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DISPLAY

broadsheet

NEW ZEALAND'S FEMINIST MAGAZINE

JUNE 1981

NO.90

\$1.20

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WOMEN UNDER
APARTHEID —
SPECIAL REPORT

The ills that ail the office worker — hidden hazards in the workplace

piles pile up. Piles from chairs piles of envelopes cative of workloads that tribute to Secretaries hav- the highest coronary rate of nen workers

Gum like this could be the cause of the Secretary's dizzy spells

Clat/clat/clat the waves of sound in the typing pool — of- fice machinery is on the move (noisily)

The fickle finger of fate never had it so bad: typists are prone to Tenosynovitis

The power behind the throne you may be, but demand a well- designed chair of your own or . . . piles, constipation, varicose veins could all be yours

2 million bottles later . . . the typist is comatose from the correcting fluid

Flickering VDUs . . . its the old eye — sores . . . eyestrain caused by bad lighting and glaring VDUs

HELP !!!

Closed doors — Australian passports/Mosgiel woollen-workers

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:
PO Box 5799, Wellesley St,
Auckland, New Zealand.

DEADLINES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

Deadline for September issue: July
10
Deadline for October issue: August
10
Display adverts, classified adverts,
small announcements and news
can reach us up to three weeks after
these dates. Ads still being received
for July/August issue.

ENVELOPING

Enveloping of the July/August issue
will be Sunday June 28 at the Broad-
sheet office starting at 10 am. All
women and children welcome.

INFO

Sheba publishers have asked us to
give **Broadsheet** readers more infor-
mation about the poster we used to
illustrate the article "Identifying as
a Lesbian" published in the
January/February issue. The poster
costs 75p + 25p postage — they
ask for payment to be made by Inter-
national Money order — address:
488 Kingsland Rd, London E84AE,
UK. **Broadsheet** hopes to stock
these posters soon. We made a silly
mistake in the advert for the Indian
feminist magazine **Manushi** in the
March issue. We forgot to put their
address which is: C1/202 Lajpat
Nagar-1, New Delhi — 110024, Indian.
A year's subscription is US\$15 and
all cheques and drafts should be in
the name of the **Manushi** Trust. This
is an excellent magazine with much
news of the Indian Women's Move-
ment, the situation of Indian women
and first class radical feminist
writing. We urge you to support this
publication.

BLIND FEMINISTS

Broadsheet is now on tape from the
Royal Foundation for the Blind.
Please spread this around. The
Foundation will only continue hav-
ing the magazine on tape if it is us-
ed.

BROADSHEET SEMINAR

Over 200 women attended the Do-
It-Yourself Seminar held on May 2 at
Secondary Teacher's College. Sonja
Davies spoke and over 30
workshops catered for interests as
diverse as Car Maintenance,
Masturbation and How to Confront
Power. Lunch was provided and
since the weather was sunny, many
sat outside at the lunch break and
were treated to performances from
the women who had attended the
Street and Political Theatre
workshop in the morning. Generally
women seemed to get a lot out of
the seminar; a frequently heard opi-
nion was that a whole day could be
spent on many of the subjects rais-
ed by the seminar.

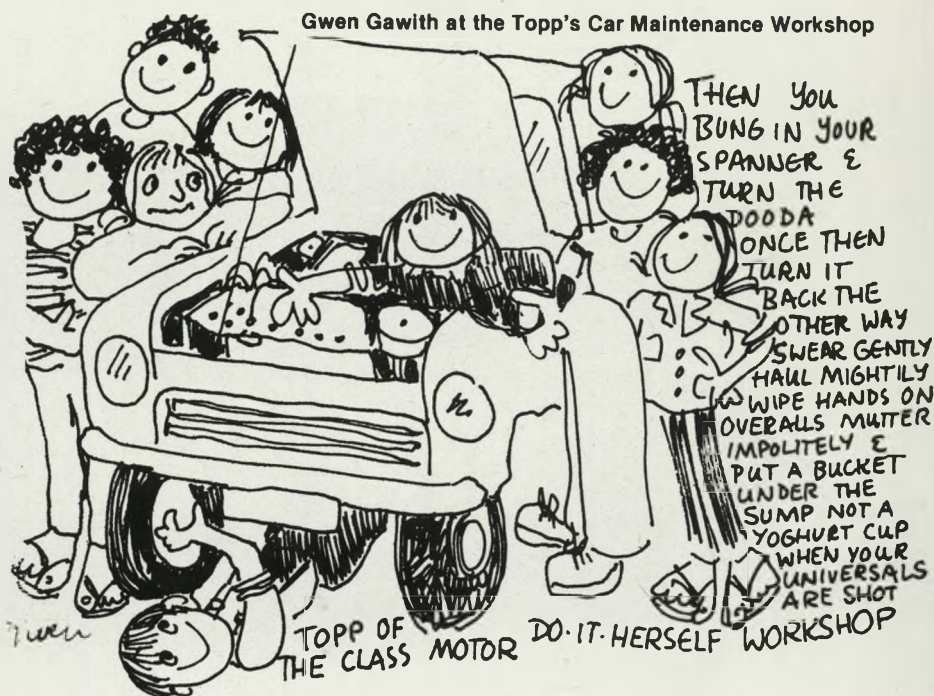
BROADSHEET SHOP

The overseas feminist magazines
are starting to arrive. So far we've
had **Spare Rib** and **Refractory Girl**.
We've also received posters from
SeeRed in Britain — see advert
elsewhere in this issue. We have a
new badge — "Support Lesbian
Mothers" to add to our button col-
lection.

We also have a selection of
postcards including some very fun-
ny ones from Sheba in the UK at 35
cents each.

PATHETIC PLEA

Need some extra pieces of furniture.
Specifically we can give a home to
any old tables, formica, wood, anti-
que kauri, chrome and glass . . .
we're not fussy! Our typewriter is
still balanced on a filing cabinet.
And while talking of filing cabinets
we could do with more, if you have
them. And old (or new) carpets,
carpet squares etc. Bookcases,
bookshelves, staples, pot plants,
files, chairs, heaters — let us
benefit from your winter cleaning.



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THE BROADSHEET COLLECTIVE

Sarah Calvert, Sandra Coney, Sandi Hall, Sally Hollis-McLeod, Miriam Jackson, Anne Macfarlane, Heather McLeish.

THESE WOMEN

Worked on this issue: Andrea, Peggy Ashton, Edna Butterworth, Ros Derby, Anne Du Temple, Jasmine Hubbers, Trish Manning, Jenny Rankine, Lesley Smith, Doreen Suddens, Ros Thompson, Jean Volkerling, Katherine White.

Cover photo: Elizabeth Leyland

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Permission must be sought before articles may be reprinted.

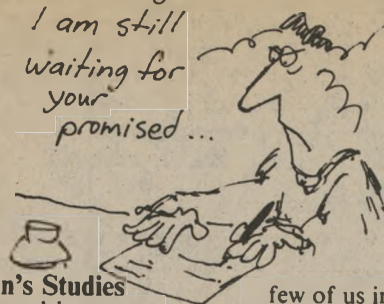
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Dear Morgan,
I am still
waiting for
your
promised...

Cartoon Helen Courtenay



LETTERS

letter. Please write as the
frame has
arrived ... size
17x30cm.



Women's Studies

Dear Broadsheet,

Sue Bond's letter (April 1981) correcting Claire-Louise McCurdy's "optimism" about the diverse backgrounds of Women's Studies (WS) students leaves me distinctly underwhelmed. Claire-Louise has been drawing on her experience in Auckland's WS with which she has been involved since 1974. Sue suggests that it is possible to generalise from 82 responses to the 261 questionnaires that were distributed; BUT she doesn't mention how many of the replies actually came from Auckland. The Auckland WEA WS sub-committee (I'm its convenor) has calculated that we will have at least 250 women participating in the different sections of our total 1981 programme, and approximately 100 of them are students in the first term.

The WEA is just one of the organisations that supports Claire-Louise's WS activities, so that she is knowledgeable about a wide range of students in several different contexts. As far as the WEA is concerned, I support the view that many WS students do not fall into the high income, professional, university educated category that Sue claims to be typical.

Perhaps Sue has forgotten, or never knew, that the Auckland WEA refused to ask their WS students to waste their time on this questionnaire from the NZ University Students' Association because of its abysmally poor design. I would speculate that the generally low response was not just because it was a postal survey, but also because of its pretentious, academic type obscurity. A

few of us in Auckland took seriously the NZUSA's request for comments in a letter accompanying what was called a draft, as we were genuinely eager to build on shared experience and skills. So we did not grudge the hours we spent on a detailed analysis of a hodgepodge revealing that NZUSA officers had never been exposed to the techniques of questionnaire design. (Among other things it involves clarity of definition and thought). For example, only the somewhat uninformed and unthinking would dream of asking that a questionnaire be distributed to, and answered and returned by women over the Xmas-New Year period. As I said in my letter to the NZUSA in November, 1979: "Have you given any thought to the way so many of them sink without trace beneath the welter of seasonal togetherness so that they're hard pressed to remember their names, let alone fill in a long questionnaire?"

My letter, plus the collective comments and plea for a short, simply worded set of questions that would elicit FACTS went unanswered and ignored. The end product continued to reflect ill-based assumptions and woolly prejudices, some of which were contained in one badly worded question that indicated total ignorance of WEA activities, even though these had been explained. It is simply not valid for Sue to query Claire-Louise's account until we have a reliable national survey.

I am trying to be very calm and sisterly over Sue's final homily with its pat prescriptions: "we have a responsibility" — we who?

Surely NZUSA's first responsibility is to its own constituents. I believe university women are very badly represented by token exercises like this survey which was marked by lack of serious preparation, inattention to technical detail and failure to comprehend the condition of the majority of women. What all women need are facts, facts and more facts. Never mind their alleged attitudes and hopes for the future (which are difficult to establish anyway) and find out what they are doing and where, and/or what is being done to them and by whom. Let's get FACTS established before we start evaluating them.

For example I cringe at Sue's suggestion that women going to WS classes OUGHT to become "actively involved in social and political change." Why? Says who? How, precisely, do you define the words in that phrase? And until we have a decent survey we don't know whether or not it's true, as Sue claims, that WS have failed to develop this involvement, whatever it may be. WS do provide an opportunity for encouraging the exchange of basic skills and information and a little more attention to this would benefit NZUSA's Women's Rights Action Committee. They seem to have unwittingly assumed the male student mantle of spurious authority which just simply does not fit a serious discussion of WS inside or outside the university.

Margot Roth.

NACEW Pamphlet

Dear Broadsheet,

I wish to correct a mistake made in Sandra Coney's letter regarding family daycare, in the March issue of **Broadsheet**. Sandra says that in the recently reprinted pamphlet on childcare issued by the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women more space is given to family daycare than was given in the original pamphlet.

In fact, in both pamphlets exactly the same amount of coverage is given to family daycare. The pamphlets aimed to describe various kinds of childcare available to those needing it, and did not advocate one type of case to the exclusion of any other.

Your sincerely,
Barbara Mabbett

Chairman,
National Advisory Council
on the Employment of
Women.

The Charter

Dear Broadsheet,

The tempo of the opposition against the Working Women's Charter is, I feel, increasing at an alarming rate.

The original objections appeared to be against clauses 12 and 15, relating to child care and sex education, contraception, sterilization and abortion.

Now it seems the opposition has moved to include clause 8 which pertains to job-sharing, shorter working week.

If this charter is to make the pages of occupations' awards/agreements in New Zealand, women who support it must come out and publicly proclaim its worth to the rest of the country. There is a lack of positive letters about the Charter to

the news media, and I know many women who say they support the Charter but do not actively do anything to show their support.

There is organised opposition to the Charter and I believe that many women have not come to terms with this opposition or the power of it. I write this letter in the hope that the women who read letters of opposition to the Working Women's Charter will answer positively to these letters, and give the other important view of this Charter.

In sisterhood,
Heather A. McLeish.

Disgusted . . .

To the Collective,

We have just finished reading the Jan/Feb issue number 86 of your magazine. This is the first **Broadsheet** that either of us have read for just under a year and we were sick enough at the end of it to feel we had to write.

We cannot believe the vast change in the political stand seen to be taken by the Collective!

The concept of a feminist magazine, to us, does not allow room for male contribution when one of the basic understandings of Women's Liberation, is that feminist publications are one of the few areas when women can have an exclusive voice.

How does the Collective justify blatant alliance with our oppressors!?

We feel that you, in allowing this article in your magazine, are perpetuating that oppression by ignoring those women with business know-how, who are already denied validity in the corporate world (if they want validity).

Our politics do not condone anything linked with patriarchy but we find it deplorable that you can even consider allowing men to contribute to your magazine when there are women just as capable of making economic comment.

This is only one of a number of observations.

On a more general note (and we will be brief as there is little to say really) we are disgusted that what was once a magazine we were proud to be associated with, is now represented by issues such as number 86 (ad nauseum).

In sympathy,
Lynne Paskaleff
Anne Speir,
London.

Feminist Names

Dear Broadsheet,

I am planning private research on feminist women and their surnames. Principally, feminists who adopt their husbands' names on marriage, or, retain their pre-marriage names; or choose their own surname; the choice of Ms or Mrs; the surnames of children when the mother does not take the father's name.

I'm interested in the effects — problems, backlash, reactions — which these choices have produced.

All identifying details will be kept confidential. I'm happy to reimburse postage to any women who write to me about this, at 71 Bayly Road, New Plymouth

Karen O'Brien

Jandals and more Third World dumping

Dear Broadsheet,

A couple of warnings:

I notice the use of jandals for bike riding on your Jan./Feb. cover. I can tell you from painful personal experience that this practice is dangerous. The jandal can twist right round so that the rider loses control and this causes accidents.

THE MOTHER EARTH NEWS "BITS AND PIECES" DEPT. No. 65: Sept/Oct 1980

"AN INSULATION DISASTER: After many families became ill as a result of the urea formaldehyde insulation in their homes, the state of Massachusetts ruled that manufacturers must pay to remove the urea foam (which, aside from being toxic, may also be a cancer-causing agent) from any dwelling where a physician has found that the material presents a health hazard. Since removal costs are estimated at approx \$20,000 a house, the ruling could bankrupt some large foam manufacturers . . . and thousands of small contractors as well."

The Third World dumping is far from confined to contraceptives: it takes in anything toxic, carcinogenic or dangerous that has been thrown out of the American market. Like the above insulation.

After the above legislation was enacted in Massachusetts, we have the local **Rodney Times** gushing in an article about local firms being favoured with American concessions to use this stuff here: "Plastic Foam Breakthrough" July 8, 1980. This article mentions that pests cannot exist in a home treated with the foam because it "removes the fat from the fur and skin of vermin." And something that would do that would have no effect on me? Well it does say that formaldehyde gas may irritate people with sensitive mucous membranes.

An advertisement for Pengelly Bros of Helensville shows this foam being pumped through a hole in the outside of a house, to entirely fill the cavity. This ad also mentions that the insulation will qualify for a \$400 power board loan.

There's another thing: what happens on a cold day when windows are shut and oxygen not coming in through the normal wall draughts? This can bring on a state called hypoxemia: irritability, restlessness, inability to concentrate and lethargy. The circulation can suffer.

Takapuna Medical Officer of Health advises me that he has "no information."

The wall cavity is not entirely empty: what happens to all the electrical wiring dangling down inside there?

Marire Russell.

QUOTE

"What I desire is liberty to go walking alone, to come and go, to sit on the benches in the Tuileries Gardens. Without that liberty you cannot become a true artist . . . thought is shackled as a result of that stupid and continual constraint . . . that is enough to make your wings droop . . ."

Marie Bashkirtsev 1859-1884

Two words in Sandi Hall's review of Perdita Huston's *Message from the Village* encourage me to write on a subject which in any discussion of feminism is rarely mentioned, but which seems to me to be of vital importance. Speaking of the "natural feminism" of Third World women which shines so clearly through the book, Sandi deplores the fact that with all our advantages "we educated, sophisticated, radical feminists — are virtually no further ahead than they." To effect change we need power which we don't possess. Feminist reform movements all over the world do admirable work seeking to change sexist laws, customs and attitudes, and with some degree of success. But at best, their efforts do little more than nibble at the massive foundation stones of a global patriarchal system. The method isn't working or, if it is, it isn't working fast enough. How many more generations of our sisters must be sacrificed to the Moloch of male supremacy before we get it all together? That is admittedly a melodramatic metaphor to describe your situation and mind, but it is a chillingly accurate description of the plight of the Indian bride, devoured by the flames of her "accidentally" toppled kerosene cooking stove, or of the girl-child infibulated to make a custom-built fit for her future bridegroom.

The goal has been identified — Power. Throughout the ages men have discovered and exploited every possible means of access to power over others. The most obvious, and the one that they have used so effectively to achieve and maintain their ascendancy over women, is money. "Where" asks Sandi despairingly "are our combined finances?" Where indeed?! But women have no money. Right? Wrong! Naturally we haven't as much money as we would like to have, and certainly we haven't the two-thirds of the world's money that doing two-thirds of the world's work should entitle us to, but we do have money. You've got some. I've got some. By the standards of our Third World sisters we have a hell of a lot more money than we need. The truth is that we are all Fat Cats, only some a little Fatter or less Fat than others. Having once admitted that we feminists do have money, all that remains is to persuade ourselves to start disgorging, to organise collection and distribution, and to ensure that every cent is used to its full value in advancing feminism here in New Zealand and wherever and whenever feasible in Third World countries. Then, and only then, will we be offering a positive response to Sandi's question.

For centuries the Christian Church, the fattest of Fat Cats, maintained its bulging coffers by means of tithing, a system whereby the Faithful were levied one-tenth of their income in cash or

kind. We can all think of further examples of how ruthless patriarchal organizations can be in demanding money from their adherents, and how willingly the latter permit themselves to be bled white. Far be it from me to suggest any kind of compulsory contributions towards feminist coffers, but voluntary offers on a regular basis could hardly be considered foreign to the spirit of the Movement. Feminism has never been money-orientated, but we must face the fact that if Money is Power then money is something that we have to get our hands on.

Throughout the country there must be many feminists like myself, who, for any one of a dozen reasons — isolation, timidity, sheer laziness, lack of talent, confidence or opportunity, or the belief that someone else will do the job — contribute practically nothing to the Movement. We read all the feminist texts and newsletters, sprout badges, attend seminars and applaud every small triumph achieved as though we had helped to bring it about. We grasp every opportunity to meet other feminists and talk feminism because of the warm feelings of solidarity and sisterhood that we experience through these contacts. We study the history and the theory of the Movement, pride ourselves on knowing all the big words, and nobody can mouth feminist platitudes, rail against the bloodmindedness of the patriarchy or generate hot air as impressively as we can. When cornered or carried away by a momentary impulse, we have been known to release microscopic amounts of money, but through good luck and low cunning we can generally coast along for years, going through the motions I've described without ever allowing ourselves to be manoeuvred into making a commitment that might involve any degree of effort or sacrifice. In other words, we are not prepared to put our money where our mouths are. Meanwhile hundreds of real feminists from Kaitia to the Bluff are quietly donating their time and their woman-energy to practical feminist issues. Some have been battling for years to keep afloat enterprises which, because of the apathy and lack of financial support of nominal feminists, are in constant danger of floundering. Instead of being able to focus their efforts singlemindedly on their objective, they are forced to dissipate precious energy on the never-ending struggle to make ends meet. The irony of the situation is that in some male organisations the drudgery involved in fund-raising is undertaken by a Women's Auxiliary! It seems that women will combine more readily to help men than to help each other.

It may be that feminist organisations don't scream loudly enough for financial assistance. Perhaps they make apologetic pleas instead of lusty demands. Whatever the reason for the lack of

support, one factor that makes the infusing of money into the Movement an urgent necessity is a new threat that confronts us. Twenty years of widespread liberalism have provided a congenial environment for the second wave of feminism.

But even the most cursory study of history reveals that human progress — or decline — is never an even steady movement but occurs in cycles, provoked by action-reaction and grudging acceptance followed by backlash. That liberalism is about to come under violent attack is presaged by recent victories of reactionary forces in many parts of the world. Right-wing governments slide into power, totalitarianism flourishes, and Far-Right and Neo-Nazi groups like the Australian League of Rights scent the slight change in the wind and leap into action. It may well be that rather than making further gains, feminists will have to fight with great tenacity to maintain the status quo and to prevent the erosion of existing rights. The important thing then will be to close the ranks to ensure survival, and it will be up to hitherto nominal feminists to brace up vital but precarious women's working groups with financial support.

It is obvious that many of our sisters have made in the past and continue to make generous donations to feminist causes. But I wonder if the time has not come to initiate for the rest of us a scheme to encourage regular, consistent giving but containing various escape clauses which make allowances for human inconsistency and backsliding. Suppose we make an assessment of our personal income after tax or, in the case of high school women, our pocket and odd-job money and decide to offer 1%-10% of it to feminism. That doesn't sound too bad, does it? Especially if we concentrate on the thought that we have 99%-90% left all to ourselves. The crunch comes, of course, when we realize just how much money is represented 1%-10% of our income. Give all that beautiful money away — even to feminism? No way!! Still — 1% doesn't work out to be so bad, and perhaps we could try it out for one year, and the idea is not so agonising if we keep thinking of it as a percentage. It's the Old Pledge Trick, of course, but a pledge with a difference. Since no one but the pledger knows what percentage she has decided upon, nor for how long a period, she is both autonomous and self-motivated. If at the end of a year she finds that her world hasn't fallen apart, her ribs aren't sticking out noticeably, and she can't honestly recall any tremendous sacrifice that she had to make, or acquisition that she had to go without, she may be prepared to continue the torture for another year, or even raise her percentage. On the positive side she will experience a little glow of pleasure and self-approbation at the thought that the money she gave helped to ensure another year of life for a

newsheet, prevented a woman from being turned away from a Halfway House, helped WEL to present a woman candidate to parliament, or to blight the prospects of an m.c.p.

Giving could be on an individual basis, but I feel that it would be more effective if it were organised. By organisation I mean the setting up of small groups, cells or collectives of up to a dozen women, on a regional or local basis, in the loosest possible fashion and with an absolute minimum of rules and regulations. Each cell would constitute a Feminist Financial Support Group. If the members of a group were scattered to such a degree that they were unable to meet personally they could function equally well by correspondence. A list of recipients could be compiled by a consensus of opinion of all the members of a cell, with the proviso that the particular interests of each member should be supported in rotation over a given period. The problems of auditing and accountability could be obviated by each woman, at three-monthly intervals, sending her donation to the particular feminist action group agreed upon, and receiving a receipt. She would immediately send the receipt to the member whose turn it was to produce a simple one-page newsletter. The active groups receiving financial help would no doubt be happy to describe briefly how the funds they received were to be used, and this information and the amount of money disbursed by the group would be recorded in the newsletter. In this way liaison and ties of intimacy would be established between the working feminist groups and individual feminists, many of whom, like myself, at present inhabit a sort of limbo. Organisation in whatever form ensures the maximum of punch, impact or clout. There is less diffusion of money over a wide variety of activities, and, most important, there is the interest, knowledge and confidence gained from working together in small groups. Such bonding is the essence of feminism.

I don't know whether Sandi's vision of "combined finances" was on the grass-roots level that I am suggesting or whether she had something grander in mind, but someone has to start somewhere, and I am prepared if necessary to be a Feminist Financial Support Group of one person! But should anyone be interested perhaps she would write to me at the address below, and I could put her in touch with any others in her area wishing to start a group.

One final thought (with apologies to Masfield):
Feminism is a garden/And such gardens are not made/By singing "Oh, how beautiful!" /And sitting in the shade,/While better women than we go out/And spend their working lives/At digging weeds from garden paths/With broken dinner knives.

Jean Gosling, Fishermans Bend, Whiritoa, P O, Waihi.

BEHIND THE NEWS



The Women's Movement has not often addressed itself to the concerns of the mothers within its ranks, and even less often to those of lesbian mothers. Recently lesbians and their children got together to discuss their problems and concerns; MIRIAM SAPHIRA reports.

Three years ago considerable antagonism was directed at a group wanting to hold a workshop for lesbians with children at the National Lesbian Conference. Finally, on the last weekend of April 1981, the first Lesbian Mothers' Conference was held at Blockhouse Bay in Auckland. It was a weekend of considerable extremes; we spoke of our common oppression but there was much hilarity when we shared experiences we had had. Anne recalled an experience with a land agent at a time when she and her lover were involved in a custody dispute over her lover's children. The land agent asked who the house was for. He was told "Two women and some children." "How many children will there be?" he asked and Anne replied: "We don't know how many children we are going to have." Leaving one land agent very puzzled about women together.

Lesbian mothers came to the conference from as far away as Christchurch, New Plymouth, Hamilton and Waiheke.

Although only a few children were expected, more than a dozen turned up and Elizabeth did a marvellous job; she kept them fully occupied for the whole two days which was no mean feat. The children made a booklet they called "Advice to Lesbian Mothers", painted lots of pictures and made a long banner showing their ideas about their mothers and their relationships. Throughout the weekend women said how discerning their children had become at picking people "who would not be able to cope". This was especially so with some relatives, teachers and neighbours. It was very apparent that the whole family needed to discuss coming out in a heterosexual society time and time again. As one child wrote: "Mothers should remember it is difficult to be different from our friends whose mothers have husbands."

The informal structure established on Saturday morning enabled changes in workshop topics to take place as the need arose. Some women were unhappy about the labels "lesbian mother" and "single woman".

The latter term was being used to refer to women who were not biological mothers and in some cases did not participate in the child rearing to any great extent. It was felt that "lesbians with children" may be better term for everyone living with children, despite the fact that it is somewhat ambiguous.

Saturday's discussion began by focussing on our relationships with our children and the process of coming out to them and to relatives. As one child said: "Try to introduce your children or child before they discover you in bed with your friend". The importance of our children in our lives was very apparent and after the weekend many felt they had gained new insights into ways of relating. "While my children are young they will come first and that will strengthen my other relationships."

On Saturday afternoon we broke up into smaller workshops to discuss our relationships as lesbians with children and the difficulties of changing relationships and living situations. After a communal meal women were in-



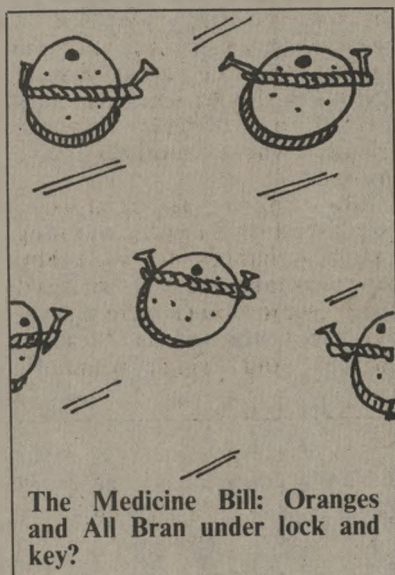
having a Lesbian Mother means we meet some beautiful women

tending to socialise but decided to share their feelings of where they were at. As they talked they expressed feelings of isolation and loneliness, for many felt they were left out of heterosexist society and the lesbian community as well. We are considered a "problem" by everyone else because of the general unwillingness to accept us. There was certainly a great deal of passion expressed for a matriarchy and for control of our own lives.

Sunday began slowly with a discussion of the intensity of the previous evening and the relationship of spirituality to some women's personal growth and their practical lives. We broke for tea and small groups, and there was a lively discussion about wills and guardianship. This is a particularly difficult area for lesbians since they feel their wishes may not be respected after their deaths. The most popular workshops, on male children, matriarchy, and bringing up your daughter to be a dyke, were not dealt with in any depth and many felt that this conference should just be a beginning. Certainly one lesbian mother felt encouraged in her ambition to write a book about our lifestyle, and the need for public education was strongly expressed. Women who had been through custody disputes pointed out how ignorant those making decisions were regarding our lives. The final workshop for the weekend was on sexuality, where we shared in depth the sexual aspects of our relationships. This was a very intense and honest discussion. "One of my biggest gains was seeing and hearing other lesbians talk about their adult relationships."

It was a weekend for sharing our experiences woman to woman; sharing the agism, classism, racism and heterosexism of our society. Oppression by other women was the most difficult to come to terms with — the heterosexual woman who can only relate to us by flirting, the women who will not allow their children to play with ours. Even the most liberal seem to squirm at our presence. As Pauline said, "A lesbian at a Steiner school puts liberalism through its paces."

Following the weekend there have been a considerable number of telephone calls and discussions. There is interest in a series of on-going workshops around the country and one is currently being planned for July 4 at the Women's Health Centre in Auckland. □



Another lengthy and wordy piece of legislation, and one which many people thought was just a tidy-up exercise — until we read it! The Medicine Bill aims to control the use of "medicines" and the information available about them. The first problem with the Bill is that it defines **anything** that is claimed to be therapeutic, or which changes the body's shape or substance, as a medicine or medical device and therefore places it under the control of the Department of Health.

The Department of Health is charged with protecting the consumer from claims about "unproven therapies or devices". This might be acceptable, although it is paternalistic to suggest that the consumer can't decide for herself, but the Bill states that the criterion to be used is "proven by medical standards". Selling any such "therapeutic substance" will require a licence from the Health Department; herbal mixtures of more than two herbs will not be allowed, and instructions for use must not be given with herbal mixtures. Making claims for "unproven" medicines or devices is also covered by the Bill and this section could have a serious effect not only on the major magazines of the alternative health movement, but also on such publications as **Broadsheet** which tends to comment not only on orthodox medical treatments but also on alternative treatments.

The Bill not only defines medicines and medical devices far too widely, it also restricts our right as consumers to make up our own minds about treatment and care of ourselves. A petition has been organised to oppose the Bill and individuals are urged to write to Mr G. Gair, the Minister of Health, objecting to the Bill. Mr Gair keeps saying that the Bill won't be used against the alternative health movement but the Bill itself does give the Health Department that power which it could use whenever it wishes. Who can say that the medical profession won't demand the end to alternative health care in New Zealand? □

Sarah Calvert

GORRY!

Part two of Christine Dann's article on the New Right promised in the last issue has been delayed.



Passports between Australia and New Zealand will tie that hop across the Tasman for a holiday in red tape. But there will be tragic consequences for another group of women as SANDRA CONEY reports.

Hidden victims of Australia's decision to require New Zealanders visiting Australia to carry passports are women crossing the Tasman to obtain the abortions they are unable to find in New Zealand. While it seems that currently most New Zealand women seeking a first trimester abortion are able to get one somehow somewhere in New Zealand, either at a public hospital or clinic, or at a private facility like Auckland's AMAC hospital, it is virtually impossible to obtain a second trimester abortion in New Zealand. The length of the process a woman must go through to get a legal abortion in New Zealand ensures that there are always women desperate for an abortion but past the 12 week limit imposed by most abortion facilities. This is particularly true with women from remote rural

areas or areas of the country where liberal certifying consultants are rare. It is not unusual for a woman to have to visit three or four doctors to even obtain a referral to a certifying consultant if she lives in a "black" area such as Invercargill.

Women over 12 weeks pregnant have, up till now, been able to travel freely to Sydney where several hospitals will perform abortions between 12 and 20 weeks. When the new legislation comes into effect on July 1, this will be made much more difficult. New Zealand citizens who have current NZ passports, and permanent residents who have current passports from their birth countries will be fine, but New Zealanders without passports face a 4 week wait for the issuance of one. When **Broadsheet** spoke to Mr C. Dowd of the Department of Internal Affairs he revealed that it was possible for a passport to be issued much more quickly than this, in fact "we can do it while people wait" in an emergency. "Emergencies" would be death of a family member or "urgent business reasons" although the latter may require substantiated evidence. When asked whether an abortion constituted an emergency, Mr Dowd said "now you've got me over a barrel . . ." but he seemed willing to consider that a life-saving abortion was "urgent business".

More dire is the situation of Pacific Island women who are not permanent residents and who haven't got current passports from their home countries. Tokelauans, Nuieans and Cook Islanders travel on New Zealand

passports so they are in the same boat as NZers — they can get a passport as long as they provide "bona fide" birth certificates, which apparently they can't always do. Such documentation may have to be obtained from their island birth places. Samoans get their passports and renewals from the Samoan Consulate, which normally takes a couple of weeks, but can be done quicker. They must then apply for a visa from the Australian High Commission. Fijians must apply to their High Commission. Tongans are in the worst position since there is no representative of the Tongan government in New Zealand — a Tongan woman with a passport issued for 5 years which has lapsed can have it renewed by the Department of Internal Affairs; but if the passport has been issued more than ten years ago she must apply back to Tonga.

By the time our **Broadsheet** reporter had talked to a dozen government officials and representatives of embassies her head was spinning. How much more difficult will it be then for a Pacific Island woman with little knowledge of "the system" and poor English. When it comes to overstayers, the situation is fearful indeed. According to a spokesman for the Samoan Consulate there is no way she could get to Australia. She could not apply for a visa nor attempt to fly to Australia without being picked up by Immigration authorities.

The Australian Government's decision will have the most inhuman repercussions for a group of women who cannot speak out in protest. □



SPUC BY ANY OTHER NAME . . .

Anti-abortionists in this country are getting plenty of mileage out of a film which has been surrounded by controversy in America but which is being touted in this country as a serious and philosophical presentation. Called "Whatever Happened to the Human Race" the film, according to an **Off Our Backs** reporter, links "infanticide, euthanasia, extermination of the terminally ill, disposing of the handicapped and Nazism to abortion." The report further says: "It shows children and teenagers with severe handicaps, such as one boy, missing both arms and a leg, who tells how wonderful life is while the camera avoids his limbs. Like manipulative advertising and propaganda films of World Wars I and II, this film discusses fetuses and abortion while it shows ten-month old children playing . . . We are calmly told if you believe in abortion it logically follows that you believe in infanticide, euthanasia, gas chambers and Nazis."

In Auckland the series was shown at the Auckland University and was advertised in the university staff newsletter **Next Week** without mentioning anything about the propaganda intent of the film. Producer Francis Schaeffer is described as "one of the foremost Christian thinkers of today" and the films described as "an analysis . . . of the widespread implications and frightening loss of human rights brought on by today's practices of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia. Choices are being made that undermine human rights at their most basic level . . ."

Later the film cropped up again at the North Shore Teachers' College, this time being shown by a Christian group which had hired the college hall. Don't be fooled by this film's "soft" title and the "respectable" venues at which it's turning up; it's hard-core anti-woman stuff. As one pro-abortion activist in the US said: "It shows woman purely as domiciles for the fetus".



POST OFFICE IN THE FAMILY WAY

What is the officially approved version of the New Zealand family? If you were ever in any doubt you couldn't be after the two latest efforts of the New Zealand Post Office.

An NZPO brochure delivered to householders is headed "We're Part of Your Family" . . . but only, it seems, if it's white and nuclear. The brochure shows three married couples, two of very long duration, and Judy, the only woman who speaks on the brochure, has a Mum and Dad too. Apparently "your family" must have a male head as well — in every couple it is the man who speaks: "I'm James and this is Karen my wife . . .", "Mavis and I have been married twenty five years . . .", "Now that we're retired Bev and I . . .". Our only speaking woman, Judy, puts herself down in the first sentence: "Now don't get

the wrong impression. I'm not a straight A student or anything like that, but I am determined to get my degree. Judy's my name . . ." Fred displays unpardonably chauvinistic attitudes in his speech: "We both had accounts with them when we first met, and we've kept them . . . she was independent enough to keep hers after we married. Now she has her own cheque account with them. Not that I mind . . . she's in good hands."

Well, big-hearted old Fred and lucky old Mavis.

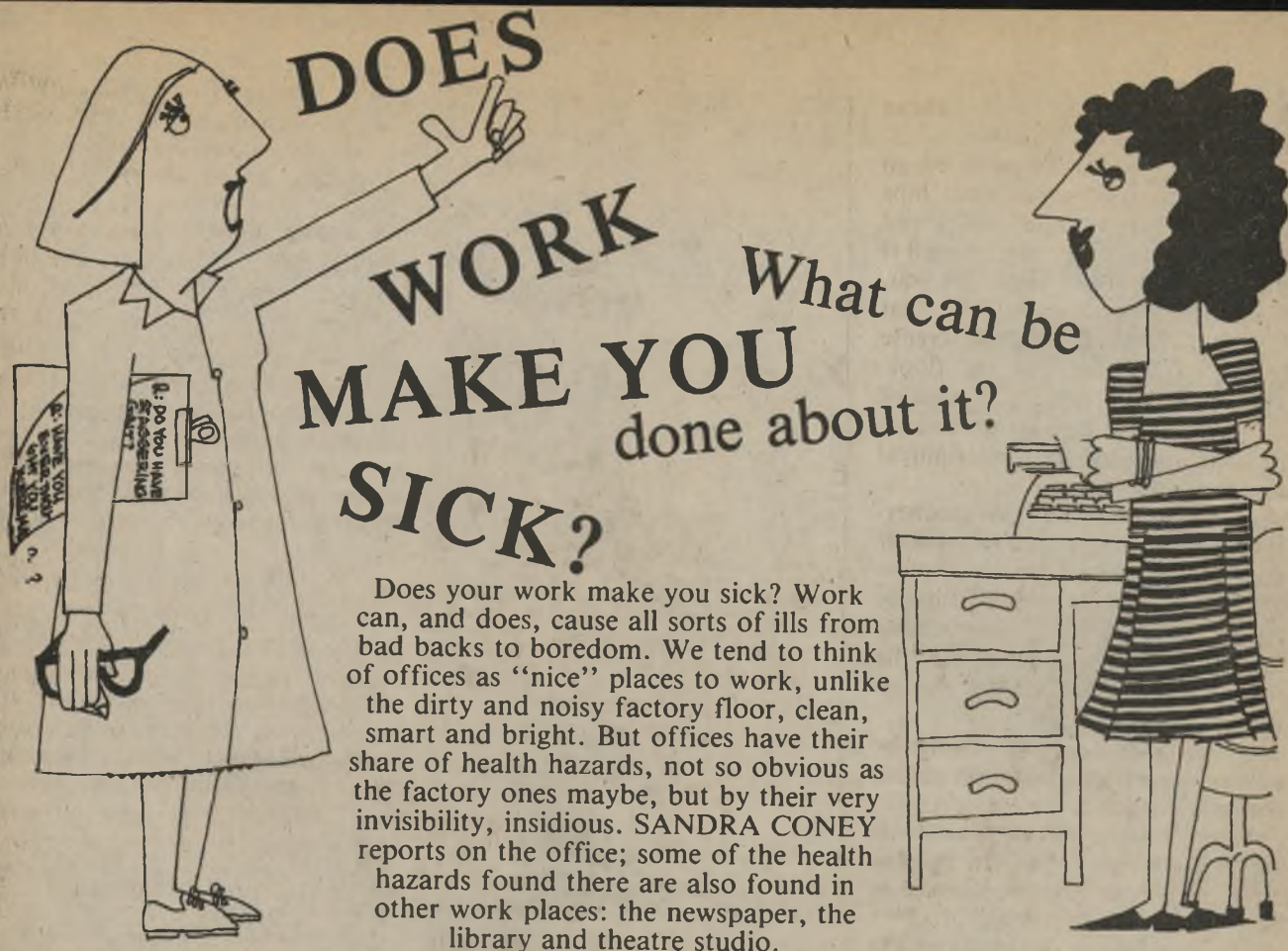
If you're one of the 16% Pacific Island or Maori inhabitants of this country, you haven't got a family the PO cares to depict. And if you're one of the 30% New Zealanders (at 1971) who doesn't live in a nuclear family, they appear not to consider you've got a family either.

Further evidence of Post Office myopia (or propagandizing) is seen in a recent issue of stamps. Four stamps show all-white nuclear families "at play", "at home", "at church" and "young and old". It seems odd that at a time when many other countries are honouring women on their stamps the New Zealand government should have sanctioned a set of stamps which celebrates "the family", and the family at its most narrow and traditional.

Can stamps be political? You'd better believe it.

WOMEN'S MEDIA

Just published by the Women's Institute for Freedom of Press — an **Index/Directory of Women's Media** containing international listings of women's periodicals, publishers, bookstores, individual women in media, media organisations, and art/film/theatre/music groups. This directory would be invaluable for any feminist groups involved in communication. Groups should also make sure they are listed in the next directory if they're not listed in the 1980 one. Available from Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 3306 Ross Place, NW. Washington DC 20008, USA at US\$8.



Does your work make you sick? Work can, and does, cause all sorts of ills from bad backs to boredom. We tend to think of offices as "nice" places to work, unlike the dirty and noisy factory floor, clean, smart and bright. But offices have their share of health hazards, not so obvious as the factory ones maybe, but by their very invisibility, insidious. SANDRA CONEY reports on the office; some of the health hazards found there are also found in other work places: the newspaper, the library and theatre studio.

Health hazards in the workplace — 1. Clerical workers

About a year ago I thought I was cracking up. I'd start sentences and then forget what I was going to say. Sometimes I'd lose my balance, misjudge how close I was to a wall or doorway and end up wrapped around the door lintel. I began to have headaches and be plagued by a strange metallic taste in my mouth. After several months I realised that these episodes always coincided with paste up time at Broadsheet. So I started investigating all the paste up materials we used to track down the culprit. I discovered that not one of the substances we used had the ingredients marked on the container.

When I contacted the supplier, however, I found out, not without difficulty, that the rubber cement and thinners we were using contained *benzene* and *toluene*, both highly toxic organic solvents which can depress the central nervous system and cause headaches, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, drowsiness,

muscular incoordination and staggering gait. Prolonged acute exposure can cause collapse and coma, and benzene is associated with various blood diseases such as leukemia.

The window display

We tend to think of offices as bright, clean and safe environments. Of course, compared to many factories and workshops, they are. Many offices are also the bosses' environment; they are frequently open to the public, thus acting as a kind of "shop window" for the business, reflecting the kind of image the business wants to project, which is usually prosperous, efficient and modern.

But don't let the acres of shagpile bristling with chrome and vinyl fool you. The office has its share of hazards; hazards which most workers don't recognise for what

they are. As Victoria Keesing, education officer for the Clerical Workers Union, said to me: "Most clerical workers don't associate their health problems with their work."

Pains and piles

Bad seating is one of the better — known hazards for clerical workers. Since many clerical workers spend hours at a stretch sitting, a badly designed chair can cause lower back pain and varicose veins and piles from blocked circulation in the thighs. The designer of a chair especially suited to office workers points out that "Executives get the best chairs, and secretaries get the worst, which is too bad because secretaries spend more time in them." Jeanne Stellman, an American who heads the Division of Occupational Health in the American Health Foundation and is the author of *Women's Work*,

Women's Health, gives these guidelines for a good chair:

The *height* should be adjusted so that when you're seated your hips and knees are at right angles and your feet flat on the floor. To tell if the chair is the right height for you, figure your "popliteal height", that is, the distance between the crease behind your knee and the floor, when standing. The highest point of the seat should be approximately two inches less than the popliteal height.

The *backrest* should be kidney-shaped to fit snugly in the small of the back and adjustable.

The *seat* should slant slightly backward to lean you comfortably against the backrest; the edge of the seat should be rounded and the entire seat should swivel.

The *fabric* of the seat should be porous, preferably wool or cotton textured fabric.

What to do if your chair feels more like a relic from the inquisition? Ask your boss or supervisor for a better one and, if he's recalcitrant, check out the situation with other workers and approach your union. An excellent booklet called *You and the Way You Sit* has been produced by the Accident Compensation Commission with the assistance of ergonomics expert James Coe. Coe's recommendations were used to help Air New Zealand staff in Wellington get better chairs. Ring your local ACC for the booklet or write to: Public Affairs Section, Accident Compensation Commission, Private Bag, Wellington.

The famous dextrous female fingers

Typists may have nimble fingers but even the nimblest fingers can get sore. Typists and key punch operators who use repetitive movements can end up with injuries colourfully described in the trade as trigger finger and key puncher's wrist, but properly called *tenosynovitis*. This disease occurs when the tendons and tendon sheaths become inflamed causing



pain, swelling, numbness and tingling in the hand. The treatment is *rest*, which means being off the job. Some surgeons recommend an operation but this is not always successful. Once the condition develops it is unlikely the worker will be able to return to the same job. Tenosynovitis is compensatable but it seems that world wide workers have to struggle to get that compensation. The Clerical Workers Union did battle with the Accident Compensation Commission over tenosynovitis in 1980 having to go to appeal to prove that the disease was work-related and therefore compensatable. Ways to prevent tenosynovitis: rotate jobs, frequent rest periods, up-to-date equipment in good condition, good seating at the right height.

Only the chemicals make her swoon

Rubber cement isn't the only hazardous office chemical. That little white jar of corrective fluid pro-

bably contains *trichloroethylene*. Several open bottles on nearby desks can raise the level of this chemical in the air to hazardous proportions. Exposure to high levels can cause central nervous system depression, headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, sleepiness, and blurred vision. Gestetner fluids and thinners also contain this solution. Always use them in a well-ventilated space and keep the cap on the bottle between applications.

Copy machines may cut down workloads but they too bring their own health hazards. Many copiers emit *ozone*, a toxic gas characterised by a sweetish smell. Over-exposure can cause irritation to the sinuses and lungs. Copiers should be located in well-ventilated spaces and exposure kept to a minimum. Use of copiers can also cause dermatitis and recent research at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston has shown that *nitropyrene*, a component in many toners used in copying machines, can cause cell mutations and chromosomal damage leading to cancer. Recently the Xerox company reduced the amount of nitropyrene in its toners, although company spokesmen maintain that no hazards exist.

Overstretched and overstressed

Most people tend to associate *stress* with the big businessman, the overstretched GP or the harassed schoolteacher. Not with office workers. But the conclusion of an eight-year study in Massachusetts reported in the *American Journal of Public Health* showed that while working women do not have significantly higher coronary heart disease rates (CHD) than housewives, (7.8 vs 5.4 per cent) CHD rates were almost twice as great among women holding clerical jobs (10.6 per cent) as compared to housewives. For married clerical workers with children the risk of developing CHD rose to 21.3 per cent. The most significant predictors of CHD among clerical workers

A black and white cartoon illustration of a chaotic office scene. In the foreground, a man in a suit stands holding a folder, looking towards a man in a striped shirt who is shouting "WAZAT?". Behind them, several other men are seated at desks, some looking surprised or shouting "HELLO! HELLO!". One man is holding a telephone receiver. The scene is filled with motion lines and expressive, exaggerated features.

For the individual typist, a cheap plastic muffler is available for use on more recent models of IBM typewriters. Other noise can be reduced by separating noise sources and workers where possible and using sound absorbing materials like carpets and heavy drapes.

Lighting can be another problem; especially fluorescent lights which can cause eyestrain and headaches. Good lighting should not produce glare and should never be placed immediately in front of a desk but at the side.

But even the most perfect physical work environment is not going to eliminate all stress for the office worker. Many of the stressful problems encountered by office workers are shared by a great many other women workers: discrimination; low status; sexual harassment; job insecurity; and as Victoria Keesing pointed out, the dual role of many women workers who put in another shift after they leave the office. Much office work is detailed, boring and repetitive, requiring no initiative and allowing for no variation in the routine. In Jeanne

In a recent survey by the US publication **Union Wage** women office workers reported that the greatest source of stress for them was time-pressure and speedup. Three-quarters of respondents reported this; boredom was a close runner up. The most common result of this stress was overeating, followed by arguing with co-workers, friends and lovers, chain smoking, depression and physical problems, particularly digestive ones. Many expressed fears about the long-term effect on their health.

VDUs — Very Dangerous Technology

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stalled in offices that weren't designed for the purpose. Many employers see it as inessential what sort of environment they install the VDUs into." Victoria Keesing feels that these problems are no different than before; the introduction of VDUs has simply exaggerated existing problems. "Office workers have seen their work environment in the past as clean and safe, a 'nice' place to work. It would be a pity if the focus on VDUs obscured the broader health problems which exist."

Most complaints to the union have been about eye problems resulting from prolonged VDU use. Most commonly reported are tired eyes, visual distortions and headaches. Whether or not VDUs can cause serious long-term complications like cataracts is an area of controversy. While proponents of VDUs claim that the type and level of radiation emitted by VDUs are safe, others are not so sure. There has been a tendency for some to "smokescreen" the issue by insisting that VDU radiation (called non-ionizing radiation) is different from ionizing radiation as used in x-rays, which can change the molecular structure of human tissue. While this is undoubtedly true, it obscures the issue of whether non-ionizing radiation is in itself harmful (photo copiers too give off non-ionizing radiation) and a growing number of studies based on experiments with animals and on observations of human beings such as radar technicians, suggest that there are serious biological effects produced by exposure to even very low levels. Although workers have gone to court in several countries for compensation for health problems they claim were caused by VDUs (cataracts, birth defects) none has been successful. But some experts point to the successful compensation case of some US air traffic controllers who developed cataracts after working with VDUs as reason to be cautious. The PSA, in a research paper entitled **The New Technology and Health**, advises women "to approach VDU operations with a degree of caution", but

it's difficult to see how a woman could assert a right not to work at a VDU, at least in the private sector and especially when she knows that other women are queueing up for her job.

Victoria Keesing points out that there are no controls on the use of VDUs in legislation or awards. Safety regulations have yet to catch up with technological change. Controls can be written into agreements as they are negotiated but, she points out, "A number of big and small offices have VDUs and these will have been installed before an agreement is reached." According to Alison Blackburn, "There's not much the union is empowered to insist upon."

What sort of controls could there be? Proscriptions about the type of environment VDUs can be installed into. Regular safety checks of terminals. Job protection for women who cannot work on VDUs during pregnancy. Limitations on the number of hours a worker can work at a VDU at a stretch. Some overseas unions have managed to insist on some of these safeguards. In New Zealand **Broadsheet** understands that the PSA is close to reaching agreement with management on limitations on time spent in front of VDUs. One of the conditions the PSA wants accepted is that operators should not spend more than 50 minutes in each hour continuously at work on VDUs.

There's not room here to go into details about what would constitute a good VDU environment. If you

want to know more you can write to the Health Department, PO Box 5013, Wellington, for a copy of the report **Visual Display Units** and the PSA, PO Box 5108, Wellington, for its two research papers nos 13 and 15 **The New Technology and Health** and **The New Technology and the Employment of Women**.

Stiff backs are for the Colonels

So you thought occupational health was about machines ripping off hair on the factory floor, collapsing mine shafts, and fingers chopped off by knives. There are health hazards in every work environment, including the home. In the office they mightn't be as dramatic or as immediately linked to the workplace as those examples given above, in fact, in their very insidiousness lies their danger. The hazards of clerical work can be debilitating, exhausting and can significantly lower the quality of our lives and our work satisfaction. There's often not a lot of satisfaction in clerical work anyway, so let's make it as good as we possibly can. We owe it to ourselves to educate ourselves about our workplaces, to insist on a better work environment, and to use our union to clean up the workplace. •

References:

Andrea Hricko and Melanie Brunt, **Working for Your Life**, Labour Occupational Health Programme and Public Citizens' Health Research Group, Berkeley, 1976. Jeanne Stellman, **Women's Work, Women's Health**, Pantheon, 1977.

Both these books are available to trade unionists from the Dan Long Memorial Library at the PSA in Wellington. Also acknowledgement to the feature on occupational health in *Kinesis* February 1981.



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Health hazards in the workplace — 2. Meat workers

Women face special occupational hazards in some industries where chemicals and disease can affect pregnancies they are carrying. JENNY RANKINE and HEATHER McLEISH talked to some women meat workers.

As more women move into non-traditional jobs, they encounter occupational hazards and diseases new to them. There is sometimes scant research on these dangers, and usually very little on their effect on reproduction in either men or women. If women become ill, they can face an uphill battle identifying the cause of the illness, proving that it is work-related, and getting compensation for damage to their reproductive capacity if they choose to have children.

The meat industry in New Zealand employs about 35,000 workers; about 1750 of whom are women. The entry of women into this male-dominated field has been slow. But the successful fight against discrimination of the women mutton butchers in the South Island's Ocean Beach works shows that this is changing. More women are breaking into areas where women have not worked before.

The occupational hazards for women are the same as for male freezing workers. Both sexes can fall victim to the high incidence of industrial accidents, and to diseases and infections common to this type of industry. Meat workers are at risk from pesticides, hormones and micro-organisms in the carcasses they process on the chain. There are several diseases carried by micro-organisms that people can catch from cattle or sheep. They include leptospirosis, listeriosis, brucellosis, toxoplasmosis and bovine tuberculosis. There has been very little research done on the reproductive effects of these diseases, although it is known that both listeriosis and toxoplasmosis can cause spontaneous abortions, stillbirths and birth defects.

Toxoplasmosis can be caught from cats, sheep, eating raw meat, or gardening in contaminated soil. A 1979 World Health Organisation report says that "those dealing with raw meat are at a greater risk of acquiring an infection than the general population." Jeanne Stellman, in her book **Women's Work, Women's Health**, lists toxoplasmosis as a disease of meat cutters and inspectors. The disease can pass unnoticed in adults, but symptoms can include swelling to the lymph nodes, pneumonitis, meningitis and hepatitis. The micro-organisms remain in the body for years after infection.

If a pregnant woman is infected, she can pass the disease to the foetus. The worst deformities occur when the woman catches the disease for the first time during pregnancy. In 10 to 15 per cent of foetal infections, the disease can cause mental retardation, blindness, water on the brain, or death and resulting miscarriage. It is thought that if the mother is infected before she conceives, this protects against deformities.

Listeriosis is an infectious disease caused by the listeria bacterium. Human infection is sporadic and sometimes occurs in small unexplained epidemics. The latest in New Zealand was in Auckland in the summer of 1979/80, during which five people, three of them babies, died. At least ten newborn babies were infected. It was not known that the women were infected until they went into (usually premature) labour and their babies were found to have the disease. Some of the infected people have been connected with meat works, and listeriosis can be contracted from animals and animal products. But there is no conclusive link with any occupational group, as many people with no illness have listeria antibodies (the body's infection fighters) in their blood. The infection may be so mild that a person does not know she has it, but symptoms may be those of an influenza-like illness, a urinary tract infection or vomiting and diarrhoea. Listeria has been found in the genital tracts of both sexes. It is possible, but unproven, that it may be transmitted during sex.

A listeriosis infection may cause repeated abortions. Often the only symptom in a pregnant woman is a fever-like illness with chills and headaches a few days before a spontaneous abortion or premature birth. Listeriosis is most damaging in the newborn or aged. If untreated, septicaemia, pneumonia or meningitis may develop, and this can be fatal.

The meat industry is New Zealand's biggest single export earner. In 1979 overseas markets paid more than \$1000 million for New Zealand meat. For the last five years it has provided one quarter of our export income. It is a highly profitable industry, despite the recent closures of individual "uneconomic" plants like Auckland's Southdown works. Obviously some of this profit is made at the expense of meat workers' health.

At present there are no on-the-job educational programmes about animal-transmitted diseases in Auckland freezing works. Meetings of workers on the offal floor at Auckland's Westfield works last year resolved to pressure the freezing companies to arrange regular blood tests and checks for all the transmittable animal diseases.

Where women in non-traditional jobs overseas have been exposed to reproductive hazards, a common employer response has been to exclude fertile women from certain jobs. This response fails to recognise that women may choose not to have children, and that hazardous chemicals or micro-organisms may have an equally toxic effect on the male reproductive system. This kind of employer response is discriminatory in two ways: women are denied jobs and men are denied protection. It is the hazards that must be eliminated, not the vulnerable workers.

The right of women to work in New Zealand's meat industry must be protected. There is an urgent need for research into occupational diseases, including their reproductive effects on both sexes. Regular testing must be instituted so that workers know if they already have diseases like listeriosis and toxoplasmosis, or if they caught them at work. Until this is done, women with these diseases will have no way of proving that they caught them at work.



TOXOPLASMOSIS: CASE HISTORY 1

"I work on the offal floor at a South Auckland freezing works. When I got sick I was working with mutton and kidneys. I've had toxoplasmosis for over a year now.

"It was a long time before I realised something was wrong with me — one day I'd be fine, the next day really sick. It got progressively worse, I had blurred vision and got very tired — I would come home from work and go straight to bed and I just slept all weekend. I had dizzy spells, I couldn't work properly and started to get glandular pain. My hearing got extremely bad. I was also having at least one day off a week sick. I got into trouble a lot for time off. We get five days (40 hours) sick leave a year. I had used up my sick pay long before I finally went off. I had at least 12 days off.

"Finally after four months it was diagnosed as toxoplasmosis. By the time I left work I could only just cope with the job. Even if they hadn't been able to diagnose the disease I would have had to resign.

"When I finally went off work I needed looking after constantly, and I was lucky I had a friend who looked after me. Also my parents gave us a car, because I used to get so dizzy I couldn't ride my motor bike.

"I was on the sickness benefit, but I had to get weekly certificates from the doctor, just to keep getting it. When I was really ill it was hard to go out and take the certificate to Social Welfare each week. I was single so I got \$60 a week. And I went weekly to the lab for blood tests and each visit cost me about \$5 to \$7. At this stage I was also going to an osteopath once a week, and if I didn't go I was just so much worse. That cost \$10. It was very difficult to live on the benefit because of doctors' bills and the cost of petrol for travelling around.

"When I first got sick and started having one or two days off, I started to lose out on overtime. With the system at work, those who have been there the longest get the first overtime. I'd already established my record, but I started to lose it.

"I tried to get them to reimburse me, but it was hard because although the doctor knew what it was she wouldn't sign an Accident Compensation form to say so. My doctor admitted that I must have got the disease from work, that there was nowhere else I could have got it, but she wasn't going to get involved.

"I'm hoping there is discussion going on about these diseases; at least in our department there is. Over 10 per cent of us have some disease. Eleven out of sixty-five. There is no information on them available and it is just the other workers who tell you what not to do. There is no special education being offered by the firm, but there are other problems too. Because it may be months before you find out what is wrong with you, you risk losing your job by having the odd day off each week."



TOXOPLASMOSIS: CASE HISTORY 2

"I work on the boning floor at a freezing works and I have toxoplasmosis. I noticed I became sick after cutting some fat off a piece of meat which had a cyst on it. The meat was discarded but a couple of days after this I was feeling a bit off. I had pains in my stomach, I felt faint and a couple of days after this I had lump come up on my neck, a swollen lymph-node. I went to the company nurse first who said I had an infection and sent me to the company doctor who confirmed this. It didn't go away so I went to my local GP who thought I might have toxoplasmosis and he sent me back to the company doctor who wouldn't commit himself at all. I then went back to my GP who sent me to have a blood test, which confirmed I had toxoplasmosis. I then started taking anti-biotics. My symptoms included sweating, pains, sore eyes.

"I've managed to keep working, but I feel pretty sick at times. It's like the flu' — you think you can fight it off so you keep going, in spite of the fact it doesn't do you much good. You feel lost, lethargic.

"I got pregnant accidentally at the end of December and had to argue with the doctors for a termination because I had toxoplasmosis. I had a relapse which coincided with the pregnancy. I felt lethargic, my glands were swollen, I had muscular pains and felt unwell. It is confusing because the symptoms are similar to the early stage of pregnancy. The doctor claimed toxoplasmosis is a virus like German Measles, and that because I got it in July, and I pregnant in

December, I could safely go through with the pregnancy. I told him that if toxoplasmosis had affected the child I'd have that on my conscience for the rest of my life. I had a termination at National Women's on the grounds of toxoplasmosis. I've since found out that there are three kids at Mangere Psychopaedic Hospital in Auckland that are physically and mentally retarded because of toxoplasmosis.

"I've had another relapse recently. If I drink alcohol my glands swell up and I feel quite sick. I have found from experience that I just can't drink, and socially it isn't too well accepted to just drink lemonade."



LISTERIOSIS: CASE HISTORY

"I work on the offal floor at a South Auckland freezing works. The disease I had was listeriosis. The disease is supposed to show itself with flu-like symptoms. I didn't have any of these symptoms but . . . it's really difficult because I was pregnant, eh? It was absolutely confused with the pregnancy. I found out I had listeriosis when I went into labour. For at least three months before I was feeling quite sick, but it was my first pregnancy so I wasn't able to tell whether I had a disease. I had regular blood tests at Middlemore Hospital but they didn't pick up that I had listeriosis.

"I found out something was wrong when I went into labour but it wasn't until after they had done tests on the placenta that they found out what it was. I went into labour prematurely, a little over two weeks, and the labour was going very slowly. I was strapped up and had that foetal heartbeat monitor on and they just knew something was wrong with the baby. I had a caesarian section about 30 hours after I went into the hospital, but the baby was so sick that after four hours it died. The tests showed that the baby died from meningitis, septicaemia and pneumonia.

"Since then I've had continual vaginal irritation that has not been diagnosed. I haven't been told exactly what it is, and they haven't been able to treat it successfully, and that's been going on for a year. The wall of my uterus is still joined on to the scar tissues, and one Family Planning doctor that I went to said that there may be some listeria within the scar tissue that may be causing these vaginal infections, but they really don't know. Apart from being a real physical annoyance, it makes intercourse less enjoyable, and just a general ill feeling. I'm just not 100 per cent well. I've had to go back and back to the doctors and I really feel I'm not getting anywhere as far as finding out what is really wrong with me." □

Health hazards in the work place — 3. Dental Nurses

Back in 1974 a few New Zealand dental nurses started to suspect that members of the profession were being gradually poisoned.

Their work eventually led to a successful campaign to clean up their workplace.

JENNY RANKINE reconstructs the events of the great mercury poisoning controversy.

How would you rate the chances of detecting a rare type of work-related poisoning in a women-only occupation when the symptoms closely resembled stereotyped feminine behaviour? Loss of confidence, indecisiveness, crying bouts, depression, emotionalism, that type of thing. Pretty low, right?

Add to this similarity the fact the the women knew nothing about the hazard. And that their bosses were all male health professionals with that breed's reluctance to share information.

No wonder then that it took New Zealand's school dental nurses until 1974 to discover that they'd been using mercury at work in a way that was gradually poisoning them. Or that they found this out purely by accident from a dental equipment salesman.

Once they were sure, however, the confidence gained from their successful pay claim march on Parliament in March 1974 enabled them to make the Health Department shoulder its responsibility for their working conditions. Nine months later they had achieved:

- Regular testing of dental nurses' mercury level
- Regular decontamination of clinics
- The groundwork for an effective code of practice that meant a complete overhaul of some old and dangerous school dental clinics
- The elimination of the dangerous mercury mixture they had been using for fillings, with the promise that it would be replaced with the safe mechanical method dentists had been using for some years; and
- A substantial drop in the official "harmful exposure" measurement for mercury.

Two Auckland school dental nurses, Rhonda Clark and Linda Whyte, heard about the death of an English dental assistant from mercury poisoning during a telephone call to a sales representative about dental equipment in February, 1974. He had been to a dentists' conference in Taupo where he'd seen an article about her death.

"Linda and I worked in the same North Shore clinic," said Rhonda. "We talked all day while we were working, about what to do. We looked at all the old dentists' journals," Linda said, "and found, since 1940, articles on mercury poisoning dangers for dentists." Linda rang the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research anonymously to ask whether they tested for mercury in factories and what sort of tests they did. "By what he didn't say, he made it quite obvious that there was a hazard." The two women hunted for information in the Auckland Medical School library.

"It's that old Mad Hatter joke," said Linda. "They used mercury to tan hides for hats in the old days, and madness was one of the risks of the trade." The women found that inorganic mercury is unique among heavy metals because it evaporates considerably at ordinary room temperatures. The rate of evaporation increases with heating. Mercury is absorbed into the body mainly through inhalation and also through the skin. Normally, the body quickly gets rid of inorganic mercury, but when excessive amounts of mercury are absorbed, it accumulates, mainly in the kidneys and liver, but also in the brain, large intestine, spleen and lungs. Symptoms of mercury poisoning include bleeding gums, dizziness, inability to concentrate, abnormal tiredness and insomnia, as well as those already mentioned. From their reading the women concluded that testing of urinary levels of mercury could be reliable for determining exposure levels, but was less dependable in determining mercury poisoning.

"We went to the PSA", Rhonda said, "but they didn't take much notice, unless we could get some women tested." They first told other school dental nurses at a branch meeting of the Dental Nurses' Institute in February '74. "One woman who was pregnant and hadn't told anyone went absolutely berserk over it," said Rhonda. "We had to play it down all the time so as not to frighten people. At the meeting we asked for ten women to volunteer to have a urine test." The Auckland Hospital had only done five such tests previously, and only found out during the dental nurse tests that glass containers absorbed mercury from the urine, thus altering the test results.

"We told every volunteer to go to another doctor if the first one laughed at the idea," said Linda. "Rhonda's doctor thought it was a bit funny but was prepared to go along. My doctor was very sarcastic but went along with it." Rhonda's test showed a level of 15 micrograms of mercury per litre; Linda's 180 micrograms. (New Zealanders average less than five micrograms; all the Auckland school dental nurses had levels above the average, usually between 30 and 60 micrograms.) "Other women's tests showed high mercury levels, but Linda's was one of the highest, leading to accusations that Linda had poured mercury into the urine bottle, and things like that," said Rhonda.

Since the test results indicated high mercury exposure levels, the PSA started work on the issue. They engaged Auckland occupational health specialist Dr Bill Glass for a report on the dental nurses' use of mercury. The PSA told all the other nurses in Auckland about the hazard, and arranged for them to have their urine tested. Of 100 tested, 36 had urinary mercury levels greater than 40 micrograms.

The test raised the issue of the exact level of excreted mercury that indicated "harmful exposure". The dental nurses had their first victory when the Health Department dropped the level from the World Health Organisation's 100 micrograms/litre, to 50 micrograms.

Glass' report, finished in August 1974, recommended that:

- the measure of "harmful exposure" be set at 40

micrograms

- all school dental clinics be decontaminated
- copper amalgam fillings be discontinued (this was the mixture used for baby teeth fillings — it was heated in an open spoon over a burner until the mercury bubbled)
- clinics be regularly inspected for mercury vapour levels; and
- all school dental nurses have regular medical examinations.

Glass gave medical certificates to all those nurses with symptoms of mercury poisoning and they stayed away from work on accident compensation. They were tested every two weeks, as the mercury levels in their urine very slowly dropped when they were away from the mercury vapour in the air of their clinics. At one stage 30 per cent of all the dental nurses in New Zealand were off work with mercury poisoning. Linda was off work for six months, and spent most of her time researching mercury in the medical school library or working out a code of practice with Glass.

Meetings of the newly constituted Dental Nurses' Advisory Panel to the PSA, which comprised three women from Auckland and five from Christchurch, pushed from September onwards for Glass' report to be implemented and kept the PSA in touch with the conduct of the Health Department's tests of nurses and clinics. At a breakthrough meeting in October 1974, between dental nurses, PSA officials and Health Department representatives, the Health Department agreed that copper amalgam was to be phased out, all dental clinics were to be decontaminated, and all nurses tested for mercury levels. The meeting also thrashed out the beginnings of a Code of Practice.

But both the dental nurses and the PSA found the Health Department unco-operative and obstructionist. The Deputy Director of Public Health told the Dominion in September that "It was the responsibility of the user to handle mercury carefully and ensure adequate ventilation." The Director of the Dental Section of the Health Department issued a circular to staff claiming that there was no danger of poisoning if proper procedures were followed. The implication was that undue absorption of mercury was the result of the dental nurses' carelessness.

When the Health Department started testing the levels of mercury vapour in the air of school dental clinics, another controversy developed about the proper way to do the tests. On the orders of the Health Department, Inspectors would not let the school dental nurses see the test machines or tell them the clinic levels. "The Inspectors would come in the morning, when the clinics were cold and the mercury had vapourised least, instead of midday," Linda said. "They used to test for vapour levels with the windows open. They were trying to prove our working conditions were fine. Trying to show we'd deliberately set it up. If it were a Fletchers factory, they'd be down on it quickly. Because it was in their own backyard, it didn't look too good for them."

One PSA official described the situation: "The general picture is one of broken promises and near inactivity and it raises a serious doubt as to whether a further meeting with the same people would be pro-



PHOTO: NEW ZEALAND HERALD

A Health Department Inspector demonstrates the correct way to measure mercury levels in the air at an Auckland school dental clinic.

ductive." Under pressure from the PSA, the Department told its Inspectors to disclose mercury vapour levels as they were tested in the clinics. The levels were over the threshold (50 micrograms/cubic metre of air) in 107 clinics.

Full agreement on a Code of Practice did not come until the middle of 1976, and the first sealed and machine-mixed amalgam was only introduced from October 1976, but by the end of 1974, the dental nurses and the PSA had ensured that every dental nurse knew about the mercury hazard, and that the Health Department had acknowledged its responsibility to eliminate it.

"Before the pay struggle," said Rhonda, "dental nurses' morale was really low. No one knew how to handle the relativity pay claim when it came up. The real problem was that we had no control over our lives." "We were very naice girls, with very naice jobs, wearing very naice veils," said Linda, putting on an upper crust accent. "Very middle class. We didn't think we'd belong to a union because we weren't meat workers." "When the relativity dispute arose," said Rhonda, "we thought 'The Institute has no

power, what can we do?' So we rang up the PSA."

Bill Glass, in a speech to the dental nurses' conference organised by the PSA in December 1974, remarked on the "interesting" similarity between mercury poisoning symptoms and "femalism". "How easy for males to ascribe such complaints to 'hysterical females' — it couldn't have fitted the picture more perfectly," he said. "It reinforced the view males have of females — particularly the males who run the School Dental Service."

"Thus blinded by their own conditioning and prejudices, sitting in their ivory towers, misinterpreting the evidence in their own professional journals, a situation was allowed to develop where 40 percent or more of dental nurses were found to be absorbing mercury in excessive amounts."

"I learnt to question everything," said Rhonda. "It happened to all the dental nurses to some extent, over the urine tests and the mercury vapour levels." "It made us realise we didn't have to be frightened of these men," Linda added. "We had always thought we were completely powerless and while we thought that, of course, we were." □

WOMEN UNDER APARTHEID



While the public takes to the streets in tens of thousands to express its opposition, the New Zealand Rugby Union persists in its plan to bring the South African rugby team, the Springboks, to New Zealand in July. In this timely article two exiled members of the African National Congress describe the conditions for black women under apartheid, and, beginning on page 24, we publish a report on South African women's struggle to get out from under the yoke.

While apartheid affects the lives of all black South Africans with horrifying brutality, it is harshest in its effect upon African women. As an African in a racially differentiated society, as a worker in a system dependent upon, and therefore structured to provide, cheap labour, and as a woman in a society controlled and dominated by men, the African woman stands on the lowest rung of the ladder of oppression.

The experience of apartheid, its direct impact upon African women, the manner in which it circumscribes their lives and impinges upon every aspect of their existence, the denial of a family life, the control of their labour, the limits on movement, the subordinate status, the poverty, the struggle for survival through the myriad laws, regulations, restrictions, permits and denials, all have served to raise the political consciousness of African women in South Africa.

In the South African legal system, African women are considered as dependent upon men, who themselves have no rights. Under the Natal code, women have a status of perpetual minority. Regardless of age, education or economic status, a woman may not inherit or own property in her own right, enter into contracts or obtain credit. She is always under the guardianship of her father, her husband or other male relative. Under customary law, the father's estate generally passes to the male heirs only. Laws incorporating similar provisions apply in other parts of South Africa. In areas reserved for Africans, land is not allocated to women.

In rural areas, where the migrant labour system has made women the effective heads of households, they can only administer or manage what land or income there is on a day-to-day basis, for they remain dependent upon their husbands for decision-making.

In urban areas, women are dependent on men for a roof over their heads. African women are not allocated housing and cannot be registered tenants of rented houses. Widows, divorcees and deserted wives cannot automatically remain in their homes. For them and for single women the choice, if choice it be, is either to become a lodger or live in a single hostel.

In the areas where an African woman is considered separately from father/husband/son/male relative, the apartheid system again works to her detriment. Apartheid does not consider the African family as a unit. Africans do not qualify for married and family allowances in taxation. For purposes of residence or movement in South Africa, Africans, regardless of sex, are considered as single individuals. Throughout what is designated as white South Africa (87 per cent of the land area), each member of an African family — mother, father and children over sixteen — has to qualify separately as a single unit of labour for the right to reside in the area. Even when such a "right" is acquired by more than one family member, it does not follow that they may live together as a family unit.

In the 13 per cent of South Africa where the white-made law does not make it illegal for an African family to live together, there is little land and what may be available is eroded and employment opportunities are minuscule. The system created to provide cheap labour forces the family apart, with the job-seekers vying with each other and the labour bureau bureaucracy for the "right" to labour alone in "white" South Africa. Upon the woman falls the burden not just of reproducing labour but also of ensuring her own survival and that of her children, and the old, the sick and the handicapped.

In pre-colonial societies, women were usually subject to the control of chiefs, headmen and heads of families. The division of labour, though sexually differentiated, was not simply biologically based, nor was it egalitarian. However, traditional societies did afford women respect, protection and security. Colonial laws and later the apartheid system have removed the responsibility owed to woman by the society, denied her protection and security, and at the same time entrenched further her disabilities.

Within the Bantustans, one finds mirrored the undemocratic and male-dominated political structures of the white rulers. Some features of "traditional" society are being revived out of their

historical and social context. The first act of the Gazankulu Bantustan was the legalization of polygamy. The Transkei has introduced polygamy and corporal punishment for girls. The position of women was strikingly illustrated by the arbitrary dismissal of a woman minister, Stella Sigcau, on the grounds that she had become pregnant though unmarried.

The Bantustan leadership collaborates in the relocation of labour-intensive industries to designated border areas where female labour in particular is easily exploited. The Bantu Development Corporations and individual officials are frequently involved in such enterprises, paying wages that are appallingly low even by apartheid standards.

The Bantu education system entrenches a conception of women's "traditional" role. While limiting the scope of training offered to all Africans, technical training for girls is limited to domestic science curricula. Neither the public service nor the tribal universities will allow married women to remain in employment.

For a woman, confined by the system to the rural areas, the immediate concern is survival for herself, her children and parents. In recent years her difficulties have been compounded. The designation of Bantustans as "foreign" countries has shifted the costs of feeding, housing, education and providing for families on to economies that are not viable and unable to sustain the population. In white South Africa, units of labour may enter and remain only so long as they are needed. What have been callously termed the "superfluous appendages", the women, the children, the old, the sick and the handicapped, must go back and remain in the Bantustans.

The relentless drive to remove Africans from the urban areas and to move communities around arbitrarily has resulted in the uprooting of over three million people. To this must be added the eviction of African labour tenants following the increased mechanization of white farms. More and more people are pushed into areas where the land cannot support the existing population and the employment opportunities are few. In KwaZulu, sites for the resettlement of 300,000 people are being sought. Within the last decade the resident population of Quaqua has increased from 24,000 to over 200,000.

The figures mount up to staggering totals and the implications are appalling when one realizes that "resettlement" is a synonym for dumping people on empty wasteland. The population on the barren land thus increases and with it the burdens on the women.

Women are no longer able to go legally to the urban areas to take up employment. The only opportunities available to them are the two sectors with the lowest pay and the greatest exploitation: agriculture and industries set up in the border areas where industry is exempted from even those few safeguards provided for black workers under the apartheid system.

Rather than accept such employment, many defy the law and go to the urban areas illegally. Some join their husbands and try to establish some kind of family life in "squatter" camps. Others go to find employment. For all of them, pass raids, detention, prison and fines are considered as the price to be paid for survival in apartheid South Africa.

For, despite having to spend months of each year in prison, they are better off than if they had remained in the rural areas. The *Financial Mail* last year published the results of a survey that revealed that there was a 702.7 per cent improvement in living standards for a worker from the Ciskei who works illegally in Pietermaritzburg for nine months and spends three months in prison. A worker from Bophuthatswana who works illegally in Pretoria for three months and spends nine months in prison is still 28.5 per cent better off. A Lebowa worker who works illegally in Johannesburg for six months and spends six months in prison improves his living standards by 170 per cent (*Financial Mail*, 12 October 1979).



Helen Joseph

*Helen Joseph was the first person to be put under house arrest under the new laws of 1962. These restrictions were only lifted in 1971 after a major operation for cancer. Joseph was secretary to Ngoyi's president of FSAW from 1954. She was a teacher but her political involvement began when she started working for the non-racial Garment Workers' Union. Hilda Bernstein says she was "a tremendous organiser with a formidable capacity for sheer hard work". She was among those accused in the Treason Trial and endured a banning order which expired in 1962. She then undertook to look at the conditions for political exiles for the ANC and travelled to remote areas to visit those banished; her account of these visits is the basis of her book *Tomorrow's Sun*. For the ten years till 1971 Joseph's house arrest kept her a virtual prisoner in her own home — she lived alone and was not permitted visitors, was confined to her home every evening and weekend and silenced by the bans. Now aged 75 she is no longer banned, but may not be quoted. She continues to speak out against apartheid. In 1978 she was sentenced to four months imprisonment for "obstructing the course of justice" by refusing to discuss her visits to her friend Winnie Mandela.*

For women, who earn less than men, the improvement would be correspondingly lower. The real economic conditions in the Bantustans can be gauged when one recalls that, even after a 700 per cent improvement, the majority of male workers in urban areas earn wages below the poverty datum line — and women's wages are lower still.

There are women literally scratching for food in the parched soil of the Bantustans. There are women slaving for meagre wages in the fields and in the border industries. There are also women in tens of thousands who live with their families and obtain employment in defiance of apartheid laws.

Last year 20,290 women were arrested for contravening pass and influx control laws. (*Rand Daily Mail*, 4 March 1980). Husbands and children are kept illegally in "single" domestic quarters. Men and women who qualify by apartheid regulations to live only as "singles", live together in squatter camps. Long established communities, arbitrarily removed elsewhere, return and live illegally.

A small number of women are permitted to live legally in the urban areas, for they qualified before the total proscription was introduced. The majority of women employed in the urban areas are domestic workers. Though many employers require them to

reside in quarters provided in their backyards, they are not permitted to have husbands or children to stay with them overnight. Contract domestic workers are required to sign a statement acknowledging that violation of these regulations would lead to a cancellation of the contract.

Domestic workers are not covered by any protective legislation and their wages are notoriously low. Over 60 per cent of economically active African women are employed as domestic or agricultural workers in sectors where no minimum wages are laid down and no unemployment insurance is available.

Throughout the economy, African women on average earn less than half the amount African men are paid, and only eight per cent of white men's average earnings. The Industrial Conciliation and Wage Acts permit differentiation on the grounds of sex and, in more than 240 job categories, minimum wages for men are fixed at a higher figure than minimum wages for women (*Financial Mail*, 18 May 1979).

Because of their lower pay scales, African women are often preferred in labour-intensive industry, and the number employed in manufacturing has increased steadily. Occasionally employers replace male workers with women. An example that illustrates the changing pattern of using ever cheaper labour is provided by the Natal textile industry. At an early stage the workers were mostly Coloured and Indian men. In the 1930s, white women became significant but their numbers fell rapidly in the 1940s, with African men and Coloured and Indian women being employed in greater numbers. In the 1950s, African men were in the majority but a decade later African women were being employed. Today women, mostly African, form about 70 per cent of the work force.

Apartheid regulations have a logic and purpose, and the system is designed to ensure the availability of cheap exploited labour. The legal dependence of women, the migrant labour system and impoverishment of the rural areas, the precarious nature of any status a woman may acquire and the refusal to recognize African family units have combined to create a state of impermanence and insecurity and have served their purpose in making African women the cheapest form of labour within the apartheid system.

Yet the struggle to live together where they choose, to take what work is available in defiance of the machinery of the State, continues. Women of the Barolong people continued to return to the village of Majeng from which they had been removed. The first group that returned was arrested and found guilty of trespass; the second was returned to the new area of Vaalboschhoek. The return and arrest of a third group brought recognition of their grievances from the magistrate and a decision from the authorities to find them a more suitable area for resettlement.

At Crossroads the resistance to removal has been on a larger scale. Crossroads is called a "squatter camp", but it has shown itself to be a viable community in which the bonds have grown stronger due to the people's struggle to remain where they are.

Faced with the prospect of being moved, the Crossroads Women's Committee has succeeded in organizing the residents and in mobilizing national



Debs Mabale

31-year-old Nikiwe Deborah Mabale is one of the new generation of South African freedom fighters. Debs was youth chairwoman of the YWCA in the Transvaal and later literacy director with SASO until it was proscribed in 1977. She was detained in 1976 and again in 1977 one week after her wedding; she was held for 18 months. On her release she was served with banning orders confining her to Krugersdorp and early in 1979 refused permission to celebrate her marriage with a belated wedding party. Her son was effectively orphaned in 1977 when both his parents were detained. Under the terms of her banning order Debs Mabale is prohibited from engaging in any political activity.

The biographies on these pages have relied heavily on information from Hilda Bernstein's book *For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears*, International Defence and Aid Fund, 1975.



Dorothy Nyembe

The longest serving black woman political prisoner is Dorothy Nyembe who was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in 1969. She was a women's organiser in the ANC in the early 50s and was twice jailed during the Defiance Campaign. In 1956 she led a contingent of women from Natal to the nationwide women's demonstration against the pass laws in Pretoria. During the 1960 State of Emergency she was detained without trial for five months. In 1963 she was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for furthering the aims of the ANC, banned for five years in 1963 and rebanned 1968. Her 1969 sentence was for charges laid under the Terrorism and Suppression of Communism Acts that she had harboured freedom fighters and assisted two of her co-defendants. She is due for release in 1984; there is no remission for political prisoners in South Africa.

and international support. They have staked their claim to permanence by establishing a school. The women have kept watch to deter surreptitious demolition of houses; they have gathered in groups the better to confront the police and demolition squads. They sat down in the fields and demanded to be arrested as a group. They sat down before the bulldozers and refused to move. They dramatized their struggle in theatre and have taken it across South Africa and projected it upon the television screens of Europe and the United States.

They have not yet won the right to remain permanently, but four years after an application was first made to the courts to remove more than 10,000 people, Crossroads is still there and the people have not moved.

It should not be forgotten that the white South African society is also a society dominated by males. Even among the privileged white group, women are noticeable by their absence in organs of decision-making. Though enfranchised since 1930, there are today only two women among the members of the all-white Parliament and none in the Cabinet. The Broederbond, which controls all the instruments of power in the country, does not allow women as members and no women are to be seen at the senior levels of the National Party.

There are no women among the directors of the Anglo-American Corporation. No woman is at the head of any major South African industry, mining house, finance or banking institution. White women also suffer from discrimination in wages. On average they earn only 44 per cent of the earnings of their male counterparts and the sectors of white employment in which white women are found are also those with the lowest white wage scales.

Yet, when compared with black women, white women are privileged indeed. To a degree unknown in the rest of the world, they are free from domestic labour and responsibility. Most importantly, they have the franchise and legal opportunities which would allow them to shape a more egalitarian society. This they have not done. Cushioned by their comfort and privilege, they have in general even refused to acknowledge the oppression of black women and failed to recognize their own.

Some white women have understood and concerned themselves with the causes of oppression in South Africa. A few Afrikaner women from the most exploited of the white working class helped to build trade unions across racial lines. A small number of white women have perceived the nature of apartheid and have worked with the liberation movement.

But the majority are cocooned by their privilege. Most of those who see beyond it concentrate on the symptoms rather than the causes. They have formed organizations and groups that reject politics but fail to recognize that political power is at the root of the problem. They call for peace but ignore the need for justice and a people's right to fight for it. They call for contact across racial barriers, extending one hand while propping up separate development with the other.

Their efforts are directed towards charity and humanitarian assistance for the suffering. They busy themselves making the "slave quarters" in their immediate environment more comfortable rather than tackling the root cause of the suffering of the black people — apartheid. This is not to deny their contribution in alleviating suffering but it is necessary to differentiate such organizations from the emancipatory organizations of the oppressed, and such efforts from the liberation struggle.

South African women recognize that it is not men who oppress them but the apartheid system. They do not seek or want a liberation that will give them equality to share the oppression of African men. For them, the liberation struggle is the battle for the liberation of all the South African people, men and women, black and white, from the apartheid system.

That is not to say that victory over apartheid is seen as automatically removing the oppression of women, nor that after national liberation women will begin a new struggle for their liberation. Rather they see the two as intertwined. For, in the course of the liberation struggle, the question is asked and must be answered — freedom from apartheid, but after that what kind of society?

The Freedom Charter embodies the aspirations of the oppressed people of South Africa and is the programme of the national liberation movement. In its clauses there is a commitment to equality of status, franchise and economic rights for men with women.

The goals of the liberation struggle are refined as the struggle progresses. But it is in the process, too, that attitudes are fashioned and the foundations laid for the realization of such goals.

To the extent therefore that women participate in the liberation struggle they will be able to influence and determine their status and role in the new society and help to create the egalitarian structures and conditions of a free South Africa.

The liberation struggle of the South African people has received a wide measure of international support. In their areas of competence, non-governmental organizations have sought to isolate apartheid South Africa. They have recognized that the imposition of mandatory economic sanctions against the Pretoria regime under Chapter VII of the UN Charter is the single most effective action the international community can take in support of the liberation struggle and have campaigned within their countries and internationally for such action.

International agencies, governments and non-governmental organizations have also taken steps to provide direct assistance to the liberation movement. There is a need for assistance to be given, focused specifically on the requirements of women, to help them overcome the particular impact of apartheid on women and to promote their fullest participation in the liberation struggle and in the development of a free and democratic South Africa. □

FRENE GINWALA, of South Africa, is a lawyer and writer now living in exile in London; and **SHIRLEY MASHIANE**, formerly South African but now British, is a lecturer in social studies at a technical college in Liverpool. Both are members of the African National Congress.

Reprinted from Unesco Courier, July, 1980.



Winnie Mandela and her daughter Zinzi on the point of departure from their Soweto home after Mrs Mandela's banning order was altered in 1977 banishing her to the African area of Brandfort, a small town in the Orange Free State.

Winnie Mandela

Winnie Mandela has been subjected to 15 years of continuous harassment and persecution by the police. She is a target both for her own activities in the ANC Women's League but also as the wife of black leader Nelson Mandela now serving a life sentence on Robben Island. She was placed under banning orders restricting her work so that she lost her job. She has been arrested and charged many times with offences concerned with breaking banning orders. In 1969 she was held in solitary confinement under the Terrorism Act and withstood five continuous days and nights interrogation with sleep deprivation. Six months later she and 20 others were brought to trial on charges concerned with activities of the banned ANC. The trial ended abruptly two months later when the charges were withdrawn and the accused were discharged; they were immediately re-arrested and Winnie Mandela endured another 5½ months solitary confinement before being brought to court once more for a trial that ended in acquittal, after 491 days in prison, most of them in absolute solitary confinement. Winnie Mandela has said this about the place of women in the liberation struggle: "The struggle in this country, I believe, will be won by the women. I am fully convinced that the role of the women in the struggle of my people is a major one, and despite all the repressive laws they are faced with they have emerged as an outstanding group in fighting for the cause of black people in this country."

BANNING ORDERS

BANNED PERSONS may not

- be in the company of more than one other person at a time
- leave the magisterial district to which they are confined
- communicate with another banned person
- publish any writing or be quoted in print
- enter public buildings such as schools or factories as specified in the banning order
- join in any social activity.

BANNED PERSONS must

- report to the police every week
- seek permission to attend special events such as weddings or funerals
- accept that there is no appeal to the courts against a ban.

BANNED PERSONS may

- be subjected to dusk-to-dawn curfew and weekend house arrest
- be prevented from continuing with their employment or studies
- be removed to remote parts of the country.

South African Women and the Liberation Struggle

Women in South Africa have always been active in the struggle for liberation. Their protests against the laws requiring women to carry passes perhaps best epitomise the courage and determination of South African women. This account of the anti-pass campaign comes largely from a document prepared by the United Nations for the Mid-Decade World Conference held in Copenhagen last year entitled "The Role of Women in the Struggle for Liberation in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa".

The organisations referred to are the African National Congress Women's League formed in 1913, the multi-racial Federation of South African Women (FSAW) formed in 1954, and the Black Sash, originally formed as an organisation of white women opposed to apartheid who identify themselves by wearing black sashes. The Black Sash is the only group of these three which is, at present, legally permitted to exist. It runs advice offices to help people cope with the problems posed for them by influx control and the pass laws. It has been suggested that the Black Sash has been able to go on operating in South Africa for so long because it is composed almost exclusively of white upper-middle class women.

The Government attempted to get women to take passes as early as 1913 but the resistance at the time was so fierce that the Government finally gave up and this became one of the most significant anti-apartheid victories of the era.

However, the situation changed dramatically in 1952 when the Native Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act was enacted. The National Party was in power and apartheid legislation was being hastily designed. Unlike the earlier period, a large number of women had moved to the urban areas to seek employment and keep their families together. For the National Party, this fact was the sign of a permanent urban labour force and, therefore, a serious threat to the apartheid structures. The 1952 Act was intended to permit only the necessary labour for industrial and domestic work into urban areas. Passes were to be extended to women. However, as a result of success of the earlier campaigns, the Government did not announce until October 1955 that passes would be issued to women in January 1956.

Lilian Ngoyi described why women resisted so fiercely: "We women have seen the treatment our men have — when they leave home in the morning you are not sure if they will come back. If the husband is to be arrested and the mother, what about the child?"

Helen Joseph, a white activist who was secretary of FSAW, further explained: "The women lived it. The whole system was part of the life they lived. They realized it was going to be very much worse if it was extended to themselves because it would be the mother who would be taken away from the child. What they

saw was in fact what had happened. It was a direct attack on their home life and their family life and this is what sparked it off in such a dynamic way because they knew the danger of passes as only the black woman can know. Because they lived it."

The women understood that influx control could destroy the increasing unity and stability in the urban areas that family life represented. Therefore, they became activated as never before to stop this from happening. Thus, they saw and dramatically responded to the attempt to destroy the family which many believed to be one of the few stable parts of the lives of Africans in the abnormal apartheid society. The resistance of the women was so dogged that the Government waited 11 years from the passing of the Act in 1952 before making it mandatory for women to carry the passes.

It is impossible to discuss adequately all the heroic actions of women; therefore only a few of the most important will be highlighted.

The women hastily organized a demonstration for October 1955 as soon as the announcement was made that they must carry passes. The women in Black Sash staged an all-white protest. Their effort was quickly put in perspective when 2,000 African women rallied in Pretoria. The Government had banned the meeting, cancelled the buses that had been hired and set up road blocks to prevent the women from coming, leaving the trains, which were expensive, as the only alternative. Not knowing what the results would be, Helen Joseph left to pick up FSAW president Ngoyi before 6 am. She described the scene: "I saw the train come over the top of the embankment and out of every window of the train there were women's heads and they were waving and shouting and singing, singing the freedom songs and I knew that it was going to succeed. I knew then that nothing could stop them."

The most well-known effort was organised on 9 August 1956 by FSAW. More than 20,000 women came to the Union Buildings in Pretoria. In commemoration of this day August 9 is still celebrated as Women's Day in South Africa. This account of the action comes from Hilda Bernstein's book *For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears*.

"Despite the most ingenious forms of intimidation the women saved and worked together to raise money to hire trains, buses, cars, to bring them thousands of miles to the capital. All processions in Pretoria were banned that day, so the women walked to Union Buildings to see the Prime Minister in groups of never more than three. All Pretoria was filled with women. This was four years before the national liberation organisations were banned, and thousands of women wore the green and black Congress blouses; Indian women dressed in brilliant saris; Xhosa women in their ochre robes with elaborate headscarves.



Lilian Ngoyi (centre), President of the South African Women's Federation and of the ANC Women's League (see biography overleaf).

'Union Buildings is designed in classic style, with pillared wings on either side of an amphitheatre on a hillside, with trees and gardens in steps down the hillside and a vista to the town far down below. The women slowly converged up the avenue and filled the amphitheatre. Their leaders went into Union Buildings and left hundreds of thousands of signatures on petition forms at the office of the Prime Minister who, of course, was not available to see them. Afterwards they stood in complete silence in the winter sun — even the babies on their backs did not cry — for thirty minutes then burst into magnificent harmony to sing the anthems, "Nkosi sikile'i Afrika" and "Morena Boloka". The singing, as they dispersed, echoed over the city, and the women began a new freedom song with its refrain "Wathint' a bafazi, way ithint' imbolodo uzo kufa" — Now you have touched the woman you have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed."

The almost spiritual and serene quality of these demonstrations was, however, not the norm. More typical was the case of Lichtenburg in the western Transvaal. In November 1956, when government officials arrived to register women, more than 1,000 women met them to protest. When the police made a baton charge, the women threw stones in retaliation. The police opened fired and two Africans were killed.

In July 1957, in Gopane Village in the Baphuruts Reserve, some women burned their passes. When 35 women were arrested, 233 more volunteered to be arrested. When officials arrived in Motswedi and Braklaagte to register the women, the villages were deserted. In June 1957, at Pietersburg in the northern

Transvaal, 2,000 women stoned officials who came to register them. When the officials returned in July, 3,000 women greeted them, again forcing their withdrawal.

The spontaneous and sustained resistance in Zeerust was a sign of the new level of tensions surrounding the passes. Chief Abraham Moilola refused to aid officials in their attempts to get women to accept passes. In April 1957, Moilola was given 14 days to leave for another area. When officials arrived, only a few women accepted. Other women collected and destroyed most of the passes issued. A church was set on fire and a school boycotted because teachers accepted passes.

When a hearing was set up to investigate the unrest, several hundred women who tried to attend were turned back at a roadblock by 40 policemen backed by eight planes which flew low over the women.

Ultimately, up to 2,000 women and children fled from Zeerust to Bechuanaland rather than take the passes.

In October 1957, officials began to push the campaign when they registered women in Johannesburg. While many women did accept the passes as impossible to avoid, many thousands protested during the week of 21 to 28 October 1957. More than 2,000 were arrested. Helen Joseph recalled the situation: "Their attitude was they're not going to do it (accept passes). That's when the first mass arrests took place . . . Within the space of a week there were 2,000 women in jail. It was incredible (they) left their children, left their husbands, left their homes, went to jail and sim-

ply would not pay the fines.”

Although the will to resist the passes had not changed, the reality of Government coercion forced more and more women to take the passes. Resistance and demonstrations did continue but it was reported that by March 1960, 3,020,281 or about 75 per cent of the adult women, had accepted passes. Winnie Mandela, one of the leading South African women who has herself been severely restricted by the regime for almost 17 years, explained why women were forced to accept passes in addition to the physical punishment mentioned above: “We have to carry passes which we abhor because we cannot have houses without them, we cannot work without them, we are endorsed out of towns without them, we cannot register births without them, we are not even expected to die without them.”

Over the end of 1959 and the early months of 1960, the ANC and the newly formed Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) planned action against the pass laws. The anti-pass campaigns were now focusing on men as well as women. On the morning of March 21, 1960, police opened fire on thousands of Africans gathered at Sharpeville killing 67 and wounding 186 including 40 women and children.

What has come to be known as the Sharpeville Massacre marked the beginning of an even more repressive era. A state of emergency was declared. ANC and PAC were both banned. Massive arrests were made under new restrictive legislation, while women led hunger strikes to protest conditions in the jail; it became virtually impossible to organize.

Proclamation 268 and Government Notice 1722 of 26 October 1962 made it obligatory for African women to carry passes as of 1 February 1963. In October 1963, the Black Sash, which had campaigned hard against the passes and other repressive legislation, opened its membership to all races.

By the time it was obligatory for African women to carry passes, the Federation of South African Women had effectively ceased to exist although it was never dissolved. The Government had attacked FSAW's leadership. Its first secretary, Ray Alexander, was banned almost immediately after FSAW's formation. Lilian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph, president and secretary, respectively, since 1955, were both defendants in the Treason Trial. Ngoyi was placed under severe bans and restrictions in 1961. In 1962, Joseph became the first South African to be placed under “house arrest” under the new law passed that year. Both Ngoyi and Joseph were kept under these orders until 1973.

It is clear that the Government feared the organizational talents of the women since it had restricted so many of them during that period. The fact that it took the Government 11 years to put its pass legislation of 1952 into effect is another indication of the power of the women.

Helen Joseph concluded that: “Many people see the Pass Campaign as a failure. I see it as an incredible success in what it achieved . . . in what it was responsible for — the fact that thousands of women resisted authority and went to jail.”

When asked what the legacy of that time is for the present, she answered: “A legacy of self-confidence, of hope because I'm sure you realize that not one of the people you speak to has any doubt whatsoever

Lilian Ngoyi

Lilian Ngoyi died in March last year after 17 consecutive years under a banning order. Ngoyi was a skilled garment worker and a widow supporting two children and her mother when she joined the Women's League of the African national Congress in 1952. Within a year she was elected president of the league and in 1955 she became president of the Federation of South African Women. With Helen Joseph as secretary they made a strong team and led South African women into one of their most vigorous periods. According to Hilda Bernstein she was “a most eloquent and colourful speaker, but this and her energy as an organiser made her a target for persecution and prosecution.” In 1956 she was arrested and charged in the mammoth treason trial that did not end until more than four years later. She said her worst experience, however, was 71 days in solitary confinement when she was detained under the 90-day law. She was later placed under severe bans and restricted to her home in Orlando Township. She was forced to give up her job and tried to survive by sewing at home, although the Special Branch scared her customers away.

After 11 years of bans and house arrest the bans were briefly not renewed and Lilian Ngoyi at that time said to the world, “You can tell my friends all over the world that this girl is still her old self, if not more mature after all the experiences. I am looking forward to the day when my children will share in the wealth of our lovely South Africa.”

about what the ultimate future's going to be. I think we inherited a legacy of hope and defiance and passed it on.”

Subsequent events in Soweto, Crossroads, Majeng and many other places indicate that the legacy was, indeed, passed on to future generations.

Postscript

In the 60s, 70s and 80s open organisation by women has been virtually impossible. In 1975 210 delegates representing 41 organisations gathered in Durban to found the Black Women's Federation (BWF); the first president was Fatima Meer, a sociologist at Natal University. But the Government acted swiftly to crush BWF. Within a year seven leaders had been detained and Fatima Meer was banned. The entire organisation was banned in October 1977.

Over the past 20 years both ANC and PAC have developed both an underground within South Africa and operations in exile. Also the roots of what is known as a Black Consciousness Movement have developed within South Africa. Many women have been extremely active within all these organisations. As PAC Central Committee member Elizabeth Sibeko says, “The activity of women during the fight for freedom is the only way to ensure their full participation when we have true majority control.” □



Will it break the spell?

by Kirsten Warner

A tiny painted box, no larger than five pence. Round, royal blue, the top screws onto a black wooden base which appears to leave the disk free-spinning. It is like a painted puffball, the curve of the box giving capacity to a Chinese blue urn painted with white clematis pinpoint yellow centred, trailing on feathery green.

I carry it with me always. Some people wear St Christophers. I carry a button, a steel splinter, a seed and a seashell. A spell against forgetfulness, a charm against despair. Inside the tiny, lacquered box, with two seashells, inside a raffia clasp.

A mother of pearl button for luck, for me, the pearly queen, the dove soaring charmed from the possible deeps. In the dove's beak the cream button, tortoise backed, two-holed, warmed pearly-purple by fingered use.

I sent Elizabeth a postcard of a dhow that carried fishermen over the salt-hot sea of Arabia to the razor hungry coral which wore holes in their flesh as they waded skinny, bare-backed, stinking of fish discarded for pearly shells piled on deck towards Ras Adabiya. To stitch buttons on English cuffs, their ulcers hit bare bone, and the stock market rose.

A pearl button for luck, a steel splinter of construction. Flat, square, chamfered, inside the lacquered box that Elizabeth gave me

when I left. A scrap from the hull of the boat she's building. Steel for friendship and a woman's work. Sent a postcard of an ancient dhow because I carry the steel scrap until I meet the boat.

A pearl button for luck, a steel splinter for construction, a kowhai seed for a country. Mustard yellow pip, hard and polished, from the land, from the ohu. I can still hear her voice calling in the winter night across the bush, and feel her arm across my shoulders in the morning. Gumboot mud, chainsawing firewood, car maintenance and the kowhai against the manuka lean-to.

A button, a steel splinter, a kowhai seed, and a tiny spiral shell for connection, for the sea. Beside the box, two fan shells from the beach in Provence where I live. Near Grasse, where Molinard perfumery painted the finger-nail sized box for cream scent.

She navigated the Atlantic under sail. Adrift, no company, she scrimshawed sailor's whale bone to hawk in Montmartre, to buy chestnuts which she cooked in a heating system — for physical survival. For survival of her identity, bought the perfume. Connection.

Neither of us has a sister. We have joint mug-shots in the police file. I keep the box beside two seashells for company, beside two seashells for company.

Kirsten Warner,
Higham Hall, Cumbria, England.

“Restructuring” will go down in the history of the labour movement as a dirty word. Officially described as a programme to increase productivity and profitability, to the mass of workers it actually means factory closures, shrinking employment opportunities and the dole. And to women? The Working Women’s Council commissioned **Mary Hancock** to look at what restructuring meant to women in one New Zealand town. She reports on

MOSGIEL



Throughout the length and breadth of New Zealand, large numbers of women are being laid off from their jobs in the manufacturing sector. This is particularly the case in the clothing and textile industry, which has come under fire from the government’s industry restructuring scheme. This programme (theoretically aimed at stream-lining and “improving” industrial production) has largely ignored the impact of the massive job loss associated with this planned change. Consequently, very little publicity has been given to discussion of **why** such large numbers of women should be forced out of their jobs and what **effect** this redundancy has on the women workers and their households.

Once again woman has been made invisible — our marginality has been assured by a society that believes that “a woman’s place is in the home”.

The New Zealand Working Women’s Council (WWC) has become increasingly disturbed at the massive redundancies that women are experiencing in the workforce, and the high incidence of unemployment associated with this. In December 1980 the WWC commissioned a study to be carried out on the effects of the collapse and takeover of Mosgiel Ltd — to look at the women who lost their jobs in this company — the largest textile and woollen mills in New Zealand.

The study revealed that women suffered particularly high job loss. Even though women workers made up 50% of the Mosgiel Ltd workforce — they accounted for 63% of those made redundant. While women experienced a far higher redundancy rate than men, they also have largely been unable to find new jobs. In one of Mosgiel’s knitwear factories, 65% of the women workers who lost their jobs are still unemployed.

These disturbing figures of high unemployment among women workers in the Dunedin area are similar to those reported in other regions of the country. In the Auckland region, for instance, the Woollen Mills industrial union of workers report that 300 knitwear workers — all of whom are women — lost their jobs recently, and that in the overall industry in New Zealand there has been a loss of 4,000 jobs over the last three years.

The general situation facing these women was summarized by union secretary, Mr. F.R. Jackson when he stated:

“The majority of the workers are married women who when they are made redundant have to return to their homes as they can’t get jobs or the dole”.

A similar situation occurred with the closure of the Kaiapoi Woollen Mills near Christchurch. Here a study by Ross Winsome has shown that women workers are greatly effected by such closures with large numbers becoming unemployed. Winsome reported that among full-time workers, those unable to get new jobs were all women, and among the part-time workers all of whom were women, the majority haven’t found work.

With such high numbers of women being made redundant and then unable to find new jobs, what is happening to these women?

Women made redundant have found that they are grappling with a wide range of difficulties and problems, the key ones resulting from the considerable drop in their standard of living with the loss of wages. Financial difficulties are particularly acute for those women who have a young family, or are widowed, separated or divorced and do not have another source of income for support.

The following case studies gathered in the Working Women’s Council project at Mosgiel Ltd, illustrate the situations that many of these women now face as unemployed workers.

Cathy is married with a young two-and-a-half-year-old child and is expecting another baby in February. Until she was made redundant in September she worked full-time and would bring home an average of \$138 including bonus, per week. Her husband brings home \$230-\$250 a fortnight. On their two wages they could cover all their living expenses and bank \$40. With Cathy’s loss of job their income has shrunk over 50% so that the family must now survive on \$115-\$125 per week plus family benefit and draw on their small savings. As she commented “my husband’s wage is all spent on weekly living and we have nothing left over

for power, telephone, insurance, clothes or going out." Cathy itemized how she budgeted their money each week from this one income.

Food	20
Husband's work food	10
Rent	25
Petrol	12
Hire Purchase (Washing machine, lawn mower)	40
Cigarettes	8
Cat and dog	12

\$127 per week

When she was made redundant she invested her modest redundancy payment “But I wish now that I hadn’t as my bank account’s gone down to nothing. So I’m wondering whether to take it out and use it.” Cathy and her family find it extremely difficult trying to live on this low income. They can’t afford money for clothes, entertainment, weekly bills, and have had to cut back on all purchases, particularly food. It is very difficult for a family to try and survive on \$20 per week for food. “It worries me living off one wage. It’s not much fun. You are limited in what you can do all the time”

After the birth of her second child in February, Cathy plans to find another job. "I would like evening work so I can be home with the children but will settle for anything — perhaps cleaning or waitressing." The chances of finding such work are remote indeed. For instance, many cleaning jobs advertised in the **Otago Daily Times** in January have had over one hundred applicants.

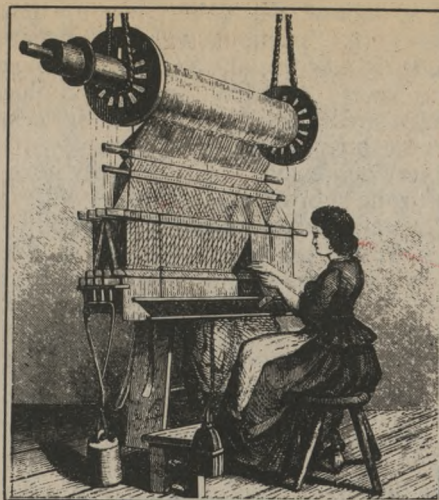
For women on their own, the hardships are even greater. Many of them found their incomes dropped by over \$100 per week when they lost their jobs, couldn't find alternative work, and had to rely on a modest benefit.

Jan, who is separated, has two sons living at home, one unemployed (18 years) and the other an apprentice (20 years). She registered as unemployed with the Department of Labour and receives \$52.78 per week (January) — a drop of \$80 to \$90 per week from her average take home wage and bonus of \$140 at Mosgiel Ltd. Although her sons contribute \$30 board, Jan finds that she can only just cover the cost of food. Until recently she used her redundancy money to cover bills and expenses but that has now all gone. (Like many other workers she also lost shares — 1600).

"I can just manage food — but not the bills. The bills will come for the telephone, electricity, coal, DIC account, Smith and Brown account and TV rental. I don't know how I'll manage once the bills start coming in. There is nothing left for clothes and entertainment."

These women face a horrifying situation of not knowing how they are going to find the money to cope with these financial difficulties — as jobs seem impossible to get and government assistance does not cover the cost of living.

For many of the married women who were made redundant and haven't been able to find employment, the last few months have also been difficult. Their households have had to rely solely on their husbands' earnings, which has meant a reduction in income of



\$100 to \$200 per week (net). This has posed considerable problems for these families as frequently both their wages were required for reasonable household expenses and daily living.

Beth and her husband both worked for Mosgiel Ltd. Beth was made redundant in September 1980 and her husband who works at the Roslyn factory will probably be faced with redundancy later in the year. Between them they lost 1800 shares in the collapse. While her husband continues to earn \$150 per week, Beth is now without a job and her wages of \$135-\$140 per week. They are unable to save now and find this particularly disturbing as "preparing for when we retire has been cut from under us". As was often stated by the women again and again in the interviews, "we have lost a way of life."

Closely related to the loss of work and the economic problems, worries and anxieties that have emerged, is the issue of social and psychological well-being.

The majority of these women have been active in the workforce for most of their lives except for a short period of child rearing when their children were young. So the loss of a job and the lack of possibility of any other work at this time suddenly looms large for these women who frequently commented on the loneliness and boredom of the now "long" hours and days of isolation at home. In response to this many of them are feeling depressed, tearful and anxious, and as they can't get work, they are increasingly distressed about how to cope.

"I found it very difficult to start with and used to worry myself sick at night wondering how I'd manage."

The fear and worry of not having enough money to "manage on" was shared by many women and is closely linked to their feelings of depression, powerlessness and isolation.

"I want to be doing something. I can't sit at home — you feel so useless. Before, life was so organised — now it's useless. I feel bored — day in, day out. I've been feeling depressed it's just awful. Since I've knocked off work, I've gone to the pack. I can't sleep, I'm on sleeping tablets, it's just horrible. I start crying and can't stop — it's the uncertainty of it all."

These feelings were echoed again and again as was the growing anxiety at facing a cold grey winter unemployed.

In some situations, particularly where women were on their own (for example, widowed, separated or divorced), these worries, anxieties and problems have resulted in severe emotional and psychological ill health and distress, and have lead to some of them seeking medical assistance.

"I feel very depressed, life is so empty now. Every-time I go to the shops I wonder how I will cope . . . You lose contact with everyone from work."

Florence who made these remarks also spoke at length about how she now gets headaches and feels very weepy. She was going to the doctor next day — she knew that she'd be told that the only way to get better was by going back to work — but she hoped she'd get some medication to help anyway. The doctor did in fact say that — but as Florence said "It's easier said than done to get a job in Dunedin now."

For many of the married women, the feelings of depression, loneliness and isolation that were widely expressed related also to their loss of economic independence as women, with their sudden reliance on their husbands for financial support. Many expressed similar feelings to Pam who commented:

"It's a knockback losing your independence when you've always earned."

A lot of women talked at length about these difficulties of dependence and how their husbands couldn't understand why they felt distressed over it, and thought they were worrying over nothing.

Ann, for example, after three months of unemployment decided that she had to sell her little car, as the money was needed.

"It was eating up my money. It was hard. I'd bought it with my own money, maintained it myself, and the knowledge that I'd never have another one of my own is hard. It was all mine — the only thing that I'd ever had — everything else was a joint thing whereas the car was mine from my wages. My husband couldn't understand what I was going on about."

This widespread desire amongst the women for economic independence was very aptly shown by Enid. When she was made redundant after 35 years at Mosgiel, she had a gap between the time when her job finished and her superannuation commenced. She didn't ask for her husband's pension to be increased to cover her for this period "as I didn't want to be dependent on him as I've worked all my life."

Even though in the majority of the households, women were providing at least half of the income, and in many cases where they were on their own, they were the sole provider, there is little realization by their husbands or society in general of the distress and hardship that results when a woman is suddenly forced into a situation where she loses this financial independence and is reliant on her husband of a benefit for support. This was particularly evident in situations where the husband and wife have separate bank accounts — the unemployed married women must now ask their husbands for money.

"In this whole situation it's been really hard for women".

To be in a situation of unemployment with the many financial difficulties that arise from this, many of the women have thus found themselves socially and emotionally distressed and are uncertain how to cope in these circumstances. The majority of these women



have been in the paid workforce for a considerable period of their lives, with their average length of employment being 19 years.

The importance of earning a living which was often half or more of their total household income, was stressed by many of the women, who in many cases have also managed to combine this work with raising a family. There was little evidence to support the view that women work for "extras". They were working to support themselves and their families in the same way as men do.

Redundancy and unemployment is having a devastating effect on the lives of many women in New Zealand. This study provided examples from the textile and woollen industry, but the same situation is found in many manufacturing sectors particularly in the area of assembly work e.g. electronics which has an assembly workforce made up of 70% women workers.

Women are becoming increasingly disturbed and angry over these events. Many of the women made redundant at Mosgiel voiced the opinion that men were getting jobs quicker than women. They commented that no-one seemed to be worried about what was happening to women.

"We are just expected to disappear back into the woodwork."

At the moment few people in New Zealand are aware of working women's anger, distress and frustration over these issues. Perhaps what is needed is Beth's suggestion:

"We all need to go on strike. All women in New Zealand should withdraw their services . . . then we'd sure get some action." □

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BOOKS TO WARM YOUR WINTER



NEW ARRIVALS

Pork Roasts, 250 feminist cartoons from all over the world (including NZ) in comic book form. Compiled for an exhibition in Canada and full of laughs at \$4. Dale Spender's **Man Made Language** costs \$21.25 but is an excellent and highly readable analysis of language and the use it is put to in keeping women in their place. The reviewer in "Spare Rib" had this to say: "If you've ever wondered why words like "power" and "truth" and "tolerance" seem so impossibly difficult to understand; why gender in English is meant to coincide with sex, but doesn't; why you have feelings you can't put a name to; why talking about, for instance, motherhood, let alone being a mother, sometimes feels like being strapped to a stick of dynamite and watching the fuse burn; then you should read **Man Made Language**."

In **Why Children** 18 very articulate women (women like Micheline Wandor, Paula Weideger and Barbara Hanrahan) talk about the terrible, crucial decision on whether to have children — some of the women are mothers, some not, there are lesbians and heterosexuals, black women and white women. This is a book for anyone who has agonised over the decision, and for all those who did it without thinking — costs \$8.95.

The Adventures of Madalene and Louisa at \$9.95 is a delightful and amusing book reproducing pages from the album of two teenaged entomologists who hunted beetles and did battle with caterpillars in Victorian England — a present for a special friend? The beautiful **Getting Clear** by Anne Kent Rush — body work for women — is available at \$13.25 and Maxine Hong Kingston's latest, **China Men**, at \$5.95. We've also got her earlier book, **The Woman Warrior** — memoirs of a girlhood among ghosts — in which Kingston weaves myths, autobiography and reminiscences about what it means to be a Chinese born in America.

Very cheap at \$2.95 **Seven Women** — portraits from the American Radical Tradition by Judith Nies. The book contains biographies of women like Mother Jones, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (author of **Herland** and **The Yellow Wallpaper**) and Harriet Tubman, a black woman who helped slaves escape from bondage in the Southern states of America. Finally, **Testament of Youth** (\$13.95) Vera Brittain's moving account of her youth during the years of World War 1 and the heartache of that time. A new edition of Lucienne Lanson's excellent health resource book **From Woman to Woman** costs \$4.95.

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NEW BOOKS BY NEW ZEALAND AUTHORS

Jean Watson's latest, a prose lyric reviewed in the last "Broadsheet", called **Flowers From Happyever** at \$7.95. If you haven't read this fine author you could also read her **Balloon Watchers** (\$3.95) or **The World is an Orange and the Sun** (\$8.95). Auckland writer Wendy Simons has now had two books published, **Harper's Mother** (\$13.95) a rare NZ novel about a solo mother and her daughter, and her latest **Odd Woman Out** (\$9.95) about a love triangle. Gwen Skinner's **Simply Living** — a gatherer's guide to New Zealand's fields, forests and shores — tells you how to use found plants, fungi and seafood as food, for healing and for all manner of other things from furniture polish to removing stains. At \$13.95 the book is profusely illustrated in both colour and black and white.

Brand new, the Church's **Listen to Me Please** on the legal needs of domestic violence victims costs \$4.00.

We have several Sylvia Ashton-Warner books which are enjoying a much-deserved revival at the moment: **Teacher** at \$7.95, her autobiography **I Passed This Way** at \$19.95 and a real bargain **Spinster** at \$2.00. SROW's **The Abortion Experience of Some New Zealand Women** which looks at the situation of women seeking abortions in Christchurch over recent years costs \$3.00. Maori writer Pat Grace's latest volume of short stories **The Dream Sleepers** (see review in Dec 80 "Broadsheet") costs \$5.95. Another fine short story collection from Yvonne du Fresne **Farvel** (\$7.95) captures wonderfully what it felt like to grow up as a girl in a strongly Danish community in New Zealand. Some of this excellent writer's work is contained in the collection of short stories **Shirley Temple was a Wife and Mother** available from us for \$5.95.

FEMINIST CLASSICS

Need to brush up on some feminist reading? We've lots of books to help you along. Shulamith Firestone's **The Dialectic of Sex** (\$8.95); **Sisterhood is Powerful** ed Robin Morgan (\$6.95); Germaine Greer's **The Female Eunuch** (\$4.95); Eva Figes **Patriarchal Attitudes** (\$8.95); the classic **Vindication of the Rights of Women** by Mary Wollstonecraft (\$4.95); Virginia Woolf's **Three Guineas** (\$3.95); Simone de Beauvoir's **The Second Sex** (\$9.85); Elizabeth Gould Davis's **The First Sex** (\$5.95); Martin and Lyons **Lesbian/Woman** (\$4.35) and a real bargain, the hardback edition of **Fat is a Feminist Issue** by Susie Orbach \$3.00.

THEORY

Strategy and Tactics in the Women's Movement.

Sarah Calvert

The start of a new decade in the women's movement seems an appropriate time to review some of the ideas and issues in the areas of theory, strategy and tactics. Insufficient attention to these issues may well be the cause of our singular lack of success in recent years, in achieving even minimal goals (such as the right to abortion, the ERA, child care). The changes that must be made to end patriarchy are nothing short of radical but few women involved with the feminist movement see themselves as fighting a revolution. It seems to me that this lack of vision prevents us from seeing strategy and tactics as crucial to our movement. But revolution means war, and war requires strategy and tactics.

Feminism: Understanding the Basics

As a social movement committed to large scale social change, the women's movement needs to be aware that its primary (and often only) resource is the commitment of its members. That commitment must be to actively work to end the oppression of women. As feminists we need to understand that there is no escape from that oppression, because we were born female. Our theory must explain our oppression in terms political, social, economic, psychological and individual. As feminists we also need to understand why our oppression occurred; specifically its basis is in our ability to carry and nurture life. This is the commonality of our experience.

Feminism needs to analyse and explain the social control of women in four major areas — reproduction, definitions of female behaviour, the subordinate social and legal status of women, and the economic and social separation of home and work. Unless we can do this we will not be able to understand our own phrase "the personal is political". Despite its widespread acceptance by feminists the concepts evoked by this phrase remain buried in our subconscious most of the time. For many women they never re-emerge. We must be clear as to its meaning but we must also be clear how to apply it, to both ourselves and to others.

The term "the personal is political" is a catch cry of the women's movement. Initially it grew out of consciousness-raising groups. Women realised that their own personal experience was political, it reflected the oppression of women as a group. They also realised that the way in which they lived their lives, their ideas and actions had the power to change the system, they were political. Politics is about power and power is about oppression. So the phrase the personal is political reflects the view that oppression is both an individual and a global experience and that the change in us, and in women the world over, is also personal and political.

Feminism focuses on women as actresses, not as victims. It seeks from women action to challenge and change patriarchy. Even activists will remain victims, however, unless we are able to see what feminism is for us as women, and for us as individuals, unless we are able to look clearly at what we want and what we can contribute. I think we need short-term goals that will sustain our energy and interest and provide real changes for some individuals; and we need the long-term vision of a changed world, of an end to oppression, to inspire us.

Winning a War: Strategy and Tactics

Strategy is the management of war; it is a large scale evaluation of the situation designed to secure the upper hand in the fight. Tactics are the art of using one's resources when in immediate contact with the enemy, to gain advantage. Tactics, then are the practice of strategy. As strategists, for example, we need to evaluate the tactic of setting short-term goals (reforms), we need to develop our vision of a future world, we need to adapt our tactics to meet repression, co-option and challenge. Strategy, because it is the long-term view, should concentrate on increasing women's power, on changing our perceptions of the world in which we live. It needs to develop tactics that will implement these visions and lead to an end to patriarchy. But without an overall strategy, tactics will not prove effective.

To begin to develop our strategy we need to be clear about our long term goals; what do we seek, where does our activism lead us, ultimately and immediately, are we losing more than we gain by our actions, are there reasons for our actions, where is our personal fulfilment? For any strategy must not only challenge the power system, it must also envisage personal changes if our vision is to grow and develop. For this reason I see something like International Women's Year (1975) as a valuable tactic, for it wrought huge changes in individual women's lives, though it failed to effectively challenge the power structure. The difficulty was that we, as feminists, failed to recognise the limited use that could be made of it and thus failed to capitalise where we could while expecting more than was reasonable. Lesbian separatism, which is seen by many as both a strategy and a tactic, has done both. For many women it has brought profound personal change, insight and creativity. For feminism it has proved a challenge to our own perception of the world (particularly in terms of heterosexism) and provided new insight (theory) and tactics to fight with.

The effect of our struggle depends not only on what is done, but on how we do it. Our style, given that we aim to overthrow the world order, is critical. Style is an essential element of tactics. We need to assess how our actions will affect women, how they will appear to others of our class, how they will appear to other feminists. To develop our own style we need to be clear on our ideology. Do we wish to swap one oppression, that of men over women, for another — that of the few over the many. The structures we use in our struggle, our movement, are also important because they affect our ability to translate our visions into actions. As Jo Freeman has pointed out, the women's movement has not yet developed a clear perspective on structure. Little attention has been paid to this issue of our style, perhaps because style is seen as a male preoccupation.

Despite a great deal of thought and writing on the issues of power, leadership and structure, we have not yet developed a vision of radical change. There is, in the women's movement, no common ground on how we will use our weapons, or which weapons we will use. In fact, we end up with no weapons at all. Even our media have become the focus of bitter debate. Communications are of central importance to any movement, they inform us of actions, issues and ideas. They are a way of drawing new women to

the movement as well as a way of extending the long-term views of the rest of us. Communications are the written CR (consciousness-raising) of our lives. We need to remember that it is ideas that systems try to destroy, it is people and books that are burnt because they are a long-term threat. We cannot afford to burn/trash our own women or their words if we wish to succeed.

As a beginning we need to look for issues that unite women by providing personal insights into their oppression. These insights need to be those that we can draw wider political implications from, such as the issue of fertility control. Feminists should perhaps see themselves as dropping pebbles into ponds watching the ripples spread. If we are to succeed we need to raise the consciousness of millions of women, that needs to be our first and foremost goal. We need to explain feminism in terms of women's lives. This is not to say that we will not disagree among ourselves, we cannot avoid or abandon our insights into oppression in order to avoid making each other uncomfortable. This too becomes a matter of style, we need to learn how to criticise and discuss issues without committing ritual movement harikari. More time needs to be spent reflecting on the manner of our challenges to each other, and more again on the manner of our challenges to the world.

Reforms or Revolution: Is there a Conflict?

Much debate within the feminist movement has centred on the question of reform versus revolution as a goal. I think we need to see these two as strategy and tactics. The implicit view that there is conflict between them is, in my view, unproven. Reforms are tasks within our wider framework and analysis which lead to a feminist revolution. They are not a solution; they are part of a strategy towards a larger goal. They may bring women into the movement, provide us with winnable goals and small successes; they affect and alter the lives of individual women. Because of this we cannot ignore their very real value. I suggest that the feminist revolution we all talk about will not occur in our lifetime, nor possibly in the lives of our daughters. It is doubtful that our energy, involvement and visions could be sustained over those long years of struggle without some small successes. The development of our women-controlled institutions and culture is seen by some to be reformist and by others to divert essential energy from the larger struggle. But these too give us ideas, visions and sustenance. Reforms serve another essential service: they allow us the opportunity to put our theories into practice. We can try out our ideas about structure (do collectives really work?), leadership, alternative relationships, health care — the list is endless.

It would be futile to argue that the women's movement has not gained enormously, in insight alone, by reforms. What we have failed to do is to keep reforms in perspective; we have abandoned our overall analysis and accepted small piecemeal changes. When we work on reforms we must continually ask where they fit into our vision, we must criticise and question, we must keep our souls. A danger with reforms is that they make us respectable, accepted by the power structure for their energy-draining effects on our movement, because to keep our gains we are easily bought off. So once again we need to take care to assess the value of each tactic. The lessons of previous feminist struggles such as the struggle for the vote, is that ultimately respectability keeps us in order, it does not further our aims.

Revolution is our vision. Revolution is a complete and dramatic change in a system. For thousands of years men — patriarchy — have oppressed women; changing that is the most revolutionary struggle in the history of humankind.

Acceptance of our vision, a revolution, is critical to our ability to make changes. So revolution is really a vision, a change in our and others consciousness. As such there needs to be two parts to our vision. We must first accept and assimilate and then advocate feminist ideas. We must make the political (the out there, the theory) personal, and the personal (our own individual experiences) political. This is a unique and somewhat isolated experience that will be different for each of us. Then we must become actresses, activists, working for and with projects, programmes, publications and organisations that are created to embody these ideas. We need to continually refer to our personal/political vision to maintain a perspective that is real and valid.

The dangers of reforms are well documented. We are co-opted, brought out, burnt out, used against our own struggle or ignored. Co-option is a favourite tactic of those who hold power, buy out those you can with jobs, power, status or through men (heterosexism). Division among us is also a favourite tactic, to set us fighting among ourselves, arguing the finer points of theory, while patriarchy can go on oppressing women unopposed. The system will also set out to destroy on a personal level those who cannot be co-opted, either by destroying them through the legal/political/social/economic machine or by destroying their credibility within the movement. And after all of this, reforms remain, at best, an irritant within the system, a minor challenge.

Revolutionary visions have other dangers; because they are visions they remain a game of words, ideas, pictures, fantasy. A revolutionary lives part of her time in an unreal world that has little substance. We can forget that there is an all too real world, where women are beaten, raped, forced to bear unwanted children. Revolutionary visions are our world in waiting and can work against action. Waiting for our revolution will not bring it nearer, and without action we may well lose our vision as well.

Understanding the Opposition

A major problem among feminists is a lack of perception about our opposition. We may, as individuals, know a great deal about men. The oppressed always know more about the oppressor than he knows about himself. However we have failed to perceive and act on the extent of women's oppression and we have failed to accept the depths of opposition to our cause. We are still playing ladies. We should be attacking the institutions of society where our oppression is based. We should be attacking both the ideas and the reality of these institutions: the family, religion, politics, economics, the whole social structure. Feminism is about everything; our analysis should and must cover all issues, ecology, nuclear power, parliamentary democracy, wage issues, freedom of information as well as our issues, like abortion and childcare.

We must remember, however, that we are at WAR. Having established ourselves and wrought changes in women's consciousness we can no longer expect to be ignored. We will be opposed by all the might of the patriarchy, its SIS police force, legal system, political system, etc. We have to adopt strategies, tactics, actions and a strength of movement to counter that. What will we do, as individuals and as a movement, when they arrest a feminist for doing illegal abortions? What will we do when they arrest a feminist for treason, which is acting or inciting the overthrow of the existing system? Where will you be, my sisters when the barricades go up? Where is our contingency plan for the war we are engaged in? It's fine to talk of separatism, but we don't even understand our enemy and we want to disengage. It is about time as feminists that we started to put a priority

on both how we will fight, what we will fight, and on learning about that enemy.

Change and Challenge

Above everything we want as feminists, I believe we want to win. However if we do want to win it seems to me that we had better start acting from that perspective. I think we should adopt a three-fold focus for feminism.

1. Consciousness-raising — developing a sense of ourselves; reclaiming our identities, our power; the personal is political; creating our theory and building a movement.

2. Building/Creating Women-controlled institutions and structures — creating a feminist subculture and community; providing alternatives that are changes for individuals and that recycle our visions and our ideas.

3. Reforms within the system — these need to structurally alter the system to provide real change for women; no reform should be in opposition to our goals or our strategy, no reform should be an end in itself, no reform should allow privilege for a few.

All our actions must involve women, new women and women already in the movement; they need to raise our hopes and visions; actions need to be used to develop organisation and structure for our movement. Finally they should also be designed to show women how the existing system works against their interests and is unwilling to change.

Charlotte Bunch, in the "Reform Tool Kit" (*Quest*, No. 1) also *Broadsheet* Nos 84 & 85 provides a five-point check list for our actions; perhaps we need to pay it more attention:

1. Does it materially improve women's lives, if so which women and how many?
2. Does it build on individual women's self esteem and respect, strength and confidence?
3. Does it give women a sense of power, strength and imagination as a group, does it bring more change?
4. Does it educate women, enhancing their ability to challenge and criticise the system in the future?
5. Does it weaken the patriarchy's control over society's institutions and give women power?

Fighting a war is a lonely process. I wonder where are the others who want to end women's oppression, why we are so divided, why we achieve so little. Working in one particular area, women's health, I see the vast potential to reach women and change the world. But like so many feminist activists, ten years on, I am tired and wonder at the seemingly vast amount of energy I and others have put into the movement. What have we achieved, could we have used that energy better? It is these thoughts that prompt me to feel we need to spend the next few years thinking hard about both the direction of our movement and the methods. What is the price the women's movement will pay for not thinking about strategy and tactics? □

This paper was presented at the Women's Studies Association Conference, Auckland, 1980.

I would like to thank P.H. for ideas and editing on this article.

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**"We hire girls
 because they
 are easier
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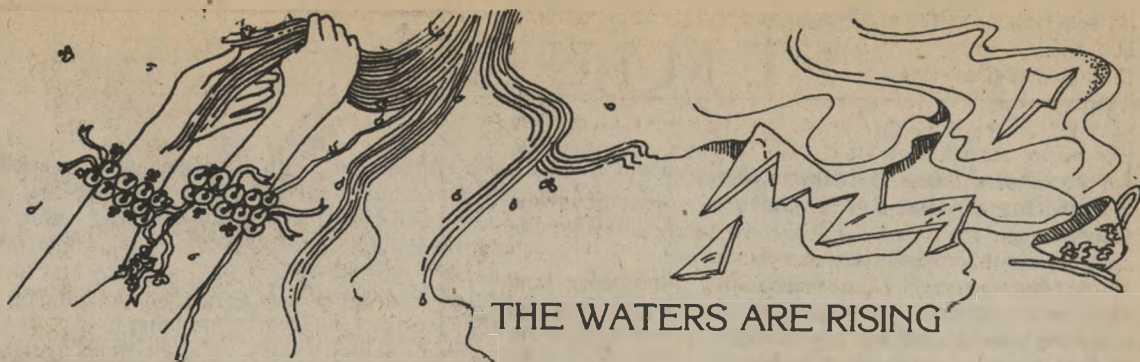
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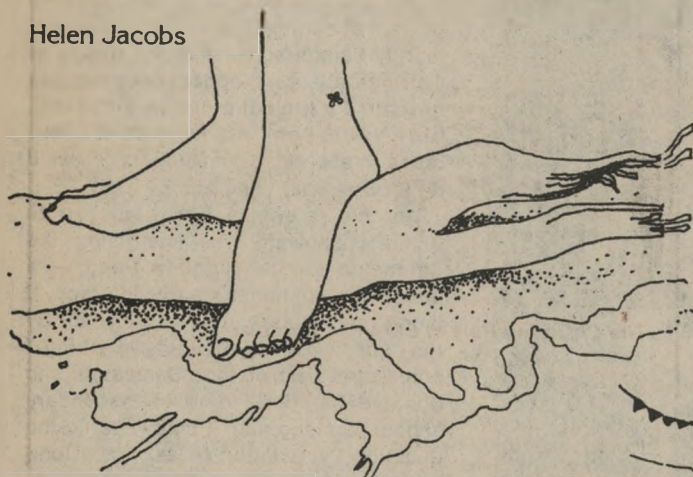




THE WATERS ARE RISING

There is something about the tui
scoring half points for clear notes
in mid-winter, in soft rain
that amulets the lime twigs
in the occasional obstinate
appearance of sunshine –
and you, younger woman **weeping** –
Let down your brown hair
let down your tears
no one will climb up
but women will stretch out their arms
to you, sometimes with bells on their
wrists.

Helen Jacobs

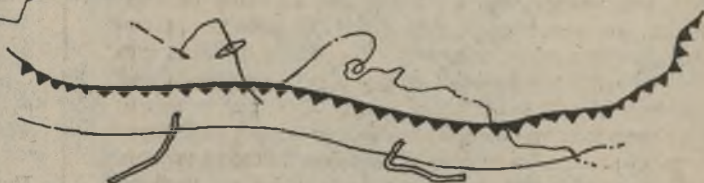


Last night I heard
her whisper –
The waters are rising
Be still my love –
Be still.
She sat crouched
in her chair –
The angels of Hell are loose
tonight my love –
Be still.

**Her fine tipped finger
nails ran down rasping –
The tides are falling
BE STILL MY LOVE –
BE STILL.**

While china tea cups
clinked – she saw –
the sky was shattering.
Be still my love –
Quite still ...

Angela Boyes-Barnes



Back to Nature

The sand is hot
My bare feet stand on dirtwood.
I see the sponges dry and dead
And in my mind those others full and red
Holding my womanhood,
Living still
And working with another tide.

Shona Gosnell

UNFINISHED PRESENTS

We should surely have time
To tie the last knot, sew
The button for those we love.
But sewing the tapes on
The hem you stitched, sister
I feel your closeness,
Wish you ease.

Lora Mountjoy

FEMINIST EYE

Eirlys Shand: New Paintings. An exhibition at the Denis Cohen Gallery

Eirlys (pronounced eye-liss) is a Welsh name meaning snow-lily, particularly apt for a painter of flowers. I walked round this exhibition of paintings prior to interviewing the artist for *Broadsheet*. Looking at Eirlys Shand's flower paintings, which have a Rousseau-like feel without the bizarreness, I thought it likely she would be a frail, gentle woman, perhaps a little diffident.

Then, when I looked at her *Outside/Inside Garden* (above), there was a perception wider and deeper than the flowers demonstrated. These three women gave me a small shiver near my heart, with their half closed eyes and their small smiling mouths and that implacable brick house behind. Another painting showed a solidly built woman

pegging out a vividly floral sheet while her two daughters stand near her. The children are as solemn and ever present as the hills behind them, but still small enough to need mother-bulk. Patience, resignation and a hint of defiance here. The contrast between the gentle dreamy touch of the flower paintings and these two works in particular intrigued me.

My image of a frail, gentle diffident woman did a candle flame tremble, then was blown out by the arrival of Eirlys Shand herself. Short, bubbling, talkative, clear astute blue eyes, a broad mother figure, blonde/silver hair wispy above strong round cheekbones, small hooked nose, nicotine-touched teeth.

She has lived in the Auckland suburbs for all of her teen and adult life. She is fiercely defensive about the suburbs and the women in them. The painting of the

woman with the sheet and the *Outside/Inside Garden* are dedications to that world. "The value of work done is relative," she declares, cocking her head to catch any hint of disagreement from me. "I think hanging out sheets is a noble thing to do." She talks jerkily about the enormous patience and dedication of suburban women to one of the world's most thankless tasks — being a housewife and mother. This has been her world for years, and she's not about to have any feminist run it down, thank you.

She gestures to the *Outside/Inside Garden*. "What do you think of that?"

"I like it," I replied, "it's my favourite here."

"Oh yes? What do you see in there?"

I struggle for words, but not for long, for she looks at the three women affectionately and tells me they are at Carrington, the mental health hospital. She came into contact with them when she was a community health worker, one of a group of people who don't believe in drugs and do believe in the curative powers of caring affection. When a community liaison scheme with patients at Carrington was stopped because the government ran out of funds, Eirlys with her suburban mates, said "No bureaucrats, no professionals — we'll do it ourselves." And did.

Another area of her grass roots feminist activism was energising the Campaign for the Right to Read — a direct result of her own early illiteracy. "I didn't read a book until I was 17-18. By the time I was 25, I read everything I could." As part of that Campaign, she donated her time to teach secondary school pupils to read. Finally I get to the question I've wanted to ask for a long time, but, being so fascinated by her story, kept forgetting. "The flowers — where do they come in?" "Oh the flowers. Well, you see, I grow flowers, always have. Had my first garden at four. And I think flowers here in New Zealand are a great subculture no one's recognised. Do you know that women exchange plants all the time? Here, look here, see that one?" pointing to *Primroses Grow in Trust for Janet*, "well, those primroses were given to me by my friend Janet, who has gone to Australia. And they probably date back to primroses brought

The Outside/Inside Garden



Photos: Maryanne Lewis

here by her great gran from England. There's a long story in the flowers in our gardens."

She's been married twice; her first husband died in a car accident when her baby was ten weeks old: "an unreal time." She was born in Hobson Street in Auckland, moved to the Hokianga when six weeks old, returned to Auckland at 8. She had a carefree country childhood in Avondale. After her first husband died, she picked beans for a market garden "that was my best job, really — you get tanned and thin!" It was about this time that her activist instincts were roused, for she was on a supplementary benefit and her close friend, a solo mother with two children from a de facto relationship was denied the benefit. "I knew that was wrong. Why should my kids be of more value to the State than hers? Just because I had a piece of paper that she didn't. That's just wrong."

She's a cheerful Socialist "I believe in caring and sharing," and a natural feminist. And, in keeping with her Leo sign, in love with life: "You're born, by accident, mostly, and live with what comes to you. But when you're about 40, you have your second birth. You give birth to yourself. How you do it depends on you, what you do with what you've learned. Life gives you great pain and great joy, which can make you very gentle or a real bitch. And I love it!"

Sandi Hall



The Joy of Persephone

The photographs for this article were taken by Eirlys' friend **Marvynne Lewis**. Because they are both broke, Eirlys swaps paintings for photographs, but particularly asked me to make sure **Marvynne's** name "went up the side of them, she'll love that."

Healing at Home, Mary Howell, Beacon Press, Boston, 1979, US\$5.95 pbk, \$12.95 hbk.

There are plenty of books on how to stay healthy for adults but parents have difficulty finding sensible, practical and accurate information on children. Mary Howell's book on anti-medical health care for children fills a huge gap.

Mary Howell asserts that we must completely rethink our attitudes to health and especially healing and medicine. We must take a fresh approach and look at healing ourselves within our own environment. She gives step-by-step instructions on how to build up a picture of your child; she points out that this "medical" history is the beginning of assessment. This section also provides adults with an example of what a good medical history should be, how to assess our own health and how to record it. The paragraph on breathing in the section of healthy functioning is an example of the practicality of this book:

"Are you having trouble breathing? Can you play as you usually do, or do you have to stop because you get short of breath? Do you have trouble breathing in? Do you have trouble breathing out? Have you ever had trouble breathing before? What happened just before the breathing trouble began? ..."

According to Dr Howell physical examination provides a framework into which we can fit our perceptions and later, knowledge. She describes how to do a complete physical examination; she sees this as an important step in long-term assessment of your child. Unfortunately it is not possible to obtain in N.Z. some of the kits she mentions for home analysis but apart from this the tests and observations can be done by us all.

The book also deals with remedies, but Mary Howell points out that effective healing only begins with accurate assessment. For example, there are remedies which treat the cause of the disease (e.g. removing lead from the environment if your child is suffering from lead poisoning or giving a specific nutrient such as calcium if that is deficient); there are remedies which treat the symptoms (e.g. aspirin to treat the symptoms of fever) leaving us to treat the cause at a later date; finally there are remedies which reinforce trust, such as rubbing on lotions and ointments or bringing soothing drinks. The effective use of remedies requires that we establish a plan of treatment based on assessment and Chapter Four discusses the establishment of such a plan. Chapter Five discusses common and not-so-common problems and illnesses with practical and easy-to-follow information.

The author also emphasises nutrition, exercises and relaxation as vital to our programme to stay healthy. Howell is not totally anti-medicine and does describe some standard and necessary medical treatments we might have to cope with, such as the appendix operation. She gives information on how to cope with the medical profession, how to choose a doctor, how to assess when to go to the medical profession and so on.

Healing at Home is a much needed guide to staying healthy for everyone. While much of the detail applies mostly to children and the charts and diagrams tend to be specific, adults will learn much from this book.

Sarah Calvert

The Dignity of Labour? Ann Cartwright, Tavistock Publications, 1979

Anne Cartwright's book, **The Dignity of Labour?**, documents the results of a well-designed study which looked objectively at induction in labour and related childbearing practices; it documents how far doctors and midwives appreciate the views of women in childbearing and how professional attitudes to induction vary. Her premise is that "dignity can only be achieved through a true partnership between parents and professionals." The unravelling of the extent of the current unequal "partnership" makes fascinating reading.

Although this study of 2,400 women was conducted in England, the trend towards increasing intervention in labour is relevant to the experience of New Zealand women. Since equal weighting of the mothers' views with the obstetricians and midwives' view is given, this book becomes of particular interest to all those in the maternal health field, since it illuminates the large gaps in perception between those offering services and those receiving them.

The findings are presented in a clear and straightforward manner and all the statistics are illustrated with quotations to amplify the human situation behind the percentages and averages. A clear picture emerges of the frustration women feel at being left out of decisions that so very much concern them. Women not only want more information, this study demonstrates, but they want more involvement and choice in the actual decision making. Eighty percent of the women, for example, wanted doctors to explain the need for an induction, but wanted the actual choice to be left up to themselves. This is significant in the light of the disparity between the manner in which obstetri-

cians overestimated the popularity of induction (36%) when only 8% of mothers said they would prefer an induction. Even more damaging, of those who experienced an induction, three out of four women said they would not want an induction if having another baby.

One of Ann Cartwright's final statements left me feeling a little uneasy. While she feels that women are increasingly conscious of the indignities of labour, "partly because of the women's movement", she goes on to say . . . "The women's movement may have raised expectations and heightened awareness among some women, but it has a long way to go in giving women confidence and ability to challenge and change services rather than passively accepting them." She concludes that the pressure for change should not only come from women, but that obstetricians should develop a more scientific, questioning, and self-critical attitude. What she fails to recognise is that it is apparently not in the interests of obstetricians to give up their authoritarianism and paternalism, and truly inform women.

This book certainly succeeds in exposing some of the myths surrounding current management of childbirth and induction, but at \$26.50 it will hardly be accessible to most women, unless special approaches are made to libraries, medical schools, and hospitals to procure it.

Ruth Bonita.

NW Health Network Resource Guides.

National Women's Health Network Resource Guides: Breast Cancer, Hysterectomy, Sterilisation, Abortion, Self help, Birth Control, DES, Menopause, Maternal Health and Child-birth.

Published by the NWHN, 224 Seventh St, SE Washington DC, 20003 USA.

Cost \$5US each or \$36 for the set.

Nine well-organised and easy-to-read resource guides covering nine major areas of concern to women. The National Women's Health Network in the USA has been working for three years to prepare these guides. While they deal primarily with the American experience, the general material provided in each one is of value to women everywhere. Each guide has an introduction, a number of major articles on the subject, a comprehensive listing of the centres where you can receive advice and help, a bibliography, a list of audio-visual resources, a list of resource people and groups and a general listing of women and health resources. The Playboy Foun-

dation provided the money to print the guides and some feminists may find it hard to reconcile this with the strong feminist philosophy present but it is an unseen presence. Generally there has been a lack of easy-to-read material that covers the main issues in the areas covered. these guides help to fill this gap. the major articles are gathered from a variety of sources and some readers will recognise them. The aim is to present the best material in a clear form, with sufficient resources to allow the interested to go further.

Sarah Calvert

The Women's Health Movement: Feminist Alternatives to Medical Control, Sheryl Burt Ruzek, Praeger Press, New York, 1979, \$14.50.

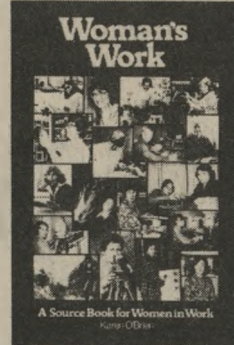
It was somewhat ironic that I should just have finished the draft of an article on the women's health movement when this book arrived. I have long felt that the women's health movement was a major force both inside and outside the women's movement and that it was a crucial pivot for it. This book provides further confirmation of that contention. Written out of an academic thesis by a woman involved in many aspects of the women's health movement it provides an excellent reference. Sheryl Ruzek has attempted to document the growth, theories and actions of the women's health movement in the USA, to look at it as a focus for social change and to assess its effectiveness. As such her book provides crucial information in a readable and collated form. Not only does she look carefully at the women's health movement (in the years 1968-1975) but she relates it to both the health advocate/alternative health care movement and to the institutions it set out to challenge.

Sheryl Ruzek has also tried to assess the effects of the women's health movement on individual women. She asks how much women's perceptions of themselves have changed; how much have they tried to change the health system at their own levels. The book looks at the separate issues feminists have focused on and how well we have succeeded in the achievement of our goals. Overall the book is optimistic and congratulatory. The women's health movement, Sheryl Ruzek argues, has been successful across a wide variety of measures. It has changed individual women's view of themselves, brought changes in individual and social health

areas. On certain levels, like direct actions to change policy/institutions (like the DES issue or childbirth practices), it has changed things dramatically. In terms of the feminist movement it has provided a proving ground for ideas and theories about structures and alternatives. The women's health movement has been in the forefront of the issues of class and race. It has looked at the issue of co-option, at radical versus reformist activities. It involves both the women's rights groups and the radical feminist groups. Crucial issues for feminist theory have been incorporated in the ideas of the women's health movement and it has more recently expanded to become international.

This is a worthwhile book to browse through for ideas not only about health and the women's health movement but also those that deal with the ways we might achieve our goals. For any woman interested in health as an issue it will probably become a definitive work. Sheryl Ruzek has collated such a wealth of information and done it so well it is hard to see anyone else doing it better.

Sarah Calvert



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HOGWASH

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Beauty course causes clerk trouble

NZPA Staff Correspondent

EJECTION of a publicly funded beauty course has put a British council clerk in a difficult position.

A woman clerk, 57, employed by a district council in Worcestershire, faced a disciplinary committee after she refused to take the beauty course. The \$480 course included advice on skin care and how to use lipstick.

It also included instructions on filling in petty cash vouchers and arranging flowers in executive's offices. Woman clerks were advised how to apply lipstick "to correct the shape of the mouth and add charm to the face".

But the woman felt the course was unnecessary, and wrote and told the Prime Minister Mrs Thatcher she considered it a waste of public money.

Her protest led to a written warning from the council about her future conduct.

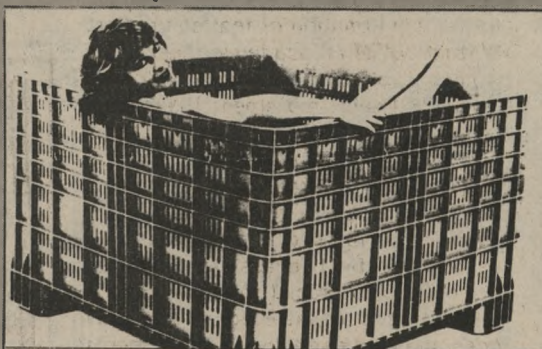
The council's chief executive, Mr Patrick Rust, was quoted as saying: "Local government is about giving the public service and this is done through post-entry training and retraining programmes."

"We thought it would have been advantageous for this employee, at her advanced age, to be included in this course but she did not feel she should go."



'SINCE WE GOT THE NEW "JIFFY" AUTO-PALLET TRUCK, LIFE ROUND HERE'S BEEN A LOT MORE PALLETABLE!'

Ad for Donaldson Engineering.
NATIONAL BUSINESS REVIEW
Mar 23, '81 From Sue Rhind, Ak.



What's this — girly pictures? Well it is a new type of sauna...? No, it's the largest ever potato box. Enquiries to Noel P. Hunt Ltd, Wellington.

FOOD INDUSTRY June 80
From Debbie Gray & Vye Gower,
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a secretary-bird*

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HAWKE'S BAY FARMER April '81
Sent in by Kate Contos

Advertising Agency

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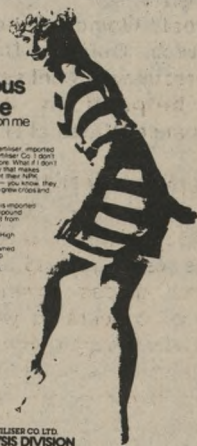
Gosh, we are chauvinistic, but we're still great to work with.

NZ HERALD April 13, '81
sent in by Emily Morgan
Auckland

I was nervous
the first time
but oh how it grew on me

Hynor: A new compound NPK fertilizer imported from Korea by the East Coast Fertiliser Co. (1981) now, I said I've never used it before, what if I don't use it? East Coast Fertiliser Co. says that makes sense. I always thought that NPK fertilizers were a lot of nonsense — you know, they don't really make a difference to the growth of crops. But I tried it, and I found it worked. It's a compound NPK fertilizer, completely different from anything I've ever produced before. They've even created a separate High Analysis Division to import and distribute it. And there's the renowned ECF service and technical back-up.

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DAILY TELEGRAPH
Hawkes Bay
14 August, 1980

DOMINION
sent in by Paula Rowe, Hastings

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2 Ph 61 089

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Phone Rev. Don Mence: Home 436 424, Work 32 401

WOMEN AND WORK SEMINAR

Womens Studies Association (Inc) **AK**.
Sunday 14 June
Secondary Teachers College.
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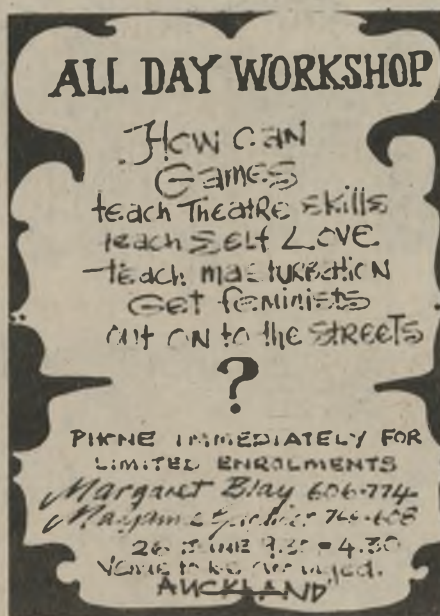
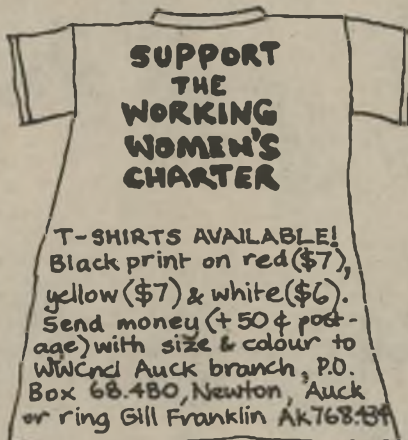
IMPREST THEATRE

Imprest Theatre will be touring the main Womins Centres in New Zealand with **Birth and Other Endings**; a collection of writing compiled by Zaffa Christian. Due to travel July — August

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- BUTTON F — Uppity Women Unite — red and white ☐
- BUTTON G — First you sink into his arms... then you end up with your arms in his sink — black and pink ☐
- BUTTON H — We don't want more of the cake we want the whole damn bakery! yellow and black ☐
- BUTTON I — Support lesbian mothers — pink, black and white ☐
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Broadsheet, P.O. Box 5799, Wellesley St. Ph. 794-751.

Council for the Single Mother and her Child, P.O. Box 47-090, Ponsonby. Ph. 760-476.
Family Planning Assn, Nat. Office, P.O. Box 68-200, Auckland.

Feminists for the Environment, C/- Kathleen Ryan. Ph. 868-399. Juliet Batten. Ph. 696-123.
Feminist Lawyers (Nationwide), C/- Linda Daly-Peoples. Ph. 794-104.

Feminist Teachers, P.O. Box 47-095, Auckland.
International Feminist Network (ISIS), 663B Te Atatu Rd, Auckland 8. Ph. HSN 46-629.
Halfway House, P.O. Box 47-157, Ponsonby. Ph. 767-635.

Jigsaw, P.O. Box 9228, Newmarket. Ph. 543-460.
Media Women, C/- Angela Griffen, P.O. Box 6860, Auckland. Ph. 794-179.

NOW, P.O. Box 2946, Auckland.
NOW, Eastern Suburbs, C/- Pat Drury, 14 Kesteven Ave, Glendowie, Auckland 5.
Rape Crisis. Ph. 764-404.

SOS, P.O. Box 47-090, Auckland. Ph. 766-386.
WEL, 33 Ferryhill Rd, Auckland 3.
Women's Community Video, C/- 30 Bellwood Ave, Auckland 3.

Women's Health Centre, 63 Ponsonby Rd. Ph. 764-506.

Women's Studies Association NZ, P.O. Box 5067, Auckland.

WONAAC, P.O. Box 68-388. Ph. 764-027.
Working Women's Council, P.O. Box 68-480, Newton. Ph. 763-098.

BAY OF ISLANDS

WEL, P.O. Box 126, Kaeo, Hokianga — Dorothy Wilson.

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Christchurch Rape Crisis Group, Doreen Green. Ph. 858-088 (home), 62-116 (work).

Coalition Against Violence on Women, Penny Owen, P.O. Box 884. Ph. 794-491.

NOW, P.O. Box 2720. Ph. 881-030.
SOS, P.O. Box 884, Ph. 796-970.

University Women's Group, Student Union Building, Private Bag, Christchurch.

WEL, P.O. Box 67, Christchurch.
Women's Refuge Centre, P.O. Box 7299. Ph. 69-187.

Women's Union, P.O. Box 2258, Christchurch.
Battered Women's Support Group, P.O. Box 2720, CPO Christchurch.

WONAAC, 154 Colombo St. Ph. 35-254.

Working Women's Council, P.O. Box 738, Christchurch.

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Dunedin Women's Refuge, P.O. Box 8044. Ph. 771-229.

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Working Women's Council, P.O. Box 5311, Dunedin.

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SOS, 37 Wairere Rd, Box 1398. Ph. 4285.

WEL, Box 282, Gisborne. Ph. 81-407.
Working Women's Council, C/- Benny Kape. Childers Rd. Ph. 82-640.

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Working Women's Council, C/- Sue Crawford, 1 Viking Place, Gore. Ph. 5370.

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Hamilton Feminist Teachers, C/- Shirley Smith, 92 McFarlane St, Hamilton. Ph. 67-491.

Hamilton Women's Centre, P.O. Box 7025, Claudelands, Hamilton.

NZ Women's Health Network Newsletter, C/- Sarah Calvert, 155 Galloway St, Hamilton.

SOS, 155 Galloway St. Ph. 65-474.
WEL, P.O. Box 9581, Hamilton North, Rebecca Judd, C/- Alyson de Boer, 102 The Terrace, Thames.

Women's Studies Resource Centre, University of Waikato, Hamilton.

Working Women's Council, C/- Barbara Ware, P.O. Box 80, Hamilton.

National Office for Working Women's Council, P.O. Box 14042, Enderley P.O., Hamilton.

HUNTLY

Huntly Women's Group, C/- Judy Wilson, River Rd, Huntly.

INVERCARGILL

SOS, P.O. Box 676, Invercargill. Ph. 88-145.
WEL, P.O. Box 676, Invercargill.

LOWER HUTT

Hutt Valley Feminists, 3 Taka Grove, Normandale, Lower Hutt.

Media Women, 4 Godley St, Lower Hutt.

MARLBOROUGH/BLENHEIM

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SOS, 13 Linton St, Box 607. Ph. 87-561.

Women's Refuge, C/- NOW, P.O. Box 607, Blenheim. Ph. 84-099.

WONAAC, 1A Stuart St, Blenheim.

MASTERTON

WEL, P.O. Box 201, Masterton. Penny Bunny. Ph. 88-835.

NAPIER/HASTINGS

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Working Women's Alliance, 15 Mt Pleasant Ave. Ph. 88-061.

Working Women's Council, C/- Verna Sutherland, 18 Dorset St, Richmond, Nelson. Ph. Rd 6434.

WIN, Newsletter of the Women's Movement in Nelson, C/- Community Education, Community House, Trafalgar Square, Nelson.

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WEL (Kapiti), P.O. Box 66, Waikanae.
WEL (Levin), 68A Queen St, Levin. Ph. 89-713.

ROTORUA

SOS, Box 4036, Ph. 88-763.
WEL, P.O. Box 2011, Rotorua. Rosemary Norman.

Women's Resource and Education Collective. Alyn Thompson, 1/23 Grey St, Rotorua. Ph. 85-407 or KHA 597.

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SOS, 8 Taupo View Rd.

TAURANGA

SOS, 20 Oban Rd, Box 368. Ph. 89-698.

WEL, 103 Grange Rd, Tauranga. Ph. 63-260.
Tauranga Women's Centre, P.O. Box 368, Tauranga; 42 Grey St (in Govt. Life Bldg). Ph. 83-530.

TE AWAMUTU

Te Awamutu Feminists, 111 Hazelmere Crs. Ph. 4320, C/o Res. 23 Tokanui Hospital, Private Bag, Te Awamutu. Ph. 7894.

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WONAAC, P.O. Box 2669. Ph. 877-703, 848-541.

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