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TIME

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Nation: Who's Come a Long Way, Baby?

THESE are the times that try men's souls, and they are likely to get much worse before they get better. It was not so long ago that the battle of the sexes was fought in gentle, rolling Thurber country. Now the din is in earnest, echoing from the streets where pickets gather, the bars where women once were barred, and even connubial beds, where ideology can intrude at the unconscious drop of a male chauvinist epithet. This week, marking the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the 19th Amendment granting women the vote, the diffuse, divided, but grimly determined Women's Liberation movement plans a nationwide protest day against the second sex's once and present oppression.

There will be parades, fiery speeches and blunt street theater. In many cities, Freedom Trash Cans will be available to receive symbols of sexist oppression such as cosmetics, bras and detergents. NBC's Today show will focus on women's rights, and the cast will be all female. Next week's edition of the underground Los Angeles Free Press will be put out by an all-girl staff. Everywhere, women's liberation organizations are urging women at home or in the office "to confront your own unfinished business of equality."

That unfinished business includes a list of goals that nearly all women liberationists agree on. They want equal pay for equal work, and a chance at jobs traditionally reserved for men only. They seek nationwide abortion reform —ideally, free abortions on demand. They desire round-the-clock, state-supported child-care centers in order to cut the apron strings that confine mothers to unpaid domestic servitude at home. The most radical feminists want far more. Their eschatological aim is to topple the patriarchal system in which men by birthright control all of society's levers of power—in government, industry, education, science, the arts.

The Emergence of an Ideologue

Such notions have been raised aloft by the feminist movement in the U.S. since its beginnings more than a century ago. Until this year, however, with the publication of a remarkable book called *Sexual Politics*, the movement had no coherent theory to buttress its intuitive passions, no ideologue to provide chapter and verse for its assault on patriarchy. Kate Millett, 35, a sometime sculptor and longtime brilliant misfit in a man's world, has filled the role through *Sexual Politics*. "Reading the book is like sitting with your testicles in a nutcracker," says George Stade, assistant professor of English at Columbia University. He should know; the book was Kate's Ph.D. thesis, and he was one of her advisers.

In a way, the book has made Millett the Mao Tse-tung of Women's Liberation. That is the sort of description she and her sisters despise, for the movement rejects the notion of leaders and heroines as creations of the media—and mimicry of the ways that men use to organize their world. Despite the fact that it is essentially a polemic suspended awkwardly in academic traction, *Sexual Politics* so far has sold more than 15,000 copies and is in its fourth printing.

In her book, Millett defines politics as the "power-structured relationships" by which one group—in this case the male elite—governs others. Patriarchy is thus limned as the institutional foe. Labeling it as the "most pervasive ideology of our culture," she argues that it provides our "fundamental concept of power." Women are helpless, in other words, because men control the basic mechanisms of society. Her solution is drastic: demolish the patriarchal system. Until this is done, women and men as well will "remain imprisoned in the vast gray stockades of sexual reaction. There is no way out but to rebel and be broken, stigmatized and cured."

Her anger is echoed by Dana Densmore, a radical activist, writing in *No More Fun and Games*: "No more us taking all the blame. No more us trying to imitate men and prove we are just as good. Frontal attack. It's all over now." Martha Shelly, poet, says that "the average man, including the average student male radical, wants a passive sex object cum domestic cum baby nurse to clean up after him while he does all the fun things and bosses her around —while he plays either big-shot male executive or Che Guevara—and he is my oppressor and my enemy." Another example of that oppression: Audrey, a student at San Fernando Valley State College, thought her male roommate was very enlightened because he urged her to get involved with the movement. To her horror, she is beginning to suspect that he's spending the time she is away fooling around with other women. "It's just possible," she says, "that all men are male chauvinists on some level. It just may be that the Lysistrata idea is the only way to get any sanity across."

That idea dates back to circa 415 B.C.; the movement in the U.S. goes back little more than a century. The first major effort, led by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, culminated in 1848 with the

convocation of the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, N.Y. For that convention, Stanton drafted a Declaration of Sentiments, stating in part that "we hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal," and demanding the right to vote, to equal educational and vocational opportunities, and to an ending of legal discrimination against women. Except for suffrage, those demands have yet to be met.

The status of women—America's numerical majority at 51% of the population—remains today as relentlessly second class as that of any minority. A third of the American work force is female: 42% of the women 16 and older work. Yet there is only one economic indicator in which women consistently lead men, and that is the number living in poverty. In 1968, the median salary for full-time year-round workers was \$7,870 for white males, \$5,314 for non-white men, \$4,580 for white women and \$3,487 for nonwhite women. The median wage for full-time women workers is 58.2% of that for men. Translated into educational levels, women make half of what men do; on the average, a woman needs a college degree to earn more than a man does with an eighth-grade education.

Education, the democratic equalizer, has not guaranteed women an even entry into the job market. Of women with five or more years of college, 6% take jobs as unskilled or semiskilled workers, and 17% of the women with four years of college enter the labor pool at these lowest levels.

The number of women in the higher business and professional categories is grossly disproportionate both to the population and to the educational background of some women. Women constitute only 9% of all the professions, 7% of the doctors, 3% of the lawyers, 1% of the engineers. Average starting salaries in each of these fields are lower for women than for their male counterparts.

Even when women enter more "traditional" fields, they have trouble reaching the top. Nine out of ten elementary-school teachers are women, but eight out of ten principals of these schools are men. Harvard will have two tenured women professors in its arts and sciences faculty this year; there were none last year. Yet 15% of the graduate degrees awarded at Harvard in recent years have gone to women. Women in public life are scarce. Ten female Representatives and one Senator serve in the current Congress. Twenty in 1962 is the alltime high. The route to the Senate for seven of the ten women in the history of that body has been by election or appointment to seats vacated by death, often those of their husbands. There have been just two women Cabinet members, and despite promises to bring women into the highest levels of Government, the Nixon Administration has yet to name the third. Of the 8,750 judges presently sitting, only 300 are women, most of whom serve on county courts. For the fall elections, however, politicians are rapidly beginning to realize that women constitute an important voting bloc. In New York State, a Women's Liberation spokesman reports, aides of major candidates are calling Women's Lib offices to ask, in effect, what they should say to attract this vote.

Revolution in the Revolution

The sudden awareness is another indication of the rising interest in the drive for women's rights, which in its current phase began in 1963, when Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, a book exposing the vacuity of many suburban housewives' lives. In 1966, she founded the National Organization for Women (NOW), whose goals have now been largely adopted by the movement. Today it is the single largest group within the movement, with 5,000 members.

The civil rights movement, in an ironic way, created additional converts to the feminist cause. During the Southern turmoil of the middle '60s, many women volunteers found that sexist discrimination extended even to the revolution. "Civil rights," says one organizer, "has always been a very male-dominated movement." Most radical organizations saw to it that the "chicks" operated the mimeograph machines and scampered out for coffee while the men ran the show.

For many women trained—and disillusioned—in the radical movements of the '60s, NOW seemed slightly middleaged, middle-class and tame. They formed protest groups in their own, often bizarre styles. Among them are BITCH (for nothing). WITCH (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell), Bread and Roses (long a feminist slogan, suggesting that women wanted not only flowers but bread—wages—as well), Redstockings, the Radical Mothers, and Media Women. Often their tactics differ from more conservative groups like NOW, FEW (Federally Employed Women) and Women Inc. of San Francisco. The latter, while it supports the call for equality, opposes abolition of abortion laws and "does not approve of the antiwar movement," as Vice President Mrs. Marjorie Hart put it.

To at least one feminist, however, the lack of a strong, single organization is unfortunate. Says Ti-Grace Atkinson, a top-ranking figure in NOW until she split from them in 1968: "The whole thing is in a mess. We need a revolution in the revolution. We really have to get to the truth, which a lot of women are afraid of doing, and yet I don't want to say anything that could be used against the movement at this time. If we get sloppy, other people will be affected." She has been called an extremist by many in the movement, and she is the first to admit it: "All my friends say I am too uncompromising and unreasonable, but I've been screwed too many times." One of her most extreme causes is her stand against marriage, which she calls slavery. She says: "If" you look at the laws, it is legalized rape, causes unpaid labor, curtails a woman's freedom of movement and requires no assurances of love from a man." Love is another target: "It's tied up with a sense of dependency, and we cling to it. Those individuals who are today defined as women must eradicate their own definition. In a sense, women must commit suicide." Few of the women's groups will go quite that far.

Another area of policy dissent is the lesbian issue. For years, men automatically shrugged off demands for female equality by labeling complainants "nothing but lesbians." The charge is manifestly unfair—a "lavender herring" at best, as Author Susan Brownmiller notes—but women in the movement are supersensitive about the issue. So much so, in fact, that many lesbians have split from the movement to "combat," as Lois Hart wrote to the New York Times, "oppression at the hands of their straight sisters. They bravely talk about liberating themselves from dehumanizing sexual-role definitions, but then employ the same odious treatment in dealing with women who have found a sexual, emotional and spiritual companion in another woman."

Fifty Ways Men Can Help

The movement's diversity is pointed up by the variety of new women's publications. Most are angry and barely afloat financially. A few, such as *Aphra*, a quarterly located in Springtown, Pa., and *Women: A Journal of Liberation*, of Baltimore, are of high literary quality. Some, like *A Broom of One's Own*, of Washington, are largely one-woman efforts. Two angry entries are *Off Our Backs* and *Up from Under*—a gymnastic juxtaposition.

Rat, one of the movement's few biweekly newspapers, started out life in Manhattan as a male-dominated, far-left publication, then degenerated into a mere politics-cum-pornography style. Women staffers asked permission to put out an issue, then took over completely. *Rat* staffers, like many other women in the movement, are bitterly resentful of the image of Women's Liberation they feel has been created by the press and TV. Some refuse to talk to major publications; others consent to interviews but only in pairs or groups. At least one major newspaper, however, has offered a hand: the Miami Herald ran a story recently headed "Fifty Ways Men Can Start Helping Women." Among those methods: "Let a woman take the initiative in dating and sex if she wants to; don't joke about Women's Liberation—it is a serious thing."

So far, the movement has not produced much humor. But the April issue of *Off Our Backs* offered readers a Playboy-type centerfold showing a bearded Mr. April fetchingly posed nude on a shaggy fur rug. In Berkeley, when an organization called Women for the Free Future burned a diploma to symbolize their claim that the university failed to teach women anything relevant to their situation in society, they also incinerated a Barbie doll, a book by Norman Mailer (regarded as an arch-male chauvinist by the movement), birth-control pills, the Bible, and *Good Housekeeping's* list of the Ten Most Admired Women (because they were identified by their husbands' names only). WITCH last year staged a protest in New York against a bridal-goods show because it exploited women. And Los Angeles activists chuckle wryly at this line: If God had wanted women to stay in the kitchen, he would have given them aluminum hands.

Liberation and Language

The proliferation of Women's Lib-oriented journals has served to standardize the movement's special jargon. In California, Varda Murrell is writing a Dictionary of Sexism attacking English as "Manglish." With perfect seriousness she advocates, for example, substituting "girlcott" for "boycott." Others are also playing the game. Unliberated honorifics like "Mrs." and "Miss" are replaced by the noncommittal "Ms." Idiotically, there is a move to replace "history" with "herstory." A favorite pejorative is "sexism"—the expression of conscious or unconscious male-chauvinist attitudes. Sexism was the sin of one professor who admitted at a San Francisco meeting of the staid Modern Language Association that, all things considered, he would look at a girl's legs when considering her for a teaching post. "You bastard, you bastard!" one girl screamed (s.o.b. is out in the best feminist lexicons).

For movement women, the sex revolution of the '60s was no help at all. Robin Morgan, a founder of WITCH, says that "the sexual revolution was hell on women. It never helped us—it just made us more available." The West Coast Redstocking Manifesto reports that "our bodies are male-occupied territory." And Laura X (she has abandoned her surname) says: "The pill is the final pollution, the exact analogue of DDT, of gadget-trapping you into functions, not organic wholes. Men have become no more human since its advent: according to many young women who have made that unenviable leap from private property to public property, they treat women worse than ever."

For all the visibility of BITCHES and WITCHES, the heart of the movement is made up of hundreds of "rap groups," usually formed on an ad hoc basis. "Consciousness raising" is their aim: the establishment of a common understanding of the problems that women face in a male-dominated society. The usual group meets one night a week, numbers eight to twelve women, and concentrates on topics such as attitudes toward work, marriage, families, feminist history and woman's role in society. Again and again, phrases like this are heard: "I was desperate when I came to Women's Lib ... I always thought there had to be something wrong with me because I wasn't exclusively interested in a life of suburban luxury . . . The first night I came to a rap group I had this suddenly close feeling because I found out other people had the same feelings about gut issues that I did." Adds another: "It's not just you alone fighting your mother and father and all those engagement announcements she sends every week" (the message is all too clear —why isn't she getting married?).

While rap groups build common awareness of problems, national and state legal codes offer women a reasonably effective way of combatting sex discrimination. Section 703 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employers from hiring, firing, or in other ways discriminating against any individual for reasons of race, color, religion or sex. Complainants who approach the Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission in Washington either begin the legal process there or, if their own state has similar laws, are told to go back to their home state for assistance. In New York State's case, the State Division of Human Rights takes on the complaint. As of the first of the year, 408 cases have been filed with the New York State Division: in 147 cases, a basis for complaint was found; in 192, the complaints were dismissed.

A major reason for the effectiveness of the civil rights legislation is simply the threat it poses. To protest male-female segregation in New York Times classified ads, for example, NOW staged an ad-lib protest in 1967. The Times desegregated its ads.

Legally sanctioned paths toward change, as far as Kate Millett is concerned, are simply not enough. She calls for a "cultural revolution, which must necessarily involve political and economic reorganization [but] must go far beyond as well." Her target is the patriarchy, "the one ancient and universal scheme for the domination of one birth group by another, the scheme that prevails in the area of sex."

The family, Millett says, is patriarchy's chief institution and cell for sexist brainwashing. It not only "encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit [in the] patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads." Male power is enforced by the man's position as head of the household: other members of the family must rely upon his economic and social status. Within the family, gender roles are ideologically reinforced. Girls, for instance, are taught to cook and sew passively, in imitation of their mothers; boys are encouraged to be aggressive in imitation of their fathers. Biologically, she argues, there is little real difference between the sexes, beyond the specific genital characteristics. The heavier musculature of the male, she admits, is biological in origin but culturally encouraged through breeding, diet and exercise. In any case, she says, physical strength is not a factor in political relations, because "civilization has always been able to substitute other methods (technic, weaponry, knowledge) for those of physical strength."

Freud and Freudian theory are a major target. Freud, she says, was unable to separate female biology from female status, and his concept of penis envy, of woman as a damaged or castrated man, became a powerful supporter of patriarchal notions.

Even the concepts of courtly behavior and romantic love come in for attack. Chivalry represents, Millett says, simply "a sporting kind of reparation," and romance is a "means of emotional manipulation," which helps men to exploit women. (She does concede that romantic love is "convenient to both parties," particularly since it allows the female to overcome "the far more powerful conditioning she has received toward sexual inhibition.") The great myths of mankind, as interpreted by anthropologists, reinforce the themes of feminine subordination. Millett cites the legend of Pandora's box and the biblical tale of Adam's Fall, and says that both "these concepts of feminine evil have passed through a final literary phase to

become highly influential ethical justifications of things as they are." Part of that literary phase, she says, is the male chauvinism that runs through the writings of authors like Norman Mailer, D. H. Lawrence and Henry Miller, each of whom in varying degrees writes of heroes who define their manhood through the subjugation of women.

There is no questioning the impact of her argument. But it is precisely the broad sweep of that argument that renders it vulnerable. Millett is no scientist, and scientists, notably Social Anthropologist Lionel Tiger (see box), are quick to point out imperfections. "She's not looking for the truth, but making a case," says Rutgers Anthropologist Robin Fox. He says he is no misogynist, but, he charges, she's "inventing a new mythology to replace the old one . . . She's playing ducks and drakes with the truth, and in the process doing herself and her cause a disservice." Specifically, Fox says, Millett's theory that gender identity is imposed by society rather than genes is "a typical half-truth."

Psychoanalyst Irving Bieber of New York Medical College says that men and women are very different genetically, and points out that the exact degrees of difference have yet to be determined. Both Bieber and Fox—and Clinical Psychologist Wardell Pomeroy as well—dispute Millett's argument that the family's chief function is to perpetuate the prescribed patriarchal attitudes. "That's another one of her sweeping generalizations," says Fox. "To assume that the situation is perpetuated by male conspiracy is to ignore the genetic basis." The real issue, says Fox, "is whether male and female roles are totally flexible and reversible." As far as Fox is concerned, the answer is no. Millett admits that "my book did overstate the case, because nobody was listening. All I did was substantiate a cliché which we all know—that it's a man's world."

Legacy of Revolution

Only briefly does Millett speculate on precisely what sort of society might be produced by the successful sexual revolution for which she calls. She expects integration of the separate male and female human subcultures, accompanied by "a permissive single standard of sexual freedom . . . uncorrupted by the crass and exploitative economic bases of traditional sexual alliances." She adds that an end to patriarchy would probably destroy the family as it is known today; the institution of marriage would wither away as well. Precisely what might replace the family is left unclear in her analysis (see THE ESSAY).

Many men, of course, are appalled by distorted visions of the liberated woman's Utopia, a sort of all-female 1984. They fear, as Cato suggested (circa 195 B.C.): "The moment they begin to be your equals, they will be your superiors." Men like San Francisco Plumber Dick Burke say that "if women want to be equal, let 'em; if they want to be plumbers, let 'em. But when they go out on a job, they're gonna have to lift 200 lbs. of pipe

like any other plumber." The basic idea of job equality gets an approving nod from Andy Anderson, 42, a publicist for Southern Pacific Railway Co. in San Francisco, but he thinks, "Those radicals are going too far. Let's face it: there are undoubtedly some women who want to castrate us." Los Angeles Adman Bob Kuhn says: "Women are jeopardizing all the gains they have made, and I also feel they are throwing away much of their mystique." Still more outspoken is Male Chauvinist of the Week Hugh E. Geyer, a Morristown, N.J., executive: "They've got nothing to do all day—just push this button and push that button. What the hell does a healthy woman do all day besides rush home at 5 o'clock and give the old bastard a beer? I just can't stomach the laziness of women." Margaret Mead, though in sympathy with most of the movement's aims, offers a caution: "Women's Liberation has to be terribly conscious about the danger of provoking men to kill women. You have quite literally driven them mad."

The Delectable Whistle

If many men are hostile—though scarcely to the point of murder—some women are simply puzzled. "I don't know what those women are thinking of," says Posey Carpenter, a Los Angeles real estate broker. "I love the idea of looking delectable and having men whistle at me." Other women, offended by this week's national protest, are setting up counter-demonstration organizations. Mrs. Helen Andelin of Santa Barbara—a mother of eight—urges that Sept. 30 be made a National Celebration of Womanhood Day: each wife should wear her most frilly, feminine dress and should "sing before breakfast," serve her husband breakfast in bed and "tell him how great he is." Still more improbable is New York's Pussycat League, Inc., which believes "the lamb chop is mightier than the karate chop." Its perfectly appropriate slogan is "Purr, Baby, Purr."

Poet Phyllis McGinley, though she feels that "women are certainly as bright, if not brighter than men," and are biologically tougher into the bargain, has her doubts about the radical fringe of the movement. In a poem from her collection, *Times Three*, she sums up her feelings this way:

Snugly upon the equal heights Enthroned at last where she belongs,
She takes no pleasure in her Rights
Who so enjoyed her Wrongs.

Black women, so often engaged in the general struggle for sociological change, are largely absent from the ranks of Women's Liberation. Anne Osborne, who works for the Southern Christian Leadership Council in Atlanta, explains their reluctance to participate this way: "They're just beginning to get the kind of good treatment as women that white women have always had—they don't want to give it up too fast. Black men have just gotten enough money to take them to nice places, and women like it." Elizabeth Morgan, a supervisor for the Oakland-Berkeley Welfare Department, adds that some of "the symbols of the women's movement are too foreign for blacks to take on ... We just got out of jeans." Sexual oppression, to Mrs.

Morgan at least, is less important to the black woman than racial oppression. "She knows," Mrs. Morgan says, "that in order to get over racial oppression, she's going to have to build up her man's ego—so she'll go on saying the problem is with the whites. She'll put herself down while breaking her back for her man."

Civil rights for women is an old cause being revived with a special kind of vehemence in an age of generalized protest and turmoil that questions nearly all established institutions and many traditional values. The prospect of the hand that rocks the cradle also rocking the boat can be frightening. But it is also freighted, as the best of the radicals insist, with a potential for enormous good for both sexes. As Kate Millett says: "We really don't have many fatuous hopes of taking over. We would like, very much, a fair shake. We are each half of a person, we are each less than we could be. If we did not have these rigid sexual roles, we would all have so much more room for spontaneous behavior—for doing things that we feel like doing, for following our own instincts, for being imaginative, for being creative. The great thing about it all is that we could not only change this, but in the process, really improve everything else as well."



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