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BEYOND FEMINISM: Anarchism & Human Freedom

How Lenin led to Stalin

FOR THE LENINIST far left the collapse of the USSR has thrown up more questions than it answered. If the Soviet Union really was a 'workers state' why were the workers unwilling to defend it? Why did they in fact welcome the changes?

What happened to Trotsky's "political revolution or bloody counter revolution"? Those Leninist organisations which no longer see the Soviet Union as a workers state do not escape the contradictions either. If Stalin was the source of the problem why do so many Russian workers blame Lenin and the other Bolshevik leaders too.

The mythology of "Lenin, creator and sustainer of the Russian revolution" is now dying. With it will go all the Leninist groups for as the Soviet archives are increasingly opened it will become increasingly difficult to defend Lenin's legacy. The Left in the west has dodged and falsified the Lenin debate for 60 years now. Now however there is a proliferation of articles and meetings by the various Trotskyist groups trying to convince workers that Lenin did not lead to Stalin. Unfortunately much of this debate is still based

on the slander and falsifications of history that has been symptomatic of Bolshevism since 1918. The key questions of what comprises Stalinism and when did "Stalinism" first come into practice are dodged in favour of rhetoric and historical falsehood.

Stalinism is defined by many features and indeed some of these are more difficult than others to lay at the feet of Lenin. The guiding points of Stalin's foreign policy for instance was the idea



SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY

The treaty of Brest-Livtosk of 1918, which pulled Russia out of World War I, also surrendered a very large amount of the Ukraine to the Austro-Hungarians. Obviously, there was no potential of continuing a conventional war (especially as the Bolsheviks had used the slogan "peace, bread, land" to win mass support). Yet, the presence of the Makhnovist movement in the Ukraine, clearly demonstrated a vast revolutionary potential among the Ukrainian peasants and workers. No attempt was made to supply or sustain those forces which did seek to fight a revolutionary war against the Austro-Hungarians. They were sacrificed in order to gain a respite to build "socialism" in Russia.

The second point worth considering about Lenin's internationalism is his insistence from 1918 onwards, that the task was to build "state capitalism, as "If we introduced state capitalism in approximately 6 months' time we would achieve a great success...".¹ He was also to say "Socialism is nothing but state

of peaceful co-existence with the West while building socialism in the USSR ("socialism in one country"). Lenin is often presented as the opposite extreme, being willing to risk all in the cause of international revolution. This story like many others however is not all it seems. Other points that many would consider characteristic of Stalinism include, the creation of a one party state, no control by the working class of the economy, the dictatorial rule of individuals over the mass of society, the brutal crushing of all workers' action and the use of slander and historical distortion against other left groups.

capitalist monopoly made to benefit the whole people".² This calls into question Lenin's concept of socialism.

ONE PARTY STATE

Another key feature many would associate with Stalinism was the creation of a one party state, and the silencing of all opposition currents within the party. Many Trotskyists will still try to tell you that the Bolsheviks encouraged workers to take up and debate the points of the day, both inside and outside the party. The reality is very different for the Bolsheviks rapidly clamped down on the revolutionary forces outside the party, and then on those inside that failed to toe the line.

In April 1918 the Bolshevik secret police (The Cheka) raided 26 Anarchist centres in Moscow. 40 Anarchists were killed or injured and over 500 imprisoned.³ In May the leading Anarchist publications were closed down.⁴ Both of these events occurred before the excuse of the outbreak of the Civil War could be used as a 'justification'. These raids occurred because the Bolsheviks were beginning to lose the arguments about the running of Russian industry.

In 1918 also a faction of the Bolshevik party critical of the party's introduction of 'Talyorism' (the use of piece work and time & motion studies to measure the output of each worker, essentially the science of sweat extraction) around the journal *Kommunist* were forced out of Leningrad when the majority of the Leningrad party conference supported Lenin's demand "that the adherents of *Kommunist* cease their separate organisational existence".⁵

The paper was last published in May, silenced "Not by discussion, persua-

sion or compromise, but by a high pressure campaign in the Party organisations, backed by a barrage of violent invective in the party press...".⁶ So much for encouraging debate!!

A further example of the Bolsheviks 'encouraging debate' was seen in their treatment of the Makhnovist in the Ukraine. This partisan army which fought against both the Ukrainian nationalists and the White generals at one time liberated over 7 million people. It was led by the anarchist Nestor Makhno and anarchism played the major part in the ideology of the movement. The liberated zone was ran by a democratic soviet of workers and peasants and many collectives were set up.

ECHOS OF SPAIN

The Makhnovists entered into treaties with the Bolsheviks three times in order to maintain a stronger united front against the Whites and nationalists. Despite this they were betrayed by the Bolsheviks three times, and the third time they were destroyed after the Bolsheviks arrested and executed all the delegates sent to a joint military council. This was under the instructions of Trotsky! Daniel Guerin's description of Trotsky's dealings with the Makhnovists is instructive "He refused to give arms to Makhno's partisans, failing in his duty of assisting them, and subsequently accused them of betrayal and of allowing themselves to be beaten by white troops. The same procedure was followed 18 years later by the Spanish Stalinists against the anarchist brigades".⁷

The final lid was put on political life outside or inside the party in 1921. The 1921 party congress banned all factions in the communist party itself. Trotsky made a speech denouncing one such faction, the Workers Opposi-

tion as having "placed the workers right to elect representatives above the party. As if the party were not entitled to assert its dictatorship even if that dictatorship temporarily clashed with the passing moods of the workers democracy".⁸

Shortly afterwards the Kronstadt rising was used as an excuse to exile, imprison and execute the last of the anarchists. Long before Lenins death the political legacy now blamed on Stalin had been completed. Dissent had been silenced inside and outside the party. The one party state existed as of 1921. Stalin may have been the first to execute party members on a large scale but with the execution of those revolutionaries outside the party and the silencing of dissidents within it from 1918 the logic for these purges was clearly in place.

Another key area is the position of the working class in the Stalinist society. No Trotskyist would disagree that under Stalin workers had no say in the running of their workplaces and suffered atrocious conditions under threat of the state's iron fist. Yet again these conditions came in under Lenin and not Stalin. Immediately after the revolution the Russian workers had attempted to federate the factory committees in order to maximise the distribution of resources. This was blocked, with Bolshevik 'guidance', by the trade unions.

By early 1918 the basis of the limited workers control offered by the Bolsheviks (in reality little more than accounting) became clear when all decisions had to be approved by a higher body of which no more than 50% could be workers. Daniel Guerin describes

the Bolshevik control of the elections in the factories "elections to factory committees continued to take place, but a member of the Communist cell read out a list of candidates drawn up in advance and voting was by show of hands in the presence of armed 'Communist' guards. Anyone who declared his opposition to the proposed candidates became subject to wage cuts, etc."⁹

On March 26th 1918 workers control was abolished on the railways in a decree full of ominous phrases stressing "iron labour discipline" and individual management. At least, say the Trotskyists, the railways ran on time. In April Lenin published an article in *Izvestiya* which included the introduction of a card system for measuring each workers productivity. He said "...we must organise in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system". "Unquestioning submission to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of the labour process...the revolution demands, in the interests of socialism, that the masses unquestioningly obey the single will of the leaders of the labour process"¹⁰ Lenin declared in 1918. This came before the civil war broke out and makes nonsense of the claims that the Bolsheviks were trying to maximise workers control until the civil war prevented them from doing so.

With the outbreak of the Civil War things became much worse. In late May it was decreed that no more than 1/3 of the management personnel of industrial enterprises should be elected.¹¹ A few "highlights" of the following years are worth pointing out. At the ninth party congress in April of 1920 Trotsky made his infamous comments on the militarization of labour "the working class...must be thrown here and there, appointed, commanded just like soldiers. Deserters from la-

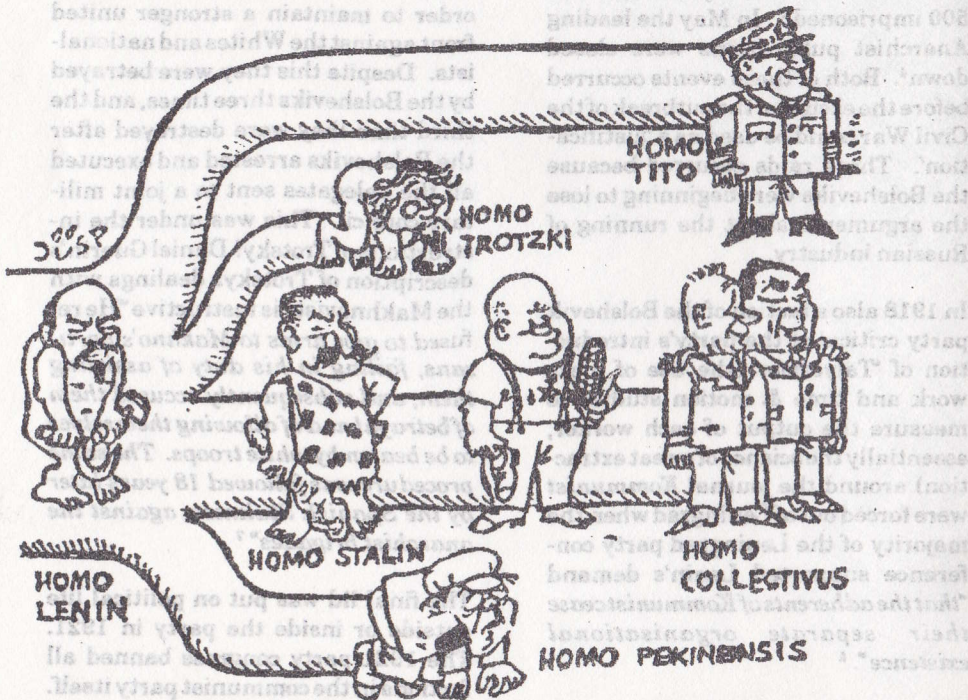
bour ought to be formed into punitive battalions or put into concentration camps".¹² The congress itself declared "no trade union group should directly intervene in industrial management."¹³

ONE MAN MANAGEMENT

At the trade union congress that April, Lenin was to boast how in 1918 he had "pointed out the necessity of recognising the dictatorial authority of single individuals for the purpose of carrying out the soviet idea".¹⁴ Trotsky declared that "labour...obligatory for the whole country, compulsory for every worker is the basis of socialism"¹⁵ and that the militarisation of labour was no emergency measure¹⁶. In *War Communism and Terrorism* published by Trotsky that year he said "The unions should discipline the workers and teach them to place the interests of production above their own needs and demands". It is impossible to distinguish between these policies and the labour policies of Stalin.

WORKERS REVOLTS

Perhaps the most telling condemnation of the Stalinist regimes came from their crushing of workers' revolts, both the well known ones of East Berlin 1953, Hungary 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 and scores of smaller, less known risings. The first such major revolt was to happen at the height of Lenin's direction of the party in 1921 at Kronstadt, a naval base and town near Petrograd. The revolt essentially occurred when Kronstadt attempted to democratically elect a Soviet and issued a set of proclamations calling for a return to democratic soviets and freedom of press and speech for "the anarchists and left socialist parties".¹⁷ This won the support of not only the mass of workers and sailors at the base but of the rank and file of the Bolshe-



The family tree of Leninism...an inherited genetic disease is killing off its branches

vik party there as well. Lenin's response was brutal. The base was stormed and many of the rebels who failed to escape were executed. Kronstadt had been the driving force for the revolution in 1917 and in 1921 the revolution died with it.

There are other commonly accepted characteristics of Stalinism. One more that is worth looking at is the way Stalinist organisations have used slander as a weapon against other left groups. Another is the way that Stalin re-wrote history. Yet again this is something which was a deep strain within Leninism. Makhno for example went from being hailed by the Bolshevik newspapers as the "Nemesis of the whites"¹⁹ to being described as a Kulak and a bandit.

SLANDER

Modern day Trotskyists are happy to repeat this sort of slander along with describing Makhno as an anti-Semite. Yet the Jewish historian M. Tchernikover says "It is undeniable that, of all the armies, including the Red Army, the Makhnovists behaved best with regard to the civilian population in general and the Jewish population in particular."¹⁹

The leadership of the Makhnovists contained Jews and for those who wished to organise in this manner there were specific Jewish detachments. The part the Makhnovists played in defeating the Whites has been written out of history by every Trotskyist historian, some other historians however consider they played a far more decisive role than the Red Army in defeating Wrangel²⁰.

Kronstadt provides another example of how Lenin and Trotsky used slander against their political opponents. Both

attempted to paint the revolt as being organised and lead by the whites. *Pravda* on March 3rd, 1921 described it as "A new White plot...expected and undoubtedly prepared by the French counter-revolution". Lenin in his report to the 10th party congress on March 8th said "White generals, you all know it, played a great part in this. This is fully proved".²¹

Yet even Isaac Deutscher, Trotsky's biographer said in "The Prophet Armed" "The Bolsheviks denounced the men of Kronstadt as counter-revolutionary mutineers, led by a White general. The denunciation appears to have been groundless"²².

RE-WRITING HISTORY

Some modern day Trotskyists repeat such slanders, others like Brian Pearce (historian of the Socialist Labour League in Britain) try to deny it ever occurred "No pretence was made that the Kronstadt mutineers were White Guards"²³ In actual fact the only czarist general in the fort had been put there as commander by Trotsky some months earlier! Lets leave the last words on this to the workers of Kronstadt "Comrades, don't allow yourself to be misled. In Kronstadt, power is in the hands of the sailors, the red soldiers and of the revolutionary workers"²⁴

There is irony in the fact that these tactics of slander and re-writing history as perfected by the Bolsheviks under Lenin were later to be used with such effect against the Trotskyists. Trotsky and his followers were to be denounced as "Fascists" and agents of international imperialism. They were to be written and air-brushed out of the history of the revolution. Yet today his followers, the last surviving Leninists use the same tactics against their political opponents.

The intention of this article is to provoke a much needed debate on the Irish left about the nature of Leninism and where the Russian revolution went bad. The collapse of the Eastern European regimes makes it all the more urgent that this debate goes beyond trotting out the same old lies. If Leninism lies at the heart of Stalinism then those organisations that follow Lenin's teaching stand to make the same mistakes again. Anybody in a Leninist organisation who does not take this debate seriously is every bit as blind and misled as all those Communist Party members who thought the Soviet Union was a socialist country until the day it collapsed.

Andrew Flood

1. V.I. Lenin "Left wing childishness and petty-bourgeois mentality".
2. V.I. Lenin "The threatening catastrophe and how to fight it".
3. M. Brinton "The Bolsheviks and Workers Control" page 38.
4. M. Brinton page 38.
5. Brinton, page 39.
6. Brinton, page 40.
7. D. Guerin "Anarchism", page 101.
8. Brinton, page 78.
9. Guerin, page 91.
10. Brinton, page 41.
11. Brinton, page 43.
12. Brinton, page 61.
13. Brinton, page 63.
14. Brinton, page 65.
15. Brinton, page 6
16. I. Deutscher, "The Prophet Armed" pages 500-07.
17. Ida Mett, "The Kronstadt Uprising", page 38.
18. A. Berkman, "Nestor Makhno", page 25.
19. quoted by Voline "The Unknown Revolution", page 572.
20. P. Berland, "Makhno", *Le Temps*, 28 Aug, 1934.
21. Lenin, Selected Works, vol IX, p. 98.
22. Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, page 511.
23. *Labour Review*, vol V, No. 3.
24. I. Mett, page 51.

ON QUOTES AND MISQUOTES

The problem when writing an article covering this period of history is where you select your quotations from. Both Lenin and Trotsky changed their positions many times in this period. Many Leninists for example try to show Lenin's opposition to Stalinism by quoting from *State and Revolution* (1917). This is little more than deception as Lenin made no attempt to put the program outlined in this pamphlet into practise. In any case it still contains his curious conception of Workers control.

I have only used quotes from the October revolution to 1921 and in every case these quotes are either statements of policy, or what should be policy at the time. As socialists are aware governments in opposition may well say "Health cuts hurt the old, the sick and the handicapped". It is however in power that you see their real programme exposed.

Further reading

If you want to find out more about where the revolution failed these are some books worth getting

- The Bolsheviks & Workers' Control by Maurice Brinton. £ 3.95
- The Kronstadt Uprising by Ida Mett. £1.75
- Anarchism by Daniel Guerin. £4.95
- History of the Makhnovist movement (1918-21) by Piotr Arshinov. £ 5.50

All available post free from WSM Bookservice, PO Box 1528, Dublin 8. Cheques or Postal Orders payable to Workers Solidarity Movement.

BEYOND

FEMINISM:

Anarchism & Human Freedom

Few would quarrel with the statement that societal changes resulting from feminist struggle have been nothing short of profound. These changes have been brought about by the efforts of women belonging to the "first wave" of feminism in the early 1900s and, more recently, by the "second wave" of women's struggle that emerged in the 1960s and continues to this day. It is hard to think of even one aspect of our lives that has not been touched in some way by the women's movement. We need only to look at the lives of our own mothers to see how much things have changed in the last 20 years. The restrictions that my mother faced first as a girl and then as a woman in the 1940s and 1950s have been largely overcome by women who fought against the confines of sexism. Today, women are by and large recognized as legitimate citizens of our society and are seen by most as valuable members of the community in their own right.

Women's fight for legitimacy has not been easy. It has been met with great resistance, not only by men, but also by some women. The fact that men as a group have resisted women's emancipation led to the establishment of a separate women's movement. If we look back to the 1960s, for example, we can see that the sexism within the New Left forced women to

look elsewhere for satisfying political involvement. As Angela Miles notes:

The ringing statements of early feminist manifestos as well as subsequent analyses of the period show clearly that feminists left male dominated groups, not from weakness but from positions of strength and experience, to carry forward a struggle for a cultural, economic, social and sexual revolution that had faltered on men's refusal to address their own power over women.

The humanism of the New Left, like the ideology of mainstream society, was male-defined. The contradiction was great -- marxists, anarchists, trotskysts, maoists, and others were all ostensibly fighting for human liberation, but they undertook this fight without confronting sexism. The New Left simply did not take women as women seriously. These movements drove women out of the left because the fundamental conception of the human being within the left was overwhelmingly male. Issues like women's sexual and intellectual freedom, childcare, housework, violence against women and

children, sexual harassment, and the objectification of women were not addressed in any serious way by the male left. Left politics was on the whole more concerned with the theory and practice of toppling governments or seizing power than with looking after children. This is not to say that left-wing politics accomplished nothing during the 1960s; in fact, the left was responsible for a critical re-evaluation of late capitalism which shook the very foundations of our society. The movement, at once playful and deadly serious, challenged the authority of the state to send men to war, challenged the authority of the capitalist to steal from workers, and challenged the right of the church to control sexuality. What it did not challenge was the right of men to exercise power over "their" women. On the whole, left-wing men did not question their own dubious right to define the human race in their image -- as male. As a result, a women's movement emerged not only in opposition to the sexism of the dominant culture, but also in response to the lack of a nonsexist and thereby truly humanist left.

The struggle by women for liberation has emerged out of a myriad of contexts and situations, both personal and political. Some women came to feminism through left-wing politics: marxism, anarchism or socialism, for example. Other women embraced feminism because, trapped in suburban kitchens, they confronted and overcame what in 1963 Betty Friedan called "the problem that has no name" by giving it a name: male domination. Still others found themselves involved in the women's movement because it allowed an alternative to heterosexuality. There are probably as many reasons for joining the women's movement as there are women. This has resulted in a wonderfully diverse collection of groups and tendencies within the feminist movement. Among others, these include marxist-feminists, socialist feminists, radical feminists, lesbian separatists, anarcha-feminists, integrative feminists, liberal feminists and eco-feminists. Not only do these various groups differ from one another, but even within groups there exist subtle and not-so-subtle differences and factions. This fluid, ever-changing pluralism, which resists rigid categorization, is one of the movement's strengths, while simultaneously posing challenging analytical problems for theorists concerned with understanding the feminist movement. Therefore, instead of becoming mired in a tiring and unrewarding discussion of what divides the women's movement, it is more useful to identify what these various groups have in common. What unites these women as feminists is their shared belief that women in our society are unfairly disadvantaged relative to men. While there is much disagreement over the causes, effects, and possible solutions to the domination of women by men, all feminists are united in their refusal to accept women's subordination as unchangeable.

This refusal has had enormous effects on the practice of politics in our society. Marxists, socialists, liberals, even mainstream politicians must now in some way or other address the concerns put forth by feminists. While some of the changes have been symbolic, like the decreasing use of sexist language in public, other changes such as the increased



availability of birth control and abortion has been undeniably concrete. These changes are due to the militancy of the women's movement over the past twenty years, a militancy that has demonstrated very clearly that if men do not treat women as full members of the human species, we will simply go elsewhere. And go elsewhere we did -- into our consciousness-raising groups, our women-only study sessions, our feminist action committees, our autonomous, self-run women's movement.

This creation by women of a movement for women provided the opportunity for many of us to be taken seriously for the first time in our lives. Instead of fighting with left-wing men to put childcare on the agenda, we wrote the agenda ourselves. This, I believe, is the most important achievement of the women's movement -- women did not ask for freedom, we took it. As Emma Goldman boldly wrote:

The right to vote, or equal civil rights, may be good demands, but true emancipation begins neither at the polls nor in courts. It begins in woman's soul. History tells us that every oppressed class gained true liberation from its masters through its own efforts. It is necessary that woman learn that lesson, that she realize that her freedom will reach as far as her power to achieve her freedom reaches.

The feminist movement has indeed freed "woman soul", certainly within the movement itself. That achievement has permeated the rest of the left, and in a lesser extent mainstream society, is a testament to the vitality and strength of women's struggle.

While acknowledging these accomplishments, I would like to turn now to what I see an inherent limitation of the feminist movement: the lack of an intrinsic critique of power and domination per se. The absence of such a critique in the core of feminist thought results in the inability of feminism as a whole either to envision or to create a world where all people can be free. I would like to suggest that the political philosophy of anarchism, with its implicit critique of power, offers an alternative to feminism in the ongoing struggle for human liberation.

To speak of power as a thing or phenomenon that can exist independent of human consciousness is to profoundly misunderstand the whole problem of power itself. Power exists as a relationship between individual human beings whereby one individual attempts to negate the free will of another. When the will of one has been successfully imposed upon another, then there exists a situation of domination. That power is a relationship between two parties -- the oppressor and the oppressed -- and not something metaphysical or otherwise beyond the grasp and control of human individuals, is clearly understood by anarchist thinkers.

In the early part of this century, Emma Goldman quoted these lines from John Henry Mackay's poem in her essay "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For":

*I am an Anarchist! Wherefore I will
Not rule, and also ruled I will not be!*

These words clearly and succinctly express the integrity that is fundamental to the anarchist position -- integrity born out of the double imperative to both denounce and renounce the exercise of power. Anarchist political philosophy is based upon the belief that people are capable of self-determination, that self-determination is the foundation for human freedom, and that power relationships undermine self-determination and therefore must be constantly opposed. This uncompromising anti-authoritarianism is what makes anarchism so compelling to its adherents, both as a philosophy and as a political movement. Anarchists understand that freedom is grounded in the refusal of the individual to exercise power over others coupled with the opposition of the individual to restrictions by any external authority. Thus, anarchists challenge any form of organization or relationship which fosters the exercise of power and domination. For instance, anarchists oppose the State because the act of governing depends upon the exercise of power, whether it be of monarchs over their subjects or, as in the case of a democracy, of the majority over the minority. Anarchists also rally against the institution of organized religion, which they regard as both implicitly and explicitly engendering relations of hierarchy and domination. Compulsory education, sexual repression, censorship, private property, alienated labour, child abuse - all these are relationships of power that anarchists critically challenge.

Of course, many expressions of power exist in our society other than those I have just listed; what

distinguishes the anarchist from other political activists is that the anarchist opposes them all. This condemnation of power per se is fundamental to the anarchist position and gives it a critical impetus that takes it beyond traditional political movements. The feminist movement, with its central concern the liberation of women, does not contain within itself the larger critique of power that is basic to anarchism. What I hope to demonstrate below is that without an implicit condemnation of power as such, feminism ultimately fails by limiting itself to an incomplete struggle for liberation.

In my view, it is absolutely necessary that an explicit anti-authoritarianism be present in a political philosophy if it is to bring about true human liberation. No hierarchy is acceptable, no ruler is allowable, no domination is justifiable in a free society. Clearly, if this anti-authoritarian principle is not fundamental to a political philosophy, then domination and hierarchy can exist in theory and practice without presenting a crisis. As a movement, feminism does not have as a defining characteristic an anti-authoritarian critique of power and domination; therefore, as a political philosophy, it is insufficient for the liberation of all people.

Of course it is possible to point to various groups and individuals within feminism who are critical of power, domination, and hierarchy. The feminist writer Marilyn French, for instance, criticizes power in her book *Beyond Power: On Women, Men and Morals* and advocates building a new world on what she argues is the opposite of power -- pleasure. Another feminist writer, Starhawk, likewise criticizes the exercise of what she calls "power-over" and advocates the use of consensus decision-making as one means to counter power. Angela Miles, in her essay "Feminist Radicalism in the 1980s", argues for an "integrative" feminism that opposes all forms of domination. These are only three examples of feminist thinkers who consciously oppose the exercise of power and domination; there exist many others.

However, while one can point to examples of feminist thought that focus on the problem of power, this does not indicate in any sense that a critique of power is necessary or integral to feminist theory taken as a whole. In other words, just as one can be a feminist and oppose power like the three writers cited above, it is also possible and not inconsistent for a feminist to embrace the use of power and advocate domination without relinquishing the right to be a feminist. For example, in her essay "The Future -- If There Is One -- Is Female", Sally Miller Gearhart argues for the establishment of a matriarchy; she says we must "begin thinking of flipping the coin, of making the exchange of power, of building the ideology of female primacy and control." A matriarchy, like a patriarchy, is based on power; the fact that in a matriarchy women hold the power does not negate the fact that power is still being exercised. Jo Freeman, in her article "The Tyranny of Structurelessness", argues that feminists must abandon their small leaderless groups in favour of designated power and a strong, centralized feminist organization. In place of small grassroots groups that use consensus to make decisions, Freeman advocates

large-scale democratic decision-making, without questioning the tyranny of the majority over the minority that is inevitable in any democratic form of organization. For Freeman, if feminism is to be successful, then "some middle ground between domination and ineffectiveness can and must be found." Clearly, Freeman sees nothing wrong with women participating in forms of politics which are based on the exercise of domination and power. Betty Friedan, feminist author of *The Feminine Mystique* and *The Second Stage*, argues in both books that the struggle for and the achievement of women's equality should take place without disturbing the existing hierarchies of the state and the capitalist economic system. Friedan has no quarrel with economic or political power -- she simply wants men and women

to be able to compete for power on an equal footing. Gearhart, Freeman, Friedan -- all three are undeniably feminist, and all three accept power as part of their world view. This acceptance of power does not in any way disqualify them from being feminists. Feminism may allow for a critique of power, but a critique of power is not necessary to feminism.

In spite of the fact that some feminists clearly embrace the use of power, the argument has been made by certain theorists that feminism is inherently anarchistic. For instance, Lynne Farrow takes this position when she claims that "Feminism practices what Anarchism preaches." Peggy Kornegger also asserts an identity between the two movements when she states, "Feminists have been unconscious



harchists for years." Both Farrow and Kornegger, in their enthusiasm to link feminism with anarchism, ignore groups and individuals within the women's movement who are decidedly "archic", that is who endorse the use of power in both theory and practice. By collapsing anarchism and feminism into one movement, Kornegger and Farrow disregard the rich diversity of perspectives that make up the feminist movement, at the same time committing a grave injustice to anarchism by rendering it redundant. If feminism practices what Anarchism preaches, why needs anarchism anyway? In fact, feminism and anarchism are not identical movements as Farrow and Kornegger suggest; feminism as a whole recognizes the iniquity of the oppression of women by men; anarchism opposes oppression of all kinds. Certainly some feminists look beyond sexism to a wider, anarchistic critique of power; however, this wider critique is not at all necessary to feminism.

Since it is possible, and in fact quite likely, that one could be a feminist without sharing the anarchist sensibility towards power, then it is logical to ask whether it is possible to be an anarchist without being a feminist. In other words, can anarchism accommodate the oppression of women without contradicting itself? As anarchism is a political philosophy that opposes all relationships of power, it is inherently feminist. An anarchist who supports male domination contradicts the implicit critique of power which is the fundamental principle upon which all of anarchism is built. Sexist anarchists do indeed exist, but only by virtue of directly contradicting their own anarchism. This contradiction leaves sexist anarchists open to criticism on their own terms. Anarchism must be feminist if it is to remain self-consistent.

Not only is anarchism inherently feminist, but also it goes beyond feminism in its fundamental opposition to all forms of power, hierarchy, and domination. Anarchism transcends and contains feminism in its critique of power. This implicit opposition to the exercise of power gives anarchism a wider mandate, so to speak, than feminism or other liberatory movements such as marxism. Anarchist political philosophy and practice is free to critically oppose any situation of oppression. While race, class, age, gender, sexuality, or ability, for instance, may pose analytical problems for other movements, anarchism is capable of dealing with all these issues as legitimate because of its fundamental commitment to freedom for all people. No one oppression is given special status in anarchism -- all oppression is equally undesirable. Anarchism fights for human freedom against each and every form of power and domination, not just a particular historical manifestation of power. This gives anarchism a flexibility not available to any other movements. Not only can anarchism address any form of oppression that exists today, it is versatile enough to be able to respond to any form of oppression that may emerge in the future. If tomorrow, for instance, left-handed people were proclaimed to be criminals for their lack of right-handedness, anarchists would have to oppose such oppression in order to remain true to

anarchism's underlying anti-authoritarian principles. It is this fundamental anti-authoritarianism that leads anarchists to fight for the dignity and freedom of such groups as women, people of colour, gays and lesbians, people with AIDS, the differently abled, the poor, and the homeless, among others. Anarchism goes beyond other liberatory movements in opposing oppression in whatever form it takes, without assigning priority to one oppression over another.

Unlike most other political movements, anarchism understands that all oppressions are mutually reinforcing; therefore it urges that the liberation struggle take place on many fronts at once. Thus some anarchists concentrate on challenging state power, others focus on opposing male domination, and still others spend their energy fighting against capitalist exploitation, compulsory heterosexuality, organized religion, and a myriad of other causes. The anarchist movement accommodates a diversity of anti-authoritarian struggles, and while each is recognized as being essential to the establishment of a truly free society, none is placed as prior to or more important than the others. Anarchism fights all oppression in all its forms.

Anarchism goes beyond feminism, indeed beyond most other liberatory movements, in its relentless quest for human freedom. Certainly there are people working within other movements who share anarchism's aversion to power; however, any political movement that does not have at its core an anti-authoritarian critique of power leaves itself open to anarchist questioning. The gift of anarchism lies in this critique -- a thoughtful but relentless questioning of authority and power, one which seeks to create a world where all may live in freedom.

-- L. Susan Brown
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