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introduction

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Trouble & Strife Magazine, 1983–2002

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This volume contains a selection of articles originally published in *Trouble & Strife*, an independent radical feminist magazine which appeared regularly in Britain over a period of 20 years, beginning in 1983 and ending in 2002. Our own involvement with *T&S* spans the whole of that period: we read it from the beginning, contributed to it on occasion, and served for a decade as members of its editorial collective. The magazine was an important part of our political and intellectual lives; it also made a unique contribution to the life of feminism in Britain.

What made *T&S* stand out from other feminist publications of the time was partly its distinctive political stance, and partly the fact that it did not fit straightforwardly into the usual generic categories. Though it had some of the characteristics of each, it was not a theory journal for academics, nor a campaign newsletter for activists, nor a general publication aimed at anyone interested in women's issues. And it definitely was not a 'little magazine' devoted to creative writing (the notice stipulating that unsolicited contributions were welcome made clear that it did not publish poetry or fiction: nevertheless there was always, for some reason, a steady trickle of unsolicited verse). Its founding editors described what they were aiming for in their first editorial statement (see ch. 1): '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'. With that in mind, the pieces *T&S* published were shorter and more accessibly written than most academic articles, and the magazine was deliberately designed to look like a magazine rather than a scholarly journal. A lot of thought and care went into visual aesthetics generally: the format and logo were the work of professional designers, and some accomplished feminist illustrators contributed on a regular basis (this collection includes some examples of their work).

Those who wrote for the magazine were a varied group. Very few were professional writers (though some, like Patricia Duncker and Denise Mina, are now successful writers of fiction). A significant number were academics, but the magazine also had regular contributors working in law, government and politics, social and community work, information technology, publishing and the media. A commitment to radical

feminism does not make for an easy or uncritical relationship with mainstream institutions, but it is evident from the Notes on Contributors at the end of this book that many of the women who wrote for *T&S* have had an impact within the mainstream: they now hold senior positions in a range of organizations, especially in the public and voluntary sectors. Others have preferred to stay—or to move—outside the mainstream, whether by setting up their own businesses or turning away from conventional careers to use their energies in various kinds of activism. Either way, in most cases the work they do has some relationship to their feminist politics; the choice they made to write for *T&S* was an expression of the same commitment.

Today, the purposes *T&S* served for a particular feminist community—acting as a focus for shared political commitments, and providing a forum for the exchange of ideas—are most often pursued via the worldwide web. But in the 1980s and for much of the 1990s, feminists around the world expressed themselves first and foremost through the medium of print, creating an international network of feminist periodicals. These publications often exchanged advertisements, and a glance at the ads that appeared in *T&S* reminds us how many titles flourished during this time: there were ‘national’ feminist news magazines such as *Broadsheet* (New Zealand), *Kinesis* (Canada), *off our backs* (US) and *Women’s News* (Ireland); there were also more specialist publications like *Sinister Wisdom* (‘a journal for the lesbian imagination’) and *Trivía* (which published ‘interviews, theory and experimental prose’). *T&S* sometimes reprinted material from magazines in the first category. However, its strongest link outside the UK was with the French journal *Nouvelles questions féministes*. Though *NQF* was more academic, the two publications were very close politically, and there were also personal links between the two groups of editors.

In the UK, the feminist publications with which *T&S* coexisted at various points in its history included the radical women’s newspaper *Bad Attitude*, *Catcall* (which described itself as ‘a non-sectarian discussion forum by and for women’), the Scottish feminist magazine *Harpies & Quines*, the lesbian feminist *Outwrite*, the young women’s magazine *Shocking Pink*, and what is still probably the best-known of all British feminist periodicals, the WLM monthly *Spare Rib*. Launched in 1972, *Spare Rib* helped *T&S* to establish itself by giving practical assistance with production and design. However, the two publications occupied different niches: *T&S* appeared less frequently, had a less news-based agenda, and did not aim to address or represent the same broad-based feminist constituency (*Spare Rib* at its peak had something like 100,000 readers).

Like *Spare Rib*, *T&S* remained in circulation for approximately 20 years, outlasting numerous other publications which were often better resourced and less politically

outspoken. *The Guardian* newspaper once said of *T&S* that it was ‘not for the faint-hearted feminist’ (this was a reference to Jill Tweedie’s *Guardian Women* column ‘Confessions of a faint-hearted feminist’—and yes, we took it as a compliment). But magazines designed to appeal to faint-hearted feminists (like the blandly-titled *Everywoman*, which was launched in the 1980s) proved not to have the staying power of their fiercer, more uncompromising sisters. *T&S* received no funding, was almost entirely dependent on unpaid volunteer labour (it paid only its typesetter, printer and distributor) and accepted no commercial advertising. Its survival over two decades is a tribute to both the commitment of the women who collectively produced it and the loyalty of its core feminist audience.

When *T&S* originally emerged in the early 1980s, there was a significant audience for feminist analysis and political debate. Organized feminism had existed in Britain for over a decade, and had made some important political gains (such as the equal pay and anti-discrimination laws which were passed in the mid-1970s). But by 1983 the climate was changing, both at the national level and in the WLM itself. The Conservatives, led by Margaret Thatcher, were embarking on a second term in government. Thatcherism was inimical to feminist aspirations, both ideologically (it championed ‘family values’ while maintaining there was ‘no such thing as society’) and materially (since one consequence of Thatcherite economic policies was cuts in the public funding many practical feminist initiatives depended on). An article by Miriam David in the first issue of *T&S* reflected the perceived need for feminist analysis of and resistance to these ongoing developments in British politics, declaring that ‘Thatcherism *is* antifeminism’.

Meanwhile, the WLM was addressing its own internal political divisions. By the early 1980s there were tensions on a number of issues, including race and class differences, motherhood, the women’s peace movement (then at the height of its public visibility thanks to the camp women had established at USAF Greenham Common), sexuality and sexual practice (this was to be the decade of the so-called ‘sex wars’, pitting feminists who styled themselves ‘pro-pleasure’ against those they disparaged as ‘anti-sex’). Against this background, *T&S* sought to give a voice to a distinctive current in British feminism which was, the original editors suggested, ‘central to movement practice [but] too often silent in print’: *radical* feminism.

Radical feminism: what it was and what it wasn’t

Radical feminism is a much-used term in writing about the WLM, but also one which is frequently misunderstood. This can be related to radical feminism’s ‘silence in print’. On both sides of the Atlantic, the most prominent historians of and

commentators on second-wave (post-1968) feminism have tended to be socialist or Marxist feminists; consequently, the most influential accounts of radical feminism are not the accounts of radical feminists themselves. Produced by outsiders, these accounts are often confused or lacking in nuance, and sometimes they are also coloured by the writer's explicit opposition to radical feminism, so that the result is less a description than a sustained political attack.

One account which illustrates these tendencies is given by the British socialist feminist Lynne Segal in a 1987 book called *Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism*. Segal is by no means the only writer who tells this particular story—since the late 1980s it has been repeated many times—but we will focus on her because of what she shares with *T&S*, namely her cultural and political location in the UK. Segal is troubled by what she alleges is the hijacking of the WLM by a kind of feminism which calls itself 'radical' but is in truth entirely reactionary. It is essentialist (based on the axiomatic belief that women are innately virtuous while men are naturally evil); apolitical (instead of organizing to bring about social change, radical feminists want women to retreat into a separate female culture); and morbidly obsessed with sex and violence (in the radical feminist worldview, all men are rapists and all women victims).

The problem we have with this account, and others like it (such as Alice Echols's 1989 history of American radical feminism, *Daring to be Bad*), is not simply that it is *critical* of radical feminism. The problem is rather that in order to make its criticisms, it represents radical feminism in a way we find unrecognizable. The political beliefs Segal ascribes to radical feminism bear no resemblance to our own beliefs, and the radical feminist she conjures into being bears no resemblance to anyone we have ever met. Like the mythical chimera, this figure appears to have been put together using parts from two completely different creatures—on one hand the dour, man-hating, dungaree-wearing political lesbian, and on the other the goddess-worshipping cultural separatist who spells 'women' as 'wombyn' and has named herself 'Tree'.

We will not dwell on the fact that both these stereotypes come straight from the misogynist repertoire of the tabloid press and *Private Eye*'s 'Wimmin' column (where they are directed against all feminists, not just the ones Lynne Segal criticizes).¹ We will even grant that some actually-existing feminists may have something in common with either the dungaree-wearer or the goddess-worshipper. But what we find wholly implausible is the idea that any feminist, or type of feminism, personifies both at once. The same confusion/conflation is apparent in Segal's suggestion that radical feminism as a political philosophy is based on the writings of three iconic

figures: Andrea Dworkin, Mary Daly and Dale Spender. One problem with this claim is that it projects onto radical feminists a kind of reverence for theoretical authority-figures which is probably commoner among socialists. But the main objection to it is that, like the dungaree-wearer and the goddess-worshipper, the three writers Segal mentions do not represent the same perspective on feminism or appeal to the same kinds of feminists. Distilling a coherent political philosophy from their collective wisdom would be a singularly challenging task—which may be why no one that we know of has ever tried.

The radical feminism represented by *Trouble & Strife* was remote from the ‘radical feminism’ of some critics’ imagination. A succinct summary of the magazine’s political position can be found in the brief legend which appeared on the masthead:

Trouble and Strife is cockney rhyming slang for wife. We chose this name because it acknowledges the reality of conflict in relations between women and men. As radical feminists, our politics come directly from this tension between men’s power and women’s resistance.

Far from speaking the language of ‘victim feminism’ or apolitical cultural separatism, *T&S* with its emphasis on ‘conflict’, ‘power’ and ‘resistance’ seems closer to the language of traditional Marxism. But its feminist politics were not Marxist or socialist, as is clear from the editorial with which the first issue opened:

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 recognize that women experience additional oppressions, particularly through race, ethnic origin, age, disability, class, and that these...may benefit and be contributed to by women who do not share them, *all* women are oppressed as *women*.

Socialist feminism is not, however, the only kind from which the editorial distinguishes *T&S*’s radical feminism. The next paragraph begins:

Men oppress women, but not because of their (or our) biology—not because men are physically stronger, nor because...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.

This makes clear that *T&S*'s radical feminism was not essentialist. Rather it was *materialist*. Although it did not draw the same conclusions as Marxist feminists about the causes of women's oppression, it used a similar conceptual apparatus to theorize them, focusing on the benefits one group (men) derived from the exploitation and subordination of the other (women). In this *T&S* was influenced less by the 'holy trinity' of Dworkin, Daly and Spender than by the ideas of Christine Delphy and other feminists associated with the French journal *NQF*.

Because of its commitment to materialism, *T&S* consistently and emphatically rejected analyses based on the idea of a 'natural' difference between men and women. Among the articles that appeared in its first few issues were a critical piece by Ruth Wallsgrove about the Greenham Common peace camp (the criticism being that Greenham represented women's commitment to peace as the consequence of their instinctive concern for future generations), and an article by Lynette Mitchell whose self-explanatory title was 'Against cultural separatism'. Several chapters of this book demonstrate *T&S*'s explicitly critical attitude to 'maternal thinking', matriarchalist myth-making and assorted varieties of spiritual mysticism (see e.g. Christine Delphy, ch. 6, Dena Attar, ch.10, Rachel Hasted, ch. 20, and Sigrid Rausing, ch. 26). Undoubtedly there were feminists to whom those things appealed, but most of those who wrote for *T&S* had no time for them at all.

The editorial goes on to state: 'While we criticize the institution of heterosexuality, we do not think that only lesbians can be feminists or that all feminists should be lesbians'. In the context of 1980s British feminism this can be read as an attempt to distinguish *T&S*'s radical feminism from the current known as 'revolutionary feminism'. In 1979 Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group had written a pamphlet entitled 'Love your enemy?' which argued that a committed feminist could not have sexual relationships with men. *T&S* never accepted that view. Its founding collective described themselves as 'heterosexual and lesbian', and subsequent collectives also fitted that description. No one questioned prospective editors or contributors about their sexuality: what mattered was their politics.

It did, however, matter that they were women: though *T&S* opposed the cultural variety, it was committed to *political* separatism—to the principle that women must liberate themselves through their own collective action rather than working in mixed-sex organizations where they would inevitably come under pressure to cede control to men. No man ever contributed to *T&S* as an editor, writer, designer, typesetter or illustrator; the only men it dealt with were those it paid to print and distribute the magazine.

Differences among women, though acknowledged and discussed, were less central to *T&S*'s thinking. The magazine was generally critical of the rise of feminist

'identity politics', where the socio-demographic category a woman belonged to or identified with—Black or white, working class or middle class, straight or lesbian, with or without disabilities, etc.—was assumed to determine both her political priorities and her position on any given issue. Committed to the view that 'all women are oppressed as women' (and that the main beneficiaries were men rather than other women), *T&S* saw identity politics as over-emphasizing differences among women at the cost of obscuring their common oppression and fragmenting their collective resistance (see Purna Sen, ch. 11).

One of the concerns expressed by the founding collective in their inaugural editorial—that few Black women saw themselves as radical feminists, and that consequently the magazine under-represented the voices and concerns of non-white women—became less marked over time. More accurately, perhaps, developments in British society and politics made the existence of a radical strand in Black feminism more visible, and *T&S* reflected that. Though the editorial collective did remain, with few exceptions, white, the magazine strongly supported and frequently publicized the work and the political views of groups such as Southall Black Sisters (SBS) and Women Against Fundamentalism (see Dena Attar, ch.10). These were (and are) organizations whose support for minority ethnic women combined a strong anti-racist element (e.g. opposition to racist immigration laws, whose impact on women they insisted other feminists must take on board) with a refusal to gloss over the oppression of women by men within their own communities, or to entertain the kind of liberal multiculturalism which condones oppressive practices by proposing they should be respected as expressions of differing values and cultural traditions. If this defence of women's interests in opposition to fundamentalism on one hand and liberalism on the other ever seemed less than central to the politics of radical feminism, it most certainly does not seem so now.

The criticisms made by groups like SBS of liberal cultural relativism fed into *T&S*'s more general concern with distinguishing its position from liberal varieties of feminism. This point is often neglected in discussions which concentrate on the 'great divide' between radicals and socialists, presumably because it is something which does not divide the two currents. Both reject what Lynn Alderson once dubbed 'the sensible agenda', meaning the kind of moderate, liberal approach which talks about women's 'disadvantage' rather than their oppression, locates the problem in individual attitudes rather than social structures, and couches its demands (if that is not too strong a word) in a language of 'choice', 'empowerment' and 'equal opportunities' (the radical feminist equivalents would be 'power', 'power' and 'power').

Radical (and socialist) feminists do not of course dissent from such basic liberal principles as women's right to political representation, reproductive freedom or equality before the law. Their objection to liberalism is that it cannot in practice deliver the rights it promises, because it refuses to acknowledge the deeper structural causes of inequality. On many issues of concern to radical feminists, perhaps most notably pornography and prostitution, it is also evident that there are conflicts which cannot be resolved within a liberal framework of individual rights and freedoms. Upholding the rights of men may entail negating those of women; his 'freedom of choice' may depend on her servitude (see Debbie Cameron and Liz Frazer, ch. 17).

This reference to pornography and prostitution brings us to the one respect in which *T&S*'s radical feminism did resemble, at least partially, the otherwise unrecognizable caricature discussed earlier. Male violence—domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, the sexual abuse of children both inside and outside the family, prostitution, trafficking and the production and consumption of pornography—were indeed key issues for radical feminists, and they were frequently discussed in *T&S*. This discussion did not, however, portray men as natural predators and women as eternal victims: its aim was rather to analyse the structures that sustained the abuse of women and children, and to support organized efforts to change those structures. Contributors explicitly criticized the kind of analysis which either treated male violence as 'natural' or used a quasi-medical language to define it as a form of individual pathology (see e.g. Liz Kelly, ch. 7). What they refused to do, however, was gloss over the extent of the problem or minimize the damage done to women and children by it.

Critical discussions of this aspect of radical feminism often dwell on its 'conservative' position in the feminist 'sex wars' of the 1980s and early 1990s. The sex wars, however, were not primarily about male violence or male sexuality: they focused more on female (especially lesbian) sexuality, with feminists who described themselves as 'pro-sex' or 'pro-pleasure' arguing that practices like using pornography or engaging in S/M sex were both erotically pleasurable and politically empowering. *T&S* did enter into this debate, since it was clearly 'an issue of current relevance', and it did so from a perspective that was critical of sexual libertarianism (see e.g. Julia Parnaby, ch. 13, Susanne Kappeler, ch. 14, and Stevi Jackson, ch. 15). One of the criticisms radical and revolutionary feminists levelled at mainstream heterosexual culture was that power differences between the sexes were routinely eroticized; this not only reflected but also contributed to the maintenance of unequal gender relations. *T&S* writers saw nothing daring, let alone empowering, about importing this heterosexual cliché into sexual encounters between women.

However, *T&S* did not give debates on lesbian sadomasochism anything like the same emphasis it gave to, for instance, the continuing struggle to get justice for women who had been raped. The topic did not even feature in most articles about lesbian sexual practice itself (one such piece was advertised on the cover of the issue in which it appeared with the words ‘Sexuality – NOT the sadomasochism debate’). Some *T&S* writers took a sceptical view of the argument made by revolutionary feminist Sheila Jeffreys in her books *Anticlimax* and *The Lesbian Heresy*, that sexual libertarians were destroying the women’s movement: as one commented, this was reminiscent of the socialist feminist complaint that radical feminists were destroying the movement. Someone or other was always being accused of destroying the movement, but somehow the movement always survived.

One reason why it survived was that in the real political world there were few spaces in which any variety of feminism could exist in a pure and undiluted form. As Liz Kelly (then based in Manchester) remarked, reviewing *Is the Future Female?*, the way the book drew up the battle-lines between socialist and radical feminism could be seen as reflecting a metropolitan bias:

For those of us in the provinces, political differences have seldom had the same hostility and divisiveness. Our communities are not large enough, our resources too limited for us *not* to find ways of working together (p.24).

Although we have focused here on what distinguished *T&S*’s radical feminism from other feminist currents, we hope we have also made the point that these differences were not in reality as stark as some accounts imply. Liz Kelly reminds us, not only that feminist politics has always involved coalitions, but also that what feminists have in common, like what women have in common, is more fundamental than what divides them.

Unlike feminism itself, *T&S* has not survived, but the reasons for its demise were economic rather than political. Like many other small independent publications, by 2000 the magazine was having difficulty dealing with a combination of rising production costs and increased competition from other media; in the summer of 2001 it was forced to cease publication. Later that year, however, the events of 9/11 prompted ex-collective member Sophie Laws to suggest producing a special issue. With the help of external funding, she and Helen Lowe guest-edited ‘Piecing it together: feminist perspectives after September 11’, which appeared in 2002. This 43rd issue of *T&S* turned out to be its last. But in the belief that the magazine deserves not only to be remembered, but also to be made available to a wider

audience than it could reach in its original form, in this volume we reprint some of its most memorable contributions to the feminist debates of the eighties, nineties and early noughties.

Content and organization

To maximize the quantity and range of material we could include, most of the pieces reprinted in this collection have been re-edited to shorten them. We have also added occasional notes, to clarify references made obscure by the passing of time. The chapters are grouped thematically in six sections.

The opening section, 'Manifestos', reproduces the two editorial statements in which *T&S* collective members defined the magazine's purpose and its political stance. The first appeared in the inaugural issue, while the second was produced to mark the magazine's tenth anniversary.

The second section is devoted to 'Controversies': this is also the largest section, reflecting the important function *T&S* fulfilled as a forum for internal feminist debate. The editorial which appeared in the first issue explicitly stated: 'we will publish material which we do not necessarily agree with in every detail, and certainly from women who do not call themselves radical feminists'. Though some views would not have been given house-room, contributors (who included a number of revolutionary feminists and even the occasional socialist) were not required to follow a strict editorial line. For one thing, there were often differences of opinion within the editorial collective. Even women who did call themselves radical feminists did not hold the same views on every issue; on some questions there were passionate disagreements. Publishing articles written from conflicting viewpoints (with the letters page often continuing the debate) did not necessarily settle these arguments, but it did help to clarify what was at stake in them.

The 'Controversies' section begins with a series of contributions on an issue which has often divided feminists (and indeed, women more generally): motherhood. Contributors discuss questions of reproductive choice, childcare, the rights of mothers and those of children. Since these were matters of controversy among radical feminists themselves, these pieces refer or directly respond to one another, producing a sustained (though finally unresolved) exchange of views. The remaining chapters take up other issues on which there was disagreement among feminists: child sexual abuse, prostitution, abuse perpetrated by women, and the perennially difficult subject of ethnic, cultural and religious differences among women. (Our two pieces on this last theme, written in 1990 and 1999, now look highly prescient: they show that radical feminists were developing critical analyses of both religious

fundamentalism and some kinds of anti-racist or 'multiculturalist' discourse long before the events of 9/11 put these issues on the mainstream political agenda.)

The pieces in the next section, 'Sexuality', also focus on issues that were matters of disagreement and controversy among feminists. We have chosen to give them a section of their own, however, because as we noted above, debates on sexuality and sexual practice took on a particular significance in the 1980s and 1990s. The radical feminist position in those debates has been repeatedly characterized as essentialist, puritanical and hostile to heterosexual women. But the chapters in this section, dealing with the HIV-AIDS epidemic, the emergence of Queer politics, the status of the body in feminist theory and the relationship between feminism and heterosexuality, show that this description is misleading: more importantly, they show what *T&S*'s position actually was. The writers of these four pieces are not disputing the importance of sexual freedom for women (nor suggesting that heterosexuality is in principle and forever incompatible with it). Rather they are taking issue with facile libertarian notions of what *constitutes* sexual freedom—for instance, the idea that if conservative moralists disapprove of something (like pornography or sadomasochism) then feminists should axiomatically embrace it as politically subversive and 'liberating'. Radical feminists argue, by contrast, for an approach to sexual desires and practices which is based on an analysis of their relationship to power and inequality in the wider social world.

Although *T&S* was not an academic journal, its contributors and readers included both academics and students, and it regularly published articles which engaged with academic feminist theory—or Theory, with a capital T. This engagement can be seen in some of the 'Sexuality' pieces, and the fourth section, 'Theory', contains a selection of contributions in which it was the central point. Writers set out both to explain particular approaches—psychoanalysis, liberal political theory, postmodernism and neo-Darwinism—and to offer a critical, radical feminist assessment of them.

As well as showing what *T&S* writers made of some of the intellectual fashions of the day, this section illustrates their more general attitude to theory itself. The early *WLM* had been a culture in which abstract or theoretical writing was often regarded with suspicion (see ch.2). *T&S* was never 'anti-theory' in that sense—on the contrary, in fact, its founders wanted to create a space where radical feminists could reflect on and develop ideas (though in their inaugural editorial statement they did feel the need to reassure readers that they were not suggesting 'intellectual activity is more important than practical campaigns'). The magazine was always, however, critical of the kind of feminist theory which is totally disconnected from

women's experience and from feminist politics; and it was resolutely opposed to the kind which is so arcane conceptually and linguistically as to exclude the uninitiated (see Stevi Jackson, ch.16). Its commitment to inclusiveness was made explicit in the founding editorial statement: 'Sharing knowledge supportively, not using it to impress or mystify, is an important part of radical feminist practice. It is to this that *Trouble & Strife* is devoted'. The magazine did, arguably, become more 'academic' (or perhaps, less self-consciously *un*-academic) in its style and tone over time; but it never lost sight of its original goal of demystifying knowledge and making ideas accessible.

From its inception *T&S* had a strong interest in women's and feminist history. It often included articles based on research by feminist historians; the fifth, 'History' section begins with two such pieces. Rachel Hasted's reassessment of the figure of the witch raises questions about the political uses of historical source material, while Rosemary Auchmuty's account of early 20th century schoolgirl fiction shows how it reflected, and was affected by, changing attitudes to intimate friendships between women.

T&S also published pieces dealing with the more recent history of the feminist movement itself. Beginning in the very first issue, a regular feature called 'Writing our own history' interviewed women about their experiences of feminist activism. Introducing the first of these interviews, the editors remarked: 'we hope that this... will go some way towards countering the attempt to write us out of existence'. This was not only a reference to the general tendency of mainstream historians to leave women and feminists out of the record, but also to the tendency discussed above, for historians of the WLM to concentrate on the liberal and socialist varieties of feminism while ignoring or misrepresenting the radical current *T&S* belonged to. In this volume we reprint one example of the 'Writing our own history' feature, in which Lilian Mohin recalls a campaign against the Wimpy Bar restaurant chain (a sort of pale British imitation of McDonald's) for its policy of refusing to serve unaccompanied women late at night. That such a policy ever existed will doubtless astonish younger readers, but even those who were around when such things were commonplace may well be unaware that feminists took direct action in opposition to them.

The other two pieces in the History section contain first-hand testimony from feminists who had been directly involved in significant recent historical events. Monica McWilliams describes the setting up of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and the part it played in negotiating the Good Friday agreement which paved the way for peace in Northern Ireland, and Sarah Maguire offers her observations, as a lawyer and activist working in the former Yugoslavia, on attempts to bring war

criminals to justice in the aftermath of the Balkan wars. While the events discussed here are certainly acknowledged as historic, they are rarely portrayed in mainstream accounts as events in which feminists either had a particular stake or played an active political role. These feminist accounts, which are both personal and analytical, thus represent another way in which *T&S* sought to counter the tendency for feminism to be erased from the historical record.

The final section, 'Culture', contains a selection of pieces in which radical feminists addressed such topics as the rise of self-help and the recovery movement, the emergence of a New Age 'masculinist' movement, the success of women's literary publishing, the increasing sexualization of girls' magazines, the strange return of the housewife as a cultural icon, and the extraordinary popularity of reality TV. These are all fundamentally critical pieces, which may leave some readers wondering if *T&S* ever commented positively on an aspect of popular culture or celebrated a new social trend. The answer is yes: among the developments contributors applauded were the rise of feminist detective writing and science fiction, women's participation in activities like windsurfing and drumming, and young girls' enthusiasm for the Spice Girls (though writers were less keen on body-building and new-age spirituality: an article on the latter was tersely entitled 'Crystal Balls'). *T&S* also gave positive reviews to various books, films and plays, and celebrated the lives and achievements of numerous inspirational women. But these pieces were often reviews, interviews with an artist or writer, or reports of a specific event; they were very much 'of the moment', and are therefore less satisfying to re-read now than the more critical and analytical contributions.

Because we have concentrated on reprinting the analytical pieces which we believe are *T&S*'s most significant legacy, some themes and some types of articles which regularly appeared in the magazine are under-represented in or absent from this volume. Our selection excludes news reports about political events and campaigns; it excludes most interviews (the exception being the feminist history pieces already mentioned) and 'straight' book and film reviews (though a few pieces do belong to the genre of the 'classic' or 'discussion' review in which an influential book provides the author's starting point). It also excludes the round-table discussions in which groups of women mused on subjects ranging from vegetarianism to cleaning, and the short opinion pieces which appeared in a slot called 'Barking Back'. While pieces in these categories were often entertaining, their 'off-the-cuff' quality combined with the ephemeral nature of some of the topics they tackled made us feel they should not take precedence over more considered contributions.

Our selection also excludes most of the magazine's global coverage. Though *T&S* did not set out to be an internationalist publication—it concentrated largely

on British concerns, with north America and France as its other main reference points—it did regularly feature pieces on feminism in other parts of the world, which were usually either articles by, or interviews with, local activists. But most of these pieces were designed to inform readers about the current state of feminist politics in a particular locality, and consequently they are now very outdated. Others cannot be included here because they were not originally written for *T&S*, but reprinted from other feminist periodicals with which it had exchange arrangements.

But although this collection cannot give the full flavour of *T&S* as a regular subscriber would have experienced it, we hope it will enable readers unfamiliar with the magazine to understand what it was about, and what kind of feminism it stood for. We hope it will convey a sense of the strengths that kept this small independent publication alive and self-supporting for two decades: its understanding of what its readers cared about (and its willingness on occasion to challenge them); its ability to render complex arguments accessible and make connections between theory and activism; and, not least, its commitment to readable prose and lively visual illustration. Finally, we hope that by compiling *Trouble & Strife: A Reader*, we will be helping to achieve one of the magazine's original aims—to put a particular current of feminism (back) into the historical record and ensure that its ideas cannot be 'written out of existence'.

Note

1. *Private Eye* is a British satirical weekly magazine, which for some time ran a column titled 'Wimmin' lampooning the supposed absurdities of feminism.

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