THE ERA AND THE AHA—Peg Strobel, President

We have prepared this newsletter earlier than originally planned because the issue of the Equal Rights Amendment has come to the forefront as a major question before the AHA in the past month with the AHA Council's decision to table a resolution asking that the AHA boycott states that have not ratified the ERA. As the activities of the AHA affect us all as historians, whether we ourselves are members or not, we wish to acquaint you with this issue so crucial to women.

As President, I speak for your elected officers in urging you to indicate to us your support of the boycott. I will relay word of this support to Joan Hoff Wilson, President of the Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession (CCWHP) who will use our support to convince the Council to reconsider and to support the boycott. There is a particular urgency in the mail ballot and petitions attached to this newsletter. We have all ignored mail ballots in the past—that is why mail ballots are so often used to preserve the status quo. This time, please take a moment to read about the issue and to return the mail ballot and petitions immediately.

If you are not an AHA member but are considering joining, you ought to write the AHA indicating that you are waiting their action in the boycott resolution before joining. In this way you will save your dues for the escrow fund, should it develop (see below), and you may still join the AHA just before the December business meeting, if that appears to be the best strategy then.

History of the resolution to boycott (taken from Joan Hoff Wilson's letter in the CCWHP newsletter IX, No. 2, June, 1978)

"On May 26, 1978, the AHA Council voted to table a resolution calling for the organization to join in a national campaign against scheduling future conventions in states that had not ratified the ERA. This resolution had been recommended to the Council in December by the Committee on Women Historians, the Professional Division, and over 600 AHA members who had signed petitions urging the Council to pass it. Instead, the Council decided to submit the issue to an advisory mail ballot. Proponents of the boycott won this referendum by a vote of 798 to 709.

Despite such wide and varied support, the Council voted to table the boycott resolution and to pass one generally favoring the Equal Rights Amendment. By implication this should mean that the Council cannot logically schedule a future conference in any state that has not ratified. The 1979 conference will be held in New York and the 1980 one in Washington, D.C. Beyond this there is no guarantee that conventions will not be held in states that do not favor granting equal rights to women.

Apparently arguments about "nuisance suits" against the Association (the probability of which is very slight), figured prominently in the Council's decision. To date, no professional organization has been sued for not holding meetings in anti-ERA states unless a previously signed contract was broken, although a few have been asked to give depositions in a suit against NOW brought by the state of Missouri.

We are left with the fact that the Council tabled a resolution that won the mail ballot by 53% (this represented 10% of the membe-
ship when normal returns by mail are usually less than 2%); (2) was supported by the CCWHP; (3) was approved by the Pro-

fessional Division; (4) urged by petition; and (5) endorsed, as of May 1978, by over 170 other national professional organi-

izations.

New developments
Since June there have been several new developments. Discussions at
the Berkshire conference in women's history resulted in the following strat-

ey. While the CCWHP proceeds to register dismay in the proper channels the
Council's ignoring of a large and mobilized section of the member-
ship, the various affiliates such as ourselves will be polling AHA members
about their support for putting their AHA dues in escrow if the Council re-

fuses to reverse its position against the boycott. This is the subject of
the attached petition. Let me quote from Joan Hoff Wilson's letter of Septem-
ber 11 to explain what putting dues in escrow entails; it is not equivalent

to resigning from the AHA.

"Placement of dues in an escrow fund, which the CCWHP would ad-

minister, and notification to the Council of the reasons for
taking such action instead of renewing membership in the normal
fashion, is the legal equivalent to a rent strike. We would still
technically be members of AHA; the Council would have to take
legal action to prove otherwise. The other thing to note about
AHA membership is that it is not required to contribute articles
to the journal or to participate in sessions at national con-

ventions. Membership simply allows individuals to run for office
or to be appointed to committees. Membership also, of course, en-
titles one to receive the journal. Placing dues in an escrow fund
would simply indicate a member's unwillingness to serve the AHA
in administrative functions; it is not intended to curtail any
scholarly participation in the historical profession.'

Joan and the rest of the CCWHP wish to get a sense of the degree of support
among AHA members to use this tactic if the Council at its December meeting
does not remove the ERA resolution from the table and follow the results of its
own advisory referendum to support the boycott. They need 1000 signatures and
hope to collect 2000.

For this reason it is essential that you return to us immediately your re-

sponse to our own mail ballot and the petitions attached to this newsletter.

We have also included the CCWHP resolutions to be presented on the floor of
the business meeting in San Francisco in the event the Council does not pass the
ERA boycott resolution. EACH WILL REQUIRE 25 SIGNATURES AND MUST BE RETURNED
BY OCTOBER 15 TO JOAN HOFF WILSON. We may be contacting you in November to get
your support for these as well. Again, from Joan's letter:

"The first resolution will call for approval of the original ERA
boycott resolution by the business meeting. Failing in this, the
second will call for a censure of the Council for ignoring its own
internal procedures and constituency in favor of the original ERA
boycott resolution. The third resolution will call for the recrea-
tion of a half-time women's position within the AHA headquarters in
order to reactivate the referral service on job openings, to update
and reissue the Directory of Women Historians, and to manage com-
plaints from members by presenting them to the Professional
Division and representing that Division's recommendations to the
Council. Another resolution will call for a vote on the Council by
either the chair of the Committee on Women Historians or the person
who occupies the recreated women's position."

To succeed in these various efforts, we will need the informed and active
support of our members. Add your voice to those calling for the AIA
Council to express what represents minimal support for women in the profession.

The following officers of the WCAWH urge you to act in support of the re-
solution for the AHA to boycott states that have not ratified the ERA:

Peg Strobel, President
Joanna Cowden, Vice-president
Penny Kanner, Vice-president
Debby Kennedy, Secretary-Treasurer
Rosemary Masek, Co-Editor
Jackie Barnhart, Co-Editor
Frances Richardson Kaller, Program
Coordinator
Please
—send in the mail ballot immediately (directly below in this column)
—sign and circulate to men and women who are AHA members the petition
pledging to place dues in escrow (see page 5)
—sign and circulate the petition of women members of the AHA in favor of
boycotting the antiERA states (see page 7)

MAIL BALLOT

**I believe that the AHA should boycott states which have not ratified**
the ERA

**I will place my dues in escrow until the AHA Council votes to boycott**
states that have not ratified the ERA

**I do not believe that the AHA should boycott states which have not rati-

ded the ERA**

As President of the WCAWH, I have endorsed a statement in response to the
AHA September Newsletter's coverage of the ERA boycott issue. The statement,
drafted by DiAnn Campbell, Organization of American Historians Committee on the
Status of Women in the Historical Profession, and Jonn Hoff Wilson, President,
CCHHP, essentially covers the material in my message above. Although our asso-
ciation has not been officially polled yet (This newsletter is an attempt to do
so), I acted in the name of the association, after consulting with the two vice-
presidents, because time limits dictated an immediate response. Furthermore,
persons at the WCAWH meeting at the PCB in August overwhelmingly supported the
ERA boycott, as have our officers.

FEMINISTS PROTEST COUNCIL DECISION

The AHA Council has blundered badly in the ERA matter. Although
most of the major professional organizations in the humanities and social
sciences have endorsed the principle of boycotting states that have not
ratified the ERA, the AHA Council has refused to make this minimal response
In behalf of the Constitutional needs of thousands of women historians.
Thereby it rejected petitions, the advisory vote of the membership, and the
recommendations of its Women's Committee & its Professional Division.

The issue will be brought to the floor of the annual business meeting.
Petitions are also being circulated and will be printed in the December AHA
Newsletter demanding the consorting of the Council, the removing of the ERA
Boycott Resolution from the table, the direct representation of the AHA
Committee on Women Historians on the Council and the resignation of Vice-
President Otis Pease who led the counterattack on the ERA boycott motion even
though his Professional Division and its subcommittee, the Women's Committee
had overwhelmingly supported the resolution. Women who have held AHA offices
or committee appointments and representatives of national and regional
organizations will send special letters directly to the Council describing
their dissatisfaction with the Council's action and inaction. Finally, we all protest
the misleading reporting of the Council's decision as described in the
September AHA Newsletter.

Names
(Affiliations)

Reg Strick, President
West Coast Association of Historians

ERA
WHEREAS:

1) We are pleased with the Council's decision to hold the 1980 meeting in Washington, D.C. and assume that the Council's endorsement of the ERA amendment means that it will not schedule any future conferences in states that have not ratified the ERA until this national issue is resolved;

2) We strongly believe that professional organizations have an affirmative duty to defend the human rights and dignity of all their members, we want to point out that over 170 other national organizations have joined in the fight for first class citizenship for women in this society by officially refusing to hold meetings in states that have not ratified the ERA. (These organizations are truly impressive in their diversity and all agree that if they remain inactive on this issue of equal rights or simply offer moral support at this critical juncture in the passage of the ERA, they are implicitly condoning the unequal treatment of all women.);

3) We recognize that women historians have overcome many professional barriers in recent years with the support of the AHA, we also realize that like all women professionals, women historians have often made tremendous sacrifices in order to contribute to their fields of specialization. They are now asking the kind of support from the AHA that will make a significant difference in the lives and attitudes of its female members. In this time of economic crisis within the profession, women must be assured that they are not the victims of covert and unwarranted fear of reverse discrimination on the part of their male colleagues. We believe that there is only one remaining way for the AHA to assure women, particularly in the wake of the Badke decision, of its serious and continuing commitment to effect affirmative action;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Until the AHA Council honors the results of the advisory referendum on the ERA resolution and the previous endorsements of this resolution by over 600 AHA members, the Professional Division, and the Committee on Women Historians by rescinding its decision to table the ERA resolution and votes at its next meeting to join the other national professional organizations that have agreed not to meet in states refusing to ratify the ERA:

1) Members of the undersigned organizations and committees will refrain from renewing their membership in the AHA by notifying the Council in writing of their decision;

2) Members of the undersigned organizations and committees will place their AHA membership dues in a national fund (and encourage their male colleagues to do likewise) to be held in escrow until such time as the AHA Council takes positive action on this resolution.

* This resolution was submitted by Joan Hoff Wilson, CCWHP President, at the Berkshire conference in August, 1978. It was discussed and debated at length at several meetings of those attending. It was not formally adopted. Rather, it was a vehicle for formulating various ways to impress upon the AHA Council the need to reconsider its May decision to table the ERA resolution.

On Candidates for AHA Office: Joan Hoff Wilson

The CCWHP urges all the regional affiliates to campaign actively for feminist AHA candidates, male and female. At the beginning of October, the CCWHP will formally endorse candidates for the various offices on the basis of their responses to a questionnaire. There are two CCWHP write-in candidates: Margaret (Peg) Strobel for the Nominating Committee (Place 1) and Catherine (Kitty) Prelinger for the Committee-on-Committees (Place 1), who already have the unqualified endorsement of the CCWHP. We can no longer afford the luxury of supporting women candidates simply because they are women. CCWHP intends to insure greater accountability of women candidates and office holders than it has in the past by reminding them of their responsibility to a female constituency within the AHA; inviting them to our meetings; and by making sure they are aware of our position on issues of concern to women. If time permits, CCWHP will take out an ad in the December AHA Newsletter indicating which candidates we have endorsed.
I am a member of the AHA and I am prepared to withhold membership dues by placing such money in an escrow fund until the Council removes from the table and passes the ERA resolution calling upon the AHA to join over 170 other professional organizations that have formally agreed not to hold convention in non-ERA states until this national issue is finally resolved.

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RETURN TO JOAN HOFF YILSON, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY, TEMPE, AZ 85281

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BAY BRANCH OF THE WCAWH: Organizational Meeting

The Bay Area Branch of the WCAWH will hold an organizational meeting on Sunday evening, November 5. The greater Los Angeles area has been well served by its local branch and the same advantages will now be available in northern California. Issues to be discussed are organizational plans, the continuing debate over ERA in the AHA, and the AHA convention in San Francisco during December. For further information, call one of the following numbers:
in Oakland, Kathy Roper, 547-3407
in Berkeley, Margaret Rossiter, 525-3012
Barbara Breiner, Gayle Escobar, 347-9669
SIGNATURES OF AHA MEMBERS IN SUPPORT OF PLACING THE FOLLOWING

RESOLUTIONS BEFORE THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, DECEMBER 1978

1. Calling for the business meeting to approve the original resolution to boycott non-AHA states.

2. To censure the Council for ignoring its own internal procedures and constituency in favor of the original ERA boycott resolution.

3. To recreate the half-time position of Special Assistant to the Committee on Women Historians and to re-activate the referral service on job openings, to update and reissue the Directory of Women Historians, and to generally promote the interests of women within the profession.

4. To create a position on the Council for either the Chair of the Committee on Women Historians or its Special Assistant.

Please sign and circulate this petition to persons who are members of the AHA. Note that these are simply titles of resolutions, and that the exact wording of the full resolutions will be worked out with the Parliamentarian of the AHA. If additional signatures are sent, please be sure to head them with the title of the resolution being supported.

RETURN BY OCTOBER 15 (DEADLINE BY AHA IS NOVEMBER 1) TO:

Joan Hoff Wilson, Department of History, Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ 85281

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VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 6: A MESSAGE FROM ALICE CLEMENT

Proposition 6 on the November (California) ballot, known as the Briggs Initiative, has serious and adverse effects for all of us as teachers and human beings. As teachers, we should be particularly aware of the potentially devastating effect the Proposition would have on civil liberties and academic freedom. Its passage would begin an era of witch hunting among teachers, for homosexual and heterosexual alike. The Proposition's loose language would make it possible for a school board to fire a teacher whether or not he or she had committed any crime.

The proposed law includes in its definition anyone who is found "advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting private or public homosexual activity directed at, or likely to come to the attention of, school children and/or other employees." Teachers in the humanities or in the social sciences could be restricted from discussing the contribution of gay men and women to literature, science, politics, society and the arts. Discussions of life-styles could come under the imprecise language of the initiative. Proposition 6 would set up in some classrooms and among colleagues a police state mentality, restricting free speech and violating the most fundamental right to encourage in the classroom the free flow of ideas.

Public school persons are already protected from sexual misconduct of both a heterosexual and a homosexual kind by existing state law, as the State Department of Education has repeatedly pointed out.
### Women Members of AHA in Favor of Boycotting Antiera States

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**WCAWH MEMBER HONORED:**

Etelie Freedman, Stanford University, has won the Joan's Award for Distinguished Teaching. Congratulations, Estelle!

**CONFERENCE NEWSNOTES:**

The National Women's Studies Association will hold its first national conference on the campus of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, from May 30 to June 3, 1979. The NWSA Committee invites proposals for panels, seminars, workshops, papers, and creative activities in feminist education. The deadline for contacts and queries is January 1, 1979. Write Emily Abel and Peg Strobel, c/o Center for Women's Studies, California State University, Long Beach, CA 90840.
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name__________________________________________ Institution________________________________________

Home Address____________________________________ Phone________________________________________

City__________________________ State________________ Zip________________________

Mail to:________________________________________

Faculty: Job Title__________________________ Subject________________________

Student _____ Unemployed_____ Non-teaching historian___________

Fields of interest________________________________________

DUES: $5 for employed persons; $2 for students and unemployed

Send directly to Debbie Kennel, 1250 Norman Place, L.A., CA 90049

COPY FOR THE NEXT TWO NEWSLETTERS SHOULD BE SENT DIRECTLY TO JACKIE BARNHART, Department of History, Calif. State University, Chico, CA.

In the next issue: Call for papers from the Organization of American Historians, PCB, etc.; conference reports/calls for action.

BY SURE TO SEND IN THE MAIL BALLOTS TO WCAAH AND JOAN HOFF WILSON CIRCULATE THE QUESTIONNAIRES SEND IN DELINQUENT DUES

WEST COAST ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN HISTORIANS

467 COMSTOCK AVENUE / LOS ANGELES, CA. 90024

Susan Bell
8 Montecito Rd.
Woodside CA 94062