

## Radical Feminism

Will Swett  
*Staff Writer*

To critique modern feminism in an age of hypersensitivity and hair-trigger social media is a risky endeavor, especially for a white straight cisgender male. It requires knowledge of feminism's history and the vocabulary of many of its followers.

The purpose of this article is not to diminish the importance of women's rights movements, but to place them within the contemporary context of radical feminism, which misappropriates many social ills to extend its own fragmented ideology and influence mainstream feminist thought. I can't imagine the difficult position this leaves many women in who want to align their support with a purely feminine movement, but have men and women like me criticizing the key elements of the ideology. Unfortunately, the word feminism does not simply and exclusively rest on the belief for equal treatment of women, but also includes certain ideological baggage that needs addressing.

Historically speaking, the last century of feminism can be categorized into three distinct stages. The first wave of feminism, taking place from the late 19th to the early 20th centuries, was characterized primarily by the fight for women's suffrage. The second wave developed during the sexual revolution in the 1960s and 1970s and established abortion rights as a key tenet of mainstream feminism.

During the 1960s, many radical feminist organizations began to pop up, waving the banner of socialism and proclaiming men to be the

natural enemy of all women. The Marxist tradition continues today in the ideology of modern radical feminist groups. To their credit, the radical feminist groups of the 1960s were very influential in focusing national attention on the question of abortion rights. Today, however, the influence of radical feminism on the modern feminist movement has resulted in a lack of intellectual depth.

The "guiding principles" of one popular rad-fem group, Deep Green Resistance, claim "men as a class are waging a war against women. Rape, battering, incest, prostitution, pornography, poverty, and gynocide are both the main weapons of this war and the conditions that create the sex-class women." The obvious Marxist influence notwithstanding, the hypocrisy of these groups comes from the blinding hatred towards men. The perception of male and patriarchal oppression leads to their assumption that men are the crux of all social issues. Such extreme ideas result in harmful misinterpretations of the social order that have permeated into the theory of modern feminism.

From the 1990s to the present, the third wave of the feminist movement—called modern or contemporary feminism—has incorporated post-colonial and post-structuralist thinking, treating what used to be considered biological facts or innate tendencies as arbitrary social constructs. Gender is no longer considered a natural classification, but a spectrum of the patriarchal structure from which the level of your oppression by men, especially white men, will be decided. This modern feminist belief completely discounts the value

and importance of actual biological differences. Equal treatment of women does not mean that we ignore genuine gender differences—men and women tend to have different strengths and weaknesses, different likes and dislikes, and will often choose for themselves different career paths, family roles, television shows, books, and movies. Discounting the individual actions of intelligent men and women as part of a patriarchal structure of oppression undermines the ability of individuals to reason for themselves and diminishes the value of pursuing personal desires and interests. Men and women tend to like that they're different and celebrate those differences. Feminism has reacted to this commonly understood reality by either arguing that our many differences are mere social constructs or by arguing that men and women are the same, except when women are better.

These key differences have created an ideological incompatibility between liberal feminism and radical feminism, but have not yet resulted in a complete break. Many modern-day feminists engage in man-bashing rather than making dignified demands for equality, as the feminists of the past did. The view some modern feminists seek to spread, in the words of Marilyn French, is that "all men are rapists and that's all they are." The expansion of feminist demands ranges from censorship to cultural change. It's disappointing to see how radical feminist ideology has poisoned the feminist movement, especially for those women seeking to identify with feminism under the simple motto of equal treatment.

## A Comparative Look at Airport Security

Taylor Elicegui | *Staff Writer*

Flying back to school after break, I, like many others, had to endure the inconvenience of incompetent airport security. I waited in line at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport for roughly 30 minutes and counted at least 15 TSA agents standing around, not doing anything. I forgot to take my laptop out of my backpack, and got my bag specially searched while I stood with my bare

feet on the dirty carpet. After that ordeal, I began to wonder if the TSA is the most inefficient government agency in the world.

When compared with airport security in Israel's Ben Gurion airport, TSA's flaws are obvious. Raphael Ron, the former director of security at Ben Gurion, describes the security process in Israel as based on the "human factor." Security guards in Ben Gurion focus on signs of anxiety in the passengers, detected through multiple interactions with the different guards. Interactions

start before you get out of your car, with armed security guards questioning the driver and passengers while scales weigh the car and scanners examine the trunk and undercarriage. Outside the airport, undercover agents patrol the area and security cameras provide additional monitoring. Security officials question each passenger before anyone checks in, checking for anxiety and eye contact, among other things. Finally, passengers go through a metal detector and again talk to security officers before finally arriving at the gate. The layered approach of Israel's airport security greatly reduces the chance of failure. If one agent makes a mistake, other agents can correct the mistake later in the process. Israel's airports haven't had a deadly incident in over 30 years, proving just how effective this method of security is.

Unlike security in Israel, the TSA relies on technology instead of skilled officers. TSA replaces the face-to-face interaction in Israel's airport security with full body scanners. The current scanners—not the intrusive scanners that produced nude images—frequently fail to detect weapons. Researchers from UC San Diego, University of Michigan, and Johns Hopkins University

released a study in the summer of 2014 in which they concluded people could easily slip weapons through the scanners. With ineffective technology and without officers trained to detect deception and nerves American airports remain at risk.

Ben Gurion's security, as effective as it is, also has critics. Many question the use of racial profiling and invasive measures used in security. In fact, many methods—strip searching, questions about religion—would not fly in American airports. So where does that leave the TSA? Rafi Sela, president of AR Challenges, an international airport security consultation firm, made some recommendations. First, he states, TSA must become a regulated agency, instead of an agency that regulates itself. Second, TSA must become a non-political organization. The failure of the body scanners shows the dangers of allowing personal connections and politics to influence airport security decisions. And ultimately, the focus of security must shift from screening baggage to screening people. By having trained officers interact with passengers, TSA can fulfill its purpose of protecting American travelers and increasing domestic security.

## Proposed USDA Reform

Sarah Larson | *Staff Writer*

Hidden within the labyrinth that is President Obama's 2016 budget proposal is a consolidation that makes sense to even a Republican. Even though President Obama's budget is more or less irrelevant to the current Congress, this particular proposal deserves serious consideration. It proposes to consolidate the Agriculture Department's Food Safety and Inspection Service by combining it with the Food and Drug Administration's food safety oversight, thereby creating a new agency to be housed under the Health and Human Services Department (HHS). The consolidation is part of the budget's effort to "reorganize and consolidate Federal programs to reduce duplication and improve efficiency". The President's proposal fulfills those requirements as well as eliminates a current moral dilemma.

The USDA has no place regulating food safety. Intuitively, that responsibility falls under the pre-existing HHS. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is run out of the Department of Health and Human Services. The professionals at the CDC manage outbreaks of salmonella, E. coli, or other food-borne illness already. Why task a separate organization—one that oversees U.S. agriculture—with preventing outbreaks they barely understand? The CDC should be able to manage outbreaks from start to finish. Doing so will further their ability to prevent outbreaks.

The two departments should operate separately in order to 'check' and 'balance' one another. Allowing the USDA to regulate farm production as well as food safety creates a damaging incentive to pursue one goal at the expense of another. The American consumer sees this all the time: food is cheaper and more plentiful than it has ever been, but Americans aren't any healthier because of it. Countless consumer organizations bemoan the 'corruption of farming,' fearing that mass production practices like the use of genetically modified crops such as Monsanto's famous "Round-Up Ready" seeds are deteriorating both American farming and health.

Regardless of the veracity of such accusations, the USDA's critics have a point: current farming practices affect human health. The USDA pursues the best interests of farmers at the cost of consumers: pouring hormones and antibiotics into cows to make them heavier without properly considering how those hormones and antibiotics might affect the human health. I'm sure the path goes the other way too, implementing regulations designed to protect human health that are detrimental to farming operations. Countless stories of intermingling between the USDA and top farming companies reveal the conflicting interests. Many critics agree that the USDA is "too close" to the food industry it regulates.

The USDA's area of expertise should be food production, not human health. According to

Obama's administration, getting rid of the current divide "would provide focused, centralized leadership, a primary voice on food safety standards and compliance with those standards, and clear lines of responsibility and accountability that will enhance both prevention of and responses to outbreaks of foodborne illnesses". Since food safety is a matter of public health, the responsibility should fall in line with the mission of HHS.

Congresswomen Rosa DeLauro hit the nail on the head when she commented on the budget proposal saying, "Our current food safety system is hopelessly fragmented and outdated, consequently putting lives at unnecessary risk. Putting our food safety functions under HHS is a step that I first suggested in 2007; I am glad the Administration has proposed taking this action in their FY16 budget."

## Enquiry Staff

**Editor-in-Chief:** Joe Simonson

**Senior Editor:** Mike Adamo

**Staff Writers:** Taylor Elicegui, Amy Elinski, Alex Klosner, Sarah Larson, Andrew Nachemson, Phil Parkes, Will Swett

*The opinions expressed in these articles are the views of their authors and do not represent the views of Enquiry or the Alexander Hamilton Institute.*

Enquiry accepts articles of 500 to 800 words at [jsimonso@hamilton.edu](mailto:jsimonso@hamilton.edu) and [madamo@hamilton.edu](mailto:madamo@hamilton.edu). Please be aware that we do not accept anonymous submissions.