REFUSING TO BE THE OTHER: BARBARA DEMING'S EXPERIMENTS WITH NONVIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

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Barbara Deming was active in the U.S. nonviolent movement from 1960 until her death from cancer in 1984 at age sixty-seven. A complex understanding of the intersections between gender, sexuality, feminism, and nonviolence can be gleaned by following her pilgrimage through nuclear disarmament activities, the African American Freedom Movement, the efforts to end the war in Viet Nam, Women's Liberation Movement actions, and her involvement in the Gay Liberation Movement. Deming had become well-known by the mid-1960s as a journalist for *The Nation*, an associate editor of the pacifist magazine *Liberation*, and the author of *Prison Notes* (1966), the first of her eight books. Despite her name recognition at the time and the leadership roles she often took in these social movements, she has nearly disappeared from the historical record.

Deming's story has been both preserved and erased because of her focus on integrating nonviolence with feminism, lesbianism, and androgyny in the 1970s and 80s. Deming identified as a lesbian as a teenager, but being white and upper-class shielded her from some oppression. By the 1970s she came to see her gender and sexuality as central to her involvement in the nonviolent movement. As she began living openly as a lesbian and writing about the connections she saw between feminism and nonviolence, she gained a new audience, primarily women, while losing the wider readership she had

cultivated in the 1960s. Some men in the nonviolent movement continued to support her work, but it was pacifist women and those in the Women's and Gay Liberation Movements who helped archive her papers at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute.

Understanding Deming's activism helps to explain the oppressive role of heterosexism in the United States and highlights the possibilities and limitations of merging feminism and nonviolence, a strategy that has been neglected by historians of peace and feminism. Reclaiming Barbara Deming's perspective expressed in a quarter-century of writing about nonviolence, and investigating the continuity and change of her arguments, reveals a hidden history of the Women's Liberation Movement and the broader nonviolent movement.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One:	We Are All Part of One Another: An Introduction	1
Chapter Two:	A Strange Kind of Homecoming	28
Chapter Three:	Experimenting with Nonviolence	69
Chapter Four:	Feminist Nonviolence	108
Chapter Five:	Androgyny and the Queering of Nonviolence	159
Chapter Six:	Moving Toward A New Society	206
	Epilogue	254

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

CNVA	Committee for Nonviolent Action
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
FOR	Fellowship of Reconciliation
MNS	Movement for a New Society
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NSP	New Society Publishers
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WIN	Workshops in Nonviolence
WISP	Women Strike for Peace
WRL	War Resisters League

Common Abbreviations for Archival Records:

BDBU	Barbara Deming Collection at Boston University's Howard Gotlieb Archival
BDSL	Barbara Deming Papers, Schlesinger Library at Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study
SCPC	Swarthmore College Peace Collection

DEDICATION

To Aurora and Leif

Chapter One: **We Are All Part of One Another: An Introduction**

> *If the fundamental contradiction that has to be resolved is, as I think it is, the contradiction between the lie that men and women are of different natures and the truth that we are of one nature, the truth that no human being should be thought of as The Other, then the appropriate form of struggle is surely that form still largely to be invented: nonviolent struggle.*[1]

Barbara Deming is a lost voice in the history of the United States, and her body of work in the historical record needs to be resuscitated. She is hardly known even to those activists and scholars who are most interested in the primary causes of her life: nonviolence, gender justice, and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) rights. Despite having written eight books on those topics and having played an influential role in the broadly understood nonviolent movement in the United States, she has nearly vanished from history. Deming has even been neglected by historians of feminism and pacifism despite serving for a decade as an associate editor of *Liberation*, the leading pacifist magazine in the U.S., and regardless of the fact that she was considered one of the primary advocates for a feminist incarnation of nonviolence from the early 1970s until her death from cancer in 1984.

Deming's writings and activism over a quarter-century provide a new lens through which to view the history of nonviolent direct action in the United States. Her story illustrates the limitations placed on women and lesbians in particular in the 1960s while also demonstrating the benefits queer theory has to offer historians. Building on

[1] Barbara Deming, "Remembering Who We Are" in Jane Meyerding, ed., *We Are All Part of One Another: A Barbara Deming Reader* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: New Society Publishers, 1984), 289. (Hereafter cited as *Deming Reader*.)

the work of historians who have investigated the intersections of gender, feminism, and nonviolence, this study complements that scholarship by giving more attention to the role of sexuality.[2] Deming's perspective on nonviolence was shaped by the fact that she was a lesbian at a time when homosexuality was considered by many to be a disease. Her decision to keep her sexuality a secret throughout the 1960s followed by her public advocacy for alternative sexualities in the 1970s indicates both the oppressive nature of heterosexism and the changes in social norms over this time period.

Restoring Barbara Deming's voice to the history of the nonviolent movement in the United States allows access to the internal debates about gender and sexuality among pacifists, integrationists, and feminists. The continuity and change in her writing and activism from the 1960s to the 1980s show the variety of ways in which activists attempted to use nonviolence as a strategy for social change. Deming continually adapted her understanding of nonviolence to fit the specific needs of a variety of campaigns for social justice, making her personal history of activism well-suited to providing insight into the history of nonviolence in the United States.

The social upheavals brought about by the African American Freedom Movement during the 1960s and the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970s opened a space for Deming's voice. Aspects of this change can be seen in the bookends of her activism. Her first arrest occurred at the Atomic Energy Commission in New York City in 1962,

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[2] See Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace As A Woman's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993), Frances H. Early, *A World Without War: How U.S. Feminists and Pacifists Resisted World War I* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997), and Marian Mollin, *Radical Pacifism in Modern America: Egalitarianism and Protest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). See also, John D'Emilio, "Homophobia and the Trajectory of Postwar American Radicalism: The Case of Bayard Rustin," *Radical History Review 62* (1995): 80-103, and *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (New York: Free Press, 2003).

while her final arrest happened twenty years later at the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment in Waterloo, New York in 1983. During that first arrest Deming sat with a mixed-gender group, wore a long skirt, and her sexuality was absent or presumed heterosexual. Her biological sex, if considered at all, was upheld or dismissed as a symbol of women's natural desire for peace. During her final arrest, she purposefully marched with an all-female crowd, and wore jeans and a flannel shirt as a threatening crowd shouted misogynist slogans at the group they labeled as men-hating lesbians. Although she came to see heterosexism as the catalyst for her initial involvement in the nonviolent movement and quickly developed a loyal following, her introduction to nonviolence was unremarkable and almost accidental.

In 1960, Barbara Deming, a forty-three year old, upper-class, white lesbian, attended a training session of pacifists from a variety of backgrounds who were protesting nuclear submarine operations in New London, Connecticut. Deming was unknown to the activists attending the two-week workshop on nonviolent direct action. Prior to this event she had not been involved in any political protest but had decided to observe the training in her capacity as a journalist for *The Nation* magazine. During the training session organized by the pacifist groups the Peacemakers and the Committee for Nonviolent Action (CNVA) she made a life-altering decision to join their movement. Within two years she had not only become a member, but was serving on the executive committee of the CNVA and participating in their anti-nuclear peace walks and other protest activities. In 1963 she was jailed in Birmingham, Alabama as part of the highly publicized racial integration protests there.

Her involvement later that year with CNVA's Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Peace Walk to promote disarmament of the U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals propelled her into a leadership role within the U.S. pacifist movement. The peace walk resulted in her month-long incarceration in an Albany, Georgia jail for defying the city's segregation codes, and it led to the publication of her widely-read memoir, *Prison Notes*. By the time the book was published in 1966 she had become the only female associate editor at *Liberation* magazine. Later that year she traveled to both Saigon and Hanoi as part of two peace delegations, and in 1967 she received the annual War Resisters League (WRL) Peace Award. After completing a national speaking tour about her trips to Viet Nam, she wrote what would become her most reprinted essay, "On Revolution and Equilibrium." In that essay she addressed the growing support for armed resistance within the African American Freedom Movement and the need to reinvent nonviolence in order to maintain its appeal for political revolutionaries. From an unknown observer in 1960 to a recognizable author in 1966, Barbara Deming had become a notable asset to the nonviolent movement.[3]

She would subsequently author two more books on nonviolence, *Revolution & Equilibrium* (1971) and *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives* (1974). The first of these books was a collection of her earlier writings on nonviolence along with a few of her newer essays supporting the destruction of government records during the Viet Nam era

[3] Deming and others used the phrase "the nonviolent movement" to refer to the various campaigns for social justice that relied on nonviolence as a strategy, including traditional pacifist actions against war and the many people's liberation movements for racial, sexual, and social justice. See also Peniel Joseph, ed., *The Black Power Movement: Re-Thinking The Civil Right—Black Power Era* (New York, New York: Routledge Press, 2006). In the introduction he argues that the term "African-American Freedom Movement" is more accurate that the "Civil Rights Movement" which often results in the exclusion of the Black Power Movement as something separate and apart from "the black freedom movement."

draft board raids.[4] The second book signaled her developing idea of a feminist nonviolence and included a public acknowledgement of the important role sexuality had played in her political and personal life. It included her much-referenced "On Anger" speech to the 1971 WRL national conference and her *Liberation* article "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle" where she named nonviolence as androgynous. For Deming, androgyny meant the intertwining of conventional definitions of femininity and masculinity into every human being. She saw it as a revolutionary act that could promote gender equality and further the causes of feminism and pacifism. She devoted a third of the book to her correspondence about feminism and sexuality with other pacifists and dedicated the book "to my lesbian sisters." Soon after its publication she encountered resistance to her feminist intervention into nonviolence and pacifism at *Liberation* and stepped down as an associate editor in 1974. She endured further rejection as she struggled to create a permanent home for feminist nonviolence in the pages of *Workshops in Nonviolence* (*WIN*), the WRL weekly. She spent the next few years writing about nonviolence for feminist periodicals such as *Lesbian Tide*, *off our backs*, and *Quest*. Her most influential writing during that time was a 1977 essay which focused on feminism, sexuality, and their connections to nonviolence. That article was often photocopied and circulated among a growing number of self-described pacifist-feminists and became the title essay of her 1981 book *Remembering Who We Are*.

[4] I have chosen to use the two-word spelling of Viet Nam out of deference to Asian American historians and academics in Asian American Studies who prefer this spelling. See Jessica Frazier, "Collaborative Efforts To End The War In Viet Nam: The Interactions of Women Strike For Peace, The Vietnamese Women's Union, and The Women's Union Of Liberation, 1965-1968," *Peace and Change 37*, no. 3 (July 2012): 339-365, 357n1.

Deming's accomplishments during her first decade of writing and activism in the 1960s ought to have been enough to secure her a notable place in the history of pacifism and nonviolence in the United States, but despite her influence and leadership roles she has remained on the fringes of that historical narrative. Although she continued to publish essays about nonviolence and participated in multiple nonviolent protest actions over the following fifteen years before her death in 1984, her mark in the historical record has been disproportionately small. Her relative obscurity has much to do with her identity as a lesbian and a feminist in the heteronormative, male-dominated culture of U.S. pacifism. As Deming's philosophy of nonviolence came to include the intersections of gender, sexuality, and feminism, she became a more controversial figure and thus easier to marginalize. Additionally, her secular-based philosophy of nonviolence did not have the institutional support that accompanied the Christian nonviolence which many of her contemporaries espoused. While she did gravitate toward the secular pacifists of the WRL rather than the religious nonviolence of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), the refusal of the WRL leadership to support an organizational home for feminist nonviolence left her feeling like an outsider.[5]

Barbara Deming's contributions were preserved in part by the publication of *We Are All Part of One Another: A Barbara Deming Reader* (1984) which was printed months before her death by New Society Publishers, the literary arm of the Movement for a New Society, a short-lived nationwide feminist nonviolence collective based in

[5] For an organizational history of the War Resisters League see, Scott H. Bennett, *Radical Pacifism: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003). Bennett use of the term "'secularization of conscience'" to describe the WRL's arguments for nonviolence match Deming's language, see xiii. For more on FOR see, Joseph Kip Kosek, *Acts of Conscience: Christian Nonviolence and Modern American Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Additionally, Deming donated much of her professional papers to the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center at Boston University in the early-1970s which was in the process of collecting materials of those involved in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. However, the most comprehensive archive of her papers, including her work from 1970 to 1984, is housed by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study in Harvard University's Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. Deming named Judith McDaniel, a nonviolence and lesbian rights activist, author, and educator to be her literary executor, and she had Deming's papers collected and donated to the Schlesinger Library in 1990. The preservation of Barbara Deming's early work first by an academic who sought to amass a comprehensive collection about the Civil Rights Movement, then preserved in book form by an organization that promoted feminist nonviolence, and finally archived by McDaniel in a library devoted to women's history, speaks to both the trajectory of Deming's activism and the barriers she encountered along the way.

As a consequence of this archival history, McDaniel has also produced most of the scholarship on Deming. Her work includes a chapter in an edited volume about women and culture in the 1960s, an essay on Deming's romantic relationships with women as part of an introduction to a collection of Deming's poems, and a biographical sketch that opens the thirtieth anniversary reissue of Deming's *Prison Notes*.[6] Other scholars that have given substantial attention to Barbara Deming are David Cortright, Ira

[6] Judith McDaniel "biographical sketch" in Barbara Deming, *Prisons That Could Not Hold* (University of Georgia Press, 1995), vii-xiv, McDaniel "The Women She Loved" in McDaniel, ed., *I Change, I Change: Poems By Barbara Deming* (Norwich, Vermont: New Victoria Publishers, 1996), 1-25, and McDaniel, "Shaping the Sixties: The Emergence of Barbara Deming" in Avital H. Bloch and Lauri Umansky, eds., *Impossible to Hold: Women and Culture in the 1960s* (New York University Press, 2005), 196-216.

Chernus, and Martin Duberman. Ira Chernus, a religious studies scholar, devoted a short chapter to Deming, describing her writings as "the best example of a secular theory of nonviolence" in *American Nonviolence: The History of an Idea* (2004). Likewise, David Cortright, a professor of peace studies, highlighted Deming in *Gandhi And Beyond: Nonviolence for an Age of Terrorism* (2006), as an exemplar of "revolutionary nonviolence" who challenged its definitional boundaries.[7] The most recent and complete scholarship on Deming is historian Martin Duberman's dual biography, *A Saving Remnant: The Radical Lives of Barbara Deming and David McReynolds* (2011), in which he remarks that Deming's archives continue to be "largely unused" by historians.[8] While Duberman and McDaniel's scholarship has been primarily biographical with less attention given to the development of her theories of nonviolence, Cortright and Chernus have briefly analyzed her theories of nonviolence without connecting her philosophies with her lived experience.

This study investigates Barbara Deming's evolving theories of nonviolence, demonstrates the role of gender, sexuality, and feminism in that process, and provides a deeper understanding of the history of nonviolence in the United States. It is most clearly in dialogue with the historiography of U.S. pacifism and nonviolence, but also speaks to the historiographies of U.S. feminism and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer histories and theories. This history of Deming's experiments with nonviolence relies on the scholarly biographical work by Duberman and McDaniel about her childhood,

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[7] Ira Chernus, *American Nonviolence: The History of an Idea* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 206, 182-191, and David Cortright, *Gandhi And Beyond: Nonviolence for an Age of Terrorism* (Boulder, Colorado: Paradigm Publishers, 2006), 116-136. For a brief mention of Deming in a foundational book about women and peacemaking see, Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace As A Woman's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights*, 243-44.

[8] Martin Duberman, *A Saving Remnant: The Radical Lives of Barbara Deming and David McReynolds* (New York, New York: The New Press, 2011), xii.

teenage years, young adulthood, and her brief career as a film and literary critic, but it is primarily concerned with the last twenty-five years of her life from age forty-two to her death at the age of sixty-seven. It is during those years that she transitioned from an unknown journalist reporting on nonviolent protests to a leading theorist of nonviolence with name recognition and a following.

Because Deming was a woman in a male dominated movement, a lesbian in a heterosexist culture and a secular-based philosopher of nonviolence in a movement dominated by religious pacifists, her relative obscurity in the historical record is easily explainable. Pacifists in the United States connected their opposition to war through their interpretations of Christianity and could rely on a tradition of religious freedom for protection. Their public image as moral exemplars and Deming's decision in the 1970s to live openly as a lesbian prevented her from becoming one of the movement's revered symbols of U.S. pacifism. That she based her theories of nonviolence in secular rather than theological terms, further explains the lack of institutional recognition. Her partial preservation in the history of pacifism and nonviolence is attributable to her prolific writings and her quarter-century of involvement in a wide variety of actions within the broader nonviolent movement.[9]

Before discussing Deming's place in the historiography of U.S. pacifism and nonviolence it is important to note that while the terms pacifism and nonviolence appear synonymous, they have caused serious debates between and among those devoted to

[9] For the story of the erasure of women from liberation movements see, Jean Allman, "The Disappearing of Hannah Kudjoe: Nationalism, Feminism, and the Tyrannies of History," *Journal of Women's History 21*, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 13-35. For a discussion of the exclusion of nonreligious activists in the Civil Rights Movement see Susan Jacoby, *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism* (New York, New York: Henry Holt and Company), 330-38.

ending war (i.e. pacifists) and those determined to bring about social change through nonviolence (i.e. the broader nonviolent movement). As Leilah Danielson has shown, the pacifists of FOR, the longest running and most prominent pacifist organization in the twentieth century, did not embrace Gandhian nonviolence until the 1940s.[10] Similarly, Scott Bennett's study of the pacifist organization WRL, shows that the executive committee remained focused on the single issue of ending war for the first thirty years of its existence until 1953 when it officially adopted the use of civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action to addresses broad social injustices.[11]

While pacifism and nonviolence are intimately related, the debates over the two ideas caused fissures within both the WRL and FOR. As Danielson shows, within FOR, even John Haynes Holmes, a prominent U.S. pacifist who is credited by many for introducing the United States to Gandhi, "never experimented with nonviolent resistance and criticized American pacifists who did." He even opposed conscientious objectors to World War II when they used nonviolent tactics to protest racial segregation in prison.[12] Holmes was certainly not alone in his criticism, as evidenced by the debates between well-respected pacifists such as Reinhold Niebuhr and A.J. Muste about the potentially coercive and therefore inherently violent nature of nonviolent direct action as opposed to peaceful pacifist protest. Eventually long-time pacifists on both sides of the issue resigned from FOR because of their differing interpretations of pacifism and nonviolence. It was not until 1941 that FOR finally "made nonviolent resistance a formal part of its

[10] Leilah C. Danielson, "'In My Extremity I Turned to Gandhi': American Pacifists, Christianity, and Gandhian Nonviolence, 1915-1941," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture 72,* no. 2 (2003): 361-388, 368.
[11] Bennett, *Radical Pacifism*, 134-38, 145-49, 155-58, 163-72.
[12] Danielson, "American Pacifists, Christianity, and Gandhian Nonviolence," 368.

program" largely because of the efforts of Muste who had become co-secretary in 1940 with the intent of redefining it as "a vehicle for building a mass 'nonviolent direct action movement.'"[13]

The debate within FOR also revealed a Christian pacifist culture that tended to place Christianity at the top of a hierarchy of world religions, and allowed some U.S. pacifists to dismiss Gandhi's ideas simply by pointing out the connections between Hinduism and nonviolent resistance.[14] Without question Christianity played a dominant role in the history of U.S. pacifism and nonviolence, but the focus of historians on that major element of the historical record has resulted in a narrative that has obscured those who operated on the margins or outside of those religious traditions. One reason that religion has dominated the historiography is the result of a great number of historians who have been interested in studying the Christian-based nonviolent direct action campaigns of the African American Freedom Movement which was headed by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and which strongly influenced Reverend James Lawson and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Additionally, historians have demonstrated the institutional connections between those organizations and FOR.[15]

A historical understanding of nonviolence and pacifism as a Christian-based philosophy is furthered by the institutional ties that help preserve the records available to historians. For example the leading archive for peace historians is the Swarthmore

[13]Danielson, "American Pacifists, Christianity, and Gandhian Nonviolence," 365-368, 381, 385.
[14] Ibid., 365-368. For a discussion of Orientalism and the historical sense of the Other, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).
[15] See Kosek, *Acts of Conscience*, 203-4, 211-30 and Joann Ooiman Robinson, *Abraham Went Out: A Biography of A.J. Muste* (Temple University Press, 1981) 20, 109-37.

College Peace Collection which has a strong historical tie to the Society of Friends/Quakers. Therefore, the majority of source material and subject matter available to historians is prefigured to favor institutional histories which in turn have tended to emphasize the role of Christianity in shaping pacifist political culture. A quick survey of the literature reveals a preponderance of religious, mostly Christian, orientated monographs on pacifism and nonviolence.[16] Furthermore, recent histories of pacifism and nonviolence in the United States have demonstrated that the culture of Protestantism was so strong that it shaped the activists' language and concepts of social change regardless of their personal religious beliefs.[17] Barbara Deming's reliance on secular rather than religious language to describe her philosophy of nonviolence placed her outside the scope of much of the history of U.S. pacifism and nonviolence.

In order to find Deming in the historical record, one might then expect that her advocacy of a feminist nonviolence has been preserved in histories of U.S. feminism, but that has not been the case. Historians of U.S. feminism have largely neglected the history of second-wave feminism's engagement in issues of war and peace, and have ignored the feminist debates about nonviolence which this study addresses. For example, notable

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[16] Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), Peter Brock, *20th Century Pacifism* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970), Charles Chatfield, *For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America, 1914-1941* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1971), Ira Chernus, *American Nonviolence: A History of An Idea* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), Merle Curti, *Peace or War: The American Struggle, 1636-1936* (Boston: J.S. Canner, 1936), Charles DeBenedetti, *Origins of the Modern Peace Movement, 1915-1929* (Millwood, New York, KTO Press, 1978) and *The Peace Reform in American History* (Bloomington, The University of Indiana Press, 1980), Mark Kurlansky, *Nonviolence: The History of a Dangerous Idea* (New York: Modern Library, 2006), Alice and Staughton Lynd, *Nonviolence In America: A Documentary History* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995 Revised Edition) Patricia McNeal, *Harder Than War: Catholic Peacemaking in Twentieth-Century America* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), and James Tracy, *Direct Action: Radical Pacifism from The Union Eight to the Chicago Seven* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[17] Patricia Applebaum, *Kingdom to Commune: Protestant Pacifist Culture Between World War I And The Vietnam Era* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), Danielson, "American Pacifists, Christianity, and Gandhian Nonviolence," and Kosek, *Acts of Conscience*.

historians of U.S. feminism such as Nancy Cott, Alice Echols, Sara Evans, Estelle Freedman, and Jane Gerhard have provided little to no examination of pacifism and nonviolence as it relates to the history of feminism in the United States.[18] The hallmark historical narrative of the U.S. Women's Liberation Movement, Echols' *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, makes no mention of the divisions among feminists on the issue of nonviolence. However, it remains a touchstone study for discussions of the various internal debates such as how to best respond to the misogyny within the male-led political left and the Civil Rights Movement, if lesbianism hurt the movement or if lesbians were the only true feminists, the exclusionary effects of racism and classism, and the rise of cultural feminism and the trend toward separatism.[19]

Barbara Deming's experiences with radical politics, the African American Freedom Movement, the Women's Liberation Movement, and her lesbian rights advocacy provide insight into those divisions. She saw herself as a radical feminist and advised against separatism along lines of sexuality or biological sex. Her commitment to nonviolent strategy led her to seek inclusion and to resist the cultural feminist ideology that women should separate themselves from men or that lesbians were more similar to

[18] Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), see chapter eight "In Voluntary Conflict" for Cott's most sustained passages on pacifism and feminism, Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left* (New York: Vintage, 1980), Jane Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution: Second-Wave Feminism and the Rewriting of American Sexual Thought, 1920 to 1982* (Columbia University Press, 2001), and Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and The Future of Women*, (New York: Ballantine, 2002). See also Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, Third Edition (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2009) and Nancy Hewitt, ed., *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism* (Rutgers University Press, 2010).

[19] See "The Great Divide: The Politico-Feminist Schism," "Breaking Away from the Left," and "The Ascendance of Cultural Feminism" in Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 51-138, and 243-95. See also, Echols, "'Woman Power' and Women's Liberation: Exploring the Relationship Between the Anitwar Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement" in Melvin Small and William D. Hoover, eds., *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement: Essays from the Charles DeBenedetti Memorial Conference* (New York: Syracuse University, 1992), 171-81.

each other than they were to heterosexual women. Deming did engage in all-female protests in the last years of her life, but stressed the temporary nature of those actions and the need for men to eventually join the circle of feminist-pacifists.

Echols only mentioned feminist-pacifists passingly in her brief epilogue where she noted the role of eco-feminists and their theory that women were better suited to save the planet from war because they were more in touch with Earth than men.[20] In her footnote to that statement she referenced *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence* (1982), a book which highlighted Deming's role as the principle advocate of feminist nonviolence. Although Echols made no mention of Deming's influence in *Reweaving* or the growing feminist-pacifist culture, she did state that not all feminists who supported pacifism were eco-feminists, cultural feminists, or essentialists.[21] Deming herself did not fall into those categories either, just as many other feminists did not fit neatly into any one category. The history of Deming's attempts to work across and through the divisions within U.S. feminism and with the male-led Left helps to fill that void in Echols' history of the Women's Liberation Movement.

On a different exclusionary note, as Harriet Hyman Alonso and Frances H. Early have articulated, the historiography of pacifism and nonviolence has also circumscribed the role of women in the history of peacemaking. As Alonso noted in a 1995 article about the status of women in peace histories, "U.S. peace organizations have either been mixed-gender or all female, there has never been an all-male group—or at least I've never heard or read of one. Therefore, the historical retelling of peace movement history

[20] Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 288.
[21] Ibid., 391n6. For Echols' only mention of Deming see, 253.

has been consistently off kilter."[22] Frances Early has elaborated on the disparity of women and a lack of gender analyses in various articles that outline the impact of feminism and gender studies on histories of peace and war.[23] Like many historians of women and gender, Early makes a distinction between women's history and the history of gender. She sees women's history influencing peace history when it "explores the role and significance of women in peace movements," while gender history's influence is evident when it "offers innovative analyses of gender-related patterns of behavior, thought, and cultural representations in specific historical contexts."[24] Early's articles show how feminist and gender historians have contributed to a historiographical intervention that can "argue convincingly that war and peace are gendered processes" and can demonstrate how "the social construction of gender (manliness, womanliness) has been central to militarism, warmaking, and peacemaking."[25] Throughout her articles and her 1997 monograph *A World Without War: How U.S. Feminists and Pacifists Resisted World War I*, Early argues for the "warrior/nurturer dichotomy" to be challenged and

[22] Harriet Hyman Alonso, "Commentary: Why Women's Peace History?", *Peace & Change 20*, no. 1 (1995): 48-52, 49. This volume included eleven commentaries that discussed the history of the field, its state at the time of publication, and the hopes for its future. Of particular note are Charles Chatfield, "Commentary: Frameworks for the History of Peacemaking" (39-47), Lawrence Wittner, "Commentary: Ten Motives and A Misunderstanding" (53-59), and Paul Wehr, "Commentary: Toward a History of Nonviolence," (82-93).

[23] Frances Early, "New Historical Perspectives On Gendered Peace Studies," *Women's Studies Quarterly 23*, (1995): 22-31 and "Feminism's Influence on Peace History," *Atlantis 25.1* (Fall/Winter 2000): 3-10.

[24] Early, "Gendered Peace Studies," 22. This concept is helpful in explaining the shift from women's to gender history which in part argues that a thorough gender analysis should explore both masculinity and femininity. See Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review 91*, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-1075 and "Gender: Still a Useful Category of Analysis?" *Diogenes 57*, no. 1 (February 2010): 7-14. See also "AHR Forum: Revisiting 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis'," *American Historical Review 113*, no. 5 (December 2008). Of particular note are Joanne Meyerowitz, "AHR Forum: A History of 'Gender'," 1346-56, and Joan Wallach Scott, "AHR Forum: Unanswered Questions," 1422-29.

[25] Early, "New Historical Perspectives," 23, 29.

calls on historians to "explore aspects of peace history through the lens of gender history."[26]

Peace historians have not only been slow to apply gender analyses, they have also neglected the role of feminists and feminism in the peace movement. The exception is Alonso's scholarship, especially *Peace As A Woman's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights*, which highlights the contributions of women in U.S. pacifism and the historical role of the essentialist ideology that women are by nature maternal and therefore peacemakers.[27] Alonso's scholarship bridges the historiographies of pacifism and feminism, but she is most often cited as a historian of peace rather than a historian of feminism. While there are certainly many peace historians that have followed in Alonso's path and have provided histories of women's organizations such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and Women Strike for Peace (WISP), a broader analysis of the historical role gender has played in U.S. pacifism and nonviolence is just beginning to take shape.[28]

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[26] Early, "Feminism's Influence on Peace History," 5, 6. See also Frances H. Early, *A World Without War: How U.S. Feminists and Pacifists Resisted World War I*.

[27] Alonso, *Peace As A Woman's Issue*, and "Suffragettes for Peace During The Interwar Years 1919-1941," *Peace and Change 14*, no. 3 (1989): 243-262 and *The Women's Peace Union and the Outlawry of War, 1921-1942* (University of Tennessee Press, 1990).

[28] Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), Linda K. Schott, *Reconstructing Women's Thoughts: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Before World War II* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), Carrie A. Foster, *The Women and the Warriors: The US Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1946* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), Amy Schneidhorst, "'Little Old Ladies and Old Women': Women's Peace and Social Justice Activism in Chicago, 1960-1975," *Peace and Change*, Volume 26 Number 3 (2001), 374-391. The work of WILPF in particular has received the most scholarly attention by peace historians, see Cecilia Catia Confronti, "How Matters: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom's Trips to the Middle East, 1931-1975," *Peace and Change 38*, no. 3 (July 2013): 284-309 and "Doing Feminist Peace," *International Feminist Journal of Politics 13*, no. 3 (September 2011): 349-370. Note: While Women Strike for Peace is commonly abbreviated as WSP. I have chosen WISP because members referred to themselves as "Wisps" and it is the abbreviation that Deming used. For more variations on their name see Swerdlow, *Women Strike For Peace*, 188-89, 308.

Marian Mollin is one historian who has taken on Early and Alonso's challenge to bring women to the forefront and to incorporate a thorough gender analysis into peace history. Her *Radical Pacifism in Modern America: Egalitarianism and Protest* (2006) explores how race, class, and gender shaped the culture of U.S. pacifism from the 1940s to the 1970s by examining World War II conscientious objectors, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Peacemakers, and the Catholic Worker Movement. She eschews organizational histories of various groups so as to speak to the broader culture of pacifism and nonviolent direct action outside the confines of an organization's ideology, personalities, and political infighting. Her study reveals that pacifists and others in the nonviolent movement copied the very hierarchical power structures they were trying to eliminate, "celebrated men as the movement's most valued heroes and cast women in supporting roles," and unintentionally "reinforced the manly and martial models of active political citizenship that marked society at large."[29] Mollin's scholarship on the intersections of gender and pacifism mark a growing appreciation of the role masculinity, femininity, and—to a smaller extent—sexuality, have played in the history of nonviolence.

Due to the lack of attention given to it, sexuality is a category that demands further analysis by peace historians. For example, Early dismisses the claims that the principal subjects of her study, Frances Witherspoon and Tracy Mygatt, were lesbians. Although she briefly addresses the topic of their sexuality in the opening chapter and in a series of informative footnotes, she does not indicate that their sexual identities, whether lesbian or otherwise, had much impact on their activism, their politics, or their place

[29]Mollin, *Radical Pacifism in Modern America: Egalitarianism and Protest*, 1, 3, 183.

within the pacifist community.[30] Likewise, Mollin discusses Deming's roles in various protests with detailed attention given to experiences of gender inequality while fasting in jail cells segregated by sex, but she never explores the impact of sexuality in those situations.[31] Mollin's argument that egalitarianism is best measured in actions not words could have been enhanced with a discussion of sexuality. The rhetoric of tolerance was present in U.S. pacifist culture, evidenced by a 1959 *Liberation* survey of its readership that the majority of respondents expressed an acceptance of homosexuality.[32] Still, just as Mollin did with rhetorical feminism, she could have discovered that the actions of pacifists did not match their egalitarian rhetoric about alternative sexualities.

One area of the historiography of the U.S. nonviolent movement that has received some attention to the intersection of sexuality and nonviolence is the African American Freedom Movement. The most notable example of sexuality having a historiographical impact comes from the scholarship of John D'Emilio on Bayard Rustin. Often portrayed along with A.J. Muste as the link between the Civil Rights Movement and traditional pacifist movement, Rustin's life has been explored in much of the historiography. However, it was not until D'Emilio's 1995 article, "Homophobia and the Trajectory of Postwar American Radicalism: The Case of Bayard Rustin" that Rustin's sexuality was engaged fully as a category of historical analysis.[33] D'Emilio shows how Rustin's homosexuality shaped which opportunities were available to him and which were closed off because he did not keep his sexual orientation closeted. He is able to show how

[30] Early, *A World Without War*, 11-13, n.9-17.
[31] Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 137, 141-145,
[32] Lawrence Wittner, *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1933-1983* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 239.
[33] D'Emilio, "Homophobia and the Trajectory of Postwar American Radicalism: The Case of Bayard Rustin," 80-103, and *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin*.

Rustin's sexuality and the racial, political, and sexual oppression of the 1940s and 50s helped to demonstrate Rustin's susceptibility to the threats of red-baiting, race-baiting and gay-baiting by those in both the pacifist and integrationist movements that opposed him, and in turn how his sexuality influenced those with whom he worked.

Historians of armed self-defense within the African American Freedom Movement have also explored the intersection of sexuality and nonviolence such as Timothy Tyson's *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and The Roots of Black Power*, Lance Hill's *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement*, and Simon Wendt's "'They Finally Found Out That We Really Are Men': Violence, Non-Violence And Black Manhood In The Civil Rights Era".[34] The primary topic of Tyson, Hill, and Wendt is the role of armed resistance within and outside the nonviolent direct action strategy of the African American Freedom Movement and its connection to black masculinity. Their historiographic intervention not only challenges the concept of a completely unarmed and homogeneously nonviolent movement prior to the rise of the Black Panthers post-1965, but it also deploys a gender analysis in which sexuality is used to investigate the intersections of nonviolence, masculinity, and femininity. Tyson and Wendt examine the historical link between sexuality and pacifism specifically in Tyson's chapter "The Sissy Race of All Mankind" and Wendt's discussion of effeminacy and the "alternative forms of masculinity" embodied by gay African

[34] Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), Lance Hill*, The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), and Simon Wendt, "'They Finally Found Out That We Really Are Men': Violence, Non-Violence And Black Manhood In The Civil Rights Era," *Gender and History 19*, no. 3 (2007): 543-564, and *The Spirit and the Shotgun: Armed Resistance and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (University Press of Florida, 2007).

American men.[35] Their attention to the intersections of sexuality and nonviolence, particularly their use of homosexuality as a signifier for nonviolence, has provided an entry point for a broader investigation of how human sexuality has shaped societal perceptions and conceptions of nonviolence.

Historians who use sexuality and queer theory as methods for historical analysis to help explain the past are increasingly common, but it is still rare in the historiography of U.S. pacifism and nonviolence. George Chauncy's *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* and monographs a decade later such as Julian Carter's *The Heart of Whiteness: Normal Sexuality and Race in America, 1880*-1940 and Margo Canaday's *The Straight State: Sexuality And Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* provide well-received examples of historians using sexuality as a lens through which to view and understand the past.[36] Despite this growing academic trend, there are a few examples of scholars using sexuality as a vehicle to investigate and explain the history of nonviolence and pacifism. The best examples are D'Emilio's *Lost Prophet*, discussed above, as well as Ian Lekus's *Queer and Present Dangers: Homosexuality and American Antiwar Activism During the Vietnam Era* and Sasha Roseneil's *Common Women, Uncommon Practices: The Queer Feminism of Greenham*. The later two histories emphasize the contributions of LGBTQ peace activists and argue that their unique interpersonal skills created what Lekus calls "the

[35] Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, Chapter Six "The Sissy Race of All Mankind," 137-166 and Wendt, "Violence, Non-Violence And Black Manhood In The Civil Rights Era," 556-7

[36] George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), Julian Carter, *The Heart of Whiteness: Normal Sexuality and Race in America, 1880-1940* (Duke University Press, 2007), and Margo Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality And Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton University Press, 2009). See also Catherine S. Ramirez, *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and the Cultural Politics of Memory* (Duke University Press, 2009).

intimacy of organizing" and what Roseneil considers an effort to "queer the records of these times."[37] As queer theorists Michael Warner and Nikki Sullivan explain it, queer theory is used "to frustrate, to counteract, to delegitimize…heteronormative knowledges and institutions" and it is envisioned as having "the effect of pointing out a wide field of normalization, rather than simple intolerance, as the site of violence."[38] Informed by the work of queer theorists and historians of gender and sexuality, this history of Barbara Deming's experiments with nonviolence from the 1960s to the 1980s, strives to shed light on a hidden history of nonviolence that helps to explain the complexity of a strategy for cultural and social change that has often been oversimplified by critics and historians alike.

Deming's history with nonviolence began with an initial embrace of the pacifist strategy of nonviolent direct action as a means of political action as she participated in protests surrounding nuclear weaponry and racial equality in the early 1960s. At that time in her life she considered herself less political, less radical, less of a feminist, less open about her sexuality, and less aware of its queering influence on her activism than she was a decade later. In the final years of the 1960s she began to challenge the conventions of nonviolence with a desire to expand and radicalize its methods. When she began reading the feminist intellectuals of the early 1970s and came out publically as a lesbian, she further altered her concepts of nonviolence and began to understand

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[37] Ian Lekus, *Queer and Present Dangers: Homosexuality and American Antiwar Activism During the Vietnam Era* (PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 2003), see "No Homosexuality or Marijuana: The Intimacy of Organizing in the Early New Left," 40-101, and "Queer Harvests: Homosexuality, the U.S. New Left, and the Venceremos Brigades to Cuba," *Radical History Review 89*, (Spring 2004): 57-91, and Sasha Roseneil, *Common Women, Uncommon Practices: The Queer Feminism of Greenham* (Cassell Press, London, 2000), 4.

[38] Nikki Sullivan, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), vi, and Michael Warner, ed., *Fear of A Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xxvi.

nonviolence as an inherently androgynous force. By the 1980s she had become the principle proponent of feminist nonviolence.

From her first exposure to Gandhian nonviolence on a trip to India in 1959 until her final essay on feminist nonviolence in 1984, she continually experimented with its methods and its philosophical underpinnings in an attempt to reinvent nonviolence. In the late 1960s when many in the African American Freedom Movement criticized nonviolence as too moderate and emasculating, Deming asserted that it was radical and masculine. In the 1970s, when feminists criticized nonviolence as too passive a strategy for encouraging women to confront sexism, Deming continued to argue for its bold and assertive qualities while explaining that "the very genius of nonviolence" was its reliance on embodying a blend of femininity and masculinity. Deming's zealous advocacy for nonviolence helped broaden the appeal of nonviolent direct action despite the fact that the African American Freedom Movement remained divided about the efficacy of nonviolence, the Women's Liberation Movement did not stage mass nonviolent direct action protests in order to dismantle the patriarchy, and leading U.S. pacifist institutions did not consider ending sexism as important as ending war.

However, Barbara Deming's ability to spread the idea of nonviolence as a viable strategy for social change presented itself in other ways. The publication of *We Are All Part of One Another: A Barbara Deming Reader* in 1984 ensured that her writings would remain accessible and signaled her presence as an intellectual of note in the nonviolent movement. Her influence can also be seen in the continual reprinting, most recently in 2012, of her 1968 essay "On Revolution and Equilibrium" which called for making

nonviolence more bold and radical by further experimentation.[39] Additionally, her impact extends beyond the basic preservation of writings to her lasting importance to historians. Deming's story illuminates facets of the history of nonviolence and feminism that have remained hidden or at best marginalized for too long. Her efforts to expand the definition of nonviolence and make it appealing to a wider audience helps enrich our understanding of a variety of social movements and demonstrates the insight that can accompany the use of gender and sexuality as lenses through which to interpret history.

The following chapters tell the story of Barbara Deming's quarter-century of struggles for social justice, and convey a history of the U.S. nonviolent movement which highlights the secular, feminist, and queer interventions of a neglected theorist of nonviolence. To tell this history, the next chapter, "A Strange Kind of Homecoming," describes her introduction to pacifism and nonviolence. The chapter opens with a backdrop of her life prior to her trip to India in 1959 when she began to delve into the writings of Mohandas Gandhi. The focus then turns to the time period between her work as a journalist in 1960 covering protest actions for *The Nation* magazine to the 1966 publication of *Prison Notes*, her first and most well-known book. During those years she became a co-editor of *Liberation* and wrote multiple articles on topics such as nuclear disarmament and racial desegregation. The chapter helps establish the roots of Deming's understanding of nonviolence and demonstrates the important role played by the CNVA who organized both the early protests she covered as a journalist and the later actions she joined as an active participant.

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[39] Elizabeth Betita Martinez, ed., *We Have Not Been Moved: Resisting Racism and Militarism In 21st Century America*. Oakland, California: PM Press, 2012, 38-51.

The next chapter, "Experimenting with Nonviolence," explores Deming's efforts to build upon the philosophical foundation she learned from the pacifist and civil rights organizations during the first half of the 1960s. This chapter begins with her anti-war trips to Saigon and Hanoi in 1966, and ends in 1970 with her speaking tour supporting selective property destruction as part of the U.S. draft board raids. During this time she published her influential essay "On Revolution and Equilibrium," which would become her most reprinted work. As noted above, in that essay she advocated for a more "bold" and "radical" version of nonviolence while addressing the concerns of those in the African American Freedom Movement who had come to view nonviolence as an ineffective and emasculating strategy. Her philosophy of nonviolence at that time emphasized the traditionally masculine rationale for nonviolent direct action as another form of battle and an alternative avenue to express one's manhood. Her interpretation of nonviolence as masculine during the 1960s reflects the male dominance of the pacifist movement and the broader context which informed the growing Women's Liberation Movement.

Chapter Four, "Feminist Nonviolence," traces Deming's evolution as a feminist and her decision to merge a gendered interpretation of power relations with her understanding of the power of nonviolence. However, Deming was not a leading figure in the Women's Liberation Movement or what some refer to as "Second Wave Feminism."[40] Her primary role as an activist was as an advocate and theorist of nonviolence. While advocating for feminist nonviolence defined her second decade in the nonviolent movement, she devoted her writing and activism more to nonviolence than

[40] For a challenge to the wave metaphor, see Nancy Hewitt's introduction in Hewitt, ed., *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, 1-14.

to feminism. Her focus on nonviolence helps explain why she has not been considered a primary figure in U.S. feminism.

The chapter begins with an exploration of how the works of feminist writers in the early 1970s influenced her understanding of nonviolence and it ends with her own publications on feminist nonviolence in the late 1970s. Two particular essays of Deming's, "On Anger" and "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle," challenged her decade-old pacifist base and introduced her to a new audience of feminists. The difficulties of navigating both communities led Deming to leave *Liberation* magazine, distance herself from *WIN* (the WRL weekly), and instead submit her writings about nonviolence to feminist periodicals such as *off our backs*. Her adherence to the nonviolent principle of refusing to name one's opponent as the enemy encouraged her to invite men to become feminists, putting her at odds with feminist separatists who encouraged women to organize independently from men.

Chapter Five, "Androgyny and the Queering of Nonviolence," investigates the theoretical underpinnings of Deming's concept of androgynous nonviolence and the role that sexuality played in her activism. The chapter begins by explaining the importance that Gandhi placed on androgyny, revealing a long history between sexuality and nonviolence. By exploring her exchange of letters with Ray Robinson, Jr. and Bradford Lyttle, two men who she met on her first major nonviolent action in the early 1960s, it demonstrates how Deming's identity as a lesbian in the heteronormative culture of U.S. pacifism shaped her philosophy of nonviolence. It also reveals the tenuous relationship between nonviolence, masculinity, and sexuality in the nonviolent movement. Deming's new conceptualization of nonviolence as relying on a blend of traditional notions of

masculinity and femininity stood in sharp contrast to her argument just five years earlier that nonviolence was simply another way to express manliness. Although the nonviolent movement did not engage deeply with the idea of androgynous nonviolence, this chapter reveals that U.S. feminists found androgyny intriguing and took a variety of stances on the concept.

Lastly, "Moving Toward A New Society" spans the final years of Deming's life from 1979 to 1984 and explores the role of her work in the emerging culture of pacifist-feminism, specifically through the Movement for a New Society which worked to establish a nonviolent, feminist culture in the United States. This chapter investigates her guidance of two books released by the New Society Publishers, *Reweaving The Web Of Life: Feminism And Nonviolence* (1982) and *We Are All Part of One Another: A Barbara Deming Reader* (1984), in addition to her final essay "A New Spirit Moves Among Us" which addressed her involvement in the 1983 Seneca Women's Peace Encampment. A discussion of these three works illustrates the continual debate among feminists and pacifists about merging the two philosophies. The correspondence between Deming, the editor, and the publisher serves as a way to revisit her twenty-five years of work in the U.S. nonviolent movement and provides a reflection on her activism and continued influence.

Barbara Deming's guiding philosophy throughout her two and half decades of nonviolent activism was to refuse the creation of "The Other." For Deming, naming a person or a group as the Other was a way of removing them from "the human family."[41] She would not give that moniker to supposed international "enemies" such as

[41] Deming, "…Our Terribly Real Kinship", *Liberation* (March 1964), 8.

Communists, just as she refused to label as Other the various chauvinists within the United States such as racists, misogynists, and heterosexists. She applied the nonviolent philosophy that one's present opponents were future allies, calling attention to the false dichotomies of Black versus white, female versus male, or gay versus straight.

Perhaps the most consequential refusal was her resistance to those who tried to name her the Other. By rejecting the confines of that label while still embracing her queerness, Barbara Deming refused to stay on the margins of the predominantly religious, male, heteronormative U.S. nonviolent movement. Her refusal to name herself or anyone else an Other resulted in her ability to see nonviolence as a strategy for a wide variety of social justice causes. As a result, she held leadership roles in nonviolent campaigns against nuclear weapons, war, racism, and sexism, which in the end make the history of Barbara Deming's writings and activism essential to a complex understanding of the history of nonviolence in the United States.

Chapter Two: **A Strange Kind of Homecoming**

> *We believe that we must learn to struggle with each other, when we have differences, only as those in a true family do—by persuasion, by example, by refusing to cooperate with actions of which we disapprove, but never with violence, always unwilling to destroy each other, either in body or spirit.*[42]

The last twenty-five years of Barbara Deming's life provide a framework that helps tell the history of nonviolence in the United States, and that story begins with her adoption of pacifism and the U.S. pacifist community's adoption of her. By the age of forty-three Deming already had a twenty-year career in the world of theatre and film criticism, which resonated with her upper class, bohemian upbringing surrounded by artists and writers. She quickly embraced her pacifism and soon began to personally identify as a political radical. Her activism caused a rift with her biological family, but the sense of belonging that she felt within the pacifist community sustained her. Her earlier life as a writer was filled with more rejection than acceptance, but readers, editors, and publishers immediately appreciated her ability to tell the stories of the nonviolent movement. Her early experiences reporting on and participating in nonviolent direct action campaigns provided her with the opportunity to publish *Prison Notes*, her 1966 memoir. The book's success laid the groundwork for creating an intellectual, professional, and emotional home for Deming within the nonviolent movement.

Barbara Deming was born in 1917, the second of four children and the only daughter, of Harold Deming, a maritime lawyer and Katherine (Burritt) Deming, a former

[42] Deming, "Statement to Recorder's Court, Albany, Georgia" in Staughton Lynd, ed., *Nonviolence in America: A Documentary History* (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), 372.

singer. The family lived in New York City, where the children attended Friends Seminary, a kindergarten to twelfth grade Quaker school in Manhattan. They spent their summers in the northern suburb of New City, New York, an affluent neighborhood that included painters, poets, and intellectuals. A formative moment occurred at age sixteen when she began a two-year romantic relationship with her forty year old neighbor, Norma Millay, the sister of the poet Edna St. Vincent Millay.[43] Deming remembered her mother speaking to her about being a lesbian when she was a teenager, and recalled that she "did not condemn it to me as anything ugly" so that her "first experience of love was free of that poison."[44]

From 1934-38 she went to Bennington College, an all-female college in Vermont where she majored in literature and then theatre. She worked at various theatre companies and occasionally taught dramatic literature courses at Bennington before moving to Cleveland, Ohio to earn her master's in theatre at Western Reserve University in 1941. From 1942 to 1944 she worked as a film analyst for a Library of Congress national film library project based at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. During that time she had fallen in love with Vida Ginsberg and lived with her for eight years before Ginsberg married Deming's brother, Quentin "Chip". Over the next decade she wrote poems, short stories, and essays on films for *Partisan Review*, *Chimera*, *Charm*, and *The New Yorker*, but found herself receiving more rejections slips than

[43] For biographical sketches of Barbara Deming's early life see the finding aid of the Barbara Deming Papers at Harvard University's Schlesinger Library, (Hereafter cited as *BDSL)*, McDaniel's biographical essay in the rerelease of Barbara Deming's 1966 memoir *Prison Notes* under the new title *Prisons That Could Not Hold* (University of Georgia Press, 1995), McDaniel's chapter "Shaping the Sixties: The Emergence of Barbara Deming" and Duberman's, *Saving Remnant*, "Barbara's Youth," 7-25. For a biographical sketch focused on Deming's romantic relationships, see McDaniel's "The Women She Loved" in *I Change, I Change*, 1-25.

[44] Deming to Mother, July 17, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 462.

acceptance letters. In 1953, at the home of her neighbor, the painter Henry Varnum Poor, she met his colleague, Mary Meigs. They quickly fell in love and moved to Wellfleet, Massachusetts, an artists' colony on Cape Cod.[45]

Barbara Deming's life took a new direction when she embarked on a world tour with Meigs in 1959 that included visits to Japan, France, India, and Cuba. It was that summer as a tourist in India that she began her intensive reading of the works of Mohandas Gandhi. As she delved deeper into Gandhi's writings during that year she found that "all I had groped toward was answered here;" she discovered that she had "been struggling toward this truth all my life" and "realized that I was in the deepest part of myself a pacifist."[46] Prior to reading Gandhi, Deming envisioned politics as "naming this group of people or that group of people 'the enemy'—to whom no allegiance at all is due; denying the complexity of human nature." When she began reading Gandhi she found that "the politics he taught did not deny this complexity."[47]

After this life-altering epiphany, she traveled to Cuba in the spring of 1960 just a year after the Cuban revolution and had a chance encounter with Fidel Castro on the streets of Havana. During an hour-long conversation with the revolutionary she tried to persuade him of the benefits that could come from adopting Gandhi's selfless approach in

[45] Deming to Jane Meyerding, March 11, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 428 and Deming to Dick Grossman, July 9, 1965, *BDSL*, Folder 777. For her unreciprocated love affair with Annie Poor, who introduced her to Mary Meigs, and her trip to Greece in 1952 which included befriending Truman Capote see, Deming, *A Humming Under My Feet: A Book of Travail* (London: The Women's Press, 1985).
[46] Deming's notes "For Joan—March 1969", *BDSL*, Folder 1369, Deming's preparatory notes for *Ms.* magazine interview, June 10, 1977, *BDSL*, Folders 4-5, and Deming to Meyerding, March 11, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 428.
[47] Mab Segrest, "Feminism and Disobedience: Conversations with Barbara Deming," *Feminary: A Feminist Journal for the South 11*, no. 1 and 2, 71-85, 73.

future negotiations with his adversaries.[48] That conversation led to her first foray into journalism with *The Nation* magazine publishing Deming's "Dialogues in Cuba" in May of 1960. She wrote three more articles related to the cold war and nuclear disarmament for *The Nation* over the next year. These protests were part of the wider movement that emerged in the late 1950s against the dangers of nuclear fallout from atmospheric testing and the fears of a global nuclear war. By 1958 the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) had over one-hundred chapters in the United States representing about 25,000 people.[49] Deming's early nuclear disarmament articles included one about the CNVA protests of the Polaris nuclear submarines that ended with the arrests of protestors who boarded the vessels, another about the inner-workings of SANE, and a two-part essay on the San Francisco to Moscow Walk for Peace organized by CNVA to put pressure on the Soviet Union and the U.S. to abolish nuclear weapons.[50]

Deming's experience writing about the nuclear disarmament activities of the CNVA had a tremendous impact on her decision to embrace nonviolence as a personal and professional calling. She had initially heard about the existence of the pacifist movement in the United States from her friend and literary critic, Edmund Wilson, who had introduced her to the pacifist magazine *Liberation*. She read an advertisement in the

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[48] McDaniel, "Shaping the Sixties: The Emergence of Barbara Deming," 196-216. For her discussion of Deming's conversation with Castro, see 200-204. See also, Deming to Mary Meigs, May 1978, *BDSL*, Folder 412. For her exchange of letters between Cuba and the United States in March of 1960 with Robert Hatch, and editor at *The Nation*, see the Barbara Deming Papers at Boston University (Hereafter cited as *BDBU*), Box 6, Folder 3. For Deming's earlier professional connection with *The Nation* and the possibility of journalism work, see Hatch to Deming, December 17, 1958, *BDBU*, Box 3, Folder 12.

[49] Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, 244.

[50] Deming, "The Peacemakers," *The Nation*, December 17, 1960, "The Ordeal of SANE," *The Nation*, March 11, 1960, "San Francisco to Washington: Why They Walk," *The Nation*, July 15, 1961, and "The Long Walk for Peace: New Mission to Moscow," *The Nation*, December 23, 1961. These articles and "Dialogues in Cuba" can also be found in Deming, *Revolution & Equilibrium* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971), 1-72. For a history of the nuclear disarmament movement, see Lawrence Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement* (Stanford University Press, 2009).

magazine that some of its editors were organizing a sixteen day "training course in nonviolent resistance" and she decided to cover the event as a journalist.[51] Immediately after completing the training she wrote home to tell her family that she had experienced "a strange kind of home-coming…like finding I had close relatives whom I hadn't known existed." She tried to articulate the "breathtaking" experience of witnessing people who were making "the complete gesture" of a life she had unknowingly wanted to live, but the best way she could find to express her feelings of belonging and self-realization was to repeat her sense that she felt "like a family member who'd been away from home too long."[52]

In 1960, at the age of forty-three, Deming had described herself politically "vaguely as liberal" for the first forty years of her life and more "concerned with world of art" than anything else. The combination of her continued reading of Gandhi, her experience in Cuba, and the two-week intensive seminar in nonviolence, brought about a sense in Deming that she had become "an instant radical."[53] The rest of her life would be defined by this commitment. Looking back on her first encounters with the members of CNVA she noted that she "recognized them at once as kindred spirits" and fondly remembered "adopting them as kin."[54]

Adopting Pacifism and Nonviolence

Barbara Deming's article about the nonviolence training session ran in the pages of *The Nation* in December of 1960. In that essay she introduced readers to the U.S.

[51] Deming to Edmund Wilson, August 17, 1960, *BDSL*, Folder 746.
[52] Deming to "Very dear family," September 14, 1960, *BDSL*, Folder 747.
[53] Deming to Meyerding, March 11, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 428 and "For Joan," March (date unknown), 1969, *BDSL*, Folder 1369.
[54] Deming to McReynolds, October 20, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 402.

pacifist community and a wide variety of their actions. She wrote of one of the older attendees, Max Sandin, a seventy-one year-old conscientious objector to World War I who had "survived brutal abuse at General Wood's detention camp" in Kansas.[55] She also told the story of Eroseanna Robinson, an African American track star who was sentenced to a one year imprisonment for her refusal to pay federal taxes as a means of withdrawing her support for the U.S. military. She explained that Robinson continued her noncooperation by refusing to walk into the courtroom and then fasting in jail for three months until the state forced her to eat through tub feeding before releasing her nine months early.[56] In addition to writing about Sandin and Robinson, Deming introduced her readers to Richard Gregg who had lived and worked with Gandhi, and who had been a featured speaker at the conference. He provided the attendees with a thorough explanation of Thoreau's concepts of civil disobedience, and was a notable author who sparked many Americans' interest in nonviolent resistance thirty years earlier through his 1934 book, *The Power of Nonviolence*.[57] Gregg opened the training session by

[55] Deming, "The Peacemakers," in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 32. For more on the treatment of conscientious objectors at Camp Funston under the direction of General Leonard Wood, see Frances H. Early, *A World Without War*, 113, 221n69. The conditions became publically known as the "Camp Funston Outrages" and the "Reign of Terror" resulting in South Dakota representative Charles H. Dillon reading into the Congressional Record in 1919 a statement titled "Introducing Examples of Brutalities, Tortures, and Deaths to Political Prisoners Under Military Regime."

[56] Deming, "The Peacemakers," in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 34-5. For more on Eroseanna Robinson, see Robinson, *Abraham Went Out*, 96, and John W. Wood III, *Wally and Juanita Nelson And The Struggle For Peace, Equality, And Social Justice: 1935-1975* (Dissertation, Morgan State University, 2008), 201-5, n321.

[57] For more on Richard Gregg, his book, and its influence on Martin Luther King Jr. and others see, Joseph Kip Kosek, "Richard Gregg, Mohandas Gandhi, and the Strategy of Nonviolence," *The Journal of American History 91*, no. 4 (March 2005): 1318-48. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote the forward to the 1959 edition of Gregg's book *The Power of Nonviolence* 2nd Revised Edition (Nyack, New York: Fellowship Publications, 1959).

"presenting the essentials of nonviolence" and reminding the attendees that nonviolent direct action "has been simmering for a couple of thousand years…its time has come."[58]

The training session in Connecticut was staffed primarily by the CNVA, which would become Deming's first home in the broader nonviolent movement. The organization began in 1957 as the Nonviolent Action Against Nuclear Weapons under the leadership of Quaker activist Lawrence Scott who considered the fledging group part of his "itinerant ministry."[59] By 1958 Scott's "ad hoc committee" with ties to the Christian pacifist organization FOR, became a formal committee and changed its name to the Committee for Nonviolent Action.[60] In her attempt to provide a history of the nuclear disarmament actions of the CNVA, Deming noted that in the summer of 1958 a group of pacifists from the committee had attempted to sail the ship *The Golden Rule* to the Eniwetok atoll in an attempt to disrupt the U.S. military's hydrogen bomb testing.[61] She also explained that Bob and Marjorie Swann who chaired the New England regional branch of the CNVA had participated in the national organization's protest in 1959 over the Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile system at Mead Air Force Base in Omaha, Nebraska. As Deming noted in her essay, Marjorie Swann's decision to trespass on the

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[58] Deming, "The Peacemakers", in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 25, 35.

[59] Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 74, 77. Mollin notes that some CNVA members believed that "Lawrence Scott regarded himself as a missionary from God." Mollin also notes that many of the participants at the first action, a trespass at the Nevada Test Site on the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, were part of the Peacemakers movement. For more on the Christian influence of the Peacemakers see Leilah Danielson, "'It is a Day of Judgment': The Peacemakers, Religion, and Radicalism in Cold War America", *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation 18*, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 215-48.

[60] Robinson, *Abraham Went Out*, 164. For a history of Fellowship of Reconciliation see Kosek, *Acts of Conscience*. For Kosek's remark that CNVA "became the vanguard of the antinuclear movement.", see 232.

[61] Deming, "The Peacemakers", in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 26. See also Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, "Family Men Speak Out for Peace: Nonviolent Action and the Voyage of the *Golden Rule*", 82-7. In 1962 Deming and another woman petitioned, with A.J. Muste's support to be on the crew of the *Everyman III* on a similar CNVA mission, but were denied when the organization supported the all-male participants' demand for a single-sex crew. See Robinson, *Abraham Went Out*, 189.

military base led to her eventual arrest which was told as a story of maternal peacemaking in *Redbook* magazine under the title "'You Are A Bad Mother'."[62] Even before that protest took place, the planned arrests in Omaha were so controversial within the pacifist community that "two influential officers of the FOR withdrew their support." It was at that time that A.J. Muste, the seven-four year-old former executive secretary of FOR became the chair of the CNVA with Bradford Lyttle, a Quaker activist in his thirties, acting as the national secretary.[63] In the summer of 1960 the New England CNVA formed to focus attention on the Polaris nuclear submarines that were being built in Connecticut and scheduled to be ceremoniously launched that fall.[64]

It was this family of pacifists that Deming joined in 1960. They were conscientious objectors, war tax resisters, political prisoners, and agitators. As she told the readers of *The Nation*, "I suddenly asked myself—for I am the daughter of a well-to-do Republican lawyer: 'What am I doing here? This is talk of revolution."[65] She tried to explain herself to her biological family a few months after finding her adoptive "long-lost family" at the two-week nonviolence workshop. She confessed to her mother that their neighbor, Bessie Breuer, a successful author and former *New York Tribune* editor, had told her that she thought pacifists were "nuts," but Breuer had "also remarked that they

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[62] Deming, "The Peacemakers", in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 26. Jhan Robbins and June Robbins, "You Are a Bad Mother", *Redbook: The Magazine for Young Adults*, August 1960, 38-39, 97-99. See also Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, "'The All-American, All-World Mother': Militant Maternalism's Alternative to the Cold War", 89-96 and Appelbaum, *Kingdom to Commune*, "Bad Mother", 184-202. The article's title is taken from a comment made by the judge during sentencing.

[63] Robinson, *Abraham Went Out*, 165. Muste was the executive secretary of FOR from 1940-1953.

[64] Marjorie Swann, *Decade of Nonviolence: Through The Years with New England CNVA* (Voluntown, CT: NECNVA), 1970, in Swarthmore College Peace Collection (Hereafter cited as *SCPC*), Committee for Nonviolent Action Records, Box 33a, Folder: Printed Releases (1969-1973). See also the fifteen-page letter co-authored by Marjorie Swann from June 16, 1980 *SCPC*, Box 33, Folder: CNVA –NECNVA Miscellaneous. Deming, "The Peacemakers", in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 35.

[65] Deming, "The Peacemakers", in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 32.

are like the people around Jesus."[66] She confided in her brother Chip and her once lover, now sister-in-law Vida, that she was disturbed by the conversation on her last visit. Deming found that their conversations about pacifism had confirmed her suspicions that they both felt she was "easily brainwashed" and that she did not "get all the facts" before deciding she was a pacifist. She told her brother that his comments to her about showing "proper love for my country" echoed the sentiments of their father, who had died six years earlier. She explained to them that it "depressed" her that they, her mother, and many of their friends "were anxious to set me straight" and had already decided what they thought of her embrace of pacifism before she even had a chance to speak to them about it. She ended the four-page letter by suggesting they all should read the 1955 pamphlet *Speak Truth to Power: A Quaker Search for an Alternative to Violence* since it was written by the Society of Friends, a group of people "whom you all recommended to me."[67]

While Deming continued to feud with her family, her correspondence during that time with her contacts in the literary world illustrate her transition from a film critic to a social critic, and help explain how she became a journalist rather than a novelist. She sent her essays on Cuba and the CNVA to E.E. Cummings and asked "Do you ever read a

[66] Deming to Mother, November 3, 1960, *BDSL*, Folder 747. "Long-lost family" comes from Deming to Meyerding, March 11, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 428.

[67] Deming to Chip and Vida, December 11, 1960, *BDSL*, Folder 748. According to an explanatory note in the September, 2010 version of *Speak Truth to Power*, the Board of Directors of the American Friends Service Committee restored Bayard Rustin's name as one of the principal authors of the pamphlet. The note reads in part: "Following objections to the inclusion of Bayard Rustin's name in the list of authors of *Speak Truth to Power*, his name was deleted from the document. The concerns raised were in the context of his arrest and jail time the previous year on a 'morals charge.' … His 'final and considered judgment' to have his name removed for 'largely personal' reasons was accepted. Regretfully, *Speak Truth to Power* was distributed without listing Bayard Rustin as one of the authors, until the AFSC board restored his name to its rightful place." For more on Rustin's role and decision to have his name removed, see D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet*, 219-22.

magazine called *Liberation*? If you do, I wonder what you think of it. Yes, as you'll guess, I think much of it."[68] Despite previous correspondence with "Cummings" as she called him, he did not reply and died shortly after the last of her letters. She asked the same question of Lawrence Ferlinghetti, the owner of City Lights Publishers in San Francisco, California who had published some of her poetry and short stories. Ferlinghetti, a pacifist and anarchist, had read both of her articles, expressed great praise for them, and not only read *Liberation*, but sold copies of the pacifist magazine in his book store. Their exchange of letters in the winter of 1960/61 also included another rejection of her submission of fiction and poetry leading Deming to feel "disappointed" but also thinking that she would "probably want to return to fiction for a while" when she finished her latest article for *The Nation* on SANE.[69]

Deming would not return to her career as a fiction writer, although her first opportunity to publish in *Liberation* appeared to point toward her earlier attempts to become a poet. During her correspondence with Ferlinghetti, *Liberation* contacted Deming to inform her that the editors had decided to publish her poem "After My Father Died" in the January 1961 issue. Richard Gilpin, the editorial secretary, included a large collection of back issues of the magazine which he said made up "a pretty complete file" with only a few of the earliest issues missing. He also informed her that one of the many subscriptions she had purchased for her friends and family had been marked "refused" and returned.[70] The publication of her poetry in a pacifist magazine rather than in a

[68] Deming's letters to E.E. Cummings, Letters to E. E. Cummings 1949-61 (323) E.E. Cummings Papers at Harvard University, Houghton Special Collections. Cummings died in September 3, 1962.
[69] Deming to Ferlinghetti, November 26, 1960, *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 5, Ferlinghetti to "Bobbie", December 27, 1960, and Deming to Ferlinghetti, January 19, 1961, *BDSL*, Folder 749.
[70] Richard Gilpin to Deming, December 31, 1960, *BDSL*, Folder 748.

literary one signaled her transition from an art writer to a journalist, just as the continuation of *Liberation* subscriptions marked "return to sender" indicated the dramatic change of her social circles.

Not only did an announcement on the back cover of *Liberation* magazine lead Deming to the training in nonviolent resistance, it also became her primary source for information about pacifism in the United States. It was started by A.J. Muste and Bayard Rustin in the spring of 1956 with funding from the WRL.[71] The magazine received editorial support from other radical pacifists such as Dave Dellinger and Roy Finch, and political activist Sidney Lens. *Liberation* was beginning its fourth year when Deming started subscribing to it. Historians have referred to *Liberation* as "the organ and focal point of what some have called the 'non-violent movement'," "a well-produced movement journal that transcended the pacifist community," and "the most important contribution made by radical pacifists to the intellectual content of the American Left."[72] According to a 1959 poll of readers, the average subscriber was a college graduate, likely a teacher with a graduate degree, an anti-capitalist with "no interest in political parties," and affiliated with various organizations of the "pacifist-radical-civil rights nexus."[73]

When Deming needed assistance in completing her article on the CNVA training for *The Nation*, she wrote to Dellinger and Finch at *Liberation* to ask for supplemental references of pacifist actions that she could include in her essay. She admitted that she

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[71] Bennett, *Radical Pacifism*, 206, Kosek, *Acts of Conscience*, 213, and Robinson, *Abraham Went Out*, 119.
[72] Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, 237, Bennett, *Radical Pacifism*, 205, and Tracy, *Direct Action*, 86. See also Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 77. For more on *Liberation* see the Roy Finch Papers, *SCPC*, especially Box 2, letters dated throughout February 1961 where Finch resigns over debates about the Cuban revolution. See also the A.J. Muste Papers, *SCPC*, especially Microfilm Reel 89.17 for "Liberation Correspondence" 1961-66 and 89.38 which included and June 13, 1963 editorial board meeting that discusses Deming attending the funeral of Medgar Evers.
[73] Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, 238-9.

was feeling "much less informed than I should be on my subject." She also asked if she should refer to Muste as "the real leader of the nonviolent movement in this country" and if not she wondered if they could "possibly suggest the appropriate wording" on how to refer to him. She shared with the *Liberation* editors that despite their finding her article "extremely interesting," *The New Yorker* decided not to publish it because they were about to publish "a Profile of A.J. Muste."[74] This provided her with the sense that U.S. pacifism was beginning to reach a wider audience.

After publishing three more articles in *The Nation* about the movement for nuclear disarmament in 1961, Deming became less of an outside observer relating a story to her readers and more of a participant in the movement itself. She sat on both the national executive committee of the CNVA and the regional executive committee of the New England CNVA.[75] She joined the WRL and ceased paying her federal taxes as a protest against war. She explained in her first letter to the Internal Revenue Service in 1962 that in the past she had paid her taxes "only under protest," but now "after a long struggle with my conscience, I have decided that…preparations for armed conflict are criminal and insane."[76] An additional sign of her movement from bystander to activist

[74] Deming to Dave Dellinger and Roy Finch at *Liberation*, November 22, 1960, BDBU, Box 3, Folder 16. See also William Shawn of *The New Yorker* to Deming, November 15, 1960, and Deming to Robert Hatch of *The Nation*, November 16, 1960, *BDBU*, Box 3, Folder 16.
[75] CNVA letterhead, "Report on Everyman III," lists Executive Committee, October 10, 1962, *SCPC*, Committee for Nonviolent Action Records, Box 33a, Folder "NECNVA Correspondence (1960-62)" and Minutes from August 19, 1960, *SCPC*, Committee for Nonviolent Action Records, Box 33 "Series VIII. Branches, NECNVA", Folder "Minutes, 1960-66".
[76] Deming to District Director of Internal Revenue, September 14, 1962, *BDSL*, Carton Two of 2000-M115 (unprocessed materials), Folder 1962 Taxes. For letter announcing her membership in the WRL, see Bayard Rustin of WRL to Deming, March 1, 1961, *BDSL*, Folder 751.

came in March of 1962 when Deming spent her first night in jail as part of a sit-in protest at the Atomic Energy Commission in New York City.[77]

As she was becoming an active member of the U.S. pacifist movement, an editor at *The Nation* wrote to commend her article on the CNVA's San Francisco to Moscow Walk for Peace, remarking that it was "the best of the several excellent ones you have done for us." He noted that he was aware that being a journalist was "not work you had thought of doing, but you are so good at it that I should be sorry if you did not go on." He also advised Deming that she "should not become a 'peace writer.' I don't mean that you should turn away from that issue—that would be foolish, not to say coldblooded—but you and all of us should be looking for other subjects that can enlist your gifts of understanding and communication."[78] Deming did not take his advice. Rather than turning her attention away from peace, she fully immersed herself as a writer and an activist in the pacifist community, and was on the verge of exploring the wider implications for nonviolent direct action.

Southern Peace Walk: Two Issues or One?

Symbolic of her transition from journalist to activist, Deming chose to publish her next article in *Liberation* rather than *The Nation*. Her choice initially felt more like "talking about us to ourselves" rather than educating a wider audience, but the topic of

[77] "AEC Sit-In/First Arrest ," *BDBU*, Box 6, Folder 13. Also in this folder, Deming to Carey McWilliams, editor of *The Nation*, March 25, 1962. Deming talks about her trial afterwards and notes that she found Howard Zinn's essay on nonviolence in the recent edition of magazine "wonderful" and was "curious to know more about him." See Howard Zinn, "The Force of Nonviolence" in *The Nation*, March 17, 1962, 227-33.

[78] Robert Hatch to Deming, (no date, early 1962?), *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 7.

the essay lent itself to that venue.[79] She titled her *Liberation* article about the CNVA anti-nuclear march from Nashville to Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1962, "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issue or One?" Rather than simply recounting the story of the peace walk, Deming took on a pressing question for U.S. pacifists, whether or not "the two struggles—for disarmament and for Negro rights—were properly part of the one struggle" for peace. She "had felt for a long time" that the two issues were "fundamentally one," but felt that "most of those advising us" believed that "the two issues simply could not be combined."[80]

Although Deming had been introduced to the pacifist movement only two years earlier, the intimate connection between racial integration and ending all war was readily apparent at her initiation into pacifism during her initial training in nonviolent resistance. She opened that earlier essay about the training by linking the CNVA's call for unilateral disarmament with the African American Freedom Movement's reliance on "Gandhi's way" to bring about a racially integrated society. She even chose to conclude that article about a protest against nuclear submarines, by quoting at length from Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, co-founder of the SCLC. He had been challenged during the training session by a "young pacifist" who believed refusing to serve in the military was the truest test of one's commitment to nonviolence. Deming gave Shuttlesworth the last word by quoting his reply that he thought "somewhere somehow maybe these various actions are kindred actions…we may find we are on common ground…The word 'pacifist' in the

[79] Deming to Marjorie Swann, September 21, 1960, *BDSL*, Folder 747. This letter was in regards to her first article about CNVA's Polaris Action where is explains wanting to publish in *The Nation* instead of a movement newsletter.
[80] Deming, "The Peacemakers," in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 103. Originally published in the July-August 1962 issue of *Liberation*.

South has a bad ring. It has it even here in the North. So you have a job. But you *are* allied with us…We have to improvise as we go."[81]

There is a strong historical tie between the African American Freedom Movement and U.S. pacifism that historians have traced to the World War II era.[82] An example of this connection can be seen in A.J. Muste's relationships with Bayard Rustin and James Farmer, the two African American men he hired in 1941 to be part of FOR's national staff. These two pacifists in particular had immense influence on the African American Freedom Movement. As race relations secretary of FOR, Farmer co-founded the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Chicago in 1942, an organization that staged some of the first sit-ins at segregated facilities and the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation which attempted to desegregate interstate busing in 1947.[83] In 1955 Rustin became a key advisor to the twenty-six year old Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and helped organize the year-long Montgomery Boycott. According to Rustin, during his many years advising King, he "never made a difficult decision without talking the problem over with A.J. first."[84]

Rustin and Farmer's connections to U.S. pacifism and their relationships with Muste were more complicated than they first appear. Farmer had always been more interested in racial equality than opposing war, and Rustin's homosexuality had

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[81] Deming, "The Peacemakers" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 37. Originally published in *The Nation* on December 17, 1960.

[82] Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War And The Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Harvard University Press, 2001), Robbie Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anti-Communism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945-1963* (Syracuse University Press, 2000), and Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism 1937-1957* (Cornell University, 1997).

[83] Kosek, *Acts of Conscience*, 178.

[84] Robinson, *Abraham Went Out*, 118. For more on Rustin's work with King in Montgomery, see D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet*, 226-35, and Kosek, *Acts of Conscience*, 213-4.

circumscribed his role within the heteronormative, Christian culture of U.S. pacifism. Farmer and Muste's dispute was both religious and institutional, and FOR always had an unsteady relationship with CORE. The tensions were initially related to concerns about FOR having to fund CORE, an organization that was not explicitly dedicated to ending war. That discomfort was heightened as Farmer and his co-founder George Houser wanted to allow non-pacifists to become members. Muste expressed his belief that all programs of nonviolent direct action must remain "within the general religious pacifist movement" because "under-emphasizing the religious basis" of nonviolence would result in people "going off the deep end on the use of violence."[85] Farmer had come to understand nonviolence through the writings of Krishnalal Shridharani, an Indian academic and contemporary of Mohandas Gandhi who emphasized the secular aspects of Gandhian nonviolence. Farmer's secular understanding of nonviolence and his desire to devote himself more to racial equality than ending war led him to resign from FOR in 1945.[86]

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[85] Robinson, *Abraham Went Out*, 113. See also, Ibid., 84. Here Muste argues in 1944 that as an organization becomes secular instead of religious, they can no longer be pacifist, will justify certain wars, and will "espouse revolutionary violence." For an argument that "secular humanist terminology…is more natural to large numbers of Northern Negroes and white civil rights activists" see, David Dellinger, "The Future of Nonviolence" in *Nonviolence in America*, 524.

[86] Kosek, *Acts of Conscience*, 179-81. For more on Farmer see Leilah Danielson, "The Two-Ness of the Movement: James Farmer, Nonviolence, and Black Nationalism," *Peace and Change 29*, no. 3-4 (July 2004): 431-52 and James Farmer, *Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Arbor, 1985), especially "God and Goddam," 134-47. See also, Krishnalal Shridharani, *War Without Violence: A Study of Gandhi's Method and Its Accomplishments* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1939), and *My India, My America* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), and A.J. Muste, review of *My India, My America*, *Fellowship 7*, no. 12 (December 1941): 194, and Shridharani, "Has Not Renounced Satyagraha," *Fellowship 8*, no. 1 (January 1942): 15. For more on Farmer's sense of himself as a humanist and enduring pressures to return to Christianity, see Detine L. Bowers, "The CORE of James Farmer: Humanist, Freedom Warrior" in Peter G. Watson-Boone, ed., *The Quest For Social Justice III: The Morris Fromkin Memorial Lectures 1992-2002* (The UWM Libraries, The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, 2005), 211-26. See also, the video, *The CORE of James Farmer*, by Bowers which is on the DVD included in *The Quest for Social Justice III*.

Rustin ended up resigning from FOR in the spring of 1953 because of issues related to his sexuality, but was hired by the WRL that fall. He was forced to leave FOR as a result of an arrest and sixty days in jail on a "lewd vagrancy" conviction for performing oral sex with two white men in the back seat of parked car in Pasadena, California.[87] As the executive secretary of FOR, Muste offered Rustin the option of resigning or being dismissed, but as an executive committee member of the WRL, he did not have as much authority. The WRL not only rejected Rustin's offer to resign, they hired him as "program director and office secretary." Muste resigned from the executive committee in protest. Jessie Wallace Hughan, the seventy-eight year old founder of the WRL, wrote that she was pleased that they voted to keep Rustin "even if we have to lose A.J. from the Executive Committee. We have decided to take a risk, knowing that this is a risk."[88] Hughan founded the WRL to be specifically a secular home for pacifists while FOR saw itself as a proponent of a religiously-based pacifism. Therefore, Rustin's sexuality presented a greater challenge to FOR's image than it did at the WRL.

Barbara Deming kept her sexuality closeted in the 1960s and her early articles and correspondence during her initial adoption of pacifism echoed the references to Christian imagery which she had heard Muste and others use to explain the philosophy of nonviolence. Although she would move to a more secular-based concept of nonviolence by the end of the decade, these earlier writings help to show that change over time. Her "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issues or One?" provides examples of her earlier Christian pacifism. In the opening pages she couched her personal belief in nonviolence within a

[87] D'Emilio, "Bayard Trouble" in *Lost Prophet*, 191-3. See also, D'Emilio, "Homophobia And The Trajectory Of Postwar American Radicalism".
[88] Bennett, *Radical Pacifism*, 172. See also Robinson, *Abraham Went Out*, 117, 190, and Kosek, *Radical Pacifism*, 295n48.

primary tenet of "the Christian faith, still revolutionary, that men are brothers."[89] Certainly, the role of Christianity within the African American Freedom Movement added to the Biblical language in Deming's article, and some of the connections she made to Christian nonviolence were simply a product of those surroundings. For example, the peace walkers met with Reverend James Lawson at Scarritt College for Christian Workers in Nashville to talk about the sit-in movement, and Reverend Cordell Sloan of Lebanon, Tennessee helped them find sleeping arrangements and places to hold community meetings in various African American churches along the way. Another example is her sympathetic portrait of one of the CNVA marchers who spoke from the pulpit at a church meeting that "the message of Jesus—to love one's enemies—was a strange message, a revolutionary one."[90] Deming's tendency to connect the philosophy of nonviolence with Christianity and to rely on Biblical language was also present in her private letter to Nicholas Katzenbach, the U.S. Deputy Attorney General of the United States. After meeting with Katzenbach at the conclusion of the Nashville march, Deming wrote to remind him of the Biblical dictum that "We must be wise as serpents. Harmless as doves. Wise as serpents." She also asked him if the Ten Commandments, specifically that "Thou shall not kill" applied to the U.S. and if not, "Don't you think we should stop calling ourselves a Christian nation, and state that it is not possible to follow Christ's advice?"[91]

Deming's essay, "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issue or One?", about the 1962 Nashville to Washington Walk for Peace also echoed Reverend Shuttlesworth's

[89] Deming, "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issues or One?", in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 103. Her use of generic male pronouns to represent people of all sexes is also evident.
[90] Ibid., 104, 106, 112.
[91] Deming to Katzenbach, June 24, 1962, and Deming to Mother, June 23, 1962, *BDSL*, Folder 1337.

suggestion at the CNVA nonviolence training that activists had "to improvise as we go" in terms of racial justice and pacifism. In the opening lines of her article, Deming hands a leaflet to an observer of their disarmament march. He reads it, then looks to her and asks "Are you walking with that nigger?" This kind of interaction "had been anticipated" by the CNVA, and the pacifists had discussed "just how distracting our obvious attitude to race relations might be." They were aware that some in the African American Freedom Movement might be in full agreement with disarmament, but would still distance themselves from the peace walk because they feared being labeled unpatriotic. While Deming did find their "tentative conclusions to have been utterly inadequate," she was not dissuaded about the natural link between the two causes. The connection she saw was not simply that both campaigns relied on "the same nonviolent tactic" or that nonviolence was "the only mode of battle" consistent with "the right not to be deprived of life." For her, the strongest bond between racial integration and pacifism was that they both relied on "the issue of whether or not one is going to be willing to respect one's fellow man."[92]

With the walk starting in Nashville during the sit-in movement, one of the most discordant moments occurred almost immediately as the walkers approached a lunch counter window and caught only "a glimpse, as in a flash photograph, of young heads

[92] Deming, "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issues or One?" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 102-3, 115. See also, Mollin, "Reversing the Traditional Pattern" in *Radical Pacifism*, 125-50, 146, 149. Mollin notes that the CNVA peace walks in the South marked a moment when "peace and freedom reached their highest level of congruence." She also suggested that "the association between peace and freedom was anything but natural." For the struggle within the War Resisters League about whether to remain focused on the single issue of abolishing war which was its mission since the 1920s or to broaden its focus to advocate for nonviolent direct and civil disobedience, see "The Pacifist House Divided" in Bennett, *Radical Pacifism*, 134-72. See also, Grace Paley, "Thinking About Barbara Deming" in *Prison Notes*, v-ix, vi. Paley commented in 1985 that "The peace movement and the civil rights movement had come to know themselves deeply related, although there are still people in both movements who do not understand this flesh and blood connection."

held in a certain proud and patient fashion; and then we had marched past." Deming commented that their decision to continue their peace march without at least pausing for a brief picket in support of the integration protest "felt unnatural, I think, to all of us."[93] Later that day, they had a chance to meet with Reverend James Lawson, one of the key figures in SNCC and Nashville's broader sit-in movement. Lawson had a strong pacifist history. He was a protégé of Muste, had spent a year in jail as a conscientious objector of the Korean War, studied nonviolence in India for three years, and was a southern field secretary of FOR in the late 1950s. By the time Deming encountered him in the summer of 1962, his activism over the past two years with sit-in movement has resulted in his expulsion from Vanderbilt University's School of Religion in Nashville.[94] Lawson shared Deming's belief that the peace walk and the sit-ins were part of a larger "nonviolent movement" and that the two actions "are related to each other, in a sense are one and the same enterprise."[95] Their perception was affirmed as the racial make-up of their walk shifted over the course of the next few days from a "token integrated" march with Robert Gore as the lone African-American peace walker, who Deming saw as "our most provocative, most instantly legible sign," to a crowd where "more of us were black than white."[96] The Nashville to Washington Walk for Peace in 1962 helped illustrate the two decades of concerted cooperation between the pacifist movement's desire to

[93] Deming, "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issues or One?" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 104.
[94] Robinson, *Abraham Went Out*, 118-19, Kosek, *Acts of Conscience*, 228, and Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Harvard University Press, 1981), 22-5.
[95] Deming, "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issues or One?" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 104-5.
[96] Ibid., 102, 105, 107. During this time Deming was also in conversation about the connection between the pacifist and the integrationist struggles with Reverends James Lawson and Martin Luther King Jr., journalists Carl and Anne Branden, and historians Howard Zinn and Staughton Lynd at Spelman College in Atlanta. Zinn whole-heartedly agreed with her and remarked that Lynd was "pointing enthusiastically to your essay" one night and he had "read it and felt the same way." See Zinn to Deming, October 5, 1962, *BDBU*, Box 3, Folder 5.

eliminate war and the African American Freedom Movement's struggle for racial equality.

The Drama of Nonviolent Action

Deming not only adopted the traditional theological, philosophical, and political arguments for nonviolence, she was also adopted by the U.S. pacifist culture itself. In September of 1962, a month after *Liberation* published her "Two Issues or One?" essay, Muste wrote to offer her an editorial position at the pacifist magazine. Muste admired her work covering the CNVA and appreciated her contributions "with editorial thinking, as well as promotion" which she was already providing to the magazine. Deming was "very much moved to accept the role" and was only concerned about being "able to put in the extended stretches I seem to need to turn out pieces of writing, and also to participate in the projects about which I write." Muste offered Deming a choice between a position as a full editor or an associate editor. She chose the latter because she wanted to be sure that she made "a sufficient contribution to justify the title."[97] Deming became the only female editor of *Liberation* and her articles along with her name often appeared on the cover.[98] She had now found success as writer, although not in the way she had planned it.

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[97] Muste to Deming, September 13, 1962 and Deming to Muste, September 23, 1962, *BDBU*, Box 7 Folder 7.

[98] Early cover articles include "Southern Peace Walk" in the Summer 1962 issue, "Courage For The New Age: The Council of Correspondence" in November 1962, "Needed: A New Declaration of Independence" in January 1963, "Earle Reynolds: Stranger in This Country" in March 1963, "Letter to Women Strike For Peace" in April 1963, "Notes After Birmingham" in Summer 1963, and "Open Letter to *The New York Times*" in October 1963. It is important to note that Deming and Meigs often gave large donations and sometimes provided loans to *Liberation*, CNVA, and other pacifist groups which may have played a role in Muste's decision to ask Deming to be an editor. For a letter where Deming proposes loaning $10,000 to CNVA for starting "a weekly peace newspaper see, Deming to "Mr. Elser," May 18, 1962, *BDSL*, unprocessed 2000-M115 Barbara Deming Carton 1 (67:2:2). For a letter where Deming offers to pay a

Her attempts to be a short story writer, poet, and drama critic were now in the past, but those skills served her well as she became one of the country's leading writers about the nonviolence movement. Deming often used her knowledge of theatre and her craft of storytelling in the dozen articles she had written about pacifism over the past three years. She referred to her early essays as "a study of satyagraha as a dramatic process—related to theatre."[99] She also noticed that some of the experienced pacifists she had met at the CNVA training had "a dramatist's eye upon events" that allowed them to maximize the power of their protest.[100] The last article she published before becoming a "peace writer" appeared in the *Tulane Drama Review* in 1959 under the title "The World of Hamlet" and it ended up having a lasting impact on her journalism.[101] In her first essays about nonviolence, she would place Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into the protest scenes to show her readers how pacifists were creating "a play within a play." She noted that Hamlet had shouted "The play's the thing!" in his attempt to "catch the conscience" of his uncle as he watched a play reenacting his murder of Hamlet's father. In her articles, Deming effectively recast pacifists as Hamlet's acting troupe who "dramatized" injustices with their staged protests. She told her audience that "Nonviolent action is a dramatic technique" even more effective than Hamlet's use of theatre, because the

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pacifists living expenses in addition to providing a $200 donation see, Deming to "Beverly K", November 3, 1961, *BDBU*, Box 6, Folder 12.

[99] Deming to Unaddressed, March 29, 1962, *BDSL*, Folder 1337. See also Paul Goodman, ed., *Seeds of Liberation* (New York: George Braziller, 1964) for a ten year retrospective of the magazine. Of the sixty-five articles, Deming authored three and her first contribution, her poem, was also included. For correspondence on how the articles were selected, see "*Liberation* Anthology", *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 15.

[100] Deming, "The Peacemakers" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 34. For her references to scenes in churches as "theatrical version of such prayer" and "the extravagance of theatre, see "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issues or One?" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 113.

[101] Deming, "The World of Hamlet" in *Deming Reader*, 67-73.

pacifists could include "antagonists as actors in the play."[102] By refusing to walk when arrested or remaining still and defiant when taunted and beaten, nonviolent direct action campaigns placed bystanders and authority figures on the stage with the demonstrators. One of the most striking examples of involving "antagonists as actors in the play" occurred in May of 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama when Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, turned high-pressure fire hoses and police dogs on children.[103]

Deming witnessed the police brutality, spent six days in jail for participating in the protest, and wrote two moving essays about the events and her personal experiences. She wrote "In the Birmingham Jail" immediately after returning home. She explained to the readers of *The Nation* that she "experienced more sharply than I ever had before the tragic nature of segregation" to the extent that it "provided a jolt for the mind that can still, recalling it, astonish me." The Birmingham protest was primarily made up of African American students and was known as the Children's March and the Children's Crusade. Deming did not tell the story of the march in that first essay, but focused the majority of the short article on the time she spent in the white women's section of the jail. She explained how her cell mates treated the African American children in the jail as less than human, calling them "wild animals," "niggers," and suggesting that "They ought to throw a bomb in there and blow them all up." She understood that these women thought of her as "a devil" and a "'nigger lover'" and recounted how the warden and guard had told the women to "'cut me down' as they chose." Over the next six days she eventually

[102] "August 19—notes for talk—(8)", *BDSL*, Folder 1337 and Deming, *Prisons That Could Not Hold* (San Francisco, California: Spinsters Ink, 1985), reprint of *Prison Notes* (New York: Grossman, 1966), "Chapter Five", 67.
[103] For a discussion of pacifists media savvy, see Kosek, *Acts of Conscious*, 239-41.

"stopped fearing" her cell mates and "made friends with them" as she came to think of them as another class of oppressed people in the South.[104]

Deming remarked on the perennially missed alliance between the poor white community and the African American Freedom Movement. She noted that there were no "well-to-do people" in the jail, just women who "were poor and had been drunk or disorderly or had prostituted themselves." One of the women, sensing the injustice of their situation, suggested that she "'ought to march with the Freedom Riders!'" When Deming was able to have individual conversations with them, she told them that "they did, in truth, belong out in the streets with the Negroes, petitioning those in power for the right to be treated like human beings." By the time she left the jail she felt as if the women were beginning to "listen to me in a strange, hushed astonishment, staring at me, half beginning to believe." This left her with the question she chose to conclude her brief essay, "if the words the Negroes in the nonviolent movement are speaking and are enacting ever begin to reach these others who have yet to know real freedom, what might that movement not become?"[105]

Deming focused her second article on the experiences that led to her arrest while also contemplating the future of the Civil Rights Movement. She relayed a potent sense of fear in her retelling of the bombings of the movement headquarters and the homes of several African American families and the constant fear of corrupt police officers. At one moment, Deming tried to convince Martin Luther King, Jr.'s eleven-year-old niece to go to sleep until her father and uncle came home from his attempt to quell the rioting

[104] Deming, "In the Birmingham Jail" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 147-150. Originally published in *The Nation*, May 25, 1963.
[105] Ibid., 147-150.

caused by a sense that the police had been complicit in the explosions that have given "Bombingham" its name. Alveda King told her that she was afraid to fall asleep because she "might dream about the bombing" of her own home earlier that month.[106] Deming experienced living nightmares as she found herself hiding at various times from the white police officers. Most dramatically, she was "smuggled" out of a meeting which "Bull" Connor had "decided" white people could not attend. Strangers disguised her in their clothing, moved her from one alcove to another, "thrust" her onto the floor of the back of a car, and brought her to a safe house.[107]

She also used her article to write about the white community in Birmingham who in moments when she was not linked with the protestors greeted her with "a honeyed smile" yet when they saw her marching for racial integration scowled at her and called her "nigger-lover, nigger." These experiences left her feeling "a sudden unpleasant catch in my stomach" whenever she encountered a white person. She personified the stark difference in treatment by telling the story of a white woman who sat next to her on the plane and told her that African Americans in Birmingham were "quite content, quite content" and "wouldn't take a penny" when she offered to pay her hired help for volunteering to "take care" of her in the immediate days after her mother died. She followed this thought by telling Deming that her "friends are putting flood lights in their backyards" because these same "contented" people were "ready to murder us in our sleep, you know."[108]

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[106] Deming, "Notes After Birmingham" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 152. Originally published in *Liberation*, Summer 1963.
[107] Ibid., 160-1.
[108] Ibid, 153, 157.

She saw this misperception and fear of the Other in the African American community too. She recalled an early meeting where one elderly woman simply "stares and stares" at her before finally allowing her in her home. Another elderly woman "too aghast to be able to speak" simply pointed her finger at her until Deming told the woman that she was a friend, "not one of them, the enemy—'whitey.'" These interactions left her with an understanding of how much work was needed to build the trust necessary to end racial segregation and make strides toward racial equality. She explained that "The truth is that the distance between us is unreal. I have always known it. But the distance nevertheless has been there."[109] During her experiences in Birmingham she was able to bridge that distance, though only temporarily. She told her readers that she "entered this world that is theirs" but unlike her comrades she was able to leave after being released from jail. Sitting at home in "a world calm and beautiful," her surroundings gave her "the sensation of staring at an illusion," a sense that she anticipated feeling for a long time, "until the two worlds can be one."[110]

As Deming was working on those articles, she wrote two of the coordinators of the Birmingham Campaign, Reverend James Bevel of the Sothern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and James Forman of SNCC. She told Bevel that in her time in Birmingham, "I learned more than I have ever learned about the practice of nonviolence—and about what a revolution is." Expressing the connection she saw between abolishing war and racism, she told him that "If anyone finally is able to speak effectively to Americans about the madness, and the wickedness, of relying upon military

[109] Deming, "Notes After Birmingham" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 159-60.
[110] Ibid., 153, 151.

force in this age, surely it will be that movement."[111] Similarly, she told Forman that she wanted to "return to the South—both to learn more about nonviolent action…and to make whatever contribution I am able." She also let him know that she had sent the SNCC office a copy of her "very quick piece" in *The Nation* while she set aside some additional time "to sit down and write a much more thoughtful piece for *Liberation*."[112]

Her two articles on Birmingham brought great praise from her friends and family. After the civil rights leader Medgar Evers was assassinated in his front lawn in Jackson, Mississippi on June 12, 1963, Deming's friend and U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, wrote her about the tragedy. He said, "I think I shall remember this year for two things: the words Mrs. Evers spoke over her husband's body and your article in *The Nation*."[113] As for her article in *Liberation*, Marjorie Swann called it "one of the most moving things I have ever read" and while admitting that their friendship over the past three years greatly influenced its emotional impact, "it would have the same effect on almost anyone, know you or not."[114] The letters that Deming received from her family during her time in the Birmingham jail were equally uplifting for her. Vida and Chip Deming wrote to express their support, and her brother Angus, who was living in Paris, sent the brief message, "Bobbie—I am proud to be your brother." Her mother also wrote to tell her that she was "brave and wonderful," adding that she "wish[ed] you

[111] Deming to Bevel, May 29, 1963, *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 7.
[112] Deming to Forman, May 21, 1963, *BDSL*, Folder 770.
[113] Moynihan to Deming, June 24, 1963, *BDSL*, Folder766. The letter was written on official United States Department of Labor letterhead. For Deming's the revelation that "I tried hardest to persuade myself that I should marry Moynihan," see, Deming to Mother, July 17, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 462. For their exchange of letters in the early 1950s, see, "Moyn," *BDSL*, Folders 455.
[114] Marjorie Swann to Deming, September 5, 1963, *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 3.

weren't there—but as always I am proud of you and love you and pray for you."[115] Her experiences in Birmingham and the support she received propelled her to speak in public "for the first time" about the nonviolent movement.[116] She recorded a lengthy interview with WGBH radio in Boston and spoke at both a local Kiwanis Club and a NAACP meeting on Cape Cod not far from her and Mary Meigs' home in Wellfleet, Massachusetts.[117]

Her letter to the local NAACP is indicative of her personal and professional transition since embracing her pacifist "family." She introduced herself as a "free-lance writer" who had written "poetry and short stories and studies of the theatre and the movies; but in the past three years [I] have turned almost entirely to writing essays about the non-violent movement—my imagination has been so caught by that."[118] She did not name herself as primarily a non-fiction writer and did not mention the fact that she had recently become an associate editor of the pacifist magazine *Liberation*. Neither did her letter reveal that she considered herself a pacifist or member of the broader nonviolent movement. However, as she began to look back on her time in Birmingham, she considered that experience as a "turning point" in her life.[119] After three days in the African American community during the tumult of the Birmingham Campaign in May of 1963, then six days in a segregated jail cell, she began to understand what it meant to live in the "lower depths" of the United States. She remarked that being raised in an upper-class community had taught her "to always obey, or anarchy might result." Her time in

[115] Vida Deming to "Bobbie," May 9, 1963, *BDSL*, Folder 770, and Angus Deming to "Bobbie," May 14, 1963, *BDSL*, Folder 769, Mother to Deming, May 8, 1963, *BDSL*, Folder 770.
[116] "May 24 Notes – (2)," *BDBU*, Box 1, Folder 15.
[117] Deming to James Forman, May 21, 1963, *BDSL*, Folder 770, and "Notes for Talks about Birmingham to Cape Code Kiwanis, NAACP," *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 2.
[118] Deming to Charles Cassidy in West Dennis, Massachusetts, June 4, 1963, *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 3.
[119] "6-10-77 Notes Leah Interview," *BDSL*, Folder 4, See "6-19---2".

the Birmingham jail was eye-opening. She wrote that while in jail she "woke to dangers of obedience" and to her own "privileged status."[120] Her next imprisonment would come in the fall and winter of 1963-64 as she returned to the South as part of the CNVA's Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Peace Walk.

Prison Notes

Barbara Deming's month-long incarceration in the Albany, Georgia city jail as part of the Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Peace Walk, an international protest to encourage nuclear disarmament, culminated in the publication of her first book, *Prison Notes*. It began as a serial memoir published by *Liberation* from August of 1964 to November of 1965, was published in hardcover by Grossman Publishers in 1966, and in paperback by Beacon Press in 1970.[121] *The New York Times Book Review* named it "One of the best books to come out of the civil rights struggle."[122] As a memoir of the peace and freedom walk, it provided the background of the action itself and a sketch of various other protest actions, but it was primarily an account of the walkers' time in jail which included fasting, refusals to walk to court, and various other forms of noncooperation. The walkers were jailed for walking as an integrated group through downtown Albany,

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[120] "For Joan," March (unknown date), 1969 and "Jan 9, 1969 Notes About Civil Disobedience," *BDSL*, Folder 1369.

[121] For *Liberation*'s serialized release of *Prison Notes*, see *BDBU*, Box 2, Folder 4 or the following *Liberation* volumes, Part I (Vol. IX, No. 5, August 1964), Part II (Vol IX, No. 6, September 1964), Part III (Vol. IX, No.7, October 1964), Part IV (Vol. IX, No. 11, February 1965), Part V (Vol. X, No.1, March 1965), Part VI (Vol. X, No. 3, May 1965), Part VII (Vol. X, No. 6, September 1965), and Part VIII (Vol. x, No.8, November 1965). Deming, *Prison Notes*. In 1985 after Deming's death, San Francisco's Spinsters Ink reissued it under the title *Prisons That Could Not Hold* and included her writings from her final protest action in 1983 with the Seneca Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace in Justice. The University of Georgia Press issued a thirtieth anniversary edition under the same revised title in 1995. The following citations come from the 1985 reprinting.

[122] "Biographical Information on Barbara Deming", *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 13. The acclaim for Prison Notes resulted in the publication of her oft-rejected book on the films of the 1940s, *Running Away from Myself: A Dream Portrait of America Drawn From the Films of the Forties* (New York: Grossman Press, 1969).

which defied the city's laws that enforced racial segregation. It was Deming's telling of this story that established her name recognition in the nonviolent movement.

Deming's craft of storytelling, penchant for poetry, theatrical eye, and her sense that disarmament and racial integration were part of the same movement were all evident in *Prison Notes*. While she was in Birmingham, Alabama in May of 1963, the CNVA organized the peace walk from Quebec, Canada to Guantanamo Bay Cuba to protest U.S. Cold War policy. Deming joined the walkers in October that year. The action eventually concluded 2,800 miles later in October of 1964 when their boat, *The Spirit of Freedom*, was confiscated by the U.S. government before making it to Cuba, resulting in the federal court case entitled *The United States of America v. The Spirit of Freedom*.[123] Most of the walkers were in their twenties, with a few in their late teens. Nearly all were from the United States with a couple from Canada and one person from England. Bradford Lyttle, the organizer of the various CNVA peace walks was thirty-six, and at forty-six, Deming was easily the elder of the group. Her age, experience as a writer, position as an editor of *Liberation*, and ability to connect personally with the full team of walkers brought about a sense of respect and trust that lent itself to allowing Deming to tell the group's story.[124]

In addition to bringing the various individuals to life within the story of their group incarceration for defying segregation laws as an integrated peace walk, Deming revealed the intimacies of her own earlier imprisonments. She opened the book with "a

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[123] Deming, *Prison Notes*, 185. See also, Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 231n.54. For Mollin's discussion of the Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Peace Walk, see Chapter Five "Reversing the Traditional Pattern," 125-50. For an account of *Prison Notes*, see Christopher Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst* (University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[124] For the journals and personal narratives that various walkers sent her see *BDBU*, Box 5, Folders 6 and 7.

fairy tale" she had once heard about a man whose old slippers continually reappear even after he throws them out a window, buries them, tries to burn them, and then travels to a foreign country and sinks them in a pond. She was making the argument that just like putting the walkers in jail, "people persist in believing that they can put other people from them."[125] She illustrated the lesson of the fable by telling the story of her single day in the New York City Women's House of Detention for protesting nuclear weaponry and atmospheric testing in 1962. She recounted a sense of becoming "invisible" and a realization that she was being "wished out of existence for society's sake." Her description of guards watching her as she showered and repeatedly strip searching her, revealed that they were not searching for drugs or weapons, "their search is for our pride. And I think with a sinking heart: again and again, it must be, they find it and take it."[126] Her skill as a writer fills the book with visceral and emotional details that mark *Prison Notes* as a memoir that reaches beyond a personal narrative or a polemical diatribe.

Deming used the opening chapters to introduce the readers to various actions of the nonviolent movement such as nuclear disarmament demonstrations, picketing of various military bases, leafleting at civil-defense exercises, the sit-in movement, and her week in the Birmingham, Alabama jail for "walking half a block, a sign around my neck: 'All Men Are Brothers.'" She began by reminding her audience that Albany, Georgia was the site of a 1961 protest referred to as the Albany Movement which became famous for police chief, Laurie Pritchett, who "likes to boast that he defeated Martin Luther King nonviolently."[127] Pritchett had read the writings of King and Gandhi and decided that he

[125] Deming, *Prison Notes*, 1-2.
[126] Ibid., 2-4, 20.
[127] Ibid., 46, 12, 6. For more see "The Albany Movement" in Carson, *In Struggle*, 56-65.

would not repeat "Bull" Connor's reliance on brutality. Instead, he had his officers carry protestors on stretchers and enlisted the support of multiple county jailhouses so that the movement could not fill up the jails or create images of racist violence to be printed in newspapers or televised around the world. Eventually King left Albany with no changes made in the policies of segregation, resulting in a movement that had dissipated by the time Deming and the walkers arrived.

Like her "In Birmingham Jail" article, she filled the pages of the book with people in the white community who passed through the Albany jail during their incarceration. There are overheard shouts of verbal abuse between the male inmates and women in dire straits who are thrown into their cell late at night, but she also included conversations and invectives related to race and war. One white traveling salesman told the walkers that if their "peace walk came through his town and 'started a ruckus' he'd just as soon shoot us." In another exchange, Deming told an inmate in their all-white, female cell that they have been marching for nuclear disarmament. The woman "grips my hand more tightly" and asks, "You didn't walk with niggers, did you?" She then proceeded to tell them that "They have more than whites do, you know it—better schools, better everything. I have a cook, she's a nigger, and she says she wouldn't want things different." At another point, during a medical check-up a nurse asked Deming if things had been difficult for the walkers in Albany. She explained that they had "no such [racial] struggle in any other city" in the South, which caused the nurse to look "pleased and proud." The interactions were also physical at times. Just as a guard in Birmingham told the women in Deming's cell that they could feel free to assault her, in Albany an inmate attacked one of the male walkers after asking him, "Are you a freedom walker like he said?" While

the others could hear the sounds of the beating, one of the walkers called for the guard, but stopped after another reminded her that "we never ask the police for protection."[128]

The physical and verbal assaults were all related to the walkers' positions on race rather than war, pointing to the conclusion of some pacifists and integrationists that these were two separate movements, not one. In a telling example, Deming spoke to their lawyer, C.B. King, "about my hopes that the struggle for civil rights and the struggle for disarmament would become one." Deming explained that she wanted the country to "abandon all national defense" and "argued the necessity of adopting nonviolent defense now that we lived in the nuclear age." A member of the Albany Movement himself, C.B. King told her that he had not "given the subject much thought…when you were down in a ditch and the white man had his foot on your throat—you didn't often look beyond the ditch and the struggle there."[129] Similarly, one pacifist left the peace walk as it entered the South, noting "I am willing to face death for my views on peace, but I am not willing to die just yet for insisting on my right to walk through the towns of Georgia with Negroes and carrying signs against racial discrimination."[130]

Evidence of the division amongst the walkers can also be seen in the views of Bradford Lyttle and Ray Robinson, Jr., the two male walkers that Deming profiled in *Prison Notes*. She portrayed Lyttle, the walk's lead organizer, as having "a special eagerness to see the Walk reach Cuba" while explaining that the walk had "reality" only in the South for Robinson, the longest serving African American walker. Whereas Lyttle had organized the CNVA's earlier peace walks, Robinson had only recently learned of

[128] Deming, *Prison Notes*, 17, 18-19, 126, 156-57.
[129] Ibid., 99.
[130] Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 132.

nonviolent direct action. A former boxer and "drifter," Robinson confessed that he had previously been the embodiment of violence. In a letter to the *Albany Herald*, he said that "This thing that's called nonviolence is the biggest challenge I have ever tried as a man and although it's hard, I have managed to continue to hold my violence in check."[131] Near the end of their time in jail, Lyttle had changed positions and agreed with Robinson that they should continue their fast and serve out their full sentences instead of taking a deal from Chief Pritchett to get out sooner in order to complete the peace walk on schedule.[132]

There were others signs of the walk's ability to merge the two movements as well. While C.B King saw the two movements as separate, the Albany Student Movement released a statement to the contrary. It began by noting that "It has been rumored that the Negroes of Albany are not 100% behind the Peace and Freedom Walkers" and ended with the statement that "We fully support their right to express their beliefs…and will assist them in any way we can…"[133] Eventually the Albany Movement itself came to see their movements as inextricably linked, leaving the group's secretary, Marion Page, to tell the walkers that they their hunger-strike had "started up the Albany Movement again."[134] Additionally, when the walk first entered the South, the African American walkers had urged the group to create a new leaflet since their original one only spoke to nuclear disarmament and did not mention racial equality. The leaflet they were handing out in Albany opened with a question in a large bold font, "We have been asked: 'Are you Peace Walkers or Freedom Walkers?' WE ARE BOTH." It stated that both causes

[131] Deming, *Prison Notes*, 110, 113.
[132] Ibid., 133.
[133] Ibid., 131.
[134] Ibid., 142.

called on people to "try to live together in peace, as one human family" and that "unless we learn the difficult new way of struggling nonviolently for what we believe, we may help the human race to commit suicide."[135] Their attempt to express their dual message of peace and freedom revealed an additional connection, a reliance on a religious foundation.

Embedded in their new leaflet was the traditional argument that Christian theology was the foundation of nonviolence. The leaflet stated that "Most Americans, from both North and South, hold a religious faith which assumes the brotherhood of all men." It continued, "The Fifth Commandment Reads: 'Thou Shall Not Kill.' Jesus taught a new commandment even more radical: 'Love one another.' He made it clear that he meant by this even our enemies." Citing a quotation from Jesus and capitalizing each word of the religious commandment not only appealed to the dominant religious background of their audience, it also clearly linked the walkers' understanding of nonviolence as based in Christianity. In a passing gesture to a secular basis for their protest, the leaflet stated that the words of Jesus and a belief in God were the same as "the faith embodied in our Declaration of Independence," adding that "most Americans proudly voice a belief" in at least one if not both of those doctrines.[136] In concordance with these statements, during one of Deming's appeals to the court in Albany she argued

[135] "We have been asked," Committee for Non-Violent Action Records, 1958-68, *SCPC*, Box 19, Folder "(Dec. 1963) Photocopies."

[136] Ibid. At least one of the marchers named herself as "an atheist." See "Letter by Katherine Havice" in Lynd, *Nonviolence in America*, 376. Deming noted that atheists also attended the two-week nonviolence training in 1960, see Deming, *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 31. For Deming's take on The Declaration of Independence and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, see "Needed: A New Declaration of Independence" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 116-23, originally published in *Liberation*, January 1963.

that "the message of Jesus—and of all great spiritual teachers" was to "recognize each other as brothers—members of one human family."[137]

To increase the chances that people would come to recognize the humanity of their supposed enemy, Deming found that nonviolent tactics worked most effectively, particularly the use of a hunger-strike. Deming devoted a substantial portion of *Prison Notes* to the month-long fast that nearly all of the walkers participated in during their incarceration. She had fasted once before and found that two weeks was her limit, so she decided to participate in only a partial fast while in jail. She told the story of the hunger-strike primarily through Yvonne Klein, whom she accompanied on various trips to the hospital for force feeding, enemas, and physicals. Her account of Klein's final hospital visit was striking. First, the doctor conducted an intravenous feeding, then he attempted "to give her orange juice through a tube in her nose," while Deming "watched her legs writhe convulsively" as she cried, "shaking her head from side to side, struggling with him." Klein left the hospital "stunned for several hours," with her face bloodied and tear stained, "she sat staring in front of her, not even thinking to wipe the tears in her eyes."[138]

The story of the fast caused Mary McCarthy, an author and friend of Deming, to commend her for a book that left her feeling "tremendously impressed. And moved" but also "repelled" and "estranged" by the "atrocious martyrdom" of the fast. She told

[137] Deming, "…Our Terribly Real Kinship" in *Liberation* (March 1964), 8. Also, in Lynd, *Nonviolence in America*, 371.
[138] Deming, *Prison Notes*, 126-7. For Bradford Lyttle's rationale for fasting, see "The Peacewalkers' Struggle in Albany, Georgia" in Lynd, *Nonviolence in America*, 361-69. For an argument that the women fared better than the men during the fast and therefore presented a challenge to the gendered notions of militancy and a threat to the idea of nonviolence as masculine, see Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 139-45.

Deming, "I don't think Jesus would have enjoyed this, rather the contrary."[139] Deming responded that "Jesus seems to me to make the most extreme recommendations" and that in her experiences with fasting she "never had strangers look at me or at others in the group with a look that did more to cross distances than when we were fasting. I've never had cops draw closer to us." She remarked that Gandhi called the fast a "fiery weapon" that should be used with extreme caution and contemplation, noting that "The truth is that I'm not sure that all of us on that project were ready to use it."[140] Despite McCarthy's disagreements about the predominance of the hunger-strike in the book, she told London's *Observer Magazine* of *The Guardian* newspaper that *Prison Notes* was one of her favorite books of 1966.[141]

One of the most remarkable sections of *Prison Notes* is an imaginative letter that Deming created between herself and a friend who was skeptical of nonviolence as a strategy for social change. Margaret L.D. Hatch of WILPF told Deming that this section of the book was "the simplest and best explanation of what is meant by non-violent resistance that I have read."[142] Deming wrote the chapter in the form of a conversational letter that included passages such as "We place our hopes in a very particular kind of persuasion, and I don't think you have ever really understood the nature of it. I have never made it clear."[143] This storytelling device allowed Deming to speak directly to the reader and to present her current understanding of the philosophy of nonviolence. While she continued to reference religious traditions that informed her theory of nonviolence,

[139] McCarthy to Deming, September 12, 1966, *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 16. She also told Deming that a friend of hers, Miriam Chiaromonte, said the book "has made her see for the first time what the experience of non-violence is. I agree."
[140] Deming to McCarthy, November 6, 1966, *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 16.
[141] "Biographical Information on Barbara Deming," *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 13.
[142] Hatch to Deming, September 10, 1966, *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 16.
[143] Deming, *Prison Notes*, Chapter Five, 57-80, 57.

the weight of her explanation rested on the Gandhian principles of discipline and noncooperation.[144]

Deming called nonviolence "a kind of force" and a "dramatic technique" that required "an actor's discipline" to "assert…stubbornly" that "here we are and we won't disappear."[145] She saw those concepts as opposed to "the caricature you hold in your mind" of nonviolence as "passive resistance," a term she wished "had never been used to describe this kind of struggle." She was not even fond of the term "nonviolent action" which too often resulted in the word "action" being "forgotten."[146] She liked Bayard Rustin's definition of "creative mischief" and told her audience that "we would be lunatics" if believing in nonviolence was like believing in "magic."[147] She understood that noncooperation "can be formidable" if practiced in great numbers, which she conceded they did not have, and that "anyone would be a fool to count on securing justice by demonstrating friendliness alone." Deming saw nonviolence as working at its best "when the two pressures—of friendliness and of disobedience—are exerted simultaneously."[148] She cautioned that using nonviolent direct action required "a kind of balance between the pressures we exert upon them" so that those opposed to them were not "caught up automatically in the reflex of self-defense."[149] The duality of nonviolence

[144] For religious references see, "the legend of the Harrowing of Hell, Quakers, Proverbs, St. Augustine, Jesus, Deming, *Prison Notes*, 23, 61, 62, 72, 73.
[145] Ibid., 62, 67, 69.
[146] Ibid., 58, 62.
[147] Ibid., 66, 61.
[148] Ibid., 71-72.
[149] Ibid., 73.

continued to fascinate Deming and she recognized that much of its nature was still hidden and "deserves endless study."[150]

Another hidden element in *Prison Notes* is Deming's sexuality. She focused on the female walkers, confined together in an all-female jail cell for a month, yet she limited her own story by only sharing heterosexual interactions and thoughts. As was the case with her general correspondence, she referred to Mary Meigs only as "her friend" and not even by name, despite the fact that they had been life partners for the last decade. There were even elements where Deming provided a heterosexual veneer for herself. The two men closest to her age, Dave Dellinger who was forty-eight and John Papworth who was forty-two, have physical and emotional interactions with her that could be easily read as romantic. For example, when the walkers are released from their cells, Deming described the scene of the doors opening as the men and women run to each other and "solemnly kiss each other on the mouth. There is John Papworth, peering into each face. I tell him, 'I'm Barbara," and we peer at each other and then we kiss."[151] It is not that Deming left sexuality out of the story. At multiple times she relayed the lewd sexual comments of prison conversations. In the opening chapter of the book she included an argument between men not on the peace walk who were in different cells. In "an endless obscene tirade" one man tells the other to stop banging on the bars by saying that "Only baboons beats on bars. And queers. He's a queer, ain't he?"[152] She makes no mention of the hatred toward queer people or the personal fear that their comments may have

[150] Deming, *Prison Notes*, 60.
[151] Ibid., 172. The only place where the presence of Mary Meigs can be gleaned from the narrative is when Deming mentions that "a friend has sent in an anthology" of poetry, see 150. Dellinger and Deming's more emotive interactions are on pages 120-30, and 148.
[152] Ibid., 9.

caused her. Additionally, Deming allows her readers to assume that she is a heterosexual woman when she describes the cultural taboo of not allowing African American men to walk, sit, or interact publically with her because she was white. Rather than add to the absurdity of the racial codes by revealing that she was a lesbian, she erased her sexuality from the story.

While writing *Prison Notes*, Deming was attempting to live in a polyamorous relationship with Mary Meigs and Marie-Claire Blais, a twenty-three year-old French-Canadian writer who began living with Meigs and Deming in 1964.[153] Their friends and neighbors, the writer Edmund Wilson and his wife Elena, were aware of the relationship that would continue for the next six years and would visit with them in their Wellfleet neighborhood. A friend of Marie-Claire Blais saw their relation quite differently, calling it "sick" and concluded that Blais would have to be "deaf and dumb" to continue her relationship with any woman, let alone with two women in their forties under the same roof. Deming's response illuminates her thoughts on alternative sexualities and the pressures that kept her from revealing her own sexuality within *Prison Notes*. She told Blais' friend that while it was "generally accepted" to think "homosexuality is an illness," she whole-heartedly disagreed. She admitted that she "tried for a number of years, myself, to be other than I am…and I think it is very fortunate that I gave up the attempt." She went on to explain that many people trying to maintain loving same-sex relationships in a society that "regards them with distaste" find them incredibly difficult "because they are unable to cope with the fact of the prejudice against them." She confided in Blais' friend that "I was ill as long as I accepted society's judgment of me, was obsessed by the

[153] For more on the relationship see Duberman, *Saving Remnant*, 95-101, and 133-38. See also, Mary Meigs, *Lily Briscoe: A Self-Portrait* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1981).

fact that my heart behaved as it did, and struggled to be what I wasn't." She had come to a place where she was "not ashamed," but admitted that there were still times when "this wound in me is opened, and I am ill from it."[154] That wound would continue to fester for another decade before Deming felt comfortable to live and write openly as a lesbian.

In 1960 Barbara Deming had discovered "a love so sweet and strange" for her new found family of pacifists, but initially considered herself simply "a humble member" among "other fumblers" who were just becoming aware of the power of nonviolence.[155] She would not address the intersections of sexuality, feminism, and pacifism until the 1970s, leaving hidden the queer subtext of her writings, but she soon began to question her ubiquitous use of generic male pronouns such as "brotherhood of man." Over the next five years, Deming began her experiments with nonviolence by pushing the bounds of nonviolent theory in both traditional realms such as traveling to Viet Nam to bear witness in an attempt to bring about an end to the war, and in unorthodox ways such as supporting sabotage and selective property destruction. After only half a decade of writing and activism, Barbara Deming had established herself within the U.S. pacifist community and was prepared to venture out from the safety of that family to become an advocate for "nonviolent revolution."[156]

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[154] Deming to Jeanne "to a friend of M-C's", July 19, 1964, *BDSL*, 2000-M115 (unprocessed materials) Barbara Deming Carton 1 (67:2:2).
[155] Deming, *Prison Notes*, 120, and Deming to "Very dear family", September 14, 1960, *BDSL*, Folder 747.
[156] Deming, "New Men, New Women: Some Notes on Nonviolence" in Deming's *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1974), 3.

Chapter Three: **Experimenting with Nonviolence**

> *It is nonviolence which is in the process of invention, if only people would not stop short in that experiment. It is for that spirit of invention that I plead.*[157]

Barbara Deming became an internationally recognized name in the nonviolent movement after the success of *Prison Notes* in 1966. She was now an acclaimed non-fiction author, on the editorial board of a respected periodical in the United States, an executive committee member of the CNVA, and a sought after speaker on issues of civil rights and nonviolent direct action. Over the next five years she would travel twice to Viet Nam, embark on a coast to coast speaking tour about the war, immerse herself in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Poor Peoples' Campaign, write her most widely-cited article on the philosophy of nonviolence, and advocate for circumscribed property destruction as a nonviolent act of civil disobedience. In each of these areas, Deming continually pushed the bounds of nonviolent theory.

Her rise in the esteem of the pacifist community in the United States during the first half of the 1960s was remarkably fast. Her involvement in the nuclear disarmament, war tax resistance, and racial justice campaigns of that period, first as a journalist and then as an activist, afforded her the opportunities to experience a wide array of nonviolent thought and practice and to meet pacifists and nonviolent direction actionists in a variety of venues. In the latter half of the decade, with these organizational connections and personal experiences, she ventured out on her own to test the possibilities and limitations of nonviolence.

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[157] Deming, "On Revolution and Equilibrium" in *Deming Reader*, 171.

First she traveled with a traditional pacifist delegation to Saigon in South Viet Nam, and subsequently with a less conventional confederation of female peace activists to Hanoi in North Viet Nam. In the pages of *Liberation* she challenged SNCC and others in the African American Freedom Movement who began to distance themselves from nonviolence as a strategy for social change.[158] She also disparaged the leadership of the SCLC for abandoning the encampment of the Poor Peoples' Campaign in Washington, D.C. instead of taking a nonviolent stand against its demolition. As the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and other anti-war groups became more radically opposed to the Viet Nam War, Deming publically advocated for the destruction of draft board records by the Catholic Worker collectives and others that began to sweep the United States in the late 1960s.

Deming's desire to see the theory and practice of nonviolence become bolder and less cautious can be seen in her activities during this period. She had built a substantial readership from her early articles in the *Nation*, her newer essays in *Liberation*, and then with her book *Prison Notes*. Her notoriety increased as she taught at nonviolence workshops, traveled the country speaking about her experience in Hanoi, camped for three weeks with the Poor Peoples' Campaign, and spoke outside courthouses encouraging pacifists and others to support those who destroyed government records at draft boards across the United States. These next five years, from 1966 to 1971, saw Barbara Deming experimenting with the philosophical, racial, and gendered dimensions

[158] Joseph, *The Black Power Movement*. Note that Joseph considers the term "African-American Freedom Movement" is more accurate that the "Civil Rights Movement" which often results in the exclusion of the Black Power Movement as something separate and apart from "the black freedom movement." Also not that the two-word spelling of Viet Nam is out of deference to Asian American historians and academics in Asian American Studies who prefer this spelling. See Frazier, "Collaborative Efforts," 357n1.

of nonviolence. Her actions illuminate the complexity of nonviolence by exploring the racial and gender underpinnings of its support and opposition, while foreshadowing the emergence of her concept of a feminist nonviolence.

Traveling to Viet Nam

In April of 1966, Barbara Deming traveled to Saigon on a peace mission planned by A.J. Muste and the CNVA. They traveled with Bradford Lyttle of CNVA, William Davidon, a pacifist activist in the Physics department at Haverford College, Karl Meyer an editor of the *Catholic Worker*, and Sherry Thurber a student at Sarah Lawrence College. As Deming explained it, their mission came out of the hope that "By standing on that very spot where our country's power is striking blindly and brutally, and so sharing a little of the risk taken daily by the many who are suffering there, our words and actions will gain a little resonance."[159] The group stayed in Saigon for one week, meeting with both Americans and Vietnamese. Two notable events marked their visit. The first was a press conference at the Saigon City Hall where they were pelted with eggs and tomatoes by supposed *agents provocateurs*. The second was a demonstration at the U.S. embassy which resulted in their expected deportation.[160]

Deming wrote about this trip in her essay "We Are All Part of One Another" in the May-June 1967 issue of *Liberation*. The essay was the text from her acceptance speech for the 1967 WRL Peace Award. Foreshadowing her continual experiments with nonviolence, she stated at the end of her acceptance speech, that it was time to "move from words to acts—from words of dissent to acts of disobedience" and to "become more

[159] Mary Hershberger, *Traveling to Vietnam: American Peace Activists and the War* (Syracuse University Press, 1998), 57.
[160] For more on this trip see, Robinson, *Abraham Went Out*, 206-208.

bold, and therefore more effective."[161] She spoke again of the Saigon trip at Muste's memorial service in February of 1967.[162]

Deming's trip to Hanoi that winter had a greater impact on her experimentations with nonviolence. For eleven days in December 1967 to January 1968, Deming traveled with three other women to witness firsthand the devastation of the U.S. aerial bombing campaigns in Hanoi. The trip was arranged by the Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU) and David Dellinger of *Liberation*, who had traveled earlier to Hanoi.[163] Deming was the oldest in the group at forty-nine and the only unmarried woman. Grace Mora Newman was a forty-two year old Puerto Rican from Brooklyn, New York whose younger brother was one of the Fort Hood Three, a group which included one Puerto Rican, one Black, and one white soldier who had been sentenced to three to five years in the federal penitentiary at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for refusing to go to Viet Nam. Patricia Griffith was a thirty-two year old peace activist involved with the SDS and was married to a Cornell professor. The youngest member of the group was Diane Nash Bevel, a twenty-four-year-old former leader of the Nashville sit-ins and the Freedom Rides who was currently working with the Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam.

The VWU, who invited these women to Hanoi, had previously hosted members of the U.S. anti-war organization, Women Strike for Peace (WISP), in May of 1965.[164] However, the four women on this trip did not represent a single organization. As Diane Nash explained it, "we disagreed on practically every other subject from child care to

[161] Deming, "We Are All Part of One Another", *Deming Reader*, 164-167.
[162] Deming, *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 183-185.
[163] Frazier, *Making Connections In Viet Nam: U.S. Women's Transnational Activism And The Meanings Of Race, Gender, And Revolution, 1965-1975*, (PhD Dissertation, Binghamton University, 2013), 74. For more on the role of Diane Nash, see 74-82.
[164] Frazier, "Collaborative Efforts," 339-43.

men, to politics and nonviolence. The only issue I can remember all of us agreeing upon during the entire month we were together was that we were all against the war."[165] These disagreements resulted from their collective life experiences which included, among others, differences in sexuality, race, class and age. However, their political actions related to their trip to Hanoi were quite similar. Upon their return, Patricia Griffiths of SDS occasionally spoke on local panels where she advocated for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Viet Nam, Grace Mora Newman continued to speak on behalf of the Fort Hood Three, Diane Nash wrote articles for various publications where she linked the African American Freedom Movement to the North Vietnamese struggle, and Barbara Deming embarked on a five-month national speaking tour.[166]

Deming spoke at colleges, universities, churches, WISP meetings, and at a variety of press conferences primarily on the east and west coasts. She held an event nearly every day during January, February, and March of 1967. After her speaking schedule tapered off in the spring, she consolidated the various drafts of her speech and published it under the title "The Temptations of Power—Report of a Visit to North Vietnam."[167] In those speeches she told audiences about the tragic scenes she and the other women witnessed in Hanoi. She explained in detail how U.S. pellet bombs "perforated" the bodies of civilians while having "virtually no effect on the targets of 'steel and concrete'

[165] Diane Nash, "Journey to North Vietnam" in *Freedomways*, Spring 1967, 118-128, 118.
[166] For Patricia Griffith see *Utica Daily Press*, March 23, 1967, 4, Syndicated *Associated Press* interview from January 19, 1967. For Grace Mora Newman and Patricia Griffith see *The Militant*, November 14, 1966, 4. In 1978 Grace Mora Newman ran for Lieutenant Governor of New York with the Communist Party. For Diane Nash's second article see "Black Woman Views Genocidal War In Vietnam" *Black Liberator*, May 1969, 2.
[167] Deming, "The Temptations of Power" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 165-182. The text of the speech cited here comes from Deming's draft titled "Talk," *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 12. For more information on the day-to-day events of the Hanoi trip see *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 12. For specifics of the places and dates of her tour see *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 13. For supportive letters about the trip see *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 18. For hostile responses and information about preparations for the trip itself, see *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 19.

which our government tells us are the only targets in which we are interested." With her skillful use of language, she illustrated the "haunting" images of children mutilated by napalm, babies wounded within their mother's wombs, and a leper sanatorium which was bombed thirty-nine times.[168]

After providing the audience with visions of the gruesome sights she witnessed, Deming would spend the vast majority of the speech arguing that as a country, the United States needed to "take a very hard look" at itself in order to stop these atrocities. She compared the civilian carnage in Hanoi and Saigon to the 1937 bombing of the marketplace in the city of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. For many Guernica had become a symbol of the inhumanity of all war. Deming asked her audiences, "What will our actions in Vietnam symbolize to future generations? What do they symbolize right now to people round the world?" She coupled those questions with a restatement of U.S. military officials' claim that "we are restraining ourselves," leading her to tell the crowds that if this was a true statement, they "had better take a hard look at what we are still capable of doing."[169]

Having spoken at many venues, Deming commonly encountered a feeling of disbelief in the audience. She sympathized with the desire to think the best of one's country and its people, and she wanted to believe that the things she saw in Viet Nam were not true. She agreed that she had "yet to meet the American guy who could lift up a child in his hands and thrust it into a fire and watch it burn," but that she did understand

[168] "Talk," *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 12, 2,4.
[169] Ibid., 4.

how a person could do just that from a great distance with a simple push of a button.[170] It was the refusal to believe that she found most threatening. She referred to that psychological manifestation of denial as a "mental block" caused by the "our obsessive anti-Communism, which has become among us a real mental disorder." She noted that the actions of former U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower reflected the same refusal to believe what was happening in Viet Nam. She used Eisenhower as an example of the pervasiveness of the "mental disorder." She explained that it was understandable that peace activists feared being labeled as Communist sympathizers for opposing the war. However, Eisenhower, who was "not exactly a fellow-traveler," could rest assured that no one would consider him a Communist sympathizer. Eisenhower represented someone who proclaimed to want self-determination for the Vietnamese yet prevented democratic elections because he believed Ho Chi Minh, a Communist, would win. For Deming, that fact made "our intervention there a clear case of tyranny."[171]

It seemed to Deming that "Americans stand in too much awe of government" and that this reverence caused them to succumb to the temptation of using increasingly lethal force which could lead to a "genocide" of the Vietnamese people.[172] In an attempt to shake people from their awe and temptation, she would conclude each of her talks by calling for a "Gandhian campaign of noncooperation." She listed actions people in the audience could take, such as the mass refusal to pay taxes, work stoppages in weapons factories, collective refusal of scientists to create "stickier napalm," a national boycott of

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[170] "Talk," *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 12, 5.
[171] Ibid., 6, 9. For an overview of the history of the Viet Nam War, see Marilyn Young, *The Vietnam Years 1945-1990* (New York, New York: Harper Perennial, 1991). For the history of the opposition to the war see, Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfield, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1990) and Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, 276-300.
[172] "Talk," *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 12, 12, 8.

General Motors, Dow Chemical and others that profit from the war, and the creation of "War Resisters' Families" to support those who resist military recruitment.[173] Deming believed that these actions carried the potential to break through the mental barriers which she suspected the majority of people in the United States had erected in order to continue believing that their country was doing the right thing in Viet Nam.

While Deming and the three other women who traveled with her to Hanoi focused their energies on ending the war rather than promoting the causes of either feminism or racial justice, both gender and race were present in the trip itself and in their advocacy. In terms of the presence and absence of feminism, although it was the VWU who had sponsored this all-female delegation, there were few references by Deming or others about sexism, gender roles, or equality for women. If anything, the attention to women and children as the victims of the war fed into the prescriptive role of women as maternal peacemakers. Deming did get the inspiration for an organization to support young men refusing to go to war from a group of elder women in Hanoi called "Soldiers' Mothers" whose mission was to care for soldiers stationed in villages away from their homes; and she did argue that the U.S. "should have War Resisters' Mothers, or War Resisters' Families" which provided a very slight alteration of gender norms. She also made a passing reference that the "four of us, as women, were very struck and astonished by the fact that women in North Vietnam have almost perfect equality with men…and are

[173] "Talk," *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 12, 11-12

treated by men with a great deal more respect than in this country," but she did not link that disparity to the war itself or to a call for social change in the United States.[174]

While Deming and her colleagues did not make gender central to their anti-war activism, the public used their sex as a way to delegitimize their opposition to the war. The lack of respect afforded to Deming in the United States because she was a woman, specifically a forty-nine-year-old unmarried woman, can be seen in newspaper accounts and personal mail concerning her trip to Hanoi and subsequent speaking tour. Many of the criticisms fell into the classic tropes of pacifists as naïve, un-American, traitors, but others were specific to her sex and some even hinted at her lesbianism. One demeaning editorial referenced her previous trip to Saigon with Muste, comparing the whole group to "idiot children playing with matches" and singled out Deming as "a tall skinny spinster."[175] Even a favorable newspaper article opened with the lines, "Barbara Deming is not what you'd call an eye-opener. Not until she begins to talk. A plain-Jane type with short, straight hair, Barbara Deming becomes a shocker when she starts to speak."[176]

While those examples illustrate the particular challenges that Deming faced as a woman publically criticizing the U.S. government in the late 1960s, the personal letters were more caustic and indicative of the comments made about these women in private circles. They ranged from the somewhat veiled gendered criticism that "you and your busybody friends [*sic*] stay home and attend to something that you know something

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[174] "Talk," *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 12, 10. For an argument that the Vietnamese Women's Union and Women Strike for Peace represented dueling images of motherhood that accentuated conflicting values of guerrilla warfare and maternal pacifism, see Frazier, "Collaborative Efforts", 339, 342, 356.
[175] Guy Wright, January 22, 1967, *San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle*, "Lively Arts" section, *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 19.
[176] Robert B. Kenney, "Barbara Deming – She's a Real Shocker," January 15, 1967, Boston Globe, *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 14.

about," to the blatantly misogynist "you are a frustrated old maid and need nothing more than a man who no doubt rejected you on too many occasions and feel that this is the best way to even the score."[177] These reactions to Deming's anti-war speaking tour illustrate the gendered context in which she spoke, and point to a de facto feminist quality that inherently accompanied her speeches. Even so, her tangentially feminist remarks demonstrate mere notions of her emerging focus on women's liberation, while also indicating that her concerns for sexual equality and the development of a gender-based analysis of war and nonviolence were far from central for Deming at this time.

The role of a racial analysis in her anti-war speaking tour is also revealing. Deming twice referred to being treated as a group of "foolish women," and noted that supporters of the war tended to think of the Vietnamese as "cunning Orientals."[178] Inclusion of these disparaging remarks in her talks demonstrates her recognition that race and gender were playing some role in the war, but these asides do not rise to an analytical level. On a deeper level, she also criticized the disproportionate number of "the poor and exploited among us" that made up the rank and file of the U.S. soldiers in Viet Nam. But she never mentioned Private Dennis Mora, the Fort Hood Three, or the fact that as part of their delegation, his sister Grace Mora Newman brought a letter from him which was read a various times to the people of Viet Nam. Conversely, in both of Diane Nash's articles, she made race a central subject. In her essay for the African American intellectual journal *Freedomways*, she detailed the racial makeup of the Fort Hood Three, noted that Ho Chi Minh spent time in Harlem as a young man, and argued that the

[177] "Letter," *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 19.
[178] "Talk," *BDBU*, Box 5, Folder 12, 2, 5.

Vietnamese leader "resented the exploitation of Negroes in the United States."[179] She was even more explicit in her article for the short-lived, radical Chicago newspaper the *Black Liberator*. There she argued that the "racist-capitalist-white men" who control the United States were fighting "a colonialist war" against "a nation of colored people no longer exploitable by Western nations." She also went further in her praise for Ho Chi Minh naming him "one of the men whom Black people all over the world should admire and love."[180]

Considering that Barbara Deming and Diane Nash were both active in the African American Freedom Movement and spent a month together as part of their eleven-day trip to Hanoi, Deming's relative silence on the centrality of race in the Viet Nam War is surprising. That Marjorie Swann of the CNVA coordinated her speaking tour helps account for her focus on traditional concerns of pacifist activism such as the human cost of war and the need for organized campaigns of noncooperation. However, it was Deming herself who wrote about the link between the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement as it related to CNVA in her essay "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issues or One?" in 1962. Deming would soon return to that connection with her next contribution to the theories of nonviolence with her essay "On Revolution and Equilibrium."[181] Prior to the Hanoi trip she had begun to work on an idea for an essay about the radical potential for nonviolent social change on both racial and geopolitical levels. With her speaking tour ended, she began in earnest to address what she considered warranted criticisms of nonviolent actions, especially those made by activists in the movement for racial justice.

[179] Nash, *Freedomways*, 118, 119.
[180] Nash, *Black Liberator*, 2.
[181] Deming, "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issues or One?" in *Revolution & Equilibrium,* 102-115.

On Revolution and Equilibrium

Deming had been corresponding with Staughton Lynd, a co-editor at *Liberation*, concerning her worries about the future of the African American Freedom Movement. She had recently read Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in which he argued that violence was the only way to eliminate colonial power in the world, and that violence was a just response to the evil forces used to colonize a people. Deming told Lynd that she found Fanon's writing "beautiful" but was concerned about the rising popularity of Fanon's ideas within the African American Freedom Movement. She remarked that while Fanon was often quoted by those calling for an end to nonviolence in the struggle for racial equality, pacifists and sympathetic activists needed to read Fanon with the goal of redefining nonviolence.[182]

As she expressed it to Lynd, "Mustn't we manage in the pages of *Liberation* to reassert soon very forcefully that nonviolent action can be radical action" and to affirm that the "concessions" the movement had won in the past such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were still not enough? She noted that recent articles in *Liberation* from the previous month mistakenly portrayed nonviolence as a "necessarily conservative action."[183] For Deming, a rebuttal to this perception was needed. She initially encouraged Lynd to write the essay believing that he would be more "able to find the right words at this time" to respond to those urging the movement to embrace a violent revolution.[184] Eventually she decided to take on for herself the "responsibility to make

[182] Letters from Deming to Lynd on October 18 and 29, 1966, *BDSL*, Folder 377.
[183] Deming to Lynd, October 18, 1966, *BDSL*, Folder 377. She named two articles from the September 1966 issue, "Black Power, Capitalism and Vietnam" and "Black Power And The Myth of Black Racism."
[184] Deming to Lynd, October 18, 1966, *BDSL*, Folder 377.

that other way somehow more visible, more credible."[185] She believed that critics of nonviolence were misinformed if they believed that nonviolence had been tried and found to be lacking. On the contrary, Deming argued that experimentation with nonviolence had barely begun.

At a *Liberation* editorial meeting, Deming jotted down some notes in connection to a discussion about a proposed article assailing Black Power by Jim Peck, a Freedom Rider and longtime leader in the WRL. She reiterated a concern she had expressed to Lynd about the problematic connection that many activists had drawn between passivity and nonviolence and the need for that idea to be "dispelled" by proponents of nonviolence. She scrawled out phrases about the need to challenge Fanon's notion that one can "find manhood through using violence," asking herself, "But nonviolence could pursue black power, couldn't it?" In a related note, she agreed that nonviolent activists involved in the African American Freedom Movement "should welcome its becoming a revolutionary movement – but not its abandoning of nonviolence."[186] These personal musings illustrate the deliberativeness of Deming's thoughts. She was looking for a way to connect the shift away from nonviolence, the global rise of violent revolutionary movements, and the long-standing criticisms of nonviolence into a single essay that could address Fanon, Black Power, masculinity, and the need to reinvent nonviolence.

The rise of the Black Power Movement in the mid-1960s emphasized the role of masculinity and presented a challenge to advocates of nonviolence. As historian Marian

[185] Deming to Lynd, Oct 29, 1966, *BDSL*, Folder 377. See also "Desanctifying Authority" *Liberation*, November 1967, reprinted in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 188-93. She wrote of the Students for a Democratic Society protest at the Pentagon, the differing severity of sentencing based on how protestors pleaded, and the pros and cons of serving jail time.
[186] Notes titled "Call Dick and Dave," *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 17.

Mollin noted, Black Power was the driving force in the African American Freedom Movement by 1966, "effectively replacing the act of turning the other cheek with the image of the raised fist."[187] That year CORE and SNCC officially endorsed armed self-defense and voted to expel white members from their staffs.[188] In an atmosphere of hyper-masculinity and an open rejection of nonviolence as a strategy for social change, Deming tried to produce an essay that could address what she saw as a dilemma. She set out to challenge both those who were dismissive of nonviolence and those who were critical of the Black Power Movement. Deming used her essay as an attempt to bring together the critics on both sides of the issue. She called for a reformulation of nonviolence as a powerful and aggressive tool for social change and argued that Black Power should not be automatically equated with violence.

A month prior to its publication, Deming sent Lynd a draft of her article with a request for him to tell her "very bluntly about anything you find weak in it." Throughout her redrafting of the essay, she found herself comparing it to her chapter in *Prison Notes* from two years earlier where she had responded to various criticisms of nonviolence in the style of an open letter. She felt more confident about that attempt to explain the power of nonviolence than she did about the draft she had sent to Lynd. She told him that because her writing in *Prison Notes* arose out of personal experiences it was more engaging than her writing for the essay "On Revolution and Equilibrium" which was the result of "reading a lot of books and articles by men who questioned nonviolence, and

[187] Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 158.
[188] Carson, *In Struggle*, 223, 241. See also, August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 403, 413-14.

feeling that I had to try to answer."[189] Deming asked Lynd for a critical reading of her article because he had recently sent her an essay in which he commented on Fanon. His piece left her with the impression "that we have very similar thoughts about Fanon" and began the conversation which eventually led to Lynd's comments on the final draft of what would become her most referenced and widely-circulated essay.[190]

Lynd began by telling Deming that her essay was "beautiful and precise and sensitive and just the right beginning for the discussion *Liberation* has to sponsor." He also noted a few concerns and provided some suggestions. He took issue with Deming's assertion that fewer revolutionaries are killed in rebellions that remain nonviolent, stating that the National Liberation Front in Viet Nam had argued just the opposite. While agreeing that "a successful nonviolent revolution has fewer casualties than a violent revolution," he wondered if there would be even less casualties if revolutionaries "retained violence as an option." Lynd challenged Deming to further develop her concept of reinventing nonviolence, provocatively arguing that "we have to be very careful to disidentify nonviolence from the appeal-to-the-Northern-TV-audience practices of Dr. King." This echoed Deming's concerns about the over simplification of

[189] Deming to Lynd, January 2, 1968, *BDSL*, Folder 781. In this letter Deming lists the names of Carl Olgesby, Stokely Carmichael, the journalist Andrew Kopkind, and Floyd McKissick as the "particular men" to whom she was trying to respond. She named all of them specifically in "On Revolution and Equilibrium."

[190] Deming to Lynd, October 29, 1966, *BDSL*, Folder 377. For republications of "On Revolution and Equilibrium" see "Nonviolence: The Current Challenges" in *Gandhi Marg 48*, The Journal of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, Volume 12 1968, 362-384, James Robert Ross, *The War Within: Violence or Nonviolence in the Black Revolution* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1971), Lynd and Lynd, *Nonviolence in America* (Revised Edition, 1995), Robert L. Holmes, *Nonviolence in Theory and Practice* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990), and Elizabeth Betita Martinez, ed., *We Have Not Been Moved: Resisting Racism and Militarism In 21st Century America* (Oakland, California, PM Press, 2012). The chapter devoted to Barbara Deming in Chernus, *American Nonviolence* is largely based on "On Revolution and Equilibrium", see 182-191. For personal reactions to her essay see *BDSL*, Oversize Folder (636f+) for a poster from the early 1980s full of comments to the cancer-stricken Deming, a number of which specifically name "On Revolution and Equilibrium." For letters to Deming about women first coming across the essay while in jail, see *BDSL*, Folder 893 and Folder 904.

nonviolence, or what she referred to in the essay as the problem of using "shorthand" to explain what nonviolence is and how it works. Lynd agreed that "we must must must stop defining nonviolence as absence of violence" because it is "something more than not being violent." He also encouraged Deming to more clearly define her "radical vision" of nonviolence to include nonviolent economic practices, decision-making, and education.[191] At the end of his letter Lynd repeated his praise for Deming's essay and opened the way for the publication of "On Revolution and Equilibrium" in the February 1968 issue of *Liberation*.

Illustrative of the racial and gender context which informed the U.S. reception of Barbara Deming's "On Revolution and Equilibrium" and its literary foil, Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, was the long-running debate about armed self-defensive within the African American Freedom Movement.[192] A prime example comes from the pages of *Liberation* itself in the autumn issues of 1959. In September the editors ran a four page essay by Robert F. Williams, an advocate of organized armed self-defense and the head of the local NAACP in Monroe, North Carolina. In October they ran a two page response by Martin Luther King, Jr. who argued for sustained nonviolence as the best means for social change. Williams wrote of African Americans being "infected by turn-the-other-cheekism" which had resulted in "cringing, begging Negro ministers" as leaders who do not comprehend the need or proven success of "meeting violence with

[191] Lynd to Deming, January 13, 1968, *BDSL*, Folder 781.
[192] For various scholars discussion of this see, Joseph, *The Black Power Movement*, particularly Kimberly Springer, "Black Feminists Respond to Black Power Masculinism" 105-18. See also Meier and Rudwick, *CORE*, especially "A House Divided," 374-408 and Carson, *In Struggle*, especially "Internal Conflicts," 229-43.

violence."[193] King responded that, like Gandhi, he "sanctioned…self-defense, even involving weapons and bloodshed," but that "organized violence" used "deliberately and consciously" as a means to achieve racial justice in the United States would fail.[194] But for Williams, the advocacy of nonviolence reinforced the image of African American men as "the 'sissy race' of all mankind."[195]

This perennial philosophical divide within the movement would manifest itself seven years later with the monumental change of leadership within SNCC in 1966. It was then that John Lewis, a staunch supporter of nonviolence, was replaced by Stokely Carmichael who soon forged institutional links with the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense which had formed in 1967.[196] In April of that same year, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "Beyond Vietnam" speech from the Riverside church in New York City where he denounced the Viet Nam War and called the United States government "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today." He also stated that "These are revolutionary times," when "The shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up like never before," and that "We in the West must support these revolutions."[197] Historian Jeremy Suri has called this time period "the global disruption of 1968" citing

[193] Robert F. Williams, "Can Negroes Afford to Be Pacifists?" *Liberation*, September 1959, 4-7. See also, Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie* and "Robert F. Williams, 'Black Power,' and the Roots of the African American Freedom Struggle," *The Journal of American History 85*, no. 2 (September 1998): 540-570. For another discussion of Black Power and nonviolent protest see Danielson, "The Two-Ness of the Movement". For discussion of masculinity, manhood, and issues of armed self-defense as it relates to nonviolence see Hill, *The Deacons for Defense* and Wendt, "Violence, Non-Violence and Black Manhood in the Civil Rights Era".
[194] Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Social Organization of Nonviolence," *Liberation*, October 1959, 5-6.
[195] Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 141. See also, Chapter Six "The Sissy Race of All Mankind," 137-188.
[196] Carson, *In Struggle*, 199-201. Carmichael became an aide to the Guinean Prime Minister Ahmed Sékou Touré, and a student of the exiled Ghanaian president, Kwame Nkrumah, changing his name to Kwame Toure in 1978.
[197] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Beyond Vietnam: An Address Sponsored by the Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam* (Palo Alto, California: Altoan Press, 1967).

massive protests in Paris, Prague, West Berlin, and Wuhan, China.[198] The turn from the nonviolent direct action of SNCC, the embrace of impoverished revolutionaries by King, and the global revolt against colonialism provided a ripe context for the influence of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in the United States.

Fanon's argument for the colonized of the world to rise up against their oppressors in violent revolution was originally published in 1961 in response to the Algerian revolution. His book was read worldwide throughout the 1960s, and English translations were published in 1963 and 1965. By 1967, as historian Clayborne Carson describes in his classic monograph *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, the leadership council of SNCC was actively reading and discussing the implications of *The Wretched of the Earth*. As one staff member remarked "people who do not read Camus and Fanon learn about them through conversation with those that have read."[199] That same year, in a global speaking tour that included Algeria, Ghana, Guinea, Tanzania and a personal visit with Ho Chi Minh in North Viet Nam, Stokely Carmichael proclaimed that the "fight 'to save the humanity of the world' would bring forth 'new speakers' from the Third World. 'They will be Che, they will be Mao, they will be Fanon.'"[200] While meeting with Fidel Castro in Havana on July 25, 1967 as tanks rolled through Detroit, Michigan in a violent state response to days of rioting by African

[198] Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge: Massachusetts, 2003), 164-212.
[199] Carson, *In Struggle*, 192, 198, 235.
[200] Ibid., 273. For a discussion of women at SNCC during this time see "Black Power-Catalyst for Feminism" in Evans, *Personal Politics*, 83-101.

Americans, Carmichael told Cuban reporters, "We are preparing groups of urban guerillas for our defense in the cities."[201]

In the midst of this global upheaval, *Liberation* magazine, in a nod to the exchange between Robert F. Williams and Martin Luther King, Jr., devoted its February 1968 issue to debate violent versus nonviolent revolution. Arguing for armed revolution was Regis Debray, a French philosopher and journalist who taught in Havana in the early 1960s, and who earlier that year published a guide to guerrilla warfare titled *Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America*. His book was reviewed as "icily brilliant," "a primer for Marxist insurrection in Latin America," and "most threatening to the men and governments who will fight against such insurrections."[202] Debray was captured by the Bolivian government in April of 1967 after spending a month in the mountains with Ernesto "Che" Guevara who was then leading an indigenous revolt against the Bolivian government. Guevara would be captured and executed only months later on October 9th and Debray would be sentenced to thirty years in prison that November. According to Debray, each person seeking social change "has to decide which side he is on—on the side of military violence or guerrilla violence, on the side of violence that represses or violence that liberates." He saw the choice as being between "reactionary" or "revolutionary" violence; nonviolence was not an option. Throughout his testimony Debray argued that while his book and his ethics

[201] Carson, *In Struggle*, 274.

[202] Quotes are from *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Paris), *Newsweek*, the *New York Times* respectively. They can be found on the inside cover of Debray's *Revolution In the Revolution?: Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America* (Grove Press, New York, New York, 1967).

supported a violent overthrow of countries controlled by "Yankee imperialism," he "regretfully" never took up arms himself in Bolivia.[203]

Where Debray's book outlined the specifics of staging armed revolutions by the oppressed peoples of the world, Deming's essay "On Revolution and Equilibrium" argued that the violence supported by Debray and Fanon was anything but revolutionary and was in fact quite likely to produce societies similar to the ones they sought to replace. Deming's two visits to Viet Nam helped shape her understanding of how a violent revolution could look and feel. After seeing the war up close in Viet Nam, reading about Che Guevara's guerrilla actions in Bolivia, and listening to Stokely Carmichael's support of urban rioting in the United States, Deming decided to take upon her shoulders the difficult task of defending the revolutionary potential of nonviolent social change during those tumultuous times.

While Deming addressed racial justice as it related to nonviolence, she did not address issues of gender justice. Instead, she spoke directly to the issues of manhood and masculinity, making the case that nonviolence was a manly endeavor. As Mollin argues, the nonviolent movement was a "highly gendered phenomenon" that accentuated "a rough and rugged style of heroic manhood" that in an "ironic historical twist" was "profoundly shaped by the values of militarism itself" as these men attempted to "defend and define their masculinity" while rejecting violence.[204] Deming's essay "On Revolution and Equilibrium" reflected the masculine, heteronormative culture of the

[203] Regis Debray, "Declaration at his court martial in Camiri, Bolivia, November 1967," *Liberation* Volume XII Number 11, (February 1968), 22-37, 36, 24. For related writings by and about Regis Debray from this time see, Regis Debray, *Strategy for Revolution* (Monthly Review Press, New York, New York, 1970). For an historical treatment of Debray see Donald Reid, "Regis Debray's Quest: From France to Bolivia and Back," *History of European Ideas 14*, no. 6 (November 1992): 830-862.
[204] Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 3.

nonviolent movement, just as the debate about self-defense in African American Freedom Movement revolved around the masculinist and heterosexist issues of manhood evident in Robert F. Williams and Stokely Carmichael's critiques of nonviolence.

Mirroring *Liberation's* decision to pair her essay with Debray's defense of guerrilla war, Deming chose to address Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* directly. The first words of her essay were actually Fanon's. In a section of his book titled "Colonial War and Mental Disorders" Fanon argued that while a violent revolution is needed to bring forth a more just society, it is often difficult for revolutionaries to "escape becoming dizzy" when the revolutions end. Fanon recounted the experience of an Algerian guerrilla who after befriending a Frenchman at the end of the war began to contemplate the fact that he likely killed men very much like his new found friend. The soldier commented that he felt "what might be called an attack of vertigo" as he tried to regain his balance in this new world, echoing a common feeling of soldiers re-entering a peace-time existence.[205]

In her essay, Deming argued that equilibrium could best be maintained "if, as revolutionaries, we will wage battle without violence."[206] Like Gandhi's use of the term "nonviolent soldier" and King's conception of nonviolence as "the most powerful weapon that oppressed people can use," Deming embraced the martial language of battle in her defense of pacifism.[207] She also demonstrated that in Fanon and Debray's support

[205] Deming, "On Revolution and Equilibrium," *Liberation 12*, no. 11 (February 1968), 10-21, 10. Hereafter cited as "Equilibrium". See also Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York, New York: Grove Press, 1963).
[206] Deming, "Equilibrium," 10.
[207] Martial language is especially common in the writings of Gandhi. For an example of Gandhi's use of "soldier" and "army of peace" see "Preparing For The March" in Homer Jack, ed., *The Gandhi Reader: A Sourcebook of His Life and Writings* (New York, New York: Grove Press, 1956), 85-88. For an example of

of violence there were elements that could be seen as supporting nonviolent revolution. She cited Fanon's statement that "violence alone" when it is "nothing but a fancy-dress parade" can result in "mere rebellion" rather than an actual revolution.[208] She also highlighted an inadvertent argument for nonviolence in Debray's statement that violent revolutionaries "cannot avoid this contradiction, escape from this pain" caused by "the tragedy…that we do not kill objects, numbers, abstract or interchangeable instruments, but precisely, on both sides, irreplaceable individuals, essentially innocent, unique for those who have loved, bred, esteemed them."[209] Likewise, Deming attempted to turn Fanon's words toward nonviolence whenever possible. To do this, she challenged readers to substitute the phrase "radical and uncompromising action" each time Fanon used the word violence, concluding "that the action he calls for could just as well be nonviolent action."[210]

In a section of her essay subtitled "The Spirit of Invention," she noted that Fanon had argued that if the new societies after the revolution are going to be different from Europe "then we must invent and we must make discoveries." Deming twice referred to the last chapter of *Wretched of the Earth* which begins: "Come then, comrades; it would be as well to decide at once to change our ways." Citing his call "that we have better things to do than to follow that same Europe" which continues to "murder men

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King's use of "weapon" imagery see his "Our Struggle" essay where he announced that "We have discovered a new and powerful weapon—nonviolent resistance," in *Liberation 1*, (April 1956): 3-6.

[208] Deming, "Equilibrium," 11.

[209] Deming, "New Men, New Women: Some Notes on Nonviolence," *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 6. This essay was written in May of 1971 "at the request of the editors" of *WIN* and titled "Pacifism." However, the quote from Regis Debray was included on the front cover of the February 1968 issue of *Liberation* but not in the text of her article.

[210] Deming, "Equilibrium," 11. Deming initially thought of substitutions "like 'self-assertion', 'bold action', 'radical and persistent non-violent direct action'" before settling on "radical and uncompromising action." See Deming to Lynd, October 18, 1966, *BDSL*, Folder 377.

everywhere they find them" and has "set her face against all solicitude and all tenderness," Deming argued that Fanon was searching "for a way that departs from violence" and that nonviolent revolution or "radical and uncompromising action" was consistent with Fanon's message. She argued that Fanon had tried to "warn us again and again against murder." Deming found evidence of that warning in his references to European history as "an avalanche of murders," and his call for revolutionaries to "'vomit up' the values of Europe." She finally asked, "What really but radical nonviolence is he here straining to be able to imagine?"[211]

It is at this point in the essay, in recognition of those turning toward Fanon and away from nonviolence, that she strived to reinvent the term so that it could be legible to revolutionaries. Deming noted that advocates of nonviolence who try to explain and define nonviolence "have yet to find for ourselves an adequate vocabulary" and tend "to speak too easily about love and truth…in a kind of shorthand" that is unreadable to outsiders.[212] She warned the essay's readers that "Those of us who believe in nonviolent action should listen closely to the words of those who mock it."[213] Here she quoted Stokely Carmichael at length about his belief that "this country does not function by morality, love and nonviolence, but by power." Deming conceded, "that advocates of nonviolence themselves write in terms that seem to corroborate the picture Carmichael paints."[214] She admitted that many of the nonviolent actions taken in the past had been "essentially acts of petition; and that the necessity of self-assertion was felt very deeply"

[211] Deming, "Equilibrium," 12. For another argument for radical nonviolence and the need for reinvention see David Dellinger, "The Future of Nonviolence" in *Nonviolence in America*, 520-30.
[212] Deming, "Equilibrium," 14. Under the subtitle, "The Choice is Wider."
[213] Ibid.,, 20. Under the subtitle, "How Many Will Answer?"
[214] Ibid., 13-14. Under both the subtitle, "Power and Nonviolence."

in the African American community. Deming added that "the gestures of the slave had clearly once and for all to be put from them by black people" instead of continuing to repeat "those ancient gestures of submission."[215]

In her attempt to convince skeptics that nonviolence has a forceful nature, she wove the notion of "nonviolent battle" through the final pages of her essay.[216] She linked battle to notions of masculinity, painting nonviolence as a way of "standing up to others like men." In the final pages she asked: "What is it to assert one's manhood—one's human rights?"[217] To answer this question she used Fanon's words again, this time from *Black Skin, White Masks.* She proposed that "a very accurate description of nonviolent struggle" is Fanon's own argument that "I have one right alone: that of demanding human behavior from the other." She argued that bold nonviolence is consistent with Fanon's charge "to hold oneself, like a sliver, to the heart of the world, to interrupt if necessary the rhythm of the world, to upset if necessary, the chain of command, but…to stand up to the world."[218] She called on critics to recognize that nonviolent revolutionaries in fact "expect to be hurt" because risking one's personal safety is "the nature of battle," nonviolent or otherwise. To distinguish her concept of nonviolence from the caricature critics put forth she asserted that "nonviolent action had better be taken boldly or one need hardly bother to take it at all."[219]

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[215] Deming, "Equilibrium", 20. Under the subtitle, "How Many Will Answer?"
[216] Deming, "On Revolution and Equilibrium," *Deming Reader*, 180, 184, 185.
[217] Ibid., 185.
[218] Ibid., 185-6.
[219] Ibid., 186.

In "On Revolution and Equilibrium," Barbara Deming questioned whether proponents of nonviolence put forth "a sufficiently radical vision."[220] Rather than stressing compassion and Biblical calls to "turn the other cheek," Deming emphasized "power," "obstruction," "aggression," and "anger" working in concert with "restraint," "respect," "poise," and "balance." The best explanation of this can be found in her essay's oft-quoted "two hands" metaphor about nonviolence. As Deming put it, "They have as it were two hands upon him—the one calming him, making him ask questions, as the other makes him move."[221] She insisted that power is consistent with nonviolence, arguing against the false dichotomy between "the humble appeal to conscience on the one hand, the resort to power on the other."[222] She explained that "To resort to power one need not be violent, and to speak to conscience one need not be meek. The most effective action both resorts to power and engages conscience."[223]

Deming's concept of nonviolence accepted the role of forcefulness in its practitioners. Her philosophy allowed for the exertion of "so very much force in this way that many people will always be quick to call noncooperators violent." She explained that nonviolence can indeed apply "physical force" such as during sit-ins and other demonstrations that will "force others to cope somehow with all these bodies," adding that the difference between violent and nonviolent force is "simply that those committed to a nonviolent discipline refuse to injure the antagonist." Deming suggested that those encountering nonviolent forces "feel that injury has been done them" because they are

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[220] Deming, "Equilibrium," 12. Under the subtitle, "Psychological Forces."
[221] Ibid., 15. This metaphor is similar to Richard Gregg's concept of "moral jiu jitsu." See Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*. See also Kosek, "Richard Gregg, Mohandas Gandhi, and the Strategy of Nonviolence" and *Acts of Conscience*.
[222] Deming, "Equilibrium," 13. Under the subtitle, "Power and Nonviolence."
[223] Ibid., 14. Under the subtitle, "The Choice Is Wider."

losing their control over the situation, not because the actions themselves are violent.[224] In her concluding paragraph, she returned to the idea of equilibrium, arguing that nonviolence harmonizes aggression and compassion. She believed that there was a "life-saving balance" in nonviolent actions because of the "equilibrium between self-assertion and respect for others." She encouraged revolutionaries, especially those persuaded by Fanon, to "discover within ourselves this poise" so that both "assertion" and "restraint" could be combined into a single powerful force.[225]

As Staughton Lynd noted in his letter to Barbara Deming a month before the essay's publication, he envisioned her piece as "just the right beginning for the discussion *Liberation* has to sponsor."[226] While a full conversation never appeared in the pages of *Liberation*, the magazine did publish a widely circulated pamphlet that carried the full text of both Regis Debray and Barbara Deming.[227] They also published a response from

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[224] Deming, "Equilibrium," 14-15. Under the subtitle, "Stopping Short."

[225] Deming, "On Revolution and Equilibrium," *Deming Reader*, 188. You can see the development of these ideas in the notes she took two years earlier for a panel she was part of with Marj Swann and Wally Nelson on Black Power at Brandies University on October 22, 1966. She referred to and critiqued Franz Fanon, questioned the movement's "abandonment of nonviolence," related the ease of recruitment for violent resistance to the concept of "feel[ing] like a man this way." She attempted to define nonviolence and responded to "clichés of misconceptions" that nonviolence is "passive" and "naïve." She also referred to the "dual motion" inherent in nonviolence. "Panel on Black Power," *BDSL*, Folder 1364. In 1969 *The New Left* published Deming's "Nonviolence and Radical Social Change" which was a condensed version of "On Revolution and Equilibrium." Deming republished that version in her 1971 book *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 222-25.

[226] Lynd to Deming, January 13, 1968, *BDSL*, Folder 781. See also Deming's article "Sanctuary" from *Liberation* July-August 1968 and reprinted in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 226-30. The article was about the New England Resistance at Boston's Arlington Street Church related to draft card burning. She explained how after being beaten by police the group decided to reevaluate nonviolence as a tactic. Deming argued that "nonviolence is not a magic spell" that prevents its adherents from getting hurt, and that "the classic testing point" occurs when violence is used against nonviolent protests. She encouraged them to "interpose their bodies" between the police and the men seeking sanctuary within the church, arguing that their protest would become "far more meaningful" and reminding them that "one doesn't stop a great machine without anyone getting hurt."

[227] For the pamphlet see, CNVA Records, *SCPC*, Box 33 "Series VIII. Branches, NECNVA", Folder "Printed Releases (1969-1973)". See also CNVA Records, *SCPC*, Box 34 "Committee For Nonviolent Action Series VIII. Branches: NECNVA", Folder "David Brown Correspondence/Biography". Copies of the *Liberation* pamphlet are included here along with a newspaper article featuring a nonviolence course taught by

SDS president Carl Oglesby, one of the authors Deming specifically named in the essay. In the July-August 1968 issue, Oglesby assailed Deming for what he saw as her condemnation of revolutionaries who embraced violence. As he put it, "The black people and the Vietnamese are on the spot…and anyone who does not live out with them, in their historical mode, that encompassing emergency, can do much more than accept their wisdom on this matter." Oglesby further argued that "The least white radicals can do is contribute a bit of silence to this noisiness" which he said Stokely Carmichael, Rap Brown, and other black radicals have to live with on a daily basis. He put it more bluntly with his assertion that "Deming would be better advised, perhaps, to make her case for nonviolence elsewhere." Turning inward, he explained that his "fundamental obligation is to support what they choose in pursuit of their own liberation," and while he can "understand, admire and relate" to the choice of nonviolence, the choice of violence "will not bewilder or demoralize" him. Turning back to Deming, he condemned "that delicately melancholy poise which she brings to her argument…a disappointment that can hardly fail to become, in spite of itself, an accusation." It was that accusation which Oglesby thought most dangerous because it "immediately leaps rivers of compassion and

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David Brown where the pamphlet was being used. Also, of note are the editorial comments that originally prefaced the February 1968 issue: The February 1968 *Liberation* cover carries Che Guevara's image with a quote from Regis Debray. It also included a statement from the managing editor that the issue was focused on two essays, one by Deming, "a beautiful, strong, reasoned argument for nonviolent revolution," and the other by Debray "an equally strong defense of a violent venture in revolution." Debray was characterized as "youthful" and is defended as having "a high sense of tragedy—the tragedy of failing to communicate, of moral corruption, of senseless dehumanization and death" with "an exemplary concern for truth." Also in the forward, the editor noted that Deming saw Fanon as "searching a different path from the violence that he advocated" due to Fanon's aim to "go forward all the time, night and day, in the company of Man, in the company of all men." *Liberation* projected that same desire on Debray with the hope that Deming's words "may reach him behind the walls of Camiri" where he was imprisoned by the Bolivian government for his support of Guevara.

mountains of loyalty" to alienate people "whom we must on no grounds in the slightest particular betray. Above all, not now." [228]

Deming shared many of Oglesby's concerns as she began writing "On Revolution and Equilibrium." In their correspondence during the early drafts of the essay, Lynd warned her "when our economic exploitation and military self-interest drive others to rebel, even those of us who are pacifists should think twice before lecturing them on nonviolence." Deming responded that she wanted to avoid anything resembling a lecture, and conceded that while "There is a sense in which we have no right to make suggestions to Cubans or to Vietnamese at all. There is another sense–isn't there?–in which 'the world is our country' and differences of nationality, race, whatever, fall away–and we have all to talk together–*as best we can*…" In terms of the African American Freedom Movement, Deming was even more apprehensive. She told Lynd, "I hesitate and hesitate to write something about their turn from nonviolence, fearful of seeming to judge in a sense that I do not, fearful of seeming to think that I'm in a position to 'lecture'…And yet–I can't feel that it's right simply to be silent, either."[229]

Barbara Deming's balancing act of trying to make it clear that she was not speaking from a racist position, and not writing out of a sense of righteousness, while also avoiding self-censorship, yielded an essay that was so provocative that three years later Grossman Publishers chose to title her book of collected writings *Revolution &*

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[228] Carl Oglesby, "Revolution: Violence or Nonviolence—A Reply to Barbara Deming" *Liberation 13*, no. 3 (July-August 1968): 36-37.

[229] Deming to Lynd, October 29, 1966, *BDSL*, Folder 377. Emphasis in the original. Oglesby also wanted to demonstrate the complexity of his position which he felt Deming has simplified. He stated at the end of his rebuttal in *Liberation* that "I do not hang pictures of Che on my walls. It is sad that there must be Ches. Sadly, then, I try to find a way in which I can lend myself to Che's purposes, choosing therefore among the world's inexhaustible supply of traps the one in which I find the finest people and the closest approach (a distant one) to be the best.", see Oglesby, "A Reply to Barbara Deming," 36-37.

Equilibrium. When providing comments about the book, Lynd remarked that Deming's essay came a time when many in the African American Freedom Movement and the anti-war movement were questioning the validity of nonviolent direct action. He noted that Deming "kept her head during the disintegration of 'the Movement' in the late 1960s, when all about her were losing theirs and blaming it on persons like herself – and myself." Of the title essay he noted, "even those who differ with her on the use of violence will depart from what she has to say about humanness at their peril."[230] For Deming, her essay was just the beginning of her campaign to resuscitate nonviolence. As she told Lynd later that year, "unless a great effort is made to enlarge the art of nonviolent struggle, to keep on inventing it, the very survival of the human race (in fact of all life on earth) is questionable."[231]

Resurrecting Nonviolence through Property Destruction

As Deming conducted her experiments with nonviolence, she continually sought to challenge its boundaries. The process of writing "On Revolution and Equilibrium" helped her to formulate her "radical vision" of what nonviolence could look like, and the actions she took in the next few years provided ample opportunities to put it into practice. She applied nonviolent direct action toward the cause of economic justice as part of the SCLC's Poor People's Campaign, and embraced the controversial destruction of government property as the Catholic Worker Movement destroyed U.S. military draft files as a protest against the war in Viet Nam. By the end of the 1960s, Deming had

[230] "Previews and Reviews of Revolution and Equilibrium – 1971 1972," *BDSL*, Folder 1159. Lynd included an additional comment about the title essay that "if heeded, it might have saved us all three years in the wilderness."
[231] Deming to Lynd, September 27, 1968, *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 17.

become a sought after speaker on the practice of nonviolence, and she was ready to lend her voice to those who wanted to test its conventional boundaries.

Her thoughts on how to reinvigorate nonviolence can be seen in her response to the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., who was assassinated on April 4, 1968, just two months after the publication of "On Revolution and Equilibrium." One week after his death, Deming submitted a letter to the *New York Times* which was never published. She began her response by pointing out the contradiction that one of the world's greatest proponents of nonviolence, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was being honored by "the country that has been bombing without mercy the small nation of Vietnam." Throughout the letter she returned to the war in Viet Nam, noting that King himself saw the connections between that war and "the war we are not waging against poverty and racism." She reminded her potential readers that Coretta Scott King had said that her husband died "for the poor of this country and the peasants of Vietnam." In Deming's motif of asking audiences to self-reflect, she called on the United States to "look honestly" at the possibility that the "primary reason" the United States had chosen to honor Dr. King was because "white people saw in him a hope that we could be spared the fire." Returning to a theme from "On Revolution and Equilibrium," she warned of a future where "this country will continue to honor Dr. King for trying to teach black men a way of struggle that respects white lives instead of honoring him for trying to teach each of us a way that respects all men's lives." Deming repeated her concern that "we run the

risk literally of destroying ourselves" if humankind rejects nonviolence as a way to bring about social change.[232]

Deming had embraced King's belief in the interconnectedness of racism, poverty, and militarism, and decided to live for three weeks at Resurrection City, the community of tents and shacks set up in Washington, D.C. as part of King's final mass movement, the Poor Peoples' Campaign. To highlight the links between racism and class, King and the SCLC had spent the year organizing a mass procession of the country's poor to arrive in nation's capital in May. Deming decided to join an impromptu walking group that gathered at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee where Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed during his support of the city's striking sanitation workers. Then she began the long walk to Washington, D.C. with poverty-stricken travelers spending nights in loud, crowded auditoriums. Despite the great potential embodied by bringing together the impoverished people subsisting in Appalachia, on Native American reservations, in Mexican-American barrios, and other racial and ethnic ghettos of the United States, the Poor Peoples' Campaign was unable to bring about substantial economic changes.[233]

An opportunity, in Deming words, "to stage a demonstration that would not have been quickly forgotten," was missed when the SCLC leadership decided to cooperate with the government's decision to dismantle Resurrection City. In the conclusion of her *Liberation* article "Mud City" about her experience, she argued that the protest actions taken during those three weeks were "less bold than many had hoped they would be." She asserted that they "might have been able to bring about the confrontation with the

[232] Letter to *The New York Times*, April 11, 1968, *BDBU*, Box 4, Folder 3.
[233] Gordon Mantler, *Power to the Poor: Black-Brown Coalition and the Fight for Economic Justice, 1960-1974* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

government" if they would have chosen to resist the closure of the city. In her perception, a radical act of nonviolent resistance was needed at that moment. It was her contention that the original steering committee which was made up of a broad cross-section of the encampment may have been "in favor of making a stand there," but the official leadership under the control of Reverend Ralph Abernathy decided to negotiate for a "quiet and uneventful" eviction. She found their acquiescence "belittling."[234] However, Deming's desire to "enlarge the art of nonviolent struggle" by encouraging more radical nonviolent actions was about to be realized in the coming months with a new tactic in the opposition to the U.S war in Viet Nam.

Embarking on the quest to further challenge conventional notions of nonviolence, Deming gave a series of talks in connection with the destruction of government documents at draft board offices around the United States. The movement was largely organized by Daniel and Phil Berrigan of the Catholic Worker Movement which carried out the initial raids in Baltimore in October of 1967 and Catonsville, Maryland in May of 1968. While the exact number of draft board raids is unknown, estimates range from 53 to 250 with at least 230 activists involved between the years 1967 and 1972.[235] Each raid involved the destruction of Selective Service files, some with blood or "homemade

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[234] Deming, "Mud City" in *Deming Reader*, 189-97, 195-97.

[235] McNeal, *Harder Than War*, 149. See also Marian Mollin, "Communities of Resistance: Women and the Catholic Left of the Late 1960s," *The Oral History Review 31*, no. 2 (Summer-Autumn 2004): 29-51, 37. In addition to a strong gender analysis of these raids, Mollin argues that Deming's book *Revolution & Equilibrium* provides "The clearest evidence of the impact of the Catonsville raid on the larger antiwar and pacifist movement," 37, n.12. See also, Charles A. Meconis, *With Clumsy Grace: The American Catholic Left 1961-1975* (New York, New York, The Seabury Press, 1979) and the documentary film *Hit and Stay: A History of Faith and Resistance* by Joe Tropea and Skizz Cyzyk (It premiered at the Chicago Underground Film Festival on March 9, 2013.) For more information on the Catonsville Nine see, the documentary website hosted by the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. For more on the Milwaukee Fourteen see Francine du Plessix Gray's "The Ultra Resistance" in Murray Kempton, *Trials of the Resistance* (New York, New York: The New York Review, 1970).

napalm" others by paint or fire. Deming began speaking in support of those actions that fall after fourteen men burned draft files they had taken from a Selective Service office while waiting to be arrested in downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin in September of 1968. As Jim Harney of the Milwaukee Fourteen explained it, these actions were meant "to help in toppling the walls of fear which imprison the dreams of mankind."[236] When the Catonsville Nine – Milwaukee Fourteen Defense Committee published an eighty-page booklet in support of their actions in 1969, the longest essay they included was Deming's "On Revolution and Equilibrium." According to the introduction, these nationally prominent activists saw her essay as "a classic explanation of the power we see in nonviolent, radical actions."[237] Her influence was not limited to the dissemination of her written words, but included fundraising, personal visits, and speaking engagements on their behalf. Deming concluded her book *Revolution & Equilibrium* with two of these talks, "Order and Disorder" which she delivered during the trial of the Catonsville Nine, and the other titled "On the Necessity to Liberate Minds" given in Palo Alto, California in the summer of 1970. In both of these speeches, she argued that an expansive definition of civil disobedience which includes actions such as selective property destruction was needed if activists wanted to resurrect nonviolence.

[236] Jim Harney's Letter can be found in the Milwaukee 14 and Milwaukee 14 Defense Fund Records, *SCPC*, a single folder in the CDGA Collective Box. The letter and more materials on the Milwaukee Fourteen can also be found in *BDBU*, Box 6, Folder 15. In another moving passage Harney wrote, ""the narrow and deadly interests of war lords and board chairmen have taken precedence over the needs of the hungry and the young. A simple and uncompromising refusal to accept things as they are, proclaiming with our flesh and futures that this is not the best of all possible worlds—this is the immediate task of men mobilized for life."

[237] Catonsville Nine – Milwaukee Fourteen Defense Committee, *Delivered Into Resistance* (The Advocate Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1969), v. In addition to Deming's essay, this booklet included writings by James Forest of the Milwaukee Fourteen, Staughton Lynd, attorney William Kunstler, and Richard Shaull a professor of Ecumenics who co-authored *Containment and Change* with Carl Oglesby.

Her "Order and Disorder" speech from October of 1968 echoed a refrain from her speaking tour about her visit to North Viet Nam nearly two years earlier in December of 1966. In those talks she had recounted the disbelief she faced when audiences first heard that the United States' military was bombing civilian targets in Hanoi. She explicitly connected those feelings of shock and awe with the reactions she was seeing in peoples' faces as they learned of the draft board raids occurring across in the country. She called on audiences to recognize the "madness" of the "murderous authority" that was successfully masquerading as order in the United States. She told them that what many people accepted as order was actually disorder, "and nobody should be in awe of it, nobody should give it obedience."[238] She also connected her visceral experiences of walking through bombed villages in Hanoi to walking through Resurrection City after it was bulldozed. She recalled in both situations "scraps of clothing sticking up from the mud, and scraps of smashed belongings." She related the experience of an elder woman seeing the remains of Resurrection City and how "a terrible cry bust out of her—of disbelief and desolation." In her continual strivings to maintain equilibrium, she counseled those crowds that while nonviolent activists needed "to be more and more bold" in their actions they also needed to remember "to be gentle, too."[239] Yet another incarnation of the power of both hands working in concert with each other—one soothing, one aggressive.

Liberation published an article she wrote about the Catonsville trial itself under the title "Interfering with the Smooth Functioning of the Warfare State" in December of 1968. In the conclusion of that piece Deming acknowledged the controversial nature of

[238] Deming, "Order and Disorder," *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 256-62, 256, 259, 260
[239] Ibid., 260-61.

including property destruction within philosophies of nonviolence. She recalled hearing the draft board raids "discussed at length in the pacifist movement" with a strangely "hypnotic" focus on the question of destroying property. She likened the stance of those against the draft board actions to the critics of Martin Luther King, Jr. who were fond of calling "civil disobedience of any sort a dangerous precedent encouraging others to disobey laws at random." However, these pacifists were quite aware of his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" where King had argued that "one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws." He defined an unjust law as one that was "out of harmony with the moral law" or "degrades human personality." As King envisioned it, "All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality."[240] Similarly, Deming argued that the U.S. government's draft files were "a very special kind" of property that "clearly diminishes other people." She compared those Selective Service records to "the papers of ownership that once gave slave holders powers over men." In the end, she believed that "the Movement has much to learn" from "the carefully executed whole action" which "formidably" raised property destruction beyond simple sabotage to a symbolic form of "communicating as few acts of protest have."[241]

Deming took a more didactic approach in her 1970 speech "On the Necessity to Liberate Minds." She began by telling the story of a woman involved in a Washington, D.C. raid of the offices of napalm manufacturer, DOW Chemical. While the activists were pouring blood on company files standing amongst the shards of a shattered glass

[240] King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" can be found in Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York, New York, Signet, 1964).
[241] Deming, "Interfering with the Smooth Functioning of the Warfare State" in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, 242-55, 252-53. In both this essay and "On the Necessity to Liberate Minds," Deming argued that there were pros and cons to allowing oneself to be arrested after taking actions such as these.

wall, a bystander looked in and asked if anything was wrong. The activists responded, "'No, everything's all right' and he went away, apparently reassured that everything *was* all right." Deming used this story to help audiences understand her contention that "it's 'all right' to attack the death machine—that it is necessary". Like in her earlier Viet Nam War and recent draft board raid speeches, she warned audiences that in an "insanely deranged" society where "most Americans are in deep awe of things-as-they-are" these nonviolent actions aimed at "halting the machinery of death" would be labeled as dangerous, destructive, and demented.[242] Deming believed that pushing the boundaries of nonviolence to include the destruction of property could bring about the "mental shock" needed to wake the masses from their routine obedience.

Still, she was careful to explain what kinds of property could be destroyed and the manner in which it should be done. Deming labeled for destruction only property "that is by its nature deathly or exploitative, and unambiguously so." She expressed deep concerns that the urgency of stopping the war combined with sanctioned property destruction could lead to a belief that the more destructive they become the more effective their protest will be. Because her goal was to free the minds of potential supporters, she worried that these "more aggressive acts" would scare off their would-be allies. Therefore, she argued that when taking actions that involve destruction of property it was extremely important to purposefully convey respect for all people during the actual act. With a goal to "open the minds of others to radical insights," it was obligatory to carry out these actions while repeating the mantra, "Don't be afraid of us. We are trying to release men from fear." For Deming, the guiding principle was "above

[242] Deming, "On the Necessity to Liberate Minds," *Deming Reader*, 198-203, 198-99.

all not to harm any person…to make clear that they never would be willing to."[243] She took this to the extent of advocating that an action underway should be aborted if a bystander was likely to be seriously injured. Unlike Gandhi who believed it was better to violently oppose injustice rather than taking no action at all, Deming argued that these radical acts of nonviolence should not be taken if there was any chance of them turning violent.

Her focus on the possibilities and limitations of nonviolence during the latter half of the 1960s is summed up nicely in her essay "Pacifism" which was published by the WRL in their weekly newspaper, *Workshops in Nonviolence* (*WIN*). The editors of *WIN* asked Deming for a contribution to a special issue of the paper to be distributed during the 1971 May Day actions in Washington, D.C. at the Pentagon.[244] She decided to address the topic of "nonviolent revolution" by returning to the themes of her previous essays and providing examples from her personal experiences over the past five years. She wrote of her trip to Hanoi in 1966 and returned to Regis Debray and Frantz Fanon's to demonstrate the dangers of violence. She cited new examples from "the black struggle" about the frustrations of nonviolent action, reiterated her stance on property destruction, and called for the reinvigoration of nonviolence as "the only way" and "the most practical way" to bring about a new society.[245]

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[243] Deming, "On the Necessity to Liberate Minds," *Deming Reader*, 202.
[244] Deming, "New Men, New Women," *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 3. Her latest rewording of the metaphorical "two hands" of nonviolence in this essay was, "one hand taking from him what is not his due, the other slowly calming him, as we do this," 8. For two other summaries of Deming's activism from 1966-1969, see Duberman, *A Saving Remnant*, 127-133 and McDaniel, "Shaping the Sixties: The Emergence of Barbara Deming," 210-214.
[245] Deming, "New Men, New Women," 3, 13.

At first glance, the essay could be seen as a restatement of "On Revolution and Equilibrium" with merely additional examples, but there were a few somewhat veiled indications that Deming was charting a new course for nonviolence. When she mentioned her trip to North Viet Nam she quoted from Susan Sontag's "Trip to Hanoi" rather than from Muste, Dellinger, or the men she used to quote during her speaking tour. She also stressed the fact that she was traveling with "three other Movement women" and focused in particular on their interactions with Vietnamese women. When concluding her essay with a quote from the two Black Panthers who were on trial in New Haven, Connecticut for killing an FBI informant, she chose Ericka Huggins rather than the chairman of the organization, Bobby Seale. She made the role of gender more apparent by stating that she had become uncomfortable with the common use of the generic terms "man" and "brotherhood" as inclusive terms for all of people, male and female. She asserted that "the word 'woman' would certainly not be allowed to stand also for the word 'man,' or 'sisterhood' for 'brotherhood." In the end, she confessed, "I tried to think of a phrase to use instead of this, but couldn't."[246] While the primary theme of the essay was her advocacy of nonviolence, an observant reader could not miss Deming's secondary theme about male normativity. Further subverting her secondary theme was the fact that the *WIN* editors chose to title her essay "Pacifism" instead of the name she

[246] Deming, "New Men, New Women," *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 7-8. Three years earlier, in her signature essay, "On Revolution and Equilibrium," Deming had consistently used male pronouns to signify both men and women. In the reprint of this essay in 1974 she added a footnote stating that she had now come up with a suitable phrase, "the sisterhood of man" which she credited to Mary Daly. She also noted at the end of her life while assembling her writings for the *Deming Reader*, "I've with great restraint *not* changed my generic use of the word 'man'—for that would certainly mislead the reader as to the state of my consciousness back then." See *Deming Reader*, ix.

originally gave it, "New Men, New Women: Some Notes on Nonviolence."[247] Her message for feminist nonviolence was waiting in the wings, soon to be unfurled.

Barbara Deming's activity in this half-decade alone ought to have secured a prominent place for her in the history of U.S. pacifism and nonviolence, but her challenges to conventional pacifism and patriarchal order resulted in a gradual erasure of her contributions as a theorist of nonviolence. Over the next decade, Deming would become the leading voice for feminist nonviolence. That new path brought her writing and activism into the lives of many women and some men, while simultaneously distancing her from the traditional and institutional names of U.S. pacifism and nonviolence.

[247] Deming, "New Men, New Women," *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 3.

Chapter Four: **Feminist Nonviolence**

> *It is my deep conviction that at this point in history a commitment to nonviolence—which WIN declares—requires a commitment to feminism; requires a recognition of the truth feminists have begun to speak—that the root of all violence is the violence men do women, harder to identify than any other violence because this violence has been eroticized. No, I can't yet believe that you won't begin to hear us.*[248]

Barbara Deming compared the first time she read Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, a foundational feminist text for U.S feminists of the 1970s, to her first encounters with Mohandas Gandhi's writings on nonviolence. She remarked that the words of both authors "exploded" in her so that she "knew instantly, 'Yes, this is what I believe. I've been struggling toward this truth all my life.'"[249] She immediately began merging the two belief systems into a feminist incarnation of nonviolence. At fifty-three years old, having spent the last decade of her life immersed in nonviolent direct action, she became the leading proponent of a feminist intervention into U.S. pacifism. While the pacifist community remained her intellectual home for the remaining fifteen years of her life, she also made some forays into the Women's Liberation Movement.

As Deming increasingly referenced feminist texts and concepts in her writings and speeches to pacifist audiences, intellectuals in the Women's Liberation Movement began reading her essays which led to her brief correspondence with leading feminist writers. In the 1970s, Deming found herself trying to convince pacifists that feminism

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[248] Deming to *WIN*, October 29, 1975, *WIN* Magazine Records, Box Four *Correspondence*, *SCPC*, Folder "Dworkin, Fritz, etc. Controversy (1975)". Workshops in Nonviolence (*WIN*) was the weekly magazine of the War Resisters League.

[249] Leah Fritz, "Barbara Deming: The Rage of a Pacifist," *Ms.* November 1978, 97-101, 98. For Deming preparatory notes for the interview see *BDSL*, Folders 4-5 and Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1970).

was essential to understanding nonviolent social change, while simultaneously encouraging feminists that a strategy of nonviolence was consistent with their goals of seeking sexual equality by deconstructing patriarchal power structures.

To understand Deming's feminist critique of nonviolence it is helpful to know some of the context of the Women's Liberation Movement. The so-called "second wave" of U.S. feminism began in the 1960s and addressed patriarchal power structures and sexual freedom in addition to the more traditional causes of the mid-19th and early 20th century feminists who focused on the right to vote and other legal protections.[250] Both "waves" were dominated by white, middle and upper class women, but the 1970s Women's Liberation Movement of which Deming was a part presented more challenges to those power structures. Despite her racial and economic background, Deming's involvement in the African American Freedom Movement and her sexuality offered opportunities to subvert those categories. She navigated the various divisions within U.S. feminism in ways that contribute to a fuller comprehension of a history that includes multiple subdivisions such as radical, cultural, and Marxist feminists just to name a few descriptors. For example, many lesbian feminists advocated for a separatist strategy that rejected all male participation and created internal animosity between heterosexual women and lesbians.[251] This contributed to the essentialist concept of cultural feminism

[250] For challenges to the "wave" metaphor see Nancy Hewitt, "Introduction" and "From Seneca Falls to Suffrage? Reimagining a 'Master Narrative' Narrative in U.S. Women's History" and Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminims" in Hewitt, ed., *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, 1-60. For background on U.S. feminism see Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*. For a history of the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970s see, Echols, *Daring to be Bad* and Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution*. For a global conception of feminism see, Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and The Future of Women*. For a theoretical understanding of feminism see Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction, Third Edition*, especially "Radical Feminism: Libertarian and Cultural Perspectives."

[251] Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 238-41, 254-57, and Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution*, 112-14, 153-158

that enshrined the idea that women were more similar to each other and shared more common cause then they did with men.[252]

Like most feminists, Deming did not easy fit into one category of feminism. She was a radical feminist who rejected separatism and essentialism which conflicted with her philosophy of nonviolence.[253] Yet, she saw the importance of a temporary separatism and the value of creating communities of support for lesbian feminists. As a feminist in the nonviolent movement, Deming used her experiences to reach out to male and female pacifists and cautioned both feminists and pacifists against divisions based on sexuality.

Deming's early attempts to bring together pacifists and feminists can be seen in *Revolution & Equilibrium*, her 1971 collection of essays from the 1960s. She demonstrated her embrace of feminism and her desire to bridge differences by dedicating the book to "my sisters in the growing Women's Liberation movement—and especially to Jane. May we find the right ways to insist upon new relations between all of us, in which not domination but equity is seen to answer the soul's need."[254] Those opening words contained a glimmer of her eventual role as the primary advocate of feminist nonviolence in the United States during the 1970s. Similarly, her reference to her life partner Jane Gapen, while still slightly veiled, also indicated her shift toward more openly expressing her identity as a lesbian and speaking about the important role her sexuality played in her politics and activism. That same year, Deming had told her

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[252] Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction, Third Edition*, 45-49 and Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 243-45.

[253] For example of the malleability of the various feminisms see Jane Gerhard's chapter on "Cultural Feminism" in *Desiring Revolution*, 149-82. For her explanation of cultural feminism as "radical feminism, refracted through lesbian separatism" and other challenges to strict categories, see 150-51. For Adrienne Rich's shift "away from the cultural feminist views she had propounded in the'70s," see Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*, 301n12.

[254] Deming, *Revolution & Equilibrium*, *VII*.

readers that she was unable to find a gender inclusive word to substitute for brotherhood when writing her essay "New Men, New Women: Some Thoughts on Nonviolence," which the editors of *WIN* re-titled simply "Pacifism." But by the time she republished the essay three years later under the original title, she had discovered the phrase "sisterhood of man" and included a footnote explaining her incorporation of the feminist term. She credited the wording to Mary Daly, a feminist theology professor at Boston University, whose book *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*, was a touchstone text for Deming's theory of feminist nonviolence. As Daly explained it, the new term could "give generic weight to 'sisterhood' which the term has never before been called upon to bear. At the same time it emasculates the pseudo-generic 'man.'" For Deming and Daly, "The expression, then, raises the problem of a sexually oppressive world and it signals other possibilities."[255]

Deming used her "New Men, New Women" essay to open the first chapter of her 1974 book, *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, her third compilation of writings and her first book to include essays explaining her theories about the intersections of feminism, sexuality, and nonviolence. Throughout the book Deming argued that her concept of feminist nonviolence was based in a belief that all people could be nonviolent rather than the traditional concept that women were naturally nonviolent or biologically predisposed to nurturative motherhood. The essentialist argument that all women are peacemakers had been a hallmark belief of female pacifists since the 19th century, and the idea that biological sex united all women regardless of any other differences was reinforced by the cultural feminists of the 1970s. Deming's concept of a feminist nonviolence departed

[255] Deming, "New Men, New Women" in *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 8, n.1.

from that tradition as she adopted a radical rather than a cultural feminism by placing patriarchal power structures rather than the ideals of womanhood at the center of her theory of feminist nonviolence.[256]

In her experiments with feminist nonviolence, Deming chose the pacifist community and the Women's Liberation Movement as the best mediums to reinvent and reinvigorate nonviolence. Her belief that "the root of violence can be found in the relations between men and women" led her to a new conviction that nonviolence "requires a commitment to feminism."[257] Later, when she would recall this effort to link pacifism and feminism, Deming remembered being "shocked that nonviolent men didn't become feminists at once" while also feeling discouraged that many women were leaving the nonviolent movement. She attributed the reactions of men to a desire to hold on to their power and authority, and explained the reactions of women as a response to their need to distance themselves from passivity, victimhood, and defenselessness.[258]

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[256] For more on maternal pacifism see, Alonso, *Peace as a Woman's Issue* and "Suffragettes for Peace During The Interwar Years 1919-1941." For Alonso's discussion of feminism and peace movements see her final two chapters of *Peace as a Woman's Issue*, "From Civil Rights to the Second Wave of the Feminist Movement, 1960-1975" and "Feminist Peace Activism and the United Nations' Decade for Women, 1975-1985." In the later chapter, pages 243-44, she provided a one page summary of Barbara Deming's activism which named her nonviolent theory as having "a decidedly feminist slant" noting that when Deming died in 1984 "the feminist peace movement lost a great voice." Alonso included two quotes from Deming in her brief summary that came from the mostly pictorial history on nonviolence edited by Robert Cooney and Helen Michalowski, *The Power of the People: Active Nonviolence in the United States* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: New Society Publishers, 1982), 204. See also, Early, *A World Without War* and Bennett, "Radical Pacifism And The General Strike Against War: Jessie Wallace Hughan, The Founding Of The War Resisters League, And The Socialist Origins Of Secular Radical Pacifism In America," *Peace and Change 26*, no. 3, 2001, 352-373. For a more comprehensive history of gender and nonviolent direct action see, Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*.

[257] Interview with Laura Henze, Folder 9, *BDSL*, and Deming to *WIN*, October 29, 1975, *WIN* Magazine Records, Box Four *Correspondence*, *SCPC*, Folder "Dworkin, Fritz, etc. Controversy (1975)".

[258] Notes for *Feminary* Interview, *BDSL*, Folder 6. For the interview see, Segrest, "Conversations with Barbara Deming".

Her own journey to feminist nonviolence had happened rather quickly. Less than five years earlier she had written "On Revolution and Equilibrium" which challenged conventional ideas of nonviolence and attempted to convince revolutionaries that nonviolence and "manhood" were compatible. By choosing that line of argument she had unwittingly written her signature essay for a male audience and emphasized only the conventionally masculine qualities of nonviolent direct action. As she quickly came to identify as a radical feminist and lesbian rights advocate, Deming continued to encourage male pacifists to incorporate feminism into their understanding of nonviolence, while at the same time recognizing that women were rapidly becoming her primary audience.

Struggling With Anger

A prime example of her early efforts at linking feminism and nonviolence can be seen in her *Liberation* essay "On Anger." She originally prepared it as a speech for the WRL national conference in Athens, Georgia in September 1971, and when the pacifist magazine published the piece a couple months later it was met with a positive response from pacifists and nonviolent direct actionists.[259] She told the audience and readers that a decade of protesting, writing, and reflection had brought her to the conclusion that most pacifists refused to focus on "our relation to anger." She pointed out that advocates of nonviolence tended to be perceived by those outside the movement as being oblivious to the emotional energy of anger. She noted that various groups such as racial minorities,

[259] In a recording of "Living Her Life: Homage to Barbara Deming, Activist," an event held at the Schlesinger Library in October 1990 to announce the opening of the Barbara Deming Papers, David Dellinger, a longtime pacifist and nonviolent direct actionist, told the crowd that "On Anger" had a noticeable impact on many people in the nonviolent movement, see *BDSL*, T196.

the poor, veterans, prisoners, women, and "Gay people—in spite of that name" were all angry and more aware of it than pacifists.[260]

Deming urged those committed to nonviolence to learn from those other groups, especially feminists, by first recognizing their own internal fury about war and violence, and then publically affirming the value of anger. She believed that anger could be "healthy" if it "contains both respect for oneself and respect for the other" with "the conviction that change is possible—for both sides."[261] Her biggest challenge to pacifists was "to discover in ourselves murderers," because although it would be "particularly painful for us" and "hard on our pride," advocates of nonviolence need to admit that they do become irate at times and have learned to quell their violent feelings toward murderous racists, rapists, and racketeers of war.[262] She argued that pacifists who embraced their anger could help close the gap between themselves and the Women's Liberation Movement. She envisioned the joining of these two movements in particular as a real possibility, because pacifists and feminists both had a long history of having "hidden their anger even from themselves."[263]

The link between the suppressed anger of women in regards to sexist oppression and the repressed anger of pacifists about the scourge of war served as a bridge for Deming to connect feminism and nonviolence. This convergence can be seen in her

[260] Deming, "On Anger" in *Deming Reader*, 209.
[261] Ibid., 212.
[262] Ibid., 213. In this same section: "I think, by the way, that it is accurate to say that A.J. Muste was often in states of anger. And they were healthy states indeed—did change faces, change lives." She went on to say: "It strikes me, though that when I talked about A.J. at a memorial service after his death, I talked about just such moments and it never occurred to me use that word." Her discussion of A.J. Muste indicates that she was aware of the audience's intimate connections with Muste and wanted to connect him with productive, nonviolent anger in order to encourage other pacifists to face the anger within themselves.
[263] Ibid., 215.

choice to end the essay by linking Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case For Feminist Revolution* and two recent articles about nonviolence in *WIN*, the WRL magazine. She paraphrased Firestone, a radical feminist, Marxist, and Neo-Freudian, as arguing "that the sexual class system is the model for all other systems of oppression, and that unless we resist this, until we eliminate this, we will never succeed in truly eliminating the others."[264] She connected Firestone's feminist argument to similar ones made in the current issue of *WIN* about "men's liberation groups springing up" that teach men "how to resist committing aggression at home—against women."[265]

Deming urged pacifists to confront their anger so that their shared emotion could serve as a bond with the women's movement, which she saw as needing support from pacifists who knew how to positively channel their anger. She spoke of "the deep, deep need for the women's movement to be a nonviolent movement… For I can more and more see this struggle becoming a very bloody one."[266] She suggested that if pacifists refused to embrace their anger, they would ostracize women who were in the process of confronting their own anger. She also warned pacifists that even if feminists adopted a nonviolent strategy and its tactics, they might still end up rejecting it because of "an unreal purity" that accompanied the pacifist practice of hiding their anger. When speaking to primarily pacifist audiences, she would recount conversations with feminists who had chosen to move away from nonviolence because as women they felt that "they

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[264] Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York, New York: William Morrow Publishing, 1970). Another quote that Deming would use when referencing Firestone was: "…not just the elimination of male privilege but of the sex distinction itself: genital differences between human beings would no longer matter culturally…The tyranny of the biological family would be broken. And with it the psychology of power." See Deming to Suki Rice, October 2, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 703.

[265] Deming, "On Anger" in *Deming Reader*, 216

[266] Ibid., 210.

can't learn from us and can't count on us, because we don't really know ourselves, don't dare know ourselves."[267] Deming wanted to see nonviolent activists in touch with their anger helping the women's movement in "translating this raw anger into the disciplined anger of the search for change." She urged pacifists to cultivate a healthy relationship with anger so they could be "in a position to speak much more persuasively to comrades about the need to root out from all anger the spirit of murder."[268]

Her next essay of this period, "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle," began as a presentation at a conference on women and literature at Washington and Lee University in March of 1973, but received more attention when she presented it later in the month as a Catholic Worker speech and then as an article for *Liberation* that June. The essay's central argument relied on a bedrock feminist principle that sociocultural gender norms and biological sex are not synonymous. As she explained to her audiences, "I think the world has been split in half for much too long—between masculine and feminine. Or rather between what is said to be masculine and said to be feminine." She went on to encourage "women *and* men" to challenge this false dichotomy and "to question boldly, by word and act" whether sexual differences are real or not, to demonstrate how these beliefs about differences between men and women "violently distort us" and "split our common humanity."[269]

In this essay designed to link pacifism and feminism, she again referenced Firestone, this time to demonstrate how children learn coping mechanisms from their

[267] Deming, "On Anger" in *Deming Reader*, 211.
[268] Ibid., 217. She noted in the conclusion of this essay that her alternate title was "Are Pacifists Willing to Be Angry?"
[269] Deming, "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle" in *Deming Reader*, 225. Emphasis in original.

mothers for dealing with oppression. Deming asserted that male children first sympathize with their mothers, but eventually overcome "contempt" for their fathers as "noble sons…emerg[ing] into the honorable state of manhood." She used Firestone's radical feminist theories to illustrate for pacifists that "imperialism," a topic central to pacifist politics, was learned first "within the home."[270] To prevent this cycle of domestic and international violence, which she saw as originating in the division of the sexes, Deming argued that it was essential for societies to redefine gender roles in order to build a new society based on sexual equality. As she explained it, in this new society "Fathers will become mothers, too, of course. And motherliness will be subtly redefined." She ended the section by calling on parents to "teach both son and daughter equity, mutuality. Which is to say, nonviolence."[271]

Deming directed these two essays toward pacifists, but they also resonated with feminists who were not involved in nonviolent direct action campaigns.[272] Although she had earlier addressed the need for feminists to embrace nonviolence in "On Anger," it was "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle" that marked the emergence of her feminist writing and consequently built a new foundation for her activism. Poet, author, and prominent feminist theorist Adrienne Rich wrote Deming in June of 1973, the same month that *Liberation* published "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle." She told Deming that she had almost written her twice before, first when she read her 1966 book, *Prison Notes*, and more recently after reading "On Anger." With "Two Perspectives" she was "greatly moved" and wanted to finally tell her "that your work has meant a great deal

[270] Deming, "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle," 229.
[271] Ibid., 229.
[272] Adrienne Rich to Deming, June 16, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 537, Mary Daly to Deming, October 6, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 163, and Leah Fritz to Deming, May 22, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 283.

to me over years of my life." She wrote that Deming's most recent article on the women's movement helped her to "become more deeply convinced every day that the split you describe is at the root of all politics, left or right, creating the fatal one-sidedness that as you say now threatens our very survival."[273] Adrienne Rich confirmed Barbara Deming's radical feminist belief that great danger lay within the hegemonic nature of the gender binary. They both believed that if the women's movement, the nonviolent movement, or any opposition to the status quo was to be successful, people had to confront the sociocultural and historically constructed nature of perceived sexual differences.

In Deming's first letter to Rich she told her that the desire to get in touch was mutual and that she had wanted to contact her "for many months."[274] She suggested that Rich read feminist philosopher and theologian Mary Daly's work. After doing so, Rich thanked her for calling attention to Daly's criticism of the patriarchy inherent in religion.[275] Eventually, in the fall of 1973 Rich invited Deming, Daly, and feminist writer and activist Robin Morgan to discuss each other's work at her home. Prior to the meeting, Deming had read two recent essays by Daly, "Theology After The Demise Of God The Father" and "Women's Liberation As Theological ReEducation." Paraphrasing Simone Weil's aphorism about digesting good books, she told Daly that "I did not read your essays but ate them, and they are now part of my flesh and bone."[276] Daly sent her a copy of her book *Beyond God The Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*

[273] Rich to Deming June 16, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 537.
[274] Deming to Rich July 1, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 537.
[275] Rich to Deming August 8, 1973,*BDSL*, Folder 537. At the time of this meeting Deming was 56 years old, Daly was 45, Rich was 44, and Morgan was 32. Deming was often the elder in both feminist and pacifist circles. For a discussion of this meeting and related correspondence see Duberman, *Saving Remnant*, 161-63.
[276] Deming to Daly, September 13, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 163.

which had been published that same year. Within weeks Deming had read and reread her book which argued that the god of Christianity is presented as masculine and thus enshrined men as having divine dominion over women. Deming found her analysis "extraordinary and life-giving" and it became a foundational text for her emerging theory of feminist nonviolence.[277]

When comparing her own work to Daly's, Deming wrote that "I, too, have been trying to write about an androgynous society, and a nonviolent society – about yes, a new kind of bonding," noting that Daly had "put it more beautifully" than she had in her "Two Perspectives" piece. She shared with Daly her hope that as the current women's movement began to grow in popularity, it "could bring into being 'the beloved community'" that the nonviolent movement of the 1960s had aspired to create. However, she also shared with Daly her encounters with women who had initially embraced nonviolence but were now moving away from it as they confronted their "own oppression." Deming remarked that although she resolutely clung to a belief in nonviolence, Daly's writing "reinforces that stubbornness in me" to remain committed to it despite other feminists' disregard for nonviolence.[278]

Daly had read Deming's "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle" more than once and was excited about her ideas. She had also read "On Anger" and concluded that

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[277] Deming to Daly, October 30, 1973, Folder 163, *BDSL*. For more on Mary Daly see her "Original Reintroduction" in the Twentieth Anniversary" edition of *Beyond God The Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1993). See also Amber L. Katherine's essays "'A Too Early Morning': Audre Lorde's 'An Open Letter to Mary Daly' and Daly's Decision Not to Respond In Kind" and "(Re)reading Mary Daly as Sister Insider" in Sarah Lucia Hoagland and Marilyn Frye, eds., *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Daly* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

[278] Deming to Daly, September 13, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 163. For a discussion of the holistic nature of King's "beloved community" see Linda Sargent Wood, *A More Perfect Union: Holistic Worldviews and the Transformation of American Culture After World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 83-109.

"I do think we need your insights on anger/nonviolence." However, Daly agreed with feminists who were critical of the strategy and felt that nonviolence was "especially a male problem for men to worry about" due to the fact that women "have been socialized not to use our powers" and "to suppress expressions of anger."[279] Despite these disagreements, Deming enjoyed the meeting and found it "hard to leave the other night…because so much happens when we talk together in that way."[280] Daly agreed, noting that their "great mutual respect" for each other resulted in "a qualitative difference from what often happens when four feminists come together from such different places."[281] Correspondence continued for these four intellectuals as Deming persisted in honing her theory of feminist nonviolence. For instance, after re-reading *Beyond God The Father*, Deming wrote Daly about her desire to go into more depth about her reaction to the book "in an attempt, especially, to grapple in a fresh way with the subject of nonviolence – which, yes, must be renamed."[282] Deming had already begun that conversation with Robin Morgan, who had become a mainstream voice for cultural feminism as the editor of the popular anthology of feminist writings from 1970, *Sisterhood Is Powerful*.

A few weeks after the meeting at Adrienne Rich's home, Deming sent a letter to Morgan in which she laid out her theory of feminist nonviolence. Much of it was rooted in the bodily memory of human birth. Deming had been influenced by Elisabeth Gould Davis's *The First Sex* which was based on an anthropological theory which argued that a preponderance of female leaders in ancient societies could be explained in part because

[279] Daly to Deming, October 6, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 163.
[280] Deming to Daly, October 30, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 163.
[281] Daly to Deming, October 6, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 163.
[282] Deming to Daly, October 30, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 163.

of a misperception that women were able to create life on their own.[283] In her letter to Morgan, she agreed that a woman who has been pregnant "can feel within her own body, own self, another self coming into being," but asserted that "men can learn it, and it seems to me that we have to insist that they can." She accepted Morgan's cultural feminist belief that "our biology makes it easier for us to see," but explained that males must also understand it because the idea that "nobody is simply 'other' is the central truth of nonviolence." She conceded that the potential ease many women have in making that connection may explain "why I've had the dream that women would at last be the ones to truly experiment with nonviolent struggle, discover its full force."[284]

However, she challenged Morgan's assertion that "we must now invent a revolution as to destroy maleness, femaleness." Deming agreed with yet pushed Morgan to see that "the splitting of us into 'male' and 'female'" with certain emotional or philosophical abilities assigned to one biological sex is false and dangerous. She explained to Morgan that if women "claim our powers as unique, we defeat ourselves – will always be men's prey" because women will be making "the fatal error…that our earliest sisters made, the error of guarding their powers as unique, instead of insisting that men, too, acquire them – instead of insisting upon the sisterhood of man." By this time, Deming had begun to commonly incorporate Mary Daly's gender-universal phrase into her language. In her letter, she appealed to Morgan further by associating feminist nonviolence with "what Adrienne beautifully calls a 'ghostly woman' –

[283] Elizabeth Gould Davis, *The First Sex* (New York, New York: Putnam, 1971). See also, May 9, 1979 "Notes For Possible Film Interview," *BDSL*, Folder 10. Deming wrote that "I used to be a Christian, before I read the 1st Sex and learned what the church has done to women; and before I read Mary Daly, who made the obvious point that the creator of all that is could hardly be male. I'm a Christian no longer, but certain things that Jesus said still reverberate in me—I simply alter the language a bit. … I'd dispense with the word Lord and simply say—to love the spirit of life in everything that is."
[284] Deming to Morgan, October 4, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 451.

acknowledge[ing] that it's not just 'all right' for women 'to be woman', it's alright for *men* 'to be woman.'"[285] Deming argued with Morgan throughout the letter that a nonviolent feminist revolution could include feminist men.

In a later letter that Deming addressed to Daly, Morgan, and Rich, she reiterated her appreciation of all three women's work and noted her pleased "astonishment" that they found value in her work. However, the comments that Robin Morgan marked in the margins of her copy of the letter reveal the resistance to nonviolence which Deming met in the feminist community.[286] This was especially true of cultural feminists such as Morgan who prioritized a perceived commonality in all people born female. As Deming noted in her letter to the prominent feminists, "As I write of nonviolence, I remember Robin's fear that compassion will 'cramp' us – a fear I gather, too that both Adrienne and Mary share." As was Deming's rhetorical style, she asked if what they really feared was an "incomplete compassion" that would result in what was "expected by women" in a patriarchy—to neglect themselves for the greater good. Morgan answered this question in the margins with and emphatic "NO." Her negative comments throughout the letter provide the impression that she was at odds with Deming on nearly every issue. At one point she scrawled "bullshit" next to Deming's assertion that the few men "who have been willing to accept the fullness of their natures have had the powers" of motherhood

[285] Deming to Morgan, October 4, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 451. See also, Rich to Deming, June 29, 1979, *BDSL*, Folder 539. Emphasis in original. Rich commented that in the introduction to "The Antifeminist Woman" after "Rereading this text in 1978 I find opinions which I now question (Is there a 'ghostly woman' in all men? What did I mean by this anyway?)" For more on Rich see Adrienne Rich Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, especially Folders 209v-211 for her work on "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence".

[286] "Adrienne, Robin, Mary---Dear Sisters," Folder 27.9, Papers of Robin Morgan, Harvard University, Schlesinger Library. Nearly every handwritten comment on the seven page letter is negative. Also revealing of the divide between Morgan and Deming is the title of the larger series of folders in this section of her papers which was titled by Morgan as "Women in/on the male left, 1968-1977."

and/or sisterhood that some feminists claim as being reserved for women only. At another point in the letter Deming referred to Morgan's poem "Monster" which includes the line "you, men, will have to be freed, as well, though we women may have to kick and kill you into freedom since most of you will embrace death quite gladly rather than give up your power to hold power." Deming wrote that she too believed that men needed liberation from patriarchy and could achieve it if they could "learn to be mother, too (or sister)." She added that "Women will have to insist that he learn it. 'Kick' him into it, Robin might say. I'd be as emphatic, even if I wouldn't use that word." Morgan simply gasped "god!" beside that remark.[287]

With Mary Daly seeing nonviolence as a good idea for men but not necessarily women, and Robin Morgan finding her and Deming's ideas almost completely at odds, Adrienne Rich seemed to be the only member of the group that remained open to Barbara Deming's concept of a feminist nonviolence. Rich and Deming continued to correspond throughout the rest of Deming's life despite their various disagreements. While Deming would often reference Rich's work, especially *Of Woman Born*, it was Daly's *Beyond God the Father* that she nearly always cited when making her arguments for a feminist nonviolence. Six months after meeting and conversing with these prominent figures in the Women's Liberation Movement, Barbara Deming began to take her place as the primary proponent for feminist nonviolence in the United States.

A Training Session for Feminists and Pacifists

[287] "Adrienne, Robin, Mary---Dear Sisters," Folder 27.9, Papers of Robin Morgan, Harvard University, Schlesinger Library. Emphasis in the original. Emphasis in original.

During the first week of April 1974 Deming helped organize "A Weekend Workshop on Women & Violence" at the CNVA Farm in Voluntown, Connecticut. The training session was sponsored by the CNVA and the American Friends Service Committee. CNVA was the pacifist organization which had fostered Deming's introduction to the nonviolent movement from her journalistic coverage of their nuclear submarine protests in 1960 to her experiences in the Albany, Georgia city jail which led to her 1966 book *Prison Notes*. Having come full circle, she was now the teacher of a group of women who had come to learn about feminist nonviolence.

The flyer for the event announced the women who would be presenting, including a karate expert, two theatre groups, and a women's health advocate. Barbara Deming, pacifist and feminist writers Andrea Dworkin and Leah Fritz, and longtime pacifist Marj Swann rounded out the list of eight presenters. These advocates of nonviolence and feminism recognized a connection between the two concepts and expected that there was enough interest by other women who also noticed these linkages to hold a conference.[288] The flyer listed topics of discussion such as exploring "the violence we feel inside ourselves, and the violence done to us as women," and asking pertinent questions such as "Does anger help or hinder us in our struggle to be free?" and "How do we deal with physical violence, for example, rape, assault, beatings by husbands, etc?"[289] Deming's notes during the conference sessions and those related to her preparation for it help to illustrate her continual efforts to interweave nonviolence and feminism.

[288] For a list of the fifty women who attended the event see: "Participants…Women and Nonviolence Conference at CNVA," *BDSL*, Folder 703.
[289] *Women and Violence Flyer*, *BDSL*, Folder 704.

The notes for her opening speech indicate that she had come to think of herself as a feminist for "over 40 years, but not consciously enough" and that she envisioned the feminist movement as the "hope of the world." In order for this premonition to come to fruition, Deming thought that women would have to "reinvent, further invent nonviolence – so that it can't possibly be confused with submissiveness, passivity, lack of anger." She approached the conference from the perspective that there would be many women attending the workshops who were already involved in the nonviolent movement, and that there would be others who were already involved in the feminist movement. She expected very few to be actively committed to both movements. However, she assumed there was common ground in the sense that "all women becoming feminists feel the need to shed submissiveness, to speak our anger." She stressed the barriers women had to overcome as a result of having "been taught to hold ourselves in" not just in terms of anger but in terms of feeling free to express one's whole self.[290]

Throughout the conference Deming referenced the work of Mary Daly while conceding that Daly did not support her vision of a feminist nonviolence. Daly told Deming that although she did not support the concept of a feminist nonviolence she had refrained from actively arguing against it because she was afraid "of not speaking out that truth fully." Deming encouraged the women at the conference to freely critique the idea of a feminist nonviolence, and used her disagreement with Daly as a way to appeal to the attendees to "break from our passivity, to speak out our truth." Deming explained that her concept of feminist nonviolence was based on seeing the Other in oneself, and in this case misogynists were the Other. If women found nonviolence to be an inaccurate term

[290] "Women and Violence" Deming's notes, *BDSL*, Folder 704.

for it, she again referenced Daly for alternate wording. She explained that Daly's *Beyond God The Father* relied on the terminology of a "double truth" rather than the term nonviolence.[291] She defined Daly's "double truth" as the refusal to be treated like the Other while also refusing to treat the oppressor as the Other.

In Deming's notes from a few days prior to the workshop, she laid out an argument that revealed a connection between nonviolence and feminism that she likely discussed with the attendees that weekend. She argued that adults in the United States in the 1970s had a "sense" of the nonviolent tradition even if they had never been a part of it. However, her perception was that those not involved in the nonviolent movement "have been trained to a parody of nonviolence, trained to passivity," and that women in particular were especially taught to be passive. She connected this fictional sex-linked passivity with the factual anger feminists felt about being oppressed by the patriarchy. Deming noted that women's anger was often tinged by the tendency to "internalize the oppressor," and she wanted to encourage the women to "distinguish between attitudes of acceptance, submission, and true nonviolence" so as to voice both "our refusals to be

[291] "March 29 – 2" Deming's Notes, *BDSL*, Folder 704. Despite Daly's resistance to nonviolence, the organizers of the conference included her book in the recommended reading list along with Deming's soon to be published *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, Andrea Dworkin's forthcoming book *Woman Hating*, Elizabeth Gould Davis's *The First Sex*, Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, and Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, "Recommended Reading on Women's Issues", *BDSL*, Folder 704. Also included were Virginia Woolf's works from the 1930s, *Three Guineas* and a *A Room of One's Own*. Deming named *Three Guineas* one of the four most influential books she read in the 1970s, see Deming's letter dated April 2, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 1375, *BDSL*. See also, Andrea Dworkin to *WIN*, December 29, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 260. Note the line: "When Marty Jezer wrote me, he said that he asked many Lefties and not one had heard of Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*. As I see it, that substantiates, as does much else, the charges I made in my letter to you about the sexist reading habits and values of left males." See also Brenda R. Silver, "The Authority of Anger: Three Guineas as Case Study," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 16*, no. 21 (1991): 340-370.

victims any longer, but also our refusal to be executioners."[292] Deming affirmed the anger that women were feeling while also attempting to direct their anger into nonviolent action. She wanted to correct the distorted view of nonviolence as passive and always even-keeled. She asserted that nonviolence is active, and that it is encouraged for nonviolent practitioners to express their anger.

The sessions in karate and self-defense provided Deming with another opportunity to challenge misconceptions about nonviolence. Her comments are also intriguing in terms of long-running debates in pacifist circles about using violence for personal protection and how a theory of feminist nonviolence would deal with issues of sexual assault. Deming's notes on the topic reveal her willingness to reevaluate her own ideas and demonstrate her continued experiments with nonviolence. While the flyer itself did not use the phrase "martial arts," Deming named them as such. Prior to the self-defense workshops she wrote of wanting to speak to the experts about their commitment to nonviolence and specifically how to make "these arts as we practice them, really new." She noted that "A few years ago I wouldn't have thought one could practice them within a nonviolent commitment. I have changed about that."[293] This change involved redefining martial arts into what may be termed pacific arts. As she remarked a few days later, karate for nonviolent practitioners would involve reinventing the discipline. Deming believed that physical self-defense could remain nonviolent if practitioners reminded themselves of what it felt like to be victims of physical assaults. This memory

[292] "Notes for Women and Violence Weekend" and "Women and Violence," March 29, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 704. See also "Women and Violence," April 2, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 704. "My own feeling is that one of the most fruitful things we can talk about…is our anger. Again – as women (and especially perhaps as women many of whom are in the nonviolent tradition, as I am – but just as women) have been trained to fear our anger, to suppress it. I think there are things about anger one must watch out for, but to suppress it is fatal."

[293] "Women and Violence," *BDSL*, Folder 704.

of being a victim could help them to consciously refrain from perpetrating that same physical harm on others while defending themselves. In order to maintain a commitment to nonviolence, Deming believed that women should not defend themselves simply in a "mechanical way." Advocates of nonviolence should not be focused simply on the type of "blows [one] can give." They must maintain their "empathy with the victim" in order to shield their opponent from too much harm.[294] Deming argued that self-defense must entail keeping painful memories of being assaulted in the forefront of women's minds in order to curtail the violence they inflict on a potential attacker.

This melding of nonviolence and martial arts that Deming engaged in was tempered by her position that "To be sure there are occasions when only by killing another could one remain alive." She believed that each person had to decide on a case-by-case basis "whether the affirmation of nonviolence or your own survival matters more." For her, being in a life-threatening situation such as an attempted rape could demand killing a violent aggressor. However, if a person's life was threatened during an organized nonviolent action, she advocated refraining from violent self-defense because the "survival of the community [is] enhanced" by risking one's life for the affirmation of nonviolence.[295] She also saw a connection between women's struggles with nonviolence as it related to rape and the struggles African Americans faced with armed white supremacists. She recalled feeling "dismay" as the African American Freedom Movement "turned from nonviolence…but can see now a little why." In reference to this new understanding of the temptations and logic of violent self-defense Deming restated her belief that although she was "very interested in martial arts disciplines" they ought to

[294] "Notes For Women And Violence Weekend," March 29, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 704.
[295] Women and Violence, April 2, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 704.

be framed with a "commitment not to kill or maim. But I would say a willingness to temporarily hurt."[296] Her incorporation of martial arts into an already well-grounded and practiced pacifist lifestyle was a product of her willingness to bring new ideas into her philosophy of nonviolence. This ability and desire to redefine and reinvent concepts was emblematic of her experimentation with nonviolence.

A Feminist Workshop In Nonviolence

Liberation magazine had been the site of much of Deming's experiments with nonviolence. The pacifist periodical was the forum where she first gained popularity as a writer and it provided her with connections to the wider nonviolent movement culture. The monthly journal had published as a serial the majority of her memoir *Prison Notes* in 1963, and it was her journalistic home for over a decade as the only female co-editor alongside A.J. Muste, Dave Dellinger, Bayard Rustin, Staughton Lynd, and other leading U.S. pacifists. In the early 1970s, the magazine had made some editorial changes and Deming thought that *Liberation* was drifting away from its emphasis on "radical nonviolence." That perception, along with a growing rift between herself and other editors about the importance of feminism brought about her eventual disassociation with *Liberation* by the winter of 1974.[297] As she explained in her resignation letter, *Liberation* had become a journal that was not "very receptive to feminism" with feminist pieces

[296] Women and Violence, April 2, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 704. In 1976 Deming supported the cases of Yvonne Wanrow and Inez Garcia who had killed men in self-defense during sexual assaults. See *BDSL*, Folders 636f+ and 66.

[297] Deming to *Liberation*, December 5, 1972 and November 10, 1974, *BDBU*, Box 7, Folder 17. An additional tension resulted from her critique of Arthur Kinoy's People's Party. For more on that dispute see "A Dialogue With Those Interested In Starting A People's Party (In Which I Let The Earth Shift Under Marx and Engels)" in Deming, *Remembering Who We Are* (Tallahassee, Florida: Pagoda Publications, 1981). (Hereafter cited as *Remembering*.) For the difficulties Deming encountered in publishing *Remembering*, see *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly* Records, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, especially Carton 2, Folder "Barbara Deming Book".

repeatedly rejected or when written by Deming herself "accepted reluctantly." She had come to the conclusion that the magazine should remove her name from the masthead because she found it "misleading to have my name up there."[298]

Pam Black, one of the new editors of *Liberation*, wrote Deming personally to explain that the magazine was going through a major transition and was "practically starting from scratch." She told Deming that while her resignation felt like "the final blow to a sinking ship," she was glad to know of Deming's criticisms and wished that she had gotten a chance to know her better. Deming replied that she was "very glad that more women are joining *Liberation*" and hoped that they could bring about some positive changes.[299] In January of 1975, *Liberation* published Deming's resignation letter along with their response. The editors thanked her for her "long, sustained relationship" and noted that they were "starting anew" with the hope of ending "the male-dominated character of the magazine." They added that they "were open to feminism" but conceded that the new editors of the journal "no longer define *Liberation* by pacifist politics" because they found many issues had been "overlooked by traditional pacifism" in the past.[300]

Upon reading the editorial response paired with her letter, Deming wrote back to ask the new editors if they could read through back issues of *Liberation* and "make a list for me…of pacifist contributors you find there who suffer from the blindness in question." She ended her letter by expressing her appreciation for the new editors' desire

[298] Deming to *Liberation*, November 10, 1974, *BDBU*, Box 7 Folder 17.
[299] Pam Black to Deming, December 18, 1974 and Deming to Black, December 21, 1975, *BDBU*, Box 7 Folder 17.
[300] *Liberation 19*, no. 1 (January 1975).

to bring a gender balance to the magazine's personnel, but asked that they focus on recruiting women who were "sturdy feminists."[301] Another reader who was "angered" at the editors' response to Deming's resignation letter wrote an even more scathing missive to *Liberation*. He found it "patronizing" that the magazine considered itself "open to feminism" and facetiously asked if they were also "'open' to black liberation" or other social justice campaigns. He wanted the editors to say that they were "(to use Deming's word) committed to feminism." He also found their accusations that *Liberation's* pacifist writers overlooked other social injustices as "an insult to Deming and your readers." As an example of the broad view pacifist writers had taken in the magazine's twenty-year history he retorted, "Now you know damn well Deming has not overlooked them."[302] The very next issue of provided Deming with something else she was not about to overlook.

The February 1975 issue carried such a harsh review of Andrea Dworkin's book *Woman Hating* by Gina Blumenfeld that the editors included a preface to inform the readers that there were "particularly serious disagreements…about whether or not to print" it.[303] *Woman Hating*, which explained human history as a series of purposeful, violent oppressions of women, was one of the few books Deming included on the recommended reading list for the "Women & Violence" conference in April of 1974. The editors of Dworkin's book considered it "an important, although undeniably controversial, statement regarding the relationship between the sexes" and Deming

[301] Deming to *Liberation*, February 15, 1975, *BDBU*, Box 7 Folder 17.
[302] Pete Wilson to *Liberation*, February 11, 1975, *BDBU*, Box 7 Folder 17. Wilson sent copies of his letter to Barbara Deming, Martin Duberman, David McReynolds, and Allen Young, all of which were pacifists involved in part with the gay liberation movement.
[303] *Liberation 19*, no. 2 (February 1975): 11-19, 26-28.

worked with the publishers to help get it published.[304] Additionally, when Deming had asked *Liberation* to remove her name from its masthead the previous month, she cited the magazine's refusal to publish essays submitted by Dworkin as disheartening because she found Dworkin's work "invaluable."[305] *Liberation's* decision to print the derisive and lengthy review which accused Dworkin and feminism on the whole to be "anti-intellectual," produced in Deming a further disavowal of her professional home. In her letter published the following month she called the review "wildly unfair" and ended her rebuttal with the parting line, "I invite Gina Blumenfeld to break with patriarchy. I invite the editors of *Liberation* to break with it too."[306] Leah Fritz, one of the presenters at the "Women & Violence" conference, followed Deming's example and decided to break her ties with the magazine that fall. Fritz remarked that "*Liberation* has already managed to alienate two of its best writers—Barbara Deming and Andrea Dworkin. To alienate Barbara, who is such a loving, gentle person, is really quite a feat!"[307]

The alienation of radical feminist writers at *Liberation*, while monumental for Deming because of her personal connection to the pacifist magazine, was less traumatic than her experiences that same year with *WIN*, the magazine of the WRL. *WIN* had published various letters to the editor by Deming about her concept of a feminist

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[304] Marian Skedgell to Deming, January 9, 1974 and Deming to Skedgell, January 13, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 260. The letters also reveal that Dworkin wanted to keep the original title *The Origins of Being Fucked*, Deming tried to convince her to use *War Against Women*, but the editor, Skedgell, chose Gloria Steinam's *Woman Hating*.

[305] Deming to *Liberation*, November 10, 1974, *BDBU*, Box 7 Folder 17.

[306] Deming to *Liberation*, March 12, 1975, *BDBU*, Box 7 Folder 17. One specific piece by Andrea Dworkin that *Liberation* rejected was "Marx and Gandhi Were Liberals—Feminism and the 'Radical' Left. For Dworkin's comments to Deming about the rejection of this essay see Dworkin to Deming, August 20, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 260. For the original publication of her essay see *American Report*: *Review of Religion and American Power*, "Woman: A Special Supplement of American Report", November 26, 1973, 6-8. Although *Liberation* decided not to reprint her article, *Frog in the Well* publishers eventually reprinted it in 1977 with additional artwork by Janet McLaughlin.

[307] Fritz to Kathy Shagas at *Liberation*, September 23, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 283.

nonviolence and there were many letters printed in response. Some readers praised the exchange of letters as "illuminating" and perceived the coverage of feminism as providing "a balanced perspective." However, the message that resounded with the editors were letters like the one from a married couple that began "Barbara Deming in particular, and other extremists in the 'women's anti-men movement' and the 'homo is better than hetero movement,' taking so much space in *WIN* really distresses us."[308] The issue of how much space *WIN* dedicated to issues of feminism, sexuality, and their intersections with nonviolence became a lasting issue for Deming as she sought to spread her concept of a feminist nonviolence.

Unlike her more individual act of protest earlier that year with *Liberation*, this time a group of feminist writers, including Dworkin and Fritz, sought to make institutional changes to *WIN* during the summer and fall of 1975.[309] The initial dispute grew out of the culture of the board meetings themselves. The editorial board had instituted some changes in procedure that moved its meetings away from their traditional dependence on unanimous consent to a hybrid model involving both consensus and majority rule voting. This change resulted in the feminist board members feeling ostracized. Leah Fritz was the leading feminist on the editorial board. Karla Jay, an

[308] See letters in *WIN*, Volume 11, Number 19, May 29, 1975 and *WIN*, Volume 11 Number 21, June 19, 1975, *WIN*, Volume 11 Number 25, July 17, 1975. The final citation is a letter from Bernard Kassoy in regards to the magazine's issue on lesbian culture. His letter reads in part, "My reason for supporting you all these years has been your positions on war and peace and the political problems affecting them. Whatever the problems of lesbian culture, they are not problems of war and peace. I think you have somehow gotten way off track…" *WIN*'s editorial board indicated that the magazine would continue to publish articles about lesbianism stating, "We believe all movements related to liberation of people of any sort are directly related to 'war and peace and political problems affecting them."

[309] For an organizational history of the War Resisters League see Bennett, *Radical Pacifism*. Although he ends his study before the founding of *WIN*, he does include a mention of it along with a mention of the "feminist critique" by women within the WRL, 241.

English professor and Gay Liberation activist, had recently been asked to join the board, and Andrea Dworkin had written the magazine expressing interest in joining.[310]

In early July of 1975, Karla Jay wrote the magazine's editorial board asking if she was officially a member of the editorial board. According to her recollection she had been invited to serve on the board after having served as a guest editor for June's special issue on lesbian culture, but the editors' notes were not clear if there was an official vote by the board. Jay learned of the confusion "third-hand" after hearing from Dworkin that *WIN* had contacted Fritz to check on Jay's membership status. This caused Jay to ask if she had only been invited to be on the board "so that you could say you had lesbian approval." She wondered if her occasional opposition to the board's ideas caused them to check their records in order to find a way to remove her since she wasn't willing to play the role of a "Yes-Dyke for the board."[311] At the end of July, Dworkin wrote *WIN* to withdraw her request to be on the editorial board. This was in part due to the "confusion over Jay's status," but also because she thought the meetings used a governing process that was inconsistent with feminism. However, she also made it clear that she wanted to continue writing for the magazine and was eager to meet Susan Cakars and other women at *WIN*.[312]

WIN had published Dworkin's "Redefining Nonviolence" just two weeks prior to her withdrawal of her name from the board. In that article, she called for feminists in the nonviolent movement to question the "male notions of what nonviolence is." She argued

[310] Karla Jay to WIN, July 16, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 673, Dworkin in *WIN*, July 31, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 672. Andrea Dworkin is known mostly for her anti-pornography work, but her activities in the nonviolent movement have been overlooked by peace historians and historians of U.S. feminism.
[311] Karla Jay to *WIN*, July 16, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 673.
[312] Dworkin in *WIN*, July 31, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 672.

that "any commitment to nonviolence which is real" had to place male violence toward women in their daily lives on the same plane as violence between soldiers during wartime. If sexist violence remained a side issue for pacifists, Dworkin considered their philosophy "hollow, meaningless—a sham." She told women readers that if the men around them who say they are committed to nonviolence do not pledge their "body and soul" to ending violence toward women, then those men should not be considered "trustworthy" and should not be called "your comrade, not your brother, not your friend." She envisioned women redefining nonviolence to mean "the refusal to be violated" and the "unlearning of all the forms of masochistic submission which are taught to us as the very content of womanhood." For Dworkin, the "nonviolent project" of feminists was not a passive one. Feminist nonviolence was instead "a revolutionary refusal to be a victim" and a means to "repudiate our programmed submissive behaviors."[313] The struggles over the following months provided her with the opportunity to test out those concepts of feminist nonviolence as she negotiated the terrain of the *WIN* power structure.

In August of 1975 Andrea Dworkin and Mark Morris of the editorial board discussed the atmosphere of the board meetings.[314] Morris contended that while admittedly unsuccessful, he had "hoped to bring a stronger feminist consciousness to *WIN*'s pages." Dworkin was shocked to learn of his feminist intentions in light of her earlier observations of Morris. She reminded him of his use of the word "paranoid" to describe a suggestion by Leah Fritz during a recent meeting. Dworkin considered that

[313] *WIN 11*, no. 25, July 17, 1975. Republished in Dworkin's, *Our Blood: Prophecies and Discourses on Sexual Politics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) 66-72, 71-72.
[314] *WIN* Magazine Records, Box 4 Correspondence, *SCPC*, Folder "Dworkin, Fritz, etc. Controversy (1975)." (Hereafter cited as *WIN-Controversy*).

word as an "epithet" when applied to women and described the treatment of Fritz in particular as "systematic disrespect." She argued that "Feminists have learned that process is the lifeblood of political work…and that adversary forms of dialogue in the end sustain and perpetuate male dominance." She urged Morris and the board to consult feminists such as herself and Deming in order to restructure the meetings by placing a stronger emphasis on listening. She told him that despite his self-perception as being supportive of feminism, he did "not yet know how to listen to women's voices or to determine the feminist worth of women's concerns." Dworkin insisted that she would not attend any *WIN* meetings until they became more like consciousness raising circles and less adherent to Robert's Rules of Order, "I won't be under Robert's Thumb, and I can't imagine any other feminist submitting to that tyranny either."[315]

Karla Jay wrote the magazine again in early August to officially resign from its editorial board. She concurred with Dworkin that as a feminist she wanted to see the structure and process of the board meetings changed, suggesting that they take turns speaking "around in a circle without a chairperson." Jay echoed Dworkin, finding the parliamentary procedures of Robert's Rules of Order to be a classist and sexist system that was originally created to "keep oppressed people in line" and not to make meetings more efficient. She also found that the men on the board were dismissive of feminist critiques. She observed that Leah Fritz was treated as if she had "some weird neurosis and not political consciousness." She also made a strong argument for feminist nonviolence in her resignation letter, telling *WIN* that just as men in general have rejected feminism, "you pacifists also don't see how feminism is relevant to your lives." She

[315] Dworkin to Morris, August 7, 1975, *SCPC, WIN-Controversy.*

explained that "war is an extension of rape…world violence is an extension of the violence committed against women every day, that nationalism is an extension of men keeping women as property." She ended her letter by informing the board that their dismissal of a feminist perspective on nonviolence was consistent with men telling women that the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion rights, and lesbianism were not as important as ending the draft or stopping the war in Viet Nam. That line of argument brought her to the conclusion that pacifists believe "our bodies don't count, only yours, our issues don't count, only yours."[316]

This prompted letters from co-editors Susan Kent Cakars and Maris Cakars. They both disputed that Robert's Rules of Order were used at the meetings, but did concede that some members used the phrases of "points of order and personal privilege." They also agreed that an occasional majority vote had replaced the strict practice of unanimous consent in order to expedite decisions. In a tongue-in-cheek manner, they made the jibe that since "there are no 'real' feminists on the board anymore" the editorial board would no longer concern themselves with the Women's Liberation Movement. Maris Cakars depicted Leah Fritz as consistently interruptive and disrespectful during past meetings. He told Karla Jay that before this feminist uproar the board had been "a rather friendly and informal group," and asked, "Do you bear any responsibility for turning it away from that?" He admitted that *WIN* was "a male dominated publication" but that "with all due respect to you as people and writers and for feminism also" it appeared to him that feminists believed that their "ideas are far more important than anyone else's." He

[316] Jay to *WIN*, August 8, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 672.

sarcastically asked them to "make us an offer for the whole operation" since he believed what the pacifist-feminist writers really wanted was a "dictatorship."[317]

Karla Jay's response to Maris Cakars was equally biting. In a one paragraph reply to his three-page letter, Jay called his prose "a masterpiece of puerile sarcasm, off-target humor, wounded machismo, muddled politics and thinking." She told him that she was going to make a copy of his letter "for use in my writing course as an example of a poor letter. It's most instructive on that level. But other than that, it doesn't merit any energy in terms of a reply."[318] Dworkin echoed Jay's response calling his letter "unjust and bullying." She also informed him and the editorial board that they were making a mistake by alienating feminist writers, since "Everywhere I go people speak to me with great excitement about the feminist content of *WIN*, for which I am partly responsible."[319] Soon Barbara Deming wrote the board to remind them that at the past WRL annual meeting many feminists had "objected (and were heard)" when the organization tried to reduce funding for *WIN*.[320]

This conflict moved from a private exchange of letters to a public debate in the pages of *WIN* when the magazine published a letter from Leah Fritz to the magazine's readers at the end of October 1975. Fritz noted that she perceived the dominant culture at *WIN* to be one where "the deep and serious concerns of feminists" were dismissed as unimportant, where feminists were considered "crackpots" or worse as "whores" to be exploited for advertising and fundraising. She informed the readers that her name was

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[317] Maris Cakars to Karla Jay, August 9, 1975, *SCPC*, *WIN-Controversy.*
[318] Jay to Cakars, August 12, 1975, *SCPC*, *WIN-Controversy.*
[319] Dworkin to Cakars, September 2, 1975, *SCPC*, *WIN-Controversy*. See also Dworkin to Gapen, September 2, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 673. Dworkin told Gapen that while in Washington, D.C. many people told her how impressed they were with the feminist perspective of *WIN*.
[320] Deming to *WIN*, September 13, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 673.

recently used for marketing purposes despite her prior resignation from the editorial board. What caught the attention of the board was her suggestion that half of each issue's articles should be selected by a group of female writers and staff members who had been active with the magazine over the years.[321] Fritz sent another letter to co-editor Susan Kent Cakars proposing that the female staff members and writers of *WIN* should hold a meeting "in a feminist and pacifist fashion" to discuss the role of feminism for the future of the magazine. She told Cakars that the readers had wrongly assumed that women have "achieved a measure of self-determination at *WIN*" and that she had "expected that pacifists would suggest negotiating with people who are seeking a measure of self-determination."[322]

When *WIN* decided to publish an edited version of Fritz's letter, they paired it with their own response in the October 30th, 1975 issue. The magazine took the stance that it was right and "only fair" to use Fritz's name in its advertising in order to let potential subscribers know who had written articles in the past, but they would not use her name again unless she submitted essays for future issues. They also rejected her idea of a separate feminist editorial group, adding that "to turn over so many pages to this group and so many pages to that group" would not be good for the magazine. They assured their readers that "the women on *WIN*'s staff and editorial board intend to ensure

[321] Fritz to *WIN* Readers, October 5, 1975, SCPC, *WIN-Controversy.*

[322] Fritz to Cakars, October 17, 1975, *SCPC*, *WIN-Controversy*. The touchstone feminist piece about women trying to change a male-dominated political magazine is Robin Morgan's "Goodbye to All That", *RAT*, January 1970, which was originally published in 1970 when Morgan helped take over the underground paper. See Morgan, *Going Too Far: The Personal Chronicle of a Feminist* (New York, New York: Random House, 1977), 122-30. For insight into Morgan's take on this struggle, in 1973 Deming had asked if Morgan read *WIN* and she replied "No longer! Not for 3 years!" See "Adrienne, Robin, Mary---Dear Sisters," Folder 27.9, Papers of Robin Morgan, Harvard University, Schlesinger Library.

ample feminist representation in these pages."[323] Upon reading the issue and finding her name mentioned twice in the opening pages, Karla Jay wrote the editorial board to condemn them for editing out the part of Fritz's letter where she informed the readers that the WRL chose to continue funding the magazine in part "because of the feminist coverage not found in other pacifist magazines." She informed them "That you owe a good part of your existence to feminists such as Barbara Deming, Leah Fritz, Andrea Dworkin, myself, and others."[324]

Deming also wrote the magazine because she was upset by the editing of Fritz's letter and the treatment of Jay. She told the board that it was her "deep conviction that at this point in history a commitment to nonviolence—which *WIN* declares—requires a commitment to feminism." Additionally, she reiterated her belief that "the root of all violence is the violence men do women, harder to identify than any other violence because this violence has been eroticized." On a personal level, she expressed her dismay that *WIN* chose to print the exchange between Fritz and the editorial board in the same issue whose cover story was her article on sexuality co-written with Brad Lyttle. She felt that having her name featured prominently on the cover of an issue which also included other essays on the topic of feminism painted Fritz as being "unreasonable." She concluded by adding that she was "addicted to optimism" and believed that together they could resolve this conflict.[325] By the end of the week, she and Susan Kent Cakars arranged a meeting at Deming and Jane Gapen's house in Monticello, New York.

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[323] *WIN 11*, no. 36, October 30, 1975.
[324] Jay to *WIN*, October 24, 1975, *SCPC*, *WIN-Controversy*.
[325] Deming to *WIN*, October 29, 1975, *SCPC*, *WIN-Controversy*. Andrea Dworkin had also written *WIN* to request a meeting. It was Dworkin's belief that "a conscientious effort at communication will enable us to

The intention of the writers' group was to have a series of meetings to discuss the possible options for the role of feminism within *WIN* and to reconcile the rift between the magazine and its feminist writers. The representatives from *WIN* viewed the meeting as an opportunity to hear the group's ideas for articles and topics for potential special issues. The two sides were at odds with the board viewing the gathering as a single meeting with a specific goal, and the writers who saw the meeting as one of a number of conversations about the broader culture of *WIN*. When the magazine's representatives met with the full editorial board and staff five days after the meeting, they reported that Deming had submitted a proposal on behalf of the writer's group that could be summed up as feminists wanting space to publish "whenever they wished it without editorial decision, on matters they considered important to them…with no questions asked." They listed a variety of options proposed such as percentages of each issue devoted to feminism or a set number of special issues on feminist topics each year. The board voted unanimously to "draft a letter to Barbara to the effect that we cannot possibly comply with her/their request/demand, but that we would hate to see them leave the magazine as writers, that they are valued by us and our readers."[326] The letter was drafted by editorial board member Karen Durbin and addressed to Deming and Gapen but also sent to Frtiz, Dworkin, Jay, and Stoltenberg.[327] Each of the six recipients were dismayed at the board's decision. Rather than the beginning of a dialogue about feminist nonviolence, it was a parting of ways between the writers and the magazine.

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explore the deep and distressing issues that have been festering in these last months." Dworkin to *WIN* Staff, November 3, 1975, *SCPC, WIN-Controversy*.

[326] *WIN* Editorial Board Minutes, November 12, 1975, Box 18, Folder: Editorial Board (1975-1980), *SCPC, WIN-Controversy*.

[327] *WIN* to Deming and Gapen, November 25, 1975, Box 4 Correspondence, Folder: Dworkin, Fritz, etc. Controversy (1975), *SCPC, WIN-Controversy.*

Leah Fritz wrote to the board explaining that things could have turned out differently if the meeting was only between the writers and "the feminists on the board." She envisioned a "beautiful and progressive" gathering that could have slowly mended the wounds of the last few months. She then canceled her subscription and asked to have her name removed from the masthead of the magazine. John Stoltenberg, Andrea Dworkin's partner, wrote to correct the board's misperceptions, noting that as he recalled the meeting, no one made an official proposal of how to address feminism in the pages of *WIN*. Dworkin wrote a tongue-in-cheek letter feigning to completely understand the board's decision to dismiss "the incredible talents and resources of women." She attached a second letter for publication telling the magazine's readers that the writers had "for the last 6 months tried, in a serious and principled way to address issues of misogyny, sexism, and anti-feminism" within the culture of *WIN*, but she had now decided to cut all ties with the magazine. Karla Jay wrote that she felt "slandered" and had "given up on *WIN* hearing what I or other feminists have to say." She explained that "When Barbara says, 'Let us communicate.' You hear her making a unilateral demand to be accepted or rejected. And as long as you see only the inside of your eyeballs and as long as you hear only what you project onto others as speaking, I am afraid to deal with you."[328]

Barbara Deming, the letter's main recipient, drafted an initial letter that revealed more than she was in the end willing to say. She eventually sent a toned-down letter, which she opened with the lines, "It is hard to write this letter. In fact I was tempted not

[328] Fritz to *WIN*, November, 28, 1975, Stoltenberg to *WIN*, November 29, 1975. Dworkin to *WIN*, November 30, 1975, Jay to Susan Cakars, December 15, 1975, *SCPC*, *WIN-Controversy*. See also Fritz to Susan Cakars, December 6, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 672.

even to try again to find my words." She had first addressed her letter directly to Maris and Susan Cakars, but decided to address it instead to Karen Durbin, the person the board chose to draft the letter. The unsent letter was seven pages long and more visceral than the two page letter of condemnation she ended up sending. Deming initially described *WIN* as becoming "a second rate mouthpiece for sexist politics." She repeatedly used the term "psychic violence" and made metaphorical references to war in describing the tone of the meeting and the decision by the board to draft the rejection letter. She told Maris that he was a sexist who could not resist the desire to display his dominance in order to prove his masculinity. She found his actions similar to "men who are violent and support a violent state" and reminded him that he was on "the same continuum as the man who rapes and dehumanizes women." In a post script to her unsent letter she confessed that she "had to let this letter cool off" because her writing had "brought up my rawest feelings of hatred toward men (and I hate to hate men)." In the end, she was able to explain to Cakars that part of what angered her was that she did not expect him "to be like most men." She thought his "nonviolent politics and outlook" would help him to understand "what it means and how it feels to women to be treated as they have been treated by you." She explained that these feminist writers expended their energy to struggle with him because they believed he could be their ally.[329]

In her letter, Deming maintained the message of her initial draft with less direct attention to Maris Cakars. That change allowed her to express in a broader sense that the board's decision was a major setback for her larger vision of bringing a feminist perspective to a longstanding pacifist organization. As Deming explained it, she was

[329] "Dear Maris and Susan," *BDSL*, Folder 671. For Susan's perspective on an earlier meeting with Deming about this topic see, Susan Cakars to Deming, October 15, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 672.

"perhaps the person who has been most anxious to have feminists want to continue to write for *WIN*, most anxious to have *WIN* behave toward feminists in a way that would bring this about." She recounted that in past conversations Cakars had himself considered "the feminist revolution to be of deep importance," but his actions as editor were calling that statement into question. This was not the reception she had anticipated since they were a group of "feminists committed to nonviolence" and were writers and activists whom the board had known for years. She distilled the matter down to an issue of trust. The board did not trust the feminist writers and therefore worried about a "takeover." By mislabeling Deming's conversation at her home as an official proposal and voting it down unanimously, the board had lost the trust of the leading proponent of feminist nonviolence. While the magazine expressed its desire for the writers to continue submitting to *WIN*, Deming said their offer sounded like a husband telling his wife to "'trust me to do what's best for both of us.'—But of course even when husbands are well-intentioned—women put that kind of trust in them at their peril."[330]

The pages of *WIN* provide additional insight into the pacifist response to the feminist critique of nonviolence that demonstrates both agreement with the feminist intervention and conversely support for the editorial staff's rejection of their critique. After the board opened the discussion with the October issue featuring Fritz's letter and their rebuttal, the magazine continued to print letters from the writers' group and reactions from the magazine's readers in nearly every week's issue until the end of January 1976. For example, all seven letters to the editor in the November 20th issue were in relation to the intersection of nonviolence and feminism. This was the issue that

[330] Deming to Karen Durbin, December 1, 1975, *SCPC*, *WIN-Controversy*.

carried Deming's assertion that a commitment to nonviolence necessitates a commitment to feminism, and that all violence originates from patriarchal violence. The other letters covered a wide spectrum from a subscription cancelation based on the condescending tone of *WIN*'s response to Fritz, to a subscription renewal in part because the magazine's rebuttal was a "soft answer that turneth away wrath" rather than "stoop[ing] to her level of anger." Three of the letters took a more moderating approach arguing that the nonviolent movement should incorporate feminism but should also not forget that sexism was just one of many "injustices that lead to war and violence." One reader noted that *WIN* should listen more closely to Deming and the other writers because while "not all feminists believe in nonviolence," those who do see the movements as connected have indeed found "the proper forum" to share their ideas.[331]

On a private level, Deming's correspondence with her long-time comrade Dave Dellinger during this debate further illuminates her struggle to institutionalize feminist nonviolence into the culture of *WIN* in particular and the larger nonviolent movement culture in general. Dellinger wrote Deming in December of 1975 after reading Dworkin's letter to *WIN* in which she cut all ties with the magazine. He found Dworkin's characterization of the magazine as being "guilty of 'bad faith, malice, and manipulation' to be both [*sic*] unjust, inaccurate, and oppressive of the people struggling to put out *WIN*."[332] He called Dworkin's accusation a "destructive and sectarian attack" and an example of "insufferable self-righteousness." Illustrative of his sense that he held

[331] *WIN 11*, no. 39 (November 20, 1975): 2-3.
[332] Dellinger to Deming, December 29, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 671. For her original letter and the published version see Dworkin to *WIN*, November 30, 1975, *SCPC*, *WIN-Controversy* and *WIN 11*, no. 43, December 25, 1975.

influence over Deming, he called on her to write a public letter "disassociating" herself from Dworkin whom he considered Deming's "troubled, insecure, erring comrade."[333]

Deming began her response to Dellinger by correcting his perception that she and Dworkin disagreed about the anti-feminist culture of *WIN*. She told him that the feminist writers were working to create a permanent space for feminist nonviolence within the pages of the magazine, but that they had been treated with malice by an editorial board and staff which acted in bad faith and manipulated them throughout the ordeal. Deming challenged Dellinger to re-read Dworkin's letter, reminding him that "the oppressed, don't forget Dave, are very often worried that they may not be heard unless they tell it rudely." She admitted to using a different tone for her own letter to the board, but cautioned him to be careful of "naming the oppressed person the oppressor." She related an essay by Fritz which reminded pacifists that "black people who 'speak bitterness' about their oppression" had been often falsely accused of being racists, just as women who speak bitter truths were commonly mislabeled as sexists. Deming explained that letters like Dworkin's rise out of the oppressive history of the patriarchy training women to be "compliant" and "cooperative" rather than to publically express their anger. She told him that Dworkin had written her letter "especially for the women who have been reading *WIN*…to let them know about our struggle." For Deming, "the tragic truth" of her endeavor to create an institutional space for a feminist perspective on nonviolence, was that the editorial board and staff "treated me as an enemy" rather than a member of the "beloved community."[334]

[333] Dellinger to Deming, December 29, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 671.
[334] Deming to Dellinger, January 3, 1976, *BDSL*, Folder 671.

Eventually, through the course of this exchange of letters, in a matter of only three weeks, Dellinger reevaluated his position and came to hear Dworkin's abrasiveness as a necessity. He told Deming that men needed to learn to "listen beyond the ordinarily insulting words to the cry of anguish and the struggle for self-assertion." He also agreed that Deming's support of Dworkin's letter was similar to the times when he "defended Stokely Carmichael's right to be angry and his right to be heard…when Martin Luther King as well as a lot of whites said he shouldn't." He ended his letter by telling her, "Now I will defend Andrea."[335] However, Dellinger's individual support did not balance out Deming's six months of struggle, resulting in her near complete withdrawal from *WIN*. As the magazine itself noted in its tenth anniversary edition in 1976, "Barbara Deming now puts her deepest hopes for a nonviolent world in the feminist revolution, and keeps looking forward to a day when the editors of *WIN* will share that vision."[336] She continued to occasionally submit and have pieces published in *Liberation* and *WIN*, but she began to seek out feminist periodicals such as *Ms.*, *off our backs*, *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly*, and *Amazon Quarterly* as her primary medium for writing about feminist nonviolence.[337]

Remembering Who We Are

Nonviolence remained the principle topic of Barbara Deming's writing for feminist periodicals, and the controversies surrounding the 1975 imprisonments of ex-fugitives Jane Alpert and Susan Saxe provided her with an opportunity to extend her

[335] Dellinger to Deming, January 16, 1976, *BDSL*, Folder 862.
[336] "Contributors" page, *WIN 12*, nos. 15 and 16 (April 29, 1976) and (May 6, 1976).
[337] For a discussion of feminist periodicals and their role in shaping the Women's Liberation Movement, see Agatha Beins, *Free Our Sisters, Free Ourselves: Locating U.S. Feminism through Feminist Periodicals, 1970-1983* (Dissertation Director: Nancy Hewitt), Doctoral Dissertation from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2011.

reach to this newest audience. For nearly five years, Alpert and Saxe had evaded arrest for separate violent crimes connected to their activities with the Weathermen, an offshoot of the Students for a Democratic Society. Alpert admitted to eight bombings of government and other office buildings, and Saxe admitted to stealing weapons from a National Guard Armory and being involved in a bank robbery that resulted in the death of a police officer. Alpert and Saxe were both feminists, and their arrests highlighted the fractures within U.S. feminism. In *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, Alice Echols uses the cases of Alpert of Saxe to illustrate the specific division between cultural and radical feminists which "continued to polarize the feminist community."[338]

Prior to her arrest, Jane Alpert had published her 1973 "Letter from the Underground" and its sister essay, "Mother Right: A New Feminist Theory." In those writings she argued that the male-dominated Left was sexist and told women on the Left that while they could continue to "fast and organize and demonstrate" for the "male supremacists" who have died for Leftist causes, "don't tell me how much those deaths moved you" because she would no longer mourn their passing.[339] Her "Mother Right" theory of cultural feminism declared that the women's movement should break with the male Left and establish "a society in which women were powerful by virtue of being mothers…because the root of motherhood and the root of female consciousness…are one

[338] Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 261. See also, pages 247-265 in her final chapter, "The Ascendance of Cultural Feminism," for her discussion of Alpert and Saxe. For a more specific and modern discussion of the split see Anne McSweeney, "'Hijacking the Movement:' The Saxe-Alpert Controversy, Media Politics and the Making of Radical Feminism in the U.S., 1974-1976," Wesleyan University, 2008.
[339] Jane Alpert, "Letter from the Underground," *off our backs 3*, no. 9 (July-August 1973): 27-28, 28. The periodical reprinted Alpert's pieces in this issue after original printing them in May of 1973. This issue also included the response to Alpert's letter by "Women of the Weather Underground", 2-3. Other responses published in this issue were by Mary Moylan, Leslie McAdoo, Betsy Warrior, and "The Feminists," 24-26.

in the same."[340] The debates among feminists about Alpert's ideas and the implications of her arrest illuminated the various divisions within the movement.[341]

The initial statement of opposition came from radical feminists in the form of a public condemnation of Alpert in the feminist newspaper *Majority Report* in March of 1975. It was a brief open letter titled "The Crisis in Feminism—To Women On The Issue of Jane Alpert" signed by Susan Sherman, Florynce Kennedy, Joan Hamilton, and Ti-Grace Atkinson. They claimed that Alpert was disloyal to "our comrades underground" and that she was distracting people from "the real enemy" by shifting the focus from racial injustice to feminism. They saw Alpert's "'feminism'" as representative of "a movement based on class privilege, on white privilege" and a means "to set us against ourselves."[342] As Echols explained it, the radical feminists saw Alpert's disavowal of the Left as a rejection of feminism's "collectivist" challenge to the state and a retreat to the cultural feminist position of "individualistic" self-improvement.[343]

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[340] Alpert, "Mother Right: A New Feminist Theory," 29-31, 30. For more from Jane Alpert herself, see her memoir about this period of her life *Growing Up Underground* (New York, New York: Citadel Underground edition, November 1990). The book was originally published in 1981 by William Morrow and Company in New York.

[341] See Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, "A Voice from the Underground," 247-62 and "Susan Saxe's Capture," 262-65, and McSweeney, "Mapping the Controversy in the Feminist and Lesbian Press," 67-87. For various perspectives on the Alpert case at the time see *off our backs 5*, no. 5 (May-June 1975): 20-25. This issue included an interview with Alpert, a statement from "Women of the Weather Underground Organization," a letter from "Mary Moylan and sisters," and Barbara Deming's "To Fear Jane Alpert Is To Fear Ourselves—A Letter to Susan Sherman." See also, *Lesbian Tide*, May/June 1975 for the magazine's editorial "On the Issue of Jane Alpert," *Lesbian Tide*, July/August 1975 for Florence Rush's "Sexism in the Male Left: A Double Standard for 'Informers'", 20-21, see *Lesbian Tide*, November/December 1975 for Karla Jay's "A Trojan War Rerun—Alpert another Helen?" 8, 36 and a "Statement of Purpose" from feminists supporting Jane Alpert. See also, Jill Johnston, "The Myth of Bonnies Without Clydes: Lesbian Feminism and the Male Left," *The Village Voice*, April 28, 1975, 14.

[342] *WIN 11*, no. 18 (May 22, 1975): 4. Also in Deming, *Remembering*, 106.

[343] Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 251.

Although a radical feminist herself, Barbara Deming joined the cultural feminists who supported Jane Alpert.[344] In May of 1975 *WIN* reprinted "The Crisis in Feminism" along with Deming's rebuttal titled "To Fear Jane Alpert Is To Fear Ourselves—A Letter to Susan Sherman." Deming argued that their statement was in effect "throwing [Alpert] out of the women's movement" because of some "deep fear" of Alpert's conception of feminism. She named that fear as a symptom of the "vertigo" that is produced from the "double vision" of seeing men as inhabiting two bodies, one as an oppressor of women and the other as an oppressed proletariat worker. She shared her own experience with a "grotesquely" distorted vision as a woman who identified as "white and from the middle class" and therefore saw non-white men as both "one person who oppresses me, another who sees me as *his* oppressor."[345]

Deming explained that there was nothing "wrong with our eyes" but there was indeed something wrong with naming either these men or feminists like Alpert as "the enemy." She found the statement condemning Alpert as an example of the misconception that "the enemy cannot possibly be at the same time a comrade." She urged Sherman and her co-writers to accept "a concept familiar to the nonviolent tradition" that she wished all feminists would begin to embrace. She wanted the women's movement to adopt the principle that behaviors, practices, and institutional structures should be destroyed while at the same time "naming no *person* one whom we are willing to destroy."[346] She ended her letter by asking Sherman if the fear and hatred she expressed in the statement about Alpert was a misplaced fear stemming from her own

[344] Deming, *Remembering*, 104.
[345] Deming, "To Fear Jane Alpert" in *Remembering*, 108, 112. Emphasis in the original.
[346] Ibid., 113. Emphasis in the original.

internal conflicts about supporting working class patriarchs while trying to bring down patriarchy itself.

Sherman responded to Deming in July of 1975 with her *WIN* essay "'Down the Rabbit Hole' [In Reply to Barbara Deming]." She compared Deming to Alice from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, describing her argument as similar to the "mad logic of Tweedledum and Tweedledee." After reading her letter, she found Deming's support of Alpert "absolutely indefensible."[347] Deming replied quickly to Sherman with *WIN* publishing her response in the following week's issue under the title "On The Subject of Trust." She struck a conciliatory tone in her response, seeking common ground while noting that feminists commonly "make life difficult for one another…as you and I in fact are doing now" when they could be instead learning "how to extend trust to one another." She explained that while Sherman was focused on "betrayal," she saw the main issue as an ingrained desire by "many men and some women" on the Left to "see the feminist movement destroyed." As Deming understood it, Alpert had "exposed" male heroes of the Left as "flawed" and had revealed truths that were "not easy to hear." Deming was therefore not surprised that Leftists wanted to see Alpert and feminist critiques of the Left "discredited" so that they would not "need to take her charges seriously." She argued that the "government manipulation of our distrust of one another" was having a "corrosive effect" on both the Left and feminists.[348]

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[347] *WIN*, July 3, 1975, 15-16.

[348] *WIN*, July 10, 1975, 17, 21. For Bernadine Dohrn's comment from a November 1976 Weatherman transcript where she stated, "In 1974, we set out to destroy the women's movement", see *Lesbian Tide* July/August 1977, "Tape from Bernadine Dohrn (Nov. 1976)", *The Split of the Weather Underground Organization: Struggle Against White and Male Supremacy* (John Brown Book Club, Seattle, Washington, Feb. 1977), and Deming, "The Lesbian As Heretic" in *Remembering*, 134.

The following month Deming wrote a longer piece titled "Seeing Us As We Are Not." In that essay she continued her argument that the opposition to Alpert was actually a veiled effort to "destroy the women's movement." As she explained it, the effort was "a conspiracy in the word's original sense—a breathing together" with men and women on the Left and the Right respiring in unison, some purposefully others unknowingly. She explained that this conspiracy had perpetually attempted to construe feminist analyses as false and those same forces were "trying to prove this upon the body of Jane Alpert." Her primary contention was that many Leftists wanted to "see us as we are not" in order to create a false choice for women to either "criticize men or criticize *The* Man"; in other words, be a feminist or be a Leftist. In the spirit of pacifist noncooperation, Deming referenced "women in growing numbers learning to refuse obedience to authority" arguing that women could nonviolently overthrow the patriarchy by recognizing their role as cooperators in their own oppression.[349]

Deming had attempted to make the link between feminism with nonviolence earlier in her "Letter to Jane Alpert: Women's Consciousness."[350] She had told Alpert before her arrest that a feminist nonviolence asserted that "we are members one of another, that nobody, nothing is strictly *other*; a consciousness that can inspire exploration of every kind." She explained that this was "a central truth of nonviolence" and recommended that Alpert and others read Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father* which contained "the most precise definition of nonviolence I have ever read." Deming

[349] Deming, "Seeing Us As We Are Not" in *Remembering*, 124-134. Emphasis in the original.
[350] Deming, "Letter to Jane Alpert—Women's Consciousness" in Deming's *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 169-174. The basis of this letter arose from the joint letter she had written to Daly, Morgan, and Rich, see footnote 34, "Adrienne, Robin, Mary---Dear Sisters," Folder 27.9, Papers of Robin Morgan, Harvard University, Schlesinger Library.

recognized that "many women are leery of nonviolent struggle" but asserted that the greater fear should be that women will "imitate impatiently what patriarchy has defined as power," namely "the ability to destroy—a 'power' which *denies* that all life is one."[351] Deming's concept of a feminist nonviolence did not allow for Alpert's cultural feminist vision of a "new matriarchal family" if it meant a society that would make men the new Other.[352]

While the controversy over Alpert continued, the capture of Susan Saxe four months later added to the sexual tensions among Leftists and brought up another longstanding division among feminists, the rift between heterosexual women and lesbian, bisexual, and queer feminists. Saxe commented on the schism over sexuality in a letter written to her defense committee, which *Liberation* published under the title "Letter to the Movement" in December of 1975. Saxe warned the Women's Liberation Movement that it must address "two distinct factions" as it moved forward, the anti-leftists and anti-intellectual lesbians. She considered feminists who supported Alpert as "counter-revolutionary in the broadest sense of the word" and belonging to a faction of "women whose true interests lie with the ruling class." Saxe characterized the other faction as a group of queer feminists who had succumbed to an "escape-to-the-country syndrome" which rejected all political analysis, Leftist or otherwise as corrupted by the patriarchy and therefore "inherently oppressive." She found the women's movement as a whole lacking in "revolutionary analysis" and saw queer feminists as having a particular "anti-

[351] Deming, "Letter to Jane Alpert" in *Remembering*, 172. Emphasis in the original.
[352] Ibid., 174. See also, "Andrea Dworkin Visit," January 25, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 260. Deming remembered discussing Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* and Alpert's article "Mother Right." Dworkin questioned her balance of Firestone's urge to eliminate all sexual distinctions with Alpert's belief that all women could be united by the virtual of potential motherhood. Deming remembered her saying that a balance of the two concepts was impossible while agreeing that Alpert's idea of thinking of men and women as different was dangerous.

analytical" streak. Further complicating matters, Saxe considered herself "a lesbian, a feminist, and an Amazon" and therefore respected "those of us who come out of the anti-war movement and happen to be gay" but not lesbians whose feminism was only "rooted in their experience as women."[353]

Because Deming supported Alpert, Saxe considered her actions "counter-revolutionary," but as a lesbian with a long history of anti-war activism she was free from Saxe's "anti-analytical" label. Continuing with her conversational style of writing, Deming decided to address Saxe in the form of an open letter. She titled her essay, "Remembering Who We Are," and it soon became her most well-known essay on feminist nonviolence. It was originally given as a talk at Florida State University in March of 1977 and was published that summer in a condensed version by *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly*. As a sign of its importance to Deming, she self-published her 1981 book under the title *Remembering Who We Are*, which included the full essay along with a collection of her writings from the mid and late 1970s. The essay went through another reprinting in 1984 with the publication of the *Barbara Deming Reader*. Jane Meyerding, the editor of the reader, noted on the first page of the introduction that photocopies of "Remembering Who We Are" were widely-circulated in the pacifist-feminist community.

Part of what makes the essay valuable for understanding Deming's concept of a feminist nonviolence is her blending of Leftist political theory with theories of gender, sexuality, and nonviolence. She opened the letter by challenging Saxe's Marxist-

[353] Susan Saxe, "Letter to the Movement," *Liberation 19*, no. 7 (December 1975): 43-45. See also Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought, Third Edition,* especially "Marxist Feminism," 39-70. For a brief discussion of "the division within feminism" in regards to Saxe and Alpert, see Duberman, *Sacred Remnant*, 267-8, n20-21.

Feminist stance that dialectical materialism was "not a male concept" but "a tool of liberation." To dispute that, she used sister-Marxist, Shulamith Firestone's "sexual dialectics" which purported to be "wider than the original Marxist concept" naming male oppression of females as "the *primary* moving power behind historic events."[354] Deming combined that idea with Adrienne Rich's belief that if women repossessed their own bodies it would bring about "far more essential change to human society than the seizing of the means of production by workers." Firestone and Rich's writings, which had greatly influenced Deming's initial embrace of feminism, brought her to the conclusion that Saxe's Marxism would "remain an inadequate 'tool of liberation'…as long as bodies of women are held in contempt by most of those who teach dialectics."[355]

In her critique of a Marxist myopia about male ownership of female bodies, she incorporated a revisioning of motherhood while praising queerness and androgyny. She did so by connecting gender and sexuality with the premise of all dialectic philosophy, to "identify the contradictions in a situation." She pointed out that Mao Zedong believed that "there is only one principal contradiction" and that when that contradiction was understood, "all problems could be readily solved." For Deming, that principal contradiction was "the lie that men and women are of essentially different natures—and the truth that we are of one nature."[356] She argued that patriarchy was based on this misconception and that men and women "need rescue from neat distinctions that are illusions." Those illusions of sexual difference were foundational to both the maintenance of patriarchy and the theory of cultural feminism which saw men and

[354] Deming, "Remembering Who We Are" in *Remembering Who We Are*, 172. Emphasis in the original. (Hereafter cited as *Remembering Who We Are*.)
[355] Ibid., 196.
[356] Ibid., 185.

women as essentially different. As a radical feminist Deming disagreed with the cultural feminist premise that women naturally shared more in common with each other than they did with men.

This understanding led her to conclude that nonviolence was the only means to end patriarchal oppression, unless feminists did not mind "destroying comrades as we strike at enemies."[357] She told Saxe, "I know that you have declared your belief in armed struggle…I imagine that…you see nonviolent struggle as essentially passive." She conceded that some feminists saw nonviolence as "just the behavior the patriarchs would like to have us adopt—very lady-like; inspiring; and ineffectual." However, Deming countered that going on strike was not ineffectual and was certainly in line with Marxist traditions. Similar to her fictional conversations with Frantz Fanon and Regis Debray a decade earlier in "On Revolution and Equilibrium," she argued that Saxe's use of retaliatory violence as a means to an end was "much more passive, much more desperate…to accept as one's own the oppressor's vision that there is nothing at all to prevent us from trying to destroy one another."[358]

Deming wanted to invent "a nonviolent dialectic" that "accords with feminism." She envisioned it as insisting that "women and men are alike in nature" but predicted that it would "ironically" require feminists to "adopt a temporary separatism" in order to develop "a strong kinship circle of women" that could withstand the resistance of those men who would want to continue to treat women as their property. She imagined that these temporarily all-female "alliances" would bring about a community where "we

[357] Deming, *Remembering Who We Are*, 187.
[358] Ibid., 188.

begin to dare to believe that we belong to nobody" and where men could come to see the gathering of females as answering the needs of women while recognizing that men themselves also have the "need…to relate to us not as masters but simply as kin."[359] Those acts of noncooperation with the patriarchs and the decision for women to live their lives as if the envisioned society already existed combined feminist principles with traditional tactics of nonviolence.

In the final thread explaining her theory of feminist nonviolence, Deming relied on various incarnations of the primary tenet of nonviolence that there is no Other. She asserted that all human beings are "of one nature," are more than "a single self," and that "all our lives are linked."[360] Having referred to the belief that women and men are more different than alike as "a transparent lie," she asserted that males and females are particularly similar because they are "made of the very flesh and blood of the other." As Deming explained it, by the virtue of being born, "we are flesh of her flesh and once literally lived within her."[361] She hoped that the stirrings of that mystical "bodily memory" of being in the womb could help unite humanity by encouraging men and women to remember who they really are—a combination of femininity and masculinity, male and female.

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[359] Deming, *Remembering Who We Are*, 189.

[360] Deming often included Mary Daly's statement that women's liberation consisted of "refusing to be 'the Other' and asserting instead 'I am'—without making another 'the Other'." In this essay Deming also cited Daly's phrase that women have been "unable to experience their own experience" as a way to demonstrate the power of the patriarchy to limit the sexual freedom of lesbians.

[361] Deming, *Remembering Who We Are*, 173-74. When making these arguments about the umbilical connection that all people share, she quoted from Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*. Deming used Rich's words to illustrate the experience of birth as a "unifying, incontrovertible experience shared by all women and men." For Deming's references to Rich's *Of Woman Born*, see *Remembering*, 179, 196. Deming argued that "those of us who are mothers and those of us who are lesbians are supposed to feel that we are utterly different from one another…even when one of us happens to be both a mother and a lesbian," which Deming was as a result of Jane Gapen's children from a previous marriage, 176.

Believing each person was neither wholly male nor female led Deming to see androgyny as the key to a new society. She asserted that only nonviolence, itself an androgynous force, could bring that new society into being. Arguing that "gender would not divide us" if human sexuality were "allowed to be natural," she defined heterosexuality as a patriarchal force that "branded lesbians as outlaws" and limited female sexuality. She extended that logic to male sexuality, claiming that "men who desire other men are supposed to 'know' that their 'manhood' requires the subjection of women." For Deming, the suppression of same-sex attraction and the confinement of sexual encounters between members of "the so-called 'opposite' sex" had "robbed both men and women of our true sexuality."[362] Envisioning a link between sexuality, gender norms, biological sex, and the nonviolent theory of eliminating the concept of the Other expressed itself in Barbara Deming's call for pacifist-feminists and all proponents of nonviolent social change to work together to create an androgynous society.

[362]Deming, *Remembering Who We Are*, 177-180.

Chapter Five: **Androgyny and the Queering of Nonviolence**

> *Nonviolent actions are by their nature androgynous. In them the two impulses that have long been treated as distinct, 'masculine' and 'feminine,' the impulse of self-assertion and the impulse of sympathy, are clearly joined; the very genius of nonviolence, in fact, is that it demonstrates them to be indivisible, and so restores human community.*[363]

In a blending of stereotypical masculinity and femininity, Barbara Deming, or "Bobbie" as her family and close friends called her, performed gender by dressing her nearly six foot frame in conventionally masculine attire. Even in her teens in the 1930s Bobbie could be seen wearing men's pants tucked into laced-up work boots with a collared jacket and cropped hair.[364] She rarely wore her hair beyond her ears throughout her life. A notable exception to her androgynous style can be seen in the photographs included in her 1966 monograph *Prison Notes*. During that march, in order to conform to the traditional gendered dress-code, Deming wore a skirt and feminized her shorter hair with barrettes. This aspect of style politics reflected the heteronormative atmosphere of the U.S. pacifist groups such as the CNVA and FOR which coordinated those actions.[365] She did not adjust her normal attire during her final protest when she joined a women's peace camp in 1983 to protest a nuclear missile site in upstate New York. She

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[363]Barbara Deming, "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle" in Deming, *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 66.

[364] McDaniel, ed., *I Change, I Change*, xii shows a photo montage from the November 17, 1984 Friends Meeting House memorial service. See also Duberman, *Saving Remnant*, 98-9 noting Deming's "deep voice" in addition to her style of dress.

[365] For the demands of heteronormativity as related to physical appearance during the Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Peace Walk see Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 111. Somewhat to the contrary, in a 1959 poll, *Liberation* readers "defend[ed] extramarital sexual relations and homosexuality." This does not negate the pressures of heteronormativity, but it does reflect the complexity of such pressures. This poll is referred to in Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, 239.

participated in that female-only demonstration with cropped hair and wore rugged denim jeans and a traditional workingman's flannel shirt.

Deming's deliberate outward performance of gender matched her internal dialogue regarding how to write about an androgynous future. As she struggled to find her words for the dedication page of *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, her 1974 collection of writings, she kept returning to the term "androgyne" and the idea that humans should aspire to be more than simply male or female, and more than homo- or hetero- sexual. Her wording took on various incarnations, including dedications to "the androgyne each one of us is called to become," to those "engaged in a search for the lost halves of their lives," "For all those who see that our lives are split, and are struggling to reclaim them," and to those trying to "change their skins."[366] She eventually settled on "To all those seeking the courage to assert 'I am'—especially my lesbian sisters."[367]

Deming and many other proponents of androgyny connected sexuality with the blending of traditional western embodiments of femininity and masculinity. Her theory of androgyny and sexuality were premised on the belief that people "are by nature androgynous" and that humans beings were not hetero-, homo-, or bi- sexual, but instead "simply sexual."[368] With androgyny and sexual desire as the natural states of being, Deming advocated for a society that encouraged consenting sexual relationships

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[366] "Notes toward dedication, discarded and revised pages," *BDBU*, Box Four, Folder Five. For another example of Deming's thoughts on androgyny, see her corrective introduction to a collection of her poetry where she stated that the use of "Father" and "Son" in her religious references no longer sat well with her. She wrote that even in her childhood she "spoke most easily the words 'Holy Ghost.' Such a spirit I could sense to be androgynous. But ghost it was for me, this androgynous spirit – which could not, of course, possibly 'proceed' from a father to a son. Too much a ghost." in Deming, *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 73.

[367] Deming, *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*,, viii.

[368] Deming, "The Purpose of Sexuality" in *Remembering*, 85.

regardless of biological sex and cultural expressions of gender. Her inclination toward androgyny pervaded much of her thinking and informed her understanding of politics, religion, language, and sexuality.

Deming's understanding of androgyny's ability to bridge differences reflects her conception of nonviolence as an androgynous force, a re-working of Mohandas Gandhi's concept of "soul force."[369] Both androgyny and nonviolence deconstruct the concept of "The Other." The philosophy of androgyny entwines the male and female into one body in an attempt to eliminate sexism. The philosophy of nonviolence forms bonds between "Us" and "Them" in an attempt to prevent violence on either side. Both concepts allude to liminal or interstitial space in the sense that the ideas occupy a place in between rather than having an exact or immutable quality. Androgyny is neither male nor female, but a new concept of gender itself. Nonviolence is neither passive nor aggressive, but an altogether different concept of power.

According to Nikki Sullivan, author of *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*, to "queer" something is "to frustrate, to counteract, to delegitimize…heteronormative knowledges and institutions."[370] Gandhian nonviolence is the foundation upon which Deming and other theorists of nonviolence built their knowledge and institutions. As

[369] Soul force is a common English translation for *Satyagraha*, Gandhi's term for nonviolent protest. It is also a nice connection of Deming's concept of "The Holy Ghost" as androgynous. It is no coincidence that *Soulforce* is also the name of an organization that is "guided by the spirit of truth and empowered by the principles of relentless nonviolent resistance" and "works to end the religious and political oppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning people." For more information see, www.soulforce.org.

[370] Sullivan, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*, vi. A few notable works that help explain queer theory are Lisa Duggan, "Making it Perfectly Queer," *Socialist Review 22*, no. 1 (1992): 11-31, Michael Warner, ed., *Fear of A Queer Planet*, and Warner's, *The Trouble With Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1999). Another informative work related to queering is Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

Marian Mollin has demonstrated, nonviolent activism in the United States was "a highly gendered phenomenon" controlled by men who defined nonviolent direct action as "a rough and rugged style of heroic manhood."[371] Their depiction of nonviolence as manly continually came up against charges that it made men effeminate and showed weakness rather than strength.[372] Deming rejected this herteronormative institutional knowledge by naming nonviolence as androgynous. She rejected both the conventional pacifist depiction of nonviolence as an expression of manhood and the philosophy of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) which portrayed peacemaking as a womanly duty.[373]

Barbara Deming thus queered nonviolence by recognizing something androgynous in nonviolent direct actions and something nonviolent in acts of androgyny. She asserted that like nonviolence, androgyny relied on the principle that all people are a part of one another, whether male, female, or a third gender. Likewise, she recognized that the power of nonviolence relied on combining forcefulness and empathy, and other amalgams of conventionally defined masculinity and femininity. A reoccurring motif in queer theory is to locate a sociocultural norm and demonstrate how it is "always already"

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[371] Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 3.

[372] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay" in Michael Warner, ed., *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, 69-81. See comments by psychiatrists connecting effeminacy and homosexuality with mothers and their sense of being "proud of their sons' nonviolent qualities" (75). Of particular note is her reference to Richard Green, *The "Sissy Boy Syndrome" and the Development of Homosexuality* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1988). See also Wendt, "Violence, Non-Violence and Black Manhood in the Civil Rights Era".

[373] See Alonso, "Suffragettes for Peace During The Interwar Years 1919-1941" and *Peace As A Women's Issue*.

queer.[374] Deming did just that by depicting a symbiotic relationship between nonviolence and androgyny, revealing that nonviolence was indeed always already queer.

Deming believed that her personal experiences as a lesbian and her circumscribed existence in a heterosexist, patriarchal society allowed her to relate intimately to the oppression experienced by racial minorities in the racial oligarchy of the United States. She explained that members of the queer community, like those in other minority communities, had to "lead divided lives" in order to cope with being under the gaze of "the hate stare." As Deming understood it, her intimate identification with the trauma of racial segregation shaped her decision to join the African American Freedom Movement as an "analogy" to "protesting it in my own name."[375]

The fact that Deming was a lesbian and a feminist helped her to see the androgyny of nonviolence. As a feminist she commonly confronted the false connection between biological sex and the socio-historical constructions of gender. As a closeted lesbian, for most of her life, she had to determine when it was safe to let anyone know about her romantic relationships with her life partners. Those tensions in her personal life highlighted the gendered dimensions of nonviolence and allowed her to see its androgynous nature. It is not surprising then that James Baldwin, a gay, African American writer, also recognized those connections and shared the belief that "we are all androgynous…each of us, helplessly and forever, contains the other—male in female,

[374] Judith Butler, "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?" *A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies Volume 13*, no. 1 (2002): 14-44; Jeffrey J. Cohen and Todd R. Ramlow, "Pink Vectors of Deleuze: Queer Theory and Inhumanism," *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge 11/12*, (Fall 2005/Spring 2006), n.7 states "queer theory is always already Derridean (and that Derrida is always already queer)." Perhaps one of the most prolific queer theorists who favors this phrasing is Jasbir K. Puar. See "'The Turban Is Not a Hat': Queer Diaspora and Practices of Profiling," *Sikh Formations 4*, no. 1 (June 2008): 47–91, and *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007).
[375] Deming, "On Anger" in *Deming Reader*, 216 and *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 132.

female in male, white in black and black in white. We are a part of each other."[376] Deming agreed with Baldwin's description of all humanity as androgynous and often remarked herself that "We are all part of one another" which reflected her understanding of nonviolence itself as an androgynous force.[377]

Exploring the history of Barbara Deming's concept of nonviolence as androgynous provides a narrative that links Mohandas Gandhi, the masculinization of pacifism, and the feminist debates about androgyny. On an individual level it illustrates how Deming's sexuality informed her experiments with nonviolence, and on a macro-level it illuminates the hidden history of androgyny in pacifism and feminism. The historical narrative begins with an examination of Gandhi's use of androgyny as part of his philosophy of nonviolence and demonstrates a link between Deming and Gandhi's concepts of nonviolence as an androgynous force. Deming's correspondence with colleagues in the nonviolent movement concerning the intersection of nonviolence with sexuality and androgyny reveal the potential openings and barriers to her ideas. As feminists showed greater interest than pacifists in her concept of androgynous nonviolence, Deming embraced the opportunity to continue advocating for a feminist intervention into nonviolence theory and practice.

Gandhi and Androgyny

One might suppose that Gandhian nonviolence is only tangentially related to Deming's concept of androgynous nonviolence, or that only a postmodernist treatment would be able to read androgyny into Gandhi's body of literary works, or perhaps his

[376] James Baldwin, *Collected Essays* (Des Moines, Iowa: Library of America, 1988), 828-9. Baldwin continued, "Many of my countrymen appear to find this fact exceedingly inconvenient and even unfair, and so, very often, do I. But none of us can do anything about it."
[377] Deming, "We Are All Part of One Another" in *Deming Reader*, 164-67, 167.

literal body. However, androgyny was quite important to the mother of nonviolence himself, Mohandas Gandhi. In fact, the concept of androgyny played a larger role in Gandhi's life and philosophy of nonviolence than most scholars of nonviolence and queer theorists have recognized. This is somewhat surprising since Erik Erikson's 1969 book *Gandhi's Truth: On The Origins of Militant Nonviolence* noted Gandhi's purposeful use of androgyny. Although it can easily be missed in his nearly five-hundred page tome, Erikson appeared to ponder aloud, "I wonder whether there has ever been another political leader who most prided himself on being half man and half woman." To take things a bit further, Erikson asserted that Gandhi "tried to make himself the representative of that bisexuality in a combination of autocratic malehood and enveloping maternalism."[378] In addition to challenging the cultural stereotypes of what is masculine and what is feminine, Gandhi also practiced a spiritual celibacy or brahmachary.

Although one could interpret celibacy as asexual and a rejection of sexual intimacy, anthropologist Gayatri Reddy provides a different interpretation in "'Men' Who Would Be Kings: Celibacy, Emasculation, and the Re-Production of Hijras in Contemporary Indian Politics." Reddy argues that Gandhi's celibacy needs to be understood in light of several ascetic traditions of India that position his brahmachary as "the ability to transcend the man-woman dichotomy through a self-conscious aspiration for androgyny—the desire to become 'God's eunuch,' considered superior to both, the essence of masculinity and femininity."[379] This reconceptualization places Gandhi not in

[378] Erik Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On The Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), 402, 44. Although Deming read Erik Erikson's *Gandhi's Truth*, she did not reference Erikson's comments about Gandhi's use of androgyny, see Deming to Dave Brown, April 4, 1970, *BDBU*, Box 1, Folder 15.
[379] Gayatri Reddy, "'Men' Who Would Be Kings: Celibacy, Emasculation, and the Re-Production of Hijras in Contemporary Indian Politics," *Social Research 70*, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 163-200, 179-80. For more

Erikson's traditional androgyny of the man/woman binary, but in the genderqueer concepts of occupying a third gender or rejecting altogether the construct of gender.

In historian Vinay Lal's "Nakedness, Nonviolence, and Brahmacharya: Gandhi's Experiments in Celibate Sexuality," he states that "Gandhi takes us into that realm of the politics of the body, where 'woman' and 'man' must be reconfigured."[380] Lal turns Gandhi upside-down, or more appropriately inside-out. His exploration of Gandhi's sexuality deals directly with notions of gender, biological sex, and the body as it relates to the religious practice of Brahmacharya and nonviolence. Although commonly understood as a Hindu practice of celibacy, Lal explains that Brahmacharya is more properly defined as "the elimination of all desire."[381] As Gandhi and other practitioners of Brahmacharya understood it, the ability to control one's sexual desires can aid one's ability to control the violence within one's self. Additionally, they believed that the release of energy through orgasm depletes the energy the body and mind need to maintain nonviolence in the face of violence.

The emphasis on the link between the body and sexuality can been seen in Lal's discussion of Gandhi's withholding the release of his semen as a spiritual pathway to androgyny. This is consistent with a Brahmacharyian belief that "the semen retained by a yogi is thought to turn into milk, and such a yogi is said to develop breasts."[382] This

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discussion of brahmachary, hijras, and Indian sexuality see Deepa Mehta's film *Fire*, Geeta Patel, "On Fire: Sexuality and Its Incitements," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism 2*, no. 2 (Spring 2002) and Gatyatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2005), especially Chapter Five, "Local Sites/Global Contexts: The Transnational Trajectories of Fire and 'The Quilt'," 131-160.

[380] Vinay Lal, "Nakedness, Nonviolence, and Brahmacharya: Gandhi's Experiments in Celibate Sexuality," *Journal of the History of Sexuality 9*, no. 1/2 (2000): 105-136, 110.

[381] Ibid., 105.

[382] Ibid., 126.

transsexual quality of Gandhi can also be seen in the section Lal subtitles "Gandhi's Vagina: A Political Account of Semen." Here he refers to Gandhi's "vulva envy" and recounts a Hindu belief that a true Brahamachari can cause his penis to shrink and in the process it "becomes that of a female sexual organ."[383] Gandhi's beliefs and sexual experiments are connected to some of his critics' references to him as a hijra or in his case an "intersexed man who takes on the identity of a woman."[384] Lal combines this sexual history, Gandhi's "oft-expressed remark that he was 'half a woman'," and his grandniece's famous biography titled *Bapu—My Mother* to demonstrate that an analysis of gender and sexuality is necessary to understand the history of Gandhian nonviolence.

Vinay Lal, Gaytri Reddy, and Erik Erikson are not the only scholars to have remarked on Gandhi's androgyny. Political philosopher, Bhikhu Parekh also notes that Gandhi "proposed and sought to live up to the ideal of an androgynous person who was 'both a man and a woman', and freely combined the psychological characteristics and moral virtues conventionally associated with each."[385] Parekh's understanding of Gandhi's use of androgyny helps to demonstrate how a politically motivated androgyny reconfigures the conventional, traditional, and stereotypical conceptions of what is masculine and what is feminine. These examples of using androgyny as part of a social

[383] Lal, "Gandhi's Experiments in Celibate Sexuality," 127-8. See also Phyllis Mack, "Feminine Behavior And Radical Action: Franciscans, Quakers, And The Followers Of Gandhi," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 11*, no. 3 (1986): 457-477. Both Lal and Mack referenced the 19th Century Indian mystic Ramakrishna who reportedly menstruated through the pores of his skin and could take on the physical characteristics of the female sex. See Lal, 129 and Mack, 461. Mack cited Gandhi as believing that "even his sexual organs would change their appearance and come to resemble those of a woman. Mack also pointed out that her three exemplars of nonviolence were referred to as "mothers" by their contemporaries and embraced nakedness which was seen as a feminine attribute. She also argued that all three movements "affirmed the equality of the sexes…or, more precisely, the irrelevance of gender." See Mack, 464, 466.

[384] Lal, "Gandhi's Experiments in Celibate Sexuality," 128.

[385] Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 94.

justice movement are more individualistic and psychological than social and behavioral, but Gandhi's use of androgyny certainly involved both aspects.

Ali A. Mazrui addresses the sociopolitical understanding of androgyny in his article "Gandhi, Marx, and the Warrior Tradition: Towards Androgynous Liberation." The androgyny that Mazrui writes of is focused on female soldiers and traditional warriors, not nonviolent ones. However, his treatment of androgyny as revolutionary demonstrates its use as a sociopolitical tool. He asserts that there is an "androgynizing tendency of revolutionary resistance" that occurs as women take an active role in the conflict. He argues that "if the revolutionary resistance lasts long enough, the androgyny may become a conscious morality and not merely a side-effect of sustained struggle." When this occurs, "androgyny as a refutation of sexist differentiation becomes at last a conscious aspiration."[386]

Mazrui's understanding of androgyny as a "conscious morality" is consistent with Erikson's representation of Gandhi's androgyny. Both scholars explain that when androgynous actions are purposeful and directly linked to social justice, the movement becomes a revolutionary rejection of the gendered, heteronormative status quo. It is Gandhi's embrace of androgyny and his open claim to be more than one sex that connects him to revolutionary androgyny. As Erikson recounts, many opposed his embrace of androgyny and tried to emasculate him by ridiculing his call for men to learn how to spin thread and make their own fabric. Gandhi often responded "with the simple admission

[386] Ali A. Mazrui, "Gandhi, Marx and the Warrior Tradition: Towards Androgynous Liberation," *Journal of Asian and African Studies 12*, no. 1-4 (1977): 179-196, 191, 195.

that yes, he aspired to be half woman."[387] Despite embodying the link between androgyny and nonviolence, Gandhi did not describe himself as a feminist and scholars have argued that he rooted his theories of nonviolence in a "Gandhian patriarchy."[388] As Deming once told a sister pacifist, "Gandhi wasn't a feminist."[389] While the leadership of U.S. pacifism refused to incorporate either feminism or androgyny into their Gandhian struggle and instead theorized nonviolence in masculine terms, Gandhi's praise for androgyny as a social goal was in line with Deming's call for the recognition of nonviolence as an androgynous force.

Confronting One's Own Oppression

Barbara Deming believed that her sexuality helped her to see the androgyny inherent in nonviolence. She explained that connection by linking her struggle to speak the truth about her sexuality to satyagraha, Gandhi's term for nonviolence, which Deming often translated as "clinging to the truth."[390] Although she and her family knew she was a lesbian by the time she was a teenager, when she was in her twenties she considered living openly as a lesbian, but decided that the societal risks to herself, her friends, and family were too great for her to make her sexuality public. At one point in the 1930s while contemplating that decision she wrote in her journal, "I am a lesbian; I must face this truth." After reading the passage a few days later she cut the sentence from the pages of her journal and threw it away out of fear that someone might read it. Later that day,

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[387] Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth*, 402-3.
[388] David Hardiman, *Gandhi In His Time and Ours: The Global Legacy of His Ideas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 116-121. See also, Madhu Kiswar, "Gandhi on Women", *Economic and Political Weekly 20*, no. 41 (October 12, 1985): 1753-58.
[389] Deming to Pam McAllister, August 15, 1980, *BDSL*, Folder 396.
[390] Segrest, "Conversations with Barbara Deming," 75.

noticing the scrap of paper in the trash "glaring up" at her, she began to realize that a time would come when she could no longer "throw truths away." [391]

Facing that truth did not come easy for Deming and that process is illuminated by her friendship with Andrea Dworkin. Like Deming, she had graduated from Bennington College in Vermont, a school which began as a women's college in 1932. Dworkin graduated in 1969, the year Bennington became co-educational, while Deming was a member of one of the first graduating classes in 1938. In Dworkin's freshman year at Bennington she was arrested in New York City while protesting the Viet Nam War, and was part of a group of young women who reported being brutalized by doctors who performed internal vaginal exams at the New York City Women's House of Detention. In 1965 at eighteen years old, Dworkin was invited along with Deming, then forty-eight years old, to be interviewed about women's experiences in prison by David Susskind on his televised talk show. This was the first time Deming and Dworkin crossed paths, but it would be ten years before they truly met one another.

Deming and Dworkin's reflections about their televised interview revealed the barriers of heterosexism that prevented their initial camaraderie. Looking back on their brief meeting, Dworkin mournfully recalled that Deming sat in silence while enduring her castigation of lesbians. Dworkin told Susskind that lesbianism was "rampant" in the jail and named lesbians as "macho, brutish, and threatening." Despite previous positive sexual relationships with women, Dworkin did not share that part of her sexual identity

[391] Segrest, "Conversations with Barbara Deming," 84-5. Deming recalled that moment in an interview with Mab Segrest and Minnie Bruce Pratt, two lesbian women who had traveled to Sugarloaf Key, Florida to meet Deming and to learn how begin a lesbian influenced her worldview. Many women made similar pilgrimages to visit Deming in the last twenty years of her life, such as Andrea Dworkin; most were lesbian-feminist-pacifists or some variation thereof.

with the interviewer and Deming did not dispute Dworkin's portrayal of lesbianism. A decade later, Dworkin attributed her negative comments about lesbians to feeling "sickened and confused and horribly afraid" after being abused by the prison doctors and seeing one of her friends raped by women in the jail cell. She wished that Deming could have been a mentor for her while still in her teens rather than having to wait for that support until she was in her late twenties. Dworkin came to understand that first meeting and Deming's silence, as emblematic of a patriarchal society that purposely made it impossible for lesbians to "live fully and openly in the world." She noted that while Deming had "risked her life" in peace marches throughout the South and in various jails, when it came to "revealing her lesbian identity" she chose silence, causing Dworkin to comment in retrospect, "Imagine fear like that." As Deming later told her, "Of course we couldn't talk. Those men were between us. Their world stood between us."[392]

Deming similarly experienced her own sense of a lost mentorship with WRL co-founders Tracy Mygatt and Frances Witherspoon as a result of the heteronormative culture of U.S. pacifism, which led to the silencing of queer pacifists. While there is some debate about whether or not Mygatt and Witherspoon were lesbians, Deming considered them to be lovers.[393] She once wrote a relative of Witherspoon who disputed the description of their shared lives as a lesbian relationship. Deming reflected on Mygatt and Witherspoon's life together and compared it to her own long-term lesbian

[392] Dworkin, "Letter to M," *WIN 11*, no. 22 (June 26, 1975): 5-7.
[393] For disputes about Mygatt and Witherspoon's relationship see Deming to Margaret Rockwell Finch, April 16, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 905. In that letter Deming defined and explained their relationship as lesbian. For a characterization of their relationship as a lesbian one see Nancy Manahan, "Future Old Maids and Pacifist Agitators: The Story of Tracy Mygatt and Frances Witherspoon," *Women's Studies Quarterly* (Spring 1982): 10-13. See also Early, *A World Without War*, n.9-18, 205-6 for a repudiation of their lesbian relationship.

relationships with Mary Meigs and Jane Gapen. Deming concluded that if she had died in the 1960s people could have just as easily mislabeled her as heterosexual.[394]

Mygatt and Witherspoon devoted their lives to pacifism and their correspondence with Deming provided her with a link to that history. Mygatt and Witherspoon had shared a home together their entire adult lives after graduating from Bryn Mawr College in 1909. They began their political activism by establishing the Bureau of Legal Advice which provided assistance for conscientious objectors during World War I. Witherspoon was the executive secretary of the organization and Mygatt later became the New York secretary for the Campaign for World Government.[395] Deming corresponded with Mygatt and Witherspoon from 1963 until their deaths just a month apart in the winter of 1973-74.[396] She wrote to them about public issues of nonviolent activism and private issues such as her separation from Mary Meigs in 1969 after sharing their lives together for fifteen years. Upon their deaths, Deming was left with the regret of not being more open with them about their personal lives and their specific struggles as lesbians.

Deming interpreted her marginalization at the WRL memorial service for Mygatt and Witherspoon as reflective of a larger patriarchal and heteronormative culture in the pacifist community. In a *WIN* magazine editorial, WRL staff member and later director

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[394] Deming to Margaret Rockwell Finch, April 16, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 905. She also stated that she believed their relationship was sexual, but that even if it was not, "They were most certainly in love with one another. And that, to me, makes them lesbians." See also, Deming to Nancy Manahan, April 21, 1981, *BDSL*, Folder 462. She told Manahan that Mygatt and Witherspoon likely "had very few lesbian friends, if any—or nonlesbian friends to whom they could reveal themselves as who they really were." She added that she wished she had thought to ask them about that aspect of their lesbian identity before they died.

[395] Early, *A World Without War*, 5-26.

[396] For their correspondence see: *BDSL*, Folder 461-2. See also the Tracy D. Mygatt and Frances Witherspoon Papers, *SCPC*, Box 2, "Letter/s from Barbara Deming, 1965-1973". Deming's letter to Mygatt about the end of her shared life with Mary Meigs is dated December 26, 1969 and is in both collections.

of the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute, Wendy Schwartz noted that Deming attended the January 1974 memorial but was not listed on the program as an official speaker for the service. She wrote that Deming "above all others is the role model for young pacifist women like myself, and she is the spiritual daughter of Tracy and Frances."[397] Deming wrote Schwartz agreeing that "I am, as you say—and as *you* are—one of their spiritual daughters." She also informed Swartz that she had intended to speak at the memorial, but "when it turned out that certain people had been invited in advance to speak, I was silent. A womanly silence, I suppose it must be called—on both our parts."[398]

Marty Jezer, an editor at *WIN*, had also written Deming at the time of the memorial service to thank her for her writings on "women and androgyny" and to express his admiration of Witherspoon, Mygatt, and their WRL co-founder Jessie Wallace Hughan. He told Deming that he was eager for her and others to "expand upon what you said you about androgyny and trace the feminist impact on nonviolent theory."[399] Deming's decision to speak more openly about her sexuality and its impact on her understanding of nonviolence coincided with the loss of Mygatt and Witherspoon, Schwartz's letter about being their "spiritual daughter," and Jezer's desire to learn more about the relationship between nonviolence, androgyny, and feminism. As she told Jezer, his letter made her "cry—good tears through which to see a new year begin."[400]

For decades Deming had remained silent about living in a heterosexist society and working in a heteronormative movement. She had chosen to remain silent on a personal

[397] Letters Column, *WIN 10*, no. 6 (February 21, 1974), *BDSL*, Folder 462.
[398] Deming to Schwartz February 19, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 462. Emphasis in the original.
[399] Jezer to Deming December 23, 1973, *BDSL*, Folder 848.
[400] Deming to Jezer, January 1, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 848.

level in the 1930s as her own words of truth stared back at her from a wastepaper basket, publically in the 1950s when consistently referring to Mary Meigs as her friend rather than her life partner, to a much wider audience in the 1960s as Andrea Dworkin condemned lesbianism during their televised interview, and again nearly a decade later as she decided not to speak of Tracy Mygatt and Frances Witherspoon's "love for each other" during their memorial service.[401] Those moments of silence help illustrate the particular risks, fears, and tensions that characterized Deming's decision to avoid the public confrontations that accompany a stand against personal injustices. While she had spent the last fifteen years standing up for the oppressed, she had often allowed her more intimate injustices to remain unchallenged. Just as she decided to confront her experiences of sexism through her feminist activism and writing, her advocacy quickly merged with the causes of the lesbian, gay, transgendered, and queer community of which she belonged.

Deming connected her experiences in the nonviolent movement with the emerging gay liberation movement in the pages of *WIN* with the publication of her exchange of letters with Bradford Lyttle about human sexuality. Lyttle had coordinated the 1963 Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Peace Walk, had traveled to Saigon with her and Muste in 1966, and was one of Deming's long-time colleagues in the pacifist community. In her letters with Lyttle she explained her theory of human sexuality and its relationship to the androgyny of nonviolence. She stated her belief that "people were bisexual – or rather, as I would put it, they were simply sexual," and that the purpose of sexuality was "to serve in building a community that nurtures us" and not only to

[401] Manahan, "Future Old Maids and Pacifist Agitators," 13.

procreate. She explained to Lyttle that "sexuality is given us so that we can commune with one another – and with our universe."[402] This philosophy led her to an understanding of sexuality that entailed intimacy with all people regardless of biological difference or similarity.

In those letters, Deming challenged the utilitarian procreative perspective on sexuality. She conceded that while there is a regenerative aspect to sexuality, "the creation of children is not the only reason for our sexuality."[403] She saw the connection between procreation and sexuality as debilitating. For Deming, when societies linked sexuality first to recreation (children) and second to recreation (enjoyment), it became easy to ascribe abnormality to homosexual relationships. As Deming envisioned it, if people started to see the creation of loving communities as a sexual need, then "Difference in gender would matter less and less. Our sexuality would be freed from repression."[404] It was that concept of repressive heteronormativity that Deming challenged in those letters. In concluding her thoughts on sexuality and bearing children, she stated that people are instinctually sexual and that "reproduction follows from does

[402] These letters were published in *WIN*, two letters at a time on October 10, 1974 and October 30, 1975 respectively. This was during the dispute with *WIN* about its treatment of feminist writers. The collected correspondence appears in Deming, *Remembering*, 68-103. Deming titled the letters *The Purpose of Sexuality*. The quotations appear on pages 85, 93, and 101 respectively. Deming's concept of the community building function of sexuality has been noted in discussions of how the gay community responded to the AIDS crisis in the absence of health services. See Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini, *Love The Sin: Sexual Regulation And The Limits of Religious Tolerance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 145-7, 123. Another similarity with Deming is their belief that "it is not enough to say, 'gay is good'…we want also to say gay sex is good; it does good," 123.
[403] Deming, "The Purpose of Sexuality", in *Remembering*, 76.
[404] Ibid., 103.

not give rise to it."[405] In other words, the desire to have children was not the driving force behind sexual desire.

The patriarchal distortion of sexuality was another topic Deming and Lyttle discussed in their correspondence. Deming operated on the presumption that "If society did not try to make us all heterosexuals – and if patriarchy were dispelled…my guess is that we would find ourselves quite naturally attracted to either sex." She saw the prevalence of heterosexuality as a societal creation rather than a natural state and asserted that "homosexuality was as natural as heterosexuality."[406] Deming determined that if human sexuality were left to natural rather than societal forces, bisexuality would be the norm. Sexual attraction between people as unrelated to gender was central to her understanding of sexuality. She perceived procreative, heteronormative suppression as preventing people from seeing sexuality as a pathway to building partnerships. She envisioned an expansion of such partnerships if sociocultural forces would become supportive of sexual relationships outside the strict confines of heterosexuality. Deming believed that people were "able to find ourselves in one another—whatever our gender" and that "we are, all of us 'members one of another', and of all that is."[407] It is this ability to recognize one's self in the Other that links Deming's theories on human sexuality to theories of nonviolence.

She defined the "root of all our difficulties" in "this very belief that we should feel differently toward one another" because of our sex, gender, sexuality, or more simply, our differences. By merging her theories of nonviolence and sexuality she came

[405] Deming, "The Purpose of Sexuality" in *Remembering*, 91.
[406] Ibid., 76, 68.
[407] Ibid., 102, 74.

to believe that "sexuality can dissolve the boundaries of our individual selves."[408] She saw sexuality as a means of dismantling walls rather than erecting them, and this was premised on the nonviolent tenet that the Other is a part of instead of apart from one's self. As she expressed it in a poem she included with her first letter to Lyttle, the "Spirit of love that blows against our flesh…Erasing every boundary that we accept" with a "Spirit that cracks our single selves."[409] Deming believed that a broader embodiment of sexuality could crack unitary beings into multiple ones, revealing other false divisions in the process. This reincarnation of nonviolent direct action through one's sexual life is consistent with her Gandhian definition of nonviolence as a means of "clinging to truth" in order to bring about societal change.

Lyttle's response to Deming demonstrates the impact of her ideas on pacifists who initially disagreed with her ideas. He began their correspondence with the impression that "homosexual relationships were 'substitute relationships'" and that "Gayness seems to have no reasonable biological origin."[410] A few months and many conversations later, Lyttle maintained his belief in the biological importance of heterosexuality. However, he did tell Deming, and the readers of their letters in *WIN*, that although he and others remained unconvinced by some of her arguments on sexuality "you could convince them, as you have me, that androgyny is a higher ideal than heterosexuality, and should become a social goal. Then, they will support your political

[408] Deming, "The Purpose of Sexuality" in *Remembering*, 73, 76.
[409] Ibid., 77.
[410] Ibid., 68-69. For more on Lyttle's letters see the Bradford Lyttle Papers, *SCPC*, especially Box 45, Folder "Deming Exchange #2"and Box 46 Folder "Fem. MS #1 Dem. Notes".

work."[411] Lyttle underestimated the resistance other pacifists had to Deming's ideas about the benefits of androgyny. A longtime subscriber wrote to *WIN* complaining that Deming had used "a real tantrum, to push a nice man like Brad to subscribe to an 'androgynous ideal.'" She found androgyny to be "the stuff of childhood dreams, when we are too busy discovering ourselves to admit that we are different from momma and daddy and sisters and brothers."[412] Despite the resistance, Deming continued to share her ideas about androgyny and sexuality with other pacifists.

Deming's correspondence with Ray Robinson, Jr., who had been jailed with her and Lyttle in Albany, Georgia in 1963, illustrates additional struggles she encountered as a lesbian advocate for an androgynous society. She published excerpts of those conversations under the title "An Exchange of Letters: Confronting One's Own Oppression" in *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*. In their letters, Deming revealed how her sexuality informed her activism, and Robinson reflected on the tensions within the African American community about homosexuality. Deming confided to Robinson that she had "been at another kind of bottom…the bottom of being a homosexual. Facing always the threat of being despised for that." She told him that "I am not black, but because I am homosexual I know in my deepest being what it feels like to be despised."[413]

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[411] Deming, "The Purpose of Sexuality" in *Remembering*, 80. One pacifist who supported Deming's views on androgyny was David Dellinger whom she worked with as an editor at *Liberation*. Dellinger told Deming that he had been "advocating androgyny (including at least openness to bi-sexuality) for some time but..it is not necessary for everyone to merge into a total sameness of sex." See Dellinger to Deming, January 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 859.

[412] Barbara Walker, Letters, *WIN 11*, no. 39 (November 20, 1975): 2.

[413] Deming, "Confronting One's Own Oppression" in *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 121. These letters are found on pages 117-148. Included is an exchange between a young lesbian, Beth Dingman, who was visiting the interracial, revolutionary farm that Ray Robinson and Cheryl Buswell-Robinson ran. At one

The context of Deming's conversations with Robinson about her sexuality is related to a tradition in the African American Freedom Movement to oppose nonviolent tactics by repeatedly connecting pacifism with effeminacy. According to political theorist Ali A. Mazrui, "Before he was assassinated and became a black martyr, Martin Luther King was sometimes denounced by some of his more militant black critics as Martin Luther Queen."[414] Additionally, Adam Clayton Powell, the African American, Democratic Party Congressman from Harlem, New York, threatened to plant stories in the press that King was a homosexual, while others said derisively that openly-gay civil rights activists like James Baldwin and Bayard Rustin would be better off leading a homosexual rights campaign.[415] Comments like those illustrate the wider movement's fear of androgyny or any other intervention that critiqued the connection between masculinity and nonviolence.

The fears of linking androgyny and nonviolence in the African American community can be gleaned from the work of Marlon Riggs and Essex Hemphill such as the film *Tongues Untied* and the book *Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men*.[416] The two works reflect each other, with Riggs's poems appearing in *Brother to*

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point Beth states that she wants to start " … awakening the society to the fact that we are not queer, but are just human beings like everyone else." (125) Although this is a challenge to Michael Warner's theory about the trouble of making only some queer identities normal. His larger concern is with the ostracizing of queer communities once a certain queer lifestyle, such as same-sex marriage, becomes normalized. His theory is consistent with Lisa Duggan's concept of homonormativity and Jasbir Puar's reinterpretation of that term with her own concept of homonationalism. Both Duggan and Puar see the normalizing of certain queer culture as a new way to oppress those in the larger queer community that do not fit the normal or nationalist molds. See Warner, *The Trouble With Normal*, Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, and Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003).

[414] Mazrui, "Towards Androgynous Liberation," 184.

[415] D'Emilio, "Homophobia and the Trajectory of Postwar American Radicalism," 92, 98.

[416] Essex Hemphill, *Brother to Brother: New Writings By Black Gay Men* (Washington, D.C.: Redbone Press, 2007) and Marlon Riggs, *Tongues Untied*, 1989. The connection between oppression by heterosexists and

Brother and Hemphill's poetry appearing in *Tongues Untied*. Of particular poignancy is their deconstruction of the societal portrayal of African American men as representations of phallic prowess and virile instruments of penetration. This stereotype contributed to the rejection of androgyny within the African American Freedom Movement. Although Riggs and Hemphill use those images to show how the predominately white gay male community continued to objectify and demean African American, gay men, it was that same phallic masculinity that the nonviolent movement did not want to lose. Riggs and Hemphill's work supports a desire for respect within the gay community that would include a diminution of their physiological manhood, while male leaders in the African American Freedom Movement feared any reduction of manhood, physiological and otherwise. As some in the African American community tried to gain respect for being a queen, others avoided being seen as effeminate by refusing to embrace any possible connections between traditional femininity and nonviolence.

As this discussion suggests, a consistent criticism of nonviolence in the African-American community was that it emasculated African American men. Due to the severe oppression and brutality of slavery in the United States, African American men had been working for a century to establish their manhood in the eyes of white men, and in their

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oppression by racists is a common one, but some have warned of its dangers. See, Jakobsen and Pellegrini, *Love The Sin*, 75-79. They argue that the dangers of linking rights for sexual and racial minorities are greater than the advantages. They urge queer rights advocates to eschew the tactic of claiming rights based on "essentialized and naturalized notions of sexuality" that are rooted in the origins of sexual identity rather than the actions of sexuality. Additionally, they call for a new secular morality as a remedy to the religious debate about queer rights. Deming's queer theory of nonviolence occupied similar ground, and it is her secular-basis of nonviolence for which she has received renewed scholarly attention. See Chernus, *American Nonviolence,* 182-191. The queer theory that is proffered in *Love The Sin* positions religion as an obstacle to social justice, whereas religion has long served as the stepping stone for gaining approval of nonviolent protest to advance social change. However, by naming nonviolence as androgynous and removing the religious grounding, Deming put into practice this aspect of Jakobsen and Pellegrini's queer theory.

[416] Mazrui, "Towards Androgynous Liberation," 184.

own communities. Opponents of nonviolence used the submissive qualities of nonviolence to associate it with effeminacy and an African American man's inability to defend himself and his family. As noted above, some critics such as Monroe, North Carolina NAACP president Robert F. Williams, saw the nonviolent direct action tactics of the civil rights movement as representing African Americans as "the sissy race of all mankind."[417] Having to always refute the depiction of pacifism as weak, proponents of nonviolence linked the suffering and courage to receive the blows of one's oppressors as manly, virile, and an expression of true masculinity.[418] Rather than recognizing the blending of stereotypic masculine assertiveness and feminine sympathy, the early leaders of nonviolent direct actions in the United States rejected any association with femininity or androgyny and especially homosexuality.

There were some African American activists who were more open to criticizing the heterosexist culture of the movement. For example, in the exchange of letters between Robinson and Deming, he shared his experiences of heterosexism in the African-American community, and wrote that he had become supportive of same-sex relationships despite having believed and explicitly acting otherwise for much of his life. He wrote, "I'm too was a person who beat up 'punks,' take their money, kicked their asses and laugh at it. The System done a very good job on me as well as others as far as anything 'queer' must be put in it's place—Beat the shit out of 'it.'[419] This admission, like Deming's sharing of her personal struggles with coming out, reveal the trust that

[417] Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 141. He titled Chapter Six, "The Sissy Race of All Mankind."
[418] Sedgwick, "How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay," 75. This is where psychiatrists consider the praise of "nonviolent qualities" as a "family pathology." The professional categorizing of nonviolence as both effeminate and pathological reveals the depth of the gendered and subversive nature of nonviolence as an androgynous force. Those psychiatric assessments also demonstrate that the public disassociation of nonviolence and masculinity was not confined to the layperson, but could also be found in the academy.
[419] Deming, "Confronting One's Own Oppression" in *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 140.

characterized their letters. As their correspondence continued, they discussed the role that racial and sexual pride had played in their lives. Robinson said that he supported the "Revolutionary Quality in every one" regardless of sex, gender, or sexuality and he encouraged Deming to take a leadership role with him in the broader nonviolent movement.[420] Despite Robinson's change of heart about heterosexism, Deming told him she was unconvinced that he saw sexual pride and racial pride as equally important spokes on the wheel of social justice. She asked him, "Do you really entirely believe that this spoke counts—that this pride counts as black pride counts?"[421]

The African American, feminist, lesbians of the Combahee River Collective shared Deming's concerns about the patriarchal and heterosexist beliefs held by many in the African American Freedom Movement. In their 1977 public statement, they quoted a 1970s Black nationalist pamphlet which stated that "Women cannot do the same things as men—they are made by nature to function differently. Equality of men and women is something that cannot happen even in the abstract world."[422] The Black nationalists further rejected lesbian women for their challenges to heteronormativity and male power. The mainstream Women's Liberation Movement which was mostly white and middle-class also marginalized Black feminists, and had its own divisions along the hetero/queer divide.

Still, like Ray Robinson Jr., there were other African American men who saw Black and gay liberation as complementary, revolutionary ideologies. In his introduction

[420] Deming, "Confronting One's Own Oppression" in *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 140.
[421] Ibid., 132.
[422] Zillah Eisenstein, ed., *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978), 210-18, 215.

to *Brother to Brother*, Essex Hemphill briefly quoted from a 1970 speech by Huey Newton, co-founder of the Black Panthers, concerning the women's and gay liberation movements. In that speech Newton reflected Robinson's change of heart about the queer community by calling for the black liberation movement to "unite with them in a revolutionary fashion." Newton even posited the thought that "maybe a homosexual could be the most revolutionary" member of the coalition. He further echoed Robinson's statements with his comment that "The terms 'faggot' and 'punk' should be deleted from our vocabulary, and especially we should not attach names normally designed for homosexuals to men who are enemies of the people."[423] Although it is clear from these statements that there was not a consensus on the revolutionary place for women and queers in the African American Freedom Movement, it problematizes the depiction of the movement as unified along misogynistic and heterosexist ideologies.

On a personal level, Deming's decision to include her exchange of letters with Robinson marked a shift in her activism toward lesbian rights advocacy. In her introduction to their correspondence, she recounted feeling as if something were missing from *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives* as she began to organize materials for it. She remarked that although she had included essays about the women's movement, "I had written none about the struggle that is particularly my own—the struggle of lesbian women." She noted that she had already decided to dedicate the book "to my lesbian sisters," but that she "had not felt free enough in spirit" to originally include the exchange

[423] Huey Newton's August 15, 1970 speech, "The Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements" can be found in Toni Morrison, ed., *To Die For The People: The Writings of Huey P. Newton* (San Francisco, California: City Lights Books, 2009), 153-156.

of letters with Robinson. She eventually concluded that their correspondence came to represent for her the moments "in which I *begin* to speak." [424]

A topic that stood out in their exchange is Deming's discussion of how being a lesbian influenced her decision to become involved in the nonviolent movement. In terms of marching for civil rights, she shared with Robinson that "I didn't walk out of some sense that it would be nice to help the downtrodden; I walked because I am a nigger too. And no one should be a nigger. And I went to Vietnam because you and I are gooks too. No one should be a gook." She confided in him that she had begun to recognize that she had finally become comfortable enough to publically confront her own oppression of being a lesbian. She told him that through her actions in the nonviolent movement she had become more courageous. "But then—I had this new encounter with a bully, with a series of bullies." Rather than being labeled "a nigger-lover this time, or un-American, a traitor; I was called a degenerate." These comments were in reference to a child custody dispute with Jane Gapen's ex-husband that ended with an out of court settlement in 1970.[425] Deming revealed that "In short, my pride was for the first time, perhaps, assaulted in its depth." She shared with Robinson her belief that one's sexuality is "so at

[424] Deming, "Confronting One's Own Oprression" in *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 117 and dedication page. Emphasis in original. 1972 is also the year that Deming returned to writing about her 1950-51 trip to Europe. She had started to write it just after the initial trip, but was discouraged to continue writing by early reviews from her friends. Twenty years later, she came to see their critiques as being more about publically naming herself as a lesbian in the 1950s than anything else. She described the final product, *A Humming Under My Feet*, as "a book about my struggle to accept my sexual self" and "daring to write…very nakedly, in my own personal voice." See, *Kalliope* Interview, 41-2, *BDSL*, Folder 14.

[425] In 1990 Jane Gapen recalled of those hearings an "Intense radicalization that Bobbie had as a woman occurred then." She went on to say that Deming's civil rights and peace activism had somehow masked the oppression of women. She also remembered that the first letter she wrote to anyone after being in a body cast for eight months after her car accident in 1971 was to Rita May Brown about the custody case. *BDSL*, T196. See McDaniel, *I Change, I Change*, 20 for her statement that, "In a letter to Dave Dellinger, [Deming] described how [Jane's husband] told Jane 'right in front of the kids' that he 'forbids them to have any more contact with the Bull Dike [sic] friend."

the heart" of one's being that the "vulnerability" of this type of "psychic assault" was immeasurable. She admitted that at that point she did not fully understand that type of confrontation, but that it had "exhausted my courage, as it had not been exhausted by any of the other confrontations, even those in which I literally risked my life."[426]

Deming went on to recount how relatively minor incidents with law enforcement officers at trials for anti-war protests and various disputes related to her refusal to pay federal income taxes had unsettled her in ways she had not felt before. She attributed her loss of courage in the face of confrontation to the idea, "that any bully or group of bullies now recalls to me those other bullies who touched my pride where I could not bear to have it touched." She asked Robinson if he remembered Brad Lyttle telling an African American man that "he should not think merely about his own problem as a black man" but that he should also protest at the local military bases in the South. Like her own conversation with C.B. King in Albany, she recalled the man telling Lyttle, "that while the white man had his foot on his throat, his efforts had first of all to be to get that foot off." Deming saw herself in a similar position with misogyny and heterosexim as the feet on her throat. She believed that if she could find her "proper pride for this struggle" then she would be "much more able to bear a little weight for others—whether like me or unlike me in their oppression." Near the end of that letter she reminded Robinson that he "once thought that we were sick people…needing to be shown the true womanly path," and that "what I needed was not to find my pride in my sexual nature but to find a cure for it." She ended the letter by telling him that "there are millions and millions of us. Have been billions of us down through history," and that the relative invisibility of

[426] Deming, "Confronting One's Own Oppression" in *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 121-22, 130-31.

sexuality "makes it in a lot of ways easier for us, in some way more difficult—because we can lead divided lives, and this does peculiar things to the psyche."[427]

When her letters with Robinson are read in conjunction with her 1971 WRL speech "On Anger," the private correspondence and public statement tell different stories even though Deming wrote them within months of each other. In her speech, she recalled that she used to answer questions about why she marched for civil rights by telling the story of a Black woman who worked for her family and the "painful awareness" of realizing that the woman had "led too little of her own life, too much simply of ours." She told her colleagues in the nonviolent movement that she had come to realize that the "more fundamental explanation" of her activism in the South was that she was "protesting that there is any such classification as a second-class citizen—and protesting it in my own name." To the audience this most clearly referred to the second-class citizenship of being a woman, but not necessarily the additional subjugation of being a lesbian. Deming immediately followed this new explanation of her activism with a hypothesis that many white members in the audience also joined the movement because they "knew in your souls something of what it is to be a nigger."[428] However, she did not share with the audience that being a lesbian helped her to understand racial oppression.

The difference in her private and public statements indicate her internal struggle to establish her footing as a queer, female, feminist, nonviolent theorist in the heterosexist, patriarchal culture of the United States. In her speech she did explain, "If

[427] Deming, "Confronting One's Own Oppression" in *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*, 131-32. For a queer theory approach to the pitfalls of comparing race, sex, gender, and sexual equality see Jakobsen and Pellegrini, *Love The Sin*, especially Chapter Three "Not Born That Way."
[428] Deming, "On Anger" in *Deming Reader*, 216.

you were gay, and known to be, you even knew what it was to receive the hate stare." Despite this eloquent phrasing she did not explicitly name herself as a lesbian as she did in her letters to Robinson. In the very next paragraph she called on the audience to "take upon ourselves the further struggle of confronting our own most particular, own personal oppression…in the company of others." She argued that "as pacifists it was much easier for you to control the anger that was in you, to transmute it, to be nonviolent in *this* struggle—where you could deal with that anger by analogy." She ended that section of her speech by stating that "one of the main recommendations I would make at this conference is that we all resist that temptation."[429] She spoke the same emotional truth of the words she wrote to Robinson, yet she did not identify herself as a lesbian. She also did not share with the audience that she marched in the South because she had personally received "the hate stare" from people who knew or guessed that she was a lesbian. It took two more years before she publically named herself as a lesbian, and over a decade before she spoke publically about the heterosexism within the culture of the U.S. pacifist movement and her fear of reprisal from her colleagues.[430] The variation in her public and private narratives points to the intensity of her internal fears and the lingering pain that resulted from the hatred she felt was directed at her.

Deming's conversation with her mother about the dedication of *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives* in which the letters with Robinson appeared further illustrate the risks she took in revealing her sexual identity. She confided in her mother that she chose to name herself as a lesbian in the book's dedication because of her personal need to claim

[429] Deming, "On Anger" in *Deming Reader*, 216. Emphasis in the original. See also the anger of "one's right to be oneself, fully oneself. It touches one's pride in the deepest sense.", 214.
[430] Barbara Deming, "A New Spirit Moves Among Us" in *Prisons That Could Not Hold* (San Francisco, California: Spinster's Ink, 1985), 195.

her identity publically "and out of response to the same deep need in my lesbian sisters." Although her writing style and political advocacy paint her as a confident and courageous person, the letter to her mother illuminates the trepidation that accompanied her initial decision in 1973 to come out as a lesbian even to a group of supportive women whom she knew very well. She recalled that despite being in a safe space, "The room stood still. I turned hot and cold. I felt as though I were coming in and out of ether. Every muscle of my psyche had learned so well to resist speaking those words."[431] Those fears informed her earlier decisions to hide her sexual identity when in public and even at times from her family and close friends. She thanked her mother for keeping her teenage love affairs with women "free of that poison" emanating from a society that "smiles on wives but not on lesbians and wishes us not to be so personal as to exist." However, she admitted that when she fell in love with Mary Meigs in 1954 and then with Jane Gapen in 1969, "I didn't even tell you, my mother, in honest words, and I didn't tell friends who were close, close to me." She named this desire to hide her true self from those closest to her, "madness." Hiding prevented her from feeling "complete" and allowed her to continue "disrespecting myself for being that unspeakable word—a lesbian."[432]

This insight into Barbara Deming's emotional reality helps explain the treacherous passages she negotiated on her queer pilgrimage to androgynous nonviolence. Her conceptualization of nonviolence as androgynous emerged from her

[431] Deming to her mother July 17, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 462. See also Deming's letter to Rita Mae Brown on December 1, 1972 in which she refers to Brown asking her why she has always been able to stand up for others who are oppressed but not for lesbians. "Will you do it for yourself and for me and other Lesbians/women?...[instead of] sidestepping your own oppression and that of other Lesbians. It's the most dangerous one to face, I can't really blame you but until you do face it, I can't really trust you.", McDaniel, *I Change, I Change*, n.50, 25.

[432] Deming to her mother July 17, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 462. She lived with Mary Meigs from 1954-1969, and Jane Gapen from 1969 until her death in 1984. That same summer and throughout the rest of the year, was when Deming was corresponding with Brad Lyttle about the nature of human sexuality.

experiences of being queer in a heterosexist society. The culture of U.S. pacifism that initially influenced her philosophy of nonviolence in the 1960s continued to shape her views, but the criticisms presented by feminist writers of the 1970s propelled her to further interrogate traditional theories of nonviolence. Deming expressed her desire to "reinvent" and challenge nonviolence from her earliest writings, but her queering of nonviolence by intimately linking it with androgyny did not emerge until she decided to come out as a lesbian.

Androgyny as "The Very Genius of Nonviolence"

Deming began to publically discuss the androgynous nature of nonviolence as part of a talk about feminist novels at Washington and Lee University, and then at a Catholic Worker meeting in early 1973. She later titled that essay "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle" for the June 1973 issue of *Liberation*. Androgyny was not the focus of the piece. It appeared as a side comment within her talks and in the essay itself she placed her comments on the androgyny of nonviolence in parentheses. However, it was not a passing description, but rather a clarion call for its recognition. In the section of the article where she discussed androgynous nonviolence she argued that nonviolent actions combine traditional femininity and masculinity which "have long been treated as distinct," and necessitate asserting one's self while maintaining sympathy. She envisioned nonviolent acts as inherently joining the masculine and feminine which then "demonstrates them to be indivisible, and so restores human community." This redemptive and "revolutionary" nature led Deming to conclude that androgyny was "the very genius of nonviolence."[433] Although her comments on nonviolence as an

[433] Deming, "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle" in *Deming Reader*, 229-230.

androgynous force went mostly unanswered by pacifists, it was this essay that brought her to the attention of many feminists and led to her meeting with Adrienne Rich, Mary Daly, and Robin Morgan.

Deming's depiction of nonviolence as androgynous merged her identities as a feminist, a lesbian, and a theorist of nonviolence. Through reading and writing feminist works and journeying through the process of publically confronting her oppression as a lesbian, she came to alter her understanding of nonviolence. This redefinition of the term brought an end to her prior masculinization of nonviolent direct action as a way "to assert one's manhood" which was so evident in her 1968 essay "On Revolution and Equilibrium." At first glance this may appear to be a clean break with her past conceptualizations of nonviolence, but a precursor of androgyny is certainly recognizable in "On Revolution and Equilibrium." It can be seen in her ability to meld two seemingly diametric ideals into one, such as power and meekness, calmness and obstruction. The concepts of equilibrium and androgyny themselves are in fact quite similar. Each seeks balance, each embodies togetherness.

Deming understood nonviolence to be a political act of androgyny, by combining what were traditionally thought of as feminine and masculine qualities to further a campaign for social justice. Her theory queered the conventional understanding of a nonviolent warrior, foot-soldier, or other concept aimed at masculinizing nonviolence. Deming rejected those depictions of nonviolence and instead said activists should "seek to return to a state of androgyny which we have lost."[434] She described nonviolence as

[434] Deming, "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle" in *Deming Reader*, 229. For a discussion on the masculinization of nonviolence see Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 70. Of particular note here is the chapter

neither pure assertiveness nor supininity, but an artful blend of both cultural stereotypes of gender. Deming's portrayal of nonviolence as androgynous thus subverted the dominant gender and sexual paradigms.

As queer theorists have argued, androgyny and other terms such as genderqueer and third-gender invoke a fluidity of gender rather than a simple binary. Another description is the indigenous term two-spirited which is used to "signify a fluidity of gender roles and sexuality beyond the dualistic Western notions of male/female and homosexual/heterosexual."[435] All of these terms along with many others help to queer the heteronormative, gender binary that is common in modern western notions of civilization. The activist tenor of these terms reveals the political and social justice nature of androgyny and its relative forms. Deming saw nonviolence as operating on similar principles. She did not want to claim nonviolence as a feminine power or perpetuate the neo-masculine claim of the nonviolent mercenary.

The term androgyny itself is commonly defined as being half male and half female. This is based on the Greek roots *andro-* for male and *gyn-* for female. Prior to the use of hermaphrodite and now intersex, an androgyne referred to a person who had

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subheading "More Nearly Androgynous Than Average," which is a quote taken from a heterosexual couple who switched traditional gender roles. Marion Bromley was active in street protests and spending time in jail and Ernest Bromley cared for the children and did secretarial work for the radical pacifist organization, the *Peacemakers*. Mollin argues that the Bromleys were the exception to the rule, with most men in the movement accentuating their traditional masculinity and most women relegated to the sidelines. For a discussion about "manliness" and World War I conscientious objectors see, Early, *A World Without War*, 106, 192.

[435] For information on two-spirited see, Karma L. Walters, Jane M. Simoni, Pamela E. Horwath, "Sexual Orientation Bias Experiences and Service Needs of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Two-Spirited American Indians," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services 13*, no. 1/2 (2001): 133-150, 135. For a more thorough discussion of the term see, Sabine Lang, *Men as Women, Women As Men: Changing Gender in Native American Cultures* (University of Texas Press, 1998), especially, the preface and XIII-XVII.

both male and female genitalia.[436] The current use of the term androgyne is more fluid and less rooted in the fe/male binary. To be androgynous can refer to a blending of the dominant culture's stereotypical understanding of what it means to be fe/male. This could express itself by combining the fashions traditionally associated with both sexes in order to exhibit a gender-neutral appearance. It could also refer to interweaving the culturally ascribed and hegemonic gender roles, for instance, male nurses or female fire fighters. In other words, androgyny can express itself physically and/or culturally, resulting in a melding of traditional concepts of male and female. While androgyny is an ancient concept that has undergone many changes, Deming used the term as a political strategy in an effort to deconstruct fe/male stereotypes in order to help bring about a new society that encouraged people to see beyond the confines of their biological sex and sociocultural gender norms.

Examples of androgyny as a tool for social justice and its role in gender and sexual politics is readily visible in the contemporary transgender community as evidenced in Judith Halberstam's *In A Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* and in Leslie Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues: A Novel*. These works show how butch lesbians and transgendered people exhibit a gender flexibility that purposefully challenges cultural norms of gender and sexuality. Transgender and transsexual resistance to sociocultural norms demonstrate how embracing androgyny can challenge the social, cultural, and historical construction of gender. Halberstam refers to "bodily flexibility" as a "queer program for social change," which is similar to Deming's

[436] For a history of the eighteenth-century one-sex theory that saw human beings as a single sex instead of two, despite the physical differences between men and women see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender From the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard University Press, 1999).

vision of androgynous nonviolence as a radical force for social justice.[437] In *Stone Butch Blues*, Feinberg remarks on the revolutionary nature of gender flexibility when a biologically female character in the novel taking male hormones comments; "It's like I'm not taken for a man or a woman anymore. They see me as something in between."[438] Feinberg and Halberstam's analyses add another layer to Deming's definition of nonviolence as androgynous. Their work shows how the social unrest that occurs as a result of physical androgyny is consistent with the "creative tension" that occurs when nonviolent resisters purposefully embody the masculine and feminine qualities of nonviolence.[439]

Contemporary understandings of androgyny are rooted in Susan Bem's 1974 psychological study of androgyny where she established a set a questions to determine a person's position on a feminine/masculine spectrum called the Bem Sex-Role Inventory. Bem argues that an androgynous person has a close to equal mix of masculine and feminine psychology, and that this blend enables an androgynous individual to be more adaptive in a wide variety of social situations.[440] This positive understanding of androgyny continues to dominate the definition forty years later. For example, in a 2004 article in the *Journal of Gender Studies* the authors proposed that both sexes "may benefit

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[437] Judith Halberstam, *In A Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York University Press, 2005), 18-19

[438] Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues: A Novel* (Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books, 1993), 149. For examples of how butch lesbians, and transgendered people exhibit a "gender flexibility" that purposefully challenges cultural norms of biological sex, sexuality, and gender see, Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Harvard University Press, 2002).

[439] "Creative tension" is the term Martin Luther King, Jr. used in his 1963 "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" to describe how disruptive nonviolent direct action encourages a stalwart party to negotiate with its opposition. King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" can be found in King, *Why We Can't Wait*.

[440] Sandra Bem, "The Measurement of Psychological Androgyny," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 42*, (1974): 155–162, Bem, Sex "Role Adaptability: One Consequence of Psychological Androgyny," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 31*, (1975): 634–643, and Bem, *The Lenses of Gender* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1993).

by embracing positive androgyny and the applications of androgynous virtues to a still largely gender-stereotyped and patriarchal world" in order to bring about "the utopian society" that Sandra Bem had envisioned.[441] The concept of androgyny providing the keys to unlock the doors of a more peaceful society is what Barbara Deming saw in the androgynous qualities of nonviolence.

Deming's original incarnation of androgynous nonviolence came from her reading of Carolyn G. Heilbrun's *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*. Heilbrun, an English professor at Columbia University, analyzed literature and mythology for examples of androgyny in order to argue that androgyny was an ancient "ideal" whose time had arrived in the 1970s in the United States. In her book, Heilbrun often refers to "the prison of gender" as a way to contrast the possibilities that androgyny offered to men and women as opposed to the rigidity that resulted from falsely separating what is "feminine" from what is "masculine." Heilbrun argues that androgyny embodies "a spirit of reconciliation between the sexes."[442] Deming shared that belief and tried to use its resonance with nonviolent principles to convince pacifists that nonviolent actions were inherently androgynous. She also urged feminist separatists to embrace androgyny as way to bridge the division between the sexes instead of distancing themselves from men and masculinity.

Like Deming, Heilbrun recognized a connection between androgyny and sexuality. Heilbrun states that discussions about androgyny bring up people's fears of

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[441] Brenda Mae Woodhill, and Curtis A. Samuels, "Desirable And Undesirable Androgyny: A Prescription For The Twenty-First Century," *Journal of Gender Studies 13*, no. 1 (March, 2004): 15–28. For another study see, Stephen C. Smith, John B. Ellis, and Trisha A. Benson, "Gender, Gender Roles, and Attitudes Toward Violence: Are Viewpoints Changing?" *Social Behavior and Personality 29*, no. 1 (2001): 43-48.
[442] Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Toward A Recognition of Androgyny* (New York, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), ix-x, xiv.

"homosexuality or the appearance of homosexuality." She explains that opponents of androgyny warn of "impotence and frigidity" resulting from men becoming less sexually aggressive and women "making themselves less 'feminine' and compliant." Heilbrun counters that just as homosexuality and bisexuality would become more accepted in an androgynous future, "heterosexual love freed from ritualized attitudes" about appropriate roles and behaviors would also be enriched. [443] Despite the potential benefits that androgyny offered to human sexuality, Heilbrun was cognizant of the stiff resistance and fear that accompanied challenges to sexual norms.

While the nonviolent movement largely ignored the debates about androgyny, the Women's Liberation Movement engaged androgyny on multiple levels. There was both an internal debate among supporters of androgyny and an external debate with those who opposed it. There were feminists who welcomed dramatic changes to sexual norms but questioned the theories of androgyny, and feminists who saw an androgynous society as a key to women's liberation. Mary Vetterling-Braggin's edited collection *"Femininity," "Masculinity," and "Androgyny": A Modern Philosophical Discussion* outlines the debates. Vetterling-Braggin presents the discussion of androgyny in two sections, psychological and behavioral. The essays addressing psychological androgyny concern themselves with distinguishing biological sex from the "psychosocial" construction of gender. Those collected essays include viewpoints that both refute and support the idea that certain "character traits" are inherently masculine or feminine. The essays addressing behavioral androgyny focus on sex roles and actions rather than mental dispositions, and address the sexual division of labor, parental duties, and whether or not

[443] Heilbrun, *Toward A Recognition of Androgyny* , xii. For examples of resistance to androgyny see "Part Three: The Bloomsbury Group," 115-167.

certain activities are particularly suited to males or females. Both sections stress androgyny's challenge to the assumption that all males are masculine and all females are feminine.

Of all the essays, the most synthetic approach is Mary Anne Warren's "Is Androgyny the Answer to Sexual Stereotyping?"[444] Warren writes of psychological androgyny and its relationship to behavioral androgyny, and devotes the majority of the essay to "Antifeminist" and "Feminist Objections" to androgyny. She sums up the antifeminist position quite simply as one based on the presumption of innate, unalterable natural differences between men and women both psychologically and behaviorally. Leaving essentialism behind, Warren gives the feminist critiques of androgyny a more thorough parsing. She details various objections by some feminists such as androgyny becoming a restrictive normative stereotype, or a perceived focus on men needing to adopt positive feminine qualities such as empathy rather than women striving to be more assertive. According to Warren, the greatest feminist challenge to androgyny is that the term itself is "self-defeating" because it paradoxically reinscribes the idea that some character traits and behaviors are either masculine or feminine. Instead of eliminating sexual stereotypes, the term androgyny (male/female) itself unintentionally reinforces them. Warren argues that assigning gender to character traits is "a reflection of myth rather than reality" and she asserts that the term androgyny is only "provisional." She claims that the word "will have served its purpose and will no longer be needed" as

[444] Mary Anne Warren, "Is Androgyny the Answer to Sexual Stereotyping?" in Mary Vetterling-Braggin, ed., *"Femininity," "Masculinity," and "Androgyny": A Modern Philosophical Discussion* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Allanheld Publishers, 1982), 170-186. For an opposing view that speaks to Heilbrun's comments on sexuality see Robert G. Pielke, "Are Androgyny and Sexuality Compatible?" in Vetterling-Braggin, 187-196.

greater numbers of people recognize that there is no connection between a person's biological sex and his or her character traits.[445] This is similar to Carolyn Heilbrun's contention that success for her book would mean that "it will, in a short time, be considered too obvious to be interesting."[446]

Feminists in the United States debated androgyny at length in the 1970s. This can be seen in *Feminist Thought*, Rosemary Tong's comprehensive study of U.S. feminism in which she uses androgyny briefly as a reference point for her discussion of radical feminism.[447] She compares Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, Shulamith Firestone's *Dialectic of Sex*, and Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father*, as a way to delineate the various ways in which these leading feminists struggled with the term androgyny. All three of the writers had a great influence on Barbara Deming's concept of feminist nonviolence despite their disagreements about androgyny.

Tong's brief discussion of androgyny shows that Millet "looked forward to an androgynous future" but cautioned its proponents to insist on "a thorough evaluation of all masculine and feminine traits." Tong presents Firestone as supportive of androgyny as a goal, noting that Firestone believed in more available combinations of masculinity

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[445] Warren, "Is Androgyny the Answer to Sexual Stereotyping?" 177, 182.

[446] Heilbrun, *Toward A Recognition of Androgyny*, xx. Another great resource for a discussion of androgyny is *Women Studies 2*, no. 2 (1974). The issue was subtitled "The Androgyny Papers" and included ten articles on the topic ranging from Heilbrun's support to Barbara Charleswoth Gelpi's strong critique. See also, Caroline Bird, "The Androgynous Life" in Mary Lou Thompson, ed., *Voices of the New Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 178-198, Ann Ferguson, "Androgyny As an Ideal for Human Development" in Mary Vetterling-Braggin, Federick A. Elliston, Jane English, eds., *Feminism and Philosophy* (Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Company, 1977), 45-69, and Allan C. Carlson, "The Androgyny Hoax," *Population Research Institute Review 5*, no. 3 (May/June 1995).

[447] Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989). See Chapter Four "Radical Feminism On Gender and Sexuality" particularly 95-111. Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, Second Edition (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998). See Chapter Two "Radical Feminism: Libertarian and Cultural Perspectives" particularly 47-65. Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, Third Edition (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2009), 50-64.

and femininity than Millett. She also portrays Firestone as envisioning the creation of an androgynous culture that would eventually eliminate the false perception of stark differences between what is masculine and feminine and what is a man or a woman. Finally, Tong juxtaposes Mary Daly's changing view on androgyny with Millet and Firestone's. Daly shifted from a praise of androgyny in *Beyond God the Father* to a rejection of the term five years later in her next book *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. For Daly, a self-identified separatist, androgyny had become a "cannibalistic…gynocidal" trap that served the interests of the patriarchy instead of empowering women.[448] Daly found androgyny to be a "misbegotten" and "confusing term." She conceded that she had once used androgyny "to describe integrity of be-ing" but had come to see its use in popular media as "conveying something like 'John Travolta and Farrah Fawcett-Majors scotch-taped together.'"[449]

Barbara Deming's kinship with Andrea Dworkin helps to illuminate the feminist debates about androgyny. After Dworkin met Robin Morgan for the first time in the early 1970s, she wrote Deming to tell her about their conversation and to share Morgan's opposition to androgyny. Like Daly, Morgan thought androgyny had become a popular culture fad rather than a feminist theory and told Dworkin that she "shouldn't use androgyny" in her writing anymore. According to Dworkin, Morgan phrased it "in a strange (but generous) way, like 'I know you were out of the country, so you didn't know what happened to the word here." Dworkin insisted on continuing to use the term

[448] Tong, *Feminist Thought*, 2nd Edition, 51, 53, 61. See also Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father,* Twentieth Anniversary Edition, xxiii-xxiv. For more of Tong's discussion of androgyny and feminism, read her depiction of "antiandrogynist" feminists on pages 4-5, and liberal feminists' ideas about androgyny on pages 30-31, in the 1st Edition. For Tong's discussion of Betty Friedan's use of androgyny, especially in her third book *The Fountain of Age*, see pages 32-33 in the 3rd Edition. For another cross-comparison of Friedan, Firestone, and Millett see Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution*, 87-99.

[449] Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, xxiv.

androgyny, but told Deming that there seemed to be "no androgynous reconciliation possible." She believed that "those of us who have this androgynous vision in one way or another, have to be very hard headed about it, and not say that it's *anything possible within the existing framework.*"[450] She wondered how she and Deming could explain "the kinds of profound structural changes that must take place" in order to bring about an androgynous society. Morgan's opposition to androgyny caused Dworkin to wonder "how can we talk about it in the best way" so as to convince others of its revolutionary qualities. Dworkin's conversation with Morgan left her feeling dismayed that other feminists rejected androgyny and she longed for a time when conversations about androgyny would be "more like between you and me, who are committed in some sense to it as a radical vision".[451]

Dworkin's correspondence with Adrienne Rich yielded a similar rejection of androgyny, but Dworkin insisted that androgyny had "revolutionary" implications. She noted that "I thought I was very hard headed about it in my book – that no one, for instance, could misunderstand the absolute revolutionary nature of the vision. Adrienne didn't think so at all."[452] Rich was responding specifically to Dworkin's discussion of androgyny in her book, *Woman Hating*, which included the chapters, "Androgyny: The Mythical Model" and "Androgyny: Androgyny, Fucking, and Community."[453] In her critique of those chapters, Rich echoed Daly and Morgan's criticisms about the use of androgyny in the media. She told Dworkin that "being 'for' androgyny is getting to be like being for peace" in the sense that many people expressed support for it without

[450] Dworkin to Deming, February 2, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 260. Emphasis in the original.
[451] Ibid.
[452] Ibid.
[453] Andrea Dworkin, *Woman Hating* (New York: Dutton, 1974). See "Part Four: Androgyny," 151-196.

understanding its implications. Rich thought that Dworkin's use of androgyny "*could* be linked, in the minds of some, with glitter-rock third-sex cultural-lifestyle 'radicalism'" which she found to be "a totally middle-class and narcissistic phenomenon" that was "exploiting the myth of sexual 'liberation' for its own ends."[454] She later wrote Dworkin to tell her that despite misappropriations of androgyny by others she conceded that Dworkin had not simplified androgyny in her writing and admitted that Dworkin in fact had warned others against doing just that.[455]

Another insight about the debates over androgyny can be seen in a dual review of Dworkin's *Our Blood: Prophecies and Discourses on Sexual Politics* and Jungian psychologist June Singer's *Androgyny: Toward a New Theory of Sexuality* which were both published in 1976.[456] The review was written by Yvonne Klein, an English professor, who was dramatically force-fed while imprisoned with Barbara Deming in Albany, Georgia. Her review provided a response to the criticisms of Morgan, Rich, and Daly and revealed the tenuous nature of androgyny's place in the feminist movement in the United States. Klein found *Our Blood* to be a vivid explanation of androgyny as consistent with a revolutionary, uncompromising feminism. While she raved about Dworkin's ability to "hold on to her anger" throughout the book, her critique of Singer's concept of androgyny stood in sharp relief to her words of praise for Dworkin. In the end, Klein found that Singer was "hardly talking about androgyny at all."[457]

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[454] Rich to Dworkin, January 20, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 260. Emphasis in the original.
[455] Rich to Dworkin, December 31, 1975, *BDSL*, Folder 261.
[456] Dworkin, *Our Blood* and June Singer, *Androgyny: Toward a New Theory of Sexuality* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976).
[457] Yvonne Klein's review, *BDSL*, Folder361.

According to Klein, the androgyny that Dworkin and Deming spoke of "imagines a new human possibility," whereas she characterized Singer's understanding of androgyny as a "New Age," "vulgarized," "safe" variation that reconstructs a gender binary built upon "the old male-female contraries." Klein deemed Singer's view of androgyny and sexuality as "considerably less than revolutionary" and she supported this by contrasting Singer's use of androgyny with Dworkin's. Klein believed that revolutionary androgyny involved restructuring "cultural assumptions based on gender, so that mere possession of a vagina or a penis predicates nothing in particular…In this definition, the end of phallic-centered sexuality envisioned by Dworkin would result in a type of… revolutionary… androgyny."[458] Klein's juxtaposition of Singer's benign androgyny with Dworkin's radical androgyny reveals the complexity of the debates about androgyny in the feminist movement.

While the nonviolent movement did not have a comparable debate over the application of androgyny to nonviolent direct action, Deming, Dworkin, and her life partner John Stoltenberg advocated for their vision of an androgynous nonviolence. Like Dworkin, Stoltenberg was a writer and activist who linked gender norms and sexuality with an androgynous incarnation of nonviolence. In his speeches and writings he argued that men were "conditioned to be the pursuer, the aggressor, the possessor, and the fucker" in both heterosexual and homosexual intercourse. He decided to reject that

[458] Klein's review, *BDSL*, Folder361. For a similar critique see Warren, 183 where she makes the argument that Singer and Jung ascribe to the belief that females "are naturally and properly ruled" by "Eros or human interconnectedness" and males by "Logos, or rationality." A testament to its staying power June Singer's *Androgyny: Toward a New Theory of Sexuality* is its reissue in 1989 as *Androgyny: The Opposites Within* and again in 2000 under that same title. The foremost scholar on androgyny remains Sandra Bem who was a contemporary of Singer and also a psychologist. See Sandra Bem, "The Measurement of Psychological Androgyny," "Sex Role Adaptability: One Consequence of Psychological Androgyny," and *The Lenses of Gender*.

stereotype of manhood and endeavored to live his life "as a moral androgyne." He called on "genital males" to "live as a conscientious objector" to male privilege and to "eradicate our allegiance to masculinity." These arguments can be seen in his articles "Refusing to Be a Man" and "Toward Gender Justice" published by *WIN* in 1974 and 1975.[459] Stoltenberg wrote Deming asking for her reaction to his ideas prior to the publication of his articles, and she told him that she had read both essays multiple times and considered them to be "extraordinary."[460]

Stoltenberg's writings echoed Dworkin's article "Marx and Gandhi Were Liberals—Feminism and the 'Radical' Left," an essay which Deming was quite fond of referencing.[461] Dworkin's thesis was that Marx and Gandhi were liberal rather than radical because they did nothing to end "the patriarchal notion of normalcy, called dominance and submission." She argued that androgyny could "transform the world…with the obliteration of gender distinctions and sex roles, and ultimately of gender itself."[462] The article originally appeared in *American Report: Review of Religion and American Power*, a short-lived newspaper of Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam. The paper published her essay in the fall of 1973 as part of an eight page supplement titled "Woman" which included articles on female pacifists during World War I, a profile of Vietnamese women, and an interview with United Farmworkers organizer Dolores Huerta. Dworkin's essay was the longest of the contributions and

[459] John Stoltenberg, "Refusing to be a Man," *WIN 10*, no. 25 (July 11, 1974): 12-14 and "Toward Gender Justice," *WIN 11*, no. 10 (March 20, 1975): 6-9.
[460] Stoltenberg to Deming June 25, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 616. Deming to Stoltenberg July 2, 1974, *BDSL*, Folder 260 and Deming to Stoltenberg August 29, 1975, *ADSL*, Box 40, Folder 7.
[461] Dworkin, "Marx and Gandhi Were Liberals". For the original publication see *American Report*, November 26, 1973, 6-8. *Frog in the Well* publishers eventually reprinted the article in 1977 with additional artwork by Janet McLaughlin, see Dworkin, "Marx and Gandhi Were Liberals: Feminism and the 'Radical Left" (Palo Alto, California: Frog in the Well, 1977).
[462] Ibid., 8.

began with a discussion of Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*. It included the subtitled sections "Patriarchy and Sexism," "Patriarchy and Violence," "The Means of Production and the Original Capital," and "Feminism and Fucking." Ester Cohen and Debrah Wiley, the editors of the supplement, noted in their brief introduction that Dworkin's article "provoked emotional, involved discussion within our staff." It also provoked a letter to the paper from Rev. Charles McGuinniss who was "shocked" by the subtitle "'Feminism and F---'" and asked them "What, in the name of God, are you people doing??? Have you lost all your senses?" He told the editors that "If there are any in my parish who read *American Report* regularly, I shall urge them to discontinue this practice."[463]

As demonstrated by Gandhi's recognition of the androgynous nature of nonviolence, the advocacy of alternative sexualities by proponents of nonviolence in the United States during the 1970s was part of a long tradition rather than a departure from it. However, the postwar tradition of U.S. pacifists dressing up nonviolence in masculine and heterosexual attire created an institutional opposition to androgyny which helps explain the resistance to Deming's depiction of nonviolence as androgynous. For example, the patriarchal culture of the nonviolent movement can be seen in one of the earliest nonviolent direct action campaigns in the United States, CORE's 1947 Journey of Reconciliation which sought to integrate interstate busing services. In her description of the protest Mollin explains that "Not only did men in the movement use gender to code their masculinity male but they also explicitly defined this militancy in contrast to a devalued feminine identity."[464] A similar heterosexist culture existed in the African

[463] Letter to the Editor, *American Report*, December 24, 1973.
[464] Mollin, "The Limits of Egalitarianism: Radical Pacifism, Civil Rights, and the Journey of Reconciliation", *Radical History Review 88*, (2004): 113-38, 129.

American Freedom Movement which D'Emilio conveys by detailing Bayard Rustin's "tale of gay oppression" which included among many other examples, his forced resignation from the SCLC and his removal from a SNCC conference in the early 1960s.[465] Alonso shows that the 1970s proved the heteronormative pattern by explaining that women's peace groups "did not work 'seriously' to resolve" their own internal criticisms about continuing to connect peacemaking with a woman's innate desire for childbearing and motherhood.[466] It was within that culture of heterosexual patriarchy that Deming sought to emphasize androgyny and its celebration of alternative sexualities.

Both Barbara Deming and Mohandas Gandhi celebrated the queerness of nonviolence by naming its androgynous nature, connecting it to human sexuality, and considering androgyny as a redemptive quality of nonviolence. Yet, leading proponents of his message in the United States stripped Gandhi of his affirmation of the androgyny inherent in nonviolence and instead retreated into masculinity. Deming initially repeated their interpretation and praised nonviolence as an avenue to "assert one's manhood" in her widely-circulated 1968 essay *On Revolution and Equilibrium*. However, she concluded that essay by cautioning those engaged in nonviolent direct action to maintain "this life-saving balance—this equilibrium between self-assertion and respect for others"[467] Her later theory of androgynous nonviolence recognized those actions as a blending of traditional masculinity and femininity, an interweaving of forcefulness and empathy, and a rejection of both passivity and violence. Gandhi had previously made

[465] D'Emilio, "Homophobia And The Trajectory Of Postwar American Radicalism," 99. See also D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet*, 232-235, 295-301.
[466] Alonso, *Peace As A Woman's Issue*, 230-32.
[467] Deming, "On Revolution and Equilibrium" in *Deming Reader*, 188.

those connections and like Deming linked them with sexuality, thereby suggesting the concept that nonviolence was always already queer.

At a time when many pacifists continued to stress the manliness of nonviolent direct action and many feminists were rejecting all things masculine, Deming chose to reaffirm the androgynous nature of a widely praised avenue for social justice by emphasizing the ability of nonviolence to meld masculinity and femininity. Examinations of Gandhi's sexuality establish a historical link between androgyny and nonviolence and help to reinforce Deming's theoretical framework that nonviolent actions are an embodiment of androgyny. Her private and public discussions about sexuality with other pacifists and the debates about androgyny among feminists in the United States help to situate her queer theory of androgynous nonviolence within those communities. The clearest expression of her influence can be seen in the emerging pacifist-feminist culture evident in the Movement for a New Society, a network of communities striving to link feminism and nonviolence, and the anti-nuclear weapons protests of the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice.

Chapter Six: **Moving Toward A New Society**

> *Those were extraordinary struggles. I'm proud to have taken part in them. And proud of the company I kept. But nonviolent struggle is always in the process of invention. Wouldn't you agree Norma—that it has still to be further and further invented? I think that we are further inventing it in our all-women circles. And that the very much deeper sharing of our selves which we are learning is at the heart of this invention.*[468]

During the final years of Barbara Deming's life she played an influential role in the publication of three books which help illuminate the isolated yet significant interventions made by pacifist-feminists in the women's liberation and nonviolence movements in the United States. Exploring this moment in the history of U.S. pacifism and feminism provides a fuller understanding of both movements and illustrates the possibilities and limitations of merging the two concepts. The impact of feminist nonviolence on both movements can be discerned by investigating the production of Pam McAllister's anthology *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence* (1982), Jane Meyerding's *We Are All Part of One Another: A Barbara Deming Reader* (1984), and Deming's final essay "A New Spirit Moves Among Us" included in the reprint of *Prison Notes* (1985). Together these writings reveal the successes and failures of the effort to merge feminism and nonviolence in the early 1980s.

An exploration of these works demonstrates both the vital role Deming played in their publication and her influence on the emerging culture of feminist nonviolence. One of Deming's principle protégés, Pam McAllister, edited *Reweaving the Web of Life*,

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[468] Deming, "A New Spirit Moves Among Us" in Sky Vanderlinde, ed., *Prisons That Could Not Hold* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 195. Norma Becker was the chairwoman of the WRL 1977 to 1983.

which highlighted the connections and tensions between feminism and nonviolence. However, Deming's focus on the mentoring of pacifist-feminists circumscribed her audience and created new barriers to overcome as she guided the publication of her collected works in *We Are All Part of One Another*. Investigating the disagreements about who should write the foreword and who the reader's intended audience was provides a retrospective approach for revisiting how race, sex, and sexuality intersected with nonviolence in Deming's writing and activism. The third work, "A New Spirit Moves Among Us," recounted her experiences at an all-female protest and mass arrest during a nuclear disarmament action in Seneca County, New York in the summer of 1983. Written in her final days, this essay provides evidence of her continual experimentation with nonviolence and offers Deming's final evaluation of the ability to meld feminism and nonviolence.

Reweaving the Web of Life

Barbara Deming's role as a mentor to Pam McAllister allows for an intimate perspective on the merging of feminism and nonviolence in the 1980s. McAllister, a twenty-eight-year-old writer and activist, first wrote the sixty-two year-old Deming in January of 1979, and their relationship continued until Deming's death from cancer five years later. Deming never had an elder lesbian mentor and wished she had been more open about her sexuality in the 1960s when she corresponded with Tracy Mygatt and Frances Witherspoon of the WRL.[469] In that first of many letters, McAllister confessed to Deming that she had "fantasized meeting you so often I feel like I know you." She told her that she was working on a book about nonviolence and self-defense and had

[469] Deming to Nancy Manahan, April 21, 1981, *BDSL*, Folder 462.

"drawn heavily on your essays for insight and inspiration." She hoped to meet with Deming to discuss feminist nonviolence, and Deming invited McAllister to visit her and Jane Gapen at their home in the Florida Keys.[470] In McAllister's poem "Snapshots of Barbara," written immediately after their first meeting, she referred to the photographs included in Deming's earlier books and how her face had become "a maze of lines" but "familiar, this face, more like an old friend's than new." She wrote about Deming sharing her experiences "encountered on those long, dry walks for peace, or in an appeal to my young heart not to forget these stories, in an appeal to create new ones for women, stories to inspire, renew us, and to pass on to younger sisters."[471]

In their first year of correspondence Deming and McAllister shared their ideas about nonviolence, feminism, and sexuality. Deming returned to her 1968 essay "On Revolution and Equilibrium" to help McAllister with her struggle to define nonviolence for those who believed "violence is necessary in any serious struggle." Deming suggested that she replace the word nonviolence with "the words 'radical and uncompromising action' – words which could just as well describe nonviolent action.'"[472] McAllister already had some success with writing about nonviolence and self-defense training for women. In April of 1979 *WIN* had published "Between Feminist Anger and Nonviolent Practice" where she noted that a combination of feminism and nonviolence ought to yield a "revolutionary process" but instead "the two mix like oil and water."[473] In McAllister's advocacy for a feminist practice of nonviolence, she found Deming's writings to be the only work of "any substance that shares this same vision although I

[470] McAllister to Deming, January 30, 1979 and Deming to McAllister, May 22, 1979, *BDSL*, Folder 396.
[471] Pam McAllister, "Snapshots of Barbara," October 5, 1979, *BDSL*, Folder 1405.
[472] Deming to McAllister, February 4, 1979, *BDSL*, Folder 396.
[473] McAllister, "Between Feminist Anger and Nonviolent Practice," *WIN*, April 26, 1979, 18-21, 18.

have found scattered articles by other women who've come close to these ideas." She told Deming that in her research on nonviolence she discovered that "so much of the literature totally ignores the violence of sexism."[474]

On a personal level, McAllister confided in Deming about exploring the lesbian aspects of her sexuality and asked for guidance from Deming after reading the 1980 Persophone Press collection, *The Coming Out Stories* that included a foreword by Adrienne Rich. She wondered what Deming was like in her late-twenties, and asked if Deming was "already an activist, nonviolent, etc?" She referred to Deming as her "role-model" and "the only one who has conveyed to me how nonviolence and feminism are intimately linked."[475] Deming revealed that McAllister knew more about herself than she did at her age. She explained that she did not know she was a pacifist until after she was forty, and that although she knew she was a lesbian, she "wasn't at all sure that I could find my life as who I was. Still sometimes thought that I should try marriage." She told her that coincidentally she was currently writing a book about herself at the age of thirty-three that dealt with her sexuality.[476] That book became *A Humming Under My Feet: A Book of Travail* which was not published until 1985, after her death. Deming called it "a book about struggling for my pride in a homophobic world. A struggle for survival."[477]

A month after their correspondence, McAllister accepted an offer to edit an anthology about feminism and nonviolence, and the book quickly became the dominant topic of conversation with Deming over the next few years. The process began in the fall

[474] McAllister to Deming, May 15, 1980, BDSL, Folder 396.
[475] McAllister to Deming, July 23, 1980, *BDSL*, Folder 396.
[476] Deming to McAllister, August 15, 1980, *BDSL*, Folder 396.
[477] Deming to Nina Huizinga, December 17, 1983, *BDSL*, unprocessed papers in 2000-M115 Barbara Deming Carton 1 (67:2:2).

of 1980 when McAllister's was invited to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by the fledgling nonviolent training organization, the Movement for a New Society (MNS), "to lead two group/community discussions on feminism and nonviolence." Their invitation also included the news that the MNS had a "publishing collective" that was interested in McAllister's work.[478] After facilitating the discussions, she met with the members of the publishing arm of the MNS and discussed the option of having her edit "an anthology of various aspects of feminism and nonviolence or the dialogue in the feminist community on the merits of violence and nonviolence." She agreed to the proposal and told Deming she was excited to work on the project in part because "We so desperately need more accessible material from nonviolent feminists."[479]

MNS was formed in 1971 "to bring lessons in nonviolence learned in the 1960s to the popular movement of the 1970s," and within five years had around three hundred members in the United States and Canada with its "major training and network center" in Philadelphia. It had its roots in the Society of Friends/Quakers and to their own dismay was "overwhelmingly white" according to George Lakey, its primary founder.[480] The two other founding members were Bill Moyer and George Willoughby, but Lakey was the only one of the three to remain with the organization until it folded in 1988.[481] In an essay about the history of the MNS, Lakey discussed the organization's focus on racism, sexism, and heterosexism. He explained that the group eschewed the "trap of anger

[478] McAllister to Deming, September 12, 1980, *BDSL*, Folder 396.
[479] McAllister to Deming, October 10, 1980, *BDSL*, Folder 396. For more on the initial discussions between McAllister and the NSP collective see Leah Halper, "Interview: reweaving the web of life feminism and nonviolence", *off our backs*, (January 1983), 20-21.
[480] George Lakey, "The Life and Death of the Movement for a New Society," *Friends Journal*, September 1989, 22-25, 22, *SCPS*, Box 9 of 90A-55, Folder "Disbanding of MNS [officially disbanded on July 1988]".
[481] Tarik W. Kamil, "Living the Revolution: Movement for a New Society" in *The Politics Of Time And Eternity: Quaker Pacifists And Their Activism During The Vietnam Era*, (Dissertation at Ohio University, 2006), 261-293, 264.

masquerading as abstract theory" by "encouraging confrontation" in a structured format that based its "analysis and strategy in the reality of people's life experience."[482]

As an example of this process he cited a discussion about the organization's advocacy for gay and lesbian rights which caused some members to express concerns that they were becoming "basically a gay organization." That "appeal to homophobia" resulted in "many lesbians, gays, and bisexuals" leaving the meeting. A group of "facilitators" then guided the different factions separately and as a whole through a series of structured confrontations until the full group was eventually able to continue their original discussion. According to Lakey, "MNSers recalled this incident as a watershed in enabling the organization to work with lesbian and gay rights actions and to handle sexual politics responsibly."[483] Historian, Tarik W. Kamil, corroborates Lakey's interpretation of the MNS and its ability to address issues of sexism in particular by citing others in the MNS who "praised members for seeking 'non-hierarchical structures, empowering group processes by acknowledgment of the personal as political, and [challenging] even subtle domination by men.'"[484]

Deming and McAllister were not members of the MNS and their relationship with the organization was primarily through New Society Publishers (NSP), the group's publishing arm that had formed in 1977 to publish internal resource pamphlets and by 1980 began to publish books that promoted nonviolent social change and fostered the link

[482] George Lakey, "'Catching Up And Moving On:' What Can We Learn For The Future From The Movement For A New Society?" *SCPS*, Box 9 of 90A-55, Folder "Disbanding of MNS [officially disbanded on July 1988]".
[483] Ibid.
[484] Kamil, *The Politics Of Time And Eternity*, 288.

between nonviolence and feminism.[485] One of NSP first books was McAllister's anthology, *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*, and it required reaching out to a variety of writers. In an attempt to seek out writers, McAllister sent a form letter from NSP along with "personal notes to about 85 women" requesting submissions. She and the publishers described the book as "an anthology of writings by American feminists and activist women who are committed to non-violence." They defined its primary objective as an attempt "to convey the connectedness of feminism and nonviolence in substance and intent in spite of the sometimes strained relations between the feminist and nonviolence movements."[486] By that fall McAllister had chosen forty-five selections and NSP had announced an anticipated publication for the spring of 1982.

In a letter to the contributors announcing the progress of the project, McAllister highlighted the variety of ideas in the proposed anthology. She explained that the chosen submissions "came from many perspectives, many parts of the country, and cover a wide range in terms of age and experience." She found that some contributors wrote "most strongly from a feminist perspective" while others came "from a pacifist perspective and are still struggling with all the implications of feminism." For McAllister, the diversity of viewpoints converged on the fact that all of the contributors "embrace both feminism and nonviolence in a way which transforms both, and our differences only add complexity and value to the pattern we weave." She divided the book in two parts with the first section exploring "various ideas about the revolutionary implications of combining feminism and nonviolence" and a second section demonstrating "how

[485] Kamil, *The Politics Of Time And Eternity*, 285, Duberman, *Saving Remnant*, 228, and "Dear Contributor" on NSP Letterhead, December 1980, *BDSL* Folder 396.
[486] NSP Letterhead "Dear Contributor", December 1980 and McAllister to Deming, January 8, 1981, *BDSL*, Folder 396.

feminism and nonviolence apply to specific areas of struggle."[487] While the book appeared to be ready to publish, McAllister and NSP encountered two major barriers that delayed its publication date.

While *Reweaving the Web of Life* focused on the compatibility of feminism and nonviolence, the process of producing the book highlighted the discordance between the twin concepts and revealed an underlying issue of racism. Evidence of both the racial and philosophical struggles can be seen in a letter from Adrienne Rich. One month after sending the letter announcing her progress on the manuscript, McAllister received a letter from Rich informing her that "she not only did not have time to write the foreword to the anthology, but was no longer convinced of nonviolence and referred to Angela Davis' quote about nonviolence being a 'philosophy of suicide.'"[488] Rich's comment revealed the continuing tensions between feminism and nonviolence and drew needed attention to the lack of attention given to race in the proposed anthology. As Deming pointed out in a letter to NSP, the preponderance of white women's voices in the book was even more troubling than not having the support of prominent feminists like Adrienne Rich. Deming decided to "very earnestly plead" with them "not to just go ahead and publish it as is." She explained that this was "a moment in history when the feminist movement is trying to confront racism—clumsily though we may be doing this in many instances." She believed that "If publication were postponed, and more women of color given the chance to contribute—it would be a deeper, more important book, and in the long run the

[487] NSP Letterhead "Dear Contributors," August 25, 1981, *BDSL*, Folder 397.
[488] McAllister to Deming, October 2, 1981, *BDSL*, Folder 397. For more on McAllister's reaction to Rich's letter see, Halper, "Interview", 20-21. McAllister noted that after reading a copy of her introduction Rich wrote back to say that McAllister's words were "extremely thought provoking and was now sure that the book would stretch her thinking about nonviolence." However, she still refused to write the foreword.

reputation of the press would be well served."[489] McAllister and NSP agreed and sent a letter to the contributors informing them that "publication was postponed this spring after we were convinced by a supportive letter from Barbara Deming." They quoted Deming's letter at length and explained that they were seeking contributions from more women of color.[490]

McAllister had been warned about this possibility by Leah Fritz when she initially sent out her call for submissions. Fritz told McAllister that she wanted "to see fully 50% of the articles written by non-whites, and to achieve that, would gladly forego my own contribution, not out of altruism, but because I might learn something!"[491] Due to Deming's insistence, NSP published *Reweaving* that fall without Rich's foreword, but with additional pieces by and about women of color with essays ranging from profiles of women who led anti-lynching campaigns to essays about the different experiences of white and Black women in the African American Freedom Movement.[492]

Although Barbara Deming did not contribute an article to *Reweaving*, her presence within the pages of the book is ubiquitous. McAllister devoted a page of her brief introduction to Deming, noting that she "had eventually become my mentor" and that her own "understanding of nonviolence was a direct result of her writing." She also

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[489] Deming to Huizinga, February 9, 1982, *BDSL*, unprocessed papers in 2000-M115 Barbara Deming Carton 1 (67:2:2).
[490] NSP letterhead, March, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 904.
[491] Leah Fritz to McAllister, January 7, 1981, *SCPC*, New Society Publishers, Box 21, Folder "McAllister (REWEAVING)".
[492] Pam McAllister, ed., *Reweaving The Web of Life: Feminism And Nonviolence* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: New Society Publishers, 1982). (Hereafter cited as *Reweaving*.) Contributions that explicitly addressed race and/or written by women of color included, Rosemarie Freeney-Harding's, "Ida B. Wells: 'Free Speech' and Black Struggle," Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's, "Jessie Daniel Ames: Grass-Roots Anti-Lynching Campaign," Susan Kling's "Fannie Lou Hamer: Baptism by Fire," Cynthia Washington's "We Started From Opposite Ends of the Spectrum," Sara Evans, "Women's Consciousness and the Southern Black Movement," Alice Walker's, "Only Justice Can Stop A Curse," Donna Landermann's "Breaking the Racism Barrier: White Anti-Racism Work," and Joan Baez's, "Message to the Next Civilization".

included Deming's poem, "A Song for the Gorgons," which preceded a lengthy interview of Deming from a few years earlier by Mab Segrest and Minnie Bruce Pratt.[493] McAllister noted that Deming's was "quoted throughout this book, and rightly so," noting that for too long she had "sung a lonely song, persistently intertwining the two strands of feminism and nonviolence into one convincing melody. With this anthology she is joined by a fine full-voiced chorus at last."[494] In many ways, *Reweaving* was the culmination of much of the last decade of Deming's advocacy for feminist nonviolence. Here was a book devoted to her cause, filled with contributions from pacifists and feminists, and published by a press committed to fostering the connection between feminism and nonviolence.

Of the fifty-five entries, three in particular help to illustrate the tenor of the book and demonstrate a link to Deming's work. Bruce Kokopeli and George Lakey's article, "More Power Than We Want: Masculine Sexuality and Violence," was the only male contribution to the anthology, but McAllister considered their article a "classic" and noted that it had been reprinted twelve times in the United States and Europe after its initial 1976 publication in *WIN*. Lakey, from MNS, and Kokopeli, a founder of the Men's Resource Center in Seattle, Washington argued that "violence and sexuality combine to support masculinity as a character ideal" and that "rape is the end logic of masculine sexuality."[495] They claimed that the cultural perception for men is that "if you are not masculine, you must be pacifist and gay, for masculinity is a package which

[493] McAllister, *Reweaving*, ii and Mab Segrest, "Feminism and Disobedience: Conversations with Barbara Deming" in *Reweaving*, 45-62. Pratt later became the life partner of transgender activist and writer Leslie Feinberg.
[494] McAllister, Introduction to "A Song for Gorgons" in *Reweaving*, 42.
[495] Bruce Kokopeli and George Lakey, "More Power Than We Want: Masculine Sexuality and Violence" in *Reweaving*, 233.

includes both violence and heterosexuality."[496] Furthermore, they found that the militarization of U.S. culture reinforced the mutually constitutive relationship of violence and masculine sexuality. They called on feminists, pacifists, and gay rights activists to align together against "the military state" in order to defeat the patriarchal, militarized, heterosexist power structure. Like Deming, they also had an "androgynous vision" of the future to the extent that they subtitled their conclusion, "Androgyny: New People For The New Society." They defined androgyny as an acknowledgement that "the best characteristics now allocated to the two genders indeed belong to both."[497]

Marion Bromley, a pacifist activist since the 1940s and later a feminist in the 1970s, also found androgyny and nonviolence to have an appealing connection. Bromley reevaluated her pacifist activism and discovered that she "had overlooked the soil in which that root of violence grew—patriarchal attitudes, patriarchal institutions and patriarchal control."[498] She viewed many pacifist men and women as "more nearly androgynous than the average," envisioned a successful social revolution contingent on keeping in the forefront "a radical, total vision of an androgynous society, a peaceful egalitarian society," and believed that a nonviolent, feminist future was dependent on "more androgynous, creative individuals."[499] Bromley explained that she did not make a connection between androgyny and nonviolence until after she embraced feminism, and it caused her to see her past experiences with pacifism in a different light. One example of this can be found in her comments about CORE, of which she had been a founding

[496] Kokopeli and Lakey, "More Power Than We Want" in *Reweaving*, 237.
[497] Ibid., 239.
[498] Marion Bromley, "Feminism and Nonviolent Revolution," in *Reweaving*, 144. For more on Marion Bromley and feminism see, Marion Bromley and Ernest Bromley Papers, *SCPC*, especially Box 1, Folder "Miscellaneous Files—Marion Bromley," Box 13, Folder "Women 1974-75," Box 7, Folders "WOW—Women of Wonder Conference" and "Marian Bromley Biographical".
[499] Bromley, "Feminism and Nonviolent Revolution" in *Reweaving*, 149, 151, 155.

member. She remarked that as CORE decided to become an all-Black organization in 1968, "It is interesting to note that the new leaders of national CORE, when nonviolence was abandoned as either principle or tactic, also spoke in stridently sexist terms."[500] Bromley believed that the organization's dual decision to embrace sexism and dismiss nonviolence was substantive rather than coincidental.

The article in *Reweaving* that best illustrated the connections and tensions that Deming and others saw between nonviolence and feminism was Jane Meyerding's "Reclaiming Nonviolence: some thoughts for feminist womyn who used to be nonviolent, and vice versa" which argued for combining radical feminism with radical pacifism. Meyerding, a lesbian pacifist-feminist, spent ten months in jail for destroying military draft records in 1970 and three weeks in jail for pouring blood on petitions designed to remove lesbians and gay men from Seattle, Washington's civil rights ordinance in 1978. She began her essay with Andrea Dworkin's argument that "any commitment to nonviolence which is real, which is authentic, must begin in the recognition of the forms and degrees of violence perpetrated against women by the gender class men."[501] Like Dworkin, Meyerding believed that nonviolence was compatible with feminism and questioned why other feminists had rejected nonviolence as a strategy for the Women's Liberation Movement. She dismissed the notion that feminist anger was incompatible with nonviolence, or that entrenched patriarchal attitudes within the male-led peace movement had caused feminists to reject nonviolence as a tool for social justice. Instead,

[500] Bromley, "Feminism and Nonviolent Revolution" in *Reweaving*, 147.
[501] Jane Meyerding, "Reclaiming Nonviolence: some thoughts for feminist womyn who used to be nonviolent, and vice versa" in *Reweaving*, 6.

Meyerding echoed Dworkin's call for a feminist intervention to reform the "traditional limitations on nonviolence theory and practice."[502]

She saw the traditional hierarchical ranking of various kinds of violence as one area where theories of nonviolence needed a feminist analysis and revision. When pacifists placed violence against women below actions designed to stop a war, prevent the use of nuclear weapons, or address racism, feminists like Meyerding felt ostracized by the nonviolent movement. She argued that instead of trying to convince pacifists that violence against women was a cause worthy of their attention, feminists interested in nonviolence should "start working at integrating specific ideas from nonviolence theory into feminist theory and practice."[503] She found the understanding of power within theories of nonviolence to be appealing for feminists. As she envisioned it, nonviolent theorists already recognized that "power is not a characteristic owned by any individual, but rather a dynamic which is present in every relationship." She then linked the power of nonviolence itself to feminist ideals by depicting it as "autonomous and decentralized."[504] Like many others movements which used strategies of nonviolence, she praised its egalitarian nature as equally accessible to activists of various backgrounds including age, class, educational achievement, and physical ability.

Meyerding rooted her advocacy of feminist nonviolence in the belief that nonviolence was the most effective strategy to bring about the societal changes that the women's movement sought. She argued that nonviolence was "vital for feminists," noting Deming's belief that nonviolent direct action allowed activists to "address

[502] Meyerding, "Reclaiming Nonviolence" in *Reweaving*, 7.
[503] Ibid., 9.
[504] Ibid., 10,11.

ourselves both to that which we refuse to accept from others and that which we have in common with them—however much or little that may be."[505] Meyerding saw consistency in the feminist refusal to be subjugated by men and the nonviolent strategy of seeking commonalities with one's opponents. While she argued on one hand that "No large mass of men has ever been interested in truly radical change, because radical change would require them to fight against their own interests as men." She also argued that radical change could come only through nonviolent direct action, and that any truly nonviolent strategy must incorporate a feminist analysis in order to be successful. Meyerding concluded that "radical feminists literally cannot do without nonviolence, and that nonviolent advocates of radical social change must accept feminism as essential."[506] Her advocacy for feminist nonviolence in *Reweaving the Web of Life* led to another NSP project, serving as the editor of a collection of Barbara Deming's writings.

We Are All Part of One Another

The history of how *We Are All Part of One Another: A Barbara Deming Reader* came into being illustrates the struggles that Deming encountered as a writer and an activist from the 1940s to the 1980s. Deming's competing narratives of being a seasoned proponent of nonviolence and a newly arrived radical feminist writer revealed themselves in various discussions between Deming, Meyerding, and Nina Huizinga, the lead editor at NSP. The main topics of conversation included which of her writings to include and exclude, who the intended audience would be, and a controversy over who should write the foreword. Because Deming had recently become known as an advocate of feminist nonviolence and the MNS saw the merger of these two concepts as central to their vision

[505] Meyerding, "Reclaiming Nonviolence" in *Reweaving*, 12.
[506] Ibid., 15.

of the future, there was no argument about including her writings on both topics. After all, the primary draw for MNS to Deming was that her history of nonviolent activism emphasized the link between feminism and nonviolence. For Deming, the publication of the reader by NSP fit her desire to reprint her previous writings on nonviolence while also spreading her newer message of feminist nonviolence. Her decades of involvement in nuclear disarmament, promoting racial equality, protesting the war in Viet Nam, and confronting discrimination based on sex and sexuality provided NSP with many avenues of appeal for the publication of the reader. The disagreements emerged in their discussions about how to best present Deming to a new audience.

The origins of Deming's relationship with NSP help to explain the difficulties that arose in the process of creating the reader. Before the publications of *Reweaving* in the fall of 1982 and then *We Are All Part of One Another* in the spring of 1984, Deming's original idea was for NSP to reprint her earlier books which were then all out-of-print. That conversation began in the fall of 1981 as Deming helped to transfer the publishing rights of her books which were then held by Viking/Penguin and Beacon Press.[507] Nina Huizinga wrote the publishing houses to inform them that NSP found Deming's work "worthy of being widely promoted and distributed" despite the fact that the books were originally printed in "small runs of 2,000 each and were never widely promoted."[508] With the rights secured, Deming eagerly anticipated the reprinting of her work and had urged the publishers to begin with *Prison Notes*. Instead, they began by reprinting in pamphlet-form her two essays "On Anger" and "New Men, New Women: Some

[507] Deming to Nina Huizinga, June 21, 1981 and Deming to Meyerding, November 26, 1983, *SCPC*, New Society Publishers Box 21, Folder "Deming (We Are All Part Of One Another)." (Hereafter cited as *NSP-Deming*).
[508] Nina Huizinga to Shelley Slater at Viking Penguin, September 14, 1981, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*.

Thoughts on Nonviolence" in the fall of 1982.[509] It was at that time that Huizinga began suggesting to Deming that a reader might be a better option than reprinting her previous books. Deming resisted the idea, continued pushing for *Prison Notes* to be reissued first, but began asking friends for their input about the concept of a collection of her writings compiled in one book rather than reprints of her prior books. By that winter she was "warming to the idea of a Barbara Deming Reader."[510]

Conflicts over which of Deming's writings to include began as soon as the project became a reality in the winter of 1982 when Deming and Huizinga offered the job of editor to Jane Meyerding. Huizinga described the idea of the reader to Meyerding as "a possible follow-up to *Reweaving the Web of Life*" and hoped that it would "appeal to feminists who are interested in Nonviolence, pacifists who are interested in Feminism, and movement people in general who are interested in Barbara Deming." She saw the book as a way "to introduce people to Feminism, Nonviolence, and Barbara."[511] In her follow-up conversation with Deming, Huizinga explained that the book would focus on her essays "which highlight feminism or nonviolence" rather than providing "an overview of your whole work."[512] When Deming originally consented to the idea of the reader, she had done so with the understanding that "it would be a better book if it did include this range of what I've written" rather than only her "political essays."[513]

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[509] Huizinga to Kenn at Movement for a New Society Northwest, April 30, 1982 and Huizinga to Deming, September 4, 1982, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*.
[510] Deming to Huizinga, September 25, 1982 and Huizinga to Deming, November 4, 1982, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*.
[511] Huizinga to Jane Meyerding, November 18, 1982, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*.
[512] Huizinga to Deming, December 13, 1982, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*.
[513] Deming to Huizinga, October 21, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.

Meyerding addressed this initial conflict about including Deming's writings from the 1940s and 50s by encouraging Huizinga and Deming to work on "a clear and specific agreement about the purpose of the book." She suggested that there were many "Barbara Deming books" that could be written such as "a 'showcase' of Barbara," "a one-woman history of U.S. nonviolent-social change movements," or an "example of the clarity and radical-ness attainable through pacifism- (& feminism-) inspired thinking." She asked if the reader was "supposed to be about Barbara? a tribute to her? or is it supposed to be more simply of Barbara and for something else? nonviolent education? the furthering of radical nonviolent social change?" She noted that her role as editor would be different depending on which of these concepts Deming and Huizinga chose.[514] After speaking with Deming and meeting with the NSP collective, the consensus was to provide a broad overview of all of Deming's work with the "hope that this book will bring new readers to Barbara's work."[515]

While the decision about the content of the reader was easily agreed upon, the conversations became increasingly complicated as their discussion about the book's perceived audience revealed the tensions that surrounded Barbara Deming's legacy as a pacifist and feminist. In Huizinga's letter responding to Meyerding's question about the broader purpose of the reader, she suggested the readership of the book could be divided into three groups; those who already knew of Deming but have difficulty finding her writings, "radical feminists who up to now have not been interested in pacifism," and a broader audience who knew nothing about Barbara Deming or her work. She noted that Meyerding was already thinking about that third audience with her idea of including a

[514] Meyerding to Huizinga and Deming, December 4, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.
[515] Huizinga to Meyerding and Deming, December 16, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.

"capsule biography" in the reader.[516] Meyerding had also told Deming that she hoped the book would "bring new readers to your work, people who don't have the foggiest notion who Barbara Deming is (for example, people who don't even know anyone who used to read *WIN*)." Meyerding told her that a brief biographical section might make her "seem more 'visible,' more 'real.'"[517]

As they discussed the potential readership of the book, Huizinga believed that the focus should be on introducing Deming to that third audience of readers who were unfamiliar with her writings because the book would "be able to reach the first two audiences anyway."[518] Deming was concerned that Huizinga and NSP would focus so much on promoting the reader to a wider audience that "the 'core' audience" would be "taken for granted."[519] Meyerding cautioned the publishers about over-simplifying all three audiences, by noting that there were "so many different kinds of feminists…so many different sorts of lesbians, peace activists, pacifists, anti-nukers, 'non-political' people, etc." that marketing the book by trying to "appeal to the largest number" was more complicated than they were portraying it.[520]

The most problematic issue related to the book's audience was the publishers' suggestion that a foreword should be written by a "non-lesbian feminist of note" in order to help spread the appeal of the book.[521] Meyerding's initial response delineated the many implications of that suggestion. While she thought reaching out to a wider audience was a good idea, she reminded the publishing collective that "Some of those

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[516] Huizinga to Meyerding and Deming, December 16, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.
[517] Meyerding to Deming, December 12, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.
[518] Huizinga to Meyerding and Deming, December 16, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.
[519] Deming to Huizinga, January 6, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 477.
[520] Meyerding to Huizinga, January 15, 1983, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*.
[521] Huizinga to Meyerding and Deming, December 16, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.

people will be lesbians, of course, and would not be particularly drawn by the inclusion of a famous straight person. (Nor would gays, I assume.)" She also asked why the "non-lesbians in the group" had to have "a specifically heterosexual introduction to her." She understood that since the publishers were not going "to include anything non-feminist in the book" their preference for a foreword writer was based on the writer's sexuality rather than her or his political or philosophical stance. She told NSP that "the real meaning of the decision must be that you want the book to carry a sign of approval—a stamp of legitimacy—from a known heterosexual." She explained that "The implication is that most people—'normal' people—must not be expected to (or, if necessary, challenged to) look upon those stigmatized by lesbianism as full, legitimate human beings whose lives and words can carry meaning for all people." She shared their desire to increase the book's appeal, but pointed out that it would be "contradictory to cater to anticipated homophobia in order to do so—contradictory, that is, to the spirit of Barbara's work, which the book embodies."[522]

Meyerding challenged NSP to face the "the assumptions behind this decision" to place restrictions on the sexuality of the foreword writer, and to revisit what it meant to impose their decision on an author and editor who were both lesbian-pacifist-feminists. She asked them if they assumed that "potential readers…would not consider reading a book by a feminist-radical-pacifist-activist-writer-poet who is also a lesbian." She wondered if they believed that "most non-lesbians who know about Barbara think of her first and foremost (or exclusively?) as a lesbian." If those were not their assumptions then she wondered if they were more concerned that they "reach non-lesbian (and non-

[522] Meyerding to Huizinga, December 27, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.

gay?) potential readers" than queer readers. Meyerding believed that their governing assumption seemed at the very least to be that "there is no way the book can be made accessible to non-lesbians by lesbians, and thus only a person known to be non-lesbian will do." All of this questioning brought her to ask for "a more complete explanation of this decision, because I am sure it was not meant to be nor to seem anti-lesbian." She hoped that the publishers had considered "the emotional impact of your collective decision" and that in light of her observations, they would reconsider it.[523]

Huizinga responded to Meyerding by telling her that "the entire purpose of the foreword has to do with marketing" and that while they wanted someone who the wider crowd "knew and recognized," the "the homosexual/heterosexual issue simply did not come up in this context; the recognition issue did." She added that the publishers were aware that Deming's out-of-print books "go from hand to hand," that she was "known by a select circle of peace activists," and that she had "become known and respected within lesbian-feminist circles."[524] Meyerding responded that "It is not true, unfortunately, that Barbara has become 'known and respected' within all lesbian-feminist circles. Many lesbian-feminists continue to have a knee-jerk reaction against nonviolence and anyone associated with it. As do many non-lesbian feminists, of course."[525] David Alpert, another editor at NSP, added that as a follow-up project to *Reweaving* they were "counting on the fact that this book will be of interest to committed and active lesbian-feminists, and to older and/or better read social change activists already acquainted with Barbara's work." From his work on *Reweaving*, he noticed that "major sales" of the

[523] Meyerding to Huizinga, December 27, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.
[524] Huizinga to Meyerding, January 3, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 428.
[525] Meyerding to Huizinga, January 15, 1983, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*.

book went "to people who are neither committed and active lesbian-feminists (or even feminists)" adding that many readers came from a group of people who were "not involved in peace-and-social change activism for a long time." He expected that the reader could reach those same audiences.[526]

Huizinga had spoken to Deming by phone before receiving Meyerding's letter expressing her concerns about the foreword writer. Huizinga had written a letter to Deming to confirm what was said in their conversation. She recounted that Deming's response to the foreword writer was primarily about her concern that the choice of the writer should not "alienate the core audience." Alpert, who was in on the call, suggested that if the reader was being published for "a mainly feminist audience," then it would be better served by Persephone Press "since our audience is more of a bridge between feminism and nonviolence." He defined their audience as "women who have never been involved in the peace movement, pacifists who are just beginning to read about feminism, ecologists interested in social change but not knowledgeable of either feminism or of peace issues." The conversation also touched on "this quiet question about reprinting your books," especially *Prison Notes*. Huizinga told Deming that she did not want her to "work on the reader with the idea that we are definitely going to reprint your books once the reader is done." While stating that she would like to see NSP reissue her earlier books, she also admitted that "we might not do so." She wanted Deming to "look at the project of doing the reader not as a means to an end (this first step toward creating an

[526] Huizinga to Meyerding, January 3, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 428.

audience for all of your books) but as a valuable project in itself and worth doing even if NSP never reprints your other books."[527]

By the time Deming received Huizinga's letter and responded, she had also read Meyerding's letter that listed her probing questions about why NSP thought the foreword writer should not be a lesbian. She began by admitting that she would "of course be deeply disappointed if NSP in the end, decides not to reprint my out-of-print books. But it would be foolish of me not to want to have this project." She added that she was "bewildered" by Alpert's observation that Persephone Press would be a better publisher if the book was geared toward a "'mainly feminist audience.'" Deming explained that "The core audience both you and I were always talking about was the very audience to which *Reweaving* looks—feminist and/or believers in nonviolence, and readers interested in feminism and/or nonviolence." She noted that Alpert himself had specifically insisted that the foreword writer should be a feminist. She pointed out that Alpert did not feel that he had to specify that writer should be a pacifist. This caused her to ask, "So does he really mean by his comment, 'if we want to market the book to a mainly lesbian audience?'" rather than a mainly "feminist audience.'" At this point, she told Huizinga that she "would deeply second all the questions Jane raises in her letter." She had come to the realization that she was initially in shock when she heard that the publishers thought the writer of the foreword should not be a lesbian. She told Huizinga that she had "tried to pretend to myself that I wasn't as jolted as I was. But Jane's letter made me

[527] Huizinga to Deming, December 28, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.

face the full truth of my feelings. Do I need to be legitimized by a few words on my behalf written by a known heterosexual?"[528]

A month after her initial letter about the potential foreword writer, Huizinga again wrote to Deming, this time to apologize for her "unfortunate use of the phrase non-lesbian feminist foreword writer of note." She remarked that "However much unintended, I am deeply sorry for any discomfort I may have caused." She explained that the publishers would not choose a foreword writer "based on whether she is a lesbian or a non-lesbian. Nor do we feel that you, as a writer or as a person, need to be legitimized by a heterosexual because you are a lesbian. Ever. I personally would not wish to be a part of a collective which operated using such assumptions." She returned to her position that the purpose of the foreword writer was to expand the reading audience, but added that the publishers would not choose a writer who would result in "jeopardizing the important lesbian-feminist market." She believed that a writer could be found who appealed to readers outside that cohort of readers while simultaneously being a person those readers respected. She also expressed her belief that the publishers should "not assume automatically that Barbara has a limited audience."[529]

While Huizinga believed that Deming's writing could appeal to a wider audience, her sense that pacifist-feminists made up the majority of her readers in the 1980s was readily apparent in their discussions about which writers to approach about the foreword. They also envisioned the primary audience to be de facto female. Therefore, the vast majority of the writers they considered were female, feminist writers such as Susan

[528] Deming to Huizinga, January 6, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 477.
[529] Huizinga to Deming, January 11, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 428.

Griffin, Mary McCarthy, Kate Millett, Grace Paley, Adrienne Rich, and Barbara Smith. The only men they considered were Bradford Lyttle and Ray Robinson, Jr. who were part of the Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Peace Walk, David McReynolds from the WRL, and George Lakey of the MNS.[530] Deming decided early on that she wanted a female foreword writer.[531] She made that decision along the same lines as her rejection of NSP's strong support of Mary McCarthy. Despite originally suggesting McCarthy herself, she felt that she had "recently made some statements that lesbian-feminists would dislike," and that choosing either McCarthy or a male writer could result in decreased support of the book because "strong lesbian-feminists" would likely feel "repelled by a foreword writer they disapproved of."[532]

Deming's discussion of the various foreword writers demonstrated the complications surrounding each woman's sexuality and their positions on nonviolent direct action. She explained that McCarthy was certainly a well-known writer, but not especially regarded in the feminist or nonviolence movements. As for Adrienne Rich, she was also well-known, especially in lesbian circles, but she rejected nonviolence as a feminist strategy. She suggested the political activist Grace Paley, as a writer who did "happen to be heterosexual," explaining that she supported her "not because she's a non-lesbian, but because she is a feminist, a pacifist, and also a known activist." One of her

[530] Huizinga to Meyerding, January 3, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 428, Deming to Huizinga, January 6, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 477, and NSP to Deming and Meyerding, February 28, 1983, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*. Dave Dellinger was a name that should have been on that list. The inclusion of Ray Robinson's name by NSP occurred before learning that he had been killed in 1973 as part of the American Indian Movement's occupation of Wounded Knee in the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota. For more on George Lakey's later work see the pamphlet *The Sword That Heals: Challenging Ward Churchill's 'Pacifism As Pathology' (*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Training For Change, 2001). See also Ward Churchill, *Pacifism as Pathology: Reflections on the Role of Armed Struggle in North America* (Winnipeg, Canada: Arbeiter Ring, 1998).
[531] Huizinga to Deming, December 28, 1982, *BDSL*, Folder 477.
[532] Huizinga to Deming, January 3, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 428.

top choices was Susan Griffin, an eco-feminist writer, was not as well-known as the others but was both a feminist and a proponent of nonviolence whom Deming saw as embodying "the very link" that the publishing house wanted to provide.[533]

These discussions illuminate the circumscribed nature of Barbara Deming's appeal. The publishers, editor, and author all recognized that they were struggling against the fact that by the 1980s Deming's writings on nonviolence were confined to a readership that was primarily female, feminist, and lesbian. Despite the fact that she had written the vast majority of her essays about nonviolence to a wide audience, her focus on feminist nonviolence in the 1970s had resulted in a narrowing of her readership. This was a marked change from the early 1960s when her articles were regularly found in *The Nation*, a widely-read news magazine. Her audience had expanded in the late 1960s with the success of *Prison Notes* and her regular features in the pacifist periodical, *Liberation*. Her formulation of a feminist nonviolence in the 1970s and the resulting conflicts at *Liberation* and *WIN* drove her to seek out feminist venues for her essays on nonviolence such as *Lesbian Tide*, *off our backs*, and *Quest*. Her tumultuous literary journey from poet, to art critic, to journalist, to theorist of nonviolence replayed itself during the conflict about the foreword writer. While McCarthy or Rich could help signify her early years as a writer of fiction and poetry, and Paley or Griffin could emphasize her merging of feminism and nonviolence, it was Barbara Smith who emerged from these discussions as the writer who could best symbolize Deming's role as an activist and writer.

[533] Deming to Huizinga, January 6, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 477. For Deming comment on Paley, see the "discarded" draft of her letter to Huizinga.

Choosing Smith filled the requirements of the three parties involved and created a link between Deming's activism in both the African American Freedom Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement. Barbara Smith had co-authored the 1977 "Combahee River Collective Statement" that had outlined the political position of the African American lesbian-feminists who had formed the collective in Boston, Massachusetts in 1974. She was best known for co-editing *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* and *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* in 1982 and 1983 respectively.[534] Her academic work and political activism allowed the feminist periodical *off our backs* to say in 1984, the same year that NSP published the *Barbara Deming Reader*, that Smith "has produced much of the major literature on Black feminism."[535] Having Smith as the foreword writer had the potential to bring a new audience to the reader, helped link Deming's involvement in the social justice movements of the 1960s to the 1980s, and came from the pen of a lesbian-feminist.

Smith had long been at the top of both Deming and Meyerding's lists for many reasons. In the letter where Deming deconstructed the various candidates, she concluded with the observation, "Thinking about it some more, I'd now name as my first choice to write the foreword Barbara Smith, the black writer and activist." She added that "so many of the pieces in the book came out of the civil rights struggle that it would seem

[534] Barbara Smith, ed. et. al., *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (Old Westbury, New York: Feminist Press, 1982) and Barbara Smith, ed., *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (New York: Kitchen Table—Women of Color Press, 1983).
[535] Michelle Parkerson, "Some Place that's Our Own: An Interview with Barbara Smith" in *off our backs 14*, no. 4 (April 1984): 10-12, 26.

appropriate, too."[536] A week later Meyerding wrote to say that "of all the women named so far, it seems clear to me that Barbara Smith would be the best choice." She explained that the selection of a foreword writer should involve more than simply finding a writer that is "known to a wider and/or different audience but because her presence in the book would in itself shed new light on Barbara's work for those unfamiliar with it."[537] Deming agreed that as an African American, lesbian-feminist, Smith provided a missing perspective on her life's work. However, she wrote Smith with some trepidation. She told her that she knew from the start that she should be the foreword writer, but "I at first hesitated to name you—asking myself: has a white woman the right to ask a Black woman to speak in her behalf? Then—overcame my hesitation. But I will very naturally understand if you say you'd rather not."[538] When Huizinga called Smith about Deming's request she discovered that Smith "was delighted! She said yes right away."[539] In Huizinga's later correspondence with Smith she told her that "It was a real thrill to hear how delighted you were with the idea!" She added that the reader "highlights Barbara's thinking really well and her thinking seems to become more and more timely."[540]

In terms of timeliness, Deming had just received letters from various correspondents both inquiring about her writings and expressing their indebtedness to her work. As Deming told Huizinga, "I keep receiving mail that makes me feel it really is the right time for the Reader. (And, I'm bold to add, for reprints to follow.)" One letter she shared with Huizinga came from a member of a feminist and nonviolence study

[536] Deming to Huizinga, January 6, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 477.
[537] Meyerding to Huizinga, January 15, 1983, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*.
[538] Deming to Barbara Smith, September 29, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 592. See also Deming to Smith, December 14, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 592. Deming sent $1000 to Smith's publishing house, Kitchen Table Press, "With gratitude for the books you are publishing."
[539] Huizinga to Meyerding and Deming, September 29, 1983, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*.
[540] Huizinga to Barbara Smith, October 6, 1983, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*.

group in England who had sent her a copy of their pamphlet "Piecing It Together, Feminism and Nonviolence." The group wanted to make Deming aware that her "writing on women, feminism, and nonviolence has informed and inspired them throughout the seven years they have been working together." A second letter came from "Old Wives Tales bookstore in San Francisco, wanting copies of *Prison Notes* and *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives*," but Deming did not have any copies to send. She also shared a more personal experience about a feminist "who always believed stoutly in armed struggle," but after reading *We Cannot Live Without Our Lives* and *Revolution & Equilibrium* visited her in person to tell her personally that her books had "convinced her that nonviolence was the truer way to take." She was surprised to hear from Deming "that there were no copies available to send to other women round the country."[541] These experiences illustrate the influence that Deming's out-of-print writings continued to have in the early 1980s prior to the publication of the reader and help explain why NSP anticipated a public eager to have ready access to her collected works.

In Barbara Smith's foreword for *We Are All Part of One Another*, she used her personal experiences to connect sexuality, race, gender, and the philosophy of nonviolence to provide a moving and poetic opening to the book. She began by recounting the first time she saw Deming as a student in the audience at a campus lecture in 1967. She had not planned to attend the event, but a friend of hers "said that we should go and hear her because we were involved in the movement—working for civil rights and against the war in Vietnam, and in my case doing black student organizing."

[541] Deming to Huizinga, May 7, 1983, *SCPC*, *NSP-Deming*. See also Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group, *Piecing It Together: Feminism and Nonviolence* (Devon, England: War Resisters League International, 1983). Chapter Two is titled "Breaking the Chains" and includes the subtitled section "Feminist Nonviolence" with multiple references to Barbara Deming and Andrea Dworkin.

Before that day, Smith "didn't know anything about her" but after hearing Deming speak about her experiences in the Albany City Jail, she "went out and bought *Prison Notes*" the very next day.[542]

She confided to the readers that she "felt it was absolutely impossible to survive being black and queer at the same time." As she wrote in the Combahee River Statement, she felt that African American lesbians did not have "racial, sexual, heterosexual, or class privilege to rely upon, nor do we have even the minimal access to resources and power that groups who possess anyone of these types of privilege have."[543] She further remarked that while both she and Deming had not yet come out publically as lesbians in 1967, "without a word being spoken," she "sensed that she was 'different' too. I never forgot her." The first time she actually met Deming was in 1981 during a lesbian poetry reading at the National Women's Studies Association conference on racism. Looking back on the years that passed, Smith contemplated and celebrated "the political struggle that made it possible for us finally to say everything we were out loud."[544]

She devoted the rest of her foreword to explaining why "Barbara's work is essential" to her and how Deming's life could serve as an example of "what it is possible to do in the name of activism and writing."[545] She commented on various entries, noting that Deming's work on racism was "most compelling" for her. She likened Deming's "Southern Peace Walk: Two Issues or One?" to the false dichotomy presented by "traditional, that is white-defined, women's issues" that end up driving away feminists of

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[542] Barbara Smith, "Foreword" in *Deming Reader*, xi-xiv, xi.
[543] Smith, *The Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies and Eighties*, (New York: Kitchen Table—Women of Color Press, 1986).
[544] Smith, "Foreword" in *Deming Reader*, xi.
[545] Ibid., xi.

color from the Women's Liberation Movement.[546] Smith went on to connect the internal division in the feminist movement to divisions within the broader activist community by ending her foreword with a defense of nonviolent direct action. Conceding that "many contemporary activists dismiss nonviolence as an outmoded and unworkable strategy," she argued that in her actions and writing Deming "explains here its basic principles, and provides example after example of exactly how it is effective." Smith added that she could "verify from experience the capacity of nonviolence, militantly practiced, to make freedom possible," and believed that Deming's writings call on more people to be "brave enough to commit themselves to seeing that its success becomes inevitable."[547]

The chance meeting in 1981 that Smith referred to in her foreword was also an emotional moment for Deming. After their conversation Deming had written a poem titled simply "For Barbara Smith" and chose to include it in *We Are All Part of One Another*. It began with the lines "Your first words to me—'We've been in the same struggles'—Generous words for I steal time-out that you cannot."[548] In her foreword, Smith remarked on a similar statement from Deming's essay "Notes After Birmingham" which pointed to her "humility" and "unsparing honesty about herself." Smith recalled Deming's words from 1963, "Now I am a Negro. Except that I can drive away from it."[549] In her 1981 poem Deming wrote about trying to respond to Smith's comments about being in the same struggles; "In place of words I find tears in my throat. They have been locked in me but now burst. So much has been taken from us. But we will take it back." Her poem spoke to the intersections of race, sexuality, and feminism in its closing

[546] Smith, "Foreword" in *Deming Reader*, xii.
[547] Ibid., xiii-xiv.
[548] Deming, "For Barbara Smith" in *Deming Reader*, 242.
[549] Smith, "Foreword" in *Deming Reader*, xiii.

lines; "I sit next to you again—My hands in yours. They took this: our right to touch. Black, white. Woman, woman. We take it back. We take it back."[550]

Barbara Smith and Barbara Deming crossed paths again in the summer of 1983 in upstate New York during Deming's final protest and imprisonment as part of the anti-nuclear protests of the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice. While Deming was putting her final touches on *We Are All Part of One Another* and corresponding with Smith about the foreword, she told her that she wished they had written to each other more often. She explained to Smith that she would have written more herself but had been "too tried at Seneca, I guess. But it was worth it. Wish so we'd met there. I guess the days you were there I was in jail."[551] Deming's experiences at the women's peace encampment had such a deep impact on her that she began writing about them in what would become her final essay.

A New Spirit Moves Among Us

The women's peace encampment in Seneca County, New York that Deming attended was part of a larger international resurgence of anti-nuclear activities of the 1980s that included a global movement of women's peace camps designed to dramatize the threat of nuclear war.[552] The Seneca organizers envisioned the women's peace encampment near the U.S. Army Depot in Romulus, New York as a supportive protest of

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[550] Deming, "For Barbara Smith" in *Deming Reader*, 242.
[551] Deming to Smith, September 29, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 592.
[552] For a list of women's peace encampments around the world see, Philadelphia Women's Peace Encampment, *SCPC*, Box 4, Folders "International Peace Camps, 1983-1985" and "Other Women's Peace Encampments". See also Greenham Women Against Cruise Missiles Collected Records, *SCPC*, especially Box 1, Folder "Addresses of peace camps and of organizations" and Box 3, Folder "Speaking Tours: general." See also, Alison Bartlett, "Feminist protest and maternity at Pine Gap women's peace camp, Australia 1983," *Women's Studies International Forum* 34, no. 1 (2011): 31-38.

the ongoing anti-nuclear weapons protests at the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp in England which began in 1981. Throughout the decade the Catholic Worker Movement staged thirty-five protests involving symbolic sabotage at nuclear weapons sites as part of their Plowshares movement which was inspired by the Biblical call to "beat their swords into plowshares."[553] According to historian Lawrence Wittner, the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign was the leading organization in the United States during the 1980s, but the Seneca encampment was the most prominent of the North American women's peace encampments.[554] The organizers estimated that 8,000 to 10,000 women attended the protests throughout the summer of 1983 with some women living there both before and many years afterward.[555]

The Seneca encampment had both domestic and international connections which can be seen in the context of its initial planning phase. The local organizers of the women's encampment were members of the Upstate Feminist Peace Alliance in New York and had participated in the Women's Pentagon Actions in 1980 and 1981. As Grace Paley explained it in the movement's "Unity Statement," the Pentagon protests were based on the eco-feminist positions that "all is connectedness" and women have the "ecological right" to protect the planet from "that sickness transferred by the violent society through the fathers to the sons." The statement also addressed it support of alternative sexualities by stating that "We will live with women or with men or we will live alone. We will not allow the oppression of lesbians. One sex or one sexual

[553] McNeal, *Harder Than War*, 214-216. See also, Arthur J. Laffin and Anne Montgomery, eds., *Swords into Plowshares: Nonviolent Direct Action for Disarmament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).
[554] Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb*, 153-54.
[555] Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace & Justice Records, 1980-1995: A Finding Aid, Harvard University's Schlesinger Library, in "History".

preference must not dominate another."[556] Several of the Seneca organizers who were part of those protests had traveled to New York City for a general anti-nuclear march in June of 1982 and attended a one-day "Conference on Global Feminism and Disarmament." It was during that meeting that a delegation from WILPF decided to help raise funds to purchase land near the Seneca Army Deport and establish a women's peace encampment there.[557]

Feminist nonviolence was a key organizing principle for the Seneca peace encampment. They restricted their encampment to women only in order "to make women's perspectives on militarism a focal point," and sought to create all their policies through a feminist process that was "non-competitive, communal, peaceful and consensus driven." Their goals were to educate the public and to oppose the deployment of nuclear missiles to Europe, help connect the women's and peace movements, and to live out their "vision of what the world could be like if militarism was not a predominate force in our lives."[558] As Deming and others explained it, the site was chosen not only because of its proximity to the nuclear weapons depot but also because the surrounding area was a gathering place where the "women of the Iroquois Nation had met—in 1590—to demand an end to war among the different tribes"; it was near a former home of Harriet Tubman and an important stop for escaped slaves on their way to Canada as part of the underground railroad; and lastly it was the near the 1848 Seneca Falls Women's Right's

[556] Grace Paley, "Women's Pentagon Action Unity Statement" in *Massachusetts Review*, Volume 49, Issue 4 (Winter 2008), 461-4. For more on the Women's Pentagon Action see, Philadelphia Women's Peace Encampment, *SCPC*, Box 2 "Actions", Folder "Women's Pentagon Action, 1981-1982".
[557] Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue*, 249.
[558] Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace & Justice Records, 1980-1995: A Finding Aid, Harvard University's Schlesinger Library, in "History", and "Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice: Information for foundations, private donors and all other interested persons," *BDSL*, Folder 710.

convention and the home of Elizabeth Cady Stanton.[559] These historical and geographical factors helped accentuate the connection that the women were making between patriarchy, race, and war.

The fifty-page *Resource Handbook* created by the women's encampment encapsulated the intellectual roots and purpose of the protest. The handbook committee brought together a variety of materials to explain "the issues, the connections, the ideas, feelings, and beliefs that bring us together as a diverse group of women working for peace."[560] As their vision statement indicated, they saw women as having "played an important role throughout our history in opposing violence and oppression." They stated that women at the encampment were "committed to nonviolent action to stop the deployment" of nuclear weapons in order to promote "a world where people, animals, plants, and the earth itself are respected and valued."[561] While they restricted the encampment to women only, they did welcome men to participate in the protests. As their orientation materials indicated, "Men are invited to support this Encampment in actions and activities off the land. The reception area and front yard are welcome areas for men." They also had mixed-gender workshops and provided directions for nearby state park campgrounds.[562] As the handbook demonstrated, the encampment and its actions had the practice of feminist nonviolence as its primary focus.

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[559] Deming, "A New Spirit Moves Among Us" in Sky Vanderlinde, ed., *Prisons That Could Not Hold* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 189-215, 206. (Hereafter cited as *Prisons*.)
[560] "Introduction" in the *Resource Handbook for the Women's Encampment For a Future of Peace and Justice* (Handbook Committee, Summer 1983), *BDSL*, Folder 712. (Hereafter cited as *Handbook*.)
[561] "Vision Statement" in *Handbook*, back cover.
[562] "Women's Encampment Orientation" and "Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice: Information for foundations, private donors and all other interested persons," *BDSL*, Folder 710. See also, "Men, Mixed Groups, and the Encampment" in *Handbook*, 12. An October 25, 1983 *Miami Herald*

The information included in the *Resource Handbook* illustrated the link between nonviolence and feminism and detailed how the Seneca Women's Peace Camp in particular embodied those connections. The handbook committee divided it into seven sections with the first two addressing "The Local Area" and "Logistics," leaving the remaining thirty-eight pages for essays that addressed more substantive issues. The section titled "Remembering Our Roots" was the shortest of the five sections and included information about the women of the Cayuga Nation, the role of women in New York's abolitionist movement, the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention, and notable women involved in New York's organized labor movement.[563] The section titled "Everything Is Connected" provided a brief history of the nuclear arms race, information about past actions at the Seneca Army Depot, a proposal for a "Non-Violent Civilian Defense" rather than amassing more nuclear weapons, and an essay about "the links between militarism and racism" and the need for the peace movement to "become functionally multi-racial."[564] The section entitled "Reweaving the Web" demonstrated the interconnections between the first women's peace camps in England and the subsequent ones in Canada, Israel, Italy, and Switzerland.[565]

The final two sections focused on essays that stressed the links between feminism and nonviolence. The first, titled "Feminism and Non-Violence," included an article by Pam McAllister and others by women who had contributed to McAllister's *Reweaving* anthology. Together these essays argued that the two concepts were so inextricably

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newspaper showed a photo of Dr. Benjamin Spock climbing over a fence at the Romulus, NY army depot fence, see *BDSL*, Folder 716.

[563] *Handbook*, *BDSL*, Folder 712, 13-17.

[564] Ibid., 17-23, 23.

[565] Ibid., 24-29

linked that it was "impossible to implement one without the other…that feminism and nonviolence offer two ways of approaching the same reality…to perfect the ways we can engage in conflict to right wrong behavior, and still affirm the opponent as a person."[566] The final section, titled "Non-Violent Action" was divided equally into two sections with one half subtitled "Legal Information" about arrests, charges and court procedure; while the second half explained the basics of civil disobedience, noncooperation, consensus-building, and affinity/support groups. It included the encampment's "Guidelines to Non-Violent Action" which stated that their protest "encourages creative, life-affirming acts of resistance to the presence of weapons of destruction" and called on participants to refrain from "physical or verbal violence toward anyone we encounter."[567]

An event that speaks to the character of the women's peace encampment was also one of the summer's most publicized acts of civil disobedience. It occurred on July 30, 1983 on the Washington Street Bridge in Waterloo, New York as a group of women, including Barbara Deming, attempted to march from Seneca Falls to the Seneca Army Depot. According to the protestors, their "intent was to walk, not do civil disobedience." However, when they reached the bridge a crowd of townspeople blocked their path and the sheriff arrested the women for "disorderly conduct" despite their ability to remain nonviolent amidst threats of violence from the counter protestors.[568] Harriet Alonso

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[566] *Handbook*, *BDSL*, Folder 712 30-38, 32-33.
[567] Ibid., 39-51, 39.
[568] "Statement of the Waterloo Fifty-Four" in *Prisons*, 227-30. See also Louise Krasniewicz, *Nuclear Summer: The Clash of Communities at the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment* (Cornell University Press, 1992), 169-87. See also, Catherine Allport, *We Are The Web: The Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice, Romulus, New York, 1983* (New York, New York: Artemis Project, 1984) and Mima Cataldo, et. al, *The Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice: Images and Writings* (Temple University Press, 1987). The authors dedicated the book to Barbara Deming including with her name her quote, "I have had the dream that women would at last be the ones to truly experiment with nonviolent

corroborates the women's description in her history of the event. As she explains, "local news media portrayed the women as threatening lesbian, Communist traitors out to cripple the nation's manhood" despite the fact that they sat calmly on the bridge surrounded by an angry crowd "screaming epithets" while the police "ironically" arrested the women.[569]

Deming revived her past career as a short-story writer and returned to her description of nonviolence as a blend of assertiveness and sympathy as she described the situation on the bridge. She recalled how some of the women sat in a "quiet, deliberate circle" for "two or three hours" in order to decide by consensus what action the group should take when an angry crowd blockaded a bridge along their sanctioned route. Other women, including Deming, continued to face the crowd, standing "eye to eye with the mob." Upon reflecting on that experience she came to see that "each group loaned the other added strength—helped the other to feel a bit less vulnerable." This recounting of the stand-off allowed Deming to remind her readers that it is this "two-fold message that gives nonviolent struggle its leverage: We won't be bullied; but you needn't fear us. You needn't fear us, but we won't be bullied."[570]

In her final lines she told the story of her interaction with one of the men on the bridge. He asked Deming the perennial question she had heard many times, "Why don't

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struggle, discover its full force." The work of Cynthia Enloe was also popular among peace camp women. See Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives* (Boston: South End Press, 1983).

[569] Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue*, 253. For Alonso's discussion of creating a course on feminist peace making that included Reweaving as required reading and a visit to the Seneca encampment see Alonso, "Feminist Issues and World Peace," *Women's Studies Quarterly 12*, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 32-3. For her perspective on the historiography of women and peace making see, Alonso, "One Woman's Journey Into the History of Women's Peace History," *Women's Studies Quarterly 23*, no. 3/4 (Fall-Winter, 1995): 170-182.

[570] Deming, "A New Spirit Moves Among Us" in *Prisons*, 189-215, 215. (Hereafter cited as *Spirit*.)

we love our country?", or as she put it, "The question within the question…Why don't we love the patriarchy?" She responded by asking him if he "had a child whom he loved…'I have a child!' he cut in." She proceeded to ask him if it was better to allow his child to behave "in a way that he thought very wrong" or if it was better to try to "change the way in which he was behaving?" As she recalled it, "The man squinted at me, silent for a few moments. I had the feeling he was considering my words. I remember even that I was able to reach out and touch his arm lightly without his flinching." After that brief moment of connection, she saw that his eyes "glazed again" before asking her if she would carry his U.S. flag. She agreed, noting that "it was my flag as well as his." She asked him if he would hold her bouquet of wildflowers she had gathered alongside the road. "He snatched them from me, then quickly let them drop to the ground laughing a strange false laugh, 'Oh they dropped!' Then, as I stooped to recover them, snatched back his flag."[571] Deming's interaction with the man illustrated her ability to use nonviolence as way to bridge their differences, albeit temporarily.

Just before leaving the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment, Deming gave an interview to the Boston Women's Video Collective which provided her assessment of her experiences that summer. She had just spent five days in a junior high school turned detention center with fifty-three other women who were arrested on the bridge. Much of her interview focused on the consensus-style of group decision making and how that "process" was a threat to patriarchal concepts of power. She explained that the perception of those opposed to their protest were "really very accurate" because they could sense that this all-female protest was more than an anti-nuclear protest. Deming

[571] Deming, *Spirit*, in *Prisons*, 215.

saw their consensus process of deciding to refuse to leave the bridge as being "very deeply connected to our reason for being here as women only." She believed there was "no reason why we couldn't/shouldn't be men and women" chanting that nuclear weapons were "a threat to us all" except that their specific message was a "feminist vision that we're never going to end war unless we dissolve the patriarchy." She guessed that "the crowd at the bridge recognized, not consciously but unconsciously, that that's precisely what we're saying."[572]

Their decision to use a deliberative, consensus process during the confrontation at the bridge made a lasting impact on Deming. In her interview, she spoke of the counter-protestors shouting insults such as "Nuke the lezzies" and other derogatory comments about the protestors' gender, sexuality, and religious beliefs. The interviewer asked if Deming thought that "people who are men and Christians and heterosexuals will lose something" if the patriarchy was fully dismantled. She responded that "they have really no need to fear us" despite the fact that "they will lose what they now think they need, which is control, power, ownership of women's bodies, ownership of the land." She believed that "The lie of ownership has them intoxicated" to the point that they had become irrationally fearful. As she explained it, "Our message is, we're going to utterly change the process of our lives and don't be scared of it."[573]

Deming further explained how the combination of asserting fundamental change in a calming and inclusive manner could deescalate violence. She did so by telling the

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[572] The Boston Women's Video Collective, "Interview With Barbara Deming" in *Prisons*, 217-225, 218. (Hereafter cited as *Interview*.) Deming was also interviewed in the early 1980s for the film *Gay Seniors: The Silent Pioneers*, see Cynthia Rich and Barbara McDonald Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, Folder 2.18 and McDonald to Pat Snyder the Executive Producer of Silent Pioneers, May 27, 1983, *BDSL*, Folder 389.

[573] Deming, *Interview*, in *Prisons*, 219.

story of two women who escaped from the detention center and the corresponding actions of the prisoners and their female guards. She told the interviewer that the guards removed the rest of the prisoners from the room while they searched it, and then informed the women that they would only allow them to return after each woman had gone through a body cavity search. As the guards put on rubber gloves the women "began to calm down and follow *our* process of asking reasonable questions, like 'Do you think you can find these missing women in our vaginas?'" and "'Why are you punishing us for what two people who are not present have done?'" According to Deming, it was the women's style of nonviolent resistance that caused the male supervisor to cancel the search. As he did so he told the women, "'Well, this is the last kind act I'm going to perform.'"[574]

Deming saw their act of nonviolence as "thrilling" and it gave her "hope for the future" because she had learned that the men in authority at the bridge and in the detention center "were grateful when we established another process." She came away from her final jail experience with the discovery that "this process *is* what the end of patriarchy is." She was eager "to find more and more ways of saying to them, 'look, don't be scared of us, because what has just happened and what you were grateful that happened is all that we're trying to bring into being.'"[575] When asked how long she planned on staying at the encampment, Deming said that although she was "tempted just to stay on and on and on" she was "not sure how much longer my body can go without going back home and deeply resting." She concluded the interview by saying "Also, I want to go home and try to write and I'll have to gauge how much I'll forget of the

[574] Deming, *Interview*, in *Prisons*, 221-22. Emphasis in the original.
[575] Ibid., 222. Emphasis in the original.

experience in jail if I don't go home and start taking notes soon."[576] When Deming returned home she began writing "A New Spirit Moves Among Us."

She used the essay to explain the rationale behind the female-only protest action and to assure those who were "dismayed by the spirit in which they (we) join these actions."[577] Returning to her style of open letters, she addressed the essay to Norma Becker, the chairwoman of the WRL from 1977 to 1983, who had expressed concern about the exclusion of men from the protest. She began the essay by telling Becker and her readers that her two-week trip to the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment was the first time she had "taken part in a large action for some time" and that she was not sure what sort of experience it would be. However, by the end of the protest she "came away filled not with misgivings about this new spirit that moves us, but with a deeper hopefulness—because of it—than I have ever known."[578]

Deming saw similarities between the women's peace encampments of the 1980s and the Women Strike for Peace (WISP) protests of the 1960s. She told Becker that while the two protests were different she could "see some seeds" of Seneca in "the WISP style."[579] While WISP remained active in the 1980s, they were best known for their initial 1961 protest of over 100,000 women in sixty cities against atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons and their testimony before the House Un-American Activities Commission in 1963.[580] As Amy Swerdlow's insider history of WISP demonstrated, the

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[576] Deming, *Interview*, in *Prisons*, 225.
[577] Deming, *Spirit*, in *Prisons*, 189.
[578] Ibid., 189.
[579] Ibid., 189. While WSP is the most common acronym, WISP is used her both for continuity with Deming's wording and for pronunciation purposes. For more variations on their name see Swerdlow, *Women Strike For Peace*, 188-89.
[580] "Historical Background," Women Strike for Peace Records, *SCPC*.

organization "relied heavily upon sex role stereotypes to legitimize its opposition to cold war policies." Swerdlow conceded that "one of the negative effects" of their approach was that it "alienated a new generation" of female activists who rejected their emphasis on motherhood.[581] As Deming put it in her 1963 *Liberation* essay about the group, these women protested because "their children were threatened—or their friends' children, the world's children; and they were angry, and they wanted to be heard."[582] The women's encampments and WISP were both female-only protest actions to prevent nuclear war, but the essentialism of motherhood no longer dominated at Seneca.

Deming told Becker that she hoped her description of the women's encampment would help explain "this new style that alarms you." Becker had given a speech about "Feminist Organizing in the Peace Movement" that had characterized the protests as having "'an anti-male attitude… an aversion to acknowledging that (men) too can be victims'," and accused the protestors as wanting "a future that is 'women only'."[583] After reading her comments, Deming wrote that "It is clear to me, of course, that you feel that in joining the women-only actions I have, as I were, lost my way." Deming rejected the argument "that these actions contain at their core the element of violence, of hatefulness."[584] She noted that Becker also cited a pamphlet created by the New York branch of the Women's Pentagon Action in order to demonstrate how another all-female

[581] Swerdlow, "Ladies' Day at the Capitol: Women Strike for Peace versus HUAC," *Feminist Studies 8*, no. 3 (Autumn 1982): 493-520, 515-16, and *Women Strike For Peace*. See also Schneidhorst, "'Women's Peace and Social Justice Activism in Chicago, 1960-1975."
[582] Deming, "Letter to WISP" in *Deming Reader*, 101-109, 105. As Jane Meyerding noted, "Barbara's pre-feminist view of Woman-as-Mom" in this essay is superficial compared with her later understanding—as represented, for example in 'Remembering Who We Are'." For Deming's brief participation with WISP see Women Strike for Peace Records, *SCPC*, Box 3, Series A, 1, Folder "National Conference 1963, Champaign, IL".
[583] Norma Becker, *The Guardian*, October 19, 1983. See also *Prisons That Could Not Hold*, 215, n.1.
[584] Deming, *Spirit*, in *Prisons*, 190.

protest reflected a hatred of men. Becker quoted a passage which stated that "'The masculine ideal which the military perpetuates…is a concept of masculinity that victimizes women, children and nature.'" Becker saw the exclusion of the word men as a denial of their humanity. Deming refuted that by pointing out that the next paragraph included a phrase about their "'sisters and brothers who have known generations of war'" to show the inclusion of men as victims.[585]

Deming also observed that while Becker never used the word lesbian "even once" in her speech, she did use the euphemism "lifestyle preference," and that caused Deming to recount her experience as a lesbian in the "beloved community" of the nonviolent movement. She explained that in the camaraderie of the Quebec-Washington-Guantanamo Peace Walk she "never told" her colleagues that she was lesbian. She kept her sexuality hidden because she feared that if they knew it "might create a hateful distance between me and the very people with whom I identified—identified precisely because of that unmentionable state." Deming conceded that she had told Ray Robinson Jr., but she only confided in him because he was "in love" with her. She explained that she told him "only out of anxiety that his pride not be hurt by my failure to fall in love with him in return." She made it clear to Becker that her "experience as a member of a despised group" motivated her to become involved in the African American Freedom Movement, but her sexuality also forced her to keep an important part of herself "always in shadow." She also explained that the all-female protests were a product of the fact that "nonviolent struggle is always in the process of invention…that it has still to be further and further invented." She believed that they were "further inventing it in our all-women

[585] Deming, *Spirit*, in *Prisons*, 207-8.

circles" and that being in the company of women who showed no disdain for lesbianism allowed a "much deeper sharing of our selves which we are learning is at the very heart of this invention." This sense of community caused Deming to feel "impatient for the day when our circles of women will widen to include men," indicating her apprehensions about separatism.[586] The separateness that Deming did observe was related to a lack of inclusivity in terms of race. She noted that there were "very few women of color…and I hope the organizers are asking themselves why. And asking women of color that question,—and listening hard to their answers."[587]

While Deming used her essay as an attempt to allay the fears of Becker and those that shared her criticisms, she also drew their attention to the differences between violence against women and violence against men. She argued that "for centuries and centuries—all the centuries of the patriarchy" women had been "victimized *as* women" whereas when men had been the victims of violence "it has not been *as men*." She added that "we are supposed to forget this" and to replace it with the "the grotesque lie" that when a woman is "victimized it is an individual matter always, and if we look closely we'll discover that we've done something to bring it upon ourselves."[588] She called on those committed to nonviolence to recognize and take "seriously the connection between the war against women and the threat of nuclear war which could destroy us all."[589] Near the end of her essay she recounted the experience of seeing police officers wrestling and disarming a counter-protestor while over one hundred women continued walking through angry crowds of mostly men and a few women and children who carried signs, wore t-

[586] Deming, *Spirit*, in *Prisons*, 194-95.
[587] Ibid., 202.
[588] Ibid., 208. Emphasis in original.
[589] Ibid., 209.

shirts, and shouted slogans such as "'NUKE'M TILL THEY GLOW, THEN SHOOT'M IN THE DARK!'" and "'Nuke the bitches!' 'Nuke the lezzies!'"[590] Deming felt reassured about the power of nonviolence as she looked into her companions' eyes. "How beautiful I thought these women's faces. I see them still. No fear written on them. No hostility. And a lovely stubbornness written on each face."[591]

The story of how "A New Spirit Moves Among Us" came to be published reveals Deming's determination to share the results of her final experiment in nonviolence. She began writing the essay in the fall of 1983 but was slow to get her energy back from the protest. She was eventually diagnosed with cancer in February of 1984 and began chemotherapy as she continued working on the essay. NSP published *We Are All Part of One Another* that spring even though Nina Huizinga had hoped to include her most recent essay in the reader. In July of 1984, just one week before her death, Huizinga told Deming that the NSP staff thought that her most recent draft of the essay was "brilliant."[592] By that time Deming had decided to end her chemotherapy treatments. Two days before she died, Deming told Sky Vanderlinde and other women who were gathered around her, that she wanted her Seneca essay included in the upcoming NSP reprint of *Prison Notes*. Deming died of ovarian cancer on August 2, 1984 at the age of sixty-seven. Weeks later, Vanderlinde tried to persuade NSP to carry out Deming's wishes for printing her essay. Huizinga reluctantly denied the request, but agreed to

[590] Deming, *Spirit*, in *Prisons*, 193, 212.
[591] Ibid., 213.
[592] Huizinga to Deming, July 25, 1984, *BDSL*, Unprocessed papers in 2000-M115 Barbara Deming Carton 1 (67:2:2).

allow another publisher to reprint the book the way Deming had wanted.[593] In 1985 Spinsters Ink, a feminist press in San Francisco, California, eventually reissued *Prison Notes* under the title *Prisons That Could Not Hold* with an introduction by Grace Paley.[594] It included Deming's essay on the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment, her interview after her arrest, and the "Statement of the Waterloo Fifty-Four." Although NSP did not reprint *Prison Notes* they continued to align themselves with Deming by creating a two volume "Barbara Deming Memorial Series" edited by Pam McAllister that included *You Can't Kill The Spirit: Stories of Women and Nonviolent Action* and *This River of Courage: Generations of Women's Resistance and Action*.[595]

In the end, Barbara Deming made lasting impacts on U.S. feminism and pacifism, but neither movement was wholly convinced of her philosophy of feminist nonviolence. For example, the U.S. feminist movement did not advocate for nonviolence as the best strategy to disrupt the patriarchy, and the U.S. pacifist movement did not place violence against women or sexism on par with violence between nations and racism. However, Deming did have some success in bringing the two movements closer together despite resistance from both pacifists and feminists.

In terms of her impact on the broader nonviolent movement, the MNS provides the best example of a pacifist organization embracing feminism. MNS devoted itself to training activists in nonviolent direct action, shared much of Deming's critique of

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[593] Huizinga to Sky Vanderlinde, September 25, 1984, *BDSL*, Unprocessed papers in 2000-M115 Barbara Deming Carton 1 (67:2:2).

[594] This same combination of Deming's prison writings was reprinted in 1995 with a new biographical essay by Deming's literary executor, Judith McDaniel. See Sky Vanderlinde, ed., *Prisons That Could Not Hold* (Georgia University Press, 1995).

[595] Pam McAllister, ed., *You Can't Kill The Spirit: Stories of Women and Nonviolent Action* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: New Society Publishers, 1989) and *This River of Courage: Generations of Women's Resistance and Action* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: New Society Publishers, 1991).

nonviolence, and considered feminism as central to their vision. However, their membership remained small throughout its short seventeen year history and their support did not demonstrate an adoption of feminist nonviolence by a leading pacifist organization in the United States. NSP, their publishing arm, furthered Deming's efforts to merge nonviolence and feminism more than any entity by publishing *Reweaving the Web of Life*, *We Are All Part of One Another*, and supporting the publication of "A New Spirit Moves Among Us." However, their commitment to feminism and nonviolence faded in 1990 when it shifted its publishing focus to environmental sustainability.[596] The MNS and NSP had only a small following and lasted for but a short time, but they best reflected Deming's vision of nonviolence as an androgynous force that could be applied to dismantle sexism and heterosexism.

The Seneca Women's Peace Encampment occupied physical and symbolic ground between the histories of feminism and nonviolence in the United States. Its historical and geographic location revealed a momentary nexus between the two movements that neither historians of peace nor feminism have fully appreciated. Seneca was neither a feminist action that simply linked itself to nonviolence nor a pacifist action that simply incorporated feminism. It was a protest that demonstrated the potential unity of feminism and nonviolence rather than a temporary alliance between two separate movements for a one-time combined action. Seneca and the global women's peace encampment movement represented the intersections of feminism, nonviolence, race, and sexuality embodied in Deming's activism.

[596] Chris Plant, "From Candlelight to Leading Lights," *British Columbia Bookworld* (Summer 2009): 22-23.

A complicated history of the feminist and nonviolent movements in the United States emerges through the exploration of Barbara Deming's activism and writing in the early 1980s. Her behind-the-scenes role in *Reweaving* sheds some light on the racial tensions within the feminist movement, just as her decision to ask Barbara Smith to write the foreword of *We Are All Part of One Another* emphasizes the role of racial justice and the acceptance of the Other in the history of the nonviolent movement. Lastly, her essay "A New Spirit Moves Among Us" speaks to the possibilities of a feminist nonviolence movement, but also illustrates its limitations in terms of it being a temporarily all-female movement. Other limitations can be seen in the contradictions that arose as some leading feminists continued to reject nonviolence as a strategy for social change while other organized groups of feminists endorsed it. Institutionally, the formation of the MNS and their role in the publication of these three works indicate an acceptance of Deming's feminist critique of nonviolence on one level. However, the public disavowal of the women's peace encampments by WRL chairwoman Norma Becker points to a continual resistance on the part of the longstanding pacifist institutions. Together these three writings demonstrate that activists in the feminist and pacifist movements experimented with nonviolence during the 1980s in ways that illuminate their separate and interwoven histories.

EPILOGUE

> Last summer, when Barbara was arrested, my young daughter was perched upon my shoulders, as a mother I could infiltrate those angry crowds, we waved to her as she was led up the ramp of the paddy wagon, and I stopped to tell my child Barbara's story, so that she should know a great woman was being arrested, a writer she will read someday, a woman who moulded her mother's life and many others. Now I tell her that a great woman has died, gone back to be with mommy nature.[597]

Barbara Deming's story inspired the women she was arrested with at Seneca in 1983, informed the pacifist and feminist communities she tried to bring together in the 1970s, and influenced those who read *Prison Notes*, her essays in *Liberation*, and her earliest articles as a journalist for the *Nation* in the 1960s. Over her quarter-century of activism, Deming crafted a philosophy of nonviolence that merged Gandhian and Christian nonviolence with feminism and her own early constructs of queer theory. Her contributions to the nonviolent movement have been far-reaching, but her presence in the historical record has until recently been minimal. Besides the biographical essays by Judith McDaniel, Deming's literary executor, she has received little attention from scholars aside from Ira Chernus' brief chapter in *American Nonviolence* (2004) and Martin Duberman's dual-biography, *A Saving Remnant* (2011).[598] Despite the profound impact she had on those with whom she worked, the preservation of her ideas in her

[597] Karen Malpede to Jane Gapen, August 3, 1984, *BDSL*, unprocessed papers in 2000-M115 Barbara Deming Carton 1 (67:2:2).

[598] McDaniel, "Biographical Sketch" in Deming, *Prisons That Could Not Hold* (1995), vii-xiv, McDaniel, "The Women She Loved" in Deming, *I Change, I Change* (1996), 1-25, and "Shaping the Sixties: The Emergence of Barbara Deming" in *Impossible to Hold* (2005), 196-216. Chernus, *American Nonviolence*, 206, 182-191 and Duberman, *Saving Remnant*. See also, Alonso, *Peace As A Woman's Issue*, 243-44 and Cortright, *Gandhi And Beyond*, 116-136.

published writings and archival collections, and her engaging life story, there has yet to be a book-length study devoted solely to Barbara Deming.

Telling Deming's story illustrates the unique niche she occupied in the history of the nonviolent movement. As Chernus explained, "Thus far, Barbara Deming has provided perhaps the best example of a secular theory of nonviolence. Her premise is that every person deserves maximum freedom simply because he or she is human."[599] This is what she meant by refusing to name one's enemy the Other. It is vital to the history of nonviolence to share the secular aspect of her story. While many people have embraced nonviolence because most of its adherents have given it a religious-basis, others have dismissed or even belittled nonviolence because of its reliance on a theological tradition. Some have rejected nonviolence because of its historical connection in the United States with Christianity in particular, and others have repudiated nonviolence because of their disavowal of all religion in general. Understanding Deming's theories of nonviolence as influenced by but separate from religion provides further complexity to the history of nonviolence. Her theories also open up the possibility for further experimentation by those looking for a secular-basis for nonviolence.

Deming's experiments with feminist nonviolence are compelling enough on their own to merit more study. Revelations about U.S. nonviolent movement and the Women's Liberation Movement can be gleaned from her negotiations to convince pacifists that feminism was essential to their struggle to eliminate war and her efforts to

[599] Chernus, *American Nonviolence*, 206-7. For more on the discussion of secular nonviolence see Noah Berlatsky, ed., *Opposing View Points Series: Pacifism* (Farmington Hills, Michigan: Greenhaven Press, 2011), especially "What Are Secular Pacifist Traditions?" 107-48.

persuade feminists that nonviolence was the key to dismantling the patriarchy. Deming was not alone in those attempts to bring the two movements together, but her name is the one most frequently mentioned in those exchanges. As Pam McAllister noted in a postcard to Deming in 1981 while attending a conference on militarism and feminism, "your name came up in *every* workshop."[600]

Her prominence in the historical record regarding feminist nonviolence and her role as an elder advocate for lesbian rights contributed to the archival preservation of her papers in the Schlesinger Library at Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute. At the opening of the Barbara Deming Papers on October 4, 1990, Judith McDaniel hosted a four-person panel that commented on Deming's importance to the history of nonviolence, feminism, and LGBTQ rights. Before introducing the panel, she provided a commentary on Deming's early life, noting that "Her journey began very differently I think than if at the age of seventeen she had fallen in love with the boy next door."[601] The other panelists who spoke that day were Dave Dellinger, Juanita Nelson, Blue Lunden, and Barbara Smith. Longtime pacifists Dellinger and Nelson both met Deming at the 1960 CNVA workshop on nonviolence and their presence symbolized her role as an editor of *Liberation* and her involvement with the radical pacifism. Smith and Lunden, a lesbian rights and anti-war activist, met Deming after 1980 and symbolized her role as one of the primary advocates for feminist nonviolence.

Their comments provide an encapsulation of Deming's twenty-five years of activism in the nonviolent movement and point to the various communities who

[600] McAllister to Deming, April 13, 1981, *BDSL*, Folder 397. Emphasis in original.
[601] "Living Her Life: Homage to Barbara Deming, Activist," *BDSL*, Audiotape T-196.

considered her one of their own. Dellinger stressed that Deming "was not an overt feminist" in the 1960s but that he valued her later feminist intervention into nonviolence especially in terms of her "On Anger" piece. He also predicted that her writings would "continue to play a creative role" in the philosophy of nonviolence. Nelson, who had been active in CORE and the Peacemakers since the 1940s, initially thought Deming was only a writer and remembered telling other pacifists upon first meeting her that they would "never see her again." However, she soon realized she was wrong and "rejoiced" when she heard of her noncooperation while imprisoned in Albany, Georgia for what Nelson saw as the joining of the "the civil rights and the peace struggle." Lunden, who marched with Deming at Seneca, read excerpts of "A New Spirit Moves Among Us" and told the audience that Deming taught her the important lesson that "It doesn't take anything away from you to listen to others."[602] Finally, Smith shared a story about a 1979 protest sparked by the murders of a number of African American women in Boston. She explained that Audre Lorde had written a poem quoting Deming, while in the background that same phrase appeared on a banner reading, "Third World Women We Cannot Live Without Our Lives."[603]

The comments made during the panel demonstrate the variety of ways to argue that the inclusion of Barbara Deming's voice is essential to a complex understanding of the history of the nonviolent movement in the United States. Her pilgrimage of nonviolence from 1959 to 1984 can be shown as symmetrical by linking her demonstrations for nuclear disarmament, from her first arrest in 1962 outside the Atomic

[602] For more on Lunden commentary about Deming's influence on her life see, Joyce P. Warshow, producer and director, *Some Ground to Stand On: The Story of Blue Lunden* (New York, New York: Women Make Movies, 1998).
[603] "Living Her Life: Homage to Barbara Deming, Activist," *BDSL*, Audiotape T-196.

Energy Commission in New York City to her final arrest in 1983 at the Seneca Women's Encampment. Her two decades of activism can also be connected by her efforts for racial equality, from her early actions in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963 to her later insistence to include more voices from women of color in the 1982 anthology *Reweaving the Web of Life*. Deming's realization later in life that her involvement in the African American Freedom Movement was in many ways a reflection of her own struggles as a lesbian create the possibilities for complicating that connection. It is also important to note that Deming's understanding of nonviolence was not static. For instance, in 1968 Deming argued in "On Revolution and Equilibrium" that nonviolence was an affirmation of manliness, while in 1973 in "Two Perspectives on Women's Struggle" she asserted that nonviolence was androgynous because it combined conventional traits of masculinity and femininity. In the end, regardless of whether she was attempting to define nonviolence as an androgynous force, working to bring an end to the war in Viet Nam, or trying to convince colleagues that nonviolence required a commitment to feminism, it is clear that Barbara Deming maintained her belief that nonviolence demands continual experimentation for it to remain effective, and it insists that no one be treated as the Other.

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