American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation

By Henry Makow Ph.D.
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(Reader's Note: This summer I am revising and reprising important articles that predate my web site.)

"Rape is an expression of ... male supremacy ... the age-old economic, political and cultural exploitation of women by men."

Does this sound like a modern radical feminist? Guess again. It is from a 1948 American Communist Party pamphlet entitled "Woman Against Myth" by Mary Inman.

In a recent book, Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation, (2002) feminist historian Kate Weigand states: "ideas, activists and traditions that emanated from the Communist movement of the forties and fifties continued to shape the direction of the new women's movement of the 1960s and later."(154)

In fact, Weigand, a lecturer at Smith College, shows that modern feminism is a direct outgrowth of American Communism. There is nothing that feminists said or did in the 1960's-1980's that wasn't prefigured in the CPUSA of the 1940's and 1950's. Many second-wave feminist leaders were "red diaper babies," the children of Communists.

Communists pioneered the political and cultural analysis of woman's oppression. They originated women's studies, and advocated public daycare, birth control, abortion and even children's rights. They forged key feminist concepts such as "the personal is the political" and techniques such as "consciousness raising."

In the late 1940's, CPUSA leaders realized that the labor movement was becoming increasingly hostile to Communism. They began to focus on women and African Americans. They hoped "male supremacy" would "bring more women into the organization and into the fight against the domestic policies of the Cold War." (80)

Communist women who made up 40% of the party wanted more freedom to attend party meetings. After the publication of "Women Against Myth" in 1948, the CPUSA initiated a process of "re-educating" men that we recognize only too well today.

For example, in the party newspaper "The Daily Worker" a photo caption of a man with a young child read, "Families are stronger and happier if the father knows how to fix the cereal, tie the bibs and take care of the youngsters." (127)

The Party ordered men who didn't take the woman question seriously to complete "control tasks involving study on the woman question." In 1954 the Los Angeles branch disciplined men for "hogging discussion at club meetings, bypassing women comrades in leadership and making sex jokes degrading to women." (94)
A film Salt of the Earth, which critic Pauline Kael called "Communist propaganda", portrayed women taking a decisive role in their husbands' labor strike. "Against her husband's wishes, Esperanza became a leader in the strike and for the first time forged a role for herself outside of her household... [her] political successes persuaded Ramon to accept a new model of family life." (132) Portrayals of strong assertive successful women became as common in the Communist press and schools, as they are in the mass media today.

Communist women formalized a sophisticated Marxist analysis of the "woman question." The books In Women's Defense (1940) by Mary Inman, Century of Struggle (1954) by Eleanor Flexner and The Unfinished Revolution (1962) by Eve Merriam recorded women's oppression and decried sexism in mass culture and language. For example, Mary Inman argued that "manufactured femininity" and "overemphasis on beauty" keeps women in subjection (33).

The founder of modern feminism, Betty Frieden relied on these texts when she wrote The Feminine Mystique (1963). These women all hid the fact that they were long-time Communist activists. In the 1960, their daughters had everything they needed, including the example of subterfuge, to start the Women's Liberation Movement.

Feminism's roots in Marxist Communism explain a great deal about this curious but dangerous movement. It explains:

- Why the "woman's movement" hates femininity and imposes a political-economic concept like "equality" on a personal, biological and mystical relationship.
- Why the "women's movement" also embraces equality of race and class.
- Why they want revolution ("transformation") and have a messianic vision of a gender-less utopia.
- Why they believe human nature is infinitely malleable and can be shaped by indoctrination and coercion.
- Why they engage in endless, mind-numbing theorizing, doctrinal disputes and factionalism.
- Why truth for them is a "social construct" defined by whomever has power, and appearances are more important than reality.
- Why they reject God, nature and scientific evidence in favour of their political agenda.
- Why they refuse to debate, don't believe in free speech, and suppress dissenting views.
- Why they behave like a quasi-religious cult, or like the Red Guard.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that feminism is Communism by another name. Having failed to peddle class war, Communism promoted gender conflict instead. The "diversity" and "multicultural" movements represent feminism's attempt to forge "allegiances" by empowering gays and "people of color." Thus, the original CPUSA trio of "race, gender and class" is very much intact but class conflict was never a big seller.

The term "politically correct" originated in the Russian Communist Party in the 1920's. It usage in America today illustrates the extent society has been subverted. Feminist activists are mostly Communist dupes. The Communist goal is to destroy Western Civilization, which is dedicated to genuine diversity (pluralism), individual liberty and equal opportunity (but not equal outcomes).

We have seen this destruction in the dismantling of the liberal arts curriculum and tradition of free speech and inquiry at our universities. We have seen this virus spread to government, business, the media and the military. This could only happen because the financial elite in fact sponsors Communism.
"Political correctness" has dulled and regimented our cultural life. Recently here in Winnipeg, Betty Granger, a conservative school trustee referred to house price increases due to "the Asian invasion." Granger was pilloried mercilessly in the press. People sent hate letters and dumped garbage on her lawn.

At a School Board meeting, the Chairman acknowledged that she is not a racist. He acknowledged that Asians have married into her family. Nonetheless, Granger was censured because, and I quote, "appearances are more important than reality." This slippage from the mooring of objective truth is the hallmark of Communism.

The atmosphere at the meeting was charged. Mild mannered Canadians, all champions of "tolerance" they behaved like wild dogs ready to tear apart an wounded rabbit. Betty Granger repented and voted in favour of her own censure.

These rituals of denunciation and contrition, typical of Stalinist Russia or Maoist China, are becoming commonplace in America. They are like showtrials designed to frighten everyone into conforming. We have "diversity officers" and "human rights commissions" and "sensitivity training" to uphold feminist shibboleths. They talk about "discrimination" but they freely discriminate against white heterosexual men and feminine women. They use the charge of "sexual harassment" to fetter male-female relations and purge their opponents.

In 1980, three women in Leningrad produced 10 typewritten copies of a feminist magazine called Almanac. The KGB shut down the magazine and deported the women to West Germany. In the USSR, feminism has largely been for export. According to Professor Weigand, her "book provides evidence to support the belief that at least some Communists regarded the subversion of the gender system [in America] as an integral part of the larger fight to overturn capitalism."(6)

In conclusion, the feminist pursuit of "equal rights" is a mask for an invidious Communist agenda. The Communist MO has always been deception, infiltration and subversion. The goal is the destruction of western civilization and creation of a new world order run by monopoly capital.

Kate Weigand's Red Feminism demonstrates that the Communist agenda is alive and well and living under an assumed name.