

are short and scattered. He defines it as technological, but it was more than that. It was demographic, too. Technology was replacing people in farming. Participants in his story knew that farmers were becoming more productive and that that change had implications for policy, but they, he suggests, were not really aware that something so big as to be labeled a revolution was under way. How far had it progressed? Was there much discussion of it in the press, in the congressional committees, and elsewhere at the time? A discussion of such questions would have strengthened the book. A full chapter on the revolution, following the introduction, could have been a helpful addition.

Even without such a chapter, the book makes a significant contribution on a topic of great importance in Iowa and much importance elsewhere as well.

Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade, by Donald T. Critchlow. Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America Series. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. xi, 422 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Glen Jeansonne is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. His many books and articles on right-wing politics in the twentieth-century United States include *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II* (1996).

Some years ago I delivered a paper on Elizabeth Dilling at the American Historical Association's annual convention. My paper was appropriately critical of Dilling, who preferred to fight beside Hitler rather than against him. After the paper was applauded, the first questioner asked me to compare Dilling to Phyllis Schlafly. I replied that Schlafly was a mainstream conservative who worked within the system and seldom lost her temper; Dilling belonged to the lunatic fringe, was infatuated with conspiracy theories, and described herself as "even-tempered, mad all the time." I could not persuade my listeners that Schlafly and Dilling were not ideological soulmates. The session quickly disintegrated, and I left the room feeling as if I had been exiled to the academic equivalent of Siberia.

More than a decade later, the stereotype of Schlafly persists in academia that lumps her with the Ku Klux Klan and the John Birch Society and just short of Lizzie Borden. Donald Critchlow's book is a useful corrective. Some people are misled to label Schlafly a fanatic by her ferocious drive, powerful energy, and fierce determination. But it is a focused, purposeful, controlled drive, although passionate.

It is important to define what Critchlow's book is not. It is not a biography, and the personal detail is parsimonious. There is overwhelming data about the evolution of grassroots conservatism, its temporary takeover in 1964, and its rejuvenation and triumph in 1980. Schlafly is an actor in the drama, but the study is more about the movement and Schlafly than about Schlafly and the movement.

Viewed at close range, as the author had the opportunity to do, it is difficult not to respect Schlafly, whether or not one concurs with her views, which are to the right of her party. If Schlafly were a feminist, feminists would consider her a model, someone who really has it all and is never subservient. Her marriage was happy, and through her own efforts and her husband's, they became moderately wealthy. Although never elected to political office, she helped others win. She wrote best-selling books and inspired and mobilized women. She juggled running a home and a hectic speaking, writing, and organizing career, and, at the height of her battle against the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), at age 51, she enrolled in law school and graduated three years later, ranking high in her class. Tireless is an understatement.

Schlafly met the world on her terms. In a word, she was liberated. Sometimes what she did was popular and sometimes it was not. She did not always win her political battles and was purged by her own party twice, but she never became bitter or alienated. It begs the question of this book, but one wonders if she ever relaxes. Does she watch the Bears, eat tofu, enjoy rap music? If work and fun are actually the same things to Schlafly, that would not make her different from many highly successful people. I suspect, however, that although she takes her causes seriously, she takes herself less seriously. Most survivors have that trait.

Schlafly fused the two most significant issues in the New Right's arsenal of causes: anticommunism and limited government. Among her other interests were maintaining nuclear superiority, banning abortion and pornography, and abolishing conscription. She opposed limited conventional wars such as Korea and Vietnam on the grounds that they would divert America from the graver Soviet nuclear threat. Schlafly opposed arms control and any appeasement of communism. Most of her books dealt with the nuclear arms race, but the one that made her famous was *A Choice Not an Echo*, a 1964 campaign biography of Barry Goldwater.

There was a David versus Goliath quality to Schlafly's crusade to deny ratification of the ERA. She entered the fray in 1973, when 30 states had already ratified it and only 8 more were needed. When time expired, Congress extended it. The amendment had the support

of both parties, Hollywood celebrities, women's organizations, and mass magazines and enjoyed generous financial backing. Its defeat, more than any single factor, led to Schlafly's demonization by feminists. Her opponents called her an "Aunt Tom," wanted to slap her into reason, and suggested burning her at the stake. Schlafly replied that the amendment would weaken the nuclear family; it was unnecessary; and most remedial steps could be achieved through simple legislation—in fact, women would lose some rights under existing laws. In the end, time ran out on the ERA.

Iowa readers will find that Schlafly's influence, especially before she became a national figure, overlapped from neighboring Illinois, where she made her home. Her losing campaigns for Congress in 1952 and 1970 received substantial coverage in Iowa. She struck a high profile in the Midwest and never left her roots, moving back to the St. Louis area after her husband's death in 1994.

Schlafly's long career necessitated exhaustive research. The author, fortunately, had access to Schlafly's personal papers, still in her possession, with no restrictions. He also scoured presidential libraries, archives, and scores of monographs. He resists hyperbole and writes in a non-judgmental style, although clearly he admires Schlafly. He is somewhat short on philosophical analysis. The book explains Schlafly's battles on conservative issues case by case, yet there is little attempt to place her conservatism into an overall scheme that ties these issues together. One would like more probing of the intellectual, philosophical, and religious foundations that animated her activism. Someone so determined must have a core philosophy that synthesizes her causes and motivates her. The book is richly detailed in many respects, but Schlafly comes across as one-dimensional.