Hating Housework - the Christmas Issue

DECEMBER 24TH
11.30 AM

10.30 PM

1.30 AM

CHRISTMAS DAY

GEE, FATHER, CHRISTMAS MUST WORK HARD.
A NEW BOOK
ABOUT THE FACTS OF LIFE FOR CHILDREN

'Here is a book about the facts of life which solves a problem. With fun and tenderness and without glossing over the difficult details it tells the story of sex and birth in a way even the most hung-up parents can read to very little children. The drawings are delightful and there is no hiding behind sentimentality, romantics or the usual irrelevant private lives of birds and bees. Even what an orgasm feels like is given a page or two and is utterly charming.' Cleo August 1975

WHERE DID I COME FROM?
$4.60

Selling fast — supplies may be short in some areas but a new shipment is due any day.

Distributed by Whitcoulls Ltd.
From all good booksellers

ABORTION BUMPER STICKERS

There are bumper stickers available at a cost of 25c each, red and black, printed with “ABORTION - A WOMAN’S RIGHT TO CHOOSE” from Sue Smith, 64 Russell Street, Dunedin.

HERSTORY EXHIBITION

A photographic exhibition with accompanying posters has been created and exhibited as the Collective’s contribution to International Women’s Year in Dunedin. The one hundred photos depict, with a very feminist perspective, the herstory of women in New Zealand since Pioneer days. Accompanying scripts have also been written for 4 women to enact late (19) women from New Zealand history.

If other groups are interested in obtaining and exhibiting this pictorial HERSTORY The Collective is willing for it to travel New Zealand after its completion in Dunedin. Write to Box 446, Dunedin for information.
Letters 2

Feminist Diary 4

Editorial - the Baby Wage 6

Behind the News 8

Kapila Khandvala 14

The Birth of Kate 16

The Last Race 20

The Bobigny Trial 25

The Blackburn Whitewash Syndrome 30

The Feminist Eye 32

Group News 38

A painted pottery figure made 6000 years ago in the Nile Valley.

These people worked on this issue:
Sharyn Cederman, Val Cole, Sandra Coney, Christine Dann, Robyn Griffith, Anne Parsons, Rosemary Ronald, Julie Thompson.

Cover : Sally Hollis McLeod

Illustrations : p 20 Vanya Lowry
             p 30 Sally Hollis McLeod
Dear Broadsheet,

Yet another spin-off of the United Women's Convention, a day long Festival of Women, took place in Masterton on Sunday October 12, drawing over 350 women. Although it was always planned as a mild affair, aimed at uniting women and expanding their ideas about the Women’s Movement as a whole, it has aroused its share of controversy and antagonism. It was organised by an ad hoc group, WOW (Women of the Wairarapa) and more than fulfilled our hopes.

Before and after the Festival I have been appalled at the blindly simplistic attitude of so many towards the Women’s Movement. For countless people, the feminist cause is intent on one thing only: dragging happy women away from their toddlers and forcing them to go to work, or destroying their confidence by calling them cabbages. I’m sure IWY has done something towards changing this popular image, yet it seems like a hard hard struggle. It is sad and ironic, when one of the key feminist concepts is that of choice - real, not illusory choice.

We did our best to stress this at the Festival by displaying 2 posters - “FEEL FREE - to marry or stay single, to have six kids or none - and please LET OTHERS BE” and “FEEL FREE - to stay home or work for money, to study or to bake and sew - and please LET OTHERS BE.” We’ve had tremendously positive feedback from those who attended the Festival, but are still provoking letters in the paper that accuse us of being “patronising to men”, “extremist minorities”, “women whose vanity far exceeds any concern they may have for their community” and of course of threatening the stability of the country by breaking up family homes. The letters are, naturally, all anonymous.

I don’t know whether my conclusion should be a wry “you can’t win ‘em all” or a despairing “you just can’t win!”

Rachel McAlpine

Dear Broadsheet,

I write to protest at the cruelty displayed in the editorial by Sandi Hall in Broadsheet No. 32.

I am 46, married, with three sons aged 25, 22, 20. I have at some cost over the last 20 years said most of the things Broadsheet is now saying, the difference being that I had very little support from other women, as you have.

When you print things like, “Feminism is in danger of becoming a farce, a comedy played cautiously by inexperienced aging actresses,” you are doing the very thing you preach against. I mean stereotyping anyone over the age of forty as being the kind of person who likes “afternoon tea-things on a tastefully arranged tray.”

It may seem to you that I and people my age have come late to Feminism. You are entitled to that view. You are not entitled to label me or anyone else and you are certainly not going to tell me (without protest) that I am “playing at it cautiously.”

I left school at twelve and went to work, (I put my age up to fifteen), because my mother had two other children to try and get through High School. She was a widow, my father having shot himself in the latter stages of the Depression in 1934.

So my brother and sister went to High School. My brother weeded carrots for sixpence an hour and paid for his clothes. They wouldn’t mind me saying that I was the one who would have benefited most from more education. I worked first at a Woollen Mill and then at a Printing Factory. I met my husband there when he came to work after the war. I was pretty busy working overtime two nights a week and Saturday morning. I read anything and everything from True Confessions to Virginia Woolf’s novels. Perhaps I didn’t have much energy left to be very vocal about Women’s Rights, I had to snatch some time to play, and besides I lacked confidence.

I married, had three sons, and worked in and outside the home. I did some freelance writing for newspapers and radio, became interested in acting and directing plays, read a lot, and grew more confident about my feelings on the role of women in our society. I made a few close friends who, like me, used each other as sounding boards to hammer out our ideas. But still not confident enough to do anything in a public way.

Six years ago I started extra-mural university work. I now have sixteen papers and when we sell our grocery-dairy I will do the stage III internally. I work at the shop from 7 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon most days except the weekend. I have directed one three act play this year and will shortly be starting rehearsals for O Temperance.

I was one of the aging women at the United Women’s Convention and for me, (have a good laugh sisters!) it was a truly remarkable experience. It was confirmation of so many things for me. I went to the Feminist Workshops; sorry if I spoiled them for you.

I attended the Convention with a friend aged 23. Since we came back we have held two public meetings, produced and delivered, (I mean walked), a questionnaire to 1732 letterboxes in this borough, the subject being a Women’s Centre.

Last Saturday we opened a Women’s Centre in this town. If you exercise your imagination you may realise that it hasn’t all been easy, certainly I have not been very “cautious” in any public speaking I have done.

Now rural women will have somewhere to feed babies, somewhere to meet and talk, somewhere to wait for buses, somewhere to read our copies of Broadsheet. Townswomen have a drop-in centre, women bring their lunch here and have tea or coffee with the volunteers who staff it.

As well as providing a place to meet we have some other programmes we are organising. An evening class on New Maths, an effective speaking course, a car maintenance course.
You see we realise something you don’t appear to. Women lack confidence. They need to be made aware that they are valued and valuable members of our community. Courses like this raise their confidence. I must say your editorial did nothing for my confidence.

It did make me angry though. I would have written before but we have been pretty busy painting the Women’s Centre and making it comfortable. Last week we had Vick Buck to a tea meeting and Sonja Davies was our guest speaker at the opening, which was as informal as we could make it. There were women, men, children and even a couple of dogs present.

Those of us, about eight all told, who are responsible for setting up the Women’s Centre are also going to attend all the election meetings and ask questions.

I am sure this sounds like very small progress to you. You are free to be critical, just don’t base your criticism on age or inexperience or whatever other label comes to mind.

Come down on the floor Sisters, that’s where it’s all happening!

Renee Taylor
Wairoa.

Sandi Hall replies:

Dear Renee,

I am extremely sorry at your distress, evident in your letter written in reply to my editorial. From your experiences, you have experienced the problems women face in society first-hand. Your extra-curricular (as the media would deem them) activities in the women’s centre, and your attendance at the convention all go to prove that you are a woman who is aware of the problems women face in society and is working towards rectifying them. Which is one of the definitions of a feminist. I’m sorry you felt I was writing about you personally.

In fact, I was writing about the women who are wives of successful businessmen, wives of university professors. These are the women who live in elegant houses, wear alligator shoes - and whose awareness of the problems women face is virtually non-existent. They stand for the status quo remaining because it is a materialistically good life for them. They often don’t admit that they have breasts and vaginas, and that these anatomical assets place them in a category in the eyes of society similar to a pet horse or a field of quality-bred sheep. Their self interest is made more appalling by their wealth, for they could do so much, and they do so little. What have bowling or tennis matches in the morning, followed by sherry parties in the late afternoon, done for the women of our world? And what makes me angry is the fact that many of them realise that it is now desirable to be called a feminist, and are doing so, so that their husbands can point to their awareness of what’s happening in society in order to make a better impression on the overlord in charge of the salary increase and a higher place in the pecking order. In general, I am pro-women; these women seem to be anti-women.

In sisterhood,

Sandi Hall

Dear Broadsheet,

The Women’s Liberation movement could be doomed to extinction unless approach is altered to cover a wider range of topics.

Some women use the movement as a weapon in a personal vendetta against the male sex. There are many long-suffering fathers, husbands and employers as well as the other kind.

Whilst tackling local themes with enthusiasm, women ignore vital issues such as nuclear testing.

Our well-being is closely related to the economic situation yet we permit the cost of living to force daughters and sons into a situation which condemns them to economic slavery for the rest of their lives. Where a household depends on two wage packets, the need for wage rises may be “masked”, the inadequacy of a single wage packet becoming obvious only if one partner ceases work. The act of “going out to work” does not in itself constitute freedom although it has become symbolic of this female condition.

All women are capable of violence given the appropriate set of circumstances yet some behave as if violence was directed only against their own persons. One of the less desirable aspects of an unthinking approach to Women’s Liberation is the tendency of some women to regard children they have already brought into the world, as “obstacles”. In this respect I would like more information concerning cruelty to children in New Zealand. I read that in Australia, the average is a thousand cases a week. This would not include instances of psychological cruelty, less detectable but equally disastrous.

Whilst suggesting women are entitled to “freedom”, we should not down-grade domestic work. We should not ignore discrimination by women against their own sex. Career women should acknowledge their debt to women willing to perform the domestic tasks for which they have not the time if they are to apply themselves to more glamorous occupations. Institutions could not function without a domestic staff, female and male.

Most members of the Women’s Liberation movement are young or middle-aged, enjoying a fair share of health and energy. They omit consideration of a less attractive aspect of the female condition - old age. A survey of elderly women at home, in hospitals and rest homes, their needs, attitudes, opinions and experiences would provide the Women’s Liberation movement with invaluable material and a reliable foundation on which to build.

Nor have Maori or Polynesian women been consulted to a worthwhile degree concerning improvements they would appreciate as regards their position in an urban community.

As an obsessional approach to subject matter has the effect of alienating possible recruits, above all let us cultivate that saving grace - a sense of humour.

Eleanor Moyles

There is no Fronting Up in this issue. We will be back again next month. Have a happy Christmas and a productive New Year.
SEPTEMBER 23

The Director-General of Health, Dr. H.J. Hiddlestone, said yesterday that six private hospitals had been given licences to perform abortions under the Hospitals Amendment Act. Three more hospitals had applied for licences, and the Health Department was completing the applications.

SEPTEMBER 24

The Ontario Council on the Status of Women, an advisory group to the Government, has released a study which reports that most U.S. advertisers are producing advertisements which are objectionable or offensive to women. The council criticized the media for carrying the advertisements, and criticized women for putting up with stereotyping demeaning ads and continuing to buy the products.

A private member's bill that would remove any existing legal barriers in employment for women was to be introduced today by Mr. W.L. Young (Nat. Miramar). The bill would also outlaw any future attempts to introduce discrimination in employment.

Mr. Justice Speight, in a judgment delivered in Auckland, said the new Hospitals Amendment Act was by no means as broad in its effect as might be thought on casual examination. "This ill-drafted piece of legislation would probably have little effect on the liability to prosecution of an abortion clinic or even of a doctor who performed an abortion in his private surgery."

The legal advisor for Auckland Medical Aid Trust said that for all practical purposes Mr. Justice Speight's decision meant the new Act had no effect whatsoever.

SEPTEMBER 26

The Government would not make any decision on possible action over the Supreme Court's interpretation of the effect of the Hospitals Amendment Act until it received legal advice on the position, the Prime Minister, Mr. Rowling, said in Parliament yesterday.

SEPTEMBER 28

The death occurred today of Dr. W.B. Sutch, economist and ardent supporter of women's rights.

OCTOBER 1

Every second cyclone in Australia will now be given a male name. The change was ordered because of pressure from women's groups.

OCTOBER 2

The women's section of the Auckland Central National Party today called for the immediate appointment of a woman advisor to the Government. Ms. Betty Biddles also said there should be more communication between women's groups and politicians, and that this would help unify the women's movement, which the National Party group felt was fragmented.

The Minister of Justice, Dr. Finlay, yesterday introduced his Matrimonial Property Bill, which seeks to secure a fairer division of property when a marriage breaks up. The bill was given a first reading and referred to the statutes revision committee.

OCTOBER 8

Two female gangs have been engaged by the Forest Service for low pruning in forests in Nelson and Marlborough. The women applied for jobs under the Government's winter work scheme. This is the first time women have been engaged for such work, and the conservator of forests said it was on a trial basis at present.

At the first day of hearings for the Royal Commission evidence was given by Professor Jerone Lejeune and Dr. J.J. Billings on behalf of the Guild of St. Luke - a society for Catholic doctors.

Dr. Billings stated that contraceptionists were "amoral, selfishly motivated" people. Professor Lejeune contradicted himself by stating "We should never mix scientific data with religious or anti-religious beliefs".

OCTOBER 9

The United States Army, after months of study, says that about all it needs to prepare West Point for its first women cadets is to change the bathrooms. Women can apply for Army, Navy and Air Force academies if President Ford signs a military Authorization Bill that includes a provision for admitting women into the military universities. About 300 women have inquired about gaining admission but so far only 11 have submitted applications.

OCTOBER 10

A Bill opening all branches of nursing to people of either sex was introduced to Parliament by Mr. McGuigan today. The Nurses Amendment (No. 2) Bill abolishes the category of male nurse. The Bill was given its first reading and referred to the social service select committee.

A Chicago nun has decided not to serve as an advisor on women's affairs at an international assembly of the World Council of Churches, because of her own Church's discrimination against women.

OCTOBER 11

Mr. Rowling has given an assurance that a woman commissioner will act as a "watchdog" when the law on women's rights operates. He said the Government intended to introduce the Bill early in the first Parliamentary session of next year. The assurance was given to Diane Cadwallad-
San Francisco suffragettes celebrate California’s ratification of the Susan Anthony amendment, November 1919

er, a member of the political action committee of Auckland Women’s Centre.

Punjab officials today said the government suspects brides who do not bring enough dowry to their husbands are often treated so badly they are driven to suicide. The rulers of India’s wealthiest State ordered investigations into a spate of suicides and fatal accidents involving young brides.

OCTOBER 21

Guides designed to show voters how this year’s political candidates are thinking on women’s issues were released yesterday by WEL. As a preliminary guide, the only people who refused to answer the WEL questionnaire were National Party candidates! Lobby spokeswomen emphasised yesterday that they were not telling women how to vote but were giving information on politicians’ attitudes to issues important to women.

OCTOBER 22

Dr. Gerry Wall said he was “highly delighted” to get a low score on the WEL survey, and said he regarded it as a “complete farce” and a joke. He claimed the survey was a political stunt by a group of frustrated women.

The president of NOW in the U.S.A. said in an interview that equality of women in the USSR is just not true. Karen Decrow was attending a conference of young women in modern society, in Moscow. Officials of the conference wanted to delete her statement that, “as long as the Soviet Union gives ‘mothers’ medals’ to women who have more than 10 children … women will never have equality”.

OCTOBER 25

The women of Iceland took the day off yesterday to demonstrate how indispensable they are. The stoppage, all part of Icelandic Women’s Day, in support of IWY, brought the country to a standstill.

OCTOBER 31

Local bodies should not deal with any organisation which discriminated against women, an Auckland Harbour Board member, Mr. B.J. Kirkwood, said yesterday. He was speaking at a board meeting where the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron’s taking over the lease of Trillos, was being discussed. Mr. Kirkwood put forward the motion that the club should be warned of the board’s disapproval of accommodating male-only tenants. The motion was defeated by an overwhelming majority.

NOVEMBER 4th

The Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion yesterday received submissions from Dr. J.C. O’Neill, of the University of Waikato, Mr. Barry Littlewood, president of the Auckland Council for Civil Liberties, and Father Felix Donnelly of the Auckland University’s School of Medicine. Father Donnelly stated that there should be no law about whether young people are given contraceptive advice, in his opinion, no one had ever suffered from over-information. Dr. O’Neill said that for the first time, motherhood was fully a matter for factional evaluation, and since the bearing of children need not be rationalised because of its inevitability, the costs as well as the virtues could be weighed. The options which the equal opportunity movement sought were progressively foreclosed by a system that denied women the right and the means to full contraceptive protection. Mr. Littlewood brought up the fact that the present law on abortion meant one law for the well-to-do and another for the poor - who could not afford to pay substantial fees to a private hospital. He said that the prohibiting of abortion except on certain grounds, assumed the woman was incompetent to make her own decision, even after receiving medical advice, and that the making of a valid and presumably moral decision was the exclusive prerogative of the medical profession.

NOVEMBER 5

Dr. James Woolnough is to be tried again in the Supreme Court at Auckland on November 24, on 12 charges of unlawfully using a suction curette with intent to procure the miscarriage of 12 women. The 59-year-old Sydney doctor appeared in court in August on the same charges but a jury failed to agree on a verdict.

At a lunchtime meeting with about 80 members of Waikato WEL yesterday, Mr. Muldoon was asked whether he would accept the findings of the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion, even if they differed from his own beliefs, Mr. Muldoon said: “No commission is better able than me to decide on conscience issues.” Unquote. He told the meeting that he would not support any move that would involve changing the law to allow contraceptives to be provided to people under 16.
A labour election bribe was the introduction of a lump sum payment to mothers for their first and second children. It was called "a motherhood allowance." JULIE THOMPSON discusses the implications and possible effects of this ill-founded proposal.

Who could have guessed that it could have been so easy! The women of New Zealand bought out for a few hundred dollars.

On the 11th of November the Prime Minister, in what can only be described as a desperate electioneering bid, announced his answer to feminist claims for wages for housework in the form of a "Motherhood Allowance".

Moderate feminist groups throughout N.Z. should take note of what has happened to this fundamental feminist demand and in future be aware that we must fight all the way to obtain our demands in their totality. The essential principles at issue here were (1) that every woman who works in the home should earn an income which is at least equal to the average wage earned in the market place. This would more reasonably enable men and women to swap roles as domestic or market-place workers, and would facilitate an end to the traditional link between women and housework. (2) That a wage should be paid for the job that women presently do in the home which produces up to 20% of many national economies but which remains unrecognised; which involves longer hours than any factory shift but pays no wages; and which is a life-long career but carries no superannuation scheme. (3) That every woman should have an income that is hers alone, which is paid directly to her and not through her husband. Such a wage would free women from some of the constraints of the domestic role, because it would allow her to buy childcare for her children, if it were available.

None of these has been established in Labour's proposed "Motherhood Allowance." What we have instead been fobbed off with, is a "dependent-minders allowance" designed to reinforce women's role as careers of this country's young, aged and infirm, and to prevent women attaining any kind of equality in this society. Until we can break the chains linking childbirthing, childrearing, and housework, women will be doomed to a life of subordinate status. This is not because there is anything inherently demeaning about having children or bringing them up. It is rather that the way society structures these roles does mean that they are limiting for the women filling them. There is moreover much inherently bad about housework and very few women gain satisfaction from it. (1). In this society the person who cares for a child at home is the person who expected to be responsible for the housework. Providing a secure, happy, domestic environment is the housewife's contribution to the country's Gross National Product. It is apparently of little relevance, that she may not be happy doing this.

The point long made by feminists, but ignored by those moderates who believed that women's status could be raised without altering our roles and which frightened those (male) politicians who realised its implications, was that women in the home are not the happy, healthy creatures we are led to believe (2,3). In fact "happy" housewives more frequently seek psychiatric help than any other sector of the population.

We know that the conditions under which women live as "domestics" are not conducive to healthy mental functioning but male politicians realised the repercussions of women's rebellion against this role. They realised that it would totally disturb the status quo and thoroughly threaten the comfortable position held by men. For this reason, almost before the words "wages for housework" had left the lips of radical feminists, we were presented with a formulated policy on a "Motherhood Allowance". Feminists asking for a wage for housework wanted just that, not a further glorification of the state of motherhood. Our government reinterpreted the spirit of the demand to further its own ends i.e. to guarantee an adequate workforce in the future. The spirit of the original demand is clear in the proposal Ms Selma James put forward.

"Not only should housewives start collecting $275 weekly from the government in salary but they should also be entitled to up to 20 years back pay." Yes, James is a radical feminist for those who would criticise on that score and so we back her up with a remark from a "respectable" person, Anne-Aymone Giscard d'Estaing, wife of the President of France. She says that it is reasonable and logical that the services of housewives be salaried. Zoe Fairbairns, secretary of the Research and Resources Centre in Britain argues "Housework is real work with real economic value. That value is seen only when for one reason or another, housewives stop doing it. It is seen in the estimated $100 per week it costs to keep a child or an elderly person in an institution, in the cost of eating out, in the cost of using launderies." (4).

The speed with which this "Motherhood Allowance" was instituted in New Zealand is interesting. "Wages for Housework" has never been a serious demand here. Unlike our long time demand for childcare, it has a short history. Twenty-four hour, state-run, free, childcare is a demand that we have made constantly and the government has been slow, very slow to respond. The reasons must be obvious. If women were provided with childcare, we would have the opportunity to control our lives, to give our lives some direction outside the total demands of children. The "Motherhood Allowance" on the other hand limits women's right to self determination. Our societal role is now legitimately that of childrearer and domestic - we are "paid" for it. This, of course, is the catch. We are not in fact paid for it at all, but the known existence of the "Motherhood Allowance" builds into our societal framework the expectation that women belong to the role, and the role belongs to women.

In 1974 the Social Development Council (5) proposed an allowance of $10 per week for women who stayed in the...
home, in order to counter the effects of equal pay legislation. We were told, in response to enquiries, that this was only embryonic thinking and would bear little resemblance to final legislation. If anything that proposal was worse but the resemblance is clear. In June 1975, the Report of the Select committee on Women's Rights sent the question into what should have been the depths of oblivion. They recommended the establishment of an inter-departmental committee to examine the implications of the allowance. To our knowledge such committee has been established. Politicians involved on the Select Committee assured us that there was absolutely no chance that any allowance would be implemented; that the recommendation made had been so weak that it would not be enacted upon; and that in any case the country could not afford it! Despite this, and despite our opposition to the scheme, a short 5 months later, we are presented with “the dependent minder's allowance” in two parts (as in all good kitchen sink dramas).

Part one is the “Mothers Allowance” payable for the first two children born after the introduction of the scheme. It is not certain whether this is an incentive for all N.Z. families to increase their numbers by 2, or whether it is an attempt to keep women tied to dependent children for 7 more years. Without going into the economic details, it is sufficient to say the financial reward is small. For families electing cash payment (payable one year after the birth) the amount additional to the present family benefit is only $344 for the first child and $144 for the second. An incentive? Yes, some men are desperate to raise cash to qualify for mortgages on their houses. However, most important is the fact that the payment is not a direct payment to women for work they have done. It is not money in her hand of an amount large enough to give her some economic bargaining power in marriage. The second option is an indirect payment in the form of a superannuation contribution (sufficient to allow a working woman on an above average salary to take 3 years off to have her 2 children without reducing her superannuation.) It assumes that every woman will stop work to have her children. “This allowance”, said Mr. Rowling, “will be paid as recognition of the role the homemaker plays in the New Zealand community” (6). We hope the women of N.Z. are listening because he could not have spoken a truer word.

Part two is the Dependent Minder's Allowance payable to women who stay at home to care for aged or infirm relatives. The P.M. justifies the allowance thus, “The security”, (my emphasis) (7) He was in such a hurry to announce the scheme that he did so even before the details had been worked out. Whatever these details are, the fact remains that while men can, with clear conscience, leave for the office and their work-mates each day, women will be expected to fulfill the social role for which they are the victims. If the government had been truly concerned with the position of women in N.Z., or had wanted to recognise the hard labour involved in childcare, it would have voted pro-abortion in the last parliamentary session. It would long ago have gone to feminists (not women posing in organisations like W.E.L. or N.C.W.) and asked them about the form childcare should take. If we are not careful we will be sold out over childcare too. We will be saddled with a scheme whereby one woman in the street will provide childcare for half a dozen children in the privacy of her own home. Such a scheme has already been mooted in government circles. We must fight against any proposal which seeks to reinforce women’s conventional role and privatise our work. While we are isolated we are rendered impotent in our struggle.

The allowance was given because the government thought that such a cheap and easy token gesture would not only be seen to be carrying out justice, it would also legitimise a delay in providing childcare, and would defuse any other demands feminists might make in the near future.

We need to be extremely careful or every demand feminists make will be sold out by moderate women’s groups who understand nothing of an overall political perspective, but who latch onto specific issues like the “Motherhood Allowance”. The horrifying thing about this allowance is that it turned a concept designed to free women into a mechanism to further control us. It was supposed to satisfy women in this election year but the interesting thing is that no group of women appears to be very pleased about it. The N.Z. Family Planning Association has voted against it; middle aged female writers to the editor want to know why they can’t have some too; we hear that Ms Cathy Wilson, Deputy Leader of the Values Party, who has always supported the idea of a Mother’s Benefit, is not happy with the current proposal and radical feminists are certainly not happy with it. Only one course of action remains. We must convince the Labour Party that it must radically change the form in which it shows concern for women.

Julie Thompson

(3) Weissman, M., 1974 The Depressed Woman
(4) Time Magazine, September 1, 1975.
(5) See Broadsheet No.30, June, 1975 p 12 - 14
Now in America recently had some massive upheavals in the leadership and direction of the organisation. SUE KEDGELY reports from New York.

Most of the 3,000 delegates gathered together in the 'City of Sisterly Love' for the eighth national convention of the National Organisation for Women found the three day event a cross between a grim endurance test and a feminist nightmare. Many delegates - especially those who had saved all year to afford to fly in from California, New Mexico etc for the bi-annual convention, expressed fury and outrage as they heaved themselves into departing trains and buses. For the Philadelphia Convention, like its predecessor in Houston in 1973, spent most of its time bogged down in election fights and almost no time discussing issues. Twelve hours of wrangling over rules of procedure (ROBERTS rules) and election procedures generally, immediately followed the President's opening speech on Saturday. Feminist entertainment, planned for nine o'clock on Saturday night, was put off till 3 am on Sunday morning, when an exhausted clutch of hardy feminists staggered around to the strains of America's leading feminist rock group - appropriately entitled the 'Deadly Night Shade.' Nor did things get better. It was personal politicking, bickering, challenges to the chair and all that non-sisterly behaviour that seems so disturbingly imitation-male. Robin Tyler (of Tyler and Harrison, the feminist comedian team who helped start NOW in New Zealand three years ago) said it was like a Republican Convention except that there was no woman coming out of the cake. Australian feminist, Liz Reid (recently resigned from her position as Whitlam's Special Advisor and visiting the States) was invited to the Conference as an International feminist. Eventually she was allowed to speak right in the middle of a challenge to the chair so her words went largely unnoticed - even her pointed observation that it is a distressing sign of oppression when the energies of the oppressed are turned to attacking and destroying each other instead of being focused outwards against their oppressor.

Nevertheless, many seasoned participants in NOW conventions insisted that the dissension and bitterly contested election struggle was more than a matter of rhetoric and personal power-seeking. What was at stake, behind the deadlocked debates, was the future dir-
section of the nine-year old, fractured, factionalised feminist organisation. Would it become, as the narrowly elected President Karen DeCrow said in her opening address, the third wave of feminism, or would it become, as a disgruntled delegate suggested, the third wave of the League of Women Voters and the Women's Junior League?

In an all-out effort to ensure that NOW would remain the 'cutting edge of feminism - a radical organisation, the intellectual innovators and innovators in action' last year's President Karen DeCrow and her supporters organised themselves into a Majority Caucus ticket, united under the theme 'out of the mainstream into the revolution' and pledged to use 'any principled means of change from lobbying to civil disobedience.'

Although many non-supporters riled at what they described as the rail-roading, blockbusting tactics used by the Majority Caucus, DeCrow and a majority of her caucus did make it into key positions in the organisation. This could mean an end to the in-fighting and divisiveness in the National Board which, many election candidates claimed, had paralysed the organisation in the last two years. Karen DeCrow, in her campaign for re-election, said a timid faction on the NOW Board had handicapped her attempt as President to move NOW to more innovative positions which was why she and her supporters had campaigned so vigorously to win control of the Board. Timid, conservative people do not bring about social change, Ms DeCrow declared, and reminded members that back in 1967 when the organisation was split over whether it should endorse abortion as a woman's right, detractors had insisted such a stand would destroy the women's movement. The reverse had happened, she told a press conference, and it was now time to take an equivalently radical step forward. Ms DeCrow and the Majority Caucus also contested the view that NOW should restrict its struggle to purely women's issues. Advocates of the 'Women's only' view argued that the women's movement, historically, had always allowed itself to be diverted and weakened by pursuing other causes. NOW would miss the boat if it allowed itself to get side-tracked into coalitions with other minority groups, the fight against racism, unemployment etc. The exact opposite was true, opponents in the Majority Caucus argued. "If we don't work to challenge and restructure all the institutions we are trying to integrate ourselves into, we will wind up with a world that is equal - for white, straight, middle class women," Karen DeCrow stated. "If we are only concerned with becoming women doctors and not with nursing and health services generally, then we are dealing with only 2% of the population, and enabling it to get a bigger slice of the unsavoury male pie."

Elizabeth Reid agreed. "It is not our task to turn women into men, but to question the polarity between women and men, superior and inferior, powerful and powerless, she said. The problems we face cannot be solved by role reversal or role reduction - producing, for example, a famous woman for every famous man." She criticised the 'reformist' strategies used so far by NOW, pointing out that 'equity demands' for equal pay for work of equal value, equal opportunity etc could create the preconditions for revolution but were not in themselves revolutionary tactics. Remedial, band-aid measures too often left the root of the problem untouched, and if doled out in a piece-meal, conciliatory way, could have the effect of defusing the revolutionary struggle and persuading everybody that the fight was being won.

With the re-election of the 37 year old lawyer Karen DeCrow and a majority of her supporters in key positions, it looked, at convention's end, as though the radicals were moving in once again to take over and give new leadership to the organisation, although when one questioned them on their new 'radical' strategies, few would be specific. Giving the NOW endorsement to political candidates who met feminist standards was one of the few new forms of action mentioned. There were some good resolutions on opposing the Catholic Church but little was said about the proposed action. This silence was tactical, veteran feminist and New York Times correspondent Eileen Shanahan suggested. In fact radicals were brimming with new ideas and strategies, but wanted first to get the huge, heterogeneous organisation to agree to the idea of radical action in principle. "Language is the tool of the oppressor" Robyn Tyler agreed. "Once you are no longer afraid of the word radical, you can begin to consider radical action, by which I mean action that gets to the root of a problem, which does not soft peddle on issues. Revolution is evolution with a spearhead, that's all. Once people see that, their fear begins to dispel. Radicals are the backbone of any movement," she added. "As they fight out front and get themselves killed off, the liberals behind can step over their bodies and get the jobs and advantages the radicals worked for."

But amidst all the talk of new radicalism and new slogans, Karen DeCrow, in her opening speech, appeared concerned primarily with apologising for any off-
A prize-winning sexist ad

The Braggatto advertisement currently begin shown in movie theatres has won prizes overseas. Carole Stewart comments on this blatant piece of sexist advertising.

BRAGATTO ADVERTISEMENT

(MacHarman Associates)

What stronger affirmation could we have of the fact that society (i.e. our male orientated and male dominated institutions) not only endorses but applauds the attitude that women exist solely for the delight, satisfaction and use of men. The Bragogatto advertisement, currently screening at Kerridge Odeon Theatres, depends entirely for its punch and effect on the portrayal of woman as sex object. It is insulting and degrading in the extreme.

Yet this is the advertisement which has recently won a Silver Trophy at the 22nd International Advertising Film Festival in Venice. Of course such a prestigious honour could not pass unnoticed amongst our easily impressed male colleagues. Craig Little (TV One) devoted not a small amount of time during 'A Little Bit of Sunday's World' to looking at the production team and the ideas that went into the making of the ad, and Stephen Ballantyne devoted his entire Cinema Column in the Listener to it (Oct. 11 - 17), in which his praise and adulation reached climactic heights, overwhelmed that a New Zealand 'film' had won "the second highest award and probably the most prestigious award ever won by a N.Z. film of any sort in international competition ...........

and even if the thing only has a running time of 60 seconds, it is still a significant achievement of N.Z. film making".

The product supposedly for sale is Bragatto, (an alcoholic drink similar to Vermouth), yet one could be forgiven for assuming that the provocative piece of flesh behind the bar is what is really being put on the market. She is the voluptuous sensual female, who knows exactly what a man wants and is there to give it to him. It is obvious from the tone and the not-so-subtle implications of what the customer really wants that this is an advertisement made by men aimed at selling the product to other men by means of exploitation of the female body as sex object. It is in extremely bad taste, and is singularly lacking in quality and imagination.

I would like to quote further what Stephen Ballantyne has to say, both because it admirably describes what happens in the ad, for the interest of those who haven’t been subjected to a viewing at the cinema, and because it gives an interesting insight into the way a lot of men view such treatment of women as being smart, something to be admired.

"......The use of sex in advertising has long been tut-tutted over, but in this case I really can’t see much wrong with it. It isn’t one of those subliminal association type advertisements, but rather is a bit of cheeky good fun."

Picture Ian Mune walking up to a bar and asking the barmaid for a drink - a drink of B-b-b-b ......He can’t get it out! He’s stuck! And obviously in some distress besides. Actually, although we aren’t immediately shown the barmaid, it becomes apparent very soon after Mune’s attack of the stutters that it is something about the woman on the other side of the counter that is distracting him. And our expectation is confirmed moments later when we cut to the barmaid herself - Liz Coulter, looking the quintessence of Kiwi blowiness.

There follows a rapid series of slips of the tongue, all revolving around our hero’s fixation, but somehow managing to include the important qualities of the drink under discussion. Finally “Could you make it a double?” he asks. (Actually he says “Could you make it a pair?”)

"......In short it is a fine advertisement .........our local film makers have turned out another work that promises even more than it delivers - the 89 minutes more film necessary to make a full-scale feature must wait for a wealthier patron.”

What Mr. Ballantyne omits to point out is that the ad is very liberally endowed with close-ups of Liz Coulter’s ample cleavage.

Imagine a similar advertisement, but with the roles reversed. A woman at the bar, trying to order a “P-P-p-p-” but obviously distracted by what she sees behind the counter. Then we see a close up of the barman’s bulging crotch, obviously the cause of the woman’s dilemma. She continues to stutter, eyes glued to his crotch, not quite able to blurt out what she wants. The barman smiles knowingly, and suggestively, and suggests - “A Pimms, perhaps?”. She smiles with relief. As he turns to get the drink, she says, “while you’re there, make it a large one”.

Sounds awful, doesn’t it. Well, what’s the difference. Would an ad like this one win an award and be acclaimed as a significant achievement for New Zealand film-making. Not bloody likely!

Carole Stewart
Connie Purdue - self styled feminist

This letter appeared in the Auckland Star. Is the writer justified in calling herself a feminist?

Feminist Issues

I am sure I will not be the only feminist active and interested in the various projects of International Women's Year who is wondering just what were the "feminist issues" on which parliamentary candidates were rated by the Women's Electoral Lobby.

No matter what one's politics, a survey which rates the Minister of Social Welfare, Mr. Norman King, below many untired candidates, in and out of Parliament, seems to me to be highly doubtful in its criteria.

What is "feminism"? As Purdue claims to be a feminist, perhaps an analysis of what she believes in will tell us what it is. Her letter shows her to be anti-abortion, anti-child-care, pro-motherhood and concerned about benefits and housing for the elderly, whom she says are mostly female.

Most elderly and aged people are women, so good housing, benefits and privileges should have been "a feminist issue." I wonder.

This letter appeared in the Auckland Star. Is the writer justified in calling herself a feminist?

Most women are mothers, or hope to be, so was the right to be anti-abortion, anti-child-care, pro-motherhood and concerned about benefits and housing for the elderly, whom she says are mostly female.

Did WEL rate it a "feminist issue" that no mother under any circumstances was made to feel that, for social or financial reasons, her unborn child was unwanted by society?

Or was the right to abortion the right to go into paid employment for young mothers with the provision by the State of child care centres, rated more highly?

What is "feminism"? Connie Purdue has gone on record before as saying that she is a "feminist", as opposed to a "women's liberationist." "Women's liberationists", in Purdue parlance, are "extremists" who blacken the respectable name of feminism.

What is "feminism"? Connie Purdue has gone on record before as saying that she is a "feminist", as opposed to a "women's liberationist." "Women's liberationists", in Purdue parlance, are "extremists" who blacken the respectable name of feminism.

Most elderly and aged people are women, so good housing, benefits and privileges should have been "a feminist issue." I wonder.

Most women are mothers, or hope to be, so was the right to be anti-abortion, anti-child-care, pro-motherhood and concerned about benefits and housing for the elderly, whom she says are mostly female.

Do these beliefs have anything in common with feminism, as an historical phenomenon, which first took root in the 1840s and which flourishes today under the newer name of Women's Liberation? Are Purdue's attitudes shared by noted feminists of the 19th and 20th centuries, such as Goldman, Anthony, Millet, de Beauvoir, Firestone and the many others who have written the books and made the speeches which have fired women with their feminist ideas?

Briefly, no. Purdue obviously believes that feminism is a concern for women. It is not. Feminism is a concern for the right of all women to self-determination. By enabling women to make their own decisions, feminism will free men and children to be independent too. When women are free from social stereotypes and oppressive systems, men and children will also be free. In fighting for freedom for women, feminists fight for a better, saner, happier society for all.

Purdue's concept of feminism is inadequate. It is a restatement of Labour Party philosophy, not a definition of feminism. Old people have problems peculiar to their age, not their sex. When elderly women are liberated they will be able to deal with these problems as equals with men, rather than being patronised or neglected for their sex as well as their age. True feminists do not believe that motherhood is, or should be, the primary and justifying goal of every woman - this is bad for women and children. It fosters the traditional attitude to woman as sexual being first, human being second. Feminists believe that the individual should decide whether she will reproduce or not, and how her offspring should be cared for. At present our anti-abortion laws make pregnancy compulsory, at great cost to reluctant mothers and unwanted babies. While there are some women who must work who would prefer to stay at home, there are far more who would welcome the independence and opportunities for growth that State-sponsored child care would bring to them and their children.

Purdue's final paragraphs reveal her distrust of anything not stamped with the Labour seal of approval - those "overseas liberation groups" which are non-partisan and presumably "radical." They also show how little she cares for the true goals of feminism. Her vision of a New Zealand composed "of workers and homemakers", presumably of the opposite sex, and adhering to traditional roles, is far removed from the feminist ideal where people are more important than roles, and the tasks of production and maintenance in society are shared among men and women and not delegated to one sex or the other. Unlike Ms. Purdue, feminists believe that political decisions based on the needs of women will be decisions which will benefit New Zealand as a whole, and that politicians who continually place other interests before those of women are not only betraying those women, but the rest of society as well. Society is composed of individuals, male and female. A society which does not treat its individual members justly cannot hope to achieve "equality, peace and development" in its larger units, such as the family, school and workplace.

New Zealand provides blatant examples of social injustice based on a disregard for the rights of individuals - the refusal to give married women the same rights as married men being but one of the more irksome. Effective as Labour thinking may be in some areas, it is still inadequate. Only a true feminist analysis can diagnose and cure these deep-rooted faults in our system. Feminism is not dogmatic, but all concepts must have limits, if they are to mean anything at all. Purdue stretches the definition of feminism so far as to make it meaningless. If she cannot accept the feminist principles outlined above, then she should stop styling herself a feminist.

Christine Dann

CONNIE PURDUE, MBE
Northcote

11
Oral Contraceptives in Iran

Contraception doesn’t always free women. CHRISTINE DANN comments on this recent report on family planning in Iran.

LONDON — Birth-control pills are to be marketed in a form called “Husband Pills” — which is certain to anger women’s libbers.

The pills are standard oral contraceptives but they will be supplied to men to hand out daily to their wives.

For family planning experts believe that many unwanted pregnancies will be prevented if the man of the house controls the situation.

“Whatever the women’s libbers may say, most wives still look to their husbands for initiative and responsibility,” said Dr. Malcolm Potts.

Iran figures

In a booklet shortly to be issued by the International Pregnancy Advisory Services, Dr. Potts and Dr. Jorgen Jenk put the case for the Husband Pill and a whole new system of marketing oral contraceptives.

Trials in Iran have shown that when pills are given directly to women, only 12 per cent continue to take them after six months. This compares with a figure of more than 90 per cent when the husbands dole them out.

Ramadan Pills are intended to be taken continuously for 60 days to cover the Moslem Ramadan fast period and so enable women to attend the Mosque.

Auckland Star 30/10/75

BIRTH CONTROL

Feminists have often advocated that men should take more responsibility for contraception. This article demonstrates what they do not want. Contraception should liberate women, not place them more firmly under the rule of men, as Dr. Potts’ proposals would.

As his trials were carried out in Iran, his conclusions seem very suspect. Iran is an archetypal male-dominated society. We are given no assurance that the women whose husbands gave them the pill wanted to remain childless. To prevent a woman from having a wanted child is just as cruel as forcing her to have an unwanted one. In both cases the woman should decide what she wants. It may be possible that in Iran women are still so brow-beaten that they need men to look after their own interests, but I would suspect it, and certainly doubt that this state of affairs occurs anywhere in the “western” world today.

The other “types” of pills are nothing new - the only novelty is that they make things easier for men. The “Tricycle Pill” will presumably make things better for men whose religion forbids intercourse during menstruation. I presume that the “Ramadan Pills” will enable women to circumvent a taboo which prevents menstruating and/or pregnant women from using the mosque, and will thus serve only to bolster irrational male dictates.

Birth control should be a matter of shared responsibilities, not imposed preferences. Because the woman must bear the baby, she should have the greater say. Potts’ scheme may make a slight dent in the birthrates of some developing countries. It will do nothing to liberate the women of those countries to control their reproductive and productive lives, and will thus be self-defeating. The development of a nation depends on the utilisation of all its resources, and that includes its woman-power. As wise developing nations realise, women hold half of the productive power necessary for full development. They will contribute fully only when they are respected and treated as individuals, and not as robots under the control of husband and State.

The IPAS is negotiating with drug companies to market the pills and several other novel contraceptive packs. These include the Honeymoon Pill, the Lactation Pill, the Tricycle Pill and the Ramadan Pill.

Honeymoon Pills are designed to enable the bride to choose her wedding day without worrying about the date. The planners regard them as specially important for those countries where the marriage date has to be carefully selected for religious reasons.

The Lactation Pill is a special low-dose contraceptive to ensure that mothers do not conceive again while they are nursing babies.

Tricycle Pills are designed to be taken regularly to reduce the number of menstrual cycles from 12 a year to three or less.
Calls for family life education in the schools are becoming more frequent. CHRISTINE DANN has doubts about whether such a programme can be successful.

With depressing regularity the problem of inadequate parents, especially mothers, resurfaces at women’s conferences. Battered babies, neglected children, sick, ill-nourished, poorly-educated boys and girls are the results of poor preparation for parenthood.

Recognising the individual misery and social cost of this syndrome, concerned women look for solutions. Because the home has failed, they look for other institutions which will prepare people for parenthood. The most obvious and accessible of these is the school. Cries for “family life” courses in schools have become louder in recent years. They represent yet another area where the school is expected to replace (or usurp) the traditional functions of the parents, presumably because trained teachers are believed to be able to teach more effectively, and more widely, what children were once expected to learn at home.

This response, which was what I had expected, helped confirm my initial suspicion that, however desirable improved parenthood may be, early adolescence is the wrong time to begin preparing people for it. If everyone in the country is to receive this sort of education, then the easiest way to ensure that they get it is of course in school, before they turn fifteen. At this age, most adolescents are far more interested in the preliminaries of sex - not in the end product. They are still growing and learning to look after themselves. Most of us would consider it undesirable for a teenage girl to become pregnant and have the responsibility of growing and caring for someone else. Very few teenage boys show any interest in the responsibilities of fatherhood. They do not relish the thought of taking on the financial responsibility of a family, and show even less enthusiasm for practical involvement in childcare. I daresay most of them are still expecting to play the role of the majority of fathers in our culture, which involves very little sustained contact with their children, especially in the early years of their lives. The schools will hardly be doing society a service if they reinforce this role by exempting boys from family life classes, if the aim of the classes is to produce better parents - yet they will probably find it very difficult to run classes full of uninterested or actively hostile boys.

Among girls, who expect to spend a lot of time with children, interest is greater, but far from unanimous. We must consider that it will be (we hope) at least six, seven, or even ten years before these girls have their first child. Will they remember what was told to them, in a necessarily simplified manner, so many years ago? It is highly likely that in this time our knowledge of child development and suitable childcare techniques will have increased and improved, and our family life graduates will possess only partially remembered and superseded knowledge. Knowledge which was given at a time when many lacked the motivation to remember it, and also the intellectual and emotional maturity necessary to grasp the complexities of the subject.

We must also remember that society, as well as students, changes. With the emphasis on the need to restrict population, the advantages of smaller families, many women preferring work to child-bearing, and increased provision of professionally-staffed childcare facilities we will see a decrease in the number of children in society, and the number of people directly involved with them, and thus in the need to train everyone to cope with children well.

Nevertheless, if we still think that all parents would benefit from extra information on how to care for their children, how are we going to get it to them? Personally, I would recommend adult education schemes, to be free and widely available, and especially recommended to expectant parents. Obviously the mechanics of such a scheme would be more complex than attaching a family life teacher to each secondary school but I believe that the superior effectiveness of such a programme would far outweigh any difficulties encountered. It certainly need not be more expensive than a school scheme. To me it makes a lot more sense to try and reach the adults who are actually involved and interested in child-rearing, rather than the adolescents who are still being reared themselves.

Christine Dann
FREDA COOK writes about an Indian woman who has done much to free her countrywomen from old traditions and taboos.

I first met Smt Kapila Khandvala in 1950, armed with an introduction from the late Shri V. K. Krishna Menon, a mutual friend with whom I had worked in London in the India League which he organised in support of India's Independence. Of course, I already knew that she was an activist and that she was Education Officer of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, the first woman in India to hold such a position. What I was soon to realise was the glowing warmth of her relationship with all sorts of people, including the many girls and women who but for her, would have been outcasts of society, without any chance of making good in a contemptuous world.

In some ways she had been very lucky in that her parents were remarkably unfettered by the rigid caste system which, at the time of her birth in 1906, virtually ruled the whole of Indian society. They shocked the orthodox Gujarati neighbours by following the principles of Gandhi and eating with Harijans or "Untouchables", as a symbol of common humanity. The Hindu hierarchy was outraged and the family was excommunicated. Kapila told me how she and her sisters who were at primary school, were thrilled at this experience and went running through the village shouting: "We're excommunicated! We're excommunicated!"

Kapila was a clever girl, and after graduating in Economics and Teaching in Bombay, won the Levi Barbour Scholarship and the Elizabeth Gamble Fellowship which entitled her to further studies in the U.S.A. where she obtained her M.A. degree in Education and Sociology. Moreover she gained much experience from her association with fellow students. With them she collected food and clothing for the wives and children of the Kentucky miners who were on strike, and in danger of losing their homes and food stores. She mixed freely with Whites and Blacks and built up friendships which have lasted till today.

On her return to Bombay she again incurred the wrath of the religious orthodox, by, in company with her parents, refusing to perform any "prayaschitta" or penance for her experiences overseas.

She was soon established as a teacher in the Vanita Vishram English School and later became Principal of the Vanita Vishram Primary Teachers' Training College, an Institution for women only, especially for child-widows, and deserted wives who lacked till then qualifications to earn their livings. In the 'Who's Who', compiled in India for International Women's Year, it is stated that "her services remain as a landmark in the history of the Institution". She brought self-respect to widows and discouraged the custom of shaving all hair compulsorily from a widow's head. She started creches and nurseries for the children of Untouchables whose mothers had to go to work and were accustomed to give their babies sleeping drugs, especially opium, to keep them quiet. She urged the Municipal Corporation to subsidise such undertakings so that today they are available in many places.

As a result of the enthusiasm engendered, Vanita Vishram now has a creche, a nursery school, a free milk centre, a medical clinic, adult literacy classes for both men and women, and a most pleasant recreation ground. I was delighted when in 1973, Kapila took me round to see the nursery school where on a very clean floor, toddlers, from 2½ years to 5, were playing or resting under the care of kind and well-trained girls. What particularly struck me was their playthings and equipment which could be found in the poorest homes. For instance a big group was engaged in covering the outlines of birds and animals drawn large on the floor in chalk, with bottle tops and shells, which, of course, cost nothing but the trouble of picking up.

During the vacations Kapila went out into the villages near the place where she was born, to meet the women who had had no chance of education or medical care. With a group of like-minded friends she spent much time, energy and money on liberating these folk from the abysmal darkness which they had inherited for generations.

With this considerable experience behind her, she was elected Hon. Secretary of the "All India Women's Conference", Bombay Branch, and in that capacity organised a number of women's conferences on Health, Maternity Care, General Welfare for Women, Employment and accompanying problems faced by working women in Bombay. She also collected thousands of signatures in support of the Hindu Code Bill which in the early '50s allows women to have property of their own and to decide for themselves whom they will marry and even whom they will divorce if they are unhappy. This Code is still too often honoured in the breach rather than in the
observance, especially in those parts of India where the AIWC has not been able to extend much influence.

In 1941, Kapila was appointed Secretary of the Schools Committee of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, the first woman in India to hold such a post, which was later raised to Education Officer. She had to struggle against male chauvinists in her Department who resented working under a woman! In 1960 she was once more the first woman in India to be appointed as Deputy Municipal Commissioner in the suburbs of Bombay, to handle problems connected with health, engineering, sewage, water supply etc., new aspects of social welfare which needed all her tact and efficiency.

Probably the most valuable reforms during her tenure of office came in the field of education, which was further complicated by there being ten language groups in Bombay. She made sure that the salary of Primary teachers was raised to a decent scale, and that duty-pay was grant-
After seeing an advertisement in Broadsheet for midwives, KITTY WISHART was able to organise having her baby at home. Here she describes her experiences in giving birth to her daughter.

The Birth of Kate

When I became pregnant for the first time at the age of 31 I was determined to avoid having the delivery in a hospital. I had heard endless stories from women of unnecessary shavings and enemas; being left alone for long periods of time; unnecessary or late administration of drugs; lack of co-operation from staff; ritual episiotomies and problems of establishing breast-feeding in a hospital environment. In comparison with the sterile look of hospital delivery rooms with their high hard tables, harsh lights and barbaric looking stirrups, the mediaeval woodcuts of a woman sitting in a wooden delivery chair with other women hovering around her looked incredibly attractive.

I was rather put out when I suggested a home delivery to my very good woman doctor and found myself classified firmly as an “elderly primigravida” (any woman over 27 having a first baby) who should put all thoughts of a home delivery firmly out of her head. Further checks revealed that almost all doctors in New Zealand were of the same opinion about all home deliveries, not just those of elderly prims like myself. The general mood of the profession seemed to be that it had taken years to get every woman to the safe environment of a hospital and there was no intention of letting them trickle back homewards again.

However, I had heard that there were two midwives now doing home deliveries in the Auckland area, tracked their phone numbers through a Broadsheet notice and rang Joan to make an appointment. I really expected that she too would turn down a rather unfit 31 year old first-time mother who also intended to work right through the pregnancy, but I should have had more faith. She examined me in her livingroom and said that as long as the pregnancy progressed well a home delivery was quite possible. She suggested a doctor who was in favour of home deliveries, recommended raspberry leaf tea for relaxation of the muscles (especially for the last three months), provided me with a source of free Black Strap
molasses for iron requirements, and said that I should book in for delivery at a public hospital and have my pre-natal check-ups there as well. (All prospective home delivery women are booked into hospital in case of problem deliveries). She was very supportive and optimistic and I left feeling much more positive about the delivery.

I attended the hospital check-ups for the next few months and Chris and I attended the evening ante-natal training classes. On the whole these classes were O.K. despite the rather dreary films, but I discovered that while the woman doctor and physiotherapist were encouraging relaxation/breathing exercises for labour on the women-only nights, the male doctor was telling the men on their single-sex night that the exercises were really a waste of time and wouldn't help at all. He also gave them suggestions that I could provide.

With the due date a month away, I attended a couple of midwife training classes. Joan checked me out regularly during the day, and my blood pressure which had dropped dramatically from the morning passed very pleasantly as the neighbourhood was alerted and the household sprang into action. Chris borrowed concrete blocks from our neighbours to build up the bed to the required height and provide easy access around it. He, my brother Scott and assorted friends prepared the baby’s room and crib which were in complete chaos. Joan arrived at about 11 a.m. carrying scales and other equipment and set about organising the household. I sat around reading my Lamaze method book, practising my breathing at each contraction, sipping the herbal tonic provided by the acupuncturist and entertaining/being entertained by friends and family who passed through in great numbers offering help and advice. The shop van arrived with some urgent cheques which required my signature and the driver was treated to a cup of coffee and the sight of me breathing through a contraction. He retired with obvious relief soon after. Myra arrived home from work and she and Joan and I created large square bed pads out of towels and newspapers.

Finally Kate was born and everyone shouted 

"It's a girl!"

with great relief

The morning passed very pleasantly as the neighbourhood was alerted and the household sprang into action. Chris borrowed concrete blocks from our neighbours to build up the bed to the required height and provide easy access around it. He, my brother Scott and assorted friends prepared the baby’s room and crib which were in complete chaos. Joan arrived at about 11 a.m. carrying scales and other equipment and set about organising the household. I sat around reading my Lamaze method book, practise my breathing at each contraction, sipping the herbal tonic provided by the acupuncturist and entertaining/being entertained by friends and family who passed through in great numbers offering help and advice. The shop van arrived with some urgent cheques which required my signature and the driver was treated to a cup of coffee and the sight of me breathing through a contraction. He retired with obvious relief soon after. Myra arrived home from work and she and Joan and I created large square bed pads out of towels and newspapers.

Finally Kate was born and everyone shouted 

"It’s a girl!"

with great relief

The afternoon brought more visitors: Chris’ parents and sister arrived, and Rosemary, an old friend who was interested in home delivery. They were all to stay until 12.45 when Kate was finally born.

Joan checked me out regularly during the day, and my blood pressure which had dropped dramatically from the day before, remained at a normal level. I felt really good physically and mentally and had absolute confidence in Joan. As the contractions became stronger throughout the day she massaged me and helped me relax through them. At about 6 o’clock Myra left to pick up Caroline, the other midwife who works with Joan, and everyone else ate dinner. The contractions became stronger and much more difficult to handle and I remember staring fixedly at some dreadful television comedy and wondering if I could relax through one more contraction.

Joan checked me out again to see that I was not dilating as fast as had been expected. I was growing tired and rather tense.

At 8.30 p.m. I agreed to have a mild analgesic and finally leave the living room where I had spent most of my labour and go to bed.

After that my time sequence became rather haywire as I went into the wild world of transition and finally the
pushing stage, but I do remember feeling very secure in my own environment with its purple sheets and cushions, my own rugs around me and my own music playing. Most of all I remember the encouragement I received from everyone, especially from Joan who had been with me solidly all day, and from Chris, whose arm was my anchor with reality throughout the transition stage. I remember staring suspiciously at Rosemary and Myra who were yelling "the head is showing" and thinking it was very kind of them to say so but I didn't really believe it. The
excitement was tremendous and people came and went and smiled and helped, but Joan and Caroline were always there and always positive and full of good humour.

Finally Kate was born and everyone shouted “It's a girl!” with great relief as my preference had always been very obvious. Flashbulbs popped and everyone watched Caroline check Kate while Joan dealt with the afterbirth and gave me the one stitch I needed. I walked to the bathroom with Joan and back to a tidy bed. Within half an hour Chris and I were asleep with Kate in her crib beside us.

Joan returned early the next morning to help with Kate and we fed her with breastmilk brought in frozen cubes from another mother Joan had delivered. She came every day for the two weeks following and several times a day when breast-feeding was being established. I felt really well and was back in action immediately although I felt tender for a couple of days. The two weeks I spent full time at home after the birth were amazingly social and euphoric. I sat eating brandy, yeast and cashew nuts to keep up the breast milk, made endless cups of coffee and looked after Kate. Myra and Chris were home a lot and Chris’ parents dropped in to prepare meals and bring soup and celebratory alcohol.

Joan’s advice about Kate was very valuable and we followed it exactly. I’m sure that the pattern of feeding established in the first few weeks led to the fact that we have not had one night of broken sleep since Kate was two months old and the middle of the night feeding was no longer needed. When Kate had a mild bout of diarrhoea at 3 weeks Joan rang every day to see how she was and to suggest remedies, and even when she stopped calling I knew I could ring her if there were any problems.

When I consider how different the birth would have been in a hospital I know how lucky I was to have Joan and Caroline as midwives. Yet I have heard from other women who have had home deliveries how difficult it has been for both of them to establish themselves against the current of medical opinion in New Zealand. They have been treated rudely by Public Hospital Staff when they have accompanied women in very difficult labour to hospital and their work is put down by a substantial section of the medical community despite the fact that they are registered and employed by the Department of Health. However a growing number of doctors are beginning to support them and the group of women who have been in their care are solidly behind them.

Kate is now 4 months old. I’ve been back at work part-time since she was 2 weeks and fulltime since she was 2 months. The politics of childbearing and rearing have become fascinating subjects to me. Some day I’d like to write an article about Plunket’s reaction to a baby with at least 3 parents: about coping at a board meeting with milk flowing freely down your front while the annual accounts are being discussed: about people’s unspoken but clearly obvious question “Why have a baby if you don’t intend to stay at home with it?” But those are other issues and my purpose in writing this article is to thank Joan and Caroline, midwives extraordinary, for making our birth-days delightful and completely untraumatic experiences.

Kapila Khandvala continued from page 15

Kapila Khandvala continued from page 15

ed during training. Today out of Bombay’s 15,000 teachers, 80% are women. Another step forward was the introduction of co-education into all Municipal schools, unheard of in the old society.

Although she retired from Municipal service in 1961, it only meant that she was able to devote much more time to the national welfare of women and children. She was invited that year to the Council meeting of the Women’s International Democratic Federation (W.I.D.F.) in Budapest, and was elected as one of its Vice-Presidents, which office she held for five years. In 1962 she was elected President of the National Federation of Indian Women, only retiring in 1967, after assuring for Indian women a recognised role in the world. She led a delegation of 33 women to the World Congress of Women held in Moscow in June, 1963, organised women’s and workers’ meetings to welcome Mme Nguyen thi Binh, Foreign Minister of the P.R.G. on her visit to Bombay, presided at the anti-price rally attended by 2,500 women under the auspices of the N.F.I.W., and is still Vice-President of the Education Committee of the National Association of the Blind. She has also encouraged and given support to Friendship Societies with Socialist countries all round the world.

She retired from almost all official positions in 1967, but is still President of the Seva Sadan (Home for the Homeless) Society and of one of the local branches of the A.I.F.W., and the All India Women’s Conference. As a special interest she still maintains an active role as Chairwoman of the Sadhana Education Society which now includes post-graduate research and library facilities for women in co-operation with Bombay University, as well as teachers’ training at all grades for those most needing recognition of their human dignity. As the “Who’s Who” said of her: “All her life she has been a champion of the disadvantaged and downtrodden.”

In 1973, when I last stayed with her, she took me to meet various groups, some all women, some mixed men and women, where business had to be transacted in connection with welfare and education. Everywhere she was loved and respected. It was a strange contrast from another part of India where I had also stayed with friends, a part of Kashmir where the majority of the population is Moslem. I was taken to visit a venerable “Freedom Fighter”, a delightful old man who welcomed me, a foreign heathen, with delightful hospitality; sealed on a carpet spread in his garden, together with the friends who had brought me, his sons and various young fellows from the locality who had come to ask his advice on various matters. We enjoyed a picnic tea. The only other female present was his 20-months old grandchild, though the women in the household remained in the house and peeped at us from the upstairs windows. They could only come into the garden when no strange men were present!

Kapila and a few other outstanding women of her generation did a mighty job in breaking through the fetters of conservatism on behalf of their sex, above all the most oppressed, as was recognised by the I.W. Celebration Committee of International Women’s Year in 1975.
THE LAST RACE

A Short Story
Cynthia put her school-case on the wooden seat and began to take her clothes off. She peeled off, layer by layer, her school uniform - gloves, shoes, black stockings and suspenders, drill rompers, belt, gym-slip and blouse.

There were only two pegs in the changing-room so she folded her underclothes and put them on the slatted seat. She quickly stepped into her bathing-suit, then put on her bathing cap. It was one of the thin rubber type, originally a cream colour, but this one, discoloured by long use and somehow dirty-looking, like bathwater, after you'd bathed, was mottled in a way reminiscent of urine stains on babies' nappies. They usually didn't last as long as this one - Cynthia either lost or tore them, but somehow this one seemed impervious to her rough handling. As she rolled it up and slipped it onto her head, the thin rubber dragged at the fine hair at the base of her neck and Cynthia winced with pain. She gingerly eased it off and started again. It was a cultivated skill putting on these membrane-like caps and was really a waste of time because the water still insidiously seeped under the rolled-up edge and soaked into her hair so that going home in the bus in the twilight it dripped onto her blouse collar and trickled down her neck. With the cap finally in place Cynthia stepped outside her cubicle door.

There was water everywhere. In the pool, all agitated and like multitudes of other children there - either for lessons or just to horse about and jump off the diving board at the deep end, arms waving and eyes popping, to see who could make the biggest splash. Down the shallow end Cynthia could see the swimming instructor taking a class, or playing to the gallery, depending on your viewpoint. Cynthia hated Mr. Mason. She had hated him since her first lesson six years ago, but she had never told anybody. At her first lesson she was in the water with the others in the beginners class. Cynthia had on her rubber helmet which buckled under the chin. It was fadey red even though it was new and it had a sea-star's tentacle clasped to the top of her bathing helmet pressing her down. The mothers laughed back as they sat there with their信托六-year-old faces. The children stood at the shallow end and held onto the ledge on the tiled wall. They looked up at Mr. Mason, who stood on the side of the pool, with their innocent, fearful, trusting six-year-old faces.

"Now", said Mr. Mason "I want you all to bob up and down in the water. Come on now, bend your knees and jump." The children obediently jumped and bobbed although many of their little knees were frozen with terror.

"Splash the water. That's right", said Mr. Mason. "Splash as hard as you can."

Mr. Mason paused in front of Cynthia. She could see his brown sandals and his strangely shaped legs beneath his knobby knees. His legs were sparsely haired and the shiny flesh hanging down his cheeks and a shiny bald patch glistened on the top of his head.

"They'll be swimming in no time mothers", Mr. Mason directed at the mothers who sat on the benches watching their children. They smiled back.

"Now, I want you to jump even harder and crouch right down and put your heads right under the water." Mr. Mason clumsily demonstrated on the side of the pool. "Come on now, bend your knees", he exhorted as the children dutifully tried it. "When you lift your head out of the water, I want you to say 'I'm h-a-p-p-y' and give me a big smile, just to show me how pleased you are'. He beamed at the children, then winked at the mothers. Cynthia put her face under as far as her mouth the first time. The second time she crouched far down, her eyes screwed shut and bobbed right down. She pushed her knees hard to come up and felt something like an octopus's tentacle clasped to the top of her bathing helmet pressing her down. Her hands let go the ledge at the side of the pool and clutched at the water. Her eyes burst open and she saw larger than life her legs struggling below her, the tiled wall of the pool in front of her and at the joining place of the wall and the pool floor masses of fine silt suspended there and eddying about in the movement of the water. Feeling suffocated Cynthia opened her mouth and the water rushed in, just as the pressure lifted off her head and she shot to the surface. Choking, Cynthia looked up. Her eyes blinked and mucus formed two parallel paths from her nostrils to her mouth and up above her she could see the laughing face of Mr. Mason.

"Come on now, Cynthia", he said "you haven't finished yet. Say I'm h-a-p-p-y".

Cynthia swallowed down the rest of the warm pool water and wiped her thin forearm across her nose. "I'm h-a-p-p-y" she said and coughed.

"What a good girl!" He turned to the mothers and beamed. The mothers laughed back as they sat there with their ankles crossed and their kit-bags on their knees. In front of her Cynthia saw her mother, laughing. Now Cynthia walked down to the shallow end to where Mr. Mason was taking a class. She stood to one side, holding her towel in front of her. She hoped it looked casual and controlled but the towel and the hunched shoulders betrayed her self-consciousness. Cynthia's raisin-bathing suit, like her cap, was old, and as long as clothes were still wearable Cynthia's parents saw no point in replacing them. The cotton was faded to a pale inky blue and the fabric had worn to an almost transparent thinness. The mothers laughed back as they sat there with their ankles crossed and their kit-bags on their knees. In front of her Cynthia saw her mother, laughing. In school uniform she could disguise it by filling the ends of the cups of her whirlpool brassiere with carefully moulded cotton-wool and by pulling her gym-slip belt to its...
tightest point she could pretend she approached the shape she coveted. In her cotton racing suit it was immediately obvious it was mostly show.

Mr. Mason turned towards her. "Well, Cynthia, and how are you today?" he asked, smiling.

"Alright" she tossed her head a little to one side.

"I think today you'd better do a mile. I'll watch you swim the first length. And remember to bring your left hand right down and touch your left thigh before you begin to lift it out of the water." He demonstrated and Cynthia nodded her head without smiling.

"O.K., in you go."

Cynthia had to put her towel down on the seat and walk past him in her ugly sagging suit to the pool side. She quickly slipped in and felt the lake-warm water soak into the thin material. She pulled her cap down over her ears and glanced up at the far end where she was heading. The deep end seemed a long distance away although it was only 33 1/3rd yards. The black lines of the lanes marked in tiles on the floor of the swimming pool wavered before her. She stretched her arms out in front of her and set off. Rhythmically she swam to the far end, then without pausing she continued, lap after lap.

She counted eleven laps then stopped at the deep end. At the shallow end she could see Mr. Mason conducting his class. He wasn't looking at her. Cynthia rarely finished her mile. Most of her training session she spent hovering up at the deep-end in the corner, floating on her back or hanging onto the side of the pool over the spot where the water came in. Here the water was at its warmest as it gushed in. Sometimes when Mr. Mason seemed particularly preoccupied she would slip into the pool next door which was smaller and hotter and only women were allowed to go in there. It was almost like the hot pools at the Government Bath-House at Rotorua where Cynthia could remember being taken by her mother and being shocked by the sight of those great white women with their huge naked breasts hanging down on their bellies - openly.

From time to time Cynthia swam a couple of lengths and always managed to fool Mr. Mason. She would never become a great swimmer, she knew that, but then she'd never wanted to be one. She hated it. It was all her father's idea. He wanted her to be a good swimmer, as he had been, so every morning at six they went down to the Shelley Beach Baths to train in the deserted and chilly pools and every afternoon she came to this pool after school to train again. It was not just the swimming she hated and the chlorine in her eyes so that they smarted and stung. Not just the leprous skin she had after every training session in the pool, all white and wrinkled and grotesque. It was also getting her clothes on over her wet skin which she never could get properly dry. She would roll her stockings into a tight ring then slip them over her foot and carefully ease them up her legs. But they always clung and wouldn't go much above her knees so she had to pull her suspenders right down so that they cut into her skin. And the soles of her stockings always got wet and her feet wouldn't go into her shoes. Her hair would always be wet through and she had a habit of leaving her comb at home. She'd have to jam her panama on pushing the wet hair uncomfortably against her head. Her panama had a dingy tide-mark all around the crown above the blue hat-band. And then there was still the trip home in the crowded six-o'clock bus with her wet togs wrapped in her wet towel soaking through her black shoe bag. She always had to stand as the pubs were just shutting and all the patrons would rush for the bus. She usually spent at least the first half of the trip with some drunk staggering over her and burbling "Been for a swim, love?"

She would dearly have loved to have given the whole thing up. Cynthia's great love was roller-skating, a pastime which her parents just tolerated. All weekend she spent on her skates and she knew the smoothest pieces of asphalt and concrete for streets around. Just last weekend she had got into trouble with the next door neighbour for skating on the concrete he had laid in his backyard the week before. She had waited till his whole household had gone out, then she had slipped over and glided onto the virginal surface. It was exquisite! So smooth it was almost like marble. She had executed some of her most daring turns on the new piece, sailed across it on one skate with the other held in the air far behind her, and then she had gone home. Unfortunately, she had criss-crossed Mr. Bevan's new concrete with ugly marks from the metal wheels of her skates and when he had come home later in the afternoon he had come over and raged at her father. Of course, she had denied it vigorously, but she had fooled no one. As a result her father had forbidden her to go to the skating rink this weekend.

The skating rink was a paradise. Cynthia would arrive with her friend Laurel half-an-hour before opening time so they could be near the start of the queue and so be the first to go in. The first in got the best skates, the boots with wooden wheels. Cynthia longed to have skates with wooden wheels like the really good skaters wore and her parents had promised her some for her birthday. At the rink, Cynthia and Laurel would sit on the wooden seats around the sides of the glassy floor and put on their skates. Then they would take to the floor. They would skate slowly round and round trying to look like experts and sometimes doing a little turn or jump. Down at the far end of the rink was not rounded, but square and in the corners they could practise jumps and spins and stopping and starting. In the middle of the rink the experts effortlessly perfected their performances on the lines marking intricate shapes there. Cynthia admired those young girls and longed to be admitted to their exclusive little band. They wore special little skating dresses with tiny bias skirts, sometimes with bands of mock fur around the hem. Cynthia could only wear a full cotton skirt and starched petticoat as her mother drew the line at a skating-frock. Perhaps when she could sew better she would be able to sew one for herself. If Cynthia and her friend had any money to spare they would buy an Eskimo Pie or Topsy at the canteen and eat it, leaning on the wooden rail at the side of the rink. People hummed past, and they would criticise the angles of legs and the actions of skates and arms. It was the nearest thing to heaven that Cynthia knew.

Meanwhile the swimming had to be tolerated. The big clock at the end of the pool showed quarter past five. It was time for Cynthia to finish her training and dress to go home. She swam a couple more lengths then climbed out at the shallow end. Mr. Mason was in his office talking to another of his training team, a boy from the Grammar School. Cynthia waited outside the office with her towel wrapped around her shoulders and clutched in front of her. Mr. Mason and the boy emerged. The boy was slim but well-muscled and had pure white skin, with not a freckle or mole to be seen. Cynthia had lots of freckles and they seemed to multiply every year but noth-
ing like the boy across the road, Warren Sutch, he was like one great walking freckle. Mr. Mason placed his hand on the Grammar boy’s shoulder.

“‘I’ll see you again tomorrow, Roger’ he was saying and he gave the boy’s cheek a little pat.

“Thank goodness he doesn’t do that to me!” thought Cynthia ‘I’d die’. Mr. Mason was always very brusque and rather off-hand with Cynthia. She wondered if perhaps he sensed how deeply she loathed him. Turning, Mr. Mason saw Cynthia.

“Well, finished, eh?” he said. His fat hand played with the whistle round his neck. Cynthia nodded. She avoided actually uttering words to Mr. Mason as the less she said the quicker she could get away.

“Make sure you get here as early as possible after school tomorrow,” Mr. Mason said. “It’s your last chance to practise before the carnival.”

Back in her dressing shed Cynthia thought about the carnival as she struggled with her school clothes. In an effort to keep her clothes dry, she put her towel on the wooden seat and then stood on the seat to get into her underpants and stockings. The upshot was, she dropped her underpants onto the wet floor and the dirty water had soaked right into the brushed cotton fabric by the time she got off the seat and retrieved them, so she would have to go home with just her baggy rompers over her bare skin.

The carnivals occurred about once a month in the swimming season and so far she’d participated in several. She’d been utterly terrified for days before the first one. It cast a pall over all her other activities and as the date came nearer the most fleeting remembrance of it was enough to make the top of her stomach contract wildly. The actual event had been as bad as she had anticipated. She’d gone through the day of the carnival in a daze and her only memories of the carnival itself were of shouting and hideously bright lights glinting on the calm water as she stood on the platform before the race. She’d come third and there were many carnivals after that but the pain and torture she went through each time did not diminish with familiarity; rather it intensified, till now weeks before the event were spoiled for her by the anticipation of her anguish.

Cynthia wondered if it were possible to get out of the carnival somehow. She could pretend she felt sick but she suspected her mother would be wise to that ruse since she had used it before to avoid other things she couldn’t face, like exams and weddings. She could always just refuse to go, what could they do about that? They couldn’t force her.

Early in the evening on the carnival night her mother called her to the tea-table. She had cooked a special dinner of food which would sit lightly on Cynthia’s stomach when she was swimming. A piece of white fish lay flatly on the pale green Susy Cooper plate. Beside it was a small claggy pile of mashed potato and beans. Her mother and father sat opposite her. The table was very small so they were very close. Cynthia’s father began to attack the pile of food on his plate. A huge slab of steak covered half the plate and besides the beans and potato he had grilled tomato halves and a fried egg. He sprinkled Worcestershire sauce all over his meat before he began to eat. He didn’t just eat a morsel of food at a time but cut his egg and steak and tomato into lots of pieces and then sloshed it all around the plate into a vividly hued mess and then started shovelling the mixture in.

“Do I have to eat this?” Cynthia appealed to her mother. Her mother didn’t even look up but said

“Of course you do. You can’t do your best on an empty stomach.”

Cynthia leaned one elbow on the table and rested the side of her face against her hand. With her fork she picked at the pale fish, she put a small morsel in her mouth. It tasted anaemic.

“Come on now,” her father looked up. “We haven’t got all day. We’ll have to leave here by six to be there with enough time for you to get changed for your race.”

“I don’t want to go” Cynthia said to no one in particular.

“It’s just pre-race nerves,” her mother said. “Come on, hurry up and finish that fish, I’ve got tapioca for pudding.”

“This fish is horrible”, Cynthia dropped her fork with a clatter. “I can’t eat it. I’ll be sick if I eat any more.”

Her father looked up from his plate. “You’ll eat it, my girl,” he said through the steak.

“Perhaps it wouldn’t matter if she left it, tonight. Her stomach’s probably upset. It’s nerves, you see, before something like this.” Her mother paused and looked at
her father, waiting for his reaction before she took the plate away. There was none, her father was eating again and reading the paper now.

She took the plate away and Cynthia thankfully went up to her bedroom and lay on the bed. Soon her mother appeared and told her to get ready.

"I'm not going," Cynthia said, "I've had enough. I hate going to those races. I'm not doing it any more." She lay with her back to her mother on the candlewick quilt. She traced their patterns with her finger. "Come on, you'll be all right. You always do very well at carnivals. You never know, you might come first."

"I don't want to come first. I don't want to go at all."

"Your father will be very angry," Cynthia's mother said as she left the room. Cynthia knew that. Nobody was allowed to disagree with him or challenge his despotism in this household. She heard her mother close the kitchen door and their muffled voices. Her father's got louder. The door of the kitchen opened then slammed shut again. Her mother's voice droned on. Her father's voice was very loud although she couldn't hear exactly what he was saying. Then the kitchen door flew open and her father thumped up the hall.

"What's this I hear about you not wanting to go and race tonight?" he demanded. He had a frightening face when he was angry.

"I'm not going!" Cynthia repeated but less firmly.

"Yes you are, my girl. I'm not putting up with your nonsense. Now get your togs and towel. You should have been ready by now."

"I'm not going!, Cynthia said and the last word turned into a wail as she turned her head into the pillow and escaped into tears.

"Now listen here," her father was getting very angry, she knew the signs. "You'll get up off that bed immediately and get your bathing suit and come down to that pool with me."

Cynthia found the crying made it easier. She sobbed wildly into the pillow and didn't answer. Her father left the bedroom and she followed his progress down the hall and into the kitchen by the noise he made. The door slammed against her shoulder. She always swam crooked, but once they flew off her arms when she lifted them out of the water. Her feet made a surging trail behind her. Almost immediately she hit the ropes. She felt them scraping against her shoulder. She always swam crooked, but once she was on the ropes there was no way she could get right off in such a short race. She angled herself away from the rope and willed herself to go faster.

"... the drops of water flashed as they flew off her arms when she lifted them out of the water."

Then her hand slammed into the end of the pool. She surfaced gasping for breath. Turning to her right, she saw the three contestants there had still to finish. On her left, the other swimmers were just finishing, except for the girl in lane seven, who was looking towards her.

"Did I win?" she asked the official as he helped her from the pool.

"I'm not sure," he said. "It was very close."

Then she heard the voice of the announcer spewing out of the sound system. "Girls 33 1/3rd yard freestyle - under 13's. First, Jennifer Webber in lane seven, racing for North Shore. Second, Cynthia Wright, in lane four, racing for Waitemata ......."

After that Cynthia's father seemed to lose interest in the swimming. The next Monday he did not mention going to the Shelley Beach Baths before breakfast and they never went again. Cynthia gradually cut down the number of times she went to practise each week, till she stopped going altogether. When her school had its swimming championships she didn't even enter. On her birthday she got her roller-skates.

Sandra Coney
THE BOBIGNY TRIAL

Five years ago thousands of French women died annually from bungled back-street abortions. Now France has one of the more progressive abortion laws in the world. What caused the change? SANDRA CONEY reports on the Bobigny trial; a trial from which we in New Zealand can learn much.

On the eighteenth of January 1975 a law which provided virtually abortion on demand in the first ten weeks of pregnancy came into force in France. Up to that time the predominantly Catholic country had completely outlawed abortion, although thousands of women annually scraped up enough money for a trip to Switzerland or England and a safe legal abortion. Thousands more entrusted their lives to back-street abortionists - these women accounted for 1% of the annual French death-rate.

France has hardly been a world leader in social reforms. How then did they manage to get through a law which makes New Zealand's look positively archaic.

Part of the credit must go to France's Minister of Health, Simone Veil, who managed to overcome the most prejudiced opposition of the male-dominated French National Assembly (480 men, 10 women). But the significant impetus for the law change came from a trial which in 1972 brought the whole issue of abortion dramatically into the open and showed the horrifying reality of France's previous repressive legislation in practise.

In New Zealand this year we are having our own abortion trials. Dr James Woolnough has already stood before a judge and jury on twelve charges of illegally procuring a miscarriage and late in November will again face those charges, the first jury having been unable to reach a unanimous verdict. So the Bobigny case, as the French trial came to be known, is of particular interest to those concerned with the abortion struggle.
The Background

First let me set the scene for the trial. In 1972, abortion was categorically prohibited in France as it had been since 1920. Contraception was virtually non-existent. Only well-informed women had access to contraception, the result being that only 5% of French women used the Pill at the time of the trial, and only 1% of these were working class. Contraceptives were not illegal but information pertaining to their use was and the government refused financial assistance to the few struggling family planning centres. The most frequently resorted to methods of birth control were, and still are, coitus interruptus and the Ogino method (Safe period). The failure rate for these methods is 33 per cent - in other words a failure every twenty-two months.

So every year thousands of French women were faced with unplanned and unwanted pregnancies. Except for the privileged few who could go abroad the choices were fearful. A stay in one of the many homes for unmarried mothers and another child to be brought up on Public Assistance - or a desperate search for a back-street abortionist. The figure for the number of back-street abortions every year in France is almost too big to comprehend. Try mentally envisaging 350,000 (the conservative estimate). If you have trouble with that could you believe that in France the figure has also been estimated at one million per year: one million women on kitchen tables or behind locked doors in a doctor's room. Not surprisingly 3600 women per year died from bungled abortions.

The French government dealt with this staggering problem by prosecuting about 500 women who had had abortions and their abortionists each year. These women were regarded as "examples" and traditionally were poor working class people with little chance of defending themselves adequately. The law punished both parties: the woman who had the abortion, who could receive a fine or a jail sentence of up to two years, and the abortionist, who could be sent to prison for one to five years. If the abortionist was a physician her or his professional license could be revoked for five years which for older doctors could spell professional death. The result of this was that only a tiny percentage of illegal abortions were performed by doctors, probably three to five percent. About ten per cent were done by nurses and midwives and the rest by abortionists with no qualifications at all.

The Case

It is against this background that we must see the case of Marie-Claire and Michele Chevalier. In 1971 Michele was the single mother of three daughters she had born to a de facto relationship which had broken up when the children were small. Her three children were Marie-Claire aged 16, Martine aged 15 and Anne aged 14. Michele worked as a subway employee for the metro: her salary, 1500 francs a month. Her work took her away from home from eleven in the morning till half past eight at night. Home was a three bedroomed flat in the Habitations Loyer Modere (high-rise flats at low rentals). Michele herself had been born to a single mother and brought up in her grandparents house.

In August 1971 Marie-Claire, a student at a vocational school was raped by one of her class-mates, Daniel P., who after offering to take her for a drive instead took her to his flat and by using physical force, frightened her into submission. Marie-Claire confessed to her mother that she was pregnant. Her mother, who barely managed to make ends meet, said that they would do their best to the child up. In later testimony Marie-Claire says she rejected this proposal. "No, I don't want this hooligan's child. I am still at school. I don't want this child."

So Michele Chevalier set about trying to find someone who could help Marie-Claire. She agreed with Marie-Claire's decision. As she said in the court hearing "I have lived through all this myself, and I can still see it all: the humiliation and the insults, an unmarried mother with the finger always pointed at me. Because of this, I would never have allowed my daughter to suffer the torment that I have been subjected to. It was my duty. I'll stick to it to the end".

Michele's search took her first of all to a gynaecologist who first gave Marie-Claire some injections and when these didn't work offered to do an abortion but for the sum of 4500 francs. This was totally beyond Michele Chevalier's means; it was equivalent to three months salary for her. Michele confided her problem in a fellow Metro employee, Mme Lucette Duboucheix. The latter was a devout Catholic and totally opposed to abortion, she suggested putting Marie-Claire in a home for mothers. However, Mme Chevalier insisted that an abortion was the only humane solution and became more desperate as the days went on. Finally, Mme Duboucheix called a friend, Mme Renee Sausset, who she knew had been in a similar predicament herself. Mme Sausset, who like Mme Chevalier had been an illegitimate child, was abandoned by her own mother at 16 days old and was brought up in orphanages and schools run by Public Assistance (the equivalent of Social Welfare). She was married briefly but divorced her husband soon afterwards and thus, like
Mme Chevalier and the abortionist, Mme Bambuck, was a solo mother. As Mme Sausset was to testify "I know the misery of being abandoned. Because of this I chose to be an accomplice to an abortion rather than to the abandonment of a child. I believe that I am better off here before you, answering for what I did, than I would be before my own conscience if I had helped to abandon a child. I would never have forgiven myself for that."

At Public Assistance School she had got to know Micheline Bambuck, another abandoned child and knew that she had learned how to perform abortions by aborting herself. "My husband had tuberculosis ... later on he contracted leprosy .... the Pill did not exist at the time and my husband was a selfish man. He used to say to me, "Get rid of it, woman." That's how I learned about it." Mme Sausset prevailed upon Mme Bambuck and gave her work phone number to Mme Chevalier. After Mme Chevalier had phoned Mme Bambuck several times and begged her to help, Mme Bambuck agreed for a fee of 250f.

The abortion took place on the Chevalier kitchen table with Michele sterilizing the instruments with boiling water and alcohol. Mme Bambuck was not practised and had to return and repeat the operation four more times before she succeeded in inducing a haemorrhage. Marie-Claire was admitted to hospital in the middle of the night and discharged two days later.

Not long after the police arrived at the Chevalier's apartment. They had learned of the abortion from Daniel who when picked up on another charge had hoped that the information about the other "crime" would buy for him some clemency.

Normally French women charged with obtaining or performing an abortion admitted their crimes in court, were punished and the whole sham was played out beyond public scrutiny. This is what should have happened to Michele Chevalier. But Michele had read about Choisir, an organisation which had been set up to defend women charged with illegal abortions, in the newspaper. She had remembered the name of one of its founders, Gisele Halimi, a lawyer, and looked through the telephone directory to find her number to contact her. Choisir took on the case and besides defending Mme Chevalier and Marie-Claire also used the case to arouse public condemnation for the abortion laws in France.

French censorship laws prohibited the publication of details of abortion cases. Choisir hoped that the French press would find the Chevaliers' story sufficiently newsworthy to break the censorship laws: after Marie-Claire was acquitted by the Bobigny Juvenile Court, before the trials of Mme Chevalier, Renee Sausset, Lucette Duboucheix who were charged as accomplices and Micheline Bambuck the abortionist, the story broke into the media and the whole of France was watching when the main trial began. Public opinion began to be mobilized against the archaic laws. Militant French women gathered outside the court and stayed there throughout the trial; the trial brought into focus an issue which most people had not even thought about. The association Choisir broke the censorship laws themselves when they published the complete transcript of the trial. Within weeks 40,000 copies had been sold.

**The Trial**

Gisele Halimi and the other legal counsel in the case (all but one women) chose not to merely plead for leniency for clients who had broken the law. They freely admitted that they had. They argued that the law was stupid, cruel and not in touch with what in reality was happening. They argued that it was barbaric that these women should be tried under a law which was cruelly repressive to women and that the judges had a responsibility to acknowledge this by acquitting the accused women.

"the learned Public Prosecutor ..... said to us" It is the law. A hard law, but the law." We have even been told of gross maladministration of the law if you did not apply it.

I say "No!" I repeat "No." And the Court must pardon my harshness, but I say that if the Court responds thus, it is refusing to accept responsibility at a moment when there is no possible excuse ..... It would amount to saying, Gentlemen, that you are there merely for the mechanical application of the law, that you are there just to read it without having understood its purpose, and that you have to hand out penalties as a machine would at the press of a button ...... to "uphold the law" has never meant to become a robot judge and to ignore the great problems of life ..... To do justice is not to transform oneself into a robot, but to recognise where the dialectics of life cuts across the dialectics of laws. Life, in this circumstance is the right of the woman to choose : law, in this circumstance, is the fact that article 317 is defunct. To interpret and uphold the law today, is to set your face against hypocrisy." Mme Halimi

To show just how hypocritical the law in practise was Mme Halimi called into the witness box a number of eminent Frenchwomen - Simone Iff, National Vice-President of Family Planning, Delphine Seyrig and Francoise Fabian, the actresses, Claude Servan-Schreiber, journalist

---

"I’ve always fought . First for my children, and now for women. I haven’t had much schooling; I’m not an intellectual. In fact, I’m nothing special, but I’m just positive I’m right". Michele Chevalier
“Where does life begin? And if one wants to show oneself consistent in the reply to this question, would it not be better to protect, by every means in our power, the women who is the bearer of the ovum and the man who is the bearer of the sperm? Would it not be better to protect this woman, this man, from the misery, the distress in all its forms, wars, all the poisons which our profit making industrial society creates . . .”

M. Jean Rostand
Biologist. Member of the Academie Francaise

and Simone de Beauvoir, writer. All these women said that they too had had abortions in defiance of the law, had even said so publicly, but had not been harassed by the police. This supported Gisele Halimi’s contention that no one who could be an embarrassment was ever convicted: it was always poor working class women who had little means at their disposal to defend themselves.

“I have had several abortions .... I should add that I am an accessory to abortions every day, either because I give money, or addresses, or lend my house so that abortions can be performed there; the last time this happened was the day before yesterday.” Testimony of Delphine Seyrig.

Gisele Halimi herself spelled out her identification with the accused women in the most personal terms “.... it has doubtless never been imagined that women advocates, like all women, have had abortions, and that they can say it and say it publicly as I am saying it today.”

The reward for adherence to the law was dramatically illustrated by the testimonies of two young unmarried mothers who had had their babies in homes for unmarried mothers.

“The girls spend their days in the workshops, knitting, all week long. That is all they do until the confinement. Then they go into hospital, most often the Port-Royal, where pressure is put upon them to give up the child. Mothers are pressured to give up the child because the homes receive a bonus for every child that is given up. Then, if they don’t give up the child, they either go into hostels for unmarried mothers or into homes such as the one at Issy-les-Moulineaux at Plessis-Robinson. In the hostels they have to hand over the sixty to ninety-five per cent of their wages, which often don’t amount to more than 1000 francs a month.

In the homes the girls work eight hours a day ....... the children are together in a separate area. They only see their mother in the evening just before they go to bed. Mothers and children live in separate worlds; there is no time they can be together.”

Gisele Halimi’s defence graphically showed what in practise the law meant. To flout it if you were rich; if poor, exploitation as an unmarried mother or the dangers of an unskilled abortionist. As she said, women always have and always will have abortions. If the law says they must not, they will break it. M. Gerard Mendel, an eminent neuropsychiatrist, discussed the psychological effect on women of having a law which they must break or obey against their most profound wishes.

“For the woman, an unwanted pregnancy is endured as something that has to be submitted to, an absence of power over the thing that is most personal to her - namely her own body. This experience is never without consequence, for a feeling of helplessness inevitably brings in its train a crippling of the personality .... This law brings about a cleavage in the individual’s own being - as a person and as a citizen. The person who has decided to have an abortion feels that this law is extremely unjust: later on, an anti-social attitude can appear, a lack of interest in her responsibilities in so far as she feels that society is beyond her comprehension and she therefore feels alienated from it.”

A convincing belief and one that hardly enters arguments in New Zealand about law reform or repeal, even from those who believe in it. The French defence as detailed in the trial transcript is incredibly radical and feminist. Choisir, and all the expert witnesses they called - Nobel prize winners, members of the Academic Francoise, men and women both, wanted nothing short of abortion on demand, as the woman’s right.

“People need not be frightened by words when we speak of abortion on request and the right of a woman to choose whether she will bring a child into the world.” Mme Halimi.

In New Zealand we have become frightened of those words. By arguing that abortion is necessary to control the population or to save unwanted babies for miserable existences we are side-stepping the fundamental issues - the right of a woman to do as she wishes with her own body.

In the French trial Gisele Halimi called eminent doctors and scientists, who, without exception did not side-step this issue but expounded it in intelligent and humane terms.

“Woman who do not want children ought to be allowed
“There is now a directive from the Ministry of Health giving a new definition of death. It is when the electro-encephalogram is flat . . . when there is a complete absence of mental activity . . . the foetus of a few weeks does not yet exist as a human being.”

Judge: How many weeks is it before the central nervous system of the foetus is formed?

M. Monod: . . . it is not before the fourth or fifth month.”

Testimony of Prof. Paul Milliez

“Against abortion, people often invoke natural law. But are no laws in nature. There are only phenomena. It is men who make laws . . . . To repress abortion means to forbid by restraint every woman, whatever her beliefs, the right to decide how many children she will have and when she will have them. On the other hand, to leave every woman free to make this decision has never meant that all women are obliged to abort. There is no need to emphasise which of these two attitudes reveals the greater respect for human life’.

Testimony of M. Francois Jacob. Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine. Professor of the College de France. Simone de Beauvoir graphically analysed why restraint on access to abortion were necessary to enforce the services of women in the home.

‘. . . . as it is very difficult to persuade a woman that washing dishes is a vocation, society has found something much better. It has exalted motherhood; because through motherhood a way is found to keep the woman at home and to make her do the housework. Instead of saying to the little girl when she is two or three or four, “When you grow up you will spend your life washing dishes,” they say, “When you grow up you will have babies.”

‘. . . a woman must be completely enslaved to motherhood. If she could at least be free to be a mother who she wishes, as often, or as seldom, as she wishes - that would give her a considerable amount of freedom to plan her life in other respects. She could compete with men in the professional sphere. She would not be tied down to the house the whole time. But that would raise the question of why the man does not do the housework.

To prevent this state of affairs then, motherhood has to be imposed upon women and imposed upon them against their will.”

Testimony of Claire Saint-Jacques

This is surely the root cause of women’s oppression. If it is convenient to keep women in the place they occupy, if, in fact, the whole structure of society is built upon a hierarchy of people with women at the bottom, the possibility of women moving away from the base of this societal structure is deeply threatening. What I would give to hear Ms de Beauvoir’s analysis ringing through the dead and hollow chambers of the Auckland Supreme Court. No male judge could feel comfortable hearing these views expressed. The Judges in the Bobigny case certainly did not like hearing it. At first they complained feebly as yet another articulate, eminent French person stood before them to denounce the existing laws. In time they became silent - stunned perhaps? They may not have liked it but they were forced to listen and judges while prejudiced are not unintelligent. They must have felt at their most uncomfortable when Gisele Halimi began her summing up.

“Members of the Court, there falls to me today a very rare privilege. I am experiencing, with a satisfaction never known by me till today, a perfect harmony between my job as a defending counsel and my condition as a woman. Never until today have I so strongly felt myself at the same time the accused in the dock and the advocate at the bar . . . . I identify myself, precisely and totally, with Mme Chevalier and with the other three women whom the law calls accomplices, with the women in this courtroom, with the women who are demonstrating in the street, with the millions of Frenchwomen and others. They are my family. They are my struggle. They are my daily round. There remains the absolutely fundamental way in which women are still oppressed and we want you this evening to make the effort to understand us. We do not have the power to determine what happens to our bodies. If slavery still exists it is that of woman : she is a serf. And the proof of that is that she has to stand before you in Court, Gentlemen, when she has had an abortion in disobedience to your law.

To be brought before you in Court - does not this symbolise our oppression? Forgive me, Gentlemen, but I have to speak out this evening. Look at you and look at us. Four women put on trial before four men - and to talk about what? About vaginal probes, about uteruses, about bellies, about pregnancies, about abortions! Don’t you think that is a fundamental and intolerable injustice? These four women before these four men? Is not this significant of the system that oppresses women? How

Continued on Page 40
I hate housework because it is unrewarding. It does not last, but is a perpetual task like painting the Forth bridge. My policy is therefore to spend the minimum amount of time on it. Having analysed the situation of keeping a house clean, I have decided that there are three main aims:

1. Superficial tidiness
2. Enough organisation for the household to function, and
3. Cleanliness

The first one, ‘Superficial Tidiness’ is easy. The second one ‘Organisation’ is rather difficult and time consuming at first, but it pays dividends and I think it is essential for smooth running. ‘Cleanliness’ I feel is not so important as it used to be. There is not much Typhoid and Plague around these days — although there may be plenty of ants and mice. However, smells are unpleasant, and one doesn’t want to sit on chewing gum or thick grease in one’s best dress.

My theory on how to spend the minimum time on these three aspects of house cleaning is to do it “on the hoof” — that is not to give up a whole morning, or day, but to try to do little bits when one is doing something else. I resist magazine articles which try to increase housework by making women feel guilty that they are slipping below the norm — for instance, American magazines suggesting that normal people change their sheets three times a week. I also avoid intricate kitchen equipment which takes half an hour to set up and half an hour to wash and put together again. My favourite example of useless equipment is an incredible ‘onion chopper’ which not only did not chop onions, — it took off finger nails and ends of fingers, was quite impossible to clean, and once I’d got it apart, it took me three days to get it together again. It then rested. (Thank the Lord for sharp knives.) And most important it is necessary to organise all members of the household to take part in keeping it running.

To keep the place looking superficially tidy, one needs plenty of functional storage facilities. As Katherine Whitehorn said in her book ‘Bed Sitter Cooking’ — it is very difficult to entertain when you keep the salt in a suitcase under the bed. So, one must have plenty of room to hang up clothes and plenty of hangers. One of the greatest untidiers of rooms is yesterday’s newspaper. I have not yet found the answer to this. When I was a child we used to always keep the papers under the cushion on the sofa, — which is not a bad idea until the ‘honoured guest’ puts a cushion on the floor. One needs somewhere close at hand and easy to get at to store the week’s newspapers. I put them in the top cupboard in the kitchen and try to remember to put them out on the day they are called for. A waste paper basket in every room is a good idea so that one gets rid of unwanted letters, bills and unsolicited information through the post.

One can do quite a bit of superficial tidying up just walking from one room to another to do something else. For instance, whenever I walk into the kitchen to get a cup of tea, I clear off the table and put it away. From the top cupboard I have the books, records, and anything else I need. I also clear the table in the living room, put the magazines away and put everything in order. Whenever I go into the bathroom, I see that it is clean and tidy. Having said that, I must confess that I don’t always do it — but I try to.
of coffee, I always take the dirty cups, or the full ashtrays, or the tea towel from the middle of the table. When I go into the bathroom, I pick up any dirty clothes and drop them in the laundry bag. Somewhere to put dirty laundry should be in the bathroom or the laundry, and it need not be an expensive good looking cane basket - a large plastic bag will do.

One of the most important rules is never to pick up clothes off the floor after anyone else, - and of course, never to make anyone else's bed. If you do, you are encouraging them to carry on, and on behaviour modification lines one should only mention the topic when the clothes have been picked up, or the bed made, to say how nice the place looks, or what a terrific person the maker is. Incidentally I don't know why people have such a fetish about beds being made in the morning. If someone doesn't mind pulling the crumpled sheets up when he gets into bed at night, - why not - that's his business.

If you are a great correspondent, you really need somewhere simple to keep letters. I have a large Ceylon tea box, which sits on a book shelf and I put in the latest letters at one end, and answered letters which are literary masterpieces which I want to keep, at the other end.

Organisation pays great dividends. Have a look at your cupboards and see that you have each item in the best place - obviously those which are used frequently on the bottom shelves at the front. Things used very often, like tea, coffee, and sugar can be kept on a tray on the bench. It is a good investment to have a number of squeegee mops and cartons of Vim in every room in the house. That dreaded monster the vacuum cleaner should be easy to get at, but since most of them are heavy and cumbersome to carry around, if you can possibly afford it, a mini carpet-sweeper will save hoovering, - one can take it out just to pick up a few crumbs after tea much more easily than a vacuum cleaner. It is handy to have a pad and pen tied to a hook in the kitchen so that anyone who uses say a tin of beans, or puts up a new toilet roll, can write down the replacement on the shopping list.

Cleaning is the worst aspect for me of housework. However at a pinch, one can do a lot superficially to make the place look presentable. Katherine Whitehorn once quoted her method of making herself look clean when she didn't have time to wash. This was in the days when women plastered their faces with thick make-up in the mornings and it was an hour's job to take it off and replace it. She suggested that if you look really grubby, and hadn't time to replace your make-up, you took a pair of tweezers and quickly plucked the odd straggling hairs between the eyebrows. I can vouch that this makes you look cleaner. I think the same principle can be applied to house cleaning. If you have visitors who are bothered about whether your house looks clean or not, a lot can be achieved by whisking round with a damp squeegee wiping all the coffeeables, dust the obvious surfaces with a tissue, put the newspapers under cushions and the beer bottles in the cupboard. If you keep boxes of tissues in every room, you can dust while doing other things - for instance, while changing the television channel you can dust the television set, or while reading the evening paper, oratching the ads on tele, you can dust the nearest table bookshelf. The dusty tissues then go in the waste paper basket.

I find I can do quite a lot from the sitting position. For instance, sitting on the loo cogitating, I find that I can reach one end of the bath and give that a clean with Vim, and with a piece of damp toilet paper, (how you dampen it is your affair) you can wipe the floor around the loo and pick up the bane of my life, and I think is most people's hair. This then goes down the loo. When you clean your teeth in the morning you can sprinkle the wash hand basin with Vim, and either give it a rinse round when you come home at night, - or else let the next person do it. This is a good idea because once the wash basin is covered with Vim, the next person can't use it until it has been cleaned off. While waiting for the jug to boil in the kitchen, you can clean finger prints off cupboard doors using a squeegee mop and Jiff. I haven't got shares in this product, and I know it is very expensive, but it is the best cleaning aid for paintwork. Hoovering is inescapable, but I think in some households it can be cut down to about once every three weeks by training people to take their shoes off at the door, training kids to keep their chins over plates while eating, and buying a patterned carpet.

Changing and laundering the sheets is another big job. If you train residents to wash at least their feet and knees, if not shower, before going to bed - sheets can last up to three weeks. I must admit however that pillow cases usually need changing once a week. I never iron sheets, pillow cases or pyjamas - to me that is madness. In fact I manage to get by ironing only handkerchiefs. If you can have a rail in the laundry with plenty of hangers, you can hang clothes up while they are still hot from the tumble drier and they don't need ironing. You can train the children to put their sweaty uniforms in the washing machine when they come in and set the machine for a small cold wash so that you are not wasting water, and they soon learn to take them out and put them in the drier and then hang them up when the bell rings to remind them they are dry.

Again on the theme of making the place look clean - rather than clean it, the kitchen floor can be made to look much more savoury with a quick wipe round the edges of the floor with a damp squeegee. This picks up crumbs, coffee, flour and generally makes the floor look clean. If like me, you are a very dirty worker, put newspapers on the floor - hard up against the bench when you are cooking, or invest in a cheap rattan mat which can be thrown away when it becomes solid with grease. Eventually you will have to give the floor a quick clean with a squeegee mop and lots of detergent. However it needs a good rinse after this - otherwise your feet stick to the floor. The problem of grease splashing around the stove can be overcome by hanging cheap pictures all round the stove which can be thrown away when the picture is obliterated by grease. At the moment I have a Van Gogh calendar.

So, if you hate housework, involve every member of the household in doing part of it, reward them with your approval when they take part, and never reward them for leaving match box toys in the doorway, or wet towels on beds by picking up after them. Most important, don't invite people to your house who think it should be clean and tidy.
The Feminist Eye

FILM

International Women’s Film Festival

The International Women’s Film Festival, currently touring New Zealand, is a real mixed bag of unusual films.

Most women film-makers have so far lacked money from the big backers, which has restricted their scope. On the credit side, it means that their films are individual statements, and not pap produced for mass audiences. The festival films reflect this independence and individuality and make interesting viewing. Below are my ideas on some of the better (or more interesting) films I got to see - write in and tell us your reactions to the films offered.

Introduction to the Enemy

Jane Fonda, 1974

Fonda’s film is a low-key documentary on life in North Vietnam and the De-Militarised Zone in 1974. Alternating between showing reconstruction activities and interviewing the people involved in them, it provides a sympathetic and attractive picture of a people amazingly without bitterness, but with a strong determination to prevail and to rebuild in their own way.

Interviews with an actress who held factory jobs to improve her understanding of and sympathy for the workers she portrays, and with a headmistress who had become a revolutionary leader, showed how the lives of Vietnamese women have changed. A young peasant woman, twining her waistlength pony-tail through her fingers, described matter-of-factly how she shot down bombers with rifle bullets. Later we saw such grounded planes being made into bicycles and eating utensils.

“Introduction to the Enemy” is an informative and encouraging film, with a message more New Zealanders need to respond to.

Got At

Patricia Edgar

“Got At” was made in Australia with the backing of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education. It begins and ends with an Edna Everage type of woman who is lecturing girls on “femininity”. She tells the girls how to conduct a dinner date so as not to be thought “low” and what the qualities of a real woman are. They include charm (not “pseudo-charm”, which is pleasing yourself instead of others) and the art of being a good listener. (“It is better to be an interested person than an interesting person, because an interested person is interesting because of her interest in others”). During this address, the camera alternates between the speaker and her audience - teenage girls who are uniformed, overweight, bedecked with tawdry jewellery - and wide-eyed with stupefaction. But not half as stupified, or amused, as the cinema audience was when she announced another requirement of a good woman - being gay. Her elaboration on this asset was lost to respond to. “Introduction to the Enemy” is an involving film.

Throughout the film there are what seem to be fairly obvious “feminist” digs at society - and there is also “romance”, which counter-balances. The main emphasis is on Isabel and her infatuation, her romanticised view of life (and men) and how Virginie tries to be supportive without being directive.

At last Isabel gets the man of her dreams into bed, and finds out, as her friend predicted, that he is a fake. A weight is lifted off her shoulders - the women can take a real holiday, and Isabel gleefully rips down the romantic pictures which she has plastered all over the walls. The viewer feels their new-found sense of freedom and exhilaration and laughs with them - a satisfying ending to an involving film.

Dream Life

Mireille Dansereau

A film simple in plot but complex in detail, “Dream Life” tells of two French Canadian women, Isabel and Virginie, who come to share a flat and their lives. Isabel cannot live as freely as Virginie, because she is in love with a very superior looking man (Virginie says he is a snob) called Jean-Jacques. Unfortunately, he is married, with two children. The women have fantasies of a life with him and a child. The film follows their lives up to the point where Isabel finally manages to sleep with her hero.

Women at War

Canadian National Film Board 1944.

In “Women at War” a male narrator describes the war effort of women in England, Russia and Canada. In England we see the work of the Women’s Voluntary Service, nursing the wound-ed, evacuating children, and taking jobs which will release men for active service. Some become the backbone of agriculture, while still more learn and competently perform all the skills of industry, including the heaviest work.
with metals. Four million women were in jobs so vital that they could not change them without permission. These efforts are praised by the narrator, in a patronising way (Imagine women joining so well!) The impression that these women are being made to support a male-induced catastrophe is not obvious even then.

In Canada women far from the war were working ten hour days to supply the Armed Forces of the Allies. The narrator stresses how well suited their left fingers were to the demanding work. In conclusion, the narrator commends "the women who are the manpower for the United Nations."

A terrible film, and one well worth seeing. It demonstrates with crystal clarity how women's labour has always been used in the service of men. It shows that although women can do very task done by men, they are only allowed to do so when it suits male interests. Men remove women from peaceful domesticity by creating wars, expect them to slave their guts out to support the war effort, then promptly push them back into the home to resume their life of "leisure" when hostilities cease.

For a modern audience, the film has the opposite effect to that intended. It teaches that if women are going to work so hard they should decide what work for, and when they will or will not work. More women (and men) need to be able to make this sort of decision and gain control over their working lives.

Christine Dann

BOOK REVIEWS

A Woman's Place?
Judith Aitken

Books about the status of women in New Zealand are so rare that one eagerly seizes upon any literature that is published. Heinemann's have just published Judith Aitken's "A Woman's Place?". Attractively presented it covers a wide range of topics: the history of the suffrage movement both here and abroad, education, employment, sex-role stereotyping, women as housewives. Perhaps the book suffers because it attempts to cover too much. In an effort to include almost every topic of concern to feminists (but not health) Ms Aitken has been forced to become rather superficial in places. How, for example, can you hope to adequately cover the impact of Freud's theories on women on society in one short paragraph? The lack of room to deal more fully with the issues and arguments raised leads to some rather unsubstantiated opinions and some statements which I personally would take issue with. I would like to have seen a convincing justification of the following statement, for example:

"Thus at the senior levels of school and later at technical or university study, the "peer model" for girls is "boys."

And I was upset to see one of the myths about solo parents being perpetuated by Ms Aitken, when she includes in a list of facts and figures about solo parents this statistic:

"In 1973 over 16,000 children were under state care or supervision, and in 1972 nearly 13,000 children passed through the Children's Court." No breakdown of where those children came from.

Ms Aitken is careful not to express her opinion too boldly. Sometimes she is so cautious that one is not sure where she stands at all. I feel there are some issues where one cannot afford to be equivocal. Does Ms Aitken really support the assertion that "Many people, both amateurs and experts, feel that leaving children in day nurseries before the age of two or three is not always a good thing."

The book comes out clearly on the side of home and family and marriage. Ms Aitkin has some criticisms of the nuclear family but there is no examination of the institution of marriage or serious suggestions of alternatives. She appears to believe that being a housewife is not necessarily a bad role but wonders why more housewives don't participate more in the community involvement. She uses the SROW survey on urban women's leisure time activities (which shows that most housewives aren't involved at all) then concludes that "Daily life must be, at least, lacking in stimulation, for 43 percent regard themselves as tired, or very tired. Is this adequate participation?" Is it enough to justify the supposed privilege of having "time on your hands"? Couldn't it be possible that if you're "very tired" you just haven't the energy to get involved in the community?

Ms Aitken favours role-sharing as a way of combating women's second class status. All very well, but I firmly believe that first and foremost we must have child-care freely available or women will still be at the mercy of the
goodwill and decency of their husbands. Husbands will still have the power to play God.

The book is not specifically aimed at secondary school pupils although the accompanying publicity release says it would be useful for seventh formers. Certainly, the language would be too difficult for children younger than that. It is difficult to see who the book would be useful for. The format and style suggest that it is aimed at beginner women's studies groups. I could see it being useful for a discussion group, although it would take some perseverance to get through the number of topics and undertake all the projects that Ms Aitken suggests.

One of the book's strong points is the many interesting facts and figures she presents. It is a pity that many of the illustrations have no caption. This may not worry many readers but I am always interested in the source of pictures and quotes, particularly historical ones.

This is an ambitious undertaking and one which I think has not completely come off. However, if you're new to the women's movement or in an isolated area and are looking for the material to start a discussion group this could be extremely useful in providing a basic introduction to the position of women in New Zealand.

Sandra Coney

Women and the Law in New Zealand.
Ed Kaye Turner and Pauline Vaver.
Hicks Smith & Sons Ltd.,
Wellington 1975.

This very informative book grew out of the Women and the Law workshop at the 1973 United Women's Convention. It gives basic information on such topics as marriage, separation and divorce, how to get legal aid, the accident compensation act, an employer's duties towards employees, buying a house etc. I have found the book extremely useful on a number of occasions as it contains information which is otherwise difficult to obtain. For example, if you think you might be entitled to legal aid how do you find out? Do you ring the Justice Department, Citizens Advice Bureau or try and find a helpful lawyer. This book will make such a dilemma unnecessary as all the basic information is readily accessible to the reader.

The format is simple and straightforward which makes finding your way round this book very easy. The language is simple and lay terms are used rather than legalese. The book was practically completely produced by women and offers much-needed practical advice in an area where women are only too woefully ignorant.

If you've already got a copy of your own, do someone else a favour and give one as a Christmas present.

Sandra Coney

Big Red Diary 1976
Pluto Press 1976
Design : Kate Hepburn
Written by Christine Jackson and others.
Available from Progressive Books, Elliot St, Auckland.

Each year Pluto Press puts out a Big Red Diary: the last two years have featured socialism and the events of 1945. Next year, the diary focuses on women. English produced, and with a socialist bias the diary is stacked with masses of snippets of information fascinating to feminists and interesting pictures. Has a definite working class orientation and contains introductory chapters on women workers in the UK, Equal Pay, Housing etc.

This is a useful and informative appointment diary but may be a bit disconcerting to use. Often the writer would have to scribble appointments over the top of illustrations or text which may induce either double vision or illegibility. Some of the text is also rather hard on the eye being printed in a grey colour and very small type.

Those reservations aside, the Big Red Diary could prove a very practical helpmate for busy feminists with too many things to remember.

Sandra Coney
The Female Man
Joanna Russ
Bantam Books
Science Fiction 1975

Science fiction is a powerful vehicle for social comment, but the limitations of the genre (and of its writers) sometimes cause the message to be buried, sacrificed to the action. Not this novel, though. Joanna Russ states her feminist convictions clearly and feelingly. The message is in the alternative nodes of living which she envisions.

The first, and most lovingly explored, is Whileaway, where men have been extinct for centuries. The women (surprise!) manage perfectly well without them. Then there is Manland and Womanland, which have been at war for forty years, deadlocked in mutual hatred. The men could not survive at all without the women, from whom they buy baby boys. What a contrast there is, between the brutishness of Manland and the highly civilized Whileaway!

The narrative is told in the first person but the identity of this person changes nearly every paragraph. This can be confusing. There are four protagonists, our personalities in the one person, each of whom is actualized in different universes of probability. There is Joanna, (the author) whose time is the present; Jeannine, who lives in an alt-universe continues; Janet, the emissary on a fight to the death with the Man. The Story tails off at this point.

This is fascinating stuff, but better still are the author's observations on the weakness of man/woman relationships: I love my body dearly and yet I could copulate with a rhinoceros if I could become not-a-woman. There is the vanity training, the obedience training, the self-effacement training, the deference training, the dependency training, the passivity training, the riverv training, the stupidity training, the placation training. How am I to put this together with my human life, my intellectual life, my solitude, my transcendence, my brains and my fearful, fearful ambition?"

The answer is implicit in the events she describes: Eliminate men, make men irrelevant, become a Lesbian. If women are to be healed, they must learn to love themselves. It is then just a short step to loving other women.

'The Female Man' is well-written, complex and absorbing. It will not cause a revolution in male/female relations, although the author seems to think that it might. In fact, she lets herself down badly in her final paragraph, which I thought appallingly twee and pretentious. Perhaps her (male) publisher tacked it on.

Patricia Dooley

CHILDREN'S FICTION

The Book of Three
The Black Cauldron
The Castle of Llyr
Taran Wanderer
The High King
Lloyd Alexander

Some children (and adults) have a real taste for fantasy, yet because the roots of fantasy lie in tradition, fantasy writers often perpetuate the traditional stereotypes of women as beautiful and weak or ugly and dangerous (princesses and witches.) Tolkein, in his famous trilogy "The Lord of the Rings", has only one active female character, who achieves distinction, and saves a city, by killing a previously invincible foe. But her achievement is denigrated as abnormal, springing not from natural female courage and ability, but from a desire to prove herself after being rejected by the man she loves, and her valor fades when she finds another lover.

Alexander does not fall into such simplistic traps. Although most of his characters are male, his female characters, even the witches, are depicted as individuals and not as stereotypes.

The books are set in an imaginary kingdom, Prydain, which is based on the Wales of mythology. They trace the adventures of Taran, the assistant pig-keeper, as he battles against evil and rises to be High King. Among his companions is the Princess Eilonwy, who is every bit as brave and determined as Taran himself. Eilonwy experiences a problem common to many girls today, that of getting Taran to break through his conditioning and express his true feelings, but she succeeds in the end, and Alexander documents her success very effectively.

The series is very well-written, each book being full of surprises and unexpected turns of events, with a good balance between mythical and fantastic elements and ordinary activities and emotions. Every child who enjoys fantasy will enjoy and profit from these books.

Christine Dann

Swallows and Amazons
Arthur Ransome

Ransome's books are less popular now than they used to be - perhaps they are being superseded by more trendy "social problem" books. I still think they are worthwhile and should be read today. They deal with the discoveries and adventures of children sailing the waters and exploring the shores of Britain's large northern lakes. "Swallows and Amazons" is the best-known of his books, and provides a good example of his style and interests.

Ransome does not discriminate between his male and female characters. Although John is the leader of the Swallows, because of his age, rather than sex, it is the younger girl Titty who single-handedly steals the boat which saves the day for the Swallows.

The Swallows are a family of four children, holidaying by the lake. The Amazons are sisters who live there, who enjoy emulating pirates. (One has changed her name from Ruth to Nancy, because pirates must be ruthless.) Both groups have small yachts, and are devoted to sailing. Trouble arises when the Swallows sail out to camp on an island which the Amazons regard as theirs. However, warfare in earnest soon becomes friendly rivalry, culminating with a midnight boat-stealing competition. The groups then unite to harass the Amazon's temporarily misanthropist author uncle, who lives on a houseboat, into a more amenable frame of mind.

Ransome mixes the detail of ordinary life (which is not so ordinary to most readers, and very interesting) with conflict in an absorbing way. The lake, the boats, the shores and their inhabitants, human and animal, come alive for the reader. A good book for boys and girls who like adventure, but prefer practical rather than fantastic tales.

Christine Dann
The Wolves of Willoughby Chase
Black Hearts in Battersea
Nightbirds over Nantucket
Joan Aiken

Set in an eighteenth century England which never existed (under a Stuart, not a Hanoverian king) the first two books in this series provide a rollicking set of adventures in which small girls as well as small boys prove their courage and resourcefulness against large numbers of formidable forces - wolves, evil governesses, traitors, madmen, the sea, the forest and other hostile environments.

In the third book the scene shifts to New England. The capable Cockney heroine, Dido Twite, has several difficult tasks ahead of her. Firstly she must persuade the daughter of the sea-captain who rescued Dido to leave her hiding-place and assume a normal life. With Dido's help Penitence changes from a milksop to a much braver and more resourceful girl. In helping Penitence, Dido stumbles upon her second, and harder task - to thwart a Hanoverian plot to blow up the palace in London by long-distance gun. Added to this already heady brew is the story of the search for the pink whale, and the part she plays in foiling the plot, the roles of the helpful ship's boy, the evil ex-governess and the mad professor, plus the more factual but still fascinating accounts of life aboard a whaler and on shore at Nantucket.

Aiken writes very well, lacing her dialogue with colourful period slang, which is fun to work out. For children with active imaginations, and especially for girls who need capable and amusing heroines, presented without comment, these books are ideal.

Christine Dann

SEX EDUCATION BOOKS

How a Baby is Made
Pictures and Text by Per Holm Knudsen
Piccolo Picture Books
Pan Books Ltd
1975

Books explaining the facts of life for children are hard to come by. Even harder to find is one which is not coy at best, misleading at worst. “How A Baby Is Made” has simple, no-nonsense illustrations, showing the male and female anatomy, how copulation takes place, the growth of the baby inside its mother and its birth.

The text is simple and straightforward and mercifully free from moralising. The book emphasises togetherness, the co-operation of the mother and father in making the baby and in the birth and caring for the baby afterwards. The father is shown present at the birth of the child and holding the baby. Love is stressed as the basis for the relationship between mother and father. It is never said or even suggested that they are married.

There are flaws in the book, but they do not markedly detract from the overall healthiness of the book. For example, sexual excitement preceding sexual intercourse is described thus:

“The father and mother love each other very much and want to be very, very close. Sometimes when the father feels especially loving, his penis becomes large.”

There is no mention of the mother’s response until the actual description of intercourse when it states:

“The father and mother hold each other tightly, and move together happily. They are making love or having intercourse.”

This section of the book contains an excellent illustration showing the couple having intercourse, the man’s penis inside the woman’s vagina. Most books for children are vague about this so I was delighted to see this book being so frank.

My five-year-old learned a lot from this book and I have seen it read to children up to eight years old and provoking a lot of discussion. A pity it doesn’t mention contraception, a subject I always try to include in any discussion of sex. However it’s easy enough to include it yourself at the relevant point and this book really needs to be read with a sympathetic adult not left to the child itself as it provokes much discussion and questioning.

Shortly after I bought “How A Baby Is Made” I was handed a copy of a booklet called “In the Beginning” which comes out of the tip of his penis. They move through the mother’s vagina into a hollow space in the mother’s abdomen called the uterus, or womb. Sometimes there is a tiny egg inside the mother, and a sperm cell joins it.

Page from “How a Baby Is Made” reviewed above.
which purports to be a book for parents "to help them tell their children about the mysteries of love and life." The book was sent to an Auckland school so I can only assume it has been sent to all schools.

Cleverly presented, its prudery and narrow-mindedness is thinly disguised behind a veneer of liberality. The book discusses sex firmly within the context of marriage; the subjects of solo parenthood and adoption are given a "special" section which begins "Should a child need to know about such topics as Adoptions and Solo Parents, ..." and ends "It is important that your explanation is factual and is without trace of prejudice." (In both cases authors emphasis.)

The book, I was not surprised to discover, is put out by the Catholic Church and printed by the Tablet. Following a quote from the Vatican, we are exhorted "Pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance and help. You have the right to ask for divine guidance" and later: "As Christian parents you should convey the idea that sex is good and beautiful and is given by God." And "The act of intercourse can be described as God's Special Gift."

This book is attractively presented and is a skilful attempt to present a reactionary message in a style that will have popular appeal. Readers who are teachers could investigate whether this clever little book has found its way into your school library and have it removed.

Sandra Coney

Where Did I Come From?
Written by Peter Mayle
Illustrated by Arthur Robins
Published by Sun Books, Melbourne 1975.

This beautifully presented book would be useful for about the same age group as "How A Baby is Made". Much of what I said about the former book also applies to "Where Did I Come From?" but the latter is bigger, more imaginatively presented but not necessarily any better.

The drawings are hilarious and have a flavour of Giles about them. The text is witty too "...vagina (it rhymes with Carolina)", and the whole aim of the book seems to be to make sex education so much fun that embarrassment must be superfluous.

This book has some of the same shortcomings as "How A Baby is Made". I'm going to get really excited when a book of the calibre of these two actually mentions birth control. Both books make the connection between the act of sex and procreation so strong that some of our young are going, to find it rather surprising to find that people actually do it for pleasure alone, with the thought of an offspring very firmly rejected and prevented. I remember years ago hearing Robin Black saying that we teach people how to make babies but not how not to make babies. The same applies today.

My five year old has learned through sharing my experiences about contraception and menstruation. He knew why I used to take a pill every day because I explained when he saw me taking them. He knows now I have an IUD, what it looks like, how it got put in and what it's for. He knows what tampons are for and doesn't go pale when he sees blood on my underclothing. He knows it's natural, just part of my daily life and not something dirty or painful or shameful. I hope he grows up believing that contraception is an integral part of making love. It seems to me irresponsible to withhold this knowledge from children.

I was a bit turned off by the illustrations in "Where Did I Come From?" of the successful sperm which had managed to conquer the egg. He is shown sitting on the egg in top-hat with a bunch of roses. I felt that was an unnecessary bit of chauvinism.

Very good is the discussion of orgasm which is quite lengthy and frank. I don't think, however, than an orgasm feels like a sneeze or a tickle, but if you're going to try and compare it to some other bodily experience obviously you're going to run into difficulties. Wouldn't it have been simpler to have compared it to the nice sensations children get when they touch their genitals or masturbate? And if we think masturbating is normal it wouldn't hurt if such a comparison prompted some children to try it.

I think "How A Baby Is Made" dealt with two aspects of sexuality more successfully than "Where Did I Come From". You've already read my praise of their cross-section view of a couple having sex. I think this is infinitely better than the half under the blankets version in this book. I think also that the diagrams showing the foetus developing in a disembodied uterus are not as effective as showing the changes taking place within the woman's body as "How a Baby is Made" did.

These two books are the best on this subject I've seen so far for small children. But we can do a lot better yet. We can include contraception, we can ascribe a more active sexual role to the woman, we can accept the fact that solo mothers do exist and make provision for their children who must feel rather alienated by the constant assumption that fathers are always around being supportive and sharing experiences with the mother.

Sandra Coney
AUCKLAND
Auckland Women’s Centre, Halfway House, Rape Crisis Centre, 125 Ponsonby Road, Auckland. Phone 764-755
N.O.W., P.O. Box 2946, Auckland.
W.E.L., P.O. Box 17021, Greenlane.
Council for Single Parent & Child, c/- Friendship House, 100 Greys Avenue, Auckland. Phone 370-257

CHRISTCHURCH
Christchurch Women’s Centre, 249 Kilmore Street, Christchurch.
Christchurch Feminists, 51 Brown’s Road, Christchurch. Phone 554-746
N.O.W., P.O. Box 2720, Christchurch. Phone 841-728

DUNEDIN
Dunedin Collective for Woman, P.O. Box 446, Dunedin. Phone 374-90

GISBORNE
N.O.W., 3 Dickson Street, Gisborne.

HAMILTON
H.O.W., P.O. Box 350, Hamilton.

Please send any additions or alterations to Broadsheet, P.O. Box 47261, Auckland.

N.O.W.
Auckland branch of NOW has a Legal subcommittee which is presenting submissions in mid-December, to the Parliamentary Committee studying the Matrimonial Property Bill. Copies of the Matrimonial Property Bill are available from the Government Printer.

Auckland NOW is asking all women’s groups in New Zealand to unite over the issue of attaining a fully funded, autonomous Women’s Bureau with legal power to see that anti-discrimination law is enforced, to conduct research, supply information to Government, advocate further changes in all areas to help women, and be answerable to Parliament through a Minister.

In particular NOW is drawing attention to the need for Bureau branches to be set up in all main centres, as are government departments. This ensures that in the event of political changes, the work of such a Bureau would remain continuous and stable. The political party in office has been informed. We now need action, not promises and proposals ad infinitum.

WELLINGTON
N.O.W., P.O. Box 9090, Courtenay Place, Wellington.
S.H.E. & Circle, P.O. Box 427, Wellington. Phone 556-336 or 51540

W.O.N.A.A.C., P.O. Box 2669, Wellington.

UPPER HUTT
N.O.W., 18 Cruckshank Road, Upper Hutt.

WHANGAREI
N.O.W., P.O. Box 1313, Whangarei.

NOW
Working women have united to found the Working Women’s Alliance. This is a union of women, including housewives, which has been formed to oppose the exploitation of working people especially the extra discrimination which women face.

So far the union has centres in Wellington and Dunedin and a publication called Working Women which is issued monthly from the Working Women’s Alliance, P.O. Box 9012, Wellington.

Immediate demands of the Working Women’s Alliance include:

1. A halt to the erosion of our living standards.
   A living 40 hour week wage
   Full cost of living increases
   A stop to escalating prices
   Rents must be reduced and held

2. The right of women to work
   Equal pay
   Paid maternity leave
   Free child care facilities
   Unemployment benefit for all women

3. A vastly improved health system
   No waiting lists for public hospitals
   Free medical and dental services
Working Women is including in each issue a case study to illustrate the hardships which working women face in their efforts to combine their role as workers with their role as mother. If readers are interested send a $2.00 subscription to the newsletter at the Wellington address.

sydney women’s liberation

Sydney Women’s Liberation group is studying the feasibility of establishing a feminist radio station for Sydney. A working party set up by the Department of the Media to work out guidelines for the issue of public broadcasting licences is due to make its report to the Broadcasting Minister and new legislation may follow.

Twelve experimental licences have already been allocated to tertiary education institutions, and community/ethnic/minority groups will receive next consideration.

health and education

Women’s Health and Education Group is in the melting pot. Its aims are to co-ordinate the activities of women who have been going out to women in schools and factories etc. Until the group becomes self-sufficient it is applying for government funding. Some possible activities include doing a bus tour of country areas in the last month of the school terms and going out to beaches in the holidays.

seminar

WOMEN IN CHINA SEMINAR

The seminar held by the China Society on Sunday the 1st of October was well-attended, with the majority of the audience being comprised of women of all ages. Joan Connolly and Jocelyn Logan introduced the topic by outlining the oppression of women in China under the Confucian order, and how Chinese women (and men) struggled against these backward ideas and practices.

The afternoon was devoted to talks and discussion on the family, the new morality, family planning, job opportunities and education for women in the new China.

The differences between China and New Zealand were early spelt out. Chinese women enjoy many advantages which we are merely groping towards in New Zealand, such as widely available and cheap day-care, free contraception and abortion, paid maternity leave, job security, prominent and heroic roles in the arts being taken by women (e.g. the operas and ballets “The White-haired Girl”, “The Red Detachment of Women”, and “The Red Lantern”) and officially sponsored campaigns to encourage men to abandon Confucian ideas about women and take on housework and child-care.

There are also differences which New Zealanders, especially feminists, may find harder to accept, such as the heavy emphasis on the family, and the Puritanism which denies sexual activity and contraception to the unmarried. But at least the Chinese can claim consistency in these matters, for they have abolished the double standard, and men and women are expected to uphold a code of behaviour which is the same for both sexes.

As I shifted suitcases with other women on a Chinese train our interpreter smiled and said, “Women hold up half of heaven.” It’s an old saying which is being well-worked in China today - we could do with the same attitude here.

Christine Dann

women’s centre

125 Ponsonby Road, Auckland. Phone 764-755

Arising out of the WONAAC Tribunal, a group of women has decided the time is ripe to start a Feminist Political Party. There will be no men involved and the manifesto is concerned with women’s issues only. This is a radical concept because radical changes are needed. Feminists must start to organise themselves now for the 1978 elections.

Anyone wanting to beat the system contact Annette Gower 452-374.

additions

NEW PLYMOUTH

Women’s Action Group
Jill Woodd 35981
Margaret Scott 34016
Greta Jackson 36377

NEW PLYMOUTH

Women’s Centre Project Committee
62 Vivian Street, New Plymouth.

Centre - Phone 79532
Rosemary Hockings
Berys Spence
The Bobigny Trial Continued from Page 29

SPECIAL OFFER

Everyone who is seriously interested in abortion should read "Abortion: The Bobigny Affair" which contains the full transcript of the trial. This book has just been translated into English by Australian Beryl Henderson, and published by Wild & Woolley. Caveman Publications is distributing it in New Zealand. Broadsheet has arranged with Caveman to have this book available for our readers.

Send $5.70 to Broadsheet P.O. Box 47-261 Auckland and a copy will be posted directly to you. Fill out the form below. All cheques and money orders should be separate from subscription monies.

Also available Rachel McAlpine’s “Lament for Ariadne” a first book of poetry from a New Zealand woman whose work you will have read in Broadsheet. Available at $2.50 paperback and $3.95 casebound.

Name: .............................................................................
Address: .............................................................................
Abortion: The Bobigny Affair, Association Choisir
............... copies paperback
Lament for Ariadne, Rachel McAlpine
............... copies paperback
............... copies casebound

References
1. Testimony of Prof. Raoul Palmer, President of the Society for the Study of Sterility and Fertility, P 46-47 "The Bobigny Affair”. Stern as they may seem, harsher penalties have been imposed within most of our lifetimes. Under Marshall Petain five women were quillotined in the early 1940’s for breaking the laws on abortion.
2. Testimony of Marie Claire Chevalier ibid p 33
3. Mme Dubouchrex’s anti-abortion views were radically altered by her involvement in the Chevalier case and trial. She said in the trial "For as much as I was against abortion for many years, I am now as much in favour."
4. Information from Ms magazine January 1975. Article by Claude Servan-Schreiber

How do we measure success? If we look at the judgments handed down at the end of the trial, we could only get partial satisfaction from the fact that two of the accused were acquitted and that Mme Chevalier and Mme Bambuck received minimal sentences. Gisele Halimi and Choisir did not succeed in winning the total acquittals that they had hoped for.

But the Bobigny trial led to massive public agitation for changes in the laws. For months the government tried to ignore the ferment, vague promises were made that repeal would be considered at a later date. But arrests of women breaking the law continued although fewer and more discreetly. Doctors began performing abortions free and when one of these doctors was arrested in May 1973, 10,000 people marched in the streets in protest. Eventually the government was forced to act and at the end of 1974 introduced in the French Parliament the bill which was to become law.

It is saddening that in a country like New Zealand, where the Church is less entrenched and influential, in a country which prides itself on its social reforms and the generally good quality of its health care that women are still denied such a basic right as abortion. Maybe we need some feminist lawyers like Gisele Halimi. Maybe we need an organisation like Choisir which is uncompromising and feminist in its beliefs but can still attract to its ranks persons of the calibre of those who gave testimony at Bobigny. Maybe, maybe .........

Maybe it is easier to fight, from a position of total oppression and desperation - easier when 1% of the population is martyred every year for an archaic law, when there are as many abortions as live births. Maybe its too easy to be apathetic and conservative when Australia is only a jet flight away.

New Times Monthly

The national monthly of politics and affairs. This month’s special feature - Women’s Supplement. Articles on Women and Publishing, Drug Addiction, Abortion, Divorce Law Reform, the Media, and others. Writers include Helen Paske, Christine Kraus, Heather Tyler.

Available at most newsagents or P.O. Box 11-192, Wellington.

Subscriptions $3 per annum. Single copies 25c each. For further information contact Stephen Prendergas Ph. 842-469 Wellington (or 739-929)
BROADSHEET SPECIAL
writings of the women's movement

JUDITH exploitation
JOAN SIMMONS breast cancer
ROBIN MORGAN lesbianism & feminism
JO FREEMAN the tyranny of structurelessness
LEE COMER the economics of the nuclear family
BEVERLY FISHER put your money where your movement is

broadsheet
Please send me the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Subscription at $4
- Overseas subscriptions $US6
- Gift subscriptions at $4 for:
- the Broadsheet Special at $1
- the 1973 Convention book at $1-50

BACK ISSUES
Set of five pre-1975 for $1.00 (3 new format and 2 old format).

- All 1975 back issues are 40c each.
- Complete set of all available back issues $5.00

your name ...........................................
address ...............................................

Send this form to:
48 st andrews rd Auckland 3