

Gloria Steinem: Now is not the time to settle

By Nancy Hass, Newsweek

Mention the name Gloria Steinem to many women under 30, and if there is a flash of recognition at all, they put her in Florence Nightingale's league—an admirable figure from the history books. To them, feminism was a war won before they were born, the miniskirted 1970s revolution that freed their mothers and grandmothers from drudgery and discrimination, paving the way for their own generation's unfettered freedom.

But in the living room of the funky Upper East Side duplex where she has lived for more than 35 years, Steinem, 77, is still on the front lines of a fight she considers barely half finished. Every day, the news pours in—from the Middle East, Africa, India, and Washington, D.C.—jamming her inbox and filling up her speaking schedule. The media haven't paid her much attention in the past 15 years (so many Kardashians, so little time), but the woman who has been the enduring face of feminism for nearly half a century insists her hands are as full as ever.

"Obviously we've come a long way on many fronts, at least for some women in this country," says the activist and founder of Ms. magazine as she curls her bare feet beneath her on a green velvet sofa she's had for decades, sipping a lukewarm cup of coffee and leaning against a needlepoint pillow that reads "Being on the Bestseller List Is the Best Revenge." "But then you have Anders Breivik," the Norwegian man who massacred 77 people in late July. "He was clearly motivated by woman-hating and the cult of masculinity. His own manifesto made super-clear that he hated his mother and stepmother for being feminists and 'feminizing' him, that feminists made 'men not men anymore.'" How far have we come if that part of it barely

got any coverage?”

Don't get her started on Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the former IMF chief who has been accused of sexual abuse by an African-born chambermaid assigned to clean his New York hotel suite. Even though the case may never be prosecuted because it is muddled by inconsistencies in the woman's story and background, Steinem considers the skirmish a victory. "Anyone can see this is a pattern of behavior," she says in her measured Midwestern tones, pointing to other women who have claimed Strauss-Kahn harassed them. "And now that has been exposed. He's gone from the job, disgraced. No matter what happens, it's a net win for us."

As for Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin, women who wouldn't be riling up the Tea Party faithful had Steinem not paved their way out of the kitchen, she sees them as inevitable, as was (ERA opponent) Phyllis Schlafly at an earlier time. "You know what you're saying is important when the power structure brings in people who look like you and think like them."

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