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On Midge Decter's Assault

I note that columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak recently named Midge Decter as one of the founding fathers (or is it mothers?) of a group called the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, which is supposed to lead the Democratic Party out of the wilderness. This is the same Midge Decter who was profiled in your Style section a few days earlier.

If Miss or Mrs. (obviously not Ms.) Decter is as unperceptive about politics as she is about women's liberation, I'm afraid the Party will remain in the wilderness, if that's where it is, for some time to come. Miss Decter focuses her assault upon some fringe excesses of the women's movement such as lesbianism and man-hating but fails, at least in The Post interview, to come to grips with what seems to me to be the central quest of women's liberation, i.e., a society in which women have as much opportunity to develop their intellects and personalities and become involved in the world outside the home as men. Miss Decter is not happy with attacks on current business prac-

tices and marriage as presently constituted. But as Dr. Jessie Bernard, the noted sociologist points out, these are the institutions which conspire to deny women the right to mold their clay as they will. Of course, Miss Decter dismisses Dr. Bernard as a mere "statistics monger."

As a product of the same social milieu as Miss Decter (midwestern Jewish middle class), I have witnessed the terrible waste of lives of Jewish women whose reason for existence ended with the raising of their families. Miss Decter might care to note that only one Jewish woman is mentioned in Stephen Isaac's thoughtful Post articles on Jews and politics. Too often these women in middle age are faced with the quiet desperation of finding meaning in their lives when the passage ways to that meaning are kept tightly closed by our existing familial, educational and business institutions.

I would like to think that Miss Decter's attack on the new women's movement is not motivated by the all too prevalent attitude that because "I had to make it the hard way in a man's world, the rest of the members of my sex should have to do so as well." Such motive would be unbecoming so liberated and talented a person.

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