The Democrats should spend less time worrying about their candidates' backgrounds and more time considering their merits. When I heard that Rep. Geraldine Ferraro (D-N.Y.) had been asked by Mondale to be his running mate, my first reaction was, "Who is Geraldine Ferraro?" No, "Who is Geraldine Ferraro?" is not, "How much does a woman cost?" It's, "How much time should I be giving to her?" I didn't think that it was relevant whether she was a woman. Apparently I was in the minority. Throughout last Thursday I heard many different radio stations proclaiming "an end to 200 years of American political tradition" and "a major breakthrough for the feminist movement." Certainly the radio stations were more concerned with Ferraro's gender than with her qualifications for the job.
The New York Times heralded Ferraro as the "first woman on a major ticket." The Boston Globe trumpeted, "It's a first." But of these two papers not one mentioned that this was the first time for a woman to be nominated to such a position, they heralded it in their headlines for days afterward.

I had never heard of this threatened Democrat from New York before, though I am sure that I would have been impressed. If nothing else, she has two saw-famous quotations, "Vice President - any woman."

Before Mondale made his decision, various feminist groups demanded that the Democratic nominee choose a woman for the vice-presidential position - any woman. These are the very groups who should have been fighting for the most qualified candidate. Instead, they were induced by the appeal of tokenism.

When Reagan was asked to comment on Ferraro's selection, he said that when the United States finally had a female president, it would probably be a Republican. Reagan said a conservative party would not choose a woman to pilot the ship of state; they would simply choose the best person, regardless of sex. It happened in England, he said, where the first female prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, was put into power by the Conservative party.

If America indeed had any history of open doors and non-discrimination, no one would care about Ferraro's sex. Likewise, no one would care about her ethnic background, her mess, her religion or her family. Instead, we would be concerned with Ferraro's political history, her philosophical outlook, her opinions on the role of government. If our society had reached the non-discriminatory plateau the media would have been able to have, we would simply note that Ferraro may be the first woman to be vice president, the way we have noted that she may be the first of Italian descent. The fact that she was the first woman to be nominated for the vice-presidential position would not be banished headline news.

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