



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Feminists sit-in at Ladies Home Journal to protest the magazine's depiction of women, 1970

Time period notes: *Single day protest beginning and ending on 18
March 1970*

18 March

1970

to: 18 March

1970

Country: United States

Location City/State/Province: *New York City*

Location Description: *Ladies' Home Journal Offices*

Goals:

"Protesters demanded the magazine: hire a female editor in chief and editorial staff, hire women to write columns to avoid inherent male bias, hire non-whites in proportion to the United States' population, raise women's salaries to a minimum of \$125 a week, provide free child-care in the offices, open editorial meetings to all staff members to avoid traditional power hierarchies, stop running ads that degraded women, stop running articles tied to ads, and end the "Can This Marriage Be Saved?" column."

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 021. Delivering symbolic objects
- 162. Sit-in

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 021. Delivering symbolic objects
- 162. Sit-in

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 021. Delivering symbolic objects
- 162. Sit-in

Methods in 4th segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 021. Delivering symbolic objects
- 162. Sit-in

Methods in 5th segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 021. Delivering symbolic objects
- 162. Sit-in

Methods in 6th segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 021. Delivering symbolic objects
- 162. Sit-in

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Democracy

Group characterization:

- self identified feminist women

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

not known

Partners:

not known

External allies:

not known

Involvement of social elites:

not known

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- Media Women
- National Organization of Women (NOW)
- New York Radical Feminists
- and Barnard College Students
- the Redstockings

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length: ~ 2 hours

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

editor in chief John Mack Carter/ the magazine's mostly male editorial board

Campaigner violence:

no campaigner violence

Repressive Violence:

Attack of a protester by unknown network cameraman

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

2 points out of 6 points

Survival:

0.5 points out of 1 point

Growth:

0 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

Editor in Chief Carter refused to resign from his position and allowed protesters to produce an eight-page section of the magazine for the August 1970 issue titled "New Feminism." The protesters were paid ten thousand dollars for their work. The magazine introduced columns, such as the "The Working Woman," in June 1971. Later moves, such as Lenore Hershey becoming Editor in Chief of the magazine fall outside of the timeframe for campaign success in the Global Nonviolent Action Database.

On 18 March 1970, a group of feminists staged a sit-in at the offices of the Ladies' Home Journal (LHJ) to protest how the magazine's mostly male editorial board depicted women. At the time, LHJ was the second largest women's magazine in the United States. The sit-in involved women from groups such as Media Women, New York Radical Feminists, National Organization of Women (NOW), the Redstockings, and Barnard College students.

The activists chose Ladies' Home Journal as the target for the sit-in for several reasons. Protesters believed the magazine's focus on beauty and housework reinforced patriarchy. They also objected to the male control of editorial and advertising content. Since its inception, LHJ had sought a role in informing, instructing, and entertaining American women. However, the magazine paid little attention to the newly established women's movement. .

The morning of the protest, the women met at St. Peter's Church on Lexington Avenue, near the magazine's 54th street offices. One of the protesters had previously worked at the magazine, giving protest leaders an opportunity to enter the offices prior to the sit-in and gather information that helped them plan their actions. At approximately 9:00am, the women entered the building and marched to Editor in Chief John Mack Carter's office where they presented their demands. While in the office, a cameraman from an unknown network entered the office and punched one of the demonstrators. He was removed from the premises. Demonstrators also began talking to secretaries and other women who worked in the LHJ offices to explain their reasons for protesting. By the end of the day, the protesters were able to gain tentative understanding from office workers who had originally questioned the motivation for protesting. The protest lasted for eleven hours.

In addition to sitting-in, the protesters created a 20-page mock magazine titled, "Women's Liberated Journal," and displayed a

banner displaying the title from the office windows. They held Editor in Chief Carter and female managing editor Lenore Hershey during negotiations, and smoked Carter's cigars. In their magazine, the women suggested article titles such as "How to Get a Divorce," "How to Have an Orgasm," "What to tell your Draft-Age Son," and "How Detergents Harm our Rivers and Streams."

Protesters demanded that the magazine: hire a female editor in chief and editorial staff, hire women to write columns to avoid inherent male bias, hire non-whites in proportion to the United States' population, raise women's salaries to a minimum of \$125 a week, provide free child-care in the offices, open editorial meetings to all staff members to avoid traditional power hierarchies, stop running ads that degraded women, stop running articles tied to ads, and end the "Can This Marriage Be Saved?" column.

While Editor in Chief Carter refused to resign from his position, he did promise to explore the possibility of on-site day care. He also allowed protesters to produce an eight-page section of the magazine for the August 1970 issue titled "New Feminism." The protesters were paid ten thousand dollars for this section, and the money was used to form the first women's center in New York City.

In the years following the sit in, the magazine introduced columns, such as the "The Working Woman," in June 1971, and "Women in the Economy," in 1973. In 1974, Lenore Hershey became Editor in Chief of the magazine. Despite these changes, the magazine still published some content feminists found controversial, including an article called "Jesus and the Liberated Woman," which concluded that failures to accept God-given roles as wife, mother, and homemaker caused many of women's frustrations.

The sit-in induced some acknowledgment of women's demands for appropriate editorial content and demonstrated how media was relevant to women's oppression. While the women produced the New Feminism column and the journal eventually promoted a female to editor in chief, the magazine continued to run columns and ads feminists found controversial.

Research Notes

Sources:

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