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White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States by Louise Michele Newman

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book, to found the Woman's National Republican Association (WNRA) in 1888. The WNRA was the first women's partisan organization that was national in scope and recognized by the Republican leadership. By 1910, the year that Foster died, there were as many as a thousand local women's clubs under the WNRA's aegis. Foster included black women's clubs in the WNRA; her efforts complemented the efforts of black leaders such as Mary Church Terrell to get out the vote for the Republican party.

Progressive Era reformers, most notably Jane Addams, built on Foster's work. Drawing on their experience in the legislative trenches, Addams and her allies added a powerful argument to the suffragists' arsenal. Once women succeeded in a given reform goal, men in public office invariably took over the programs or institutions women had created. If women were to break this cycle, they needed the vote and access to public office itself. Addams became the centerpiece of the Progressive party's drive in 1912 to attract a female constituency.

All of the main players in the final act of the suffrage drama were shaped by the partisan battles of the preceding decades. Carrie Chapman Catt told her followers that "the only way to get things done in this country is from the inside of political parties," while her feminist counterparts chose to call themselves the National Woman's Party. But it was the Republican party that provided the majority of "yes" votes on the Anthony Amendment in 1919; the Republicans took credit for the suffrage victory and claimed in their 1920 platform that women were finally welcomed into "full participation in the affairs of government."

Gustafson shows that Republicans viewed female voters primarily as campaigners and that, despite the success of pioneering politicians such as Jeanette Rankin of Montana, resistance to female office-holding proved resilient within party culture. Gustafson would have tapped a rich vein of information on female politicians if she had examined appointments to the massive Post Office Department. Thousands of women served as postmasters in the late nineteenth century, and their stories would have enriched Gustafson's book.

Gustafson astutely asserts that, because Americans do not know the history of the female presence in the world of electoral politics, we continue to view "the political woman as an awkward, illegitimate, or misbegotten phenomenon." Such works as Gustafson's should serve to counter the timeworn notion that the female partisan is, by definition, encroaching on male terrain.

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*White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States.* By Louise Michele Newman. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. x, 261 pp. Cloth, \$52.00, ISBN 0-19-508692-9. Paper, \$19.95, ISBN 0-19-512466-9.)

Louise Michele Newman's *White Women's Rights* is a compelling investigation of how racial questions informed the creation of white feminist thought in the United States. The foundation of early white women's rights activism was evolutionism, which allowed white women to cast themselves in the unique role of "civilizers" of "primitive" peoples. Through assimilation, Americanization, and the American imperialist mission, white women sought to domesticate "primitive" women in the image of white womanhood, even as they were rejecting such ideals for themselves. Newman concludes that the positioning of white women as superior civilizers of others who were also engaged in a battle with patriarchy still has an impact on women's rights discourse today.

Newman begins her study with the story of Susan B. Anthony's refusal publicly to support Frederick Douglass's marriage to Helen Pitts, a white woman. Anthony argued in 1884 that she had "but one question, that of equality between the sexes." In the conclusion to her book, Newman relates that, in the midst of the O. J. Simpson trial, Tammy Bruce, head of the Los Angeles National Organization for Women (NOW), stated that the association was not there "to teach our children about race; what we have to teach them about is violence against women." These two stories are book-

ends to a history of how race and gender tensions influenced the development of feminism. Racism, Newman argues, “was not just an unfortunate sideshow in the performances of feminist theory.”

The emphasis of this study is on the years from 1870 to 1920, but Newman attempts to demonstrate deeper roots and legacies of white women’s racialized views of equality. She traces the development of feminism through crucial debates about women in higher education and industry and introduces key figures, both men and women, in those political and intellectual battles. Like other scholars of white women’s rights, she demonstrates that debates about woman suffrage were about voting, but they were also about what womanhood meant and, for Newman, how whites thought about the future of the white race. Newman focuses on key white women whose public presence contributed to a discourse of racialized theories of gender oppression. So Susan B. Anthony leads eventually to May French-Sheldon, whose 1891 trip to Africa helped support a new role for white women: the “refined white woman” who served as a substitute for “the aggressive white man” in the larger imperialist exercise.

Newman discusses Charlotte Perkins Gilman as a crucial transitional figure in feminist discourse. Like earlier white feminists, Gilman believed that “primitive” people, here specifically African Americans, should adopt the very gender practices that she was rejecting for white women. Unlike those earlier white feminists, however, Gilman optimistically believed that sexual differences for whites, like race difference for blacks, were a “negative vestige” of “primitive” pasts. Gilman’s theories and life, like those of so many of the women introduced in this study, were full of contradictions, and Newman does an excellent job of exploring and explaining the messiness, and sometimes even the logic, of those contradictions. Those readers concerned with questions of women and peace will find especially interesting Newman’s examination of how Gilman’s challenge to sex differences could coexist with her belief in white women’s nonviolent nature. I highly recommend this book. I must say, however, that Oxford University Press has

not served its author well. Tiny, tiny print makes this a hard book to read.

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*Bargaining with the State from Afar: American Citizenship in Treaty Port China, 1844–1942.* By Eileen P. Scully. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. xii, 306 pp. Cloth, \$49.50, ISBN 0-231-12108-3. Paper, \$19.50, ISBN 0-231-12109-1.)

For decades, polemicists and scholars (sometimes one and the same) have lambasted the principle and practice of “extraterritoriality” (extrality, in common parlance) that Western powers and Japan imposed on China through notorious “unequal treaties.” Under this provision, foreign nationals resident in Chinese treaty ports involved in legal disputes were to be tried by tribunals staffed by diplomats or judges from their own countries. Foreign, not Chinese, law applied. Eileen P. Scully has reexamined both the theory and the practice of extrality and in so doing confounds nearly every assumption—including this reviewer’s—about how the system operated.

Applying both theoretical analysis about the nature of citizenship and rigorous research in diplomatic and legal archives, Scully explores the fluid nature of the relationship between American “sojourners” in China and the United States government. For most of the century under review, it was not a happy union. Although extrality effectively exempted U.S. nationals from Chinese law, it also made them subject to supervision by American officials and laws they did not always approve of. Officials in Washington and diplomats in China seldom gloated about the special privilege conferred on their countrymen living in the Middle Kingdom. More often than not, those officials resented the costs, burdens, and complications of looking after their nationals. For their part, American sojourners resented and resisted what they perceived as unwarranted interference by meddling diplomats.

Extrality began in 1844 and lasted until 1942. Before 1906, Scully explains, American