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**‘Finding Our Own Solutions’:  
The Women’s Movement and Mental Health Activism  
in Late Twentieth-Century England**

**by**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History**

**University of Warwick  
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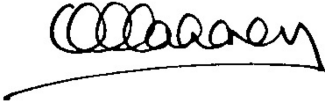
Thank you to my amazing friends for reminding me that a world exists beyond academia. The class of 2005 have proven to be a constant source of inspiration. Finally, I would like to thank my incredible family, including my parents Louise and Terry, my brother Nick, and my nana Marion, for their unwavering support, love, and inside jokes. Completing this thesis has not always been easy. I would never have been able to do it without them and I cannot thank them enough.



## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form, to this or any other University for a degree.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom, enclosed within a rectangular box.

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the development of mental health activism in the women's movement in England from the establishment of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) in 1968 until the end of the first nationwide charity campaign to focus on women and mental health, MIND's *Stress on Women*, in 1994. Constructing in-depth case studies, this thesis assesses the assumption in the late 1960s and early 1970s that consciousness-raising facilitated women's positive mental health, examines the formation of the London Women's Liberation Workshop Psychology Group, traces the development of the Women's Therapy Centre in London, and explores how the mental health charity MIND increasingly utilised and popularised women's movement ideas and approaches across the 1980s and 1990s. In doing so, it explores how women's movement mental health activists increasingly aligned feminist critiques of psychiatry and psychology, with the positive promotion of psychotherapy. Existing accounts of women's movement mental health activism focus on the rejection of psychology and psychotherapy by its members. This thesis highlights how women's movement members established community-based organisations and grassroots self-help groups to bolster their understandings of themselves and their political affiliations, and to support women experiencing mental health concerns and emotional distress. It therefore produces a more expansive understanding of the development of the personal politics integral to the women's movement, challenges the popular narrative that women's movement organisations became depoliticised in the 1980s, and documents the previously unexplored contribution of the women's movement to the development of radical therapy networks and community-based mental health care in late twentieth-century England.

## **Abbreviations**

ACT UP	AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power
BAC	British Association for Counselling
BACC	Battersea Action and Counselling Centre
CBT	Cognitive behavioural therapy
ECT	Electroconvulsive therapy
GLC	Greater London Council
IAPT	Improving Access to Psychological Therapies
LWLW	London Women's Liberation Workshop
MPU	Mental Patients Union
NAMH	National Association for Mental Health
NHS	National Health Service
OWAAD	Organisation for Women of Asian and African Descent
POWS	British Psychological Society's Psychology of Women Section
PTSD	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
WIRES	Women's Information and Referral Enquiry Service
WISH	Women in Special Hospitals
WLM	Women's Liberation Movement
WTC	Women's Therapy Centre
UKCP	United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy

## Introduction

This thesis examines the mental health activism that emerged out of the English women's movement between 1968 and 1995. During the 1960s and early 1970s, popular Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) publications contained strong critiques of psychiatric, psychological, and psychotherapeutic theories and treatments.<sup>1</sup> Writing in 1964, Betty Friedan detailed how the permeation of Freudian psychoanalytic ideals in American culture discouraged women from forming independent identities.<sup>2</sup> In 1970, Shulamith Firestone, co-founder of the American WLM groups Redstockings and New York Radical Feminists, wrote that Freudianism and feminism 'grew out of the same historical conditions': women's subjugation and the privatisation of family life.<sup>3</sup> Freudianism, however, 'subsumed the place of feminism as the lesser of two evils', obtaining a 'religiosity' that ensured its enduring social and cultural influence. Writing in *The Female Eunuch*, Germaine Greer argued that psychoanalysts offered a 'paternal guidance' that dissuaded their female clients from adopting autonomous social roles.<sup>4</sup> Grassroots women's movement groups also opposed therapeutic approaches in early 1970s England. In March 1971, the London-based Tufnell Park Women's Liberation Group rejected the association of Women's Liberation politics with therapy.<sup>5</sup> They suggested that therapy pathologised and

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<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Coontz, *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), p. iv; Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (London: Granada Publishing Limited, 1970); Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. Reprint (London: Penguin Classics, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, pp. 111-13.

<sup>3</sup> Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (London: Paladin, 1972), p. 64; p. 83; Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 186; Paul D. Buchanan, *Radical Feminists: A Guide to an American Subculture* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011), p. 118; Bonnie J. Dow, *Watching Women's Liberation 1970: Feminism's Pivotal Year on the Network News* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 83.

<sup>4</sup> Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> Feminist Archive [South], Irene Peslikis, 'Resistances to Consciousness', quoted in Tufnell Park Group, *Shrew*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March 1971), p. 10.

individualised women's experiences, resulting in the depoliticisation of patriarchal oppression.<sup>6</sup>

By the early 1990s, feminist ideas surrounding women's mental health, psychology, and psychotherapy had permeated popular consciousness and were recognised by public figureheads, mental health campaigners, and media representatives previously unaffiliated with feminist activism. In June 1993, Diana the Princess of Wales spoke at a conference on women and mental health hosted by the charity Turning Point.<sup>7</sup> Diana linked women's poor mental health with the social expectation that they should be selfless familial carers.<sup>8</sup> She asserted that allowing women to communicate their anger and frustration about their prescribed social roles would tackle the causes of mental illness.<sup>9</sup> In championing women's right to express their emotions, she critiqued widespread patriarchal restrictions on women's behaviour and self-expression. Media responses to the Princess of Wales' speech highlighted its feminist underpinnings. Feminist author Joan Smith compared Diana's speech to 'sitting in a women's group back in the 1970s'.<sup>10</sup> David Turner, director of the national body for drug misuse Scoda, endorsed Diana's emphasis on women's increased propensity to be prescribed tranquilisers, arguing that support groups founded by and for women had aided the development of provision for tranquiliser addiction.<sup>11</sup> He therefore

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Peslikis' article was originally published in Robin Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood is Powerful* (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. xxiii-xxiv. Peslikis was a member of the radical feminist group Redstockings, based in New York (Paul D. Buchanan, *Radical Feminists: A Guide to an American Subculture* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011), pp. 35-36).

<sup>7</sup> Chris Mihill, 'Diana counts the cost of women's caring', *The Guardian* (2 June 1993), p. 20. Turning Point is a charity that supports individuals affected by mental illness, learning disabilities, and substance misuse (Turning Point, 'Who We Are', available at <http://www.turning-point.co.uk/about-us/who-we-are.aspx> [accessed 6 September 2016]).

<sup>8</sup> Liz Sayce, 'Campaigning for change', in Kathryn Abel et al. (eds), *Planning Community Mental Health Services for Women* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 231-46 (pp. 232-33).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*; Mihill, 'Diana counts the cost of women's caring'.

<sup>10</sup> Joan Smith, quoted in Edward Pilkington, 'Speech "was like a feminist testament from the 1970s"', *The Guardian* (2 June 1993), p. 20; Joan Smith, *Misogynies: Reflections on Myths and Malice* (London: Faber & Faber, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> David Turner, quoted in Edward Pilkington, 'Speech "was like a feminist testament from the 1970s"'.

recognised the influence of community-based groups formed by women in supporting those with mental health concerns.

This thesis examines how and why women's movement ideas and approaches to mental illness entered the public domain and increasingly influenced mental health policies and provision in late twentieth-century England. It traces the development of these ideas from the establishment of the WLM in the late 1960s until the mid-1990s, when the mental health charity MIND launched the first nationwide campaign focused on women's mental health. The dissemination of these approaches was attributable not only to the increased visibility awarded to critical feminist perspectives of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy, but also to the various grassroots, community-based alternatives that women's movement members established. The formation of these alternative forms of support, such as the London Women's Liberation Workshop (LWLW) Psychology Group and the Women's Therapy Centre (WTC), was influenced by feminist critiques of mental health care. However, women's movement activists also linked their increased interest in mental health and psychotherapy to the new understandings of themselves that they developed by engaging with the personal politics of Women's Liberation.<sup>12</sup>

## Research Questions

I explore the development of women's movement ideas, approaches, and activism surrounding mental health by answering four research questions. First, this thesis asks how and why members of the women's movement started to employ psychotherapeutic ideas and approaches despite the dominant feminist perspective that psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy contributed to women's patriarchal repression. Second, it questions how

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<sup>12</sup> Margaret Green, personal interview (London, 5 September 2016); British Library, C1420/25, Susie Orbach, 1946- (speaker, female; interviewee; psychotherapist), interviewed by Polly Russell, *Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project* (London, 6 June 2011; 10 June 2011; 7 April 2011; 15 August 2011; 6 October 2011; 29 November 2011).

and why feminist activists' employment of psychotherapeutic discourses both reflected and informed the personal politics promoted within the women's movement. Third, this thesis assesses how women's movement members developed their own forms of therapy to support women experiencing mental health concerns in the wider community. Fourth, it queries the extent to which women's movement politics and activism influenced campaigns and organisations oriented around women and mental health in state-led mental health services and charities at local and national levels.

I answer these research questions across four chapters. The first contextualises the women's movement in England in the late 1960s and early 1970s, exploring its critiques of psychiatry and psychology, and the belief that consciousness-raising represented an alternative to psychotherapeutic approaches. The remaining chapters consist of three detailed case studies focusing on the LWLW Psychology Group, the WTC, and the mental health charity MIND. The loose chronology fostered by these chapters enables the thesis to chart a clear trajectory in the development of women's movement approaches to mental health. The thesis begins in the late 1960s, with the establishment of the WLM, and continues into the early 1970s, when some women's movement members started to promote therapeutic approaches as politically viable forms of alternative support. It then examines the development of distinct feminist therapeutic practices at both local and national levels from the mid-1970s onwards, before exploring the ways in which MIND drew on women's movement ideas and activism to negotiate women's mental health issues until the mid-1990s.

This trajectory challenges prevailing assumptions about the women's movement's uniform hostility to psychiatry and psychology. Some sociologists and historians have drawn on these critical feminist perspectives to promote the development of new

approaches to women and mental health.<sup>13</sup> Sociologist David Pilgrim argues that feminist theorists, in linking women's experiences of mental illness to patriarchal norms of femininity, reinforce the social expectation that women are less resilient than men.<sup>14</sup> He suggests that 'feminist scholarship now may have become part of the problem rather than a solution in mental health research' and calls for the development of 'post-feminist' perspectives on women and mental health.<sup>15</sup> Historian Ali Haggett critically assesses feminists' association of mental illness with mothering and homemaking.<sup>16</sup> She states that women's movement members employed the 'notion of the "desperate housewife" to support their campaigns for equality'.<sup>17</sup>

I argue that feminist assessments of mental illness should not be rejected in historical and sociological accounts of women and mental health in twentieth-century England. Calls for the dismissal of feminist approaches to mental health focus predominantly on women's movement members' critiques of psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy, and published accounts associating mental illness with patriarchal constructions of femininity. Little attention is paid to the ways in which women's movement grassroots groups and therapeutic organisations expanded feminist understandings of mental health, working collaboratively with other radical political and service user groups, and medical professionals, to enhance women's support and representation in mental health policy and provision. Feminist activists simultaneously drew on psychotherapeutic and psychological discourses to expand their own political perspectives and understandings of the ways in which the women's movement operated

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<sup>13</sup> David Pilgrim, 'Mind the gender gap: mental health in a post-feminist context', in Dora Kohen (ed.), *Oxford Textbook of Women and Mental Health* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 17-22; Ali Haggett, *Desperate Housewives, Neuroses and the Domestic Environment, 1945-1970* (London, 2012), p. 12; Lesley Johnson and Justine Lloyd, *Sentenced to Everyday Life: Feminism and the Housewife* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 11

<sup>14</sup> David Pilgrim, *Psychotherapy and Society* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), p. 61.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> Haggett, *Desperate Housewives, Neuroses and the Domestic Environment*, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.



more broadly. This thesis explores the development of these positive, collaborative interactions with psychological and therapeutic discourses within the women's movement, expanding the history of feminism and psychotherapy beyond critical feminist perspectives.

Extending my study into the 1980s and 1990s, I challenge overarching historical narratives that depict the women's movement as entering a state of abeyance in the late 1970s.<sup>18</sup> I therefore contribute to an emergent critical history of the women's movement being developed by a generation of researchers who were too young to be involved in late twentieth-century feminist activism. These accounts foreground issues of race, political division, and rural activism previously overlooked in narratives produced by prominent women's movement members.<sup>19</sup> I explore the influence of women's movement organisations in England throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, tracing how women's identification with feminist politics changed across the period. Feminist activism in the late 1960s and early 1970s is generally associated with a Women's Liberation politics that was encouraged through attendance at local women's groups.<sup>20</sup> Women's movement organisations emerging in the 1980s, however, did not align themselves explicitly with Women's Liberation politics. Rather, they enacted an expansive feminist sensibility that

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Byrne, *Social Movements in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 110; Lynne Segal, *Why Feminism? Gender, Psychology, Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Natalie Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England, 1968-1993* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Jeska Rees, 'A Look Back at Anger: the Women's Liberation Movement in 1978', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (2010), pp. 337-56; Sarah Browne, "'A Veritable Hotbed of Feminism': Women's Liberation in St Andrews, Scotland, c. 1968-c.1979", *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2012), pp. 100-23; Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell, *Sweet Freedom: The Struggle for Women's Liberation* (London: Pan Books, 1982); Sue O'Sullivan, *I Used to be Nice: Sexual Affairs* (London: Cassell, 1996); Michèle Roberts, *Paper Houses: A Memoir of the '70s and Beyond* (London: Virago, 2008); Sheila Rowbotham, *Promise of a Dream: Remembering the Sixties* (London: Verso, 2000); Amanda Sebestyen (ed.), *'68-'78-'88: From Women's Liberation to Feminism* (London: Prism Press, 1988); Lynne Segal, *Making Trouble: Life and Politics* (London: Profile Books Ltd., 2007); Michelene Wandor (ed.), *Once a Feminist: Stories of a Generation* (London: Virago, 1990); Elizabeth Wilson, *Mirror Writing: An Autobiography* (London: Virago, 1982).

<sup>20</sup> Barbara Caine, *English Feminism, 1780-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 255; Jane Pilcher, *Women in Contemporary Britain: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 160; Esther Breitenbach and Fiona Mackay, 'Feminist politics in Scotland from the 1970s to 2000s: engaging with the changing state', in Esther Breitenbach and Pat Thane (eds), *Women and Citizenship in Britain and Ireland in the Twentieth Century: What Difference Did the Vote Make* (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 153-70 (p. 154).

was then tailored towards specific social issues and campaigns, including mental health, sexuality, and antiracism. Organisations enhanced their feminist sensibilities by collaborating with a range of institutional, national, and community-based groups.<sup>21</sup>

The thesis therefore speaks to a wider history of the post-war voluntary sector. This history explores the ways in which regulatory public funding policies enacted by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government from 1979 onwards restricted charities by demanding increased accountability.<sup>22</sup> Several historians, and feminist campaigners active in the 1970s and 1980s, have argued that these policy developments led to the depoliticisation of feminist organisations.<sup>23</sup> This was reflected in the rise of municipal feminism, as highlighted by the foundation of several women's committees in regional and local councils across England, and the increased enactment of feminist politics within, rather than in opposition to, governmental frameworks.<sup>24</sup> This thesis challenges narratives that depict the linear depoliticisation of women's movement organisations across the period.

Whilst organisations responded to voluntary sector changes to ensure their survival, they also sought to maintain their feminist underpinnings. Staff members enacted collective forms of organising, and strategically applied for funding that enhanced their services and ensured their continued political pertinence. This study therefore highlights

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<sup>21</sup> Anny Brackx, personal interview (London, 19 September 2016); Carol Mohamed, personal interview (Sheffield, 18 November 2016); Liz Sayce, personal interview (London, 7 October 2017).

<sup>22</sup> Nick Crowson, Matthew Hilton, and James McKay (eds), *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non-state Actors in Society and Politics since 1945* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Matthew Hilston, Nick Crowson, Jean-François Mouhot and James Mackay, *A Historical Guide to NGOs in Britain: Charities, Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector since 1945* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Nick Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry: Social Movements in Mental Health* (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Segal, *Why Feminism?*, p. 29; Julie Bindel, 'Neither an Ism or a Chasm: Maintaining a Radical Feminist Agenda in Broad-based Coalitions', in Lynne Harne and Elaine Miller (eds), *All the Rage: Reasserting Radical Lesbian Feminism* (London: Women's Press, 1996), pp. 247-60 (p. 249); Susie Orbach, personal interview (London, 21 September 2016); Iona Grant and Marie Maguire, personal interview (London, 26 September 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Irene Bruegel and Hilda Kean, 'The moment of municipal feminism: gender and class in 1980s local government', *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 45 (October, 1995), pp. 147-69; Hazel Conley and Margaret Page, *Gender Equality in Public Services: Chasing the Dream* (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), p. 36.

how debates, fostered by activists on the libertarian left in the 1970s, about how public sector staff could work professionally both within and against the state, remained relevant during the 1980s.<sup>25</sup> However, it also explores why feminist activists operating in the 1970s subsequently developed accounts charting the depoliticisation of the women's movement. Here, I argue that nostalgia was a factor in activists' reflections on their feminist pasts. This analysis of how time and generation affected narratives of this past contributes to an emergent historical field of history that uncovers the position of emotions, and personal and public perceptions of social change, in 1970s and 1980s British politics.<sup>26</sup>

My assessment of emotions and the English women's movement is also situated within the broader history of emotional politics in oppositional social movements in post-war Europe and North America.<sup>27</sup> Gould, for instance, has asserted that emotions played an influential role in the development and stagnancy of activism in political movements oriented around AIDS activism. This provides a framework for understanding how women's movement members drew on their personal self-understandings and emotional responses to establish alternative forms of therapeutic support for women experiencing mental health concerns.<sup>28</sup> The thesis also demonstrates that the organisational structures, political ideologies, and collective identities encouraged within women's movement groups resulted in the prescriptive promotion of certain emotional responses and feelings to new

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<sup>25</sup> The London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, *In and Against the State*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1980); Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal, and Hilary Wainwright, *Beyond the Fragments* (London: Merlin Press, 1979); George Bridges and Rosalind Brunt, *Silver Linings: Some Strategies for the Eighties* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1981).

<sup>26</sup> Emily Robinson, Camilla Schofield, Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite and Natalie Thomlinson, 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the 'Crisis' of the 1970s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 28 (2017), 268-304; Stephen Brooke, 'Space, Emotions and the Everyday: The Affective Ecology of 1980s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 28 (2017), 110-42.

<sup>27</sup> Deborah B. Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Benno Gammerl, 'Emotional Styles- concepts and challenges', *Rethinking History*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (2012), pp. 161-75; William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of the Emotions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Joachim C. Häberlen and Jake P. Smith, 'Struggling for Feelings: The Politics of Emotions in the Radical New Left in West Germany, c. 1968-84', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (2014), pp. 615-37; Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy, 1968* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> Gould, *Moving Politics*, p. 33.

members. Women's movement members initially drew on psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic discourses to understand the promotion of these specific emotional styles, and their impact on the well-being of individual activists.

By tracing the development of women's movement groups and organisations oriented round mental health, I also respond to calls for the production of a history of twentieth-century mental health care that negotiates the various "costs, "risks", "needs" and "values" associated with modern provision, the diversification of definitions of mental health and illness, and the alignment of service user experiences with wider social, economic, and political changes.<sup>29</sup> Historians contributing to this new area of research have called for a move beyond histories of psychiatry that focus on the development of psychopharmacology and the "decarceration" of asylums in order to capture the 'sheer diversity of approaches to understanding and managing mental distress and disorder that characterises the British mental health services'.<sup>30</sup> Reflecting such calls, many of the new developments in mental health provision in this period, including the growth of person-centred care and attention to service user voices, have not been significantly historicised.<sup>31</sup> Existing historical accounts still largely focus on state-led mental health services, exploring how local authorities, clinicians, and service users responded to changes in policy and provision.<sup>32</sup>

This thesis forges a new direction in the history of mental health care in late twentieth-century England. It explores the responses of individuals and organisations that operated both outside of and in opposition to state-led services to changes in mental health policy and provision. For instance, Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach established

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<sup>29</sup> John Turner et al., 'The History of Mental Health Services in Modern England: Practitioner Memories and the Direction of Future Research', *Medical History*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (2015), pp. 599-624 (p. 599).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

the WTC in 1976 in response to their perceived absence of community-based therapy services for women.<sup>33</sup> By charting the development of these initiatives, I highlight how members of radical political groups and movements were both influenced by and informed developments in state-led, voluntary, and private community-based mental health provision in late twentieth-century England.

Assessing the collaborations that feminist organisations formed with other radical therapy and mental health groups, this study also informs the history of the service user movement in England. Existing histories of the service user movement do not focus explicitly on the influence of feminist politics, or the position of ideas relating to gender, within the service user movement.<sup>34</sup> I therefore highlight how service users who also identified as feminist activists influenced the development of the movement, drawing on external political ideas and approaches when petitioning for improvements to mental health services. By aligning the history of the service user movement with the emergence of feminist psychology groups and organisations, the thesis explores the experiences of individuals who simultaneously identified as clients, practitioners, policymakers, and political campaigners. This research therefore disrupts key categories of analysis used in the history of mental health such as 'service user' and 'clinician'. In doing so, it helps to facilitate the 'new language and landscape of mental health care' that historians deem integral to the development of histories of mental health care in modern England.<sup>35</sup>

Exploration of how women's movement members drew on their personal politics and self-understandings to support other women experiencing mental health concerns informs a wider historiography about late twentieth-century women's movement organisations and community care. Doing so highlights the increasingly collaborative approach to mental

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<sup>33</sup> Sheila Ernst and Marie Maguire (eds), *Living with the Sphinx: Papers from the Women's Therapy Centre* (London: The Women's Press, 1987).

<sup>34</sup> Helen Spandler, *Asylum to Action: Paddington Day Hospital Therapeutic Communities and Beyond* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006).

<sup>35</sup> Turner et al., 'The History of Mental Health Services in Modern England', p. 600.

health activism taken by women's movement groups and other radical and alternative organisations, linking histories of community care with political activism and voluntary action.

## **The History of the Women's Movement in Late Twentieth-Century England**

### **i. The Emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement in England**

This thesis begins in the late 1960s with the establishment of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). Feminist activism has existed in England since the late eighteenth century. Caine begins her history of English feminism in 1792 with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*.<sup>36</sup> Wollstonecraft has been cited as the 'founder of feminism' and is credited with establishing a discourse around women's rights that endured throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>37</sup> Activists present in the late 1960s, however, championed a new brand of feminism which they contrasted to the 'fetishized femininity' of the previous decade.<sup>38</sup> The post-war consumer economy designated women as 'shoppers-in-chief' by glorifying domesticity, marriage, and motherhood and promoting a 'new, restricted sense of what femaleness entailed'.<sup>39</sup> Encouraged by emergent radical politics, women came together in small groups to formulate theories and campaigns with the object of rejecting women's second-class position in society.<sup>40</sup> These groups were inspired by expatriate women who disseminated

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<sup>36</sup> Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 23.

<sup>37</sup> Miriam Brody, *Mary Wollstonecraft: Mother of Women's Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 7; Bee Rowlatt, 'The original suffragette: the extraordinary Mary Wollstonecraft', *The Guardian* (5 October, 2015), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/womens-blog/2015/oct/05/original-suffragette-mary-wollstonecraft> [accessed 19 October 2016]; Dale Spender, *There's Always Been a Women's Movement this Century* (London: HarperCollins, 1983); Johanna Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace, 1914-28* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1989).

<sup>38</sup> Coote and Campbell, *Sweet Freedom*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

information about women's movement activism in America and Germany.<sup>41</sup> WLM member Sheila Rowbotham also cited the influence of Lil Bilocca, who launched a campaign in Hull calling for improved safety standards on trawlers following the deaths of forty men at sea in January 1968.<sup>42</sup> Bilocca was influential because 'it was unusual to see a woman fighting publically and speaking, and men on the left listening'.<sup>43</sup>

Events, including the first Women's Conference at Ruskin College, Oxford, in 1970, galvanised local women's groups into a movement and established the WLM's central aims.<sup>44</sup> The WLM initially demanded equal pay, equal opportunities in education, free access to contraception and abortion, and twenty-four hour childcare.<sup>45</sup> By 1978, the WLM promoted seven demands, including women's financial independence, an end to discrimination based on sexuality, and women's freedom from male violence and sexual coercion.<sup>46</sup> Local Women's Liberation groups carried out these aims through meetings, petitioning local services, holding localised protests, and producing newsletters and periodicals. Many groups established or joined regional Women's Liberation networks. The London Women's Liberation Workshop (LWLW) acted as an umbrella organisation for local groups, provided information and contacts via its office, hosted a meeting space and social

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<sup>41</sup> Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*, p. 33; Sheila Rowbotham, 'The Beginnings of Women's Liberation in Britain', in Michelene Wandor (ed.), *The Body Politic: Women's Liberation in Britain 1969-1972* (London: Stage 1, 1972), pp. 91-102.

<sup>42</sup> Rowbotham, 'The Beginnings of Women's Liberation in Britain', p. 91; Sheila Rowbotham, 'Appreciating Our Beginnings', in Nancy Holmstrom (ed.), *The Socialist Feminist Project: A Contemporary Reader in Theory and Politics* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002), pp. 260-68 (p. 265).

<sup>43</sup> Rowbotham, 'The Beginnings of Women's Liberation in Britain', p. 91.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>45</sup> Pilcher, *Women in Contemporary Britain*, p. 160; Sally Alexander, 'Women, Class and Sexual Difference in the 1830s and '40s: Some Reflections on the Writing of a Feminist History', in Sally Alexander, *Becoming a Woman and Other Essays in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Feminist History* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), pp. 97-126 (p. 99); Natalie Thomlinson, "'Sisterhood is Plain Sailing?'" Multiracial Feminist Collectives in 1980s Britain', in Kristina Schulz (ed.), *The Women's Liberation Movement: Impact and Outcomes* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), pp. 198-213 (p. 198).

<sup>46</sup> Finn Mackay, 'Feminist activism in movement: UK activism against VAW', in Nadia Aghtaie and Geetanjali Gangoli (eds), *Understanding Gender Based Violence: National and international contexts* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 81-93 (p. 82).

centre, and published works.<sup>47</sup> Comparable networks operated in Birmingham, Leeds, and Bradford.<sup>48</sup> These networks consisted of both local women's groups and single-issue campaign groups. The LWLW Psychology Group, examined in the second chapter of this thesis, was one of eight single-issue groups affiliated with the Workshop in 1971.<sup>49</sup>

## ii. Defining the Politics of Women's Liberation

WLM politics focused on the notion that the 'personal is political', an idea qualified by American Women's Liberation activist Carol Hanisch, who wrote in 1969 that 'personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution'.<sup>50</sup> Practices such as consciousness-raising, the therapeutic tenets of which are deciphered in the first chapter of this thesis, bolstered group members' commitment to the WLM's personal politics by encouraging women to explore how their individual experiences were aligned with the society-wide patriarchal repression of women.<sup>51</sup> Despite the idea that the 'personal is political' being broadly associated with the feminist politics of the late 1960s onwards, historians have documented the various and contrasting ideological identifications that existed within the WLM.

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<sup>47</sup> Eve Setch, 'The Face of Metropolitan Feminism: The London Women's Liberation Workshop', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2002), pp. 171-90 (p. 174).

<sup>48</sup> Feminist Library, *Birmingham Women's Liberation News/Views Letter* (October 1972); Anna E. Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s: West Yorkshire women's groups and their impact on women's lives' (PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2010); Bridget Lockyer, 'An Irregular Period? Participation in the Bradford Women's Liberation Movement', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (2013), pp. 643-57.

<sup>49</sup> Feminist Library, 'Women's Liberation Workshop Groups' (14 October 1971), enclosed in *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 54 (17 October 1971).

<sup>50</sup> Deborah Siegel, *Sisterhood Interrupted: From Radical Women to Grrls Gone Wild* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 69; Carol Hanisch, 'The Personal is Political' (New York, 1969), available at <http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html> [accessed 27 April 2015]. The paper was originally published in Shulamith Firestone et al. (eds), *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation* (New York, 1970).

<sup>51</sup> Siegal, *Sisterhood Interrupted*, p. 69; Margaret A. McLaren, *Feminism, Foucault and Embodied Subjectivity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 155; Sarah Browne, *The Women's Movement in Scotland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 50; Caroline Hoefferle, *British Student Activism in the Long Sixties* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 192-93.



The WLM's emergence has been linked to the rise of the British New Left. The New Left reconfigured orthodox Marxism, aligning the youthful countercultural revolts of groups such as the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC) with the 'older socialist traditions of the labour movement'.<sup>52</sup> Student protesters aimed to join the 'workers' struggle' by supporting industrial strike action.<sup>53</sup> Several WLM members whose narratives are contained in this thesis were previously involved in Leftist groups.<sup>54</sup> Their development of Women's Liberation politics was inspired by the 'alienating revolutionary culture' they encountered as women in New Left Trotskyist groups like the VSC.<sup>55</sup> The socialist feminist periodical *Red Rag*, co-founded in 1972 by Women's Liberation member, historian, and service user Barbara Taylor challenged 'whatever and whoever denies the right of women to be free from economic inequality and from the tyranny of the role forced upon them in our society'.<sup>56</sup> *Red Rag* contributors argued that the WLM's support of the 'organised labour movement' was integral to enacting positive social change.<sup>57</sup>

Writing in 1969, Rowbotham also promoted a new form of socialist feminism that emphasised women's centrality to the Marxist transformation of society, stating: 'Without us any such transformation can only be partial and consequently soon distorted'.<sup>58</sup> Rowbotham asserted that the patriarchal constructs of womanhood could be

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<sup>52</sup> Dennis L. Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left and the Origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 77; Celia Hughes, *Young Lives on the Left: Sixties Activism and the Liberation of the Self* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1987), p. 54.

<sup>54</sup> Hoeffler, *British Student Activism in the Long Sixties*, p. 28; Stephen Brooke, *Sexual Politics: Sexuality, Family Planning, and the British Left from the 1880s to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 188.

<sup>55</sup> Hughes, *Young Lives on the Left*, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> Redchidgey, 'Red Rag: A Magazine of Women's Liberation', *Grassroots Feminism: transnational archives, resources and communities* (12 November 2009), available at <http://www.grassrootsfeminism.net/cms/node/521> [accessed 27 November 2016]; Barbara Taylor, *The Last Asylum: A Memoir of Madness in Our Times* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2014), p. 82; Feminist Library, *Red Rag: a magazine of liberation*, No. 1 (c. 1972), p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, 'Women's Liberation and the new politics', in Michelene Wandor (ed.), *The Body Politic: Women's Liberation in Britain 1969-1972* (London: Stage 1, 1972), pp. 3-30 (p. 3).

reconceptualised by examining how ‘social transformation [is] communicated to the individual psyche’.<sup>59</sup> As highlighted in this thesis, the relationship between individual consciousness, political identification, and social movement activism remained an integral line of enquiry for WLM members, and was instrumental in their initial employment of psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses.

Not all my research participants identified as socialist feminists. Some defined themselves as radical feminists.<sup>60</sup> Whereas socialist feminists denoted capitalism and class relations as the cause of women’s oppression, radical feminists argued that it was facilitated by ‘patriarchy and sexual politics’.<sup>61</sup> Radical feminists asserted that men’s power over women could only be overcome if women mobilised and militated against it.<sup>62</sup> Co-founders of the Leeds-based radical feminist periodical *Trouble & Strife*, launched in 1983, stated that, ‘As radical feminists, our politics come directly from this tension between men’s power and women’s resistance’.<sup>63</sup> Several radical feminist theorists drew on this assessment of male domination to critique the patriarchal power dynamics prominent in psychology and psychotherapy. As previously highlighted, Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex* and Greer’s *The Female Eunuch*, both seminal radical feminist texts, strongly criticised Freudian psychoanalysis, the promotion of male dominance in the therapist-client relationship, and the application of therapeutic tenets to ensure women’s subordination to men.<sup>64</sup> Exploring WLM members’ identification with radical feminism therefore contextualises early opposition to psychology and psychotherapy within the women’s movement.

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Rukshana Afia, personal interview (Leeds, 17 July 2012).

<sup>61</sup> Pilcher, *Women in Contemporary Britain*, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> Byrne, *Social Movements in Britain*, p. 116.

<sup>63</sup> *Trouble & Strife*, No. 1 (Winter 1983), p. 2, available at [http://www.troubleandstrife.org/issues/Issue01\\_FullScan.pdf](http://www.troubleandstrife.org/issues/Issue01_FullScan.pdf) [accessed 25 July 2017].

<sup>64</sup> Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*, pp. 46-72; Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, p. 92.

My other research participants asserted that their identification with feminism reflected a range of political ideas and personal experiences. Margaret Green, a WLM member and therapist, described how her promotion of social equality was aligned with the politics of the women's movement and the civil rights movement, an association that she linked to growing up in Apartheid South Africa.<sup>65</sup> This dual political focus meant that she found it difficult to define herself explicitly as a feminist therapist when she worked at the WTC. By exploring the eclectic ideas and experiences that influenced women's engagement with the politics of Women's Liberation, this thesis challenges the 'binary division' drawn between radical and socialist feminists in historical narratives of the WLM that has previously privileged socialist feminist voices.<sup>66</sup> Rees attributes the foregrounding of socialist feminist perspectives to the increased availability of archival material produced by socialist feminist activists and groups.<sup>67</sup> She asserts that the availability of this material, as well as the numerous widely-disseminated autobiographical accounts produced by socialist feminist campaigners, has given rise to the historiographical assumption that a small group of revolutionary feminists were responsible for the breakdown of relations within the WLM at the 1978 Women's Liberation conference in Birmingham.<sup>68</sup> Rees suggests the view that revolutionary feminists were responsible for the schism within the WLM in the late 1970s was promoted by socialist feminists 'devastated by the loss of feminist unity and good will' at the 1978 conference.<sup>69</sup> In identifying the emergence of revolutionary feminism in the late 1970s, Rees dismantles the historiographical dichotomy

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<sup>65</sup> Green, personal interview.

<sup>66</sup> David Bouchier, *The Feminist Challenge: The Movement for Women's Liberation in Britain and the United States* (London: Palgrave, 1983), p. 75; Coote and Campbell, *Sweet Freedom*, pp. 26–35; Martin Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1959* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), pp. 331–34; Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall, *Contemporary Feminist Politics: women and power in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 96; Setch, 'The Face of Metropolitan Feminism', p. 172; Rees, 'A Look Back at Anger', p. 338.

<sup>67</sup> Rees, 'A Look Back at Anger', pp. 337-39.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 351.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 351-52.

drawn between radical and socialist feminism.<sup>70</sup> She also highlights how women's movement members' emotional responses to particular events have influenced their subsequent construction of narratives documenting the WLM's development.

I also destabilise the historiographical perspective that debates taking place within the WLM were predominantly oriented around ideological disputes and differences.<sup>71</sup> Members of the LWLW Psychology Group demonstrated how an absence of emotional support in local women's groups contributed to some members' negative experiences of WLM activism. These negative experiences, often resulting in the antagonism and alienation of individual group members, were attributable to a lack of adequate mediation and support within groups as opposed to unresolved ideological debates. Women's movement members subsequently drew on these personal experiences to construct new self-help approaches and feminist therapies.

Throughout this study I have therefore remained highly sensitive to the ways in which my research participants defined their political affiliations. In recognising how activists' politics were grounded in their personal experiences and emotional responses, this thesis further highlights how and why women's movement members have reflected on the history of the WLM in certain ways. This assessment indicates why certain historiographical assumptions have dominated narratives of the WLM's development, therefore aiding the development of an increasingly critical history of the women's movement in late twentieth-century England.

### **iii. The Development of the English Women's Movement in the 1980s and 1990s**

In this thesis, I adopt the broader term 'women's movement' as opposed to 'Women's Liberation Movement' to reflect the proliferation of feminist ideas and approaches that

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>71</sup> Browne, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland*, p. 14; Robert Leach, *Political Ideology in Britain*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Palgrave, 2015), p. 213.

developed in late twentieth-century England. I continue to employ 'Women's Liberation Movement' and 'Women's Liberation politics' when specifically referring to the feminist activism and ideas that was prominent in England from the late 1960s until the late 1970s, and when reflecting the political definitions used by my research participants. I use 'women's movement' as an umbrella term for all feminist activism occurring in England from the late 1960s until the mid-1990s. I do so to clarify that not all forms of women's mental health activism that existed during this period were directly affiliated with Women's Liberation politics. Some women loosely identified with feminist politics and activism, expressing a political sensibility that could not necessarily be positioned within a specific self-defined feminist group or movement.

The emergence of critical histories of the English women's movement has resulted in the closer examination of feminist activism in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>72</sup> Historians have increasingly countered the perspective that the women's movement entered a state of abeyance in the late 1970s, arguing that its perceived fragmentation resulted in the development of multiple feminisms, dedicated campaign groups and voluntary organisations, and greater collaboration, not only across different feminist initiatives, but oppositional politics more broadly.<sup>73</sup> The proliferation of these groups also highlighted the 'ability of feminist activists to work in different settings and their longstanding acknowledgement of what has come to be termed intersectional issues'.<sup>74</sup> Black feminists increasingly called out the exclusivity of Women's Liberation politics, problematizing the depiction of universal womanhood that many white WLM members endorsed.<sup>75</sup> The development of multiple strands of feminism also led to the enhancement of feminist

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<sup>72</sup> Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*, p. 200.

<sup>73</sup> Caine, *English Feminism*, pp. 269-270.

<sup>74</sup> Lucy Delap and Thierry Delessert, 'Introductory Remarks', in Kristina Schulz (ed.), *The Women's Liberation Movement: Impact and Outcomes* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), pp. 151-56 (p. 155).

<sup>75</sup> Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*; Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 269.

theory during the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>76</sup> The history of community-based feminist organisations in 1980s England, however, remains in its infancy. By exploring the development of community-based women's-movement psychology groups, feminist therapy organisations, and feminist campaigners operating within mental health NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s, this thesis expands understandings of the women's movement in England during the period.

When documenting feminist interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses across the 1980s and 1990s, historians focus on the incorporation of psychoanalysis into feminist theory.<sup>77</sup> Caine describes how feminist theorists used Lacanian psychoanalysis to critique the categorisation of "women" and popular understandings of sexual difference'.<sup>78</sup> She argues that these theoretical assessments were employed to explain why 'earlier goals both of emancipation and of liberation had proved so elusive'.<sup>79</sup> Historians have not explored, however, how women's movement members' application of psychoanalysis was fostered at a grassroots level in local women's groups and feminist therapeutic organisations. This thesis highlights how these groups drew on psychotherapeutic discourses to understand themselves personally and politically, before applying these new therapeutic approaches to support women experiencing mental health concerns in the wider community. It therefore examines how women's movement members sought to transform feminist theory into practice through the provision of alternative, community-based mental health initiatives. Some feminist therapists felt that the WTC's increased focus across the 1980s on community-based support over the development of feminist therapy theories reflected its depoliticisation.<sup>80</sup> Other staff

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<sup>76</sup> Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 269; Christine Collette and Keith Laybourn (eds), *Modern Britain since 1979: A Reader* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), p. 210.

<sup>77</sup> Caine, *English Feminism*, pp. 269-70.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*; Yanis Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 13.

<sup>79</sup> Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 270.

<sup>80</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

members, however, felt that this community-based support, which involved improving the WTC's provision for women from Black and ethnic minority communities, reflected the Centre's recognition of intersectional feminist perspectives.<sup>81</sup> Debates surrounding whether feminist therapeutic organisations should focus on developing their theoretical perspectives or community-based services, reflected wider tensions concerning what feminist activism could and should achieve in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Since the 1990s, social scientists and campaigners have emphasised the durability of feminist activism throughout the decade.<sup>82</sup> By continuing this study into the 1990s, I highlight how the decade represented a continuation of the collaborations fostered between women's movement groups, state-led mental health services, and academic institutions in the 1980s. Exploring the significance of campaigning around women's mental health carried out by the charity MIND, the thesis indicates the role of organisations previously unaffiliated with the women's movement, in endorsing and promoting feminist approaches to mental illness and mental health care. The timeframe of the thesis, however, concludes in the mid-1990s, prior to the advent of the internet. The proliferation of opportunities that the internet has afforded activists in promoting transnational spaces and personal perspectives to an increasingly expansive audience has been crucial to the development of feminism, but simply cannot be contained within this study.<sup>83</sup>

#### **iv. The Women's Health Movement**

In the late 1960s and 1970s, numerous grassroots women's movement groups emerged that focused on health. The LWLW Psychology Group is the earliest example of a WLM group in England to focus on mental health. Historians documenting the development of

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<sup>81</sup> Ruthie Smith, personal interview (London, 12 September 2016); Mohamed, personal interview.

<sup>82</sup> Gabriele Griffin, 'Introduction', in Gabriele Griffin (ed), *Feminist Activism in the 1990s* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1995), pp. 1-10.

<sup>83</sup> Hawkesworth, *Globalization and Feminist Activism*, p. 70.

women's health groups highlight the emergence of a Women's Health Movement in late 1960s Britain and North America. Several studies document the history of the Women's Health Movement in the United States.<sup>84</sup> There are currently no full-length volumes assessing the British Women's Health Movement.

Charting the emergence of the American Women's Health Movement, Morgen highlights a workshop at a 1969 Women's Liberation conference in Boston which explored participants' perceptions of 'childbirth, sexuality, relationships, birth control, abortion' and male doctors' patronising attitudes when treating female patients.<sup>85</sup> The women at the workshop named themselves the Boston Women's Health Book Collective and sought to educate themselves and others about women's bodies.<sup>86</sup> Women's increased access to this information would empower them to provision for their own health and circumvent the patriarchal treatment of female patients in institutional medicine. In 1973, the Boston Women's Health Book Collective published *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, which informed readers about topics including the menstrual cycle, childbearing, birth control, sexuality, and rape, through text, photographs, and anatomical drawings.<sup>87</sup> By 2007, *Our Bodies, Our Selves* had sold over four million copies.<sup>88</sup> Morgen asserts that the publication has 'changed the landscape of women's health care in the United States and throughout the world'.<sup>89</sup> The Boston Women's Health Collective's commitment to empowering women through information was reflected in discussions in Women's Liberation groups across Britain and

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<sup>84</sup> Sandra Morgen, *Into Our Own Hands: The Women's Health Movement in the United States, 1969-1990* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002); Jennifer Nelson, *More Than Medicine: A History of the Feminist Women's Health Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2015); Barbara Seaman with Laura Eldridge, *Voices of the Women's Health Movement*, Vol. 1 (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012); Barbara Seaman with Laura Eldridge, *Voices of the Women's Health Movement*, Vol. 2 (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2014).

<sup>85</sup> Morgen, *Into Our Own Hands*, p. 5.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*; Boston Women's Health Book Collective, *Our Bodies Ourselves: A Book By and For Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

<sup>88</sup> Kathy Davis, *The Making Of Our Bodies, Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across Borders* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 52.

<sup>89</sup> Morgen, *Into Our Own Hands*, p. 5.



the United States.<sup>90</sup> Members of women's groups practised self-examination, using speculums to explore their own cervixes in order to appropriate the tools of clinical authority and reclaim knowledge about their own bodies.<sup>91</sup> Self-help clinics advising women on self-examination and abortion were established across the United States in the early 1970s.<sup>92</sup> In England, initiatives including the West London Contraception Action Group replicated American self-help clinic techniques. Formed in 1971, the group collated advice about contraception and abortion, and offered free pregnancy testing.<sup>93</sup>

Morgen assesses the American Women's Health Movement's focus on physical and mental health. She highlights how feminist psychiatrists formed mental health collectives that operated alongside women's self-help clinics.<sup>94</sup> Histories of the Women's Health Movement in England, however, focus only on women's physical health and do not explore feminist mental health activism. Writing in the early 1980s, Doyal detailed attempts by women's movement members' to overcome doctors' monopolising of reproductive technologies.<sup>95</sup> Annetts et al. also associate the Women's Health Movement with Women's Liberation activism surrounding contraception and abortion services.<sup>96</sup> By exploring why mental health activism has not been incorporated into the history of the English women's

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<sup>90</sup> Smith, personal interview; Browne, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland*, p. 67; Jason Annetts et al., *Understanding Social Welfare Movements* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2009), p. 120; Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*, p. 61.

<sup>91</sup> Smith, personal interview; Browne, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland*, p. 67; Annetts et al., *Understanding Social Welfare Movements*, p. 120; Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*, p. 61; Morgen, *Into Our Own Hands*, p. 22.

<sup>92</sup> Nelson, *More Than Medicine*; Cindy Pearson, 'Self Help Clinic Celebrates 25 Years', *Network News: National Women's Health Network* (March/April 1996), available at <http://www.fwhc.org/selfhelp.htm> [accessed 21 July 2016].

<sup>93</sup> Feminist Library, Caroline Smith, 'Promotion of Medical and Biological Group', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet*, No. 26 (4 April 1971), p. 2; Feminist Library, Highbury and Stoke Newington Women's Group, 'Free Pregnancy Testing and Information', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 114 (31 December 1972), p. 2; Feminist Library, London Women's Liberation Workshop, 'Meetings and Events', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, no. 69 (February 6 1972) p. 1.

<sup>94</sup> Morgen, *Into Our Own Hands*, p. 139.

<sup>95</sup> Lesley Doyal, 'Women, health and the sexual division of labour: a case study of the women's health movement in Britain', *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 3, No. 7 (June 1983), pp. 21-32 (p. 21).

<sup>96</sup> Annetts et al., *Understanding Social Welfare Movements*, p. 120.

health movement, this thesis demonstrates the primacy attributed to physical health in the initial aims of the WLM. In assessing the predominance of particular conceptualisations of health within the women's movement, I contextualise why some women's movement members were initially reticent about mental health activism and feminist therapy, highlighting the ways in which widespread social stigma also influenced feminist perceptions of mental illness in the 1970s. Therefore, I argue that it is important to incorporate mental health activism into the history of the Women's Health Movement. I also explore the connections that existed between women's movement groups that focused on mental and physical health, tracing an increasingly expansive history of feminist interactions with health discourses in late twentieth-century England.

## **Mental Health Provision in Late Twentieth-Century England**

By analysing feminist interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses, I connect the history of the late twentieth-century women's movement with the development of mental health provision in England. In doing so, I develop an increasingly comprehensive overview of community care in late twentieth-century England, promoting an expansive definition of mental health services that extends beyond state-led provision. Historians have defined the transition of mental health provision from a focus on institutions to the community as one of the major policy developments in the period.<sup>97</sup> However, the history of community care from the 1970s to the 1990s continues to be disputed.<sup>98</sup> Historians have increasingly critiqued the assumption that community care

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<sup>97</sup> Kathleen Jones, *Mental Health and Social Policy, 1845-1959* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960); Kathleen Jones, *A History of the Mental Health Services* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972); John Welshman, 'Rhetoric and Reality: Community Care in England and Wales, 1948-74', in Peter Bartlett and David Wright (eds), *Outside the Walls of the Asylum: The History of Community Care, 1750-2000* (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), pp. 204-26 (p. 205); Joan Busfield, *Managing Madness: Changing ideas and practices* (London: Uniwinn Hyman, 1986), p. 326.

<sup>98</sup> Turner et al., 'The History of Mental Health Services in Modern England'.

policies reflected the state's benevolence towards mental health patients, emphasising instead the fiscal benefits of community-based provision and its protracted development.<sup>99</sup> Their assessments, however, still foreground the influence of the state on mental health care. There is little focus on the ways in which developments in civil society affected public perceptions and provision for mental health.

Historians and sociologists documenting women's movement members' responses to community care focus on the role of feminist academics in critiquing government policy. Feminist sociologists including Janet Finch argued that community-based provision bolstered the traditional social role of women as familial caregivers.<sup>100</sup> This thesis provides a fresh perspective on the history of feminist engagements with community care in late twentieth-century England by charting the development of mental health initiatives run by and for women. It explores the development and influence of community-based women's movement initiatives that provided emotional and therapeutic support to women beyond state-led services. These organisations were established in response to the belief that government policies did not recognise women's diverse experiences of mental illness, or provide them with adequate services at a local level. Therapeutic organisations that emerged out of the women's movement therefore offered an alternative form of community care that is yet to be situated in wider narratives of late twentieth-century mental health provision. By incorporating women's movement organisations into the

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<sup>99</sup> Andrew Scull, *Decarceration: Community Treatment and the Deviant- A Radical View* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1977), p. 152; Stan Cohen, *Visions of Social Control: Crime, Punishment and Classification* (London: Polity, 1985); Busfield, *Managing Madness*, pp. 327-28.

<sup>100</sup> Janet Finch and Dulcie Groves, 'Community Care and the Family: A Case for Equal Opportunities?', *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (October 1980), pp. 487-511; Janet Finch, 'Community Care: developing non-sexist alternatives', *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 3, No. 9 (December 1983), pp. 6-18; Claire Sewell, 'The emergence of the carer: mental health care in England and Wales, c. 1946-1999' (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2015), p. 49; Welshman, 'Rhetoric and reality', p. 204; Jennifer A. Parks, *No Place Like Home? Feminist Ethics and Home Health Care* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 21; Mark Walsh, Paul Stephens, and Stephen Moore, *Social Policy and Welfare* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes, 2000), p. 205; Helen Jones, *Health and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 161.

history of community care, I destabilise historical narratives that foreground state service providers' responses to government policies. I offer, instead, a definition of community care that highlights the influence of grassroots political initiatives that operated both alongside and against the state.

### **i. Definitions of Mental Health**

Women's movement members perceived the provision of positive mental health in various ways. Some associated mental distress with negative emotions including desperation and frustration when exploring the absence of emotional support in some Women's Liberation groups.<sup>101</sup> They also employed clinical symptomologies to explore their own experiences of mental illness in patriarchal society. LWLW Psychology Group founder Dinah Brooke referenced the condition schizophrenia to illustrate the pressure she felt to simultaneously conform to and oppose feminine behavioural norms.<sup>102</sup> The WTC provided training and support services to women diagnosed with medically-recognised eating disorders including anorexia nervosa. Feminist therapists also conceptualised new mental health conditions in order to understand women's mental distress and its grounding in patriarchal repression. WTC co-founder Susie Orbach defined compulsive eating disorder as a condition that encapsulated women's relationship with their bodies and food.<sup>103</sup> Her development of a symptomology and treatment for the condition referenced the wider social pressures women experienced in patriarchal society. Women's movement members therefore provisioned for women's positive mental health in a variety of ways, developing strategies to ensure the political effectiveness of the women's movement, to support women

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<sup>101</sup> Women's Library @ LSE, Papers of Amanda Sebestyen, 7SEB/A/16, Vivienne, Judy, Trish, Sheila and Sheila, 'Other Questions' (1973).

<sup>102</sup> Dinah Brooke, 'Identity', in Michelene Wandor (ed.), *The Body Politic: Women's Liberation in Britain 1969-1972* (London: Stage 1, 1972), pp. 45-49.

<sup>103</sup> Susie Orbach, *Fat is a Feminist Issue: How to Lose Weight Permanently Without Dieting* (London: Paddington Press Ltd., 1978), pp. 36-127.

overlooked in state-led mental health services, and to critique existing clinical associations of mental illness with femininity.

I employ a multifaceted definition of 'mental health' that reflects the numerous ways in which women's movement members defined their own health and emotional well-being, as well as changing conceptualisations of 'mental health' in clinical and therapeutic arenas.<sup>104</sup> 'Mental health' is often defined as a positive sense of well-being, the capacity to comprehend everyday life challenges, and the maintenance of personal relationships.<sup>105</sup> Pilgrim, argues, however, that these positive definitions are problematic because 'it is not easy to draw a firm line between normal and abnormal mental states' due to variations in individual experience and social and historical circumstances.<sup>106</sup> He therefore defines mental health as a series of positive thoughts, feelings, and emotional responses that are subject to critical assessment based on their social or historical context.<sup>107</sup> I draw on this definition of 'mental health'. Women's movement members problematised institutional conceptualisations of mental health, rejecting patriarchal formulations of femininity that dominated psychiatry and psychology in order to establish new and empowered ways of behaving. The term 'mental health' is also used to define services and provision. Pilgrim argues that the foundation of the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948 reframed 'psychiatric services' as 'mental health services'.<sup>108</sup> The increased promotion of community care led to a proliferation of mental health services that operated beyond psychiatric authority.<sup>109</sup> This thesis uses 'mental health service' and 'mental health provision' to define

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<sup>104</sup> The Women's Health Council, *Women's Mental Health: Promoting a Gendered Approach to Policy and Service Provision* (Dublin: Women's Health Council, 2014), p. 5.

<sup>105</sup> David Pilgrim, *Key Concepts in Mental Health* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), p. 3; Rachel Jenkins, Andrew McCulloch, and Camilla Parker, *Nations for mental health: supporting governments and policy makers* (Geneva: World Health Organisation, 1998), p. 1; The Women's Health Council, *Women's Mental Health*, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> Pilgrim, *Key Concepts in Mental Health*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Welshman, 'Rhetoric and reality'; Edward Shorter, 'The historical development of mental health services in Europe', in Martin Knapp et al. (eds), *Mental Health Policy and Practice Across Europe* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2007), pp. 15-33 (p. 20).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

mental health initiatives that emerged out of the women's movement, as well as state-led care. In doing so, I seek to expand the history of history of mental health provision in late twentieth-century England beyond clinical and institutional parameters.

Pilgrim also explores the use of 'mental health' in regards to illness. He employs 'mental health problem' or 'mental health concern' to define the range of conditions that mental health services provision for.<sup>110</sup> Pilgrim asserts that 'mental health concern' is less stigmatising than diagnoses offered by psychiatrists.<sup>111</sup> This thesis uses 'mental health concern' as a general term, whilst also acknowledging the terminology offered in personal accounts and oral history narratives. Castilo emphasises the need to foreground self-definitions when researching mental health, arguing that individuals articulate their experiences using terminology that extends beyond clinical parameters. Recovery, for example, can be seen as a process of hope and opportunity rather than simply the 'absence of mental illness'.<sup>112</sup>

When exploring activists' self-definitions of mental health, it is also important to decipher the clinical and institutional conceptualisations of illness that they often opposed. The development of professional and public perceptions of mental health was linked to changing ideas about psychology's social function in post-war Britain.<sup>113</sup> Following the Second World War, mental health was framed as a 'source of values' that encouraged national rehabilitation and world citizenship.<sup>114</sup> This perspective was influenced by a 'mental hygienist vision of how the organisation of society and lifestyle could promote

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<sup>110</sup> Pilgrim, *Key Concepts in Mental Health*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Heather Castillo, 'Service User Insights into Recovery in Personality Disorder', in Steven Walker (ed.), *Modern Mental Health: Critical Perspectives on Psychiatric Practice* (St. Albans: Critical Publishing Ltd., 2013), pp. 17-32 (p. 21).

<sup>113</sup> Mathew Thomson, *Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture, and Health in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Rhodri Hayward, *The Transformation of the Psyche in Primary Care, 1870-1970* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); Nikolas Rose, *Inventing our Selves: Psychology, power and personhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>114</sup> Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, pp. 239-40.

psychological well-being'.<sup>115</sup> Thomson explores how the permissiveness of the 1960s led anti-psychiatrists like R. D. Laing to critique the association of mental well-being with social values that dictated normative behaviour.<sup>116</sup> Challenges to existing definitions of mental health were not simply grounded in countercultural politics.<sup>117</sup> Psychologist Hans Eysenck popularised the view that psychology and mental health should not be associated with political, ethical, and social values. Psychology was not a 'secular guide to salvation' but a science that offered facts about human behaviour.<sup>118</sup> Women's movement members contributed to these contemporary debates by critiquing traditional constructions of femininity prevalent in both psychology and anti-psychiatry. By drawing on feminist politics to foster alternative forms of emotional support to women, women's movement members reiterated the capacity for mental health services to be politicised, whilst also rejecting the social values previously associated with psychological practices. They therefore highlighted how mental health, as it was both defined and provisioned for, was an arena that could facilitate positive social change.

## **ii. The Development of Mental Health Care in Modern England**

The history of mental health provision in modern England has typically charted the rise of the asylum in the nineteenth century and the promotion of community care from the mid-twentieth century onwards.<sup>119</sup> The expansion of asylums to contend with overcrowding due to economic dislocation and poverty raised questions about the curative nature of

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 257-58.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>119</sup> William Tuke established the York Retreat in 1796, which promoted a form of 'moral management' which involved treating patients with respect and dignity, encouraged exercise and good diet, and banned the use of cells and physical restraints (John D. Greenwood, *A Conceptual History of Psychology: Exploring the Tangled Web* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 498); Sewell, 'The Emergence of the Carer', p. 20; Leonard Smith, *'Cure, Comfort and Safe Custody': Public Lunatic Asylums in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), p. 13.

institutions.<sup>120</sup> The UK had a large asylum population and institutions were increasingly deemed costly and ineffectual. The number of beds in psychiatric institutions peaked at 148,000 in 1954.<sup>121</sup> The 1959 Mental Health Act marked the transition of mental health treatment from hospitals and psychiatric institutions to the community.<sup>122</sup> In 1961, health minister Enoch Powell announced the government's plans to move mental provision from institutions into the community.<sup>123</sup> Finally, the 1962 *Hospital Plan for England and Wales* proposed the relocation of mental health care to psychiatric units at general hospitals and community-based services run by local authorities.<sup>124</sup>

The 1959 Act enhanced mental health patients' agency. Psychiatric facilities had voluntary admissions and were reframed as curative as opposed to custodial.<sup>125</sup> Mental health tribunals were established to respond to complaints raised by patients compulsorily admitted to hospital.<sup>126</sup> Psychiatric hospitals and state-led community-based services, however, remained inadequate throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>127</sup> The 1975 White Paper *Better Services for the Mentally Ill* called for improvements to local services and the expansion of outpatient facilities.<sup>128</sup> This emphasis was reinforced in the 1983 Mental Health Act.<sup>129</sup> The new legislation outlined the professional responsibilities of nurses, social workers, and psychologists in mental health services, clarified patients' right to refuse

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<sup>120</sup> Steven Cherry, *Mental Health Care in Modern England: The Norfolk Lunatic Asylum- St. Andrew's Hospital, 1810-1998* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), p. 22; Susan Piddock, *A Space of their Own: The Archaeology of Nineteenth Century Lunatic Asylums in Britain, South Australia, and Tasmania* (New York: Springer, 2008), p. 46; Dirk Claasen and Stefan Priebe, 'Ethics of Deinstitutionalization', in Hanfried Helmchen and Norman Sartorius (eds), *Ethics in Psychiatry: European Contributions* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), pp. 341-62 (p. 343).

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Welshman, 'Rhetoric and reality', p. 210; Audrey Leathard, *Health Care Provision: Past, Present and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes Ltd., 2000), p. 35.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*; John Glasby and Jerry Tew, *Mental Health Policy and Practice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Palgrave, 2015), p. 31.

<sup>124</sup> Glasby and Tew, *Mental Health Policy and Practice*, p. 31.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> Leathard, *Health Care Provision*, p. 35.

<sup>127</sup> Glasby and Tew, *Mental Health Policy and Practice*, p. 138.

<sup>128</sup> Leathard, *Health Care Provision*, p. 35.

<sup>129</sup> Nicola Glover-Thomas, *Reconstructing Mental Health Law and Policy* (Edinburgh: Butterworths LexisNexis, 2002), p. 29.



treatment, and highlighted local authorities' responsibility to provide community-based provision.<sup>130</sup> The 1990 National Health and Community Care Act responded to patients' individual needs by transferring responsibility for community care to local social services.<sup>131</sup>

Historians have debated why governmental policy on mental health became oriented around community-based provision. Jones initially promoted the perspective that community care policies were a response to concerns for patients' wellbeing.<sup>132</sup> Scull dismisses Jones' perspective as liberal rhetoric. He redefines community care as a process of 'decarceration' that represented a shift in social control practices from the institution to the community.<sup>133</sup> Both accounts, however, focus on professional authority, legislative development, and state control, therefore overlooking the role of grassroots voluntary organisations in the establishment of community-based mental health services both within and beyond institutional parameters. Since the 1990s, historians have created narratives of community care that extend beyond clinical, institutional, and legislative frameworks.

Motivated by calls to recognise patient voices and uncover women's experiences, some historians have analysed the position of gender within the modern mental health system.<sup>134</sup> These histories document how certain mental health concerns became associated with women and femininity, linking gendered constructions of mental illness to wider social debates in nineteenth- and twentieth-century England.<sup>135</sup> They also explore

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 31.

<sup>131</sup> Gordon Hughes, 'A Suitable Case for Treatment? Constructions of Disability', in Esther Saraga (ed.), *Embodying the Social: Constructions of Difference* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 43-90 (p. 72); Glover-Thomas, *Reconstructing Mental Health Law and Policy*, p. 92.

<sup>132</sup> Jones, *Mental Health and Social Policy*; Jones, *A History of the Mental Health Services*; Kathleen Jones, *Asylums and After- A Revised History of the Mental Health Services: From the Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century to the 1990s* (London: Continuum, 1993); Welshman, 'Rhetoric and Reality', p. 205; Busfield, *Managing Madness*.

<sup>133</sup> Andrew Scull, *Decarceration: Community Treatment and the Deviant- A Radical View* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1977), p. 152; Stan Cohen, *Visions of Social Control: Crime, Punishment and Classification* (London: Polity, 1985).

<sup>134</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It* (London: Pluto, 1973).

<sup>135</sup> Hilary Marland, *Dangerous Motherhood: Insanity and Childbirth in Victorian Britain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

how assumptions surrounding gender influenced patients' treatment within psychiatric institutions.<sup>136</sup> These assessments demonstrate how patients' experiences were influenced by wider social, economic, and medical developments and discourses.<sup>137</sup> The thesis contributes to this wider history of gender and mental health care, highlighting how developments in feminist politics influenced the conceptualisation of women's mental health and their psychiatric treatment.

Bartlett and Wright also define community care as a 'social phenomenon', acknowledging how service users and non-institutional organisations facilitated its development beyond clinical and legal parameters.<sup>138</sup> Taylor and Whittier narrow their definition of 'community' further by assessing the development of lesbian feminist self-help groups for women experiencing post-natal depression in the United States. They argue that these groups facilitated the development of a 'social movement community' that supported women and encouraged their participation in oppositional action.<sup>139</sup> Therefore, in the context of this thesis, 'community' refers not only to the geographical locale in which the organisations that I examine were based, but also the group or collective of women who ran them. I argue that both these definitions of 'community' were integral to the successful running of these initiatives.

Former service users have played an integral role in the production of critical histories of late twentieth-century mental health provision.<sup>140</sup> In *The Last Asylum*, Barbara Taylor draws on her own experiences to problematise the assumption that the

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<sup>136</sup> Louise Hide, *Gender and Class in English Asylums, 1890-1914* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> Peter Bartlett and David Wright, 'Preface', in Peter Bartlett and David Wright (eds), *Outside the Walls of the Asylum: The History of Community Care, 1750-2000* (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), pp. vii-viii (p. vii).

<sup>139</sup> Verta Taylor and Nancy E. Whittier, 'Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilisation', in Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (London: Yale University Press, 1992) pp. 104-29; Verta Taylor, *Rock-a-by Baby: Feminism, Self-help and Postpartum Depression* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>140</sup> Roy Porter, 'The Patient's View: Doing Medical History from Below', *Theory and Society*, No. 14 (1985), pp. 175-98.

development of community care was entirely beneficial to mental health patients. Taylor documents her stay at Friern Hospital in London, formerly the Colney Hatch asylum, shortly before it closed in the late 1980s. Taylor refers to Friern as her 'stone mother', highlighting the safety and support she felt whilst there.<sup>141</sup> She also emphasises the role that extensive psychoanalysis played in her recovery.<sup>142</sup> Taylor's account disrupts the assumption that community care replaced institutions that were largely ineffective in providing support. As a prominent WLM member and feminist historian, Taylor also indicates the significant emotional support that she received from the women that she met through Women's Liberation groups. *The Last Asylum* therefore details her experiences at the intersection of feminist politics and mental health care.

The analysis that follows further demonstrates how women's movement members exceeded clinical, professional, and political boundaries when engaging with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses. I explore how they aligned feminist politics and psychotherapies to both understand their personal mental health concerns and develop community-based provision, therefore transcending existing roles of service user and service provider. This study therefore documents women's movement members' contribution to the provision of community care. By resituating this history within civil society, I highlight the ways in which its development was influenced and enacted by individuals with radical political affiliations. Community care proponents did not simply respond to government policy but sought to provide effective alternatives to state-led services, therefore redefining ideas of 'community' in the provision of mental health care beyond the clinical and the institutional.

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<sup>141</sup> Barbara Taylor, *The Last Asylum: A Memoir of Madness in Our Times* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2014), p. 103.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii.

### iii. The Development of Psychology and Psychotherapy in post-war England

By engaging with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses to enhance their political understandings and support one another, women's movement members contributed to debates about what constituted psychology and psychotherapy. Modern psychology, as a science of the mind and human behaviour, emerged in the late nineteenth century out of debates within physiology and philosophy about whether the "inner" world of private experience could be explored'.<sup>143</sup> Psychology was a 'modest enterprise' in early twentieth-century Britain.<sup>144</sup> The British Psychological Society was formed at University College London in 1901, bringing together teachers in the discipline, and the *British Journal of Psychology* was first published in 1904.<sup>145</sup> Psychology was initially associated with the development of experimental quantitative research methods.<sup>146</sup> However, as the twentieth century progressed, psychologists' aims and areas of interest expanded. The application of psychological understandings in the world wars led to the discipline's increased institutionalisation. Bourke highlights how technological advancements in modern warfare resulted in the need to scientifically explore the human costs of conflict.<sup>147</sup> As previously highlighted, the need to rehabilitate citizens in post-war Britain led to psychology's development into a discipline that responded to social concerns by promoting specific cultural values.<sup>148</sup> The association of psychological and social values, however, was increasingly subject to critique in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Kurt Danziger, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 17-18.

<sup>144</sup> Geoffrey C. Bunn, 'Introduction', in G. C. Bunn, A. D. Lovie, and G. D. Richards (eds), *Psychology in Britain* (Leicester: BPS Books, 2001), pp. 1-32 (p. 1).

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Beatrice Edgell, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> Joanna Bourke, 'Psychology at war, 1914-1945', in G. C. Bunn, A. D. Lovie, and G. D. Richards (eds), *Psychology in Britain* (Leicester: BPS Books, 2001), pp. 133-49 (p. 133).

<sup>148</sup> Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*; Martin Rosier, 'Social psychology and social concern in 1930s Britain' in G. C. Bunn, A. D. Lovie, and G. D. Richards (eds), *Psychology in Britain* (Leicester: BPS Books, 2001), pp. 169-187.

<sup>149</sup> Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, pp. 239-40.

Historians have increasingly challenged narratives that foreground psychology's theoretical development. Thomson defines twentieth-century British psychology as both an academic discipline and an expansive culture of thinking that 'independently guided the lives and broader intellectual outlook' of British people.<sup>150</sup> I draw on Thomson's conceptualisation to decipher how women's movement members negotiated contrasting perceptions of psychology. They viewed psychology as both a patriarchal institutional practice and a series of discourses that could be drawn on to facilitate women's empowerment. When formulating a new psychology of women, feminist therapists debated how and why psychology was politicised, distinguishing between psychology as a political theory and an applied therapy. Women's movement members therefore contributed to an enduring discussion concerning the capacity of psychology to instigate social change. This thesis highlights how the association of psychology with political and social values was not only explored in institutional and academic arenas, but was also facilitated in grassroots women's groups and therapeutic organisations.

The women explored in this study used psychoanalysis to develop their self-understandings and formulate theories on women's psychology and feminist therapy. Psychoanalysis was first developed by Sigmund Freud in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Vienna.<sup>151</sup> Freudian theory explores the impact of unconscious mental processes on the development of the psyche, examining how repressed memories and experiences, often occurring during childhood, subsequently manifest themselves in inexplicable destructive behaviours frequently linked with sexuality.<sup>152</sup> Psychoanalytic ideas

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<sup>150</sup> Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, pp. 133-149.

<sup>151</sup> Louis Rose, *The Freudian Calling: Early Viennese Psychoanalysis and the Pursuit of Cultural Science* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), p. 11.

<sup>152</sup> Eli Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), p. 4; Stephen A. Mitchell and Margaret J. Black, *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), p. 218.

were subsequently developed by Freud's numerous followers.<sup>153</sup> Anna Freud and Melanie Klein played a prominent role in the development of child psychology in 1920s and 1930s Britain.<sup>154</sup> I argue that women's movement members justified their application of psychoanalysis by discerning between its theoretical development and broader sociocultural application. Whilst tenets of Freudian theory empowered women, it had subsequently been appropriated by consumer outlets to endorse patriarchal norms. The LWLW Psychology Group sought to reframe the history of psychoanalysis, championing analysts who they believed endorsed feminist ideals. Feminist activists were also able to employ psychoanalysis due to its professional positioning on the periphery of psychology in the late 1960s. The perceived marginalisation of psychoanalysis ensured that its theoretical tenets, previously seen to endorse traditional behaviours, could be redefined as oppositional and empowering.

The women's movement members explored in this study also drew on psychotherapeutic techniques associated with countercultural politics. The 'personal growth movement' emerged in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s and was closely aligned with humanistic psychology.<sup>155</sup> Personal growth techniques represented a 'turning away from the heavy theoretical commitment of psychoanalysis' by emphasising spontaneity and intuition.<sup>156</sup> Humanistic psychology promoted person-centred therapies that focused on 'self-actualisation' and 'body-mind unity'.<sup>157</sup> It was therefore also distinguishable from the perceived determinism of Freudian psychoanalysis and behavioural psychology.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Robert B. Lawson, Jean E. Graham, and Kristin M. Baker, *The History of Psychology: Globalization, Ideas and Applications* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 292.

<sup>154</sup> Alex Holder, *Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, and the Psychoanalysis of Children and Adolescents*, trans. Phillip Slotkin (London: Karnac, 2005).

<sup>155</sup> Colin Feltham, *What is Counselling? The Promise and Problem of the Talking Therapies* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), p. 86.

<sup>156</sup> John Rowan and Windy Dryden, 'Innovative Therapy in Britain: Introduction', in John Rowan and Windy Dryden (eds), *Innovative Therapy in Britain* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988), pp. 1-11 (p. 2).

<sup>157</sup> John Rowan, *The Reality Game: A guide to humanistic counselling and psychotherapy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), p. 1.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*; Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, p. 273.

Humanistic psychology was promoted by young academic psychologists frustrated with mainstream psychology and inspired by the 'heady atmosphere of countercultural rebellion and experimentation' in 1960s Britain.<sup>159</sup> Proponents of the personal growth movement worked to reject societal authority and clinical expertise by training at 'growth centres'.<sup>160</sup> Leading centre Quaesitor was founded in London in 1969, with further growth centres established in Bristol, Manchester, Cheshire and Sheffield by 1973.<sup>161</sup> I challenge the assumption that feminist activists rejected psychology and psychiatry by examining the ways in which women's movement members drew on psychological and psychotherapeutic ideas that were deemed both institutional and countercultural. I highlight how women's movement members expanded debates about the political value of psychological and psychotherapeutic approaches. Members of feminist psychology and therapy groups redefined histories of psychotherapeutic tenets in order to foreground their feminist underpinnings. As a result, feminist activists not only contributed to political understandings of psychology and psychotherapy, but also to perceptions of their disciplinary development and sociocultural significance.

## **Mental Health Activism in Late Twentieth-Century England**

This thesis uses 'mental health activism' as an umbrella term to define women's movement members' engagement with psychological and psychotherapeutic ideas and approaches. In doing so, it highlights the connections and continuities between feminist opposition to psychology and psychiatry, women's movement members' application of psychotherapy to understand their frustrations with feminist politics, the development of feminist therapy,

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<sup>159</sup> Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, p. 273.

<sup>160</sup> Mike Wibberley, 'Encounter', in John Rowan and Windy Dryden (eds), *Innovative Therapy in Britain* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988), pp. 61-85 (p. 63); O. Void, 'Do you have an authority problem?', *Self and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (1973), pp. 11-14.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272; *Self and Society*, 'Growth Centres', Vol. 1, No. 10 (1973), p. 19.

and the enactment of feminist policies within mental health charities more broadly. Defining these interactions as activism reinforces my argument that they offered a politicised, and oppositional, alternative to institutional ideas about female mental illness and state-led provision that has yet to be recognised in histories of community mental health care. Employing the term 'activism' also reiterates my belief that women's movement organisations remained politicised during the 1980s and 1990s, whilst also situating these initiatives within a wider history of opposition to psychiatry and state-led mental health services in post-war England. I identify four oppositional or critical approaches to psychiatry and health care that both informed and were influenced by women's movement mental health activism: antipsychiatry; academic psychology; radical therapy; and the service user movement. Documenting the emergence of these oppositional and critical approaches contextualises women's movement members' subsequent engagement with them.

Several sociological and historical accounts document opposition to psychiatry, psychotherapy, and mental health services. Crossley historicises the influence of oppositional social movements and organisations on the development of mental health provision in post-war Britain. He theorises the ways in which power was enacted both within and against psychiatry, identifying a 'field of contention' between groups who opposed conventional psychiatry and promoted alternatives, and organisations who countered this opposition by 'calling upon mainstream psychiatry to ignore its radical and liberation critics and stick to its "proper" role'.<sup>162</sup> He also highlights how mental hygiene organisations negotiated the formation of the welfare state in the 1950s, founding the National Association for Mental Health (NAMH)- later renamed MIND- and challenging the mistreatment of patients in mental hospitals.<sup>163</sup> Finally, he explores the ascension of anti-

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<sup>162</sup> Nick Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry: Social Movement in Mental Health* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 1.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-98.



psychiatry in the 1960s, before charting the development of service user initiatives such as the Mental Patients' Union (MPU) from the 1970s onwards.<sup>164</sup> His study situates opposition to psychiatry and mental health provision in a wider political context, citing, for example, how the development of anti-psychiatry was influenced by radical leftist politics.<sup>165</sup> However, Crossley does not explore how women's movement activism, an integral aspect of this emergent radical politics, influenced oppositional approaches to psychiatry. He also offers no assessment of the alternative services created by members of the women's movement. This thesis expands Crossley's study by exploring how feminist activists enhanced existing opposition to psychiatry. The LWLW Psychology Group referenced anti-psychiatry whilst also critiquing its failure to explore gendered experiences of mental health care. By charting the individual women's movement members who established mental health initiatives, I also demonstrate the influence of their radical politics on mental health provision more broadly.

Coppock and Hopton also examine the development of 'critical perspectives on mental health' in England since the late 1950s.<sup>166</sup> They call for the development of a literature that brings together these critiques in a 'cohesive way', whilst also recognising the influence of oppositional perspectives on liberal reforms that occurred in institutional psychiatry and state-led mental health care.<sup>167</sup> Coppock and Hopton recognise the critical perspectives offered by feminist therapists, arguing that they redefined women's mental illness as reflective of the powerlessness they felt living in a patriarchal society.<sup>168</sup> They also explore feminist therapists' responses to women's mistreatment within mental health services, and the emergence of critical perspectives that questioned the universalised

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99-125; 144-63.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>166</sup> Vicki Coppock and John Hopton, *Critical perspectives on mental health* (London: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

notion of female distress often depicted in feminist therapeutic approaches.<sup>169</sup> Coppock and Hopton's assessment, however, focuses predominantly on the theoretical tenets of feminist therapy and does not explore how women's movement members practically applied it through community-based organisations and initiatives. By tracing women's movement members' involvement across numerous radical therapy groups, I chart the existence of a wider radical grassroots network that opposed psychiatric practices and developed community-based alternatives. In doing so, I reiterate the importance of expanding historical definitions of community care to incorporate radical mental health initiatives that provided valuable support to individuals at a local level.

### **i. Anti-psychiatry**

Anti-psychiatry emerged in Britain in the 1960s and directly challenged the core assumptions of mainstream psychiatry.<sup>170</sup> Particularly associated with the existential psychology of R. D. Laing, its tenets were widely disseminated through influential publications and the establishment of several therapeutic communities.<sup>171</sup> A trained psychiatrist, Laing developed an approach to mental health that was both a response to patients' neglect in psychiatric institutions, and emergent radical politics and philosophies.<sup>172</sup> The term 'anti-psychiatry' was coined by the South African-born psychiatrist David Cooper in 1967.<sup>173</sup> Like Laing, Cooper believed that institutional

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*; Zbiginew Kotowicz, *R. D. Laing and the Paths of Anti-Psychiatry* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 78; Robin Cooper (ed.), *Thresholds Between Philosophy and Psychoanalysis: Papers from the Philadelphia Association* (London: Philadelphia Association, 1989); David Cooper (ed.), *Psychiatry and Anti-psychiatry* (London: Random House, 1967); R. D. Laing and Aaron Esterson, *Sanity, Madness and the Family* (London: Penguin, 1964).

<sup>172</sup> Allan Beveridge, *Portrait of the Psychiatrist as a Young Man: The Early Writing and Work of R. D. Laing, 1927-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 44-45; 47; Kotowicz, *R. D. Laing and the Paths of Anti-Psychiatry*, p. 71.

<sup>173</sup> Cooper, *Psychiatry and Anti-psychiatry*.

psychiatry was a discipline ‘founded on violence’.<sup>174</sup> The hierarchical structures in mental institutions reinforced professional power and were therefore ineffective in treating mental health patients.<sup>175</sup> Laing founded the Philadelphia Association in 1965 in order to promote alternative forms of treatment.<sup>176</sup> The organisation set up several therapeutic communities that aimed to break down the power imbalances inherent in psychiatrist-patient relationships by sharing decision-making between staff members and residents.<sup>177</sup> Mental illness was presented as a creative and transformative process, and residents were encouraged to act out their symptoms in expressive ways.<sup>178</sup>

Laing also offered a new perspective on women’s mental health.<sup>179</sup> *Sanity, Madness and the Family*, co-written in 1964 with Aaron Esterson, drew on case studies of several women to argue that traditional familial and domestic environments aggravated their symptoms of schizophrenia.<sup>180</sup> Historians and sociologists question whether anti-psychiatric perspectives empowered female patients.<sup>181</sup> Laing did not qualify why he focused on female patients, and failed to explore how patriarchal power was enacted in therapist-client interactions.<sup>182</sup> There is little assessment, however, of feminist responses to anti-psychiatric perspectives when they were first produced. I analyse how the LWLW Psychology Group assessed and applied anti-psychiatric ideas. I also explore the

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<sup>174</sup> Kotowicz, R. D. *Laing and the Paths of Anti-Psychiatry*, p. 78.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77; Philadelphia Association, ‘Houses’, available at <https://www.philadelphia-association.com/houses> [accessed 30 July 2017].

<sup>177</sup> Kotowicz, R. D. *Laing and the Paths of Anti-Psychiatry*, p. 78.

<sup>178</sup> Terry A. Kupers, ‘The Asylum, Prison, and the Future of Community Mental Health’, in Samuel J. Rosenberg and Jessica Rosenberg (ed.), *Community Mental Health: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 86-101 (p. 87).

<sup>179</sup> Jayashri Kulkarni, ‘Psychotic Disorders in Women’, in Sarah E. Romans and Mary V. Seeman (eds), *Women’s Mental Health: A Life-Cycle Approach* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2006), pp. 191-204 (p. 193); Tamsin Wilton, ‘Madness and Feminism: Bristol Crisis Service for Women’, in Gabriele Griffin (ed.), *Feminist Activism in the 1990s* (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd., 1995), pp. 27-38 (p. 31).

<sup>180</sup> Laing and Esterson, *Sanity, Madness and the Family*.

<sup>181</sup> Coppock and Hopton, *Critical Perspectives on Mental Health*, p. 71; Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago Press, 1987), p. 238.

<sup>182</sup> Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 247.

experiences of feminist therapists who completed their training at the Arbours Association, founded by anti-psychiatrists Joseph Berke and Morton Schatzman in the early 1970s.<sup>183</sup> These women's movement members drew on their feminist politics to enhance anti-psychiatric thinking, aligning existing critical ideas with an emergent gendered assessment of approaches concerning mental health.

## ii. Academic Psychology

Academic psychology was also critiqued by practitioners influenced by radical, countercultural politics. The periodical *Red Rat*, published in 1971 by self-titled 'abnormal psychologists', and the 1972 edited collection *Rat, Myth, Magic* offered a 'political critique of psychology' that highlighted the 'real awfulness' of how the discipline was taught in universities.<sup>184</sup> Contributors to *Rat, Myth, Magic* stated that academic psychology endorsed elitist professional hierarchies that bolstered broader social inequalities. However, the very fact that academic psychology was used to uphold power relations meant that it also had the potential, if it was taught in innovative and radical ways, to dismantle repressive social structures.<sup>185</sup> *Rat, Myth, Magic* linked opposition to academic psychology with other forms of mental health activism. Contributors explored women's movement members' opposition of Freudian psychoanalysis and documented the development of the service user movement, publishing the manifesto of the newly-founded Mental Patients' Union (MPU).<sup>186</sup> *Rat, Myth, Magic* therefore served as a platform that established connections

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<sup>183</sup> Coppock and Hopton, *Critical Perspectives on Mental Health*, p. 77.

<sup>184</sup> John Rowan, 'Andrew, Me, and the AHP', in Gottfried Heuer (ed.), *Sacral Revolutions- Reflecting on the Work of Andrew Samuels: Cutting Edges in Psychoanalysis and Jungian Analysis* (Hove: Routledge, 2010), pp. 232-37 (pp. 232-33); British Library, General Reference Collection ZD.9.b.2009, *Red Rat: the journal of abnormal psychologists*, No. 1 (May 1970); British Library, Document Supply f76/2825, John Rowan (ed.), *Rat, Myth, Magic: A Political Critique of Psychology* (London, 1972).

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> Jeanne Magagona, 'Sexist Psychology', in John Rowan (ed.), *Rat, Myth, Magic: A Political Critique of Psychology* (London, 1972), pp. 13-14 (p. 14); Liz Durkin, 'Protest at the Paddington Day Hospital', in John Rowan (ed.), *Rat, Myth, Magic: A Political Critique of Psychology* (London, 1972), pp. 56-7 (p. 56); Mental Patients' Union, 'Mental Patients' Union Declaration', in John Rowan (ed.), *Rat, Myth,*

between different forms of mental health activism, which extended across political identifications, disciplines, and institutional and grassroots organisations.

The analysis that follows highlights the role of women's movement members in bolstering these networks of mental health activism, via the establishment of community-based initiatives and production of academic works, across the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Wilton asserts that feminist assessments of women's mental health across the period were primarily theoretical and located in the academy.<sup>187</sup> I argue, however, that feminist interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses were partly defined by women's movement members' negotiation of political theory and community-based practice. Campaigners at the charity MIND, for instance, developed connections with feminist academics to publicise issues of women and mental health at national and community-based levels. These connections reflected the collaborative nature of mental health activism in late twentieth-century England.

### iii. Radical Therapy

Critical approaches to academic psychology and institutional psychiatry were accompanied by the development of radical therapy. Radical therapy emerged in the 1960s in opposition to psychotherapies that were seen to promote an 'individualist, medicalised view of human behaviour'.<sup>188</sup> Radical therapists explored the social structures that influenced individual behaviour and conditioned perceptions of what it was to be healthy or unhealthy.<sup>189</sup> The development of radical therapy reflected an intersection of numerous oppositional political

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*Magic: A Political Critique of Psychology* (London, 1972), pp. 60-1. Vicky Long, *Destigmatising Mental Illness: Professional Politics and Public Education in Britain, 1870-1970* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 178.

<sup>187</sup> Wilton, 'Madness and Feminism', p. 31.

<sup>188</sup> John A. Kovach, 'The Concept of a "Healthy Person": A Sociological Contribution to a Truly Revolutionary Psychotherapy', in James J. Chriss (ed.), *Counseling and the Therapeutic State* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1999) pp. 151-164 (p. 154).

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

and psychotherapeutic ideas, including feminism and anti-psychiatry.<sup>190</sup> The influence of feminist politics on the development of radical therapeutic approaches in England, however, remains largely unexplored, with a greater emphasis placed on anti-psychiatry. I have already highlighted how anti-psychiatry organisations established radical therapeutic communities that challenged institutional definitions and treatments for mental health concerns.<sup>191</sup> Whilst organisations like Laing's Philadelphia Association were run privately, some radical therapeutic communities operated within the NHS. Staff at the Paddington Day Hospital ran a therapeutic community inspired by 1960s radical intellectualism and activism. Their work demonstrates that radical therapists operated both within and against state-led mental health practices.<sup>192</sup>

The absence of discussion about the influence of women's movement politics on radical therapy is partly attributable to the fact that several feminist therapists have argued that their ideas and approaches represented a disjuncture from previous oppositional or political therapies. WTC co-founder Susie Orbach argues that the Centre was unlike previous feminist or radical therapy initiatives because it provided support to women outside of oppositional political movements.<sup>193</sup> She asserts that there was little grassroots feminist engagement with psychotherapy prior to the WTC's foundation.<sup>194</sup> Orbach's narrative overlooks women's movement psychology groups that operated in the early 1970s and developed their own forms of politicised self-help therapy.<sup>195</sup> Her account also omits the experiences of WTC staff members who were involved in radical therapy

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<sup>190</sup> Mollie Whalen, *Counseling to End Violence Against Women: A Subversive Model* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), p. 7.

<sup>191</sup> Coppock and Hopton, *Critical Perspectives on Mental Health*, p. 75; Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, pp. 99-125; Liam Clarke, *The Time of Therapeutic Communities: People, Places and Events* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004), p. 13.

<sup>192</sup> Long, *Destigmatising Mental Illness*, p. 178; Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 144.

<sup>193</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Orbach, personal interview.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> Feminist Library, LWLW Psychology Group, *Shrew*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (April 1972); Green, personal interview; Klein, personal interview.

organisations before they joined the Centre.<sup>196</sup> By incorporating these experiences into the history of feminist therapy, this thesis elucidates women's movement members' interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses, creating an increasingly cohesive picture of the individuals and networks that constituted radical therapy in late twentieth-century England.

#### **iv. The Service User Movement**

By tracing the political and professional networks bolstered through feminist interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses, this study also assesses women's movement members' engagement with the service user movement. The service user movement comprises of individuals and organisations who draw on their own experiences of mental health provision to campaign for improvements to services and increased service user advocacy.<sup>197</sup> Members of the service user movement also employ the term 'survivor' to denote their experience of both mental distress and invasive or violent psychiatric treatments such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).<sup>198</sup> The service user movement emerged in response to wide-ranging developments in the perception and provision of mental health in post-war England, notably the introduction of community care policies, the increased criticism of biomedical definitions of mental illness, the reframing of patients

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<sup>196</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

<sup>197</sup> Peter Campbell, 'From Little Acorns: The Mental Health Service User Movement', in Andy Bell and Peter Lindley (eds), *Beyond the Water Towers: The Unfinished Revolutions in Mental Health Services 1985-2005* (London: Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, 2005), pp. 73-82; Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, pp. 144-63; Jan Wallcraft with Jim Read and Angela Sweeney, *On Our Own Terms: Users and survivors of mental health services working together for support and change* (London: Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, 2003), available at <http://www.nsun.org.uk/assets/downloadableFiles/on-our-own-terms.pdf> [accessed 1 August 2017]; Jan Wallcraft and Michael Bryant, *Policy Paper 2: The mental health service user movement in England* (London: Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, 2003), available at [http://studymore.org.uk/policy\\_2.pdf](http://studymore.org.uk/policy_2.pdf) [accessed 1 August 2017]; Samantha L. Miller, Mary Chambers, and Melanie Giles, 'Service user involvement in mental health care: an evolutionary concept analysis', *Health Expectations*, Vol. 19. No. 2 (13 February 2015), pp. 209-21 (p. 209); Marian Barnes and Phil Cotterell (eds), *Critical Perspectives on User Involvement* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2012), p. 70.

<sup>198</sup> Survivors History Group, 'Survivors' history and The Survivors History Group', available at <http://studymore.org.uk/newsweb1.pdf> [accessed 1 August 2017].

as consumers, and the emergence of countercultural radical politics.<sup>199</sup> The service user campaign to stop the closure of the Paddington Day Hospital, held between 1972 and 1973, reframed the 'mental health arena' as a 'collective forum of political struggle'.<sup>200</sup> The Mental Patients' Union (MPU), founded in 1972 as a result of the Paddington protests, declared their opposition to repressive psychiatric practices and restrictive definitions of mental illness.<sup>201</sup> It asserted that mental health concerns arose from social inequality in housing and employment and agitated for service users' increased agency in the provision of their treatment.<sup>202</sup> Sayce asserts that the collective struggle enacted by the service user movement has 'generated goals of inclusion' within mental health care, as well as instigating a 'successful fight for civil rights' in services.<sup>203</sup>

Members of the service user movement have extensively documented its history. The Survivors History Group has generated an expansive online archive containing first-person accounts, timelines, periodicals, and policy publications.<sup>204</sup> Historians have drawn on these materials to document the influence of the service user movement on the politics and provision of mental health.<sup>205</sup> However, there is little focus on the links between the service user movement and other oppositional political movements. This thesis traces the ideas and experiences of some women who were involved in both the service user movement and feminist activism, indicating how their dual affiliation influenced and aided

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<sup>199</sup> Wallcraft and Bryant, *Policy Paper 2: The mental health service user movement in England*; Miller et al., 'Service user involvement in mental health care: an evolutionary concept analysis', p. 209; Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 144; Anne Rogers and David Pilgrim, *A Sociology of Mental Health and Illness*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2014), p. 212; Alex Mold, *Making the Patient-Consumer: Patient organisations and health consumerism in Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

<sup>200</sup> Spandler, *Asylum to Action*, p. 13.

<sup>201</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 144; Nick Manning, *The Therapeutic Community: Charisma and Routinization* (Hove: Routledge, 1989), p. 63; Mental Patients' Union, 'Mental Patients' Union Declaration', pp. 60-61.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> Sayce, *From Psychiatric Patient to Citizen Revisited*, p. 34.

<sup>204</sup> Survivors History Group, 'Mental health and survivors' movements and contexts', available at <http://studymore.org.uk/mpu.htm> [accessed 1 August 2017].

<sup>205</sup> Spandler, *Asylum to Action*; Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*.



their development of alternative, community-based mental health care and support groups for women.<sup>206</sup> Members of the service user movement drew on their experiences to inform feminist politics surrounding mental health.<sup>207</sup> At the same time, the involvement of feminist activists in service user campaigns resulted in their incorporation of an assessment of gender that is yet to be historicised.<sup>208</sup>

Tracing feminist interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses therefore demonstrates the connections that existed between different facets of mental health activism, including anti-psychiatry, oppositional approaches in academic psychology, radical therapy, and the service user movement. These networks were crucial to the foundation and development of alternative community-based mental health organisations. By assessing their development, this study generates an increasingly cohesive picture of radical approaches to mental health in late twentieth-century England. It also reflects the increased collaboration of women's movement groups with other oppositional movements throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. In exploring the development of alternative organisations that emerged out of mental health activism, I challenge the primary association of mental health services with governmental policies and state-led practices. I will also demonstrate how alternative community-based services offered valid and effective mental health services, ensuring the personal, political, and professional representation of individuals that were not recognised in state-led provision.

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<sup>206</sup> Jan Wallcraft, 'Islington Women and Mental Health', in *Women in MIND, Finding Our Own Solutions: Women's experiences of mental health care* (London: MIND Publications, 1986), pp. 109-10.

<sup>207</sup> Jan Wallcraft, 'ECT & Women', *Spare Rib*, No. 183 (October 1987), pp. 20-24.

<sup>208</sup> Wallcraft and Bryant, *Policy Paper 2*, p. 12.

## Sources and Methodology

### i. Archival Sources

The thesis draws on archival material housed at the London-based Feminist Library, The Women's Library, the recently-opened MIND archives at the Wellcome Library, the London Metropolitan Archives, and the Feminist Archive [South], based in Bristol. The Feminist Library contains periodicals produced by grassroots women's groups and Women's Liberation networks. Newsletters published by these networks, including the LWLW's *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter* and *Birmingham Women's Liberation News/Views Letter*, highlight the frequency of women's mental health groups meetings and the promotion of their community-based support. They also contain letters and opinion pieces detailing WLM members' responses to contemporary developments within the women's movement. I have also used *Spare Rib's* recently digitised archive, the monthly national feminist magazine which ran from 1972 until 1993, to explore how ideas developed in a grassroots setting were promoted and articulated at a national level.<sup>209</sup>

The Women's Library houses the personal collections of key figures within the women's movement. They contain unedited and unpublished materials associated with women and mental health, such as research notes and interview transcripts. The personal papers of journalist and author Amanda Sebestyen include the handwritten accounts of Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group members who were also involved in mental health activism.<sup>210</sup> Sebestyen used these accounts in a *Spare Rib* article documenting the group's

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<sup>209</sup> British Library, '*Spare Rib*', available at <https://www.bl.uk/spare-rib> [accessed 25 September 2016]; Deborah Chambers, Linda Steiner and Carole Fleming, *Women and Journalism* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 165; redchidgey, '*Spare Rib* (Magazine, 1972-1993)', *Grassroots Feminism: transnational archives, resources and communities* (7 August 2009), available at <http://www.grassrootsfeminism.net/cms/node/234> [accessed 25 September 2016].

<sup>210</sup> Amanda Sebestyen (ed.), '*67, '78, '88: From Women's Liberation to Feminism*' (London: Prism Press, 1988); Women's Library @ LSE, Papers of Amana Sebestyen, 1969-1991, 7SEB/A/13 'Belsize Lane'.

history.<sup>211</sup> By examining the unedited notes, I was able to better assess members' perceptions of one another, events taking place within the group, and the content that Sebestyen deemed most suitable for a national audience when transferring them to print.

The MIND archive, opened in 2014, remains largely unexplored by historians. It has proved invaluable in deciphering the influence of women's movement ideas on the charity.<sup>212</sup> The breadth of archival material available, including campaign packs, meeting minutes, service user accounts, information leaflets, and edited collections, demonstrates the organisation's extensive output and highlights how its campaigns were formulated and promoted. The archival materials used in this thesis are supplemented by publications produced by the mental health initiatives under examination. Edited collections, including Women in MIND's *Finding Our Own Solutions* and the WTC's *Living with the Sphinx*, provide further insight into these organisations by charting the experiences and anxieties of individual members of staff.<sup>213</sup>

There are methodological issues involved in the use of these archival and published materials.<sup>214</sup> The MIND archive was catalogued into subject files by archivist Emma Hancock.<sup>215</sup> Whilst it was clear that I would find relevant materials in the subject file 'Women', it was important to consult other subject headings, including files on Black and ethnic minority communities and the service user movement, in order to situate the

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<sup>211</sup> Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group, 'Nine years Together: A History of a Women's Liberation Group', *Spare Rib*, No. 69 (April, 1978), pp. 41-45.

<sup>212</sup> Emma Hancock, 'Keeping Mental Health in MIND', *Wellcome Library* (10 October, 2014), available at <http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2014/10/keeping-mental-health-in-mind> [accessed 25 September 2016].

<sup>213</sup> Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions: Women's experiences of mental health care* (London: MIND Publications, 1986); Ernst and Maguire (eds), *Living with the Sphinx*.

<sup>214</sup> Maria Tamboukou, 'Archival rhythms: narrativity in the archive', in Niamh Moore et al. (eds), *The Archive Project: Archival Research in the Social Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 71-98 (p. 78).

<sup>215</sup> Chris Millard, 'Mental health history ventures out of the asylum', *Wellcome Library* (9 July, 2015), available at <http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2015/07/histories-of-mental-health-venture-out-of-the-asylum/> [accessed 25 September 2016].

material on women within the broader context of the organisation's work.<sup>216</sup> I was also wary of drawing too readily on the personal collections of prominent women's movement members as I did not wish to replicate dominant narratives that historians of the women's movement have increasingly problematised.<sup>217</sup> This issue was partly mitigated by using pamphlets and books self-published by organisations, which have been a rich source for the thesis.

## **ii. Oral History**

This thesis draws on oral history interviews with fifteen women involved in women's movement and mental health activism. I identified research participants by contacting contributors to academic and professional publications on feminism and psychotherapy, individuals listed as members of women's movement groups and feminist therapy organisations, the authors of articles on Women's Liberation and psychology in grassroots periodicals, and by liaising with regional feminist networks. Two research participants spoke of their general engagement with psychology and psychotherapy in Women's Liberation groups.<sup>218</sup> One interviewee was a member of the LWLW Psychology Group.<sup>219</sup> Eight women interviewed were former WTC staff members and four had previously worked at MIND.<sup>220</sup> By carrying out oral history interviews, I was able to collect previously undocumented personal insights into mental health activism in the women's movement. I adopted a loose life narrative approach that situated my research participants'

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<sup>216</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archives, SA/MIN.B.12, 'Black and Ethnic Minorities'; Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archives, SA/MIN/B/125 'User Movement'.

<sup>217</sup> Browne, "'A Veritable Hotbed of Feminism'".

<sup>218</sup> Sally Carter, personal interview (Bristol, 4 July 2017); Afia, personal interview.

<sup>219</sup> Carola Klein, personal interview (Birmingham, 18 November 2016).

<sup>220</sup> Vivien Burgoyne, personal interview (London, 10 July 2012); Iona Grant and Marie Maguire, personal interview (London, 26 September 2016); Green, personal interview; Mohamed, personal interview; Orbach, personal interview; Joanna Ryan, personal interview (London, 12 July 2012); Smith, personal interview; Anny Brackx, personal interview (London, 19 September 2016); Alison Cobb, personal interview (London, 13 October 2015); Liz Sayce, personal interview (London, 7 October 2016); Daphne Wood, personal interview (London, 9 September 2016).

engagement with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses within their broader personal, political, and professional trajectories as activists, therapists, and charity workers.<sup>221</sup> I therefore explored my research participants' responses to wider developments in the organisation of the women's movement and mental health care, assessing their views on the influence of feminist approaches to psychology and psychotherapy on wider policies and practices surrounding women and mental health.

Through undertaking oral history, I also identified how women's movement members drew on psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses to reflect on their involvement in feminist activism. Several research participants employed psychoanalytic theories to articulate their emotional responses to organisational developments and group dynamics within women's movement mental health initiatives. Analysing these reflections demonstrates the enduring influence of psychotherapeutic discourses on the construction of my research participants' understandings of their professional and political pasts. The continued prominence of psychotherapeutic ideas within research participants' narratives is partly attributable to the fact that many still work as therapists. I carried out several interviews in my participants' therapy rooms, a setting that, on occasion, influenced the power dynamics inherent in the oral history researcher-interviewee relationship. In asking my participants questions, I felt as though I was reversing the professional role that they usually enacted as therapists who encouraged their clients to impart personal recollections. Some of my interviewees then asked me why I was focusing on women's movement mental health activism and enquired after my own mental well-being. Being questioned about my mental health in what was typically a therapeutic setting destabilised my position as a researcher. I had not expected to explore how my research interests were potentially connected to my personal experiences with my participants. In asking me this question, my

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<sup>221</sup> J. Amos Hatch and Richard Wisniewski, 'Life history and narrative: questions, issues and exemplary works', in J. Amos Hatch and Richard Wisniewski (eds), *Life History and Narrative* (London: The Falmer Press, 1995), pp. 113-36 (p. 124).

participants subverted the researcher-interviewee relationship, facilitating an interaction that reflected their own professional positioning as therapists exploring the experiences of a client.

Oral history is defined as a feminist research method due to its uncovering of voices previously hidden from history.<sup>222</sup> It was of interest to me to explore how a feminist research method could be employed to create a history of feminist activism. Oral history lends itself to the production of critical histories of the late twentieth-century women's movement in England. Thomlinson and Browne promote oral history as a means to foreground the experiences of Black feminists and women's groups in rural areas, therefore challenging dominant narratives produced by white, middle-class women's movement members who operated in metropolitan locales.<sup>223</sup> In this thesis, I seek to critically assess narratives of women's movement mental health activism and feminist therapy that equate its development with a small number of prominent feminist therapists. However, given that it is also the first full-length study on the development of feminist therapy in England, I still deemed it important to interview the feminist therapists who have dominated this history.

When interviewing the feminist therapist Susie Orbach, who has maintained a public platform since the 1970s, I was anxious about reinforcing her predominance in the history of feminist therapy.<sup>224</sup> Jolly, Russell, and Cohen express comparable concerns when

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<sup>222</sup> Sherna Berger Gluck, 'Women's Oral History: Is it so Special?', in Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless (eds), *History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology* (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2007), pp. 357-80 (p. 358); Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, 'Introduction', in Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (eds), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (Routledge: New York, 1991), pp. 1-6 (p. 2); Ann Oakley, 'Interviewing Women- A Contradiction in Terms?', in Helen Roberts (ed.), *Doing Feminist Research* (London: Routledge, 1981), pp. 30-61 (pp. 32; 44).

<sup>223</sup> Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*, p. 198; Browne, "'A Veritable Hotbed of Feminism'".

<sup>224</sup> Orbach, *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. Susie Orbach has continued to publish on issues surrounding women's bodies, eating, food and psychology. Her most recent publications include *In Therapy: How conversations with psychotherapists really work* (London: Profile Books, 2016), *Bodies* (New York: Picador, 2009) and *On Eating* (London: Penguin, 2002). She also co-edited *Fifty Shades of Feminism* (London: Virago, 2013) with Lisa Appignanesi and Rachel Holmes. She recently produced the series *In Therapy* for BBC Radio 4 and is routinely recognised for advising Diana, Princess of Wales in the 1980s and 1990s. Ellen refers to Orbach as 'among the best known [psychotherapists] in her

documenting their development of the oral history project *Sisterhood and After*.<sup>225</sup> They highlight 'tensions concerning the status of individual experience and the practicalities of selection and method' during the oral history process, questioning the ethical implications of choosing participants to document the history of a social movement that promoted collectivity.<sup>226</sup> My concern about privileging the voices and experiences of already prominent women's movement members also arose during the oral history interview process. I felt increasingly nervous when meeting Orbach. This nervousness, which I equated with my reverence for her publicly-recognised political and professional achievements, complicated my capacity to critically assess the narrative that Orbach provided in her interview.<sup>227</sup> I have sought to acknowledge the impact of this emotional exchange when analysing my interview with Orbach alongside my research participants who have not featured so readily in existing histories of feminist therapy.

Interviewing women's movement members who have previously been foregrounded in the history of women's movement mental health activism has given me insight into how and why their voices have been attributed such significance. Their predominance is not only indicative of researchers' increased propensity to engage with their narratives, but also the emotional exchanges that occur during the oral history interview process. Several historians have documented the influence of the negative

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profession' (BBC Radio 4, *In Therapy*, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b071c4cy> [accessed 7 April, 2017]; Barbara Ellen, 'In Therapy- How Conversations with Psychotherapists Really Work by Susie Orbach- review', *The Guardian* (7 November 2016), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/nov/07/in-therapy-how-conversations-psychotherapists-really-work-susie-orbach-review> [accessed 7 April 2017]).

<sup>225</sup> Margaretta Jolly, Polly Russell and Rachel Cohen, 'Sisterhood and After: Individualism, Ethics and an Oral History of the Women's Liberation Movement', in Kevin Gilan and Jenny Pickeril (eds), *Research, Ethics and Social Movements: Scholarship, Activism and Knowledge Production* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 75-90.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175; 177.

<sup>227</sup> Kate Mahoney, "'It's Not History. It's My Life": Researcher Emotions and the Production of Critical Histories of the Women's Movement', in Tracey Loughran and Dawn Mannay (eds), *Emotion and the Researcher: Sites, Subjectivities and Relationships* (Bingley: Emerald Books, forthcoming).

emotions they experienced during the process of constructing critical histories of the women's movement. Rees highlights her research participants' reticence at becoming historical actors and their discomfort at having their life narratives analysed by a researcher too young to have participated in the women's movement activism of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.<sup>228</sup> My application of oral history highlights how positive emotions, including reverence and admiration, also complicate the construction of critical histories of the late twentieth-century women's movement, resulting in the potential endorsement of dominant narratives that critical historical accounts seek to dismantle.

Existing oral history projects were also a valuable resource when deciphering the development of general attitudes towards psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy within the women's movement. Utilising existing oral history recordings and transcripts that also adopted a life narrative approach enabled me to further situate women's changing perceptions about psychotherapy and their mental health within the wider trajectory of their lives.<sup>229</sup> This thesis predominantly draws on interviews from two existing oral history projects: *Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project*, which consists of sixty-six oral history interviews carried out from 2009 to 2012 and housed at the British Library, and the *Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism Oral History Project*, which contains interviews with Bristol-based activists from 2000 to 2001 conducted by the Feminist Archive [South].<sup>230</sup>

Historians have increasingly explored the benefits and shortcomings of reusing of oral history interviews. Shopes argues that researchers must be aware of the research

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<sup>228</sup> Jeska Rees, "'Are you a Lesbian?' Challenges in Recording and Analysing the Women's Liberation Movement in England', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (2010), pp. 177-87 (p. 185).

<sup>229</sup> Hatch and Wisniewski, 'Life history and narrative', p. 124.

<sup>230</sup> British Library, 'About Sisterhood and After', available at <https://www.bl.uk/sisterhood/about-the-project> [accessed 25 September 2016]; British Library, 'Sisterhood and After: Interviews', available at <https://www.bl.uk/sisterhood/interviews> [accessed 25 September 2016]; Feminist Archive [South], 'Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism Oral History Project (2000-2001)', available at <http://feministarchivesouth.org.uk/collections/personal-histories-of-second-wave-feminism-oral-history-project-2000-2001/> [accessed 25 September 2016].



questions, historiography, and methodology that inspired the original oral history project when reusing its interviews.<sup>231</sup> Gallwey asserts that researchers must listen to existing oral history interviews in full in order to adequately situate specific points of interest within a wider narrative.<sup>232</sup> Given the time constraints imposed by doctoral research and my alignment of existing oral history interviews with a range of other sources, I was unable to adopt this approach. In order to carry out focused research, I searched interview transcripts to pinpoint participants who spoke most readily of their engagement with psychiatric, psychological, and psychotherapeutic discourses. This approach allowed me to effectively identify personal narratives pertinent to this thesis and triangulate existing accounts with my own oral history interviews. Oral history methodologies rarely use both personal interviews and narratives contained in existing projects. By aligning new and existing oral history interviews, I have been able to further examine the existence of collective memory and popular narratives in feminist activists' personal accounts, and their role in the construction of histories of the women's movement more broadly.<sup>233</sup>

### iii. Case Studies

This thesis contains case studies of the LWLW Psychology Group, the WTC, and the charity MIND. Case studies encourage an in-depth assessment of 'detail, richness, completeness, and variance' that can be used to 'illustrate, question, or test philosophical and historical points of view'.<sup>234</sup> Some historians question the extent to which case studies can be used to

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<sup>231</sup> Linda Shopes, 'Oral History and the Study of Community History: Problems, Paradoxes and Possibilities', *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (September 2002), pp. 588-98 (p. 590).

<sup>232</sup> April Gallwey, 'The Rewards of Using Archived Oral Histories in Research: The Case of the Millennium Memory Bank', *Oral History* (Spring 2013), pp. 37-50 (p. 44).

<sup>233</sup> Susan A. Crane, 'Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 102, No. 5 (December, 1997), pp. 1372-85; Angela Davis, 'Oral History and the Creation of Collective Memories: Women's experiences of motherhood in Oxfordshire c. 1945-1970', *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History*, No. 10 (2006), pp. 1-10.

<sup>234</sup> Bent Flyvbjerg, 'Case Study', in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (eds), *Strategies of Qualitative Enquiry* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2012), pp. 169-204 (170); Tilman Sauer and

decipher wider public attitudes and broader historical trends.<sup>235</sup> Pitt asserts that the employment of case studies to make generalisations about historical developments is unreliable, arguing that the temporal parameters of a case study, as selected by the historian, do not 'explain a problematic in terms of its origin and its fate'.<sup>236</sup> Burian, however, defends historians' use of case studies. He presents the case study as a means of exploring the methodologies, tools, and ideas employed by actors to facilitate historical change. Flyvbjerg also reframes the role of researcher choices in the construction of case studies. He argues that historians, in establishing the parameters of a case study, demonstrate the ways in which the focus of their study operated or existed in relation to its wider surroundings and environment and political and societal contexts.<sup>237</sup> Thomlinson promotes the use of case studies in the production of the history of the English women's movement. She asserts that employing case studies of specific geographical areas and political groups allowed her to explore the 'dynamics and histories of activism in particular localities' and triangulate the experiences of her oral history participants.<sup>238</sup> The case studies contained in this study therefore foster an in-depth understanding of feminist ideas surrounding mental health, charting how these approaches were developed and disseminated by individual women from various political and professional backgrounds operating at grassroots and national levels. The use of case studies provides a springboard for understanding how women's movement members and grassroots groups influenced public perceptions and policy approaches towards women and mental health, by contributing to the development of radical networks, liaising across initiatives, and engaging with national organisations.

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Raphael Scholl, 'Introduction', in Tilman Sauer and Raphael Scholl (eds), *The Philosophy of Historical Case Studies* (Zug: Springer International Publishing AG, 2016), pp. 1-10 (p. 2).

<sup>235</sup> Joseph C. Pitt, 'The Dilemma of Case Studies: Toward a Heraclitian Philosophy of Science', *Perspectives on Science*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Winter, 2001), pp. 373-82 (p. 373).

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> Flyvbjerg, 'Case Study', p. 170.

<sup>238</sup> Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*, pp. 23-24.

Feminist researchers also use case studies to develop community-based research methods that are increasingly equitable, collaborative, and reflexive.<sup>239</sup> The WTC, for example, indicated an interest in using my historical account of their development to bolster their current promotional campaigns and funding applications. Faced with significant cuts and competition for funding, feminist organisations are routinely placed under pressure to qualify their rich histories of expertise.<sup>240</sup> The use of case studies in this context therefore highlights how historians have the capacity to participate in action research, supporting the participants who have generously aided the production of their work, whilst also championing contemporary political concerns.

## Thesis Outline and Structure

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter contextualises women's movement members' early interactions with psychology and psychotherapy. It explores the extent to which the feminist practice of consciousness-raising was seen as a suitable alternative to therapy. In doing so, it examines the historical assumption that women's movement members did not positively engage with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses until the mid-1970s. The examination of debates about whether consciousness-raising was therapeutic indicates dominant critiques of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy in the early WLM, as well as a reticence about the personal politics of Women's Liberation within the New Left more broadly. This chapter focuses on consciousness-raising due to its association with the early development of the WLM. It

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<sup>239</sup> Gillian Creese and Wendy Frisby, 'Reflections: Promises and Limitations of Feminist Community Research', in Gillian Creese and Wendy Frisby (eds), *Feminist Community Research: Case Studies and Methodologies* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), pp. 232-36 (pp. 232-33).

<sup>240</sup> Amelia Gentleman, 'Women's groups struggle amid funding cuts', *The Guardian* (2 February 2011), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2011/feb/02/womens-groups-funding-cuts> [accessed 14 August 2017]; Laura Bates, 'Women's support services save lives. So why is government cutting their funding?', *The Guardian* (30 November 2015) <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/womens-blog/2015/nov/30/womens-support-services-save-lives-so-why-is-the-government-cutting-their-funding> [accessed 14 August 2017].

examines how participants associated the personal transformation linked to the practice with positive emotional responses. It also highlights how women's movement members associated the strong female friendships that they fostered through consciousness-raising with emotional support comparable to that engendered through therapy. By exploring the replication of personal transformation and female friendship tropes across accounts of consciousness-raising, I trace the existence of popular narratives or collective memories of the practice. In doing so, I highlight the formation of a popular assumption that consciousness-raising was of political and emotional benefit to its participations. This predominant perspective has resulted in women's negative experiences of consciousness-raising being overlooked. This chapter therefore contextualises women's movement members' subsequent application of psychotherapeutic approaches to support women who felt marginalised from consciousness-raising groups due to the prescriptive promotion of the practice.

The second chapter explores how and why women's movement members began to promote psychotherapeutic and psychological discourses at a community-based level, despite dominant critiques of therapy within the WLM. It employs a case study of the London Women's Liberation Workshop (LWLW) Psychology Group, established in 1972, to highlight how members' promotion of psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses reflected their own experiences of mental health care. Drawing on LWLW periodicals, articles produced in *Spare Rib*, local newsletter advertisements, and oral history interviews, this chapter charts the formation and development of the Psychology Group. Whilst acknowledging existing critiques of psychology and psychotherapy prominent in the WLM, the Psychology Group argued that the predominance of patriarchal authority in therapeutic settings could be overcome if women were empowered with information about psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses. Members drew on their personal experiences to inform women about specific therapies, therefore employing political

approaches associated with the WLM to support women with mental health concerns more broadly. Psychology Group members politicised their employment of psychotherapy by arguing that therapeutic theories could be utilised to expand women's self-understandings of feminist politics and patriarchal repression. Psychology Group members also questioned whether consciousness-raising sufficiently supported women experiencing mental health concerns and emotional distress. Promoting therapy as an alternative to consciousness-raising, the Psychology Group reflected wider issues about the organisation and effectiveness of the LWLW; concerns that influenced the emotional well-being of its members.

The chapter concludes by assessing how the Psychology Group actively applied their new, politicised approach to therapy at a community level through the development of two self-help therapy initiatives. Documenting how these initiatives were promoted and who attended them demonstrates their contribution to the development of subsequent feminist therapeutic organisations in England. It also assesses the organisational difficulties faced by Psychology Group members when transforming their politicised approach to therapy from a focus on theory to practice. Finally, the chapter questions why women's movement groups oriented around mental illness are rarely incorporated into histories of the Women's Health Movement. Overall, the chapter explores how the Psychology Group reframed existing women's movement critiques of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy by arguing that therapeutic methods could be both supportive and politicised. It also indicates that women's movement members began to embrace and apply psychotherapeutic ideas and approaches earlier than histories of feminist therapy suggest.

The third chapter documents the foundation of the London-based Women's Therapy Centre (WTC) in order to examine the development of a distinct form of feminist therapy in England from the mid-1970s onwards. Founded in 1976, the WTC was the first

community-based facility that promoted feminist therapy to women experiencing mental health concerns in England. Situating a case study of the WTC alongside an analysis of the LWLW Psychology Group highlights the continuities inherent in the history of Women's Movement members' engagement with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses. In doing so, it critically assesses accounts provided by some WTC practitioners, who argue that the Centre represented a disjuncture in the history of radical therapeutic initiatives in Britain. It therefore also examines the role that proponents of feminist therapy have played in the articulation of its history.

The chapter highlights how and why the WTC was established by drawing on oral history interviews with former staff members, publications produced by the Centre, and references to the organisation in women's movement magazines and periodicals. It traces the personal and professional trajectories of the WTC's founders Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach to demonstrate that their conceptualisation of feminist therapy was intrinsically linked to their desire to improve their understandings of themselves and their political affiliations. In doing so, it bolsters my argument that women's movement members' interactions with psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy were not simply limited to the critiques that predominated the early WLM, but rather reflected the new understandings of themselves that they had developed whilst engaging in women's movement groups and activism. This chapter explores how Eichenbaum and Orbach applied their feminist therapy approach in a community setting by publicising the WTC, hiring staff, and attracting clients from beyond the women's movement. In doing so, it documents how Eichenbaum and Orbach imbibed an oppositional entrepreneurship that influenced the development of alternative or radical organisations during the 1970s. By exploring the impact of new staff members on the Centre, I indicate how feminist therapy increasingly became an umbrella term for a range of therapeutic approaches. I therefore argue that the WTC can be situated in an expansive history of community-based radical

therapies. The chapter also demonstrates how organisational issues, including the use of volunteers, potentially contravened the WTC's radical political foundations. It therefore contributes to a wider history of women's movement organisations from the 1970s until the 1990s.

Concerns about activists working both within and against the state became increasingly relevant in the 1980s. Tracing the WTC's organisational structure and funding throughout the decade, I challenge historical arguments that increasingly strict constraints on grants depoliticised women's movement organisations. The WTC adopted a collective organisational structure in the 1980s and strategically applied for funding in order to respond to political concerns regarding the Centre's accessibility and inclusivity. The contrasting responses of WTC staff members to concerns about funding and race highlight changing perceptions about the political nature of feminist therapy, as well as the ways in which emotions, such as nostalgia and excitement, have influenced practitioners' reflections on the Centre's development. The WTC's promotion of accessibility highlights the increasingly collaborative approach adopted by women's movement members in tackling women's mental health concerns in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The nature of this collaboration is explored on a national scale through assessment of the mental health charity MIND. This fourth and final chapter examines how feminist mental health activism influenced the policies and practices of a national mental health charity previously unaffiliated with the women's movement across the 1980s and early 1990s. It highlights the varying ways in which the charity negotiated community-based women's movement approaches to mental health across its organisation at local, regional, and national levels. This chapter therefore provides further analysis of the practical application of women's movement approaches. It also highlights how MIND'S organisational structure and institutional foundations influenced its endorsement of women's movement approaches.

The chapter explores how women's movement viewpoints were disseminated both within and by MIND. Exploring the work of former *Spare Rib* journalist Anny Brackx, who edited Mind's *OpenMIND* magazine in the early 1980s, the chapter highlights the influence of individual women who had a background in women's movement activism. It also demonstrates that MIND's endorsement of a civil rights discourse provided a springboard for women's movement members to promote particular perspectives on mental health. Tracing the establishment of Women in MIND in 1985, the first women's working group at MIND, highlights how staff members called for the increased recognition of women's mental health concerns by replicating grassroots feminist approaches within the organisation. Publications produced by Women in MIND listed numerous community-based women's mental health organisations and support groups, highlighting the emergence of a movement that specifically addressed mental health in the 1980s. This chapter further responds to the assumption that the women's movement became increasingly depoliticised in the 1980s. It examines whether the proliferation of women's mental health activism during the period reflected a reframing of women's movement activism around single issues and alternative forms of community care. It aligns women's movement ideas and approaches with wider debates about the enacting of community care legislation in the 1980s and 1990s. It shows that the diversity of groups promoted by Women in MIND reflected the increasingly collaborative nature of women's mental health activism in the 1980s, readily incorporating members of the service user movement.

This chapter concludes with an examination of the *Stress on Women* campaign, launched by MIND in 1992. *Stress on Women* was the first nationwide campaign run by a national mental health charity that focused specifically on women. Exploring the formulation and development of the campaign, promoted by MIND's all-female policy team, further highlights the role that individual women played in ensuring that MIND recognised women's movement mental health issues. It also presents the campaign as a



response to concerns that MIND did not recognise wider social issues relating to mental health. MIND's foregrounding of women's movement perspectives at a national level was therefore reflective of its wider aim to recognise the voices and experiences of mental health service users. Examination of campaign materials produced for the *Stress on Women* campaign demonstrates how it reinforced increasingly collaborative approaches to women's mental health activism, promoting related grassroots organisations including Rape Crisis Centres and academic studies produced by feminist psychologists and historians. As a result, this chapter is able to cast light on the nature of women's activism in England in the 1990s more broadly. Charting the successes of the *Stress on Women* campaign indicates the role that it played in disseminating women's movement approaches to mental health at a national level. Professional therapeutic bodies, MPs, and the media championed tenets of the campaign. As a result, this chapter concludes that by the 1990s women's movement ideas were able to influence broader institutional and governmental policies and practices concerning women's mental health. Such a conclusion on both continuity and influence calls for significant revision in our understanding of the relationship between the women's movement and the history of mental health in modern Britain.

# 1.

## **Consciousness-raising in the English WLM:** **The Political, Emotional and Therapeutic**

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the proliferation of critiques of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy within the English WLM led many of its members to reject therapeutic approaches.<sup>1</sup> The feminist practice of consciousness-raising was presented as a suitable alternative to psychotherapy in provisioning for women's mental health.<sup>2</sup> Consciousness-raising entailed women coming together in small groups to discuss their individual experiences of oppression.<sup>3</sup> Through collective discussions, participants developed an understanding that their experiences were part of the society-wide patriarchal repression of women.<sup>4</sup> In numerous oral history narratives and autobiographical accounts, WLM members detail the positive emotions and personal well-being that participating in consciousness-raising encouraged.<sup>5</sup> Some feminist therapists have argued that the WLM's engagement with therapeutic approaches was protracted because political activities like consciousness-raising were deemed more effective in ensuring women's mental health.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, pp. 111-13; Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*, pp. 64; 83; Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, p. 92; Peslikis, 'Resistances to Consciousness', quoted in Tufnell Park Group, *Shrew*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March, 1971), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Sheila Ernst and Marie Maguire, 'Introduction', in Sheila Ernst and Marie Maguire (eds), *Living with the Sphinx: Papers from the Women's Therapy Centre* (London: The Women's Press, 1987), pp. 1-29 (p. 7).

<sup>3</sup> McLaren, *Feminism, Foucault and Embodied Subjectivity*, p. 155; Browne, *The Women's Movement in Scotland*, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> Browne, *The Women's Movement in Scotland*, p. 50; Hoefflerle, *British Student Activism in the Long Sixties*, pp. 192-93; Sarah Maddison, 'Discursive politics: changing the talk and raising expectations' in Sarah Maddison and Marian Sawyer (eds), *The Women's Movement in Protest, Institutions and the Internet: Australia in transnational perspective* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), pp. 37-53 (p. 41).

<sup>5</sup> Afia, personal interview; Smith, personal interview; Roberts, *Paper Houses*; Rowbotham, *Promise of a Dream*; Nicola Harwin, interviewed by Ilona Singer, in Viv Honeybourne and Ilona Singer (eds), *Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism* (Bristol: Feminist Archive South, 2004 pp. 97-102 (p. 97); Sarah Braun, interviewed by Ilona Singer in Viv Honeybourne and Ilona Singer (eds), *Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism* (Bristol: Feminist Archive South, 2004), pp. 7-9 (pp. 7-8).

<sup>6</sup> Ernst and Maguire, 'Introduction', p. 7.

This chapter explores how the association of consciousness-raising with emotional well-being in the early WLM can be situated in the wider history of women's mental health activism. The incorporation of consciousness-raising into this history is complicated by contemporary and historical debates concerning whether the practice can be defined as therapeutic. Whilst historical accounts document the existence of a 'consciousness-raising as therapy' debate in the North American WLM, there is little assessment of comparable discussions taking place in England.<sup>7</sup> The first half of this chapter documents the existence of these debates within the English WLM. It explores how and why WLM members opposed the association of consciousness-raising with therapy. In doing so, it contextualises the emergence of popular feminist critiques of psychology, psychiatry and psychotherapy, and the impact of these ideas on WLM politics and practices at a grassroots level. These critical perspectives readily influenced the ways in which individuals WLM members and Women's Liberation groups defined consciousness-raising and its perceived emotional benefits.

I argue that the personal politics of Women's Liberation, as developed and enacted through consciousness-raising, enabled women to reframe the discussion of emotions, mental well-being, and the facilitation of emotional support, as a form of collective political activism as opposed to an individualised therapeutic approach. However, the distinction drawn between consciousness-raising and therapy not only reflected Women's Liberation critiques of psychology and psychotherapy, but was also crucial to the definition and justification of WLM politics and practices more broadly. The WLM's New Left critics equated consciousness-raising with therapy as a means to dismiss the personal politics that Women's Liberation promoted.<sup>8</sup> WLM members therefore dismissed the notion that the emotional benefits of consciousness-raising were therapeutic in order to defend Women's Liberation politics from accusations that its focus on personal experience was individualistic

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<sup>7</sup> Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, p. 87; Bonnie J. Dow, *Prime Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women's Movement since 1970* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, p. 87.

and bourgeois.<sup>9</sup> By exploring ‘consciousness-raising as therapy’ debates, I therefore contextualise women’s movement members’ initial interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses in late 1960s and early 1970s England. These debates did not simply highlight the patriarchal norms reinforced by existing psychological and psychotherapeutic approaches, but were also tailored towards defining and justifying why the focus on the personal within the WLM remained political.

Debates about the association of consciousness-raising and therapy, however, assumed that the practice encouraged the positive well-being of its participants. As is demonstrated in the second chapter of this thesis, members of the WLM started to employ psychotherapy in response to concerns that consciousness-raising groups failed to provide adequate emotional support to their participants.<sup>10</sup> I argue that the association of consciousness-raising with the promotion of positive emotions and well-being has resulted in these early applications of psychotherapy, and associated critiques of consciousness-raising, being overlooked. In the second half of this chapter I decipher why the positive emotional impact of consciousness-raising has come to be foregrounded in histories of women’s movement mental health action. This section employs accounts contained in contemporary periodicals and anthologies, recollections collated for existing oral history projects, and my own interviews to document the centrality of emotions to women’s personal and collective narratives of consciousness-raising. Assessing the replication of language across oral history interviews, I assert that the assumed centrality of consciousness-raising to the WLM’s development has resulted in the development of popular narratives that extol the practice’s emotional benefits. In doing so, I identify two popular tropes associated with consciousness-raising, personal transformation and female

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<sup>9</sup> British Library, C1420/14/04, Gail Lewis, interviewed by Rachel Cohen, *Sisterhood and After: The Women’s Liberation Oral History Project* (15-18 April 2011).

<sup>10</sup> LWLW Psychology Group, *Shrew*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (April 1972); Vivienne, Judy, Trish, Sheila and Sheila, ‘Other Questions’ (1973); Klein, personal interview.

friendship. This chapter therefore deconstructs the enduring historical assumption that consciousness-raising was deemed a suitable alternative to existing mental health services within the WLM throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. In so doing, it champions an increasingly critical analysis of the position of consciousness-raising within the history of the WLM, demonstrating how the predominance of certain popular narratives has led to women's varied, and sometimes negative, experiences of the practice being overlooked.

## **The Development of Consciousness-raising in the English WLM**

Historians and contemporary commentators alike emphasise the centrality of consciousness-raising to the development of the WLM in Britain and North America. Armstrong describes consciousness-raising as the 'organisational building block of the women's movement'.<sup>11</sup> Writing in 1970, Pamela Allen, a Women's Liberation activist based in San Francisco, described her group as somewhere 'to think about our lives, our society and our potential for being creative individuals and for building a women's movement'.<sup>12</sup> In an English context, consciousness-raising has been presented as a practice that allowed women to develop their new political identities and ideas collectively before enacting them through public demonstrations and events, including the 'first national women's demonstration since the suffragettes' on International Women's Day in March 1971.<sup>13</sup>

Historians seeking to construct increasingly critical histories of the late twentieth-century women's movement have questioned the framing of consciousness-raising as a precursor to public forms of feminist activism. Bruley argues that histories of the WLM

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<sup>11</sup> Elisabeth Armstrong, *The Retreat from Organisation: U.S. Feminism Reconceptualised* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 66.

<sup>12</sup> Pamela Allen, *Free Space: A Perspective on the Small Group in Women's Liberation* (New York: Times Change Press, 1970), pp. 5-6, available at <http://radfem.org/freespace/> [accessed 11 November 2016].

<sup>13</sup> Hoeffler, *British Student Activism in the Long Sixties*, p. 191; Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group, 'nine years together: a history of a Women's Liberation group', *Spare Rib*, No. 69 (April 1978), pp. 41-46 (p. 41).

foreground the “public” face of the movement’, focusing on its campaigns, demands, and conferences.<sup>14</sup> She asserts that little emphasis has been placed on the role that consciousness-raising played in allowing women to understand their oppression and develop new personal and collective feminist identities.<sup>15</sup> Rogers also argues that the personal benefits of participating in consciousness-raising, such as increased self-confidence and the development of strong support networks, were themselves subversive acts because they contravened gender stereotypes.<sup>16</sup> She critiques sociological and psychological perspectives that associate the emotional support and intellectual development facilitated through feminist activism with personal development rather than socio-political change. Rogers attributes this association to the continued prevalence of a ‘patriarchal scholarly tradition’ that perceives activism as political only when it directly engages with the government, legal system and public political protests, citing Kitzinger and Perkins’ notion of ‘male definitions of political action’.<sup>17</sup>

This chapter contributes to the increasingly critical history of consciousness-raising. I explore how the predominance of particular popular narratives of consciousness-raising has influenced how women’s movement members’ early interactions with psychiatric, psychological, and psychotherapeutic discourses have been perceived. In exploring the development of consciousness-raising within the English WLM, I seek to contextualise the construction of these popular narratives and collective memories, highlighting the political and psychological discourses that informed its key tenets, as well as the practice’s perceived centrality to women’s initial engagement in feminist activism. Like Rogers, I

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<sup>14</sup> Sue Bruley, ‘Consciousness-Raising in Clapham; Women’s Liberation as “Lived Experience” in South London in the 1970s’, *Women’s History Review*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (2013), pp. 717-38 (p. 717-18); Sue Bruley, *Women Awake: the experience of consciousness-raising* (London, 1976).

<sup>15</sup> Bruley, ‘Consciousness-Raising in Clapham’, p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Rogers, ‘Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s’, pp. 1; 73; 132; 142; 155.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30; Morton A. Lieberman, and Gary R. Bond, ‘The problem of being a woman: A survey of 1,700 women in consciousness-raising groups’, *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1976), pp. 363-79 (p. 364); Celia Kitzinger and Rachel Perkins, *Changing Our Minds: Lesbian Feminism and Psychology* (London: Onlywomen Press, 1993).

argue that the emotional expression that consciousness-raising encouraged was viewed as a politicised and subversive act. However, the assumption that this emotional expression also facilitated participants' mental health remains largely unchallenged. By contextualising the development of consciousness-raising, I seek to uncover why histories of the practice have foregrounded women's positive experiences and well-being.

### **i. The Politics of Consciousness-raising**

Historians document how the development of consciousness-raising in England was influenced by the dissemination of American WLM literature detailing the nature of the practice.<sup>18</sup> The earliest form of consciousness-raising associated with Women's Liberation was practised in the United States by the group New York Radical Women, who met between 1967 and 1969.<sup>19</sup> In a self-published account of her involvement in a Clapham-based consciousness-raising group in the mid-1970s, Sue Bruley highlights the widespread circulation of a 1971 article on the practice produced by the New York-based Sappho Collective.<sup>20</sup> Originally published in *Women: A Journal of Liberation*, the first national periodical to emerge out of the American WLM, the article listed a series of topics that consciousness-raising participants should explore in order to effectively carry out the practice.<sup>21</sup> Newsletters produced by regional Women's Liberation networks indicate the dissemination of the Sappho Collective article in other parts of England. In a 1974 edition of the *Birmingham Women's Liberation Newsletter*, the Monday Consciousness-raising Group

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<sup>18</sup> Steven M. Buechler, *Women's Movements in the United States: Women's Suffrage, Equal Rights and Beyond* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 35.

<sup>19</sup> Maren Lockwood Carden, *The New Feminist Movement* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1974), p. 87.

<sup>20</sup> Sue Bruley, *Women Awake: the experience of consciousness-raising* (London, 1976), p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Sappho Women's Collective, 'Rapping in Small Groups: Perspectives on Consciousness-raising', *Women: A Journal of Liberation*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Winter 1971), pp. 49-50 (p. 49);

stated that they had been drawing on the article to expand their consciousness-raising programme.<sup>22</sup>

In her oral history interview, Joanna Ryan, a London-based psychotherapist who joined a consciousness-raising group in Cambridge in 1969, argued that its proliferation in England was also the result of an increased identification with Maoist politics amongst some members of the New Left.<sup>23</sup> In the United States, members of student protest movements were influenced by Mao Tse-tung's 1937 essay 'On Practice' when constructing their own forms of radical politics.<sup>24</sup> Students drew on Mao's assertion that 'all genuine knowledge originates in direct experience' to both encourage self-reflection and undermine explanations for societal inequality provided by professional and institutional experts such as sociologists, economists, and psychologists.<sup>25</sup> Maoist politics therefore influenced the development of consciousness-raising within the American WLM. Cuevas highlights the promotion of a 'Maoist concept of the political consciousness-raising process' in seminal American Women's Liberation anthologies such as *Sisterhood is Powerful*, edited by New York Radical Women member Robin Morgan in 1970.<sup>26</sup>

Members of the New Left and WLM in England also employed Maoist ideas relating to the association of politics and experience. In the 1960s, individuals who identified with Maoism either left or were expelled from the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB)

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<sup>22</sup> Feminist Library, *Birmingham Women's Liberation Newsletter*, 'Monday Consciousness-raising Group' (July/August 1974), p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ryan, personal interview.

<sup>24</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley et al., 'Black like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution', in Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen (eds), *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections Between African Americans and Asian Americans* (Durham: Duke University, 2008), pp. 97-154 (p. 147).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*; Mao Tse-tung, 'On Practice: On the Relation Between Knowledge and Practice, Between Knowing and Doing' (July 1937), available at [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1\\_16.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_16.htm) [accessed 29 May 2015].

<sup>26</sup> Claudia Mary Cuevas, 'Organisational Development and Coalition Building Among Domestic Violence Agencies in California; Conflict and Compromise Between Grassroots Groups and Established Institutions' (PhD thesis, University of South Carolina, 2006), p. 114; Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful*. Morgan's *Sisterhood is Powerful* is routinely presented as the first anthologies to emerge out of the early 1970s American WLM (Donna Langston, *A to Z of American Women Leaders and Activists* (New York: Facts on File, 2002), p. 156).



because they felt that the peaceful co-existence promoted by Soviet Union leader Nikita Khrushchev was a 'compromise with imperialism'.<sup>27</sup> Geoff Richman, ejected from the CPGB in 1969 for asserting that the party did not address contemporary social issues, articulated his identification with Maoism in the essay 'On Strategy'. Directly referencing Mao's 'On Practice', Richman emphasised the need for activists to incorporate politics into their everyday lives in order to construct more effective political identities.<sup>28</sup> WLM members drew on Richman's essay when defining their own approaches to consciousness-raising. In March 1971, the Tufnell Park Women's Liberation Group, affiliated with the London Women's Liberation Workshop (LWLW), wrote an article on consciousness-raising in the Workshop's periodical *Shrew*. They stated that Richman's 'On Strategy' contained 'helpful ideas on the small group'.<sup>29</sup> Defining consciousness-raising as the 'small group process', Tufnell Park members argued its importance in creating secure, accepting, and positive places where women could share their experiences with one another without feeling threatened.<sup>30</sup> They highlighted how this process enabled women to reconceptualise their personal experiences as social issues, developing an understanding of the 'real' causes of their concerns, and encouraging political action.<sup>31</sup> The Tufnell Park group described how the small group process resulted in the development of a political analysis of patriarchal oppression that was not prescriptive but 'rooted in the reality of women's lives'.<sup>32</sup>

Ryan also described how consciousness-raising aligned a Maoist emphasis on the politics of experience with ideas developed by Frantz Fanon, the Martinique-born writer,

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<sup>27</sup> Tom Buchanan, *East Wind: China and the British Left, 1925-1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 200-201.

<sup>28</sup> Celia Hughes, 'The Socio-Cultural Milieux of the Left in Post-War Britain' (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2011), pp. 207, 214; Hughes, *Young Lives on the Left*, p. 173; Geoff Richman, 'On Strategy' (1970), private papers of Geoff Richman, quoted in Hughes, 'The Socio-Cultural Milieux of the Left in Post-War Britain', p. 201.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2; Allen, *Free Space*.

<sup>30</sup> Tufnell Park Women's Liberation Group, 'Organising Ourselves', *Shrew*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (March 1971), pp. 1-2 (p. 1).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

revolutionary, and psychiatrist.<sup>33</sup> She believed that Fanon's work, in which he sought to develop new ideas regarding liberation in a period of decolonisation, facilitated the understanding that

you can't just expect people to rise up against oppressive conditions because they are objectively repressive and people are exploited and miserable because you have to take into account their whole psychology and how they might be dependent on people who are exploiting them.<sup>34</sup>

Exploring the emergence of consciousness-raising in the English WLM therefore highlights the influence of feminist activism in the United States, and broader developments and divisions within the British New Left, on the politics of the practice. Whilst consciousness-raising reflected leftist political ideas, personal reflections on the practice also indicate the perceived influence of radical psychological perspectives on the emergence of consciousness-raising in England. The political and psychological foundations of consciousness-raising influenced the ways in which the personal and emotional benefits of the practice were framed in debates about its association with therapy.

## **ii. The Organisation of Consciousness-raising Groups**

Articles on consciousness-raising produced by American WLM members not only detailed its political aims, but also provided recommendations to groups seeking to carry out the practice effectively. The Sappho Collective recommended that consciousness-raising groups contain six to ten members and encouraged participants to select a topic of discussion before each meeting.<sup>35</sup> The responses of English WLM groups to these recommendations reflected both the individual interests of their members and their overall group dynamic. Some groups, like the Monday Consciousness-raising Group in Birmingham, based their

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<sup>33</sup> Ryan, personal interview. Fanon's work developed new understandings of decolonisation during the 1950s and 1960s and he remained a committed revolutionary in the struggle for Algerian independence until his death in 1961 (Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of the Oppressed* (New York, 1985), p. 7; David Macey, *Frantz Fanon: A Biography* (New York, 2012)).

<sup>34</sup> Ryan, personal interview.

<sup>35</sup> Sappho Women's Collective, 'Rapping in Small Groups', p. 49.

organisation of the practice on American Women's Liberation literature. In October 1972, the *Birmingham Women's Liberation News/Views Letter* recorded the disbanding of a Moseley-based consciousness-raising group into two small groups. Its members felt that the group had grown too large and lacked direction.<sup>36</sup> In creating smaller groups, participants adhered to widely-disseminated recommendations for the effective practice of consciousness-raising, which generally suggested that groups should consist of no more than ten members.<sup>37</sup>

Other Women's Liberation groups, however, actively rejected existing recommendations and sought to establish distinct approaches to consciousness-raising.<sup>38</sup> Writing in 1977, Sue Bruley critiqued the advice on consciousness-raising offered by the Sappho Collective. She asserted that the collective oversimplified and glamourised the practice, presenting it as the 'beginning of an inevitable road which takes everyone who joins into a glorious life of lesbian sorority'.<sup>39</sup> She argued that the collective did not acknowledge the various functions that a consciousness-raising group performed, asserting that the practice should include all women regardless of their sexuality.<sup>40</sup> Rogers documents how a group based in Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire, also flaunted the perceived rules of consciousness-raising, disregarding the view that participants should listen to each other's personal concerns without offering advice.<sup>41</sup> Linda, who joined the Hebden Bridge group in 1981, described how its members rejected this rule with an 'exaggerated disobedience' that provided 'humorous relief' from their emotionally-charged discussions.<sup>42</sup> She perceived the deliberate contravention of their own rules as an 'ironic

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<sup>36</sup> Feminist Library, *Birmingham Women's Liberation News/Views Letter* (October 1972), p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> Sappho Women's Collective, 'Rapping in Small Groups'.

<sup>38</sup> *Birmingham Women's Liberation Newsletter*, 'Monday Consciousness-raising Group', p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Bruley, *Women Awake*, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 106.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106; 272-73.

mode of defiance' because it mocked traditional, masculine responses to women's personal issues.<sup>43</sup>

The ways in which consciousness-raising groups defined themselves also indicates the personal and collective politics that they believed the practice reflected. Some consciousness-raising groups chose not to define themselves by the practice.<sup>44</sup> Groups affiliated with the LWLW, including the Tufnell Park and Belsize Lane Women's Liberation groups broadly associated themselves with WLM politics, practising consciousness-raising whilst also engaging in public protests.<sup>45</sup> In West Yorkshire, consciousness-raising was also practised within groups that identified with WLM politics and activism more broadly, notably the Bradford and Leeds Women's Liberation groups.<sup>46</sup> By situating their internal, personalised discussions alongside more traditional forms of oppositional protest, groups promoted both approaches as valid political practices. In doing so, they foregrounded their belief that the personal was political and challenged restrictive ideas about what constituted political activism.<sup>47</sup>

Other Women's Liberation networks, however, clearly distinguished between consciousness-raising and other forms of activism. Minutes from a Birmingham Women's Liberation general meeting in 1972 highlight the existence of two consciousness-raising groups affiliated with the network.<sup>48</sup> One group was based in Moseley, whilst the Pershore Road group met in Stirchley.<sup>49</sup> At the meeting, members of the Moseley group described how they had formed as a result of their involvement in the Balsall Heath Action Group.

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>44</sup> Gill Philpott et al., 'Consciousness-raising: back to basics', *Spare Rib*, No. 92 (March 1980), pp. 49-54 (pp. 49-51); Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 85.

<sup>45</sup> Tufnell Park Women's Liberation Group, 'Organising Ourselves'; Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group, 'nine years together'.

<sup>46</sup> Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', pp. 108-09; pp. 117-21.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>48</sup> *Birmingham Women's Liberation News/Views Letter* (October 1972), p. 9; Feminist Library, *Birmingham Women's Liberation News/Views Letter* (July/August 1973), p. 8.

<sup>49</sup> *Birmingham Women's Liberation News/Views Letter* (July/August 1973), p. 4.

The Balsall Heath Action Group organised community projects based on the view that the WLM should focus on the needs and requirements of local women.<sup>50</sup> The establishment of two separate groups highlights Birmingham Women's Liberation members' distinction between consciousness-raising and public forms of political activism. Women in the Moseley-based consciousness-raising group conceded that some Birmingham Women's Liberation members deemed the practice too internalised and self-reflective.<sup>51</sup> The ways in which Birmingham Women's Liberation members practised and defined consciousness-raising was therefore not only influenced by their aim to reconceptualise the personal as political, as well as critical perspectives about how the politics of Women's Liberation could and should be realised.

The minutes of Birmingham Women's Liberation general meetings also demonstrate the varied composition of consciousness-raising groups in the region. Members of one of the Moseley groups described in 1973 how they had all been involved in Women's Liberation activism prior to engaging in consciousness-raising. The Pershore Road group, on the other hand, was predominantly made up of women new to the WLM.<sup>52</sup> These variant compositions confirm Bruley's assertion that consciousness-raising groups offered a variety of functions to its participants, not only creating spaces for personal discussion and facilitating political development, but also introducing women to the WLM more broadly. English WLM groups therefore organised their provision of consciousness-raising in a manner that they felt would most effectively support their immediate members. However, some groups' deliberate rejection of recommendations for the effective organisation of consciousness-raising suggests the existence of perceived rules of the practice, some of which WLM members found to be overtly prescriptive. As will be explored in the second chapter of this thesis, it was the prescriptive nature of

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Birmingham Women's Liberation News/Views Letter* (October 1972), p. 9.

consciousness-raising that led some participants to associate it with emotional distress and mental health concerns.

## Consciousness-raising as Therapy

Examining consciousness-raising's political and organisational foundations highlights the ways in which the practice was seen to foster individual and collective political identities within the WLM, as well as providing the opportunity for the discussion of personal experiences and emotional expression. Some WLM members have asserted that this focus on personal experience and emotions ensured that consciousness-raising was itself therapeutic. This association of consciousness-raising with therapy might indicate why the practice was seen to bolster WLM members' positive mental wellbeing and was deemed a precursor to feminist therapeutic approaches. Interviewed for the *Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism* project in the early 2000s, psychotherapist Jill Brown argued that consciousness-raising facilitated the development of the WLM partly due to the support that it fostered amongst its members. She also asserted that the mutual support engendered in consciousness-raising groups ensured that the practice was therapeutic. Brown became interested in feminism whilst at university in 1971. She joined the WLM when she moved to Bristol in 1975, taking part in consciousness-raising groups, campaigns for equal pay, and National Women's Liberation conferences.<sup>53</sup> Brown described how consciousness-raising entailed telling 'our stories, always from the point of view of being female. It was very therapeutic and supportive, as if it were the base of the movement'.<sup>54</sup> She argued that consciousness-raising resulted in many women realising that 'things which in the past might have been treated as individual inadequacies were actually about the way

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<sup>53</sup> Jill Brown, interview by Ilona Singer, *Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism* (Bristol: Feminist Archive South, 2004), pp. 10-11 (p. 10).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

that women were viewed and discriminated and discriminated against in society'.<sup>55</sup> Brown asserted that this realisation fostered an important psychological development in women's perception of themselves.<sup>56</sup>

Other WLM members, however, have contemporaneously and retrospectively contested the notion that consciousness-raising was therapeutic.<sup>57</sup> By examining why WLM members' have strongly opposed the association of consciousness-raising with therapy, I highlight the influence of critiques of psychology and psychotherapy in the WLM in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This assessment also demonstrates the ways in which consciousness-raising participants sought to defend the emergent personal politics of Women's Liberation from criticisms raised in existing New Left circles. By exploring how WLM members negotiated critiques of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy in their promotion of consciousness-raising, I demonstrate how and why the practice came to be seen as an alternative form of support for women experiencing mental health concerns. The portrayal of consciousness-raising as an alternative to existing psychotherapies was based on the notion that its personal benefits were political as opposed to therapeutic.

### **i. Opposition to Psychology and Psychotherapy in the English WLM**

Dever identifies a 'consciousness-raising-as-therapy' debate that existed in literature produced by American WLM members in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>58</sup> In 1969, New York-based radical feminist group the Redstockings launched a manifesto that detailed the aims of consciousness-raising. Whilst they framed the practice as a means to 'develop female class consciousness through sharing experience and publicly exposing the sexist foundation of all our institutions', they strongly opposed any association of consciousness-

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*, p. 89.

<sup>58</sup> Carolyn Dever, *Skeptical Feminism: Activist Theory, Activist Practice* (Minneapolis, 2004), p. 178.

raising with therapy.<sup>59</sup> The Redstockings asserted that therapy ‘implies the existence of individual solutions and falsely assumes that the male-female relationship is purely personal’.<sup>60</sup> The Redstockings asserted that the individualisation and personalisation of women’s issues contravened WLM politics, which was oriented around the concrete realities of members’ lives. This rejection of consciousness-raising as therapy was reiterated by New York Radical Women and Redstockings member Carol Hanisch in her 1969 article ‘The Personal is Political’.<sup>61</sup> Hanisch asserted that therapy was carried out on the assumption that ‘someone is sick and that there is a cure’.<sup>62</sup> Engaging in therapy meant adjusting oneself to fit into society’s repressive institutions and norms rather than seeking to overcome them.<sup>63</sup>

Concerns about the ways in which therapeutic approaches reinforced patriarchal gender norms were reflected in popular publications that both influenced and emerged out of the WLM in North America and Britain across the 1960s and early 1970s. Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, routinely credited with reigniting the women’s movement in America after selling three million copies in the first three years after its publication in 1963, contained a rigorous critique of Freudian psychoanalysis and its impact on society.<sup>64</sup> Friedan argued that the dissemination of Freudian ideas via social scientific and educational institutions, as well as through individual therapy, resulted in a ‘new tyranny of the “shoulds” which chains women to an old image, prohibits choice and growth, and denying

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<sup>59</sup> Redstockings, ‘Redstockings Manifesto’ (6 July, 1969), available at <http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/redstockingsmanifesto.html> [accessed 29 November 2016].

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Carol Hanisch, ‘The Personal is Political’ (New York, 1969), available at <http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html> [accessed 27 April 2015]. The paper was originally published in Shulamith Firestone et al. (eds), *Notes from the Second Year: Women’s Liberation* (New York, 1970).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*; Coontz, *A Strange Stirring*; Laura Prieto, ‘*Feminine Mystique, The*’, in Lynne E. Ford, *Encyclopaedia of Women and American Politics* (New York: Facts on File, 2008), p. 182.



them individual identity'.<sup>65</sup> Friedan asserted that, in its promotion of normative feminine behaviour, psychoanalysis not only led to the social paralysis of modern, educated American women, but also resulted in the historical demonization of feminist activists who, through their rejection of marriage and motherhood, were presented as 'maneating phantoms'.<sup>66</sup> Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, first published in 1970, offered a similar critique but focused on the treatment of women by analysts in a therapeutic setting. She argued that psychoanalysts routinely offered women a form of 'paternal guidance' that dissuaded them from adopting autonomous roles.<sup>67</sup> Numerous WLM members have asserted that publications like *The Feminine Mystique* and *The Female Eunuch* inspired their involvement in the politics of Women's Liberation.<sup>68</sup> The popularity of these accounts demonstrate the widespread dissemination of critical approaches to psychology and psychotherapy within the early English WLM.

The influence of these critiques in England is apparent in the periodicals produced by local Women's Liberation groups in the early 1970s. A 1971 edition of *Shrew* produced by the Tufnell Park Women's Liberation Group situated an extract from Redstockings member Irene Peslikis alongside their own account of consciousness-raising, 'Organising Ourselves'.<sup>69</sup> Reiterating the Redstockings manifesto, Peslikis asserted that the association of consciousness-raising with therapy 'implies that you and others can find individual solutions to problems'.<sup>70</sup> She also argued that the individualisation of problems

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<sup>65</sup> Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, p. 80.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80; 78.

<sup>67</sup> Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, p. 92.

<sup>68</sup> Braun, interviewed by Singer, *Personal Histories of Second-Wave Feminism*, p. 7; Jackie Barron, interviewed by Ilona Singer, *Personal Histories of Second-Wave Feminism* (Bristol: Feminist Archives South, 2004), pp. 59-64; Pen Dalton, interviewed by Ilona Singer, *Personal Histories of Second-Wave Feminism* (Bristol: Feminist Archives South, 2004), pp. 75-82 (p. 76).

<sup>69</sup> Tufnell Park Women's Liberation Group, 'Organising Ourselves', pp. 1-2; Irene Peslikis, 'Resistances to Consciousness', quoted in Tufnell Park Women's Liberation Group, *Shrew*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (March 1971), p. 10. The article was originally published in Robin Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood is Powerful* (New York, 1970), pp. xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>70</sup> Peslikis, 'Resistances to Consciousness'.

undermined the association of the personal and political that WLM groups encouraged, and therefore operated to disempower women.<sup>71</sup>

The view that therapy was apolitical was further emphasised in collective publications that emerged out of the early WLM. Michelene Wandor's edited collection *The Body Politic*, the first anthology to be published by British WLM members in 1972, contained an impressionistic interpretation of the conversations held in a consciousness-raising group over a period of twenty four weeks.<sup>72</sup> Wandor's account contained a fictional discussion between two consciousness-raising participants who, after attending the group for fifteen weeks, explored the personal and political understandings that the practice had encouraged.<sup>73</sup> One character, Judy, described how she had separated from her husband after attending the group due to her new awareness of the issues that were affecting her marriage. She attributed this discernment to her new understanding that marriage was a social institution rather than a private interaction and therefore 'imposed the same pressures on everyone'.<sup>74</sup> Another character, Jean, interjected to say that a therapy group might have helped Judy foster a similar perspective on marriage. Judy responded that she 'did not know of any therapy groups that discussed Engels' *Origins of the Family*'.<sup>75</sup> Wandor's fictional account reiterated the view that the support offered by consciousness-raising was personally affecting because it was politicised. Therapy, in contrast to consciousness-raising, did not explore political ideas and therefore did not offer the same means of situating women's individual issues within a wider picture of patriarchal oppression.

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Michelene Wandor, 'The Small Group', in Michelene Wandor (ed.), *The Body Politic: Women's Liberation in Britain, 1969-1972* (London: Stage 1, 1972), pp. 107-15; Lee Comer, 'From 1969', in Amanda Sebestyen, '68, '78, '88 (Bridport: Prism Press, 1988), pp. 84-89 (p. 86).

<sup>73</sup> Wandor, 'The Small Group', p. 111.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

Other WLM members opposed the association of consciousness-raising and therapy due to their professional engagement with psychiatry and psychology. When interviewed in 2012, London-based psychotherapist and WLM activist Joanna Ryan strongly denied that consciousness-raising could be linked to contemporary therapeutic approaches because it was solely a political practice.<sup>76</sup> She denied that consciousness-raising could be associated with psychotherapy as a result of her objections towards psychological and psychiatric approaches in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Ryan first became involved in the WLM whilst studying for a psychology doctorate at Cambridge. She described how her engagement with the politics of Women's Liberation influenced her attitude towards academic psychology. She decided to draw a clear division between her politics and the psychological approaches that she engaged in professionally due to her shock at the conditions of a 'sub-normality hospital' that she visited as part of her postdoctoral research.<sup>77</sup> Sub-normality hospitals typically housed individuals who were deemed to have profound mental and physical difficulties.<sup>78</sup> By the late 1960s, they were subject to strong criticism.<sup>79</sup> Pauline Morris' 1969 report *Put Away* likened the institutions to prisons from which patients, many of whom she felt should not be there, would never be allowed to leave.<sup>80</sup>

Ryan described how a visit to the sub-normality hospital caused her to critically assess psychological methods and the effectiveness of carrying out research on

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<sup>76</sup> Ryan, personal interview.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Andy Nazarjuk and Cathy Bernal, 'Upholding the Rights of People with Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities', in Georgina Koubel and Hilary Bungay (eds), *Rights, Risks and Responsibilities: Interprofessional Working in Health and Social Care* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 83-100.

<sup>79</sup> John Welshman, 'Ideology, Ideas and Care in the Community, 1948-71', in John Welshman and Jan Walmsley (eds), *Community Care in Perspective: Care, Control and Citizenship* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 17-38 (p. 34); Mark Walsh et al., *Social Policy and Welfare* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes, 2000), p. 183.

<sup>80</sup> Nazarjuk and Bernal, 'Upholding the Rights of People with Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities'; Welshman, 'Ideology, Ideas and Care in the Community, 1948-71', p. 34; Walsh et al., *Social Policy and Welfare*, p. 1983.

quantitative methods when patients lived in such poor conditions. She gave up her career as an academic psychologist because she found it too limiting and became interested in therapy and psychoanalysis instead.<sup>81</sup> Despite being a psychotherapist, Ryan emphasised the fact that consciousness-raising remained a political act. She argued that 'there was a lot political leverage to be had by getting women to share their private, subjective experiences in a more social forum'.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, Ryan's engagement with academic psychology, which occurred at the same time as her involvement in consciousness-raising, influenced the distinction that she drew between the practice and therapeutic approaches.

Exploring opposition to the association of consciousness-raising and therapy within the early English WLM therefore highlights the dominance of a broader feminist critique of psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Previous discussions on 'consciousness-raising as therapy' debates in the WLM foreground feminist concerns about ensuring the politicisation of women's experiences. However, as Ryan's account demonstrates, WLM members' rejection of the links between consciousness-raising and therapy due to feminist critiques of psychology and psychiatry also reflected wider concerns about the quality of mental health provision in late 1960s England.

## **ii. Consciousness-raising and the New Left**

Women's movement members also rejected the association of consciousness-raising with therapy in order to defend the personal politics of Women's Liberation from criticism within the New Left. Writing in New York in 1969, Carol Hanisch stated that the 'consciousness-raising-as-therapy-debate' was indistinguishable from wider discussions about the 'personal' versus the 'political' in New Left circles.<sup>83</sup> Critics from both within and beyond the New Left associated consciousness-raising with therapy as a means to

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<sup>81</sup> Ryan, personal interview.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Hanisch, 'The Personal is Political'.

undermine the wider political aims of the WLM.<sup>84</sup> Speaking at the First National Conference of Stewardesses for Women's Rights in the United States in March 1973, New York Radical Women member Kathie Sarachild described how men across the political spectrum, from Communists to Republicans, concurred that they supported aims of Women's Liberation such as equal pay.<sup>85</sup> However, Sarachild stated that when women came together to work out why they were not paid the same amount as men, employing practices like consciousness-raising to examine their experiences, then 'what we were doing wasn't politics, economic or even study at all, but "therapy", something that women had to work out for themselves individually'.<sup>86</sup> Sarachild reiterated that consciousness-raising was not a form of therapy that focused on individual experiences, but the political act of listening to women's feelings in order to assess their collective situation and counter male supremacy.<sup>87</sup> Politicians and activists beyond the WLM linked consciousness-raising to therapy in order to ensure that 'whole areas of women's lives were declared off limits to discussion'.<sup>88</sup>

Members of the WLM in England also sought to defend consciousness-raising against critiques that associated it with therapy. Michelene Wandor prefixed her impressionistic account of consciousness-raising published in *The Body Politic* with a quotation from anthropologist Lionel Tiger's 1969 book *Men in Groups*.<sup>89</sup> Tiger stated that 'female organisations affect political activity far less than male ones' due to the fact that they were not as likely to form bonds with one another and were reliant on the 'earnings and genes of men'.<sup>90</sup> Wandor framed her account of consciousness-raising in opposition to

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<sup>84</sup> Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 5.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*; Nachescu, 'Becoming the Feminist Subject', p. 81; Kathie Sarachild, 'Consciousness-Raising: A Radical Weapon', in Redstockings (eds), *Feminist Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1978), pp. 144-50 (p. 144).

<sup>86</sup> Sarachild, 'Consciousness-Raising', p. 144.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>89</sup> Wandor, 'The Small Group', p. 107.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*; Lionel Tiger, *Men in Groups* (London: Nelson, 1969), p. 140.

Tiger's sentiment, presenting the practice as a valid and effective form of politics that could be readily contrasted with existing therapeutic approaches.

Other feminist activists, however, endorsed the association of consciousness-raising and therapy because they too remained reticent about the personal politics of Women's Liberation. Gail Lewis, a long-standing member of the Brixton Black Women's Group and co-founder of the Organisation for Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD), was interviewed in 2011 for the *Sisterhood and After* oral history project.<sup>91</sup> Lewis recalled how, in the early 1970s, she deemed therapy an anathema to the Marxist politics that she then subscribed to, believing that it encouraged 'petty bourgeois individualism and internal preoccupation'.<sup>92</sup> Lewis's rejection of psychotherapy was linked to her concerns about the incorporation of the 'personal' into the politics of Women's Liberation more broadly. She described attending a WLM meeting that explored the emotional impact of abortion. Lewis felt apprehensive about its focus on women's individual feelings and interjected the meeting to make what she perceived to be the 'standard point about we need to be wider than abortion and what about enforced sterilisation and that kind of stuff'.<sup>93</sup> However, the event's organiser was uncomfortable about Lewis' interruption. Her statement was regarded as antagonistic and undermining the integrity of the event.<sup>94</sup> Lewis' account highlights the tensions that existed between WLM members who promoted the discussion of individual emotions as political, and those who felt that this approach contravened existing Marxist politics. Disagreements about consciousness-raising and therapy therefore reflected wider debates within the WLM about the links between individual and social change, personal experiences and politics.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Lewis, interviewed by Cohen, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Dow, *Prime Time Feminism*, p. 65.

Exploring where her opposition to consciousness-raising was situated in her wider trajectory as an activist, Lewis stated that she now viewed the practice as an effective means of examining women's subjectivities, particularly in the context of Black feminist politics.<sup>96</sup> Lewis attributed this change in perspective to her training as a psychodynamic psychotherapist. Lewis began counselling after her mother died in 1983 and continued to receive psychoanalytic psychotherapy throughout the 1990s.<sup>97</sup> Undergoing therapy enabled her to see the 'psychic defensive structures' that she had employed throughout her life.<sup>98</sup> This realisation caused her to question whether a political focus on language, theory and structure successfully captured her inner life.<sup>99</sup>

Lewis received psychoanalytic psychotherapy in the 1990s, before taking up a training course at the London-based Tavistock Clinic that examined the psychodynamics of group processes.<sup>100</sup> She stated that the course caused her to reconsider the Leninist politics that she had subscribed to by assessing the nature of institutional structures and leadership. Whilst Lewis had previously rejected any form of leadership as antidemocratic and elitist, she subsequently drew on her experience as both as a psychotherapist and a women's studies course convenor to argue that 'leadership is not the same as authoritarianism and it doesn't have to be elitist. In fact it can be actually about a process, an explicit responsibility to try and unleash people in their creative capacity'.<sup>101</sup> Lewis' oral history account highlights how WLM members' subsequent personal and professional engagements have influenced their reflections of consciousness-raising. Lewis'

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<sup>96</sup> Lewis, interviewed by Cohen, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* The London-based Tavistock Clinic, opened in 1920, was the first outpatient facility in Britain to provide psychoanalytic psychotherapy to the general public (H. V. Dicks, *Fifty Years of the Tavistock Clinic* (Hove: Routledge, 2015), p. 1). It continues to exist in the present day as the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, providing a range of counselling services and training courses (Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust, 'Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust- committed to improving mental health and wellbeing', available at <https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/> [accessed 20 August 2017]).

<sup>100</sup> Lewis, interviewed by Cohen, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

retrospective promotion of the practice, a development of opinion that she attributed to the counselling and psychotherapeutic training that she had received, led her to draw a comparison between consciousness-raising and therapy that she had previously rejected. In developing a new understanding of herself, she also re-evaluated her political identifications and perceptions of particular political practices.

In her 1976 account of consciousness-raising, Bruley similarly described how her affiliation with leftist politics meant that she was initially apprehensive about taking part in consciousness-raising.<sup>102</sup> Bruley first became involved in politics when she joined the International Socialists at the age of eighteen and expressed her enthusiasm for emergent Women's Liberation ideas. She joined the WLM whilst still an International Socialist member.<sup>103</sup> Although she promoted women's issues, Bruley rejected consciousness-raising as both a valid political practice and a facilitator of emotional support. She believed that it encouraged the individualisation of collective and social concerns.<sup>104</sup> Bruley described how her views were replicated by other International Socialist members, who did not class consciousness-raising as a 'real political activity' and deemed it bourgeois.<sup>105</sup> Bruley's narrative mirrors Lewis', further highlighting how concerns about the individualising qualities of Women's Liberation politics resulted in the rejection of both consciousness-raising and therapy by some WLM members.

In her account, Bruley recalled how her involvement with the International Socialists meant that she felt guilty when she did join a consciousness-raising group. She deemed it 'selfish and indulgent to devote one evening a week to a discussion with other women about our personal relationships'.<sup>106</sup> Bruley attributed this guilt to the fact that she had been a 'victim of the left sect mentality which writes of consciousness-raising as a

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<sup>102</sup> Bruley, *Women Awake*, p. 2.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.



talking shop for middle class women'.<sup>107</sup> She subsequently became disillusioned with this approach. After coming out, she discovered the narrowness of International Socialist politics, particularly their 'denial of the place of the gay movement in any kind of revolutionary alignment'.<sup>108</sup> Bruley realised that a consciousness-raising group was the only place where she could explore the intersection of her working-class background and sexuality in personal and political contexts, and was therefore of enormous emotional benefit to her.<sup>109</sup>

Therefore, WLM members distinguished between consciousness-raising and therapy to defend the practice, and WLM politics more broadly, from New Left critiques. Politicians and activists associated consciousness-raising with therapy in order to posit that the personal politics of Women's Liberation were individualistic and bourgeois. This discourse not only highlights leftist opposition to the emergent WLM in the late 1960s, but also reflects the wider rejection of psychotherapeutic approaches in some oppositional political circles. Exploring leftist attitudes to psychology and psychotherapy helps to contextualise responses to WLM members' subsequent promotion of therapeutic ideas and approaches. Accounts provided by Lewis and Bruley demonstrate how their affiliation with socialist politics influenced their perception of consciousness-raising and its emotional benefits. Both women subsequently promoted the practice as a platform for uncovering uncomfortable experiences and emotions; a revelation that, in Lewis' case, was influenced by her psychotherapeutic training. Her account highlights how the ideas and aims of consciousness-raising and therapy can come to be interrelated due to their concurrent focus on the development of self-understanding. Bruley indicates how this focus in consciousness-raising group discussions aided her development of a lesbian feminist

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

subjectivity and allowed her to engage in a politicised discussion about her emotional well-being.

## **Consciousness-raising and Personal Transformation**

This chapter has deciphered how and why numerous WLM members rejected the association of consciousness-raising and therapy. Whilst not being presented as therapeutic, consciousness-raising was still seen to bolster women's emotional well-being and positive mental health. The remainder of this chapter identifies how and why consciousness-raising was promoted as an alternative to existing psychologies and psychotherapies in late 1960s and early 1970s England. It does so by identifying and exploring two key tropes in narratives of consciousness-raising that associate the practice with emotional support: personal transformation, and female friendships. The notion that consciousness-raising encouraged women's political expression was deemed intrinsic to the emotional support that the practice was also seen to foster. I also explore the extent to which the key tropes that equate consciousness-raising with emotional support and well-being have been foregrounded in popular narratives of the practice. This has resulted in women's negative experiences of consciousness-raising, which inspired some WLM members to initially employ psychotherapeutic ideas and approaches, to be overlooked. The assumption that consciousness-raising ensured women's positive mental well-being does not sufficiently contextualise WLM members' early interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses.

Numerous WLM members have described the personal transformation that they experienced when they initially engaged in consciousness-raising. Interviewed for the *Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism* oral history project in the early 2000s, Bristol-based artist Sarah Braun described the importance of consciousness-raising in her early

involvement in Women's Liberation.<sup>110</sup> In 1971, whilst married with a young child and working for a small printing business, Nicole found out about the city's WLM network through a friend who had lent her a copy of Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*.<sup>111</sup> Braun joined a consciousness-raising group and initially found it challenging because she was urged to discuss highly personal issues. However, she felt that these discussions were important in fostering her understanding of the lives of women who came from backgrounds different to her own. Braun described consciousness-raising as 'the most important experience of my life for my own personal growth because of the way it just took me by the neck and shook me'.<sup>112</sup> She employed violent imagery to emphasise the immediacy with which she experienced the personal effects of her new understandings developed through consciousness-raising. Maddison explores the political and emotional impact that these deeply personal discussions, often on purportedly taboo subjects such as sexuality, had on consciousness-raising participants. She states that consciousness-raising, through promoting a 'discursive politics of the women's movement...delivered the liberation that the WLM promised, at least in their own psyches'.<sup>113</sup> She presents the personal transformation that consciousness-raising was seen to facilitate as integral to the development of Women's Liberation ideas amongst its participants, both political and mental. Braun confirmed Maddison's assertion, attributing to consciousness-raising not only her greater knowledge of Women's Liberation politics, but also her enhanced self-understanding and personal awareness.

Nicola Harwin, who was involved in WLM activism in London, Nottingham and Bristol from the late 1960s before becoming director of Women's Aid, a charity that provides support to survivors of domestic abuse, also attributed the positive impact of

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<sup>110</sup> Braun, interviewed by Singer, *Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7; Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*.

<sup>112</sup> Braun, interviewed by Singer, *Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism*, p. 8.

<sup>113</sup> Maddison, 'Discursive Politics', p. 41.

consciousness-raising to the interrelation of personal growth and collective understandings that the practice fostered.<sup>114</sup> In the early 1970s, Harwin was a member of the Shepherd's Bush Women's Group, a campaigning and consciousness-raising group based in London. She stated that consciousness-raising 'was part of the new understanding that the personal is political, that our individual experiences are part of a collective experience and that they can be challenged and transformed'.<sup>115</sup> Whilst Braun emphasised the immediacy with which she felt transformed by consciousness-raising, Harwin presented the practice as aiding her understanding that she had the capacity to transform her own life on her own terms.

McLaren defines consciousness-raising as a 'feminist practice of the self'.<sup>116</sup> She posits that self-transformation was just as integral to the effective practice of consciousness-raising as its capacity to facilitate socio-political change.<sup>117</sup> Rogers and Nachescu reinforce this conceptualisation of the practice, arguing that the personal transformation that consciousness-raising facilitated was itself politicised and revolutionary.<sup>118</sup> Rogers documents the intense excitement experienced by an oral history participant when she realised that her "private, personal horror" could be situated within a society-wide patriarchal oppression.<sup>119</sup> Rogers asserts that consciousness-raising bolstered women's self-confidence, providing them with an environment within which to discuss politics and ideas.<sup>120</sup> Many of her oral history participants had not engaged in such discussions since leaving compulsory education. They therefore felt that consciousness-raising encouraged them to become more 'confident thinkers'.<sup>121</sup> The politicised self-

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<sup>114</sup> Harwin, interviewed by Ilona Singer, *Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism*, p. 97.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>116</sup> McLaren, *Feminism, Foucault and Embodied Subjectivity*, p. 155.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 1; Nachescu, 'Becoming the Feminist Subject', p. 242.

<sup>119</sup> Linda, quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 155, 272-73.

<sup>120</sup> Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 148.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

transformation that consciousness-raising encouraged therefore concurrently fostered positive emotional responses and an enhanced sense of self-worth amongst participants.

Women's articulation of negative emotions within consciousness-raising groups was also seen to aid participants' personal growth. In her history of the Scottish WLM, Browne presents anger as the 'central dynamic of the movement', describing how its articulation formed a dual purpose.<sup>122</sup> First, the expression of anger bolstered women's self-confidence when standing up for their beliefs. Second, as argued by revolutionary and radical feminists, voicing anger countered the assumption that feminine passivity rendered women less likely to engage in direct action or public protest.<sup>123</sup> Consciousness-raising enabled women to move beyond simply feeling emotions by translating these 'feelings into action'.<sup>124</sup> The practice not only allowed women to express their emotions in a public space for the first time, but also enabled them to respond to these feelings proactively by petitioning for social change. Consciousness-raising promoted the increased porosity of boundaries between personal transformation and political activism, a development that was seen to benefit individual women personally and politically.

Some WLM participants described how the personal transformation fostered through consciousness-raising helped them understand and overcome specific mental health concerns. Writing in a 1971 edition of LWLW periodical *Shrew*, an anonymous member of the Tufnell Park Women's Liberation Group described her experiences of consciousness-raising and the ways in which it had influenced her life.<sup>125</sup> She focused predominantly on the practice's capacity to change women's individual psyches, stating that

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<sup>122</sup> Browne, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland*, p. 50.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Feminist Archive [South], Tufnell Park Women's Liberation Group, 'Charity begins at home', *Shrew*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (March 1971), p. 4.

a constant critical reassessment of one's personal life leads to an awareness of the kind of oppression that is operating in it, and of the way in which this oppression is perpetuated by one's own blindness and confusion.<sup>126</sup>

Developing an awareness that she subconsciously reinforced her own oppression as a woman, she was able to reconsider how she lived her life and initiate personal changes.

In the article, the Tufnell Park Group member described how she frequently experienced severe depression and had been unable to comprehend her symptoms. As a wife to a revolutionary political activist and the mother of two young children, she assumed that she should feel fulfilled.<sup>127</sup> Taking part in a consciousness-raising group in the summer of 1971 helped her to identify the source of her depression. While her husband was able to attend political meetings and write, she was expected to spend all day at home looking after their children. She realised that the enjoyment she associated with childcare was 'cancelled out by the negative effects of spending all my time in their company devoid of any external stimulus'.<sup>128</sup> She associated her depression with her fear that she was 'losing the capacity for thought'.<sup>129</sup> The Tufnell Park group member responded to this realisation by challenging her husband, arguing that his assumption that she was responsible for childcare and housework contravened his political belief in equality. Ensuring that she and her husband took equal shares in their domestic responsibilities meant that she was able to go to political meetings herself. This activity enabled her to 'withdraw from the smothering effects of being involved in children and domesticity' and helped her to feel like an independent person.<sup>130</sup> Through facilitating the understanding that women were empowered to step outside of prescribed gender roles, consciousness-raising enabled her to make lifestyle changes. The political and psychical implications of these changes allowed the participant to better understand her mental health and take steps to alleviate her

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

symptoms. Klar and Kasse identify psychologists' long-running interest in the links between political activism and mental wellbeing. They highlight Adler's concept of 'social interest', first developed in the 1930s, which explored how a 'concern with fostering the welfare of others...was a prerequisite for social health'.<sup>131</sup> The Tufnell Park group member's account highlights the existence of this perspective at a community-based level.

The view that engaging in consciousness-raising and other forms of Women's Liberation activism improved women's mental health was promoted into the 1980s. In 1987, feminist psychotherapists Sheila Ernst and Marie Maguire discussed the ways in which women's involvement in the 1984-1985 miners' strike helped them overcome mental health concerns.<sup>132</sup> They highlighted the experience of Pat, who was based in Castleford.<sup>133</sup> She had suffered from agoraphobia since the early 1970s and rarely left the house on her own. However, she was persuaded to volunteer at her local community kitchen that had been set up to support striking miners and their families. Pat's dedication to the kitchen and the other women who worked there meant that she had to leave the house every day. She stated that, despite numerous visits to psychologists and psychiatrists, the strike proved to be the only thing that cured her agoraphobia.<sup>134</sup> Ernst and Maguire asserted that Pat's political activism helped her overcome agoraphobia because it allowed her to develop social and political ways of countering the oppression and isolation that lay behind her mental health concern.<sup>135</sup> They drew on Pat's account to

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<sup>131</sup> Malte Klar and Tim Kasser, 'Some Benefits of Being an Activist: Measuring Activism and its Role in Psychological Wellbeing', *Political Psychology*, Vol. 30, No. 5 (October 2009), pp. 755-77 (pp. 755-56); Alfred Adler, *Social Interest: A Challenge to Mankind*. Reprint (Eastford: Martino Fine Books, 2011).

<sup>132</sup> Ernst and Maguire, 'Introduction', p. 7; Pat, quoted in North Yorkshire Women Against Pit Closures, *Strike 84-85* (Leeds: North Yorkshire Women Against Pit Closures, 1985), pp. 61-62.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

argue the predominance of the view that tackling political and social causes remained the most effective method of support for women experiencing mental health concerns.<sup>136</sup>

Historians exploring the construction of popular narratives of the WLM have assessed the repetition of terminology surrounding 'personal transformation' in consciousness-raising accounts. Hughes asserts that the emphasis on 'transformation' or 'instant revelation' in accounts of the practice are echoed throughout personal and secondary histories of the WLM.<sup>137</sup> She argues that the mirroring of this language is demonstrative of WLM members drawing on 'publicly available, discursive cultural narratives to shape their own stories'.<sup>138</sup> This was apparent in my own oral history interviews. Vivien Burgoyne is a London-based psychoanalytic psychotherapist who participated in WLM activism. She worked at the WTC in the late 1980s and had attended Greenham Common.<sup>139</sup> In her oral history interview, Vivien recalled how she became increasingly aware of women coming together to talk about their personal lives and difficulties when she was a student in the late 1960s. She understood that these women were engaging in consciousness-raising but did not participate herself. She was working hard on her degree and felt 'a bit ambivalent about it because it wasn't my style'.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Hughes, 'The Socio-Cultural Milieux of the Left in Post-War Britain', p. 237.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Burgoyne, personal interview.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*; Christopher Moores, 'Opposition to the Greenham Women's Peace Camps in 1980s Britain: RAGE Against the "Obscene"', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (October 2014), pp. 204-27. Greenham Common was a peace camp established on the American military base of the same name in Berkshire in August 1981. Several protest camps were formed around Greenham Common after a group of thirty-six women named Women for Life on Earth walked 120 miles from Cardiff in protest at it becoming the first military base in Europe to receive ninety-six new Ground Launched Cruise Missiles. Shortly after, the camps became women-only and, between 1981 and 2001, staged numerous protests and other creative forms of activism. At the camps' peak, they hosted up to 40,000 protestors. As Moores highlights, 'Greenham became a globally recognised symbol of peace and gender protest and the location of much rhetorical innovation and imaginative feminisms' (Moores, 'Opposition to the Greenham Women's Peace Camps in 1980s Britain', p. 204; David Heller and Hans Lammerant, 'U.S. Nuclear Bases in Europe', in Catherine Lutz (ed.), *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle Against U.S. Military Posts* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), pp. 96-130 (p. 98); Jill Liddington, *The Road to Greenham Common: Feminism and Anti-militarism in Britain since 1820* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989), p. 1).



Despite her contemporary ambivalence towards consciousness-raising, Vivien still provided a positive account of the practice in her interview, stating:

I think, looking back on it, it allowed people to speak to each other. It allowed women to talk to each other. It allowed women to share things. It allowed women to get strength and to find a confidence and to find new voices...it had immense value.<sup>141</sup>

Whilst Vivien did not engage in consciousness-raising herself, her narrative still emphasises the personal benefits that consciousness-raising facilitated. The development of her opinion on consciousness-raising could be indicative of the period of time, from the late 1960s until her interview in 2012, over which she reflected on the practice. Vivien's use of language that emphasised the value of consciousness-raising could also indicate her exposure to popular narratives of the practice and her desire to align her own experiences with general histories of the WLM. Summerfield describes this process, frequently found in oral history interviews, as *composure*, which she defines as: 'creating accounts of experiences and achieving personal composure, or equilibrium through constituting oneself as a subject of those stories'.<sup>142</sup> Summerfield emphasises the fact that oral history interviewees, when constructing their own personal subject, 'draw on the generalised subject available in discourse'.<sup>143</sup> Vivien's account of her ambivalence towards consciousness-raising cannot be aligned with narratives that promote its transformative qualities and centrality to the development of the WLM. Her emphasis on the personal benefits of consciousness-raising could demonstrate her desire to facilitate a composure or equilibrium in her own narrative of the practice. Her interview therefore represents her negotiation of her own experiences of consciousness-raising and the general assumptions that surround the practice.

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<sup>141</sup> Burgoyne, personal interview.

<sup>142</sup> Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 16-17.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

By examining accounts that associate consciousness-raising with personal transformation, I highlight how and why the practice was seen to foster individual participants' mental well-being. This personal transformation was associated with the increased porosity of boundaries between personal experience and political activism that consciousness-raising encouraged. By politicising their experiences, consciousness-raising participants were able to proactively respond to their emotional frustrations. Not only did these responses bolster their self-awareness, but they also led WLM members to make lifestyle changes that helped them overcome specific mental health concerns. As Burgoyne's oral history interview suggests, not all WLM members experienced consciousness-raising as a transformative practice. The ways in which WLM members like Burgoyne have since sought to align their experiences with positive accounts of consciousness-raising indicates the popularisation of narratives that associate the practice with personal transformation and, as a result, the provision of women's emotional well-being.

## **Female Friendships and Emotional Support**

Narratives that foreground personal transformation focus primarily on the impact that consciousness-raising had on the psyches of individual women. However, other participants have equated their positive experiences of the practice with the collective identities, ideas, and experiences that it encouraged. Jilly Rosser, who was based in Bristol, became involved in the WLM whilst at university.<sup>144</sup> Recalling her experiences, she described the 'terrific strength' she felt when she took part in consciousness-raising groups. She attributed this strength to her 'feeling that you can do anything anywhere, be anywhere and you were

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<sup>144</sup> Jilly Rosser, interviewed by Ilona Singer, in Viv Honeybourne and Ilona Singer (eds), *Personal Histories of Second Wave Feminism* (Bristol: Feminist Archive South, 2004 pp. 139-46 (p. 139).

part of this very supported network'.<sup>145</sup> In an oral history interview, Rukshana Afia, who participated in WLM groups and activism in both Bristol and Leeds, also emphasised the importance of female friendships within the women's movement.<sup>146</sup> She described how 'women were so committed to one another, and you never lacked friends and you never lacked support, and you could pick up the phone and reach twenty or thirty people who really thought you mattered'.<sup>147</sup> Afia presented this support as synonymous with the WLM, stating that she missed the kind of friendships that the movement provided now that she was not part of a Women's Liberation group. Whilst involved in the WLM, she never felt that she was isolated when making personal decisions, particularly regarding the relationships that she formed with men.<sup>148</sup>

The emotional support facilitated through consciousness-raising is similarly highlighted in group narratives of the practice. The minutes of a Birmingham Women's Liberation meeting, held in the summer of 1974, document a discussion about its merits between consciousness-raising groups based in Stirchley and Moseley.<sup>149</sup> Members of the Pershore Road Group asserted that consciousness-raising was emotionally supportive because it 'taught them to relate to women in ways they had not previously' and allowed them to develop an understanding that their 'past and present experiences were part of a common pattern for women'.<sup>150</sup> Moseley group members concurred, describing how consciousness-raising provided them with emotional support because it developed their knowledge of patriarchal inequality, therefore bolstering their dedication to Women's Liberation and encouraging them to form honest friendships with other women.<sup>151</sup> The accounts of consciousness-raising presented at the Birmingham Women's Liberation

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<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>146</sup> Rukshana Afia, personal interview (17 July 2012).

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Feminist Library, *Birmingham Women's Liberation News/Views Letter*, (July/August 1973), p. 4.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

general meeting are group narratives. Rogers describes how group narratives developed within the WLM were oriented around the articulation of a collective identity.<sup>152</sup> Therefore, it remains unclear whether the emphasis that the group placed on consciousness-raising and emotional support was representative of the views of all participants. However, in orienting their collective identities around the emotional support that consciousness-raising offered, these narratives reinforce the importance of women's engagement with one another within the WLM. When situated alongside retrospective oral history accounts, these contemporary narratives demonstrate the endurance of the idea that consciousness-raising provided a new and alternative form of support for its participants.

Dixon explores the emergence of this new form of politicised female friendship and the support that it fostered within the WLM in the late 1960s.<sup>153</sup> Drawing on the experiences of feminist historian Barbara Taylor, Dixon argues that the idea 'the personal is political' influenced the conceptualisation and formation of friendships within the Movement. Talking to Dixon, Taylor described how friendships within the WLM were oriented around ideas of sisterhood and common political cause. WLM members mobilised emotional support to either enhance the unity of political protests or help women who required individual emotional aid.<sup>154</sup> She asserted that these politicised friendships deviated from existing conceptualisations of female relationships, which pitted women against one another as sexual rivals.<sup>155</sup> Taylor reinforces the closeness of the friendships that she developed in the WLM in *The Last Asylum*, a historical and autobiographical

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<sup>152</sup> Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 144.

<sup>153</sup> Thomas Dixon, 'Families of Choice', *Five Hundred Years of Friendship*, BBC Radio 4 (10 April 2014 [radio]), available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04009c6> [accessed 26 April 2015].

<sup>154</sup> Barbara Taylor, interviewed on *ibid.*; British Library, 'Barbara Taylor', *Sisterhood and After: An Oral History of Women's Liberation*, available at <http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/sisterhood/biographies/144001.html> [accessed 26 April 2015]; Caine, *English Feminism*, p. 256; Redchidgey, 'Red Rag: A Magazine of Women's Liberation', *Grassroots Feminism* (12 November 2009), available at <http://www.grassrootsfeminism.net/cms/node/521> [accessed 27 November 2016].

<sup>155</sup> Taylor, interviewed on Thomas Dixon, 'Families of Choice'.

account of her recovery from a severe mental health concern during the perceived deinstitutionalisation of mental health provision in late 1980s England. She emphasises the significance of her feminist friendships in bolstering her recovery.<sup>156</sup>

Rogers argues that friendships, facilitated through consciousness-raising, built on the positive emotions that the practice encouraged at an individual level.<sup>157</sup> She asserts that the new understandings of women's lives that consciousness-raising participants developed encouraged them to form close friendships with one another. These friendships were more intimate and honest than the relationships women had previously established.<sup>158</sup> Rogers' oral history participants, including Joanna, who joined a Wakefield-based women's group in 1981, and Lee, a feminist author who became engaged in Women's Liberation in Leeds in the late 1960s, deemed these friendships unlike anything they had experienced before.<sup>159</sup> They attributed the newness of these friendships to the fact that they had previously only formed relationships with women that they were connected to through men.<sup>160</sup> Therefore, the perceived newness of the female friendships developed within the WLM was intrinsic to the emotional support that they were seen to facilitate. Warner and Rogers argue that the emotional support encouraged within the WLM, with women helping one another without the involvement of men, directly challenged the 'heteronormative tendency for social relations to be portrayed as organised around marriage'.<sup>161</sup> Friedman concurs, emphasising the scope friendships had to initiate social change by fostering mutual oppositional values and alternative lifestyles.<sup>162</sup> As a

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<sup>156</sup> Taylor, *The Last Asylum*.

<sup>157</sup> Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', pp. 176-177.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-178; pp. 270-271.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178.

<sup>161</sup> Michael Warner, 'Introduction', in Michael Warner (ed.), *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. vii-xxxi (pp. ix-x); Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 179.

<sup>162</sup> M. Friedman, *What Are Friends For? Feminist Perspectives on Relationships and Moral Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 207; Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 180.

result, the subversive nature of female friendships within the WLM bolstered the emotional support that they provided, with women encouraging one another as they aligned their lives with the politics of Women's Liberation and petitioned for social change.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter contextualises WLM members' early interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses. It does so by exploring the historical view that consciousness-raising was deemed a suitable alternative to psychological and psychiatric approaches, ensuring the positive mental health of women's movement members in late 1960s and early 1970s England. In so doing, it explores how consciousness-raising can be situated in the wider history of women's movement mental health activism. Its position in this history is potentially problematic given that many WLM members opposed the association of consciousness-raising with therapy. At the same time, histories documenting the emergence of the WLM in England foreground women's positive experiences of consciousness-raising on its development. This has led to women's negative accounts of the practice, which influenced women's movement members' initial promotion of psychotherapeutic approaches, being overlooked.

Highlighting the existence of a 'consciousness-raising as therapy' debate within the early WLM demonstrates how and why consciousness-raising was posited as a suitable alternative to existing therapeutic practices. Firstly, WLM members opposed the association of consciousness-raising and therapy due to the widespread dissemination of critiques of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy contained in popular feminist publications, that were subsequently read and discussion by individual WLM members and Women's Liberation groups. Oral history accounts contained in this chapter also demonstrate that critical feminist perspectives did not simply focus on the sociocultural promotion of psychological and psychotherapeutic ideas, but also reflected contemporary

concerns about the inadequacy of state-led mental health provision in England. Secondly, WLM members rejected links drawn between consciousness-raising and therapy in order to defend their personal politics from critics within the New Left. This examination highlights how their identification with socialist politics led some feminist activists to be reticent about the personal politics of Women's Liberation and the capacity of consciousness-raising groups to ensure women's mental well-being. This chapter therefore demonstrates that WLM members' disassociation of consciousness-raising and therapy was grounded in their wider desire to define and justify the political value of Women's Liberation practices.

Consciousness-raising participants narrated its positive impact on their emotional well-being by emphasising its facilitation of personal transformation and supportive female friendships. The perceived newness of the emotional expression and mutual support that consciousness-raising fostered was deemed integral to its provision of women's positive mental health. Participants described how the practice helped them to overcome symptoms of specific mental health concerns because they were able to productively channel their emotional frustrations into the promotion of personal and social change. The emotional benefits of consciousness-raising were therefore grounded in the fact that the practice was politically subversive. Assessment of Burgoyne's oral history account demonstrates that not all WLM members regarded consciousness-raising as personally transformative. Her desire to align her experiences with this portrayal of consciousness-raising, however, highlights the popularisation of positive narratives of the practice. This chapter therefore also identifies how particular narratives surrounding consciousness-raising and its provision of women's personal well-being have been constructed, and therefore influence the history of women's movement members' interactions with psychiatric, psychological, and psychotherapeutic discourses more broadly. Such accounts overlook the fact that, from the early 1970s, women began to form groups within the WLM that directly applied psychotherapeutic ideas and approaches.

## 2.

### **Psychotherapy and the English WLM:** **The London Women's Liberation Workshop** **Psychology Group**

From the early 1970s, members of the women's movement began to form groups that applied psychotherapeutic ideas and approaches. This chapter is a case study of the London Women's Liberation Workshop (LWLW) Psychology Group, one of the first groups oriented around psychology and psychotherapy established within the WLM.<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1971 in London, the Psychology Group consisted of medical professionals, trainee psychotherapists, patients, and Women's Liberation activists with a general interest in psychology and therapy.<sup>2</sup> The Group was affiliated with the LWLW, the umbrella organisation that incorporated local and single-issue Women's Liberation groups based in London.<sup>3</sup> Psychology Group members drew on their negative experiences of mental health services and therapeutic approaches to bolster existing Women's Liberation critiques of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy. However, they also nuanced these critical perspectives.<sup>4</sup> The Psychology Group promoted positive accounts of therapy by holding discursive meetings, producing publications, and developing self-help initiatives. They aimed to support women experiencing mental health concerns within the WLM and uncover the cause of their mental illness. Their examination partly reinforced existing feminist analyses of mental health, notably that women's conformity to restrictive societal

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<sup>1</sup> Feminist Archive [South], London Women's Liberation Workshop Psychology Group, *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972).

<sup>2</sup> Feminist Library, Dinah Brooke, 'Women and Psychotherapy', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet*, No. 33 (23 May 1971), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Setch, 'The Face of Metropolitan Feminism', p. 174.

<sup>4</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*.



gender roles had a detrimental effect on their mental wellbeing.<sup>5</sup> However, the Psychology Group also documented how women's engagement with WLM politics potentially aggravated symptoms of mental illness. Members argued that consciousness-raising groups often failed to deal sensitively with participants' negative emotional responses.<sup>6</sup> This case study therefore problematises popular narratives of consciousness-raising that foreground the personal transformation and collective support that the practice was seen to offer.

This chapter aligns the Psychology Group's concerns about consciousness-raising with wider anxieties about the effectiveness of the WLM in the early 1970s. Some activists felt personally responsible for the purportedly slow progress of the Movement in facilitating social change. WLM members reported that some women experienced extreme levels of guilt and emotional distress as a result of this internalised responsibility.<sup>7</sup> The Psychology Group aligned tenets of psychotherapy with the politics of Women's Liberation in order to theorise why organisational issues and tensions occurred in the WLM and to bolster the effectiveness of the Movement. Highlighting how the Psychology Group responded to organisational issues within the WLM destabilises the popular historiographical assumption that the Movement enjoyed a period of ascendancy throughout the 1970s.<sup>8</sup> This case study demonstrates that Psychology Group members sought to overcome organisational tensions within the WLM throughout the decade. These tensions were not simply a result of ideological debate but reflected activists' concerns about their capacity to successfully live out the politics of Women's Liberation. This chapter therefore responds to the research question: how and why did some WLM members begin to utilise psychotherapeutic ideas and approaches despite predominant feminist critiques

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<sup>5</sup> Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, p. 92; Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*; Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness* (New York: Avon, 1972).

<sup>6</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Women's Library @ LSE, Papers of Amanda Sebestyen, 7SEB/A/16, Vivienne, Judy, Trish, Sheila and Sheila, 'Other Questions' (1973).

<sup>8</sup> Rees, 'A Look Back at Anger', pp. 337-39; Segal, *Why Feminism?*, p. 9.

of psychiatry, psychology and psychotherapy? It also highlights how and why activists' employment of psychotherapeutic discourses both drew on and was influenced by the personal politics promoted in the women's movement more broadly. This chapter therefore explores the ways in which women's self-understandings, informed by psychotherapeutic ideas, aided the development of new perspectives and approaches within the WLM.<sup>9</sup>

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first two sections trace the development of the Psychology Group, deciphering how its formation, ideas, and approaches can be aligned with wider concerns about the organisation of the WLM and Women's Health Movement activism. By recognising organising and activism around mental health concerns, this chapter promotes a more expansive definition of the early 1970s Women's Health Movement. The third section explores how Psychology Group members utilised their own experiences to formulate an approach to therapy informed by the personal politics of Women's Liberation, documenting how they drew on and expanded existing critiques of psychology and psychotherapy within both the WLM and anti-psychiatric circles. The final section documents how the Psychology Group practically applied their new, politicised approach to psychotherapy through the formation of two self-help initiatives: the Women's Self-Help Therapy Group and the Re-evaluation Counselling Group. The Psychology Group promoted therapeutic approaches associated with the personal growth movement, therefore operating beyond the psychological mainstream. This enabled Psychology Group members to encourage the practice of

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<sup>9</sup> Johnstone, Hank and Bert Klandermans, 'The Cultural Analysis of Social Movements', in Hank Johnstone and Bert Klandermans (eds), *Social Movements and Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 3-24 (p. 8); M. Diani, 'Analysing movement networks', in M. Diani, and D. McAdam (eds), *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action* (London: Sage, 1992), pp. 107-135.

psychotherapy whilst also upholding a feminist critique of women's treatment in state-led psychiatric mental health services.

Sources used in this chapter include the LWLW's weekly newsletter.<sup>10</sup> The Workshop's newsletter allowed affiliated groups to advertise their aims and objectives, call for additional members, and promote meetings and events. The newsletters help to decipher how and why the Psychology Group was established, how regularly it met, and how its aims and approaches developed. Despite advertising the frequency of group meetings, the newsletters contain little information about who attended these events and what was discussed. I have therefore supplemented the information contained in the newsletters with periodicals published by the Psychology Group, as well as interviewing one of its members. The Group produced a special edition of the LWLW's magazine *Shrew* in 1972, in which they elaborated on their aims, politics, and the nature of their group discussions.<sup>11</sup> Many of the articles produced for *Shrew* were anonymous. This rendered it difficult to trace the activist trajectories of many of the Psychology Group members. WLM members debated the issue of anonymity in Women's Liberation publications. Writing in the *Birmingham Women's Liberation News/Views Letter* in 1974, Val Hart documented the 'current controversy' faced by the Newsletter Collective as to whether contributors should be obliged to sign off using their real names.<sup>12</sup> Hart believed that refusing to anonymise articles was an oppositional act because it attributed to contributors a political identity previously denied to them by the patriarchy.<sup>13</sup> However, the anonymity of the Psychology Group's edition of *Shrew* also reflects the sensitive nature its contents, particularly members' highly personal experiences of therapy and mental illness. I have negotiated the anonymity of much of the *Shrew* edition by incorporating named accounts of self-help and

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<sup>10</sup> The LWLW's newsletter was initially called the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet* before being renamed the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*.

<sup>11</sup> LWLW Psychology Group, *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972).

<sup>12</sup> Val Hart, 'A Question of Identity', *Birmingham Women's Liberation Newsletter* (June 1974), p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

therapy produced in *Spare Rib* and autobiographies. Whilst these recollections have enabled me to better trace the subsequent activities of their authors, I have sought to ensure that this does not mean that I privilege their voices over those of Women's Movement members who did not wish to be named.

## **The Development of the LWLW Psychology Group**

### **i. The Formation of the Psychology Group**

In May 1971, the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet* published an appeal to women interested in starting a group focused on women and psychotherapy. The advertisement, produced by Dinah Brooke, proposed that the group meet monthly to discuss their experiences of psychotherapy. Brooke aimed to publish these experiences in a biannual magazine and produce a directory that highlighted dependable and disreputable psychoanalysts and psychotherapists that WLM members could use. Women with experience as both clients and practitioners were encouraged to join.<sup>14</sup> Brooke was an established member of the LWLW, playing a key role in protest events organised by the Workshop. She was part of the Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group, one of the first women's groups affiliated with the LWLW in 1969, and the Women's Street Theatre Group.<sup>15</sup> The Belsize Lane and Women's Street Theatre Groups participated in London's

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<sup>14</sup> Feminist Library, Dinah Brooke, 'Women and Psychotherapy', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet*, No. 33 (23 May 1971), p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group, 'Nine years Together', pp. 41-45. The Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group consisted of Audrey Battersby, a student counsellor who was also involved in Women's Liberation abortion and contraception campaigns; Sally Belfrage, a writer; Sue Crockford, a youth centre leader; Carole de Jong, a potter who was also in the Women's Art Group and worked on the WLM's Nightcleaners' Campaign; Nan Fromer, an editor for an educational film-strip company who was a member of the WLM's Women in Media group; Mica Nava, a research student at the Institute of Education who was also in the Women's Theatre Group; Carolyn Roth, a nurse; Dinah Brooke, a writer who was in the Women's Street Theatre Group and subsequently, the Psychology Group; psychotherapist Judith Brandt, who was also a member of the Psychology Group; and Sally Fraser, an acupuncturist and photographer who was involved in the Claimants Union and the Women's Newspaper (*ibid.*, pp. 41; 43). The Women's Street Theatre Group put on street performances and 'guerrilla theatre' events that tackled gender inequality and elitism in professional theatre productions and social events (Lily Susan Todd, interview transcript quoted in Susan Croft

first Women's Liberation demonstration. The Women's Street Theatre Group performed a play at the end of the demonstration that they had practised in Brooke's flat.<sup>16</sup> The visibility afforded to the event resulted in fifty new groups joining the LWLW, increasing the total number of affiliated groups from sixteen to sixty-six.<sup>17</sup>

Brooke was open about her personal experience of mental illness. In 1971, she presented a paper at a Women's Studies event at Hornsey College of Art, Haringey. In her presentation, Brooke aligned a discussion on mental health with a feminist critique of the social pressures placed on women.<sup>18</sup> She explored how women formed their identities in accordance with the social controls and constraints endorsed by media outlets, educational institutions, and legal systems. Brooke argued that the pressure to be good wives and mothers had a negative influence on women's mental health. She referred to women's identities becoming fractured, a process she believed was 'almost a prescription for schizophrenia'.<sup>19</sup> In likening the fragmentation of women's identities with schizophrenia, Brooke drew on a contemporary public understanding of the condition that equated it with 'split personality'.<sup>20</sup> Her incorporation of 'split personality' also reflected the portrayal of

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and Jessica Higgs, 'Audio Transcriptions', *Unfinished Histories: Recording the History of Alternative Theatre*, available at <http://www.unfinishedhistories.com/hidden/audiotranscriptions> [accessed 18 May 2016]); Roberts, *Paper Houses*; Gavin Gaughan, 'Chris Wicking', *The Guardian* (6 February 2009), <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/feb/06/obituary-christopher-wicking> [accessed 1 June 2016]; Michelene Wandor, *Post-War British Drama: Looking back in gender* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Roberts, *Paper Houses*; Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group, 'nine years together'.

<sup>17</sup> Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group, 'nine years together'.

<sup>18</sup> Dinah Brooke, 'Identity', in Wandor, *The Body Politic*, pp. 45-49.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>20</sup> Alan Carr, *Clinical Psychology: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 241. Kasper argues that the condition came to be associated with 'split personality' symptoms because the term 'schizophrenia', first employed by Swiss psychiatrist Eugene Bleuler in 1911, incorporated the Greek words for 'split' and 'mind'. However, in employing these terms, Bleuler was not referring to a 'split personality' but rather the disassociation from reality felt by an individual experiencing schizophrenia (Siegfried Kasper, *Schizophrenia Explained: A Guide for Patients and Carers* (St. Albans: Altman Publishing, 2003), p. 5). The association of schizophrenia with 'split personality' continues to pervade public understandings of the condition. In 2006, a national random sample carried out in the UK discovered that forty percent of respondents regarded split personality or multiple personality as symptomatic of schizophrenia (Jason Luty, Danial Fekadu, and Arun Dhandayudham, 'Understanding of the term "schizophrenia" by the British public', *The Psychiatrist*, Vol. 30, No. 11 (October 2006), p. 435; Carr, *Clinical Psychology*).

schizophrenia in anti-psychiatric literature produced in the 1960s.<sup>21</sup> In *The Divided Self*, first published in 1960, R. D. Laing described how individuals with schizophrenia experienced a 'basic ontological insecurity', the result of which left them feeling 'primarily split into a mind and a body'.<sup>22</sup> Psychologists and psychiatrists have deemed this association inaccurate, arguing that schizophrenia is a psychotic condition.<sup>23</sup> However, Brooke aligned her analysis of female identity with her own experiences of mental illness, opening her paper with a series of questions:

Who are you? Who am I? I'm Dinah Brooke. I'm a writer. No, I'm not. I'm Dinah Dux, wife of an American, mother of twins. Well, I'm both. Anyway, I'm Dinah. Brooke is my father's surname. Dux is my husband's surname.<sup>24</sup>

Brooke described how she became unsure of her identity after getting married and having children because women were expected to obey their husbands and required their permission to buy property and use certain forms of contraception.<sup>25</sup> Brooke also spoke about her mental health concerns in a 1977 *Spare Rib* interview with fellow Women's Street Theatre Group members Alison Fell and Michèle Roberts. She described how she had spent years trying to cope with depression and suicidal feelings aggravated by concerns that she could not look after her family, struggled to relate to other people, and did not experience love properly.<sup>26</sup> Brooke's examination of the links between the societal expectations placed on women and mental illness mirrored popular feminist critiques of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy published in England in the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>27</sup> Demonstrating how societal pressures placed on women directly influenced their

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<sup>21</sup> Heike Schwarz, *Beware of the Other Side(s): Multiple Personality Disorder and Dissociative Personality Disorder in American Fiction* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014), p. 322.

<sup>22</sup> R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (1960. Reprinted, London: Penguin, 1990), p. 65.

<sup>23</sup> Royal College of Psychiatrists Public Engagement Editorial Board, 'Schizophrenia', *Royal College of Psychiatrists* (August 2015), available at <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/schizophrenia.aspx> [accessed 2 June 2016].

<sup>24</sup> Dinah Brooke, 'Identity', p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Alison Fell, 'All a Girl needs is a Guru', *Spare Rib*, No. 59 (June 1977), pp. 6-10 (p. 7).

<sup>27</sup> Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, p. 92; Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*.

mental wellbeing, Brooke expanded these existing critiques. When writing *The Feminine Mystique*, for example, Betty Friedan drew on her own life and the knowledge of other women that she had garnered whilst working as a journalist.<sup>28</sup> However, she conceded that her critique of psychoanalysis focused only on its cultural influence and did not reflect women's direct experiences of therapy or mental illness.<sup>29</sup>

Brooke's establishment of a LWLW women and psychotherapy group reflected her desire to align her understanding of her own mental illness with the politics of Women's Liberation. By October 1971, the group had been named the 'Psychology Group'.<sup>30</sup> It held fortnightly to monthly meetings at Brooke's flat and was listed in the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter* as one of eight single-issue groups affiliated to the LWLW, alongside forty-nine local groups.<sup>31</sup> Brooke emphasised the Group's inclusivity, stating that anyone with an interest in psychotherapy was welcome to attend.<sup>32</sup> The Psychology Group subsequently defined itself as an open group for women with an interest in psychology, as well as mental health patients and professionals.<sup>33</sup>

In April 1972, the Psychology Group published a special edition of the LWLW's monthly to bi-monthly magazine *Shrew*.<sup>34</sup> The Psychology Group used the publication to articulate their aims, highlight the nature of its membership, and share personal experiences of mental illness, treatments and therapies.<sup>35</sup> The magazine listed the

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<sup>28</sup> Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, pp. 111-13.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Feminist Library, 'Women's Liberation Workshop Groups' (14 October 1971), enclosed in *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 54 (17 October 1971).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Brooke was then based at 16 Gloucester Crescent, London, N.W.1. Feminist Library, Dinah Brooke, 'Psychotherapy Group', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet*, No. 37 (20 June 1971), p. 1; Feminist Library, Women's Liberation Workshop, *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 47 (29 August 1971), p. 1; Feminist Library, Women's Liberation Workshop, 'Meetings and Events', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 54 (17 October 1971), p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> LWLW Psychology Group, *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*; Laurel Forster, 'Printing Liberation: The Women's Movement and Magazines in the 1970s', in Laurel Forster and Sue Harper (eds), *British Culture and Society in the 1970s: The Lost Decade* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp. 93-106 (p. 97).

<sup>35</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*.

Psychology Group's permanent members as Judith Brandt, Dinah Brooke, Hazel East, Eva Friedrich, Sue Lipshitz, Chandra Masoliver, Carola Moon, Carol Morrell, Gillian Riegler and Bette Spektorov.<sup>36</sup> The Group contained women who had studied or worked in professional psychology. Brandt, a psychotherapist, already knew Brooke through their involvement in the Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group.<sup>37</sup> South African-born Lipshitz moved to England in 1962 and studied psychology at the University of Sussex before working as a researcher and clinician. She later described her keen interest in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory.<sup>38</sup> Other Psychology Group members represented the LWLW in popular media productions. In 1972, Carola Klein (née Moon) appeared on an episode of John Berger's BBC television series *Ways of Seeing*, discussing artistic representations of the female nude and the perception that women viewed themselves only through the male gaze.<sup>39</sup> In an oral history interview, Klein emphasised the numerous ways in which Psychology Group members collaborated with other LWLW groups and projects, stating that the Workshop presented the opportunity for 'a lot of mixing and ways to mix'.<sup>40</sup> She

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Belsize Lane Women's Liberation Group, 'Nine Years Together', p. 43.

<sup>38</sup> Susan Lipshitz, 'Notes on Contributors', in Susan Lipshitz (ed.), *Tearing the Veil: Essays on Femininity* (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. ix-x (p. ix).

<sup>39</sup> John Berger, Anya Bostock, Eva Figs, Jane Kenrick, Carola Moon and Barbara Niven, 'The Female Nude', *Ways of Seeing*, series 1, episode 2 (London: BBC Television, 1972), available at <http://bobnational.net/record/189070> [accessed 25 July, 2016]; A. Wolfe, 'Seeing Women Seeing Women', *Network Awesome* (22 September 2013), available at <http://networkawesome.com/mag/article/seeing-women-seeing-women> [accessed 25 July 2016]; Women's Library @ LSE, Papers of Amanda Sebestyen, 7SEB/A/16, Jane Kenrick, 'Why I believe we face a crisis in the Workshop at the moment' (13 March 1971), *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsheet*, No. 24 (21 March 1971); Eva Tucker, 'Eva Figs obituary', *The Guardian* (7 September 2012), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/sep/07/eva-figes> [accessed 25 July 2016]. Based on the book of the same name by Marxist author John Berger, the series has been credited with presenting a critical perspective of Western visual culture to a popular audience (John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972); Sukhdev Sandhu, 'Ways of seeing opened our eyes to visual culture', *The Guardian* (7 September 2012), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2012/sep/07/ways-seeing-berger-tv-programme-british> [accessed 25 Jul, 2016]; Jonathan Conlin, 'An irresponsible flow of images': Berger, Clark and the Art of Television, 1958-1988', in Raf Hertel and David Malcolm, *On John Berger: Telling Stories* (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2016), pp. 269-92 (p. 270)).

<sup>40</sup> Carola Klein, personal interview (18 November 2016).



represented the Psychology Group at the *Shrew* collective, which was responsible for publishing the monthly periodical. She was also a member of the Women in Film group.<sup>41</sup>

Examining the formation and membership of the Psychology Group highlights how its establishment was influenced by members' personal experiences of mental illness and emotional distress, as well as their academic and intellectual interests in psychology and psychotherapy. Members subsequently drew on their experiences regarding their mental health to formulate political ideas and approaches within the Group. The Psychology Group contained women who were already involved in WLM activism. It could therefore be argued that these close connections meant that Psychology Group members fostered and promoted their ideas amongst a small network of women. However, as will be discussed, members' engagement with other Women's Liberation initiatives resulted in dissemination of Psychology Group theories and approaches across different political and cultural platforms.

## **ii. The Psychology Group and the Women's Health Movement**

The Psychology Group established two key aims in their special edition of *Shrew*. First, the Group sought to explain to medical and psychiatric professionals how therapy was used to 'trap women more tightly in their roles'.<sup>42</sup> Second, the Psychology Group aimed to examine the 'liberating possibilities of psychotherapeutic techniques'.<sup>43</sup> The group discussed how women could use therapeutic approaches to ensure their agency when responding to their mental health concerns.<sup>44</sup> The Psychology Group's organisational and political approaches were highly comparable to those of Women's Health Movement groups. Women's health activists also petitioned for women's right to choose their medical treatments and

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

organised small self-help groups that demystified medical expertise and validated women's own feelings about themselves and their bodies.<sup>45</sup> Incorporating the Psychology Group into the history of Women's Health Movement expands existing historiographical definitions that equate it only with activism around reproductive rights and physical health.<sup>46</sup> The Psychology Group promoted their individual experiences of psychotherapy in order to inform women about the various therapeutic approaches available to them. In describing their emotional responses, thought processes, and developments in their individual consciousness, Psychology Group members defined their health as mental as well as physical.

The Psychology Group engaged with other medical groups affiliated with the LWLW. Assessing these interactions indicates that London-based WLM health activism was collaborative and not wholly focused on physical wellbeing. The Psychology Group operated alongside a Medical and Biology Group, established by Caroline Smith.<sup>47</sup> In an advertisement published in the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet* in April 1971, Smith emphasised the need to obtain factual medical knowledge in the fight for gender equality.<sup>48</sup> She described a lack of public information about contraception and abortion, requesting that doctors, midwives, pharmacists, psychologists, and biochemists affiliated with the Workshop share their 'specialist knowledge'.<sup>49</sup> The Group aimed to 'fulfil an advisory service to the whole movement by providing answers to any questions that arise concerning the biological aspects of womanhood'.<sup>50</sup> Smith argued that the service extended the politics of the WLM beyond the 'economic and legal sides of liberation'.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Doyal, 'Women, health and the sexual division of labour', p. 21.

<sup>46</sup> Annetts et al., *Understanding Social Welfare Movements*, pp. 120; 127.

<sup>47</sup> Feminist Library, Caroline Smith, 'Promotion of Medical and Biological Group', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet*, No. 26 (4 April 1971), p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

Examining meetings held by the Medical and Psychology Groups indicates how they collaborated. Whilst Psychology Group meetings normally took place in Brook's Gloucester Crescent flat in Camden, on occasion its members met at Caroline Smith's flat on St. Augustine's Road.<sup>52</sup> By sharing meeting places, the two groups fostered communication and mutual support between members.

Caroline Smith stated that the Medical Group would not focus on contraception and abortion issues, arguing that these were 'social aspects' of women's health that should be acknowledged and protested by the women's movement as a whole.<sup>53</sup> Free access to contraception and abortion on demand constituted one of the WLM's four demands, decided at the first Women's Liberation conference in 1970.<sup>54</sup> Other single-issue groups within the LWLW focused on achieving this aim. The Holland Park Contraceptive Group, based in West London and convened by Peri Halpern, provided information about women's reproductive health.<sup>55</sup> In 1972, it was renamed the West London Contraception Action Group. Like the Medical Group, the Contraception Action Group sought collaboration with other LWLW health groups. In February 1972, the Group hosted an event exploring women's position in the NHS. Advertising the event in the Workshop's *Newsletter*, the Contraception Action Group requested that members of the Workshop's Medical and Psychology Groups attend.<sup>56</sup> The foregrounding of campaigning around reproductive rights and technologies in histories of the Women's Health Movement reflects the emphasis that WLM campaigners placed on abortion and contraception at a national level. However,

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*; Feminist Library, Caroline Smith, 'Medical and Biological Group', *Women's Liberation Workshop Weekly Newssheet* (9 May 1971), p. 1; Feminist Library, Caroline Smith, 'Medical Group', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet*, no. 37 (20 June 1971), p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>54</sup> Browne, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland*, p. 82; British Library, *Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project*, 'Timeline of the Women's Liberation Movement', available at <http://www.bl.uk/sisterhood/timeline> [accessed 12 July 2016].

<sup>55</sup> Feminist Library, Women's Liberation Workshop, 'Meetings and Events', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter* (February 6 1972), p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*.

newsletter advertisements demonstrate how LWLW groups fostered links between physical and mental health activism by collaborating locally.

The Psychology Group discussed the links between mental health, physical health, the body and the mind in their special edition of *Shrew*. One Group member argued that women's views on menstruation and mental health were informed by pervasive social myths that had yet to be significantly explored or verified. She requested that *Shrew* readers document the myths that they were told when they started their periods.<sup>57</sup> Another Psychology Group member explored the links between the body and mind by documenting her experience of encounter therapy.<sup>58</sup> She described how the approach, which offered a series of relaxation, breathing and meditation exercises, fostered a closer connection between her body and her mind.<sup>59</sup> The Psychology Group member developed an understanding of the ways in which emotions manifested themselves as physical symptoms. She realised that she had previously felt unable to express anger, an emotion that was repressed in women and therefore manifested itself in depression.<sup>60</sup> In helping her to feel anger, the Psychology Group member stated that encounter therapy contributed to her social liberation as a woman.<sup>61</sup> Doyal argues that the Women's Health Movement was not homogenous. Women's health activists held a wide range of views that could be equated with feminism in various ways.<sup>62</sup> Incorporating mental health activism associated with the WLM into the history of the Women's Health Movement demonstrates this diversity of interests.

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<sup>57</sup> Anon., 'Mind-Body-Mind', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), p. 10.

<sup>58</sup> Anon., 'Where I'm At', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), p. 12. Inspired by the ideas of Will Shutz, a UCLA-trained social psychologist, encounter therapy incorporated tenets of Gestalt and psychodrama and encouraged individuals to unite their 'mind, body and spirit' in order to become more self-aware. Encounter therapy began to be practised in Britain in the late 1960s and was promoted at two influential Growth Centre, Quaesitor and Community (Wibberley, 'Encounter', p. 63).

<sup>59</sup> Anon., 'Where I'm At'.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Doyal, 'Women, Health and the Sexual Division of Labour', p. 21.

The association of Women's Health Movement activism with physical health is also indicative of contemporary attitudes towards mental illness within the WLM in the 1970s. Whilst LWLW health groups displayed an awareness of mental illness, other members have conceded that they failed to view mental health as a cause for concern. Writing in her autobiography, Michèle Roberts, who was a member of the Women's Street Theatre with Brooke, stated that she was unwilling to acknowledge issues surrounding mental illness in the WLM in the early 1970s. In 1975, Buzz Goodbody, another Women's Street Theatre Group member, committed suicide.<sup>63</sup> Aged twenty-eight, Goodbody was one of the first female salaried theatre directors in Britain.<sup>64</sup> Roberts stated that Goodbody's death produced uncomfortable and conflicting emotions about life, family, love, and work amongst the Theatre Group members. She had not acknowledged her own deeply negative emotions because she was afraid that they would be equated with mental illness. Roberts realised that she had been using feminism as a 'big, shiny shield', focusing on other women's struggles to suppress her own personal suffering. She argued that learning to cope communally with personal suffering should therefore form the 'meat of feminism'.<sup>65</sup> Roberts' account demonstrates how individual fears and social stigma meant that some WLM members felt unable to engage with issues surrounding mental illness in the early 1970s. Her recollection raises questions about the extent to which mental illness was openly discussed in Women's Liberation groups that were not oriented around women's health. The rejection of psychotherapeutic approaches in popular feminist texts might have also engendered a lack of discussion of women's individual mental health concerns within the Movement.

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<sup>63</sup> Roberts, *Paper Houses*; Andrew Dickson, 'Buzz Goodbody: the tin hut revolutionary', *The Guardian* (11 June 2014), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/jun/11/buzz-goodbody-other-place-royal-shakespeare-company> [accessed 13 July 2016]; Lily Susan Todd, quoted in Susan Croft and Jessica Higgs, 'Audio Transcriptions'.

<sup>64</sup> Dickson, 'Buzz Goodbody'.

<sup>65</sup> Roberts, *Paper Houses*.

By exploring how the Psychology Group engaged with other health groups in the LWLW, I demonstrate that Women's Liberation activism surrounding women's physical and mental health was interrelated. In doing so, I indicate the value of sources produced by community-based women's movement health groups. They highlight how personal interactions between activists led to the construction of broader definitions of women's health that have been overlooked in existing histories of the national Women's Health Movement. This chapter makes a case for the inclusion of mental health activism in histories of the Women's Health Movement, therefore constructing an increasingly expansive picture of feminist health activism in late twentieth century England. Histories of the Women's Health Movement have predominantly focused on activism surrounding women's physical health. This focus reflects the manner in which the WLM foregrounded political aims that championed women's reproductive health at a national level, but overlooks mental health activism within the women's movement that occurred at a grassroots level. Examining the interconnected nature of women's health groups suggests that the Psychology Group's ideas and approaches were promoted amongst a relatively small network of women. However, the Psychology Group was also formed in response to wider anxieties about the inclusivity and organisational efficiency of the WLM. Its members therefore engaged with concerns expressed by women in the women's movement more broadly.

## **Organisational Issues in the Women's Liberation Movement**

Some WLM activists joined the Psychology Group because they were concerned that engaging in WLM activism had a negative impact on women's mental wellbeing.<sup>66</sup> In the introduction to their special edition of *Shrew*, the Psychology Group expressed anxiety that

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<sup>66</sup> Klein, personal interview.

consciousness-raising groups failed to offer adequate emotional support to all women when they articulated their experiences.<sup>67</sup>

The Psychology Group's concerns indicated broader debates about the inclusivity of the WLM in the early 1970s. Historians have largely attributed disputes and schisms occurring within the WLM to disagreements over ideology. By exploring organisational tensions, I argue that debates within the WLM did not simply associate concerns about the Movement's effectiveness with ideological difference. WLM members were also fearful that negative group dynamics, and their impact on the emotional well-being of individual activists, inhibited the Movement's capacity to facilitate social change. The Psychology Group responded to these concerns by developing strategies to support women who had negative experiences of consciousness-raising. Exploring these responses also challenges the assumption that consciousness-raising always encouraged women's positive mental wellbeing. In recognising the potentially destructive tenets of consciousness-raising, the Psychology Group utilised therapeutic approaches to better understand the personal politics of Women's Liberation.

Writing in *Shrew*, Psychology Group members stated that consciousness-raising had facilitated women's early engagement with WLM politics and activism. Describing how small groups formed the 'basis of this movement', they stated that consciousness-raising enabled women to 'discover the common nature of their problems and this understanding is channelled into a political perspective'.<sup>68</sup> Psychology Group members associated consciousness-raising with personal and political development, therefore endorsing popular portrayals of the practice explored in the first chapter of this thesis. Whilst numerous WLM members opposed the association of consciousness-raising and therapy, the Psychology Group conversely asserted that it did serve a 'semi-therapeutic function'.

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<sup>67</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>68</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*, p. 1.

Its members argued that consciousness-raising groups 'deal with the emotions aroused with the process of changing'.<sup>69</sup> However, they remained concerned about whether the practice offered enough emotional support to its participants, asserting that:

The fears naturally associated with change must be recognised as real, otherwise the group interaction can become destructive...if the fears are dealt with by confining the discussion to a theoretical level, development can be blocked because the ideas are separated from our lives.<sup>70</sup>

Some members joined the Psychology Group to explore how and why these destructive group dynamics occurred and to assess their emotional impact on consciousness-raising participants. Psychology Group participants therefore offered an alternative perspective on the 'consciousness-raising as therapy' debate. Whereas some WLM members opposed the association of consciousness-raising and therapy in order to bolster the political value of the practice, the Psychology Group asserted that consciousness-raising could not be defined as therapy because it did not provide women with adequate emotional support.

Carola Klein joined the Psychology Group after her close friend was excluded from a Women's Liberation group in Notting Hill.<sup>71</sup> Klein also encountered personal issues regarding inclusivity when attempting to take part in a local WLM group. After getting the date of its initial meeting wrong, Klein joined when its other members had already formed close relationships. She found it difficult to feel sufficiently integrated in the group. In her oral history interview, Klein described how her friend Jane, a prominent member of the LWLW who gave a speech at the first WLM march, was forced to leave her group because its other members were jealous of her. Klein believed that Jane was scapegoated for the group's wider personal and organisational issues. Jane was unsure how to negotiate her negative feelings on leaving the group and did not know how to respond to the actions and attitudes of its other members.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Klein, personal interview.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*



Klein recalled seeing Brooke's advertisement for a 'Women and Psychotherapy' group in the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter* and believed that it presented a good opportunity to talk about group dynamics in the WLM.<sup>73</sup> In her oral history interview, she described attending meetings in Brooke's flat, which had a large kitchen and lounge.<sup>74</sup> Whereas Jane had found her experience in her Women's Liberation group to be destructive, Klein felt that Psychology Group provided a safe space in which she could openly discuss her emotions. She believed that consciousness-raising fostered very little acceptance of participants' emotions and failed to sensitively respond to conflicts within groups. Klein attributed the safety she felt in the Psychology Group to the fact that the majority of its members were already undergoing therapy. If members experienced difficult emotional responses during group discussions, they had a 'means of recourse' because they knew they could subsequently explore them in more detail with their therapists.<sup>75</sup> Rather than reject therapy, the Psychology Group believed that it was a useful tool for exploring emotional issues that arose when engaging with the politics of Women's Liberation. As a result, the Psychology Group proposed the creation of a 'flexible self-help scheme' within the WLM that its members hoped would 'bring about a re-evaluation of the dynamics of local, project, and action groups and certain casualties connected with them, which we feel will only increase our strength'.<sup>76</sup> The Psychology Group therefore sought to replicate the forms of emotional support that they experienced at their therapy sessions within the Movement itself.

Reflecting Klein's account, the Psychology Group highlighted the experiences of other women who they felt were 'casualties' of destructive dynamics within consciousness-raising groups. In *Shrew*, they described the marginalisation of gay women within one

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*; Brooke, 'Women and Psychotherapy'.

<sup>74</sup> Klein, personal interview.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>76</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*, p. 2.

group who 'became isolated because their presence aroused anxieties about homosexuality which the rest of the group were not ready to face'.<sup>77</sup> Personal experiences documented in other LWLW periodicals in the early 1970s also demonstrated women's expulsion from groups for generating discomfort amongst members. Writing in the *Women's Liberation Newssheet* in July 1971, a contributor named 'Disgruntled Hazel' described how she was alienated from her consciousness-raising group because she had experiences that deviated from its other members.<sup>78</sup> Defining herself as a 'Misfit', Hazel stated that she was rejected from the group after six months because she was an 'out-and-out individualist'.<sup>79</sup> She called on the LWLW to be more tolerant of the 'Misfit in society', printing her telephone number to encourage likeminded women to discuss the issue with her further.<sup>80</sup>

Elsewhere in England, WLM members described the isolation that they felt when they were not seen to comply with consciousness-raising group dynamics. In an oral history interview, Sally Carter, a housewife who joined a Women's Liberation group in St Albans in 1970, described how she felt uncomfortable in groups and remained very quiet at Women's Liberation meetings.<sup>81</sup> She attributed this discomfort to her growing up as an only child with few friends her own age. Carter was apprehensive about voicing her opinion in group meetings because she felt that its other members were more knowledgeable about oppositional politics, having engaged with socialist and feminist activism whilst at university. Carter, who was not university-educated, described 'feeling a bit out of it' and only 'accepted to a point'.<sup>82</sup> She recalled how a fellow group member challenged her for being too reserved, stating that Carter's lack of participation made her nervous. Carter

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Feminist Library, Disgruntled Hazel, 'A Warning to Misfits', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet*, no. 42 (25 July 1971), p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Sally Carter, personal interview (London, 4 July 2012).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

described that she had thought at the time, “Well, I’m quite nervous of you!” and stated that the exchange had an irreconcilable impact on her relationship with the group member.<sup>83</sup>

Feeling unable to contribute to the ‘discursive politics’ promoted within her Women’s Liberation group, Carter sought to distinguish herself and the way in which she identified with WLM politics from the other group members.<sup>84</sup> Carter described how she had taken an alternative route into Women’s Liberation because she had not been to university. She stated, ‘It was my experience as a woman and actually finding out that being female in 1960s Britain was not acceptable for me anyway and there should be more options basically’ that inspired her to become involved.<sup>85</sup> In her study of consciousness-raising groups in West Yorkshire, Rogers emphasises the role that collective experiences and attitudes played in the development of female friendships within the women’s movement during the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>86</sup> Whilst many accounts assert that consciousness-raising aided the development of a feminist sisterhood within the movement, Rogers argues that members still built on existing common interests and shared experiences when forming relationships.<sup>87</sup> The fact that Carter did not share the same educational background and sensibilities as her fellow members resulted in her finding it difficult to engage with her group and led other participants to question her attendance and contribution.<sup>88</sup> Hazel and Carter’s accounts therefore highlight the pressure they felt to conform to specific forms of expression and experience within Women’s Liberation groups.<sup>89</sup> They also indicate how their perceived failure to conform had a negative influence on their involvement with their respective groups.

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*; Maddison, ‘Discursive politics’.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Rogers, ‘Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s’, pp. 184-85.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Carter, personal interview.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*; Disgruntled Hazel, ‘A Warning to Misfits’.

WLM members beyond the Psychology Group also recognised the emotional impact that this perceived pressure to conform had on individuals as they sought to incorporate the politics of Women's Liberation into their everyday lives. In 1973, activists Vivienne, Judy, Trish, Sheila, and Sheila compiled a series of questions that they wanted to ask at a radical feminist workshop in London.<sup>90</sup> The women queried whether identifying with radical feminism meant 'living your politics twenty-four hours a day' and explored the emotional impact that this identification had on activists.<sup>91</sup> They argued that women often joined the WLM as a last resort because they 'had nowhere else to go'.<sup>92</sup> As a result, they felt an enormous amount of pressure to adhere to Women's Liberation politics, whilst also being entirely dependent on the Movement. Vivienne et al. attributed this pressure to the proliferation of contrasting imperatives associated with Women's Liberation politics, resulting in members experiencing an internal conflict about how they should live their lives. The women articulated these conflicting pressures as:

Be a lesbian, don't be a lesbian, have kids, don't have kids, get out of exclusive relationships, stay in them, fuck with everybody, don't fuck at all, be sisterly (whatever that means), etc. etc. etc.<sup>93</sup>

In not complying with these contrasting requirements, women believed that they would be forced to leave the WLM and therefore 'be deprived of the fragile ground they've gained'.<sup>94</sup> Vivienne et al. attributed the proliferation of these conflicting aims to the gap that existed between the expectations of WLM activists, encouraged by contemporary feminist theory, and the oppression that women continued to encounter in society. They emphasised the need to tackle the guilt women felt at 'not being there yet' in the fight for gender equality, stating that 'women are dying---in a sense killed by the Movement'.<sup>95</sup> Vivienne et al.'s

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<sup>90</sup> Vivienne, Judy, Trish, Sheila and Sheila, 'Other Questions'.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

account articulates the severity of the negative emotions some individuals had come to equate with Women's Liberation politics and activism in the early 1970s. Their calls for increased emotional support for WLM members therefore replicated those of the Psychology Group.

Contemporary discussions about women's negative emotional responses as they enacted WLM politics reflected concerns about the organisation and efficacy of the Movement in the early 1970s. In a 1974 *Red Rag* interview, WLM member and women's health activist Sue O'Sullivan stated that the Workshop experienced organisational issues from 1971 onwards. She described how debates between radical and socialist feminists resulted in a factional split in 1972. At the same time, the dramatic increase in the number of groups affiliated with the LWLW had a negative impact on the spontaneity of its activism, and its capacity to rigorously assess the nature of women's oppression.<sup>96</sup> Letters submitted to the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter* critiqued the LWLW's organisational structure, questioning its inclusivity and capacity for collectivism. Writing in March 1971, Jane Kenrick stated that the Workshop was in crisis because individuals were making decisions about its organisation that should have been made collectively. She argued that groups affiliated with the Workshop believed that its main office promoted a centralised form of 'ideological control' that contravened Women's Liberation politics, questioning whether it should act as a base for feminist activism at all.<sup>97</sup> Members of the Chiswick and Barnes Women's Liberation groups also expressed concern that the LWLW alienated new WLM members through its promotion of strongly left-wing views. The

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<sup>96</sup> Women's Library @ LSE, Papers of Amanda Sebestyen, 7SEB/A/16, Sue O'Sullivan, interviewed by Lois Graessle and Janet Hadley, quotes from a tape made for *Red Rag* (1974).

<sup>97</sup> Women's Library @ LSE, Papers of Amanda Sebestyen, 7SEB/A/16, Jane Kenrick, 'Why I believe we face a crisis in the Workshop at the moment' (13 March 1971), published in *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsheet*, No. 24 (21 March 1971).

groups argued that women joining the Workshop due to increased media visibility were likely to be apolitical rather than left-leaning.<sup>98</sup>

Historians and sociologists have explored the emotional impact that organisational uncertainty and debate within oppositional political movements has on activists. Cvetovich refers to a 'political depression' felt by activists when 'customary forms of political response, including direct action and critical analysis are no longer working either to change the world or to make us feel better'.<sup>99</sup> Exploring the development of political insurgency in the African-American civil rights movement, McAdam refers to the 'cognitive liberation' that inspired activists in social movements.<sup>100</sup> He defines 'cognitive liberation' as the change in activists' consciousness that inspires their participation in direct political action, facilitated by their realisation that societal oppression is unjust and can be subject to change.<sup>101</sup> Debates about the ability of the LWLW to facilitate social change disrupted the 'cognitive liberation' enjoyed by activists when they joined the Workshop, frustrating their initial belief that patriarchal repression could be overcome.<sup>102</sup>

The Psychology Group's use of therapeutic approaches to explore how the activism of the WLM might be enhanced was therefore a response to these frustrations. Some Women's Liberation activists attributed tensions between Movement members to ideological divisions.<sup>103</sup> However, in focusing on individual women's negative emotional responses, the Psychology Group demonstrated that they were also attributable to

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<sup>98</sup> Feminist Library, London Women's Liberation Workshop, 'General Meeting', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newssheet*, No. 23 (7 March 1971), p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression: a public feeling* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), p. 1. The term 'political depression' was coined by Feel Tank Chicago, a collaborative group of researchers, activists and artists who explore political emotions (Deborah B. Gould, 'Political Despair', in Paul Hoggett and Simon Thompson (eds), *Politics and the Emotions: The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies* (New York: Continuum, 2012), pp. 95-114, (p. 109)).

<sup>100</sup> Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 34.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, p. 34.

<sup>103</sup> Segal, *Why Feminism?*, p. 9.

unrecognised yet destructive group dynamics, the pressure women felt to conform to specific practices and sensibilities as they engaged with Women's Liberation, and activists' internalisation of guilt at the Movement's protracted capacity to initiate social change. In foregrounding the significance of activists' emotional responses when they participated in Women's Liberation politics, the Psychology Group not only sought to support women who felt isolated but also aimed to remedy these dynamics, ensuring the cohesion and efficacy of the WLM more broadly. Existing histories of the women's movement in 1970s England focus primarily on the influence of women's negative emotional experiences on internalised group dynamics.<sup>104</sup> This thesis is therefore the first to explore how some WLM members developed strategies of emotional support at a grassroots level in order to provision for wider stability in the women's movement. As a result, it contributes to a field of British history that is increasingly seeking to uncover how individual feelings and emotional styles have influenced developments in both governmental and oppositional politics in the post-war period.<sup>105</sup>

## **Psychotherapy and the Personal Politics of Women's Liberation**

The Psychology Group drew on the personal politics already integral to WLM activism to assess the 'liberating possibilities of psychotherapy'.<sup>106</sup> Group members used their own accounts of mental illness, therapeutic practices, and activism as a vehicle to raise awareness, support other women, and better understand patriarchal repression. The Psychology Group based their promotion of psychotherapy on supporting women in their everyday lives. Members argued that therapy did not simply help women overcome

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<sup>104</sup> Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s'; Lockyer, 'An Irregular Period?'.  
<sup>105</sup> Brooke, 'Space, Emotions and the Everyday'; Martin Francis, 'Tears, Tantrums and Bared Teeth: The Emotional Economy of Three Conservative Prime Ministers, 1951-1964', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.41, No.3 (July 2002), pp. 354-87.

<sup>106</sup> LWLW Psychology Group, *Shrew*, pp. 1-2.

specific mental health concerns but also enabled them to express themselves more openly on a day-to-day basis. They stated that therapeutic approaches facilitated a 'release of energy' that they had not previously experienced, having been discouraged from acting assertively and aggressively.<sup>107</sup> Therapy was therefore seen to aid the WLM's wider opposition to restrictive feminine behavioural norms.

This section examines how Psychology Group members used their own experiences to promote the incorporation of psychotherapy into the politics of Women's Liberation. It assesses why the Psychology Group deemed psychoanalytic tenets particularly useful for understanding WLM activism. It demonstrates how the Group used their personal accounts to negotiate existing critiques of psychology and psychotherapy provided by WLM members and anti-psychiatrists. In promoting the variation of their own experiences, Group members formulated a politicised approach to psychotherapy that recognised tenets of these existing critical perspectives whilst also reframing and expanding them. As a result, the Psychology Group negotiated WLM members' blanket rejection of psychotherapy and opposed the lack of a gendered analysis in prominent anti-psychiatric publications. Annetts et al. argue that Women's Health Movement activists utilised their 'embodied knowledge' to petition for women's increased clinical autonomy.<sup>108</sup> However, Psychology Group members presented their personal experiences of health as extending beyond the 'embodied'. They connected their perceptions of their mental health with their wider sense of self, their political affiliations, and their position within the WLM. Assessing Psychology Group members' employment of personal experiences to formulate a politicised approach to psychotherapy further destabilises historians' focus on physical health in the context of the Women's Health Movement.

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>108</sup> Annetts et al., *Understanding Social Welfare Movements*, p. 127.



## **i. Psychoanalysis and the Politics of Women's Liberation**

The Psychology Group drew on their personal experiences to argue that psychoanalytic theory could be used to enhance understandings of patriarchal repression and social inequality. Group members aimed to develop a theoretical understanding of gender inequality that extended beyond women's structural and economic subordination, utilising psychological insights to explore how women 'might continually be seeking out situations to confirm our oppression'.<sup>109</sup> Many Psychology Group members attributed their positive experiences of psychotherapy to the fact that it encouraged them to consider the promotion of inequality in society and allowed them to explore their emotional responses to sexism. One Psychology Group member described how her therapy with male and female psychoanalysts bolstered her commitment to the politics of Women's Liberation. She argued that her male analysts' pathologisation of her feminist politics demonstrated that personal traits associated with femininity lent themselves to the success of the WLM:

I can't help but feel that certain indefinable qualities such as having convictions without being arrogant, being truly interested in what goes on inside of people and as keen as you are to make discoveries, and being undefended about aspects of oneself, are perhaps something to do with the existing qualities of womanhood that as members of the movement we must make certain we never sacrifice.<sup>110</sup>

The Psychology Group member suggested that psychoanalysis enhanced her understanding of how the WLM could and should operate effectively despite its endorsement of patriarchal perceptions of womanhood.

Another Psychology Group member asserted that psychoanalysis was theoretically compatible with Women's Liberation politics. She defined psychoanalysis as a 'heuristic and unique process' that challenged individuals' existing understandings of consciousness and broke down the 'barrier between being and doing', therefore demonstrating the artificiality of the social divisions between men and women.<sup>111</sup> The Group member argued that

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<sup>109</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Anon., 'Yes No', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), p. 9.

psychoanalytic theory was comparable to Women's Liberation politics because they both called for a 'reorganisation of cultural patterns, for a reappraisal of how people need each other and a new form of communication'.<sup>112</sup> She recommended that WLM members simultaneously engaged with psychoanalysis. Whilst undergoing analysis, women could develop individual understandings about their social position and relationships that they could then draw on when exploring patriarchal repression more broadly.

In calling for the incorporation of psychoanalysis into WLM politics, the Psychology Group responded to Movement members who believed that Freudian theory reinforced patriarchal repression. The Psychology Group argued that psychotherapy had 'revolutionary' foundations that could be drawn on when incorporating it into WLM politics.<sup>113</sup> In a *Shrew* article titled 'Freudian Phallacies', one Psychology Group member demonstrated Freud's contribution to female empowerment.<sup>114</sup> She stated that Freud was one of the first clinicians to listen to his female patients, countering medical practitioners who attributed women's symptoms to feminine frailty and nervousness. The Psychology Group member argued that feminist critics misinterpreted the context in which Freud had developed key tenets of psychoanalytic theory. She highlighted Freud's concession that penis envy was not based on clinical evidence and the fact that he frequently lamented his failure to develop a full understanding of female sexuality.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> LWLW Psychology Group, *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), p. 1.

<sup>114</sup> Anon., 'Freudian Phallacies', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April, 1972), pp. 6-7.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6; Freud stated in his 1905 paper 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' that, whilst he was able to conceptualise male sexuality, his inability to understand the sexuality of women was 'partly owing to the stunting effect of civilised conditions and partly owing to their conventional secretiveness and sincerity' (Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey. Reprint (New York: Basic Books, 2000), p. 1). Freud reiterated this sentiment in 1926, describing female sexuality as 'the dark continent' (Robert B. Lawson, Jean E. Graham and Kristin M. Baker, *The History of Psychology: Globalization, Ideas and Applications* (Routledge: London, 2016), p. 282). There are two English translation of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. The first was translated by Austrian-born psychiatrist Abraham Arden Brill, who was based in the United States in 1910. The second translation, published in 1949, was produced by the British psychoanalyst James Strachey. Brill and Strachey offer contrasting translations of Freud's statement on the difficulties of theorising female sexuality. Strachey's version, directly quoted above, translated

The Psychology Group member recognised Friedan's assertion that psychoanalysis had been used to uphold traditional feminine norms throughout the twentieth century.<sup>116</sup> She countered this perspective by arguing that Freudian theory had been subject to critical analysis by psychoanalysts, such as Karen Horney, since the 1920s.<sup>117</sup> Horney was one of the first psychoanalysts to challenge key tenets of Freudian theory, such as penis envy.<sup>118</sup> She argued that young girls became conscious of their reproductive organs far earlier than Freud suggested. It was this awareness that facilitated their feelings of anxiety.<sup>119</sup> The Psychology Group member believed that Horney's viewpoint 'opened up further enquiry into the many complex emotions and anxieties that the little girl seems to go through in her feelings and phantasies about intercourse and about having babies', therefore enhancing contemporary understandings of female psychology.<sup>120</sup> Kimball likens Horney's approach to that of German maternal feminists. Also active in the early twentieth century, German

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Freud's discussion of women's 'conventional secretiveness and sincerity'. This phrase was translated differently in Brill's earlier version, with Freud attributing his difficulty in conceptualising women's sexuality to their 'conventional reticence and dishonesty', an analysis more overtly negative in its tone (Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. A. A. Brill (New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Co., 1920), available at <https://archive.org/stream/threecontributio14969gut/14969.txt> [accessed 22 June 2016]). As highlighted by Gay, Strachey's translations of Freud's works have come to be regarded as more accurate and consistent than Brill's, with Strachey's versions receiving approval from Freud himself (Peter Gay, *Freud: a life of our time* (London: Dent, 2008), pp. 572-75)).

<sup>116</sup> Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, pp. 111-13.

<sup>117</sup> Anon., 'Freudian Phallacies', p. 6. Horney was born in Hamburg in 1885 and initially trained as a doctor before working with psychiatric patients at a hospital in Berlin. She began psychoanalysis with the German analyst Karl Abraham, who worked closely with Freud, in 1910. Horney was the first female member of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Clinic, which opened in 1920. She moved to the United States in 1932 and was associated with the Chicago Institute Psychoanalysis and the New York Psychoanalytic Institute (Susan Tyler Hitchcock, *Karen Horney: Pioneer of Feminine Psychology* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004), pp. 102-04; Janet Sayers, *Mothers of Psychoanalysis: Helene Deutsch, Karen Horney, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1991), p. 4; Isabel Sanfeliu, *Karl Abraham: The Birth of Object Relations Theory*, trans. Kate Walters (London: Karnac, 2014), p. 39).

<sup>118</sup> Hitchcock, *Karen Horney*; David Sue et al., *Understanding Abnormal Behaviour, Tenth Edition* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2013), p. 49.

<sup>119</sup> Anon., 'Freudian Phallacies', p. 6

<sup>120</sup> Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women* (New York: Pantheon, 1974), p. 49.

maternal feminists developed a discourse that opposed evolutionary theory in order to highlight the importance of the mother-child bond in personal and social development.<sup>121</sup>

The Psychology Group member also highlighted the significance of Melanie Klein's work in critiquing and developing Freudian ideas of female development. Born near Vienna in 1882, Klein was a key proponent in the development of British object relations theory, championing a new form of "mother-centred psychoanalysis" that explored 'terrain Freud had already staked out, and then opened up new territories he had only dimly perceived'.<sup>122</sup> Seeking to expand the Freudian notion of female penis envy, Klein asserted that the concept did not materialise, as Freud suggested, due to a young woman's 'permanent sense of anatomical inferiority'.<sup>123</sup> Rather, it was reflective of her response to the anxieties that occurred as she traversed "masculine" and "feminine" positions throughout her development. Klein therefore explored the influence of social, cultural, and domestic pressures on the individual psyches of young women.<sup>124</sup> By suggesting that psychoanalysis had been informed by feminist ideas throughout the twentieth century, the Psychology Group member justified its incorporation into the politics of Women's Liberation.

WLM members have suggested that the alignment of psychoanalysis with Women's Liberation politics was aided by its professional reputation in the early 1970s. In her oral history interview, Vivien Burgoyne, a WLM member, psychoanalytic psychotherapist, and former WTC practitioner, described how psychoanalysis was

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*; C. N. Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800-1914* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), pp. 159-63; LWLW Psychology Group, *Shrew*, p. 1.

<sup>122</sup> Joseph Polombo, Harold K. Bendicson, and Barry J. Koch, *Guide to Psychoanalytic Developmental Theories* (London: Springer, 2009), p. 129; Sayers, *Mothers of Psychoanalysis*, p. 3; Janice Doane and Devon Hodges, *From Klein to Kristeva: Psychoanalytic Feminism and the Search for the "Good Enough" Mother* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 7; Judith M. Hughes, *Reshaping the Psychoanalytic Domain: The Work of Melanie Klein, W. R. D. Fairbairn, and D. W. Winnicott* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 44.

<sup>123</sup> Hughes, *Reshaping the Psychoanalytic Domain*, p. 56.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

dismissed by mainstream psychologists in the early 1970s.<sup>125</sup> Burgoyne became interested in Freud after reading Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women* in 1974 and attempted to discuss Freudian psychoanalysis with a family friend who had been a president of the British Psychological Society.<sup>126</sup> Burgoyne recalled that he was highly dismissive of psychoanalysis, stating: "Oh, I've done Freud, I've read him. He doesn't work". Burgoyne believed that his response reflected wider attitudes towards psychoanalysis expressed in professional psychological and psychiatric arenas at that time:

What he meant was he had read a little bit of Freud. He had never had any psychoanalysis. He had never had any psychotherapy, but from the few bits and bobs he had read he knew he had tried it and it didn't work'.<sup>127</sup>

She argued that the rejection of psychoanalysis in professional psychology and psychiatry meant that psychoanalysts could operate outside of the medical mainstream. This allowed them increased freedom when developing therapeutic approaches and bolstered the appeal of psychoanalysis to oppositional political movements. Burgoyne described how this freedom to develop new therapeutic and theoretical approaches ensured the 'growth and development of thinking about the questions that came out of the Women's Movement' within psychoanalysis itself.<sup>128</sup>

Thomson historicises the professional marginalisation of psychoanalysis as a therapeutic approach in post-war Britain.<sup>129</sup> Efforts to expand mental health provision as part of the developing welfare state highlighted the disparity between psychologists' aims and the discipline's application, power, and influence.<sup>130</sup> Thomson describes how

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<sup>125</sup> Burgoyne, personal interview; Vivien Bar, 'Change in women', in Sheila Ernst and Marie Maguire (eds), *Living with the Sphinx: Papers from the Women's Therapy Centre* (London: Women's Press, 1987), pp. 213-56.

<sup>126</sup> Burgoyne, personal interview; Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*.

<sup>127</sup> Burgoyne, personal interview.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, p. 209.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241; Shaul Bar-Haim, 'Regression and the Maternal in the History of Psychoanalysis, 1900-1957', *Psychoanalysis and History*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (December 2013), pp. 69-94 (pp. 82-83); Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-war Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 79-105.

psychotherapeutic approaches like group therapy, readily promoted in the military during the Second World War, did not appeal to a general public who expected individual attention when overcoming sensitive, personal issues.<sup>131</sup> A lack of resources forced the new NHS to 'take a pragmatic and relatively unsympathetic approach to psychological complaints'.<sup>132</sup> As a result, one-to-one therapeutic approaches like psychoanalysis were not sufficiently promoted to the masses.<sup>133</sup> The popularity of psychoanalysis was also inhibited by its emphasis on 'breaking oneself down' to explore repressed, unconscious emotions and behaviours.<sup>134</sup> Thomson argues that it was important that psychology demonstrated its capacity to rebuild and renew on a society-wide scale in the wake of the Second World War, resulting in the foregrounding of psychological approaches that focused on 'putting oneself together, of improving oneself, and of connecting oneself to a broader whole' instead.<sup>135</sup> However, this focus lent itself to the aims of the Psychology Group, who promoted self-reflection as a means to explore the extent to which WLM activists continued to subconsciously endorse patriarchal norms.

## **ii. Negotiating Critiques of Psychology and Psychotherapy in the English WLM**

Despite promoting the incorporation of psychoanalysis into the politics of Women's Liberation, the Psychology Group did not reject WLM critiques of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy. Rather, group members drew on their personal experiences to bolster these existing critical perspectives. Assessing these personal accounts highlights the tensions that the Psychology Group negotiated as its members recognised dominant feminist critiques, whilst also promoting better provision for women experiencing emotional distress within the WLM. Writing in the Psychology Group's special edition of

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<sup>131</sup> Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, pp. 209, 242.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

*Shrew*, one member recalled her highly negative experience of psychoanalysis, describing the therapeutic approach as ineffectual and personally damaging.<sup>136</sup> She stated that she was expected to remain submissive to her male psychoanalyst and felt drained of her 'critical faculties' as a result.<sup>137</sup> The author described how her analyst dismissed her interest in Women's Liberation politics as unrealistic.<sup>138</sup> As her psychoanalysis progressed, the Psychology Group member adopted modes of behaviour that complied with social expectations of femininity. Whilst she had once rejected make-up and wore clothes that subverted traditionally female fashions, she began wearing eyeshadow and altered the way she dressed.<sup>139</sup> Her psychoanalyst praised these adjustments, stating that she was in a state of recovery because she was becoming more attuned to her natural femininity.<sup>140</sup> Feeling 'more unhappy than ever', the Group member stopped seeing the analyst, believing that his perception of female happiness was fixed and stereotyped.<sup>141</sup>

Another Psychology Group member, who had experienced depression for several years, described how she began psychoanalysis after the breakdown of her marriage.<sup>142</sup> In an article titled 'Shrinks and Gurus', she recalled the sexism she encountered during a stay in a mental hospital. Whilst suicidal, she was informed by a psychiatrist that she was a 'nice, sexy girl and should get married'.<sup>143</sup> On getting married, the Psychology Group member became anxious about her identity, feeling frustrated and dissatisfied as she negotiated the various societal expectations connected to her roles as a woman, wife and aspiring artist. Under the impression that she was placing undue pressure on her marriage by seeking creative fulfilment through her husband's work rather than her own, the

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<sup>136</sup> Anon., 'An Analysis of an Analysis', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), pp. 8-9.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> Anon., 'Shrinks and Gurus', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), pp. 2-3.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Psychology Group member sought psychiatric treatment from several London hospitals, only to be informed that there was a two-year waiting list. As a result, the Psychology Group member used money inherited from her family to pay for several sessions of psychoanalysis at London's Tavistock Clinic. She struggled to identify with her male analyst. He stated that her creative aspirations were unfounded because there had 'never been any great women artists'.<sup>144</sup> Drawing on the Freudian concept of penis envy, the psychoanalyst informed the Group member that she would be 'cured' of the frustration she felt about her personal and professional identity if she stopped being jealous of her husband's penis, which she subconsciously equated with his creativity.<sup>145</sup> The Psychology Group member was highly critical of this experience, arguing that analysts failed to acknowledge the ways in which their application of psychoanalytic theory was influenced by wider societal assumptions, norms, and values.<sup>146</sup>

These personal accounts supported existing feminist critiques of psychoanalysis. Both analysts assessed the mental health of their clients by drawing on models of normative female behaviour. They discouraged assertive, independent, and subversive behaviours, aligning recovery with Group members' adoption of traditionally feminine social roles. Through publishing these experiences, the Psychology Group demonstrated how the sexist application of psychoanalytic tenets repressed individual women seeking emotional support for their mental health concerns. However, personal experiences contained in the Psychology Group's edition of *Shrew* diverged from existing popular feminist critiques because they also highlighted members' positive experiences of psychoanalysis. The Group member whose first analyst promoted a stereotyped view of

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* It is possible that this personal account was produced by Dinah Brooke herself. The author referred to the time that she spent in New York shortly after marrying her husband, and subsequently described her interactions with an Indian mystic. Writing in 1971, Brooke stated that her husband was American and later described how she became involved with Indian mysticism early in the 1970s (Brooke, 'Identity'; Alison Fell, 'All a Girl needs is a Guru', *Spare Rib*, p. 7).

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*



femininity subsequently went to a female psychoanalyst.<sup>147</sup> She found her female analyst increasingly helpful because she was respectful of her political views and understood her need to be educated rather than treated.<sup>148</sup> The Psychology Group member described how she was 'able to contrast that feeling of being humanly whole with how I felt only half a person with my previous analyst'.<sup>149</sup> The female analyst encouraged her to appreciate her homosexuality and subversive behaviour. This acceptance enabled her to 'find a way of making use of the limitations of my personality and putting them to good purpose'.<sup>150</sup> The Psychology Group member argued that her analyst being female meant that she was not prejudiced and had experienced the aspects of women's social struggle that her male analyst deemed neurotic. This personal account queried WLM members' dismissal of psychoanalysis by suggesting that not all psychoanalytic therapeutic relationships were problematic. Variables such as the gender of the psychoanalyst influenced a woman's experience of the practice, resulting in the development of a therapeutic relationship that bolstered rather than undermined Women's Liberation politics.

Other members of the Psychology Group detailed their positive experiences of psychoanalysis. One member, who had experienced severe depression and heard voices for several years, began to attend psychoanalysis with a male analyst after falling pregnant.<sup>151</sup> Her psychoanalysis was helpful because it provided a safe space in which she could experience and understand her unconscious behaviour. Her feelings of safety were bolstered by the rigid structure of her psychoanalytic sessions, each of which lasted for fifty minutes. This meant that she was unable to relive some of her more 'frightening fantasies', resulting in their decreasing influence on her wellbeing. The Psychology Group member praised her analyst's non-judgement. She could express 'fantasies of sexuality and violence

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<sup>147</sup> Anon., 'An Analysis of an Analysis', p. 8

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> Anon., 'Psychotherapy', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), p. 7.

without provoking any terrible comeback'.<sup>152</sup> She realised that she had used negative emotions to defend herself from positive feelings such as love and ambition, which she had not allowed herself to feel for fear of being disappointed.<sup>153</sup> The Psychology Group member attributed her analyst's non-judgment to his highly flexible psychoanalytical approach, which drew on the theories of both Freud and Klein.<sup>154</sup> She used her account to inform readers about the different psychoanalytic techniques her analyst used, such as transference and free association.<sup>155</sup> The Psychology Group member therefore suggested that psychoanalysis was of therapeutic benefit to women if it was flexible and drew on a range of approaches.

The Psychology Group's edition of *Shrew* also contained members' positive personal experiences of other psychotherapeutic approaches. The Psychology Group member whose male analyst attributed her professional frustrations to penis envy, found greater support in group therapy. She stated that group therapy was useful because it involved men and women. This aided her realisation that she 'both resented and needed men, or maybe resented them because I needed them'.<sup>156</sup> She conceded that her male group therapy leader was opposed to the WLM because he did not believe that Women's Liberation groups could promote gender equality if they excluded men.<sup>157</sup> Despite this, the Psychology Group member felt that their therapeutic engagement was her first relationship with 'anyone where I felt I would neither destroy nor be destroyed'.<sup>158</sup> She felt that their interactions demonstrated what a good analytical relationship should be. The Psychology Group member therefore reiterated the importance of emotional expression and feelings of safety that group therapy encouraged. She asserted that these positive benefits ensured

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

that psychotherapy could support women experiencing mental health concerns despite the fact that its practitioners sometimes rejected WLM politics.

Psychology Group members therefore attributed their positive experiences of psychotherapy to the fact that it allowed them to express negative or destructive emotions in a safe space. In doing so, the Group used their personal accounts to bolster their view that psychotherapy fostered an emotional support that consciousness-raising failed to facilitate. By publishing the accounts of members who had a negative experience of psychotherapy before discovering a therapeutic approach that they believed worked for them, the Psychology Group emphasised the need for women to have the agency to explore different therapies and select the one that they deemed the most effective. The Psychology Group's application of personal experience to advocate women's increased agency in making decisions about their mental health mirrors the broader aims of the Women's Health Movement. Women's Health activists drew on their knowledge of themselves and their bodies to challenge medical authority and develop self-help groups and networks.<sup>159</sup> Personal accounts published by the Psychology Group in *Shrew* utilised a self-knowledge that extended beyond embodiment. Group members' assessments of different therapeutic approaches also examined the ways in which they were able to effectively live out the politics of Women's Liberation, their perception of themselves as working mothers, and their capacity to understand and express destructive emotions. The personal experiences contained in *Shrew* therefore demonstrate the ways in which Women's health activists utilised self-knowledge to raise awareness of women's mental and physical health issues.

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<sup>159</sup> Annetts et al., *Understanding Social Welfare Movements*, p. 127; Maya Goldenberg, 'Working for a Cure: Challenging Pink Ribbon Activism', in Roma Harris et al. (eds), *Configuring Health Consumers: Health Work and the Imperative of Personal Responsibility* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 140-62 (p. 143).

Despite its emphasis on women's agency in the provision of their mental health, the Psychology Group remained uncritical of the ways in which women's access to therapy was influenced by their social context. Although one Psychology Group member described how she had to use her family inheritance to pay for psychoanalysis, her account was not accompanied by an assessment of how financial security ensured the accessibility of private psychotherapies.<sup>160</sup> The absence of a discussion about income inequality could be indicative of the fact that Psychology Group members were predominantly middle-class. In her oral history interview, Klein alluded to the privileged backgrounds of Psychology Group members.<sup>161</sup> She recalled being impressed at the size and location of Dinah Brooke's flat when she attended Psychology Group meetings there, partly because she lived on the same road as playwright Alan Bennett and director Jonathan Miller.<sup>162</sup> Klein, who had attended boarding school, discussed how she and other WLM members visited the homes of women who lived in 'poorer areas' of London.<sup>163</sup> She positioned herself in a contrasting social strata to the women that they visited, stating that WLM members were 'trying to relate to a different bracket of women'.<sup>164</sup> Klein asserted that she adopted the role of a 'pseudo-counsellor' when making these visits, although she questioned how helpful the conversations were for the women that she spoke to.<sup>165</sup>

In her interview, Klein was aware of her middle-class position and the need for the WLM to engage with women whose experiences were not necessarily already represented within the Movement. However, this awareness was not reflected in the Psychology Group's assessment of psychotherapy. Joanna Ryan, herself a WLM member and psychotherapist, documents the continued absence of critical discussions on class, income

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<sup>160</sup> Anon., 'Shrinks and Gurus', p. 2.

<sup>161</sup> Klein, personal interview.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

inequality, and accessibility to therapy within the psychotherapeutic profession.<sup>166</sup> The Psychology Group's lack of a critical assessment concerning women's accessibility to therapy was therefore reflective of its members' middle class backgrounds, and the absence of discussion of class inequalities in psychotherapeutic discourses more broadly. As will be discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, the promotion of a 'universal womanhood' in WLM therapeutic ideas and approaches became increasingly problematised as feminist therapy garnered mounting public visibility in the mid- to late 1970s.<sup>167</sup>

Publishing their personal accounts of psychotherapy in *Shrew*, the LWLW Psychology Group expanded WLM critiques of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy. Documenting members' negative experiences of psychoanalysis, the Psychology Group appeared to endorse the view that psychoanalytic theories and approaches reinforced women's patriarchal repression. However, the Psychology Group also highlighted how its members subsequently discovered therapeutic approaches that worked effectively. Psychology Group members argued that the patriarchal tenets of certain therapies could be overcome if women were informed about different psychotherapeutic approaches and had the agency to provision for their own mental health care.

### **iii. Anti-psychiatry and the Family**

In seeking to highlight the ways in which psychotherapeutic techniques endorsed the patriarchal repression of women, the Psychology Group also expanded anti-psychiatric perspectives. Writing in *Shrew*, numerous Psychology Group members drew on anti-psychiatric tenets by situating their mental health concerns within a familial context. Their

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<sup>166</sup> Joanna Ryan, "'Class is in you': an exploration of some social class issues in psychotherapeutic work", in Frank Lowe (ed.), *Thinking Space: Promoting Thinking About Race, Culture and Diversity in Psychotherapy and Beyond* (London: Karnac Books, 2014), pp. 127-46.

<sup>167</sup> Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*, p. 1.

assessment of mental health and the family reflected the links drawn by Laing and Esterson between schizophrenia and traditional domestic environments in their 1964 publication *Sanity, Madness and the Family*.<sup>168</sup> Using interviews with women diagnosed with schizophrenia and their relatives, Laing and Esterson argued that patterns of communication within families exacerbated mental health patients' symptoms.<sup>169</sup> The women interviewed described how their families routinely communicated to them that their behaviour was unintelligible. Their families' constant reiteration of their mental illness reinforced their feelings of frustration and despair. These emotional responses were then also pathologised by their relatives.<sup>170</sup>

The Psychology Group referenced publications by prominent anti-psychiatrists in their writing. In an article titled 'The Dangers of Professionalism', one Psychology Group member argued that psychological perspectives on femininity were subjective, despite the assumption that psychology was ethically neutral and value-free.<sup>171</sup> She stated that psychologists made subjective choices when deciding research subject and methods. The author explored how psychological studies were employed at a societal level, stating that:

Society puts the study to its own use, so that typical middle-class families are taken as ideally adjusted to society (of course they are! But one can be adjusted to undesirable as well as desirable ones); homosexuals are seen as products of faulty conditioning; and women are kept in their place at home sweet home.<sup>172</sup>

The Psychology Group member included a quotation from David Cooper's *The Death of the Family*, published in 1971, to critique the use of psychological studies to bolster the social and cultural primacy of the traditional family. Discussing how young women were brought up to enact normative feminine behaviour, Cooper wrote: 'the little girl...is educated to be a mother like her mother and like all other mothers who were educated, not be

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<sup>168</sup> Laing and Esterson, *Sanity, Madness and the Family*.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*; Kotowicz, R. D. *Laing and the Paths of Anti-Psychiatry*, p. 46.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Anon., 'The Dangers of Professionalism', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April, 1972), pp. 4-5 (p. 4).

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

themselves, but to be “like mothers””.<sup>173</sup> Kotowicz describes how Cooper, a prominent anti-psychiatrist, believed that schizophrenia was not a condition with a specific, objective symptomology but rather a ‘set of prejudices’ that manifested themselves within the family.<sup>174</sup> *The Death of the Family* highlighted the negative influences that familial structures had on individuals’ wellbeing, with Cooper arguing that contemporary families did not encourage children’s individuality.<sup>175</sup>

In ‘The Dangers of Professionalism’, the Psychology Group member’s critical analysis of psychology focused specifically on the cultural significance attributed to maternal attachment.<sup>176</sup> Psychologist John Bowlby formulated the concept of attachment theory, asserting from the mid-1950s that a child’s strong attachment to a maternal figure was intrinsic to their positive development.<sup>177</sup> In a paper presented at the British Psychoanalytic Society in 1959, Bowlby argued that children experienced a significant emotional response to the extended absence of their mothers which was detrimental to the mother-child bond.<sup>178</sup> The Psychology Group member asserted that Bowlby had used cases of severe child neglect in his examination of maternal deprivation and childhood development. She questioned why these extreme cases were used by governments and institutions to dictate how mothers should raise their children.<sup>179</sup> Drawing on Germaine

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<sup>173</sup> Anon., ‘The Dangers of Professionalism’, p. 4.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> David Cooper, *The Death of the Family* (London: Allen Lane, 1971); Tony Monocchio and William Petitt, *Families Under Stress: A psychological interpretation* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 4.

<sup>176</sup> Anon., ‘The Dangers of Professionalism’, p. 5.

<sup>177</sup> Mario Marrone, *Attachment and Interaction: From Bowlby to Current Clinical Theory and Practice* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998), p. 18.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* Bowlby’s presentation at the British Psychoanalytic Society was later published as ‘Grief and Mourning in Infancy and Early Childhood, *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, No. 15 (1960), pp. 9-52, available at <http://icpla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Bowlby-J.-Grief-and-Mourning-in-Infancy-and-Early-Childhood-vol.15-p.9-52.pdf> [accessed 10 July 2016]. Bowlby subsequently published his formulation of attachment theory in the series *Attachment and Loss*, published in three volumes in 1969, 1973 and 1980 (Marrone, *Attachment and Interaction*, p. 18; John Bowlby, *Attachment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1982); John Bowlby, *Separation: Anxiety and Anger* (London: Hogarth Press, 1973); John Bowlby, *Loss: Sadness and Depression* (London: Hogarth Press, 1980).

<sup>179</sup> Anon., ‘The Dangers of Professionalism’, p. 5.

Greer's concept of 'healthy neglect', the Group member promoted partial attachment, arguing that it resulted in the development of a child that was less possessive and not 'expected to fulfil its mother's hopes instead of its own'.<sup>180</sup> The Psychology Group member drew on R. D. Laing's assessment of love and violence to evidence her perspective.<sup>181</sup> In his 1967 *The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise*, Laing stated:

Love and violence are polar opposites. Love lets others be, but with affection and concern. Violence attempts to contain the others freedom, to force him to act in the way we desire, but with ultimate lack of concern, with indifference to the other's existence of destiny.<sup>182</sup>

The Psychology Group member described Laing's statement, which presented 'love' as allowing an individual the space necessary to develop, as a 'beautiful way' of encapsulating her feminist opposition to Bowlby's attachment theory.<sup>183</sup>

In a *Spare Rib* interview, Mica Nava, a member of the Tufnell Park and Belsize Lane Women's Liberation groups, described how Bowlby's theory of maternal attachment was an important area of discussion within the WLM in 1970.<sup>184</sup> Members of the Tufnell Park Group read a paper presented by Sheli Wortis at the first Women's Liberation conference. Wortis argued that a child's development was facilitated through a positive attachment to any adult in a stable and stimulating environment, regardless of whether they were the child's mother.<sup>185</sup> Members of the Tufnell Park Group developed an understanding that it was social expectation as opposed to biological necessity that resulted in women being the primary carers of children. Nava described how reading the paper was the 'single most significant and liberating experience of the early movement' as it helped to alleviate the severe guilt she felt when questioning the quality of care that she provided to her

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise* (London: Penguin, 1967), p. 50.

<sup>183</sup> Anon., 'The Dangers of Professionalism', p. 5; Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, pp. 79-105.

<sup>184</sup> Women's Library @ LSE, Papers of Amanda Sebestyen, 7SEB/A/13, Amanda Sebestyen, 'History of Belsize Lane consciousness-raising group' (1978), p. 5; Hughes, 'The Socio-Cultural Milieux of the Left in Post-War Britain', p. 255; Hughes, *Young Lives on the Left*.

<sup>185</sup> Sebestyen, 'History of Belsize Lane consciousness-raising group', p. 5; Hughes, 'The Socio-Cultural Mileux of the Left in Post-War Britain', p. 255.



children.<sup>186</sup> Drawing on an oral history interview with Nava in 2009, Hughes describes how Wortis' critique of Bowlby resonated with Nava because it reflected the internal division she felt between her self-definition as an "earth mother" who enjoyed pregnancy and motherhood, and her identification with radical, oppositional politics.<sup>187</sup> Therefore, critical discussions about Bowlby's work not only contributed to a reappraisal of the family within the WLM, but also had a strong impact on the self-perceptions of the Women's Liberation group members involved.<sup>188</sup>

By aligning the views of Laing and Cooper with WLM discussions about motherhood and the family, the Psychology Group highlighted a lack of awareness of gender issues in work produced by prominent anti-psychiatrists. Introducing their aims in *Shrew*, the Psychology Group underlined the absence of oppositional networks offering alternative forms of mental health care specifically to women. Interviewing Juliet Mitchell for *Spare Rib* in 1974, Psychology Group member Carol Morrell discussed Laing's failure to differentiate between men and women's experiences of mental illness.<sup>189</sup> Feminist theorists and historians have critiqued Cooper and Laing's use of case studies on female patients. Coppock and Hopton question the methodological rigour of Laing and Esterson's *Society, Madness and the Family*, stating that they failed to qualify why they only focused on female patients. Writing in 1985, Showalter qualified why antipsychiatry was employed in the WLM to conceptualise the links between madness and femininity. She argued that anti-psychiatric examinations of the family lent themselves to WLM members' assertions that women's mental health concerns were linked to their perceived 'violation of sex-role

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<sup>186</sup> Sebestyen, 'History of Belsize Lane consciousness-raising group', p. 5.

<sup>187</sup> Hughes, 'The Socio-Cultural Mileux of the Left in Post-War Britain', p. 256.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255-256.

<sup>189</sup> Carol Morrell and Juliet Mitchell, 'I went to Freud first of all and sort of perversely, found that his theory was incredibly useful for understanding femininity', *Spare Rib*, No. 22 (April 1974), pp. 6-8 (p. 6).

expectations'.<sup>190</sup> However, she questioned to what extent Laing explicitly confronted the perceived link between sex-roles and schizophrenia.<sup>191</sup> She argued that Cooper's promotion of 'bed therapy', where therapists were encouraged to pursue sexual relationships with their clients, reinforced destructive forms of patriarchal authority and encouraged sexual abuse.<sup>192</sup>

The Psychology Group drew on their personal experiences to argue that the structures and assumptions associated with the traditional family reinforced women's repression regarding their mental health. Aligning their personal accounts with anti-psychiatric viewpoints, Psychology Group members presented the traditional family as an arena in which women's symptoms of mental illness were aggravated and pathologised. Drawing on existing discussions of Bowlby within the WLM, the Psychology Group argued that psychological discourses were utilised by individuals at both national and highly localised levels, from government policy makers to close relatives, to influence women's perceptions of their mental health and their approach to childrearing. The Psychology Group therefore asserted that psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses did not just impact on women who sought provision for specific mental health concerns, but also influenced the ways in which they experienced their everyday lives. In doing so, Group members highlighted how anti-psychiatrists had previously overlooked issues of gender in their work. The Psychology Group therefore utilised their personal experiences to formulate a political approach to psychotherapy that recognised but also sought to expand existing feminist and anti-psychiatric perspectives. Foregrounding the need to adequately support WLM members who were experiencing mental health concerns, the Psychology Group did not reject certain psychotherapeutic approaches on the basis of their patriarchal

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<sup>190</sup> Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago Press, 1987), p. 222.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>192</sup> David Cooper, *The Grammar of Living: An Examination of Political Acts* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 41; Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 247.

tenets, but rather called for women's increased agency in the provision of their good mental health. Drawing on the Women's Health Movement methods and personal politics already equated with the WLM, the Psychology Group asserted that women could employ psychotherapeutic approaches to not only overcome individual mental concerns, but to also understand their repression in society more broadly.

## **The LWLW Psychology Group's Self-Help Initiatives**

This chapter has explored how the Psychology Group drew on their own experiences to argue the relevance of psychotherapeutic ideas to the personal politics of Women's Liberation. As well as using psychotherapeutic approaches to understand the social repression of women, they established initiatives that aimed to support individual WLM members. Writing in *Shrew*, Psychology Group members outlined their plans for a self-help therapy scheme that would use therapeutic approaches to support women experiencing emotional distress within the LWLW and wider WLM.<sup>193</sup> The Group's proposed scheme contained three parts. Firstly, the Group aimed to compile a list of sympathetic LWLW members who women could ring if they felt depressed or isolated, and required external but informal support. Secondly, the Group planned to facilitate structured, one-to-one sessions that informed women about co-counselling. Thirdly, Psychology Group members aimed to establish several community-based self-help groups that employed various psychotherapies to support women experiencing personal and emotional concerns.

The Psychology Group advertised their self-help scheme in the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*. In November 1971, Carola Klein promoted an 'experimental project' that would bring women together on a one-to-one basis to discuss their 'personal

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<sup>193</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*, p. 1.

problems'.<sup>194</sup> Klein's emphasis on the project's 'experimental' nature indicates that it was deemed new and innovative, providing a form of support that other practices within the WLM had failed to facilitate. Five months after Klein's initial advertisement, the Psychology Group conceded that their proposed telephone support project was still in its infancy.<sup>195</sup> The Group acknowledged the complexities inherent in setting up a multi-faceted self-help scheme and requested the support of other LWLW members.<sup>196</sup> Exploring the two schemes subsequently developed by the Psychology Group - the Women's Self-Help Therapy Group and the Women's Re-evaluation Co-counselling Group- highlights the issues that its members encountered as they applied their politicised approach to psychotherapy in a community-based setting.

I argue that the self-help initiatives established by the Psychology Group represented an alternative form of community care formulated by women for women that acted as a precursor to subsequent community-based feminist therapy organisations, including the Women's Therapy Centre (WTC). Feminist therapist Susie Orbach distinguishes the WTC from previous radical therapeutic initiatives because they were introspective rather than focused on supporting women in the wider community.<sup>197</sup> Her perspective questions the inclusivity of the psychotherapeutic approaches that the Psychology Group explored and endorsed. Members of the Psychology Group did, however, promote their self-help schemes to all women, regardless of their involvement Women's Liberation politics and psychotherapy.<sup>198</sup> Whilst the Psychology Group did not define the approaches that they promoted as 'feminist therapy', some individuals involved went on to work as psychotherapists at the WTC.<sup>199</sup> Weaving their narratives into the

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<sup>194</sup> Feminist Library, Women's Liberation Workshop, 'Meetings and Events', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 59 (21 November 1971), p. 1.

<sup>195</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*, p. 1.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*; Eva Friedrich, 'Women's Self-Help Meeting', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), p. 16.

<sup>197</sup> Susie Orbach, personal interview,

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> Margaret Green, personal interview (5 September 2017).

history of feminist therapy highlights the historical continuities that existed between the Psychology Group's self-help initiatives and subsequent feminist therapeutic organisations.

### **i. The Women's Self-Help Therapy Group**

In May 1972, Psychology Group member Eve Friedrich requested that women interested in supporting a self-help scheme should attend a 'Self-Help Meeting' at a women's centre based at the Hole in the Wall in Camden.<sup>200</sup> Writing in the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter* in October 1972, Judith Brandt and Gillian Riegler reported that the meeting resulted in the successful establishment of an 'all-woman Leaderless Therapy Group'.<sup>201</sup> Also referred to as the Women's Self-Help Therapy Group, it operated without a leader to counter concerns that traditional psychoanalysis reinforced patriarchal social structures and perpetuated women's assumed dependency on men.<sup>202</sup> Despite being leaderless, the Women's Self-Help Therapy Group still adopted a formal structure. It met for a specific length of time at the same time and place every week, appearing to replicate the conditions of safety that Psychology Group members felt were facilitated in structured psychoanalysis sessions. It was important that the Therapy Group remained impersonal. Participants were discouraged from socialising with one another to stop the formation of sub-groups and to ensure that participants were able to open up about personal issues they normally felt uncomfortable discussing in front of friends.<sup>203</sup> Writing in *Spare Rib* in 1973, Psychology Group member Carol Morrell described how the Women's Self-Help Therapy Group incorporated traditional and experimental therapeutic methods. The group's strict structure was comparable to traditional group therapy, whilst its leaderless

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<sup>200</sup> LWLW Psychology Group, *Shrew*, p. 1; Feminist Library, Eva Friedrich, 'Women's Self-Help Meeting', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), p. 16; Feminist Library, Women's Liberation Workshop, 'Meetings and Events', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 78 (23 April 1972), p. 1.

<sup>201</sup> Feminist Library, Judith Brandt and Gillian Riegler, 'Self-Help Psychotherapy Groups', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 103 (15 October 1972), p. 2.

<sup>202</sup> Carol Morrell, 'The Hostess with the Mostest', *Spare Rib*, Vol. 16 (October 1973), pp. 37-38.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

format suggested a more experimental approach.<sup>204</sup> This incorporation of traditional and experimental methods indicates that Psychology Group members sought to reconfigure existing group psychotherapies in accordance with their own experiences as mental health patients, therapy clients, and WLM activists.<sup>205</sup>

The Women's Self-Help Therapy Group was seen to provide emotional and therapeutic support previously neglected in WLM consciousness-raising groups. Morrell described how the Self-Help Therapy Group was distinguishable from a consciousness-raising group because its participants did not discuss how their personal issues were aligned with theoretical debates within the WLM.<sup>206</sup> She asserted that consciousness-raising groups were not equipped to deal with the emotional distress fostered by the important changes women made as they aligned their lifestyles with the politics of Women's Liberation.<sup>207</sup> The Women's Self-Help Therapy Group allowed women to explore these emotional concerns more readily. Morrell reiterated the Psychology Group's assertion that exploring emotional issues would bolster the strength of the WLM. She stated that 'the way we cope with beginning to be ourselves will affect the rest of our progress', enabling WLM members to better engage with and promote the politics and aims of Women's Liberation.<sup>208</sup>

In her oral history interview, however, Carola Klein indicated that the Therapy Group replicated some of the issues present in consciousness-raising groups.<sup>209</sup> She recalled how the Therapy Group initially contained seven or eight members and 'went well'.<sup>210</sup> After much discussion, the Therapy Group decided to let a man to join. In doing so,

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<sup>204</sup> Morrell, 'The Hostess with the Mostest', p. 37.

<sup>205</sup> Anon., 'Psychotherapy', *Shrew*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1972), p. 7.

<sup>206</sup> Morrell, 'On Not Being the Hostess with the Mostest', p. 38.

<sup>207</sup> Carol Morrell, 'Why is liberation an emotional struggle?', *Spare Rib*, No. 14 (August 1973), pp. 35-37 (p. 37).

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> Klein, personal interview.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

its members overlooked their initial aim to establish a women-only group. Klein described how he and another woman in the Group formed a relationship but kept it secret from the other members. When the other members found out, Klein stated that it felt like something had gone wrong in the Therapy Group because the issue had not been raised in their discussions. Klein suggested that the relationship was difficult to address because the individuals in the relationship had met as a result of attending the Therapy Group. The relationship directly contravened the Group's emphasis on limited socialising between members.<sup>211</sup> As previously discussed, consciousness-raising groups often failed to explore how their promotion of collective politics, identities, and experiences led to the marginalisation of some members. The Self-Help Therapy Group fostered a strict and boundaried routine, before relaxing these restrictions. Participants did not necessarily discuss their emotional responses to the constraints the Therapy Group placed on socialisation. Its members felt that they could not raise particular concerns within the Self-Help Therapy Group, leading to specific organisational and emotional issues remaining unexplored. Klein's account therefore highlights the issues encountered by Therapy Group members as they sought to create a therapeutic approach informed by the politics of Women's Liberation that was both non-hierarchical and boundaried.

The Psychology Group negotiated existing Women's Liberation critiques of psychotherapy when promoting the Self-Help Therapy Group. Describing the tenets of its self-help approach in *Spare Rib*, Morrell conceded that the term 'therapy' had 'unpleasant associations for many people' because it implied that individuals needed to be 're-moulded'.<sup>212</sup> Foregrounding the Group's 'self-help' philosophy over its therapeutic tenets, Morrell sought to make the Group's innovative approach palatable to *Spare Rib* readers, indicating the continued dominance of feminist critiques of psychotherapy in the early to

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<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> Morrell, 'Why is liberation an emotional struggle?', p. 36.

mid-1970s. Women who joined the Self-Help Therapy Group also encountered opposition from other WLM members. South African-born Women's Liberation activist Margaret Green, who moved to England in the early 1970s, described how her partner at the time was horrified when she first joined initiatives founded by the Psychology Group.<sup>213</sup> As she developed her interest in psychotherapy, Green had to re-evaluate her own attitude towards therapeutic approaches. When she initially became involved in oppositional politics, Green deemed therapy a 'bourgeois kind of project'.<sup>214</sup> She attributed this perspective to her political engagement in South Africa, where there were 'rigid ideas of what constituted politics...people thought that everything would be cured by the revolution'.<sup>215</sup> When she first became involved in psychotherapy she felt like she was doing something highly contradictory, recalling her thought process as: 'You're crazy! You don't believe in it! You are totally opposed to it!'.<sup>216</sup> Green's account demonstrates that she initially felt that her interest in psychotherapy contradicted her political affiliation with the WLM. Her narrative indicates that the links that the Psychology Group drew between feminism and psychotherapy were not immediately obvious to other WLM members. Activists like Green had to work to understand how WLM politics, psychology, and psychotherapy could be aligned in their everyday lives.

Morrell's emphasis on 'self-help' when writing in *Spare Rib* also reflected the broader emergence of self-help as a practical political approach in the WLM in the early 1970s. 'Self-help' approaches such as self-examination were integral to Women's Health Movement activism. Groups including the LWLW's West London Contraception Action Group, founded in 1971, replicated American self-help clinic techniques, providing advice

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<sup>213</sup> Margaret Green, personal interview.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*



and information about contraception and abortion and offering free pregnancy tests.<sup>217</sup>

Publications that emerged out of the American Women's Health Movement, like the Boston Women's Health Book Collective's *Our Bodies Ourselves*, also contained detailed information about self-help techniques and became increasingly influential in the English WLM in the early 1970s.<sup>218</sup> Morrell recognised and endorsed Women's Health Movement approaches whilst promoting Psychology Group initiatives, further highlighting the connections that existed between various women's health groups in the WLM. Her articles therefore situate the Psychology Group in the wider history of the Women's Health Movement in England.

Thomson historicises WLM members' promotion of self-help techniques over therapeutic approaches. He argues that consciousness-raising and self-help were viewed as practices where women worked together to counter the 'social causes of unhappiness', whereas therapy was seen to individualise social issues and replicate authoritarian, patriarchal relationships.<sup>219</sup> Thomson connects consciousness-raising to a broader public interest in self-help that aligned the popularisation of psychology with a general distrust of clinical expertise imposed from the top down.<sup>220</sup> As a result, whilst Psychology Group initiatives emerged out of a feminist culture that associated health issues with concerns about the efficacy of Women's Liberation politics, it also shared commonalities with a wider public tendency towards self-help. Thomson's account conflates consciousness-raising with Women's Liberation self-help approaches. The Psychology Group, however,

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<sup>217</sup> Smith, 'Medical and Biological Group'; Feminist Library, Highbury and Stoke Newington Women's Group, 'Free Pregnancy Testing and Information', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 114 (31 December 1972), p. 2; Feminist Library, London Women's Liberation Workshop, 'Meetings and Events', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 69 (6 February 1972) p. 1.

<sup>218</sup> Boston Women's Health Book Collective, *Our Bodies Ourselves*; Angela Phillips and Jill Rakusen, 'Preface to the UK edition', in Boston Women's Health Book Collective, *Our Bodies Ourselves: A Health Book by and for Women*, British edition by Angela Phillips and Jill Rakusen (London: Penguin Books, 1978), pp. 9-10 (p. 9).

<sup>219</sup> Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, p. 282.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

presented their self-help therapy as distinct from consciousness-raising because it aimed to counter the negative group dynamics that the practice fostered. In doing so, they created a therapeutic approach that problematised the patriarchal structures of traditional psychoanalysis whilst also seeking to rectify the detrimental tenets of practices promoted within the WLM itself.

## **ii. The Re-evaluation Counselling Group**

The LWLW Psychology Group's promotion of self-help was also influenced by the burgeoning therapeutic Growth Movement. Alongside the Women's Self-Help Therapy Group, Psychology Group members established a Re-Evaluation Counselling Group.<sup>221</sup> Re-evaluation counselling, also called co-counselling, emerged in Britain in 1970.<sup>222</sup> Evison and Horobin describe co-counselling as a 'therapeutic process which uses catharsis to change rigid, maladaptive modes of thinking, feeling and acting'.<sup>223</sup> The technique was established by Seattle-based Harvey Jackins, who set up his first counselling agency in 1952.<sup>224</sup> Jackins described catharsis as a process which used actions including laughing, crying, shaking and yawning to 'reset' an individual's body and mind after they experienced negative emotions.<sup>225</sup> He believed that co-counselling was best practised in pairs, with participants alternating the roles of counsellor and client.<sup>226</sup> Jackins disseminated the ideas of co-counselling through lectures and workshops and set up a Re-evaluation Counselling organisation in 1970.<sup>227</sup> In the same year, California-based psychologist Tom Scheff taught

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<sup>221</sup> Carol Morrell, 'Co-counselling Group', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 102 (8 October 1972), p. 1; Carol Morrell, 'On Not Being the Hostess with the Mostest', p. 37.

<sup>222</sup> Rose Evison and Richard Horobin, 'Co-counselling', in John Rowan and Windy Dryden (eds), *Innovative Therapy in Britain* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988), pp. 85-109 (p. 87).

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86; Harvey Jackins, *The Human Side of Human Beings* (Seattle: Rational Island Publishers, 1965).

<sup>226</sup> Evison and Horobin, 'Co-counselling', p. 85.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

the first co-counselling workshop in London.<sup>228</sup> A subsequent workshop held by Scheff in 1971 resulted in the authorisation of several British-based co-counselling teachers, including John Heron who was the director of the Human Potential Research Unit at the University of Surrey.<sup>229</sup> Heron began running workshops for beginners in both Britain and continental Europe.<sup>230</sup>

Rowan and Dryden classify co-counselling as an 'innovative therapy', a therapeutic approach regarded as new and reflective of the eclectic nature of psychotherapy in late twentieth century Britain.<sup>231</sup> The Psychology Group's promotion of co-counselling reflected the alignment of personal growth approaches with countercultural and oppositional politics. Writing in *Spare Rib* in 1973, Morrell referred to co-counselling as the 'most radical of radical therapies', arguing that it allowed participants to work on themselves at their own pace and take control of their emotional lives without being directed or analysed.<sup>232</sup> Morrell believed that co-counselling was especially effective in facilitating women's self-realisation. Co-counselling enabled participants to take control of their therapy, therefore fulfilling the Psychology Group's aim to empower women in choosing therapeutic approaches tailored to their individual needs.<sup>233</sup> Morrell aligned co-counselling with Women's Liberation politics, arguing that Jackins based the approach on the idea that the 'functioning of society (including behaviour, roles, values) depends on the systematic and forceful repression of emotions'.<sup>234</sup> She argued that co-counselling allowed individuals to express emotions in a positive way, developing an understanding of their causes and

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<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> John Rowan and Windy Dryden, 'Innovative Therapy in Britain: Introduction', in Rowan and Dryden (eds), *Innovative Therapy in Britain*, pp. 1-11 (p. 1).

<sup>232</sup> Carol Morrell, 'With a little help from ourselves', *Spare Rib*, No. 15 (September 1973), pp. 37-38 (p. 37).

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*; Carol Morrell, 'Co-counselling Group'.

<sup>234</sup> Morrell, 'With a little help from ourselves'.

facilitating a “mental clearing” which broke down unhelpful emotional patterns.<sup>235</sup> Morrell asserted that the approach, in exploring the causes of repression, recognised the ways in which emotional expression was gendered.<sup>236</sup> Co-counselling therefore enabled women to express traditionally unfeminine emotions like anger, as well as develop an awareness that their emotional repression was connected to wider societal inequalities.

Despite emphasising the ways in which co-counselling ensured women’s self-realisation, Morrell deviated from the aims of the Psychology Group when promoting the Re-evaluation Counselling Group in a 1972 edition of *Shrew*. She stated that individuals could only benefit from co-counselling if they received approximately forty hours of training from a certified co-counselling teacher.<sup>237</sup> In 1973, all information about local co-counselling groups and teachers was available from John Heron who ran the Guildford-based Re-evaluation Counselling Headquarters.<sup>238</sup> Morrell’s assertion that co-counselling could only be practised following extensive training appeared to promote a hierarchical structure of expertise that countered the Psychology Group’s critique of expert authority in professional psychiatric medicine. Given that the majority of early co-counselling proponents in England were male, this emphasis on training replicated the patriarchal therapeutic authority that the Psychology Group sought to undermine. However, Morrell attributed her emphasis on training to her experience organising the Women’s Self-Help Therapy Group. She thought that the Women’s Self-Help Therapy Group was successful because all its members were involved in psychoanalysis or therapy. In transforming their political and therapeutic aims into practice, it became clear to Psychology Group members that their self-help groups would be more effective if they contained individuals with therapeutic experience.<sup>239</sup> Morrell described how its members, when establishing the

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<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

Women's Re-evaluation Counselling Group, were immediately aware that they did not have the skills required to co-counsel successfully and therefore invited a female therapist to train them. The Group requested the expertise of Jill Wilkson, a co-counsellor who had been personally trained by the practice's founder Harvey Jackins.<sup>240</sup> The promotion of groups for women by women countered the potential replication of patriarchal therapeutic authority in the co-counselling training process.

Advertisements for these Psychology Group's self-help initiatives linked the politics of Women's Liberation with personal growth movement approaches. Morrell first advertised the Psychology Group's co-counselling group in an October 1972 edition of the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*.<sup>241</sup> She described it as a 'therapy group, which practices self-help techniques'.<sup>242</sup> In a subsequent advertisement, Morrell defined co-counselling as a self-help therapy and emphasised the practice's radical grassroots.<sup>243</sup> By 1973, two women's co-counselling groups had developed through the Psychology Group's Women's Self-Help Therapy Scheme.<sup>244</sup> Margaret Green responded to the Psychology Group's advertisement for the Self-Help Therapy and Re-evaluation Counselling Groups whilst recovering from a corneal graft. In her oral history interview, Green stated that

during my recovery process, which took a long time, something like two months, I became, for the first time in my life, I would say depressed and I started to look for ways to deal with my feelings.<sup>245</sup>

Green's narrative confirmed Psychology Group members' concerns that consciousness-raising failed to adequately support women as they explored their experiences of emotional distress. Green described how she joined the Chalk Farm consciousness-raising group in London when she first moved to England. At the group, Green discussed personal

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<sup>240</sup> Carol Morrell, 'Co-Counselling Group', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 103 (15 October 1972), p. 2.

<sup>241</sup> Morrell, 'Co-counselling Group', p. 1.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>244</sup> Morrell, 'With a little help from ourselves', p. 38.

<sup>245</sup> Green, personal interview.

issues such as menstruation. She recalled how she described a particular experience to the other women in her group, but 'made it a very funny story for everybody else, and they were all laughing, when actually it was a painful memory for me'.<sup>246</sup> Green's account reinforces the fact that some consciousness-raising participants employed humour to diffuse the difficult emotional issues that they discussed in groups.<sup>247</sup>

Green felt that the Re-evaluation Group provided her with the opportunity to explore why she felt the need to use humour to discuss her traumatic experiences. She described how she was 'completely taken' with co-counselling because 'it was just one thing, which was that crying, yawning, shaking and all of this wasn't the actual hurt. It was recovering from the hurt'.<sup>248</sup> In seeking to understand the ways in which she recalled and reflected on her past experiences in a group setting, Green realised that she wanted to become a psychotherapist. Within a year of discovering co-counselling through the Psychology Group, she left her research job in biochemistry to practice it full-time. She completed her psychotherapy training throughout the early 1970s, before joining the WTC in 1976. Green's account connects initiatives established by the Psychology Group with subsequent feminist therapy organisations, as well as institutions that emerged out the anti-psychiatric movement in England more broadly.

The establishment of the Re-evaluation Counselling Group inspired other WLM members to engage in co-counselling. In early 1973, the *Newsletter* listed an additional co-counselling group affiliated with the LWLW. In May 1973, the group's convenors, Marge and Ellie, held an introductory meeting for women interested in learning about co-counselling run by female co-counselling teacher, Pat Carey.<sup>249</sup> Neither Marge nor Ellie

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<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*; Rogers, 'Feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 106.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> LWLW, 'Meetings, Events, Etc.', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 131 (29 April 1972), pp. 1-2 (p. 1); LWLW, 'Meetings, Events, Etc.', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 133 (12 May 1973), pp. 1-2 (p. 1).

were listed as members of the Psychology Group. This suggests that the Psychology Group's initial promotion of co-counselling led to the dissemination of the practice elsewhere in the Workshop. Like Morrell, Marge and Ellie promoted co-counselling as a form of self-help, describing it as a 'process whereby people can learn to exchange effective help with each other or to free themselves from the effects of past distressing experiences'.<sup>250</sup>

Through the establishment of the Re-Evaluation Counselling Group, Psychology Group members promoted a form of therapeutic self-help influenced by the personal growth movement and Women's Liberation politics. This politicised approach to psychotherapy was promoted elsewhere in the WLM. In 1972, California-based WLM member and self-defined feminist body therapist Anne Kent Rush published *Getting Clear: Body Work for Women*.<sup>251</sup> *Getting Clear* contained exercises and therapeutic approaches designed to improve women's physical and mental self-awareness.<sup>252</sup> Kent argued that women's incorporation of psychotherapy into their everyday lives allowed them to 'continue to develop and grow consciously', whilst also learning the 'reality of being female' in contemporary society.<sup>253</sup> *Getting Clear* was informed by Women's Health Movement activism. It contained details on how to conduct a self-examination, describing how it improved women's knowledge of their own bodies and helped them overcome their concerns about attending professional gynaecological appointments.<sup>254</sup> Rush was also a member of the Health Centre Function Group, which successfully petitioned Berkeley City Council to fund the establishment of a women's health centre that provided abortion counselling and medical referrals.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> LWLW, 'Meetings', *Newsletter*, No. 16 (14 November, 1973), p. 1.

<sup>251</sup> Anne Kent Rush, *Getting Clear: Body Work for Women* (1972. 2014 edition).

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11; Anica Vesel Mander and Anne Kent Rush, *Feminism as Therapy* (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 134.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101-103.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

*Getting Clear* aligned advice about physical self-examination with information about personal growth therapies. Rush described how bodywork therapy exercises enabled women to reintegrate their feelings with their actions and empowered them to 'have the choice to make changes'.<sup>256</sup> She included a series of verbal self-awareness techniques informed by Gestalt therapy to aid women's understanding of their societal roles.<sup>257</sup> Rush was involved in the personal growth movement, teaching massage techniques at one of the first growth centres, the California-based Esalen Institute, in the early 1970s. She described how she wrote *Getting Clear* in order to develop a better understanding of her feminist politics and highlight the crucial work of several female psychotherapists associated with the Californian growth movement.<sup>258</sup> Much like the Psychology Group's initiatives, Kent promoted a form of self-help that integrated her therapeutic experience with her Women's Liberation and Women's Health Movement politics. This formulation of self-help inspired the establishment of numerous other therapy-oriented self-help groups within the English WLM from the early to mid-1970s. Fiona McKay recounted her experience of setting up a self-help group in a 1976 edition of *Spare Rib*.<sup>259</sup> On establishing the group in January 1975, its members were unsure how to employ self-help approaches. McKay described how they practised the breathing and relaxation exercises detailed in *Getting Clear* in order to become more acquainted with self-help techniques and decide how they wished to proceed with the group.<sup>260</sup>

The Psychology Group and Kent's forms of psychotherapeutic self-help also informed the development of personal growth approaches by highlighting the 'political nature at the heart of personal relationships and identity'.<sup>261</sup> Thomson discusses how key

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<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52-54.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>259</sup> Fiona McKay, 'Self-help therapy', *Spare Rib*, No. 48 (July, 1976), pp. 14-16 (p. 14).

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>261</sup> Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, p. 278.



figures in the British growth movement, such as John Rowan, maintained links with the WLM throughout the mid-1970s.<sup>262</sup> In 1974, Rowan co-founded Red Therapy, a leaderless therapy group that contained individuals from a variety of revolutionary and anti-authoritarian political groups, including WLM members.<sup>263</sup> The group assessed how the alignment of political and therapeutic approaches could positively influence their everyday lives. Red Therapy members raised similar issues to the Psychology Group, exploring how political activists continued to unconsciously endorse societal inequalities whilst engaging in oppositional action.<sup>264</sup> The interrelation of Red Therapy and women's movement interactions with psychotherapy will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

Examining the development of the Women's Self-Help Therapy and Re-evaluation Counselling Groups demonstrates the ways in which Psychology Group members applied their politicised approach to psychotherapy in a community-based setting. Psychology Group members employed existing psychotherapies whilst also seeking to subvert the patriarchal structure of traditional psychoanalytic relationships. In doing so, the Psychology Group developed a form of therapeutic self-help that aligned Women's Health Movement activism with the ideas and approaches of the personal growth movement. Historians and practitioners assert that the incorporation of Women's Liberation politics into the personal growth movement aided its awareness of gender issues. Whilst some Psychology Group members documented its self-help initiatives as being successful, others raised concerns that they replicated negative group dynamics associated with consciousness-raising. Klein's account demonstrates that the Psychology Group experienced organisational and emotional issues as it sought to practically apply its ideas. Morrell also indicates the ways in

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<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 277-78.

<sup>263</sup> Red Therapy, *Red Therapy* (London: Rye Press, 1978), p. 1, available at [http://www.eastlondonbigflame.org.uk/files/Red%20Therapy%20pamphlet\\_1.pdf](http://www.eastlondonbigflame.org.uk/files/Red%20Therapy%20pamphlet_1.pdf) [accessed 1 August 2016]; John Rowan, *The Horned God: Feminism and Men as Wounding and Healing* (London: Routledge, 1987), pp. 20-22.

<sup>264</sup> Red Therapy, *Red Therapy*.

which Psychology Group members both worked within and challenged the organisational structures of existing personal growth approaches. In ensuring that they used female co-counselling trainers, the Re-evaluation Counselling Group avoided replicating a hierarchal structure that reflected the patriarchal authority of traditional psychotherapeutic approaches.

By utilising personal growth movement methods influenced by the 1960s counterculture, the Psychology Group presented their self-help initiatives as an alternative to existing state-led and private mental health treatments and therapies that were seen to reinforce women's patriarchal repression. Despite this, members of the Psychology Group did not entirely reject work taking place in state-run mental health institutions and hospitals. In an October 1972 edition of the *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, Psychology Group members Judith Brandt and Gillian Reigler advertised for women to join Dr Estela Welldon's all-woman psychotherapy group at the Paddington Day Hospital.<sup>265</sup> Brandt and Reigler described Welldon as an 'aware woman therapist' and therefore did not see their endorsement of a state-led mental health initiative as contravening the feminist ethos of their psychotherapeutic approach.<sup>266</sup> Their promotion of Welldon's work was also reflective of Paddington Day Hospital's reputation as a radical site for psychology and psychiatry. Protests in response to its proposed closure led to the formation of the Mental Patients' Union (MPU), which played a central role in the development of the service user movement in late twentieth century England.<sup>267</sup> The links between women's movement mental health activism and the service user movement will be explored more readily later in this thesis.

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<sup>265</sup> Feminist Library, Judith Brandt and Gillian Reigler, 'Self-Help Psychotherapy Groups', *Women's Liberation Workshop Newsletter*, No. 103 (15 October 1972), p. 2.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 144; Spandler, *Asylum to Action*, p. 13.

The Psychology Group's alignment of Women's Liberation politics and self-help therapy was underpinned by a desire to empower women in the provision of their own mental health, rather than to simply endorse existing perspectives on psychiatry and psychology within the Movement. As a result, the Psychology Group provided the foundational tenets for the development of feminist therapy in England. Feminist therapists have queried to what extent the Psychology Group provisioned for women experiencing mental health concerns beyond the WLM. Although the Group emphasised its inclusivity, the predominantly middle-class backgrounds of its members as well as its overt advertising in LWLW publications, meant that the majority of its self-help participants were also Movement members. However, women involved in the Psychology Group initiatives subsequently worked for projects that became increasingly community-oriented, such as the WTC.

### **The LWLW Psychology Group in the mid-1970s**

Promoting the Women's Self-Help Therapy Group in a 1973 edition of *Spare Rib*, Morrell referenced the ideas and aims of the 'old psychology group'.<sup>268</sup> In her article, she suggested that the Psychology Group in its original, discursive format had disbanded after it established its self-help initiatives.<sup>269</sup> Despite the fact that they no longer held regular meetings, members of the Psychology Group continued to disseminate their ideas. Between 1973 and 1974, Psychology Group member Carol Morrell published a regular psychology column in women's movement magazine *Spare Rib*. She used her column to promote the Psychology Group's self-help initiatives and demonstrate how ideas developed within the Psychology Group were subsequently drawn on and expanded by other WLM members.

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<sup>268</sup> Morrell, 'On Not Being the Hostess with the Mostest'.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

In April 1974, Morrell interviewed Juliet Mitchell, who had recently published *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*.<sup>270</sup> Mitchell was already a prominent Women's Liberation member. Previously an editor of the *New Left Review*, her 1971 book *Women's Estate* was seen to influence the development of a feminist consciousness within the WLM.<sup>271</sup> *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* traced the ways in which psychoanalytic ideas of female sexuality had developed since Freud. Mitchell argued that feminist critiques of psychoanalysis focused only on Freud's early assessments of female sexuality despite the fact that he subsequently redefined his approach.<sup>272</sup> She asserted that psychoanalysis was not a heterogeneous discipline, but rather a set of theories that were constantly developed and critiqued.<sup>273</sup> Mitchell stated that psychoanalysis did not prescribe to men and women how they should live their lives, but rather provided an assessment of why they came to adopt normative gender roles.<sup>274</sup> Therefore, psychoanalytic theory could be used to better understand the ways in which patriarchal structures operated and were upheld in society.<sup>275</sup>

The ideas promoted in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* were highly comparable to those developed by Psychology Group members. Mitchell was already known to the Psychology Group due to her prominent position within the WLM. In her oral history interview, Klein recalled attending a *Shrew* collective meeting at Mitchell's house, describing her as part of an older and more established set of Movement members.<sup>276</sup> Morrell used her interview with Mitchell to document their comparable views on

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<sup>270</sup> Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*; Morrell and Mitchell, 'I went to Freud first of all', pp. 6-8.

<sup>271</sup> Juliet Mitchell, *Women's Estate* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971); Janet Batsleer et al., *Rewriting English: Cultural Politics of Gender and Class* (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 143.

<sup>272</sup> Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 49.

<sup>273</sup> Rosemary Davies, 'Juliet Mitchell', *Institute of Psychoanalysis* (March, 2016), available at <http://psychoanalysis.org.uk/our-authors-and-theorists/juliet-mitchell> [accessed 23 June 2016].

<sup>274</sup> Davies, 'Juliet Mitchell'; Mitchell, *Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne: Feminine Sexuality* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 3.

<sup>275</sup> Davies, 'Juliet Mitchell'; Juliet Mitchell, *Siblings, Sex and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), p. 1.

<sup>276</sup> Klein, personal interview.

psychoanalysis and anti-psychiatry.<sup>277</sup> In the interview, Mitchell described how it had never occurred to her to use anti-psychiatric perspectives to understand the position of women in society, due to anti-psychiatrists' failure to recognise gender issues.<sup>278</sup> Morrell concurred that she was 'troubled' by this lack of recognition, describing to Mitchell that 'it's one of the reasons the women's self-help therapy groups were formed, to work on their own problems together'.<sup>279</sup> Mitchell recognised the significance of the Psychology Group's self-help initiatives, stating:

Yes, I think that it is just terribly important. Because if you have a whole area of thinking, especially the psychological area, that doesn't say there is anything specific about women, what are you, as feminists, to do with that?<sup>280</sup>

Chodorow described *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* as the 'first major argument for psychoanalytic feminism'.<sup>281</sup> Morrell's interview highlights how Mitchell's ideas confirmed those already explored within the Psychology Group. It therefore demonstrated how important publications like *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* had their grounding not only in academic feminism, but also grassroots organising around psychotherapy within the WLM.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored how and why some WLM members began to employ psychotherapeutic discourses to understand themselves and support others, despite the strong critique of psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy that existed within the Movement in the early 1970s. The Psychology Group recognised the significance of these existing critical perspectives, drawing on their own negative experiences of mental health services and psychoanalysis to bolster the view that psychiatry and psychology was used to

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<sup>277</sup> Morrell and Mitchell, 'I went to Freud first of all'.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> Nancy J. Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 16.

reinforce women's societal repression. However, members of the Psychology Group also shared their positive experiences of psychotherapy, documenting how the gender of a therapist or the techniques that they applied influenced the effectiveness of their therapeutic approach. The Group therefore emphasised the importance of women's agency in the provision of their mental health. This foregrounding of women's involvement in the provision of their own healthcare, alongside their collaboration with other LWLW health initiatives, means that the Psychology Group can be situated in the wider history of Women's Health Movement activism in England. Mental health activism is absent in histories of the Women's Health Movement due to the WLM's national focus on reproductive health in the late 1960s and early 1970s. WLM members have also recalled that they remained wary of discussing mental health concerns due to a fear of stigmatisation.

Psychology Group members employed their own experiences to champion women's agency in the provision of their own mental health. This chapter therefore highlights how the Psychology Group's promotion of psychotherapeutic discourses was both influenced by and informed the personal politics of Women's Liberation. The Psychology Group formulated a politicised approach to psychotherapy, arguing that therapeutic ideas and practices could be beneficial to women, both in facilitating their good mental health and understanding their patriarchal repression. The Psychology Group's desire to expand perceptions of societal inequality was influenced by wider organisational issues within the WLM and concerns about the effectiveness of Women's Liberation approaches in supporting women emotionally. Whilst practices like consciousness-raising allowed women to express and acknowledge the negative emotions that they associated with patriarchal repression, they did not provide them with the means to overcome them. Group members presented the alignment of Women's Liberation politics and therapeutic techniques as a solution to this absence of adequate emotional support.

The Psychology Group sought to practically apply their politicised approach to psychotherapy by formulating two self-help initiatives within the WLM. Its members justified their incorporation of psychotherapy and oppositional politics by utilising psychoanalytical and personal growth techniques that operated beyond the psychological mainstream. Whilst the Psychology Group promoted its initiatives to all women, the small network in which it operated suggests that its Self-Help Therapy and Re-evaluation Counselling Groups were predominantly populated by WLM members. This issue of accessibility demonstrates why the Psychology Group has not been incorporated into the history of feminist therapy in England. Feminist therapists argue that the subsequent establishment of the WTC represented a disjuncture in women's movement approaches to mental health because it promoted its services specifically to 'non-Movement' women. I argue that the self-help initiatives formed by the Psychology Group were introspective, primarily because they targeted mental health concerns specific to WLM members. In this respect, they did offer a form of community care, but one that was tailored to their own 'social movement community'.<sup>282</sup> However, this introspection does not mean that its ideas and tenets did not contribute to the subsequent development of feminist therapy. One member of the Psychology Group's self-help therapy initiatives went on to work at the Women's Therapy Centre. Therefore, whilst Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* has been championed as the 'first major contribution' to discussions about the incorporation of psychotherapy and Women's Liberation politics, its publication was accompanied by a grassroots activism that sought to champion issues surrounding mental health within the LWLW at a community-based level.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Taylor and Whittier, 'Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities', p. 205.

<sup>283</sup> Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Thought*, p. 16.

### 3.

## **Developing Feminist Therapy in England:** **The Women's Therapy Centre**

On 8 April 1976, the Women's Therapy Centre (WTC) opened in Islington, London.<sup>1</sup>

Founded by Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach, the WTC was the first organisation to promote feminist therapeutic approaches to clients and professionals beyond the women's movement. Whereas previous WLM initiatives, such as the LWLW Psychology Group, demonstrated that psychotherapies could be effectively aligned with Women's Liberation politics, the WTC developed and disseminated a specifically feminist therapeutic approach. This chapter traces the establishment and development of the WTC from 1976 until the mid-1990s. It adopts a loosely chronological structure, initially exploring how Eichenbaum and Orbach formulated their own form of feminist therapy in the United States in the early 1970s before applying it in a community-based setting at the WTC. It subsequently assesses how and why Eichenbaum and Orbach were able to formulate a community-based feminist therapy centre in London in the mid- to late 1970s. These detailed analyses indicate how and why feminist therapy emerged as a distinct psychotherapeutic approach in England. Eichenbaum and Orbach's conceptualisation of feminist therapy was influenced by their personal and political experiences as WLM members and Women's Studies convenors. Assessing its formulation therefore further demonstrates that women's movement members' interactions with psychotherapeutic discourses were influenced by a desire to better understand themselves and their political affiliations. Exploring how the establishment of the WTC was influenced by a radical, entrepreneurial spirit also situates

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<sup>1</sup> Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out- Women's Psychology: A Feminist Psychoanalytic Approach* (London: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 7.



the Centre in a wider, yet largely unexplored, history of alternative community-based organisations in England in the 1970s and 1980s.

In order to assess how the development of feminist therapy was interlinked with the personal politics of women's movement members, this chapter utilises oral history narratives provided by seven WTC practitioners. Using oral history interviews, I became increasingly aware of how much the narratives of leading figures at the WTC have influenced historical understandings of the development of feminist therapy in England.<sup>2</sup> Orbach's continued visibility as a psychotherapist and feminist has provided her with the opportunity to publically document and retell her experiences at the WTC through numerous publications and media appearances.<sup>3</sup> Incorporating the voices of other WTC practitioners expands this historiographical focus on Orbach's narrative. Orbach has stated that the WTC represented a disjuncture from previous radical organisation around psychotherapy and mental health in England.<sup>4</sup> However, assessing the influence of new staff members on the WTC's early development highlights continuities between the Centre and existing radical therapeutic initiatives such as Red Therapy. Tracing these continuities develops an increasingly complex history of radical and alternative therapeutic organisations and collectives in late twentieth-century England. Exploring how WTC practitioners reflected on developments at the Centre across the 1980s, this chapter also interrogates the wider historiographical assumption that feminist organisations became depoliticised across the period. Early proponents of the WTC argued that the Centre

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<sup>2</sup> Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 25; Daniel Kerr, 'Countering Corporate Narratives from the Streets: The Cleveland Homeless Oral History Project', in Pauline Hamilton and Linda Shopes (eds), *Oral History and Public Memories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), pp. 231-52 (p. 233).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*; Orbach, *In Therapy*; Orbach, *Bodies* Appignanesi, Holmes, and Orbach (eds.), *Fifty Shades of Feminism* (London: Virago, 2013); BBC Radio 4, *In Therapy*; Ellen, 'In Therapy- How Conversations with Psychotherapists Really Work by Susie Orbach- review', *The Guardian* (7 November 2016), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/nov/07/in-therapy-how-conversations-psychotherapists-really-work-susie-orbach-review> [accessed 7 April 2017]).

<sup>4</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Orbach, personal interview.

became increasingly apolitical in response to funding constraints initiated by Thatcher's Conservative government. Other practitioners, however, argued that the WTC continued to engage with feminist concerns, taking steps in the early 1990s to improve its accessibility. Assessing why some interviewees defined this focus on accessibility as 'social' rather than 'political' highlights the influence of emotional responses such as nostalgia on practitioners' contemporary involvement in the WTC and their subsequent oral history reflections. Given the WTC's therapeutic foundations, many practitioners used psychotherapeutic discourses to understand this interrelation of the personal, political and professional. The case study contained in this chapter therefore contributes to wider histories of feminist therapy, radical organisations and the women's movement. It also assesses the role that emotions play in the construction of oral history narratives.

## **Developing a Feminist Therapeutic Approach, 1970-1976**

Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach promoted their own form of feminist therapy at the WTC. Tracing the development of their feminist therapy indicates that the approach was founded on their personal experiences and political understandings.<sup>5</sup> Their formulation of a distinct feminist therapy was therefore comparable to WLM members' previous employment of psychotherapeutic discourses. This chapter highlights the centrality of ideas surrounding the 'personal' in early formulations of feminist therapy. In so doing, it further demonstrates that women's movement members' interactions with psychotherapy at a grassroots level were not just reflective of popular feminist critiques of psychiatry and psychology. Rather, they were grounded in the self-understandings that women developed by participating in feminist activism more broadly.

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<sup>5</sup> Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach, *Understanding Women: A Feminist Psychoanalytic Approach* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), pp. 1-3; 5-7.

## i. Political Activism and Women's Studies in New York

Eichenbaum and Orbach had a background in women's movement politics, women's studies and psychotherapy. Orbach was born in Chalk Farm, North London.<sup>6</sup> She moved to the United States to attend university in the late 1960s.<sup>7</sup> Orbach was active in the American New Left and the women's movement from the early 1970s, identifying as a Marxist feminist.<sup>8</sup> She joined the New York Law Commune, a legal collective who represented radical political groups including the Black Panthers, in 1970.<sup>9</sup> Orbach initially engaged with feminism through her work with feminist lawyers. She was further influenced by feminist works by Robin Morgan, Kate Millett and Susan Brownmiller.<sup>10</sup> Orbach subsequently enrolled on the Richmond College Women's Studies programme, one of the first in the United States.<sup>11</sup> She met Eichenbaum there while planning an International Women's Day event.<sup>12</sup> Eichenbaum began to identify as a feminist in the late 1960s. She attributed her

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<sup>6</sup> Joanna Briscoe, 'Susie Orbach: Why is Fat Still a Feminist Issue?', *The Independent* (10 January 2002), available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/susie-orbach-why-fat-is-still-a-feminist-issue-9247749.html> [accessed 20 March 2017].

<sup>7</sup> Susie Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Aida Edemariam, 'The Saturday Interview: Susie Orbach', *The Guardian* (26 February 2011), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2011/feb/26/susie-orbach-endangered-species-summit> [accessed 20 March 2017]. Orbach already had connections to the United States through her American mother Ruth Hubsch (*ibid.*).

<sup>8</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Orbach, personal interview; Edemariam, 'The Saturday Interview'.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*; Matt Apuzzo and Adam Goldman, *Enemies Within: Inside the NYPD's Secret Spying Unit and Bin Laden's Final Plot Against America* (New York: Touchstone, 2013), pp. 41-42; Jim Dwyer, 'Gustin Reichbach, Judge with a Radical History, Dies at 65', *The New York Times* (17 July 2012), available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/19/nyregion/gustin-reichbach-judge-with-a-radical-history-dies-at-65.html> [accessed 9 March 2016]. The Commune, which based its practice on not simply representing clients but also embracing their political struggle, promoted a form of feminist law. Feminist lawyers within the commune called for the restructuring of legal practice, problematising the hierarchies of traditional law partnerships. In doing so, they offered a political critique of repressive societal structures more broadly (Apuzzo et al., *Enemies Within*, p. 41; Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, *Women in Law*. Reprint (New Orleans: Quid Pro Books, 2012), p. 124).

<sup>10</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*. Publications produced by the authors during the period in question include Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful*, Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), and Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975).

<sup>11</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Edmond L. Volpe, *The Comprehensive College: Towards a New Direction in Higher Education* (San Jose: Writers Club Press, 2001), p. 48; Catherine N. Carson, 'A Guide to the Women's Studies Program Records, 1972-2002' (Staten Island: City University of New York, 2005), available at <http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/archives/FindingAids/fa0034.htm> [accessed 9 March 2016].

<sup>12</sup> Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 2; Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

politicisation to being a student from 1969 to 1973, learning about feminism, Marxism and socialism at anti-war demonstrations.<sup>13</sup> Eichenbaum was a member of the socialist feminist New York Women's Union.<sup>14</sup> Its members regularly discussed their personal and political positions as feminists in relation to the anti-war and anti-racism movements.<sup>15</sup> They also formed smaller consciousness-raising groups.<sup>16</sup>

The Richmond College Women's Studies programme was founded in 1972 by Phyllis Katz and Dorothy Riddle.<sup>17</sup> Both specialised in women's psychology, an emergent field influenced by feminist politics and women's studies.<sup>18</sup> Whilst continuing to operate within a scientific framework, Katz and Riddle challenged existing disciplinary practices and sought to extend the boundaries of what constituted research in behavioural psychology.<sup>19</sup> Riddle co-founded the Association for Women in Psychology (AWP) in 1969.<sup>20</sup> The AWP called out sexist practices inherent in the administration of psychology as a discipline, including sexual harassment in the workplace, "men-only" job advertisements, and

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<sup>13</sup> Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*; Judith Ezekiel, *Feminism in the Heartland* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), p. 153.

<sup>15</sup> Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Carson, 'A Guide to the Women's Studies Program Records, 1972-2002'; Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 1. Carson states that Richmond College Women's Studies Programme was the second of its kind in the United States. The first institutional Women's Studies course was established at San Diego State University in 1970 (Carson, 'A Guide to the Women's Studies Program Records'; Alice E. Ginsberg, 'Triumphs, Controversy and Change: Women's Studies 1970s to the Twenty-First Century', in Alice E. Ginsberg (ed.), *The Evolution of American Women's Studies: Reflections on the Triumphs, Controversies and Change* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 9-40 (p. 10)).

<sup>18</sup> Marilyn P. Safir and Kareen Hill, 'International Aspects of the Development of the Psychology of Women and Gender', in Florence L. Denmark and Michele A. Paludi (eds), *Psychology of Women: A Handbook of Issues and Theories. Second Edition*. (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2008), pp. 70-92 (p. 95).

<sup>19</sup> Behavioural psychology became an increasingly significant field within British and American academic psychology in the 1950s and 1960s. Plante argues that the 'behavioural platform was especially attractive to research-oriented clinicians who felt that behaviour therapy approaches proved more effective in empirical research relative to traditional theories and methods such as psychoanalysis' (Thomas G. Plante, *Contemporary Clinical Psychology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 2011), p. 56).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*; Alexander Rutherford and Wade Pickren, 'Women and Minorities in Psychology', in William F. Buskist and Stephen F. Davis (eds), *21<sup>st</sup> Century Psychology: A Reference Handbook* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc., 2008), pp. 21-37 (p. 29).

inadequate childcare facilities at psychology conventions.<sup>21</sup> Proponents of women's psychology also petitioned for an increased focus on women's lives in psychological research. In 1973, Katz helped establish Division 35, an American Psychological Association section that petitioned for increased research on the psychology of women and gender.<sup>22</sup> She also launched and edited the academic journal *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, in 1974, which she described as an 'interdisciplinary, behavioural science journal with a feminist perspective' that aimed to 'illuminate the underlying processes and consequences of gender role socialisation, gendered perceptions and behaviours, and gender stereotypes'.<sup>23</sup> Phyllis Chesler, author of *Women and Madness*, the first full-length volume that drew on women's experiences to offer a feminist critique of psychiatry and psychology, also taught Women's Studies at Richmond College from 1969.<sup>24</sup> In a personal interview, Orbach distinguished her own interest in psychotherapy from those of her colleagues and professors. She described *Women and Madness* as an 'important book' because it demonstrated that the 'mental health of women was judged on entirely different criteria' to men.<sup>25</sup> Despite this, Orbach believed that the studies it contained were 'just part of what we knew really', drawing on existing radical therapeutic perspectives that already recognised how psychotherapy could be used coercively.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Rutherford and Pickren, 'Women and Minorities in Psychology', p. 29.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*; Jeanne Marecek, Ellen B. Kimmel, Mary Crawford and Rachel T. Hare-Mustin, 'Psychology of Women and Gender', in Donald K. Freedheim (ed.), *Handbook of Psychology: Volume 1- History of Psychology* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2003) pp. 249-69 (p. 261).

<sup>23</sup> Phyllis A. Katz, 'Editorial', *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 1975), pp. 1-2; Safir and Hill, 'International Aspects of the Development of the Psychology of Women and Gender', p. 75; Sam V. Cochran, 'Emergence and Development of the Psychology of Men and Masculinity', in Joan C. Chrisler and Donald R. McCreary (eds), *Handbook of Gender Research in Psychology*, Vol. 1 (New York: Springer, 2010), pp. 43-58 (p. 47).

<sup>24</sup> Ginette Castro, *American Feminism: A Contemporary History*, trans. Elizabeth Loverde-Bagwell (New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 276; Phyllis Chesler, interviewed by Ellen Cole, 'A Leader of Women', in Phyllis Chesler, Esther D. Rothblum, and Ellen Cole (eds.), *Feminist Foremothers in Women's Studies, Psychology, and Mental Health* (New York: Harrington Press Park, 1995), pp. 1-23 (pp. 4-5); Orbach, personal interview; Chesler, *Women and Madness*.

<sup>25</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Orbach, personal interview.

<sup>26</sup> Orbach, personal interview.

Orbach deemed it important that feminist activists did not just highlight existing social inequalities, but sought to understand how women unconsciously contributed to their own repression. She and Eichenbaum believed that a psychoanalysis informed by Women's Liberation politics aided understandings of this external repression.<sup>27</sup> Eichenbaum attributed her interest in psychology to her involvement in activism and consciousness-raising. After practising consciousness-raising, Eichenbaum wanted to develop her feminist identity further, stating:

The link of understanding about what was conscious was one part of what we think, but we had to know the unconscious. Okay, Freud understood the unconscious, and there is a tremendous amount of material here for us to make use of.<sup>28</sup>

She turned to psychology to understand the 'deeply internalised structures that have made us who we are'.<sup>29</sup> Both Eichenbaum and Orbach viewed psychological and psychotherapeutic approaches as tools to expand their understandings of themselves as feminist subjects, contrasting their interest with existing Women's Liberation critiques of psychology and psychiatry.

## **ii. The Feminist Therapy Study Group and Psychotherapeutic Training**

Whilst at Richmond, Eichenbaum and Orbach formed a feminist therapy study group.<sup>30</sup> In the group, they explored different therapeutic cases from the perspectives of social workers, psychologists and therapists.<sup>31</sup> Group members did not use traditional psychological or psychotherapeutic terms when interpreting the cases, aiming to keep

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<sup>27</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>28</sup> Luise Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 5

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Carol Bloom, Laura Kogel and Laurie Phillips were also members of the group. Bloom, Kogel and Phillips are still involved in the Women's Therapy Centre Institute in New York, an institution established by Orbach and Eichenbaum when they returned to the United States in 1981 (Susan Gutwill, Andrea Gitter and Lisa Rubin, 'The Women's Therapy Centre Institute: The Personal is Political', *Women & Therapy*, Vol. 34, No. 1-2 (2010), pp. 143-58).

<sup>31</sup> Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 6.

discussions as subjective as possible.<sup>32</sup> Eichenbaum asserted that their discussions represented a departure from traditional forms of psychotherapy, which she felt were oriented around giving an 'objective, neutral response to the material of the patient'.<sup>33</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach's feminist therapeutic approach was also influenced by their view that consciousness-raising provided limited emotional support to women.<sup>34</sup> They asserted that WLM politics provided a new means of understanding women's psychology, highlighting how consciousness-raising and psychotherapy uncovered the role of the family in shaping childhood development and promoting the expectations and restrictions associated with traditional familial roles.<sup>35</sup> Writing in 1982, however, they described how participants' internal consciousness often developed faster than external repressive social structures, rendering it difficult for women to alter their behaviour in accordance with the new understandings they developed through consciousness-raising.<sup>36</sup> Consciousness-raising groups often became very emotionally charged and participants' feelings were not always dealt with sympathetically by other group members. Eichenbaum and Orbach argued that psychoanalysis helped women to develop the awareness of their emotions and actions that they had initially established through consciousness-raising.<sup>37</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach's promotion of psychoanalysis was similar to the LWLW Psychology Group's approach. Both recognised the role that consciousness-raising played in uncovering women's feelings and the practice's limitations in helping participants overcome emotional distress.<sup>38</sup> These similarities suggest that WLM members in England and the United States were concurrently developing psychotherapeutic approaches inspired by both the personal politics of the Movement and concerns about the potential pitfalls of its practices.

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*, pp. 1-2.

In my oral history interview with Orbach, she described how her Women's Studies professors were alarmed that she and Eichenbaum wanted to study psychoanalytic theory, stating, "Why the hell do you want to study psychoanalysis? You're radicals!"<sup>39</sup> She attributed their reaction to Freud's association with misogyny within the American WLM. Like the LWLW Psychology Group, who responded to Women's Liberation critiques by emphasising the radical tenets of Freudian theory, Eichenbaum and Orbach justified their focus on psychoanalysis.<sup>40</sup> In the feminist therapy group, they critically assessed Freudian theory from a feminist perspective.<sup>41</sup> They did not, for example, endorse Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex, arguing that psychoanalytic theories originally centred on male psychology could not automatically be applied to understand women's mental processes.<sup>42</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach encountered further opposition when completing a two-year psychiatric social work course at Stony Brook, a 'progressive health services centre' based in New York.<sup>43</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach attended the course because it was the 'cheapest and most efficient' way to become a psychotherapist.<sup>44</sup> Their course leaders also opposed the study of psychoanalysis, focusing on community-based activism and radical social work instead.<sup>45</sup> Eichenbaum argued, however, that psychoanalysis should be studied on psychotherapy courses because it helped students to understand the significance of power and social dynamics in psychology.<sup>46</sup> Given the freedom to decide who could teach

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<sup>39</sup> Orbach, personal interview.

<sup>40</sup> LWLW Psychology Group, *Shrew*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (April, 1972), p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Gutwill et al., 'The Women's Therapy Centre Institute', p. 145; The Oedipus Complex is often presented as the central tenet of Freud's theory of development. Freud asserted that the various facets of an individuals' sexuality converge at the age of approximately five or six 'in a genital organisation, in which the component pregenital instincts (such as orality and anality) are subsumed under a genital hegemony'. The child's desire then become oriented around sexual intercourse with the parent of the opposite sex, resulting in the parent of the same sex becoming a dangerous rival (Stephen A. Mitchell and Margaret J. Black, *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), p. 15).

<sup>43</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project*, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*



them, Eichenbaum and Orbach developed an element of psychoanalytic training on the course. Eichenbaum later stated that their desire to change the course reflected their 'tremendous arrogance'.<sup>47</sup> This self-confidence was reflected in the entrepreneurial spirit they demonstrated when subsequently setting up the WTC.<sup>48</sup>

Narrating their early engagement with psychoanalysis in academia, Eichenbaum and Orbach distinguished their assessment from other feminist interactions with psychotherapeutic discourses in early 1970s America. In 1974, Anica Vesel Mander and Anne Kent Rush produced an approach to feminist therapy which critiqued psychoanalytical approaches, promoting aspects of Gestalt therapy and bodywork instead.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, Eichenbaum and Orbach's feminist therapy diverged from both critical and therapeutic approaches already promoted by women's movement members in the United States. However, their adoption and defence of psychoanalysis was highly comparable to ideas promoted by the LWLW Psychology Group in England.

### **iii. Developing a Psychology of Women**

Whilst Eichenbaum and Orbach and the LWLW Psychology Group both used psychoanalysis to bolster the limitations of consciousness-raising, they subsequently expanded their application of psychotherapeutic discourses in contrasting ways. The Psychology Group promoted psychoanalysis as one of several therapeutic approaches that its members found helpful when overcoming their individual mental health concerns. At a theoretical level, the Psychology Group also employed psychoanalytic tenets to target emotional issues specific to the WLM. Eichenbaum and Orbach, on the other hand, employed psychoanalysis to construct their own understanding of the psychology of women beyond the WLM.

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Anica Vesel Mander and Anne Kent Rush, *Feminism as Therapy* (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 39-44; 47-49; 55-59.

Eichenbaum and Orbach popularised their approach to the women's psychology in a series of publications produced across the late 1970s and 1980s. In *Fat is a Feminist Issue*, first published in 1978, Orbach detailed her work with women who were 'compulsive eaters', a condition that she defined as eating when not physically hungry, feeling out of control around food by dieting or gorging, anxiety about fatness and having a negative body image.<sup>50</sup> Orbach argued that compulsive eating was socially situated. Women ate compulsively in response to the pressures of a sexist society, routinely feeling out of touch with the emotions that influenced their behaviours.<sup>51</sup> In *Fat is a Feminist Issue*, Orbach highlighted how her conceptualisation of compulsive eating was grounded in her political experiences in New York. In March 1970, she attended a women-only course on compulsive eating and self-image at the free school and meeting centre Alternate U.<sup>52</sup> *Fat is a Feminist Issue* was commercially successful and has been reissued several times. Andermahr situates it within an expansive genre of feminist theoretical publications that proliferated in the 1970s, arguing that it was one of the most significant feminist publications of the decade.<sup>53</sup> The success of *Fat is a Feminist Issue* aided the dissemination of feminist therapeutic ideas in England, as well as increasing public visibility of the WTC's services.<sup>54</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach also published their theory of women's psychological development in their 1982 volume *Outside In...Inside Out*.<sup>55</sup> Their application of psychoanalysis was distinguishable from previous popular publications to emerge out of

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<sup>50</sup> Orbach, *Fat is a Feminist Issue*, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Orbach, *Fat is a Feminist Issue*, p. 8; David Carter, *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2006), p. 120. The Alternate U was aligned with the 'Free School Movement', a radical political movement that promoted the development of alternative forms of education based on the belief that state-endorsed educating was dehumanising, stemmed creativity and was overtly technocratic (Ron Miller, *Free Schools, Free People: Education and Democracy After the 1960s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 17).

<sup>53</sup> Sonya Andermahr, '1970s Feminist Fiction', in Nick Hubble, John McLeod and Phillip Tew (eds), *The 1970s: A Decade of Contemporary British Fiction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 69-92 (p. 73).

<sup>54</sup> Orbach, personal interview; Green, personal interview; Smith, personal interview.

<sup>55</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out*.

the WLM on the subject, most notably Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*.<sup>56</sup>

Mitchell used psychoanalysis to develop a theoretical examination of patriarchy and its operation within society.<sup>57</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach's work focused on understanding the human psyche more broadly, assessing how women's psychological development was both influenced by and perpetuated their patriarchal oppression.<sup>58</sup> They incorporated a psychoanalytic emphasis on childhood development with a feminist critique of social gender roles, arguing that the 'construction of personality...is intrinsically linked to a person's gender identity'.<sup>59</sup> This focus on the role of the family in women's emotional development formed a central tenet of Eichenbaum and Orbach's feminist psychotherapy.

In *Outside In...Inside Out*, they stated:

Feminist psychotherapy is interested in how the social practices of a given culture are transmitted to its members and how the individual internalised the power relations, the sex roles and the psychodynamics of the family.<sup>60</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach differentiated their application of psychoanalysis from Freudianism by foregrounding the mother-daughter relationship and employing tenets of British object relations theory. Like the LWLW Psychology Group, they argued that Melanie Klein's focus on the mother, and children's acquisition of masculine and feminine roles, was particularly useful to feminists.<sup>61</sup> Despite endorsing Klein's work, the LWLW Psychology Group remained critical of British object-relations theorists like John Bowlby. Eichenbaum and Orbach, on the other hand, argued that the work of British object relations theorist Donald Winnicott countered patriarchal elements of Freudian psychoanalysis due to his focus on relationships and clinical democracy. Whilst endorsing Winnicott's work, Eichenbaum and Orbach also sought to expand it. They argued that British object-relations

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<sup>56</sup> Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*; Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>59</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out*, p. 25.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

theorists failed to perceive mothers as social subjects that operated within patriarchal social structures and social institutions. Eichenbaum and Orbach distinguished their own approach from object relations theorists by emphasising their focus on the ways in which mothers, in fulfilling their assumed societal role, perpetuated gender inequality.<sup>62</sup> In a 1977 *Spare Rib* interview, they described how ‘mothers have the really horrible job of teaching their daughters to be second class citizens’.<sup>63</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach presented their feminist therapy as an alternative to existing conventional or mainstream therapies. In their *Spare Rib* interview, they argued that conventional therapeutic practices pathologised clients by seeking to ‘treat’ them.<sup>64</sup> They believed that conventional therapists encouraged women to redevelop their traditional femininity and failed to explore women’s internal conflicts when they complied with societal gender roles.<sup>65</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach therefore aligned their feminist therapeutic approach with existing critiques of psychology within the WLM. However, like the LWLW Psychology Group, they argued for a reframing of psychotherapeutic approaches as opposed to their blanket rejection. Eichenbaum and Orbach avoided the prescriptive tenets of existing psychotherapies. They argued that the feminist politics intrinsic to their own therapeutic approach were not dogmatic and they did not seek to ‘fit women into a new mould of correct feminist behaviour’.<sup>66</sup> Rather, they incorporated feminist politics into their therapeutic practice in order to develop new understandings of the ways in which women’s emotional distress was influenced by both their adherence to and rejection of repressive societal gender norms.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out*, p. 113.

<sup>63</sup> Cathy Haw and Rosie Parker, ‘Feminist Therapists Talking’, *Spare Rib*, no. 61 (August, 1977), p. 36.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35-37.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

Therefore, the feminist therapy that Eichenbaum and Orbach's promoted at the WTC was grounded in their Women's Studies background and psychotherapeutic training in the United States. The Centre co-founders initially engaged with psychotherapy because they wanted to expand the self-perceptions that they had developed through consciousness-raising. This assessment demonstrates that Eichenbaum and Orbach's therapeutic approach was not influenced primarily by Women's Liberation critiques of psychology and psychotherapy, but rather a desire to expand the personal politics that the WLM promoted. Aligning psychotherapeutic ideas with the personal politics of Women's Liberations, Eichenbaum and Orbach promoted an approach to therapy that was similar to the LWLW Psychology Group. However, their approaches differed in practice. Eichenbaum and Orbach aligned their self-understandings with psychoanalytic tenets and Women's Liberation politics to promote a new therapy for women that expanded existing understandings of female psychology.

### **The Foundation of the Women's Therapy Centre, 1976-1981**

In 1976, Eichenbaum and Orbach founded the WTC in London. By exploring its foundation and early development, this chapter indicates how Eichenbaum and Orbach applied their distinct feminist therapeutic approach in a community-based setting. It examines how the WTC co-founders distinguished the Centre from existing radical psychotherapy groups by promoting it to 'non-Movement' women and assesses if they were successful in achieving this.<sup>68</sup> Exploring how Eichenbaum and Orbach maintained and publicised a therapy centre with no initial funding demonstrates how the social and political conditions of mid-1970s England aided the development of radical organisations. Their founding of the WTC reflects the sense of entrepreneurship that predominated within the non-aligned left in the 1970s.

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<sup>68</sup> Haw and Parker, 'Feminist Therapists Talking', p. 37.

Eichenbaum and Orbach's justification for using volunteers, however, highlights the limitations of this entrepreneurial spirit, demonstrating how their emphasis on keeping the Centre running compromised its radical political foundations.

### **i. Opening the Women's Therapy Centre**

In 1975, Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach came to London. Orbach moved with her partner who had taken up a job there.<sup>69</sup> On seeing her close friend leave the United States, Eichenbaum also decided to move and experience living in another part of the world.<sup>70</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach recalled their excitement at the prospect of engaging in British women's movement politics. They had assumed, given the publication of Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* in 1974, that discussions about psychotherapy and politics dominated the English WLM. On arriving in London, Eichenbaum and Orbach expressed their disappointment that this did not appear to be the case.<sup>71</sup> Whilst Mitchell's work had a significant influence on feminist theory, they did not feel that her ideas were being promoted at a grassroots level. This purported absence of community-based feminist therapy groups inspired Eichenbaum and Orbach to establish the WTC.<sup>72</sup>

The WTC opened on 8 April 1976.<sup>73</sup> The Centre was located in the basement of Orbach's house on the Hartham Road in Islington. It consisted of a small waiting area, two therapy rooms, a kitchen and an office.<sup>74</sup> Orbach bought the house with her partner Joe because her brother lived next door.<sup>75</sup> She described how the area was in the early stages

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<sup>69</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>70</sup> Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*; Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*.

<sup>73</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out*, p. 7.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*; Anny Brackx, 'Short List', *Spare Rib*, no. 82 (May, 1979), pp. 24-25 (p. 24).

<sup>75</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

of gentrification, with house prices remaining accessible to buyers on lower incomes.<sup>76</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach's friends helped paint the premises and Orbach's brother donated furniture.<sup>77</sup> The WTC co-founders initially regarded it as a pilot project and did not apply for funding. They agreed that they would submit applications for grants if its services were positively received. In Orbach's oral history interview for the *Sisterhood and After* project, historian Polly Russell expressed surprise that she and Eichenbaum were able to found the WTC, asking 'Where? What? How? I mean, you can't just start these things'.<sup>78</sup> Orbach replied that you could in the 1970s.<sup>79</sup> Eichenbaum attributed their establishment of the WTC to the 'chutzpah of youth'.<sup>80</sup> She and Orbach had the confidence to set up the Centre because they knew that they were offering a novel and much-needed service for women.<sup>81</sup> Their self-confidence reflected the 'entrepreneurial energy' that inspired the development of numerous alternative or radical organisations in the 1970s.<sup>82</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach distributed one hundred press releases and information leaflets to women's centres, women's groups, local doctors, educational and psychiatric institutions, and national and local media sources to publicise the WTC.<sup>83</sup> They posted the information in a post box outside the Chalk Farm Tube Station, near to Orbach's mother's home.<sup>84</sup> Orbach's brother advised them to embargo the press release to heighten the anticipation surrounding the Centre.<sup>85</sup> The press release described the WTC as a new

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*; Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century: A City and Its People* (London: Viking, 2001. Reprint, London: Vintage, 2008), p. 64; Chris Hamnett, *Unequal City: London in the Global Arena* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 184.

<sup>77</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out*, p. 7; Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>78</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 7.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Baz Kershaw, 'Alternative theatres, 1946-2000', in Baz Kershaw (ed.), *The Cambridge History of British Theatre, Vol. 3: Since 1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 349-76 (p. 365); Graham Saunders, *British Theatre Companies, 1980-1994* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 89.

<sup>83</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out*, p. 7.

<sup>84</sup> Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 7.

<sup>85</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

centre that offered various forms of therapy to women.<sup>86</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach advertised their experiences as Women's Liberation activists and trained psychotherapists. The release stated, 'There is a real gap between the help and advice that most conventional psychiatric services offer and the lessons that have been learned by the women's movement in the past five years'.<sup>87</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach asserted that the Centre combined women's movement ideals with individual and group psychotherapy, enabling women to situate their personal experiences within a feminist context.<sup>88</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach recognised issues that extended beyond women's mental health. They listed proposed workshops taking place at the Centre on topics including compulsive eating and achieving orgasms, therefore highlighting wider issues concerning women's sexuality and wellbeing.<sup>89</sup> From the late 1960s, WLM activists asserted that reclaiming the female orgasm resulted in women's sexual liberation and bodily autonomy.<sup>90</sup> Haraway documents the 'extraordinary attention that the politics of women's orgasms got in the popular media' throughout the 1970s.<sup>91</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach's foregrounding of a workshop topic already subject to media sensationalism further demonstrates the entrepreneurship inherent in the WTC's early self-publicity.

Eichenbaum and Orbach reiterated the WTC's feminist underpinnings through the imagery that they used in the press release. The WTC's logo consisted of the Venus symbol with the words 'feminist therapy' positioned in its centre. Surrounding the symbol was the

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<sup>86</sup> Women's Library @ LSE, 7CMS/04/12, Women's Therapy Centre, 'Press Release- Women's Therapy Centre Opens' (9 April 1976); Susie Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>87</sup> Women's Therapy Centre, 'Press Release'.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Michael Hochgeschwender, 'Emotions, American Society, and Discourses on Sexuality', in Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht (ed.), *Emotions in American History: An International Assessment* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 201-24 (p. 204); Chilla Bulbeck, *Living Feminism: The Impact of the Women's Movement on Three Generations of Australian Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 36; Donna Haraway, 'Investment Strategies for the Evolving Portfolio of Primate Females', in Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth (eds), *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 139-62 (p. 150).

<sup>91</sup> Haraway, 'Investment Strategies for the Evolving Portfolio of Primate Females', p. 150.



phrase ‘women hold up half the sky’.<sup>92</sup> This sentiment has been attributed to Mao Zedong and was regularly used by WLM members.<sup>93</sup> The WTC’s feminist foundations appealed to WLM members who viewed the Centre as an opportunity to reflect on their experiences in Women’s Liberation groups at a one-to-one level.<sup>94</sup> Lynne Segal recalled that she was part of a therapy group with other women involved in women’s movement activism in the mid-1970s.<sup>95</sup> Segal stated that Alison Fell, another member of the therapy group, encouraged her to go to the WTC. Segal thought that the Centre’s services were reasonably priced so she and the other therapy group members began to attend. Their therapy group disbanded shortly after the WTC opened. Segal’s account demonstrates that the WTC’s services were viewed as a viable alternative to WLM self-help therapy groups.<sup>96</sup>

Orbach was surprised that WLM members demanded individual psychotherapy. She and Eichenbaum had assumed that the Movement’s reliance on small groups meant that its members would want group therapy.<sup>97</sup> Despite her initial emphasis on the WTC’s promotion of feminist therapy, Orbach subsequently asserted that the Centre was not a feminist therapy centre but rather a women’s therapy centre that was for all women.<sup>98</sup> These contrasting perspectives reflected tensions that subsequently arose as the Centre sought to both provide a community-based therapeutic service and contribute to the theoretical development of a psychology of women.

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<sup>92</sup> Women’s Therapy Centre, ‘Press Release’. A reproduction of the press release containing the logo, can be found in Appendix 2.

<sup>93</sup> Lincoln Cushing and Ann Tompkins, *Chinese Posters: Art from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books LLC, 2007), p. 67. The Bristol Women’s Studies Group, for example, named their collection of women’s studies materials *Half the Sky* in 1979. The Bristol Women’s Studies Group, *Half the Sky: An Introduction to Women’s Studies* (London: Virago, 1979).

<sup>94</sup> Susie Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>95</sup> British Library, C1420/28, Segal, Lynne, 1943- (speaker, female; interviewee; academic and activist), interviewed by Margaretta Jolly, *Sisterhood and After: The Women’s Liberation Oral History Project* (London, 11 August 2011).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

## ii. Developing a Client Base

Potential clients personally contacted the WTC to access its services.<sup>99</sup> In their 1977 *Spare Rib* interview, Eichenbaum and Orbach stated that the WTC was under enormous pressure.<sup>100</sup> Demand for the Centre's services was high yet it had no funding. Despite receiving large amounts of correspondence from women requesting referrals, self-help advice, and to attend workshops, Eichenbaum and Orbach admitted that their limited funds meant that they had to select their clients.<sup>101</sup> They recognised the politics involved in choosing clients and aimed to counter the view that the stereotypical female therapy client was 'young, educated, highly verbal, middle class and attractive'.<sup>102</sup> If clients could not be seen immediately, they were placed on a dated waiting list or were transferred to other therapists whose politics aligned with the Centre's.<sup>103</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach sought to ensure the diversity of their client base by advertising in 'non-movement media', like local newspaper the *Islington Gazette*.<sup>104</sup> They also sent a copy of the press release to Mary Stott, a journalist and former editor of *The Guardian* women's pages, who engaged with the British women's movement throughout the twentieth century.<sup>105</sup> Stott corresponded with numerous feminist organisations whilst at *The Guardian*.<sup>106</sup> Feminist organisations used *The Guardian* women's pages to publicise events and services. In her *Sisterhood and After* interview, Orbach emphasised the diversity of the WTC's early client base, describing how women were varied in their class

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<sup>99</sup> Haw and Parker, 'Feminist Therapists Talking', p. 37

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>105</sup> Stott was editor of *The Guardian*'s women's pages from 1957 to 1972. Lena Jeger, 'Mary Stott', *Guardian* (18 September 2002), available at <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/sep/18/guardianobituaries.gender> [accessed 3 March 2016]; Spender, *There's Always Been a Women's Movement This Century*, pp. 125-56.

<sup>106</sup> The Lewisham Women's Centre, for example, invited her to attend their meetings and enquired if she knew other women who would like to participate (Women's Library @ LSE, Papers of Charlotte Mary Stott, 7CMS/04/12, Women's Centre Collective, 'Lewisham Women's Centre' (11 May 1978)).

background, religious upbringings, and sexual orientation. Orbach described how gay working-class women came to the WTC because they had nowhere else to go. She also identified a number of Irish women from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds who attended the Centre. Orbach conceded, however, that the majority of clients were middle-class or upper-middle-class women.<sup>107</sup>

Despite this, Orbach's maintained the fact that she and Eichenbaum successfully promoted the WTC's services to a wide demographic of women. She equated its diversity with the number of women who attended from outside the women's movement. Of the fifty women who attended the Centre for individual counselling in 1977, just under half had no previous involvement in women's movement activism.<sup>108</sup> Orbach also attributed the diversity of the Centre's client base to their varied experiences of mental illness and psychiatric services. Several women who attended the Centre had experienced long stays in psychiatric institutions. They came to the WTC because they felt that existing psychiatric treatments focused on resocialising them into "proper" women.<sup>109</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach drew on their clients' experiences to nuance their critical approach to psychiatric care.<sup>110</sup> Orbach learnt that long stays were the 'only time that women were looked after. They didn't have to clean. They didn't have to nurture. They didn't have to cook'.<sup>111</sup>

Barbara Taylor reiterated this perspective in *The Last Asylum*, her account of her stay at the London-based Friern Hospital in the late 1980s.<sup>112</sup> Taylor referred to Friern as a 'stone mother' and a 'refuge from unmanageable suffering' that could 'hold me for as long as I needed it'.<sup>113</sup> Taylor's time in residential psychiatric care was beneficial because she felt safe enough to rescind all of her responsibilities. This association of safety, support, and

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<sup>107</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>108</sup> Haw and Parker, 'Feminist Therapists Talking', p. 37.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Susie Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Taylor, *The Last Asylum*, p. 103.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 269.

self-expression was also present in the positive narratives of therapy published by LWLW Psychology Group members in the early 1970s.<sup>114</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach therefore developed the perspective that mental institutions helped to alleviate some of the pressures women faced when conforming to the traditional gender roles. Other women attended the WTC to find out about psychotherapeutic methods and stop taking medication prescribed to them by their GPs.<sup>115</sup> Orbach recalled how engaging with these clients further informed her perception of female psychology, asserting that society discouraged women from talking about themselves or seeking support.<sup>116</sup>

Orbach did not incorporate an assessment of race into her narrative accounts of the WTC's diversity in the late 1970s. Margaret Green, who joined the Centre as a therapist shortly after it opened, described the WTC's early client base in her own oral history interview. She stated, 'I think it was largely white to begin with but there were some working-class women...people who were originally working-class and through the Eleven Plus became middle-class'. Iona Grant and Marie Maguire, who joined the WTC in 1980, also asserted that the majority of women supported at the Centre were white.<sup>117</sup> The absence of Black women and women from other ethnic minority communities at the WTC in the 1970s reflected the 'relative exclusivity of WLM organising' and the absence of Black women's voices and experiences in Women's Liberation campaigns more broadly.<sup>118</sup> Psychotherapeutic training also rarely incorporated discussions about diversity, racism and discrimination, an issue that continued into the 1990s.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Psychology Group, *Shrew*.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Iona Grant and Marie Maguire, personal interview (26 September 2016).

<sup>118</sup> Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*, p. 62.

<sup>119</sup> Frank Lowe, 'Introduction', in Frank Lowe (ed.), *Thinking Space: Promoting Thinking About Race, Culture, and Diversity in Psychotherapy and Beyond* (London: Karnac, 2014), pp. 1-10 (pp. 1-2).

### iii. Fees and Funding at the Women's Therapy Centre

Eichenbaum and Orbach's personal politics influenced their approach to fees and funding at the WTC. They argued that charging female clients contradicted the aims of feminist therapy, stating, 'Women always have to give in order to receive - and payment only perpetuates that experience'.<sup>120</sup> Many therapists and psychoanalysts argued that charging fees bolstered the therapist-client relationship because individuals were more likely to choose a therapy and therapist that they deemed most suitable for them.<sup>121</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach argued that this perspective reinforced psychologists' wealth and perpetuated a repressive class system. The existence of free NHS healthcare in Britain further problematised the notion that individuals should pay to improve their mental health.<sup>122</sup> Drawing on their theory of women's psychology, Eichenbaum and Orbach argued that free psychotherapy benefitted clients financially and mentally. Women could not 'simply offload the issues of dependency by paying for it'.<sup>123</sup> Orbach described how their approach to fees and funding was also influenced by their political views on money and consumerism:

Nobody gave a shit about money. I mean, it was so irrelevant. Even though consumerism had hit Britain, if you were on the Left, part of the Women's Liberation, you just weren't interested in that kind of thing. And then we thought about how we'd get money. But there were no barriers.<sup>124</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach's apathy towards money further reflected the countercultural, anti-consumerist, and entrepreneurial culture that inspired the foundation of radical or

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Susan Howard, *Skills in Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy* (London: Sage, 2009), p. 45.

<sup>122</sup> Debates about client fees continue today. Groups like the Free Psychotherapy Network work to provide free or low-fee therapies to individuals on low incomes and benefits in response to the continued inequality of wealth and power in Britain and the detrimental influence of funding cuts on the NHS (The Free Psychotherapy Network, 'The Free Psychotherapy Network', available at <https://freepsychotherapynetwork.com/2014/01/21/the-free-psychotherapy-network/> [accessed 23 March 2017]).

<sup>123</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>124</sup> Orbach, personal interview.

alternative organisations in the 1970s.<sup>125</sup> Iona Grant recalled how the Centre's initial ambivalence towards funding contributed to its creative and spontaneous atmosphere, stating, 'If you had an idea, you could put it forward and do it as long as you were prepared to put in the work. It was very creative in that way ... you could just explore'.<sup>126</sup>

Despite Eichenbaum and Orbach's political and theoretical stance towards fees, the WTC's funding shortage meant that they had to charge for therapy sessions on a sliding scale. When the Centre opened, clients were charged between £2 and £6 per session, the equivalent of approximately £12 and £35 today.<sup>127</sup> The WTC subsequently applied for grants to ensure that some women did not have to pay. Eichenbaum and Orbach paid themselves £30 a week, the equivalent of approximately £170 today. Part-time workers who joined the Centre were paid £15 a week.<sup>128</sup> Staff at the WTC were paid less than the average weekly wage in Britain in the mid- to late 1970s. In 1977, median monthly disposable income was £187, whilst the average weekly wage of public sector workers in 1979 was £54.<sup>129</sup> Many of the practitioners were required to do private practice to supplement their incomes. Grant conceded that she and Marie Maguire did not like seeing clients privately, but were obliged to do so to contend with the financial pressures of living in London. However, she also stated that the staff's low wages were accepted. She deemed her work rewarding due to the creative freedom she was afforded rather than the pay she received. Therefore, it was the creative and politically innovative work developed at the Centre that was of personal and professional worth to its practitioners.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Sara M. Evans, 'Beyond Declension: Feminist Radicalism in the 1970s and 1980s', in Van Gosse and Richard Moser (eds), *The World The Sixties Made: Politics and Culture in Recent America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), pp. 52-66 (p. 52).

<sup>126</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

<sup>127</sup> Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*, p. 7. Fees

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Chris Megson, *Modern British Playwriting: the 1970s- Voices, Documents, New Interpretations* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 2.

<sup>130</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

Eichenbaum and Orbach endeavoured to employ women who had a strong interest in feminism and left-wing politics, an aim that was compromised by their use of volunteers. Ellie Chaikind, an American therapist, joined the WTC shortly after it opened and worked there until the mid-1980s.<sup>131</sup> Orbach felt that Chaikind did not come from the same 'progressive' or left-wing background as other WTC practitioners because her husband held a senior position at an oil company.<sup>132</sup> Orbach stated that Chaikind remained an 'enthusiastic feminist', citing the increased visibility of 'bourgeois' women in the American women's movement.<sup>133</sup> She also argued that Chaikind was an asset to the WTC because her financial stability as a result of her husband's profession meant that she was able to offer her services for free.<sup>134</sup> Orbach's celebration of Chaikind's voluntary work appeared to counter the radical politics on which the WTC was based; an anti-consumerism that raised concerns about exploitation and free labour. The Centre's volunteers ensured that it could use feminist therapy to support women despite its limited funding. However, Smith documents the capacity for radical organisations to become hierarchical based on volunteers' flexibility and external financial support, replicating a class structure based on voluntary workers' contrasting 'opportunities to engage'.<sup>135</sup> Orbach's endorsement of Chaikind's volunteering highlights the contentious position that voluntary work held in the organisation of radical, community-based initiatives.<sup>136</sup> It indicates the potential limitations of the radical entrepreneurship that informed the WTC's development, demonstrating the compromises made by its co-founders to ensure the Centre's effective operation.

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<sup>131</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out*; Linda L. Bain, Timothy Wilson and Ellie Chaikind, 'Participant Perceptions of Exercise Programs for Overweight Women', *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (1989), pp. 134-43.

<sup>132</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Andrea Smith, 'Preface', in INCITE! (ed.), *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2007. Republished Duke University Press, 2017), pp. ix-xi (p. x).

<sup>136</sup> Mathew Hilton et al., *The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs Shaped Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 85.

#### iv. The Women's Therapy Centre and State-led Mental Health Services

The WTC also promoted a critical perspective towards existing mental health provision for women. Eichenbaum and Orbach critiqued state-led psychiatric services and treatments, arguing that medication and physical treatments like ECT did not tackle the source of women's emotional distress.<sup>137</sup> Seeking to improve women's mental health provision, however, Eichenbaum and Orbach established connections with the NHS and other welfare state institutions, presenting lectures at the Royal Free and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospitals.<sup>138</sup> In a 1977 interview, the WTC founders argued that their services would be more effective if they operated within the NHS. Eichenbaum and Orbach's approach reflected the increasing interrelation of alternative and mainstream services in women's movement health politics in the late 1970s. In a 1979 edition of *Spare Rib*, for example, Gaelle Finley aimed to produce a list of NHS staff sympathetic to women's movement politics, which would be distributed via the national Women's Information and Referral Enquiry Service (WIRES), local women newsletters, and women's health groups.<sup>139</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach's emphasis on working with or within the NHS contributed to a contemporary debate, led by the Libertarian Left, about how political change could be achieved through collaborating with state-led institutions. In 1979, the London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group published *In & Against the State*, which explored the frustrations of state workers such as teachers, social workers, and health workers who also took part in oppositional activism.<sup>140</sup> The Group suggested that state workers had a special opportunity

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<sup>137</sup> Haw and Parker, 'Feminist Therapists Talking', p. 37.

<sup>138</sup> Orbach, personal interview; Anny Brackx, 'Short List', *Spare Rib*, no. 76 (November 1978), p. 24.

<sup>139</sup> Anny Brackx, 'Short List', *Spare Rib*, no. 82 (May 1979), pp. 24-25.

<sup>140</sup> The London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, *In and Against the State*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1980), p. 2. The London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group were a working group for the Conference of Socialist Economists, which was founded in 1970 'with the aim of fostering the materialist critique of capitalism in the Marxist tradition through non-sectarian debate and discussion' (Conference of Socialist Economists, '*Capital and Class*', available at <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/capital-class> [accessed 23 August 2017]; Hugo Radice, 'The Conference of Socialist Economists', *Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists*, Vol. 1,



to effectively militate against the state by working from within state-led institutions.<sup>141</sup> In the early 1980s, the WTC hosted several workshops for female mental health care workers. In February 1983, Mira Dana ran a course on feminist approaches to eating disorders for staff from the NHS and other care agencies.<sup>142</sup> The WTC also organised conferences for clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychiatric social workers that provided information about feminist therapy.<sup>143</sup> Participants attending stated that they enabled them to integrate their personal politics into their professional practice, encouraging them to initiate change within existing mental health services.<sup>144</sup> After attending a social work course led by Pam Smith, a mental health worker stated that she had previously felt unable to define herself as feminist at work because women were routinely subject to sexism.<sup>145</sup> Attending the course, she developed her knowledge of 'the problems women have with separations and independence; the reasons for these problems and the effect they have on women's behaviour'.<sup>146</sup> The social worker deemed her new knowledge applicable to both the women she worked with and her own professional experiences. In this way, the WTC provided educational courses that encouraged women to initiate professional and political change within existing mental health services, endorsing activism both within and in collaboration with state-led health care systems.

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No. 1 (Winter 1971), p. 5; Janet Newman, *Working the Spaces of Power: Activism, Neoliberalism and Gendered Labour* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), p. 195.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>142</sup> *Spare Rib*, 'Therapy', *Spare Rib*, no. 127 (February 1983), p. 34.

<sup>143</sup> Sheila Ernst, Sue Krzowski, and Sue Green, 'Dealing with Dying', *Spare Rib*, No. 141 (April, 1984), pp. 6-7, 19 (p. 6); Anny Brackx, 'Short List', *Spare Rib*, no. 105 (April 1981), pp. 36-37.

<sup>144</sup> Sheila Ernst et al., 'Dealing with Dying', p. 6.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

## The Influence of Radical Psychotherapy Groups on the Development of Feminist Therapy, 1976-1981

As the WTC developed its services, it took on an increasing number of staff. Shortly after the Centre opened, Eichenbaum and Orbach employed Sally Berry and Margaret Green as part-time psychotherapists. By 1978, four additional part-time staff members had joined the WTC. They carried out individual psychotherapy sessions, organised workshops, and attended a weekly staff study group where they assessed emergent political theories and therapies. Held every Wednesday, the study groups were a forum in which Centre workers could discuss and debate the nature of feminist therapy.<sup>147</sup> Visiting American feminist therapists routinely joined in discussions and advised Centre members on their own feminist therapeutic methods.<sup>148</sup> The editors of *M/F*, a journal that sought to develop feminist theory by exploring aspects of social theory, representation, and psychoanalysis also attended meetings, resulting in practitioners assessing the links between feminist therapy and academic feminism.<sup>149</sup>

Women who joined the WTC came from a variety of national, professional, and political backgrounds. Exploring their backgrounds highlights how their employment resulted in the WTC expanding its ideas and approaches, promoting forms of feminist therapy that extended beyond Eichenbaum and Orbach's particular psychology of women. As a result, the Centre increasingly promoted feminist therapy as an umbrella term that encapsulated a variety of psychotherapeutic and political perspectives.<sup>150</sup> Narrating the WTC's development, Orbach distinguished it from previous radical therapy initiatives in England. However, exploring the influence of staff members' different professional

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<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*; Sheila Ernst and Marie Maguire, 'Acknowledgements', in Sheila Ernst and Marie Maguire (eds), *Living with the Sphinx: Papers from the Women's Therapy Centre* (London: The Women's Press, 1987), pp. vi-vii (p. vi).

<sup>148</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Jocelyn Chaplin, 'Feminist Therapy', in John Rowan and Windy Dryden (eds), *Innovative Therapy in Britain* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988), pp. 39-60 (pp. 39-41).

backgrounds, including their involvement with the Arbours Association, Battersea Action and Counselling Centre (BACC), and Red Therapy, situates the WTC within a wider history of radical psychotherapeutic organisations in late twentieth-century England.

### **i. Nationality, Class, and the Therapist-Client Relationship**

In her *Sisterhood and After* interview, Orbach reflected on the international backgrounds of WTC staff.<sup>151</sup> Women with non-British therapists readily explored how class issues influenced their lives, whereas clients with British therapists rarely did. Green asserted that clients' interactions with were 'very much to do with who I am', stating:

Because I've got a South African accent I saw, not just at the WTC but in my private practice, many people...didn't want to go to a posh-speaking therapist. So I tended to see clients who had grown up working-class and sort of 'made it' into the middle class and then felt alienated from their roots.

Clients who experienced emotional distress or confusion about their class felt unable to articulate their feelings to women whose accent demonstrated a clearly-defined class position.

In a series of workshops, WTC practitioners drew on their clients' articulation of class issues to examine how class played out in their own professional and personal lives. It became apparent that many practitioners had internalised their own middle-class positions.<sup>152</sup> Krause argues that middle-class therapists are less likely to explore class issues with their clients due to the middle-class hegemony that pervades psychotherapeutic theory and professional bodies.<sup>153</sup> Orbach believed that practitioners' discussions at the workshops helped them to encourage their clients to talk more openly about class.<sup>154</sup>

Orbach and Green's discussion on class and nationality indicates the ways in which the

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<sup>151</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> Inga-Britt Krause, 'The complexity of cultural competence', in Frank Lowe (eds), *Thinking Space: Promoting Thinking about Race, Culture and Diversity in Psychotherapy and Beyond* (London: Karnac, 2014), pp. 109-126 (p. 113).

<sup>154</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

inclusion of additional staff at the WTC enhanced therapist-client relationships at the Centre in both theory and practice. The addition of feminist therapists with different professional backgrounds also aided the development of new therapeutic approaches at the WTC.

## **ii. The Arbours Association**

Several psychotherapists who joined the WTC in the late 1970s and 1980s had completed their training at the Arbours Association. Berry and Green, who joined the Centre in 1976, began their training together at the Arbours in the early 1970s.<sup>155</sup> Ruthie Smith, who originally joined the WTC as an administrator in the early 1980s, also completed her training at the Arbours, as did Iona Grant, who started at the Centre in 1980.<sup>156</sup> Both Smith and Grant joined the Centre through Berry, who remained working at the Arbours when she joined the WTC.<sup>157</sup> The Arbours Association was founded in 1970 by Joseph Berke and Morton Schatzman.<sup>158</sup> Berke and Schatzman were both involved in the anti-psychiatry movement and had helped R. D. Laing establish several therapeutic communities across London in the 1960s.<sup>159</sup> The Arbours Association is both a training facility and a therapeutic community, offering low-fee psychotherapy and residential facilities to people experiencing emotional, psychological, and social difficulties.<sup>160</sup> Its therapeutic community initially replicated Laing's Kingsley Hall, described by Crossley as a 'central hub for the radicalism of

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<sup>155</sup> Green, personal interview.

<sup>156</sup> Smith, personal interview; Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Simon du Plock, 'The Existential-Phenomenological Movement, 1834-1995', in Windy Dryden (ed.), *Developments in Psychotherapy: Historical Perspectives* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 29-61 (p. 53).

<sup>159</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 99.

<sup>160</sup> du Plock, 'The Existential-Phenomenological Movement', p. 53; Arbours Association, 'About the Arbours Association' (2017), available at <http://www.arboursassociation.org/about/> [accessed 2 May 2017].

the 1960s'.<sup>161</sup> Both Kingsley Hall and the Arbours developed a community where practitioners and clients lived alongside one another, breaking down the distinction between patients and staff made in mainstream psychiatric services.<sup>162</sup> Smith initially received therapy at the Arbours Association as a result of her mother and sister's experiences of severe mental illness. She studied at the University of York, where she participated in Women's Liberation marches, before forming the feminist band The Stepney Sisters. Between 1976 and 1978, she completed a postgraduate diploma in psychotherapy and returned to the Arbours on placement. Smith spent a year living in its therapeutic community, an experience that she thought was 'extraordinary, amazing training'.<sup>163</sup> Because it was community-based, Smith obtained significant insight into residents' lives.<sup>164</sup>

In the 1970s, the Arbours took on approximately fifteen trainees annually, who completed their training in four to six years. Trainees engaged with various psychoanalytic works, including those by Freud, Klein, and Winnicott, as well as the work of philosophers such as Hegel, Nietzsche, and Socrates.<sup>165</sup> Green and Berry were amongst the first trainees at the Arbours Association.<sup>166</sup> Green recalled that being in the Centre's initial cohort made them 'very bolshie', allowing them to specify what they wanted to learn.<sup>167</sup> Green's desire to tailor the training to her own interests mirrored Eichenbaum's and Orbach's incorporation of psychoanalysis into their psychiatric social work course in the United States. The perceived novelty of the projects and approaches that they engaged with afforded them the confidence and freedom to be creative.

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<sup>161</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 99. Laing set up Kingsley Hall in 1965 (du Plock, 'The Existential-Phenomenological Movement', p. 53).

<sup>162</sup> Kotowicz, R. D. *Laing and the Paths of Anti-psychiatry*, pp. 75-76; Smith, personal interview.

<sup>163</sup> Smith, personal interview.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> du Plock, 'The Existential-Phenomenological Movement', p. 53.

<sup>166</sup> Green, personal interview.

<sup>167</sup> Green, personal interview.

Arbours co-founder Joseph Berke obtained visibility in the 1960s due to his therapeutic relationship with artist Mary Barnes, one of the first residents at Kingsley Hall.<sup>168</sup> In 1971, he and Barnes published *Mary Barnes: Two Accounts of a Journey Through Madness*, which recounted her childhood experiences, her initial psychological breakdown, her regressive behaviour whilst living in Kingsley Hall, and her emergence out of madness through painting.<sup>169</sup> Kotowicz documents the ‘celebrity’ Barnes’ obtained by publishing her story.<sup>170</sup> The visibility of her narrative undermined the assumed association of female mental illness with feminine passivity. Showalter presented Barnes as a commanding figure at Kingsley Hall who exerted autonomy over her treatment.<sup>171</sup> However, Showalter critiqued Berke’s assessment of Barnes’ mental health because he continued to rely on traditional psychoanalytic ideas about female sexuality.<sup>172</sup> Showalter also asserted that the co-authorship of *Mary Barnes* implied that the experiences of a female mental health patient could only be understood when ‘mediated through the male voice’.<sup>173</sup>

When interviewed, former WTC staff members discussed the limitations of the radical politics promoted at the Arbours Association. Green stated that the Arbours was only politically engaged through its promotion of anti-psychiatric ideals<sup>174</sup>. Grant concurred. Born in Grimsby, she felt that she had a ‘real experience from the beginning of my life of a much more patriarchal society. It was definitely the men who knew what to do’.<sup>175</sup> Grant initially went into psychiatric nursing, which she described as ‘about as patriarchal as you could get’ due to the imbalanced treatment of male and female

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<sup>168</sup> Kotowicz, R. D. *Laing and the Paths of Anti-psychiatry*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*; Mary Barnes and Joseph Berke, *Mary Barnes: Two Accounts of a Journey Through Madness* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1971); Showalter, *The Female Malady*, pp. 232-235.

<sup>170</sup> Kotowicz, R. D. *Laing and the Paths of Anti-psychiatry*, p. 76.

<sup>171</sup> Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 232.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> Green, personal interview.

<sup>175</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

patients.<sup>176</sup> She moved to London and retrained as a psychotherapist because she ‘wanted to do something more psychological’.<sup>177</sup> Her Arbours training meant that she could leave the NHS and work at the WTC. Reiterating Showalter, Grant stated that the Arbours Association ‘wasn’t as alternative as people imagined’ because its practitioners still promoted relatively traditional psychotherapeutic ideas and approaches, and did not incorporate an assessment of gender into their practice.<sup>178</sup> As a result, Grant was very excited to join the WTC after completing her training. She felt that the Centre was:

Absolutely opening up the world of women, about women, to do with women. I’d been used to working with women because of the nursing but this was very different, very, oh it was just, I don’t know how to describe it really.<sup>179</sup>

Grant’s account distinguished the Arbours Association’s work with female residents from the support afforded to women at the WTC, bolstering the view that women’s movement members enhanced existing anti-psychiatric perspectives by aligning them with an analysis of gender. By questioning the Arbours Association’s radical politics and presenting the Centre as an exciting alternative, Grant’s recollections add support to Orbach’s emphasis on the newness of the WTC’s ideas and approaches, presenting it as a disjuncture from previous oppositional organising around mental health.

Despite distinguishing between the Arbours Association and the WTC, practitioners still incorporated their existing professional interests into their work at the Centre. Green found her Arbours training difficult because she was required to understand and apply a range of psychotherapeutic techniques despite being ‘first and foremost a co-counsellor’ rather than a psychoanalyst.<sup>180</sup> She only felt able to incorporate psychoanalytic tenets into her practice if ‘they made sense to me from a co-counselling perspective’.<sup>181</sup> However,

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<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> Grant, personal interview.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

Orbach welcomed Green's interest in co-counselling in her own oral history interview. She stated that Green 'influenced us tremendously' because co-counselling was less interpretative than psychoanalysis:

It wasn't like, can you see how the baby's attacking my breast, you see? Margaret was like, well... "I'm really listening to this person, and then they really listen to me". It's a completely different emphasis.<sup>182</sup>

Orbach therefore emphasised the value of employing practitioners at the Centre who had interests that extended beyond psychoanalysis, stating that she and Eichbaum turned to Green to learn about developments in co-counselling. Green likewise emphasised the importance of aligning co-counselling with the psychoanalytic ideas inherent in Eichenbaum and Orbach's psychology of women. She described how co-counselling highlighted how different prejudices intersected in people's lives, emphasising her own experiences as a Jewish woman.<sup>183</sup> Green therefore presented co-counselling's broad focus on 'social liberation' as more expansive than the gender-based empowerment initially promoted at the WTC.<sup>184</sup>

Documenting the experiences of WTC practitioners who trained at the Arbours Association indicates that the Centre's development was linked to approaches already promoted in radical psychotherapeutic organisations in England. The distinctions that practitioners drew between the Arbours Association and the WTC further problematises the purportedly radical tents of anti-psychiatry. They also bolster practitioners' beliefs that the Centre represented a new and exciting disjuncture in oppositional community-based approaches to mental health care. Despite this emphasis, continuities can be drawn between the Arbours and the WTC. Therapist Sally Berry continued to work at the Arbours Association when she joined the Centre. Green's promotion of co-counselling at the WTC also demonstrated how the Centre incorporated existing oppositional therapies into their

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<sup>182</sup> Orbach, personal interview.

<sup>183</sup> Green, personal interview.

<sup>184</sup> Evison and Horobin, 'Co-counselling', p. 104.



practice in order to better understand and support women. The WTC therefore promoted an increasingly broad definition of feminist therapy that incorporated various radical and psychoanalytic therapies.

### **iii. Battersea Action and Counselling Centre**

Many practitioners who joined the WTC in the late 1970s and early 1980s expressed their excitement at being involved in an organisation that aligned women's movement politics with community-based mental health provision. Joanna Ryan joined the WTC as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist. Ryan was aware of the excitement that surrounded the WTC before she joined, recalling that there was a 'tremendous amount of energy for setting something up for women that had a feminist perspective and a critique of the sexism of a lot of mental health practices'.<sup>185</sup> She reiterated the perceived novelty of approaches that were available at the Centre. As previously highlighted, Iona Grant also emphasised the enthusiasm that accompanied the WTC's incorporation of psychotherapy and feminism.<sup>186</sup> I interviewed Grant with Marie Maguire. They joined the WTC within months of one another in 1980. Questioning Grant and Maguire together was highly useful because it enabled me to assess their reflections on one another's experiences as well as their own. In doing so, I uncovered how their contrasting training and professional background influenced the ways in which they situated themselves, and each other, in the history of the WTC. Maguire was involved in community politics from her early twenties, participating in Women's Liberation and housing groups in South London. She equated the community politics groups she attended with consciousness-raising, describing how participants explored how they could personally support local issues. Maguire taught Women's Studies for the Worker's Educational Association before completing her

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

counselling training. Maguire's first impressions of the WTC contrasted to Grant's.<sup>187</sup>

Maguire suggested that she was not as excited to join the WTC as Grant, having previously been involved in the community-based Battersea Action and Counselling Centre (BACC). Grant recognised Maguire's prior involvement in mental health activism, stating in their interview, 'I think Marie had been involved, you see, with this before so for her I had the impression it was sort of "well okay, but I've been here and got the t-shirt"'.<sup>188</sup>

The BACC was established by Sue Holland, a psychotherapist and Maoist who trained at the Tavistock Clinic, in 1973.<sup>189</sup> Paul Hoggett defined the BACC as an 'early attempt at a psycho-social project'.<sup>190</sup> He joined the initiative shortly after falling out with his doctoral supervisor, a social psychologist at Sussex University, who was unhappy about his increased interest in psychoanalysis.<sup>191</sup> The BACC was based in a shop-front premises on a busy street in Battersea, described by Hoggett as a 'depressed working-class community'.<sup>192</sup> It hosted a nursery, food co-operative, and welfare rights service, alongside short-term psychotherapy sessions with community psychologists.<sup>193</sup> Whilst the BACC was not directly affiliated with the WLM, it maintained links with women's movement groups, taking couples therapy referrals from local Women's Aid organisations.<sup>194</sup> Staff at the Battersea Centre worked with other community activists to publish the newspaper *Pavement*, which highlighted local anti-fascist and anti-cuts campaigns.<sup>195</sup>

The BACC aligned politics and psychotherapy in two ways. First, its practitioners argued that their clients' emotional distress could be overcome if the social deprivation

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> Paul Hoggett, *Emotional Life and the Politics of Welfare* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press 2000), p. 159; Paul Hoggett, 'Learning From Three Practices', *Journal of Psycho-social Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (November, 2014), pp. 179-96 (pp. 179-80).

<sup>190</sup> Hoggett, 'Learning From Three Practices', p. 179.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> Hoggett, *Emotional Life and the Politics of Welfare*, p. 159.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*; Nick Totton, *Psychotherapy and Politics* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 35.

<sup>194</sup> Hoggett, *Emotional Life and the Politics of Welfare*, p. 159.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

they encountered was also alleviated. This perspective was influenced by the view that the 'ongoing process of injury' produced by capitalism had a destructive influence on individual psyches and human relationships.<sup>196</sup> Second, the Battersea Centre was motivated by the belief that 'political action to fight injustice needed to be informed by a vision of human frailties and possibilities'.<sup>197</sup> Practitioners at the BACC sought to create an expansive radical politics that incorporated the emotional and personal, amidst concerns that oppositional activism was becoming dehumanised.<sup>198</sup> The Battersea Centre's aims to provide community-based support and incorporate the 'emotional' into radical politics were comparable to the LWLW Psychology Group's objectives. Whilst the Psychology Group focused on countering emotional distress amongst WLM members, BACC practitioners sought to apply community-based psychology and politics beyond the parameters of an identifiable oppositional political movement. Writing in 1995, Maguire compared the aims of the BACC and WTC.<sup>199</sup> She defined both as 'radical psychotherapy projects', documenting how each initiative drew on the psychoanalytic ideas of W. R. D. Fairbairn to explore how 'real inequities of class, race and gender are structured into the personality and emerge within the therapeutic relationship'.<sup>200</sup> Practitioners at the BACC and WTC drew on Fairbairn's association of personal development with an individual's material surroundings and human interactions to bolster their equation of mental distress with repression social structures and ideologies.<sup>201</sup> Writing in 1982, Eichenbaum and Orbach also stated that tenets of their feminist psychotherapy were rooted in Fairbairn's 'materialist

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<sup>196</sup> P. Hoggett and J. Lousada, 'Therapeutic intervention in working class communities', *Free Associations*, No. 1 (1985), pp. 125-52 (p. 126).

<sup>197</sup> Hoggett, *Emotional Life and the Politics of Welfare*, p. 159.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> Marie Maguire, *Men, Women, Passion and Power: Gender Issues in Psychotherapy* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 4.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*; W. R. D. Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality*. Reprint (London: Routledge, 1994); Graham S. Clark and David E. Scharff, 'Introduction', in Graham S. Clark and David E. Scharff (eds), *Fairbairn and the Object Relations Tradition* (London: Karnac, 2014), pp. xxiii-xxxi (p. xxv).

view of ego development'.<sup>202</sup> Assessing Maguire's narrative accounts of the BACC and WTC indicates that continuities between the two initiatives were attributable to both practitioners' experiences and their application of psychoanalytic theory.

BACC founder Sue Holland subsequently highlighted issues that arose at the BACC as it negotiated its dual roles as a support service and developer of radical political theory. She described how she and her fellow practitioners became distracted by their excitement at working within an alternative organisation and contributing to the development of new political and psychotherapeutic theories.<sup>203</sup> She felt that they did not sufficiently support their clients to develop forms of therapeutic self-help that they could enact autonomously within their community.<sup>204</sup> As will be discussed, tensions between the WTC's development of psychoanalytic theory and application of community-based support became increasingly prominent during the 1980s as it negotiated funding restrictions and concerns about its accessibility. Whilst the BACC endorsed the incorporation of emotional understandings into radical politics, its practitioners also identified how the predominance of specific emotions within an alternative therapeutic organisation influenced its efficacy.

The BACC was initially supported by the Labour-run Wandsworth Council, choosing to work outside the state but with state funding.<sup>205</sup> Totton argues that BACC's early success indicates that the 'paradoxical tension of working *within* the system, *against* the state, can be temporarily creative'.<sup>206</sup> Practitioners at the WTC adopted a similarly strategic application of state and non-profit funding to ensure the Centre's increased accessibility.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out*, p. 111.

<sup>203</sup> Sue Holland, 'Psychotherapy, oppression and social action: gender, race and class in black women's oppression', in Rosine Jozef Perelberg and Ann C. Miller (eds), *Gender and Power in Families*. Reprint (London: Karnac, 2011), pp. 256-69 (p. 265).

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview; Patsey Healey, Michael Purdue, and Frank Ennis, *Negotiating Development: Rationales and practice for development obligations and planning gain* (London: E & FN Spon, 1995), p. 121; Hoggett and Lousada, 'Therapeutic intervention in working class communities', pp. 149-150; Totton, *Psychotherapy and Politics*, p. 35.

<sup>206</sup> Totton, *Psychotherapy and Politics*, p. 35. Italics author's own.

<sup>207</sup> Smith, 'Preface', in INCITE! (ed.), *The Revolution Will Not be Funded*, pp. x-xi.

In 1978, however, Wandsworth Council came under Conservative control and closed the BACC down.<sup>208</sup> The council developed a reputation for testing out Thatcherite policies by initiating economic and social changes centred on 'effective and efficient service delivery'.<sup>209</sup>

The BACC's closure was a precursor to the funding concerns that affected other radical community-based organisations, like the WTC, following Margaret Thatcher's election in 1979. In her oral history interview, Maguire recalled how her dismay at the BACC's closure influenced her initial response to the WTC. When she started at the WTC she was 'still in mourning for the organisation that I had worked in before because I probably would have worked there for a long time if it hadn't been closed down'.<sup>210</sup> Maguire's oral history account therefore indicates the emotional impact that funding cuts had on practitioners who ran radical or alternative organisations, influencing their personal and professional participation in subsequent activism.

Assessing Marie Maguire's involvement in the BACC highlights that not all WTC practitioners felt that its alignment of community-based psychotherapy and feminist politics represented a disjuncture in the history of alternative community-based mental health initiatives. Maguire's professional and political trajectory demonstrates the similarities between the aims and theoretical approaches of the BACC and WTC, therefore situating the WTC in this wider history. Examining the development and closure of the BACC contextualises the WTC's theoretical issues and the funding concerns faced by the WTC under the Conservative government in the 1980s. Analysing the links between the BACC and the WTC therefore highlights broader political and logistical issues faced by

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<sup>208</sup> Healey, Purdue and Ennis, *Negotiating Development*, p. 121.

<sup>209</sup> Nick Buck et al., *Working Capital: Life and Labour in Contemporary London* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002), p. 333.

<sup>210</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

radical organisations that are increasingly being explored in histories of oppositional political activism in late twentieth-century England.<sup>211</sup>

#### iv. Red Therapy and the Growth Movement

The WTC expanded its workshop programme as it employed new members of staff.<sup>212</sup>

Many WTC practitioners have emphasised the significance of the Centre's workshops, with women travelling from across Britain, Ireland and, on occasion, the United States and America, to attend.<sup>213</sup> Smith described the 'fantastic workshop programme' available at the WTC in the 1980s, recalling how one programme contained 102 events.<sup>214</sup> The diversification of the Centre's workshops bolstered the view that feminist therapy encompassed a range of psychotherapeutic approaches.<sup>215</sup> A 1978 WTC workshop programme advertised Ellie Chaikind's six-week course on Gestalt therapy.<sup>216</sup> Associated with the Growth Movement, Gestalt was developed by German psychologist Fritz Perls in early 1950s New York.<sup>217</sup> WTC practitioners Sheila Ernst and Marie Maguire described Gestalt as a 'theory of perception' that promoted positive mental wellbeing by focusing on clients' conscious memories of past events.<sup>218</sup> It therefore contrasts with Freudian psychoanalysis, which uncovers repressed memories and unconscious experiences.<sup>219</sup> The

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<sup>211</sup> Brooke, 'Space, Emotions and the Everyday'; Daisy Payling, "'Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire': Grassroots Activism and Left-Wing Solidarity in 1980s Sheffield', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (December 2014), pp. 602-27; Daisy Payling, 'City limits: sexual politics and the new urban left in 1980s Sheffield', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April 2017), pp. 256-73; Sam Wetherell, 'Painting the Crisis: Community Arts and the Search for the "Ordinary" in 1970s and '80s London', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (October 2013), pp. 235-49.

<sup>212</sup> Women's Library, 7CMS/04/12, Women's Therapy Centre Programme (Winter/Spring 1978), p. 3.

<sup>213</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

<sup>214</sup> Smith, personal interview.

<sup>215</sup> Jocelyn Chaplin, 'Feminist Therapy', pp. 39-41.

<sup>216</sup> Women's Therapy Centre Programme (Winter/Spring, 1978), p. 3.

<sup>217</sup> Fritz S. Perls, Ralph F. Hefferline and Paul Goodman, *Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality*. Reprint (London: Souvenir Press Ltd., 1994); Robert L. Harman, 'Gestalt Group Therapy', in Samuel Long, *Six Group Therapies* (New York: Springer, 1988), pp. 217-56 (p. 218); Sheila Ernst and Lucy Goodison, *In Our Own Hands: A Book of Self-Help Therapy* (London: The Women's Press, 1981), p. 57.

<sup>218</sup> Ernst and Goodison, *In Our Own Hands*, p. 57.

<sup>219</sup> Ernst et al., *In Our Own Hands*, p. 57.

WTC's Gestalt therapy training contrasted to the feminist therapy promoted by Eichenbaum and Orbach. Writing in 1982, Eichenbaum and Orbach remained apprehensive about Growth Movement approaches, arguing that they failed to encourage women to explore how their emotional and political development was hindered by unconscious internal mechanisms.<sup>220</sup>

Incoming WTC practitioners critically applied Growth Movement approaches, aligning therapies like Gestalt with the politics of Women's Liberation. The Centre's critical application of Growth Movement therapies was fostered by Sheila Ernst (nee Young), Lucy Goodison and Joanna Ryan. All were members of Red Therapy, the radical therapy collective founded in 1974.<sup>221</sup> Red Therapy was established by proponents of the Growth Movement who aimed to assess how the incorporation of radical politics and therapy could positively influence everyday lives. Co-founders included radical therapist John Rowan, and Paul Atkinson, a Jungian psychotherapist who was involved in trade unionism and community-based activism.<sup>222</sup> Some Red Therapy members were part of the East London Big Flame, a left libertarian group who organised and published on issues around community activism, workplace politics, class, racism, and Women's Liberation.<sup>223</sup>

Clifford, Gildea and Warring present Red Therapy as a men's liberation group that aligned therapeutic and political practices to better explore the influence of patriarchal systems on their lives.<sup>224</sup> Atkinson and Rowan were involved in men's liberation when Red

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<sup>220</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out*, p. 15.

<sup>221</sup> British Library, General Reference Collection YD.2010.b.3042, Red Therapy, *Red Therapy* (London, 1978), p. 2; Joanna Ryan, personal interview; Ernst and Goodison, *In Our Own Hands*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>222</sup> Rowan, *The Reality Game*, pp. 1-2; Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, p. 273; *The Free Psychotherapy Network*, 'Paul Atkinson', available at <https://freepsychotherapynetwork.com/paul-atkinson/> [accessed 29 March 2017].

<sup>223</sup> East London Big Flame, 'About', *1970s Activism and Autonomy: stories from East London Big Flame*, available at <http://www.eastlondonbigflame.org.uk/about> [accessed 30 March 2017].

<sup>224</sup> Rebecca Clifford, Robert Gildea and Annette Warring, 'Gender and sexuality', in Robert Gildea, James Mark and Annette Warring, *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 239-57 (250).

Therapy formed.<sup>225</sup> Rowan recalled the pain he felt when he realised his propensity to reinforce patriarchal assumptions within his own marriage. He stated, 'It was important to learn this stuff. But I was being wounded. It hurt'.<sup>226</sup> Red Therapy's remit, however, extended beyond men's liberation and contained female members. The group emerged from a conference organised by leading growth centre Quaesitor in London in May 1974.<sup>227</sup> The conference was attended by 350 people and hosted a talk by Victor Seidler, a lecturer at Goldsmith's College. Seidler suggested that attendees form a group to explore the connections between therapy and politics.<sup>228</sup> The leaderless therapy group that subsequently formed contained individuals from various revolutionary and anti-authoritarian political groups including the student and worker movements.<sup>229</sup>

In a pamphlet self-published in 1978, Red Therapy members stated that they aimed to change themselves and their emotional lives in accordance with wider political issues and social developments.<sup>230</sup> Seidler recalled how participants explored the predominance of 'self-denial' in socialist politics, stating that 'even though we continually talked of needs and desires, it proved difficult to sustain much connection with the reality of this vision'.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Rowan, *The Horned God*, p. 17. Emerging in the early 1970s, men's liberation groups often contained men who had been informed by friends or partners involved in Women's Liberation that they should explore the negative influence that patriarchal repression had on their lives. Atkinson and Rowan remained committed to men's liberation throughout the 1970s, helping to establishing the magazine *Achilles Heel*, which produced articles challenging traditional conceptualisations of masculinity and ran until 1999 (*ibid*; Lucy Delap, 'Uneasy Solidarity: The British Men's Movement and Feminism', in Kristina Schulz (ed.), *The Women's Liberation Movement: Impact and Outcomes* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), pp. 214-36; Amanda Goldrick-Jones, *Men Who Believe in Feminism* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), p. 34; Victor J. Seidler, 'Preface and acknowledgements', in Victor J. Seidler (ed.), *Men, Sex and Relationships: Writings from Achilles Heel* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. ix-xiii (pp. ix-x); Ali Haggett, *A History of Male Psychological Disorders in Britain, 1945-1980* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 8; redchidgey, 'Achilles Heel (Magazine, 1978-1999?)', *Grassroots Feminism*, available at <http://www.grassrootsfeminism.net/cms/node/712> [accessed 29 March 2017].

<sup>226</sup> Rowan, *The Horned God*, p. 1.

<sup>227</sup> Rowan, *The Horned God*, pp. 20-21; Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, p. 272; *Self and Society*, 'Growth Centres', Vol. 1, No. 10 (1973), p. 19.

<sup>228</sup> Rowan, *The Horned God*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>229</sup> Red Therapy, *Red Therapy*, p. 1; Rowan, *The Horned God*, pp. 20-22.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>231</sup> Victor J. Seidler, *Recreating Sexual Politics: Men, feminism and politics* (London: Routledge, 2001. Reprinted, Oxford: Routledge, 2010), p. xvii.



The group aligned a social critique influenced by their political affiliations with a critical assessment of existing mental health services and therapies. Drawing on their Marxist politics, members argued that state-led psychiatric services, endorsed by pharmaceutical companies, were a 'major area of social control and of capitalist marketing'.<sup>232</sup> Their critique replicated ideas developed in the service user movement in the early 1970s. The Mental Patients Union (MPU), founded in 1972 by current and former mental health service users, presented psychiatry as a 'form of social control of the working classes in a capitalist state' that could be overcome through unionisation.<sup>233</sup> Red Therapy members believed politicised Growth Movement approaches countered this social control because they helped people to 'own their own feelings rather than referencing them onto some external source'.<sup>234</sup> The collective therefore aimed to redefine alternative psychotherapies to recognise the 'realities of class, race and gender'.<sup>235</sup>

The involvement of Red Therapy members with men's liberation ensured the group's direct affiliation with the WLM. The collective recognised the WLM's role in helping women to 'understand how personal and individual emotions have grown out of particular social structures'.<sup>236</sup> These connections were bolstered when several WLM members joined Red Therapy in 1975. The new members, who included Sheila Ernst, Lucy Goodison, and Joanna Ryan, were involved in a WLM food cooperative and nursery in East London, and had helped to establish the Tower Hamlets Women's Aid centre.<sup>237</sup> The WLM members initially established their own self-help group. The group explored the difficulties associated with living out Women's Liberation politics, assessing emotional issues linked

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<sup>232</sup> Red Therapy, *Red Therapy*, p. 4.

<sup>233</sup>; Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 147; Helen Spandler, *Asylum to Action: Paddington Day Hospital Therapeutic Communities and Beyond* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006), p. 53; Liz Sayce, *From Psychiatric Patient to Citizen Revisited* (London: Palgrave, 2016), p. 53.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>235</sup> Seidler, 'Preface and acknowledgements', p. x.

<sup>236</sup> Red Therapy, *Red Therapy*, p. 14.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

with working collectively, forming non-repressive relationships with men, and overcoming competition with other women. The WLM members felt that these issues were not sufficiently explored in consciousness-raising groups and used psychotherapeutic discourses to enact personal change at a 'deeper level than just intellectual and political understanding'.<sup>238</sup> They joined Red Therapy to expand their knowledge and experience of psychotherapeutic and self-help methods.<sup>239</sup>

Shortly after Ernst, Goodison, and Ryan joined Red Therapy, the collective spent a week at a 'large house in the country' with the aim to integrate new members.<sup>240</sup> Group discussions held during the excursion highlighted the invisible power relations that existed within the collective. By exploring the hierarchies of authority that existed within a mixed-sex group in a therapeutic setting, members assessed the gender imbalances and inequalities inherent in radical political organising more broadly.<sup>241</sup> As the collective expanded, however, members met less frequently as one group. The collective struggled to negotiate the 'difficulty of male/female relations' highlighted in Red Therapy meetings.<sup>242</sup> By 1977, Red Therapy members met in separate male and female groups.<sup>243</sup> This division coincided with Ernst, Goodison, and Ryan joining the WTC.

As members of Red Therapy, Ernst, Goodison, and Ryan practised numerous Growth Movement techniques, including bioenergetics, Gestalt, guided fantasy, psychodrama, and regression.<sup>244</sup> Ernst, Goodison, and Ryan drew on these techniques when facilitating workshops at the WTC. In 1978, Ernst and Ryan held several workshops for women new to self-help.<sup>245</sup> Participants shared their experiences and skills with the aim

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<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-44.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28; p. 41.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>245</sup> Women's Therapy Centre Programme.

of establishing their own self-help initiatives. Subsequent workshops in the series catered for women already involved in self-help.<sup>246</sup> They provided a forum for participants to discuss issues that had arisen in their self-help groups and to try out new techniques. Practitioners at the BACC had expressed concerns that they did not ensure their clients' autonomy in provisioning for their positive mental wellbeing. Ernst and Ryan's workshops appeared to respond to this issue, offering clients the opportunity to lead and develop their own support groups. They promoted a form of therapeutic self-help that aligned Women's Health Movement practices with tenets of other Marxist-influenced and service user-led activism around mental health. Red Therapy members practised both mental and physical exercises at their meetings.<sup>247</sup> WTC courses run by Red Therapy members reflected the collective's interrelation of physical and mental wellbeing. The Centre's 1978 workshop programme advertised an event led by Goodison and Ryan on migraines. It explored women's physical and emotional responses to the condition.<sup>248</sup> Goodison continued to host events incorporating mental and physical exercises at the WTC for fifteen years, leading workshops on bodywork, dance and dream analysis.<sup>249</sup> As members of Red Therapy and the WTC, Ernst, Goodison and Ryan aligned Growth Movement methods with Women's Liberation politics. In a self-help manual produced in 1981, Ernst and Goodison stated that various Growth Movement approaches, including Gestalt and psychodrama, could be successfully employed by women already influenced by WLM politics, and described how their own interest in psychotherapy had developed through their participation in consciousness-raising.<sup>250</sup> As a result, they promoted a therapeutic approach inspired by Growth Movement therapies that was also informed by feminist self-help.

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<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> Red Therapy, *Red Therapy*, p. 56.

<sup>248</sup> Women's Therapy Centre programme.

<sup>249</sup> Ernst and Goodison, *In Our Own Hands*, p. i.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-85; 194-212.

Despite Ernst, Goodison, and Ryan's involvement at the WTC, Orbach specifically distinguished the Centre from Red Therapy.<sup>251</sup> She argued that whilst the WTC focused on supporting women in the wider community, Red Therapy was introspective and only explored participants' own personal and political development.<sup>252</sup> Rowan, however, viewed the Red Therapy members who joined the WTC as disseminating the collective's ideas and approaches at a community-based level.<sup>253</sup> In her oral history interview, Ryan drew links between Red Therapy and the WTC. She felt that her previous involvement in alternative or Marxist community-based psychotherapy projects like Red Therapy ensured that she had a critical approach that 'fitted quite well' at the WTC.<sup>254</sup> Ryan felt that working at the WTC allowed her to develop her political approach to psychotherapy. Whilst Red Therapy members who joined the WTC identified continuities inherent in the ideas that both initiatives promoted, they asserted that the practices they developed at the Centre were a departure from their previous experience of group work because they were professional. Writing in 1981, Ernst and Goodison recalled how the Red Therapy women's group disbanded in 1979 because they no longer required the mutual support and personal development that it offered.<sup>255</sup> Members left the group to focus on their own therapeutic specialisms, therefore demonstrating the role that the WTC played in the development of their professional lives as feminist psychotherapists.<sup>256</sup>

Exploring the ways in which Red Therapy members aligned Growth Movement approaches with women's movement self-help techniques at the WTC further demonstrates the influence of existing radical therapeutic organisations on the Centre's development. The professional trajectories of WTC practitioners such as Marie Maguire,

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<sup>251</sup> Susie Orbach, personal interview.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> Rowan, *The Horned God*, p. 21.

<sup>254</sup> Joanna Ryan, personal interview.

<sup>255</sup> Ernst and Goodison, *In Our Own Hands*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

who previously worked at the BACC, indicate the continuities between existing radical therapeutic initiatives and approaches promoted at the WTC. However, these continuities were not clearly linear. Like Eichenbaum and Orbach, members of Red Therapy initially employed psychotherapeutic ideas to understand themselves and the oppositional political movements that they were involved in. As stated in the Red Therapy pamphlet, radical and feminist therapy grew out of the 'needs of people in various political movements in the '60s and '70s rather than from within existing therapy set-ups'.<sup>257</sup> Whilst the WTC promoted comparable ideas to Red Therapy, its members distinguished between the practices that they promoted; focusing on personal and political development, or facilitating community-based support by women, for women. Whilst the WTC and Red Therapy were deemed to have comparable theoretical underpinnings, they transformed this theory into a grassroots practice in distinctive ways. The WTC continued to negotiate tensions concerning the development of theories of radical therapy and the manner in which they were enacted throughout the 1980s.

## **The Development of the Women's Therapy Centre throughout the 1980s**

In the early 1980s, Eichenbaum and Orbach returned to the United States, resigning from their leadership positions at the WTC.<sup>258</sup> Eichenbaum returned to New York in 1981, whilst Orbach, influenced by developments in her partner's career, left London in 1982.<sup>259</sup>

Eichenbaum and Orbach have described the impact that their departure had on the Centre.<sup>260</sup> Orbach questioned the Centre's approach to the issues that it faced during the 1980s and 1990s, emphasising its increased depoliticisation as it sought funding, its need to psychologise the backlash against the women's movement's social gains, and its

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<sup>257</sup> Red Therapy, *Red Therapy*, p. 14.

<sup>258</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Eichenbaum, *Psychology's Feminist Voices*.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

employment of staff who did not explicitly define as feminist.<sup>261</sup> Orbach implied that the WTC would have contended with these issues more effectively if she and Eichenbaum had remained in leadership roles, believing that they had left the Centre prematurely.<sup>262</sup>

Orbach's account of the Centre's depoliticisation reflects wider histories of feminist organisations that emphasise the 'institutionalisation of gender' and growth of 'municipal feminism' in Britain across the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>263</sup> These accounts document how the growth of neoliberalism resulted in the marketisation of the voluntary sector and significant government cuts to state welfare.<sup>264</sup> In order to comply with state-sponsored funding constraints, community-based feminist organisations adopted increasingly bureaucratised structures.<sup>265</sup> Orbach argued that the WTC now fulfils a social rather than a political role due to these funding constraints.<sup>266</sup> Assessing accounts provided by practitioners who remained at the Centre during the 1980s, however, destabilises Orbach's emphasis on its depoliticisation. Whilst the Centre developed its administrative system and received state funding, it also adopted a collective organisational structure and improved the accessibility of its services. Exploring these developments demonstrates changing perceptions about how and why feminist therapy was political, highlighting the increasing

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<sup>261</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Orbach, personal interview.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> Ruth Pearson and Cecile Jackson, 'Introduction: Interrogating development: feminism, gender and policy', in Ruth Pearson and Cecile Jackson (eds), *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Policy* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1-16 (p. 6); Joni Lovenduski, 'Sex equality and the rules of the game', in Frances Gardiner (ed.), *Sex Equality Policy in Western Europe* (Routledge: London, 1997), pp. 91-109 (pp. 105-06); Sheila Rowbotham, 'Mapping the Women's Movement', in Monica Threlfall (ed.), *Mapping the Women's Movement: Feminist Politics and Social Transformation in the North* (Verso: London, 1996), pp. 1-17 (p. 9).

<sup>264</sup> Soniya Munshi and Craig Willse, 'Foreword', in INCITE! (eds), *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2007. Reprinted Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), pp. xiii-xxii (p. xiv).

<sup>265</sup> Joyce Outshoorn and Johanna Kantola, 'Assessing Changes in State Feminism over the Last Decade', in Joyce Outshoorn and Johanna Kantola (eds), *Changing State Feminism* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 266-85 (p. 282); Joyce Gelb, *Feminism and Politics: A Comparative Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 122; Alena Heitlinger, *Women's Equality, Demography and Public Policies: A Comparative Perspective* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993).

<sup>266</sup> Orbach, personal interview.

tension that existed between practitioners who regarded it as a theoretical approach and those who deemed it a community-based service.

### **i. Leadership and organisation at the Women's Therapy Centre**

Whilst radical therapy groups like Red Therapy ran as leaderless collectives, Eichenbaum and Orbach promoted a managerial structure at the WTC.<sup>267</sup> The Centre's co-founders believed that collective decision-making would have hindered the WTC's efficiency.<sup>268</sup> As the only full-time staff members, Eichenbaum and Orbach were consistently present to make organisational decisions. Their promotion of a hierarchical organisational model reflected their personal experiences of Women's Liberation activism, as well as wider concerns about collectivism within the WLM. In her *Sisterhood and After* interview, Orbach described the disputes that took place within the Richmond College Women's Studies organising committee, with one disagreement resulting in a physical fight.<sup>269</sup> She believed that collective organisation resulted in a 'hierarchy of oppression' that remained unresolved.<sup>270</sup>

Despite establishing themselves as leaders, Eichenbaum and Orbach believed that the Centre's staff supervision and study groups promoted a sense of communality and democracy through which the WTC's founders' theories and practices could be explored and challenged. Grant and Maguire emphasised the support fostered in the study group.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*; Orbach concerns mirrored Jo Freeman's assessment of collectives contained in her widely-disseminated 1972 essay 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness'. Freeman questioned whether leaderless groups could be successfully established. She asserted that the strong emphasis placed on collectivism in the women's movement became a 'smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others'. (Jo Freeman, 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness', *The Second Wave*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1972), reproduced on *JoFreeman.com*, available at <http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm> [accessed 1 April 2017]; Susan Magarey, *Dangerous Ideas: Women's Liberation – Women's Studies – Around the World* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2014), p. 35).

<sup>271</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

WTC practitioners felt that Eichenbaum and Orbach's leadership contributed to the Centre's stability. Vivien Burgoyne (née Bar) worked at the WTC in the 1980s after training as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist at Brunel University. She referred to the Centre's co-founders as 'two very powerful women with strong ideas and they did a brilliant job'.<sup>272</sup> Writing in 1987, Ernst and Maguire described how Eichenbaum and Orbach promoted a highly coherent approach to feminist therapy at the Centre.<sup>273</sup> Carol Sturdy, a WTC administrator, stated that Eichenbaum and Orbach had a clearly defined set of aims that were continually reiterated to staff members both explicitly and implicitly.<sup>274</sup> As a result, WTC staff members were anxious about their departure. Ernst and Maguire stated:

It can be difficult to recapture the anxieties we felt about whether we could run the WTC on our own. Their leaving coincided with demands from our funders for a new level of monitoring, or record-keeping, and financial accountability.<sup>275</sup>

Practitioners' concerns about the absence of strong leadership, coupled with increasing pressures to bureaucratised, did not result in the Centre's immediate depoliticisation. After Eichenbaum and Orbach left, its remaining staff members decided to run the WTC as a collective, making decisions by consensus without an acknowledged leadership.<sup>276</sup> Whilst practitioners never made an explicit decision to operate as a collective, Sturdy asserted that communal self-management appealed to those who had been involved in the 'libertarian culture' and Women's Liberation politics of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>277</sup> Sturdy recalled the significance of statements by prominent WLM member including Sheila Rowbotham, who argued, 'Your politics were communicated not only through what you said, but in what you did and how you did it'.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Burgoyne, personal interview.

<sup>273</sup> Ernst and Maguire, 'Introduction', p. 3.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>275</sup> Ernst and Maguire, 'Introduction', pp. 4-5.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*; Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal and Hilary Wainwright, *Beyond the Fragments* (London: Merlin Press, 1979), p. 30.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33



Running as a collective, the WTC made all organisational decisions at compulsory monthly meetings. If decisions on minor issues had to be made quickly, a vote was taken. Disagreements on larger issues were explored through extensive discussion.<sup>279</sup> The Centre was promoted as non-hierarchical. Although WTC practitioners' different levels of expertise were recognised, resulting in them obtaining a '*personal* authority' on specific issues, Sturdy argued that the Centre did not afford formalised power to any staff positions.<sup>280</sup> The WTC therefore paid all WTC staff members the same hourly rate, regardless of their role or experience.<sup>281</sup> The WTC's adoption of a collective organisational structure, an approach aligned with their radical political beliefs and involvement in oppositional activism, problematises the historiographical assumption that radical voluntary organisations became increasingly depoliticised during the 1980s.

Eichenbaum and Orbach's departure also afforded WTC practitioners the freedom to further develop their own feminist therapeutic approaches. Ryan described how there were more debates in staff study and supervision groups about the alignment of feminist politics and psychotherapy.<sup>282</sup> In the absence of Eichenbaum and Orbach's strong leadership, staff members had to formulate their own theories of women's psychology. Whilst this was initially daunting, Ryan described how practitioners became increasingly excited as they realised that they could 'rewrite therapy so that it had a more feminist perspective and a more political perspective'.<sup>283</sup> WTC staff members viewed Eichenbaum and Orbach's departure as an opportunity to contribute to the emergent theory surrounding feminist therapy.

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<sup>279</sup> Carol Sturdy, 'Questioning the Sphinx: an experiencing of working in a women's organisation', in Sheila Ernst and Marie Maguire (eds), *Living with the Sphinx: Papers from the Women's Therapy Centre* (London: The Women's Press, 1987), pp. 30-48 (p. 32).

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.* Italics author's own.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>282</sup> Ryan, personal interview.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

This expansive approach was also reflected in WTC's development as a community-based service. Shortly before Eichenbaum and Orbach's departure, the WTC moved from Hartham Road to the top floor of Manor Gardens, a health and community service facility on Holloway Road, North London.<sup>284</sup> Manor Gardens contained various voluntary and statutory services, including a child welfare clinic and a charity supporting gay teenagers.<sup>285</sup> WTC practitioners deemed it a 'nice historical irony' that it had also housed a charity supporting women and children during the Victorian period.<sup>286</sup> Finding the WTC's new location was the first major organisational decision that Orbach and Eichenbaum did not orchestrate. Sue Krzowski, who had joined the Centre in 1979 to develop its workshop programme, organised the move.<sup>287</sup> The Manor Gardens premises were more spacious, containing ten therapy rooms and a lecture theatre.<sup>288</sup> The WTC's new location therefore bolstered its interconnected roles as support service, training facility, and campaigns body.<sup>289</sup>

As the 1980s progressed, WTC practitioners confronted issues associated with collective organisation. Staff members drew on the psychotherapeutic insights they developed in a professional capacity to reflect on the personal impact of organising as a collective. Writing in 1987, Sturdy stated that running the WTC without a formalised leadership was an 'enormously difficult task'.<sup>290</sup> She recognised the ways in which collective organising led to the establishment of invisible hierarchies and unquestioned power positions, replicating Freeman's concerns raised in 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness'.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Manor Gardens, 'Who We Are', available at <http://www.manorgardenscentre.org/about-us/> [accessed 25 March 2016].

<sup>285</sup> Ernst and Maguire, 'The Women's Therapy Centre', in Ernst and Maguire, *Living with the Sphinx*, pp. ix-x (p. ix). The WTC's move the Manor Gardens facility took place in 1980.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>287</sup> Susie Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*; Sue Krzowski and Pat Land (eds), *In Our Experience: Workshops at the Women's Therapy Centre* (London: The Women's Press, 1988), p. ii.

<sup>288</sup> Orbach, *Sisterhood and After*.

<sup>289</sup> Sturdy, 'Questioning the Sphinx', pp. 36-37.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46; Freeman, 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness'.

Sturdy drew on Wilfred Bion's psychoanalytic theory of groups to explore how negative group dynamics developed at the WTC.<sup>292</sup> In *Experiences in Groups*, Bion defined two group types: the 'work group' and the 'basic assumption group'.<sup>293</sup> Sturdy perceived the 'work group' to operate at a 'conscious, rational level', establishing goals and tasks that reflected members' knowledge and skills. The 'basic assumption group' acted 'spontaneously and instinctively as though on the basis of some common emotional assumption' that was usually influenced by the attitudes of one individual. Sturdy suggested that the WTC's organisational structure conflated the two group types. Invisible hierarchies and unquestioned authorities developed because it was difficult to discern whether the staff group were 'behaving as rationally as it claimed in pursuing its overt goals, or whether it is in the grip of one of the basic emotional assumptions, and therefore unlikely to be effective'.<sup>294</sup>

Sturdy aligned her psychoanalytic assessment of collective organisation with an emergent critical literature that explored the longevity and success of radical organisational approaches. In *What a Way to Run a Railroad: An Analysis of Radical Failure*, Charles Landry, amongst others, highlighted the organisational issues that they believed were endemic in radical political institutions, citing poor financial planning and the censorship of contrasting views.<sup>295</sup> The authors asserted that radical groups' uncritical allegiance to collective organisation was self-destructive:

The assumption is that as long as we fight in the right way we are bound to win...From here it is only a short step to thinking that it doesn't matter if we win as long as we've played the game in the right spirit.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Sturdy, 'Questioning the Sphinx', pp. 45-46; W. R. Bion, *Experiences in Groups and other papers* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1961); Robert M. Lipgar, 'Re-discovering Bion's *Experiences in Groups*: A Commentary on Theory and Practice', in Robert M. Lipgar and Malcolm Pines (eds), *Building on Bion: Roots- Origins and Context of Bion's Contributions to Theory and Practice* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), pp. 29-58 (p. 30).

<sup>293</sup> Bion, *Experiences in Groups and other papers*.

<sup>294</sup> Sturdy, 'Questioning the Sphinx', p. 45.

<sup>295</sup> Charles Landry et al., *What a Way to Run a Railroad: An Analysis of Radical Failure* (London: Comedia, 1985), p. 38.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Sturdy expressed concern that WTC practitioners fetishized collective organisation. Smith described how staff members were afraid to question the Centre's collective structure for fear that they would undermine the feminist politics that underpinned it:

There was a lot of anxiety about people taking leadership roles- very naïve- but that was the times. It really was feminist in that sense. Nobody's allowed to put their neck above the parapet. We are all the same.<sup>297</sup>

Practitioners' anxieties about rejecting the Centre's collective feminist ethos mirror the emotional distress experienced by participants who felt that they were contravening Women's Liberation politics and practices in earlier WLM groups. This assessment therefore highlights how issues that initially affected internalised Women's Liberation groups were subsequently played out in community-based women's movement initiatives. Aligning examinations of the WTC and LWLW Psychology Group therefore further indicates the influence of individual emotions and group feelings on the organisational development of radical political initiatives in late twentieth-century England.

## **ii. Developing an Administrative System**

Concerns about invisible hierarchies and unquestioned power dynamics were particularly apparent in debates about the WTC's administration. Histories charting the depoliticisation of feminist organisations link it to their increased bureaucratisation. Throughout the 1980s, the WTC developed a more cohesive administrative structure. Some practitioners felt that this hindered their creativity and spontaneity.<sup>298</sup> Exploring narrative accounts provided by the staff members who initiated these administrative changes, however, demonstrates that they did not view as them as depoliticising but rather as ensuring the longevity of the Centre and its capacity to enact its political aims. Ruthie Smith joined the WTC in 1979 as

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<sup>297</sup> Smith, personal interview.

<sup>298</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

an administrator. She felt that the Centre's bookkeeping system was inadequate when she started there, describing how 'they didn't have any system for money. People just paid what they could'.<sup>299</sup> The Centre's initial approach to administration and bookkeeping reflected the entrepreneurial rebelliousness with which Eichenbaum and Orbach had developed the WTC. This sense of rebellion extended to how the Centre co-founders spent grants. Orbach recalled how they spent funding 'creatively' and did not necessarily use it for its requested purpose.<sup>300</sup> In the late 1970s, the WTC was supported by the Islington Council. Here, the Centre's creative approach to funding provides a further example of how radical organisations used state support but then often turned against their sponsor.

Smith believed that Islington Council's financial support meant that the WTC had to be more accountable. Her concerns reflected the increased emphasis placed on accountability in the voluntary sector in the 1970s and 1980s, as charities combined their own fundraising with local and central government grants.<sup>301</sup> Plummer argues that public funding provided charities with the financial support to be innovative. However, it also enabled governments and councils to demonstrate that they were responding to social issues despite not carrying out the work directly.<sup>302</sup> As highlighted by Hilton, Crowson, Mouhout, and Mackay, accountability became increasingly associated with governance, raising concerns about the autonomy of voluntary sector organisation.<sup>303</sup> They argue that the association of accountability with governance demonstrates that developments in the

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<sup>299</sup> Smith, personal interview.

<sup>300</sup> Orbach, personal interview.

<sup>301</sup> John Plummer, *How Are Charities Accountable? A study of the approaches to governance and accountability developed by twelve major charities* (London: Demos, 1997), p. 59; Margaret Harris, Colin Rochester, and Peter Halfpenny, 'Voluntary Organisations and Social Policy: Twenty Years of Change', in Margaret Harries and Colin Rochester (eds), *Voluntary Organisations and Social Policy in Britain: Perspectives on Change and Choice* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp. 1-20 (p. 12).

<sup>302</sup> Plummer, *How are Charities Accountable?*, p. 59.

<sup>303</sup> Matthew Hilton et al., *A Historical Guide to NGOs in Britain*, p. 355.

voluntary sector were initiated by the government rather than by the organisations affected.<sup>304</sup>

When Smith joined the WTC, she wrote a paper querying how the Centre could be accountable and exploring its efficacy as a collective. She recalled how she and other WTC practitioners debated its contents over a picnic on Hampstead Heath. She stated, 'I think my paper was actually quite threatening because I was new and I was from outside so I was naively going in stumbling about and putting my foot in it all over the place'.<sup>305</sup> Smith attributed their apprehensive response to wider concerns about power within the WTC. She felt that the paper contravened the Centre's emphasis on collectivism and equality.<sup>306</sup> Asking whether the Centre should readopt directors was deemed a 'radical question'.<sup>307</sup> This suggests that the nature of the collective politics at the WTC was assumed rather than discussed.

Despite the decision of WTC staff members to remain as a collective, Smith still developed a new bookkeeping system, promoted the use of annual reports, and compiled statistics about the Centre's services and clients. Enlisting the support of friends and capitalising on the WTC's Manor Gardens location by utilising the expertise of its staff, Smith maintained elements of Eichenbaum and Orbach's informal, off-the-cuff approach to organisation when bolstering the Centre's administrative system. She requested the support of the Manor Gardens centre director to develop the bookkeeping system and enlisted the help of her friend and fellow musician Julia Doyle because she worked at a statistics company.<sup>308</sup> Smith believed that bolstering the WTC's administration ensured its

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<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>305</sup> Smith, personal interview.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>308</sup> Smith, personal interview; Julia was a bass player who subsequently performed with Smith in the band The Guest Stars (The Women's Liberation Music Archive, 'The Guest Stars, 1983-1988' in *The Women's Liberation Music Archive: Feminist music-making in the UK and Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s*, available at <https://womensliberationmusicarchive.co.uk/g/> [accessed 3 April 2017]).

longevity. In seeking to protect the Centre, however, she contravened its collective organisation. Smith recalled how, in the early 1980s, she developed a 'gut feeling' that the Centre would be visited by a tax inspector and was anxious because 'the books weren't happening'.<sup>309</sup> Although other staff members 'just thought I was absolutely potty', Smith acted on her concerns and took the unilateral decision to fire the Centre's bookkeeper due to her lack of experience.<sup>310</sup> Smith then employed her friend, an accountant, to work on the books over the weekend. Smith admitted that she did not consult other staff members before firing the bookkeeper, therefore undermining the Centre's communal decision-making process. Despite this, she believed that her decision was vindicated because a tax inspector visited the WTC shortly after the books were amended.<sup>311</sup> Smith's account indicates how contraventions in the Centre's collective approach were accepted when the WTC's existence was threatened. This pattern continued into the late 1980s when practitioner Sheila Ernst was appointed Director of the WTC in response to a particularly acute funding crisis.<sup>312</sup>

In her 1987 assessment, Sturdy also explored the WTC's administrative issues. She documented increasing tensions between administrators and psychotherapists and the pervasive belief that 'if the office workers had their way, theirs would be the major work of the Centre, with psychotherapy very much in second place'.<sup>313</sup> Because the Centre's administrative work was not clearly defined, it was often perceived as an all-consuming 'amorphous mass of activity'.<sup>314</sup> Sturdy believed that practitioners avoided defining work as administrative because they did not want it to be framed as specialist. Defining tasks as specialist undermined the notion that the Centre could collectively self-manage without

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<sup>309</sup> Smith, personal interview.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>311</sup> Smith, personal interview.

<sup>312</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

<sup>313</sup> Sturdy, 'Questioning the Sphinx', pp. 38-39.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*

the need for a hierarchy of expertise.<sup>315</sup> This meant that routine administrative tasks often got overlooked. A temporary worker was employed to contend with the backlog of administration on a lower wage than the hourly rate paid to Centre workers. This contravened the WTC's collective ethos.<sup>316</sup>

Sturdy's account further demonstrates how the WTC's organisation as an informal collective across the 1980s could result in staff members' undermining the radical politics on which the Centre was based. Smith and Sturdy's narratives therefore reinforced Landry et al.'s assertion that organisations' staunch dedication to collectivism often resulted in logistical issues that remained underexplored.<sup>317</sup> Their accounts highlight that concern about the depoliticisation of alternative organisations in the 1980s was accompanied by increasingly critical assessments of the radical politics that informed their development. These assessments suggested that the political influence of alternative initiatives could only be maintained if activists and practitioners recognised the potential pitfalls of radical organisational approaches. WTC practitioners drew on their knowledge of psychotherapy to theorise the need for increased self-awareness amongst activists, therefore contributing to wider debates about the efficacy of radical organisations in 1980s England.

### **iii. The GLC and Funding at the Women's Therapy Centre, 1982-1986**

Debates about the WTC's accountability and administration were oriented around funding. The WTC did not receive funding when it opened in 1976.<sup>318</sup> However, by the late 1980s, the Centre was a registered charity that was funded by several public bodies and trusts. It also benefitted from client fees, which it charged on a sliding scale based on what individual income.<sup>319</sup> Between 1982 and 1986, the WTC received lump sum grants from the

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<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*; Landry et al., *What a Way to Run a Railroad*, p. 13.

<sup>318</sup> Haw and Parker, 'Feminist Therapists Talking', pp. 37.

<sup>319</sup> Ernst and Maguire, 'The Women's Therapy Centre', pp. ix-x.



Greater London Council (GLC)'s Women's Committee. The way in which the WTC was structured was influenced by the nature of the grants that it received. At the same time, the association of the GLC with municipal feminism further queries whether feminist organisations' acceptance of state support resulted in their depoliticisation.

The GLC was Greater London's government body from 1965 to 1986.<sup>320</sup> Under the Labour leadership of Ken Livingstone, the GLC established Britain's first women's committee in 1981.<sup>321</sup> The foundation of women's committees in local governments across England represented the growth of 'municipal feminism' in 1980s Britain.<sup>322</sup> Municipal feminism, as defined by Bruegel and Kean, promoted the view that state institutions should not be uncritically perceived as vehicles for social change, but were rather bureaucratic 'structures of semi-autonomous, gendered power'.<sup>323</sup> With an annual budget of up to £8 million, the Women's Committee supported approximately four hundred women's organisations until the GLC's closure in 1986.<sup>324</sup> Between 1982 and 1985, the GLC Women's Committee granted over £80,000 to the WTC, funding staff salaries and running costs. In November 1982, Women's Committee chairman Valerie Wise described the WTC as an 'established, well-run and professional organisation, providing a unique service to London women'.<sup>325</sup> In 1984, the Women's Committee praised the WTC's provision of therapy and self-help to women who could not afford specialist counselling.<sup>326</sup> The GLC's lump sum grants ensured that the WTC could decide how the money was spent, abating concerns

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<sup>320</sup> Ben Pimlott and Nirmala Rao, *Governing London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 33; Tassilo Herrschel and Peter Newman, *Governance of Europe's City Regions: Planning Policies and Politics* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002), p. 209.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*; Wendy Stokes, *Women in Contemporary Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 188.

<sup>322</sup> Bruegel and Kean, 'The moment of municipal feminism', pp. 147-49; Conley and Page, *Gender Equality in Public Services*, p. 36.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>324</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, *Women on the Defensive: Living Through Conservative Times* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 107.

<sup>325</sup> Valerie Wise, quoted in London Metropolitan Archives, Greater London Council, GLC/DG/PRB/35/039/577 GLC Public Relations Branch News Service, 'New Grants to Help Women' (November 29 1982).

<sup>326</sup> London Metropolitan Archives, Greater London Council, GLC/DG/PRB/35/044/262 GLC Public Relations Branch News Service, 'GLC Work to Help Women's Health' (April 11 1984).

that accepting state funding contravened women's movement politics.<sup>327</sup> However, Wise's emphasis on the WTC's professionalism also suggests that it was important that the GLC was seen to be supporting formal organisations, responding to the Conservative government's expressed concerns that the Council was 'fiscally irresponsible and politically out of step'.<sup>328</sup>

The GLC aligned the WTC with other women's organisations that required funding in the wake of significant welfare cuts. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Labour and Conservative governments responded to economic recession by cutting public expenditure on welfare.<sup>329</sup> Alcock and May argue that whilst the Labour government, under James Callaghan, did so to reduce the 'economic "burden"' of public spending, Thatcher's Conservative government cut public provisions to expand privatised welfare services.<sup>330</sup> In a 1982 press release, the GLC Grants Sub-committee Chairman emphasised the need to give 'hard cash' to voluntary organisations affected by government cuts.<sup>331</sup> The GLC raised concerns about the specific impact cuts and privatisation had on mental health and women's organisations due to their focus on issues overlooked by the central Conservative government.<sup>332</sup> In 1985, the GLC's Women's Committee and Health Panel published *Chance or Choice? Community Care and Women as Carers*.<sup>333</sup> The document argued that the promotion of community care at local and national levels placed undue pressure on familial

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<sup>327</sup> Andy Harris, quoted in London Metropolitan Archives, Greater London Council, GLC/DG/PRB/35/039/329 GLC Public Relations Branch News Service, '£1.5 Million "Lifeline" for Community Groups' (July 26 1982), p. 1.

<sup>328</sup> Bashevkin, *Women on the Defensive*, p. 106.

<sup>329</sup> Pete Alcock and Margaret May, *Social Policy in Britain*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 25.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*; Pat Thane, 'The "Welfare State" and the Labour Market', in Nicholas Crafts, Ian Gazeley, and Andrew Newell (eds), *Work and Pay in Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 178-202 (p. 196).

<sup>331</sup> Andy Harris, quoted in GLC Public Relations Branch News Service, '£1.5 Million "Lifeline" for Community Groups', p. 1.

<sup>332</sup> Sylvia Bashevkin, *A Tale of Two Cities: Women and Municipal Restructuring in London and Toronto* (Vancouver: UCB Press, 2006), p. 57.

<sup>333</sup> British Library, Document Supply OP-LG/2291, F. McLean, *Chance or Choice? Community Care and Women as Carers* (London: GLC, 1985).

carers, the majority of whom were women. Valerie Wise and GLC Health Panel chair Barrie Stead argued that government policy must ensure that women and families caring for dependent relatives received adequate support, and that caring was shared more equally across society.<sup>334</sup> Their concerns replicated contemporary feminist assessments of community-based mental health provision.<sup>335</sup> The GLC supported community-based women's mental health initiatives through the allocation of grants and promoting feminist perspectives. Assessing grants awarded by the GLC highlights the complex ways in which the WTC engaged with the state in the early 1980s. Given the variant political affiliations of local and central government, radical organisations could obtain state funding whilst opposing governmental policies at a national level.

#### **iv. Promoting Accessibility and Diversity at the WTC, 1986-1995**

In 1986, the Conservative government shut the GLC down, concerned that it had come to represent a 'bastion of the left'.<sup>336</sup> The GLC's closure had a large impact on the type of the funding that the WTC and other London-based voluntary organisations received. Whilst the GLC had provided lump sum grants to ensure the autonomy of such organisations, ongoing funding was available to support specific concerns or projects. This development reflected the Conservative government's emphasis on accountability and governance within the voluntary sector.<sup>337</sup> Organisations like the WTC were compelled to justify how they spent

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<sup>334</sup> Valerie Wise and Barrie Stead, 'Foreword', in *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>335</sup> Nancy R. Hooyman and Judith Gonyea, *Feminist Perspectives on Family Care: Policies for Gender Justice* (Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, California, 1992), p. 15; Sewell, 'The emergence of the carer', pp. 48-49; Janet Finch, *Family Obligation and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989); Janet Finch and Jennifer Mason, *Negotiating Family Responsibilities* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>336</sup> Bashevkin, *A Tale of Two Cities*, p. 6; Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders, 'Introduction: Varieties of Thatcherism', in Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders (eds), *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 1-22 (pp. 7-8).

<sup>337</sup> Hilton et al., *A Historical Guide to NGOs in Britain*, p. 355.

public funding and adopted increasingly bureaucratic structures of management to ensure that grants were obtained and spent correctly.<sup>338</sup>

Many practitioners who had worked at the WTC from the late 1970s asserted that funding constraints enacted after the GLC's closure had a detrimental impact on the Centre's political foundations. Grant and Maguire felt that the administrative work associated with funding applications led to greater distinctions being made between administrators and psychotherapists at the WTC. Psychotherapists were afforded less influence in how the Centre was run. In her oral history interview, Grant was unaware, for example, that the WTC had used celebrity endorsement in a 1990 fundraising campaign.<sup>339</sup> Grant stated that she did not approve of the use of celebrities and speculated that, by the late 1980s, campaigning decisions were usually made by the Centre's trustees without consulting the psychotherapists who worked there.<sup>340</sup> Jones highlights a broader tension concerning the use of celebrity endorsement in charitable fundraising, arguing that it reflected a 'shift in the legitimacy of charity and welfare, away from state-led welfare solutions towards more individualised and market-driven forms of action articulated through the realms of consumption and mass culture'.<sup>341</sup> Grant's reticence towards the WTC's use of celebrity endorsement could therefore be reflective of the individualisation and consumerism that charity fundraising was increasingly seen to reflect. This perspective would be aligned with her belief that the WTC became depoliticised during the 1980s.

Grant and Maguire felt that the absence of lump sum grants hindered the WTC's creativity and flexibility. Psychotherapists no longer had the freedom to develop ideas and approaches that they found interesting. Grant stated that practices at the WTC became

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<sup>338</sup> Bashevkin, *Women on the Defensive*, p. 137.

<sup>339</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview; Wellcome Library, PP/RYP/C/26 Women's Therapy Centre Brochure (c. 1990), p. 1.

<sup>340</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

<sup>341</sup> Andrew Jones, 'Band Aid revisited: humanitarianism, consumption and philanthropy in the 1980s', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2017), pp. 189-209 (p. 191).

increasingly oriented around what funding bodies required as opposed to what the Centre wanted to achieve. Maguire felt that less emphasis was placed on training, citing the decline of the Centre's one-year course 'Working with Women'.<sup>342</sup> She stated, 'I would have liked the WTC to have gone on running higher level courses, or sort of interesting events for psychoanalytic psychotherapists'.<sup>343</sup> Grant and Maguire therefore equated the political nature of the WTC with the opportunities that it gave psychotherapists to develop their theoretical understandings of pertinent issues, and subsequently apply them in a community-based setting. Jan Robinson, a feminist activist involved in organisations oriented around family law and violence against women, has also documented how the increasingly bureaucratic requirements associated with small-scale, short-term funding applications forced many women's organisations to cut back services and resources in the 1980s.<sup>344</sup> Drawing on Robinson's testimony, Bashevkin argues that cutbacks had a negative influence on staff members, many of whom felt like they were continually on the defensive, isolated and frustrated by local and central government administrations.<sup>345</sup>

Due to its continued economic instability in the late 1980s, the WTC was significantly restructured. Its collective organisational approach was replaced with a management structure. Linda Massie, previously of Islington MIND, was employed as the Centre's new director, indicating that the WTC replicated the organisational structures of mental health groups that had not emerged out of radical political movements.<sup>346</sup> A brochure produced by the WTC in 1990 emphasised the need to generate more funds through the profit-making areas of its work, placing an increased emphasis on full fee-paying clients.<sup>347</sup> Limited funding meant that the WTC also closed its regular workshop

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<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>344</sup> Jan Robinson, quoted in Sylvia Bashevkin, *Women on the Defensive*, p. 137.

<sup>345</sup> Bashevkin, *Women on the Defensive*, p. 137.

<sup>346</sup> Women's Therapy Centre Brochure, p. 4.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

programme, a format that had been a central tenet of Centre services since its formation.<sup>348</sup> This resulted in reduced access to therapy for hundreds of women.

Some practitioners have suggested, however, that tailored funding grants, as well as the closure of the workshop programme, forced the WTC to assess and improve issues of accessibility and diversity that it had previously overlooked.<sup>349</sup> Solomos and Jenkins document the increased emphasis placed on ideas of equal opportunity, equal access, and anti-discrimination in the voluntary sector across the 1980s.<sup>350</sup> Given that local and central government bodies used voluntary sector grants to demonstrate that they were responding to pertinent social issues, the WTC drew on funding to enhance their services for Black women, women with disabilities and working-class women. In the October 1987 edition of *Spare Rib*, the WTC advertised funding from the London Borough Grants Scheme that meant that women with disabilities could attend Centre events at a reduced rate.<sup>351</sup> The Centre received funding from the Richmond Scheme for the same purpose.<sup>352</sup>

WTC practitioners also applied for funding grants to research the Centre's accessibility. In 1990, Rosamund Grant, Carol Mohamed, and Ruthie Smith received grants from the King's Fund and Paddy Ashdown Charitable Settlement to assess the ways in which the WTC could improve its support for Black women.<sup>353</sup> Smith recalled how they started the research project because the WTC was 'hardly reaching Black women at all'.<sup>354</sup> Mohamed was the first Black psychotherapist to work at the WTC, joining in the late

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<sup>348</sup> British Library, Document Supply q95/19762, Rosamund Grant, Carol Mohamed and Ruthie Smith, *Time limited psychotherapy at the Women's Therapy Centre: a guide to practice* (London: Women's Therapy Centre, 1993), p. 3.

<sup>349</sup> Mohamed, personal interview.

<sup>350</sup> John Solomos and Richard Jenkins, 'Racism, equal opportunity and public policy', in Richard Jenkins and John Solomos (eds), *Equal opportunity policies in the 1980s*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 3-13 (p. 3).

<sup>351</sup> *Spare Rib*, 'The Women's Therapy Centre', *Spare Rib*, no. 183 (October 1987), p. 9; Pimlott and Rao, *Governing London*, p. 47.

<sup>352</sup> WTC, 'Therapy Workshops for Women with Disabilities', *Spare Rib*, no. 176 (March 1987), p. 9.

<sup>353</sup> Grant et al., *Time-limited psychotherapy at the Women's Therapy Centre*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>354</sup> Smith, personal interview.

1980s.<sup>355</sup> She filled a training post established amidst concerns that the Centre did not support Black women.<sup>356</sup> Growing up in Croydon, Mohamed became interested in mental health whilst doing holiday shifts at the psychiatric hospital where her mother worked. She completed a degree in psychology before becoming a social worker. Incorporating psychodynamic perspectives into her social work, Mohamed considered retraining as a clinical psychologist. Concerned about the predominance of behaviourism in clinical psychology, she became a psychotherapist instead. Mohamed recalled how she and Rosamund Grant, an associate WTC staff member, were amongst very few Black psychotherapists working in England in the late 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>357</sup>

Black feminist psychotherapists who ran workshops at the WTC had already raised concerns about the lack of diversity at the WTC in the late 1980s. In 1988, Janet Hibbert and Dorann van Heeswyck documented the Black Women's Workshop they ran at the WTC after a Black woman who attended several events there felt that there was 'no place for her blackness', and that essential elements of her identity were ignored.<sup>358</sup> Hibbert and van Heerwyck argued that this was a common experience for Black women seeking psychotherapeutic support.<sup>359</sup> The workshop provided a space for Black women to explore their experiences of the 'double oppression' of racism and sexism together. Participants realised their power and potential by 'looking at the way internalised racism and sexism prevent us from being close and supportive to each other'.<sup>360</sup>

Documenting how psychotherapeutic organisations and approaches overlooked the experiences of Black women, Hibbert and van Heerwyck's account reflected the

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<sup>355</sup> Mohamed, personal interview.

<sup>356</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

<sup>357</sup> Mohamed, personal interview.

<sup>358</sup> Janet Hibbert and Dorann van Heeswyck, 'Black Women's Workshop', in Sue Krzowski and Pat Land (eds), *In Our Experience: Workshops at the Women's Therapy Centre* (London: The Women's Press, 1988), pp. 84-101 (p. 84).

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*

emergence of a broader critical assessment of feminist therapeutic approaches. Writing in 1994, McLeod explored how the majority of accounts citing the benefits of feminist therapy were produced by its practitioners. She argued that it was important to recognise clients' voices when assessing the positive and negative tenets of feminist therapy.<sup>361</sup> Writing in 1998, Aileen Alleyne stated that the historical oppression of Black people had created a 'transgenerational transmission of trauma, which is heavily compounded by our present-day experiences of cultural oppression and racism'.<sup>362</sup> She argued that the intersection of these historical and contemporary traumas had to be considered in psychotherapy for Black women.<sup>363</sup> Alleyne called for the recognition of the diversity of women's experiences within the feminist therapeutic relationship, countering the universalising terms adopted by early proponents of feminist therapy. In *Outside In...Inside Out*, for example, Eichenbaum and Orbach had explored 'women's ego development' and mother-daughter relations without examining the variance of female experiences and familial relationships.<sup>364</sup> O'Sullivan recognised how women's experiences had been universalised in women's movement health activism more broadly. Assessing articles on health care in *Spare Rib*, she argued that the magazine initially subsumed women's differences under a unified 'woman- who was most often white, middle class, heterosexual and able bodied'.<sup>365</sup> Debates about the WTC's accessibility and theorisation of womanhood therefore reflected ideas about the intersection of class and race in the construction of gender promoted by

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<sup>361</sup> Eileen McLeod, *Women's Experience of Feminist Therapy and Counselling* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994), p. 2.

<sup>362</sup> Aileen Alleyne, 'Which Women? What Feminism?', in I. Bruna Seu and M. Colleen Heenan (eds), *Feminism and Psychotherapy: Reflections on Contemporary Theories and Practices* (London: Sage, 1998), pp. 43-56 (p. 43).

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>364</sup> Eichenbaum and Orbach, *Outside In...Inside Out*.

<sup>365</sup> Sue O'Sullivan, 'Women's Health: A *Spare Rib* Reader', *Spare Rib*, no. 186 (January 1988), pp. 38-39 (p. 38). Italics author's own.



Black feminists since the 1970s, as well as an emergent critique of feminist therapy oriented around client experience.<sup>366</sup>

Carrying out their research over three years, Grant, Mohamed and Smith published their findings in the 1993 report *Time Limited Psychotherapy at the Women's Therapy Centre*.<sup>367</sup> The report explored how the WTC could expand their services, placing a specific emphasis on Black women and accessibility. Assessing time-limited psychotherapy as a potential solution, the report contributed to contemporary discussions about the contrasting merits of short- and long-term therapies.<sup>368</sup> Grant, Mohamed and Smith asserted that long-term psychoanalytic approaches were too costly to provide to large numbers of clients, stating that up to two hundred women contacted the WTC enquiring about its services every week. Some psychotherapists viewed short-term therapy as a suitable response to waiting lists and the 'solution-focused approaches' promoted by funding bodies.<sup>369</sup> They interviewed 277 women, including 120 from Black and ethnic minority groups, all of whom received therapy at the WTC for between ten and fifteen weeks.<sup>370</sup> In their report, Grant, Mohamed, and Smith documented how their interviewees' experiences of emotional distress and responses to therapy were influenced by a range of social factors including poverty, education, racism and sexual abuse.<sup>371</sup> They also highlighted how accessibility issues extended to the absence of Black psychotherapists within the profession. Grant, Mohamed, and Smith attributed the lack of discussion about

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<sup>366</sup> Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*, p. 18; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 5.

<sup>367</sup> Smith, personal interview; Grant et al., *Time-limited Psychotherapy at the Women's Therapy Centre*.

<sup>368</sup> Barry Joseph Weber and David L. Downing, *Object Relations Self-psychology: a user-friendly primer* (Indianapolis: University of Indianapolis Press, 2009), p. 144; Peter Dale, 'Benefits of Therapy with Adults Who Were Abused as Children: Some Issues from Evaluation of Counselling Services', in Colin Feltham (ed.), *What's the Good of Counselling and Psychotherapy? The Benefits Explained* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2002), pp. 34-47 (p. 39); Stephen Frosh, *For and Against Psychoanalysis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 138.

<sup>369</sup> Dale, 'Benefits of Therapy with Adults Who Were Abused as Children', p. 39.

<sup>370</sup> Grant et al., *Time-limited psychotherapy at the Women's Therapy Centre*, p. 8.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11.

Black women's experiences as therapists and clients to the wider absence of a 'Black perspective within feminism generally and within feminist therapy, since the lives and socialisation of Black women have not been represented'.<sup>372</sup>

In her oral history interview, Mohamed expressed concern that their application for funding to research the Centre's accessibility was partly cynical. She, Grant, and Smith knew that that funding was likely to be granted if it 'filled gaps in provision within the community' and foregrounded cost-effectiveness.<sup>373</sup> Her concerns highlight Grant, Mohamed, and Smith's awareness of the increased marketisation of the voluntary sector in the 1980s and 1990s. However, Smith felt that their research benefitted the Centre and improved its accessibility. Drawing on the results of the project, the WTC promoted its services more effectively to Black women, advertising in publications including *The Voice*, the first newspaper to specifically address issues affecting British African-Caribbean communities.<sup>374</sup> An increasing number of Black women began to access the Centre's services as a result.<sup>375</sup> Statistics collated for the project also resulted in the Centre obtaining further funding to support Latin American women, and refugee women.<sup>376</sup> The WTC's support for refugee women was representative of what Miles refers to as the 'global visions' of feminist organisations in the 1990s, influenced by violence against women in the Balkans and Rwandan conflicts.<sup>377</sup> Smith felt that the research resulted in the WTC creating a 'community for disadvantaged groups'.<sup>378</sup> Research produced by Grant, Mohamed, and Smith ensured that the WTC contended with current concerns regarding mental health

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<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>373</sup> Mohamed, personal interview; Grant et al., *Time-limited psychotherapy at the Women's Therapy Centre*, p. 4.

<sup>374</sup> Smith, personal interview; David P. Christopher, *British Culture: An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Routledge: London, 2015), p. 70; Nyantah, 'Voice, The', in Alison Donnell, *Companion to Contemporary Black British Culture* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002), pp. 317-18 (p. 317).

<sup>375</sup> Grant et al., *Time-limited psychotherapy at the Women's Therapy Centre*, p. 11.

<sup>376</sup> Smith, personal interview.

<sup>377</sup> Angela Miles, *Integrative Feminisms: Building Global Visions 1960s-1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 126.

<sup>378</sup> Smith, personal interview.

care, feminist theory, and women's movement politics. Some practitioners at the WTC felt that adhering to funders' expectations stymied its political ethos.<sup>379</sup> Andrea Smith, co-founder of INCITE!, a 'national activist organisation of radical feminists of color' based in the United States, maintains that radical initiatives can adopt strategies that ensure funding bodies still 'support movements, rather than being thought of as *the* movement'.<sup>380</sup> Grant, Mohamed and Smith's use of funding to improve the WTC's accessibility by raising concerns about its diversity demonstrated the benefits of this strategic approach to grant applications.

Despite the success of the time-limited psychotherapy project, it also highlighted internal tensions within the WTC regarding issues of race. The project's researchers felt that it responded to contemporary political concerns about representation and race within the women's movement. However, practitioners who had worked at the WTC since the late 1970s and early 1980s associated the Centre's increased support for client groups such as refugee women with its depoliticisation. In her oral history interview Orbach stated that the WTC had become

depoliticised...sort of more social. This is a terrible thing to say but it is more providing for refugee women. Now, that's because of the funding. But that's also because the fight hasn't been made.<sup>381</sup>

In her statement, Orbach qualified that her perspective was contentious. She implied that the Centre's provision for refugee women was not politicised because it was oriented around community support rather than the development of critical perspectives on related issues. Her assessment mirrored Grant and Maguire's assertion that the WTC became depoliticised when it ceased to offer training and foster theoretical discussions. Sturdy documented how, when the WTC opened

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<sup>379</sup> Grant and Maguire, personal interview.

<sup>380</sup> INCITE!, 'About INCITE!', available at <http://www.incite-national.org/page/about-incite> [accessed 4 April, 2017]; Andrea Smith, 'Preface', in INCITE! (ed.), *The Revolution Will Not be Funded*, p. x.

<sup>381</sup> Orbach, personal interview.

the campaigning aspect of its work was considered by the founders of major importance, with mutual aid next, in terms of study and peer supervision, and then, last, the provision of a service of psychotherapy.<sup>382</sup>

By the late 1980s, however, the Centre's reliance on external funding meant that it focused more readily on its psychotherapy service, with less emphasis placed on theory development and campaign work.

Documenting their view that the WTC became increasingly depoliticised throughout the 1980s, original proponents of the Centre expressed a strong level of nostalgia for the excitement that surround their early theoretical discussions. Drawing on Winnicott's 1974 *Playing and Reality*, Ernst and Maguire presented the early staff study groups as a 'playground' - a safe setting in which practitioners could be overtly creative.<sup>383</sup> Discussing issues surrounding race in the study group meant that practitioners had to acknowledge the Centre's failure to provision for Black women and were compelled to recognise their own contribution to structural racism. Mohamed recalled how discussions in the group resulted in 'unpleasant clashes' due to the pervasive assumption that practitioners could not have contributed to racism because they identified as feminist.<sup>384</sup> These necessary discussions created an atmosphere of tension within staff meetings that early proponents of the Centre contrasted with the excitement and safety that early proponents of the Centre associated with the study group.

Practitioners' narratives of depoliticisation were therefore not only grounded in concerns about the marketisation of the voluntary sector, but also their nostalgia for the sentiment that they felt encapsulated the Centre when it was formed. The WTC had to recognise its inaccessibility to clients who were not white, in the same way that activists had to acknowledge the ways in which politics of Women's Liberation had overlooked Black

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<sup>382</sup> Sturdy, 'Questioning the Sphinx', p. 37.

<sup>383</sup> D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Penguin, 1974); Ernst and Maguire, 'Introduction', p. 5.

<sup>384</sup> Mohamed, personal interview.

women's experiences and political perspectives. In doing so, the WTC recognised contemporary concerns within the women's movement and expanded the support it provided to women in the local community. Despite the debates that they entail, Mohamed felt that study group discussions on race were productive. She stated that, 'It's through struggle sometimes that new ideas are born'.<sup>385</sup> Therefore, developments at the Centre during the 1980s did not result in its linear depoliticisation, but rather the redefinition of what it was to be a political, feminist therapeutic organisation. Whilst the politics of the early WTC were grounded in its campaigning work and development of theory, the politics of the Centre in the 1990s were based on its strategic use of funding to expand its psychotherapeutic services to a wider demographic of women.

## Conclusion

This chapter assesses the development of feminist therapy through a detailed analysis of the WTC, the first organisation to promote a specifically feminist therapeutic approach in Britain. Other accounts trace the development of feminist therapy at a theoretical level, foregrounding of the popular publications of WTC co-founder Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach. This chapter recognises Eichenbaum and Orbach's role in developing a distinct feminist therapy and disseminating the WTC's ideas and approaches. However, this chapter argues that the Centre's everyday, grassroots organising played an equally significant role in how feminist therapy was developed and defined by its practitioners and clients. Eichenbaum and Orbach drew on their experiences as WLM activists, Women's Studies convenors, and psychotherapists to formulate the feminist therapy first promoted at the WTC. Tracing its initial development reiterates an argument central to this thesis. Women's movement members' engagement with psychotherapeutic discourses was not limited to

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<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

Women's Liberation critiques of psychology and psychiatry. Rather, they were motivated by a desire to understand themselves and their political affiliations. Their application of psychotherapy was a response to both their personal needs and wider organisational issues in oppositional political movements in the 1970s. Exploring the WTC's foundation also indicates how oppositional activists responded to the political and social conditions of the period with an entrepreneurial spirit, drawing on informal organisational structures and an innate self-confidence to establish an initiative that worked both alongside and against the state. However, assessing the logistical issues faced by early WTC proponents highlights the limitations of this radical entrepreneurship. WTC practitioners continually negotiated and assessed tensions between the Centre's political ethos and the need to ensure its longevity, contributing to an emergent leftist critique of radical organisational approaches.

Incorporating the voices of other WTC staff members highlights their influence in developing a definition of feminist therapy that incorporated a variety of ideas and approaches. They also situate the Centre in a wider history of radical, alternative organising around psychotherapy and mental health. Orbach and Eichenbaum have distinguished the WTC from previous radical therapeutic initiatives. Whilst Red Therapy was an internalised collective, the BACC promoted a politicised psychotherapy in a community-based setting. Tracing these continuities indicates connections between the WTC and existing initiatives in terms of the ideas that they promoted and the practitioners involved. Whilst they adopted varying practitioners and had different foci, proponents moved between organisations and initiatives, creating a network through which radical therapeutic ideas were developed, disseminated, and cross-fertilised.

Assessing narratives provided by psychotherapists who worked at the WTC from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s indicates their varying responses to developments in the non-profit sector throughout the 1980s. Exploring their accounts destabilises the historiographical assumption that feminist organisations became increasingly depoliticised.

Eichenbaum and Orbach's departure, as well GLC funding, allowed the Centre the autonomy to organise collectively. Staff members used psychoanalytic theory to reflect on their experiences of collective organising, highlighting the role that emotions played in the logistical decisions made at the Centre. This chapter therefore provides an in-depth assessment of how the personal politics of Women's Liberation continued to be enacted in community-based organisations across the 1980s. In the late 1980s, the WTC initiated structural changes that some practitioners felt undermined the collective, creative ethos that defined the Centre's radical politics. In the early 1990s, the Centre did focus more readily on its community-based services instead of its campaign work and theory development. However, in doing so, practitioners responded to clients' concerns about its accessibility and the universalising of female experiences in feminist therapeutic theory. In this respect, the WTC remained politically engaged, expanding its clients and ensuring its longevity through the strategic application of funding. Culminating in the 1990s, this case study demonstrates how feminist therapeutic approaches came to be aligned with other psychological perspectives concerning class, race, and sexuality. This increasingly collaborative approach to community-based organising around mental health can be explored on a larger scale by assessing the influence of women's movement perspectives on the mental health charity MIND.

## 4.

### **Women and Mind: The Influence of Women's Movement Politics on an Existing Mental Health Charity**

This chapter employs a case study of the mental health charity Mind to examine the influence of women's movement politics at national, regional, and local levels, expanding the previous chapter's focus on the development of feminist therapy in a community-based setting. Founded as the National Association for Mental Health (NAMH) in 1946 and renamed MIND in 1972, Mind is a nationwide charity that provides information about mental health concerns through helplines and publications, and counters stigmatisation through awareness campaigns.<sup>1</sup> In the late twentieth century, Mind's federal structure, consisting of a national office, regional bodies, and local associations, afforded it the platform and resources to lobby central government and petition for change at a community-based level.<sup>2</sup> Focusing on Mind therefore highlights the influence of women's movement ideas and activism on legislative and institutional changes concerning women and mental health.

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<sup>1</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, pp. 70, 136; Mind, 'What we do', available at <http://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/> [accessed 15 April 2017]. Mind's name was capitalised as MIND from 1972 until the 1990s, when it adopted a lower case title (Mind, 'A History of Mind', available at <http://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/our-mission/a-history-of-mind> [accessed 15 April 2017]). When referencing the charity generally, I will use its current title of 'Mind'. When citing Mind's campaigning and activism in its previous guises, I will use its contemporary titles.

<sup>2</sup> Liz Sayce, personal interview (London, 7 October 2016). In 1978, MIND reported having 130 local mental health associations directly affiliated with the charity across England and Wales, who were responsible for promoting the charity's campaigns and run local support services, including social clubs and advice centres (Wellcome Library, MIND (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.35, MIND, 'Directory of Projects (England and Wales), 1978/79 for Adult Offenders, Alcoholics, Drug Takers, Homeless Single People and People with Histories of Mental Illness' (London, MIND: 1978), p. xii). By the early 1990s, this number had increased to 250 (Wellcome Library, MIND (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.121, MIND, *MINDGuide to Managing Stress* (London: MIND, c.1995), p. 15). By the mid-1990s, MIND's regional offices were listed as North West MIND, based in Preston, Northern MIND, in Gateshead, London-based South East MIND, South West MIND in Bristol, Trent & Yorkshire MIND, based in Southampton, West Midlands MIND in Wolverhampton and the Cardiff-based Wales MIND (MIND, *MINDGuide to Managing Stress*, p. 15).



This chapter traces MIND's increasingly critical stance towards issues surrounding women and mental health throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. In the early 1980s, MIND did not problematise concerns surrounding women and mental health, despite the pertinence of issues including the increased prescription of minor tranquilisers to women, and the racism and sexism experienced by Black women in mental health services. In the early 1990s, however, MIND enshrined its commitment to women's mental health issues in an official policy and an extensive national campaign titled *Stress on Women*.<sup>3</sup>

Documenting MIND's increasingly explicit approach to women's mental health concerns highlights the influence of women's movement theory, activism, and organisations on the charity throughout the 1980s. This chapter explores this influence by focusing on several key campaigns and working groups that operated within Mind during the period in question: its mental health magazine *OpenMIND*, launched in 1983; the MIND campaign on minor tranquiliser addiction between 1983 and 1985; Women in MIND, a working policy group established at MIND's central office in 1985; and the 1992-1994 *Stress on Women* campaign.

Adopting a chronological structure, the chapter defines the nature of women's movement influences on Mind. It highlights the significant influence of individual women affiliated with the women's movement, including *OpenMIND* editor and former *Spare Rib* journalist Anny Brackx.<sup>4</sup> It also demonstrates staff members' replication of women's movement-style groups within MIND, as demonstrated by the working group Women in MIND. Policies and campaign aims developed by MIND in the late 1980s and early 1990s indicate the influence of both Women's Liberation critiques of psychiatry and psychology as well as wider feminist concerns including the politics of rape. Assessing the *Stress on Women* campaign's focus on eradicating the sexual abuse of women in psychiatric and

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<sup>3</sup> Wellcome Library, MIND (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.131, MIND, *Stress on Women: MIND Campaigns for Women's Mental Health Campaign Pack* (London: MIND, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Anny Brackx, personal interview (London, 19 September, 2016).

therapeutic environments indicates that women's movement politics surrounding rape helped to expand definitions of what constituted mental illness and trauma.<sup>5</sup>

Foregrounding a language of 'stress', the campaign also reflected psychology's increased recognition of social and domestic factors in the development of stress processes.<sup>6</sup> This chapter argues that it was not simply Women's Liberation opposition to psychological and psychiatric ideas and approaches that influenced ideas around women's mental health in Mind, but rather a wider feminist sensibility located in the personal politics of individual staff members, the organisational approaches adopted by all-female working groups within the organisation, and women's movement concerns that extended beyond mental health.

Tracing the work of small-scale and local groups such as Women in MIND highlights the increasingly collaborative approach taken by community-based women's mental health organisations in late 1980s and early 1990s. These collaborations, influenced by radical politics, negotiated community care legislation in the 1980s and 1990s. This chapter begins its analysis in 1982, shortly before the publication of MIND's *Common Concern* manifesto. *Common Concern* emphasised MIND's commitment to community care in the wake of the 1982 Mental Health (Amendment) Act and the resultant 1983 Mental Health Act.<sup>7</sup> The 1983 Mental Health Act foregrounded community care by placing psychiatrists under increased legal scrutiny and attributing more power to psychologists, nurses, and social workers.<sup>8</sup> Examining how MIND's national branch engaged with its regional and local organisations highlights tensions between its focus on raising public awareness at a national level and its

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<sup>5</sup> MIND, *Stress on Women: MIND Campaigns for Women's Mental Health Campaign Pack*; Courtney E. Ahrens et al., 'Understanding and Preventing Rape', in Florence L. Denmark and Michelle A. Paludi (eds), *Psychology of Women: A Handbook of Issues and Theories*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Westport: Praeger, 2008), pp. 509-54 (p. 510); Simone Lindorfer, *Sharing the Pain of Bitter Hearts: Liberation Psychology and Gender-Related Violence in Eastern Africa* (Berlin: LIT, 2007), p. 177.

<sup>6</sup> Haggett, *A History of Male Psychological Disorders in Britain*, p. 79; Mark Jackson, 'Stress in Post-War Britain: An Introduction', in Mark Jackson (ed.), *Stress in Post-War Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-16; William W. Dressler, *Stress and Adaptation in the Context of Culture: Depression in a Southern Black Community* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Wellcome Library, MIND (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.23, MIND, *Common Concern: MIND's Manifesto for a New Mental Health Service* (MIND: London, 1983).

<sup>8</sup> Glover-Thomas, *Reconstructing Mental Health Law and Policy*, p. 35.

provision of localised community development schemes. These tensions meant that MIND initiatives focusing specifically on women, mental health, and self-help were not afforded a significant national platform within the organisation until the late 1980s.

The analysis draws on numerous sources housed at the Mind Archive, based at the Wellcome Library, London.<sup>9</sup> The archive was catalogued into subject files, including 'Self Help Group', 'User Movement', and 'Women'. The Wellcome Library consulted Mind during the archival process, indicating the contemporary influence that the organisation had on the presentation and preservation of its history.<sup>10</sup> As a result, I was aware of methodological issues associated with using institutional archives. Cook and Shepherd highlight the propensity for institutional archives to bolster women's traditional absence from social history.<sup>11</sup> Cox argues that historians should not assume the history of a particular institution is contained in its archive, recommending that researchers also obtain sources that exist beyond it.<sup>12</sup> Blouin and Rosenberg also assert that the cataloguing of an archive into subjects can often reflect topics that the archivist deems to be of contemporary as opposed to historical significance.<sup>13</sup> I responded to these issues by recognising subject files such as 'Stress' that did not explicitly reference women's mental health but remained a topic of historical relevance to women's movement members. I also supplemented my archival research with four oral history interviews with current and

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<sup>9</sup> Emma Hancox, 'Keeping mental health in Mind'.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Shepherd, 'Hidden voices in the archives: pioneering women activists in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century England', in Fiorella Foscari, Heather MacNeil, Bonnie Mak and Gillian Oliver (eds), *Engaging with Records and Archives: Histories and theories* (London: Facet Publishing, 2016), pp. 83-103 (p. 83); Terry Cook, 'Remembering the Future: Appraisal of Records and the Role of Archives in Constructing Social Memory', in Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg (eds), *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), pp. 169-81 (p. 170).

<sup>12</sup> Richard J. Cox, *Documenting Localities: A Practical Model for American Archivists and Manuscript Curators* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1996), p. 69.

<sup>13</sup> Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, 'Archives, Memory and Political Culture (Canada, the Caribbean, Western Europe, Africa and European Colonial Archives)', in Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg (eds), *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), pp. 253-56 (p. 256).

former Mind staff members. Conducting these interviews further demonstrated the influence of institutions or organisations in the construction of their own history. One oral history participant was interviewed at Mind's national office, where she was still a staff member. I was aware that she might feel uncomfortable offering particularly critical perspectives of the organisation where she still worked. Simply locating the interview within Mind meant that the organisation continued to influence the history that its proponents promoted.<sup>14</sup> My remaining oral history participants no longer worked at Mind and therefore appeared able to freely articulate their experiences and viewpoints. Concerns regarding the use of organisational archives in the construction of institutional histories are therefore also applicable when historicising organisations that promoted oppositional ideas and approaches.

## **The Development of the National Association for Mental Health into MIND, 1946-1982**

The NAMH was founded in 1946 following the merger of the Central Association for Mental Welfare, the National Council for Mental Hygiene and the Child Guidance Council.<sup>15</sup> In its earliest guise, the NAMH endorsed the mental hygiene ideals promoted by its founding organisations.<sup>16</sup> However, by the early 1970s the NAMH was renamed MIND and advocated an increasingly oppositional and lobbyist approach influenced by civil rights activism.<sup>17</sup> Tracing the development of the NAMH into MIND demonstrates the influence of radical political movements on the organisation in the post-war period. Doing so contextualises how the political atmosphere at MIND in the early 1980s enabled women's movement

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<sup>14</sup> Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> The Central Association for Mental Welfare was originally founded as the Central Association for the Care of Mental Defectives in 1913, changing its name in 1921. The National Council for Mental Hygiene was established in 1922 and the Child Guidance Council was formed in 1927 (Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 70).

<sup>16</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

members such as Anny Brackx to incorporate their personal politics into the work that they carried out there. Whilst women's movement ideas and practices were influential, they formed just one tenet of MIND's wider promotion of alternative and egalitarian forms of community-based mental health care. The incorporation of feminist values into this broader radical sensibility influenced how issues surrounding women's mental health were promoted at MIND. MIND's campaigning around women's mental health concerns was further influenced by structural changes to its local and national organisation throughout the post-war period.

The NAMH was established from organisations that promoted mental hygiene.<sup>18</sup> In the interwar years from which it emerged, proponents of the mental hygiene movement had associated mental disorder with moral decline, connecting the dangers of industrialisation and urbanisation with concerns about the 'impending collapse of civilisation and social disorder'.<sup>19</sup> Mental hygienists focused predominantly on working-class lives, exploring how the loss of working days due to poor mental and physical health threatened Britain's economic and military efficiency through the loss of working days.<sup>20</sup> The Child Guidance Council and National Council for Mental Hygiene, for example, focused on the links between social inefficiency and psychological disorders within communities.<sup>21</sup> Throughout the 1930s, the aims of the Central Association for Mental Welfare, Child Guidance Council, and National Council for Mental Hygiene became increasingly aligned.<sup>22</sup> In 1939, the Feversham Committee, an independent enquiry into voluntary-sector mental

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<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2013), p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 136; Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain*, p. 30; *British Medical Journal*, 'A National Council for Mental Hygiene', *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3200 (April 29 1922), p. 694.

<sup>20</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 72; Mathew Thomson, 'Mental Hygiene as an International Movement', in Paul Weindling (ed.), *International Health Organisations and Movements, 1918-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 283-304.

<sup>21</sup> Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain*, p. 30.

<sup>22</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 76.

health provision, proposed that the organisations amalgamate into a centralised body.<sup>23</sup>

The merger was finalised in 1946 with the launch of the NAMH.<sup>24</sup>

The Feversham Committee recommended that the NAMH focus on developing public understandings of mental health; preserving positive mental wellbeing by preventing ‘mental disorders and defects amongst both adults and children’; and training mental health professionals to a set of standardised qualifications.<sup>25</sup> Crossley argues that the NAMH continued to endorse a mental hygiene agenda.<sup>26</sup> It supported individuals defined as mentally ill or mentally handicapped in community-based convalescent homes, held mental health courses for psychologists and psychiatric social workers, and disseminated information through its journal *Mental Health*.<sup>27</sup> The NAMH also held annual conferences attended by politicians, mental health professionals and charity volunteers. Government officials used these events to ‘sound out’ proposed mental health policies.<sup>28</sup> At the 1961 Annual Conference, Health Minister Enoch Powell announced the Government’s plans to shift mental health provision from institutions to the community by closing psychiatric hospitals.<sup>29</sup> His aims were subsequently enshrined in the 1962 *Hospital Plan for England and Wales*.<sup>30</sup> The NAMH initially sought to shape government policy on mental health by employing influential political figures and operating within parliamentary frameworks. The

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<sup>23</sup> Anon., ‘The Report of the Feversham Committee on the Voluntary Mental Health Services’, *The British Journal of Nursing* (August 1930), p. 206; Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, pp. 70, 80; Kathleen Jones, *Lunacy, Law and Conscience, 1744-1845*. Reprint (Routledge: Oxford, 1998), p. 201; Andrew Sackville, ‘Professional Associations and Social Work. Working Paper 7. ASPW- From Feversham to Mackintosh, 1939-1951’ (June 1988), pp. 1-14 (p. 1), available at <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/scwru/swhn/2013/Sackville-WP07-APSW-From-Feversham-to-Mackintosh-1939-1951.pdf> [accessed 21 September 2015].

<sup>24</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 76.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*; Anon., ‘The Report of the Feversham Committee on the Voluntary Mental Health Services’.

<sup>26</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 76.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*; Helen Lester and Jon Glasby, *Mental health policy and practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Lester et al., *Mental health policy and practice*, p. 27; John Mohan, ‘Hospital policy in England and Wales: of what is the 1962 Hospital Plan a case?’, in Mark Exworthy et al., (eds.), *Shaping Health Policy: Case study methods and analysis* (The Policy Press: Bristol, 2012), pp. 59-76.

Earl of Feversham, a member of the House of Lords and leader of the enquiry that produced the Feversham Report, chaired the NAMH from 1946 until 1963.<sup>31</sup> Feversham used his political influence to promote the charity's aims and perspectives during parliamentary debates on the 1959 Mental Health Act.<sup>32</sup>

The NAMH also maintained professional links with psychiatrists. Representatives from the Medico-Psychological Association, now the Royal College of Psychiatrists, sat on its Council until the late 1950s.<sup>33</sup> Toms asserts that the NAMH's professional affiliations resulted in its promotion of innovative work within psychology and psychiatry, citing psychological studies on therapeutic communities produced in the 1960s.<sup>34</sup> However, the NAMH also defended psychiatrists and psychologists against critiques from civil rights groups.<sup>35</sup> In 1955, the National Council for Civil Liberties published a report on individuals wrongly incarcerated in mental institutions under the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act.<sup>36</sup> The report questioned the efficacy and suitability of psychiatric diagnoses and treatments.<sup>37</sup> The NAMH described the report as 'limited and prejudiced', accusing the National Council for Civil Liberties of distorting the truth.<sup>38</sup> Toms argues that the NAMH's political and professional connections rendered them wary of publicising the mental health system's deficiencies, preferring to initiate changes behind the scenes.<sup>39</sup> Crossley concurs, referring to the NAMH as 'apologists for both mainstream psychiatry and government policy'.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 80.

<sup>32</sup> M. Appleby, 'Lord Feversham: A Personal Tribute', *Mental Health*, No. 22 (1963), pp. 138-9, quoted in Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 80.

<sup>33</sup> Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain*, p. 227.

<sup>34</sup> Toms cites the work of Richard Balbernie, who carried out 'therapeutic community style work' at an approved school for "maladjusted" children' (*ibid.*, p. 117).

<sup>35</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain*, p. 125; Liberty, 'Liberty timeline', available at <https://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/who-we-are/history/liberty-timeline> [accessed 24 September 2015].

<sup>37</sup> Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain*, p. 125.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* Toms cites the NAMH's 1951 Annual Report (pp. 10-11) and R. F. Tredgold's views in *Mental Health*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (p. 80) when documenting the NAMH's response to the National Council for Civil Liberties.

<sup>39</sup> Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain*, p. 131.

<sup>40</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 10.

NAMH's close affiliation with mainstream political and professional institutions influenced their portrayal of women's mental health concerns in the early 1960s. In a 1963 NAMH publication, Dr Anne Gillie described the emotional difficulties experienced by the 'middle-aged family woman' when her children left home because she were no longer able to use and develop skills to meet their daily needs.<sup>41</sup> Gillie's assessment of female mental health situated women in a traditional, domesticated female role and offered little analysis of their varied experiences of mental illness. Despite indicating that this role was potentially pathologising, Gillie offered few alternatives when suggesting how women should cope with this life event. The publication reinforced rather than critiqued mainstream psychiatric perspectives on women's mental health as well as traditional social roles and familial structures.

In 1972, the NAMH underwent a 'radical transformation'. It changed its name to MIND following a campaign of the same name that sought to clarify its aims and replenish funding.<sup>42</sup> Throughout the 1970s, MIND became an increasingly active political campaigns group, promoting a civil rights discourse that the NAMH had previously dismissed.<sup>43</sup> Crossley attributes this development to the emergence of anti-psychiatric, countercultural, and New Left ideals.<sup>44</sup> A series of scandals in the mental health system in the 1950s and 1960s rendered the NAMH's public defence of professional psychiatry and parliamentary policies untenable.<sup>45</sup> Toms documents how mental hygienists became increasingly receptive to New Left ideals, inviting the cultural theorist and founding editor of the *New Left Review* Stuart Hall to lecture at the *Twentieth Inter-Clinic Child Guidance Conference* in 1964.<sup>46</sup> Toms aligns this influence with the NAMH's increased incorporation of service user

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<sup>41</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archives, SA/MIN.B.131, Anne Gillie, *Time for Yourself: A New Look for the Middle-aged Family Woman* (London: NAMH, 1963), p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 136.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113; 126; 135-36.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain*, pp. 155-56.



voices in debates on mental health provision.<sup>47</sup> The NAMH's 1969 Annual Conference contained a consumer panel that recognised the 'rapid development of consumer participation in all areas of public life'.<sup>48</sup> The terminology used to frame this recognition of patient voices also reflected the increased alignment of consumerist thought with health services in the 1960s.<sup>49</sup>

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the NAMH became increasingly combative when calling for improvements to mental health provision. In 1967, they supported the publication of *Sans Everything: A Case to Answer*, an edited collection that documented serious cases of abuse and neglect in mental hospitals.<sup>50</sup> The NAMH were highly critical of Kenneth Robinson, Minister for Health, who accused *Sans Everything* authors of grossly exaggerating the facts.<sup>51</sup> Shortly after assuming its new name, MIND appointed Tom Smyth as Director and Larry Gostin as Legal Director. Smyth was a former director at the National Council for Civil Liberties, whilst Gostin was an American civil rights lawyer who promoted a 'rights-based approach' to mental health.<sup>52</sup> Their political and professional backgrounds were reflected in MIND's increasingly lobbyist stance. It hosted a series of events across the 1970s that bolstered its transformation into an oppositional pressure group. In November 1975, MIND organised a conference in London exploring the impact of the 1971 Immigration Act on community mental health.<sup>53</sup> Amrit Wilson, founder of Asian women's collective Awaz, was invited to chair a workshop exploring the impact of the legislation on

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>48</sup> NAMH, 'Annual Report, 1968-9' (NAMH: London, 1969), p. 9, quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Mold, *Making the Patient-Consumer*, pp. 1-3; Alex Mold, 'Complaining in the age of consumption: Patients, consumers or citizens?', in Jonathan Reinartz and Rebecca Wynter (eds), *Complaints, Controversies and Grievances in Medicine: Historical and social science perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 167-83.

<sup>50</sup> B. Robb (ed.) *Sans Everything: A Case to Answer* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1967); Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain*, p. 166.

<sup>51</sup> Toms, *Mental Hygiene in Modern Britain*, p. 166.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181; Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 136; Simon Hebditch, 'Mental Health Reform: Gostin's Legacy', *OpenMIND*, No. 1 (February/March 1983), p. 8.

<sup>53</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.12, MIND, *The Immigration Act and What to Do About it: Conference Pack* (New Hall, City University: London, 8 November 1975), pp. 1-2.

women.<sup>54</sup> Wilson subsequently published the seminal feminist text *Finding a Voice: Asian Women in Britain* in 1978.<sup>55</sup> MIND's increasingly critical ethos ensured that it became a suitable platform for women's movement members to express their views on mental health. Existing histories of MIND pay little attention to the influence of feminist politics on the charity's policies and practices.

MIND mobilised their new approach to campaigning by calling for the reform of the 1959 Mental Health Act. The 1982 Mental Health (Amendment) Act and 1983 Mental Health Act substantially altered legislation passed in 1959.<sup>56</sup> The new legislation outlined the professional responsibilities of nurses, social workers and psychologists within the mental health services, emphasised patients' rights in refusing treatments, and highlighted local authorities' responsibility to provide community-based provision.<sup>57</sup> MIND regarded the new legislation as a 'major achievement'.<sup>58</sup> Assistant Director Simon Hebditch stated that MIND was at the forefront of mental health policy debates throughout the 1970s, 'alerting professionals and the general public to the urgent need for change'.<sup>59</sup> Hebditch argued that the legislation indicated the value of MIND's civil rights-based approach to lobbying and campaigning.<sup>60</sup>

Following the passing of the 1982 Mental Health (Amendment) Act and 1983 Mental Health Act, MIND Director Chris Heginbotham outlined the charity's new focus on welfare rights. MIND would provide improved training to mental health professionals, expand their campaigning into previously unexplored areas such as stress and anxiety, and

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3; British Library, 'Sisterhood and After: Amrit Wilson', available at <http://www.bl.uk/people/amrit-wilson> [accessed 14 October 2015].

<sup>55</sup> Amrit Wilson, *Finding a Voice: Asian Women in Britain* (London: Virago, 1978); Heidi Safia Mirza (ed.), *Black British Feminism: A Reader* (London: Routledge: 1997), p. 29.

<sup>56</sup> Glover-Thomas. *Reconstructing Mental Health Law and Policy*, p. 29.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 31.

<sup>58</sup> Anny Brackx, 'Editorial', *OpenMIND*, No. 1 (February/March 1983), p. 3; Crossley, *Contesting Psychiatry*, p. 66.

<sup>59</sup> Hebditch, 'Mental Health Reform'.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

ensure that the new legislation was successfully enacted.<sup>61</sup> MIND's new direction was enshrined in *Common Concern: MIND's Manifesto for a New Mental Health Service*.<sup>62</sup> The manifesto documented the charity's focus on the 'practicalities of providing a comprehensive, local, psychiatric service', outlining their commitment to a wide demographic of social groups.<sup>63</sup> Aligning its promotion of a strong civil rights discourse with the practical application of community mental health services, MIND increasingly recognised women's movement ideas and activism surrounding mental health.

### **Anny Brackx and *OpenMIND*, 1983-1985**

MIND's renewed focus on welfare rights and community-based mental health provision was championed in its magazine *OpenMIND*, launched in February 1983. In an oral history interview, Alison Cobb, who joined MIND in 1982, described how *OpenMIND* aligned the charity's legal and civil rights legacy with its new focus on local services. She stated:

'It was more of a platform for debate and thinking differently about mental health and looking beyond the UK- looking at movements and services and new ideas from around the world as well as what was going on over here'.<sup>64</sup>

*OpenMIND*'s focus on international activism and debates around mental health contrasted with the professional appeal fostered by its predecessor *Mind Out*, which was tailored to service providers. *OpenMIND* was both MIND's 'publicity agent' and a space where readers could discuss their experiences of discrimination and stereotyping within mental health services.<sup>65</sup> Its ethos reflected MIND's increasing emphasis on open communication between mental health professionals, patients, and service users.<sup>66</sup> It was also a forum for purportedly controversial points of view and discussion, printing opinion pieces by MIND

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<sup>61</sup> Anny Brackx, 'Editorial', *OpenMIND*, No. 1 (February/March 1983), p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> MIND, *Common Concern*.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*; Simon Hebditch, 'New MIND Manifesto', *OpenMIND*, No. 5 (October/November 1983), p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> Alison Cobb, personal interview (London, 13 October, 2015).

<sup>65</sup> Brackx, 'Editorial', *OpenMIND*, No. 1 (February/March 1983), p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Toms, *Mental Hygiene in Modern Britain*, p. 166.

staff members, mental health service professionals, survivors, and service users that critiqued parliamentary approaches to contemporary mental health provision.<sup>67</sup>

Cobb attributed *OpenMIND*'s emphasis on critical thinking to its first editor, Anny Brackx. Brackx was a journalist who had worked at *Spare Rib*.<sup>68</sup> Charting Brackx's influence at *OpenMIND* indicates the role that individual women's movement members in championing issues surrounding female mental health at MIND. Documenting the development of Brackx's personal politics highlights how and why women's movement ideas came to be situated within MIND's wider, egalitarian approach to mental health provision. Brackx promoted women's movement concerns, particularly women's assumed role as carers, through the editorials and articles that she published in *OpenMIND*. In doing so, she aligned women's movement issues with those of other political groups, such as the service user movement. Whilst women's movement politics influenced the contents and ethos of *OpenMIND*, the magazine was also a forum in which feminist ideas were developed and debated.

### **i. Personal, Political, and Professional Background**

Anny Brackx was a journalist who wrote extensively for *Spare Rib* between 1976 and 1982. Originally from Belgium, she became involved in oppositional politics when she learnt about the anti-colonial movement in Algeria and the Congo.<sup>69</sup> She strongly opposed the injustices of colonialism and knew individuals connected to Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of the Congo's first democratically elected government in June 1960.<sup>70</sup> Moving to London in the late 1960s, Brackx became involved in the student movement, participating

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<sup>67</sup> Brackx, 'Editorial', *OpenMIND*, No. 1 (February/March 1983), p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Brackx, personal interview.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*; Emmanuel Gerard and Bruce Kuklick, *Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba* (Cambridge: Massachusetts, 2015), pp. 1-2; Karen Bouwer, *Decolonization and Gender in the Congo: The Legacy of Patrice Lumumba* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

in a Marxist study group, attending Women's Liberation conferences, and joining a squatting community. Whilst there, she became familiar with anti-psychiatric perspectives, recalling how David Cooper lived in a similar commune.

Brackx stated that it was a 'very easy decision' to join *Spare Rib* in 1974 because 'feminism was nearest to what I felt strongly about'.<sup>71</sup> Despite her close association with Women's Liberation, Brackx endeavoured to locate her personal politics within a broader radical activism, also citing the influence of Black Power groups and Gay Liberation.<sup>72</sup> Writing for *Spare Rib*, Brackx focused on issues surrounding sexuality, women's work, and her own experiences of Women's Liberation activism. She documented police harassment of gay and lesbian communities in Bradford, interviewed representatives prior to the 1977 Women's Trade Union Congress Conference and produced a reflexive account of the 1978 Women's Liberation Conference, which contained an aggressive exchange between attendees during the plenary lecture.<sup>73</sup> Brackx left *Spare Rib* in the early 1980s.<sup>74</sup> Working within the *Spare Rib* collective had provided her with extensive editorial experience and fostered her belief in the importance of partisan journalism.

Brackx drew on the political and professional experiences she developed at *Spare Rib* when she began to edit *OpenMIND* in 1983.<sup>75</sup> She had become increasingly interested in the politics of mental health after visiting a close friend of a friend in a psychiatric hospital. Brackx found that they were unable to query their friend's treatment because they were not related to her. The experience highlighted patients' mistreatment in psychiatric institutions, and the absence of service users' voices in the provision of their

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<sup>71</sup> Brackx, personal interview.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Anny Brackx, 'Bradford Witch Hunt', *Spare Rib*, No. 58 (May 1977); Anny Brackx, 'Working for the Union', *Spare Rib*, No. 59 (June 1977), p. 12; Anny Brackx, Gail Chester, and Sarah Rance, 'How we oppress each other', *Spare Rib*, No. 70 (May 1978), p. 17.

<sup>74</sup> Brackx, personal interview.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

mental health care.<sup>76</sup> On joining *OpenMIND*, Brackx championed the voices of service users. At the first mental health conference that she attended, members of the MPU displayed a banner that asked, “What about us?”. Brackx felt that the sentiment was closely connected to the women’s movement politics that she already subscribed to:

I think my kind of instinctive feeling that there ought to be a user movement was all to do with my feminism and the feeling that you ... have to have a voice to assert yourself. Which is something that mental patients didn’t have.<sup>77</sup>

Brackx therefore drew on her personal politics in order to develop *OpenMIND* as a platform for service user voices: in doing so, women’s movement concerns were translated into the arena of mental health.

## **ii. *OpenMIND*, Women’s Movement Politics and Community Care**

Brackx foregrounded her political leanings in the editorials that she produced in early editions of *OpenMIND*. In her oral history interview she stated that, whilst the magazine ‘wasn’t necessarily feminist because that wasn’t the subject...I brought my own philosophy as a feminist to what I produced’.<sup>78</sup> Writing in the April/May 1983 edition, Brackx critiqued proposals produced by the Family Policy Group.<sup>79</sup> The Family Policy Group was a secret contingent of cabinet ministers formed to develop policies that restructured the welfare state around the family.<sup>80</sup> Leaked Family Policy Group proposals encouraged women to remain at home and assume caring responsibilities.<sup>81</sup> Brackx argued that:

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Anny Brackx, ‘Editorial’, *OpenMIND*, No. 2 (April/May 1983), p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Jill Walker, ‘Women, the state and the family in Britain: Thatcher economics and the experience of women’, in Jill Rubery (ed.), *Women and the Recession*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), pp. 218-52 (p. 230); Mary Langan, ‘Women in the Mixed Economy of Care’, in Mary Langan and Lesley Day (eds.), *Women, Oppression and Social Work: Issues in anti-discriminatory practice* (Routledge: London, 1992), pp. 67-92 (p. 75); Sewell, ‘The Emergence of the Carer’.

<sup>81</sup> Malcolm Dean, ‘Thatcher team plot their future for the family’, *The Guardian* (17 February 1983), p. 4; Ian Aitken, ‘Thatcher seeks policy leak culprit’, *The Guardian* (February 22 1983), p. 32; R. Lister, ‘Family Policy: alternative viewpoints- Forward’, *Poverty*, No. 55 (August 1983), pp. 15-18 (p. 15).

The Conservatives are trying to engineer a playback in history; remove women off the labour market, fit them back into their traditional home-maker role and there you have your cheap alternative to the welfare state.<sup>82</sup>

Brackx aligned her concern that the Family Policy Group enshrined women as primary carers with MIND's renewed focus on community-based mental health services. She argued that the Family Policy Group's emphasis on familial care bolstered the Government's underfunding of community-based mental health care initiatives.<sup>83</sup>

Brackx incorporated women's movement perspectives on community care with MIND's emphasis on the development of effective community-based mental health provision. Historians and sociologists align these concerns with women's movement members' wider aim to problematise the stereotyping of women as natural caregivers.<sup>84</sup> In the late 1970s and early 1980s, *Spare Rib* journalist Anna Briggs wrote extensively on the impact that community care had on women as carers. In 1979, she stated that 'governments have always assumed that women will care for children for nothing, so they take it for granted that women will look after disabled, sick and frail people'.<sup>85</sup> Briggs argued that married or cohabiting women's exemption from the Invalid Care Allowance belied the Government's assumption that they would be unemployed and therefore not lose out on pay when caring for a relative.<sup>86</sup> Women's movement groups explored the impact of community care policies on women. In February 1979, the London-based group Women and Science hosted the one-day workshop 'Women and Health- what are we fighting for?'. Participants agreed that the development of community care was an

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<sup>82</sup> Brackx, 'Editorial', *OpenMIND*, No. 2 (April/May 1983), p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Hooyman and Gonyea, *Feminist Perspectives on Family Care*, p. 15; Sewell, *The emergence of the carer*; Finch, *Family Obligation and Social Change*; Janet Finch and Jennifer Mason, *Negotiating Family Responsibilities*.

<sup>85</sup> Anna Briggs, 'Caring for the disabled', *Spare Rib*, No. 81 (April 1979), pp. 14-17 (p. 14); Sewell, 'The Emergence of the Carer', pp. 67, 80-93.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

‘economic measure that will inevitably place an increasing burden of health care on more women’.<sup>87</sup>

Articles published in *OpenMIND* reflected women’s movement concerns about community care. In a 1983 article titled ‘Why Be a Wife?’, Teresa Leo replicated Briggs’ critical assessment of the Invalid Care Allowance.<sup>88</sup> She highlighted the ‘household duties’ test women had to take in order to claim a non-contributory invalidity pension, despite the fact that the pension was automatically paid to men who were chronically sick or disabled, regardless of their marital status.<sup>89</sup> Leo promoted a day of collaborative parliamentary action that highlighted the issue. The action was due to be attended by women’s groups, disability organisations and welfare rights initiatives.<sup>90</sup> Leo’s article also referenced the ‘Why be a Wife’ campaign, launched by the Women’s Liberation Campaign for Legal and Financial Independence in 1977. The campaign problematised tax, pension, and benefits policies that assumed husbands and wives did not have separate incomes.<sup>91</sup> A 1981 campaign pamphlet critiqued the assumption that married women should care for their husbands and relatives, stating that traditional ideas about marriage ensured that women performed care work ‘on the cheap’.<sup>92</sup>

Laureen Levy, a MIND Community Development Worker, also produced an article for *OpenMIND* that aligned the charity’s promotion of community care with women’s movement concerns about women as carers. Levy questioned how ‘community care’ was defined, arguing that the Government overlooked the fact that it usually meant:

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<sup>87</sup> Women and Science (London), ‘Moving on Health’, *Spare Rib*, No. 81 (April 1979), p. 12.

<sup>88</sup> Teresa Leo, ‘Why be a wife?’, *OpenMIND*, No. 2 (April/May 1983), p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> The Women’s Liberation Campaign for Legal and Financial Independence or ‘Fifth Demand Group’ was set up to secure the WLM’s fifth demand, adopted at the 1974 National Women’s Liberation Conference that called for the ‘legal and financial independence of women’ (Mary McIntosh, ‘Engendering Economic Policy: The Women’s Budget Group’, *Women: A Cultural Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2001), pp. 147-57 (pp. 147-48)).

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*



either a married woman in her mid-50s running two household, holding down a part-time job, and suffering financially, physically and mentally, or elderly spouses/siblings caring for each other.<sup>93</sup>

Whilst Leo demonstrated how community care policies bolstered traditional familial gender roles, Levy explored the impact that community care legislation had on individual women's mental and physical health. She referenced research produced by *Spare Rib* journalist Anna Briggs for the Association of Carers in the early 1980s, tracing continuity between concerns highlighted in *Spare Rib* and subsequent responses to these issues in the voluntary sector.<sup>94</sup> Brackx also charted the similarities between *Spare Rib* and *OpenMIND*, highlighting both magazines' endorsement of feminist therapy and opposition to psychotropic medication.<sup>95</sup> She linked these continuities to the wider political atmosphere at MIND in the early 1980s, highlighting its employment of women who identified with feminist politics as well as men with radical political affiliations.

In her oral history interview, Brackx recalled her conviction that *OpenMIND* continued to champion the voices of service users whilst promoting women's movement concerns about carers. She referenced the work of the organisation SANE (Schizophrenia A National Emergency), established by journalist Marjorie Wallace, who supported carers of relatives with severe mental health issues.<sup>96</sup> Sewell documents the controversial nature of SANE's campaigning in the 1980s, highlighting how its focus on carers often stigmatised individuals with mental health concerns as both dependent and dangerous. Campaigners drew on the association of mental illness and danger to argue that any mental health patient with a history of violence should receive mandatory drug treatment.<sup>97</sup> MIND did not endorse SANE's perspective because it did not promote the autonomy and

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<sup>93</sup> Laureen Levy, 'A Woman's Work?', *OpenMIND*, No. 5 (October/November 1983), p. 14.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*; Anna Briggs, *Who Cares? A Report of a Door-to-door Survey into the Numbers and Needs of People Caring for Dependent Relatives* (Chatham: The Association of Carers, 1983).

<sup>95</sup> Brackx, personal interview.

<sup>96</sup> Brackx, personal interview; Sewell, 'The Emergence of the Carer', p. 100.

<sup>97</sup> Sewell, 'The Emergence of the Carer', pp. 100-01.

independence of service users.<sup>98</sup> By publishing feminist responses to community care legislation, Brackx used *OpenMIND* as a platform to highlight the relevance of women's movement politics to wider debates about mental health provision. Brackx, in her position as *OpenMIND* editor, played a crucial role in aligning women's movement concerns regarding mental health care with MIND's increasingly service user-led ethos.

### iii. Promoting Women's Movement Organisations in *OpenMIND*

Brackx also drew on her personal politics and editorial position to promote mental health services and campaigns that emerged out of the women's movement. Writing in the fourth edition of *OpenMIND*, Brackx charted the development of women's movement perspectives on mental health.<sup>99</sup> She attributed the ascendancy of women's movement perspectives on mental health to the increased visibility of the WTC.<sup>100</sup> Brackx also championed the work of self-help groups and feminist therapy initiatives in highlighting women's experiences of mental illness.<sup>101</sup> Several editions of *OpenMIND* contained articles by community-based mental health organisations that worked to counter traditional gender norms. For instance, Ron Wiener, a staff member at The Vale, a Leeds-based psychiatric day centre, described its provision of women's health courses and workshops for men that explored their treatment of women.<sup>102</sup> In 1984, a Crisis Centre Planning Group proposed the establishment of a safe house for women experiencing acute emotional distress.<sup>103</sup> The group, consisting of a therapist, psychiatric nurse, service user, and

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<sup>98</sup> Brackx, personal interview.

<sup>99</sup> Brackx, 'Editorial', *OpenMIND*, No. 4 (August/September 1983), p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Ron Wiener, 'Out of the Gender Trap', *OpenMIND*, No. 4 (August/September 1983), p. 6.

<sup>103</sup> Crisis Centre Planning Group, 'A Crisis Centre for Women', *OpenMIND*, No. 9 (June/July 1984), p. 7.

Women's Aid representative, argued that the contemporary social pressures placed on women induced crisis through mental illness.<sup>104</sup>

*OpenMIND*'s promotion of community-based groups was supplemented by advertisements for related services and events. The magazine listed the formation of a new Women and Psychiatry Working Party, founded by the International Network of Alternatives to Psychiatry, as well as a London-based Women's Health Information Centre that aimed to raise awareness about contraception, the menopause, premenstrual tension, and minor tranquilisers.<sup>105</sup> *OpenMIND* also advertised events hosted by the WTC, announcing the launch of its 1984 workshop programme and a training course on 'Women and Eating Problems'.<sup>106</sup> Advertising the WTC alongside other radical therapy initiatives, *OpenMIND* situated women's movement organisations within the wider alternative and egalitarian approach to community-based provision that MIND endorsed throughout the 1980s. Brackx remained at MIND until 2009, leaving *OpenMIND* to become the charity's Publishing Director in the mid-1980s.<sup>107</sup> Other staff members were aware of Brackx's involvement in the women's movement, describing her enduring endorsement of feminist politics surrounding mental health.<sup>108</sup> In 1989, she published the co-edited volume *Mental Health Care in Crisis*, which included chapters on patient advocacy, therapeutic communities, and women's mental health.<sup>109</sup>

Anny Brackx's *OpenMIND* editorship highlights the role of individual women's movement members in promoting feminist approaches to mental health at MIND. The civil rights discourse already endorsed at MIND from the early 1970s ensured that the organisation was receptive to women's movement ideas surrounding mental health.

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *OpenMIND*, 'Listings', *OpenMIND*, No. 8 (April/May 1984), p. 18.

<sup>106</sup> *OpenMIND*, 'Advertisements', No. 4 (August/September 1983), p. 2); *OpenMIND*, 'Listings', No. 6 (December/January 1984), p. 4.

<sup>107</sup> Brackx, personal interview.

<sup>108</sup> Sayce, personal interview.

<sup>109</sup> Anny Brackx and Katherine Grimshaw (eds), *Mental Health Care in Crisis* (London: Pluto, 1989).

Brackx's political and professional trajectories demonstrate that her personal politics were intrinsic to her promotion of MIND's focus on service users and effective community-based provision. In her oral history interview, Brackx argued that feminist politics were interlinked with MIND's policies of 'user writing and representation, the language of change, egalitarianism, demystification of women's issues'. The fact that Brackx sought to negotiate women's movement critiques of community care alongside MIND's promotion of service user voices demonstrates that *OpenMIND* served as a platform for the political collaboration that defined alternative organising around mental health provision into the 1990s.

### **Minor Tranquiliser Campaigns, 1983-1985**

Despite the platform that *OpenMIND* afforded to women's movement perspectives during the early 1980s, campaigns organised by the charity over the same period did not explicitly foreground these views. MIND's 1983 manifesto *Common Concern* promoted community-based mental health services by targeting the 'gap between rhetoric and action' in the government's provision of mental health care.<sup>110</sup> Despite this critical promotion of community care, the manifesto did not highlight women's movement concerns about female carers, or the impact that mental health policies had on specific population groups. Employing a case study of MIND's work on minor tranquiliser addiction, an issue seen to affect significantly more women than men, this chapter assesses the organisation's promotion of women's mental health concerns in the early to mid-1980s.<sup>111</sup> Comparing MIND's national campaign publications on minor tranquilisers with those produced by the drugs information and campaign group Release, I argue that MIND tempered its promotion

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<sup>110</sup> MIND, *Common Concern*, pp. 1; 4.

<sup>111</sup> José B. Ashford and Jill Littrell, 'Psychopathology', in Josefina Figueira-McDonough, F. Ellen Netting and Ann Nichols-Casebolt (eds), *The Role of Gender in Practice Knowledge: Claiming Half the Human Experience* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), pp. 127-59 (p. 147).

of radical, political perspectives in order to obtain public support for its new focus on community care.<sup>112</sup> Oral history narratives provided by staff members indicate tensions between MIND's national emphasis on public awareness and work by MIND's local associations on community support groups for minor tranquiliser users.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, this chapter also argues that MIND's organisational structure, and the dominance of the national office, restricted its incorporation of political ideas associated with grassroots activism in its campaigning in the early to mid-1980s.

In 1985, MIND dedicated its annual 'MIND Week' to tackling minor tranquiliser addiction and highlighting the experiences of the 250,000 people in Britain who were prescribed the drugs. MIND's national director Chris Heginbotham wrote to Health Minister Kenneth Clarke demanding the Government's 'urgent action to set up services to provide help and support to people dependent' on minor tranquilisers.<sup>114</sup> MIND collaborated with the BBC current affairs programme *That's Life!* to produce a series of television segments documenting individual experiences of minor tranquiliser addiction.<sup>115</sup> From 1983 onwards, *OpenMIND* published articles documenting women's increased propensity to be prescribed minor tranquilisers, promoting self-help guides and events that supported women with minor tranquiliser addiction.<sup>116</sup> In 1983, the magazine advertised the photography exhibition *Minor Tranquilisers- Major Problems*, hosted by the Blackfriars Photography Project, which questioned why tranquilisers were prescribed to so many women.<sup>117</sup> In an

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<sup>112</sup> Release, 'About', available at <http://www.release.org.uk/about> [accessed 9 October 2015].

<sup>113</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>114</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.81, MIND, 'MIND Week 1985: Tranquiliser Addiction- The Way Forward' (London, MIND: 11 June 1985).

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*; British Library, Document Supply 85/10837, Ron Lacey and Shaun Woodward, *That's Life! Survey on Tranquilisers* (London: BBC in association with MIND, 1985); Frances Bonner, *Ordinary Television: Analysing Popular TV* (Sage Publications Ltd: London, 2003), p. 21; Alison Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>116</sup> Chris Shaw, 'The Tranquiliser Trap and How to Get Out of It by Joy Melville (Fontana, £1.95 Pb). *Women and Tranquilisers* by Celia Haddon (Sheldon Press, £2.50 Pb)', *OpenMIND*, No. 12 (December, 1984/January 1985), pp. 16-17.

<sup>117</sup> *OpenMIND*, 'News', No. 3 (June/July 1983), p. 7.

editorial, Brackx stated that MIND's minor tranquiliser campaign would be crucial in highlighting the need for 'more egalitarian structures' within mental health services, linking the overt prescription of tranquilisers to women to the patriarchal discrimination that they experienced on a daily basis.<sup>118</sup>

Despite Brackx's assertions, *OpenMIND*'s focus on the increased prescription of minor tranquilisers to women was not explicitly articulated in literature produced for the 1985 'MIND Week'. Campaign materials included a 'special report' that contained statistics on minor tranquiliser usage in Britain.<sup>119</sup> The report documented how fourteen percent of adults in Britain were prescribed the minor tranquiliser Benzodiazepine each year, and that they were prescribed 'twice as often for women than men'.<sup>120</sup> However, its authors did not problematise women's increased propensity to be prescribed minor tranquilisers. Rather, they focused on advising readers about the general nature of the drugs, describing ingredients and side effects in order to help them make an informed and independent decision about taking the medication. The report therefore bolstered MIND's renewed focus on service user autonomy. Writing in the United States in 1984, feminist psychologist and sociologist Carol T. Mowbray, amongst others, argued that disparities in medication prescribed to men and women reflected 'sex role stereotyping and bias' within the mental health care system and reinforced patriarchal authority because the majority of physicians prescribing minor tranquilisers were male.<sup>121</sup> In not subjecting women's predominance as minor tranquiliser users to political critique, the MIND Week 'Special Report' appeared to inadvertently reinforce assumptions that women were more susceptible to mental illness.

Comparing *OpenMIND*'s promotion of issues surrounding minor tranquilisers and

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<sup>118</sup> Anny Brackx, 'Editorial', *OpenMIND*, No. 4 (August/September 1983), p. 3.

<sup>119</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.81, MIND, *Special Report: Tranquilisers- Hard Facts, Hard Choices* (London: MIND, c. 1985).

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> Carol T. Mowbray, Susan Lanir, and Marilyn Hulce (eds), *Women and Mental Health: New Directions for Change* (New York: The Haworth Press, 1984), p. 121.

materials produced for the 1985 'MIND Week' indicates that different platforms within MIND foregrounded women's mental health concerns in contrasting ways. This can be partly attributed to the fact that feminist critiques of minor tranquiliser prescriptions were associated with a wider radical politics of mental health. Organisations with radical political underpinnings foregrounded women's movement perspectives on minor tranquilisers more readily in their publications. In 1982, the organisation Release published *Trouble with Tranquilisers*, a pamphlet that queried the overt prescription of the drugs to women.<sup>122</sup> Release asserted that the patriarchal promotion of normative male and female behaviour resulted in contrasting assumptions about men and women's use of drugs.<sup>123</sup> Release argued that the 'pill-popping housewife' stereotype bolstered the assumption that women required tranquilisers in order to cope with their everyday lives. This resulted in women internalising feelings of anger and aggression that subsequently manifested themselves in anxiety and depression.<sup>124</sup> Release's assertions replicated women's movement members concerns that adhering to the role of the traditional housewife facilitated their emotional distress.

Release's endorsement of women's movement ideas reflected its background in radical politics. Release was formed by art students Caroline Coon and Rufus Harris in 1967 in response to a significant increase in arrests and convictions for drug use.<sup>125</sup> Employing a human rights framework, Release supported individuals arrested for drug offences through a telephone helpline and 'bust cards' that detailed drug users' legal rights.<sup>126</sup> Coon

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<sup>122</sup> Release, 'About'; Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity), SA/MIN.B.81, Release Publications Ltd, *Trouble with Tranquilisers* (London Release Publications Ltd, 1982).

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Steve Abrams, 'Rufus Harris', *The Guardian* (30 April 2007), available at <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/apr/30/guardianobituaries.drugsandalcohol> [accessed 11 October 2015].

<sup>126</sup> Alex Mold, "'The Welfare Branch of Alternative Society?': The Work of Drug Voluntary Organisation Release, 1967-1978", *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2006), pp. 50-73; Alex Mold and Virginia Berridge, *Voluntary Action and Illegal Drugs: Health and Society in Britain since the 1960s* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 42-43.

maintained links with radical, artistic initiatives throughout the 1970s and early 1980s.

Working as a music journalist, she regularly promoted feminist and female-fronted punk bands and fanzines.<sup>127</sup> Therefore, Release's countercultural underpinnings resulted in its promotion of a human or civil rights discourse that was closely connected to radical politics.

Comparing MIND and Release's minor tranquiliser campaigns highlights the position of tension that radical politics held in MIND's own promotion of a civil rights discourse. It also explains the disparity between OpenMIND's portrayal of women and minor tranquilisers and the general depiction of minor tranquiliser usage in MIND's national campaigns. *OpenMIND* was able to promote women's movement perspectives because it was an open forum for discussing issues of mental health that was largely read by subscribers supportive of MIND's causes.<sup>128</sup> MIND's national campaigns, on the other hand, were promoted via general press releases and publications distributed across numerous media outlets. With an increased consideration for the variance in audience and reception that national campaign literature received, organisers in the early 1980s did not wish to explicitly align themselves with oppositional political viewpoints. The 1985 MIND Week was the first MIND campaign to utilise its new focus on community care to petition the Government on a specific mental health concern. It therefore took tentative steps in the promotion of new approach, seeking to capitalise on its legislative success in the early 1980s whilst bolstering public and professional support.

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<sup>127</sup> Mary Montgomery Wolf, "'We Accept You, One of Us?'" Punk Rock, Community, and Individual in an Uncertain Era, 1974-1985' (PhD thesis, University of North Carolina, 2007); Matthew Paul Becker, 'The Edge of Darkness: Youth Culture Since the 1960s' (PhD thesis, University of Minnesota, 2007), p. 313.

<sup>128</sup> Brackx, 'Editorial', *OpenMIND*, No. 1, p. 3.



Alison Cobb also attributed the disparity in ideas surrounding minor tranquilisers at MIND to a tension between the charity's campaigning on the issue at local and national levels.<sup>129</sup> She stated that:

There were two strands to that work, support to women's groups and organisations and the kind of national exposure around the addiction to tranx [*sic*] that was raised through *That's Life* on BBC, and I think there was a bit of tension there.<sup>130</sup>

Community development worker Laureen Levy, who had previously contributed to *OpenMIND*, worked with MIND's local associations on the issue of minor tranquilisers in the early 1980s.<sup>131</sup> In 1984, Levy produced a pamphlet for the local associations' annual meeting that called for improved community-based services for minor tranquiliser users. She highlighted the support that MIND's local associations could offer minor tranquiliser self-help groups.<sup>132</sup> The pamphlet included contributors who supported women experiencing minor tranquiliser addiction. Shirley Tricket, a drugs worker at the Newcastle Association for Mental Health, stated that she 'knew that there were women all over the country coping with large numbers of distress calls from people dependent on tranquilisers, with a chip pan in one hand and a telephone in the other'.<sup>133</sup> The pamphlet documented women's role in establishing self-help groups and other community-based services that tackled the issue.<sup>134</sup> This approach contrasted with literature produced by MIND at a national level, which did not highlight the gendered nature of local minor tranquiliser support services. Cobb reiterated the fact that the 1985 MIND Week aimed to raise general public awareness, highlighting how pharmaceutical companies perpetuated addiction, rather than examining the specifically gendered nature of its usage.<sup>135</sup> This focus

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<sup>129</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.81, MIND Associations at work on the minor tranquiliser problem', *Come Off It!* (London: MIND, October 1984).

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

was reiterated in a 1985 MIND press release that celebrated legislation banning GPs from prescribing minor tranquilisers by their brand names, consequently limiting pharmaceutical company profits.<sup>136</sup> This suggests that MIND did not feature women's movement approaches in their national campaigning on minor tranquilisers due to the association of feminist ideas with community-based initiatives and grassroots activism.

MIND's campaigning on minor tranquiliser addiction highlights contrasting responses to women's movement perspectives across the charity's local and national platforms. Comparing MIND and Release's national campaigns indicates the different ways in which the organisations incorporated radical politics into their civil rights discourse. Release's countercultural underpinnings ensured that radical politics were interlinked with its human rights approach. MIND's desire, at a national level, to bolster public appeal indicates why campaign materials produced for the 1985 MIND Week did not foreground women's movement perspectives. The campaign's lack of focus on minor tranquiliser support services run by and for women also highlights the association of women's movement ideas with grassroots activism. Exploring the position of radical politics within MIND's minor tranquiliser campaigns demonstrates why women's movement perspectives reflected in *OpenMIND* were not replicated in MIND's national campaigns in the early 1980s. This disparity became less apparent in the late 1980s due to the development of working policy parties on women and mental health, and increased service user involvement at the charity.

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<sup>136</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.81, MIND, 'Press Release-MIND welcomes the Government's announcement that from April next year, NHS doctors will no longer be able to prescribe minor tranquilisers by their brand names' (London: MIND, 1985).

## Women in MIND, 1984-1987

In November 1984, Laureen Levy formed Women in MIND, a policy working party located at the charity's national branch in London.<sup>137</sup> Women in MIND represented Levy's attempt to incorporate local issues and approaches into MIND's national ethos through the promotion of feminist politics and practices.<sup>138</sup> It was the first group within the organisation that focused specifically on women's mental health concerns. The political and professional affiliations of Women in MIND members indicate the group's alignment of women's movement and service user movement approaches. Women in MIND therefore contributed to the increasingly collaborative approach taken by single-issue mental health groups in the 1980s. This growing emphasis on collaboration reflected the 'mixed economy of welfare' that developed in Britain over the decade.<sup>139</sup> However, it also indicated the recognition within oppositional mental health groups of intersecting issues of class, race and gender, and their influence on women's experiences and provision of mental health.

The previous chapter assessed the extent to which feminist therapeutic organisations' increased cooperation with state-led services and funding bodies led to their depoliticisation in the 1980s. Organisations such as INCITE! promote the strategic engagement of radical groups with non-governmental organisations to ensure the fulfilment of their political objectives.<sup>140</sup> Women in MIND complicates this portrayal of women movement members' working either 'in or against the state'.<sup>141</sup> MIND was, and still is, a non-governmental organisation. Unaffiliated to a specific political movement, it endorsed some radical political ideas whilst also working directly with state-led mental

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<sup>137</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.131, Women in MIND, *Women in MIND* (MIND: London, 1985), p. 1.

<sup>138</sup> Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions*, p. 7.

<sup>139</sup> Jeanette Brejning, *Corporate Social Responsibility and the Welfare State: The Historical and Contemporary Role of CSR in the Mixed Economy of Welfare* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 11.

<sup>140</sup> Smith, 'Preface', in INCITE!, *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*, p. x.

<sup>141</sup> London Edinburgh Return Group, *In & Against the State*.

health service leaders.<sup>142</sup> Whilst Women in MIND contained some women's movement members, it also consisted of women who did not directly participate in women's movement activism but shared feminist sensibilities. Assessing the positioning of women's movement politics in Women in MIND, as well as responses to the group within the charity itself, demonstrates that MIND held a liminal position, linking state-led mental health care with alternative organisation around mental health.

### **i. The Ideas and Aims of Women in MIND**

Women in MIND was the first occasion that an established group of staff members from MIND's national branch sought to incorporate issues surrounding women's mental health into the charity's policy and practice. The group met once a month at MIND's central offices on London's Harley Street.<sup>143</sup> Convening Women in MIND, Levy was initially responsible for the policy working party's aims.<sup>144</sup> Alison Cobb also joined the group and was its main point of contact alongside Levy.<sup>145</sup> In her oral history interview, Cobb could not recall how the policy working party was set up. However, she believed that Levy's involvement was influenced by her community development work and her personal politics.<sup>146</sup> Introducing *Finding Our Own Solutions*, an edited collection produced by Women in MIND, Levy stated that 'far too little attention is devoted to our experiences as women of mental distress and the way that distress can be resolved'.<sup>147</sup> She critiqued the presence of gender stereotypes in physicians' diagnoses and treatment of female mental

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<sup>142</sup> Mind, 'Mental health NGOs from the globe unite in new report' (4 March 2014), available at <http://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/mental-health-ngos-from-across-the-globe-unite-in-new-report/#.WPj-2tLyvIW> [accessed 20 April 2017].

<sup>143</sup> Women in MIND, *Women in MIND*, p. 9.

<sup>144</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*; Women in MIND, *Women in MIND*, p. 9.

<sup>146</sup> Alison Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>147</sup> Laureen Levy, 'Introduction', in Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions: Women's experiences of mental health care* (London: MIND Publications, 1986), pp. 6-7 (p. 6).

health patients, arguing that it was 'perfectly healthy for us to be "childish", unable to cope and in need to protection'.<sup>148</sup>

Levy posited the aims of Women in MIND as: acknowledging women's individual and diverse experiences of mental illness and mental health care; recognising services and groups established by women to support one another; promoting counselling and psychotherapy as effective alternatives to medication; the enforcement of equal representation in mental health care planning and the abolition of discriminatory health care practices.<sup>149</sup> Women in MIND's aims replicated critiques of women's mental health services that Levy had articulated in *OpenMIND*, as well as opinions offered by Brackx in her editorials.<sup>150</sup> Levy recognised the prevalence of women's activism around mental health, presenting Women in MIND as part of a growing movement. She asserted, 'There has never been a better time to insist that the women's dimension is incorporated into all health planning and provision'.<sup>151</sup> It can therefore be assumed that Levy's foundation of Women in MIND was influenced by women's movement ideas and approaches.

In literature produced by the group, however, there was no specific mention of their aims being feminist or located within the women's movement. The absence of an explicit identification with women's movement approaches demonstrated that many of its members shared an assumed and accepted feminist sensibility, rather than necessarily being directly involved in women's movement activism. Cobb, for example, joined MIND in 1982 after training in both social work and information studies.<sup>152</sup> Writing in 1989, Cobb identified as a 'Christian feminist'.<sup>153</sup> However, in her oral history interview, she attributed her commitment to issues surrounding women's mental health to her work at a psychiatric

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>150</sup> Levy, 'A Woman's Work?'.  
<sup>151</sup> Levy, 'Introduction', p. 7.

<sup>152</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>153</sup> Brackx and Grimshaw (eds.), *Mental Health Care in Crisis*, p. v.

hospital prior to attending university. She volunteered on a women's ward that used a token economy, a system employed in many psychiatric institutions that rewarded appropriate behaviour with tokens that were then used as a 'currency of exchange'.<sup>154</sup> Cobb described her mixed feelings about the token economy system due to its endorsement of behaviourism. She also recalled shadowing an occupational therapist on a back ward for male patients. Back wards housed long-stay patients who had little interaction with the world beyond the institution. Service users and health care professionals documented the poor conditions of back wards, citing inadequate hygiene levels and a lack of stimulation for patients.<sup>155</sup> Cobb recalled the back ward she attended as 'rows and rows of men with nothing much really going on...very grim and yeah, very much lost lives in a way'.<sup>156</sup> Cobb's initial role at MIND, setting up a temporary information workshop in one of its regional offices, reflected her desire to raise awareness of psychiatric hospital conditions. In her oral history interview, she emphasised her conviction that information was empowering.<sup>157</sup>

Cobb's participation in Women in MIND reflected her belief that mental health patients could be empowered if they were informed about community-based services. Her emphasis on empowerment through education replicated the approaches of earlier WLM initiatives like the LWLW Psychology Group, who aimed to bolster women's medical autonomy by informing them about different psychotherapeutic approaches.<sup>158</sup> The fact that Cobb did not articulate her influences as feminist, however, could indicate Women in MIND's close collaboration with service user movement groups, and the fact that her

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<sup>154</sup> Cobb, personal interview; Laura D. Hirshbein, *Smoking Privileges: Psychiatry, the Mentally Ill and the Tobacco Industry in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), p. 38.

<sup>155</sup> Rachel Perkins, 'Forewords', in Mark Hardcastle et al., (eds.), *Experiences of Mental In-patient Care: Narratives from services users, carers and professionals* (Hove: Routledge, 2007), pp. xii-xxiv (p. xxii).

<sup>156</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

feminist sensibilities were already assumed and did not need to be foregrounded. Women in MIND represented a coalition of influences that reflected contemporary developments in mental health policy, provision and activism.

Writing in 1996, Liz Sayce, who joined MIND in the late 1980s, also highlighted several interconnected developments that influenced the emergence of groups like Women in MIND. She identified these influences: the new feminist therapies and approaches to women's psychology developed by women's movement members; the establishment of local women's mental health projects that focused on specific issues, highlighting the 'different needs of Black women, lesbians and other groups'; the expansion of service user organisations that raised women's issues; and an increased focus on community care that 'allowed some limited space for the development of local women's services'.<sup>159</sup> Sayce therefore attributed the proliferation of groups like Women in MIND to a combination of developments in feminist theory, community-based activism around mental health, and legislative change. As a result of this coalition of influences, Women in MIND held a liminal position as a women's mental health group that operated both with and against the state. Women in MIND promoted groups that emerged due to the government's increased focus on community care and worked with the government to ensure it enacted its pledge to improve local services. However, they also recognised the need to protect these groups from extensive funding cuts and government criticisms. Sayce documented how Thatcher's government's associated community-based women's mental health initiatives with the "loony left", a sentiment expressed by politicians to justify the closure of the GLC.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Liz Sayce, 'Campaigning for Change', p. 232.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*; John Charmley, *A History of Conservative Politics Since 1830*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 228; Harry Harmer, *The Labour Party 1900-1998* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), p. 267.

## ii. Women in MIND and the Service User Movement

Women in MIND's incorporation of women's movement approaches, service user perspectives, and community-based organising was reflected in the group's membership. An introductory pamphlet produced in 1985 emphasised its members' diverse experiences: 'black women and white women from different parts of Europe and Africa. Some of us live alone, or with our partners, children and, in one case, grandchildren'.<sup>161</sup> Members of Women in MIND described their own experiences of mental illness and the mental health concerns of individuals that they cared for. Many also emphasised their previous involvement in women's groups.<sup>162</sup> Women in MIND contained MIND staff members and women from external organisations. These included the West London Cyrenians, a community-based homelessness charity.<sup>163</sup> Women in MIND therefore included representatives from organisations that focused on wider social issues related to mental health.

Women in MIND's membership reflected MIND's wider emphasis on foregrounding the voices of service users and survivors.<sup>164</sup> In July 1985, MIND invited representatives from American, Dutch, and Danish survivor movements to speak at their World Congress on Mental Health in Brighton.<sup>165</sup> Cobb referred to the event as a milestone in the integration of service user perspectives into the charity's work.<sup>166</sup> Service users at the congress produced a declaration that bolstered MIND's commitment to individuals' self-

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<sup>161</sup> Members of Women in MIND were listed as: Cathie Andrews; Maggy Bynorth; Alison Cobb; Lesley Cocoran; Nona Ephraim; Laureen Levy; Yolanta Lis; Joma Longmoor; Busie Mavolane; Elaine Moss; Yvonne Pearson; Jill Taylor and Jan Wallcraft (Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions*, p. 8).

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> Levy, 'A Woman's Work'; Cobb, personal interview; Women in MIND, *Women in MIND*, p. 1.

<sup>164</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>165</sup> Peter Campbell, 'World Mental Health Conference, Mental Health 2000, held in Brighton from 14.7.1985 to 19.7.1985', in Survivors History Group, *Mental health and survivors' movement history and context*, available at <http://studymore.org.uk/mpu.htm#WorldCongress1985> [accessed 16 October 2016].

<sup>166</sup> Cobb, personal interview; Peter Campbell, 'World Mental Health Conference'.



determination when provisioning their good mental health.<sup>167</sup> The declaration problematised the stigma associated with medical diagnoses of mental illness and called for the restriction of harmful psychiatric treatments, like ECT. It also asserted that existing mental health systems reinforced social inequalities by penalising individuals who did not demonstrate normative behaviour. The declaration stated, 'It is known that people who are oppressed because of sex, age, race and class experience more life problems and are at greater risk of being psychiatrically labelled'.<sup>168</sup> The declaration reflected Levy's assertions that mental health care bolstered gender stereotypes, as well as critiques of psychiatry and psychology previously developed by women's movement members.

Women in MIND established links with service user groups through its membership. Women in MIND member Jan Wallcraft chaired the London-based self-help group Islington Women and Mental Health and campaigned for the survivor movement.<sup>169</sup> Wallcraft became aware that people were discussing the politics of mental health in 1982 when she discovered feminist therapy and women's self-help groups in London. She described how women at the groups were 'sharing raw and passionate feelings about their lives and what was wrong with the mental health system'.<sup>170</sup> In a *Spare Rib* article published in 1987, Wallcraft aligned the politics of the women's and survivor movements with her personal experience of the mental health system.<sup>171</sup> After attempting suicide in the early 1970s, Wallcraft spent time in a psychiatric hospital where she underwent ECT.<sup>172</sup> She

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<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*; Andrew Roberts, 'Mental Health History Timeline' (London: Middlesex University, 1999), available at <http://studymore.org.uk/mhhtim.htm#1985WFMH> [accessed 16 October 2015].

<sup>168</sup> Charter Mental Health 2000: Brighton Declarations on the Rights of Mentally Ill People and the Promotion of Mental Health, *Part 2: Self Determination as a Human Right: Its Implication for "Mental Health" Services* (Brighton, July 1985), available at <http://studymore.org.uk/mpu.htm#WorldCongress1985> [accessed 16 October 2015].

<sup>169</sup> Survivors History Group, 'Mental health and survivors' movements and contexts', available at <http://studymore.org.uk/mpu.htm> [accessed 23 April 2017].

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Jan Wallcraft, 'ECT & Women', *Spare Rib*, No. 183 (October 1987), pp. 20-24.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

subsequently critiqued the prescription of the ECT, arguing that women's social situations were rarely acknowledged by psychiatrists before they were treated.

Wallcraft highlighted the power imbalances inherent in psychiatrist-patient relationships, stating, 'I am sure you can imagine the various ways in which such power by mainly male psychiatrists over mainly female, often Black and working-class women is used and often abused to maintain the status quo'.<sup>173</sup> Wallcraft drew on her own working-class childhood to highlight the impact that deficiencies in the mental health system had on different groups of women. She attributed her mental health concerns to growing up 'lonely on a large council estate, a soulless concrete jungle, shut up in my own world'.<sup>174</sup> Wallcraft's *Spare Rib* article highlighted how Women in MIND members aligned survivor movement campaign strategies, such as the foregrounding of individual experiences of psychiatric care, with the personal politics of the women's movement perspectives on mental health. She emphasised the importance of incorporating a diverse range of service user voices into feminist assessments of mental health care, whilst also using the article to promote Women in MIND, referencing *Finding Our Own Solutions* and listing Laureen Levy's contact details.<sup>175</sup> Wallcraft continued to work with MIND throughout the 1980s, helping establish MINDLINK, the charity's first service user network and support group, as well as producing histories of the survivor movement.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>176</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.125, MINDLINK, 'List of Addressed of Groups and Organisations relevant to Advocacy/User Involvement', (London: MIND, July 1992); Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.125, MIND Information, 'User Involvement and User Empowerment Information Pack' (London: MIND, c. 1993-1994).

### iii. Internal Responses to Women in MIND

Women in MIND's promotion of the service user movement reflected the charity's national aims. However, Cobb asserted that the group's development was also influenced by internal issues at MIND. Despite acknowledging that there were female directors at the organisation in the early to mid-1980s, Cobb stated that MIND's senior management was predominantly male.<sup>177</sup> Women in MIND was therefore an attempt by likeminded women within the organisation to raise awareness of issues surrounding women and mental health at a staff level. No directors were involved in the group.<sup>178</sup> In her oral history interview, Brackx reiterated that it was important that Women in MIND did not come under managerial influence. She described how she did not join the group because she had become MIND's Publishing Director.<sup>179</sup>

Despite the absence of female representation at a managerial level, Cobb argued that MIND's 'collective' atmosphere aided the development of Women in MIND's grassroots ethos. MIND's managerial structure remained relatively loose, affording individuals within the organisation the opportunity to work in groups on issues distinct from the charity's national campaigning. Cobb stated that 'it was almost kind of making decisions in little caucuses, which is quite different from how things work now'.<sup>180</sup> Cobb's account suggests that the civil rights discourse promoted by MIND from the early 1970s onwards extended to aspects of its internal structure, with groups within the charity replicating forms of collective organisation associated with radical politics. However, in promoting a structure that allowed staff members to form collective groups, MIND also engendered an atmosphere in which their predominantly male management was subject to critique. Cobb therefore believed that Women in MIND was a successful example of

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<sup>177</sup> Tessa Jowell worked as an Assistant Director of MIND during the period. Judi Clements and Ros Hepplewhite served as directors in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Cobb, personal interview).

<sup>178</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>179</sup> Brackx, personal interview.

<sup>180</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

collective organisation within MIND in the mid-1980s, promoting wide-ranging changes to women's mental health care whilst petitioning for the charity's internal development regarding women's representation.

Cobb argued, however, that Women in MIND's grassroots approach meant that it remained distinct from MIND's national campaigns at a public level.<sup>181</sup> This distinction was reflected in staff members' responses to the Women in MIND publication *Finding Our Own Solutions*. Cobb recalled how pleased she was that *Finding Our Own Solutions* reflected a wide range of voices and experiences. MIND's publications editor, however, was unhappy with the illustrations it contained.<sup>182</sup> The images depicted women's experiences of mental health and illness, detailing support group meetings and emotional responses to treatments such as ECT. Some cartoons were explicitly political.<sup>183</sup> One image titled 'I wanted a safe place' depicted a woman sitting on a suitcase between a hospital and her home. The images of the hospital and home were represented by a collage of newspaper headlines consisting of phrases such as 'male violence', 'threat' and 'fighting'. Another illustration portrayed a woman reading a warning sign affixed to a wall that stated 'Danger. Health warning. Being a woman in this society can seriously damage your health'.<sup>184</sup>

Cobb perceived the images to have a 'self-made' aesthetic that reflected Women in MIND's grassroots ethos. However, the Publications Editor felt that this ethos did not reflect MIND's published output. In her oral history interview, Cobb was wary of overstating the Publications Editor's reaction, a response that potentially reflected her continued employment at the charity. Women in MIND members were ultimately successful in using an illustration style that they felt best represented their work. Their exchange with the Publications Editor, however, reinforces the view that radical politics

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<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>183</sup> Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions*, pp. 9, 43.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.* Reproductions of these images can be found in Appendix 3.

held a position of tension within MIND in the 1980s. Women in MIND's grassroots aesthetic appeared to contravene the professionalism that the charity sought to promote through its general publications.

#### **iv. *Finding Our Own Solutions* and Alternative Community Care**

*Finding Our Own Solutions* fulfilled Women in MIND's aims to produce a publication for both service users and carers that listed resources related to women and mental health.<sup>185</sup> The volume incorporated the voices of service users, carers, and self-help convenors, documenting women's experiences of state-led mental health care and detailing numerous self-help groups and community-based organisations that supported women beyond the NHS. The book was divided into sections, each focusing on a specific social issue that affected women's mental health and the provision of effective community services. Issues included food, drink and drugs, imprisonment, secure psychiatric units, race and sexuality, employment and 'crisis'.<sup>186</sup> *Finding Our Own Solutions* acknowledged issues previously raised by *OpenMIND* and reflected Levy's community development work. It explored women's increased propensity to be prescribed minor tranquilisers, the establishment of women's crisis centres and the outcome of invasive psychiatric treatments like ECT.<sup>187</sup> Contributors drew on feminist critiques of the psychiatric system to narrate their own experiences of mental health care, problematizing the ways in which negative stereotypes of femininity influenced women's mental health treatments. For instance, Jess Halsall of the Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa Association reiterated that women's socialisation as

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<sup>185</sup> Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions*.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25; 31-42; 49-50; 63-74; 15.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12; 16; 24.

selfless nurturers meant that they did not acknowledge their own needs, therefore associating food with the ambiguous demands that society imposed on them.<sup>188</sup>

*Finding Our Own Solutions* promoted an intersectional perspective that had not previously been recognised in MIND's national campaigns. The publication acknowledged that women's negative experiences of mental health care were influenced by an intersection of poverty, racism, sexism and homophobia. Contributor Evie described how Black women's mental health concerns were aggravated by the racist assumption that 'black women are aggressive, stupid and unreliable', an attitude that was reflected in the discriminatory treatment that they received within state-led mental health services.<sup>189</sup> FW documented how her custody battle for her children was impeded by the court's discriminatory assertion that lesbian mothers were 'unstable, immature, abnormal, deviant, irresponsible, dangerous'.<sup>190</sup> In publishing FW's account, Women in MIND highlighted other tenets of women's movement activism surrounding sexuality and mental health. The Rights of Women Lesbian Custody Group was formed in 1982 to research the social and legal issues faced by lesbian mothers.<sup>191</sup> The group's *Lesbian Mothers' Legal Handbook*, published in 1986, explored how traditional psychiatry's association of lesbianism with neurosis influenced how custody decisions were made.<sup>192</sup> Rights of Women member Jill Radford situated the legal system's pathologisation of lesbianism within a broader backlash against feminism in the 1980s.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Jess Halsall, 'A self-help approach to eating problems', in Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions: Women's experience of mental health care* (London: Women in MIND Publications, 1985), pp. 27-29 (p. 27).

<sup>189</sup> Evie, 'Racism', in Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions: Women's experience of mental health care* (London: Women in MIND Publications, 1985), pp. 49-50 (p. 50).

<sup>190</sup> FW, 'Lesbianism', in Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions: Women's experience of mental health care* (London: Women in MIND Publications, 1985), pp. 51-53 (pp. 52-53).

<sup>191</sup> Rights of Women Lesbian Custody Group, *Lesbian Mothers' Legal Handbook* (London: The Women's Press, 1986), p. ii; Christine Cocker, 'Social work and adoption: the impact of civil partnership and same-sex marriage', in Nicola Barker and Daniel Monk (eds), *From Civil Partnership to Same-Sex Marriage: Interdisciplinary reflections* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 97-114 (p. 98).

<sup>192</sup> Rights of Women Lesbian Custody Group, *Lesbian Mothers' Legal Handbook*, pp. 125-137.

<sup>193</sup> Jill Radford, 'The Lesbian Custody Project', in Phyllis Noerager Stern (ed.), *Lesbian Health: What Are the Issues?* (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd., 1993), pp. 139-48 (p. 139).

*Finding Our Own Solutions* not only foregrounded women's personal experiences of mental health concerns, assumptions and systems, but also documented the numerous community-based resources that afforded women vital support. The publication expanded perceptions of feminist therapy previously highlighted by Anny Brackx in *OpenMIND*. Whilst Brackx associated feminist therapy primarily with the WTC, *Finding Our Own Solutions* charted the development of feminist therapeutic organisations across England, highlighting the work of Women's Counselling and Therapy Services in Birmingham and Leeds, as well as the Bristol-based therapy centre Womankind.<sup>194</sup> Jan Wallcraft documented the work of service user support groups, including the Islington Women and Mental Health Project that she chaired. The project was formed by women who believed that existing mental health services were inadequate and aimed to share their pain in order to establish connections 'between the pain and their external oppression'.<sup>195</sup> The project ran a drop-in service that provided a safe environment for women to obtain support and information about mental health care. Wallcraft described the drop-in as an alternative to state-led psychiatric services. The discussions that took place there helped women to reframe their experiences of mental illness and learn that their feelings did not mean that there was 'something intrinsically wrong with them'.<sup>196</sup> Wallcraft's emphasis on the safe space generated through the drop-in service replicated the aims of previous women's movement initiatives, like the LWLW Psychology Group and WTC, whilst also emphasising the importance of foregrounding service user voices. The Islington Women and Mental Health Project further demonstrates the ways in which women's movement perspectives on mental health became increasingly aligned with the politics and practices of the service user movement.

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<sup>194</sup> Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions*, pp. 77-81, 84-86, 102.

<sup>195</sup> Jan Wallcraft, 'Islington Women and Mental Health', in Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions: Women's experience of mental health care* (London: Women in MIND Publications, 1985), pp. 109-110.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

*Finding Our Own Solutions* also contained information about the Peckham-based Black Women and Mental Health Group. The group formed to highlight the discriminatory assumptions that accompanied Black women's treatment in mental health services.<sup>197</sup> Its members stated, 'It is clear that assumptions- rather than medical judgements- and poor communication at all levels are regular features of psychiatric practice when the patient is black'. The group argued that many mental health service providers assumed that Black women did not respond positively to counselling or psychotherapy. They critiqued the over-prescription of minor tranquilisers to Black women, asserting that such treatments were endorsed because they were economical rather than effective. In doing so, they expressed concern that the extensive rolling out of community care services meant that local authorities resorted to the easiest and cheapest treatments.<sup>198</sup> The Black Women and Mental Health Group was run by the Peckham Black Women's Group, a network for women who experienced racial and cultural discrimination when accessing housing and public services, and at work.<sup>199</sup> The Peckham Black Women's Group was closely involved with the Black Women's Movement, containing members of the Organisation for Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD), 'one of the most decisive influences on Black women's politics'.<sup>200</sup> Highlighting the work of the Black Women and Mental Health Group, *Finding Our Own Solutions* incorporated aligned critical assessments of race with the feminist perspectives on mental health previously discussed in *OpenMIND*. *Finding Our Own Solutions* therefore foregrounded the specific discrimination experienced by black women within mental health services in ways that previous national MIND publications had not.

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<sup>197</sup> Peckham Black Women's Group, 'Peckham Black Women's Group', in *ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, 'The heart of the race: Black women's lives in Britain', in Heidi Safia Mirza (ed.), *Black British Feminism: A Reader* (London: Routledge: 1997), pp. 42-44 (p. 42); Tracy Fisher, *What's Left of Blackness: Feminisms, Transracial Solidarities, and the Politics of Belonging in Britain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 79.



*Finding Our Own Solutions* therefore highlighted the proliferation of community-based organisations and self-help groups focusing on women's mental health that emerged in England in the 1980s. Many of these groups articulated women's movement perspectives surrounding mental health and adopted organisational approaches similar to existing radical political groups. However, on occasion, these groups did not explicitly highlight their affiliation with the women's movement. This reflected the assumed feminist sensibilities of many of the organisations featured, as well as their promotion of an increasingly collaborative approach to alternative community-based mental health services that recognised the service user movement. Women in MIND, in foregrounding their own grassroots approach, situated themselves within this movement. In emphasising the collaborative and comparative nature of groups within the movement, Women in MIND members also responded to concerns about the dichotomy drawn by some mental health organisations between service users and carers. Writing in Brackx's co-edited volume *Mental Health Care in Crisis*, Cobb and Wallcraft emphasised the importance of providing 'services to carers and/or their dependents', incorporating an analysis of the specific issues faced by female carers into their general assessment of women's mental health.<sup>201</sup> In doing so, they conflated the positions of carer and service user, emphasising the importance of ensuring women's autonomy in the provision of their overall mental health.<sup>202</sup>

By documenting the emergence of women's mental health groups, publications like *Finding Our Own Solutions* complicate the assumption that the 1980s was a period of depoliticisation for women's movement organisations. Women in MIND championed the existence of an extensive alternative community care network in England that was not only influenced by the women's movement, but reflected increasing collaborations between feminist groups and other radical health initiatives. The organisations listed in *Finding Our*

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<sup>201</sup> Alison Cobb and Jan Wallcraft, 'Women's Needs', in Anny Brackx and Katherine Grimshaw (eds), *Mental Health Care in Crisis* (London: Pluto, 1989), pp. 49-61 (p. 54).

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-60.

*Own Solutions* emerged in response to the increased governmental emphasis on community care by providing alternative services to women who remained unsupported and unrecognised within state-led provision. These alternative organisations called out the government's failure to recognise women's diverse experiences of mental health or response adequately to racist and sexist discrimination taking place in state-led services. Responses to Women in MIND within the charity itself highlight an enduring tension over its endorsement of radical politics. By ensuring the publication of *Finding Our Own Solutions*, Women in MIND highlighted the need for MIND to recognise external community-based mental health organisations, many of which had radical political foundations, at a national level. An examination of MIND's subsequent nationwide campaign *Stress on Women* casts further light on how previously localised concerns regarding women's mental health came to be promoted by the charity at a national level, influencing governmental policies and institutional practices as a result.

### ***Stress on Women: A National MIND Campaign, 1992-1994***

On 8 July 1992, MIND launched the national campaign *Stress on Women: MIND Campaigns for Women's Mental Health*.<sup>203</sup> Run by Katherine Darton, Janet Gorman, and Liz Sayce, *Stress on Women* raised awareness about the different groups of women using mental health services. Following consultation with a wide demographic of service user groups and professionals, including women from Black and ethnic minority communities, lesbians, and older women, the campaign established four key aims:

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<sup>203</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.131, MIND, 'Campaign Calendar' in *Stress on Women: MIND Campaigns for Women's Mental Health Campaign Pack* (London: MIND, 1992), p. 1.

1. An end to sexual harassment and abuse in mental health settings;
2. Service provision, monitored by gender and action to end unfair treatment;
3. The right for women to choose a woman care manager or key worker;
4. Child care for people who use mental health services.<sup>204</sup>

The *Stress on Women* co-organisers located their aims within the wider context of gender inequality, stating that legislation such as the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act had failed to ensure women's economic and political parity. They argued that the power imbalance between men and women continued to manifest itself in mental health provision. Women were still admitted to psychiatric hospitals in larger numbers than men, were increasingly likely to be diagnosed with clinical depression, and continued to be extensively prescribed antidepressants and minor tranquilisers. Black women and older women were more likely to undergo physical psychiatric treatments.<sup>205</sup> *Stress on Women* acknowledged women's activism around mental health, highlighting calls for the development of provision that countered discrimination and addressed needs and experiences specific to women.<sup>206</sup>

In her oral history interview, Cobb contrasted MIND's responses to Women in MIND and *Stress on Women*.<sup>207</sup> Whereas Women in MIND had been regarded as a grassroots collective operating within the charity, *Stress on Women* was a nationwide campaign that foregrounded women's mental health issues. Examining the *Stress on Women* campaign highlights the developments that took place within MIND that resulted in its increased recognition of feminist and women's community-based organising around mental health. Documenting these developments indicates the influence of other areas of feminist activism in the provision of mental health services. The feminist politics of rape, enacted at a community level at Rape Crisis Centres, contributed to a reframing of the

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<sup>204</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.131, MIND, 'Introduction', in *Stress on Women*, in MIND, *Stress on Women: MIND Campaigns for Women's Mental Health Campaign Pack* (London: MIND, 1992), pp. 1-2.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*; Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archives, SA/MIN.B.131, Katherine Darton, Janet Gorman and Liz Sayce, *Eve Fights Back- The Successes of MIND's Stress on Women Campaign* (London: MIND Publications, 1994), p. 7.

<sup>206</sup> MIND, *Stress on Women*, p. 1.

<sup>207</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

psychology of trauma, as well as highlighting issues of safeguarding and sexual abuse within mental health facilities.<sup>208</sup> The campaign demonstrated the increased visibility of academic feminist psychology, as well as historical studies into women and madness.<sup>209</sup> Referencing these perspectives alongside the work of community-based organisations, the *Stress on Women* campaign enshrined the collaborative approach to mental health, previously promoted by Women in MIND, at a national level. MIND's commitment to women's mental health concerns was bolstered through the publication of policy on women and mental health, produced in conjunction with the *Stress on Women* campaign in September 1992.<sup>210</sup> By exploring the way in which this policy was enacted within MIND, as well as the successes of the *Stress on Women* campaign, the next section of this chapter will highlight how the charity's promotion of women's movement perspectives influenced governmental policies and institutional practices.

### **i. Establishing Women's Mental Health as a National Focus at MIND**

The issue of women's mental health was first proposed as a 'key campaigning issue' for MIND at the charity's annual conference in 1991.<sup>211</sup> Recalling the decision to formulate the *Stress on Women* campaign, co-organisier Liz Sayce described how MIND had received feedback from its members about its need to promote social inclusion and anti-discrimination measures within and beyond mental health services.<sup>212</sup> Members felt that MIND was focusing too readily on clinical treatment issues rather than wider social concerns linked to mental health provision, including child care, employment and

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<sup>208</sup> Ahrens et al., 'Understanding and Preventing Rape', p. 510; Ellie Lee, *Abortion, Motherhood and Mental Health: Medicalizing Reproduction in the United States and Great Britain* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2003), p. 66; Helen Jones and Kate Cook, *Rape Crisis: responding to sexual violence* (Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing, Ltd., 2008).

<sup>209</sup> Cobb, personal interview;

<sup>210</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archives, SA/MIN.B.131, MIND, *Policy Paper: Women and Mental Health* (London: MIND Publications, 1992).

<sup>211</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 12.

<sup>212</sup> Sayce, personal interview.

housing.<sup>213</sup> Sayce and Brackx felt that a campaign focusing on women and mental health would highlight these wider social concerns. Sayce deemed Brackx's support for the campaign important, stating, 'Anny and I, it was great working together. We were very different but we had sort of similar ideas and had roots in feminist thinking'.<sup>214</sup> Brackx's support for the campaign highlighted her continued influence at MIND. In her own oral history interview, Brackx described how she expressed her personal politics through her work as Publishing Director at MIND in the late 1980s and early 1990s, asserting:

I have always put forward my feminist standpoint at trustees meeting and at our council meetings. But, I mean, again it wasn't in so many words like "I'm a feminist". It was more to do with making sure things were egalitarian and done in a democratic way.<sup>215</sup>

Aligning her women's movement politics with a wider commitment to egalitarianism, Brackx reinforced the view that *Stress on Women* was developed in response to a variety of social issues, with feminist perspectives providing a useful lens. As a result, women's mental health became MIND's 'key campaigning issue' for 1992-1993.<sup>216</sup>

Brackx and Sayce's proposed focus on women was timely due to wider institutional and governmental responses to women's mental health concerns. In 1991, the World Federation for Mental Health European Regional Council's Standing Committee on Women's Issues expressed their commitment to good practice in women's mental health projects.<sup>217</sup> In the same year, a women's unit was set within the NHS, with the backing of Secretary of State for Health William Waldegrave, to increase the number of women in

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<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> Brackx, personal interview.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> The World Federation for Mental Health was founded in 1948. Predominantly psychiatrist-led, the organisation focused on social and human rights issues, defined by Brody as initially the 'only international mental health NGO consulting with UN agencies' on issues including women's rights. Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 12; Eugene B. Brody, 'The World Federation for Mental Health: its origins and contemporary relevance to WHO and WPA policies', *World Psychiatry*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2004), pp. 54-55; Audrey Mullender, *Rethinking Domestic Violence: The Social Work and Probation Response* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 122.

decision-making roles within the health service.<sup>218</sup> The Government also reiterated their commitment to women and health care in the 1992 White Paper, *Health of the Nation*. The paper listed mental illness as one of the key areas of ill health it aimed to reduce.<sup>219</sup> It also emphasised the importance of responding to women's particular needs when addressing all areas of health care.<sup>220</sup> Although recognising the increased emphasis on women's health in governmental and institutional policies, *Stress on Women* campaigners argued the need to ensure that policy developments were successfully translated into practice.<sup>221</sup> They asserted that the reference to women's health in *Health of the Nation* remained an 'afterthought' due to its inclusion at the back of the White Paper.<sup>222</sup> *Stress on Women* therefore reflected MIND's continued commitment to ensuring the Government's effective provision of community-based mental health services, as documented in their 1983 manifesto *Common Concern*.<sup>223</sup>

The campaign's adoption of a language of 'stress' also reflected the expansion of definitions of the term in psychological and public health discourses in the late twentieth century. Jackson historicises the emergence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the aftermath of the Korean and Vietnam wars, when many American soldiers experienced difficulties 'readjusting to social life'.<sup>224</sup> Elsewhere, he documents how this association of trauma with psychological readjustment after conflict influenced public perceptions of stress in post-war Britain. Previously presented as an occupational hazard, stress became

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<sup>218</sup> Angela Coyle, 'Gender Politics in the "New" NHS', in Esther Breitenbach et al., (eds.), *The Changing Politics of Gender Equality in Britain* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 124-42 (p. 131); Susan Corby, 'Equal opportunities: fair shares for all?', in Susan Corby and Geoff White (eds.), *Employee Relations in the Public Services: Themes and issues* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 95-113 (p. 101).

<sup>219</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 12; Andy Alaszewski and Patrick Brown, *Making Health Policy: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), p. 26.

<sup>220</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 12.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> MIND, *Common Concern*.

<sup>224</sup> Mark Jackson, *The Age of Stress: Science and the Search for Stability* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 7.

equated with the personal and 'political challenges of coping with change' following the trauma of the Second World War.<sup>225</sup>

The emergence of Women's Liberation politics led to a further redefinition of the association of stress and trauma. Susan Brownmiller's seminal *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, first published in 1975, opposed the portrayal of rape as a sexual act, arguing that it represented the systematic degradation and devaluation of women in society. Women psychologists simultaneously explored the traumatic impact of rape.<sup>226</sup> In 1974, Boston-based forensic psychiatric nurse Ann Wolbert Burgess and sociologist Linda Lytle Holmstrom published a study based on interviews with 146 women who were survivors of rape. They asserted that the women displayed symptoms of 'rape trauma syndrome' and required crisis intervention counselling. Burgess and Holmstrom enshrined the severe emotional impact of rape, as a violent, traumatic and repressive act, in psychological and psychiatric study.<sup>227</sup> Good and Hinton argue that the proliferation of feminist research on sexual abuse throughout the late 1970s and 1980s not only highlighted its prevalence but also 'recast' sexual violence 'in terms of PTSD'.<sup>228</sup> In adopting a language of 'stress', the *Stress on Women* campaign drew on definitions of the disorder that equated it with trauma experienced in everyday life. Concurrently recognising the increased association of rape and PTSD, campaign organisers foregrounded the social and gendered nature of stress, linking psychological understandings of trauma and emotional distress to the patriarchal repression of women.

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<sup>225</sup> Jackson, 'Stress in Post-War Britain', pp. 1; 3.

<sup>226</sup> Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*; Ann J. Cahill, *Rethinking Rape* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 16.

<sup>227</sup> Ann Wolbert Burgess and Linda Lytle Holmstrom, 'Rape Trauma Syndrome', *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 131, No. 9 (September, 1974), pp. 981-86; John M. Scheb II, *Criminal Law*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Stamford: Cengage Learning, 2015), p. 185.

<sup>228</sup> Byron J. Good and Devon E. Hinton, 'Introduction. Culture, Trauma, and PTSD', in Devon E. Hinton and Byron J. Good (eds), *Culture and PTSD: Trauma in Global and Historical Perspectives* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp. 3-49 (p. 12); Kathleen C. Basile, 'Sexual Violence in the Lives of Girls and Women', in Kathleen A. Kendall-Tackett (ed.), *Handbook of Women, Stress, and Trauma* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2005), pp. 101-22 (p. 110).

## ii. Developing *Stress on Women* at Local and National Levels

*Stress on Women* was the first national MIND campaign to focus specifically on women's mental health. Its co-organisers emphasised the importance of generating public interest in the campaign at local and national levels, staggering its launch to ensure maximum publicity.<sup>229</sup> *Stress on Women* was launched at MIND's 'Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Mental Health Settings' conference in London on 8 July 1992. The campaign's first two aims, bringing an end to sexual harassment and abuse in mental health settings, and monitoring mental health services by gender to end discriminatory treatments, were announced at the conference. The remaining aims, improving child care for people using mental health services, and ensuring women's right to choose a woman care manager or key worker, were released at MIND's Annual Conference in November 1992.<sup>230</sup> An information pack accompanying the campaign contextualised its key aims using statistics and personal experiences.<sup>231</sup> Over 1000 campaign packs were distributed to MIND's regional offices and local associations, along with 39,000 copies of the leaflet *Your Right to Say NO*, which provided women with information about sexual harassment and abuse in therapeutic environments and listed relevant support services.<sup>232</sup> *Stress on Women* was also promoted through the distribution of merchandise, including mugs on which the campaign aims were printed.<sup>233</sup> Lahusen argues that the distribution of practical items like mugs, routinely used during social interactions in professional and domestic environments, reflects a charity's use of 'habits, practices and preferences ... to simulate political protest actions and guarantee a public impact'.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 13.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> MIND, 'Introduction', in *Stress on Women*, in MIND, *Stress on Women*, pp. 1.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*; *Stress on Women, Your Right to Say NO*, in MIND, *Stress on Women*.

<sup>233</sup> Alison Cobb, personal archive. Alison Cobb very kindly donated her *Stress on Women* mug, which she had kept at home since the campaign came to an end, to me when I interviewed her in October 2015. A reproduction of the *Stress on Women* mug can be found in Appendix 4.

<sup>234</sup> Christian Lahusen, *The Rhetoric of Moral Protest: Public Campaigns, Celebrity Endorsement, and Political Mobilization* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), p. 366.



*Stress on Women* campaigners engaged with MIND groups and service providers at local and national levels. In her oral history interview, Sayce stated, 'What *Stress on Women* did was try to amplify some of the great work that was going on locally and spread it and bring people together to make more of it'.<sup>235</sup> She highlighted the work of local MIND associations in Brighton and Redcar to tackle women's mental health concerns, as well as the importance of external organisations including Women in Special Hospitals, a charity supporting women released from maximum security hospitals and prison psychiatric units.<sup>236</sup> Local groups were asked to provide feedback on women's mental health issues specific to their communities. The results were collated at MIND's regional offices and reproduced in *Stress on Women's* national publications.<sup>237</sup> MIND's Policy Department also hosted an International Women's Day forum on 8 March 1993, with MIND's local associations, community-based women's groups, and other relevant charities and organisations, to explore responses to the campaign.<sup>238</sup> *Stress on Women* therefore foregrounded the community development and grassroots work previously promoted by Laureen Levy and Women in MIND at a national level, forging links between local activism and nationwide campaigning.

*Stress on Women's* alignment of local and national provision fulfilled the aims of previous proponents of women's mental health at the charity such as Laureen Levy. It also demonstrated the influence of MIND's engagement with service user groups. The consultation process and forum events established by *Stress on Women* organisers replicated processes adopted by the charity to ensure their increased recognition of service user voices. In 1987, Women in MIND member Jan Wallcraft established the

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<sup>235</sup> Sayce, personal interview.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*; Sam Warner, 'Special women, special places: Women and high security mental hospitals', in Erica Burman et al. (eds.), *Psychology Discourse Practice: From Regulation to Resistance* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 1996), pp. 95-112 (p. 110); Ian Parker et al., *Deconstructing Pathology* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), p. 145.

<sup>237</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 16.

<sup>238</sup> MIND, 'Campaign Calendar', p. 2.

charity's 'consumer network' MINDLINK.<sup>239</sup> By 1991, MINDLINK had 650 members who were regularly consulted via newsletters and regional meetings.<sup>240</sup> *Stress on Women* organisers described how local MINDLINK groups played an important role highlighting women's individual experiences for the campaign. The increased visibility of local and national women's mental health activism at MIND was therefore attributable not only to the views of individual women within the organisation, but also the increased collaboration between women's mental health groups and service user activism that they encouraged.

### iii. Formulating a Policy on Women and Mental Health

In her oral history interview, Cobb also attributed the increased interaction between MIND's national branch, regional offices and local associations to internal organisational developments.<sup>241</sup> MIND underwent a 'significant reorganisation' under the directorship of Ros Hepplewhite in the late 1980s.<sup>242</sup> Hepplewhite established a series of official policy positions at MIND including Policy Director and Policy Officer roles.<sup>243</sup> *Stress on Women* co-organiser Liz Sayce was MIND's Policy Director, whilst Alison Cobb and Daphne Wood were Policy Officers.<sup>244</sup> Cobb deemed it significant that the policy team consisted only of women, comparing its ethos to that of Women in MIND. Whilst the policy team held a formalised position within the organisation and was therefore less 'ground up' than Women in MIND, she still believed that it replicated many grassroots elements, particularly its emphasis on representing the viewpoints of individual women.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.125, MIND, *MIND's Policy Paper on User Involvement* (London: MIND, 1991), p. 2.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> Cobb, personal interview; Sayce, personal interview; Sayce, 'Campaigning for Change'.

<sup>245</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

Cobb recalled how the Policy Team was influenced by Sayce's commitment to civil rights, a conviction she attributed to her experience of mental health services and interest in women's movement activism. Sayce described how she became interested in mental health at university. She also became involved in the women's movement there, citing the influence of Phyllis Chesler's *Women and Madness*. Like Cobb, she volunteered at a local psychiatric institution before working as a nursing assistant in a large hospital that had been the subject of a public enquiry into human rights abuses. Sayce described how she 'got quite fired up by what was happening in the hospital', a sentiment she attributed to the continued pertinence of anti-psychiatric thinking in the mid- to late 1970s:

I felt very strongly that it was wrong that people were in this environment and some of the things that happened in that environment were wrong ... I got really interested in that and how you change things like this.<sup>246</sup>

Cobb described how Sayce articulated her commitment to civil rights to the MIND Policies Committee, the group responsible for approving MIND's national policy statements of policy.<sup>247</sup>

The establishment of official policy roles formalised MIND's stance on several pertinent issues previously raised by women's mental health groups like Women in MIND. MIND published a *Policy on User Involvement* in 1991, its *Policy Paper: Women and Mental Health* in 1992, and a *Policy on Black and Minority Ethnic People and Mental Health* in 1993.<sup>248</sup> The policy documents recognised community-based activism and organising around specific mental health issues, establishing how MIND should respond to these concerns at a national level. MIND's *Policy Paper: Women and Mental Health* was published in September 1992 as part of the *Stress on Women Campaign*. The policy was produced by Daphne Wood, who had joined MIND in 1990 to develop their equal

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<sup>246</sup> Sayce, personal interview.

<sup>247</sup> Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>248</sup> *MIND's Policy Paper on User Involvement*; MIND, *Policy Paper: Women and Mental Health*; Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.12, MINDFile, 'MIND's Policy on Black and Minority Ethnic People and Mental Health (London: MIND Publications, 1993).

opportunities policies. Wood described how her employment in an equal opportunities position was deemed contentious because she was a white South African.<sup>249</sup> In 1990, the South African government were in the initial stages of developing policies to dismantle Apartheid.<sup>250</sup> Wood felt that her personal and professional positioning made her very aware of hierarchies of oppression and importance of representing an intersection of voices at MIND.<sup>251</sup>

In her oral history interview, Wood discussed her perception that there existed a wider feminist sensibility at MIND, articulated through the personal politics of staff members like Anny Brackx, which she negotiated when establishing her own professional and political affiliation with the charity. Wood felt that she had little previous involvement in women's movement activism when she joined MIND. She asserted, however, that she found her distance from the women's movement useful because she did not arrive with 'readymade' perspectives. She stated, 'I could do nothing but try to listen to people'. This bolstered her commitment to accurately representing voices and experiences in the policies that she developed.<sup>252</sup> Wood's account therefore indicates that the policy team's focus on representation was reinforced by its members' varied political and professional experiences of women's movement and mental health activism.

MIND's policy on women and mental health recognised gender inequalities in psychiatric services and outlined the charity's commitment to eradicating negative gender and racial stereotypes in women's diagnosis and treatment.<sup>253</sup> Stating that 'many black and minority ethnic women find that mental health services perpetuate their distress', the policy called for the increased involvement of women from marginalised groups in equal

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<sup>249</sup> Wood, personal interview.

<sup>250</sup> François du Bois and Antje du Bois-Pedain, 'Introduction', in François du Bois and Antje du Bois-Pedain (eds), *Justice and Reconciliation in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 1-8 (p. 1).

<sup>251</sup> Wood, personal interview.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> MIND, *Policy Paper: Women and Mental Health*, p. 19.

opportunity policy consultations. It also recognised the role of self-help and community-based groups run by and for women in providing vital support.<sup>254</sup> The document therefore enshrined the ideas and aims of women's mental health activism as national MIND policy, officially recognising the impact of women's movement self-help groups and community-based organisations in raising awareness of mental health issues.

The *Stress on Women* co-organisers sought to obtain maximum publicity for the new policy, simultaneously releasing it to the press and presenting it to the Under Secretary of State for Health, Tim Yeo, at the Annual Conference of the Mental Health Promotion Unit at the University of Keele.<sup>255</sup> Responding to the policy, Yeo reiterated the Government's commitment to gender monitoring, stating:

We are moving towards more uniform, patient-based information systems in which analysis of personal characteristics such as age, gender and ethnic origin will be important components of improved management data and more responsive service provision.<sup>256</sup>

Darton, Gorman, and Sayce regarded their direct engagement with Yeo a success and argued that references made to women's mental health in the Government's *Mental Illness: Key Area Handbook*, first published in 1993, demonstrated *Stress on Women's* influence on government policy.<sup>257</sup> The policy was also seen to have a positive impact on clinical institutions. The Royal College of Nursing Women's Issues Sub-committee drew on the *Stress on Women* campaign aims when producing their own paper, *Women and Mental Health: the nurse's responsibility*, in 1994.<sup>258</sup> The production of MIND's policy on women's mental health, facilitated through the charity's organisational development and all-female policy team, therefore enshrined many of the issues previously raised by women's mental

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<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*; Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>255</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 13; Liz Hunt, 'Mentally ill women's problems "ignored"', *The Independent* (27 September 1992), available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/mentally-ill-womens-problems-ignored-1554124.html?amp> [accessed 25 April 2017].

<sup>256</sup> Tim Yeo, quoted in Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 13.

<sup>257</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 19; Department of Health, *Mental Illness: Key Area Handbook (Health of the Nation) 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, (London: HMSO, 1994).

<sup>258</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 20.

health groups at a grassroots level as national concerns. Exploring responses to the policy, *Stress on Women* co-organisers were able to document the success of the campaign, charting its influence on governmental, institutional and clinical policies and practices.

#### **iv. *Stress on Women*, Academic Feminism, and Feminist Theory**

*Stress on Women* co-organisers also recognised the proliferation of academic feminist research on women and mental health in psychology, history and legal studies. The links that they established with academic centres further highlights the campaign's collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to women's mental health concerns, as well as the wider impact of feminist research on mental health provision. In 1992, *Stress on Women* co-organiser Janet Gorman documented the campaign's influences in the book *Out of the Shadows*.<sup>259</sup> Gorman referenced several academic texts, including Elaine Showalter's *The Female Malady* and Jane Ussher's *Women's Madness*, published in 1988 and 1991 respectively.<sup>260</sup> In *Eve Fights Back*, a pamphlet produced by the *Stress on Women* co-founders to explore the successes of the campaign, Darton, Gorman and Sayce reiterated the role played by feminist historians and sociologists in contextualising women's increased propensity to be diagnosed as mentally ill.<sup>261</sup>

*Stress on Women* also recognised contemporary developments in feminist theory, most notably Susan Faludi's 'backlash theory', first published in *Backlash: The Undeclared War against Women* in 1992. Faludi argued that gains in gender equality were subject to an anti-feminist backlash in the 1990s, fostered by negative media portrayals of women's activism and right-wing politicians' responses to women's increased independence.<sup>262</sup> Bean

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<sup>259</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.131, Jane Gorman, *Out of the Shadows* (London: MIND, 1992).

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46; Showalter, *The Female Malady*; Jane Ussher, *Women's Madness: Misogyny or Mental Illness?* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

<sup>261</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 7..

<sup>262</sup> Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War against Women* (London: Vintage, 1992), pp. 14-15.

documents the influence of Faludi's work, stating that *Backlash* established the author as a 'feminist icon' and initiated debates about the pervasive anti-feminism of American politics in the Reagan era.<sup>263</sup> Other commentators subsequently referenced backlash theory in their assessments of women's mental health. As previously highlighted, Rights of Women member Jill Radford wrote in 1993 that the legal system's pathologisation of lesbianism was situated within a broader backlash against feminism.<sup>264</sup> Darton, Gorman and Sayce also referenced 'backlash theory' in a statement on the front cover of *Eve Fights Back*:

The *Stress on Women* campaign demonstrates that however ferocious the backlash against women, they will continue to speak out about injustice and work together to achieve change. Despite attempts to ignore, undermine and "frame Eve", the fight for mental health services which address women's needs will go on.<sup>265</sup>

Utilising the imagery of 'framing Eve', the authors also drew on Helena Kennedy's *Eve Was Framed: Women and British Justice*, published in 1992, which explored the ways in which pervasive gender stereotypes influenced decisions made within the British legal system.<sup>266</sup> Kennedy documented how stereotypes of female sexuality and morality were foregrounded in rape cases, critiquing the 'contributory negligence' levelled at female survivors who were 'dressed sexily' when they were attacked.<sup>267</sup> She also explored how the assumed association of women's criminality with madness was reflected in the treatment of female suspects, as well as the discriminatory stereotyping of Black women within the British justice system.<sup>268</sup> Utilising Kennedy's work, the *Stress on Women* campaign further recognised the interrelated social issues that influenced women's experiences of mental illness and mental health care, including their treatment in prison and the legal system.

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<sup>263</sup> Kellie Bean, *Post-Backlash Feminism: Women and the Media since Reagan/Bush* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2007), p. 54.

<sup>264</sup> Jill Radford, 'The Lesbian Custody Project', p. 139.

<sup>265</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, front cover.

<sup>266</sup> Helena Kennedy, *Eve Was Framed: Women and British Justice*, revised ed. (London: Vintage, 2005).

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111; 171.

Referencing Faludi and Kennedy's perspectives, the *Stress on Women* co-organisers highlighted the continued relevance of feminist theory in understanding women's experiences of mental health.

Wendy and Rex Stainton Rogers document the influence of feminist theory on the development of academic feminist psychology in the 1970s and 1980s, emphasising the significance of assessments of the 'analytic of power' produced by American women's movement members such as Kate Millett and Shulamith Firestone.<sup>269</sup> Darton, Gorman, and Sayce established links with academic psychologists as the *Stress on Women* campaign progressed, promoting it at several events, including a one day symposium on 'Developing Mental Health Services for Women: Feminist Principles into Practice' at Lancaster University.<sup>270</sup> Cobb and Sayce also recalled MIND's close collaboration with the Tizard Centre, a University of Kent-based research group that produced psychological and social policy research on issues surrounding learning disability, mental health and community care.<sup>271</sup> Cobb and Sayce recognised the work of psychologist Jennie Williams, based at the Tizard Centre, who conducted studies across the 1980s and 1990s on service user consultation, social inequality and mental health, and the prevalence of abuse in therapeutic settings.<sup>272</sup>

The alignment of *Stress on Women* with feminist psychological perspectives reflected the increased visibility of women's and feminist psychology in the 1980s. Its

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<sup>269</sup> Wendy Stainton Rogers and Rex Stainton Rogers, *The Psychology of Gender and Sexuality* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001), pp. 130-131; Millett, *Sexual Politics*; Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (London: Paladin, 1972).

<sup>270</sup> MIND 'Campaign Calendar', pp. 1-3.

<sup>271</sup> Cobb, personal interview; Sayce, personal interview; The Tizard Centre, 'About the Centre', available at <https://www.kent.ac.uk/tizard/About/about.html> [accessed 26 April 2017].

<sup>272</sup> Cobb, personal interview; Sayce, personal interview; Jennie Williams and Peter Lindley, 'Working with Mental Health Service Users to Change Mental Health Services', *Journal of Applied Community Psychology*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (May 1996), pp. 1-14; Jennie Williams, 'Social Inequalities and Mental Health: Developing Services and Developing Knowledge', *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 6, No. 5 (December 1996), pp. 311-16; Jennie Williams and Frank Keating, 'Abuse in mental health services: some theoretical considerations', *The Journal of Adult Protection*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2000), pp. 32-39.



formalisation as a discipline was recognised through the establishment of the British Psychological Society's Psychology of Women Section (POWS) in 1988.<sup>273</sup> The history of women's contribution to development and organisation of psychology as a discipline in late-twentieth century England remains largely unwritten. Writing in 1994, feminist psychologist Erica Burman argued that the establishment of women's psychology sections was potentially divisive, because they distinguished feminist research from other significant areas of study, including "multicultural issues".<sup>274</sup> Burman regarded collaboration with other disciplines as vital in ensuring that feminist psychology remained an 'arena of critique *between* psychology and feminism', rather than 'another normative apparatus that essentializes its own activity' by becoming subsumed into the discipline.<sup>275</sup> Situating feminist psychological perspectives alongside community-based women's mental health activism, the *Stress on Women* campaign appeared to respond to these concerns. Adopting a collaborative approach to women's mental health activism, the campaign co-organisers' demonstrated the relevance of feminist psychology as a critical tool that could be successfully applied beyond academia.

Examining references made to academic feminist research and feminist theory in the *Stress on Women* campaign demonstrates that its collaborative approach to women's mental health incorporated a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives. Aligning assessments oriented around media studies, legal studies, history and psychology, *Stress on Women* contributed to the development of perceptions of women's mental health that recognised the importance of interrelated social issues. The campaign responded to assertions that MIND focused too readily on treatment issues rather than the everyday lives of individuals

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<sup>273</sup> British Psychological Society, 'Psychology of Women Section' available at <http://www.bps.org.uk/networks-and-communities/member-microsite/psychology-women-section> [accessed 20 October 2015].

<sup>274</sup> Erica Burman, 'Experiences, Identities and Alliances: Jewish Feminism and Feminist Psychology', in Kum-Kum Bhavani and Ann Phoenix (eds.), *Shifting Identities, Shifting Racisms: A Feminism & Psychology Reader* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), pp. 155-78 (p. 159).

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

diagnosed with mental health concerns. *Stress on Women's* interdisciplinary approach also highlighted the increased visibility of women's movement perspectives of mental health in both academic and the voluntary sector, notably the perception that women's stress reflected the wider societal pressures, oppression and traumas that they endured in their everyday lives.

## **v. The Feminist Politics of Rape and Sexual Abuse in Therapeutic Settings**

The *Stress on Women* co-organiser's interdisciplinary approach to women's mental health activism was reflected in their promotion of the campaign's first aim, to end sexual harassment and abuse in mental health settings. *Stress on Women* raised awareness of women's experiences of abuse within therapeutic environments, as well as campaigning for improved mental health provision for women who were survivors of sexual abuse.<sup>276</sup>

Assessing the campaign's fulfilment of this aim further demonstrates how *Stress on Women* fostered a collaborative approach to campaigning, aligning women's movement activism around mental health with an emergent feminist politics of rape. *Stress on Women* successfully raised awareness around abuse in mental health services, eliciting a commitment to facilitate improvements from several service providers and psychotherapeutic bodies. As a result, the campaign utilised women's movement perspectives on mental health and sexual abuse to initiate developments in mental health provision at a national level.

In 1993, Daphne Wood, author of MIND's policy on women and mental health, produced a pamphlet titled *The Power of Words: The Uses and Abuses of Talking Treatments*.<sup>277</sup> Wood documented the increased availability of therapy and counselling in

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<sup>276</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, pp. 12, 24, 32.

<sup>277</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity): archive, SA/MIN.B.29, Daphne Wood, *The Power of Words: Uses and Abuses of Talking Treatments* (London: MIND, 1993).

England.<sup>278</sup> Syme attributes the growth of counselling in 1990s Britain to a greater public awareness of what constituted therapeutic approaches, the increased number of people training to be counsellors and therapists, and the destigmatisation of seeking non-clinical support for mental health concerns.<sup>279</sup> Writing in 1990, Woolf linked the proliferation of therapy and counselling to the shifting association of mental health with 'wellbeing' as opposed to 'sickness', a sentiment promoted by both anti-psychiatrists and women's movement members from the 1960s onwards.<sup>280</sup> This redefinition resulted in the perception that positive mental health could be achieved through 'talking cures' as well as medication. Wood argued that the increased number of people attending counselling meant that service providers had to develop increasingly effective safeguarding strategies within their services. She highlighted collaborations between Rape Crisis Centres and local NHS trusts which supported women who had experienced abuse whilst in therapy.<sup>281</sup> Wood's concerns were replicated in the information pamphlet *Women who are Sexually Abused by their Therapists*, published by MIND in the early 1990s. The pamphlet connected the abuse that took place in therapeutic environments with the 'abuse of power which men hold within our communities'.<sup>282</sup> It therefore situated individual experiences of abuse and trauma within the wider patriarchal repression of women. The leaflet foregrounded the work of Sheffield Rape Crisis, who called on the Government to pass legislation that would require counsellors and therapists to be monitored by a Code of Ethics.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>279</sup> Gabrielle Syme, 'The development and growth of freelance counselling', in Jean Clark (ed.), *Freelance Counselling and Psychotherapy: Competition and Collaboration* (Hove: Brunner-Routledge, 2002), pp. 9-19 (p. 17).

<sup>280</sup> R. Woolfe, 'Counselling Psychology in Britain: An Idea Whose Time Has Come', *The Psychologist*, Vol. 3, No. 12 (1990), pp. 531-35; David A. Lane, 'Counselling psychology in organisations: From problem fixing to emergence and growth', in Barbara Douglas et al. (eds), *The Handbook of Counselling Psychology*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2016), pp. 446-63 (p. 447).

<sup>281</sup> Wood, *The Power of Words*, p. 32.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>283</sup> Wellcome Library, MIND (the mental health charity), SA/MIN.B.98, MIND Information, 'Women Sexually Abused by their Therapists', (London: MIND, c. 1991-1992), p. 2.

Documenting the work of Rape Crisis Centres in targeting abuse in therapeutic environments, *Stress on Women* campaigners incorporated two distinct women's movement approaches to psychotherapy. As previously highlighted, women's movement members who promoted psychotherapeutic approaches negotiated existing critiques of therapy that dominated the WLM in the early 1970s. Whilst groups like the LWLW Psychology Group promoted psychotherapeutic approaches as suitable alternatives to consciousness-raising, WLM activists like Phyllis Chesler remained highly critical of therapy, describing how 'sexually seductive (or assaultive) therapists are quite ordinary in their ethical failure'.<sup>284</sup> Publications on sexual abuse and therapy produced by MIND destabilised earlier women's movement members' association of psychotherapeutic spaces with safety. In doing so, they developed an increasingly critical endorsement of psychotherapy, emphasising its suitability as an alternative to psychotropic medication whilst also expressing the need to monitor therapeutic services in order to eliminate abuse.

British counselling and psychotherapy bodies were seen to respond favourably to the *Stress on Women* campaign aims. In 1993, the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) was formed, resulting in the establishment of a National Register of Psychotherapists.<sup>285</sup> The Register aimed to protect clients by ensuring that its registrants adhered to the UKCP's 'standards of training and ethical and professional practice'.<sup>286</sup> The British Association for Counselling (BAC) set up a comparable UK Register for Counsellors in 1996.<sup>287</sup> The UKCP and BAC's emphasis on safeguarding demonstrated their wider desire to

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<sup>284</sup> Chesler, *Women and Madness*, p. 140.

<sup>285</sup> Wellcome Library, Mind (the mental health charity), SA/MIN.B.29, MIND Publications, *Understanding Talking Treatments* (London: MIND, 1993), p. 26; Kenneth R. Evans and Maria C. Gilbert, *An Introduction to Integrative Psychotherapy* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 157-158; Del Loewenthal, 'Counseling and psychotherapy in the United Kingdom: Future of talking therapies', in Roy Moodley, Uwe P. Gielen, and Rosa Wu (eds), *Handbook of Counseling and Psychotherapy in an International Context* (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 348-58 (p. 349).

<sup>286</sup> Evans and Gilbert, *An Introduction to Integrative Psychotherapy*, pp. 157-58.

<sup>287</sup> Judith Baron, 'Recognition and Professional Status', in Ian Horton and Ved Varmer (eds.), *The Needs of Counsellors and Psychotherapists: Emotional, Social, Physical, Professional* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), pp. 214-21 (p. 217).

professionalise counselling and psychotherapy. This development was influenced by the increased number of people training to be therapists and seeking out counselling services, as well as a pressure to improve professional accountability in response to concerns raised about abuse taking place in therapeutic settings, as highlighted by the *Stress on Women* campaign.<sup>288</sup>

In calling for the eradication of sexual abuse in therapeutic environments, the *Stress on Women* campaign also raised awareness about women's experiences of harassment and violence on mixed sex wards in psychiatric facilities.<sup>289</sup> Cobb recalled that campaigners were unaware of the issue's prevalence until women can forward to document their experiences after *Stress on Women* was launched. She highlighted how public responses to *Stress on Women* shaped the nature of the campaign as it progressed.<sup>290</sup> *Stress on Women* campaigners faced opposition from the Royal College of Psychiatrists when targeting abuse on mixed sex wards. In her oral history interview, Sayce described how the College invited the campaign co-organisers to attend a formal lunch, at which their promotion of single-sex wards was vigorously questioned.<sup>291</sup> Professor Brice Pitt, chairman of the College's Public Education Committee, continued to promote mixed sex wards despite the emergence of numerous accounts of abuse. In 1992, he stated that female patients had an 'ameliorating effect' on male patients due to the 'homely touches' they brought to psychiatric wards.<sup>292</sup> In 1993, Pitt further commented that incidences of sexual abuse on psychiatric wards were not an issue because they occurred so

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<sup>288</sup> Nick Totton, *Psychotherapy and Politics* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 125.

<sup>289</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 10; Cobb, personal interview.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>291</sup> Sayce, personal interview.

<sup>292</sup> Professor Brice Pitt, quoted in Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 10; J. Sullivan, 'How Unisex Wards are Providing a Real Mix', *Hospital Doctor* (28 May 1992), p. 23; Poppy Hughes, 'Therapeutic for whom?', *The Guardian* (2 July 1992), p. 36.

infrequently.<sup>293</sup> His statement was refuted by Malcolm Alexander, Chief Officer of Camberwell Community Health Council, who asserted that the Council had received five allegations of rape on psychiatric wards since 1988.<sup>294</sup>

*Stress on Women* campaigners strongly critiqued the ‘professional myopia’ around abuse in mixed sex wards.<sup>295</sup> Their responses were published in the national press.<sup>296</sup> Poppy Hughes reported on Pitt’s comments in the *Guardian* in 1992, criticising his promotion of female patients as ‘civilising agents’ and reproducing accounts provided by women who had experienced sexual abuse in psychiatric hospitals.<sup>297</sup> Hughes demonstrated how numerous stereotypes about gendered behaviour, abuse, and mental illness intersected in the treatment of women who reported sexual harassment on psychiatric wards, quoting one parent who stated, “The police were very sympathetic, but advised me that because Emma is mentally ill, it would be virtually impossible to make the case stand up in court”.<sup>298</sup> Hughes promoted the *Stress on Women* campaign in the article, highlighting its demand that ‘all women be given the choice of a woman-only ward’.<sup>299</sup> *Stress on Women* campaigner Liz Sayce was also featured in an *Independent* article that highlighted further cases of abuse on psychiatric wards in 1993. Sayce described how mixed-sex wards undermined women’s right to “feel secure at times of extreme crisis in their lives”.<sup>300</sup> The article bolstered the collaborative nature of the *Stress on Women’s* campaign by also quoting Tizard Centre psychologist Jennie Williams, who stated that the ‘practice has no

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<sup>293</sup> Sandra Barwick, ‘A Man in the Next Bed is Not Therapeutic’, *The Independent* (5 March 1993), available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/a-man-in-the-next-bed-is-not-therapeutic-after-alleged-attacks-on-women-there-is-concern-about-1495706.html> [accessed 27 April 2017].

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>295</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 10.

<sup>296</sup> Hughes, ‘Therapeutic for whom?’; Barwick, ‘A Man in the Next Bed is Not Therapeutic’.

<sup>297</sup> Hughes, ‘Therapeutic for whom?’.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>300</sup> Barwick, ‘A Man in the Next Bed is Not Therapeutic’.

therapeutic value for women at all. What is happening is a cruel parody of what psychiatric care should be'.<sup>301</sup>

*Stress on Women's* campaign to end abuse in psychiatric units also obtained parliamentary interest. In July 1993, Labour MP Dawn Primarolo requested that Parliament release figures indicating the number of women-only wards that existed in the UK.<sup>302</sup> The issue of mixed sex wards in hospitals continued to be debated at a parliamentary level.<sup>303</sup> Whilst the Labour Government pledged to remove mix-sex wards in hospitals in 2001, this promise extended only to single-sex accommodation as opposed to day wards.<sup>304</sup> Overcrowding also results in hospitals routinely breaching single-sex accommodation guidelines.<sup>305</sup> Despite this, guidelines now specify that female patients in mental health units 'should have access to day spaces that are for women only'.<sup>306</sup> The *Stress on Women* campaign therefore played a crucial role in raising awareness about abuse on mixed-sex wards and the importance of women-only spaces for female psychiatric patients. Statements made by *Stress on Women* campaigners were afforded extensive media coverage and parliamentary recognition.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists' response to the *Stress on Women* campaign indicated its continued endorsement of gender stereotypes and a lack of concern for the specific experiences of women in mental health care. Numerous commentators drew on

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<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, p. 24.

<sup>303</sup> MIND, *Listening to Experience: An independent inquiry into acute and crisis mental health care* (London: MIND, 2011), p. 16, available at [http://www.mind.org.uk/media/211306/listening\\_to\\_experience\\_web.pdf](http://www.mind.org.uk/media/211306/listening_to_experience_web.pdf) [accessed 20 October 2015].

<sup>304</sup> Clare Allan, 'Mixed sex wards are more complicated in mental health', *The Guardian* (23 January 2009), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/society/joepublic/2009/jan/23/mental-health-mixed-sex-wards> [accessed 27 April 2017].

<sup>305</sup> Jo Stephenson, 'Hospitals still breaching mixed-sex ward ban', *Nursing Times* (18 March 2011), available at <https://www.nursingtimes.net/clinical-archive/public-health/hospitals-still-breaching-mixed-sex-ward-ban/5027358.article> [accessed 27 April 2017]; Lucy Donnelly, 'Number of patients forced to endure mixed sex wards rises 50 per cent', *The Telegraph* (16 March 2017), available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/16/numer-patients-forced-endure-mixed-sex-wards-rises-50-per-cent/v>

<sup>306</sup> MIND, *Listening to Experience*, p. 16.

statements made by psychiatrists like Brice Pitt to call for the modernisation of psychiatry and its denouncement of 'old-fashioned' perspectives.<sup>307</sup> Writing in 1996, McCarthy and Thompson asserted that 'providing women to have a civilising effect on the behaviour of men is feeding into and perpetuating extreme and old-fashioned sexist stereotypes that have no place in a modern service'.<sup>308</sup> In the late 1990s, the newly-elected Labour government initiated a 'Modernisation Agenda' that aimed to re-orientate psychiatrists' role around patients' needs and foreground the voices of service users.<sup>309</sup> A central tenet of this 'Modernisation Agenda' was the acknowledgement that mental health services had previously failed to support significant areas of the population, notably women and members of Black and ethnic minority communities.<sup>310</sup>

Assessing the development and achievements of the *Stress on Women* campaign demonstrates how the ideas and approaches developed by MIND staff members at a grassroots level came to be promoted by the organisation nationally and enshrined in official policy. *Stress on Women* was established by MIND staff with a background in the women's movement. However, key tenets of the campaign, including its alignment of local and national activism, reflected MIND's increased engagement with the service user movement in the late 1980s. The *Stress on Women* campaign enhanced this collaborative approach to women's movement activism by incorporating a range of academic and service user perspectives into their publications. Aligning women's psychology perspectives with the feminist politics of rape, *Stress on Women* campaigners highlighted the previously underexplored issue of sexual abuse in therapeutic environments. The media coverage and public awareness generated by the campaign initiated developments amongst professional

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<sup>307</sup> Sayce, personal interview.

<sup>308</sup> Michelle McCarthy and David Thompson, 'Sexual Abuse by Design: An examination of the issues in learning disability services', *Disability & Society*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1996), pp. 205-218 (p. 208).

<sup>309</sup> Theo Stickley and Thurstine Basset, 'Setting the Scene', in Theo Stickley and Thurstine Basset (eds.), *Teaching Mental Health* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2007), pp. 1-8 (p. 2); Glasby and Tew, *Mental Health Policy and Practice*, p. 43.

<sup>310</sup> Sitckley and Basset, 'Setting the Scene', p. 2.



and state-led health bodies at both national and regional levels. Liverpool MIND representative Karen Colligan described how *Stress on Women* activism had been covered in the local media, resulting in the North Merseyside Community Trust appointing a female psychiatrist and developing a policy on sexual harassment and abuse.<sup>311</sup> The South Birmingham Health Authority also drew on *Stress on Women* materials when drafting a policy on women and mental health.<sup>312</sup> The Royal College of Psychiatrists' resistance to the campaign highlighted the need for increased recognition of service user voices and the pervasiveness of gender stereotypes in institutional psychiatry. Examining parliamentary responses to *Stress on Women* therefore indicates the influence of women's movement ideas and approaches on wider institutional development concerning women's mental health provision in the early 1990s.

## Conclusion

This chapter has employed a case study of the charity Mind to assess how and why women's movement ideas and approaches surrounding mental health gained increased visibility across the 1980s and 1990s, coming to influence professional and governmental policies and practices. It highlights how the background and structure of the organisation influenced its integration and promotion of women's movement perspectives. As the NAMH, the charity had endorsed mental hygiene ideals and defended psychiatrists and mental health services from oppositional critiques. However, by the early 1970s, MIND promoted an increasingly combative civil rights discourse, calling out patient mistreatment in psychiatric institutions and petitioning for legislative change. As a result, MIND became a fertile ground for individual women's movement members to champion feminist perspectives. From 1982, former *Spare Rib* journalist Anny Brackx developed the charity's

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<sup>311</sup> Darton et al., *Eve Fights Back*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

magazine *OpenMIND* into a successful forum for service user perspectives and a platform for exploring women's movement approaches to emergent community care legislation and provision. Assessing Brackx's account of her political development indicates that she aligned her women's movement politics with a strong commitment to the service user movements he was able to incorporate her personal politics into her editorial work and thereby integrated women's movement perspectives into MIND's egalitarian approach to community-based mental health care.

Examination of MIND's various responses to the issue of minor tranquiliser addiction at local and national levels highlights how the charity's federal structure influenced its incorporation of women's movement politics and practices in the early 1980s. Working with MIND's local associations, Community Development Officer Laureen Levy foregrounded minor tranquiliser support groups established by women, for women. However, her gendered assessment of minor tranquiliser addiction was not explicitly recognised in MIND's national campaigns. This disparity highlighted broader tensions between MIND's national office and its community-based representatives. It also indicated how MIND's institutional foundations influenced the civil rights discourse that it promoted, including its continued reticence to explicitly endorse radical political perspectives when seeking to develop public awareness on specific issues. This reticence reflected wider debates about the position of radical politics in the voluntary sector in the early 1980s. As stated by Kendall and Knapp, 'just as central government looked to the voluntary sector as an ideologically desirable alternative government to local government ... some on the left saw political advantage in supporting the voluntary sector'.<sup>313</sup> MIND adopted a liminal position between these two conceptualisations of the voluntary sector, utilising

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<sup>313</sup> Jeremy Kendall and Martin Knapp, *The Voluntary Sector in the United Kingdom* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 153.

parliamentary structures to petition for legislative change whilst also recognising emergent oppositional forms of mental health activism.

Documenting Levy's establishment of Women in MIND highlights how individual MIND staff members aimed to promote women's movement activism by aligning the charity's local and national concerns. Publications produced by Women in MIND documented the proliferation of community-based organisations and self-help initiatives oriented around women's mental health in 1980s England. The emergence of these organisations destabilises narratives that chart the depoliticisation of women's movement activism during the decade. Many of the organisations not only supported women with specific mental health concerns in a variety of social contexts, but also called into question the Government's capacity to provision for women's good mental health. Whilst many of the organisations utilised terminology associated with the women's movement, some did not explicitly align themselves with feminist politics. This absence of affiliation could be seen to reinforce depoliticisation narratives. However, this chapter demonstrates that the expansion of community-based groups highlighted the emergence of a 'movement' specifically oriented around mental health. Whilst many of the groups contained in the movement had assumed feminist sensibilities, they also promoted an increasingly collaborative approach to mental health activism that incorporated members of the service user and survivor movements, as well as tenets of broader political debates around race and class. The emergence of a movement around women's mental health reflected the wider reframing of the women's movement in the 1980s. Rather than becoming depoliticised, the women's movement re-oriented around specific areas of campaigning, including mental health and Rape Crisis. The emergence of a movement of community-based women's mental health organisations in 1980s England confirms the assertion, made in the previous chapter, that women's movement activism became more readily orientated around the provision of services throughout the decade.

Running from 1992 to 1993, the *Stress on Women* campaign enshrined this increasingly collaborative, community-based approach to women's mental health within MIND at a national level. Exploring the establishment of the campaign highlights the continued role of individual women, including MIND's all-female policy team, in foregrounding issues of women's mental health at the charity. *Stress on Women* was also a response to wider concerns, articulated by service users, that MIND were not responding to the social issues associated with mental illness. The campaign therefore further highlighted the alignment of women's movement and service user movement ideas and approaches in the early 1990s. Tracing the development of the campaign indicates that it successfully raised awareness of women's experiences of mental illness and mental health care. Significant media coverage was dedicated to the issue of sexual abuse on mixed sex wards and other therapeutic environment as a result of *Stress on Women* campaigning, resulting in calls for the modernisation of institutional psychiatry, as well as an increased emphasis on safeguarding within private psychotherapeutic bodies. The campaign therefore highlighted broader ideological and organisational issues within institutional psychiatry and psychotherapy, demonstrating a need for professional bodies to respond to the popularisation of counselling.

Despite *Stress on Women's* success in raising awareness of women's mental health concerns and experiences, the continued use of mixed sex wards in hospitals, for example, indicates the enduring disparity between governmental commitments and their successful enacting of effective mental health provision. Mind continue to critique Government policy on mental health, opposing significant cuts to funding for mental health services and calling for a benefits system that better supports individuals experiencing mental health concerns.<sup>314</sup> However, both Cobb and Sayce felt that the organisation was less radical now

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<sup>314</sup> Mind, 'Mental health services "cut by 8 percent"' (20 March 2015), available at <https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/mental-health-services-cut-by-8-percent/#.WQmUFOXyVlU> [accessed 3 May 2017]; Mind, 'Government should postpone disability

than it was in the 1980s and 1990s. Charting the history of Mind's engagement with oppositional movements not only highlights the influence of women's movement perspectives on the charity and institutional and parliamentary policies more broadly, but also realigns the organisation's current critical perspectives with their radical political foundations.

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benefits, says new report' (3 February 2017}, available at <https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/government-should-postpone-cutting-disability-benefits-says-new-report/#.WQmUGeXyviU> [accessed 3 May 2017].

## **Conclusion**

In December 2016, the WTC celebrated its fortieth anniversary with the conference 'Women Changing Minds. Women Changing Worlds'. The event aimed to reunite former WTC staff members and explore the contemporary contribution of feminist therapy organisations. It became apparent during the event that many of the issues and tensions relating to the history of the organisation, as highlighted in this thesis, remained pertinent to current and former staff members. In a roundtable discussion, early proponents of the WTC critiqued the Centre's increasingly community-centred ethos. Susie Orbach reiterated her view that she and Luise Eichenbaum had resigned from the WTC prematurely, suggesting that the Centre might have, in her view, maintained its oppositional edge throughout the 1980s if they had retained their managerial positions. In conversations held during lunch and tea breaks, feminist therapists used popular models of women's movement history to frame their position at the Centre. Former WTC staff members described to me which 'generation' of practitioners they belonged to, differentiating between staff who worked at the Centre from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, and those who joined later. They used this generational model to explain the tensions and debates that existed at the WTC in the late 1980s and early 1990s. One former staff member, who positioned herself in the second generation of psychotherapists at the Centre, implied that the first generation of WTC staff members had been reticent about recognising issues surrounding accessibility and race. She implied that they adopted an 'old guard' mentality that rendered them apprehensive about change. In the same way that administrators including Carol Sturdy utilised psychoanalysis to explore how the WTC was organised in the 1980s, conference attendees used psychotherapeutic discourses to understand these generational tensions. One former staff member referenced the 'intergenerational transmission of trauma' occurring at the event. Other conference attendees, however,

were frustrated at the emphasis former WTC staff members placed on enduring conflicts and debates. One participant, a self-defined mental health activist and member of Sisters Uncut, the feminist direct action group that opposes cuts to government services for survivors of domestic abuse, became audibly annoyed that panels were focusing primarily on the historical development of the Centre.<sup>1</sup> She stated that the event should provide a platform for assessing how the history of the WTC might inform and enrich contemporary activism and provision regarding women's mental health.

The conference therefore raised several questions concerning the interrelation of histories of the women's movement, the historical development of community-based mental health provision in late twentieth-century England, and contemporary organisations and activism oriented round women's mental health concerns. How should therapeutic organisations that emerged out of the women's movement acknowledge and engage with their radical political foundations, and why is this important? Do historical actors, such as former WTC staff members, have a responsibility to inform, influence, and inspire contemporary feminist mental health organisations and activism? How can the history of women's movement mental health activism be employed by protest groups to inform their current actions against government policies and discriminatory practices? What is our role as contemporary historians in facilitating and mediating these various and, at times, conflicting exchanges between past and present, particularly in the context of radical politics in modern England? These questions are significant because they explore how historians, their historical actors, and contemporary activists engage with numerous histories of oppositional activism in England and align it with the present. Categories such as 'historian', 'historical actor' and 'activist' are by no means exclusive. Their conflation

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<sup>1</sup> Sisters Uncut, 'Feministo', available at <http://www.sistersuncut.org/feministo/> [accessed 24 August 2017].

reflects a further issue about the production and purpose of contemporary histories of radical politics.

This thesis offers a unique and informative perspective on these questions and concerns by examining the development of feminist interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses in England across the late twentieth-century. The women's movement members that I identify in this study aligned feminist politics and psychotherapeutic discourses to develop enhanced strategies of personal and political reflection. Historically, they utilised these strategies to explore the nature of their political affiliations and to assess their application of feminist politics in organisational, community-based settings. By carrying out oral history interviews, I was able to examine how my participants continued to apply these reflective strategies to contemplate their feminist pasts and the history of the women's movement more broadly. This thesis therefore not only highlights the nature and development of women's movement mental health activism but also how its proponents perceived it, both contemporaneously and retrospectively. By charting the endurance of strategies of reflection employed by my research participants, I have been able to uncover how their changing perceptions of the women's movement have influenced the construction of histories charting its development, as well as contemporary portrayals of feminist organisations and activism. This emphasis on self-awareness and reflection, particularly during the research process, lends itself to thinking about historians' own subjectivity and emotions in the construction of contemporary history. It therefore asks wider questions about what contemporary history is for and why we are motivated to write it, assessing whether historians of contemporary Britain should engage with both past and present as a means to inform political and social debates that still exist today.



## **Mental Health, Psychology, and the History of the Women's Movement**

Women's movement members drew on psychotherapeutic discourses firstly, to understand themselves and their politics, and secondly, to establish community-based initiatives that supported women experiencing mental health concerns. By incorporating this focus into the history of the women's movement, I have created an increasingly expansive account of its development in late twentieth-century England. Historians have previously explored the development of feminist activism around women's reproductive and physical health. I argue that women's movement members employed wider definitions of 'women's health' by also mobilising around issues concerning mental health and mental health care. Definitions of what constituted mental health were mediated within the women's movement at popular and grassroots levels. In the 1960s and early 1970s, widely disseminated feminist publications equated the clinical symptomologies and treatments for women's mental illness with patriarchal oppression. Increasingly, however, members of the women's movement viewed discourses surrounding women's mental health and well-being as a means to explore the interconnections between the personal and political within feminist politics more broadly. Ideas surrounding mental health and emotional distress became associated with anxieties about political inefficiency. The effectiveness of the women's movement as a whole was intrinsically linked to the well-being of its individual members. The establishment of radical therapeutic groups such as Red Therapy, which incorporated members from a range of oppositional political backgrounds, highlights that this association was reflected in protest movements more broadly. Therefore, health activism in the women's movement did not simply promote women's bodily autonomy, mental freedoms, and agency in the provision of their health care, it also focused on bolstering the effectiveness of feminist politics in inducing wider social change. Exploring the history of women's movement mental health activism therefore aids closer

examination of the position of the personal in feminist politics, and the strategies adopted by women's movement members to ensure the provision of its aims across the period in question.

By historicising the development of feminist strategies of personal reflection, I have also contextualised the enduring focus on self-awareness within feminist activism. Contemporary commentators argue that intersectional feminism can only be successfully enacted if activists recognise the potential positions of privilege from which they operate. Failure to do so results in activists endorsing rather than dismantling structural inequalities concerning gender, race, class, and sexuality. This association of effective activism with individual self-awareness strongly resembles women's movement members' use of psychotherapeutic ideas to understand how they subconsciously perpetuated the patriarchal repression of themselves and others in 1970s England. Focusing on ideas surrounding psychology and mental health in the women's movement therefore highlights continuities in the history of feminist theory and activism that have previously been framed around intergenerational conflict and difference.

This thesis has explored the continuities inherent in feminist activism in late twentieth-century England by assessing the development of women's movement mental health initiatives in the 1980s and 1990s. In doing so, it creates an increasingly detailed history of feminist activism, organisations, and personal politics over the period, and challenges dominant narratives that foreground its depoliticisation. I argue that feminist activism did not become depoliticised in the 1980s. Rather, government policies and theoretical developments ensured that the oppositional nature of feminist politics was reconceptualised. As women's movement organisations became increasingly threatened by government funding cuts and legislative changes to the voluntary sector, their very existence was subversive. The emphasis that women's movement initiatives placed on inclusivity and accessibility also reflected their identification with an increasingly

intersectional feminist politics. Many proponents of women's movement mental health activism in the 1980s and early 1990s loosely identified with a feminist politics that incorporated anti-racism and service user movement perspectives. Women's movement mental health groups formed networks with other radical political initiatives and national organisations, such as MIND, to call for the provision of women's diverse backgrounds and experiences. MIND's promotion of feminist politics through its policies and campaigning in early 1990s England contributed to the mainstreaming of women's movement approaches to mental health, with several clinical and professional bodies responding to its calls for change. By exploring the political and professional trajectories of MIND staff members, I have argued that the mainstreaming of feminist politics in this way was not indicative of its depoliticisation. Rather, it demonstrated an increasingly collaborative approach to initiating political change that aligned local and national activism with a cooperation across disciplines and professions.

## **Incorporating the Women's Movement into Histories of Mental Health Care**

The women's movement played a significant role in the development of ideas and provision of community-based mental health care in late twentieth-century England. Histories documenting oppositional approaches to mental health provision over the period in question primarily focus on feminist theories critical of psychiatry, institutional treatments, and government policy. I expand these studies by demonstrating that the personal politics and grassroots activism of the women's movement informed the development of community-focused approaches to mental health provision in both theory and practice. Existing histories of community care focus primarily on its legislative development, charting the manner in which clinical, political, and social institutions responded to changing government policy at local and national levels. These histories have

become increasingly critical, debunking the assumption that post-war policies reflected an increased benevolence towards mental health patients. However, they continue to focus on the community care practices that were launched in response to government legislation. This thesis traces in detail how members of the women's movement established alternative forms of community care to support women who they believed were overlooked in state-led policies and provision. Whilst founded on oppositional politics, these initiatives sought to apply effective mental health care to women in the local community. They were part of a wider network of radical therapeutic initiatives and service user-led groups that provided different forms of mental health service at a grassroots level. Whilst these groups directly petitioned the government to improve their services, their very existence made a political statement: that state-led mental health provision failed to support women from a diverse range of backgrounds and overlooked the voices and experiences of service users.

This thesis makes a case for the incorporation of oppositional and radical organisations into histories of community care. Whilst these groups responded to concerns about the inadequacies of state-led mental health services, they also promoted definitions of 'community' that extended beyond those enshrined in governmental policy and clinical settings. The LWLW Psychology Group, for example, was founded in response to fears that negative dynamics within Women's Liberation groups aggravated members' mental health concerns. Early women's movement mental health initiatives were oriented around provisioning for the political efficacy of the WLM, before seeking to support women in the community more broadly. Therefore, community-based mental health initiatives did not simply emerge as a top-down response to government legislation but were also reflective of personal and political tensions within internalised feminist communities.

These contrasting definitions of 'community', underpinned by either governmental or radical politics, also query what is meant by 'provision' in the history of late twentieth-century mental health care. In seeking to provide provision to women overlooked in existing mental health services, alternative forms of community care developed within the women's movement had a contentious relationship with the state. The effectiveness of the services that they provided, and their success in facilitating forms of support previously non-existent in mental health care, is indicated by the fact that many women's movement mental health initiatives began to work collaboratively with clinical institutions, receiving referrals from NHS mental health trusts, local social services, and the police. Some former feminist therapy centre practitioners argue that this cooperative approach reflected the increasingly mixed economy of care encouraged by the Government nationally, as well as the potential depoliticisation of women's movement organisations. Other proponents of women's movement initiatives welcomed these collaborations as they felt that they ensured their longevity and efficacy of their services. However, the increasing pressure placed on the voluntary sector through funding cuts and policies emphasising accountability also generated an atmosphere that bolstered opposition to the national Government. This point further questions what was political or oppositional about women's movement mental health initiatives and alternative forms of community care more broadly. Was their political work linked to the production of theories of radical therapy, or simply oriented around ensuring the longevity of their community-based services in order to continue to support those who needed them? Proponents' answers to this question were grounded in where they situated themselves within the women's movement and how they defined themselves as feminist activists; as either the active and creative producers of political materials, or the purportedly passive facilitators of external forms of support and care. Incorporating an examination of the women's movement into the history of mental health therefore encourages closer examination of the interrelation

of radical political discourses and concepts of community care. The development of alternative forms of community care were both influenced by and informed contemporary debates about the political and the personal within radical groups and movements more broadly.

Despite their collaboration with state-led services, these alternative forms of community care have rarely been incorporated into the history of community-based mental health provision in England. Their influence and contribution to mental health services continues to be overlooked in contemporary discussions concerning community care. News outlets routinely report on the current crisis within NHS mental health services, detailing staff shortages, protracted delays in the provision of treatment, and a significant lack of funding.<sup>2</sup> These sentiments were reiterated by the independent Mental Health Taskforce to the NHS in England, who stated in 2016 that: 'People of all ages with mental health problems have been stigmatised and marginalised ... Mental health services have been underfunded for decades, and too many people have received no help at all'.<sup>3</sup>

Concerns about NHS mental health care focus, not only on provision for patients experiencing acute mental health concerns, but also on individuals who require long-term support through counselling and psychotherapy.<sup>4</sup> The Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme was launched by the NHS in 2008 to provide psychotherapeutic treatments to individuals experiencing anxiety disorders and depression.<sup>5</sup> The IAPT service now offers treatment to 900,000 people annually.<sup>6</sup> However,

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<sup>2</sup> Denis Campbell, 'NHS bosses warn of mental health crisis with long waits for treatment', *The Guardian* (7 July 2017), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jul/07/nhs-bosses-warn-of-mental-health-crisis-with-long-waits-for-treatment> [accessed 29 August 2017].

<sup>3</sup> Mental Health Taskforce to the NHS in England, *The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health* (February 2016), available at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Mental-Health-Taskforce-FYFV-final.pdf> [accessed 29 August 2017], p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> NHS England, 'Adult Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme', available at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/adults/iapt/> [accessed 29 August 2017].

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

concerns continue to be raised within the media, by mental health organisations, and human rights and health activists, about the long-term sustainability of the treatments that IAPT services offers.<sup>7</sup> Detailing their provision of therapeutic treatments, NHS Choices states that psychotherapy provides clients with the opportunity to ‘develop your own solutions’.<sup>8</sup> This sentiment is reminiscent of assertions by women’s movement members that the provision of a choice of therapeutic treatments ensured women’s agency in facilitating their own mental health. Despite this emphasis on choice, therapeutic treatments most readily available on the NHS are short-term, and focused around cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and telephone or digital counselling approaches.<sup>9</sup> Women’s movement mental health initiatives and feminist therapeutic organisations still play a crucial role in providing free, long-term, and flexible counselling services that are not offered on the NHS. Much like the LWLW Psychology Group, these initiatives were formulated around a desire to realise feminist political aims. Former Rape Crisis Centres, for example, initially established to overcome the patriarchal promotion of rape culture, now provide a crucial therapeutic service to survivors of rape and domestic abuse that provisions for their clients’ mental health concerns more broadly.<sup>10</sup> Women’s movement mental health initiatives therefore continue to respond to disparities in the NHS-led services by providing their own forms of community-based provision. Contemporary

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<sup>7</sup> OCD UK, ‘Improving Access to Psychological Therapies’ (IAPT), *Compulsive Reading* (July 2010), available at <https://www.ocduk.org/iapt> [accessed 29 August 2017]; Robert Booth, ‘Can call centre therapy solve the NHS mental health crisis?’, *The Guardian* (25 January 2016), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jan/25/call-centre-counselling-treating-mental-illness-therapy-iapt-cbt-nhs> [accessed 29 August 2017]; Kitty S. Jones, ‘IAPT is value-laden, non-prefigurative, non-dialogic, antidemocratic and reflects a political agenda’, *Politics and Insights: Public interest issues, policy, equality, human rights, social science* (7 March 2017), available at <https://kittysjones.wordpress.com/2017/03/07/iapt-is-value-laden-non-prefigurative-non-dialogic-and-antidemocratic/> [accessed 29 August 2017].

<sup>8</sup> NHS Choices, ‘Psychotherapy’ (14 April 2014), available at <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Psychotherapy/Pages/Introduction.aspx> [accessed 29 August 2017].

<sup>9</sup> NHS Choices, ‘Psychotherapy’; NHS Choices, ‘Can I get free therapy or counselling?’ (3 January 2016), available at <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/free-therapy-or-counselling.aspx> [accessed 29 August 2017].

<sup>10</sup> Rape Crisis England & Wales, ‘Who We Are and What We Do’, available at <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/historyofrapecrisis.php> [accessed 29 August 2017].

discussions on tackling the mental health crisis in the NHS must therefore adopt a broader definition of community care that recognises the significance of these alternative organisations. Their incorporation into governmental depictions of community care would further highlight the absence of long-term, flexible psychotherapy on the NHS, and emphasise the need to preserve the invaluable expertise and experience that these mental health organisations provide.

## **The Representative Status of Case Studies**

Case studies have proved invaluable to this thesis, deciphering the formulation of women's movement approaches to mental health in a grassroots setting, the development of feminist mental health organisations, the personal, political, and professional trajectories of individual women's movement members, and the interconnections of local and national campaigning around women's mental health concerns. Using case studies, however, raises the question of their representative status and the extent to which developments occurring in community-based initiatives were reflective of wider trends within the history of feminism and mental health at national and international levels. The case studies contained in this thesis focus predominantly on women's movement mental health activism occurring in London. Historians that champion increasingly critical histories of the women's movement have called for studies of feminism that focus on activism occurring beyond metropolitan areas.<sup>11</sup> However, my study also contributes to the development of critical histories of the women's movement by focusing on London-based initiatives previously overlooked in dominant narratives of urban feminism.

By combining detailed case studies and oral history interviews, I have closely examined the personal and professional trajectories of women's movement members and

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<sup>11</sup> Browne, "A Veritable Hotbed of Feminism".



feminist therapists. Women's movement members moved between organisations based on their changing political allegiances and professional development. Exploring these trajectories highlights the ways in which women's movement members contributed to the establishment of broader networks of radical therapy and mental health activism across London and England. The concerns and perspectives promoted by initiatives like the LWLW Psychology Group and the WTC were not confined to those organisations but explored across these political and professional networks. WTC practitioner Carol Mohamed, for example, left the Centre to work for a feminist therapy organisation in Sheffield. She found that many of the issues surrounding feminist therapy and race that she had highlighted at the WTC were replicated at her new place of employment.<sup>12</sup> Her account therefore indicates that concerns raised within specific women's movement mental health initiatives reflected wider issues concerning the alignment of feminist politics and psychotherapy in England.

The representative status of case studies can also be assessed by focusing on both local and national organisations. Assessing the charity MIND's recognition of a feminist politics in its policies and campaigning indicates the ways in which grassroots women's movement approaches towards mental health became increasingly representative of attitudes towards women and mental illness promoted within the voluntary sector at a national level. This assessment also highlights the nature of feminist influence and the mainstreaming of particular radical political perspectives. Campaigns developed by MIND drew on feminist politics to encourage clinical and psychotherapeutic bodies and institutions to improve their responses to women's mental health concerns, thereby garnering the professional recognition of ideas promoted within the women's movement. However, charitable campaigns and publications informed by feminism were still organised and produced by a small number of women with previous involvement in grassroots

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<sup>12</sup> Mohamed, personal interview.

women's movement activism. This study therefore provides insight into the development and dissemination of feminist politics at local and national levels. Whilst the women's movement politics contained in MIND campaigns broadly reflected ideas surrounding women and mental health developed by feminists in a variety of professional arenas, they also remained representative of the personal politics of the women at MIND who sought to promote them.

Exploring the personal and professional trajectories of feminist therapists in late twentieth-century England also highlights the transatlantic influences and exchanges inherent in the development of feminist therapy. The form of feminist therapy developed by Eichenbaum and Orbach, for example, was representative of their engagement with radical politics and psychoanalytic theory in both the United States and England. In the same way that feminism has been defined as 'travelling theory', psychoanalysis is also historicised as a transnational enterprise.<sup>13</sup> These definitions are attributable to the movements of its key proponents across national borders, and the manner in which they have informed reflections on global developments in the post-war period.<sup>14</sup> Herzog states that transnational 'battles within and around psychoanalysis provided a language for thinking about the changes in what counted as truth about how human beings are, and what could and should be done about it'.<sup>15</sup> Drawing on psychoanalysis to develop feminist therapy, women's movement members in the United States and Britain contributed to this transatlantic exploration of the self.

There remains scope to situate women's movement members' alignment of psychoanalysis and their personal politics within a broader politics of subjectivity, the

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<sup>13</sup> Kathy Davis and Mary Evans (eds), *Transatlantic Conversations: Feminism as Travelling Theory*. Reprint (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Why Psychoanalysis?* trans. Rachel Bowlby (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 60; Dagmar Herzog, *Cold War Freud: Psychoanalysis in an Age of Catastrophes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> Herzog, *Cold War Freud*, p. 2.

development of which spanned contrasting national contexts in mainland Europe and North American in the late twentieth century. When exploring the representative status of cases studies, however, it remains important to position situate them within their specific national contexts. The provision of free health care on the NHS in Britain influenced feminist therapists' assertions that psychotherapy should be offered to women free of charge. At the same time, an overtly feminist sub-discipline of academic psychology emerged in the United States several years prior to in Britain. The Association for the Psychology of Women was founded in the United States in 1969, and Division 35, an American Psychological Association section that petitioned for increased research on the psychology of women and gender, was established in 1973.<sup>16</sup> A comparable Psychology of Women Section was only founded within the British Psychological Society in 1988.<sup>17</sup> Whilst this thesis recognises the significance of these transnational links in the development of feminist therapy in England, it also seeks to highlight how its specific national context influenced women's movement members' negotiation of feminist theories developed in the United States. The politics of health care therefore provides a useful platform for assessing the nature of transatlantic influence in the development of political, theoretical, and therapeutic ideas.

## **Historicising Contemporary Radical Politics- Methodologies and Emotions**

A key concern raised by attendees at the 'Women Changing Minds. Women Changing Worlds' event was that the WTC did not engage with its former staff members.

Practitioners who used to work at the WTC believed that this disengagement was reflected

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<sup>16</sup> Rutherford and Pickren, 'Women and Minorities in Psychology', p. 29; Marecek et al., 'Psychology of Women and Gender', p. 261.

<sup>17</sup> The British Psychological Society, 'Psychology of Women Section', <http://www.bps.org.uk/networks-and-communities/member-microsite/psychology-women-section> [accessed 30 August 2017].

in the fact that very few former staff members were asked to directly participate in the conference. Their selection of Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach as keynote speakers, without the incorporation of other WTC staff members, served to bolster dominant narratives of the Centre's development, and feminist interactions with psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses more broadly, that have been challenged throughout this thesis. The event therefore highlighted the platforms through which historical actors are able to articulate particular narratives of feminist history.

The event also caused me to further reflect on my own motivations for producing a history of women's movement mental health activism in late twentieth-century England. My completion of this research has been motivated by my commitment to intersectional feminist politics, and a strong desire to showcase the enduring impact of women's movement initiatives on community-based mental health provision. As a historian of contemporary radical political history, my work has benefitted from materials and knowledge garnered from these women's movement mental health initiatives in their past and present forms. Am I therefore accountable for utilising the critical history that I produce to ensure the longevity of women's movement mental health organisations and the services that they provide? This thesis explores the ways in which members of the women's movement used psychological and psychotherapeutic discourses to develop their own strategies of self-awareness and to understand their emotional responses. Carrying out oral history interviews, and therefore directly engaging with women's movement members as they enacted these strategies, has also provided me with the opportunity to reflect on my own emotional responses during the research process and their impact on my construction of a critical history of feminist activism. This subjective analysis has enabled me to consider our role as contemporary historians, particularly when producing history that we feel emotionally and politically attached to, and the wider political implications of aligning past and present in the history of radical politics.

Several of my oral history interviewees expressed feelings of disconnect with the mental health initiatives and organisations that they were previously involved in. On occasion this emotional response proved to be inspirational. In the early 1970s, Carola Klein reacted to her sense of exclusion and distance within a Women's Liberation group by joining the LWLW Psychology Group and developing self-help strategies that sought to counter these personal and political disconnections. Others, however, described how they left women's movement mental health initiatives because they believed that their contribution no longer mattered or that their personal politics deviated too readily from the perspectives promoted there. I have highlighted how these feelings of disengagement manifested themselves in my oral history interviewees' reflections on past political trajectories. In several interviews, participants drew on their sense of disconnect to argue that women's movement initiatives became increasingly depoliticised across the 1980s, expressing a nostalgia for a feminist past in which they had felt instrumental to the construction of political theory and activism within women's movement organisations.

Their accounts further demonstrate changing perceptions about what constituted the 'political' within the women's movement, and radical politics more broadly, in late twentieth-century England. Many of my oral history interviewees who became involved in the women's movement in the 1970s associated the political nature of activism with their personal feelings of creativity. However, those who worked at feminist organisations primarily in the late 1980s and early 1990s based the political tenets of their work on the expansion of what constituted 'the personal', orienting services and initiatives around increasingly expansive and diverse conceptualisations of female experience. These contrasting views of what was 'political' about feminist activism manifested themselves in emotional responses that have come to be equated with intergenerational difference within the women's movement. Rukshana Afia, who I interviewed in Leeds in 2012, associated her nostalgia for the feminist activism of the late 1960s and 1970s with the fear

of getting left behind. She described how some women's movement members expressed this sentiment in response to the increased organisation of political actions online via social media platforms that they felt unable to access.<sup>18</sup>

By employing oral history, this thesis has highlighted how narratives produced by women's movement members regarding their activism in the 1970s and 1980s are readily influenced by the emotions that they associate their subsequent and contemporary engagement with women's movement politics. The significance and, at times, rawness of these feelings can result in their projection onto contemporary feminist organisations, therefore undermining the perceived effectiveness of these services in the present day. In the case of the WTC, the construction of historical narratives that foreground its depoliticisation query the political value of its contemporary endeavours. This is despite the fact that the Centre continues to engage with pertinent political and social issues that affect women in their local community, providing individual and group psychotherapy to survivors of rape and domestic abuse, and refugees and asylum seekers.

The feelings of frustration that former proponents of women's movement mental health activism have levelled at organisations like the WTC demonstrates the need for contemporary feminist therapeutic initiatives to re-engage with their radical political foundations. By tapping into their rich histories, contemporary feminist organisations can reiterate to members of the public, funders, and government bodies their extensive experience in fields such as women's mental health, psychotherapy and community-based support. These factors are particularly relevant given the competitive nature of funding for community-based initiatives in the face of extensive government cuts. Given the fact that this contemporary political climate threatens the very existence of these feminist organisations, I argue that it is also valuable that historical actors reflect on the influence

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<sup>18</sup> Afia, personal interview.

that their construction of a particular feminist past has on the perceived effectiveness of women's movement mental health initiatives that still exist today.

This suggestion raises the question, however, of who is responsible for aligning the past and present within contemporary organisations. I have highlighted the difficulties faced by feminist therapy practitioners and administrators as they negotiated the time-constraints and stresses involved in providing a community-based service whilst also obtaining funding. Therefore, it remains unrealistic to expect feminist therapy initiatives to effectively engage with their past proponents and construct detailed histories of their involvement whilst also responding to these immediate practical concerns. Whilst oral history interviews provide historians with the opportunity to directly engage with historical actors, they are an inappropriate platform through which to critically assess their narratives and perspectives. At times, I felt frustrated during the oral history process that I was not able to challenge my oral history participants concerning their association of community-based support with depoliticisation. However, I believe that the value of the oral history interview lies in the fact that it enables interviewees to articulate their life narratives without interruption. A discursive platform is therefore required that encourages historical actors to critically reflect on their role in constructing histories of the women's movement in collaboration with contemporary mental health initiatives, historians, and activists. Collaborative events that unpack the emotions which informs an organisation's alignment of its past and present would not only support the development of increasingly critical and reflective histories of grassroots oppositional activism, but also aid the establishment of common political goals that span professions and generations. In constructing critical histories of activism, historians utilise the resources and experiences of organisations that still exist, and whose services are routinely threatened. As a result, we too should be committed to the facilitation of these historical and political collaborations: to finding our own solutions.

# **Appendix 1**

## **Oral History Interviewee Biographies**

### **Rukshana Afia**

Rukshana Afia is a Leeds-based radical feminist who was previously involved in the WLM in Bristol. Afia became interested in feminism after her mother encouraged her to read Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. Rukshana's parents were South African. Her mother was Malay and heavily involved in the Unity movement, an organisation with Trotskyite leanings that agitated against social oppression. Rukshana joined the WLM when she started university and participated in consciousness-raising. Afia is a Muslim and she felt that some WLM members could not understand how she was both religious and a feminist. She objected to the use of the term 'second-wave feminism' to describe her activities in the WLM, stating that for her, there was never a point where her feminist ceased to play an important role in her life.

### **Anny Brackx**

Belgium-born Brackx became interested in radical politics on learning about the anti-colonial movements in Algeria and the Congo. She was readily influenced by the May 1968 student movement, through which she learnt about libertarianism, anarchism, and Marxism. Whilst she was involved in the WLM, attending groups and conferences, she was also committed to the civil rights movement and Gay Liberation. She became aware of radical approaches to mental health whilst squatting in London. Anti-psychiatrist David Cooper lived in a commune similar to her own. Brackx joined *Spare Rib* in the mid-1970s because she had always enjoyed writing and editing. She wrote numerous articles for the magazine as well as routinely editing its listings page. She left *Spare Rib* in the early 1980s



on the basis that it becoming 'too fundamentalist'. From 1982, she edited the relaunched MIND magazine *OpenMIND* before becoming MIND's Publishing Director.

### **Vivien Burgoyne (née Bar)**

Burgoyne is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist based in London. She first became involved in feminism whilst studying for a social science degree in her twenties. Whilst she was aware of women coming together to talk about their lives in the late 1960s, she did not join a women's group because she was working towards her degree. She became increasingly involved in the WLM after studying feminist re-readings of Freudian psychoanalysis.

Although she did not define herself as a 'tremendous activist', she did attend Greenham Common several times. Burgoyne joined the WTC in the 1980s and expressed her concerns about the apparent primacy attributed to Eichenbaum and Orbach's conceptualisation of feminist therapy there. She offered a contrasting perspective on feminist therapy in her contribution to the WTC's edited collection *Living with the Sphinx*, titled 'Change in Women'.<sup>1</sup>

### **Sally Carter**

Carter first became aware of feminism after reading Freidan's *The Feminine Mystique* in the mid-1960s.<sup>2</sup> Given that the WLM did not emerge in England until the late 1960s, Carter felt as though she had to wait several years before she was able to discuss her feminist leanings in a group. She married in her early twenties and had three children soon after. Carter was frustrated at her husband's expectation that she should be a housewife and carry out domestic duties. She became aware of WLM groups through her involvement in the Pre-school Playgroups Association. Carter found it difficult to engage in feminist agitation,

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<sup>1</sup> Bar, 'Change in women'.

<sup>2</sup> Name has been changed.

which usually took place in the evenings or at weekends, due to her childcare commitments. In the late 1970s, she completed a degree in Contemporary Studies and started working for Bristol Women's Aid. She felt strongly about women having economic independence, and argued that women's financial reliance was linked to their experiences of domestic abuse. Carter was still working for Women's Aid at the time of her interview in July 2012.

### **Alison Cobb**

Cobb's first experience of mental health services was as a child when she visited the back wards of a large mental hospital in Sheffield with her mother, who volunteered there. The hospital had a connection with the church that Cobb's family attended. After completing her schooling, Cobb did community service volunteering at a psychiatric hospital. She subsequently completed a degree in social studies, through which she developed her interest in mental health and legislation. Cobb later studied for a librarianship, with a focus on information science. She was committed to the idea that information could be empowering and therefore took up a position at a temporary information workshop in a MIND regional office in 1982. Cobb subsequently moved to MIND's national office, working as an Information Librarian and Information Officer before becoming a Policy Officer in 1990. Cobb was involved in the working party Women in MIND in the mid-1980s, which she felt was readily influenced by feminist politics. She currently works as MIND's Senior Policy and Campaigns Officer.

### **Iona Grant**

Grant was born in Grimsby into what she was felt was a very patriarchal society. She initially went into psychiatric nursing before subsequently moving to London. She wanted to do something 'more psychological' so began psychotherapy training at the Arbours

Association, where she met WTC practitioner Sally Berry. Berry encouraged Grant to apply for a position as a therapist at the WTC, and she joined in 1980. Whilst at the WTC, she organised events for women with disabilities. Grant left the WTC in the early 1990s, believing that the aims of the centre were becoming too readily tailored around the expectations of funders. She continues to run a private practice in London.

### **Margaret Green**

Green was born in South Africa. Her parents were Lithuanian Jewish immigrants. She studied medicine and biochemistry before moving to the United States in 1968 with the aim of completing a doctorate. There, she became involved in New Left groups. After deciding not to complete a PhD degree in America, Green moved to London and worked as a technician for the Medical Research Council. She practised consciousness-raising and joined the Chalk Farm Women's Liberation Group in the early 1970s. Whilst recovering from a serious operation in 1972, Green experienced depression and decided to join a self-help group run by the LWLW Psychology Group. Green became fascinated with co-counselling and decided to practise it full-time. She was subsequently one of the first trainees at the Arbours Association and, on becoming a therapist, joined the WTC. At the centre she did one-to-one counselling and facilitated workshops on a range of topics including anti-racism and abuse. She continued to participate in WLM activities as a member of the Jewish Feminist Group. Green left the WTC in the mid-1980s. She returned to South Africa in 1996 and continues to practise as a therapist in Johannesburg.

### **Carola Klein**

Klein was born in London in 1941 and grew up in West Sussex, attending boarding school there. Her mother worked at the Institute of Education in London, and contributed to research on the psychology of nursery school children. Klein became involved in Women's

Liberation groups in Notting Hill, Putney, and Fulham in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As well as being involved in the LWLW Psychology Group, whom she represented on the *Shrew* collective, she was a prominent figure in the development of feminist filmmaking. She directed *The Great Grandmother* in 1968 in collaboration with the Hornsey Art Institute where she also taught, edited *Riddles of the Sphinx* in 1977, and directed and produced *Mirror Phase* in 1978. *Riddles of the Sphinx* was co-directed by prominent feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey. In *Mirror Phase*, Klein drew on psychoanalytic ideas to explore the early development of her daughter Leonie. Klein moved to Birmingham to teach in the 1980s, where she has continued to run community-based feminist film projects.

### **Carol Mohamed**

Mohamed was born in Croydon, South London, and had two brothers and two sisters. Her father was the deputy head teacher of a junior school in Balham. Her mother worked as mental health nurse and was an NHS matron in a psychiatric hospital in Caterham, where Mohamed took a holiday job. She was always interested in mental health and completed a degree in psychology before obtaining a postgraduate qualification in social work. At university, she was politically active as a member of the Labour party. Mohamed was unsure about being a social worker because she 'didn't want to be like a police person' and 'wanted to be able to offer change'. She considered becoming a clinical psychologist but did not wish to focus on behavioural psychology. Mohamed decided to train as a psychotherapist instead and felt as though she was one of a very small number of Black psychotherapists working in 1980s England. She began working at the WTC in the late 1980s, where she petitioned for improvements to the accessibility of its services. She has subsequently completed Masters degrees on psychoanalytic theories of racism, and occupational psychology and trauma. Mohamed left the WTC in the 1990s to work at a feminist therapy organisation in Sheffield, where she still lives today.

## Marie Maguire

Maguire is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist based in London. She first became interested in community politics around housing in South London, before joining women's groups in her early twenties and taking part in consciousness-raising. She taught a Women's Studies course on women's literature at the Worker's Education Association before completing her counselling training and obtaining a job at the Battersea Action and Counselling Centre (BACC) in the mid-1970s. Maguire started counselling privately after the BACC was closed by the newly-Conservative Wandsworth Council in 1978. She attended a supervision group at the WTC and started working there as a therapist in 1980. Maguire remained at the WTC until the late 1980s and was responsible for editing two collections containing discussions produced by staff members there.<sup>1</sup> She continues to operate a private practice and has published on issues surrounding gender and psychotherapy.<sup>2</sup>

## Susie Orbach

Susie Orbach was born in 1946 and grew up in Chalk Farm, London. Her mother, Ruth Hubsch, was from the United States and worked as a teacher. Her father, Maurice Orbach, was a Labour MP. Orbach travelled to New York in the late 1960s to study. Whilst completing courses in Women's Studies, psychology, and psychotherapy at Richmond College and Stony Brook, Orbach became involved in the WLM and met Luise Eichenbaum. She and Eichenbaum established the WTC in 1976 and the Women's Therapy Centre Institute in New York in 1981. Often writing collaboratively with Eichenbaum, Orbach has produced several publications detailing her theorisations of feminist therapy, including the highly popular *Fat is a Feminist Issue* in 1978. She remains a public figure, routinely

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<sup>1</sup> Ernst and Maguire, *Living with the Sphinx*; Marilyn Lawrence and Marie Maguire (eds), *Psychotherapy with Women: Feminist Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Maguire, *Men, Women, Passion and Power*.

publishing and speaking on issues relating to feminism, therapy, and psychoanalysis, and was psychotherapist to Diana, Princess of Wales, throughout the 1980s.

### **Joanna Ryan**

Ryan is a London-based psychoanalytic psychotherapist. She first became involved in the women's movement as a postdoctoral psychology researcher at Cambridge University. She developed her feminist politics by reading the works of Simone de Beauvoir and Doris Lessing. She found the psychology taught at Cambridge to be highly empirical and overlooked social concerns. When she wanted to study 'mental handicap' for her doctorate, she was informed that the topic was not scientific enough. On obtaining her PhD, Ryan began to research 'mental handicap' and was shocked at the conditions of the 'sub-normality hospitals' that she visited. On leaving Cambridge and moving to London, Ryan became interested in psychoanalysis and therapy, giving up academic psychology because she found it too limiting. Ryan began to draw links between psychotherapy and WLM politics. She bolstered these links through her involvement with the Red Therapy collective, and joined the WTC in the late 1970s. Ryan has since published on the links between psychoanalysis and social issues.<sup>1</sup>

### **Liz Sayce**

Sayce first became involved in mental health whilst at university, when she volunteered at a local psychiatric institution. On graduating, she got a job as a nursing assistant in a large hospital and, having experienced mental health concerns herself, became interested in anti-psychiatry and the treatment of mental health patients. She joined MIND in the late 1980s and was instrumental in the charity's development of equal opportunities policies as

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<sup>1</sup> Joanna Ryan, *Class and Psychoanalysis: Landscapes of Inequality* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

well as the organisation of the *Stress on Women* campaign. In 1994, she co-founded the Women and Mental Health network, which published a magazine documenting women's treatment in mental health services and special hospitals. Sayce left Mind in 1998 and conducted research in the United States on the American Disabilities Act. Since 2000, she has worked on issues surrounding Disability Rights. Between 2000 and 2007, she served as a Director for the Disability Rights Commission, for which she was awarded an OBE, and is now Chief Executive of Disability Rights UK.

### **Ruthie Smith**

Ruthie Smith became involved in the WLM in the 1970s whilst attending York University. A musician, Smith joined the feminist band The Stepney Sisters in 1975. The band performed songs detailing the demands of Women's Liberation and routinely went on tour. Smith has played in other bands informed by feminist politics, including jazz group The Guest Stars, who were active throughout the 1980s. Smith began therapy following her mother and sister's experiences of severe mental illness, and completed a postgraduate diploma specialising in psychotherapy between 1976 and 1978. She carried out part of her training at the Arbours Association, before working as an administrator and therapist at the WTC. On leaving the WTC, Smith practised as a psychotherapist for the NHS. She now runs the London-based Flame Centre, which provides psychotherapy and counselling informed by holistic thinking and practices.

### **Daphne Wood**

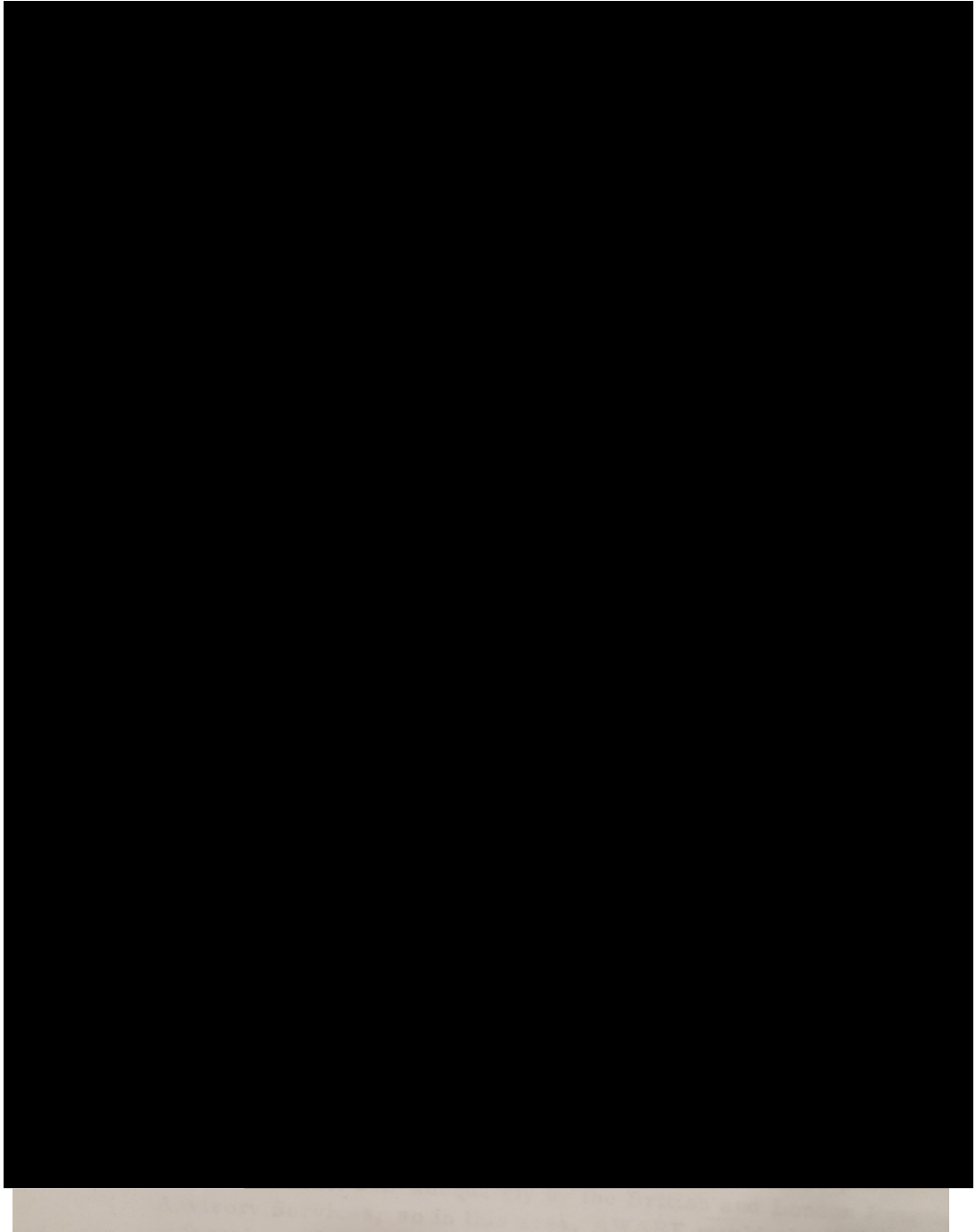
Born in South Africa, Wood began working at MIND on its equal opportunities policies in 1990, having previously held research-based posts. She had not been involved in the 1970s women's movement, stating that her political interactions in South Africa had been focused primarily on civil rights and race. However, Wood felt as though working at MIND helped

her become an 'instant expert' in issues surrounding mental health and gender, and she was responsible for producing the charity's policy paper on women and mental health. She left MIND in 1993 to work at the University of Kent's Tizard Centre. Whilst there, Wood produced research on the development of an effective community care complaints procedure that acknowledged and reflected service user voices. She now lives in London.



## Appendix 2

A reproduction of the Women's Therapy Centre's first press release, featuring the logo inspired by the Venus symbol.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Women's Library @ LSE, 7CMS/04/12, Women's Therapy Centre, 'Press Release- Women's Therapy Centre Opens' (9 April 1976).

## **Appendix 3**

Examples of illustrations contained in Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions*:

*Women's experience of mental health care* (London: Women in MIND Publications, 1985).<sup>1</sup>

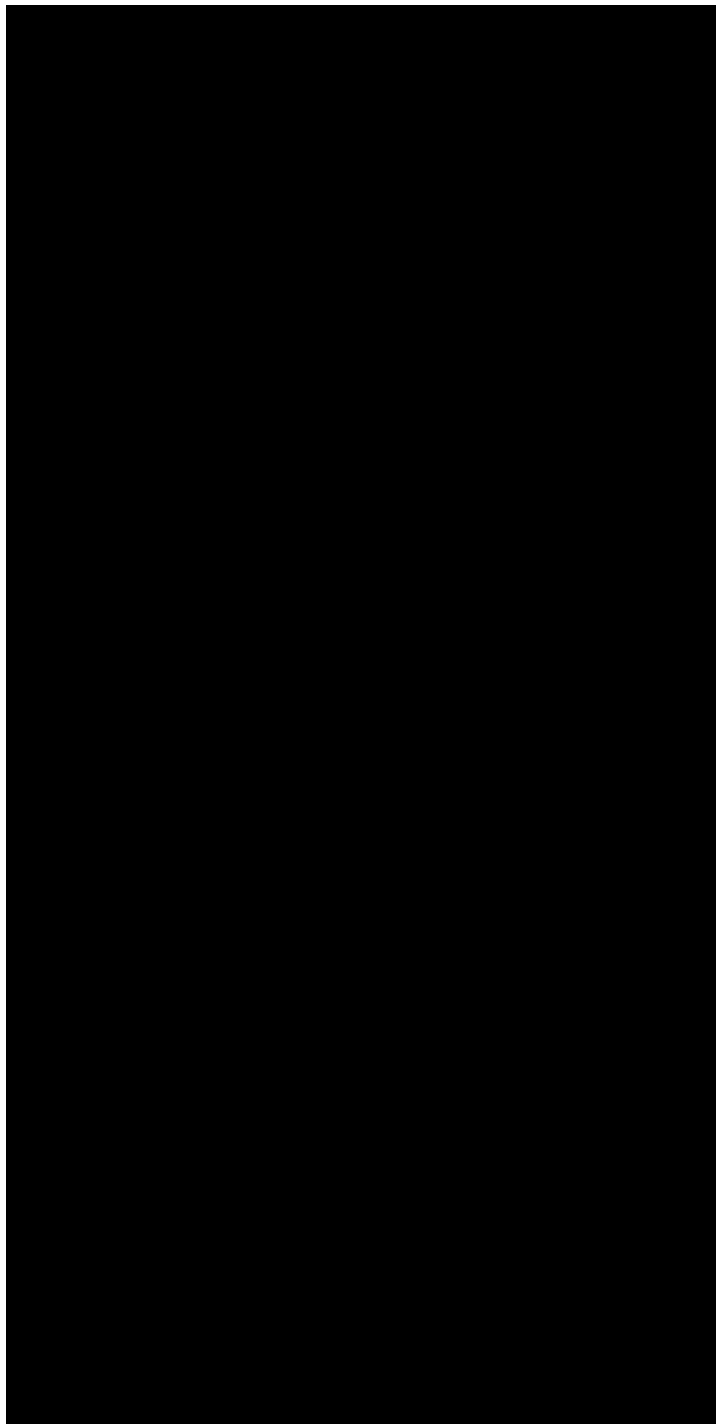


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<sup>1</sup> Women in MIND, *Finding Our Own Solutions: Women's experience of mental health care* (London: Women in MIND Publications, 1985), pp. 9, 43.

## **Appendix 4**

Mug produced for MIND's *Stress on Women* campaign between 1992 and 1993.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Alison Cobb, personal collection.

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*Shrew*

*Spare Rib*

*The Guardian*

*The Independent*

*The New York Times*

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*Trouble & Strife*

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