

Day Care Deception: The Family Under Siege

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The "day care deception" of my book's title refers to two things: 1) the continuing attempts to cover up or explain away the social science findings that show the serious risks of over-reliance on non-parental group care for preschool children, and 2) the continuing attempt to portray greater public investment in organized group care for children as something that time-strapped working parents demand.

With regard to the social science data, the evidence is conclusive and becomes more conclusive every year: day care is a serious risk, both to children's normal development *and* to their health. Just last month, findings from an ongoing study conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Development showed a high correlation between time in non-parental group care and "aggressiveness" in children, a technical term used by investigators to describe behaviour such as non-compliance, talking too much, arguing a lot, throwing tantrums, demanding a lot of attention, disrupting class discipline, cruelty, meanness, bullying, explosive behaviour, and getting in a lot of fights. The study showed that children who spend an average of thirty hours per week or more in non-parental group care display three times as many of these behavioural problems as children who spend ten hours per week or less in day care, about as dramatic a correlation as one can find in sociology. Despite the attempts of the NICHD and the media to downplay and explain away the findings, they were clear to anyone who bothered to pick up the study.

The newer findings regarding the detrimental effects of day care on behaviour and the mother-child bond are merely the latest confirmation of warnings from numerous child development experts over the last forty years--warnings that have been largely suppressed by the reigning day care establishment of researchers, journalists, and lobbyists. The truth is, these experts--particularly those that specialize in the field of "infant attachment"--found the evidence against day care for young children conclusive long ago. Burton White, former director of the Harvard Preschool Project and a leading authority on the first three years of life, is one of the few who has dared to breach the conspiracy of silence that surrounds this body of research. "After more than thirty years of research on how children develop well," he writes, "I would not think of putting an infant or toddler of my own into any substitute care program on a full-time basis, especially a center-based program." "Unless you have a very good reason," he concludes, "I urge you not to delegate the primary child-rearing task to anyone else during your child's first three years of life...Babies form their first human attachment only once. Babies begin to learn language only once...The outcomes of these processes play a major role in shaping the future of each new child." ¹

Despite the frenzied assertions of day care defenders to the contrary, for many years experts have been aware of a consistent link between behavioural problems as well as attachment disorders and time in day care. The recent data merely confirm what researchers have been finding for the last two decades and more.

Despite the fact that its advocates constantly tout day care's benefits to children's intellectual development, these too turn out to be an illusion--and a deception. While

defenders of day care for preschoolers point to supposed gains in things like vocabulary and short term memory provided by the "intellectually stimulating" environment of a group care setting outside the home, there is no evidence that this is the case. There has, in fact, been a massive effort to cast early day care for infants and toddlers as an essential component of early intellectual preparation for school which can give young children a comparative advantage. Much of the enormous amount of attention given to the "crucial first three years of brain development" has cantered on the notion that a formal, systematic, "educational" setting like a day care center is best able to provide the intellectual stimulation necessary for babies and toddlers to get the maximum intellectual advantage during this decisive stage. The whole campaign is a huge distortion propagated by the day care lobby.

First, the research actually shows that "quality of care"--in this case referring to how much caregivers talk to their charges--is what correlates with cognitive development, not center-based care per se. This is also why time with parents correlates with cognitive development. In fact, in light of the poor quality of the vast majority of existing center-based care (the level of infant stimulation in the typical day care setting is low and lacks variety), on this criterion day care is likely to be an intellectual *risk* for infants and toddlers.²

And even though quality of care appears to be a marginal factor, it actually accounts for very little of the differences in academic performance and tests of cognitive development. According to John Bruer's *The Myth of the First Three Years*, only 1 to 4 percent of these differences have anything to do with quality of outside-the-home care. On the contrary, 96 to 99 percent are attributable to the influence of parents.³**[3]** One would think that this might be an incentive to design policies to help parents spend more time with, and become more engaged with, their children rather than to provide more incentives for parent-child separation. But the day care lobby in Washington has considerably more influence than parents.

The most damning evidence of all concerning the dangers of day care for infants and toddlers is that which reveals the health risks, sometimes grave, which group care presents for small children. Of all the indications available about the perils associated with day care, none are so alarming, well-documented, and consistently ignored as those that point to the transmission of disease in day care centres.

The drastically elevated risk run by children in day care of contracting infectious diseases is hardly a secret among pediatricians and epidemiologists. The gravity of the dangers day care poses to children's health was indicated a decade ago when *Pediatric Annals* devoted a special issue to day care-related diseases, headlining their lead editorial "Day Care, Day Care: Mayday! Mayday!"⁴ The statistics are truly shocking. According to one estimate published by the American Academy of Family Physicians, children in day care are eighteen times more likely to become ill compared with other children, while, at any one time, one-fifth of those attending day care are likely to be sick. Of those sick children, 82 percent continue to attend day care in spite of their illness.⁵ Children in day care are three to four-and-a-half times more likely to be hospitalized than those raised at home.⁶ One study estimated that "children in day care are at a 50 to 100 percent increased risk for contracting [certain] fatal and maiming diseases *for each year in day care.*"⁷

Aside from the cover-up of the risks day care poses to healthy child development, the other aspect of the deception is the notion propounded by day care advocates that parents around the nation are demanding more public investment in day care. In reality, despite substantial increases in dual career families and the use of institutional day care for young children, there is every indication that the vast majority of parents are not happy with the situation. Public Agenda, a non-partisan polling agency based in New York, released a comprehensive survey in 2000 on the subject of how parents, employers, and "children's advocates" view the issue of child care. Its findings, little covered at the time, are both fascinating and revealing. According to the survey, parents prefer one parent to stay at home over a "quality" day care center as the best arrangement for children under five by a margin of 12 to 1; 71 percent agreed with the statement that "parents should only rely on a day care center when they have no other option." If non-parental care is necessary, 78 percent of the parents surveyed believe that relying on a grandparent or other close relative is the best solution. Eight out of ten agreed with the statement that "no one can do as good a job of raising children as their own parents," and 63 percent contended that it was not possible for even "a top-notch day care center" to provide care as good as what a child would get from a parent at home. Eight out of ten young mothers with preschool children professed the desire to stay home with them rather than continue to work. By an astounding margin of 81 percent to 1 percent, parents feel that children are "more likely to get the affection and attention they need" with a stay-at-home parent than they are in a day care center.⁸

This aversion to day care is confirmed when we look at the policy options that parents prefer. The survey reported that parents prefer policies that would "make it easier and more affordable for one parent to stay at home" over those that would "improve the cost and quality of child care" by a margin of better than two to one. The study's authors wrote:

"By overwhelming margins, parents say the love and sustained attention a parent offers simply *cannot* be replicated by other forms of care. Parents also believe that children raised by a stay-at-home parent are more likely to learn strong values and considerate behaviour than children in child care. When a parent cannot be home, parents say, child care by a close relative is best." [emphasis added]

A more wholesale rejection of the official propaganda line of the day care establishment cannot be imagined.⁹

This is obvious when we look at how dramatically the opinions of the child development "experts"--academics, sociologists, and advocates who work in the field of child development--contrast with those of parents. In most respects, the views and priorities of the two groups stand in stark opposition. Eight out of ten of the experts think that the attention children get in high-quality day care is just as good as what they would get from a parent at home. Only thirteen percent of the children's advocates surveyed thought that "too few families choosing to keep one parent at home with children at least during the first few years" was a very serious problem, but 86 percent of this same group felt that the "lack of affordable, quality day care centres" was a grave problem--the exact opposite of parents' views. While seven out of ten of the child development professionals thought that the best child care policy would be to "move toward a universal, national child care system," just six percent

thought that "tax breaks that encourage families to have one parent stay at home" should be provided.¹⁰

At the very least, these responses reflect a clear clash of philosophies regarding childrearing between parents and the professional "child development" community. What is the essence of this clash?

The formation of children's intelligence, moral sense, empathy with others, and a strong sense of self-identity have always been regarded as among the most fundamental of parental responsibilities. And the time parents put into this task--the extent to which they invest themselves in this process--has traditionally been regarded as the measure of parental devotion. This understanding of parenting--indeed, the very function of the family as the first school of social virtues--is challenged by the day care agenda and directly attacked by the ideology that undergirds that agenda.

One might think that in propounding such a revolutionary doctrine--that our traditional notions of the family and the primary formative role of parents are antiquated and insufficient to the realities of modern life--the burden of proof would be on those calling for drastic changes in the established familial order. Yet, as we have seen from the debate over the detrimental effects of day care on children, this is not the case. The proponents of institutional day care insist on irrefutable proof that institutional, center-based care is truly damaging to children in measurable ways like academic performance and emotional adjustment--and even when proof is provided they insist that "other factors" may be at play. The truth is that their determination to justify the day care regime trumps any evidence. And what they are determined to bring about is the surrender of parental responsibilities.

In his book *The Myth of the First Three Years*, Bruer points out how the research on early brain development is being used by early child education advocates as an argument for inflicting organized communal activities on young children, with the excuse of enhancing skills (and future test scores).¹¹ Just beneath the surface of the trendy argument that neuroscience proves the necessity of stimulating a child's brain properly during the first three years is the mentality that childrearing consists of getting young children on track early for their future roles as academic stars and chief executive officers in a knowledge-based economy. Whether they will be good spouses, parents, or citizens is another question.

It is undoubtedly true that in an economy that increasingly rewards educational attainment, intelligence is at a premium. No wonder proponents of greater public investment in day care are beginning to argue that center-based care should be viewed essentially as preschool or "early childhood education." Danielle Ewen of the Children's Defense Fund was explicit about the analogy in a recent *Newsweek* story: "Preschool is child care. Child care is preschool."¹² As author Kay Hymowitz has noted, however, this equation doesn't mean that day care is "education in the humanistic or civic sense; it is all business; it is school in the vocational sense. The point is to train babies, yes--for the workplace." It is a very narrow conception of education that does not acknowledge its moral importance in molding character, and the logical conclusion of such small-mindedness is, in Hymowitz's vivid words, "the absurdity of seeing a toothless infant batting at his crib gym as an executive-in-

training."¹³ A mindset that sees self-worth as limited to income-earning potential is not likely to have much appreciation for the family as the school of character.

When the energies and attention of the culture are focused on the marketplace, the social and economic contributions of the home--particularly in terms of the parents' role in bringing up their children--tend to be regarded as irrelevant.

But the debate over day care will not address the fundamental needs of families as long as it revolves around the so-called "needs of the economy." Here, the converging interests of feminist supporters of a day care regime, business leaders, and advocates of an expanded federal government become apparent. Feminists and other day care advocates commonly make the argument that the "needs of the economy" or the "needs of the labour force" demand the workforce participation of married mothers. In the same way, "the needs of government spending" can only be sustained by the larger tax base that comes with married mothers in the workplace, an argument that has been repeatedly made by economic advisors to the current administration. This is explicitly acknowledged by the Swedes, cited as the "model" welfare society by so many who promote government subsidies for day care. The Swedish government concluded that "the gain which the State makes from the taxes paid by working women would be greater than the cost of [funding] the day care system," and that the welfare society of Sweden "can be financed only by taxes from a labour market in which almost everyone is working and paying taxes."¹⁴ This is fine with the former chairman of the socialist Swedish People's Party, who was quite direct in spelling out the party's agenda in shifting individual allegiances from the family to the state:

The parental monopoly cannot be broken solely by indirect measures--the State must intervene directly, by, for example, taking the children from the parents during part of their growing up years...It is best for the children and society that a universal and compulsory preschool program become clearly indoctrinating, thus enabling society to intervene more directly when it comes to the children's values and attitudes.¹⁵

While other advocates of day care do not call so explicitly for alienating children from their parents so as to reorient "children's values and attitudes," the push for a system of publicly supported day care certainly reflects an underlying hostility to the notion of parents being primarily responsible for their children's spiritual, intellectual, and emotional formation. Their public arguments for center-based, commercial care rely more on the convenience to families of "professionalizing" the care of preschoolers. (Because "child care professionals" are in charge, parents with access to high-quality care can rest easy about safety, hygiene, health, nutrition, education, and play.) As at-home parenting becomes increasingly uneconomic, it is portrayed as less desirable than the alternative--even though it is what most parents want. Since center-based care is a commercial endeavour, it is depicted as more reliably consistent than both parents and relatives, who can be sick or otherwise unavailable in a pinch. It is a "service" that working parents require due to the hectic demands of modern life. The late social critic Christopher Lasch cut to the heart of this conceit when he pointed out that although "the expansion of professional authority at the expense of the family has been justified on the grounds that the best way to 'help' the family is to relieve it of its responsibilities," the true result "has been to weaken the ties between the generations, to reduce the emotional intensity of the parent-child connection, to deprive children of direct access to adult experience, and to produce a generation of young people who

are morally and emotionally at sea, lacking any sense of participation in their culture's tradition or in its ongoing development." With his usual perceptiveness, Lasch concluded that even though it pretends to speak for the interests and serve the needs of the family, the day care industry "actually weakens its authority at every point."¹⁶

At one time liberals would have been the first to recognize this distinction between the good of "the economy" in the abstract and the good of families, and to fight against the intrusion of the market into the sacrosanct domestic sphere. In fact, an older women's movement did just that. Before Betty Freidan and the new feminism equated careerism with progress for women, protecting mothers in the home from having to work out of economic necessity was central to both the thinking and the political agenda of the early twentieth century women's movement.¹⁷

The triumph of contemporary feminism affected liberalism in profound ways, not least of which was a new identification of women's interests with independence from husbands and family, combined with a greater dependence on corporations and government. Traditionally, American women had only accepted placement of children in day care in emergency circumstances, and then only "until the mother could be restored to her rightful place in the home," in the words of social historian Margaret Steinfels. "Day care was not a service for the normal."¹⁸ But the older notion, that interests of mothers required protecting the family from the intrusions of the market economy, began to break down with the new feminism's attack.

As the marketplace relationships of the day care center and the elderly care facility gain ground over the mutual interdependence of generations in the domestic sphere, the bonds between family members become less meaningful, and family life itself becomes more strained. The breakdown of the family in the United States is not only the result of changed social mores, it is also closely related to the conceit that the love of family members can be replaced by purchased care in the marketplace.

Pushing for a greater provision of on-site day care by corporations, Senator Barbara Mikulski reflected this mentality when she argued, "If the private sector is enlightened enough to provide slots for employees to park their cars, it can provide slots for employees' children."¹⁹ But the idea that "purchased care" can replace the blood relationships of the family is ultimately absurd, even in economic terms. As the English social critic G.K. Chesterton pointed out more than eighty years ago, "If people cannot mind their own business, it cannot possibly be more economical to pay them to mind each other's business, and still less to mind each other's babies." In the name of efficiency, Chesterton noted, day care advocates were ignoring the plain fact that the natural family system is "economical" precisely because it is outside of the economy: "Ultimately," he wrote, "[they] are arguing that a woman should not be a mother to her own baby, but a nursemaid to somebody else's baby. But it will not work, even on paper. We cannot all live by taking in each other's washing..."²⁰ But the obvious logic of his argument escapes day care advocates. At a 1997 White House Conference on Child Care, California child care consultant Patty Siegel complained that "the child care crisis is so acute that child care workers in many areas of the country are unable to find adequate day care for their own children."²¹ Thus has Chesterton's *reductio ad absurdum* become a reasonable argument.

The radical feminists have always been aware, however, that their social experiment of mandating equality of outcome in the job market would ultimately run up against the reality of mothers' actual choices for home and family. Full statistical equality in economic and political life for women can only be achieved with the abandonment of motherhood as traditionally understood. The problem is, from the feminist perspective, that women will not abandon that traditional role if left to their own devices. The late Simone de Beauvoir, one of the most significant intellectual influences on modern feminism, bluntly argued that "women should not have the choice [to stay home], precisely because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one."²² Rather than reflecting popular demand, the early support of radical feminists for government funding of day care was based on this very acknowledgement that workforce parity could not be achieved without the provision of strong cultural and economic incentives. Hence, the 1977 National Conference on the International Women's Year chaired by feminist icon Bella Abzug called for government funding of "universal" day care and child development programs²³ and the 1986 National Organization for Women's convention demanded "full public funding for...child care starting in infancy and continuing through primary and secondary school."²⁴

Since the new feminist version of women's empowerment requires all mothers to pursue careers and be economically independent of their husbands, it cannot abide the realities of motherhood. Pregnancy and the responsibilities of motherhood by necessity affect the workforce participation of women, and not just because they are unfortunate inconveniences imposed upon women by an oppressive patriarchal society. Most women freely choose to scale back their workforce participation because they want to invest themselves in raising their children. In most cases, however, it is their "economic dependence" on their husbands that allows them to make the choice of motherhood. That dependence is exactly what feminist ideology seeks to make impractical, if not to abolish outright.

This view of women's emancipation ironically puts feminist supporters of day care in the position of pushing to increase the number of children who must lead regimented lives. They lobby for public schools and businesses to include day care programs for preschoolers, push for longer school years and mandatory summer school, and want to lower the age of kindergarten. Not only that, they seek greater government intervention into family life to ensure that parents are raising their children correctly in the home. "Every home and family should be taught," insists Senator Hillary Clinton, "through parenting education and family visitation by social service intermediaries, how to raise children. This would begin in the prenatal stages and continue through childhood."²⁵

It is in this context that one should view comments like those of Senator Christopher Dodd when he says that the "early childhood education" of center-based day care is desirable from "the point that the child leaves the womb."²⁶ The importance of such "education" is not that it helps at-risk children, but that it undermines traditional motherhood, family life, and parental influence. Infant day care proponents Belle Evans and George Saia admit as much when they bemoan the fact that when mothers raise their children at home, "the mother's values, wishes, needs, desires, and expectations are readily imposed on the developing child, who often becomes a symbiotic extension of the mother through whom she attempts to fulfil her own

unrealized ambitions." The authors argue that this is "especially destructive to the child who often must live out his mother's unfulfilled dreams rather than realize his own identity."²⁷

The sympathy of radical feminism with the tendencies of encroaching market capitalism to replace family bonds with market loyalties of workplace and pay check has not often been recognized. But it has always been an integral aspect of the strain of feminism that regards the abolishment of traditional motherhood and family relationships as the key to progress for women. Now the dominant strain, it began as an aberration. Almost unique in an era when the women's movement was identified with maternalism and opposition to mothers' labour force participation, the prophetic Charlotte Perkins Gilman argued a century ago that industrial society "was freeing the individual, old and young, from enforced association on family lines," which would allow for "free association on social lines" and "wide individual intercourse" without the burden of family associations. Gilman argued that the family as an institution was in its death throes, and that "the lines of social relation today are mainly industrial." A new order of loyalties had to be forged: "As our industrial organization has grown to the world-encircling intricacies of today,...the unerring response of the soul to social needs has given us a new kind of loyalty--*loyalty to our work*."²⁸

Modern feminist advocates of "big business socialism" echo Gilman's views quite closely. Judy Heymann points out in her book *The Widening Gap: Why America's Working Families Are in Jeopardy and What Can Be Done About It* that "the revolutionary movement of men and women into the industrial and post-industrial labour force has transformed the United States," to the extent that all preschoolers should be educated and cared for by the government on a scale equal to the public education provided for five- to eighteen-year-olds.

Mona Harrington insists that those family functions that remain must be socialized. Her agenda includes: extending the Family and Medical Leave Act to cover all employees and to mandate paid leave; "joint corporate-government contributions" to create a "guaranteed annual income" for every household; high-quality day care and bigger tax credits for parents who use it; support for early childhood care and education as well as the expansion of after-school programs; subsidies to ensure better training and higher salaries for day care workers; and higher levels of funding for elder care centres. All this, argues Harrington, is necessary to institute a "new politics of social responsibility."²⁹

Author Theda Skocpol acknowledges that it is in the enlightened self-interest of corporations to weaken family bonds, since marriage and parenting get in the way of the most efficient allocation of labour. But Skocpol insists that corporate capitalism is perfectly compatible with the new feminist order of the dual income family--as long as government provides adequate social supports for the worker bees. "It is a myth," she writes, "that vibrant market capitalism and adequate social supports for working families cannot go hand in hand." Skocpol's social support system would include universal health insurance, paid family leave, "repeated increases in the minimum wage," and "a national system of subsidized [day] care with state support going to both institutions and families." Since today "participation in the wage-employment system is universally understood as desirable for all adults, men and women, mothers and fathers alike," Skocpol concludes that "it will be necessary to revalue national

government as an instrument for addressing broadly shared needs in the name of democratically shared values." Only when families give up the small bits of autonomy they still possess to the corporate state will "work and family...mesh more smoothly."³⁰

But support for this new big business-friendly nanny state to replace the traditional family at home is by no means restricted to the academic Left. It also happens to be the cutting edge of management theory in the "conservative" business schools. Stewart Friedman and Jeffrey Greenhaus, professors of business management, argue persuasively that corporate capitalism as we know it today is neither socially conservative nor a bulwark against family breakdown. Quite the contrary: because corporations thrive in social turmoil--claiming the loyalties of workers without family and neighbourhood roots to get in the way--the business professors urge America to "keep the revolution going" since "the struggle for the creation of new and more varied lifestyle options is far from over."

To further this revolution, the old notion of "hierarchies" within families must be finally put to rest, and Americans "must be prepared to make the most of the brave new world" of corporate-based (rather than family-based) loyalties. This "workplace revolution" is a necessary result of capitalism's genius for "creative destruction." Since "women seem to be more skilled" than men in the qualities so desired in the new economy such as handling ambiguity, multi-tasking, and building personal networks, they must participate more fully in the "*brave new world* of twenty-first century careers." [emphasis added] The authors even argue for "innovative summer camps" for children in order to "open [their] minds to challenging the traditional gender roles," a necessary preparation for the post-family re-ordering of loyalties. The business professors single out Hillary Rodham Clinton's book *It Takes A Village* for particular praise on account of its "powerful message" that "each of us--society as a whole--bears responsibility for all children, even other peoples' children." The policy measures that Friedman and Greenhaus call for to bring forth their "brave new world" are almost identical to those of the gender feminists: government subsidies to "significantly increase the quality and affordability of child care for working parents," strengthened family leave laws, and more recruiting, training, and pay for a professional class of child care workers, all accomplished with state funds.³¹

The view of parental responsibilities and child care in the home as obstacles to business efficiency has also made considerable inroads into the corporate boardrooms of major American companies. At the 1996 Family and Work Conference, Randall Tobias, former CEO of Eli Lilly, sneered at the "outdated" view that male heads of families should be able to earn enough to enable a mother to raise preschool children in the home. This antiquated notion, he argued, is the reason that some companies still maintain personnel policies "based on Ozzie and Harriet." According to Tobias, companies need to take on an increasingly paternal role. Eli Lilly, in addition to on-site day care, has a cafeteria that prepares take-home dinners four nights a week, a dry cleaning facility, and a twenty-four-hour counselling service for its employees. Tobias emphasized the bottom-line benefits the company reaps from such progressive policies: "The child care facility," he asserted, "will benefit not only the families that use it, but all our employees, stockholders, customers--all who benefit from the undivided attention of our employees."³²

Other benefits that are truly family friendly, allowing employees time at home to fulfil their family obligations rather than ensuring their full-time presence in the office, are remarkably little utilized by most corporations.³³ Policies like comp time, flex time, part-time work with benefits, priority scheduling for parents, and telecommuting are all relatively rare in the corporate world when compared with investment and subsidies for day care. Perhaps the government should be offering businesses tax breaks for adopting such policies as telecommuting, flextime, and benefits for part-time workers rather than for setting up day care facilities and referral services.

One voice conspicuously absent from the call for more flexibility in work hours is that of the feminist lobby. Groups like the National Organization for Women shun discussion of such proposals out of the belief that, since more mothers would take advantage of them than fathers, that they would slow the movement toward gender equality in career achievement. Suggestions that employers should recognize the existence of two types of women employees in their work policies, those for whom career comes first and those for whom family obligations come first, are mocked as singling out women for a "mommy track" which hampers their careers. Any values that are seen to be in conflict with the professional advancement of women in the money economy are rejected, no matter how popular among the rank and file of working women.³⁴ Instead, a corporate paternalism that replaces the old, repressive *paterfamilias* regime is welcomed as the path to liberation.

The new paternalist attitude on the part of corporations was justified by Robert Allen, former CEO of ATandT, in the promotional literature of the 1996 Family and Work Conference. "We have not traditionally linked the *wellbeing of children* to the success of business or the governance of nations," he wrote. "Yet increasingly we're acknowledging that upheavals in the American family aren't self-contained--they intersect with business and economic circles and loop into the social fabric of this nation."³⁵

What is so striking about Mr. Allen's formulation is that the wellbeing of children is accorded importance only insofar as it affects "the success of business or the governance of nations." This reflects a reversal of the concern about industrial or business pressures intruding into the domestic sphere, to the detriment of family welfare. It tells us that we have experienced a true cultural revolution in the relationship of work and family. The only question today is whether "upheavals in the American family" impinge on the success of business rather than whether the success of business impinges on the sanctity of the family.

From the perspective of most parents struggling to find more time for their children, such a "family-friendly" future of paternalist corporations is likely to seem pretty ghastly. But this "brave new world" seems equally desired by the feminist Left and the Fortune 500. The striking similarity in thinking regarding the family between radical feminists and corporate titans raises some interesting questions about what it is, exactly, that the modern feminist movement has achieved. In contrast to the pro-maternalist women's movement of the first part of the twentieth century, modern "careerist" feminism comfortably fits into the corporate-state economy. As a result of the new feminism's "success" in achieving its goal of empowered professional women, the entire adult population--rather than just half of it--is now expected to participate in the labour force. As author Charles Seigel has noted, "Because of the

modern women's movement, we have moved from the 1950s organization man to today's organization person."³⁶ The feminist Left's continuing attack on repressive "patriarchal structures" seems hopelessly irrelevant today, when it is corporations, not husbands, who hold real power in society. The feminist agenda--especially the establishment of day care as a social norm--simply puts more power in the same hands. That's precisely why so many CEOs and professors of business support day care. But to a generation that has grown up with working parents, an impoverished home life, and the empty vulgarity of consumerist culture, the feminist fight against the "patriarchal" family looks to be not only anachronistic, but a large contributor to the problem.

In light of the strange but powerful alliance of the feminist Left and the Business Roundtable arrayed against the self-professed interests of parents and the wellbeing of children, who can be relied upon as a defender of family interests? Even though the vast majority of parents are opposed to day care for young children becoming the norm, it must be acknowledged that, against such powerful financial and social incentives, it will be difficult to reverse the trend toward center-based care for preschool children. Parents have relatively little influence on family policy makers, especially when compared to the respective influences of feminism and big business on the major political parties in the United States.

But there are also indications of a brewing parental revolt against the day care establishment. While the last thirty years have seen a greater participation of mothers in the paid workforce and an increasing reliance on non-parental care for young children, there has been a remarkable sea change in sentiment in the last decade. Parents are reacting against both the commercialization of traditional family functions as well as the careerist mentality that pursues personal fulfillment through professional achievement at the expense of the family. It is just possible that the prospect of a society composed of the children of working parents raised by a professionalized class of day care workers in technocratic, amoral institutions for the benefit of the corporate-socialist state will be the last straw that causes parents to reclaim their prerogatives and recognize that strengthening the vitality of family life in the home is the key to their survival in every sense of the word.

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¹ Karl Zinsmeister, "Longstanding Warnings from Experts," *The American Enterprise*, (May/June 1998): 34-35.

² Arminta Jacobson and Susan Owen, "Infant-Caregiver Interactions in Day Care," *Child Study Journal* 17 (1987): 197-209

³ John T. Bruer, *The Myth of the First Three Years*, (New York: Free Press, 1999), 91.

⁴ Robert A. Hoekelman, "Day Care, Day Care: Mayday! Mayday!" *Pediatric Annals* 20 (1991): 403.

⁵ Cynthia G. Olsen, Carmen P. Wong, Richard E. Gordon, David J. Harper, and Philip S. Whitecar, "The role of the family physician in the day care setting," *American Family Physician*, September 15, 1996.

⁶ Memphis State University study and *American Journal of Public Health* article cited in Karl Zinsmeister, "The Problem with Day Care," *The American Enterprise*, May/June 1998, 41.

⁷ David M. Bell, "Illness Associated With Child Day Care," A Study of Incidence and Cost, *American Journal of Public Health* 79 (1989): 479-484.

⁸ "Necessary Compromises: How Parents, Employers and Children's Advocates View Child Care Today," *Public Agenda* (August, 2000).

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ John Bruer, *The Myth of the First Three Years* (New York: Free Press, 1999).

¹² Kaye Hymowitz, "Fear and Loathing at the Day Care Center," *City Journal*, Summer 2001, Vol. 11, No. 3, 58-67.

¹³ Ibid

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