

SPEAKER: We were the means of production. We produced the workers, and we produced the soldiers. And our bodies had to be controlled by whatever system there was, if that production was to be controlled, and if men were going to be able to create dynasties and to determine paternity.

I would like to say that this was a concern that was consigned only to ancient history, but I noticed it in your state legislature where they seem convinced that all those ancient white men there have the total right, in spite of the Supreme Court, to legislate the reproductive freedom of the individual woman, and to turn her yet again into a political instrument, into simply a means of production of workers and soldiers.

If we look at other countries in which people have been allowed some degree of reproductive freedom-- and I think it's important we talk about freedom, not about birth control, which is used against some communities more than others-- we see that in Japan and some of the East European countries where we have been allowed to decide for ourselves, where various forms of birth control and abortion and so on are available, the population has become more or less self regulating, and has even begun to diminish somewhat.

It's important because somehow it's all right for Kennedys to have a lot of children, but it's not all right for poor people to have a lot of children under the philosophy of birth control. Under the philosophy of reproductive freedom, it's a personal choice. But in Japan and in other countries, it's beginning to be evident that the government is now out of control. The population rate is going down. They're getting quite alarmed they won't have enough people to produce their Sony radios, and so on.

And so we are treated to the vision there of how deeply political this is, and how much the freedom of women to decide this process, and the preexisting or a system in which that process is honored and worshiped , how much the equality and humanity of women depends upon, either the control of that function, and/or the revering of that function.

And until we change this system that is totally based on caste, that does not allow a female-headed family to exist, and to be a whole and important and loving family, we are never going to solve the problems of poverty. They are together. They are integral. Part of our punishment of women on welfare is that they are supposed to be unable, to there's something wrong with them because they can't find a man to support them.

In fact, the women of the National Welfare Rights Organization sometimes speak of the welfare system as a gigantic husband. The big husband in the sky who gives you just enough money to stay at home and take care of the children, but not enough training or encouragement or anything else to get out and up and be autonomous and independent, and off welfare. Who sometimes is even jealous. Who comes in and looks in your medicine chest and under your bed to make sure you're being faithful to the great welfare husband in the sky.