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broadsheet

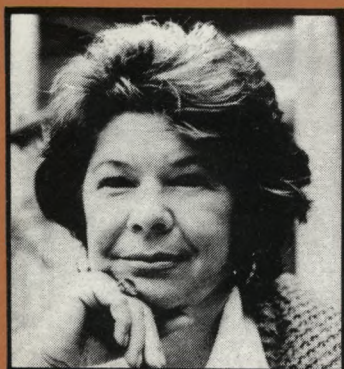
new zealand's feminist magazine

july/august 1980

no. 100
TEACHERS COLLEGE

SEP 1980

SPECIAL EXTRA REPORT: Broadsheet's eighth birthday



Interview:
Marilyn French
"Women's Room"
author

Silicon's ugly secret:
the Asian assembly
lines

Russian underground
feminist magazine
surfaces in the West

PLUS: how to write a submission to parliament, how to keep your own surname, how to help stop genital mutilation.

Registered at the GPO Wellington as a magazine

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.

Deadlines for future issues:

Deadline for September issue:

July 10

Deadline for October issue:

August 10

Deadline for November issue:

September 10

Remember **No August issue!**

We take a break then.

Display adverts, classified adverts,
and small announcements and news
can reach us up to three weeks after
this date.

Enveloping

Enveloping of the September issue
will be on Saturday, August 30, at
the Broadsheet office. The turnout
at the enveloping of the last two is-
sues was very good and we finished
soon after lunch. We hope to see
more of you in September!

We want to hear from you

We're planning to do some articles
later in the year on aspects of
women at work and we need your
help. We'd like readers to share
their experiences with other readers
— anonymously if you like — so we
can have a wider understanding of
these subjects. A kind of printed
consciousness-raising. The two
areas of work we want to look at
are:

• Sexual harassment at work

If you've ever been patted, pinched,
assaulted by a male at work we want
to hear from you. Have you had to
fight off sexual overtures from work
mates? Has promotion or a job ever
been offered to you dependent on
sleeping with the boss?

• Being a feminist in the workplace

Are you regarded as a bit weird be-
cause of your ideas on women? At
staff meetings do all heads swivel to

look at you when the boss makes a
sexist comment? Have you been
passed over for promotion or lost a
job because of your feminism? Do
other women support you? Do the
men bait you? Have you ever found
a sign saying "mad feminist" on
your office door?

Write anything from 100 to 1000
words on either of these subjects
and send them to our box number. If
you would like your comments to be
published anonymously state that
with your letter.

Reporters wanted

We're often told we're too
Auckland-centred in the content of
the magazine. We'd really like to
have more news from other parts of
New Zealand, articles about women
in these areas, and items about com-
ing events. Are there any women
who would like to offer their ser-
vices to send material from out-of-
Auckland? We can't pay, but you'll
see your writing in print and high-
light what's happening in your area.
South Island contributors particu-
larly welcome.

A Personal Way to Help

One of our loyal readers and suppor-
ters is responsible for doing, and
paying for, the xeroxing of address
labels which go on the envelopes for
mailing out to subscribers. She re-
cently suggested that other women
might rather help with a specific task
like this rather than giving money. It

has the advantage also of being able
to be paid in instalments and thus
not hitting your pocket so hard.
Other women have helped with buy-
ing filing boxes for the library and
helping pay for photographs. If
there are other people who would
like to help in a similar way, could
they ring the office to discuss this
with a Broadsheet Collective
member. We very much appreciate
the help we get in this way and it can
make your contribution more per-
sonal.

Anonymous letters

A number of readers have recently
sent us letters for publication with-
out signing them. Our policy is not
to publish anonymous letters al-
though we are quite happy to pub-
lish letters without revealing the
identity of the writer as long as the
identity of the writer is supplied to
us. This policy is firstly to ensure
good faith, and secondly, so that we
have a name and forwarding ad-
dress to pass on letters we might
receive to the writer of the letter
from our readers. Several of the let-
ters we have received recently have
made interesting and important
points and we are disappointed that
we cannot share them with readers.
Please ensure that we can either by
providing your name for publica-
tion, or if you do not wish to do this,
by providing the editors with your
name but stating that you do not
want it published.

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gardens, general house renovations and maintenance,
draughting, offset printing and lino laying.

Window cleaning and carpet steam-cleaning anti-flea, anti
bacteria, stain removal): **Phone 685-344, Auckland.**

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DRAWING: VANYA LOWRY

The Broadsheet Collective: Sarah Calvert, Sandra Coney, Sandi Hall, Miriam Jackson, Anne Macfarlane, Jenny Rankine.

These women worked on this issue: Heather Clark, Anne du Temple, Jean Gosling, Christine Hamilton, Marg Medley, Jill Ranstead, Lyn Roberts, Lesley Smith, Doreen Suddens, Jean Volkerling and the enveloping women.

Cover photo: Shirley Guar

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LETTERS

Reversed racism not on

Dear Broadsheet,

And ten points to Fiona Stevens too for a magnificently splenetic letter on the May issue! However, I'd like to take up some of the things she says about Donna Awatere's "I want a New Zealand where it is safe to be born a Maori child" (Jan/Feb Broadsheet, text of speech at Suffrage Day Seminar). First, let's clarify some definitions. By racism I understand, and from the text of the offensive document I'd say Donna does too, racism that is systemic: that is built into all the institutions of society and the values and assumptions on which they operate; so that they are more beneficial to Pakehas, while they deliver disproportionately less of the goods to the disadvantaged minorities. It's not primarily a matter of personal prejudice or discrimination, although that can reinforce institutional racism. This pretty well parallels how I understand sexism too. So for example you can say that a hospital is a sexist and/or racist institution because of who holds the power, who participates at what levels on whose terms, and what the underlying values and assumptions are.

Therefore, because of the power patterns in this society, it is just not on to talk about "reversed racism", any more than reversed sexism. Women can be prejudiced against men, and blacks can be prejudiced and hold negative stereotypes of whites, but racism and sexism flow in only one direction in this society.

I'd say that everyone of European ancestry inherits the benefits of living in a racist society. The schools,

the news media, use our language; and they certainly don't embody Maori value systems or thought patterns. Nor do Government Departments or transport facilities or business practices. Nor do customs relating to food, social gatherings or family relationships, unless they are in the most private parts of the private sector, when only Maoris are present on their own territory; and all kinds of pressures minimise that territory and the time that can be spent there.

Although some of us dissent from the culture, and we have historically been denied power and access to institutions in our own right, Pakeha women still have access to resources and institutions through Pakeha men — fathers, lovers, husbands. Even when, as adults, we cut loose from men, we have had education in our own language; access to better housing, food, transport and general welfare. We are less likely to have lived in selectively policed areas, less likely to have been taken away from our parents, less likely to have been processed right through the bowels of the "justice" system — and less likely to be working in the Hospital laundry.

Good grief! we can see how institutions and society work for men to disadvantage women: come on, Fiona, recognise that there's a racial/cultural strand in that tangle too, and they're *cumulative*.

What the hell do you mean, 'fall romantically in love with the "plight" of Maori women'? I can't imagine who's wanting you to do that — whatever it is! What difference would that make? I think you *are* being asked to consider some issues of justice. However, as long as you stick to your

highly individualised mode of operating, you will be able to avoid them because at most you will only perceive as incidents or isolated cases what you would see as part of a pattern if you developed some analytic skills for working from the particular to the general.

I can feel your emotional response to the emotional aspects of Donna's article. But what about the other side which you pass over — the facts and figures which bear out what she says, even presented in a summarised form.

If we do nothing, we simply allow racist oppression to continue. If we become actively anti-racist, to the best of our abilities, we *still* benefit from past and present social structures — but at least we are entitled to hope for a more just future. I am suspicious of liberals myself, but I think that radicals have more to offer than reactionaries.

Mitzi Nairn

Rotten apples do fall

Dear Broadsheet,

Phyllida Bunkle describes SPUC's actions in Wellington politics well (Broadsheet, May 1980) but there is no reason for liberals to act helpless. For women's sakes, start putting some heat on the bastards. These MPs only survive because of the support of their organisations and parties — start shaking that. Campaign against them with members of their party's committees and with groups such as the Trade Unions which have traditionally supported them. The adoption of the Working Women's Charter by the FOL and the activism of the Working Women's Council gives you a sympathetic place to start. Go to it — and shake the rotten

apples out of the tree.

SPUC's post-election survey (1979) shows that a candidate who takes a strong pro-choice line makes a net gain of 600 votes. Therefore, it is rubbish to say that candidates in marginal seats are prevented from taking such a line. Surveys show that 60% — 70% of the public are liberal on the abortion issue. Thus, women should not be afraid of arousing the support on this issue.

In sisterhood,

Pat Wilkinson

Not beyond redemption

Dear Broadsheet,

Barbara Jones' diatribe on the evils of the media in the April issue seemed to ignore one vital point — the "male media" happens to include some purposeful feminist women, of which I am one.

On a personal basis, I take issue with Jones' uninformed criticism of sub-editors, of which I also am one. Jones rudely labelled the mythical sub-editor as "he" and spoke only of "his work", "his selection" and "the boys" etc. Does she not consider that women are ever worthy enough to reach this level? There are many women in the media in New Zealand, firmly feminist in their beliefs and their lifestyles and although it may be a struggle to maintain this strength of purpose, I know it is worth it.

I work directly with six men and indirectly with dozens of others. I believe, indeed I know that I more than justify my existence as a journalist and a feminist — at the same time! By working competently with these men I am promoting feminism and successfully blowing to pieces the tired

old clichés about women doing a man's job.

Don't dismiss the media because it is male-dominated. Sisters, the whole bloody world is male-dominated (in terms of economics, society, power). It would be a tragedy to let this stand in the way of achieving our aims. I am not blind to the failings of the media — I am painfully aware of them but I know I will achieve far more by taking action rather than mouthing vaguely about injustice and bias. It is up to us to promote the type of media service we want and need. This is not a particularly simple or speedy task but can be achieved by bombarding the media with material about our groups, meetings, centres, struggles, triumphs. Use the media to work for you, not against you!

There is no point in destroying something for which you are not prepared to substitute a better alternative. Get in there and change what you don't like and keep changing, until you DO like it!

Karen O'Brien

The rewards of duty

Dear Broadsheet,

I am a middle-aged woman who spent twenty years housekeeping for my husband and bringing up my family. Now I am alone, and, since I lost my job, on the "dole". I see that I will have enough money for rent and perhaps one modest meal per day, but nothing for electricity, phone, TV or bus fares.

When I was bringing up my children people often said to me that I was doing "the most important job of all."

"The most important job" seems to lead to semi-starvation, doesn't it?

Yours faithfully,

Retired mother (name supplied)

In response to our news item about a Wet T-shirt competition in Auckland (see Broad-sheet April 1980) reader Gwen Gawith sent this cartoon:



Natural Family Planning

Dear Broadsheet,

Natural family planning has become very fashionable lately, even being recommended by some feminists. I wonder why this insistence on naturalness in reproduction and specifically in contraception.

We wear manufactured clothes, launder them in machines. We don't hesitate to use cars, planes, motorbikes and other "unnatural" forms of transport. Our homes are built with materials not found in nature; we readily accept artificial heat and lighting, telephones and furnishings.

Even those who prefer "natural" health foods have to cook with unnatural means, store food in refrigerators, and eat with implements. So why be natural about family planning? If, as natural family planning enthusiasts would have us believe, there is a method of fertility control provided by nature, then logically it must include the whole process of pregnancy and childbirth, of birth and death. If it is unnatural to prevent conception (except by abstaining during the fertile period) then it must also be unnatural to prevent miscarriage (nature's way of dealing with mistakes?) it must also be unnatural to prevent death through

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I do not think women should take up power against men thinking they will be able to avoid what men did against women."

Simone de Beauvoir
"Feminist Studies" V, No 2, 1979.

childbirth (nature's way of controlling the population increase?) It must also be unnatural to take medication, have operations, or use any artificial means to extend the lifespan.

Of course this is so — it is "unnatural" to do these things, just as it is unnatural to use electricity, cars, telephones, washing machines, plastic, nylon, and just about everything else in our lives.

Nobody seriously expects that people will give up all these "unnatural" inventions and return to a totally primitive way of life. Nobody seriously expects that people will ignore all life-saving medications or techniques, in order to experience a "natural" death. Why then are we asked to be natural (primitive) in this one facet of our reproductive lives?

Is it coincidence that the result of this bit of "natural" behaviour is for women to bear more children? Is it coincidence that women are being asked to use primitive methods of contraception, which gives them less control over their fertility and therefore their lives, while it is considered quite acceptable for unnatural methods to be employed in all other areas of life?

Men enjoy the benefits of civilisation and the wonders of modern technology, while women fulfil their "natural" function, bearing children. Sound familiar? Think again, women, before joining those extolling the virtues of natural family planning.

Leah Hawkes
Ohope

The naming matter

Dear Broadsheet,

I am changing my surname and have been told by the Australian authorities that I have to do it by writing to the N.Z. authorities. Have you any information on women changing their

surnames in N.Z. and what legal hassles they had to go through? Anyone who can help could write to me at the address below.

Arohanui,

Gai Egg

7/93 Cambridge St, Stanmore, Sydney, NSW, 2042, Australia.

Response to "Statement"

Dear Broadsheet,

I would like to join the many, who will, I'm sure, write following "A Statement" on page 2, May 1980 issue.

I was saddened by the split that occurred at the end of '78 and have read and re-read and identified with Sharon Alston's contribution on Lesbianism in the "Looking Back at the Seventies" feature (March 1980).

That Sharon and others felt committed enough to try to find a way to bridge the gap is tremendous.

Congratulations to Broadsheet Collective for responding to the challenge.

Sincerely,

Sheila Knight,

Palmerston North.

Bent on rape

Broadsheet workers were told of an attack on four women staying on Waiheke at the end of April. The following letter from a witness to the attack was sent to the *Gulf News* on the island but was not printed for several weeks. Broad-

sheet has received a letter from Jenny Bare of Waiheke about a meeting she and some other women had with the editor about the delay and the paper's policy, but due to lack of space and time to get some comment from the editor ourselves, Jenny's letter will be printed next issue.

Dear Broadsheet,

Tuesday, [April 29] at one o'clock in the morning I was awoken by the sound of yells from a neighbouring house. Dressing rapidly, I ran across and found a pitched battle between four young women of the house and three men who had tried to force entry. One woman was struggling on the ground with a man bent on removing her clothing as he pinned her down with the help of another man who was yelling "Drag her away." A second woman was against the wall, ducking punches at her head. A third woman was struggling to free her sister while the fourth, who had been thrown over the cliff, but had managed to retain sufficient grip on her huge attacker to pull herself straight back, then ran up the steps to the firewood pile, from which she rained a steady stream of missiles upon the heads of the intruders. Even a couple of boulders from the rock wall and some bottles barely missed their mark.

I arrived at a point overlooking the whole scene and joined the women's yells ordering the trespass-

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sers to leave. One of the men who was holding down the first woman stood up to assess the position and was knocked unconscious by a blow under the ear from a flying, whirling board. His mate dragged him down the track from the line of fire. The first woman, now free, grabbed a spade and confronted the last man, twice her size and armed with a length of heavy wood. He issued a number of violent threats and moved towards her gesturing. She attacked! He fled!

The man who had been knocked out made three attempts to return to the fray. The first time his companion pulled him back, the second he retreated from flying wood pieces. His last try, screaming in rage and running up the track followed by one of the men, was met by a log, delivered by a mighty two-handed throw, bowling both of them. They ran.

I was proud to be a friend of these women who had acquitted themselves so well in war, on what would

have been a night of terror. For there was and is no doubt in my mind: those men were bent on rape!

It should be further understood that rape is not a sexual act, but an act of violence and repression used by men of all cultures to hold all women in fear of their power and authority. Only drastic changes in people's attitudes to women can alter this position.

Graham Rogers

World War III

Dear Broadsheet,

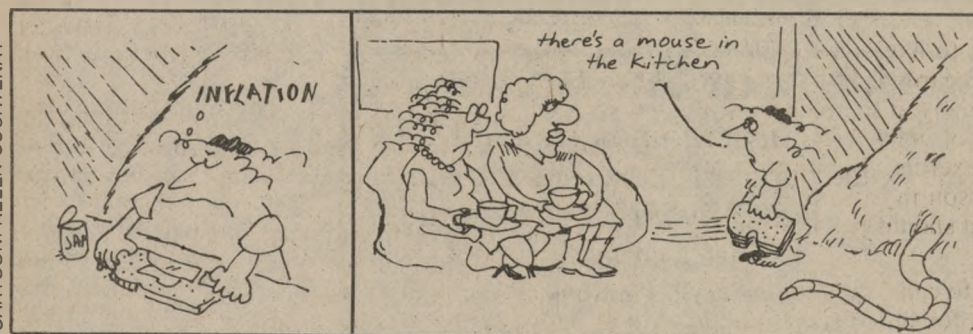
We in Sydney have just begun an anti-war group to begin resistance to the coming World War III — be it a cold war or an all-out destruction one. If there is a group begun in New Zealand could you give us a contact address for them. We would like to get as many perspectives as possible on what is happening as we in N.Z., Aussie and Tasmania are very isolated as far as a communication network goes and our geographical positioning. Alternatively if there is not such a group begun there but you would like information from us on what we have begun, write and ask us.

In sisterhood,

Gai Maley

7/93 Cambridge St, Stanmore, Sydney, NSW, 2042, Australia.

CARTOON: HELEN COURTENAY



COMMENT

by Roslyn Noonan

The Labour Party's decision at its annual conference in May to call for a referendum on abortion is yet one more sorry episode in a long history of treachery by the party on this issue.

It was a Labour Party Member of Parliament, Dr Gerald Wall, who first attempted to get restrictive legislation through Parliament. It was the Labour Party which established the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion — and deliberately peopled it with reactionaries.

The leader of the opposition, Bill Rowling, tried to make his actions look like those of a responsible and courageous leader acting in the best interests of his party. In fact his call for a referendum on abortion was but another example of his lack of political nerve.

Feminists should be absolutely united in their opposition to the referendum. The referendum is presented as a step towards community participation and democratic decision-making. It is not! Referendums have been used in the past by undemocratic and dictatorial regimes to give a semblance of legitimacy to their pre-determined actions. In these cases the outcomes of the referendums have inevitably been foregone conclusions.

In a referendum the question is the key to the results. Already the Labour Party is having difficulty coming up with an adequate question.

There are a number of other difficulties with a referendum. Only a low voter turnout can be expected — as in local body and by-elections. And invariably it is the reactionaries who vote on such occasions.

We know SPUC has access to the considerable resources of the Catholic Church, and indeed of other organised religious groups. We could expect a massive advertising campaign with full page ads showing cute foetuses. The advertising will manipulate people's ignorance with appeals to sentimentality. Feminists and others who support repeal of the abortion laws — or at least major reform of them — cannot hope to match the funds available to SPUC and therefore will undoubtedly lose by default.

The most important objection to the referendum is, however, one of principle.

A woman's right to choose to have an abortion is absolute. It should not be regarded as a privilege which may be allowed or removed at the whim of anyone, not even a majority of New Zealanders. If only one woman wanted to exercise her right to an abortion and every other person in this country opposed abortion — that woman should still be entitled to her abortion.

The Labour Party decision to call for a referendum raises a number of questions for feminists — about how to achieve the changes we want.

People keep telling me that I should be more grateful, that attitudes are changing and that women are becoming more visible and involved in public life. For a few days in May I thought maybe those people were right when the FOL and then the Labour Party passed the Working Women's Charter.

I felt so elated, even euphoric, at the time. It made me realise how few victories we have to celebrate and how nice it is to be on the winning side occasionally. The realisation that there were still many battles to be fought before the various clauses of the Charter became reality certainly chastened my celebrations. But at last I thought we had something to wave in their faces — to say "You agreed to it, now do something about it!"

And then came that terrible day when I turned on the radio to hear the unctuous, self-righteous and hypocritical Bill Rowling seeking to reverse the decision on the abortion clause of the Charter. Rowling's actions were of course perfectly consistent with his previous pro-SPUC line and his general lack of political courage and leadership qualities. He has also been consistent in his ignorance about the oppression of women — and has consistently refused to do anything about it.

So while Rowling's actions should have come as no surprise, it was distressing in the extreme to hear women like Anne Hercus and Margaret Shields rushing to his support.

These women may well have encouraged Rowling to take the action he did. Margaret Shields, for example, may have feared for her nomination as the Labour candidate for Kapiti as she has within her party organisation SPUC leader Marilyn Pryor. Anne Hercus, of course, is intent on making it into the next Labour cabinet.

It would seem that strong personal political ambition — that is ambition to succeed within the existing political structures — precludes a principled commitment to feminist goals. It is certainly true that the male system will seek to divide women — and will in many cases most successfully co-opt women to its own ends. Yet it is also true that we must have women working within the system in positions sufficiently powerful to prevent the full resources of the state from being used against us.

At present, radical feminist women are creating the climate which provides the opportunity for conservative women to move into positions previously denied all women.

We need to develop strategies to ensure that those women who owe their success at least in part to our movement's activities recognise their debt and repay it by active support for the issues we regard as important. ■

BEHIND THE NEWS

GENITAL MUTILATION

It's a subject some people find too horrifying to think about. But it won't go away unless people act to stop it. SANDRA CONEY reports on progress being made in the struggle and outlines how we can help.

Last year Broadsheet published a horrifying article on genital mutilation. The article, originally published in the French paper *Le*

Monde, told us that up to 30 million women in Africa and the Middle East have been subjected to one of three forms of genital mutilation:

- sunna "circumcision" — removal of the tip of the clitoris;
- clitoridectomy — excision of the entire clitoris;
- infibulation — removal of all the external genital organs and closing of the vaginal opening.

We learned that the women affected by these atrocities suffer an appalling toll in ill-health, complications of childbirth, loss of sexual feelings and, not infrequently, death from shock, haemorrhage and infection. The writer of the article, Claire Brisset, described how the operations, although still most frequently performed under the most primitive and unhygienic conditions were increasingly being performed in hospitals and by doctors while international health and family planning agencies in these areas expressed reluctance to interfere with "social and cultural attitudes".

The first break in the "conspiracy of silence" surrounding these practices came when the World Health Organisation-initiated conference on Traditional Practices affecting the Health of Women, held in Khartoum in February last year, passed a resolution condemning clitoridectomy and urging campaigns for its abolition. Later in the year, a United Nations conference held in Lusaka, Zambia, in preparation for the UN's Mid-Decade World Conference of Women condemned female mutilation and called on women's organisations in the countries concerned "to mobilise information and health education campaigns on the harmful medical and social consequences of the practices." The subject will be on the agenda when women from all over the world meet this month in Copenhagen for the Mid-Decade World Conference.

Although some Western feminists, notably Fran Hosken of WIN News, have been campaigning for years on this issue, we are only now beginning to hear the voices of the victims and of others in the countries where the mutilations occur. Voices like that of Nawal el



PHOTO: JANIA/SIPA PRESS

The village women splash water on seven-year-old Adizetu's wound after the excisor has performed a clitoridectomy.

Saadawi, an Egyptian feminist and doctor, whose description of her own clitoridectomy is published here (see box). A Nigerian nurse, Esther Ogunmodede, spoke out strongly in Nigeria's **Drum** magazine and this prompted a flood of letters discussing the issue. Following the announcement of the Khartoum conference the International Planned Parenthood Federation magazine **People**, which had previously kept a total silence on the subject, published part of Esther's article.

In some areas women are organising to openly resist the perpetuation of these operations. For instance, in Upper Volta, where about 70% of the women are excised, the Federation des Femmes Voltaigues sent a representative to the Khartoum conference and following this, at their second Congress, condemned the practice. They decided to launch an educational programme and planned a series of 52 radio talks explaining the medical and psychological dangers of the operation but the programmes were stopped by the government.

So far it appears that opposition to the operations is mainly coming from the educated elite — people who are influenced by Western ideas.

Again Fran Hosken reports that at a public meeting in Somalia she was told that "a group of families in the modern sector who refuse to have their girls operated have formed a mutual support organisation as the children are exposed to great social pressure. The children are being taught when teased to refer to their friends, who similarly have not been operated, stating that 'we are better than you because we are whole and you are cut.'"

While change is slowly occurring among this educated group, change among rural and more traditional peoples will be slower to come. Among these people un mutilated girls are seen as unclean, sexually rapacious and unmarriageable. A correspondent to **Le Reveil de Djibouti** wrote: "In our society when a girl wants to insult another, she tells her, 'You are open — therefore you

Nawal el Saadawi, an Egyptian feminist and doctor, describes her own genital mutilation.

I was six years old that night when I lay in my bed, warm and peaceful, half way between wakefulness and sleep. I felt something move under the blankets, something like a huge hand, cold and rough, fumbling over my body, as though looking for something. Almost simultaneously another hand, as cold and as rough and as big as the first one was clapped over my mouth, to prevent me from screaming.

They carried me to the bathroom. I do not know how many of them there were, nor do I remember their faces, or whether they were men or women. The world to me seemed enveloped in a dark fog which prevented me from seeing. Or perhaps they put some kind of a cover over my eyes. All I remember is that I was frightened and that there were many of them, and that something like an iron grasp caught hold of my hand, and my arms, and my thighs, so that I became unable to resist or even to move. I also remember the icy touch of the bathroom tiles under my naked body, and unknown voices, and humming sounds interrupted now and again by a rasping metallic sound which reminded me of the butcher when he used to sharpen his knife before slaughtering a sheep for the festival.

My blood was frozen in my veins. It looked to me as though some thieves had broken into my room and kidnapped me from my bed. They were getting ready to cut my throat which was always what happened with disobedient girls like myself in the stories that my old rural grandmother was so fond of telling me.

I strained my ears trying to catch the rasp of the metallic sound. The moment it ceased it was as though my heart stopped beating with it. I was unable to see, and somehow my breathing seemed also to have stopped. Yet I imagined the thing that was making the rasping sound coming closer and closer to me. Somehow it was not approaching my neck as I had expected but another part of my body. Somewhere below my belly, as though seeking something buried between my thighs. At that very moment I realised that my thighs had been pulled wide apart, and that each of my lower limbs was being held as far away from the other as possible, gripped by steel fingers that never relinquished their pressure. The sharp metallic edge



PHOTO: ANGELA PHILLIPS (SPARERIB)

seemed to drop between my thighs and then cut off a piece of flesh from my body.

I screamed with pain despite the tight hand over my mouth, for the pain was not just a pain, it was like a searing flame that went through my whole body. After a few moments, I saw a red pool of blood around my hips.

I did not know what they had cut off from my body, and I did not try to find out. I just wept, and called out to my mother for help. But the worst shock of all was when I looked around and found her standing by my side. Yes it was her, I could not be mistaken, in flesh and blood, right in the midst of these strangers, talking to them, and smiling at them, as though they had not participated in slaughtering her daughter just a few moments ago.

They carried me to my bed. I saw them catch hold of my sister who was two years younger. I cried out with all my might "No! No!". I could see my sister's face held between the big rough hands. It had a deathly pallor and her wide black eyes met mine for a split second, a glance of dark terror which I can never forget. A moment later and she was gone, behind the door of the bathroom where I had just been. The look we exchanged seemed to say: "Now we know what it is. Now we know where lies our tragedy. We were born of a special sex, the female sex. We are destined in advance to taste of misery, and to have a part of our body torn away by cold, unfeeling cruel hands."

From **The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World**, published by Zed Press, London.

are dirty and a prostitute.' " And in a Mali maternity hospital the chief midwife reported: "All the women coming to this hospital are excised. To say 'you are not excised' is a great insult." Nawal el Saadawi describes how women who have been excised are invariably relieved to have had the operation: "I was happy the day I recovered from the effects of the operation, and felt as

though I was rid of something which had to be removed, and so become clean and pure."

It will take a massive education programme to budge such entrenched attitudes. Passing legislation and making recommendations will not be enough. In the Sudan, for example, infibulation was made illegal in 1945 but it is still very widely practised in that country. In Esther Ogunmodede's opinion "nothing short of a worldwide campaign, like that mounted by the International Planned Parenthood Federation over family planning, is needed to eradicate genital mutilation of girls." But she believes such a campaign is not impossible; she points to the abolition of tribal scarring as an example of what can be done. In some parts of Africa travelling educative caravans have started making inroads into rural areas with displays, leaflets, and tapes pointing to the health dangers of these practices.

Reports are now coming in to show that genital mutilation is not confined to Africa and the Middle East. After the Khartoum conference it was revealed that immigrants to Sweden from countries practising clitoridectomy were continuing the operation in their new country and that these had in some cases been performed by a Swedish surgeon and professor of gynaecology. Articles condemning this appeared in all the major Swedish papers and the matter was discussed in parliament. Since a law was passed in Sweden last June forbidding all forms of corporal punishment of children it is clear the operation would be illegal but moves are being made to specifically prohibit the mutilations.

Closer to home the New South Wales Humanist Society discovered that genital operations are being performed "on the daughters and Australian brides of some overseas students" and "among some ethnic groups from North Africa and the Middle East." "Clitoridectomy is not illegal in Australia and may be performed in public hospitals and claimed on health insurance. New South Wales which has

about three and one half million people seems to average about 150 clitoridectomies per year in hospitals. However, information gathered by the committee [the Humanist Female Genital Mutilation Committee] suggests that the operations performed for traditional purposes tend to be done clandestinely like backyard abortions."

And lest we think that mutilation of the female genitalia is only practised by Third World peoples, the US feminist news service *Her Say* reports that a Dr James Burt, an Ohio gynaecologist, offers a \$1500 vaginal reconstruction operation in order to "make the clitoris more accessible to direct penile stimulation." In doing so, he mutilates a major muscle, creates a high risk of infection and incontinence, makes vaginal delivery during childbirth problematic and creates difficulties for intercourse in any other position than male superior.

Like her African sister who is excised and infibulated to ensure her marriageability and fidelity once married the American woman is mutilated to please her man: "It cost me \$1500, I could have bought me a car for that, but why shouldn't I spend it on her 'cause I enjoy her a lot more . . . with the surgery she's much firmer and our bodies are much closer during sex. Now I don't even have to try for her to enjoy herself. You don't even need foreplay. She used to 'party' me just to satisfy me. A man feels like he ain't much of a man, like she might be seeing other men. Now, why should she when she's getting satisfied at home? 'I'm more sure that my woman's gonna be there when I get home.'"

Nawal el Saadawi has spoken of "the psychological clitoridectomy" of women in the West — the women who do not know they have a clitoris. There is only a difference in degree between the African child mutilated with a bottle and the American matron who is prepared to be surgically reconstructed to be more acceptable. Our sexuality has always been manipulated to suit male needs. We are, indeed, sisters under the skin. ■

STOP GENITAL MUTILATION

What we can do to help

More reading on the subject:

Broadsheet, No 72, Sept 1979 (send 90 cents).

SpareRib, No 92, March 1980.

Ms, Vol 8, No 9, March 1980.

WIN News, most issues, available from 187 Grant St, Lexington, MA 02173. USA or read in the Broadsheet library. Sub: US \$15.

The Hosken Report, Fran Hosken, available from WIN News, address above, at US\$17.00 plus US\$4.00 for airmail postage. Also in Broadsheet library.

The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World, Nawal el Saadawi. Zed Press, 57 Caledonian Rd, London N19 5DN, UK.

File on genital mutilation in Broadsheet library.

Groups fighting the mutilations:

Human Rights/Health Action Network, contact at WIN News, address above. Aims to coordinate action internationally and to keep groups informed of new developments.

Women Against Mutilation, 1630 R St. NW, Washington DC 20009, USA.

New South Wales Humanist Soc, 10 Shepperd St, Chippendale NSW 2008, Australia.

To protest write to the following agencies urging:

- implementation of the WHO seminar recommendations;

- inclusion of preventative measures in all ongoing and planned health programmes;

- health/reproductive information programmes for general public. Mr Henry Labouisse, Executive-director UNICEF, UNO Headquarters, New York, NY 10017, USA.

Dr T. Baasher, WHO Mediterranean Office, PO Box 1517, Alexandria, Egypt.

United Nations Association, PO Box 1011, Wellington.

UNICEF, New Zealand, PO Box 122, Wellington.

Taking charge of their own lives

Ros Capper and Philippa Proudfoot launched their Wellington-based Skills Project in March.

JENNY PHILLIPS reports.

Using workshops and short courses as their vehicles the two plan to pass on such skills as assertiveness training for women, co-counselling (counselling between equals) and leadership skills for women. They foster leader redundancy in their groups by bringing out members' positive abilities and encouraging them to "have a go" — for example to try leading or co-leading their own groups. Part of the teaching offered includes how to pass on the skills learned to other women.

Philippa and Ros see their assertiveness training groups as a consciousness-raising tool. Women become aware that in any given situation there are a number of

choices they can make — that for example they can give more rights to others than themselves ("I'd better agree to be secretary of the PTA because poor Bev is in a spot") or give themselves rights too ("No, I don't want to be secretary"). They try it — it feels good. Many never look back. Many start to analyse why they have allowed themselves to be put down for years. For many it is the beginning of an awareness of how women are oppressed in our society: the personal is political.

Any group of women sharing life experiences develops heightened awareness. The women in these groups also learn to support one another. "Having support to try new things," says Ros "is not to be underrated as a very powerful method of learning."

The waiting list for the eight-week assertiveness courses was huge until recently. Now, as a result of women being encouraged to develop group leadership skills, five groups are being led or co-led by former group members. Ros and Philippa hope this is just the beginning: fostering their own redundancy is an important part of their project.

Some who have trained as group leaders find co-counselling training

useful as it provides them with a valuable support network. Strains, such as being cast as "the expert" when a new group begins, mean plenty of moral support is required.

Ros is feeling good about a group outside Wellington which she took for assertiveness last year. This year half the group members are working outside the home and the others are providing their child care. Two of the women are now co-leading their own assertiveness training group and two are about to lead a post-natal support group for women. "It's exciting to see women take charge of their lives in a very real way," says Ros.

In Ros's private life she has found her assertiveness training skills and co-counselling support valuable. With others she has been planning the establishment of a birth centre — a place where families can choose their own birth ritual. She has found when facing the unbridled wrath of a certain section of the medical establishment her group has needed all the strength it can muster to stand its ground.

Philippa, just back from the United States, has collected a lot of experience in career exploration for women. She wants to closely observe New Zealand conditions first, but hopes soon to involve the skills project in this field too. Philippa's return from the US, plus a Government grant, mean the work Ros has become known for in Wellington can be broadened and more time given to the network aspect.

Both Ros and Philippa are looking for feedback and suggestions on what other directions their skills project could take. Phone Wellington 757-352.

Ros Capper and Philippa Proudfoot are keen to see competent assertiveness trainers for women. They feel they are nearing this goal in the Wellington area and are now working more outside Wellington. They plan a three-day course for assertiveness trainers in Auckland at the end of July to be co-ordinated by Raewyn McKenzie, a family planning tutor.



Philippa Proudfoot and Ros Capper

Charter Barter

**SONJA DAVIES reports
on the endorsement of
the Working Women's
Charter by the
Federation of Labour.**

After three years of trade union debate on the job, at workshops, factories, union meetings and Trades Council seminars throughout the country, the New Zealand Working Women's Charter was endorsed by the 1980 Federation of Labour Conference by an overwhelming majority. The promoters of the Charter, as the result of hundreds of requests, had outlined its principles at meetings and seminars organised by women's organisations, service clubs and other interest groups throughout the country where it had received wide support.

Delegates came to the Federation of Labour Conference to vote on the Charter with a clear mandate from their rank and file members.

The Federation of Labour Committee set up to consider amendments from Trades Councils and unions amended the Charter in accordance with the majority decisions and sent it to the Conference Policy Committee where any unions had the right to make representations in support or rejection of the proposal. There were one or two minor amendments which were then discussed at a caucus of women delegates to the Conference and accepted prior to the vote.

In 1979 there had been some criticism because the Charter was for a second time sent back to the Trades Council for further debate, but most people now agree that the advantages of this action far outweighed the cost of a year's delay. It was a

much more aware Conference that voted in 1980 because so many delegates had been involved in prior discussion.

At the beginning of the campaign it was said by opponents that Clause 15 [on a woman's right to contraception and abortion — Ed] would be divisive — would split the movement, was nothing to do with the lives of working women, but it soon became obvious that people understood very clearly that a woman's right to control her fertility is a crucial part of her working life.

It was Clause 8, which asks for flexible working hours, part-time job opportunities and a shorter working week which caused the most debate, mainly because it was clear that trade unionists with a lifetime of support for a five-day 40-hour week, feared what they saw as an undermining of all that had been achieved. The clause was finally endorsed with the rider that these provisions should only be introduced through union negotiations.

The media reacted predictably in most cases, dwelling mainly on what it termed the "abortion on demand" aspect. Some journalists however, treated the Charter responsibly and reported it fully.

There has been an expected backlash from SPUC and others whose religious beliefs place them in opposition not only to abortion, contraception and sex education.

NEW ZEALANDER ASKED TO COPENHAGEN

After meeting Lucille Mair, Secretary-General of the 1980 World Conference of the UN Decade for Women, earlier in the year, Maori activist Donna Awatere has been asked to speak at the opening of the session on racism at the Mid-Decade Forum. The Forum, to be attended by non-governmental organisations, runs concurrently with the World Conference; both are scheduled for Copenhagen in mid-July. We hope to have a report from Donna in the September issue.

but also to child care. They have branded the Charter as communist and dangerous.

So we now have a Bill of Rights for working women with all its clauses leading back to Clause 1 — the right to work. Detractors have said that most of the Charter is already Federation of Labour policy and so is not needed. It is true that some clauses are part of policy, but some are not. The reality is that policies such as quality child care and parental leave have not been actioned. The endorsement of the Charter now highlights the needs that exist.

What happens now?

The Federation of Labour executive was instructed by Conference to place before the Federation of Labour's National Council (this is comprised of one representative of each Trade Council) in August a plan of action, including the implementation of the proposal to reactivate the Women's Advisory Committee.

In Australia, the ACTU following the endorsement of its Charter, set up inter-state Charter Campaign Committees. The result of this is being investigated and will be considered when the plan of action is being prepared.

Whatever is decided individual union members will decide which aspect of the Charter they wish to see activated. Just as most unions now take their award claims to their members, so too will they place before them any action proposed and seek their suggestions and endorsement.

The passing of the Charter is not the end but the beginning of the campaign. The hard work starts now.

High on my own list of personal priorities is the desire for a strong trade union approach to the World Health Organisation asking for a safe effective contraceptive to receive urgent consideration, so that the discomfort and uncertainty existing for many women is eliminated — but as a working trade unionist our membership will decide. ■
Sonja Davies

IN BRIEF

DEAD, BUT NOT BURIED

Among the books and papers found in a time capsule recently, sealed in 1879, was a feminist message.

In an official guide to the geysers of California, inside the cover, the author of the pamphlet, Laura De-Force Gordon, had written the following inscription: "If this little book should see the light of day after its 100 years entombment, I should like the readers to know that the author was a lover of her own sex, and devoted the best years of her life in striving for the political equality and social and moral elevation of women."

Info from *New Women's Times*, February 1-14, 1980.



PREGNANT WOMEN ... BEWARE! ...

According to the 14th Annual Report of the New Zealand Committee on Adverse Drug Reactions (*NZ Medical Journal* March 26, 1980; 91: 226-9), "... the potential of anti-histaminics to cause fetal malformations has been largely discounted." Because there is no national registry set up in this country to collect such statistics, only 12 cases of congenital abnormalities potentially associated with drugs were reported to the Committee. As the Committee says, these represent but a miniscule fraction of the cases which must occur of malformations born to mothers who have taken medications of some kind in early pregnancy. While no conclusions can be drawn from these small

numbers, it is interesting, nevertheless, that half of these cases were related to anti-histaminics; and furthermore, of these six, five had used the drug **Doxylamine**, marketed under the name of **Debendox**.

Debendox is commonly used for nausea of pregnancy. It has received attention in both Australia and America as a drug of dubious value. One woman in America has succeeded in winning a law suit against the manufacturers of the drug. Certainly a more conservative use should be made of this drug, until its safety has been proved.

One wonders what attempts the above Committee has made to warn doctors of a possible association between this drug and congenital malformations ... or more importantly, what action the Department of Health will take to protect women from being prescribed this potentially hazardous drug.

Ruth Bonita

MONEY TALKS

Researcher and writer Caroline Bird, who penned *The Two Paycheck Marriage* after studying 5000 couples over a three-year period on the effects of working wives on marriage has found that the more family income a husband earns, the more likely he is to win family arguments. She says that a wife's share of decision-making power is in direct proportion to how much of the family income she brings in.

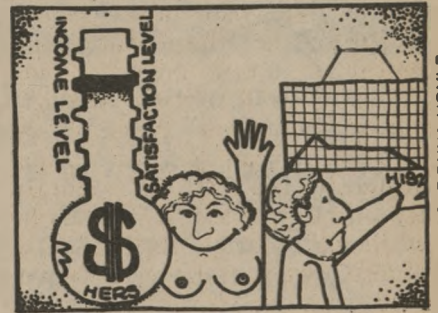
For example, Bird says a wife who earns \$6,000 to her husband's \$8,000 has more power in a relationship than a woman who earns \$20,000 to her husband's \$100,000 salary.

Bird also found that a couple's

Anti-Iranian demonstrators in the US have carried such placards as "Nuke Iran" and "Rape an Iranian woman".

sexual relationship is related to family economics. Most men the researcher interviewed, for example, said that sex gets worse when the wife works, while most women said it gets better.

Bird reports that a wife's income also affects the divorce rate. The separation rate goes up two per cent for every \$1,000 increase in a woman's salary.



DRAWINGS: DONNA HOYLE

NOT GOOD ENOUGH?
The Women's Appointment File forwarded more than 50 names of women for appointment to statutory bodies but none was successful.

BIG SISTER IS WATCHING

The sexism of newspaper and radio news editors throughout the country is about to come under scrutiny. Following a Committee on Women sponsored seminar on the media in May it was agreed to monitor news and feature coverage throughout New Zealand for a week, to be called National Watch-woman Week. During this week — the dates of which will not be disclosed to the media organisations involved — people throughout the country will clip newspaper stories and check on radio coverage of women, women's issues and activities. These will be collected and assessed, and newspapers and radio stations graded according to their freedom (or otherwise) from sexual stereotypes.

the broadsheet report

Celebrating your eighth birthday seemed to us an appropriate time to report to our readers on how this magazine works. We have become aware that many readers do not know who produces Broadsheet and how we do it. We hope this article will go some way towards explaining the behind-the-scenes work that goes into producing the magazine you hold in your hands.

herstory

"We were sitting around, this group of us, wondering what to do. We wanted some *action* but were having a spot of bother deciding where it was going to be. Someone suggested we make a futile gesture, strap on our pregnancy pouffs and threaten to throw ourselves off the top of the town hall in protest at the Abortion Law. Or, we could go out . . . no, not our scene. Well what could we do — we could read, we could write and 'Hey' someone said, 'we can type! A NEWSPAPER — that's great.' — *Broadsheet No 1, July 1972.*

So with few skills, no money but loads of enthusiasm a newsheet was born. The name "Broadsheet" was only delivered after much labour, for prolonged straining far into the night resulted in many abortive ideas until finally

a description of the six-leaf foolscap magazine which was also a send-up, was supported. Nevertheless the first issue did challenge readers for ideas and one reader suggested, "Redeem, Exemplar, Rising Up, Ad-Lib, and Climax . . ."

That first edition of 200 copies was produced ready for printing on a winter's day at Sandra Coney's house and the energy on that first day overcame the inexperience. The one professional, Anne Parsons, was to proofread Broadsheet for many years but we learnt the other tasks as we went along. The enthusiasm was infectious and over the years many women became involved with stapling evenings when the printed pages were sorted and stapled, and later with enveloping, as well as the more technical work. In the early years men were involved — the first illustrators were men — but

the talents of women were recognised and used whenever possible. Later it became the policy that Broadsheet became a magazine for women by women and men were not involved.

The 48-page Broadsheet of this issue seems far removed from the original foolscap issues. Nearly two years after that first issue one collective member suggested a more professional format, a glossy cover, typeset rather than typewritten, which, if distributed throughout NZ bookshops would reach a far greater audience of women. With great trepidation, and fears of financial collapse, the change was made and bigger, brighter and sometimes better issues have kept on rolling out. Originally each issue was devoted to one topic but with some topics seeming more popular than others, a change was made to provide variety.

eight years in print

Another change has been Broadsheet's own centralisation and the development of its own identity. In the first years the magazine was scattered around Auckland — proofreading at Anne's, accounts at Sharyn's work, typesetting in the city, subscriptions and enveloping at Rosemary's and layout at Sandra's. Since subscriptions increased with the new format, a shop was rented for layout but it was 1976 before Broadsheet came to town. With every step of the publishing process at a different location there was a growing frustration at the running around, delays and breaks in the chain. In addition, the constant overwork was beginning to affect workers as they tried to put together the magazine between families, relationships and paid work. Faced with the prospect of reducing production to five or six issues a year, Broadsheet chose the alternative of paying two women to work part-time on the magazine so they did not have to put so much time into earning a living elsewhere. Admittedly the pay was meagre but it was a start in providing alternative employment for feminists, and later the part-time workers were increased to three. With premises established in the city and paid workers, office hours could be regular, making Broadsheet more accessible to our readers and advertisers. The two large rooms in Victoria Street had space for a library of feminist books, magazines and a resource file. In the latest premises in Anzac Avenue the library has expanded to a room of its own.

Since the major change in format six years ago Broadsheet has looked much the same. It is still produced in the cheapest way possible using recycled newsprint and only two colours on the cover. For although our skills are more developed we are limited by our minimal equipment and our restricted income. Despite the constraints there are always new ideas to be debated and Broadsheet is a vibrant feminist activity.



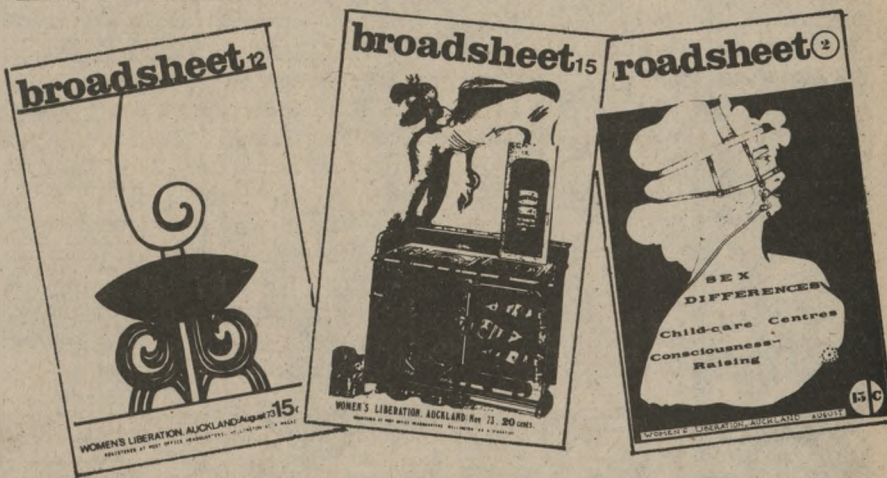
The present Broadsheet collective at a meeting.

the collective

Every second Thursday night finds the six members of the Broadsheet collective gathered in a small suburban sitting room. Over many cups of coffee we work our way through Broadsheet business which has arisen over the past two weeks. Sometimes we get distracted by snippets about personal lives and social events until someone, frustrated by the delay, hauls us back to the business of money, planning and politics. One sardonic collective member once recorded such a digression in the minute book:

"People keep talking about potty-training, vaginas, urine-passing, incubis, succubis and 'Pallas Athene' means 'cunt, cunt' and it's a virtue to look up words like iconoclast in the dictionary."

But mostly it's three to four hours of looking at finances, discussing how successful the latest issue is (we call it the "post-mortem"), whether adverts are acceptable, delegating responsibility for calls for help, production hassles, new fund-raising projects and so on. The collective is the policy making and administrative body of the magazine — it is



Early Broadsheet covers by (left to right): Marilyn Webb, Barbara Stanish, Kay Davenport.

1 2 WEEKS IN THE LIFE OF BROADSHEET TUESDAY...

① TO NEXT BROADSHEET. FIVE QUICK STEPS

2 MEET ANNE WITH TYPESETTING FOR THIS ISSUE.

② OPEN OFFICE. THE PHONE IS RINGING.

3 SARAH RINGS TO CONFIRM NEXT SEMINAR.

③ COLLECTIVE MEETING TOMORROW! WHERE'S ALL THE MAIL?

4 SAT, SUN, MON, TUES...

④ VANYA ARRIVES WITH RUSH DRAWING.

5 AND THEY ALL GET BUSY!

⑤ SHIRLEY GOES TO TAKE A PHOTO.

6 THURSDAY...

⑥ MORE TYPESETTING ARRIVES ~ WE CHEER.

7 WEDNESDAY...

⑦ TO NEXT BROADSHEET. FIVE QUICK STEPS

8 THURSDAY...

⑧ TO NEXT BROADSHEET. FIVE QUICK STEPS

9 WEDNESDAY...

⑨ PAGES READY FOR PRINTER. GOTTA CATCH THAT TRAIN!

10 THURSDAY...

⑩ TO NEXT BROADSHEET. FIVE QUICK STEPS

11 WEDNESDAY...

⑪ TO NEXT BROADSHEET. FIVE QUICK STEPS

12 THURSDAY...

⑫ TO NEXT BROADSHEET. FIVE QUICK STEPS

13 SAT, SUN, MON, TUES...

⑬ TO NEXT BROADSHEET. FIVE QUICK STEPS

14 WEDNESDAY...

⑭ TO NEXT BROADSHEET. FIVE QUICK STEPS

15 THURSDAY...

⑮ TO NEXT BROADSHEET. FIVE QUICK STEPS

16 SAT, SUN, MON, TUES...

⑯ TO NEXT BROADSHEET. FIVE QUICK STEPS

ultimately responsible for what's in the magazine, it employs the paid staff and develops guidelines for how we should work. Most important decisions come to the collective which delegates the day-to-day running decisions to the three part-time paid workers.

It's a closed collective which means there has to be a unanimous decision to invite a new person onto the collective, and that person must be a radical feminist who's shown a commitment to the magazine and who's worked on it for a while. It hasn't always been that way. When *Broadsheet* commenced it immediately went into print with no prior discussion of politics or structures. We all saw ourselves as radical feminists then; the movement hadn't diverged to the extent it now has into different political groupings. As time went on it became clear that such a loose way of working wasn't functional. Anyone who turned up to a planning meeting was part of the "collective" and took part in decision making, whether she intended making a commitment to the magazine or not. This was frustrating for those women who had; it was also time-consuming covering old ground for newcomers. There were problems with women not sharing similar political perspectives or visions of what the magazine was trying to do. In those early days, since little was written down, it was difficult to know what our policies and decisions were. In fact, it wasn't until early 1975 that we began to keep a minute book. Although the basic structure of the collective hasn't changed from that time, developing policies and making decisions on many issues is a continuous process. Because the feminist collective structure is so new, and we are often so busy in the movement we do not share our working experiences, there are few available guidelines on how to work.

At *Broadsheet*, we also come up against what is called amongst feminist groups "the process/product" conflict. For feminists



Covers in the new format designed by (left to right): Susan Reidy, Vanya Lowry, Shirley Gruar photo.

how you work is critically important; our work processes should embody our political belief, simply put, that we should work in non-hierarchical organisations with consensus-decision making. So, ideally, there should be a continual process of assessing how we are working, of dealing with conflicts and tensions amongst us and of showing support and caring for individual people to guard against "burn-out" from overwork. But in reality, at *Broadsheet*, with a monthly deadline to be met, a product that must be in subscribers' letterboxes and on the bookstands by a certain date or credibility or sales will be damaged, it is hard to find the time to devote to the process of working. To give an example: the collective has been trying for almost five years to draw up a statement of our political position; this appears on our agenda every meeting, but, by the time we have dealt with all the immediate problems of running a business we must postpone this topic yet again.

Dealing with conflict is an issue the women's movement has struggled with without coming up with any solutions (perhaps there are none?). *Broadsheet* has certainly had its share of conflict and this has not always been handled well. Most of us try and avoid conflict by hoping it will go away, thus when it finally surfaces it tends to erupt, creating casualties, rather than resolution. Such crises at *Broadsheet* have tended to result in individuals leaving when the

differences appeared irreconcilable, or, in the case of the major political difference of opinion at the end of 1978 between lesbian feminist women and others on the collective it resulted in the lesbian feminist women leaving the collective and a strained relationship between some sectors of the lesbian feminist community and the magazine.

There is a lot more that can be said about the collective process and *Broadsheet's* experience with it and we hope, when we finally manage to discuss collectives that it will lead to a fuller article on the subject.

the office

The location is fringe downtown, the building is old and gloomy but *Broadsheet's* harbour view office on the first floor is large and cheerful with posters and it's generally sunny. It's an office plus. Plus armchairs, a divan, noticeboard, kids' room, library and coffee-making facilities for all who drop in. And lots do, from overseas and out-of-town as well as Aucklanders researching or passing the time of day.

Broadsheet is a very visible part of the Women's Movement, so most days the phone rings with requests for the name of a feminist lawyer, the number of the abortion clinic or accommodation wanted.

But the main business is the

CONTINUED ON p 18

broadsheet's



Anne Macfarlane

I'm 46. I've had four children and been out of the work force for 13 years. I know what it's like trying to get a job, any job. I've experienced the hassles of working as a barmaid, the loss of persona in being the boss's handmaiden as an office girl (age 42 then), and the tremendous burden of working a 40-hour week on top of the wife and mother bit.

So it's my incredibly good fortune to work for Broadsheet: the matching of political beliefs with breadwinning; the working in a feminist environment, and the ability to arrive home at the same time as my kids do.

It was the play centre movement which started me on the trail that's led me to where I am now. Concepts then about the rights of children which were brand new to me. Children in our society are oppressed. That realisation occurred in NZ, and for me, before the women's movement. Women are oppressed too and the extension of my ideas was a logical development.

Four years of active play centre involvement was followed by seven years with Rosedale School. Knowing what education should be about, I couldn't acquiesce with what the State system was and still is doing. Setting up an alternative was the way to model what could be done. Chipping away at the establishment.

Well I've lost a few friends in the process, shed a husband, never made any money, parted company with "the Church", and don't belong to any clubs.

But, eureka, I've gained a lot of feminist friends, feel so free and happy and poor in my present life style that I even "Ran around the Bays" in March. We need to be fit for the struggle ahead, how about a Broadsheet team next year?



Sarah Calvert

Feminism has become my way of life. It has touched and changed my work (psychology), my hobbies (now feminism), my interests (now feminism), my politics (feminist with a socialist tendency) and my personal life. It is a total absorption for me: I travel, speak, write, read and research feminism and women's health issues. I am 26, live in Tauranga, have two cats (Thomasina and Lilith) and a dog (Ms). I have been involved in the Women's Movement for about nine years. For me the most precious thing feminism has given me is the friendships I now have with women. Each day everything I do is changed in some way by my feminist perspective and I find that exciting and fulfilling. Women's health seems to me the fundamental starting point because it touches us all and because it has always been such a primary area of our oppression.

I have been involved in Broadsheet for about six years. I remember selling it in

pubs and on the street corners. Then an article on IUDs fired my need to write about health and this has been my major work for Broadsheet since. I joined the collective in late 1978 hoping to bring a view from outside Auckland, and one free perhaps of some of the local traumas. I love Broadsheet because I see it as a lifeline to many women who have limited or nonexistent contact with feminism.



Sandra Coney

My mother said the other day, "When Sandra was a child she never did things the way you were meant to!"

As long as I can remember I believed I had the right to make my own decisions about my life. It was an attitude which had me constantly at loggerheads with authority during my school and training college years.

I can remember when I was about thirteen coming across the word "feminist" and looking it up in a dictionary — a believer in women's rights, it said. "That's me," I thought, although it was many years before I came to see what that word meant in relation to my own life.

I have always fought against what I saw as unfair, wrong and cruel. But when it came to the things I felt unfair about my own life, I laid them down to my inability to conform, my rebelliousness. I wanted people to accept me, but I knew that I

collective

would never be acceptable while I was being true to myself. Still I did not relate these feelings to any social condition, did not see any political reason for them. I did not see that they had to do with being a woman. I once told Sharyn Cederman, when she asked me to join a women's liberation group in 1972, that my life was alright, but I wanted to help other women who were badly treated by their husbands.

I was one of the original four who started Broadsheet and although I've been involved in many other projects since, it has remained my first love. The work is endlessly interesting — there is so much to learn; I am able to use my skills to the best advantage and I believe strongly in the power of the written word to change minds. There is also a freedom to be as you will at Broadsheet, a welcoming of new ideas, the opportunity to be an individual as well as work collectively which I find lacking in many other parts of the movement.



Jenny Rankine

My commitment to feminist magazines had its roots during a period of severe depression nine months ago in New Plymouth. I'd just resigned from a journalism job — the only work I'd ever considered for a career — after a direct confrontation with the racism and sexism which pervades daily newspapers. I had never wanted to marry or have children, my job skills had proved to be only mediocre and the future looked bleak.

The urge was strong to return to Adelaide (my home town), surround myself with familiar faces and sulk; but I ended up doing my sulking in New Plymouth, coming out as a lesbian to my family over the Christmas pudding in Adelaide, and starting work on Broadsheet early this year in Auckland.

My politics are still evolving rapidly, catching up after years as an "armchair" feminist. I hover over the fine line between encouraging my friends and myself to

shed compartmentalised, male-defined concepts about women and being doctrinaire about what is a patriarchal hang-over and what is truly woman-born. I have to constantly pull myself up for anti-woman reactions and authoritarian work methods, and open honest communication with friends at Broadsheet and elsewhere is a continuous struggle.

Every so often I catch glimmers, in the conversation and loving relationships of friends, and the visions of feminist writers, of a totally nurturing, woman-inspired future. Everything I write is ultimately aimed in that direction. I found feminism and lesbianism an enormous creative release. Shackles on my mind I hadn't known the existence of were broken. I want to use my communicating skills to bring this experience to other women. Newly-released woman energy flowing into all spheres of life is an irresistible force for attitudinal change. But changing attitudes doesn't change the power structure — I'm still working on that one.

P.S. Since this is meant to be a profile, I should mention that my hobbies include reading feminist science-fiction and watching old movies, and that my favourite fantasy is an all-woman, self-sufficient feminist rural community.



Miriam Jackson

I was born in a small dairying district and learnt a great deal about Mt Egmont, catching eels, growing native orchids, and NZ birds and trees, but very little about people in the cities and their relationships. During the early forties I can vaguely remember the blackout during the war — the nervousness of women and the hanging of grey blankets on the french doors. We lived on the side of the mountain and had to black out the house because of the threat of the Japanese. Later, I studied Zen buddhism and in 1969 I learnt their language. My life is full of paradoxes, of looking at both sides before making a choice.

The growth of my feminism was a natural extension of my involvement with establishing the University Creche at Au-

ckland. This fight for the right for all women to be able to continue their education, or begin it, as I did, was probably my first picture of women's oppression. I remember one Student's Association President telling us to go back to the kitchen sink. Before this time I had felt that my oppression was mine alone and due to my own mistakes. When I joined the CR group in 1973 I also began helping with Broadsheet. Although I have been involved in helping with services for women such as Halfway House, my commitment remains in seeking information and disseminating it. Since I joined the Justice Department as a clinical psychologist I have concentrated on violence against women, but I am angry about all forms of oppression. I see Broadsheet as a necessary link in exposing these forms and imparting information that will develop and nourish a feminist politic.



Sandi Hall

LIFE LINES

Born I was in a three day hour, the cord around my neck
Kicking and screaming and fighting for life —

you could say I was born to protest.
So they gave me a home where the buffaloes roam
and the farmer and fascist play
where seldom I heard an encouraging word
and was preppers on my 19th birthday.
I married the man and carried the can for a decision as wrong as can be;
through no thoughts in my head and my wide open legs
to the first child was added more — three.

Not conscious why I then left the guy
Leaving all of the children with him
My guilt at that act made secret that fact —
twelve years 'til I was honest again.
I met a new mate and from that date
I travelled and learned and had fun
My mind was a flower, blooming more

every hour
Under the Zambian sun.
To Enzed we came to partake in your
game
Just another adventure and lark;
That was six years ago, as some of you
know,
and this place has a hold on my heart.
In just a short while it sure made me
smile
To discover some feminist friends
Long nights of talk, and the days are too
short
For the discussion that can't have an
end.
For Broadsheet I wrote, and then to
promote
my lover's career I soon moved
to the south for a while and that
fabulous isle
put me more in a feminist groove.
I was one of the five who through all
kinds of strife
Organised the convention down there
And though some was quite bad and
made some of us mad
In the end, we all kept our hair.
Back up here again, and the end of a
reign —
my longstanding relationship died;
and the women I knew, who helped as I
grew,
loved and kept my spirit alive.
I left advertising's scamp, for teevees
camp
and took a good look at my life
now I've finished a novel (to rhyme that
I'll grovel)
and forsaken an area of strife.
As I've long been aware that a 'bee in
my hair'
is the fight we women must win
and there's no going back, whatever the
flack
For me, that's a dedication.
Love and Rangitoto,
Sandi Hall

CONTINUED FROM p 15

magazine. Opening the mail each day is always fun. Copy for the editor, letters to the editor, graphics from our artists around the country, subscriptions from around the world and the feeling of contact with subscribers. "Love the magazine, the articles never fail to stir up interesting discussion/screaming matches." "Congratulations on good recent issues." "It's a great magazine and I wouldn't give it up for anything." "Sorry we ran out of money for a while. It became more important to eat than to read your magazine. Back to normal now, whatever that means!" and also, "You keep on saying the same things over and over again — you're boring."

Broadsheet is beamed at a very wide range of women: At women who have been in the movement for a while who eat a meaty dialectic of feminist analysis. And at others, newly come to feminism, who are slowly developing their awareness. Then there are those who pick up the magazine for the first time in a bookshop, and for whom a discussion on in-movement struggles is meaningless. But their appetite may be whetted by an article on child care. All have to be catered for.

There are requests too, for material on sterilization, for a copy of a photo in an issue three years ago, the phone number of an advertiser.

And always bills. We manage to keep some head above water, just. Some months we make a profit, some months we are down the drain (see box). Costs over the last year have increased dramatically with rent and postage having virtually doubled.

We help balance the books by selling, through the magazine, books and posters, badges and caps. Advertising is another source of revenue for us, though not without its difficulties. We have to feel okay about the products and services we sell space to, and there's lots of room for conflict here. "Is this ripping off women in any way?" "Are we being compromised by this product?" Collecting the money from the advertiser is not always easy either and some accounts run unpaid for months.

In two areas Broadsheet is most unbusinesslike. Firstly, because of our political nature, because it is important for us to get the message of feminism to as many women as we can, we actually sell the magazine at a loss. Broadsheet costs us 74 cents a copy and we sell to our national distributors Gordon and Gotch at 60 cents and to such retailers as we supply direct, at 68 cents. Only with our subscription sales and sales at seminars and the like, do we make any money.

Secondly, Broadsheet workers and contributors actually subsidize the magazine. The workers get paid, but not at marketplace rates — over the past 4 years their pay rates have risen by only 8% per annum. As for the contributors, well, they don't get paid at all. The original intention of paying workers and contributors at non-exploitative rates is a long way from being achieved.

In March we instituted a sustaining subscriber scheme — people were invited to pay \$20 for a subscription instead of the normal \$9.50, and by the end of May 60 women and men had done this. Thus the gap between income and expenditure is bridged in the short-term, though only

BROADSHEET MONEY MATTERS (Balancing the Books . . . the Monthly Curse)

	IN	OUT	PROFIT
May	\$2393	\$2308	\$85
June	\$2538	\$2078	\$460
July	\$2158	\$2816	-\$658
August	\$1604	\$1965	-\$361
September	\$2234	\$1681	\$553
October	\$2744	\$3388	-\$644
November	\$2783	\$2166	\$617
December	\$2265	\$2931	-\$666
January	\$2288	\$1737	\$551
February	\$1837	\$1712	\$125
March	\$2760	\$2585	\$175
April	\$2430	\$2738	-\$308

more subscribers will make Broadsheet healthy in the long-term.

Over the last three years, with minor fluctuations, the number of subscribers has been static. Over the last year and a half we've made a serious attempt to improve the quality of the magazine. Is it a losing battle, or can we gain momentum again?

volunteer workers

Once a month, up to 20 women, several kids and the occasional dog crowd in amongst the patchwork posters and a litter of cartoons at the Broadsheet office. They're there for stuffing — packing well over a thousand subscription copies of the magazine into envelopes, counting them and sorting them by area into huge postbags.

There are always a few women new to the process and cries of "Where the hell does Te Puke go?" and "Where's the box for Invercargill?" and "How many for New Plymouth?" get shouted at those who seem to know what they're doing.

Stuffing is probably the most obvious example of the amount of volunteer work put into Broadsheet. A telephone tree swings into action, women bring their friends and when the job's finished there is coffee or wine for those who can stay. There are other less obvious chores involved in putting out a regular magazine that are all done voluntarily. Every month there are thousands of donated envelopes that have to be recycled. One woman ferries the full postbags to the post office after stuffing; another picks up last month's left over copies from the only national magazine distributor, Gordon and Gotch. One woman's contribution is the cost and effort of photocopying the 40 pages of envelope labels 10 times a year. For the last two years four dedicated librarians have been indexing all the old Broadsheets and in the process have evolved one of the first feminist indexes.



One of the main difficulties of the first four entirely voluntary years was finding the time and energy for concentrated work after a full day working. Another was co-ordinating the effort between the houses where different parts of the magazine were organised.

Having three paid workers now enables much more work to go into the content and the look of the magazine. It has gradually become more visually exciting. This is in accordance with an original aim — to show what women can do working together for other women.

Producing Broadsheet in a non-hierarchical feminist way has perhaps become more difficult in the last four years with paid workers. The magazine still has to compete with very glossy and professionally-produced mags on the bookshelves, and there is a limit to what can be achieved with three part-time paid workers and a host of volunteers. A lot of time each month has been spent sharing layout and writing skills with untrained women who may only be able to help for a little time each month. The pressure of deadlines works against equal sharing of complicated skills. So often volunteers tend to be given the more routine mechanical jobs — recycling envelopes, sticking on page numbers, typing addresses — when first they come into the office.

Part of the problem is that the Broadsheet office is only open from 9 to 3. People who work full-time and want to help can only

write or come to stuffing. And often because writers have little idea of the magazine's deadlines, Broadsheet has to constantly deal with very late copy which can need substantial editing.

Another difficulty in producing a magazine in a feminist way is that an imbalance of information and power can develop between volunteers and paid workers. Things that in themselves sound small, like not opening the mail, answering the phone or womaning the office can contribute to a volunteer's feeling of not being part of the whole process. It is the responsibility of those with a lot of skills and information to be continually sharing it and other regular workers must see that this happens. There have been many structures for ensuring this sharing in the past. About a dozen different editorial groups have shared planning the magazine, deciding on particular stories and editing them. For some time after the paid jobs were created, the layout person had to make sure that there was a lot of skilled and essential work for volunteers to do in the weekends. Earlier it was considered essential that everybody regularly involved learnt all the skills.

Volunteer work is always essential to an alternative business like Broadsheet. Working on the magazine in a feminist way will always be difficult while we exist in a patriarchal capitalist society, but that difficulty does not detract from the enjoyment of creating something with and for other women.■



INTERVIEW: Marilyn French

BY:
Sandi Hall

We are at Clichy's, that unpretentiously good restaurant just down the road from Broadsheet. There are Anne and I from Broadsheet, and four others from Hutchinson's. And her. She moves calmly and smiles a lot, her clear green eyes slitting with appreciation at a line of thought, a terse remark. She has an opal ring, and I am not-so-secretly pleased that I'm wearing my opal pendant. Raewyn from Hutchinson's points delightedly to the opal ring she is wearing. To share one of her tastes, I feel, gives us yet one more thing in common, for already I share many of the points of view she expressed in **The Women's Room** and **The Bleeding Heart**.

She is so easy to talk to, this Marilyn French, woman of heart and mind whose words have been read by about 50 million women. Anne tells her how much effect she sees that **The Women's Room** has had on women she knows. She compares it in its impact to **The Feminine Mystique** and across the table, one of the men from Hutchinsons nods enthusiastically and approvingly at Anne. But she is engrossed in Marilyn French and doesn't see.

"I talk to many women's groups across the States," French says, "and it's always overwhelming to see the caring and energy they give

to me. But I have to hold myself back, a little, because they'd eat you if they could. Their needs are so great." In the bio sheet that I have been given by her publisher, she had enlarged on that: "... though women are angry, many are still paralysed. It's simply not enough to give up doing the dishes and take a job outside the home, they want a real vision to work towards; a vision that says the world can and will become a decent place."

That kind of vision is to be the subject of her next two books, and later that afternoon, in the museum auditorium, she will expand on her own personal world vision. "I believe that feminism is the only solution — the only workable solution — to the world's problems. Feminism is a set of moral values that is looked down upon by the culture at large, and is considered by the system to be of no value. The real job of feminists now is to change that attitude. If we don't accomplish it, we will wipe ourselves out."

Women succeeding in jobs within the system are not necessarily succeeding as feminists. "You can't be in the system and not be affected by it. If you are at all open, it gets to you and poisons you. If you are to succeed at what you're doing, you have to do it on their terms. And that



poisons you.” She points out that there are hundreds of ‘successful’ women in America, in law, in banking, in commerce and industry. But their individual successes don’t advance the cause of feminism because the achievement of that success has not been made feministically.

The Clichy waiter tells us our table is ready, and we make our way downstairs to the round table by the kitchen. Anne and I are put on either side of Marilyn French and all during our conversations with her, the Hutchinson’s people talk to one another. Constantly, her name is heard. “How does that feel, hearing of yourself like that?” I ask. “It’s not me they’re talking about,” she replies with a swift smile, “it’s Marilyn French the product. It’s really got very little to do with me.” I ask her how her son and daughter feel about her success. “I’ve brought them, through their lives with me, to an understanding of feminism, which we now all three share. It’s not easy for my son, he has a hard time. He hasn’t many male friends, is quite wary of a lot of men.” “You say he’s a feminist — how can that be?”

Her eyes become wary, a little guarded. “I feel that anyone who not only understands feminism but believes and lives it is a feminist. My son is like that. He is a feminist.” She talks for a mo-

ment of the difficulties feminist men face, compounded by the knowledge that, historically, wherever men permit themselves to be sensitive and caring to one another, women are put down. In ancient Greece, the man was at the top of the social structure; homosexuality was frequent and thought to be perfectly natural. Indeed, that relationship was thought to be the purest kind of loving possible. In that society, women were almost totally in two categories — wife or hetaera; the women who were domestic servants were in the “wife class”; the others were prostitutes. “In countries where men were less dedicated to controlling their emotions, they had a greater control over women,” she continues, and into my head flashes harem images. In at least three countries, harems still flourish.

Her view of the world today is one that many women recognise immediately: “What we really have is two huge war machines, the US and Russia, both of who are dedicated to power. They will do *anything* to keep that power. We have to set our sights on them, to end their grasp; we have to humanise the world, feminise the world. And that really can only happen when generation after generation grows up with more and more humane values, those values that are uniquely

"Somebody has to weep when a baby dies."

feminist values."

At the end of the lunch, Shirley Gruar arrives to take photographs. She was to be at the lunch, but various home pressures made that difficult. Because the restaurant is crowded, we make our way to Broadsheet. Shirley settles Marilyn in a chair by the window, where the afternoon light makes shooting better. Outside, the endless rush of traffic up Anzac Avenue is punctuated by the squawk of gulls and the soft voices of the women in the central Broadsheet lounge.

She begins to elaborate on the problems dedicated feminists face: "There are two prongs to feminism, philosophical and political. We are the custodians of both, but either one without the other leaves us nowhere. If you opt only for the philosophical without the political, or the political without the philosophical, you face a problem. As a personal solution, each of those alone is wonderful; as a cultural solution, it won't do. The two *have* to go together — there is no other way."

She pauses to light one of the long thin cigarettes she smokes, head tilted and her thick wavy hair touched by the blue coils winding upwards. "Even if we could re-create the hunters and gatherers culture, we'd find we need a completely new model, because we have never had a time when men participated fully in feeling. And somebody has to weep when a baby dies."

Later that afternoon, she spoke to an audience of about 450 people. She gave her world vision to those gathered to listen, outlining the world situation as it is now, the dangerous game of war still being played for sleazy reasons, the accumulation of power among fewer and fewer people. The growth of the feminist movement, based on the principles feminists have forged over years of perceptive analysis of their oppression, will not be stopped. And should not be stopped until it reaches the point of total confrontation and conquest of the present system. Her words are powerful and exciting and the attention of the audience is absolute. No coughing or shuffling. Earlier in the day she told us that "when her books are as popular as the Bible, she'll know a new age has begun." I know people will be as outraged at that statement as they were when the Beatles claimed to be more popular than Jesus Christ. But they were right then, and she is right now. Such popularity would be symptomatic of the kind of concrete change that thousands and thousands of women work daily to achieve, in a wide array of countries throughout the world.

At the end of her speech, it's question time. How disappointing that all of the first questions relate to marriage, woman after woman standing to challenge her with the words "Why don't you write about happy marriages. I have one — why are all your marriages [in her books] no good?" "Well — I don't know of any good ones", she replies simply, and can go no further than that, for there is nowhere else to go. Finally, a man rises. "If you don't think marriage is the right sort of relationship to have, what alternative can you give?"

"Anything that doesn't diminish the people involved", she says, her hand describing an arc. "I don't care what kind of relationship it is, but the underlying base of it has to be that none of the people inside it are diminished by it, that it is a growing thing. That seems to me to be the only way in which the nourishing and support you want from relationships can happen."

There is a small silence at the truth of her words. A murmur of voices at the back signals the start of conversation on that point. I know that many of the women here have travelled a long way to hear what Marilyn French has to say; I know that the radio programme she participated in yesterday morning touched on some of the points she has just talked about, and that the announcer interviewing her seemed very disconcerted by the points she made relating to global feminism and her belief that it will, rightly, triumph. And I see that in the four short days she's been here, and the relatively small number of women she has been in touch with over those days, she has managed with the surety of inner conviction to give to us the gifts of strength and purpose. She has given strength to the committed feminists here and touched raw nerves in those who doubt her message.

She is aware that our struggle is a painful one, indeed, our lives are full of pain. She believes that it is neither possible nor desirable to live totally without pain: love and death take care of that. But we don't need to inflict as much pain on ourselves as we do now. We must grow in strength by sharing pain with an end to eradicating much of the senseless pain we feel. And we have to live within this culture, with all its old sexist habits, until our entire language, art, thinking and culture change. "That is why I write, in the hope that my writing will feminise the world for the next millennium."■

Photographs by Shirley Gruar

The Bleeding Heart

Marilyn French
Author of "The Women's Room"

Available from Broadsheet @ \$14.95 plus
cents p & p

Please send me copies of
The Bleeding Heart

Name

Address

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I enclose a cheque for \$

Send to Broadsheet, PO Box 5799, Auckland.

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HOW TO LIVE AS A FEMINIST AND NOT GO MAD!!



**A seminar that looks, not so much at
issues, as at ourselves**

Saturday July 26

9 am — 4 pm

at Auckland Secondary Teachers College
60 Epsom Ave, Epsom, Auckland

Cost: \$4 (including lunch)

Programme:

- 9.00 — morning tea and enrolment
- 9.30 — opening speaker — **Sandi Hall**
- 10.00 — 12.00 — workshops
- 12.00 — 1.00 — lunch
- 1.00 — 3.00 — workshops
- 3.00 — 4.00 — speaker — **Roslyn Noonan**

Workshops on:

Sharing sexuality with our children; being a feminist in the system; surviving the women's movement; high school women; relationships with men; opting out of the system; bringing up non-sexist children; black women; being a lesbian in the workplace; working motherhood; coming out as a lesbian; trying to change relationships; older women; lesbian relationships; living alone; not being in a couple.

This is a seminar for women who are trying to change their lives and encountering problems. This won't be a talking heads seminar — we will be sharing problems, pooling solutions and trying to be constructive.

Ring the office for more information; phone 794751.

I

She is seated one in a row of double-seats harmonizing in her head words to a song somehow remembered: *We all live in a yellow submarine / a yellow Amster-dam-tram / a yellow Amster-damtram*. Remembered by association with absurdity and colour, she tells herself.

There had been leaves of gold of a bright clear golden hue dropping down from trees like flocks of birds canary-feathered. On their forest walk. A similar experience, she is guessing now, to being inside a sequin of spring morning light such as caught on the surface of a canal outside her tram. For the two of them had been drenched in colour stolen from the sun. She had wanted then, a photograph to catch those fighting flying falling leaves for herself but had been warned by what she had read on his face. Wind had blown his words along as leaves, had buried Boudewijn's words in leaves. "It is probably the best alternative there is for you," he had been telling her. "For you". "Doesn't interfere with your body". "Your body." She sighs, though not for him to hear, her sigh staining awhile her window of the tram: *now Kathleen, don't be silly Kathleen*. Her eyes back on that forest-thick floor. "No side-effects at all", he had been saying to her.

Her child of twelve, her daughter by another man, had been unhopd for and had lost her that man. Never since has she been with a man without a care for contraception: *Kathleen McPhee / is thirty-three / a wonderful age to be / she tells me*. The tram is too warmed for early May. McPhee is no longer true anyway; she cannot, however, identify herself in Boudewijn's name. Sliding further down her seat, she checks her watch against her appointment for ten fifteen.

The woman is somewhere hot — near a beach? She wonders, and chooses. *Nine miles of sandhills in sun. Couch-grass creeping close towards sea* — she needs to add in this clue of how wild. *The woman can see only as far as where sand shimmers into mirage. There is a heat* — she puts up her hand to feel for it on her face — *a heat intense enough to dry to salt any sea-spray which reaches the face of the woman who stands watching waves roll in to the rhythm of a surf-shore. Silence except for this ocean* — heard roaring in her ears. *The woman does not mind wind-washed air blowing her hair; haze in her eyes; nor does the woman bother with the burning soles of her feet. Footprints stretch in line. Two pairs* — for she allows the man to

be breathing close beside the woman. Once, this man had taken the form of her first-ever lover till she found his thrill had gone out of him for her. *The woman and the man tread together*. She is the woman. *White feather of a gull high in a midday-blue sky*.

She has not cared to let him know her dreaming: *are you too greedy, Kathleen?*

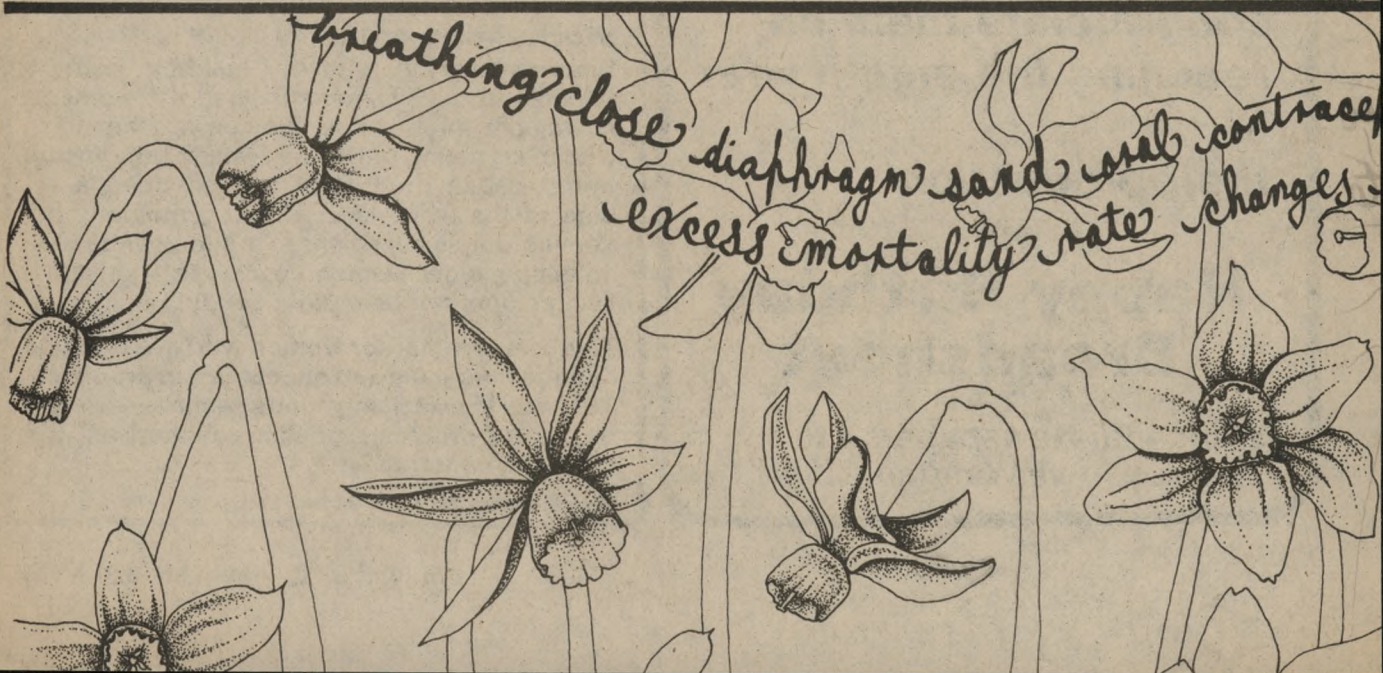
Now it seems she has missed her stop for the clinic — the Aletta Jacobshuis, named for Holland's first female doctor. Boudewijn had thought to come with her; she had restrained him because she wants to take care of herself alone. She will walk back in such weather. Pressing a button opening a door of the tram she continues to consider: *but are you too greedy, Kathleen?*, as she walks back carrying under her arm her copy of a women's liberation magazine she has held unread on her lap, resisting other women's stories.

II

So many women and not any talking in the waiting-room corner of a corridor. Nearly all younger than thirty, progressive and proud, dressed in jeans. Nearly all smoking, she might not be able to refrain from asking for a roll-your-own cigarette, though she fears breaking into their silence with her language. Instead, she goes through photocopies she has with her for her own conviction:

In a large prospective study carried out in the United Kingdom, the death-rate from diseases of the circulatory system in women who had used oral contraceptives was five times that of controls who had never used them; and the death-rate in those who had taken the pill continuously for five years or more was ten times that of the controls. The excess deaths in oral-contraceptive users were due to a wide range of vascular conditions. The total mortality-rate in women who had ever used the pill was increased by 40%, and this was due to an increase in deaths from circulatory diseases of 1 per 5000 ever-users per year. The excess was substantially greater than the death-rate from complications of pregnancy in the controls, and was double the death-rate from accidents. The excess mortality-rate increased with age, cigarette smoking, and duration of oral contraceptive use.

Had been easier in her case to give-up the pill than smoking; she can do nothing about her age. There had been excuses, risks and condom in-between before coming to this clinic. The pattern of her sex-life had been changed. The occasional fright,



experienced over five years' or more coital delight, could not be compared with a monthly dread of late days.

Lit up with sunlight, buds on branches of trees showing distorted through small fatigued-glass panes at the end of the corridor, delight her. She is amazed by her feeling of spring since being off the pill. Of feeling young. No longer tired most of the time. Some shadow has been lifted from her mind. The women smoke. She reads:

The present findings suggest that the risk of circulatory disease increases with the duration of oral-contraceptive use and may persist after the pill is discontinued. This suggests that oral contraceptives induce changes in the circulatory system which are not immediately reversible.

A woman older than the rest, in a straw-coloured dress, laughs looking at a poster that asks, "DO YOU ALSO WANT TO HAVE A PIECE OF THE PIE?", and lists possibilities including secretaries and cups of coffee served. Someone has added on in scribbled English, "Let him sleep on the wet spot!". The idea seems a surprise to the woman in the dress of sun-dried straw, though the others are not amused. As for her, everything went silent when she read:

Case no: 11114. Cause of death: Acute myocardial infarction. Age at death: 36. No. of cigarettes smoked per day: 20. History: Used pill for a total of 68 months. In use at time of death, which was sudden and unexpected.

Case no: 2604. Cause of death: Subarachnoid haemorrhage. Age at death: 35. No. of cigarettes smoked per day: 0. History: Used pill for a total of 57 months when she was advised to change to a diaphragm because of a subarachnoid haemorrhage. Subsequently she chose to be sterilised. 9 months later she died after a further subarachnoid haemorrhage.

Case no: 2371. Cause of death: Pre-cerebral artery occlusion. No. of cigarettes smoked per day: 20. Age at death: 28. History: Used pill for a total of 47 months. In use at time of terminal illness (internal-carotidoartery thrombosis), which was sudden and unexpected.

Nurse is calling your turn, Kathleen.

III

A vase of daffodils coloured like buttercup or primrose, or wattle even, stands on the desk. Lace curtains ripple on a breeze of birdsong. Nurse's eyes are grateful to be kind.

dutch interlude

fiction by Leila Rodd

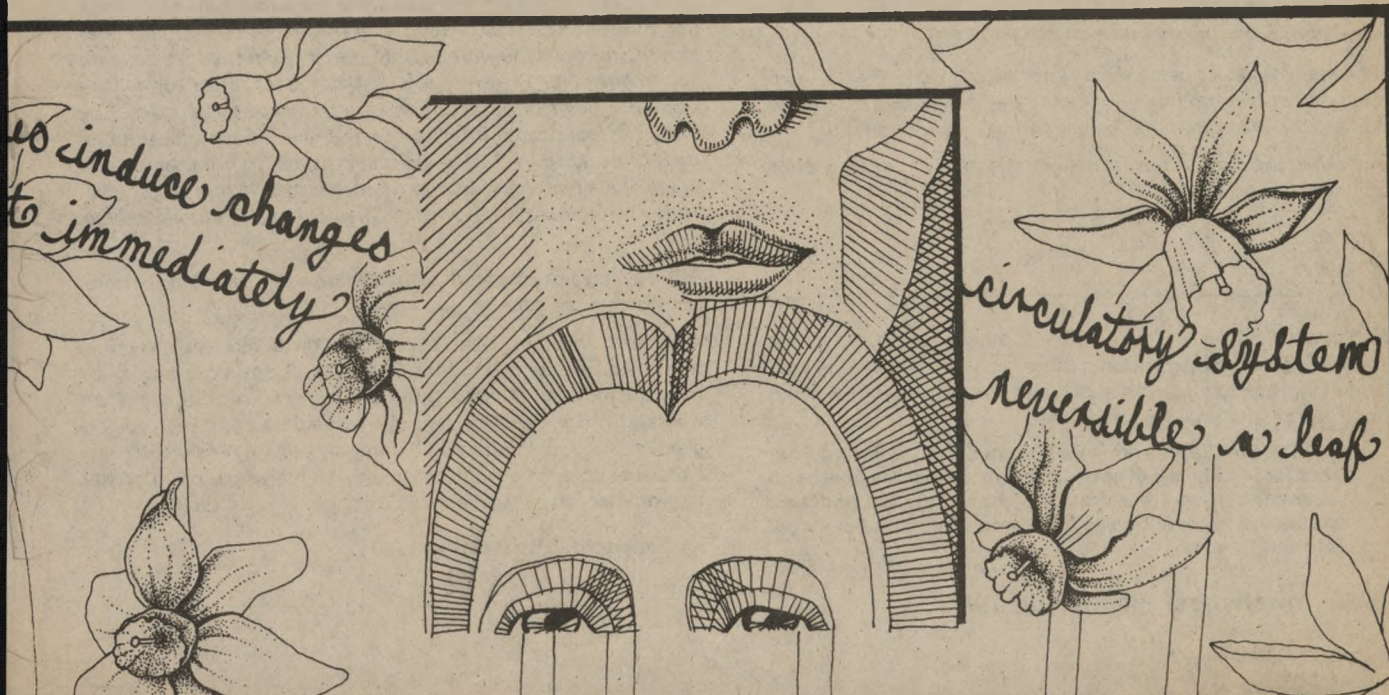
illustrated by Robyn Conway

Told to remove her french-cut and velvet jeans her boots from Brazil her pure-wool socks her crocheted cardigan her pants. "in that cubicle there". Remarking her t-shirted mirror image: *no need, Kathleen, to be uneasy.*

Flat on her back, knees up: *no stirrups for once, thank god.* Gripping the tissue-paper sheet with her own toes controlling her own balance. Nurse holding high above her a replica in see-through plastic of a woman's reproductive system: *this is a ridiculous position to listen in.* Lowering her legs and leaning up onto her elbow. Nurse's cheeks shine clear so close, nurse's hands are soap clean. Learning a language not yet hers: "baarmoeder" (womb); "baarmoedermond" (cervix). Nurse slips a finger into the plastic vagina and crooks it round a rim and slides down a rubber ring thing, a contraceptive contraption, a dutch-cap — "pessarium" (diaphragm).

What did you expect, Kathleen?

Feeling her face forming forgotten lines of suppression. "Kathleen take that look off your face", her mother serving tripe for dinner for example. Near her feet another window frames sky and lets in a sudden singing of birds and a whiff of sun. She never could stand rooms with curtains drawn across summer skies, she reflects. And so when that boyfriend of days gone by had left his darkened bedroom for a moment, she had taken



from his drawer those little silver-paper-wrapped things — like sticks of lipstick — and thrown them out of his window, over his nextdoor neighbour's fence. "Pessary", that boy had said to her and her face had set in horror on hearing it was meant to be pushed up inside her. She and he had been back down swimming in the sea at the end of his street before the sun had had time to set. Sea. New Year's Eve. And Elizabeth had been there too, that night the years had changed. Budding beautiful Elizabeth crossing cooled sand towards her at the surf's edge where, both their faces drowned in the silence of their surprise, they had washed away together with waves of salt a stain spilled out onto stockings onto skirt while they had lain beside boys on the beach.

Nurse chooses a size for her fitting, as near as large as the palm of her hand. Plastic-gloved fingers smear it with goo from a tube labelled "pasta" (spermicidal jelly), squeeze its coil-spring rim into a figure-eight shape then, with the skill of the kindergarten teacher tying shoelaces for fumbling fingers, insert it up over her cervix. Nurse explains, "it takes eight hours for sperm to die in your vagina, those that swim around this rim are killed off by the jelly". She must walk about trying it out as if buying a new pair of shoes. After that she must practice doing it by herself. Flat on her back, knees up, she cannot quite grip it, it slips but should slide: *it's not that bad, Kathleen, think of IUDs for instance which hurt so on insertion it makes you faint from steel-cold instruments from cervical dilation.*

During their forest talk Boudewijn had protested, "I don't want you having something inside you as a constant source of irritation", and had offered vasectomy. His mother was adamant, "what would you do if she and that child of hers were killed in a car accident?". Boudewijn's father was dead, in the War. Boudewijn was an only child. Boudewijn's mother yearned for a real grandchild of her own.

A doctor comes to check she has put it in right. "Your man can do this for you, too, you know", the doctor says then giggles a bit because of the position in which she has found the diaphragm. "The lower rim must be above your pubic bone."

Standing semi-naked receiving instructions how to wash to powder to preserve it in its plastic wallet, hold it to the light to search for holes.

What she will do when she leaves is buy a bunch or two or three of fragrant flowered freesias — having the colouring of a nostalgia, of a knee-deep paddock of childhood — from among those in buckets on the footpath of the florists opposite the tram stop. She will bury her face in freesias on her way home on the tram.

How many tubes of pasta would she like? "Two". "Two?": *two too many or two too few?* She could pay downstairs but has to come back in six months' time wearing it inside her.

She splits the hem of her jeans with the heel of her foot while pulling them on again.

IV

And again she is in Amsterdam, she is telling herself. On a tram painted yellow as egg yolks as butter as ripe corn-on-the-cob. Just as she had been. And she begins once more to repeat in her head words she only yesterday read:

In 1982 the diaphragm was invented; an important year both for the history of contraception and for the liberation of women. It was the first time that a reliable and safe method of separating sex from procreation had been put into our hands.

And in a few seconds she is deciding, is aware she has already decided. By coming back in six months' time as instructed, wearing it inside her, she has made a positive decision: *don't be silly, Kathleen, how could any of these people possibly know.* She stares on. Outside her window of the tram another year's falling leaves sink in a pale-ice November light. "You must have a home for it. Where will you keep it?". Boudewijn joked. "Are we going to play with tonight?". Leaving her bed to reach her dressing-table draw in the dark of night; scratching amongst unused cosmetic containers, spilt face-powder. Washing it with water of her morning bath. "What's it doing here? Does it live here, now?". Boudewijn smiled at it balanced beside the soap. "Getting us used to it", she tried, and swallowed her distaste in the taste of her laughter.

Amongst passengers' reflections in the darkening glass of afternoon, she shapes her friend Claudia — small and exasperated, dark hair flying in the rush of her existence, dark eyes unquiet for "it almost ruined our marriage", her husband flinging it from her intolerant of his interrupted pleasure. She pictures in the crowd of strangers' forms others she knows. Flo's sister who gets into a state where she finds herself going to work concealing both a diaphragm and a tampon nearly every other day, dousing her thighs with perfume to dispell any spillage. Tall Atie, always cool always precise about physical contact, will wrinkle her nose and adjust her fine hair even on mention of the subject. Gail has never used anything else, she claims, learnt it from her mother without a complaint. Di who is as tough as nails says, "those dreadful rubber things". And, heads bent into a circle, a group of women debating: "spontaneity is allowed him but not us, we'd all also like to fall into bed without first thinking whether or not we might want sex" versus "properly used it gives us control over ourselves, we can choose, gets us in touch with our bodies".

Wind is blowing leaves tinted all colours of autumn golds through reds through browns along on the surface of a canal outside her tram. Her cheek is cold on contact with the pane. She checks her watch and she has ten minutes to go before her appointment.

The woman is on a beach — it is not possible for her to see it elsewhere. Miles from nowhere. It is hot. The air a kaleidoscope of spots of light retained behind closed eyelids — she closes her eyes. There is a smell of salt — she breathes in to the bottom of her lungs — an intense smell of salt left to dry on wave-washed bodies and of rivulets of sweat. Sounds are a gull's cry and an ocean's pounding — echoes heard in her ears. The woman does not mind the scrunch of sand heat under her back; hair in her mouth; nor does the woman bother with grains caught beneath her fingernails. The woman's flesh — seen close up — the woman's flesh underneath the fingernails of the man. She brings in Boudewijn briefly to be the man, those first thrilling days of Boudewijn. Surf beaks and crashes. To break again and crash again near the woman who surges to a rhythm all her own. She is the woman. White crest of a wave high on a midnight-blue sea.

And she has not yet cared to let him know this dreaming of hers: *for are you too greedy, Kathleen?*

And again she has missed her stop for the clinic. She has come alone. Just as she had before. She will catch another tram back in such weather. Such a bitter cold wind. Pressing a button opening a door of the tram she considers still: *are you too greedy, Kathleen?* And as she sits on her tram-ride back she holds her copy of a women's liberation magazine open on her lap, reading other women's stories.

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Big Lady Blues

My soul and mind have turned full circle one more time
Again they are left floundering in a mire of self-deceit
and suppressed pain.

Sometimes I feel that youth just passed me by
It always seemed so close, but was so far, far away.
Long, lonely saturday and friday nights spent
dreaming about boys I'd met passing
dreaming about the beautiful body I'd have
if only I could find the magical device or diet
to make all the excess disappear in a puff
of teenage smoke.

Praying to god, hoping, hoping that I'd wake up
looking like the girl in the
coppertone ad.

And I'm back in the place where so much pain was
felt, but this time its different.

I have a child, I've proved to the world
that I could get a man, and have babies;
but is it different?

I don't feel as though I've achieved anything.
I'm still left with that feeling
that people won't like me
because of how I look, telling myself
what a big fat ugly person I am

I can hear all the feminist raves
in the back of my mind —

in my gut I know it's right.

It's a matter of sifting through
the media induced neuroses
and telling myself, I'm okay,
I'm okay!

— Chrissie

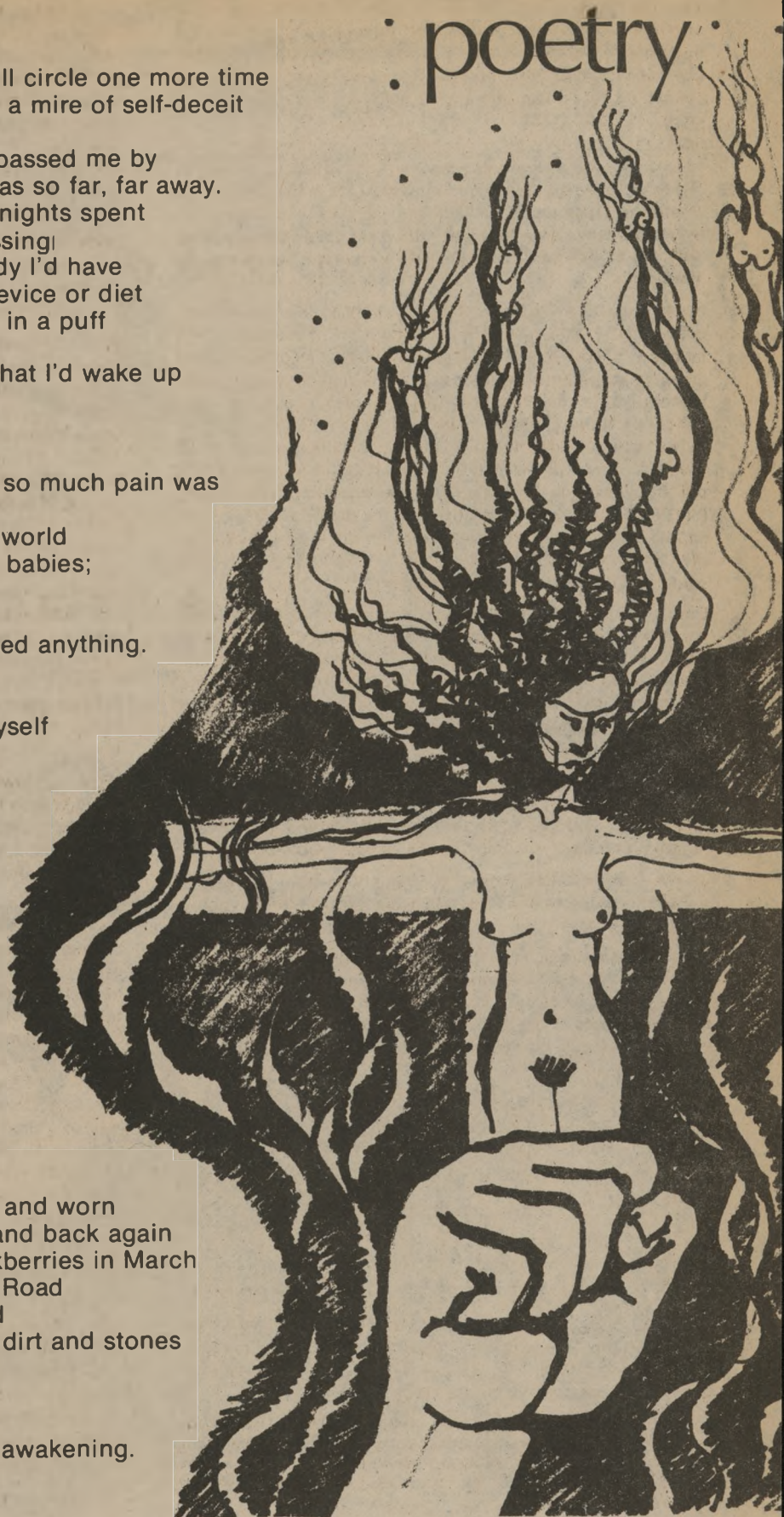
Dyke Boots

Your little dyke boots are brown and worn
They have taken you to the fair and back again
They have helped you pick blackberries in March
They have walked dusty Slater's Road
With your dog not too far behind
And they have kicked clumps of dirt and stones
When you've been really mad. .

They sleep under your bed
And it is there that they wait for awakening.

— Jools Topp

poetry



DRAWING: MIRIAM CAMERON



SENTINEL



OUR BEAUTY QUEEN MISS MARIA SPEAKS

Coming from Kuala Lumpur time in mid-June, 1973, I work as an operator in the electronics Sdn. Bhd., Penang. I was employed and I work as a lead bond.

The working makes me feel peaceful and I sent job because line leader helpful and

In this Contest, indeed to in this co will go to Poor - How know who with me a try my best test hop glory to



apply here

We've added five fresh new shines to our fashion favorites! Each comes with its own sponge-tip wand that shapes colors, dazzles your lips, applies



SILICON'S UGLY SECRET:

the Asian assembly line

RACHAEL GROSSMAN reports on how the management in the Asian semi-conductor industry keeps its female workforce passive and compliant.



ILLUSTRATIONS: VANYA LOWRY

The Intel plant in Penang, Malaysia, is a subsidiary of one of the largest semi-conductor firms based in northern California's Silicon Valley. Women make up 90 percent of the assembly work-force in this 1400-person plant, as they do in the other electronics factories on the island of Penang. Approximately 19,000 women work in these factories, and several thousand more work in electronics factories in other places in Malaysia. In all, between 200,000 and 300,000 women work in electronics plants throughout Southeast Asia.

Electronics, especially semi-conductors, is the fastest growing industry in Southeast Asia. It is also the technologically most advanced industry in the developed economies, providing critical components to all others. Ironically, the almost invisible element in this glamorous break-through industry is the repetitive, semi-skilled labour of Asian women. Driven by the need to cut prices in their competition for profitable shares of the market, virtually all the major semi-conductor companies have sought cheap labour to perform the labour-intensive parts of their operations. To a large extent they have found it in Asia, where women assemble the tiny components of products ranging from digital watches to multi-million dollar computers. Their labour makes possible the low prices which in turn have made possible the explosive growth in the market for semi-conductor-based devices.

Because they must keep productivity high and costs low to be competitive, semi-conductor firms have put a great deal of effort into developing a whole battery of methods to manipulate and control the women who work in their plants. Their personnel policies now combine authoritarian discipline with the most sophisticated human relations techniques. Most highly developed in Malaysia, these techniques specifically exploit the traditionally defined attributes of femininity — passivity, submissiveness, sentimentality, sexual desirability — while creating a factory lifestyle distinct from that of the general society. Their purpose is to make workers more immediately productive and to inculcate into them a long-term sense of identity with the company. At the same time, the emphasis on passive and ornamental femininity is intended to forestall the rise of any sense of independence or unified strength among the women workers.

Beauty contests are the most dramatic example of the way electronics factories manipulate traditional concepts of femininity and gender roles. At one factory this year's beauty contest winners will receive: first prize, a package tour to Medan (the nearest big city); second prize, a cassette player; and third prize, a night for two at the Rasa Sayang (the ritziest hotel in Penang). When I asked about the implications of offering a night for two to 18-year-old Malay women, primarily from rural Muslim backgrounds, the officer quipped, "We tell the winner, 'This is your prize. Whatever happens nine months from now, we aren't responsible.'"

One American plant manager in Penang explained, "We've developed recreation to a technique. Recrea-

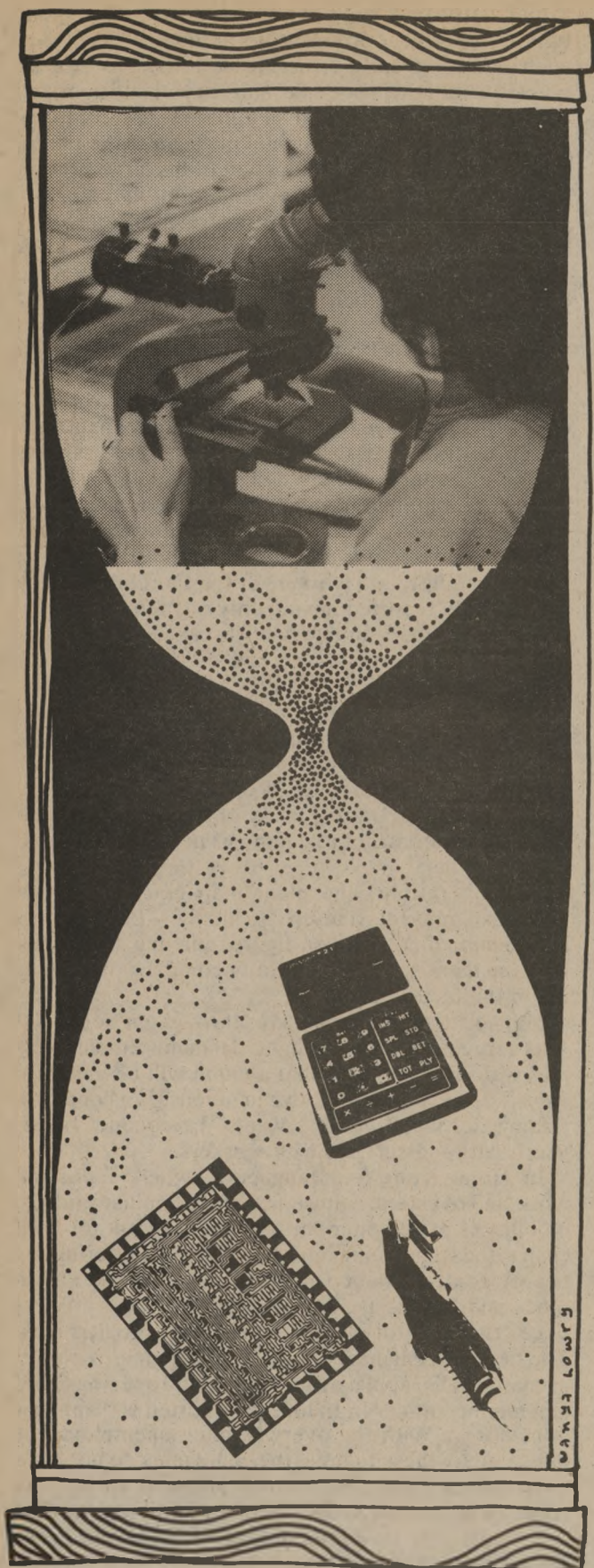
tional activities keep turnover down. We spent US\$100,000 a year on personnel activities." He listed such stereotypically feminine activities as sewing classes, a monthly shoe sale, singing competitions and the beauty contest as well as a library, the company store and sports events. A plant manager in the Philippines described the only function of his large personnel staff as "creating activities." Monthly company publications contain an endless stream of images of women as sex objects and passive providers. Their features range from pictures of the scantily clad beauty contest participants to romantic poetry and sexist humour.

In the transition from beauty contests to production competitions, the guiding principle behind all the clever games becomes suddenly visible: control. Discipline is strict, because electronics components are either perfect or unusable. Workers are assigned quotas and monitored by daily productivity charts. They are prohibited from talking on the factory floor. They must wear uniforms. They are allowed an average of only forty-five minutes break time during an eight-hour shift, and workers at the Fairchild factory in Indonesia reported having only one ten-minute tea break and a fifteen minute lunch break. They also said about twenty women were laid off every week for failing to meet their production quotas.

From the day a worker enters the factory, she is bombarded with such slogans as "Catch on to the Motorola Family Spirit and build a good future for yourself and your family." These portray the factory as a family incorporating many of the patriarchal features characteristic of real families in Southeast Asia. "Big Brother" male supervisors lord it over the female operators. The plant manager, usually an American, presents himself as a kindly — but nonetheless demanding — father figure, playing basketball with the team, kissing the beauty contest winner, eating in the factory canteen.

Management representatives throughout Southeast Asia express the same thought: "If management operates well, it is my hope that a union will be unnecessary." "Intel doesn't believe in unions. We believe in finding out what workers want. We conduct twice-yearly attitude surveys with workers."

In Hong Kong and Singapore, where industrial work and Western culture are more familiar and job mobility is more common, workers hold out for hard cash rather than being impressed by such offerings as beauty contests and cosmetics classes. In the Philippines and Indonesia, on the other hand, poverty reduces the need for elaborate personnel programmes. The personnel manager at AMD-Philippines reported as many as 500 applicants a week for 50 openings, and a personnel officer in Indonesia reported 500 applications a day. With the overwhelming unemployment indicated by these figures, the companies do not have to make the efforts they do in Malaysia to win the fealty of their employees. As one Indonesian worker commented, "No matter how bad it is, it's a job. That's better than nothing."



The electronics industry has not operated in a vacuum in constructing its Asian circuit. Asian governments, looking for development capital and solutions to their employment problems, have actively sought labour-intensive investment. Semi-conductors have appeared particularly attractive, according to one Malaysian government official because "they are so fast moving. They come in and quickly soak up people." In addition, governments hope to acquire new technology from the semi-conductor industry! In wooing foreign investment, Asian governments have stressed the availability of large, cheap pools of female labour. Glossy brochures describe the prospects in terms similar to the following from **Malaysia: the solid state for electronics**: "The manual dexterity of the oriental female is famous the world over. Her hands are small and she works fast with extreme care. Who, therefore, could be better qualified by nature and inheritance to contribute to the efficiency of a bench-assembly production line than the oriental girl?"

Domestically, Asian governments have taken measures to make their country's women even more attractive as potential employees by ensuring that they will not resist demands made on them by the foreign firms. In 1970, when electronics companies wanted to locate in Malaysia the government provided for exceptions in the law which protected women from night-shift work. In the Philippines, Presidential Decree No. 148 issued shortly after the declaration of martial law in 1972, reduced maternity benefits from 60 percent of pay for 14 weeks to 100 percent of pay for six weeks, and limited coverage to the first four children. According to the personnel director at one textile factory, "This made it profitable to hire women again."

Perhaps even more serious than removing legal protections has been the active role of all Southeast Asian governments in putting down all forms of worker protest. Over and over again the story is told — in the Philippines, in Indonesia, in Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea: "As soon as the protest began, carloads of police and government officials descended on the plant . . ." Such actions are backed up by laws prohibiting strikes in "vital" industry, which normally includes foreign-owned manufacturing plants.

In actual fact, the electronics corporations have failed to live up to the expectations of their hosts in providing employment. While they have brought thousands of jobs to Southeast Asia, their requirements for young, educated (high school) female workers have meant that they have brought a new category of people into the workforce rather than reducing the ranks of the unemployed. A recent study in Penang found that over two-thirds of the workers had never worked before and came from families whose female members had never worked for wages. Malaysia defines "active unemployed" as men who have registered as unemployed on the Labour Exchange, and government officials complain that the electronics firms are not helping them, because they rely almost exclusively on women. In the Philippines and In-

onesia, many electronics workers are the daughters of teachers or low-level bureaucrats and had aspired to, but could not find, white-collar jobs.

For the electronics firms, the newness of the work force they are creating is an advantage. Not only are the young women more tractable than older women or men might be, but since they are not believed to be supporting families, their wages can be kept low and they can be laid off with relatively few repercussions. Thus the employers give first preference to women with no work experience and generally refuse to hire married women, although they do not necessarily fire them if they marry after being hired. The ability to lay their workers off at will is essential to the electronics firms, because the work is almost by definition temporary. After three or four years of peering through a microscope a worker's vision begins to blur, so that she can no longer meet the production quota. The unspoken expectation of the company is that she will marry and retire by the time she becomes unfit for work, but she will be laid off in any case.

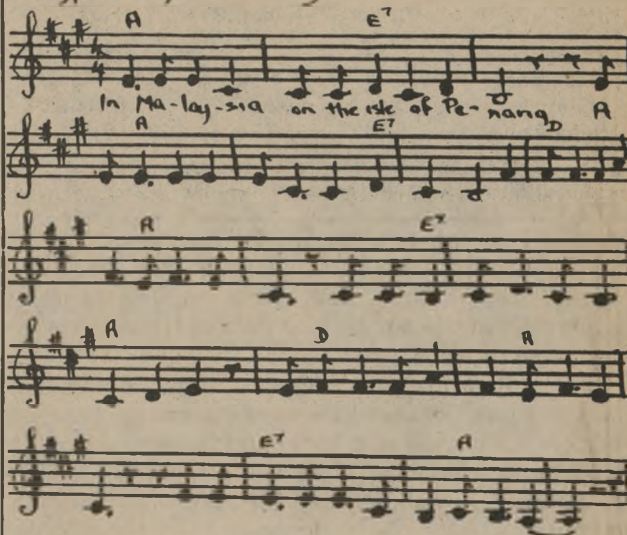
The nature of the industry also requires an expendable workforce, for the fierce competition means each company experiences strong ups and downs. Some will survive only a few years before going under, but in the meanwhile, they have employed numbers of Asian women. An NS executive in California predicted that within ten years, only three or four semi-conductor firms would still exist. However it is still too early to tell which three or four firms will survive. Hence the host countries have no control over the durability of the investments they so eagerly seek.

If electronics plants do not provide permanent jobs, then perhaps they train women for other work? Not so. As highly compartmentalised segments of a multinational production process, the jobs develop skills with no application in other industries. Bonding, for example, requires looking through a microscope, and testing, dipping into tanks of chemicals. As the only part of the electronics process which come to South east Asia, there is not even an opportunity for advancement or transfer to other kinds of work within the same industry.

For the women on the production line, there are tangible consequences of their position within the international structure of the industry. The companies use various means to keep wages low, although many of the electronics workers are expected to contribute substantially to their families' income. In the Philippines and Indonesia, women are paid less than the minimum wage for as long as six months, during which they are considered apprentices. With legal minimum daily wages of 11 pesos in the Philippines and Rp.500 in Indonesia, electronics apprentices receive eight pesos or Rp.390 respectively. Yet personnel officers readily admit that a new operator can learn her job in a week, or at most, two. Such pay is in many cases less than subsistence for one person. In Manila a worker living in the six-by-six foot extension of a squatter hut told me she needed ten pesos a day to pay for the bare minimum of fish, rice, water and rent. A community

SONG

Calypto-style ~ freely



In Ma-lay-sia/ on the isle of Pe/nang
A/ work-ing class wo/man can't laze on/ the sand
Her/ fam-ily is poor/ and she has to/ eat
So she joins/ the oth-er girls/ to com-pete/
Her fam-ily is poor/ and she has to/ eat
So she/ joins the oth-er/ girls to com-pete.

They go to work in the factories
Making silicon chips for industries
Soldering tiny wires so fine
That after a few years they go blind

} (2)

The multi-national accountants figure
That their profits can only keep getting bigger
If one worker's output for a day
Pays for ten more workers and transport
each way

} (2)

The chemicals used in the bonding process
Could cause cancer and they surely distress
The women who breathe them in each day
But if production drops then they're sent
on their way

} (2)

Behind each woman upon the wall
There hangs a chart which tells it all
If her production line should fall
Another worker will fill her stall

} (2)

In the factories they run a beauty quest
So all the girls can line up and contest
Such circuses, the bosses say
Take their minds off the lousy pay

} (2)

The bosses there are fatherly men
They don't want trouble so now and again
They play with the workers like real nice guys
For they'd hate the women to unionise

} (2)

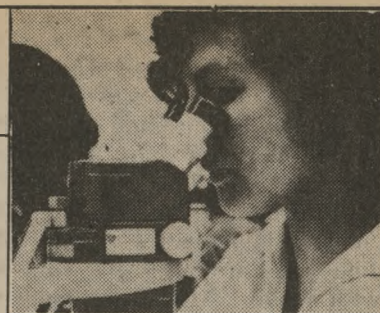
So just remember when you watch your TV
It was made in an Asian factory
You're part of those workers, they're part of you
Now what can all of us workers do?

} (2)

Words and music by Christine Dann, April, 1980.

Wages (in US dollars)			After 2 yrs employment	
	Basic	W/bonus	Monthly wages	Monthly* expenses
Indonesia	.80	—	19.20	29.25
Philippines	1.40	1.90	34.00-45.60	75.00
Malaysia	2.00	2.25	54.00-60.00	100.00
Hong Kong	5.00	6.36	120.00-152.00	187.00

* Basic cost for one person for rent, food, transportation.
Source: Interviews with workers Nov 78-Jan 79.



organiser in the province of Bataan reported that peasant families often had to support their daughters for the first months, and often the first year, of employment in the factories in Bataan Export Processing Zone or Manila.

Rather than institute adequate wages, companies use monetary bonuses as a means to put pressure on their workers, even after the apprenticeship period. In order to earn adequate income, a worker must qualify for bonuses, which are paid for perfect attendance, punctuality, high production, work on the microscopes. With any infraction of company rules or a single absence in a month, a woman loses her eligibility for extra payment. This is particularly rampant in Hong Kong, where industry uses monetary incentives rather than recreational activities to discipline and motivate the workforce. There a worker earning a daily base wage of HK\$24 (US\$5) can collect an additional living allowance (US\$60), meal allowance (\$40), and travel allowance (\$20). However, if she is 15 minutes late, she will lose all allowances for the day.

Wages increase somewhat after the apprenticeship period, and most women begin contributing to their families once their own subsistence needs are met. In the Philippines many workers employed for more than two years report that they send half or more of their monthly earnings home. In Malaysia, where electronics workers come from slightly less severe economic backgrounds, they still turn over 25 to 50 per cent of their wages to their families.

A photograph of the interior of an electronics plant is striking for its sense of immaculate order: a spacious, well-lighted room in which rows of women dressed in white bend over gleaming microscopes. On an actual walk through the plant, however, the visitor gags on the strong smell of chemicals, and a trial look through the microscope quickly produces dizziness or a headache. Toxic fumes and eye ailments are the twin enemies of electronics workers. Yet the companies do not inform them of the health hazards their jobs entail, and management-run health and safety committees actually divert attention from these problems.

"Hey, Grandma!" Young women greet their slightly older co-workers at the factory gate every morning. In Hong Kong most electronics workers over twenty-five are called "Grandma" because they wear glasses. While workers in Southeast Asia are much newer to electronics work than those in Hong Kong, they too are beginning to have serious eye problems. In 1975, just three years after the first electronics plant opened in Penang, nearly half the workers there complained of deteriorating eyesight and frequent headaches — the result of microscope work. Most workers suffer at one time or other from conjunctivitis, a painful and highly contagious inflammation of the eye. Individual comments echoed this worker's story: "After some time we can't see very clearly, it's blurred. We'll be looking into the microscope for over seven hours. We have to work with

Chemical analysis of women

Symbol: WOE

Occurrence: Found wherever men exist

Physical properties:

Very active — boil at nothing and may freeze any minute. Melt when properly treated. Very bitter if not well used. Great pretenders. Where spreading of news and incidents are concerned, they are better than the BBC.

Chemical properties:

Very active. Possess great affinity for gold and precious stone. Very choosy. Violent reaction when left alone. Able to absorb great amounts of expensive food and clothing. Turn green when placed beside better looking specimens. Age rapidly. Possess the best accessories which men like most.

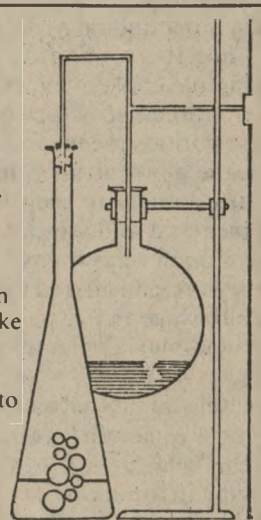
Uses:

Highly ornamental. Useful as a tonic in acceleration if in low spirits, etc. Equalise distribution to wealth. Are probably the most powerful (income) reducing agent.

Caution:

Highly explosive when in experienced hands.

Published by Motorola Communications Group, Penang.



The sort of thing silicon women are thought to enjoy reading.

those gold wires, very thin like our hair . . ." Virtually anyone who stays on the job more than three years must eventually wear glasses. Companies usually refuse to pay for the glasses — although they require 20-20 vision when they hire.

Caustic chemicals, all toxic and many suspected of being cancer-causing, sit in open containers beside many workers, giving off the fumes which so assault the first time visitor to the plant. They include TCE, xylene and MEK, all particularly dangerous acids and solvents which are used extensively throughout the production process. Workers who must dip components in acids and rub them with solvents frequently experience serious burns, dizziness, nausea, sometimes even losing their fingers in accidents. A major cause of accidents is the high speed at which workers are required to carry out their tasks. It will be ten or fifteen years before the possible carcinogenic effects of these chemicals begin to show up in the women who work with them now.

Management representatives deny or trivialise the dangers of electronics work. Sometimes their denials are unintentionally revealing. The manager at Hewlett-Packard in Malaysia answered my questions about eye problems: "These girls are used to working with 'scopes. We've found no eye problems. But it sure makes me dizzy to look through those things." Personnel departments set up management-worker health and safety committees, but these seldom address the real hazards or consider ways to correct

them. Instead of questioning the way in which chemicals are handled they generally focus on health and safety posters or essay contests, fire drills or an annual health and safety week.

The semi-conductor industry presents its Southeast Asian workers with short-term dilemmas and long-term contradictions. Jobs which seldom last longer than four years can bring profound changes into their lives for years to come. While the newness of the industry in Southeast Asia means there are relatively few veterans of semi-conductor employment, it is essential to consider what will happen to these workers when their time in the electronics plants is over.

For the short term, the tens of thousands of jobs the electronics industry has brought to each Southeast Asian country have created new economic roles for women, potentially raising their status and undermining the patriarchal structure which often makes families oppressive for women. At the same time, however, by stressing Western versions of feminine passivity, the companies have been able to prevent the workers from realising their potential for independence. ■

Rachael Grossman has lived in Indonesia and travelled throughout Southeast Asia. She has worked at the Pacific Studies Centre researching US corporate involvement in Asia. She is now a staff member of the Southeast Asia Resource Centre. This is extracted from a joint issue of the Southeast Asia Chronicle (No 66) and Pacific Research (Vol 9 no 5-6).

CYCLE TOUR WITH TIKA TOURING EQUIPMENT

RANGE INCLUDES:

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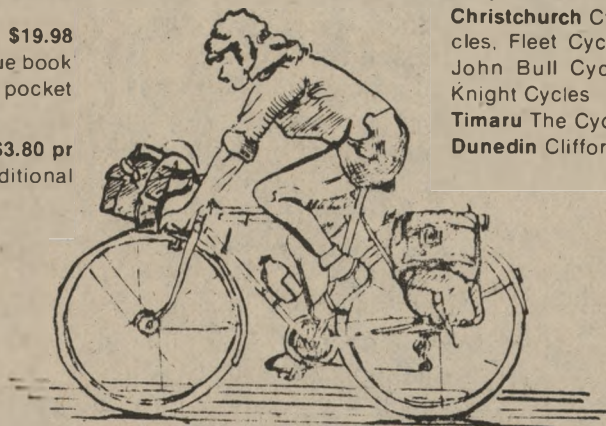
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ЖЕНЩИНА И РОССИЯ

"Women in Russia"

A Russian underground feminist magazine surfaces in the West.



The cover of "Women in Russia" showing International Decade of Women symbol with letter M above its head, standing for Tatjana Mamonova, founder of the magazine.

The official version of the position of women in Russia is that they already have equality. We have been told that the vast majority of Russian women work, that day care is provided everywhere, and that abortion is freely available. There was even a Russian woman cosmonaut, a space-aged symbol of the heights that Russian women were said to have reached. While there have been whispers of the double burden carried by working Russian women and of the low status of female-intensive occupations (even when they differ from those in the West), we have not heard the actual voices of Russian women.

But all this changed with the appearance in the West of a Russian underground feminist magazine called **Women in Russia**. The German feminist magazine **Courage** takes up the story.

"In the middle of December last year rumours began to circulate in Paris about the existence of a samizdat (literally, 'self-printed') or underground women's magazine in Russia.

Articles appeared in **Liberation**, then, soon after, a complete translation in Volume 10 of **Des Femmes en Mouvement hebdo** revealed the shocking reality of the daily oppression of women in the USSR.

This "Almanac by women for women," first volume dated 10 December 1979, the day of Human Rights in the USSR, was written by ten women and one child and circulated by hand last September in Leningrad. Somehow, two of these underground magazines got to Paris, one to the feminist publishing firm Tiero, which subsequently produced a full translation with additional texts written by Paris-based dissidents. The magazine is an unpretentious, well-thumbed pamphlet, hand-bound in a sort of heavy grey blotting paper. The hand-drawn title, saying **Women in Russia**, has underneath the Women's Year insignia, with an M overprinted, standing for Mamonova, the initiator of the paper, then above that, an infinity sign.

Each of the copies was produced and duplicated by hand — the ten articles and editorials are all in typing of different quality. The machines sometimes print so badly that words are almost illegible and the paper is at times like cigarette paper. Each article is accompanied by a picture of the authoress, who risks a prison sentence of three to four years for the publication of this underground paper. The women proudly give not only their full names, but also their pictures.

The prosecutions didn't take long to start. On her birthday, 10 December 1979, Tatjana Mamonova was summoned by the KGB [the internal security police force] and made to sign a statement in which she 'admitted having published with ten other people, a newspaper of tendentious ideology'.

Tatjana Goritceva and Sofia Sokolova have also been summonsed several times by the KGB. In January 1980, Mamonova, Sokolova and Vosnesenskaja were arrested, then immediately released. The appearance of the promised second volume of **Women in Russia** thus seems to be imperiled, as the women were told they would all be arrested if this happens." *Courage March 1980*

The present fate of the writers of the samizdat is uncertain. The May issue of the British magazine **Socialist Review** claims that "all the authors have now been arrested."

What "crime" did these Russian women commit? What forbidden subjects did they speak of? The concerns they express are similar in many ways to those raised by women in the West. The articles, poems and fiction discuss women giving birth in harsh conditions, a typical Russian abortion centre called by local women "the butchery", the drunkenness of the men and their lack of contribution to the home, the double burden of working mothers and the long waits "in endless lines to buy vegetables, fruit and other rare items" after a full day at work.

On the following pages we print extracts from some of the articles from **Women in Russia**.

*Letter from the Public Prosecutor of Leningrad 14 December 1979

A Statement of Aims.

Attention!

Dear Sisters!

We have scarcely begun living when we become conscious that all the burdens of life are kept for our shoulders. At first, everything which is painful and harmful to us — containing us in a dense circle — seems to happen by chance. It is impossible to believe that life can punish completely innocent individuals just because they are born female. All suffering is felt to be unbearable to human life, and its immediate removal urgent — except for the suffering of women. Our situation is so unbearable that it surely must disappear of itself, dissolve as would a nightmare. But nothing changes of itself. And we are convinced that no-one will help us except we ourselves. Only when we write, to talk about our sufferings, our bitterness, only when we have made our experiences known to each other, made politicized, can we find a way through, can we help ourselves and thousands of women suffering as much as ourselves.

Precisely for these reasons we have decided — in our free country — to put out a magazine for women. On the pages of this magazine, we are reporting on the situation of women in the family, at work, in the hospital, in childbirth, on the situation of our children, on the position of our theoretical reflections. We will publish the artistic and journalistic work of women. We will write realistically of the fate of our contemporaries. We ask of you: write to us of everything which disturbs and moves you. Send us your work, stories about your sisters, mothers, friends. If it is necessary, the correspondents of the magazine will go to you to help you with this as much as possible. We hope that we will, with our strength united, set ourselves in motion and, with that, the liberation of women.

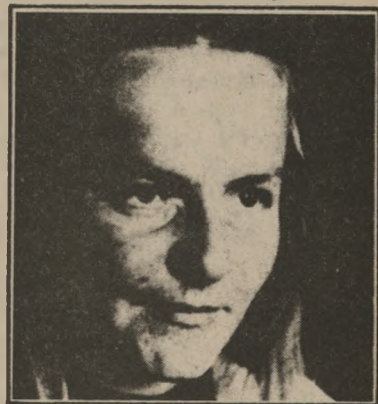
*"When that which is concealed is revealed,
then it will become clear."*



Tatjana Mamonova



Julja Vosnesenskaja



Tatjana Goritceva



Irina Tiscenko

АЛЪМАНАХ

Excerpts from the Editorial

In these times, reason should actively prevail. Because of this, we are compelled to take up an urgent issue: the situation of women in society is the most important question of our time.

The old ways of thinking, the rigidities of consciousness, make women prisoners in their own milieu — more precisely speaking, in communal living.

And the woman cannot defend herself against an intangible force. For if she lets slip her supporting energy, the household collapses. Meanwhile the myth of her weakness is still, incredibly, alive. And if the woman departs from the confines of the household, she must pay for it. For the obligation and the responsibility of reproducing actual life lies with her, as well as doing her share of society's work, *and* the housework (which is still known as "women's work"); thus she is hugely overworked. It is to be expected that such an overload causes tensions for women, the more so as she is always being pushed into a secondary position. Her lower status is a concept which has been cultivated by patriarchy and invented for women. Officially equality for women has long been established, but in fact the rights of women are regarded as presumptuous. The fear of competition — which is especially found in high positions, from which women are so obviously excluded — the fear of losing prestige causes men to praise the roles of wife and mother.

These Pharisees do so as if they do not notice that it is women who pull the carriage they sit in, women who provide the power to drive it on. The fever of an incessant production-line existence makes for a concealed oppression of the woman's personality. Her slave-psyche has not disappeared, withered away, it simply appears in covert and distorted forms. The degrading conditions of childbirth, of

abortion, and in the communal household, etc, prevents her development as a human being. Values remain male-oriented; the woman is appraised by the society she lives in and she is forced to measure herself by those values. Her worth is dependent on how much like a man she has become. The falseness of this position always demands a sacrifice from the woman but it is society which has caused this: what is known as the "woman question" is one of the most important elements in the common struggle for the revolutionising of the world.

"We are not ashamed to openly state what we believe to whomever wants to listen, be that person a Russian, a foreigner, or an agent of the KGB." — Tatjana Mamonova

The patriarchy has become a phallocracy. It is understandable that the educated woman seeks a way out and sees it in the refusal to bear children. A conscious motherhood cannot emerge from stony ground. The protest, by women, against the arbitrariness of men, though, is founded not only in this refusal but more frequently in the paradoxical refusal of her own personality. This flight into absurdity is legitimated because the downgrading of everything female, an unspoken, sexist attitude, is officially practised and is unfortunately not overcome by non-conforming. The sexist attitudes towards women

leads to a complete denial of their personality. The age-old forbearance of women has become a disease in the sub-stratum of society; while the continual boozing of men makes them animals.

However, feudal conditions and the absence of fathers are also found in intellectual families, although here a competition also takes place, with the battle of egos. The women there are like men; they debate competently, smoke, drink, swear like men. Intellectual women do not feel as though they are making sacrifices, yet male culture excludes women, it is saturated with misogyny; while the concept of "man-hating" does not exist. The brutal pressures of a phallocratic culture represses everything female in the women and at the same time makes them misogynistic. This senselessness is flourishing here all the time. Woman, who cannot obtain true knowledge, who is filled with misinformation, cannot see her real enemy. While she turns away from herself, she must wander about in the dark corners of an alien culture.

This contempt of women leads to the disintegration of the family, to the division of humanity and to the isolation of women from each other. The common experiences of the women of society are not respected and new experiences do not develop. New ideas are prone to be discredited from the start. The voice of truth is difficult to hear in the middle of parade-ground music.



Natalia Malachovskaja

Here, there is much talk of military defence, but before someone is defended, the vitality of the whole society should be ensured. That is, the woman, who gives life, comes first, and then military defence, not the other way around.

Tatjana Mamanova

The full transcript of the editorial is available by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope and 50 cents for xeroxing to Broadsheet.

On Abortion

When a woman has decided to have an abortion, a narrow road to calvary lies in wait for her. It begins with the humiliation of having to go to the consultants to collect a heap of papers for the impending execution; there, she is spoken to with undisguised arrogance and contempt. The degradation continues along the road the woman must take to reach her aim. There is the waiting in the queue for registration: in a large room, without light and air, on benches placed against the wall, sit women with worried and depressed faces. They sit there for 1½ to 2 hours.

With the passing of the hours, the torture of a mapped-out destiny comes closer. Finally they go to the abortion department of the Lermontowski-Prospekt. It is a monstrous institution, like a mincing-machine for women. This clinic takes in 200 to 300 people a day. Huge rooms with ten to fifteen beds, wire-wove beds with cotton covering them. There is always a lack of sheets. A woman has to be very lucky if she is to come by a sheet she can either lie on or cover herself with. And that is the medical institution in which surgical operations are carried out on women. But the women who come here pay no attention to this. They are fearful, apprehensive of the approaching humiliations. Then comes the deciding moment. The women sit in a queue in front of the operating room. The chairs are so placed that the women can see everything that is happening in the room opposite.

They see the distorted faces, something bleeding, something being taken from the insides of a woman. In the theatre there are two doctors and one nurse. "Quickly, quickly" says the nurse. The woman, trembling with fear and nervousness climbs onto the operating bed. Her movements are awkward and uncertain. The doctor tells her, irritably, the position she should be in. Finally, she gets into the right position and the doctor begins the operation. Sometimes an injection is given, but its effects are slight because there is not enough Novocain and because they don't wait for it to take effect. And because of that the women suffer terrible pain. Some become unconscious. The nurse who must attend on two doctors, cannot help the "patient". With a great deal of difficulty, the woman is "revived" and led out. Then it is the turn of another woman who has been waiting. They take her to bed. There, for 1 to 1½ hours, the woman lies writhing with pain and shaking with nausea; sometimes she has to vomit. The next day she is sent home, irrespective of her condition, which would leave much to be desired. The medical care in the Soviet Union is based on the principle of self-treatment for the sick, and is considered beneficent. The sick receive basic care and everything else is left to them.

Vera Golubeva

On Childbirth

Pregnancy, undoubtedly a parasitic phenomenon, destroys your youth. Your faith. The meaning of your own existence. All for posterity which is preferably male! Patriarchy somehow or other always forces woman into a cage.

Man couldn't care less about your sacrifice, he is separated from you by a thick glass wall, which he relies on to protect him from the noise you occasionally create (in your few spare moments).

Sometimes your voice reaches him from behind the glass wall (when you scream too loudly).

'Change the world.' 'Make the world just.' but there's no reason for man to change the world. Such a system is comfortable and profitable for him. He would rather start a new war which will exterminate your children. He would rather invent a new rocket, than to take the heavy chains from you. What use is your emancipation to him? Your liberation only creates inconveniences for him.

On the 8 March (once a year!) he dusts the sideboard. He declares 1975 women's year and invents various formalities to go with this.

"You can avoid the procreation of the species, but not the 'opinion' of society, an opinion formulated exclusively by men. If you are not a mother (they give this sacred word the vilest associations) you are either an 'old maid' or a whore."

— R. Batalova

From your first minute in the 'maternity home' (this is the respectful name for Golgotha) you freeze with fear. The groans, sobs and pleas of the women in labour have a traumatic effect on anyone the first time they go there. To the question:

'How can you permit this?'

The doctor answers:

'Our aim is children.'

'Women will put up with anything.'

Then trestles of beds, on which the unfortunate victims of patriarchy writhe. Bloody sheets. Eyes huge from pain. Bitten lips (they prudently cut your nails on your admission), soaking wet nightgowns, dishevelled hair.

'Why all together?'

'There are so many of them.'

'But they are human beings.'

'Forget the philosophy. Lie down and get on with it.'

'You're being rude.'

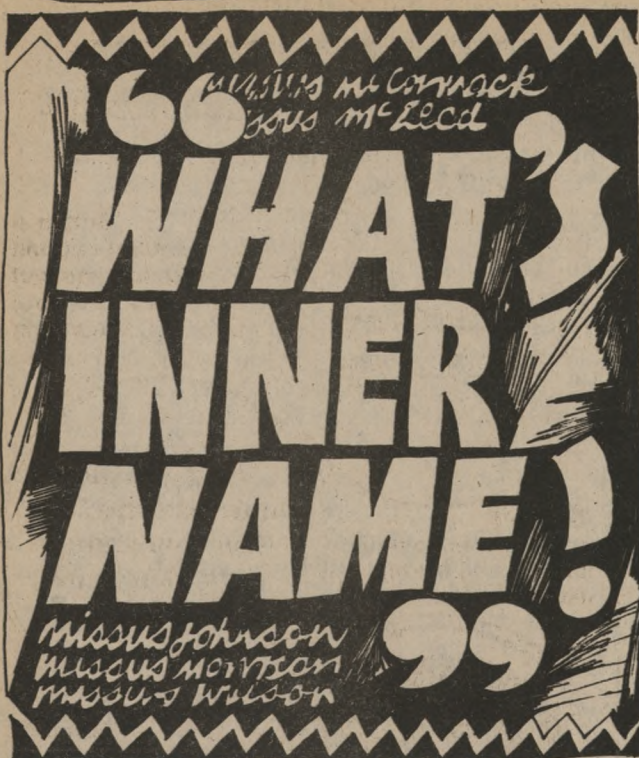
'There's no alternative here.'

'On the contrary these women need attention and a kind word like no one else.'

'We've got lots of work to do.'

You lie down. You close your eyes tight. For all these groans tear

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42



DRAWING: SALLY HOLLIS MCLEOD

Being called Mrs Henry Brown symbolises the loss of self many women experience on becoming married. Part of hanging onto your own identity is keeping your own name. But it can be a struggle as **SAPPHIRE BARRY** describes.

Maybe there are some Broadsheet readers who are thinking of getting married, and thinking of not changing their surnames to their husbands'. I can say from my own experiences, that there will be difficulties ahead.

I have been married two years and have two children, the first child to a previous relationship and the second one from this. You may be interested in the difficulties I faced in keeping my surname.

The first of many explanations was made to Social Welfare. That department requires more than just a verbal explanation; it must be put in writing. I discovered this when I informed it that I no longer needed the Domestic Purposes Benefit I had previously been receiving.

Banks require explanations too. If you take out a joint account they put it under the husband's name first, with one's (preferred) name following. At least they don't try to persuade you to use your husband's name.

We had our wills made out by the Public Trust. Their lawyer tried to persuade me that my will should be under my husband's name, or at least it should be there as an alias. I got in touch with a manager of one Public Trust Office about that. He told me it is not policy to insist that a wife use her husband's surname, but that rather, if a woman does at any stage use her husband's surname it is desirable that it be written down, as it

could affect her assets — for example, a bank account.

Insurance agents are hard work. As they may not have encountered a woman keeping her own surname before, they have to be told the actual law regarding a wife's name. One in particular ignored me completely, talking only to my husband and referring to me as Mrs . . . only when he had to. We had no further dealings with him.

We recently purchased some children's books on a hire purchase account. It was put under our joint names but arrived addressed to Mr and with my initials and his surname. A call to the company has, hopefully, corrected this. Other hire purchase accounts have been made with no trouble using my name as I had an established credit rating before I married.

When the baby was registered a small note had to be written that my name remained the same as my maiden name. The baby was given a hyphenated surname with my name first as it sounded better that way.

Now it seemed to start all over again. Everyone assumes your name will be the same as your child's. When you think of how many things are associated with your children, you will see how many problems you could have. With perseverance it can be overcome though. I am lucky that my christian name is a bit unusual; it helps

me to be more easily remembered.

I think you do need a supportive partner if you are keeping your surname as he may also have to face difficulties. In our case he decided to rejoin the Air Force six months after we married. When he put down my name as his next-of-kin he was told the computers wouldn't accept it! It is amazing what computers will and will not do. It was altered, but not till later. It wasn't advisable to dispute it too much just then as there is a certain rank structure that one must adhere to.

My partner's work associates get confused and sometimes embarrassed. If they assume I have the same name as my husband I correct them by first denying his name and then informing them of mine. It is not *his* household — it is a joint household. It is a lot easier for them to call me by my christian name which suits me fine.

Shopkeepers remember our different names but neighbouring women tend to be different. They refer to me by my name but instruct their children to use my husband's name to call me by. Puzzling? I think so too. There could be many reasons for this but it does seem that while people accept it, they don't really understand and can't fully come to terms with it. The first comment I get is: "But are you really married?" When I say yes, I am often told, "But then your husband's name is your legal name." But no, it is not my legal name. Often they prefer to think I'm not married.

As can be seen from my experiences there is still a great need for education of people as to our rights. It is all very well to have occasional newspaper articles on professional people, upper class and wealthy people and actresses who don't use their spouses' surnames. But very few people realise that one doesn't have to be outstanding in any way to use one's own name all one's life.

I wonder how many women when they apply for a birth certificate and a marriage licence realise that they have this right. Surely they could be informed at the Registrar's office that they have an option.

I have nothing against women who change their names to those of their husbands' — that is their choice. I only ask that I be allowed to make my choice and live by it without being pressured to conform. The only fear that I now have is that after all my struggling to retain my own name, I may be issued with a death certificate under my husband's surname. He would not do it, but some other person may. If anyone has a solution to this I would be pleased to hear. ■

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with lots of clout
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**First you sink
into his arms . . .
then you end up
with your arms
in his sink.**

**UPPITY
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UNITE**

Button C
for firey women —
radical red on
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Button D
the classic —
punchy black on
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more of the cake
we want
the whole damn
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Button E
for women who
don't want the
crumbs — black
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HEALTH NOTES



BREAST CANCER UPDATE

US surgeons are increasingly abandoning radical mastectomy in the treatment of breast cancer. There is mounting evidence that other approaches — less radical surgery, radiation therapy — are just as effective as the radical approach which not only removed the breast but also the lymph nodes and underlying muscles down to the ribs causing disfiguring and often debilitating scarring. Dr W. A. Hasted who invented the radical mastectomy at the turn of the century says: "Conceptions from the past blind us to fact which almost slaps us in the face."

Last June a group of experts gathered by the National Institutes of Health recommended that total mastectomy (removal of breast and lymph nodes only) be adopted as the standard operation for patients with early signs of the disease.

Experiments at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda are looking at lumpectomy (removal of the tumour) and radiation treatment as an alternative treatment; so far patients treated this way have the same recurrence rate as after surgery. Another approach, particularly favoured for younger patients for whom it seems more effective, is to combine minimal surgery with chemotherapy.

Despite all these changes in approach to the treatment of breast cancer the sobering fact is that while the incidence of breast cancer has

increased markedly over the past fifteen years the death rate from the disease has remained exactly the same.

Info from *Washington Post*, Oct 28 and 29, 1979

ATTENTION DIAPHRAGM USERS

Some women experience painful urinary tract infections using the diaphragm. These are caused by the diaphragm rubbing on the urethra — the tube from the bladder. They are more common in very thin women who have little in the way of fatty tissue to protect the urethra. These infections are more likely to occur where intercourse takes place during the day (i.e. in the morning for example) and the woman is physically active afterwards. It is in these situations that the urethra is most likely to become damaged. Women who experience this can try to get a refit of their diaphragm, change their sexual habits or change their method of contraception.

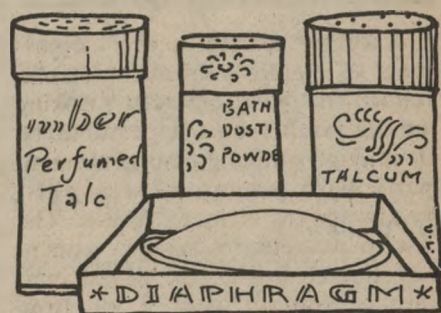
BACK TO THE RUBBERS

Sales of oral contraceptives in the US dropped by 24% in the four years between 1975 and 1978. In the face of increasing reports of detrimental side-effects of the Pill women are turning to other methods of contraception. Over the past decade there have been reports linking the Pill to blood clots, some forms of cancer, gall bladder problems, liver tumours, heart disease, stroke and anaemia to say nothing of many other less serious, but nevertheless debilitating, side-effects. American women are increasingly turning to IUDs and barrier methods like condoms and diaphragms. This turn to barrier methods has resulted in an enormous increase in prescriptions filled for diaphragms from 503,000

in 1975 to 1,205,000 in 1978 — a 140 percent increase. No figures are known for condom use because prescriptions are not needed.

In the past women have been discouraged from using the diaphragm by the reported 85% effectiveness of that method compared with the Pill's ostensible 98-99% effectiveness; now some workers in the birth control field are rethinking this approach to barrier methods. If the diaphragm is used correctly, they now maintain, it is 97-100% effective while the Pill's effectiveness drops to about 94% when one takes into account the odd forgotten or late pill.

Info from *Washington Post*, Nov. 3, 1979.



DRAWINGS: VANYA LOWRY

TALCUM POWDER NOT SO HARMLESS

A recent study suggests that talc and ovarian cancer are linked. Consumer talc products in the past also sometimes contained asbestos, a known carcinogen, so isolating talc's role in the development of ovarian cancer is difficult. Although several animal studies have failed to show any carcinogenic properties in talc, there have been clinical reports of talc particles found deeply embedded in ovarian, cervical and endometrial tumours. Talc is found in dusting powders, deodorants, soap, chalk, crayons, textiles, pills (including some oral contraceptives).

condoms, contraceptive diaphragms and many other products. The authors of the study suggest that hazardous talc exposure begins with repeated application of talcum powders round the genitals. This process could be accelerated by additional exposure to asbestos or talc in adulthood through the use of a talc-dusted diaphragm or condom.

While the authors say more research is needed to validate this suggested association between talc and cancer it would be wise for users of barrier methods of contraception to switch to cornflour as a dusting agent.

Info *The Lancet*, August 18, 1979, *Modern Medicine*, Dec 15, 1979-Jan 15, 1980.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABE!

A recent article in the Department of Health publication *Health* reports that while cigarette smoking among adult males appears to be declining, smoking among women, particularly among teenage girls, has increased in recent years. The rise in cigarette smoking in women is reflected in the rise in the incidence among women of lung cancer, cardiovascular disease and other smoking-related diseases. In the US lung cancer, fifth leading cause of death among women in 1964, had by 1969 advanced to third place ahead of uterine cancer but still behind cancer of the colon and rectum and breast cancer. It is predicted that it will pass the current leader, breast cancer, in the 1980's.

Theories advanced to explain the increase include "the disappearance of many social differences between the sexes through the action of the women's movement"; that women do not heed anti-smoking messages as much as men; the success of cigarette manufacturers' campaigns aimed specifically at women.

In New Zealand 30 per cent of non-Maori women smoke while a staggering 60 per cent of Maori women do so. This rate probably explains why Maori women have what is suspected to be the highest rate of lung cancer in the world.

The article in *Health* does not suggest other possible reasons for increased cigarette smoking among women: The heavy burden many women must carry because of their dual roles as housewives and workers with little support from their men; increased awareness among women of the restrictions placed on their freedom and unhappiness and frustration because of that. Smoking for some women may be a response to stress.

AN "EXPERT" ON HOME BIRTH

Quote From Martin Stone, new president of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology:

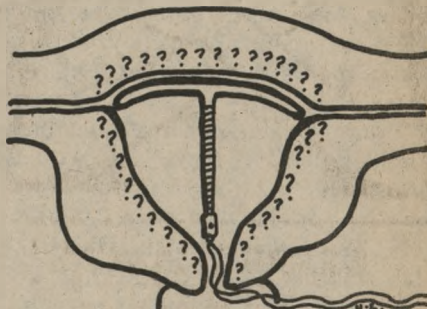
"We must publicly question the safety of home births, of home treatments, of home-grown midwives. Home delivery is the earliest form of child abuse."

"You know that the trip through the birth canal is the most dangerous trip we ever take with the greatest chance of dying of any one day in our lives."

INFLAMMATORY IUDs

A doctor from a Dutch hospital reported to an international symposium on medicated IUDs held in Amsterdam late last year that a study he conducted showed that women who use IUDs have a sig-

nificantly higher rate of subclinical pelvic inflammatory disease than women who use other forms of contraception. 54% of women with IUDs had some form of salpingitis while the rate for the control subjects was only 6%.



At the same conference the results of a Japanese study of IUDs were discussed. Inflammation of the endometrium (lining of uterus) was found in 27 of 145 women wearing five different kinds of IUDs for periods of less than three months to more than 24 months. The study also found that the incidence of endometrial inflammation increased with the length of time the IUD was in place rising to 50% in women who had had an IUD over 24 months.

Family Practice News, October 15, 1979.

DOUBTS ABOUT FLAGYL

Flagyl (metronidazole), the only effective drug in the treatment of trichomoniasis should be used with caution says *The Medical Letter*, a publication on drugs. Metronidazole is carcinogenic in some animals and although a recent study of women treated with the drug for trich was entitled "Lack of Evidence for Cancer Due to Use of Metronidazole" *The Medical Letter* points out that the women were followed up less than 10 years after exposure to the drug, while the latency period of chemical carcinogenesis may be more than 20 years.

The Medical Letter, Nov 21, 1979.



CONTINUED FROM P 37

you to pieces. An unbearable sight for a normal mind. Delirium. Horror personified. A nightmare which shatters the nerves. Bloodstained trestlebeds. You clutch your head. You try to immerse yourself in oblivion. The contractions wake you. The contractions return you to this room, to this ceaseless groaning reality.

Your stomach is transformed into an alien body. It moves by its own will. It is no longer under your power. Your hands try to contain its jerks. You can hear again. One cry, then another pierces your brain:

'Doctor, you promised to help me, Doctor' — a skinny girl cries in a broken voice.

'Midwife dear, Klavochka, come to me please' — this is the voice of the woman in the next bed, who you try not to look at.

'I don't want to live, I don't want to' — a voice from the other corner ward. A voice which ends in a heart rending shriek.

'Mother, why?' gasped someone else.

Your heart stops. Your throat dries up. A thought as penetrating as a yell; run from here. But a new lot of contractions nails you to the bed. Minutes. Hours. The lights go on. The groans follow, one after the other. A trail of blood from the bed, from the pre-natal to the labour ward. A trail of blood, which dried up before they have time to mop it up. You can lift yourself up and look out of the window. Your time still hasn't come. There below, through the branches of trees you see another world. You hear carefree laughter. They bring in a new patient. She wears glasses and is noticeably calm. In half an hour her glasses fall on the stone floor and she is terrified for her sight.

The foul face of patriarchy. Its convulsions. Agony. One of the prophets foretold its near speedy end. 'The power of woman will come on Earth.'

R. Batalova

Articles translated by Moira McGuinness, Jill Ranstead and Vera Slutskaya.

SURVIVAL KIT

MAKING SUBMISSIONS

How to find out that submissions are wanted:

- Get a member of your group to read the Public Notices column of the daily newspapers every day. Most public bodies advertise for submissions in those columns;
- As for Parliament — ask your local MP to send you regularly, eg every 3 weeks, a list of the Bills that are being studied by Select Committees and the closing date for submissions to them.

Getting the submission together:

If it is a group submission —

- Ask all members of the group to put any ideas about the topic on paper, just rough notes are quite sufficient;
- If possible give everyone copies of the ideas that have come in, then arrange to meet to decide on the main points to be included in the submission;
- Choose one or two people to write a first draft of the submission;
- Circulate the draft to all group members and ask for written or oral comments by a set date. If there are no comments by that date assume that everyone is happy with the draft. If there are major disagreements you will have to call another meeting to sort them out;
- Write the final draft incorporating the comments that have come in.

Written presentation of the submission:

Materials needed —
typewriter
stencil and gessetner or access to a xerox machine if you can afford it.
nb. submissions to Parliamentary Select Committees and many other official bodies require 15-30 copies.

Type on one side of the paper only. Number your paragraphs and keep paragraphs reasonably brief. When typing allow space and a half between each line and triple space at least between each paragraph.

Getting started:

- A standard sentence saying how

pleased you are to have the opportunity to make the submission saves hours of trying to decide how to begin;

- Then state briefly who you are or what your group or organisation is. State its main purpose, how many members it has and give a brief description of your membership, eg. women of all ages some in paid employment some not etc
- State what your interest is in the matter under consideration. eg I am a woman worker who will be affected if . . . I have done research relating to . . .

Contents of submission:

- Summarise the main points of your submission in one paragraph
- Then deal with each point in turn, elaborating on it and giving any back-up material eg statistics, reference to research finding etc
- Each point should be dealt with in a separate paragraph
- If commenting on a Bill you may suggest alternatives to what is there, but don't feel you have to put those alternatives into legal language
- At the conclusion, once again summarise your main points. Always add that you would like to appear in person to discuss the submission. Submissions presented in person have more impact than those simply received in writing.

Presenting submissions in person:

- Always take two people along for support
- You may be asked to read your submission or you may be asked simply to summarise the main points — always prepare a brief punchy summary beforehand so you aren't floundering
- When asked questions don't be afraid to pause for a moment to think about what you want to say
- Don't hesitate to say at the end that before you go there are some points you would like to emphasise — then repeat your main points.

Roslyn Noonan



HOGWASH

Send your contributions for the Hogwash pages to Broadsheet, PO Box 5799, Auckland.

They don't make 'em like they used to . . .

This explanation of why a ship is called "she" caught our attention.

It appears that there are others, according to Blue Water, the newsletter of the Small Boat Safety Committee, but this is the one that has been around for some time.

This particular explanation appeared in the shipping news of the Christchurch Press and was taken from a framed poem presented to the vessel Nedlloyd Bangkok when she was christened.

"... A ship is called 'she' because there is a great deal of bustle around her, there is usually a gang of men about, she has a waist and stays, it takes a lot of paint to keep her looking good, it is not the initial expense that breaks you but the upkeep, she can

be all decked out, it takes an experienced man to handle her correctly and without a man at the helm she is absolutely uncontrollable.

"She shows her topsides, hides her bottom, and when coming into port always heads for the buoys . . ."

WHAKATANE BEACON

16/5/80

Sent by Leah Morrison

IS YOUR WIFE A VEGETABLE? Then this wouldn't suit her. Only 5 mins from shops, schools, Pakuranga College, about \$3000 deposit unless you can save hard, phone GLE-4775. 819238

AUCKLAND STAR
20/5/80

THE BULLETIN 18/3/80

Sent by M Vanderberg
CHCH PRESS 2/5/80

NZPA-Reuter San Francisco

Glyn "Scotty" Wolfe, aged 71, who claims to be the world's most married man, has said he is about to marry for the twenty-fourth time, to Hessee, aged 17.

"I'm sure I've found the right girl this time," Mr Wolfe, a Baptist minister who has performed some of his own wedding ceremonies said.

He said he had recently divorced Guadalupe Chavez, aged 21, whom he married last July.

Mr Wolfe, who first married in 1927 and has 39 children, runs a boarding house in the sleepy California desert town of Blythe. He says he has seldom had enough money to pay significant amounts of alimony.

"I divorce the women when I get tired of them or they don't behave," he said recently. "Sometimes I teach them the important things — cooking and homemaking, and then I give them their diplomas in the form of divorce papers."

From JIGSAW — magazine of staff and patients of Ward 11, Psychiatric Unit, Tauranga Hospital. Sent by an ex-psych patient.

Special thanks to CHRISTINE

- our typist

(she's the shapely decoration at the front door!)



A bad exposure leaves you with next to nothing.

The dark picture is a bad exposure. The camera forced the photographer to rely on guesswork. To miss such a shot is almost indecent.

The other picture was taken with a Minolta 35mm SLR. A beautiful exposure.

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Take the Minolta XD7. Simply switch to an automatic setting and it will select the exposure for you. Correctly.

There's no risk of over, or underexposure. Your pictures reveal all, leaving nothing to the imagination.

Well, in this case, maybe just a little.

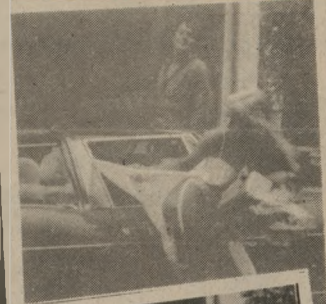


Minolta

Catches the one that normally gets away.

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Le Bulletin (Sydney) 4.3.80



The Feminist Eye

Films for Feminists in Film Festivals

SANDRA CONEY takes a brief look at some of the films to be shown in this year's film festivals, including five from feminist filmmakers from Europe, Canada and Australia.

Two European women filmmakers have work in the festivals. Vera Chytilova's **The Apple Game** is a rare Czechoslovakian movie which focusses on the chaotic sex life of a young doctor whom one reviewer describes as "an emotional nitwit, impossible to admire but extremely easy to recognise..." The film cuts between sex episodes and his work in a pediatric hospital with much frontal footage of labouring mothers and childbirth. Director Chytilova however, finds obsession with plot a Western concern; she is, she says, more concerned with her message: "The film... says that we should take responsibility for our actions. Everything that we cast out comes back to us. The characters in the film aren't responsible for their actions.... The children in the film and the birth of children are important as a metaphor for the idea of responsibility." Reviewers of the film have also praised Chytilova's evocation of mood, her wit, and her brilliant use of colour.

Auckland Thursday 24 July at 2.15 pm
Wellington Tuesday July 15 at 2 and 8

German filmmaker Margarethe von Trotta's **The Second Awakening of**

Christa Klages is based on the real-life story of a young woman who robs a bank to finance an ailing radical day care centre. Interspersed with the adventures of Christa on the run from the police is the investigation of the bank clerk, Lena, held hostage during the holdup, as she determinedly tracks down Christa. "**Christa Klages** looks and sounds very sober, but it is full of odd associations and images that distinguish the work of a true filmmaker from that of a well-studied hack. It is never predictable. **Christa Klages** is a didactic film, but it is never smug in the manner of a film that knows all the answers. It's mostly about uncertainty, and about the need to take risks and to make choices." *Vincent Canby in New York Times*

Auckland Saturday 20 July at 5.15 pm
Wellington Tuesday July 15 at 5.30 pm

Sydney Filmmakers Coop member Linda Blagg has **Just Out of Reach** in this year's festivals. Some NZ feminists may have seen her **Me and My Little Girle**, a short film on incest. Her latest film "deals with a young woman's attempted suicide after the breakdown of her marriage. It... examines her family life, early relation-

ships and marriage, in an attempt to show the forces that create a depressive personality.... Blagg says the film is about loneliness and alienation, rather than suicide. Describing it as a 'kitchen sink drama' she says that in it she wanted to explain self-destructive behaviour through family background." *Barbara Alysen in Cinema Papers*

Wellington Sunday July 6 at 10 am

Canada's **Mourir a Tue-tete** — Die Laughing (called **Scream From Silence** in Wellington) takes a serious feminist look at rape. "A mixture of narrative and documentary from the Quebequoise director Anne Claire Poirier, it examines rape in both its widest social context and its devastating effect on one individual.... Poirier stages the rape in a way that effectively de-eroticizes it and underlines the physical and mental violence." While this reviewer, Molly Haskell in **Village Voice**, has much praise for the film, she, like other feminist reviewers, found the ending unacceptably weak. However, she welcomed the film as a refreshing counterbalance to some very anti-woman rape films which are currently being screened.

Auckland Monday 21 July at 2.15 pm
Wellington Thursday July 17 at 2 and 8.15 pm

Two interesting British offerings will have special appeal for feminists. **Rapunzel, Let Down Your Hair** was co-produced by Susan Shapiro, Esther Ronay and Francine Winham, ex-members of the London Women's Film Group, and boasts an all-woman production team. The film examines the mother/daughter relationship through the telling of the Rapunzel fairy story. "**Rapunzel** works with the pleasure we get from stories; and on the peculiar pleasure we get from hearing stories repeated. The Rapunzel story is narrated several times, in several different ways, using different film genres.... Each time the story is re-told, it is thus re-interpreted. And as the re-tellings accumulate and qualify each other, three things happen simultaneously; the symbolism of the fairytale and its ideological function are dissected; the story itself and its meaning for women are transformed; and the possibility of a feminist aesthetic pleasure



Margarethe von Trotta's "**The Second Awakening of Christa Klages**"

is opened up in a way that does not involve painfully 'breaking' with the tales your mother told you, but starts from them as a basis to bend them another way."

Meaghan Morris in Cinema Papers

Auckland Tuesday 15 July at 11.15 am

Wellington Saturday July 19 at 10 am

Glenda Jackson is by all accounts "brilliant" in the title role of Bob Ender's film **Stevie** about Stevie Smith, a British poet and novelist (**Novel on Yellow Paper, The Holiday, Over the Frontier**) whom Jackson apparently knew before her death. Stevie lived with her aunt in the London suburb of Palmers Green and commuted each day to an office in the city. "People think that I never married because I don't know about emotions," said Stevie, "but they are wrong, I love my aunt." Stef Pixner, the **SpareRib** reviewer, found the film a little too theatrical but also "a warm, sad, funny film about a woman poet which takes seriously her work, her ideas about life, her need for independence, and the close relationship between her and her aunt — the love between two single women."

Auckland Tuesday 15 July at 11.15 am

Some festival films are sure to cause nausea for feminist filmgoers. It's certainly not profitable to dwell on them in the pages of Broadsheet, except perhaps to mention Bergman's latest effort, since so many filmgoers go gooey at the sound of his name. This year we have **Autumn Sonata** described by the **New Women's Times** reviewer as a "two-hour tantrum". Lillian Mohin in **SpareRib** outlines the plot: "Ingrid Bergman plays a glamorous concert pianist mother on a visit to Liv Ullman, as her plain daughter, a minister's wife who adheres to what is 'really' appropriate for women. . . . During most of

the film she berates her mother, ladling on the guilt until Bergman has nearly drowned every female member of the audience who ever dreamt of an autonomous life. Mama's crime was not being sufficiently mama-like. She was successful outside the home, a dedicated musician . . ." As European filmmaker Agnes Varda says of Bergman: "All his women are consumed with his anxiety."

Auckland Saturday 12 July at 5.15 pm & 8.15 pm

The Wellington Film Festival will be at the Paramount Theatre July 4 — 19

The Auckland Film Festival will be at the Civic Theatre July 11 — 24

book review

The Bleeding Heart, Marilyn French, Andre Deutsch, 1980, \$14.95

A couple of years ago, four friends visited me. We had a meal together and sat, with our coffee, in after dinner conversation. Marilyn French's **The Women's Room** came into the conversation. One of my friends, the only journalist — and the only man — there, said he thought it was boring and badly written. When he had recovered from the barrage of indignant challenges he then faced, he defended his criticism of it by saying that while he thought it "picked up" about two-thirds of the way through, he found the endless recital of the trivia of the character's days was boring; and the fact that it couldn't hold his attention meant to him that it was badly written.

"But she did that deliberately," exclaimed one friend, referring to the recital of the trivia. "Hoping to show you. Don't you see?"

"Do you think she's that good a . . ." he said, startled, and broke off at the sight of our cynical faces. "Well. Perhaps I'd better think about it some more," he said. We let the matter drop.

In her second book, **The Bleeding Heart**, French could come in for the same type of criticism my journalist friend levelled. He could well find the minute documentation of an affair a far cry from the profiles that grand romances offer. But it's much more real. Some of the passages came so close to my own experiences that I felt at times that I was reading my diary.

By the time I had finished **The Bleeding Heart**, I felt that Dolores, the main character in it, was a woman I knew well. I met her on the train at Oxford, when she almost has Erica de Jong's zipless fuck, but instead of consummating her passion then and there (they did have a first-class carriage) she got off the train, he comes with her and they fuck at her place. Then he's in her life good and proper. And, of course, he's married and she's divorced. She's too close to woman's pain to be quite sane, and he's had a slap or two in the face which jerked him into a deeper understanding of the lot of women — but not their pain.

But the need Dolores has to have her body "lain in some arms, against another body" puts her through the same old mincer, which she sees. But it doesn't stop her from holding her fingers to the turning blades. Her own brief descent into hell is brilliantly described: "She bent and stood up and caught sight of a woman with a white face and dishevelled hair and a

9th Wellington Film Festival

Paramount Theatre July 4-19 1980

Featuring FILMS BY WOMEN:

From Czechoslovakia **THE APPLE GAME**, directed by Vera Chytilova: A feminist comedy set in a maternity hospital.

From Australia **JUST OUT OF REACH**, directed by Linda Blagg: The story of a young woman's suicide attempt. Starring Lorna Lesley.

From West Germany **THE SECOND AWAKENING OF CHRISTA KLAGES**, directed by Margarethe von Trotta: A thriller based on a true story about a young woman who holds up a bank in order to save her day-care centre from financial ruin.

From Canada **A SCREAM FROM SILENCE** (a.k.a. **PRIMAL FEAR**), directed Anne-Claire Poirier: A film about rape which also investigates the possibility of ever dispelling the male mythology of sexual domination.

From the U.K. **RAPUNZEL, LET DOWN YOUR HAIR**, directed by Susan Shapiro, Esther Ronay and Francine Winham: This film retells the fairy-story from several points of view and in several different film genres. An investigation of the status of feminist cinema.

Featuring FILMS ABOUT WOMEN:

From France **DEAR INSPECTOR**, directed by Lino Brocka: Investigates the sexual pressures brought to bear on a girl growing up in a slum area of Manila.

From France **A SIMPLE STORY**, directed by Claude Sautet: Starring Romy Schneider as a 40-year-old woman tempted to return to her former husband.

From Czechoslovakia **HEAVENLY EMMY**, directed by Jiri Krejčík: Starring Bozidara Turzonovova as an opera singer who returns from a tour of America to be accused of spying.

For further details write at once to Box 9544, Wellington, or ring Bill Gosden Wgtn 850-162.

strange expression. She moved back from the mirror slowly, and stood very still. There was something wrong with her. She could feel it. It was something serious. She'd have to be careful. It was going to be hard to live this way, she'd have to walk very carefully, a little at a list. She could do it if she tried very hard. She'd slide by. She had to, because if they saw, they did horrible things to you, they grabbed you by the arm and stuck needles in you and locked you up and gave you electric shock. . . . She looks in the mirror. She buttons the jacket but the two bottom ones won't close. She looks odd. She is fat for Jesus. But she will pass."

I got angry with Dolores time and time again. I muttered warnings to her from the start about that man, but would she listen? I scolded her for her stupidity. I asked her why she didn't look at alternative ways of interacting with Victor. "What else is there?" she said quietly, pushing her glasses up her nose. "Either he's with me or he's not. However you shape it, that's what you've got to work with." True, Dolores. But every now and then I begin to wonder a little. Is it better to have loved and lost than never have loved at all? And if so, how is it that we can't seem to structure our relationships in a way that doesn't leave us feeling worthless or used or hard done by or on the thin edge of insanity? Marilyn French has a remarkable talent for setting down the details of the emotional mindtraps we know only too well. I only wish Dolores had moved ahead at least one fraction of a millimetre instead of running on the spot.

Sandi Hall

women in communication

10 July — 30 July

33 videotapes from the Los Angeles women's video centre photographs and prints by New Zealand women artists opening lecture on video in New Zealand

forum discussing GREAT? ART? WOMEN? Sun 27 July

at the
National Art Gallery

film review

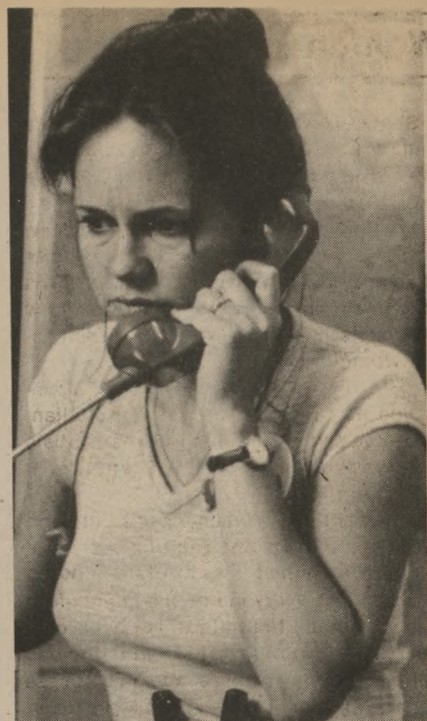
Norma Rae
Dir: Martin Ritt
Starring: Sally Field

Norma Rae deals with a woman's struggle to unionise a cotton mill in a small town in America's Deep South two years ago. Martin Ritt's gritty movie is based on a woman's real life experiences. Sally Field has the kind of rare role actresses dream about as the strong, independent, quirky Norma Rae, and her performance is excellent. The town of Henleyville is insular, cluttered and limiting. Everything, including the faces of the characters, is worn and grimy.

The triple oppression of life in a poor Southern Baptist town is there for anyone to see. Workers at the mill are kept too tired for organised action by the factory bosses. Workers who criticise, like Norma Rae, are promoted above their workmates, separated and reporting on them. If workers threaten the management stranglehold, even if they're within their rights, they're arrested on blanket charges like "creating a disturbance" by the police, who work hand in hand with the bosses. Almost every woman has two jobs so their families can eat. They earn the rewards of paid work — deafness and death from brown lung — the same as the men.

Norma Rae has to fight sexist attitudes every step of the way. When she expresses doubt during her regular Friday night liaison with a married man, she gets slapped across the room and told, "You're meant to make *me* feel good." Her new husband proposes like he's interviewing for a job: "I eat anything that's put in front of me, I come straight home with my paypacket, I love kids," and so on. The male idea of a blueprint for a perfect husband. But of course he didn't expect to have any hand in preparing what was put in front of him and is furious when Norma Rae's union organising leaves him running the home. Reuben, the Yankee union organiser with whom she works, tells her not to yell at a back-sliding union worker because "You can't treat him like that and leave him his balls." Never mind her self-respect.

A kind of apartheid applies to the social life of the blacks. Norma Rae's preacher, at whose church she's been a regular worshipper, refuses permission for a mixed-race union meeting in his all-white church. As the conflict with the mill bosses heats up, a management smear that the blacks intend taking over the union causes an attack on two blacks by some young white



Sally Fields in "Norma Rae"

toughs.

The main fault with the film is that the drive to organise the union is not presented as the grassroots, continuous, collective slog that it must be. Rather, it's a case of individual heroic struggle. We see Reuben leafletting, holding two small meetings; Norma Rae cyclostyling all night in his messy motel room, and all of a sudden there's 400-plus votes for the union in a worker mass meeting. So the factory is unionised, the organiser leaves, and all is rosy in Henleyville. But one earlier scene of conflict with the big nobs from the union shows that it isn't. They visit Reuben to hurry his campaign and to get Norma Rae out of it because her past provides a too-easy target for an employer smear. In doing so they grant such tactics validity instead of building worker solidarity and ignoring them. And just because the place is unionised doesn't mean the brood of anonymous, white-shirted factory bosses will cease pitting the workers against each other or that their atrocious work conditions will magically improve.

The original Norma Rae, wanted Barbara Kopple (director of a documentary about a coal miners' strike — **Harlan County, USA**) to film her story. (**Ms** reports that it might still happen.) I look forward to seeing a woman-defined version of the struggle. But until it comes, let's hope more films about stropky, independent, fighting women supersede the Tom Horns and the Kramer vs Kramers.

Jenny Rankine

Women in Touch

Scheduled for the Wellington Women's Gallery between July 22 & August 23 is the "Women in Touch" exhibition of the postcard exchange which has been operating between Australian and New Zealand women for over a year. Jude Watters, a member of Women's Art Movement in Adelaide, describes how WIT got started and what it's meant for the women involved.

"The idea of Women in Touch was conceived at a meeting between Australian, New Zealand and visiting women artists involved in the Sydney Biennale in March/April, 1979.

A keen interest in each other's work and ideas led to the proposing of a system of keeping in contact. This involved sending postcards to everyone by the twenty-fifth of each month. Naturally, this was thrown open to any women artists who showed interest in being involved, and this process began with the nomination of friends and identities known to the original group.

Response at first was fairly minimal, but gained momentum as the situation became clear. The initial list was changed continually as: a) it was realised that some nominated members were travelling and unavailable, and b) new members started communicating.

This should prove to be an interesting and highly visual exhibition as most members have used the postcard format as an extension of their current ideas and materials in an expressive intuitive manner. Generally tending to convey more information on the front of the card rather than in writing, although letters and poems have been sent.

So far, I have received forty-four cards and letters, the last being an enquiry for information about WIT, so new members are still joining. I have found this exercise very rewarding in many ways. The making of the cards each month has been very useful in helping to bring ideas together and extending ideas in a quick and accessible manner. On another level, I have kept in touch with friends and introduced them to others. A friend in Gippsland, Victoria, whom I introduced to WIT, spent some time visiting NZ this year and stayed with WIT members there, enabling her to contact the art scene there with ease."

Before the WIT exhibition is the "Womenspirit" exhibition of illustrated poetry (June 17 — July 19) and a showing of Australian and NZ women's videos at lunchtime and evenings (July 10 — 30). Running concurrently with WIT is the "Diaries" exhibit. A wide variety of women have been invited to document the month

of June in any chosen media. Between October 28 and December 6 the Gallery plans a "Women and Violence" exhibition. This will be a large-scale project documenting women's experience and expressions of living in a violent world. This is being coordinated by Heather McPherson and is open to all women. Early next year a large multi-media exhibition round the theme "Mothers" aims to look at women's experience of motherhood. Women or women's groups interested in participating are invited to contact the Gallery.

Phone: 723-257

Hours: Tues-Sat, 12 to 4

Friday: 12 to 7

book review

**Protect Yourself,
Robert G. Barthol,
Prentice-Hall, 1979, \$8.70.**

Sub titled "A Self-Defense Guide for Women from Prevention to Counter-Attack", this Spectrum paperback is by a retired FBI agent with thirty-four years experience teaching self-defense both inside the force and out. The first two-thirds of the book covers how to escape without physical contact from dangerous situations, or better, how to avoid getting into them in the first place. In the second part of the book, the author covers practical physical methods to use on an attacker. Much of the early lengthy section is overkill in the New Zealand situation: don't put out your garbage at night, install a peephole, a heavy duty chain, and a speaker in your front door, don't walk on the street at night, have three police whistles, one in the car, one beside your bed, and one to carry in your mouth if you do have to walk at night, install iron grille work over ground floor doors and windows, leave front porch, side door and back door lights on all night.

Other sections contain suggestions more practical and relevant to New Zealand: on a bus or train sit near the driver or conductor, at the front so an unwanted approach to you can be seen; sit by the aisle in a theatre; if you are walking and a car pulls up for directions, don't walk up to it and don't stay around for social chit-chat after the directions have been given; if you're in a car, can't drive off and a guy is reaching through the window, wind it up and attack his hand with your teeth, handbag, car cigarette lighter.

In the second section of the book very good detailed descriptions are given of counters to actual attack situations. He attempts to strangle you and you move through steps 1-6 of the counter and escape technique. Photos assist your understanding of how these techniques work.

Ten basic attack situations are covered.

Clearly Barthol knows his onions, so why did I do a slow burn as I read the book? It was partly because of his paternalistic attitude: "I checked many purses and some of them you wouldn't believe! I found some women carry everything they may need for the next three weeks."

"When a woman converses, holds a flashlight for him, accompanies him to the basement, the repairman may justifiably assume that the woman is giving him a come-on." "Draw the blinds when walking around dressed in provocative clothing." "If you lead a clean sensible life... (you) probably don't need this book."

It was partly because of his sex stereotyping: little Buttercup the dog is as cute as a button and female, the large protective watch dog is male; the telephone operator is naturally female, and among his credits he lists "the pretty young women who were his models". It was also because of tasteless statements like the dedication, which is to "the Bad Guys who Made this Book Necessary" and the statement on p.178, "The poor guy would get bored and lose interest if all his victims took that long to succumb!"

A retired FBI agent, thirty-four years teaching others. It all shows, officer.

Anne Macfarlane.

PROTECT YOURSELF

A SELF-DEFENSE GUIDE FOR WOMEN

by Robert G Barthol

How you can prevent yourself from being raped, robbed, assaulted; how to attack, how to escape; techniques for handling obscene phone calls, intruders...

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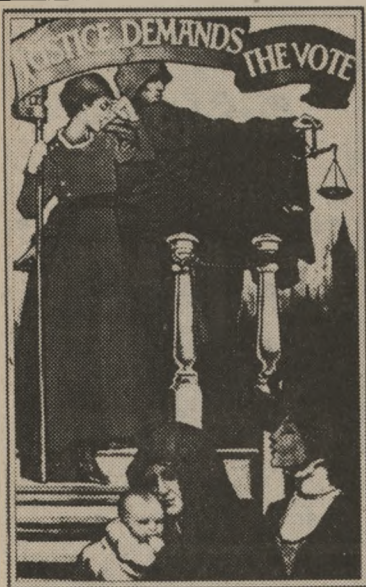
3 DAY MULTI-MEDIA GROWTH GROUP

for women and men. To be held on Waiheke Island end of July (starts 7 pm Thursday 31 July, ends 4 pm Sunday 3 August). We will be using gestalt, encounter, psychodrama, bioenergetics, paint, clay, role-playing and other media to facilitate the process of learning about ourselves and our relationships with each other. **NO PREVIOUS GROUP EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY.**

Fee — \$45 — including food and accommodation (negotiable in cases of real hardship). Send \$25 deposit to: **KATERINA SELIGMANN** 8/101 College Hill, Ponsonby, Auckland. or phone Auckland 765 672 or Waiheke 7544

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Palmerston North Lesbian Social Group

We feel a need to create a Lesbian Space with P Nth. To do this we are organising social get-togethers on a fortnightly basis.

Now, if you come to the Manawatu area, you can contact us through the Women's Centre, 53 George St. Ph 72756 or contact the Manawatu Gay Rights Group Ph 88877.

DON'T FORGET!!!

Women's Studies Association Third Annual Conference will be held in Auckland, 29-31 August at Secondary Teachers College, 60 Epsom Ave, Epsom.

The organisers are still looking for papers on: arts, environment, social sciences, law, work, herstory, health etc. A creche will be available and billets can be arranged.

All enquiries to:
Women's Studies Association
Conference, PO Box 5067, Auckland.

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