



The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America, Revised Edition

By Ruth Rosen

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The Newly Revised and Updated Edition

In this enthralling narrative-the first of its kind-historian and journalist Ruth Rosen chronicles the history of the American women's movement from its beginnings in the 1960s to the present. Interweaving the personal with the political, she vividly evokes the events and people who participated in our era's most far-reaching social revolution. Rosen's fresh look at the recent past reveals fascinating but little-known information including how the FBI hired hundreds of women to infiltrate the movement. Using extensive archival research and interviews, Rosen challenges readers to understand the impact of the women's movement and to see why the revolution is far from over.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

For anyone who wants a thorough introduction to the modern American women's movement, this is it: a rousing story of the revolution by a history professor who participated in its struggles. Ruth Rosen introduces her book by reminding readers of discriminatory practices that were common in pre-1960s America:

"Harvard's Lamont Library was off-limits to women for fear they would distract male students. Newspaper ads separated jobs by sex; bars often refused to serve women; some states even excluded women from jury duty; no women ran big corporations or universities, worked as firefighters or police officers." She then proceeds to delineate the changes that make such discrimination seem unthinkable today. Her research takes in popular books, magazines, newspaper articles and television, the details of politics and law, and the individual liberation stories of not only famous feminists and thinkers but many lesser-known women as well.

By the end of the 1970s, there are not only legal abortions, Title IX, and more women than men at American universities but letters like the following submitted to *Ms.* magazine: "One day last week, I pulled up to a four-way stop in my taxi," writes Jill Wood. "At one of the stop signs sat a police officer in a cruiser, and at the third, a telephone installer in a van. What made the occasion memorable was the fact that all three of us were women. We celebrated with much joyful laughter." Yet, says Rosen, this is only the beginning of the struggle for human rights. *The World Split Open* should serve to galvanize the energies of a new generation of women and men. --*Maria Dolan*

From Publishers Weekly

Highlighting the dramatic changes in culture and attitudes brought about by the women's movement in the 1960s and '70s, Rosen details the rebirth of feminism, from the liberalism of NOW through women's liberation, which grew out of the civil rights movement. Her focus is on the "hidden injuries of sex" and how what had been construed as "personal" problems--abortion, compulsory heterosexuality, rape and sexual violence, prostitution and pornography--became political issues. She also sketches the political splits and crises--such as the Redstockings' attack on Gloria Steinem and FBI infiltration--that wrought havoc in the movement as the backlash against legal abortion and the ERA was gathering steam. Finally, Rosen outlines how, even as feminism was proliferating throughout the country among such groups as older women and trade union women and in educational and religious institutions, it was also becoming diluted by what she terms consumer feminism (selling goods and services to promote liberation) and therapeutic feminism, which turned the political back into the personal. A history professor at the University of California-Davis, Rosen often focuses on groups sometimes left out of other accounts, like women who grew up in left-wing homes in the 1940s and '50s and women of color. Because her narrative moves decade by decade, some subjects, like abortion, are presented in a scattered manner. But the clear chronology and extensive bibliography make this volume an excellent teaching tool that is accessible and broad enough to appeal to general readers as well. Agent, Sandra Dijkstra. (Feb.)

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From Library Journal

This portrait of postwar American feminism is both a study in social history and a memoir; but Rosen's (history, Univ. of California, Davis) personal narrative takes nothing away from her scholarship. Organized chronologically, her study examines movement trends, leadership, achievements, and failures, addressing the criticisms that modern feminism both ignores women outside of mainstream privilege and lacks a sense of

humor. Rosen's generosity of outlook lends this subject a note of optimism missing from Germaine Greer's recent *The Whole Woman* (LJ 5/15/99). A lively and readable complement to Flora Davis's *Moving the Mountain* (LJ 11/1/91) and Marcia Cohen's *The Sisterhood* (Ballantine, 1988. o.p.). Index not seen; but her suggestions for further reading are particularly comprehensive and well-organized. One small quibble: she misidentifies International Women's Day as May 8 instead of March 8. Recommended for public and academic libraries. [BOMC selection.]--Barbara Ann Hutcheson, Greater Victoria P.L., B.

---Barbara Ann Hutcheson, Greater Victoria P.L., BC

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