

# NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBERATION



Greetings of sisterhood to Ros Baxandall from National Women's Liberation.

NWL came out of the collaboration of Gainesville Women's Liberation (Florida) and Redstockings and it was from this collaboration that I was invited, as an uninformed college student, to the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Redstockings Abortion Speakout in 1989.

Ros had been the second testifier at the 1969 speakout—a pathbreaking and mindblowing event, where women 'defying law and custom' first spoke out about their illegal abortions.

I was 4 at the time, so I missed that one, but I remember Ros's testimony at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary very clearly. After talking about the illegal days, she recounted getting an abortion at a clinic so swanky it put her uptight. What a contrast! But she also bravely testified that she would have had another child, if "she lived in a socialist country, where the state helped a bit." Her testimony was an indication, the first I'd really encountered, not so much that we'd won on abortion—the backlash was a major topic at the speakout—but that we were losing ground in other areas—wages, working hours, health care, public services.

Ros's testimony opened up the debate--we have so much territory to win still in the battle for fair and equal time and work. Truly to go further we need double militancy, as the Italian feminists say, both against men and the owning class.

But to even see these new struggles we had to win a lot, and so from my generation to Ros, thank you for your part in making women's lives freer, more comfortable, more secure, and richer in ideas and challenges. We owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude.

Jenny Brown for National Women's Liberation, New York, July 28, 2015