



# The Phyllis Schlafly Report

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## The Two-Class American Society

Is the traditional family an anachronism in the 1980s? That seems to be the assumption of television and radio talk shows, lecture platforms, lifestyle sections of metropolitan newspapers, magazines, the theater and movies, public opinion surveys, and all the channels that report socio-cultural trends. This dreary message is beamed at the public, overtly and subliminally, in a thousand ways every week.

The economic side of this message is that all wives will soon be out of the home and in the paid labor force, and that this trend is not only an economic "necessity" but a social good. We are told incessantly that a single-earner couple cannot support a family, that mothers "have to work" in order to support their families, and that the wife in the home is as extinct as the dodo bird.

What is presumptuously called "the women's movement" has supposedly "liberated" women from the menial drudgery of housework and given women new opportunities for careers in the paid labor force, especially in nontraditional (formerly all-male) occupations (from astronaut to coal miner).

The social side of this message is that "sexual liberation" has permanently changed moral attitudes, made any sexual activity socially acceptable, and redefined the "family" to include any group of persons living together even if not related by blood, marriage or adoption. "Alternate lifestyles" are now supposedly acceptable, including serial marriage (frequent changing of partners through multiple divorces), cohabitation without marriage, and homosexual and lesbian couples.

Premarital sex among teenagers is asserted to be a permanent fact of life. We are not supposed to be judgmental about this but instead make it free from guilt and pregnancy by contraceptives and abortion clinics without parental knowledge or consent. Some people even propose that high school clinics aid and abet promiscuity by handing out free contraceptives.

Everybody, we are told, will probably be divorced at some time in their life. "Single parenthood" is the modern-style family. Divorce-on-demand must be made available to any spouse without the consent of the

other. Abortion-on-demand should be available to any woman without the consent of the other spouse (or the parent of the minor).

Taxpayers are supposed to pay the horrendous financial costs of all these policies, including child-care for mothers who prefer to be in the paid labor force, separate housing and generous money payments to teenagers who have illegitimate babies, tax-paid abortions, and a variety of costly benefits to divorced wives whose husbands have been allowed to evade their support obligations.

We have the freedom to choose our own values and goals. But the frequency and intensity (often combined with ridicule and sarcasm) with which media spokespersons try to thrust these anti-family attitudes down our throats indicates their emotional demand for social acceptance of these changes in values. They seem determined to make those who live by traditional moral standards the ones who are out of step with the times.

These anti-family attitudes have established themselves as dominant in the fantasy world of communications, but they have not succeeded in the real world. Despite persistent hammering through news and entertainment, the majority of Americans have rejected the whole line. In this other unreported portion of our society, people believe in the work ethic, and they resent paying high taxes for handouts.

In this other unreported section of our society, people consider marriage a lifetime commitment, in sickness and in health, for richer and for poorer. They look upon marriage as the beginning of a new family in which children will bear their father's name and are entitled to faithful nurturing by a full-time mother. A recent survey shows that, among couples who marry in church and continue to attend church regularly, the divorce rate is only one in 50.

America has become a two-class society. The class division has nothing whatsoever to do with level of income or education or job status or talent or sex or race or color or advantage/disadvantage of birth. It has everything to do with whether or not you have a commitment (1) to moral values (i.e., respect for God,

church/synagogue, and the Ten Commandments), (2) to family values (i.e., marital fidelity, mothercare of children, and parental rights in education), (3) to the work ethic (i.e., hard work, thrift, savings, and the right to enjoy the fruits of one's labor and improve one's economic lot in life).

The Americans who share these traditional commitments have almost no voice in the channels of communication today. But these Americans exist, and the more the media claim they are obsolete, the more the media lose credibility.

### Fashions in Morals

One day I asked my children, "Why is it that none of the six of you is a smoker? Is it because your dad and mother don't smoke? Or is it because you were dissuaded by our repeated sermons on the health risks of smoking?" "Neither," one of my children replied. "It's because it isn't 'cool' to smoke any more. Maybe it was 'in' to smoke when you were young, but it just isn't fashionable any more."

The *Wall Street Journal* discovered this phenomenon in a page-one news story. Smoking is not only becoming socially non-acceptable; non-smoking is becoming more identified with career success at the high-income business and professional levels. The *Journal* even quoted a professor at the University of California at San Diego who predicts that cigarette smoking will continue to decline and will "disappear in the next 20 to 25 years." It will become, he says, "like cigar smoking -- unusual."

The decline is particularly marked among teenagers. That's also particularly significant because those who don't begin smoking before age 21 seldom start at all. What is so fascinating about this topic is the cause of the decline. It appears to be much more a matter of fad and fashion than of logic, health, morals, or money.

If anyone had predicted 25 years ago that the percentage of smokers would voluntarily and massively decline, despite high-powered advertising and teenage peer pressure, the prophet probably would have been laughed at. Common wisdom tells us that we can't stop teenagers from experimenting; and that's when their addiction starts.

The profiteers of promiscuity have a much larger advertising budget and more effective advertising techniques than the tobacco companies. The powerful forces making money out of the playboy lifestyle include the commercial industries selling abortion, contraceptives, divorce, pornography, and entertainment.

Some of these profiteers of promiscuity sell their wares through the powerful medium of television (now banned to tobacco companies). The big majority of dramatizations about sex on primetime television involve sex outside of marriage.

Some of these profiteers of promiscuity even advertise their wares in the public schools. Most so-called sexuality education classes are really sales meetings for contraceptives and abortion services, and the "teen clinics" that some people are now trying to put into the public schools would be exactly that.

For the last 15 years, the promiscuity propaganda has been falsely telling young women that they are just the same as men, just as sexually driven, and have just as much right as men to be promiscuous and independent of family and children. The trouble is that sex is not equal as between men and women.

The playboy lifestyle is the real exploitation of women. The pregnancy is borne by the woman, not the man. The contraceptives with their side effects and the abortion with its trauma are thrust upon the woman, not the man. The out-of-wedlock births usually mean permanent poverty for the mothers. Venereal diseases are more hurtful to the woman than the man and can be deadly to her future babies.

Easy divorce, heralded in the early 1970s as legislation to liberate women, has caused economic devastation to women. The divorced woman's financial status is usually cut in half while her ex-husband's lot is significantly improved.

Can we hope that teenage promiscuity, like smoking, might go out of style and that virginity until marriage might again become fashionable? Brooke Shields' new message to teenage girls is to remind them of their right to say "no," and, "if the situation gets out of control, leave. You'll probably gain his respect." Even Dan Rather on the CBS Evening News has proclaimed that weddings, complete with white bridal gown, are back again, even for women marrying for the first time in their thirties.

### Blurring Gender Identity

A recent article by a left-handed writer summarized very well the centuries-old unreasonable and unfeeling discrimination which society has imposed on left-handed persons. He told how growing up in the New York public schools in the 1930s and 1940s meant repeated whacks from teachers who tried to force him to write with his right hand.

This writer reminded us that anti-left-handed bias is enshrined even in the language of Western civilization. The Latin for left hand, "sinister," translates into evil in English. The French for left hand, "gauche," means crude or awkward in English.

When the mistaken belief that enlightened education should endeavor to correct left-handedness was finally relegated to the junk heap of quack psychology, a remarkable fact occurred in U.S. statistical annals. Between 1932 and 1970, the recorded percentage of left-handed people rose from 2% to 10% of our population. Since it is incredible that the percentage actually increased so dramatically, the statistics could reflect a new willingness of southpaws to admit they are different, or the anonymous bureaucrats' willingness to admit that left-handedness is just as normal as right-handedness, or both.

Modern scientific, medical, and psychological opinion now teaches that it is wrong -- physically and psychologically -- for teachers to try to force left-handers to be right-handers. I wonder if, a few decades hence, writers will comment as condescendingly on the peculiar pedagogical passion of the 1970s and 1980s to

force boys to abandon their boyishness and girls to abandon their girlishness.

Those who have not kept up with trends in the classroom would be surprised to learn how pervasive is this passion. The feminist women's movement, operating like a censorship gestapo, has combed the primary-grade readers, all school textbooks, and career-guidance materials in order to eradicate the natural gender traits of youngsters and to produce a gender-neutral society.

In the late 1970s, the major textbook publishers, such as Macmillan and McGraw Hill, published "guidelines for the elimination of sexism," which listed the words, illustrations, and concepts that would henceforth be censored out of all textbooks. This impudent intolerance galloped unchecked through school materials, so now the feminists have presumed to rewrite children's stories in order to teach that women are strong and men are bad.

Once upon a time, children read a charming allegory about "The Little Steam Engine That Could." It told how the little engine, with a lot of effort and another engine's help, climbed a mountain. The currently-used edition published by Scholastic, Inc., identifies itself on the title page as "The Complete, Original Edition retold by Wally Piper." What does "retold" mean? It means that the good, kind, hard-working engines in the story are identified as female, while the bad, arrogant, selfish engines are identified as male.

Despite all the attempts to blur gender identity by, for example, showing pictures of girls playing with snakes and boys using hair spray, and even to pervert the English language by forcing schoolchildren to use such pronouns as he/she or s/he, there is no evidence that human nature is changing. The attempt to change it confuses the youth and frustrates the adults.

A case in point is a hilarious article in the *Washington Post* called "Boys Just Want to Have Guns." The *Post's* staff writer admitted that her three-year-old son, and the sons of all her pacifist-feminist-yuppie friends, despite their parents' persistent efforts (bringing them up sex-neutral, with no toy guns, and no TV except "Sesame Street"), nevertheless are naturally, irrepressibly male: boyish, aggressive, and fascinated by guns.

In addition, she moaned, the daughters of "what used to be the Berkeley left," given trucks and airplanes, still go for dolls and dress up with jewelry. "The boys slug each other and the girls paint their fingernails. Where are they getting this stuff?", she asks.

It's not just little girls and little boys who rebel at the blurring of gender identity. The magazine *Working Woman* featured an article called "Does the New Woman Really Want the New Man?" The consensus in this feminist magazine was a frustrated No. The author complained that, while the New Man is no longer possessive, he's also no longer committed. So, warns the author, the New Woman won't find "the classic knight on the white charger" and may have to settle for a man who just benefits from her energy and follows where she leads. But, the author ruefully concludes, "her heaviest liability is a likelihood of winding up alone."

## Betty Friedan and the Feminist Mystique

The *New York Times Magazine*, which three years ago gave us an article called "Voices from the Post-Feminist Generation," put another nail in the coffin of feminism by publishing Betty Friedan's article called "How to Get the Women's Movement Moving Again." That title and the accompanying artwork clearly convey the message that the women's liberation movement is stopped dead in its tracks.

Friedan has discovered that young women believe that "women's rights are not chic in America any more" and that feminism has become "a dirty word." She admits that "the movement is in trouble," that it has been wasting its energy in "a bitter, vengeful internal power struggle," and that feminist nostalgia harks back to "old rhetoric, old ideas, old modes of action."

Friedan made her fame and fortune by interviewing suburban housewives, diagnosing their difficulties as a "problem that had no name," and reciting their litany of tiresome complaints in her 1964 best-seller called *The Feminine Mystique*. She is the founder of the movement of women who believe that they are an oppressed minority.

Friedan's article is a direct appeal to the nonradical feminists to regroup and take up the fight for "second-stage feminism." Her betes noires in this battle are the Reagan Administration and "the paralysis that fundamentalist backlash has imposed on all our movements," on liberalism and humanism as well as feminism.

It's clear that Friedan has learned a lot that her radical feminist sisters have yet to learn. Since she is the godmother of the 21-year-old women's liberation movement, her admissions in this article are significant.

Friedan's recent interviewees, she says, are women "trying to 'have it all,' having second thoughts about her professional career, desperately trying to have a baby before it is too late, with or without husband, and maybe secretly blaming the movement for getting her into this mess."

She urges women to "confront the illusion of equality in divorce," citing the new book by Lenore Weitzman called *The Divorce Revolution: The Unexpected Social and Economic Consequences for Women and Children in America*. This book details how, after all states adopted easy, no-fault divorce laws, divorced women and their children suffered an immediate 73% drop in their standard of living, while their ex-husbands enjoyed a 42% rise in theirs.

Weitzman shows how the "equal" division of the marital property was grievously hurtful to wives because it denied the wife a share in the growth of the husband's earning power which she had helped to create, and also because it usually meant the forced sale of the house (which formerly was awarded to the wife and children).

The truth of the matter is that the economic consequences of the no-fault divorce laws were not unexpected; they were predicted by those who then opposed easy divorce laws. Millions of women have

been economically devastated by the change in divorce laws -- one of the few legislative "successes" of which the feminist movement can boast.

Friedan freely admits that "feminists originally supported" no-fault divorce laws. Now she calls for "urgent grassroots political support" to get rid of them.

After admitting they were wrong about divorce laws, Friedan calls on women to "affirm the differences between men and women." Would you believe! She brashly admits a fundamental error of her movement: that "first-stage feminism denied real differences between women and men except for the sexual organs themselves."

Now she says what must be to unenlightened first-stage feminists the ultimate heresy: "Bring in the men. It's passe, surely, for feminists now to see men only as the enemy."

Finally, Friedan admonishes feminists to "move beyond single-issue thinking" because she does not think that "women's rights are the most urgent business for American women. The important thing is somehow getting together with men."

Perhaps Friedan's *Times* article will develop into another best-selling book under a new title, "The Feminist Mystique." It certainly is an interesting study in psychology to catalogue the changing attitudes of feminists as the biological clock ticks on.

However, an even better title when Friedan writes about "beyond the second stage" would be "The Feminist Mistake."

### Ms. Magazine Discovers Human Nature

I must confess that I never would have read the magazine if Eastern Airlines hadn't provided free copies as I boarded the shuttle at LaGuardia Airport. But as I thumbed the pages of Gloria Steinem's *Ms. Magazine*, waiting for my plane to take off, I was fascinated at the change that has come about in this magazine since I last read it.

Fourteen years ago, the magazine featured pre-marriage contracts obliging husbands to do half the dishes and the diapers, and housewives' declarations of independence from essential housework. Today, there aren't any husbands or babies to complain about.

The first article that caught my eye was entitled "Learning to Flirt at 37." It was the confession of a mature feminist with a good job and an apartment of her own, who grew up in the sixties believing that flirting was "Victorian in the midst of the sexual revolution." After all those years of buying her own flowers, opening her own doors, and cooking dinner for herself after going to the movies alone, she actually answered an ad in the local newspaper headlined "Learn to Flirt."

She called the number listed, and the flirting teacher convinced her that even a feminist can flirt, if she uses time-tested arts. The teacher taught this feminist such simple techniques as *do* cross, uncross, and recross your legs, but *don't* cross your arms, and *do* imitate the seductive glances on soap operas, but *don't* initiate conversations on toxic waste removal. Next

there was a tear-jerker article by a female author commiserating with a friend who was still mourning a break-up with her live-in boyfriend a year after it happened. As he told her when he casually signed off a two-year relationship, he "wasn't looking, it just happened; so don't take it personally."

The author then interviewed 87 victims of break-ups of live-in lovers. She found that the average duration of these extra-marital relationships was two years. The typical break-up occurs when the man wants out; but instead of saying so, he makes signals that the thrill is gone and leaves it to the women to define the relationship as ended.

I turned to an article called "Star Wars" but, alas, it wasn't about Reagan's SDI. It was about how men feel threatened when women's careers move faster and higher than their own. The illustration showed the man with a vacuum sweeper while the woman goes out with her briefcase; the unhappy look on the man's face is a sure sign that he won't be sticking around that household very long.

Another article confessed that the main topic on the conversation agenda of brainy, successful women is "the man shortage." The author acknowledged painfully that, "after 15-plus years of consciousness-raising and general feminist hell-raising, most middle-class women who are single and heterosexual still confine their search for mates to men who are well upscale of them in income and status."

Feminists since the 1970s have been trying to force us into a gender-neutral society and bring about sex-role reversals. Their ideology is based on the notion that gender differences are caused by stereotyped education and an oppressive male-dominated society.

So it was fascinating to read the article called "Designer Genes" which admits that men and women are naturally, biologically different. It proposes that "a committee of reputable biologists" engage in "genetic manipulation" to change human nature so that men and women will have an equal motivation, desire, and enjoyment of the sex act.

There are still, as in its early years, ads in *Ms. Magazine* for sexual aids mailed in plain wrappers and for lesbian contacts, but, *mirabile dictu*, there are bigger ads for diamond engagement rings, make-up, and sheer panty hose, plus a large color ad for a \$195 doll called Scarlett O'Hara. It looks like "voices from the post-feminist generation," proclaimed three years ago by the *New York Times Magazine*, have even invaded *Ms. Magazine*.

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