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THE SILENT MAJORITY: CONSERVATIVE PERCEPTION, MOBILIZATION,  
AND RHETORIC AT THE UTAH STATE INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S YEAR CONFERENCE

by

Jenny Lynn McGee Harris

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History

Brigham Young University

April 2005

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Jenny Lynn McGee Harris

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Jenny Lynn McGee Harris in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographic style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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## ABSTRACT

# THE SILENT MAJORITY: CONSERVATIVE PERCEPTION, MOBILIZATION, AND RHETORIC AT THE UTAH STATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR CONFERENCE

Jenny Lynn McGee Harris

Department of History

Master of Arts

Held in 1977, the Utah State International Women's Year (IWY) Conference became a battleground. Mobilized by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and conservative groups, 14,000 women revolted against the state coordinating committee. Chaired by Jan Tyler, Utah's IWY committee tried to plan the conference to include both liberals and conservatives; however, they found themselves overwhelmed by the audience. The participants rejected all nationally formulated resolutions, voted against or reworded workshop-sponsored resolutions, and elected to the National IWY Conference an overwhelmingly LDS, conservative slate of delegates.

Mobilization of conservatives at Utah's meeting was complex. The LDS Church enlisted the help of state representative Georgia Peterson to encourage LDS members to

attend and to promote a slate of conservative LDS women. Concurrently, Dennis Kerr and the Conservative Caucus mobilized conservatives through political channels to encourage attendance. Conservatives were suspicious of the National IWY Committee and Utah's IWY committee, their motives, and practices. They feared resolutions would be passed that they did not endorse. Conservatives believed this meeting was part of a national conspiracy to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. In addition, they wanted delegates who would represent them and their values at the National IWY Conference in Houston.

While some conservatives voted blindly against resolutions, the rhetoric within workshops shows that many women who attended the conference had defensible reasons for rejecting resolutions. These conservatives opposed resolutions that favored increased taxes, federal control, reverse discrimination, the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, and homosexuality. Conservatives rewrote or altered resolutions to advocate local control, community involvement, reform of government agencies, protection of traditional gender roles, and volunteerism. Understanding conservatives' motivations and rhetoric in this conference explains why they acted the way they did and their objections to many liberal tenets. Conservatives saw Utah's meeting as a battleground, and they came prepared to fight.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my chair, Dr. Brian Cannon, not only for his critique of this document but his endeavors to challenge me personally. Dr. Thomas Alexander and Dr. Richards both deserve recognition for their editorial suggestions. All three members of my committee contributed a unique perspective to this work. Any greatness it espouses is in part theirs as well. I would also like to thank those conservatives who shared their experiences with me, believing that I would tell their story. Finally, my gratitude extends to my family and my wonderful husband, who has never wavered in his support. It is to him that I dedicate this work.

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## PREFACE

[For the Utah International Women's Year Conference] I was asked to serve on the Displaced Homemakers Committee. . . . As we neared the time for convening the conference, news of other conferences in other states not only filtered in, but crashed through every media and personal source available. The state was hot with debate and finally panic. The [National] IWY had, in many eastern and midwestern states, overwhelmed the debate and the voting process and had passed very controversial resolutions without many of the local people having a voice in it. It seemed, from reports coming in[,] that the Feminist Agenda, manifested in the conferences, was intent upon swallowing up dissent and passing their resolutions come what may.

The issues, without this advance swelling dissent, were hot,[:] we had to deal with them in our committee work. . . . All of us on the committee were concerned, however, with the lack of advance material. Those who had signed up to attend were not receiving the books that were promised to study ahead of time. This was a four hundred page book with a lot of stuff in it. They kept saying the books were coming, but they didn't. So people got more and more suspicious. There were hateful rumors surfacing that the [LDS] Church had waged a big campaign, that church authorities at all levels had gathered their groups and insisted that they attend and vote what the Church wanted them to. That deepened each day and opposition began to build. An ugly black cloud was floating over the valley. We could see a huge conflict coming, and it seemed we could do nothing about it.<sup>1</sup>

Gloria Firmage, a conservative, helped plan the Utah State International Women's Year (IWY) Conference. Held in 1977, the Utah IWY Conference became a battleground. Mobilized by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and conservative groups, 14,000 women revolted against the state coordinating committee.

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<sup>1</sup>Gloria Firmage, Unpublished Memoirs, 258-259, copy in author's possession.

They rejected all nationally formulated resolutions, voted against workshop-sponsored resolutions on affirmative action, the ERA, abortion, sex education, and federal interference in local or family interests, and elected to the National IWY Conference an overwhelmingly LDS, conservative slate of delegates. The fourteen women who formed the delegation became an isolated and despised minority at the national convention at Houston in November of 1977.

The LDS Church became involved in Utah's conference in a variety of ways. The then-current president of the LDS women's organization, Barbara Smith, wanted to encourage women to attend. A letter sent by one male leader, Ezra Taft Benson,<sup>2</sup> directed each church, congregation, or ward to send ten women as delegates to the conference. Many wards interpreted this as a call to arms. To complicate matters, conservative groups, which often included LDS members, held informal meetings. What occurred was a melding of church and politics to create the impression the LDS Church was trying to overwhelm the conference.

The conservative majority at Utah's IWY conference included many different kinds of conservative women and men. Some women came because they were asked to by their local congregational leader; they voted against the nationally drafted resolutions because they believed it was the safest route and best decision. Many voted no because they believed this is what LDS church leaders had asked them to do. Others voted according to their beliefs. Despite the ignorance of many women, this group of conservatives

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<sup>2</sup>This letter is commonly referred to as the Benson Letter. A copy is contained in Appendix B.

included women who were familiar with the political process, and these women came prepared. They arrived with pre-drafted resolutions and sincerely wanted to participate and help solve many of the problems they saw around them. Other women came unprepared but still participated; they attended workshops and found themselves getting involved.

The turmoil many more liberal women experienced at the conference led them to believe conservative women who attended rejected the resolutions blindly or out of fear. While this statement is true in some cases, it ignores the actions of many conservative women and the solutions they presented at the workshops. Past research does not examine why conservatives believed the conference had been rigged to pass resolutions they did not support or why they rejected the resolutions posed by the National IWY Committee.

The purpose of this thesis is to take a closer look at conservatives and their experience at Utah's IWY conference. First, placing IWY in a national context helps the reader understand why these meetings were so controversial. In addition, examining right-wing mobilization and rhetoric within the conference explains why conservatives rejected many beneficial resolutions. Furthermore, Utah's meeting cannot be understood without examining the involvement of the LDS Church.

The organization of the LDS Church is crucial to understanding why it was so effective in mobilizing its members. During the majority of its history, the LDS Church has been organized under the direction of a First Presidency, which included a prophet and two counselors. Members of the church have believed the prophet can receive inspiration

from God on how to direct the affairs of the church. He has been assisted by two counselors and a group of twelve men called the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. No women served in these positions. This group of fifteen men has been revered by members, and they have exercised tremendous influence among members, who often tried to follow their actions politically.

On the local level, churches or congregations have been called wards. One man, a bishop, has presided over each ward. Several wards have comprised a stake, which has been presided over by a stake president. In the 1970s, stakes were then organized into regions, then areas.

One organization which has exerted immense influence over female LDS members has been the Relief Society. This organization has functioned on the ward level but also had its own general president who reported to a designated general authority, who then reported to members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Presidency. Under the supervision of the bishop, each ward or congregation had its own local Relief Society president who directed the Relief Society's affairs within the ward.

Wards have encouraged a strong sense of community among their members. Believing their leaders were inspired, many LDS members chose to follow their leaders' counsel and felt a sense of obligation toward them.

To understand conservative rhetoric and mobilization in Utah's IWY Conference one must place it within the context of past historical research regarding right-wing groups. The conservative resistance faced by the Utah IWY Conference emerged from the New Right. Where liberals and leftist political groups had triumphed during the New

Deal, World War II, and 1960s, the right slowly gained momentum and became a viable political contender in the 1970s and 1980s. The election of President Ronald Reagan in 1980 signaled their triumph.

A brief overview of selected research is needed to understand the motivations and rhetoric of the right. A vast amount of research dealing with this topic exists. The following works were chosen because they each address a critical component of the right and provide models that give insights in understanding the dynamics of this group, showing how the right loosely united to oppose legislation and elect candidates and providing models to understand conservative rhetoric and motivations.

*The New American Right*, edited by Daniel Bell, was responsible for beginning scholarly study of the right. Daniel Bell, a political science professor, examined the New Right's support for McCarthyism. Richard Hofstadter, Seymour Lipset and others contributed articles as well. The original book was titled *The New American Right* and was published in 1955. In 2002, Daniel Bell expanded and updated the volume to include introductions and other articles relating to the right; it is currently titled *The Radical Right*.<sup>3</sup>

The authors' main purpose was to explain what fueled the rise of the New Right. These men argued that right-wing activists were not motivated by a coherent set of ideas or political views. Instead, the right was motivated by psychological distress. Richard Hofstadter's article, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," portrayed men and women

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<sup>3</sup>Daniel Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002).

of the right as marginalized individuals whose mental disorders caused them to project their problems onto others. In times of plenty and peace, conspiracy theories and paranoia retreated to the extremist fringe; in times of war, stress or economic insecurity, entire communities would temporarily be attracted to the right.

Hofstadter, borrowing from clinical psychology, suggested that a sense of “persecution” and “paranoid style” characterized the right’s adherents. These cast the right as being prone to “episodic outbursts” similar to those of other extremist groups that ran counter to the fundamental direction of change in American life. In plain words, these historians categorized the growing right as a group of paranoid individuals trying to stop the progress of society toward American liberalism. They implied that the conservative movements rose out of economic motives, spurred by psychological and personality disorders.

Many of the articles’ authors supported liberal legislation. The articles revealed the authors’ belief that progress for America lay along this path. Thus, members of the New Right could not have rational reasons for their beliefs or behaviors since they believed and acted contrary to what obviously would be the destiny of America. It is important to note that Bell’s work preceded the rise of the New Right in the ‘70 and ‘80s. As his modified title suggests, the groups he studied had not yet become part of mainstream politics and today would be classified with other “radical” right-wing groups.

Bell’s book was the first scholarly work to look at the rise of the New Right. As such, it had a tremendous impact on future research. Many authors would borrow, modify and expand on the models Bell and his colleagues put forth. *The New American Right* left

a lasting legacy, both positive and negative, on how the right would be perceived.

Since that time, scholarly works have incorporated other models to interpret the New Right. These models aid in understanding the New Right and their actions. The motives behind conservatives became more complex, and scholars became more sympathetic toward right-wing groups. As the right gained political momentum, scholars also looked at how such diverse groups united.

George H. Nash in his book, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, surveys twenty-five conservative intellectuals, editors, authors and scholars as a lens to summarize post-World War II conservatism and to develop a model for how the New Right developed. He specifically focuses on continuity within the right.<sup>4</sup>

While recognizing that the conservative movement was diverse, Nash loosely divides conservatives into three groups: libertarians, traditionalists, and anti-communists. Each group overlapped and interacted with each other. All believed America was in decline but for differing reasons. Libertarian supporters believed America was in decline due to the federal government's meddling in personal rights. Traditionalists believed the deterioration of moral and religious values was responsible for America's problems. This group believed the federal government had intruded into the moral realm of society and that the government supported programs that undermined moral values instead of upholding them. The anti-communist group believed pro-communist individuals had infiltrated many institutions in America and used their position to directly challenge the

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<sup>4</sup>George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1976).

capitalist system.

Nash argues the writers brought cohesion to the movement by providing common ground for differing factions. Nash's work is also sympathetic to the conservative movement. His book does not assume right-wing members behaved irrationally, were uneducated, and were motivated by paranoia. Nash asserts that the three factions of the right united behind a common cause, which created the driving force behind the growth of the right. As such, he creates a large conservative "community" model that included all factions of the right.

Continuing to focus on continuity and the belief in America's decline, Rebecca Klatch examines motivations and ideology of conservative women in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. In her book, *Women of the New Right*, Klatch divides the women into two distinct groups, social conservatives and laissez-faire conservatives. Each group analyzed America's problem in different ways and believed America was in decline for different reasons, but they shared similarities. Both groups were anti-communist, suspicious of the media, against big-government, pro-defense, and for states rights. Klatch argues the New Right found cohesion in sharing common "enemies" that allowed the group to be politically viable.<sup>5</sup>

However, the author notes key differences in why right-wing women supported these platforms. Social conservatives were motivated by traditionalism, or Protestant fundamentalism, and fear of moral decay; laissez-faire conservatives focused on individual

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<sup>5</sup>Rebecca E. Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

rights, self-determination, and economic freedom. As Klatch summarizes, social conservatives focused on traditional gender roles, while laissez-faire conservatives emphasized the rights of the individual.

For example, social conservatives feared communism and believed certain communist social programs were being implemented in American government. Klatch found that social conservatives believed communism attacked the family and religion. Communism restructured society, placing authority in the government. Social conservatives supported what they believed to be the natural order of the family: the father is subject to God and head of the family; mother and children are then subject to the father, who has responsibility to care for them. Communism broke this pattern of authority by teaching that all persons are subject to the state, which has the responsibility to care for all. Social conservatives feared communism because it eliminated tradition gender roles and the role of God.

Laissez-faire conservatives opposed communism and had the same emotional reaction as social conservatives, but for different reasons. For this group, communism threatened economic freedom. Communism opposed capitalism and private ownership. It maintained that the will of the state was more important than personal freedom. Communism also denied the legitimacy of the individual by rewarding group output and implementing large social programs. Communism asserted the state was the best judge of the “collective interest,” instead of letting each person decide what was best for themselves. Communism attacked all the values a laissez-faire conservative held dear. This created a similar reaction in laissez-faire conservatives as in social conservatives but

for very different reasons.

Klatch identifies a person's background as the main factor in influencing why women were either social or laissez-faire conservatives. Women who had a religious affiliation or a religious upbringing, possessed less education, and were homemakers tended to be social conservatives. Women who were not from a religious background, had a college education, and worked outside the home tended to be laissez-faire conservatives. Klatch also noticed social conservatives were often older than laissez-faire conservatives. Laissez-faire conservatives also were more likely to be divorced, single, or living unmarried with a man.

Klatch claims a woman's background can explain why very few social conservatives supported feminism. They believed feminism either aimed at destroying the family or tried to solve social problems with wrong solutions. Social conservatives argued women need to be returned to their honored and protected position in the home instead of lobbying for legislation to protect women in the workplace. Klatch infers this opinion was due to social conservatives' not being in the workplace and not experiencing discrimination.

Klatch also proposes that laissez-faire conservatives were evenly divided between supporting and opposing feminism due to background. Laissez-faire conservatives faced discrimination in the workplace and education. As such, many joined the feminist movement to support passage of protective legislation. Others did not support the movement because of traditional laissez-faire values. These women recognized that discrimination existed but believed the solution rested on individual action. For example, a

women who was denied a promotion because of sex should protest by boycotting that institution. She should quit and look for another job in the free market, and thus the employer would be deprived of a good worker and suffer as a result. Those who supported the feminist movement did not necessarily support legislation that would allow the government to intervene, but supported laws that assured individual rights and freedom. Klatch adequately identifies the differences between the two groups of conservative women. The differences existed with regard to why the women opposed outside forces. These dissimilarities did not hinder the right in uniting to oppose legislation since both groups identified common enemies. Thus, the women of the right found unity only in opposition.

Klatch provides a background for understanding the rhetoric of right-wing women. More importantly, she also explains their belief that America was in decline; this point is crucial in understanding conservatives' actions. She also addresses specifically how mainstream right-wing members united despite differing value systems.

As models of the right focused increasingly on continuity within, scholars began to examine how groups on the fringes were incorporated into the right. More specifically, researchers looked at radical or racist groups and their motivations for supporting the right.

David Bennett, in *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History*, analyzes the history of radical right-wing movements in America and compares the movements to mainstream right-wing groups. Bennett specifically looks at what motivated these groups to turn to extreme measures. Why, in America, have such

groups existed? The author examines the Know Nothings, the Ku Klux Klan, the first Red Scare, McCarthyism, and the John Birch Society.<sup>6</sup>

Bennett finds one common trait which links these groups. Political extremism of the right focused on groups, ideas, or people who were seen as threats to the cherished American way of life: “alienism” as Bennett describes it. The most striking feature of the groups was their devotion to the nation. Members believed America’s citizens were privileged and special; these groups felt it was their responsibility to protect this way of life. Bennett argues each group saw their community, whether it be America as a whole or a local neighborhood, as being threatened by outside forces. These groups chose not to use local legislative systems to combat this enemy because of conspiracy. Instead they resorted to subversive and illegal activities as a defense. However, Bennett does not see the right as being unified by common enemies. He asserts the right did not have common enemies or motives; instead the enemy or alien changed continually. This forced groups to either abandon old enemies or adapt.

David Bennett’s book is a valuable asset in understanding extremist right groups. His work also compares these groups to the mainstream right, and he concludes they share common traits. Specifically Bennett argues the extreme right shares the fear of alien forces and a belief in America’s decline with the mainstream right. But the groups differ in racial tolerance and in how they tried to assert their ideals. Mainstream groups used only democratic methods, protests and politics. Extremist groups often resorted to violence

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<sup>6</sup>David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

and terrorist activities.

Robert Alan Goldberg in his book, *Enemies Within: The Culture of Conspiracy in Modern America*, addresses another key characteristic of the right that often prompted groups to resort to illegal activities: belief in conspiracy. While other authors, specifically Bell, believed conspiracy was due to psychological disorders and was limited to fringe or radical groups, Goldberg argues conspiracy is an American tradition, one that has been incorporated into mainstream politics and that occasionally proves to be correct. Not only is conspiracy normal, but it is also American. It is a necessary part of our culture.<sup>7</sup>

Goldberg introduces his topic by looking at past conspiracy theories in the United States. From the Salem witch trials to communism, conspiracy has been alive in America. Politicians, reformers and activists encouraged conspiracy theories to gain power and establish groups. Religious imagery became incorporated into arguments against subversives – Satan controlled other nations and organizations in order to subvert God’s favored nation and its people. At times government officials encouraged conspiracy theories to hide their activities, such as spy plane research near Roswell, New Mexico. The assassination of John F. Kennedy encouraged public acceptance of the reality of subversive groups; it also encouraged “alternative history” theories. If JFK had not died, the long war in Vietnam might have been avoided. The media used conspiracy theories to attract the public through films, ads, and tabloids. Americans began to accept and even rely upon the idea of secret plots, although not all would resort to drastic or extreme

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<sup>7</sup>Robert Alan Goldberg, *Enemies Within: The Culture of Conspiracy in Modern America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

actions to combat subversive groups. Most Americans developed a passive attitude toward conspiracy.

Goldberg's work is critical in understanding the use of conspiracy by the right. Counter-subversive action was not limited to fringe groups nor to the right. Instead groups from both sides, left and right, rely upon the use of secret plots. Conspiracy is an intricate part of American culture.

While some authors examine the rhetoric and belief systems of the right, others examine how the right formed, how leaders mobilized members, and why members were attracted to the right. Jerome Himmelstein, in his book, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism*, explains why the political right achieved prominence in the United States in the late 1970s and 80s. Himmelstein disagrees with previous works which describe the right as a populist movement with its roots in the 40s. Instead the author traces conservatism only to the 1950s, particularly to the opponents of the New Deal philosophy (not those who opposed the New Deal themselves) and the followers of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Himmelstein asserts that political schisms characterized the political right and reduced the movement to an opposition force instead of a viable political contender.<sup>8</sup>

The author proposes the New Right arose because of major changes in the conservative movement. The transition occurred due to the incorporation of several right-leaning groups: anti-communists, traditionalists, and libertarian defenders. With a more

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<sup>8</sup>Jerome L. Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

unified following, three developments led to the success of the New Right. First, evangelical Christians became politically active and rallied to support conservative figures for public office. Second corporate conservatives mobilized to fund right-leaning authors and publications. Third, the Republican party was revitalized with the influx of evangelical groups and voters from the left who were disappointed with President Jimmy Carter.

Despite the transformation, Himmelstein argues the ideology and leaders of the right did not change substantially. The same principles and core beliefs that existed in the 1950s continued to exist in the 1980s. Instead, it was the social context that allowed the right to rise to prominence. Himmelstein concludes that the right's success did not indicate a revolutionary break with older incarnations of the American right, nor did the group achieve a lasting political realignment. The movement, in his view, failed to have a lasting impact.

Like Klatch, Himmelstein addresses one substantial flaw in many other works which stress continuity of the right. The right somehow loosely united groups of various backgrounds and interests, yet how did this unity work? For example, libertarians and traditionalists were antagonistic toward government intervention for differing reasons. Because they shared a common enemy, they were able to work together to oppose legislation that increased government intervention. However, how could the groups work together to pass legislation that was not oppositional in nature? They could not, Himmelstein argues, because of their differences. Each group would try to solve social problems differently. The women's movement was the perfect example. Libertarians and traditionalists both opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. But traditionalists would solve

the problem of discrimination by removing women from the workforce and promoting traditional gender roles, whereas libertarians would implement laws on the local level to stop discrimination or they would boycott businesses that discriminated against women. To oppose the problem would be easy for the New Right to do; solving the problem would be impossible.

Himmelstein's conclusion on the viability of the New Right comes from his brilliant analysis of the cultural characteristics of its members. Himmelstein found that culture was the most important factor in determining the sector of the right to which a person belonged. Traditionalists commonly came from religious backgrounds. Libertarians (laissez-faire conservatives) came from business backgrounds. Each group defended their values and did not want to compromise. Each group's solutions differed widely and often offended the other factions. As such, the right could only oppose, not solve, a problem.

Himmelstein's research on the new religious right sheds light on mobilization of its members on gender issues. Himmelstein found that religious institutions wielded tremendous influence on their members in politics. Issues like the ERA and women's movement motivated religious leaders to exploit this influence. "Religiosity" as Himmelstein defines it, was the most important cultural factor in influencing right-wing members on the ERA or women's movement. He found that 80 percent of those opposed to the ERA attended church regularly. He found that 60 percent of those for the ERA did not attend church at all, and 10 percent attended occasionally. Leaders in the new religious right used religious imagery to combat these issues and to encourage members to become involved. The ERA and women's movement became tools of Satan; those who

opposed became saints. As such, these issues became battlegrounds for good and evil. Himmelstein argues the success of the right in defeating the ERA was found in the religious right's ability to mobilize its members.

Himmelstein's model for how the right formed is in direct contrast to the populist model. Instead of grass-roots participation, business and religious leaders mobilized and created impetus for the rise of the New Right. In some respects, Himmelstein hints that leaders manipulated members for personal gain. But most often, the leaders simply wanted to rally others who shared common concerns to action.

Lisa McGirr blends Himmelstein's model of right-wing opposition with the populist model in her work. *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* is a history of the conservative movement in America using Orange County, California, as lens through which to view the social conditions and ideological base for the growth of the New Right. McGirr examines the growth of the right from 1960 to 1980, ending with the election of Ronald Reagan. In the suburbs of Orange County, middle-class men and women petitioned for Barry Goldwater, joined the John Birch Society, organized study groups, published pamphlets, and became active in the Republican Party, "all in an urgent struggle to safeguard their particular vision of freedom and the American heritage." McGirr contends these men and women transformed right-wing politics and brought conservatism into mainstream political thought.<sup>9</sup>

McGirr argues the movement of the right from extremist to mainstream happened

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<sup>9</sup>Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

in four steps. First, rapid suburbanization of cities created a predisposition for conservative thought. As men and women became homeowners in quiet suburbs, they naturally wanted to keep the busy, racially diverse, immoral inner city from extending into their realm. They also feared communism. Thus, the fear of communism and moral decay created the perfect background for mobilization. Second, as politically active conservatives found themselves shut out from liberal politics, they turned to writing and publishing as a means to draw recruits. Many intellectuals created journals and held meetings. These publications drew on many of the tenets and ideals of McCarthyism and would be the impetus for future growth of the right.

Third, as many joined the ranks of conservatives, they entered the political arena by becoming active in local and state Republican chapters. The campaign for Barry Goldwater gave many men and women experience in mainstream politics. McGirr asserts that as the right began to find a home in a mainstream political party, it had to shed many of its extremist tenets. The right shifted its focus away from anti-communism. Instead the right embraced libertarianism and social conservatism as its core tenets. This allowed it to attract a larger following as well as to appeal to many disenchanted liberals. This shift, accompanied by other events such as the Civil Rights Movement, led to the right's first victory: the election of Ronald Reagan to the California governorship in 1966.

The fourth and final stage came with the rise of new social issues and the re-emergence of evangelical Christianity in the late 1960s and 70s. With shifting views older organizations declined, such as the John Birch Society. Large-scale evangelical churches mobilized members to combat the women's movement, ERA, and homosexuality.

Conservative ranks swelled with Americans who were discontented about high taxes, the growing deficit, and a failing economy. Thus the right achieved its greatest victory, the election of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States in 1980.

McGirr uses ordinary men and women to tell the story of the rise of the New Right in Orange County. The views and opinions of the men and women are the greatest strength to her research. McGirr moves away from traditional approaches, such as viewing the right as paranoid or irrational or categorizing them into groups. Instead, McGirr shows that the right was a complex weave of ideas and beliefs. The rise of the right came in part from grass-roots movements and was later fueled by leaders mobilizing religious denominations and calling trees. Like Himmelstein, McGirr proposes that the right obtained cohesion by having common enemies to combat. Members of the right disagreed on how to solve social problems, but united on the common ground of opposing legislation that would create new problems.

McGirr's work then blends many models together, showing the difficulties scholars have faced in trying to define the right. Scholars still disagree on how to categorize the right in America. Earlier scholars have viewed the motivations of the right as being economic. The members were seen as "radical," "irrational" and "paranoid." Thus the rise of the New Right was dismissed for years as a fringe movement that opposed modernity and lacked a positive philosophy.

In more recent years researchers have examined the right more closely looking for patterns and models to interpret the rise of the right and its attraction to voters. The treatment of the right changed to include extremist fringe groups. In addition, scholars

began to examine why individuals joined the right, what motivated them, and the ideology to which they adhered. New research increasingly views the right as diverse, rational, and politically viable. Strangely a mixture of models leads to the best interpretation of the right. A sense of fear and paranoia characterize their language. In times of economic distress, they became critical of government policies. Right-wing groups feared loss of status (status anxiety) and loss of privileges. Many of their members believed America was in decline due to differing reasons. Many felt they bore the responsibility of reversing this downturn, whether through democratic channels or through terrorist acts. Conspiracy permeated many of their arguments.

How they mobilized in many cases differed. Some groups followed the populist model; others did not. Many right-wing groups were mobilized by leaders, others experienced mobilization from the ground up. Religious groups joined the right in fighting legislation. Often mobilization was complex, incorporating multiple models and tactics.

As we will see, Utah's IWY Conference fit these models. In regard to mobilization patterns, the LDS leaders prompted members to attend and defend their beliefs and morals, in accord with Himmelstien's top-down model. Additionally, political groups experienced grass-roots mobilization as men and women became concerned about the conference and rallied neighbors and other right-wing members to attend. As in McGirr's study, a blend of both models more accurately describes conservative mobilization at Utah's conference.

Right-wing rhetoric and arguments closely follow Klatch, Bennett, and Goldberg's

models. Women who attended Utah's conference fit into Klatch's two groups, social conservatives and laissez-faire conservatives. In addition, extreme factions of the right also attended Utah's meeting, such as the John Birch Society. All three groups shared one common characteristic as Bennett suggested, a belief that America was in decline. This common enemy created a foundation for all groups to loosely unite in opposition. While some conservatives believed the meetings were a tool of evil where the passage of the resolutions would aid Satan in his battle against the Saints of God, other conservatives believed the conference would promote legislation that would restrict personal rights. Most importantly, conspiracy colored their arguments. Conservatives believed the meeting was part of a national conspiracy to pass the ERA and other liberal legislation. Conservatives saw Utah's meeting as a battleground, and they came prepared to fight.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE ORIGIN OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S YEAR, INCLUDING A HISTORIOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF UTAH’S CONFERENCE

When two such inflammatory issues as abortion and the ERA were established as major goals of the IWY Commission – which was funded by \$ 5 million of taxpayer’s money – citizens who value the sanctity of life or who feel there is a better and safer route than ERA to equal rights for women understandably were upset. Given these circumstances, how could IWY’s leaders have expected all peace and love as they rolled toward Houston?<sup>1</sup>

#### **Origins of International Women’s Year**

The origins of the Utah State International Women’s Year meeting can be traced from the women’s movement in the late 1960s and 70s. Without the increase of awareness concerning women and the desire for reform by middle class and politically-active women, International Women’s Year (IWY) would not have been created. Yet many of the same issues which caused controversy for the women’s movement plagued both the national and state IWY conferences. These included abortion, lesbianism, and the Equal Rights Amendment.

Several factors created the climate for the women’s movement in the United States. Recent work by historians has identified that middle-class women in the 1950s,

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<sup>1</sup>Ellie Colton, “A Mormon Woman Looks at the ERA,” *Washington Post*, 21 November 1977.

generally thought to be traditionalist, were in fact on the forefront of social and gender change. By having families early and pursuing education or employment later in life, they helped promote a flexible gender-role standard. An increase in the number of women who attended college brought the realization that women lacked the same opportunities as men in the workforce. With a rise in the number of single women and a lower birth rate, women stayed in the workforce and faced lower wages and few opportunities for advancement. Women who participated in the civil rights movement realized they, as women, also faced discrimination. All of these factors set the stage for the women's movement.<sup>2</sup>

Several key events created momentum for the beginning of the movement. First was John F. Kennedy's creation of the President's Commission on the Status of Women. The commission generated a report on the condition of women and raised hopes of its members in achieving reform. This report advocated tax breaks, government involvement in ending job discrimination and equal pay. This commission laid the groundwork for future groups and precipitated the first piece of ameliorative legislation, the Equal Pay Act of 1963.<sup>3</sup>

Another influential event was the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty

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<sup>2</sup>Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 4-9, 78-81, 134-139, 223-226; Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and its Relation to the Policy Process* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1975), 21-35; Alice S. Rossi, *Feminists in Politics: A Panel Analysis of the First National Women's Conference* (New York: Academic Press, 1982), 5-14.

<sup>3</sup>Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues, 1945-1968* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 109-118; Freeman, 52-55.

Friedan in 1963. Friedan identified “the problem with no name” that was common among housewives. They felt unfulfilled and yearned for something more. They could not understand nor name what the problem was. These women started day cares, health clinics, clubs and other organizations to fill the void. Many housewives went back to work or pursued higher education. These women faced resistance from their communities, husbands, and other housewives. Friedan did not advocate rejecting the traditional roles of wife and mother, but she suggested women look for meaningful work to supplement these roles. Friedan’s work voiced what many women felt and was instrumental in calling women to action.<sup>4</sup>

An important association created in 1966 was the National Organization for Women (NOW). Women frustrated with the lack of progress on the federal level, including female politicians and lobbyists, began this organization with the intent to put political pressure on the legislative and executive branches to end discrimination and pass reforms. The organization’s first president was Betty Friedan.<sup>5</sup>

The movement spread when women who were disenchanted with the New Left and the Civil Rights Movement founded groups to raise awareness on the local and national levels. Often, these groups focused on new concerns, including rape, battered women, child care, poverty, welfare, and the status of homemakers and minority women. In addition, women brought new issues to the forefront: media portrayal of women, sexist

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<sup>4</sup>Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), 26-30, 350-365; Rossi, 14; Freeman, 53.

<sup>5</sup>Freeman, 54.

images, stereotyping, male dominance, and gender roles. This created tremendous disunity within the movement and made it the focus of opposition from conservatives. One of the most controversial issues supported by the women's movement was the Equal Rights Amendment.<sup>6</sup>

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was first proposed in 1923. Although it had been reworded twice since that time, the amendment remained virtually the same in purpose – to ensure that all people regardless of sex were treated fairly. The National Women's Party (NWP), which had existed since 1916, succeeded in reintroducing the amendment in Congress every year without any significant results. Primarily a lobbyist group, the NWP remained separate from other women's groups. However, in 1967 the ERA became a subject of debate once again.<sup>7</sup>

At the 1967 NOW conference, members voted to adopt the ERA into their Bill of Rights for Women. In 1970 twenty-four NOW women interrupted a hearing being held by the Senate Judicial Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments and demanded that hearings on the ERA be scheduled. This brought the ERA into serious consideration once again. After much debate and lobbying, on 10 August 1970 the ERA passed the House by a vote of 354 to 23. It passed the Senate on 22 March 1972 with a vote of 84 to 8. It

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<sup>6</sup>Freeman, 55-59, 82-85, 134-141. The full text of the Equal Rights Amendment can be found in Appendix A.

<sup>7</sup>Freeman, 63-75, 220-222; for a more detailed account see Mary Frances Berry, *Why ERA Failed: Politics, Women's Rights, and the Amending Process of the Constitution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

now had to be ratified by thirty-eight states.<sup>8</sup>

By 1977 momentum for ratification of the amendment had waned. Twenty-eight states ratified the amendment in the first year; supporters were confident it would pass. After a few years the process stalled with only three states ratifying the amendment in 1974, one more in 1975, and the last state, Indiana, in 1977. Two states rescinded their vote: Nebraska and Tennessee. In 1975, New York and New Jersey rejected referenda on the amendment after previously ratifying it. From January of 1975 to 1977, twelve states voted against the amendment.<sup>9</sup>

Mobilization of conservatives halted the process of ratification. The ERA was not widely known to the public in general until both the House and Senate passed the amendment. Opponents of the ERA did not have time to mobilize until the amendment was sent to the states. The leader of the opposition was Phyllis Schlafly, the “Sweetheart of the Silent Majority.” Schlafly was an influential activist in the Republican party and was involved in other campaigns and organizations. Her background allowed her to effectively reach and mobilize millions of voters against the ERA.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Freeman, 212-215; Winifred D. Wandersee, *On the Move: American Women in the 1970s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), 177. Utah’s representatives and senators varied in their support for the amendment. In the House, Democrat Gunn McKay voted against the amendment; Republican Sherman P. Lloyd abstained. In the Senate, Republican Wallace F. Bennet voted against the ERA while Democrat Frank E. Moss voted for it.

<sup>9</sup>Wandersee, 187, 193; Hoyt Gimlin, ed., *The Women’s Movement: Achievements and Effects* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1977), 137; Freeman, 209-222.

<sup>10</sup>Freeman, 216-218; Carol Felsenthal, *The Biography of Phyllis Schlafly: The Sweetheart of the Silent Majority* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1982).

The ERA did not come to the attention of Schlafly until a friend asked her to participate in a debate in 1971. After researching the background and possible implications of the amendment, Schlafly became determined to defeat it. While it was too late to block passage in the House and Senate, Schlafly resolved to block state ratification of the ERA. She organized the National Committee to Stop ERA, dedicated her monthly publication, the *Phyllis Schlafly Report*, to disseminating information about the possible harmful effects of the amendment, and traveled to various states to speak out against the ERA before state legislatures. By 1973 Stop ERA had grown to several thousand members in twenty-six states.<sup>11</sup>

In 1973 the John Birch Society began to mobilize against the ERA. Other organizations soon followed: the National Council of Catholic Women, the Communist Party, the Ku Klux Klan, the Liberty Lobby, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Conservative Caucus. Like Schlafly, activists organized specific groups to defeat the ERA: WWW (Women Who Want to be Women), FOE (Females Opposed to Equality), and AWARE (American Women Are Richly Endowed or American Women Against ERA). In 1975 Schlafly also founded the Eagle Forum and dedicated its newsletter to combating the ERA.<sup>12</sup>

Schlafly argued the passage of the amendment would subject women to the draft, deny wives the support of their husbands, alter custody laws, and remove protective legislation for women. Specifically, she argued that state governments would have to

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<sup>11</sup>Freeman, 216-220.

<sup>12</sup>Wandersee, 179-181; Freeman, 217-220.

transfer power over many areas to the federal government. The federal government would then create a national standard that would not allow states to meet the needs and concerns of local communities. The amendment, she asserted, would give Congress the power of enforcement and the Supreme Court the power of interpretation.<sup>13</sup>

The ERA further became a complicated issue when traditionalists interpreted it as a symbol of the gender revolution. They argued the ERA was concocted by feminists to free them of the social obligations of being female by removing all legal distinctions between men and women. It reflected male values; family and children were considered restrictive.<sup>14</sup>

Conservatives argued passage and future interpretation of the ERA would force all laws to conform to a unisex standard; all references to sex in current laws would have to be removed. It would assure men and women would be treated equally by laws. The possible implications or interpretations were shocking. The ERA could be used to legalize homosexual marriages. It would lead to same-sex bathrooms, since past interpretation had ruled separate was never equal. Women would no longer be allowed to stay at home while their husbands supported them; this would be unequal. Instead a women would have to provide an equal income, the same as her husband, thereby removing the mother from the home and forcing families to place their children in day-care centers.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Wandersee, 179-81; Freeman, 221.

<sup>14</sup>Donald G. Mathews and Jane Sherron DeHart, *Sex, Gender, and Politics of ERA: A State and the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 30-92, 152-155.

<sup>15</sup>Mathews and DeHart, 152-166.

With judicial review of the amendment, women's traditional roles as mother and wife could be legally challenged, and the family structure would be forced to change. While ERA supporters contended this was foolish and absurd, past experience with court cases such as *Roe v. Wade* showed the Supreme Court was capable of radical interpretations that contradicted the values of conservatives.<sup>16</sup>

The ERA was not the only target of conservatives. At the 1967 NOW conference, when the issue of whether or not to adopt reproductive freedom (abortion) and the ERA into their Bill of Rights for Women arose, many members threatened to leave over the question of abortion. The issue continued to be debated until both were adopted. This cost NOW the support of the conservative wing as well as fundamentalist women. NOW also lost credibility among conservatives with the adoption of an alternative lifestyle plank in their Bill of Rights for Women in 1971 under the direction of Aileen Hernandez. The media further complicated the situation by linking the movement to lesbianism. According to the media, to be a feminist meant supporting abortion, the ERA, and homosexuality, when in reality many feminist groups did not. The result was disunity within the movement and the rise of suspicion and opposition from conservatives.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>David J. Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality : the Right to Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). *Roe v. Wade* was a landmark Supreme Court case regarding a woman's right to abortion. Many conservatives abhor abortion and support the right of the fetus to live. They were outraged by the Supreme Court's decision.

<sup>17</sup>Freeman 75-139; Wandersee, 40-47. Aileen Hernandez is considered to be more liberal in supporting the controversial issue of lesbianism. Betty Friedan, the previous president, specifically opposed NOW's support of lesbianism since she believed it would discredit the movement and repel conservative women.

It was amid these controversies that IWY was created. In 1972 the United Nations formed a commission to study the status of the world's women because of rising demands to end discrimination. The commission declared 1975 as "International Women's Year." Led by the United States and nine other countries, women pressured the U.N. to sponsor a meeting in Mexico City that summer.<sup>18</sup>

The United States actively supported IWY by donating \$100,000 to the Mexico City conference. In addition, with a small grant from the Department of State, the U.S. Center for International Women's Year opened in 1973. Its purpose was not to lobby but to generate interest and distribute information concerning IWY with a mailing list of over 8,000 names.<sup>19</sup>

The Mexico City meeting drew 1,300 delegates from over 130 countries. Women who attended discussed the status of women and how to remove barriers that prevented women from participating fully in society. They created a "World Plan of Action," a list of goals to be implemented over a ten-year period. Thirty-nine Utah women attended. As a result of the 1975 conference, the United Nations designated the next ten years as the "Decade of the Woman."<sup>20</sup>

Prior to the Mexico City conference, President Gerald Ford established a national commission to study barriers and issues of greatest concern for women. The National

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<sup>18</sup>Gimlin, 125-136.

<sup>19</sup>Gimlin, 125-136.

<sup>20</sup>Martha Sonntag Bradley, "The Mormon Relief Society and the International Women's Year," *Journal of Mormon History* 21, no. 1 (1995): 108-110; Gimlin, 125-126, 136.

Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year (National IWY Commission) facilitated and coordinated government participation in IWY as well as generated a report on the status of women in the United States titled "To Form a More Perfect Union." The report resulted from the efforts of Catherine East, who set up thirteen committees to review the progress made toward women's rights since the Kennedy Commission's report and to make new recommendations.<sup>21</sup>

In January 1975, Congresswomen Bella S. Abzug of New York and Patsy Mink of Hawaii introduced a bill asking for a national women's meeting to be held as part of the Bicentennial Celebration. After House Government Operations Subcommittee and floor debate, Public Law 94-167 was passed. This ordered the National IWY Commission to hold state and regional women's meetings prior to holding a national conference. The committee planned the national meeting to be held in November 1977 in Houston. State meetings would elect delegates to the national conference. The conferences should assess the status of women, identify barriers that prohibited women from fully participating in society, and develop recommendations on how to remove such barriers. The national conference would also generate a report on what women wanted and establish a timetable

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<sup>21</sup>Gimlin, 136; Bradley, 108-110; Wandersee, 186; Rossi, 24-16. This commission was established on 9 January 1975 by President Gerald Ford. Commissions are often altered when elections displace the majority party. This can be seen when the Republican Ford administration was replaced with the Democratic Carter administration. President Carter also increased the size of the commission to forty-three members. Whereas the earlier National IWY Commission was more conservative in its approach under Jill Ruckelshaus, in 1976 the new Carter administration appointed Representative Bella S. Abzug as the presiding officer. Under Abzug the commission was perceived as being liberal and pro-feminist. Many conservatives were suspicious of its motives and actions. See Rossi, *Feminists in Politics*, for a more complete history of the National IWY Commission.

for achieving the objectives set forth in the recommendations.<sup>22</sup>

The National IWY Commission created a list of suggested recommendations based on its 1976 report “To Form a More Perfect Union.” This report mirrored the agenda of NOW and other feminist organizations. The core agenda consisted of sixteen resolutions. Women in all states could vote on these resolutions, modify them, and submit new resolutions in state meetings. The National IWY Commission gave suggested topics, background material, and guidelines for discussion on planning workshops; however, these were just guidelines. The commission intended for the state meetings to provide a forum for discussion.<sup>23</sup>

Like the feminist movement, the national IWY conference suffered from many controversial issues, the foremost being abortion, lesbianism, and the ERA. Lesbian groups succeeded in getting thirty states to submit a resolution advocating lesbianism to the National IWY Commission. Despite this, the ERA became the most problematic.<sup>24</sup>

The National IWY Commission clearly made the ERA a central issue in state meetings and the national meeting by forming a resolution around the amendment. The commission also stated it would do all in its power to ensure the ERA passed. Since this resolution, as well as others, would affect federal policy, the IWY meetings became a battleground in many states, pitting liberals against conservatives, homemakers against

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<sup>22</sup>Wandersee, 187; Bradley, 109-111; Caroline Bird, *What Women Want* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 47-48.

<sup>23</sup>Wandersee, 186; Bird, 47-48.

<sup>24</sup>Wandersee, 192.

feminists. Each group wanted to make its agenda heard. The goal of the commission was to show that women of the nation would and could agree on certain rights and issues related to all women. These rights and solutions would form a national plan of action. As state meetings demonstrated, especially in Utah, no consensus existed among women. With the national conference supporting a pro-feminist agenda, conservatives became concerned with the outcome of the state IWY conferences and began to mobilize.<sup>25</sup>

### **Unique Problems for the Utah IWY Conference: The LDS Church, the ERA and Feminism**

The political atmosphere surrounding the Utah IWY conference cannot be understood without knowledge of LDS Church opposition to the ERA. The LDS Church was not the only religious institution to oppose the ERA; the amendment had increasingly become suspect in many religious circles because of association with the women's movement, pro-abortion activists, and homosexuals. Like other groups, the LDS Church played a decisive role in shaping the actions of its members to defeat the amendment. Since 70 percent of Utah's population was LDS, except in Salt Lake City which is approximately 50 percent, the LDS Church's campaign against the ERA heavily influenced the outcome of the state IWY conference.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Wandersee, 188-89. The Commission also established ERAmerica, which was a national organization designed to unify efforts and groups toward ratification of the amendment.

<sup>26</sup>Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: the Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 366-368; William B. Smart, ed., *Deseret News 1977 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1977), 211.

In 1974 the Special Affairs Committee of the LDS Church was organized to study current issues and decide what response (or lack thereof) the church should make. Barbara Smith, General President of the Relief Society, had studied women's issues and decided the ERA was not the best way to solve many of the problems women faced.<sup>27</sup> She met with members of her board and the Special Affairs committee and Smith suggested she make an official stand on the issue. On 13 December 1974, she spoke against the ERA at an LDS Institute devotional; the press were invited as well. Numerous articles and interviews involving Barbara Smith followed, including television appearances.<sup>28</sup>

Utah soundly defeated the reintroduced ERA in 1975.<sup>29</sup> However, in 1976 the ERA needed to be ratified by four more states to make it an amendment. The LDS Church shifted its focus to coordinating efforts to defeat the ERA in other states. The LDS Church's First Presidency officially made the ERA a moral issue; they took a public

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<sup>27</sup>There is some debate over whether or not Barbara Smith decided on her own to oppose the ERA or whether she was following the advice of Church leaders in making her opinions public. Smith's memoirs suggest she had already decided against the amendment and wanted to consult with male leaders on how to effectively communicate this to female members. D. Michael Quinn, in his article "The LDS Church's Campaign Against the Equal Rights Amendment," *Journal of Mormon History* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1994), suggests Gordon B. Hinckley and James E. Faust, then members of the Special Affairs committee, requested that Barbara Smith make a statement based on their view of the amendment. It is also possible that both parties had reached this conclusion somewhat separately and their actions coincided. It is only important in deciding whether she was following male orders against an amendment that she might otherwise have supported. After speaking with her personally, reading her memoirs, and Derr, Cannon, and Beecher's *Women of the Covenant*, this author is convinced that she did oppose the amendment based on her own convictions and study.

<sup>28</sup>Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 366-367.

<sup>29</sup>Utah defeated the ERA 54-21 on 18 February 1975.

stance against the ERA in October 1976 by stating, “We firmly believe that the Equal Rights Amendment is not the answer” under the title, “First Presidency Opposes ERA.” Church leaders traveled to speak against the amendment; local stake leaders were given direction on how to organize members and get involved. The Relief Society also published a pamphlet titled: “Why Mormon Women Oppose the ERA.” This pamphlet urged women to become informed on the major issues, organize themselves politically, and uphold righteous principles.<sup>30</sup>

With Church leaders taking a firm stance on the ERA, it soon became a controversial issue amongst its members. To support the amendment would mean not following the direction of their leaders. Many LDS men and women changed their stance due to the LDS Church’s influence, believing they could not go against the divine counsel of the prophet and his counselors. Those who supported the ERA often found themselves treated hostilely by other LDS members. These women believed their faith was being questioned because they supported legislation which LDS leaders opposed. Pro-ERA women felt intense pressure to change their position, and they struggled both emotionally and spiritually with their decision to support the amendment.<sup>31</sup>

Coupled with the controversy over the ERA, Mormon women felt confused by the

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<sup>30</sup>D. Michael Quinn, “The LDS Church’s Campaign Against the Equal Rights Amendment,” *Journal of Mormon History* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 107- 110; “LDS Leaders Oppose ERA,” *Deseret News*, 22 October 1976, B-1; Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 368-369.

<sup>31</sup>Bradley, 116; Molly Ivins, “Many Mormon Women Feel Torn Between Equal Rights Proposal and Church,” *New York Times*, 26 November 1979, B-9; Sonia Johnson, *From Housewife to Heretic* (Albuquerque: Wildfire Books, 1989).

growing tide of feminism. In the early 1970s the LDS Church urged women not to become heavily involved. As the women's movement became more radical with the adoption of abortion and lesbian tenets, the LDS Church leaders spoke out against these elements while not openly stating their disapproval of the movement as a whole. The LDS Church combated the perceived threat of feminism by counseling women to stay in the home as mothers and wives. Many members translated this disapproval to mean the leaders and the LDS Church opposed feminism. Many members assumed a righteous Latter-day Saint could not be a feminist.<sup>32</sup>

Not all Mormon women experienced this turmoil. These LDS women accepted and gloried in their roles as homemakers and mothers. They believed they had chosen the greater calling. The difference in opinions caused friction between church members. Members who felt unfulfilled with "just being a housewife" were ostracized by other church members. LDS women who worked by choice were scorned by LDS women who stayed home. Those who fought for women's rights became targets of hostility. They were accused of rejecting or trying to destroy the God-given role of women and the family.<sup>33</sup>

As was true for other religious and conservative groups, LDS women were

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<sup>32</sup>"Message from the First Presidency," *Ensign* 1 (January 1971): 1; Quinn, 101-102; Elouise Bell, "The Implications of Feminism at BYU," *Brigham Young University Studies* 16, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 527-539; Melody R. McClure, "Feminism, Mormonism, and Fascinating Womanhood," *Exponent II* 3, no. 4 (September 1977): 7.

<sup>33</sup>Claudia Lauper Bushman, "Women in Dialogue: An Introduction," *Dialogue, A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6, no. 2 (1971): 5-6; Cornella Novak, "To Have a Career or be a Homemaker?" *Exponent II* 2, no. 1 (September 1975):8; Linda Gene Walser, "What Value is Womanhood?" *Exponent II* 1, no. 5 (June 1975): 3.

polarized by the women's movement and the ERA into two opposing camps. The LDS Church's opposition to the ERA and growing hostility toward feminists caused many members to fear the conference. In part, it explained why the LDS Church eventually instigated a quota system to guarantee Mormon attendance and why the results of the conference were so volatile.

Past research on Utah's IWY conference includes several articles from women who attended the conference and from historians. Most explore the relationship of the conference to the battle over ratification of the ERA. Others examine the events of the conference to discuss its failures and the role of the LDS Church. Several examine the conference in a national context. What is significant in each work is its portrayal of the LDS Church's role at Utah's conference and how each depicts conservatives.

Caroline Bird, in *What Women Want, From the Official Report to the President, the Congress and the People of the United States*, discusses the events of the national IWY conference in Houston, including the torch relay, exhibits, the history of IWY, and a summary of state meetings. While not covering each meeting specifically, she focuses on those that were most memorable, such as the first state meeting in Vermont; meetings involving ethnic minorities like Alaska and Puerto Rico; and controversial meetings such as Mississippi, Missouri, and Utah.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Bird, 47-53. Bird's book is based on the National IWY Commission's Report *The Spirit of Houston*. Bird wrote the chapter, "Every Woman Her Say - State Conferences," in the Commission's report. It is nearly identical to the state meeting chapter in *What Women Want* with only minor changes.

Bird describes the Utah meeting as being taken over by conservative forces, which she labels anti-change. On one hand, she praises Utah for holding fifty mass meetings to generate interest but criticizes the conference's outcome. Because Utah women rejected all national resolutions and changed the intent of all workshop resolutions offered by the pro-IWY state committee, she infers that the majority of women at the Utah conference did not show compassion toward disadvantaged women or minorities and that they were not concerned with solving world problems. Regarding the Utah delegates she comments that despite the outcome of Utah's conference they "showed compassion and supported resolutions for the disabled, older women, and minorities when they got to Houston." This implies that the delegates finally overcame their conservative Utah mentality and showed the true spirit of feminism at the conference.<sup>35</sup>

This viewpoint is extended to conservatives in general when she summarizes the outcome of controversial state meetings. Bird categorizes conservative forces negatively, using the term "anti-change" to refer to women or groups who opposed IWY-sponsored resolutions and viewpoints. Bird adapted her report from the National IWY Commission's report and believed anti-change forces aimed to subvert feminist agendas and the inevitable progress of the women's movement. She points out many negative aspects of conservative actions at state conferences. Specifically, she portrays these women as being uncaring and intolerant of others and opposing all resolutions without providing alternative solutions.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Bird, 48-52.

<sup>36</sup>Bird, 43-50.

Bird's work does not examine the Utah State IWY meeting in detail. Her intent is to provide a summary of state meetings as a background to the National IWY Conference. Her work is significant in how it portrays conservatives, their actions, and motives. She implies that conservatives were not compassionate toward those who faced discrimination and that they were opposed to any changes at all. Bird's approach is often the basis for other works on IWY.

Several articles examine the Utah conference in more detail. Each provides a different outlook as to the reasons why the conference was so controversial, and each relates this to other events within Utah. Many of them share the same view of conservatives as Bird.

Dixie Snow Huefner published her experience at Utah's IWY meeting. Huefner was asked to recruit ten women from her LDS ward. Huefner briefly describes the atmosphere of the conference. She noticed the crowd was hostile to the state IWY committee and was determined to keep control in their hands. Huefner proposes several theories to explain how women acted and voted. Huefner suggests that women voted against major issues such as abortion and the ERA due to their beliefs. However, on minor or moderate issues they voted no to send a clear message to the federal government that they were opposed to a feminist agenda. Women did not examine issues on individual merit and were influenced heavily by pre-caucus meetings.<sup>37</sup>

She blames the outcome of the conference on confusion and lack of organization.

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<sup>37</sup>Dixie Snow Huefner, "Church and Politics at the Utah IWY Conference," *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought* 11, no. 1 (1978): 58-75.

There were too many workshops for all the women voting to attend; there were only a few hours in which to debate resolutions regarding complex problems and issues. In addition, sheer numbers contributed to the problem: too many attendees, not enough materials, and not enough space. There was no need to find compromises to meet minority needs or wants. Due to time, women voted on resolutions as a block, causing many worthwhile proposals to be rejected. Furthermore, many women were ignorant and unfamiliar with the women's movement. When they were in doubt, they voted no.<sup>38</sup>

The outcome of Utah's conference seems to confirm the assumption that conservatives intended to reject all national resolutions and pro-IWY state resolutions. However, many resolutions formed by conservatives in workshops failed to pass the floor. Huefner argues this was due to the lack of information the workshops provided. Only those who attended the workshop really understood the issue and how it would be implemented. Many women voted no on worthwhile issues because they did not understand them. In addition if a resolution hinted at increased government regulation, it was speedily voted down in the plenary session.

Huefner describes conservatives in much the same way as Bird. She asserts they showed no compassion to most disadvantaged groups except for female offenders. She says, "The body of decisions was politically conservative and out of spirit with the national women's movement." Conservatives revolted against increased government control but

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<sup>38</sup>Huefner, 70-75. Dixie Snow Huefner, Linda Sillitoe and Martha Bradley (the latter two will be discussed shortly) are both secondary and primary sources since they recount the author's personal opinions and feelings during the conference. All attended the conference and viewed the outcome negatively.

felt it was appropriate for government to take a stand on certain moral issues and even promote family values. Thus, paradoxically, government could intervene in moral issues only if it promoted the “right” ones. Huefner does not believe that national resolutions would have passed if voting had been held at the end of conference as was the case at other conferences. They were rejected out of protest, not ignorance.<sup>39</sup>

When addressing the role of the LDS Church, Huefner attributes the large turnout of women to the quota system. Right-wing groups acted out as individuals, not church representatives, and filled the vacuum created by the Relief Society’s lack of information to women. Huefner implies that the Relief Society was not displeased with the pre-caucus meetings; otherwise they would have been more active in stopping them. Huefner believes the LDS Church approved of the overall results of the conference, although perhaps it was not so enthused with the offensive actions of some of its members.

Linda Sillitoe presents another view of the conference. She also attended the meeting and examines why it was so volatile. According to Sillitoe, battle lines were drawn before it started, and issues forced women into two camps that many did not fit into naturally. This tension caused hurt, distrust, and controversy. She argues that it was clear that most women who attended the conference were convinced it had been rigged. Many women felt they had been purposely excluded from the conference. This atmosphere emerged directly from the LDS Church’s involvement in encouraging attendance.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Huefner, 66-68.

<sup>40</sup>Linda Sillitoe, “Women Scorned: Inside the IWY Conference,” *Utah Holiday* 6, no. 12 (August 1977): 26-28, 63-69.

Sillitoe describes the scene as an “irony of bungled good intentions.” Barbara Smith wanted to encourage women to attend with a quota but was naive in not thinking that President Ezra Taft Benson’s<sup>41</sup> name on the letter would be a red flag to right wing organizations.<sup>42</sup>

Into this “blunder” stepped two key groups, Let’s Govern Ourselves (LGO) and the Conservative Caucus. Both groups organized informative meetings. Sillitoe openly accuses these groups of using official church channels and so-called “calling trees” to indoctrinate women against IWY and its intentions in these meetings. The groups succeeded in their goals; women attendees were manipulated to be suspicious of the meeting and the committee who planned it. Because of this, Sillitoe argues it was a miracle the conference “stayed afloat.”<sup>43</sup>

Sillitoe characterizes conservative groups similarly to Bird. She contends their intent was to defeat, not to solve or listen. Women at the conference were manipulated to vote no on all issues. She implies they might have voted for many of the resolutions if circumstances had been different. Conservatives opposed any changes, showed little compassion toward disadvantaged groups, and would not consider any of the resolutions, whether good or bad. Conservative groups took advantage of fearful women and were

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<sup>41</sup>Benson was then the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. His office contacted area and stake leaders concerning the conference. Benson had known connections with the John Birch Society and other right-wing groups. A copy of the letters sent out by the Relief Society is contained in Appendix B and C.

<sup>42</sup>Sillitoe, 27.

<sup>43</sup>Sillitoe, 28, 63-64.

directly responsible for the results of the conference.

Other historians have further examined the conference's connection to the LDS Church's campaign against the ERA. D. Michael Quinn argues the LDS Church was directly involved in Utah's IWY conference. The IWY meetings were perceived by Church leaders as being part of the "national feminist agenda." While being concerned, LDS Church leaders initially resisted efforts to recruit women, as LDS attendance at the conference might be seen as an endorsement of feminism. Quinn asserts someone, though he does not identify anyone by name, realized they could overwhelm the meeting, "set aside the presumed feminist agenda," and send a delegation that would support traditional values at the Houston conference. Key leaders drafted a letter requesting all wards send ten women as representatives and formed an unofficial committee to host meetings to encourage women to vote for a list of anti-ERA women.<sup>44</sup>

Leaders said these preparations were due to calls from other states about feminist railroading, which Quinn says is unlikely. Mormons who were asked to attend the conference also attended meetings led by Dennis Kerr and other conservatives. Quinn argues John Birch Society members and other right-wing individuals often took over these meetings, using LDS Church authorities' names without permission; Quinn identifies Georgia Peterson specifically.<sup>45</sup>

Because of the LDS Church's actions, Quinn contends that women rejected all issues blindly in one bloc vote. A spokeswoman from the Relief Society told the women

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<sup>44</sup>Quinn, 109-112.

<sup>45</sup>Quinn, 111-114.

to vote no and “the women obeyed.” After the conference the Relief Society sent out a letter which stated that right-wing groups had contacted women through ward channels without the church’s approval. Quinn implies this letter was just for damage control since many of the key figures were part of these groups. The LDS Church offered no public criticism of the conference and was pleased with the results.<sup>46</sup>

Other state meetings followed the same tactics used in Utah. Men with walkie-talkies coordinating voting, busing of women, and bloc voting would all be used in subsequent meetings. These tactics proved extremely effective, even in areas where LDS women were a minority. Quinn argues this extension of power demonstrates the LDS Church’s ability to manipulate local politics in favor of its national anti-ERA campaign.<sup>47</sup>

Another historian, Martha Bradley, addresses the conference in terms of the LDS Church’s involvement while examining the events of the conference in greater detail. Like Quinn, she contends the controversy of the conference emerged directly from the LDS Church’s campaign against the ERA. Bradley argues the IWY Utah committee was unbiased. They tried to be fair and tried to plan the meeting without controversy or a one-sided agenda by providing resolutions they thought most women would support. The committee’s main goal was to encourage dialogue between women. Conservatives vehemently argued the committee was biased; Bradley contends this was a false

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<sup>46</sup>Quinn, 114-115.

<sup>47</sup>D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1997), 116-117. Quinn’s article, “The LDS Church’s Campaign Against the Equal Rights Amendment,” was published previously and forms a major chapter in this book.

assumption and implies that conservatives were irrational for believing this.<sup>48</sup>

Bradley also argues the LDS Church was involved. LDS Church leaders realized the importance of the Utah IWY Conference in their campaign against the ERA. Leaders did not openly tell women to vote against all resolutions. Bradley explains that LDS women were so grounded in church beliefs that indoctrination was not needed. Bradley states that church leaders were aware of how women would vote and knew that they could sway the conference just by motivating women to attend. Bradley does assert that Smith and other leaders were surprised by the misuse of church networks by conservative groups and were unprepared for what happened.<sup>49</sup>

Bradley implies that men like Kerr directly manipulated the church's system to mobilize and educate women at mass meetings by means of telephone trees directly instituted by him or his group. These meetings caused the polarization between women at the conference. Uninformed but faithful LDS women who thought they were defending their homes, religion, and family came prepared for battle.<sup>50</sup>

Bradley portrays conservative women as being naive and easily manipulated. She follows Bird in labeling them anti-change and those "who saw more value in the status quo." She implies that the relative comfort of their lives prevented them from empathizing with "others less fortunate or those whose situations were more challenging." The attitude of conservatives, coupled with manipulation by right-wing groups, created the

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<sup>48</sup>Bradley, 105-106, 112-115, 118-122.

<sup>49</sup>Bradley, 123-127.

<sup>50</sup>Bradley, 130-135.

turmoil at the conference. The Utah IWY conference was “a fight with a clear victory but many, many casualties.”<sup>51</sup>

While some historians view conservatives negatively and believe their motives lacked justification, other scholars examine the IWY conferences in a more positive light. *On the Move*, by Winifred D. Wandersee, looks at IWY in the national context of the 1970s decade. The author sees the event as demonstrating the many problems plaguing the women’s movement. Suffering from factionalism and association with radical feminism (lesbianism and complete societal change), the women’s movement had never enjoyed broad support among Americans. Instead the conference showed the viability of the opposition by providing a focal point for the right to organize against. Two key issues, abortion and the ERA, brought women who would otherwise have not become involved into the political scene. The IWY meetings became a battleground for conservatives and liberal forces over such issues.<sup>52</sup>

Wandersee contends the National IWY committee had an agenda: it was determined to have the ERA passed. Houston then became the arena for power politics, including political maneuvering and lobbying by groups with their own agendas. Despite the adoption of core resolutions, the large number of minority reports sent a clear message that not all women supported them. The results of the IWY conferences foretold the eventual end of the campaign for the ERA and the declining viability of the

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<sup>51</sup>Bradley, 114-115, 148.

<sup>52</sup>Wandersee, 175-188.

women's movement.<sup>53</sup>

Like Bird, Wandersee interprets conservatives in a model similar to that of Richard Hofstadter; they had status anxiety and would prefer to “make a bad bargain with marriage and family rather than risk the misogyny of the outside world.” They resisted change and were mainly motivated by paranoia and fear.<sup>54</sup>

While being somewhat neutral toward conservatives, her work examines the intent of the National IWY Committee and of special interest groups at state conferences. Her book does not assume conservatives misinterpreted the actions of the committee. Wandersee contends that right-wing groups had just cause to be concerned. Despite this, *On the Move* lacks detailed analysis of the motives behind conservatives and their actions.

One work in particular explains the actions of conservatives at the Utah IWY conference in more detail. Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, in their history of the Relief Society, *Women of Covenant*, examine the Relief Society's involvement in the Utah IWY meeting in the context of overall changes and transformation of the society during the 1970s. Under the leadership of Barbara Smith, the Relief Society increasingly focused on promoting women's involvement in their communities and in politics.<sup>55</sup>

The ERA and the IWY meetings became tied to the Relief Society's decision to speak out against immoral behavior and what it considered to be harmful legislation,

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<sup>53</sup>Wandersee, 189-192.

<sup>54</sup>Wandersee, *xii-xvii*, 191-192.

<sup>55</sup>Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 364-366.

including the ERA. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher contend this greatly influenced the climate of Utah's meeting. With the National IWY Committee taking a firm stance for the ERA, the IWY conferences became part of a complicated struggle over ratification with people battling each other more than issues.<sup>56</sup>

Derr, Cannon, and Beecher argue the format of the conferences also contributed to the problems. The National IWY Committee had selected fifteen basic recommendations in the national plan of action to be considered in advance. The participants in state meetings now thought they were voting on an already set plan of action instead of creating one. Others thought they should have more of a voice in developing plans. In addition, problems arose over differing expectations about the meetings' overall purpose. Special interest groups saw meetings as opportunities to push for power, while traditionalists saw them as a battlegrounds between good and evil. There were too many divisive issues for women to agree on. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher state the National IWY Committee was naive to think that they could endorse and push the ERA without causing controversy at the meetings. With a set agenda and a pro-ERA stance, the stage was set for confrontation.<sup>57</sup>

The authors argue the Relief Society tried to be impartial by encouraging women to become informed on the issues and vote according to their beliefs, but this created a vacuum for other groups to enter. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher state the use of priesthood channels "may have fueled a widely publicized charge that the Mormon male hierarchy had

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<sup>56</sup>Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 366-367.

<sup>57</sup>Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 367-370.

ordered Relief Society women to pack the Utah IWY conference.” Ironically, the request had originated with the IWY committee itself. Further complicating the problem, pre-conference sessions, lack of materials, and general disorder increased the tensions at the conference; women became polarized into two opposing camps.<sup>58</sup>

Derr, Cannon, and Beecher assert that little came out of the conference. Although conservatives had proposed alternative solutions to resolutions calling for increased federal funding and involvement, “many of the more liberal participants indignantly condemned such apparent lack of caring.”<sup>59</sup>

Although agreeing that the ERA was the central issue at the IWY conferences, *Women of Covenant* differs substantially from earlier discussed works by its treatment of conservatives. The tension of the conference did not come solely from right-wing groups. In addition, conservatives posed viable solutions to many problems which were disregarded by liberals, leading to conservatives being unfairly labeled as uncaring and uncompassionate.

Another scholar who further examines the conservative element at the conference provides a very different view. While commenting on a lecture by Bradley based on her article, David Magleby provided key insights into many controversies surrounding the historical analysis of this conference which are relevant. First, he pointed out that her interviews were elitist and structured. She mainly interviewed women who served on the committee; no interviews exist with conservatives such as Kerr. In addition there is

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<sup>58</sup>Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 370-371.

<sup>59</sup>Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 371-373.

abundant speculation on the motives of the thousands who voted no without ample evidence to support her claims.<sup>60</sup>

Bradley's article contends that the Utah IWY committee did not have a presumed agenda and was impartial; the national resolutions were also unbiased. Magleby argued this was untrue. The committee was biased – it had a specific agenda and experienced internal tensions among its members. He disagreed with her statements concerning the fairness and wording of the forty-four suggested state and national resolutions. Magleby asserted they contained specific intentions in their wording and that they conveyed a certain perception on the role of government. The resolutions manifested a very clear agenda. He also claimed that resolutions cannot be considered separately. They must be examined in the context of other resolutions. In this setting, even good resolutions were colored by comparison with others. Most of these resolutions were inconsistent with the values of Utah women, not just LDS Utah women at the time. IWY opponents correctly saw the resolutions as a threat.

During mass meetings, conservatives warned their members against questionable films that would be shown at the conference. Both Sillitoe and Bradley contend that none of the films would be considered pornographic. They cite this as proof that conservatives' fears were unjustified and irrational. On this issue Magleby countered that some of the

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<sup>60</sup>David B. Magleby, comments at "ERA and the IWY in Utah" by Martha Bradley, presented at a faculty seminar as part of the Women's Symposium sponsored by the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for LDS History, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 29 July 2003; tape recording in my possession. Magleby was then a political science professor at Brigham Young University and dean of the college of Family, Home, and Social Sciences. He has published several books on voting patterns and campaign finance reform in the United States.

movies would be considered pornographic, and many were inappropriate to Utah women and the values they supported. In addition, if the movies reinforced the Utah IWY committee's rhetoric it was safer to simply avoid watching them.<sup>61</sup>

Regarding conservative voters, Magleby argued that bloc voting is not only appropriate but democratic. "Rule of thumb, if this is what they want and are for, then it will be wise to vote against all their planks. . . . Not a bad rule of thumb in voting." He also pointed out that busy people cannot always study and become informed on all the issues. At the Utah IWY conference attendees had to vote on forty-four issues. Cue sheets and pre-printed forms played an important role in this conference. Women who attended knew where they stood on important issues and looked to more knowledgeable people to tell them about the others. Magleby compared the voting patterns at the Utah IWY conference to current voting trends in California, which regularly has forty-plus issues for voters to consider. Political groups often resort to cue sheets to inform their members. He argued these women were no different than other voters; what they did was normal and normally part of a democratic system.

As for women asking to be told how to vote, Magleby questioned why not. The women knew where they stood on a few issues, and they looked to leaders who shared their values. Why not ask Rex Lee<sup>62</sup> or Barbara Smith how they would vote and then

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<sup>61</sup>A list of films shown at Utah's IWY conference is contained in Appendix D. A few of the films dealt with breast cancer; others possibly promoted the ERA and day care. This controversy is further discussed in the final chapter.

<sup>62</sup>Rex Lee was a prominent LDS lawyer in Utah who spoke out against the Equal Rights Amendment. Lee would later become president of Brigham Young University.

follow their lead? Did these leaders tell women how to vote? No, but the women chose to vote the same as their leaders.

Concerning the role of the LDS Church, Magleby asked why scholars object to church groups mobilizing their members yet other groups receive no such censure. What is wrong with mobilizing one group but not another? He averred there was a double-standard regarding group participation specifically among religious organizations. LDS leaders had a right to be concerned about resolutions. The LDS Church should be able to encourage its members regarding political issues and events.

In order to understand the conference, Magleby offered a counter hypothesis – that the resolutions reinforced the perception that the committee had a hostile agenda, one that contradicted conservative values. In addition, this conference was a political event, not a meeting based on discussion. It needed to be understood as such. He described the meeting as a set of referendum questions on controversial topics, specifically on the issue of the largeness of government which ran counter to Utah's political climate. Like other scholars, he suggested that the conference was more about the ERA than IWY by stating the conference became an arena in which to battle over the ERA, where national and state votes mattered.

Magleby's comments placed the Utah IWY conference in a different light than that used by other scholars. While others discredit the actions of conservatives, he defended and explained the rationale behind them. Bloc voting, cue cards and mobilization were all normal and necessary voting practices in a democratic society. He did not assume voters were paranoid or ignorant; instead they behaved like most Americans in political situations.

The significance of past works is their portrayal of conservatives' actions at the conference, the LDS Church's involvement, and the importance of the struggle over the ERA. The conference was extremely volatile, causing much hurt and bitterness among those who planned it and those who attended. Who was to blame? With the exception of Wandersee, Derr, Cannon and Beecher, and Magelby, most scholars argued the results came directly from right-wing groups who manipulated women into voting against all issues without providing alternatives. This problem was further compounded by the quota system initiated by the LDS Church and the battle over ratification of the ERA. These authors characterized conservatives who attended the conference as unfeeling, ignorant, and easily manipulated.

Wandersee, Derr, Cannon and Beecher, and Magelby imply that conservatives saw the conference as a chance to become involved and find solutions. These works differ from others in their treatment of conservatives, believing conservatives had valid reasons for mobilizing and rejecting all national resolutions. While Wandersee, Derr, Cannon and Beecher, and Magelby attempt to explain the rationale behind conservatives' actions and mobilization, even these three sources do not examine conservatives' perspective of the conference or arguments inside the sessions. A closer look at the workshops and a more in-depth study of the actions of conservatives is needed to better understand what part they played in the conference.

## CHAPTER 2

### PREPARING FOR BATTLE: PERCEPTION AND MOBILIZATION OF CONSERVATIVE GROUPS AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

When I got home. . . Dan told me of an “International Women’s Year” Conference that was coming up. . . . At first when he said that the Church wanted the women to participate, it just sounded like some dumb women’s meeting and I didn’t want to go. But as he explained more – how the IWY is organized to promote the ERA and other things and how they have used deceitful tactics in other states’ conventions – I decided to go.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Preparing for Utah’s IWY Conference**

In February 1976 Utah Governor Calvin L. Rampton appointed Jan Tyler as chair of the yet-to-be-appointed state International Women’s Year (IWY) coordinating committee. Tyler was the ideal choice. She had been involved in planning IWY on the national level, had organized a group of Utah women to attend the Mexico City meeting in 1975, supported passage of the ERA, was a member of the Governor’s Commission on the Status of Women, and had acted as a liaison to the national commission. As a single, active LDS member, Tyler was then working at Brigham Young University as an education professor. She had previously worked in administration at Weber State College and Arizona State University. Tyler, who described herself as a feminist, recommended

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<sup>1</sup>Cheryl Carson, Unpublished Journal, 10 July 1977, as read in interview by author, 26 August 2003, American Fork, tape recording in author’s possession.

names to the National IWY Commission for Utah's IWY committee. Tyler had traveled extensively outside Utah and to other countries and brought what she described as a "world perspective" into planning the Utah IWY conference.<sup>2</sup>

In January 1977 the National IWY Commission appointed thirty-three Utah women to organize and plan the Utah IWY Conference; this group was known as the coordinating committee. The commission chose women to reflect the diversity of Utah women along lines of race, social status, age, ethnicity, and religion. Each group was represented in order to plan workshops and resolutions that would reflect the variety of opinions and needs of Utah women, not simply the voice of the majority. The National IWY Commission chose prominent, politically or socially active women; women with whom they had worked previously; and women recommended by Tyler. Utah's committee then selected women for the executive board, subcommittees, task-forces, and other positions. Tyler wielded enormous influence in this process.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Martha Sonntag Bradley, "The Mormon Relief Society and the International Women's Year," *Journal of Mormon History* 21, no. 1 (1995): 118-119; Jan Tyler, interview by Marcie Goodman, 21 February, 1992, Brigham Young University Women's Research Institute, Provo, photocopy of transcript in author's possession. Tyler later left BYU and worked for the Utah Board of Education.

<sup>3</sup>Public Law 94-167; Tyler, Oral History, 1992; Bradley, 117-119; *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee* (Salt Lake City: IWY Commission, 1977), folder 2, pg 6. This is a photocopy of the original report submitted to the National IWY Commission. It is contained in five folders but does not have page numbers. All page numbers are approximated. Bradley's article and other sources differ as to who chose the women for Utah's committee. Bradley maintains that Tyler herself selected the members of the committee, but Tyler's interview indicated that all women were chosen by the National IWY Commission although she did recommend many women. Tyler states that in many cases the women she suggested were not chosen. Sources differ as to whether the coordinating committee was created first or the executive committee. Tyler's interview uses the terms interchangeably, but the *Final Report of the*

The Utah IWY Committee operated out of a small office in the state capitol building, with a limited budget of \$25,000 from the federal government. Initially the group met roughly once a month and then weekly as the conference approached. The committee named the conference “Voice of Womankind” and scheduled it for June 24 and 25.<sup>4</sup>

The committee was charged with identifying specific problems for women, selecting topics for workshops, informing women of the conference, drafting potential resolutions, providing an environment for discussion of these resolutions, and drafting a list of potential delegates from the local population to represent Utah at the National IWY conference in Houston. In addition, they solicited contributions to help augment the funds given by the federal government. Their task involved forming some thirty subcommittees and task-forces, which meant over 300 people, including speakers, who would assist in planning the conference.<sup>5</sup>

To help in the preparations, the National IWY Commission provided several workshop guides, which contained information on planning the workshop, a list of common problems women faced on the topic, specific recommendations to consider, and

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*Utah International Women’s Year Coordinating Committee* states that the coordinating committee was chosen first, and then it selected the executive committee. Tyler wielded enormous influence in the make-up of the executive committee. A list of committee members can be found in Appendix G.

<sup>4</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992; *Final Report of the Utah International Women’s Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 2, pg 6.

<sup>5</sup>Bradley, 118-119; Tyler, Oral History, 1992; more information on the demographics of the committee can be found in Bradley’s article; *Final Report of the Utah International Women’s Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 2, pg 9.

some national statistics. Task-forces faced the daunting task of customizing the material to fit the needs and values of women in Utah in a limited time frame. Each task-force needed to identify how the issue affected Utah women specifically, what programs already existed that dealt with this issue, and possible solutions that could be implemented within Utah's culture and political climate. Workshops tended to focus on local and state-wide problems, with some time given to address the problem on a national level.<sup>6</sup>

All national workshop guides evolved from the information contained in "*To Form a More Perfect Union*," the 1976 report on the status of women. This four-hundred page book was divided into specific areas or topics for women. It contained 115 recommendations with background on each recommendation. This background included some national statistics, personal experiences, and the changes that needed to be made in each area. All forty-two national resolutions emerged from this report. Furthermore, the report gave specific guidelines on how the resolutions should be implemented by the federal government. Not surprisingly the report heavily advocated passage of the ERA and in many of the topics, such as lack of funding for women artists, the ERA was listed as a possible solution. All resolutions called for more government intervention to help solve the problems women faced.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Bradley, 122-123. Some task-forces were later divided. Others split their topic into more than one workshop. Due to constant changes in speakers, task-force chairs and volunteers, some task-forces were able to utilize the whole six months in planning their sessions. Others had as little as six weeks.

<sup>7</sup>Bradley, 122-123; Gloria Firmage, interview by author, 4 June 2004, Salt Lake City, tape recording in author's possession; National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, "*To Form a More Perfect Union*," *Justice for American Women* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976).

This guidebook was given to each task-force and subcommittee. Other copies were supposed to be made available to women who registered and wanted a copy. However, this material was in short supply. In addition, other organizations published shortened versions to inform their members. These smaller versions obviously supported the resolutions en masse or opposed policies of IWY without providing the extensive background contained in the original report. Utah's IWY committee also provided a short fact sheet to organizations they contacted.<sup>8</sup>

In preparation for the conference, Utah's new governor Scott M. Matheson declared the month of June as Utah Women's Month. Resolutions from this conference would be reported to local authorities, the governor of the state, President Jimmy Carter and Congress, and would serve as an agenda for the meeting in Houston. Any legal resident of Utah, male or female, over the age of sixteen could attend.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Involvement of Barbara Smith and the LDS Church**

LDS Church General Relief Society President Barbara Smith was aware of the activities in preparation of IWY from a variety of sources. Smith regularly met with a group of prominent and socially-active women to discuss issues of concern to women. Her assistant, Moana Ballif Bennet, organized monthly Saturday meetings where Smith would listen to women as they discussed social problems and possible solutions. This

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<sup>8</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992; Firmage, Oral History, 2004.

<sup>9</sup>*Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 2, pg 6-13.

discussion group allowed Smith to be abreast of current trends within the feminist movement and unique problems women faced. Topics that were discussed included abortion, ERA, unequal pay, divorce, and lack of job skills. Utah's IWY meeting was brought to her attention by this group.<sup>10</sup>

Smith also learned about IWY from Utah's IWY Committee. Tyler and the Outreach Committee had contacted many women's groups across the state, including government agencies, school districts, and county services. Members of the Utah IWY committee and subcommittees asked women to volunteer, encouraged female employees to attend the conference, requested information and statistics in planning workshops, and solicited donations. While speaking about the planned attendance of Ester Landa, the president of the National Council of Jewish Women, at the Utah conference, the discussion came up whether or not to contact religious groups. Tyler felt uneasy because that would mean contacting the Relief Society and the LDS Church. The committee spoke with other church groups first, other religious women's organizations, and then decided to speak with Barbara Smith. Tyler said the meeting was strictly informational, and she let it be known that other groups were also being contacted. She asked Smith to invite LDS women to attend and gave an informational packet and a fact sheet to Smith.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Aileen Clyde, interview by author, 12 April 2004, Springville, Utah, tape recording in author's possession; Barbara Smith, *A Fruitful Season* (Salt Lake City Utah: Bookcraft, 1988), 106-107. In addition, Ruth Funk, a member of Utah's IWY committee, was also serving as president of the Young Women's General Board for the LDS Church. It is possible Smith spoke with her concerning the conference.

<sup>11</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992. Tyler does not address specifically why she felt uneasy about contacting the LDS Church. The author believes it was due to the LDS Church's opposition to the ERA and general opposition to the women's movement.

Smith reported that she initially resisted efforts to ask LDS women to attend the conference through official channels. She recalled telling Tyler that if they did invite members, the conference would not be able to handle the large number. She said Tyler insisted it would not be a problem and encouraged her to contact LDS women about the conference anyway.<sup>12</sup>

From the beginning Smith's involvement centered on encouraging LDS women to attend and get involved. In one instance she personally met with and asked Gloria Firmage, who was chosen in 1977 as Utah's Homemaker of the Year, to volunteer to serve on a task-force. This encouragement stemmed from a desire to have conservative women be involved in order to counter the possibility of ultra-feminist groups dominating the conference. Smith also approved the use of Relief Society channels for planning and hosting the IWY-sponsored mass meetings.<sup>13</sup>

Before the conference the Outreach Committee planned public meetings to help inform women of the issues, discuss and rank topics in order of importance, and generate interest for the conference. Utah's IWY Committee requested help from the Relief

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<sup>12</sup>Smith, *A Fruitful Season*, 106-107; Barbara Smith, unrecorded interview by author, 5 April 2004, Salt Lake City.

<sup>13</sup>Bradley, 128-130; Clyde, Oral History, 2004; Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: the Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 370; Firmage, Oral History, 2004. In many of the primary sources the term "mass meetings" is used to refer both to the official meetings planned by the Outreach Committee and the mass meetings held just before the conference by political and religious groups. To avoid confusion, this paper will call meetings sponsored by Utah's committee "IWY-sponsored mass meetings" and the political meetings hosted by conservative groups or the LDS Church will be referred to as "mass meetings."

Society to plan and host these meetings. Local stake Relief Society presidents, as well as those who participated in Smith's discussion group, were asked to invite women and plan meetings around the state. Women from other organizations also participated. In less than a few weeks during May 1977, over fifty meetings were held around the state in local schools and recreational centers. Women came, picked which issues they would like to be discussed at the conference, received information, and asked questions. In addition, women could sign up for carpools. Not surprisingly, the top issues were the ERA, abortion, pornography, day care, rape laws, and equal pay. Some sources say the turnout was disappointing; others say it was a marginal success.<sup>14</sup>

Because of low attendance at IWY-sponsored mass meetings, Barbara Smith, her presidency, and Smith's discussion group became worried LDS women would not attend Utah's IWY conference. Aileen Clyde, who regularly met with Barbara Smith as a member of the discussion group, was asked to organize an IWY-sponsored mass meeting in her stake. She remembers calling several stake and ward leaders asking for help. None were interested in volunteering; few women came to the meeting.<sup>15</sup>

Several sources imply that Smith may have heard about the Utah IWY meeting from other channels. Tyler and others suggest male leaders learned about the conference through political organizations such as the John Birch Society and the Republican Party.

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<sup>14</sup>Clyde, Oral History, 2004; Smith, *A Fruitful Season*, 106-107; Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 370; Bradley, 129-130. No definitive estimate of how many women attended the mass meetings exists.

<sup>15</sup>Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 370; Clyde, Oral History, 2004; Smith, *A Fruitful Season*, 106-107.

These leaders would have contacted Smith. Smith also spoke with members of political groups. Smith herself indicated that many groups requested to speak with her concerning the conference. In addition, many women who lived outside Utah contacted Smith regarding the IWY conferences held in their areas.<sup>16</sup>

After meeting with Tyler and prior to hosting IWY-sponsored mass meetings, Smith had assigned women from her board to examine the national resolutions and their possible implications. She and her board decided many of the resolutions contradicted LDS values. With the low turnout at IWY-sponsored mass meetings, Smith feared LDS women would not attend the conference to represent the conservative population. Smith decided to use official church channels to urge women to attend the conference. Instead of providing the fact sheet given to her by Tyler, Smith encouraged women to become informed on the issues through their own resources and several articles that would be published in the *Deseret News*. She and her presidency drafted a letter and met with priesthood leaders to have it approved and distributed.<sup>17</sup>

Smith met with Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve and other leaders regarding the conference. Benson approved the letter. In addition, Benson's office contacted many regional leaders with a telephone call. The letter was to be distributed to

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<sup>16</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992; Smith, *A Fruitful Season*, 106-107; Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 370-371; Dennis Kerr, interview by author, 2 August 2003, Salt Lake City, tape recording in author's possession.

<sup>17</sup>Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 370-371; Smith, *A Fruitful Season*, 106-107; Bradley, 126-128. The articles provided information regarding the negative aspects of the ERA, abortion, and other controversial issues. As a note, the *Deseret News* is owned by the LDS Church. These articles would have reflected the LDS Church's position on these issues.

each ward and was soon labeled the Benson letter by the media.<sup>18</sup>

The Benson letter caused mixed reaction amongst ward leaders and members. In some wards, leaders did little concerning the conference. Bishops and ward Relief Society presidents asked for volunteers. They did not provide much information on the conference, and they did not try to fill or exceed the quota.<sup>19</sup>

Other wards took a much different approach. Bishops and stake presidents seriously tried to inform their members of the conference and prepare them to participate. Again this response varied with some wards filling the quota and giving women some instruction on the topics, with others holding mass meetings and renting buses to allow as many women to attend as possible.<sup>20</sup>

Cheryl Carson recalls that she was asked to attend by her bishop. She did not want to go at first, believing it was just “another stupid women’s meeting.” She became concerned when she learned what resolutions would be passed and that one dealt specifically with the ERA. The women attending from her ward met a few days before the conference to discuss the resolutions. As a group they examined the resolutions and found most of them contradicted their values. They also became suspicious of the

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<sup>18</sup>Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 370-371; Smith, *A Fruitful Season*, 106-107; Bradley, 126-128; *Final Report of the Utah International Women’s Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 5, pg 183-184. A copy of the Benson letter and a letter sent to stake Relief Society presidents can be found in Appendix B and C.

<sup>19</sup>Linda Sillitoe, “Women Scorned: Inside the IWY Conference,” *Utah Holiday* 6, no. 12 (August 1977): 28, 63-64.

<sup>20</sup>Sillitoe, 28, 63-64; Dixie Snow Huefner, “Church and Politics at the Utah IWY Conference,” *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought* 11, no. 1 (1978): 58-59.

National IWY Committee when they learned that Bella Abzug<sup>21</sup> was involved. They concluded the conference was a tool of Satan to destroy the family and promote immoral behavior. They adamantly decided to vote against all resolutions and to attend the workshops which dealt with abortion and homemakers.<sup>22</sup>

Thera Lou Bird heard about the conference from her involvement in the John Birch Society. She decided to contact her ward Relief Society president and her bishop. Both had received the Benson letter but were not really concerned about the conference. Bird explained the significance of the conference and what issues were being addressed. The bishop decided to obtain information from another source; Bird assumed he was skeptical of her background and the Birch Society's radical reputation. Despite this, she noticed a complete change in her ward and stake's reaction to the conference. The bishop and stake president became more concerned, recruited more women to attend, and began to hold informational meetings.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Bella S. Abzug, *Bella! Ms. Abzug goes to Washington* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972). Abzug, a congresswoman from New York, was a controversial figure who was responsible for the passage of many liberal bills during 1971 and 1972, including measures on abortion, childcare, and Social Security. See Rossi, *Feminists in Politics*, for a more complete account of Abzug's role in the National IWY Commission. Carson and her group opposed Abzug's support of legislation because they believed it hindered homemakers and families; specifically, Abzug suggested families pay in a larger amount of money to Social Security to allow homemakers to receive benefits. Carson viewed this negatively since it would promote women whose families were struggling financially to leave the home in order to find work to pay the extra amount.

<sup>22</sup>Cheryl Carson, interview by author, 26 August 2003, American Fork, tape recording in author's possession.

<sup>23</sup>Thera Lou Bird, interview by author, 6 October 2003, Salt Lake City, tape recording in author's possession.

One area of Brigham City showed how involved many wards became in the conference. The women in this area first heard of the conference through the IWY-sponsored mass meetings. They helped host one in their area. Afterward they began to inform women and recruit them to attend. They rented buses and organized car pools. They sponsored their own mass-meeting and decided to draft their own slate of nominees. In one meeting before the conference they split into groups to study the resolutions and draft alternative ones. They also listened to a talk on the rules of the conference and watched a skit on proper parliamentary procedure.<sup>24</sup>

Conservative and ward involvement cannot be examined separately. The first reaction of conservatives upon hearing about the significance of the conference was to contact friends and neighbors; this included their stake and ward leaders. Furthermore, local church leaders often belonged to political or conservative groups that disseminated information to their members about the meeting. They would have become concerned about the conference through these channels. Faced with the charge of adequately preparing the women in their area, local church leaders contacted other leaders and looked to more knowledgeable people to come speak to them.

The Benson letter further supported the idea that this conference was important and urged leaders to become involved and rally local women to attend. Besides mobilizing its members, the LDS Church decided to directly influence the election of delegates from

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<sup>24</sup>“They’re Among 12,000, [sic] Area Women Attend Salt Lake Meeting,” *Box Elder Journal*, Brigham City, Utah, 26 June 1977, 1.

Utah to the national conference.<sup>25</sup>

### **Georgia Peterson and Let's Govern Ourselves**

Georgia Peterson served as a Utah state representative from 1969 to 1980. She worked on many committees dealing with taxes, discriminatory laws, and parental-child rights. Peterson was also heavily involved in the anti-ERA campaign in Utah. Peterson opposed the ERA due to its blanket approach; she wanted specific laws to address specific problems. Because of her background and involvement against the ERA, she claims the media labeled her as "anti-feminist and ultra-conservative."<sup>26</sup>

Peterson had not been invited to take part in planning Utah's IWY conference despite being politically active. She often wondered if it was due to her reputation. Despite this, Peterson decided to become involved. She called the office, offered to help, and was assigned as a speaker in the Legal Status of Homemakers workshop. Peterson specifically chose to speak on the current passage of the Parentage Act in Utah's legislature.<sup>27</sup>

Peterson became more heavily involved when she received a phone call to meet

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<sup>25</sup>Bradley, 126-128; Smith, *A Fruitful Season*, 106-107; Derr, Cannon and Beecher, 370-371; a photocopy of the Benson letter is contained in *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 56 pg 184.

<sup>26</sup>Marcie Goodman, "Eye of the Storm: Georgia Peterson and the Utah IWY Conference," paper written for Brigham Young University Women's Research Institute, Provo, 3-4, photocopy obtained from Georgia Peterson; Georgia B. Peterson, interview by author, 25 February 2004, Salt Lake City, tape recording in author's possession.

<sup>27</sup>Goodman, 6-7; Peterson, Oral History, 2004.

with the Special Affairs Committee (SAC) of the LDS Church, which was then headed by Gordon B. Hinckley and James E. Faust of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Members of this committee were acquainted with Peterson due to her anti-ERA stance and knew her position and background. They had a special task for her. Since few LDS women had attended the IWY-sponsored mass meetings and the list of nominees for delegates seemed to include very few conservative, anti-ERA women, they requested Peterson's help.<sup>28</sup>

Several meetings took place between five key individuals: Oscar W. McConkie, Jr., senior partner of the LDS Church's law firm; Wendell Ashton, director of the LDS Church's Public Communications Department and acting liaison to the SAC; Peterson; Barbara Smith; and Moana Ballif Bennet, a consultant, speech-writer, and assistant to Barbara Smith. With the conference just three weeks away, this group devised a plan to include prominent LDS or conservative women as delegates to the Houston conference. Peterson's task was simple. Using parliamentary procedure she would alter the rules regarding who could be nominated. The Utah IWY committee had already finalized a slate of nominees they thought was representative of Utah women. This list contained very few prominent, conservative, LDS women, and the SAC feared that most nominees were pro-ERA or pro-abortion.<sup>29</sup>

Peterson, who was experienced in parliamentary procedure due to her background, would use it to "force" the committee to accept nominations submitted past the published

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<sup>28</sup>Goodman, 8; Peterson, Oral History, 2004; Bradley, 131-133.

<sup>29</sup>Goodman, 8; Peterson, Oral History, 2004.

deadline. This meant she would need to speak to LDS women, encourage them to attend, and promote a list of recommended women. Peterson selected most of the women listed on the slate; the SAC suggested a few. Those suggested by the SAC were past Relief Society presidents or well-known LDS women. Her charge was simple: she could not lie, she could not associate herself with the church, and she could not tell women how to vote.<sup>30</sup>

The group realized Peterson needed an organization to campaign under for credibility and to avoid negative media coverage for the LDS Church. They titled the new organization Let's Govern Ourselves Caucus (LGO). The only identifiable member was Peterson. From unknown sources, funding was provided for printing the slate of women-nominees and also renting of a room at the conference. On 20<sup>th</sup> June, Smith decided she would not participate in the meetings with Peterson any longer. Peterson states that it was her impression that Smith disliked campaigning among LDS women and would have preferred the LDS Church to completely remain impartial.<sup>31</sup>

During the next few weeks, Peterson met with LDS women across the state, always as a guest and never as a sponsor. Many of these meetings were organized by bishops or stake leaders. Others were organized by individuals. Some days she attended over three meetings. She did not know who planned all the meetings; there was often much confusion about her purpose. She was also unaware of who referred her name to stake presidents and bishops. Peterson specifically tailored her message to stress the

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<sup>30</sup>Goodman, 8-9; Peterson, Oral History, 2004.

<sup>31</sup>Goodman, 9; Peterson, Oral History, 2004.

election of women listed on the slate; she also encouraged women to become informed on the issues and participate in drafting resolutions. She did not tell women how to vote; specifically she never encouraged them to vote no.<sup>32</sup>

Although she did not specifically tell women to vote against the forty-two resolutions, Peterson expressed disapproval of them on one occasion. Peterson explained to the media that she opposed the wording of many of the resolutions. She also disliked what she understood to be the pro-ERA stance and the pro-abortion stance of the resolutions and the committee. She stated the wording on many would take a back-door approach to endorse abortion and the ERA. “They’re not honest in presenting the issues,” she said. “I think it’s deplorable. I really resent it.” She did, however, admit that many were worthwhile and needed consideration.<sup>33</sup>

Several assumptions arise from Peterson’s involvement. The SAC must have contacted the women listed on the slate and encouraged them to submit an application as a delegate nominee. Who or how they did this is unknown.<sup>34</sup> Second, the SAC also

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<sup>32</sup>Goodman, 9-10; Peterson, Oral History, 2004. While Peterson claims she did not contact leaders concerning the conference, Sillitoe relates one instance where Peterson directly contacted a fellow Conservative Caucus member and asked her to organize women in her region. The woman, acting as an individual, naturally called her stake president. Peterson did not direct the woman to contact stake leaders but asked her to organize women to attend the conference.

<sup>33</sup>“A Battle Brewing on Eve of Women’s Meeting,” *Deseret News*, 3 June 1977, B-1. Most of the newspaper articles cited are contained in folder 6 of the *Final Report of the Utah International Women’s Year Coordinating Committee*.

<sup>34</sup>Bradley’s article describes the experience of two women listed on the slate. Norma Udall was encouraged to run by friends and acquaintances. She stated, “Different people contacted me . . . and asked me to run, and several people just sort of got behind me and pushed it, I mean, more than I was prepared for, really.” Belva Ashton, wife of

encouraged Peterson and perhaps others to attend the opening session to nominate these women and to have the nominations seconded. Third, someone or some group distributed Peterson's name amongst organizations, stakes and wards as a speaker to inform women of the conference.

The way this task was orchestrated caused much frustration for Peterson. At meetings leaders often did not know why she was there, and she was asked to leave on one occasion when the bishop accused her of campaigning. Peterson recalls being very embarrassed and often wished she had more support from the SAC for her purpose. In other meetings, women assumed she was there to tell them how to vote. Peterson, being involved in politics and supporting equal rights for women, repeatedly encouraged women to learn about the issues themselves and to become involved. Peterson became more and more frustrated by these problems, negative media coverage, and the suspicion aroused by these meetings.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Conservative Perspective: The Conservative Caucus and Dennis Kerr**

The main controversy faced by Peterson was the wrongful association of LGO and the LDS Church with the Conservative Caucus and Dennis Kerr. Dennis Kerr was a twenty-six-year-old LDS bishop when IWY came to his attention. Kerr was somewhat

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Wendell Ashton, recalled that she saw an announcement in the paper and decided to run without speaking to other individuals.

<sup>35</sup>Peterson, Oral History, 2004.

active in politics at the time, serving as a Republican delegate from his local caucus. Kerr and other Republicans had been invited to the Salt Palace for a Conservative Caucus (CC) meeting by Howard Phillips.<sup>36</sup> Phillips had traveled to Salt Lake City to organize a coalition of conservative groups. This would allow them to work together on key issues and form a stronger political identity.<sup>37</sup>

While at this meeting Kerr was elected to be the director of the local branch of the CC. Kerr himself was shocked; he was totally unprepared and had not expected this. At this meeting Erma Christensen, who was serving on the state school board, suggested the caucus should focus its efforts on the upcoming Utah IWY meeting. Kerr was unaware of it until this time. Christensen explained a little about the conference and the National IWY Commission's endorsement of the ERA. With the conference just a few weeks away, a small group composed of different organizations decided to meet.<sup>38</sup>

Kerr states the group gathered at a member's home to discuss how they wanted to participate in the conference and to discuss the issues being addressed. After this meeting, Kerr went home and his telephone started ringing. He received calls from women who had attended other state IWY conferences. He was unaware of how these women found

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<sup>36</sup>Since 1974, Howard Phillips has been chairman of the Conservative Caucus, a non-partisan, nationwide grass-roots public policy advocacy group. He played an instrumental role in the leadership of the New Right, as well as in the founding of the religious right in 1977. He has also published three books: *The New Right at Harvard* (1983), *Moscow's Challenge to U.S. Vital Interests in Sub-Saharan Africa* (1987), and *The Next Four Years* (1992).

<sup>37</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

<sup>38</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

his name or knew that he was involved, though women mostly likely passed his name through familial or friendship networks. They reported that most of the state IWY conferences were poorly attended and that conservative groups were not invited. In addition they told him that liberals were in charge with pre-drafted resolutions and what they saw as a pro-ERA agenda. These women believed the meeting was being orchestrated to have one voice endorse the ERA in Houston. They talked of “pornographic” films, stuffed ballot boxes, and other unfair tactics.<sup>39</sup>

Many of the women felt left out when workshops refused to address new business or other resolutions besides those drafted by the committees. They complained workshops did not address both sides but had mostly liberal speakers and few conservatives. Other women reported being locked out or not being allowed to vote after leaving during the films. Many women felt this was because they were conservative or because they were from a church organization but that businesses or liberal groups faced no discrimination.<sup>40</sup>

Kerr received calls until nearly three a.m. The main theme he gathered from these women was that the meetings were being carefully planned to exclude conservatives in order to pass feminist and liberal legislation, especially the ERA. Only women from work-oriented or liberal groups were invited to plan or participate. He came to believe that the meetings were not open and not fair. He stated, “It was all about promoting the ERA.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

<sup>40</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

<sup>41</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

Over the next two weeks these reports kept pouring in. Kerr became increasingly concerned and disturbed. His group decided to meet with the Utah IWY committee to gather materials and express their concerns. Kerr then decided to meet with Barbara Smith as well. By this time the Relief Society had already distributed the Benson letter. Kerr recalls that Smith was very gracious to him and his wife. He expressed his fears concerning the conference, and Smith related that she had also heard reports from women who attended meetings in other states; Smith specifically mentioned her daughter. Smith did not want to be involved in informing women on the issues and made it clear that Kerr was not to use the LDS Church's name in any of his meetings. Kerr explained he was not acting on behalf of the LDS Church but as the director of the CC. He agreed that it would be inappropriate for him to mislead women by wrongfully posing as a spokesman for the church or using church buildings or channels.<sup>42</sup>

The next day Kerr met with other women from conservative groups who tried to see the Utah IWY committee. Their purpose was to obtain information and speak with a few committee members prior to meeting with other CC members that evening about the conference. He says they were escorted out before they could even speak. The office refused to give them any information or published materials. Kerr personally felt the office did not want to listen to them or hear what they had to say. He believed the committee did not want them to attend; for him battle lines were drawn from that moment on.<sup>43</sup>

That evening he had planned on a dozen people meeting at his house. Police

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<sup>42</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003; Smith, unrecorded interview, 2004.

<sup>43</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

estimated some 700 people had to be dispersed. Kerr was once again shocked that so many people had heard of his name and came because they were concerned about the conference. He gave what information he had to the women but obviously did not have enough copies. The women were very concerned about how to contact members of their organizations and how to educate them about the conference. Kerr's only way to handle such a large number of people was to suggest they hold separate meetings in areas to inform conservatives of the conference. He offered to speak to groups individually if they wished. The mass meetings began this way. Groups contacted each other, neighbors, and friends, and rented recreational centers and local schools to host them. Kerr himself did not plan or host any of these meetings. He did not have time. He took two weeks' vacation from work and, like Peterson, spent the next two weeks traveling and speaking to women around the state. He often spoke at two or three meetings a day right up until the conference.<sup>44</sup>

Kerr was not the only one invited to speak at these meetings; he rarely spoke alone. Erma Christensen, Peterson, Carol Garbett and others were also invited to many of these meetings. Carol Garbett<sup>45</sup> recalls being invited to several meetings to speak. She was also a well-known conservative who believed in individual freedom and limited government. Garbett was invited because of her reputation and, like Kerr, found herself swept up in the preparations. In addition, Garbett left shortly after Utah's meeting for a

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<sup>44</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

<sup>45</sup>Carol Garbett, a past president of the Eagle Forum, was elected as a delegate to represent Utah in the national IWY meeting in Houston.

vacation in Hawaii. When conservatives found out she attended Utah's conference and was elected as a delegate, she was pressured to speak to women there as well. She remembers her whole vacation was spent traveling and speaking, to the point that her health suffered. She did not know how her name was spread or how people heard about her, but women called and wanted her to talk to them.<sup>46</sup>

These meetings were vastly different from the meetings held by Utah's IWY committee or Peterson. Kerr's message at the meetings differed in many respects. With little information available on the conference, women looked to him for direction. He explained the meeting was an open forum; anyone could attend and the meeting was designed for the population to voice their opinions. He explained about the resolutions and what impact they would have. He encouraged women to attend, examine the resolutions, and draft ones that would reflect their values. Neither Kerr nor any member of his group drafted resolutions or noticed copies of pre-drafted resolutions being handed out. Kerr strongly urged women to draft their own since he believed most of the forty-two resolutions were liberal, pro-abortion and pro-ERA, although a few had some merit.<sup>47</sup>

Word spread and the mass meetings grew larger as the conference approached. Often stake presidents contacted Kerr since they knew him personally or his name was referred to them. Kerr believes they just wanted to inform women from their stake. Most often women contacted Kerr, scheduled their own meetings, and invited him. He believed

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<sup>46</sup>Carol Garbett, unrecorded interview, 28 May 2004, Salt Lake City; Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

<sup>47</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

they heard of him through normal organizations, like the PTA, and from friends. Kerr stated that neither he nor anyone in his group used LDS Church ward lists or calling trees.<sup>48</sup>

During the meetings some women Kerr spoke to stated they had studied what resolutions they could, but were becoming overwhelmed by such a large task of gathering information. Many simply came to him and asked him how to vote. He encouraged them to study issues and told them to draft their own list of delegates or study the lists being distributed by other groups. Other organizations drafted slates besides LGO. Specifically he remembers one by a BYU group. He tried not to endorse one group's list over another since unity was the goal of the CC. He recalls that LGO's list seemed to be the most prominent and was circulated at many of the meetings he attended.<sup>49</sup>

Kerr and Peterson met on one occasion. Peterson attended a mass meeting held at Highland High but was not invited to speak. The CC hosted the meeting and heavily advertised it in several newspapers including the *Utah Independent*.<sup>50</sup> Phyllis Schlafly's pamphlet, titled "Federal Financing of a Foolish Festival for Frustrated Feminists," and her anti-ERA pamphlet were distributed to those who attended. Unexpectedly Kerr began to talk about Peterson and the LGO, creating the perception that the two were associated. Peterson became upset and rose to leave. Instead, she decided to confront him and correct the misconception. She marched to the podium. Kerr did not appear to be

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<sup>48</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

<sup>49</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

<sup>50</sup>This is a right-wing newspaper published by the John Birch Society of Utah.

surprised to see her and introduced her as though he expected her to be there. According to Peterson, Kerr told women to vote against all resolutions and to be suspicious of the committee. Peterson asked women to attend, get involved and enjoy themselves. She stated that many resolutions were worthwhile and tried to encourage the audience to be more open-minded.<sup>51</sup>

The largest mass meeting was held the night before the conference in Bountiful. Reports of the meeting vary with some estimating the attendance as high as 6,000. Kerr states at least 3,000 people attended. The meeting was fairly emotional. The speakers once again warned women against “pornographic” films and faulty resolutions. They encouraged women to attend the conference, vote against the forty-two resolutions, and draft new ones to be sent to the federal government. Many women felt confused as to whether or not this meeting was endorsed by the LDS Church and whether or not the church endorsed the slate of nominees being handed out to the women. LGO’s slate along with another group’s list was distributed amongst the crowd.<sup>52</sup>

While the CC and LGO received extensive media coverage, other groups were also involved. Tyler recalled being contacted by Senator Orrin Hatch, who was anti-ERA. He requested permission to give a presentation at the conference; the committee denied his request assuming it would focus on the ERA. Tyler also fielded several calls from his office concerning how to plan the conference. Others became involved as well. The Right

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<sup>51</sup>“1,000 Cautioned on Electing Women Delegates,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 June 1977; Kerr, Oral History, 2003; Peterson, Oral History, 2004; Goodman, 10.

<sup>52</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003; Peterson, Oral History, 2004; “Caucus Leader Claims LDS Aware of Plan,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 June 1977.

To Life group distributed their own nominee slate and publicly stated they became involved in Utah's IWY conference due to problems faced by their organization in other states. One group titled the Thursday Night Caucus Endorsement drafted its own list of eight pro-ERA women just before the conference. In addition, Tyler stated that liberal groups contacted her, though they were not as memorable as conservatives, nor did they enjoy as much press. Tyler did not believe conservative groups had as much influence as they hoped; instead, she blamed the outcome of the conference on the LDS Church's quota system.<sup>53</sup>

The wrongful association of LGO and the CC caused many problems for Peterson, Kerr, and the LDS Church. All received negative press and were repeatedly accused of conspiring to subvert the intent of the committee and ruin the conference. Specifically the CC was accused of using LDS church channels to manipulate women. This linkage was the result of a series of bungled events and the way each group interacted with the other.

Kerr and his group were repeatedly accused of using official church channels to contact women. However, Kerr states this was incorrect. Neither he nor anyone from his group used official church or ward lists or priesthood channels. This charge may have arisen due to wrongful association with LGO. It is unknown who contacted local LDS leaders and referred Peterson's name to them. Peterson herself did not contact stake or

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<sup>53</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992; Angelyn Nelson, "State Women's Year Leader Urges Unity," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 June 1977; Kerr, Oral History, 2003; "187 Seeking 14 Slots as Delegates," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 June 1977; "IWY Convention, Hostility Rises," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 June 1977. Senator Hatch was heavily involved in Utah's anti-ERA campaign, was a member of the LDS Church, and was serving as a member of the men's advisory board to the Utah State IWY committee.

ward male leaders directly. It can be assumed that Peterson's name was referred along LDS channels by the SAC in some form; otherwise, she would not have been able to complete her assignment.<sup>54</sup>

In addition, the same people who asked women to attend as delegates<sup>55</sup> from their ward also asked them to attend mass meetings. Women who attended mass meetings became confused as to whether the LDS church endorsed LGO or the CC's position. Peterson's lack of support by the SAC and Kerr himself created this problem. He mistakenly mentioned he was a bishop in one of the earlier mass-meetings. He immediately regretted it and tried to correct the problem by emphasizing he was acting individually. But the damage had already been done. He was repeatedly asked in later meetings what his calling was by the press and those who attended. In one instance he was interviewed by a reporter from the *Salt Lake Tribune* and asked what calling he held. He answered that he was a bishop but was not acting as a church spokesman, and he did not want either piece of information to appear in the article. The reporter mentioned it anyway. This problem was compounded by LGO's position and purpose, and the fact that LGO's slate was passed around at many of the same meetings. Furthermore, this list contained the names of many prominent LDS women and leaders hinting that the LDS

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<sup>54</sup>Sillitoe, 64.

<sup>55</sup>There is some controversy over the use of delegates in the Benson letter (refer to Appendix B). It is used to portray the LDS Church negatively for requesting delegates to a conference. However, this term was used by non-LDS women attending from other organizations. It is interesting to note that all women interviewed referred to themselves as a delegate, whether from their work, university, organization, political caucus or ward. Each woman stated she attended the conference to represent her group's interests.

Church did indeed endorse it, creating suspicion about the CC.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, Kerr's purpose differed from Peterson's; he was informing members of his perception of the National IWY Committee's intent, Utah's committee's purpose, possible resolutions, and conservatives' experience in other states. Women were warned against pornographic films<sup>57</sup> and lockouts. From the conservative view, as David Magleby implies, it was safer to vote against the resolutions and draft new ones. While not telling them to vote blindly against all resolutions, Kerr urged women to study how the resolution would be implemented and to vote against resolutions that contradicted their values.

The media and women argued the LDS Church was taking a stand by telling women to vote against resolutions through its representatives. This arose from association with the CC and statements from a member of Smith's board. Amy Valentine, then a member of Smith's board, attended a mass meeting. When asked what position Smith was taking on the issues, she reported that Smith was not publicly telling women to vote against the resolutions, but that she was letting it be known through her board members that she opposed them. Smith had tried to remain impartial and declined to publicly state her view concerning the resolutions; she did not want to be accused of

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<sup>56</sup>Sillitoe, 63; Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

<sup>57</sup>Bradley and Sillitoe argue that this statement is an exaggeration by conservatives. Bradley specifically contends that none of the films would be considered pornographic. However, Tyler indicated in her interview that one film chosen by the National IWY Commission dealt with lesbian relationships which she admitted was controversial. A complete list of films held at Utah's IWY Conference as well as a selection of National IWY recommended films is contained in Appendix D. More on this controversy is addressed in the conclusion.

telling women how to vote.<sup>58</sup>

Peterson believed she was taking a neutral stance regarding the resolutions. Because she was representing the LDS Church, Peterson only promoted the slate of delegates; she tried not to tell women how to vote on resolutions. However, LGO origins were unknown to the general public. With no member rolls, meetings, or public presence, it was ambiguous and this added to the confusion. Being the only identifiable member, Peterson's reputation of being ultra-conservative and right-wing led to further association with the CC and the idea of a conservative conspiracy between the LDS Church and right-wing groups.<sup>59</sup>

Tensions arose before the conference that foretold its outcome. First, conservatives, including LDS women, feared that only liberals would attend and that programs they opposed would be sanctioned in Utah and in their name. If the IWY conferences were going to tell the federal government what women wanted, then conservative women needed to attend.<sup>60</sup>

Most importantly, conservatives saw the Utah IWY Committee as having a hostile agenda which contradicted their values.<sup>61</sup> They believed the committee was pro-ERA and

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<sup>58</sup>Sillitoe, 64,66; D. Michael Quinn, "The LDS Church's Campaign Against the Equal Rights Amendment," *Journal of Mormon History* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 112-113.

<sup>59</sup>Goodman, 9-11; Peterson, Oral History, 2004.

<sup>60</sup>Ruth Harmison, "ERA Foe Makes Allegations," *Provo Daily Herald*, 23 June 1977; "LDS Leaders Oppose ERA," *Deseret News*, 22 October 1976; Firmage, Oral History, 2004; Kerr, Oral History, 2003; Smith, unrecorded interview, 2004.

<sup>61</sup>Although the Utah IWY Committee may not purposely have been trying to endorse any position, it is the perception of conservatives that mattered. All conservatives

had selected speakers and resolutions which also supported the amendment. They believed Utah's IWY committee had chosen delegate nominees who favored abortion and the ERA. They also questioned why the National IWY Committee did not ensure that Utah's IWY committee was evenly split (pro/con) on issues such as the ERA, abortion and lesbianism. Instead, it seemed to them that the committee was mostly composed of liberals, with very few conservatives. It appeared the conferences were part of a national conspiracy to pass the ERA.<sup>62</sup>

Conservatives also believed the conference had been rigged to exclude them. Several events led to this suspicion. Conservative groups were not directly notified of the conference, and they felt it had not been sufficiently and publicly advertised. Instead, it seemed only work-related or women's groups had been initially contacted. The committee repeatedly refused to meet with conservative groups concerning the conference, though most likely due to lack of time. In addition, the committee seemed to them to be controlling information regarding the conference and the pre-selected nominees. Workshop titles and times were not made available until just before the conference. Packets were not mailed out in time for women who pre-registered to get notice of the deadlines for submitting nominee applications. Copies of "To Form a More

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interviewed stated the National IWY Committee was biased; it had an agenda. They also believed Utah's committee supported the agenda of the National IWY Committee.

<sup>62</sup>Ruth Harmison, "ERA Foe Makes Allegations," *Provo Daily Herald*, 23 June 1977; Tyler, *Orah History*, 1992; Arline H. Heaton, "Woman Criticizes Procedures of IWY," *Provo Daily Herald*, 23 June 1977; "Utah Women Should Match Power With Responsibility," *Deseret News*, 23 June 1977; Firmage, *Oral History*, 2004; Kerr, *Oral History*, 2003; Smith, unrecorded interview, 2004.

Perfect Union” were not made available until the morning of the conference. Many women did not receive registration forms. Two women complained of not being able to register due to unhelpful women at Utah’s IWY office. One specifically felt the receptionist was withholding information and refusing to accept alternative registration forms because the would-be registrant was conservative. Rumors circulated that the committee had allowed committee members and other liberal groups to register earlier than the general public. The committee appeared to be withholding information about the resolutions in order to “railroad them down women’s throats.” Women became suspicious of the committee’s actions and believed it was a package deal designed to force women to accept all resolutions en masse.<sup>63</sup>

Women also criticized the selection of delegates and voting procedures. No information was available on the pre-selected nominees, who selected them, or why they were selected. In addition, the Utah IWY Committee had limited the time to accept nominations from the floor to twenty-eight minutes from a group of several thousand women. Conservatives believed this was to discourage women from providing alternative nominees. False reports surfaced that women had to attend both days or they would not be able to vote and that a person could not attend the meeting unless she was an official delegate from an organization. Conservatives became increasingly suspicious; they believed the meeting was being tightly controlled. It was not open, and they were not welcome. This not only aroused suspicion but angered many conservatives. Ruth

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<sup>63</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003; Ruth Harmison, “ERA Foe Makes Allegations,” *Provo Daily Herald*, 23 June 1977; Arline H. Heaton, “Woman Criticizes Procedures of IWY,” *Provo Daily Herald*, 23 June 1977; Firmage, Oral History, 2004.

Gulbranson stated, “Because we are happy and content in our homes, our church, and our community, many people think the women of Utah are not aware . . . but when they feel their rights are being trampled, they won’t take that.”<sup>64</sup>

To complicate the matter, the *Salt Lake Tribune* and other newspapers openly accused the LDS Church of trying to subvert the conference. Newspaper articles repeatedly charged conservative groups of conspiring with LDS Church leaders. In addition, newspaper articles rarely agreed on details, contained false information, and speculated on the activities of conservatives.<sup>65</sup>

Tyler and her committee were shocked by these events. They had planned on only 2,000 -3,000 women attending the conference. When Tyler learned about the Benson letter, she realized the conference would be swamped with 7,000 - 8,000 women. Her committee did not share her opinion and believed attendance would only rise to 4,000 or so.<sup>66</sup>

Tyler also tried to stem the tide of negative reports and rumors concerning the committee. Tyler decided to confront Kerr. A few days before the conference started, she and three members from her committee arrived at his house to talk with him. Only she would go in. Tyler gave him some information and was “a little confrontational, in a

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<sup>64</sup>Ruth Harmison, “ERA Foe Makes Allegations,” *Provo Daily Herald*, 23 June 1977; Arline H. Heaton, “Woman Criticizes Procedures of IWY,” *Provo Daily Herald*, 23 June 1977; Firmage, Oral History, 2004; Sillitoe, 26.

<sup>65</sup>Angelyn Nelson, “Women’s Meeting Nears Amid Rumors of ‘Meddling,’” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 June 1977, B-1; Peter Gillins, “Fights over ERA, Abortion Disrupt Utah’s International Women’s Meet,” *Logan Herald Journal*, 24 June 1977.

<sup>66</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992.

‘Look quit trying to twist things’ way.’ He seemed to receive what she had to say and they talked for a while. Tyler did not recall a negative feeling from the meeting. She and Kerr shared opinions on different issues without getting into a heated discussion. She hoped this would help calm the tension between the CC and Utah’s committee.<sup>67</sup>

The day before the conference began Tyler held a press conference in order to calm fears and combat false reports. She contended the conference was not rigged to promote the ERA. She commented the committee had taken a neutral stance on the amendment, and many other issues were being addressed. She stated that everyone was invited; the committee wanted everyone to attend. She plead with women to attend the conference with open minds; “To those who would attend to disrupt and divide, for you we have compassion. To those who come with a deep desire to treat each other with dignity, we join hands.” Furthermore, Tyler defended the LDS Church against accusations by the media that it was trying to control the conference by pressuring women to attend. Tyler did publicly blame other conservative groups in this press meeting for the controversy surrounding the conference. She specifically identified Hatch, Peterson, and the CC.<sup>68</sup>

On the eve before the conference, pre-registration reached over 5,000 with more expected to register at the door. Tyler and her group had to make several last-minute

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<sup>67</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992.

<sup>68</sup>“Statewide Women’s Conference Concerns More Than ERA,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 June 1977; Peter Gillins, “Fights over ERA, Abortion Disrupt Utah’s International Women’s Meet,” *Logan Herald Journal*, 24 June 1977; Angelyn Nelson, “State Women’s Year Leader Urges Unity,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 June 1977; “Director Denies Meeting Rigged,” *Deseret News*, 24 June 1977; Tyler, Oral History, 1992.

changes to accommodate so many women. Tyler appealed to the governor for emergency funds to make 3,000 more copies of registration materials and as many ballot cards and nominees lists as needed. In addition, the LDS Church donated funds to rent a larger assembly hall in the Salt Palace which would hold 10,000 women comfortably. Smith's assistant Moana Ballif Bennet contacted women who regularly met to discuss issues with Smith and asked them to volunteer at the registration tables. "We were told to bring our typewriters," Clyde recalled. "Something big is going to happen."<sup>69</sup>

That night Tyler received several threatening telephone calls. She approached the opening session with absolute fear and apprehension. Neither she nor any of her committee had any idea of what to expect.<sup>70</sup>

The eve of the conference showed the many problems IWY faced. Conservatives were suspicious of the committee, its motives, and practices. They feared national resolutions would be passed that they did not endorse. They feared state resolutions would be passed that went against conservative values. In addition, they wanted delegates who would represent them and their values at Houston. Due to the Utah IWY committee's actions and the lack of information, these women came prepared for battle. This meeting would tell the world what Utah women wanted and they were determined to let their voices be heard.

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<sup>69</sup>Clyde, Oral History, 2004; Tyler, Oral History, 1992; *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 2, pg 32.

<sup>70</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE SILENT MAJORITY SPEAKS: CONSERVATIVE ACTIONS AND RHETORIC AT THE UTAH STATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR CONFERENCE

Friday morning long lines stretched around the Salt Palace as women, and some men, waited to register. Some women had left at four a.m. to travel hours to be on time; others had camped out overnight to make sure they would have a spot. As women registered, they received a packet and, while supplies lasted, a copy of "To Form a More Perfect Union." Attendees had little time to skim this large report as they prepared for workshops and the opening session. Women brought babies and young children; few chose to use the day care provided. By eight a.m. registration had reached 7,000 and, not surprisingly, materials were already running short. By the end of the conference, almost 14,000 women had registered.<sup>1</sup>

The first opening session was designed to welcome the women, introduce them to

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<sup>1</sup>Ann Kilbourn, "The Many Faces of IWY Meeting," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 June 1977; Martha Sonntag Bradley, "The Mormon Relief Society and the International Women's Year," *Journal of Mormon History* 21, no. 1 (1995): 136-139; Aileen Clyde, interview by author, 12 April 2004, Springville, Utah, tape recording in author's possession; Gloria Firmage, interview by author, 4 June 2004, Salt Lake City, tape recording in author's possession; Marcie Goodman, "Eye of the Storm: Georgia Peterson and the Utah IWY Conference," paper written for Brigham Young University Women's Research Institute, Provo, 11, photocopy in author's possession; Georgia B. Peterson, interview by author, 25 February 2004, Salt Lake City, tape recording in author's possession; *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee* (Salt Lake City: IWY Commission, 1977), folder 5, pg 24.

Utah's committee, and allow the audience to accept the rules of the conference. Esther Landa, a Salt Lake resident and president of the National Council of Jewish Women, served as chairman. The meeting was packed. Women stood or sat in the aisles; already long lines formed behind the microphones. Here Georgia Peterson used parliamentary procedure to change the rule on electing nominees. She moved to change the time for nominations from thirty minutes to sixty minutes to allow more nominations to be accepted from the floor. It passed.<sup>2</sup>

Other women submitted changes as well. One woman wanted information that would be posted for nominees to be selected by the attendees, not the committee. This woman, and others who commented after her, did not want Utah's committee to have the authority to choose what information would be posted for participants to read.<sup>3</sup> They also wanted to be able to post their own information in another location. This was ruled out of order for two reasons. First, it was against the federal rules, which tried to limit campaigning; the federal rules could not be altered. Second, it was impractical. All nominee biographies were in the process of being printed. The information they contained had been provided in the application submitted by 8:30 that morning. There would not be

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<sup>2</sup>Goodman, 11; Peterson, Oral History, 2004. A description of the conference schedule can be found in Appendix E.

<sup>3</sup>Utah's committee posted background information on all women who submitted an application to be a delegate from Utah to the Houston meeting. These were posted along a specified hall in the Salt Palace for audience members to read during the day on Friday. This information included age, ethnicity and organizations they were involved in. It did not include whether or not the individual was for or against key issues such as the ERA or abortion. This background information was supposed to aid women in selecting which women they would vote to be delegates representing Utah at the Houston conference.

a way to change this.<sup>4</sup>

The women approved a motion to strike the rule that gave Utah's committee the power to disqualify delegates. The audience passed the motions overwhelmingly. They also passed a resolution advising the federal government not to use tax funds to host a meeting of this sort again. After the rules were adopted, the audience listened to two opening speeches, one of them by former General Relief Society president Belle Spafford.<sup>5</sup>

The opening session foretold the overall mood and outcome of the rest of the conference. Right from the beginning the Utah committee felt the hostility of the audience and could tell this conference would be difficult for everyone who attended. In many respects they were right. Women in halls argued over issues and campaigned. In workshops women shouted and booed at speakers; they were disrespectful and rude. The majority of women rejected or altered nearly every resolution that the task-forces and Utah's committee had drafted. Women who hosted workshops felt betrayed and frustrated. Gloria Firmage, who spoke in the legal status of homemakers workshop, recalls the anger, suspicion, and bitterness against the task force. She felt the tension and went home and cried most of the night. She did not know how she could return and face the animosity the next day. While not all workshop chairs experienced this tension, others dealt with absolute chaos as audience participants yelled at each other and used the

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<sup>4</sup>Opening Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University [SC-BYU].

<sup>5</sup>Opening Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

microphones for personal insults. The meeting became one large battleground.<sup>6</sup>

This mood of frustration was compounded by the large number of women. A significant amount of pre-registration materials was lost. These women had to re-register. Women had to wait almost forty-five minutes to vote; the voting cards were not alphabetized and some were lost. There were not enough voting booths; materials and handouts ran short. Every workshop overflowed with women. Many resorted to meeting in the hall to accommodate all the women who wanted to attend. In workshops and sessions, microphones and projectors did not work as expected; neither did the air-conditioning. Participants found themselves frustrated at every turn.<sup>7</sup>

Committee members tried to curb campaigning, but thousands of pamphlets, lists of pre-drafted resolutions, and slates appeared everywhere. Many women left their copies in the 200 voting booths; there were not enough volunteers to keep the booths free of literature. The Right to Life group distributed some 4,000 copies of its slate. The group was well rewarded; ten of the fourteen delegates who were elected came from their list as did several of the alternates. The Eagle Forum and Let's Govern Ourselves (LGO) successfully swayed voters as well. Many of the delegates also came from LGO's list.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Bradley, 137-147; Linda Sillitoe, "Women Scorned: Inside the IWY Conference," *Utah Holiday* 6, no. 12 (August 1977): 65-67; Firmage, Oral History, 2004.

<sup>7</sup>Open-mike Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977, SC-BYU; Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 5, pg 23, 63-71.

<sup>8</sup>Peterson, Oral History, 2004; *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 5, pg 63-80. Sources differ as to how successful Peterson's campaign was. One source claims all but one came from her list; she claims all delegates, except alternates, came from her list of names.

Most workshops accomplished their task despite the turmoil; they passed a large number of resolutions that the participants endorsed. The plenary session revealed a much different attitude. Resolutions dealing with a variety of issues drafted by conservatives in workshops failed to pass on the floor. Confusion and suspicion characterized the session. The plenary session was designed to have the women as one body accept or reject the resolutions drafted in workshops. What happened was quite the contrary to this. The audience rejected many resolutions, altered them, and displayed such animosity to the chair that many women were shocked by the blatant rudeness and disrespect.<sup>9</sup> Resolutions that hinted at increased taxes or federal involvement were rejected along with resolutions that seemed more beneficial, for example blind judging. Due to the lack of time and constant debate, women repeatedly suggested that the rules be altered to allow unlimited debate or not to allow any debate at all. The audience also became confused on what they were voting on. Blue sheets had been distributed that morning by task-forces with proposed workshop resolutions, but while audience members still had these sheets, workshops had altered or rejected many of these.<sup>10</sup>

Women also became confused by the numerous motions and amendments for each resolution. Members of the audience repeatedly asked for clarification on proposals, how they would be implemented, and what they really pertained to. Audience members often

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<sup>9</sup>Suspicion in the plenary session was not limited to controversial resolutions dealing with homosexuality, abortion and other controversial topics. Instead, many resolutions that would seem beneficial inspired heated debate. Key reasons included federal control, debate over taxes, and resolutions that mirrored the feminist agenda.

<sup>10</sup>Friday Plenary Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

asked for someone from the workshop to speak on these issues since not all women had attended the workshop. They also tried to pass motions to vote on workshop resolutions in blocks, not individually, to save time.<sup>11</sup>

The audience also changed the order of when each workshop's resolutions would be voted on; they moved that the most important topics be covered first: teenage pregnancy, reproductive health, and power. Other workshop resolutions that dealt with less controversial subjects were placed last. Needless to say the women who planned or attended these workshops felt slighted. Many times women who wanted to speak out on an issue found that debate for the item was prematurely closed. Women pushed each other out of the way at microphones. As the session dragged into the night, women over and over refused to adjourn. They feared the committee would re-open the session and pass resolutions after the audience left. Several motions to adjourn were rejected until Barbara Smith approached the microphone and asked the women to adjourn. The audience passed her motion but would not leave until the Utah committee seated on the stage had left. Some participants followed the committee to their cars to make sure they were indeed leaving.<sup>12</sup>

Saturday fared better in many respects. Workshops enjoyed more cooperation,

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<sup>11</sup>Friday Plenary Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

<sup>12</sup>Friday Plenary Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU; Barbara Smith, *A Fruitful Season* (Salt Lake City Utah: Bookcraft, 1988), 106-107; Goodman, 11-12; Peterson, *Oral History*, 2004; Jan Tyler, *Oral History*, interviewed by JoAnn Freed, 13 September, 1977, Utah Women's Project, IWY Collection, Utah State Historical Society.

and many resolutions were reworded with the mood of the plenary session in mind. A few workshops did not fare as well. The health workshop suffered from bitter feelings that carried over from the previously-held reproduction workshop. The chair commented many times that the health workshop was not a continuation of the reproduction workshop; the same resolutions would not be discussed. Despite this, some women tried to pass a motion to prematurely end the speeches and instead spend the time drafting resolutions. The speaker cordially stated that if this was the consensus of the audience, she would cease speaking. A large number of women applauded this statement but even more women applauded her continuation. The mood changed briefly to allow her to finish. But when debate started, many women moved to reintroduce resolutions defeated in the previously-held reproduction workshop, such as allowing sex education in schools. A large part of the audience became upset. The workshop became increasingly hostile and chaotic until the time ran out.<sup>13</sup>

The Saturday plenary session commenced in the same fashion as Friday's. Women were less hostile to the committee and chair, but a furious debate over many resolutions pushed the mood into one of frenzy, confusion, and desperation. The session had to end at 8:30 p.m. – there was not enough time to consider recommendations from all the workshops. As the time grew short one woman moved to end debate and just vote yes or no on the remaining resolutions, stating, “If we do not do this we lose our right to vote on

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<sup>13</sup>Health Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, International Women's Year Audio-Visual Collection, 1977, Manuscripts Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah [SC- U].

these issues.” The media and education workshops moved to reconsider their resolutions because otherwise “We have nothing to send to Texas.” These women were determined that their views and opinions would be represented at the Houston conference.<sup>14</sup>

The chaotic workshops and actions of women in the plenary session inspired criticism from both Peterson and Tyler. Although from different perspectives, both women felt the conference was a tragedy.

### **Georgia Peterson and Jan Tyler**

Peterson had arrived early Friday morning to deliver her pre-drafted script on rule changes and to distribute LGO’s slate of delegates. She considered this the “greatest victory at the conference” and began to prepare for her presentation on the Utah Parentage Act in the legal status of homemakers workshop. LGO had rented a room for women to sit, chat, and rest. Peterson visited it to find the floor packed with women sitting on the floor, chairs, and tables. When she arrived, Peterson recalls being swarmed by women asking her how to vote. She was appalled that these women, who were capable and intelligent, could not decide for themselves.<sup>15</sup>

Peterson blamed the hostility and suspicion of the audience on the Conservative Caucus and other special interest groups who manipulated women to blindly defeat all or most of the workshop-sponsored resolutions. Peterson, like others, noticed men in dark

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<sup>14</sup>Saturday Plenary Session of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

<sup>15</sup>Goodman, 6-10; Peterson, *Oral History*, 2004.

suits with walkie-talkies directing groups of women on how to vote. Peterson left the convention feeling discouraged. “I was very relieved that the whole thing was over, and after having such a harassed ten days, I could go home and forget it.”<sup>16</sup>

Peterson believed the main achievement of the IWY meetings was that it educated Utah women and prompted many of them to become more involved politically. She later chastised LDS women who attended the conference for voting, she believed blindly, against many worthwhile resolutions.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, Peterson was flattered by the success of LGO’s campaign. A large majority of the delegates came from her slate. In addition, she was elected as one of Utah’s delegates. Peterson’s life was drastically changed by the results of the conference. She spent the next six months preparing for the Houston convention. She lost the friendship of many women, who she thinks blamed her for the turmoil of the two days. She believed that her reputation was tarnished and her political career was ended prematurely. Peterson also estranged right-wing women and men who felt betrayed by her actions.<sup>18</sup> Most of all Peterson felt used, especially by the Conservative Caucus and other political groups. “I personally received an image that I regret in that people didn’t really understand where I was coming from, and maybe that’s why I got so angry with the right-

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<sup>16</sup>Goodman, 11-12; Peterson, Oral History, 2004.

<sup>17</sup>Goodman, 11-13; Peterson, Oral History, 2004.

<sup>18</sup>Peterson was later chosen to head Utah’s delegation to the National IWY conference in Houston. She steered the group toward a more moderate stance on abortion and other issues. This and her criticism of women’s actions at Utah’s conference caused more conservative right-wing members to distrust Peterson.

wing crowd, because I think they used me and my political experience by tying themselves to me, and that was unfortunate.”<sup>19</sup>

Like Peterson, Jan Tyler found herself shocked at the events of the conference, how women behaved, and that those who attended rejected all national resolutions. Tyler indicated three groups had been involved in manipulating the conference: right-wing, LDS, and pro-ERA. She believed the LDS group had the most influence and the biggest impact on the conference. She felt most women voted against the resolutions out of fear and manipulation by men who were “controlling them” through Relief Society and right-wing channels. This fear led women to try to dominate the conference to ensure nothing harmful would pass. Tyler attributed most women’s fear to their ignorance of political issues and lack of concern for how minorities suffer, although it was also due to right-wing nativism. She stated, for example, that women at the conference could not understand why bilingual education was so important because they had not grown up in multi-cultural areas. “What should have been simple and a courtesy to other struggling groups became a heated issue.”<sup>20</sup>

Tyler commented that it broke her heart to see what happened at the conference and how women acted. The committee tried to provide an open forum where women could come, meet together in sisterhood, discuss important problems women faced, and work together to create solutions. In respect to these goals, Tyler stated, “What we were

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<sup>19</sup>Goodman, 13-14; Peterson, Oral History, 2004.

<sup>20</sup>Jan Tyler, interview by Marcie Goodman, 21 February, 1992, Brigham Young University Women’s Research Institute, Provo, photocopy of transcript in author’s possession; Tyler, Oral History, 1977.

trying to do failed almost in every kind of way other than the opportunity presented.”<sup>21</sup>

Tyler indicated the conference was a success in two ways. First, it was the largest political meeting the state of Utah had ever had, “for better or for worse.” It provided an opportunity for women to come together “around something that was theirs,” despite the fact that it was highly politicized. Tyler later said she was not surprised by the political atmosphere because she had seen the same thing happen in the 1975 Mexico City meeting. There governments and special interest groups had tried “in every way imaginable” to interfere in the resolution process. Tyler commented, “The idea, how threatening it was, that women all over the world were getting together and sharing their experiences. So to some degree I wasn’t surprised when it happened in Utah because it was no less threatening.” To Tyler, this meeting brought women together and motivated those who had previously been inactive in politics to become involved.<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, Tyler believed the meeting was a success simply because “it actually worked!” The committee gained valuable experience in planning and preparing the conference in such a limited time frame. In addition, the committee had been able to deal with all sorts of last minute problems and still pull it off. All the committee members had benefitted by being involved in such a large undertaking. Being able to host such a meeting, with so many women, was a success in itself.<sup>23</sup>

Tyler felt that bitter feelings resulting from the conference would be slow to heal –

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<sup>21</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992; Tyler, Oral History, 1977.

<sup>22</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992; Tyler, Oral History, 1977.

<sup>23</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992; Tyler, Oral History, 1977.

not only her own but those of others as well. The meeting had polarized women into two camps – it had isolated women from each other. It ruined people’s reputations and branded many innocent women with false labels, which was both sad and unfair.<sup>24</sup>

### **Conservative Rhetoric**

Women who attended, newspaper articles, and other historians leveled two charges against conservatives. They argue conservatives either tried to pass resolutions that would reduce the status of women or that conservatives simply wanted to support the status quo. They accused right-wing women of trying to end Social Security, and stated the audience seriously considered a resolution on repealing voting rights for women. While these charges were aimed at the ultra-conservative element at the conference, moderates received criticism as well. Because they rejected all resolutions, moderate conservatives were labeled anti-change. It was assumed they either could not identify with those individuals who had problems or that they wanted to support the status quo. Because they voted against stronger anti-pornography laws, aid to the elderly, and help for minorities, conservatives were labeled as unfeeling and unable to sympathize with disadvantaged women.<sup>25</sup>

Tyler was disappointed at the voting results. “In other words, we made a statement about the things that we didn’t like or couldn’t approve or endorse – at least the

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<sup>24</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992; Tyler, Oral History, 1977.

<sup>25</sup>Bradley, 148; Caroline Bird, *What Women Want* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 47-48; Sillitoe, 65-67.

majority of women, but we were not capable of turning around and saying, okay, now these are the things that we can do and must do.” She believed women in Utah were unable to identify with others; they were not mature enough to cooperate to solve problems. The state resolutions that were submitted were nothing but “complaints.”<sup>26</sup>

These charges were indeed grievous, showing that conservatives were backward and unfeeling toward disadvantaged groups. But no one asked conservatives why they behaved the way they did. Many women attended only because they were asked by their bishops, and they did indeed vote no out of ignorance or because they believed this was the safest action. Some women were manipulated by right-wing groups and church leaders. Not all conservatives behaved this way. The variance in voting results<sup>27</sup> and the personal experiences of Martha Bradley and Dixie Snow Huefner reveal that many women read the resolutions and voted no out of personal choice.

Rita Eason, a member of Utah’s coordinating committee, stated, “Admittedly, some of the women were duped into cooperating because of their political and religious conservatism. The almost fanatic fervor of the vast majority of women, [sic] showed genuine commitment, however.” Many conservatives came prepared with alternate resolutions and firmly believed this conference was a place where they could come up with solutions to many of the problems women faced. Some conservative women arrived at the conference not knowing what it was all about. Once there, they became involved and

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<sup>26</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1977.

<sup>27</sup>A list of the recommendations and voting results is contained in Appendix F, which is a duplicate of Attachment U of the *Final Report of the Utah International Women’s Year Coordinating Committee*.

tried to submit resolutions they believed would help women across the nation. These conservative women did not reject or alter resolutions blindly.<sup>28</sup>

Since voting for national resolutions took place in voting booths, little or no record exists that directly explains why women rejected these resolutions. But women who voted against the national resolutions also rejected similar resolutions discussed in workshops. Both Bradley and Huefner mention anti-federal sentiment expressed at the conference as a possible explanation of why conservatives rejected national resolutions.<sup>29</sup> Not only did most women vote no on all national resolutions, but their opposition to federal involvement in state resolutions is blatantly apparent. The workshops themselves reveal the opposition of women to the federal government. Women discussed, altered or rejected state within workshops, voicing their opinions and concerns as they did. The rhetoric within workshops and sessions reveals why women opposed the national resolutions.<sup>30</sup>

One session in particular allowed women to express themselves. The open-mike session at the conference was designed to give all women an opportunity to voice their complaints and concerns which might not be heard otherwise. In an open area, conference

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<sup>28</sup>*Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 5, pg 32-33.

<sup>29</sup>Bradley's article mentions only one woman who said that she voted no on all resolutions because she was against increased federal involvement. However, Bradley focused on the polarization of women based on the LDS Church's involvement.

<sup>30</sup>A copy of the national resolutions and the voting results is contained in Appendix F. Many state resolutions, which were discussed in workshops, closely resembled national resolutions.

attendees stood at six microphones and for two minutes spoke whatever opinion or concern they wished. Anyone who wanted to speak could do so if they chose. Thirty-four women and one man spoke in the open-mike session. Their concerns ranged from federal involvement in family affairs to tax misuse and abortion.<sup>31</sup>

This session along with other workshops revealed the diverse opinions of women who attended the conference. The majority of women who attended the conference displayed an obvious aversion to increased federal involvement in their rejection of proposed national resolutions. The hostility carried over to other sessions where women moved and carried the resolution for the federal government not to be able to sponsor or fund another conference of this nature.<sup>32</sup> The clear message from the conference was anti-federal.

Why did these women vote against all proposed national resolutions, why did they reword or reject many of the state resolutions, and what fueled their hostility toward the federal government? Almost all issues at the conference called for federal involvement or laws. Women's opinions about these issues and other resolutions reflect their opinion of the federal government and its ability to solve problems. Their view on increased taxation, representation, values instigated in these programs, and personal freedom reveal possible reasons why women rejected all nationally formed resolutions.

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<sup>31</sup>The taped recording of the session indicates that many people still did not have the chance to express their opinions. It was extended from 30 minutes to an hour due to demand. No records were kept on how many women attended and how many did not have the opportunity to speak.

<sup>32</sup>*Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 5, pg 84.

As Daniel Bell's model suggests, conservatives often cited economic reasons for rejecting resolutions. Many women at the workshops constantly mentioned the economic state of the U.S., the deficit, and taxes. Those who attended complained about spending and taxation by the federal government although for differing reasons. Some thought taxation was unfair; others feared increased taxes. Some women argued that taxes should not be used to promote immorality or programs that attacked the family.<sup>33</sup>

Marge Small resented current and proposed resolutions that promoted unfair taxation. She opposed federally funded day care because women who did not use it would still pay for it. She argued that tax money for programs such as day care should only be paid by those who use the service, similar to gasoline or cigarette taxes. It was unfair to tax women who chose to place their children with a babysitter instead of with a federally-sponsored daycare program.<sup>34</sup>

Other women pointed to the deficit and overspending by the federal government as reasons for opposing resolutions. One woman commented in the enforcement of laws workshop that because the country was already "too much in debt," she did not want to pass any resolution that added to the country's excessive deficit. In the basic needs workshop, an audience member stated that "if we turn to government to solve our problems, it will get bogged down and [government] will spend too much money."

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<sup>33</sup>Daniel Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002).

<sup>34</sup>Marge Small, Comments at Open-mike Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

Women did not want any new programs that would add to overspending by the government, nor did they believe the government was the most economical way to solve problems.<sup>35</sup>

A large number of women feared increased taxes. An unnamed woman in the employment workshop commented that many of these programs would force the government to raise taxes; she opposed certain resolutions because of this. Due to fear of increased taxes, many women at the conference wanted more consideration for resolutions. Betty Homer, while speaking on the resolutions in general, asserted that increased federal regulation would only diminish their freedoms and add to their already excessive tax burden. She felt that funding and implementation of the resolutions needed more consideration. Many would be costly and expensive. She urged women to be more responsible and to consider where the funds would really be coming from, because “ultimately they come from us.”<sup>36</sup>

As George Nash’s work, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, points out, many conservatives believed government had intruded into the moral realm of society, especially by funding certain programs and in how government taxed families. Some conservative women at the conference also opposed resolutions that

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<sup>35</sup>Enforcement of Laws Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Basic Needs Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>36</sup>Employment Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Betty Homer, Comments at Open-mike Session of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

used tax dollars to promote values they did not condone. Women in the legal status of homemakers workshop opposed changes in how homemakers accrue Social Security. They would not pass the resolution until they were sure it would not raise taxes or require the husband to pay more money in taxes. They did not want to further burden financially-struggling families and encourage mothers to leave their homes to work.<sup>37</sup>

Gayle Judd disliked the use of tax dollars to promote compliance with federal laws. She used Title Nine as an example. Specifically, she thought Title Nine<sup>38</sup> was both an unfair law and was being unfairly enforced. “You either comply or you don’t get the money.” Unfair laws, which local institutions should not have to comply with, were enforced by withholding money. Schools that relied on federal funds for operation had to bow to federal demands. Women in the enforcement of laws workshop echoed her sentiment. They did not want the federal government using funds to force compliance with laws they did not endorse.<sup>39</sup>

Federal taxation became a key reason why many women opposed federal programs

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<sup>37</sup>George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1976), 57-82; Legal Status of Homemaker Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>38</sup>Title Nine prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities which received federal assistance, with some exceptions such as beauty pageants. It was designed to encourage schools and universities to increase the percentage of women in programs, allow women to participate in restricted programs, and increase women’s involvement in sports and academic clubs.

<sup>39</sup>Enforcement of Laws Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Gayle Judd, Comments at Open-mike Session of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

and involvement. They felt taxes were misused, adding to the national debt. They resented unfair taxes, which penalized those who did not use federal services. They believed many of the resolutions would lead to increased taxation. In addition, they did not like the values promoted by tax dollars.

Some participants at the conference were also concerned with reverse discrimination. They did not advocate laws that favored one group over another or forced businesses to hire unqualified individuals. The arts and humanities workshop highlighted this problem. One speaker stated that affirmative action had mixed results in the artistic community; it opened doors in many cases, but those who were “black and crippled” were often chosen over more talented artists. Reverse discrimination, they claimed, did not encourage individual effort but instead rewarded those who fit a specific category and denied opportunity to those who were not minorities.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, a few women in the workshops did not believe women were discriminated against, just that women did not know how to compete in the workforce as men did. In the employment workshop, one woman, who opposed a resolution forcing the state to solicit bids on contracts from women entrepreneurs, stated that most women who bid on government contracts did not follow the proper procedure and “they need to be taught to do it right, not get special treatment.”<sup>41</sup>

Rebecca Klatch’s model in *Women of the New Right* clearly describes conservative

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<sup>40</sup>Art and Humanities Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>41</sup>Employment Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

women at Utah's conference. The laissez-faire conservative valued individual merit and personal freedom. Because many government programs aimed to help minorities, they downplayed individual effort in favor of race or gender. Conservatives who valued a society based on merit resented legislation that disadvantaged one group over another.<sup>42</sup>

Klatch's work also identified that laissez-faire conservatives valued personal freedom and limited government. Many women at Utah's meeting echoed these sentiments. These women worried about increasing the power of the federal government. They feared the federal government would become too large and too involved in people's lives. Federal programs, they believed, did not promote individual growth but instead encouraged dependence on the government. The federal government's solution also robbed citizens of a chance to solve the problem in a different way. They believed their rights were in jeopardy as the federal government became more and more powerful. Participants continually referred to a diminishing of freedom while debating resolutions.<sup>43</sup>

Many women did not want to create resolutions that allowed the federal government to extend into personal or business realms. In the child abuse workshop, Annie Christensen commented, "Why do we want how we take care of our children to go into legislature?" She did not want to give the federal government the right to interfere in how she chose to raise her family. Regarding credit regulation in the enforcement of laws workshop, one woman asked why they needed to involve the government when making

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<sup>42</sup>Rebecca E. Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 31-43.

<sup>43</sup>Klatch, 31-43.

sure lending establishments did not deny women credit. She believed it could be solved on local level, which would not infringe on business rights and would not set a precedent for more government control.<sup>44</sup>

Many women feared the passage of resolutions would lead to the loss of personal rights and liberty. Regarding family courts being established, one woman commented that the resolution might make it mandatory for her to use the court system in a family dispute. She did not want that choice taken from her. Women repeatedly tried to alter resolutions to preserve individual choice.<sup>45</sup>

Vague wording and misinterpretation of resolutions by courts concerned some women in the workshops. Not only the resolutions, but the ERA as well, inspired this criticism. Women worried resolutions were too vague or wordy and could easily be misinterpreted to mean differing things. In the arts and humanities workshop, one woman, while discussing altering a resolution, stated that the wording created loopholes, and she did not want the resolution to give the wrong impression or lead to a wrong interpretation. Another woman stated that they needed to tighten up resolutions to make sure they could not be misinterpreted; she stated, "Ambiguities lead to loopholes."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Child Abuse Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Enforcement of Laws Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>45</sup>Basic Needs Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>46</sup>Equal Rights Amendment Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU; Arts and Humanities Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake

Joanne Quarry also urged women to study the wording. The resolutions were only a summary and gave the appearance of being beneficial. As she stated:

But if you study the resolutions, you find that everything is going to be done by the federal government. Everything will be controlled by the federal government. And for this reason, I do not think it is taking the easy way out to vote against resolutions. On the contrary, it is taking the easy way out to vote for them and let the government take over our thinking for us.<sup>47</sup>

Quarry worried that many women were not studying the intended results of many resolutions, which sounded beneficial in a brief form. However, when the full resolutions and their implications became known, the person realized the resolution would restrict their freedom.

Loss of personal freedom explained why many national resolutions did not pass, even though they seemed more beneficial than detrimental. Women at the conference opposed increased federal involvement because of misinterpretation, the loss of individual freedom, and fear of an all-powerful government. In these cases, even a resolution that might seem advantageous would contribute to the loss of liberty and should not be passed.

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City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U. Resolution F - 2 is a great example. It states “Disparities in the treatment of male and female juvenile offenders should be eliminated.” While this could be interpreted to mean that females should not receive longer sentences than males for the same offense, it could also mean that any difference in treatment should be eliminated. All facilities would have to be standardized; all activities would have to be the same. In addition, the question of who would audit institutions, what criteria would be used in determining compliance, and how this resolution would be enforced are not stated.

<sup>47</sup>Joanne Quarry, Comments at Open-mike Session of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

As Susan Weeks stated, “A government that can give everything, can take it all away.”<sup>48</sup>

With the loss of liberty, women at the session worried about representation. They did not want agencies that did not represent their concerns in creating and enforcing laws. In the mental health workshop, one woman argued against federal involvement saying that local government is closest to the citizens and ideal for implementing solutions to social problems. Federal agencies would not be able to alter laws and regulations to fit the local community’s needs. Local agencies would ensure that “we can have people who understand Utah and its problems.” She wanted as little federal involvement as possible. While debating a resolution to establish a board to oversee school compliance with Title IX, one woman did not want a state agency to handle it. She suggested, “Why can’t local school boards?” She believed a state agency would not be able to meet local needs; conversely, she could easily contact her school board if she opposed decisions. Citizens could not readily go to Washington or state agencies to make sure they were properly represented and that the problem would be solved correctly.<sup>49</sup>

Some women resented federal agencies because they did not feel they had any “say” in how these organizations operated or enforced laws. Committees were not formed from elected officials and did not represent the people. Centralized laws and organizations

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<sup>48</sup>Susan Weeks, Comments at Open-mike Session of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

<sup>49</sup>Mental Health Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Enforcement of Laws Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

could not meet the needs of their community. These women wanted local agencies which were responsible to the local population.

Most importantly, women at the conference opposed federal involvement and nationally formed resolutions because of the values and morals they entailed. As Klatch's model of social conservatives suggests, many conservative women felt the federal government should not be allowed to promote behavior or practices the women considered immoral. Nor should it be allowed to decide which values would be practiced and enforced. For example, in the reproductive workshop, the audience rejected resolutions advocating federally established sex education in schools. Some participants were concerned that the government would teach "unnatural sex acts," or homosexuality. The women spent a considerable amount of time debating a substitute resolution. While agreeing that children and students need to be taught about sexuality, the women did not want the federal government to determine the content of the course or use public funds to teach behaviors they did not condone. This argument surfaced in the health workshop over non-mandatory sex-education classes in schools. Women opposed this; they did not want state or federal funds to be used to teach what they classified as a moral issue.<sup>50</sup>

In the open-mike session, Susan Weeks was concerned that the resolution mandating that the federal government provide day care for all children would raise taxes and make it disadvantageous for her to stay home. She opposed Social Security for

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<sup>50</sup>Klatch, 21-30; Reproductive Health Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Health Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Health Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

homemakers because her husband would have to pay it, making it advantageous for her to leave her home. She opposed any legislation that would discourage her from staying home and raising her children.<sup>51</sup>

Some women did not approve of the values being promoted by federal involvement. They resented the federal government's interference in moral matters and would not support legislation that attacked the family structure. They believed the government had no right to interfere or promote immoral values.

Conservatives have also been accused of being unable to propose viable solutions to the problems women and minorities faced or simply not believing those problems existed. If conservatives opposed resolutions based on the above criteria, how did they propose solving the problems women faced? Conservative women within workshops and sessions advocated solutions that promoted local control, volunteerism, individual choice, and responsibility.

While most conservatives worried about taxes, they proposed to fix the problem in several ways. First, they did not want to increase government spending. Repeatedly conservatives reworded resolutions from workshops to reflect this. They added "already existing funds" to many proposals to show they did not want the deficit or taxes to

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<sup>51</sup>Susan Weeks, Comments at Open-mike Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU. As mentioned in chapter two, footnote 21, Belle Abzug, the current president of the National IWY Commission, supported legislation that wanted families to pay in a larger amount of money to Social Security to allow homemakers to receive benefits. Conservatives opposed this since it would promote women whose families were struggling financially to leave the home in order to find work to pay the extra amount.

increase. Money had to come from sources already in use or not at all.<sup>52</sup>

A few conservatives advocated reform of current tax practices. One man, a Mr. Thompson, suggested a resolution to gradually decrease and end the Social Security system. Those who had already paid into it for more than nine years and those who were receiving benefits would continue to use the system. However, everyone else would be allowed to take these funds and invest them in a retirement system of their choice. He stated he did not really believe this would happen but wanted the federal government to know that people wanted this system to be examined. Changes needed to be made so this system would be more economical and provide better benefits in the future.<sup>53</sup>

In the basic needs workshop, women passed a resolution that would allow families to take tax deductions for disability of full-time homemakers. They also advocated the elimination of taxes pertaining to gifts from one spouse to another and estate taxes from the death of one spouse. This would remove the tax burdens of women whose husband had died and also reduce the tax burden of families who had to pay for housecleaning, cooking, and other related expenses when the homemaker became ill or disabled.<sup>54</sup>

To keep taxes from increasing, some conservatives believed money could be

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<sup>52</sup>Wife Abuse Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Legal Status of Homemaker's Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Enforcement of Laws Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>53</sup>Aging Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>54</sup>Basic Needs Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

moved from unneeded areas to projects with more merit. Specifically, these conservatives wanted funds used for practices or programs they considered immoral to be used elsewhere. In the reproductive workshop, participants drafted resolutions that would divert all funding for promotion or distribution of contraception and instead fund other programs, such as food, shelter, training, and adoption programs for pregnant women. One resolution specifically requested that funds used for abortion be diverted to increase medical research for birth defects and to promote adoption.<sup>55</sup>

When money could not be found within existing budgets, participants supported volunteerism. Women re-drafted resolutions to encourage local organizations, groups or individuals to provide the money needed for many remedial programs. In the enforcement of laws workshop, one resolution advocated that the state create and fund a campaign to make consumers aware of credit laws and rights. One woman moved that no such campaign be conducted “whatsoever” by the government but that local people or organizations conduct such a campaign through schools and private industries in order to “cut down on government taxes that we have too much of.”<sup>56</sup>

In addition, if an existing organization could handle the problem, conservatives opposed creation of another one. In the enforcement of laws workshop, one resolution advocated creation of a state board to monitor girls’ and boys’ sports programs with regard to Title IX. One woman asked why a state board needed to be created, taking up

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<sup>55</sup>Reproductive Health Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>56</sup>Enforcement of Laws Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

more funds when local school boards could handle this problem.<sup>57</sup>

To solve problems without increasing taxes or spending more money, right-wing women reworded resolutions to specify that no new funds be allotted. They wanted existing funds to be used more economically, funds currently being used for what they saw as immoral practices to be diverted to more worthwhile projects, and volunteerism if funds could not meet the demand. These solutions would not raise taxes or the national deficit.

Regarding personal rights and liberty, conservatives tried to limit government involvement and make sure individual choice was preserved. In order to protect their freedom, conservatives did not advocate passage of laws that were redundant. If an existing law would solve the problem, they instead called for stronger enforcement of that law. In the basic needs workshop, the women proposed elimination of one resolution because a law already existed to handle that problem. The law just needed to be enforced. In the enforcement of laws workshop, the task force suggested several recommendations that would reform athletic programs to allow more women to participate. In opposition to these resolutions, one woman commented “We have Title IX and affirmative action; we do not need another law.” While many conservatives disliked how Title IX was regulated, they did acknowledge a law was needed. Instead of creating a new law, conservatives believed Title IX simply needed to be reworded and enforced.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Enforcement of Laws Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>58</sup>Basic Needs Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Enforcement of Laws Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U. As comments from workshops reveal, some conservatives disliked affirmative

Conservative women also rejected many resolutions for being too vague or wordy. In many cases a few words could drastically change how the resolution would be implemented. In the child abuse workshop, one resolution called for more juvenile judges to handle abuse cases. One audience member suggested altering this resolution because it was too vague. She contended the word “more” could mean anything; why not be specific? How many judges would really be needed?<sup>59</sup>

In many workshops, many women reworded the resolutions to be more specific to tighten the interpretation and preserve individual choice. In the health workshop, a resolution called for the government to have schools teach classes to increase health awareness. Several women advocated the addition of the word “non-mandatory.” Women in the audience wanted to preserve each school’s right to choose whether or not to have this program. They also wanted to add that this health information would not include sex-education.<sup>60</sup>

Conservatives also wanted control to be kept on the local level, with the least amount of federal involvement as possible. Many resolutions were altered to have local agencies and local government handle the problem instead of passing authority to the federal government. Not only would local groups be able to handle the problem in a more

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action and Title Nine. Others believed the laws had good intentions but were not effective in their aims. Those that did support Title Nine wanted it enforced fully rather than create another vague law.

<sup>59</sup>Child Abuse Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>60</sup>Health Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

timely manner, but they would also be able to adapt programs to suit the political, cultural, and moral climate of Utah. In the wife abuse workshop, women suggested the Division of Family Services should work with local agencies instead of with the federal government to establish a network of safe houses for battered women. Not only would this involve the community, but the local groups would be taking responsibility for their members. In all workshops, local control was preferred by the audience over federal involvement.<sup>61</sup>

Conservatives also rejected or changed many resolutions for advocating reverse discrimination. These women worried many of the resolutions would give too much preferential treatment to women, leading to discrimination against men or against more qualified individuals. First, conservatives wanted individual merit to be recognized. In the women offenders workshop, one resolution called for more women to be hired in administrative and board positions. To avoid forcing agencies to hire applicants less suited for the job, the audience added the word “qualified” to the resolution. They did not want businesses and government agencies to feel pressured to hire unqualified minorities.<sup>62</sup>

Audience participants altered many resolutions to remove a forced quota, but still wanted to keep the goal intact. In the employment workshop, the audience altered one resolution that called for the state government to increase the number of women in administrative positions up to 20 percent. The women in this workshop did not want a specified number that might force these agencies to hire women arbitrarily in order to meet

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<sup>61</sup>Wife Abuse Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>62</sup>Women Offenders, Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

this standard. The phrase “20%” was deleted.<sup>63</sup>

Women also rejected suggestions that specifically targeted women and excluded men. In the employment workshop, one resolution called for state government to develop management training programs for women. The audience believed this discriminated against men who also needed this training. They did not want men excluded and changed the wording to be “for men and women.” This same spirit moved into the enforcement of laws workshop as well. When debating a resolution to urge lawmakers to enforce Title IX and guarantee girls’ sports received the same funding as boys’ programs, one woman in the audience proposed the substitution that funding not be taken away from boys’ programs and given to girls. She argued this would lower the quality of many boys’ programs. The resolution would defeat the purpose of having sports programs by making boys’ programs of lesser quality than girls’ sports. She cited a local school where the boys had to pay for their own uniforms and equipment while the girls enjoyed new uniforms purchased by the school that year. While she supported equality, she did not support putting young men at a disadvantage in order to comply with federal laws.<sup>64</sup>

Conservatives did not want laws that advocated reverse discrimination. Instead they promoted individual merit and qualification. They especially did not want quotas to force businesses and organizations to hire less qualified individuals. Conservatives also opposed many resolutions because they disadvantaged homemakers. Since most, if not

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<sup>63</sup>Employment Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>64</sup>Enforcement of Laws Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

all, right-wing women oppose an increase in taxes, people must compete for government services. If all programs catered to single or divorced women or minorities, white married men would be left out and so would their wives. Conservatives wanted government programs to be available to all individuals, regardless of marital status, race, or sex.

Most importantly, conservatives worried many resolutions would not promote good morals. They wanted resolutions that would teach responsibility, involve people, promote the sanctity of life, and preserve the traditional roles of women in the home.

Conservatives encouraged volunteerism and do-it-yourself resolutions that fostered responsibility and encouraged people to get involved. Regarding day care issues for working women, conservatives advocated a baby-sitting co-op. They realized some women needed to work to support their families. This co-op would involve local women taking turns hosting a day-care in their homes. These co-ops would be regulated by county agencies. They believed this would not only eliminate problems with the federal government deciding what would be taught in day-care programs but would also promote responsibility among these women. Conservatives believed federal day-care programs were seen as a way out by many women who did not want the responsibility of caring for children. In the mental health workshop, participants added the word “temporary” to one resolution regarding day-care assistance and financial welfare payments. They wanted to avoid dependency problems among women and encourage welfare recipients to become self-sufficient <sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Basic Needs Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Mental Health Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

Conservatives also wanted the community to become involved in many programs and areas to promote responsibility locally. Participants altered resolutions to have local agencies become involved. In the mental health workshop, women also suggested having high school students run day care centers, in conjunction with country agencies, in order to teach parenting skills. In the wife abuse workshop, one woman suggested a resolution to encourage churches, volunteers, groups, media, and civic organizations to educate the public on available alternatives for battered wives. This problem belonged to the community, and the community should be involved in providing a solution.<sup>66</sup>

Conservatives also vehemently opposed any resolution that did not maintain the sanctity of life, specifically abortion. They believed the unborn child had a right to live. They also opposed any resolution that dealt with sex education or contraception. Any resolution that supported abortion, sex education, or contraception regardless of age or parental consent was speedily voted down.<sup>67</sup>

Conservatives also wanted to reserve the right to teach children based on their own moral background. They reworded resolutions to support parental rights and

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The women in the audience wanted the Division of Family Services, which operated on the local level, to regulate these and encourage parental input.

<sup>66</sup>Mental Health Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Wife Abuse Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U. Several workshops debated resolutions on day care. This workshop also wanted local county government to monitor and regulate this program.

<sup>67</sup>Reproductive Health Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Health Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

opposed sex education being taught in schools. Three workshops spawned considerable tension and debate over this issue: reproductive, health and child development. In all three conservatives struck down or reworded resolutions advocating sex education. In the reproductive workshop, a resolution was passed not to allow textbooks used in schools to teach homosexuality or any “unnatural sex act.” As another resolution stated, “We reserve the right as parents to teach our children.”<sup>68</sup>

Most importantly conservatives wanted to maintain the traditional gender roles of women and preserve families. They opposed removal of gender-related terms concerning the distinction between men and women. They wanted more programs to treat families in battered wives cases instead of focusing just on the wife. They wanted equal services for men to help them overcome abusive behavior; one woman stated, “Jail won’t help.”<sup>69</sup>

In the legal status of homemakers workshop, task-force members rejected the National IWY recommendations and drafted their own. Regarding problems with Social Security, conservative task-force members proposed that a homemaker accrue benefits along with her husband. This would not increase the amount already taken out of his paycheck but would allow the benefits to be “split” evenly between a married couple. This

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<sup>68</sup>Reproductive Health Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Health Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Child Development Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>69</sup>Reproductive Health Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Wife Abuse Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

would permit homemakers to receive benefits under their own name and would not require extra funds from struggling families. It would not encourage mothers to leave the home to seek work. Women in the mental health workshop called for more pre-marital counseling to help stem the rising divorce rate. Conservatives did not just focus on helping women in difficult situations; they wanted resolutions that encouraged women to remain in the home and that focused on preserving families rather than encouraging women to leave their husbands.<sup>70</sup>

Analysis of rhetoric within workshops provides a window into why women at Utah's state IWY meeting rejected all nationally formed resolutions and why they were so hostile toward federal involvement. While it is impossible to say the women who commented inside workshops accurately represent the women who attended the conference, the workshops give further insight into the participants' personal feelings and concerns. For historians, it might be hard to understand why women at the conference, who stated they were not opposed to equal rights, would reject many of the resolutions. For example, blind judging, increased access to credit, and Social Security for homemakers appear to be extremely beneficial. Without understanding the attendees' reasons, it is easy to assume they voted ignorantly. These workshops disclose possible reasons why women rejected all national resolutions and re-worded most of the state

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<sup>70</sup>Legal Status of Homemakers Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Mental Health Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

resolutions. Women at the conference had reasonable concerns in rejecting resolutions which we might see as harmless or extremely beneficial. Women were not passive but active participants who wanted to be heard.

It is also easy to assume women, because they were mobilized by the LDS Church and right-wing groups, voted no on all issues because they were told to do so. Both Martha Bradley and Dixie Snow Huefner recount personal experiences that included women who simply came and voted no. They also recount experiences of women who were told to vote no by Relief Society presidents, other members, and sponsors of the mass meetings. Yet the large variance in voting results<sup>71</sup> reveals that some women were reading the resolutions; they were thinking about them. The debate within workshops confirms that despite what motivated women to attend, many voted according to their own opinions.

The workshops point out the inconsistency between labels given to conservatives and their actions. While being labeled “anti-change,” many right-wing women at Utah’s conference did not want to simply support the current social structure but wanted changes just as drastic as those espoused by liberals. Conservatives wanted to reduce taxes, to roll back many government programs they believed were ineffective, and to return to earlier eras of limited government and local control. The term “anti-change” did not apply to these conservative women.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>See Appendix F. Notice some resolutions received a larger percent of no votes than others. Specific resolutions which illustrate this would be A - 2 compared to D - 1.

<sup>72</sup>Bradley, 148; Bird, 47-48; Sillitoe, 65-67. See for example *The Legal Status of Homemaker’s Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference*, Salt Lake

The workshops also reveal the diverse opinions espoused by conservative women. The issue of blind judging best reflects this. A workshop speaker commented that essays and art often included the participant's name and other personal information. She argued all contests and tryouts needed to be blind in order to end discrimination based on sex. While many women in the audience recognized this as a problem, they did not want a blanket law that made all judging blind. Some contests and competitions relied on visual presentation or other personal information which would indicate the contestant was female, such as playing an instrument or dance competitions. Judges would also need to examine form as well as sound.<sup>73</sup>

The resolutions suggested by the workshop task-force would require federal or state involvement to monitor and encourage schools and foundations to hold blind judging. Yet, the audience was skeptical of implementing this resolution. They did not want the resolution to be taken to any extremes, perhaps forcing blind judging in areas where it would be impractical. They also believed most organizations would adopt blind judging without federal laws, reflecting a trust in businesses and a mistrust of government.<sup>74</sup>

The debate over this one resolution was quite intense. The women did not want

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City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U, Enforcement of Laws Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>73</sup>Art and Humanities Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>74</sup>Art and Humanities Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

one inflexible standard to be placed on all competitions, but still decided to pass the resolution with the qualifying phrase of “where appropriate.” However, the plenary session defeated the resolution. In the plenary session debate, one woman commented that this would increase federal control and that a resolution was not needed. As Klatch’s and Jerome Himmelstein’s models suggest, the right had considerable problems finding solutions that pleased all its factions. This, and other workshops’ debate of resolutions, reflect the tendency of the right to find unity only in opposition. Creating a solution among members of the right was difficult.<sup>75</sup>

This in part explains why many resolutions that were drafted by conservative women in workshops failed to pass on the plenary floor. It also accounts for the large variance in votes on the national resolutions. The national resolution regarding blind judging attracted nearly one-fifth of the votes, while a more controversial resolution that advocated the appointment of more women to international organizations or government bodies garnered only a little over one percent of yes votes. Men and women of diverse opinions formed the make-up of the New Right. These groups often found it hard to create solutions that pleased all of their members.<sup>76</sup>

In addition, the rhetoric of the sessions reveals the overall concerns of women attending. In many ways their comments can be summarized in one word: fear. Other

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<sup>75</sup>Art and Humanities Workshop of the Utah International Women’s Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Jerome L. Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Klatch, 197-212.

<sup>76</sup>See Appendix F, A - 2 and G - 1.

studies of the New Right or conservative movements say they are colored by episodal outbursts and paranoia based on fear.<sup>77</sup> With this observation comes the implied assumption that many of the fears were unfounded, illogical, and irrational.

In evaluating the responsibility and rationality of women who attended Utah's conference, Seymour Lipset and Richard Hofstadter provide a model for distinguishing between "status politics" and "class politics." Status politics lacked "clear-cut solutions" and involved a reliance upon "irrational" remedies and "a search for scapegoats" rather than relying on "realistic proposals for positive action." Some participants at Utah's conference did present unrealistic solutions and also relied upon emotional or poorly focused solutions or implications. One such example involved a woman who claimed the National IWY's resolutions would make everything like "Red China - everybody in gray pants and grey shirts." This outcome was illogical and could not be rationally debated. However, most women who participated in workshops proposed solutions that could be realistically implemented and could be debated intelligently between opposing groups.<sup>78</sup>

The workshops revealed that many women were motivated by fear: fear of taxation, of increased federal control, and of the loss of personal rights. However, to assume these fears were unfounded is to do women at the conference a great disservice.

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<sup>77</sup>Daniel Bell, ed. *The Radical Right* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002).

<sup>78</sup>Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Sources of the 'Radical Right,'" in Daniel Bell, ed., *The Radical Right*, 308-309; Richard Hofstadter, "The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt," in *ibid.*, 85; Richard Hofstadter, "Pseudo-Conservatism Revisited: A Postscript," in *ibid.*, 99; Melba Holman, Comments at Open-mike Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

Many did not fear drastic results, such as complete obliteration of gender, but most feared little changes that would place them at a disadvantage. Increased taxes would make them poorer, local organizations would have to defer to federal opinions, and Washington, rather than local residents, would dictate what morals would be taught in their communities. These fears were not unjustified or illogical, showing women had valid concerns and reasons for their actions. By illuminating how conservative women felt, the workshops and sessions become a valuable tool in understanding the motivations of those who attended Utah's conference.

## CHAPTER 4

### EVALUATION OF CONSERVATIVE ACTIONS AT THE UTAH STATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR CONFERENCE

I'm thankful for . . . being awakened, that we could be awakened to these things that issues are not put over on us and we're not made aware of them. It's been said from the stand this morning that this is the largest group of women convened for or against ERA and abortion and these other things that we covered today in the United States. And I want all to know that women in every state in the nation from now on are going to rise up and be heard and banish the ERA across the nation and abortion and number nine [Title Nine]. And that we're no longer going to be, [sic] remain asleep and not be heard.<sup>1</sup>

#### **The Viewpoint of Barbara Smith and Dennis Kerr**

Initially, Barbara Smith stated she was disappointed by the actions of many of the women who attended the conference, and the Relief Society General presidency released a letter claiming the LDS church had good intentions in recruiting women to attend but that the women had been manipulated by right-wing groups. This may have been an attempt, as D. Michael Quinn states, to control damage and to portray LDS involvement as positive. Smith said she was glad that many women became involved and felt that these women would "go back to their homes and respond in a positive way." After the

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<sup>1</sup>Vanda Thorp, Comments at Open-mike Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University [SC-BYU].

conference, Smith met with a group of IWY committee members, including Jan Tyler. Smith also spoke with seventy-five stake Relief Society presidents. After these meetings Smith noted that women who attended said they became more aware of women's issues and of their need to become more informed. Smith's main regret was that the lack of information given out by the presidency had created a vacuum which allowed right-wing groups to prey on women's fears.<sup>2</sup>

In later interviews, Smith spoke of the conference as a success. Many LDS women attended, got involved, and defeated the block of resolutions instead of accepting them as many other states did. She believed the negativity stemmed from the sheer size of the conference and the ignorance of many women. She still did not condone the involvement of right-wing groups but was proud that Utah women came and spoke out against immoral practices.<sup>3</sup>

Dennis Kerr viewed the results of the conference with "absolute pride." He stated the women who attended astonished him. He was surprised at what these women accomplished, not because they were women, but because these women, with only a few weeks' and in some cases a few days' notice, took the time and studied the issues as best

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<sup>2</sup>"Effects of Women's Conference to Live On," *Deseret News*, 27 June, 1977; Martha Sonntag Bradley, "The Mormon Relief Society and the International Women's Year," *Journal of Mormon History* 21, no. 1 (1995): 142, 149; D. Michael Quinn, "The LDS Church's Campaign Against the Equal Rights Amendment," *Journal of Mormon History* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 115-116; Linda Sillitoe, "Women Scorned: Inside the IWY Conference," *Utah Holiday* 6, no. 12 (August 1977): 66-68; Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: the Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 371-373.

<sup>3</sup>Barbara Smith, *A Fruitful Season* (Salt Lake City Utah: Bookcraft, 1988), 108-109; Barbara Smith, unrecorded interview by author, 5 April 2004, Salt Lake City.

they could. They drafted resolutions that they believed represented their values and, yes, Kerr states, many were poorly worded and based on emotion rather than practical solutions, but many were viable and clearly showed that the women had strong feelings. These women let their voices be heard and were not pushed by men to act. They got involved and participated. He was initially fearful that conservatives would be excluded from participating in Utah's conference due to complaints by conservatives from other states. He was proud that conservatives in Utah had reversed this trend. Even though he thought the meeting was a success, he said the conference was controversial; that was to be expected of a political meeting. Even if men had not become involved, it would have been political – that is how people, not just men, act in a democracy. These women took the opportunity seriously to debate issues in a democratic format and they let their voice be heard.<sup>4</sup>

Conservative complaints regarding the IWY meetings in other states have often been dismissed as fake, phony, or exaggerated, but there is a grain of truth to their complaints. Most of the same problems and events that caused suspicion in conservatives in other states also occurred in Utah's meeting. But were conservatives right about Utah's IWY committee? Did the committee purposely try to exclude conservatives? Did it have an agenda?

The answer is somewhat complicated, but most of Utah's controversy came from a series of bungled events and miscommunication between groups. Utah's committee

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<sup>4</sup>Dennis Kerr, interview by author, 2 August 2003, Salt Lake City, tape recording in author's possession.

refused to meet with most conservative groups. Though probably due to lack of time and simple inconvenience, this refusal most likely set the stage for suspicion. However, the committee was not purposely trying to exclude conservatives. The outreach committee conducted an extensive program to contact women's groups. While focusing on work-related groups such as school districts and government agencies, they did contact political groups as well, such as the Republican and Democratic parties and the Right to Life Group. The committee did appear to cater to professional organizations simply because this was the most effective way to contact women. To the committee's credit, they conducted the largest calling campaign of all the IWY meetings, planned on hosting over ninety IWY-sponsored mass meetings, and promoted the conference through articles, radio ads, and television commercials all in an effort to encourage women to attend the conference.<sup>5</sup>

Was Utah's committee composed solely of liberal and leftist women? Tyler contends that this was only a perception; the committee was a moderate group and espoused many diverse opinions. The committee was composed of working women along with a few housewives. All but two of the women were white and middle class. One woman was in her thirties, nine were in their forties, while all the rest were fifty or older. While Tyler admits that women in the committee leaned toward liberal politics, it at least

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<sup>5</sup>Jan Tyler, interview by Marcie Goodman, 21 February, 1992, Brigham Young University Women's Research Institute, Provo, transcript in author's possession; *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee* (Salt Lake City: IWY Commission, 1977), folder 2, pg 22-25, 53-70; Jan Tyler, Oral History, interviewed by JoAnn Freed, 13 September, 1977, Utah Women's Project, IWY Collection, Utah State Historical Society; Sillitoe, 69.

represented the geographic diversity of Utah women. Most, if not all, of the women were considered moderates; only Tyler could possibly be called liberal. Tyler commented that Utah's committee was purposely chosen by National IWY in order to represent the multiple views of Utah women. Tyler also said that to avoid contention, the National IWY committee tried to cater to Utah's religious climate; all but two members were LDS. However, no official poll was taken on how each member of Utah's committee felt about the ERA, abortion, or other controversial issues. Tyler indicates these charges probably arose out of her involvement in liberal women's groups and her support of the ERA. This perception also originated from reports of women who attended other state IWY conferences.<sup>6</sup>

Did Utah's committee attempt to promote the ERA, lesbianism, and other liberal tenets at the conference? This charge arose out of how differently the committee and conservatives viewed the actions and intent of the conference. Two workshops vividly show the disparity between the committee's intent and conservative actions, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) workshop and the lifestyles workshop. In the ERA workshop, Utah's IWY committee claimed they tried to encourage dialogue between women and did not endorse one position over another.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992; Gloria Firmage, interview by author, 4 June 2004, Salt Lake City, tape recording in author's possession; Kerr, Oral History, 2003; *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 5, pg 26. See Martha Bradley's article, "The Mormon Relief Society and the International Women's Year," for more information on Utah IWY committee's demographics. She does not include other statistics such as who was single, married, or employed in her article.

<sup>7</sup>Equal Rights Amendment Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

Conservatives, however, complained the recommendation that was presented in the workshop was pro-ERA. The workshop chair argued the recommendation, which called for a subcommittee created by the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women in Utah to establish facilities to disseminate both pro and con information regarding the ERA so women could become informed and make up their own mind concerning the amendment, was neutral. Conservatives contended this was biased. Inside the workshop, one woman commented that Utah had already defeated the amendment; this information campaign operated under the assumption the ERA would pass nationally and that Utah had defeated it blindly – possibly due the influence of the LDS Church. Conservatives did not share this belief that it would pass nor did they assume the amendment had been defeated in Utah due to ignorance. They argued the ERA would be defeated in other states and that women in Utah already knew enough about the amendment; they would not change their minds. The resolution was just a back door approach to promote the ERA and possibly an insult to women in Utah. They claimed that it proved that Utah's committee did endorse the ERA.<sup>8</sup>

This controversy was best seen in the lifestyle workshop. The task-force decided not to show any films or media that might offend the audience; they particularly decided not to show the much-disputed film "Lavender" which showed a lesbian couple holding hands. This task-force instead planned on creating an atmosphere of dialogue where women could listen and understand why women chose different lifestyles. Panelists

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<sup>8</sup>Equal Rights Amendment Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977, SC-BYU*.

included women who were single, divorced, married, childless, those who chose careers, homemakers, and homosexuals. The task-force decided not to draft or allow consideration of any recommendations. They believed this was taking a completely neutral stance.<sup>9</sup>

Conservatives viewed this workshop very differently. Audience participants were offended and outraged. The lesbian speaker found herself being treated rudely by the audience. Participants were mostly concerned that no resolution on such an important issue was being discussed. When a woman in the audience tried to submit one, she was refused by the workshop chair. Conservatives argued this was outright discrimination. In a conference that was supposed to let women participate, they were not allowed to do so. They believed this was another plot to brainwash Utah women into supporting lesbianism by forcing them to listen to a pro-lesbian speaker. Women later introduced a resolution in the plenary session against homosexuality.<sup>10</sup>

These two workshops reveal how differently the committee and conservatives viewed the actions and intent of the conference. While Utah's committee wanted to educate women and draft solutions all women could endorse, this often meant leaning toward more liberal resolutions. Conservatives attended to submit their opinions to the federal government. They were not necessarily interested in changing their mind or

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<sup>9</sup>Lifestyles Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, International Women's Year Audio-Visual Collection, 1977, Manuscripts Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah [SC- U].

<sup>10</sup>Lifestyles Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

finding a solution that fit every person's needs or viewpoint. Furthermore, conservatives interpreted a lack of a resolution against such issues as the ERA and homosexuality as equivalent to an endorsement.<sup>11</sup>

In the Utah IWY committee's defense, Tyler argues the committee tried to water down many of the resolutions with Utah's conservative tendencies in mind. The committee also requested task-forces to take a more moderate approach in planning workshops. This is best seen in how the task force who planned the film festival dealt with the issue of which movies were played. Similar to the lifestyles workshop, the film festival task-force also had the choice of showing the film "Lavender." The task-force originally planned to show this movie, but later cut it from the program. In addition, the task-force that selected movies tried to cater to Utah's conservative nature in its selection of films and was instructed not to show controversial films to help the meeting be less polarized. Prior to the conference, conservatives were not aware of this instruction but were only aware that other state IWY conferences did show this film.<sup>12</sup>

Did Utah's committee have an agenda? Martha Bradley argues the committee was unbiased and did not have an agenda. But several complaints and events show the committee was not free from power politics. In a few workshops, chairs openly admitted that Utah's committee had altered resolutions or insisted the workshop include certain

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<sup>11</sup>*Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 5, pg 22.

<sup>12</sup>Tyler, Oral History, 1992; *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 5, pg 35-39. A full list of films shown at Utah's conference can be found in Appendix D.

resolutions. One example involved the child abuse workshop, which also discussed a resolution on day care. The workshop task-force did not support federally funded day care even after conducting months of research on the issue. Instead they suggested a resolution advocating a babysitting co-op, modeled after a system used in Great Britain. Utah's IWY committee discarded their resolution and submitted one which supported the National IWY committee's resolution to have the federal government provide day care. During the workshop, the chair told the audience Utah's committee had changed their resolution. She called for a vote to discard resolutions by Utah's committee and afterward moved to consider the resolutions the workshop task-force had originally wanted.<sup>13</sup>

This would have reinforced conservatives' perception about Utah's committee. The audience would have become aware the committee could and did override the resolutions drafted by task-forces. Conservatives may have been correct in assuming Utah's committee had an agenda. Specifically, Utah's committee may have endorsed more federal control while dismissing alternative solutions as impractical.

Several women also complained that Utah's committee was dominated by a small group of women which included Tyler. Rita Eason, a member of Utah's coordinating committee, stated that this group made most of the decisions and often overrode opinions of other members. Kathleen Flake, who also served on the committee, commented Tyler was difficult to work with and insisted on having her way in many of the decisions. The minority women workshop perhaps had the strongest criticism against the committee.

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<sup>13</sup>Bradley, 118-123; Child Abuse Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

They complained the committee failed to address the needs of minority women in many resolutions. They also commented the committee ignored their suggestions and only included a workshop on this subject due to the insistence of minority women working with Utah's committee. They argued the committee was dominated by a middle-class mentality which showed "little evidence of sincere concern" for minorities. This task force felt Utah's IWY committee did not fully incorporate nor give minority groups the consideration the National IWY committee asked for. Not only did right-wing women demonstrate nativism but the committee did as well.<sup>14</sup>

How workshops were organized added to the turmoil of the conference and the charge that Utah's committee was promoting liberal resolutions. In many cases the audience wanted to reject the entire list of recommendations presented by the workshop chair. This became a complicated process. Instead of just accepting the motion to reject them in one block, chairs insisted the audience had to vote on each one individually and reject it; this was the rule. This process took up valuable time, which conservatives wished to use in drafting new resolutions and, in many women's eyes, went against normal parliamentary procedure. It prompted the statement "Whose rules, Yours?" by a frustrated woman. This rule created the belief that the committee was trying to force

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<sup>14</sup>*Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 5, pg 32-33; Kathleen Flake, Oral History, interviewed by JoAnn Freed, 8 September 1977, Utah Women's Project, IWY Collection, Utah State Historical Society; *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 4, pg 11.

conservatives to accept their resolutions.<sup>15</sup>

Workshops also limited time for new business to fifteen minutes at the end of the workshop. Fifteen minutes was rarely enough time to debate and draft new resolutions or even just one resolution. Many workshops had to close with people still lined up at the microphones; these women did not get a chance to submit their own solutions. Some workshops ran out of time before any new business could be entertained. This frustrated conservatives. In workshops where the chair was impatient and even rude to those who moved to extend time or allow new business, conservatives became convinced that the workshop task-force was against them. Charges that conservatives were not allowed to participate as they desired in these instances were true, though perhaps their nonparticipation was not intentionally orchestrated.<sup>16</sup>

Many of these problems came about because of poor organization and time restrictions. Most workshop task-forces had less than four months to prepare. Resolutions took considerable amounts of time to debate. Changing the wording, substituting, and amending resolutions took up valuable time. The workshops were limited to two hours in which the audience would try to solve complex problems. Furthermore, parliamentary procedure complicated the amending process. Many workshops which went more smoothly than others did not adhere so closely to

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<sup>15</sup>Reproductive Health Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>16</sup> See for example Wife Abuse Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Employment Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

parliamentary procedure or the rules. They simply judged the mood of the audience and adopted a looser style. These workshops fared better and probably communicated a desire to work with the audience which allowed for a greater exchange of ideas. One workshop simply abandoned the rules and adopted a taking turns approach to speaking. The chair remained cheerful and little tension was involved in dealing with problems.<sup>17</sup>

Utah's IWY conference also suffered from its sheer size. Lack of materials, lost registration forms, and voting problems all added to participants' frustration. Size also altered how women interacted with each other. Women complained they were not allowed to participate; not all felt they had an opportunity to speak. Audience members closed debate on issues using parliamentary procedure, as women still waiting behind them found they were not allowed to voice their opinion. The chair repeatedly became confused on whose turn it was and, due to the large number of motions, often forgot to return to suspended motions. The audience and the committee found it difficult to mediate between the 10,000 - 15,000 people who attended.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, the purpose and organization of the conference added to the contention. The stated intent and voting practices did not agree. The National IWY

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<sup>17</sup>See for example Health Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Education Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Employment Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U.

<sup>18</sup>*Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*, folder 5, pg 61-67; Friday Plenary Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU; Saturday Plenary Session of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, *Oral History, 1977*, SC-BYU.

Commission wanted minorities and rural groups of women to become involved. They wanted women to discuss issues and come to a consensus on what should be done. These meetings purported to be based on grassroots democracy; they wanted everyone's voice to be heard. Yet the resolutions required a majority vote. The majority "got their way." As such, the purpose of the IWY committee seems to be paradoxical. While stating their intent was to have women tell the government what they wanted and pointing out that they invited and catered to minority groups so that they would also have their voice heard, it was still the majority that decided "what women wanted." The conference was not really designed to let everyone have an equal voice; like politics, the most organized and unified group could easily get their planks adopted. The way the conferences were organized already favored well-structured and well-organized special interest groups.<sup>19</sup>

Conservatives misinterpreted the actions of Utah's IWY committee, believing the committee meant to exclude conservative resolutions and pass liberal ones. Utah's committee most likely espoused a liberal agenda, but they wanted conservatives to attend and participate in Utah's meeting. Much of the negativity from the conference arose out of how each group viewed the purpose of the conference. Furthermore, how the conference and workshops were organized contributed heavily to the adverse experience of the women who attended.

Bitterness and tension still lingered after the conference was over. Some women asked to be released from their callings as ward Relief Society presidents. Some LDS

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<sup>19</sup>Child Abuse Workshop of the Utah International Women's Year Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, 24-25 July 1977, SC- U; Winifred D. Wandersee, *On the Move: American Women in the 1970s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), 194.

women stopped attending religious meetings. Chanting “Not the church, not the state, women will decide our fate,” a coalition of sixteen feminist organizations picketed the Salt Palace protesting what they said was packing of the convention by the Relief Society. They also protested the make-up of Utah’s delegation.<sup>20</sup>

Utah’s delegation was composed of mostly LDS and conservative women. Since federal IWY rules mandated a diversity in each state’s delegation, debate raged over whether the National IWY Commission would allow it to be seated. Local newspapers found themselves deluged with editorial letters. Utah’s IWY committee came under investigation for misuse of emergency state funds. The LDS church itself endured considerable negative press and received many complaints from women who attended. This prompted the Relief Society general presidency to release an apologetic letter. For many women who attend the conference the anger, hurt, and bitterness did not fade for many years.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the lack of dialogue at the conference, Tyler received many letters from women who say they attended the conference with little knowledge of women’s issues and little enthusiasm. These women thanked her for the opportunity to expand their horizons and claimed their outlook was changed. The conference was successful in spurring many

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<sup>20</sup>Margaret and Warner Woodworth, “From Vanguard to Rearguard,” *Exponent II* 4, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 10; Tyler, Oral History, 1992; Becky Cassier and David Croft, “Most are Happy With Results of Utah Women’s Conference,” *Deseret News*, 28 June 1977, A-1.

<sup>21</sup>Sillitoe, 68; Angelyn Nelson, “Panel to Ask Careful Check of Utah IWY Delegation Credentials,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 30 June 1977.

women to become involved.<sup>22</sup>

LDS activism showed up in other states as well. Reports from Montana, Idaho, Washington, and other states claimed LDS members stormed their states' IWY meetings. These members were instrumental in defeating many resolutions in these states. After Utah's experience, the LDS Church did not send out informational letters to stake or ward Relief Society presidents. The LDS Church's public communications department did send out packets titled "Meaningful Participation in the IWY Meeting" with material on abortion, the ERA, and homosexuality. This packet did not contain a specific quota or any guidelines on how to vote.<sup>23</sup>

Other studies regarding Utah's IWY meeting interpret conservative actions based on Utah's religious and conservative climate, but they do not look at conservative groups from a national perspective. Scholars focus on the relative neutrality of Utah's committee but do not take into account its association with the National IWY Committee. Conservatives had little interaction with Utah's committee, but they were aware of the National IWY Committee's intent, publications, and resolutions. Right-wing groups assumed Utah's committee would endorse the same planks. In addition, this meeting was not just for Utah's IWY committee to propose solutions. Conservatives looked at Utah's meeting from a national perspective – it was about defeating the ERA and presenting Congress with resolutions they wanted. Utah's committee may not have been as liberal as

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<sup>22</sup>Sillitoe, 67; Bradley, 147-153; Tyler, Oral History, 1992.

<sup>23</sup>Sillitoe, 67-68; Quinn, 116-119.

the National IWY Committee but sadly Utah's IWY committee still suffered from association with it.

Conservatives' actions at Utah's meeting cannot be understood solely based on the Utah IWY Committee's position or LDS Church involvement. Future works need to examine right-wing motivation and mobilization from a national perspective. As Wandersee states, anti-ERA groups took considerable time to mobilize; thus, opposition tended to show up later in the game. This held true for IWY. Kerr claims earlier IWY meetings prompted conservative groups to network with members in other states to reverse the pro-ERA trend. If so, then Utah's meeting was not just an example of LDS involvement in politics but of conservative groups mobilizing against the ERA.<sup>24</sup>

Would Utah's meeting have been as controversial if the LDS church had not become involved? Yes and no. Whether or not it was directly responsible for how women voted, the LDS Church was responsible for the tremendous increase in attendance. No other influence can account for such a large influx of women. But at the same time conservative groups were mobilizing and rallying their members. If Utah's committee planned on 3,500 attending, 1,000 right-wing members would have easily been able to disrupt most workshops and defeat many resolutions they did not endorse. While not being able to overwhelm the committee, they would have been able to make their presence felt and viewpoints known in the workshops they attended.

Kerr also stated that Utah's victory by conservatives was crucial in stopping the intent of the National IWY committee, which was that each meeting would endorse the

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<sup>24</sup>Wandersee, 179-188.

ERA to prove to Congress that indeed this is what American women wanted. Kerr argued that Utah's meeting was the first to reject the ERA and all other resolutions. This meeting became the model for political conservative mobilization. Other states soon followed and also rejected many resolutions, especially the ERA. Utah "turned the tide."<sup>25</sup>

Kerr's statement bears some truth. Utah was not the first IWY meeting to reject the pro-ERA resolutions and the liberal agenda of the National IWY committee. Missouri's IWY meeting was stormed by women who elected a conservative slate of delegates. These women did not attend the workshops, but showed up only to vote. Most of the national recommendations passed. Other states showed early opposition by defeating some of the national resolutions and electing more conservative slates. Utah was the first IWY meeting to reject all resolutions formed by the National IWY committee. It is possible the press coverage this meeting received and actions of right-wing groups spurred conservatives in other states to organize against their state IWY meetings. Meetings held after Utah's IWY conference increasingly voted against all resolutions and many, like Utah, elected solely conservative women as delegates. Although all National IWY resolutions passed in Houston, the federal government learned that indeed this was not what all American women wanted.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, Utah's IWY conference reflected the political re-alignment taking place in Utah. Since 1976, conservative Republicans have held the majorities in the Utah

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<sup>25</sup>Kerr, Oral History, 2003.

<sup>26</sup>*The Spirit of Houston: The First National Women's Conference* (Washington, D.C.: National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, 1978), 114-115.

state legislature. Democrat Scott Matheson served as governor of Utah from 1977-1984; no Democrat has served as governor since. Since Jan Graham, who campaigned successfully as Attorney General in 1992, no Democrat has held any statewide elective office. In 2005, the only Democratic member of Utah's congressional delegation was Jim Matheson of the 2<sup>nd</sup> congressional district. Both Scott and Jim Matheson, who are father and son, were considered conservative Democrats and attracted votes from conservatives as well. Before 1976 the two parties had been relatively equally balanced in the state. But as early as the 1980s, the Republican party began to emerge as the dominant party in Utah. Many counties which had been Democratic strongholds shifted their support. Only Salt Lake City, Park City, and Carbon county continue to be dominated by democrats. Even previously Democratic counties like Toole and Weber became equally balanced. Utah's IWY conference was a harbinger of the coming political change.<sup>27</sup>

This transformation in Utah politics happened due to complex changes in Utah's economy and social and political culture. Coupled with white-flight from California, the Republican party attracted moral conservatives who were disenchanted with the left. The party also gained strength by the evolution of Utah's economy from a colony under eastern and federal domination to an "American commonwealth" as the percentage of local-owned businesses increased. In addition, the Democratic party in Utah faced considerable challenges promoting unity and loyalty.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah, The Right Place* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 1996), 402-409.

<sup>28</sup>Alexander, 402-415.

In the late 1970s and early '80s conservatives would come to dominate politics in the state and, with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, the nation. Even with a swing toward a more liberal policy with the two terms of new Democrat Bill Clinton, conservative rhetoric and viewpoints continue to exist with president George W. Bush, and a Republican-dominated House and Senate in 2005. Many of the opinions and concerns expressed by conservatives at Utah's conference continue to affect policy. For example, President Bush has proposed what one man suggested as a resolution at Utah's IWY conference: that Social Security be reformed and his solution advocates privatizing deductions from younger individuals.<sup>29</sup>

Most importantly, Utah's IWY meeting mirrored the debate over the ERA and revealed the polarization that occurred among women during the women's movement. As Wandersee argues, the mobilization by conservatives at these meetings foretold the eventual death of the ERA. The conference also reflected the intricate tensions surrounding the women's movement. At Utah's meeting, not only were women hostile to the coordinating committee and the federal government, they were also combative to each other. Women at the open-mike session and workshops continually pleaded for other women not to enforce nor inflict disparate views upon them. In a nation where the majority decided the outcome, women resented that other people with different beliefs decided what roles and values would be placed upon them. Each woman felt others decided her fate for her. As such, women became belligerent to each other during the

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<sup>29</sup>Jim Vande Hei, "Poorest Face Most Risk on Social Security; Bush Plan's Success May Hinge on Perceived Safety," *The Washington Post*, 19 February 2005, A-1.

conference, claiming the other was responsible for trying to force a different lifestyle upon them.<sup>30</sup>

Understanding conservatives' motivations and rhetoric in this conference explains why they acted the way they did and their objections to many feminist tenets. Utah's State IWY Conference remains a fascinating example of conservative mobilization, making it a watershed event in Utah history.

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<sup>30</sup>Wandersee, 193-196.

## APPENDIX A

### Full text of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1972

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

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

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

## APPENDIX B

LDS Letter sent to Stake Presidents, commonly known as the Benson letter.  
Dated June 3 1977

TO: All Regional Representatives in Utah

This is a follow-up on the phone call you received from President Ezra Taft Benson's office, and here is what should be done:

1. Encourage LDS women in your stake to read the Deseret News articles in order to become informed regarding the rules of the IWY meeting: voting times, procedures, recommendations, and how delegates are selected, including how nominations from the floor should be made;
2. Select one capable and experienced LDS woman who could speak from the floor at the convention, as a concerned citizen;
3. Encourage at least ten women and hopefully many more from each ward to attend the convention workshops as registered participants (\$2 fee). This will enable them to vote and be in a position to support good recommendations, and to file a minority dissenting report if necessary.
4. Encourage LDS women to call friends, neighbors or women affiliated with other churches who share mutual concerns, and ask them to attend the convention also.

You will find enclosed enough copies for all your stake presidents. Your presidents should receive this no later than June 9, 1977.

Enough copies are enclosed for bishops in your region. Would you please request the stake presidents to see that the bishops in their stakes receive the copies.

Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated.

We hope Mormons everywhere will participate in the meetings and become part of the decision making process by registering as delegates and by making themselves eligible to become delegates to the national conference.

Note: This letter was printed on Relief Society letterhead. No signatures were placed at

the bottom, instead only the line: "RELIEF SOCIETY GENERAL PRESIDENCY."

Note: found in folder 5 pg 184 of *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*

## APPENDIX C

A follow-up letter was immediately sent out to “All Stake Relief Society Presidents in Utah” on June 7, 1977. The cover letter read:

Enclosed is a copy of the letter we are sending to your stake presidents under priesthood direction.

The Deseret News will shortly be carrying a series of articles with information on the state IWY meeting, which should be of great help to you and other Latter-day Saint women in becoming knowledgeable about the meeting.

Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Note: The signature line was simply “RELIEF SOCIETY GENERAL PRESIDENCY” with no individual signatures or names.

Note: found in folder 5 pg 183 *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*

## APPENDIX D

Films available at Utah's "Film Festival" include:

### Time Has No Sympathy

The story of a woman in prison, looks at life in isolation[,] anticipating release and transition into community life.

### Woman to Woman

Forty-eight minutes of history tracing the experiences, trials[,] and accomplishments of women

### Womanhouse

Documentary on a woman's art project in a renovated Hollywood mansion

### ERA and the American Way

Provides an impartial statement of the terms of the Equal Rights Amendment

### What I Want

A funny and provocative presentation of one woman's feelings about her desires, dependency, and love and freedom

### Jaine's Jane

A documentary on one welfare mother's struggle to develop her own strength and potential after years of isolation, and repression within a working class family

### Chris and Bennie

Focuses on the special needs and problems of single parents

### Men's Lives

A documentary that delves into the personality of the American male, his feelings, masculinity[,] and socialization process

### Joyce at 34

Excellent study of conflict between career and child[,] considers two generations of thought

### Day Care Today

Discusses the needs, changes, [and] innovative methods used in child care centers

### Mothers After Divorce

A close look at how mothers deal with raising families alone after divorce

### Children as People

A fresh portrayal of how children feel, [and] what they think about

### The Black Woman

Brings together well-known singers, dancers, and writers who share views on the role of black women today

### Does Anybody Need Me Anymore

Maureen Stapleton plays an older wife who examines her life, [and] then finds a job

### I is for Important

Shows the sex role biases of teachers, a kindergartner's fear of role reversal, and emphasis on beauty among girls

### When Women Get to Hurting

Moving film of how poor women in rural Georgia struck Levi Straus and then set up their own factory

### Images of Country Women

Looks at the lives of four rural women — including a farmer in West Virginia

### Chlorae and Albie

Touching film on two black women who have made many false starts[,] and are now going back to school and planning their lives and futures

### Girls at Twelve

Examines the socialization of 12-year-old middle-class girls

### We are Women

Narrated by Helen Reddy, the film offers census data on women in the work force, introduction into women's movement

### Breast Cancer: Where are We Now?

Jennifer O'Neill narrates this documentary on the advances of detection and treatment of breast cancer

How to Examine Breasts - (from the American Cancer Society)  
Three women show the simple steps every woman should follow for early breast cancer detection

For a Wonderful Life - (from the American Cancer Society)  
Discusses detection and treatment of uterine cancer

Something Very Special - (from the American Cancer Society)  
Directed toward young women, discusses breast and uterine cancer and the importance of annual pap smears.

Selection of National IWY Recommended Films:

Live at the Top - population planning in other countries  
Sugar 'Nspikes - integration of sports in schools  
Woman Candidate - running for office, how to  
From 3am to 10 pm - international, mother and child  
Lavender - alternate lifestyles, lesbianism  
Do Blondes Have More Fun? - humor, women in media  
Modesta - minorities and labor  
Nobody's Victim - rape, self-defense  
Womanpower: the Hidden Asset (no description given)  
Woo Who? May Wilson - separated women in the '60s

Note: found in folder 5 pg 37-40 *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*. All descriptions are printed from the list.

## APPENDIX E

### Conference Schedule

Note: found in folder 25 pg 16-20 *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee.*

Friday, June 24, 1977

7:00 a.m. - registration opens, booths closed at 7:00 pm

8:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Plenary session

Esther Landa presiding

-introduction of committee

-credentials committee report

-adoption of rules

-program

-voting instructions

-nominations committee report

9:45 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. - nominations accepted from floor

10:15 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. - film festival open

10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. - General Session

11:45 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. - voting booths open for National Recommendations

11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - lunch

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. - first block of workshops

3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - second block of workshops

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. - general session

6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. dinner on your own

7:30 p.m. - Plenary session  
Esther Landa Presiding  
recommendations from workshops groups

Saturday, June 25, 1977

7:00 a.m. - registration opens, booths closed at 2:00 pm

8:30 a.m. - 8:45a.m. Plenary session  
Esther Landa presiding  
-credentials committee report  
-voting instructions

8:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - film festival open

8:45 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. - General Session

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. - voting booths open for Houston delegates

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - first block of workshops

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. - lunch

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - General session

2:30 p.m. - Plenary session  
Esther Landa Presiding  
recommendations from workshops groups  
- announcement of women chosen as Utah's delegates

## APPENDIX F

Utah IWY Conference Votes on the Twenty-six National Resolutions

Note: found in folder 2, attachment U of *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*. All text and numbers are a reproduction of original. Percent calculations added by author.

### A. Arts and Humanities

1. The President should take steps to require that women (1) have equal opportunities for appointment to managerial and upper level posts in Federally-funded cultural institutions, such as libraries, museums, universities, and public radio and TV; (2) are more equitably represented in the staffing of grant-awarding agencies; (3) benefit more fairly from government grants, whether as individual grant applicants or as members of cultural institutions receiving Federal or State funding.

Agree: 1,486 Disagree: 8,041 Don't know: 73

Agree: 15.5% Disagree: 83.7% Don't know: 0.8%

2. Judging agencies and review boards should use blind judging for musicians, singers, articles, and papers being considered for publication or delivery, exhibits, and grant applications, wherever possible.

Agree: 2,091 Disagree: 7,199 Don't know: 130

Agree: 22.2% Disagree: 76.4% Don't know: 1.4%

### B. Child Care

1. The federal government should assume a major role in providing universal voluntary child development programs with ability-to-pay fee schedules and with direct parental involvement in operations.

Agree: 693 Disagree: 8,858 Don't know: 67

Agree: 7.2% Disagree: 92.1% Don't know: 0.7%

2. Employers and labor unions should be encouraged by tax policies of federal and state governments to establish nonprofit child care programs.

Agree: 1,020 Disagree: 8,424 Don't know: 75

Agree: 10.7% Disagree: 88.5% Don't know: 0.8%

3. Education for parenthood programs should be improved and expanded by local and state boards with technical assistance and experimental programs provided by the Federal government.

Agree: 1,020 Disagree: 8,424 Don't know: 75  
Agree: 10.7% Disagree: 88.5% Don't know: 0.8%

#### C. Credit

1. The Federal Equal Credit Opportunity Act should be vigorously, efficiently, and expeditiously enforced by all the Federal agencies with enforcement responsibility.

Agree: 2021; Disagree: 7485; Don't know: 152  
Agree: 20.9% Disagree: 77.5% Don't know: 1.6%

#### D. Education

1. The President should direct the vigorous and expeditious enforcement of all laws prohibiting discrimination in education, including sports, and oppose any amendments that would weaken the protections.

Agree: 670; Disagree: 8860; Don't know: 132  
Agree: 6.9% Disagree: 91.7% Don't know: 1.4%

2. Federal surveys of elementary and secondary schools should gather data needed to indicate compliance with federal anti-discrimination laws, and these data should be collected by sex and race or ethnicity.

Agree: 657; Disagree: 8910; Don't know: 115  
Agree: 6.8% Disagree: 92.0% Don't know: 1.2%

3. The Civil Rights Commission should conduct a study to evaluate the enforcement of laws prohibiting sex discrimination in physical education and athletics.

Agree: 1666; Disagree: 7864; Don't know: 148  
Agree: 17.2% Disagree: 81.3% Don't know: 1.5%

4. Bilingual vocational training and education programs should be significantly expanded.

Agree: 1148; Disagree: 8326; Don't know: 177  
Agree: 11.9% Disagree: 86.3% Don't know: 1.8%

5. Leadership programs for working women in post-secondary schools should be upgraded and expanded, and private foundations are urged to give special attention to research on women in unions.

Agree: 1148; Disagree: 8326; Don't know: 117  
Agree: 12% Disagree: 86.9% Don't know: 1.1%

## E. Employment

1. The President should direct the vigorous and expeditious enforcement of all laws, executive orders, and regulations prohibiting discrimination in employment, including discrimination in apprenticeship and in construction.

Agree: 1197; Disagree: 8455; Don't know: 85

Agree: 12.3% Disagree: 86.8% Don't know: 0.9%

2. The Executive Branch of the federal government should abide by the same standards as private employers.

Agree: 2217; Disagree: 7227; Don't know: 223

Agree: 22.9% Disagree: 74.8% Don't know: 2.3%

3. Protections and privileges afforded minority business owners should be extended to women business owners.

Agree: 2043; Disagree: 7473; Don't know: 131

Agree: 21.2% Disagree: 77.5% Don't know: 1.3%

4. All enforcement agencies should follow the guidelines of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Agree: 1304; Disagree 8137; Don't know: 222.

Agree: 13.5% Disagree: 84.2% Don't know: 2.3%

5. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission should be expanded to cover discrimination in job evaluation systems.

Agree: 1108; Disagree 8357; Don't know: 199.

Agree: 11.5% Disagree: 86.5% Don't know: 2.0%

6. Unions should review the impact on women of all practices and correct injustices to women.

Agree: 1724; Disagree 7838; Don't know: 1020.

Agree: 16.3% Disagree: 74.1% Don't know: 9.6%

7. The President should take into account in appointment to the National Labor Relations Board and in seeking amendments to it the obstacles confronting women who organize in traditionally nonunionized employment sectors.

Agree: 1241; Disagree: 8221; Don't know: 252.

Agree: 12.8% Disagree: 84.6% Don't know: 2.6%

8. Extra attention should be given to the employment of minority women, especially blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and Native Americans.

Agree: 951; Disagree: 8624; Don't know: 144.

Agree: 9.8% Disagree: 88.7% Don't know: 1.5%

9. Enforcement of the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Social Security Act as they apply to household workers should be improved.

Agree: 1297; Disagree: 8149; Don't know: 255.

Agree: 13.4% Disagree: 84.0% Don't know: 2.6%

10. All statistics collected by the federal government should be gathered and analyzed so that information concerning the impact of federal programs on women and the participation of women in the administration of federal programs can be assessed.

Agree: 1210; Disagree: 8334; Don't know: 158.

Agree: 12.5% Disagree: 85.9% Don't know: 1.6%

#### F. Female Offenders

1. Federal and state governments should cooperate in providing more humane, sensible, and economic treatment of young women who are subject to court jurisdiction because they have run away from home, have family or school problems, or commit sexual offenses ("status offenders").

Agree: 1831; Disagree: 7678; Don't know: 154.

Agree: 18.9% Disagree: 79.5% Don't know: 1.6%

2. Disparities in the treatment of male and female juvenile offenders should be eliminated.

Agree: 1591; Disagree: 7910; Don't know: 195.

Agree: 16.4% Disagree: 81.6% Don't know: 2.0%

3. States should review their sentencing laws and their practices relating to women in penal facilities with a view to eliminating discrimination and reforming treatment.

Agree: 1591; Disagree: 7910; Don't know: 195.

Agree: 16.4% Disagree: 81.6% Don't know: 2.0%

#### G. Health

1. The President should direct a review of whether women and their mental and physical health needs are being treated equitably in the health-related functions of the federal government.

Agree: 118; Disagree: 8452; Don't know: 135.

Agree: 1.4% Disagree: 97.1% Don't know: 1.5%

2. Women should be represented in all aspects of health-related federal programs, including policy, administration, research design, research populations, and general service availability to women.

Agree: 1729; Disagree: 7825; Don't know: 105.

Agree: 17.9% Disagree: 81.0% Don't know: 1.1%

## H. Legal Status of Homemakers

1. Federal and state laws relating to marital property, inheritance, and domestic relations should be based on the principle that marriage is a partnership, in which the contribution of each spouse is of equal importance and value.

Agree: 1281; Disagree: 8202; Don't know: 208.

Agree: 13.2% Disagree: 84.6% Don't know: 2.2%

2. Homemakers should be covered under Social Security.

Agree: 1405; Disagree: 8039; Don't know: 247.

Agree: 14.5% Disagree: 83.0% Don't know: 2.5%

3. Alimony, child support, and property arrangements at divorce should be such that minor children's needs are first to be met and spouses share the economic dislocation of divorce. As a minimum the economic provisions of the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act should be enacted in every state.

Agree: 1405; Disagree: 8039; Don't know: 247.

Agree: 14.5% Disagree: 83.0% Don't know: 2.5%

4. More effective methods for collection of support should be adopted.

Agree: 1145; Disagree: 8232; Don't know: 232.

Agree: 12.0% Disagree: 85.7% Don't know: 2.3%

5. Homemakers displaced by widowhood or divorce should be helped to become self-sufficient members of society through programs providing job counseling, training, and placement; advice on financial management; and legal advice.

Agree: 2091; Disagree: 7442; Don't know: 101.

Agree: 21.7% Disagree: 77.2% Don't know: 1.1%

## I. International Interdependence

1. The President and the foreign affairs agencies of the federal government should see to it that many more women participate in the formulation and execution of U.S. foreign policy, including greater consultation with women in citizen voluntary organizations which are concerned with international affairs.

Agree: 1364; Disagree: 8200; Don't know: 135.

Agree: 14.1% Disagree: 84.5% Don't know: 1.4%

2. More women should be appointed to U.S. delegations at international conferences and to government bodies of international organizations.

Agree: 462; Disagree: 8093; Don't know: 141.

Agree: 5.3% Disagree: 93.1% Don't know: 1.6%

3. The U.N. Commission on the status of women should be continued and should meet annually.

Agree: 1463; Disagree: 7949; Don't know: 259.

Agree: 15.1% Disagree: 82.3% Don't know: 2.6%

#### J. Mass Media

1. The mass media should employ women in all job categories and especially in policy-making positions.

Agree: 1371; Disagree: 8214; Don't know: 111.

Agree: 14.1% Disagree: 84.7% Don't know: 1.2%

2. Affirmative efforts should be made by the media to expand the portrayal of women to include a variety of roles and to represent accurately the number of women in society.

Agree: 1371; Disagree: 8214; Don't know: 111.

Agree: 14.1% Disagree: 84.7% Don't know: 1.2%

3. Appropriate federal agencies, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Federal Communications Commission and the Department of HEW, among others, should vigorously enforce those laws which prohibit employment discrimination against women working in the media.

Agree: 1433; Disagree: 8089; Don't know: 146.

Agree: 14.8% Disagree: 83.7% Don't know: 1.5%

4. Federal agencies should continue studying the impact of the mass media on sex discrimination and sex-role stereotyping in the American society. Special consideration should be given to media which are publicly funded or established through acts of Congress.

Agree: 918; Disagree: 8577; Don't know: 141.

Agree: 9.5% Disagree: 89.0% Don't know: 1.5%

#### K. Equal Rights Amendment

1. The Equal Rights Amendment should be ratified.

Agree: 666; Disagree: 8959; Don't know: 84.

Agree: 6.9% Disagree: 92.3% Don't know: 0.8%

#### L. Older Women

1. Public and private women's organizations should work together to give publicity to the positive roles of women over fifty and to provide the services that will enable elderly women to function comfortably in their own homes instead of moving to institutions.

Agree: 1591; Disagree: 7896; Don't know: 224.

Agree: 16.4% Disagree: 81.3% Don't know: 2.3%

## M. Rape

1. State and local governments should revise rape laws to provide for graduated degrees of the crime, to apply to assault by or upon both sexes; to include all types of sexual assault against adults; and to otherwise redefine the crime so that victims are under no greater legal handicaps than victims of other crimes.

Agree: 2296; Disagree: 7235; Don't know: 164.

Agree: 23.7% Disagree: 74.6% Don't know: 1.7%

2. Local task forces to review and reform law and practices of police, prosecutors, and medical personnel should be established where they do not now exist.

Agree: 2414; Disagree: 7008; Don't know: 173.

Agree: 25.2% Disagree: 73.0% Don't know: 1.8%

## N. Teenage Pregnancy

1. The IWY Committee believes that the moral decisions relating to production are rightfully the responsibility of individual women and that every woman, regardless of her economic circumstances, education, race or ethnic origin, age, rural or metropolitan residence, is entitled as a basic human right to have readily available the means of controlling reproduction. The IWY Commission: Supports the series of Supreme Court decisions guaranteeing reproductive freedom to women; Urges all branches of federal, state, and local governments to give highest priority to complying with these Supreme Court decisions and to making available all methods of family planning to women unable to take advantage of private facilities; Condemns any interference, open or subtle, with a woman's right to control her reproduction; and Urges organizations concerned with improving the status of women to monitor how government complies with these principles. Particular attention should be paid at all levels of government to provide family planning services for teenagers, education in responsible sexuality, and reform of laws discriminating against illegitimate children and their parents.

Agree: 627; Disagree: 9048; Don't know: 66.

Agree: 6.4% Disagree: 92.9% Don't know: 0.7%

## O. Women in Elective Appointive Office

1. The President, governors, political parties, women's organizations, and foundations should join in an effort to increase the number of women in elective and appointive office, including especially judgeships.

Agree: 1463; Disagree: 8057; Don't know: 121.

Agree: 15.2% Disagree: 83.6% Don't know: 1.2%

## APPENDIX G

Note: found in folder 2, page 6 of *Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee*. Descriptions of the executive board were found in Martha Sonntag Bradley, "The Mormon Relief Society and the International Women's Year," *Journal of Mormon History* 21, no. 1 (1995): 118, footnote 25.

The members of Utah's IWY coordinating committee:

Chair: Jan Tyler

Executive Board:

Katie Dixon, vice chair;

Sharon M. Keigher, vice chair;

Margaret Wilde, consultant and technical advisor;

Dorothy Littrell, fiscal officer;

Suzanne M. Grua, historian/recorder;

Marilee Latta, public relations/media;

Kathleen Flake

Staff Coordinator: JoAnn Freed

Staff Secretary: Lorille Miller

General Members:

Shauna Adix

Alberta Almada

Dolores Bennett

Zelma Brundage

Kathleen Butters

Etta Diamanti

Rita Eason

Janet Darley

Afton Forsgren

Ruth Hardy Funk

Bonnie Hartley

Brenda Hancock

Beth Jarman

Dorothy Husband Jones

Alice Kasai

Lynne Van Dam

Gaye D. Littleton

Dorothea Livingston

Norma Matheson

Maria Elena Perez

Lola Van Wagenson

Georgia Beth Thompson

Valora Treshow

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*Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee.* Salt Lake City: IWY Commission, 1977. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo. - MSS 1852

The report was created by the executive coordinating committee with Jan Tyler as the chairwomen. This report is a copy of the original report sent to the National IWY commission which is contained in the National Archives, Washington D.C. Currently BYU's copy is incomplete. It contains correspondence, minutes of meetings, speeches, media clippings, newspaper articles and resolutions. The materials relate to the planning, public relations, and meetings of the Voice of Womankind conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

*Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee.* Salt Lake City: IWY Commission, 1977. Ruth Funk Collection, Utah Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

This report is a copy of the Final Report of the Utah International Women's Year Coordinating Committee, also contained at BYU.

International Women's Year Audio-Visual Collection, 1977. Manuscripts Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

A collection of cassette-tape recordings of most workshops held during Utah's International Women's Year conference.

*Oral History, 1977.* L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo - MS 906

Cassette tape recording and typed transcripts recorded by Jan Tyler. The manuscript consists of several sessions including an opening ceremony, plenary sessions, first ERA workshop, open-mike session, and a closing session.

Utah Women's Project. IWY Collection, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

A collection of interviews regarding the Mexico City Meeting, Utah's IWY meeting, and the national meeting in Houston. All women were interviewed by JoAnne Freed.

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