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WOMEN AND GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP

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A new generation of women leaders is carrying out an invisible revolution. All over the globe certain women have been asserting collective rights to protect their children against pollution, disease, and homelessness. Not content merely to fight for improvements in the lives of their individual families, many of these women leaders struggle to assure community rights rooted in human need according to an interpretation of democracy that they themselves are developing through their actions.[1] In various resistance movements from the seventies on, women activists have transformed desires to protect their children and their homes into political claims about what democracy should mean. For these leaders and the movements in which they participate, democracy entails human rights based on a standard they themselves define. The implicit theory of human rights they promote seeks to make community health a corollary of justice, deriving its power from common sense notions of human need rather than codified laws.

Beginning in the late seventies and early eighties, white working-class women in the neighborhood known as Love Canal, New York, and poor black women in rural Warren County, North Carolina, not only tried to protect their loved ones and their communities when their families' health was threatened, but certain women assumed responsibility to speak for all those affected. Leaders demanded that authorities listen to their proposals for solutions. And when officials ignored them or ridiculed their concerns, these women mobilized their neighbors to resolve their problems. In the face of recalcitrant authorities, such women formed organizations that carried on demonstrations to press their views on a larger public. Their claim was that justice required them to intercede. By justice, they often meant more balanced behavior, an end to life-threatening pollution, and equal distribution of social necessities. These women leaders from working-class and subordinated ethnic and racial groups even challenged rights of private property and unfettered markets in the name of a clean and safe environment.

From their ranks, grassroots leaders such as Lois Gibbs, Luella Kenny, Dollie Burwell, and her daughter, Kim Burwell have emerged. They and thousands of leaders like them value the wishes of ordinary people and believe that they can decide how to transform their own and their communities' lives according to democratic principles that entail social and economic as well as political equality. "Building democracy community by community," as Lois Gibbs says, these women are creating new standards for justice and human rights.

Though widely used, the term grassroots does not have a commonly recognized meaning. Grassroots generally implies being widespread and common, in the sense of being universal. The term also suggests being outside the control of any state, church, union, or political party. To the women claiming its provenance, being from the grassroots generally means being free from any constraining political affiliations and being responsible to no authority except their own group. Though such women generally recognize their seeming powerlessness against their corporate and governmental opponents, they also assert their moral superiority, their right to be responsible citizens, not according to official laws, but on their own terms. It is no exaggeration to say that these women leaders and hundreds of thousands like them around the globe are transforming politics.

Yet, women such as Dollie Burwell, Kim Burwell, Luella Kenny, and Lois Gibbs are hardly household names. Neither was the reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1955 when he became the leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.[2] Even after he and Miss Ella Baker organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference known as SCLC, few in the United States paid them any heed. Ella Baker, a longtime community leader, and the local women organized in church and civic groups all over the South were scarcely visible.[3] Today that invisibility extends to women working in their communities and linking communities through new patterns of leadership.

Prime examples of new women's leadership can be found in struggles around protecting homes and the environment. To understand how new forms of leadership work, it is useful to begin with Lois Gibbs, Luella Kenny, and the women of the Love Canal Homeowners' Association who first alerted Americans to the dangers of toxic wastes in their own backyards and basements. As far back as the early seventies, people in Love Canal had found black sludge in their basements. Many of them had gardens where nothing would grow, but they tried to ignore the problem. Lois Gibbs could not, however, ignore her son's physical ailments. Within two months of starting school, Michael, an otherwise healthy child, began having convulsions, and the doctors thought he might have epilepsy. Then he developed asthma, followed by bladder irritations and rashes. After that, his white blood count declined.[4] Hoping simply to get her son out of the school, which seemed to be damaging him, Gibbs went to the principal. He asked for a note from the boy's doctor. Even though Gibbs came back with two notes saying her son was sensitive to medications, and therefore should be removed from exposure to chemicals, the school board adamantly denied that any health hazard existed. They refused to transfer the Gibbs boy. Unable to get her child out of the contaminated school, she began contacting her neighbors to see how their children were doing.

Shy and inexperienced, Gibbs forced herself to go door-to-door to discover what people in the larger community knew about what was going on at Love Canal. She began to canvass people in her neighborhood, gathering up other women who told of fertility problems, repeated miscarriages, still births, children born with

deformities, and other children suffering from neurological diseases. The women could not at first believe what was happening to the neighborhood where they had thrown down roots and where they had felt lucky to have homes. Love Canal, a housing development in the city of Niagara near the falls in northwestern New York State, was an ideal working-class housing development. It provided suburban homes where in the early seventies, for a $200 down payment, and $150 a month rent, young, blue collar families could be homeowners. What the homeowners did not know is that the Hooker Chemical Corporation, a subsidiary of the Occidental Petroleum Corporation, which produced pesticides, plastics, and caustics, had dumped over 82 different compounds in the canal between 1947 and 1952, according the New York Times.[5] The city of Niagara Falls and perhaps even the U.S. army joined Hooker in using the canal as a landfill for fifty years. Together they discharged up to 20,000 metric tons of toxic wastes, including pesticides and transformer oil tainted with PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl), containing dioxin, a deadly chemical found in DDT and Agent Orange.[6] Like asbestos, dioxin is believed to be dangerous to human health in quantities of a billionth and in some cases a trillionth or quadrillionth proportion. The pollutant attaches itself to other chemicals like benzene and toluene and travels with them through water and leaches into ground water if the water table is too high. Known to cause central nervous system disorders, severe rashes, liver and bladder ailments, still births, and miscarriages, dioxin has been considered one of the greatest of all environmental hazards. According to reporter Mike Brown, "The mere tracking of minuscule amounts of dioxin on a pedestrian's shoes in Seveso, Italy [where a chemical plant blew up] was of major concern, and according to [another commentator], a plant in Amsterdam found to be contaminated with dioxin had been "dismantled, brick by brick, and the material embedded in concrete, loaded, at a specially constructed dock, on ships, and dumped at sea, in deep water near the Azores."[7]

A few years after Love's canal was filled, in 1956 the chemical company handed over the land to the city of Niagara for a nominal one dollar price with the proviso that the company not be held responsible for any health damage that might arise. They permitted a school and a housing development to be built over the landfill, providing modest homes for young working-class families. Because they owned these homes and had to pay mortgages on them or risk losing their investment, the families could not simply leave and move elsewhere. Terrified, many of the women tried to get help from authorities. At first dismissing the women's concerns, public health officials then attempted to limit their intervention.

When the local people realized what was happening to their community, they formed the Love Canal Home Owners' Committee (later Association), which ultimately gathered five-hundred families as ongoing members. Formerly docile housewives began in 1978 to became enraged citizens, determined to win recognition of their predicament and redress of their grievances. Over four years they met with government representatives, carried out demonstrations at

government offices, political conventions, and in their neighborhood, hoping to dramatize what was happening to them. Periodically they lived in hotels at the government's espense while authorities weighed the risks versus the expense of buying out the homeowners and permitting them to move away. Once the homeowners had succeeded in having their mortgages bought out, Gibbs and her children moved to the Washington, D.C. area to continue the work she had begun at Love Canal.

Gibbs's formed an organization, the Citizens Clearinghouse For Hazardous Waste, to meet the needs of others who wanted to fight back, as she and her neighbors at Love Canal had, against companies that damaged the environment and against government bureaucrats who underestimated their determination to save their families from destruction. Luella Kenny, whose seven year old son died of kidney failure presumed to be the result of dioxin later found in the creek in which he played at the bottom of his yard, sits on the board of the clearinghouse, but she also directs the Love Canal Medical Trust fund, distributing the financial settlement a group of Homeowners won for the ailments they've developed from living over a toxic waste dump. Today, the clearinghouse coordinates the efforts of seven thousand grassroots environmental organizations all over the United States.

Dollie Burwell, who in 1982 helped launch the movement for environmental justice, linking civil rights and environmentalism, continues to work in The Warren County Citizens against Toxic Wastes. She also serves as Registrar of Deeds for Warren County, North Carolina; sits on the boards of the United Church of Christ Commissions for Racial Justice and the Committee for Church and Society and acts as a local leader of SCLC. But few outside the movement or the region know anything about her. Her daughter Kim, an activist in the Leadership Initiative Project, a branch of the Youth Task Force, which allies with the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice, leads a Southern grassroots youth crusade, engaging youngsters from fifth graders to people in their twenties, as she herself is. By focusing on local schools, civil rights, and the environment, Kim Burwell helps empower a new generation of leaders many of whom will remain in their home towns in the southern United States to create a permanent core of citizens with a vested interest in local politics and the necessary skills to make their voices heard.

Dollie and Kim Burwell, Luella Kenny, and Lois Gibbs all uphold a sense of justice that transcends any other kind of law or politics. That sense that they can decipher the just from the unjust and that they can join with others in the pursuit of justice marks this new generation of women's grassroots leaders from leaders who have preceded them. A theory of leadership that explains the activities of women such as these and countless others rests on the idea of charisma as distinct from mere celebrity.[8] They are charismatic in the sense sociologist Max Weber meant it, insofar as they appear to have inherent magical qualities of authority that justify their ethical mission. Yet unlike leaders who stand aloof, acting as stars, participating only in the most

publicized meetings, these women work with rolled up sleeves, paying as much attention to the nitty gritty of daily organizing as to making the points that register at the national level. In doing so, they create new political cultures.[9]

Weber and his followers viewed charisma as a quality associated with breaking from the established order by recourse to a conception of moral authority that placed issues in entirely new contexts and provided new meanings.[10] Though three of the four women focused on here are deeply religious, their charisma lies not in their religion, but in their commitment to promoting new ethical principles as the basis for democracy. Their moral fervor challenges the meaning of human rights and justice as the women have known them. In Weberian terms, these women are prophets: lay people who evoke a higher moral order.[11] They would not blaspheme their inherited religions by claiming to be prophets, but by promoting ethical agendas for transforming society, they fulfill Weber's definition. What they are doing is reclaiming human rights on their own terms, re-defining humanity and making demands for the social and economic support necessary to sustain it. Such women, with their strong personalities, abilities to pitch in, and high morale, gather together people with different backgrounds, areas of expertise, and status, helping to create egalitarian movements.[12] While grassroots leaders seem to enhance the ability of groups to reach a higher moral plane, they do not stand out themselves so much as they seem to help the community come together.

The grassroots leaders considered here, despite their similarities, differ in the kind of leadership they exercise. Dollie Burwell has the mind of a crafts woman. She can imagine an improvement and carry it out from start to finish. She can also dig in at the person-to-person level, going door to door, registering voters as happily as when participating on presidential committees on rural development. The goal for her is always social justice, that concept some still think is utopian but she thinks is attainable. Whether she is in the forefront, arguing before cameras, or in the background, acting as a peace monitor in the South African elections in 1994, she is always at the service of the same cause: creating a just life for everyone on earth. For her, that includes a healthy dose of democracy.

If Dollie Burwell is like an artisan, seeing individual projects through from start to finish and participating whether or not she leads, Lois Gibbs, Luella Kenny, and Kim Burwell are more like orchestra conductors. All can play most of the instruments, but what they usually do is put the notes together to create an ensemble whose power surpasses those of the individual tones. A synergy of sound.

Dollie Burwell fought against the dumping of toxic wastes in her backyard in Warren County in rural North Carolina. In order to resist attempts to "develop" her region as a dumping ground for the entire southeastern United States, Burwell called on civil rights organizations who helped mobilize masses of people. Besides launching a movement linking civil rights and environmentalism, she

works through a variety of organizations dedicated to social justice. The story of how she became a leader really goes back to the end of July 1978, when nearly 31,000 gallons of transformer oil filled with PCB was dumped along two-hundred miles of roads in fourteen counties in central and northern, North Carolina.[13] The Ward Transformer Company in Raleigh employed a New York trucking firm to dispose of the transformer oil. The firm "obtained a 750-gallon tank and installed it in back of a truck....[V]alves were run from the tank through the wall of the truck so that fluid could be drained at will." Then the truck simply drove along at about 20 miles per hour dribbling the contaminated oil along the highway.[14]

Little was done with the polluted soil for four years while the courts tried to decide how to dispose of it. The spill, lying as it did along the roadways, adversely affected local people, who generally treated it as they would a natural disaster. A sixty-eight year old woman, who lived with her sister along one road, described what life was like after the dumping: "There was a brown streak along the highway..." and the smell was "so strong that we had to roll our glasses up, and even with the glasses up it could get in your eyes and burn." They "rode by this stuff for months and months with [their] glasses rolled up, and it was awfully strong," she claimed.[15] In fact, the contaminated soil remained on the road for four years.

It seemed as if miscarriages increased, while children were born with defects all along the roads where the toxic liquids rested. In 1980, a local physician, Dr. Brenda Armstrong, claimed to be seeing increased incidence of congenital illnesses among her patients. Three weeks after the spill, Vicky Jordan, who lived about thirty feet away from one of the right-of-ways where soil was contaminated, had a still birth. A year later, she had another child who suffered from heart defects and lived only eight months.[16]

Then in the fall of 1982, twelve women who came in contact with the spill were found to have suffered contamination of their breast milk with Aroclor 1260, the same exact form of PCB that was in the transformer oil. Most of the women lived along the road; one, Diane Griffen, 34, of Raleigh, had been looking at some land to buy and had noticed a "black, oily substance" on the road when she was two weeks pregnant.[17] All of this was what experts considered anecdotal evidence, but local people, calculating the increased threat, got worried. Still they didn't blame the state government, which they thought had their best interests at heart. But instead of incinerating and thus neutralizing the forty-thousand cubic yards of contaminated soil resulting from the oil dumping, the state decided on the cheaper method of simply disposing of it in a landfill.[18]

Dollie Burwell, a housewife, mother, and legal secretary in Afton, North Carolina, at first believed that the government would act justly, in the interest of all the people, and find a safe way to get rid of the tainted soil. Despite suffering racial discrimination and segregation until the seventies, and despite the bad taste that lingers from having been given broken-down equipment

because she went to segregated schools, Dollie and her neighbors maintained their faith in justice and could not believe that the state would make them the repositories of toxic wastes just because their community was poor and black. Little could Dollie have imagined that the governor would recommend and the Environmental Protection Agency would approve a 142-acre site near her home. Although the EPA had stipulated that dump sites be at least fifty feet from the water table in dense clay soil, the site where 142 acres were targeted for the landfill at Afton was within fifteen feet of water-- and the soil was sandy. But, to Dollie's horror, on June 4, 1979, the EPA waved requirements for clay soil in the case of Warren County.

More than any case that had come to light earlier, the case of potential PCB pollution in Afton opened the eyes of people in the United States to the relationship between seemingly powerless, poor and isolated people of color and the pollution of the soil and water supply.[19] Afton, North Carolina, is a largely black town in Shocco Township in Warren County in rural North Carolina. According to sociologist Robert Bullard, Afton, was chosen for suspicious reasons among which is the fact that "Warren County has the highest percentage of blacks in the state ....," so although blacks constituted barely one-quarter of the state population, they were 63.7 percent of the county population.[20]

When the Environmental Protection Agency refused to take action by testing those along the highway to see how the chemicals may have been affecting them, and when the state moved inexorably to deposit the contaminated soil in Afton, Dollie Burwell and Ken and Deborah Ferrucio, recent White immigrants to Warren County, began to organize, arguing that their community's health was in danger and that they had to take action. The state, required to hold public hearings, scheduled them at Christmas time for early January 1979. Despite the constraints of the holiday season, Dollie Burwell alerted all the women and local ministers she knew; she also got word to SCLC. But Dollie did not even begin to suspect the magnitude of the problem when she organized her neighbors and fellow parishioners to ask questions at the January 1979 hearings.

A group of people, mostly women, had formed the Warren County Citizens Concerned about PCBs, and Dollie became an active member. Now convinced that Governor Jim Hunt didn't really intend to stop with the 40,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil, but planned to turn the 142 acres in Afton into a regional dump for toxic wastes, Dollie and her neighbors succeeded in making that impossible.

In 1982, Dollie Burwell, determined at all costs to keep her neighborhood from becoming a toxic waste landfill, turned to her church and to the civil rights groups of which she had been a part since her childhood.[21] Sharing experiences of racial oppression and a history of fighting for racial justice, SCLC, the United Church of Christ, and the local people of Warren County set out to make their plight known. Dollie roused her neighbors and fellow parishioners, most of whom were parents who believed in the justice of their cause. Ken Ferrucio made contact with the New York Times and the Washington Post.

The government scheduled the first dumping in Afton for Wednesday, September 15, 1982. Dollie, her neighbors, and the local pastors, many of whom like the Reverend Leon White had planned to engage in civil disobedience, were ready to meet the trucks. Since by the early eighties, demonstrations themselves occurred infrequently, and the connection between civil rights and environmental issues was a novelty, some local TV stations and even the news media turned their attention to how events were unfolding.

When the first of 7,000 truckloads of contaminated soil rolled down the road, four-to-five-hundred demonstrators, Dollie and her eight-year-old daughter Kim among them, tried to stop the truck in front of the Coley Springs Baptist Church, a short distance from the proposed dump. Highway patrol police dressed in riot gear descended on the demonstrators. Chanting "Oh Lord, don't let 'em drop that PCB on me," 55 people moved onto the paddy wagons. The protesters, who were also singing "We Shall Not, We Shall Not Be Moved" and "We Shall Overcome," recalled civil rights demonstrators of earlier decades.[22] Yet, the arrests themselves were notable: Never before had so many women demonstrated around an environmental issue and never before had authorities treated protesters against a hazardous waste facility so forcefully.[23]

Since Dollie had presumed that people who knelt to pray in front of the trucks would face arrest, she had urged her neighbors to decide whether to practice civil disobedience and go to jail, or whether to disperse when the highway patrol gave their orders. Worried about what would happen when people who had never before engaged in civil disobedience faced the police, Dollie was aghast when ten-year-old Kim announced that she planned to go along with Dollie on the first day of the demonstrations. When the police arrested Dollie, Kim-- who had been cautioned that her mother might be arrested--broke out sobbing. CBS Nightly News carried the image all over the United States. The sight of the child weeping and the largely black female crowd entering the paddy wagons once again proved the justice of the cause--otherwise why would apolitical, predominantly black women and a little child take such action.? The press converged on Warren County to cover the story of black and white men, women, and children kneeling down in the road in front of the trucks. During the first week of demonstrations, between September 15 and September 22, 1982, the police arrested more than 268 people, mostly African-American women, including Dollie several times. Two-hundred men, women, and children marched three-to-four miles every day and stayed in jail to protest against what was happening to them. At school, Kim organized her classmates to write letters to the governor. As Kim says, she has been a grassroots leader since she was ten.

During the initial demonstrations, people got out on their own recognizance, but second offenders like Dollie had to post $500 the second day. Nevertheless, she and many others kept returning to the demonstrations.[24] At the end of the second week of the protests, Dollie and a group of other women decided that they had to remain in prison a few days to show that they meant business. Ann Sheppard Turner, the lone woman in the Wilmington 10 [a group of civil

rights activists who were charged with murder and jailed for two years in the early seventies before being exonerated]; Martha Nathan, widow of a Communist Workers Party member slain in 1979 in Greensboro, North Carolina, in a confrontation with the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party; and Evelyn Lowery of the SCLC joined Dollie in refusing to pay bail.[25] They spent several days in jail, dramatizing their special commitments as mothers as well as citizens to fight for racial and environmental justice. Kim took the bus from school to jail every day to visit her mother and then went on to the Coley Springs Baptist church where she ate dinner and did her homework.

When I asked Dollie Burwell why there were so many women in the demonstrations, she replied that "More women participate. Even in the hearings, you have more women." "You have more women at church.... More women saw the need to do something....It was the first time they really got involved. They saw it as someone destroying what my community is, destroying black folk and poor people," Dollie Burwell explains. "When you come in and say we gotta save our lives or we gotta save our children's lives or we've gotta save our homes from this poison, black [mothers] can relate." When the need to take care of themselves became clear, according to Dollie, "[women] in Warren County didn't really consider it as an environmental movement. People talked about their land, their surroundings, their health, the fact that they [were] poor would mean they [had] no health [care]."[26]

Burwell helped lead this movement as one among many interested in justice. As early as high school, Dollie had been a leader in her community, urging fellow students to stay in their schools with their Black teachers and Black principals but to demand equal facilities. She still winces when she remembers how she lost the chance to compete in a state-wide typing contest because she got one of the many bad typewriters that jammed, thereby slowing her down. Very little has slowed her down since. She exercises her leadership as one among many. When I asked Dollie how she knew what to do and what gave her the courage to act, she says that she just did what was necessary, that "there are hundreds of Dollie Burwells all over the South." Certainly, Dollie could not have mobilized her community if the other women of Warren County had not agreed that justice required that everyone help dispose of the waste, but Dollie's ability to shine her light on the path to justice has gained her the respect of the entire community. Justice seemed to require that everyone share the discomfort. But justice was not what the governor had had in mind when he sighted the dump in Afton.

Dollie Burwell and her neighbors later learned how unjust the disposal of uncontrolled hazardous waste is in the United States. According to the report issued by the Committee on Racial Justice of Dollie's church, the United Church of Christ, "three out of five African Americans or Hispanics in the United States live in a community with one or more uncontrolled hazardous waste sites. This represents more than 15 million African Americans and eight million Hispanic Americans."[27]

Even though other environmental activists had carried on demonstrations in various places in the United States, the largely poor African-American demonstrators in Afton became, according to anthropologist Harriet Rosenberg, the first people arrested "in relationship to grass-roots anti-toxic movements. Not since the civil rights movement had African-American people in the South mobilized in such large numbers to demonstrate that they had reached the end of their rope and wouldn't have their human dignity and their very lives discounted because they were black and poor."[28] Afton, though poor and rural, mobilized against the dump, transforming their struggle into one for "environmental justice" and against "environmental racism."

Although the movement did not keep the 40,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil away from Afton, the women of Warren County did prevent the government from establishing a regional dump there, as Dollie Burwell suspects the governor had initially planned. Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. belatedly met with residents of Afton to express his concern about their health once they were stuck with the dump in October 1982.[29] Right now the 13-foot hole dug to capture water flowing through the facility has two and one half million gallons of water with high concentrations of PCB and traces of Dioxin, the most deadly chemical pollutant known. Dollie, her daughter Kim, the Ferruccios, and many of their neighbors have continued organizing. Just this year, they succeeded in getting the government to agree to detoxify the dump with which they have lived for more than thirteen years.

Kim Burwell, having grown up as Dollie's daughter in the movement for social justice in the South, has an historical vision and a sense of group process that lead her to work through a single organization, the Leadership Initiative Project, to generate new communities among young people. The people who head organizations assume responsibility for the continuity of their institutions at the same time as they try to express the opinions of the people who constitute the organizations. But they have greater difficulty than the grassroots artisanal women in forming alliances and folding the groups in which they work into other organizations.

The women featured here have linked social need with democracy by forcing the government to buy their contaminated homes in Love Canal, New York; and by attempting to prevent the dumping of soil laced with toxic wastes in Warren County, North Carolina. They have grown from individuals fighting to survive to members of communities with collective identities. Taking for granted that all human beings are entitled to safe housing and a clean environment and that sometimes women must secure them, women in the United States and around the globe frequently have united in social movements. Whether as a means of maintaining everyday life in the poor neighborhoods of East London that historian Ellen Ross has documented or of helping sustain a community denigrated by authorities as Dollie and Kim Burwell have done, both survival and protest frequently rest on loose networks with strong bonds.[30]

One theory that helps clarify what these women are doing comes in the work of sociologists Naomi Rosenthal and Michael

Schwartz.[31] Emphasizing the distinctions among three different kinds of associations, they identify one type of national organization they call "federal movement organization." This group, including the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the National Organization of Women (NOW), for example, are governed by formal rules and regulations, and directed by leaders, whose power and influence differs markedly from that of ordinary members.

The second group or "local movement organizations," may or may not be branches of federal organizations like SCLC or NOW, but these associations exercise a great deal of autonomous judgement. With easy relations between people designated as leaders and the rest, local movement organizations are nevertheless membership groups, whose support can ebb and flow.

Most relevant for this discussion is what Rosenthal and Schwartz call "primary movement groups." Distinguished by informality, these groups usually depend on regular contacts between individual members in their buildings, church groups, or supermarkets. Rosenthal and Schwartz claim the cohesion of such associations can be found in the regular contact, friendship, informal ties regularly reassessed, and recognition of leadership that emerges in groups that vitiate any distinctions people may make between public and private life.[32]

Despite my initial argument that grassroots women leaders are carrying out new kinds of struggles, recognition that democratic political ideas and practices can develop through everyday associations makes it possible to acknowledge the similarities of the Burwells, Kennys, and Gibbses and other women who attempted to improve everyday life through democratic organizing in the past.[33] For instance, women's campaigns to reform society contributed to utopian socialism, Chartism, anarchism, and to the organization of labor.[34] Women's historical attraction to decentralized, religious and political movements and their involvement in contemporary environmental, peace, and communitarian struggles also derive greater clarity when they are examined in the context of frequent attempts to fight for the survival of the community.[35] In fact, many of the patterns of organizing by neighborhood and through huge demonstrations to make politics incorporate social needs by opening up a free space have long been common to women's movements.[36]

To the extent that the Gibbses, Kennys, Burwells, and their allies expect to democratize everyday life, they take part in a tradition of mobilizing to substitute human need for all other values. What is new is that instead of disappearing after initial grievances have been aired, or instead of being absorbed into larger, more complicated, hierarchical organizations, the new democratic organizations of women have been able to sustain themselves over long periods of time and over great geographical distances.

If these new movements and their new leaders are so important, why have they not had greater impact? What effect can local associations that are so idealistic and nearly invisible have on "real" politics where elected officials run governments and negotiate with other governments at every level? If democracy

refers merely to political campaigns and voting rituals organized by professionals and conflicts get resolved only according to the dictates of power and property ownership, can there be any hope of transforming society to assure its benefits for all? Lois Gibbs, Luella Kenny, and Dollie and Kim Burwell think so. They believe in justice and think they can achieve it through the introduction of new ethical values.

These women have had the experience of righting wrongs, of securing justice by working with people face to face, and they have created informal organizations and loose networks to keep their gains and teach others how to win their collective rights. Also, having coordinated their activities with people in other regions and countries, they know that their experiences of local control are compatible with solving national and international problems. The injunction of the Third World Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985 to "Think Globally and Organize Locally" has become a powerful slogan for ordinary women throughout the world. Without writing down what they are doing and without contacting professional politicians and experts for advice about how to achieve their aims, poor and working-class women have been extending their reach beyond local grievances to express broad democratic goals. Because of their loose organizational forms and informal leadership styles, women's grassroots protest activities have been largely overlooked or underestimated, especially in regard to their political significance for democracy and ethical beliefs in human rights.

Gibbs, Kenny, and the Burwells have all learned skills and accumulated knowledge that they share with others who keep joining the ranks. But they exercise leadership in different ways. To an extent Gibbs, Kenny, and Kim Burwell, by accepting leadership of organizations, making sure that the whole job of planning, coordinating, and campaigning gets done, miss the day to day pleasures and mobility of simply acting as members of a group. Lois Gibbs talks about the loneliness of being the one responsible for cheering people on, keeping their spirits up, having no one in whom to confide her own doubts, no one on whose shoulders she can cry. Gibbs and others who head grassroots organizations must be ready to carry their institutions alone while encouraging others to assume more responsibilities.

Dollie Burwell leads in a different way, acting as a facilitator, expressing the views of people she talks to, working with individuals, shaping them into self-administering communities. Burwell, by acting as a political intermediary, helps rejuvenate the organizations in which she participates. While all these leaders serve the people, Kim Burwell, Gibbs, and Kenny basically sustain organizations; Dollie Burwell shares herself, empowering other women like her who lack her experience. Yet, they all raise politics to a higher moral level.

How then could all this be going on without the public noticing? In part, it is because grassroots movements are mainly concerned with local issues, with what affects ordinary people every day. The media and public opinion is preoccupied with the

spectacular: with the activities of celebrities. What's more, the participants in grassroots movements are ordinary women, who orient their activities to accomplishing necessary tasks, to providing services rather than to building power bases. Therefore, the work they do and the gains they make hardly seem politically significant.

Yet, these grassroots leaders are not modest. In fact, they have assumed special positions as spokeswomen for women's rights as human rights. They link civil rights, welfare reform, and environmentalism--and some of them are feminists. Cora Tucker, a speaker at the "Women and Toxic Organizing" conference the citizens clearinghouse organized in 1987, explained: "People don't get all the connections. They say the environment is over here, the civil rights group is over there, the women's group is over there, and the other groups are here. Actually all of them are one group and the issues we fight become null and void if we have no clean water to drink, no clean air to breathe and nothing to eat. They say 'Now Miss Tucker, what you really need to go back to food stamps and welfare. Environmental issues are not your problem,' and I say to [them] 'Toxic wastes, they don't know that I'm black.'"[37]

Dollie Burwell concurs, and they and others like them have attempted to rectify the situation by working with a variety of community-based organizations and participating along with Lois Gibbs in the Citizens Clearinghouse. These and other women grassroots leaders, by asserting their own ideas about what constituted justice, by attempting to prevent the dumping of soil laced with toxic wastes in Warren County; or by getting evacuated from their homes in Love Canal, formed collective identities, a sense of having a legitimate right to stop injustices. Rooted in the belief that all human beings are entitled to safe housing and a clean environment and that frequently women have to secure those rights, women's efforts to protect their communities frequently have transformed themselves into popular movements that confront the state.[38] Homemakers in Love Canal began by protecting the safety of their homes, and wound up alerting the country to the poisons beneath the soil of homes throughout the nation. Local housewives and ministers in Warren County realized that their neighborhood had been chosen for the landfill because their neighbors were largely poor, black, and thought to be politically powerless.

The particular brand of justice women evoke in these kinds of movements rests with fundamental human rights that no existing government or legal system now promotes. But these rights--to eat, have shelter, remain well, and live in a safe environment--are so much a part of what every human being in every culture knows is necessary to survival that only tyrants are willing to say that others should not strive for them. Women such as those in Love Canal and Warren County increasingly have compared their own collective treatment at the hands of powerful companies and governments that endangered the health of their families to violations of justice and human rights. And these women have not been alone. In grassroots movements all over the world, women

activists have integrated social and economic demands into their conceptualization of human rights. To win their demands, women have formed networks and carried out mobilizations to win their rights.

No one explains such mobilizations better than Elizabeth Jelin, the Argentine sociologist, who has argued that campaigns such as those these women carried on "should not be interpreted in political terms (if by this we mean the struggle for power), but rather as practices concentrated on the construction of collective identities and on recognition of spaces for social relations." These social relations provide, according to Jelin, "a new means by which to relate the political and the social, the public and private world, in which the every day social practices are included alongside and in direct connection with ideological and institutional politics."[39] I think these new social relations go even farther to legitimate demands for new political arrangements rooted in a new idea about what constitutes human rights.

In different cultures and historical periods, the obligations people collectively and individually undertake in democratic societies presuppose that authorities will concern themselves with meting out equal justice. When those in power fail to honor perceived rights of women--which certain women presume justice includes--those women may call into question the entire system of politics. This is precisely what happened in Love Canal, New York, and Warren County, North Carolina. But unlike other leaders and activities that have undermined the political systems we know, discrediting democracy itself, popular movements of women worldwide have been attempting, through claims for justice and human rights, to reorient politics as we have known it in a far more just and democratic direction.

Lois Gibbs, Luella Kenny, Dollie Burwell, and Kim Burwell along with tens of thousands of activist throughout the world have embarked on a prophetic mission to create a new global community and the notion of women's rights as human rights is intrinsic to it. Women's human rights now promise the right to a good life, free from torture, intimidation, scarcity, and pollution, with access to good education, health care, choices about childbearing, and meaningful work.

The Burwells, Kennys and Gibbses are pathfinders, mapping out new routes to democracy. The women concerned with human rights internationally commit themselves to practical transformations in everyday life through collective action to achieve justice. That form of justice has never been codified in national or international law, but the increasing frequency with which women's groups have called for it in the twentieth century indicates that justice as a social as well as an ethical goal may be closer at hand than any of us had previously imagined.

Yet, in the far-reaching debate about social movements that has engaged many of the leading international social scientists, these women's movements, their demands that political authorities meet ethical standards, and their calls for justice have received little attention. Because such groups seldom leave records, because leadership in larger organizations frequently passes to men, and

because journalists and scholars focus on national organizations, local and primary groups connected by networks tend to disappear from view. Those works that have dealt with women's efforts to transform conditions under which they and their families live have largely treated them as peripheral to the real conflicts.

Yes, the prophetic tradition these women represent is visionary in its efforts to substitute universal human rights based on ethical programs for the political and social systems that now prevail. Yes, these women lack proposals for specific alternative systems of government and economics to replace the old ones; but they do challenge corporations and governments which hope to continue excluding moral issues from politics. Rather than accept the separation of social need from politics, the Gibbs, Kennys, and Burwells place their hopes on democracy.

Democracy is certainly not possible in the new millennium if it only applies to politicians elected to office through the work of campaigners who then withdraw and expect their candidates to intuit their will. While direct democracy, according to which we each negotiate for ourselves and our communities, is impractical on a national and international stage, representative democracy does not work without the continued activism of many ordinary citizens. If activists' views cannot and should not always prevail over other interests, their opinions certainly deserve an equal hearing with those of elected officials. Without citizens' commitments to put their own bodies on the line and their willingness to demonstrate in front of courthouses and congresses, there can be no democracy. In the United States or South Africa, many of the principal political problems concern providing for human needs, about which grassroots activists have extensive experience. Moreover, elected officials require the constant encouragement of people who know what is happening at the local level.

Of course, grassroots activists themselves can always stand for and be elected to office as Dollie Burwell has been in Warren County. But even they need to be in constant contact with the people who remain doing the everyday tasks that make all societies function, applying democratic principles to daily life. The question is not about principled leaders; it about how to factor in committed citizens like most of the women discussed here, who work maintaining and re-orienting activities that sustain and improve the conditions for social life and democracy.

The activities of the Burwells, Gibbses, and Kennys over the past few decades makes it seem that democracy as a process by which people collectively decide their social priorities is impossible without ongoing mobilization of the kind they turn to as their principal tool of direct democracy. Whether one focuses on the social division of labor by sex; on the egalitarian potential of which democracy is capable; or on these new notions of human rights that emphasize social need, the existence of the silent revolution in which the new women of courage are engaging indicates new and promising directions for democracy.

ENDNOTES

1. For a related argument about how contemporary grassroots movements especially among women of color in the United States employ justice as their motivating force, see Iris Marion Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

2. The boycott rested on the organizational abilities of the Montgomery Women's Political Council, made up of local African-American women like Jo Ann Gibson Robinson. See Jo Ann Gibson Robinson, The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It: The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson. Edited, with a foreword, by David J. Garrow (Knoxville, Tenn: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987.

3. The most complete account of the contributions Miss Ella Baker made to constructing a social movement that enabled masses of people to be leaders can be found in Charles M. Payne, I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1995).

4. Lois Marie Gibbs, Love Canal: My Story. As told to Murray Levine (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1982), p. 10.

5. The figures on dumping come from the New York Times, which claimed the chemical company dumped metal barrels in the water or along the banks of the canal. Then Hooker sold the land to the School Board. See Donald G. McNeil Jr., "Upstate Waste Site May Endanger Lives," New York Times August 2, 1978, pp. A1, B9.

6. Love Canal is one of the best studied instances of toxic waste damage in the world, and there are numerous books and articles about it. For a sampling of work, see Adeline Gordon Levine, Love Canal: Science, Politics, and People (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Company, 1982); and Michael H. Brown, Laying Waste: The Poisoning of America by Toxic Chemicals (New York: Pantheon, 1979; 1980), p. 5.

7. Brown, Laying Waste, pp. 52-53.

8. Contemporary ideas about charisma rest on the theories of Max Weber, who argued that the quality entailed the properties of magic that were incompatible with the modern, scientifically rationalist world, though it constituted a form of authority, along with legal and rational systems and traditional systems. For the original formulations of Weber's ideas about charisma, see, Max Weber, The Sociology

of Religion Translated by Ephraim Fischoff. Introduction by Talcott Parsons.(Boston: Beacon Press, 1963) and Max Weber, Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building; Selected Papers. Edited and with an introduction by S.M Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

Given the time when Weber wrote and his privileging of one form of technical, scientifically based rationality over all other system of ordering priorities, it is not surprising that the theory entirely ignores gender and women. But the fact that so little attention has been paid in recent works is quite distressing.

For a sampling of how the concept of charisma has been used to discuss political authority, see S.N. Eisenstadt, Power, Trust, and Meaning: Essays in Sociological Theory and Analysis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Richard J. Ellis, "Explaining the Occurrence of Charismatic Leadership," Journal of Theoretical Politics, Vol 3, no. 3 (1991): 305-319; Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in Culture and Its Creators: Essays in honor of Edward Shils. Edited by Joseph Ben-David and Terry Nichols Clark, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977) pp. 150-171; Douglas Madsen and Peter G. Snow, The Charismatic Bond: Political Behavior in Time of Crisis (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991); Edward A. Shils, The Constitution of Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

9. The subject of political culture has become very important to social historians trying to explain how collective groups can sometimes resist authority by insisting on new meanings for old practices. Many of us, building on the work of anthropologists have studied how parades, festivals, and customary gathering such as Fourth of July 4th celebrations can become occasions to hold political leaders and governments accountable for repression as well as to celebrate unity. Without changing political institutions, people can sometimes change political relationships through cultural means by playing with the meanings of symbols and rituals. Applying cultural theories to consider the political uses of motherhood, I have shown that women have sometimes used motherhood symbolically to pursue the interests of their families and communities.

In addition to my own Red City, Blue Period: Social Movements in Picasso's Barcelona (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), some of the works that consider cultural politics are the articles in Culture, Power and History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory Edited by Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Lynn Hunt, Politics, Culture and Class in The French Revolution (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); David Kertzer, Ritual, Politics, and Power (New Haven: Yale

University Press, 1988); Pamela Radcliff, From Mobilization to Civil War: The Politics of Polarization in the Spanish City of Gijón 1900-1939 (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming); and Kathleen Wilson, The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture, and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

10. Talcott Parsons, "Introduction," to Weber, The Sociology of Religion, pp. xxxiii to xxxiv.

11. For a truly brilliant historical investigation of the connection between women preachers and socially transforming the lives of working people, see Deborah M. Valenze, Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1985).

12. For an insightful consideration of why charismatic leadership works so well in egalitarian movements, see Richard J. Ellis, "Explaining the Occurrence of Charismatic Leadership," Journal of Theoretical Politics Vol. 3, no. 3 (1991): 305-319; 311.

13. News and Observer (Raleigh), September 1, 1978; "PCB Suspect Plotted Cover-Up, State Claims," News and Observer, March 6, 1979; and "PCB Dumping Described in Court," News and Observer, May 24, 1979 found in the file on PCB spills in the Clipping Collection of Wilson Library, the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, subsequently referred to as PCB Spills; New York Times, January 19, 1979, Section A, p. 12; New York Times, June 5, 1979, Section A, p. 19; The Christian Science Monitor, June 24, 1981, Vol. 73., p. 2. The sequence of events is summarized in Nicholas Freudenberg, Not in Our Backyards! Community Action for Health and the Environment. Forward by Lois Marie Gibbs. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), pp. 182-184; and additional evidence is provided in Robert D. Bullard, Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 35-39; 35-36.

14. The evidence comes from Nicholas Freudenberg, Not in Our Backyards! pp. 182-183. The story is detailed in "PCB Dumping Described in Court," News and Observer, May 24, 1979: PCB Spills. In Dumping in Dixie, Bullard explains the spill from a slightly different perspective. According to him, the oil tainted with PCB was bought for resale from the Raleigh company, but EPA standards changed in 1978 and the oil could no longer be re-sold. Having agreed to dispose of the oil, the Ward company simply drained it from the truck along the roadside. See pp. 35-36.

15."PCB Dumping Described in Court," News and Observer, May 24, 1979: PCB Spills.

16. Sharon Begley, "Toxic Waste Still Pollutes Roadways," Newsweek, October 27, 1980.

17."Mother's milk found to have PCB similar to toxic spills," News and Observer, September 25, 1982: PCB Spills.

18. Ginny Carroll, "Three Enter Guilty Pleas in PCB Trial," News and Observer, May 6, 1979: PCB Spills. For damages and the cost the state of North Carolina tried to recover, see News and Observer, September 1, 1978: PCB Spills. William Sanjour, the chief of the Environmental Protection Agency expert on hazardous wastes, challenged the use of dumps for PCB contaminated material. For an explanation of his views see, Bullard, Dumping in Dixie, p. 38. In fact, the only safe ways to dispose of material with PCB at the time consisted of burial in sealed areas, chemical neutralization, and incineration. See Block and Sarpitti, Poisoning for Profit, pp. 60-61. The state and the EPA argued that it was too costly in time and money to use the new mobile incineration system to dispose of the PCB. See "On-Site PCB Disposal Called Too Expensive," Durham Morning Herald, Regional Edition, August 6, 1982, p. 1B.

19. Joyce Brown, "U. S. Advises Against In-Place Treatment of PCB-Tainted Soil," News and Observer, June 5, 1979: PCB Spills; Dollie Burwell presentation at the Redefining Motherhood Conference, Dartmouth College, May 15, 1993; Freudenberg, Not in Our Backyards!, p. 183; The Christian Science Monitor, June 24, 1981, p. 2.

20. Bullard, in Dumping in Dixie, p. 36, elaborating on findings published in the Commission for Racial Justice, Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Wastes Sites (New York: United Church of Christ, 1987), p. xi. This study, done after the dumping and the demonstrations, seems to be the most accurate. The newspapers, focusing on Warren County, generally claimed it was 59.5 percent African-American. See, for example, F. Alan Boyce, "PCB Protest-Environmental Issue Being Clouded?" News and Observer (Raleigh), September 19, 1982. But Jenny Labalme says in A Road to Walk: A Struggle for Environmental Justice (Durham: The Regulator Press, 1987), page 4 that Warren County was 64 percent Black and that Shocco Township, where the site was established, was 75 percent African-American. Of 100 North Carolina counties, according to Labalme, Warren ranked 97 in per capita income. Whatever the correct figures, it is clear that Afton, the unincorporated township of Shocco, and Warren County were

among the poorest places in a poor state.

21. Freudenberg, Not in Our Backyards!, pp. 183-184; Dollie Burwell confirms that she made the contacts. Personal interview with Dollie Burwell, Warren County, North Carolina, January 25, 1993.

22. Dollie Burwell, January 25, 1993; "Afton Residents Hear Work on PCB Landfill," (New York Times Service) Durham Morning Herald, Regional Edition. August 12, 1982, p. 1B. Jenny Labalme, a student at Duke who covered the demonstrations as a history student and journalist, wrote and did the photographs for A Road to Walk and "Dumping on Warren County," in Environmental Politics: Lessons from the Grassroots, edited by Bob Hall (Durham: Institute for Southern Studies, 1988), pp. 23-30. I am grateful to her for her work and for the phone conversations we had in February 1993 about the 1982 demonstrations.

23. Freudenberg, Not in Our Backyards!, p. 183; "People of Color and the Struggle for Environmental Justice," Position paper of The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, October 24-27, 1991, pp. 1-6; p. 4.

24. "155 Arrested During Warren PCB Protest," Durham Morning Herald, Regional Edition. September 21, 1982, p. 1B; F. Alan Boyce, "Warren PCB Protest: Landfill Used for 2nd Day," Durham Morning Herald, Regional Edition. September 17, 1982, p. 1B.

25. "PCB Dump Action Nets 114 Arrests," Fayetteville Observer, September 28, 1982, pp. 1A; 2A; 1A; "Protest Over PCB Continuing Here," Warren Record, Vol. 85, no. 38, September 29, 1982, pp. 1, 14; 14.

26. Interview with Dollie Burwell, January 25, 1993.

27. Vernice Miller, November 7, 1992 lecture at Eugene Lang College of the New School for Social Research; Charles Lee, "The Integrity of Justice: Evidence of Environmental Racism," Soujourners 25 (1991) xeroxed and in the possession of author.

28. Harriet G. Rosenberg, "Housewives and Hostages at Love Canal: A Narrative of Resistance," Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings, Chicago, Illinois, November 20-24, 1991, pp. 1-14; p. 13; New York Times, September 16, 1982, p. 11(N), p.A18(L); Dake Russakoff, Washington Post, October 11, 1982, p.A1.

29. New York Times, October 11, 1982, p16(N).

30. Ellen Ross, "Survival Networks: Women's Neighborhood Sharing in London before World War II," History Workshop Journal 15 (1983), pp. 4-27.

31. Naomi Rosenthal and Michael Schwartz, "Spontaneity and Democracy in Social Movements," International Social Movement Research Vol. 2 (1989): 33-59.

32. While Rosenthal and Schwartz ("Spontaneity and Democracy in Social Movements," p. 46) emphasize the organic democracy found in primary movement groups, such affinity groups can also achieve profoundly undemocratic goals--as certain white supremacy groups and right to life movements have done. Although the structure of primary movement group behavior is basically fluid and personal, allowing the group itself to work democratically, the achievements of the groups may be racist or sexist. Blame for what the group does must rest with the mass base as well as with individual leaders even more than in more highly differentiated movements.

33. For a cross-section of works on women's collective efforts to improve the quality of life and achieve social justice, see Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Paula Giddings, When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America (New York: W.W. Morrow, 1984); Linda Gordon, Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935 (New York: The Free Press, 1994); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981); Nancy A. Hewitt, Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1870 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Robert G. Moeller, Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany (Berkeley: University of California, 1993); Annelise Orleck, Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900-1965 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Ellen Ross, Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Kathryn Kish Sklar, Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

34. Sheila Rowbotham, Joan W. Scott, Barbara Taylor, and Dorothy Thompson have explored the attractions of decentralized, social movements such as utopian socialism and incipient labor unions for working-class and middle-class women hoping to transform their roles in family, work,

Earthscan Publishers in association with IUCN, 1988); Celine Krauss, " Blue-Collar Women and Toxic-Waste Protests: The Process of Politicization," in Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice, edited by Richard Hofrichter (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1993), pp. 106- 117; Radha Kumar's The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India, 1800-1990 (London and New York: Verso, 1993), pp. 182-190; Annabel Rodda, Women and the Environment (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed, 1993); and Joni Seager, Earth Follies: Coming to Feminist Terms with The Global Environmental Crisis (New York: Routledge, 1993).

36. See Dorothy Thompson, The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution (Aldershot: M.T. Smith, 1984). Architect and feminist critic Dolores Hayden deals with the place of gender and ethnicity in shaping local politics through claims on certain spaces in The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995).

37. Cora Tucker, "Women Make it Happen," Women and Toxic Organizing, p. 5.

38. My thinking about the ways women defended their homes against the government has been strongly influenced by Linzi Manicom, "Ruling Relations: Rethinking State and Gender in South African History," Journal of African History, 33 (1992), pp. 441-465.

39. My translation of Elizabeth Jelin, "Los Movimientos Sociales en la Argentina contemporánea: una introducción a su estudio", en Los Nuevos Movimientos Sociales/1 (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1985) pp. 14; 18.