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Double Issue: 3.3 & 4.1

*The Scholar & Feminist XXX:*

*Past Controversies, Present Challenges, Future Feminisms*

2005 Conference Transcripts

PANEL 2

WOMEN AND RESISTANCE:  
GRASSROOTS AND GLOBAL ACTIVISM

Temma Kaplan: This morning, as we spoke about traditions at "The Scholar and the Feminist," one we omitted was our tradition of starting everything late. And so, we are keeping up the old bonds of this. I want to welcome you to the afternoon session on "Women and Resistance: Grassroots to Global Activism."

And I also wanted to reiterate our invitation for everybody to come to the reception at four o'clock, or probably it would be closer to 4:30, upstairs on the fourth floor. And I would also like to remind you that Blue Stockings will be selling books at that time as well, so you have a chance to read a lot of things that you've probably been looking for and haven't been able to find elsewhere.

It's really my great pleasure to be here this afternoon with some really old friends, and some new friends from politics and life itself. And what we're going to do is a little bit different from some of the morning sessions. What we will do

is, I'll introduce everybody in the order we are here now, [Bios are available at <http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/sfxxx/contribu.htm>] and then they will talk to you for five or ten minutes.

And then we'll raise some questions, the intersections of what they are talking about. I hope you are all with us, and since this is a room filled with grassroots activists and people who moved in and out of a variety of grassroots movements, we want to leave a lot of time for real conversation among all of us.

Kumkum Sangari: It is my pleasure to be here today and address an audience that I have certainly not addressed before. It's my pleasure to address this audience today and I'm really delighted to be here. I haven't really been at all active in the American women's movement.

I've been here a few months and so, what I shall speak from is my experience of the Indian women's movement in which I have been involved since 1979. Maybe the things that might be of interest here would be to understand that the women's movement in India -- it should be movements, because it's really very diverse.

There are urban women, there are rural women, there are working class women, there are various kinds of groups. There are what I will call the women funds[?] of party political

organizations. And then there are what are called the autonomous women's organizations. And then there have recently been what are called non-governmental organizations which are increasingly funding work on women's issues.

The other thing which is also very different in India, compared to the U.S. is that within the U.S. the women's movement very quickly turned into women's studies departments in the universities. This hardly happened in India. Some centers of research came up, but it never became a full-time university occupation.

So in that sense, even doing research on women in the university and teaching about women was activism for people like me, because it wasn't part of the syllabus. It wasn't mandated, as it were. It was something that you sort of subversively pushed into various sorts of agendas.

Again, it's very hard to talk about the nature of activism without actually seeing what the shape of the movement itself has been. So I will quickly tell you the five or six major mobilizing points, beginning in the late '70s, the second phase of the women's movement.

The first phase had been part of nationalism and anti-colonial, anti-imperialist struggle against British colonization. The second one which came up in the 1970s really

was sitting back and saying -- yes, we did become independent, but then what happened?

And I think that has been a classic scenario in many, many countries. Interestingly, as well, this second phase was really centered on violence. And most of the issues, such as the high incidence of rape of poor women, custodial rape, dowry debt, widow immolation -- were in fact, the central targets of street organizing in those days.

This type of organizing included standing in front of the homes of people where a daughter-in-law had been burned, with placards; and so on and so forth. Later, of course, this aspect of the movement broadened out to take on other forms of domestic violence, which included marital rape or prohibition of marriage of choice, abuse of girls and so on.

The interesting part of this was that even from those days, perhaps, it was important to take on differences in castes and class divisions among women. It was very hard to formulate to a single category called women, because in fact, much of this violence in many cases was related to forms of social stratification -- so you couldn't pretend.

As the women's movement expanded, it joined with other movements such as peasant struggles over rights to land for women, which was formulated in a way that was very different

from bourgeois property rights. So here, the women's movement had to actually take in issues like agrarian relations.

So you see how difficult it was for us to ever separate out women's issues from the wider political economy. Then there were survival and livelihood issues, which were taken both inside trade unions and in the now growing, unorganized sector - - which led into wider labor relations. Women's groups would find themselves working side by side with trade unions, as well as inside trade unions. They took on issues of health and reproduction which centered on control of women's fertility, and they fought against son-preference and the pre-birth elimination of daughters.

Now, what was quite important here was that the whole question of birth control and safe contraception was, on the one hand, hedged in by the Indian state's very autocratic family planning measures; and on the other hand, had to resist the dumping of unsafe contraceptives by transnationals in Third World countries, including India. What became pivotal were critiques of the state, as well as of the transnational economy and various infrastructure issues.

Then came another area of struggle, which is classic for most Third World countries, which is the struggle over legal reform. As some of you will know, legal reform attained an almost exaggerated importance in countries that were colonized

because the legal domain came to standing for various forms of power and inequality, at the same time.

Here there has of course been a massive debate because some feminists have advocated just abandoning the legal domain all together, since it's so tainted by a colonial history and so deeply implicated in various forms of power.

On the other hand, there has also been another interesting difference here, which is to say that it's all very well to fight for a good law and get it. But who is going to implement it? And will it ever be implemented? And so on. So then the focus has shifted to issues of implementation, which are really infrastructure and civil society issues.

So even here there has been a very complex formation of the relationship between the state, the law and the civil society. Again, the discourse of legality, strangely enough -- which was sort of fairly threatened and almost actually abandoned by many feminists -- took on a new importance once we got a Hindu rightwing government six years ago.

Because when you get a neo-fascist government in power, then the rule of the law seems to be an antidote to their lawlessness. So many of us find ourselves returning towards civil liberties and democratic rights platforms; and some of us had never abandoned them anyway. So that has been a kind of, another kind of strategy.

Then comes this very interesting question of the state. Now, the women's movement has actually had a dual relationship to the state. And this has informed more sorts of activism. On the one hand, the state is an adversary on many, many issues such as the family planning, two-child law or custodian violence by the police or the army, or its refusal to actually honor any form of state security and welfare for women and the poor in general. In many, many ways the state is an adversary.

But on the other hand, women have also worked inside the state in the sense that, asking for legal reform and the legal reforms that we have had, in some sense, has been work within the parameters of the state. Now, it was possible actually to have this double relationship with the state quite easily, until a few years ago.

Because the state seemed to be a carryover of the new nation, the new independent nation which was going to build a new egalitarian society, which was going to be free, and so on. But I think of where the question of working with the state really came into severe question was with the inauguration of a rightwing government in the center. Because then it really became increasingly difficult.

Then, I think I'd also like to point out that the women's movement has been very deeply involved in what are called communal forms of violence in India. Communal -- meaning, based

on religious differences. And almost all women's groups have united in taking a stand against this.

But at the same time, I think, women's groups are beginning more and more to recognize, since the '80s, that religious differences between women and caste differences between women will mean autonomous forms of organizing. But in hopes that we might have, and maybe even now do have, a very wide number of groups which are made on different lines, but which can come together on issues.

For instance, when the huge pogrom in 2002 took place in Gujarat against Muslims. Almost all groups, regardless of their differences, their priorities, came together on the issue and stayed together for over a year. So in some sense, what we have is a kind of unspoken coalition politics.

When something of a crisis order occurs, people get together, and then they go back to pursuing their own particular issues, whatever they give particular importance to. Now, I'd like to conclude with making four observations on what this kind of activism has involved, and the difficulty that it is faced with.

The first wave of feminist politics in India really, as I said, was a nation building. The second wave, to which I belong, relied on the politics of exposure. We assumed that if we were able to understand why things happen, and explain this



adequately to people of our own age and those younger than us and those older than us -- things would change. So there was a kind of easy correlation made between exposure and social transformation --which, in fact, hasn't really worked. The problem is partly because of the way that every issue has been taken up by the media and effectively "journalized." Every newspaper will give you an expose; a TV program will give you an expose, in some sense.

The second thing is -- the debit/credit sheet. How do we decide how much we've succeeded and how much we didn't? At times, of course, I feel like a total failure but then, that's not how one should put it in conferences.

(laughter)

But I have a feeling that it's actually very hard to do a debit/credit sheet of the women's movement in India. Because the failures of the state and the structural changes that have come about with new and liberal policies, are actually pulling women backwards so rapidly and so ruthlessly that this can hardly be the failure of the women's movement.

Do you know what I mean? And I think here what is really happening is that literacy is getting affected. With privatization of education, for instance, in the university in which I teach or used to teach, anyway, until a few months ago - what happens is that lower middle-class persons quickly withdraw

their daughters from education because if they are going to have to pay and the state will not subsidize it, then they will only pay for sons.

So this is really walking backwards. Again, I think the same thing is happening with agrarian reforms. We have levels of hunger in India today which are the highest in the past 55 years, almost since after the British left. And here it is entirely a question of structural adjustment programs; buying into false promises and generally becoming entrapped into the world economic order.

And there are rebounding effects on medical care, on child care and so on. So some of what may look like failures of the women's movement are actually coming out of a wider political economy. On the other hand, they are also coming out of the conservative ideologies of neo-liberalism.

We now have a strong anti-feminism. We have new control over domestic labor -- because if the state is going to withdraw its promised provision of welfare, then who will fill the gap of child care, looking after the old? Women, obviously. Who will be the buffer against unemployment? Women's labor, obviously.

So you find actually, a new reformulation of patriarchal control, on the one hand -- side by side with glamorous images of women as consumers of the new world market of goods, on the

other. So in some sense, the increase in violence against women in the past decade, I actually attribute to this peculiar kind of formation that is coming up.

The penultimate point that I want to make is the way the language of leftwing socialist, secular feminism has actually also been seized a great deal by the Hindu rightwing in India.

There was a time when everybody said -- women need to have more representation in Parliament; women need to have more representation in local government. And the whole thing hinged on numbers and quantity.

I think that now is completely misguided. I think the question really is -- what kind of women? With which politics? What will they do when they are in power?

(applause)

So somewhere there, then, I think that the qualitative nature and the ethical nature of political affiliation now completely supercedes thinking of women numerically. Because there are as many political affiliations amongst women as exist today.

You find women on the spectrum of the political right who are anti-minority and anti-Muslim, anti-democratic, anti-feminism -- anti all that we would value in a room like this. So in that sense, I think that simply fighting for representation of women -- which is something, by the way, that

is also being propelled very heavily by the new U.N. system -- does not work.

And I think this strategy is producing a new class of compliance, made up of women who can manage very well with the new bureaucratic language of gender, which is not necessarily a feminist language. And I think this we see growing in India today.

So let me conclude with the whole question of the single issue. A couple of months ago, somebody came into my office in New Delhi and wanted me to join a lobby against the pre-birth elimination of daughters. As this conversation unfolded, it turned out that the [UN??? inaudible] has actually a law and gender program in India and many countries in the world where it teaches women in these countries to lobby with the government for the particular issue that they are interested in.

So I said to her -- well, everything in my experience seems to lead from one issue to multiple issues. Everything in my experience in the women's movement seems to say that I might begin with one small form of injustice, but I find myself facing a wider, interlocking structural system. So why should I return to lobbying for one thing?

And clearly this was supposed to be an educative program for Third World women who, for some reason, are unable to understand how to lobby about a single issue. So leaving aside

the politics of patronage here, which I think are self-evident, I think what is more crucial is how depoliticizing the single-issue platform can be within a women's movement like India which in fact has found itself constantly pulled towards wider forms of labor movements, anti-imperialism, looking at political relations as a whole, the political economy; joining up with other kinds of groups and so on.

So in some sense, I think this, which I think has been one of the trends of the movement is very likely now to be under, it's likely to be eroded by precisely these kinds of non-governmental organizational formations that are coming up, as well as these new forms of teaching that are coming up. Thank you.

(applause)

Jennifer Kern: Good afternoon. It's great to be back at Barnard College. This conference is about returning to the roots of struggle and resistance as activists, and it's really wonderful to be back to the place where I learned a lot about activism.

And in the spirit of looking to past activists, I would like to dedicate this talk to a role model of mine that I met at Barnard College. I actually met her at the Scholar and the Feminist Conference in 1986. I had recently become disabled in

a car accident and was still in the rehab program and I came to this conference with my mom.

And I went to a workshop on women and disability. And it was one of those "aha" moments that we've all had that really can change a life. It changed mine. But I realized that, though I was a new feminist and I was studying women's studies in my other college, and just waking up as a young woman of 19 - - I was now in a new constituency.

And though there were big sisters to be found and women who had been working on the issues for a long time, it was a moment of realizing -- I joined this constituency and there's a lot of work to do, so let's get busy. And Julie Marsteller was the Dean for Disabled Students at that time. And she's primarily responsible for Barnard being as inclusive to people with disabilities as it is today.

So this talk today is dedicated to her memory. And I miss her a lot.

Most grassroots movements, in my experience, start from necessity when enough people empower each other to take action against oppression. Lots of us are parts of lots of groups that are taking action. And I want to just give a broad, thumbnail sketch of some of the activism that's happening in the global disability rights movement.

Just some background -- there are approximately 600 million people with disabilities worldwide. Roughly one in ten. And as we live longer, it's quite likely that most of us will acquire a disability at some point. Disability rights activists are involved in a wide variety of activities. Women in Uganda build wheelchairs. In Bolivia psychiatric survivors are using international law to secure the right to live in the community rather than in hospitals. That's also happening in lots of other places.

In the U.S. there's a group called "Not Dead Yet" -- some of you might know of. Activists who are protesting things such as "Million Dollar Baby" -- I won't say anything else about, in case people haven't seen the movie.

But in general, they are also resisting the proliferation of assisted suicide legislation that threatens people with disabilities because it can often operate on myths about disability and fear of our lives of difference; and of our various tubes, either for feeding or breathing or drinking or eating.

There's also the way in which each of lives our lives so as to make a difference in the world around us. I'd like to just reference my decision as a single disabled woman to have a child, or any disabled woman who decides to have a child, when the presumption that to be a disabled woman is to be childlike

or dependent, in need or not able -- which were the same stereotypes that women have faced in many other areas, not necessarily health.

But when I sometimes remember, I think -- oh, I'm not doing political work at this very moment and I'm just rolling around my neighborhood with my baby, I think, "Well, from the looks I'm getting, I guess I'll just say that this is political work." Every diaper -- political action.

(laughter)

So everywhere, people with disabilities and allies are recognizing at conferences like this, that in spite of internal and external oppression -- and especially when the two come together -- our voices are needed; our bodies are vital to the struggle whose time has come; it is now, and will continue to be.

Since 1984, when the last conference on this theme took place at Barnard, the disability rights movement has really come of age. Lots of individuals were doing a lot of work for a long time, but since 1984, there has been great progress.

Most notably, on a state level, there's been the securing of legislation such as the "Americans with Disabilities Act" or some form of legislation in at least 55 countries and counting. The political and legal reality has shifted as well. There's



been a paradigm shift from the medical model to a more rights-based model.

And again, I use myself as an example. In the medical model, (I have to read this because I can't quite bring myself to think of it myself) I would be called "a wheelchair-bound quadriplegic unable to climb stairs or to ambulate." Okay? That's one of the versions. In the civil rights model, I'm -- a wheelchair-riding member of a protected class.

Lots of people's activism has been responsible for ensuring the equal access to buildings, such as this building with ramps such as this. I just want to note that last time I was at the Scholar and Feminist conference a few years ago, my mentor and I were here on a panel; we were going to meet in this room but we didn't because there was no ramp onto the stage. So, this is a small victory. And a very beautiful ramp, I might say.

(applause)

So it's great now to be able, not only to get into the room, but to get onto the podium. That's one of the effects of being part of a protected class. Unfortunately, disabled people are responsible in large part for the enforcement of various laws that do exist. It is one thing to pressure states to have legislation and another thing to ensure enforcement. And if it means going out in front of busses, to make sure Greyhound was

accessible, then that's what it's going to be -- or whatever the action is.

I think later we are going to talk about some of the co-opting of movements. Sometimes legislation can co-opt a movement when we feel like the victory is over because we have a law signed. There's a big ceremony in the Rose Garden. Well, that, as many of us know, is the beginning.

So the shift from a medical model to a civil rights model is happening all over the world. It's being played out on the U.N. level as well, when the International Convention on Disability is currently being crafted -- painstakingly, I might add. Although if anyone is looking for something to be active about, I'm sure there is no shortage of issues.

But the U.S. is refusing to participate in the crafting of the convention. But what's important about a convention -- and when you talk to legislators, you can tell them -- that for all the countries that don't have a model of people with disabilities that isn't based on the medical model, and don't have a law to work with -- international conventions are really something they can point to. They can say -- look, we're part of the international community and this is an enforceable law. So it isn't just a piece of paper; it's really what is there to work with.

So my belief is that the creative struggles of people with disabilities are unstoppable -- because they are coming together and finding each other. But, huge issues still remain, particularly economic issues. None of the advances is a panacea against poverty, lack of adequate health care, education, access to jobs, political power. Those remain the key issues.

And that's really where the work begins. I want to talk for a minute, women's disability rights movements. In the past ten years the movement of women with disabilities internationally has grown exponentially, especially since we found each other at the U.N. Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

That was a major turning point for the movement of women with disabilities; they came from all over the world. We were 500 disabled women, joining 40,000 feminists who might have some concepts about disabilities, but until we were there on the ground, not being able to get into the buildings. Fighting the same fight there that we fight in our home communities -- I think lots of women there had big "aha" moments.

And it was thrilling to be part of it, in terms of struggle and resistance. We didn't go because the powers that be invited us or that every delegation of women said -- oh, we need to include some women with disabilities. We went because we knew

that a worldwide movement, or a conference representing the world women, had to have women with disabilities.

So there we were. And we talked about every single issue. We are not just disabled women. We are part of every constituency. We are immigrants and we are of color and we are refugees and we are corporate executives and we are film makers and parents and teachers. We are everywhere.

And there's this interesting invisibility issue with disabilities because, although there are lots of different types of disabilities . . . we were having a conversation the other day about what it feels like to be invisible, which is so odd, being in a wheelchair. It's sort of seeing, and not seeing.

I was talking to a friend who is over 50 who said -- yeah, there's something about being seen and not seen at the same time. I think lots of women have this experience, in general, and in our various constituencies it could be more or less true in a given moment.

We are everywhere and finding each other. We are in China, in Uzbekistan, India, Costa Rica, and Uganda. We are in this room. We have so much to learn from each other about self-determination and freedom. And I just want to end with the slogan of the Federation of People with Disabilities -- "Nothing about us, without us." It's great to be here. Thanks very much.

(applause)

Lateefah Simon: It is such a privilege to be in this space with some of the most dynamic freedom fighters that I've known and read about; I wanted to meet this person, or these people -- and I'm on the panel with a lot of them.

(laughter)

So, I want to thank Barnard for giving the space and opportunity for me to share a story. It's a good one. Ready? Okay.

This story actually is one, I believe, that provides possibility and hope that we are on our way to freedom, even in these very hectic and horrible times: a people movement that is happening in my home town, San Francisco. I'll take you back 12 years.

The woman is from New York . . . I'll have to give props to; you really have feminist thinkers here in New York, in grad school . . . who came out to San Francisco to do the work of her dissertation on young women and girls who were out of sight and out of mind.

Young women who were involved in sex work. Young women who were deeply involved in the drug trade -- 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18-year-old young women. Oftentimes, the population scared away by social service and violence because these were young women that even feminists weren't comfortable talking about.

Working with, loving, fighting for. She wanted to learn about the voices, the struggles of this out of sight and out of mind population. A population that folks usually dealt with by enforcing the law and throwing them in jails, in prisons and in cages.

She got together with a group of young women for the studies, and trained them in actual research and paid them with the little teeny dollars that I hear folks get for research grants -- especially if you are a student and poor.

What she learned actually has catapulted an immense movement of self-determination. The information that Rachel Pfeffer, our founding executive director, learned from working with those young sisters on the street corners of San Francisco -- the Tenderloin and Mission district -- founded an organization called the Street Survival Project which then became the Center for Young Women's Development.

In 1993 that information and the knowledge from those young women -- in what wasn't happening and what needed to happen -- pushed service providers to rethink about how young women, not only should be looked at, but should be respected. I'm a product of this story; I've been in this organization now for 11 years and just left.

Part of what I'm going to talk about is these amazing opportunities that we've developed, at the Center for Young

Women's Development. But, I also want to highlight the importance in radical feminism, in the social movement of women of color movements, women of color organizations that created space and developed a methodology that oftentimes is uncomfortable to talk about.

We started doing street outreach in 1993 because through the information that Rachel learned from working with young women and actual research, it became clear that for the young women who were a part of this particular group, a part of this particular population there was a ton of service providers and organizations that want to work with them, help them. But there were very, very little institutions that wanted to build their power.

Like many left movements, there were a lot of folks, and still a lot of folk who continue to organize for or on behalf, not even of the working class, but of the commoners -- there were prison movements and women prisoner movements. There were movements that called for the rights and the dignity of sex workers. Of young women who were middle class who were affected by the drug trade and ended up with those crazy 25 years-to-life sentences. But there was a new breed of young women who came to be through the work that Rachel began.

What if we actually got paid to design our own framework, our own methodologies that would create programs that would

train us to free ourselves? What if we had the opportunity to convey pedagogy that outlines the story of the lives that we've lived as a result of bad policy?

As a result of being born in the '80s, and being born at a time where our parents were literally ripped away from our homes and the first violence that we saw wasn't necessarily violence in the home. It was the state violence when the police and federal agents and CIA agents dumped crack cocaine into our communities and built more prisons and schools. And we went to more funerals than we did weddings and graduations.

What if we got the script and outline for how we would battle those systems? And could we get paid for it too? Because sex work and being deep in the drug trade oftentimes -- was the very peril that prevented this population of young women and girls from actively participating in their own activism.

So this organization developed, as I said, The Center for Young Women's Development, that, who would have thought? It paid young women to go through a human process where they 1) had the opportunity to deeply analyze and understand the social conditions in which we came from.

So with \$5,000 -- ten girls were hired. We were on the streets every day and we went on the street doing outreach, educating young sisters about, not only their rights. But that



we were breeding and developing an institution of speaking for our own power and our development. We were receiving training back at the office and we were on the street -- how to become stronger, how to raise money, how to write contracts, how to learn Excel, how to be directors, how to be organizers.

Our founder and executive director, she left us in 1997. A white woman from New York who believed that, in fact, her role was to develop a small infrastructure in a space and a place for young women who had been kicked in the ribs, even by the very movements that were supposed to represent them. Those young women deserved institutions and opportunities to lead their own movement.

The beauty is, that yes, in the last almost eight years -- and this is a teeny, small organization; less than a million dollars a year. But we have about 20 staff now, all under the age of 35 -- 30, ha, ha.

It's important to understand that, in that context, those young women have developed an immense methodology that says a few things that -- yes, we can employ and train our own to fight our own battles and to spread the word and the gospel of the revolution on the street corners and in crack houses, and in jails and in prisons, to young women who haven't had the opportunity to understand that, yes, we are the ones we've been waiting for.

That we can -- Number 1) wage our own education campaign.  
2) -- we can push and shape whatever policies that ain't fitting the bill, and we actually can change them. These young women have created curricula where no other probation department in the country would let girls on probation, to actually go away and teach other girls on probation. It's a revolutionary ideology, but we did it.

And we're still doing it, nine years later, working in juvenile hall, working with the California Youth Authority. Teaching young women how to be free and ensuring them, that when they get out they have a place to touch down to develop their skills so they can become harder and stronger organizers for the benefit of, not only of themselves, but other children and other mothers that were lost to prison systems, that were lost to crack cocaine, that were lost to the war on drugs.

The work of the Center right now is so exciting and why I left --it's been about three-and-a-half weeks -- from my beautiful job of being executive director was that, the very reason why Rachel left. That it was important in time to give space to the emerging beautiful leadership of the young women who are street survivors. Of young women who understand what it feels like to be in a cage at 14, 15, 16; denied of their basic liberties because they were born poor.

So now I'm happy to say that our organization is truly led by other young women who've been through these things and who can devise and create and implement amazing organizing strategies which they have, from pushing policy inside. They're fighting the racists, the homophobic, transphobic treatment of lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people who are detained.

Young women right now, who are in this room who I will introduce in a second, are creating a bill of rights -- check this -- for incarcerated teen moms who are being ripped away from their babies. And their babies are being literally shackled up, thanks to Hillary Clinton's beautiful fast track adoption policies for women in prison. These young women are pushing the Board of Supervisors and local policy makers to look at how folks who incarcerate children and folks who take away their children can begin talking together and being working together to really try to figure out a way where we don't create this now third generation of imprisoned families.

The same group of young women is now traveling the nation, training organizations and those bad guys like the wardens and the probation officers on how to re-sculpt their thinking about what it really means for a young person to live a happy life, after they've been neglected and raped by the very institutions that were supposed to protect them.

I speak in a melancholy tone because right now, in this nation there are hundreds of thousands of women and children who are behind cages. But the staff of the Center for Young Women's Development, they are waging a campaign, they are raising their own money and they are hiring young sisters from the streets to rise up and organize for their own freedom.

Our new executive director, she's actually been with the organization for nine years and she is in the audience. Her name is Marlene Sanchez. Marlene, can you stand up?

(applause)

So folks can understand, that by making space in organizations you actually provide leadership opportunities for new breath and new life and new passion and new vibrancy. The coordinator of our young mother's organizing project has too seen the dark of the jail cell and has had her children ripped away from her arms. And she is organizing literally hundreds of mamas on the block and mamas in jail cells, to create policy that will free not only themselves but their children from the status quo. Lisa? Please stand up so that folks can see that the work is real and that feminism comes hard, and it comes ghetto and it comes right and it comes real.

(applause)

Stephanie Sabini, who is actually coordinating that national training and that pedagogy that we're talking about.

She's traveling around the country, training folks. We were at Harvard a couple of weeks ago, giving lessons, training professors in criminal justice to rethink about how they're talking about liberty and children. Stephanie Sabini Stand up.

(applause)

She herself understands the complexities of working with these horrible systems that look down upon the poor single mother, that look down upon and incarcerate children that have been themselves deprived of liberties.

In short, I'll say -- organizations are difficult places. We all know that. But what they provide us and what the Center provided me in the 11 years that I was there, was an intense opportunity -- 1) to rise out of poverty and organize. It is possible that organizations can develop opportunities for folks who never have a voice in these movements, to become the very leaders who change the social construct they are fighting.

So the three women that I've introduced to you today, they are again, the savants of the streets. And they are the savants on Capitol Hill that went to visit the Supreme Court to hear the arguments against the child death penalty. We were there. We were there.

And five years ago, we were on street corners in those same organizations that said they were fighting for us, passed us up and never invited us to table. Now we invite them to table and

we challenge them to read our policies, read our procedures. And you know what -- be there for the party when they get implemented.

We will be the ones to follow up with probation departments, legislators, mayors, boards of supervisors. Because the power and the pain that we felt from being the brunt of degradation and oppression -- the joy comes in the satisfaction of creating opportunities for our sisters to continue to rise.

And although it's hard, difficult. It's a horrible time to raise money and resources for this kind of work; the work is slower. It's not just about the win. It's about developing the tool kit and the capacity and the ammunition, the spirit and the sisterhood of young sisters who've been kicked in the ribs by not only their organizations and institutions that we fight, but by the organizations and institutions that we are a part of.

I'm so proud to sit on this dais as someone who had the opportunity to be in a place where I got the opportunity to have a voice and power. I look forward to hearing from the Marlenes, the Stephanies and the Elisas of the world. Because like Audre Lorde said, they are only cages. Like Asada Shakur said -- they are only walls. He went on by saying those walls can be torn down and these women are tearing down those walls. Thank you very much.

(applause)

Minnie Bruce Pratt: I'm proud to be here with these panelists who are doing such crucial work in the world. It's a wonderful moment for me just to share that with you all. This panel is the reincarnation of the 1984 theme, women and resistance, of the Barnard conference.

And that was, as has been said earlier, that was a very significant decade in the women's movement in this country; because it was during the decade that the challenges were raised to the more mainstream or reformist women's movement. And also, to some of us who consider ourselves radicals -- challenges were raised by women of color, in particular, about the racism within the women's movement; the way in which the women's movement had not addressed issues of racial discrimination, oppression, national oppression.

And that challenge really was first raised by African American women and women of other nationalities also came forward, almost simultaneously, and brought their issues to the movement: Native American women, Latinas, Asian women. Issues were raised also around disability, issues around religion. Discussions were initiated around anti-Semitism in its full range, and anti-Arab also, as well as anti-Jewish prejudices.

It was a decade of great ferment within the movement, in the U.S. And one of the things that came out of that decade for

me, was that I wrote an essay after Barbara Smith, who somebody mentioned just a minute ago, and Elly Bulkin started working on a book called Years in Struggle: Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism.

And they asked me to add an essay to that book. And that essay was about the growth of my consciousness and my activism as a white woman who was born in the south, who grew up under segregation and who came to understand, through the great social change movement, that I needed to join the struggle, to go into action.

What I want to talk about very briefly today is something about the limitations of the positions I took in that essay. I thought that might be helpful, since that was then and this is now. In the conclusion to that essay, the focus that I gave, after I went through what I believed had been for many white people, white women in particular, a chronicle of my own political growth.

The conclusion that I came to at the end that essay was really along the lines of -- I really want white women, in particular, and Christian-raised women, to change our attitudes so that we can have a more sisterly environment. Now, I'm not being quite fair to myself, but that really was pretty close to the conclusion. There are a lot of, I think, very helpful



things in that essay. But the conclusion was not helpful, I believe.

It was a conclusion borne out of the very deep ignorance of the economic structure that I lived inside -- capitalism. And that ignorance was borne, not because I was a dumb person or because I had grown up in the south, but it was born of the fact that the U.S. had gone through the McCarthy Era, in which discussion of critique of capitalism had been completely suppressed through deliberate government policies.

And so, when I try to envision a future to end my essay, I came up with this very internal and psychological identity. I would call it a direction for the future. Subsequent years of organizing and theoretical struggles have changed that position, that ability to envision the future.

And when I think about what I might contribute to this panel today, a call for an anti-imperialist women's liberation movement within the U.S. is what I believe I can contribute to the panel today.

(applause)

I believe that the people in this room are aware of this, but let me just briefly recapitulate. The current administration is very actively using the slogan of the liberation of women to pursue its wars of aggression. We heard that language around the invasion of Afghanistan. There was a

blitz campaign of publicity orchestrated by internationally-known publicity specialists --all of them white women aligned with the ruling class, a publicity blitz to push this position on us, within this country. Most recently perhaps, you noticed that Laura Bush was in Afghanistan. And there were photo opportunities of her with her arm around young women, in front of a women's school.

This co-optation -- you referred to it yourself -- of our language by the right wing is simply a cover for the pursuit of the interests of big business, big corporation, U.S. corporations, a cover for the real history of what has gone on. So, for instance, this administration says that the U.S. should invade Afghanistan--the Taliban is terrible to women. These statements erase the whole history of U.S. backing for fundamentalist and feudal land-owning interests in Afghanistan in order to overthrow a revolutionary socialist government that was trying to retain the resources of the country for their own people.

To return to Laura Bush standing in front of that school with the young women: I just, by accident, happen to be having dinner with a woman who had connections to that school when that publicity picture came out. And she said to me -- that school didn't come into being in the way this press release and this photo op is being promoted; I know how that school started.

Women, separately and autonomously, organized to get that school in place; and then the U.S. has gone in and used the establishment of that school as a cover for the continuing war on Afghanistan.

So when I say, we need within this country an independent, strong anti-imperialist women's liberation movement, I mean -- we have to fight to keep our connections with other women all over the world, from being co-opted by a government that's looking for any chance to take what we do in solidarity and use it. It means we have to be smart, astute and we have to be students of history; because that history is being erased constantly.

Finally, I want to think about these same issues in relation to the women of Iraq. You didn't hear so much about the liberation of the women of Iraq before that invasion. But you're hearing it a lot now, especially around the election. And I just want to note that the first and most prominent liberation of a woman in that war was the manufactured liberation of Jessica Lynch. A young white woman on the poverty track in West Virginia, who joined the Army so she could get her education paid for. She wanted to be a kindergarten teacher. The rescue of her happened after the Iraqi doctors who were caring for her, attempted twice to turn her over to the U.S. troops; and their ambulance was fired on both times. There's a

lot more detail around this rescue than told by the video that was shot was sent directly to Central Command in Kuwait and edited by the Pentagon and released there to news agencies.

I see the connection in this moment between the need for the women's liberation movement in the '80s to bring forward an anti-racist perspective and the need to incorporate an anti-imperialist perspective into our work because here we have Jessica Lynch being rescued: a young white woman in the hands of people of color. A replay of "Birth of a Nation" right there on the TV screen, being propagandistically broadcast all over the world.

Meanwhile, the safety net for Iraqi women that was instituted through the national revolution of 1958 in which the oil reserves were seized from the colonial interests -- England, Britain and the U.S. -- and turned over to the people. That safety net for women, which included equal pay for equal work, pre-and postnatal care for mothers, guaranteed leave for mothers, Education through the university level for free, which meant, again -- that people could keep their daughters in school and not pull them out--, and many other things. That national safety net that existed until the U.S. sanctions, the first Gulf War, and the sanctions put in place afterwards -- that safety net is gone, gone, gone.

And Iraqi women are dying in disproportionate numbers. They represent about 65 percent of the population of their country. And they must be dying in disproportionate numbers because according to U.N. figures, 80 percent of the casualties from small arms fire in any war are women and children.

The safety net for women in the U.S. is also being ripped apart-- 60 percent of the poor people in this country are women; a quarter of those are Latinos and African-American women. I don't know the other percentages. The safety net is being slashed. Increasing numbers of women are in prisons for crimes of survival. Women and men are coming back from the war disabled, so that the number of people with disabilities and women with disabilities has increased. And many are women who are drafted by the poverty draft, who are in the army now in huge numbers and dying disproportionately in the army. Fifty percent of the female casualties, U.S. casualties are African-American women. It says something about the numbers within the army.

So the impact of this war on the women in this country, the impact of these wars on women of others countries -- and of course, we are not even talking about the saber rattling that's going on about other countries: the saber rattling at Korea, the saber rattling at Iran. The other places that the things that

now are coming out from the Bush Administration around Venezuela, for instance.

There is a good chance that another warfront will be opened somewhere. Now is the time for the women's movement, the women's liberation movement, the current of the women's movement which has been my kind -- which is a multi-issue current which says these things are all connected. Now is the time for us to be in our historical moment. This is it. This is the struggle of the moment.

We need an anti-imperialist women's liberation moment, fully cognizant of the impact of U.S. policy and action on the women of the world. And we can only be cognizant of that if we work really hard to study and listen -- which is why I'm so appreciative to be able to hear what my sister panelists have been saying today.

We are talking about economic policies and military action. Both of those things are things that we have to know more about. I think the only other thing I want to say is -- the U.S. is not about to define a foreign policy that will liberate women. Its actions, because they're based on economic exploitation and military pressure to ensure a certain economic system, absolutely will prevail.

It's going to bring more grief to women. For there to be a successful U.S. anti-imperialist women's movement, we have to

stand up in sisterhood with the women of the world for their right to self-determination within their communities and their nation. That is so, so important to say -- how can we offer solidarity? How can we offer support? Because you are there and we are here. We need to know what we can do. We very much need to look at the model of organizing and the way of gathering the women's movement together that was expressed, say, in the March for Women's Lives.

A million people, perhaps. Very thrilling. And yet, standing at the podium was Madeleine Albright, former Secretary of State who, was asked by a journalist if the loss of hundreds of thousands of children that came about because of the U.S. sanctions on Iraq. When a journalist asked her if it was worth it, she said -- yes, it was worth it for those children to die. And she stood at the podium at that March for Women's Lives. That cannot be a model. Ultimately it will lead to our betrayal [inaudible].

So, I have for you two very practical suggestions. There is an economic draft going on and there is perhaps the potential in this country for the reintroduction of the draft. I think if that happens, it will include young women. There is a "No Draft, No Way" conference going on, April 16. I have brochures; here in New York City. And I hope that if you are here, you will pick this up, you'll let people know about it.

Also, there will be a May Day action in Union Square this May Day, under the leadership of the Million Worker March. It will include people of color, union organizers working to connect the war on people at home to the war on people abroad. And I hope to see you there. Thank you.

(applause)

Barbara Ransby: I am so glad to be on this panel. I must confess, I came a little travel-weary. I have been traveling quite a bit and I got up at five o'clock this morning. I didn't come as far as Heisoo, so I get no sympathy from her.

(laughter)

But I am very energized by all the speakers on the panel thus far, so I'm very glad I came. I was here in 1984. I think Temma Kaplan was here, as a model of how to do grass roots organizing on a campus. Because I was basically raising hell across the street, and I think, about 10 months pregnant, it felt like, at the time.

And she asked me to come be on this panel with Barbara Smith and Grace Paley and some other people who were larger-than-life figures for me at that time. And I did. And it was really an important experience and it sort of convinced me that I could survive in the academy because there were sisters who were going to be fighting with me.



So I'm happy to be here and I'm also happy that I'm coming to you late in this conference, because I'm actually coming from another conference in Chicago on Feminism and Hip Hop. Now, how many weekends do you get to go to two feminist conferences in one weekend?

And last month, as many of you may know, in New Orleans there was a conference of over 1000 women - Incite! Women of Color Against Violence Against Women -- who also have, as Minnie Bruce called us to do, taken a very strong position that violence against women is not just about individual violence to individual women, but about violence to groups of women: about violent economic policies, about the violence of imperialism. And they have forfeited some funding as a result of taking that position and I'm very proud to be affiliated with that group of women; they were very early supporters of RAWA -- Revolutionary Alliance of Women of Afghanistan.

I want to make a few points -- and people have been somewhat autobiographical and I guess I will be too, in some of the lessons that I've learned in 25 or 30 years of feminist organizing. And then, some of the challenges that I think we face today. And it's really the challenge of looking at the past as a way to look to the future.

Also, I want to just say -- it is very empowering to be in the presence of mighty women who speak so powerfully and so

humbly. It's so foreign for those of us who go to academic conferences and are used to such a different kind of performance of people who have so much less to say, and say it with greater pomp and circumstance.

(laughter)

Anyway, a number of struggles that I've been involved in over the years that I sort of paused and reflected on more recently, as a part of my post-election therapy for myself -- what good has come of all the work that so many of us have done for so many years?

And Kumkum said that she felt that there were some failures. And I often say -- oh, how many marches, how many conferences? And look -- we seem to be worse off than we were. And then I talk to myself about it. And I think about the anti-apartheid movement, the Free South Africa Solidarity movement that I was very deeply involved in, in the 1980s; and very inspired by, it taught me a lot of lessons.

I went to Southern Africa, to Zimbabwe and Botswana in South Africa. I met with women there who were involved in this struggle, who were defining a new kind of feminism, really for me, that was feminism defined in the context of a moment of social transformation. Women who were in the ANC and in other organizations were fighting both a larger structure in the state at that time, and also fighting struggles for women's voice

within a movement for social change. And that was a very important lesson, to watch that dual struggle play itself out at the same time. That is, struggling with comrades and allies and brothers and sisters about issues of race and gender and class, but also, struggling for this larger goal at the same time.

Another important lesson I guess that struggle represented for me is that, in the main, it wasn't about me. That many of us do come to various movements of social change in a very personal way. And that's important. Identity politics gets a bad rap. I think -- yes, who we are brings us to the table. That's the lightbulb that goes off and says -- this is something that speaks to me in some way.

But once we do that, once we find our own personal connection to injustice and the potential for change, then we have to go a step further and ask the question -- what does this have to do with other people who may, in fact, be in a worse position than me?

So for me, the struggle in South Africa was also about not just my identity as an African-American woman from a working class background. But about people who really were living in the circumstances of fascism at that moment. And so I think we always have to be reminded.

This is probably the most inclusive panel I've been on in a long time, but we also have to remember those women who aren't

here. Often, American Indian women aren't at the table. Often Arab and Arab-American women are not at the table. Sometimes young women are not at the table. Working class and homeless women are often not at the table.

So there are all kinds of ways that we have to constantly remind and humble ourselves about the struggle that we're engaged in. At the same time, there are often links that we don't see. And I was reminded when Jennifer was speaking -- during the anti-apartheid struggle at Columbia in the 1980s there was a massive blockade of Hamilton Hall in 1985. And the administrators and the people who worked in the building complained that they had to actually go through tunnels to get into the building because students had blockaded the building. And then the disabled activist students on campus came out and held a press conference and said -- hey, guess what, we go through those tunnels all the time. And so it was a moment of awareness for us in sort of linking two communities of struggle that we hadn't made that connection to, prior to that.

Another struggle that I was very involved in in the early 1990s was something called AWIDO -- African American Women in Defense of Ourselves. And this, in my reflective moments, holds another lesson for me. This was really borne out of anger and venting. It was when the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas event was happening, whatever we call it. So many of us were yelling at

our television sets. Some of us were mad for different reasons. But those of us who were black feminist activists were really mad because we felt that there was this artificial polarization of the issue of sexism and racism.

Clarence Thomas, who had no allegiance to either feminists or black people, was basically exploiting that moment, in a way. And the media, and unfortunately a lot of feminists who came up to the microphone, were not challenging it; were not talking about the complexity of the situation.

In fact, it had all to do with race and gender and class, at the same time. So that was a way of building a campaign around an opportunity or an event or a moment of collective anger -- which has potential and limitations. Right?

We did this massive fund raising drive and got 1600 African-American women from around the country to sign ads and put them in The New York Times and other newspapers. And we caught some flak for giving The New York Times all that damn money, but part of the point was that they were simply refusing to do their jobs.

And so, we had to purchase the right to tell the truth in the newspaper.

After that event there was an attempt to mobilize the 1600 women who had signed on into AWIDO chapters, and that went on for several years. And ultimately, I think it did fail. And it

failed partly because we did not have the kind of consensus, the kind of foundation borne in more calm moments of discussion, debate, analysis, et cetera -- that we needed to really have a unified organization.

So that had been in my failure chart for a long time, until fairly recently, when I realized that time and time again in the years since 1991, people had put that network that we put together in the early '90s into effect for other issues. That is -- this was an invisible network of people who, on some level, were affiliated, even though we couldn't be in a single organization.

We were on the same page on enough issues that when the war in Iraq happened, people said -- where is the AWIDO list? Had we kept that up to date? And to a certain extent, we had. The Tabitha Walrond case, people may remember, in New York . . . was the young woman who was actually convicted for her baby's death because she actually couldn't get health care and was trying to breast feed the baby, and so forth.

And so we built a little campaign around that. That same AWIDO network was re-deployed in that context. So I tell that story to say that oftentimes we don't give ourselves enough credit for the things that we have accomplished, and the incremental change that constant struggle will produce, almost

in spite of our cynicism sometimes, over the years, as we persist.

So, mobilizations that don't result in changing the world and making it what we envision it to be in our wildest political fantasies -- are not always the failures that they feel like at the moment.

The other lesson comes fairly recently. It's something that I was involved in; it started in 1996. It was something called the Black Radical Congress. And about five of us were the initiators of that project that culminated in a conference in Chicago in 1998.

And unlike AWIDO, which had the event first and then attempted to build an organization, the Black Radical Congress actually met for two years before we had an event. And very critical to that mobilization and organization was the Black Feminist Caucus.

It really was the first time that a National African American organization has had explicitly, unapologetically feminist politics at its core and at the beginning. And it was a little bit of a fight, but the organization was receptive to that and the array of forces that came together were receptive to that.

And again, that network has been redeployed and energized and reformulated around various struggles in the years since.

The Black Radical Congress still exists and it still has a black feminist caucus. Jamala Rogers, a sister in Saint Louis, is very active at the helm of that at this time. I'm not as involved.

But that was an important moment, I think. I don't know if a lot of people outside the African-American community knew about it, but there were 2,000 people that came together in 1998 in Chicago. Academics, artists, journalists, community workers, et cetera. And for some of us, those of us who were in the Black Feminist Caucus, it really was in part a response to the Million Man March, we wanted and needed a critical response. It was saying that there has to be a fight within our community, around issues of sexism and misogyny, and we wanted to build a black radical response, a black left response, a black response that respected and valued women as leaders and whole people, and being a cutting edge force for change.

Out of that feminist caucus, I think there have been a number of young women who have gone on to do the kind of work that Lateefah talked about a few minutes ago. And I'm so honored to be in her presence, as the next generation. Gosh, I feel old saying this.

(laughter)

The next generation of young women doing this amazing work, I think, much better than my generation did, quite frankly. So



while we mourn sometimes the loss of organizations or attempted coalitions or projects that didn't come to full fruition, I think we also have to look at the other side of the coin and assess -- what are some of the less tangible ways in which we have pushed forward and made a difference?

And I'm reminded of that when I talk and do work on the civil rights movement and the black freedom struggle in the 1960s -- I'm an historian by training. And Vincent Harding, who is a long-time civil rights activist says -- people who say things are just the way they were, they really don't know the way they were.

I mean, things are bad. I'm afraid of the times that come and I think we have serious work to do. But we have done work, which should give us confidence that this is not something insurmountable. And I think that is important.

(applause)

So, a gathering like this affords us an opportunity to kind of go down memory lane a little bit, and reflect on things that some of us have been involved in. But it's also a time for projection, as well as reflection. And I think that two challenges for those of us who are activists, is a challenge to utilize and tap into weapons and tools that we don't often use.

And I'm thinking of the past and the future. That is, history and vision. And sometimes, when you feel the urgency of

the moment, these feel like luxuries. You feel like -- look at the assault on welfare and how our sisters are struggling. You look at the outrages of the war and you feel like -- this is an urgent moment.

We don't have time to go read a book. We don't have time to go and theorize about it. But I will argue that we have to make time for reflection and analysis about history, as Minnie Bruce just said to us. We have to make time to close our eyes and dream about -- and I love the title of your book, *Kumkum, Politics of the Possible*.

To dream, not about just what is, but what can be. To dream about the possible. You can only go so far in fighting against something. Really, what fuels you when you are really, really tired and really, really feeling like not going to the next event -- is what you're fighting for.

So it's that vision. And the time to sit and talk and share our ideas about what we're fighting for. What would the world look like post George Bush? What would the world look like if we listened to the poets and the singers and the artists and the wonderful people who inspire us to do the practical work?

If we allow those feminist fantasies to go wild, what would the world look like? And I would argue that that is as important a part of the task ahead, as anything else. And we

will be much dispirited and much less happy in our work if we don't take that seriously.

To go back for a minute to this question of history -- that's another important battlefield. And maybe it's obvious, but I think it bears repeating. The way in which history is told matters a great deal, both the history of the women's movement and the history of the antiwar movement to a certain extent. If you read some of the tracts now -- everybody was against the war in Vietnam. Right?

So then why did some people go to jail and get exiled and get beaten up and all that? I don't know. But the history of the women's movement and the history of the black freedom struggle are being distorted and co-opted by forces not only alien to those struggles, but antithetical to those struggles.

The way in which the language of the black freedom movement is being used now by rightwing think tanks like the Center for Equal Opportunity. The likes of Ward Connelly. The Civil Rights Institute. Those sound like friendly institutions, don't they?

They are not. They are spending lots of money and lots of energy to undo many of the gains that people fought for. And so, that language is important. It's not just words. No, that language is important and we have to fight to make sure that

people understand that some of the people using that language are actually betraying where it comes from.

The Independent Women's Forum is yet another example of that. Sounds like something you might want to join, doesn't it? But this is another think tank that is basically exploiting the opportunities created by the feminist movement, to attack the victories of the feminist movement. And we have to take that very, very seriously.

One of the big lies about the civil rights movement in particular is this idea of colorblindness that has now been deployed time and time again. The civil rights movement was all about colorblindness, right?

No. It was not. That's not true. That's a distortion and we have to stand up and say that. Because if you go down that road and you allow that discussion to be built upon that kind of lie and falsehood, you'll never get your way back to the truth. You'll never get your way back to it.

And I've had some very long, painful discussions with students, just on that very point and that very issue. So I just think I want to close by saying -- it is a difficult time and a difficult and challenging historical moment. I think we would be naive to deny that.

I feel that at this moment, just with the folks in this room, very empowered. And people who know me -- I'm not usually

the one giving the pep talk. I'm more a "glass half empty" than a "glass half full" person. But I do genuinely feel an energy brewing and building and rising up. I felt it in the conference I just came from in Chicago, and in this session here, and in what came out of the Incite! Conference in New Orleans. And, I've seen it many other pockets of struggle and activity that I've observed and been a part of around the country, in, for example, A group of young women in Miami called "Power You." They just started and they said -- we read your book about Ella Baker and we are really in sync with that. Now we want to be in touch with somebody. That's like 10 or 15 of them and they're -- we want to change the world. And I said -- good.

(laughter)

So that is stuff to inspire us and I think, to have the sober reality in front of us is important. But also, to have a sense of the possible. And to draw that understanding from looking at the past seriously, and looking to the future optimistically. So I just want to leave you with two of my favorite quotes by other women who I think are models for struggle in feminist activism.

One is Arundhati Roy and she says -- "Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing."

Audre Lorde, before she left us, but really she is still with us, reminded us -- "When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I'm afraid." Thank you.

(applause)

Temma Kaplan: And now, it's very fitting to conclude with one of the most important international feminist activists that I know . . .

Heisoo Shin: . . . the previous speaker left with a very positive note. But I'm going to tell you a joke, which I forgot from whom I heard. What do you say when a person speaks three languages? Tri-lingual, right? When a person speaks two languages? Bi-lingual. When a person speaks one language?

Audience Member: American.

(laughter)

Heisoo Shin: You all know. Okay, so in front of very powerful Americans who are monolingual, but who are giving so much influence upon the lives of many women in other parts of the world. In the last election in your country, people in Korea -- and I guess this happened also in people in other countries -- thought that, in the last election we felt almost like we should be allowed to vote in your election.

Because the politics in the United States, so much influences our national politics as well as what the kinds of lives women in Korea can live.

(applause)

I think the great challenge to you, as Americans and as American women, and you said that what you need to do here for women out there, I think the greatest challenge for you is to change your government. If you don't do that soon enough, at least in your next election, that will be a tremendous influence in a less fortunate way, in the lives of women around the world in the future.

I just flew in yesterday from Geneva, from the 64th Commission on Human Rights, and this has been my 13th year, since 1992, to raise this issue of so-called "comfort women." And yesterday, I spoke at the Commission on Human Rights as an NGO. I was allowed to speak for three minutes only, because of the growing number of NGOs. And this time we brought a 78-year-old survivor, Grandma Chin. So she was sitting next to me when I spoke. And I spoke on behalf of her because she has a special plea to make to the participants and the member states of the Commission on Human Rights.

She was drafted as a sex slave for the Japanese army at the age of 12, so she was a child. And she was literally, kind of abducted by soldiers, and then taken to Manchuria and many parts

of China, I guess. Because she was illiterate and she doesn't know where she was taken to. But she could be released only after Korea was liberated in 1945, so she suffered as a sex slave for seven long years. She was completely shut off from the world in Korea, for 20 years; because she was almost like a (inaudible). If anybody visited her, she just shut the door and hid because she was afraid to confront people. And after our movement came out in 1990 publicly, and then these women registered with the government and then got supported because of the legislation that we pushed through to be enacted, and got government assistance; and then our demonstration every Wednesday since January 8, 1992, without failure, every Wednesday noon in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul.

Again, the thirteenth year . . .

(applause)

. . . a weekly demonstration. So more than 650 times. And these women, in the beginning some of them would have newspapers across their faces like this because they didn't want to show their faces to the cameras. But now they go to Japan, to the States. Actually, one of the survivors was at Emory University to give testimony.

Grandma Chin was interesting because this is the first time that she ever saw such a diverse group of people from all around the world. Anyway, it was a real exposure for her to be with



all different kinds of people. In this way they are sort of elevating from their very long trauma that they kept inside for more than 50 years. Inside Korea, because of this struggle on behalf of the survivors of the sexual slavery by the Japanese military, it also connected with the patriarchal ideology on chastity inside Korea.

Because chastity and virginity have been valued so much and if you are raped, then you should be ashamed of that fact. And many women literally, actually committed suicide over the past years, before the feminist movement came forward. But in pursuing truth and justice and redress to the survivors of this sexual slavery by the Japanese, we again see the big obstacle to this -- is the United States.

Because at the time of the Far Eastern Military Tribunal in 1946, the United States knew all about it because they got prisoners of war. The Japanese, and also the former so-called "comfort women" and then they interrogated the prisoners of war from the Japanese army. I think, actually, a lot of the documents are kept in your archives, the Congress libraries, et cetera, some of which we got a hold of.

But in the Far Eastern Military Tribunal, the U.S. condoned completely the war crimes committed against these women. Those who perpetrated these crimes were never tried because U.S. put

Japan as the next leader in the so-called security in Asia. So we have been trying very hard to bring this issue.

And this Grandma Chin was requested to go with us, the Korean Council that I'm heading, this time. The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. It's a long name. It's a coalition of 22 women's organizations that I worked on since 1992.

Because she received the so-called, she did not receive the money from Asian Women's Fund, which was created as a gesture to avoid legal responsibility. Because Japan had been saying that -- well, everything was solved by the San Francisco Peace Treaty, as well as by other treaties. So although the crimes acknowledged, finally -- because of all the pressure and evidence, that there was some involvement of the army -- no fault has been admitted.

But later they had to admit in a report saying that -- okay, there was some fault involved. But everything was solved by the bilateral treaties and other treaties. But we are morally responsible, so here is the Asian Women's Fund as so-called atonement money, charity money. We are sorry, so -- here's the money.

And many of these survivors refused to receive this money and actually, Grandma Shin was listed as one of the recipients. And it turned out that somebody else must have filed an

application and because she was illiterate, she was tricked to give the certificate of which a copy was made, et cetera.

So when she confronted the Asian Women's Fund in February of this year, they acknowledged that she was listed as one of the recipients but actually she did not receive any money. So that was why we brought her to Geneva so that there is this woman.

And Japan excused for not paying legal reparations, but Asian Women's Fund which is not really reparations. And along with us we brought 200,000 signatures collected from around the world, urging legal reparations of the victims of the sexual slavery by Japan.

And if it is not given, then well, there is no chance for Japan to be a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. Because now Kofi Annan suggests a radical reform of not only the U.N. Security Council, but also the Human Rights Commission as well as treaty bodies, et cetera.

And again, backing Japan becoming a member of the U.N. Security Council, is the United States because the United States wanted the alliance from Japan, their money, et cetera.

So I many times find the United States as a blockade to many of our movements. And it is of course, upon the pressure from the United States that our government dispatches troops to Iraq, which created a lot of division within our own country.

Although we see that there is a development in terms of democracy and social reform, et cetera.

I think Korea is one of the few countries nowadays that has been, in terms of (inaudible) development in the feminist movement, social movement which can give optimistic message to countries around the world, especially neighboring countries in Asia.

But anyway, I don't have a lot of time to talk about CEDAW or any other things. But other than being involved in the struggle for the survivors of sexual slavery, I have been coming to New York at least twice a year to attend the CEDAW committee session in January and July.

And over the past 10, 15, 20 years -- it has been summarized by Wednesday's panel, Commission on Human Rights, by Ms. Louise Albert[?], High Commissioner as well as by Mr. (inaudible), that what has been the greatest achievement during the past 10, 15 years was to set the international standard, what has to be the standard in terms of women's rights and human rights.

And consciousness raising has been a great achievement. What has been the weakness and challenge is -- how to implement those standards that are set up to be implemented in every country? And I think, in this it is very important that we have our feminist struggle in each and every part of the world.

And I see, including my own country, during the last 10, 15, 20 years, at least after Beijing -- in a more aggressive way, all kinds of feminism in each country, that women have been struggling to confirm and reaffirm women's rights and human rights; and trying to eliminate violence against women.

These efforts are brought to the CEDAW committee, when we review the reports of various governments. Of course, we have our own frustration that sometimes the governments do not report at all and there are long-overdue reports. And also, we are frustrated very much about the lack of time, when we (inaudible) reports, so each of the 23 experts have only six minutes total to question.

But still, this is a venue that (inaudible) can also submit their shadow reports to counter the government reports. And not surprisingly, the U.S. is not a party to this convention, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. And in this last January session, I was lucky to participate in part of the debate when the new Convention on the rights of people with disabilities, I could participate in because there were four women from Korea, women with disabilities who participated in this preparatory conference meeting.

And there was a debate whether there should be a separate article on women with disabilities versus whether this article should be mainstreamed into all other articles. And I think the

debate is still going on. So I'm a little bit of everything and this brings still, I think, our struggle goes on in many parts of the world, as well as in Asia, to try to connect; to reaffirm that what we are struggling for is actually for other women.

And I feel pressure over time, so I think I'll stop here so that the audience can have some time. Thank you very much.

(applause)

Temma Kaplan: I know it's late, but some of you may want to have your say and ask a few questions, and we said we would go to 4:30, and I know they will save food for us. Are there any portable mikes? Would somebody like to raise a question?

Audience Member: Hi, my name is Megan Todd and I'm in the Women's History graduate program at Sarah Lawrence College. My question primarily is for Jennifer. I've been very involved in disability rights for several years now. And as a feminist, I also get the feeling sometimes that disability still tends to be an afterthought in the feminist movement.

And when I bring up disability rights or disability studies in my course work or with my fellow classmates, I'm often met with misunderstanding, confusion or just a general feeling that the topic is irrelevant, which it completely is not.

So I was wondering if you could address how we can go about bringing these movements together, or how we can further unite

disabled and able-bodied feminists in the pursuit of common goals?

Jennifer Kern: Thanks for the question. I'm thinking, maybe my sister panelists could respond to it in terms of issues of disability. It is a frustration that disability seems to be sort of another -- it's not generational. I mean, we are so indebted to all of the civil rights struggles that have come before us.

And I think our strengths are when we can work in coalition. I think having opportunities like today, to participate and meet other women struggling . . . so many of the struggles are the same, as we heard across the panel today, in terms of exclusion, in terms of poverty, in terms of imperialism and U.S. government policy.

So I think it's in finding what the common links are, and I think for us, showing up over and over. And being the squeaky wheel, so to speak. I think a weakness of our movement is that it is frustrating and there are ways we sort of show up and then sort of trail off.

And it would be easy to characterize it as failure until we remember -- oh, yeah, that made a difference from being there that day or being heard by the committee, that convention made an impression. We got some language in. And in Beijing, many things were happening all at once.

There were the NGOs who were raising hell. We were separated from the more formal feminists who were doing their document work. We were separated from the NGOs -- and that was a decision by the Chinese government because they were terrified of having all these feminists there.

Not that any other country would be. They really wanted the Olympics; but they got us.

(laughter)

They got the Feminist Olympics. So unfortunately, we were separated from the document preparation. But I think there were women with disabilities who were part of that process, who got some language in. And if anyone knows -- making legislation, getting one word can make a difference. If you're going to talk about the girl-child and you get inclusion of girls with disabilities -- that's a major victory.

Heisoo Shin: Can I respond to that question? This June, in Seoul, there will be the Ninth International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women to be held. And I'm the coordinator for (inaudible) NGOs and activism in . . . argument, decided not to have. And this Congress, organized mainly by the scholars, feminist scholars. But sometimes we feel that those of us who are in activism, there is some distance between what's happening actually in the field and what's happening in academia.



And the Korean feminist scholars' argument was that -- well, what is the logical base for having separate subtheme for women with disabilities? Then there should be lesbian, separate subtheme for lesbianism, separate subtheme for all the people, et cetera.

So instead, we ended up compromising that women with disabilities would raise this request at the end of the Congress, for the next Congress -- please prepare a separate subtheme. I think that shows a struggle.

And for me, personally, I wanted to have in my staff, when I was working at Korean Women's Hot line, I wanted to have at least one full-time staff to work as symbolism, to include women with disabilities, which didn't work out. Because you need to find the proper person to be worked with, all sorts of difficulties.

But I think that the real challenge -- in theory, you think you make alliance with women in different categories. But actually, how to realize that is a challenge.

Audience Member: I want to talk about different ways to build alliances and different currents in the feminist movement. And I was wondering -- this is a question to all the speakers -- how you feel transpolitics plays into things and if it's something that should be included in feminist movements? Or is it something that is (inaudible) to that?

Lateefah Simon: In the work of the Center for Young Women's Development, one of things that we consistently addressed was the fact that our transgender sisters, again, have very few spaces at table. In social movements (inaudible) young women, young transgender sisters.

And so, our space at the Center for Young Women's Development, it is just that space to include our sisters who are struggling and who are fighting and being left out from a lot of these conversations. And I think, as young women, we look back and we learn the lessons of what didn't work and what still ain't working.

And I think that we have had the opportunity to be bold enough to say -- well, we don't have to necessarily subscribe to whatever issues and conversations folks, and this is the old guard feminist movement, haven't yet grappled with. We need to build coalitions with sisters.

The fact that still, though, in progressive cities and progressive areas and progressive organizations -- transgender sisters and brothers are left out. I think it calls definitely for a cry of deeper conversation and dialogue and we really need to check ourselves about the internal racism, the internal transphobia that we have in these movements, as we call ourselves leftists and radicals, it's often the transgender sisters and brothers who are always left out on the outskirts.

Minnie Bruce Pratt: Thanks for that question because actually, I was sitting here realizing that I hadn't said that part of my journey towards the interconnections of issues was that when I came out as a lesbian in the South and lost custody of my children, because of that, was the really the true beginning of my seeing that I was not the only person who was losing what I loved, and that that was happening with a lot of other people in these different ways.

The way that African-American people in the segregated South had lost family, had been separated from their children by violence and so forth. And I was just conscious that that was an omission on my part, so I appreciate the question as a way to talk about issues of sex, gender and sexuality oppression.

I noticed that just a couple of weeks ago, there was an article in the New York day papers, where a group of women who did work internationally issued a statement about the way in which lesbian baiting was used to limit movement towards women's liberation in different countries.

And that certainly has been true here. I think the way that your question fits in with, say, that announcement is -- that sex, gender and sexuality are so intertwined with both economics, with culture, with history of a people that it's impossible to generalize about even what transgender is, from country to country or culture to culture.

I can't really speak to that. But what I can say is that I feel like this particular moment is a wonderful moment for us to look at alliances between people who are sex-, gender- and sexuality-oppressed. And that may evince itself in different ways, in different places; but that possibility for alliance is something that could be true anywhere. Because I do believe that, for instance, the building of solidarity and the building of women's liberation in place, that the weak link in that struggle is often the baiting of people around sex and sexuality and gender sexuality issues. And certainly, that's happened in this country in many historical moments that we could talk about when women's liberation was weakened because there was transphobia.

Or there was baiting of people around their sexuality. So I think that, to strengthen each other to come together and try to figure out how to strengthen the conditions of people. Experiences are not the same around these issues, life experiences. But yet, they are kept from each other by the way the oppressor seeks to divide us on gender and sexuality issues.

And that's where I think transgender, in a very, very broad meaning of that term, might enter into the struggle.

Barbara Ransby: I just want to say something quick because I think the two last questions, in my mind, are linked. And I'm just reminded of a lot of frustrating conversations about

coalition work, although that could be a whole other panel, what that means.

But also, I think that we see a backlash, there's a whole anti-political correctness movement that really took hold. Why do you have to be worried about everybody? The more inclusive, the more you fight for principled inclusive organizations, people see it as diluting. There's a language that's self-righteous and mocking it, and so forth and so on.

So I think that there are two things about this position. One is -- that whatever group is most often left out, we ought to try to make sure they're first in the queue, first in consideration.

The other thing is that we don't have to have a body that has a physical immediate representation of an issue, in order to have an issue in the room, if we are principled people in the work that we're doing. Right? You don't have to have a Native American on every panel to bring up the issues of indigenous people.

If a disabled person is not on a particular panel, it doesn't mean that the issue of disability rights is not in the room, of the key person. That's not saying it shouldn't be represented. Sometimes it's sort of like -- if that issue is represented in a body, we can talk about it.

But as principled progressives, we ought to talk about those issues even when there is not somebody that can say -- this is my issue right now.

Jennifer Kern: I'd like to say one thing about alliances in terms of disability rights and trans issues, and the indifference and stigma, and all that we have to teach each other in terms of movements. What is at the heart of this? And controlling women's bodies and just bodies -- this is a great discussion to be had.

Audience Member: My name is Erica Thompson and I'm a third-year doctoral student at the University of Maryland. And my question, which is probably going to be kind of my thoughts, is on something that I'm struggling with in terms of . . . Barbara Ransby, you brought up issues of theory and nomenclature and language and things like that.

And one of my struggles, I think is that particularly for academics speaking in the academy, and for someone who is in training to become a scholar, that my struggle is that we often theorize ourselves out of reality. That we discuss these issues so much amongst ourselves, that we've decided that we have overcome and that's the disconnect that exists in here, between the academy and real life and what's going out on the streets.

So my question, I guess, is kind of fundamental in that I am curious -- and this is open to the panel -- how you define

feminism or feminist? What that means and what it is that, is there a consensus that maybe I'm unaware of? What it means? Because there are multiple feminisms that people acknowledge.

But yet, in instances like this, we fall back to the one singular feminist or feminism. And I'm just kind of grappling with these issues in my work, so I'm curious as to what the panel has to say on that.

Lateefah Simon: A beautiful question that I think needs to be raised consistently. In this work we struggle with it intensely, I think, in our work. One -- not only the academy provides some of these limited opportunities, it gets deep into the trenches of the reality. But I also think that grass roots organizing oftentimes limits discussions, with the idea that you just brought up.

Defining feminism for the work that we've done over the years has been difficult because everyone has asked us -- are you in the first wave or in the third wave? What do you identify with? We identify with the fact that our folks must develop power to fight and exist.

And for the circles to be so loving, circles that suspend judgment, circles that we create where women can come and be and learn. It doesn't have to, to me, to us, to all the hundreds, literally the thousands of sisters that we work with on the streets. Again, I always have to articulate that.

Those women are saying every day -- where is my women's movement? There are people who are fighting . . . not only don't I know the issues that are being discussed, but where is my voice in that? So for our work, what we are fighting for, it's to reclaim for us what that movement looks like. And for us to define it for ourselves and not wait or rely on -- whether it's the academy or radical feminist grass roots movement, whatever the acronym I want to create for whatever organization that I'll make up right now.

We can't wait and rely on movement to define street-based, grass roots activity. It really is up, I believe, to the people; now, we can rely on some of the histories and historical lessons. But I think that we are all grappling with that very issues -- how do we define ourselves? And where do we fit in?

Because half of these folks don't even like us. Because they keep saying -- who are you to challenge us or challenge these movements, that you're standing on our shoulders? Who are you?

And I think that what we have to say is -- who aren't we? To challenge these ideas and challenge these definitions that have continually left us out on the benches outside of rooms like this. So, girl, keep asking the questions because we're going to read your book one day, and it's going to be -- yeah, that's real, that's right. Thank you for that question.



Kumkum Sangari: That's a question which comes up again and again, and I don't think I have the same answer every time, but there are some things I think that one has to also accept, and then fight against. Women are (inaudible), and they are divided by manifold relations of inequality. And wherever you can create a single category of women for that reason, you can also create a single category of feminism. Right? That would be self-evident.

But on the other hand, there is also another situation where one would say there can be as many kinds of feminism as there are women. And I think that the way I would look at it is, that one would say first of all -- let's look at it in principle. And second -- let's look at it in context.

In principle, I would say that because patriarchies are related and (inaudible) on every form of inequality, so they would be related to race in the U.S. They would be related to caste in India. Right? Evidently related to class and so on. (inaudible) inequality, they are related to all forms of stratification, so you can't be a feminist who accepts any other kind of inequality.

You cannot. You cannot fight only for women. That's the first way for me not to be a feminist. Because if I see that women's oppression, aside from other forms of oppression, I

can't just say that I'll clean up my front yard and let all the rest go; because it's the same road.

So that would be my first definition, in principle. In context, I would say that -- how to see how things are working. I had the occasion to be in Eastern Europe quite a while, a couple of years ago. And women there actually thought that what was coming to them, as U.S. feminism, was a form of civilizing imperialism.

And I happened to be in China a few months ago, and Chinese feminists said that what is actually a beleaguered, marginalized self-respecting movement in Europe or in America, it turns out to be an imperial form of patronage here. So, what happens to that feminism when it shifts context?

What is it that it needs to be aware of? Similarly, I would say a feminist coming from India, she might actually have a small role in a large struggle, might suddenly look at issues representing India here, as equally (inaudible). So I think these shifts in context, one has to be really very attentive about.

What makes sense, in one space may not in another. And without that, one can't be a feminist. Without that sensitivity context.

Barbara Ransby: Absolutely. I'm almost tempted not to say anything because she said it so beautifully. I was jotting down

things, and you were sort of saying them. I think that part of the answer has to be a process, for me. The process for fighting for the most just, humane and inclusive world you can imagine.

Not just what you think is realistically possible at the moment, but that you can imagine -- I think, is the process of being a feminist. And once you define it in too finite a way, there's that danger. It's like, freedom is a moving target. People say -- well, as soon as men and women are equal, even that language has a certain shackle. Right?

I'm reminded of bell hooks talking about -- for some people, of course, that means equality within a class-stratified system. As soon as working class women are getting the pittance that working class men are getting, we're cool. So I think it has to always be a process of pushing for a greater possibility and on all levels.

And it's not just about gender. I think that the reason that feminists have to be a part of my identification is that that is one of the things that can very readily get left out of a vision of a more just society -- is the inclusion and empowerment of women.

It's rarely that I only describe myself as a feminist, if I'm asked to describe myself. I'm many other things too. But I think, too, we also work with people who share different

definitions. Sometimes we use "feminism" in the singular, which sort of suggests this homogenous view of things.

I consider myself a socialist. I consider myself a radical Democrat. And there are people who use those terms, who I disagree with on a whole number of things. But still, I'm going to claim the term and fight for the meaning that I understand to be the just meaning that advances society and advances the world in the best way that I can.

And if somebody proves me wrong, I'll change; I'm not afraid to do that. But we are going to always overlap in ways that are going to be asymmetrical and a little bit messy; and I think that's exactly what makes it a process and not an end result.

Audience Member: Just something really quickly -- thank you all very much for coming. It was very wonderful. My name is Emily and I'm from southern California and staying here for the weekend, so I'm really excited that it happened to just fall when this conference did.

I just wanted to talk a little bit about -- maybe you all can speak to this, but particularly Minnie Bruce, you were talking about mobilizing against imperialism, which is a really important part of our current movement. And I just think that's really important and as westerners, particularly as western

feminists, it's so important for us to remember that the domestic is foreign.

And to think about it that way and also that the foreign is personal. And then also, that the personal is political. So it's all sort of tied together. I'm wondering if you could talk about what that vision looks like for you, in terms of what an anti-imperialist structure looks like? If you have some thoughts on that?

Minnie Bruce Pratt: You mean, an anti-imperialist movement? Right. Only in a kind of sketchy way because one of the things I've been very conscious of today, as we have these different panel discussions, is that there's been a lot of talk about the movement and how to get the movement going.

But movements come out of an historical moment, out of a matrix of what's happening to people economically and politically. And that isn't something that can just be predicted or even much less, controlled. So we can sit and talk about all that ad infinitum, but more importantly is -- to look around and try to get a really accurate sense of what we are living in the middle of and what's happening to people.

And a grounding in just the material conditions of where we are, and what's going on with people. And I think that will bear a much more accurate reflection of what could happen, and what could emerge. The fact that people could do the work of

this country now, mostly in service jobs rather than in heavy industry jobs.

And that increasingly, they are women and women of color -- rather than white working class men. That is something to ponder when we think about -- what does it mean to be part of an anti-imperialist movement? The fact that so many of those women are also immigrant and come from other countries who have their own history of struggles against imperialism and colonization.

What do those women have to teach those of us who have been living here all our lives, for instance? So when I think about anti-imperialist movements, I think about humility and learning from other people and especially, looking to the people who are the most oppressed and most vulnerable -- what do they have to say about their condition?

What is it that they need to do to change that condition? And where are they mobilizing? Because they are mobilizing. It's just not information that's being made readily available by the mainstream media to the rest of us. Right?

So how do those of us who say we want to have an anti-imperialist movement, how do we proceed? I think that we try to find those connections between the people who are struggling at home. I don't want to say -- at home. That's really not accurate. People who are struggling inside the U.S., because

people have many different kinds of homes, if they're living here.

People who are struggling to be here and the struggles outside the borders of this country, the imposed borders of this country. And who is in motion around that? Who is actually in motion? A lot of my feeling about this is influenced by my growing up in the deep South where . . . people have an attitude about the South sometimes, the deep South of the U.S., about how backward it was.

Yes, segregation was terribly oppressive, and these great liberation struggles came out of the South with leadership that had come completely from grass roots people who said -- we've had it, we're going to stop this; and feel like that's what we need to be looking for now. People who are at that edge and it's one of the reasons I mentioned May Day because the people who are organizing this May Day event are working class, people of color, labor unions and people who are saying that they want to make a connection between the inside and the outside.

And they want other people to join them in that. And that is an opening. That's a moment, an opening of where the people are in motion to join in, to see where that might go. And that's as far as I can go because I feel like we got here because of the collective imagining of millions of people.

And if it had been up to me to imagine, I wouldn't be here.

(laughter)

Temma Kaplan: I want to take the chair's prerogative and just build on that to say -- during the war in Southeast Asia, the Nixon Administration and Kissinger and all of those people said they didn't care about all the people in the streets. They weren't concerned.

Not only do we know that they were concerned, but we can read it in the Watergate Papers and so on. Massive mobilization on February 15 didn't stop the U.S. imperialist invasion of Iraq. But work could have happened. I think, as historians, when we read about . . . it's very important that people read, organize, but demonstrate.

These massive public acts of civil disobedience are one of the tools that a free people have, and the growth of a civil society throughout the world, in support of things like CEDAW, which most people in the United States, most feminists in the United States don't even know about -- it's an international equal rights amendment that has changed the lives of women and girls throughout the world.

We have need to demonstrate and to read each other's stuff. But to keep moving, whatever small or large thing you do, you've got to do something in the streets and in the places that you work. And you've got to do them at least every month, if not,



every day. And I think that is one thing that everybody in this room can do.

I want to thank this panel. I feel very honored to have been here.

(applause)