

“A Spontaneous Loss of Enthusiasm”: Workplace Feminism and the Transformation of Women’s Service Jobs in the 1970s*

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In 1972, a group of tired **stewardesses** **tried** to explain their concerns to the incredulous male transit union officials who led their union. No, the primary issues were not wages and benefits, they **insisted**, but the particular cut of **their uniforms** and the sexual insinuations made about their occupation in the new airline advertisements. Their words fell on deaf ears. Despite their **commonalities** as transportation workers, the gender gap separating the **two** groups was simply too wide to **cross**. Indeed, male subway drivers could not understand **why the stewardesses** would object to their glamorous sex-object image. Deeply held gendered notions of unionism and politics also stood in the way of communication. For even if the complaints of stewardesses were accepted as “real,” to many male union leaders they seemed petty: matters not deserving of serious attention, let alone concerted activity.

The gender gap in labor history may not be quite as wide as that **between** female flight attendants and male subway drivers. But many of the same processes have blocked productive communication and hindered the intellectual development of the field. Labor history scholarship still rests upon gendered definitions of work, politics, and unionism. Just as **significantly**, the overall **narratives** that dominate the field incorporate neither the **history** of female-dominated occupations and industries **nor** that of women’s particular forms of collective action.

The relative neglect of service work, where the overwhelming number of **women** wage earners work, is particularly problematic. The history of work and **unions** in the twentieth-century United States, for example, is tied largely to changes taking place in the manufacturing sector. Thus, **taking** factory work as the empirical basis for generalization, one oft-told tale is of the overall **deskilling** of work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the replacement of craft systems of control by a new managerial class, and the rise of welfare **capitalism**.¹ The relation of unionism to these organizational reforms is complex. The general consensus, however, is that by the 1930s the industrial unionists had rejected the paternalistic overtones of welfare capitalism while accepting many of the actual managerial practices that **were** in place. Unionists demanded that many of the benefits provided by employers in the 1920s be continued as rights

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under a union contract rather than as gifts from a benevolent patriarch. They preferred bureaucratic rules governing hiring, firing, and discipline to governance by foremen's whimsy, and they favored wage rates tied to job **classification** over ones linked to worker morality, personal habits, and family status. Thus, by the 1930s and 1940s, in many unionized settings, the arbitrary **personalism** of foremen and supervisors was tempered by bureaucratic fiat, and court-backed contracts specifying wages, benefits, and **working** conditions replaced the unsteady largess of individual employers. From one perspective, this "modernization" of the workplace **was** but the triumph of hierarchical managerial power masked as bureaucracy, but these same workplace innovations and institutions also ensured equity, dignity, and industrial **citizenship**.²

The story **differs**, however, if service work rather than **manufacturing** is taken as the paradigmatic example. In **the** service workplace, the employee-customer encounter could not be **deskilled** and monitored to the same degree as the **employee-machine** relationship. Indeed, despite their low pay and status, department-store saleswomen, for example, retained considerable control over their work pace, work organization, and craft knowledge into the 1940s. Only in the postwar era did managers begin to experiment with "self-service" and look to "buyer-managers" rather than saleswomen for guidance in anticipating **customer** buying **habits**.³

My own work on the restaurant industry demonstrates that commercial food service also resisted **deskilling** and bureaucratization **until** the post-World War Two period: "Fast food" and chain restaurants remained a small part of the industry **until** very recently. They existed side by side with the leisurely "white tablecloth" **sector** which employed specialized craft workers and with the "family-style" restaurant in which motherly waitresses often dished out admonishments with the food. Thus, many restaurant workers retained an impressive degree of control over the employee-customer encounter, and managerial styles in the restaurant industry remained personal rather than **bureaucratic**.⁴

How typical **are** these two cases? How did the nature of work in the service sector change over the **course** of the twentieth century? And how has the history of unionism and worker control in service jobs intersected with changing managerial practices? Did service workers explicitly attack managerial **personalism** and paternalism as did industrial workers in the 1930s? If so, on what grounds and with what degree of success?

I suggest some partial answers to these questions by focusing here on the upsurge of collective activity among women service workers in the United States during the 1970s. Women in female-dominated **service** jobs had organized formally before the 1970s in a few cases, and they also **influenced** the nature of their work through **informal** and individual **pressure**.⁵ Beginning in the 1960s and increasingly in the 1970s, however, women service workers tuned to formal collective action to a degree not evident earlier.

By the **mid-1970s**, Karen Nussbaum, an organizer of 9to5, a prominent clerical workers' association, predicted that the organization of jobs traditionally held by women would be the next great **growth** wave of **unionism**.⁶ Particularly

if one uses the yardstick of membership in traditional labor unions, the actual extent of female organizing fell short of **Nussbaum's** projections. Nevertheless, the rise of collective action **among women** service workers in this period is significant. If one **redefines** the labor movement to encompass a wide range of associations and not merely those organizations with collective bargaining contracts, then the numbers of women involved come much closer to meeting her predictions. Moreover, the upsurge is notable in two other respects: **First**, women in many service occupations were **organizing** on a widespread basis for the **first** time; and second, **as** I argue below, although their activism did not result in large numbers of new collective bargaining contracts, it helped fundamentally transform the gender, class, and racial norms governing millions of women's service jobs.

I focus here on the organizing efforts among three groups of female service workers—**flight attendants, clericals, and household workers** (or according to 1970s terminology: stewardesses, secretaries, and maids)—groups which **experienced** significant collective organization on a national basis for the first time in this period. These groups provide a rich **evidentiary** base for an exploration of the content and form of activism among female service workers. In the **1970s**, women composed ninety-five percent of **flight attendants**, ninety-seven percent of secretaries (the largest group of office workers), and ninety-seven percent of domestic workers.⁷ Not surprisingly, the organizations they created were **almost** exclusively female. The records of these three groups' collective activity permit a relatively unmediated glimpse into the concerns of women service workers as expressed in their own words.

Moreover, these three occupations allow for **speculation** about the differences among women by race, class, age, and family status. Women from many different ethnic and economic backgrounds entered clerical work in the twentieth century as it replaced domestic service as the largest single occupation among women. Over a third of all working women held clerical positions in the **1970s**.⁸ African-American women did not enter clerical work in any appreciable numbers before World War Two, but by the 1970s **almost** as large a percent of African-American women were in clerical jobs as held jobs in the overall labor **market**.⁹ In contrast to the heterogeneity of clerical workers, only certain categories of **women** were hired as flight attendants or domestic workers. Although age and marriage bars fell in the **1960s**, the airlines continued to prefer young, single, white women for their **flight attendant** positions. Conversely, domestic work was an occupation composed disproportionately of women of color and older women heads of households. In 1968, of the million and a half women working as private household employees, some sixty-four percent were African American. By the **mid-1970s**, the percentage of African Americans had dropped to fifty-three percent but the numbers of Hispanic and other ethnic minority women had increased. The median age of household workers was forty-six, some six years older than the typical woman worker, and over one-third were either divorced or separated or **widowed**.¹⁰

In the sections that follow, I detail the story of female activism in these three female-dominated occupations, exploring the nature of their jobs, the issues **cen-**

tral to their collective action, and the impact of their movements. A history of service work and of service **unionism** does more than challenge long-accepted assumptions undergirding twentieth century labor history. It also offers a new narrative of unionism, one rich with implications for the revitalization of the labor movement in today's service economy.

The Reform Decades

The heightened militancy among women service workers in the 1970s drew on decades of prior struggle for racial, class, and gender justice. The civil rights movement gathering steam since the **1940s** burst onto the national stage in the mid-1950s with the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycotts and the subsequent highly publicized **racial** confrontations on the steps of public schools and at **lunch-room** counters throughout the South. The **1960s** witnessed the passage of federal legislation which prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of race and sex and promoted the unionization of public-sector workers, the majority of whom were minority and/or female. By the late **1960s**, however, the civil rights movement was **ebbing** and the wave of public-sector unionization had **subsided**.¹¹

The women's movement, however, was just **taking** off. It too drew on prior efforts of gender reformers, although these efforts were not as widespread nor as visible as those on behalf of racial justice. Female reformers had called for an economic and political agenda that was partially realized in the establishment of the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women and the Equal Pay Act of **1963**,¹² but this network of social and labor **feminists** was in disarray by the late 1960s. The passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act brought long-simmering disagreements over the support of sex-based state protective laws into the open. In 1969, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission ruled that most **sex**-based state protective legislation **conflicted** with Title VII and hence was illegal. Virtually overnight, the principal basis for a half century of opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA-defense of protective laws-disappeared. The collapse of this cornerstone of the older labor feminism made possible the emergence of a new, transformed workplace-based **feminism**.¹³

Like their middle-class counterparts, working-class and union women engaged in widespread gender activism in the 1960s and 1970s. Nancy **Gabin** and Dennis Deslippe, for example, have described the remarkable transformations of blue-collar factory women in the late 1960s when they embraced a new vision of gender equality and for the first time en masse rejected the sex-typing of jobs as discriminatory. Rank-and-file union women flooded the Equal Employment Opportunity **Commision** (EEOC) offices with sex discrimination claims in the **1960s** and forced the agency to take the issue seriously. Once stirred into action, the EEOC sought and won major court decisions designed to end sex segregation and discriminatory practices by such prominent employers as AT&T and **u s Steel**.¹⁴

Working women relied on workplace-based **organizing** as well as the courts to advance gender equality. Nonprofessional as well as professional women **or-**

ganized workplace **caucuses** that took up issues of **affirmative** action and employment **discrimination**.¹⁵ They also sought to transform the bargaining and legislative agenda of the labor movement. By 1974, union women had established the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). A self-consciously **feminist** organization, CLUW supported the Equal Rights Amendment as well as women's reproductive rights, and the founders' goals included moving women into "ion leadership, increased attention to organizing women workers, and a" end to sex segregation and other discriminatory workplace practices based on **sex**.¹⁶

What is less know", however, is the activism among women in female-dominated jobs during this period and the ways in which their reform movements changed the longstanding familial and paternalistic **norms** governing female-dominated service jobs. These **women** took older **reform** traditions and reworked them to **suit** their own **realities** as woman service workers. They built upon the past, but they broke with it as well. They expanded the vocabulary of workplace rights, made a public and political issue of the gendered construction of women's jobs, and invented new forms of workplace representation.

*"Sex Objects in the Sky Unite"*¹⁷

Unlike most women in the female service ghetto, the majority of flight attendants had joined "ions in the 1940s and 1950s. The unions representing stewardesses included the Stewards and Stewardesses (S&S) Division of the Air Line Pilots Association (**ALPA**), the Teamsters, and the Transport Workers Union. These "ions had secured moderate advances in wages, hours, and working conditions for **flight** attendants, and under growing **pressure** from the tight attendants themselves and the **impetus** of new **antidiscriminatory** legislation, they had helped undermine the airline policies restricting the occupation to white, young, single, and childless women. Airlines hired a small number of minority women as attendants in the late 1950s, and by the end of the 1960s, flight attendants could many, have **children**, and work past age **thirty-two**.¹⁸

But by the early 1970s, tight attendants wanted more: They wanted **economic** rights and opportunities equal to me" as **well** as the right to control and **define** their own sexuality and "personhood."¹⁹ To **secure** these rights, tight attendants put increasing pressure on **their** male-dominated "ions and **formed** the first all-female national organization of **flight** attendants, Stewardesses For Women's Rights (SFWR). As Sandra **Jarrell**, cofounder of SFWR, explained, "the most obvious tool available for remedying the injustices we are subject to are [sic] the unions. Unfortunately, unions do not have the reputation of representing **the** interests of women." The male leadership, she continued, blamed stewardesses, but they "will obtain rank and file support only if they stop limiting [themselves] to economic **issues**."²⁰

The emergence of this new militancy among flight attendants in the 1970s was spurred in part by **the** new feminist sensitivity to employment **discrimination** and to male control over female sexuality. Flight attendants, however, were

as much feminist leaders as followers. They helped invent the new feminism in the 1960s, and they were instrumental in the 1970s in demonstrating the power of these ideas when applied to women's jobs.

The rise of activism among **flight** attendants was also a product of the transformation of the occupation and the kid of women who entered it. By the early 1970s, for the **first** time, the majority of flight attendants were married and **expected** to stay in their job longer than the earlier average of eighteen months. Moreover, working conditions had deteriorated. Flight attendants' **real** wages fell as higher fuel costs and recession-related declines in business travel cut into airline profits.

But most galling, the occupation was **sexualized** as companies came to rely upon female sexuality to sell seats. The fantasy image of **flight** attendants in the 1950s had been the fresh-faced girl next door—the kind you wanted to marry. By the early 1970s, however, the image had shifted from the attractive young woman available for marriage to the attractive young **woman** available for sex. Airlines routinely required **flight** attendants to wear hot pants and other **sexually** alluring uniforms. National's rules called for all stewardesses to wear "Ply Me" buttons. The company maintained with a straight face that no sexual innuendo was intended, despite their ad campaign featuring stewardesses panting, "Hi, I'm **Linda**, and I'm going to **PLY** you like you've never been flown before." Continental learned from National's success. In 1972, they aired ads in which stewardesses promised that we "really **move** our tail for you." As one airline **executive explained**: "It's the sex thing, pure and simple. Put a dog on a plane and twenty businessmen are sore for a **month**."²¹

Historically, attendants had taken pride in their appearance and the company's celebration of their attractiveness, but the more crass approach was objectionable to many. The new sexy image encouraged harassment by male passengers; it also meant that they had become less respectable. As one explained: "It represents a lack of respect for hostesses. We have always projected pride, a class **kind** of image and this slogan is barroom talk. We're professional career **women** and mothers not fly girls."²²

Flight attendants initially took their concerns to the three chief unions that represented them, but they made little headway. In exasperation and somewhat reluctantly, stewardesses began organizing in opposition to their unions as well as their employers. Not only did they form their own national organization in 1972, SFWR, but by the end of the 1970s they had deserted the male-dominated transportation unions in droves, setting up a bewildering array of independent **flight** attendant **unions**.²³

The SFWR dedicated itself to "fighting the policies of the **airlines** which strip us of our individuality and dignity," chiefly the airline's manipulation of the **flight** attendant's sexual **image**.²⁴ The SFWR attacked the problem from a number of angles. They picketed **films** that depicted flight attendants as hypersexual women. They filed lawsuits against Continental and National **alleging** that their airline ads created a hostile work environment. They distributed buttons reading, "Go Ply Yourself" and "National, Your Fly is Open" bumper **stickers**.²⁵

And they initiated an elaborate media campaign to publicize their alternative image of the flight attendant as a career woman and professional. The campaign culminated in the release of a “**countercommercial**” aimed at ending what they called “sexploitation.” In it, they defined themselves as professionals responsible for passenger safety, not passenger sexual titillation. “The sexpot image is unsafe at any altitude,” the script proclaimed, because “people do not obey the safety orders of their sexual fantasies.” Or, as one SFWR leader put it in a letter to Time magazine: “We’re in the business of saving tails, not serving them. The airlines are ass-king for pecuniary **returns with** a part of my anatomy that is not for **sale.**”²⁶

Although the SFWR took the lead in this campaign, they **were** joined by some union officials, particularly those leading the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), the former S&S Division of **ALPA** which had decided to go independent.*’ The SFWR also worked with flight attendant unions to change the rules governing appearance, demanding that airlines change stewardesses’ **uni-**forms and abolish their archaic grooming and weight requirements. The **S&S** Division of **ALPA** had led the battle in the 1960s with some success. **Girdle** checks disappeared as did most airline charm classes. In the **1970s**, SFWR and union pressure helped convince airlines to let flight attendants choose their own make-up and hair **style.**²⁸

But the airlines drew the line at weight: Thinness was the one nonnegotiable aspect of female attractiveness. Airlines weighed attendants weekly, held them to weight standards which were detrimental **to** their health, refused to adjust requirements **as** women aged, and tied more flight attendants for violations of weight regulations than for any other reason. The SFWR argued that such rules were discriminatory since only female attendants were required to be pencil thin, that the airline “appearance supervisors” used highly arbitrary **stan-**dards, and that the only acceptable work rules **an** employer should impose were those related to a person’s **ability** to perform his or her assigned **job.**²⁹

Other issues included demands for enforcement of **affirmative** action policies and the end of mandatory layoffs during pregnancy. **Their** health and safety task force objected to the airline’s claim that stewardesses’ health problems were “primarily **self-inflicted** and psychosomatic” and called for a serious research program “to **find** out just what is happening to our **bodies.**”³⁰

The SFWR made a splash despite its brief organizational life. It captured media **headlines.**³¹ It also moved new issues of control over one’s body and **personality** into the center of union politics, ultimately reinvigorating unionism among tight attendants.

When the SFWR folded in 1976, many former SFWR activists **turned** full-time attention to union work. A number ran for union office and won. In their new capacity as union officers and activists, they continued **the** flurry of lawsuits and press releases. They also threatened airlines with strikes, sick-ins, and the old International Workers of the World (**IWW**) tactic of slowdown-what Kelly **Rueck** of the AFA described as “a spontaneous loss of enthusiasm” for the **job.**³² By the end of the 1980s much had changed. Weight restrictions were **lift-**

ed; **new, more** dignified uniforms appeared; and **flight** attendants no longer looked **like** mass-produced life-size Barbie dolls.

Office Wives Organize

Like **flight** attendants, **clericals'** **working** conditions **were** declining as their needs and expectations rose, spurring protest. According to **some** chroniclers, clerical work had been in decline since the late nineteenth century as female workers **re-**placed male, and wages, status, and promotional opportunities plummeted. But conditions deteriorated further in the post-World War Two decades. As larger, **more** bureaucratic organizations became the **norm** and the new office technologies spread, many secretaries found themselves reorganized into office clerical pools. Others **saw** their jobs downgraded to a monotonous routine of typing and filing.³³

Accompanying this decline was a shift in the needs and expectations of the women employed as **clericals**. The majority were married (as they had always been), but a growing proportion were single **or** heads of families without a partner. They spent more years at work and felt frustrated by their "secondary earner" wages and the lack of promotional **opportunities**.³⁴

In addition, the messages of the new feminism stirred discontent. If flight attendants did not take kindly to being seen as mistresses, many secretaries no longer found solace in their role as "office wives." Not only did they have to attend to the bosses' personal needs, but like housewives their labor was rarely acknowledged or respected. And since few job **descriptions** for secretarial positions existed, there were no protective boundaries, emotional or otherwise. Of course, **secretaries** did have their one day of token recognition, National Secretaries Day, begun in 1951.³⁵ Being taken out to **lunch** and given roses by the boss once a year was supposed to compensate for poor **working** conditions the rest of the year.

Organized **clericals** set out to change this state of affairs. Public-sector clerical had organized along with teachers, maintenance workers, and others in the 1960s; now the focus shifted to the millions of unrepresented office workers in the private sector? Margie Albert, a twenty-five-year office veteran and a steward for the Distributive Workers of America spoke of a "new spirit" sweeping **America's** secretaries in a 1973 *New York Times* opinion editorial piece; New York Congresswoman **Bella Abzug** had it read into the Congressional *Record*.³⁷

Albert claimed the movement erupted in 1969 when employers imposed a "no pants, dresses only" rule on office staff. Women rebelled, she reported, signing petitions, **organizing** delegations to the boss, and threatening mass **walk-outs**.³⁸ Albert may have exaggerated the extent of the discontent, but certainly the acceptance of conventional office etiquette was eroding.

Within the next few years, **over** a dozen independent office-worker organizations **sprang** up, perhaps the most effective being **9to5**. Launched in 1973, **9to5** **grew** quickly from its origins as a luncheon gripe session for Harvard secretaries (led by fellow University of Chicago refugees Karen **Nussbaum** and Ellen

Cassedy) to a citywide organization with hundreds of **members**.³⁹ Similar groups emerged in Chicago (Women Employed), New York (Women Office Workers), San Francisco (Women Office Employees), and elsewhere. By the end of the decade, twelve local groups (with a total membership of some ten thousand) had united under the umbrella of the National Association of Working **Women**.⁴⁰ Like flight attendants, **clericals** wanted higher wages and promotions; they also wanted their occupation professionalized and upgraded. The objectionable quality of interpersonal relationships in the office or “insulting male behavior,” however, angered women the **most**.⁴¹

As Karen **Nussbaum** remembered it, the “most powerful motivator was the issue of respect. Women did not want to feel they were office wives. They were real workers with real jobs.” They also wanted their **personhood** acknowledged. **Nussbaum** recalled with chagrin her experience of being looked “dead in the eye” and asked, “Isn’t anybody here?”⁴² Other **clericals** spoke bitterly of being “invisible,” of having people not “really look at you as a person,” and of the indignity of the “servant role.”⁴³ In short, **clericals** rejected being an “office maid” as well as a “office wife.”

But how best to transform the nature of the **secretary–boss** relationship? **Rosabeth Moss Kanter** has written eloquently of the boss-secretary relationship as the “most striking instance of the retention of patrimony within the bureaucracy,” a dyad governed more by personal whimsy, status, and loyalty than by objective criteria and bureaucratic **rules**.⁴⁴ In many ways, the office-worker movement looked to modernize and depersonalize **the** boss-secretary relationship. They called for evaluations based on more objective criteria, such as skills in typing, office management, and budget administration, rather than on a pleasing personality or good looks. They wanted to be promoted on their own merits rather than rise as appendages to their boss. More “precise job descriptions,” some thought, would **limit** the **almost** total discretion bosses had over **them**.⁴⁵

At the same time, the office-worker movement also believed that bureaucratization and depersonalization were not the ultimate solution. Rather than banish the personal, they sought to transform it. They hoped to rewrite the **cultural** scripts governing office relationships and change the larger cultural norms that underlay the “micro-inequities” of daily office **encounters**.⁴⁶ **In** brief, they sought to change attitudes as well as practices.

To effect these ends, office-worker groups relied on a range of tactics: lawsuits, petitions, pickets, as well as **more** unorthodox tactics—described by one reporter as a combination of “street **theatre** and Madison Avenue hype.” Their public relations skills served them particularly **well** in their attempt to “repossess” National Secretaries Day. **Their** demand for **an** office-worker “Bill of Rights” and their slogans “Respect, rights, and raises” and “Raises not roses” instigated a public debate over the working conditions of **clericals** and the cultural norms governing boss and secretary interaction. Their call for secretaries to refuse participation in such a longstanding and widespread public ritual as National Secretaries Day set off confusion in offices **nationwide**.⁴⁷ Did secretaries really prefer raises to roses? As with the male union officers who had **repre-**

sented **flight** attendants, few male bosses could understand why their female support staff would want to reject what many saw as flattering forms of male attention. But for a significant segment of the clerical **work** force, National Secretaries Day represented an outmoded paternalism perfectly symbolized in the demeaning **rituals** of one-way **gift-giving**.⁴⁸

9to5 and other groups also devised innovative tactics to draw attention to the non-job-related duties often required of clerical-the duties, as one secretary explained, "that have no purpose but to make the boss seem, and feel, important." They held "worst boss contests" to publicize the most outrageous requests bosses made of secretaries and on occasion they picketed individual bosses. Karen **Nussbaum** tells the story of one secretary whose boss screamed at her because the **corned** beef sandwich she brought him was on white bread rather than rye. When she refused to give up her own lunch hour and go back out in the **rain** for a different version of the sandwich, he fired her. She contacted 9to5 and forty women turned out to picket his office, carrying placards reading, "Boss Says Rye Bread or No Bread." The **woman** never got her job back, but as **Nussbaum** remarked years later, that "was one. satisfied **secretary**."⁴⁹

Office-worker groups like the. SFWR had an impact way beyond their small numbers. By the end of the 1970s, the movement had helped win millions of dollars in back pay and equity raises, spurred the development of employer **affirmative** action plans, turned National Secretaries Day into a contested ritual, and inspired a hit "9 to 5" song, movie, and TV **show**.⁵⁰

Ultimately, the office-worker movement helped transform the daily office encounters that had done so much to **humiliate and** demean secretaries. As *Business Week* noted in 1980, 9to5 changed public "notions of fairness," of "what a boss may fairly ask a[n] office worker to do." Personal errands, coffee-making, and **numerous** other requests **were** no longer acceptable business practice in most **offices**.⁵¹ By the 1990s, even the time-honored tradition of "rug-ranking," or basing a secretary's pay on her boss's status rather than on the content of her job, was in retreat. Like their counterparts in the home, secretaries were no longer a perk of the **powerful** or a mere appendage; they were **emerging as individuals**.⁵²

These gains, as significant as they were, left **many** problems unresolved. Countless office workers got raises, promotions, and enhanced job control. But many, particularly those who occupied the lower rungs of the occupation-typing, **filig**, and processing forms in huge faceless offices-still faced low wages and poor working **conditions**.⁵³ Indeed, it was often the **secretaries** with the "preferred spots in small, private offices" who experienced the most dramatic improvements. The women relegated to the more impersonal, assembly-like conditions stayed **put**; not surprisingly, women from the working-class and women of color held a disproportionate number of these **jobs**.⁵⁴

From the beginning, however, many office-worker activists had pushed for changes affecting "the entire class of women who are being discriminated against," not **just the few**.⁵⁵ And, by the end of the 1970s, many office-worker groups turned to unionization as a way of broadening the movement **and** addressing the particular concerns of the lower echelons of the clerical sector.

1975, through its **new** sister organization Local 925 (later Service Employees International Union [SEIU] District 925), decided to focus on organizing women in insurance and banking, because, as **Nussbaum** explained, it was "the heart of the clerical work force—some 30 percent" and "the majority came from working-class neighborhoods."⁵⁶ District 65 and other "ions also targeted clerical in banking and insurance as well as publishing, legal offices, and **universities**." Their decision reflected in part the more "ion-minded orientation of **clericals** and their **new** willingness to **self-organize**.⁵⁸

Employers fought with every **weapon** available, particularly in the insurance and banking sector. "We "ever knew what hit us," **Nussbaum** remembered some **fifteen** years later. "We got smashed over and over. These businesses [**insurance and banking**] had not traditionally been unionized, and they were **damned** if they **were** going to be the first ones **in** the new **wave**."⁵⁹ By the end of the **1980s**, the banking industry had changed some of its most egregious discriminatory pay and promotion policies, but "ion density had actually fallen **over** the course **of the decade**.⁶⁰ The insurance industry was equally invincible. After a hard-fought organizing and contract victory at the Syracuse offices of Equitable Life, the company closed its Syracuse branch and laid off all its unionized **workers**.⁶¹

The major **successes** were among university **clericals**, especially at prestigious schools such as Harvard, Yale, Vassar, and Columbia. Even these privileged institutions, however, balked at the notion of sharing control and wealth with their largely female clerical staff. Harvard, for example, engaged its support staff in a" exhausting twelve-year campaign **before** conceding **defeat**.⁶² Nevertheless, some seventy percent of the campaigns **among** university **clericals** conducted **in** the 1970s and 1980s emerged with "ion contracts despite employer **opposition**.⁶³

By the end of the **1980s**, c&f&e-worker **unionization** (sixteen percent) was comparable to the work force **as** a whole (seventeen **percent**).⁶⁴ The 1980s did not witness the reversal of "ion decline—one that began for the private-sector work force in the **1950s**—**but** the fault cannot be laid at the door of office workers.

*"Taking the 'Mammy' Out of Housework"*⁶⁵

The household-worker movement also burst into public view in the **early** 1970s. In 1971, some six hundred mostly black and middle-aged women gathered for the first national conference **of household** employees. Under the banner, "pay, protection, and professionalism," they applauded enthusiastically as speaker **after** speaker spoke of a **new** day for domestics. The conference received extensive press coverage, encouraging hope that a fundamental **shift** in the employment relations governing domestic work was underway?

The events of the 1970s were the culmination of trends long **in** motion. Household employment had changed fundamentally over the **course** of the twentieth century. By World War Two, day work predominated over live-in

arrangements, and outside the South, African-American and other women of color replaced Irish and Scandinavian immigrants as the typical domestic. In the decades following the war, wages and working conditions also improved slightly for household workers as demand exceeded supply and opportunities for alternative employment opened for minority **women**.⁶⁷ Household workers themselves had provoked many of these changes through their daily acts of individual **defiance**.⁶⁸ Yet prior to the 1960s, organized efforts to reform domestic work, largely led by middle-class white reformers, had been **sporadic**.⁶⁹ Local organizations of household employees-inspired by the civil rights and poor people's movements-had begun forming in the late 1960s. In the 1970s, for the first time, a national movement organized primarily by household workers arose.

Dorothy **Bolden**, a veteran community and civil-rights activist **who had** started cleaning houses in 1935 at the age of twelve, founded a domestic-workers organization in Atlanta in 1968. Its **aim** was to improve Working conditions and build "respect for the women in this low-income field of labor." **Bolden** wrote: "I have been a maid all my life, I have rocked cradles and given guidance to little boys. Now we're going to give them **some** guidance when they are grown."⁷⁰ **Similar** groups organized in **some** two dozen other cities across the country. As one participant explained, "The garbage **men** have been upgraded to sanitation workers, with all the benefits, and that's just what we have to do. If you're tough enough to talk back to your big man on Sunday, don't tell **me** you're afraid of Miss Suzy on **Monday**."⁷¹

By the early 1970s, the majority joined **in a loose** national movement headed by the National Council of Household Employees (NCHE). The NCHE, formed in 1965 under the auspices of the Women's Bureau, grew out of the long-standing commitment of labor feminists like former Women's Bureau director Esther Peterson to revalue household labor. By 1968 the NCHE had secured funding from the Department of Labor for a series of eight pilot projects to "upgrade household employment standards"; by 1970, they had funding from the **Ford Foundation**. Initially, the **NCHE** focused on training household employees and on fostering minority contractors in the private household-services sector. Many thought this approach would give minority entrepreneurship a boost, expand the availability of household services, and benefit domestic workers whose terms of employment would be set formally through a contracting agency. In the early 1970s, under the leadership of Edith Sloan, a young African-American woman with legal training as well as experience as a domestic worker, the NCHE redefined itself **as** an advocacy organization promoting the interests of female domestic workers **first** and foremost. Instead of fostering small businesses, which usually were owned by minority **men**, the NCHE put its energy into building a national movement of household **workers**.⁷²

The household-worker movement differed in many respects from that of **flight attendants** and **clericals**. In part, this divergence reflected **differences** among the women activists themselves: Household workers were older, and much **more** likely to be women of color and single heads of household. Further.,

arrangements, and outside the South, African-American and other women of color replaced Irish and Scandinavian immigrants as the typical domestic. In the decades following the war, wages and **working** conditions also improved slightly for household workers as demand exceeded supply and opportunities for alternative employment opened for minority **women**.⁶⁷ Household workers themselves had provoked many of these changes through their daily acts of individual **defiance**.⁶⁸ Yet prior to the **1960s**, organized efforts to reform domestic work, largely led by middle-class white reformers, had been **sporadic**.⁶⁹ Local organizations of household employees-inspired by the civil rights and poor people's movements-had begun forming in the late 1960s. In the **1970s**, for the first time, a national movement organized primarily by household workers arose.

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household workers worked alone in private homes supervised **almost** wholly by women, and the norms governing these highly **privatized** encounters **were** rooted as much in racial and class prejudices as in gender. Hence, the movement relied upon different tactics than did the others, and it drew its inspiration more from **traditions** of race and class justice than from gender. Indeed, rather than attack **the** gender status quo, at times the household-worker movement used traditional gender values to justify their assaults upon the oppressive norms under which they **worked**.⁷³

Nevertheless, all three movements had remarkably similar goals. **Like** flight attendants and **clericals**, household workers sought to upgrade and professionalize their occupation. They wanted their skills as cooks, care-takers, and cleaners recognized. They sought dignity and respect for their person as well as concrete economic benefits. And at the heart of the movement was the effort to transform the nature of interpersonal relations at work.

Household workers, however, **were** much further from achieving these goals in the 1960s and early 1970s than were **flight** attendants and **clericals**. Household workers were denied the basic statutory protections governing wages, hours, and **working** conditions afforded other employees. The average yearly income of household employees was below **poverty** level, and many domestics still worked from sunup to sundown. Moreover, despite the formal end of slavery some one hundred years earlier, the relationship between mistress and maid was often reminiscent of slavery. As a worker in the big house, the domestic still was seen as part of the white family, despite her **own** outside household. Her wages and hours were often arranged informally, **and many** household employees were expected to work long hours out of loyalty and love for the white family. As one NCHE official asserted, "In no other industry is the modern day worker so completely at the mercy of her **employer**."⁷⁴

Like clericals, household workers wanted their tasks and their compensation **more** formalized. "We want to be treated **like** an employee," explained one maid. "Everyone tells you you're in the family and then they won't **even** give you a holiday." They wanted compensation in cash rather than in gifts of old clothes and food; they wanted their job to be **defined** as a set of discrete tasks that they themselves could manage. Like other service workers, they wanted occupational criteria that revolved around objective **skills** rather than the **more** subjective criteria of personality and the right **attitude**.⁷⁵

The "right attitude" for household workers differed from that expected of **flight** attendants and **clericals**. Domestics had to meet the psychosocial needs of female employers rather than those of male bosses or customers. Female bosses did not need sexually attractive subordinates; indeed, they preferred older, more matronly figures with whom one could develop intimacy. At the same **time** and in part due to this emotional connection, household employees were **expected** to reinforce the unequal power dynamic by displaying deference. Domestics became adept at "learning people," as one expressed it. They knew when to be invisible, when to be best friend and spiritual guide, and when childlike obedience was required.

The consequences of “**misreading**” one’s employer or “**sassin**” could be severe. Maids who strayed from the familiar scripts found themselves without a job or worse. When Dorothy **Bolden** refused an order to wash dishes and walked out, her employer had her arrested for insubordination. “They said I was mental because I talked back. . I was in jail five days.” She was only released after her uncle hired two psychiatrists who testified to her mental **health**.⁷⁶

Household workers wanted to be adults, to be treated with “the respect due any human being”; they objected to the “common **use** of **first** names, and uninvited familiarity by employers.”⁷⁷ They wanted to replace the oppressive **one-way personalism** with a relationship that was “a two-way street,” one with “promptness, integrity, and courtesy” from both **parties**.⁷⁸

The dilemma for the reform movement was how to bring about these changes and push domestic work, “the last holdout against modernization,” into the twentieth **century**.⁷⁹ A range of answers emerged. Some groups, such as a statewide organization in Massachusetts, focused primarily on extending state protective statutes to household **workers**.⁸⁰ Others, like the Detroit Household Workers Organization (HWO) and the Atlanta-based National Domestic Workers Union (NDWU), acted as a combination “lobby group, training program, placement service, and grievance **committee**.”⁸¹

Dorothy **Bolden**, head of the Atlanta-based **NDWU**, spent much of her time staffing the union’s employment placement service, accepting requests from employers who would agree to abide by the union’s wages and **working** conditions. She also **leafleted** maids at bus stops to spread the word about the new standards: fifteen dollars a day plus carfare. “**After** we set the price,” she explained, “you had to teach these women how to ask for it. You had to **learn** how to communicate with the lady and tell her about the cost of living.” In their career center program, the **NDWU** offered “human relations **training** on how to **handle** employee-employer relationships including ‘rap’ sessions with employer volunteers.” The **NDWU**, like the Detroit **HWO**, sought to improve the bargaining power of individual women by fostering self-esteem, creating “an awareness of the value of their labor,” and upgrading household workers’ skills and **marketability**.⁸²

In 1970, **Bolden** initiated one of the **NDWU**’s most successful projects, what she called “Maid’s Honor Day.” Maid’s Honor Day quickly **turned** into a **well-**attended annual Atlanta affair with distinguished women speakers such as Mrs. Herman **Talmadge**, Mrs. Lillian Carter, and Mrs. Andrew Young. Yet as with National Secretaries Day, the affair and its rituals became contested **terrain**. This annual occasion and the rhetoric surrounding it clearly reveal the gulf between the new, less demeaning norms advocated by many household employees and the older paternalistic practices of white employers.

Bolden organized the **event** with the aim of recognizing “those who toil in the home without recognition” and honoring “outstanding women in the field of domestic labor for their professional skills, great common knowledge,” and their ability to “mastermind two households.”⁸³ Despite **Bolden**’s intentions, however, the annual affair became for many whites an occasion to reinforce their own

expectations of loyalty, **sacrifice**, and **self-abnegation from** their maids. Atlanta's **mayor** established July 15, 1970, as "Maid's Day" and called on city dwellers to honor their maids because of their "admirable record of devotion and loyalty," their "**significant** and notable contribution to family life," and their assistance in giving "mothers and other women **more** opportunity to add their creativity and energy to Atlanta's **growth**."⁸⁴ Presumably it was white mothers who had been freed from the home and white family life that had been sustained.

The thousands of letters sent to **Bolden** between 1970 and 1977 **from** employers nominating maids for the award reveal the family-like bonds between maid and mistress in all their excruciating contradictions. Letter writers describe their maids as "a very dear part of **us**," "a devoted family friend," a "second mother," and "a loving and sincere person who always puts 'her people' [referring to the family of the employer] ahead of herself." Other letters **praise** maids for their spirituality and **self-sacrifice**, their emotional nurturing, and their loving care. One explained simply: "She's remarkable I love her. I'm **so** proud to call her **mine!**"⁸⁵

Bolden herself and many of the other domestic workers who participated in this ritual also claimed for themselves the role of stand-in mother, spiritual advisor, and **caretaker**.⁸⁶ Yet at the **same time**, they rejected the possessive and demeaning overtones in many of the employer accolades, and they used these **well-worn** maternal roles to challenge the status quo rather than reinforce it. As Patricia Collins argues, mothering is a **source** of power and self-esteem in the African-American **community**.⁸⁷ Moreover, the point for **Bolden** was to honor the domestic work of these women in their own **community** as well as in the white family, a nuance almost completely lost on the white community.

Womanhood itself could also be a source of pride and a resource in resistance. As **Bolden** explained, "I was **born** poor, grew up poor, and I am still poor, but I am not going to bow down. I am still a **woman**."⁸⁸ As was also **true** for the Memphis sanitation men who carried signs simply saying, "I Am a Man," for household workers, traditional gender ideology could be deployed to undercut racial and class domination.

But not everyone in the household-workers movement embraced **Bolden's maternalist** rhetoric. Neither did they see an emphasis on "**self-sacrifice**" and "love" as the best tactic for improving the lot of household workers. Indeed, for many, it was precisely the "'personal' aspect of the existing relationship" that had to be eliminated. Real change could only come through unionization, Edith Sloan of the NCHE asserted, **or** by imposing a third party—a contractor—between the employer and employee. **Otherwise**, she promised to loud cheers at the **first** national conference of domestic workers in 1971, "'Madam' is going to have to clean her own house and cook and **serve** her own meals because everyone is going to **quit**."⁸⁹

By the end of the 1970s, the NCHE and most of its **affiliates** were in decline, but the movement could claim some crucial victories. The lobbying of grassroots domestic workers combined with pressure from female legislators such as Shirley Chisholm, **Yvonne** Burke, and Patsy Mink forced the inclusion of do-

mestic workers under the **Fair** Labor Standards Act provisions for the first time in 1974. A few states also added domestic workers to their minimum wage, unemployment insurance, and workers' compensation **coverage**.⁹⁰ In addition, although wages for household employees remained unconscionably low, significant economic gains were made in some key regional labor **markets**.⁹¹ And, as Geraldine Roberts, longtime civil-rights and later household-worker activist explained in 1977, "We thought that we needed them to make a living, but we learned that they needed us, that we were important."⁹²

Although changing the ideology surrounding the work and **redefining** its psychology at the "point of personal contact" proved formidable indeed, the nature of the employee-employer relationship continued to transform. While many private domestic jobs still involve the oppressive one-on-one personalism and deference of the past, household cleaning is increasingly done by teams of workers from agencies or by individual workers who contract on a fee-for-service **basis**.⁹³ Moreover, many of the domestic functions once performed by individual women in the home have shifted into the commercial realm. **African-American** women in particular moved into these newly commercialized "domestic" jobs of hotel maid, home health care aide, janitor, day care and kitchen **worker**.⁹⁴ And, during the late 1970s and 1980s, they and their coworkers built strong unions in many of these "public household" occupations. Indeed, some of the most important union breakthroughs in the 1980s occurred precisely in these **sectors**.⁹⁵

Conclusion

How then are these movements to be characterized, and how do they expand our understandings of the history of work and collective action? Arguably, one could gather these stories under the broad rubric of a belated modernization. After all, like industrial workers of the 1930s and 1940s, they too wanted to do away with the feudal, paternalistic trappings of their work and to depersonalize employment relations. These stories from the female-dominated service sector also suggest, however, that women workers themselves were divided over how best to reform the personal **encounters** so central to their work lives and that employers may be more reluctant to depersonalize women's jobs than **men's**.

One might also put these movements in a class framework. For in many ways, women service workers in the 1970s sought to **realize** the familiar demands of organized workers. All three movements desired a more equitable return on their labor and more control over their **working** conditions. Many also argued that dignity, respect, and enhanced status would follow once these changes were wrested from employers.

But neither of these frameworks captures the soul of these movements, the spirit that animated these women and sparked their rebellion. For fundamentally, these movements were about **degendering** women's jobs, about dismantling the gendered structures and norms around which these occupations had been created. In short, **flight attendants**, **clericals**, and household workers sought

escape from the gender constraints of their work. They wanted to be treated as **human** beings and as "real workers," not as sex objects, office wives, or "**mammies**." Women service workers subjected these age-old scripts to public scrutiny and brought them into the arena of labor-management negotiation.

Race and class norms **infuse** women's jobs as well and intersect with gender expectations in complicated ways. Flight attendants, often young, white single women, faced heightened **sexualization** at work, but it was tempered by competing notions of flight attendants as respectable and potential marriage partners. Similarly, the elite of the clerical work force, secretaries and administrative assistants, also benefited from being white and having some college education. In contrast, household workers, mainly poor women of color, had no such shields. Dismantling the "**mummy**" stereotype with its expectations of self-sacrifice and deference required an assault against multiple ideologies of **domination**.

Of course, men's jobs bear the mark of gender. But for most men, gendered labor has meant higher wages, status, and more autonomy. Thus, dismantling gender constructs **has** not been a prime concern of collective action among men. Indeed, typically men have relied upon the dominant gender ideology as an aid to their advancement.

In the unions of the **future** just as in the scholarship of the present, the differences between men's and women's jobs and the differences in **their** reform ideologies and practices must be confronted. The old industrial vision of one, big union based on class identity and class solidarity must give way to a new ideal, one in which psychological and cultural as well as economic issues are paramount, one in which control over one's emotional terrain is as central as control over one's mind and body. And, ultimately, this new ideal must recognize the multiple constructs of domination and the variety of collective movements that **will** arise in response.

NOTES

1. For an introduction to this literature, see **Daniel** Nelson, *Workers and Managers: Origins of the Twentieth-Century Factory System in the United States, 1880-1920* (Madison, 1995).

2. See, for example, **Lizabeth** Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York, 1990); **David** Brody, *Workers in Industrial America* (New York, 1993), 48-120.

3. **Susan** Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana, 1986).

4. **Dorothy Sue** Cobble, *Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana, 1991).

5. *Ibid.*; **Stephen** Norwood, *Labor's Flaming Youth: Telephone Operators and Worker Militancy, 1878-1923* (Urbana, 1990); **Marjorie** Murphy, *Blackboard Unions: The AFT and the NEA, 1900-1980* (Ithaca, 1990); **Tera W.** Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom': Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge, 1997).

6. **Philip S.** Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement: From World War I to the Present* (New York, 1980), 560-62; **David** Plotke, "Women Clerical Workers and Trade Unionism: Interview with **Karen** Nussbaum," *Socialist Review* 49 (1980):151-59.

7. **Women's** Bureau of the US Department of Labor, *1975 Handbook on Women Workers, Bulletin* 297 (Washington, DC, 1975), 96-98, 276; Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Perspectives on*

Working Women: A Databook, Bulletin 2080 (Washington, DC, 1980), 10–11; Barbara Gutek, "Women in Clerical Work;" in *Women Working: Theories and Facts in Perspective*, ed. Ann Stromberg and Shirley Harkess (Mountain View, CA, 1988), W-28. Women also accounted for between seventy-five and eighty percent of all "clerical and kindred workers"—a broad occupational category including postal clerks, computer operators, bookkeepers, bank tellers, and others.

8. For the leading occupations among women historically, consult Rosalyn Baxandall, Linda Gordon, and Susan Reverby, eds., *America's Working Women: A Documentary History* (New York, 1976), 406–7; Women's Bureau, *1975 Handbook*, 96.

9. On World War Two, see Julia Kirk Blackwelder, *Now Hiring: The Feminization of Work in the United States, 1900–1995* (College Station, 1997), 153; on the 1970s, see Stuart H. Garfinkle, "Occupations of Women and Black Workers, 1962–1974," *Monthly Labor Review* 98 (1975):25.

10. Women's Bureau of the US Department of Labor, "Women Private Household Workers Fact Sheet," (Washington, DC, 1970); Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, 560–63.

11. For an overview, see William Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II* (New York, 1991), 146–246.

12. Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Recapturing Working-Class Feminist Union women in the Postwar Era," in *Not Just Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia, 1994), 57–83; Kathleen Laughlin, "Backstage Activism: The Policy Initiatives of the Women's Bureau in the Postwar Era, 1945–1970," (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1993).

13. Dorothy Sue Cobble, "The Other Women's Movement: Lost Visions of Work and Equality in Modern America" (manuscript in progress).

14. Nancy Gabin, *Feminism in the Labor Movement: Women and the United Auto Workers, 1935–1975* (Ithaca, 1990); Dennis Deslippe, "Organized Labor, National Politics, and Second Wave Feminism in the US, 1965–1975," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 49 (1996):143–65; Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1992), 217; Venus Green, "Race and Technology: African-America, Women in the Bell System, 1945–1980," *Technology and Culture* 36 (1995):128–36.

15. Nancy Maclean, "The Hidden History of Affirmative Action: Working Women's Struggles in the 1970s and the Gender of Class," *Feminist Studies* 25 (1999):43–78.

111. Diane Balsler, *Sisterhood and Solidarity: Feminism and Labor in Modern Times* (Boston, 1987), 151–210.

17. Paula Kane, *Sex Objects in the Sky: A Personal Account* (Chicago, 1974).

18. On the history of flight attendants, see Georgia Panter Nielsen, *From Sky Girl to Flight Attendant Women and the Making of a Union* (Ithaca, 1982); Frieda Rozen, "Turbulence in the Air: The Autonomy Movement in the Flight Attendant Unions," (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1988); Kathleen Barry, "'Coffee, Tea-But Not Me!': Stewardesses for Women's Rights: Flight Attendant's Construction of a Feminist Professional Identity in the 1970s" (manuscript, New York University History Department, 1996); Lindsay Van Gelder, "Coffee, Tea, or Me," *Ms.* (1973):86–91, 105; Kathy Lukas, "The Evolution of the Flight Attendant in the United States," n.d. [c.1980], Box 2, Folder 52, Stewardesses for Women's Rights Records, 1963–1987, Tamiment Library, Wagner Archives, New York University, New York [hereafter cited as SFWR Records]; Independent Union of Flight Attendants Collection (Pan Am), Tamiment Library, Wagner Archives, New York University hereafter IUFA Collection].

19. The reference to 'personhood' is from Cynthia Glacken letter, October 1, 1975, Box 2, Folder 50, SFWR Records.

20. Sandra Jarrell, "Keynote Address at First SFWR Conference," *Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 2 (May 1973), Box 2, Folder 51, SFWR Records.

21. See note 18; quotes from Kathleen Heenan, "Fighting the Fly-Me Airlines," *The Civil Liberties Review* (1976–1977):48–53; Anne Sweeney, "The To... of the Screwed," *Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 5 (May 1974), 6–7, Box 2, Folder 52, SFWR Records; Frank J. Prial, "The Great Girl Shortage in the Sky," *New York World Telegram*, August 25, 1965 (part 1), 25, and August 26, 1965 (part 2), 17.

22. Betty Liddick, "Tail Slogan Hits Bottom, Say Stews," *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1994, in Box 2, Folder 64, SFWR Records.

23. Nielsen, *From Sky Girl to Flight Attendant*, 117–36; Rozen, "Turbulence in the Air."

24. *Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1973), Box 2, Folder 51, SFWR Records.
25. Box 1, Folders 7, 15-17, 22-25 and Box 2, Folders 51-54, SFWR Records; unidentified newsclipping, Box 2, Folder 64, SFWR Records; Ricki Fulman, "Get Off My Back, Don', 'Fly Me,'" *New York Daily News*, September 13, 1974.
26. In SFWR Records, see in particular Carol Ivy, "Stews Organized Against Sexism," Box 2, Folder 64; Henrietta Leith, "'Sexpot' Stereotype Angers Stews," unidentified undated clipping, Box 2, Folder 64; *Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 9 (September-October 1974), 1-2, Box 2, Folder 52; letter from Cynthia Glacken to *Time* magazine, February 14, 1974, Box 1, Folder 22. See also "Coffee, Tea, or Tails," *Newsweek*, February 11, 1974, 10.
27. Press release from Association of Flight Attendants, June 25, 1974, Box 1, Folder 22, SFWR Records; Association of Flight Attendants Papers, Dallas Collection, 1952-1980, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.
28. Prial, "The Great Girl Shortage," 25; Ed Cray, "The Barbie Dolls Revolt," *Air Fair* (April 1975), 16-19, Box 2, Folder 61, SFWR Records.
29. Box 1, Folders 15-17, SFWR Records.
30. Box 1, Folders 30-40; *Newsweek*, (March 18), 1974, Box 2, Folder 64, SFWR Records.
31. Box 2, Folder 64, SFWR Records.
32. Box 2, Box 63, SFWR Records; interview with Kathleen Heenan and Cindy Hounsell, SFWR Records. For Rueck quote, see Carolyn Childers, "Stews Challenge Airlines," *Christian Science Monitor*, n.d. [c. 1974-5], Box 2, Folder 64, SFWR Records. See also Nielsen, *From Sky Girl to Flight Attendant*, 117.
33. For the historical transformation of clerical work, see Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1974); Margery Davis, *Women's Place Is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia, 1982); and Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (Baltimore, 1994). For analysis of more contemporary conditions, see Jean Teppel, *Not Servants, Not Machines* (Boston, 1976); Mary Benet, *The Secretarial Ghetto* (New York, 1973).
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37. Margie Albert, "Something New in the Women's Movement," *New York Times*, December 12, 1973, op-ed page; *Congressional Record*, December 12, 1973, 41255.
38. Albert, "Something New"; Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, 557.
39. Dorothy Sue Cobble and Alice Kessler-Harris, "Interview with Karen Nussbaum," in *Talking Leadership: Conversations with Powerful Women*, ed. Mary S. Hartman (New Brunswick, NJ, 1999), 135-55; John Hoerr, *We Can't Eat Prestige: The Women Who Organized Harvard* (Philadelphia, 1997), 47.
40. For a fuller discussion of the various organizations and their issues, see Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, 556-57; Nancy Seifer and Barbara Wertheimer, "New Approaches to Collective Power: Four Working Women's Organizations," in *Women Organizing*, ed. Bernice Cummings and Victoria Schuck (Metuchen, NJ, 1979), 152-83; Judith Sealander and Dorothy Smith, "The Rise and Fall of Feminist Organizations in the 1970s: Dayton as a Case Study," *Feminist Studies* 12 (1986):321-41; Tepperman, *Not Servants*, 63-84; Roberta Wyper, "Secretaries Dictate New Images," *Worklife* (September 1976), 29-31; Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York, 1989), 299-300; "Rebellion Behind the Typewriter," *Business Week* (April 28, 1980), 86, 89-90; Plotke, "Women Clerical Workers," , 151-59.
41. Hoerr, *We Can't Eat Prestige*, 47-51.
42. Cobble and Kessler-Harris, "Interview with Karen Nussbaum," 138, 140.
43. Hoerr, *We Can't Eat Prestige*, 52; Tepperman, *Not Servants*, 2, 15, 63; Joyce Moscato, "Hard Day At the Office: The Pitfalls and Promise of Clerical Organizing," *Union* (December 1988-January 1989), 22-26.
44. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York, 1977), 69-97. quote on page 73.

45. For quote, see Wyper, "Secretaries Dictate New Images," 29-31. See also Tepperman, *Not Servants*, 40.84; Cobble and Kessler-Harris, "Interview with Karen Nussbaum."
46. Hoerr, *You Can't Eat Prestige*, 52.
47. "Rebellion Behind the Typewriter," 86, 89-90; Cobble and Kessler-Harris, "Interview with Karen Nussbaum"; Plotke, "Women Clerical Workers"; Tepperman, *Not Servants*, 81; Evans, *Born for Liberty*, 299-300; 9to5 and the National Association of Working Women, *Anniversary Celebration Commemorative Journal* (New York, 1988).
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49. "Rebellion Behind the Typewriter," 86, 89-90; Sealander and Smith, "Rise and Fall," 246-52; Cobble and Kessler-Harris, "Interview with Karen Nussbaum," 141.
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54. Susan Silver, "Women in the Workplace: A Variety of Viewpoints," *Monthly Labor Review* (1974):85-89; M. C. King, "Black Women's Breakthrough into Clerical Work: A, Occupational Tipping Model," *Journal of Economic Issues* 27 (1993):1097-1125.
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56. *AFL-CIO News*, March 7, 1981; Tepperman, *Not Servants*, 89.
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60. Cobble, "Willmar, Minnesota, Bank Strike," 571-74; Richard Perras, "Effective Responses to Union Organizing Attempts in the Banking Industry," *Labor Law Journal* 35 (1984):92-102; Sealander and Smith, "The Rise and Fall of Feminist Organizations in the 1970s," 244-46.
61. Moscato, "Hard Day At the Office," 25.
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63. Hurd, "Organizing and Representing Clerical Workers," 319-20.
64. Moscato, "Hard Day At the Office," 25.
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65. Quote from Darry A. Sragow, "Taking the M-y Out of Housework," *Civil Rights Digest* (1971):34-38.
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