

## Questions for Gender Politics and the Women's Liberation Movement

### Abortion on Trial

What are the issues that Gisele Halimi raises in defense of Marie-Claire and her mother?

What are the principle arguments that she uses to attack existing abortion laws?

How do her arguments represent the influence of May 1968 and the MLF ?

### Simone de Beauvoir, *I am a Feminist*

Why was de Beauvoir initially reluctant to call herself a feminist ?

Why has she changed her mind by 1972?

Why is marriage “dangerous” for de Beauvoir? Why does she think that it is absolutely vital that women work outside the home? What do you think of her argument?

### Claire Duchen, Chapters 6&7

What was the effect of May 1968 on French feminism?

Why were MLF activists reluctant to acknowledge the role of feminists who came before them? How was their feminism different from that of the previous generation?

How did women's magazines respond to the events of May 1968? What, according to Duchen, can be gleaned from their responses?

How is sexual liberation different from feminism? Why do you think that the sexual liberation movement arose when it did?

### Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open*

Why, according to Rosen, was a “storm” brewing in the seemingly tranquil 1950s? How did the 1950s set the stage for the explosion of the 1960s?

What similarities and differences do you see between women's situation in France and the United States in the 1950s and early 1960s?

Why did Betty Freidan's *Feminine Mystique* speak so strongly to many women of her generation? What were the limits of her analysis? Whose needs and problems did the book fail to address?

