PS1 for 9/8/88#WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GENDER GAP?

For several months prior to the Republican National Convention, the specter of ""gender gap politics'' hung over political discourse. It was the trendy subject in newsmagazines, the crucial question posed on network talk shows, and the topic reporters liked most to ask of Republicans converging in New Orleans.

(BF) Time's(end BF) pre-Convention lead national news story, complete with color graphics, was titled ""Shoot-Out at Gender Gap.'' The magazine defined the problem as ""Why don't women take a liking to Bush?'' and asserted that George Bush trailed Michael Dukakis among women voters by anywhere from 17 to 32 points, depending on which poll you relied on.

The purpose of the peddlers of gender-gap politics is to persuade candidates to support the radical feminist agenda. Republicans resisted this ploy, while laboring to explain and to minimize the existence and the extent of the so-called gender gap.

The first wave of media assault on Dan Quayle was not about the National Guard at all. It was an orchestrated series of questions trying to induce Republicans to say that Bush deviously chose his running mate for the ulterior purpose that Quayle is handsome and would therefore help Bush to close the gender gap.

On the Sunday after the Republican Convention, the morning television programs announced the startling news that not only did new polls show that George Bush is now leading Michael Dukakis, but that the gender gap has vanished!

On the PBS's ""McLaughlin Group'' a week later, TV commentator John McLaughlin said, Doesn't anybody want to talk about the disappearance of the gender gap? Not one of the political pundits on the program responded.

One doesn't have to be suspicious of all polls to conclude that

gender-gap politics is as phony as a $3 bill. The only time it becomes real is when politicians structure their strategy as though it were real, as Walter Mondale did in 1984 by choosing Geraldine Ferraro.

It is not to be believed that such a wide swing in opinion was due to Quayle's good looks. It's likely that most of the so-called gap never existed in the first place, and whatever gap there was, was erased when women finally got a look at George Bush and realized that he is a man of strength, a war hero, and an experienced leader.

According to the American Enterprise Institute's Norman Ornstein, the principal factor in the opinion shift was that voters started to hear about Michael Dukakis's soft-on-criminals program under which murderers and rapists who had been sentenced to life-without-parole were turned loose for unsupervised furloughs.

The American public wouldn't be so confused about feminist strategies if they had a chance to read books that dissect and refute feminism. Allan Bloom wrote about the ""closing of the American mind'' at universities, but the closing of the booksellers' doors to books critical of feminism is even more pronounced.

The refusal of publishers to publish, bookstores to stock, and libraries to purchase ""Men and Marriage'' by best-selling author George Gilder is a national scandal. The latest critic of feminism to feel the lash of feminist censorship is Nicholas Davidson, whose book ""The Failure of Feminism'' would be an excellent textbook for anyone who wants to understand this complex subject.

Davidson methodically summarizes the writings of leading feminists such as Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer and Kate Millet. He places them in historical context and refutes their silly notions which are so contrary to common sense.

Davidson debunks the sacred cows of feminist dogma one by one: the

claim that what we call masculine and feminine personality traits are merely culturally conditioned, the claim of the existence of human societies without the nuclear family, the desirability of unisex child rearing, and the need for women's history courses in universities.

But don't hold your breath waiting for Davidson's book to have a display at your local library or bookstore. It took (BF)Time(end BF) four years to admit that nominating Geraldine Ferraro in 1984 was ""a ticket to political disaster.''

Davidson says that, to any extent that there is a difference between men and women in voting habits, it is caused not by Republican losses among women, but by Democratic losses among men. The more the Democrats court the aging disagreeable radical feminists, the brighter the opportunity for Republicans.