



SEXUAL LIBERATION versus EMPOWERMENT

by

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Remarks at a United Nations Luncheon

March 9, 2005



For over 30 years, Americans have been singing a one-note song about sexuality – that sexual liberation is the key to empowerment for women.

I will only have time today for an overview; I'll barely have time to hit the high points. To find detailed facts and data about the positive and negative outcomes of sexual liberation, you can access and study a report that I wrote called, *Gaining Ground: A Profile of American Women in the Twentieth Century*, which can be found on the Web site for Concerned Women for America – www.cwfa.org. In that report, you can find 100 years of data about American women's well-being.



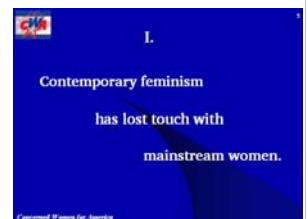
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In our time together today, I will argue that contemporary feminism – by focusing on sexual liberation as a means of empowerment for women – (1) has lost touch with mainstream women, (2) has been detrimental to women's well-being, and (3) has lost sight of what most women really care about.



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Problem #1: Contemporary feminism has lost touch with mainstream women.



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- A recent CBS poll revealed that three out of four women described the word “feminist” as an insult.
- Another study found that the number of working women who believe that a career is as important as being a wife and mother has fallen 23 percent since the 1970s.

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What has caused such a dramatic change in women’s attitudes? Why does the word “feminist” have such negative connotations for women today?

“Having it all” doesn’t mean:

- hatred for men
- lesbianism
- radical leftist politics

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What has happened to a movement that was supposed to make it possible for women to “have it all”?

Feminism has “come a long way.” A long way the wrong way!

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Let me hasten to add that the first wave of feminism, the Woman Suffrage movement, won the right to vote and the right to own property. We owe a great debt to the early feminists. Because of their work more than a century ago, women today have incredible horizons.

The second wave of feminism, however, won such dubious gains as preferences, quotas, and sadly: sexual freedom, no-fault divorce, and abortion-on-demand. These basic tenets of modern feminism have been a disaster for women.

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To understand the extent of the disaster, let’s compare the two great 20th century Utopian experiments — communism in the East and feminism in the West.

Both movements originated as a result of discontent with flawed social, economic and political systems.

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Communist Discontent originated over the barely subsistence wages given to labor and the unequal distributions of wealth. Marx, in writing *Das Kapital*, his monumental critique of capitalism, argued that capitalism was fundamentally exploitive and so hopelessly flawed that it would collapse under the weight of its contradictions.

The Communist Ideal offered a shining vision of an egalitarian socialistic society where the output of the community would be shared according to a noble, altruistic principle: “from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.”



Communist Discontent:

- subsistence wages to labor
- unequal distribution of wealth

Communist Ideal:

- egalitarian socialist society
- from each according to his ability to each according to his need

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The feminist theorists of the mid 20th century also put forward a Utopian vision of the “good society” based on savage critiques of the existing progressive social order. **Feminist Discontent** originated in women’s dependence on men and their unequal opportunities.

The Feminists’ Ideal was a blend of sexual freedom and economic equality, borrowed from earlier First Wave champions of women’s rights, and social justice borrowed from the civil rights movement, which had just come into full flower in the United States with the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Added to this you have many feminist thinkers in the academic world promoting neo-Marxist views about capitalism.



Feminist Discontent:

- women's dependence on men
- unequal opportunities for women

Feminist Ideal:

- sexual liberation
- economic equality
- complete social justice for women

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It is worth noting that communism first came into being via the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 — a rebellion NOT against a system of **free market capitalism** — but against a semi-feudal society ruled by the dictatorial monarch, Tsar Nicholas II.

The rebellion inspired by Marx and headed by Lenin, then, was against despotism and a cruelly class-stratified society. To communist thinkers, once the workers’ paradise was fully established by government ownership of all capital, poverty would disappear and the temporary dictatorship of the proletariat — required by the transition to socialism — would become unnecessary and the state would wither away.



Communist Revolution:

- rebelled against dictatorship of Tsar Nicholas II and a cruel, exploitive class-stratified society

Communist Goal:

- freedom for the masses in a classless society
- end to poverty and oppression

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To second-wave feminist thinkers, the great obstacle to progress toward a sexless, egalitarian society— where women could be free to realize the fulfillment of their heart’s desires—was **inequality** rooted in **male supremacy** plus those elements of the social order that supported it, particularly marriage and religion. Some include capitalism as a contributing source of male domination. The males in society had to be re-educated as to their proper roles relating to women and, where necessary, coerced by legislation and judicial decree into letting women pursue their professions on a “level playing field.” In the event that sexual activity resulted in an unwanted pregnancy, abortion on demand would be readily available. In those instances where a woman chose to have children, institutional arrangements had to be put in place so that the rearing of those children would not be burdensome or interfere with career aspirations.



Feminist Revolution:

- rebelled against inequality the domination of male supremacy

Feminist Goal:

- a sexless, egalitarian society
- end to male supremacy, marriage and unwanted childbearing

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Note that according to both of these systems of thought, the root cause of the problems—the obstacles to progress—were faulty institutional arrangements, factors external to the individual. According to this view, defective institutions produced defective behavior that produced negative outcomes. The solution was not individual moral accountability for greed, oppression, and exploitation. The solution was to change the institutional arrangements, which would then produce positive behavior and outcomes.

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Who is not inspired by the thought of a prosperous, egalitarian society, where an equal distribution of wealth, power and influence is the norm . . . and NOT a mere Utopian dream? Who is not inspired by the elimination of poverty and oppression? The elimination of violent domination and abuse?

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But, everywhere that communism has ruled, it has been via a totalitarian regime established by force, never by free elections.

As Mao famously said, “All power comes from the barrel of a gun.”

Russia’s tyrannical dictator Joseph Stalin is quoted as having said, “A single death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic.”

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Please take careful note: Utopian schemes produce a lot of statistics.

Well, let us look at some of the communist Utopias, see what became of the people of Russia, China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cambodia.

- In Russia, to usher in the worker’s paradise, Stalin engineered a famine in the Ukraine, which is estimated to have killed 7 million. He put millions more into forced labor camps, the gulags of Siberia, where another 15-20 million died.
- Mao's man-made famine in China killed more millions than died in the USSR.
- Pol Pot was responsible for the deaths of up to 2 million Cambodians, 25 percent of the population. He literally emptied the cities in his attempts to produce an agrarian Utopia during the mid-1970s.
- Another 2 million are estimated to have died in North Korea . . . so far!

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Let’s try to grasp those statistics:

- Line up a million people in a column 10 abreast with each row 3 feet behind the one in front of it; the column would reach the 56 miles.
- If the column marched by us at 3 miles per hour (that’s 20 minutes to walk a mile), it would take about 19 hours for it to pass.

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- This is just one million.

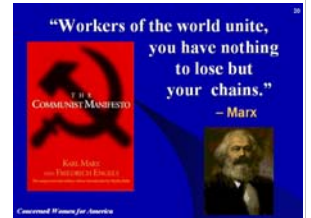
Some estimates of the total number who died under communism in the 20th century put the number as high as 100 million.

We are not talking about war casualties here; we are talking about totalitarian regimes killing their own people. And why? This was done in the name of establishing a Utopian workers' paradise.

How ironic. Marx had promised: *Workers of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains.*

It didn't work out quite that way.

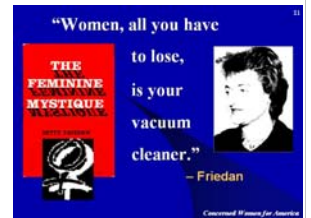
The Marxist rhetoric was high-sounding, noble, and idealistic, but in the forced labor camps in Russia, China, and Cambodia, the individual was insignificant and expendable, and life was miserable and usually short!



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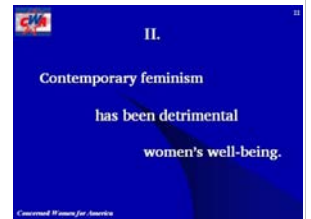
How does this relate to feminism? We are confronted with another Utopian ideal, whose animating principles — women's rights, sexual freedom, economic equality, and the fulfillment of women's potential — are high-sounding and noble.

But like the tragic irony of communism, feminist ideals have betrayed us and produced massive damage both to women and to their children: Betty Friedan said all women had to lose were their vacuum cleaners. But the losses have been devastating – in pursuing power and prestige, far too many American women have lost the personal things that make life fulfilling and satisfying.



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Problem #2. Contemporary feminism has been detrimental to women's well-being.



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(1) Sexual liberation has put women in a perilous position:

The actual outcomes from sexual liberation carry a staggering cost:

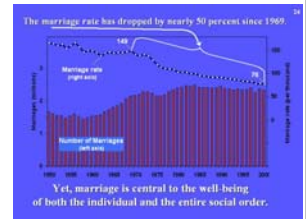
- 35 million kids affected by divorce since 1970
- 43 million abortions
- 10 million STDs a year in young adults
- one-third of all children now born out of wedlock



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- 50 million women living alone as “unrelated individuals”
- a ten-fold increase in cohabitation

- The marriage rate has dropped by nearly 50 percent since 1969; fewer people are getting married and they are waiting later to get married.



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- The number of unmarried couples “living together” in the U.S. is 10 times larger than in 1970 and a large percentage of those households include children.



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- Women have been told that living together leads to marriage, but the facts prove otherwise. In the 1970s about 60 percent of cohabiting couples married each other within three years. Now, this proportion has declined to less than 40 percent.



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- Women have been told that living together is a good deal – financially. But it ends up being a very expensive arrangement for women. Not only do both women and children suffer more poverty after a cohabiting relationship breaks up, BUT there is typically an economic imbalance in favor of the man within such relationships, too.



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- Unmarried couples say that they plan to share expenses equally, but more often than not, the women support the men.
- Studies show that women typically contribute more than 70 percent of the income in a cohabiting relationship. Likewise, the women tend to do more of the cleaning, cooking and laundry.
- If they are students facing economic or time constraints requiring a reduction in class load by one partner, it is almost invariably the woman, not the man, who drops



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a class.

- Clearly such relationships exhibit an imbalance of power that puts women in a perilous position.

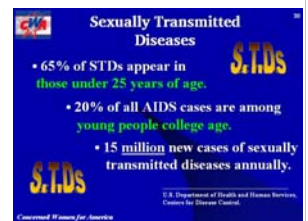
(2) Sexual freedom has produced a dramatic increase in STDs – with women the primary victims.



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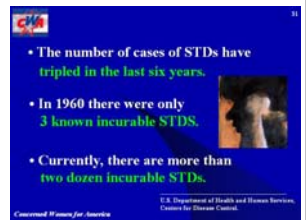
The Centers for Disease Control reports that:

- nearly 65 percent of STDs appear in people who are under 25 years of age and
- more than 20 percent of all AIDS cases are among college-age young people
- about 15 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases occur every year in the United States.



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- The number of cases is increasing – they have tripled in just six years – AND the types and deadliness are also growing.
- In 1960 there were only three STDs;
- Currently, there are over two dozen STDs that are incurable.



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- The fastest-spreading STD – commonly called HPV – causes over 90 percent of cervical cancer and
- HPV kills about 5,000 American women every year.



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- The number of STD cases among unmarried, sexually active women is six times higher than among married women.
- One doctor estimates that a person having three or more sexual partners in a lifetime increases the odds of cervical cancer 15 times.

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(3) Sexual freedom has increased abuse and violence to women.

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- A University of Chicago study found that 16 percent of unmarried, sexually active women reported that arguments with their partners became physical last year while
- only 5 percent of married women had similar experiences.

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- The U.S. Department of Justice reports that women are 62 times more likely to be assaulted by their live-in boyfriends than they are if living with their husband.

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- (4) Sexual freedom leaves the woman both “paying the rent and rocking the baby.”
- Very few nonmarital relationships last; they are fragile and short in duration.
 - Less than half of cohabiting relationships last five or more years.
 - Typically, they last about 18 months.

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- Researchers from Yale and Columbia found that the divorce rates for women who cohabit before marriage are nearly 80 percent higher than the rates of those who do not.
- Clearly being sexually active before marriage is preparation for divorce.



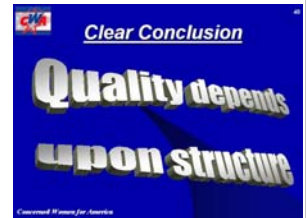
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- One study sums it up very bluntly – “The practice of unmarried couples living together does not serve the best interests of adults, children, society or governments.”
- The study continued: Living together too often leaves in its wake “a trail of broken relationships, unstable homes, children at risk, domestic violence, poverty and thus a weakened society.”



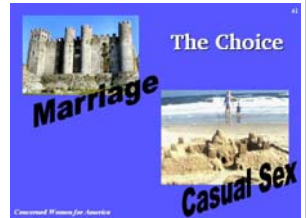
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What the facts clearly show is that the quality of a couple’s relationship is heavily dependent upon its structure.



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We need to send a clear message to young women – opting to “move in” with a guy is a weak, uncertain and unreliable choice.



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- On the other hand, a UCLA survey of 130 published empirical studies documented the fact that marriage is healthier than living together without marriage.
- Marriages preceded by cohabitation, however, are more prone to problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, more promiscuous sex, and abhorrence of dependence.



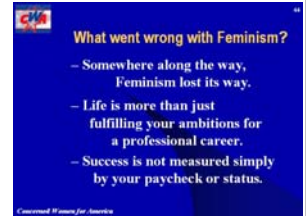
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- Nontraditional households are detrimental to the partners' health. Unmarried couples, even when living together, have a higher mortality rate than married couples: 50 percent higher among women and an amazing 250 percent higher among men.



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What do I think is wrong with feminism? Somewhere along the way, feminism lost its way. It began focusing on selfish and self-centered hedonism and power. Life is not just profession and career. Success is not measured JUST in paycheck, status and power.



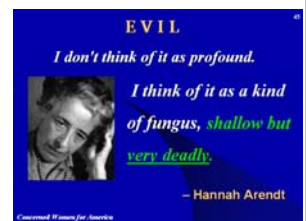
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The data clearly show us the pathetic results of America's experiment in sexual freedom.

Question: How is it possible to start out with high-sounding, noble ideals and end up with so much wretchedness?

This brings us back to the earlier comparisons between the two massive Utopian experiments of the 20th century: communism and feminism. Both systems were founded on the idea that changing the institutional arrangements of society would provide the solution to basic problems. This view stemmed from a huge misunderstanding of the origin and nature of evil.

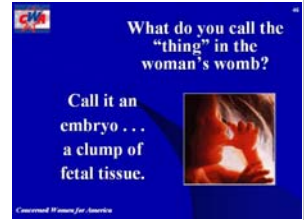
If you ignore all of contemporary feminism's idealistic-sounding rhetoric, you may well see its outcomes in terms very similar to those used by Hannah Arendt to describe evil. She saw evil personified by the Nazis at the Nuremberg War Crimes trials at the end of World War II, and she was trying to comprehend how such ordinary-looking people could visit such violence on other human beings. Her conclusion? She said she didn't think evil was profound, but rather more on the order of a fungus: shallow but very deadly. The picture she draws for us is vivid.



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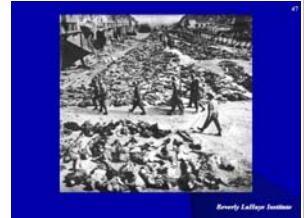
It is instructive to look at this evil movement to see how the Nazis succeeded. Otherwise, as the old saying goes, we are doomed to repeat those tragedies. So, how did the Hitler approach the "Final Solution," the total elimination of all Jews? How could such an idea be possible? First the Jews were turned into the "Other," into beings without a human face . . . then nobody cared.

Likewise with abortion today. Notice how diabolically the language is chosen. Do not call the “thing” in the woman’s womb a baby. A baby is a young human. Call it an embryo, a clump of fetal tissue. As long as we don’t see this “thing,” this “problem” that the abortionist “disposes” of . . . then nobody cares.



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But with the defeat of the Nazis, Gen. Eisenhower at the end of WWII ordered that the people from the surrounding areas be rounded up and taken to the death camps. He was determined that they would see and hear and smell the horrific slaughter that they had closed their minds to.



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Likewise today, advances in technology are making clear the horrors of the abortionists’ handiwork. We’ve all seen ultra-sound pictures of tiny infants in the womb sucking their thumbs. Then there was the startling picture of the baby reaching its hand out of the incision in the womb to grasp the surgeon’s hand.



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No matter what rhetoric is used to dress up the reality – terms like “choice” or “women’s rights” – there is nothing profound or redemptive here. This is a raw struggle for power; a struggle that is very deadly. And not just for the unborn child, but for the relations between men and women – nothing could be more poisonous. And, ultimately, it is destructive of women, too.

To what end has this plague of abortion, this massacre of the innocents, been directed? The pursuit of hedonistic pleasure? Women’s liberation? Liberation from what? So that a woman can engage in the pleasure of sexual intercourse without the demands of motherhood? No . . . no, this horrible slaughter has little to do with pleasure. But it has a great deal to do with the demands of motherhood. Radical feminists accurately see abortion as women’s ultimate weapon in their battle to escape the control of men. The issue is one of power, of having the power to “call the shots.”

With abortion as an option, a woman can escape pregnancy. Abortion gives her the power to avoid giving birth to the man’s child, a child she would otherwise be connected to for life and who would likewise connect her to the father.

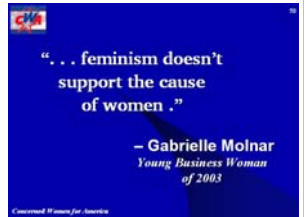
Herein lies a **second** great difficulty with these Utopian schemes: You cannot ignore nature, specifically human nature.

The Utopians deny the fact that human nature makes demands on all of us — that there are realities that we all have to deal with in life, that there are boundaries imposed by nature. They naively believe that they can shape the world to fit the specification of their Utopian vision. They want an impossible world, one where they have complete control . . . control not only of their actions but of the consequences of their actions as well.



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Is it any wonder that the 2003 young businesswoman of the year, Gabrielle Molnar, explained that she didn't want to be called a feminist because feminism doesn't really support the cause of women?



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Unless something intervenes to prevent it, nature dictates to a married woman that she will long for the joy and fulfillment of having the baby of her husband. She does not see this as an issue of power or dominance but one of joyful partnership in raising their child together. Reproduction is one of the central goals of life; many would say the highest goal in life. You have only to ask a mother and she will tell you just how much birth has given meaning and purpose and fulfillment. Or . . . witness the pain and frustration of a loved one who is infertile.

Feminism has lost sight of what most women REALLY care about

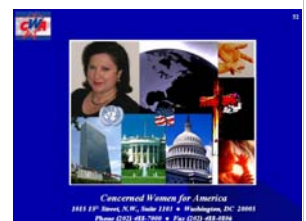
- that they want to love and be loved,
- that they want to be married to the love of their life and to have children.

Certainly they also want the freedom to be all they can be and they want to be treated with dignity and respect. And many also want the opportunity to have meaningful careers and productive lives — but most aren't willing for their ambition to harm their relationships or damage their children. So in the end, feminism now is the creed of the privileged elites and the downtrodden or abused; otherwise, it is simply becoming less and less relevant to the wants and needs of the average woman.



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Thank you for your attention.



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