



# **Red War on the Family: Sex, Gender, and Americanism in the First Red Scare**

*Erica J Ryan*

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In the 1920s, cultural and political reactions to the Red Scare in America contributed to a marked shift in the way Americans thought about sexuality, womanhood, manhood, and family life. The Russian Revolution prompted anxious Americans sensing a threat to social order to position heterosexuality, monogamy, and the family as a bulwark against radicalism.

In her probing and engaging book, *Red War on the Family*, Erica Ryan traces the roots of sexual modernism and the history of antiradicalism and antifeminism. She illuminates how Americans responded to foreign and domestic threats and expressed nationalism by strengthening traditional gender and family roles-especially by imposing them on immigrant groups, workers, women, and young people.

Ryan argues that the environment of political conformity in the 1920s was maintained in part through the quest for cultural and social conformity, exemplified by white, middle-class family life. *Red War on the Family* charts the ways Americanism both reinforced and was reinforced by these sexual and gender norms in the decades after World War I.

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