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A Note on Terminology

From 1970-1983, the coherent confluence of anarchism and revolutionary feminisms was referred to as ‘anarcho-feminism,’ ‘anarcha-feminism,’ ‘anarcha feminism,’ and ‘anarchist-feminism;’ such fluctuations in name do not signify any difference in meaning, relying mainly on an individual or group preference. The term ‘anarcho-feminism’ was more prevalent during the early and mid 1970s, though the terms remained interchangeable until the early 1980s, when ‘anarcha-feminism’ eclipsed alternative enunciations, remaining the dominant term to this day. In order to encapsulate the fluctuation of the terminology, I created the term ‘anarch@-feminism’ to refer to the corpus of thought, practice and action that were identified by the plethora of aforementioned terms.

Where a specific choice of term was established by an individual, author, group or conference, I utilize the specified term contained within single quotations. Wesleyan student Amy Horowitz, for instance, uses ‘anarcha-feminist’ for herself, and the Wesleyan ‘anarcha-feminist’ affinity group in her discussion of how anarch@-feminism (generally) applied to Wesleyan. Additionally, in discussions where there have been multiple terms identified and used, I employ ‘anarch@-feminism’ for clarity and focus; where it is unclear which term is preferred, I also use ‘anarch@-feminism’ to reference all the possible nominal expressions. Contemporary anarcha-feminism consistently maintains the same term; as such, ‘anarcha-feminism’ without quotations will be used in discussing anarcha-feminism from 1990 onward.
‘Revolutionary feminism(s)’ will also be used to refer to the radical, socialist, and anarchist feminisms that emerged in the ‘second wave’ of feminism in the late sixties. Likewise, ‘women’s liberation movement’ is used to express the mobilization and organization of these ‘revolutionary feminisms,’ whereas ‘women’s movement’ denotes the mobilization of feminism as a whole, inclusive of liberal and equality-seeking feminisms. All other specialized terms are explicated in text or citation.
Preface

Finding History at Home

There is nothing more satisfying to a novice feminist historian than discovering personal politics in a project close to home. When I first embarked on researching anarch@-feminist histories, I searched far and wide, traveled from coast to coast, and spent hours upon hours sifting through files in archives, infoshops, and libraries. In the beginning, the anarch@-feminist subjects of my research, and everything they had left behind, seemed distant, detached and obscure. I cast a wide net, gathering hundreds of pages of primary sources, and commenced the long journey of close reading, analysis and interpretation. At some point, however, I could progress no more; swimming in mountains of primary source material I became overwhelmed and lacked inspiration to move forward.

Then, the Wesleyan anarch@-feminists entered my project through the side-door. Working on Wesleyan’s radical/progressive Hermes magazine (est. 1975) brought me into contact with a history of anarch@-feminist organizing and activism on the campus I have called my home for the past three years. The October 8, 1980, issue of the magazine, dedicated specifically to exploring anarchism, contained an article written by Wesleyan student Amy Horowitz describing campus ‘anarcha-feminist’ groups and organizing; the article also elucidated her own personal understanding of anarch@-feminist politics and theory.

Like many anarch@-feminists in the 1960s and 1970s, Horowitz described the connection between anarchism and feminism as natural and instinctive. She wrote,

The feminist movement, like the anarchist vision, is a process and revolution which demands individual freedom. Indeed, given the values and tradition of
‘otherness,’ which characterize women because we have lived in the private sphere of the family, we can be seen as ‘intuitive’ anarchists.\(^1\) The notion that women, specifically more radically inclined feminists, were ‘intuitive’ anarchists was an important and common articulation for many anarch@-feminist writers in the United States.

Moreover, identifying with anarchist organizing and theory provided early anarch@-feminists with the tools to criticize early feminist practices, while still offering concrete alternatives to hierarchical institutions. Horowitz specifically cited the Clamshell Alliance, an anti-nuclear confederal organization of local affinity groups in New England, in which Wesleyan students and Middletown activists participated. As well, she referenced the organization of anarchists and anarchist-feminists in 1930s revolutionary Spain, who “for sixty years comprised…a cultural and social revolution, [attesting] to the viability of a movement which is truly rooted in the customs and lives of people.”\(^2\) Prior to their suppression by Francisco Franco’s fascist forces, Spanish anarchists underwent a holistic transformation wherein men were forced to deal with their personal implication in women’s oppression. Facilitated by the founding of anarchist study groups, they engaged in a collective denunciation of religious heritage and other traditions that evoked self-destructive and oppressive behaviors.

The concept of a simultaneous social and cultural revolution was integral to anarch@-feminist articulation and practices that emerged in the 1970s; the process of total transformation—social, political, economic, cultural and personal—was another feature of anarch@-feminism that distinguished it within the U.S. radical milieu.

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2. Horowitz, “Anarcha-Feminism.”
Horowitz emphasized this point, contending, “An anarchist revolution, is a non-violent, personal, freely chosen one; each individual becomes aware and chooses to grow in such a way as to re-define her or his values.” Here Horowitz underscores feminist contributions to anarchism, which emphasized personal expression and transformation, nonviolence, and revolution as an ongoing process. Similarly, she pointed to the feminist “life-giving values of nurturance, co-operation and mutual aid” to underline the anarchistic tendencies inherent in feminist engagement in “direct, unmediated relationships and egalitarian processes.” To this point, Horowitz cited the local organizing of Wesleyan anarch@-feminists, concluding, “Women, then, in the anarchist tradition which is our own, are working where we live.” Such a statement speaks to the local emphasis of anarch@-feminist organizing, and to the abiding rhetoric of motherhood, nurturing, and intuition prevalent throughout the development of anarch@-feminist thought and practice.

The Hermes ‘Anarchism Issue’ also contained a draft statement of the New England Anarchist Conference (NEAC), written by renowned anarchist, libertarian and social ecologist Murray Bookchin, with an addendum written by Wesleyan anarchists and anarch@-feminists. Entitled, “Anarchism: A Solution to Chaos,” the statement further highlighted the importance of local organizing and tradition, contending

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3 Horowitz, “Anarcha-Feminism.”
4 Horowitz, “Anarcha-Feminism.”
5 A development I examine in chapter 4.
6 Horowitz, “Anarcha-Feminism.”
7 This addendum was most likely written by Hermes staff members Amy Horowitz ('82) and John Ely ('83), who were the most active contributors to anarchist/anarch@-feminist organizing, and the most prolific Hermes correspondents on anarchist issues.
The memory of our New England town meetings compromise the nascent forms for such a decentralized, direct, face-to-face democracy. We seek to revive this memory, to give it new life, to free it of its parochial and patriarchal trappings, and to raise it as a model for our country and our campus in contrast to omnipotent bureaucracies and elite dominated groups in which a few politicos set themselves up as a vanguard.8

The hearkening back to New England processes of direct democracy situated this particular statement both nationally and regionally by evoking a collective memory of early New England politics; consequently, such a collective memory became a valuable tool for local anarchist organizing by proposing anarchism as an extension of this localized tradition. Because of the somewhat limited audience of Hermes at the time, and its positioning as a student-run campus magazine, the statement and addendum address anarchism and anarch@-feminism within a specified university community—in this case, Wesleyan. The addendum draws the applicability and relevance of anarch@-feminism back to the Wesleyan campus, stating

Anarchism is relevant to Wesleyan because it recognizes that all contemporary social issues—environmental destruction, nuclear power, weapons, and waste, apartheid and racism…and must therefore be dealt with as a unified structural problem.9

Horowitz’s article and the collective statement were not only explanations of anarch@-feminist theory, but also calls to praxis relevant to the Wesleyan community. The Hermes issue thus highlighted the importance of looking for anarch@-feminism in local contexts, as well as in global, national and regional histories.

9 “Anarchism: A Solution to Chaos.”
Introduction

The historical investigation that follows will explore the evolution of anarch®-feminism from 1970 to 1983. Focusing on early discourses in theoretical texts, newsletters, ‘zines, journals, and conference reports, I will address how theoretical debates were translated into practice over the course of the seventies, through experimentation with organizational structures, decentralized networking, and consensus process. Finally, I will explore how these experiments influenced anarch®-feminist direct action and protest in the early eighties.

My approach to writing this history owes much to Sharif Gemie’s article, “Historians, Anarchism and Political Culture,”10 in which the author cites prevalent approaches to historicizing anarchism. Gemie contends that two tendencies have dominated anarchist histories: “firstly, the reduction of anarchism to a political philosophy, centered on the works of great men of genius…. [Secondly,] an analysis of anarchism as organization or institution.”11 To Gemie’s first point, I abstain from only concentrating on the most prevalent anarch®-feminist writers, though their works are important sources to this project, and frame both theory and practice with a wide range of writers and publications obtained through archival research. To Gemie’s second point, I focus on “…wider, looser culture[s] of support for anarchism existing outside the formal organization,”12 alongside explicit anarch®-feminist articulations and practices within organizations and movements not expressly identified as ‘anarchist’ and/or ‘feminist.’

Between the early seventies and early eighties, anarch@-feminists interacted and collaborated with a wide variety of organizations and peoples; thus, delineating where anarch@-feminism begins and ends in relation to other ideologies and critiques only serves to obscure the complex relationships that make this history so unique. Gemie suggests “…that the focus for anarchist historians should be a milieu, or a political culture, whose center is in informal, lived relationships.” As such, I have approached the development of anarch@-feminist taking seriously these wider political cultures, informal organization and decentralized communication. Over the course of its development, anarch@-feminism operated and organized at the margins of overlapping and intertwined political cultures—feminist, anarchist, ‘leftist,’ radical, GLTBQ… and queer, ‘counter-culture,’ environmentalist, etc.—and thus, their position illustrates complex relationships within and between these milieus.

While anarch@-feminism in the U.S. was never hugely influential outside of radical circles, their theories, critiques, organization and practice informed a vast diversity of peoples and organizations; in the process, anarch@-feminists sustained an ongoing radical tradition that continues to evolve to this day. Centralizing anarch@-feminism in this historical study, then, enables the exploration and interrogation of complex relationships between radical (and some non-radical) political philosophies from 1970-1983.

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Contemporary Anarcha-Feminism

*Death to the Manarchy!*

The inquiry that follows is itself a part of, and an extension of, the historical narrative of anarcha-feminism that it seeks to clarify. As a historian of radicalism, feminism and anarchism, I am able to pursue these academic interests due to the inroads made by anarcha-feminist writers and historians within the university beginning in the 1970s. Contemporary anarcha-feminists often engage the anarcha-feminist past as a way of fostering radical political culture and community, an extension of the same drive evident in anarcha-feminist writing emergent with the ‘second wave’ of feminism. Just as anarcha-feminists in the 1970s and 1980s looked back to female anarchist figures of generations past, so too now do today’s anarcha-feminists look to their generation for empowerment, guidance and community tradition.

Seeking a ‘contemporary’ definition of anarcha-feminism is by no means an easy task, as it exceeds traditional modes of identifying political theories, ideologies and social movements. In 2003, two students at SUNY-New Paltz collaborated on a ‘zine response to the re-release of *Quiet Rumors: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader*, which included several important anarcha-feminist theoretical texts from the 1970s.14 *Beyond Gallery Walls and Dead White Men: Anarcha-Feminism in Action* was the resulting senior thesis project, and the ‘zine proposed extending the theory

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presented in *Quiet Rumors* “into a contemporary, lived light.”¹⁵ The students, Kendra and Lauren, gathered interviews from anarcha-feminists on the East coast “to form a kind of daily life anarcha-feminist ‘theory,’” and consequently highlighted the integral place of process and practice in forming contemporary understandings of anarcha-feminism.¹⁶ The diverse interviews, however, do nothing to clarify a specific contemporary anarcha-feminist position; rather, the project posited that there is no authority on anarcha-feminism, and that it is defined through the lives and experiences of many people, articulated in many voices, and manifested in an endless multiplicity of forms and expressions.

In “Kendra’s Reactions,” one of the authors further explicated the drive to form a new kind of ‘theory’ out of unabridged interviews, citing specifically the hierarchical ‘coding’ of knowledge into academic language, and the competition bred in university settings. Within the university, she claimed, “the goal of attaining knowledge becomes less and less about giving back to your community, about sharing ideas, but more and more about owning knowledge, using it as a commodity in the intellectual game higher education wishes us to play.”¹⁷ *Beyond Gallery Walls*… in its very structure, language and content implies that there can be no holistic or static account of contemporary anarcha-feminist ‘theory,’ as such; however, the contours of anarcha-feminism’s living impression can be sketched through the writings and expression of contemporary anarcha-feminists.

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¹⁶ Kendra and Lauren, “Introduction.”
¹⁷ Kendra and Lauren, “Kendra’s Reactions.”
While anarchism should be, at its root, feminist, historically gender issues and sexism were marginalized or ignored in anarchist milieus. In her oft-cited essay on anarcha-feminism, internet author and contemporary anarcha-feminist, Flick Ruby, writes, “while anarchism has provided a framework for the transformation required, for far too long even this revolutionary ideology has been largely male identified; male articulated, male targeted and male exclusive in both its language and participation.”

One common critique raised by many anarcha-feminists involves the prevalence of “aggressive, competitive behavior within the anarchist movement that is frighteningly reminiscent of historically oppressive male gender roles…[including] acting macho, holier than thou, and elitist,” otherwise known as ‘manarchism.’ Articulating anarcha-feminism, then, provides feminist critiques of patriarchy and sexism equal, if not more, consideration within the anarchist analysis of hierarchical power relations, while at the same time distinguishing anarcha-feminism from other revolutionary feminisms. Ruby, for one, distances contemporary anarcha-feminism from socialist feminism, claiming that the socialists’ “gender blind hierarchical bludgeoning from the podium organizations…” often devalue feminist critiques, painting them as ‘irrelevant’ to the movement and the overall goals of socialist organizing.

21 Flick Ruby, “Anarcha-Feminism.”
In lieu of active, youth oriented radical and socialist feminist organizing and outreach, contemporary anarcha-feminism sustains the revolutionary feminist tradition for the new millennium; certainly, at least, in predominately young, white, and college educated populations. That contemporary anarcha-feminism is intimately related to a larger community of anarchists, who are (in most cases) at least nominally open to self-critique through anarcha-feminist frameworks, also lends to its sustaining relevance and draw for young people today.

A relative openness to radical critiques of gender binaries, sexuality and relationships also distinguish anarcha-feminism from contemporary radical and socialist feminist groups, as well as from the ‘anarchist’ community as a whole; anarcha-feminism’s holistic framework provides more space for radical queer and trans folks to extend and deepen anarcha-feminist thought and approaches. The negotiation of these critiques and articulations are still developing; Darby, a contributor to Beyond Gallery Walls..., took issue with the contemporary anarchist community’s failure to explicitly address queer and trans issues, “which is why anarcha-feminism is so important, even though that too, isn’t explicit.” Such tension reflects the flexibility and fluidity of evolving anarcha-feminist frameworks, as well as the contemporary focus on creating (and living) everyday revolutionary alternatives, with an equal focus on present struggles and needs. Darby specifically cites issues of transgender and queer healthcare and housing, and another contributor, Gina, reflects,
although of course I definitely see myself as working towards a broader social revolution, I think that I have to make myself okay in the here and now. We have to be able to make spaces that are safe for women and for queer people and for people of color now. So then that, to me, means that we can’t just be working towards some abstract revolution that’s going to happen in the future, but it has to really be everyday in our spaces.\textsuperscript{24}

The lack of static definition for contemporary anarcha-feminism thus may very well be the reason it has sustained its relevance for so long; the flexibility engendered by its lived and experienced ‘theory’ provides for a continuous deepening of anarcha-feminism’s impression and critique. Such dynamism represents a distinctively different approach to other ‘radical’ articulations than the separatist tendencies maintained by many radical feminists today, and the party structure and hierarchical organization of contemporary socialism.

Many anarcha-feminists today, while recognizing the historically important role of women only consciousness-raising (c-r) groups in the emergence of radical feminist organizing, support working with individuals of all genders to confront the implications of patriarchy, capitalism and the State.\textsuperscript{25} Reflecting on the exclusion of men from c-r based feminist organizing, Sunčana of Croatian anarcha-feminist group, AnFEMA,\textsuperscript{26} writes, “I understand here the need of individuals for ‘secured’ environment in order to make themselves stronger, but that should not be the final goal, but a step on the way to liberation.”\textsuperscript{27} Understanding c-r style groups to be only one tactic in a larger struggle for the emancipation and empowerment of all people

\begin{footnotes}
\item[24] Kendra and Lauren, “Gina.”
\item[26] AnFEMA stands for Anarcha-Feminist Action
\item[27] Sunčana Bartakovic, letter to author, October 29, 2007. Also published in \textit{Erinyen} #1 by the Berlin-based Erinyen Anarcha-Feminist Collective (http://www.erinyen.blogspot.com/)
\end{footnotes}
differentiates anarch@-feminists from other radical feminist organizing based on women-only spaces and c-r groups. Sunčana concludes,

Solving problems of patriarchal domination only from one side – educating/raising conscience[s] of only [the] female population is only 50% of work…until we move [on] from this point, we can come only half-way to true liberation. Ignorance is our worst enemy. That’s why I think anarchofeminist groups should be mixed by sex, exchanging and comparing experiences in order to deconstruct traps of gender roles.28

To contemporary anarcha-feminists, the liberation of all people thus requires the energies and organization of people of all genders; anarchist men, trans-folks, gender queers—all individuals regardless of how they relate to, or identify on, the gender binary of masculinity/femininity, or how they personally understand biological sex in relation to gender—are included in this emancipatory schema.

Anarchist critiques of patriarchy are also articulated by male-identified anarchists, such as Colin Wright, who suggests, “by unlearning one’s own sexism and then challenging the sexism of other men, we can help create a climate that fosters the full participation of everyone in all areas of life.”29 Today’s anarcha-feminist struggle is thus one that anarchist men and women engage with collectively and collaboratively. Though situated within a busy intersection of ideologies and socio-political movements,

anarcha-feminism isn't just a response to anarchism and feminism, it's its own entity: an anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist, anti-oppression way of addressing

28 Bartakovic.
gender issues- and addressing other issues with a radical critique of patriarchy. Anarcha-feminism today is very much its own animal, driving individuals of all genders to critically participate within, and outside of, anarchist, feminist and anarcha-feminist circles.

Still, some writers do attempt to explicate the values, approaches and articulations of anarcha-feminism. Particularly prevalent in the early to mid nineties, anarchist, feminist and anarcha-feminist scholars attempted to elucidate a ‘contemporary’ understanding of anarcha-feminist theory using traditional means of theoretical analysis. In 1994, for instance, Howard J. Ehrlich wrote “Toward a General Theory of Anarchafeminism,” to further elucidate the theoretical underpinnings of anarcha-feminism that evolved in the seventies, eighties and early nineties. The editor of Reinventing Anarchy and Reinventing Anarchy, Again, Ehrlich placed his article as an introduction to anarcha-feminist theoretical writing that spanned the late 1960s to the 1990s. Ehrlich situated the historical development anarcha-feminist thought within various revolutionary feminisms, articulating explicitly the anarcha-feminist approach to state power.

To anarchist feminists, the state and patriarchy are twin aberrations. Thus, to destroy the state is to destroy the major agent of institutionalized patriarchy; to abolish patriarchy is to abolish the state as it now exists. Anarchist feminists…caution that the state by definition is always illegitimate. For this reason feminists should not be working within the electoral confines of the

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30 SallyDarity, “What is Anarcha-Feminism?”
state nor should they try to substitute female states for the present male states. Ehrlich did not criticize state power without offering alternatives. He highlighted radical feminist ‘revolutionary transfer culture,’ which located “the individual working collectively with others [as] the locus of change,” and required “alternative institutions built on principles of cooperation and mutual aid [be] the organizational forms for this change.”

Offering an alternative to state power relations, Ehrlich’s anarcha-feminist theory manifests itself in practice through the projects of local collectives and collaborative regional networks. In addition to direct political engagement, anarcha-feminism also demands the creation of a revolutionary counter-culture to foster and support the radical individual and community in struggles against state power. Ehrlich’s tract thus provided a more historical account of anarchafeminist theory, that elucidated anarcha-feminist thought through relation to historical influences; it is a traditional analysis in that it emphasized the influence of other theoretical frameworks and praxis on contemporary anarcha-feminism, in lieu of concrete examples of anarcha-feminist expression, process, practice and action. However, Ehrlich concluded his essay by acknowledging, “If there is an underlying principle of action it is that we need to cultivate the habits of freedom so that we constantly experience it in our everyday lives.” Here we see the seeds of Beyond Gallery Walls and Dead White Men, and a new way of articulating anarcha-feminist ‘theory.’

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33 Howard Ehrlich, “Toward a General Theory of Anarchafeminism.”
34 Howard Ehrlich, “Toward a General Theory of Anarchafeminism.”
Contemporary anarcha-feminism is also strongly internationalist in theory and practice. While this international bent is also evident in anarch@-feminist organizing in the 1970s and 1980s, the advent of the internet in the nineties enabled easier, freer and faster communication across languages and borders. Judging from the plethora of international anarcha-feminist material, translated and not, available archived online, anarcha-feminism is constantly being critiqued and negotiated on an international level.\textsuperscript{35} Highlighting the applicability of anarcha-feminist frameworks across geopolitical contexts and divisions, one Swedish anarcha-feminist, Sofia Hildsdotter, writes,

Anarcha-feminists are constructionalist [feminists]. The norms controlling in which ways men and women should present themselves or how they should interact with each other are regarded as social constructions. In order to change these power-related relationships between the sexes it is therefore, to a large degree, necessary for people to change themselves.\textsuperscript{36} By centering a critique of constructed hierarchical gender relations and allowing flexible ideological parameters, anarcha-feminist theories cross linguistic, cultural, and national borders, manifesting in a diverse variety of local and international practices.

My own involvement in organizing began while studying abroad in Zagreb, Croatia. Having sponsored an international anarcha-feminist festival the previous spring, Anarcha-Feminist Action (AnFEMA) Zagreb had a history of including international membership prior to my arrival. The collective consisted of (mostly)

\textsuperscript{35} See, Spunk Library (http://www.spunk.org), Anarcha.org, The Anarchy Archives (http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives), Scarlet Letter Archives (http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/ScarletLetterArchives/).

women who traveled, lived and squatted abroad, and who contributed to various international anarchist magazines and publications. During our weekly meetings, the members of AnFEMA related stories of their experience with mass organizing and protest in Thessaloniki, Copenhagen and Genoa; their experiences there, and at home, were the primary influences for how they personally interpreted anarcha-feminism in their lives.

Likewise, my experiences in the AnFEMA discussion group played a large role in my own understanding of anarcha-feminism, enabling me to make important transformative connections between my everyday life and anarcha-feminist practices and action. My experiences working in AnFEMA lead me to study the recent history of autonomous spaces and squatting in Croatia; in doing so, I uncovered stifling and debilitating gender dynamics in the anarchist community in Zagreb. The process of researching and writing this history confirmed to me the important role of engaging community and collective histories as a form of productive self-critique; such histories provide personal (and communal) empowerment that bolsters the development of a radical political ‘culture’ through the exposition of a shared radical tradition. Exploring Zagreb’s particular histories also revealed underlying and abiding tensions that presented seemingly new obstacles to contemporary organization and action. Consequently I discovered that engaging and writing histories of existent radical communities, organizations and ‘movements,’ was point of rupture where individuals within these communities could productively encounter ongoing tensions and obstacles to organization evidenced in their history.

37 Squatting involves occupying and reclaiming unused or abandoned buildings and spaces.
My engagement with anarch@-feminist history in the U.S. is thus informed by my personal development in AnFEMA, and by the process and practice of writing a history of anarchist organizing in a community I was a member of, albeit for a short time. To this point, as I encountered the archived remnants of anarch@-feminist thought, organizing and action, I was not surprised to find that anarch@-feminists consistently sent their publications directly to established anarchist and feminist archives and libraries. The women who lived the history I now engage were aware of their historical agency, no doubt cemented by their own investigations into 19th and early 20th century anarchist women; their efforts helped preserve a record of their thought and practice, and it is this archival record that provides the basis’ and primary sources for my historical inquiry.
Anarch@-Feminism and Historiography

The AnFEMA members’ negotiation of praxis exemplifies the positive relationship between ‘the local’ and ‘the global’ in contemporary and historic anarch@-feminism. The placement of the global and local perspectives “in a creative rather than competitive relation to each other,” as elaborated by well-known feminist historian and ‘anarcho-feminist’ Nancy Hewitt, is another important framework for approaching both feminist and anarchist historical study.\(^{38}\) To this end, historicizing anarch@-feminism must take into account international, as well as the national, regional and local perspectives.

Beginning in the late 1960s, as interest in anarchist and women’s history grew, historians of American anarchism began placing more emphasis on famous female anarchist writers and orators from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. American notables including Emma Goldman, Voltairine De Cleyre, Mollie Steimer and Lucy Parsons, regardless of explicit ‘feminist’ identification, were identified as the forbearers of an anarch@-feminist tradition. Biographies of all four women were published in the 1970s and early 1980s, following increased interest in their lives and work.\(^{39}\)


Emma Goldman in particular was a frequent subject for feminist and women’s historians, in conjunction with her already prevalent placement in American anarchist, radical and labor history. Part of Goldman’s popularity was due to her prolific literary output and involvement in well known publications, as well as the accessibility of her personal papers, correspondence and records, which she spent a decade collecting and archiving before donating her collection to the Institute of Social History in Amsterdam in 1939.\footnote{Goldman was the editor of anarchist journal Mother Earth, and is also noted for her biography, Living My Life. See Emma Goldman, Living My Life (New York: Dover Publications, 1970.)} The “appreciation for the diversity of America’s documentary heritage that arose in the 1960s” instigated federal government support for the publication of her papers.\footnote{Candace Falk, “Editor’s Introductory Essay,” Emma Goldman Papers Project, http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Guide/introduction.html.} The subsequent twelve-year process of collection, organization, annotation and, finally, publication of her papers took place under the auspices of The Emma Goldman Papers Project (EGPP), which eventually produced microfilm editions of the collection, guides to Goldman’s documents, historical exhibits and middle and high school curriculums.

Goldman’s writings contained explicitly feminist content, which further popularized her as a subject for women’s historians.\footnote{See Penny A. Weiss and Loretta Kensinger, Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).} She also figured heavily into histories of labor organizing and radicalism in the U.S., notably Howard Zinn’s A People’s History of the United States.\footnote{See Howard Zinn, A People’s History of the United States, 1492-Present, (Harper Perennial Modern Classics. New York: Harper Perennial, 2005), and Emma: A Play in Two Acts About Emma Goldman, American Anarchist, (Cambridge, Mass: South End Press, 2002).} The vast corpus of documentation Goldman left behind compared to many of her compatriots facilitated extensive study of her
life, thought and work. Other anarchist histories of education and organizing highlighted the integral role of women during this period as well. These histories identified the importance of international forces—such as war and European immigration—and local collective efforts—such as the Modern School movement, union organizing, and intentional communities—in the history of late nineteenth and early-twentieth century American radicalism. Anarchist historian Paul Avrich was a dominant figure in this nascent American anarchist historiography; his historical work incorporated oral histories, documentary sources, biography, and global and local perspectives, influenced in part by developments in feminist historiography. Anarchist women were often the focus of his historical work.

One of the first feminist academics to seriously investigate historical ‘anarchist-feminist’ women was cultural historian Margaret Marsh. In her 1978 article, “The Anarchist-Feminist Response to the ‘Woman Question’ in Late Nineteenth-Century America,” Marsh traced the development of 19th century ‘anarchist-feminist’ critiques of motherhood, marriage, sexuality and the family structure to the anarchist “primacy of complete individual liberty.” Marsh’s interest in late-19th century anarchist-feminists stemmed from her positioning of them as a ‘gauge’ “to study the interplay between cultural and physical determinants of social evolution.”

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44 For further reference, see Goldman’s bibliography at the Anarchy Archives, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_archives/goldman/Goldmanbiblio.html.
46 Avrich, The Modern School Movement.
roles, such as class and sex, and the development of ideology.” She reiterated and extended this position in her 1981 book, *Anarchist Women, 1870-1920*, where she argued ‘anarchist feminism’ “provides us with a useful yardstick for measuring the boundaries of acceptable deviation from conventional patterns of behavior.”

Through distinguishing anarchist-feminist women from their more mainstream feminist and male anarchist counterparts, Marsh pinpointed a uniquely ‘anarchist-feminist’ critique and practice in late 19th century America.

Marsh’s work was by no means overly sympathetic to the late 19th century ‘anarchist-feminist’ cause. She was intrigued by the liberatory rhetoric and action of ‘anarchist-feminists,’ as well as by their refusal to compromise, but she positioned them as a marginal group without any impact on a majority of women’s lives, past or present. In one illustrative example, Marsh critiqued the ‘anarchist-feminist’ focus on attacking gendered and sexual norms for precluding serious discussion of the place of children in anarchist philosophy.

Their failure in this crucial respect was indicative of an inability to translate radical commitment into practical action. It also suggests that the anarchists were primarily concerned, in the realms of sexuality and domesticity, with attacking the norms of contemporary society with regard to the behavior of men and women, rather than with creating a framework within which future generations could build a new society.”

By the early 20th century, anarchist experimentation with education produced viable alternatives to hierarchical learning and family structures, while also providing innovative frameworks for incorporating children into anarchist praxis. Furthermore,

Avrich’s extensive account of the Modern School movement in the U.S. was published the same year as *Anarchist Women*. But Marsh remained quite critical of the perceived effectiveness of ‘anarchist-feminist’ ideology, as exemplified by the ‘failure’ to incorporate children.

Relegating the anarchist-feminists to a ‘marginal’ or ‘impotent’ status in her works enables Marsh to operate within established feminist historical narratives without complicating them in any way. In a review of *Anarchist Women*, anarch@-feminist political theorist Kathy Ferguson points out that “the personalities and themes of the anarchist feminist movement are held at arm’s length, scrutinized, and evaluated…” by Marsh, who considers the anarchist-feminists to have ‘good ideas’, but ones that are “…‘too extreme’ to be really relevant.”

Ferguson also criticizes Marsh’s attempt to relate 19th century anarchist-feminism to contemporary feminism, arguing that the author appears to be ‘unaware’ that the radical critiques brought forth a century ago by anarchist feminists remain integral to radical feminisms emerging in the late-1960s. Ferguson asserts that Marsh’s understanding of ‘contemporary’ feminism as the push for ‘equal rights’ undermines her attempts to draw connections to anarchist-feminism of the past. Marsh fails to fully appreciate “…the extent to which contemporary radical feminism follows the lead of the earlier anarchist feminists in criticizing the male-dominated household, the denial of women’s erotic expression, and the dangers of hierarchical social relations…”

Ferguson’s response to Marsh’s book is indicative of its publication in *Social Anarchism*, which has quite

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53 Ferguson, 68.
54 Ferguson, 68.
a different view on historical study than *The Journal of American History* or *The American Historical Review*. Ferguson concludes, “readers who want to live anarchist feminism rather than simply study it will be somewhat frustrated by the detached attitude the author brings to her work, but will also learn a great deal about their own history and its context.” Ferguson’s review in *Social Anarchism* assumes an audience of activist oriented individuals, and reflects anarchist perspectives on history.

Ferguson’s critiques of Marsh also point to emerging historical constructions of anarchism that reifies its marginal position in the body of radical, labor and working class histories, discussed at length in anarchist historian Davide Turcato’s “Making Sense of Anarchism: Anarchists, Historians and Rationality.” Turcato argues that the historiography of anarchism often constructs anarchist movements and mobilizations as marginal, ineffective, archaic, doomed; Marxist historiography, on one hand, “hastens to toll the bell for anarchism,” while liberal historiography “wishes it along life as a permanently unsuccessful movement.” Even anarchist histories produced after the advent of ‘new social history’ in the late sixties reiterated these constructions, despite the emergent counter-construction that anarchism displayed a potent adaptability across geopolitical and historical contexts, and through changing conditions. Furthermore, Turcato cites Matthew Thomas’ 2005 book, *Anarchist Ideas and Counter-Cultures in Britain, 1880-1914*, which recycles Marsh’s criticisms of anarchist-feminists in the U.S. during the same period. Thomas

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55 Ferguson, 68.
57 Turcato, 2.
argues that anarchism “in its purest sense” is incapable of mass movement formation, citing, specifically, “the failure of anarchist feminists and educators, who refused to reach beyond their sub-culture.”

Turcato’s analysis of contemporary studies of anarchist history finds a common thread, despite their diversity, in the presentation of anarchist goals as irreconcilable with realism, flexibility, expediency and effectiveness. In an unsettling number of recent anarchist histories, according to Turcato, “anarchism is made sense of by introducing an element of oddity, inconsequence, or irrationality at some point of the process, whether in the form of impossible aims, futile means, or absurd beliefs.”

Reviews of Marsh’s work in non-anarchist publications bolster Turcato’s contentions, and reveals how Anarchist Women was received, and what kind of contribution it made to the historiography of anarch@-feminism. Marsh’s book was also reviewed in feminist journal Sojourner, which considered it favorably for making “an important contribution to feminist scholarship…changing the face of the 19th century feminist movement as we have known it to one considerably more varied and complex.”

Feminist historian Mary Lou Roberts’ review relates new shifts in ‘contemporary’ feminism (c.1982)—more focus on the intimate and familial institutions as sources of women’s oppression—to the articulated critiques of 19th century anarchist feminists. In relating these ‘new turns’ in late 1970s feminism(s) to anarchist-feminism of the late 19th century, Roberts effectively ignores radical

58 Turcato, 4.
59 Turcato, 4.
60 Turcato, 4.
62 Writing under the penname Lou Roberts.
feminisms that had been active since the late 1960s, as well as anarchist-feminist organizing throughout the seventies and early eighties. Just as Ferguson’s review reflected a specifically anarchist and activist viewpoint, Roberts’ review reflects a feminist, particularly liberal feminist, viewpoint. That Roberts’ positioned the critical contributions of late 19th and early 20th century anarchist-feminism in relation to ‘contemporary’ liberal feminism, underscores Marsh’s construction of the ineffectual marginality of anarchist-feminists within their historical context; historically, and in the present, the radical articulations of anarchist-feminists are often viewed as an ineffective, ‘utopian’ and unrealistic purism, warranting study only so far as the ‘diversity’ they bring to feminist history.

Marsh’s work also appeared in general American history journals, and Anarchist Women was reviewed in both The Journal of American History or The American Historical Review. Historian Anita Clair Fellman’s review criticizes Marsh for her small sample of sources, exaggeration, favoring of individualist over communist anarchism, shallow analysis and concentration on “…explaining the ‘failure’ of the anarchists to become dominant, ultimately blaming the philosophy itself or inconsistent application of the philosophy more than external circumstances and forces of repression.” Fellman’s review supports much of Turcato’s analysis, despite her review predating the 2005 article by almost twenty years. Her criticisms also point to another facet of Turcato’s critiques—the necessity of a unique approach to anarchist history engendered by the “scarcity or unreliability of sources and

64 Fellman, 183.
deceptiveness of evidence…” in anarchist documentary sources, which he argues, “…are not accidental, but inherent to the nature of the movement itself.” Turcato stresses that anarchist history cannot be explored exclusively through influential thinkers, books, or organizational records; rather, the historian must “look at the dense network of links between individuals and groups to study how anarchism functioned as a collective movement,” found in the newspapers, pamphlets, journals and memories of living anarchists and anarch@-feminists. Fellman’s criticisms highlight how the inappropriate historiographical approach employed by Marsh reflects the inherent difficulties of working with anarchist sources to detect continuity; indeed, in this light, its is easier to see why Marsh reached the conclusions that she did.

Historian Constance Myers, conversely, complements Marsh’s analysis and attention to the ‘ideological inconsistencies’ of 19th century anarchist’s approach to the ‘Woman Question.’ The only criticisms of the book pointed out factual errors, referring to anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan as ‘Edward Morgan,’ but generally accepted the book as a positive addition to American radical history. Marsh’s book was reviewed in various ways depending on both author and publication bias, but the work was accepted as a generally positive contribution to literature on anarchist women, and feminist and women’s history in general. Indeed, the criticisms of Marsh’s book speak to the difficulties engendered in historicizing anarch@-feminism in any time period; the inappropriate approach employed by Marsh, in effect, helped

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65 Turcato, 12.
66 Turcato, 8.
67 Myers, 1331.
68 Myers, 1331.
clarify the need for an explicit anarchist, and anarch@-feminist, historiography. That the book was reviewed by such a diverse array of publications further proves its important place in anarchist, feminist and anarch@-feminist historiography.

Most of the innovative historiographical work on anarch@-feminism appeared in the mid-1990s. Anarchist historian Sharif Gemie’s 1996 article, “Anarchism and Feminism: a historical survey,” published in *Women’s History Review*, examines the “structures and concepts within anarchist political culture which permitted and even encouraged the development of [sexist] attitudes…,”69 so called ‘anarcho-sexism,’ within late 19th and early 20th century anarchist organizing. Gemie also argues that despite the development and maintenance of ‘anarcho-sexism,’ ‘proto-feminist’ critiques developed within the masculine oriented anarchist political culture. Though Gemie focuses mainly on the experiences of European anarchist-feminists, the arguments articulated can be applied to the American context as well, as historically American and European anarchisms were intertwined through the immigration, deportation and exchange of peoples across the Atlantic Ocean.

Like Marsh, Gemie situates anarchist-feminists in the ‘first-wave’ feminist milieu, which contained, “on the one hand, anti-statist liberal feminists; on [the] other, pro-statist socialist and radical feminists.”70 Anarchist-feminists, embracing radical and socialist views, while at the same time articulating anti-statist positions, complicate a previously constructed historical dichotomy of ‘first-wave’ feminism. Similarly, as will be shown, anarch@-feminism situated in the ‘second-wave’ of feminism complicates how historians understand relationships between different

feminisms, specifically radical and socialist feminisms. Gemie also shows how women and sexuality figured into the anarchist discourse, surveying anarchist male anarchist writers of the 19th and early 20th centuries, and reflecting on how anarchists “tended to assume a male revolutionary subject.” Gemie additionally points to how anarchist discourses developed a specific approach to ‘the woman question’ that associated femininity and womanhood in opposition to ‘nature.’ However, as Gemie notes, “… anarchists were capable of learning from feminists, and could initiate some limited form of auto-critique of their own record.”

Two years later historian of sexuality, Richard Cleminson, responded to Gemie’s article, offering an argument elaborating how late 19th and early 20th century anarchist political culture was influenced by dominant sexual culture, and used “…the fear of homosexuality as a disciplinary factor in the sexual politics of their movement.” Extending Gemie’s argument that anarchist political culture supported static and ‘naturalized’ understanding of gender, Cleminson argues that anarchist political culture positioned homosexuality and any non-heterosexual expression of sexuality as deviant, which, in turn, “exercised a role in guaranteeing and ensuring ‘correct’ sexual behaviour,” and thus, proper anarchist gender roles and practices. Cleminson’s centering sexuality in the historical investigation of anarch@-feminism established anarch@-feminist historiography as both a developing method, and an evolving and expanding body of historical knowledge.

75 Cleminson, 137.
Though Cleminson’s argument summarizes the dominant anarchist antipathy towards homosexuality and alternative gender expression, the author does not account for anarchist-feminist Emma Goldman’s staunch defense of homosexuality alongside birth control and free love in both her writings and her lectures. An excerpt from Goldman’s biography, *Living My Life*, details responses, both negative and positive, to her lectures on homosexuality.

Censorship came from some of my own comrades because I was treating such ‘unnatural’ themes as homosexuality. Anarchism was already enough misunderstood, and anarchists considered depraved; it was inadvisable to add to the misconceptions by taking up perverted sex-forms, they argued. Believing in freedom of opinion, even if it went against me, I minded the censors in my own ranks as little as I did those in the enemy's camp.\(^{76}\)

This discrepancy further explicates the tremendous difficulty of working with anarchist sources; censorship was exerted from without and within, forcing issues of gender and sexuality further into the margins of historical documentation. As such, Goldman’s articulation are not evoked to disprove Cleminson’s arguments, but rather to highlight the inevitable obscuration of these issues in anarchist documentation; Goldman was surely not the only anarchist or anarch@-feminist voice to address homosexuality in a positive light, but her voice was the only one that survived, speaking to Goldman’s privileged position in the hallowed halls of the anarchist ‘greats.’

Emma Goldman is an integral figure in American anarch@-feminist history, to the point that her death in 1940 seems to mark the end of historical exploration of

anarch@-feminism in the U.S. While American anarchism in the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s changed face, it did not disappear altogether, and the continual lack of attention paid to this time period by anarchist historians reifies its disappearance from history. Surely, profound changes in American political culture impacted the ability of anarchists to organize and operate; but as anarchist theorist Murray Bookchin contends, the lull between the 1930s and 1960s enabled a truly American anarchist political culture to emerge in the late 1960s.

To Bookchin, anarchism in American in the 1930s was a European transplant, dominant in immigrant communities that failed to create an anarchist movement for the United States. The ‘failure’ of radicalism in the 1930s to create a movement “…that could deal with uniquely American problems and function within a distinctively American context,”77 was picked up by the counter-culture radicals and New Left of the 1960s. ‘Old Left’ anarchist organizations persisted into the 1940s and 1950s, but changing times forced many to alter their approach: “drifting into the academy or into labor unions, they became a self-enclosed clique after the Second War—basically social-democratic, indulgently ‘pluralistic’ (which concealed a deep-seated social schizophrenia) or cold warriors…”78 An anarchist movement, as such, was no longer identifiable, but the influence of anarchist organization, strategies and tactics, persisted in unions, neighborhood cooperatives and new social movements; subsequently, the orthodox ideology demanded by the anarchists of the ‘Old Left’ was reinvented as a fluid and flexible framework, given life through its influence in emergent political, social and cultural radicalisms.

77 Murray Bookchin, “Between the 30s and the 60s,” Social Text 9/10 (Spring - Summer, 1984): 248.
78 Bookchin, “Between the 30s and the 60s,” 248.
Historical Background

Contentious Beginnings: Situating Emergent Anarch@-Feminism

In 1984, *Quiet Rumors: An Anarcha-Feminist Anthology* was published as a collection of anarch@-feminist theoretical writings from the 1970s. Included in *Quiet Rumors* were two manifestos published in the early Chicago-based anarch@-feminist journal/newsletter, *Siren*, and a sampling of the well-known theoretical articulations spanning the seventies, with essays by Lynne Farrow, Peggy Kornegger, Marian Leighton, and Carol Ehrlich.\(^7^9\) The introduction to the anthology, written by radical feminist and leftist scholar/activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, situated emergent anarch@-feminism within late sixties feminist “…organizational form and practice, at the heart of which lay the small group.”\(^8^0\) Dunbar-Ortiz also points to early feminist organization and practice emphasizing the ‘building’ a non-hierarchical feminist movement organized horizontally, through networking, instead of vertically, through the incorporation of groups into hierarchically organized structures.

Dunbar-Ortiz contends that by the mid seventies, as the early ‘anarchic’ organizational tendencies and practices of women’s liberationists were eclipsed by an increasingly hierarchical and ideological ‘Women’s Movement,’ the “…anarcha-feminist critique gained popularity and was widely studied,” producing newsletters, conferences, publications, and regional, national and international networks of


\(^8^0\) Dark Star Collective, 3.
‘anarcha-feminists.’ At the dawn of the 1980s, the ‘anarcha-feminist’ movement, as understood and articulated by Dunbar-Ortiz, “…had to all intents and purposes ceased to function,” the victim of opposition from Marxist and ‘reformist’ feminists, and from the ‘traditional’ male-oriented anarchist community. Echoing many early anarch@-feminist articulations, Dunbar-Ortiz situates the emergence of ‘anarcha-feminism’ in the feminist milieu, while also recognizing the influence of the general anarchist, feminist and radical leftist thought and practice on ‘anarcha-feminism’s’ development as a ‘movement’.

Situating ‘anarcha-feminism’ as movement, however, necessarily limits historical inquiry by ignoring the wide range of influences and relationships that impacted its theoretical development. Indeed, Dunbar-Ortiz’s contention that the ‘anarcha-feminist’ movement, as such, ceased to function by the 1980 points to the limitations indicted by a singular focus on theoretical scholarship and formal organization. Situating ‘anarcha-feminism’ only within the feminist milieu similarly ignores the influences of anarchist philosophy and practice, which played an important part in emergent articulations; interrogating the basis of this framing of ‘anarcha-feminism’ requires a brief historical contextualization. While post-sixties feminism facilitated a platform for the first articulations of anarch@-feminism in the early seventies, the political and cultural radicalism of the New Left and counter-culture also played a decisive role in anarch@-feminism’s development. How, then, can one proceed in situating the emergence of anarch@-feminism in the early 1970s?

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81 Dark Star Collective, 3.
82 Dark Star Collective, 3.
For one, major theoretical texts cannot be the basis for exploring nascent anarch@-feminist articulations; as works of synthesis and coherence, such texts are extensions of existent discourses that deserve exploration in their own right. Additionally, the first proponents of anarch@-feminism were influenced by a diversity of practices, ideologies and social movements. Exploring how these women personally came to anarch@-feminism thus provides important insight into the diversity of thought and practice that impacted their articulations, and highlights commonalities within individual processes of personal transformation.

*The Personal begets the Political: Coming to Anarch@-Feminism*

Those writers and activists who contributed to the written discourse came from a variety of different backgrounds and took an array of different paths. Fortunately, many women who contributed to the early discourses of anarch@-feminism personalized their writings with their own histories and struggles. The personal backgrounds of anarch@-feminism’s most fervent proponents reveals a common thread of feminism intertwined with the influences of other post-sixties liberatory projects.

Indeed, it is in the various personal stories of ‘becoming anarch@-feminist’ that a version of what historian Nancy Hewitt terms ‘the Emma thread’ can be observed; exposure to Emma Goldman’s work and writings transcends the individual peculiarities of personal transformation, but her writings also support viewing individual transformation within community contexts. Hewitt’s exposure to Goldman’s writings while living in Berkeley in 1974 pushed her to develop, and to
integrate, her ‘anarcho-feminist’ views into her approach to historical study. To this point, Hewitt’s own story of ‘becoming an anarcho-feminist’ pushed her to recognize “that so-called global perspectives were also rooted in some place, some particular cultural and material position.” Originally radicalized through antiwar and radical feminist organizing in the late 1960s, Hewitt reflects upon the desire for a ‘global vision’ in her early (pre-Emma) writings, a trend wholly transformed with her embrace of ‘anarcho-feminism’ as a scholar and activist. Considering the impact of ‘anarcho-feminism’ on her writing and scholarship, Hewitt writes, “I have crafted—piece by piece and locale by locale—a larger narrative exploring one thread of women’s activism, the Emma thread, that embeds a global vision of change in communal and communitarian values.” In this sense, ‘the Emma thread’ ties together a ‘global vision’ of anarcha-feminism through the examination of the peculiarities of local contexts. The individual transformative experiences often instigated by Goldman’s writings are not isolated, but rather, products of the milieus, contexts and communities in which anarcha-feminists lived and interacted. Hewitt’s own journey from “small-town, honor-student cheerleader to antiwar radical feminist” to ‘anarcho-feminist’ reflects the impact of multiple liberatory projects, and further underscores the value of exploring and contextualizing personal transformations alongside the negotiation of global and local perspectives.

In 1992, Elaine Leeder, a Cornell trained scholar and ‘anarcha-feminist’ activist, reflected on the injustices she perceived growing up in a working class
household run by immigrant parents who clearly favored their sons over their daughter. Stifled in this environment, Leeder identified ‘the 60s’ as a key turning point in her intellectual and political evolution.

I joined the melee gleefully, all the while still attending college and later an orthodox Jewish graduate school. But civil rights, the antiwar movement and later the women’s movement came along and swept me away….The movements for social change were powerful. I eagerly joined political demonstrations, women’s groups and collectives for action."87

Though not yet aware of anarchist theory and practice, the significant influence of sixties social movements, in addition to Leeder’s own experiences as an activist, solidified her commitment to a holistic and total social transformation. Her involvement in anti-war demonstrations, direct action, collective organization, and women’s groups, as well as her involvement in the welfare rights movement in New York mark important influences on Leeder’s political development. Her initial exposure to anarchist practices in the East was built upon by experiences living in rural counter-cultural communes in Northern California. Leeder later recalled her experiences in rural alternative communities as she started a family with her husband: “Idyllic and alone, [we were] trying to create a new world that would not emulate what we had sought to run away from.”88

After her exposure to Emma Goldman’s writings, also while living Berkeley, Leeder ‘became an anarcha-feminist,’ reflecting, “I guess once I read Emma I knew that I had always been an anarchist. I had just never had a name for the ideas and the

88 Leeder, 25.
beliefs that I held." Upon moving to Ithaca, New York, Leeder joined ‘anarcha-feminist’ collective Tiamat, a prolific group both in written theory and organization. It was there that I could intellectually explore a theory, then feel it and try it out emotionally. Tiamat was a place for emotional support, intellectual stimulation and friendship. It was there that I could think through what an anarcha-feminist was in the ideal and then look at the real of me and how I could get to the idea.

The collective strove to embody the non-hierarchical social organization it espoused while negotiating the incorporation of feminist and anarchist theory and practices. While pursuing graduate school at Cornell, Leeder produced historical scholarship on early 20th century ‘anarcha-feminist’ labor organizer Rose Pesotta, and continued contributed to anarch@-feminist and anarchist publications into the early 1990s.

Leeder concludes her reflective essay by affirming her continued commitment to ‘anarcha-feminist’ theory and practice. “…I am involved in making anarchism a viable alternative for the women’s movement to consider as its ideological foundation. I also hope through this work to educate the anarchist community as to the lessons that the women’s movement can provide.” Leeder’s personal evolution as an ‘anarcha-feminist’ was thus directed by her exposure to anarchist practices in early women’s liberation organizing, the New Left and the counter-culture; the failure of sixties radicalisms to adequately address sexism, patriarchy and feminist critiques highlights the necessity of women’s liberation to the development of anarch@-feminism in the early seventies.

89 Leeder, 25.
Peggy Kornegger reveals a similarly complex path to ‘anarcha-feminism’ in a 1983 interview for the feminist publication *Sojourner*. Kornegger, like Hewitt, grew up an ‘all American girl’ in a small Midwestern town, never hearing of anarchism until she read Emma Goldman, whose writings initially inspired her to start forging connections between anarchism and radical feminism.\(^{92}\) After graduating from college in the early 1970s, Kornegger’s initial spark of anarchist consciousness evolved through her involvement in the women’s movement in San Francisco. Later, when asked what influenced her theorizing of the relationship between feminism and anarchism, Kornegger cites the publication of Robin Morgan’s *Sisterhood is Powerful*, Shulamith Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex*, and anarchist Murray Bookchin’s article “On Spontaneity and Organization,”\(^{93}\) alongside her initial exposure to Goldman as formative to her theorizing and writing about ‘anarcha-feminism.’ Bookchin, who had been a proponent of anarchism within SDS, wrote the article in 1971 as a response to the demise of SDS.

Bookchin’s article seemed the perfect reading at that time because it was the end of the 60s when so many people were going through disillusionment about the revolution not happening. People were leaving the left and getting into the Guru Majaraji, hip capitalism, or open marriage—or just being generally discouraged and pessimistic. Bookchin’s article to me was the first hopeful and still practical conception of the revolution in our times.\(^{94}\)

The reflections of Hewitt, Kornegger and Leeder demonstrate how previous activism and movement experience impacted how they came to understand and articulate...


\(^{93}\) Bookchin’s “Spontaneity and Organization,” was originally delivered as a lecture at the Telos conference, Buffalo, N.Y., 1971, and later published in *Anarchos*, no. 4 (1973) and *Liberation* (March 1972). It was also republished in Bookchin’s own *Toward an Ecological Society* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1980).

anarch@-feminist theory. By examining their personal evolutions, in their own words, it becomes clear that elements of sixties radicalism, both political and cultural, facilitated these women’s initial radicalization; however, the advent of women’s liberation provided the context and impetus to forge connections between feminism and anarchism.

Fluffy Golod’s 1975 article, “On Anarcha-Feminism,”95 included in the midwestern anarchist and ‘anarcha-feminist’ publication *Soil of Liberty*, illustrates how, through the negotiation of anarchism and feminism, an explicitly ‘anarcha-feminist’ critique emerged. Golod reports that she too was initially radicalized in the late sixties through her participation in the anti-war movement, but pressures of early motherhood, marriage and higher education prevented any ‘concrete’ work and participation in radical movements. Empowered by the nascent Women’s Liberation movement, Golod worked within her university community to provide access to childcare for student mothers, and helped establish a Women’s Studies department. Golod reflects that her exposure to anarchism was gradual, considerate and critically conscious of the ‘extremes’ of anarchism: “Too much stress on revolutionary lifestyle leads to a self-consciousness which puts a political person out-of-touch with the daily concerns of most women.”96 Golod’s criticisms of ‘anarcha-feminism’ stem from her concern that the emphasis on ‘total revolution’ may be incompatible with many women’s needs and experiences; her reflection illustrates that connections drawn between anarchism and feminism were thus not always intuitive, but rather complexly negotiated based on personal experiences and situation.

96 Golod, “On Anarcha-Feminism.”
Hewitt, Kornegger, Leeder, Golod and countless other anarch@-feminists in the 1970s came to anarchism through feminism in hopes that an explicit anarch@-feminist framework would address the shortcomings of sixties radicalism and the Women’s Liberation movement. Their exposure to anarchist theory, often through the writings of Emma Goldman, provided a political framework for understanding their goal of radical social change, as well as a tradition of theory and practice they could draw upon and extend. That all four received college and/or post-graduate degrees is no coincidence; the university setting provided the intellectual space, as well as the knowledge and language needed to interrogate and synthesize anarchist and feminist theoretical frameworks. Given, then, the constantly shifting ground of the Women’s Liberation movement in the early to mid seventies, the adoption of an anarchist theoretical framework compensated for the inadequate theorization of radical and socialist feminisms. Consequently, anarch@-feminism emerged as an anarchist critique of feminism and a feminist critique of anarchism.

The Revolution is Nigh! Anarchism, The New Left, and the Counter-Culture

What can be gleaned from these personal stories of political and intellectual evolution is the impact of sixties political and cultural radicalism to the emergence of radical feminism in the late sixties, and anarch@-feminism in the early seventies. During its nascent stage in early 1960s, the New Left in America, Canada, and many Western European nations “…began espousing the traditional anarchist principles of mutual aid, participatory democracy, and decentralization,” targeting universities,

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factories and the State itself. Many anarchist historians are quick to identify the anarchic strains within organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and new strains of ‘libertarian Marxism,’ which diverged from the ‘Old Left’ by emphasizing free will in history, the importance of consciousness in social organization, and effectiveness and necessity of organizing in community based groups. The orthodox ideology of anarchism in the ‘Old Left’ was replaced by a flexible anarchist framework of variable tactics; political scientist Benjamin Barber noted that in the sixties, anarchism lived “in the slogans and banners of the French Student Movements, in the New York Townhouse laboratories where amateur chemists forge weapons of terror at the risk of their own lives, in the syncretic vision of the anti-authoritarian young Left and in the street theater and comic braggadocio of the Yippies.” The diversity of this political and cultural radicalism was united by the common force of spontaneity, in direct opposition to the strict ideologies of American radicalism of the past. Thus, the most visible and common anarchic expression in sixties radicalism was the anarchist precept of spontaneous order, which suggests that “given a common need, a collection of people will, by trial and error, by improvisation and experiment, evolve order out of the situation.”

Anarchist historian Peter Marshall notes that this ‘new’ breed of anarchists were generally pacifists, and differed from the traditional worker based ideology, mobilizing “principally disaffected middle-class intellectuals, especially teachers, social workers and students [resulting] in a new emphasis on the importance of

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98 Marshall, 541.
100 Perlin, 7.
environment, culture, and lifestyle.” Consequently, the disenchanted intellectuals and college students that made up a majority of the early New Left found it difficult to gain the trust and participation of the working class. Sociologist and former SDS president Todd Gitlin echoes Marshall’s delineation in his book *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, recounting the radical shift within SDS following the success of their anti-war demonstration in Washington D.C., in 1965. The deluge of new SDS members included many working-class people, who “tended to come from the Midwest and Southwest…[the] children of Goldwater voters, students at schools that hadn’t progressed to paternalism, sometimes veterans of the armed forces, they were instinctive anarchists, principled and practiced antiauthoritarians.” Within two years of the Washington demonstration, with no end to the Vietnam War in sight, tactics on the New Left became increasingly militant and direct action oriented, providing the death blow to the localized action and community organizing popularized by SDS in the early to mid 1960s.

By 1969, internal divisions and dissent caused SDS to implode at its last convention, splintering into various ‘self-appointed vanguards’ of the revolution—the Workers-Students’ Alliance (Progressive Labor: Maoist), the Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Youth Movements I and II (which included the militant and direct action oriented Weathermen). A fourth, often overlook faction, was the anarchist Radical Decentralist Project (RDP), influenced heavily by Murray Bookchin. RDP’s resolution on the role of SDS disavowed the elusive struggle to attract the working

102 Marshall, 542.
104 Gitlin, 247.
105 Gitlin, 387.
class to the New Left; the resolution charged that the ‘youth revolt’ demanding sexual freedom, mutual aid, community, spontaneity and decentralized participatory democracy were ‘intuitive’ and ‘inchoate,’ reflecting “elemental social forces…that emerge not from books and formulas, but from the very social development itself.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, the language by which anarch(-feminists in the early seventies expressed the anarchist tendencies and practices within the Women’s Liberation movement originated with the first generation of ‘intuitive anarchists,’ the student radicals of the New Left.

RDP’s resolution also demanded the New Left take seriously the cultural radicalism, alternative structures and ‘life style’ revolution of the counter-culture; a successful liberatory project, they argued, required that participants transform their life style and values, while also creating alternative structures in support of this transformation. RDF also demanded a prefigurative model of revolution that attempted to address the failures of organization within SDS and the New Left as a whole: “Our movement should attempt to reflect in its own structure and human relations the kind of society it is trying to build.”¹⁰⁷ This ‘utopian’ articulation stands in stark contrast to the violence of the Weathermen, and the bureaucratic infighting and hierarchical organization that characterized other post-SDS factions.

Despite the painful and messy demise of the iconic SDS, the New Left’s homage to anarchism was critical to the survival of anarchist analysis within leftist politics. The anarchist principles employed by the New left might not have been recognized in name, but the practices of direct action, mutual aid, and non-

¹⁰⁷ Bookchin, “Toward A Post-Scarcity Society: The American Perspective and the SDS.”
hierarchical grassroots organizing were most definitely anarchist in spirit. Indeed, the anarchist current within SDS particularly, “seemed to validate the anarchist analysis and open the door a crack to the anarchist viewpoint.”

The anarchist tendencies within the New Left are not wholly representative of the 1960s radicalism alluded to in the personal reflections. The ‘New Right,’ which emerged alongside the New Left in the late sixties, contained a small group of ‘radical libertarians’ who “presented an anti-political program that demanded an end to public education, to the draft, to the ‘robbery’ of taxation and to the repression of individual freedom that is the main task of the corporate state.” While the ‘New Rightists’ would not acquiesce their valuation of private property, individualism and laissez-faire economics, radical libertarians, following radical libertarian intellectuals like Murray Rothbard and Karl Hess, developed their own counter-institutions and organized alongside anarchists and counter-culture adherents. These ‘radical Rightists’ were also more prone to participation in the legal system and party politics; one radical libertarian lawyer, who also edited an anarchist journal, helped organize ‘tax payer revolts,’ and wrote revisionist historical essays blaming the U.S. for the Cold War, stated, “We will use the law to destroy the law.” Thus, the radicalism that would eventually inform anarch@-feminist development came from both the ‘Right’ and the ‘Left’ of the political spectrum.

Cultural radicalism also played an important role in the sixties radical milieu. By 1965, actors in the burgeoning ‘counter-culture’ began criticizing the campus-based New Left as ineffective in “…addressing the root problem of American life: the

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108 Perlin, 14.
109 Perlin, 7.
110 Perlin, 8.
cultural foundation of the state was corrupt and could not be reformed by means of conventional politics.”\textsuperscript{111} One such group, the San Francisco-based Diggers, theorized “…small-scale, independent bands of ‘life-actors’ with more informal, contingent, interchangeable leadership and an ‘open’ membership posture.”\textsuperscript{112} Most of the Diggers were a decade or more older than the young ‘hippies’ that crowded the Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco, and many had a background in theater that manifested in their colorful and creative protests and guerilla theater actions; they did not originate in the counter-culture, but moved into the Haight “deliberately to infuse the new culture with their ethos.”\textsuperscript{113}

The Digger’s theoretical understanding of anarchism was noticeably stronger than the currents within SDS, a contention supported by Todd Gitlin’s \textit{The Sixties}, in which the Digger’s are consistently and explicitly referred to as ‘anarchists.’ Gitlin posits, “they were anarchists of the deed, and their flair, in the full spirit of the time, was to carry a romantic idea to its logical endpoint.”\textsuperscript{114} The Digger’s disruption of a 1967 SDS conference further distanced their anarchic theatricality and prefigurative politics from the New Left, despite the marginal support of RDF and identified anarchists within SDS. This incident precipitated a growing rift between political and cultural radicalism. The Diggers, according to Gitlin, “were our anarchist bad conscience, and so they paralyzed us.”\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{112} Doyle, 2.
\textsuperscript{113} Gitlin, 223.
\textsuperscript{114} Gitlin, 223.
\textsuperscript{115} Gitlin, 229.
The Diggers rejected the politics of mass political demonstration in favor of establishing free stores, free medical clinics, free housing, free food production and distribution, and free public transportation networks, all of which were part of their larger plan to establish “…a network of small-scale, decentralized, mutual aid communities,” known as ‘free cities.’ The Diggers’ experiments were explicitly anarchist in theory and practice. Through enacting and creating alternative institutions, the Digger collective “…wanted to see what would happen if each individual pursued maximum personal autonomy within an anarcho-syndicalist framework.” In their initial formation, the Diggers of San Francisco lasted for 21 months (beginning in the fall of 1966), and their political philosophy “…was considerably more anarchistic than socialistic,” as they resisted “…notions of authority, hierarchy, and often any kind of formal organization…” much more than the New Left actors.

While the Digger collective was immediately a part of the emergent counterculture in San Francisco, it was also part of an American communitarian tradition, of which intentional anarchist communities are also a part. Historian Laurence Veysey contends that unlike political radicalism, ‘cultural radicalism’ is linked to a “communitarian impulse…” that has inspired individuals to “…break off from the ordinary flow of life around them and collectively share in a new existence arranged

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116 Doyle, 1, 3.
117 Doyle, 3.
118 Doyle, 29.
119 Political Radicalism engages directly in the immediate struggle for power, relegating all other considerations to a distinctly secondary role, or, at its most extreme, insisting they be abandoned entirely” (Doyle 19).
according to a deliberate (‘intentional’) pattern.”¹²⁰ Intentional Anarchist communities, such as Utopia, OH,¹²¹ and the Modern Times Colony,¹²² in New York, as well as the Modern School in New Jersey, required adherents to radically alter their lives, thinking, and relationships in order to embody the personal freedom and the liberatory society they desired. The communitarian impulse is particularly visible in the cultural radicalism of the sixties, as a new wave of young ‘hippies’ embraced ‘returning to the land,’ and constructed prefigurative communities and alternative social and economic structures in rural areas. Some of these communes set up radically egalitarian methods of governance and labor, while others simply recreated the inequalities of society at large.¹²³

In New York City, another group of cultural radicals congregated to form a group called Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker. Inspired by European anarchism and the Marxism of the Frankfurt School, The Motherfuckers introduced a new organizational approach, the affinity group, a so-called “street gang with an analysis.”¹²⁴ Affinity groups were supposedly ‘all purpose,’ simultaneously “fighting units in the midst of riots…intimations of the new society after the revolution.”¹²⁵ Like the Diggers, the Motherfucker’s direct action was theatrical in nature, owing to a membership that included actors, artists and Situationists; due to the influence of Situationism, their “actions were less survivalist than the Diggers’, more aggressive,
more hostile to high art and intellect.”126 The Motherfucker’s organizational model, the affinity group, has had a lasting impact on anarchist and anarch@-feminist organizing; to this day, affinity groups are utilized by anarchists and anarch@-feminists in mass demonstrations, mobilizations, occupations or blockades.

What connected many of the diverse individuals, organizations, and movements that drew upon anarchist practices was the belief that emphasizing the ‘personal as the political,’ connecting individual freedom with communal emancipation, and building alternatives—social, political and economic—to hierarchical power structures was a path to a liberated future. These themes are also reflected in the Women’s Liberation movement, specifically in radical feminist theory and organizing, which synthesized and extended anarchist theory and practice in the late 1960s. The emergence of socialist, radical and anarchist feminist critiques indicate that both political and cultural radicals failed to adequately address the liberation of women and the pervasive sexism within sixties radical movements. The cultural and political radicalism of the sixties did, however, provide “…much of the intellectual foundation and cultural orientation for the women’s liberation movement.”127

Historian of radical feminism and sixties social movements, Alice Echols, contends that Women’s Liberation movement was in fact a integral part of the radicalism of the sixties, as there are “considerable philosophical connections to the New Left…”128 Addressing the marginalization of Women’s Liberation in the history of sixties radicalism, Echol’s cites Gitlin’s history of The Sixties, where he associates

126 Gitlin, 239.
127 Echols, Shaky Ground, 77.
128 Echols, Shaky Ground, 62.
the burgeoning feminist consciousness with the ‘unraveling’ and fragmentation of the male-dominated New Left.\textsuperscript{129} Echols does argue, however, that the proliferation of Women’s Liberation was related to the collapse of the New Left, particularly as a response to the failure of the New Left to take seriously the prefigurative politics and organization put forth in the counter-culture:

The New Left’s repudiation of prefigurative politics, which had emphasized creating the present the desired community of the future, and its reversion to a tired old left politic not only guaranteed its irrelevance to most people in the United States but also contributed to the development of feminist consciousness.\textsuperscript{130}

Echols further suggests that both New Leftist and Women’s Liberationist histories have constructed the relationship between these movements as inevitably antagonistic; while initially radical feminists foresaw positive exchange and interplay between the two movements, the New Left’s failure to take seriously the potential of prefigurative politics lead to reactive relations with emergent radical feminism.

The women’s liberation movement that grew out of the late sixties drew upon, and extended, the prefigurative politics of the counter-culture, demonstrating a commitment to developing counter-institutions, such as abortion clinic referral services, women’s health clinics, rape crisis centers, feminist bookstores, schools, and restaurants. Indeed, by the early seventies it became clear that women’s liberation had succeeded where their predecessors had failed—the ‘women’s communities’ that developed around the country were politicized countercultural communities, displaying, again, the influence of both cultural and political radicalism of the sixties.

\textsuperscript{129} Echols, \textit{Shaky Ground}, 64.
\textsuperscript{130} Echols, \textit{Shaky Ground}, 65.
The thought and practices of women’s liberation, especially in its more radical forms, were essential to the development of an explicitly anarch@-feminist articulation. For it was almost exclusively women who forged connections between revolutionary feminisms and anarchist theory, and it was women who demanded that anarchist theory and practice express a true commitment to the liberation of women. In 1975, Peggy Kornegger reflected upon so-called ‘anarcho-sexism,’ contending, “Anarchist men have been little better than males everywhere in their subjection of women. Thus the absolute necessity of a feminist anarchist revolution. Otherwise the very principles on which anarchism is based become utter hypocrisy.”

Preceding the development of a specifically anarch@-feminist critique and theory was the (re)emergence of radical and socialist feminisms within the milieu of women’s liberation politics.

The ‘Woman’ Question Revisited: Socialist Feminism, Radical Feminism and Cultural Feminism

Beginning in 1967, women in the New Left began to organize and theorize separately, extending the mantra ‘the personal is political’ to demand that women, not men, organize and define the terms of women’s liberation. In the same year, a group of women in Chicago issued a manifesto entitled, “To the Women of the Left,” that warned, “Only we can and must define the terms of our struggle…it is incumbent on us, as women, to organize a movement for women’s liberation.” Yet emergent radical feminism was not completely isolated from other political and social justice

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movements and organizations. According to Alice Echols’ history of radical feminism, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*,

Although the founders of the women’s liberation movement were committed to organizing women apart from men...many radical women wanted the new movement to remain closely tied to the New Left, both organizationally and ideologically. In fact, the new left continued to have an enormous influence on women’s liberationists, even those who favored an autonomous women’s movement.  

The question of how the new women’s movement should relate to the larger movement for social justice eventually spawned a divisive debate that produced a schism between radical and socialist feminists in 1969.  

Whereas many socialist feminists remained allied with New Left and other socialist groups, radical feminists maintained a “reactive stance toward the New Left,” following the movement’s disavowal of prefigurative politics.

For socialist feminists, or ‘politicos,’ class was key to any analysis of women’s oppression; as such, capitalism was at the root of women’s oppression and its abolition was integral to female emancipation. As such, women’s liberation was seen as being the inevitable outcome of a larger socialist revolution and social transformation, for which men and women should struggle together. Though attacked for their closeness to the male-dominated Left, the politicos’ connections, networks, organizational knowledge and experience “…was a major factor in the rapid proliferation of women’s liberation groups across the country.”  

As well, the politico’s insistence on class analysis and anti-capitalist struggle sustained these

133 Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 50.
134 Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 51.
135 Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 10.
136 Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 52.
critiques within the women’s liberation movement, which, though deemed expendable by the politicos’ radical feminist contemporaries, were picked up and extended by anarch@-feminists in the early seventies.

Though never a dominant force within the women’s liberation movement, socialist feminists were active until the mid seventies, especially in Chicago and other areas with histories of working class mobilization and labor organizing. 137 Between 1975 and 1977, arguably the most productive and prolific years for anarch@-feminists in the U.S., Marxist-Leninist and Maoist groups destroyed the socialist feminist networks, organizations and unions. 138 In 1977, anarch@-feminist Carol Ehrlich provided a sympathetic view of socialist-feminism from an anarchist perspective; although constrained by economic determinism, socialist feminism provides a revolutionary framework for women “…who don’t want to be witches, primitive warriors, senators, or small capitalist, but who do want to end sexism while creating a transformed society.” 139

While anarch@-feminists and radical feminists alike took issue with the approaches and theory of the politicos, it cannot be wholly coincidental that the first anarch@-feminist manifestos, organizations, and publications emerged in Chicago in the early to mid seventies. The demise of socialist feminist networks between 1975 and 1977 also mirrored the proliferated expansion of anarch@-feminist thought, organization, conferences and networks. Though ideologically distinct from anarch@-feminism, socialist feminism had a notable impact on the formulation of anarch@-feminist theory. In her seminal 1975 article “Anarchism: The Feminist

137 Echols, Daring to be Bad, 136.
138 Echols, Daring to be Bad, 137.
139 Carol Ehrlich, “Socialism, Anarchism, Feminism,” in Reinventing Anarchy, 261.
“Anarchism: the Feminist Connection,” Peggy Kornegger reflected upon the divisions within the women’s liberation movement:

It seems crucial that we share our visions with one another in order to break down some of the barriers that misunderstanding and splinterism raise between us. Although I call myself an anarcha-feminist, this definition can easily include socialism, communism, cultural feminism, lesbian separatism, or any of a dozen other political labels.\(^{140}\)

Anarchist critiques of the authoritarian aspects of socialism were inevitably divisive, but these criticisms were pointed more towards organizational incompatibilities, rather than absolute ideological disagreements. Indeed, anarch@-feminists were often much more sympathetic to socialist feminists than their male counterparts. In 1974, Marian Leighton, one of the founders of Black Rose Anarcho-Feminists,\(^{141}\) wrote that socialist feminist literature was “…not narrowly dogmatic or opportunistic in the tradition of Marxist/Leninist/Trotskyist sect groups…but… exploratory and utilize[s] Marxist analysis in a way that is creatively consistent with the best and intellectually most rigorous of the Marxist approaches.”\(^{142}\) Moreover, Leighton goes onto explore the closeness of the ‘libertarian Marxist’ and anarcho-communist traditions in regards to organization and practice,\(^{143}\) but agrees that anarchism generally diverges from socialism in that it rejects ‘fanatical economic fatalism.’\(^{144}\)

Anarchists and radical feminists often possessed similar criticisms of the socialist Left. Quoting Bookchin’s article “On Spontaneity and Organization,” Leighton highlights the socialist tendency to emphasize class-consciousness over self-
consciousness, which Bookchin contends, “…denies the emergence of the self as ‘individualist.’”

Similarly, Carol Ehrlich criticizes socialist feminism for failing to accept non-hierarchical structure as “essential to feminist practice.”

Radical feminism follows social anarchist theory in demanding non-hierarchical organization and consensus processes, while also emphasizing personalized politics and the individual’s revolutionary potential more than in politico circles.

Radical feminism was strongly represented in the women’s liberation movement from its origins in 1967, and remained the dominant current within women’s liberation until the mid seventies, when it was eclipsed by cultural feminism. Echols summarizes the differences between radical and cultural feminism, as follows:

While cultural feminism did evolve from radical feminism, it nonetheless deviated from it in some crucial respects. Most fundamentally, radical feminism was a political movement dedicated to eliminating the sex-class system, whereas cultural feminism was a countercultural movement aimed at reversing the cultural valuation of the male and the devaluation of the female.

After 1975, radical feminism no longer carried the same influence within the women’s movement, resulting in liberal feminism becoming ‘the voice’ of the movement.

Despite the fact that many of the newer members of the ‘women’s movement’ considered radical feminism to be an “ideology of self-improvement, [and] not radical social transformation,” anarch@-feminists continued to draw

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145 Leighton, “Anarcho-Feminism and Louise Michel,” 255.
146 Ehrlich, “Socialism, Anarchism, Feminism,” 263.
147 Echols, Daring to be Bad, 6.
148 Echols, Daring to be Bad, 243.
149 Echols, Daring to be Bad, 284.
upon and cite radical feminist critiques and examples in emergent theory. To this point, the explosion of anarch@-feminist writings after the contentious emergence of cultural feminism in the mid seventies can be seen as an attempt to maintain and highlight the radical transformative aspects of radical feminism, while at the same time addressing the theoretical deficiencies stemming from radical feminism’s rejection of the New Left.

Given the diversity and complexity of the radical milieu in which anarch@-feminism emerged, it is possible to understand why its innovative thought, practice and organization have been obscured by the dichotomous constructions of sixties radicalism and women’s liberation. Anarch@-feminism’s position at the margins of these traditions intervenes in established dichotomies, negating and questioning many of these historical oppositions—between political and cultural radicalism, the New Left and women’s liberation, radical and socialist feminism—and thus provides a way to make sense of the complicated radical milieu without reverting to the dichotomization of historical social movements.
Chapter 1
Emerging Anarch@-Feminist Thought, 1970-1974

In the January 1977 issue of *Soil of Liberty*, Victor Urbanowicz of Ames, Iowa wrote to his ‘chums’ contesting the usage of ‘anarcha-feminist’ in anarchist publications and organizations. Urbanowicz’s main problem with the term was his perception of ‘anarcha-‘ as “…an attempt to perform a sex change operation on the compound form anarcho-.. But the o in that word is not a gender ending [and] in Greek it is simply a sound used in the first half of a compound form…”\textsuperscript{150}

When historicizing anarch@-feminism even the most basic of terms and language of definition are contentious, flexible and composite, highlighting the complex influences and dynamic evolution of its theoretical foundations. Understanding the appropriation of, invention of, and debate over language in anarch@-feminist discourses is central to a coherent vision of its theoretical development.

The following chapter explores the emergence of anarch@-feminist theory in relation to the American radical milieu, and the diversity of influences—left, right, and otherwise—that engendered its initial appearance and articulations. Anarch@-feminism’s unique position in relation to this diverse milieu illuminates previously unexplored intersections and interplay of ostensibly divergent radical traditions. The available written archive of anarch@-feminist publications and newsletters provides the plateau on which developing discourses and critiques can be identified and explored.

‘Who We Are’: Siren and (Re)Emergent ‘Anarcho-Feminism’

The most cohesive of archive of early anarch@-feminist discourses is contained in *Siren: A Journal of Anarcho-Feminism* and *Siren Newsletter*, first published in Chicago in April 1971. The initial issues of *Siren* also contain some of the first articulations and discussions of explicit ‘anarcho-feminism’ after the emergence of sixties radicalism and women’s liberation movement. These formative writings included several ‘anarcho-feminist’ manifestos, including “Who We Are: The Anarcho-Feminist Manifesto,” published in *Siren’s* first issue. The collective statement designates ‘anarcho-feminism’ as the “ultimate and necessary radical stance at this time in world history.” Unlike later theoretical works, which tended to highlight the similarities between radical feminism and anarchism, “Who We Are” focuses on differentiating ‘anarcho-feminism’ from socialist feminism. The manifesto emphasizes the need to confront the “pathological state structure,” not by ‘overthrow,’ but by ‘outgrowing’ the need for state structure and management, reflecting the prefigurative drive of early radical feminist organizing. While critical of the role and power of the state in socialist feminism, the manifesto goes to great lengths to identify with politico feminists, pointing to the strong socialist feminist presence in *Siren’s* home base of Chicago. “Who We Are” continues,

We are all Socialists. We refuse to give up this pre-Marxist term which has been used as a synonym by many Anarchist thinkers…we love our Marxist sisters and all our sisters everywhere, and have no interest in disassociating ourselves from their constructive struggles. However we reserve the right to

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criticize their politics when we feel that they are obsolete or irrelevant or inimical to the welfare of womankind.\textsuperscript{152}

The manifesto’s identification with socialist feminists also reflected the practical and organizational needs of the early ‘anarcho-feminists’ who comprised the collective that published \textit{Siren}. In 1971, ‘anarcho-feminists’ were small in number and working with politicos gave them access to their established networks, resources or organizational capabilities. In pursuit of this collaborative relationship, however, the writers of the manifesto relegate anarchist theory to simply a critique of the state, ignoring the proactive aspects of anarchist organization and practice in favor of its reactive negation of hierarchies and state power.

Anarchism…is the affirmation of human freedom and dignity expressed in a negative, cautionary term signifying that no person should rule or dominate another person by force or threat of force. Anarchism indicates what people should not do to one another. Socialism, on the other hand, means all the groovy things people can do and build together, once they are able to combine efforts and resources on the basis of common interest, rationality, and creativity.\textsuperscript{153}

In this final section in becomes clear that the collective behind \textit{Siren} wished to maintain or pursue working relationships with politicos, and in fact, considered socialist feminist organizing to be the most appropriate method for channeling ‘anarcho-feminist’ energies into practice and action.

Concomitantly, the first issue of \textit{Siren} contains articles critiquing ‘conventional marriage’ for its reliance on the private ownership of women, arguing that the nuclear family turned women into ‘kitchen slaves’ and men into ‘wave

\textsuperscript{152} “Who We Are: The Anarcho-Feminist Manifesto.”
\textsuperscript{153} “Who We Are: The Anarcho-Feminist Manifesto.”
slaves;’ the ‘revolutionary’ family, on the other hand, could be made up of "people not biologically or legally related one another, [for instance] mixed collectives, women’s collectives, affinity groups and tribes." The issue also contained essays defending the necessity of radical women to organize separately from men, personal reflections, fiction, poetry and art, as well as a piece praising ancient matriarchies and the ‘Great Goddess’ for surviving the onslaught of war-like male deities. At this early stage of articulation, anarch@-feminism shows the influences of socialist, radical and nascent cultural feminisms.

The first issue of Siren was published as a journal by a group of women, not all explicitly anarchist identified, including noted Chicago-based ‘anarcho-feminist’ Arlene Meyers. An outgrowth of an ‘anarcho-feminist’ study group started in 1969, the journal emerged from the original group’s desire to spread anarcho-feminism to other women; the collective’s politics ranged “from cultural to political…liberal New Leftists, Yippies, Hippies and dropout runaways.” Beginning in February 1972, Siren reestablished itself in a newsletter format, “written by and for activists [letting] people hash out politics, exchange ideas and establish a communications network.”

Taking the idea of a newsletter format from SRAF (Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation), a Chicago-based anarchist group, the new Siren newsletter format precipitated a trend within anarch@-feminist publishing in the 1970s that favored newsletter correspondence over other journalistic formats.

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156 Siren Newsletter, No. 2, and Siren Journal, No. 1.
157 Siren Newsletter, No. 1.
In a letter to *Siren* subscribers, Meyers explained the collective’s decision to switch to a newsletter format, citing “…the work of building a newspaper is primarily a business operation, and our little group was more oriented to the creative aspects of journalism than the business end of it…” While a ‘pyramid-type’ correspondence had been previously discussed at the Libertarian Conference in New York (January 1972), Meyers points to *Siren*’s new format as integral to the development and spread of ‘anarcho-feminist’ theory and practice.

In the anarchist tradition, [the newsletter] allows the subscribers to both communicate and participate in the publication of the newsletter….we can spread the growth of libertarian ideas and gain access to other libertarian groups around the country….[and] many issues can be discussed more fully within the confines of a limited-circulation bulletin. That anarchist and many feminist groups employed non-hierarchical organizational structure and egalitarian processes made the newsletter format particularly appropriate. Anarch@-feminism was never a mass, mobilizable population, especially at this early stage, and as such, the development of activist networks connecting different geographic regions was essential for the evolvement of a cohesive theoretical foundation. The newsletter format implemented by *Siren* allowed women (and some anarchist men) from around the country to participate in the formative and productive discourses delineating ‘anarcho-feminist’ thought, organizing and action. Indeed, almost every explicitly anarch@-feminist publication that followed *Siren* in the 1970s employed a newsletter format.

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159 *Siren Newsletter*, No. 1.
In the first issue of *Siren Newsletter*, in February 1972, Arlene Meyers rhetorically poses, “Has anyone noticed the trend toward anarcho-feminism in the women’s movement?” Recounting the anarchistic tendencies of the women’s liberation movement over the previous four years, Meyers also recounts that her attempts to elucidate connections between women’s liberation and anarchism were usually met with intimidation and censorship within the women’s movement. Consequently, Meyers articulates her preference for working with anarchist groups over women’s groups because “they are anarchistic,” as opposed to the un-named and unacknowledged anarchistic tendencies within early women’s liberation organizing. She concludes, “I am hopeful that anarchist women will bridge the gap between the anarchist stage of development in the women’s movement and the encroachment of authoritarian structures,” signaling a developing anarch@-feminist critique of both radical and socialist feminism’s failure to fully disavow the legitimacy of State power and hierarchical institutions.

The *Siren Newsletter* 2, released in early spring of 1972, includes a response to Meyers’ statements from Evan Paxton in Santa Monica, CA, relating similar experiences witnessing “intuitive and inarticulate” anarchism within the women’s liberation movement in Los Angeles; Paxton, too, faced criticism and censorship from her feminist compatriots when attempting to highlight these tendencies. Facing negative reactions from ‘sisters’ in the movement was common for early articulators of anarch@-feminism. A majority of *Siren Newsletter* 2 is dedicated to reflecting on

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161 Meyers, “What’s Happening in the Women’s Movement.”
162 Meyers, “What’s Happening in the Women’s Movement.”
163 *Siren Newsletter*, No. 2.
how internal critical commentary is handled in social movements, focusing on the women’s liberation movement and anarchist groups. The introduction to the newsletter points out, “…whenever organizational or personal problems arise in radical political groups, we resort to the same tactics the state uses against us; force and intimidation.” This contention reflects a recognized need on the part of early ‘anarcho-feminists’ to create the space where the theoretical connections between women’s liberation and anarchism could be fostered and explored in depth. And it is evident from the content of *Siren Newsletter* that the critiques elaborated and lodged from this space were not immediately accepted or supported by the women’s liberation movement and mixed anarchist groups alike. Meyers’ response to Paxton characterizes the early drive of anarch(f-)feminists to open up critical dialogue between feminist and anarchist theory: “We need an anarchist’s critique of feminism, but also a feminist’s critique of anarchism.”

The following several issues of *Siren Newsletter* in actuality contained little debate and little theoretical work, focusing more on international news reports, local organizing and action news, and networking. Serious theoretical consideration was instigated by Marilyn Ferrandino’s article, “Women and Political Philosophy,” which was published and discussed in *Siren Newsletter 5*, released in the summer of 1972. Ferrandino, a feminist academic and activist, was intimately involved in the creation of the first for-credit women’s studies courses at SUNY Buffalo in 1967, while obtaining a graduate degree in philosophy. At the time of the article’s publication in the early summer of 1972, Ferrandino was teaching feminist studies at New College

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in Sarasota, FL,\textsuperscript{166} and the ‘academic’ tone of her article was immediately noted and distinguished from the newsletter milieu; her serious consideration of the political theory of ‘anarcho-feminism’ was set against personal reflections, reports on local organizing and actions, response letters, event announcements, and anarchist and radical feminist resource listings. To this point, rather than publishing the entire article, Meyers—the ever-present energy fueling \textit{Siren}—condensed, analyzed, and summarized Ferrandino’s essay instead of publishing it in its entirety. Juxtaposing Marxism and anarchism in relation to their approach to the oppression of women, Meyers cites Ferrandino’s use of theory “…as a tool to change the condition of the oppression of women,” which differed from the anarchist and radical feminist emphasis on process.\textsuperscript{167} Meyer’s summarization of Ferrandino’s article, though it engendered vibrant discussion, points to the constraints to form and length resulting from the newsletter format.

Included in the same issue was a response from Ferrandino, stressing the importance of the women’s liberation movement, inclusive of ‘anarcho-feminists,’ engaging seriously with economic theories and practices. Ferrandino’s response goes on to criticize Marxists (as opposed to Marxism), centralized socialism, laissez-faire capitalism, and individualist anarchism, spawning debates and responses that invigorated theoretical discussion in the newsletter. Her critique of laissez-faire capitalism, a principle supported by radical libertarians, anarcho-capitalists and many individualist anarchists brought to light the influence of radicalism from the Right, and the assumption of leftist orientation in ‘anarcho-feminism.’ Ferrandino evoked a


\textsuperscript{167} “Women and Political Philosophy,” \textit{Siren Newsletter}, No. 5.
strong response from a leader of the radical libertarian movement within the ‘New Right.’ In *Siren Newsletter* 6, published in the late summer of 1972, libertarian and individualist anarchist feminist writer, activist, and scholar, Sharon Presley, who would go on to help found the Association of Libertarian Feminists in 1975, responded to Ferrandino’s criticism of individualist anarchism and laissez-faire economics.

The evils attributed to laissez-faire are the results of government-given privileges and interventions…Laissez-faire means no special privileges to anyone because it means non-interference in the affairs of others…you don’t coerce us, we don’t coerce you. In a non-coercive, anarchist society, each individual must have the right to choose his or her own way of living.\(^{168}\)

Until Presley’s response, there had been no discussion of the differences between communitarian, syndicalist, social and individualist anarchism, which stem from radically different traditions. Individualist anarchism is more associated with the conservatism of the New Right than the liberatory project of the New Left; additionally, unlike the transplantation of other anarchisms originating Europe, individualist anarchism is an indigenous ‘American’ tradition. Individualist anarchism emerged and found its greatest support in late 19th century America, where its most prominent thinker, Benjamin Tucker, drew its origins back to the laissez-faire emphasis of the “transcendentalists, rationalistic theists, and…utopians,” exemplified by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman.\(^{169}\) Thus, the earliest articulations of anarch@-feminism show the influences of political radicalism from both the Right and the Left of the political spectrum.

\(^{168}\) “Readers’ Reprisals,” *Siren Newsletter*, No. 6.

At the time of her letter’s publication, Presley was an important figure in libertarian activism, having founded New York’s Laissez Faire Books (LFB) in 1972, which eventually became the world’s largest libertarian bookstore.\textsuperscript{170} Presley’s letter, and the exposition it engendered, marked the deepening of anarch@-feminist analysis with the addition of more varied anarchist critiques. \textit{Siren Newsletter}’s self-positioning as a milieu where internal debates and dialogue were encouraged, especially after publishing the correspondence between Meyers, Ferrandino, and Presley, fostered an proliferation of theoretical writings after the publication of \textit{Siren Newsletter} 5. As well, with the publication of Presley’s letter in \textit{Siren Newsletter} 6, the title of the publication was modified, from “Siren: A Newsletter of Anarcho-Feminism,” to “Siren: A Libertarian Newsletter of Anarcho-Feminism,”\textsuperscript{171} reflecting the malleability of the newsletter based on women’s input and dialogue.

By mid-1972, \textit{Siren Newsletter} began addressing liberal, or ‘equality,’ feminism, while still maintaining critical amity towards Marxist and socialist feminist theory. One anonymous article in \textit{Siren Newsletter} 6 disparaged liberal and ‘Stalinist’ feminists alike for their willingness to participate in authoritarian and hierarchical structures, emphasizing both individual and collective struggle for liberation.\textsuperscript{172} The association of ‘Stalinist’ feminism with Marxist politico feminism signals the end of an overly sympathetic view of socialist feminism in \textit{Siren}; the expansion of the newsletter and network enabled ‘anarcho-feminists’ to concentrate on organizing themselves separate from other feminists. The article continued, “We don’t need to

\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Siren Newsletter}, No. 6. Italics Mine.
\textsuperscript{172} “Female Chauvanism,” \textit{Siren Newsletter}, No. 6.
imitate men in order to free ourselves from men,” echoing radical feminist critiques
of politico’s closeness to the ‘male Left.’

Emergent cultural feminism is also evident in Arlen Wilson’s article, “Mother Right: Women’s Ancient History,” which argues that “…women in late pre-history and the earliest period of civilizations were in an indisputably higher position than they were later on…in the religious, political and economic life of the community.” Citing the mass worship of female goddesses, the Amazonian myths, Wicca, and the ‘powerful figure’ of the Matriarch, Wilson outlines the co-development of patriarchy and ‘civilization’—in this case referring to “the militarized State, private wealth and class divisions”—as the cause of the destruction and erasure of “women’s earlier, freer and more important position.” While not nearly as emphatic as Jane Alpert’s 1974 seminal cultural feminist text of the same name, Wilson utilizes the ‘hidden’ history of powerful ancient matriarchical cultures to promote women’s liberation through reviving lost ‘women’s culture.’ Wilson’s argument, however, relies on postulates antithetical to anarchist political philosophy, specifically the implication that ancient women’s ‘freedom’ (prior to patriarchy and civilization) was necessarily tied to “the very real power of women.” Equating freedom with power, especially the power of a specific group, contradicts the omnipresent aversion to authority, power, domination, and hierarchy contained in anarchist thought. While there was no direct response to Wilson’s article in following

173 “Female Chauvanism.”
174 Arlen Wilson was also the writer of the Anarcho-Feminist Manifesto “Who We Are.” Siren Newsletter No. 6.
175 Arlen Wilson, “Mother Right: Women’s Ancient History,” Siren Newsletter, No. 6.
176 Wilson, “Mother Right.”
177 Wilson, “Mother Right.” Italics mine.
newsletters, the acceptance of her argument can be gauged by simply looking at the cover pages for *Siren Newsletter* 7 and 8, which evoke the cultural feminist tropes of a witch and a goddess respectively.

Wilson’s focus on women’s power highlights *Siren Newsletter*’s formative position in the continual development of anarch@-feminist theory. In mid-1972, anarch@-feminists were still in the early stages of navigating anarchist, socialist, and feminist topos; thus, the pages of *Siren Newsletter* reflect the varied explorations of seemingly incompatible theoretical traditions. By the time cultural feminism emerged as a dominant force within the women’s liberation movement in the mid seventies, anarch@-feminists had developed a strong theoretical foundation from where criticisms could be lodged, and incompatibilities realized.

Subsequent development of anarch@-feminist theory in *Siren Newsletter* included collective statements from anarch@-feminist groups around the country, conference reports, a ‘Dear Anarcho-Dyke’ advice column, and critical responses to articles. The final three newsletters, no. 8, 9, and 10, released during the first half of 1973, contain a wealth of analysis and interpretation, addressing topics including state power and authoritarianism, revolutionary political organization, prison abolition, sexuality, gender identity and expression, and family structures.

*Dialogue and Debate: “Blood of the Flower” and “Dear Anarcho-Dyke”*

The later issues of *Siren* reflected, and in many cases even reprinted, theoretical output from other early anarch@-feminist collectives. A serious consideration of how anarch@-feminists understood these topics is necessary prior to
approaching their practice and organization. However, before seriously addressing key theoretical innovations and debate, this discussion would be remiss without mentioning diversity of groups, locations and individuals contributing to initial anarch@-feminist output in the early 1970s. Arlene Meyers, of course, was the individual most identified and tied to Siren, but the expansion and prolific output of the publication is due to the enthusiasm in which women from around the country embraced the supposed ‘intuitive’ connections between anarchism and feminism in the early 1970s. The newsletter connected disparate individuals, small groups and collectives from small towns to cities, in the Western, Midwestern and Eastern regions of the U.S.

Over the course of Siren’s publication, individuals from Los Angeles, Seattle, Tucson (AZ), Eugene (OR), Midlothian (IL), Champaign (IL), Yellow Springs (OH), Iowa City (IA), Detroit (MI), Ann Arbor (MI), Scranton (PA), Philippi (WV), New York City, Cambridge (MA), Baltimore (MD), Sarasota (FL), Tampa (FL), Deep Gap (NC), Knoxville (TN), and Vancouver (B.C., Canada) wrote letters or contributed news reports, articles, fiction, poetry or art. In addition to these individuals and the Siren collective, there were three collectives of anarch@-feminists organized by the summer of 1973—Tucson Anarcho-Feminists, Black Rose Anarcho-Feminists (Cambridge, MA) and Venice Anarchist Women’s Group (Los Angeles, CA)—and two new anarch@-feminist publications in the Midwest. Frequent contributor to Siren, Chicago ‘anarcho-feminist’ Fredrika Baer, proposed a new ‘anarcho-feminist’ literary publication, Whirlwind, which published two issues in 1973.178 An anarchist

publication in Ann Arbor, MI, called Smoke, also shifted focus to ‘anarcho-feminism’, joining Siren Newsletter, Black Rose Bulletin and Whirlwind in the early anarch@-feminist written discourse.

The Black Rose Bulletin, while not as widely circulated as Siren, is another early ‘anarcho-feminist’ publication published by the prolific Black Rose Anarcho-Feminist collective. In 1971, approximately around the time the first Siren journal was published, Black Rose Anarcho-Feminists was founded in Cambridge, MA.¹⁷⁹ Two of the founding members of the group—Marian Leighton and Cathy Levine—would go onto produce two of the most oft-cited texts in the anarch@-feminist written discourse: 1974’s “Anarcho-Feminism and Louise Michel” and “The Tyranny of Tyranny,” respectively. In Black Rose Bulletin 1, which also contained Levine’s essay, both women collaborated on “Blood of the Flower: A Statement on Anarcho-Feminism,” albeit writing under the pseudonyms ‘Red Rosia’ and ‘Black Maria.’¹⁸⁰ This statement, alongside Siren’s “Who We Are: The Anarcho-Feminist Manifesto,” has been reprinted numerous times in anarchist and anarch@-feminist anthologies and publications as illustrative of early ‘anarcho-feminist’ theory. “Blood of the Flower”s” publication in Siren Newsletter 8 gave the statement a platform for exposure while also engendering extensive debate; the statement’s prominent position in the discourse, then, may be tied to its inclusion in the newsletter, and further highlighting Siren Newsletter as an early home-base for anarch@-feminist statements, manifestos and intellectual debate.

¹⁷⁹ Reinventing Anarchy, 251.
There were, of course, important contributions made in other feminist and anarchist publications that never made it to the pages of *Siren Newsletter* before it ceased publication in the summer of 1973. By the end of 1974, anarch@-feminist texts had appeared in feminist publications, such as *The Second Wave* and *Aurora*, and anarchist publications *Black Rose*, *Soil of Liberty* and *Black Circles*. The end of *Siren Newsletter* coincided both with a rise in anarch@-feminist output in other publications, and with the ebb of radical. Connecting the theory debated in the final issues of *Siren Newsletter* to the theory emerging after the publication’s conclusion provides a dynamic tether of historical linkages, continuity and innovation in the development of anarch@-feminist thought. And considering the dramatic shifts in feminist theory and practice during the mid seventies, *Siren Newsletter*’s content provides a frame for approaching the period of 1974-1975, during which several ‘major’—i.e. the most influential, cohesive, well-argued and well-known—anarch@-feminist theoretical works were published.

With the publication of newsletters 8 (c. early 1973), 9 (c. spring 1973) and 10 (mid-summer 1973), *Siren Newsletter* entered a phase of production and debate that moved beyond appropriating and exploring anarchist and feminist critiques, and delimited an explicitly anarch@-feminist critique and approach. The publication of “Blood of the Flower” in *Siren Newsletter* 8 helped establish the parameters of discussion by articulating anarchist political theory in relation to feminism (and the women’s liberation movement) with more clarity than any statements that preceded it.

“Blood of the Flower” deepened the analysis of the connections between feminist practice and anarchist theory by positioning anarchism as “the logically
consistent political expression of feminism.” Immediately, the authors’ centralize anarchist political organization as necessary to the realization of women’s liberation, and the only way that “personal dreams of liberation” can be totally translated into reality. The statement is particularly critical of political ‘movements,’ mentioning liberal and politico feminism, Marxism, and New Left by name, pointing to the emphasis on ‘building’ organizational structures evidenced in these movement’s hierarchical structural expressions. Within a section entitled, “Why Anarchism?” the authors contend, “the nature of groups concerned with ‘building’ movements is, 1. To water down the ‘more extreme’ dreams into ‘realistic’ demands, and, 2. To eventually become an organ of tyranny itself.” The statement identifies organizational models based on small, local, non-hierarchical and voluntary groups—previously observed organically emerging in the women’s liberation movement in the form of consciousness-raising (c-r) groups—as the only political and social expression that enables women to free themselves of their oppression.

“Blood of the Flower” impresses the future of women’s liberation upon the structural alternatives presented in anarchist political thought, differing from previous texts that had worked to highlight the ways in which feminists already practiced anarchism, albeit ‘intuitive’ anarchism. To this end, the statement demands that women name and accept this anarchism, and embrace anarchist organizational expression over authoritarian and bureaucratic ‘movement’ politics. The insistent rhetoric of “Blood of the Flower” must be understood within the context of the

181 Leighton and Levine, “Blood of the Flower.”
182 Leighton and Levine, “Blood of the Flower.”
183 Leighton and Levine, “Blood of the Flower.”
splintering women’s liberation movement. In this light, the statement may be read as a reaction to the disillusionment rocking the ‘movement,’ and a call to maintain a liberatory focus by channeling radical feminist commitment to revolutionary change into more conducive forms of organization offered by anarchist organizational structure.

In explicating anarchist structural expression, “Blood of the Flower” points to the inability of any political ‘movement’ to prevent the domination of specific groups and individuals, the unequal distribution of power amongst participants, and the emergence of authoritarianism within hierarchically organized structures. To Leighton and Levine anarchism is, then, a critique of the power, domination and authority of the state, a critique of how other political traditions organize to ‘fight’ (with) state structures, and a viable set of structural alternatives to organize politically and socially without hierarchical, authoritarian and bureaucratic governing structures. Their enunciation of anarchist methods for enacting and building alternative social and political structures stands in stark contrast to “Who We Are,” which identified with the practices and process of socialist feminism and negated anarchism’s potential as a productive revolutionary framework.

At the same time, the statement emphasizes the importance of the individual revolutionary in anarchism, and as a corollary, the necessity of personalized politics in feminism. “We must no longer think of ourselves as members of a movement, but INDIVIDUAL revolutionaries, cooperating….each member [of a leaderless affinity group] participates on an equal level of power, thus negating the hierarchial(sic)

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184 Leighton and Levine, “Blood of the Flower.”
function of power." Here the correspondence between anarchism and women’s liberation is pointed towards the articulations of the ‘personal is political’ in the New Left and ‘second wave’ feminism; this relation is used to highlight the simultaneous emphasis on the personal transformation of consciousness, and the formation of non-hierarchical community and organization to support and mobilize these individuals, present in both anarchism and feminist principles. Just as anarch@-feminist history demands the synchronous negotiation of global and local perspectives, Leighton and Levine stress a concomitant focus on the individual and communal.

The strong and decisive stance of the “Blood of the Flower,” which through its argument centralizes anarchist over feminist analysis, was not without detractors. In opposition to their stance, individualist anarch@-feminism would conversely demand a singular focus on the individual. Additionally, radical feminist critiques of the statement followed its publication in early 1973. In a reply to the statement included in Siren Newsletter 9, Mairead Conner takes issue with the statement’s anarchist bent, and in the process reveals her own favoring of radical feminist analysis.

I must say that FEMINISM is the logically consistent political expression of feminism. And it just so happens that being a feminist means being against ALL authority, states, and hierarchies. These are alien to us. We had nothing to do with their inception. Conner is critical of anarchism as a traditionally male-led and male-dominated political ideology, and attempts to reaffirm women’s revolutionary power outside of a strictly anarchist framework. Conner insists that though ‘feminist revolution’ may

185 Leighton and Levine, “Blood of the Flower.”
186 “More Views on Anarcho-Feminism,” Siren Newsletter, No. 9.
take the form of anarchist structural expression, this expression is does not indicate that feminists are (proto-)anarchists, but rather, that feminists are carrying out revolutionary change “in a women’s way.”

Conner goes on to delimit a purely feminist rhetorical space in her critique, agreeing with anarchist organizational tactics while naming them feminist. “…I feel that women must group together in small cells and work collectively. Not because this is an anarchist way of organization, but because it is the best way of accomplishing a feminist revolution.” By the end of Conner’s response, it becomes clear that the author is speaking from a radical feminist perspective infused with a cursory understanding of anarchist theory and practice. While claiming an ‘anarcho-feminist’ position, Conner concludes her article, “All power to no one!!! And at the same time ALL power to women!!!,” displaying thought prevalent in radical feminist analysis, which diverges from anarchism in its acceptance, and even promotion, of power and hierarchies employed by women.

Appearing in alongside “Blood of the Flower” in Siren Newsletter 8 was the column “Dear Anarcho-Dyke,” which explored territories not touched upon by Leighton and Levine’s statement. Addressing heterosexism, lesbian separatism, and bisexuality in its first installment, the column garnered immediate responses from Siren readers. Responding to a reader’s query, “Why is the world so heterosexual?,” the author of the column advises that the world is “…really queer as a three dollar bill. Everyone just pretends it’s heterosexual so the nuclear family won’t fall

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187 “More Views on Anarcho-Feminism.”
188 “More Views on Anarcho-Feminism.”
189 “More Views on Anarcho-Feminism.”
apart.” While simplistic, the column’s responses mark the first time in *Siren* that queer sexuality is centralized in discussion, and despite the lack of language available to the author—ze never uses the word ‘heterosexism’—the column brings family structures, sexuality and radical queer identities to the forefront. Compared to the analysis of family structures in *Siren*’s first issue, which critiques the nuclear family without addressing sexuality, “Dear Anarcho-Dyke” claimed a space in early ‘anarcho-feminism’ for empowering radical gay, lesbian and queer identities. Concomitant to ‘Anarcho-Dyke’’s’ queer positive articulations, the column accuses bisexuals of being exploitative liars who cannot fully commit to lesbianism as a political, social and emotional lifestyle.

The key points of departure within the column include the author’s narrow and strict interpretation of sexual identity, as well as hir assertion that the world is *naturally* queer, not heterosexual. In “Rebuttal to Anarcho Dyke—Will Heterosexuality Survive?” Arlen Wilson contests both points by arguing that individuals should be free to express sexual and emotional interest in whomever they desire, and “making heterosexuality taboo, or denying its existence, isn’t really going to help matters.” Wilson concludes by citing the anarchist insistence on individual freedom, inclusive of sexual freedom; like the “Blood of the Flower” statement, a close reading of the rhetoric and content of Wilson’s rebuttal shows a clear preference for anarchism, effectively making the piece an anarchist critique of Anarcho-Dyke’s radical feminist slant.

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191 Arlen Wilson, “Rebuttal to Anarcho Dyke—Will Heterosexuality Survive?” *Siren Newsletter* No. 9.
It is evident both in the original ‘Anarcho-Dyke’ column, and in responses to it, that sexuality was a particularly contentious arena to navigate in the early years of anarch-@-feminist theoretical development. Such debates point to historian Richard Cleminson’s argument that historically, anarchist ‘movements’ used the fear of queer sexuality as a ‘disciplinary factor;’ while ‘Anarcho-Dyke’ does not ‘fear’ bisexuality, hir response to it is clearly a product of a disciplinary discourse in ‘anarcho-feminism,’ and women’s liberation as a whole, that is attempting to ensure ‘correct’ sexual behavior and identification. The carving out of a queer ‘anarcho-feminist’ space, despite the initial limited acceptance of queer sexualities, was an important step forward for early ‘anarcho-feminist’ thought.

The incongruence of anarchist and radical feminist understandings of sexuality, as well as the politicization of sexuality in both feminist and anarchist traditions, makes these early discussions vital to comprehending how theoretical inconsistencies were dealt with, and how dynamic the boundaries between these two traditions were in 1972-3. These discussions also precipitated further discussions of sexuality and gender in the final issue of Siren Newsletter.

In Siren Newsletter 10, personal accounts of male to female (MTF) and female to male (FTM) transsexuals are included alongside information from Dr. Harry Benjamin’s book, The Transsexual Phenomenon. In “The Other Side of the Coin,” Eden W, a member of Tucson Anarcho-Feminists, describes her own experiences as a ‘femmiphile,’ ‘heterosexual transvestite,’ and ‘male woman,’ in order to elucidate her own critiques of gender and initiate positive relations with the

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emerging ‘anarcho-feminism.’ Eden states that ‘femmiphiles’ “…do not object to gender ‘roles’ as such, but do object to the authoritarianism that demands that males must be of one gender and females of another. Why can’t we play at either role—or neither if that is what the individual prefers.” Eden thus lodges a rather progressive critique of gender that suggests both the performative aspects of binary gender and the possibility of gender expression lying outside of the binary opposition of masculine and feminine. Eden separates gender expression from sexuality, thus distancing the ‘femmiphile’ position from lesbian separatism. She concludes, “We love you, our sisters, Please look on us as your sisters too.” Following Eden’s article were reprinted reflections of Mike Curie, a FTM transman, and excerpts from Harry Benjamin’s *The Transsexual Phenomenon*.

The discussion of transsexuality in *Siren* contrasted much of the negative reception to transsexuals in the women’s liberation movement. In the early seventies, a few MTF transsexuals joined feminist organizations, much to the dismay of radical feminists and lesbian separatists, who demanded ‘women-only spaces’ and separatist organization. These women “portrayed MTFs as interlopers who brought male privileges with them even when they lived as women,” and consequently, the women’s liberation movement was polarized about transsexuality in the early seventies. At the 1973 West Coast Lesbian Conference in Los Angeles, radical feminist Robin Morgan’s denouncement of MTF feminist activist Beth Elliot as an

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193 Eden W, “The Other Side of the Coin.”
194 Eden W, “The Other Side of the Coin.”
195 Eden W, “The Other Side of the Coin.”
‘infiltrator’ and ‘destroyer’ further underscored the negative view and rejection of transsexuals in the women’s liberation movement.197

*Siren*’s inclusion of positive portrayals of transsexuality sets ‘anarcho-feminism’ apart from a majority of women’s liberationists in the early seventies. The involvement and support of anarchist men is also well documented throughout *Siren*’s publication, though the collective maintained a general ‘for women, by women’ publishing ethic. The separatist currents in women’s liberation were thus not as visible in *Siren* as in radical feminist publications; indeed, strict separatism does not appear to be particularly strong anywhere in the early anarchist discourse. However, in addition to addressing sexuality and gender, all of the last three newsletters included extensive articles accusing, defending and contesting the sexism of the anarchist movement and of individual revolutionary men.

*Further Theoretical Developments*

By the summer of 1973, the pages of *Siren* had dealt with the gamut of the personal and political, addressing and debating ideal forms of social and political organization, sexual and emotional relationships, and individual and collective revolutionary consciousness. However, the newsletter format was inevitably limiting due to length, style and publication time. Due to lack of resources, time and energy, the last *Siren Newsletter* was published in the summer of 1973. Between 1974 and 1975 several major anarchist feminist theoretical texts were included in anarchist and feminist publications. These texts synthesized and extended much of the discussion

197 Meyerowitz, 260.
that had taken place on the pages of *Siren* and exposed new audiences to emergent anarch@-feminist thought.

Lynne Farrow’s “Feminism as Anarchism,” Marian Leighton’s “Anarcho-Feminism and Louise Michel,” and Peggy Kornegger’s “Anarchism: the Feminist Connection,” were comprehensive accounts of the connections between anarchism and revolutionary feminism that marked the first attempts to fully synthesize anarchist and feminist philosophies. Their works help to contextualize further developments in anarch@-feminist theory amidst the changing milieu of the women’s liberation movement in the mid seventies. Most importantly, these texts have retained their importance in contemporary anarcha-feminism, and are included in almost every bibliography, reading list and resource page on historical and contemporary anarch@-feminism available today.

The importance of these three texts to the tiny population of anarch@-feminists at the time is two-fold; not only did these texts expose large numbers of women (and men) to anarch@-feminist ideas, but they also provided an alternative revolutionary feminism to the women’s movement as radical feminism was being eclipsed by cultural and liberal feminisms. Thus, these texts cannot be read in isolation, but within a genealogy of both emergent anarch@-feminism and the diversity of revolutionary forms of feminism.

In 1974, Lynne Farrow’s “Feminism as Anarchism” was published in *Aurora*, a feminist publication in New York. Arguing that “feminism practices what anarchism preaches,”198 Farrow identifies feminist practices and processes as ‘apolitical,’ in that they refuse to bow to the ‘combat terms’ of the political right and

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198 Lynn Farrow, “Feminism as Anarchism,” in *Quiet Rumours*, 11.
left. Farrow traces the drive towards women’s liberation to abolitionist women in 1840s through the Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention in 1848 and into the early 20th century suffrage organizing. Farrow provides this historical context in order to elucidate her point that feminist energy has long been co-opted and diverted by traditional political elements; in her historical examples, women are squeezed “…into [political] plans symptomatically, i.e. when the essential struggle is fought and won women then will come into their own. Women must wait. Women must help the larger cause.”\(^{199}\) Farrow echoes a popular radical feminist critique of politico feminist’s association with the ‘male Left,’ a criticism extended to anarch@-feminist’s association with male dominated anarchist groups.

Farrow also investigates feminism as situationism, contending that feminist organizing will necessarily be problem-centered rather than struggle centered, and this problem solving will take place locally, on a small scale, through person-to-person communication and cooperation. Farrow warns of universalizing ‘problems’ in relation to a “symptom of some larger condition,” stating, “such theoretical over-articulation gives one the illusion of responding to a critical situation without ever really come to grips with one’s own participation in it.”\(^{200}\) Furthermore, Farrow identifies the ‘maintenance of life’ as the primary concern of women, emphasizing her initial point about feminists practicing what anarchists preach.

What follows in Farrow’s argument, then, is feminist organizing taking on an anti-theory, pro-practicality position in relation to anarchism; as Farrow states, “our energies must necessarily be applied to ‘how to’ questions rooted in our practical

\(^{199}\) Farrow, 14.
\(^{200}\) Farrow, 17.
Despite her clear articulation of situationism, Farrow finds little place for theoretical discussions in feminism, and even accuses ‘knowledge’ and ‘argument’ of being alien to women generally. She concludes,

Because women have no vested interest in theoretical assumptions and their implications and hence no practice in the arts of verbal domination they will not easily be drawn into its intricate mechanics….Feminism means finding new terms to deal with traditional situations, not traditional terms to deal with what has been called a new movement. It is a mistake for us to argue the validity of our cause; that would imply we wanted in.\footnote{Farrow, 22.}

Published in a feminist journal, Farrow’s text emphasizes practice over theory, and at the same time overlooks the similar emphasis on practice and action in anarchist philosophy. “Feminism as Anarchism” possesses a bias towards all theoretical analysis that reflects feminist reluctance to wholly adopt the analysis of any political tradition, including anarchism. As well, the text relates directly to Connor’s response to “Blood of the Flower” in \textit{Siren Newsletter 8}.  

Many writers stressed the connections between the practices of feminism and anarchism without disavowing theoretical contributions, as shown in Marian Leighton’s April 1974 article, “Anarcho-Feminism and Louis Michel.” As one of the writers of the “Blood of the Flower” statement, Leighton had already established herself as a thinker and writer with extensive knowledge of anarchist philosophies. Yet Leighton also argued that ‘anarcho-feminists’ should devote their energies to women’s liberation, not to anarchist politics. She contends, “…anarcho-feminism’s primary commitment is and should be made to the radical feminist movement with

\footnote{Farrow, 20.}\footnote{Farrow, 22.}
only marginal participation in anarchist movement politics...” Unlike Farrow’s dismissal of theoretical contributions, Leighton focuses on where anarchism and feminism coincide in order to point to how the two can be synthesized productively. Leighton also rejects the notion that women themselves are ‘naturally’ anarchists, and views the “organic and conceptual link between anarchism and revolutionary feminism” as based on the common commitment to total revolution and personal awakening possessed by radical feminists and anarchists alike. This point was debated in early anarch@-feminists writings, in which both womankind and the women’s liberation movement are alternatively designated as naturally, intuitively, or organically anarchist. While Leighton identifies natural anarchistic tendencies in revolutionary feminisms, she is careful to distinguish these observations from women generally, as well as the women’s movement as a whole.

Published in the Cambridge, MA, anarchist scholastic journal Black Rose, Leighton’s article examines ‘anarcho-feminism’ in conjunction with a historical exploration of 19th century ‘anarchist-feminist’ Louis Michele, deepening knowledge of the anarch@-feminist tradition while bringing relevant points to the forefront. Leighton focuses on the concurrence of the personal and political in both anarchism and feminism, stating, “personal consciousness, as a part of social and political analysis, is emphasized equally with revolutionary solidarity and struggle.” In this

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203 Marian Leighton, “Anarcho-Feminism and Louise Michel,” 257.
204 Leighton, “Anarcho-Feminism and Louise Michel,” 256.
205 In Kytha Kurin’s article, “Anarcha-Feminism: Why the Hyphen?,” the author criticizes designations of ‘intuitive’ anarchistic tendencies in the women’s movement. “If anarchistic tendencies within the feminist movement are accepted as a natural by-product of being female, it puts an unfair pressure on women to ‘live up to their natural anarchism’ and it limits our potential for political development because it discourages us from examining why women behave more anarchistically than men.” Open Road 11 (Summer 1980).
206 Leighton, “Anarcho-Feminism and Louise Michel,” 255.
sense, Leighton is attempting to integrate feminist practice into a revolutionary tradition that includes personalized, localized and egalitarian praxis. When read together, Farrow and Leighton highlight areas of negotiation and contention over theory, as Farrow leans toward radical feminist critiques, while Leighton favors anarchist analysis.

Peggy Kornegger’s “Anarchism: the Feminist Connection” appeared in the Spring 1975 issue of feminist journal The Second Wave, and remains the most cited and reprinted text of anarch@-feminism to this day, and for good reason. Kornegger’s approach reflects the developments of the early 1970s, but expands the critique based on developments within the women’s movement. By 1975, radical feminism was on the decline, and many radical women became disillusioned with revolutionary politics, which was only exacerbated by “…liberal feminism [becoming] the recognized voice of the women’s movement.”

Kornegger positions her argument against counter-culture based cultural feminists and reform-based liberal feminists, contending the lack of anarchist analysis is ultimately responsible for the decline of radical feminism. Consequently, Kornegger’s text can be read both as a call to disillusioned revolutionary feminists, and as evidence of the development of an independent and dynamic anarch@-feminist consciousness.

Kornegger agrees that feminists have been practicing ‘intuitive’ anarchism for years, but cites the failure of c-r groups to “transition to political confrontation and direct action” as proof that the framework of anarchism is necessary for the maintenance and success of revolutionary feminism. “If we want to ‘bring down the

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207 Echols, Daring to be Bad, 243.
patriarchy,’ we need to talk about anarchism, to know exactly what it means, and to use that framework to transform ourselves and the structure of our daily lives.”

Her statement evokes the prefigurative politics put forth initially by the sixties counter-culture, and picked up by women’s liberation, while also emphasizing the ‘long-term process’ of building revolutionary alternatives; “I am talking about a ‘hollowing out’ of the present system through the formation of mental and physical (concrete) alternatives to the way things are.”

Her rhetoric recalls the prefigurative enunciation of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, or ‘Wobblies’) who proposed “forming the structure of the new world in the shell of the old.”

While stressing the importance of anarchist political expression, Kornegger also emphasizes the importance of a radical feminist analysis to anarchism, calling “feminism…the connection that links anarchism to the future.” She chastises liberal feminism for promoting gradual ‘change’ and reform instead of ‘total transformation.’ Like Farrow, Kornegger identifies women as the “unique bearers of a subsurface anarchist consciousness which, if articulated and concretized, can take us further than any previous group toward the achievement of total revolution.”

Kornegger naturalization of biological sex in relation to a ‘subsurface anarchist consciousness’ cements the notion of ‘intuitive’ anarchism as inextricable to the development of ‘anarcha-feminist’ theory. However, in her explication of ‘anarcha-feminism,’ it becomes clear that ‘intuition’ is not enough to delineate an explicitly

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210 Kornegger, “Anarchism: the Feminist Connection,” 244.
'anarcha-feminist' position; as evidenced by the dynamic discourse of the early seventies, the exploration of the connections between anarchism and feminism required serious consideration, exploration and analysis before it emerged as a cohesive and distinctive position within the women’s liberation movement and the American radical milieu.

‘We Need Each Other’: Conclusion

What can be concluded from a survey of theoretical texts early anarcha-feminist discourses were dynamic, responsive and distinct. During the period of 1971-1973, the anarcha-feminist critique solidified through the debates and discussions produced on the pages of Siren Newsletter, and was later extended in the theoretical texts of Farrow, Leighton and Kornegger. Throughout its development, anarcha-feminists navigated divergent positions and ideologies, between the New Left and New Right, between radical feminism and socialist feminism, and between separatism and gender inclusiveness, to name a few. Early anarcha-feminists were thus forced to broaden and critique the theory and practice of both anarchism and radical feminism from the start. The boundaries between revolutionary feminisms and various anarchisms were constantly being pushed, pulled, redrawn and thrown out.

Theory and practice cannot wholly be separated in a history of anarcha-feminism. Both constantly inform each other, and the critique is always in the process of becoming, bringing a multiplicity of traditions together in revolutionary praxis. Just as emergent anarcha-feminism faced debate over how to positively integrate revolutionary feminism and anarchism, so too are today’s anarcha-feminists
constantly navigating new critiques, continuing to deepen a body of knowledge set into motion on the pages of *Siren*.
Chapter 2
Networking, Communication and Conferences, 1974-1979

Men tend to organize[sic] the way they fuck - one big rush and then that ‘wham, slam, thank you maam,’ as it were. Women should be building our movement the way we make love - gradually, with sustained involvement, limitless endurance - and of course, multiple orgasms.

-Cathy Levine, “The Tyranny of Tyranny,” 1974

Tyranny Abounds! Revolutionary Feminist Organization in the Mid Seventies

Levine’s essay, which first appeared in the Autumn 1974 edition of ‘anarchofeminist’ publication Black Rose, was a reply to feminist scholar and activist Jo Freeman’s “The Tyranny of Structurelessness,” a piece condemning the ‘leaderless’ and ‘structureless’ organizational trend within the women’s liberation movement. Freeman’s essay had first appeared in 1970, and was republished in feminist periodicals extensively thereafter. Often published together,215 both essays represent methods of organization contending within the women’s liberation movement in the mid seventies.

Freeman’s essay argues that a movement based on small-scale, local, egalitarian and horizontally organized groups is impossibly ineffective; these groups will inevitably evolve into hierarchical formations without formalized structures, and thus, cannot be the basis of organization for a sustained women’s liberation movement. According to Freeman, “if [the movement’s] development is not to be

arrested at this preliminary stage, it will have to alter this trend [of organization
because]…informal structures have no obligation to be responsible to the group at
large.” To this point, Freeman demands formalized leadership and structure in
order to prevent the ‘tyranny of structurelessness.’ She proposes that to achieve full
women’s liberation, a mass revolutionary movement with specified structure and
leadership is needed; and while consciousness-raising groups and localized/grassroots
organizing is a good beginning, it cannot be the organizational format to bring about a
feminist revolution and an end to patriarchy.

Levine’s riposte to Freeman is what one might expect from the co-author of
the “Blood of the Flower” and co-founder of one of the first anarch@-feminist
collectives in the U.S. Levine points to the limitations and inevitable failures facing
feminists who appropriate organizational strategies from movements on the Left.
These movement ‘building’ strategies de-emphasize the importance of developing
personal revolutionary consciousness in favor of erecting large authoritarian
organizational structures. When movements are ‘built up,’ Levine argues, the
individuals who make up these movements are stifled, disempowered, and less likely
to be personally transformed. Levine continues,

What we definitely don’t need is more structures and rules, providing us with
easy answers, pre-fab alternatives and no room in which to create our own
way of life. What is threatening the female Left and the other branches even
more, is the 'tyranny of tyranny', which has prevented us from relating to
individuals, or from creating organizations in ways that do not obliterate

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216 Freeman and Levine, Untying the Knot, 6.
individuality with prescribed roles, or from liberating us from capitalist structure.\textsuperscript{217}

To Levine, organizing a feminist revolutionary movement demands the ‘leaderlessness’ and ‘structurelessness’ disavowed by Freeman; feminists are distinguished from the ‘male Left’ in their equal reliance on socio-political organization and personal consciousness-raising.

Levine contends that Freeman’s emphasis on structure is misplaced in the political sphere; the processes essential to the success of a revolutionary feminist movement lie in the development of a revolutionary women’s \textit{culture}. She continues, “creating a woman’s culture is the means through which we shall restore our lost humanity,”\textsuperscript{218} implicating both men and women as the benefactors of this emancipatory project. The psychological struggle of the individual coincides with the political struggle of the collective in the small, localized and volitionally organized groups Freeman disavows. Levine positions the small group as the \textit{solution} to disempowerment engendered by bureaucratic and authoritarian movement building, not merely a \textit{reaction} to them, as Freeman posits.

Levine also addresses Freeman’s contention that small groups allow for ‘elites’ to emerge—i.e. ‘natural’ leaders who dominate the collective’s dialogue. This criticism was widely dispersed throughout the women’s movement, and was especially cogent amongst radical feminists.\textsuperscript{219} Freeman prescribes the formalization of power structures so that collective members might have a formal (read: electoral) say in the group’s leadership and direction, and maintain the collective’s power to


\textsuperscript{218}Levine, “The Tyranny of Tyranny.”

\textsuperscript{219}Echols, \textit{Daring to be Bad}, 60.
hold said leadership accountable. Freeman’s solution to the ‘tyranny of structurelessness’ requires the retooling and redistribution of power, not its complete diffusion.

Rather than abandoning small group organizing in favor of formalized authoritarian and bureaucratic structures, Levine puts forth an anarch@-feminist organizational strategy that support local small-scale group form, consensus group processes, and prefigurative community and politics. Indeed, from 1974-1978, much anarch@-feminist energy was focused on organization, internal group process, intra-group/collective networking, and building an anarch@-feminist community on local, regional and global levels.

The anarch@-feminist focus on organization is a consequence of the state of the women’s liberation movement during the period. The proliferation of c-r groups and small-scale women’s collectives during the early 1970s—holistically termed the ‘small group sector’ of the women’s movement by feminist historian Barbara Ryan—was stymied in the mid-1970s, exacerbated by internal dissension in the movement as a whole, and within the small group sector dominated by radical feminists. Many feminists at the time characterized this discord as the ‘growing pains’ of the movement; even contemporary feminist histories, the small group sector is heralded as considerably important the growth of women’s liberation in its “infancy stage,” but is maligned as ineffectual and impractical for a sustained feminist movement.

220 Barbara Ryan, Feminism and the Women's Movement: Dynamics of Change in Social Movement Ideology, and Activism, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 54.
221 Ryan, 55.
222 Ryan, 54.
The oft-repeated narrative of the ‘rise and fall’ of small sector feminism effectively erases anarch@-feminist contributions and organizing; for it was anarch@-feminists who demanded the preservation of the small group based organizing and continued to develop these forms long after they fell out of favor in the movement as a whole. Anarch@-feminist writings, newsletters, and conference proceedings from the period reflect a serious consideration of structural expression and internal processes maintained throughout the growth and expansion of their networks. By 1975, the original radical feminist groups had dissipated and with them, the emphasis on localized small groups, consciousness-raising, guerrilla and street theater, and direct action subsided. Anarch@-feminism, however, continued to promote and practice small-scale ‘leaderless’ and ‘structureless’ organizing, extending radical feminist critiques and revolutionary feminism into the early 1980s.

“Now Our Resistance has become Collectivized.”

The spring and summer of 1974 was the start of a period of horizontal expansion for American anarch@-feminism, with the development of activist networks, newsletters and conferences. Still based in small-scale local collectives, anarch@-feminists successfully maintained this method of basic organization while developing regional, national and international networks. Rather than consolidating individuals, groups and energies in a top-down manner that required formal leadership and hierarchical structure (employed by Politico and liberal feminisms) anarch@-feminists expanded horizontally, through individual and inter-group

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communication networks, conferences, festivals, and forums. Necessitated by their small numbers and dispersed population, this networking allowed anarch@-feminists to organize with groups outside the women’s movement, and provided for closer relationships to, and growing acceptance within, American anarchist groups.

The organization of the Hunter College Anarchist Conference in the spring of 1974 brings to light innovative anarch@-feminist networking and organizing that required new methods of communication. The conference, which had been in the works for over a year, was held at Hunter College in New York City, April 19-21\textsuperscript{18}; it was sponsored by Anarchs of New York, an ad hoc group including Freespace Alternate U, Hunter Libertarian Alliance, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) NY, The Living Theater Collective, Vegetarian Activist Collective, Ecology Action East, Faggot and Dyke Anarchists (FADA), New York Anarcho-Feminists, and Come!Unity Press.\textsuperscript{224} The organizing collective initially proposed the conference as a “preliminary organizational anarchist conference,”\textsuperscript{225} to gather and organize prior to an even larger anarchist conference, which never took place. And while ‘anarcho-feminism’ and women were included in most of the early conference organizational documents, they remained mostly in the periphery until planning for workshops began in the early spring of 1974.\textsuperscript{226}

\textsuperscript{224} Conference Correspondence, Publications relating to Anarchist Conference – Live and Let Live Festival of April 1974, Main Collection VertFile, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University; Later additions (in March of 1974) to the Anarchs included the Tenants Association of 517 E 11\textsuperscript{th} St, People’s Warehouse, the Revolting Theater, Youth International Party (YIP), War Resisters League, Freie Arbeiter Stimme (Yiddish Anarchist periodical), Danny Levitt’s Commune, and Mental Patients Liberation Project (MPLP). (The Anarchs of New York Newsletter)
\textsuperscript{225} Conference Correspondence.
\textsuperscript{226} “What Would You Like to See at the Spring (or, if not, the Fall) Anarchist Conference?” 1973, Publications relating to Anarchist Conference – Live and Let Live Festival of April 1974, Main Collection VertFile, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University.
The Anarchs collective managed to streamline energy for the conference by producing newsletters that included workshop proposals, information about sponsoring groups, and manifestos by lesser-known groups in the anarchist community. The March 1974 *Anarchs of New York Newsletter* included workshop proposals for discussing “the relationship between Anarchism and Feminism,” and included proposals for several small group workshops, followed by a larger open workshop.\(^{227}\) Written by the ‘New York Anarcho-Feminists’ collective, the proposal also included a sidebar, defining and emphasizing the importance of consciousness-raising as “the most basic process of the women’s movement.”\(^{228}\) C-R is put forward as a method of introducing and opening up communication between women; thus, the conference workshops they proposed could not be exempt from following c-r guidelines and processes. Furthermore, the proposal elaborates on c-r groups as a basis of further anarch@-feminist development: “Where we have continued beyond consciousness raising, we have evolved into feminist study groups and actions groups for specific projects.”\(^{229}\) The ‘New York Anarcho-Feminists’ proposal anarch@-feminist’s contention that c-r is both a necessary evolutionary step towards feminist revolution, and a valuable endeavor in and of itself.

Some thoughts by FADA (Faggot and Dyke Anarchists) was also included in the March ’74 planning newsletter. Positing that sexual repression is the “most fundamental repression” and “the root of all other repressions,” FADA articulates messages of gay and lesbian liberation within an anarchist framework, using anarchist


rhetoric. FADA uses the newsletter space to call for gay anarchist workshops and communications networks, and for the abolition of all sex roles, tying organization, networking and community building to a clearly articulated liberatory stance. Linking gay liberation to sexual liberation and women’s liberation, FADA tied the oppression and marginalization of both female anarch(-)-feminists and gay and lesbian anarchists to a hierarchical heterosexist framework operating in society at large, and also pervasive in the anarchist community.

By April 19th, the conference had taken on a new direction, along with a new name—the ‘Live and Let Live Festival.’ Several hundred people attended the conference, though women were clearly in the minority, at times outnumbered “by two to one,” according to a female ‘anarcho-feminist’ conference attendee. The final schedule included four ‘anarcho-feminist’ workshops throughout the weekend, a gay anarchist workshop on the 20th, a development workshop for gay collectives on the 21st, and an Androgyny and Anarchy workshop on the 21st amongst many other unscheduled gay, lesbian and anarch(-)-feminist discussions, meet ups and workshops.

Two political action workshops were scheduled on the 20th and 21st, formed to address a wide variety of subjects, including feminist liberation, third world struggles, sexual revolution, the gay liberation movement, education, community organization,

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233 Reliance and Horan.
‘cellular’ group structures, and theoretical and practical anarchisms. Subtitled ‘anarchism and activism: organization and strategy,’ the political action workshops were intended as a space where many subjects could be negotiated, facilitating the creation of “…a program for widening and also strengthening the anarchist movement.” The generality and vagueness of the political action provoked criticisms from many anarch@-feminists attendees; the Off Our Backs commentary on the conference, written by two ‘anarcho-feminists’ who attended the conference, cites the huge attendance of male anarchists at the political action workshops, while the ‘Androgyny and Anarchy’ attracted only four people.

These reports also make clear that the scheduled workshops only accounted for a portion of the organizing, networking, discussion and debate that took place during the conference. During an ‘anarcha-feminist’ workshop on the afternoon of the 20th, the initial group split after several men entered the workshop; a number of women left to form an impromptu women-only workshop, while most stayed in the integrated workshop. ‘Anarcho-feminist’ Mecca Reliance, who attended both sessions, compared the content and tone of the workshops, describing the integrated workshop as bland and unproductive. Featuring speakers Lynn Farrow and actress Judith Malina, the integrated group discussed childcare and the abolition of the nuclear family, which according to Reliance, was the only topic everyone felt

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236 Reliance and Horan.
237 Unlike the schedule and organizational newsletters, which used ‘anarcho-feminism,’ the signage for this workshop read ‘anarcha-feminism.’ (Reliance and Horan).
238 Reliance and Horan.
239 Malina was a member of the Living Theater Collective.
comfortable speaking about considering the significant number of men in the room.

After moving to the women-only workshop, Reliance elatedly described the energetic and diverse dialogue that included discussion of

the lack of role models for women in working collectively, problems with women taking power, how women confer power upon other women, problems that come up in project-oriented groups when the service rendered becomes more important than the women themselves, the voguish aspect of sisterhood, [and] the wrongs done in the name of sisterhood.\(^{240}\)

The women-only space appears to have facilitated a focus on organization and internal process, in addition to more theoretical conversations; anarch@-feminists could collectively discuss their feelings of alienation from the conference due to the domination of male voices in workshops and discussions. Reliance further described the women-only workshop’s discussion as follows:

Most women had a lot of experience with collectivity and working on projects but didn't hold to an anarchist philosophy per se…some see it as the strength of the women's movement that we aren't overly concerned with theorizing but instead are applying our politics in practical ways. But others feel that the lack of theorizing, or the downgrading of theory constitutes a weakness of the movement and makes for the lack of role models, or worse, facilitates the evolution of project-oriented individuals.\(^{241}\)

The conference thus highlighted the contention over theory and practice inherent in the synthesis of radical feminisms and anarchism.

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\(^{240}\) Reliance and Horan.

\(^{241}\) Reliance and Horan.
One of the major complaints filed by participants of the ‘anarcho-feminist’ workshops at the conference was their lack of direction and failure to address practical matters. The workshops did, however, by the end of the conference, produce an ‘anarcho-feminist’ communications network, based on a mailing list and newsletter to be published by anarch@-feminists in a different city each issue. These newsletters, which were published sporadically until the end of the decade, provide the most complete archive of documentation about anarch@-feminist practices, organization and networking; the newsletters also include information about geographically diverse collectives and their local work and actions. Unlike *Siren Newsletter*, which was produced by one Chicago-based collective, the *AnarchoFeminist Network Notes*’ form, length and content varied extensively from issue to issue, based on the resources available to the women publishing the newsletter.

The first of *AnarchoFeminist Network Notes* was published by ‘Ann Arbor Anarcho-Feminists’ and was sent out a short time after the conference in the summer of 1974. The issue included a mailing list assembled for a post-phoned ‘Ann Arbor Anarcho-Feminist Conference,’ a summary of the ‘Live and Let Live Festival,’ and a reprint of ‘Black Rose Anarcho-Feminist’s’ ‘Blood of the Flower,’ and a letter from two North Carolina women who attended the New York conference. The first issue of *Network Notes* was plain, imageless and concise. The ‘Ann Arbor Anarcho-Feminists’ included a statement of purpose for the newsletter:

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242 The Ann Arbor Anarcho-Feminist Conference would have taken place in June, 1974, but was moved back to September. There is no information available regarding whether or not it took place.
We’ll write notes of our activities and thoughts, and how we can be reached, and from this women can establish direct contact where they wish. Anyone could be the nucleus of a center and find sisters in her area through the network. And then—let’s see. If we keep it loosely structured, the network can be more responsive to our evolving needs, and we can be open to change things as we go.243

Thus, the Network Notes served more practical than theoretical purposes; though many of the newsletters included articles and statements, its primary purpose was to connect likeminded anarch@-feminists and develop regionally and nationally connected communities. The reason for forging these inter-personal/inter-collective connections were diverse, ranging from friendship to political action. The newsletter also served as a platform for individuals and groups to share their experiences with small group organizing and direct action. Run exclusively on donations and volunteer energy, the Network Notes was incredibly important to the spread of anarch@-feminist ideas in the U.S., allowing women who hadn’t been at the conference in New York the ability to participate and contribute to the creation and expansion of an anarch@-feminist network and community.

The next issue of Network Notes, put together by ‘New York Anarchofeminists’ and Come!Unity Press, was put together in the style of a directory. Included were personal statements and contact information for anarch@-feminist individuals and collectives in the U.S. and Canada. The newsletter included contributions from individual anarch@-feminists in San Francisco (CA), Grover City (CA), Minneapolis (MN), Milwaukee (WI), Canton (OH), Norfolk (VA), Charlotte

Those in more isolated areas or rural areas often ended their personal statements with pleas to other anarch@-feminists in their areas to contact them. However, the directory also included information about individuals in larger cities who wanted to network with other activists around a specific cause, such as the dispersal of educational materials or the founding of intentional communities.\(^\text{244}\)

As well, the directory provided information about the various anarch@-feminist collectives established at the time, including New York Anarcho-Feminists, Hunter College AnarchoFeminists (New York), Lesbians Rising (New York), the Emma Goldman Information Exchange (New York), Come!Unity Press (New York), Black Rose Anarcho-Feminists (Cambridge, MA), The New World Collective (Des Moines, IA), and A Woman’s Place Bookstore (Oakland, CA). Unsurprisingly, most of these collectives emerged in densely populated areas and cities, and around universities and college environments; the diversity of population in cities, and the privileges of university life, no doubt, impacted the coming together of groups in these areas. By the summer of 1975, Anarchofeminist Network Notes was established and producing newsletters somewhat regularly, succeeding in its mission to network anarch@-feminist activists and collectives together without formalized structure and hierarchical organization.

\(^{244}\) AnarchoFeminist Network Notes, Vol. 1, No. 2, Come!Unity Press, New York Anarcho-Feminists, Anarchism and Feminism folder, Lesbian Herstory Archives, New York, N.Y.
The National Socialist-Feminist Conference, held in Yellow Springs, OH in July 1975, and the Midwest Anarchist Conference in August of the same year, provided for further innovation and expansion of anarch(-feminist activist networks. Organized by women of the New American Movement, over 2,000 people descended on Antioch College for the conference, bringing with them a diverse array of ideological and methodological knowledge and experience. Though many feminists considered the conference a failure due to a lack of theoretical unity, anarch(-feminists responded positively to the event, if not enthusiastically. The Yellow Springs conference contained an ‘anarchist-feminist’ workshop in which (mostly) Midwestern anarch(-feminists proposed a communications network similar to that produced by the Hunter College conference. Anarch(-feminist collectives were established in Bloomington, IL, and Buffalo, NY, soon thereafter, representing a new rush of energy in anarch(-feminist organizing provided by the Yellow Springs conference. Concomitantly, established groups like ‘New York AnarchoFeminists,’ dissolved under financial and personal pressures into smaller project-oriented groups. From 1975 on, the most productive and sustained anarch(-feminist collectives were located in smaller cities or university towns, which can be attributed

246 NAM, a mixed-gender democratic socialist group that self-defined as socialist feminist was a national organization with structured bylaws and leadership positions. Helping NAM with the conference organizing were several unions, including the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union (Ryan 169).
247 Ryan, 70.
248 AnarchoFeminist Network Notes, Vol. 1, No. 3.
to the success of *AnarchoFeminist Network Notes* for activist networking outside of major urban areas.

The Midwest Anarchist conference in August 1975 also provided a networking platform for Midwestern anarch@-feminists, albeit a reactive one. At the beginning of the conference, several incidences of sexism on the part of anarchist men spawned a conference-wide attempt to analyze and proactively deal with sexism within the anarchist community—so-called ‘anarcho-sexism.’ Karen Johnson, an ‘anarcho-feminist’ from Des Moines, reported,

> The result was [the] acceptance of the criticism and we women learning about other ways our criticism might have been raised to be more constructive. The fact that women’s concerns were dealt with indicates primarily our strength and feminist understanding, but it also reflects some desire to struggle on the part of most of the men there.  

Though sexism remains, to this day, a problem within the anarchist community, the presence of ‘anarcho-feminists’ at the Midwest conference engendered the self-criticism and evolution of consciousness deemed necessary for liberation by anarchist (and feminist) philosophy. At the same time, the Midwest and Hunter College conferences confirmed to many anarch@-feminists that the anarchist ‘movement’ was not a nurturing environment for women’s liberation, and anarch@-feminists needed to also organize on their own.

The *Anarchist-Feminist Communications Network* emerged from the Yellow Springs conference in the summer of 1975, and was soon merged with the preexisting *AnarchoFeminist Network Notes*. The merger was proposed by several Des Moines

\[249\] *AnarchoFeminist Network Notes*, Vol. 1, No. 3.
‘anarcho-feminist’ women—anarcho-communist feminists, specifically—anarcho-feminist women—who had attended the Hunter College, Yellow Springs and Midwest Anarchist conferences, and proposed that the resulting networks and mailing lists be merged into one. The Des Moines ‘anarcho-feminist’ collective included a proposal for the merger in the 3rd *AnarchoFeminist Network Notes*, published in the fall of 1975. The proposal stated,

> We define our purpose as a quarterly newsletter, centering on theory development, sharing of social practice and feedback, bibliography sharing and development, and other ad hoc sharing of a personal or creative nature as need and resources indicate.

The Des Moines ‘anarcho-feminists’ also offered to take responsibility for the first merged newsletter, pending feedback from the respective networks.

The third and final *AnarchoFeminist Network Notes* also included action reports from Des Moines, Buffalo and New York City. In October of 1975, ‘anarchafeminists’ in New York City held meetings in radical freesp ace, ‘Free Association,’ that garnered a crowd of over 150 women. In Des Moines, ‘anarcho-feminists’ worked with an anti-imperialist caucus, and participated in local workplace organizing. To further the point that the newsletter could be a platform for theoretical development, New York ‘anarchafeminist’ Rebecca Staton provided an article, “Anarchism and Feminism,” that used Emma Goldman and Peggy Kornegger

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252 In the mid-1970s, Des Moines was home to an active, but small, population of anarchists and libertarian Marxists, who in 1976 organized another “Continental Organizing and Communications Conference” in their hometown. The Des Moines anarcho-communist feminist group, The New World Collective, comprised of four women including Karen Johnson, actively collaborated with the male radical population in Des Moines on anti-racist, anti-imperialist, health care and workplace organizing. Mike Hargis, “Notes on Anarchism in America, Part 2,” Libertarian Labor Review 22 (Winter 1997), http://www.syndicalist.org/archives/llr14-24/22i.shtml.
to summarize her view of the theoretical framework of ‘anarchafeminism.’ She concluded,

As we unite our small groups to give one another support and share our experiences we are building a non-hierarchical form of organization. Our information networks can keep us in touch with one another. As more and more women become active our revolutionary potential begins to multiply. As women learn to be strong and control our own lives we are building our movement. As we are more able to take care of our own needs within our community we consolidate our strength.\(^{254}\)

Staton’s article makes evident what is implied through the first issues of *AnarchoFeminist Network Notes*—anarch@-feminists had a strong desire to build a revolutionary ‘movement,’ but were uncompromising in their approach, organization and collaboration. Anarch@-feminism’s prefigurative politics also shine through in their drive to build a consolidated and networked community using means and practices that corresponded to their ideal future society.

The first issue of the expanded network newsletter, *Anarchist Feminist Notes*, was published in December of 1976.\(^{255}\) Much of the discussion revolved around the organization, function and purpose of the newsletter; the Des Moines ‘anarch@-feminists’ who produced the first issue, proposed a quarterly newsletter to connect anarch@-feminists and ‘left libertarian feminists’ in “…an effort of women, for women, and by women.”\(^{256}\) The Des Moines collective proposed a compromise on the issue of male contribution to the newsletter, where the group organizing the issue would accept announcements, inserts, resources and financial support from men; they

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\(^{254}\) *AnarchoFeminist Network Notes*, Vol. 1, No. 3.


\(^{256}\) *Anarchist Feminist Notes*. 
also demanded a no censorship or content edition policy towards women’s contributions, and supported the sending of the newsletter to archives and libraries that requested *Anarchist Feminist Notes*. The members of the Des Moines collective—Mae Green, Karen Johnson, Grant Purdy, Irene Talbott and Mary Svien—also included a response to Staton’s article, in which they attempted to elucidate “the definitions of ‘leaderless’ and the discussion of strategy—direct action, transforming institutions and alternative building.”

As the publishers of the issues, the Des Moines collective took the opportunity to relate their history and struggles with organization and networking; in doing so, they provided an invaluable window into the everyday workings and organization of localized ‘anarcho-feminist’ organization. Began as a study/action group in 1973, the Des Moines collective underwent significant transformation due to tensions over class within the group, cumulating in the winter of 1976; to proactively deal with the class tensions, the group divided into smaller groups based on class background to deal with the “questions related to ways in which [class] background affected” women. These small groups continued until there was no longer a need for them, and the group as a whole dissolved. Coming back together the next year, the collective structured itself based on smaller groups with independent agendas, which in turn, collaborated on larger gatherings and group meetings.

The Des Moines group’s history underscores the struggles of growth and expansion experienced by anarch@-feminists around the country during this period. Collective member Midge Slater, contended, “the size of the group affects its

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effectiveness, and we have been cautious of not getting too big;²⁵⁹ fearing that regular membership turnover interrupted the processes integral to building a supportive revolutionary community, the Des Moines collective expanded through the proliferation of small, independent groups that were networked for collaboration on a local level. Slater continued, “Our vision included more groups, self-organized and self-defined, which will become a part of the larger federation.”²⁶⁰ In describing the Des Moines collective process of organization and expansion, Slater highlights the necessarily ephemeral nature of anarch@-feminist collectives. Organized spontaneously to meet the needs of anarch@-feminists, or in pursuit of a specific goal, the dissolution of groups does not always indicate ineffectuality or lack of interest, but rather that the current situation does not call for anarch@-feminist collective action or organization at that time.

The evolution of the Des Moines group highlights the contingent nature of anarch@-feminist organization, and thus, the value of a communications network for sustaining a community based on the sporadic, spontaneous, and temporary coalescing of individual anarch@-feminists in localized small groups. To this point, the Des Moines group stated that the newsletter was the only direct political work they engaged in together as a collective, though the individuals who made up the group were involved in local activities ranging from NOW advocacy, to participation in libertarian communist organizations, to working at women’s self-help health centers.

²⁵⁹ Anarchist Feminist Notes, Vol. 1, No. 1.
²⁶⁰ Anarchist Feminist Notes, Vol. 1, No. 1.
The dissolution of the ‘Anarchist-Feminists of Chicago’ further supports the ephemeral nature of these collectives. One member, Mi Mi, wrote to *AnarchoFeminist Notes* to propose the mergence of their networking newsletter, the *Emma Goldman Feminist Newsletter*, with the new network notes, as the divergent paths of the members prevented further publication. Mi Mi reported that she was working on *Black Star: An Anarchist Review*, participating in an androgynous anarchist study group, organizing a regional network for ‘rebel workers,’ and translating the writings of early 20th century Puerto Rican ‘anarchist feminist’ Luisa Capetillo.\(^{261}\) Another member of the disbanded Chicago collective, Bernice Murry, wrote to the newsletter reporting on her historical work on ‘anarcha-feminism’ at the Labadie Collection\(^{262}\) in support of Arlene Meyers work on an ‘anarcha-feminist’ anthology.\(^{263}\)

Both in Chicago, and in Des Moines, anarch@-feminists did not restrict their action and practices to explicitly anarch@-feminist causes, pointing to an underlying commitment to holistic transformation; anarch@-feminism’s local focus thus enabled many to work in multiple arenas of activism and expose more individuals to anarch@-feminist thought, process, organization and action. The serious consideration of structure, organization and process, then, reflects the desire to form a large networked community that allowed for local focus and autonomy, while maintaining the diversity of influence provided by the everyday work of anarch@-feminists in their respective environments.

\(^{262}\) Anarchist Archive at University of Michigan.
Due to the sporadic release of the newsletter, some members of the network proposed that one group take on primary responsibility for the newsletter to ensure periodical publication. In their response to these proposals, the New York anarch@-feminist Noa emphasized the function of the newsletter over its content and style.

As I see it, the newsletter…and this coordinated effort comprise an attempt to form a real network of anarchist women for the purposes of contact and communication, solidarity, and participation on local, national, and international levels—all of which are more important to build than considerations of the clumsiness of the method and content.

The frustration, labor, and perceived inefficiency of this model, argued Noa, was far outweighed by the potential of the newsletter facilitating local and regional organizing; the “continuity and constancy of vision” of the newsletter, it was argued, was “best suited to a fairly stable, committed small group collective process,” much like the production of *Siren Newsletter*. *Anarchist Feminist Notes* was not merely a platform for espousing ideas, but an interactive and constantly evolving method for communication, connection, support, and sharing.

Three hundred and seventy copies of *Anarchist Feminist Notes* were published and distributed at the end of 1976. Along with discussion of the newsletter’s form, content, and organization, the first issue included a report on a gay anarchist conference, held in September 1976, in Buffalo, NY, which drew thirty people, including seven or eight anarch@-feminists; the *Gay Anarchist Newsletter* emerged from the conference to connect and network gay and lesbian anarchists and functioned similarly to the *Anarchist Feminist Notes*. The issue also included reports

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from anarch@-feminist collective Tiamat (Ithaca, NY), who offered to take responsibility for the next newsletter, and personal letters from anarch@-feminists in Somerville (MA), Florence (MA), and Northampton (MA).

Released by Tiamat in spring 1977, the second issue was renamed *Anarcha-Feminist Notes* because the collective felt “that ‘anarchist feminist’ as two words implies two separate and distinct philosophies. To make it one word unifies the two. We are not anarchist and feminists. We are anarcha-feminists.”

The emphasis on organization and process continued in the second issue with a review of the first issue’s publishing process by the Des Moines collective, which reflected on the struggles and successes they encountered, and requested additional monetary support. Continuing the negotiation of separatism and ‘anarcho-feminism’ started in the first issue, Des Moines collective member Grant Purdy contributed an article to the second issue that reported on the successes and incompatibilities witnessed by ‘anarcho-feminists’ working in mixed groups. Additionally, the personal letters sent in by women from Rochester (NY), Jessup (MD), Baltimore (MD), Somerville (MA), Berkeley (CA), and SUNY-New Paltz (NY), responded to the Des Moines groups initial query about male participation; an overwhelming number of responses demanded that the newsletter not include contributions, announcements or any content from men.

Marian Leighton also wrote a response in to *Anarcha-Feminist Notes*, in which she applauded the growth of ‘anarcho-feminism’ since she had help found ‘Black Rose Anarcho-Feminists’ in 1971. She reported that her own collective was in

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a process of transition, as it had expanded and evolved into several study and action
groups; Leighton wrote, “its great to see how far and wide interest has spread.”267
Indeed, given the miniscule population of anarch@-feminists in 1971, and the serious
commitment to small-localized collectives and non-hierarchical organization during
expansion, the growth of anarch@-feminism is truly impressive feat.

The collective that produced the second issue, ‘Tiamat,’ included a statement
about their collective in the newsletter, entitled “Who We Are,” and also included a
personal reflection from Elaine ‘Tiamat’ Leeder. Together, these documents add yet
another level of insight into the organization and process of local ‘anarca-feminist’
collectives. Based in Ithaca, NY, which was home to a significant population of
socialist feminist organizations, the collective was founded after several women
attended the ‘anarchist-feminist’ workshop at the National Socialist Feminist
Conference in the summer of 1975. Tiamat took their name from the Goddess/creator
in the ancient Babylonian creation myth, which the collective claimed, “spoke to us
of the conjunction of ‘feminism’ and ‘anarchism.’”268 Tiamat differed from the Des
Moines and Chicago groups in their stability and longevity; the collective described
themselves as “a stable and unified group which is at the same time diverse in
lifestyle and in political thinking.”269 Thus, Tiamat provides yet another vision of how
local collectives organized, and is particularly insightful due to its sustained
involvement in expanding anarch@-feminist networks in the late seventies.

Tiamat’s organizational structure was based on several small sub-groups,
which met together once a month to discuss ‘anarca-feminist’ history, theory,

267 Anarcha-Feminist Notes, Vol. 1, No. 2
268 Anarcha-Feminist Notes, Vol. 1, No. 2
269 Anarcha-Feminist Notes, Vol. 1, No. 2
practice, and literature, encouraging personal expression and reflection throughout the meetings. To stress this point, each meeting would open with a ‘check in’ with each group member, which could last for minutes or the entire meeting. Tiamat was also heavily concerned with process, organization and action; one member reflected, “apart from concluding that there is no one way (no ‘correct’ line) and that as anarchy-feminists the means of revolution cannot be different from the ends, we haven’t resolved anything concrete.” Tiamat’s organization and process, then, relied primarily on spontaneity and flexibility within a framework of prefigurative political expression.

Of the nine core members, only one person was associated with Cornell University—Elaine ‘Tiamat’ Leeder—whose personal reflection was also included in the second Anarcha-Feminist Notes. Leeder’s reflection in the newsletter is at times almost identical to her 1992 essay, “Making of An Anarcha-feminist,” highlighting the personal transformation engendered by her participation in Tiamat. She concluded, “it is in Tiamat that we already have our anarchistic society…[the collective] has helped me begin ‘Living My Life.’” Leeder’s reflection points to the positive impact of prefigurative organization; perhaps, then, part of Tiamat’s longevity is due to the collective’s adherence to prefigurative ‘anarcha-feminist’ process, practices, action and organization.

In the same issue, anarch@-feminist Amy Kollman, a student at SUNY-New Paltz, reported that she had found out about Anarcha-Feminist Notes while attending a mixed-gender SRAF conference, and she further suggested a separate ‘anarcho-

270 Anarcha-Feminist Notes, Vol. 1, No. 2
271 Anarcha-Feminist Notes, Vol. 1, No. 2
272 Anarcha-Feminist Notes, Vol. 1, No. 2

‘Anarcha-feminist’ Mary Fridely reviewed the conference for Off Our Backs, and reported that the principles of ‘anarcha-feminism’ were outlined during the conference based on ‘guidelines’ for feminism and anarchism. Fridely reported the guidelines as follows, for feminism,

(1) nuclear family is the base for all power relationships; 2) small leaderless groups with a project orientation; 3) a commitment to social and economic values being changed; 4) sharing skills and knowledge; 5) a recognition of patriarchy as a dominant force; 6) collective work. Anarchism has as its goals: 1) a redefinition and redistribution of power; 2) dissolution of authority based on power differences -- i.e., all hierarchical structures; 3) spontaneity; 4)

273 Anarcha-Feminist Notes, Vol. 1, No. 2.
principles of self-management; 5) rotation of tasks; 6) direct action; 7) the personal as political.\textsuperscript{275}

Fridely was critical of the conferences focus on theory over practice and action, and expressed disappointment with the lack of class-consciousness and awareness of privilege amongst the attendees. One of the most positive aspects of the conference was the communal living environment; Fridely reported, “women took more responsibility for themselves in a communal setting than I’ve ever seen at any type of gathering.”\textsuperscript{276} She closed the review questioning whether the “nature of anarchism is antithetical to being confined to a conference setting,”\textsuperscript{277} and encouraging ‘anarcha-feminists’ to communicate and establish relationships with other women.

The most notable contention that arose during the theory workshop was a split over the use of violence in ‘anarcha-feminist’ direct action; many women in the workshop cited the prefigurative demand for non-violence—violent means, it was argued, begets a violent future society. Others desired further exploration of violent tactics in direct action, resulting in the creation of another discussion group, which Fridely attended. She recounted,

Ideas expressed ranged from using violence only when it would bring women together, making people aware of issues through violence, how violence is defined, separating violence and militancy, the role the media plays in deciding what actions you do, and the impact of "non-violent" actions such as hunger strikes, or the value of pie-throwing as a means of drawing attention to an issue.\textsuperscript{278}

\textsuperscript{276} Fridely.
\textsuperscript{277} Fridely.
\textsuperscript{278} Fridely.
Much of the discussion group focused on planning and strategy for the approaching anti-nuclear mobilization at Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant in New Hampshire. The mobilization was in large part organized by the a coalition of affinity groups called the Clamshell Alliance, which was itself facing dissent over the issue of violence in direct action.

Fridely was quite critical of the ‘elitist’ interest in anti-nuclear activity that shifted focus away from confronting the issue of violence used by women in self-defense, which disproportionately affects poor and working class women.279 “The feminism in anarcha-feminism seems in danger of getting lost,” she admonished, and further impressed ‘anarcha-feminists’ to pursue “a grass-roots women’s movement which would be a coalition of the truly oppressed—poor, working class, Black, Third World, and middle class women?”280 However, as will be shown in the following chapter, ‘anarcha-feminists’ continued to be actively involved in non-violent anti-nuclear organizing, and subsequent anti-militarist mobilizations. Their involvement in anti-nuclear organizing, ironically, allowed ‘anarcha-feminists’ to make a lasting impact on feminist direct action by implementing apparently successful ‘anarcha-feminist’ prefigurative political frameworks in large anti-nuclear and anti-militarist mobilizations.

The “Anarcha-Feminism: Growing Stronger” Conference was followed by another explicitly ‘anarchist feminist’ conference on April 28, 1979. Co-sponsored by the Association for Libertarian Feminists (ALF) and the Gay Men’s Alliance of Hunter College, the all-day ‘Anarchist Feminist’ Conference drew approximately one

279 Fridely.
280 Fridely.
hundred people to the Park Royal Hotel in New York City to attend workshops and network with others. Unlike the Tiamat sponsored conference, the New York conference allowed men to both attend and run workshops. Speakers at the conference included anarchist historian Paul Avrich, who spoke about his work on the life of 19th century ‘anarchist feminist’ Voltairine de Cleyre and pushed others further investigate the plethora of admirable historical ‘anarchist feminists,’ and long-time activist Esther Dolgoff, wife of noted anarchist activist Sam Dolgoff, reflected on her over sixty years as an ‘anarchist feminist,’ including her meeting with Emma Goldman. Other attendees included individualist ‘anarchist feminist’ Sharon Presley, Elaine Leeder and Patti Stanko; the latter two were involved in Anarcha-Feminist Notes and its communications network. Participants in the conference hailed from New York City, Ithaca (NY), Boston (MA), Philadelphia (PA), Baltimore (MD), Ypsilanti (MI), Bridgewater (ME), and Paris, France; Australian ‘anarchist feminist’ who had found out about the conference also sent support and literature for distribution. The conference organizers also reported that at least one ‘anarchist feminist’ group was formed in New York City as a result of the conference.

Workshops at the conference included Gay Anarchism, Applying Anarchist Feminist Principles to Everyday Life (run by Leeder), Socialist vs. Anarchist Feminism (run by Stanko), Lesbian Anarchism, Alternatives to Government

281 Association of Libertarian News 13, Paul Avrich Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections, Library of Congress, Box 40, folder 10.
282 During his lecture, Avrich ‘reeled off’ a list of ‘anarchist feminists’ who deserved further historical inquiry, including Kate Austin, Miriam Daniels, Lizzy Mae Holmes, Lillian Harman, Georgia Replogle, Gertrude B. Kelley, Eleanor Fitzgerald, Sarah E. Holmes, Old Maximoff, Millie Rocker and Agnes Inglis. (Association of Libertarian News 13, 8.)
283 Association of Libertarian News 13, 8.
284 Anarcha-Feminist Notes, Vol. 1, No. 2.
285 Association of Libertarian News 13, 6.
Solutions, and Communist and Individualist Anarchism, which was a dialogue between Leeder and Presley. The theoretical focus admonished by Fridely at the Ithaca conference was still present; however, the largest attendance of the conference was at Leeder’s workshop on the practical applications of ‘anarchist feminism,’ which one male attendee reported, “evoked both active discussion during and favorable comment after the workshop.”

The dialogue between Presley and Leeder reportedly began with many in the workshop “warily eyeing each other’s ideology;” but early tensions eventually gave way to “a spirit of tolerance, reasonableness, and community.” One workshop participant recounted that the most engaging and “impassioned” contributions came from individuals, such as Avrich, who spoke out against factionalism among anarchist and ‘anarchist feminists.’ Avrich specifically cited “…the co-existence of individualists and C.N.T anarcho-syndicalists in Spain during the 1930s,” and by the end of the workshop, the various ‘sects’ “discovered that if they could not agree on everything, they could still, as anarchists and libertarians, share trust and good will.”

As the conference was co-sponsored by the Gay Men’s Alliance of Hunter College, the mixed gender environment, and the diversity of political identification, distinguished the New York City conference from the previous convergence in Ithaca. The large attendance of radical libertarians, and gay male anarchists, diversified networking possibilities, and further underscored the varied political traditions that fed into anarch@-feminism in the late seventies.

Closely associated with anarch@$-feminist organizing, though differentiated in theory and name, the Association of Libertarian Feminists was founded on Ayn Rand’s birthday, February 2nd, 1973 in Eugene, Oregon. Though organized hierarchically and occasionally involved in electoral politics, libertarian feminists—also called individualist feminists, or individualist ‘anarchist feminists’—promoted radical social, political and economic change to free the individual from the oppression of bureaucracy and massive institutions; the ‘liberation’ of the individual could only be achieved if the government left the individual alone. ALF’s critiques of state power and domination also differed from leftist oriented anarch@$-feminist critiques, in that libertarian feminism critiques reformist legislation and equal rights activism on purely individualist terms; the group’s founding statement read, “We…resent and reject legislation which attempts to ‘equalize’ our social or economic position. Frankly, we don’t think there is anyone else in the world quite like us and we object to political attempts to rob us of our uniqueness.”

Libertarian feminists also rejected the use of direct action or violence in their work, favoring education, establishing alternative institutions, and Libertarian Party politics to direct confrontation with the state. More radically oriented libertarian feminists, like Sharon Presley, rejected party politics, though she participated in ALF’s incorporation into a national organization in September 1975.

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290 “About ALF.”
291 “About ALF”
aligned herself closely with individualist anarchism, and contributed to anarchist and anarch-feminist conferences, projects, and scholarship. Beginning with the publication of *Government is Women’s Enemy* in 1976, Presley pursued the historical and philosophical study of individualist anarchist and anarchist feminists, and libertarian feminists, including Voltairine de Cleyre and Benjamin R. Tucker. Presley continues to research and teach on American women resisters to authority at California State University, East Bay, one of many anarch-feminists who have utilized the resources of academia to further develop anarch-feminist critiques, theory and history.

The structure of ALF presents a counter-point the dominant organizational strategies of anarch-feminists from 1974-1979. ALF’s hierarchical structure—President, Treasurer, National Coordinator, etc.,—was in direct contrast to the structures and process supported by anarch-feminists favoring social anarchist analysis, which proposed wholly egalitarian and consensus run collectives. ALF’s statement of purpose affirmed its commitment to “provide a libertarian alternative to those aspects of the women’s movement that foster dependence and collectivism.” The autonomy of local ALF groups from the national coordinating office, as well as ALF’s “neutral” position on the Libertarian Party of the U.S., supports the association’s claim that they possess “only a handful of organizational guidelines.” In short, ALF was able to sustain itself, and its structure, over time because its

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organizational expression coincided with their individualist mission; to organize locally in small collectives based on consensus decision making, as anarch@-feminists were doing at the time, would have put in jeopardy the autonomy of the individual in favor of the collective.

Though libertarian feminists also dealt with sexism within the male-dominated Libertarian Party, the underpinnings of individualist anarchism negate the necessity of collective struggle based on sex. To libertarian feminists, the sexism is, above all, the oppression of the *individual*, not just the oppression of women collectively. Thus, membership in ALF, from the beginning, included both men and women, and the mixed gender environment of the conference co-sponsored by ALF resulted from the anti-separatist philosophy of the group.

The strategies and organizational expression articulated on the pages of ALF newsletter represent an alternative form of synthesizing anarchist and feminist traditions. Though the building blocks of libertarian/individualist feminism and anarch@-feminism differ, their emphasis on individual emancipation and the oppressive nature of the state corresponded enough that the two ‘sects’ often networked, organized and worked together. Libertarian feminism and individualist anarch@-feminism thus provide a constructive contrast to the dominant syndicalist, communal/communist, and social anarch@-feminisms.

*Where do we go from Here?: Approaching the 1980s*

As the women’s liberation movement underwent dramatic structural change in the mid-1970s, an emphasis on organizational strategy and internal process
dominated much of the anarch@-feminist discourse after 1975. The desire to create a revolutionary women’s culture alongside direct political action necessitated a focus on how anarch@-feminists could organize themselves, and others, locally, regionally, nationally and globally. To this point, anarch@-feminist adherence to localized small group organizing, in addition to the development of regional and international communication networks, engendered the continued evolution of this form of organization, despite shifts toward hierarchical leadership and bureaucracy in the women’s movement at large. This organizational format allowed anarch@-feminists to work on local projects while also developing a larger anarch@-feminist revolutionary culture and supportive community.

The anarch@-feminist focus on developing a revolutionary counter-culture in conjunction with political, social and economic alternatives, distinguishes them from many social movements of the decade. This ‘holistic’ framework for revolution attempts to meet the needs of both the individual and collective practically, while also maintaining a commitment to total revolution along anarch@-feminist prefigurative lines. In 1975, Peggy Kornegger stressed the long-term process of revolution, stating, “the romantic image of a small band of armed guerrillas overthrowing the US Government is obsolete and basically irrelevant to this conception of revolution.”

By the end of the decade, anarch@-feminists had developed structural expressions and organizational models that took seriously this long-term process, and fostered networks and communities to support of their ongoing struggle. Their analysis of, and experiences with, non-hierarchical and leaderless organization, consensus decision making, and horizontal networking—the main practices of their organizational

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296 Kornegger, “Anarchism: the Feminist Connection,” 244.
strategy—informing and broadening not only their own praxis, but also a wide range of activism, grassroots organizations, and new social movements in the late seventies and early eighties.
Chapter 3
Anarch@-Feminist Direct Action and Community: 1978-1983

As anarch@-feminists successfully created communication networks from the mid to late seventies, their conversations and written works turned towards discussion of the tactics and strategies required for liberation. Some anarch@-feminist theorists, like Lynn Farrow and Carol Ehrlich, drew upon situationism to propose the creation of situations that might break “…the pattern of socialized acceptance of the world as it is.” Ehrlich’s situationist analysis of ‘anarchist-feminism’ in her 1977 article, “Socialism, Anarchism, Feminism,” articulates the creation of situations—action—as key in combating and destroying socialized patterns of acceptance.

Ehrlich’s synthesis of ‘anarchist-feminism’ and situationism implied that action, specifically directed action, must be a part of a liberatory milieu. These situations required energy be turned inward to support and maintain of these environments, which in turn, produced the liberation of personal consciousness, and the translation of this internalized energy into outwardly directed actions. Additionally, Ehrlich’s analysis highlighted the need to develop alternatives to the culture of spectacle, which treats individuals as “passive spectators” of their lives instead of purposeful actors. Thus, her tract implicitly argues that the development of an alternative culture, a revolutionary ‘counter-culture’ even, is necessary for the processes and action that bring about individual and collective liberation.

Other anarch@-feminist writers advocated direct action: they called for the
direct confrontation with state power, what anarchists termed, the ‘propaganda of the
deed.’ Northeast-based anarch@-feminist writer Maria Scipione, for one, articulates
the need for direct action in her 1978 talk on ‘anarcha-feminism,’ which was given at
a forum on women and violence in Rochester, NY, and reprinted in southern
anarchist newspaper Bayou La Rose in 1980. According to Scipione, the state’s
inability to protect women from violence and sexual assault necessitated feminist
direct action as a form of self-defense. To this point, she argued that women have the
right of self-defense, as authoritarian state structures cannot, or will not, protect
women from the violence of both men and the state. She concluded,

We do need to protect ourselves and since we are the only ones we can
depend on the task is awesome. The right of all women to self-defense should
become a collective responsibility….We must be prepared—not to take it—
but to fight and change it.299

Still, other anarch@-feminist writers emphasized the need to break out of the
‘reaction’ model of activism and focus on the active creation of radical social,
political, economic and cultural alternatives.300 In her 1980 article, “Anarcha-
Feminism: Why the Hyphen?” Canadian anarchist Kytha Kurin proposed valuable
critiques for anarch@-feminism at the dawn of the 1980s. She wrote, “As feminists
move more and more from reaction to direction, and as we all work to develop
community sharing skills, we should be looking at making our cities more livable

300 The reactive model highlights the formation of projects/actions based on reaction to injustices in
society; thus, the structure and efficacy of this work is directly tied to the power structures responsible
for the injustice in the first place.
rather than devising ways to escape them." Here Kurin references the exodus of sixties counter-cultural radicals from the cities over the course of the seventies; while many established successful alternative communities in rural areas, Kurin critiqued the ‘dropping out’ of the counter-culture precisely because of their refusal to confront, act and create alternatives within their local environments.

Kurin additionally argued, “an anarchism broadened by the feminist experience [is] the most viable revolutionary direction for the 80s,” concluding her essay with the announcement that she self-identifies exclusively as an anarchist, inclusive of feminism, rather than as an ‘anarcha-feminist.’ Within anarchism, and anarchist history, Kurin identified the essential drive for total human liberation, regardless of gender, which was deepened by the work and organizing of radical and anarch@-feminists in the seventies. Kurin’s article incorporated nascent anarch@-feminist history into a longer tradition of anarchist internal critique; as a “continuously created explorative and active response to the immediate and to the future,” anarchism, like feminism, is a process of liberation, and has, throughout its history, been compounded with other social movements. Anarchist history is littered with examples of collaborative efforts between anarchists and other revolutionaries working together for the same end; these mutual struggles have helped expand anarchist theory and practice and have allowed anarchism to emerge as the most adaptable and responsive framework for liberation.

303 Anarch-communism, which stresses the importance of creating/sustaining community, and anarcho-syndicalism (revolutionary unionism), which emphasizes workplace oriented organizing and action, are just two of such compound movements that join anarch@-feminism in the anarchist tradition.
Kurin’s article highlights important organizational trends that took place for anarch@-feminists in the late seventies and early eighties. While direct action tactics were negotiated, implemented and revised, anarch@-feminists expanded their networks into emergent areas of collective radical activism, and, concurrently, began working alongside other anarchists in mixed gendered groups. The milieu of radical activism in the early eighties allowed anarch@-feminists to play increasingly important roles in general anarchist groups and in mass movements for radical social change. Kurin’s critical point, however, is her demand that local struggles be placed in a global context. Accordingly, she stated,

> It’s important to see our constructive local struggles in their global context so that we don’t get assimilated into the system, so that we can learn from others who are struggling in their own areas, so that we never forget that we’re involved in world revolution and so that when we do join in large demonstrations such as anti-militarist and anti-nuke, we do so from an informed position and are able to participate constructively.\(^\text{304}\)

The involvement of anarch@-feminists in larger political movements provided a platform for further innovation in small-group organizing and tactics. Their participation and influence in anti-nuclear and anti-militarism organizing, in particular, elucidated the importance of connecting local and global struggles, and precipitated improvements to the local, small-scale and non-hierarchical organizational model.

The resuscitation of these models for mass movements and mobilizations owes much to the proliferation of anarch@-feminist organizing in the seventies, as well as anarch@-feminist dedication to consensus decision-making and local affinity

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\(^{304}\) Kurin, “Anarcha-Feminism: Why the Hyphen?” 262.
groups. The movement milieus of the late seventies and early eighties, then, provided
the opportunity for anarch@-feminist thought, process and action to impact activism
and individuals far beyond the constraints of an explicit anarch@-feminist position.

Intersecting Milieus: Anarchism and Feminism in the Late Seventies and Early
Eighties

Mirroring the horizontal expansion of anarch@-feminist networks and
organizing earlier in the decade, the late 1970s saw American anarchists attempting to
organize federations of anarchist groups on regional, national and goal-oriented
basis’. The Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation (SRAF) had been organized in
the early seventies, but functionally served as a communications network between
diverse anarchist groups and individuals. At a 1977 SRAF conference in Wisconsin
the federation splintered, and a group tired of the “stagnant and non-revolutionary”305
SRAF founded the Anarchist Communist Tendency, re-launched in 1978 as the
Anarchist Communist Federation of North America (ACF). The ACF included groups
from Ontario (Canada), Ann Arbor (MI), Chicago (IL), Champaign-Urbana (IL), New
York City, Milwaukee (WI), Evanston (IL), Morgantown (WV), Rochester (NY), San
Francisco (CA), Minneapolis (MN), Madison (WI), Ypsilanti (MI), and Portland
(OR).306 Reports on ACF in Black Flag of Anarchism: an Anarcho-Syndicalist
Newsletter, stated,

The ACF stands alone on the libertarian left because it has been founded
around revolutionary principles of collective responsibility, mutual aid,

305 “Anarchist-Communist Federation Founded,” Black Flag of Anarchism: an Anarcho-Syndicalist
Newsletter [online], Vol. 1, No. 1 (1977); available from http://libcom.org/forums/north-america/blast-
past-18122008; Internet.
306 Hargis, “Notes on American Anarchism, Part II.”
feminism and class struggle. Opposed to the ACF in pioneering the way towards economic and political freedom are scattered groups of libertarians who either fail to grasp the issues at hand or who are opposed to collectively working together to bring about social and economic change.\footnote{307} Though the ACF was dissolved in 1982, its organizational model and ideological emphasis’ tell much about the state of American anarchism of the period.\footnote{308} The push towards federation and networking organizations, more revolutionary political expression, and the ‘twining’ of anarcho-communism and anarcho-syndicalism characterize major trends in North American anarchist movement politics during the late seventies and early eighties.

Workers Solidarity Alliance (WSA), founded in 1981, also possessed many of these characteristics, and like the ACF, emerged as an effort to break “with ‘counter-culturalism,’ non-class struggle and anti-organizational anarchism.”\footnote{309} WSA’s publication, ideas & action, was explicitly anarcho-syndicalist in view, though it possessed many tendencies of anarcho-communism as well. In early 1980s, as the U.S. military supported military dictatorships in Latin America, the WSA turned to organizing solidarity actions and support for workers in these countries, many of which had a history of anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist activity.\footnote{310} As well, WSA groups in the New York area organized to support workers in Eastern Europe attempting to form independent unions behind the Iron Curtain.\footnote{311} The Anarchist Association of the Americas (AAA), founded in Washington D.C. in 1981, is another
notable federation of collectives, including groups from Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Illinois, New York and Louisiana. The AAA was also responsible for publishing the well-known anarchist newsletter *Emancipation*.

While these federations were somewhat regionally inclusive, they all represent attempts to network disparate anarchist groups into a geographically broad and non-hierarchical organizational structure. These federations were also organized by anarchist affiliation, wherein ACF and WSA focused primarily on union organizing and syndicalist action, and centered the working class in their thought, process and action. In this context, the development of anarch@-feminist communications networks between 1974-1979 can be seen as part of a general trend within North American anarchism to organize federations based on geography and common interest. From the late 1930s until the formation of these federations, American anarchism had comprised primarily of ‘atomistic’ affinity groups, not of large-scale organizations. The formation of these federations served to network small collectives regionally, and their publications and newsletters facilitated the connection of local, regional, and global struggles.

Mainstream feminist organizational structure at this time tended towards nationally based single issue organizations, such as the National Abortion Rights and Action League (NARAL) and the National Women’s Political Caucus. The shift towards bureaucratic structures started in the mid seventies was completed by the end of the decade, with the dissolution of the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union in 1977.

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312 Hargis, “Notes on American Anarchism, Part II.”
alongside the destruction and/or co-optation of most socialist feminist organizations and networks.\textsuperscript{314} With liberal feminists and the National Organization for Women (NOW) leading the way, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) became the mobilizing and unifying issue for feminist activism. According to feminist historian Barbara Ryan, “because NOW had moved into a leadership role in [the ERA] campaign, it was able to pick up women from different segments of the movement who were unaffiliated in the late 1970s,” including untethered socialist and radical feminists.\textsuperscript{315} Between 1975 and 1982, the ERA (and NOW) dominated the political landscape of the women’s movement, dislocating feminist politics from the liberatory rhetoric, development and action of the early women’s liberation movement; this new landscape emphasized a rhetoric of ‘equality’ and the centering of feminist action on reform, legal maneuvering and party politics.

When it failed to gain ratification in 1982, the ERA’s uniting power was lost to emerging fragmentation within the women’s movement.\textsuperscript{316} To anarch¬-feminists, who based their organizational structure and decentralized networks on the diffusion of power, this fragmentation pointed to the failure of hierarchical organization and legal wrangling. The hierarchical movements structures feminists had built around the passage of the ERA obscured anarch¬-feminist networks and organizing during the campaign. Consequently, the increased fragmentation in the women’s movement served to highlight the decentralized networks that anarch¬-feminists built throughout the seventies.

\textsuperscript{314} Ryan, 73.
\textsuperscript{315} Ryan, 73.
\textsuperscript{316} Ryan, 77.
This fragmentation also allowed powerful critiques to be lodged within and against the feminist movement based on race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation, resulting in the deepening of feminist analysis and the opening up of ‘feminism’ to groups of women previously critical of the movement’s articulation of ‘universal’ sisterhood. Writing in 1985, feminist historian Alice Echols reported, “the recent emphasis on analyzing the interaction of male dominance, capitalism, racism and systems of sexual hierarchy would seem to suggest improved possibilities for coalition politics.”\footnote{Echols, \textit{Daring to be Bad}, 295.} While coalition politics were easier imagined than achieved, compounded politics—which combined the theory, organization, processes and action of different movements on the Left—would presumably allow seasoned veterans of women’s liberation an opportunity to maintain activist energy, while also deepening feminist analysis with increasing awareness of the intersectionality of systems of oppression. The anti-nuclear movement, for instance, drew heavily from the thought, action and population of previous environmentalist, feminist, municipalist and anarchist movements and organizing.

The fragments of feminism were re-synthesized with a non-statist focus, and many movement veterans turned towards the plethora of new social movements that appeared in the early eighties. As Ryan points out, “a connection was made between violence against women, destruction of the environment and the military mentality of the nuclear arms race.”\footnote{Ryan, 89.} The politically conservative atmosphere of the U.S. in the 1980s further pressed women to elucidate the connections between feminism,
environmentalism, the arms race and nuclear proliferation, and setting the stage for
the emergence of new non-statist movements.

A growing interest throughout the 1980s in feminist spirituality, non-violence,
a reverence for nature and womanist values led to the involvement of radical
cultural feminists, anarcho-feminists, and ecofeminists in the prevention of
violence to the earth and the earth’s people.\(^\text{319}\)

The Women’s Pentagon Actions in the early 1980s, and the proliferation of women’s
peace camps during the summer of 1983, are two illustrative examples of feminist
direct action strategies employed in movements for social, political and economic
change.

The reorganized movements of the late 1970s and early 1980s that utilized
direct action strategies, including anti-nuclear and anti-militarist mobilizations, drew
upon the theory, practice and networks produced by anarchist, feminist and
environmentalist groups throughout the seventies. Because anarch@-feminism can
itself be understood as a compound ‘movement’ or revolutionary expression,
anarch@-feminists played an important role within these movements, contributing
their knowledge of, and experiences with, anarchist and feminist practices.

Compounding Agents: Social Ecology, Ecofeminism and Anarch@-feminism

Most of the groundwork for anarch@-feminist participation was laid by the
time movements against nuclear proliferation and the arms race coalesced in the late
seventies. Indeed, the very participation of anarch@-feminists in a movement at all
questions the organizational structures they articulated and practiced throughout the
seventies. The specific organizational aspects of these movements will be addressed

\(^{319}\) Ryan, 137.
in the next section; however, prior to this inquest it is pertinent to explore, briefly, the theoretical, political and social confluences that provided the impetus for anarch@-feminist involvement in anti-nuclear and anti-militarist organizing.

Even in the early stages of articulating anarch@-feminist theory, the writings of social ecologist and anarchist Murray Bookchin were incredibly influential. Of particular importance to anarch@-feminist development in the late seventies and early eighties was his articulation of ‘social ecology,’ which connected problems of environmental degradation to problems in the society at large. Bookchin’s writings admonished the constructed division between human nature (the cognizance, society and products of humans) and non-human nature, which is romanticized as so basically natural and wild that it is “frozen into a circumscribed domain in which human innovation, foresight, and creativity have no place and offer no possibilities.”

Human nature, he argues, is an extension of the evolutionary processes that brought about nonhuman nature, and as such, the transformation of society will necessarily go part and parcel with environmentalist goals. In 1982’s Ecology of Freedom, Bookchin wrote, “in this confluence of social and ecological crises, we can no longer afford to be unimaginative; we can no longer afford to do without utopian thinking.” Freedom of humans and freedom of nature, then, are inextricably intertwined in Bookchin’s holistic emancipatory project. His emphasis on

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320 O’Conner, “Towards a Leaderless Revolution.”
322 Bookchin, “What is Social Ecology.”
‘utopian’ thinking, as well, provides another point of convergence between Bookchin’s thought and anarch@-feminism.

Bookchin also addressed the legacy of man’s domination over nature, and by extension, over woman. By doing so he linked theories of the environment to theories of patriarchal power. His linkages between the devaluation and violation of nature and of women were built upon by ecofeminism and women’s spirituality prevalent within the anti-nuclear and anti-militarist nonviolent direct action movements.

Bookchin drew the origins of hierarchy back to a time in which “social life was matricentric and nature was its domestic abode,”324 when spiritual practices empowered female practitioners and positively related to, and interacted with, nonhuman nature. So too, are the seeds of feminist anti-militarism seen within Bookchin’s work, as he connects ‘male’ aggression to the devaluation of nature and women, and to humiliation brought by sexual differentiation.325

Most ecofeminist scholars point to the development of ecofeminism in the U.S. as a result of the nonviolent direct action movements against nuclear power and arms, though Bookchin is said to have coined the term as early as 1976 in his plans for the curriculum of the Institute for Social Ecology.326 Aside from Bookchin’s influence, other feminists produced texts in the late 1970s that laid the theoretical

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324 Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, 121; Bookchin borrows the term ‘matricentric’ from philosopher Erich Fromm, and uses it to signify pre-historic social shifts, wherein “the community, in separating itself from a certain degree of dependence on game and migratory animals, began to shift its social imagery from the male hunter to the female food-gatherer, from the predator to the procreator, from the camp fire to the domestic hearth, from cultural traits associated with the father to those associated with the mother” (Ecology of Freedom, 58).


Two events in 1980 stimulated the formation of a practice and action based movement: the ‘Woman and Life on Earth’ conference and the first Women’s Pentagon Action, which emerged from the ISE sponsored conference and paved the way for further autonomous feminist organizing of women’s peace actions and camps, including the 1983 chain of encampments in across North American and Western Europe.\(^{328}\)

The popularity of ecofeminism as both an academic and action-oriented articulation emerged as a consequence of the nonviolent direct action movement, and owes much to the strong presence of anarcha-feminists within these movements. To this point, Nancy Tuana and Rosemarie Tong’s *Feminism and Philosophy* reader grouped ‘anarcha feminist’ and ecofeminist perspectives in a chapter together, contending that “the equally practice-oriented ecofeminist movement developed out of the concerns and principles of anarcha feminism,” and their grouping together allows for the “…recognition of their connections and [recovery of] the importance of the anarchist feminist tradition.”\(^{329}\) The editors’ introduction to the section also pointed to the arenas of convergence between eco- and ‘anarcha feminism,’ stating, “ecofeminists rightly note that except for anarcha feminist, no feminist perspective

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\(^{328}\) Brian Tokar, “Social Ecology and Social Movements: From the 1960s to the Present,” *Harbinger* [online] (Vol. 3, No. 1, 2002); available from http://www.social-ecology.org/2002/09/harbinger-vol-3-no-1-social-ecology-and-social-movements-from-the-1960s-to-the-present/; Internet; accessed April 1, 2009; Sponsored by Bookchin’s Institute for Social Ecology (ISE) and held in western Massachusetts. The conference received an outpouring of interest, to the point that King and the other organizers had to limit the conference size. In the end, 800 women came to the conference. (Gaard, *Ecological Politics*, 18).

has recognized the importance of healing the nature/culture division." This recognition, in turn, stems from the influence of social ecology on anarch@-feminist thought and practice.

Despite the genealogical linkages to anarch@-feminism, ecofeminism’s primary focus is on the relationships between human and nonhuman nature, contending that no emancipatory project can succeed in dismantling hierarchy and oppression without addressing the liberation of nonhuman nature. A full understanding of the importance of the anarch@-feminist tradition demands the recognition of its integral role in the development of ecofeminism, as well as its influential presence within the nonviolent direct action movement.

Negotiating Praxis: New Social Movements, Prefigurative Communities and Nonviolence

As I have argued, anarch@-feminism in practice, and in theory, cannot be reduced to a purely counter-cultural or political movement; it straddled the divide between cultural and political revolution, calling for a holistic revolutionary process to produce a liberatory society. Their process demanded the simultaneous development of personal consciousness, revolutionary culture and emancipatory political expressions. Throughout the 1970s, the divergence of the sixties counter-culture and New Left gave way to a new breed of social movement—environmental, feminist, municipalist and anti-militarist—which grew over time into an “interlacing

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330 Tuana and Tong, 329.
332 For a more in-depth review of ecofeminist literature and development, see Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature, Edited by Greta Gaard.
network of movements and tendencies—gay, lesbian, ethnic, localist (based on citizens’ initiative groups and notions of decentralization), anti-militarist as well as anti-war, indeed even new visions of…broadly speaking, new lifeways.”

Emerging from the intermingling and overlapping of these ‘new social movements’ was a renewed commitment to anarchic forms of organization, which manifested itself most visibly in movements against nuclear proliferation and the build up of arms. These movements included emphasis on decentralization, local self-management, confederal political structures, consensus decision-making, affinity groups, alternative cultural expressions and direct action. Indeed, according to Bookchin, “the new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s represent at their best an absorption of New Left ideas and counter-cultural values without the frivolity and indifference to organization that marked the 1960s.” The anarchic organizational strategies adopted by these movements brought together diverse groups in anti-nuclear and anti-militarist struggles. That so many groups found this framework to be appropriate, if not essential, to movement success speaks both to the flexibility of anarchist practice and to the anti-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian tendencies dispersed throughout movements for social change.

The organized struggles against nuclear proliferation and growing U.S. militarism utilizing nonviolent direct action and anarchist organizational structures, are delineated as the ‘nonviolent direct action movement’ by historian Barbara Epstein. In her book *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution*, Epstein contends that the direct action movement of the late seventies and early eighties took seriously the

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necessity of *cultural* revolution, attempting to “give it greater coherence, to articulate it as a philosophy of political protest, and to draw out its implications for forms of organization and styles of political action.”\(^\text{335}\) Combined with a dedication to nonviolence, the direct action movement was able to draw upon a large constituency of individuals—seasoned movement veterans and neophytes alike—and overlapped with diverse political and cultural movements and communities. Building off of revolutionary feminist praxis and ecological analysis, the practices of the nonviolent direct action movement facilitated deeper understanding of the intersections of egalitarian organization, participatory democracy and revolutionary processes as they related to the envisioning of an emancipatory future.\(^\text{336}\)

Organizationally, the direct action movement consisted of federated local affinity groups, organizing for sporadic mass protests, blockades and demonstrations.\(^\text{337}\) Alliances and confederal organizations based on egalitarian principles and consensus provided the general structure necessary to direct movement strategies, tactics and mobilizations without hierarchical leadership and bureaucracy. The movements also placed direct emphasis on the development of prefigurative politics, which was largely inspired by anarch@-feminist participation in these movements. For anarch@-feminists, prefigurative politics meant the holistic embodiment of ‘utopia’ within community structure and action wherein the means of liberation must fulfill the promise of the ends. During their period of expansion in the late seventies, for example, anarch@-feminists experimented with structure and


\(^{336}\) Epstein, *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution*, 57.

\(^{337}\) Epstein, *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution*, 55.
process as they built a decentralized community. Epstein argues, “There is always a prefigurative element in radical politics, or at least a pull toward prefigurative politics, because without an effort to live one’s values radical claims collapse into hypocrisy.”

The emphasis on prefigurative politics had long been an integral part of anarch@-feminist organizational demands; however, the emergence of nonviolent direct action movements provided the opportunity to apply these prefigurative demands on a much larger scale than was available to anarch@-feminists previously. Consequently, the adoption of these strategies by the nonviolent direct action movement promoted anarch@-feminist critiques, organizational modes and tactics. Indeed, as will be shown, anarch@-feminism played an important role in the successes of the direct action movement, which in its own right influenced the development and strategies of activism and grassroots organizing well into the 1990s.

Anarch@-feminists were integral to the formation and success of prefigurative communities, which were created and maintained in support of direct action mobilizations. As will be shown, much of the perceived successes of these movements stemmed from the creation of solidarity, community and support amongst federated affinity groups, often facilitated by the collective contributions to camp structure and organization. The ‘utopian’ leanings of these revolutionary communities were directly tied to the contributions of anarch@-feminists, so much so, that the prefigurative aspects of anarch@-feminism were overtly emphasized in academic

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analysis after the mid eighties. In Tuana and Tong’s introduction to their chapter on anarcha feminism and ecofeminism, the editors state, “A central tenet of anarcha feminism is that in removing all forms of domination, the process of revolution must itself take place in and through structures that are consistent with the type of society and social relations at which the revolution is aimed.”

The impact of this association, for one, was to emphasize anarcha-feminism within a communalist anarchist tradition articulated by, among others, Emma Goldman and Spanish anarchists in the 1930s, but was to the detriment of the American individualist anarchist tradition articulated by 19th century anarcha-feminist Voltairine de Cleyre, and contemporaries Sharon Presley and L. Susan Brown.

Anarcha-feminists also attempted to situate their emphasis on nonviolent action in an international context that recognized the differences in approach mandated by the geo-political environments in which organizing took place. For anarcha-feminists, nonviolent action and tactics embodied the nonviolence of the future society they were demanding. Moreover, the growing international ‘military-industrial complex’ demanded a nonviolent approach. One Vermont anarcha-feminist, Lori Barg, reflected, “Non-violence as a personal lifestyle is the only lifestyle that allows me to be treated as I would like to be treated, with love and respect.” Articulating an explicitly feminist view of nonviolence also helped delineate the distinction between self-defense and nonviolence. This distinction was especially relevant given the connections being forged by these movements between sexual assault and violence against women in society, and the growing militarism of

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340 Tuana and Tong, 328.
the U.S. at home and abroad. Vermont-based anarch@-feminist Laurie Larson explained this distinction:

Living is a key word. I do not believe that cutting down a fence at a nuclear power plant is violence. I do believe that what it tries to do to me (and succeeds) is violence. Active self-defense. No ‘passive’-ism. Hammering/destroying the nosecones of nuclear warheads is great. A bit of spray-paint on a bank to educate people as to its connections in South Africa is fine. Non-violent direct action. Creativity and belief in life. What they do is terrorism. I reserve the right to reclaim words for truer expression.”

In women-only communities, encampments and actions, a shared sense of being ‘victims’ or ‘survivors’ of violence was crucial to developing a dialog on the distinctions between ‘self-defense’ vs. ‘nonviolent’ action in the context of U.S. activism.

Nonviolence, as understood by anarch@-feminists, did not necessarily maintain applicability outside of the U.S., Canadian and British contexts. At the height of the Cold War, the concern over NATO’s (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) expansion of nuclear weapons technology grew within member nations; a nonviolent approach to anti-militarism mobilizations gave protestors the upper hand in confrontations with a military super-power. Barg also articulated her own understanding of the connection between emergent nonviolent (feminist) action in the U.S. and ‘third-world’ armed guerilla movements:

I think that guerilla revolutions (while not employing nonviolence as a political strategy), adopt the basic tenets of nonviolence; a respect for life, freedom and humanity as their personal spirit….They depend on the goodwill

343 The U.S., Canada, the U.K. and much of Western Europe were the loci of feminist anti-nuclear and anti-militarist organizing.
of the population for their safety and their very lives…I believe nonviolence is present if the approach is one of love and support rather than fear and coercion.  

Barg’s connections between third world guerilla movements and nonviolent direct action in the U.S. is even more striking when compared with the ‘guerilla’ tactics employed by anarch@-feminist affinity groups in the Abalone Alliance. 

The anarch@-feminists that scouted, mapped and traversed the backcountry around the Diablo Nuclear Plant during Abalone’s blockade reflected Barg’s connections: “We looked at it as a mini-war; we were into a nonviolent guerilla mentality.” Connecting nonviolent direct action and prefigurative ‘action-based’ communities in the U.S. to ‘third world’ guerilla movements further reveals the relationship between prefigurative community and personal empowerment. Such communities necessitate ‘living the revolution’ in all aspects of personal and social life, and consequently serve a vital role in empowering individuals to take seriously their agency and action as integral to the overall emancipatory project.

However, it was not until feminist and anarch@-feminist practices and approaches were accepted within the nonviolent direct action movement that tactics and strategies were figured into an international context. The emergence of international solidarity within nonviolent direct action organizations was connected to a growing sense of internationalism brought on by more sustained prefigurative projects.

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344 Barg, “Not Textbook Theory.”
345 Epstein, Political Protest and Cultural Revolution, 110.
Re-visiting Nonviolence and Self-Defense: The Clamshell Alliance and Emergent ‘Manarchism’

Nonviolent direct action organizations appeared, and garnered the most support and participation, in areas where alternative communities had flourished in the mid-1970s, particularly in rural northern New England, Northern California and Upstate New York.\footnote{Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 55.} One of the first organizations to emerge, the Clamshell Alliance, was founded in 1976 to oppose the construction of Seabrook nuclear power plant in New Hampshire.\footnote{Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 61-63.} The alliance was immediately inspired by the successful mobilization and occupation of the site of a nuclear power station in Wyhl, Germany.\footnote{David Graeber, “The Shock of Victory,” \textit{Infoshop News} [online] (12 October, 2007); available from http://news.infoshop.org/article.php?story=2007graeeber-victory; Internet.}

Clamshell was organized in small group structures—affinity groups—based on local, political and personal identification, and utilized consensus in supporting and enacting nonviolent civil disobedience.\footnote{Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 63.} The organization was implicitly anarchist in organization and strategy, though the individuals and affinity groups involved varied in their acceptance of an ‘anarchist’ identification; these conscious and unconscious anarchists included many older activists involved in religiously based peace activism, most notably, Quaker activists. The diverse collective of individuals who instigated the alliance shared a belief that electoral politics and legal maneuvering were not effective for the struggle against nuclear proliferation.\footnote{Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 64.}

Keeping with anarchist principles, the method of organization for Clamshell—named
in reference to the clams threatened by Seabrook’s waste output—arose more or less spontaneously in its initial meetings, and was tested throughout several occupations of the Seabrook site, culminating in a massive mobilization in the spring of 1977.\textsuperscript{351}

Contemporary anarchist anthropologist (and self-identified anarchist) David Graeber points out that Clamshell’s structure reflected “what we now consider standard anarchist tactics and forms of organization: mass actions, affinity groups, spokescouncils, consensus process, jail solidarity, the very principle of decentralized direct democracy.”\textsuperscript{352} The dissolution of the alliance also demonstrated the contentious navigation of direct democratic processes that persist today in contemporary anarchist communities and direct action mobilizations. In May 1978, after the perceived success of Clamshell’s first three mobilizations, the newly initiated Coordinating Committee ‘violated process’ in by-passing the consensus decision-making structures by negotiating with government officials; the result was the translation of the upcoming fourth occupation into a three day ‘legal rally’ at Seabrook.\textsuperscript{353} Further dissention over the alliance’s nonviolence guidelines precipitated its destruction, sending a large number of radicalized activists, trained and experienced in nonviolent direct action, into related movements and activism. By 1979, the Clamshell Alliance dissolved into competing and ineffectual factions; soon thereafter, half of the Seabrook nuclear power plant went into operation.\textsuperscript{354}

\textsuperscript{351} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 64.
The most notable internal division in Clamshell arose because of the presence of Boston anarchist affinity groups, including Black Rose\textsuperscript{355} and Hard Rain, that “put themselves forward as representing militancy against what they regarded as the prevailing timidity.”\textsuperscript{356} Reminiscent of the rhetoric and factionalism of the ACF, the so-called ‘Hard Clams,’ alienated many contingents within the alliance by pushing for a more confrontational approach. They argued that a nonviolent stance did not rule out violence against property, only violence against people. The Hard Clams also rebelled against the alliance’s nonviolence guidelines and mandatory non-violence training, contending that such mandates were authoritarian; their support of fence cutting, in particular, sparked acrimonious debate within alliance meetings.

Consequently, after the demise of the alliance, many members blamed the militancy and controversy of the Hard Clams. Others, however, pointed to the alliance’s lack of direction after the third (and largest) mobilization at Seabrook, in conjunction with the failure to delineate the parameters of ‘anarchism’ and ‘nonviolence’ within the Clamshell structure.

Many of the anarch@-feminists involved in Clamshell were alienated by the Hard Clam’s promotion of confrontation, sabotage, property destruction and machismo. Epstein’s extensive interviews of ‘anarcha-feminists’ involved in Clamshell mobilizations point to a nascent critique of ‘manarchism,’\textsuperscript{357} which set

\textsuperscript{355} Unrelated to Black Rose Anarcho-Feminists. The Black Rose group in question was involved in running an anarchist lecture series at MIT and publishing anarchist periodical \textit{Black Rose} from the late 1970s to the 1990s. (Epstein, 69)

\textsuperscript{356} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 69.

\textsuperscript{357} See The Rock Bloc Collective, “Stick It To The Manarchy,” \textit{Infoshop.org}, http://www.infoshop.org/rants/manarchy.html, which identifies manarchism/manarchy as “…aggressive, competitive behavior within the anarchist movement that is frighteningly reminiscent of historically oppressive male gender roles…[including] acting macho, holier than thou, and elitist.”
anarch@a-feminist support of nonviolent prefigurative politics against a more confrontational ‘macho’ anarchist style. West Coast ‘anarcha-feminist’ Crystal Gray, a member of an anarcha-feminist group from the West Coast that attended [a Clamshell action in] 1979 (and that used the spelling “anarcha-feminist” intentionally to underline its rejection of the masculine universal), many anarcha-feminist were attracted to CDAS initially because of its anarchism but were disappointed to find how little the group had been influenced by the feminist critique of the macho style.\textsuperscript{358}

Indeed, if one need pinpoint the emergence of ‘anarcha-feminism,’ a major point of rupture is located in the West Coast ‘anarcha-feminists’ reaction to the militancy of Hard Rain’s anarchism.

The Hard Clams’ reliance on confrontation did not demonstrate \textit{by means} and \textit{by example} the kind of emancipatory society envisioned by anarch@a-feminists. Epstein summarized the conflict as follows,

A rhetoric of personal and sexual liberation often conflicted with a more complicated reality in which the rejection of convention allowed machismo to flourish and the attempt to reestablish a bond with nature reinforced the expectation that women would occupy traditional roles as mothers and nurturers.\textsuperscript{359}

Set against the strict nonviolence and prefigurative politics supported by anarch@a-feminists, the ‘manarchy’ emerged as an alternative to the perceived lack of militancy within direct action movement, and articulating a vision of ‘nonviolence’ that provided for the destruction of property. Cutting down a fence, it was argued, was not equivalent to violence against people.\textsuperscript{360}

\textsuperscript{358} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 87.
\textsuperscript{359} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 50-51.
\textsuperscript{360} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 71.
Organizing Utopia: The Abalone Alliance and Prefigurative Community at Diablo

The Abalone Alliance coalesced in much the same way as the Clamshell Alliance, though the location, strategies and players were crucially different. Formed to oppose the construction of Pacific Gas & Electric’s (PG&E) Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant on the central California coast, the Abalone Alliance took seriously the experiences and contributions of ‘anarcha-feminists,’ and consequently lasted longer and suffered less internal conflicts than the Clamshell Alliance.\(^{361}\) Abalone enacted a more flexible consensus process, and fostered an internal culture of “nonviolence combined with a utopian vision of a radically democratic society in which everyone’s views would have equal weight and all relationships would be strictly egalitarian.”\(^{362}\)

Within the Abalone Alliance, the explicit linkages between nonviolent revolutionary action and ‘anarcha-feminist’ prefigurative politics pushed the alliance to at least partially achieve their end aim. While the internal culture and utopian politics advanced by the ‘anarcha-feminists’ in the alliance did not eliminate all internal dissention, they did help “reinforced the commitment to a utopian democratic vision and a political practice based on the values it contained.”\(^{363}\) Of great importance within (and outside of) the Abalone Alliance was the anarch@-feminist insistence that feminism required nonviolent direct action and revolutionary struggle, which provided the nonviolent direct action movement with legitimacy, and

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\(^{361}\) Epstein, *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution*, 93.

\(^{362}\) Epstein, *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution*, 93.

undermined the association between violence and revolutionary political action.\textsuperscript{364} Epstein argued that anarch@-feminists lodged the only articulations of “what was central to Abalone as a whole: the experience of total engagement, of politics merged with personal life, that came with dedication to visionary politics and with the attempt to build a prefigurative community.”\textsuperscript{365}

Abalone held its first conference in 1976, and remained a small collection of affinity groups for the first several years of its existence, cementing a strong sense of community within the alliance early on.\textsuperscript{366} In the first two years of its existence, Abalone organized two successful actions. The first, on August 7\textsuperscript{th}, 1977, drew 1,500 people to a rally at Diablo Canyon, resulting in the arrest of forty-seven individuals for occupying the site. A second rally was held August 6\textsuperscript{th} and 7\textsuperscript{th}, 1978, where 5,000 people converged on the Diablo site resulting in the arrest of 487 activists.\textsuperscript{367} These actions coincided with the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima (August 6\textsuperscript{th}, 1945), which extended the criticism of nuclear power to include anti-militarist sentiment.

While ‘anarcha-feminists’ were involved in Abalone during its initial period, the most cohesive collective joined the alliance after the Three Mile Island meltdown in March 1979. Roses Against Nuclear Energy (RANE) was comprised of former Stanford students who, rather than attempting graduate school, tried their hand at living and organizing the revolution full time. The group came together in 1976 on the Stanford campus in Palo Alto, CA, to organize around Stanford’s divestment in

\textsuperscript{364} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 95.
\textsuperscript{365} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 116.
\textsuperscript{366} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 98.
\textsuperscript{367} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 99.
South Africa.\textsuperscript{368} By 1979 they dispersed to San Francisco and Santa Cruz, forming a regional network of ‘anarcha-feminists’ in communities with strong counter-cultural histories. The Stanford ‘anarcha-feminists’ also extended their communal living experience in student cooperatives after graduation; several moved to Urban Stonehenge in San Francisco, a collective ‘anarcha-feminist’ household that was the base of organization for several Abalone actions.\textsuperscript{369}

The meltdown at Three Mile Island sparked a surge of interest and participation in anti-nuclear activism; an Abalone organized rally in San Francisco subsequently drew over 25,000 people in April 1979, and Abalone participation increased dramatically to sixty local affinity groups in the North California area by the summer of that year.\textsuperscript{370} Like Clamshell, Abalone built up momentum, peaking in large-scale mobilizations, and dissolving soon after they were completed. In the fall of 1981, with the licensing of the plant imminent, over 2000 protesters—all trained in nonviolent civil disobedience and organized by affinity groups—blockaded the plant site for two weeks.

‘Anarcha-feminist’ affinity group Love and Rage (Santa Cruz) helped scout and map the back-country around Diablo weeks in advance, and assisted in training participants in nonviolent civil disobedience, which was required of everyone in the blockade.\textsuperscript{371} ‘Anarcha-feminist’ group Antinuclear Civil Disobedience Community (ACDC) helped block the back gate of the site, camping for four days to keep it open for participants heading into the backcountry. The range of action and approach

\textsuperscript{368} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 108.
\textsuperscript{369} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 109.
\textsuperscript{370} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 100.
\textsuperscript{371} Epstein, \textit{Political Protest and Cultural Revolution}, 110.
employed by ‘anarcha-feminists’ at Diablo was broad, only eclipsed by the diversity of the actions all around. One action participant reported on the small groups traversing and organizing in the backcountry,

Synchronized with CB communications, waves of people came into the oak covered canyons to reclaim the area in a play of non-violent, creative war sports. At once point in the action, all the utilities’ and states’ men got caught red-faced for a half and hour because sixty people showed up sitting in the road between security points six miles apart. ‘My God, they would have had to hike over mountains for hours to get there!’, and that was the spirit of Diablo.372

The main hub of activity leading up to the blockade took place at the main camp, which one participant recounted for an anarchist magazine as follows;

…it was clear to me that two years of organization and community-building had paid off. Clusters of affinity groups were arranged like the spokes of a wheel with a central meeting space as its hub, most of the ‘spokes’ corresponding to one of the half dozen or so possible approaches to the plant. Another ‘spoke’ was for the support area, another was for new arrivals who had never undergone nonviolence training….and when the blockade began, affinity groups were to demonstrate a higher level of spontaneity and ability to respond creatively to changing situations than has ever been seen in an action of this size in this country. Instead of placing undue constraints on affinity groups and their movements, the outwardly peaceful tone and unhurriedness of the action seemed to encourage people to transcend their personal limits and undertake risks that might have seemed much too fearful in a different setting.373

373 Brian Tokar, “Direct Action, California Style,” Black and Green 2/3, 8.
It was clear that the Diablo action was transformative experience for all who participated, including many who had little to no experience in nonviolent direct action.

The success of Diablo blockade was due to the flexibility of the organizational model and consensus processes. Though often tedious, these aspects of the Diablo action linked spontaneity and organization in a dynamic methodology that could (and did) function in a variety of different settings—in the main camp, the backcountry, the county jail, or wherever participants found themselves. ‘Anarcha-feminists’ were integral in the creation and maintenance of these frameworks. ‘Anarcha-feminist’ Chrystal Gray, a member of Love and Rage, wrote to her friend incarcerated in Leavenworth Federal Prison, KS:

> You always knew where you stood with the rest of the protesters. It was a coherent community all the way through; a taste of what a sane society can be. It was a society where co-operation, harmony with nature, nonviolence, and hard work were the principles we tried to live by. Our technology, our process, and our institutions were to serve these principles, instead of trying to invent principles to excuse what we do, which is what often seems to happen these days.  

By the end of the action, 1900 protestors were in jail and thousands of people had come out in support of the action. Additionally, a young engineer rechecking the plant blueprints discovered a flaw in the plants design, forcing the opening of the plant back significantly and costing PG&E billions of dollars.

Thus, the action ended in relative success, quite unlike the end of Clamshell, which dissolved prior to achieving their aim of shutting down Seabrook. This sense of

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success was apparent both within Abalone, and within the public response to the
blockade. Chrystal Gray reported,

   The Abalone Alliance is bigger and richer than it has ever been. More people
know about, and care about Diablo Canyon than ever have before….All the
affinity groups we know of are still together, many are planning their own
outreach programs and are also working on some of the actions coming
up…Many of the workers and police were pretty affected too, I know. Juana
and I met some workers one night and spent time with them…when Karen
Narcoleptic was sentenced, she sang a song about Hiroshima. Most of the
courtroom cried, including the clerk and judge. There are a few more cracks in
the wall.375

Most participants in the alliance felt that they had achieved their goal, and many
turned to other avenues of anti-nuclear, anti-militarist or local organizing.376 Abalone
‘anarcha-feminists’ contended that the dissolution of the alliance maintained the
anarchist precepts of organization and spontaneity; the alliance served its purpose,
and the affinity groups and individuals that comprised it could now turn their
attention to other projects, taking with them the experience of Abalone to inform
future actions, organizations and alliances.

   Anti-militarist organizing, such as Livermore Action Group (LAG), the
Women’s Pentagon Actions, and women’s peace encampments, were the
beneficiaries of an ever-evolving anarch@-feminist approach to nonviolent civil
disobedience and direct action, which was indelibly deepened by the Diablo
experience and success. Indeed, the impact of ‘anarcha-feminism’ on the Diablo
blockade spread like tendrils into other areas of environmentalist, feminist, anti-

376 Epstein, Political Protest and Cultural Revolution, 103-104.
militarist, and anti-nuclear organizing and direct action. While neither Clamshell nor Abalone succeeded in their short term goals of permanently shutting down the proposed plant in question (Diablo went online in 1988), Graeber argues that their actions were successful in that they helped delegitimize the very idea of nuclear power—raising public awareness to the point that when Three Mile Island melted down in 1979, it doomed the industry forever. While plans for Seabrook and Diablo Canyon might not have been cancelled, just about every other then-pending plan to build a nuclear reactor was, and no new ones have been proposed for a quarter century.\textsuperscript{377}

After Diablo’s success, concern turned from nuclear power to militarism and the arms race, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, anarch@-feminism’s contribution to the nonviolent direct action movement is clearly seen in the autonomous women’s mobilizations in the early eighties, which connected the violence of the state to violence against women, and further extended and deepened anarch@-feminist process, practice and action.

*Weaving Peace: The Women’s Pentagon Actions and Women’s Peace Encampments*

The first Women’s Pentagon Action on November 17\textsuperscript{th}, 1980, drew two thousand women to Washington D.C. to participate in a creative demonstration that significantly differed from the mass demonstrations of the 1960s in its dual emphasis on women’s personal expressions and women’s collective and creative resistance. Coming out of the ‘Women and Life on Earth’ conference, which gathered together anarchists, anarch@-feminists, ecofeminists, radical feminists and activists in anti-nuclear and ecology movements to bridge “political and spiritual concerns through a

\textsuperscript{377}Graeber, “The Shock of Victory.”
politics that would link militarism to patriarchy and other forms of oppression.”

The second action, on November 15th and 16th, 1981, drew 3,500 women to Washington, and again utilized tactics that allowed for greater individual participation and creative expression. The actions utilized symbolic puppets, expressing mourning, rage, empowerment and defiance; women placed cardboard gravestones, representing female victims of violence, on the lawn of the Pentagon, and wailed in mourning.

Women who chose to participate in civil disobedience wove the doors of the Pentagon shut with yarn, while others attempted to block the entrance with a sit in. Other affinity groups constructed temporary food co-ops, clinics, schools and housing out of cardboard on the Pentagon lawn; women sang, laughed, and celebrated in defiance of the violence they wished to end. One anarcha-feminist participant wrote, “With color. Music. Sheer creativity…we spun strange webs of love and rage, cooperation and resistance, creation and destruction, with a ‘common thread’ of nonviolent direct action.”

The actions presented a new envisioning of protest, and the experiences of the women involved reflect the importance of prefigurative community and organization in fostering the transformative of personal consciousness. ‘Anarcho-feminist’ Karen Struening, a Pentagon action participant, reported,

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378 Epstein, Political Protest and Cultural Revolution, 161; The spiritual aspect of the conference drew upon the women’s spirituality movement, an offshoot of 1970s radical feminism, that was also closely connected to anarcha-feminist networks in the Bay area of California. The Urban Stonehenge collective household, for one, was both Pagan and anarcha-feminist oriented, and many of the Diablo anarcha-feminists were Pagans. (Epstein, Political Protest and Cultural Revolution, 132) Pagan anarchist affinity groups were also active in LAG organizing. (Ibid., 156)
380 Linton and Whitham, 18–22.
381 Laurie Larson, “We Encircle the Pentagon,” Black and Green 2/3, 10.
We believe that the way we make changes determines the outcome of those changes….creating what have been called ‘alternative lifestyles and institutions’ are important methods in a revolutionary process. We are committed to changing ourselves as we discover and invent our common vision.”

Building on the groundwork of all-women actions and affinity groups within Clamshell and Abalone actions, the Women’s Pentagon Actions organizers intentionally created an environment that fostered a supportive action community. Moreover, the theatricality of the action provided a loose frame for simultaneous individual and collective expression. One organizer recounted,

folks don’t take any major new step in their own political development, really, by just observing, so we wanted to have it be a totally participatory action which reflected women’s unique commitment and contribution to the event....What we actually did while we were at the Pentagon, though, we wanted to do for ourselves, and from our own hearts and consciousness. We wanted a real respect for each woman’s contribution.

Much like the Diablo blockade, the actions provided for community support and solidarity with those arrested during the demonstration. In the second action, women from around the country sent whole-wheat flour to action organizers, which was made into bread during the action, and sent with protestors to jail—“to nourish them.”

After her arrest for blocking the Pentagon entrance during the 1980 action, Struening reported that she witnessed the practice and success of ‘anarcho-feminism’ while incarcerated in Arlington Country Detention Center with twenty-three other

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384 Warnock, 42.
‘wimmin.’ All of the prisoners practiced bail solidarity, refusing to accept bail or release as “an act of collective resistance to the ‘justice’ system which determines an individual’s freedom on the amount of money they have access to.” Struening placed her experiences in jail within her knowledge of anarchist and feminist theory. She continued,

We came together in spontaneous meetings that provided a supportive, non-judgmental space for creative discussion. We did not feel the need to reach consensus on every issue…disagreement was a positive quality, no one was expected to capitulate to a group decision…During crisis situations we acted swiftly from a group sensibility, aware of our power as a whole.”

The woman-only aspect of the action also influenced how the protesters related to each other within jail; unlike mixed gender protests, there was little threat of separating affinity groups based on sex. Continuing non-cooperation, consensus and spontaneous organization within jails helped to cement the sense of women’s community established during the action. Struening’s reflection concluded,

We were pushing at the edges of the previous years of feminist experience. We had stopped our lives to say no to the murderers and yes to the love of wimmin. Our community was built on the premise, that we are here for each other. What we make of our individual lives must reflect that choice. This seems to me to be the essence of direct action, to set the meaning of our lives against the actions of men who seem compelled to destroy the human race.

Though the Women’s Pentagon Actions did not continue after the 1981 demonstration, the community fostered within the action itself showed the adaptability of prefigurative feminist politics to different forms of direct action. At

[Notes]

385 Struening, 29.
386 Struening, 29.
387 Struening, 29.
the Pentagon, women’s prefigurative communities developed within, and alongside, new forms of protest that encouraged and valued more personal expression and contribution. The fact that the actions were women-only, no doubt, enabled this process to function without disrupting the collective identification.

The ‘edges’ of the feminist experience were pushed further by the international network of women’s peace camps over the summer of 1983, which formed in solidarity to oppose nuclear proliferation, militarism and violence. Responding to the initial women’s camp begun in 1981 at Greenham Common (U.K.), camps throughout the U.S. and Canada formed a ‘chain’ of prefigurative communities dedicated to nonviolent action and civil disobedience. Camps were erected near the Boeing air-launched Cruise missile plant (Puget Sound Women’s Peace Camp, Kent, WA), a testing ground (Cole Bay, Saskatchewan, Canada), a transshipment point (Seneca Army Depot) and a deployment site (Greenham Common, U.K.).

The women’s peace camps operated throughout the summer of 1983, and many sites maintained a permanent presence for months after the summer mobilizations. The ‘Santa Rita Peace Camp,’ for example, was a ‘temporary’ women’s camp in the makeshift Santa Rita jail, which held women arrested in a major LAG mobilization in 1983. Lasting only eleven days, the Santa Rita camp implemented and maintained many of the prefigurative processes that characterized

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388 *We are Ordinary Women: a Chronicle of the Puget Sound Women's Peace Camp.* (Seattle: Seal Press, 1985), 16.

389 *Risking Peace: Why We Sat in the Road.* (Berkeley: Open Books, 1985), 7.
the more permanent camps, such as the encampment at Greenham Common, where women maintained a continuous presence for nineteen years (1981-2000).  

Greenham Common was also the first women’s peace encampment and it employed non-hierarchical and leaderless structure, consensus decision-making and the valuing of women’s personal expression. The camp’s process was first tested on the issue of separatism and male support, a trend of contention present in many of the camps. The camp set up near Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, too, experienced conflict over separatism. Comprised of many Diablo veterans and LAG members, the 1983 Vandenberg encampment’s mixed gender population provoked debate over women-only spaces and autonomous women’s actions. Despite these problems, the campaign against Vandenberg produced successful ‘all-wimmins’ overland actions by six affinity groups, many of which included anarch@-feminists or were identified explicitly as such. Seven Santa Cruz ‘anarcha-feminists,’ part of the affinity group Black Rose, staged an action at the base gate, carrying a banner stating ‘Wimmin Weave the Web of Life’ and weaving themselves together with colorful yarn and fabric.

The permanency of the camps presented a new dimension to the prefigurative utopian politics put forth by ‘anarcha-feminists’ at Diablo. At times, this new dimension proved to be disruptive; as the encampments were founded for nonviolent direct action by women, they drew extensively from lesbian separatist communities, which played an integral role in the development of nonviolent direct action.

390 “19-year Greenham Common Campaign to End,” Guardian.co.uk [online] (5 September 2000); available from http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2000/sep/05/1; Internet.
While separatism was seen by many as a divisive element within the camp environment, participants attempted to shift this divisiveness into productive experiences. Lois Hayes, a lesbian who participated in the Seneca encampment, recalled,

One of the strongest principles of non-violence is honesty...in Seneca County we lesbians who came out within the assumption of lesbian separatism have had to listen to heterosexual women who felt ‘left out’ and angry at our exclusiveness. When faced with angry townspeople we have had to choose between turning into our supportive circle or reaching out to confront their anger with the force of our vision. We must have the option of our circles, but if we are going to make change happen we must also learn to face other people’s anger.

Despite the contentious atmosphere of the Seneca camp, the semi-permanent women-only encampments extended the prefigurative politics put forth by ‘anarcha-feminists’ in Diablo Canyon.

The camps provided an environment where women could work through the divisions that appeared using (at times pain-staking) consensus processes; that the camps were formed to be experimental communities—places “where we can try to put into practice our visions of a nonviolent feminist society”—demanded that these divisions be dealt with as a symptom of women’s social conditioning. One participant of the Puget Sound camp maintained, “to truly achieve our vision of community...we will need to redirect some of our energy from external political

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394 For a more in depth discussion of internal camp dynamics, see Louise Krasniewicz’s *Nuclear Summer: the Clash of Communities at the Seneca Women’s Peace Encampment* (1992).
396 *We are Ordinary Women*, 45.
action to nurturing ourselves and each other….as women, we are working under the added difficulty of our social conditioning not to be unified.” Such internal struggle was not uncommon within the camps, but the prefigurative anarchic structures and methods required that these divisions be confronted, and dealt with, as a group.

A vast majority of anarch@-feminists maintained that a holistic revolution must necessarily include every living being—regardless of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, ability, and age; prefiguring revolutionary communities, then, provided a way to work through divisions constructed within, and outside of, the camp. Participants at the Puget Sound Women’s Peace camps centered their organizing and actions on the Boeing site because it was important for us to bring attention to the industrial part of the ‘military-industrial complex’ from a pro-worker perspective…instead of ‘going up against’ the corporation through a blockade or one-time symbolic demonstration, we saw an opportunity, by sustaining a long-term presence near the plant, to create a public dialog that would foster awareness of Boeing’s military role, both in the local community and within Boeing, and eventually make the workers aware of their ultimate power to stop weapons production at Boeing.

Thus, the Puget Sound camp extended the anarch@-feminist influence in two important ways. The women of the camp first articulated an explicitly pro-worker stance that corresponded to the strategies employed. They also acknowledged that ‘sustaining a long-term presence’ would necessarily require local organizing outside of the camp, and decisively different tactics than a blockade or short-term occupation.

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397 We are Ordinary Women, 45.
398 We are Ordinary Women, 16. Italics mine.
The Puget Sound camp’s focus on educating and organizing the workers at Boeing suggested a form of feminist syndicalism—that is, a feminist inspired revolutionary unionism—that attempted to bridge the divides between worker and demonstrator. The demonstrators demanded an end to the arms build-up without ignoring the position of the plant workers. Despite Murray Bookchin’s popular contention at the time that argued the ‘worker’ was no longer the primary agent of revolutionary change, anarch@-feminists consistently pushed analysis and strategy in a direction of inclusiveness.

In the 1980s ecofeminist and anarch@-feminist, Judi Bari, organized radical environmentalists, loggers and local communities in Northern California to oppose the destruction of jobs, the community and the environment by industrialized the logging industry. IWW-Earth! First Local 1, which existed from 1988-1990, is an expositive example of ‘green syndicalism’ that resulted from the anarch@-feminist emphasis on the holistic and prefigurative aspects of revolutionary struggle.399

Conclusion

The Women’s Pentagon Actions and women’s peace encampments displayed the extent to which the intersections of nonviolent direct action, feminism, and anarchism influenced major feminist anti-militarist actions. The internationalism fostered at the camps further highlights the anarch@-feminist precept of connecting local and global struggles and organizing.

The significant role anarch@-feminism played when amalgamated with other emancipatory projects points to the value of anarch@-feminism’s location at the margins of ‘new’ social movements. Anarch@-feminism was significantly more visible within these movements than it had been in the past, which further affirms the applicability of their liberatory framework. Anarch@-feminists’ impact on anti-nuclear and anti-militarist organizing is undeniable, and their influence can be seen in a wide range of organizing to this day. One can see their contemporary influence in massive anti-globalization protests, ‘No Border’ camps and the D.I.Y. ethic.

Interrogating this history, and putting it in creative relation to local anarch@-feminist organizing and perspectives, is crucial to the recovering of the active and influential anarch@-feminist tradition in the U.S.
Chapter 4

Working Where We Live: Locating Anarch@-Feminism in the Local

*Wesleyan ‘Anarcha-Feminists’ and the New England Anarchist Conference*

Given that anarch@-feminist structural expression was rooted in localized small-groups and decentralized networks, anarch@-feminist history demands, as feminist historian and ‘anarcho-feminist’ Nancy Hewitt contends, the figuring of global and local perspectives in “…creative rather than competitive relation to each other.” The entwining of local and global anarch@-feminist perspectives allows historians to simultaneously evoke and interrogate established narratives in radical, feminist, and anarchist histories. Moreover, the interweaving of local and global histories situates scholarly projects within the milieus that conditioned and produced them. In this spirit, I now turn to the local anarch@-feminist tradition of which my own political consciousness and praxis—and, by extension, this scholarship—belong.

Hunter College, Cornell and Stanford were not the only universities with an active anarch@-feminist presence. Surveying the geographies of anarch@-feminist networks reveals that cities and towns with large universities were most likely to foster anarch@-feminist collectives, organizing, festivals and conferences. The movement in the seventies to establish Women’s Studies in universities provided young anarch@-feminists with a cause to organize for, and, once achieved, a safe and encouraging space to engage with anarch@-feminism in a scholarly context.

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The Stanford ‘anarcha-feminists,’ for example, had lived communally and worked together for several years within their university community. The freedoms of student life supported an environment in which they experimented with different modes of organization and action on a local scale, prior to participating in a major action like Diablo. Similarly, Wesleyan’s anarchists and anarch@-feminists organized, studied and produced together, creating a short booklet on non-hierarchical forms of organization, and participating in regional mobilizations and convergences. Another point of similarity was the creation of ‘anarcha-feminist’ libraries. The anarchist library Wesleyan was housed in the Alternative Resource Center at 190 High Street. Shortly after the creation of the library, Hermes featured anarch@-feminist literature reviews, history, spirituality, and theoretical elaborations, and increased its coverage of women’s studies and feminist issues noticeably.

Wesleyan’s history of anarch@-feminism illuminates both local and regional New England histories, and enriches our understanding of how anarch@-feminism operated on these levels. My discovery of Wesleyan’s anarch@-feminist history gave me the opportunity to seriously engage the creative and dynamic relationship of local and global perspectives by analyzing how they converged on a single university campus. The discover of a single article in a back issue of alternative campus newspaper Hermes spurred further digging—literally, through cabinets, stacks of old issues and musty storerooms—and unearthing connections between Wesleyan and the Clamshell Alliance, Boston ‘Hard Clams,’ Murray Bookchin and ISE, and finally,

regional anarch@-feminist networks and the New England Anarchist Conference (NEAC).

The archive of Hermes contains the history of student activism at Wesleyan. Founded in 1975 in opposition to campus newspaper The Argus, the Hermes reflects student dialogue, activism, organizing and thought, particularly during its most prolific output in the late seventies and early eighties. This history of activism includes collaboration between Wesleyan students and Middletown residents in the Middletown Clamshell Alliance affinity group, Nuclear Resistance Group (NRG).403

Anti-nuclear activism at Wesleyan was also directly influenced by environmentalism and social ecology. Murray Bookchin first spoke at Wesleyan in April 1977, and made regular appearances on the pages of Hermes into the early 1980s. He returned to campus in 1981 to give the keynote speech for the Ecos Fair.404

Also in April 1977, at the third and largest Clamshell mobilization at Seabrook, forty Wesleyan students were among the over fifteen hundred people who were arrested for occupying the plant site. Bookchin’s active participation in Clamshell thus appears to be tied to the interest in his work in the radical community at Wesleyan.405

The Hermes staff documented Wesleyan involvement in all three of the Seabrook actions, and followed the legal struggles of those arrested during the actions as a part of Wesleyan affinity groups and/or NRG.

The first mention of anarch@-feminism in the Hermes was in a report on the ‘Women and Political Theory’ student forum in November 1978, part of a feature on

the push for women’s studies at Wesleyan.\textsuperscript{406} The article discussed the material for the class, including readings and discussions on radical, socialist and ‘anarchist feminisms,’ and described the ‘radical’ pedagogical models (non-hierarchical organization, consensus) students experimented with in the forum. Two years later, anarchists and anarch@$-$feminists at Wesleyan utilized the \textit{Hermes} to educate on anarch@$-$feminist thought and practice, and to relate anarchist forms of organizing and living—specifically mentioning Clamshell and NRG—to the Wesleyan community.

The \textit{Hermes} ‘anarchist’ issue, released October 6, 1980, featured Emma Goldman’s portrait and words on the cover. Much of the content focused on student involvement in the organization of the New England Anarchist Conference, to take place October 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} at Goddard College in Vermont.\textsuperscript{407} John Ely (’83) and Amy Horowitz (’82), advertised student transportation to the conference, supported by a $145 allocation from the student budgetary committee.\textsuperscript{408} The ‘anarchist’ issue also included a draft of the Conference statement, written by Bookchin in July 1980, and adopted by NEAC October 19\textsuperscript{th}, 1980, as “Who We Are: What We Believe.”\textsuperscript{409}

That Wesleyan students were able to obtain and publish the unity statement prior to its adoption and publication, points to their extended involvement in NEAC’s organization. This contention is strengthened by Horowitz’s article, “Anarcha-Feminism,” which concluded by advertising NEAC and the ‘anarcha-feminist

\textsuperscript{406} \textit{Hermes}, November 30, 1978.
\textsuperscript{407} At the time, Bookchin was associated with Goddard College; it was also the site for regional anarchist, feminist, radical and anti-nuclear organizing and convergences. See \textit{Commonwoman}.
\textsuperscript{408} Editorial, \textit{Hermes}, October 6, 1980.
\textsuperscript{409} “Who We Are: What We Believe,” \textit{Black and Green} 1 (Summer 1981).
workshops’—one mixed gender, one women-only—that Wesleyan’s ‘anarcha-feminist’ affinity group organized and planned to facilitate.\textsuperscript{410}

An addendum to the draft of the NEAC statement, probably written by Ely and Horowitz, explained how anarchist forms of organization could be implemented at Wesleyan, proposing affinity groups of 6-10 people, such as those formed \textit{temporarily} in the past to do specific tasks or direct action, who can organize closely and continuously together in order to create an atmosphere of community and support. \textit{Rooted} affinity groups facilitate action and commitment in place of the chaos and elitism which has frustrated and alienated the activists in the past.”\textsuperscript{411}

The following “Anarchist Notes” section, which continued for several issues of \textit{Hermes}, reported four anarchist affinity groups on campus already—a Women’s Eco-Anarcha-Feminist affinity group, a Women’s Anti-Nuclear affinity group, an Eco-Anarchist study group, and an Anarchist Energy affinity group—as well as information about the location of the anarchist information bulletin board in the Political (Alternative) Resource Center, which would later turn into a small anarchist library.\textsuperscript{412}

In keeping with their mission to instigate “social action to stop abuse of women and [reach] out to the women’s community in the Middletown area,”\textsuperscript{413} the Wesleyan Eco-Anarcha-Feminist affinity group, along with women from other anti-nuclear and anti-militarist groups, planned and carried out actions in the Middletown

\textsuperscript{410} Horowitz, “Anarcha-Feminism.”
\textsuperscript{412} “Anarchism: Solution to Chaos,” \textit{Hermes}, October 6, 1980; Political Resource Center and Alternative Resource Center are used interchangeably in the \textit{Hermes} to refer to the student run and oriented resource center ‘above the Housing Office’ at 190 High Street. The resource center was used extensively to organize anti-nuclear activism at Wesleyan, particularly involvement in Clamshell with NRG.
\textsuperscript{413} “Anarchist Notes,” \textit{Hermes}, October 6, 1980.
community. This included touring Middletown’s pornography store, “to be an unsettling presence to those inside,” and utilizing the experience to discuss the connections between pornography, violence against women and militarism.\textsuperscript{414} In addition to organizing and facilitating workshops on ‘anarcha-feminism’ at NEAC, the Wesleyan ‘anarcha-feminist’ affinity group used the conference to network with other anarch@-feminist affinity groups in New England, including the Susan B. Anarchy affinity group in Boston. The October 27, 1980 \textit{Hermes} “Anarchist Notes,” issued immediately following the first NEAC, publicized the formation of an ‘anarcha-feminist’ printing collective and publication by the Susan B. Anarchy group in Boston, and sought contributions and collective membership from the Wesleyan community.\textsuperscript{415}

Wesleyan’s anarch@-feminists were also involved in creating networks amongst active anarch@-feminists in New England. In addition to involvement in NEAC, and collaborations with the Susan B. Anarchy group, Wesleyan anarch@-feminism appeared in the local feminist publication \textit{Commonwoman}, which was advertised in \textit{Hermes}\textsuperscript{416} as a local Burlington (VT) feminist newspaper with a strong ‘anarcha-feminist’ bent. Burlington ‘anarcha-feminist’ Laurie Larson, who was also involved with NEAC and a follower of Bookchin, directly quoted Amy Horowitz in the first of her two-part article, “Anarcha-Feminism,” in February 1982. In discussing the importance of anarch@-feminist analysis to current radical organizing, Larson identifies the revolutionary potential of disillusioned middle-class youth, arguing that the privilege of such youth allows them, as a group, to act first in times of ‘revolt;’

\textsuperscript{414} Horowitz, “Anarcha-Feminism,” \textit{Hermes}, October 6, 1980.
\textsuperscript{415} Hermes, Oct. 27, 1980.
given that this ‘revolutionary’ population dominated liberal arts colleges at the time (and to this day), Larson’s criticisms point to an ongoing contention within American anarchism. This acrimonious schism pitted anarchism of the workplace (anarcho-syndicalism) against anarchism of the university, which was heavily influenced by Bookchin, social ecology, and radical and cultural feminisms.

Larson’s analysis explicated an anarch(a)-feminist critique of revolutionary organizing that relied on ‘superficial’ class analysis, on the separation of revolutionary processes from goals, and on “workers as being the only possible revolutionary force.” In contrast to her apparent disdain for an exclusively class based approach to anarchism was her demand for feminist analysis in anarchism.

Women who know the importance of social interactions, who always stress revolution as process, who are experienced at mixing love and rage, individuality with cooperation, who ignore authority and foster their own decentralist ways of organizing, who are creative and colorful….women like these, rich with the essence of life, don’t often look to a visionless, regimented people for a map of how the revolution should go. As Amy Horowitz says, ‘Feminism facilitates, indeed creates, anarchism.’

Clearly there was an emerging division between class-oriented anarchisms and the anarchism influenced by radical feminism, anarch(a)-feminism, social ecology. This division took on new dimensions when set against the university associations of Bookchin and his acolytes; the anarch(a)-feminism articulated by Larson, Horowitz, Ely and the Wesleyan anarch(a)-feminists was incompatible with an anarcho-syndicalist praxis. The gendered implications of this incompatibility are vital to a more subtle understanding of developing ‘manarchism;’ following the Wesleyan

anarch@-feminists thus provides another frame for understanding these developing critiques.

The October 27,\textsuperscript{th} 1980 \textit{Hermes} also featured a collective account of NEAC by Wesleyan students, which, when put in conversation with other reports on the conference (including those in NEAC’s own publication, \textit{Black and Green}), reveals the extent of Wesleyan student’s involvement in the contentious negotiation of anarchism, social ecology and feminism within the conference. The two-day conference gathered between 140-150 participants at Goddard College in Vermont, October 18-19\textsuperscript{th}, for a series of workshops, congresses, networking, organizing and theorizing. The New England Anarchist Federation (NEAF) was formed during the conference, which included the Clamshell Alliance, Coalition for Direct Action as Seabrook (CDAS), Black Rose Collective (Cambridge, MA), the Susan B. Anarchy affinity group (Boston, MA), and the Wesleyan Eco-Anarcha-Feminist affinity group. The primary goal of NEAF was to form an ongoing federation of affinity groups and collectives dedicated to eco-anarchist principles. Subsequent articulation of the federation’s goals included a focus on local autonomy, decentralization and participatory democracy that evoked the on the ‘collective memory’ of colonial New England town hall meetings.\textsuperscript{419} The federation’s goals also included a dedication to non-hierarchical, consensus based affinity groups, federated organization, direct action and civil disobedience.\textsuperscript{420}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[419] \textit{Black and Green} 1 (Summer 1981).
\item[420] \textit{Hermes}, October 27, 1980.
\end{footnotes}
The federation also evoked the organizational modes of the Clamshell Alliance, the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT)\textsuperscript{421}, and other anarchist organizations in 1930s revolutionary Spain. The Spanish anarchist influence is especially notable considering the massive mobilization of anarch@-feminists through \textit{Mujeres Libres} (Free Women). The organization was founded for the empowerment of working class women and at one point had approximately 20,000-30,000 members.\textsuperscript{422} All member affinity groups put up spokespeople, and quarterly federation conferences were to be organized by a committee comprised of rotating, co-operating affinity groups. The \textit{Hermes} report elaborated the resolutions of the conference, which stressed emergent prefigurative politics and direct action as necessary for drastic social change:

> Actions are organized by regions rather than by the conference as a whole. This structure anticipates and prevents the organizational failures that lead to the downfall of the Clamshell by preventing any individual group from gaining control of the federation as a whole….The resolve on Direct Action explains our commitment to working outside of existing governmental and corporate structures, and to using civil disobedience and the like as means for social change.\textsuperscript{423}

Thus, the experiences of many NEAC affinity groups in the Clamshell Alliance directly impacted the way the federation organized itself. Clamshell’s demise thus became a tool in the negotiating of organization and process within NEAC, as an overwhelming number of participants had been involved in the alliance. Unlike

\textsuperscript{421} Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT)—National Confederation of Labour, was a confederation of anarcho-syndicalist unions in Spain, active from the early 1910s-1930s, that was a major influence in Spanish labor organizing. The anarchist struggle in Spain is often cited as the most massive mobilization and inaction of anarchist practices, despite its demise to Franco in the Spanish Civil War.

\textsuperscript{422} Hayley, Ron. “A Herstory of Anarcha-Feminism.” \textit{Kick it Over}, Spring 1987, 14.

\textsuperscript{423} \textit{Hermes}, October 27, 1980.
Clamshell, however, NEAC was an explicitly anarchist organization; as such, the conference directly engaged the meaning of direct action, nonviolence and self-defense.

Taking heed from the dissention engendered by Clamshell’s failure to explicate these ideas, the federation goals articulated the goals of direct action as both an expression of self-defense, and as a prefigurative means for change.

Direct Action is a means of teaching people to live in social arrangements proposed as alternatives to centralized bureaucratized institutions and exploitative market relations; it enables atomized ‘masses’ to turn themselves into empowered individuals who feel their ability to control their own lives and to create positive change—in short, to live the revolution they conceive.\footnote{Hermes, October 27, 1980.} Additionally, NEAC passed a resolution targeting “Individualist and Syndicalist Trends in Anarchism.” Such trends were definitively excluded from the federation. The reasoning behind this resolution, which was heavily inspired by Bookchin, was that the different methodology and focus of these ‘trends’ made them disruptive to the functioning of the federation; individualist and syndicalist anarchism are again articulated as incompatible with NEAC’s goals.\footnote{North American Anarchist, Vol. 1, No. 1.} This exclusion also distanced and alienated individualist and syndicalist anarch@-feminists, who had been active in early theoretical development and networking, from engaging with the anarch@-feminist currents in NEAC.

The conference resolutions were rejected by Wesleyan’s ‘anarcha-feminist’ affinity group, as well as by the majority of anarch@-feminists at the conference, as
an inappropriate “form for an explication of feminist principles. The philosophical tenets upon which feminism is based cannot be stated as a declaration of purpose, but rather, must be developed in an article or expository piece, as they will be for the next conference.”

The second conference, organized by the Susan B. Anarchy group in Boston, was planned for January 1981, focusing on “non-violence, the nature of human freedom, property, imperialism and spirituality.” The Wesleyan Eco-anarcha-feminist group also participated in the planning of the NEAC anarcha-feminist conference.

‘to take back the earth as well as the night’: Anarcha-Feminism and the University

As we can see, anarcha-feminism also had a lasting impact on what came to constitute everyday anarchist practice in the university. The anarchist currents displayed in Hermes, and on other college campuses, tended to align with the Bookchin contingent rather than with a strict class analysis of anarchism. This corresponds to Bookchin’s proposal that ‘study groups,’ in the processes of forming themselves “into a sort of intellectual community,” should develop into politically engaged entities capable of articulating a coherent political vision. Contained in a book of interviews and essays from the early 1990s, Bookchin’s essay “Building a Movement” helps to identify the currents of anarchism and anarcha-feminism at Wesleyan as part of a larger strategy operating in New England at the time. Given Bookchin’s association with academic institutions, and his popularity among self-

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426 Hermes, October 27, 1980.
427 Hermes, October 27, 1980.
styled radicals at Wesleyan and other ‘progressive’ liberal arts colleges, his articulation of the revolutionary potential facilitated by, and through, personal and collective education is not surprising.

That Bookchin was also involved in the Clamshell Alliance, along with a significant number of Wesleyan students and Middletown residents, and that he founded the ISE underscored his relationship to, and influence on, radical political expression at Wesleyan. Furthermore, Bookchin’s active presence in local anti-nuclear politics found significant support in radical/progressively oriented cities (Burlington, Vermont), and within counter-cultural communities in rural New England.

The study group, Bookchin contended, “should not be a mere academic exercise but the nucleus for building a movement.”429 The politicization of such study groups, he argued, would be facilitated by the publishing of a newsletter or small periodical. This publication provided as a medium for articulating a cohesive political and cultural vision; as such, a newsletter or pamphlet was “a mechanism by which members would develop their writing abilities and formulate their ideas as clearly as possible.”430 Bookchin also urged involvement in local political struggles simultaneous to intra- and extra-community networking. Through networking on local, regional, national and even international scales, groups could work through common problems and share ideas. Through involvement in the local community, study groups could “try to create a radical political culture by holding lecture series

429 Bookchin, “Building a Movement,” 335.
and public forums by writing and publishing community newsletters, and by organizing events and demonstrations around various community issues.\(^{431}\)

Wesleyan anarchists/anarch@-feminists’ publication of \textit{Hermes} and smaller anarchist pamphlets, their creation of an anarchist library, study and affinity groups, anarchist lectures, and their involvement in local Middletown, Clamshell and NEAC organizing, spoke to the applicability of Bookchin’s framework to the university setting. Such a framework supports the integrity of Wesleyan anarchist organizing, despite its entrenchment in an exclusive and privileged academic environment.

Wesleyan anarchist and anarch@-feminists made serious attempts to create a radical political culture on campus, and in Middletown, through local involvement, educational outreach, and confederal and regional networking. The irony inherent in these attempts was that the Wesleyan Student Budgetary Committee funded many of these activities. The development of radical political culture, no matter how marginalized in the greater community, was facilitated by the privileges provided by student life at Wesleyan. Furthermore, as a four-year institution, the Wesleyan student population was constantly in flux, which did not provide for a setting conducive to ongoing organizing and the formation of a supportive radical community and culture.

An additional factor in Bookchin’s popularity among university radicals was Bookchin’s emphasis on the local community as the focus of revolutionary organizing. The activation of historical linkages with the tradition of American utopian communes in New England, pointed to another important convergence between Wesleyan’s radicals and Bookchin: many Wesleyan anarchists and anarch@-feminists made serious attempts to create a radical political culture on campus, and in Middletown, through local involvement, educational outreach, and confederal and regional networking. The irony inherent in these attempts was that the Wesleyan Student Budgetary Committee funded many of these activities. The development of radical political culture, no matter how marginalized in the greater community, was facilitated by the privileges provided by student life at Wesleyan. Furthermore, as a four-year institution, the Wesleyan student population was constantly in flux, which did not provide for a setting conducive to ongoing organizing and the formation of a supportive radical community and culture.

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\(^{431}\) Bookchin, “Building a Movement,” 339.
feminists lived in student housing that supported communal living, similar to the student co-operatives at Stanford. Thus, Bookchin’s geographical, ideological and cultural influences make his ‘study group’ framework especially appropriate to the Wesleyan academic milieu. That the freedoms of student life allowed for, and even encouraged, the development of these study groups suggests a need to re-center academic milieus in anarch@-feminist history.

The direct focus on anarcho-feminism in NEAC’s second conference in January 1981, pushed the organization further towards prefigurative anarcho-feminist politics. Held January 16th-18th, 1981, at the Group School in Cambridge, MA, the conference included workshops on the roots of power, feminist and anarchist history, the feminist response to ‘Reaganism,’ men supporting men, being a woman-identified woman, incompatibilities in anarchism and feminism, anarcho-feminism and the men’s movement, and anarcho-feminist direct action.432 An emphasis on feminism and ecology that emerged was evident in the second and third issues of Black and Green, issued after the anarcho-feminist conference in Boston. The issue contained personal accounts of the Diablo and Women’s Pentagon actions, articulations of ecofeminism, and women’s poetry and literature.

The Hermes “Anarchist Notes” on the conference reported that the weekend of workshops and caucuses—women’s only, men’s only, and mixed—ended in a final plenary session in which feminism’s relation to action and social change was

432 Black and Green 1 (Summer 1981).
discussed on a personal level. The anonymous Wesleyan ‘anarcha-feminist’ that wrote the report came away from the conference with the following impressions:433

The emphasis during the entire weekend was not on ‘business’ or ‘getting things done,’ but with relating experiences with feminism among a large number of people who were concerned with the issues. While many folks were bothered by the lack of planning and direct concern with social change on a larger social level, my feeling is that the majority of people who participated in the conference were excited by the opportunity to work out a lot of the inner feelings, confusion and differences that many people feel on confronting feminism on a personal, face-to-face level.434

While it appears that NEAC actively pursued anarch@-feminist dialogue, these attempts often devolved into complaints that the personal foci engendered by anarch@-feminism ‘distracted’ from important issues of general organization, policy and direction. Thus, “it was decided” during the plenary session that the next NEAC “must be more concerned with developing a more explicit policy, organization and decision-making process”435 Scheduled for April, and to be organized by the Ramapo Valley affinity group in New Jersey, the conference on ‘practical’ issues never came about; NEAC dissolved soon after the second/third issues of *Black and Green* in early 1982.436

The influence of Bookchin and social ecology at Wesleyan, and the evolving relationship between Bookchin and Wesleyan anarchism/anarch@-feminism, was highlighted by the commonalities between *Black and Green* and *Hermes*. Aside from Bookchin’s speaking engagements on campus, John Ely’s (’83) tenure at *Hermes*

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433 This was most likely written by Amy Horowitz, who was the most active *Hermes* correspondent on anarch@-feminist issues.
recorded parallels between the two publications, including the cross publication of several articles. Much of the coverage of NEAC in *Hermes* contained advertisements calling for submissions to *Black and Green*; the second and third issue (Fall/Winter ’81-'82) contained Ely’s review of Bookchin’s *Toward and Ecological Society*, originally published in the September 29, 1981 *Hermes*; “Loisaida: Community Self-Reliance in New York City,” by Dan Chodorkoff and Matthew Seig, who were associated with Bookchin and ISE, was first published in the May 6, 1981 *Hermes*, and then in *Black and Green* 2/3. The “Loisaida” article was contained in a *Hermes* special edition dedicated to the Ecos Fair at Wesleyan, in which Bookchin was the keynote speaker. The special edition also contained articles on ecofeminism, queer ecology and radical ecological critiques of economics written by Wesleyan students, including Ely’s exploration of “Ecology, Anarchism and the Limitations of Marxism.”

During his time at *Hermes*, Ely went on to examine anarchism as it emerged in conversation with critical theory, social ecology, feminist/women’s spirituality, indigenous spiritualities, solidarity with Eastern Europe/Latin America, and antipornography. Ely’s delineation of anarchist spirituality, or “Anarchy as Dialectical Paganism,” connected “the most conscious politicized elements of neo-paganism” to lesbian feminists, gay men, and emergent radical queer political expressions. He specifically cites groups like the ‘Dianic Witches’ and the ‘Radical Faeries’ who “combine a pagan perspective with radical politics and a coherent social critique that flows beautifully into the most liberatory aspects of the anarchist tradition.”

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437 *Hermes*, May, 6, 1981.
explorations generally focused on connections between anarchism and different academic, feminist, religious and ecological traditions.

Included amongst the *Hermes* reports of the Seabrook occupation and ‘Take Back the Night’ marches were personal accounts of participation in the Women’s Pentagon Action. The first action, attended by a dozen Wesleyan women, was reported by Amy Horowitz in the December 8, 1980 issue. Horowitz’s account of the action stressed the importance of the action as an event planned by (more or less) autonomous small groups of women. Horowitz contended that the action “was in fact, an anarcho-feminist expression of protest. . . though not all the participants were anarchists, the action was conceived in an anarchist fashion.”

Considering the action a success due to its stimulation of small group organizing, nonviolent direct action and explicitly feminist overtones, Horowitz concluded her report by suggesting the Pentagon action was the beginning of greater feminist and anarcho-feminist mobilization “to take back the earth as well as the night.”

In March of 1981, *Hermes* began co-publishing with *Iahu*, a feminist campus publication named after the Sumarian goddess of all things, who in the form of a dove gave birth to the ‘universal egg.’ *Iahu*’s coverage of the Women’s Pentagon action stressed the anarchistic aspects of the protest as well, however, without ever using the terminology present in the *Hermes*. Alison Kelsey’s overview of the action, for example, emphasized the convergence in Washington as the “chance for women working at the local level to come together to share and focus the energies generated in the communities.” Kelsey’s report also stressed the autonomy of individual affinity

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441 *Hermes*, March 2, 1981.
groups within the action. Iahu did explore anarchist themes peripherally, through explorations of ecofeminism, the utopian feminist novels of Marge Piercy, and supporting workshops by Pagan anarch@-feminist Starhawk. In the early 1980s, the only other mention of anarch@-feminism in Iahu was a letter soliciting contributions to the ‘Emma’s Daughter’s’ anthology, organized by Carol Ehrlich, Elaine Leeder and Peggy Kornegger.

The relative absence of anarch@-feminist voices within Iahu corresponds to broad intellectual and structural changes taking place within the university that, in effect, distanced radical theoretical articulation within the academy from its roots in grounded social movements. The lack of anarch@-feminist expression may, to some, indicate a lack of anarch@-feminist presence on campus, which very well may be the case; however, Alina Ever’s and Philippa Nye’s article, “The Politics of College Feminism,” insinuates that feminist expression within the university had been weakened by rift between radical and liberal feminisms, particularly as Women’s/Feminist Studies programs and centers were institutionalized. Written about a 1983 Brown University conference on college feminism, the report highlighted the ways in which radical feminist co-optation of women’s studies had alienated large amounts of liberal feminists on campus; for the good of the ‘women’s movement,’ then, the agents of feminism within the university—classes, women’s

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442 Iahu, October 13, 1981.
444 Iahu, December 10, 1982.
centers, women’s studies programs—should lean more towards a ‘neutral’ stance, or what many revolutionary feminists would deem ‘liberal co-optation.’

Other Iahu articles in the early-to-mid 1980s reflected the ebb of radical and revolutionary feminism in the university with the institutionalization of women’s studies. In 1985, Vicki Kurtz further criticized the institutional evolvement of Women’s Studies at Wesleyan, arguing that the program falls far short of its radical potential. Women’s Studies as an organ of the university separates the academic from the activist, and reinforces an image of feminist scholarship as apolitical and detached from political movements. Furthermore, Kurtz reported that the Educational Policy Committee at Wesleyan refused to approve programs that were explicitly political. Thus, the institutionalization of Women’s Studies resulted in the devolution of Women’s Studies into Gender Studies, over the development the program as ‘Radical Studies.’ Kurtz stated,

Women’s studies divorced from activist feminist politics is women’s studies at its barest and meagerest….it is the broader understanding of oppression that ultimately radicalizes the field of Women’s Studies, and which broadens the Women’s Movement into a truly feminist revolution—where all relationships amongst the oppressors and oppressed are uncovered and overturned.

The process of institutionalizing Women’s Studies as a program at Wesleyan necessarily required the ‘mainstreaming’ of a diverse range of scholarship, research approaches and feminist pedagogies that emerged out of the student-led struggle for feminist and women’s studies. That most programs, including Wesleyan’s, took the
name ‘Women’s Studies’ instead of ‘Feminist Studies’ signaled a growing backlash against radical and revolutionary feminisms within the academe.\textsuperscript{447}

\textsuperscript{447} After re-admitting female students in 1968, the push for a Women’s Studies program at Wesleyan began when students organized individual courses and student tutorials to address the lack of academic initiative in the area throughout the early 1970s. Starting in 1977, a faculty committee formed to discuss the development of a program and in 1979, a proposal for a Women’s Studies (WMST) program was passed by the faculty. In the fall of 1988, the WMST Major Committee’s proposal to the Educational Policy Committee was approved, and the first WMST majors were able to declare the following year. The major remained ‘Women’s Studies’ until the 2002-2003 school-year, when a student forum focused on evaluating the program resulted in the renaming of the WMST major to ‘Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies’ (FGSS), which was agreed to be a more accurate description of the course work, methodological approaches and theoretical foci of the program at Wesleyan. (http://www.wesleyan.edu/fgss/history.html).
Conclusion

By now it must be clear that I am personally fascinated by the history of anarch@-feminism. As I commenced this project, many people pushed me to explain why this history mattered, and why I wished to dedicate almost a year of my life to uncovering the unwritten stories of anarch@-feminists. Why write about anarch@-feminism? What can this ‘marginal’ and obscured history tell us? In short, why does anarch@-feminist history matter?

But does one need a reason or justification for an intervention in the historical record? Histories of women’s liberation and anarchism alike have almost completely ignored anarch@-feminism between 1970 and 1983. Thus, this thesis has detailed the unique position of anarch@-feminism within the American radical milieu. Furthermore, in juxtaposing the concept of anarch@-feminism with my historical methodology, I have sought to provoke important questions about established historiographical approaches to radical, anarchist and feminist histories.

The emergence of self-defined anarch@-feminism in the early seventies was set against the varied topography of sixties radicalism and women’s liberation, which in all their diversity, found common ground in their inchoate ‘anarchic’ tendencies and expression of the ‘personal is political.’ Anarch@-feminism’s early theoretical synthesis and articulations highlight these underlying philosophical similarities, confronting the divisive historical constructions that have placed these movements in opposition or contention with each other, thus obscuring the areas of practical and theoretical convergence that provided for anarch@-feminism’s emergence.
Centering anarch@-feminism within this radical rhizomatic landscape also underscores the significance of anarch@-feminists’ adherence to, and experiments with, prefigurative politics. They took seriously the challenge of coordinating effective and innovative action with their idealistic and uncompromising vision of a future liberatory society—their own anarch@-feminist ‘utopia,’ if you will. Anarch@-feminist growth and expansion throughout the seventies maintained this prefigurative emphasis, and in the process, evolved new ways of networking, organizing and communicating.

These new methods, processes and practices fostered a sense of a larger community through the building of an internal culture of support. Indeed, the decentralized and horizontally networked community of anarch@-feminists that developed from the mid seventies to early eighties prefigured what Colin Ward described as the ‘ideal anarchist society,’ in explicitly anarch@-feminist terms; they articulated, in theory and practice, a global “network of self-sufficient, self-regulating communities,” based on local autonomy, decentralized collaboration, consensus decision-making, nonviolence, and an intra-community culture supportive of concomitant personal and collective emancipation.448

Like anarch@-feminist networking and community building of the seventies and early eighties, the modern anti-globalization movement—exemplified in the U.S. by the mobilizations against the 1999 WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle—engages a ‘cultural logic of networking.’ This logic stresses the building of horizontal ties between diverse autonomous groups and organizations, the open circulation of information and literature, inter-community/group collaboration through


\textit{Anarch@-Feminism and Women’s Liberation}

Despite the extensive historical study of so-called ‘second wave’ feminism, and the plethora of evidence indicating an anarch@-feminist presence within this movement, there has been no concerted effort until now to explore anarch@-feminism within the women’s liberation movement. This invisibility and obscuration points to anarch@-feminism’s disruption of dominant movement narratives, which map the shifting and contentious landscape of feminism with condensation and dichotomization. As such, when anarch@-feminism is mentioned in these histories, it is often incorporated as a sub-sect of either radical or socialist feminism, and relegated to the periphery of women’s liberation.

I have shown, however, that anarch@-feminists collaborated with, and were influenced by, both radical and socialist feminism, complicating the apparent ‘split’ between the two revolutionary feminisms that emerged in the late sixties. Nascent anarch@-feminist articulations traversed this dichotomy, incorporating socialist and radical feminist critiques and approaches, and working within and alongside a diversity of feminist affiliations. With the ebb of radical feminism in the mid seventies, and the subsequent weakening of politico organizing, anarch@-feminists
put forth strong and cohesive theoretical texts, providing a revolutionary feminist framework that addressed the theoretical weaknesses of politico and early radical feminist organizing.

By the mid seventies, in the face of rising tides of liberal and cultural feminisms, anarch@-feminists presented a prefigurative vision that incorporated elements of radical, socialist and cultural feminisms. They sustained the anarchic qualities and practices of early women’s liberation, focusing on building a networked community of anarch@-feminists that maintained the localized small group as a primary structural expression. Anarch@-feminist commitment to non-hierarchical growth, decentralized collaboration, and consensus, starkly contrasted the shift towards hierarchical organization, formalized structure and bureaucracy in the women’s movement at large.

Given the movement towards formal structure and hierarchy in the women’s movement, anarch@-feminists looked to other radical movements as the beneficiaries of their prefigurative model. Their activity in the non-violent direct action movements against nuclear power and arms proliferation proved the viability of their framework, and popularized anarch@-feminist thought and practices in amalgamated movements of diverse interests, groups and individuals. Compared to their obscurity in the history of women’s liberation, anarch@-feminism is more clearly seen and acknowledged within these ‘new’ movements, where the blending of diverse radical traditions is a given.

With the failure of the ERA in 1982, and the resulting fragmentation of the women’s movement, interest in anarch@-feminism and anti-statist feminisms
increased. Indeed, the failure of such an intensive and extensive mobilization reaffirmed the early feminist focus on local organizing, and resulted in increased feminist involvement in new social movements of the eighties. Anarch@-feminism’s continual development of early feminist organizational expression was much more suited to a fragmented women’s movement than a rigidly structured one; however, traditional historiographical approaches to social movements cannot neatly fit this fragmentation into established women’s liberation narratives.

Between 1970 and 1983, anarch@-feminism provided a framework that helped women make sense of the complicated and variable landscape of women’s liberation. Putting forth a constantly evolving praxis, anarch@-feminists strove to realize the revolutionary potential of feminism amidst great fluctuations without constructing oppositional relationships and dichotomies. Histories that rely on opposition, division, formalized structure, and clearly defined ideological boundaries to construct narratives of the women’s liberation movement fail to recognize the dispersed, decentralized, flexible, and informal organization of anarch@-feminism. Ironically, the very elements and tendencies that make anarch@-feminism unique within women’s liberation provide the dissonance that continues to obscure its history.

The history of anarch@-feminism cannot be told using traditional anarchist and feminist historiographical approaches. The emergence of their thought rejected traditional modes of ideological identification, and their expansion and growth produced decentralized, non-hierarchical and informally structured communities that emphasized local autonomy, openness, horizontal networking and coordination.
Finally, their most successful actions took place within mobilizations that were themselves composed of a multiplicity of radical influences and networks. Thus, it is futile to search the documentary history of women’s liberation for an anarch@-feminist ‘movement’ based on formal structure, leadership, and a defined ideology; an anarch@-feminist ‘movement,’ as such, simply isn’t there.

Anarch@-feminism’s history is enmeshed in local communities, direct action mobilizations, and the lived experiences of anarch@-feminists and those individuals transformed by their practice and work. Anarch@-feminism’s decentralized nature thus demands a historiographic approach that engages the dissonance and uniqueness of local environments in conjunction with regional, national and global developments. As such, I integrated my own local milieu, and it’s tradition of anarch@-feminism, into this history to demonstrate the historiographic approach demanded by anarch@-feminism. Through addressing proximate local and regional anarch@-feminist organizing, I was able to delve deeper into subtleties and peculiarities I had already identified on a national level.

My exploration of Wesleyan’s history of anarchist and feminist thought was itself a transformative experience. The experience rooted my project in the environment that enabled its production, injecting my process with a passion of purpose engendered by my personal identification with this history. Historical study had never been so tangible and real to me before I found anarch@-feminism in my backyard. Before uncovering Wesleyan’s ‘hidden’ history of anarchist and ‘anarcha-feminist’ organizing, I had never seen myself reflected in local radical tradition. Peggy Kornegger stated of her own historical education, “as a woman I was relegated
to a vicarious existence. As an anarchist I had no existence at all.” Thus, if I wanted to see myself in the history of activism at Wesleyan, I would have to write the story myself. In doing so, the parallels of the past and present crystallized, affirming my commitment to engaging anarch@-feminist history further.

Thirty years ago, Wesleyan students organized an anarchist library above the Housing Office at 190 High Street. Today we are using that same building for ‘Emergence,’ a radical organizing space and infoshop. With other Wesleyan anarchists and anarchy-feminists I have traveled to regional anarchist book fairs, conferences and convergences. I have experienced the joys and challenges of communal living, and immersed myself in the works of Goldman, de Cleyre, and Bookchin. Even my own experiences speak to the abiding relevance of anarch@-feminism. This history needed to be told. Thank you for listening.

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