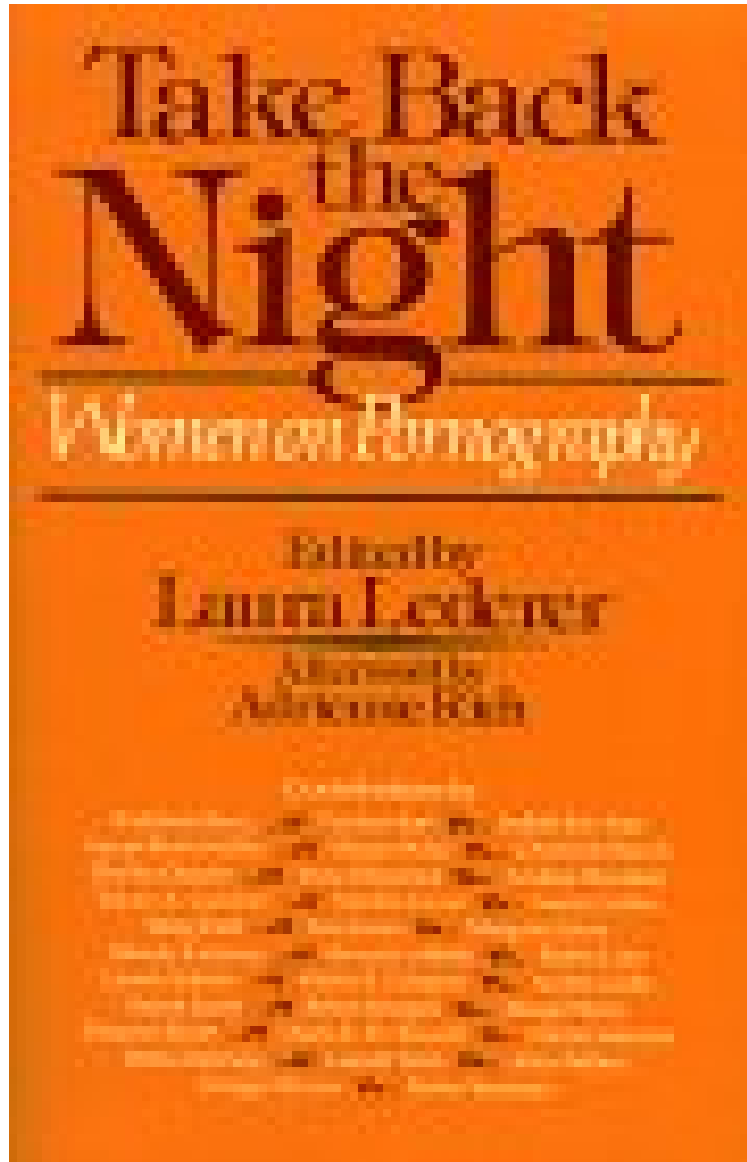


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Take Back the Night

Laura Lederer

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A MARVELOUS COLLECTION OF FEMINIST WRITINGS AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY By Steven H Propp

Laura J. Lederer (born 1951) is a legal scholar and former Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons in the Office for Democracy and Global Affairs of the United States Department of State. She has also been an activist against human trafficking, prostitution, pornography, and hate speech. Lederer is also the founder of The Protection Project, a legal research institute at Johns Hopkins University devoted to combating trafficking in persons. She has also edited *Price We Pay: The Case Against Racist Speech, Hate Propaganda, and Pornography*. She wrote in the Introduction to this 1980 book, "The title of this book, 'Take Back the Night,' reflects this growing realization of the links among crimes against women... The slogan take back the night was first used in the United States as a theme for a national protest march down San Francisco's pornography strip... Take Back the Night was a profound symbolic statement of our commitment to stopping the tide of violence against women in all arenas, and our demand that the perpetrators of such violence---from rapists to batterers to pornographers---be held responsible for their actions and made to change... This book ... (suggests) That pornography is the ideology of a culture which promotes and condones rape, woman-battering, and other crimes of violence against women." Here are some quotations from the book (which contains writings from persons such as Susan Brownmiller, Gloria Steinem, Diana Russell, Charlotte Bunch, Alice Walker, Robin Morgan, Susan Griffin, Andrea Dworkin, Phyllis Chesler, Audrey Lorde, Kathleen Barry, etc.): "Feminists have a further objection to this definition (of pornography as 'patently offensive'): if pornography does not offend local community standards, then something is wrong because it should!" (Pg. 40) "Many men, if confronted directly with a violent sexual image would reject it---and the magazine! The idea is to put these vicious crimes into a context which infers that it is 'just a joke' or 'all in good fun.' After all, who can object to that---except a woman without a sense of humor?" (Pg. 125) "A group of women ... called on a theater owner to protest his showing of 'The Story of O.' But he asked them for their evidence that the film was demeaning to women, and they didn't have any... With women, outrage is not enough. We have to tally our wounds in keeping with the best social science practice." (Pg. 181) "It is true that many women have masochistic fantasies and can be sexually aroused by pornography... This does not make it harmless. It does not mean it is healthy." (Pg. 231) "Every single book, magazine, or film must be proven to be obscene in an individualized judicial proceeding before it may be enjoined. This makes it almost impossible for the government to take any generalized action against businesses that regularly deal in pornography." (Pg. 243) "It is common knowledge that women who go to the police and the courts and say, 'This man is going to hurt me---will you protect me?' get the response, 'No. Until he hurts or kills you, we cannot do anything.'" (Pg. 249)

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