

Women's Group Split Over Meaning of Feminism: Feminist Leaders Divide

By Elizabeth Shelton Washington Post Staff Writer

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Because of "irreconcilable ideological conflicts" on what feminism is about the president of the New York chapter of National Organization for Women has resigned.

A faction of dissidents followed Ti-Grace Atkinson out of the feminist organization founded by author Betty

Friedan ("The Feminine Mystique.")

The dissidents immediately organized a coalition of "the young, the black and the beautiful," under the name of "The Oct. 17 Movement."

"A la Che Guevara," Miss Atkinson explained yesterday. The date marked the "showdown" of NOW members' differences. A long, bitter schism based on dif-

ferences on such issues as marriage, abortions, family and the class system ended in the heat of debate on NOW's own operating structure.

Mrs. Friedan says her goal is "to get women into positions of power."

Miss Atkinson and her followers "want to get rid of positions of power."

To start, Miss Atkinson rid herself of her own.

The new organization will have no officers and no structure. Its goal is to be

an action coalition of the student movement, the wom-

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en's movement and the Negro movement.

Miss Atkinson, a Louisiana native, is a candidate for a Ph.D. in philosophy at Columbia University.

She said yesterday that the 50 members of the new "Oct. 17 Movement" include Columbia students.

The struggle within NOW was climaxed Sunday night when a proposal to eliminate offices in the organization was ruled illegal under the bylaws. The young dissenting faction then tried to diffuse the office powers by increasing the number of persons in each office.

This was defeated by a 2-1 majority. Miss Atkinson decided that, since she had failed to get rid of the power situations which she held, she had no choice but to resign.

This left bitter feelings between her and Mrs. Friedan, whom she accused yesterday of having tried to have her impeached.

The alleged impeachment attempt took place, Miss Atkinson said, after she appeared in court in Boston with Valerie Solanas who was being tried for the shooting of pop artist Andy Warhol. Mrs. Friedan, according to Miss Atkinson, objected to newspaper picture captions stating that Miss Atkinson was appearing in behalf of NOW, when she was there on her own.

Conservative NOW members objected also to the young dissidents' support of Bill Baird, an abortion crusader, who uses civil disobedience as a means of getting cases into court.

Miss Atkinson and her followers also:

- Believe in abolition of

marriage because they consider it slavery.

- Long for the day of test tube babies so births can be performed without human incubation.

"We wanted to move faster, and they said, 'no, that's too controversial,'" Miss Atkinson said.

When Mrs. Friedan addressed the Washington chapter of NOW on Tuesday she did not directly mention the dissent. However, she made an oblique reference to it by expressing the hope that the "brightest and most spirited young women" would not "turn their backs on marriage and motherhood."

The Washington chapter, headed by Barbara Ireton,

has no such split, although members are not unanimous on all issues. According to one member, Mary Eastwood, "This chapter has been almost totally inactive."

Recently, however, some of the chapter's individual members threw their support behind the ultra-conservative National Woman's Party to pressure Congress to save the Party's property on Capitol Hill. The effort to bar the Senate from taking the land was successful.

NOW is a comparatively small organization, with 1200 members in city chapters in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Atlanta, Denver, Miami, Boston, Chicago, Syracuse, Cleveland, Seattle



BETTY FRIEDAN

... ideological conflict

and statewide chapters in New Mexico and West Virginia. The New York chapter represents a third of the membership.