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**PANEL: “Affirmative Action, The Minority Movement and Women’s Liberation: Is There a Conflict?”**

**John S. Harwell, Moderator  
Bernice Sandler  
Patricia King  
Blenda Wilson**

**LEONARD:** We come to the last afternoon of our conference. I don’t think that I will have an opportunity to say anything before the conference is completely over, so just two or three very quick things. One is to tell you how much I think that you, each of you, all of you, have brought to this conference. We have learned a great deal. We hope that you will take something away that will help in the action and help deal with the issues at your institution.

I want to thank those persons who helped us put it together. I want to welcome members of NOW for the dimension that they added to our luncheon. I regret that I did not see any minorities in their ranks. I think that might have made it more effective. I regret that very much. I do wish that some energies would be put toward contacting people like Congresswoman Holt, herself a non-minority female, contacting people like Congressman O’Hara, and dealing with some of the individuals who are attempting to undermine legislation that permits us to deal with these issues in some kind of rational way is essential. Unless energies are directed in those directions you don’t have to pressure the HEW, it won’t be here; you won’t have to worry about Harvard or any other institution, because there will be no outside sanctioning to compel them to do anything. I would suggest to you that the implementation of civil rights is in trouble, and to the extent and degree that the age-old method of divide and conquer continues to prosper, you don’t have to worry about whether or not there is going to be movement by women, by members of minority groups or by any other identifiable or protected group, you don’t have to worry about them because we will revisit the 1870’s and the 1880’s. So unless we see the problem where it really is, all of this periphery will be worth nothing. It is a misdirected finger at one little symptom, it does not deal with the total cause. Again I want to thank you very much and I would hope that you carry away from this as much as I have learned from your presence.

Our moderator for the afternoon is John S. Harwell, Senior Tutor in Mather House and Associate Director of Financial Aid in Harvard College.

**HARWELL:** Thank you very much, Walter. It is a great pleasure for me to introduce members of the panel this afternoon and I will start at my extreme left and introduce to you Dr. Bernice Sandler, who is presently the Director of the Project on the Status and Education of Women for the Association of American Colleges in Washington, D. C. Dr. Sandler has a degree in counseling and personnel services from the University of Maryland, has formerly performed as an educational specialist in the U.S.

House of Representatives, and the Special Subcommittee on Education, and as Director of the Action Committee for Federal Contract Compliance.

Sitting to Dr. Sandler's immediate right is Patricia King who was formerly Deputy Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, is presently an Associate Professor of Law at Georgetown University, and is a graduate of Wheaton College and the Harvard Law School.

To Patricia King's immediate right is Blenda Wilson, who is presently the Associate Dean for Administration, the School of Education, Harvard University. She was formerly the Executive Assistant to the President of Rutgers University and prior to that was the Executive Director of the Middlesex County, New Jersey, Community Action Agency. She is a graduate of Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania and Seton Hall University.

We will begin with Dr. Sandler.

SANDLER: I want to talk a little bit first about the famous Peter Principle and how it applies to women and how it applies to minorities. As you know, the Peter Principle has been widely hailed as an explanation of how white men get promoted. Essentially, white men are promoted upward until they finally reach their level of *incompetence*, at which point they no longer get promoted. They move upward until they can no longer function effectively. Well, unfortunately we academics have discovered that women and minorities, to a large degree, have been generally *exempt* from the effects of the Peter Principle. We do *not* get promoted to our level of incompetence; indeed we hardly get promoted in the first place. Study after study, whether it is in academia or in industry or in government shows that women and minorities, no matter how qualified, simply do not move up the promotion ladder with the same speed as their white male counterparts. Indeed, some studies indicate that women and minorities often do not get promoted at all.

Now with affirmative action, women and minorities, like white men, may finally get promoted to their level of incompetence. This may have profound social impact upon the managements of academia and industry, for if women and minorities, along with white males, finally get promoted to their level of incompetence, then who indeed is going to effectively carry out the day-to-day functions? Such may be the cost of equal opportunity. But that indeed is what equal opportunity is all about: women and minorities as well as white men will have the opportunity to make fools of themselves.

First, let me tell you the *good news* about women and minorities in academia. Around the country, people are talking about fair practices, and a great many institutions are even actively recruiting for women and minorities for the first time in their histories. And now the bad news: *Very few women and minorities, including minority women, are being hired.* Indeed at some institutions, after a year or two of affirmative action, the number and percentage of women and minorities has *decreased* while the number and percentage of white men has increased. Obviously the budget crunch hurts, because when retrenchments are made, those last hired—women and minority men—are the first to be let go.

The laws concerning sex and race discrimination in academe are virtually identical. There is no priority given to one over the other. Discrimination is no longer only a moral or philosophical issue; it is a legal issue as well. For the first time in history, we have a national policy, although it may not always be enforced, forbidding discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion or sex. Virtually all of the principles developed in the courts that apply to race discrimination apply to sex discrimination. Although the problems of women and minorities are intimately related, I do not want to imply that the problems are identical, for they are not. Both groups have been hurt by discrimination, although in different ways.

Both women and Blacks suffer from the myth of contentment: Blacks were "happy" on the plantation until those "outsiders" stirred them up; women were "happy in the kitchen" until those "women's lib" people stirred them up. Just as we used to hear "My maid says there's no discrimination," now we also hear, "My wife says there's no discrimination, and she's perfectly happy at home."

Both Blacks and women have had to use "ways to get around the Man"—flattery, pretended ignorance, etc. The Man is supposed to be dominant; minorities and women are supposed to be passive. They ought to know their place, and stay in it. Both women and minorities are thought to be somewhat childlike and emotional. Both tend to take things personally. Both groups are supposed to have insatiable sexual appetites, and both groups are terribly good with children. We've had separate schools for Blacks and separate schools for women. And we have separate professional organizations for both groups—associations of women physicians and associations of minority businessmen.

The economic picture is a good measure of discrimination. Of all the people who work full-time in this country, white males earn the most. Then come Black men, partially because equal opportunity programs are beginning to have an impact—perhaps not enough of an impact, but somewhat of an impact nevertheless. Then comes white women, and at the bottom of the pile, suffering from a double dose of discrimination, is the Black woman. Sex determines how much a person will earn even more than their race.

More than twice as many Black women live in poverty than do Black men; 2/3 of the adults on welfare are women. Indeed, poverty is as much a women's problem as it is a minority problem. Yet most of our anti-poverty programs—what's left of them—have been aimed at minority males, despite the fact that the group with the highest unemployment rate in the country is that of young minority females.

If you were a child in the 1960's living in poverty in a family headed by your father, your chances of getting out of poverty in that decade were about 50%, for the number of such families declined by half. 50% is not good enough, but it is far better than the chances of getting out of poverty if you lived in a family where the father was absent; the chances were less than zero because the number of families headed by women, particularly minority women, increased substantially during that decade.

It is understandably difficult for minorities to accept the women's

movement. They are perhaps fearful that the women will get the resources that the minorities want and deserve, and they are fearful of being overshadowed by the women's movement. Certainly the small piece of the economic pie can't be shared, but must be enlarged. If the minorities and women end up struggling with each other for the meager crumbs on the floor allocated by the white male power structure, we can be sure that neither the women nor the minorities will ever get to ask for the place at the table that is rightfully theirs.

Sometimes it is said that because the women's movement is largely white, it is by definition racist, and that therefore minority groups cannot make coalitions with women. The women's movement itself is not racist, either ideologically or in practice. If there are individual women in it who are racist, they will need to change, for the women's movement cannot exist or succeed if it is to ignore rights of minority women. Similarly, minority men who are sexist will also need to change. Certainly if race discrimination were to end tomorrow, there would still be many minority women who would be no better off than they are today. All of us need to remember that when we talk about women, we are talking about *all* women, *whatever their color or national origin*. And all of us will need to remember that when we talk about minorities, we mean minority men *and* minority women.

There are some who believe that the women's movement is frivolous, that it is composed mainly or only of middle-class white women whose main concern is that of professional women. Yet virtually all of the complaints of discrimination filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission were filed by factory women, clerical women, women in poorly-paid service jobs. Virtually every complaint filed by women against universities with HEW requested an investigation of staff personnel practices as well as that of faculty. It was the faculty women at Columbia University who protested loud and clear about the maids, many of them minority women, who were receiving less pay than the janitors who did the same work. It was those white middle-class faculty women who called in government. For years, civil rights groups had been trying to extend the minimum wage provisions to cover domestic workers. Alone, they were unsuccessful; but in 1974, the active support of these "middle class" women's groups was enough to make the difference in securing the passage of the legislation.

What is happening in the women's movement is this: as white women become involved in women's issues, their initial concern is often with themselves and their own jobs. As they learn more and begin to understand the widespread nature of discrimination, they discover their minority sisters as well, and they begin to understand a good deal better the kind of hurts that minority women and men have suffered. White women perhaps cannot ever walk in the shoes of minority women, but they begin to grasp what discrimination really is, they can begin to know, at a gut level, some of the pain that minorities face.

Many Black women, and minority women, if you ask them, are indeed ambivalent about child care; they are not ambivalent about health services, equal access to higher education and technical training. They are concerned with protection from consumer fraud, and fairer treatment by banks and loan offices. They are concerned with getting justice for women in the

courts and better facilities for minority women in prison. And many minority women realize, without a doubt, that they cannot sit quietly by and wait for the *men* (minority or white) to take care of these things; nor do they want to watch *white women* work on these issues by themselves. From the time of Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth to Mary McLeod Bethune, to the present, Black women have not hesitated to step out and actively strive for what they believe is necessary for the improvement and the welfare of their people. While the priority for many minority women will be that of race or ethnic status first, they nevertheless have concern about many of the issues raised by the women's movement.

Historically both the women's and Black movements have been linked together. I don't think I understood what Black studies was all about until I got interested in women's studies, and found out what women had done back 100 years or more. Some of the strongest supporters of abolition were the female anti-slavery groups. One of the first women in America to publicly ask that women be educated was a Black woman, Maria Stewart, in the 1830's. At the first women's rights conference ever held, in 1848 in Seneca, New York, it was Frederick Douglass who spoke in favor of the resolution calling for women's suffrage. Indeed the women were hesitant about introducing that resolution and Fred Douglass said go ahead, you need to do it. Douglass was very aware of the relationship between the two movements. He wrote:

Many who have at last made the discovery that the Negroes have rights as well as other members of the human family, have yet to be convinced that women are entitled to any.<sup>1</sup>

I might remind people who tell us that Blacks got the vote after the Civil War that Blacks did not get the vote, only Black men got the vote. Black women did not get the vote anymore than did any other women in this country. I often wonder what would have happened had all women gotten the vote. I suspect that the history of the South might have been vastly different.

Women and minorities have begun to work together on a variety of issues; informal coalitions are beginning to work. For example, at the University of Maryland, a Black woman who is Director of the Office for Human Relations has pulled off a working coalition of Black, Chicano and female staff, faculty and students. The minorities are demanding more jobs for minorities and women; and the women are demanding more jobs for women and minorities.

It is of more than passing interest that the current activities of HEW investigating the employment of women and minorities on the campus did *not* come about because of liberal support for minorities, nor did it come about because of substantial minority pressure. It occurred because *women* filed charges against universities, and when the government comes in, they examine discrimination not only against women but against other minorities as well. There is no priority in law for one group over another; the laws that apply to minorities apply to women as well. I might also point out here that white women along with minority women have been particularly active in

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1. [Ed. Note] Source of Quote not found.

pressing for all data collection to show race and sex simultaneously, such as white men, Black men, Chicano men, etc. This is particularly critical if minority women are to benefit from the protections that their minority brothers and white sisters enjoy. At one university, HEW requested numerical goals for women and for minorities. Because the data was collected separately for sex, and separately for minorities, it would have been perfectly legal for that institution, for example, to have hired all minority men and all white women, without ever hiring any minority female. The opposite could also happen; Black women only could have been hired, counted twice,<sup>2</sup> and no minority male would have had a chance to be hired. In this particular case, the women protested and the institution had to change its data collection procedures. Unless data is collected simultaneously by race and by sex, the position of minority women is often obscured. The women's groups have been particularly active in pushing for this type of data collection both in employment and in other statistics gathered by the government.

The economic crunch is likely to accelerate the current backlash against affirmative action, because women and minorities are an economic threat to white males. Women and minorities have common cause to work together.

The current backlash against affirmative action will hurt both women and minorities unless they can work together. The two groups have much in common and much to gain from coalitions around those issues they agree upon. We can argue as to who hurts most, but that is not the basis on which the issues will be decided. The issues will be decided on the basis of effective politics and effective pressure.

In one sense, the women's movement is potentially the largest ally that minorities can have. The intellectual liberals of the 60's have deserted the active civil rights movement in large numbers. Minorities, because they *are* a minority in number, cannot hope to move the power structure unless they have strong allies. The women's movement, unlike any other, cuts across race, color, ethnicity, caste, class and age. We are everyone. We are white, Black, poor and old and Indian, and Chicano; we are middle-class. We are not rich. That's the one group we seem to be omitting. It literally and figuratively involves every group in America. Women are the newest, fastest-growing and potentially the largest advocacy groups on the campus and indeed in the nation and perhaps in the world. Women, including minority women, comprise about 53% of the population over 21 years of age. Minority men comprise about 6 or 7%. With close to 60% of the population, women and minorities together could really change this nation. And this is what we are talking about. Not making the world better for Chicanos, not making the world better for women, but making the world better for all of us. Thank you.

**HARWELL:** Thank you very much Dr. Sandler. Next is Professor King.

**KING:** I have the sense from listening to Bernice Sandler that in some ways we are going to be saying the same thing, using different words. I

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2. Minority women cannot be counted twice when an institution is fulfilling its numerical goals or percentage goals. (If they were paid two salaries, that might be a different story).

hope, so that you won't be bored to death, that it won't entirely be some of the same things, there will be a slight difference in perspective. I think it's very difficult to discuss the topic that we have been assigned: "Is There a Conflict Between the Women's Movement and the Civil Rights Movement?," because it is very hard to define what we mean by conflict. So, what I was trying to do was to break the issue down.

One, should there be a conflict; two, is there a conflict in fact or in reality between women and minorities; three, if there is such a conflict, why does it exist; and four, what if anything, should be done about the conflict that exists? As a starting point, I would like to quote from two opinions of two Chief Justices. The first, Justice Taney speaking in the *Dred Scott* case:<sup>3</sup>

They, Negroes, have for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order and altogether unfit to associate with the white race either in social or political relations and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect. And that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit.

A second Supreme Court Justice, speaking in the case of *Bradwell v. the State*:<sup>4</sup>

The civil law as well as nature herself has always recognized a wide difference in the respective spheres of man and woman. Man is or should be woman's protector and defender.<sup>5</sup>

He continues,

The harmony, not to say identity of interests and views, which belong or should belong to the family institution is repugnant to the idea of a woman adopting a distinct and independent career from that of her husband. The paramount destiny and mission of woman are to fill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the creator.<sup>6</sup>

I think if we start with the opinions of those two Justices at different points in our history, both in the 19th Century, we can conclude that discrimination against minorities and women is an integral and accepted way of life in our society. Some will hasten to point out that there is a vast difference between being denied the right to practice law which was the issue in the case of *Bradwell v. the State* and the right to be released from slavery, a difference which I willingly recognize. However, I think we should all understand that we aren't denying that discrimination against both groups exists. We may perhaps just be discussing the perniciousness or the degree of perniciousness with respect to various groups. In some sense, to recognize the difference and to continue the discussion along the lines of priority or which group should have priority today is, from my way of thinking, a useless discussion because it doesn't get us anywhere.

The reason it doesn't get us anywhere is that he or she who is hurt or affected by discrimination is concerned with their particular problem whether you be a minority, or whether you be a woman, or whether you be both. It's like the old adage, the problem that I have is the most important thing in the world to me, although I might be willing to recognize that there are others who have problems that might be more difficult to deal with.

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3. *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, 60 U.S. 406, 407 (1856).

4. *Bradwell v. State*, 16 Wall. 130 (1872).

5. *Id.* at 141.

6. *Id.* at 141.



Or to attack it from another perspective, as Maslo has pointed out, there is a hierarchy of needs, or he postulates that there is a hierarchy of needs, and that these needs vary from physical needs, the need for food and shelter, to the need for status and social acceptance. There are others, but at every level there are needs and non-fulfillment produces frustration and anxiety. There may be a difference between physical needs and status needs, but they produce the same results in human beings. And it makes no sense to talk to a person who is suffering from lack of food and lack of shelter in terms of need and tell him that his needs or her needs are not important. And vice versa, it doesn't make sense to tell someone to whom status is the most important thing in the world that that's not a need that produces frustration. From my way of thinking, so it is with minorities and women. We may be at different levels in the hierarchy but we all react strongly to our oppression. And neither of us is going to sit around and wait for the other to "arrive" or "make it."

Incidentally, although we are discussing the problem between women and minorities, some of the same things hold true about the conflict within minority groups—the conflict that rages between Blacks and Puerto Ricans on the East Coast, or Blacks, Orientals and Chicanos on the West Coast and the Southwest. Some of these facts apply to that dispute as well.

The fact that because of our own felt needs we are not willing to defer to other groups shouldn't in and of itself produce conflict between groups. But as a practical matter it does. As a practical matter, we are out of sympathy with each other's problems. We do compete for the small piece of the pie. We attack each other and I might add at some points both groups attack minority women.

I have often heard white women say that Black women are in a better position and they get all of the jobs, and I hear Black men say Black women are in the better position and they get all the jobs. The fact that we find ourselves at different levels or with different needs helps increase the potential for conflict.

In higher education particularly, the differences and the discrimination suffered by minorities and women has helped to produce conflicts that I currently see. For example, the pool, albeit small, of women available for positions in higher education, is much greater than the pool of minorities available for positions in higher education. This has been so despite the fact that we have all been discriminated against. Because we have been discriminated against in different ways, women have had more access to education than have minorities. The fact that we find ourselves now or currently on different levels of preparation has helped to produce conflict particularly in the higher education arena.

Each group's perception of where it "finds itself" at any point in time also has something to do with what you attack first. When Blacks wanted to deal with the problem of education in this country, they started at the elementary school level and they started at the secondary school level because it was there that we found that we had to fight for integration even before we could begin to really attack colleges.

I think it is fair to say that when women began to focus on the problems of education they started basically with admissions not just to undergradu-

ate school, most often to graduate or professional schools and that is because when we became aware of what our problems were we just found ourselves on different parts of a ladder. These are real differences. I think that the degree of discrimination that a group has suffered affects what we do and what we are all about currently. But instead of trying to figure out ways to minimize the differences between minorities and women, I do feel that we have allowed ourselves to be manipulated by white males.

Last summer I was on the campus of a major mid-western university talking to a white male Dean of Arts and Sciences who was very proud to be able to tell me that he had been visited by a women's delegation and he told those women right away, our only concern on this campus is for the rights of minorities, you women will have to stand in line and wait your turn. He was so happy to be able to tell me this because he thought I was going to be extremely happy. I was disgusted, disgusted because I am sure that the women who were told that you must wait in line, went out, not being so mad at that white male administrator, but willing to take on every Black male or female who was hired in that institution. I am also not so sure than when visited by minorities he didn't give them the same argument in reverse, which meant that the minorities went away not attacking that white male administrator, but arguing about all those white women who are coming along and taking the jobs that we otherwise would have.

Or, the second strategy that I observed especially when I was at HEW, was the fact that when universities do indeed make that step to hire their minority or woman that they tell every white male that they turn down we had to let you go because you know we have got to hire a woman or a minority. And the result is like the world turned on itself. The white male now sees himself as the victim. I have never heard of anything so ridiculous in my life.

If we, we minorities and we women, allow our differences to be magnified, we will all lose. We should be forcing an enlargement of the pie, not be content with the way it currently exists. And if we have got to fight, fight in private. Not before that white male administrator who, in the last analysis makes the decision that affects us all. Now I am not saying that we have to be a part of the same organization. I have never even argued that Black women should join NOW or WEAL. I believe our interests and our backgrounds are different. Some white women are racists, and some Black men are sexist and nothing is going to change that. At least I haven't seen anything yet that is having a big impact on that. But like it or not, I think we face the same obstacles—a white male who is both sexist and racist, who knows exactly what he intends to do, and that is to keep us divided. He understands his interests and he acts on them. And I think it is time that we begin to understand our interests, not only our interests that exist across this barrier of sex and race.

In higher education we do have common interests. It is vital to both women and to minorities that goals and timetables be set for our hiring. It is vital for us that we establish tenure and promotion standards. It is vital for both of us that we do away with what I hear most administrators, both in industry and education say, and that is we have to find a person with a track

record. Well you all know and I know that women and minorities don't have track records. We have never had an opportunity to acquire them. And to talk about I have to find someone who has X number of degrees and X kinds of experience is to really keep both groups out—to keep both minorities and women out.

In conclusion, there shouldn't be a conflict between victims. You have to recognize that we are all victims and not become a party to someone else's manipulation.

There is the conflict I believe in practice, I have seen it, and that is because we have to some degree allowed ourselves to be manipulated. By whom? By someone that should be a common enemy for us all. Third, I don't think we get beyond tokenism, tokenism for minorities or for women, if we can't join at some level, identify those common problems and work together in order to bring about change. If we can't really, those of us in this audience, who can't really bring ourselves to work with a minority, or a minority with a woman, then at minimum we can stop talking about each other and keep our mouths shut. Because that talk and loose talk that I have heard here and at other places has only served to fuel fires and make the conflicts appear even worse than they really are.

My concluding statement I repeat is, if you can't do anything, at least keep your mouth shut.

**HARWELL:** Blenda Wilson, please.

**WILSON:** Pat King was wrong, there is a different point of view and a different perspective to be presented on this panel. More than a decade ago, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., led more than a quarter of a million Black and white, male and female Americans in a march on Washington. The march expressed, what appeared then to be an almost universal sentiment for responding positively to the cries of those who wished greater human dignity, justice and equality in this country. It was a sentiment which we assumed was held by all educated people, all liberals, certainly all Blacks and all poor. That dream, frustrated, led to urban insurrection in the mid-60's. Renewed once again that dream called upon the house of reason—colleges and universities—to bring it to fruition.

I am still confused and surprised in recalling that first Earth Day celebration—what did that have to do with eliminating racism? From what did that distracting movement spring? No matter though, this was the first period of expansion in higher education from mass to universal education. Special recruitment and admissions programs were established; community urban and Black studies programs were begun; Black students and Black faculty members and staff were being sought across the entire nation. However reluctant the commitment, there was plenty of room and there seemed to be plenty of time to achieve equal opportunity in education. Even when "Black" became "minority," and "discriminated against" meant women too, there was apparently enough growth room and enough time.

The emergence of newly identified oppressed groups suggested as a matter of fact the opportunity for viable coalitions either of the Third World or of the protected classes, minorities and women through affirmative action

programs and affirmative action pressure groups. In somewhat the same manner that the Earth Day celebration interrupted the accelerating civil rights movement, a financial depression, declining enrollments and reduced job prospects for college graduates, happened to higher education. In part, one cause of the dilemma we are discussing today was expressed quite straightforwardly by the Carnegie Commission: "Women and members of minority groups have greatly increased their hopes for faculty positions at a time when the rate of new hires is declining rapidly." It is important to point out that the potential for conflict between the women's movement in higher education and the Black movement, or the minority movement, is not in the first instance something that either of those groups can control. In the first instance, until both movements have succeeded, the question is how do the white male decision-makers perceive those movements and interact with them? We live, after all, in an environment that is determined by economic, social and political factors, all of which women and minorities do not control. That is the perspective from which I wish to talk about the question asked of us today.

I view the question of both the Black movement and the women's liberation movement from the perspective of the equal rights movement, against the backdrop though of a steady state situation in higher education and declining enrollments, fewer jobs, less expansion. I believe that there is a conflict, and that the nature of the conflict needs to be surfaced so that the advocates and presumably the beneficiaries of affirmative action programs can develop strategies to overcome them. I further believe that history has shown that strong government action and strong community pressure groups are the only devices that have been successful against discrimination in this country.

The trend in higher education can be characterized by the phrase, those who have, get. Epstein and Forster<sup>7</sup> acknowledge what few would seriously question, that the evils of past discrimination leave their marks: inferior education, lack of training, inadequate preparation. I would add others: lack of access to channels of influence, underdeveloped and unrecognized business and grantsmanship skills, inadequate incomes, lack of organizational and management experience.

To say that non-minority American women control the wealth of this country, is I believe, to perpetuate a myth. But clearly, non-minority academic women have had a familiarity with and access to the wealth of this country. They have acquired many of the behavior patterns and in-group skills that attend the management of money and influence. Blacks and other minorities have not had that opportunity. That distinction is important. Women hold about 13% of all Ph.D degrees. Blacks of both sexes represent about 1%. Blacks in 1972-73 made up 2.9% of the total college and university faculty. Women 20% in the same years. In 1972-73 women comprised 12.8% of the first year class in medical schools across the country, and 15.6% of the enrollment in law schools. By contrast, same year, same data for Black students—medical school enrollment 5.5%, law school enrollment 3.9%. The point is, that there is differential in equality. I

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7. B. EPSTEIN AND A. FORSTER, PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT AND QUOTAS (Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, New York, 1974) at 13.

am reminded of the popular song title, "Compared to What." Because non-minority women have had more opportunities relative to Blacks and other minorities, they are in a relatively better position to benefit from affirmative action efforts.

The Anti-Defamation League argues that instead of affirmative action, a just society has an obligation to afford such persons every opportunity to hasten their participation in all sectors at optimum levels of capacity.<sup>8</sup> In a steady state employment situation in colleges and universities, that solution makes conflict unavoidable.

Richard Lester's proposal<sup>9</sup> for affirmative action on the supply side is a much better solution. But in denying or underestimating sex or race discrimination, he fails to provide strong standards or strong mechanisms for enforcement on the demand side. This is one of the great fallacies of his book.

University compliance with affirmative action is reluctant at best. The point of least resistance is the rule. To me that means, that university administrators can define their roles as hiring either minorities or women and the result can be, for the reasons given above, another version of unequal representation.

The second source of conflict between the minority movement and the women's movement could be characterized by the phrase, "the door that squeaks the loudest, gets the grease." Twenty years of continuous struggle for equal educational opportunities for Black people have passed since the *Brown* decision. The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, Executive Order 11246 forbidding racial discrimination was issued in 1965. By comparison then, the Amendment to the Executive Order, and to Title VII and Title IX all prohibiting sex discrimination could be called recent developments—offspring if you will, of the Black struggle. There are indications, particularly in higher education though, that the movement for sexual equality has eclipsed its inspirational parent. I have a sense that the women's movement in academia has cornered the attention of administrators, financial supporters, the educational press, professional associations, hence conflict.

Some examples—in August of 1974 the *Chronicle of Higher Education* carried a feature article entitled, "Affirmative Action Four Years After."<sup>10</sup> The entire focus of the story was on women in academic institutions. Only academic women, including a minority woman were interviewed for this story. The salary comparison was the gap between men and women and that was the only statistical analysis covered in the article.

Another—at its fall meeting, the American Federation of Teachers "supported affirmative action plans aimed at increasing the number of women on college faculties."<sup>11</sup> The Association of American Colleges supports the project on the status and education of women—no similar organization for minorities. The American Council on Education has both

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8. *Id.* at 31.

9. R. LESTER, *ANTI-BIAS REGULATIONS OF UNIVERSITIES* (1974) at 151 ff.

10. "Affirmative Action Four Years After," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 5, 1974, at 1 and 8.

11. "Union New Chief Sets Sights on Colleges," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Sept. 3, 1974, Vol. 8, no. 41, p.4.

an office of women in higher education and an urban affairs office—I am not sure what urban affairs means in this context. The AAUP has established Committee W. The pattern of having a women's committee and an affirmative action office on a college or university campus, but no separate office for minority affairs is not uncommon. Given that sex discrimination is perceived as less onerous than racial discrimination, and given that women are clearly in a better position to benefit from affirmative action efforts, I cannot explain the phenomenon of differential advocacy except by the squeaking door principle.

The third and final and perhaps the most serious source of conflict I see between the academic women's movement and the minority movement, can be characterized by the phrase, "The Governor's Lady and Rosie O'Grady are not sisters under the skin." The Black movement on American college and university campuses was rooted in the universal human need for dignity and hope, and in the needs of that total Black community to be free of oppression. The commitment to improve the quality of life for sanitation workers was as deep and profound as the devotion to electing a Black mayor. The demands to increase the numbers of Black faculty and staff were directly related to the requirements that those employed would serve the Black community and Black students on college campuses. This was true both in rhetoric and largely also in fact. Brotherhood and sisterhood meant shared despair as well as hope, common struggle and common purpose. It meant that when one succeeded, all Black people had overcome a little.

The national women's movement, and in particular again the academic women's movement, has failed to develop a broad-based women's constituency. It has virtually ignored the different needs of working women, white ethnics and minority women. On college campuses the demands are very often limited to increasing the employment of top level administrators, increasing the number of senior professors rather than improving the working conditions of secretaries, kitchen workers and the like.

Nancy Ciper in "Absent From the Majority, Working Class Women in America" stated, that "the movement can only become a majority coalition by exploring more fully the needs of different groups of American women in the context of their own lives. Working class women, absent from the majority, and still solely under represented in the ranks of the movement may well become its cutting edge."<sup>12</sup> This image of the women's movement has more than any other cause, prevented greater involvement of Black women and has precluded the development of a coalition strategy between women's groups and minority groups.

In a very short period of time the women's movement has been powerfully effective in calling a male-dominated society to task, and in transforming women's consciousness about their rights to be complete adults. That positive result from the movement is one for which we can all, male, female, Black and white be grateful. But Black women still charge that the polarizing image of the women's movement suggests strongly that non-minority women operate under the same elitist, divisive, status-seeking

12. "Absent from the Majority Working Class Women in America," National Project on Ethnic America, December, 1973, p.2.

value system as non-minority men. They question whether or not accelerating the employment of non-minority women would have any positive effect on the position or treatment of minorities in higher education. They tell each other that Black women cannot afford to confuse the rhetoric of sisterhood with the reality of self-interest, or even the sincere goal of change with the realities of power. Is there a common ideology that can overcome this perception of conflict? Let me suggest very briefly three areas of possible coalition.

First the Carnegie Commission figures indicate that women at 22.5% are represented in college faculties at slightly more than half their number in the labor force. Minorities at about one-third their available rate. The Commission also points out that difficulties in achieving the rates of normal expectation, even by the year 2000, given the steady state and small pools of qualified women and minorities will be very, very difficult indeed. Both women's groups and minority groups should insist then that their institutions establish separate, clear affirmative action goals and timetables for minorities and for women. They should insist that these goals reflect the results of a utilization analysis, survey of the representation on the campus, and that the goals reflect reasonable priorities that those analyses suggest. Thirdly, they should insist that success not be judged in either/or, that is, either minority or either female, or female terms.

Secondly, both groups should develop and support all programs which have as their purpose increasing educational opportunities for previously excluded groups. The Richard Lester proposal is one example of that, and that is something that women's groups and minority groups could uniformly, I think, support.

Finally, both women's groups and minority groups should establish platforms which insist on the humanizing of educational institutions, both in your dealings with employees and students, and in your dealings with external communities. It is, I believe, this goal which provides the basis for a coalition between the two groups. And it is only this goal which can characterize the major contribution that women and minorities can and will make to higher education.

**HARWELL:** Thank you. Thank you very much. I am sure that we all are appreciative of the very thoughtful presentations made by members of the panel. We would hope that you would direct questions and concerns that you have toward our guests, and I will just stand here and direct traffic. So, those of you who have questions or comments, editorial comments, feel free to raise you hand or gesture and I will try to point you out and you may direct your questions to any one of the three panelists.

**QUESTION:** I am a little confused. Ms. Wilson's remarks sound to me as if she is in support of Professor Lester's proposal. Can you tell me where in that proposal you felt it was beneficial to women and minorities?

**WILSON:** Yes, I tried to be careful to only support one aspect of Professor Lester's book. Toward the very end he offers proposals for increasing the pool of qualified minorities and women in education. I can't remember the exact title, but it is affirmative action for the supply side of something similar to that. I think very often on college and university

campuses both affirmative action officers, HEW, women and minorities and everybody get so obsessed with the notion of numbers in hiring that people forget that there is another obligation of affirmative action which is to prepare people who will be able to take jobs later on. Given the statistics we have heard today about the small numbers of people, both women and minorities, who are able to take positions, I think it is important that both groups support programs, not necessarily Lester's though I think his is an example, that will provide incentives for minorities and women to be trained and will provide opportunities for them to enter academic life.

**QUESTION:** Would you or any other member of the panel wish to comment on Professor Lester's account of excessive affirmative action to date?

**SANDLER:** I would be glad to comment a little bit. Professor Lester's report for the Carnegie Commission, which they sponsored but do not endorse, incidentally, has caused a lot of flack. It is filled with a lot of inaccuracies; he cites laws inaccurately, he had the dates of laws wrong, he quotes them wrong and I suspect he is not a very solid researcher and he is a good product of the "old-boy network", and I say this getting money from the Carnegie Corporation for my own project. But they agree to some degree and are working on it. It is indeed true, we do need more affirmative action supply kinds of programs, but the danger with Lester's is that his proposal is that if you have a good affirmative action supply program you ought to be exempt from numerical goals, which I think is a trade-off that frankly we ought not get involved in because I think we need both, really. The other thing is, he doesn't make it clear, he kind of slips it in, and I didn't even catch this until I read the book twice—he has got a little thing saying of course these supply people wouldn't be eligible for tenure when you hired them. They don't go on the tenure track. The thing that kind of underlies his whole book is that minorities and women really aren't that well qualified and we will have to make some exceptions to let a few in. He doesn't say it in quite those words, but that's the implication on a kind of underlying philosophical assumption that he makes.

**WILSON:** I think that's fair, just to comment on it. I don't know how you make a distinction between the tone of an entire book and a motive that I don't even know, but one that I would question for an entire book, and yet, the germ of an idea that I think is valuable. If you will recall when I mentioned that I think the plan for increasing the supply side is a valuable one, I indicated that Dr. Lester either didn't recognize or underestimated discrimination and therefore, left out standards and mechanisms for judging performance. So I think he is very short on the demand side. On the other hand, if I were clever enough I would have wished to suggest alternative kinds of proposals that lead to the same thing, which is attempting to find ways for minorities and women to break through that academic bottleneck with some reasonable opportunity for pursuing academic careers in less than 20 years, and without starving to death and all of the things that now seem to preclude effective entry.

**COMMENT:** I would like to reiterate one reason why I thought it was so



important that the women's movement and the minority movement should both support the position of minority women. If you look at those indices and it's by no means all of them, where the average woman in the United States comes off a little better than the average minority person, that can be explained entirely by the position of minority women. That is to say, with respect to wage indices and so on, women as a whole come off very poorly. But then, some of the indices that Blenda Wilson cites where women appear to be coming off on the average better than on a proportionate basis than the average minority that gap is easily explained entirely. I am not suggesting that on any individual basis this is true, but on an average that gap is entirely explained by the differential joint discrimination against minority women. Let me give you an example. And the example I give is for M.I.T. I don't think it illustrates only the problem at M.I.T., I think it's a national problem, so I feel free to give this statistic although it's a bad one. If you multiply the faculty; if you multiply the index of discrimination on the basis of race times the index of discrimination on the basis of sex, we have one-twelfth the Black women you would expect if you multiply both of those indexes together. That is, Black women in our faculty positions are in one-twelfth as good a position as you would expect if both the national indexes were multiplied by each other. Now, in part that is because we are a technical institute, we are looking for Black female engineers and so on. But I would like to illustrate that when we talk of the relative position of women and the relative position of minorities, as all three of our panelists would indicate, it is a gross myth that the women's movement and the Black movement working together are disproportionately helping minority women. Precisely the reverse is true and by a simply enormous factor.

**KING:** I am not quite sure I understood. If you are saying that the civil rights movement on the one hand, and the women's liberation movement on the other hand have not done very much for minority women, I agree. I am not talking about higher education—in some respects higher education is a special type of area—but since I did my early career at EEOC where the universe is much broader and we had far more low-income blue collar women involved, both Blacks and whites, than we see in higher education, it was certainly true that under Title VII with the tremendous gains that were made for minority men or for white women, that the minority woman (I hate to talk about this a lot, because this gets to be divisive too, it is a very hotly debated issue) when you go back and look at the statistics, and take some of the emotion out of it, they will show as you indicate that the minority woman with the exception of the token, how everybody holds up and says see—she has been used to satisfy two criteria being female and being minority. That with those exceptions, if you look across the board, the opposite has been true, particularly in industry.

**SANDLER:** There is no question that the minority female gets it twice. She gets it once for being female and once for being a minority. One of the tragedies that sometimes occurs between the two movements is that the minority female is put under great pressure to declare total and final allegiance to either one of these groups and to pretend either that she is not female or that she is not minority, while she is indeed both. In the long run it is the minority female who is going to have to be the liaison to a large

degree or to some degree between the two movements because she indeed has a foot in each camp and can communicate more openly and honestly perhaps with each of those groups. White women may be more distrustful of Black men and Black men may be more distrustful of white women than they are of minority women and minority women can talk to them about women's issues far better than I can, and I think minority women can talk to me about minority issues far better than some of the minority males can. So, there is really, I think a very heavy burden put upon minority women that all of us who are not minority and female probably ought to think about a little more than we do.

**COMMENT:** It seems to me that while the minority woman is a member of the women's groups, she is also a member of the ethnic group, and contrary to what you just said, I believe that the minority woman can discuss her problems with a minority man a little easier than she can with a non-minority woman.

**KING:** It depends on what you're talking about.

**COMMENT:** I am not talking about just the problems a minority woman comes in contact with as a woman. I am talking about general discrimination problems. It would seem to me to be a greater relationship between the minority woman and the minority man than there would be between the minority woman and the non-minority woman. It's generally true, that's all I am saying.

**SANDLER:** I may not have said as clearly what I meant to say so maybe I ought to say it again to make sure it came out the way I wanted it. I think what Pat says is exactly true; that certainly I think minority men and women can talk together better about minority issues and know what they are talking about than say Pat and I talk about minority issues. I have to think and feel a little more. But I think on the other hand, when Pat talks to me about women's issues, then I probably understand her maybe a little better than you do. We understand each other a little better on that level. And that is what I was partly getting at. And I think when Pat tells me about minority issues, it is probably a little easier for me to understand it because I am beginning to understand women's issues, and I know that discrimination hurts differently, but it hurts, and it hurts when you are female. So I get a little bit a sense of what it is when people tell me about what minority discrimination is like. And I think that works both ways. I think this is a two-way street that we are talking about.

**WILSON:** May I join in a minute? Because the drift is going further past me than I can keep up with. It seems to me that one of the problems with the kinds of distinction you are making in minority women being able to talk to the minority man about minority problems and women on the other side is that the minority woman is only one person. She is not on the one hand a minority, and on the other hand a woman, she is a minority woman altogether. The issue of which movement speaks best to her needs seems to me to have to go back to what the movement defines as its constituency. What is it responding to, and what are the kinds of needs it wishes to represent? In that case, because of the circumstances, and now that you all

know my point of view you won't be surprised, I find myself thinking of the old spiritual—I love him because he first loved me. And that's the Black movement. There is a little evidence in my experience that the women's movement can understand the whole of what a minority woman feels. But that does not mean there aren't possibilities for coalitions on issues and I firmly hope and believe there will be. But I really rue the whole notion that minority women should somehow be torn apart inside themselves simply to try to figure out where either of those other movements is going.

**KING:** I would like to say since we are on the subject, to make it slightly different—being a minority woman and wrestling with the issue every day, I really think in practical terms and I have seen this work in one city in the country, that the solution for minority women and minority women's organizations is alliance with civil rights organizations on the one hand, women's organizations on the other. When you start getting into a real analysis of what that one person is all about, I feel the civil rights movement left me out. I certainly feel the white liberation women's movement left me out. And my solution has always been that we minority women have to start speaking for ourselves as minority women. In terms of organization, or organizational perspective, we may have more in common as Black women with Chicano women and Puerto Rican women, and Oriental women to some degree—at least as far enough to form our own organizations. The city that I am talking about is San Francisco, which has a very effective minority women's organization that works very effectively as a matter of fact in alliance with both civil rights groups on the one hand and with women's groups on the other.

**LEONARD:** I would suggest that one area of erasing what may seem to be a conflict is in direction. That is that the few, very few agencies and the very few institutions headed by white women might determine that it would be good to have some minority women in the employ of those institutions. That might do a great deal toward erasing what might seem to be a conflict. Because I have always wondered and questioned why it is that the women's movement can move so effectively and consider itself placing under its general umbrella both groups, but for some reason, yet leave out minority women. I speak for example of our own Radcliffe College, where we have an institution headed by a white woman with virtually no Black women or other minority women in any position of influence. The same thing is true of several such institutions just a few miles away. They seem to use the same measures of exclusion as white men have used against them all along. I never want to conclude that white women practice elitism and racism with the same intensity as white men engage in elitism, racism and sexism. Now, with respect to the economics of this subject, it is absolutely true that the salary scales, generally, show white men, Black men, white women and then Black women. Did you ever add the salary of white male and female and that of the Black man and woman and look at the difference? Why the attack on the few dollars now finally being paid to Black men?

**QUESTION:** With the economic constraints that we all know about, what do you suggest should be done to form important coalitions between the civil rights movement and the women's movement in order to reach their

joint needs vis-à-vis the reality of the environment?

**WILSON:** I guess my own view is that minorities and women need to perceive that situation in colleges and universities much as we look now at the greater political context of our country. There was a time early in the minority movement when the push was simply we need a Black there, or in the women's movement I presume a similar kind of pressure—we need a woman. Without, very frankly, the kinds of considered judgments about what those people stand for, what kind of causes they will push, where they stand on issues. It is kind of defined as enlightened self-interest, which means knowing full well that there are not going to be large numbers of minorities hired in Harvard University, for lots of reasons. I need then to be more careful in being able to assess the views, the positions, the record if you will, of anyone who is going to be appointed. That is true, not only of minorities, it is true of women, and not to assume by virtue of someone's race or sex that they have any interest in what is important to me. So I see us becoming more involved in the kind of dynamics of enlightened self-interest so that every position whomever it is filled by will count for those things we think are important.

**SANDLER:** Yes. I think the other priorities and issues which we can easily make coalitions on are seeing that we keep the legislation that we have got and that that doesn't get done out from under us. And I think on the campus itself, as these groups work together they can at least protect certain parts of affirmative action to see that they are implemented to some degree. When women and minorities are divided nothing happens. In order to protect what we have or to even grow we are going to have to work together on those issues where we agree and where we can work together. On those issues that we disagree we are going to have to learn to respect each other's disagreement and to let each other go their own way.

**KING:** I would like to add, in conjunction with what Bernice said, however, that we can't do that in ignorance. Having sat in an office, two offices that were concerned with both the rights of minorities and of women, the ignorance on both sides is appalling. Blacks are very concerned about Title IX because Title IX was set out for women. I have talked to very few Blacks who really know what Title IX is all about. I have talked to very few Blacks who understand how it expanded Title VI and where it is not as broad as Title VI. Title VI deals with minorities. Very few Blacks understand that there are some aspects of Title IX, that can at least be used to advance minority women. Title IX covers some areas that are very critical to us. For the first time we have another vehicle for getting at elementary schools which I think is extremely important—the staffing of elementary schools. I agree with both panelists, but I think that the starting point is a little knowledge. I think you said it in your speech—we have to understand what the conflict is, what the potential conflict might be, and we have to go on from there and identify what common areas we have. We can only do that by knowledge which I think is lacking.