Feminism Has Become a Hot Topic

by Phyllis Schlafly February 11, 2011

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The liberals have unjustly blamed Sarah Palin for many things, but there's one thing for which she is probably responsible: making feminism the hot topic that it has become today. Every couple of years Time and Newsweek ask "Is Feminism Dead?", but all of a sudden feminism is being discussed and debated in the MSM.

Feminists have been weighing in to dictate their definition of feminism. Modern feminist Jessica Valenti defined it authoritatively in the Washington Post: "Feminism is a structural analysis of a world that oppresses women, an ideology based on the notion that patriarchy exists and that it needs to end."

Picturing women as the victims of mean men is the engine of feminism. The feminists' legislative agenda, from unilateral divorce in the 1960s, to the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s, to taxpayer-financed daycare in the 1980s, to the Violence Against Women Act in the 1990s, to the Paycheck Fairness Act in the 2000s, is always wrapped in whines about alleged discrimination.

Feminist dogma decrees that women can never be successful under our oppressive patriarchy. Feminists complain that Hillary Clinton was denied the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008 because of (in Gloria Steinem's words) "profound sexism," and feminists never honor genuinely successful women such as Margaret Thatcher or Condoleezza Rice.

The most scholarly book written about the feminist movement by a non-feminist is "Domestic Tranquility" by Carolyn Graglia. She read all those tiresome books and articles by the feminist leaders, Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer, Kate Millett, Gloria Steinem, and Simone de Beauvoir, and concluded that the principal goal of feminism from the getgo has been "the status degradation of the housewife's role."

Mrs. Graglia documented the fact that all branches of feminism are united in the conviction that a woman can find identity and fulfillment only by a career in the workforce. Gloria Steinem said "you become a semi-nonperson when you get married," while Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan labeled the housewife a "parasite."

Acquiescence in devaluing the role of fulltime homemaker has become part of our culture, taught in women's studies courses, and endlessly reiterated onin the media. Conventional wisdom says that modern women should all be in the workforce because just being a homemaker is a wasted life.

Another contemporary feminist, professor and author Linda Hirshman, set forth a popular definition in the Daily Beast. She wrote that "support for abortion rights and ObamaCare were litmus tests for true feminism."

That shows how out of touch the feminists are. The Republican victories in the 2010 elections, which demonstrated American opposition to ObamaCare, included many new non-feminist female House members, a Senator and four Governors. Nearly all newly elected Republicans are anti-abortion.

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The feminists don't know what to say about Sarah Palin but they can't resist talking about her. They can't deal with the facts that she has a successful career, a cool husband and lots of kids; and it's salt in the feminists' wounds that she's pretty, even while wearing glasses.

It's clear that feminists never wanted gender equality; they want power for the female left, which is why they use the word empowerment so repetitively. The

worldview of the women you see on television and in college classrooms is fueled by feminist dogma about men, sex, work, marriage, motherhood, and politics.

The female left got Barack Obama to make his first acts as President to overturn the anti-abortion Executive Order known as the Mexico City policy, to sign the Lilly Ledbetter Law to facilitate lawsuits against decades-old alleged employment discrimination, and to give women the majority of jobs created by the Stimulus.

By November 2009, the feminists were ready to gloat and to reproach Americans for relying on "an outdated model of the American family." They gave fulsome publicity to "The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything," published by the leftwing think tank, Center for American Progress.

The 400-page Shriver Report boasted that we are now living in a "woman's world," and "Emergent economic power gives women a new seat at the table, at the head of the table." The female left argues for women to be independent of men, self-supporting, sexually uninhibited, and liberated from the obligations of marriage and motherhood.

However, the result is that women are chronically dissatisfied. The National Bureau of Economic Research reports, "As women have gained more freedom, more education, and more power, they have become less happy."

It's time that young women have a handbook that sets forth the real goals and agenda of the feminists plus a non-feminist roadmap to a happy life. My co-author, Suzanne Venker, and I have provided this in our new book, "The Flipside of Feminism: What Conservative Women Know and Men Can't Say."