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1. Editorial Statement (1983)

The Trouble & Strife Collective¹

We hope that this magazine will provide a new forum for what has been known, since the start of the current wave of feminism, as radical feminism.

We want *Trouble and Strife* to be a widely available, easily readable magazine, exploring in depth issues which are of direct and current relevance to the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain. We will publish material we do not necessarily agree with in every detail, and certainly from women who do not call themselves radical feminists. But we want to encourage writing from, and make visible the activities of, a particular strand within feminism. Radical feminism, though central to movement practice, is too often silent in print.

Within this strand, some call themselves simply 'feminists', because they see labels as restricting and divisive, and they want an evolving, broad and united Women's Liberation Movement. However, there are today important differences within the movement and many strands use a qualifying adjective. The following paragraphs, therefore, outline what we in the collective see as the shared basis of our radical feminism.

We believe that men as a group benefit from the oppression and exploitation of women as a group. We do not see women's oppression as secondary in importance to class or any other oppression; nor do we see it as produced by, or maintained because of, class or any other oppression. Although we recognise that women experience additional oppressions, particularly through race, ethnic origin, age, disability, class, and that these additional oppressions may benefit and be contributed to by women who do not share them, all women are oppressed as *women*.

Men oppress women, but not because of their (or our) biology, not because men are physically stronger, nor because men have phalluses and women may bear children and breast feed, nor because men are innately more aggressive. We consider men oppress women because they benefit from doing so. All men, even those at the very bottom of male hierarchies, have advantages which flow from belonging to the category male. Even the men most sympathetic to women's liberation benefit from women's subordination. The social structure has been developed so as to ensure that the collective and individual actions of men support

and maintain them in power. We believe change can come about only through women's collective action, and convincing men of the need for feminism is therefore not a priority for us in our struggle against male supremacy.

We seek a movement of *all* women to overthrow male supremacy. While we criticise the institution of heterosexuality, we do not think that only lesbians can be feminist or that all feminists should be lesbians.

We hope that *Trouble and Strife* will encourage feminists to communicate with each other about what they are doing and thinking. We hope it will enable ideas and practices to be clarified and developed. We see ideas as emerging from personal experience and practical struggles which then feed back into our work within the Women's Liberation Movement. Although we are producing a magazine we are not doing so because we think intellectual activity is more important than practical campaigns. Sharing knowledge supportively, not using it to impress and mystify, is an important part of radical feminist practice, and it is to this that *Trouble and Strife* is devoted.

The idea for a magazine came from several of us who had connections with a French radical feminist journal, *Nouvelles questions féministes*. We had discussed the possibility of an English language sister publication with them over a number of years. Others of us have been involved in various kinds of radical feminist publishing. Last year we formed a group to produce this magazine.

We come from various backgrounds within the Women's Liberation Movement but have a shared commitment to radical feminism and the project of getting this new publication established. We do not want it narrowly to reflect the opinions of the collective, but rather to be a forum for debate open to and used by all who fall within a broad definition of radical feminism. An important part of our commitment to open debate is to develop links with radical feminist publications in other countries world-wide, in order that our readers can be informed about and contribute to radical feminism internationally.

We are aware that our collective by no means represents all the lines of division between women. We are all white women, and we recognise that few Black women see themselves as radical feminists. We are heterosexual and lesbian, working and middle class, with and without children, and we vary in age from mid 20s to mid 50s and in kinds of Women's Liberation Movement experience. We are united by our differences and our similarities.

Note

1. The members of the 1983 collective were Lynn Alderson, Jalna Hanmer, Sophie Laws, Diana Leonard, Sheila Saunders and Ruth Wallsgrove.