

WE STILL DEMAND!

REDEFINING RESISTANCE IN SEX AND GENDER STRUGGLES

Edited by Patrizia Gentile,
Gary Kinsman, and L. Pauline Rankin



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Acknowledgments

We Still Demand! would not exist without the vibrant sex/gender activist movements that inform its pages and the contributors who were inspired to share the narratives of these movements. Thanks to our talented (and patient) contributors, the volume bears witness to resistance and activism, past and present. The collection originated from the 2011 SSHRC-funded conference, “We Demand: History/Sex/Activism in Canada,” organized by Elise Chenier and Patrizia Gentile to mark the August 28, 1971, Parliament Hill protest initiated by Toronto Gay Action. Several of the papers from the Vancouver conference appear as chapters in this book and are informed by the lively debates and discussions about the histories of sex activism that animated that event.

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Introduction

PATRIZIA GENTILE, GARY KINSMAN, AND L. PAULINE RANKIN

In 1970, feminists organized a cross-Canada caravan to challenge and resist the 1969 Criminal Code reforms (Bill C-150) that continued to deny many women any access to abortion. The campaign called for “Free Abortion on Demand,” and the caravan culminated in a series of direct action protests in Ottawa in May of that year.¹ By the time it travelled from Vancouver to Ottawa, the Abortion Caravan had ballooned to five hundred protesters wielding placards with slogans such as “The State Has No Business in the Womb of the Nation,” playing on then minister of justice Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s famous remark about the state having no place in the bedrooms of the nation.² The Abortion Caravan marked a critical moment in the history of sex and gender activism in Canada, building momentum for feminist organizing around reproductive rights from the 1970s and into the present.

The following year, more than one hundred gay men, lesbians, and their supporters gathered in the first major public protest on Parliament Hill on August 28, 1971, to mark the second anniversary of the proclamation of Bill C-150 and to reject the privatization of queer sexualities contained in that legislation. What became known as the We Demand demonstration sought to oppose the Criminal Code reforms by protesting against the higher age of consent for same-gender erotic practices, police repression, the national security campaigns against queers under way in the public service and the military, and calling for the repeal of gross indecency laws. Coordinated by Toronto Gay Action (TGA), an organization influenced by the gay liberation

politics radiating from the Stonewall Riots in New York City in 1969 and the formation of gay liberation fronts around the world (which saw themselves as part of a broader revolutionary movement), the demands compiled by TGA members Herb Spiers and David Newcome³ focused on equal rights and the repeal of discriminatory federal laws.⁴ Brian Waite of TGA and the League for Socialist Action (LSA), along with Cheri DiNovo of the TGA Toronto Women's Caucus and the LSA (two activists willing to be out publicly), signed the cover letter for *We Demand*, arguing:

In 1969 the Criminal Code was amended so as to make certain sexual acts between two consenting adults, in private, not illegal. This was widely misunderstood as "legalizing" homosexuality and thus putting homosexuals on an equal basis with other Canadians. In fact, this amendment was merely recognition of the non-enforceable nature of the Criminal Code as it existed. Consequently, its effects have done but little to alleviate the oppression of homosexual men and women ... in our daily lives we are still confronted with discrimination, police harassment, exploitation, and pressures to conform which deny our sexuality. That prejudice against homosexual people pervades society is, in no small way, attributable to practices of the Federal government.⁵

We Demand critiqued the limited decriminalization and the public/private strategy of sexual policing followed by the Trudeau government and focused on the actual, daily discrimination that queer people continued to face.⁶ *We Demand* garnered RCMP surveillance because of the challenge it posed to the national security policies of the Canadian state. The RCMP judged this surveillance as necessary because of the involvement of activists from the LSA and the Young Socialists who themselves were already subject to anti-left surveillance.⁷ To commemorate the significance of this event, the 2011 conference "*We Demand: History/Sex/Activism in Canada*" was organized by historians Elise Chenier and Patrizia Gentile to mark the fortieth anniversary of the *We Demand* protest. Some of the chapters in this book have their origins as papers presented at this conference.

This volume draws its inspiration from the active resistance of feminists and queers to the limitations of the 1969 omnibus bill. As the contributions to *We Still Demand!* confirm, the legacy of this pivotal moment of protest lies not solely in the rights-based claims that successive waves of sex and gender social movements pursued in its aftermath but also, and more

importantly, in the struggles of these activists to transform both the material realities and discursive practices that organized/disorganized their communities. The interlocking themes of activism and resistance highlighted in this volume, therefore, reveal the richness of mobilizations beyond a state-focused, rights-based trajectory and carves out space for emerging research on topics such as the organizing of gays and lesbians in unions; the politics of early same-sex marriage campaigns; trans activism, trans identities, and citizenship claims; struggles against racialization at Toronto Pride; sexuality, immigrants, refugees, migrants, and the problems of citizenship; and the problems with campaigns against sex trafficking.

Certainly, Bill C-150 marked a central shift in sexual regulation within Canadian state formation from a morally conservative, criminalization strategy towards a liberal regulatory strategy based on public/private and adult/youth distinctions. This shift not only significantly affected the policing and regulation of queer people but also had a profound impact on the regulation of birth control and abortion, sex work, and censorship practices with respect to sexually explicit materials.⁸ This reorientation of regulatory strategies was propelled both by social transformations and organizing and by the emergence of new ruling strategies of gender and sexual regulation. The distribution of the McGill University students' 1968 *Birth Control Handbook*, a peer education manual, is a case in point.⁹ Written and distributed a year before the 1969 reforms, this action initiated by young feminists was, according to the Criminal Code, technically illegal. Thus, given that the decriminalization of distribution of birth control and birth control information had not yet taken place, it stands as a landmark example of successful feminist resistance to the Canadian federal state. Abortions were partially decriminalized in 1969; however, this was limited to "health" grounds and in hospitals that had established therapeutic abortion committees.

Despite claims to the contrary on behalf of the Liberal government and others, the 1969 reforms did not legalize homosexuality or entirely decriminalize homosexual practices; rather, they signalled a shift to the public/private, adult/youth liberal strategy of oppressive sexual regulation, echoing the perspective outlined in the United Kingdom's 1957 Wolfenden Report, which addressed both female street prostitution and male homosexuality as "social problems." In the wake of discussions generated by the Wolfenden Report, the mobilization of public/private distinctions and adult/youth classifications embedded in Canada's 1969 Criminal Code reforms allowed for a limited realm for "private" adult (defined as twenty-one and over)

same-gender erotic practices. Consequently, these dichotomies reconfigured police work, directing it against “public” expressions of sex between men as well as sex work.¹⁰

The 1969 reform was partly a response to the earlier homophile organizational efforts of the Association for Social Knowledge (ASK) in Vancouver and other groups across Canada. Activists in these organizations sparked reform discussions in professional, church, and legal contexts within the broader social transformations of the postwar years. Such legal reform discussions coincided with an undermining of the perception of heterosexual marriage as central to the defence of capitalist state and patriarchal relations, and an erosion of support for the effectiveness of moral conservative strategies. Such efforts unevenly paved the way for a certain consensus towards a more liberal regulatory and policing strategy.

These changes led to major escalations of sexual policing during the 1970s and early 1980s against men engaging in sex with other men and, to a lesser extent, against women engaging in sex with other women. This regulatory perspective, therefore, links the regulation of queer sexualities with the regulation of sex work as well as with the regulation of women’s reproductive freedom and control of women’s bodies. Moral reform of broader sexual and gender policies lay at the core of this regulatory strategy; ironically, this also led to the emergence of a radical sexual politics.

The chapters in *We Still Demand!* confirm the necessity of writing sex and gender activism so that we *remember* it not just in the context of human rights gains, such as the later inclusion of sex equality and sexual orientation protection in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but also in the context of recording efforts to solidify activist networks between communities and building and sustaining transformative protest movements. As the work of our contributors document, acts of resistance and the changes that flow from them are not limited to Parliament Hill protests and lobbying for legislative reforms. Indeed, one of the central aims of our collection is to demonstrate that the counter-narratives derived from acts of resistance are often rooted in non-conventional and non-conforming moments with a range of material and discursive results.

One of the major ways that institutional regulation controls and coordinates our everyday experiences and becomes entrenched in how we regard gender and sexuality is through the social organization of a systemic forgetting of experiences of struggle and resistance in favour of focusing on how we “gained” rights. When remembered, however, the struggles and resistance of the historical past can give us insight into, and inspiration for, our

struggles in the historical present.¹¹ For instance, writing about the history of abortion rights in Canada as a legal victory *without* recording and highlighting the many feminist protests, struggles, and public actions mounted to resist oppressive and patriarchal systems that control women's bodies facilitates a forgetting of these past actions even as historians struggle to keep this history of resistance alive.¹² In his history of human rights laws in British Columbia in the mid-twentieth century, Dominique Clément outlines the various challenges and acts of resistance that human rights claimants, their lawyers, and feminist organizations mounted as they endeavoured to shape parts of the human rights code that pertain to sex discrimination.¹³ To spotlight such histories of resistance, therefore, foregrounds an understanding of sex and gender activism and shows that it cannot be separated from other struggles anchored in race, colonialism, disability, poverty, class, sexual violence, health, or age.

Remembering and forgetting, the act of recollecting or memory making, is the subject of a broad scholarship too massive for a thorough mapping here. Encompassing a wide range of methods and methodologies, "collecting" memories about the past as a way of *recording and transforming* them includes looking at ethnographies, oral histories, archiving and archives, life histories (see chapters by Bain, Kinsman, and Noble, this volume), scrapbooking, connecting space/place and memory (cartographies of memory), and auto-ethnographies. Infusing these methods and methodologies about memory making (remembering and forgetting) is affect theory, a relatively new analytical tool that focuses on how experiences, even bodily experiences, are *felt* as social and therefore impart political meaning in our lives. In her work on the archives of feeling, Ann Cvetkovich *documents* trauma as a vehicle through which we can examine how emotion and social processes intersect with memory and history, giving rise to "cultural memory."¹⁴ Trauma is also invoked in the "testimonies" collected by Mona Oikawa. In her study of Japanese women internment camp survivors in Canada, Oikawa's objective is to use these testimonies as "a countermap to a sanitized landscape of national forgetting."¹⁵ These examples bring a critical question into relief: Who is doing the forgetting or remembering? *We Still Demand!* attempts to unravel this question not by offering definitive answers but by revisiting sex and gender activism through the "stories" of those often "forgotten."

This book, therefore, joins a long tradition of remembering and documenting sex and gender activism against collective forgetting. Foundational contributions by scholar-activists play pivotal roles in shaping our

understanding of this activism and in framing contemporary scholarship.¹⁶ While this research continues to fill the gaping holes in “Canadian” historiography, missing narratives linger. This volume attempts to move beyond the focus on queer and trans* struggles (as standing in for critical gender and sexuality politics) to also emphasize the history of resistance of sex workers in national and transnational contexts as well as struggles over which genders and sexualities can legally cross nation-state borders. Some of these missing narratives, specifically those that focus on the histories of queers of colour, two-spirit people, trans* people,¹⁷ and sex workers, are being written by the current generation of scholar-activists.¹⁸ Viviane Namaste’s work on trans* sex workers and their communities in Montreal is a prime example of such scholarship, as is Dan Irving’s research on trans* people, work, and productive bodies.¹⁹ In a different vein, Elise Chenier’s *Strangers in Our Midst* also makes a significant contribution to our historical understanding of sex and gender resistance. She highlights the different ways that imprisoned “sexual deviants” engaged in acts of resistance by continuing to develop intimate and long-term relationships despite the oppressive processes (physical, psychological, emotional, ideological) of the prison system.²⁰

Doing activist scholarship and using methodologies to unearth hidden research – whether based on archival material, posters, or personal letters stashed away in basements or on oral histories – requires envisioning the collection of such materials as a political act. Activist research – that is, research driven by a commitment to foregrounding and *remembering* grassroots practices grounded in lived experiences and communities – is transgressive.²¹ These approaches include, but are not limited to, feminist, anti-racist, and leftist practices that seek to resist any documentation of the past or present that excludes silenced voices, political protest, or critical praxis that aims to transform. One of the main objectives of this book, then, is to engage in the transgressive act of using activist scholarship as a way of fighting against the collective forgetting of the radical (as in getting to the root of the problem) politics that forged our communities. The risk of forgetting the roots of our radical politics is compounded because our histories are not easily accessible in traditional archives. Feminist, queer, and trans* archives exist in the margins and survive largely on community donations and volunteer time. Activist researchers must undertake the precarious work associated with sustaining and gaining access to such marginal archives in the context of pervasive discourses that insist “Canada’s record” on gender and sexuality rights is an exemplary history of steadily expanding

equality, the story of which has already been written. Such dominant narratives, however, exacerbate a collective forgetting of the sacrifices, protests, and acts of resistance that created the possibilities for the eventual institutionalization of those same rights and that paper over the ongoing forms of oppression that a rights-based politics alone cannot end.

To make the struggles and acts of resistance of the historical past relevant and enduring in the historical present, the research presented here seeks to trace the history of the contours of resistance, activism, and mobilizations around sex and gender, while always being in dialogue with social, political, and institutional forces. *We Still Demand!* remembers and actively resists forgetting the transformative politics born from actions such as, but not limited to, the 1970 Abortion Caravan; the Compton Cafeteria Riot; the Stonewall Riots in Greenwich Village; the August 28, 1971, We Demand protest on Parliament Hill; the 1977 rebellion against the Truax Bar raid in Montreal; and the 1981 Toronto bath raids.²² Such moments in the gay and lesbian liberation movement and feminist sexual politics did create unprecedented possibilities for sex and gender activism and presented significant gains for gays, lesbians, and women during this period. The gains secured by these particular forms of militancy and resistance, however, often ignore or, worse, erase other forms of sex and gender activism and acts of resistance that are often subsumed by white gay, lesbian, and feminist histories: those acts of resistance undertaken by Indigenous and racialized people, trans* people, working-class lesbians, people in rural areas, and sex workers, to offer only a few examples.²³

If we embrace the call to “decolonize our minds and practices,” articulated by Jessica Davenport, executive director of the Native Youth Sexual Health Centre, and scholar-activists Audra Simpson, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, and Chela Sandoval, then the writing of sex and gender activism must assume a different form.²⁴ In recognizing that we live in a white-dominated settler colonial state, and that we write this Introduction on unceded Indigenous land, non-Indigenous people need to take up decolonizing approaches as central to our activism, research, and writing. In his “Unsettling Queer Politics: What Can Non-Natives Learn from Two-Spirit Organizing?,” Scott Lauria Morgensen, in drawing on his own experiences in developing a politics of decolonization through deep self-reflexivity, outlines three “lessons” with which non-Native activists must engage. These “lessons,” or learnings, show that Two-Spirit people are not a Native sexual minority, that non-Native narratives of Two-Spirit people have often been shaped by

non-Native desires, and that Two-Spirit organizing challenges power relations in settler societies. This involves a central challenge for non-Natives to critically investigate their own formation – including their gender and sexual formation – through settler colonialism. Mapping Native GLBTQ and Two-Spirit activism and resistance in the “United States” and “Canada,” Morgensen cites the work of San Francisco’s Gay American Indians, the Vancouver Native Cultural Society, a social group in Winnipeg called Nichiwakan, 2 Spirit in Toronto, and the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network as early examples of Indigenous organizing.²⁵

In an important challenge to white people regarding racialization, Himani Bannerji writes: “Why don’t they move from the experience of sharing our pain, to narrating the experience of afflicting it on us? Why do they not question their own cultures, childhoods, upbringings, and ask how they could live so ‘naturally’ in this ‘white’ environment never noticing that fact until we brought it home to them?”²⁶ We need more work that focuses on a politics of responsibility, that forces whites and settlers to critically interrogate and challenge racialization and colonization from their social locations. This is one basis for building solidarity between settler populations and Indigenous people and people of colour. We were again powerfully reminded of the need for this approach with the disruption, in 2016, by Black Lives Matter Toronto and its allies of the Toronto Pride Parade for its continuing exclusion of people of colour and for its anti-black racism in particular. This is a call for more anti-racist, anti-colonial work of critical interruption and interrogation of white and settler social privilege and the generation of anti-racist and anti-colonial practices of critical gender and sexual politics. Aspects of these struggles are addressed in this volume by Cynthia Wright, Bobby Noble, Gary Kinsman, and, from a different vantage point, Beverly Bain. *We Still Demand!* is limited, however, by the absence of contributions on queer Indigenous struggles, and we recognize this as a major failing that we hope will be remedied in future collections on gender and sexual struggles. Research on HIV and AIDS activism is also lacking in this volume.²⁷ We recognize these omissions and acknowledge the vital contribution these social movements offer on questions of sex and gender activism.

It is in between our known stories that we find the ways in which people struggling against relations of oppression and systems of power used various strategies of resistance to survive and flourish, even when they did not have access to organizations or political institutions (especially when those institutions were motivated to bring about their annihilation). For example,

when the gay rights movement sought inclusion of sexual orientation protection in the Canadian Human Rights Code, it did so with some knowledge of the political and legal system that necessarily excluded trans* activists and experiences. This has had a lasting legacy on the obstacles now facing trans* activists seeking legislative changes in the wider context of North America. Dean Spade's *Normal Life* and the work of other trans* scholar-activists raise fundamental questions about whether the human rights legal strategy on offer to the trans movement from the gay/lesbian movements is adequate to address trans oppression, especially given the administrative organization of the two-gender binary "system."²⁸

Trish Salah argues that a collective forgetting of trans activism occurs when scholars use "queer" as an umbrella term that functions "precisely to forget the history of transsexual, transgenderist, transvestite, and other gender-diverse subjects' activism."²⁹ During her time as an activist in the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), and especially as the trans* representative of its National Pink Triangle Committee, one of the main obstacles to trans inclusion and solidarity was the union bureaucracy's inability to recognize sex work as a labour issue.³⁰ Similarly, the development of the mainstream gay movement was coded with the social construction of whiteness and the marginalization of queers of colour. Consequently, human rights gains benefitted white, middle-class, formally educated queers more than, and at a cost to, less privileged and marginalized subjectivities who experienced daily oppression.

The impact of neoliberalism in the later 1970s and 1980s became fertile ground for "the respectable same-sex couple," Mariana Valverde's term for the new configuration at the heart of the same-sex marriage debates in Canada and the United States since the 1990s.³¹ Mostly concerned with how this "new entity" has resulted in the vanishing of sex and, in particular, the homosexual, Valverde focuses on consumerism and the class of the respectable same-sex couple, arguing that these social practices have led us away from debating sexuality.

Lisa Duggan and, to a lesser extent, Jasbir Puar deploy the spectre of the respectable same-sex couple when they use terms such as "homonormativity" and "homonationalism" to account for major shifts away from queer organizing based on militant and grassroots activism. Whereas Puar develops her analysis of homonationalism through building on and reworking a critical analysis of homonormativity by using the former to describe the development of queer identifications with the nation-state in the context of the "war on terror," Duggan popularizes "homonormativity" as a term to

describe how some queers have become “normalized” and have accommodated themselves to the relations of neoliberal capitalism.³² Making visible the class and racialized bases of homonormativity and homonationalism is part of the motivation for *We Still Demand!* In their respective chapters, Elise Chenier, Beverly Bain, Cynthia Wright, and Gary Kinsman expose the historical and political processes that work to entrench heterosexuality and whiteness as hegemonic and central to the “Canadian” state.

In this collection, contributors use homonormativity, transnormativity, and homonationalism as tools to help illustrate the impact of neoliberalism, the hope being that activists will find them useful in their struggles for social transformation. Questions of citizenship (who is included and excluded?) within neoliberal frameworks are at the core of the chapters written by Cynthia Wright and Bobby Noble. Wright’s analysis of anti-immigrant discourses and sexual citizenship exposes the class and racialized contours of homonationalism by focusing on the hegemonic uses of heterosexuality to entrench sexual citizenship. Noble subverts the debates surrounding homonormativity and homonationalism by underlining the biopolitics (how “biology” becomes a resource for power) of citizenship and the trans body.

How do we write critically about sexuality and gender activism and ensure that social identifications always have a social and historical basis?³³ While it is difficult to engage with sex and gender activism beyond the borders of identity categories because much of what has been written is grounded in social movements formulated through essentialist identity categories, there are many Canadian examples of how to critically remember and think about sex and gender activism beyond identity politics. Scholars such as Steven Maynard, Lyle Dick, Elise Chenier, Valerie Korinek, Line Chamberland, and Becki Ross have written extensively about the struggles of marginalized people resisting state, legal, and social regulatory practices in the late nineteenth to the late-twentieth century.³⁴ The bulk of this research illuminates the existence of same-sex social and cruising networks as instances of sites of resistance and the focus of state regulatory practices prior to the mobilization of the 1970s and 1980s. We also encounter this critical remembering and thinking with Namaste’s writing on transsexuals working in 1950s and 1960s Montreal, which is based partially on interviews conducted with cabaret performers before they could speak about a “transsexual identity.” Ross’s history of burlesque from the 1920s to the 1970s in Vancouver traces the complex interrelationship between sex, industry, and work. Her chapter on “dancers and their gimmicks,” for example, is especially useful for understanding sex and gender activism as it reveals how

race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and class shaped the acts of “stripteasers” in the world of burlesque and the men who paid for their services.³⁵

A new volume on sex worker activism, *Selling Sex: Experience, Advocacy, and Research on Sex Work in Canada*, is yet another example of a pathway into critically remembering and thinking sex and gender activism that is often forgotten or erased from the historical record. Building on the scholarship of Andrée Levesque, Patrick Dunae, and Deborah Brock, *Selling Sex* draws on community-based and academic knowledge to shed much-needed light on the social movement organizing mounted by sex workers in Canada.³⁶ Organizations such as the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes (ASP) in Vancouver (active in the 1980s); Montreal’s first sex workers’ organization, Stella, formed in 1995 (a drop-in space in the red-light district); and Action Santé Travesti(e)s/Transsexuel(le)s du Québec (established in 1998) are only a few examples that stand as testament to the long-standing mobilization of sex workers’ communities. The chapters in this volume by Andrea Zanin, Shawna Ferris, and Annalee Lepp on pornography, sex worker activism and virtual space, and the mobilization of sex worker rights against the sex trafficking discourse, respectively, demonstrate the enduring and central role of sex worker mobilization, past and present, in sex and gender activism.³⁷

We Still Demand! follows on the heels of three other recently published edited collections that anchor the study of sexuality in Canada: Maureen FitzGerald and Scott Rayter’s *Queerly Canadian: An Introductory Reader in Sexuality Studies*; a special issue of the *Journal of Canadian Studies (JCS)* on sex and gender activism, edited by David Churchill; and the groundbreaking volume, *Trans Activism in Canada: A Reader*, edited by Dan Irving and Rupert Raj.³⁸ *Queerly Canadian* is a remarkable collection covering an impressive array of topics, including film, marriage, sport, health, sex work, education, and religion, relating sexuality to the formation of national narratives. This voluminous reader boasts an extensive collection of pivotal research in the field of Canadian sexuality studies and features contributors at the forefront of scholar-activism. This is also the case with the *JCS* winter 2014 special issue on sex and gender activism. In this issue, Churchill foregrounds chapters written by leading scholars such as David Rayside, Miriam Smith, and Catherine Nash with some contributions from the August 2011 “We Demand” conference. *Trans Activism in Canada* bridges the gap between knowledge produced in the academy and the lived experiences and activism born in the crucible of community. Using a social justice framework, this volume seeks to “acknowledge” trans* activists’ endeavours

dating back to the 1970s, provide space for the examination of this important work, and offer “practical advice” on how to continue its legacy. The contributors trace the struggles and transformative politics of trans activism in chapters dedicated to revealing trans* activist histories, narratives that speak to resistance to bureaucratic logic, and chapters that highlight community organizations and strategies. We feel fortunate and humbled to add to this rich scholarship.

Like these recent publications, *We Still Demand!* seeks to destabilize, engage, activate, revitalize, and rewrite past and present narratives of “Canadian” history on sex and gender activism. We deploy the word “activate” to underscore the engagement at the heart of scholar-activists’ research efforts in both continuing the project of excavating this past and in encouraging reflection on how its ongoing retrieval can be used to ignite resistance in the present. This collection critically and centrally engages sexuality and gender with other social relations and moves beyond conceiving this engagement as simply part of the past.

The chapters in *We Still Demand!* defy any attempt to impose a coherent linear history on sex and gender activism; instead, they point out that a singular narrative is problematic since activism and acts of resistance, and the links between them, are often fuzzy and even contradictory. In the chapters that follow, sites of resistance are messy and do not fit neatly into a chronological march towards organizational development or community formation. We hope the range of topics and strategic practices of resistance represented opens up possibilities for readers to make connections between the different chapters and the dialogue between them. Ultimately, these chapters demonstrate the possibility of creative strategies of resistance, whether they take the form of a massive demonstration against police repression, printing a magazine, building a website, or an individual intervention to transform the bureaucracy of border security.

The chapters in Part 1 are concerned with fighting against collective forgetting and with actively remembering the past as an act of resistance. Part 1 begins with Elise Chenier’s chapter, “Liberating Marriage,” which fills a significant gap in Canadian sexuality historiography by excavating those “early trailblazers” who used same-sex marriage as a radical tactic against heterosexual marriage, long considered the linchpin of women’s and homosexual oppression, in a deliberate act to subvert the hegemony and oppression heterosexist institutions created in the lives of gays and lesbians in the 1970s. Chenier is interested in demonstrating how early sex and gender activists did not rally behind the middle-class, white respectability that today

is often associated with same-sex marriage campaigns but, instead, endeavoured to “throw a monkey wrench in the works,” using the struggle for marriage as an act of disruption and resistance. A far cry from Valverde’s respectable same-sex couple or Duggan’s warning against homonormativity, the subjects of Chenier’s research used marriage as a trope and vehicle for radicalism.

The alliance between labour and the gay liberation movement in the 1970s and 1980s was often taken as “natural”; that is, there was an assumption that the problems plaguing the labour movement coincided, at least in principle, with those plaguing the gay liberation movement, leading to an inevitable partnership. This is not the case in neoliberal times, when earlier queer connections with the labour movement are often forgotten. Mathieu Brûlé’s chapter plays an important part in recovering this history as it questions this perception of a “natural” connection by examining how the relationship between the fight for human rights in the gay liberation and labour movements developed. Brûlé argues that, although the alliance between these movements was marked by internal tensions and discriminatory attitudes towards “queers” on the part of some union activists, a solid relationship was forged based on various elements, including a mutual interest in social unionism, strong bonds with female rank-and-file members, and the labour activism of workers in sectors with high numbers of queer members. “Seducing the Unions” demonstrates the extent to which sex and gender activism depended upon critical partnerships with other movements that were also fighting against oppression and marginalization.

Scholarship on state and police repression against the gay and lesbian liberation movement abounds in the history of gay and lesbian activism of the 1970s and 1980s. Much of this history focuses on how movement activists and organizations resisted attacks on clubs, bars, bathhouses, parks, and the places where people organized. Patrizia Gentile’s chapter, “À bas la repression contre les homosexuels!,” concentrates on illuminating the character and internal practices of coordinated police and legal regulatory tactics against the gay and lesbian communities. She draws on documents declassified through the Access to Information Act to analyze the coordinated police repression tactics used against Montreal’s gay and lesbian community and highlights the resistance strategies mounted to fight back.

The politics of Pride celebrations are frequently incorporated into histories that explore sex and gender activism. Recent events surrounding the attempts to censor and even bar Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) and the 2016 Black Lives Matter Pride disruption in Toronto have exposed

a myriad of tensions that run through Pride politics, especially in major urban centres.³⁹ The chapters by Beverly Bain and Allison Burgess refocus our attention on these politics by examining the politics of race and gender at the centre of Toronto's Pride festivities. In "Fire, Passion, and Politics," Bain draws on her own experiences as a black lesbian activist to explain the complex racial politics that black drag queens and queer and trans* activists negotiated as they organized Blockorama, an event established to sustain a black queer diasporic presence at Toronto Pride in the late 1990s. Bain uses life-writing techniques to help the reader "live through" the experience of memory making and resistance that shape her recollections of Blockorama. She draws on her memories as well as on the memories of other black activists to recount a history of Toronto Pride festivities, punctuating her narrative with examples of how black queers and trans* people resisted efforts to marginalize Blockorama. The continuing relevance of this struggle was shown when the Black Lives Matter protest at Toronto Pride 2016 demanded to "double funding for Blockorama and ASL interpretation and headliner funding." Burgess's chapter reminds us that the Dyke March, which has become a key Pride event, was the result of hard-won struggles by lesbian activists. Burgess is one of the first scholars to write an extensive history of the Dyke March in Toronto, a fact that further demonstrates how certain examples of sex and gender activism are ignored or even erased by historical trends in the writing of sex and gender activism, a dilemma revisited by Fabien Rose in Part 2.

Exposing erasure reveals the many injustices incurred by movements as they sought (and continue to seek) to eradicate social, political, and historical oppression. Actively remembering sex and gender activism also necessitates a reflexivity that moves beyond a need to "get the story right" (as though this were ever fully possible) towards excavating events, actions, and even individuals hidden from view. Nicholas Matte's "Rupert Raj, Transmen, and Sexuality" is a prime example of such excavation and places trans* people at the forefront of sex and gender activism. Matte explores the work of Rupert Raj, a transman activist who, among other initiatives, established *Metamorphosis Magazine*, which is geared to transmen's experiences. While Matte argues that Raj's acts of resistance played a major role in the lives of transmen, he also provides an analysis of the transnormative discourses that underscored Raj's view of trans* people as he and other trans* activists attempted to influence medical and state policies.

Gary Kinsman's chapter, "Queer Resistance and Regulation in the 1970s," examines the disjuncture between the gay and lesbian liberation movement

Kinsman joined in 1972 and the “mainstream queer organizing and community formation” of today. The author is interested in examining “the making of the neoliberal queer.” Infusing his analysis with life-writing techniques, Kinsman shares recollections of how the movement organized against the initial emergence of currents trending towards neoliberalism by resisting state and police repression, anti-queer national security policies, and the hegemony of the heterosexual family through alignment with other oppressed and marginalized people. Kinsman’s analysis reinforces a key theme of Part 1 – namely, the need to investigate the social and historical relations that create erasures while, at the same time, actively exploring acts of sex and gender resistance.

Challenging borders and the boundaries for activism and research are the main themes elaborated in Part 2. Designed to redouble efforts to rethink the major fault lines in sex and gender debates, these chapters introduce the reader to interdisciplinary approaches that ask readers to engage with a critical understanding of the politics of power and resistance. The chapters in Part 2 deal with the uses of “gender passing” in the writing of the history of gender and sexuality, questions of citizenship, problems within sex trafficking campaigns, sex worker rights and activism, and lesbian porn activism. Our contributors pose two challenges. First, their work disrupts widely held ideas about what constitutes sex and gender activism and calls for a recalibration of sex and gender debates. Second, the analyses offered in Part 2 function as signposts for emerging areas of research and possible interventions. Although they in no way propose an exhaustive list, these chapters point to sites that require our attention in this historical moment.

Part 2 begins with Fabien Rose’s chapter on the “epistemological fault lines” created by historians of sexuality and gender when they formulate analysis about gender passing. “A History of That Which Was Never Supposed to Be Possible” ponders the political and epistemological consequences produced by discourses about “those who passed,” arguing that the common understanding of gender passing (which implies a “truth” about gender) has obscured and erased certain people from the historical record. Rose invites his readers to reject the idea of passing as an apolitical act and instead to embrace a tenet of critical trans theory, approaching the history of “people who passed” and its methodological challenge as pointing to lived gendered possibilities that complicate the way we understand gender.

In “Your Cuntry Needs You,” Andrea Zanin explores Canadian dykes’ sexual self-representation through sex zines focused on pornography. She

looks at three magazines published in the 1990s that she considers represent the desire to fight against the censorship of marginalized sexualities. As a perennial target for Canada Customs censorship, those publications producing dyke S/M representations became a site of resistance for activists intent on establishing a flourishing S/M-positive dyke sexual culture. Although queer theory includes discussions of S/M sexualities, the history of sex and gender activism in Canada has been largely silent on this topic.⁴⁰ Zanin's chapter invites us to examine how queer publishing and anti-censorship struggles became a lightning rod for shaping activism in certain dyke communities.

Both Shawna Ferris and Annalee Lepp consider sex worker rights, another terrain of struggle now attracting significant attention. Ferris and Lepp each offer a historical analysis to contextualize this critical issue and the impact it has on sex and gender activism in the contemporary period. The stigmatizing practices directed at sex work means that discussions related to pivotal debates in this area are often considered taboo, even in the writing of sex and gender activism. Ferris analyzes how sex worker organizations such as the Sex Workers Alliance of Vancouver (SWAV) and the Sex Professionals of Canada (SPOC) used on- and offline activism to resist a "whore stigma," reclaim space, and compile a history of such efforts in two urban centres. In "Safe Sex Work and the City," the web functions as a site of resistance used imaginatively by sex workers to share information about legal advice, Bad Client Lists, and drop-in centres as well as to forge a community with group members who too often function with little support.

Lepp draws us into transnational and local debates about "sex trafficking" and the ways in which sex and migrant worker rights activists continue to resist an anti-trafficking framework. Viewed as a disciplinary tool reinforced by the state as well as some feminists, anti-trafficking measures have a long history. In "Collateral Damage': Anti-Trafficking Campaigns, Border Security, and Sex Workers' Rights Struggles in Canada," Lepp examines anti-trafficking legislation and campaigns and how they influenced sex worker activists' agendas as they often translated into debates over who belongs in national discourses about human rights and citizenship. Sex worker activists and their allies hailed as a significant legal milestone the 2014 Supreme Court decision that struck down the criminalization of sex work. The decriminalization of prostitution-related activities would have been welcomed as a victory against oppressive regulation and sexual policing not only by sex workers but also by the trans*, queer, and much of the

feminist movement. Unfortunately, the controversial legislation adopted under Bill C-36, The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act, reinforced the Harper Conservatives' moral agenda and succeeded in raising new concerns over the safety and rights of sex workers as the struggle for the decriminalization of sex work continues. The new Liberal government has not moved to repeal this legislation.

Sexual citizenship, human rights, and anti-immigration discourses are the main themes explored by Cynthia Wright in "Nationalism, Sexuality, and the Politics of Anti-Citizenship." Although Lepp is concerned mainly with how sex worker activists often used a rights-based discourse that engaged them in national and transnational debates on human trafficking, Wright argues that the framing of the Canadian nation's sexual citizenship as "heterosexual" has been used as a "cutting out" tool for queer refugees and immigrants seeking asylum in this country. Wright describes various "sophisticated forms of differential inclusion" invoked by the federal government, especially through the auspices of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and how they constitute a systemic attempt to include only certain LGBT refugees and immigrants and reinforce homonationalist discourses that ultimately uphold nationalist agendas of racialized (read "white") sexual citizenship. Wright examines the discourses behind these state policies and projects and offers possible sites of resistance to them.

Through a fascinating discussion of human rights, trans citizenship, and gender activism, Bobby Noble's "Trans-ing the Canadian Passport" creatively explores the idea of challenging borders. In another example of life writing, Noble recounts as an example of resistance his 2012 human rights complaint against the federal government for its use of binary gender categories on the Canadian passport. This act of resistance sits at the core of Noble's chapter, which seeks to "*out* the failures of sex categories at the national level" in order to expose how border anxieties and the security state collide over identification, gender, sex, passports, and race. Modern taxonomy based on sex-gender coherence and certain racialized subjectivities have given rise to the biopolitical technologies at the heart of citizenship discourses and passports. Noble examines these questions through a novel theoretical and literary analysis.

In their introduction to "What's Queer about Queer Studies Now?," David Eng with Judith Halberstam and Esteban Muñoz challenge us to engage with a myriad of analytical filters such as empire, geography, epistemology, neoliberalism, and diasporas, to list a few, as we continue to grapple with how we mount our struggles and undertake research. They insist that

the articles in their special issue of *Social Text* involve “some of the most innovative and risky work on globalization, neo-liberalism, cultural politics, subjectivity, identity, family, and kinship that is happening in the realm of queer studies.”⁴¹ The chapters in *We Still Demand!* are part of a similar effort since they also throw “natural boundaries and borders” into question, asking us to think “beyond queer” when we consider sexuality and gender activism. That “thinking” includes anchoring sex and gender activism within the context of Indigenous, anti-colonial, trans*, immigrant, and sex worker struggles. *We Still Demand!* is part of this larger project, notwithstanding its shortcomings with respect to Indigenous, anti-colonial, and anti-racist struggles. Situating sex and gender activism within the broader politics of struggles moves us into “innovative and risky” territory.

The narratives of resistance presented in this collection are meant to spark new contributions to activist history and research and to incite, agitate, and provoke renewed resistance. *We Still Demand!* reminds us that writing, researching, and thinking about resistance is, in itself, a transgressive act. We are inspired by the Zapatista saying: “Walking we ask questions.” And we hope that this volume prompts activists and scholars to continue recording and sharing the countless still unknown acts of sex and gender activism and to rethink how such collective and individual histories may activate new forms of sex and gender resistance.

Notes

- 1 See Christabelle Sethna and Steve Hewitt, “Clandestine Operations: The Vancouver Women’s Caucus, the Abortion Caravan, and RCMP,” *Canadian Historical Review* 90, 3 (2009): 463–95; and Judy Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution* (Toronto: Penguin, 2005), 35–46.
- 2 See Sacha’s Blog, <http://blog.sacha.ca/2013/08/14/historical-feminist-organizing-part-2-the-abortion-caravan/>.
- 3 Herb Spiers died of AIDS-related disorders and cancer on March 2, 2011, and David Newcome died of AIDS-related disorders on February 4, 1994.
- 4 See “We Demand,” *The Body Politic* 1 (November/December 1971): 4–7; Brian Waite compiled and published *Remembrance and Reflection on We Demand and Strategy for Gay Liberation*, August 28, 2011.
- 5 See “We Demand,” *The Body Politic*, 4.
- 6 The socially constructed divide between “public” spaces (parks, public washrooms, etc.) and “private” spaces (behind closed doors) played a central role in sexual policing in this period. These regulatory strategies were fuelled by the debates born out of the Wolfenden Report regarding queer men and public spaces. This divide was further complicated by adult/youth distinctions with the age of consent set at twenty-one. See Gary Kinsman, “Wolfenden in Canada: Within and beyond Official