

turn professional wrestling into entertainment, along the lines of vaudeville and radio.

Hatton gleans his insights from a variety of archival sources, such as newspapers, periodicals, manuscripts, and provincial, municipal, and military records. I recommend this book to anybody interested in the history of sport, especially professional wrestling, but also to readers keen about late-nineteenth- and early- twentieth-century Canada, for its interweaving of major historical themes with the history of professional wrestling.

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KLAUSEN, Susanne M. *Abortion Under Apartheid: Nationalism, Sexuality, and Women's Reproductive Rights in South Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 327.

Abortion as a topic often brings out the worst in people, whether “worst” is measured by outright misogyny or simple callousness towards women’s and girls’ lives. The fact that poorer women and women of colour suffer disproportionately from lack of access to safe, state-funded abortion services adds an element of class and race contempt to the equation. As I write, this is manifest in the Trump administration’s executive order to defund any organization currently receiving US support that provides abortion counselling, let alone abortion itself. This order threatens to create a surge of unsafe abortions and maternal deaths in the Global South and will wreak havoc on efforts to control population growth in Africa in particular, with predictably devastating impacts. Apparently black lives do not matter in the current White House.

Susanne Klausen’s moving and timely book sheds powerful light on the interplay of abortion policy and the defence of white male supremacy in apartheid South Africa which still resonates there and more widely. Indeed, as I write, this is manifest in the Trump administration’s executive order to defund any organization currently receiving US support that provides abortion counselling, let alone abortion itself. This order threatens to create a surge of unsafe abortions and maternal deaths in the Global South and could wreak havoc on efforts to control population growth in Africa in particular, with all the suffering and inequality that implies. Even in South Africa today, where women are now guaranteed free, state-provided abortion on demand and constitutional protections of their health, privacy, and dignity, tens of thousands of South African women still turn to the often brutally incompetent private sector to obtain abortions. The law may have changed but the attitudes that women fear have not kept up.

Klausen begins by acknowledging her own longstanding abortion rights activism, and the inspiration (and subsequently direct assistance) that she drew from Helen Bradford, the pioneering historian of abortion in South Africa and a powerful critic of androcentrism in the radical historiography. Klausen aims

to carry on Bradford's work both with a rich enhancement of our empirical knowledge about the role of abortion in South African history, and a compelling theoretical argument to extend gender and sexuality studies into mainstream scholarship. She ably succeeds in both these aims, drawing upon a wide range of sources including newspapers, memoirs, court transcripts, official documents, and interviews with some of the key players in the struggles mostly from the 1960s to eighties. These sources evoke the tumble of emotions experienced by the victims of cruel laws and harsh social judgements, the passion of activists in the struggle for women's rights, and the often rank hypocrisy of those appointed to police the morality of the nation. Michael Watts, for example, was jailed for providing safe, and sometimes free abortions following a show trial conducted to demonstrate the state's rectitude. In prison, a high-ranking official asked if Watts could perform an abortion for his daughter, which Watts obliged.

The narrative begins with an overview of precolonial practices as attested in the ethnography of South Africa's various African cultures and elsewhere on the continent. The evidence shows that African societies were pro-natalist but tacitly enabled women's discreet use of herbal abortifacients in a variety of situations. The criminalization of abortion was subsequently "one of the many unfortunate by-products of colonial rule" (p. 15). Chapter one then details how abortion procedures were perceived, performed and/or punished under white settler rule, and examines the differential impacts that clandestinity had upon women by race. Chapter two explores links this differentiation to the political agenda of Afrikaner nationalism in the apartheid era. National Party ideologues were in particular fixated with defining sexuality for whites in "a nation-building and race-affirming" manner (p. 58). This required suppressing anything that promoted promiscuity, declining fertility among whites, and communism and liberalism. Abortion was imagined to promote all of those evils, and was thus virtually impossible to obtain legally. As elsewhere in the world, however, women chose to seek abortions for a variety of reasons and risked their health, reputations, and even lives to obtain them by illegal means.

The movement to reform the law got under way in the late 1960s in the first instance from doctors struggling to deal with the consequences of rapidly growing numbers of clandestine abortions induced in large part by the pervasive economic and social malaise that grand apartheid engendered. Motivations were often conservative—to protect the doctors, and to protect families. Feminists, using the language of women's rights, only came belatedly to the struggle through the leadership of two middle-class, English-speaking white women. Dolly Maister and June Cope independently launched campaigns in the early 1970s to press for abortion on demand. They were unsuccessful, both in promoting the cause and in recruiting women of different class, race, and ethnic backgrounds. The latter stemmed in part from their naivety about the political sensitivity of population control and of perceived threats that abortion posed to African men's power over women's sexuality.

The heart of the book unfolds in the next three chapters, where the struggle for abortion rights moves into the courts and parliament. Two sensational trials in

1972 and 1973 exposed both the extent of doctors' covert facilitation of abortion and the determination of the state to crack down on what it perceived as a threat to the survival of the white race. The abortion-providers in these cases were all found guilty and hounded out of the country in disgrace. A commission of enquiry comprised of ten older white men was then struck to recommend ways to seal the deal. The resultant law was aimed to nip in the bud liberalizing trends that the trials had revealed, and which by then were evident and seemingly irreversible internationally. In Klausen's analysis, this law was more a performance of National Party morality than a meaningful response to women's health needs. Indeed, the number of legal abortions actually declined in the following years to a low of 387 in 1980 (p. 210), almost all of which were for white women. While the rich could send their daughters abroad or buy silence, the poor suffered increasing indignities and dangers. It perfectly suited the needs of the apartheid regime to turn a blind eye to this suffering as the burden of ill-health fell principally upon the bodies of African women.

Chapter seven makes two very important points. First, the callousness of the apartheid regime was not African women's only enemy. The anti-apartheid movement was also often openly hostile to African women's access to abortion, seeing such access as an extension of the government's policies to reduce the rate of growth of the African population and to emasculate African men. Klausen cites one protest song from the 1980 that equated informers, witches and those who seek abortions—a necklace of burning tire awaited them all (p. 196). Second, despite this hostility, African women actively sought ways to control their fertility including with the assistance of the state to access new technologies and through old methods to induce miscarriages.

The penultimate chapter was for me a bit disappointing in that it moves so hastily from the dire situation of the late 1970s and 80s to the achievement of abortion rights soon after the end of apartheid. Given the hostility to abortion rights by African nationalists noted above, the turn-around in the early 1990s needs closer attention. How did African feminists and their allies convince socially conservative men like Nelson Mandela to embrace the cause by signing one of the most progressive laws in the world? One suspects, as in the analogous case of protections for sexual orientation, that a small number of progressive leaders pushed the cause well in advance of popular opinion.

Klausen's conclusion stresses the magnitude of that achievement, but also introduces a critical note of caution. An estimated 50,000 mostly black women now get abortion on demand, free to those who opt for the public system. Yet an equal number still opt for clandestine means to avoid the censure, or even direct harms, that they expect from family, community and health care providers. Legal rights are clearly insufficient, and need to be linked to wider struggles for social justice, including anti-racism and wealth redistribution. *Abortion Under Apartheid* makes an eloquent case in favour.

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