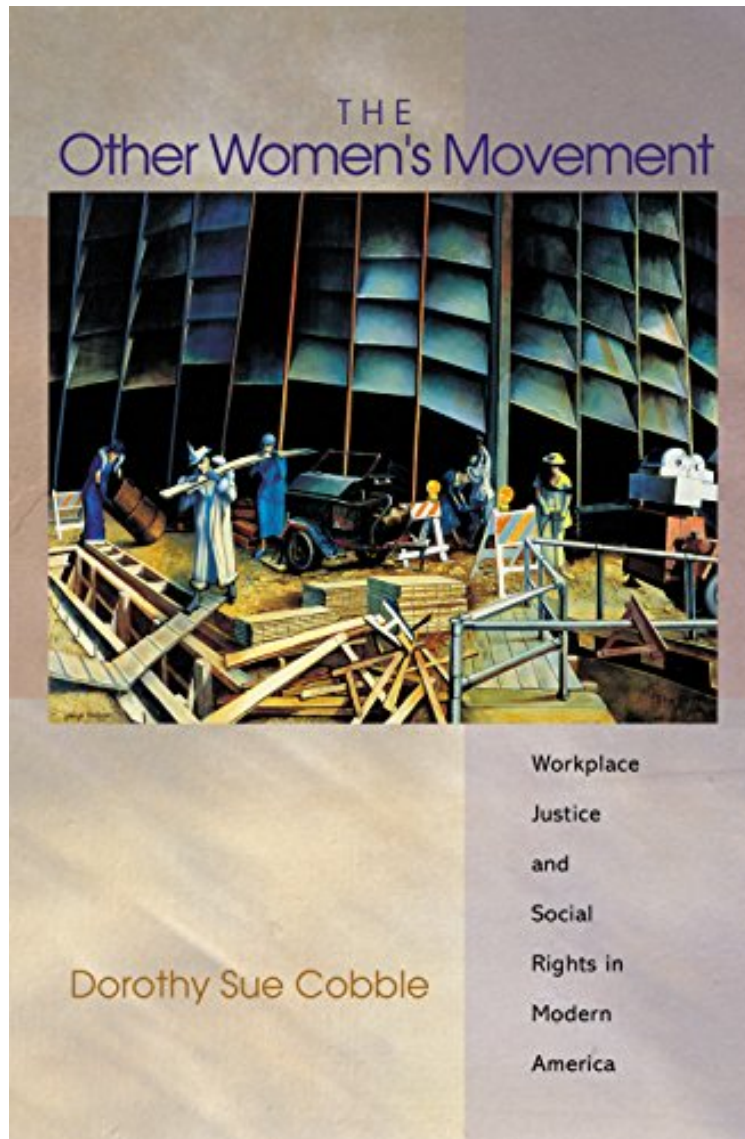


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(Politics and Society in Modern America)

The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America (Politics and Society in Modern America)

Dorothy Sue Cobble

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Dorothy Sue Cobble : The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America (Politics and Society in Modern America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America (Politics and Society in Modern America)*:

3 of 18 people found the following review helpful. A highwayscriber "Book Report" By Stephen Siciliano highwayscriber wanted to tell you about "The Other Women's Movement," by a Rutgers University professor named Dorothy Sue Cobble. The text relates specifically to organized labor and focusing on it through a patented highwayscriber "book report" maintains continuity with the previous post's theme - the Teamsters organizing victory at the L.A. Times. The reason for reading this academic thesis was a little primary research for a screenplay dramatizing the 1964 Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union drive to organize bunnies at the Detroit Playboy Club. The force behind this effort was a left-over from 1930s union activism, one Myra Wolfgang, "the battling belle of Detroit." A rebel woman who had helped organize the Woolworths lunch counters during the Great Depression. Years later, she was something of a national figure to the extent women were paid attention to at all and held a position as a national vice president of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union. She was old school. Betty Friedan called her an "Aunt Tom," for what she considered Wolfgang's subservience to union bosses. Wolfgang responded that Friedan was the Chamber of Commerce's Aunt Tom. Anyway, Wolfgang sent her 17-year old daughter into the Playboy Club as a union "salt" - an insider - and began the successful drive. She said Hugh Hefner's "Playboy Philosophy" perpetuated the notion that women should be, "Obscene and Not Heard." That's the scribe's title. Go ahead and try to steal it, he can use the publicity. Anyway, Cobble knows a lot about Myra Wolfgang, waitress unions, and the Playboy campaign in particular so the scribe went out and ordered her book from Princeton University Press. It was the wrong book. The one (hopefully) with all the Playboy stuff is in "Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the 20th Century." But this book was interesting and will serve to deepen the scribe's indoctrination prior to scribbling that story. "The Other Women's Movement," is what Cobble believes to have been a forgotten generation largely excluded from the story of feminism as currently redacted. That story, and the scribe admits to not having known this, involved a "first wave" of feminists in the suffragettes' era (early 1900s) and a "second wave" of the 1960s spawned and led by the Betty Friedans and Gloria Steinems of the world. Cobble's thesis is that in between these two waves was a crucial period peopled with a special breed of "labor feminists" who took root and then cover in their unions during what was the heyday of organized syndicates in the United States. They took the form of activists in large feminine "auxiliaries" to the unions, and later as members and leaders themselves. The labor feminists tackled, early, the questions women are still dealing with today; the need to make employers understand that "time" itself is the most valuable commodity to a woman with family; and that less work, rather than more money, is preferable to them. This book reviews the debate between working class women in unions and those in a more conservative outfit called the National Women's Party, which first (and the scribe did not know this either) floated the idea of that Equal Rights Amendment feminists pushed until the mid-'80s. Later, all feminists were behind ERA, but in the beginning, the factory girls and servers felt it was a Republican ruse for allowing employers to circumvent the real issues of industrial democracy, wages, and job security they fought for in statehouses and at the collective bargaining table. Cobble successfully renders the exciting rebel-girl beginnings of, Wolfgang, Anne Draper, Ruth Young, Esther Peterson, Gladys Dickason, and a long cast of worthwhile characters you've never heard of, and follows the threads of each's long career dedicated to the same issues that fired their youths. Labor feminists were split amongst themselves and others in the women's movement over whether special labor laws protecting women in particular (capping hours, preventing dismissal for pregnancy) actually kept women apart, or separate, and thus more vulnerable to being judged as "less" than men. Others wanted no special protections, just the same rights everybody else had. These latter eventually won out, but only with the slow passing of the labor feminists and their influence on women in America. So that is what was interesting about the thesis; the airing out of bread and butter issues afoot in the land or at least among the womanry. It shows the cracks and coalescence and the interests that separated women by class and race when it came to defining exactly the kind of "progress" women should aspire to. It reminds us that these debates are going on today and provides a primer on the roots of those debates. More than anything, and as was to be expected, the labor feminists were concerned with the workplace and Cobble argues that such should be the focus today, work having the feature role it does in most our lives. The sixties wave of feminism offered some correctives to the labor feminist doctrine, Cobble says, but also accepted, rather quietly, some of its most important analyses of work, class and their relation to women's position in society, beyond gender itself.

0 of 32 people found the following review helpful. Okay, but hardly a new subject By M. Yue With the emphasis today on women's rights and privileges, I sometimes worry that the reverse is true: that men are the ones being cheated. Why doesn't someone write about them?

American feminism has always been about more than the struggle for individual rights and equal treatment with men. There's also a vital and continuing tradition of women's reform that sought social as well as individual rights and argued for the dismantling of the masculine standard. In this much anticipated book, Dorothy Sue Cobble retrieves the forgotten feminism of the previous generations of working women, illuminating the ideas that inspired them and the reforms they secured from employers and the state. This socially and ethnically diverse movement for change emerged first from union halls and factory floors and spread to the "pink collar" domain of telephone operators, secretaries, and airline hostesses. From the 1930s to the 1980s, these women pursued answers to problems that are increasingly pressing today: how to balance work and family and how to address the growing economic inequalities that confront

us. The Other Women's Movement traces their impact from the 1940s into the feminist movement of the present. The labor reformers whose stories are told in *The Other Women's Movement* wanted equality and "special benefits," and they did not see the two as incompatible. They argued that gender differences must be accommodated and that "equality" could not always be achieved by applying an identical standard of treatment to men and women. The reform agenda they championed--an end to unfair sex discrimination, just compensation for their waged labor, and the right to care for their families and communities--launched a revolution in employment practices that carries on today. Unique in its range and perspective, this is the first book to link the continuous tradition of social feminism to the leadership of labor women within that movement.

Winner of the 2005 - 28th Annual Philip Taft Labor History Award, International Association of Labour History Institutions
Honorable Mention for the 2004 Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award, Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights
One of Choice's Outstanding Academic Titles for 2004
"This [book] . . . shows the results of prodigious research. . . Cobble believes that labor feminism learned from second-wave feminism and that later the new feminism learned from the old. She outlines steps that must be taken for labor feminism to be revitalized."--Library Journal
"Dorothy Sue Cobble has recovered . . . a feminist legacy that in its embrace of female difference refused to conform to 'men's ways.' She provides a usable past for those of us who wish to revalue women's labors. . . . Cobble's stunning reinterpretation persuasively shows that we've been looking in the wrong place for a mass movement after suffrage and before women's liberation. She names this movement 'labor feminism.'"--Eileen Boris, *Women's of Books*
"A rich contribution to the history of American women and American labor from the 1930s to the 1980s."--Choice
"In this meticulously documented and richly characterized book . . . [Cobble] provides a detailed and lively account . . . of the aspirations of an often-overlooked movement within what is commonly considered a monolithic American [feminism]."--Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law
"[A] sweeping new history of working-class feminism. . . . Future studies of post-World War II labor activism, politics, and feminism will build on this crucial work."--Annelise Orleck, *s in American History*
"Meticulously researched and beautifully written. The kind of history that causes us radically to rethink what we thought we knew about the relationship between feminism and social class. We cannot afford to ignore the lessons of the past she so cogently analyzes for today's activists and scholars."--Mary Margaret Fonow, *British Journal Of Industrial Relations*
"[A] remarkable . . . fascinating new history of the 'other,' forgotten feminism."--Sarah Blustein, *The American Prospect*
"The unheralded advocacy and pivotal role of working-class women in the labor movement in the decades following the Depression are illuminated for the first time in this work. . . . This book scrutinizes intersections and divergences in the history of the labor movement and American feminism."--Noteworthy Books in Industrial Relations and Labor Economics, Firestone Library, Princeton
"Dorothy Sue Cobble's book is a tour de force of feminist historical research and scholarship."--Sue Ledwith, *Industrial Relations Journal*
From the Publisher
Winner of the 28th Annual 2005 Philip Taft Labor History Award, International Association of Labour History Institutions
Honorable Mention for the 2004 Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award, Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights
One of Choice's Outstanding Academic Titles for 2004.
From the Inside Flap
"The book is a tour de force of historical analysis. "The Other Women's Movement pursues the very ambitious goal of reconstructing the historical relationship between feminism and working women in the United States between 1930 and 1980. The book brilliantly achieves this goal."--Kathryn Kish Sklar, Binghamton University