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The Response of the Canadian Women's Movement to the Crisis of the Welfare State

by
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Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
and Research in partial fulfillment of the
degree of Masters of Arts in Political Science

Supervisor : Professor Caroline Andrew

University of Ottawa

Krista Nicholds, Ottawa, Canada, 1994

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Introduction

As a social movement containing women's advocacy and lobby groups with a presence inside and outside the state and possessing an ambiguous though primary relationship with the welfare state, the modern Canadian women's movement has a significant stake in the development and evolution of the Canadian welfare state. Though there is no clear agreement in Canada on the ultimate fate of the welfare state, the current challenges to the state model known as the welfare state are many and appear unrelenting. The central focus of this thesis is on the way in which the women's movement has responded to the rethinking and realignments taking place in the Canadian welfare state. In this period when all relations with the welfare state are in flux, the women's movement's reaction to real and perceived threats to its relationship to the welfare state is found to be varied and contradictory but reveals a dominant pattern of state-centeredness. The crisis of the welfare state has forced the women's movement into a position of defensiveness vis-a-vis the welfare state.

This enquiry into the response of the women's movement to the crisis of the welfare state turns first to the general characteristics and circumstances of the Canadian welfare state. Chapter one contains an outline of the political, ideological and economic logic of the post-World War Two welfare state in Canada and offers an account of the breakdown in the early 1970s of this combined logic. I have chosen to use these categories as a way of defining the conditions of the welfare state in order to facilitate the reading of the text, and not to imply an intellectual

commitment to the autonomy of each category.

Chapter two steps back from the issue of the welfare state crisis in order to focus upon the varied and complex relationship that has developed between the women's movement and the welfare state in Canada. This relationship has had an impact on the character of the Canadian welfare state and on the direction taken by the Canadian women's movement. The extent to which the state is a primary context for the women's movement is shown and the dominant pattern in the historical interaction between the women's movement and the welfare state is also revealed.

Chapters one and two are intended to provide the context necessary to interpret the findings revealed in chapter three. This final chapter attempts to answer directly the central question of the thesis: how has the women's movement responded to the crisis of the welfare state? The crisis of the welfare state in Canada began in the early 1970s. Ironically, it is at this time that the women's movement was developing ties with the state thus forcing, with other social movements, a counter-trend of expansion of the welfare state's mandate. For the women's movement, the welfare state crisis began to affect it in earnest in the late 1980s. Although until that time the relationship had seldom been easy there had been a sense that progress was always nearby. By the mid-1980s, and specifically when the Progressive Conservatives formed the federal government, this relationship began to fall apart. The crisis of the welfare state for the women's movement began when the government's agenda showed signs of turning away from the welfare state and specifically the welfare society concept defended by Canadian feminist for generations.

In the present case, the crisis of the welfare state is shown less as a manifestation of changes in social policies affecting women than as an overall public policy thrust affecting in specific ways women's movement activism. Specific social policies are therefore not examined in any detail here. In its role as social movement organization, the movement's tasks of "identity formation and interest promotion,"[1] previously facilitated by the welfare state, are thwarted with the crisis of the welfare state. The concern of the third chapter then, is with how the women's movement responds to the crisis of the welfare state as activists and not as femocrats or clients of social welfare. The response of the women's movement to the crisis is organized again with the explanatory use of the three categories of the political, economic and ideological.

The conclusions of chapter three concerning the movement's response to the crisis of the welfare state provide the background for raising the question as to whether the dominant pattern of interaction between the state in Canada and the women's movement, cited in chapter two, still persists in this current era of crisis. This question is considered in the conclusion and the findings of the thesis are used in a more speculative fashion to look forward at the future evolution of the relationship between the women's movement and the state.

The thesis is based on a research strategy that takes two forms. Chapters one and two were constructed with the help of secondary material. Both chapters are syntheses of existing academic literature. In the case of chapter one, the literature employed focussed primarily on the history and political economy of the Canadian welfare state. The reading material and lectures contained in a course attended at

1 Susan Phillips, "New Social Movements and Routes to Representation: Science versus Politics," paper prepared for *Social Scientists, Policy Communities and the State* (August 1992).

Carleton University entitled "Social Democracy in One Province," helped to highlight some of the central issues and debates emanating from the congruent events of social democratic government and fiscal and economic crisis. Chapter two was derived from histories of the Canadian women's movement and from accounts of the Canadian state's response to the pressure exerted by the second wave of the women's movement.

Chapter three was constructed in a more eclectic fashion than the first two chapters. In August 1992, I presented a paper at a graduate student conference at the University of Waterloo based on an early draft of chapters one and two and on initial thoughts of what would become chapter three. The conference was entitled "Options for a Renewed Canada" and the papers presented offered diverse views on the policy options for Canadian governments and communities confronting ever-increasing global challenges. The questions that arose around this theme and my particular treatment of it, led me to consider in greater depth the preoccupation of chapter three: how has the Canadian women's movement dealt with these challenges as they affect its central interlocutor, the Canadian welfare state?

In order to answer this question, the material presented in chapter three was obtained from several sources. The principal method of gathering material was empirical and the principal source of information used in this chapter came from primary documentation of the activities of national women's groups. The resource centres of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, as well as the resources of the Canadian Women's Movement Archives at the University of Ottawa were indispensable for making available their collections of various forms of

documentation such as pamphlets, policy statements, letters, committee minutes, annual general meeting agenda and resolutions, briefs, media reportage, etc. Speeches and comments made in conference proceedings and press conferences, particularly concerning the constitutional negotiations, also served as important 'documents' of the mindset of women's groups and women's movement leadership.

The interpretation offered in this thesis of the women's movement's political, economic and ideological response to the crisis of the welfare state is primarily based on this abundant documentation from and about the women's movement. This material was supplemented, however, by the literature in Canadian feminist theory that deals with the consequences for women of the questioning of the welfare state. The reason theory was even considered as relevant subject-matter in a thesis with a stated focus on movement activism was that ideas were being entertained and arguments were being made that were not evident in what activists were saying. The loose definition of the women's movement employed here enabled me to make the unstudied assumption that ideas and actions, academia and activism are not mutually exclusive domains within the women's movement. Furthermore, I didn't want to omit mentioning the fact that a sympathetic voice within the broader movement was suggesting a different route for activists to take.

It should be made clear that in using either one of empirical or theoretical material the intention was not to do a rigorous content analysis of the discourse of the women's movement and NAC in particular, but to uncover overall themes in the reaction of the women's movement.

There were advantages and disadvantages to the somewhat eclectic research methodology employed in chapter three. One disadvantage is that there is no clear boundary of what is and what isn't pertinent material. There is thus no end to the unearthing of these popular accounts of the strategies, rhetoric and actions of the women's movement. Furthermore, each piece of documentation used has been weighed equally in terms of its historical veracity. This means, for instance, that briefs representing a women's group's well-thought out point of view on government policy is given the same level of consideration as remarks made by movement leaders at press conferences. The method employed in chapter three is thus highly interpretive and 'of the moment.' The advantage to this method is that it represents history in progress and is able to capture nuances in a historical record that may otherwise be swept aside by the broad trends, cycles, and patterns that are the stuff of history books.

An open-ended research approach like this one that does not attribute priority to 'hard' factual information may be considered too subjective or overly journalistic. Nevertheless, the approach has been chosen as the most suitable one for the purposes of this thesis because of the nature of the thesis' subject matter. An hypothesis of crisis means that we are not at the end of a process but in the midst of one. Uncertainty and change are palpable in the current economic and political climate. Even the mainstream political discourse about the welfare state has altered since this thesis was first conceived two and a half years ago. More recently it has become easier for political leaders to say that entitlements must be cut. The political and strategic significance of arguing that universality is a sacred trust, as Brian Mulroney did in 1985, is no longer as compelling. The women's movement is not only affected by this broader context of change but is also undergoing transitions at

its own instigation. Under these fluctuating circumstances, the research approach employed here is by necessity 'soft' as the response must be compiled *en route*.

Another characteristic of this research approach is that it is perhaps more faithful to feminist methodology. It elevates everyday, contingent realities that are so often dismissed as not representative of the truth and that comprise the informal, woman-dominated private sphere. In other words, it is based on what women say.

Finally, two of the major phrases contained in the thesis question, 'welfare state' and 'the crisis of the welfare state' are defined in the course of chapter one. The term, the 'women's movement,' cited repeatedly throughout the thesis, will be defined here. Feminist authors concede time and again the difficulty associated with defining a phenomenon that is, in Adamson, Briskin and McPhail's words, "politically, ideologically and strategically diverse."[2] Nevertheless, although the movement is extremely heterogeneous it can be seen to be made up of two kinds of groups, those that are small and community-based and those that have a large membership and a Canada-wide focus. I will be using a loose, conventional definition of the women's movement which in actual research terms will focus on that segment of the movement that is the network of large, national organizations most visible to the public and that participate in campaigns that are national in scope and significance. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Native Women's Association, the National Association of Women and the Law, the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Group and the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women are a few examples of this 'women's movement.'

[2] N. Adamson, L. Briskin and M. McPhail, *Feminist Organizing for Change*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), 7.

Although the thesis is thus not about one organization, the National Action Committee is the most frequently cited and analyzed, and is treated as the dominant organization of the Canadian women's movement. NAC is assumed to be the flagship organization of the women's movement because it is the largest- containing a majority of Canadian women's groups as members- and because it is the women's organization **outside** the state that is most actively engaged in national level politics.

Furthermore, where relevant the thesis highlights the distinctive viewpoints of the English Canadian women's movement, the women's movement in Quebec and the "New Force"[3] movement of visible minority women. Nevertheless, at the risk of underplaying these differences, the thesis takes for granted that more is shared among these movements than not. For instance, although Marie Lavigne is a leading femocrat in the advisory structures of the Quebec government and is thus a product of and spokesperson for a social context and discourse with unique attributes, Lavigne is considered here to be a part of the Canadian women's movement expressing ideas that have consequences for all women in Canada and for the movement as a whole. Again, the methodology employed of not concentrating specifically on one movement or another is justified by the desire to uncover any voice within the broad movement that offered a point of view on the subject.

3 Jill Vickers, Pauline Rankin and Christine Appelle. *Politics as If Women Mattered: A Political Analysis of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 10-11.

Chapter One

The Welfare State in Crisis

The post-World War Two welfare state can be understood as a framework containing a broad political, ideological and economic logic. Though among the western industrialized nations there have been a variety of welfare state régimes constructed in the postwar period,[1] each variation on the theme has incorporated the logic of the welfare state and followed the general pattern of development with which it is associated. Canada's welfare state is no exception- in Jane Jenson's words, it is "different but not exceptional."[2] The following discussion will sketch a model encompassing the political, ideological and economic dimensions of the Canadian welfare state and, in turn, will describe why the model began to collapse in crisis in the 1970s.

Political Logic of the Welfare State

By the end of the Second World War, the political logic that had evolved among the western liberal democracies ascribed to the state a positive, interventionist role. The welfare state was the concrete, institutional manifestation of this new role of government these countries had developed. The welfare state was supported by a broadly based, society-wide consensus over a forty year period. It was widely and popularly accepted that the state should intervene to correct the inequities and

1 Gosta Esping-Andersen, "Labour Movements and the Welfare State: Alternatives in the 1990s," in *Getting on Track*, ed. D. Drache (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).
2 J. Jenson, "'Different' but not 'Exceptional': Canada's Permeable Fordism," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 26, 1 (Feb. 1989).

injustices that obstructed political and economic freedom. The state, it was believed, had a responsibility to ensure that postwar working and living conditions in Canada were maintained at adequate levels. Indeed, the insecurity of war and the need for basic health, housing and nutrition provided a critical impetus to public demands for the social security safety programs that followed.[3] Once the war was brought to an end and the benefits of the economic boom of the 50s and 60s were being widely felt, the state not only continued to intervene but stepped up its welfare activity sustained as it was by public expectations of social services.[4]

In Canada, there was widespread public debate and a rash of reports, such as the Marsh Report, that centered on specific social welfare policies and on the nature of the new society proposed by the welfare state.[5] The strongest voice in favour of welfare state intervention came from advocates of social democracy, such as the League of Social Reconstrucion, who supported the concept of a social wage and of rendering formal legal rights meaningful by reducing economic inequalities.

That it was assumed that the state **could** deliver on these expectations can, in part, be explained by the hope of public policy. Ramesh Mishra explains that the ascendancy of the social sciences in the late 1950s and 1960s when state activism was firmly underway, and the corresponding promise of social policy in understanding and managing social life, provided the underpinnings of this transformation in the role of the state. Social intervention and social engineering in the service of

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[3] Jane Ursel, *Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family*, (Toronto: Women's Press, 1992), 207; Alvin Finkel, " Origins of the Welfare State in Canada," in *The Canadian State*, ed. Leo Panitch (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

[4] Ursel, *Private* 255.

[5] A. W. Johnson, "Social Policy in Canada: The Past as it Conditions the Present," in *The Future of Social Welfare Systems in Canada and the United Kingdom*, ed. Shirley B. Seward (Halifax: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1987), 31.

improving society were notions that were granted widespread legitimacy at the time and can help to explain this renewed esteem for the state, and the justification for the welfare state, in particular.[6] The state was perceived as the most effective instrument for determining and implementing social policy. The expectation was that the state would act as an "integrative agency"[7] capable of capturing and fulfilling public needs where the market had failed in doing so.

Although the Second World War brought with it economic prosperity, reminders of the economic and social dislocation of the Great Depression still lingered compounding the fear of postwar unemployment and social disorder. The social consensus around the idea of an activist state was thus prompted by the precarious present and uncertain future that enveloped this era pressuring the federal government to respond. The Depression had forced a virtual collapse of the provinces' financial structures thus precluding their ability to provide the social services that were in such high demand at the time. What followed through the next couple of decades were a series of constitutional amendments and federal-provincial agreements enabling the central government to assume control of principal sources of revenue thus facilitating its large scale intervention in the national economy .[8]

While the Depression provided a precedent for central government intervention, the Second World War provided the institutional framework. The 'warfare state' would become the welfare state, albeit without the highly planned, centralized and

6 Ramesh Mishra, *The Welfare State in Crisis* (Sussex: Harvester Press,1984), 13-15.
7 David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1987), 222.
8 Audrey Doerr, " Overlapping Jurisdictions and Women's Issues," in *Women and the Constitution* , eds. Audrey Doerr and Micheline Carrier (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women,1981):125.

regulatory features permitted by invocation of the War Measures Act. Nevertheless, Wallace Clement contends that "World War II provided both the necessity and the constitutional means for this massive centralization of power in Ottawa."[9] The experience of the war also indicated that the state could mobilize rapidly to promote economic growth. Confidence in the ability of the state thus grew because of the high levels of economic activity and employment engineered by a government in a state of war.

Histories of the origin of the welfare state in Canada often neglect its institutional and ideational antecedents prior to the Depression. Indeed, the underpinnings of the welfare state had been developed, primarily within the voluntary sector, as early as the late nineteeth century, and certainly some welfare-state-type reforms had been implemented by governments in Europe and North America before the thirties. Jane Ursel, in her book, *Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family,* describes the social reform movement that swept Canada and other Western countries at the turn of the century, and maintains that its legacy is contained in the "new welfare ideology"- the welfare state- of the mid-twentieth century.[10] According to Ursel, both movements were buoyed by a very high degree of social consensus and both directed the attention of the state to the gap between the wage-labour system and human need.[11] Nevertheless, though a framework of legislation was put in place as a consequence of pressure exerted by the reform movement,[12] the network of welfarist programs that was implemented in the decades following the Second World War had no historical parallel. Ramesh

9 W. Clement, "Canada's Social Structure: Capital, Labour, and the State, 1930-1980," in *Modern Canada: 1930-1980s*, eds. Michael S. Cross and Gregory S. Kealy (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984), 79.

10 Ursel, *Private* 67-70.

11 *Ibid.,* 205.

12 *Ibid.,* 69.

Mishra has said that the postwar welfare state differed from previous state-managed reforms in that it, "made the process more systematic, gave it a clearer rationale, and at the same time extended the scope of state action a good deal."[13] The array of policies making up the welfare state expanded the parameters of the state to the extent that the public allocation of resources as a share of Gross National Product grew exponentially between 1945 and 1975.

Ideology of the Welfare State

The ideologies that reinforced and informed the political choice of a positive, activist state were the new ideology of universal entitlement and the ideology of national unity.[14] Although the welfare state in Canada would be precariously financed and seldomly applied universally, social programs such as family benefits and medicare were made available to all Canadians by virtue of their Canadian citizenship and regardless of economic class. Programs that rested on means-tested entitlement to welfare with the negative connotations of deserving and undeserving poor were replaced, in some cases, by universalized programs. In other cases, social welfare was set up so that the most needy were targeted for benefits while the non-poor paid the taxes necessary to support this "selective entitlement."[15]

The welfare ideologies of entitlement and universality reflected the "benevolent policy thrust"[16] of the Canadian welfare state that was a response to a powerful public consensus, articulated primarily by the provinces, the electorate and the

13 Mishra, *Welfare State in Crisis* 15.

14 Ursel, *Private* 252-253

15 *Ibid.*, ; and Margrit Eichler, *Families in Canada Today, 2nd ed.*, (Toronto: Gage, 1988).

16 *Ibid.*, 253

labour movement. The provinces in Jane Jenson's view, however, likely had the greatest role to play. Indeed, public pressure for welfare was first felt by the provinces, thus challenging Canadian nationhood from the beginning. The proximity of provincial governments to people's lives and, more importantly, the jurisdiction held or inferred constitutionally by the provinces over most areas of social welfare forced them to respond, and ultimately to bear the burden of administration and costs of welfare delivery. The dilemma was that the demand for welfare outweighed the financial resources of provincial and municipal treasuries, as in the precedent-setting case of Depression relief. While provincial governments guarded their independence and constitutional rights strenuously, in the inter-war years they nevertheless exerted constant pressure on the federal government to contribute massive financial support. The federal government was not initially enthusiastic about becoming involved in welfare but eventually recognized the political credit that could be obtained through participation. Furthermore, national standards in social welfare came to be recognized by the central government as a valuable tool for maintaining a cohesive Canadian federation. In his study of the relationship between the welfare state, income security and federalism in Canada, Keith Banting acknowledges the impact of the ideology of national unity when he states that,

> Modern Canadian politicians view income security, not so much as a means of preserving democracy, but as an instrument of cultural and political integration, as an underpinning of the stability of the federal system... Some see income security as central to the sense of community in Canada, arguing that the major federal programs are both an indicator of the strength of the Canadian community, and an instrument for its further reinforcement.[17]

The ideology of national unity was thus a major impetus in the creation of the

[17] Keith G. Banting, *The Welfare State and Canadian Federalism* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1982), 119.

welfare state in Canada. And not just in the fields of social and economic welfare. Cultural programs and institutions were also set up and were intended to complement the social welfare measures in order to further strengthen feelings of national identity. For instance, the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (better known as the Massey Commission), established in 1949, recommended that the central government broadly and actively intervene in national cultural affairs by setting up federal funding mechanisms and institutions to foster national cultural welfare.[18]

According to Paul Litt in his book, *The Muses, the Masses and the Massey Commission* , Canada's current government support system for culture, including the Canada Council, is largely the brainchild of the Massey Commission.[19] Litt attributes the cultural nationalism of the Massey Commission to a general mood of idealism and confidence about Canada that followed the Second World War and that was expressed in other formative, welfare state documents such as the Marsh Report.[20] Culture was understood by the commissioners and the Canadian cultural élite at the time to be the binding force in forging a national identity and unified country. Canada, in the words of one study prepared for the commission, possessed an "unripe state of national culture"[21] to which our geographical distance and decentralized federation contributed. The Massey Commission expressed the view, held by many to this day, that the private sector could not be relied upon to support national culture and thus government was the natural agent to defend and promote

18 Canada, Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, *Report* (Ottawa, 1951).
19 Paul Litt, *The Muses, the Masses and the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 4.
20 *Ibid.*, 17.
21 B. K. Sandwell, "Present Day Influences on Canadian Society," in *Royal Commission Studies* (Ottawa, 1951), 10.

national cultural welfare.[22]

But national unity was not only threatened by the internal tension of Canadian federalism or a disinterested business sector. The Massey Commission proposed a strategy of state-sponsored cultural development in large part because it heeded the view that Canada was vulnerable to American cultural influence and the force of American exports of mass popular culture, in particular.[23]

The importance of the national unity argument marked the ideological debate over the welfare state, dominating such alternate themes as equality between classes. There was a public debate in Canada concerning justice and equality and the role of the welfare state in the development of both but, Jane Jenson contends, the central struggle of the welfare state from its early days to the present has been over the equality of provinces in relation to eachother and in relation to the federal government. Jenson argues that the Canadian welfare state was never set up to resolve class conflict, as in some European countries, but instead contained as its rationale the resolution of the crisis of federalism that the Depression had precipitated.[24] The terrain of struggle of the welfare state in Canada has thus not been the legislative institutions where parties on the left and right hammered out a political compromise. Instead, political negotiation of the welfare state in Canada has taken place in the bureaucracy of government, such as royal commissions, and the federal/provincial negotiating table. The national shared-cost programs instituted in areas of provincial jurisdiction such as health and social services, are products of the federal/provincial negotiation of the Canadian welfare state.

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22 Litt, *The Muses*, 105-106.
23 Litt, *The Muses*, 3.
24 Jenson, *Different But Not Exceptional*, 82.

In the postwar era of the welfare state, the Canadian state acquired its legitimacy by supporting the ideologies of entitlement and national unity. Unlike other welfare states, the Canadian welfare state cast the issues of equality and entitlement into issues of national unity and regional and/or provincial equality.

Economic Logic of the Welfare State

Notwithstanding the profound effects of depression and war on the collective psyche of western liberal democracies, it is unlikely that the ideology and politics of the time would have developed and been sustained in the direction of the welfare state had it not been for the economic imperative of postwar reconstruction and, ultimately, the enormous growth and prosperity that erupted in these economies with reconstruction. Indeed, a decisive factor motivating the establishment of the welfare state was this production of wealth that the state itself came to facilitate and from which it benefited. In basic terms this affluence supported investment, primarily through taxation, in the social security safety net. As Jane Ursel has said, the ability of the state to redistribute wealth "was rooted in the generation and circulation of enormous amounts of capital in the twenty years following the war..."[25]

Like other governments elsewhere in the west, the federal government in Canada did implement a welfare state program of fiscal and monetary policy intended to assist economic growth and stability. Capitalism's chronic lapses enjoined the state and its new welfare-state tools to monitor and manipulate the economy and distribute its resources in a way that would safeguard against the vicissitudes of the business cycle. Patricia Marchak explains at length how the experience of the Great

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[25] Ursel, *Private* 231

Depression provoked a disenchantment with the longstanding theory that unfettered markets were the most fair and effective mechanism of resource allocation.[26] The postwar governments would ensure that the overproduction and underconsumption that marked the Depression would not happen again.

The state's rationale for its new welfare role was the theory and practice of Keynesianism. Keynesianism provided the blueprint for jump-starting the postwar economy. The Keynesian welfare state assumed responsibility for maintaining high employment and ensuring economic expansion of the national economy without seriously disrupting the prevailing processes of capitalism. (Goldthorpe 1987) Indeed, according to David Wolfe, compared with some of its European counterparts, Keynesianism as it was applied in Canada was not implemented to modify in any comprehensive way the direction of economic activity.[27] The goal of Keynesian intervention was to stabilize a norm of consumption that would stabilize the demand for commodities.[28] The ideological and political justifications for issuing transfer payments to individuals and making massive expenditures on education and health were discussed earlier. The economic justification for issuing transfer payments directly and indirectly, however, was to fulfill the demand management strategy of stimulating consumption and demand.[29] Securing consumer buying power ensured that demand was maintained at levels sufficient to absorb the steady growth of capitalist output that was expected to continue.[30]

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26 Patricia Marchak, *The Integrated Circus* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

27 D. Wolfe, "The Canadian State in Comparative Perspective," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 26, 1 (Feb. 1989), p. 109.

28 *Ibid*., p.111.

29 Philip Armstrong, Andrew Glyn and John Harrison, *Capitalism Since 1945* (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 126-127.

30 David Harvey *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

Keynesian demand management found a partner in the Fordist régime of capital accumulation that was becoming entrenched in workplaces in the postwar period. Fordism is a model of industrialization and social organization epitomized in the postwar assembly-line factory. The social democratic version of Keynesianism was at odds in important ways with the controlling and compromising of labour integral to Fordism.[31] Like Keynesianism, a crucial component of the Fordist régime was high demand for product: mass consumption was essential to mass production. Thus, for Fordism, as for Keynesianism, maintaining stable demand conditions was necessary. One of the ways stable demand could be ensured and Fordism perpetuated was through the state. The interventionist orientation assumed by the state in peacetime after 1945 enabled the deployment of Fordism.[32]

David Wolfe argues that, in the Canadian context, the state and Fordist arrangements were indispensable to one another. The Keynesian welfare state and the Fordist mode of organizing production together made up a broad accumulation strategy in Canada.[33] Wolfe and others stress, however, that the strategy adopted by Canada was very different politically and economically from the European version.[34] The notable differences include: the minimum to moderate level of state involvement in the private sector; the absence of neocorporatist structures; the weakness of labour mobilization at the level of party politics; a high level of foreign control of the Canadian economy restricting the preponderance of the state; and a continentalist strategy of exporting and investing.

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31 Harvey, *Postmodernity* 127.

32 *Ibid.*, 135.

33 David Wolfe, "The Canadian State in Comparative Perspective," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 26, 1 (February 1989):111.

34 Jenson, *Different But Not Exceptional*.

The phenomenal growth of the postwar boom and the régime of Keynesianism and Fordism that facilitated it were ultimately dependent on, in David Harvey's words, "a series of compromises and repositionings on the part of the major actors in the capitalist development process."[35] Accompanying the positive-state discourse of the time was the evolution of an economic consensus that was composed of labour, business and the nation state. It has been argued that the cohesiveness of this economic consensus in western countries depended on the strength of working class mobilization.[36] In Canada, for a variety of reasons, this mobilization was relatively weak. The state's accomodation of working class interests was therefore limited. Nevertheless, Canada did follow a similar pattern of economic consensus: the major actors in the development process did, at least implicitly, strike a real compromise in the form of the welfare state that heralded the longest period of sustained economic growth in history.

At the time, in Canada, the welfare state option was perhaps the only one that could address the demands of all sides.[37] Years of labour unrest threatened the industrial process and there was widespread concern that the reconstruction of the economy after the war would be stalled. The Liberal government then in power recognized this, as had the Conservative Prime Minister, R.B. Bennett in the 1930s. Bennett's reportedly anti-labour government was moved to propose a package of welfare state reforms, which included unemployment insurance, out of the desire to pacify worker militancy.[38] Labour unrest and the growing popularity of the CCF also provided the reasons for the government of Mackenzie King to follow through on welfare state reform. The welfare state solution, around which the consensus lay,

35 Harvey, *Postmodernity* 132.
36 Wolfe, *Canadian State* .
37 Ursel, *Private*, p. 208.
38 Finkel, *Origins*.

enabled the owners of production to maintain control over ownership and investment decisions while in return, unionized workers acquired certain rights and material benefits.[39] Labour had fought for several decades to achieve these concessions. [40] The state also had something to gain from a mixed economy of some government intervention interacting with market forces. Although social program development was slow and reluctant,[41] the electoral pressure that had built up in favour of an activist state made the welfare-state option the only politically feasible one.[42]

Breakdown of the Welfare State Logic

It was with the economic downturn of the world economy in the mid-1970s that the political, ideological and economic logic of the welfare state began to break down. The Keynesian formula declined in its effectiveness and with it, the economic and social consensus that supported it became increasingly strained.[43] Stagflation, where recession, high unemployment and inflation combine to trouble the economy, eluded Keynesian solutions. (Mishra 1984; Wolfe 1984) The state failed to adequately manage the mixed economy thus inviting a collapse in public confidence. Moreover, the static or shrinking economic base that this downturn created meant that the government had difficulty financing existing and new demands on its resource base, thus igniting greater public discontent.

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39 P. Armstrong, et. al. *Capitalism Since 1945* ,136, 150, 305.

40 George Ross and Jane Jenson, "Post-War Class Struggle and the Crisis of Left Politics," in *The Socialist Register*, eds R. Miliband, J. Saville, M. Liebman and L. Panitch (London: The Merlin Press, 1986).

41 Jeffrey Patterson, "Winding Down Social Spending: Social Spending Restraint in Ontario in the 1970s," in *The Benevolent State*, eds. Allan Moscovitch and Jim Albert (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987), 242.

42 Ursel, *Private* 208.

43 John H. Goldthorpe, "Problems of Political Economy After the Postwar Period," in *Changing Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Charles Maier (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 365.

The decline in growth that had begun in the 1960s and that the recession of the mid-1970s bluntly exposed pressured the state to increasingly focus its attention exclusively on the one-sided concerns of business and the requirements of capital accumulation.[44] This reorientation on the part of the state marked a shift in the delicate balance of the postwar consensus between labour and business.[45] With the advent of stagflation and the loss of faith in Keynesian methods of state management, the state embarked on a patchwork of fiscal and monetary policies that had the ultimate effect of inviting the world economy in and forcing the domestic economy, the working and non-working population, all levels of business and government, to adapt. (Wolfe 1977; 1984)

By the 1970s, the world economy had become a truly global marketplace. Since the Second World War, barriers to trade had been progressively lowered by national governments mostly under the auspices of international organizations and agreements such as the GATT. This had the effect of opening up new avenues for capital to avert the constraints of domestic markets and exploit opportunities found elsewhere.[46] International trade was stepped up and the world economy was becoming increasingly trade-oriented. Although the postwar welfare state compromise did very little to restrict the mobility of capital, domestic economies in this period were buoyant and relatively secure locations for investment thus deterring the movement of capital. From the mid-1970s, however, capital was increasingly looking beyond its domestic borders for alternative sites, capitalizing on the increasingly open global economy, as national economies were unable to

44 David Wolfe, "The Rise and Demise of the Keynesian Era in Canada: Economic Policy, 1930-1982," in *Modern Canada: 1930-1980s*, eds. Michael S. Cross and Gregory S. Kealey (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984), 75.
45 *Ibid.*, 75.
46 Miles Kahler, "The Survival of the State in European International Relations," in *Changing Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Charles Maier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987),294.

recapture the prosperity they had previously known. Innovations in communications and transportation technology were enabling productive and investment capital to be less rooted, more mobile. The process of accumulation, once within the grasp of the welfare state, had become more unstable and less predictable.[47] Consequently, the political struggle between labour and capital within each national economy was becoming increasingly conditioned by global restructuring of the international economy. The internationalization of production meant that labour markets both domestically and internationally were being overhauled. In situations where capital did not flee to more cost-efficient jurisdictions taking jobs with it, labour suffered at the hands of technological changes that transformed the domestic workplace.

In Canada, and the west generally, these technological advances provoked the decline in steel-age industries and a growth in the lower cost service sector. Rianne Mahon has described the dismantling of Fordism in the traditional core industries in Canada, such as steel and automotive.[48] As their share of the economy was shrinking and mass production was thus being threatened, labour's bargaining power in these industries was being undercut. It therefore became difficult for labour to resist capital's demands for concessions on wages and rules coordinating the workplace. Mass consumption among these "core workers," therefore, was being progressively eroded.[49]

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47 Daniel Drache and Meric S. Gertler, "The World Economy and the Nation-State: The New International Order," in *The New Era of Global Competition: State Policy and Market Power*, eds. D. Drache and M.S. Gertler (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 7.
48 Rianne Mahon "Post-Fordism: Some Issues for Labour," in *The New Era of Global Competition: State Policy and Market Power*, eds. D. Drache and M.S. Gertler (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).
49 *Ibid.*, 322.

Because of the possibility of rapid shifts of capital, domestic labour pools are now summoned to be more flexible.[50] That is, more than ever, as capital divests or invests as it becomes more sensitive to global fluctuations, labour is being required to accept that its security and welfare is less certain than it was in the postwar Keynesian period.[51]

Even at the peak of the welfare state, government commitment to labour in Canada was always ambivalent and piecemeal. Referring to the era in industrial relations since the 1970s, Daniel Drache states that, "The dramatic changes in compensation and other benefits can be traced to the defects of the collective bargaining system in Canada."[52] In spite of the important role collective bargaining had in creating a middle-class of consumers among workers in Canada, the collective bargaining system was relatively weak. The trilateral arrangements that operated at the national level in some European welfare states, where labour's bargaining power was more firmly institutionalized, were never adopted in Canada. (Drache 1991; Bakker 1991; Myles 1991) It has thus been easier for the state in Canada to condone business choices to "discipline the workforce and constrain wage movements...",[53] effectively weakening labour.

The global crisis of the mid-70s triggered an unravelling of the economic logic that supported the welfare state compromise and uncovered the development of a new economic rationale to which the state would adjust. As the economic logic of the

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[50] Daniel Drache, "The Systemic Search for Flexibility: National Competitiveness and New Work Relations," in *The New Era of Global Competition*, eds. D. Drache and M.S. Gertler (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 249.

[51] *Ibid.*, 251.

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] D. Drache and M.S. Gertler, "The World Economy and the Nation-State," in *The New Era of Global Competition*, eds. D. Drache and M. S. Gertler (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 9.

welfare state compromise became increasingly irrelevant so did the political logic to which it was closely tied. The state found itself in a fiscal crisis that undermined its political raison d'etre. A disjuncture had developed between state revenue and demands on state resources which meant that the state could not fulfill all the social welfare promises that had become a fixture of political rhetoric and activity since the Second World War.

The state's legitimacy has not only been weakened by a troubling fiscal situation, but its autonomy has also been challenged. The globalisation of the domestic economy that the state itself invited has in turn eroded the state's own decision-making powers. In Canada, nationalists have always warned of American economic and cultural imperialism, but in the current context of the Free Trade Agreement and the North American Free Trade Agreement the concern about Canadian autonomy has become particularly acute.[54] In the context of globalisation, the question of whether the Canadian state can hold on to its democratic authority to direct the economy in such a way that improves the lives of Canadians is a compelling one.[55]

If globalisation is the external foe of the welfare state, the overloaded-state hypothesis posits an internally motivated threat to the welfare state. (Held 1987; 1991) The higher standard of living that the economic boom of the postwar period precipitated resulted in an increase in expectations and aspirations. The values of the burgeoning consumer society obviously had a role in generating these expectations.[56] But the welfare state too had cultivated the image and amassed the

54 see Sylvia B. Bashevkin, *True Patriot Love: The Politics of Canadian Nationalism* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991).

55 David Wolfe, "Technology and Trade: Finding the Right Mix," in *Getting on Track: Social Democratic Strategies for Ontario*, ed. Daniel Drache (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 18.

56 Harvey, *Postmodernity.*

revenue of the 'great provider' that became the basis of public demand and of its legitimacy. The welfare role of the state translated into increasing pressure on government on the part of civil society to deliver on its promises of higher wages, job protection, and low inflation as well as the host of guarantees the state made with the advent of the new social movements of the 1960s. Politicians and parties peddled these promises in order to be elected thus reinforcing the expectations of the electorate.[57] They developed "strategies of appeasement" leading to an expansion of state bureaucracies that, paradoxically, become less and less responsive to citizen's demands and more and more out of control fiscally-speaking.[58] The welfare state had become 'overloaded' with promises it could not keep and expectations it could not fulfill. Since the fiscal crisis of the 1970s state actors have increasingly recognized the political disadvantage to building up the state as the answer to all society's ills. The positive-state climate of the postwar era and the social consensus that had supported it had deteriorated with the loss of faith in the ability of civil servants and politicians to deliver solutions through public policy. The state found itself in a political dilemma when, with too few tools and stagnating revenue, demands on its resources were greater than ever.

The political and fiscal crisis of the welfare state accelerated the pressure put on the state by business interests and paved the way for the new right dogma. The large state that was permitted to develop with the consolidation of the postwar consensus was now perceived by some as hampering productivity and competitiveness and restricting individual liberty.[59] Whereas the enhancement of the welfare state initially satisfied business as it provided industry with a relatively non-militant,

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[57] David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 232.
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] *Ibid.*, 233.

educated and available pool of labour, welfare provisions directed at "special interests" would now be seen as a drag on the domestic marketplace as it confronted ever-increasing global challenges. Furthermore, the welfare state's ideological support of universal entitlements also came under increasing attack. Attacks ranged from the claim that universality was putting scarce revenue to inefficient use by transfering benefits to the middle class to the claim that the system promoted cheating and slothfulness in its primary users, the poor.

Around the same time that the state was being pressured to diminish and/or reevaluate its role, a contradictory message was pressuring it to rethink and expand its ideology of entitlement. Moreover, the goal of national unity was under strain thus also forcing a different reading of entitlement. In the late 1960s and 1970s the welfare state was undergoing a crisis of legitimation that challenged the scope of entitlement that had prevailed up to this point. A rigorous questioning of the legitimacy of the dominant actors who had made up the balance of forces of the welfare state and had benefited from it was underway. The new social movements of the 1960s were the source of this legitimation crisis as they embodied identities different from the ones the postwar welfare state had been built around. In Warren Magnusson's and Rob Walker's words, these social movements sought to "de-centre" the state: divert the state's attention from the "bourgeois categories" of capital, also bought into by organized labour, and spread its focus to encompass gender, ethnic and linguistic identities.[60] The 'bogeyman' for the women's movement, for example, was less capital than it was patriarchy. One component of the legitimation crisis of the welfare state was the unearthing of the patriarchy

60 Warren Magnusson and Rob Walker, "De-centring the State," *Studies in Political Economy* 26 (Summer 1988).

inherent in the relations of production the welfare state itself had facilitated.[61]

The new social movements demanded that the state expand its basis of legitimacy by reconstructing the mechanisms of democracy, representation and empowerment. The welfare state came to be viewed as unresponsive and as failing to reflect the diversity of Canadian society. The rise of the welfare state in the postwar period created needs and entitlements that focussed grievances on the state itself.[62] The welfare state was the self-defined target of protest. The legitimation of the state was dependent on its ability to deliver services and to spread the benefits and losses of the economy. The social movement organizations that have been politically active since the 1960s and 1970s exploited the state's need for legitimacy in order to have its goals recognized and achieved. The welfare state responded to the crisis of legitimacy by establishing links between it and the dominant social movements of the time; links that effectively came to embody the welfare state itself. Indeed, the popular movements of the 1960s were a critical force in the expansion of the welfare state that we know today.[63] The crisis of legitimacy exploded the categories of the postwar welfare state and heralded a period of reconstruction of the welfare state.

Breakdown: Impasse or New Model?

In Canada, as elsewhere in the west, the crisis of the welfare state is a subject under considerable scrutiny. The welfare state paradigm is under attack: challenged to reconstitute itself on a more equitable basis while also challenged to dismantle itself. Whether we now find ourselves in an ideological time warp or moving toward a

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[61] Ursel, *Private* 283.

[62] Centre for Policy and Program Assessment, "Public Interest Groups in the Policy Process" (Ottawa: School of Public Administration, Carleton University, 1990), 12.

[63] Francis Fox Piven, "Ideology and the State: Women, Power and the Welfare State," in *Women, the State and Welfare*, ed. Linda Gordon (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 251.

"different kind of state,"[64] as the title of a recently published text asks, is hard to ascertain. As the different perspectives of John Myles and David Wolfe imply, there is no consensus. John Myles has challenged the assumption that the welfare state is actually in decline as a consequence of the recomposition of its economic, ideological and political logic. (Myles 1988) Myles contends that the welfare state and the social policy paradigm that informed it in the thirty years following the war are at an impasse. What we need, Myles insists, is a new welfare state régime that reflects the new régime of accumulation. David Wolfe, however, describes the welfare state as a historically-specific entity with a particular institutional configuration that is synonomous with the postwar consensus. (Wolfe 1992; Wolfe 1992) Though Wolfe would not disagree with Myles' contention that new directions in social policy must be explored and support for the active intervention of the state in improving the lives of Canadians maintained, it is not his view that the future configuration of the state will reflect the Keynesian welfare state. New relationships and institutional configurations are being forged, according to this post-welfare, post-Fordist point of view.

At this stage, then, there are differences of opinion as to the degree to which the welfare state is actually being dismantled. What is certain, however, is that the earlier consensus is being challenged which in turn calls for a repositioning of social and political actors.

64 Gregory Albo, David Langille and Leo Panitch, eds., *A Different Kind of State? Popular Power and Democratic Administration* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Chapter Two

The Relationship of the Women's Movement to the Canadian Welfare State

Integration into 'Normal Politics'

The crisis of the welfare state is a dilemma for those public interest groups and social movement organizations that have developed a close relationship to the state since the 1960s. Their future together was never guaranteed but is now incontrovertibly uncertain. The welfare state's need for legitimacy led it into providing opportunities after the 1960s for participation in the policy-making process to those newly formed social movement groups that had been questioning its democratic representativeness and responsiveness. Since this time, and only with sustained pressure, the welfare state in Canada has financially supported and cultivated relationships with many of the dominant social movement organizations, such as women's groups and ethnic and minority language groups.[1] In the name of creating a level playing field among interest groups and promoting citizenship in general, the state opened itself up to the demands of these groups thus altering and expanding the grounds of consensus around the welfare state.[2] Comparative studies have shown that since the 1960s public interest groups in Canada have had a closer relationship to federal state agencies than is the case in the United States or Europe.[3] The relationship of these groups to the Canadian state

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1 Centre for Policy and Program Assessment, *Public Interest Groups*, 12.

2 Susan D. Phillips, "How Ottawa Blends: Shifting Government Relationships with Interest Groups," in *How Ottawa Spends: The Politics of Fragmentation, 1991-1992*, ed. Frances Abele (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991),184.

3 Centre, *Public Interest Groups*, 24.

has thus had a significant impact on their direction and definition, and has influenced the character of the state itself. These organizations have a stake in the Canadian welfare state and the legitimacy of the state has come to relate in part to its support of the objectives of social movement organizations.

As one of the dominant social movements in Canada, the women's movement reemerged in a 'second wave' in the 1960s and has since been nurtured by the state. Since the 1970s, the Canadian welfare state has engaged in strong financing of the women's movement. In fact, a significant and exceptional characteristic of the development of the welfare state in Canada is this support for the women's movement and its integration into the "normal politics" of the state.[4] The legitimation process of the welfare state has been tied to its support of the women's movement. While financing is one important feature of this support, another is the creation of the 'women's state:' representative bodies within government such as the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW), Status of Women Canada and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, established with the intention of placing and maintaining women's issues on the agendas of federal decision-makers.

The establishment of the women's state, the importance of funding in the relations between women's groups and the state and the placing of women's issues on the state agenda are the outcome of intense lobbying on the part of national women's groups whose lobbying activity has been directed at the federal government. Indeed, the women's movement in Canada has been highly statist in its orientation and markedly supportive of the welfare state, in particular, as a means of achieving

[4] Centre, *Public Interest Groups*, 56.

its goals. Examinations of the historical development of the Canadian women's movement have led feminist scholars to conclude that the movement in Canada clearly appears to have adopted as its central political position, participation with the welfare state.[5]

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW), established in 1967, represents the watershed moment of convergence between the women's movement and the welfare state in Canada. The second wave of the 1960s which culminated in the RCSW represents a continuation of earlier feminist activity. Feminist activities never ceased after enfranchisement and many of the original organizations such as the YWCA still exist today. Nevertheless, the intervening years witnessed few successes, little publicity and a dearth of large scale organizing.[6] With the exception of the fight to extend the voting franchise to women in Quebec in the 1930s, Veronica Strong-Boag contends that no issue in the interwar years provoked the outrage or the political activity among women of the early suffrage movement.[7] By the 1960s, however, the momentum of the women's movement was picked up with the appearance of new groups, such as student and racial minority groups, expressing grievances to which many women could relate.[8] In spite of widespread sexism at the time, women's demands could not be ignored because of the centrality

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5 Jacinthe Michaud, "The Welfare State and the Problem of Counter-Hegemonic Responses within the Women's Movement," in *Organizing Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice*, ed. William K. Carroll (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1992), 212; and Alicia Shreader, "The State-Funded Women's Movement: A Case of Two Political Agendas," in *Community Organization and the Canadian State*, eds. Roxana Ng, Gillian Walker and Jacob Muller (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1990): 165-183.

6 Naomi Black, "The Canadian Women's Movement: the Second Wave," in *Changing Patterns: Women in Canada*, eds. Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code and Lindsay Dorney (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 82.

7Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939.* Markham: Penguin Books, 1988, 190.

8 *Ibid.*, 82.

of issues of discrimination and inequality in the political mainstream.[9] The second wave unleashed a struggle to get women's issues on the political agenda. A direct consequence of this struggle and an early and significant example of the state taking women's issues seriously was the establishment of the RCSW.

The RCSW enhanced the visibility of women's issues and it provided a blueprint, albeit one with limitations, for change. The mandate of the welfare state was being challenged at this time and the RCSW*Report* motivated the women's movement in its own challenge of the status quo. Indeed, the momentum the RCSW provided immediately led to the establishment of several new non-governmental women's organizations such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the National Association of Women and the Law and national networks of groups fighting for abortion rights, child care and rape crisis centres- all established with the express purpose of pressuring the state to act to improve women's lives.[10]

The RCSW reflects what Sue Findlay has called the "equal opportunity framework" that dominated the state's response to women's issues at this time.[11] Monique Bégin has observed that the liberal feminist spirit and substance of the Royal Commission explains why many of its recommendations were eventually implemented.[12] Those recommendations involving reforms to practices, procedures and laws that discriminated against women made up the great majority of the Report's recommendations and were the most swiftly adopted and carried

9 Sue Findlay, "Facing the State: The Politics of the Women's Movement Reconsidered," in *Feminism and Political Economy: Women's Work, Women's Struggles*, eds. Heather Jon Maroney and Meg Luxton (Toronto: Methuen, 1987), 34.

10 Lorenne M. G. Clark, "Reminiscences and Reflections on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada," (conference paper), 11.

11 Findlay, *Facing the State*, 34-35.

12 Monique Bégin, "Do State Initiatives Make a Difference?" (conference paper), 4.

out.[13] On the other hand, those recommendations that went beyond liberal feminism calling for more radical changes, have yet to be acted upon. Nationalized day care and safe and equitable access to abortion are two examples of issues posing more deep-rooted challenges to the system.[14] Several feminist scholars have also maintained that the emphasis in the RCSW Report on enhancing equal opportunity and equal rights for women can help to explain why it overlooked issues such as violence against women, solutions to which do not easily lend themselves to a strictly liberal feminist understanding of women's lives.[15]

In the two decades following the RCSW Report the relationship in Canada between the women's movement and the welfare state was intensified and institutionalized. Through the 'femocracy' of the women's state, the women's movement and the state came to share a "ritualized relationship."[16] Although the "unequal structure of representation"[17] of the Canadian public policy process had relegated women's issues and the women's state to a status of secondary importance, by the 1980s some commitment to equality was institutionalized.[18]

Defining the Prerogatives of the State

The cooperation reflected in the RCSW between the state and the women's movement, the development of the women's state and the encouragement of the

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[13] Maureen O'Neil and Sharon Sutherland, "The Machinery of Women's Policy: Implementing the RCSW," (conference paper), 12.

[14] Bégin, *Initiatives*, 4.

[15] Clark, *Reminiscences*, 10.

[16] Findlay, *Facing the State*, 47.

[17] Rianne Mahon, "Canadian Public Policy: the Unequal Structure of Representation," in *The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power*, ed. Leo Panitch (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977),165-198.

[18] Sue Findlay, "Feminist Struggles with the Canadian State," *Resources for Feminist Research* 17, 3, (1988): 7.

women's movement the RCSW precipitated, are the culmination of a history of attempts made by the women's movement to define the responsibilities of society and of the state- a history that is often overlooked by conventional accounts. Indeed, the women reformers and first wave feminists of the social reform movement of the late nineteenth century were instrumental in building the institutions and ideological framework that would later form the basis of the welfare state. Industrialization, urbanization and immigration, they argued, were disrupting society and undermining the stability of the most important social institution: the family.[19] Women felt particularly suited to comment and act on social problems affecting the family because, in their roles as daughters, wives, mothers and grandmothers, they were the caretakers of society. The volunteer social reform organizations they created and contributed to enabled them to transfer the values of the home to the community. In so doing they could realize their social, political and educational aspirations without compromising their domestic role. In fact, the Canadian women's suffrage campaign at the end of the nineteenth century emerged out of the women's organizations that had been created with the benefit of the community in mind, not with the goal of the personal empowerment of women.[20] The vote, it was generally argued, would give women the political leverage to pressure government in the direction they saw fit. Only secondarily were suffrage organizations established with the singular intention of securing women's right to vote.[21] They sought to realize their vision of a more caring and less chaotic society by providing services to women and children, who they believed were most affected by the poor working conditions, unemployment and poverty

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19 Caroline Andrew, "Women and the Welfare State," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* XVII, 4 (December 1984), 671.

20 Jane Errington, "Pioneers and Suffragists," in *Changing Patterns: Women in Canada*, eds. Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code and Lindsay Dorney (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 70-71.

21 Canada, Royal Commission on the Status of Women, *Report* (Ottawa, 1970).

that was endemic at the time.[22] Women were the foot soldiers in charitable organizations managed by men and formed as extensions of male-dominated institutions such as the church.[23] But women were also the frontline providers and managers of organizations of their own creation addressing areas of need they themselves had identified. Women took active responsibility for vast domains of activity that the official institutions of the state and the church were either not ready to assume or were incapable of assuming. Indeed, women's social reform work was a response to the absence or ineffectiveness of services, as identified by women.

In the period preceding the establishment of the welfare state then, women were taking an active role in defining its prerogatives. The first wave women's movement provided the language for an interpretation of "welfare state" that would later be adopted by the second wave of the women's movement in Canada. Thelma McCormack has discussed this women's interpretation. McCormack has written that there are two welfare state ideologies contained within the welfare state and that they are based on men's and women's differing conceptions of the proper role of government in society. McCormack attributes the 'welfare state' to a male construct. In McCormack's words, the welfare state is:

> a set of administrative and economic measures, a form of crisis management that would eventually become unnecessary as a new equilibrium was achieved... a small number of intractable case needs might persist but with long-term economic growth and mechanisms to "fine-tune" the economy there would be a more stable economy and a healthier society with minimal intervention by the state.[24]

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22 Errington, *Pioneers*.

23 Wendy Michinson, "Early Women's Organizations and Social Reform: Prelude to the Welfare State," in *The Benevolent State*, eds. A. Moscovitch and J. Albert (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987).

24 Thelma McCormack, "Politics and the Hidden Injuries of Gender," *The CRIAW Papers, 28* (Ottawa: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 1991), 39.

The welfare state in this view possesses a temporary adjustment role, relying mostly on the market to provide 'welfare' and the state, only secondarily, to step in in the worst case scenarios of individual misfortune and market failure.

The other welfare state, the "welfare society," reflects the experience of women as "cradle-to-grave" caregivers and "carriers of culture."[25] The welfare society has concerns that overlap with the welfare state but, again in Thelma McCormack's words, the welfare society goes

> beyond assisting hardship... and the principle of entitlement... to include access to cultural development and the conversion of cultural development- the arts, recreational facilities- from an élite privilege to a publicly supported and publicly accessible community resource.[26]

The state, in the welfare society understanding, has a more positive and systematic function than the welfare state notion allows. Politics and the state in the welfare society are not rigidly separated from civil society and the market but, like culture, are manifestations of community. As British feminist Kathleen B. Jones has written, the welfare society challenges the "inadequacy and partiality of traditional conceptions of the political community as an instrumental alliance" and reflects the sense found in women's experience of continuity between people, the natural world and social institutions.[27]

Both of these welfare-state notions have a history within the Canadian welfare state. McCormack credits the women's movement for placing welfare society issues on the welfare state agenda. The early women reformers exposed the special plight of

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25 *Ibid.*, 37.
26 *Ibid.*, 41.
27 Kathleen B. Jones, "Towards the Revision of Politics," in *The Political Interests of Gender*, eds. Kathleen B. Jones and Anna G. Jonasdottir (London: Sage, 1988), 24.

women and augmented the 'women's sphere' and the sphere of culture to a level of political importance.[28] Societal and cultural maintenance would not be a temporary endeavour vulnerable to economic fluctuations. Government initiatives in the arts, education and social security would collectively reflect the state acting to preserve a permanent web of community. The contemporary women's movement would take up the articulation of a welfare society point of view, pressure for its implementation and reshape it to suit contemporary times- a development that will be discussed later, in chapter three.

The early women's movement can be seen, then, as co-founder of the postwar welfare state. Nevertheless, women's relationship to the postwar welfare state has been complex and varied and, to say the least, the welfare state itself has fallen short of embodying the values of the welfare society. Also neglected in standard historical accounts of the welfare state is the extensive and particular way the lives of Canadian women have been affected and implicated by the welfare state. Not only were women arguably founders, but women have also been clients and employees of the welfare state.

The 'Mixed Blessing' of the Welfare State for Women

The first part of this paper discussed the history of the welfare state as the history of the regulation of production on an unprecedented scale. The history of the welfare state also includes, however, a shift in the site of the regulation of reproduction, from the household to the state. (Ursel 1992) Jane Ursel defines reproduction as "the production of human life which involves three processes: procreation, socialization and daily maintenance."[29] This definition of reproduction goes

28 *Ibid.*, 14.
29 Ursel, *Private* 5.

beyond the narrow conventional one of procreation to include the everyday work of childrearing and caretaking. With the welfare state, governments assumed responsibilites that regulated this caretaking, previously within the purview of the family and the church.[30] With this extension of the site of caregiving to the public sector, women continued to be the primary caregivers in the home as well as in the state, as this work also became the work of the state.[31] The governmentalization of women's work that had previously been done exclusively in the home and voluntarily in the community, benefited women as it increased their possibilities for paid employment and personal development. Women entered jobs in the public sector as both professional service providers- nurses, social workers, teachers- and clerical, secretarial and mid-level management functionnaries in the newly formed welfare state ministries.[32]

In spite of women's major role as workers in the welfare state, their power to direct policy has actually been very limited.[33] In Caroline Andrew's words, women "are the executants and not the deciders" of the welfare state.[34] Though federal programs of employment equity and affirmative action may ultimately increase the presence of women in the senior bureaucracy, currently women are largely absent from the ranks of civil servants who make and decide policy. Furthermore, women's elected legislative participation remains remarkably low. The statistics for the whole country, in ministries and departments that are closely linked to welfare state activities, reveal the same pattern: women continue to be concentrated in the

30 Andrew, *Women and the Welfare State* 667.
31 see Carol T. Baines, "The Professions and an Ethic of Care," in *Women's Caring: Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare*, eds. Baines, Evans and Neysmith (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 36-72.
32 Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, *Theorizing Women's Work* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1990), 116.
33 Andrew, *Women and the Welfare State* 678.
34 *Ibid.*, 676.

lowest paid occupations and have not been readily integrated into management.[35] Even those women who were hired to top management spots in the "women's state" of bureaus and departments created to integrate women's issues into the policy process in the wake of the RCSW, have held little power in relation to the Department of Finance, for instance, which is male-dominated.[36]

In this movement of the regulation of reproduction from the private realm to the public sector the state has amassed a large client group of women. In fact, women are the primary recipients of social welfare, a reality that has become increasingly recognized as women's poverty is more accurately understood and quantified. (Andrew 1984; Evans 1991) Moreover, the nature of women's social welfare need is tied to women's caretaking role. Indeed, although women constitute the majority of state clients, "the services they seek are frequently required on behalf of children, husbands and other relatives"- the people for whom women provide care.[37] Pat and Hugh Armstrong explain that within the welfare state there is a redistribution of resources that takes place from the employed to the unemployed, from the young to the old, and from those without children to those with children at home.[38] Since women, they argue, "are the majority of those without paid employment, of the old, and of those with responsibility for young children, the redistribution tends to flow from men to women."[39]

In spite of the preponderance of women as clients in several program areas, feminist

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35 *Ibid.*, and Armstrong and Armstrong, *Theorizing*, 117.

36 Findlay, *Feminist Struggles* , 8.

37 Carol Baines, Patricia Evans and Patricia Neysmith,"Caring: Its Impact on the Lives of Women," in *Women's Caring* , eds. C. Baines, P. Evans and P. Neysmith (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 24.

38 Armstrong and Armstrong, *Theorizing*, 127.

39 *Ibid.*, 127.

analysis of Canadian social welfare policy has found that welfare state programs have been a mixed blessing for women. The welfare state has provided women with some protection from the variability of the marketplace and reduced women's financial dependence on men. Nevertheless, welfare transfers have been inadequate in Canada, keeping many women at a financial disadvantage. Furthermore, welfare state policies intended to help women have routinely been conceived less as policies reflecting the reality of women's lives than as policies reflecting a patriarchal or paternal ideology of women and a bias in favour of nuclear families. (Eichler 1983; 1988; Andrew 1984; Armstrong and Armstrong 1990; Evans 1991) Social assistance programs have been shaped by a male breadwinner/female dependent homemaker model of the family and thus have generally not been available to a single mother who lives with a man. (Eichler 1983; 1988; Evans 1991) Furthermore, welfare state programs have not been devised to help single mothers overcome obstacles to employment.[40] The original model around which welfare state policies were constructed assumes that a family exists to care for persons in need. As a consequence, "services designed to replace or supplement this care are minimal, stigmatizing to the care recipient, and rationed according to the availability of female kin."[41] The extent to which women's caring in the home is taken for granted is graphically illuminated by the absence of a comprehensive childcare program in Canada.

The shift in the site of the regulation of reproduction from the private sphere to the state that the welfare state heralded is a shift in the site of the **control** of reproduction- a shift from what Jane Ursel has referred to as "familial patriarchy" to

40 Patricia Evans, "The Sexual Division of Property: The Consequences of Gendered Caring," in *Women's Caring*, eds. C. Baines, P. Evans and P. Neysmith (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991),185- 187.

41 Carol Baines, et al., "Caring: Its Impact on the Lives of Women," in *Women's Caring*, p. 24.

"social patriarchy."[42] In other words, in spite of the benefits to women, the welfare state does not diminish the patriarchal control of women's bodies but enables control of women's reproduction and labour in ways that ultimately benefit the patriarchal status quo. Theoretically, the welfare state was set up to enhance citizenship and reduce risks for the working population. Women's work has never been taken seriously in economic terms by the state[43] and continues to be marginalized in the labour market, with the recent exception of the requirements of pay equity and employment equity. Furthermore, because of their exclusion from the formal public arena, women have not historically fit into the conventional mold of citizen. (Pateman 1988; Clark 1992)

Not until the 1960s was the "social patriarchy" of the welfare state first identified and challenged in a concerted manner. With the advent of the second wave of the Canadian women's movement in the 1960s, analyses of women's relationships with existing institutions such as the market, the family and the state were developed and articulated. The ambiguities and contradictions contained in these relationships were problematized and politicized, and the patriarchy was exposed. Ironically, the critique of the welfare state launched by the women's movement was facilitated by the state itself in the form of the RCSW. The RCSW examined family law, criminal law, immigration, taxation, family allowance, education and the economy and recommended reform in these areas to breakdown the gender discrimination that was revealed.[44]

The redefinition of the state that the RCSW embodies and the reiteration of the

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[42] Ursel, *Private Lives*, 17- 58.
[43] see Madeleine Waring, *If Women Counted* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1988).
[44] Canada, RCSW, *Report*.

welfare society model that has characterized the women's movement in the period since the RCSW point to a decidedly statist orientation on the part of the Canadian women's movement. Nevertheless, the myriad of strategies used by the women's movement to improve women's lives do not reflect a unidimensional embrace of the state. The contradictory experience of women in the welfare state has reinforced an ambivalence toward the state that has always existed alongside the movement's statist focus. The Canadian women's movement has pursued a double strategy of dominant statism and simultaneous disengagement. The RCSW experience demonstrated that the women's movement is both critical of the state and dependent on it.

Mainstreaming Versus Disengagement

The strategy on the part of the women's movement that brought about the RCSW and pressured for the extension of departments and programs directed at women reflects the broader strategy of "mainstreaming" undertaken by large segments of the Canadian women's movement throughout its history. Mainstreaming is defined by Linda Briskin as operating

> from a desire to reach out to the majority of the population with popular and practical feminist solutions to particular issues, and therefore [mainstreaming] references major social institutions, such as the family, the workplace, the educational system and the state.[45]

A politic of mainstreaming has to do with taking seriously the power of established institutions and their pervasive affect on all our lives. It also means accepting, to some extent, the conventional process and character of social change embodied by

[45] Linda Briskin, "Feminist Practice: A New Approach to Evaluating Feminist Strategy," in *Women and Social Change: Feminist Activism in Canada*, eds. Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1991), 30.

the liberal state.[46] The central motivation behind a mainstreaming strategy is to make mainstream institutions work for women by making them accessible to women and responsive to women's needs. But the goal of mainstreaming is not only to reshape the state so that it benefits women. The goal is also to make feminism accessible to a majority of women. Indeed, a politic of mainstreaming recognizes that the lives and consciousness of most women are shaped by mainstream values and institutions.[47] It thus assumes that ignoring these institutions and the values that define them risks alienating the majority of women from feminism "making it difficult to actually reach and mobilize them."[48]

Francis Fox Piven, speaking to the American context and Jane Ursel, the Canadian, have explained how and why the strategy of integrating with the state continues to be fertile and necessary for the women's movement. According to Piven, the family and job market have not developed into promising arenas for women's empowerment, thus leaving the state as the main recourse of women.[49] Piven and Ursel both argue that the patriarchal control of the state is not all-pervasive. There are points in time and space where the state's interests coincide with women's interests. With resources in short supply, seizing the opportunity to use the state's resources is the only responsible choice of the women's movement if it is going to make the improvement of women's lives a priority. (Piven 1990; Ursel 1990; Ursel 1992)

The approach of cooperating with government and established institutions to

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46 Nancy Adamson, Linda Briskin and Margaret McPhail, *Feminist Organizing for Change* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), 140- 159.
47 Adamson, et. al., *Feminist Organizing*.
48 *Ibid.*, 184
49 Francis Fox Piven, *Ideology*, 254.

benefit women's lives has not, however, always been the approach of choice of women's groups in Canada. Indeed, the history of the Canadian women's movement also embodies a tradition of "disengagement" from the provincial or federal state. (Briskin 1991) Disengagement is the result of a fundamental sense that the state and mainstream politics generally, are not representative of women's experience. The critical distance that disengagement entails stems from a visceral distrust of a political process seen as male-centered and male-developed.

As the history of the first wave reveals, women have always created their own organizations and provided services to their communities outside the mainstream. During the struggle for the vote, women's groups joined the mainstream when the need arose as part of a larger strategy of achieving their goals. The central thesis of Sylvia Bashevkin's book, *Toeing the Lines: Women and Party Politics in English Canada* , is that the history of women's participation in the party system is a history of ambivalence: women's loyalties are torn between independent political organizing inside and outside political parties and struggles to integrate into the political system making it more relevant to women by participating more fully in partisan politics.[50] Women have not traditionally had the political clout necessary to shape the political mainstream but neither have women wanted it.

The tension between mainstreaming and disengagement is a longstanding fixture of the politics of the women's movement. The women's movement has always worked at a relationship with government and given high value to policy change but it also has always given priority to building and maintaining autonomous spaces of resistance.[51] For instance, although NAC has campaigned to encourage

50 Sylvia Bashevkin, *Toeing the Lines* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).
51 Findlay, *Facing the State*, 37.

Canadian women to use their federal electoral vote wisely, this organization that is the major women's movement lobby of the federal government has never adopted a tradition of advancing and supporting women candidates in federal elections.[52] NAC, to this extent, has chosen to stay outside mainstream politics. Furthermore, some women's groups in Canada, such as the network of women's health centres in Québec, deliberately pursue an independent line from government, requesting little to no financial assistance or moral support from the state.[53]

The scepticism with which engagement with the state is regarded- expressed by radical feminists, though from time to time by liberal feminists as well- is the result of the well-founded conviction that the state can interfere with women's goals by diverting energies and resources to its own overarching, often patriarchal agenda.[54] Moreover, when women's groups engage in one form or another with the state the intention to implement new organizational structures that reflect women's experience is eclipsed by the state's bureaucratic and hierarchical nature.

In all cases, however, disengagement from mainstream institutions is only a matter of degree. As Linda Briskin puts it, "all feminist practice risks institutionalization by organizing for change... [disengagement] is more a matter of degree than a rigid separation."[55] For instance, even the Québec network of women's health centres cited above must occasionally depend on the province's hospitals to provide the necessary care for its constituency of women. Escaping the institutions and conventions of society is not an option, a reality that can be a constant source of frustration to the women's movement as well as something it does not want to do

[52] Chantal Maillé, *Primed for Power: Women in Canadian Politics* (Ottawa: CACSW, 1990), 27.
[53] Michaud, *Counter-Hegemonic Responses*, 209.
[54] see Findlay, *Facing the State*.
[55] Linda Briskin, *Feminist Practice*, 39.

anyway. There is thus a delicate balance to maintain between the competing needs of mainstreaming and disengagement that translates into the women's movement's basic stance of ambiguity toward the state.

Chapter Three

The Response of the Women's Movement to the Crisis of the Welfare State

With the 1970s a paradoxical situation has developed where the women's movement has seen some of its concerns increasingly taken up by the welfare state, thereby enlarging its scope, at the same time that the underlying logic of the welfare state has been eroding. The 'rules of the game' are changing and this challenges the state's traditional leverage and the political, economic and ideological framework within which it operated. The full effects of the crisis of the welfare state were not felt until the 1980s when the women's movement, never convinced of the loyalty of the state to its cause to begin with, began to see its gains eroded.

The reaction of the women's movement in Canada to this alteration of the welfare state agenda has manifested itself economically, politically and ideologically. Just as the crisis of the welfare state can be understood as having economic, political and ideological dimensions, the reaction of the women's movement also can be classified in this way. These categories should be conceived of as composing a loose expository framework that is being applied to the reaction of the women's movement in order to better understand it. The framework is by no means exhaustive and it is not intended to suggest that these are separate categories in reality but rather that this organization permits a clearer exposition of the response of the women's movement.

Economic Dimension

For the women's movement in Canada, the crisis of the welfare state has manifested itself in economic terms in the form of funding cutbacks, a reformulation of its primary types of funding, and a government agenda containing an economic discourse that is in opposition to the traditional welfare-state discourse. The women's movement, and particularly NAC, has reacted to this situation in three ways. It has made 'old style' demands on the state by lobbying against cutbacks to the Women's Program of the Secretary of State and other sources of government funding, and by reiterating its longstanding argument that the state has a role in supporting women's groups and assisting the dismantling of sexism through public policy. A second component to this reaction, though an extension of the first, is an analysis and critique of the state's economic agenda in terms of how it affects women as well as Canadian society in general, and a challenge to this agenda in association with other groups hurt by it. Finally, in reaction to an ideologically resistant government and a significant withdrawal of financial assistance from that government, the women's movement has embarked on a fundraising effort that is new in its breadth and scope in targeting the private sector.

In Chapter Two the 'courting' of women's groups by the Canadian state was discussed. One central aspect of that courting is government funding. Funding of women's groups began in earnest, upon the advice of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, in 1973 when the Women's Program of the Department of the Secretary of State was established. The objective of the Program, expressed in a Secretary of State document, is:

> to support the full participation of women in all aspects of Canadian society and to increase the capability and effectiveness of women's organizations and groups working to improve the status of women

> and, in addition, to promote increased understanding of and action on, women's issues among women and the general public in the form of advocacy and information exchange.[1]

The Women's Program provides money and other resources such as information and advocacy to women's organizations whose activities are directed at improving the status of women. It also acts with other agencies of the women's state as a source of public education on women's issues. The federal government offers other sources of funding to women's groups in programs such as the Native Women's Program, but the Women's Program of the Secretary of State is the central site of distribution of financial resources from the state to the women's movement in Canada. In 1989, the Women's Program was funding approximately 600 regional and national women's groups.[2]

The Women's Program offers two kinds of funding: operational funding and project funding. Again, in the words of the Secretary of State, operational funding of a women's organization is to be directed at:

> enhancing national and regional participation of executive and members; supporting long-term planning and consistency over time; encouraging the development of more sophisticated systems for the participation of women; creating a political base from which current and emerging women's issues can be addressed and for which leadership is provided; and improving organizational development.[3]

The intention of operational or core funding is thus to ensure the institutional and

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[1] Canada, The Nielsen Task Force. "Improved Program Delivery- Citizenship, Labour and Immigration," (University of Ottawa, Ottawa: Canadian Women's Movement Archives/Archives canadiennes du mouvement des femmes. National Action Committee on the Status of Women Funding, Secretary of State File).

[2] National Action Committee on the Status of Women, "We're Worth More!" (Bulletin published by NAC, 1990).

[3] Canada, Nielsen Task Force, *Improved Program Delivery*.

financial sustainability of selected women's groups. Operational funding, however, is not available for the direct provision of ongoing social services such as rape crisis centres or transition houses but is to be directed toward the administrative costs of women's advocacy groups.[4]

Project funding, on the other hand, makes up the majority of the Program's grants and exists to support the short term activities of women's groups. The projects eligible for such funding may include conferences, information packages, television programs and theatre productions.[5]

Between 1983-1984 and 1984-1985, the budget of the Women's Program of the Secretary of State almost tripled.[6] However, since the 1985-1986 budget, funding to the Program has decreased incrementally until substantial cuts were introduced in 1989.

According to NAC, in 1987 the government promised to maintain the existing level of funding for the Women's Program of the Secretary of State.[7] Nevertheless, in the federal budgets of 1989-1990 and 1990-1991 the Program was cut by 15.3% and 15% respectively.[8] These cuts were directed specifically at operational funding thus affecting organizations like NAC that depend on these grants in order to sustain themselves. Indeed, the grant to NAC was cut by 50% extended over three years and the core funding to feminist publications was ended altogether.

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[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] NAC, *We're Worth More*.
[8] *Ibid.*

Furthermore, the diminished operational funding granted by the Women's Program was accompanied by a decisive public policy shift away from an institutionalized relationship between the federal government and women's groups toward temporary, contingent linkages between the two parties.[9] The Mulroney government has not interfaced with NAC or other segments of the women's movement the way other governments have in the past. For instance, for the first time the government of Canada has consistently refused to participate in NAC's annual lobby day on Parliament Hill. Formal lobbying against cuts to the welfare state has thus been confined to talks with the women's state. NAC has therefore felt obliged to locate its lobbying activities in civil society in order to at least attract the attention of Canadian citizens.

An additional blow to the women's movement accompanied the funding cuts of the late 80s and undoubtedly strengthened the government resolve that led to those cuts. The 1989 budget of the Women's Program included an outlay of $21,000 to the social conservative and anti-feminist group, R.E.A.L. Women. In 1984, R.E.A.L. made an application to the Program for funding and was denied. According to Susan Phillips, this ignited R.E.A.L.'s lobbying activities and campaign against feminism and the feminist funding priorities of the Secretary of State.[10] In 1986, with an eye to anti-feminist groups, including the National Citizen's Coalition and some Progressive Conservative Members of Parliament, NAC presented a brief to the Standing Committee on the Secretary of State defending its role, the feminist orientation of the Program,[11] and the role of government funding of women's

[9] Susan Phillips,*How Ottawa Blends*, 184- 185.

[10] Susan Phillips, "Projects, Pressure and Perceptions of Effectiveness," Doctoral Thesis, Carleton University, 1990,

[11] According toSusan Phillips the feminist orientation of WPSS has been challenged by government before.

groups. This brief as well as the 1988 NAC publication, "The Rise of the New Right in Canada: Implications for the Women's Movement,"[12] are representative of the feminist literature written in the 1980s that addresses the threat to women and the women's movement of social conservative groups and the "patriarchal family movement."[13] Susan Phillips refers to this threat as constituting one of the two major political crises of the contemporary women's movement in Canada- the other being the Charter struggle in 1980-81.[14]

Since 1989, with the first announcements of cuts to the budget of the Women's Program, the women's movement has responded by vociferously criticizing the federal government for decreasing both the type and amount of funding to women's groups and for reneging on its promises of social services for women, such as national public child care. In pamphlets such as "We're Worth More!", published in 1990, NAC publicized its anger toward the Mulroney government by arguing that Canada has backed out of its international treaty and national Charter commitments to end discrimination against women by cutting its funding of Canadian women's groups and by denying these groups the less intrusive tool of operational funding.[15]

In reaction to the complete absence in the 1989 federal budget of the long-awaited national day care initiative, NAC and the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association organized protest activities such as the National Bake-off.[16] A NAC flyer

12 Joan Hannant *The Rise of the New Right in Canada*, eds. Rebecca Coulter and Trudy Richardson (Toronto: NAC,1988), 1- 8.

13 Margrit Eichler, *Families in Canada Today*, *2nd ed.* (Toronto: Gage, 1988), 412- 419.

14 Phillips, *Projects, Pressure and Perceptions,* 64- 66.

15 NAC, "We're Worth More!"

16 National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, "Bake Sales Cancelled- No More Bake Sales for Child Care, Mr. Wilson," (Flyer published in May1989), Canadian Women's Movement Archives/Archives canadienne du mouvement des femmes. NAC 'Get the Budget on Track' Protest 1989 File.

announcing the Bake-off stated, "Apparently, Finance Minister Michael Wilson wants child care centres and providers to continue to hold bake sales and raffles which for so many years provided the funds to make child care possible."[17] The intention of the protest was to swamp Michael Wilson's office with baked goods, baked and sent by angry individuals and groups. "Let Him Eat Cake," the flyers read.

The retaliatory message of these women's groups was that the funding priorities of the federal government ignored women's reality and took for granted the volunteer services provided by women and women's groups. NAC has consistently used the strategy of publicly highlighting government initiatives that it argues are anti-woman. In the "We're Worth More" pamphlet, NAC asks rhetorically what the federal government has done for women, and in response cites several government policies such as the recriminalization of abortion; the refusal to fund women's work on reproductive choice; lack of action on lesbian rights, on peace and on the environment; and, the declaration of war against Iraq.[18]

The scope of the women's movement's economic challenge to the federal government in the late 1980s has not been restricted to the issues of funding cuts to women's groups. As the litany previously cited suggests, NAC attacks the fiscal priorities of the Canadian government. Many women's groups, particularly NAC, have reacted to funding cutbacks that specifically affect them by also reacting against the state's broad economic agenda. Sylvia Bashevkin has pointed out that NAC's high-profile involvement in the free trade debate in particular, reflects a shift in policy focus "beyond conventional 'women's issues,' notably legal rights and social

17 NAC, "Join the Child Care Budget Bake-Off!" (Flyer published by NAC, May 1989), Canadian Women's Movement Archives/Archives canadienne du mouvement des femmes.
18 NAC, "We're Worth More!"

policy questions, toward an integration of these concerns with broader economic policy."[19] In fact, Bashevkin adds, the involvement of Canadian women's groups in the free trade debates that took place between 1985 and 1988 was a unique phenomenon in the history of Canadian public debates around economic issues.[20] This is not to say that NAC has never commented on economic issues as they affect women. The bibliography of NAC briefs indicates that NAC has dealt with economic questions since its inception but that the production of such briefs has increased substantially since 1984-85.

The women's movement has actually asked itself the question of whether engagement in debate of this kind is appropriate. In a paper published by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women in 1987, the authors, Barbara Cameron and Ann Porter, submit that: "Free trade presents the women's movement in Canada with an important question: should organizations committed to advancing women's right to equality become involved in debates over general economic strategy?"[21] Cameron and Porter respond by contending that women's groups' interest in economic policy has emerged because years of consultation with government has taught them that the state considers the financial costs of their endeavour too high.[22] Furthermore, they add that the particular evolution of Canadian trade policy has forced the attention of women's groups who fear that free trade with the United States will further weaken women's labour market position and restrict the Canadian government's ability to implement policies and

19 Sylvia Bashevkin, "Free Trade and Canadian Feminism: The Case of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women," *Canadian Public Policy*, XV, 4 (1989), 363.
20 *Ibid.*, 363.
21 Ann Porter and Barbara Cameron, *Impact of Free Trade on Women in Manufacturing (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987)*, 1.
22 *Ibid.*, 1.

legistlation that help women.[23]

Within NAC specifically, the move toward the development of a strategy to deal with state economic policy reflects a combination of factors, most of which are directly related to the crisis of the welfare state. One of these factors is the weakening of liberal feminism as the dominant feminist ideology of NAC leadership in favour of the more radical institutional critiques of socialist feminism and radical feminism.[24] A second factor is the growing perception that government economic strategy would negatively affect women's employment and government policies related to women as the questioning of the welfare state became more explicit with clarification of the Mulroney economic policy agenda.

NAC conceives of the government agenda as the systematic dismantling of the goals of equality. Since 1985 NAC has expressed its opposition to the government's economic agenda by means of pamphlets, press conferences, briefs, policy resolutions, protest rallies, televised debates and political affiliation. In 1985, in anticipation of the release of the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada* (1985) and the Report's endorsement of free trade, NAC held a press conference where it voiced its main criticisms of free trade.[25] Shortly thereafter, NAC published its criticisms of the Report's recommendations in a brief entitled, "The Macdonald Report and its Implications for Women."[26] Since then, NAC has presented briefs on the impact on women of

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23 *Ibid.*, 1.

24 Bashevkin, *Free Trade and Canadian Feminism*, 365-366; and Adamson et al., *Feminist Organizing*, chapter 7.

25 Bashevkin, *Free Trade*, 366.

26 Marjorie Cohen, *The Macdonald Report and Its Implications for Women* (Toronto: NAC,1985).

federal legislative initiatives such as unemployment insurance reform,[27] employment equity[28] and the Canadian Jobs Strategy. In 1987, feminists such as Marjorie Griffin Cohen, also affiliated with NAC, published studies on the impact on women workers of policies such as free trade.[29] By 1988 the activity on the part of the women's movement protesting the government's economic policies and particularly the FTA reached a "crescendo," to borrow the word used by Sylvia Bashevkin.[30] The 1988 federal election campaign precipitated a massive mobilization effort on the part of the Canadian women's movement.

The women's movement did not restrict its critique of the government's economic agenda to how it affects women but extended the analysis to include the effects of the agenda on the lives of all Canadians. For instance, NAC contends that the cuts to the Women's Program of the Secretary of State do not flow from financial necessity but from a right-wing agenda that excludes all ordinary Canadians.[31] From its brief on the Macdonald Commission in 1985 to its submission in 1990 to the federal Minister of Finance, NAC has criticized the Mulroney government for

27 *The Problem is Jobs, Not Unemployment Insurance* (Toronto: NAC, 1986); *The Problem is Still Jobs... not Unemployment Insurance: A Brief to the Legislative committee on Bill C-21* (Toronto: NAC,1989); "Bill C-21: A Minefield for Women" (Pamphlet published by NAC,1989); *Unemployment Insurance Programme: Brief to the Senate* (Toronto: NAC,1990).

28 Lynn Kaye, *Bill C-62: Employment Equity* (Toronto: NAC,1985); Phebe-Jane Poole, *Women in Banking: The First Year of Employment Equity* (Toronto: NAC,1989); Phebe-Jane Poole, *Employment Equity in the First Year: An Examination of Aboriginal Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Visible Minorities* (Toronto: NAC,1989); *Employment Equity and the Banks: Visible Minorities, Disabled Persons, Women and Aboriginal Persons* (Toronto: NAC,1990); Judy Rebick, *Not Another Hundred Years: NAC Brief to the Parliamentary Committee Reviewing the Federal Employment Equity Act* (Toronto: NAC, 1992).

29 Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Free Trade and the Future of Women's Work: Manufacturing and Service Industries* (Toronto: Garamond Press,1987); Porter and Cameron, *Impact of Free Trade on Women in Manufacturing* (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987).

30 Bashevkin, *Free Trade and Canadian Feminism.*

31 Paul Koring, "Coalition to Ride Rails in Fight Against Budget," in *Globe and Mail* , May 15, 1989, A1-A2, (Canadian Women's Movement Archives/Archives canadienne du mouvement des femmes. NAC 'Get the Budget on Track' Protest 1989 File.)

neglecting the needs of Canadians by implementing economic strategies that "reflect the short-term interests of business groups rather than the best interests of the majority of people in this country."[32] Attacking its fiscal and monetary policies of high interest rates and low inflation and its implementation of higher, regressive taxes Marjorie Cohen criticizes the government for not heeding the basic principle that: "Real people are affected by economic policies and budgets, not just markets, corporations, and abstract economic institutions."[33] In the same vein, NAC criticized the general recommendation of the Macdonald Commission that the Canadian economy should be more responsive to market forces, noting that its Report is "relatively unconcerned about the disparate effect [these] policies would have on various groups of people in the economy."[34] The brief also states that the "report pays scant attention to how various groups of workers and regions in the country will be affected."[35]

The women's movement has criticized government economic policies of privatization, unemployment insurance reform and inflation and interest rate policy, as well as the cornerstones of its agenda, the FTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Goods and Services Tax. NAC has agreed that the federal deficit is an economic burden and that it must be reduced but it argues that current measures used to reduce it are ineffective and socially destructive. Again Cohen states: "Because of the focus on reducing inflationary pressures through the mechanism of high interest rates, even the radical reductions in real government

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32 Marjorie Cohen, *Federal Government Consultation with the Minister of Finance, Michael Wilson* (Toronto: NAC,1990), 1.
33 *Ibid.*, 1.
34 Marjorie Cohen, *The Macdonald Report and its Implications for Women* (Toronto: NAC,1985), 1.
35 *Ibid.*

expenditures on programs have not solved the problem..."[36] NAC adds that the priority given to deficit reduction during a recession is ill-conceived and is really an excuse for dismantling social programs for ideological reasons.[37]

Other women's groups have held the same conviction. The dismantling of the Court Challenges Program announced in the 1992 federal budget in the name of streamlining the bureaucracy and controlling the deficit angered groups such as the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), who saw the move as motivated by an ideological objection to the program and not by fiscal constraint.[38]

NAC also lobbyied against the Goods and Services Tax.[39] Indeed, NAC included among its 1989 Executive Priority Recommendations **before** the GST was officially announced that "NAC undertake a country-wide campaign against the proposed implementation of an across-the-board sales tax on goods and services..." and that it should object, in particular, to "government proposals to extend the sales tax to food and housing."[40] NAC is opposed to sales tax in general, contending that it is regressive and that government revenues should be derived from sources such as income tax, which can be a progressive method of tax collection.[41]

NAC has reserved its most vociferous opposition for the government's centerpiece

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36 Cohen, *Federal Government Consultation*, 2.

37 "Breaking the Social Contract," (Flyer published by NAC, 1989) Canadian Women's Movement Archives/Archives canadienne du mouvement des femmes. NAC 'Get the Budget on Track' Protest File.

38 Susan Phillips, "New Social Movements and Routes to Representation" (unpublished), 33.

39 NAC response to GST includes the following: Marjorie Cohen and Ruth Rose, "Questions and Answers on the Goods and Services Tax," (1989 pamphlet); *Why the Goods and Services Tax will be Harmful to Women: A Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance* (1989); *Women Want Fair Taxes: Alternatives to the GST* (1990).

40 NAC, "1989-1990 Executive Priority Recommendations, No. 1" (CWMA/ACMF. NAC AGM, Ottawa, 1989 File.)

41 *Ibid.*

of economic policy, the FTA. In fact, NAC maintains that the other initiatives of the government's economic agenda, such as unemployment insurance reform, privatization and social program cutbacks, are the direct consequence of an overarching "free trade agenda."[42] In 1989, NAC and others organized the "Get the Budget on Track" campaign in order to galvanize support against the 1989 federal budget. The campaign was actually conducted on trains travelling from Western Canada and the Maritimes, ultimately converging on Ottawa where a massive protest march ensued.[43] One of the flyers announcing the campaign was entitled, "Breaking the Social Contract." According to this flyer, the federal budget of 1989 was a vehicle for accelerating the process of dismantling the social contract, a process which the FTA had put into motion. The social program cutbacks and privatization initiatives announced with this budget signified to these groups further "assaults on the social contract."[44] Staging the campaign on a cross-Canada train trip was thus particularly symbolic given the cuts to VIA Rail also introduced in the 1989 federal budget.

The 'Get the Budget on Track' campaign also illustrates how important coalition politics have become to the women's movement's challenge to the economic program of the federal government. The women's movement in Canada has a history of coalition-building. First wave feminists and suffragists formed alliances with other reform-oriented groups. Equality feminists created links with groups that were non-feminist or with those who held more conservative social feminist views. These otherwise disparate groups shared in common a concern about the profound changes then disrupting society. The immediacy of the health and social

[42] NAC, "Breaking the Social Contract."
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] *Ibid.*

problems that preoccupied many women's groups ultimately encouraged them to ally themselves with those who had similar concerns in order to pressure existing institutions to respond.

It is important to note that the women's movement was in this earlier period involved in public debates of national importance. Nevertheless, the questions that it was raising and the demands it was making were primarily social in nature and not economic. The assertion made earlier that the addition of women's groups and of a 'women's perspective' to contemporary debates concerning national economic questions is a new phenomenon thus remains legitimate. However, what is similar about first wave social activism and the approach of today's women's groups to political action concerning economic questions, is the varied nature of the strategies pursued. Strategies developed to pressure established institutions have reflected both a need to act independently and a recognition that some form of "mainstreaming" may be useful for fulfilling certain goals.[45] Then as now, women's groups act independently, in concert with other women's groups and with those groups with whom they share opponents.

NAC's experience with the Mulroney government has indicated that women's groups lobbied against the state's economic agenda independently in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, on issues as galvanizing as free trade the women's movement has extended the scope of its activity to include coalition-building. An important early moment of coalition-building against free trade occurred in 1987 when a network of women's groups including representatives from NAC, the Ontario Federation of Labour's Women's Committee, the NDP, daycare groups and several

[45] see Bashevkin, *Toeing the Lines*, for the nomenclature of "independence" and "partisanship".

local Toronto women's groups established Women Against Free Trade (WAFT). Varda Burstyn and Judy Rebick, both members of WAFT, explain that WAFT was formed with three objectives in mind: firstly, to publicize as widely as possible the group's particular critique of the free trade deal; secondly, to publicize their point of view to the anti-free trade forces, in particular; and finally, to communicate to Canadian women that free trade is a women's issue.[46] Rebick and Burstyn add that WAFT wrote its Manifesto specifically to make up for the dearth of information on the subject of the proposed free trade agreement and on the economic alternatives to free trade.[47] Even the members of WAFT asked themselves if this self-appointed role constituted the proper action of a women's group. Burstyn and Rebick state: "WAFT discussed whether it was appropriate for a women's group to put forward such a global critique and alternative approach as presented in the Manifesto."[48] The authors explain that WAFT had surmized that the anti-free trade forces were kept from moving on the issue because of internal disagreement over how to proceed.[49] WAFT would attempt to break the deadlock for the simple reason that, in its view, "no one else was going to do it."[50] They also add, however, that women are a "distinct force" and thus could contribute in a distinctive way to the anti-free trade movement.[51]

The creation of WAFT is not a simple illustration of the "welfare society" approach introduced in Chapter Two. As the following quotation will illustrate, the political space that WAFT occupies and the critique it offers resonates with but ultimately

46 Varda Burstyn and Judy Rebick, "How 'Women Against Free Trade" Came to Write its Manifesto," *Resources for Feminist Research*, 17, 3 (1988), 139-142.
47 *Ibid.*, 139.
48 *Ibid.*
49 *Ibid.*
50 *Ibid.*
51 *Ibid.*, 140.

goes beyond the welfare society definition traditionally proferred by the women's movement in Canada. Burstyn and Rebick explain that the WAFT Manifesto was conceived as a challenge to the dominant discourse on free trade then extant. They explain their method and philosophy in the following way:

> In the most ordinary language possible, we tried to address people's usually very limited conception of the actual and potential role of the state in economic and social life. We wanted to make it clear that the apparatus of the state was being consciously manipulated to achieve one set of goals and aims, and that it was possible to manipulate them otherwise to achieve a different social and economic agenda.[52]

The welfare society point of view that advocates an expansive role for the state is evident in the previous passage. What is different this time is that instead of culture, economics is understood as a rightful domain of politics and the state.

Since the early 1980s, women's groups across Canada have joined together to challenge not only the economic program of the federal government but also the cost-cutting agendas of provincial governments. In 1987, for instance, Saskatchewan women established a provincial women's coalition called "Connections."[53] Connections was founded as a direct response to the Saskatchewan government's funding cutbacks in 1987.[54] According to member groups, the cutbacks represented an "erosion of rights and services."[55]

Connections shared the same strategies for pressuring government as other

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52 *Ibid.*, 139.

53 Ronnie Leah and Cydney Ruecker, "Saskatchewan Women Respond to Cutbacks: The Founding of a Provincial Women's Coalition," in *Women and Social Change: Feminist Activism in Canada* , eds. Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1991), 117-133.

54 *Ibid.*, 117.

55 *Ibid.*, 126.

women's coalitions and women's groups in Canada. The importance of building "unity and solidarity" among women and women's organizations was an explicit goal of the coalition, but so was the building and coordinating of networks with existing male-dominated organizations.[56] In their analysis of Connections, Leah and Ruecker state that:

> While the Connections statement of unity has specifically focused on the needs of women and children, members of Connections have been concerned with working to establish a better world for all people-including men.[57]

Women's groups played a central role in forming the Saskatchewan Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ), and upon its inception Connections became an affiliate of this broader coalition.[58] The SCSJ was founded in reaction to social program cutbacks, anti-labour legislation, and initiatives such as privatization pursued by the Saskatchewan provincial government.[59]

The SCSJ and the 'Getting the Budget on Track' campaign are both examples of a temporary partisan linkage between women's groups and other similarly disaffected groups. With NAC as a primary force behind its creation, the Action Canada Network (ACN) is probably the most explicit manifestation of the depth of involvement of the women's movement in coalition politics at a national level.

The ACN was established in reaction to what were judged to be the exclusionary process and bias recommendations of the Macdonald Royal Commission.[60] Peter

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56 *Ibid.*, 126.
57 *Ibid.*, 131-132.
58 *Ibid.*, 119.
59 *Ibid.*
60 Peter Bleyer, "Coalitions of Social Movements as Agencies for Social Change: The Action Canada Network," in *Organizing Dissent* ,ed. William K. Carroll (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1992), 105.

Bleyer argues that in spite of the opposition of "popular sector groups" to free trade made evident during the Commission's hearings, the Commission's Report paid scant attention to their concerns as it placed free trade at the center of its plan.[61] According to Bleyer, the election of the Mulroney government in 1984 and the publication of the Macdonald Report in 1985 represented a culmination of political events that facilitated large-scale cooperation among the groups that made up the ACN. Bleyer contends that these two events brought the enemy into clear focus once and for all:

> The final result was the public drawing of clear lines of demarcation between a neoconservative corporate vision of Canada and a "popular sector" perspective. Furthermore, with free trade clearly hitched to the corporate wagon, the "popular sector" had an issue it could rally around.[62]

Although outside the coalition-politics and intensive lobbying undertaken by the women's movement in recent years, a direct consequence of the economic and fiscal agenda that provoked this massive activism and critique on the part of the movement is its attempt to find alternatives to the state as a base of funding. The third component of the economic dimension of the women's movement's reaction to the crisis of the welfare state is an acceleration and intensification of the fundraising activities of women's groups in the 1980s. Indications that fundraising has become a major priority of the women's movement include the establishment of charitable foundations aimed at improving women's status, such as the Canadian Women's Foundation and the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Foundation; the establishment of trusts by political parties intended to recruit women for politics; the establishment of the Secretary of State's Voluntary Action Directorate and its

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61 *Ibid.*, 105.
62 *Ibid.*

publication in 1988 of the booklet, "Everything You Need to Know to get Started in Direct Mail Fundraising," specifically aimed at advocacy groups; and the increasing popularity of direct mail fundraising techniques on the part of women's groups.[63] For those women's groups using it, direct mail fundraising indicates that they are serious about raising money in the private sector. Direct mail is an expensive fundraising option and its effects on an organization's support is unique in that it requires a substantial commitment to be undertaken.[64] LEAF, for instance, has sought to expand its appeal by using 'mainstream' feminist celebrities such as Gloria Steinem, as spokespersons in its direct mail campaigns.[65] NAC's own fundraising efforts directed at the private sector have become so intensive that in 1993 it relied on government funding for less than 30% of its total budget.[66]

The women's movement also appears to be increasingly encouraging activists within the movement to contribute money. In 1992, in a speech given at the annual conference of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW), Judy Rebick remarked that though NAC had never relied on its own activists to personally donate money in the past, it felt the need to convince people to reconsider this tradition.[67] Rebick's argument was that those people who have money and who might support NAC are not always in agreement with the radical elements of NAC's agenda and they therefore exert pressure on NAC to reevaluate its activities. The threat of cooptation from the private sector is therefore as real as it

63 Phillips, *Projects, Pressure and Perceptions*, 167; and NAC,"Program Submission to the Standing Committee of the Secretary of State for 1987-1988," CWMA/ACMF. NAC Briefs and Misc. File.
64 Phillips, *Ibid.*
65 "From the Desk of Gloria Steinem," (Flyer published by LEAF,1990); letter also signed by Lillian Allen, Margaret Atwood and Buffy Sainte-Marie.
66 Geoffrey York, "Rebick's departure from NAC marks shift in balance of power," *Globe and Mail* , April 21, 1993, A3.
67 As described to me by 1992- 1993 CRIAW president, Caroline Andrew.

is in relation with the state and is one reason why NAC is looking for money among people who support its orientation thus soliciting within and beyond its own membership.

In recent years, NAC has indeed directed some of its fundraising efforts to movement activists and known supporters of NAC policies. In 1989, Nancy Adamson, co-founder of the Canadian Women's Movement Archives (CWMA) and member of NAC, was sent a type-written solicitation on NAC stationery signed by Marjorie Cohen, then a NAC vice-president. The letter contained a personal tone and format, appealing to Adamson to contribute money on the grounds that NAC is "your organization" and the "women's movement is your movement."[68]

As the concern about cooptation by the private sector expressed by Judy Rebick suggests, the women's movement in Canada has been reluctant to engage in private sector fundraising in the past. Indeed, the title of a recent feminist publication illustrates this hesitation and an ongoing ambivalence: "The 'F' Word: A New Look at Fundraising for Women's Services."[69] To this day, few women's groups even have a paid fundraiser on staff, though NAC does employ a full-time fundraiser.[70] Susan Phillips' research directs us to the ambiguities in the approach the women's movement takes to fundraising. Even though the women's movement has undertaken fundraising in a professional and long-term manner, Phillips has found that compared to the fundraising initiatives of the environmental movement, fundraising by women's groups remains limited. According to Phillips, the environmental movement in Canada has facilitated the representation of its

68 NAC, letter to Nancy Adamson, June 1989. CWMA/ACMF. NAC Correspondence, 1989-1991 File.
69 Author unknown. CRIAW Resource Library. Fundraising File.
70 Susan Phillips, "Democratizing Society and State in Canada: From Identity Politics to Partnerships," (unpublished), 14.

interests through "elaborate and highly innovative fundraising mechanisms."[71] Phillips contends that environmental groups have been ambivalent about cooperating with industry and those institutions they deem part of the problem but they have arrived at a "rapprochement" with the private sector that, she suggests, has no parallels in the women's movement.[72] The environmental movement in Canada is, Phillips asserts, a "money-making machine"[73] and unlike women's groups most environmental groups employ fundraisers.[74]

That fundraising has been anathema to the Canadian women's movement may be attributable to its basic philosophical stance. The women's movement conceives of women's equality, its *raison d'etre,* as a right. In the context of modern liberal-democracy, the state is the source of the legitimacy of that right. In the context of the welfare state, the state legitimizes that right by providing the resources necessary to uphold it. The women's movement in Canada, therefore, has understood the state, and not civil society, as its appropriate source of financial support.

At the same time, the women's movement is not unequivocally enthusiastic about government funding of its activities, as the discussion in Chapter Two noted. The women's movement holds a position of ambivalence vis-a-vis the state and its funding relation with the state is not exempt.[75] While it may be demonstrated that government funding may have acted as a disincentive within women's groups to fundraise, what is more likely the case is that the time spent coordinating government funding applications strained existing resources to their limit thus

71 *Ibid.*, 15.
72 *Ibid.*,15.
73 *Ibid.*, 15.
74 Phillips, *New Social Movements*, 20.
75Schreader, *The State-Funded Women's Movement*, 197.

leaving little time or energy left for fundraising in the private sector. Women's groups equally resent having to make applications for grants and project funding to governments because of the amount of time it takes away from politics and because of the interference that external funding can represent.[76] Social movement organizations like NAC by their nature consider practical organizational tasks such as fundraising regardless of whether it is in the public or private sector, as distractions from their primary goals of "identity promotion and interest lobbying."[77]

A further explanation for why the women's movement has been slow to engage in private sector fundraising can be said to be related to the anti-market and/or a-market tradition within which the second wave of the women's movement emerged. The Women's Liberation movement in Canada and the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s can be characterized as anti-market in that it viewed fundraising as an act of 'giving in' to the money culture of the establishment. Indeed, the second wave of the women's movement grew out of a left-wing critique of established privilege.[78] For a time, requesting money from group members in the form of membership fees was considered particularly offensive, including among what have become more mainstream organizations such as the National Organization for Women (NOW) in the United States.[79] The goal of these groups was to make their organizations as accessible to poor women as to wealthier women.[80] Although the concern over accessibility persisted, financial pressures and

76 *Ibid.*, 14.
77 *Ibid.*, 9.
78 Canada, RCSW, *Report*, 352.
79 Maren Lockwood Carden, *The New Feminist Movement* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1974), 95-96, 125.
80 *Ibid.*, 96.

the increasing demand on the woman-power of these organizations led them to institute membership fees.[81]

In Canada, according to Susan Phillips, with the exception of some minority women's groups who do not require membership fees, the membership fees of national women's groups and those of social movement organizations in general, tend to be very low.[82] The Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, for example, charged a membership fee in 1989 of $10 a year[83] which in November 1992 rose to $20.[84] Furthermore, many women's groups, while charging a standard membership fee, also offer a reduced fee without reduced priviledges to lower income earners. The National Association of Women and the Law, an organization that is primarily composed of members who are lawyers and law professors, requires a membership fee of $55 a year and one at $20 for students or others living on smaller budgets.[85]

The a-market attitude toward financing and the accent on a funding relation with the state within the women's movement can perhaps be attributed to the personal and professional biographies of the majority of women's movement activists in Canada. The NAC executive, for instance, has been made up primarily of union members, community workers, university professors, activist lawyers, and women from the voluntary sector.[86] A significant enclave of feminist activists in Canada has been contained within the state- the women's state- and thus, again, outside the private sector. Knowledge of, and experience with the market have thus been at a

[81] *Ibid.*, 96.
[82] Phillips, *Projects, Pressure and Perceptions*, 182 *n. 25.*
[83] *Ibid.*, 182 *n. 25.*
[84] Telephone conversation with CDCAA staff member, June 1993.
[85] Telephone conversation with NAWL staff member, June 1993.
[86] Judy Rebick, current president of NAC, is a former activist for the hearing impaired.

minimum among the players of the Canadian women's movement. Until recently, therefore, the disposition of the Canadian feminist has meant that she had neither the expertise nor the inclination to fundraise.

While some feminist activists may not have the financial or technical expertise to develop the necessary fundraising apparatus or may not have a professional interest in fundraising, others may also not want to fundraise because it may be something they have been compelled to do in other organizations- their children's schools or day care, church, the Cancer Society, political parties, etc. Susan Phillips contends that women entering women's organizations may have a desire to dedicate their efforts to developing policy and to escape what she calls the "gendered roles" they fulfilled in other organizations where they "ran bakesales or canvassed door-to-door."[87]

Important exceptions to the a-market or anti-market profile of the women in the Canadian women's movement are the "red tory" feminist activists. These women actively embrace the private sector and reject a statist approach to social change, although they are not anti-state, per se. Maureen McTeer and Flora MacDonald call themselves feminists and have proven themselves to be supporters of women's causes although they do not possess an ideological objection to the market economy.[88] They do, on the other hand, believe the state has a role in improving the status of women. Kim Campbell too has not been afraid to publicly declare her feminism although her status as a red tory has been disputed by some political commentators.[89]

87 Phillips, *Democratizing Society and State in Canada*, 13-14.
88 Sherrill MacLaren, *Invisible Power: The Women Who Run Canada* (Toronto: Seal Books, 1991), 107, 110, 242- 247.
89 Geoffrey York, "Why Campbell is not a Red Tory," *Globe and Mail* , March 31, 1993, A7.

Feminists such as Barbara Jackman, one of the founders of the Canadian Women's Foundation (CWF), believe in the market and believe in exploiting the market to further women's causes, even those that may ultimately upset the establishment. Indeed, the CWF does promote profound change through its "feminist ideal of philanthropy."[90] According to its guiding principles the central goal of the CWF is to "help women and girls achieve greater self-reliance and economic independence" by promoting "long-term systematic change" based on a redistribution of wealth, and the values of inclusiveness and sharing in order to transcend "traditional definitions of power and privilege."[91]

Accompanying the undeniably feminist intentions of the CWF is a commitment to use the market to its advantage. For example, since 1992 the CWF has been engaged in the "Help Tampax Help" fundraising campaign in conjunction with Tambrands Canada Inc., a company that manufactures hygiene products for women. The campaign is intended to raise money for the Tampax Trust Fund, donations to which are directed at increasing awareness of violence against women and children and providing financial support to battered women's shelters.[92] The role of the CWF, in this "charitable partnership" with Tambrands, is to administer the Fund.[93] Another current project of the CWF is its distribution of Economic Development Grants. Again, this endeavour encourages market involvement, this time on the part of the women to whom the Foundation is granting funds. The "Application Guidelines" for the grant cite the following examples of projects that may be considered: "Programs to train entrepreneurs; self-employment or small business

90 The Canadian Women's Foundation, "Mission Statement and Guiding Principles" (CRIAW).
91 *Ibid.*
92 Tambrands Canada, Inc., *News release*, 1992 (CRIAW).
93 *Ibid.*, 2, 3.

support projects; projects that link women's businesses with outside markets; etc."[94]

It is significant to note that women's charitable foundations like the one headed by Jackman, are new on the private sector fundraising scene in Canada and appear to be responses to the crisis in funding of the women's movement. The Canadian Women's Foundation itself has stated that it was created in reaction to the "lack of funding to support work to achieve equality for women."[95] A CWF solicitation from 1992 states that the Foundation was started at a time when only 4% of charitable foundation giving in Canada was channelled specifically to initiatives helping women or girls.[96]

The view that the private sector must be mobilized to support women's issues seems to have taken on widespread currency in recent years among feminists in Canada. Women's movement membership is broader and the immediate social problems facing women are more widely understood. Furthermore, a younger generation of feminists does not seem as strongly opposed to the use of the market. The movement's embrace, to different degrees, of the private sector is a reflection of this internal context and of the growing recognition within communities that all the available resources must be commanded if the depths of social problems in general are to be scaled.

Political Dimension

The dual and contradictory economic response of intensification of fundraising on the one hand, and demands for state action on the other hand anticipates the

94 The Canadian Women's Foundation, "Application Guidelines for April 1993 Economic Development Grants."
95 The Canadian Women's Foundation, letter announcing Economic Development grants, 1992.
96 *Ibid.*

complex nature of the political response of the women's movement to the crisis of the welfare state.

The women's movement appears to be doing three things within the sphere of politics: it is reemphasizing its claims on the welfare state and, paradoxically, increasingly turning to civil society for support and action on issues that have been a preoccupation since the seventies; thirdly, while it reiterates past claims it is also broadening its focus on the state beyond traditional women's issues to the question of the organization of the state itself.

In most instances of political action directed at the state by the women's movement, traditional claims are being made on the welfare state. The discussion on the economic dimension of the response of the women's movement to the crisis of the welfare state described the very vocal opposition of women's groups to cutbacks in social services and to the dismantling of programs designed to help women overcome sexual discrimination. The women's movement continues to support an interventionist role for government in its demands for social program responses and legislative action on pay equity, sexual harassment, reproductive rights and violence against women and children, and is increasingly tying these demands to claims of basic rights and entitlements. Furthermore, the women's movement has forcefully and exhaustively advocated a nationalized child care scheme, challenging the mainstream conviction that, unlike in the past, the Canadian state cannot afford to undertake such a large-scale initiative.

An important extension of this continued focus on the welfare state is the critique of decentralization and deinstitutionalization (including privatization) of welfare state

services made by several Canadian feminists. Decentralization can refer to several phenomena, from privatization to provincialization of both the service and the cost to partnerships between the state and different players that could include other levels of government, industry or interest groups. Feminist scholarship that examines the impact on women of the decentralized, "community-based" model of welfare delivery has grown in recent years in Canada as the phenomenon of decentralizing care-taking has been instituted and gained greater currency. (Neysmith 1991; Bullock 1990)

The question of whether these trends in social service delivery are affecting and burdening women's work disproportionately is a pertinent one given the responsibility of caring that women continue to assume in our society. When there is a retrenchment of those services and transfer payments that enable families to more effectively carry out their caretaking work the crisis of the welfare state means a crisis in women's lives. It is women who will fill the gap left in the wake of the welfare state. (Pateman 1988) Under these circumstances, the women's movement casts itself as a fervent defender of the welfare state and maintains that what is best for women is better funding of women's programs and better nation-wide institutional supports, not less government.

This pro-welfare state, anti-decentralization orientation of the women's movement in the midst of the crisis of the welfare state has led it to form coalitions for the purposes of strengthening its voice. The women's movement's struggle against the weakening or reorientation of the traditional welfare state is being conducted in cooperation with such groups as unions, church organizations, student organizations and economic nationalist groups. However, Susan Phillips has

pointed out that again, unlike the Canadian environmental movement, the women's movement in Canada has not been inclined to participate in "strategic partnerships" with the 'establishment' institutions of government and industry. Indeed, although the women's movement in Canada has a history of cooperation with the state, groups have fought hard to attain the liberty of arms-length funding in order to maintain their independence. However, a new form of partnership has been offered to NAC by the Canadian state that may signal the development of a new relation between the state and social movement organizations. NAC is currently represented on the federal Labour Force Development Board, a new para-state agency which contains representatives from labour and the private sector.[97]

A specific example of the pro-welfare state stand taken by the women's movement can be found in the treatment of the issue of violence against women and children. In recent years, at the urging of women's groups, pockets of the state provincially and federally have taken feminist analysis of violence against women and children seriously and new forms of state and criminal justice intervention have been developed that are more effectively addressing this issue.[98] Jacinthe Michaud puts it best when she asserts that, "The problematic of women as victims of violence has been incorporated into the welfare state system."[99] In general the women's movement has been supportive of government action in the area of violence against women. At times the role of government has been queried but for the most part women's organizations have pressured for greater, not lesser, state intervention.

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97 Phillips, *New Social Movements*, 31.

98 see Canada, Status of Women Canada. *Final Report of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Wife Battering*, June 1986.

99 Michaud, *Counter-Hegemonic Responses*, 211.

Jane Ursel is the first in Canada to theorize this pro-state stance. The conclusions she has drawn from her studies of state intervention in the sphere of violence against women have led her to criticize the radical feminist argument that patriarchy is omnipresent in the state.[100] Radical feminism has maintained the view that patriarchy precludes an effective response on the part of the state to the issue of violence. While never denying the presence of patriarchy in the state, Ursel nonetheless contends that moments present themselves where the interests of the state coincide with the interests of women's groups and that these moments must be exploited in order to benefit women.

While the issue of violence is an excellent illustration of how the movement is using the state for solutions, it is also a good example of how the movement is looking for help beyond the state. The women's movement is establishing new methods for dealing with violence against women without relying on the traditional forms of engagement with the state. NAC, for instance, has announced its intention to launch a community network for dealing with violence against women. The network will ostensibly have the effect of taking back the issue from the state and placing it in the hands of women and communities. The fall 1991 issue of *Canadian Woman Studies* is devoted to illustrations of the "strategies for change" pursued by women's groups across the country in the area of violence against women. Many of these groups are doing creative and innovative things to educate and empower women in violent situations and yet many do not have a funding relation with the state.[101]

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100 Jane Ursel, "Considering the Impact of the Battered Women's Movement on the State: The example of Manitoba," (unpublished).

101 "Violence Against Women: Strategies for Change," *Canadian Woman Studies*, 12, 1 (Fall 1991).

While this strategy signifies a turn toward civil society as a method of empowering it to deal with the violence issue, the women's movement nevertheless continues to press for reform and action at the level of the state. It may be asked why the women's movement has taken this two-tiered approach. It seems the enormity of the issue can not be adequately addressed by a state that does not have the resources or is unwilling to contribute the resources necessary to deal with this massive social problem. The women's movement is thus soliciting help from every corner of society; the discovery that the adversarial climate of the justice system of the liberal-state can not adequately resolve domestic violence; a championing of radical feminist dogma in an era when government is engaged in fiscal politics and is closed to women's politics- each of these may point to why NAC has chosen to broaden its strategy beyond traditional mechanisms and divert some of its attention to civil society.

NAC itself is ambivalent about locating attempts at social change in civil society for two reasons: first, because of its dominant place in society the state must remain involved and second, the women's movement must make sure that violence against women and children stays a women's issue, even while the wider society becomes aware of it. NAC has expressed skepticism about the recent mainstream attention given to the issue of violence against women and children especially as the issue has been absorbed to some extent by civil society, independent of women's groups. The White Ribbon Campaign and the nascent anti-male-violence men's movement are two examples of this.[102] While supportive of men's action on the issue of male violence against women, groups like NAC are frustrated and concerned that the work done by the women's movement will be overlooked given

[102]An example is Men Against Rape, a University of Victoria anti-sexual harassment, anti-male violence organization.

the disproportionate access to the media and to money that men have. Judy Rebick has asked why men can not join women's initiatives that are already in place to combat violence in women's lives.[103] In response to the White Ribbon Campaign in 1992, women's groups requested that the campaign direct its funds to women's services.[104]

It is important to note at this point that some of the radical feminist elements within the women's movement in Canada have always taken an a-state or anti-state approach for dealing in practical ways with the issue of violence in women's lives. Rape crisis centres and the shelter movement have largely been founded and run without the assistance of government or the interference that government funding entails.[105] Nevertheless, until recently (and now only minimally), the consensus within the women's movement was to participate directly with the state and thus to combine the radical feminist orientation to social change with a mainstream orientation.

The third political response of the women's movement to the crisis of the welfare state is a reiteration of the focus on the federal state but this time in the form of a broadening of the movement's agenda to encompass new concerns, specifically the constitutional question. It was noted above that the women's movement's close engagement with the free trade debate was unprecedented and challenged the conventional definition of women's issues and of the welfare society principle. In

103 Morningside, CBC. Interview with Judy Rebick, Spring 1993.

104 Sherri Davis-Barron, "White ribbons lead to tangle," *Ottawa Citizen*, November 24, 1992, B1.

105 It is likely that services to women provided by radical feminist groups are dependent to a limited extent on government services. For instance, Jacinthe Michaud explains that even the Quebec Coalition of Health Centres for Women, a radical feminist network that is non-participatory in relation to the welfare system, has "tiny links with governmental services, mainly through hospitals..." in *Counter-Hegemonic Responses*, 209.

the 1980s the outspoken concern of women's groups over constitutional renewal also reflects a new positioning of the women's movement within public debate. Engagement with constitutional issues illustrates, by definition, a focus on the state and as the nature of the women's movement's constitutional demands are revealed the focus on the federal, welfare state is only reinforced.

Before looking at those demands, a brief history of the relationship between the women's movement and the constitution in Canada prior to the Meech and Charlottetown rounds should be described. Even though the women's movement in the past did not take up the constitutional question as its own in any central way, there have been moments in Canada's constitutional history when the women's movement has raised issues of fundamental importance to women and, in so doing, has altered the path of constitutional renewal in Canada. Indeed, in her submission to the Ontario Committee on Constitutional Reform in 1988, Mary Eberts stated that "women's involvement on constitution-making has a long and significant history."[106]

That history begins in 1929 with the Persons Case. Eberts states that this case addressed "women's eligibility to sit in the Senate and their identity as persons under the Constitution."[107] Sylvia Bashevkin explains that the struggle to have 'persons' interpreted in the constitution to include women was initiated in 1919 by a small group of suffragists from Alberta associated with the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada.[108] They believed it was high time for the government of Canada to appoint a woman senator, which was impossible as long as the "qualified

[106] Mary Eberts, *Resources for Feminist Research*, 17: 3 (1988), 145.
[107] *Ibid.*, 145.
[108] Sylvia Bashevkin, *Toeing the Lines*, 17-18.

person" referred to in the BNA Act was considered legally to be male. The petition to the Supreme Court that these women initiated was defeated by the Court but was ultimately granted in 1929 by the British Privy Council, then Canada's final court of appeal.

After the Persons Case the women's movement involvement in constitutional matters was sporadic and relatively weak until the era of the Charter. Women would not become involved in the Constitution again until 1978 when they fought against the federal recommendation tabled at a constitutional conference that power over marriage and divorce should be devolved to the provinces.[109]

The struggle on the part of the women's movement over the inclusiveness of the impending Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the early 1980s marks a decisive turning point in the history of women and the constitution. The group that succeeded in pressuring Canadian governments to include gender equality rights in the Charter was the Women's Ad Hoc Committee on the Constitution. On the one hand, this women's group was very much like previous groups of women in Canada' constitutional history that have come together temporarily to address a constitutional neglect of women. The Committee was 'ad hoc:' it was established on a contingent basis for the sole purpose of achieving what it did ultimately achieve. Nevertheless, what sets the Charter struggle apart from other constitutional challenges of the past is that it changed forever both the overall orientation of the Canadian women's movement and the pattern of participation of the women's movement in constitutional debates.

109 Eberts, *RFR* ,145.

The particular ideological orientation within the women's movement that the Charter struggle represents and reinforces will be discussed below in conjunction with the other ideological responses of the women's movement to the altered landscape of the state. The effect that the relatively limited but decisive involvement of the women's movement in the Charter outcome would have on the participation and interest of the women's movement in constitutional issues is, however, pertinent to the present discussion. The Charter fight has been described by Susan Phillips as one of the major contemporary crises of the Canadian women's movement.[110] It had the effect of galvanizing and unifying a wide variety of women and women's groups around a single, constitutional issue. Phillips adds that the Charter struggle can be compared to the RCSW in its effect on the women's movement in that it ushered in a new "universe of political discourse" and thus increased "the scope of the questions deemed to be political by women's organizations."[111] The sustained and highly vocal presence of the women's movement during the constitutional debacles since the Charter, specifically during the Meech Lake Accord and Charlottetown Accord deliberations, signifies unequivocally that the constitution is a women's issue.

The constitutional demands made by the women's movement during the debates surrounding the Meech Lake and Charlottetown constitutional accords were concerned primarily with the issues of decentralization and representation.
The very nature of the critique of decentralization made by NAC and the Native Women's Association (NWAC) of aspects of the Meech and Charlottetown accords is an expression of the women's movement's continued focus on the federal welfare state. In recent constitutional debate NAC has continually made the argument that

110 Phillips, *Projects, Pressure and Perceptions*, 61- 64.
111 *Ibid.*, 63.

the central government is uniquely and ideally situated to institute progressive social reform and to distribute resources most effectively and fairly. While the site of debate has moved to the constitution, the argument is classically welfare society.

NWAC's critique of decentralization is different in the present case because it is directed at proposals for decentralization of federal legal jurisdiction between the federal government and aboriginal governments; status of welfare-state entitlements within native self-government are likely a concern but were not explicitly raised in the present case.

On the issue of federal decentralization NAC appears to hold a double position, maintaining at the same time a federalist position and a position favourable to federal-provincial competition. Representatives of NAC have said openly that the federal government is a better protector of women's rights than the provinces.[112] NAC rejected the restrictions on the federal spending power proposed by the Charlottetown Accord in areas of provincial jurisdiction such as health, social services and education precisely because it is suspicious of and uncertain about provincial government priorities in these welfare state areas.[113] Furthermore, at an academic conference on the Accord, Judy Rebick challenged the point raised from the floor that governments closer to the people, refering to the provinces, are surely the best at identifying need and delivering services. Rebick stated that for social movements it has not always been the case that provincial governments have been more responsive to their demands than the federal government. Rebick equivocated on NAC's centralist conviction, however, when she further responded

112 Hugh Winsor, "NAC wants Senate gender equality in deal," *Globe and Mail*, August 25, 1992, A3.
113 Judy Rebick, "The Division of Powers." Conference: "The Constitution," York University, September 23, 1992.

that it is the political orientation of the government in power that is a greater determinant of sensitivity to and action on women's issues. Rebick referred to a "creative tension" existing between the federal spending powers and the provincial jurisdictional powers that provides space for social movement organizations to move.[114] Two positions thus coexist without, it appears, having been clearly explored.

In spite of this double positin favouring both federal and provincial control, the overwhelming message of NAC is that any attempt to diminish the role of the central government in welfare state issues represents a challenge to the traditional dependence of the women's movement on the state. Policies that provoke a transfer of power from the public sector to the market (FTA; NAFTA) and from the federal government to provincial and local levels of government (Meech; Charlottetown) are understood as threats to the fabric of the welfare society and to the already fragile commitment of the state to improving the lives of women. National women's groups have assiduously lobbied the federal government in the past. The decentralization proposals of the last two constitutional deals potentially require these groups to now divide their struggle among ten provincial governments, two territorial governments and an indefinite number of aboriginal governments. In response to the suspension of rights that the Charlottetown Accord effectively meant to native women pending native self-government negotiations, Mary Eberts who was counsel for NWAC remarked, "'fix it later' is not an option for disadvantaged groups."[115]

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114 *Ibid.*

115 Mary Eberts, "Constitutional Referenda." Conference: "The Constitution," York University, September 24, 1992.

In the fall of 1992, NAC became an outspoken voice on the "NO" side of the Referendum question on the fate of the Charlottetown Accord. NAC's position was that the Accord's decentralization provisions not only threaten the constitutional rights of all Canadian women and most explicitly aboriginal women while strengthening the rights of governments but also threaten new and existing social programs.[116] NAC was of the view that the changes to shared-cost programs and the spending power contained in the Charlottetown Accord weakened the ability of the federal government to implement standards and programs that are universal in scope. Furthermore, the language of the so-called Canada Clause which confers special status on Quebec and Aboriginal governments was considered open to the interpretation that the equality rights guarantees within the Charter could be compromised in the name of collective rights, thus risking the violation of the constitutional rights of women. In this case, Charlottetown represented a decentralization of power where, one minute, women are within federal jurisdiction protected by equality rights, and the next minute are subject to a different jurisdiction where their equality rights are potentially undermined by priorities deemed essential to collective survival.

NWAC opposed the Charlottetown Accord in reaction to the Accord's provisions that enable the decentralization of power from the federal government to native governments.[117] It took this stand on the decentralization proposals with difficulty as it shares, with the aboriginal establishment, the commitment to the goal of self-government and the belief in the inherent right of aborignals to govern themselves. NWAC's contention, however, was that the nature of the Accord's self-government

116 "NAC Says No to this Constitutional Deal," (Flyer published by NAC,1992).
117 For details on NWAC's constitutional position, see Gail Stacey-Moore, "In Our Own Voice," *Herizons* (Winter 1993), 21- 23.

provisions insulate native governments from appeals to the equality rights guarantees of the Charter. Gail Stacey-Moore, NWAC spokeswoman, has explained that given the patriarchal nature of the aboriginal political establishment, aboriginal women cannot be expected to have faith that their rights will not be violated without Charter protection while the details of self-government are worked out and, once worked out, that self-government will guarantee respect for women's equality.

The decentralization proposals contained within Charlottetown force women and women's groups to repeat their struggles to make sure that women's equality is respected and to multiply their efforts on a variety of fronts to attract the attention of government. In the past, the federal government was the primary site of struggle determining those legislative and program initiatives important to women. With Charlottetown, national women's groups must divert their tactics and divide their activities among ten provincial governments and an indefinite number of aboriginal governments.

Of course, the women's movement in Quebec has a very different point of view concerning decentralization. Among Quebec women there is less uncertainty over the future of equality rights and the balancing of equality rights and collective rights, than there is for aboriginal women whose existing governments are relatively powerless politically, legally and financially. When considering the English Canadian women's movement as a whole, its position is generally the polar opposite of the Quebec position. The Quebec provincial government is considered to be more progressive than the federal government in Ottawa and the bureaucracy and duplication contained in federal/provincial relations is considered harmful to

social movements.[118]

What the Quebec women's movement and the Canadian women's movement do share, however, is the struggle for democratic representation of women and of women's groups. The arguments invoked in the constitutional debates around Meech and Charlottetown by the women's movement have been as much about the democratic character of the constitution-making process as they have been about the substantive issue of decentralization. The critique of free trade levelled against the government by NAC is closely related to its critique of the constitutional process: the government did not have a mandate to make these changes. During the Meech wrangle, "executive federalism" was widely criticized for its failure to consult the Canadian public and for its exclusion of certain groups, particularly First Nations and women. Underlying these criticisms is the assumption that Canada's elected leadership is not representative, and therefore that it does not have the democratic legitimacy to formulate and institute constitutional reform. At a conference on the constitution last year, Shelagh Day, then a NAC vice-president, pointed directly to this failure of democracy when she argued against the Charlottetown Accord for failing to entrench equality of representation in the Senate; Day asserted that the "credibility and output of the process will be enhanced by our inclusion."[119]

Not only is the process lacking democratic credibility but the output is tainted by the exclusion of women and of women's interests from the negotiating table. In fact, the women's movement has consistently linked the underrepresentation of women in the process to the failure to represent women's interest in the substance of the

118 Interview with Marie Lavigne, August 28,1992.
119 Shelagh Day, "Central Institutions." Conference: "The Constitution," York University, September 24, 1992.

accords themselves, the arguments against decentralization are a case in point. According to groups like NAC, the underrepresentation of women and women's interests at the constitutional table reflected an undemocratic process that has resulted in flawed constitutional accords. Time and again the testimonies of women's groups at constitutional hearings illustrate a strong sense of alienation and express the view that the representativeness of the process is intimately connected to the representativeness of the constitution itself.

In "We Can Afford a Better Accord: The Meech Lake Accord," the Ad Hoc Committee of Women on the Constitution made the following comment on the Meech process, linking it to the final outcome:

> We believe in a democratic process of constitution building and in our democratic right to shape the decisions that shape the future. Since this is not happening, we believe that, together, women and men will put a stop to this undeniably undemocratic process. But bad as it is, it is not just the process we object to. The substance of the Accord shows the evidence of too hasty a consideration, too hasty a process, and too small a group of Canadians to see the problems being created for those of us excluded.[120]

At the same Ontario government hearing on constitutional reform where the sentiments above were expressed, the DisAbled Women's Network also objected to the exclusionary nature of the process and content of the Meech Lake Accord. DAWN cited the threats to women's rights posed by the Accord and expressed vehement opposition to what it considered the awkward and hasty timing of the federal hearings, arguing that this made the hearings less accessible to its

120 The Ad-Hoc Committee on the Constitution, "We Can Afford a Better Accord: The Meech Lake Accord," *Resources for Feminist Research* ,17, 3 (1988), 143.

members.[121]

The Ontario government hearings on Meech also included a submission from the Congress of Black Women of Canada. Citing several clauses in the proposed Accord, the Congress' underlying concern was that "multicultural groups and others like native people" would not be treated equally under the Accord in relation to the dominant groups in English Canada and Quebec.[122]

The process and substance of the Charlottetown Accord were similarly challenged on the issue of representation by the women's movement. In spite of the wider participation of social movement organizations and individual citizens permitted at the Constitutional Conferences in 1992 and the widespread optimism about the outcome that this participation inspired, the Accord for many women would ultimately reflect "the tired elitism of Canadian federalism."[123] NAC would refer to the final Accord as the "First Ministers' Deal "[124] and in the fall of 1992, NAC argued against the Charlottetown Accord in the debates leading up to the referendum. According to NAC, the Accord not only threatened the rights and social programs that women had exhaustively fought for but also failed to provide for gender equity and minority representation in the Senate. Since the early 1980s, the women's movement in Canada has insisted that constitutional reform must minimally ensure women's representation in the Senate and on the Supreme Court.

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121 Elizabeth Stimson, Sharon Wood and Carol Popkey (DAWN), *Resources for Feminist Research*, 17, 3, (1988), 144-145.

122 Jean Augustine and Akua Benjamin (Congress of Black Women of Canada), *Resources for Feminist Research*, 17, 3, (1988), 144.

123 Barbara Cameron and Judy Rebick, *NAC's Response to the Report of the Special Joint Committee on a 'Renewed Canada' (Beaudoin-Dobbie)*, (Toronto: NAC, 1992), 1.

124 NAC, "NAC says NO" flyer ; and NAC, *Action Now* newsletter, (Sept/Oct. 1992).

NWAC also presented a case against the Charlottetown Accord on the issue of representation on behalf of its constituency. It challenged the underrepresentation of aboriginal women within the process and content of the constitutional deal that culminated in the Charlottetown Accord. NWAC went so far as to ask the courts to rule on the constitutionality of its exclusion from the constitutional discussions that included other major first nations' representatives, arguing specifically the possibility that native women's freedom of expression had been violated. NWAC also requested an injunction against the referendum on the grounds of its exclusion from the formulation of the Accord.[125]

Anne Bayefsky argues that it is the absence of NWAC from the constitutional negotiations that led directly to the interests of aboriginal women being ignored in the final accord. Referring to the decision of the Federal Court of Appeal that ruled in NWAC's favour, Bayefsky notes that "the Court's concern that the interests of native women would not be put forward at the bargaining table in their absence has been confirmed... [by] the legal text of the aboriginal self-government package."[126]

Some analysts go even further in challenging the present political and constitutional structures and the absence of women. Beverley Baines argues that the physical presence of women is not enough to make our political institutions inclusive. In "Gender and the Meech Lake Committee," Baines offers a compelling but disturbing analysis of the written proceedings of the parliamentary committee on the Meech Lake Accord. Her analysis exposes the depth and subtlety of the obstacles to representation in constitutional deliberation while pointing beyond to

125 Gail Stacey-Moore, "In Our Own Voice," *Herizons* (Winter 1993), 21.
126 Anne Bayefsky, "The Effect of Aboriginal Self-Government on the Rights and Freedoms of Women," in *Network Analyses: Reactions* (October 1992), 1-2.

what is likely a pervasive phenomenon in the overall political interaction between men and women. Baines suggests that a primary reason for why the demands of women's groups were not heeded by the committee or reflected in the final accord is that the demands were not properly understood by committee members. For one thing, the majority of positions on the committee as well as all of the leadership positions were filled by men. Furthermore, Baines found that the Committee's Report does not include excerpts from the submissions of women's groups and leaves the women witnesses unnamed, conspicuous only because male witnesses were not silenced in these ways.[127] Furthermore, and more significantly, the substance of the Report did not "represent what the women had actually said."[128] The Report that followed the committee's hearings and contains its recommendations misinterprets fundamental viewpoints expressed by the women's groups found in the minutes.

Baines concludes from her evidence that the women's organizations were speaking with a 'voice' that was different from the male-dominated discourse of the committee, leading thus to misunderstanding and misinterpretation and ultimately to exclusion.[129] Baines' conclusion suggests that even if women were represented in equal number with men on the committee and as witnesses the only way their interests would be recognized and consented to is if the men could learn the 'language' of their demands.

The history of the women's movement's relationship to constitution-making has been "long and significant," in Mary Eberts' words, though largely as a history of

127 Beverley Baines, "Gender and the Meech Lake Committee," *Queen's Quarterly*, 94, 4 (Winter 1987): 808- 809.
128 *Ibid.*, 809.
129 Baines, *Gender and the Meech Lake Committee*, 813.

exclusion: exclusion from participation and exclusion of interests. Interestingly though, the women's movement in Canada until the 1980s never pushed for women's representation in political institutions let alone in constitution-making. The RCSW Report and others found that the first wave suffragist movement did not position itself as a source for encouraging women to enter electoral politics. It merely assumed women's political involvement would logically follow the vote.[130]

In its section on "Participation of Women in Public Life," the RCSW Report itself only suggests that the federal government and political parties exercise their prerogative to improve women's participation in the political system. The Report expresses the need for a government to reflect the composition of its citizenry[131] but makes no explicit recommendations for the removal of what it recognizes as obstacles to the "genuine participation" of women.[132] The Report's position is that "very positive measures are needed... [but] the Commission does not believe that special consideration should be given to women..."[133] The RCSW Report did recommend that the federal government improve the representation of women on the federal judiciary[134] and in the electoral system but its position seemed primarily to be that the political underrepresentation of women was not an issue that should be taken up directly by the state.

Today, the issue is much more central to the women's movement in Canada and is not restricted to participation in constitution-making. Representation within the

130 Canada, RCSW ,*Report* 339.

131 *Ibid.,* 341;355

132 *Ibid* ., 355.

133 *Ibid.,* 356.

134 Beverley Baines, "Women, Human Rights and the Constitution," in *Women and the Constitution*, eds. A. Doerr and M. Carrier (Ottawa: CACSW, 1981), 43; and Janine Brodie. "Women and the Electoral Process in Canada," in *Women in Canadian Politics* , ed. K. Megyery (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991), 4.

state and political system as a whole is on the minds of Canadian women. Referring to the behaviour of political parties and women's groups, Chantal Maillé contends that,

> The 1980s saw the beginning of action more specifically oriented towards increasing the representation of women in politics and educating women in all forms of political participation.[135]

Maillé lists several of the women's movement's initiatives in the domain of improving women's political participation and representation. For example, in 1984 a group of women established the "Committee for '94," whose various activities are directed at the achievement of equal representation of men and women in the House of Commons by 1994.[136] Another national group, "Canadian Women for Political Representation," created in 1986 and several provincial women's groups such as the "Winning Women" network, also established in the 1980s, share the objective of accelerating women's political action and representation in electoral politics.[137] Existing women's organizations such as NAC and the Fédération des femmes du Québec have also taken steps to address the underrepresentation of women in the political process.[138]

The issue of women's representation as it concerns the constitution or other institutions of the state is the product of a strong social current that favours the view that civil society should be organizing the state and that state élites should not be determining the fate of civil society. There is a growing intensity in Canada of the politics of representation or politics of diversity.

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135 Maillé, *Primed for Power*, 26.
136 *Ibid.*, 27.
137 *Ibid.*, 27-30.
138 *Ibid.*, 27-28.

Research studies conducted for the *Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing* published in 1991 on the subject of women in Canadian politics all point to the need for greater representation of women in the House of Commons and in provincial legislatures.[139] In fact, the studies found that Canadian political institutions do not compare well with other segments of society. Janine Brodie states: "The most significant gender gap in Canadian society remains the glaring imbalance between men and women in the distribution and exercise of political power."[140] The studies stress, furthermore, that greater participation by women in electoral politics is not natural or inevitable and recommend, therefore, that a proactive policy of recruitment of women candidates and a reform of aspects of existing party and legislative structures and rules should be instituted.[141] One of the studies also cites the media as a subtle source undermining the status of female politicians.[142] The studies also consistently maintained that the chronic underrepresentation of women was undermining democracy. Indeed, the underlying justification for the recommendations offered by the authors is summed up by Kathy Megyery, the editor of the studies, when she states that, "a system that does not, over time, come closer to adequately representing its citizenship calls into question the legitimacy of its democratic institutions."[143]

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139 Kathy Megyery, ed. *Women in Canadian Politics: Toward Equity in Representation* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991).

140 Brodie, *Electoral Process*, 48.

141 See in particular, Janine Brodie, "Women and the Electoral Process in Canada;" Sylvia Bashevkin, "Women's Participation in Political Parties;" and Lynda Erickson, "Women and Candidacies for the House of Commons." In *Women and Canadian Politics: Toward Equity in Representation*, ed. Kathy Megyery (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991).

142 Gertrude Robinson and Armande Saint-Jean, "Women Politicians and their Media Coverage: A Generational Analysis," *Women in Canadian Politics: Toward Equity in Representation*, ed. Kathy Megyery (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991), 127-164.

143 Kathy Megyery, *Preface, Women in Canadian Politics*, ed. K. Megyery (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991), xvii.

Chantal Maillé, in a study published in 1990 for the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, states that "Today, women are still emerging from a long culture of exclusion from politics..."[144] Along the same lines as the Royal Commission's studies, she argues that this culture of exclusion within, for example, political parties, the Senate, band councils and crown corporations, will only be reversed with the introduction of new rules and standards to accomodate women. The obstacles in the way of women's political participation are not going to dissolve without affirmative action. Maillé stresses that women themselves must engage in affirmative action by, in particular, building non-partisan networks among women in politics and forging links between women's groups and women in political institutions.[145]

Maillé asserts that women must "step forward to take their rightful place as political representatives in Canada."[146] Politics and the state are as much the 'rightful place' of women as of men. The issues of representation raised around the constitution and the political system reflect the popular democratic perspective that the state should 'mirror' the diversity of civil society. Part of the argument made by the women's movement is that Canadian politics is undemocratic because women are present in neglible numbers and they are absent because there is no 'level playing field;' the rules of the game give men an unfair advantage. For instance, the constitutional debates were reprehensible because the executive federalism that defines them is anthrocentric federalism. Janine Brodie clearly articulates the argument that our democratic values demand representation of every segment of society when she says that it is important

> that our institutions reflect the composition of the Cana-

144 Chantal Maillé, *Primed for Power* (Ottawa: CACSW, 1991), 3.
145 *Ibid.*, 34.
146 *Ibid.*, 43.

> dian population and that our rule systems do not prohibit large segments of society from participating in the democratic decision-making process.[147]

There is a second component to the politics of representation illustrated by the women's movement's critique of the political system. Democracy not only hinges on the participation and physical presence of women but also on the representation of women's interests in all their diversity. Men cannot continue to make the paternalistic and essentially incorrect assumption that they can make decisions that are in women's best interests. By enabling women to participate fully, the political system would be enabling the airing of women's interests. Feminist research has found that women do indeed share a collective identity and collective interests.[148] Even if they don't, however, this does not justify their exclusion. Women must have the power to define problems and identify solutions that affect their lives. The discussion of women's constitutional history to the present day demonstrates that when the political process excludes women, issues affecting women are either ignored or distorted.

There are two recent examples where the connection between exlusion and representation of interests was raised by the women's movement. Ironically, the examples are of moments when the state actually was attempting to have women's concerns represented. Indeed, it was on the subject of the Mulroney government's two major initiatives addressing two major contemporary women's issues- the panel studying violence against women and the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies- that the representative and inclusive character of the Canadian state was again scrutinized and found wanting by the women's

147 Brodie, *Electoral Process*, 48.
148 Jill Vickers, "Getting Things Done," in *The CRIAW Papers* (Ottawa: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women).

movement.

In 1991 the federal government set up a panel to examine the issue of violence against women. Though NAC and other women's groups initially supported the panel, a few months after its establishment concerns were raised by these groups over the inadequate representation of visible minority women among panel members. Women's groups including NAC, the Congress of Black Women, the DisAbled Women's Network and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres ultimately boycotted the panel "over the issue of who is being represented and, by extension, over the appropriate discourse on the issue of violence."[149]

The other major initiative of the Mulroney government in the area of women's issues was the establishment of the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies (RCNRT) in 1989. Susan Phillips has explained that the controversy that ended in a lawsuit being filed by former commissioners against the Commission was a classic example of an ideological struggle over meaning. In Phillips' words the nine original commissioners on the panel were "divided between a rational science-medical perspective and a feminist one."[150] In this case, those commissioners with a feminist orientation to the issue maintained that women's unique experience of reproduction means that a women's perspective on the issue of reproductive technology is a priority.

The position taken by the women's movement on the constitution, the Panel on violence against women and the RCNRT, reflect the movement's ongoing battle to have women's worldview in all of its diversity acknowledged by and incorporated

149 Phillips, *New Social Movements*, 20-21.
150 *Ibid.*, 21.

into the state. The assumption of this politics of representation is that by neglecting the point of view of the women who will be subject to state policies these policies will not adequately reflect their experience. Thus where this neglect takes place oppression takes place. The assumption of the arguments made against the Panel by those women's groups that opposed it was that in failing to solicit and recognize the point of view of minority women the Panel rendered these women invisible. This is where the politics of representation becomes the politics of identity or the politics of recognition. Women's movement politics has moved into identity politics where the representation of 'women' has evolved into the representation of individual women or different groups of women, such as black, lesbian, feminist poet.[151]

In recent years identity politics have so dominated the women's movement that, arguably, as much energy and criticism has been directed internally to this question as toward the state. While women's groups were demanding that the state be more responsive to the diversity of civil society, the women's movement itself was undergoing a serious examination of its own representativeness. In the 1980s in particular, the women's movement would become fragmented but it also would be strengthened by its engagement with the politics of identity. Many Canadian women could not identify with the standard profile of the Canadian feminist who had been, since the first wave, predominantly white, middle-class and able-bodied and whose political priorities reflected this profile. These disenfranchised women came to establish their own organizations. Single-constituency organizations arose, such as the DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) and the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (NOIVM), to act as voices for

151 This is the identity that American feminist, Audre Lorde, gave herself.

women who experience multiple oppressions that condition their lived experience of sexism, making it very different.

The disillusionment with the mainstream movement that produced these single-constituency groups also forced the mainstream groups such as NAC to look inward and examine themselves. Today, the women's movement is preoccupied internally by questions of its own representativeness and is acting to sensitize its members and organizational structures to the issues of women's diversity. NAC's recent acclamation of Suneira Thobani, an immigrant woman of East Indian descent, to the post of president is not an accident.[152] This upheaval of consiousness-raising has been painful and though arguably the movement as a whole has made progress on these questions, many micro-level conflicts remain. The conflict over board representation at Nellie's, a Toronto shelter for women, is an illustration of the tension that still exists between the old guard and the new guard within the women's movement, in this case between white women and women of colour.[153] The debates among women written about recently in articles found in prominent Canadian magazines concerning the behaviour and treatment of June Callwood, a white woman, at Nellie's illustrates well the polarity as well as the solidarity between women on the issues of race and gender.[154]

The absorption of the women's movement into this politics of representation and identity can go a long way to explain its response to mainstream political and economic issues. Sylvia Bashevkin has pointed out that NAC's anti-free trade stand

152 The former editor of *Ms.* Magazine, Robin Morgan, said recently on CBC's As It Happens (July 2, 1993) that she intentionally recruited and advanced an African-American woman so that she was poised to succeed her as the new editor.

153 see Adele Freedman, "White Woman's Burden," *Saturday Night* (April 1993), 40- 44, 74- 84.

154 See Elaine Dewar, "Wrongful Dismissal," *Toronto Life* (March 1993), 32- 45; "Equal Time: Letters to the Editor," *Toronto Life* (May 1993), 14- 16; and "Letters," *Saturday Night* (June 1993), 9.

can be construed as an act of solidarity with non-white women, poor women and immigrant women- those women NAC had argued who would be most adversely affected by a free trade economy.[155] In Bashevkin's words, in relation to free trade, "NAC tried to influence policy outcomes for these women; in so doing, it helped to establish the Canadian women's movement as a vehicle for more than simply the aspirations of a privileged few."[156] The women's movement's own inner politics is providing the energy to the demands that the state recognize and represent those traditionally on the margins of its constituency. The women's movement is challenging the welfare state triumvirate of industry, labour and government. The crisis of the welfare state is thus not just an economic crisis but a political crisis of representation and of democracy. And the women's movement, in challenging the composition of the welfare state, is not just reacting to the crisis of the welfare state but is in fact provoking it.

Ideological Dimension

At an ideological level, how is the women's movement responding to the crisis of the welfare state? In light of the crisis of the welfare state, what is the women's movement's point of view regarding the state as an agent of social change? The ideological response of the women's movement has been ascertained by an examination of the ideological underpinnings of the economic and political responses of the women's movement discussed above and by looking at some of the recent debates by Canadian feminist theorists on the topic.

The ideological response of the Canadian women's movement concerning the crisis

155 Sylvia Bashevkin, *Free Trade and Canadian Feminism*, 371.
156 *Ibid.*

of the welfare state contains roughly three discernible strands. Although these ideological strands can be said to represent three separate discourses on the crisis of the welfare state, generally-speaking they share a fluid rather than polarized relationship within the collective consciousness and behaviour of the women's movement. Furthermore, although no rigid differences exist one discourse stands out, overshadowing the others. Indeed, the ideological response of the women's movement appears to broadly reflect the movement's long-standing but cautious embrace of the welfare state. On the part of the vast majority of Canadian women's groups there is little to no rethinking of their relationship to the Canadian state in the current context of possible changes in the structure and character of the welfare state. Strong support remains for the welfare state apparatus combined with the conviction that this apparatus must more effectively integrate women's needs either into existing programs, such as unemployment insurance, or by creating new ones that are more specific to women, such as national child care.

The second strand of the women's movement's ideological response does reflect a rethinking of the welfare state and the women's movement's relationship to it. Nevertheless, it does not represent a rejection of the traditional welfare state but indicates a shift in focus that is less a deliberate openness toward a "post-welfare" state, than a forced consideration of its possibilities for women. Post-welfare state can be defined as a devolution of power and activity to public terrain beyond the centralized nation state to locales such as the marketplace or municipalities, or simply a movement toward other arrangements between social and political actors.

The third strand of the ideological response does not reflect an embrace, cautious or otherwise, of the welfare state. On the contrary, it positions itself in opposition to

the collective enterprise that is the welfare state. The primacy of the welfare state, in this view, is replaced by the primacy of the individual. The engagement of the Canadian women's movement with the Charter and the associated 'rights' discourse that the Charter has consolidated moves the women's movement into a classical liberal understanding of the relationship between the individual and her community. This is the ideological shift, referred to earlier in this chapter, which took place when the movement first embraced Charter politics. Although the Charter will be used to diverse ends with diverse results for the latter relationship, its literal purpose is the safeguarding of the rights of the individual against the incursion of the state. In spite of provisions for collective rights, the stress of the Charter is on the autonomy of the individual.

The first and most dominant ideological disposition within the women's movement vis-a-vis the state is the one that seeks to preserve and expand the welfare state. This point of view carries with it a response to the crisis of the welfare state that is highly critical, reflecting a basic loyalty to the welfare state and the highly developed focus of attention on the nation state on the part of the Canadian women's movement. Concern is oriented at the loss of entitlement and representation that the current political and economic climate threatens. Though the movement is highly critical of the patriarchal slant given welfare policies in the past, it does not question the legitimacy of the welfare state *per se* but demands a shift in focus away from the traditional triumvirate of labour, business and government that composed the welfare state. For instance, in the Action Canada Network NAC has joined forces with male-dominated unions to fight cutbacks to the programs originally directed at a male workforce, while demanding that policies

be tailored to women's labour force needs too. Indeed, NAC is probably the most visible national exponent of this 'ideology' in its insistence on expanding, not contracting, the welfare state and in its questioning of the motives behind deficit-reduction, bureaucratic streamlining and the rhetoric of partnerships employed by current governments. Government policies justified in the name of the fiscal crisis of the welfare state are received by NAC as attempts to divert attention from the real problems of economic injustice and sexual inequality.

Groups such as NAC condemn the deference that the new right expresses in favour of the private sector as a deliverer of services and of the privatization of government concerns. Relinquishing previously public sector responsibilities to the marketplace challenges the "welfare society" principle that the state is in a unique position to foster and preserve community. Government initiatives of decentralization that devolve jurisdiction or the financial burden from the federal government to the provinces are also greeted with opposition by the women's movement. NAC's constitutional position was a highly centralized vision of the country. It supported an "asymmetrical federalism" that would have enabled a form of self-determination for Quebec and for aboriginal peoples and the maintenance of a strong central government in Ottawa to govern the rest of the country. Of course, women's groups have fought the *de facto* decentralization that has seen the provinces shouldering a greater share of welfare state financial responsibilities in recent years but the principle of decentralization itself has also been roundly denounced. While municipalities have not been, in the history of the Canadian welfare state,[157] supportive structures of social policy the national

[157] See Pran Manga and Wendy Muckle, "The Role of Local Government in the Provision of Health and Social Services in Canada," In *The Provision of Health and Social Services in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1987).

women's movement has demonstrated a noticeable indifference to ideas of transforming those structures to improve services to women and communities.[158] One indication of this indifference is the virtual absence of written material on the subject of the potential of municipal structures.

The strength of the women's movement's ideological conviction about the Canadian welfare state is demonstrated by the evolution of the welfare society model it has nurtured. The women's movement not only defends the welfare state but has broadened the reach of its state-centered welfare society principles. The very presence of the women's movement, most remarkably NAC and NWAC, in the constitutional debates in the last decade as well as its constitutional standpoint expand both the definition of women's issues and the original conceptualization of the welfare society. The social feminist foundations of the welfare society notion never gave priority to a constitutional or mainstream political involvement on the part of women as a way of achieving welfare society objectives. Furthermore, tying necessary social policy reform to specific constitutional reform was also new and served not only to broaden the welfare society rubric but also ensure its consolidation. NAC's demands for a social charter to be appended to the constitution would have potentially meant the extension of social welfare guarantees previously unheard of in the history of the Canadian welfare state. Law professor Errol Mendes contends that NAC's position anticipates a second generation of equality rights he calls, "welfare rights."[159] In the tradition of its feminist forebears, NAC has doggedly pushed at the boundaries of the welfare state

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158 see Caroline Andrew, "Getting Women's Issues on the Municipal Agenda: Violence Against Women." Conference: The Urban Affairs Association, April 1993.

159 Errol Mendes, "Distinct Society, Aboriginal Rights and Fundamental Values." Conferenc: "The Constitution," York University, September 24, 1992.

to arrive at the welfare society.[160]

In its defence of the welfare state the Canadian women's movement, and in particular feminist theory, has not only attacked cutbacks or policies of decentralization but has developed a critique against what is currently being theorized about the state. The critique holds that the state has been hijacked not just by anti-state politicians and oppressive economics but by commentators and academics who have forecasted the demise of the welfare state as we know it.[161] What the feminist critique challenges is the view that the ability of the state to act as an "integrative agency" has been tried and has failed. The state, in this view, has become technically and financially impossible to govern. The administrative responses of the state have foundered either because they no longer serve the needs of capital or because the demands on the system have become too great. As American feminist academic Anna Yeatman observes, the opening up of politics to a greater plurality of voices "becomes defined as the crisis of "ungovernability" or- another favoured term- as "pluralistic stagnation." "[162] The democracy inherent in the participation of marginal groups is not grasped by this viewpoint. In this climate, women's interests and women's groups are labelled "special interests" and special interest groups. Indeed, during the referendum campaign, NAC and specifically Judy Rebick were singled out as special interests burdening the process and undermining Canada for their own immediate gratification. That their voices broadened the scope of debate and thus of democracy itself was not widely perceived.

160 see Carole Pateman, "The Patriarchal Welfare State," in *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (1989).
161 see Bob Jessop, "Towards a Schumpeterian Workfare State? Preliminary Remarks on Post-Fordist Political Economy," *SPE* (Spring 1993): 7- 39.
162 Yeatman, *A Feminist Theory of Social Differentiation*, 295.

While the overloaded-state hypothesis cited above is generally a centre-right point of view, the left has also accused the women's movement of focussing too rigidly on the state not because its pluralism burdens the process but because it is not pluralistic enough. This view holds that the women's movement's championing of community and its focus on the state represent a utopian aversion to conflict and difference. The notion of massive, institutionally-driven social change embodied by the state is dismissed. Not only is the state impotent but also, as one Quebec-French sociology journal recently announced, "le social devient évanescent."[163] The social- what makes up civil society- is not quantifiable or knowable, it is dispersed and fragmented and too complex for the state and public policy to capture. Previous attempts on the part of the state to satisfy social need have ended in homogenization and totalitarianism, it is argued.

Feminists respond by arguing that the 'social' is indeed too complex to capture but only within the modes of representation that currently dominate politics and not because the state as a social form is bankrupt. The welfare state, they contend, is 'fading away' because patriarchy and patriarchal capitalism are finished with it. Such theorizing is thus a backlash in response to the collapsing of white, middle-class, male privilege, according to this view. Indeed, at the basis of feminism's objection is the argument about representation: in their absence from political institutions, women have not yet had the chance to decide if the state works or not. Nancy Harstock asks,

> Why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic? Just when we are forming

163 P. Hamel, H. Manseau et G. Saez, "Repenser les solidarités étatique," *Revue internationale d'action communautaire* , 19, 59 (Printemps 1988): 6.

> our own theories about the world, uncertainty emerges about whether the world can be theorized. Just when we are talking about the changes we want, ideas of progress and the possibility of systematically and rationally organizing human society become dubious and suspect.[164]

The pro-welfare state disposition that dominates the ideology of the national women's movement shares with others the view that the crisis of the welfare state is merely an "impasse."[165] The demands that continue to be made of the welfare state and the persistence of the welfare state ideology within the women's movement reflect the view that the current economic, political and ideological climate emphasizing a smaller state is a transitory phenomenon that will pass with the onset of economic renewal and new governments. The women's movement's current preoccupation with the politics of identity and with issues of representation means that in the minds of women's groups the central issue is not whether the state is the best institution for achieving social change but whether the state in its current form is sufficiently responsive to the needs of all citizens in Canadian society.

The second ideological thread running through the women's movement is being expressed by those who are currently looking at the opportunities being provided for the movement by government initiatives that are altering the traditional welfare state configuration. As explained earlier, radical feminism in Canada has always provided the movement with an anti-state discourse that has either condemned or at the very least been skeptical of dependency on a patriarchal state. This skepticism

164 Nancy Harstock, "Foucault on Power: A Theory for Women?" in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. Linda J. Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1990),163- 164.
165 John Myles, "Decline or Impasse? The Current State of the Welfare State," *SPE* (Summer 1988): 73-107.

has had a pervasive presence within the Canadian women's movement.

Paradoxically, the radical feminist view takes the existence of the state for granted. Some within the women's movement who have in the past advocated participation with the state now however are minimally questioning the practicality of this participation in an era when the leverage of the nation state is in decline. Here the effectiveness of the welfare state apparatus as the ideal site for social change is being questioned and thus some of the observations of postmodernism are being entertained. Threads of an argument are in evidence regarding the possibility of new forms of social institutions and of new roles for existing political actors and public spaces. This does not mean a rejection of government *per se* but signifies an incipient problematizing of the centralized, large state.

Some feminists go so far as to contend that new institutional relationships may hold greater promise than the structures currently in place. (Lavigne 1990) This point of view, nonetheless, is wary of what the crisis of the welfare state and particularly the new right platform may mean for the maintenance of women's past achievements as well as for current initiatives.[166] Marie Lavigne, the president of the Quebec Status of Women, contends that the women's movement must remain vigilant. Lavigne, nevertheless, suggests that realignments of relationships between levels of government and between the public and private sectors can ultimately be more beneficial to women. The decentralization that these shifts imply can have the effect of making services more relevant to grassroots concerns.[167] Also, creating more local points of entry for the women's movement at which to enter

166 Marie Lavigne, "Les structures institutionelles en condition féminine: le cas du Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec," (unpublished), 22.
167 *Ibid.*, 24.

mainstream institutions may be more beneficial to women in the long run.

Jane Ursel, who as discussed earlier offers an analysis of the potential benefits to women of state action, nevertheless questions the wisdom of an almost exclusive focus on the central state on the part of the women's movement. Ursel warns that the globalization of domestic economies now taking place at an unprecedented scale likely means that the women's movement's terrain of struggle is also shifting. As capital out-manoeuvres the nation state undermining the traditional tools of the welfare state, the women's movement will face "a new set of strategic challenges" just as, Ursel adds, it is "getting good" at gaining ground within the state.[168] In other words, the commitment to the welfare state insisted upon by much of the women's movement may ultimately be detrimental to its goals. Ursel asks that the women's movement begin to analyse for itself whether a devolution of welfare responsibilities to the provinces will not force a localization of women's strategies and actions.[169] Furthermore, as supra-national politics become an increasingly central terrain will supra-national women's organizations not become necessary for confronting and contesting the global division of reproductive labour that is the inevitable outcome of the current globalizing of **productive** labour?[170]

Though neither Ursel nor Lavigne advocate the abandonment of the welfare state principle, their suggestions that the women's movement pursue different avenues indicate a certain ideological flexibility that is also apparent in some decisions taken in recent years by women's groups. In a speech given last August, former NAC president Lorna Marsden argued that local and supranational politics would

168 Ursel, *Private Lives*, 302-303.
169 *Ibid.*, 303.
170 *Ibid.*, 303-304.

increasingly determine the direction of social life and that women's groups must begin to bear this in mind if they are to achieve any of their goals.[171]

In spite of its overwhelmingly state-centered politics, NAC is engaging in non-traditional strategies of larger-scale private sector fundraising and community-based action on the issue of violence against women. Those segments of the women's movement that have generally taken a single path either by way of the state, as in NAC's case, or by way of anti-institutional feminist collectives, are loosening these commitments. Even organizations with structures and philosophies that have their roots in radical feminism have demonstrated an unprecedented ideological flexibility. In Ottawa recently the Sexual Assault Support Centre, a women's service with a radical feminist history and orientation, held a fundraising luncheon at the Westin Hotel with high profile American feminist Gloria Steinem as guest speaker. The event was tied to a commercial tour of Steinem's latest book and attracted an audience of mostly professional and upper-middle class women.[172] This kind of fundraising event is a new phenomenon and indicates, among other things, a less dogmatic approach to achieving the goals of social change. The approach is arguably less the product of proactive decision-making than a reaction to financial necessity. Though these groups have always been strapped financially, unmanageable increases in the demand for their services and increased awareness of the depth of the social problems they are trying to address have contributed to this incremental turn to a more pragmatic politics.

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171 Lorna Marsden, Keynote address. Conference: University of Waterloo, Waterloo, August 22,1992.

172 While the use of Steinem indicates a turn away from traditional radical feminist tactics, Steinem herself has become a very public advocate for the creation of new institutions and new spaces by and for women, a strategy with radical feminist roots. She suggests the establishment of small "revolutionary cells" and social institutions based on the consciousness-raising techniques of the early second-wave but embodying a more sophisticated analysis of family, law, market... Of course, it is no surprise that a leading American feminist would be advocating the establishment of non-state spaces given the way the women's movement in the U.S.A. has had to evolve with little to no help from government.

Within this second ideological response the sensibilities of postmodernism are in evidence. Jane Ursel and Marie Lavigne, as well as the remarks made by Lorna Marsden, open up the debate within the women's movement to postmodern themes of difference, diversity and decentralization. They recognize the challenges confronting the central state and the implications this has on the strategies of the women's movement and are asking women's groups to recognize the stubbornness of these forces. Ironically, it is the politics of identity, while engaging forcefully with the state and demanding that it be more inclusive, that is more comfortable with multiple and variable points of reference and that challenges the very notion of a centre- a central institution, a central site of politics, a central story.
There is a third aspect to the women's movement's ideological response to the crisis of the welfare state which has to do with the gaining momentum of equity feminism and of "equality-seeking groups" in Canada. This third aspect is not a direct response to the crisis of the welfare state as in the previous two cases but a concurrent trend within the women's movement that contains the possibility of implicating the welfare state. Equity feminism is a feminism that seeks to integrate women into mainstream institutions based on the assumption that women are equal to men and that the dominant Canadian institutions must reflect this essential equality.[173] Equity feminism defends the primacy of the individual and of civil society and challenges the perogative and the autonomy of the state.

Though the women's movement since the first wave has always pressured for the recognition of women's equal rights it was not until the advent of the Charter that equity goals became a priority and the judicial system became a vehicle of choice. Chaviva Hosek explains that the struggle for political rights, which is exactly what

173 Naomi Black, *Social Feminism* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 54- 60.

the Charter struggle was, has not dominated the agenda of the Canadian women's movement in the past as it has in the case of the American women's movement. Because of the United States' particular political system and political history the American women's movement has sought to achieve social change primarily through the mechanisms of the American constitution and legal system and thus with the assistance of a "rhetoric of rights".[174] In contrast, watershed events in the history of the Canadian women's movement such as the Royal Commission on the Status of Women demonstrate the legislative and administrative approach to social change taken by this country's women's movement.[175] In Hosek's words: "the Canadian women's movement has not developed in a political atmosphere highly charged with the rhetoric of political rights. From the outset, women's groups have pursued a wide range of economic and social objectives."[176]

Furthermore, in reference to the Charter struggle, Hosek maintains that "the drive for equal legal rights did not spring spontaneously from within the women's movement."[177] According to Hosek, the only reason women's groups in Canada began to focus decisively on equality rights is because the federal government had introduced the possibility of entrenching a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Canadian constitution.[178] Two other factors can explain the well-spring of interest within the women's movement and of support for the initiatives of the Ad Hoc

174 Chaviva Hosek, "Women and the Constitutional Process," in *And No One Cheered: Federalism, Democracy and The Constitution Act*, eds. Keith Banting and Richard Simeon (Toronto: Methuen, 1983), 280-281.
175 *Ibid.*, 281.
176 *Ibid.*, 281.
177 *Ibid.*, 283.
178 *Ibid.*

Committee among women's groups and individual Canadian women.[179] Firstly, the frustration that had developed within the women's movement over the inadequacy of the Canadian Bill of Rights in promoting women's equality can be said to have culminated in the struggle to enshrine equality rights in the constitution.[180] Secondly, a discourse on rights and an individualization of society had been developing within Canadian society as in most western countries for several decades; phenomena which the women's movement was caught up in, albeit with a strong streak of equivocation.

At the core of the equity feminist or equality rights argument is an individualist conception of society- that the individual is at the centre and that the integrity and dignity of the whole or of the community depends on respect for the integrity and inherent dignity of the part, or the individual.[181] Indeed, equity feminism casts women as individuals first and not as a group with a collective experience or political interest. This accent on the recognition of and respect for the individual is reminiscent of wider social currents and currents of thought. Postmodernism and identity politics both conclude that there are a multitude of centres and authentic sites of truth and not one, true centre.

Equity feminism defined strictly in opposition to social feminism assigns to the state the narrow role of legal definer. The state exists to define the legal limits of collective interest against those of individual interest and does not exist as a builder

179 Although the Ad Hoc Committee was a small group of about thirty women, Phillips has said that it "also reached a very wide spectrum of women's groups who actively came to support equality rights and it formed alliances with other Charter-susceptible groups..." In Susan Phillips, *Projects, Pressures and Perceptions*, 62.
180 Margaret Buist, "Elusive Equality: Women and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms," *RFR*, 17, 3, (1988), 103; Baines, *Women, Human Rights and the Constitution*, 41- 43.

of community and deliverer of welfare as social feminism would have it. According to equity feminism, the proper use of the Charter is to ensure that legislation does not have the effect of disproportionately burdening women's lives relative to men's. Though there are equity feminists in Canada who are not social feminists as they support minimal positive use of the state to improve women's lives, many if not most social feminists would agree with the ends of this equity feminist use of the Charter. Nevertheless, social feminists also contend that the state must intervene proactively with the other, non-legal tools at its disposal to improve the lives of women not leaving it up to individuals and civil society to deal with the often arbritrary consequences of legal decisions. There is a basic ambivalence felt within the women's movement about the usefulness for women of the Charter in particular and the law in general.[182] Canadian feminist activists and academics have found Charter litigation to be a mixed blessing for women.[183] For instance, it has been found that the sexual equality rights guarantees in the Charter have, in several cases, been used successfully against women with the effect of reversing women's equality gains.[184]

Nevertheless, there is little indication that the women's movement is prepared to abandon even the limited recourse the law and the Charter can provide. Just as they have become increasingly critical of the usefulness to women of the Charter, these same groups fought the dismantling of the Court Challenges Program- a program that enabled the litigation of Charter cases by individuals and groups who could not normally afford what are extremely costly legal endeavours and would have the effect of testing the possibilities of the Charter and its usefulness to excluded groups.

182 See Carol Smart, "Feminist Interventions and State Policy." (unpublished); and Mary Jane Mossman,
183 Gwen Brodsky and Shelagh Day, *Canadian Charter Rights for Women: One Step Forward or Two Steps Back?* (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1989).
184 *Ibid.*, 47- 68.

Furthermore, these same women are looking for ways to more broadly define Charter rights as a way to force the state to preserve and improve its social service role.[185]

The variability and flexibility of ideological responses to the crisis of the welfare state reflected in the assorted and often contradictory strategies pursued by the women's movement indicate that there are no clear distinctions between different and even opposing currents of thought and activity within national Canadian women's groups. The dominant current seems to be one of the coexistence of a variety of strategies and responses with an accent on the welfare state.

185 Anti-poverty groups used Charter to try to force government to increase social welfare spending. See Sean Fine, "Raising the Issue of Letter of Law," *Globe and Mail*, March 30, 1993, A3.

Conclusion

It has been shown that the response of the Canadian women's movement to the crisis of the welfare state is multi-tiered and contradictory. The women's movement has reacted to a political and economic climate hostile to the welfare state with strategies that range from increased lobbying and activism on a wider spectrum of political, social and economic issues to ensuring that more women obtain decision-making power in the private and public sectors.

The Response: Statist *and* Ambivalent

Can the response of the women's movement to the crisis of the welfare state, taken collectively in its economic, political and ideological incarnations, be said to illustrate the ambiguity that has marked the history of relations between the women's movement and the Canadian state? On the one hand, the movement's dominant voice, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, is clamouring for a reinstatement and strengthening of the welfare state. On the other hand, some feminists are looking outside the welfare state at other, increasingly compelling sites of political struggle in what they perceive is an era of localizing and globalizing forces which are leaving the nation state behind. The latter point of view has not had much currency outside feminist theoretical debates and the country's largest women's organization and lobby group with the greatest presence within mainstream politics and media, the National Action Committee, is relentlessly committed to the welfare state and to insisting on the role of the central

government in improving the lives of women. The answer, then, is that the two-tiered strategy that is characteristic of the past persists today: dominant state-centeredness combined with a certain ambivalence toward the state.

Possible Directions for the Future

But does the current crisis of the welfare state not pose a new problem to the women's movement in its relationship to the state? The double strategy was formulated at a time when there appeared to be a choice between participation with the state and an a-state or anti-state orientation. Today, the reactions indicate that this choice positions itself differently. Although there is a continuation of the pattern of the past, a continuation is not the only trend in evidence. Indeed, the beginnings of a major shift are perceptible.

Firstly, social movement politics is increasingly becoming a politics of desperation. This politics of desperation leaves groups without the option of choosing between mainstreaming or disengagement. The withdrawal of funding from the state means that the women's movement must direct its appeals for support toward a broader constituency within civil society that is beyond the state and beyond its traditional social group. This shift is exemplified by the greater flexibility being shown by radical feminist groups toward finding a broader funding base. Another example comes from those women traditionally supportive of participation with the state. Although, in most cases, their support for government intervention has not abated they have declined to rule out the possibilities for women that may exist through other avenues, such as global politics or the private sector.

Whereas those women's groups now mired in the politics of desperation have had

their choice between mainstreaming and disengagement diminished, some within the women's movement have never situated themselves within that dichotomy and thus never conceived of it as a choice. The refusal to recognize the dichotomy between mainstreaming and disengagement, always evident within red tory feminism, is the second standpoint that seems to have gained greater currency with the crisis of the welfare state. The appearance in recent years of feminist-inspired philanthropic organizations such as the Canadian Women's Foundation is an example of how segments of the women's movement who have never shunned the private sector are now actively embracing a market-oriented strategy for change. Furthermore there seems to be a growing segment of younger feminists who do not relate to the conflict between mainstreaming and disengagement and who thus do not conceive of red tory feminism as a sell-out, faux-feminism as some older feminist activists do. This younger generation of feminists is entering the private sector for employment in large numbers and thus will invariably develop a different relationship to the market than their predecessors in the women's movement.

The two apparent trends noted above share in common a problematizing of the state and thus are part of that segment of the women's movement in Canada that has a relationship of one form or another to the Canadian state. Nevertheless, a certain number of women's groups in Canada have represented a third trend by choosing to conduct themselves outside the standard discourses and avenues of politics. The longstanding paradigm of mainstreaming and disengagement is not applicable to these groups. Ecofeminist groups, for instance, do not have the state as their point of reference, but instead define themselves in relation to their immediate community or bioregion. As mentioned earlier, radical feminism is

hostile to the state and dominant institutions but nonetheless always defines itself in relation to the state. Even if it was only to ultimately distance itself from the state, the rejection by radical feminism was an explicit one. Ecofeminist groups, on the other hand, appear genuinely indifferent to the state. Ecofeminist politics is not state-centered but community-centered and supports direct participation and direct democracy- both impossibilities at the level of the modern, highly bureaucratized and geographically-distant nation-state.[1]

The three trends described above are all possible signs of the future of Canadian women's movement politics. The trends anticipate a politics characterized by diversity in ideology and sites and a more autonomous relationship with the nation-state. The evidence collected here, however, suggests overwhelmingly that the women's movement in Canada is currently responding to the crisis of the welfare state with only an incremental distancing from the nation-state. State-centeredness remains the dominant approach of the women's movement in Canada.

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1 Janet Biehl, *Finding Our Way* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1991).

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