



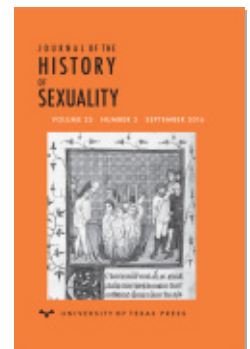
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Mobilizing New York: AIDS, Antipoverty, and Feminist Activism by Tamar
W. Carroll (review)

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something else would have profitably ameliorated this. If transactional sex in Lagos was a “core component of urban life, its youth-centeredness, and its economic opportunities” (59), what other channels for sexual satisfaction and emotional intimacy did the urban environment open up? Without a wider view of the diverse sexual and affective economies that Lagosians were participating in, there is a risk of reinscribing the very colonialist trope of the hypersexualized African that Aderinto otherwise so convincingly dismantles.

Readers familiar with the history of sexuality in other colonial African contexts will find much that resonates with Aderinto’s perceptive account. From the mapping of diverse colonial and nationalist anxieties onto illicit sexuality (chapters 4, 6, 7); the role of the press in fomenting and disseminating conversations about prostitution (chapter 6); the link between prostitution, the military, and colonial state security (chapter 4); to the role of elite men and women in engaging reformist agendas (chapters 6, 7), what was happening in colonial Lagos was also happening elsewhere, especially in British West Africa, where prostitution and sex trafficking were regionally linked enterprises. A broader engagement with the secondary literature, in addition to the impressive corpus of primary sources that the book is largely based on, would help bring greater clarity to what is exceptional and what is more widely representational about the Lagos case study.

A final note: This book ends with a compelling conclusion about the Nigerian government’s comparative disengagement with contemporary prostitution in favor of addressing international sex trafficking because of the latter’s implications on Nigeria’s global standing. Aderinto’s conclusion powerfully illustrates how state politics continue to turn on questions of illicit sexuality with differing and often devastating consequences for those whose lives are conditioned by the domestic rather than international realities of the sex trade. Engagingly written, perceptive in its analysis, and concerned with issues of deep historical and contemporary importance, this book has much to offer those interested in not only African and sexuality studies but also urbanization and migration studies, as well as colonialism, nationalism, and race.

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Mobilizing New York: AIDS, Antipoverty, and Feminist Activism. By TAMAR W. CARROLL. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Pp. 304. \$34.95 (paper); \$27.99 (e-book).

Someday, because of historians like Tamar Carroll, the history of postwar radical feminism will be understood as the rich cross-class, multiracial movement that it was. Made up of neighborhoods full of immigrants and people

of color who spearheaded civil rights, antiwar, and labor activisms, New York has a long history of direct-action politics. These grassroots movements were often made up of women who were drawn to feminism because of prior commitments to neighborhood-based social justice.

New York's activists of color increasingly inspired white feminists to understand the links between gender oppression, racism, poverty, reproductive rights, and, ultimately, AIDS. Carroll's study of four direct-action organizations—Mobilization for Youth (MFY), the National Congress of Neighborhood Women (NCNW), the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), and the Women's Health Action Mobilization (WHAM!)—takes us from working-class Brooklyn to the Lower East Side, from feminists who organized mothers for neighborhood justice to those who escorted pregnant women past antiabortion protesters.

Mobilizing New York is an unusually exciting book to read in part because of the bridges it builds: between neighborhoods, between grassroots organizations, and between historiographies. Carroll's research shows how the civil rights movement, antipoverty mobilizations, labor organizing, women's liberation, and LGBT liberation spoke to and built on each other in New York; she draws on a rich reservoir of activists steeped in left-wing politics. Feminism was in the air that women on the left breathed, even when they did not know yet that they were breathing it, and it is the thread that ties these six compelling chapters together.

At the center of it all is New York City, a universally recognizable urban landscape with a national reputation that made any political cause taking to its streets hypervisible. A global crossroads, New York is "simultaneously distinctive and representative of America," Carroll writes (5). Policy initiatives like the War on Poverty, youth employment, gender equity, and health care had a particular appeal in a city with a rich community-organizing tradition based in neighborhood activism, cross-class alliances, and social justice traditions handed down from parents to children. "Many [activists] viewed their childhoods and upbringings as crucial to their political consciousness," Carroll notes, documenting activists' memories mined from twenty-five archival collections and over fifty of her own interviews, which she has now deposited at the Sophia Smith Collection in Northampton, Massachusetts (xi).

New York City gave activism a stage. This global and national media capital, with built-in audiences of workers, shoppers, and tourists, linked well-choreographed actions to iconic spaces. The Statue of Liberty, the United Nations, Times Square, and other landmarks also embedded local feminist activism in larger conversations about human rights. Because of this, *Mobilizing New York* provides a platform for thinking beyond the scope of the book to even more recent activisms informed by feminism, such as #BlackLivesMatter. As Carroll writes, local issues become national conversations in New York streetscapes where activists' "attention-grabbing

graphics, words, and performances transform the city's spaces into forums for critical and creative expression" (3).

As Carroll's opening chapter on MFY underlines, the New Left, often seen as an environment where women's negative experiences led them to feminism, also created a contemplative space for the women's movement to germinate. It is in MFY that Carroll finds Rosalyn Baxandall, by 1967 one of the founding members of New York Radical Women (NYRW), as well as organizer and scholar Stanley Aronowitz, later married to Baxandall's NYRW comrade Ellen Willis.

It is easy to see that MFY, a comprehensive social service organization funded by the Kennedy administration and designed by social scientists Lloyd Ohlin and Richard Cloward, promoted a repertoire that feminists would draw on as they began to understand the parallels between racial and gender inequality. Indirectly, Carroll raises the possibility that consciousness-raising, the technique most frequently associated with feminism, may also have had its origins in working-class, people-of-color communities. Baxandall recalled that in MFY, and in subsequent groups that organized the poor with Great Society funding, a crucial method for creating a bottom-up agenda was to ask people to give voice to their experiences. In these meetings, conversations "went around the room and people weren't ashamed any more of saying they were on welfare and they were fighting as welfare mothers for their rights," Baxandall told Carroll (69).

Soon, however, the federal money for organizing dried up, a problem intensified by the fact that a contracting economy, escalating crime, and urban blight created new challenges for New York's most vulnerable and blue-collar communities. The post-Vietnam War recession and the retraction of social service funds were devastating setbacks for the working poor and families on public assistance. Beginning in 1974, New York's white ethnic neighborhoods joined with communities of color to defend themselves against budget cuts to city services, particularly fire and police protection. Skilled female neighborhood organizers who now identified with a women's movement created the NCNW as a cross-class, cross-racial movement to fight for equal rights. But as lead organizer Jan Peterson recalled, that struggle was "integrated with . . . efforts to improve the quality of life for . . . families and communities" (83).

The NCNW was an organization that, like the better-documented National Welfare Rights Organization (NWR), called attention to the women's issues that were at the heart of poverty: housing, social services, and schools were all sites where women's rights translated into progress for children, families, and neighborhoods. Organizers like Peterson brought "a feminist analysis of social institutions, especially the family," to their work, Carroll writes, integrating other policy issues on the national feminist agenda, "including the right to be free from domestic violence" (103).

Tracing organizers from project to project, neighborhood to neighborhood, Carroll demonstrates that the history of feminist activism has been more than the sum of its parts in New York. Although grassroots organizations were short-lived, feminism was not, and organizers brought techniques, theories, and consciousness into the next struggle. They also repurposed them to meet new political challenges like AIDS and conservative attacks on women's health care. "Some historians have seen the 1980s as a period of decline in feminist activism," Carroll notes, "but ACT UP is a good example of the ways in which feminist insights and methodologies, as well as feminist activists themselves, were incorporated into other social justice movements of the era, including the nuclear freeze and the Central American solidarity movements" (138). Because of this, Carroll's book is crucial reading not only for researchers documenting the contemporary history of social justice activism but also for those who seek to keep feminism alive in today's political grassroots.

CLAIRE BOND POTTER
The New School



Athenian Prostitution: The Business of Sex. By EDWARD E. COHEN. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 243. \$74.00 (cloth).

This eagerly awaited volume by Edward Cohen expands on the author's previous work on sexual contracts between prostitutes and their clients, and its stated purpose is to discuss the Athenian sex worker in the context of the economic structure and business ethics of fourth-century BCE Athens. In this respect, the book has a tight focus on the economic aspects of prostitution.

In the introduction Cohen provides a discussion of the previous literature and of his own main sources, as well as a brief, oblique look into the material evidence on vase iconography (he does not discuss the vases themselves but cites a few important studies). In the first chapter Cohen discusses the terms *hetaira* and *porne* against the backdrop of Athenian civic ideology. He mistakenly states that *hetairos* was the term used for a high-end male prostitute in ways analogous to how the female equivalent, *hetaira*, was used for a high-end female prostitute. This is certainly not the case; the term *hetairos*, meaning "companion," often with old-fashioned, aristocratic undertones, had been sanctified through centuries of use to embody all that is best in male friendships, a tradition that protected the term from being subverted by the sex market the way the feminine form *hetaira* was. For the masculine, a participle was used (*ho hetairesas*, only attested in the lexicographers, or *ho hetairekos*, e.g., Aesch. 1.161). The second chapter, entitled "Prostitution as a Liberal Profession," touches upon the topic of slave versus free labor.