

broadsheet

new zealand's feminist magazine

september 1978 62 90 cents

301.41205
B.R.O.

Life Behind a Typewriter

Humanae Vitae — the Pope's contribution to the abortion laws?



BASTION POINT AND THE MAORI WOMEN'S STRUGGLE

Registered at the GPO, Wellington, as a magazine

Statement of Aims

At the beginning of August several members of the Broadsheet Collective resigned. As a result of this the present Collective has produced a Statement of Aims, which you will find on page 2 of this issue. Also included in the magazine is a supplement for subscribers which deals with the specific circumstances of the resignations. Readers who buy this copy in a bookshop may write for the supplement, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

New Office

By the time you receive this issue the new office should be set up. Our old phone number (794-751) should be reconnected, and our new premises:

First floor, Colebrooks Building, 93 Anzac Ave.

The recent upheavals in Broadsheet have disturbed the normal work routine somewhat. Uncertainty about our premises has meant that the office has not been open, and that the phone has been disconnected, which will have made it difficult for women wanting to get in touch with us. There has also been a delay in attending to some of the mail we have received — subscriptions, requests, and so on. We apologise for any inconvenience that has been caused, and would like to reassure our readers that as from now business is as usual.

Writing for Broadsheet

If you are interested in writing for Broadsheet, but would like some guidance on the sorts of articles, style and presentation required, please send in a large stamped, self-addressed envelope and we will send you a copy of our recently prepared Guide to writing for Broadsheet.

Poetry

We apologise to all the women who have sent in poems for publication who have not yet heard from us nor seen their poems in print. Selecting poems is a real problem for us because at present no-one working on the editorial side of the magazine feels very confident about assessing poetry. Will poets please bear with us until we sort this one out?

Office Furniture

We would be grateful for any pieces of furniture which readers can give us to make the new office more comfortable. Chairs and rugs especially needed. Cushions, bookcases and filing cabinets also gratefully received. Please ring so that we can arrange delivery.

Toys and Books

To make it easier for women with children to help with Broadsheet we aim to set up a small playroom in the extra space we now have, with enough in the way of toys and books to help amuse a child for an hour or so. So if you have any to spare, please think of us.

Sterilisation Abuse Stories

At present we are collecting material for an article on sterilisation abuse (women being sterilised against their will, women being subjected to pressure to be sterilised, etc.). There is a lot of evidence that this occurs in Third World countries, and it has been suggested that Island women in New Zealand are also vulnerable to this sort of abuse. We would like to hear from you on the subject — has it happened to you, do you have evidence that it has happened to other women in New Zealand?

Radical Feminist Information Exchange

Are you interested in reading Radical Feminist papers and contributing to a Radical Feminist information exchange? If you are, write to 4A Hillside Cres, Auckland 3, for a full list of the papers currently available. (Enclose s.a.e.). Some of the papers (with prices to cover the cost of Xeroxing and posting only) are:

Will the women's movement survive? — Naomi Weisstein and Heather Booth, U.S.A. — 45c.

Do feminists need Marxism? — Jane Flax, U.S.A. — 45c.

Feminism and socialism — Des Feministes Revolutionnaires, France — 45c.

Remembering who we are — an open letter to Susan Saxe — Barbara Deming, U.S.A. — 75c.

Challenging Assertiveness Training — May Schneidt, U.S.A. — 40c.

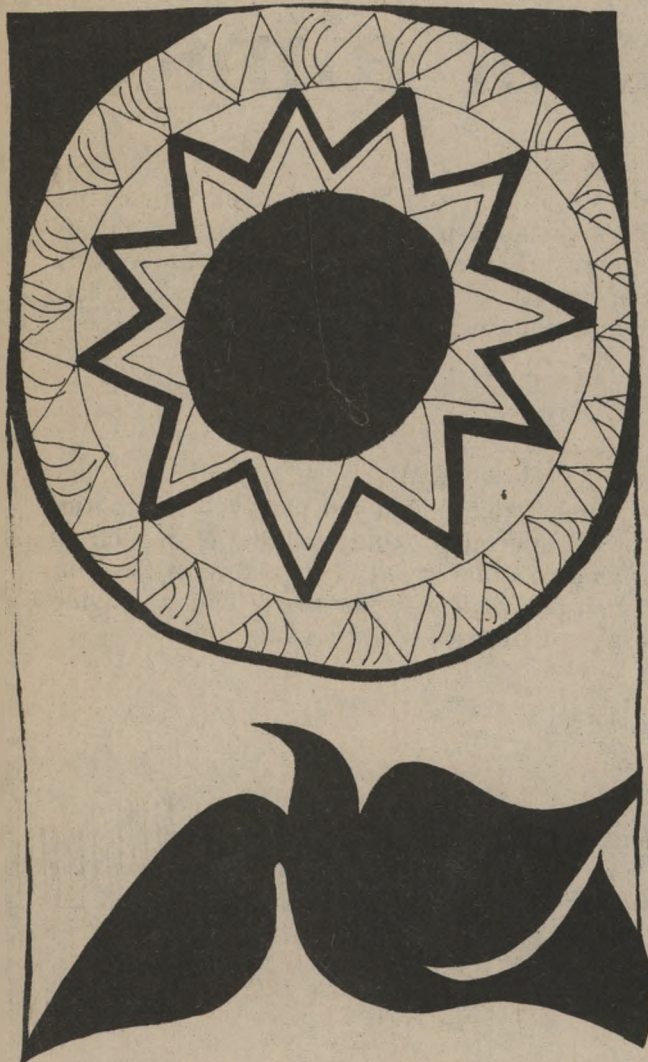
WOMEN'S HEALTH PACKS

Broadsheet has collated the issues containing health articles, and has made them into packages on different health areas. The packages and their prices are listed below (free postage).

No. 1	Childbirth	\$2.00
No. 2	Contraception	\$4.50
No. 3	Disorders (Cystitis, thrush, etc.)	\$2.00
No. 4	Herbs	\$1.20
No. 5	Herstorical	\$1.20
No. 6	Menopause	\$1.20
No. 7	Menstruation	\$1.20

Invaluable for your self-help group, women's centre or own reference. Send your cheque/money order, stating name, address and number(s) of the pack(s) you require to Health Packs, Broadsheet, Box 5799, Auckland.

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women

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September 1st, 1978.

Broadsheet is on file at the Women's Collection, Special Collections Department, Northwestern University Library, Evanston, Illinois 60201, USA.

These women worked on this issue: Val Cole, Sandra Coney, Christine Dann, Anne Parsons, Jill Ranstead, Rosemary Ronald, Anne Woodley and the enveloping women.

Illustrations: Vanya Lowry p1, p17
Donna Hoyle p14
Robyn Conway p33

broadsheet

~ a statement of aims ~

In view of the recent upheaval within Broadsheet the Broadsheet Collective felt that it would be a good idea to make an interim and brief statement of its aims and intentions. This statement is not comprehensive, and should be read as an attempt to clarify directions for the moment, and not as a manifesto which Broadsheet must rigidly adhere to in the future. As soon as possible, the Broadsheet Collective intends to produce a more complete and definitive description of the aims and structure of Broadsheet for women who wish to become involved with the magazine.

* Broadsheet aims to discuss issues of interest to women from a feminist perspective. It tries to reach as many women as possible with feminist ideas, information and analysis. With such an orientation, it will always have room for discussing women's movement ideas and activities, but its primary aim is to reach out to women who may be unfamiliar with feminism. Thus satisfying the desire of women within the movement to discuss their theories is a secondary object.

* The political ideas expressed in Broadsheet are largely the ideas of members of the Broadsheet Collective. Although Broadsheet is open to discussion of varying theories and trends within the women's movement, Broadsheet does not speak for the movement, but reflects the stance taken by the Collective. Broadsheet does not align itself with any one group within the movement, but takes an independent stance.

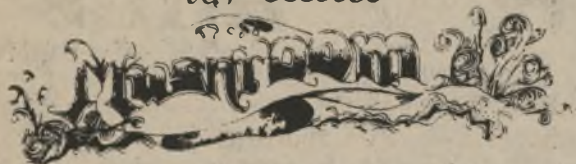
* Similarly, Broadsheet editorials reflect the views of the women who write them, and although the Broadsheet Collective prefers not to publish viewpoints which it strongly disagrees with, not every Collective member necessarily agrees with every idea expressed in a Broadsheet editorial. For this reason, editorials are signed by individuals.

* Concern has been expressed that Broadsheet will no longer publish any information or views on lesbianism and lesbian feminism. In so far as Broadsheet intends to discuss all aspects of the women's movement, Broadsheet will continue to discuss lesbianism and lesbian feminist politics.

There is a magazine in N.Z. for those
people interested in knowing about

ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES

it's called



If you are interested, please write
to P.O. Waitati, Ctage.

WOMENS ART WORKSHOP

We are hoping to set up classes and displays etc. Call us and let us know what kind of things you are interested in (painting, photography, lithography, screen printing, fabric work ...). Also let us know if you have a skill to teach. We need large tables, chairs, and any art or photography equipment you may be willing to donate or sell cheaply. Contact: Jill — 761-483 or Maureen — 765-800.

THE NEW ZEALAND RATIONALIST & HUMANIST

Latest issue featuring:

- Religious Indoctrination in State Schools — Uri Geller Exposed
- Cardinal Delargy Preaches Civil Disobedience — Are You A Freethinker?

Write for your free copy to: P.O. Box 1784, Palmerston North.

YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS COURSE: PROGRAMME

DATE: TOPIC: GUEST SPEAKER/S:

September 7 Housing Finance — Sources Chris Evatt (Savings Advisory Service)

Tax Benefits for Savers

Budgeting — How to best save your money

September 14 Civil Rights Dr Rodney Harrison

September 21 Wills, Estates Terry Darby

September 28 Local Authority — Bylaws K.M. Lyons (Auckland City Council)

These sessions are free and open to everyone. Come along Thursday evenings from 7-9 pm at Grey Lynn Citizens Advice Bureau, 510 Richmond Road.

NAU MAI!

HAERE MAI!

NAU MAI!

HAERE MAI!



Daybreak Book Shop
P.O. Box 5424
Dunedin.

- Female Friends — a novel by Fay Weldon \$2.85 ☐
- Free Space — by Pamela Allen . \$2.20 ☐
- Generations of Denial — 75 short biographies of women in history by Kathryn Taylor ... \$2.35 ☐
- Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves — women in classical antiquity by Sarah B. Pomeroy \$7.45 ☐
- Kathie Kollwitz: Woman and Artist — by Martha Kearns .. \$9.50 ☐
- The Lesbian Reader — an Amazon quarterly anthology edited by Gina Covina & Laurel Galana \$6.80 ☐
- Les Guerilleres — by Monique Wittig \$2.25 ☐
- Loving Women, Loving Men — Gay Liberation & the Church by Sally Gearhart & W. R. JOHNSON \$8.80 ☐
- Sappho — a new translation of poems, songs and fragments, trans. by Mary Barnard \$2.55 ☐
- Sappho Was A Right-On Woman — by Sidney Abbot & Barbara Love \$5.60 ☐
- The Woman Warrior — Memoirs of a girlhood among ghosts by Maxine A. Kingston \$3.35 ☐
- Women Look At Psychiatry — edited by Dorothy E. Smith and Sara J. David \$6.15 ☐
- Rational Woman's Guide to Self-Defence — Mary Conroy \$2.35 ☐
- Herstory Diary 1978 \$0.65 ☐
- Sugar and Snails — a counter-sexist children's booklist by Jenny Pausacker \$1.15 ☐
- Changing Childcare — Cuba, China and the challenging of our own values \$0.90 ☐

All prices include post and packaging so please tick the box beside the book(s) you want. This is just a selection of the many books we have, including all titles of Doris Lessing and Virginia Woolf. Let us know if you would like any other books and we will tell you the cost of them plus postage.

Name:

Address:

.....
.....

"She Link"

Dear Broadsheet,

The recent discussion on the herbal contraceptive 'she link' led me to make enquiries about it. The traditional Chinese acupuncturist and herbalist here in Christchurch did not know of this particular 'brand', but was dubious about the use of Chinese herbs as contraceptives. His main concern was that the effects of such herbs may not be reversible, and a woman might remain sterile for life.

Following this, I took the opportunity on a recent trip to China to make enquiries at a Teaching Hospital we visited in Shanghai. The doctors I spoke to there were surprised by my enquiries. They stated that herbs were used as contraceptives in the past, but although research is being done on them at present, herbal contraceptives "have not been popularised" — nor was there any suggestion that they were likely to be used in the near future. Given that abortions are readily available on demand in China, it seems likely that they have encountered problems beyond the fact that herbs are not 100% effective.

In the light of this information, the use of 'she link' seems to me unwise.

Patricia Marcussen.

Currents & Volts

Dear Broadsheet,

In the article on E.C.T. (Broadsheet April 1978), it was stated (p. 26), that a 'current (70 to 140 volts)' is used. This statement is a mixed metaphor, as current is not synonymous to voltage. Electric current is measured in amperes (amps), so the reference to voltage does not enlighten the reader on the size of the current flowing through the patient. The relationship of current to voltage is analogous to water flow

and the pressure applied. With the application of pressure, water is able to flow through a pipe. Likewise with voltage applied, current can flow. A lethal current is measured in milliamps.

I have also noticed in several contributions to this excellent magazine, that varied spelling of the words 'woman' and 'women' appear. The spelling has even altered within a single article, which is disconcerting. Perhaps Broadsheet could formulate a policy on the spelling of these words so that contributors and readers alike may receive continuity.

Kay Junge,
Rarotonga.

Tampon Sponges Again

Dear Broadsheet,

With reference to the "tampon versus sponge" controversy ... Sponges are defined as a form of marine life. They require adequate sterilisation or may retain sand grains or marine insects.

Sunlight does not "sterilise" in the full sense of the word. It dries, thus promoting cleanliness. It retards the growth of some forms of bacteria but tends to "hatch" others.

The source of sponges requires consideration as some ocean areas are contaminated by pollution, including cancer-forming nuclear waste products.

In event of vaginal infections, used sponges could re-introduce infection.

Strict hygiene would have to be applied where non-disposable articles are used regards the menstrual process.

Psychologically, some women prefer disposable articles in this respect.

Old sponges tend to break up. Fragments could adhere to mucus membranes, causing irritation.

It is a fact of life that the majority of women will continue using factory-produced sanitary articles. Such articles should therefore be available at prices they can afford.

It is incumbent upon the WLM to gain the type of political power which promotes economic legislation.

A tendency to "make do" undermines the WLM. Every woman is entitled to nothing but the best. Isn't this what the WLM is all about?

Eleanor Moyles
Auckland.

On Making Moves

Dear Broadsheet,

What Way Out? ... In reply to Dorothy Platt's letter — Broadsheet May — Dear Dorothy, your maiden name is not your own either, it came from your father, his father, his father etc. so unless you change your name to one of personal choice by deed poll you are stuck with it, but you do **not** have to be stuck with a 'dead marriage' ... (For the benefit of any would-be accusers, I am not busting a gut to bust up anyone's marriage) ... if it is so bad that you want out then indeed why not get out? Of course it is not easy. Many of us who have done it find it often takes great courage (especially if you do not have anyone supportive around you) to leave behind 'security', but as far as physical, emotional and financial investment' are concerned I made the same investments in my marriage and physically I wound up on a spinal stretcher from investing too heavily; emotionally I ground down into a mental hospital by investing to the point of bankruptcy; and financially I was down to my one pair of broken shoes and wearing my sixteen-year-old son's shirts, but, I made it.

Leaving is also one way to become

again involved in the physical activity you mention. Forced to find somewhere to live (ah, no women's communes then) I was lucky — or unlucky — to rent an old house from a landlady who did not believe in maintaining it but was quite happy to let me do so — unpaid. Since then my partner, my daughter and I have had three more moves to our present address where, with a landlady who is sympathetic to solo women, we have carte blanche to do as we like while any maintenance work is immediately carried out and paid for by the owners when needed. However, aside from misfortune or fortune in living accommodation, I am now gloriously free to do my wood-carving, writing, painting, knitting, travelling, reading, music, have friends, silent spaces when needed, sleep or not sleep, and all without demands such as 'when are you going to come to bed/put out the light/show some sympathy/interest/understanding/love/pull yourself together etc. etc.

I do the mechanics on our car, carpentry when needed, in fact practically everything that was once considered only male territory (but seldom done except on a five year plan basis) and discovered the simple joys of sharing the reading of a funny-ha ha book with another person.

As for your children/husband 'never forgiving' you, for God's sake for WHAT do they have to forgive you? You are a person, a being, an individual with rights, you have a right to give and receive in this life. Your husband/children do not own you anymore than you own them. Doubtless each of your children will live THEIR life as they want to and if your husband prefers to be a bug in the rug then that could be taken as his right (not wishing to be terribly fem-separatist about this) but surely you do not have to share that mean existence with him if he cannot be nudged out of it.

There are many alternative lifestyles, if you read Broadsheet you must have read about some of them. You do not say whether you work can/do/can't . . . how about a job as

a gardener — my lady cousin of nearly fifty does just that successfully. How about starting up a women's commune? Taking into account the deplorable unemployment situation, could you start fluttering your wings, if you want to wait until the youngest child has left school, and try to get a job or training for one while waiting ...

Take heart and courage Dorothy, there are many of us who have done what you are wondering about and in this sexist society there will be many more. If you feel trapped and remain in that situation then sooner or later resentments will eat into you. For your own sake as a person be positive, make SOME move ...

Melva Gibson
Christchurch.

Bank Policies

Dear Broadsheet,

I was very interested in your article "What's In A Name", (May issue, pg32). Perhaps there are other legal issues affecting women of which they are unaware?

I was recently told by a bank (when my husband and I applied for a house loan) that the bank considered the man to be the prime wage earner, and they would not take the wife's earnings into consideration. (It was obvious from the figures that I, the female, was in fact the prime wage earner.) Do banks make up their own policies, or are they subject to Government control?

Yours faithfully,
Caroline Henry
Whakatane.

We hope to have an article on this soon. We welcome information from readers.

Letters for publication should be 300 words or less. Longer letters may have to be cut so as to fit them in. An asterisk indicates that a letter has been cut for reasons of space.



An Expression

Dear Broadsheet,

I want to write, to tell, to ask, to find out if the things going on in my world are similar to/shareable with the experiences of other women. The insecurities, doubts, the pain centred in the chest, like a bleeding fire that is continually rekindled — and the moments of hope, light, which I grab at, indulge in, but the fire waits to bleed. And then I see it all as a big game, to be enjoyed at all costs, any cost even human values — which seem to lose meaning anyway.

Drugs help the game, help me feel more comfortable, looser, but the insecurity of an inconstant supply makes the game a desperate one and the straights seem even more scary than before. Men scare me because of their power, hate/love reinforces their power and the more I try to veto it the more lonely and alienated I become. Support from women doesn't seem enough — maybe just the women I know — I want a lover, and yet my loves are a forgone conclusion before I even start. I desire those which seem to hurt the most. I wonder how long, how much more pain, before I get so sick of their power that I will give their game up.

I mutilated myself one, O.D'd another time — desperate ways of trying to communicate. What about loving a woman — the sexual part doesn't come easy and I see it like

drugs — avoiding that which is hurting. But I am in strong need of comforting, and I have strong attractions to women — my fear is that when with a woman I might resent the maleness that she lacks — I couldn't handle the dishonesty of that one.

Honesty I hold as my only strong value — it's continually eroded because of the energy it requires and the threat it holds for others. Compromise doesn't come easy, everytime some pain is glossed over something inside is lost. If I lived from within, the loneliness which is now apparent from without would become intensely real — an intensity which only physical death could touch.

There is both calmness and despair in these words, but their expression is one of hope

Anna Pedrai
Auckland.

Research References Wanted

Dear Broadsheet,

I would be most grateful if you could publish this plea for help. I am performing research into Contraception and Sterilisation for my masters thesis in Psychology and am finding it very difficult to obtain references to research in my specific area — which is studying how much women know about the workings of their contraceptive method(s) and how they feel about/react to the side effects or possibilities of side effects. I would be very grateful if anyone could provide me with references or put me into contact with people working in this area.

Thank you for any assistance.

In sisterhood,

Frith Hall
Psychology Dept
University of Waikato
Hamilton.

The editorial printed in the July issue of Broadsheet provoked a strong response from some of our readers. Lack of space prevents us from printing all the letters received, but the following are representative of the opinions expressed.

Dear Broadsheet,

You have been close to my heart since your very beginnings — interwoven with my personal feminist herstory, i.e. my life, over the past six years. It therefore distresses me greatly to now witness a trend resulting in a different magazine than one in which I wish to put so much of my energy. I mean the growing trend to a rigid, one-eyed, party-line editorial policy which has become apparent particularly in the last few issues, culminating in the July editorial, to which I object most strongly.

I have acknowledged for years that the views and visions of the many women who work on Broadsheet range across the entire spectrum of feminist politics. It is upsetting therefore to find one *right way* to the feminist revolution being dictated to our wider readership. Surely this cannot even pretend to be representative of the views held by the women working on, and committed to Broadsheet. I feel it is essential for Broadsheet to publish material *on* cultural feminism *by* cultural feminists; *on* lesbian feminism *by* lesbian feminists; (and I was going to say on radical feminism by radical feminists, but I feel at the moment they've already had a fair go!), rather than negating and invalidating such theories as 'alternatives', 'theoretical limbs' or 'drifting away from mainstream political activity'. All this before in-depth discussion, dialogue and exploration of the theories has even started! What a huge put down if ever there was one (particularly to lesbian feminists who are an integral part of the women's movement and Broadsheet, and whose politics are derived from personal experiences — therefore it is in reality a put down to lesbians).

I think Christine that you are guilty of the very 'judgemental attitude' and 'authoritarian line' which you

criticise, and I also disagree with the many assumptions you make in this editorial. For example your *definition* of the Women's Liberation Movement and your *tactics* are not necessarily mine and the importance you place on 'getting organised' is not necessarily shared. (I felt on reading and rereading the last few issues that if I heard/read the word 'organise' once more I'd scream.) Yes, using your terms of reference the W.L.M. has 'shrunk', but for me it is alive and well, changing and growing thank you very much. The 'flame of activity' burns vividly — and it is multi-hued and hot.

Broadsheet calls itself 'New Zealand's feminist magazine' — let's stick with that. To be true to itself it must publish feminist theory articles which are truly representative of the range of New Zealand feminism and its different factions. I feel it is a shocking betrayal of half, if not the majority of the workers on, and those supporters committed to Broadsheet, to negate and deny their very politics, when for the past six years we have worked together for the broader aims of Broadsheet and joined together in the battle against male supremacy.

For me the path to the feminist revolution is not a one way track. I think that for every woman who is 'getting organised' it is vitally important there be another woman exploring her creativity; another researching our buried herstory; another finding her true womanself and womanidentity; another working on change in her lifestyle and values: and that all these are inextricably bound together for women to regain their own power and strength — which in turn is vital for the feminist revolution.

Yes, let's not forget that we need to work for liberation *to* as well as liberation *from*.

With love,
Rosemary Ronald.

Dear Broadsheet,

What is the theoretical limb that Christine Dann insists that Women's Liberation has got itself out onto for 'arguing over the intricacies of heterosexim'? It may be a theoretical waste of time for you, but it's not for me. I resent that Broadsheet editors are in a power position to negate to a large Broadsheet reading body, the development and validity of Lesbian Feminist politics.

Because I care about and love women I have come to the Women's Liberation Movement to join with others who wish to have and share the skills and rights to control our own bodies and lives, and a basic for me as a lesbian feminist, is to **communicate** these skills and rights with and to other women. This includes an understanding of how the heterosexual system has denied for centuries our women-loving-women connections — in every conceivable way, both personally and politically. This is my need as a lesbian woman, oppressed every day by society's all-pervading heterosexual assumptions which make women powerless. This last editorial is asking me and my lesbian sisters to **sacrifice** an important analysis of women's oppression for the 'Greater (W.L.) Cause'. Self-sacrifice is a virtue **always** forced on oppressed groups. Christine Dann is asking/demanding us to do just that when she says we would be 'better off' organising on the insights of 'basic Women's Liberation Theory'. Does she mean the theory way back before lesbianism was treated as an issue in the movement? That's heterosexism.

The Jews didn't want lesbians in their movement. The Christians hunted our women-loving-women ascetresses out and burned them because they threatened the basic tenets of the Christian family movement, and goodness me, here's the Broadsheet editorial doing it. Is Broadsheet scared women won't have a plan of action to set the

'Third Wave' going if we acknowledge heterosexism exists? Do you think lesbianism gives W.L. a bad name? Do you think you might all get hated and treated like lesbians?

If, as I believe, some radical feminists believe, lesbian feminism is not 'rational' and is 'counter-revolutionary' and it isn't doing anything towards the 'success' of the movement then what's the problem? If it's so ineffective why aren't you just getting on out there with your women organised into cheerful digging relays? Or is it not that easy when, on getting out there, you realise the large body of lesbian feminists who've been slaving their guts out in the movement for years, aren't out there with you; that our definition of cheerfulness, persistence and supportiveness differs from yours; that there is resentment at being denied the reality of the ugly oppressive effects of heterosexism; that we won't be persuaded to give up the tools we have created for ourselves and start using some others that you tell us are better: Many so-called lesbian cultural feminist separatists have been involved in the 'basic revolutionary strategies' outlined in Broadsheet — look at all the work done this year in Christchurch by a strong group of such defined women (3 Women Artists, review Broadsheet July. Christchurch Women's Liberation Collective activities, June Broadsheet). They're also working on an analysis of heterosexism. So what's the problem? What we do to define heterosexism apart from all the other W.L. activities, is surely our prerogative, and it is revolutionary. Does Broadsheet want to shame its readers into not feeling their hurt and anger at the rabid ways institutionalised heterosexism oppresses all women? Must we keep on demanding the saintly purity of the oppressor so that Broadsheet readers are encouraged to hide from the chronic tyranny of a social structure based on church, law, marriage, the family = male power over women?

We must break the mould of women's lot in the most thorough way possible. If we don't want to be stunted and deformed any more, then I'm afraid, as painful as it is, we've got to take strong, original and resilient moves to stop the mess. We must be aware of where that mess begins. The W.L. basics confirm that to be discriminated against, patronised, belittled, frustrated, limited, and taught that one is not important are hardly breeding grounds for love, and that these conditions operate under the auspices of marriage and the family. If we don't challenge these institutions which are the very pillars of society, how are things going to change?

This heterosexual/lesbian feminist conflict betrays our submission to the rule of men. Because of them, we are divided from each other. We are quarrelling without gratification or victory when we allow ourselves to be defined and held captive by men. Lesbian feminists turning to each other and away from the captors are seeking a world free from force and coercion; 'love without a trace of devotion, sacrifice and guilt; sex uncorrupted by power, fear and manipulation'. (Jill Johnson).

'Tactically, any feminist should fight to the death for lesbianism because of its strategic importance. If the government witch hunts lesbianism (and all feminists have always been aware of this possibility) and if the government succeeds in isolating lesbianism to any degree from feminism, feminism is lost. Feminism like unionism will be a complete racket, feminism will be co-opted and subsumed by its oppressor'. (Ti-Grace Atkinson).

If Broadsheet has a problem getting lesbian feminists involved in 'getting organised' it'll be because our eyes are still smarting from reading the last three consecutive editorials in Broadsheet. What a pity.

Alice L. Hawk
Waitakere.

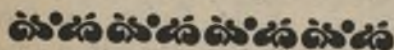
continued on page 30

Suffrage Day ~

The Struggle Continues

The British Women's Liberation Movement issued this press release to mark the fiftieth anniversary of British women gaining the right to vote. We reprint it as our September editorial because this month it is now eighty five years since New Zealand women won their right to vote — and we agree with everything our British sisters have to say about how far we still have to go.

An Open Letter to Suffragettes attending the celebration of the 50th anniversary of equal voting rights, from your sisters who are still fighting in the Women's Liberation Movement.



Dear Sisters,

We are writing to you because you will understand how angry we are. One hundred years after the first feminist movement started, fifty years after we were given the vote, women are still not free. What are we being asked to celebrate? That after many years of intense struggle on your part, a process during which you were systematically attacked and worn down by the male establishment, women won the vote — a minute part of what you were asking for. Few people now recall the forty-year fight of feminists and prostitutes working together to stop a legalised brothel system and slave-trade in under-aged women; or the early birth control campaigns which demanded women's right to control their own bodies. Yet almost everyone has heard about women chaining themselves to railings in pursuance of the

vote. Why should this be so? Then, as now, focussing on the vote — in our childhood history books as much as in these 50th anniversary celebrations — diverts attention away from changes that would materially affect the position of women. Instead we get those small concessions which the male establishment considers it reasonable — or useful — to give us. As long as changes in women's position remain in the power of men and male institutions to donate or withhold, nothing will change, because it is not in men's interest. Eight years after men gave us the Equal Pay Act (do not be misled, there are still only 27 women MPs), the average male wage is £78.60, the average female wage is £51.00. Three years after the Sex Discrimination Act became law, it is still impossible for young women to get equal education in schools or to have equal access to trade apprenticeships, or for older women to get equal consideration for jobs — and these are things that are supposedly within the power of the law — the vote — to give us.

In order to achieve women's liberation, we intend to take those things that no male law will ever give. We will walk down any street without being assaulted and raped. We will

live in our own homes without being battered by the men we live with. We will live with other women, as lovers, if we choose. We will not bear sole responsibility for the housework or childcare. We will not take the burden, unpaid, in the home, of caring for the victims of cuts in the Welfare State whilst our sisters in the public sector are thrown out of paid work. We will not be labelled as mad when we protest — twice as many women as men are labelled as psychiatrically ill, and women are prescribed twice as many psychotropic (i.e. mood-changing) drugs as men. We will not be confronted on every hoarding, in every newspaper, and on every TV screen by images of ourselves as ideal sex symbol, ideal mother, ideal servant, the product of male fantasies we are incapable and unwilling to fulfil.

These are only some of the issues we are organising around; they are elements of all our lives which we as women of all ages are angry about, and which will never be changed by Act of Parliament. We want to make it clear that no feminist 50 years ago thought that getting the vote was the end of the struggle. We haven't won — we've only just begun!

GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY

The Government's Cabinet Committee on the Family consists of nine male members whose average age is 57. Only one member (Peter Wilkinson) is below 50. The rest are grandfather zone.

Add to that the fact that their role as MPs probably excludes them from what Bert Walker blithely calls "normal family life" and you've got the basis of a group well and truly out of touch with real families.

This could explain the Government's attacks on solo mothers, its lack of assistance for good child care, and ignorance of the problems of working parents. It might also explain why the Government has bungled along with questions of the cost of living and has never faced up to the demand for a better standard of living.

Members of the Cabinet Committee on the Family are: George Gair (51); Les Gander (59); Frank Gill (60); Allan Highet (64); Duncan McIntyre (62); Robert Muldoon (56); David Thomson (62); Bert Walker (58); Peter Wilkinson (43).

Sexist Shop Display

This display is sexist and insults women. It is a sick male fantasy, which portrays women as objects for men's sadistic impulses.

Do you really think women will free themselves by breaking out in this [under] fashion?

We demand that Haywrights ceases to use such offensive window displays, which exploit and degrade women.

... ran the text of a leaflet handed out by members of Christchurch Women's Liberation who were nicketing an offensive window dis-

Heads They Win ...

Beth Furmage, the Hamilton solo mother who was denied the Domestic Purposes Benefit because she had a man friend who visited regularly, has finally won her case to have her benefit reinstated. It will be backdated to the time it was stopped (February 1977). Meanwhile, Minister of "Welfare" Bert Walker has announced his intention to alter the relevant Act so that women in Beth's position will no longer be legally entitled to a benefit.

MEDIA WOMEN

A Media Women seminar in Wellington has decided to push for more part-time jobs in journalism.

Convener of the organisation, Cathy Strong, said unions had traditionally opposed part-time workers.

Media women realised these workers sometimes threatened the security of full-time workers — both men and women. But, she said in a statement, part-time jobs were the only way to provide opportunities for profess-



ional journalists who "also happen to have child-rearing responsibilities."

Ms Strong said one of the observations made at the weekend seminar attended by 65 women was that female journalists were often disadvantaged because people saw them as "girls" rather than as reporters.

"Many of the women said that interviewees often expressed surprise when a good-looking woman was also able to be a competent journalist," Ms Strong said.

from the *Northern Journalist*, June 1978.

play. The Christchurch Press did this write up of the event:

"Women yesterday demonstrated outside a Christchurch department store to protest about a shop-window display of under-garments that they described as insulting, sick, and as portraying women as the objects of male sadistic impulses.

"The demonstration continued for an hour — until the window display was removed.

"The underwear display, in a Colombo Street window of Haywrights' main Christchurch store, showed four female mannikins, clad only in underwear and boots, in a simulated prison setting.

"The models were shown with their legs surrounded by barbed wire, and with balls and chains attached to their ankles.

"Behind them in the display was a stone wall over which they had presumably escaped. A slogan in the window read, "Break out in Bendon".

"The demonstration was held after the failure of "repeated requests" to the store management to remove the display, the Christchurch Women's Liberation Collective said in a statement.

"After an hour of demonstrating by the women, the window display was removed."

Women Tortured in Christchurch Hospital

Two women who contacted SOS were given abortions at Christchurch Women's Hospital by the method of 'termination by prostaglandin'. One woman was 9 weeks pregnant, and the other, a schoolgirl, was 12 weeks pregnant. The schoolgirl suffered about 30 hours of agony. She was sweating, vomiting, trying to pull out the drip in her arm, and kept saying she was going to get out of the hospital and go to Australia. Although the nursing staff were requested to give her pain relief, they refused, saying it would stop or slow down the 'labour'. This method of terminating pregnancy is very stressful for the woman concerned, and if a consultant decides on "termination by prostaglandin" it would seem more humane to try to find the money for a trip to Australia, rather than have to suffer 20-40 hours of pain.

Both of these women could have been aborted by alternative methods. The schoolgirl could have been aborted by a D and C given under general anaesthetic which would have been over in less than an hour. Instead she was tortured. Broadsheet can think of no other word for the pain she was forced to endure. At best she was forced to be a guinea pig for a relatively new (and obviously unpleasant and unnecessary method of abortion) — at worst she was the victim of a sadistic doctor or doctors who knew perfectly well that she would undergo unnecessary pain and chose to reinforce their anti-abortion views by causing her to suffer. The refusal of pain relief tends to support this view.

... and in Auckland

In Auckland a woman who was 21 weeks pregnant was forced to undergo an abortion by prostaglandins without pain relief — she endured a long and exceedingly painful labour, and was left unattended much of the time. There was speculation among feminist health workers that the hospital concerned intended to make use of this well-formed and undrugged foetus for research purposes — or are they pure sadists there too?

It is obvious that SPUC doctors are revelling in their new-found power — we would appreciate receiving your reports on their activities in other parts of the country.

Christchurch women interested in getting involved in a group aimed at improving hospitals for women please contact Pat Wilkinson, 23 Charlcott St, Christchurch 5. Ph: 585-299.

SPUC Money

Did you know that "Pregnancy Help" donations have been made tax deductible? This demonstrates the power of the anti-abortion lobby ... because SPUC has been classed as a political organisation donations to it cannot be tax deductible but it seems too much of a coincidence that Pregnancy Help donations have just been made tax deductible ...!

From the Christchurch N.O.W. Newsletter, June-July 1978.

QUOTES?!

Interviewer: Do you get any financial support from the Church?

SPUC President Marilyn Pryor: No. Well, perhaps some money. We go \$5000.

Interviewer: It was quoted as \$7000 by Des Dalgety & past president of SPUC.)

Quote from *Salient*, interviewer Caroline Massol, June 12, 1978.

85 YEARS AFTER THE VOTE — National Day of Abortion Action

**Friday 15 September
Black Arm Band Day**

**Repeal the Contra-
ception, Sterilisation
& Abortion Act.**



For local details contact WONAAC:
Auckland: 764-027 Hamilton 84-355
Wellington: 877-703 Chch. 35-254

or write to:
National Publicity Committee
P.O. Box 68-388, Newton, Auckland.

EQUAL PAY?

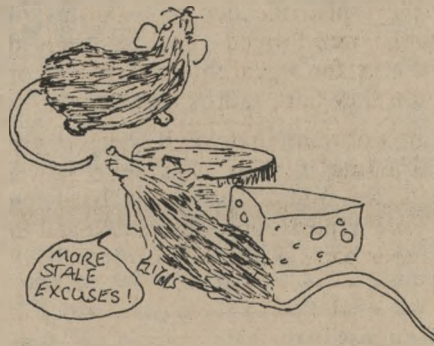
Women have been losing the real battle for equal pay. Statistics for the year ended October 1977 show that earnings for women increased less than earnings for men despite the fact the last step in "equal" pay has been made.

In the private sector female pay increased by 14.3%, a 2.1% lead on the men. But in every other area male rates increased by more. In the state sector income for males increased by 13.1% (females 10.2%); local authority males gained by 16.6% (females 11.7%) and for Government Corporations the figures were 15.8% (male) and 10.1% (female).

Various explanations are possible. The figures could reflect greater assertiveness of male-dominated occupational groups in pay negotia-

tions. They could reflect a greater number of females working more than 20 hours a week but less than 40, and they may well indicate a disproportionate number of women in lower paid jobs.

Possibly all these influences are having an effect but regardless of the exact cause the conclusion must be obvious. Women still have a long way to go and "equal" pay was only the first step.



SOS Abortions

The women of S.O.S. Auckland wish to announce that they have sent their 1000th woman to Sydney for an abortion since the service began operating in January this year.

It seems likely that by the end of the year 2000 women will have made use of the Auckland service, and we can assume that 2000-3000 women in the rest of New Zealand have been sent to Australia by the S.O.S. services in their area. Thus approximately 5000 New Zealand women will have obtained an abortion in 1978 — the same number as obtained abortions from the Auckland Medical Aid Centre in 1977. The passage of the anti-abortion law has therefore not reduced the number of abortions "in New Zealand" at all. Far from suppressing the desire for abortion it has probably served to further legitimise abortion in the eyes of New Zealand women. To obtain an abortion now

all one needs is money — no begging, pleading, playacting or unnecessary counselling required. While money is still hard to come by, and it is iniquitous that New Zealand women should be forced to pay exorbitantly for something which countries such as Britain and Sweden provide as part of their national health care system, it is basically a practical barrier. New Zealand women passed the moral barrier years ago, as the McMillan Report of 1937, which conservatively estimated that there were 4000 induced abortions a year, conclusively showed. The passage of the anti-abortion law and the activities of S.O.S. have brought these facts out into the open. Once we crept guiltily and in fear to back-street butchers — now we step openly and confidently on to a plane with other women like us, with the support of sympathetic women in Australia and New Zealand. The anti-abortion law, far from restoring "traditional morality", has actually speeded up the closing of the gap between moral practices and attitudes.

Backstreet Butchers Back In Business

On April 4 in New Plymouth a woman came before the courts charged with performing illegal abortions. This is the first illegal abortion case to be heard in New Zealand since the Auckland abortion clinic opened in 1974 — and closed in 1978. We have gone back to the bad old days with a vengeance. The woman charged uses a very dangerous method of abortion — she places the woman in a very hot bath with Dettol and soap frothed up in it. She then uses an "enema" of the bath water to induce a miscarriage. This is dangerous since if liquid is forced into the uterus under pressure there is a possibility of death resulting from the solution and air entering the bloodstream. The risk of infection is also very high. For this procedure the abortionist charged \$400. She had been operating for some time, but apparently the police finally decided to "bring her in" when they heard of her charging \$140 just for a description of the procedure. (Curious logic — exploiting wallets is worse than endangering lives?)

There are no certifying consultants in Taranaki. A Taranaki woman must travel to Palmerston North to find any — not necessarily sympathetic. The Government has been told repeatedly that women will not obey anti-abortion laws — they never have. In 1936 sepsis subsequent to abortion was the major cause of death among women of child-bearing age in New Zealand and accounted for almost half the total female mortality in urban areas. The law must be changed before we go back to this sort of situation.

UNEMPLOYMENT

the special work fraud

What do you do if you can't find a job? You become dependent on the good graces of the Labour and Social Welfare Departments. What's that like for women? One would-be worker tells her tale of frustrations and sexist expectations.

After dropping out of Massey in May of this year, I registered for employment with the Department of Labour. The procedure of registering, fulfilling the extensive requirements for receiving the benefit, eventually getting the dole, then working as a special worker, has enabled me to see and experience the effects of the corruption and social ineptness of the special work scheme.

Trouble looking for work . . .

After registering, there is a lengthy and formidable procedure to endure before being considered for the dole. The Labour Department referred me to a variety of female intensive labour type slushy jobs. The Social Welfare Department, which pays the dole, requires that a letter of introduction to possible employers is presented to six such bosses within two weeks of application for benefit, for their signatures. This is supposed to indicate that work has "genuinely" been sought after. Hawking that letter around was an angering and frustrating performance. I knew that there was no work, the Labour and Social Welfare Departments knew there was no work and yet the farce had to go on before the Social Welfare Department would pay a cent! The stance of the Labour Department is that

every job must be applied for, any offered must be gratefully accepted. It is very bad form to refuse interviews or offers of work from bosses. **The notion of choice of work was exploded by the agency which is supposed to help people to find reasonably satisfactory employment.**

After a couple of weeks I knew that I was supposed to feel owned by the Labour and Social Welfare Departments.

As well as hassling with the system as it affects all workers, I had to battle with the institutionalised sexism of the Labour Department as manifested by the male interviewer who dealt with my case. Mr B's style and tone was accusatory, rather than helpful. All the stereotypical nonsense about bludgers and perennial students and women was trotted out. Since I didn't want to make tea, wait at tables or scrub floors, "I didn't want to work at all".

I was forced to agree to interviews for a variety of cruddy jobs. Several times it was made clear that the job was mine. I rapidly developed the technique of dismaying or annoying the interviewing boss by saying that I'd be bored silly and/or wouldn't stay long. This worked well. The Labour Department was getting heavier, so when a gardening job as special worker was offered I took it.

. . . and trouble on the job

Within a couple of weeks one of the other special workers was unfairly dismissed. He was unwilling to fight. I was intensely angry and stirred it up in the tea room. This earned me an invitation to "hear the super boss's side of things". The following day he wanted to see me and the only other worker who supported my rave, separately. We weren't having that on. Lesson number one — bosses use the different status of special worker and ordinary worker as a tool for intimidating special workers! During the interview with this new bureaucrat risen from the ranks of the workers, the whole gamut of anti-worker, divisive, patronising and authoritarian cliches and stances were struck. We talked about getting the union in. The big boss wasn't scared of the union. In any case, he said, "the union had nothing to do with it, the job was an arrangement between the Labour Department and us. Special workers are taken on on the basis that they work while there is work to do, and can be laid off at any time with a few hours notice and sent back to the Labour Department." We assumed him that he was sadly mistaken. By the end of the day our co-worker was reinstated.



Photo: Rose Curl

Ensuing conversations showed that established staff members were largely positively disposed towards unions. A job delegate was elected.

About a month after I'd begun the job, all the special workers were laid off. The departing supervisor was afraid to leave us for his successor, in case there wasn't enough work for us. Along with one other special worker I was reinstated the following week, but before that I had to front up to the Labour Department again. I was pissed off to find Mr B. waiting for me with open arms and closed mind. We spent 40 minutes talking. We went over some old ground, but more astounding prejudices emerged. I asked to be referred to some of the male

vacancies. Oh, no, there aren't female toilets on male intensive labour work sites! We tossed that chestnut around. Mr B. was sure that "most women" don't share my attitude and anyway "industry wouldn't condone it". I continued to assert that I wanted an outdoor job and did not want any of the female jobs, and that I was quite prepared to do the necessary hassling with bosses. The real reason for Mr B.'s refusal was that he feared bosses would not list jobs with the Labour Department if they sent women to try for "male" jobs.

Though I was happy to return to the gardening job which I enjoy, I still feel angry about the way the corrupt special work scheme is itself abused.

Wrongs which need to be righted

- Since a special worker is paid by the Labour Department, two special workers are cheaper for bosses than one permanent staff member.
- Government departments and local bodies clearly manipulate permanent staff ceilings according to the number of special workers available to be exploited.
- The corollary of this is that special workers are utterly expendable, and are therefore signed on and laid off in bunches, in an erratic way according to the whims of bosses (heads of departments).
- The Labour Department interprets the right to work for a living as compulsion to work for a forty hour week.
- The person registered for employment is supposed to relinquish any preference for type of work, to be bought and sold backwards and forwards between bosses who want cheap labour and the Labour Department "worker warehouse".
- Though there are always many times more "male vacancies" than female vacancies, women do not have access to this far greater range of jobs, via the Labour Department (in this town anyway).
- The collusion between the Labour Department, other government departments, bosses in the private sector and the media which presents the "statistics" and describes the "bludgers" ensures that the system will go on without effective opposition.
- There are currently over 16,000 unemployed persons in N.Z.. 8,000 of these persons are pawns in a game of fool the public. They are "special workers".

Karen Sutton
From *Impulse* Palmerston North.

Church morality is obvious in our current abortion and contraception laws. But how does the Church come to wield so much influence in a supposedly secular state? Jacqueline Steincamp looks at what has been happening since the Pope's ban on abortion and "artificial" contraception was published in 1968 and gives some insights into how it's done.

HUMANAE VITAE

The abortion debate, New Zealand's bitterest social struggle for many years, is moving to a climax with the approaching general election. An extremely well-organised and effective nationwide campaign can be expected from the vigorous and well-funded anti-choice groups. The groups themselves are varied, and they are by no means composed of Catholics only. Indeed, this is their biggest strength, that they have members who are Mormons, Pentecostals, Lutherans — as well as from the major churches.

Nevertheless, a common thread of anti-abortionism runs through them all, while SPUC, like the Catholic Church, is also against contraception.

One might be forgiven for wondering why, when polls consistently show that the majority of New Zealanders have reasonably liberal views on abortion, there is such a rising and vociferous tide of anti-abortionism.

While it is fashionable to accuse the Roman Catholic Church of using its influence in this area, there has been little effort to examine what evidence there is that the anti-abortion campaign is church-

inspired. But the evidence is there for those who look. To begin with, it is necessary to go back to the bitterly divisive Papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968, the anti-abortion, anti-contraception encyclical.

When Pope Paul, the 'diplomat' Pope, confirmed the ban on abortion, the pill and all other 'artificial' birth control methods, he was not breaking new ground. Nevertheless, the rigidity of his attitude in defining sexual intercourse as a biological function only and that any frustration of "its natural power to general life is an offence against the law of God and of nature", devastated many church members. Some turned a blind eye. Others left the church.

But Paul had no intention of letting sinners escape his net. As reported in *Time*, February 1, 1971:

"Now through his Secretary of State, Jean Cardinal Villot, he has begun a quiet counter-attack, attempting to marshal Catholic forces against all official programs, national or international, that propagate artificial contraception.

"The cardinal's 15-page confidential document", *Time* correspondent Wilton Wynn learned in Rome, "was dated November 14, and set to all papal nuncios and apostolic delegates and to the Vatican's permanent observers at the United Nations and its agencies".

In it, Villot stressed the secrecy of the new lobbying effort, and was critical of such agencies as the UN Fund for Population Activities, UNICEF and family planning programmes.

"Governments must be persuaded to take positions 'in favour of Catholic morality'. Papal diplomats ... should press bishops in each country to build up relations with local representatives of international organisations," the *Time* article states.

Pope Paul again made it clear he was in deadly earnest on the subject of abortion when he announced in 1972 that the innocent unborn child had a full right to life from the moment of conception, and that the mother had no right to abort, even to save her life.

At this very moment, the Church is in the process of canonising an Italian woman doctor who chose to die in childbirth in 1964 rather than have her pregnancy terminated. She is the first person to be honoured on these grounds.

Also in 1972, Pope Paul made a series of historic journeys to the Americas, Africa, Asia and Australia, becoming the most widely travelled Pope in history, and spreading the message of *Humanae Vitae*.

In late 1973, he summoned the first plenary assembly of papal diplomats in the Vatican's history. More than 80 bishops and cardinals met at Frascati in the Alban Hills near Rome.

The tentacles of the movement that has grown from *Humanae Vitae* and Cardinal Villot's directive are reaching across the world.

This year is the tenth anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, and there is clear evidence that the Vatican regards New Zealand as a crucial area.

In March, the Tenth Anniversary Conference of *Humanae Vitae* was held in Melbourne. It was attended by bishops, clergy and laity from all over the world, with a heavy representation from New Zealand.

The first International Conference of the World Organisation of the Billings Ovulation Method was held in Melbourne at the same time. New Zealand priests, doctors and Natural Family Planning teachers attended.

Shortly afterwards, the International Catholic Media Conference was held in Palmerston North. The opening greetings were contained in a long message from Cardinal Villot.

The Papal nuncio for the Pacific Islands and New Zealand has also recently been travelling around New Zealand, almost totally unreported. He is Archbishop Guido Acerbi, who has been meeting with parishioners, priests and others up and down the country.

At the same time, SPUC has made it clear that it is putting everything it has into a major campaign prior to the election. With a goal of 92 branches by November from the 66 it had at the end of March, it has apparently also improved its public relations capacity by the appointment of a full-time publicity officer.

One wonders how brand new branches of SPUC can open with already established memberships, such as the 500 inaugural members of the North Shore branch and the 250 inaugural members in Ashburton.

While a social conscience on the part of any church or its members is to be welcomed, there is a difference in standing up for the downtrodden and oppressed and for agreed human rights on the one hand, and in imposing sectarian morality on the rest of society.

"Our secular state rests on the convention that churches may advocate the liberalisation of laws, but they must in no circumstances pressure Parliament into legislating in a way that forces people who are not members of that particular church to observe the moral rules of that particular church," said Dr Peter Munz, Professor of History at Victoria University in an article in the *Evening Post*, May 8, 1975.

Otherwise god-fearing men, should they be Christian Scientists, might legislate doctors out of existence; Jehovah's Witnesses might make blood transfusions illegal; Roman Catholics would draw the line at divorce and contraception.

The very basis of our secular state which makes the peaceful co-existence of all religious groups and churches, as well as non-churchgoers possible, is threatened if this convention is broken.

AN UNDERCOVER VICTORY

Even the Plunket Society falls for the Catholic line. Jacqueline Steincamp explains how.

It is often forgotten that, like the Roman Catholic Church, SPUC is against contraception. One of its patrons, Dr Neil Begg, the retired director of the Plunket Society, has achieved quite an undercover victory in the new metric edition of "The Child and HIS Family". This is the Plunket book on child and baby care.

Metric editions are normally never reviewed, and no doubt Dr Begg felt that he would be able to make the following changes quite safely.

After a factual account of ovulation in the earlier, pre-metric edition, he goes on to say:

"Pregnancy is not so likely for about ten days before the onset of menstruation until ten days after the onset. This is the so-called 'safe-period' and the practice of restricting intercourse to this period is called the 'rhythm method' of contraception. Though it is an acceptable method it is by no means reliable. Safer methods are available from the doctor for those who wish to use them".

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In the new edition, he says: "This fertile time can usually be observed by the woman as a 'wet feeling' when a thin stretchy mucus discharge is present at the vagina. This fertile mucus may be confirmed by other signs. During the rest of the cycle sperm cannot survive because there is no discharge of mucus or the mucus is such that it traps the sperm.

"This is the basis of Natural Family Planning or Fertility Detection which is taught at special Natural Family Planning Clinics in all towns and districts in New Zealand. It permits responsibility as regards intercourse to be shared by both husband and wife without pills or devices which might disturb normal physiology.

"Methods of artificial contraception such as pills, injections or intra-uterine devices — or indeed, sterilisation — are available from doctors for those who prefer these methods".*

Dr Begg also changes his concluding paragraph on unmarried motherhood. In the earlier version, he says:

"It would seem that the least we can do in New Zealand is to remove the financial and social barriers so that, with the help of the putative fathers, those women who wish to care for their children may do so".

In the **new edition**, he says:

"As Dr John Bowlby has pointed out, the baby's greatest need is for a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother or mother substitute. It is only with help and the most selfless dedication that a solo parent can provide such circumstances".

*Note: No mention either of the Family Planning Association or of the diaphragm or condom, methods which do not disturb normal physiology.

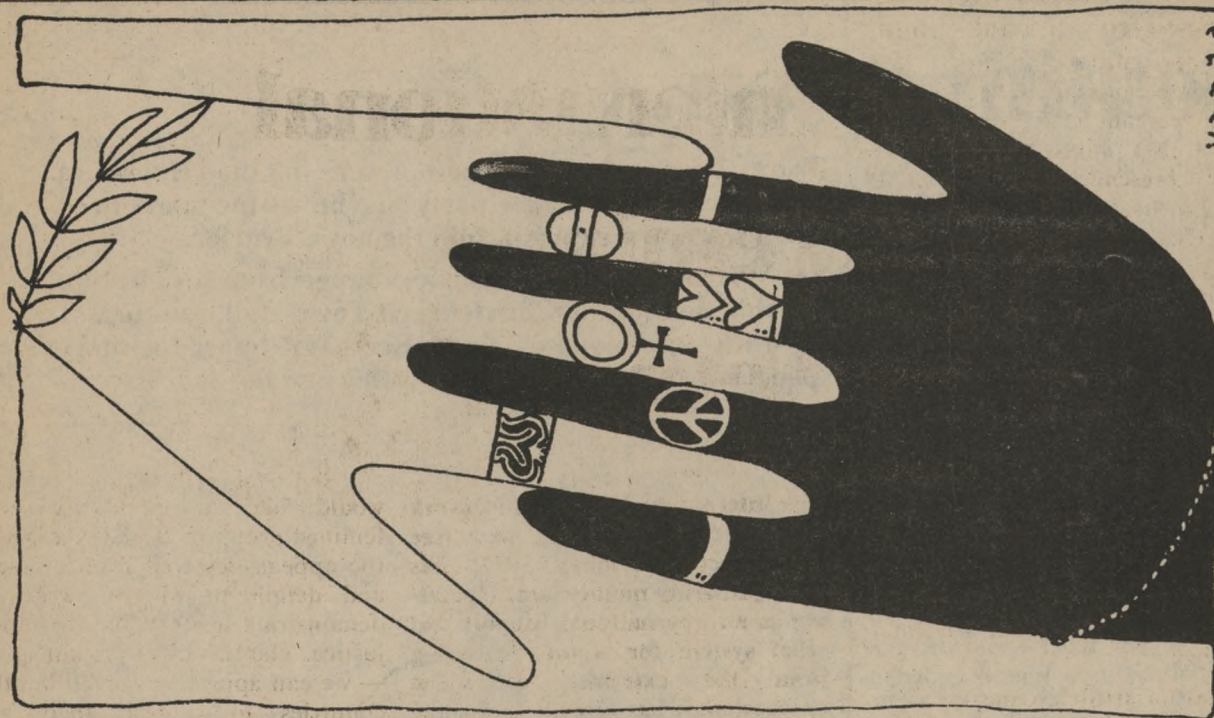
International Feminist Network

The International Feminist Network which was set up last year [see Broadsheet December 1977] has been gathering momentum. Operating as an international support and relief system for women suffering from the extremes of sexist oppression, it has already had some successes. A case in point: Monique Moller of Holland, founder of the Noreen Winchester Committee, tells of their success. [Noreen Winchester is a Northern Irish woman who was jailed for killing her father after he had repeatedly raped her and her sisters.]

"Our Committee was contacted by organisations and individuals all over the world and they promised to start actions and demonstrations if Noreen was not released. As soon as the leave to appeal to a higher court was refused, Noreen's lawyer, Patricia Drinan, put in a petition for Noreen to get the Royal Prerogative of Mercy and at the same time the Noreen Winchester Committee sent to Roy Mason (Secretary of State for Northern Ireland) the proof that action would take place in five European countries, the U.S.A., Canada and Australia. As this was not favourable for the reputation of British justice, Mason had no choice but to release Noreen."

The International Feminist Network now has a New Zealand co-ordinator — she is Dora Sutcliffe, of 143 Tirooa Ave. Auckland 8. Dora

would like to circularise every feminist group in New Zealand with the appeals received from overseas, and details of who to write to/demonstrate against, etc. to obtain justice. The IFN can work for us too — we can appeal to women in other countries to protest about our abortion laws, for instance, by writing to our Government, and/or by embarrassing official representatives of New Zealand overseas with demonstrations, etc. Broadsheet will continue to print brief reports on IFN activities, but we don't have enough space to give full details, and it seems to be much more effective to engage in this sort of activity as a group anyway. The organisation which campaigns for the release of political prisoners, Amnesty International¹, has achieved some astonishing successes just by small groups keeping up a barrage of letters. The IFN seems well on the way to doing the same for women. However, any organisation needs some money, and if Dora is to continue to circularise the material received from overseas she will need money for xeroxing and postage. If you wish to become part of the Network, if you wish to donate money to the Network, please contact Dora (address above). The success of the Network in New Zealand depends on your support — Monique Moller's success with Noreen Winchester shows what can be done.



Two women who need your help:

Dessie Woods is a black American woman currently serving a 22-year sentence for killing a white man who tried to rape her at gunpoint. She used his weapon in self-defence. She has been inhumanly treated in the Georgia prison where she is detained. Write to Dora for more information on what you can do to help free Dessie.

Dalila Zegha-Maschino is a Canadian citizen. She was born in Algeria and married a Frenchman, Denis Maschino, against the wishes of her brother, who is an extremely wealthy and influential Algerian. He objects to her husband because he is not a Moslem (in Algeria Moslem women are forbidden to marry non-Moslem men), and because the Maschino family is not popular with the ruling group in Algeria for political reasons. In order to marry Maschino, Dalila had to escape from Algeria under a pretext. Once married, the couple emigrated to Canada, where they both began university study in Montreal. Delila's family pursued her to

Canada, and gradually succeeded in winning her confidence. They lured her into dining with them alone — she was then drugged, propped up in a wheelchair, taken out of Canada on a new passport provided by her brother, and flown to Algeria in a specially hired plane. She is now being kept prisoner by her brother in Algeria and may be forced to marry a Moslem. In a letter which managed to reach the outside world because it was in English, Dalila said, "I have been drugged ... I am guarded by armed men and vicious dogs ... I am not able to leave this place if I refuse to marry." She has been forced to write statements and make phone calls saying that she is in Algeria voluntarily, but these have been contradicted by the letters in English which she has managed to send.

Her husband has written to his brother-in-law, and to President Boumedienne of Algeria, offering to convert to Islam. The brother-in-law refuses to correspond, and the letter to Boumedienne, sent by diplomatic telegramme, was returned.

The Canadian authorities have evidence that Dalila was kidnapped. The U.S. is also implicated — the crew of the plane which flew Dalila to Algeria was American. The Algerian government refuses to take action to free Dalila — on the contrary, it is suppressing foreign papers which carry news of the outrage and threatening correspondents in Algeria who mention it with expulsion.

Dalila's husband and friends fear that she may commit suicide. The governments of Quebec and Canada have several options open to them, including putting out an international warrant for the arrest of Dalila's brother, who spends a lot of time out of Algeria. The Canadian government must be pressured to act — the IFN has drafts of letters in French and English and the appropriate addresses to send them to — get in touch with Dora soon. This is a classic case of the patriarchal system of state power buttressing the patriarchal family system.

Christine Dann

Mouthing on...

Chairman: The first question can come from the lady in red at the back. I hope red is not a significant colour.

Feminist: Mr Beetham, I admire your concern for the single income family and the woman at home with young children, but how can women vote for you when you won't give them freedom to control their fertility and plan their lives. (Groans from Social Creditors and cheers from feminists.) And how can you say that an M.P. should vote according to his conscience when surveys show that 65% of the population wants a liberal abortion law?

Beetham: There have been no scientific surveys done on abortion.

Feminist: I'll send you some.

Male interjector: What about the Heylen Polls?

Beetham: You can't have abortion on demand.

Feminist: What is abortion on demand?

Beetham: Just what it says.

Feminist: What about the doctor?

Beetham: You know my views on abortion. I've stated them on T.V.

Male interjector: Are you for a liberal abortion law? Yes or No.

Beetham: What is a liberal abortion law?

Feminist: Don't you even know that?

At this point the mood of the meeting was swinging against Beetham and he could feel it.

Female interjector: Stop being an ostrich. You've got your head in the sand.

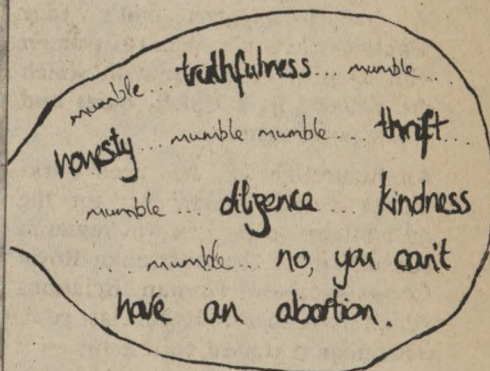
Beetham: Would you like to see my bottom?

Bruce Beetham — A new force in the House of Representatives? A new party maybe — the same tired old anti-woman rubbish. Join the boys, Brucie.

Pat Wilkinson sends us this exchange from an election meeting held in the Christchurch Town Hall, and tops it off with some quotes from Beetham's parliamentary speeches to show what bad news this new boy is.



Photo: Auckland Star



Male interjector: Is that where your brains are?

Much laughter from audience.

Two days later, during the second reading of the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Amendment Bill, Beetham made the following statements:

"Abortion may be aesthetically less deplorable than infanticide and child bashing, but in ethical terms it is closely similar. We hear the cry that the decision regarding the termination of pregnancy should lie with the woman alone. That is a frightening and possibly foolish misconception, because it lays the whole burden of reproduction and contraception upon women; it absolves men from obligation; it subtracts the idea of total mutual care from the sexual relationship, and negates the whole concept of fatherhood."

"It is claimed by many that political representatives should not have the

right to impose their personal beliefs and morals upon dissenting constituents, but not all constituents subscribe to the same standards of truthfulness, honesty, thrift, diligence and kindness. There is no public outcry when legislation is introduced to encourage responsible behaviour in those areas. Surely then it must be able to be argued that politicians have a right to ask that when the question of setting aside nascent life is under consideration the decision should not be one based on selfish convenience."

"I hope that women may soon be liberated from the sort of society which is increasingly offering them as rubbish bins for casual men, and which is vacuuming them tidily out and setting them back into circulation often for the convenience of the next passerby."

Truthful, honest, thrifty, diligent and kind Bruce vs the "rubbish bins"? We'll give him rubbish bins!

Eva Cox: kicking along social change

A recent visitor to New Zealand contributes her ideas and experiences.

"Petite, demure — but she shocks society", said the Auckland Star headline. Yet another lesson in not believing everything you read in the papers. Eva Cox is neither petite or demure — and if you are shocked by her I suggest that's your problem. She's a real beaut woman with a mine of information which she delivers in a quick, quiet and to-the-point manner.

An Australian who has been working as a social researcher for the past fifteen years, Eva was research consultant for the Australian Royal Commission on Human Relations which published its Report last year. That Report caused quite a stir — it recommended legalising prostitution and homosexuality, and allowing abortion on request, among other "shocking" proposals. But when Eva talked to a group of Auckland women in June she chose to talk about the other projects she has been involved with, particularly after-school and community childcare projects. We felt that both of these schemes were worth reporting in some detail, in the hope that New Zealand women might consider setting up similar schemes.

What is an after-school childcare centre? Basically the school the children go to in the daytime, but with different adults and different activities. We must have all thought at some time or other that it is ridiculous for school buildings to be sitting idle when children are in need of good after-school care. When Eva had a primary school child she thought so too, and so she and other parents became involved in setting up the first after-school centre in Australia. First of all they had to find a sympathetic head-

master. Then they arranged a roster of parents and other adults to look after the children. All children who attended the school were eligible for after-school care, regardless of whether both their parents worked or not. This was a deliberate policy to minimise friction between parents who worked full-time and their children, and the children of part-time workers or houseworking parents. It was soon found that a voluntary roster tended to break down, and so paid staff (paid by the State government) were hired. (This could be an excellent opportunity for employing people under our government's present special work schemes.) Now there are lots of after-school centres in Australia, most of them using this original model.

Community childcare centres, based in old houses, were another successful scheme Eva helped get off the ground. These centres aim to provide both full-time and part-time childcare for a variety of children. At any one time there will be around twenty children being cared for in a house, with about fifty children using the facilities over the week. The centres are co-operatively run by parents and professional staff. Eva feels that these small, multi-purpose centres are much better than the large, one purpose sort of childcare centres (e.g. — all full-time four-year-olds) which the State has so far preferred to provide. After an initial struggle, which involved some dramatic scenes — women and children squatting in the houses of their choice with good press coverage when the bureaucrats came to evict them — several Australian city councils are now committed to the



Photo: Auckland Star

idea of providing neighbourhood childcare centres. Ideally, says Eva, there should be one per hundred houses, within walking distance for the users. People should put pressure on city councils to provide these amenities — they should be considered to be as basic as street lighting and other facilities. The economic sense of providing constructive care for citizens when they are small rather than remedial and custodial care for them when they get larger should be emphasised.

Eva's view on social change: "I don't believe in social evolution. Unless you kick some asses you won't evolve." She certainly sets some good examples for getting things done.

Christine Dann

Bastion Point

— the words have come to symbolise the struggle for the Maori that has been stolen in the name of white male supremacy. For more than 500 days, the Point was the home of many people defending their ancestral land of the Ngati Whaatua. The following article says what it was like for the Maori women who lived there.



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The social and working structure at Bastion Point was symptomatic of an age long-gone; but never laid to rest. Organisation as such is a relic of ancient Maori society still in practice throughout Aotearoa today.

From the outset the women active in the Bastion Point protest movement have been dogged both by the traditional male dominance of the issue, and by the occupation. It is an extremely sensitive question which is being consciously worked on, by only a small number of Maori women mainly from the cities.

However, hope does lie in the challenge by growing numbers of Maori women with increased awareness, their ability to handle the stress of family, economy, and earnings, better than the men, plus their outspokenness in the homes, on the maraes and in public life — leading to a gradual erosion of the accepted supremacy of the Maori male.

The women by sheer persistence, perseverance and by their over-all ability to organise, participate, and show results for their efforts, managed to evolve from a merely supportive or back-up role (for men), to a dynamic role in active leadership.

As time went on and the occupation continued, women increasingly asserted themselves in areas of the struggle other than in the kitchen, tidying up the beds, or as objectivised relief aids for men under stress.

There is a talent you learn, if you are a Maori woman — in what are considered to be normal circumstances, you become a super-organiser-worker; which means that you combine housekeeping, wage earning, and family rearing with exceptional skill. You tend to get on with the job, and pretend that the useless slob you married does not really exist after all. You shift him out of the way as you would any piece of furniture that is a hindrance. Or if you are too tired, you just simply sweep around him.

In the middle and later stages of occupation Maori women came to the fore time and again as speakers for the cause, as challengers of outmoded chauvinistic attitudes, and as sustained revolutionaries — very much the equal of the men, often, very much their better.

Confrontations with the state are seen as the prerogative of men. Women generally support; and mind the kids. Bastion Point saw this prerogative surely emasculated, as women hammered nails, sawed timber, erected shelters, tended gardens,

dug ditches, led speaking tours, cooked, chopped firewood, swept floors (and men out of the way!), tidied up beds (and those in them), and continued to look after the kids!

It was a hard fought battle on two fronts. The one in the struggle for the land, the other in the struggle for equality within the movement.

Said one man in an unforgettable moment:

"We have to stop being chauvinists, we must regard women as equals, we must stop using them as tools for our pleasure....." !!!

(I think he really meant to say, "pleasure for our tools.")

Said the same man, acting as chairperson when a woman demanding the right of reply to a man who had attacked what she had to say earlier:

"No, otherwise we'll have a slanging match between the two of you and you'll be accusing him of being a male chauvinist pig, and so on....."

Her very dignified reply was:

"That was not the kind of reply I was going to make and I demand the right of reply. The same right that you and every other man *takes* ..."

He, somewhat reluctantly:

"Alright then"

She then proceeded to deliver an eloquent spiel on constructive criticism, and of the place of women in the revolution.

As I said, it was a hard fought battle on both fronts. We gain our place in the movement only because we fight for it. Women are active on the committees, on the marches, in the courts. Our worth as leaders can not be disputed.

And on the day of eviction the women were arrested very much on a par with the men. The state accorded us equal status on an inferior basis — lawbreakers.

Very equal, when one considers the toilet facilities some women shared at the police station.

Our sisters in their ridiculous copper's clobber looked as if they had years to go before they attained the same status.

Back to the Point. We women flexed our muscles with this one. They, and we, tasted the power. But it is not the end, only the beginning. This was far from victory, only an achievement on the road to victory.



Finally, sisters, it was worth the tears, the trembling; "It is the first time I have ever spoken at a gathering."

It was worth the passion and anger;

"I refuse to be patronised and put down by the men at this meeting."

It was worth the effort in consciousness-raising;

"I want to thank all those brothers who helped ... (pregnant pause) ... and the sisters too."

And it was worth all the joy, emotion, love and hate. A woman said to me;

"Look I'm not going, it's not my struggle."

This is my reply:

"The struggle belongs to all of us. Men are the owners and perpetrators of oppressive institutions, governments, and systems which kept us too oppressed to effectively oppose them. We have enlightened and emancipated ourselves. Now we challenge, we fight, we dominate. It is necessary to be where the struggle is — for when it is won, the male-white-supremacist-power-oppression cycle will continue unopposed yet again — because we were not there."

On May 25, the occupation of Bastion Point ended. The Government mobilised its forced, bringing in 700 police with army back-up, to arrest 222 people and to demolish every building in the protest camp.

An account of May 25th at Bastion Point.

We had a phone call at 8.30 a.m. on May 24th. Another urgent call to Bastion Point. They said the police were moving in. All day on the 24th we waited up there. People poured in, rumours grew. Rumour had it that the police and the army were coming at us from everywhere — from the air, the land and the sea — someone jokingly suggested a camel train from Ninety Mile beach.

There was a lot of talk during the day about what we were going to do when "they" came. Non-violence was stressed again and again, as it always had been. Some men expressed concern about how they would react if they saw women and children manhandled — and so it was suggested that women should take their children off before the police came. It never seemed to occur to anyone that the children also had fathers.

So there we were, packing into Arohanui on the night of the 24th. Arohanui had a muted electrical



lighting system which gave the effect of a vast hall lit by one 40 watt bulb. And when the generator packed up we were left with flickering firelight. People trickled in all night until Arohanui was bursting at the seams. It wasn't noisy in there — but it hummed with suppressed excitement and anticipation.

Breakfast was at 4 a.m. We were expecting them at 6 and we wanted to be cleaned up and ready for them. There was always a tremendous pride in order and tidiness at the Point, which seemed to come from the women. I once heard a man complain to the younger men that he'd seen a woman carrying firewood, but as many of the women were at home earning the money and presumably carrying the wood, the coal, the groceries and the babies — I thought it was rather a baroque piece of chivalry.

After breakfast we were asked to decide where we wanted to be when the police came. Then the radio reports began to warm up. We heard that "they" were coming. The police and the army — in trucks and helicopters. We knew that a flare would go off from the roof when they came. Suddenly there was some kind of order. We moved to our posts and practised the haka.

A helicopter flew over the Point. I tried to overcome a desire either to die or to run away. I felt close to tears until someone leaned over, patted my arm and said, "You alright, sister?"

At 9 a.m. the second flares went up, lighting the building. Then, at 10 past 9 the *Auckland Star* reports that "600 police, shoulder to shoulder — moved in under the command of Assistant Commissioner Bill Overton, who was seated in an Army jeep." That must have been a stirring sight! I wish I'd seen it. Our fine police force, marching in, shoulder to shoulder, against the common enemy — the people of this country!!! We were blind; in the centre of the action and getting more and more apprehensive as time passed and we couldn't see what was going on.

Two policemen walked in the main door of Arohanui. They were greeted with a howl of "AAAAAAAAAAHH! KAMATE! KAMATE! KAORA! KAORA!" 130 people howling in unison. They looked around nervously and helplessly and left. First round to us! Morale rose. Some time went by and two more policemen decided to brave Arohanui. This time they paraded right round the room while we howled the haka. They had difficulty with their eyes. One of them

covered his fear with a sneer — the other kept his eyes trained on a piece of air in front of his nose. They left without making an arrest. Morale rose higher.

While the police built up their strength we attended to more personal matters. We had been sitting in Arohanui for nearly three hours by now and most of us were in need of the flush toilet — or even the army latrine. Instead some of the more enterprising women discovered a bucket and a blanket and a tin can. The women got behind the blanket and peed in the bucket — the men turned their backs and used the tin can. For the first time we moved around and looked out of the window. We saw a magnificent crowd lining the fence. That was a beautiful sight! We sat down again with renewed courage.

The main door of Arohanui was open — and as I have already said, the police walked in and out as they wanted to. But they decided to use intimidatory methods. The side door of Arohanui had been nailed up. They chose to smash their way in rather than walk in by the main door. Once they'd done that they smashed the door at the back with battering rams and it broke amidst showers of glass.

They came in in hordes and made arrests. In between they left us to sit for long periods of time. During these periods we needed all the courage we had — especially as the room began to empty out.

At last there were only 10 of us left — all women. Then three — then none. They piled us into an army truck. Five of us. On your taxes.

And drove us all the way to the Central Police Station where they kept me until about three o'clock with nothing to eat or drink. They don't believe in spending your taxes on short term projects like feeding prisoners. Instead they spent it with an eye to the future — they photographed me from different angles, took my fingerprints from different angles and made sure that my hands were liberally covered with black ink. And once I was recorded for posterity and the Wanganui computer, they let me go.

The rest of Auckland was going about its business as if nothing had happened. I caught the bus home — they were all reading about Bastion Point in their newspapers. I fell asleep and had to be picked up from the aisle — and none of them knew why.

Jan Farr.



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for a woman of achievement and potential

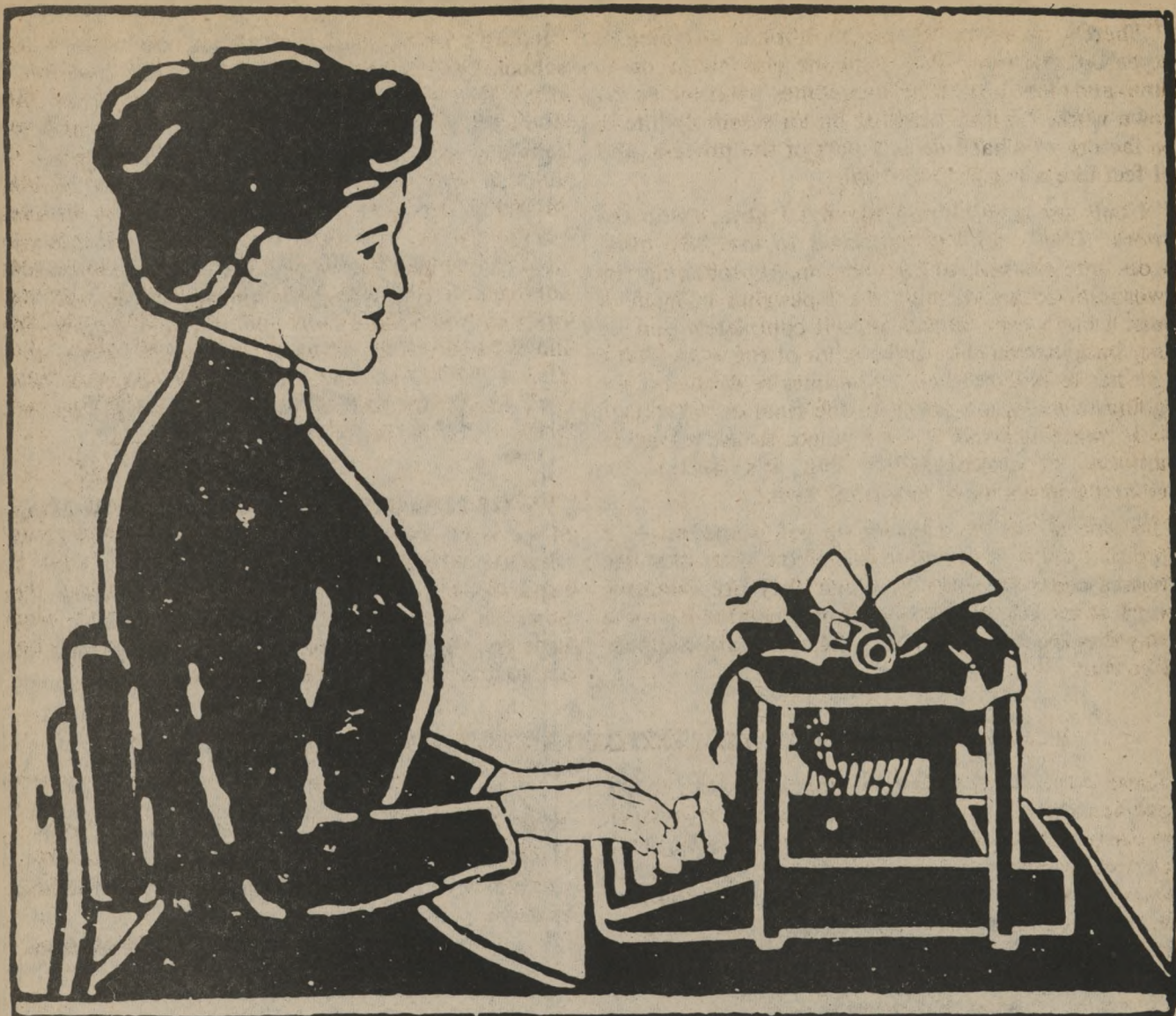
Applications are now being received for the seventh Annual Award of the Zonta Club of Auckland (Inc.), a service group of professional and business women. The \$300 Award will be presented to a woman of achievement and potential. The level of attainment, field of study and/or business is not restricted but candidates must be resident in Auckland at the time of application and should include details of the proposed course of study/travel/research for which the Award would be used, should their application be successful. Candidates may apply personally, or be nominated by an employer or patron. Applications close on October 27, 1978 and forms are available from: Zonta Club of Auckland (Inc)
P.O. Box 5197
Auckland 1

The winner of the Award will be announced in Dec. 1978. Further details and information are now available from the above address.

The making of this Annual Award is solely in the control of the Zonta Club of Auckland (Inc.) and its elected judges.

**THE ZONTA CLUB OF AUCKLAND
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"A world-wide service organisation of executive women in business and the professions."



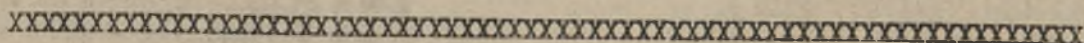
In the July issue of Broadsheet, we printed an article about the salary claim recently made by Public Service typists. But the issue goes further than a simple rise in salaries. Jill Ranstead spoke to some of the women involved in the claim and from those conversations came this article.

LIFE BEHIND A TYPEWRITER

"There's no room for me to initiate anything. I type out the work that someone else hands on to me, and there's nothing that comes from me as my own work. It's like working on an assembly line in a factory — what I do is a part of the process, and I feel like a cog in the wheel.

"I only use a minimum of what I have, to do the work. That's all I'm supposed to use. My mind goes into neutral, and grinds on, reproducing the words of others through the typewriter in front of me. I can't even detach myself completely and let my imagination take over. A lot of the work that I get has to be corrected, sometimes re-written if it's going to make any sense in the final copy (and go help you if it doesn't). So I've got to use a certain amount of concentration, but it's always for someone else's work, never my own.

"In one of the newsletters we get, someone — a typist, I think — wrote a list of the rules that the bosses seem to work by when they are dictating work to us. It's meant as an ironic comment on the way they treat us, but it's no joke. It really happens like that.



These words came from a woman who works in the public service as a receptionist/typist. She belongs to the typists' occupational class, which, along with clerical workers and shop assistants, make up the three most heavily female-dominated occupations in this country. These three have one thing in common — they are service jobs. The feelings expressed in the words spoken above say something of what that means.

Work, but no recognition

Another woman I spoke to described the job as being a necessary part of the overall running of any department or business, but a downgraded one. So much of what the women do, she said, goes unrecognised. She talked about the typists in the Treasury Department, who would be handling top security work, such as budget matters and other Government policy affairs. A lot of responsibility would fall on her shoulders, yet there is no recognition of that, in either the salary she is paid, or in her job status. There is the invisible workload, too, which is not mentioned in any job specification — the 'extras' the typists do over and above the required work, such as phone calls, messages, making appointments. These will vary

"I didn't know what I wanted to do when I left school, and this job is always one to fall back on. I think that is how it happens for most of us. We don't know what to do with our lives, and we somehow get channelled into a job like typing. It starts a long way back — while we're at school, probably. And the thing is, you start to become resigned to it. You have to deaden any hopes you might have had for anything else, just so you can survive and get through each day. You start to lose faith in yourself. You're not allowed to use the initiative or other abilities you might have, and after a while you start doubting if you have any. And what's the use of leaving the job? You can break out of it, sure, but into what?

"We learn to accept it. It's an exact mirror image of what we are supposed to be. We are not doing what we want, most of us, we're doing what is expected of us. We are kept from using the potential we might have, most of us don't even have the chance to find out what that might be, and that's the way the world seems to work."

Rule 12. *Should work be required urgently, it aids the typist considerably if the dictator rushes in at intervals of 30 seconds to see if it is done.*

Rules For Dictators

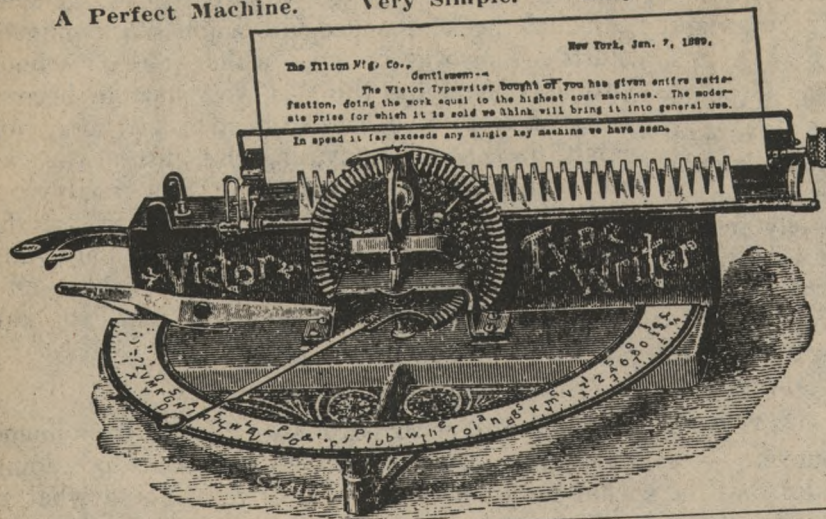
according to who and what the employer is, she pointed out, but it seems that the typist is in a situation where these demands can be made of her at any time.

The pressures that this would bring have become gradually worse over the years. In part, this is connected to technological developments that have meant a slow increase of new machines and devices. Word-processing machines, for example, which act as electronic typewriters, storing computerised typescript and reproducing it when it is wanted later on. No formal training is given to the women in the office. No formal training, and therefore no monetary recognition. The department, or office managers simply decide to install the machines, give the staff some instructions, then leave them to it. It makes for an imperceptible, insidious change in the workload; one that does not have to be paid for.

THE VICTOR TYPE-WRITER

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There is a theory developed by Lane Tracey in the Harvard Business Review, which is interesting to look at. It talks more about secretaries, but it is also relevant to the typists' situation. He looks at the 'Peter Principle', which states that everyone in the business world is promoted until they do the job badly, and there they stay. Given this, he asks why businesses are able to operate. "The obvious conclusion is that our organisations are somehow able to retain a cadre of competent people to whom the 'Peter Principle' does not apply. These people cannot be part of the organisational hierarchy for there the 'Peter Principle' operates in full force. And yet to be in a position to carry out the necessary functions of planning, directing and controlling the enterprise, such people must reside at all levels of the administrative hierarchy. What class of people fits this description? The obvious answer is secretaries."

Rule 5. *When dictating, please parade up and down the room. Typists can understand what is said more distinctly.*

Rules For Dictators

There are similarities with the typists' situation. The work they do is crucial to the day-to-day running of our economic life, but it is not recognised as such. In fact, their work situation seems to have been structured so as to make it that

way. There is one ad. which reads, *From Thought* (picture of a man speaking into a dictaphone) *To Words* (a woman typing) *To Action* (the man again). It sums up quite neatly the way in which the typists' role in the workforce is seen. It talks about a division of labour that ensures that women serve one always-unspoken rule — that of serving the power of those further up the hierarchies of the business, state service and industrial world. So the processes involved in a service job is very much a one-sided affair. Women giving of themselves and feeding into those they work for; patching up and keeping things going for them, while being drained by them.

Speaking out and fighting back

The injustice of this situation has simmered for so long in the women who have worked in this job. The recent stopwork meetings to push negotiations for their salary claim bear witness to that much. Attendance at these meetings was nearly 100% throughout the country, and in Wellington the hall that was booked was not able to hold a good third of those who came. At the meetings, too, there was a clearly marked identification of the enemy as 'he, the boss'. The women who spoke up consistently laid the responsibility for their grievances on to the male employer. An interesting connection is therefore made between the power of a capitalist economy, and male supremacy.



As for the claim itself — the efforts made by the typists and their union, the Public Service Association, has resulted in an offer from the State Services Co-ordinating Committee, proposing changes in the basic salary and career structures. For example, the abolition of the 'numbers game'. This is the name given to the system where a typist could only get promotion if the total numbers of typists increased in relation to the total numbers of workers in that department or office. So if a woman started her working life working with x-number of typists, and in 20 years that number had not increased enough to reach the required number for the grade and salary above hers, then her basic rate of pay would remain the same for those 20 years.

Rule 14. *If a typist is making a tricky alteration requiring concentration and precision, always stand over her and breathe down her neck while she does it.*

Rules For Dictators

The flip side of that coin is that if the numbers had increased significantly, in many cases it would only mean that the women would find themselves in an unbearably large typing pool. Auckland's Social Welfare Department has the largest such pool in the country, with 41 typists all sitting in the one room. Along with the abolition of the numbers

game, though, the SSCC has agreed to look into the typing pool system. The new salary structure would make an added incentive to changing it — where there was only one salary, one supervisor, and one room for a typing pool per department, the proposed changes mean that there would be different salaries for different positions. Which, in turn, would make it easier to break up the pools into smaller and less noisy, less regimented units.

I use conditional tense. Whether or not these changes take place depends on many factors, one of which being the continued action of the women themselves, collectively organising with their union, the Public Service Association. This is perhaps one of the most important things about the salary claim so far. It has meant that the women have been able to come together, through their union, to voice the injustices and grievances that have been silently pushed on to them for so long. Silence is an essential force of oppression, and to break that silence is to see a chink in the armour of the status quo. The women have more at stake than a simple salary rise, and the stopwork meetings they attended enabled them to speak out about the injustices they experience in their day-to-day work situation. It is not a complete answer — no single factor is — but it can make the difference between acceptance of a situation, and changing that situation. The agitation of the typists makes a significant step in that direction.

Jill Ranstead.

continued from page 7

Dear Sisters,

I would like to express my deepest concern with the tone of the two recent editorials by Christine Dann (June and July). I would like to make the point that a focus for my concern is that these appear as editorials, as the view of Broadsheet supposedly the feminist magazine of New Zealand.

I see yet again Broadsheet setting itself up as the arbiter of our movement — the very thing so many of us were concerned about some years ago.

Certainly as a cultural feminist of sorts (as well as I hope a political feminist) but most of all as a radical feminist I do not feel a part of the same women's movement as Christine. Indeed I wonder where she has been while I have travelled around N.Z. talking to hundreds (actually to date this year it's about 1,000) all of whom are part of my movement.

In the June editorial Christine seems to define cultural feminism as anything not activist political (whatever that is). Indeed to me this is a rallying call for marches, slogans etc., all of which were decried not long ago in Broadsheet. I do see a women's culture, since culture means society, as my revolution. A women's culture means health, employment, lifestyles, music, art and writing. Culture allows us to explore our visions without which some of us at least would not survive (me for one). They also give us access to one another. Health work (which is totally cultural and apolitical) music and writing are to me the main viable areas of our movement. I and many others would not be here but for these and daily more women are drawn into WLM by these aspects. Writing in particular gives us strength (why else Broadsheet?)

What most worries me is the lavender menace threats made implicitly in these editorials. Friedan where are you, alive and well here, why is lesbian feminism all parts of it, for it is as diverse as

the rest of WLM) such a bogey for you? I would see the greatest threat to WLM as the socialist feminists whose ideology is totally disparate from mine and I believe most feminists. Lesbian feminists (who are not a cohesive whole) have a diverse section of opinions on feminism but most of them manage to accommodate those of us who are not lesbian, and they are to me a central and essential part of my movement. I can only say on a personal level that heterosexual though I may be and angry though I may get over some lesbians' views or attitudes (say Jan Smith's article) lesbians have given me ideas, support, love and visions. Lesbian separatism has made our movement grow and I want it to continue, since it seems to me so essential.

The WLM has grown, Christine, up and down this land, hundreds of women are being exposed and are moving to challenge this male world. They may not be doing what you want, or doing it in ways you feel to be right but they are doing it. My area is health and women are changing things in this area in ways I feel to be wrong (as tactics) but I rejoice that they are challenging this world. Issues such as heterosexism are central to our movement and we do need to talk and argue about them, not through the divide you have drawn, the us/them mentality (with lesbians firmly them along with many of the rest of us I suspect). You, Christine, fall into your own trap, you have become the self-appointed radical delineating that some alternatives are not part of the mainstream. I am sorry that Broadsheet has finally moved away from us into a ghetto of its own making. Perhaps a funeral for it would be in order!

Yours,

Sarah Calvert
Hamilton.

Dear Broadsheet,

Over the last few months, I've read lots of things in Broadsheet which have angered me as a lesbian-femi-

nist. But I haven't bothered to reply, perhaps because I feel so alienated. But Christine's editorial on "The State of the Movement" is really the last straw.

Looking back over the history of Broadsheet, I can remember very few articles on lesbianism or lesbian politics (maybe five or six), and of these, only one, the interview and speech reprint on Charlotte Bunch's visit several years ago, discussed lesbian politics. However recently there have been an increasing number of Broadsheet attacks on lesbian politics, lesbian lifestyles, and so on. Your report on the Women's Liberation Congress is a good example. The article by Miriam Jackson which attacked lesbian separatism is another. Finally, and most recently, Christine's editorial in which she suggests that while lesbians freely attack heterosexual feminists, heterosexual feminists are not free to respond, and that the Women's Movement has got itself out on a limb "arguing over the intricacies of 'heterosexism'," while in fact "we would be better off organising activities based on the insights given us by our understanding of basic Women's Liberation theory".

If comments like this one represent Broadsheet's understanding of lesbian politics, it's not surprising that Broadsheet's general presentation of lesbian politics is so distorted. For a start, Broadsheet itself has frequently demonstrated that some heterosexual feminists feel uninhibited in attacking lesbians and our politics, all the while apparently expecting us to stay friendly. I think it is disingenuous to reply that women are free to write in and defend lesbian politics and lesbian lifestyles. The point is rather that the **presentation** of these topics by Broadsheet has been increasingly negative. Furthermore, all these negative allusions to lesbian politics and lesbian lifestyles must be rather perplexing to probably a large section of Broadsheet's readers who have had little or no exposure to lesbian feminists and our ideas (certainly not in the pages of Broadsheet).

I have been, like many lesbian feminists, involved in the Women's Movement from the beginning. Again like many lesbian feminists, I was heterosexual when I was first involved, and I have become a lesbian within the Movement. That so many activists have become lesbians is no coincidence, although ignored in Broadsheet's discussion of the last five years. How does Christine account for the fact that so much energy has recently gone into discussing what she calls "the intricacies of 'heterosexism'?" (She implies this is an activity comparable in significance to debating how many lesbians can fit on the point of a needle. Her use of quotation marks implies that there is some doubt as to whether heterosexism is a meaningful concept or even really a word. Compare "racism" or "sexism".)

There are real, material reasons for the development of lesbian politics; **oppression** for instance, and the particular relation of the lesbian to patriarchal society. Does Christine imagine that a whole lot of the movement's most committed activists have suddenly gone berserk, or that incorrect ideas like lesbian feminism float around waiting to attack weak-minded women?

The Women's Liberation Movement has not in fact discussed "the intricacies" of heterosexism, or even just the basic idea very much. It's well past time for Broadsheet to print material on lesbian oppression, lesbian politics, lesbian separatism and so on. By New Zealand lesbian feminists.

It's hard to know how to approach the Broadsheet collective on this issue. How representative of the collective as a whole are your editorials? Do you mind whether or not you alienate lesbian feminists? Do you mind whether Broadsheet is oppressive to lesbians? As Broadsheet claims to be New Zealand's feminist magazine, I think lesbians can expect representation in Broadsheet in proportion to our numbers and energy input into the New Zealand Women's Movement.

Deborah Jones

Dear Broadsheet,

May I point out to Christine Dann that her own editorial is judgemental and authoritarian and, apparently, anti-lesbian feminist. In the WLM, as I understand it, **no** line prevails, in an overall sense, although some ideas surface from time to time, like her own 'organising' line which Broadsheet has been pushing over the last few months.

My perception of the WLM is that it has not shrunk but rather factionalised. It is possible that Christine's faction has shrunk. If so I'll thank her not to pretend that that's the whole Movement. She may see a need for more organisation at the present, other women may not. The basic problem seems to be that Christine is still thinking in terms of hierarchies. The WLM does not **lead** it **permeates** — it enters every aspect of women's lives and the societies we live in and acts to change them.

Yes we can hurtle along with the Second Wave never stopping to look at the effects of the gains we have already made. Leading a diverse women's movement into a path of reformism in the continual pursuit of the pre-conditions for revolution. Or we can assess our situation, try different routes and assess them too.

These look freaky do they? Of course they do, by patriarchal standards anything that appears to challenge the status quo looks freaky — hence the continuing processes of repression and co-option.

I don't want to ride a Second Wave that leaves me high and dry on the shores of the patriarchy, I'd rather wait for the Tsunami.

Val Cole.

Dear Broadsheet,

I am sorry Christine Dann (refer Broadsheet July editorial) does not have the time to understand heterosexism. To keep women in submission to men, men have used the technique of defining women who do not need men as unnatural. It is a matter of ideology. The straight woman then sees her position as natural and therefore unchangeable. There is nowhere to be liberated to. That is why the straight liberation movement is in the doldrums.

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Yours,
Porleen Simmonds



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one woman's life

Everything we do provides a lesson on how our society treats women. Rhona Thorpe takes a case in point — moving house — and shows how assumptions about women affected this already difficult operation.

I have just moved from Lower Hutt to Christchurch. As a member of the Women's Electoral Lobby, I knew to watch out for signs of society's attitudes to married women even when moving house.

Firstly — Why did we uproot at all? What was my part in the decision?

The move benefits two of our three children as well as my husband. It may not help me as a teacher of English as a Second Language, so the decision was made on a simple majority. The others accept that I might initiate the next move (I hope).

Next we had to sell the jointly-owned house. The land agents did business on this with me separately, whenever the need arose. Just one uncomfortable note. We both introduced ourselves to them by our Christian names. Only one was used; I was "Mrs" plus surname. The "woman should be put on a pedestal" hang-up is still around.

The other owner went first to see the lawyer about legalising the sale. Later, I went to sign the documents on my own. A quick look through. Yes, my name is spelled correctly. But wait, my status is defined as "his wife". I begin to point out the irrelevance of this term in the transfer of property from two adult owners. The lawyer can't hide a weary look at the ceiling. "Friday afternoon and I meet one of **them**", I can see him thinking as I plan inwardly to keep notes on this. His reply is my first entry. "Most women are happy to be known in this way".

How's that for "emotional reasoning" from the sex that swears it is above such human frailty and so can keep public decision-making to itself? And what about the dose of guilt-conditioner there?

In the end I had to sign the offending article as it was, because time was short and my husband had

already signed. Since maleness is the norm in our society, he hadn't noticed anything unsatisfactory. Most women have been conditioned to do the same. Please lawyers, ask women clients how they would like to be described on the documents you draw up!

Of course I was "at fault" too; I hadn't given any prior instructions. I decided not to make the same mistake at the buying end, where another lawyer was drawing up more reams of paper. I wrote off asking to be described as a teacher and this was accepted without question. With my partner's agreement, my name is to appear before his on the list of ratepayers. Only the first-listed of joint owners can usually vote in ratepayers' polls (rare though they are) and only the first-listed is automatically put on the roll for local body elections. The traditional listing of the male owner first is one of many small details that keeps women in their traditional position of secondary citizens, and makes them see themselves as inferior persons. My partner was inclined to see this as nit-picking until I reminded him that he hadn't even asked my agreement when his name went first on the ratepayers' list in Lower Hutt. Neither of us had known much then.

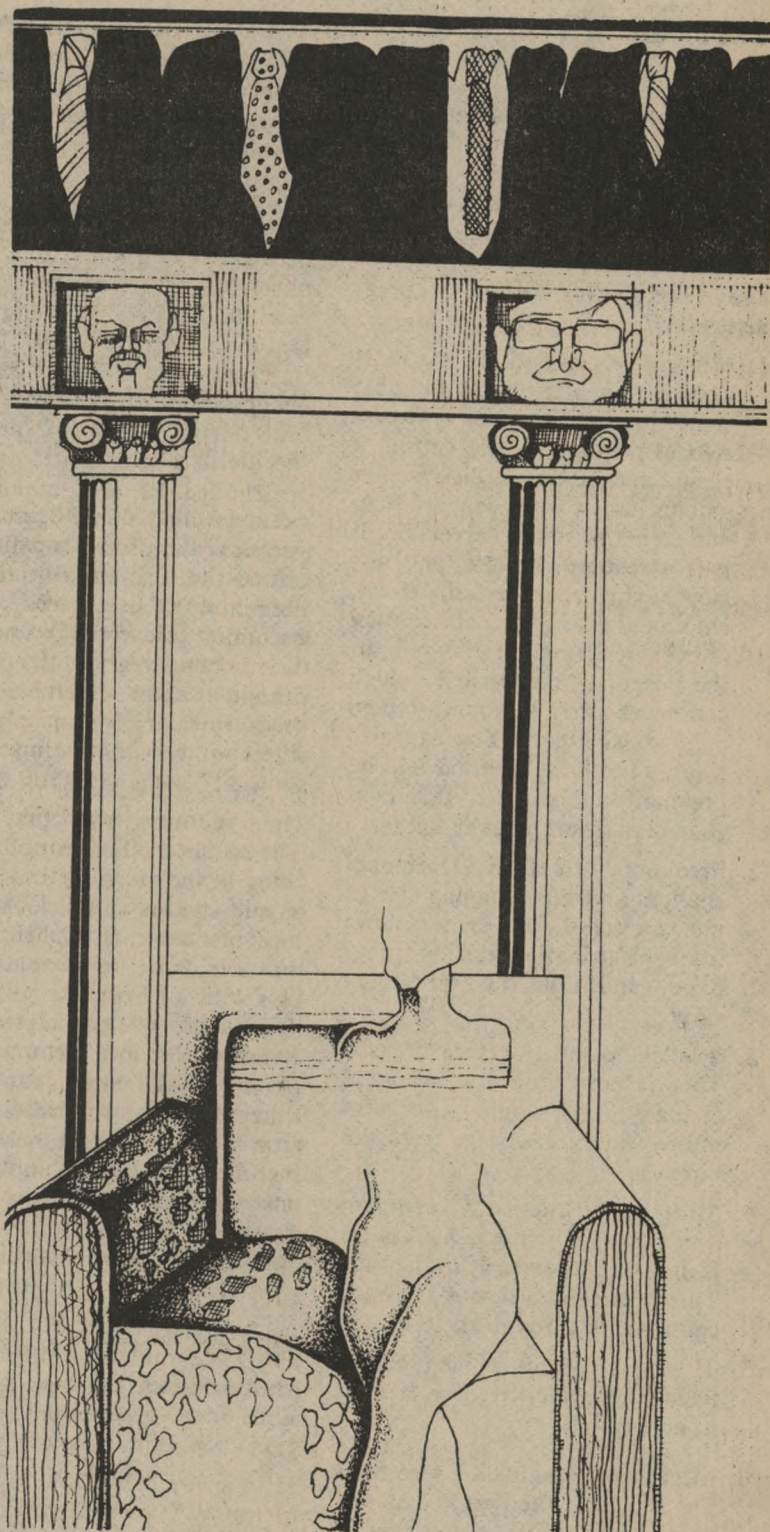
Skip over the trip to Christchurch — muddle, brimming emotions and miserable cats.

We went to the bank together to transplant our joint account. The clerk, a woman, handled the routine very smoothly but addressed herself solely to my husband. The male is the breadwinner assumption in instant action. ("Perhaps you looked too much like a housewife, Mum," was my daughter's contribution from her conditioning, during a post-mortem at home.)

Finally I asked the clerk why she didn't include me. She became distinctly ill-at-ease and replied, "That's the way it is." (Women's Solidarity, where are you?) I described this incident in a letter to the Manager, who invited me to talk it over with him. He was emphatic that the clerk hadn't told it the way it really was and said he would raise the matter with his staff. He added that the whole issue is a dilemma for them with some married women complaining of being insulted if asked their occupation!

The male accountant at the local garage accepted my name alone when I went to open an account there. Much more even-handed than the Education Board form used by the school where I enrolled one son. All the parental information they wanted from **me** was father's initials and occupation! I had a sudden urge to tell the secretary that I had contributed half the genes. I forgot it just as fast when I saw my son looking at me hard. The look said, "I know you, Mum, but please don't embarrass me where I need to belong!" If Authority must count the two-parent families, why does it ask sexist questions?

There was an incident that deserves to be the postscript to this exercise. It was moving-in day. In the spirit of the above, I had offered to help four of the other sex (two from my family) to lift the piano off the truck and carry it the twenty-five metres to its new place. The carrier looked a little nonplussed but didn't object. On our erratic way up the path, I fell backwards into the nearby bushes. The others continued to hold the angular burden, apparently as before. Some masculinist ribbing could have been expected, but they just waited for me to rejoin them and we all shuffled on.



healthy women

PREGNANCY TESTING

Part One in a series on general gynaecological problems.

A pregnancy test is a way of clinically determining pregnancy by chemical testing. All types require a urine sample from the woman. What are some of the signs of pregnancy which will suggest to a woman that she might be pregnant and therefore in need of a pregnancy test?

1. Missing a period. For most women this is the most tangible sign. However it is not always a sign of pregnancy. Not getting a period may be due to diet, weight gain or loss (if you lose more than one stone in weight, especially if it is a fast weight loss, you will stop having your period), stress, emotional changes, contraception (especially being on the pill, or the injection), menopause (which can occur early in some women) or physical illness. You can also continue to have a period and be pregnant although in this case your periods are usually lighter.
2. Frequent urination. Hormonal changes and the changing size of the uterus both cause more frequent urination during pregnancy and this can start very early.
3. Swollen, painful or sore breasts. This is also due to hormonal changes. Some women also get a milky, watery discharge from the nipples.
4. Morning sickness. A common symptom of pregnancy is a feeling of nausea early in the day. This is most unpleasant and may continue all through the day.
5. Tiredness. Many women report feeling lethargic, tired or lacking in energy.
6. Increased vaginal secretions. Thrush is often a sign of pregnancy because it is a sign of

hormonal changes in the body.

Pregnancy Tests — Types and Methods

A. Internal Examination: This has to be done by an experienced person because telling the signs of pregnancy is a matter of experience. The examination involves using a speculum to inspect the cervix. The cervix tip becomes soft and the cervix itself changes colour from a red/pink to a blue/purple. The shape and feel of the uterus also changes and this is determined by a bi-manual pelvic examination. When you are not pregnant the uterus is a firm round object the size of a plum. When pregnant, the uterus changes, becoming soft to touch and the size of a lemon at about six weeks, an orange at eight to ten weeks and a grapefruit at twelve plus weeks (these are very approximate).

B. Urine Tests: There are three types of urine tests now available. The urine should be obtained first thing in the morning and should be a 'mid-stream' sample. The urine is most concentrated in the morning and a mid-stream sample is best — piss a little then take your sample. This should give you a clear sample. Put the urine in a clean glass bottle or jar. Make sure that the containers you use to collect the urine (say a stainless steel bowl and the jar) are well cleaned out and well rinsed. Any impurities, such as detergent, will ruin the test. Before your test don't drink alcohol or take any tranquilizers or sedatives as these will affect the test. Methadone will also affect the tests.

Most urine tests in New Zealand are done in a laboratory. Your doctor takes the sample and arranges the tests. Some Family Planning clinics can also arrange them for you. It should be possible for you to do your

own test as it is very easy to do, and certainly women's health groups, etc. should be able to do them, but as yet this does not happen here.

There are two ways of doing urine tests; the biologic and immunologic methods. Both make use of a hormone, HCG (Human Chorionic Gonadotropin) which is secreted by the developing embryo and found in the urine of pregnant women. This HCG will show up as early as three weeks after conception, but it is normally detected about 6-8 weeks. In some women it doesn't show up until very late. I have heard of cases where women were 4-5 months pregnant and did not show a positive test, though this is rare.

Biologic testing. This is not done very often now. It involves injecting the woman's urine into laboratory animals. If she is pregnant the HCG will cause the animals to ovulate.

Immunologic Testing: This is now the most common method in use. A drop of the urine sample is mixed onto a slide along with a drop of serum to sensitise it and some latex. Any urine with HCG in it will neutralise the serum and stop the latex agglutinating. However, there has to be a sufficient quantity of HCG in the urine, so this test can't really be done before 6-8 weeks.

This test is 95-98% effective and accurate. However it often won't work early in pregnancy. If you get a negative result wait a week and have another test. Very occasionally you can get a false positive test.

The newest test that has just become available is a more refined version of the above. It is called the Beta-Subunit HCG radio-immunoassay test. It provides more accurate measure of HCG and can theoretically be accurate as early as 2 days after conception. More realistically it is accurate as early as eight days. This test is very quick, taking about two hours to complete. It is just becoming available in New Zealand.

Sarah Calvert



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Contributors: Marjorie Hall

Bay of Plenty Times

"SELECTING a good cow is like
choosing a good wife... there are many
points to look for in perfection but you
have to make a compromise."

The executive manager of
the farm production division
of the New Zealand Dairy
Board, Mr H. J. Clifford,
gave this advice to beef and
dairy cattle farmers at the
annual ward conference of
the Livestock Improvement
Association in Tauranga
yesterday.

Mr Clifford was giving an
address on selection of bulls
and cows under the artificial
breeding process.

Wgn. Evening Post

The Press

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EVENING POST 23-5-78

Females can make executive suite

More women will be
seen as managers, is the
view held by Martin Kim-
ble, manager of the local
division of the Institute of
Management.

"Entry to executive posi-
tions in private enterprise
could be via secretarial or
sales posts. Although sex
should not be a factor in
deciding who should be
promoted, women are certain-
ly not an automatic choice.
Their reputation for changing
jobs or resigning
for marriage, leaves the em-
ployer with no certainty that
entrusting a senior position to
a woman would be a safe long
term selection" said Mr
Kimble.

After observing and work-
ing for managers, many se-
cretaries feel they could cope
with administrative
promotions.

"Rather than talking to
their peers about the unfair-
ness of a man's world, they
should take the initiative and
prepare for management
jobs," said Mr Kimble. A
woman has a better chance if
she walks in with a Supervi-
sion Certificate or a Man-
agement Diploma. These
studies can be done by corre-
spondence or at a technical in-
stitute for relatively little
cost."

He also referred to the
opportunity for women who
are good organisers to assert
themselves when word
processing is used more in
New Zealand offices. "This
could take them out of the
steno-typing pool to fill more
exacting role within the firm,"
said Mr Kimble.

Promotion is often given to
girls who work beyond their
job prescription and some
come up with ideas on how to
cut cost by improving an
existing system or how to up-
grade customer services.

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The Feminist Eye

book review

It Changed My Life

Betty Friedan

Betty Friedan is a liberal — in a way which reminds us that the word was once a compliment. The main defect of liberalism is that it does not go far enough; but by the same token, neither does it go too far. In her collection of autobiographical and theoretical writings, "It Changed My Life", Betty Friedan demonstrates that she both came from, and is still very much a part of, mainstream Middle America. This position has its strengths and weaknesses. The weaknesses in this book spring mainly from Friedan's inadequate understanding of the processes of society and change. In my opinion she over-emphasises the role individuals play in creating and directing historical change. She credits her own book, "The Feminine Mystique" (which was undoubtedly very important) with having more influence than it can credibly sustain. Neither "The Feminine Mystique", nor that other very important source book "The Second Sex", came into their own until the late 1960s when social forces, not just literary ideas, were creating a Women's Liberation Movement.

Reading Part I of "It Changed My Life", someone ignorant of the spread of women's movement activities might easily get the impression that Betty Friedan started it all. Perhaps this is forgivable in an autobiographical book, that she concentrates on the parts she played, but readers should therefore be wary of taking this section as herstorical gospel.

Friedan documents her experience and the experience of women like herself excellently — but not all women, nor all feminists, are like her. She is neither black nor working class and the experience of these women is not described or analysed. This is also understandable within an autobiographical context, and as Friedan points out (on p.231) white middle-class women should be sticking up for themselves instead of feeling (as they have so often been made to feel) that everyone else's problems are more important than their own. However, this shortcoming does limit Friedan's analysis and keeps it liberal rather than radical.

Part II, "Betty Friedan's Notebook" is a fascinating mixture of her career as a speaker and her thoughts on feminist issues. Of her experience in Italy, for example, where a woman interpreter scorned feminism as "non-political" — but where fascist thugs turned out in force on a rainy night to break up a feminist abortion demonstration. Of her thoughts on sex and love, where she strikes a chord with me when she questions the preoccupation with sterile technique from professionals (how to have orgasms with men and machines) and feminists (how to have orgasms without men) alike and suggests that removing sex from its current context of power imbalance and re-locating it in a



genuine love context will do more to improve our sex lives than any amount of sexology, however well intentioned. Next she has me disagreeing with what I see as her rather too optimistic view of the future of marriage and the future generally — tens of thousands of years of patriarchy are not wiped out even in a century of agitation, and I don't believe that the evils of the institution of marriage have been annihilated in a decade. While I sympathise with her feelings about what seem to be basic human needs for love and commitment, I do not believe that it is yet possible for most women to enjoy these benefits of marriage free from the very real legal, economic and personal restrictions which marriage as an institution places on us. Therefore we should be very careful about doing anything which may appear to support marriage.

Also In Part II Friedan has some harsh words to say about "female chauvinism", which she defines as "the assumption that women have any moral or spiritual superiority as a class, or that men share some brute insensitivity as a class" (p.120). Within the Movement, this has been an increasing trend, and I agree with Friedan that it is a dangerous one. Again, while I do not share her optimism about the rate at which men are changing, I can see how exasperation with the outrages they have committed and still commit can lead us into a state of reaction, in which we attempt to reverse the poles by proclaiming ourselves good and men evil, rather than working on eliminating the polarisation between the sexes and creating new worlds for both sexes.

The most interesting section of Part III, "Transcending Politics: New power in the world" is the chapter "Scary Doings in Mexico City", a description of what went on at the United Nations sponsored International Women's Year conference in Mexico City in 1975. A sobering account of the lengths to which the powers-that-be will go to keep women weak and divided, and essential reading for any woman who doubts what a political threat the Women's Liberation Movement poses to patriarchal authorities.

Finally, there is Part IV, 'An Open Letter to the Women's Movement 1976', from which I'd like to quote this excellent piece:

"In a wonderful book called "The Left Hand of Darkness" by Ursula Le Guin I found the passage:

How to break the circle: They say here: "All roads lead to Mishnory." To be sure, if you turn your back on Mishnory and walk away from it, you are still on the Mishnory road. To oppose vulgarity is inevitably to be vulgar. You must go somewhere else; you must have another goal; then you walk a different road.

.... We don't reach the "new yes" of sexual liberation — human liberation — just by saying "no" to male power. The road away from Mishnory — the reaction against an excessively powerless femininity and an excessively dominant masculinity — is still the road of sex-role polarisation." (Friedan goes on to repeat her criticism of sexology, mentioned above, and questions whether Erica

Jong's concept of the "zipless fuck" is the sexual dream of liberated women.) She goes on:

"I didn't think a thousand vibrators would make much difference — or that it mattered who was in the missionary position — if the unequal power positions in real life weren't changed. The "zipless fuck" was simply sexual revenge. The question is: How can we enjoy the true human differences of sex — male and female, yang and yin, passive and active — all the facets of male and female we each possess in varying degrees and can express in love or life, in passion or poetry? How can we evade the final fact that our humanity is **ours** as male and female if we are to truly realise ourselves? It was the **economic** imbalance, the power imbalance in the world that subverted sex, or made sex itself into a power game where no one could win.

Work and love, Freud said, are the two essentials of the human condition. The trouble is, the polarisation of the two sexes in human society has also polarised work and love — economics as the male world, and love the female. Concepts of power ignore sex or treat women as a commodity. The sex therapists treat them like things too — as if sex, mechanised, could be divorced from love, or both from the world of work. In the real world of home and kitchen, bedroom and office, where we all live, economic power and sex are inescapable and converge."

I found reading "It Changed My Life" rather like eating muesli — a solid base, some tough and indigestible nuts, a few gluggy lumps — but the pieces of fruit make it really worthwhile. Every now and then, among this really assorted mixture, Friedan comes up with a piece of analysis which is derived from her Middle America experience and which is worth serious consideration if Middle America — or mainstream New Zealand — is to be changed along feminist lines.

Christine Dann

National Art Gallery, Wellington

an exhibition of Wellington photographers

August 14 — September 10

including work submitted by six
women photographers



Photo: "Radical America"

film review

Harlan County U.S.A. Barbara Kopple

I managed to see this film twice, in both Wellington and Auckland, and at both screenings the audience was vitally involved, cheering and hissing at appropriate moments and moved to clap at the end. It's not surprising — Barbara Kopple has made a powerful movie. Identifying strongly with her subjects, she enables us to identify with them too.

"... where the rain never falls and the sun never shines, it's dark as a dungeon way down in the mine..." goes the song which introduces the film, complementing scenes of miners at work, in conditions which are unpleasant and difficult enough at the best of times. Older men and women reminisce about the bad old days, and their grandchildren repeat the tales and add a new grievance of their own — the company which employs the Harlan County miners has refused to allow them to join a union, although this is their constitutional right. From this point the movie follows the struggle of the people of Harlan County for their union contract, but also introduces other material about the fight for better leadership of the United Mine Workers Union itself, and the wider context of the conflict. Hard cold facts about profits and miners' wages, black lung disease and ballot papers contrast and complement intensely personal and painful music ("oh death, oh death — please spare me over for another year.").

Particularly significant in this movie is the role the women played in the strike. They were the leading force in securing the contract. As the strike dragged on they became more frustrated and more mili-

tant than the men. The men accepted a restriction on the numbers allowed to picket the mine — the women challenged the restriction and organised large pickets of women and men. In doing so they placed themselves in physical danger, for they were shot at while picketing. The movie shows their leader taking the cheerful precaution of tucking a revolver down the front of her dress. When it became obvious that not even large pickets could prevent scab labour from entering the mine, the women came up with a new tactic, and successfully organised an (illegal) road block to stop the scabs driving up to work. The sheriff tried to move them — they responded by presenting him with a warrant for the arrest of the chief gun thug who was organising the scabs and protecting the company's interests.

Harlan County is a film about politics, and as such provokes comment about the political line which the director has taken. For having the commitment and determination to make such a unique film I think she deserves nothing but praise. Whether she makes too much or too little of the role of the women, whether she ties the overlapping stories together well enough (I found it helped to see it twice — but I had difficulty with the Kentucky mountain accents), and whether she gives too much validation to the union, which even under its new leadership does not appear to be radically reformed, are matters which I think viewers should decide for themselves after seeing the movie. There is talk of buying the movie (it only costs \$3,000) and keeping it in the country so that it is available for screening to women's groups, unions, schools, etc. and I think that it is well worth giving money for.

C. Dann



Photo: Melbourne Film Festival booklet

film review

Adoption Marta Meszaros

This is not so much a review of Marta Meszaros' "Adoption" as it is my personal account of it, a reconstruction of what I saw in the film, from what I have seen in my own life. The film left some deep impressions on me, and I wanted to write this piece so that I could put into words what I felt about it.

The film is called "Adoption", and on one level, I could describe it as being about the problems faced by those who have been abandoned, and by those who are alone and do not want to be. It goes further than this, though. Meszaros once said in an interview:

"I am a feminist, if you like, in that I believe the fundamental question of any relationship to be the need for men and women alike to understand themselves. Yet the vast majority of women — even the most intelligent — have a subordinate position. Five or six years ago, a search for sexual understanding was the problem of the day. Now as I see it, the problem of today is the quest for companionship ... not primarily a quest for sexual partners, rather a search for friends. If this should be realised, then the notion of the family, too, would acquire a different dimension. However, in my view, true friendship between men and women is the most difficult thing in the world."

Meszaros restates those ideas through the relationships she shows between the different men and women in the film. Social expectations, and positions; the worn-out clichés that still have such a stranglehold, and still define the respective places of men and women; the men

who do not understand, and who have the power to inflict their ignorance on women; the damage caused by a male supremacist system. Companionship seems a mirage in the plundered wasteland.

Kata is a middle-aged woman, childless and widowed. She has a lover, Joska, who is married with two children, and she wants a child with him. She is financially self-sufficient, physically healthy, and quite prepared to bring the child up on her own; she tells Joska of her intentions because she thinks it is dishonest not to. He is violently opposed to it. Kata accepts this, and tries desperately to be understanding about it, consciously sorry for having made such a suggestion. Joska no longer trusts her, is afraid that she will stop using contraceptives, and he refuses sex with her. In an attempt to say why he does not want her to have a child, he brings her home to meet his wife and their children. It is as though he has neatly placed the two women into two separate compartments — one as wife and mother, the other as lover — and in his mind, the two roles are irreconcilable. For him, relationships between men and women are to be set on these terms, or not at all, and Kata's desire to have a child disturbs him.

So does Kata's conversation with his wife. The children have grown older, and do not need her; she wants to find work outside of home, but Joska will not let her, thinking that she has enough to do where she is. But Kata supports her, saying that there is no real reason for staying on at home. The two women look at each other; there is a bond there that excludes Joska, and as he looks at them, he knows it.

That night he comes to Kata's place, deeply upset by something he does not understand. He cannot talk about it with her, but stays the night. At the end of the film, Kata adopts a baby from the Home nearby.

Anna is 16 years old, and has been in the Home ever since her parents abandoned her. She introduces herself to Kata because she wants a room where she can occasionally meet with her lover. It is with these two women that any sign of companionship is to be found. Kata is crying quietly to herself over Joska's decision; Anna puts her arms around her, wipes the tears from her face, roughly. She sees the unfairness of Kata's situation, and sees how she must subordinate her desires to Joska's decision. Together, the two women go to a restaurant, happy with themselves, and happy with being in each other's company. But there, too, they are surrounded by a group of men who do not understand that happiness, and who keep asking one or other of the women to get up and dance with them. They understand the women on their terms, or not at all.

There are also gaps in this friendship between Kata and Anna. There is one scene where Anna, after spending the day with her lover, comes into the shed where Kata is working at a lathe. Kata looks up, then continues with her work. Anna turns her face to the wall, and it seems as if she were sobbing. Kata looks up again, hesitates, then goes up to her, wanting to show the empathy she feels. Anna turns around, laughing to herself and at Kata. Kata slaps her on the face, hard, and looks at her for a very long time. A look measured by the betrayal she must have felt. She had wanted to come close to Anna, and to understand why she seemed upset, and Anna had rejected her.

Betrayal and rejection; yet it is made clear why it might be so. Kata goes to see Anna's parents, in order to talk them into the marriage Anna wants with her lover. Her parents are tight-lipped, hard-eyed people; hard in the sense of brittle, not tough. When Kata asks Anna's father why he does not want the marriage, he refuses to give any reasons. Finally he draws up a marriage contract, whereby Anna would stay on with the parents of her husband-to-be, in the case of divorce. He does not want anything to do with her, but he cannot say that in any other way but through a contract made by him and agreed to by her lover. First, by the law of the land, she is possessed by her father; by that same law, the state

was then allowed to possess her. Now Anna was to be possessed by her husband and his family. Possessed by, and precisely because of that, unable to belong with; and thus the rejection she herself must have felt.

And thus, perhaps, the nature of the relationships between men and women as set by male supremacist society. Communication by contract, nothing closer than that; the barriers of silence formed between ourselves and men, by such a process; the words that should have been spoken, but are not; are left to harden the silence that could once have been companionship and love.

Anna's wedding day arrives. The two are married, and afterwards the guests all gather to celebrate — friends, relations and other girls from the Home where Anna lived. Paired-off couples dance with one another, exchanging partners, drinking, talking. The girls from the Home sit and watch this display of 'normal life', and as the night draws on, so their pain deepens. Some of them weep. In another corner, Anna's new husband is trying to kiss her, but she has become cold, withdrawn, and cannot respond. She pushes him away; upset, he walks away from her, and the scene ends with Anna staring mutely after him. The pain of her past will not leave her.

In an earlier scene, she tells Kata never to adopt a child from the Home because "we are all scarred, scarred for life." And the relationship between Anna and her parents parallels that between Kata and Joska, is like that which is to be between Anna and her new husband. The years of unhappiness stretch endlessly ahead, years that have been preceded by centuries of the same. External decisions subordinating internal desires; imposed conditions restricting natural lives; women living in accordance with male authority, free to move within its boundaries, and suffering if any challenge is made. When will our desire for freedom be understood? When will men learn to let go, and become people we can love? When will there be real companionship between men and women?

As I left the Civic that night, I heard someone comment, "But what dreary lives they had." Dreary is not the word I would use. The film showed the plain, unadorned truth of most people's lives, without the fripperies used to conceal it. When will even this much be understood?

Jill Ranstead



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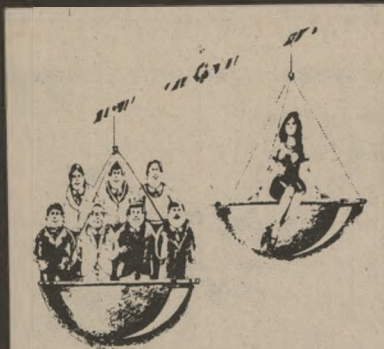
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continued from inside back cover

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