

# Newman Weekly

By Dr. Muriel Newman  
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The New Zealand Centre for Political Debate

## The Feminist Agenda Three Decades On

Last month, when the public furore erupted over an airline policy that bans men from sitting next to unaccompanied children, I wondered whether the feminists were celebrating. A few years ago, the mere suggestion that a man on a plane could be a likely child molester, would have been greeted with derision. Now, however, not only has the concept been taken seriously by the airlines, but some public servants – including the Commissioner for Children - have said it's a good idea.

Stuart Birks, Director of the Centre for Public Policy Evaluation at Massey University, explores the emergence of this worrying trend towards the denigration of men, in our guest opinion piece in this week's NZCPD Forum ([www.nzcpd.com](http://www.nzcpd.com)).

The unfortunate situation we are in today can be traced back to the agenda set in place by radical feminists some thirty years ago. While the key objective of most of the women who have enthusiastically joined the women's liberation movement has been equality for women, the movement appears to have been taken over by those who want to pursue a socialist agenda.

A booklet entitled *A Strategy for Women's Liberation* produced in 1974, explains:

*"The socialist who is not a Feminist lacks breadth. The Feminist who is not a Socialist is lacking in strategy. To the narrow-minded Socialist who says: 'Socialism is a working class movement for the freedom of the working class, with woman as woman we have nothing to do,' the far-sighted Feminist will reply: 'the Socialist movement is the only means whereby woman as woman can obtain real freedom. Therefore I must work for it.'*

*The booklet outlined the rationale behind the feminist movement: "The oppression of women began with the origin of the patriarchal family, private*

*property and the state. Anthropological evidence has shown that in the primitive communal society, women held a respected and important position. The basic economic unit was the maternal gens or clan, in which the family as we know it did not exist. In this clan, goods were shared among members equally. Women played an important role in the providing of food and shelter and were not tied to individual men economically, nor was there any compulsion to remain with one sexual partner."*

*"With the development of an economic surplus and the individual accumulation of this surplus as private property, the clan system gave way to the setting up of separate households. This was the beginning of class society and the patriarchal family. Women became isolated from communal activity, and monogamy for the wife was strictly enforced to ensure legitimate heirs."*

*"Today, the nuclear family unit remains as the basic economic cell of class society and women continue to be isolated in individual households, dependent on individual men for economic survival. The family also serves to perpetuate capitalist rule by inculcating in children the values of the private property system."*

Radical feminists believed that the only way to achieve true equality for women was through liberating them from the bonds of husband and family. Further, they could see that if women were freed from the traditional requirement to remain loyal to one partner, the whole system of private property rights - which relies on the creation of legitimate heirs and is a fundamental tenet of a democratic free market economy – would ultimately collapse. The Labour Government of the day embraced these feminist goals and introduced the Domestic Purposes Benefit as a vehicle for change.

The effect of the DPB was to pay women to separate from their husbands and partners. It paid them more money to have more children, and it didn't matter how many different fathers were involved. In fact, it was not even necessary for the woman to name a father on a child's birth certificate.

The DPB also encouraged single women to have children on their own, to the extent that the number of women now receiving the benefit who have never married, has eclipsed the number of women who were married but separated. This shows that rather than helping women to adjust from failed marriages, the DPB has created single-parent families.

Further, as the DPB has caused parenting and inheritance lines to become increasingly blurred, men have been prevented from using modern DNA technology to establish paternity - unless the mother agrees. But the consequence of placing all of the power and control in the hands of the mother is a continuing erosion of the fundamental rights of fatherhood.

Thirty years on, with state funding what was essentially a radical feminist agenda, the family unit has been significantly undermined, transforming society in a way that is putting our children at risk.

Throughout the ages, the nuclear family has traditionally been the safest environment in which to raise children. Yet, with the DPB effectively incentivising family breakdown, child abuse and

neglect have escalated to the point where it is estimated that almost 50,000 children will be referred to our child welfare service this year alone. With literally tens of thousands of children now living in dangerous family situations, governments have clearly sacrificed the safety and wellbeing of children in order to satisfy the on-going demands of radical feminists.

And radical it is. Back in 1974, feminist leaders warned: "With its thrust against the family institution, the women's liberation movement is profoundly revolutionary".

These women put in place a well-organised plan of action some thirty years ago ([www.nzcpd.com/weekly12.htm](http://www.nzcpd.com/weekly12.htm) to view details of their policy programme). The changes have been introduced incrementally and they are now well on the way to achieving their key goal which

is the replacement of the traditional patriarchal family.

Dr. Muriel Newman is the director of the NZ Centre for Political Debate.

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