

# EXCALIBUR

Everything secret degenerates: nothing  
is safe that does not show it can bear  
discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

Excalibur, founded in 1966, is the York University weekly and is independent politically. Opinions expressed are the writer's and those unsigned are the responsibility of the editor. Excalibur is a member of Canadian University Press and attempts to be an agent of social change. Printed at Newsweb. Excalibur is published by Excalibur Publications under the auspices of the Council of the York Student Federation.

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## The women's movement as it looks now

The question for those who have been involved with the women's movement for some length of time is "where is the movement going?"

The questions of direction and ends of the movement also arise for women who develop an interest in the movement, and who try to decide for themselves if this is a relevant activity to their lives. Women who have come to the women's movement equipped with a prior political analysis have generally looked for a clear ideological stand in the movement, which included both defined goals and defined methods with which to achieve those goals, and an organized hierarchical structure. Both of these characteristics are noticeably absent from the women's movement as it presently exists. For those who have stayed in the movement despite the absence of these characteristics, the definition of what women's liberation is, and what individual liberation looks like, has come from exploration of our human possibilities while participating in the movement.

To describe the absence of certain organizational features in the women's movement is to describe it negatively. But this points out a significant difference in the women's movement from most large-scale organizations without acceding to the value judgment generally placed on organizational structure. Structure and bureaucracy are generally considered necessary evils. They are necessary because they create the conditions wherein effective work and change can occur; they are evil because of the lack of humanity they encourage within the organization. Most of the women in the movement acknowledge the truth of this assumption and put a high enough value on the human aspect of the movement to try and deal with minimal structural definitions.

The choice of structural definitions used by the different women's groups depends on the direction the women involved want to pursue. There is a fairly general agreement about the evils of structure and hierarchy, however, some groups have bowed to these necessities, in varying degrees, in order to achieve political power. Other groups, which center around consciousness raising and individual liberation, have concentrated on the intrinsic revolutionary value of these activities and have not concerned themselves with achieving political power within the existing societal structure. The flavour of anarchy resulting from the emphasis on individual solutions characterizes the group. Another direction in which feminists are going is radical lesbianism. These women have combined individual solutions with a political stance, which is to expend their energies solely on women. They have redefined their sexual nature, the root of their oppression, to combat that oppression. The value of this stand as a political solution is dubious. It does little to affect the general quality of all of our lives because it never approaches the visible political sphere. It leaves the status quo unchanged.

Radical lesbians are not the only women who have attempted to coordinate individual solutions with political statements. Two Toronto women who were actively involved with women's groups in '70 and '71 talked recently about their experiences. One of the women is no longer involved in any specifically feminist activities and the other woman is partially involved with the newly reorganized women's group at Glendon. They both stated that the

women's movement does not make sense to them as an autonomous organization. They have lost interest with the present state of the women's movement. Because instead of progressing in a coherent, politically effective way, it has degenerated into separatism and scape-goating.

Both of these women look at women's oppression in society as part of the whole sphere of capitalist oppression. Within this sphere both men and women are oppressed. Sexism is not only a personally recognizable characteristic but also a socially determined trait. The characteristic has to be personally identified and dealt with, but the root of the problem is not men's piggery, it is the society which operates by virtue of that piggery.

Because of their political analysis of women's oppression, both women think that liberation can be achieved primarily through women working in politics to change the capitalistic structure.

The radical lesbian's stance and their separatist politics do not seem to lead in any fruitful, liberating direction. This direction of the movement leads instead to stagnation and degeneration. For that reason, though these two women positively acknowledge the reality of women's oppression, they do not look to the women's liberation movement as an autonomous organization, for the final solution.

There is one more direction in the women's movement — the area of legal reform. It is one aspect of the women's movement that we are publicly confronted with and made aware of above all other issues in the movement. In the area of legal reform the end of the women's movement is more clear cut. Equality of rights and opportunities are the obvious goals. Our problems in legal reform appear when questions of retributive justice arise, such as demands for back-pay for the years worked at jobs for unequal pay. The problems arise when we confront our own lower expectations because of social conditioning. Our problems arise with the lack of adequate daycare facilities. Our problems continue with the entrenched sexist attitudes on the part of men and are sugar coated with reform legislation requirements but essentially unchanged. Thus, while legal reform is essential in the liberation of women, it is totally unsatisfactory as a final solution.

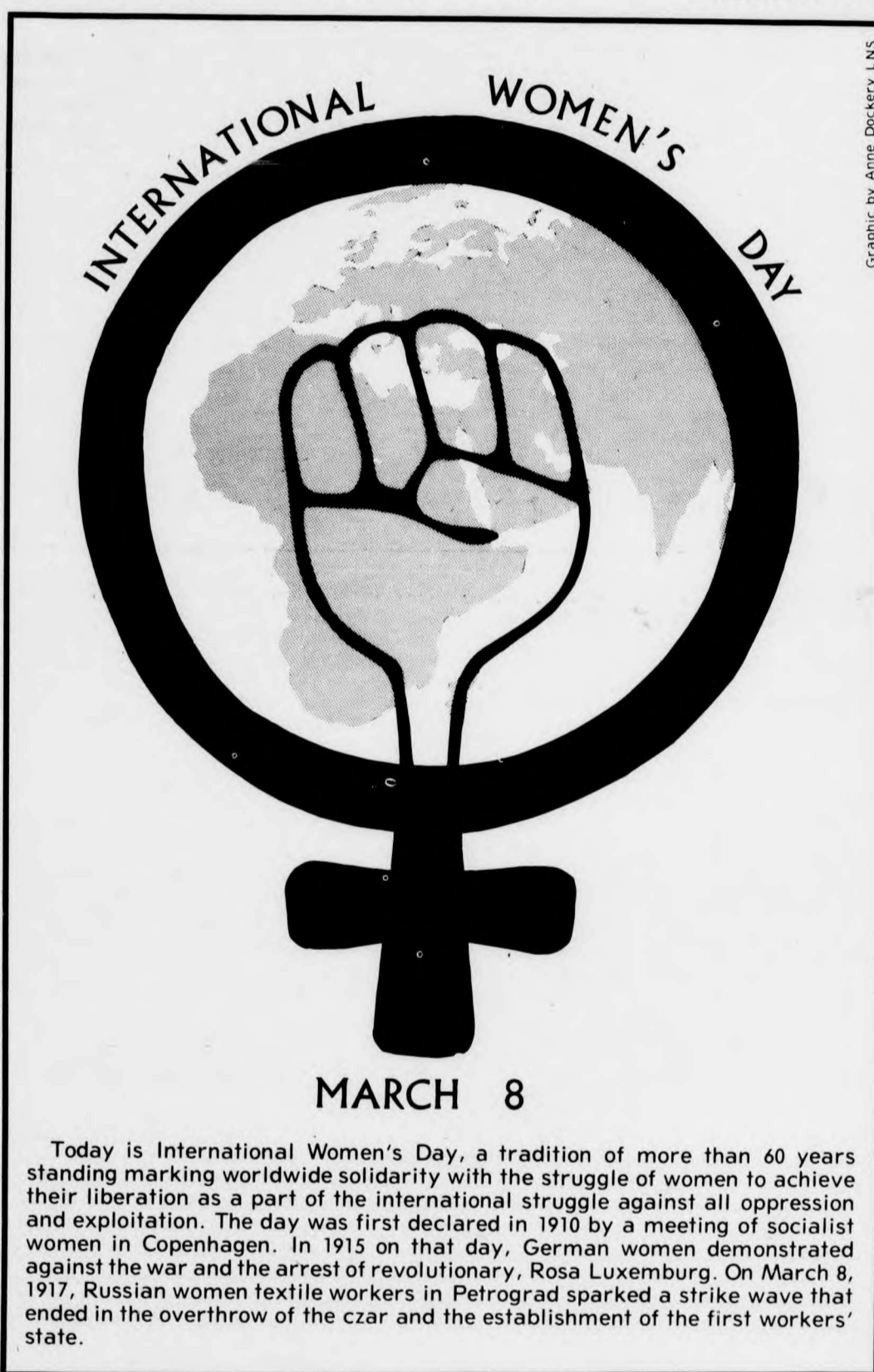
Where is the women's movement going from here? We have issued no general policy statement on how to treat basic problems of organization and power. We have not learned how to coordinate the different directions of the movement and the fragmentation caused by this could severely limit the

possibilities of the women's movement. But there is optimism about the possibilities for change caused by the women's movement precisely because it is such a grass-roots, unorganized movement.

To those of us who are involved in women's liberation as a process of individual and social reconstruction rather than as an external hobby, we find the clues to direction in ourselves. As we re-define ourselves and our relationship to the world we discover, both individual and for some, political

directions to pursue. Our solutions may be in terms of the external political analysis or they may be confined to individual self-realization. Individual self-realization cannot achieve the political power the women's movement needs, but to keep our political activity sensible, it is essential to emphasize individual self-realization and understanding. The symbiotic relationship between the two contains the possibility for a revolution, the likes of which has not yet been experienced in human history.

— CAROLINE GRAY



Today is International Women's Day, a tradition of more than 60 years standing marking worldwide solidarity with the struggle of women to achieve their liberation as a part of the international struggle against all oppression and exploitation. The day was first declared in 1910 by a meeting of socialist women in Copenhagen. In 1915 on that day, German women demonstrated against the war and the arrest of revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg. On March 8, 1917, Russian women textile workers in Petrograd sparked a strike wave that ended in the overthrow of the czar and the establishment of the first workers' state.

## Letters to the editor

### Culture editor left nude

No, your writer need not pose in the nude for the centre-fold of Excalibur. She has already done so — (see centre-fold March 1, 1972 edition.)

She has laid bare the nature of her thinking. She has exposed her inability to write. The content, style, size and wording of this memoir from 1970 eliminate all credibility from any further articles penned or edited by her.

How could she so mar the York university publication as she has done? How could the editor-in-chief allow this to be published?

Would you have accepted this article from any student other than your cultural editor?  
C.I. IRWIN

### Trapping must be dealt with

One issue which has received a lack of commentary by this paper is the trapping of fur-bearing animals. Not only has this paper failed to rally support against trapping, but it publishes ads by fur retailers.

Can students on the one hand cry out about injustices and atrocities to people but ignore the atrocities to animals? It makes me feel sick each time I see someone strutting around

in a fur coat or ornament. To wear the fur of a wild animal is to carry a badge stating that one has no respect for other forms of life, that one supports the torture and murder of wildlife.

Perhaps the problem is that people tend to disassociate themselves from the act of trapping. They do not try to imagine the pain to the animal. Yet could these same people imagine their own dog or cat lost in the wild and caught in a trap? The thought is unpleasant, but wild animals experience as much pain and suffer as much agony.

Let us denounce those who buy the furs of wild animals for it is they who provide the market and the reason for atrocities in the wild.

W. FAG