

account “the susceptibilities of the young” (210).

Tubbs does see the possibility of a liberalism that is not detrimental to children. Freedom does not depend on individual liberties that harm children. He acknowledges a “value-pluralism movement within liberalism” that suggests a new liberalism that considers personal freedom and individual rights important, while allowing a restriction of adults’ rights to safeguard children. Legislators, not the courts, should ensure that a balance between competing rights is effected.

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Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

In updating and revising her classic 1976 study of reproductive rights, *Woman’s Body, Woman’s Right*, historian Linda Gordon provides an illuminating and timely addition to our understanding of the intersection between gender equality and reproductive control, which she designates “the single most important factor in the material basis of women’s emancipation” of the past century (3). A social history of birth control and the quest for female sexual freedom, her book offers an in-depth analysis of four distinct phases of the birth control movement: the nineteenth century campaign for ‘voluntary motherhood’, which paralleled the drive for suffrage; early twentieth century links between birth control advocacy and radical movements, primarily socialism, that sought to ‘empower the powerless’—poor people and women; the shift away from radicalism into mainstream liberalism from the 1920s through the 1970s, especially through the family planning concept promoted by the Planned Parenthood Federation, the only national birth control organization until abortion reform in the 1960s; and, finally, the post-1970s politics of reproductive rights, with special attention to the role of the Christian right. Gordon’s core argument is that reproductive control has always been central to women’s status, and opposition to it a fundamental component of opposition to gender equality.

Gordon deftly weaves her narrative through the historical landscape of nineteenth and twentieth century America, linking reproductive issues to the Great Depression, two world wars, and to ideological influences like progressivism (which was less concerned with feminism, Gordon suggests, than with elitism—hence its association with the eugenics movement and its emphasis on selectivity—producing babies “of great merit” rather than merely reducing overall birth rates) (174). Such elitism survived the demise of the progressive movement and continued to permeate birth control discourse and policy: in the 1940s and 1950s, Planned Parenthood urged mothers to stay at home and concentrate on raising smaller, “better” families with the help of contraceptives (276).

Class and economic issues are crucial to Gordon's analysis, whether in regard to differences in availability and quality of contraceptives for "rich folk" vis-à-vis the poor, or New Deal programs supporting birth control as a means of "heading off the militancy of those at the economic bottom" (241). In the wake of *Roe v. Wade*, the religious right appealed to its middle class supporters by equating abortion rights with liberal elites, while at the same time, Gordon points out ironically that African Americans who tended to be supportive of reproductive rights were alienated by the movement's overwhelmingly middle-class priorities (much more than by the fact that it was largely white). Moving to a global perspective, she shows how the population control movement of the 1960s, tied to neo-Malthusian and ecological concerns about worldwide overpopulation, shifted the discourse on reproductive control away from feminist issues like sexual freedom and women's rights toward an economic focus on the ability of birth control to improve living standards and stability, especially in developing countries. U.S.-sponsored population control programs, which were often tied to foreign aid (and touted as crucial Cold War tools because of their potential to defuse Third World "population powder kegs") were widely regarded by developing nations as imperialistic—a case of elitism raised to a global level (284).

Gordon has shifted from the position she took in her 1976 study, that opposition to birth control was primarily a consequence of male oppression. Rather, she suggests, the complexities of the issue require examination of women's motivations as well, bearing in mind the differences among women. She points out that many pro-feminists who might be expected to view birth control as a fundamental component of female liberation in fact opposed it—for example, the suffrage movement, many of whose members argued that contraception would destroy families and undermine marriage and motherhood, those "hard-won protection[s] against the merciless selfishness of men" (161). And, while socialists like Emma Goldman linked sexual freedom to the working class ideals of her movement, other radicals decried birth control for deflecting attention from the 'real' issue of class struggle while simultaneously denying the existence of sexism within the working class (164).

In pressing her argument that every aspect of reproductive rights must be viewed through a political prism, Gordon compellingly discusses the reproductive controversies of the latter part of the twentieth century. After the 1960s, she observes, feminists shifted from promoting birth control as an element of personal freedom to setting it within a wider context of promoting overall social equality. More than a mere "selfish individual desire," reproductive choice was credited with being a positive social good, a redefinition that served to bring together a broader coalition of supporters (297). This enlarged support would be needed in the face of the emergent Right to Life movement, the product of an unprecedented merger between religion and politics that had not yet taken place when Gordon wrote her earlier book on birth control. Initiated by a Catholic hierarchy alarmed

by sexual liberation and increasing divorce rates, the movement became, by the end of the century, one of the most powerful grassroots conservative movements of the century. To the white born-again evangelical Protestants who overwhelmingly comprised its membership, abortion was not simply a moral issue: it was deemed part of an overall liberal assault on traditional gender arrangements, especially women's withdrawal from domesticity, and as a license for (female) sexual excess—punishment for which would be specifically reserved for women, who would be denied access to contraceptives and abortion.

Though clearly concerned about the potential of social conservatism to undermine access to abortion and other reproductive freedoms—most notably through an increasingly conservative Supreme Court—and noting that worldwide, 675,000 women still die annually from pregnancy-related causes and botched abortions, Gordon concludes on an optimistic note. Gains include the establishment of an enduring network of women's health organisations with significant influence upon mainstream medicine, and an international trend even in very traditional cultures toward smaller families. Though the fight is far from over, the defense of abortion rights has had the positive effect of revitalizing the feminist movement and leading to a crucial recognition of the importance of sexual freedom for women worldwide.

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Frances Lee Bernstein, *The Dictatorship of Sex: Lifestyle Advice for the Soviet Masses* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007).

The focus of this detailed study is the programme of 'sexual enlightenment' in the Soviet Union of the 1920s in which a part of the medical profession tried to assume the leading role in solving the 'sex question' that had first emerged in the later nineteenth century. The immediate context for the medical advice on health and sexual behaviour was NEP (the New Economic Policy adopted in 1921), denounced by many communists as a concession to forces hostile to the revolution which encouraged sexual promiscuity, taken by its opponents as proof of the immorality and hedonism of capitalism. At the same time, the authorities were concerned about the 'sexual revolution' which was proclaimed by young comrades in particular but also by a few prominent communists, notably Alexandra Kollontai who was widely condemned (and misunderstood) as a promoter of 'free love'. In addition, there were serious social problems after seven years of war, not least the millions of abandoned children, as well as what the communists deemed to be hangovers of pre-revolutionary moral disorder, such as widespread prostitution, drug-taking, and venereal disease.

Building a new order, it was held, required discipline (there was great