

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

June 1, 1977

TO ORGANIZERS AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

The regional conferences of the National Organization for Women (NOW) are scheduled over the six weekends from Memorial Day, May 27-29, to June 25-26.

Letters to supporters of the Defending Women's Rights resolution have been mailed by Clare Fraenzl and Rhonda Rutherford, urging them to attend these conferences. A copy of the letter is enclosed.

More than 200 women caucused at the Detroit conference around the strategy laid out in the Defending Women's Rights resolution. Black and Latina women who participated in the minority women's workshop also attended some caucus meetings. Over fifty Black and Latina women attended the extended sessions of the minority women's workshop to discuss the resolution on Women of the Oppressed Nationalities. While this resolution was defeated at the national conference, a national committee of minority women was established. This committee calls for at least one representative from each of the nine regions and one national board representative.

The regional conferences will be the first opportunity since the April conference to extend discussion on a national strategy of self-dependency for women. It will also be the first time Black and Latina women can discuss out how the committee of minority women established at the national conference should function and decide who should be on it.

As supporters of both the resolution, Defending Women's Rights in the Second Decade, and the resolution on Women of the Oppressed Nationalities and the committee of minority women, we want to make every effort to attend these conferences and participate in the workshops and caucus meetings.

While the purpose of these conferences is primarily to elect national board members, many new women from chapters in the region who did not attend the national gathering in Detroit will be attracted. The schedule for the conferences in the nine regions follows:

1) May 27-29 in El Paso, Texas; includes Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Kansas.

2) June 3-5 in Washington, D.C.; includes New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, and Delaware.

3) June 3-5 in Jacksonville, Florida; includes Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

4) June 10-12 in Gulfport, Miss.; includes Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, Alabama, and Arkansas.

5) June 17-19 in Burlington, Vt.; includes Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

6) June 18-19 in Los Angeles, Calif.; includes California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and Hawaii.

7) June 18-19 in Lafayette, Ind.; includes Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio.

8) June 18-19 in Seattle, Washington; includes Washington, Alaska, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

9) June 25-26 in Sioux Falls, S.D.; includes South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Iowa.

As you can see, some conferences will have already taken place. Likewise a few of the state conferences organized by the International Women's Year Commission (IWYs) will have taken place too. But the bulk of the IWY conferences will be coming up over the next two months.

While it is true that these are government sponsored, government controlled events, they are being well publicized and well organized to guarantee that large numbers of women will attend. Thousands of women are expected at each of the conferences scheduled in the fifty states and six U.S. territories. Workshops and plenaries are scheduled where lively discussion is expected to take place. The anti-ERA, anti-abortion, anti-women forces are organizing to attend these events in attempts to dominate the activities.

As supporters of women's rights, we should find out as much as we can about the conferences scheduled in our state and prepare to attend.

The national center in Washington, D.C. sends out monthly updates on the activities organized around the country. You can stay informed about these events by simply adding your name and address to the mailing list. Write to:

Office of Public Information
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520
(202) 632-8978 or 79.

A calender of state meetings is enclosed. The state meetings are open to all women and special categories of women who have been targeted, like Black women, working women, political women, etc. These state meetings will be a chance for us to discuss socialist ideas and women's issues with thousands of women. They will be the places also where we can work together with women in NOW and other women's groups to confront the right-wing movement and win some of these new women to the women's movement.

In addition to literature tables, we should participate in the workshops and investigate the possibility of having our candidates speak in sessions organized for political speakers or other candidates. These state meetings have the character of being a forum organized for women to express their opinions about what the government should do about women's problems. We should treat them the same way we do any public forum or government hearing by attending and expressing our opinion.

The fifty-six conferences scheduled through August are forerunners to the national conference in Houston, Texas, No November 18-21. This conference is delegated. Each state will select their quota at the state meetings. The same categories of women being targeted on the state level are also being organized to be present as delegates in Houston.

We can maximize our participation in these conferences if we are also able to get some delegates to the national conference in Houston. In many states, IWY organizers are women we have worked with in other activities. And we have been asked in a few places to run as delegates. In these cases it may be less difficult to become a part of the elected state delegation.

However, we should be clear on the fact that these conferences have been organized by the Carter administration to contain discussion around women's problems. No actions have been projected to come out of any of these gatherings that women can take beyond the discussions. While we can extend our ability to participate if we are delegates, we do not want to take responsibility for organizing these conferences. We do not want to accept positions on the planning boards or assume responsibility for organizing any part of these state meetings.

In states where conferences have already been held, information on the size, composition, delegates elected, election process, topics discussed, response to our literature, and local news coverage should be sent to the National Office

For upcoming state meetings, it will be helpful to know what workshops are scheduled, the number of delegates to be elected from each state, whether it is possible for us to organize workshops or participate as workshop leaders. We should also encourage other organizations we work with in the antiracist movement, political prisoners, and other to participate in these conferences.

The last item enclosed is a list of the individuals appointed by President Carter to organize the IWY meetings.

Comradely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Willie Mae Reid".

Willie Mae Reid
SWP National Office

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May 26, 1977

Sisters,

Our recent national conference in Detroit charted a course for NOW that can only weaken us in the fight ahead. The strategy adopted was one of increased dependency on elected officials, rather than on the independent power of women fighting to defend our rights. The democratic foundations of our organization also came under severe attack when the conference adopted a red-baiting motion against Socialist Workers Party members in NOW.

NOW members concerned about these new directions taken by our organization responded to the challenge.

First at the conference itself, over 250 members formed a caucus to support the perspective laid out in the resolution, "Defending Women's Rights in the Second Decade." This resolution was initially submitted by more than eighty members. It outlined a national strategy to involve larger numbers of women, especially working women, Black, Latina, Asian and Native American women, in public actions to defend women's rights under attack.

The caucus met daily at the conference and introduced the resolution in other caucuses and workshops. It was endorsed by the abortion workshop, campus women's workshop, and minority women's workshop. The minority women's workshop adopted the resolution on Women of the Oppressed Nationalities, which the caucus also voted to support. This resolution detailed a national campaign of activities aimed at involving more nationally oppressed women in NOW.

Through discussions and debate in the plenary sessions, caucus supporters explained that two counterposed perspectives were being put forth. One is the strategy of self-reliance and direct action embodied in the caucus resolution, Defending Women's Rights in the Second Decade. And the other perspective is represented by two resolutions that were adopted. The ERA Strike Force resolution calls for a few NOW members to travel from state to state trying to convince legislators to "give" us the ERA. And, the Political Action Committees (PACs) called for using our resources to elect politicians.

Members of NOW also responded rapidly to the undemocratic red-baiting motion that accused the SWP of trying to use and exploit the feminist movement. Many women saw immedi-

ately that while the stated target was the SWP, the motion was really aimed at any NOW member who disagreed with the new direction being charted. This had been evident throughout the conference in the attempts to stifle dissent and discussion of the real issues before us.

Over half of the 1200 participants who attended had left the conference when the red-baiting motion was introduced and rammed through. One hundred of us caucused immediately and signed a statement denouncing this witch-hunting motion and reaffirming NOW's non-exclusionary policies.

The "Defending Women's Rights" supporters had both disappointments and accomplishments. Our resolution never reached the plenary floor for a vote. But we were able to have a political debate around strategy for the first time at a national conference. We were red-baited because we disagreed with the leadership's proposals, but numerous chapters across the country have already passed motions denouncing this action, including New York NOW, Metro NOW in St. Louis, St. Paul NOW, NOW-New Jersey State Board, and many others.

We think it is important to continue to discuss how to build NOW and make our organization more effective. The regional conferences scheduled over the next several weeks will give us the opportunity to discuss perspectives with other members, and broaden support. We feel our perspective can be summarized in the following few sentences:

"We support a national strategy for NOW based on our traditions--an independent feminist movement that mobilizes women "to take action" to win rights for women.

"In pursuing our goals, we must build a massive, visible women's movement to counter the sweeping assault on our rights today. We must promote an action campaign, organizing all women to defend safe, legal abortion, affirmative action in employment and education, and child care facilities. We must use this strategy to defend the gains we won and extend our demands for maternity benefits, passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, gay rights, and protection from forced sterilization, without counterposing one issue to another.

"We must involve those women who are bearing the brunt of the attacks--working women, especially Black, Latina, Asian and Native American women, who are on the bottom of the economic pile. Our strength can be multiplied by uniting in common actions with our allies in the labor movement, civil rights movement, student movement, and other organizations."

We can bring this simple statement of our ideas to the workshops and caucus meetings at the regional conferences. It will be another chance to discuss the importance of organizing women to rely on ourselves and plan actions, particularly around our day, August 26, the day women won the vote. Pickets, rallies, teach-ins, or marches held that day or later in the fall around the issues that represent the sharpest attacks on women would be a good beginning.

In the past NOW members organized on-going caucuses to change NOW's positions. We must do the same. At our final caucus meeting in Detroit, we voted to continue our efforts nationwide. The regional conferences will give us an opportunity to do just that. We urge you to attend.

Mailings have helped us exchange our ideas and stay in touch, but they are expensive and have been irregular. As the number of NOW members who agree with us continues to grow, the need to have a more regular exchange of information on our progress in each region will become more important. The regional conferences are the best places to start a discussion on how to do this.

In the meantime, we would like very much to hear your opinions on these ideas. We would appreciate too, any contribution which you could send to defray the cost so far. The expense for sending out this letter to our 300 supporters was \$65.

In sisterhood,

s/Clare Fraenzl

s/Rhonda Rutherford

CALENDAR OF STATE MEETINGS

May

- ALASKA--Anchorage--May 6-8 at University of Alaska. Contact Tay Thomas, 429 D Street Suite 309, Anchorage 99501, 907-278-4593
- GEORGIA--Atlanta--May 6-7--Sheraton Biltmore. Kathleen Crouch, 1027 Columbia Ave., Atlanta 30309, 404-892-6161
- IDAHO--Boise--May 21-22--Boise State University. Hope Kading, 1514 West Franklin, Boise 83702, 208-336-2161

June

- MINNESOTA--St. Cloud--June 2-5--St. Cloud State College. Joan Anderson Growe, 400 SW State Office Bldg., St. Paul 55155, 612-296-3834
- ARIZONA --Phoenix--June 3-4--Phoenix Civic Center. Trudy Multine, 111 West Osborn, Suite 130, Phoenix 85013, 602-271-4160
- MISSOURI--St. Louis--June 3-4--Washington University. Jean Berg, Box 1396, St. Charles 63301, 314-946-3077
- VIRGIN ISLANDS--St. Thomas--June 3-4--College of the Virgin Islands. Edith Bornn, P.O. Box 1542, St. Thomas 00801, 809-774-1400
- COLORADO--Boulder--June 3-5--University of Colorado. Janet Beardsley, Room 255C, 325 S. Broadway, % Commerce Dept., Boulder 80302, 303-499-1000x3354
- WISCONSIN--Madison--June 3-5--Madison Area Technical College. Connie Threinen, 30 W. Mifflin, Madison 53703, 608-266-5572
- NEW MEXICO--Albuquerque--June 3-5--Albuquerque Convention Center. Elaine Mondragon, P.O. Box 602, Albuquerque 87103, 505-243-2014
- OREGON--Salem--June 3-5--Willamette University. Gladys McCoy, 730 Summer St. NE, Salem 97301, 503-378-8189
- NORTH DAKOTA--Bismarck--June 3-5--Bismarck Junior College. Shirley Peterson, 509 S. 10th St., Bismarck 58501, 701-223-8605
- SOUTH CAROLINA--Columbia--June 10-11--Carolina Inn. Dr. Marinna Davis, 2801 Devine St., McCrory Bldg, Columbia 29205, 803-254-6554
- DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA--June 10-11--Trinity College. Anne B. Turpeau, Room 204 District Bldg., Washington D. C. 20004, 202-724-5583
- MICHIGAN--Lansing--June 10-11--Lansing Civic Center. Mary Aikey, % YWCA, 217 Townsend, Lansing 48933, 517-485-7201x36
- NEW HAMPSHIRE--Plymouth--June 10-11--Plymouth College. Elizabeth S. Hager, 11 S. Main St., Concord 03301, 603-224-5092
- ILLINOIS--Normal--June 10-11--University of Illinois. Rep. Susan Catania, P.O. Box 404, Normal 61761, 309-454-1011
- ARKANSAS--Little Rock--June 10-12--University of Arkansas. Brownie Ledbetter, 326 Hall Bldg., 209 W. Capitol, Little Rock 72201, 501-375-0615
- WYOMING--Casper--June 10-12--Casper Community College. Patricia Duncombe, 1500 Highview Dr., Casper 82601, 307-266-2266
- IOWA--Des Moines--June 10-12--Veterans Memorial Auditorium. Jean Lloyd-Jones, 507 10th St., Des Moines 50319, 515-280-1241
- KENTUCKY--Lexington--June 10-12--Lexington Convention Center. Dr. Allie Corbin Hixson, % YWCA, 604 S. 3rd, Louisville 40202, Room 203, 502-587-6990
- PUERTO RICO--Santurce, San Juan--June 10-12--Sacred Heart. Dr. Isabel Pico de Hernandez, Box 11382, Fernandez Juncos Sta., Santurce 00910, 809-7222907
- VIRGINIA--Richmond--June 10-12--John Marshall Hotel. Jill Kinhart, 1108 E. Main, Richmond 23219, 804-643-3587 or 88

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June, continued

- CONNECTICUT--Bridgeport--June 11-12--University of Bridgeport. Gloria Schaffer, 3rd Floor 61 Woodland, Greater Hartford Community College, Hartford 06105, 203-527-8916
- OHIO--Columbus--June 11-12--Columbus Fairgrounds. Mary Miller, 199 W. 10th Ave., Columbus 43201, 614-422-1681
- RHODE ISLAND--Providence--June 11-12--Brown University. Helen Migliaccio, 235 Promenade St., Providence 02908, 401-277-2744
- MARYLAND--Baltimore--June 12-13--Johns Hopkins University. Emily Taylor, 211 E. Fayette St., Baltimore 21202, 301-837-5540
- OKLAHOMA--Stillwater--June 16-18--Oklahoma State University. Ann Ashmore, % YWCA, Box 307, Oklahoma City 73101, 405-235-7964
- LOUISIANA--Baton Rouge--June 16-18--Chateau Capitol Hotel. Shirley Marvin/ Clarence Marie Collier, ACTION, 1 American Pl., Room 1911, Baton Rouge 70825, 504-389-0140
- AMERICAN SAMOA--Pago Pago--June 16-18--Community College. Saeu Scanlan, Box 367, Pago Pago 96799, (International Operator) 688-9820
- CALIFORNIA--Los Angeles--June 16-19--University of Southern California. Sally Martinez/Anita Miller, 837 W. 36th Pl., L1-L2, Los Angeles 90007, 212-747-5500
- DELAWARE--Dover--June 17-18--Delaware State University. Helen Thomas, % Delaware Technical/Community College, 333 Shipley St., Wilmington 19801
- MAINE--Bangor--June 17-18--Husson College. Patricia E. Ryan, Room 505 State House, Augusta 04333, 207-289-3418
- NEVADA--Las Vegas--June 17-19--Las Vegas Convention Center. Jean Ford, 3511 Pueblo Way, Las Vegas 89109, 702-735-0375
- NEW JERSEY--Princeton--June 17-19--Princeton University. Clara Allen, Box 1521, Union City 07083, 201-366-8725
- NORTH CAROLINA--Winston-Salem--June 17-18--Winston-Salem Civic Center. Elizabeth Koontz, 526 N. Welmington St., Raleigh, 27604, 919-733-5721
- SOUTH DAKOTA--Mitchell--June 17-18--Dakota Wesleyan University. Lorraine Collins/Loila Hunking, 1828 7th Ave., Belle Fourche 57717, 605-892-4402, or 2309 S. Stephen Ave., Sioux Falls 57103, 605-338-4675
- WEST VIRGINIA--Huntington--June 22-23--Marshall University. Lois Kauffelt, 2604 Virginia SE, Charleston 25304, 304-348-8816
- UTAH--Salt Lake City--June 24-25--Salt Palace. Jan Tyler, 351 East Center #104, Provo 84601, 801-377-5480 or 347-1211x3373
- NEBRASKA--Lincoln--June 24-25--Center for Continuing Education. Donna L. Polk, 124 N. 11th St., Lincoln 68501, 402-471-3181
- PENNSYLVANIA--Pittsburgh--June 24-26--Duquesne University, Mary Hughes Burns/Kay Hague/Augusta A. Clark, Box 380, Harrisburg 17108 717-787-4457
- TENNESSEE--Clarksville--June 24-26--Austin Peay State University. Fran Byrne, 499 S. Patterson St., Memphis 38111, 901-323-8539 or 901-324-8530
- TEXAS--Austin--June 24-26--LBJ Auditorium & Thompson Conf. Center. Owanah Anderson, Federal Bldg. G-161, 300 E. 8th St., Austin 70701, 512-476-9098
- MISSISSIPPI--Jackson--July 8-9--Holiday Inn Downtown. Jessie B. Mosley, 1018 Pecan Circle, Box 10448, Jackson 39209, 601-355-9104

July.....

- MONTANA--Helena--July 8-10--Carroll College. Mary Munger, Community Affairs Dept., 1424 9th Ave., Helena, 59061, 406-245-6151x215

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July, continued.....

WASHINGTON STATE--Ellensburg--July 8-10--Central Washington College. Dorothy Hollingsworth, 313 1/2 First Avenue South, Seattle 98104, 206-3232520

NEW YORK--Albany--July 8-10--Empire State Mall. Bella Abzug, 9 W. 57th St., New York City 10019, 212-593-5511

ALABAMA--Montgomery--July 9--Montgomery Civic Center. Pat Edington, Post Office Box 75023, Birmingham 35223, 205-433-1750

HAWAII--Honolulu--July 9-10--Farrington High School. Winona E. Rubin, % YMCA Room 305, 1040 Richard St., Honolulu 96813, 808-538-7061x26

FLORIDA--Orlando--July 15-17--Sheraton Towers. Gwendolyn Cherry, % State Capitol House Office Bldg., Room 430, Tallahassee 32304, 904-488-9880

KANSAS--Wichita--July 15-17--Century II & Holiday Inn Plaza. Kay Camin, % College of Business Administration, Wichita State University, Wichita 67208, 316-689-3225

INDIANA--Indianapolis--July 15-16--Indianapolis Convention Center. Frances Dodson Rhome, Box 1082, Bloomington 47401, 812-336-9155.

August.....

MASSACHUSETTS--Boston --August date tentative. Anne T. Barron, 20 Ruth Drive, Framingham 01701, 617-872-5902 or 617-653-1000x2906

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No Schedule Information Yet for GUAM or for TRUST TERRITORY.

VERMONT's State Meeting was February 26 at Vermont College in Montpelier. For further information contact Dr. Lenore McNeer, Director, Human Services, Vermont College, Montpelier 05602, 802-229-0522.

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CARTER APPOINTEES TO NEW NATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR COMMISSION, BELLA ABZUG, PRESIDING OFFICER

Bella S. Abzug, of New York, New York, Former U. S. Congresswoman(D-N.Y.); Attorney; Founder and Chair, National Women's Political Caucus

Ruth J. Abram, New York, New York, Executive Director, Women's Action Alliance

Maya Angelou, Sonoma, California, Poet, Author, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Elizabeth Athanasakos, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; Attorney; Former Municipal Judge; former Presiding Officer, IWY Commission, 1976

Betty Blanton, Nashville, Tennessee, First Lady of Tennessee; Member, 51.3% Committee

Liz Carpenter, Austin, Texas, Co-Chair, ERAmerica; Public Relations Executive

John Mack Carter, New York, New York, Editor-in-Chief, Good Housekeeping Magazine

Seymour M. Chassler, New York, New York, Editor-in-Chief, Redbook Magazine

Ruth C. Clusen, Green Bay, Wisconsin, President, National League of Women Voters

Audrey Rowe Colom, Washington, D. C., President, National Women's Political Caucus

Jane Culbreth, Leeds, Alabama, President, National Federation of Business & Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.; Corporate Officer and Secretary, Moss-Thornton Company

Harry T. Edwards, Boston, Massachusetts, Professor of Law, Harvard Law School

Beverly Everett, New Sharon, Iowa, Iowa State President, American Assn. of University Women

Marc K. Fong Eu, Sacramento, California, Secretary of State for California

Betty Ford, Palm Springs, California, Former First Lady of the United States

Bernice S. Frieder, Lakewood, Ohio, Former Officer, National Council of Jewish Women

Martha Griffiths, Romeo, Michigan, Law Firm Member, Griffiths & Griffiths; Member of Congress, 1955-1975

Dorothy Haener, Detroit Michigan, International Representative, Women's Dept. UAW

Rhea Mojica Hammer, Chicago, Illinois, Journalist-Newspaper Publisher of El-Charin

LaDonna Harris, Albuquerque, New Mexico, President, Americans for Indian Opportunity

Lenore Hershey, New York, New York, Editor-in-Chief, Ladies' Home Journal

Koryne Horbal, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Chair, Women's Caucus, Democratic National Committee

Mildred Jeffrey, Detroit, Michigan, Chair, Democratic Women's Task Force, NWPC

Jeffalyn Johnson, Arlington, Virginia, Management Consultant; Former Associate Director, Dean and Senior Professor, Federal Executive Institute

Coretta Scott King, Atlanta, Georgia, Founder, Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Center

Mary Anne Krupsak, Canajoharie, New York, Lieutenant Governor, State of New York

Margaret J. Mealey, Washington, D. C., Executive Director, National Council of Catholic Women

Jean O'Leary, New York, New York, Co-Executive Director, National Gay Task Force

Mildred E. Persinger, Dobbs Ferry, New York, National Board, YWCA, Organizing Chair of the Tribune at the UN World Conference on IWY in Mexico City, July 1975

Connie Plunkett, Carrollton, Georgia, Member, Democratic National Committee

Ersa Poston, Loudonville, New York, Commissioner and Past President, New York Civil Service Commission, Former Member, U. S. Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly

Cecelia DeBurciago Preciado, Palo Alto, California, Assistant to the President, Stanford Univ.

Claire Randall, New York, New York, General Secretary, National Council of Churches in Christ in the U. S. A. ; Artist; Designer

Alice S. Rossi, Amherst, Massachusetts, Chair, Board of Directors, Social Science Research Council, New York; Author, The Feminist Papers and many other articles.

Gloria Scott, Houston, Texas, National President, Girl Scouts of America

Eleanor Smeal, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Chair and President, National Organization for Women

Jean Stapleton, Los Angeles, California, Actress, "All in the Family".

Gloria Steinem, New York, Editor, MS Magazine, Founder, National Women's Political Caucus

Ethel Taylor, Bala-Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, National Coordinator, Women's Strike for Peace

Carmen Delgado Votaw, Bethesda, Maryland, President, National Conference of Puerto Rican Women

Gerridee Wheeler, Bismarck, North Dakota, Past Pres. National Assn for Mental Health

Addie Wyatt, Chicago, Illinois, Vice-President, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Members of Congress: Senator Birch Bayh, from Indiana, Senator Charles Percy, from Illinois, Representative Elizabeth Holtzman, from New York, Representative Margaret Heckler, Massachusetts