



Scapegoat: The Jews, Israel, and Women's Liberation

Andrea Dworkin

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On Yom Kippur, Jews of antiquity would sacrifice two goats: one killed as an offering to a harsh and judging god, the other taken to the wilderness and turned loose, a carrier of the sins of the group. Throughout history, argues brilliant feminist critic Andrea Dworkin, women and Jews have been stigmatized as society's scapegoats. In this stunning and provocative book, Dworkin brings her rigorous intellect to bear on the dynamics of scapegoating. Drawing upon history, philosophy, literature, and politics, she creates a terrifying picture of the workings of misogyny and anti-Semitism in the last millennium. With examples that range from the Inquisition, when women were targeted as witches and Jews as heretics, to the terror of the Nazis, whose aggression was both race- and gender-motivated, Dworkin illustrates how and why women and Jews have been scapegoated and compares the civil inequality, prejudices, and stereotypes that have framed identity for both groups. Taking the state of Israel as a paradigm, Dworkin traces the growth of male dominance in societies both old and new -- resulting in the subordination of women and a racial or ethnic "other." In Israel today, Palestinians and prostitutes are the new scapegoats: degraded, inferior, abject. Although the gentle Jewish martyrs of old have become modern Israeli warriors, women retain the stigmatized status of "weak Jews" who, when attacked, never fight back. This leads Dworkin to imagine a world in which women betray men of their own kind in order to develop and defend their own sovereignty. Ultimately, her book forces us to ask profound questions: Why do women continue to value their own lives less than those of the men they love? Where is the line between justifiable self-defense and violence? Both an impassioned plea for women to challenge and destroy the authority of the men in their own group and a startling work of history, "Scapegoat" will forever change how we think about the patterns of behavior and belief that give rise to domination and oppression.

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