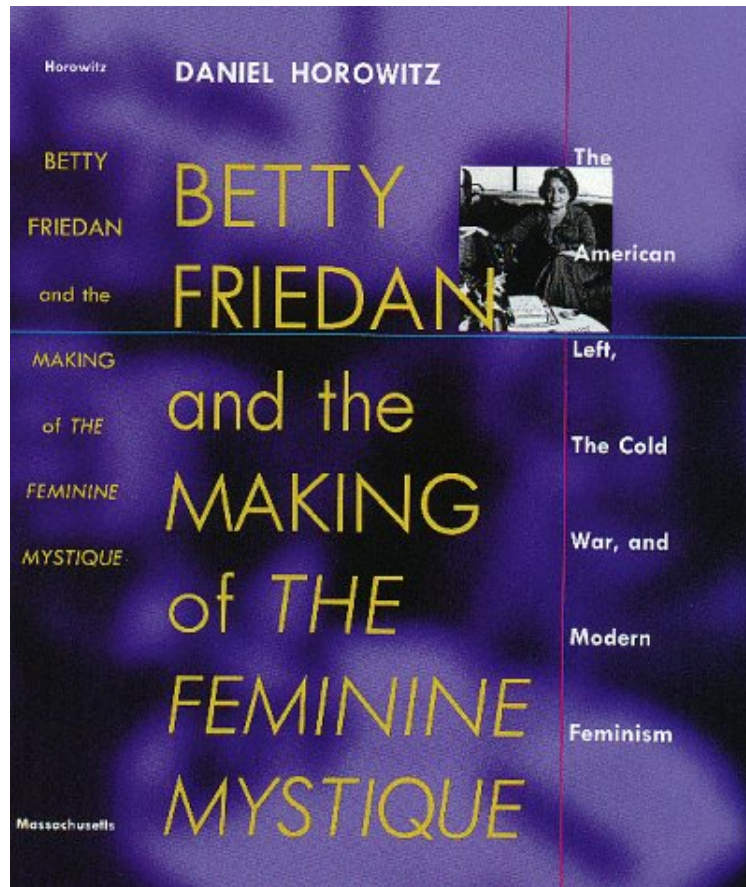


[Free and download] Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminine Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism (Culture, Politics, and the Cold War)

Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminine Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism (Culture, Politics, and the Cold War)

Daniel Horowitz

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Daniel Horowitz : Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminine Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism (Culture, Politics, and the Cold War) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminine Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism (Culture, Politics, and the Cold War):

22 of 27 people found the following review helpful. Explores the "missing past" for Betty Friedan By Peter W. Sage In this very readable book, Daniel Horowitz examines Betty Friedan's political and intellectual origins and finds good reason to question the widely held understanding that The Feminine Mystique was written out of the perspective and consciousness of a typical suburban housewife. Professor Horowitz explores the life and thought of the young Betty Goldstein as an undergraduate at Smith, and then as a labor journalist in the early and mid 1940's, and reveals her

origins as a committed social critic and advocate with labor-left origins. Professor Horowitz treats his subject gently and with respect. Betty Friedan disagrees with Horowitz's analysis, and this tension adds to the fun. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. WAS THE FEMINIST MYSTIQUE AN OUTGROWTH OF FRIEDAN'S EARLIER RADICAL POLITICS? By Steven H Propp Daniel Horowitz is a professor of American Studies at Smith College. He has also written/edited books such as *On the Cusp: The Yale College Class of 1960* and *A World on the Verge of Change, The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979*, *Jimmy Carter and the Energy Crisis of the 1970s: The "Crisis of Confidence" Speech of July 15, 1979*, *Consuming Pleasures: Intellectuals and Popular Culture in the Postwar World*, *American Social Classes in the 1950s: Selections from Vance Packard's The Status Seekers*, etc. He wrote in the Introduction to this 1998 book, a labor journalist in 1952 wrote a pamphlet, *UE Fights for Women Workers* The labor journalist was Betty Friedan. Yet in 1973 Friedan remarked that until she started writing *The Feminine Mystique*, I wasn't even conscious of the woman problem. Although at one point in the 1970s she alluded, in often vague terms, to a more radical past, even then she left the impression that her landmark book emerged principally from her own captivity from the very forces it described Friedan's version of her life hid from view the connection between her union activity of the 1940s and early 1950s and the feminism she articulated in the 1960s and thereby enhanced the book's appeal a longer-term perspective makes clear that the book's origins go back much further An exploration of her experiences as a young radical and activist are crucial to understanding Friedan's life and the history of modern feminism. (Pg. 1-2) He continues, The primary task of this book is to offer the story of Betty Friedan's life, focusing on what enabled her to make two extraordinary contributions: to write *The Feminist Mystique* and then to help launch the feminist movement in the 1960s. I seek to enrich our understanding of the origins of 1960s feminism by locating one of the routes to that movement in left-wing labor union activity of the 1940s and 1950s. (Pg. 5) He adds, The relationship between Friedan's life, McCarthyism, and the Popular Front is a central theme of the story I tell. Starting in 1940 and for at least a dozen years thereafter, Friedan was part of a movement best identified as Popular Front of progressive feminism. (Pg. 10) He points out, Sensitized to political issues in her first two years at Smith, as a junior and senior Betty Goldstein became fully radicalized politics took hold of her life Meanwhile, beyond the confines of Smith and Northampton, the world turned upside down and did so in a way that, along with events at Smith, began to transform her anti-fascism into a concern for workers. (Pg. 50) About her 1942-43 year as a graduate student in psychology at UC Berkeley, he observes, she was disappointed with the intellectual quality of her graduate education compared with her undergraduate years Despite the presence on the Berkeley faculty of role models who combined marriage and career, the dream she had since high school seemed difficult to realize She wanted a career the combined intellectual analysis and political action in a way that gave meaning to her inner life, perhaps something that a woman of her generation could not achieve At a time when her own intensely personal difficulties made her study of psychology more individually relevant, the possibility of working to reconcile Marx and Freud faded A 1943 article reported that Goldstein turned down the fellowship because she wanted to work in the labor movement---on the labor press. (Pg. 99-101) Of her marriage at age 26, he says, [She] entered the marriage with both hope and trepidation Carl was hardly the husband Friedan had long imagined. He did not share her dream of an egalitarian marriage, her aspirations to combine career and family, or her political passions. Her conventional longings, never in abeyance but always in tension with her radicalism, once again played themselves out, this time bolstered by the postwar resurgence of what she later called the feminine mystique. (Pg. 132) He notes, Well before the publication of *The Feminine Mystique*, her involvement with unions taught her a great deal about the problems women faced. Friedan's commitment to women's rights, her disillusionment with unions, the contradictions of her own class position, her longings to be in the mainstream, and McCarthyism were key factors in her shifting, over time, from Popular Front feminism that focused on working-class women to middle-class suburban feminism. (Pg. 142) He argues, Friedan's reconsideration of her life enabled her to move on past traumatic events She now interpreted her years at Smith as a steady path toward a career in her undergraduate major She recovered her identity but lost or hid from view crucial elements of her past She diminished her sense of what she had struggled to achieve politically and opted instead for a feminized vision of change through personalized self-fulfillment. (Pg. 163) He summarizes, She had shifted her attention from working-class and African-American women to middle-class white ones. She had developed an antipathy to volunteer activities that were limited in scope, preferring instead women's professional efforts that sought to change society. Above all, she was giving extended consideration to the problems middle-class women faced in the suburbs As a writer and public figure she was finding her voice, although she encountered obstacles along the way. (Pg. 179) Of Friedan's book, he observes, Friedan's largely negative conclusions contravened her original conception of the book the book's dominant view was of women being overcome by, rather than overcoming, the feminine mystique its main thrust was of frustration and thwarted possibility Besides the shift from the positive and nuanced tone to a mainly negative one, the other main change in the book involved the watering down of Friedan's politics. (Pg. 210-211) He contends, in writing *The Feminine Mystique* Friedan took pains to hide her own radical heritage Whether a deliberate, strategic choice or an unconscious decision, Friedan created a second narrative in order to avoid revelations about her radical past and to project a believable persona with which her readers could identify. (Pg. 217) He concludes, This intellectual biography challenges her claim that her own feminism emerged principally

from her experiences as a trapped housewife whatever its fate as a movement, in the 1940s and 1950s feminism as a series of commitments was not as dormant and vanished as assumed Friedan did not write *The Feminine Mystique* simply because she was an unhappy housewife. (Pg. 224) Later, he adds, This reconsideration of Friedans life emphasizes the importance of the 1940s radicalism in the history of American feminism. We have insufficiently examined the period right after World War II, when women like Friedan had such high hopes for the transformation of society. (Pg. 249) Whether one necessarily agrees with all of Horowitzs positions (its not unusual for people to later turn sharply from positions they once held in college, after all), this book is a thought-provoking analysis that provides unique and valuable insight into the background of Friedans book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

WAS THE FEMINIST MYSTIQUE AN OUTGROWTH OF FRIEDANS EARLIER RADICAL POLITICS? By Steven H Propp Daniel Horowitz is a professor of American Studies at Smith College. He has also written/edited books such as *On the Cusp: The Yale College Class of 1960* and *a World on the Verge of Change, The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979, Jimmy Carter and the Energy Crisis of the 1970s: The "Crisis of Confidence" Speech of July 15, 1979, Consuming Pleasures: Intellectuals and Popular Culture in the Postwar World, American Social Classes in the 1950s: Selections from Vance Packard's The Status Seekers, etc.* He wrote in the Introduction to this 1998 book, a labor journalist In 1952 wrote a pamphlet, *UE Fights for Women Workers* The labor journalist was Betty Friedan. Yet in 1973 Friedan remarked that until she started writing *The Feminine Mystique*, I wasnt even conscious of the woman problem. 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Ever since the 1963 publication of her landmark book, *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan has insisted that her commitment to women's rights grew out of her experiences as an alienated suburban housewife. Yet as Daniel Horowitz persuasively demonstrates in this illuminating and provocative biography, the roots of Friedan's feminism run much deeper than she has led us to believe. Drawing on an impressive body of new research - including Friedan's own papers - Horowitz traces the development of Friedan's feminist outlook from her childhood in Peoria, Illinois, through her wartime years at Smith College and Berkeley, to her decade-long career as a writer for two of the period's most radical labor journals, the *Federated Press* and the *United Electrical Workers' UE News*. He further shows that even after she married and began to raise a family, Friedan continued during the 1950s to write and work on behalf of a wide range of progressive social causes. By resituating Friedan within a broader cultural context, and by offering a fresh reading of *The Feminine Mystique* against that background, Horowitz not only overturns conventional ideas about "second wave" feminism but also reveals long submerged links to its past.

Betty Friedan and the Making of "*The Feminine Mystique*" is ... intelligently ambitious but so tendentious you want to throw it across the room. -- *The New York Times Book Review*, Judith Shulevitz
About the Author: Daniel Horowitz is Sylvia Dlugasch Bauman Professor of American Studies and director of the American studies program at Smith College. He is author of *Vance Packard and American Social Criticism*.