

A lot of the stuff listed above isn't specifically "anarcha-feminist" but we think it's all interesting, and worth checking out.

In fact, there are very few full-length "anarcha-feminist" books – but a lot more that takes the form of short articles and zines (often self-published by the individuals and collectives who wrote them) – which you may be able to find in an Archive (like the one at 56a info-shop), or online, for example at:

<http://www.anarcha.org/sallydarity/index.php>

<http://nopretence.wordpress.com/>

<http://www.spunk.org/cat-us/anarcfem.html>

<http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/wsm/women.html>

<http://ragdublin.blogspot.com/>

<http://feministchildrearing.blogspot.com>

History tends to be written and disseminated by the winners, by those who've ended up on top of the pile. Despite the efforts of women, working class, queer and indigenous people to unearth alternative stories, real people's experiences, and preserve/ share that knowledge, much has been lost.

Don't assume that you're getting the full story, especially if the books you're reading have been written by relatively privileged white men.

**london anarcha-feminist kolektiv**

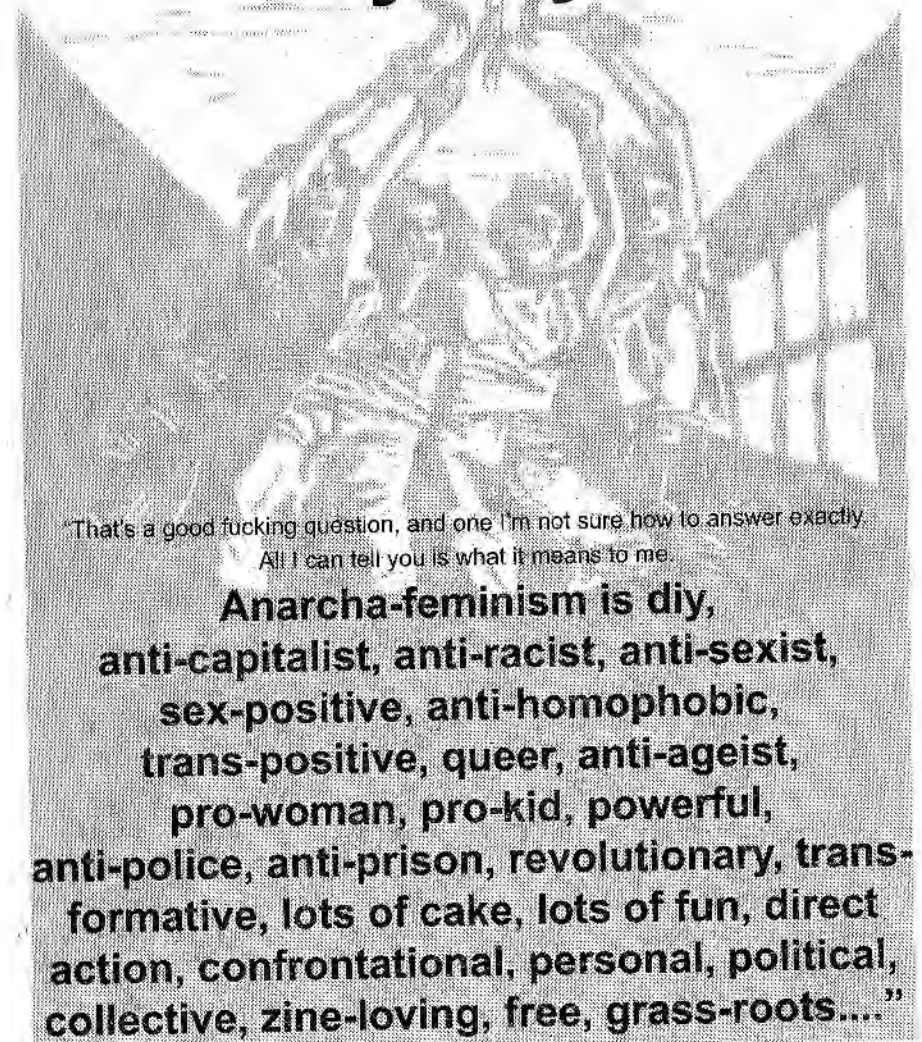
**<http://lafk.wordpress.com/>**

lafk @ riseup.net – c/o 56a Crampton Street, SE17 3AE.

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We've put this together quite quickly – and included quotes from lots of people – and will hopefully make another version in future...

# what the fuck is anarcha-feminism anyway?



That's a good fucking question, and one I'm not sure how to answer exactly.  
All I can tell you is what it means to me.

**Anarcha-feminism is diy,  
anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-sexist,  
sex-positive, anti-homophobic,  
trans-positive, queer, anti-ageist,  
pro-woman, pro-kid, powerful,  
anti-police, anti-prison, revolutionary, trans-  
formative, lots of cake, lots of fun, direct  
action, confrontational, personal, political,  
collective, zine-loving, free, grass-roots...."**

## what does anaracha-feminism mean to you?

"Basically when I strip it down, anaracha-feminism to me means resisting and struggling against oppression and hierarchy. Anaracha-feminism is revolutionary. It seeks to transform the whole of society, and banish all oppressions. It recognizes that oppression isn't something that just happens out there, it happens within us, we oppress and are oppressed, and these oppressions can be seen and felt in every aspect of our lives from our relationship with ourselves and others all the way through to national and international politics, economics and culture. There are hierarchies and a result, oppression everywhere. Anaracha-feminism helps me understand and my life in a political way. It enables me to understand where other people put me on their own particular personal hierarchy, where I place myself on the hierarchies I create and where the state and society places me as a white, working class straight, able-bodied woman who is also a mother".

"What distinguishes anaracha-feminism from other forms of feminism is the recognition that reformist politics is disempowering. We cannot look to a sexist, racist, homophobic, anti-woman state and legal system to grant us freedom, we must take it ourselves and create new, anti-oppressive and anti-hierarchical ways of living, being and organizing. Anaracha-feminism enables us to regain power and autonomy, to think outside the box, and to act in ways that are new, revolutionary and empowering. Anaracha-feminism rejects outdated ways of being and doing. It is creative and radical. Anaracha-feminism educates me about the power I have as an individual acting as part of a community. Anaracha-feminism rejects tradition and stereotype, anaracha-feminism allows complete individuality while showing the value of collective action. Anaracha-feminism teaches that we alone have the power to affect our own lives, that as women we can take direct action on a micro and macro level to transform our lives and the lives of women around the world. Anaracha-feminism is a vision of what the future could look like and it's a vision worth fighting for. Anaracha-feminism is about freedom, a freedom to be whoever the fuck I am or want to be, a freedom to decide without interference what is best for me and my family, a freedom to dress how I want, to do what I want and to be valued for what I do."

"I'm so glad to have found anaracha-feminism. Anaracha-feminism has given me so much and helped me to realize the value of myself and my actions and the power that I have as one person in a world of 6 billion. Capitalism will be smashed, patriarchy will be destroyed, oppression will cease to exist; anaracha-feminism is the future and the way."

"a thoughtful but relentless questioning of authority and power, one which seeks to create a world where all may live in freedom".

"self-determination values ones right to make choices about ones own body and life, or a community's right and access to make choices about their livelihood, who they are, how they want to organise themselves."



"I'm an anarchist and a feminist. I want to see this society completely changed, I want to see a new world based on equality, mutual aid and co-operation, without rulers or ruled, without exploitation, and with much more leisure and love created on the smouldering ruins of this shitty old world. And to take up an old slogan: 'There will be no revolution without women's liberation; there will be no women's liberation without revolution'."



## what do we mean by 'feminism' and 'patriarchy'?

"A feminist is someone who recognises patriarchy as a structure and a force which exists within society and is working to, or recognises the need to, change it or get rid of it."

"Feminism is basically the recognition of a system of male domination in our hierarchical world ('patriarchy'), and fighting against it with ideas and actions".

"Women have been denied control over their own lives, have been owned by their fathers, husbands and children. Women have been denied access to knowledge, education and to position of power. Women have been talked of and treated as sexual objects and they have always had male myths surrounding them and limiting their self-recognition. Women have been abused and killed. All this just for being women, and/or not following the 'rules' of gender, all throughout history."

"Patriarchy is still going strong. Capitalist society is dependent on hierarchies, and male domination is particularly useful when it comes to helping people internalise the concepts of government, property and power. And, as a bloke, even if you feel fucked over by your boss you can still go home and exercise your own authority over your wife."

"Feminism as a movement to end sexist oppression directs our attention to systems of domination and the interrelatedness of sex, race and class oppression".

"Feminism is a struggle to end sexist oppression. Therefore, it is necessarily a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates western culture on various levels, as well as a commitment to reorganising society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires. Defined in this way, it is unlikely that women would join feminist movement simply because we are biologically the same. A commitment to feminism so defined would demand that each individual participant acquire a critical political consciousness based on ideas and beliefs." - bell hooks in 'Feminist Theory: from margin to center'.

## what makes anarcha-feminism different to other feminisms?

"There are many kinds of 'feminism' - as anarchists we're not interested in asking the State to sort things out. We believe in self-determination, mutual aid and cooperation, that we are capable of managing our own lives. We don't need politicians and political parties. We don't want our communities to be policed, we don't want anybody to be incarcerated. We reject capitalism, nation states, all borders and binaries."

"Feminism's about challenging male power structures, but for some women, this translated into gaining access to those power structures at the expense of everyone else who was still fucked over by them."

"Being an anarchist feminist means becoming conscious of all struggles for liberation, not letting the struggle for women's liberation become the struggle for white, middle-class, able-bodied, straight, heterosexual women's equality under capitalism. While as feminists we are aware of male privilege, we also need to be aware of our own. The eternal difficulty with feminism, and all politics/ activism, is that it tends to be exclusive. It is more likely to be the educated, the white, the middle-class, the able-bodied, the non-marginalised, the young, the straight, the child-free, the cis-gendered (ie non-trans), the settled, that get to participate in these groups."

"The most treacherous form this power [of the Enemy] can take is cooptation, which feeds on any short-sighted, unanarchistic view of feminism as mere 'social change'. To think of sexism as an evil that can be eradicated by female participation in the way things are is to ensure the continuation of domination and oppression."

## why not just 'anarchist'?

"Anarchism aims to abolish hierarchies, with the belief that everyone should have equal control and say in what directly affects them".

"For a long time I've experienced sexism within the anarchist movement, it disappointed me loads, and went against everything that I thought anarchism stood for. It almost put me off being an anarchist altogether. This was until I met other anarchist women, we got chatting, and found out we felt the same way. As my confidence as an anarchist rose, and my feminism took hold, my disappointment turned to defiance: how can you call yourselves anarchists and be so blatantly sexist?! Lo and behold: an anarchy-feminist was born!"

"It's often claimed that anarchism, for example, is essentially feminist anyway, and there is no need for women's organisation: 'come the revolution, we shall all throw off our shackles and ta-da! Women shall be free, too'. That's bollocks. Even if its State institutions are burnt down, the patriarchal behaviour and attitudes that we have internalised will persist, they won't go away overnight."

"i did find widespread homophobia, lesbo-phobia, and trans-phobia but that's another story. i also found huge ignorance of non-white cultures, lack of understanding about childcare, ignorance about sexual assault and rape survival, ignorance about disability and accessibility, and a lot of bullshit about class, as well as some horrific (to me) attitudes to mental health and addictions."

"I feel alienated a lot of the time – unable to use my voice sometimes because there are always louder male voices than mine. And the subtle way men control things. I have had friends who have been sexually abused by anarchist men too and the 'community' has done nothing about it. Because many times men protect men, women protect men – so who is left to fight for women?"

*"So long as women are not free, the people are not free".*

"just because you declared yourself an anarchist doesn't mean someone waved a magic wand and all of your privilege goes away. It's still there."

"Anarchists, we think we know it all, we have all the answers. Every now and then something happens to challenge this and we can either get defensive, find every micro-justification for how "I'm not sexist/racist/homophobic/able-ist", and dismiss the challenge.

Or we can spend some time reflecting, educating ourselves, and being really critical of who we are, what we do, how we organise, and how that perpetuates our privilege. We can build a great strong anarchist movement but if the only people that this movement gives a voice are white, middle class males then all we are doing is replicating the systems of oppression that capitalism creates."

"Last year I went to a great workshop on male privilege at the climate camp. It opened my eyes up a lot. Who attended? Mainly women, with a few queer boys. The great thing about privilege is that those with privilege have the privilege to be ignorant of it."

"There definitely has to be more dialogue about gender, race, sexuality, age and the countless others ways we oppress and hierarchise others. Just because we are anarchists doesn't mean we are by default blameless and innocent when it comes to oppressing others."

"please do not feel that as a man, you have to sit around and wait for someone else (a woman?) to organise it. why not get together with a group of friends and actually put some of your time and energy into figuring out what we mean by 'patriarchy', various ways of resisting it, and ways in which we can start to make our groups and spaces less hierarchical/ male-dominated/ white-dominated/ ableist?"

it's not the sole responsibility of women to make sure those discussions take place, and it's not the sole responsibility of women to attack sexism. we are all responsible.

similarly, it's not black people's responsibility to educate white people about racism, or to make sure race gets discussed, or to sort out the problems of racism in our 'movement'. "



## how can i take action against patriarchy?

"Let's start by challenging the idea that women should act in a certain way, and that men should act in another. And move on to challenging all the other crap attitudes we hear around us, whether they come from our friends or from people we don't know so well – for example, casual sexism, harassing or bullying behaviour, 'jokes' about rape, comments designed to make others feel bad about themselves, assumptions about others' abilities/ status/ sexuality/ gender etc..."

"I think it's interesting that so many anarcho-feminist groups end up doing similar projects – for example, organising skill-share events. I think this is because sharing skills and knowledge freely is a practical way of breaking down the kinds of hierarchies that trap us in certain roles."

"get away from the gender role conditioning that strangles us."

"'The personal is political' – I don't think this was ever meant as a move towards self-indulgence and lifestylism, as some make it out to be. It's about extending politics to include everything we do and think about in our everyday lives. Feminists have already shown that power and authority is experienced in the nuclear family, for example. Anarchists see the State as the enemy, which it is, but what about the way we treat each other on a daily basis? Challenging capitalist society also means taking a close look at what privileges we have – how we exercise authority, manipulate, take advantage of power or exclusive skills, in our dealings with each other – and struggling to overcome this. The State and capitalism are in us too."

"Use the 'f-word' with pride. Men can and should be "feminists" too! Dismantling patriarchy takes all of us. If you're a man, don't get caught up in feeling guilty... Do consider your own actions, assumptions and behaviour, and how the language you use affects other people; don't leave the housework/ child-care/ cleaning-up work to others... And do **think**, about how patriarchy affects your personal relationships; how it functions to privilege you at the same time as oppressing all of us..."

"Take direct action – patriarchy is all around us – there are many potential targets! For example, here's a long feminist tradition of subverting adverts, and using stencils to get the message across..."

## solidarity & safer spaces

"Sexual assault, sexist harassment and intimate violence are – unfortunately – experienced by a staggeringly high proportion of folk. Just because you don't have to put up with this kind of shit yourself, doesn't prevent you from being a better ally to those who face this kind of violence on a regular basis.

Learn more about how to support your friends and loved ones through situations like these. And help to create a culture where rape and sexual violence are not tolerated, excused away, ignored, denied,

If someone comes to you for help with a problem, try to listen to what they're describing, and to what they want to do about it.

Don't impose your own values, morals or choices on them.

Don't question someone else's experiences in a way that makes it clear that you don't believe them, just because you haven't had that exact same experience yourself."

"Let's create a culture of consent, and positive sexuality. That means being more open to verbal consent and adept at practising it (and finding it hot rather than mood-killing), being less confined by gender stereotypes and narrow conceptions of what constitutes 'sex', more comfortable with check-ins and communication about boundaries, more aware of our own desires as well as boundaries..."

"severe problems persist in every punk/anarchist community: continued belief in rape myth and survivor-blaming, 'talking the talk' of feminism or consent while acting out the same shitty patterns, resistance to accountability or to acknowledging abusive behaviour, and innumerable other examples. Still, I've encountered so many steps in the right direction: the presence of consent-themed workshops and discussions at most radical gatherings, the widespread circulation of zines and writing about consent and positive sexuality, emerging reading/ study/ discussion groups to focus on these issues in more depth, solid collective structures for community accountability in towns and at gatherings... these and many other signs point towards a shift in our whole way of thinking about sex and consent... in particular, absorbing and applying the feminist principle of politicising the personal by insisting that these conversations must be public and community-wide ones, rather than privatising them as just our own personal business..."

## what would you recommend reading/ learning more about?

- \* Anything by bell hooks – especially 'Feminism is for everybody' and 'Feminist Theory: from margin to center.'
- \* 'Quiet Rumours: an anarcha-feminist anthology' - Dark Star Collective.
- \* 'Autobiography of a blue-eyed devil' and 'Cunt: a declaration of independence' by Inga Muscio.
- \* 'Real Live Nude Girl: chronicles of sex-positive culture' and 'Exhibitionism for the Shy' by Carol Queen.
- \* 'Oudaw Woman: a memoir of the war years 1960-75' by Roseanne Dunbar-Ortiz
- \* 'Stone Butch Blues' and 'Transgender Warrior' by Leslie Feinberg.
- \* 'Night-Vision: illuminating war & class on the neo-colonial terrain' by Butch Lee & Red Rover
- \* 'Color of Violence: the INCITE! anthology'
- \* 'That's Revolting: Queer strategies for resisting assimilation', 'Nobody Passes: rejecting the rules of gender and conformity' and 'Dangerous Families: Queer writing on surviving' all edited by Maritilda
- \* 'Whores in History' by Nickie Roberts
- \* 'Home Girls: a black feminist anthology' ed Barbara Smith
- \* 'Public Sex: the culture of radical sex,
- \* 'Sex Changes: the politics of transgenderism' and 'Speaking Sex to Power: the politics of queer sex' by Patrick Califa.
- \* 'Free Comrades: anarchism and homosexuality in the US 1895-1917' by Terence Kissack
- \* 'Sister of the Road: the autobiography of Boxcar Bertha' by Ben Reitman.
- \* 'We don't need another wave: dispatches from the next generation of feminists' ed Melody Berger.
- \* 'Cavedweller' and 'Bastard out of Carolina' by Dorothy Allison.
- \* 'Exile and Pride' Eli Clarke
- \* 'Nobody Nicked' Em: how we started a toy library in the East End of London' by Joanna Grana
- \* 'The Heart of the Race: Black women's lives in Britain' ed Bryan, Dazie & Scafe.
- \* 'Abolition Now!: ten years of strategy & struggle vs the prison industrial complex' from Critical Resistance.
- \* 'Intimate Politics: how I grew up red, fought for free speech, and became a feminist rebel' by Bettina F Aphtheker

- \* 'The Rebel Girl, an autobiography' Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.
- \* 'Without a Net: the female experience of growing up working class' ed Michelle Tea.
- \* 'Bread upon the Waters' by Rose Resotta.
- \* 'Abortion without Apology: a radical history for the 1990s' by Nina Baehr.
- \* 'Seige of Azadi Square' by Manny Shirazi.
- \* 'Women Race and Class' by Angela Davies.
- \* 'The Wise Wound: menstruation and every woman' by Renelope Shurtle & Peter Redgrove.
- \* 'Witches Midwives and Nurses: a history of women healers' by Barbara Ehrenreich & Delirdre English.
- \* 'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee' and 'Creek Mary's Blood' by Dee Brown.
- \* 'Only the Rivers Run Free: Northern Ireland: the women's war' by Fairweather, McDonough & McFadyean.
- \* 'Our Bodies, Our Selves' from Boston Women's Health Book Collective.
- \* 'There's always been a women's movement this century' Dale Spender.
- \* 'Zami: a new spelling of my name' by Audre Lourde.
- \* 'Benefits' by Zoe Fairburns.
- \* 'Living My Life' or 'Anarchism and other essays' by Emma Goldman.
- \* 'Memoir of a race traitor' by Mab Segrest.
- \* 'Anything by Derrick Jensen, including 'A Language Older than Words', 'As the world burns', 'Songs of the Dead', 'Endgame' etc.
- \* 'My Dangerous Desires: a queer girl dreaming her way home' Amber L. Holibaugh.
- \* 'Colonise This: young women of color on today's feminism' ed Daisy Hernandez and Bushra Rehman.
- \* 'Free Space: a perspective on the small group in women's liberation' by Pamela Allen.
- \* 'Women's Health: a Spare-Rib reader' by Sue O'Sullivan.
- \* 'Read my Lips: sexual subversion and the end of gender' Riki Anne Wilchins.
- \* 'Pregnancy & Birth: in support of autonomy' and 'Threads' ed Lisa Fannen.
- \* 'A Taste of Power' Elaine C Brown
- \* 'A Door into Ocean' and 'The Wall around Eden' by Joan Slonczewski
- \* 'Native Tongue' and 'The Judas Rose' by Suzette Haden Elgin
- \* 'Everything by Octavia Butler'