



# Freedom, Feminism, and the State

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Many feminists have believed that government is the natural ally of the women's movement. However, this book demonstrates that the opposite is true: government has long been a major oppressor of women and their rights. Feminism is not a new political force; its origins can be traced back to the abolitionist movement before the Civil War. Fighting to end slavery, women became conscious of their own legal disabilities. From these anti-statist roots, the women's movement eventually divided over such issues as sex, the family, and war. McElroy's book traces individualist feminism from those early roots until the present day. Her research demonstrates that in vital issues from sex and birth control to business and science, government has been the real obstacle in preventing women from achieving personal freedom and equal rights. This book discusses such controversies as individualism and socialism in the feminist tradition, economic freedom and the role of women, and the contemporary differences between mainstream and individualist feminism. Through McElroy's work and those of a distinguished group of contributors, this book issues a ringing call for women to recapture their individualist heritage.



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