

broadsheet

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BRO

new zealand's feminist magazine

september 1979

no. 72

90 cents

The Superior Sex — Women? Men?



The Problems of Working Mothers



African Women — Mutilated for Marriage

Reverse your blurb
out of this column



Sunday night

Dear Priscilla
This Rough is as far as
I could get before the deadline.
Sorry, but my 3-year-old will
not let me work on it. She
wants to play dominoes!
This'll do. Print it
black on mustard
Yrs. in haste,
vanya

FRONTING UP

Broadsheet Office

is at:

1st floor, Colebrooks Building.
93 Anzac Ave, Auckland.

Office hours: 9—3, Mon-Fri. Phone
number: 794-751

Our box number is:

P.O. Box 5799, Wellesley St,
Auckland, New Zealand.

Enveloping

Enveloping of the October issue will
be Sunday 30th September at the
office, Colebrooks Building, 93
Anzac Ave between 10 a.m. and 3
p.m. approx.

Poetry Criticism

We receive so much poetry that it
is becoming too big a job to reply
with constructive criticisms to all of
you. Some of you may not want
criticism anyway so we are asking
when you send in poetry to specify
whether you want criticism of your

work or not. If you do not want any
evaluation of your work you will re-
ceive a straight acceptance or rejec-
tion.

Car Stickers

At last we have new car stickers
available. These are free to good
homes (cars) but we ask that you
send a stamped addressed envelope
with your request. You help publi-
cise Broadsheet by displaying a car
sticker on your car, shop window,
house window, etc.

Ring Binders

We have recently completed fil-
ing all our photographs and graphic
material for easy retrieval. Now we
have run out of the ring binders
which are ideal for filing this mate-
rial. Have any readers old ring bin-
ders they can let us have? We would
be grateful to have them from you.

Women in prison

The Collective has decided to
make free subscriptions of Broad-
sheet available to women in prison,
borstal and girls' homes. Any
woman in a penal institution can
write to us with her request and we
will mail a Broadsheet to her
monthly for the time that she is in-
carcerated. Please spread this
around.

Submitting work

All articles, fiction and poetry
sent to Broadsheet (not letters)
should be accompanied by a
stamped addressed envelope and
should be typed, double-spaced on
one side of paper only. Two copies
of articles would be appreciated and
the name and address of the sender
should be written on the work not
just on the accompanying letter.

*For the 86th anniversary of women's suffrage in
New Zealand Broadsheet is holding a*

SUFFRAGE DAY SEMINAR FOR WOMEN

Place: Trades Hall, 147-151 Great North Road, Auckland.

Time: 9 a.m. — 5 p.m. Saturday, 22 September, 1979

Programme:

The programme consists of four speakers with discussion after
each address followed by a panel discussion.

Speakers:

Sarah Calvert — on women's health

Vicki Keesing — Education officer for the Clerical Workers'
Union, on women workers

Cath Tizard — Auckland City Councillor, on women in local
body politics

Donna Awatere — on Maori and Pacific Island women

Panel discussion on "What is feminism?"

The above speakers will be joined by:

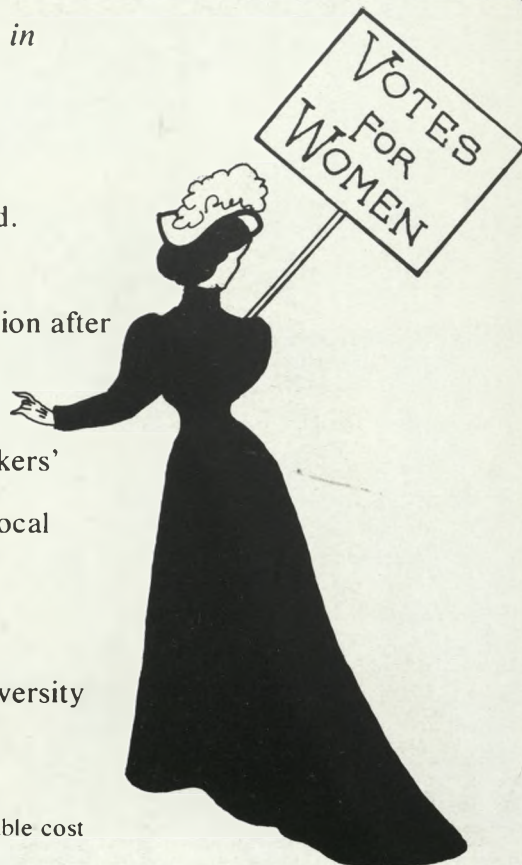
Jane Kelsey — lecturer in Criminology at Auckland University

Linda Daly Peoples — lawyer, women's studies tutor

Sandi Beatie — Working Women's Council

Cost: \$3.50

Tea and coffee will be provided. Lunch will be available at a reasonable cost
but women are invited to bring their own lunches.



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Women

The Broadsheet Collective: Sarah Calvert, Sandra Coney, Miriam Jackson, Anne Macfarlane, Priscilla Pitts.

These women also worked on this issue: Simone Lalande, Joan Oswin, Jill Ranstead, Doreen Suddens, Jean Volkerling, Joy Wright and the enveloping women.

Cover: Vanya Lowry

Illustrations:

Robin Conway, pages 18 and 20

Vanya Lowry, pages 10 — 15

Sally Hollis McLeod, pages 26, 28 and 29

Priscilla Pitts, pages 6 and 24

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LETTERS

Further comments on the United Women's Convention

Dear Sisters,

In answer to your request for opinions on the future of the UWC.

1. Yes. We need Conventions . . . in the regions. They would develop the initiative and resources of women, get more women involved, bring out local talent.

2. Yes. We should be more political. Bunch and Levy were right. It was a waste of such a large women's gathering not to point the finger at Parliament. The conference or convention can be ¾ main concerns at the time. e.g. 1981: parliament, abortion, women candidates.

3. Should be structured. Everything that succeeds is. Must have a form, a face, a co-ordination or else it is left to the individual who, once away from the enthusiasm, allows the old routines to take over. Good meetings can be wrecked by one person domination from the floor on a subject that is not of major concern to the majority. Nothing is ideal but commonsense is a pretty general watershed.

4. NO. We need the media. (They too, are threatened by this government.) We should try to get good coverage, even the damn stupid comments make women react against them. Try to seek the co-operation of the press and media. Lots of people support us in the press, etc, women reporters if possible. There is more awareness among editors that we merit a better deal; give out your own handouts too, but try to get on better terms with the newscaster.

The general consensus of a report-back meeting here on the UWC was that it was

too big to handle, that the disappointments were accepted with good grace, that we have a long way to go but are right there on the road.

Read Dr. Sutch's book **Women with a Cause**. Nothing we want will be given to us, but we have to go on and not give up.

Good wishes as always,

Mary Thomas,

Hastings.



Dear Broadsheet,

I read with interest the impressions of four women who had attended the United Women's Convention in Hamilton this year, especially those of Nancy Peterson and Joss Shawyer. In analysing the weaknesses and disappointments of the convention, both writers returned to a common root — that is, lack of good planning and communication on the part of the organising committee. The committee is described as "paranoid" (p 26); "powerless" (p 26); "the enemy" (p 25); and "out-of-control", "power-hungry", and "non-functioning" (p 25). They are accused of wanting to repress dissent (p 22), encourage convention (p 22) and avoid confrontation or communication of any kind. I feel very strongly that accusations of this kind call for an examination of the issues in which *both* sides are involved.

Broadsheet is the ideal vehicle for this type of examination, being widely available and able to give expression to the views of the committee, as it has to those who are dissatisfied with the committee. Points which must be raised are these: the aims of the committee for the convention; difficulties they encountered, and why they chose

to deal with them the way they did; and what the committee members feel were the failings and achievements of the convention.

Towards the end of her article, Joss Shawyer asks: "Is the UWC committee accountable?" I personally feel that they must be, for if the Hamilton UWC is to be the learning experience it was certainly meant to be, the committee must be asked to explain their actions; to enable future committees to plan conventions more in keeping with the demands and desires of those who attend them. I want to *hear* from the UWC committee, not just see them attacked in print as the faceless "enemy", a scapegoat for every dissatisfaction with the convention.

Yours sincerely,

Kaye McLaren

Broadsheet note: The United Women's Convention committee was approached to reply to the criticisms published in the June issue of Broadsheet. However they have declined to do so, preferring to discuss all aspects of the convention in the proposed Convention Booklet.



Dear Broadsheet,

A Managing Corporation rented an Institution to create a short term national supermarket. This was a radical Managing Corporation, and so the members felt genuinely concerned about such things as quality of product, and the powerlessness of the Consumer. Inevitably, the concern is modified somewhat by administrative detail, and by the reality that when assuming a role which grants a more privileged access to resources one can easily lose touch with what the Consumer really wants.

Anyway, in the tradition of business, a dozen busy forewomen were attracted to work in the supermarket and behind the scenes. These busy forewomen took on the specialised job of creating and providing certain "Specials". Many of the forewomen gathered friends around to help with the work, and formed a production team. Some members were newish to the game, some were old hands, but all learnt a lot more about the Consumer, the "Special" and the nature of Managing Corporations. The reward for doing the job was Consumer response, and the "Specials" were prepared late into the day and night in anticipation of their being embraced with vigour and delight.

In the months of heady preparation it came to light that this supermarket was going to be Gigantic, and that everyone regardless of job, had over-committed her energy. Clashes of spirit came about, and misinterpretation escalated.

Nevertheless, the fever had momentum, and lo, the supermarket was opened. Everywoman at the sunlit door was given a glossy shopping guide, and in due course, with shopping bag and book in hand, the Consumers scurried around the supermarket, trying to choose which "Special" they wanted, and who they wanted to be with.

And all hell broke loose the next day when it came about that many of the "Specials" were misadvertised, many were a limited offer, and some were even cancelled. It seemed to many that an atmosphere of panic buying prevailed.

Now, panic buying, as we all know, was a strategy for over-consumerism de-

vised by male free-enterprisers. And consumer-competitiveness, we have seen, fosters many types of casualty. For some, it is predominantly an alienation from the "Special" and its makeup; for others, an alienation from other shoppers. Either way, it makes a farce of choice, and I shall never forget our combined faces and posture. Neither though shall I willingly forget the image of 50 women in the J Block passage calling in unison "WE WANT ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING!" because despite the shoppers' guide, Collective Assertion was a component of the "Special" and it was tremendous to see it occur naturally, in a passage sporting apt graffiti, and in an atmosphere of alienation.

There was nothing really radical about the way we interacted, and there is nothing radical about supermarkets. We can't afford to go shopping at that price again. Let's go forward to a real neighbourhood store, of our own social and physical architecture, in our own season, and let's fully re-examine what we need from each other.

Tilly Lloyd.

Lesbian feminism misrepresented?

Dear Broadsheet,

Whether or not one agrees with lesbian separatism or lesbian separatists is another issue, but I am beginning to feel very uneasy about the misrepresentation of lesbian separatists in the pages of Broadsheet. It reminds me of the misrepresentation which, out of fear, ignorance and mistrust, was given to the Black Panther Party in the U.S. The result was that they were systematically prosecuted and shot down by the police until they were totally wiped out. I am specifically referring to Anne Macfar-

lane's report in the June Broadsheet about the post UWC meeting held in Auckland. I attended that meeting. Very soon after it started there was a heated discussion about lesbian feminism. Because of that a woman who later said she was living with a man suggested that since it seemed obvious that we were not understanding each other, maybe a weekend in which lesbian feminism would be discussed could be organised. This was approved by a lot of women. At no time was any suggestion made by a lesbian separatist of a lesbian weekend for lesbians only.

As for the "angry separatist women who attack any who are brave enough to open their mouths" — we women like to play victims, don't we. I must say that I was exasperated at some of my lesbian separatist sisters who I felt did not speak for me. But I was furious and certainly not impressed by the behaviour of some of the very proper middle class women who reacted to what they thought was an "attack" in a defensive, oblique, put-downish, snubbing way. All done in a very nice manner "of course." Any responsible reporter would have given an analysis about the method of confrontation from both sides of the picture. Yet Broadsheet has given us a one-sided, biased point of view. We behaved very much like the oppressed people we are. We hit at each other rather than at the real enemy out there. The only difference was in style. I know it is very easy to feel defensive if one feels she is being attacked. But if the majority of women there had not been so defensive, maybe we would all have dealt better with the confrontation. I wonder if any women there knew why, all the whys, for their defences. Are lesbians, fed up

with the straight world's arrogance and lack of awareness and struggles, supposed to deal with life in a calm, cool and collected manner. Hetero (sexism) is central and close to lesbians, why should we be quiet about it. But most of all why should we be quiet about it with women who presumably are with us in the struggle.

Quite a lot was said in the June Broadsheet about accountability. I certainly think it is an important issue. Broadsheet calls itself New Zealand's Feminist Magazine. Is Broadsheet accountable? I believe it should be. So long as you keep calling yourselves New Zealand's feminist magazine I demand an explanation for this kind of biased reporting.

Yours for the revolution and always in struggle,
Pilar Alba

Christchurch Women's Refuge replies

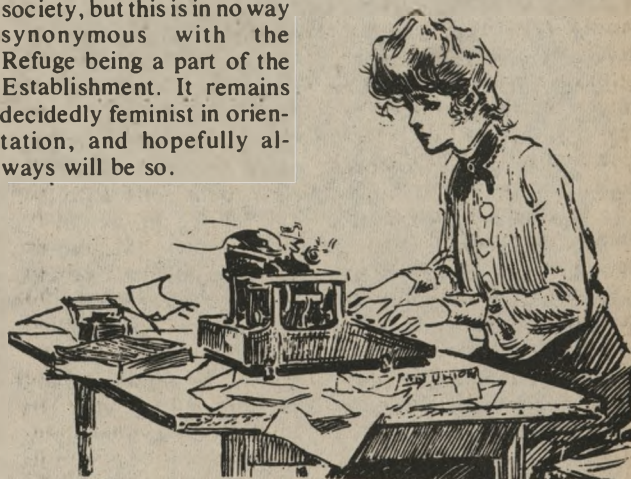
Dear Broadsheet,

In the May 'Broadsheet' article entitled: "Feminist alternatives — safety valves for the system?" the view was put forward that the Christchurch Women's Refuge has been co-opted by the system.

This is sheer rubbish!

It is true that over the years the Refuge Centre has acquired a certain degree of respectability in the eyes of society, but this is in no way synonymous with the Refuge being a part of the Establishment. It remains decidedly feminist in orientation, and hopefully always will be so.

The main difference between the Refuge at present and the Refuge as it was at its inception lies in the difference in attitude towards the women using the Centre. In the beginning attempts were made to "encourage the development of feminist awareness among those who came to the house", whereas now it is deliberate policy not to force feminism down the throats of women using the Centre. This difference is based primarily on the realisation that the feminist perspective is not something which develops overnight — it may take years to acquire. Also, the women using the Refuge are typically so emotionally involved in their own problems that they have little interest or energy to devote to feminism. Their chief concern is survival, not politics. And understandably so. However, it is hoped that at least a small seed of feminism has been sown during their stay at the Refuge — indirectly through feminist-orientated reading material kept at the Refuge; via business meetings being held at the Refuge during which a fair amount of feminist theory and attitudes are discussed; and via the very existence of the Refuge, a place set up by women for women (who want and need to get out of the system for whatever length of time).



The Refuge Centre has a dual purpose: it provides protection and support for women and children coming out of violent domestic situations, and it provides a proving ground for feminist-orientated volunteers. Volunteers are recruited on a self-selection basis — the nature of the job and the feminist perspective of the women already involved seems to ensure that the volunteers who stay longest are usually either feminists or developing feminists. As a rule, it doesn't take long for volunteers to realise that they are caught in the bind of providing a sort of ambulance service at the bottom of the cliff, yet because of insufficient numbers and other commitments, they get snowed under with day-to-day concerns and have little time or energy to expend on working towards being a significant force for social change.

Roster women recognise that though the Establishment may accept the existence of the Refuge, the general public is much less aware of its existence. This needs to be remedied. So too the attitude that the Refuge Centre is but another "welfare service." The real reason for the Refuge's existence — the oppressed position of women in society — needs to be impressed upon people's minds. In addition, the fundamental inadequacy of conventional "pathological" and "like-Father-like-son" type explanations of inter-family violence needs to be clearly spelled out — again and again!

The problem for roster women is that of finding time and energy to be both political and practical when there is a lack of adequate helpers and only 24 hours in a day. Regrettably it is only when faced with external threats to our autonomy, or with criticism of our effectiveness, that the need to "make time" to be more

political gathers momentum. This, however, is an internal problem and is in no way symptomatic of the Refuge having been "co-opted by the system."

Whatever the inadequacies of the Christchurch Refuge, it does have a definite consciousness-raising function, both for volunteers and for the women using the Centre. The latter are still basically responsible for running the house and do provide considerable support for each other, while volunteers also gain in self-confidence and feminist awareness through interactions with the system and through relationships with the women and children who are the unfortunate casualties of the system. Change does occur! The Refuge remains a viable stimulus to social change — with the inbuilt potential for greater political effectiveness awaiting the time, enthusiasm and determination of feminists who know how to walk the fine line between education and alienation of the public.

Helen Dewar,
for the Christchurch Women's Refuge.

Freedom from togetherness

Dear Broadsheet,

I would like to make a personal comment after reading Anne Else's article "Can Marriage Survive Feminism?" in the June issue.

When I came to the country to live and work with my man we did everything together. We designed and built the workshop and studio. We worked the farm and garden. We cooked and cleaned the house together. All our resources were pooled and the money shared. This was my dream — living and working in harmony with the man I love.

Well, we fought. I didn't do things his way. He wouldn't do things my way. We compromised at every

turn.

After two years he decided to do something entirely different in the way of work and lifestyle. This left me to do everything "my way." I was aghast. What had happened to the dream? The reality is this. He has a job with his money. I have a job with my money and a child to support. I am self-employed and don't earn as much as he does but I can pay my way 50/50. Everything is split down the middle. I run my business and support myself and daughter and it is fine. I feel so free. I can work as hard or as little as I like. Do what I want with my working day. Make all decisions for myself. Financial independence without having to rely on, or share with another person is marvellous. I have so much more to give to the relationship and so has he.

We still help each other but it is on an entirely different footing. There is no compulsion on either side because we are independent of each other and work and help is freely given.

Ann Ambler

Postpartum depression

Dear Broadsheet,

Having just had a child, Sarah Calvert's article on postpartum depression (June issue) was very disappointing. It is sad to say, but her perceptions are based on patriarchal, male-dominated studies and statistics. Women don't need to record such data. They *know* it. The only trouble is they have been existing in a world dominated by the external/physical / materialistic viewpoint characteristic of the male form. So much so that they were forced to deny their own knowledge and to attempt to see the world through male/patriarchal eyes. Some have succeeded in that and are left confused and

perplexed or just plain angry, for the material form is nothing without their spirituality.

Males not only *use* us to have contact with theirs but force us into *using* children for contact with ours.

Postpartum depression?

If you were having a spiritual being in a society which denies your spirit and represses full flow of emotions or interchange of feeling, wouldn't you be depressed.

Jan Irwin

"Misbehaving" defended

Dear Broadsheet,

Was there anything positive about the lesbians at the Convention? Reading the report in Broadsheet May and June one would have thought that in fact there was not. Lesbians were everywhere at the Convention but it seems that apart from this "very small unnamed group" we were invisible, not worth mentioning. Lesbians ran workshops, convened quite a lot of different activities and generally worked hard. Yet all the attention has gone to this so-called small group.

I wonder why Sandra Coney in her report in the May Broadsheet chose to dedicate ¾ of her report to this small group? As for Juliet's report in June, why so much focus again on this same small group?

Why, I ask myself, why?

As I see it, it reflects very much on the way these women feel about lesbians in the first place. They have been very careful to specify that it was just this small group they were talking about. But I think that it affects their place. We are allowed to entertain. But if some of us "misbehave" then everybody gets very alarmed and they call us oppressive. This not only happens to us. I have seen it done to Blacks or any minority group who asserts themselves. The mass

media has done it to feminism. It is really a very liberal attitude and it makes me sick.

As for "lesbian vandalism" — what is Juliet talking about? Is she referring to the graffiti, and if so, why didn't she say so. It is obvious that her sense of propriety was "touched" by the graffiti. Why, I ask? Graffiti is one of the most political modes of expression. It is universal. Why is this woman, reporting in a feminist magazine calling it "vandalism"? It smacks of classism to me. And I think that is where the question lies. We were supposed to go to the Convention, be "nice feminists" and behave like ladies. Well let me tell you that feminism and being a feminist does not have anything to do with being nice and being ladies. Be nice. It has been ingrained into our heads from the time we were born. It has been used as a form of social control to keep women in their place. But wanting to be nice and expecting others to be the same is so much a part of our conditioning that when we see other women "not being nice", instead of seeing these women as acting in a liberated way some of us get very alarmed and call them vandals.

For a women's revolution, **Pilar Alba.**

P.S. If anything, what was called for was a political analysis of the function and effect of this "small group" (which by the way was not that small) within the overall framework of the convention. Calling people oppressive when in fact they are one of the most oppressed does not take us very far in this sphere of the political continuum.

Juliet Seule replies: I am disturbed that Pilar concludes from my Convention report that I am against "misbehaviour", or to put it more strongly, women expressing their anger. Far

from it. What we desperately need is to draw attention to ourselves and our oppression, and graffiti can be one way of doing this. But I believe in directed anger — directed at the oppressors. At the Convention I saw the anger falling on the shoulders of other women, who did not understand what it was all about. All they could see was that it would be women who would be cleaning and scrubbing afterwards so that future conventions would not be jeopardized. This was in contrast with the black women's anger which they made sure was communicated to all women at the Convention through a written handout.

I knew my report, written in haste to meet a deadline, reflected my impressions only of events I did not fully understand. But I understood that a report was being solicited from one of the lesbian women who were in the midst of those events and could therefore provide some analysis of it all. It wasn't until **Broadsheet** appeared that I realised that no-one had written such an analysis, and that I began to understand the extent of the lesbian boycott of **Broadsheet**.

I agree with Pilar that a political analysis of those Convention events is needed; I would like to see it too.

Finally, I am not anti-lesbian and I am fully aware that both lesbian and black women are even more oppressed than their heterosexual sisters. **Sandra Coney replies:** After the convention I contacted a number of women asking them to write something about the United Women's Convention. I communicated directly with five lesbian feminist/separatist women (including Pilar) all of whom declined to write anything and I was told that it had been decided at the convention by some lesbian feminists to boycott **Broadsheet**.



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BEHIND THE NEWS

THE 1979 BUDGET— What's in it for Women?

"... more cause for alarm than satisfaction."

This year's Budget is set in an economic climate in which women face a major problem: unemployment. In the last few years there has been widespread recognition of the fact that the major constraint on growth in New Zealand has been the balance of payments. As internal demand for goods and services grows with increases in disposable income, we require a level of imports to satisfy that demand which we simply cannot afford. Government policy has thus, in the recent past, been directed at holding increases in internal demand to a level we can sustain. This has resulted in a level of unemployment which for New Zealand is historically very high.

Women, typically, are more lowly skilled than men; they therefore have greater difficulty finding jobs and keeping them. In addition an increasing number of women are actively seeking work in response to changing expectations and economic necessity. While the male:female composition of the labour force remained virtually static from 1973 to 1978, over the same period the proportion of females to total persons both enrolled for employment and registered as unemployed increased on average from 31% to 40%. (Unemployment statistics must be treated with caution: since many married women who are ineligible for the unemployment benefit do not register, one would expect figures of registered unemployed to understate female unemployment.)

This situation is unlikely to change in the near future. The continuing restraint on Government

expenditure is likely to hold economic activity at a level too low to generate substantially greater employment. With the annual rate of inflation running at 19.25% for the quarter just ended and unlikely to fall significantly in the near future, it also appears probable that little increase in disposable incomes will result from the tax cuts effective from 1 October.



Beyond the short term horizon, the Budget represents the first tentative moves towards "restructuring" — that is, an attempt to provide incentives and remove obstacles to enable the economy to surmount the balance of payments constraint and thus achieve sustained growth. We must increase foreign exchange earnings relative to payments in order to pay for growth. The reallocation of re-

sources necessary to achieve this will inevitably result in the "death" of some industries in order that those which can provide greater net foreign exchange earnings (or savings) can expand. Again one could reasonably expect the casualty rate of female members of the workforce to be higher than that of males since their ability to obtain new jobs is typically hampered by both relative lack of skill and lower mobility.

In the long run when sustainable growth is achieved we can expect considerable expansion in employment opportunities and a continuing rise in real incomes. In the meantime there is much that could be done to ease the costs of restructuring and facilitate the reallocation of at least one resource — labour. The Government states in the Budget that its "role in the financing of training related to specific jobs should be limited to providing genuine incentives to get industry-financed training programmes started", and that "it is questionable to what extent the taxpayer should continue to meet the cost of industry's obligation to ensure effective training." It is worth pointing out that as taxpayers we may in fact be faced with a choice of paying for such training now, or paying — both in monetary and social terms — the costs of continuing unemployment. An attempt could be made to identify those industries likely to provide most benefits in the future, and the skills such industries will require from the workforce. Following this by a co-ordinated programme designed to endow sufficient people with those skills is surely preferable, dollar for dollar,

to a situation of continuing "unskilled" unemployment.

The remainder of this discussion must of necessity be brief. The following are areas of particular concern.

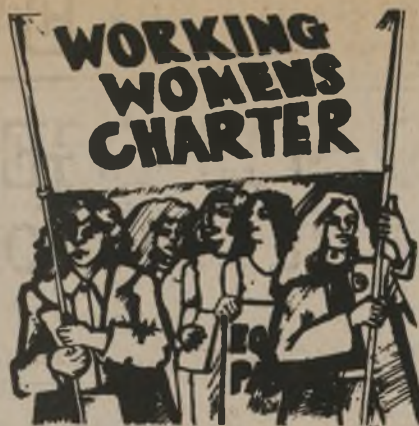
1. The tax cuts announced in the Budget are in fact regressive in that they confer least benefit on those taxpayers below the average wage (where many single income families lie).

2. The spouse and single income family rebates will produce an effective rate of tax on a spouse's earnings of 34.5% in the income range \$520 — \$2600 p.a. while the marginal rate on income between \$4500 and \$11000 p.a. will be 35%. In other words, this represents joint assessment of family income in a tax system otherwise geared to tax on individual incomes.

3. The family benefit is of considerable importance since it is received personally by the mother, as opposed to indirect assistance in the form of reductions in the father's tax. The doubling from \$3 to \$6 per child is a significant improvement, but is not sufficient to raise purchasing power of the benefit to its 1972 level. (This would require \$6.46 per child.)

4. Demonstration of need to qualify for the supplementary provision of the tertiary study grant will in general be budget-tested on parents' income for those students under 20, as well as taking into account holiday earnings. It is too soon to tell whether in practice this will discriminate against female students whose earnings capacity is generally lower than that of males; one would hope that sufficient flexibility is retained to prevent this. It should also be noted that although students are apparently regarded as "dependents" until the age of 20, in the sense of receiving financial support from parents, all generalised state assistance for dependents ends when they reach 18.

A full analysis of the implications for women of the 1979 Budget has not been possible in this short discussion. Even so it is difficult to escape the conclusion that it provides women with more cause for alarm than satisfaction. □



Is it possible to bring about change within "system" oriented organisations? Working Women's Council members are doing just that. The council, founded along the lines of the Israeli model, combines women in paid employment and those working at home; it aims to promote greater understanding of the trade union movement and the problems facing all women, inside and outside the home. As a pre-

requisite to membership of the council, women accept a 15 point charter (see box.)

Women make up one third of the paid workforce, so the council believes that unless women do take a full and active part in their unions and also understand how they operate, male trade unionists will continue to make the decisions and ignore the problems of working women. Working Women's Council is not aligned with the trade union movement but sees itself as a force for change within it.

While the council is primarily interested in encouraging women to have their say in union affairs it also campaigns among trade unions to have the charter endorsed by them. However endorsement of the charter by individual unions or adoption of it as FOL policy does not mean the battle ends there. This is only one step toward forcing the union movement into recognising women, their rights and the valuable contributions they have to make.

NEW ZEALAND WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER

The Working Women's Charter has been devised by the New Zealand Working Women's Council to "encourage trade unions to take up issues vital to overcoming women's inequality."

It proposes:

- The right to work for everyone who wishes to do so.
- The elimination of all discrimination on the basis of race, marital or parental status, sexuality or age.
- Equal pay for work of equal value.
- Equal opportunity of entry into occupations and of promotion.
- Equal educational opportunity.
- Union stop-work meetings held in working hours, and special trade union education courses for women unionists to be held with paid time off for participants.
- Equal access to vocational guidance and training, including on-the-job training, study and conference leave.
- Introduction of a shorter working week with no loss of pay, flexible working hours, part-time work opportunities for all workers.
- Improved working conditions for working women and men, the retention of beneficial provisions which apply to

women and other benefits to be equally available to women and men.

- Removal of legal, bureaucratic and other impediments to equality of superannuation, social security benefits, credit finance, taxation, tenancies and other related matters.
- Special attention to the needs and requirements of women from ethnic communities, as they see them.
- Wide availability of quality child care with Government and/or community support for all those who need it, on a 24-hour basis, including after-school and school holiday care.
- Introduction of adequate paid parental leave (maternity and paternity leave) without loss of job security, superannuation or promotion prospects.
- Availability of paid family leave to be taken in family emergencies, for example, when children or elderly relatives are ill.
- Sex education and birth control advice freely available to all people. Legal, financial, social and medical impediments to safe abortion, contraception and sterilisation to be removed.
- Comprehensive Government funded research into health questions specific to women.

IN BRIEF

SPUC'S DONE IT AGAIN

While wanted foetuses are being damaged by 2,4,5-T; while boat children die in the South China Sea; while African babies die because their mutilated mothers cannot give birth properly the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child has launched another offensive in its campaign to keep unwanted foetuses inside their unwilling mother's bellies. Principals of Auckland secondary schools recently received information about an essay competition on "The Unborn Child" to mark the International Year of the Child. The proposal is given a semblance of respectability and impartiality by the use of Auckland University English Professor M. K. Joseph as judge and by the selection of resource material from mostly respected and notable authors e.g. Margaret Drabble, Wordsworth, Tolstoy, etc. However the selection of material is clearly biased in favour of an anti-abortion line and stresses a passive role for the mother; she is host only to the growing foetus. This attitude is made very clear in

the article by William Liley from the Catholic newspaper "The Tablet" enclosed in the pack. He talks about the need to accept "that it is the foetus who is in command of the pregnancy, that it is the mother, not baby, who is the passive partner in the relationship..." He outlines a harsh attitude towards pregnant women: "No matter how severe mother's heart disease, renal complaint, diabetes or mental illness, no one would be suggesting an abortion was essential if mother wanted the baby."

SPUC's role in the essay competition is only explicit on the letter accompanying the information, not on the posters and resource material for teachers to use. However, SPUC is so unsubtle you would have to have been asleep for the last 6 years not to know where it came from.

While the essay competition closing date will have passed by the time you read this Broadsheet, our information assures us that many teachers are not using the competition in their schools because they have recognised it for what it is — anti-woman propaganda.

St Helens shuts

The St Helens Action Group failed to get the Minister of Health, Mr Gair, to reverse his decision to close St Helens maternity hospital in Wellington (See July/August issue). Despite the fact that hundreds of women have begged for St Helens to remain open, and despite the fact that Wellington Hospital Board is planning extensive cuts in services, as an economy measure, the new, expensive birth factory which will replace St Helens has been given the go-ahead.

Dire abortion situation

Since August, four out of every five Wellington women needing an abortion have had to fly to Australia. Wellington was previously one of the most liberal areas in New Zealand, with just under half of the women needing abortions having them locally. But with the resignation and/or departure of most of the operating doctors who were previously available, the situation has become desperate.

The Wellington Hospital Board has asked the government for assistance to purchase a house to be used as an abortion clinic in Lower Hutt — which the anti-choice brigade is now protesting loudly about. Wellington women and women's groups who want to prevent even this meagre concession being taken away would be well advised to write to the Board expressing their support.

Rape protection

Following a rape attempt by a man posing as a Post Office telephone man, the Post Office has advised that genuine Post Office employees carry I.D. cards, which must be presented if requested. Requesting identification from any strange men who claim entry into your home would seem to be a wise move.

Photo: New Zealand Herald



One hundred and fifty women attended an all-day seminar in mid-July organised by the Dental Nurses' Association in Auckland to hear speakers on women's health, women in politics and women's work.

MILITANCY IN MATAMATA

Big City feminism's one thing — breaking the chains in a town of a few thousand is something else again. A new women's group cut their political teeth by staging a protest in the main street of Matamata — MARGO MARTINDALE reports.

At the United Women's Convention electoral group meeting 11 women representing the whole of the Matamata electorate formed a Feminist Women's Support Group.

Most of us were "new" feminists and none of us had engaged in public political action before, so it was with great trepidation that we organised a protest for the repeal of the abortion law in Matamata to coincide with other protests around the country. We were surprised when we were actually granted a permit and emboldened by this we informed all local radio stations, newspapers and both TV channels.

None of us could summon up the courage to march through the streets — anyway we would have looked a bit silly — all eleven of us! Believe me, it took a lot of guts to stand up for two hours in front of the Post Office of a small town where everyone knows you. We psyched ourselves up in a nearby coffee lounge first and then, with knees knocking and dry mouths we crept with our banners to our allotted place. Our fears were distracted when both TV1 and TV2 turned up to interview us and after they left our confidence had been boosted. We were standing in a line on the edge of the footpath (in the sunshine) and it was amusing to watch people who ran the gauntlet and accepted our explanatory leaflets, others who walked into one end of the Post Office (avoiding direct confrontation), read the banners through the windows and walked out of the other end thus escaping our "clutches". Others crossed the road and circumnavigated us; acquaintances spotted us and suddenly turned round and shot off in

the other direction! We were pleased by the support we got from men — "Should be a woman's decision" — and appalled at those who regarded it from a purely personal viewpoint. One woman who couldn't have children was very anti; maybe she thinks that those of us who are fertile should act as host-mothers to produce children for the infertile. We weren't heckled or splattered with refuse, the Society for the Procreation of Unwanted Children was conspicuous by its absence and the greatest relief of all, we weren't ignored. Mind you, we had to go and fetch the reporters from our local paper, they said they had the time wrong, but moved with alacrity when they heard that the TV had been there.

So, our first venture into public political action wasn't too scary after all. We hope it was a consciousness — raising activity if nothing else and thoroughly recommend other feminists in small towns to try it.

Margo Martindale for Matamata Feminist Women's Support Group.

Solo Parent Bashing Continues

Solo parents have been the victims of two attacks on their rights and standards of living in the last few months. The first attack came in the Budget announcement that additional benefit allowances (at present worth \$16 per week) would be removed from beneficiaries in state houses. This means that some beneficiaries have suffered a significant reduction in their benefits at a time when electricity, telephone and other costs have increased sharply.

The second measure made it mandatory for a woman applying for a benefit to have a state-appointed lawyer to handle maintenance proceedings against her husband. This is not only a breach of civil liberties in removing the right of the woman to the lawyer of her choice (even a murderer has this) but would not work in the best interests of the woman or her children. As the Council for the Single Mother and Her Child (CSMC) pointed out in their July newsletter:

"... Social Welfare would have information about your marriage breakup and all information that is usually confidential"; it could also cause unnecessary hostility on the part of the man towards the woman which could affect his future relationship with her and the children; more men might go for custody; it could strengthen the position of the man who is opposed to separation. C.S.M.C. needs help in fighting these battles. Contact them at P.O. Box 47-090 Auckland; write to your MP and the local and national Departments of Social Welfare.



America has its first woman on a coin — 19th century suffragette Susan B. Anthony is on the front of the new US dollar.

CARLESS DAYS — who suffers?

"I hope you're going to expose the latest rip-off for women" the caller to our office said. She was a fifty-five year old housewife and as she told me she has "two carless days a week". On her husband's carless day he insists on taking her car to work, leaving her stranded in the suburbs twice a week. Her protests met with a threat to cut her petrol account (paid by him) if she didn't acquiesce. "It's happening all over the place here" she told me "My friend's sixty and she has to visit her elderly mother every day; now she has to do it by bus. My husband thinks it's all right for me to lug home all the shopping on my aged back. You can't expect a company director to travel in the bus, can you? But it's all right for me".

As she says, another rip-off for women.

"I try to get the children to be sick in the weekend...."

SANDRA CONEY talks to working mothers

When a woman enters the workforce she does so as an honorary male worker. She is expected to slot into a male work or career structure. The fact that society also expects her to have other responsibilities to children, husband and house is not taken into account. The government believes she should be at home so has a policy not to provide day care. School holiday programmes and after school care are left up to local bodies or interested parents and thus are scarce resources. No provision is made for maternity leave, time off for sick children or other family responsibilities. Part-time work is increasingly difficult to find and part-time jobs rarely have any career structure or promotion opportunities.

Despite the constraints against mothers working they do. In 1971* it was estimated that 12.9% of female heads of households and spouses working over 20 hours per week have pre-school children and 49.2% have one or more children under 15. There are 112,070 mothers working full or part-time and these

women have 251,016 children.

Why do women work? The traditional view has been that it is for "pin money", an attitude that is used to justify pathetic wages and exploitative working conditions. It is grudgingly conceded in these times of economic hardship that some women have to work. Other reasons are very important to women but are seldom acknowledged: companionship, economic independence, love for the work, desire to work and be part of the public work scene.

To find out more about working mothers I talked to five women, some married, some not, with varying numbers of children and in a variety of occupations. The solutions they have found to the problems of child care range from satisfactory to nerve-wracking.

*"Labour Force Participation of Mothers" a paper prepared by the Department of Labour for the Women in Social and Economic Development Conference held in Wellington in March 1976. The figures have been taken from the 1971 census and as the paper points out would not include single women and solo mothers who are not heads of households.

Dawn Anderson, full-time shop assistant, married with 3 children from 4 to 7.

“When I left school I got a job in a cake shop and then I went to work at Foodtown as a checkout operator. I worked there for a little while after I got married because we were hoping to get some money together but I fell pregnant — I didn't know much about contraception. I left when I was about 5 months pregnant — I was just too tired and I started making mistakes. I thought they would sack me so I left. My husband even then used to drink a lot and he would get pretty angry with me because I was so tired. After I had Janine I helped out in a lunch bar in the middle of the day and I used to take her down in the pram. But then I got pregnant again and I didn't work till Michelle was two and I went back working in the lunch bar. But I'd no sooner started working there when I fell pregnant again. Once Toby started afternoon kindergarten I started working in K Rd as a shop assistant and I've been working full-time ever since. I don't think women ought to work when they've got small

children but I never had any money so I felt that was the only way I could buy clothes for the children.

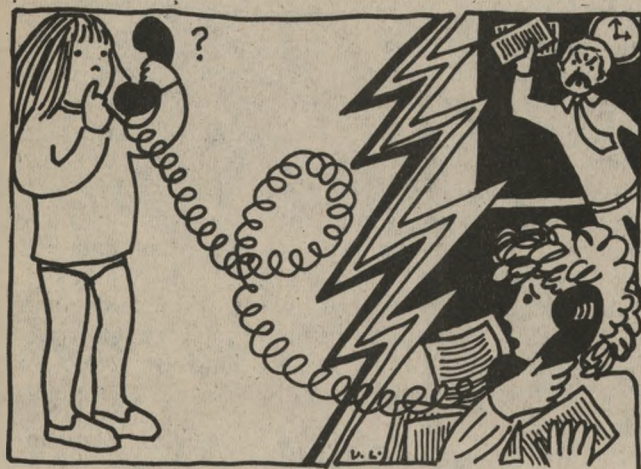
My husband's a driver — he's been in the same job for years. I don't know what he gets paid, I never see his pay. We have an account at the local grocer's and he pays that and I get all my food there. But I have to be careful what I put on the account. Sometimes they have specials like children's clothes or stockings — he always goes through the list and makes me pay for anything that's not food. Even when I wasn't working he expected me to pay it out of the family benefit. He also pays the rent, the telephone and electricity and he buys the meat. His job often takes him out to Westfield so he gets the meat there.

My husband starts work at 7. I get up about ¼ past 6 and get his breakfast, then I get the kids' breakfast, cut their lunches and I get the 8.15 bus. I pay my neighbour \$15 a week to look after Toby. It's not very much but I don't get paid a lot and there seem to be so many other expenses. Things like shoes for the kids. She has a little boy of the same age and they get on quite well. She takes them both to kindergarten, then

they come home and play together till I get home. She's a really good neighbour, she gives him an evening meal when I work late on Thursday nights. Also the other two go over there that night — they buy fish and chips down the road but they go over about 6 o'clock and watch television for a while, because I don't really like them being by themselves after dark. The rest of the time they just come home from school and watch TV. Their father comes home on Monday and Tuesday a bit early but on the other nights he tends to go to the pub straight after work because he gets paid on Wednesdays. He usually gets home on those nights about 9 so the kids are already in bed when he arrives. We don't seem to talk much as he's usually a bit drunk. I've always got to have some dinner kept for him although he doesn't always eat it. He complains if it's dried out but it's hard to keep food moist for long.

I'd hate to lose my job. Some of the women I work with are really good women — we all have a good laugh. Sometimes the job gets tedious — your legs ache because you're on your feet so much. Even when we're not serving customers there's always lots to do in our department.

I worry about leaving the kids at home alone, especially as they're girls. Toby's alright but I'm never quite sure that the girls have gone straight home after school. They don't like people ringing us up at work — they get quite shirty, particularly if there's a kid on the phone. So I tell the girls not to, because I don't like getting into trouble at work. I think about it a lot at work — there's so many terrible things happening these days. I've asked my husband to come home on Thursday night — we've had a few fights over that but he refuses to budge. I'm only asking him to be home one night a week — it would make a big difference if he would, even if he just got them fish and chips. You'd think he'd be pleased I'm working — I don't have to try to ask him for money so often but he seems to resent it. I don't know how you're supposed to please men. Even if I'm a bit late home on Monday or Tuesday nights because I miss the bus or something he goes crook about his dinner being late.”



Susan Chandler, full-time professional woman, separated with 6 children from 6 to 18.

“I did one year at training college and then got pregnant and married. When I only had one child I worked as a tea lady in a garage for fifty guys for two pounds ten shillings sterling. I didn't work again till I left university at the end of 1974 and I've been in the same job ever since. I was still married then and the youngest child was two — I put her in a day nursery and the others fended for themselves after school with the older ones walking the younger ones home. Then I separated in 1975 and a mother of a friend of mine who'd known the children quite a long time came and sat with them on Wednesday night when I worked till eight — she supervised the oldest child who was fourteen cooking the tea.

The day nursery was a real problem. Although it was good it was a factory day nursery and it closed at ¼ to 5 and I didn't officially finish till 5 o'clock. So in the afternoon I would be constantly watching the clock and I'd sneak out of the office at 25 past 4 to rush and grab my car and race up, cursing at every traffic jam, to get to the nursery in time — hoping that no-one would ring me, hoping that no-one in the office would notice — if any friend rang me they got a stream of abuse if I found out. On the night I worked late one of the children would catch a bus from the intermediate school to the day nursery, pick up the youngest one, and bring her home in the bus. She didn't like that very much so there was always extra money to be provided to pay for ice creams so she came home willingly. Once she started school she got out at 2 o'clock and I had all the same problems again. A friend near the school looked after Helen after school for a while — then she moved and I managed to arrange with the school for Helen to come home at 3 o'clock. Had she not been very bright and already able to read I would have been in difficulty.

At the moment the two younger ones, who are now 6 and 9, trot home by themselves and wait for a bigger child to come home at about ¼ to 4; the next two come home at 4 and the biggest gets home about 5. I don't like them being by themselves but I don't see any alternative — it would cost a tremendous amount for me to pay someone to come in and then there always seems to be hassles about the right sort of person — you seem to be at loggerheads with the children about some stranger who comes in and imposes her standards on them. Sometimes they ring me up at work when there's been a fight or they've broken a window. One of the problems is when I get home and find one of them hasn't turned up from school and has gone to play with a friend. That happened the other night — Helen wandered in at ¼ to 6 — it was pitch dark and I had no idea where she was. I gave her the third degree and she was very upset. I don't mind them going to someone's place as long as I know beforehand and the phone number.

The worst time is when the little ones are sick. The

older ones are either at lectures at University, or sitting school cert. The next one down isn't very good at looking after the children and he doesn't do much school work anyway, so it's better if he doesn't miss school. So if one of the small ones is sick I usually keep both of them at home to look after each other and try and dash home at lunchtime to see how they are. If I stayed home myself I'd run out of sick leave. If one of the kids got ill for any length of time I don't know what I'd do; I guess I'd have to go on a benefit when my sick leave ran out and I couldn't survive. I'd get about \$98 a week on a benefit and my mortgage is \$54 and our food bills about \$60.

School holidays are a nightmare, I sit at work and pray they don't kill each other off while I'm at work. It's always on my mind, particularly if there's been an accident or if I hear a fire engine on my way home — I'm always terrified the house is going to go up in smoke. Sometimes they go and stay with their father for a while and that helps — the rest of the school holidays is spent with me trying to juggle our finances so that they can have some outing every day, just to fill up the time that I am at work.

The eldest child has cooked dinner one night a week since he was thirteen and looked after the others when they were little: changed nappies, carried them out, picked them up if they were crying, and he still has that sort of responsibility. The children all look to him if I'm not there. Brian used to resent it but now he just accepts it; but he really enjoys times when the smaller children are away.

Although the people I work with in my department are OK about my situation we work alongside another department and I have to be constantly on guard that I'm not caught out ducking off to take the kids to dentists or doctors. If I do have to dash out I usually have some excuse that I'm going to another department somewhere and they won't be able to get me by phone; I say I'll ring in in an hour to check whether there are any messages for me. It doesn't happen very often now because of the way I've organised the children to be very independent and I try and get them to be sick at weekends!

I do feel vulnerable in my work situation particularly in the school holidays. Although they don't say anything to my face, if I take sick leave in the school holidays I can hear everybody saying "Oh, yes, it's the school holidays".

I feel guilty when I lie about where I am: I feel guilty about neglecting the children, not being there when they get home from school and at weekends I don't feel like going to watch them play sport because there's the house to clean up and the washing and I want to relax too. I can do my shopping in an afternoon I get off once a week in lieu of the late night. I buy food in bulk. I clean up one night a week and a bit during the weekend but it's generally only superficial. Every now and again I spend all one Saturday cleaning up — usually when I've got people coming.

Because of the children I am limited in where I go from here in my job. I had to turn down three separate

jobs recently because I can't very well shift — I would lose my support system to look after the kids as Brian would naturally stay here to finish his university studies. I wouldn't have any friends to look after the kids in an emergency.

They try to encourage us to go to conferences — it's really frowned on if you don't attend some work seminars during the year, but it's really difficult to arrange for the children to be looked after so they can get to school. Sometimes, which is even worse, they arrange these conferences in the school holidays. I don't like to think of being stuck in the same job for years but I can't see any way for me to accept promotion — within the next few years anyway. ”



Marianne Gardiner, full-time evening job, married with one 2-year-old daughter.

“My father told me the most sensible thing to do when I left school was to get married and have children. I asked him the other day why he didn't send me to university and he said "Because you didn't have a brain" — so I said "Why didn't you send me to art school?" and he said "Your imagination's alright but you can't really draw." He wanted me to do shorthand typing because it's something to fall back on but I fought because I wanted to go to art school. I did art, but at tech, and then became a commercial artist. That was horrible. I went overseas and then came back and met Roger. We both worked at the "Herald" proof-reading and then we got married and made a baby just like that. The birth was fantastic and motherhood was wonderful — I just really, really enjoyed the whole thing. Olivia was just the most perfect baby. For about a year I enjoyed being a lady with a baby — I found it interesting walking round the streets and meeting other women with children. But after about eighteen months I had really had enough and I started to take it out on Roger. At that stage he was working long hours at the theatre and he'd come home and I would expect him to take Olivia off my hands because I was sick of that too. She was eighteen months old and demanding. He would just want to crash and watch television. I'd get more and more tense and say "Who do you think I

talk to about anything interesting all day apart from babyshit and nappies?" I decided I wanted to paint — I had a studio up in the roof which I never used. We decided to put Olivia into someone else's care for two days a week so I could paint — Roger thought that would be the answer. We tried that for a while but I didn't have a train of thought to paint by. So I sat up in my room getting more frustrated, freaking out because I had the time and the place and couldn't think what to paint. Roger said "Don't panic. Enjoy your two days off — read a book, sleep, go out for lunch." So we justified the two days and my guilt over lying about for two days while we paid someone else to look after Olivia out of Roger's poor wage at the theatre.

Then feminism set in and there was more and more questioning flying round the house. I thought — "I'm going back to work." So I rang the "Herald" and got my job back. I went to the United Women's Convention and came back with so much strength and feeling that I would definitely make this job work. I advertised in the paper for a young person to live in the house for free rent to do some babysitting. So Ingrid came and she is just marvellous, she just adores Olivia. My job starts at 5.30 and finishes around midnight. Because I'm up that late I need to sleep till at least 8.30. Roger gets Olivia up, breakfasts and changes her and brings her into me at 9 with a cup of tea and toast before he goes to work. So we see each other for 5 minutes in the morning. It's pretty important that he rings me during the day and we have our time together on the phone. Ingrid gets home before 5 and she takes over with Olivia. She generally feeds Olivia and baths her because she loves that. Roger tries to get home to be with Olivia for the hour before she goes to bed. If he's got to go back to the theatre and work all night then Ingrid's home. If Ingrid wants to go out I organise a babysitter or make sure Roger's staying home.

I have one night off during the week and every Saturday night. We have two special nights a week rather than every night sitting watching television. We generally make a big effort to do something exciting, like have dinner by candlelight.

I like the work for rather strange reasons. It's neat to charge out of that domestic environment at 5 o'clock and do something that's working, that's living, that's moving fast. Also none of the other people in the reading room cares that I'm married with a baby. There are some really interesting women there. They're all doing different things and I can relate to them about things that really appeal to me. The work itself is relatively mundane, but you get into it. Boats and cars for sale is pretty boring but front page news is always interesting. Working there is a compromise because I've got a kid but I think that ideally I'd like to paint and painting doesn't give me enough outside stimulation. So even if I had 5 days a week to paint I would need and yearn for other people to communicate with. I still have my two days off and now I spend them painting. I get into my studio by 10, I barely stop for lunch — sometimes if my stomach's rumbling I

run downstairs and get a Vogel's sandwich. I'm here till 20 to 5.

The financial aspect of working is important. It's nice to be totally participating and paying half of everything. I really like that feeling of power. I don't like being obligated to anyone.

Roger too is determined to make it work. Apparently the reason he "fell in love" with me was because I was such a strong individual and being a lady with a baby I was becoming less and less of a strong individual. We were arguing and tense. If I'd stayed home I wouldn't have gone under but I need to go to work, I really enjoy it. I enjoy the whole structure of my life at the moment."

Postscript: Following my interview with Marianne she informed me that Ingrid had decided to leave to go flatting; as we went to press Marianne was in the process of finding a replacement. Even the most satisfactory arrangements have a habit of falling through.



Beatrice Holland, part-time clerical worker, separated with one 10-year-old son.

"When my husband and I separated seven years ago I had no work skills or experience at all. I'd married straight from school, pregnant, and had not worked outside the home during our marriage. I had done craftwork at home because I could do that and also because my husband's job was so demanding of his time that it would have been enormously difficult for me to work outside the home. Once on my own I continued the craftwork at home but found that I was easily distracted by housework, phone calls from friends and my child. Besides that I missed adult company during the day. I began a part-time job with built-in job training. Gradually that increased to several days a week and then I found I needed another part-time job as well, as my maintenance by then had decreased. I've had many different arrangements for the care of my child over the years — none satisfactory. It's a constant headache. None of the arrangements has lasted for long — people who I've paid or who've done it out of the goodness of their hearts have moved or their circumstances have changed. One mother from the local school looked after Sean after

school but there were difficulties because she was narrow-minded and religious and we're not and my son was too exuberant for her two stereotypically passive little girls. A later after-school arrangement proved unsatisfactory because although the woman was fine I felt Sean had to be on his best behaviour in her home and couldn't be just how he wanted to be after school. That was when I tried working full-time once which was a disaster. I was constantly tired — my lunch hours were spent doing necessary messages — shopping, the bank. I didn't get my head above water till about eight each night and felt I wasn't getting any time to just talk and enjoy my child, and I do enjoy him a lot. I felt he deserved better than that. I wanted him to be able to come home from school and be bad-tempered if that's how he felt, or excited if something great had happened during the day, or withdrawn and quiet if he felt like that. I also wanted him to play with his schoolfriends at our house or their's if he wanted to.

So although the experience was a disaster it also taught me what my priorities were and I have had to accept that I will never be able to work full-time till Sean's much older. Of course that means I am severely limited in the jobs I can do which are invariably not well paid with no prospects of advancement. This is frightening since I realise I will always have to support myself. Women should not to be forced to make these choices — it should be possible to work in a fulfilling job and have children. Reforms like flexible work hours, shorter working hours, after-school care and school holiday programmes should be rights not scarce resources regarded as privileges.

I prefer two part-time jobs to one full-time job because it gives me greater flexibility of hours. I can do some work at home. However at the moment part-time jobs are nearly impossible to get and since I was made redundant at one eighteen months ago I've only had one part-time job and have had to do casual work to fill the gaps — as a result we're surviving on a very low income which gets harder and harder as electricity, phones and food prices increase.

The people in my present job are fine about my child which is a very unusual situation — I can take him there in school holidays or if he's sick. I can take time off for school functions or leave work early if he's getting out of school early. In other jobs I've always felt guilty about these things which if granted are made to seem like special favours which should stop you asking for rights which other workers take for granted like sick leave. In one job I sometimes used to pick him up from school and race back with him to work. I always felt the other workers considered it an imposition and I always felt torn between their requirement for peace and my son's needs of me. I usually attempted to shut him up by spending money on books, comics and trips down to the shops for ice creams.

I have had to drastically tailor my work life to be able to cope with the demands of my child — I do not resent him because of that, it's not his fault. I do feel angry that society blathers on about the importance of

raising children and then penalises people so much for doing so. And the people who say that women have equal opportunity with men make me sick. My husband whom I met at school now earns eight times more than me and he's no brighter, no more able.

I don't feel guilty about working with a child because his interests do come first; but I get penalised for being a "good" mother by having a low income and not having many career prospects. A woman who can't or doesn't want to do this gets punished by being judged a "bad" mother. Either way we can't win. ”



Brigid Robertshaw, full-time university lecturer, married with 2 school-aged children.

“ I had the children very young so I didn't have much of a work history — a year at training college which I left because I didn't like it, a year full-time at university and a year working full-time in a library. I continued at university while having the children and after they were born and at the same time helped to run a family business. So it took rather a long time to get a degree — about seven years. I did a masters degree which took two years, then I started a doctorate which took three years full-time but which I haven't finished. This year I got a temporary junior lectureship so this is really my first year of full-time work. Lectures and tutorials don't account for very many hours a week so my times are very flexible. I don't have to clock in and work from 9 to 5 but there are times when I've just got to be there no matter what crises come up. I can take time off or work at home but it is a full-time job so I have to put in a full-time number of hours to keep up. To write a lecture every week takes most of the week to do — it's like being on a treadmill.

Having the children gave me the opportunity to continue with university as I wasn't forced to earn an income. Going to university's something you can do at your own pace and gradually up the pace as your responsibilities lessen. If I hadn't had the children I might well have got stuck in a job that I didn't particularly like so I think it's given me more freedom actually. It's given me more a sense of purpose — before I

had children I didn't know what I wanted to do. But I was also growing up at the same time and developing in other ways, so it's difficult to sort out whether having children changed my direction. Going to university was a very convenient thing to do but that doesn't mean it was second choice.

Working for me is not too difficult because the children are both at school and my husband doesn't work full-time. If John had a full-time job I would have to decide to leave the kids at home by themselves after school or get someone in to look after them or bring more work home with me.

It suits John to stay at home because he writes. John's a person who's never really liked the idea of having a career. Men who don't fall easily into a career slot have to come to grips with the fact that they haven't made it in a conventional sort of way. So he was very ready to come round to the idea that having a career isn't the be-all and end-all. He was very prepared to be flexible about sex-roles. He didn't feel that he adequately filled the male sex role so he was ready to share work and looking after the children and to see that as a worthwhile thing to do. We've always shared 50/50 with childcare and housework.

Mentally I can switch off from the kids at work. I know they're with John and that he's just as committed to their care as I am. Also they're good reliable kids so I don't expect them to do anything silly if I leave them on their own for a while. What I can't do is switch off work when I'm back with them. I can't be as enthusiastic about things the kids are doing when I'm busy.

I don't think my having family responsibilities has so far disadvantaged me compared to younger people in my line of work. I've probably got more of a sense of direction than they have. Although I've got less time I'm probably willing to spend less time having fun. I feel that being older I can't waste so much time. However, I haven't got enough time to spend on writing and research and I think that this'll make me go slower. As I've already spent such a long time getting to where I am I don't want to keep on going at half pace. I just feel I'm ready to work quite hard.

Another thing that might hold me back is that I should be thinking of going overseas to do more research or work. Academic jobs are incredibly hard to get at the moment and there's not likely to be a permanent job in my field here. It's very difficult to see how I can work in going overseas or to another city with John's plans and with what's best for the family. I'm all the time wondering whether my career is very important to me or not. So I don't have as much sense of future as perhaps some other people who can just go anywhere to get ahead. If I stay here perhaps I'll have to teach in a technical institute or perhaps become a secondary school teacher which isn't my ideal job at all. ”



ZONTA

IS LOOKING

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, 1979 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. 1979. 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.

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"A world-wide service organisation of executive women in business and the professions".

WATCHWOMAN

KEEPING AN EYE ON SEXIST ADVERTISING

We all get mad when we see sexist ads which show women in limiting roles or exploit women's bodies to sell anything from sticky labels to garage doors. Is it worth doing anything about it? CHRISTINE DANN thinks so; in this article she looks at protests against sexist advertising and what they can hope to achieve.

Turn to the back of the magazine. Look at the Hogwash page . . . now you are certainly feeling sick, and perhaps you are also feeling tired. Sick and tired of seeing women insulted, belittled, put-down and treated like dumb objects in advertisement after advertisement, paper after paper.

So what can we do about it? We can certainly protest against every example of sexist advertising we see, and demand that it be changed. A group called **Watchwoman** has been formed in Wellington to monitor the media. It will criticise sexist advertising and reporting, praise non-sexist writing and writers, and exercise whatever sanctions it can against advertisers and reporters who refuse to budge from their sexist line. Sanctions can include boycotting goods which are advertised in a sexist manner and publicly embarrassing the businesses which run sexist ads. **Watchwoman** has prepared information sheets outlining how to complain effectively and who to complain to. These are freely available (from **Watchwoman**, Women's Resource Centre, Box 11-669, Wellington) to other groups of women who would also like to keep a critical eye on the media. **Watchwoman** also suggests that the name could be shared. Thus a particularly sexist ad on TV could be objected to "officially" by lots of individuals who are kept in touch via the **Watchwoman** groups in all these places. As well as making national protests media-watching groups could also monitor the local papers and radio stations and deal with them on a local level.

Media-watching groups need not have a static or permanent membership. In fact it is better if membership changes gradually, so that fresh voices and ideas are added to the protest at frequent intervals. All that is needed is a local coordination, which could be via monthly meetings where all interested women meet to discuss

targets and methods of protest; and individual enthusiasm — enough time, energy and concern to commit oneself to writing letters and joining actions to protest every sexist ad one sees for three months, six months, or some other sustainable period. The **Watchwoman** (Wellington) information sheets also contain suggestions for structuring a media-monitoring group, and suggest possible protest actions.

Anyone who has ever protested about sexist advertising knows what a consciousness-raising experience it is. Women protesting against sexist ads can expect to effect some changes some of the time. More often, however, they will receive angry and rude rebuttals — which are the real consciousness raisers. A reasonable request (to stop putting down women) is treated unreasonably. Gradually, we begin to realise what we are up against.

What are we up against? Unfortunately, not just a few advertisers who need to be shocked out of their sexist ways, but a whole economic system in which sexist advertisements are *functional*. That is, sexist advertising is not just a wart on an otherwise healthy body, but rather a vital organ of a diseased body. Our present economic system — private monopoly capitalism — depends for its profits upon a system of social organisation which keeps women in a consuming role. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan describes the horrified reactions of manufacturers and advertisers to the "new woman" — the woman who worked outside the home, shared housework with the other people in her home, and had no time for the "housewifely arts". Such a woman might send her husband down to the local laundromat on Saturday morning with the week's wash — instead of washing the clothes every day in her own machine, using a variety of carefully chosen soap powders, bleaches, etc. Such a woman

was and is a non-consuming menace — and Friedan's description of the advertising and editorial content of American women's magazines in the 50s and 60s (and it hasn't changed much) shows how seriously big business took the task of keeping women in roles which encouraged consumption and not creation.

The stereotype housewife image can be used to sell soap powder, baby food and other domestic items — the stereotype "liberated lady" image can be used to sell cigarettes, perfume, insurance and other items which a woman with an income of her own can afford and be persuaded to want. Either way *real* women, real feelings and real needs lose out. Big business and advertisers will encourage any kind of role for women — so long as it is a consumption role. Generally sexist assumptions and approaches work best — but for some products a fake "liberated" line proves more effective. Our only real power which we can bring to bear on sexist advertising is our power *not to consume*. Once we start thinking about refusing to consume, however, we open up new possibilities which go beyond getting rid of sexist advertising. Cigarettes advertised in a non-sexist way are no better for you than cigarettes advertised in a sexist way. And so on . . .

So if sexist advertising is just a part of exploitative advertising generally, and exploita-

tive advertising is a vital feature of capitalism — why bother about sexist advertising? Surely we should concentrate our efforts on the cause of the problems, not just the symptoms? Yes and no. I have suggested that advertising in general and sexist advertising in particular will only disappear when the economic system which needs and uses advertising disappears. Therefore we should certainly oppose that system, and work towards replacing it with something better. However, I believe that it is worthwhile to protest against sexist ads here and now, since by doing so we can obtain a little relief for ourselves, and we can make others more aware of sexism. Sexist ads can be public targets which we can use to raise public consciousness about women's oppression.

Defacing sexist billboards, inundating radio talk-backs with complaints, publicly and privately threatening to boycott products — every action lets more women know that they don't have to live up to or live within the stereotyped, sexist, consumption roles that advertising pushes for women. That there are women who are refusing to play the advertisers' game, and that any woman can be one. When enough women feel that way . . . and want to act to change things . . . the problems of both sexism and advertising are well on the way to being solved.

Christine Dann



Are you taking pot luck with your roasts?

A joint on the table is still every housewife's dream. But simply looking at a piece of meat in a butcher's shop will tell you very little about it.

And you won't be able to gauge its tenderness and flavour until you eat it.

When you may find out that you've bitten off more than you can chew.

So we'd like to suggest an alternative to taking pot luck with your roasts.

And give you some sound reasons for buying Scotch beef and lamb.

Our beef, for example, is the finest quality meat produced anywhere in the world.

It comes from specialised stock, bred and raised on some of the finest pastures in the British Isles.

To give you meat so nourishing and wholesome it's rivalled only by our lamb.

Which is in its prime at this time of the year and fresh off the hills and upland pastures of Scotland.

So the next time you're shopping look out for our signs.

They're your assurance that the meat you take home is the most nourishing and full of flavour there is.

Even if you have to fork out a penny or two more for the pleasure.

Because nobody eats well on a shoestring.



If you buy a few pairs of Travel Fibs you'll be met by Ambassadors and Diplomats from the four corners of the Earth who'll cover you with unforgettable souvenirs.



Holeproof Fibs. Would we lie to you?

GENITAL MUTILATION

the hidden atrocity

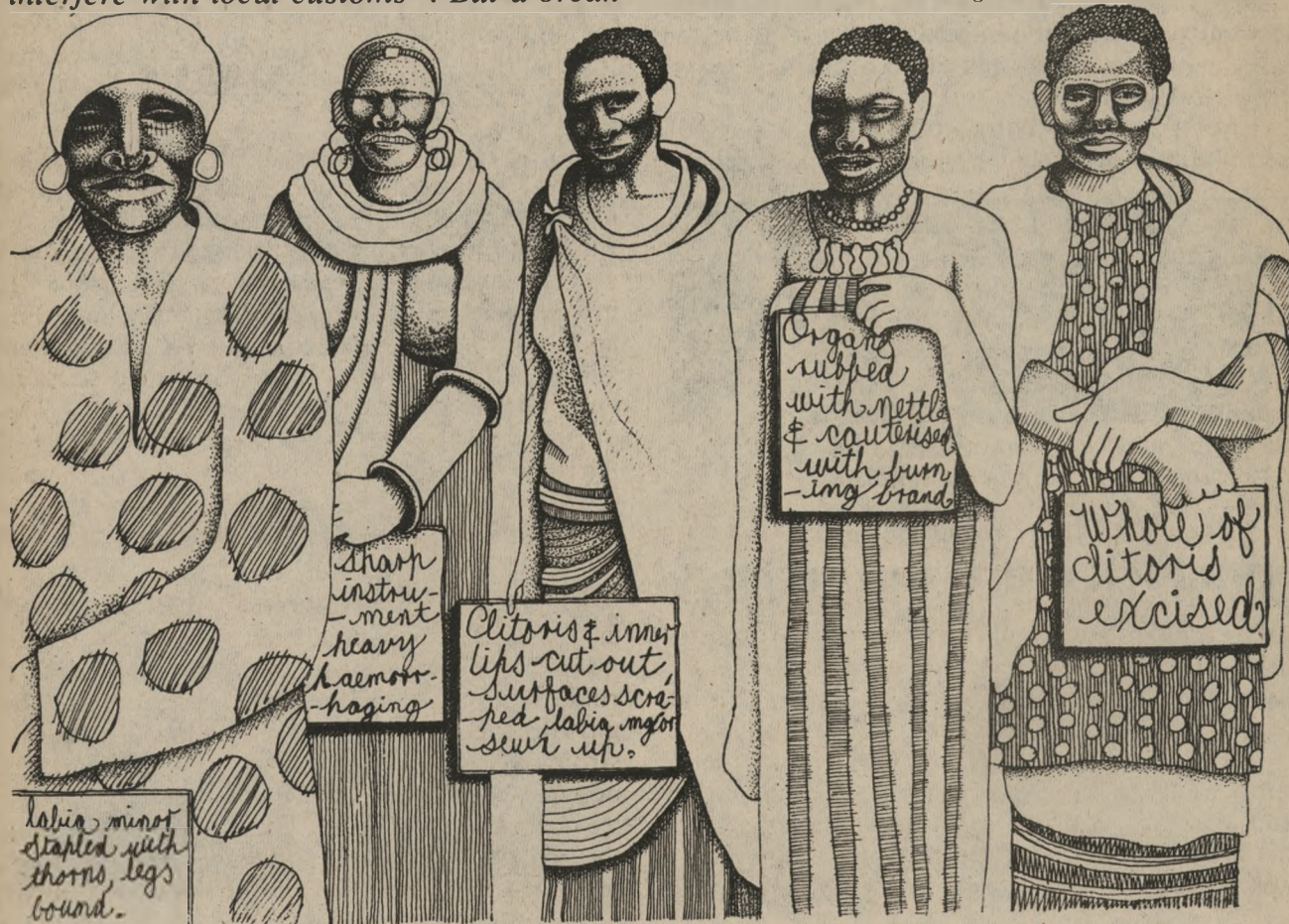
The article on the next page is horrifying. The horror happens to an estimated thirty million women in third world countries and this number is on the increase. Fran Hosken, editor of the US feminist magazine WIN News, has been campaigning for years to end this hidden atrocity. She writes: "Aside from the secrecy by African ethnic groups, which has protected the perpetuation and spread of these operations for 2,000 years, all international and U.N. agencies, as well as church groups and family planning organisations working in Africa, have engaged in a **Conspiracy of Silence** and have obstructed all publication of these terrible realities." In the past such organisations have justified their inaction on the grounds that they "cannot interfere with local customs". But a break-

through occurred in February when the U.N. World Health Organisation held a seminar in Khartoum, Sudan, on "Traditional Practices affecting the Health of Women and Children" attended by health professionals from many African countries. The key topic at the meeting was female circumcision, as it is euphemistically called. This article by Claire Brisset reports on that conference.

For more on this subject:

Fran Hosken has recently published "The Hosken Report" - Genital Mutilation of Females" obtainable from WIN News, 187 Grant St, Lexington, MASS 02173, U.S.A. at US \$16.00 airmail.

Also see Mary Daly, "Gyn/Ecology - the Metaethics of Radical Feminism", Beacon Press, 1978 (available from Daybreak Bookshop, see ad p.39) which contains an analysis of genital mutilation and shows its global connections with other atrocities against women.



KHARTOUM — Donkeys and bumpy taxis rub shoulders in this dusty, ugly, scorchingly hot city. Mercedes limousines driven by Gulf Arabs sidle up silently beside overloaded buses covered with quotations from the Koran and huge posters still celebrating the last Organisation of African Unity conference. They proclaim, in English and French, that "African unity is the only road to the future" and that it will be accomplished only by Africans themselves. None of those who came here could thus have any doubts about having seen African unity at work.

As against this, however, it was very difficult for the uninitiated to know that, in the vast Friendship Hall built at great cost on the banks of the Nile some years ago, a meeting was taking place discreetly on a subject entitled; "Traditional customs affecting women's health." WHO had assembled a number of subjects under this heading — nutritional taboos during pregnancy and lactation, early marriage and the excision and infibulation of female genital organs prevalent in most African countries and, to a lesser degree, the Middle East. This last topic, quite obviously, overshadowed all the others both by the description of the operations and the horror they revealed.

Excision and infibulation methods vary slightly depending on the culture, ethnic group and the period in history, with the variations mostly affecting the rites leading up to and following the operation itself.

The Khartoum meeting decided that the mutilation can be grouped into three categories:

- The "mildest" form consists of slicing off the tip of the clitoris with a sharp instrument, usually a razor blade. This practice, which is recommended by a number of Islamic authorities under the name "Sunna circumcision," is by far the least widespread. It was hardly discussed at the Khartoum meeting, except as a "fallback solution." If, said the delegates in substance, people insist on retaining such a pre-pubertal rite, then perhaps they should be persuaded to give up other kinds of excision and change to this "mild" form, which does not appear to hold major problems for the woman's future.

- The form of sexual mutilation most widespread among African peoples, including Copts and animists, consists of excising the whole of the clitoris (cliterodotomy) as well as the inner lips. Local "variants" have obviously sprung up.

Some ethnic groups, for instance, cauterise the clitoris with fire. The organs to be destroyed are rubbed with a special kind of nettle; the next morning, the woman performing the operation cauterises the already swollen clitoris with a burning brand. It is more usual to excise the organs with the help of various sharp instruments, which of course cause heavy haemorrhages. To stop the flow of blood the wound is covered with compounds of various herbs or plasters made up with milk, honey, sugar and even animal droppings.

Franzesca Hosken (United States), WHO's temporary delegate who has been collecting data on the subject for an impressive number of years, says: "This form is practised in over 26 African countries extending from the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea right across to the Atlantic coast (Senegal and Mauritania), and from Egypt in the north to Tanzania in the south, including most of Nigeria. I consider that some 30 million women and young girls are operated on in this way."

According to the writer Awa Thiam of Senegal (*"La Parole aux negresses," Denoel-Gonthier, Paris*), the practice is also to be found in the two Yemens, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Southern Algeria.

- The most harrowing descriptions provided at the Khartoum meeting were of the third and most radical form of mutilation — infibulation. The Sudanese call it "Pharaonic circumcision" and the Egyptians "Sudanese circumcision." It involves removal of the clitoris and the inner lips and then sewing up the labia majora, whose inner surfaces have previously been scraped so as to ensure they stick together when they heal. The practice is standard in the whole of the Horn of Africa — Somalia, Djibouti, in most of Ethiopia (Ogaden and Eritrea), Sudan, Upper Egypt, northern Kenya, Nigeria, and in many areas of Mali.

Edna Adan Ismail (Somalia), WHO's temporary delegate who has long served in the health ministry at Mogadishu, gave the conference a rundown on the technique of infibulation. The girl is placed on the floor or on a low stool and a strong woman sitting behind her pins her arms down. Two women hold each of the little girl's legs to immobilise them. The woman performing the operation (often the village matron) then approaches with her instrument (usually a razor

blade or a knife specially kept for the purpose) and slices off the clitoris and the labia minora and scrapes the skin off the inner surface of the labia majora. Then the stitching begins. The labia majora are pulled together and "stapled" with the thorns of the dwarf acacia which grows freely in the desert (the thorns measure about 10cms — 4 inches). A string is then passed around the thorns closing the wound like a corset. A tiny opening is left at the lower end for the evacuation of urine and menstrual blood. To prevent the wound from closing completely, the matron places a matchstick or tiny bamboo wedge in it. Next she covers it with a mixture of gum arabic and sugar which forms a hermetic seal. The girl's legs are next bound together right down to the ankles to prevent her moving them and interfering with the healing process. By this time, the little girl is too exhausted to cry. She is then placed on a mat and the women wait for her to urinate, which would show the opening had not been closed. The first passage of urine causes intense burning.

At the end of a week, the thorns are drawn out and the girl is given a stick to help her hobble about in her hut, as her legs are still bound. The scar is inspected and if the operation has not been successful, it is repeated.

A few years later comes the time for marriage and motherhood.

Jacques Lantier has described in detail the Somali rituals involved here in his book "La Cite magique," published by Les Editions Fayard, Paris, in 1972. "The wife goes to her husband's home where he takes off her clothes and whips her till she bleeds with a leather-thonged lash known as the *courbash* . . . He may not deflower his wife with his penis. For this he uses a double-bladed dagger that he plunges into the vagina which is ripped open and bleeds profusely . . . Then he penetrates the woman.

"Tradition requires the man to have repeated

and lengthy intercourse with his wife during the first week, the object of these 'labours' being to keep a passage open and prevent the wound from scarring over. During all this time the woman lies stretched out and stirs as little as possible to keep the mouth of the wound open.

"On the morning after the first night, the husband wears the bloody dagger on his shoulder and calls on neighbours to receive their expressions of general admiration. Once these formalities are over he goes back home immediately to resume his labours.

"The woman becomes pregnant quickly. When the time for delivery arrives, she sits on a stool and the midwife opens the vulva with a kitchen-knife . . . With every outward push of the

foetus, the midwife cuts her open a little more. When the foetus has been expelled, water which is nearly boiling is poured on the organs causing enormous blistering. Then the process of scraping the tissue off the inside of the labia, fixing them together with acacia thorns, binding the legs together and all over again . . ."

According to the Khartoum conference delegates, it is not rare for a woman to be sewn up and opened ten or 12 times until the operation becomes impossible because of the state of the organs.

The "complications" arising from such a

practice are evidently innumerable. As Lantier describes it, "a clumsy or awkward cut or exploration pierces the bladder or the rectum." Dr Ahmed Shandall, professor of Khartoum University, who did not take part in the WHO symposium, has described these complications in a very important work based on five years of treating 4,000 gynaecological and obstetric cases at the Khartoum hospital.

It is not unusual for babies to die as a result of shock caused by haemorrhages and violent infections (such as tetanus). As for the extreme pain



Source: *People*, a quarterly published by the International Planned Parenthood Federation, volume 6, No. 1, 1979.

and the psychological trauma they cause, they are obviously the rule. Cases of urine retention are very frequent, especially when the woman performing the operation is particularly "conscientious" or is bothered by her patient's movements and slices through the meatus and even a part of the vagina. Dr Shandall gives the case of a woman patient whose urinary tract had been enlarged to such a point that for more than a year it was mistakenly "utilised" by her husband. The delegates at the conference also told of cases of the anal opening being used for this purpose when infibulation makes normal sexual relations difficult.

And that's not all either. The long-term complications are even more important. In the first place, chronic infections of the genital region lead to an exceptionally high incidence of sterility, which in Africa, as we know, is more of a social and economic disaster for the woman and her family than a personal tragedy. Cysts and stones often develop over the scars, on the vulva and in the vagina, and they can grow as big as grapefruits. Painful menstrual spasms become very frequent, especially when the blood cannot be evacuated properly.

Perhaps the most tragic of side effects are the obstetrical complications, for they injure two persons — the mother and the child. Scars on the vulva, generally become hard, tear off easily, which means having to make very wide openings, generally on both sides of the perineum (episiotomies) with the help of a sharp instrument. This in turn leads to infections when the operations are conducted by people who are not too skilled, as is generally the case in the bush. There is also a very high incidence of vesicular-vaginal and recto-vaginal fistulas, caused largely by repeated childbirths.

Frigidity — a subject scarcely touched upon by the Khartoum congress participants, except the

Egyptians — is almost always the lot of these mutilated women. Eighty per cent of the infibulated women examined by Professor Shandall had never experienced any sexual pleasure. Eighty of the women did not even know until then that women could experience pleasure from sexual contact.

"Poor love-making," say Somali women. What else could it be, considering the physical havoc caused by such mutilations and the attitude they betray regarding the female sexuality?

People, the quarterly magazine published in English, French and Spanish by the London-based International Planned Parenthood Federation, cited this testimony of a Bamako

(Mali) midwife: "A woman was brought into my care. In the bedroom there was an old woman; she said the bride was not 'clean', she still had some clitoris left. The old woman cut it off, after which the husband immediately deflowered his bride. She arrived here bleeding profusely."

Before considering what could be done about it, the delegates asked themselves how such a thing had become possible. How did a body of mutilating rites become so firmly rooted in such a large number of cultures so different from one another in terms of geography, religion and



ethnic affiliation?

Islam has wrongly been blamed for it, and for far too long. Excision has been, and still is, practised by a large number of non-Muslims, beginning with Christians. The Skoptzis, a Russian sect that only Stalinism succeeded in suppressing, is said to have got its male devotees to practise self-castration. Its women were forced to undergo excision of their sexual organs and mastectomies. The authority for the practices came from Matthew XIX, 12: For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's

womb: and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

Closer home, excisions have been practised in psychiatric hospitals in Great Britain and France, traces of which can be found in a report made in 1864: "Aware of the need to combat the awful vice of masturbation among young girls, Broca made the humane suggestion to tuck the clitoris away behind the sewn-up labia majora instead of resorting to cliterodotomy. The young girl would be given back the use of her clitoris with a second operation freeing her on the eve of her wedding."

We are not told whether this "humanitarian" plan had been often effective. All this shows, however, that the idea is not "typically" African, Middle Eastern or Muslim. Some South and Central American tribes — though this is rare — in Brazil, Peru and Mexico also practise a form of excision, as do certain ethnic groups in Malaysia and Pakistan and the Australian aborigines. On the whole, however, the majority of Muslims all over the world do not practise, and have never practised, ritual sexual mutilation of women.

Marie Assad, assistant lecturer at Cairo's American University, told the delegates: "It's impossible to say whether it is an old African puberty rite which has spread into Egypt or whether it is a holdover from Pharaonic times."

It has often been argued that the mummies found in tombs were excised and infibulated. But the truth is, their physical state does not permit making such a claim. Nonetheless there is no doubt that these practices were very widely rooted in the Upper Nile valley from the days of the Pharaohs. A Greek papyrus going back to 163 BC mentions it clearly, as does the Greek geographer Strabo. Neither Christianity nor Islam managed to change the practices. They were either ignored, as happened among the Egyptian and Ethiopian Copts, or became buttressed with religious notions which did not conform to the texts, as was the case with Islam.

The Koran contains not the least reference to either excision or infibulation. There is only a tradition (*hadith*) which says that the prophet one day told Um Attiya, a matron who was excising a young girl: "Reduce, but don't destroy." This permits Cairo's influential Islamic authorities today to encourage the so-called "Sunna" form of female circumcision, which does not damage

the woman and which is legal to this day in Egypt and Sudan.

But many animist populations practise excision and infibulation well outside Islam's influence. In the absence of any religious ban, the continuing survival of such mutilating practices seems to be a mystery still. What explanations do the countries concerned give?

The first reason, it would seem, would have to be sought in an obsession with female virginity and chastity. Though excision is not mentioned in the Koran, Marie Assad says: "Chastity before marriage and virginity are clearly mentioned. A hymen ruptured before marriage is such a serious business — both among progressive Egyptians and among others — that it may lead to some rural families killing their own daughter."

Among the tribal people in Somalia and in the Arabian peninsula, infibulation was at first meant to protect young girl herders working alone in the desert from attempts to rape them. Yet, more intensive research uncovers another objective. It is not just to protect young girls against possible male assaults, but also to shield them from their own desires, for as one former victim of the practise herself admitted, "women have a hypersexual nature."

This is what I was told in so many words in an Eritrean refugee camp near the Sudanese border. During the course of the conversation it dawned on us that the women we were speaking to were quite convinced that we too (two French women reporters and a German woman) were excised and infibulated. The disclosure that we were not came as a shock to them and they exclaimed: "So you must be oversexed."

It would seem that a good many ethnic groups have a deep-rooted notion that every human being has some of the other sex's features; which must be removed. It is done by circumcision of the male and excision of the female. This revelation of the African cosmogony has led some ethnologists to make an improper comparison between the two procedures which lead to radically different results in adult life.

The conception of an initially hermaphroditic human nature is so strong that the Mossi of Upper Volta and the Dogon and Bambaras of Mali consider the clitoris a dangerous organ: its contact with the penis could be fatal to the man. It could kill the newborn child if it touched its head during birth. Another ethnic group throws the

excised clitoris into a backwater where it is believed to change into a leech.

For the clitoris, as it was said at the Khartoum congress, is only the organ of sterile, and even shameful, pleasure. "Bush bitches" is the name the Bororos give women who have not been excised. And there is no greater insult in Sudan, Djibouti and Somalia than to be called a "non-excised."

Brought up in this atmosphere, young girls understandably ask to be excised, convinced they would be "unmarriageable" if they remained intact. For men are supposed to obtain more pleasure having relations with excised or infibulated women. The last point is flatly disproved by Professor Shandall's investigations among the husbands (all polygamous) of variously mutilated women. Nearly all of them said they would prefer non-excised women. Some even admitted taking a second wife because of the first wife's sexual coldness.

It is obvious that none of the explanations holds water. And yet . . . All the governments of the countries concerned have certainly not made official statements lauding excision as Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya had done ("No Kikuyu worthy of the name wants to marry an uncircumcised girl, for this operation is indispensable for receiving a complete moral and religious education"). But they have by no means taken, or attempted to take, the vigorous measures many Africans demand today against such practices.

Up to now, the most determined have been the governments of Sudan, Egypt and Somalia, where laws prohibit such mutilations. Yet prohibitions of this sort have proved to be largely useless. Excisions and infibulations continue to be widespread in all three countries, except in a few small urban areas.

This led a good many delegates to recommend, not legal measures, but the organisation of educational drives using the services of the traditional village matrons, of teachers and the radio. Others held that in any case it called for a strong condemnation as a matter of principle. The resolutions adopted in the end represented a compromise between the two positions.

They called for:

- The adoption of clearly defined national policies for the abolition of excision and infibulation.
- The establishment of national and international committees to co-ordinate these policies.

• General education of the public, especially of traditional midwives.

You get an idea of the long way the World Health Organisation has come since 1959 when, answering a request from a UN body to undertake a study of the subject, the 12th WHO assembly ruled "that the ritual operations in question are the result of social and cultural conceptions whose study is not within the WHO's competence."

It is because of these very "social and cultural conceptions" that the discussion of sexual mutilations had long been blocked: in the West by a badly understood sense of guilt or through open contempt; and in the countries concerned, through a culturally defensive reaction that many Africans condemn today.

The Khartoum initiative should one day give the lie to this Eritrean guerrilla fighter and midwife who told me in the burning heat of a camp: "Being born a woman in the Third World is additional bad luck."

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A HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT ~ PART 1



Women's movement ideology . . . or more correctly, ideologies . . . Where do they come from? What are the ideas based on? Where do they lead? To new women the diverse/conflicting ideologies of the women's movement can be confusing and off-putting. Even those within the movement can feel bogged down in the rhetoric, immobilised by the splits or fail to perceive the underlying bases of their beliefs.

PHILLIDA BUNKLE has attempted the mammoth task of unravelling the ideologies of the women's movement. Her long articles will be published in five monthly parts from September to January 1980. We will also be asking women involved in the various political factions which she describes to comment on her analysis as it is published. This month: The early origins of the women's movement. Future issues will look at: women's rights ideology, socialist feminism, cultural feminism, radical feminism, lesbian separatism.

I suppose the **Broadsheet Split** was inevitable; there is no reason to suppose that the magazine should be immune from the bitterness that has swept so many feminist groups in recent years. But as Charlotte Bunch said the time has come for constructive dialogue. Perhaps because the conflict has arisen this time within the context of a national magazine, it may be possible to now move toward the sort of constructive debate that New Zealand feminism so badly needs. But many women feel intimidated or confused by the issues. This confusion is compounded because we seem to be caught up in the tail-end of an international controversy. Feminist ideas have come to New Zealand from overseas; their dissemination has been uneven and their assimilation to the New Zealand context haphazard. Our feminist ideas arose in other countries. We must know where these ideas come from if we are to select and naturalise what is appropriate for ourselves.

I shall examine briefly the political origin and ideological evolution of feminist ideas in the last ten years, concentrating upon six main positions — Old Left Feminism, Women's Rights, Socialist Feminism, Radical Feminism, Cul-

tural Feminism, and Lesbian Separatism. Such an overall interpretation involves distortion but may help locate ideas within the pattern of debate.

Europe and the Old Left

We need to recognise that unlike most of New Zealand's political ideology, feminist ideas have mostly come from the United States. The influence of European feminism in New Zealand has been greatest upon socialist women's groups because the European women's movement is closely tied to the marxist left.

In England the first signs of re-awakening feminist activity on the left was Juliet Mitchell's article in *New Left Review*, December 1966, called "Women the Longest Revolution". There was no feminist activity, however, until the student and labour revolts of 1968 brought women together politically. The most pressing problem of the left was perceived to be the formation of a worker/student alliance. The first feminist groups were closely tied to traditional left wing labour actions. The women's movement did not take on an autonomous existence until 1970 when a national conference was organised at the union af-

filiated Ruskin College in Oxford. Since then feminism has consolidated its position within left wing groups, but despite a good deal of media attention it has spread fairly slowly beyond them.

The old left are those marxist groups whose ideology is derived from the political experience of the 1930s. Most marxist groups are hostile to the idea of separate women's organisations so only a few of New Zealand's left wing factions have women's groups: Working Women's Alliance is associated with marxist/leninist groups; Women's Abortion Action Campaign is a direct offshoot of its parent American trotskyst group, Young Socialist Alliance; and trades union oriented women have organised the Working Women's Council. These groups tend to be more closely attached to their parent left wing organisations than to the feminist movement. The distance between them and feminism derives from the limited place of women in the orthodox marxist view of revolution.

Old Left Feminism

Most of the English groups are or at least began as what might be called old left feminism — (in New Zealand the Working Women's

Alliance is the clearest equivalent). To the revolutionary left, class war and the role of the proletariat in revolution are primary. They tend to see the women's rights movement as a part of the bourgeois revolution which brought capitalism to power. Middle class feminism is perceived as intrinsically counter revolutionary except where it can be co-opted or used to recruit for the

development of the New Zealand feminist movement has been a result of marxist control of the student press. In the absence of other "underground" press outlets, control of the student press is an important source of real power in opposition politics. The revolutionary left is sufficiently organised to exercise this control, and has consistently directed it away from the 'decadent'

up the women's movement. This distinction originated with the first women's liberation activists in the late 1960s and gained currency early in the 1970s, especially through Firestone's work*. It has been followed by academic analysts ever since. The distinction is useful because it distinguishes two political styles and types of organisation with somewhat separate political

"Most of the ideas that have affected the growth of the women's movement in New Zealand have come from America. It is important to acknowledge this and understand the specific context in which these ideas arose."

"REAL", or economic, revolution.

This is why in New Zealand even the marxist/leninist women's groups have remained aloof from other feminist organisations. They see working class women as the constituency to be reached and therefore have separate organisations and media which usually focus directly upon economic issues of concern to women.

Furthermore the orthodox left inherits much of Marx's and Engels' views on sexuality and also a limited view of the political significance of personal issues. The old left tended to see concern with sexuality, especially homosexuality, as expressions of upper class decadence. They, therefore, perceive personal

issues of women's liberation towards what it perceives as the "REAL" issues of international politics or state capitalism. The result has been to inhibit the growth of feminism on the campuses. The university is one of the few natural meeting grounds for young New Zealand women, but feminists have found it hard to find other means of reaching the student population. Although many groups have started at universities most have, therefore, been short-lived. This is a major difference between New Zealand and America, where, although the movement was not initiated at the university, the campus has become important for feminist organisations.

origins. Our adoption of this scheme has, however, sometimes obscured the radical nature of women's rights demands which include total economic and legal equality and reproductive control.

Both wings of the women's movement grew from the civil rights campaign for racial equality which dominated American politics in the 60s. Black activism was not new, but when the supreme court decision in 1954 made school segregation illegal the campaign for desegregation gained momentum. Eisenhower was forced to give very limited federal support for enforcing desegregation in the South. Moderate black organisations struggled to increase this commitment espe-

"A distinction is commonly made between reformist women's rights and radical women's liberation groups... Our adoption of this scheme has, however, sometimes obscured the radical nature of women's rights demands which include total economic and legal equality and reproductive control."

politics as indicative of the self-centredness of privileged middle class women. The complaints of feminists have been repeatedly repudiated by the New Zealand left as reflecting only the self-indulgence of privileged women rather than evidence of systematic oppression.

In New Zealand the leninist left has recruited few women who have not had a prior commitment to the politics of the left, and they have not joined feminist organisations. The primary impact of the left upon the

America

Most of the ideas that have affected the growth of the women's movement in New Zealand have come from America. It is important to acknowledge this and understand the specific context in which these ideas arose.

Contention about who is or is not part of the feminist movement is rampant. A distinction is commonly made between reformist women's rights and radical women's liberation groups, which together make

cially from Kennedy but little happened until a major black movement erupted in the early 1960s. The organisational base of this movement was the black churches and the movement often resembled a religious revival. This movement was given a boost when, in the wake of Kennedy's assassination, Johnson was able to pass the 1964 Civil Rights Act. From then on moderate civil rights energy has been directed to trying to get this act implemented.

INTERVIEW:

DEBBIE FILLER

music maker

“There’s something in my soul which says that music is important to me. It’s close to my heart.”

SANDRA CONEY talked to singer/songwriter/actress Debbie Filler shortly before her departure for the States.



A cold Sunday night in July at Auckland’s Island of Real Cafe. Inside, packed thigh to thigh, on tabletops, benches, floor and cushions if you’re lucky, an audience gets high on women’s music. We are treated to three hours of Nancy Keil’s soulful flute-playing, Nancy and Di Cadwallader’s foot-stomping duos, the Topp twins’ brassy harmonics, Pauline Poole’s beautiful ballads and Debbie Filler’s energetic, warm, superb singing and guitar playing. Reason for the gathering is Debbie’s imminent departure for the US. Everything is grist to the creative mill for Debbie and heading for the big smoke is no exception. She adjusts the microphone, wraps herself lovingly round her guitar, then . . .

I picked up the paper,

*And saw to my dismay
That the DC10 I’d booked on
Wasn’t going to LA.*

We laugh. The audience, as usual, is in the palm of her hand. She charges into the chorus . . .

*They got the concorde whee
They got the cherokee
Only thing they ain’t got is a
DC for me . . .*

I wanted to share this night with Broadsheet readers and, of course, I couldn’t. The nearest I could get was to interview Debbie, which I did, at her parents’ home the morning she left on the 3.15 flight for San Francisco.

Debbie told me she “likes all kinds of music” then rattled off a string of favourites from Malvina Reynolds, through Elton John, black women singers to Joni Mitchell. “As a kid I was a Peter, Paul and Mary freak — I used to

sing with the record player and play a tennis racket. Mum and Dad thought that was a great joke so for my tenth birthday they gave me a guitar.” Time was spent in a local children’s folk group, and a trip to Israel where she studied Hebrew and learned Hebrew songs also influenced her music. A spell at Browns Mill, work in pubs and singing anywhere anyone wanted to listen enabled Debbie to develop and refine her music and find her own style. On stage Debbie is ebullient, extroverted, serious about her music and funny at the same time. It’s engaging. “What I do onstage is what I do offstage. I don’t become an instant personality the minute I step behind the microphone. I really enjoy talking, raving, laughing and it’s the same on stage. I just talk — I talk, I soothe myself and I convince people it’s very good they’re there and it’s even better I’m there with them. I try to be honest. If I’m angry, I sing really angry. If I’m happy, I’ll be happy — it depends on the mood I’m in.

It’s fairly raw. I don’t hide anything. You’re very vulnerable when you’re onstage. You’re saying ‘This is what I am.’ Usually when I get on I feel very nervous and then after two or three songs I’ve cooled down and then I get hotter.” Being exposed onstage means being vulnerable to audience reaction. Does it affect Debbie? “If someone says ‘Boring’ or ‘You’re flat’ or ‘Get off the stage’ it influences the audience because New Zealand audiences tend to be very easily manipulated. If people are clapping they’ll clap. If people are booing, they’ll boo. People don’t go in thinking that as an audience member I’m going to create something. They go in feeling uncreative.

“I love singing at feminist

concerts because the women are so much with me. It's very supportive. At the United Women's Convention a lady came up and she cried on my shoulder. She said I'd given her something. I was very moved. I find that women often feel the pain coming out of my music, but a lot of guys I know enjoy my music." Debbie doesn't confine herself to playing for all-women audiences and doesn't want to. "I prefer playing for mixed audiences. Playing for women only is like playing to the all-blue-eyed society. I like playing for children, I like singing for women, I like clubs . . . I have no preference, as long as the audience is prepared to listen."

Most of Debbie's songs are her own compositions; she's just coming out of a long drought when she couldn't actually complete a song. "For two years I couldn't write. It was the most frustrating period of my whole life. I think I'm at the end of it now. I think it's because I didn't have enough passion. You've got to be moved to write. If you're bored and lethargic you can't produce anything."

Song writing is a lengthy, careful process of refinement. "A song is a whole lot of words which I've got to refine and refine again. It's a very frustrating process but the reward is multifold when you get there and it's up to standard. I'll sing it for days to anyone who'll listen and get feedback."

What inspires a song? "My songs are about experiences that I've lived. A song I wrote called **The Airport Song** was about a time I went to the airport and I saw something spiritual happen. Another time I was very disillusioned in love. I thought love was just a rip-off and I wrote a song." I asked what prompted a particular song: **Supermarket**

Blues.

*Neon lights protect the rights
And keep away the truest sights,
BARLEY, POTATOES, HAM
N' EGGS,
YOU TOO CAN HAVE
LOVELY LEGGS!
Automatic doors and over-waxed tile floors,
And ladies wasting energy,
wasting energy,
Wasting energy on their chores . . .*

"I was feeling really frustrated. I was teaching and I saw a lot of the women teachers very down, very depressed. And one lady in the staffroom said 'Uh, I've got to go to the supermarket.' I kept on hearing this word supermarket all week and the minute I picked up my guitar it just came right out, I had the melody there all the time. That's what happens. I can't control it at all. If I sit down and say 'Right, Deborah . . .', I can't".

Over the last couple of years Debbie's also extended her talents to theatre as part of **Ratz Theatre, Debbie and the Dum Dums** and finally **Vivo**. "I got involved in **Ratz** through my music — it turned out I could act too. I'd always felt my niche was in drama but I'd never called myself an actress before then. If anyone asked what I was I'd say ateacher. Now I'd say I'm an entrepreneur — a Jean of all trades. I think I'm a performer — I'm a performer of music, I'm a performer of jokes . . ." **Vivo** split up because the group couldn't cope with the conflict between the creative side and the practicalities of getting a group on the road. As Debbie puts it — "We had to be our own managers and grease for money." She sees great opportunities for political and feminist theatre as yet unexplored in New

Zealand. "If you've got bright costumes and bizarre or very good makeup and a strong statement to make you'll go a long way." Does the feminist movement need a bit of colour? I asked. "I think New Zealand needs a bit of colour and drama. And there are a lot of talented women round."

Leaving New Zealand is necessary says Debbie "To get a fresh perspective. We all have to mature and it's quite easy to be immature in New Zealand. I could easily stay here, easily. My family's here and my friends. I adore Ponsonby, I love it, I live there. But everyone knows everyone else. I don't like the horrible incestuousness. It's really refreshing to be able to walk along the main street of a town that you don't know without someone saying 'Isn't that Debbie Filler over there kicking her heels up? What's she into?' I just feel quite claustrophobic. I feel like I've been stagnating. I want to go where I can be stimulated by other cultural happenings, other political happenings." Why San Francisco? "It's the magic city. It's got a good pulse, a cosmopolitan environment. I feel like putting myself in another culture for a while. It's got a lot of music in it. In New Zealand it's easy to break the ice but there's no scope. In the States it's very difficult to break the ice but there's so much scope. It's a challenge. I want to make music in America, I want to make music in Afghanistan, in London, in Kabul . . . put myself in a lot of different situations. So when I come back I hope you're going to listen to what I sing. I'll probably say something like — 'Well, when I was standing at the Louisiana International Airport Terminal, there was this bible basher . . . and I wrote this song . . .'"

Biological Superiority

by
Andrea Dworkin

1

All who are not of good race in this world are chaff.

Hitler, Mein Kampf¹

It would be lunacy to try to estimate the value of man according to his race, thus declaring war on the Marxist idea that men are equal, unless we are determined to draw the ultimate consequences. And the ultimate consequence of recognizing the importance of blood – that is, of the racial foundation in general – is the transference of this estimation to the individual person.

Hitler, Mein Kampf²

Hisses. Women shouting at me: slut, bisexual, she fucks men. And before I had spoken, I had been trembling, more afraid to speak than I had ever been. And, in a room of 200 sister lesbians, as angry as I have ever been. "Are you a bisexual?" some woman screamed over the pandemonium, the hisses and shouts merging into a raging noise. "I'm a Jew," I answered; then, a pause, "and a lesbian, and a woman." And a coward. Jew was enough. In that room, Jew was what mattered. In that room, to answer the question "Do you still fuck men?" with a No, as I did, was to betray my deepest convictions. All of my life, I have hated the proscribers, those who enforce sexual conformity. In answering, I had given in to the inquisitors, and I felt ashamed. It humiliated me to see myself then: one who resists the enforcers out there with militancy, but gives in without resistance to the enforcers among us.

The event was a panel on "Lesbianism as a Personal Politic" that took place in New York City, Lesbian Pride Week 1977. A self-proclaimed lesbian separatist had spoken. Amidst the generally accurate description of male crimes against women came this ideologi-

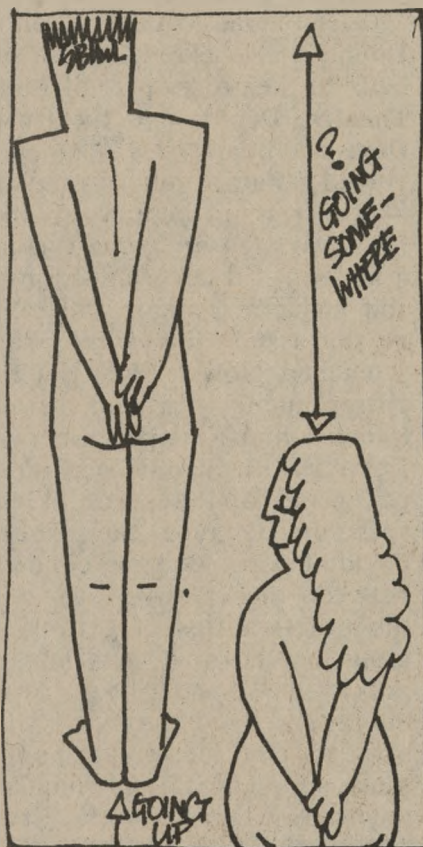
cal rot, articulated of late with increasing frequency in feminist circles: women and men are distinct species or races (the words are used interchangeably); men are biologically inferior to women; male violence is a biological inevitability; to eliminate it, one must eliminate the species/race itself (means stated on this particular evening: developing parthenogenesis as a viable reproductive reality); in eliminating the biologically inferior species/race Man, the new *Ubermensch* Woman (prophetically foreshadowed by the lesbian separatist* herself) will have the earthy dominion that is her true biological destiny. We are left to infer that the society of her creation will be good because she is good

because she is good, biologically good. In the interim, incipient SuperWoman will not do anything to "encourage" women to "collaborate" with men — no abortion clinics or battered woman sanctuaries will come from her. After all, she has to conserve her "energy" which must not be dissipated keeping "weaker" women alive through reform measures.

The audience applauded the passages on female superiority/male inferiority enthusiastically. This doctrine seemed to be music to their ears. Was there dissent, silent, buried in the applause? Was some of the response the spontaneous pleasure that we all know when, at last, the tables are turned, even for a minute, even in imagination? Or has powerlessness driven us mad, so that we dream secret dreams of a final solution perfect in its simplicity, absolute in its efficacy? And will a leader someday strike that secret chord, harness those dreams, our own nightmare turned upside down? Is there no haunting, restraining memory of the blood spilled, the bodies burned, the ovens filled, the peoples enslaved, by those who have assented throughout history to the very same demagogic logic?

In the audience, I saw women I like or love, women not strangers to me, women who are good not because of biology but because they care about being good, swept along

*SuperWoman's ideology is distinguished from lesbian separatism in general (that is, lesbians organizing politically and/or culturally in exclusively female groups) by two articles of dogma: (1) a refusal to have anything to do with women who have anything to do with males, often including women with male children and (2) the absolute belief in the biological superiority of women.



in a sea of affirmation. I spoke out because those women had applauded. I spoke out too because I am a Jew who has studied Nazi Germany, and I know that many Germans who followed Hitler also cared about being good, but found it easier to be good by biological definition than by act. Those people wretched in what they experienced as their own unbearable powerlessness, became convinced that they were so good biologically that nothing they did could be bad. As Himmler said in 1943:

We have exterminated a bacterium (Jews) because we do not want in the end to be infected by the bacterium and die of it. I will not see so much as a small area of sepsis appear there or gain a hold. Wherever it may form, we will cauterize it. All in all, we can say that we have fulfilled this most difficult duty for the love of our people. And our spirit, our soul, our character has not suffered injury from it.³

So I spoke, afraid. I said that I would not be associated with a movement that advocated the most pernicious ideology on the face of the earth. It was this very ideology of biological determinism that had licensed the slaughter and/or enslavement of virtually any group one could name, including women by men. ("Use their own poison against them," one woman screamed.) Anywhere one looked, it was this philosophy that justified atrocity. This was one faith that destroyed life with a momentum of its own.

Insults continued with unabated intensity as I spoke, but gradually those women I liked or loved, and others I did not know, began to question openly the philosophy they had been applauding and also their own acquiescence. Embraced by many women on my way out, I left still sickened, humiliated by the insults, emotionally devastated by the abuse. Time passes, but the violence done is not undone. It never is.

2

I am told that I am a sexist. I do believe that the differences between the sexes are our most precious heritage, even though they make women superior in the ways that matter most.

George Gilder,
Sexual Suicide⁴

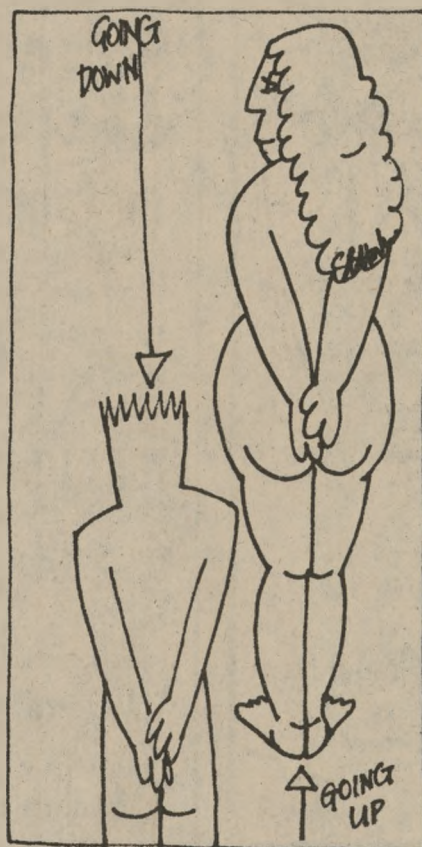
Perhaps this female wisdom comes from resignation to the reality of male aggression; more likely it is a harmonic of the woman's knowledge that ultimately she is the one who matters. As a result, while there are more brilliant men than brilliant women, there are more good women than good men.

Steven Goldberg,

The Inevitability of Patriarchy⁵

As a class (not necessarily as individuals), we can bear children. From this, according to male-supremacist ideology, all our other attributes and potentialities are derived. On the pedestal, immobile like waxen statues, or in the gutter, failed icons mired in shit, we are exalted or degraded because our biological traits are what they are. Citing genes, genitals, DNA, pattern-releasing smells, biograms, hormones, or whatever is in vogue, male supremacists make their case which is, in essence, that we are biologically too good, too bad, or too different to do anything other than reproduce and serve men sexually and domestically.

The newest variations on this distressingly ancient theme center on hormones and DNA: men are biologically aggressive; their fetal brains were awash in androgen;



their DNA, in order to perpetuate itself, hurls them into murder and rape; in women, pacifism is hormonal and addiction to birth is molecular. Since in Darwinian terms (interpreted to conform to the narrow social self-interest of men), survival of the fittest means the triumph of the most aggressive human beings, men are and always will be superior to women in terms of their ability to protect and extend their own authority. Therefore women, being "weaker" (less aggressive), will always be at the mercy of men. That this theory of the social ascendancy of the fittest consigns us to eternal indignity and, applied to race, conjures up Hitler's identical view of evolutionary struggle must not unduly trouble us. "By current theory," writes Edward O. Wilson reassuringly in *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, a bible of genetic justification for slaughter, "genocide or genosorption strongly favouring the aggressor need take place only once every few generations to direct evolution."⁶

3

I have told you the very low opinion in which you (women) were held by Mr Oscar Browning. I have indicated what Napoleon once thought of you and what Mussolini thinks now. Then, in case any of you aspire to fiction. I have copied out for your benefit the advice of the critic about courageously acknowledging the limitations of your sex. I have referred to Professor X and given prominence to his statement that women are intellectually, morally and physically inferior to men . . . and here is a final warning . . . Mr John Langdon Davies warns women "that when children cease to be altogether desirable, women cease to be altogether necessary." I hope you will make note of it.

Virginia Woolf,

A Room of One's Own⁷

In considering male intellectual and scientific argumentation in conjunction with male history, one is forced to conclude that men as a class are moral cretins. The vital question is: are we to accept *their* world view of a moral polarity that is biologically fixed, genetically or hormonally or genitally (or whatever organ or secretion or molecular particle they scapegoat next) absolute; or does our own historical experience of social deprivation and injustice teach us that to be free in a

just world we will have to destroy the power, the dignity, the efficacy of this one idea above all others?

Recently, more and more feminists have been advocating social, spiritual, and mythological models that are female-supremacist and/or matriarchal. To me, this advocacy signifies a basic conformity to the tenets of biological determinism that underpin the male social system. Pulled toward an ideology based on the moral and social significance of a distinct female biology because of its emotional and philosophical familiarity, drawn to the spiritual dignity inherent in a "female principle" (essentially as defined by men), of course unable to abandon by will or impulse a lifelong and centuries-old commitment to childbearing as *the* female creative act, women have increasingly tried to transform the very ideology that has enslaved us into a dynamic, religious, psychologically compelling celebration of female biological potential. This attempted transformation may have survival value — that is the worship of our procreative capacity as *power* may temporarily stay the male-supremacist hand that cradles the

test tube. But the price we pay is that we become carriers of the disease we must cure. It is no accident that in the ancient matriarchies men were castrated, sacrificially slaughtered, and excluded from public forms of power; nor is it an accident that some female supremacists now believe men to be a distinct and inferior species or race. Wherever power is accessible or bodily integrity honoured on the basis of biological attribute, systematized cruelty permeates the society and murder and mutilation contaminate it. We will not be different.

It is shamefully easy for us to enjoy our own fantasies of biological omnipotence while despising men for enjoying the reality of theirs. And it is dangerous — because genocide begins, however improbably, in the conviction that classes of biological distinction indisputably sanction social and political discrimination. We, who have been devastated by the concrete consequences of this idea, still want to put our faith in it. Nothing offers more proof — sad, irrefutable proof — that we are more like men than either they or we care to believe.

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Biography.

Andrea Dworkin is the author of *Woman Hating* (Dutton, 1974) and *Our Blood: Prophecies and Discourses on Sexual Politics* (Harper and Row, 1976). She is currently working on a feminist analysis of pornography, to be published by Anchor/Doubleday in 1981.

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Try and work like a dog.

WMA WOMAN...

What (Woman) Has
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Just kick it into life, hop on
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Tupperware party - at 150
kilometres per gallon.

The Feminist Eye

SATIATION AND INDIGESTION FOLLOWS FILM FESTIVALS

Film freaks are recuperating now having gluttonously devoured up to three films a day in the annual Wellington and Auckland film festivals. Brief notes on some of the good ones, and some which promised to be good but stuck in the gullet.

GAMES OF LOVE AND LONELINESS, Sweden/Norway 1977, Dir: Anja Brelen.

The hauntingly beautiful images in this film by the maker of *Wives* do not conceal the painful realities of the "games" the characters play. Arvid leaves his first love, Lydia, because he's "too young to be tied down"; later he marries another woman, has children; he is "rather happy."

Then he meets Lydia again. We know from a dinner party scene that he is seeking "adventures"; another woman would have done just as well. They become lovers, but Lydia asserts her independence in the only way she can, by seeing other men. His wife puts up with the situation, rather than face the scandal of divorce. Any husband is better than none. In the end Arvid leaves them both.

The power of the movie lies in the way it refines a drearily familiar sequence of events down to their essence, so that they almost take on the elements of legend. No one escapes, no one is happy. If Arvid had married Lydia in the beginning, nothing would have changed. Although not overtly feminist, the film has total truth and integ-

rity in its portrayal of the sad intricacies of human relationships.

Anne Else

PARADISE PLACE, Sweden 1977, Dir: Gunnel Lindblom.

When did we last see real women at the movies? *Paradise Place* is full of real, mature, intelligent women with real relationships with each other.

Four generations of a family come together at their *sommarhus* by the sea for an annual holiday. Katha, a middle aged doctor, passionately argues with Emma, her friend of thirty four years; later she tenderly dries Emma's rain-soaked feet and puts on her slippers. Sassa, young and urbane, tells her new lover Kiss that the relationship must never come between her long-standing friendship with Ingrid; to reassure the jealous Ingrid the two women take off alone for four days leaving Kiss behind to care for the children. The men are shown to be weak and riddled with egocentric anxieties; they lean on the women, expecting them to provide family stability and personal emotional sustenance. The women care for them patiently,

as a mother cares for a demanding child. But the men are largely peripheral to the deep, slow rhythm of the women's lives and the bonds of affection and commitment that tie them.

A thin thread of tension weaves its way through the beautiful scenes of family solidarity and comfort. Gradually, subtly, we sense that this thread is a fuse leading to destruction. The idyll by the sea is an anachronism, a cocoon vulnerable to rupture by the influences of the world outside. Emma pleads with Katha to recognise the alienation of many of the young children in the cities; Ingrid's son, King, retreats to his tree house whence he commands imaginary space ships to destroy the occupants of the *sommarhus*; adolescent Tomas withdraws to photograph plants and to draw strange and ugly graffiti in his notebook. The rupture comes violently and conclusively when Tomas shoots himself. The patriarchal world floods in.

Feminist filmgoers tired of trivia would be well-advised to seek out this film if it reappears on the commercial circuit.

Sandra Coney

NINE MONTHS, Hungary 1976, Dir: Marta Meszaros.

The only thing that worried me about this study of a woman trying to form an independent life was how on earth she could fall in love with the family-ridden, violent Janos. I found particularly difficult to cope with the scene where he virtually rapes her and she then treats him with infinite tenderness. But Lili Manori gives an outstanding performance. In the East European manner, the film is full of long, slow closeups of her rather ordinary, round, stubborn little face. She has had a child by a married scientist; he gives her affection and support, but she copes mainly alone. When Janos finds out, he is at first outraged, then jealous, as much of the child as the father. His family too turn on Lili, and she realises she must leave him. Alone, she has his child (Manori used her own pregnancy and childbearing for this sequence) and prepares to start all over again, this time in a better job.

Hungarian society seems to be a strange mixture of tolerance and rigidity. Abortion is apparently never even considered as an option; but Manori's courage and determination are sharply set against the narrow "morality" of Janos and his family. The choice seems a bleak one for Hungarian women; either you submit to the male ancien regime, or you go it alone, kids, work and all.

Anne Else



"Games of Love and Loneliness" . . . the sad intricacies of human relationships

THE LEFT-HANDED WOMAN' West Germany 1978, Dir: Peter Handke.

This elegant but ponderous study of a woman breaking away from the devoted yet stifling ministrations of her husband bored some but irked me. *Die Frau* (the nameless heroine played by Edith Clever) is so passive I could have screamed. Although she single-mindedly pursues her purpose of being alone she has no ambition for herself beyond that: she rids herself of the past, but builds no future; she reacts but does not act. Edith Clever's passionless face tells us little of her desires, confusions or frustrations (isolated acts like the flinging of her typewriter across the room tell us she does have some) and the sparse monosyllabic script prevents her articulating them either. Enigmatic images and disconnected visual sequences cannot substitute for dialogue. The final frames are overlaid with the statement that "There is no room in the world for those who do not make room for themselves"; presumably this was designed to pull the film together but I remain unconvinced that our heroine had made any space for herself at all — she had merely escaped from her marital prison into a prison of her own inertia.

Bonus points though for the depiction of the warm and supportive relationship between *Die Frau* and son, Stefan. Her only joy appeared to be in sharing simple pastimes with him.

Sandra Coney

MELODY IN GRAY, Japan 1978, Dir: Mashira Shinoda.

This remarkable film, the only Japanese movie to come to the 1979 Wellington Film Festival, follows the life of a blind woman who as a child was passed into the company of goze (blind) women who make their living singing to audiences of wealthy Japanese. In single file, hand-on-shoulder, they journey across landscapes of bitter cold and splashing rain winds. The accuracy of sight and sound is superb; the spectator who looks on with a critical eye dares not breathe too loudly for fear of breaking the magic woven in the images.

The woman (Orlin) is expelled from the group for breaking the group's vow of chastity and it is from this point that the movie becomes searing in its realities. Orlin meets up with a poor peasant who travels with her as her brother. Their traumas of survival twist and turn with a structural deftness which leads to her hometown and a moment by the sea where Orlin attempts to hear the sea of her childhood and instead says "sabres". We don't know, as her man does not, what she means until she screams to run; the police are behind him to arrest him as murderer

and deserter.

They are both tortured; before he is executed he, in a revolutionary voice, charges the military with its class hypocrisy; his mother sold him to the army in place of some rich bastard. Japan 1919 was a fearful place for the peasants. Orlin moves to a lone death; symbolically her red garment is still seen on a hillside many years later by workers. One sure thing this movie gave me as a kiwi was the recognition of the worthiness of our own voices and gypsy-ness; the joyful traditions of women singing, travelling and living by their talents (admittedly a harsh life in this movie).

Raewyn McDonald

THE STEPFORD WIVES, USA 1974, Dir: Bryan Forbes. A horror movie for those who like to be shocked and frightened by an exaggeration of the horrors of everyday life. Two normal women who are trying to liven up their houseproud, home-and-family-obsessed new neighbours are horribly transformed into housewife zombies themselves. Of course such women are not made quite so artificially as the director represents — but by suggesting that such women are made, not born, and that they are something a normal woman fights against, the movie provides a little food for thought among the scares.

Christine Dann

ONE SINGS, THE OTHER DOESN'T, France/Belgium/Netherlands/Antilles 1977, Dir: Agnes Varda.

To me this highly acclaimed film rang false virtually from beginning to end. Again, the images were beautiful, and so was everyone, but everyone, involved. The friendship between the two women was close and warm, but not particularly re-

markable; despite male assertions to the contrary, women have always had a genius for such friendships, given a chance. The falsity showed in the shallow interpretation of what sisterhood means on a wider scale. Pauline Pomme, after a setback in her singing career, abandons her troupe and runs off to Iran with her tall, dark and handsome Persian boyfriend. There she plays at being the veiled Muslim wife, without for one moment understanding what that really entails for the real women around her. When Darius reverts to his true colours by demanding dinner, she runs home pregnant to Suzanne. It is all make-believe — the genuine struggles are glossed over, because they are not sufficiently picturesque.

When Suzanne's lover commits suicide, she goes home to her parents' farm; her hard life there is symbolised by a few pretty winter scenes. She teaches herself to type and suddenly she's a medical secretary in the warm South, and then a family planning counsellor. How she manages this, with two kids, is not explained. She then comes across a charming gynaecologist, but will have nothing to do with him because he's married. Then hey presto! he is conveniently divorced and he and Suzanne go off into the sunset. Pomme gives her first baby (it's a boy) to Darius to take home and raise in his own image, after first making sure he gets her pregnant again — of course, the next one's a girl for her. She goes back to singing, with not a nappy in sight — that's too dull for this "life-filled" movie. Everyone goes off into the sunset.

"Lovely in every way" it may be; feminist it's not.

Anne Else



"One Sings, the Other Doesn't" ... off into the sunset with a song.

film review

Seeing Red, A Festival of Women's Films, Supplied by the Sydney Film-maker's Co-operative.

Undoubtedly the worst thing about the Seeing Red Festival was that it was so inadequately publicised. The audience at the session I went to was small — much smaller than I expected; and for days before the showings the Broadsheet office was receiving phone calls from people wanting details of time and place (and even we had to chase up those details ourselves). Whatever its faults this collection of films deserved better than that.

The films themselves were certainly a mixed bag — in terms of subject matter, approach and quality. I felt the least successful was *Elsie*, a film about the running of the Elsie Women's Refuge in Sydney. The technical quality of the film (black and white) was very poor and what could well have been an interesting subject if imaginatively handled, was presented in a very uninspiring way. I felt much the same about *Me and My Little Girlie*, a short film, again black and white and of only slightly better visual quality than *Elsie*, which claims to explore the incestuous relationship between a father and daughter. A horrifying subject with implications that need to be considered very seriously — but those implications weren't, it seemed to me, really explored. The relationship was presented in a very "exterior" manner which allowed the viewer little opportunity to empathise with the girl's feelings about

the situation. A more imaginative and "subjective" approach and more expressive acting on the part of the girl and her father could have set up ripples of thought and emotion that would have kept on widening long after the film was over. Unhappily it just didn't go far enough.

Another film which I felt didn't go far enough was the very short film *The Selling of the Female Image*. In part of this film, which looks at women's image on television commercials, Carole Kostanich uses a hilarious device — that of replacing the woman in such ads as those for carpet, shampoo, etc. with a man. This was very funny and a real consciousness raiser, making the viewer realise just how ridiculous the TV woman image is — but it could have been extended.

I felt disappointed when this film ended — it could have gone on much longer and said even more than it did.

Another film with a related theme — that of woman's body as object, divorced from personality, actions, everything else that goes to make up a woman — was *Size 10*. This was an enjoyable, stimulating film — another good consciousness raiser. The film showed us four women in a variety of situations — talking about themselves, looking at clothes, looking at their bodies, doing exercises, swimming together, etc. I must admit that the shots of the four women in a bathroom, sitting on the loo, looking in the mirror, lying in the bath, immobile and faceless, were a bit of a shock. Seen like that their bodies were so very unbeautiful, so "unideal", that I really wondered how the film was going to make what I knew to be its message felt. But it did. As the warmth of these women's personalities, and their enjoyment of the

things they were doing reached me, the importance of their bodies, seen as lumps of static flesh, diminished. By the end of the scene in which they are seen creating a "water ballet" and playing around in a swimming pool, conscious of their bodies only in terms of creative action and pleasurable sensation, that other aspect had become completely irrelevant. A good quality film that really got its message across.

Undoubtedly the most controversial film in this festival was *Maidens*, made by Jeni Thornley. Some women I spoke to later loved it; some hated it; others were unable to decide and not a few found it difficult to understand. It seems to me that any difficulty in coming to terms with this film lay less with the viewer's inability to cope with the wide range of often unusual filmic techniques used by the film maker, than with the intensely personal nature of the film. In it Jeni Thornley traces the history of her maternal family through four generations using family photographs, letters, film clips, etc. to present that history and the growth of her own awareness of herself as a woman, and in relation to other women. Not only the subject matter but the presentation of it is extremely intimate and almost totally subjective; this means that for those who find echoes of their own experience in it the film is likely to be exciting, moving, enlightening; for those whose experience is little touched on, it may be confusing, incomprehensible, almost meaningless. Altogether a somewhat disturbing film and one which should probably be seen more than once.

For my money, the most exciting film in the festival was *With Bables and Banners: The Story of the Women's Emergency Brigade*. A group of elderly American women, tough, lively and talkative, all of whom had been closely involved with the Women's Emergency Brigade, talked about the Great General Motors Strike of 1937, a strike which ultimately led to the unionisation of industry in the States. Their recalling of events and their part in them was interspersed and reinforced with a large amount of rare and fascinating historical film footage showing every aspect of the strike. There were women everywhere — on the picket lines, in the soup kitchens, breaking windows, fighting the police, calling other women to solidarity and action. Quite clearly these women played an absolutely vital role in keeping the strike going — their determination, quick wittedness and courage deserve to be commemorated as they have been in *With Bables and Banners*. A superb film, serious, funny, moving, above all an inspiration.



"Maidens" ... intensely personal

Priscilla Pitts

feminist exhibition

Vulvas on plates Judy Chicago's Dinner Party

Being a founding member of the Dune-din Collective for Women and of its *Herstory Diary* Collective, I seized the chance to see Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* recently in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

The first thing to hit me was the sheer size of the exhibition. Thirty-nine table settings (the thirty-nine articles of the Christian faith?) celebrate thirty-nine women of our past by appropriate and larger than life ceramic plates, flatware and chalices, each set on embroidered runners. The settings occupy three tables outlining the triangular base made of tiles over-written in neat schoolgirl gold letters the names of 999 gifted and creative women of Herstory (the 999 names of God?).



Kali

The image of the Dinner Party was chosen because Judy Chicago saw it as a metaphor of women's lives — centuries, millennia, of creativity to produce edible artifacts that are immediately consumed and destroyed. (Virginia Woolf knew this. Think of Mrs Dalloway's casserole at her dinner party, which is her only way of ordering her world.) 'Men had a last supper', writes Chicago, 'but women have had dinner parties'.

Chicago also celebrates two other traditional women's arts, the solitary slow perfectionist arts of embroidery and china-painting. Yes, china-painting. All that careful skilful work, sometimes beautiful, sometimes vulgar, sometimes functional, is done by women. And to do all this she attracted the support of more than 200 people, mostly women but some men, who worked on the project collectively for 5 years. Hers was the vision and hers the guiding intelligence, but group members clearly had the feeling that they were making an individual contribution to a collec-



Eleanor of Aquitaine

tive work, the like of which hasn't been seen since the guilds died out.

After size, the next thing to send me reeling was that the design of each plate is based on a vulva. Each plate varies the theme, vaginal, flowery, fruity, butterfly-ish, beginning with plates that are almost flat and culminating in the three dimensional engorged scarlet peony for Margaret Sanger and the writhing artichoke for Virginia Woolf. All this arouses mixed and powerful sensations to do with sexuality, domesticity, fruitfulness, edibility. *Vulvas on plates*, for heaven's sakes?

Then the extraordinary craft and art of it all starts to come through. Not only are the plates sculptured, but they have been coloured and fired in an astonishing variety of designs. I had previously been somewhat ho-hum about Judy Chicago, but her colour virtuosity now left me gasping. She's often witty too: the neatly folded labia on Emily Dickinson's plate are appropriately for that erotic but genteel poet, being made out of pink lace dipped in ceramic solution like the frilly skirts on ballerinas that we used to covet in the fifties.



Hildegard of Bingen

Not only is each plate appropriate to its woman — Byzantine mosaic for the Empress Theodora, holy flames for Saint Bridget — but each runner is worked in the characteristic embroidery of her time. Here is the whole remarkable range and brilliance of women's art over the ages,

simple shell fringes, Indian beadwork, Egyptian linear embroidery, mediaeval tapestry, stump-work, Assisi work, drawn thread work, patchwork, samplers, weaving, applique, piecing, work with precious jewels, gold thread, knots of ribbon, beads. Every kind of stitch is used for every kind of effect. And the effect is, simply, stunning.

Associated with the main Dinner Party are photo montages and a video showing how the work was done, a display of plates painted by professional china-painters, and a huge map of the world flagging the telegrams sent on opening night. The New Zealand ones show up nicely. Handsomely produced and impeccably researched Heritage panels list chronologically the names and achievements of women in herstory. Finally, there is a book, thick, detailed, splendid — but the colour illustrations, rich as they are, cannot do justice to the glorious vibrancy of the plates in all their three dimensions. Nor are the runners shown. But it can be bought and read and savoured.



Sappho

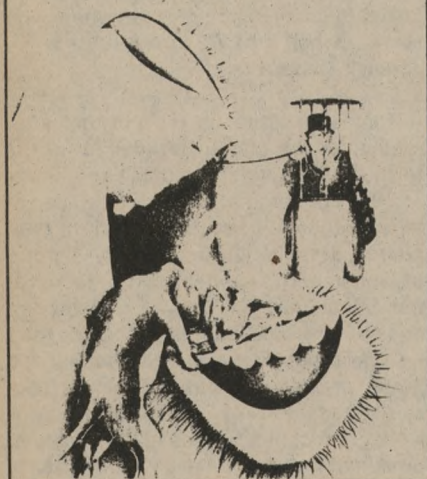
Judy Chicago has celebrated achieving women in her exhibit. But by choosing the media that she has done, china-painting and embroidery, and by selecting as her controlling image a dinner party, she has linked them to all women everywhere who serve up their vulvas upon plates.

Jocelyn Harris

Heather McPherson reports that after reading in the March *Broadsheet* of the forthcoming opening of the *Dinner Party* and Judy Chicago's invitation to women of all countries to celebrate women of their country at their own dinner party, a group of Christchurch women held a dinner at the Christchurch Arts Centre restaurant and "among talk, laughter, wine and food we chose our own women to honour." A group of Trafalgar Street feminists also celebrated the event. The women also sent a telegram of best wishes to the museum, presumably one of the flags Jocelyn Harris mentioned in the above review.

Grandma's Teeth

A WOMAN WHO DID THINGS.
GRANDMA'S TEETH IS THE
BOOK YOU WILL ENJOY
READING WITH THE KIDS.
WRITTEN BY DINAH BRADLEY,
ILLUSTRATED BY SALLY
HOLLIS MCLEOD & PUBLISHED
BY ALISTER TAYLOR.
\$7.95



"Grandma's Teeth" Fills a Gap

SIMONE LALANDE looks at New Zealand's first full-colour feminist children's book.

Dinah Bradley has seen enough of children's books to know that a lot of them are rubbish. There are so many that are either boring or patronising or sexist or beyond the comprehension of the child reader or just simply an ego trip for adults. Some books manage to combine all these faults and still end up on the child's bookcase. Many of us groan in disgust, sure that we "can do better than that!" Dinah Bradley can and has and the result is her book **Grandma's Teeth**.



Grandma's Teeth is an original, fun story because Grandma, at the centre of the story, is an original, fun and very vital person. She has led an adventurous life, and still does, despite her age.

In the story Grandma comes from her island home to the mainland to get a new set of false teeth. While staying with her grandchildren she tells them the story of how she lost her teeth: playing cricket as a young girl, practising trick riding on her horse, piloting bombers in World War II (not through flying accidents but through habitually sucking barley sugars when she flew which rotted her teeth.)

Dinah says: "I was sick of stories where the woman in the story was not very interesting and **always** wore an apron. My own boys like the story very much! I can't seem to stop them being warmongers, but I can make them realise women do heroic things too. Older children can find this out if they try very hard, but for very young readers women seem to be a very bland lot".

Dinah asked freelance designer Sally Hollis McLeod to illustrate the book. Sal-

ly's full colour illustrations are really superb, beautifully suited to the story. They are deliberately not nostalgic, portraying a sweet-old-helpless-grandma image but are instead vibrant and energetic with a touch of zany humour in each one.

Dinah and Sally worked very closely on the content and design of the book, putting a lot of thought and research into coming up with a book that children could be entirely happy with. They tested the book on numerous children to make sure that the four to nine age group it was intended for was capable of reading and understanding the text, and to be certain that children enjoyed both the story and the illustrations. The book has been intentionally designed to promote adult involvement, as an adult reading the story to children is bound to have to answer questions about it and so has ample room to embroider it.

"Grandma's Teeth" is being published by Alister Taylor.



Dinah Bradley



Sally Hollis McLeod

book reviews

My Own Story, Emmeline Pankhurst, Virago, 1979, \$10.25

"It was absolutely in this spirit that our women went forth to war. In the first month of guerilla warfare an enormous amount of property was damaged and destroyed. On January 31st a number of putting greens were burned with acids; on February 7th and 8th telegraph and telephone wires were cut in several places and for some hours all communications between London and Glasgow were suspended; a few days later windows in various of London's smartest clubs were broken, and the orchid houses at Kew were wrecked and many valuable blooms destroyed by cold. The jewel room at the Tower was invaded and a showcase broken. The refreshment house in Regents Park was burned to the ground on February 12th and on February 18th a country house . . ."

Anyone who needs convincing that we can't be "nice" and "polite" in achieving our women's revolution need only read Emmeline Pankhurst's **My Own Story**. The above passage describes events early in 1913; by this date all the reasoned and reasonable tactics of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) had brought it no nearer its goal of female suffrage. Emmeline Pankhurst, leader of the WSPU, originally wrote **My Own Story** for the American magazine **Good Housekeeping**; out-of-print since 1914 it has recently been republished by Virago and describes in vivid and enthralling prose the struggle for the vote up to 1914.

Feminists today can learn much from Mrs Pankhurst's description of tactics and the arguments behind them. She had little faith in the system of government to act fairly and justly. From an early age she had approached traditional politics and politicians with caution and cynicism. She saw that "men regarded women as a servant class in the community and that women were going to remain in the servant class until they lifted themselves out of it."

The early years of the WSPU were devoted to working in peaceful and conventional ways but on a scale which is staggering to contemplate given the more limited freedom of our sisters seventy years ago. "After a summer spent strengthening our forces, organising new branches, holding meetings — something like three thousand of these between May and October — invading meetings of Cabinet Ministers — we managed to do that once every day — electioneering, and getting up huge demonstrations in various cities, we arrived at the end of the year."

While the WSPU used many of the tactics we use today — rallies, petitions, marches, meetings, leaflets — careful organisation and an acute understanding of the nature of the opposition meant that they had the maximum effectiveness in achieving the desired end. As the militancy escalated in response to the hypocrisy and inaction of the government guerilla tactics were never merely expressions of anger as they often are today, but planned strategies in a battle. The tight organisation of the WSPU, its clearly stated aims, its success at raising money and its acknowledged and powerful leadership makes me, as a participant in our formless, anarchic modern movement, green with envy. What comes through so clearly in this book is that the women saw themselves as being **at war** (this was behind the demand to be treated as political prisoners when arrested rather than as criminals) and they acted accordingly. They were willing to lay their lives on the line and many did.

No mere history book could quite capture the spirit of this book and no modern day feminist could fail to be moved by the seriousness and suffering of our suffragette sisters.

Sandra Coney

The Friends, Rosa Guy, Puffin 1973.

Phyllisia Cathy is a West Indian girl who is brought to live in Harlem, New York. At school she is rejected because she is a foreigner, she is picked on and beaten up

by the other students. Edith Jackson is a slum kid, she lives in poverty and her clothes and habits reflect this. But Edith is the only person who offers friendship to Phyllisia in her hostile new environment. Phyllisia slaps Edith's offer back, repulsed by Edith's dress and manner. However, as the story unfolds Phyllisia comes to realise that outward appearances are unimportant, and in the end she values and loves Edith for the great person she is.

This is a very powerful story, at times achingly sad, related in a sensitive and realistic way. Rosa Guy's portrayal of Harlem indicates that she has in-depth knowledge of the area and its people. Edith and Phyllisia are gutsy girls who have minds of their own and know how to use them. They are both oppressed — Edith because of her poverty, and Phyllisia because of her nationality, but more importantly by her brutal, domineering, bloated-macho father. Although this man and his extreme form of oppression is not acceptable to Rosa Guy, and she has Phyllisia kicking and struggling beneath it and finally making some headway at the finish, I could not help but feel that male domination in a more diluted, less violent form was acceptable to her. I found this disheartening in such a talented woman writer.

Basically, Rosa Guy's message is a plea for change: "Children, by all means, by whatever means, change your parents so that the lives of all of us — all of the Ediths — must be more bearable on this earth." A sharp cry against oppression, especially of the poor, and that can't be a bad thing.

Simone Lalonde.

DEATH BY ADOPTION

by

Joss Shawyer

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A FEMINIST READING LIST



• CLASSICS

The Second Sex, Simone de Beauvoir, Penguin, 1972, \$7.25 Preceding the second wave of feminism, de Beauvoir's masterpiece is essential feminist reading.

The Dialectic of Sex, Shulamith Firestone, Morrow, \$4.50. The guts of radical feminism — goes beyond marxism to see the first class divisions occurring along sex lines.

Patriarchal Attitudes, Eva Figes, Virago, 1978, \$5.25. A radical feminist perspective on attitudes to women through history: she takes on and exposes the sexism of Hegel, Rousseau, Darwin, Freud, Christianity...

SCUM Manifesto, Valarie Solanis, Olympia Press, 1971, O/P. Angry, violent, extreme — Solanis's manifesto for the Society for Cutting Up Men expresses how we all feel at times. Hard to find but not to be missed.

Three Guineas, Virginia Woolf, Penguin, 1977, \$2.60. Recently republished — a brilliant argument from this noted author on why women should be disloyal to male "civilisation".

• ANTHOLOGIES

Sisterhood is Powerful, ed Robin Morgan, Vintage Books, 1970, \$3.50. The first and best women's liberation anthology — contains much of the best writing from the first years of the radical feminist movement.

Radical Feminism, ed. Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine, Anita Rapone, Quadrangle, 1973, \$6.50.

Voices from Women's Liberation, ed. Leslie Tanner, Signet, 1971, O/P.

Feminist Revolution, Redstockings, Random House, 1978, \$6.95. First published in 1975 — looks at what's happened to the movement since its earliest days, — jolts us into reassessing trends in the movement now.

• MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Wedlocked Women, Lee Comer, Feminist Books Ltd, UK, 1974, One pound Sterling. Using her own experience and interviews with other women Comer comes up with one of the best analyses of the role of the housewife and mother.

The Feminine Mystique, Betty Friedan, Penguin, 1972, \$2.75. The groundbreaking book on the "problem which has no name" — the increasing dissatisfaction of the American housewife. It jolted many women into feminist awareness.

The Power of Women and The Subversion of the Community, Selma James and Mariarosa Della Costa, Falling Wall Press, UK, 1972, \$2.00. Marxist analysis of the housewife's role.

Some of the best descriptions of the family and women's role in it are to be found in fictional works:

The Women's Room, Marilyn French, Sphere Books, 1978, \$4.25.

The Man Who Loved Children, Christina Stead, Penguin Modern Classics, 1975, \$4.95.

Martha Quest and A Proper Marriage, Doris Lessing, Panther, 1977, \$2.45 and \$2.85.

• MOTHERHOOD

Of Woman Born, Adrienne Rich, Bantam, 1977, \$4.20. An inspired view of this crucial subject; Rich uses her own experience and also analyses motherhood as an institution.

• MEN AND WOMEN

Body Politics, Nancy Henley, Spectrum Books, 1977, \$5.35. Henley looks at non-verbal behaviour between the sexes and at how this embodies the power imbalance between men and women.

Love, Sex and Sex-Roles, Constantia Safilios-Rothschild, Prentice-Hall, 1977, \$4.95. A look at love and mating behaviour using research on the subject.

Combat in the Erogenous Zone, Ingrid Bengis, Wildwood House, \$3.25. An absorbing biographical account of Bengis's changing attitudes to men.

About Men,* Phyllis Chesler, The Women's Press, 1979, \$8.50. Using art, literary sources and personal experiences, demonstrates male oppression of women with particular emphasis on physical brutality.

Good Fiction:

Who Are You? Anna Kavan, Peter Owen, 1975, \$11.75.

Ice, Anna Kavan, Peter Owen, 1967, \$13.50.

The Yellow Wallpaper, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Feminist Press (USA), 1973.

• HEALTH

Our Bodies, Ourselves, Boston Women's Healthbook Collective, Simon & Schuster, 1976, \$7.45. The classic and comprehensive resource book on women's health — no woman should be without it.

Menstruation and Menopause, Paula Weideger, Pelican, 1978, \$4.60.

The Wise Wound, Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove, Victor Gollancz, 1978, \$24.50. Sometimes sloppily documented but always fascinating argument for a positive view of menstruation.

Fat is a Feminist Issue, Susie Orbach, Paddington Press, 1978, \$7.95. Food addiction, fat and dieting come under feminist scrutiny.

Witches Midwives and Nurses* and **Complaints and Disorders***, Deidre English and Barbara Ehrenreich. The Feminist Press (USA), 1976, \$1.95 and \$2.50. Classic studies of the treatment of women by the male medical profession

WOMEN IN TRADE UNIONS

I. R. Research Monograph No. 6 by

Alan Geare Joyce Herd John Howells
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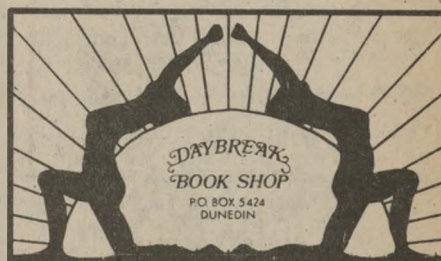
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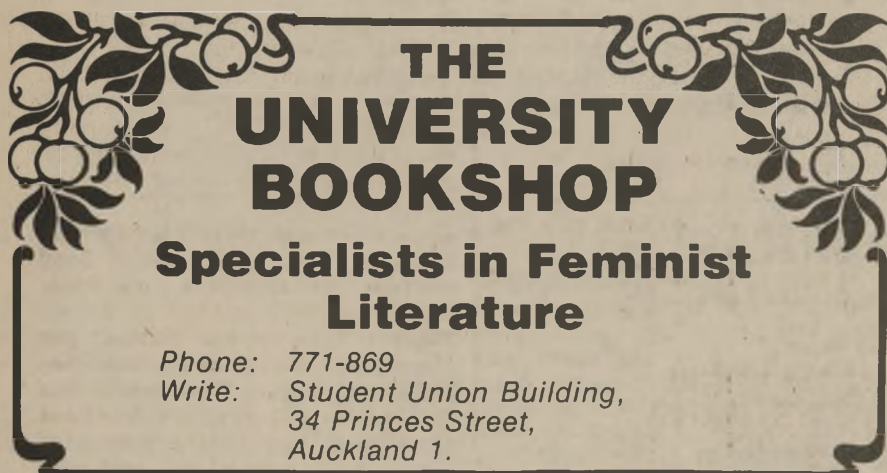
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