

SHORT STORIES FOR GREAT WINTER READING

BROADSHEET

301.41205

BRO

**QUICK ANSWERS
TO SEXIST
PUT-DOWNS**

**BITING THE
HANDS THAT
FEEL YOU**

**PSYCH.
PATIENTS
SPEAK OUT**

**LOOKING
AFTER
MOTHER**

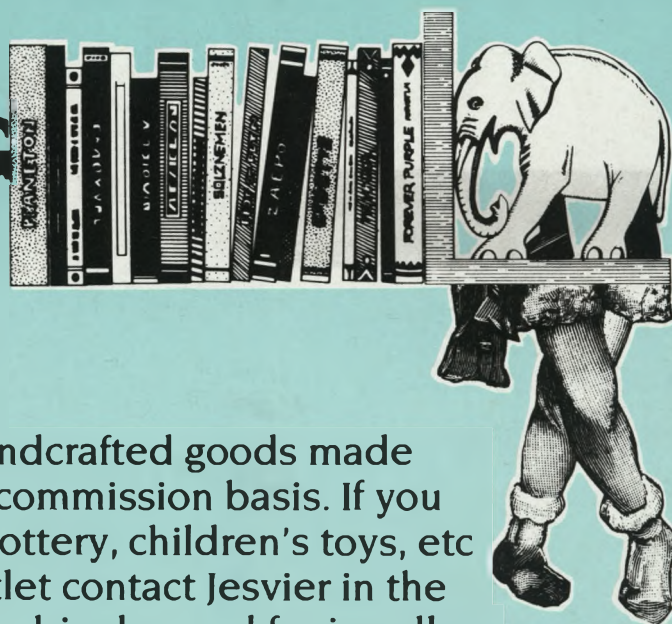
UH-OH!
ANOTHER
SPACE INVADER!

NEW ZEALAND'S FEMINIST MAGAZINE
FOURTEENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION
JUNE 1986 ISSUE 140 \$3



29 MAR 1986

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



We will sell handcrafted goods made by women on a commission basis. If you make jewellery, pottery, children's toys, etc and need an outlet contact Jesvier in the bookshop. There's a big demand for jewellery at present



BROADSHEET MAGAZINE AND BOOKSHOP
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WHATAMAN

GOT HER! YOUNG
LADY, I'M GOING TO
TAKE YOU BACK
WHERE YOU'LL
BE SAFE--DON'T
GO LOOKING
FOR TROUBLE
AGAIN!

GET A
JOB!

Philo

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Cover drawing by Maureen Jaggard based on Magritte's 'Gigantic Days'

BROADSHEET COLLECTIVE Sharon Alston, Peta Joyce, Claire-Louise McCurdy, Jenny Rankine, Pat Rosier, Jesvier Singh, Athina Tsoulis

THESE WOMEN WORKED ON THIS ISSUE: Leonie Child, Jess Hawk Oakenstar, Jill Segedin, Chris Grace and the enveloping women

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LETTERS



COMING OFF TRANQUILLISERS

Dear Broadsheet,
A diet high in raw vegetables and fruits can help women trying to come off tranquillisers, and large doses of Vitamin C are effective with addictions. So says British nutritionist Celia Wright in a new book on health and diet.

As *Broadsheet* noted (April issue), stopping the whole dose of the tranquilliser in one go is usually too taxing. Celia Wright advises first building up the health and then starting to reduce the dose by about 15 per cent (in consultation with a doctor).

Cutting out sugar, salt, caffeine, red meat, processed foods, and making sure the diet is high in fibre and low in fat, is a good start. A basic supplement programme is also advised, and throughout the period of coming off, large doses of Vitamin C — up to five or six grams a day — may be especially helpful.

"The Wright Diet", just published in the U.K. by Piatkus Books, is an impressive guide to health, especially for women, and draws on the author's experience during nine years at the Green Farm Nutrition Centre in East Sussex.

In it, Wright says coming off can take several months, depending on the length of the period of dependence. Two weeks before taking the last step, she suggests, double your supplement programme, and continue at that level until you feel stable again.

Wright also notes regular snacks and meals should help, by keeping up the blood sugar.

Virginia McMillan
London

MAORI SOVEREIGNTY TOO PAINFUL?

Dear Broadsheet,
Your article on Maori Sovereignty shows clearly how selfish a country New Zealand has become. No longer is it a case of living together in peaceful co-existence, regardless of the colour of our skin. Now, as your article claims, we

are all either Maori or Pakeha and because of this our attitudes must conflict in some way.

Is it really necessary to keep bringing up such topics about which we are already aware? Shouldn't it now be time for discussing solutions to these problems? It seems almost as though we enjoy the hostility that exists between the races and that we are afraid to wake up one morning to find it gone.

Your article spouts facts and statistics, yet it fails to mention that there are people behind the statistics, and truth to back up the facts. It speaks constantly of "it". But we cannot go back in time, nor can we change past events that perhaps should never have happened.

It is our job to live in the present and stop further mistakes. We must stop pointing the finger at others and instead try examining ourselves for our own faults.

S.L. James
Howick

BOOK PLEA

Dear Broadsheet,
The library at the Women's Centre in Ponsonby Rd, Auckland, is starting up again. We have over 1,500 books but 800 of them are out and many are very overdue. We would ask anyone who has a book from the library to return it, no matter how overdue it is. Relieve your guilty conscience! We would also welcome donations to the library. We look forward to seeing women make use of the library.

Jayadevil
for the Women's Library

BISEXUAL SUPPORT

Dear Sisters,
I am writing in response to Viv Porzolt (of Wellington) in April's issue on "Being Bisexual." I too am bisexual and was told recently that it must be awful to be caught in the middle not being one or the other. I don't see it like that at all now.

It's taken me a long time to feel positive about being bisexual as I have had a lot of barriers to break down, but I'm

finally opening up to my heterosexual womyn friends and telling them as they had no idea I was bisexual. I was ashamed of it for years and hid in a marriage for ten years.

I'm now living with my daughter and still see her father as a friend which is what I wanted all the time.

I'm more attracted to womyn and feel more loyalty towards them than I do towards men. I hope this letter may help other bisexual womyn who have been afraid of coming out. I know it can be hard but if your friends are true friends they won't stop wanting to know you because you're bisexual.

Linda McClutchie-Burrows
Warkworth.

WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Dear Broadsheet,
In Africa today women's voices are being raised against genital mutilation still practiced on babies, little girls and women. These voices belong to a few women who are prepared to call it in question when traditional practices endanger their lives and health. The total number of women affected is unknown, but without doubt it involves tens of millions of women.

Female genital mutilation varies, and in Africa there has been a tendency to group all kinds of mutilations under the misleading term "female circumcision." Circumcision as we know it is the cutting of the female prepuce or hood of the clitoris. This is the mildest, and affects only a small proportion of women. Besides this is "excision," which is the cutting of the clitoris and of all or part of the labia minora. The worst of these kinds of mutilation is "infibulation" which is the cutting of the clitoris, labia minora and at least the anterior or two thirds and often the whole of the medial part of the labia minora. These operations are done with special knives, razor blades or pieces of glass.

Most frequently the operations are prepared by an old

woman of the village known as "Gedda" in Somalia or traditional birth attendant known as "Daya" in Egypt and Sudan, and in some parts of Nigeria and Mali by village barbers or women of the blacksmith's caste with knowledge of the occult. More recently, however, mutilations are also being carried out in hospitals in urban areas like in Mali. Except in hospital, anaesthetics are never used. The age at which the mutilations are carried out varies from region to region. It varies from a few days old by the Jewish Falashas in Ethiopia to about seven years old in Egypt and many countries of Central Africa, to adolescence among the Ibo and Ibibis tribes of Nigeria.

The little girl, entirely nude, is immobilized in a sitting position on a low stool by at least three women. One of them has her arms tightly around the little girl's chest, two others hold the child's thighs apart by force, in order to open wide the vulva. Men are rarely present at operations. The child's arms are tight behind her back by two other women guests. The operator cuts with her razor from top to bottom of the small lip and then scrapes the flesh from the inside of the large lip. This nymphectomy and scraping are repeated on the other side of the vulva. The little girl howls and writhes in

LETTERS POLICY

Broadsheet does not necessarily endorse or agree with views expressed in letters. We have printed letters that contain racist and other attitudes that we disagree with because we believe the expression of these ideas should not be subject to our censorship but put out front where they can be challenged. Nearly all the letters we are sent get published. Those that are not published in full are considered by the whole collective and edited in consultation with the writer. We do not publish personal attacks. Letters from men are published only when they correct matters of fact. We particularly welcome letters about the content of the magazine.

pain, although she is strongly held down. The operator wipes the blood from the wound and the mother, as well as the guests verify her work, sometimes by putting their fingers in. The amount of scraping of the large lips depends upon the technical ability of the operator. Herb mixtures, earth or ashes are rubbed on the wound to stop the bleeding. Exhausted, the little girl is dressed and put on a bed. The operation lasts from fifteen to twenty minutes according to the ability of the old woman and the resistance put up by the child.

Health risks and complications depend upon the gravity of the mutilation, hygiene conditions, the skill and eyesight of the operator and the struggles of the child. Whether immediate or long term, the consequences are grave. Haemorrhaging from the section of the internal pudental artery may result in death. Bad eyesight of the operator or the resistance of the child cause cuts in other organs and may cause infection. Since the instruments used have rarely been sterilized, tetanus often results. In all types of mutilations, a part of woman's body containing nerves of vital importance to sexual enjoyment is amputated. There are psychological consequences as well: anxiety prior to the operation, terror at the moment of being seized by the village matron, unbearable pain, a sense of humiliation and betrayal by parents, especially the

mother. Long term complications include infections of the uterus. Sometimes a large foreign body forms in the interior of the vagina as a result of the accumulation of mucous secretions. The vagina may also be ruptured and painful menstruation is certain.

The forces which motivate a mother to subject her daughters to such drastic operations are different and bewildering. The reasons given are often sexual, religious and sociological. Some African societies believe that the operations may diminish a woman's desire for sex and thus erase prostitution. Some religions like Christianity have the opinion that circumcision was one of the commands delivered when the lord made trial of Abraham and that there was no clear indication in the case of female circumcision. Muslim theologians also advocate mild clitoridectomy. In some parts of Nigeria, it is a mark of honour and distinction for both the girl and her family. In Egypt, for instance, the uncircumcised girl is called "nigsa" (unclean). Western efforts, on the part of missionaries or colonial masters to eliminate the practice, have simply served to confirm in people's minds that colonial destruction of traditional customs weakens their societies and exposes them to the ill effects of western influence.

We of this women's centre, a feminist organization in Nigeria, strongly condemn

this outrageous act, and have frequently been appealing to many African Governments to legislate against this dehumanizing tradition. Only one country has legislation against female genital mutilation and that is Sudan. But legislation alone is not the only weapon, for it may simply drive the operator underground and have little effect in achieving any measure of eradication. We are therefore planning a massive education campaign by radio, television, film shows, a well equipped team of field workers, lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences against these mutilations. Only a broad and sustained campaign of education will show traditionalists the undesirable consequences of the practices which they are tempted to follow. But our greatest handicap is the fund for launching the campaign as we have no sufficient funds or financial assistance. We therefore earnestly appeal to all our womenfolk, women's groups, networks and organizations to come to our aid. We need your support, for the project needs funding. Therefore support our women's cause and donate to our worthy cause, for together we shall succeed.

In sisterhood,
Hannah Edemikpong

Women's Centre
PO Box 185, Eket,
Cross River State,
Nigeria, West Africa.

PRAISE AND SUPPORT

Dear Friends,
I have loved reading *Broadsheet* during the last year. The magazine is improving all the time. Over the years it has helped with my learning on many issues. Also because of the range of articles I have been able to introduce *Broadsheet* to friends who otherwise would not pick it up. The letters to the editor are always interesting and give food for thought. The last issue with its article on Palestinian women made me decide that I can afford to give two gift subscriptions as well as my sustaining sub. My husband really enjoys *Broadsheet* and we can share and discuss many issues that arise through articles. Thank you for that.
Peace
Naomi Forrester
Howick.

SEXISM AT SCHOOL

Dear Broadsheet,
We are two Ponsonby Intermediate girls, and we are totally against sexism. We were inspired to write this poem because in standard four we played soccer with our friends who were boys, some boys couldn't accept us but most could. Most of the other teams rubbished us so we wrote this poem about sexism.

Sexism
Insults are pelted
Like hailstones
Wounding the inner

FRONTING UP

WHERE WE ARE

The magazine and the bookshop are at 485 Karangahape Rd, Auckland. We are open from 10am to 5.30pm. Monday to Friday and Thursday until 8pm. Saturday opening is from 10 to 1. The Magazine's phone number is 794-751 and the bookshop's is 398-895. Our box number is 68-026, Newton, Auckland 1.

STUFFING

Stuffing of the July/August

issue will be on 28 June. Join us for a shared lunch and good company, and help get the magazine ready for posting.

BACK ISSUES

Bundles of back issues up to December 1983 are available in the bookshop for \$30. Complete sets of available back issues are \$50 — it's a solid cubic foot of feminist herstory and ideas.

BOOKSHOP AND BOOKSTALLS

The shop continues to offer an excellent selection of books by and for women, and we have a large selection of badges, t-shirts, jewellery, posters and cards. Call in and browse. We offer 10% discount to students and beneficiaries.

We welcome the

opportunity to show what we stock in the bookshop, and of course it also helps us. If you are having a seminar, workshop or meeting, please get in touch with us.

PRICES

The magazine costs \$3 per issue, subs \$29 and \$40 sustaining.

CORRECTIONS

There are two errors in the Christchurch listing. They should read: Incest Survivors group ph Rape Crisis 796-202. Rape Crisis Collective P.O. Box 25-167 ph 796-202.

We misspelt the surname of two of the Wahine Toa modelling women, Mere and Tupiki Tawa, and Te Kaweroa Kohu, one of the organisers, also had her name misspelt. We apologise to these women.

COLLECTIVE

Heather McLeish has left the collective after many years of unpaid work for *Broadsheet*, and many bookstalls. She is still doing the accounts and helping with the library. We appreciate all the work you have done, Heather and are glad that we will still see you around the place.

DEADLINES

Deadline for July/August is 24 May and for September 24 July.

ADVERTISING

Our advertising rates are very competitive. Display ads are \$80 a quarter page, \$160 a half page, \$320 a full page. Inside covers more. Special rates for regular advertisers on request.

feelings
They dig ruthlessly
Into your private
Thoughts
We struggle to
Maintain our dignity
And express our
Capability
Why fear the
Savage words?
When we know
We are able.
We made this sometime after
13 June 1985 (when we were
ten).
So come on girls, lets show
em.

Josie Vendramini and Laura Rainsford. Grey Lynn

YOUNG SIKH WOMEN

Dear Broadsheet,
I am writing in reply to your article on "Sikh Women." When I read it I saw many things in it that were true. But the things which held no truth for me did for my mother — which proves that your article had the ideas of the older generation. You failed to mention the younger generation, the teenager. I would just like to point out that things have changed and that we (Sikh girls) are allowed to play sport, wear European clothes and are encouraged towards a higher education for our own personal satisfaction. Not in the hope to "obtain" a high educated man. The thing that my friends and I found most irritating was your constantly downgrading remarks. I only wish you had written about the upcoming generation and of our views. And contrary to your "the new generation don't know about their culture" we do know and are very aware of our heritage and its

cultural significance.
Harpreet Singh
Auckland.

OPINIONS ON PORNOGRAPHY

Dear Broadsheet,
I was disturbed and depressed by "Pornography and Censorship" in the April *Broadsheet*. Disturbed, because I found the article confusing, full of red herrings and in some places acting as an apologia for unacceptable male behaviour; and depressing because I believe pornography is an issue that a majority of New Zealand women can join in sisterhood to denounce.

Pornography is an extremely profitable industry which is ruthlessly trying to infiltrate society at all levels of sophistication. Its hallmark is that it portrays women as sexual objects to be abused and used, accessible, expendable and enjoying the experience. For children to be brought up on this debased view of female and male sexuality is abhorrent and highly dangerous. With the proliferation of videos this has become one of our most serious problems. No amount of woolly theorizing can justify allowing this trade to burgeon into the billion dollar industry it has become overseas, without a fight. Feminists who are working against an almost out-of-hand situation should be helped and encouraged by us all. To hell with justifying pornography because it may help some males fill their phantasy gap, or give them a much needed break from their role as sexual initiators!

I am worried about the false attitudes and assumptions about women that all pornog-

raphy, including media advertisements, introduces and reinforces, because it's those attitudes that limit me, my daughters and my sisters in achieving a satisfying lifestyle. There are ways of dealing with different manifestations of the problem, and censorship is one of those ways.

Controlling pornography is yet another problem that we as feminists have to work on, along with fighting for equal pay for jobs of equal value, affordable, quality childcare, abortion as a contraceptive backstop and human development and relationships taught at all levels in our schools.

There is no danger of our becoming a single issue movement!

Elizabeth Scott
Motueka

Dear Broadsheet,
I wish to express my disappointment and disquiet concerning the argument in your April issue "Pornography and Censorship." There is much in this article with which I disagree but I am especially disturbed that your contributor fails to appreciate that pornography both reflects the attitudes of some sections of society and helps to create the kind of society it reflects. Not only does it reinforce and strengthen attitudes which already exist in adults but it creates those attitudes in the young, many of whom are receiving their sex education from pornographic videos. These adolescents absorb the meanings and understandings presented by such material and come to believe that women are available for men to use as objects, and must

therefore be inferior.

Your contributor understands the harm sexist advertising does to girls growing up, but does not see the much greater damage that pornography does to boys. She appreciates that women must learn to view themselves as real people strong and worthwhile, not as they are portrayed in the media; why then does she not see the harm pornography does to women through its effect on how women are viewed by those in positions of power in our society, ie men? Surely there is an obvious connection between the degradation of women by pornography and their economic status? As long as women are regarded as inferior they will not achieve economic equality. Hard core pornography degrades women as people and affects their economic status, the two are inextricably linked.

The article states that pornographic videos may be useful because they provide men with sexual fantasies! I find this statement completely unacceptable. Even if some men lack sexual fantasies and this is highly doubtful, why fill the gap with woman-hating propaganda?

Nor can I agree with Athina that pornography provides a safe rallying point for the women's movement. It is not a safe or soft option; to suggest that it is, is to denigrate the work of Women Against Pornography. Indeed, if the women's movement ignores the damage pornography does, any progress it makes in other directions will prove to be ephemeral.

Elaine Taylor
Upper Moutere

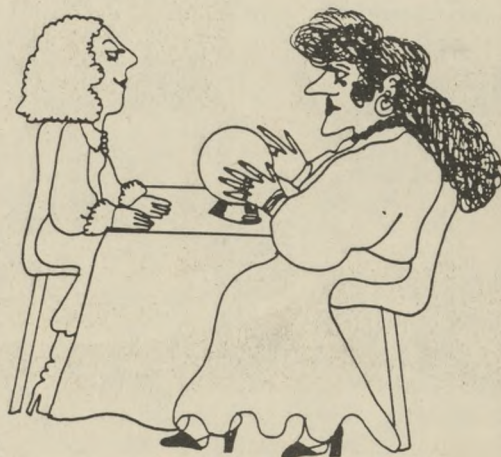


Illustration: Nicole Hollander

BEHIND THE NEWS



MORE ON EQUAL PAY

Kris Bennett was one of 70 people who went to a seminar on equal pay in April at Victoria University, Wellington, organised by the Centre for Continuing Education.

The Equal Pay Act isn't working. The gap between male and female rates stays wide — women still earn only about 70% of men's wages. Margaret Wilson, Prue Hyman, Therese O'Connell, Eli'abeth Orr and Bill Hepplestone all presented papers at the seminar on the history of the equal pay movement, why women don't get equal pay, job evaluation and how we can work towards

equal pay. It was clear that the Equal Pay Act hasn't given women equal reward for our labour, and we need to change that.

At the seminar, we broke into small groups to draw up recommendations. They included a call for the Minister of Labour to establish a committee this year to review equal pay legislation and incorporate the concept of equal pay

for work of equal value. We also called on unions and the trade union movement to educate members about equal pay for work of equal value, to include it during bargaining and award claims, to be involved in a campaign to get the legislation reviewed, to get the principle of equal pay for work of equal value on the agenda for the current tripartite wage talks, and to encourage and support women in our fight for true equal pay.

It's important for women's organisations to join the campaign. We also reaffirmed our support for national awards, and compulsory unionisation, and clause 10.2 of the State Services Conditions of Employment Act, which allows comparisons between occupations on the basis of relevant skills, education and training.

The seminar also led to a

public meeting, held at the end of May in Wellington, to launch a public campaign for equal pay for work of equal value. The majority of women are caught in jobs which are low paid and are seen as an extension of women's "homework". Looking at equal pay for work of equal value means comparing traditionally female-dominated jobs with traditionally male-dominated jobs on the basis of carefully selected non-sexist criteria.

It is generally agreed that jobs should be evaluated according to skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. But this is not usually what happens. The work women do is likely to be given lower value than men's work for none of these reasons. As Prue Hyman said, bias creeps into the valuation. Responsibility for financial and personal



May Day Rally Photo: Gil Hanly

decisions may be regarded as more important than responsibility for human lives.

Employers don't want equal pay for work of equal value because of the expense, and because they believe *economic* factors only should determine the price of labour.

In February this year, the Clerical Workers Union took the issue of equal pay for work of equal value to the Arbitration Court in the award round. The court said it couldn't hear the case because it didn't have the power under the Equal Pay Act. So women clerical workers at Todd Motors went on strike and won equal pay for a core tradesman rate. It seems that unless the law gets changed, industrial action is going to be a key component to winning equal pay.

But, as Therese O'Connell said at the seminar, real equal

pay requires a lot of other changes too — like more women in non-traditional jobs, good quality free or cheap childcare, women valuing our work and ourselves, sharing housework and family management, as well as upgrading traditional jobs through equal value arrangements.

Booklets, leaflets and other resources on equal pay for work of equal value campaigns are available from your local Clerical Workers Union, the Dan Long Library at PSA House private bag, Wellington, and the Working Women's Resource Centre, private bag 5, Newton, Auckland 1. Photocopies of *No More Peanuts*, an excellent English trade union handbook on equal pay for work of equal value, are available from the resource centre. □

DELIVERING ON LOW PAY

Celine Kearney looks at the results of underpaying domiciliary midwives.

Domiciliary midwives currently earn about \$7,000 a year or just over two dollars an hour. They earn this despite six and a half years training, heavy case loads and being on call 24 hours a day, year round.

Compared with this, a midwife working in a hospital earns over \$26,000 a year for a forty hour week, with benefits like holiday pay, sick pay and maternity leave.

That domiciliary midwives, a professional workforce, are expected to work for an income below a living wage is a major point in a recent letter by Alison Livingstone, accountant for Auckland domiciliary midwives, to members of the Health Department, Health Minister Dr Basset and other MPs. It is part of a continuing campaign to have domiciliary midwives' work recognised financially and to provide women with an alternative to a hospital birth.

A gross fee of \$180 paid by the Health Department covers

three ante-natal visits, attendance throughout labour, delivery of the baby and two weeks post-natal care of mother and baby at home — an average of 48 hours work. The current cost to have a baby in hospital is an estimated \$1200.

Home birth at \$180 looks very cost effective so why, Livingstone asks, is the Health Department not encouraging this option for those who choose it?

Apart from travel allowance paid at public service mileage — no car is provided — midwives supply all their own equipment such as oxygen, sonic aid, intravenous and delivery equipment as well as disposable supplies like gloves, syringes and sutures. Business overheads include professional subscriptions, insurance, stationery, laundry costs and training courses.

Joan Donley, a domiciliary midwife in the Auckland area for twelve years believes that obstetricians do not want

home births to flourish as this would reduce the number for women having children in hospitals. They would have less opportunity then to gain experience, and other women would be demanding non-interventionary births in hospitals, again reducing the need for obstetricians.

Low pay rates are politically determined, she adds, as the medical profession has the second strongest political lobby in the country and this has influence with the Health Department. A decent wage would encourage more midwives to do domiciliary work, but she believes this will not happen unless women, the consumers, demand it.

Women attended by domiciliary midwives vary in age, says Donley; they are predominantly Pakeha with a few Maori women. The better health of women in a higher income bracket is a contributing factor for their use of this service.

Over the past 12 years 1,000 babies have been delivered by domiciliary midwives in the Auckland area, and 211 in the year April '85 to '86.

Currently there are seven registered domiciliary midwives in the Auckland area (two have just had babies and one has a baby due in December); two each in Christchurch, Nelson and Hamilton with one each in Northland, Thames, Wellington and Dunedin.

Carolyn Young, another domiciliary midwife who has also worked in the Auckland area for about twelve years, says that financial pressure does stop many women from practising as domiciliary midwives, since they are not prepared to live on such a low income or can't make that choice. The expenses of running a car make it particularly difficult to survive, and at times, she says, survival depends on running the vehicle into the ground.

On the \$6,000 to \$8,000 a year which she earns and the monthly workload of five or six deliveries, as well visiting one or two women for post natal care after an early discharge from hospital, Carolyn says it is hard to get by and bring up children. She plans to take her latest child — she has four — back to work with her at three months.

Because of the lack of domiciliary midwives many

women cannot have a homebirth unless they are willing to risk one unattended. Its important that the choice should be there.

For some of the medical profession their only contact with homebirths is with cases transferred into hospital, which can add to an already jaundiced impression. Carolyn feels, though, that the pressure of criticism from the nursing and medical profession and the Health Department, for stepping outside conventional practice has lessened over the years.

Women themselves are becoming more confident about giving birth without extra aids and there are changes now in partners' attitudes. Motivation for a homebirth in some cases comes from a partner, willing to accept responsibilities which men would previously have been unhappy about.

Many women who have had home deliveries will put an amazing amount of energy into homebirth support groups. The Homebirth Association which has been operating in Auckland since 1974, has 16 branches and 400 members throughout the country. It lobbies government and tries to raise public awareness by various means including an annual public awareness week at the end of October.

Brenda Hinton, of the Homebirth Association warns that since hospital delivery is provided free, if an alternative was to have official political support, women may need to pay for it. So care needs to be taken about how pressure is applied or it could become a service for those who can afford it.

The association is currently preparing submissions to the health benefits review by the Health Department, pushing for increased fees for domiciliary midwives. It would like to see direct entry training for midwives as a step towards independent practitioner status. This would allow them to set up neighbourhood clinics providing an alternative to a hospital clinic to which women often have to travel long distances and sit for hours with two or three other children. □

Contacts

Home Birth Assn: Box 7093 Auckland
Save the Midwives Assn: 24 Ashton Rd, Mt Eden, Akld 3.

AFTER THE STRIKE

Sharon Chapman reports on worker action in Northland.

Hine Edmonds, Isabelle Dalton and Ngaire Hinton were strangers six months ago. To see them together now, you would think they had been friends for years. Their friendship is the result of a shared experience — the experience of being on strike for four weeks along with nearly 100 other women in Northland.

They were part of the Northland Hospital kitchen workers dispute over the introduction of contractors. It is still not resolved and the women won't be satisfied until it is.

Hine is a second cook at Kaikohe Hospital, Isabelle is a first cook at Rawene Hospital at Hokianga, and Ngaire is a diet cook at Whangarei Base Hospital. The women are now extremely close as a result of the strike, but their relationship with fellow workers who scabbed has been strained. "I feel very distant from those who scabbed. It's been very upsetting to know that some of our workmates did that," says Ngaire.

She says even the scabs' closest friends have rejected them, each feeling that the other should apologise. Hine, on the other hand, has found it easier to rebuild relationships with the two workers at her hospital who worked through the strike. "After talking to them I realised they just didn't consider the union's point of view because they weren't used to a union. They thought more of their jobs and what was said to them by the employers. I feel responsible in a way because I wasn't able to convince them. But we weren't allowed back on the premises so I couldn't talk to them about it at the time," she says.

Workers who scabbed were definitely few and far between, however, and all three women would rather dwell on the new friends they gained amongst their fellow strikers. "When I'm in Whangarei someone will come up and kiss me on the

cheek. At first I'm trying to work out where I know her from, and then I figure out she's one of the women from the strike," says Hine.

BACKGROUND

About 100 kitchen workers from eight Northland hospitals have been involved in a dispute over contractors since November 1985. The workers had been employed by the Northland Area Health Board until the union received notification that a contract would be employed by Advance Foods, not the Area Health Board. In other cases where hospital kitchen work has been contracted out in this way it has led to hours of work and numbers of workers being reduced, award conditions being denied and workloads increased.

The workers took limited action for eight weeks, followed by a full-strike for four weeks in January/February. The strike ended when a committee of enquiry was set up. The outcome of the enquiry is not yet known.

As well as gaining friends through the dispute, the workers also gained more union delegates. Ngaire says the number of delegates at the base hospital has jumped from three to eight, "so we had eyes and ears every minute of the day and night where possible."

The number of delegates at Kaikohe and Rawene has also doubled since the strike. The increase in the number of delegates has gone hand in hand with a new union awareness among the workers. "I now have a union awareness that was never there before," says Isabelle.

Ngaire says her fellow workers ask more questions now and are eager for information on the union. And the women are all anxious to hear the results of the Commission of In-

quiry which was set up to look into the dispute. Hine and Isabelle made submissions to the inquiry and Isabelle was especially pleased to get the chance to have a say. "I feel honoured and privileged to have been involved right through. I feel good about my input into the inquiry and I feel that I helped the cause."

Ngaire, who also went along to the inquiry, says it was a good topping to the whole dispute. "It put the icing on the cake. Now we are just waiting for it to bake and see how it turns out."

Although the women feel good about their part in the dispute, they can well recall the mixed feelings they and their fellow workers went through during their four weeks out on strike. Hine remembers a woman who had to start selling her furniture in order to survive. "Even though she was in tears over it she still stayed out. It made me feel very humble." Hine found the bills were the main thing she worried about. "I was in a predicament as far as my rent was concerned. But I didn't care what happened to me, I was going to stay out."

Her decision to "stay out no matter what" was particularly strong and lasted right to the end. "By the end of the strike I didn't really trust anybody. I had heard so much bullshit in the High Court that when we were offered the inquiry I didn't believe it. I felt really defeated when we had to decide whether to stay out or go back. It was a hard decision to make, and the only person who changed my mind was the Assistant Secretary Mark Gosche. He said 'sit down and think about it' and that made me realise."

Ngaire says Hine felt they

would be letting the workers in the rest of the country down if they went back to work. "That's where we sometimes let our emotions override our judgement," she says.

Isabelle agreed with the problems Hine was facing in deciding to go back. "The support round the country kept us going and that held us together. We felt that if we went back to work we would be letting them down. All three women had their own workers' feelings to worry about as well as their own. "Even at night in bed, I would start thinking that maybe tomorrow the girls would give in. I could only ever be totally sure of myself and my own determination," says Hine.

Ngaire was lucky financially. Her husband is self-employed, so they did not get into difficulties during the strike. "But I always made a point of checking the girls and building up the morale of the ones I knew would be having trouble, so they wouldn't fall. And I made sure the ones in dire straits went up first for monetary help when it was given."

Even when morale was low, the women somehow still managed to bring something to share along to the meetings. "That was something I really liked. In spite of us being down, we were still able to have our afternoon teas at those meetings," says Hine. As well as food shared at meetings, the women always found spare cash for the inevitable raffle tickets. They were raising money for the women's seminar. "All through the strike we were still selling each other those raffle tickets to help pay for our registration fees," says Ngaire.

Isabelle was also lucky not



From left: Hine Edmonds, Ngaire Hinton and Isabelle Dalton

to be too badly off money-wise. I was so involved keeping up with the play I had no time to think about the bad parts. My advice to anyone in that situation is keep involved and support each other. That's where the strength lies."

The whole dispute has done much for Isabelle's confidence. She "never dreamed" she would find herself in a situation like that. "It has done a lot for me personally. Everyone has noticed how different I have become. I think it has made me less cautious and more outgoing."

Hine says she hasn't noticed a change in her personality since the dispute. "I don't think it has changed me much, but it has given me a lot more insight into what people are all about. Before I just took it that we each went to work for our own money, but I don't have those thoughts any more," she says.

Ngairé says she has always been a "bolshy" person, and has always taken an interest in the union. "I've always been the same. I think this dispute has just made me more so." □

PACIFIC WOMEN IN BRITAIN

Jane Blaikie reports.

Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFP) Week was celebrated in Britain this year with a speaking tour by two indigenous Pacific women. The tour continued for nearly a

month throughout Britain, Holland, Germany and Denmark with the women, from Belau and Rongelap in Micronesia, speaking to many hundreds of women, and to politicians, media representatives and peace groups.

The women were invited by the national steering committee which represents the 170 nuclear free zone local authorities (equivalent to New Zealand local councils) in the United Kingdom and the British network of women working for a nuclear free and independent Pacific.

The network first came together at Greenham Common in 1984 and is now active throughout Britain. It has organised two previous speaking tours of Pacific women, writes a bi-monthly newsletter, makes videos, has raised more than £13,000 and initiated many actions.

According to network and tour co-organiser Sian: "There has been so much follow-up to the tour. Women are phoning the network asking for speakers. There are a lot of new women getting into the support network — and the women (speakers) haven't even gone home. There's a woman from the *New Statesperson* (statesman) who's writing a book on the Pacific phoning us up. The journal *Inside Asia* is interested."

The success of the tour comes against a background of growing awareness of the Pacific in Britain. Again and again the phrase "the Pacific is becoming the new military and economic centre of the world" is repeated in women's peace publications.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), which has until recent months been very Britain-centred, is asking the network to write a pamphlet on the Pacific which they (CND) will publish. The nuclear free zone authorities have initiated a letter writing campaign to the United States government over its strong-arm



The ASB/PiPs Festival of Island Light was held at Grey Lynn Park on 22 March, and featured performances by groups from different Pacific Island cultures, as well as the Patea Maori Club (above).

The Auckland Secondary Schools' Maori and Pacific Islands' Cultural Festival was held at Nga Tapuwae College in South Auckland in mid-April. Thirty-five schools took part, fielding competitive and non-competitive teams in the Maori, Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island and Niuean sections. The Nga Tapuwae Maori team (below), as hosts, were the last to perform. Nga Tapuwae came first equal with Auckland Girls Grammar School.



tactics in Micronesia.

The two women speakers on the tour can only have heightened any awareness. The women attended dozens of meetings and each time, according to organisers, told the same story with clarity and strength.

Lorenza Pedro is from Belau, population 15,000. In 1979 92% of Belau voters approved the world's first nuclear free constitution. Since then Belaus have been forced (Belau is part of the Micronesian US Trust Territory) to vote six times to keep their constitution.

Lorenza told a press conference in London: "We have strong sovereignty over our lands and water which we don't want the military to use. For this reason we were forced to have three plebiscites (referenda) to decide if we wanted to keep our constitution. All three were 70 per cent in favour of the constitution.

"In February 1983 we had another plebiscite, this time to vote on the compact contract of free association which gives the US military the right to use our land and bring nuclear substances to our islands. We have had three plebiscites on this compact — under our constitution there has to be 75 per cent in favour for it to be passed. The first was 62 per cent majority in favour for it to be passed. The first was 62 per cent majority in favour of the compact due to the fact it was worded in English and very thick — 2" thick and 90 per cent of Belaus do not speak English. So people are confused and depend on our leaders who say it is good for the economy.

"For second compact teaching was limited to 48 days and they spent a lot of money campaigning and the vote was 67.8 per cent in favour. For the last compact, teaching was limited to two weeks only and the Americans sent \$US200,000 for teaching.

"But I went to two of these places where there was teaching and they were not teaching about the compact — just saying it was an improved compact and has lots of money and eliminates nuclear substances. But reading the compact you can find it does not eliminate the sections which allow nuclear substances to be brought in.

"The last compact got 72

per cent. (The plebiscite was held late February '86) and now the president of Belau is saying that it is way over a simple majority so the compact is passed.

"We suspect the \$US200,000 may have been used for bribes because leaders — elected and traditional — have changed. Something is very wrong. We feel very helpless — we don't have the strength, ability and money to fight the United States. The US have more than what they need."

The same week Lorenza told an International Women's day meeting the compact will give the US rights to use Belau's only harbour and two airports and will limit the law of the sea to 12 miles. A reduction from 200 miles, which is in contradiction with the Belau constitution. The compact establishes an arbitrary board of disagreement to resolve disputes which deprives Belaus of redress in international courts. Once the compact has been passed, any review of it or another referendum on it can only be called by mutual agreement — that is the Americans have to agree to such a referendum.

The compact gives the US the right to take any land it chooses, on giving 60 days notice for 50 years. As most land is family clan owned this will create "war" between the government and the clans. In return the compact gives 15 years of economic aid.

The US can invite any foreign power it likes to Belau and has the right of port calls and anchorage of nuclear vessels — the People's Committee of Belau, to which Lorenza belongs, was told this section had been eliminated from the compact whereas in fact the section had been retitled and put in another part.

Lijon Eknilang from Rongelap told the press conference: "Rongelap is 100 miles from Bikini atoll. In 1954 there was the Bravo test at Bikini — it was 1000 times as big as Hiroshima and we were not informed and we were not evacuated. (See *Broadsheet* Jan/Feb for details.)

Long-time activist and author Charlotte Waterlow, who recently travelled in New Zealand at the invitation of the New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies, has returned to the UK and prepared a 33-page paper, ending with the

suggestion that NZ should lead a non-nuclear Pacific "community" modelled on the European community.

She is seeking to have the paper published and has sent a shorter version plus a paper about the European community as a submission to the defence committee of inquiry in Wellington. She says a "third force" is emerging

(aside from the super powers) in the Pacific which is demanding the denuclearisation of the region and the creation of a communitarian society.

"Women, particularly non-white women, are playing a major role in this force. New Zealand, Belau and Vanuatu can be regarded as the moral leaders of the world," she says in the papers. □

GOOD AND BAD TOUCHING

Anthea Kershaw sent this account of sessions on child sexual abuse held in the Nelson kindergarten in which she teaches.

The sessions were planned by two teachers and two parents; one parent and one teacher each worked with half the class. We decided to fit the sessions with others on safety — after fire safety and police, and before traffic safety. All the parents were sent a newsletter saying the kindergarten was going to run two sessions on sexual abuse and we wanted them and their children to attend together. Before the sessions started, we sent another newsletter on how to talk to children about child sexual abuse, using information from earlier seminars for parents, and from *The Sexual Abuse of Children* by Miriam Saphira.

Before the sessions we did lots of talking with the children about what they thought was good and bad touching; for example, cuddles, fights, touching slime, spiders, and so on. They read books about feelings, fighting, scary things. They played musical hugs, a variant on musical chairs, and musical touch — nose to nose, elbow to elbow when the music stops — and talked about how they felt about them. Both were very popular. They played other cooperative games like body sculpture, making a spiral, catch the dragon's tail, forming a train and all trying to sit on the lap of the person behind. They also made cards for someone special, and painted to music.

For the first session, everyone sat in a circle on the

floor, children beside their parent/s. We listened to the first of two tapes on child sexual abuse from *Grandpa's Place*. This one was more about strangers, and lasted for 15 minutes. After a short discussion, the children drew to happy and sad, scary music, to try to tune into how their feelings tell them what to do. We then gathered the children in front of us for a flannel graph story which went over what they had learnt in the tape. The story used cars, houses, a road, children, a man, a park, swings, a bag of sweets, etc. We used characters from other stories that we had and made what was needed. We tried to get the children to give us the answers to what the flannel board child should do in each case.

In the second session parents and children sat in a circle again; most cuddled. They listened to the second tape, about someone you know doing the bad or yukky touching. The children then wrote down three people they thought they could tell if someone was touching them in a way they didn't like. Then we used puppets to tell the story of the book *My Feelings*; a man, a mother, and a boy and girl puppet acted out the story, ad libbing and getting the children to tell the puppets what to do. One of us read the story and was on puppet, while the other worked the three puppets, two at a time. This

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ANOREXIA AND BULIMIA AID

Sally Blundell writes about this group in Christchurch.

Many people suffering from anorexia and/or bulimia know all about eating disorders. They've read the books, they've done the research. They may be familiar with Susie Orbach — author of "Fat is a Feminist Issue" and co-author of "Outside in ... Inside Out". Orbach says a new woman made from rules, regulations, diets and self-control is created to replace the real woman whose needs and emotions are too painful to realise.

But most women know this. They know that the scrawny models held up on banners in every avenue of life are totally unrealistic shapes. They know the typical person suffering from anorexia or bulimia keeps inside the pretty, intelligent child — the one in the family who always kept their room tidy, who helped Mum prepare dinner and who did well at school. Of course — anything less than that would have been failure.

People know, too, that the approval of others is all-important. Whether they were bribed

with food or love as children, they now know they will suffer if they do not perform — not just well, but best.

And you will find that sufferers are up with the play with the most recent research into eating disorders. Studies exploring the link between sexual abuse and anorexia, between agoraphobia, or high scholastic achievement, and anorexia — sufferers themselves research the subject well.

"Many people have read all the books. They know the symptoms and the irreparable damage it can do their bodies, but there is a gap between their brain and their emotions," said Sarndra Hamilton, field worker with Christchurch's Anorexia and Bulimia Aid Group.

Since 1981, when two industrial nurses started a support group through The Health Alternatives for Women (THAW) in Christchurch, sufferers of anorexia and bulimia, and parents of sufferers, have met in groups, talked over the phone, written letters or met

field workers on a one to one basis in an attempt to change their lives.



Sarndra Hamilton, field worker with the Christchurch Anorexia and Bulimia Aid Group.

Photo: JULIE RIPLEY

Although answerable to the

Anorexia and Bulimia Aid Collective, Sarndra is employed through the Voluntary Organisation Training Programme — one of the government — funded employment schemes soon to be axed. The Aid Group are praying for assistance from the Ministry of Women's Affairs or the Community Grants Committee.

But in the meantime there is work to be done. While books and articles continue to be written and studies undertaken, the Christchurch Aid Group is doing something — something to do with emotions rather than intellect.

"We're the safety valve. We're not professional, we're just people. There are no white coats here. We don't say you have to go into hospital. It's just time out to talk. It's support, an ear, that may prevent the disorder from getting worse," said Sarndra.

"It means a lot for them to have a person there for an hour. It means you can sort out the muddle in your head verbally. Many have never said anything about their problem out loud before. It's an incredible feeling to say what has been bottled up inside for years, and no one gasps in horror."

People who go to the old house two doors down from Hagley High School do so on their own accord. They have had enough. Finally they are recognising a need which they have been stifling, sometimes since early childhood.

"I mainly see bulimics here — they hate what they're doing. Some steal money for food, diuretics and laxatives.

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session seemed more popular and we got down to more detail of what might happen, something we'd include in the earlier session next time.

Some three-year-olds came — a few coped with the half hour and got the message, another was sent back to the other half of the class as he couldn't concentrate. Three

school children were taken out of school to come also.

Follow up for the sessions included: using the tapes, songs, the felt board story and reading *My Feelings*. Lots and lots of talk and "what would you do if...?" games, tuning into feelings; going through the five senses — good and yukky tastes, and so on. Lots of parents have borrowed the

tapes to use with kindergarten and older children. Lots more want to borrow *My Feelings*, and the flannel board story after we've used them enough for the moment.

It wasn't easy to prepare the sessions and feel confident of how they would go down. We wanted to inform the children, but not scare them, and involve all parents so they could

carry on with the subject at home. □

Resources

Grandpa's Place tapes NZBC, Wellington
My Feelings by Marcia K. Morgan, pub. Equal Justice Consultants and educational products, Box 5582, Eugene, Oregon 97405, USA. Bookshops can order.

They lead lives of eating, throwing up, exercises, calories — that's often 95% of their daily thoughts. Relationships are ruined, often they can't work because they're bingeing and throwing up so often.

"Anorexics have a thin layer of high self-esteem. They feel good about themselves superficially. They take a lot of persuading to admit they've got a problem."

Why should they see a thin body as a problem? Sarndra sees the difficulty when she visits schools and tries to tell students to feel good about themselves and their bodies.

"It's just not enough, when they go out and society is telling them exactly the opposite. This job often makes me angry. People are told by society women should be thin — it keeps them like children, powerless, yet thinness is equated with success and happiness."

The ads, society's usual poking and prodding of the female shape, won't go away tomorrow. No one is that blindly optimistic.

And, even if it did, the pain and need may well still be there. The feasting and fasting, Sarndra said, is the anaesthetic to the real hurt. It's the blood from the wound, but what's in the wound?

Nil confidence. Nil self-esteem. Nil self-love. It is these that people must now receive. The anger, the rhetoric — that has been done and can continue in the search for more information. In the meantime, those suffering and those who know others who are suffering must do something.

There are not enough Aid Groups in New Zealand. Because the nature of eating disorders is one of troughs and peaks, support groups are often short-lived. There are few steady aid groups in the southern hemisphere. Women, and the smaller number of men suffering from anorexia and/or bulimia, try to get help from psychological units in public hospitals. For this, you need a referral from a general practitioner. One young woman who came to Sarndra had tried this. The GP had looked at her and said —

"Well, why don't you EAT something?" The Anorexia and Bulimia Aid Group now keep a file on sympathetic and unsympathetic GP's.

But its most important role is one which everyone must follow — whether by starting a local aid group or by offering personal support to a friend or work mate. While it is essential for people with this debilitating lack of self-esteem to stop, and recognise a need for help, it is also of vast importance that someone else be there when that recognition occurs.

"A lot of it is just wanting someone to love them for themselves. My advice for people who know someone with anorexia or bulimia is to be there if they want to talk. Reassure them that you care about them, no matter what their bodies are like. Reaffirm their self-worth. Tell them they're OK. □

EARLIER BROADSHEET ARTICLES, "Bulimia" in Issue 130, June 1985. "Fighting Fat Phobia" in issue 136, Jan/Feb 1986.

ANOREXIA AND BULIMIA SUPPORT

AUCKLAND

Drop-in group: Annette ph 279-8085
Parent group: Ann Lumb ph 678-493
Counselling/self-help groups: Jasbinder Singh ph 452-560
Counselling: 794-380

GISBORNE

Support phone contact: Judy ph 75146

WELLINGTON

Support groups: Janet ph 892-375 Mary ph 759-084
PO Box 12-016 Wellington North

LOWER HUTT

Contact: Mrs Lawrence 65 Karalca St Wainuiomata

NELSON

Counsellor/parent group: Rosemary Musters ph 83441

CHRISTCHURCH

Anorexia and Bulimia Aid group: Chilton House 486 Hagley Ave Christchurch 1 ph 67725

HIT LIST

FEASTING AND FONDLING!

On 24 March Television New Zealand screened a particularly obnoxious programme called "The Great Pleasure Hunt No 3 — Feasting and Fondling".

This was supposed to be a lighthearted look at whether food or sex offers the greatest pleasure to the consumer. It also offered a glimpse to us ordinary folk into the ways of the super-rich and their preoccupation with spending large amounts of money on trivia.

The programme was presented as a pseudo-documentary, featuring an elderly British man, supposedly a connoisseur (in actual fact a snob) sampling the most expensive food, wines and entertainment in all parts of the world. He also acted as primary voyeur and commentator while the camera "sampled" the sex.

As could be expected this programme was incredibly sexist and classist. It also offered a fair morsel of racism as well. For example, scenes of elephant polo being enjoyed by rich white men riding on the backs of the animals and shouting directions to Indian servants who were actually controlling the animals. Another scene was of the connoisseur eating a traditional Hawaiian feast while "Hula Girls" (his words) dance before him. Both scenes strongly reinforced negative attitudes that people of colour and/or non-european culture are inferior to white people, although they're okay for entertainment.

Equally offensive, if not more so, were the scenes where the connoisseur investigates the "pleasure" of sex for sale. This featured predominantly Asian women. The camera pandered to the dangerous male myths that women, and especially women of colour, are objects for their use. It was particularly degrading to watch a scene where a woman was used by an instructor to teach his paying student (male of course) techniques in "love-making". Throughout the les-

son the woman said nothing — a man was instructing another man about what women want sexually, filmed for the titillation of the male viewer at home. This doubly stresses the fact that women have little or no say about our own sexuality.

This programme was shown during the late night viewing slot, not on prime-time. Despite this, that it was shown at all indicates a marked insensitivity from TVNZ. No matter how hard up they are for decent material, showing a programme that promotes racism, pornography, and colonialism disguised as entertainment proves that they are obviously out of touch with current attitudes in the community. □
Women Against Pornography, Auckland.

SEXISM LIVE

Yet another sexist live show is on its way from the States to New Zealand. Six Playboy bunnies will "sing, shake their tails, and strip to leather bikini pants" on stages throughout the country in June. The promoter, the infamous Joe Brown, organiser of the Miss

New Zealand contests, describes the revue as "a family show". His promo video features three "bunnies in fishnet stockings, scanty panties, and ragged bra tops."!!

Auckland Women Against Pornography is overcommitted running workshops on pornography for interested groups. We are not organising any protest action in Auckland but will support any action organised by other feminists. □

WET T-SHIRTS DAMPENED?

The manager of a Lion hotel in Wellington has been trying to organise a wet T-shirt competition. However, Lion head office have vetoed the event saying that they don't want their business to be associated with the wet T-shirt image.

Meanwhile, the Liquor Licensing Commission has yet to deliver their decision regarding Lion Corporation's application for an exemption from an entertainment licence allowing the corporation to hold wet T-shirt competitions. □

BITING THE HAND THAT FEELS YOU (Or Why Didn't I Think Of That?)

JENNY RANKINE, WITH IDEAS FROM PAT
ROSIER, MARGOT ROTH, MITZI NAIRN AND
SUSAN GRIMSDSELL.

Many's the time that someone has stumped me by coming out with one of the many anti-feminist clichés. There I am, itching to counter with a cool and stinging Witty Feminist Retort, but my brain is frozen to the roof of my mouth with outrage and indignation.

We all need ways to counter the butts that inevitably follow feminist arguments. We need verbal self defense against harassment, being ignored or trivialised.

One reason anti-woman remarks are so hard to deal with effectively on the spot is that they hide one or more nasty presuppositions. Like this one: "Some husbands would object to their wives going back to work when the kids are still toddlers." This sentence has a host of buried meanings: that it's wrong for you to go back to work; that he's unique and superior to other husbands because he doesn't object to you going back to work; that he has the

power to let you go back to work or not, as he likes; that you should feel very guilty going back to work; and that you should feel very grateful to him.

It takes a long time to figure all this out, and longer to work out which is the crunch one you want to take issue with most. In the meantime, you've probably blown your stack with no useful result and feel frustrated and angry.

I've found that practice helps. Anti-woman sentiments come in certain guises, some used more than others. It becomes easier to work out your feelings and answers to them, and have responses ready when someone says them again.

So here's some verbal ammunition, cadged from lots of feminist sources, for some of the put-downs and harassing situations. Any women who have some more good quick answers, please write and tell us.

Some husbands would object to their wives going back to work when the kids are still little.

- ☐ Yes, but I know *you* wouldn't, dear.
- ☐ Some husbands could *try*.
- ☐ Some would leap at the chance to look after the kids.
- ☐ Yeah, some husbands still think they can tell their wives what to do.

If I were your husband I wouldn't let you out so often.

- ☐ If I were your wife I wouldn't let you out at all.
- ☐ I'm not anybody's possession and I don't like your sense of humour.
- ☐ They're issuing licenses for the owners of wives now, are they?

(To stropky woman) Why don't you get off his back?

- ☐ He's a big boy, he can look after himself.
- ☐ If he doesn't like it, he'll tell me.

Is your husband *allowed* to do X?

- ☐ Ask him, it's not my business.
- ☐ Ask him, he's got a mind of his own.

Women can't produce great art — there hasn't been a female Shakespeare.

- ☐ So what?
- ☐ There hasn't been a male Shakespeare since Shakespeare, dammit.
- ☐ One cannot, in reason, ask a shoeless peasant in the Upper Volta to write songs like Schubert's: the opportunity to do so has never existed².

It's women's fault they're not in top jobs, they don't apply.

- ☐ They don't apply because they don't expect to succeed, and there's plenty of evidence that they won't.
- ☐ They don't apply because they're not so interested in status and power, and they want to stay working in areas they like.
- ☐ And when they do, their childraising and voluntary work is not seen as an asset.
- ☐ If you've got an hour to spare I'll tell you all the ways women are kept out of top jobs.
- ☐ I'd like to see you try and juggle caring for two kids under three and being head of TVNZ.

Well, girls . . .

- ☐ I'm not a girl, I'm a fully menstruating woman.
- ☐ When will you start calling us women?
- ☐ Yes sonny/little man?
- ☐ I don't like being called a girl. It implies childishness, dependency, conformity, delicacy, passivity and non-competition.²

But I like opening doors for women/having doors opened for me!

- ☐ Okay; what about the doors to equal pay and male-dominated jobs?
- ☐ Helping women into coats, into seats and through doors are the same kind of things mothers do for their children. It gives you an idea of how some men see women.²

- ☐ Chivalry is a fine thing, but it's conditional. Men threaten to withdraw their chivalrous respect for women at every step we take towards independence.²

If you ladies will just . . .

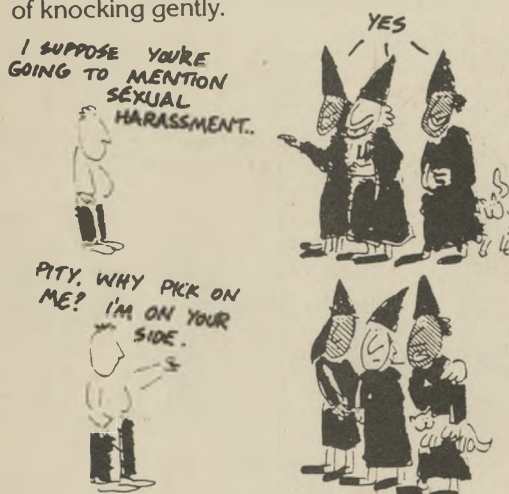
- ☐ I'm no lady, I'm a woman.
- ☐ I don't like being called a lady. It implies femininity, being supported by the work of others, delicate, unproductive, and frilly.

Anatomy/biology is destiny . . . Or it's natural for women to . . .

- ☐ If anatomy were destiny, the wheel would not have been invented; we would have been limited by our legs.
- ☐ The women who are convinced the only place for women is in the home always come out of the home to prove it.
- ☐ Last century men said it wasn't natural for women to study at university; that our ovaries would atrophy and our periods would stop.
- ☐ Men are unnatural because they don't have cyclical changes during the month.

It's not what you say that upsets me, it's the way you say it.

- ☐ If you find that people shout at you, check out whether you've given the impression that you're deaf.
- ☐ Yeah; if you don't like the message, shoot the messenger.
- ☐ Okay, I'll say it again smiling.
- ☐ If people have no right to make decisions about us behind closed doors, after a while we get tired of knocking gently.



Don't give me that "chairperson" stuff.

- ☐ Yeah, I know; man is a mammal and therefore suckles his young.
- ☐ Using "men" to mean "human" makes male experience appear to be the norm.
- ☐ "Man" and "he" do not include everyone equally, and have caused confusion in law and officialdom for 1000 years.
- ☐ Nineteenth century lawyers in England decided that the word "man" includes women when there is a penalty to be incurred, but never includes women when there is a privilege to be conferred.

- ☐ Chairwoman has been in use in English since 1699. Alternatives are coordinator, facilitator, convenor, president or chair.

The trouble with you is you don't know who your allies are.

- ☐ I'll be the judge of that.
- ☐ Real allies give us money and share childcare.
- ☐ At last, a man who'll tell me what to do!

Feminists hate men.

- ☐ Try it, you'll like it — very cathartic.
- ☐ What do you mean by hating men?
- ☐ Which men?
- ☐ That's right; our magazines are full of pictures of men being displayed for our titillation, we spend our meetings talking about how to put men down, we insult and harass men all day at work and when we get home we make them cook dinner.
- ☐ With tomato sauce or mustard?
- ☐ I'm indifferent to men. I love women.
- ☐ Some of us do.
- ☐ If women sodomised your sons, denied you jobs, forced you to look after babies when you didn't want to and beat you when you didn't mow the lawn, you'd hate women, wouldn't you?

Feminists are all lesbians.

- ☐ Yeah, isn't it neat?
- ☐ So?
- ☐ Some feminists are lesbians and some are not. Some lesbians are feminists and some are not.
- ☐ The way you said that sounds like you have something against lesbians.



Feminists have no sense of humour.

- ☐ Translation: I find jokes about you funny. Why don't you find jokes about you funny?³
- ☐ Neither do you, pizza face.
- ☐ I don't laugh at anti-woman or racist jokes — it cuts out an awful lot.
- ☐ No, you just don't get our jokes.
- ☐ Have you heard the one about the guy doing the washing who got his balls caught in the wringer? (laugh uproariously)
- ☐ Feminist no. 1: Do you know feminists have no sense of humour? Feminist no. 2: No, but if you hum a few bars I could fake it.⁴

Feminists encourage women to, you know, masturbate!

- ☐ Since when have women needed encouragement?
- ☐ Yeah, and isn't it fun?
- ☐ You mean you don't?



Feminists are anti-family.

- ☐ Yep!
- ☐ Depends on what you call family; have you read the definition of family published in the April *Broadsheet*?
- ☐ I've got nothing against nuclear families as one option; it's just when it's the only kind of family that's allowed that I'm against it.
- ☐ The nuclear family is not a healthy place for women and children. When women get married, their mental health gets worse; when men get married their mental health gets better. More violence to women and children happens inside the family than out of it.

I'm not a feminist, but X,Y,Z.

- ☐ That's interesting; I always thought XYZ were feminist policies.
- ☐ "I myself have never been able to find out precisely what a feminist is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat." Rebecca West²
- ☐ No, of course you're not. Feminists are strident and manhating and slaver at the mouth. You're not like that.
- ☐ What's wrong with being a feminist?

I'm liberated; my husband and I have an equal marriage.

- ☐ Yeah, but does he clean the toilet?
- ☐ Anything that hurts one woman, hurts all women.

Men are oppressed too.

- ☐ Oh, diddums!
- ☐ (To a man) Well, do something about it, then.
- ☐ (To a woman) What are they doing about it?
- ☐ Sure, western men can't cry and put all their energy into work, but those traits are valued. So-called "feminine" traits are not.

You feminists talk about discrimination, but you don't let men into your meetings or conventions!

- ☐ At mixed meetings, men always take up more time speaking than women.
- ☐ There are many subjects — sexual abuse, thrush, menstruation, sex — that women feel inhibited about discussing in a mixed group.

- ☐ Many situations are in effect men-only clubs; company boards, many jobs, sport administration; it's just not stated openly.

Why aren't you at home with the children where god meant you to be?

- ☐ I've talked to god and she said what I'm doing is okay.
- ☐ Being a mother doesn't mean being with children the whole time.

Women should stay home with their children — working mothers are bad for family life.

- ☐ Right on: Roses not raises; I'd rather be ironing; Brooms not basketballs; Pump iron — do his shirts; Gold rings not gold medals.
- ☐ Mothers at home with small children often become depressed.
- ☐ Leaving children with an unhappy and over-stressed full-time carer is bad for family life.
- ☐ An absent or uninvolved father is bad for family life.
- ☐ Men, workplaces, relatives and friends should all share in bringing up children. It isn't just the mother's job.
- ☐ Many women feel trapped, depressed or unfulfilled at home. Working makes them feel better about themselves, and better with their families.

Women workers are not as reliable as men — they take more time off work.

- ☐ People in boring, repetitive jobs take more time off than people in interesting jobs. More women than men have boring jobs.
- ☐ Older women have lower absentee rates than older men, even when the men have higher level jobs.
- ☐ Women are the ones who have to stay home in family emergencies. When men share childcare and caring for sick relatives, absentee rates will even up.



© Jay Kimbley '79

Women don't need to work!

- ☐ You're quite right. I'd rather be cleaning dirty nappies and washing your socks.
- ☐ What woman doesn't need to earn money?
- ☐ What about women who are the only breadwinners in a family, or whose partners are on low pay?
- ☐ Women need to earn money for the same reasons as men — to support ourselves and our families.

Young women always leave work to have children.

- ☐ Not all women have children.
- ☐ Some women don't want to leave work when they have a baby, but have to because there's no childcare.

- ☐ Young men change their jobs a lot too.

(To a working mother) **Where are your children?**

- ☐ Out in the streets wrecking cars.
- ☐ I notice you don't ask fathers that question.
- ☐ Where are yours?
- ☐ I'm paying a professional.

What do you get when you cross an octopus and a Negro?

- ☐ A racist joke.

What do we sensitive, aware men do to help?

- ☐ Fundraise — give us some of your money.
- ☐ Childcare.
- ☐ Support women's campaigns for control over our lives.
- ☐ Go and talk to those guys over there who think I don't have a sense of humour/women already have equal pay/lesbians are perverted, etc, etc.
- ☐ Work it out for yourself.

What do we sensitive, aware whites do?

- ☐ Give Maori groups money and resources.
- ☐ Support Maori *take* (issues).
- ☐ Cater for hui.
- ☐ Talk to those Pakeha over there who say New Zealanders are one people.

Those Maori activists hate whites.

- ☐ With good reason — we're the ones who stole their land, caned them for speaking Maori, killed their ancestors.
- ☐ Only on Mondays.
- ☐ If you have an hour to spare, I'll explain why it looks that way.

There's no pleasing you!

- ☐ Sometimes that's true.
- ☐ Not in my lifetime.
- ☐ Only on Wednesdays.

What do you women want?

- ☐ We don't want a bigger slice of the cake, we want a new recipe.
- ☐ I want to be rich and rule the world!
- ☐ I'm sick of people asking me questions that they don't want to know the answer to.
- ☐ Subscribe to *Broadsheet* and find out!

Whistle from man in the street.

- ☐ What's the matter, sonny, lost your dog?
- ☐ I'm not a dog to be whistled at!
- ☐ I don't like being whistled at. Why can't you say hello or leave me alone.?
- ☐ Stage an Ogle-in. New York women in 1970 organised one at a construction site, touching the men, looking at them, passing out pamphlets, and carrying signs about the degrading nature of flattery.

A man flashes at you.

- ☐ That looks like a penis, only smaller.
- ☐ Put it away before it shrivels up.
- ☐ LOOK, THIS MAN'S PENIS IS HANGING OUT!

- ☐ Mummy, that man's got a worm in his pants.
- ☐ If I ever see you flashing again, you creep, I'll cut it off!

A man puts his arm around you, or touches you in a way you don't want.

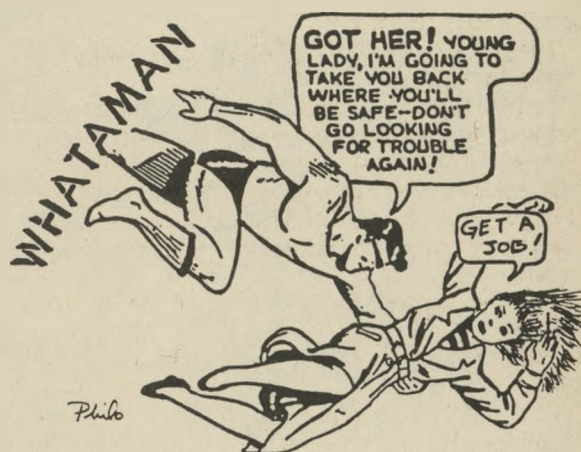
- ☐ If you want to lean on something, use the wall.
- ☐ Underarm pinch and twist.
- ☐ Elbow jab.
- ☐ Inner thigh pinch
- ☐ Stomp your heel on his foot.
- ☐ Rap his knuckles with your fist.

Persistent come ons or gropes from workmate or boss.

- ☐ STOP IT! (If others are in earshot)
- ☐ I don't want you to touch me. This is only a working relationship.
- ☐ Keep a record; tell friends at work and ask them to keep on the lookout for his advances.
- ☐ Ring your union.
- ☐ If he's been doing it to other women workers, you could confront him together.
- ☐ Threaten to tell his boss or his wife.
- ☐ When no-one else is around, put up stickers at work; John Smith is a groper; John Smith can't keep his hands to himself; John Smith doesn't know when he isn't wanted, and so on.

Man staring at you.

- ☐ I don't like you staring at me.
- ☐ Stare at his balls. ☐



1. *The Gentle Art of Verbal Self Defence*, Suzette Hagen Elgin, 1980.
2. *A Feminist Dictionary*, Cheris Kramarac and Paula Treichler, Pandora Press, 1985, \$29.95
3. Joanna Russ in *Pulling Our Own Strings: Feminist Humour and Satire*, Ed. Gloria Kaufman and Mary Kay Blakely, Indiana University Press, 1980.
4. *Titters*
5. Jean Gosling, "The Trouble with Feminism" *Broadsheet*, March 1982, No. 97
6. Renee
7. Many of the answers to statements about working women come from *Working Women*, issue two, published by the Working Women's Resource Centre, Private Bag 5, Newton, Auckland 1; available from your union or feminist bookshops.
8. See *Self Defence for Women* by Sue Iytollis, New Women's Press, Auckland, 1983. Better still, go to a YWCA/Sue Iytollis Self Defence course.
9. See *Broadsheet* backpack on Sexual harassment and Organising against violence, \$3.90

POWER TO THE PATIENTS

TWO WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN
THERE TALK ABOUT ISSUES INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Mary O'Hagan got involved with issues concerning psychiatric patients when she went to a Mental Health Foundation conference in 1985. Only 1-2% of the people there were ex-patients and there was nothing going on with patients.

Mary has been a patient in Sunnyside Hospital in Christchurch, a unit attached to a Dunedin hospital, and a private psychiatric clinic. She suffers from mood swings, a condition known as manic depression and characterised by swings from elation to severe depression, accompanied by extreme changes in energy levels. There are usually stable periods when there are no symptoms. She describes the extremes of mood, as they occur for her, like this.

"In a 'high' my body and mind will be racing. I talk faster, have a short concentration span, my thoughts speed through my mind, I'm very distractable and physically very restless, I can only sit still for a



few seconds. I'm often elated. Everything seems beautiful and brimming with meaning, but I can be dangerously fearless and reckless as well.

"In a 'low' I am very slowed down, very removed from everything. A big black rim moves in and shuts out the world. I have no energy and don't look up above about a metre off the ground. I recognise people by their voices and their feet. I lie in bed. Sometimes my thoughts are distressed and suicidal, I feel guilty about everything in the universe, and I have nihilistic delusions. I feel like I'm screaming out of the pores of my skin. But at other times I feel very tranquil. I might go through these different thought states several times a day when I am depressed."

Mary is working on developing a research project with ex-psychiatric patients and starting a patients' organisation. She spoke to Pat Rosier.

Illustration: Sharon Alston

I am concerned with more than just patients' rights in the narrow sense, I am interested in patients taking power back. Part of that is legal rights and good conditions in hospitals, but it's more than that. There isn't even a word to use to talk about patients that doesn't put them in relationship to the system. "Psychiatrically labelled people" is clumsy.

I got involved through my dissatisfaction with psychiatric services in New Zealand. They are so authoritarian, you get the helper/helped thing—I'm the patient, there because of my incompetence, they're the helpers, there because of their competence. I've seen patients get very caught up in their therapist's interpretation of what's going on. Any notion of helping yourself is completely lost.

When I went to the Mental Health

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Foundation conference in '85 I had been reading and planning a book for people with mood disorders, a practical book. Psychiatrists tend to be either only interested in you as a drug muncher or in you at three and how your mother treated you. What you need are skills to help you deal with today. They send you out of hospital with no help in day to day living. Some of this life skills works could be done by the patients in their own groups. Feminists rather than psychiatrists use this approach.

I see the psychiatric patients' movement arising as from the same well of discontent as feminism. I became interested in feminism as much through my experience as a psychiatric patient as through my experience as a woman — though as a patient my powerlessness was more pronounced. Feminism has got a tremendous amount to offer in the creating of a psychiatric patients' movement.

DRUGS

DRUGS are over-used. This is coming out very clearly from the ex-patients I have interviewed for my research. They have some very worrying side effects, which are not generally talked about and can be irreversible.

ble — particularly the anti-psychotic drugs. Drugs provide an easy way to pacify people. They work quickly. They totally slug you, I have been given really high doses for short times. I remember once after a "high", they put me in hospital and gave me sleep therapy — that's drug-induced sleep. The sensation was like drowning, it was awful. Anti-psychotic drugs are highly effective though, and I do want to come down. I hate them, but I haven't come across an alternative. The problem is that they're used too often and in doses that are too high. Long term drug maintenance does make people easier to deal with, but I wonder whether their quality of life is improved.

In a psychiatric hospital expressing any strong feeling — and women tend to be more expressive than men — is seen either as an offence to be punished or as a symptom. And the line between therapy and punishment can be very unclear. Any assertion or outburst is seen as part of your illness, you have no credibility, anything you say or do can be invalidated. That makes you incredibly powerless. Women tend to be doubted as a matter of course. Their interpretations or reactions are not validated, they can easily be seen as "playing up", or pretending to be distressed. There is a double loss of credibility for a woman.

One experience I had in a hospital occurred when I was in an extreme state of depression. I was lying on the floor, I didn't have the energy to get up, I was left there all day and at the end of the day a doctor came along (it was a woman, actually) and told me to get myself up. She told me I was being histrionic. That's a very sexist word, I've never heard it used on a man. She was like the parent and I was being "naughty". That is incredibly humiliating. Women in our society are infantilised anyway, and women patients get it both ways.

I have these mood swings. They are a major part of my life and they deserve a name, but the trouble with labels — like manic depression — is that they give you a reputation and create the expectation that you are useless to society.

What happens to me, and other manic depressives, is more than someone feeling depressed multiplied several times. It's more than a difference in degree, it's a difference in kind. More than any other psychiatric



Mary O'Hagan

In a psychiatric hospital expressing any strong feeling — and women tend to be more expressive than men — is seen as an offence to be punished or as a symptom.

condition perhaps, there is evidence for a genetic factor for predisposition. I have never been able to identify a trigger stress for myself, although some people do, and I can't see any stress in my life that would have "caused" it.

I am ambivalent about drugs. I'm on Lithium and anti-depressants, because I can't function without them. But it might be different if my experience was seen as something that had something to offer — if my mood swings were regarded as a talent rather than a disability. If 99% of people were manic depressive, instead of the 10% there is now, society would be pretty well organised to allow for people's mood swings. Maybe society would even socialise people into "good" and "bad" ways of having mood swings — the way we do with sexuality, for instance. People would be taught how to have mood swings. I was never taught this because it is such a rare experience.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

I have strong feelings about therapy. In my experience psychiatrists have this incredibly naive

belief that they are not judging you, but I felt judged if for no other reason than the structure of the therapeutic relationship, which reduced my competence. It was also a problem in group therapy, which is supposed to be egalitarian. There are strong expectations in these group situations for people to conform to some underlying assumptions about good and bad people. Good people (and I'm not just referring to how they behave in the group) show their feelings, are orgasmic, independent, and so on. Bad people are inhibited passive and dependent — this is the new morality. These so-called liberating virtues can be just as authoritarian as the old ones. The therapists think they are getting you to make your own judgements. I never felt this, the therapist had more status and "competence" than me. In subtle ways their approval/disapproval came through. They deny this and say they're not judging you, but implicitly they are. And while their judgements remain implicit they are in control and their ideas can't be challenged — by themselves or their clients.

I'm not a therapy sort of person, but I see patient-run support groups as an alternative, dealing with stuff that is grounded in what is going on today, and what is going on with the others in the group. The advantage of this is that you can reciprocate, you're not stuck on the bottom of the competence/incompetence model.

I've mainly had therapy run by psychiatrists, in hospital and outside it.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

ONE thing that annoys me about psychiatric institutions is the architecture — long corridors with doors going off. In Sunnyside there wasn't even a room to sit except the TV lounge. There you just go straight onto drugs. When you are in a state of distress and agitation going into hospital can put you in the least possible responsive environment. I was having awful delusions about turning into insects and was just left in my room. Sunnyside for me was a de-personalised and arid environment without any support.

The hospitals served, although badly, a purpose in getting me away from my environment. When I'm very depressed and can't stand light and

sound and get very sensitized to how people are feeling about me I need somewhere quiet to go. I am developing strategies for dealing with depression. In the past I thought I shouldn't give way, I should battle on, but that actually makes it worse. Now, when I am depressed I know my body is telling me I have to have a very quiet life for a while. I'm interested in finding ways of being depressed without guilt and despair. There are cross-cultural studies which show that in some non-western countries people with physical depressive symptoms don't have these distressing feelings.

If I get high I need somewhere quiet to go and calm down. But there's nothing between home and hospital — just this huge gap.

I have never had electro-shock. Like drugs, it's overused. I saw it used on one extremely depressed woman in hospital and a day or so later she was coming up again. But it is one of those things that has to be used with extreme caution. Many patients are strongly against it.

THE RESEARCH

MY present work began after that conference last year, when I realised how little there was from the perspective of psychiatric patients. I went back to Dunedin where I was living and drew up a proposal to do research into the experiences of psychiatric patients and work towards establishing a patient-run organisation. The Mental Health Foundation agreed to support my work and give me office space. That's really important because it gives me credibility. I have been living off grants and now have a subsidised salary.

I started off by doing conventional research into the experiences of psychiatric patients by interviewing them after they had left hospital. I got very dissatisfied with it. It was a list of questions that set up a structured interview but also allowed for digression and elaboration. I got bored with it because I felt I wasn't learning anything new. Then I read some feminist literature on research and found that enormously helpful. So what I'm doing now is preparing an alternative proposal.

I have reduced the number of interviews in my original research from 50 to 25 and now the alternative will be about people taking part in their own

As soon as you get a professional in among psychiatric patients they take power whether they are intended to or not.

research. What I want to do is get a group of patients together who would write about their experiences and come back to the group and discuss them. The original research was like a snapshot, the alternative proposal is dynamic, the group will be actors in their own improvised "plot"! They will decide on their own directions. I want to involve three groups — patients, friends and family of patients and professionals. At first, they will work separately and once they've come to some understanding of their experiences as individuals and as a group, then the groups would come together and discuss each others' perceptions. The third stage is that the groups make proposals for change — it has got to go back into the real world.

One of the problems with this approach is that it relies on people's commitment. My role would be as coordinator and writer-up. Everyone, particularly the patients, would have a right to amend my writing. An important feature of the work would be that it is coming from the bottom up, it's initiated by the people without power. That's really important to me.

PATIENTS' ORGANISATIONS

THERE'S not a lot going on in this area in New Zealand. But my research would provide an information base. A problem that will have to be dealt with early on is that of the role of professionals within such an organisation. I feel very strongly that professionals, if they are there at all, should be in the background, with no power to make decisions. It would be quite good to have someone like a social worker for backup facilities like photocopying and funding, but they must not be in control. As soon as you get a professional in among psychiatric patients they take power, whether they are intended to or not. The patients must be in control.

The underlying function of the organisation would be to empower patients at all levels. So that starts with the organisation being patient-run. It would also include being a lobbying

group, for improvements in services and the establishment of new ones. Then there's educating people about the experience of being a patient and the whole law reform area, particularly the rights of committed patients. There is also a need for a vigorous advocacy structure to make sure that the law is enacted and the patients are treated well. It should be more than a legal service, and advocates would have to be independent of the hospitals. □

THE LAW IN NEW ZEALAND

The law about psychiatric patients in New Zealand is covered by the Mental Health Act (1969). The act allows for informal (voluntary) admissions and committal, with separate provisions for children.

The standard for committal is "Mentally disordered and requires detention in a hospital for his (sic) own good or in the public interest." Mentally disordered is defined as mentally ill, infirm, or subnormal. Voluntary patients may discharge themselves at any time, but the act gives the hospital superintendent power to apply for a patient's committal and to detain them pending a court hearing. During this time compulsory treatment can be given.

The detailed provisions of the act are complex. An issue that is very important to patients is the one of treatment without consent — it seems that those that work in an institution can find a way to give any treatment to any patient that they decide "needs" it.

The legal consequences of committal at present include: you can't leave; you cannot refuse treatment; you lose control of your property; you lose your driver's licence; your mail can be censored; you have visitors at the discretion of hospital staff; if you live outside the hospital you still have no choice about treatment; your committal is for an indefinite period (hospital staff or the judiciary decide when you can leave); and you will be stigmatised

as a mental hospital patient. Once you are a committed patient in New Zealand you can be in a mental hospital for ever. Patients hardly ever have a lawyer at the committal hearing, although it can sentence them to the rest of their life in an institution.

The Mental Health Act is under review. The Health Department has a set of proposals for change which will result in some improvements, such as a definite time period on committals and the setting up of review tribunals. But what these proposals do *not* do is provide for more resources for psychiatric care, or set up

minimum standards. They talk of setting up Community Treatment Orders (CTOs), without providing resources except that the law will state, "No CTO may be made unless the doctor is satisfied that the treatment available to the patient in the community is of a quality no less than that available in hospital." This does not seem like much of a promise. And CTOs do nothing to remove compulsory treatment. The consent sections are an improvement on the present law but, again, do no go far enough, and there is still no provision for legal representation at every committal hearing.

Note this interesting new section, "... no person may be committed by reason *alone* of: intellectual handicap; religious or political beliefs; delinquent or criminal behaviour; alcohol or drug consumption." No mention of sexual preference, which means that anyone in a position to recommend psychiatric hospital treatment who saw homosexuality (including lesbianism) as a mental disorder, could use that as a reason for admittance.

There is nothing anywhere about patients having a say in their care and treatment. □

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

The Health Department has recently published a document, *Psychiatric Hospitals and Hospitals for the Intellectually Handicapped*. Here are some quotes from the summary:

"Many patients remain in hospital who could be more appropriately cared for in other environments. There is insufficient emphasis on strengthening community resources, so that rehabilitation and community care can be realised."

"... often inadequate levels of patient care. Staff frequently have to use inappropriate interventions, and are able to provide only basic care: (there is) under-use of psychotherapeutic approaches to treatment. Patients often do not have individual treatment plans and in many instances patient reviews are infrequent. Multi-cultural and family issues are increasingly recognised as major factors affecting patient care, but the responses to cultural issues remain underdeveloped ..."

"In many instances hospital design, including ward size and bathroom and toilet facilities seriously hamper patient care." In many wards there is no privacy for bathing, showering or going to the toilet.

"It could be said of the country's psychiatric hospitals: It is a cruel paradox that the least is provided where the need is greatest."

So, the department knows that the situation is bad, what are they doing about it?

Another document, *Caring, Curing and Controlling* was published in 1985. Subtitled "Outsiders look at life and work in New Zealand psychiatric hospitals", it is written by Jan Dowland and Robin McKinley and published by the health services research and development unit of the Department of Health, Wellington.

It identifies three possible roles for psychiatric hospitals — to care, to cure, or to control — and does not use the more usual words like "patient" or "inmate". People in hospitals are called "residents", which seems like a real move to treat them with respect.

It is a long report (220 big format pages), dealing with all aspects of hospital treatment and conditions. One chapter is called "Respecting Residents' Rights". Here reference is made to a written code of rights which most hospital boards have, and which applies to all the institutions in their area. These codes focus on treatment issues and Dowland and McKinley observe, "We believe the issue of residents' rights extends beyond this, focusing not only on knowledge and consent in relation to the treatment process, but also on what residents are entitled to by way of a stimulating, satisfying and dignified lifestyle."

The report identifies different types of information that residents need, beginning with information about the ward programme, hospital facilities, visiting and meal hours and so on. They should also have information about their illness, treatment and progress for, "... taking part in making informed decisions about their care and treatment". The other area of information is to do with residents'

rights and the implications of their status as informal or committed residents.

The right to take part in decision-making about care and treatment is identified, along with ideas about residents being involved in ward organisation. Particular attention is given to the rights of committed residents, how the experience of being committed affects them, and the need for safeguards for the protection of all rights. This section of the report concludes:

"Consider, again, residents' access to recreational opportunities, their educational opportunities, their access to storage and space and right to retain personal possessions, their right to keep and spend their own money, wear their own clothes, their right to worship, their right to respect of their religious and cultural beliefs and their right to privacy, not only in relation to their personal care but also in relation to their mail and other communication with family and friends. A consideration of these issues suggests that not all residents have access to a life that respects their dignity and that some are denied opportunities to develop their potential as human beings."

Overhead at a seminar: "In the admission wards it's not so bad, but the further away from them that you get the worse it is. In some long stay wards it's more like a zoo".

Given present economic policies it seems likely that this is yet one more case of getting reports to find out how bad things are and not doing anything much (like spending money) to make improvements. □

Judi Chamberlin has been involved in mental patients' liberation groups in the United States since 1971. In the mid sixties she spent five months as a patient in six mental hospitals. As she tells it in her book, *On Our Own: Patient-Controlled Alternatives to the Mental Health System* (McGraw-Hill, 1978) "... the experience totally demoralized me. I had never thought of myself as a particularly strong person, but after hospitalisation I was convinced of my own worthlessness. I had been told that I could not exist outside an institution. I was terrified that people would find out that I was an ex-patient and look down on me as much as I looked down on myself. For years I feared that any stress, any difficulty would lead to my total collapse. But gradually I had to recognise that I was not the fragile shell I



Judi Chamberlin

*We look towards
alternatives that are
user-controlled*

believed myself to be. It was a long process. I had to fight the crippling belief in my own inferiority, a belief that I had been given by the people I once trusted as healers. It was years before I allowed myself to feel anger at a system that had locked me up, denied me warm and meaningful contact with other human beings, drugged me, and so thoroughly confused me that I thought of this treatment as helpful."

Her involvement in mental patient liberation groups was "of enormous help in getting through the layers of mystification." Through this involvement she has become a well-known advocate for ex-inmates.

Judi was in New Zealand as a guest of the Mental Health Foundation and talked to Hilary Haines.

THE ex-patients' movement in the United States is growing, changing and developing in a lot of ways. It is based on a number of independent local groups loosely networked together. We have a newspaper, "Madness Network News" which comes out of San Francisco, and we have a conference that meets annually. Although the groups are local and independent we tend to support the same things, including the abolition of enforced psychiatric treatment and the development of alternatives to the psychiatric system that are non-medical, voluntary and user-controlled.

We have had an impact in a number of states: we got electroshock banned in Berkley, California, although that is now being disputed in the courts and we led a successful lawsuit against the forced use of drugs in Massachussetts. Other commitment laws have been changed, but it is difficult to keep track because in the States mental health laws are state laws and it's a major undertaking just to keep track of the status of a number of different laws in fifty different states.

Developing patient-controlled alternatives to the psychiatric system has been a very slow process, largely because funding has been very difficult to get. Ex-patients' groups have

always served as support groups for their members, usually in very informal ways. People meet one another through the group and develop friendships and support networks. But we have always been called upon by our own members and by prospective members to offer more in the way of support services. That really takes funding. But we have been developing our ideas of what a good model support service would be.

We look towards alternatives that are voluntary, small, user-controlled and which blur the distinction between the helper and the helped, so that somebody can take on the role of the person who needs help one day, and then turn around and be the person who helps the next day.

A group in Baltimore, which is called "On Our Own", have been getting funding to operate a drop-in centre. They are proud of the fact that in addition to taking money from the state of Maryland to run the centre, they are also in the process of suing the state over the conditions in their hospitals. They feel that is a real indication of the fact that you can provide services and maintain an activist stance, that you can turn around and bite the hand that feeds you and get away with it!

Our group in Boston, the Mental Patients' Liberation Front, is presently in the process of receiving a sizeable

grant from the state. We will be using parts of the model used by the Mental Patients' Association in Vancouver, and endeavouring to maintain a very activist political stance at the same time. There are other groups receiving funding too. However it's very controversial: a lot of groups say that you shouldn't take money because it inevitably leads to co-option.

The drop-in centres I have mentioned are not set up to deal with people in acute crises, but we think we will circumvent a number of crises from ever occurring because for many crises seem to be the culmination of a number of rather long processes in which the person cannot get any help or attention. If you can provide a setting where people can come and find someone to talk to and maybe ease some of their tensions, a lot of these crisis situations may be short-circuited a little.

There is a group in Portland, Maine that has a very well developed plan for running a crisis house, for which they are trying to get funding. We do need the whole spectrum: we need residential places for people who don't want to stay in their apartments, we need crisis centres so that people have an alternative to the psychiatric institutions, and we need drop-in centres to do something about the loneliness and isolation that a lot of

ex-patients are living in.

THE DECLINE OF THE INSTITUTIONS

THE professionally run community mental health system which was brought in to replace the large psychiatric hospitals has resulted only in the creation of another bureaucracy. There are now two bureaucracies, both fighting for the same piece of the pie.

It is very common for buildings that used to hold 1,000 to 1,500 people to now be holding 100 to 300. There is opposition to their closing from the union that represents state hospital workers and community opposition. Many state hospitals, like prisons, are the primary economic support for their communities because they tend to have been built in outlying semi-rural areas, small towns and the like. The community mental health systems largely don't want to deal with ex-state hospital patients, who tend to be shunted out into "medication" groups, where they come in once a week or once a month and get a pat on the head and a prescription. Community health centres seem to be much happier dealing with what are sometimes jocularly referred to as "normal neurotics", people who are getting divorced or going through other life crises, who come in for a little therapy and then go away again. The inpatient units run by community mental health centres tend to be just as dependent on drugs and control as the state hospitals; further, they need the state hospitals as a back up, because there is always the threat that "if you don't behave yourself, we're going to send you to the state hospital."

RADICAL THERAPISTS

THERE is a lot of antagonism between people who call themselves radical therapists and people in the ex-patients' movement. This is because the radical therapists, in general, seem to be very intent on maintaining their own power, even as they are making what they feel is a very radical critique of the psychiatric system. I feel that the ex-patients' movement has gone far beyond that in really challenging

the idea of roles and expertise and professionalism, to the extent of maintaining that often people who are most skilled in helping someone through a crisis do not have an academic degree at all, but have been through that experience themselves.

The anti-psychiatry movement, which is what R D Laing and his followers call what they were doing, was still very much under professional direction and control. In fact, in his book Laing speaks of "schizophrenics" and he uses diagnostic labels even though his attitude towards people he labels as schizophrenic is somewhat different from the traditional psychiatric attitude. The ex-patients' movement, on the other hand, is directed and controlled by patients and ex-patients, and although there are people who have read Laing and who sympathise with a lot of the things he was saying, we have also seen the emergence of a critique of much of the Laingian position, because of the maintenance in his work of the traditional role of the helper and the helped, the psychiatrist and the patient.

People come to our group sometimes and say, "I'm schizophrenic" or "I am a manic depressive" and we tend to say "So what?" That doesn't seem to be very important. What is important is that we have to figure out how to tell people to feel better. We can be sceptical of psychiatric labels. We have to be critical of the psychiatric system and the kinds of treatment used in psychiatry. We have to be very sceptical of the idea that psychiatric expertise has developed very far.

I feel very strongly that adult patients should not live with their families. People who are physically disabled, people who are behaviourally disordered (or whatever your wish to call it) and mentally retarded people often have families that are very paternalistic, very protective in a loving way. It's not out of any evil motivation, but they are holding back the person from their independence, because they are worried that the person won't be able to handle it. Yet inevitably, at some point, that person is going to have to live independently or be institutionalized, because their family isn't going to be around for ever. So I'm a strong advocate of

getting such adults out of the family setting, which is both an infantilizing force on the person and a burden on the parents, into some kind of supportive living arrangement. Very often you have to overcome the opposition of the family, because they are saying "So and so is never going to be able to survive" or "So and so is so sick or incapacitated that they have to be taken care of every minute", and it's that type of paternalism that's holding them back.

PATIENTS' RIGHTS AND FEMINISM

THE feminist critique of psychiatry has only gone so far and the ex-patients' critique has gone a lot further. There is a wonderful paper that was written by a group of women in Toronto who were both ex-patients and feminists. It talks about how our movement's critique goes a lot further than the feminist movement ever would. I don't know whether you have the same situation here, where rape crisis centres and battered women's shelters are becoming professionalized — I mean being staffed by social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists — so that often women who come in, who have been battered or raped, and who are judged inappropriately disturbed over their battering or raping, are referred off to psychiatric institutions. We feel that the notion that there is a proper way to respond to having been raped or battered is a very damaging and ultimately very unfeminist ideal.

We feel that self help and mutual support, which really are the ideals of the women's movement, should be resorted to in those cases. Women who have been raped deserve the support of other women — other rape survivors — in dealing with their feelings, instead of being told that their feelings are the sign of an illness. At the moment in the United States there is another issue being raised by ex-patients regarding appropriate and inappropriate responses to incest. Incest survivors are becoming very vocal within the ex-patients' movement, criticizing a lot of the terminology that is being applied (even some feminists do this) to incest survivors.

We feel very strongly that the

feminist movement is not extending their concept of sisterhood to women who are somehow still being deemed as "out there". We have this tremendous problem because there is a large segment of the feminist community composed of feminist therapists who seem to think that being a therapist is far more important than being a feminist.

I was involved with the Coalition to Stop Institutional Violence, which was formed in Boston in order to deal with the state proposal to build a unit to house violent women who were being drummed out of the prison system into the psychiatric system. It was a really nice group to work with because it was a coalition of women who had worked in the mainstream ex-patients' movement and women from the anti-prison movement. It was really the first time that the two groups had sat down and talked to one another. It was a really positive, strong experience for most of us.

The group was successful in stopping the violent women programme, and later worked on stopping some programme that had been set up for violent adolescents. We developed a very strong political analysis of what was being labelled violence, and why women were labelled as violent when they were doing the same things that men were doing which were not being labelled violent.

Women who were assertive tended to be labelled violent, as were women who were defending themselves against sexual harassment in the institutional setting. A woman who was part of the Coalition to Stop Institutional Violence and who had worked with the Patients' Liberation Front was at one time known as the most violent woman in Massachusetts by mental health staff. In fact she was just a very assertive person, demanding her rights and trying to defend herself against horrendous institutional conditions. The mental health workers were so afraid of her that they would approach her in groups of no less than six big, strapping males (this woman was maybe five feet tall, if that!). Of course, if you're five feet tall and you're being approached by six hulking males who are about to throw you down, tear your clothes off and shoot you full of psychiatric drugs and god knows what else, then that

may create behaviours which can be turned around and labelled as violent. The woman in question, as it happens, is also a mental health professional, a social worker in fact, who has been a head social worker for years.

So, the Coalition to Stop Institutional Violence had a very strong critique of the whole idea of prisons and of lockups of any sort that deal with this type of behaviour. We looked at the sexism of the system. Why do women end up in prisons and mental institutions? They are sent there for behaviour that men are seldom, if ever, sent to institutions for. We see this as part of the economic oppression of women. Most of the women in prison in Massachusetts and, I guess, all over the United States, are there because of prostitution, and prostitution has a lot to do with the economic oppression of women.

WORKING IN SELF-HELP GROUPS

In our groups we expect people to put something back into the group, but we have a long-range expectation. We don't think that after one hour you're going to get anything back. On the other hand, if we put time and energy into someone for months on end and we don't get anything back, then we start talking to the person. We may say that maybe they don't want a self-help group, maybe they *do* want a professional relationship where it all goes one way.

People should talk about the fact that they're getting irritated or angry. I have a friend who runs a halfway house in Connecticut. It's nothing like the traditional halfway house in approach. They encourage the residents to tell the staff if they think they're full of shit. Tom, the guy who directs it, always says, "I'd much rather tell someone that they're acting like an asshole than a schizophrenic". If you're acting like an asshole then you can change. If you're acting like a schizophrenic then a condemnation is being made of the way you are rather than of the way you're behaving at the moment.

I have seen people make incredible changes in their lives, people who really have been given up by the psychiatric system as being hopeless cases. These people *do* go through

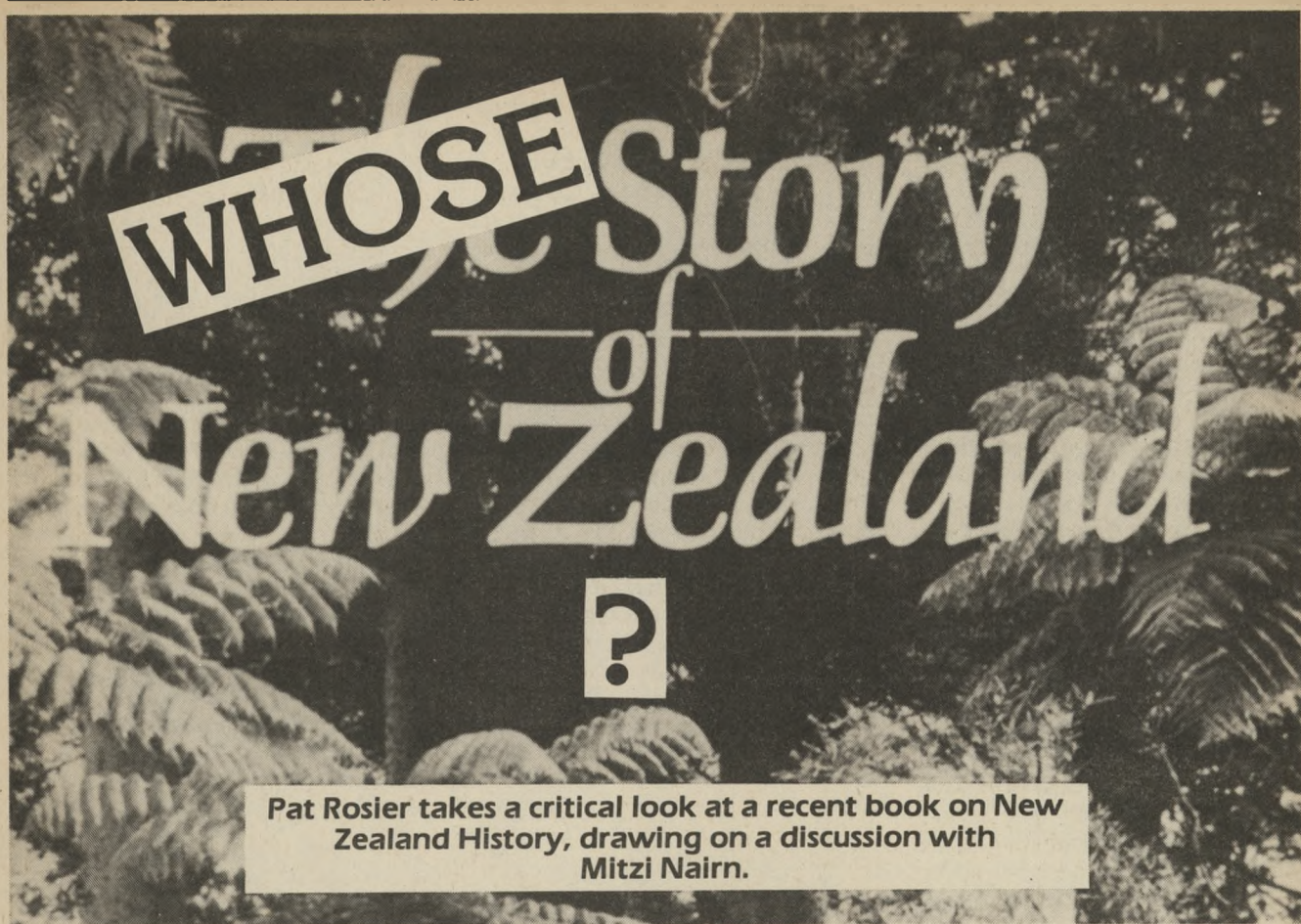
changes in situations where people expect them to change, instead of expecting them to remain the way they are. I'm not saying that it's magic or that it's going to cure everybody, but expectations have a lot to do with it.

Of course, someone going through extreme crises can be very draining and very demanding. So you need crisis centres and other similar places where people are paid. If you're getting everyone together one evening a week to help themselves through the normal crises of life, you can't just take on someone who is extremely freaked out, really wanting and needing a great deal of care and attention.

Basically, I think that there are two kinds of patients' groups. There are those concerned with patients' rights, composed of a mixed group of patients, ex-patients, lawyers, concerned citizens, mental health professionals, parents and so on. Those groups should be looking at the laws of a particular jurisdiction, monitoring commitment proceedings, helping to get lawyers for people who want lawyers, helping to train lawyers (who tend to have standard paternalistic attitudes towards people who are labelled psychiatrically unwell).

political action groups along the model that exists not just in the United States, but also in Canada, across Europe and more recently in Australia. These groups should be composed exclusively of patients and ex-patients. They should be looking to the experiences of their own members in the way that, for example, women's groups developed out of the experience of women's lives and from that began to draw political conclusions and directions for further development.

I think it is very important for ex-patients to have somewhere that they can go which is their own group, where they can begin to develop some of the skills that otherwise they would be more reticent about doing. They tend to sit back and say, "People who are a lot more educated, a lot more able and a lot more experienced can do these things". In fact, groups that are exclusively composed of ex-patients begin to develop skills that otherwise would have been underdeveloped because of a reluctance to do things. □



Pat Rosier takes a critical look at a recent book on New Zealand History, drawing on a discussion with Mitzi Nairn.

THESE days if I come across a book called *The Story of New Zealand* I have high expectations. Once I would have anticipated a book about governments, parliaments, maybe the odd strike, goldfields and farms. Now I look to see what sort of treatment women and Maori people get, whether they are accorded their full and just place in history, whether they are respected. That's how feminism changes your point of view.

So when I find that the book treats New Zealand history as though it really started around 1642, that the Maori and women are treated as secondary to the really important stuff and that it is written in a style that talks down to its intended audience ("young people"), I am disappointed.

If the book was published in the sixties I can think "Oh well, Maori and feminist analysis was not widely published or discussed then." But when I see that historians Judith Bassett, Keith Sinclair and Marcia Stenson published their book in 1985, my disappointment turns to outrage. An

THE UNDERLYING ASSUMPTION IS THAT SETTLERS WERE SOMEHOW IN THE RIGHT

outrage that is fuelled by reading in the authors' introduction that they took into account "... the newest writing and work on New Zealand history." They also wrote, "With the new social history in mind." Their "new" needs updating to encompass class difference, at least, and analysis of the motivations for imperialist expansion like excess labour (and hence unemployment), and the need for new markets. They give their reason for writing as, "we thought young people would like to read a history of New Zealand that was written specially for them." And add, "It needed to be a complete history — from the earliest times to our own time ..." What it is in fact is a very conventional history of

the colonisation of New Zealand from a Pakeha and male perspective.

The title of the book *The Story of New Zealand* implies that it is the definitive one, the one that everyone should know — and believe? The titles does not recognise that there are many other stories of New Zealand: the stories of the Maori tribes, of Dalmation, Indian, Chinese, Greek settlers, the stories of Pacific peoples, the stories of working class settlers and so on. We get snippets from these, but basically the book is *The Story of White New Zealand and its Settlement by Men From Britain and Their Families*. (It is as wives and members of a family, that women are most often portrayed.) Well okay, that story is part of New Zealand's history, but to assume that it is the story of New Zealand is sexist (more of this later) and racist.

For example, the authors write about Captain Cook (pages 20-21) naming various parts of New Zealand, without any acknowledgement that these places had names well before Cook came. Does this mean that the

names the Maori had for places like "Young Nick's Head" or "Cape Kidnappers" just didn't matter, because Cook didn't know them? But if the story of New Zealand does begin in earnest only with its "discovery" by white men then I guess it's not only place names but the entire history of the country before 1642 (when Abel Tasman found it) that is of minimal importance.

The book begins with a short chapter on geological beginnings and in Chapter two deals in six pages with life in New Zealand before the early (Pakeha) explorers. The lack of respect this shows is appalling — hundreds of years of history dismissed in a few pages — when the title claims to be *The History*...

The lack of an analytical framework is a major flaw. None of the assumptions (that it was okay to come and settle in an already occupied land and take over running it, that English based systems should replace Maori based ones, and so on) and myths (Maori culture was "less developed", Maori people "needed" christian religion for their spiritual salvation...) are challenged, in fact they are reinforced.

One of the ways they are reinforced is by assuming that the behaviour of early explorers was above question. It was, in the English speaking world in their day, but surely it should now be openly recognised as arrogant and exploitive. Cook's first contact with Maori people is described like this:

"They could see a Maori settlement ashore and Cook hoped to make contact with them. To Cook's surprise and confusion, the Maori response was proud and aggressive. They saw these intruders as a threat and determined to drive them off. In self-defence the crew of the Endeavour killed a number of the Maoris and Cook left the area he called Poverty Bay, much distressed by this failure."

The Maori, we are told, were proud aggressive and threatened — and killed. Cook was surprised, confused, distressed — and in killing showed the Maori that their original reaction was a valid one. The assumption in the passage is that Cook's behaviour was fine. If an unknown craft full of unknown people had arrived at the shores of England I wonder whether a proud, aggressive and threatened response would have been seen as appropriate.

Chapter Five is called "Under the

IT IS A VERY CONVENTIONAL HISTORY OF THE COLONISATION OF NEW ZEALAND FROM A PAKEHA MALE PERSPECTIVE

British Flag" and describes the events of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and some of the confusions that arose from it almost immediately. It includes this paragraph, "Nevertheless the Treaty continues to have a symbolic importance for New Zealanders. Although it was hastily drawn up, confusing and not very clear, there is one aspect of it that was important. This was put into words by Hobson himself, in the few Maori words he had learnt: 'He iwi tahi tatou.' (We are one people.)"

Maori and Pakeha are not one people, and never have been. Pakeha rules have prevailed for the past hundred and more years, and the Maori have been stuck with that. I think it is irresponsible of the authors to ignore what Maori people have been saying about their perception of New Zealand's recent history and promote this dangerously appealing "one people" idea.

THE chapter on the Land Wars (called "Wars between the Maoris and British, 1860-72), begins, "The 1850s were good years for Maoris and settlers, but there were still difficulties." There is no explanation of how they were good for either group, and the cause of the trouble that was brewing (their words) was "... that the settlers wanted to get land faster than the Maoris would sell it." There is no analysis of this position from the point of view of either group — it is just stated as so, and the implication is that the Maoris were being a bit unreasonable. The explanation that is given for the developing conflict over the land is astonishingly unquestioning.

"For the Maoris the land was their country; they loved it. To the settlers the land meant new farms and profit. They did not yet feel that it was their country. The Maori valued the bush for its birds, berries and other foods. The settlers wanted to cut down and burn the bush and plant grass seed. In

the end they won, but only after a long and hard struggle."

There is no mention of the spiritual attachment of the Maori to the land, no questioning of the settlers "right" to win, nothing to suggest that the relationship to the land was anything more complex to the Maori than the pragmatic one of providing food — have the authors not read *any* Maori mythology? In the next paragraph, talking about some Maori resistance to selling the land they say, "They wanted to keep plenty of land for nga mokopuna (their grandchildren)." Isn't this exactly what landowners in Europe had always done?

The rise of the Maori King movement is described, and then,

"So the Maori kingdom was a block to Pakeha progress through the centre of the North Island. The Europeans and a large section of the Maori people had set off on different paths. The situation was becoming more dangerous."

This statement is accurate, but not neutral, because the underlying assumption is that the settlers were somehow in the right.

In a description of a Hau Hau action at a Captain Wilson's house (adapted from a history of New Zealand written by a Pakeha in 1881) the Maori people are definitely the "baddies". They are described as "murderers", a word that was not used of Cook in that first encounter when he killed people he had never met before. The Maori in this instance were in the midst of what we call the "Land Wars".

And the description of events at Parihaka ridicules the Maori action in defence of their lands there. "In 1881 the Native Minister, John Bryce, led an expedition of the militia to occupy Parihaka, where they were met by a couple of hundred children, singing and dancing. One of our early poets, Jessie Mackay, wrote a parody of *The Charge of the Light Brigade* to celebrate the victory of the militia." (page 93) The Light Brigade had charged into a valley under full military defence, the militia into a group of children!

Following this is Chapter 10, "Family Life in New Zealand in the Late Nineteenth Century", which is entirely about Pakeha families.

Chapter 13 "The Maori People Rebuild" continues with information that whitewashes New Zealand history by making generalised statements that are presumably meant to be taken at face value. For instance there is a

paragraph about the devastating effects of Pakeha diseases, but no mention of how the Maori Land Court helped to spread tuberculosis, typhoid and so on. Because the court did not tell people when a case was to be heard, Maori groups had to hang around for weeks or months in poor housing around the court. If they were not there when their case came up they were assumed to not care about the outcome. Home lands and gardens were neglected during the waiting, Maori people became more dependent on the money economy, debts grew on the land, and the myths about "shiftlessness" grew, along with the measles and typhoid. The effects on any group of people of being displaced, whether by "law" or by war have been well documented. All of this is ignored.

There are many many more examples in this book of a process of seeing everything as progress, of smoothing over real conflicts, of generalising a difficult, yet real history into a sort of "haven't we done well" reminiscence of "our colourful past". One more example: "In 1984 the University of Auckland was building a marae." Makes them sound good, up with the play, doing the right thing. No mention of the years of struggle, the way the university had to be embarrassed into agreeing to it.

The Story of New Zealand is based on figures up to 1981, so I looked up Pacific Island people and Samoans in the index. No entry for either. There is this on page 197: "By 1981 there were 91,500 Pacific Islanders living in New Zealand. They came from Western Samoa, Tonga, The Cook Islands, Niue and other Pacific Islands. There were more Polynesians in Auckland than in any town in the Pacific." Nothing about immigration policies and how they have been related to the needs of industry. A photograph on the same page has the caption "Manager and workers at a Christmas party at an Auckland factory, gathered round a sucking pig. It is an Auckland Polynesian feast." The manager is white, the workers mostly Polynesian. The one piece of Pacific Island content in the book is a "lovely" one. "We are one people" carries on in the face of racism in the housing field (as described in recent stories in the New Zealand Herald), discriminatory immigration policies, and so on.

Note this, "The Maori Women's Welfare League was set up in 1951,



I AM APPALLED THAT HISTORIANS CAN CONTINUE TO PUBLISH WORK THAT HAS NO ANALYSIS OF POWER

and the New Zealand Maori Council in 1962." (page 148). This is perfectly accurate, as far as it goes, but does not acknowledge the different origins of the two groups: Maori women had been getting together and created a strong base themselves for the league; the Maori Council was formed by the National Government of the time.

THE authors say in their introduction that the book is not a text book but a "book for young people to read themselves", and promise some previously unwritten stories about young people from the past. And that, "We have paid special attention to the kind of lives lived by women and children: how they earned their living, what they did in their spare time." Is this sentence saying that women and children are somehow on the fringes of history, an "extra" apart from the main action? And are they significant only because of earning a living and having spare time? (My understanding is that women have always had less "spare" time than anyone.) And lumping the women and children together always makes me suspicious. But the statement does suggest that they are at least going to notice the women. However, a caption on page 15 is disturbing. It explains an anthropologist as "a person who studies mankind." It explains an anthropologist as "a person who studies mankind." This book was published in 1985, and there is no excuse for such grossly sexist language.

Well, in the first six chapters the Pakeha guys are exploring, exploiting, "buying" land, settling. Accurate enough, there weren't any women on Cook's boat, all the governors and whatever were men, but I would have liked some discussion about why exploring was such a masculine undertaking, how these men perceived women. The statement "Many traders found it useful to marry into the tribe with whom they lived," from a caption on page 33, is unfortunately not at all

ambiguous. The traders were men, and some married Maori women — note the "usefulness" of this.

But here we are, Chapter 7, "A New Life in a New Land", and some women in the pictures. Mind you, the little personal stories about individual immigrants are about men. But the conditions on the ships for families are described, and we all know that *that* includes women. And when we get to the section on daily life we read that "women wore skirts which hid their ankles, with lots of petticoats." Then about Sunday, and church, and schooling, and children having to work for money. The section "The role of women", begins, "Women were very important in the new settlements." It goes on to talk about women as home-makers and workers,

"Within the home women had a wider range of responsibilities than they would have had in England. They earned much-needed cash from the sale of their butter and dairy goods. Sometimes they had to take over the management of the farm if their husbands died or left them. Not only did they bring up the children, they were often responsible for educating them, because schools were distant and often expensive . . . it was usually the women who took care of the sick . . ."

This puts every woman in New Zealand on a farm, which was never true. It ignores the large numbers of women in domestic service and assumes that everyone was at least middle class. The lack of class awareness continues in,

"Perhaps the most important role that women played in the new society was that of moderating the hard-drinking rough-spoken pioneer society. Women used their influence to stop men drinking too heavily; they did their best to remind the men of the polite customs and social manners of the land that they had come from. They taught their daughters to play the piano, and their sons to take off their hats when talking to a lady."

Do the writers really mean to imply that all the women in New Zealand then were preoccupied with manners and social niceties? That all the women were at least middle class, and not only could play the piano, but had one? And do they (all historians, I remind myself) really think that all the settlers came from a life of "polite

customs and social manners”?

It's about now that I notice that the Maori have “disappeared”. When they are not obstructing (from the settlers' point of view) the acquisition of land, they don't exist?

“Earning a Living” as described in Chapter 8, consists of sheep farming, forestry and gold mining. The women's work at sewing, washing and in domestic service has disappeared. And prostitution is certainly never mentioned. This paragraph, from the section, “Families on the goldfields”, ends in a thoroughly anti-woman way,

“As unmarried women arrived they were met by crowds of miners in their best clothes, hoping for a wife. Most of the women were married within a week. One boasted she had fifty offers of marriage in one week. The hotel keepers were desperate for barmaids, kitchen-help and dance girls. One hotel keeper asked for a friend in Dunedin to send him the ugliest girl he could find. His friend did as the hotel keeper asked. She lasted a fortnight before she too was married.” (page 78)

Some of the work outside the home that women did gets a passing mention here, but note the contradiction with the previous quote. I find the promotion of the idea that “even” ugly (whatever that means) women can find a husband if there is a big enough shortage totally offensive. The attitude may well have been there: I expect present day writers to at least acknowledge that as an attitude there is a lot wrong with it — like appearance being the criteria by which women are “selected” for a start.

Women disappear again in Chapter 10, except as far as they are implied in “families”. Look at this interesting piece of writing.

“The missionaries and the settlers of the 1840s and 1850s had brought families, but the people who came in the 1960s were mostly men once more . . .”

I'm sure the writers are not *intending* to say that women exist only as part of a family, but this is how it reads.

In the section “Pioneer children” there are some welcome examples of girls' work, including sewing and delivering mail on horseback, but it is only boys who go to work in factories and I'm sure girls were doing the same by the 1870s. (There is a photograph of women workers in a Dunedin woollen mill on page 107, but it is

undated.) Nothing here, or anywhere else about Maori families or women or children. Are they not part of our history?

When the information gets really specific in this book it is fascinating. As in the section in Chapter 11, “Bad working conditions”, which talks in detail about (Pakeha) women working in factories, as outworkers and as a cook in an eating-house. But even this section jumps suddenly back to the “real business” of exports and government.

The section “A better deal for women” (page 110), deals with work and the law. It's okay, as far as it goes. Here's a sample,

“Now women wanted to decide for themselves how they should live. They did not want to be under the authority of a father or a husband. Middle-class women had more free time because they had servants. They had time to lead campaigns for changes in the law.” (page 111)

The next paragraph is about some of the things the women wanted — education for careers, changes to law on marriage, property, divorce and the vote. Nothing very specific, and no indication how successful or otherwise they were, except for, later, a slightly obscure statement about women getting the vote,

“In spite of opposition from the liquor trade, by 1893 the majority of Members of Parliament were in favour of giving women the right to vote. New Zealand was the first country to do so.” (page 112)

Atelling example of the attitudes towards and underlying assumptions about women is contained in the use of “Women's lib” — the women's movement to get equality —”. (page 197) Surely this should be “The Women's Liberation movement (sometimes called ‘Women's Lib’) or something more like that. After all, the authors do say, “Richard John Seddon, known to everyone as ‘King Dick’” (page 118), and “. . . the Federation of Labour. They were nicknamed ‘The Red Feds’”

Again, I could give more and more examples of the subtle and not so subtle ways in which women are denigrated. One last quote, from the chapter “The 1930s: Depression and the Welfare State”,

“... people needed jobs. Much bigger public work projects were

started, using men and machinery efficiently. Many of these projects were badly needed.”

Again people = men, in this case needing jobs. Over 90,000 women were in paid work in 1936, and nothing is said about the work they did, and needed.

“Young people”, the group for whom the book was written, is a fairly loose description of a projected audience, and maybe could refer to children from about eight, who were confident readers, to 16-17 year olds. There are a number of arguments about what sort of writing style is suitable for young readers, and I tend to go along with the idea that good, clear writing is accessible to anyone over about eight if the ideas contained in it are within their grasp. So when I read a sentence, from the introduction, like, “They really lived and we have found out about them and written their stories for the first time.” I cringe as I hear echoes of the kindly but superior and patronising voices of my primary school teachers in the 1950s telling me what they think I will be interested in. And this tone and style is continued throughout the book.

When they are being very specific and giving factual information the language seems fine, but as soon as general statements are being made (and they are made *very* often), the talking down tone creeps in. For example Governor Grey made, “fiery speeches on the bad deeds of landlords”. (page 51) “Bad deeds” makes me think of stealing apples and “naughty” children rather than property owners exploiting tenants. The quaintness of some of the language jars, too. As in “The Maori warrior, like the English soldier, sought honour and fame in the assault with the patu (club) as in the cannon's mouth.” (page 15) And, of Governor Fitzroy, “He had often proved *infirm of purpose*.” (page 51, my italics)

As a woman I feel cheated by this book. I am appalled that historians can continue to publish work that has *no* analysis of power and that presents a generalised view of our history that ignores its differences and variety. School Journals are doing better than this in presenting New Zealand material for young people.

I fear that it will be bought by schools and become yet another tool for propagating a racist and sexist view of our past. □

LOOKING AFTER MOTHER

JULIA MILLEN EXAMINES SOME OF THE CONFLICTS THAT ARISE FOR PAKEHA NEW ZEALANDERS WHEN THE ELDERLY NEED SPECIAL CARE

From March 1981 to May 1982 I had to take into my home and care for a woman suffering from a severe mental illness. I was untrained, unprepared and received little or no help. But I had no choice but to cope as best I could because the woman was my mother. She was suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Later I wrote the book — *Dilemma of Dementia* — about my experience. (See "Strokes and Art Attacks")

Until the "mother" crisis struck, I was oblivious of the implications of my mother's ageing and quite unprepared for the illness that so severely reduced her competence and independence. Up to that time I had been a carefree and complacent woman in her thirties with few responsibilities. Outwardly my mother appeared to be a healthy, active woman in her early 70s. So it was that when my mother's dementia appeared in a dramatic and frightening way, it was a bombshell. Almost overnight everything changed. My mother had to submit to being cared for by her younger daughter, while I was destined to become the worried, harassed, insecure daughter of an aged parent — a carer for the elderly.

Five years on I am older and a little better informed. I know for instance that what happened to me and my mother could happen to anyone — especially any woman. One person in ten over the age of 65 suffers from some form of dementing illness and the prevalence increases markedly among the over 80s. Women live longer and are therefore in a high risk category. They make up the majority of New Zealand's estimated 20,000 people affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementing illnesses. With our ageing population structure the prediction is that by the year 2000, there could be 50,000 sufferers.



Julia Millen Photo: Evening Post

Despite some changes in women's role, it is still women who are expected to become the carers of the elderly. An unseen army of women — daughters, sisters, nieces, daughters-in-law — carry the burden.

Dementia is a condition affecting the brain which used to be called senility. The less offensive term dementia is used mainly by the medical profession but most people have only a vague idea what it means. It describes the various symptoms of mental deterioration — memory loss, confusion, suspiciousness and inability to reason. Dementia can be caused by a number of diseases or mental conditions, but the most common is Alzheimer's disease. At present there is no treatment and no cure for it. Usually it is fatal within ten years of diagnosis.

By its nature Alzheimer's disease is difficult to diagnose. The onset is gradual and doctors are reluctant to make a damning prognosis too early. In the case of my mother's illness, I did not know and neither it seemed did the medical profession, whether she was going "mad" or suffering

from the loneliness and depression commonly found among the elderly.

One thing rapidly became clear to me. Although my mother was by nature independent and resented interference with her lifestyle, she could no longer look after herself. She was agitated and irrational, she forgot to eat, she accused the neighbours of stealing her money and kept calling on the police.

So what was going to happen to her? The health service does not provide the sort of constant supervision which would have been appropriate. It rapidly became apparent that everyone assumed that as I was her daughter and lived in the same city, I would care for her. And eventually that is what happened. Mother came to live with me.

Having my demented mother in the house made life very difficult. Here is an extract from the diary I kept at that time:

Saturday 4 July.

Woken from a deep sleep at 8.30 a.m. "I must ring Fraud," she says through the door. Groan. "No you can't," I shout at her. Hassle, hassle. We told her to make us a cup of tea. Frank really annoyed at being woken, having been out to a late movie. So that was the morning shot . . .

Saturday 25 July.

Woken early again. Still dark. "Must get in. Use the telephone." "Go back to bed, Mum." I kept shouting. Only about 6.30 a.m. Three weeks since this last happened. Must try to see a pattern in this. Strain on us. Mum keeps going on about the "gang of thieves."

Even after Mum moved in, I still had not fully accepted that I was committed to the role of her carer — a life sentence. As I saw it, if my mother was suffering from a serious health problem, medical professionals should diagnose and treat her and try to bring about a cure. But they offered nothing. No help and no solution to the problem. Like it or not, I had to carry on looking after a severely mentally disturbed woman.

Health service publicity makes much of its support for the elderly. Services include: Meals-on-wheels, domiciliary physio and occupational



Photo: Gil Hanly

'What do you see nurses, what do you see?
Are you thinking when you look at me —
a crabbit old woman, not very wise,
Uncertain of habit with far away eyes,
Who dribbles her food and makes no reply
When you say in a loud voice 'I do wish you'd try'.
I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still
As I rise at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
I'm a child of ten with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters who love one another;
A bride soon at twenty my heart gives a leap
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep:
At twenty-five now I have young of my own
Who need me to build a secure happy home;
At fifty once more babies play round my knee
Again we know children, my loved one and me;
Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead.
I look to the future I shudder with dread.
My young are all busy rearing young of their own
And I think of the years and the love that I've known.
I'm an old woman now and Nature is cruel
'Tis her jest to make old age look like a fool.
The body it crumbles, grace and vigour depart
There is now a stone where I once had a heart.
But inside this old carcase a young girl still dwells
And now and again my battered heart swells,
I remember the joys, I remember the pain,
And I'm loving the living all over again.
And I think of the years all too few — gone too fast
And I accept the stark fact that nothing will last.
So open your eyes nurses, open and see
Not a crabbit old woman, look close — and see me!

This poem was written by an old lady in a geriatric ward of a London hospital, and was found in her locker after she died.

therapists, district nurses, home help and a laundry service. These are of most use for the elderly who are physically rather than mentally frail. For the mentally disabled, services can do little more than support the carers of the elderly. They do not take over responsibility for the elderly person but will prop up the carer for as long as that person — woman — can cope. If there were no carers the health and welfare system would break down. Yet carers are unpaid and often unappreciated and unnoticed by either the old people or the rest of the community.

Elderly people suffering from various forms of dementia need almost 24 hour a day supervision. How can a woman be expected to cope and still lead a life of her own? She can't. The many women who at present are caring for their elderly have usually made enormous sacrifices. If more is expected of the "community" it is women who will suffer — both the women carers and

the elderly women in need of care.

If present trends continue the situation can only get worse. One trend is inevitable — the increasingly aged population. The second trend could be reversed and should be before it is too late. Politicians are promoting community care for the elderly as being more desirable than institutional care. And since costs are enormous, hospital boards are responding by closing down geriatric wards and hospitals. But the fact is that even under the best circumstances of community care, there is still a need for institutions to provide long term care for the many who need 24 hour nursing.

And while health policies favour community care as being in the best interest of all, the provisions have not been made for extra support services. Existing services are already stretched to the limit and without more day care centres, more intermittent institutional care and considerably improved home visiting

services, carers and their elderly will suffer. In any case there are and always will be many elderly who have nobody who can act as carer for them.

Being a carer — even for the willing and able — is no easy task. She has to organise and co-ordinate all services and be persistent and vigilant to ensure that services continue.

To get help from the state, a carer must arrange with a doctor to have their elderly person assessed. This procedure involves a medical team who decide how much assistance is needed to maintain the patient at home. While under home care the health/welfare service provides for the elderly person to be admitted to an institution for 28 days per year to enable the carer to have a holiday. When extra support is recommended this can be extended to intermittent care. The patient is admitted to an institution for two weeks out of every six, ten, or 14. It is only when the patient is assessed as being

unmanageable at home that they will be admitted into an institution for long term continuing care. With demented elderly patients this institution will most likely be a psychiatric hospital. Because of feelings of guilt, many carers choose to carry on coping with their elderly at home.

For carers like myself who find they cannot cope at a stage when the state system still regards the person as manageable, the alternative is the private rest home. The procedure for gaining admission to a rest home is neither easy nor quick. Apart from the expense, all applicants must be referred by a doctor and most homes have a four to six month waiting list. They can pick and choose whom they accept and are wary of admitting people with Alzheimer's disease.

Despite some reservations, I believe that in many respects my mother was better off in institutional care than at home with me. The staff were cheerful and pleasant and looked after her well. The facilities were designed especially for the elderly. While retaining some privacy, my mother always had company and was never left on her own. Also, once she was living in a home I resumed a more normal relationship with my mother and was able to enjoy her company.

On the negative side was the reduced independence and the regimentation. There was also the loss of personal attention and little attempt made to maintain my mother's skills. In the rest home Mum had practically nothing to do and her morale and general well-being deteriorated.

Even while the old person is living in an institution, the carer is still on duty and if anything goes wrong, gets the first phone call. Matron phones: "Your mother needs more underwear," or "Your mother is becoming incontinent." There will be financial and legal matters to attend to, and there is the occasional crisis. The police: "Your mother has been reported missing." A carer gets to hate the telephone.

Added to the burden of caring comes the increased feeling of guilt. While my mother was living with me I often felt guilty — when I was angry and shouted at her, when I felt embarrassed by her behaviour. And I felt more guilt at having to put my



Photo: Gil Hanly

mother into a home. Unconsciously and probably sometimes consciously, society and the health service exploit such feelings, especially in women, in order to make carers assume more of the burden. It is ironic that it is the women who are already doing most to help who are most likely to suffer a sense of guilt. Learning to cope with feelings of frustration, anger and guilt is one of the many ways that Alzheimer's Support Groups can help. The Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Society (ADARDS) now has groups in most main centres and contact numbers can be

obtained through the Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Care for the elderly is an important issue for women. Ideally the standard health services should free the carer from feeling obliged to make unreasonable sacrifices and should feature the best aspects of the two extremes of care — home and institutional.

If women are not careful — that is loud and persistent in demanding something better — and "community care" becomes a cheap option, we will end up with a system in which care for the elderly combines the worst features of the present alternatives. □

Photo: Gil Hanly



ON THE SHELF

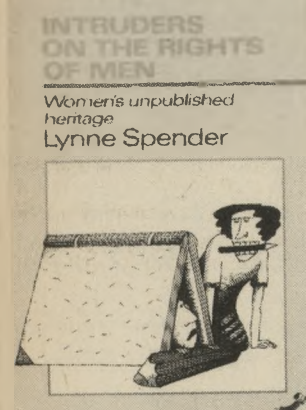


NON FICTION

WOMEN AND EDUCATION Eileen M. Byrne

The education system today is as male-dominated and as male-oriented as in the Victoria era which laid its foundations. Eileen Byrne examines many modern educational policies and exposes the continuing basic problems of the severe underachievement of girls and women and the missing role of women in the government of education. Tavistock Publications, pbk, \$20.95

PANDORA PRESS



INTRUDERS ON THE RIGHTS OF MEN

Lynne Spender

Lynne Spender tells the story of an unpublished heritage of women's writing. She reveals the fortunes of past generations of women who have taken up the pen. She talks with today's writers and publishers too, uncovering the part that publishers yesterday and today have played in selecting what shall and shall not be published. Pandora Press, pbk, \$9.85

WOMEN CONFINED Ann Oakley

Women have not been seen as human beings, but as people whose bodies and minds are programmed for childbearing. Consequently their reactions to birth and motherhood — their "adjustment" or "depression"

— have been attributed to their femininity rather than to their humanity. Ann Oakley shows that particular social and medical circumstances make depression after birth more likely and she emphasizes that lack of adjustment to the life-event of childbirth is a common occurrence, given the present position of women in modern industrialized societies. Martin Robertson, pbk, \$23.70

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT Claire Tomalin

One of the most controversial figures of her day, Mary Wollstonecraft had travelled to France and lived through the Terror and the destruction of the incipient French feminist movement; produced an illegitimate daughter; published (in 1792) *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and married William Godwin before dying in childbirth at the age of thirty-nine. She was witty, courageous, unconventional. She was also often embattled and bitterly disappointed; but she never gave up her radical ideals, or her belief that courage and good intentions would triumph over dead convention. Penguin, pbk, \$13.50

ON BEING A WOMAN Fay Fransella and Kay Frost.

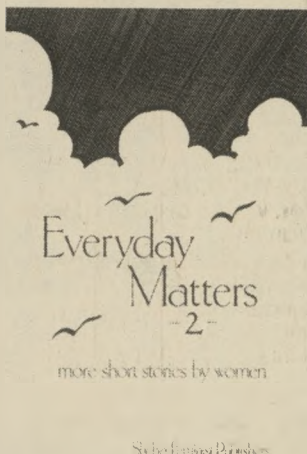
This book is concerned with what women have to say about themselves — what it means to a woman to be a woman. Topics cover conflict between career and housework, attitudes to motherhood, childhood development and mental health in general. Tavistock Publications, pbk, \$21.95

VICTORIA'S FURTHEST DAUGHTERS

Patricia A Sargison

A Bibliography of published sources for the study of women in New Zealand from 1830 to 1914. Alexander Turnbull Library, pbk, \$10.00

LESBIAN



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USES OF THE EROTIC: THE EROTIC AS POWER Audre Lorde

Audre Lorde examines the corruption and distortion of the erotic by those in power. For women this has meant a suppression of the erotic as a considered source of power and information with in our lives. Audre reclaims and celebrates the erotic. The Crossing Press, pbk, \$3.95

BLACK WOMEN

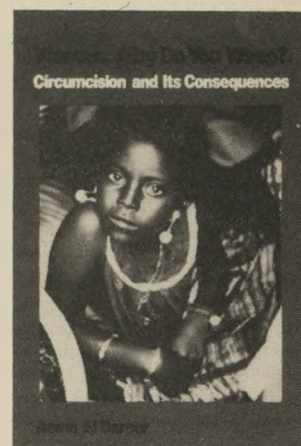
SISTER OUTSIDER Audre Lorde

Black woman, lesbian, feminist, mother of two children, daughter of Grenadian immigrants, educator, cancer survivor, activist. The essays

and speeches in *Sister Outsider* give new resonance to that fundamental revelation that the personal is political. The Crossing press, pbk, \$21.00

WE MAKE FREEDOM Beata Lipman

"Black women in South Africa live their daily lives within a framework of apparently immutable laws that have said, for hundreds of years, that if you are both black and female you may not aspire, you are not equal and you have no rights. But those who spoke to me so frankly do not accept their status: they are neither passive nor victim. They certainly do not sit with their hands folded listlessly in their laps." Beata Lipman records the voices of the women who struggle and endure there. Their words come through with a power and immediacy which shockingly conveys the texture of daily life in a country



WOMAN, WHY DO YOU WEEP?

Asma El Dareer

This is the first book by a Sudanese woman to deal with female circumcision and infibulation in Sudan. Detailed evidence is presented. Asma El Dareer focuses particularly on the health problems resulting from the custom, and gives a fascinating account of the very varied attitudes which Sudanese women and men have towards it. Zed Press, pbk, \$14.50

organised entirely on the proposition that the majority of its people simply do not count as full human beings. Pandora Press, pbk, \$16.95

POETRY

NO HOLDS BARRED

Anna Carteret, Fanny Viner, Sue Jones-Davies

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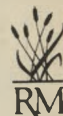
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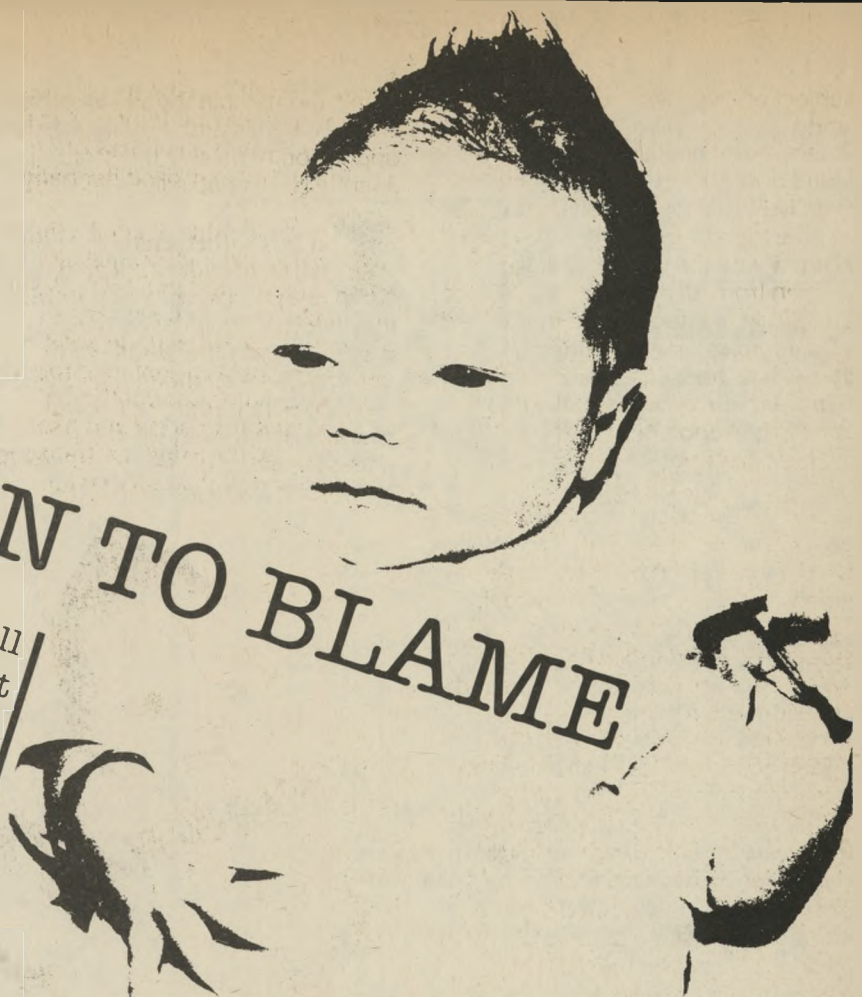
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A WOMAN TO BLAME

Mary O'Connell
of the Campaign against
the Kerry Tribunal Report
sent us this account
of what has come to
be known in Ireland as
the "Kerry Babies" affair



On 13 April 1984, in the early hours of the morning, a young Kerrywoman Joanne Hayes gave birth to a premature baby boy, which did not survive. Forensic evidence was later to indicate that the baby had not achieved a separate existence. Joanne buried her dead infant on the family farm. The father of this child, Jeremiah Locke, a young married man, was also father of Joanne's eleven month old daughter Yvonne. Their relationship had ended months previously following Joanne's discovery that his wife was expecting a second child.

On 14 April the body of a male infant was found on a south Kerry beach fifty miles away from the Hayes farm. This baby (the Cahirciveen baby) had multiple stab wounds and a broken neck. Senior gardai (police) were brought down from Dublin for a murder investigation.

On 1 May Joanne Hayes was charged with the murder of an unnamed infant. After hours of "questioning" she and her family; her mother, sister, two brothers and aunt had all made detailed

statements confessing that a baby had been born to Joanne which was stabbed, choked, beaten to death with a bathbrush and disposed of in the sea, thrown off the cliffs of Sleah Head in Kerry. Joanne had told them the story of her baby buried on the farm but they had not been believed. A cursory gardai search found nothing. The next day her sister searched for and found Joanne's baby where she said she had placed it and alerted the gardai.

The guards were not unduly put out by this discovery. Undaunted they decided Joanne had had twins. But blood group tests established that Joanne and Jeremiah Locke could not be the parents of the Cahirciveen baby. In other words, that the Hayes family could not have done what they had admitted to in their "confessions". Still undaunted, the gardai considered that Joanne had had twins to two different lovers, one of whom had the blood group necessary for fathering the stabbed infant. Not surprisingly their report to the Director of Public Prosecutions was met with this advice: "All charges should be withdrawn at the first opportunity". On 10 October this was done.

The story of how a woman and her family had confessed to a crime they could not have committed hit the papers four days later. An internal police inquiry proved inconclusive. In response to the public outcry the government set up a tribunal of inquiry headed by Mr Justice Kevin Lynch which opened proceedings on 28 December 1984 and closed on 14 June 1985. It cost the state 1.5 million pounds.

An article of this brevity couldn't begin to sum up the evidence and opinions and theories considered by the tribunal. The gardai talked about twins, bifecundation (the two lovers... a lot of time was spent trying to find the second lover) and even considered the possibility of a third baby. They denied that they had put any pressure on the family to sign confessions or had put words in their mouths. The confessions were true, they insisted, the forensic evidence was false.

The Hayes family found themselves in court and on trial after all. One lawyer alone asked Joanne 2,216 questions, many of them incredibly personal. She says in her book *My Story*, "My life has become public property and my body a

subject of discussion all over the world."

On the fourth she collapsed and could only continue with the aid of sedatives. Demonstrations took place outside the tribunal, first by her fellow villagers and the following day by women from all over the country. The judge was furious; he threatened jail sentences on any further demonstrators and called the women "ignorant raucous urban dwellers". Later in his report he was to condemn the public support for Joanne, the "wrongdoer" as he called her.

Justice Lynch published his report on 4 October. The *Irish Times* headlined "Report blames Hayes family, criticises actions of gardai." The *Irish Independent* was more sure of itself. "Joanne's Shame," it screeched, adding "Gardai slipshod but exonerated".

How did we get from patently rigged confessions to blame on the family and shame on the woman?

The blame and shame came from these words of Mr Lynch: "Joanne Hayes got into a panic and as the baby cried again she put her hand around its neck and stopped it crying by choking and the baby did not breath again. At some stage during the course of these events, Joanne Hayes used the bathbrush from the bathroom and hit the baby to make sure it was dead. None of the family tried to stop Joanne Hayes from either choking or hitting the baby."

Strong stuff indeed. And although read carefully it is clear that the death of Joanne's baby was neither intentional nor premeditated (she stopped it crying) the subtlety of Lynch's language (rare in the rest of his report) was, of course, lost on the general public and the newspapers. As far as we were concerned, at least initially, Joanne Hayes had killed her baby, full stop. The judge had said it. And when Joanne agreed to appear on Ireland's most popular TV programme, the *Late Late Show* "to tell the people that I did not kill my baby" the switchboard was jammed with vicious and often obscene phone calls.

The judge had made the question of what had happened the night Joanne gave birth the central question (and answer) of his report, and although disquiet began to be expressed over other aspects of it — the treatment of the gardai, for instance, or the sexism of it — the

public did not join the usual motley crew of liberals and feminists in their opposition. Why split hairs when Joanne Hayes had killed her baby?

In November, Gene Kerrigan wrote a lengthy article for the liberal magazine *Magill* which they titled on their cover: "Kerry Babies, We say the judge got it wrong." Gene Kerrigan had followed the tribunal throughout the six months of the hearing and had access to all the evidence, transcripts, confessions and so on that the



tribunal had considered. Slowly, carefully, painstakingly he challenges the judge's deductions and findings. On the specific accusation of choking and the hitting he wrote: "There is no evidence of choking. No evidence of hands around the neck, of damage to the larynx." And "Given the almost universal understanding that Joanne Hayes hit the baby with the bathbrush; it cannot be emphasised enough. The evidence *does not* support the judge's findings." (The judge got it wrong, *Magill* said. Less kinder souls might have put, the judge made it up.) Kevin Lynch himself showed some kindness to Joanne. He graciously allowed that she was not the mother of the Cahirciveen baby, and furthermore that there was no second lover. He was kinder still to the gardai who had charged her with the murder of the first and insisted on the existence of the other for many months.

It would be naive to expect a member of the judiciary to come down heavily on the police but the judge's own naivety is pretty amazing. Kevin Lynch accepts that allegations of physical and verbal abuse are

made against the cops regularly. In fact he calls it "an everyday event". Luckily the judge knows such allegation's to be false, for if they were true "Those gardai accused would have to be dismissed from the Gardai Siochanna because such misconduct involving physical abuse of citizens by Gardai cannot be tolerated." The dogs in the street know otherwise, the judge had obviously never heard their barking.

Justice Lynch accepted that the gardai, following a pre-arranged line of defence, had sworn on oath certain things that were untrue. "A charade" he delicately calls it and having listed three examples of gardai swearing on oath things to be true that the judge knew, and knew that they knew to be false he goes on to say that you could not call them "barefaced lies." They are an exaggeration over and above the true position, or a gilding of the lily, or wishful thinking elevated to the status of hard fact." Explaining why police lied on oath, or rather gilded lilies in the stand, he says "Familiarity (with oaths) breeds contempt" A contempt of his court that Lynch had wanted to imprison demonstrators for.

The justice saw no such grey areas when he dealt with the Hayes family. He didn't like them at all, especially Joanne and her mother and sister. Perhaps the sisters' weeping in his tribunal got on his nerves. But then the judge does not have a very high opinion of women. "What is so unbelievably extraordinary" he asks at the end of his report, "about the fact that two women in County Kerry in one of the weeks in 1984 both decided to do away with their babies?"

What is unbelievable is that Kevin Lynch, without a single shred of evidence has decided that it was the mother of the Cahirciveen baby who stabbed it to death. What is extraordinary is that he has now declared Joanne Hayes *decided* to kill her baby. That baby who was not strangled, not choked, not stabbed and whose only mark was a slight bruise on the neck, which might have been discoloration due to decomposition, said the state pathologist, or a bruise consistent with marks made sometimes during delivery.

The judge quotes the illegitimacy statistics for Kerry to explain his lack of surprise at two dead infants found

in one week in one county of Ireland. He doesn't go on to include, though he could well have done, the fact that Ireland had now the highest abortion rate in Europe, that each year hundreds of babies are born to young single women in secret, in homes run by religious orders and friends; that each year tens of women turn up at hospitals in labour, which is the first time any member of the medical profession has heard of or helped with their pregnancies. Perhaps the judge is quite right not to be surprised.

Nell McCafferty, journalist and feminist, in her book on the case *A Woman to Blame* asks: "Is it seriously suggested that Irish society is standing proudly by waiting for the child, any child, no matter the circumstances of its parentage?"

Ask Yvonne Hayes, Joanne's daughter. Kevin Lynch describes her father in the same way that that man had described himself before the tribunal; as a married man with two

children. Yvonne Hayes, bastard child, does not exist. A tribunal wiped her out.

The judge extended his kindness to Jeremiah Locke. Joanne had "cast her eye upon him" (Well if we women are murderers, why not witches as well?). She was "the main or dominant force in the liason. For his part Jeremiah Locke gladly accepted the sexual favours which he knew were so readily available to him" (and what man wouldn't, eh judge? nudge nudge). He hopes that Mary Locke will have better days of it now that "her husband has disentangled himself from Joanne Hayes."

To quote from *A Woman to Blame* again, Nell McCafferty asks, "This report's attitudes to sexual relations between men and women is such that, if it fairly represents the male view of women, will it be enough to drive Irishwomen and their children off the cliffs of Sleat Head in suicidal despair?"

Well, we didn't need the Kerry Tribunal report to show us what the male view of women is, and some women have committed suicide in the face of it in despair. Others have died because of it. Fifteen year old Anne Lovett and her baby in a grotto, Shiela Hodges of cancer the doctors wouldn't treat due to her pregnancy and Shiela's baby as well.

One of the hundreds of women, and men, who wrote to Joanne or sent mass cards or flowers during her ordeal at the tribunal told her "Joanne you pray too to your little boy in heaven. But for the narrowminded people of Ireland, holy Ireland at that, your little boy would be alive today as you wouldn't be afraid of being a mother."

The one thing Mr Justice Kevin Lynch and Joanne Hayes are agreed upon; Joanne is no heroine. Joanne Hayes was an ordinary women, like ourselves, and like ourselves, a woman to blame. □

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The day of the Lost Boys began late. Violet slept in. She was woken from a convoluted dream by the noise of the phone. Not its ringing, more as if someone were tinkering with it. Absentmindedly it trickled and blurred.

Ignoring it, Violet pattered round her rooms, throwing on layers of warm clothing, gulping tea, loading up her bag with a library paperback, tissues, acid drops, money purse, first aid purse, identity purse, roll-up raincoat. Plus a letter to post to her little sister in Perth, and her keys, and picture books and treats for the Boy.

Slamming the door, she rushed down the stairs with ten minutes to get to the stop before the next bus.

Down by the fence, the deaf lady next door buttonholed her.

"These bananas, you like them don't you."

"Well yes we do but, ah . . ."

"There's a big bunch going rotten here, just going rotten here on the shed roof. If you stand on this chair you might be able to reach them. Here, would this knife do? I can't reach."

Violet took the lethal looking knife and reaching up, standing tip toe on the chair, she slashed the stalk and found her arms full of the great straggling bunch.

"Thank you!" she said to the deaf lady. "Are you sure you don't want some."

"I'm allergic to them, y'know. Someone might as well eat them."

Violet took her stairs again, two at a time, dumped the bananas on a big fruit dish, slammed out the door again, and reached the stop just as the bus arrived.

Gasping, she got on, and grinned. The driver was a mate of hers. He owed her a favour, having beaten her unmercifully at Scrabble last time they had met. He waved her to sit up front so they could chat.

"Eh, what you been up to."

"Nothing much."

It took a while to get her breath. She leaned back in the seat, closed her eyes, and was lulled into submission like the rest of the passengers.

Violet opened her eyes. Her friend was talking to her. She noticed icicles of sky flashing past in winter tree branches as the bus trundled down Franklin Road, and up the other side. She waved goodbye to her mate. "So long!"

Waiting in Victoria Street for the Favona bus, Violet felt the wind seeping through her layers of clothes to her bones.

The Favona bus, when it came, was wide and warm. From time to time a bleak sun came out and Violet lifted her head from the paperback in time to glimpse her old school, or the library where she used to change her book and magazine every day after school, or the statue of white streaked Sir John, or the Greenwoods Corner shops where she bought Captain Marvel comics, or Ollie's Ice Cream Parlour, or the old bridge seen from the new bridge.

After the fruit shops she put her book away and rang the bell. She bought biscuits and yoghurt at the dairy by the hospital gate. Walking along the hospital driveway Violet ate the pot of chocolate flavoured yoghurt and a couple of the afghans. Inside her she felt the familiar dull pain and joy of knowing she would see the Boy again. Would he have more scars from falls. Would he be glad to see her and show it. Or would he be sunk in sadness and take it out on her by pulling her hair or trying to hug

SHORT STORY

THE DAY OF THE LOST BOYS



Illustration: Hotspur

her to death.

Past the staff pool, the office block, the workshops, the playground where a few ducks pecked, she walked, past the footie players on the field and a group of girls going for a walk with a nurse.

Pressing the buzzer by the door, Violet went in. The Supervisor greeted her from the staff room. She sat for a little while and he told her the Boy had been "not too bad, you know what he's like" since her last visit.

"The horse riding has been a big success on Tuesdays," he said. "But he still refuses to wear his crash helmet. You know how stubborn he can be."

She grinned wryly. "Keep trying," she said. "As long as someone walks on each side of the horse he should be all right."

The Supervisor stood up. "If you'll just sign the book, I'll go and see if the Boy is dressed yet." After the book was signed and dated Violet stood waiting by the little fountain in the foyer.

Now here he was, staggering towards her with that Groucho Marx walk of his that always made her want to laugh, or cry.

"Hello Boy!" She threw her arms round him in a bear hug.

He grunted, chuckled. She thought, if he had grown up straight he would be taller than me now! Amazing thought. Another boy was sitting on the floor, rocking back and forth. When he saw them, he gabbled excitedly. Reached out and tugged her dress.

"Boy muvver! Boy muvver!" Let go.

"Come on Freddy, let's get you out to the courtyard for a bit of sun," said the Supervisor, helping Freddy up and away. Thank you.

Violet sat in the chair beside the Boy and gave him another hug. "Well, have you been a good boy." His hair smelt of shampoo.

He snickered, and buried his head in her shoulder. She held him for a while as he groaned. He was sad because he hadn't seen her for two months, Violet thought. She had been too busy.

The Supervisor came back and sat down in the chair on the other side of the Boy. The Boy lifted his head from Violet's shoulder. He pushed the Supervisor away. The Supervisor wanted to talk.

"Hey, Boy," joked the Supervisor, pushing him back. The Boy pretended to sulk, while the Supervisor told Violet about the problems he was having getting staff, and said they had seen her mentioned on the telly. She had not seen it herself, she said.

"The Boy likes watching the telly, don't you Boy," said the Supervisor. The Boy pushed him away again. Violet brought a little package out of her bag. A little jumping-bean puzzle, wrapped.

"And he likes little presents too, don't you kid," laughed Violet. Opening and playing with the toy would distract him while she listened to the Supervisor. But he had to go, he said, to supervise the afternoon tea and she and the Boy went out to sit in the sun. They sat side by side on the steps, watching the world go by. "Look at those lovely clumps of jonquils!" "Car!"

Sparrows soon flocked to them when Violet threw some crisp crumbs on the path. Another group of boys went for a walk with nurse. A couple of them waved and shouted out to the Boy. The nurse smiled at Boy and Violet sitting on the step.

"Boy Mummy . . ." as the children wandered away down the road with Nurse. The sun shone. The wind blew. But they were sheltered by the jasmine covered fence. Violet told the Boy how the rest of the family was getting on. She rolled his little matchbox car back and forth along the step, up his leg and arm and over his back and down the other side. From time to time she gave him another hug. Once she whispered in his ear that he was a special boy and that she loved him. She fed him bits of his banana, a biscuit, crisps.

She wished she could come more often, she said, but had been busy.

Staff came on and off duty. A father took a handicapped boy for his Sunday afternoon drive, smiling dolefully at Violet as he drove away. Oh for a car, she thought. He's lucky.

When a big cardboard box dropped off the grey delivery truck, Violet and the Boy thought it was a huge joke and laughed when the driver, returning, nearly swerved round it before realising it must have dropped off the back of his truck and getting out to pick it up. As the truck roared away the Boy gave a great burst of laughter. Then turned to grin at her.

"This is better than watching telly isn't it," said Violet, getting up to stretch her legs. The Boy got himself up and stood crookedly beside her, hanging on to the rail with one hand and with his other arm crooked round her.

Standing, they felt the cold wind, and the Boy, Groucho like, followed her back in to the sun room. He tore aside the lace curtain, sat down in a chair and twisted round so he could watch the world go by through the window while Violet told him all her problems. He listened, smiling. Time passed.

The Supervisor came to offer tea, but Violet was satisfied by the yoghurt and was not thirsty. A nurse brought a drink of cordial for the Boy. He drank it without spilling a drop, clutching the plastic cup in both hands.

"You're a clever Boy," she said, patting his shoulder, his corduroy knees of hospital brown. "Shall we play with the puzzle." Suddenly she felt the need to escape. Hastily she packed the bag.

"Let's go in with the other boys now, and watch the telly before I go and catch the bus, eh Boy." He took her outstretched hand, struggled to his feet, and holding her hand tight, walked through the door to plonk himself down in a spare seat in the front row. Some boys watched, some scratched themselves, rocked.

She sat on the floor and watched the Sunday afternoon movie for a while. He wouldn't look at her when she said she had to go and catch the bus. "I'll try and come again soon, Boy. Be good for the nurses, and be careful when you go horse riding. Goodbye. Goodbye nurse." Where's the door.

The Boy's eyes never left the screen as she stumbled past another boy's reaching fingers. No. Let me go.

"Boy Mamma, oh home." Before I cry.

"Goodbye boys." Let me out. Out the door, past the waterfall, down the steps and past the windows.

Waving goodbye to the Supervisor, she strode past the jonquils and the footie players and the playground and the workshops. She began to whistle an old tune, and then sing, There but for fortune go you or I, you or I. □

Violet Coalhouse

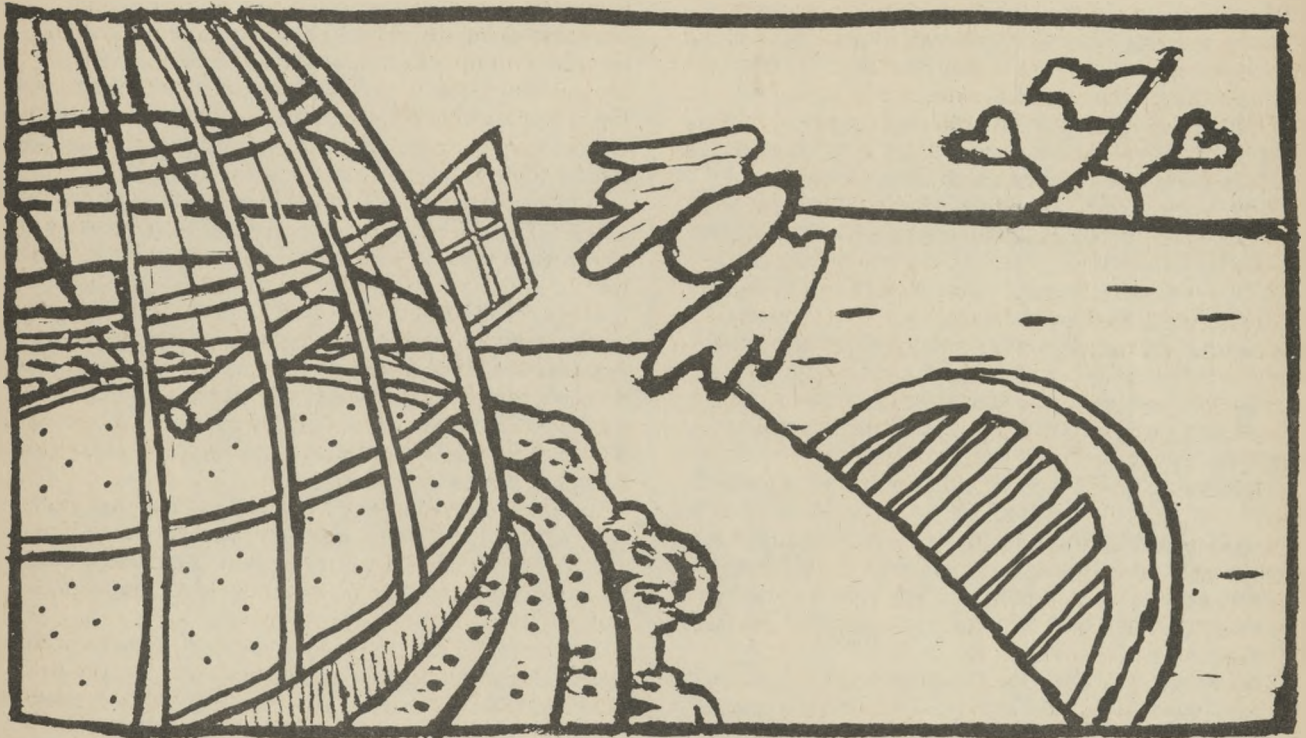


Illustration: Adriana Tuscia

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mrs Baird was very fortunate in her daughter, she concluded, and fortunate in life itself, she remarked to herself with immense self satisfaction. Even though dear Henry had died, (and her private, making-up face twitched into her public mourning face,) she had succeeded in doing what many another woman would have failed at — she had built herself a new life.

Henry always had been a trifle thoughtless, she mused, gazing on the symphony of apricot she had produced around her. He had even died somewhat fecklessly, she reflected; and she bravely derived comfort from her decor. The walls, with their discreetly embossed, slightly pearly finish, the lush carpet, the heavy drapes with their decorative valances — they reflected her very being, as the interior designer had pointed out. She had always liked apricot; she smiled, as she stroked her angora sweater and dear Tibbles, the Persian. She had chosen him specially. Apricot was so warm and reminded one of fuzzy summer days. Yes, she was very fortunate; and her

daughter was really quite satisfactory.

There had, of course, been a time long, long ago when Muriel — named her after dear Mother, now long since dead, but it is such a nice tradition, such an unusual name — when dear Muriel had been such a worry. She and Henry had both discussed the matter, and she had gone over to see the dear Vicar about it. After all, church youth groups are all very well, but some of the young men are, well, really, Vicar, you do understand, don't you? well, *young men*, really; and apparently Muriel had actually been kissing one of them, or rather, one of them had been kissing her. That isn't the standard one expects, really, at a church function; one doesn't expect to have to chaperone one's daughter on a church picnic, does one? you do see my point, Vicar, don't you?

The Vicar saw the point only too well, and sighed at his singular lack of success. Such a difficult parish. He longed for the slums.

Mrs Baird was jolted back into the present by that gentle

ripping sound known and loathed by Siamese and Persian owners everywhere. Tibbles had woken, yawned and stretched. Yes, Tibbles had actually stretched and yawned! What a good boy! What a clever boy! No, Tibbles mustn't ever put those naughty claws into Mother's satin cushion . . . Tibbles is a darling, naughty . . . surrogate. I wonder, thought Mrs Baird, if they've ever thought about breeding cats without claws? and gave herself another bonus mark for this genuinely intellectual question. What she had had to give up to be a wife and mother . . . Yes, dear Muriel had been a constant worry then, but the dear girl had really made up for it, and always would.

Why, just last week, on Muriel's fortieth birthday, she had been so sweet to her when she had had such a filthy headache. She hadn't fussed a bit when she'd had to ring the theatre and the restaurant, and cancel everything. It wasn't every girl who would react like that. Anyway, it hadn't been going to be a big celebration. Just Muriel and Mother — and Rosemary, of course. Rosemary was such a good influence. Rosemary was sensible. Rosemary always paid attention to Mother. And it was such a kindness to include dear Rosemary, because she lived all alone in a pokey little flat in the dreariest part of town. So, Mother had gone to bed with her awful headache; but she didn't want Muriel to leave her, because you never know what these things can turn into, do you? One minute you're alive and well, and the next you may well be dead under your apricot quilt; after all, look what happened to Henry.

Henry had simply been working in the garden; perfectly all right, he was. He had been mowing the lawn; she remembered even though it was such a long time ago, her annoyance that he had started out at the back instead of out at the front, which he knew he wasn't supposed to do. It upset her; he knew how any changes in routine upset her, didn't he? so why did he do it, she wanted to know. She still hadn't received any reply, because she recalled having delivered the peroration via the French windows which she had then slammed. It had rung through the golden chrysanthemums and the bees of that Saturday afternoon. Muriel was studying for her exams and had come out of her room and been very pettish and demanding about the noise. She had been rather rude, thought Mrs Baird; after all, her father had bought a quiet electric lawnmower which would not get on people's nerves; which was what the problem really was, because eight minutes later exactly, judging by Mrs Baird's TV programmes, he had run over the cord and then picked up the live end of it and died. It really had been too bad of him, out there on the lawn, and a strange colour, too. Mrs Baird hadn't noticed, because she had left the lounge to ring her dearest friend, Beryl; it was Muriel who interrupted her and who, of all things, had called in the neighbours.

Mrs Baird had been left comfortably off. Muriel, of course, had to sit her examinations about a week later; it was good for her because it kept her mind off what had happened, but poor Mrs Baird had found it so hard to find anything with which to assuage her grief and disappointment. She had read that it helped to talk things out, so she did.

She would invite her nearest and dearest for afternoon tea or supper or coffee — she wasn't up to catering for dinners — and she talked to them. She talked to them as if they were members of her own family. She knew they

would understand how much she missed someone to talk to. She talked warmly and unceasingly of Henry in her beautiful, trained, very rich voice which had shared her life since boarding school and which was fully resonant. It's strange how trivia became so important to her at the time, she reflected. She talked about the minutiae of her life because suddenly these things were important to her. It was also strange how friends feel reticent when one is widowed. I suppose it is hard to sit dinnerparties with a fiftyish widow, she thought, self consciously charitable. But somewhere a little voice kept telling her that she had simply bored them all to death and that actually they had liked Henry better. So she had taken up reading Norman Vincent Peale. She smacked Tibbles for going too close to a Limoges pot on the side table, comforted him when he mewed, and continued to gloat over Muriel.

Muriel, dear girl had duly got her examinations, over her grief, and a job as a law secretary for quite a respected firm in the City. She worked hard and kept up her 'cello playing with the Regional Orchestra. Of course, when she gave that up — it was when Mrs Baird insisted on buying a Honda Civic — she started becoming ambitious. If she went back to University part-time, she reasoned, she could extend her degree and become a lawyer in her own right. Mrs Baird was tremendously encouraging. There was no step that she left unturned to help dear Muriel. She rang the law firm the very next day and explained to Mr Hutchinson, the senior partner, personally, about her aspirations for Muriel. She told him how much time Muriel would need off work, let alone a possible year's leave, and how Muriel would no longer be exploited by the system and he did understand, didn't he? She rang the Professor of Law and the Dean of Arts and told them how Muriel would do better now than she had done before because she was just about over her father's death and because she, her mother, would see that study got done in spite of all the household chores that Muriel insisted on doing because she, Mrs Baird, was likely to get ill because they had not yet produced a hypo-allergenic Jif . . . and she rang the Vicar and asked him to pray that God's will might be done.

It was just like a miracle. Muriel was so much better off in her new job. It was a smaller, friendlier office, it was out of town, and there was so much less pressure. There was so much less money, too, but now that Mrs Baird was a beneficiary, there was no problem. It was good that Muriel had been a late child, Mrs Baird thought; you could so much more enjoy their youth, couldn't you? The University had been very sensible and allowed her to do just two papers a year. But the regulations had changed and it meant that she would have to work for four years, and not miss anything each year. At least that wouldn't put too much pressure on her; that was a blessing, as Mother had said to the dear Vicar, because the poor girl had lost so much weight lately; so in fact it was all for the best, and obviously God had responded appropriately. Mrs Baird had not been back to St. Faith's after what the Vicar had said when she had remarked on God's provenance. She had never believed that any man of God could use words like 'parasitical' in reference to a well-meaning member of the parish. She was supposed to be loved in christian fellowship. After all, she tithed, didn't she?

Mrs Baird smoothed her beautifully veneered hair with

one hand. It was a defensive gesture, but she saw it rather as putting the final touch on a perfect product. She adjusted the orchids and continued her tranquillising inventory check of her satisfactory life. No, she had never returned to Church; it caused her some dismay that Muriel had continued to go; but, of late, that was Muriel; a creature of simple pleasures and of perfect routines; a nice, unspoiled girl. Muriel went to work, went on Tuesdays and Thursdays to the gym, came home and cooked, made her phone calls, made Mother supper and then went to bed. Once a week she took Mother out shopping or to a five o'clock film. Once a week she went to Church, which seemed to do her good. Once a fortnight she went out with the girls at work and came home very late indeed, but Mrs Baird always waited up for her. Once she had gone away for a weekend conference, but she had returned early. Mother had been sick; almost too sick to summon aid. On state occasions Rosemary was invited. And now, dear Muriel was forty. How time flew! Still, she didn't look rough like dear Rosemary, who simply had no style; fattish and fiftyish, Rosemary (sweet girl, though — nothing was ever too much trouble for Rosemary) was all tan and trousers, really; "healthy" was the kindest word for her.

Now, if Rosemary had been shopping last night, Mrs Baird thought, disloyally, she would by now have a decent pair of kid gloves to wear to dear Beryl's son's wedding, wouldn't she? Shotgun, probably, anyway, but she needed gloves to go with her new suit. So Muriel had cancelled the seats for "Bolero" and driven Mother across town to Wilson and Hortley's. Mrs Baird had not envisaged walking a block or so to the shop, but then Muriel had never been able to park anyway. At five forty-five one does not wish to push one's way through the crowds on the sidewalk. The shop had changed. Not for the better.

There was a tired old baggage behind the counter who just would not understand that Mrs Baird took size 6½. She always had done. Why should it be different?

Eventually, Muriel had bought her a lovely scarf, but it wasn't the same. They would have to go to the shops in town on Saturday, and find something. After all, the new cleaning lady would just have to be interviewed early, so that they would have time. The wedding was only a week away. She hadn't bought the present yet either, she thought, peevishly.

To cap it all, as they walked in unbending silence back to the car, who should they bump into but Rosemary, who had run out of a coffee shop when she'd spotted them and did they have time for a coffee? Mrs Baird realised suddenly that it was getting too late to pick up some more tickets to go and see "Bolero", and, anyway, Muriel was too selfish to stop chatting just because she, an old lady, was standing in the street. Self-pity had immersed her. Why couldn't she have produced someone sturdy and cheerful like Rosemary, instead of this drippy, obsequious child of hers?

This child of hers, she recalled, as she twiddled bits of dear Tibbles, was late coming back to take her shopping. Where could she be? She had gone to pick up the new cleaning lady. Mrs Baird had fired the old one because she kept on shifting things and she wouldn't come when Tibbles had a tummy upset all over the house. Muriel had done the housekeeping for the past few months while Mrs Baird agonised over whether domestic help was worth the anxiety. She'd even found Muriel cleaning

out her bedroom at half-past nine last night, after the shopping. She seemed to have everything everywhere. Anyway, today they would interview Mrs Baldstock, and then they would go shopping, and Mrs Baldstock would clean. Splendid, thought Mrs Baird, but why was it not happening?

She must have dozed. She was awoken by the door opening. The whole frame was filled with an immense amount of woman. The face reminded one of several of the stronger U.S. presidents as they appear on Mount Rushmore. All was contained within a tailored grey suit, with a prominent badge on the left. At first Mrs Baird knew that she had been burgled and that the police had been called in. Mrs Baldstock smiled, and gushed, and sat on the couch without being asked to. Mrs Baird normally would have commented, but secretly felt that the Earthquake and War Damage Commission would have to be called in to deal with the aftermath. Muriel left them to make tea, and to let them get better acquainted. This consisted largely of Mrs Baldstock informing Mrs Baird that she was Miss Baldstock and did not care for her Christian name to be used by an employer.

Muriel brought tea in and promptly dropped a teaspoon. She looked like a gangly teenager next to Miss Baldstock, who by now had told Mrs Baird exactly how to redecorate the room in quiet shades of french grey. Mrs Baird erupted. "Look how clumsy you are, Muriel. Really, do try to behave with a little more finesse so that people will know that you haven't been dragged up. After all, it is good silver, and good silver is to be treated with some degree of care. And the noise you make, banging around like that — you know how it affects me . . ."

Muriel, instead of wilting, stood up and looked at her mother amusedly, affectionately, and finally. "And I have never been the same since my poor father died and I have inherited from him the same utter selfishness," continued Muriel, "which is why Miss Baldstock and you will get on splendidly now that I am old enough, at forty, to go flatting."

Mrs Baird tried to work out a lecture about how this was not going to happen and why, but no words would come. She recalled the kisses at the Church group, and the fact that Muriel went to Church every Sunday. It was some beastly man, she knew it. All these years of training and now some beastly man was taking her helpmeet from her, some daft bugger like Henry who didn't know any better than — than —

Anyway, they couldn't afford Miss Baldstock, she stated triumphantly, not fulltime.

Her lips flapped a bit, when Muriel gently told her about endowment policies, and what use she had made of her inheritance from Henry. She had led a frugal life up until now. "I'll come and take you out every week, Mother, just as I do now. And I'm not going to throw myself away at any man. I'm moving in with someone sensible — Rosemary — You do understand, don't you?"

And, with that, she bent and kissed her mother, smiled at Miss Baldstock, ran up to her room for the cases packed the previous night, and set off for — a little flat in the dingiest part of town. It was Independence Day for mother and daughter, but only Rosemary waved any flags. □

Jill Brame

WHAT'S NEW

WORKSHOPS MEETINGS COURSES

1986 WOMEN'S STUDIES CONFERENCE — from 29 to 31 August at the New Plymouth Girls High School. Closing dates for workshops and papers 30 June; registrations 31 July. Numbers are limited to 250 so hurry now and write to P.O. Box 4030 New Plymouth.

PALESTINE NATIONAL CONFERENCE — will be held in Hamilton at the University of Waikato from Friday evening 5 September 1986 until Sunday noon September 7. Possible speakers include a representative of Jews Against Zionism and Anti-Semitism and the Palestine Human Rights Campaign. For further information contact: The Conference organiser, Palestine National Conference, P.O. Box 13-065, Hamilton.

THE SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN (SROW) is gathering in Wellington during the weekend 13-15 June to celebrate 20 years of activity. Any former, current or potential members who would like to join in contact SROW P.O. Box 12270, Wellington North.

WELLINGTON WOMEN'S REFUGE — Volunteers wanted. A training course will commence shortly for women wishing to work with us. Phone Tracey 759-235 for details.

YWCA (AUCKLAND) — *Setting up your own business:* a six week course for women, June 3, 10, 17, 24; July 1, 8; 5.30 to 7.30pm. Limit 20. Enrolment by May 26.

— *Self defence:* by Sue Lytollis June 10, 17, 24; 5.30 — 8.30pm. Enrolment by June 3.

— *Massage:* 10 week course from June 12 to Aug

14. Includes childcare. Enrolment by June 4.

— *Investment opportunities for women:* from June 12 to July 31; 1 — 2pm. Enrolment by June 4.

— *Assertiveness Training:* a six week course from July 17 to Aug 21: 5.30 — 7.30pm. enrolment by July 9.

A range of weekend workshops for women are also offered. they include G.S.T., vegetarian cookery, car mechanics, self defence, naturopathy and stress management. For further details contact: YWCA, 10 Carlton Gore Rd., Grafton. Ph 778-763.

YWCA (CHRISTCHURCH) — offer a wide range of courses for this term. Workshops include unemployment and you, self defence, Maoritanga for women, assertiveness training, stress management, your health and natural healing, over 60s social group, youth in communication, bus trips and school holiday programmes. For further details contact: YWCA, 85 Bealey Ave, P.O. Box 25-146, Christchurch or phone 63-063.

CONTRIBUTIONS

HERESIES ISSUE 21 — "Food is a feminist issue," will explore the cultural and political impact of food and feeding on women's lives. The issue collective invites contributions of poetry, performance scripts, prose, recipes, oral histories and visual art. Manuscripts should be typed, in duplicate with stamped self-addressed envelope. Visual material in slide, photocopy, or photographic form. Send to P.O. Box 1306, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

24 HOUR DANCE MARATHON — to celebrate the *UN International Year of Peace*. 2pm Saturday 16 August until 2pm Sunday 17 August, Great Hall, Arts Centre, Christchurch. All funds in aid of peace projects in the Pacific. Form a team, sign up the whole family or go alone. For further details contact G.P.A.D., Co-ordinating Committee, c/- Arts Centre of Christchurch, P.O. Box 845 or Ph 882569/63806.

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GA Some scenes
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WOMEN AND BOYS IN PARLIAMENT

Sue Fitchett listened to some of the debate on the Homosexual Law Reform Bill and found the women's behaviour a big improvement on the men's.

When I was a young person growing up in a politically interested household the radio was often tuned to "Parliament in Session." I reached adulthood with little reverence for this term. My predominant memories of those broadcasts were the cacophony of male voices shouting at each other, and certain words being repeated over and over again. "Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker, order, order." Perhaps this was the natural process of politics. Political discussion in my childhood home often ended up in shouting matches. My father had the power of the final say (veto?) through his actions. Besides my father had once stood as a political candidate and thus knew best. Against Walter Nash my mother told me with pride.

True political discussion in our house languished into silent shame following my display of anti-Vietnamese war banners across the garage doors. Dismissed from the house for disorderly behaviour. Not until I reached middle-adulthood, the world stripped of its illusions, did I realise parliament, like my father, has the power of the final say through its actions. Abortion, Homosexual Law Reform, those areas of primary concern to me as a woman and a lesbian are in the final analysis out of my hands and in the hands of the white and male members of parliament, or in democratic jargon the "representatives of the people."

What's new, we know all this and we try, have tried to circumvent this biased structure with radical action, groups, centres that don't rely on government funding or parliamentary interference. The white males in power had to

sit up and take notice of us because we were unified in numbers and strength. From outside we affected the system. Two times in adult life I have listened again to "Parliament in Session" and two times I came to realise how little we have shaken the pillars. We are mostly unheard voices, our issues little understood.

I chillingly conclude that these MP's, these makers and breakers of laws and policies can also attack us, endanger us, oppress us if they as a majority so wish. Power is power. Today I can be a citizen, tomorrow a criminal or vice versa. I may challenge the system, wish to be beyond it, but the system weaves around me. I cannot buy food, find shelter, earn money, associate with friends entirely outside its set patterns.

De ja vu, the feeling of having been here before rippled through me those Wednesday nights at the end of last year and first half of this year, listening to the debate and committee stages of the Homosexual Law Reform Bill. Shouting (mainly male), rude interjections. "Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker", order, order" and new ones "I raise a point of order" "standing order number ...". I feel like Alice at the red queen's game. The rules are very complex.

Quite often I listen in anger to the narrow prejudice, ignorance, and untruths in the speeches of many MP's. During the committee stages of the bill, unfortunately unrecorded in written form, the deviousness, pettiness, and cruel interactions increase. Several members comment on the courage of the bill's proposer in bringing the measure to parliament. They were not referring to the invective

heaped on Fran Wilde's head by the general populace opposed to the bill, but to the actions of her parliamentary colleagues.

Marilyn Waring has given testament to parliament as a jungle, deadly to the outspoken and non-conformist. During the Homosexual Law Reform Bill's second reading debate MP's kept on complimenting each other on the high standard of debate on such a controversial issue. Yet Hansard clearly records threatening interjections and personal attacks by certain members which can only be described as sly and nasty. While listening to the radio I had missed the full implications of the attack on the Minister of Maori Affairs, Mr Koro Wetere, by the MP for Papakura Mr M.M. Wellington. Hansard, 6th October: "I have seldom heard the Minister of Maori Affairs so defensive ... I wonder who has been at the Minister of Maori Affairs in recent weeks and recent months. Who has hammered him into shape? Is he speaking for the Maori Queen? Is he speaking for the four quarters?" Mr Wetere's "sin" being his support for the Bill. In Black and white the attack on Wetere stank. On 13 November Hansard records what to me, seems a misuse of parliament's standing orders to slow the passage of the bill and a deliberate questioning of the authority of the Speaker of the House.

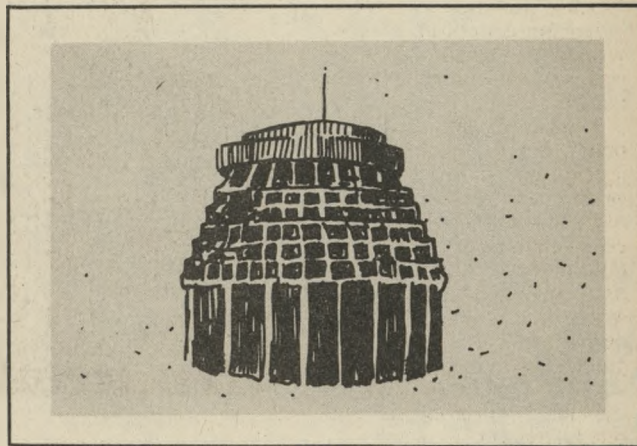
Detached I can laugh. Ironical that these tactics might be used in parliamentary debates on law and order, debates on the country's social and welfare future. Little boys playing with the tools of parliamentary power — amendments, motions, standing orders, whips, ayes, noes and divisions. "Ring the Bells, Lock the doors"

Curious, I analysed the infallible written word of Hansard. There was a pattern in this King Lear madness. Firstly no woman MP used objectionable tactics. Admittedly Fran Wilde interjected occasionally to defend herself against cruel personal attack. Even two women MP's whose views I object to and whose speeches differed widely in logic, Ruth Richardson and Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan, debated the issue respectfully. The speeches of Fran Wilde, Margaret Shields, Judy Keall, Helen Clark and Ann Hercus had depth, reason and humanity. Emotive arguing, irrationality and plain disorderly behaviour was almost exclusively the forte of a small clique of the Bill's opponents.

In opening the second reading of the debate Fran Wilde said "I have come to accept that there is a minority of people in our community who do not want to discuss the facts. They are not interested in seeking social justice through truth". Listening to, and reading the words of MP's M.L. Wellington, G. Lee, J.Banks, M.P. McTigue, J.H. Falloon, D.A. Angus, W. Peters, R.M. Gray and N.P. Jones, I am convinced she is right. The following quotes form part of my proof. On 9 October in a point of order M.L. Wellington said, "People are tired of such garbage under the guise of a private members bill. I suggest the House get on with the important business of the country." On 9 October Banks said of the bill "(Its) obscene resolve ... (it's) evil and insidious consequences." Mc Tigue, on 23 October, "I believe the homosexual within the community is a predatory being." Falloon, 23 October, "(The) gay movement is trying to increase its members", (Suggestion of international plot). Angus, 23 October, "The MP for Wellington Central is clearly trying to destroy the normal strong structures of the very fabric of family life". N. Jones, 6 November, "There has been an international or-

ganised campaign by homosexuals in every country of the world". He went on to claim the aim of the homosexual campaign is to "deliberately spread the AIDs disease into the world's bloodbanks". I could go on quoting ad nauseum. Interestingly the nine MP's listed above are all from the National Party. Nine MP's out of 95 may seem a small ratio. However I only analysed the 2nd reading debate. (Note though that these nine MP's almost equate our twelve (only) women MP's — also a small ratio out of 95).

On this mornings' news I hear that Wellington has decided to stay within the National Party and remain a National candidate at the next election. Following Muldoon's defeat as leader of the party in the house, Wellington had decided to stand as an independent because he was a Muldoon loyalist. Wellington's politics are extremely right-wing and reactionary. It is not only in parliamentary sessions on Homosexual Law Reform that his behaviour is difficult and disruptive. I skimmed through the rest of Hansard for the first session of the forty-first parliament and found several instances of Wellington's petty and conservative behaviour. His support for the Bolger line-up may be due in part to Muldoon having risen again in favour but it may also foreshadow an even more right-wing tenor in National's future policy.



Listen to the statements of Ruth Richardson ("Compulsory adoption for illegitimate children of girls under 16 years") and Michael Cox ("a tougher line on beneficiaries). A shame Wellington decided to stay a "Nat". I hoped he might lose his seat as an independent in the next election and buy himself a one-way ticket to Queensland, Australia. (By the way I hear Bjelke-Peterson has told Queensland barmen to not serve Gay customers).

In the reversed Roman circus that's our parliament the "Christians" have tried to eat the lions but haven't succeeded in earning the title "Honourable" by their antics. The problem for us as women is their presence in Parliament, and their numbers are growing. Timaru recently produced McTigue from a by-election. A "Nat" from a traditional Labour seat. This type of MP is dangerous; stonewalling bills they don't like; wanting a particular strain of morality enshrined for all time in law.

Whether I like the system or not, and it may not be radical to admit this in public, parliament influences my life. It has its hands on my life and might in the future try to tear that life to shreds. Wanting to survive the contact, I respect the brave lions in the house who refuse to be eaten. Women are very evident in this group. We need them there and we need to let them know we appreciate their courage and integrity. □

STROKES AND ART ATTACKS

ACCIDENTAL

PHANTASIES

by Stephanie Johnson,

Directed by Andrea

Kelland under the

umbrella of Working Title

Theatre, performed at

the Little Maidment

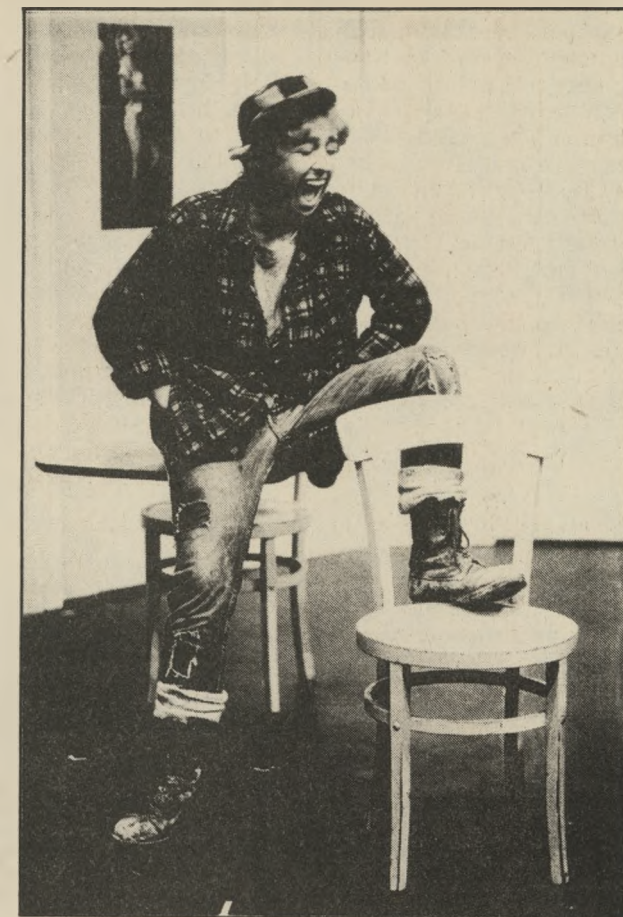
Theatre, Auckland

I enjoyed *Accidental Phantasies*. The five women actors played their parts (two each) with gusto. Elizabeth McRae's Chips, a man with a ghoulish interest in road accidents, was an authentic portrayal, with some subtle body language. Truckie, (Heather Bolton) was a caricature, but fun. Theresa Woodham's university lecher was no caricature, unfortunately.

It was an all-woman production: design, set-building, lighting and sound, as well as writing and acting. Sharon Alson's set, the inside of a seedy eating-place, struck the right note with its tacky tables and smoking griller. And where *did* that salt-shaker come from? A supine, naked, crockery woman, with breasts sticking straight up and removable — one for salt and one for pepper.

I liked the way the play connected the grubby little men in the first act with the grubby big men (Heffner and de Sade) in the second, but I did not like the violent "solution". Okay, so Eve (Heather Bolton) was ambivalent about carrying it out, but it was a solution arrived at by women. The second act was maybe just too polemic, even for a play that was one of arguments rather than events. De Sade and Heffner did not convince me, they didn't seem dangerous. (Mind you, they had both just been run over.) Eve strode around the stage in a stunning costume, dealing with her conflict about killing Heffner, de Sade and the "man of god", who wandered in expecting to be helpful.

Eve had come back from the future to "deal" with Heffner and de Sade. She did deal with them — they were dead by the end of the play. I don't find this a satisfactory solution



Heather Bolton as "Truckie" in *Accidental Phantasies*.

to pornography; other men just fill the spaces.

The play won the 1984 Bruce Mason Award, but I felt that many of the flaws were inherent in the script. There was lots in the production to enjoy. Like using five women to play the ten characters, eight of which were men. Like the enjoyment of the actors in playing the male parts. And the interval.

I didn't go out and have a cup of coffee in one of those revolting foam plastic containers because I was fascinated by the set changing. The roadside cafe was wheeled out one piece at a time, black drapes moved here and there and presto! there was a lovely shiny red Mazda. A couple of women positioned it carefully, turned the front wheels to an angle, just so, and gave it a friendly pat. The set was changed with a casual grace that was very entertaining.

The reaction of feminists I know to the play were varied. From "As a feminist statement on pornography I found it embarrassing", to "Wonderful, just wonderful." □

Pat Rosier

THE COLOUR PURPLE

Directed by Steven

Spielberg. Screenplay

By Menno Meyjes,

with Whoopi Goldberg

as Celie

When I first heard that Spielberg was going to film Alice Walker's sensitive and powerful black novel, I felt he couldn't do justice to her fierce love for black women. But I also felt that if he did the film at all well, the mainstream recognition a Spielberg film gets would help audiences to identify with black women and les-

bians dealing with human dilemmas. Not "the other", for a change, but on centre stage. By the time I went to see the film, I was half persuaded by Spielberg's earlier Boys own movies and some overseas feminist reviews that he was stepping right out of his league translating this particular book onto celluloid.

I left the theatre stunned and absorbed in the world the film had created. I was surprised that it moved me so much. I'd like to see it again, without the tissues.

As a translation of Alice Walker's book, the film makes big changes in emphasis, the biggest is the avoidance of the lesbian relationship between blues singer Shug Avery and Celie, the film's protagonist. There is one very moving scene where Shug kisses Celie, teasing her out of her self-protective shyness. But that's it. Any filmgoer who hasn't read the book could see them as just close friends. Spielberg said in an interview that he "didn't want to turn absolutely everyone off by being too graphic" about Celie's lesbianism.

In the book, the relationship lasts for decades, changing Celie's denigration of herself into confidence, providing her with an alternative to her violent husband, and an outlet for her creativity in a clothes business she and Shug build together. In the film there is no explanation of how Celie learnt to run a shop and make beautiful clothes.

Spielberg also gives Celie's husband Mister, played by a Danny Glover, a much larger role. His redemption becomes a major theme, and Danny Glover gets top billing.

Spielberg adds some slapstick touches that ring a little hollow. Celie's stepson Harpo falls through three different roofs, and Mister, comically but unbelievably, adds kerosene to a live fire in the range. The first view of Sophia, Harpo's fiancée, trivialises her strength. It shows her striding along to a honky tonk beat to meet her future father-in-law, with Harpo flapping along behind.

And racism in the film is

Photo: Adrienne Martlyn

represented by a caricatured white woman who employs Sophia as a maid. In the book, the woman's patronising and dishonest do-gooding "for the niggers" results in years of prison for Sophia and many more years of separation from her children. But the movie glosses over this.

Looking at the film on its own, the strong loving relationships between the women characters stay with me. Sophia is wonderful, enduring violence and separation from all that she loves, emerging still strong and unbeaten. She and Celie support each other at crucial moments in their lives. All the acting is excellent, especially Whoopi Goldberg's and Desreta Jackson's as the young Celie.

Walker deals with issues like male violence in the black community, which in a white context would reinforce racist stereotypes about black men. The film is controversial for this and its (minimal) lesbian content. Many people of colour and lesbians will feel ambivalent about it. But Spielberg has made a powerful, woman-centred film, and those of you who react to weepies had better take a few hankies. □

Jenny Rankine.

DILEMMA OF DEMENTIA

Julia Millen

(Landsdowne Press,
1985, \$16.95)

Alzheimer's disease and other illnesses causing dementia in the elderly are extremely common, affecting around one in ten people over 65 and one in five of the over-80s. The problem is increasing rapidly because people are living longer and are therefore more prone to these disorders and because there is a bulge of people heading towards the older age groups.

"Senility", as it used to be called, was thought to be a natural ageing process, but it is now recognised that the dementias are caused by disease processes which are not a normal part of ageing, but which are relatively common in the elderly. At some point in the process of Alzheimer's disease sufferers can no longer manage to care for themselves and this is where the "dilemma of dementia" begins.



The Colour Purple. Whoopi Goldberg (left) as Celie, Margaret Avery as blues singer Shug Avery. Warner Bros. Inc.

Julia Millen's book puts a human face to this dilemma. Subtitled "A Daughter's Story", it documents Millen's experiences of caring for her mother. The story runs a course familiar to anyone who has come into contact with the profound misery caused by these illnesses. There were the early stages of noticing something was wrong, the family conference about "what should be done?", realising that she herself was going to be the principal caregiver, the daily struggles of living with someone with Alzheimer's which tests patience to the limits, the hassles of trying to find help, the guilt experienced when caring becomes too difficult and institutionalising is the only viable alternative.

The book draws on a journal Julia Millen kept at the time and the details of conversations and incidents are used to create, at times, the immediacy of a novel. It is a gripping story of a changing relationship between mother and daughter, set in the context of the wider family system.

Julia Millen's dilemma is one which affects many people, mainly women, at least once and often more times during the course of their adult lives. Daughters, rather than sons, are expected to take on the caregiving role, often for an in-law as well as their own parents. Women usually marry men older than themselves and since women live longer, a wife will usually care for her ageing husband. For some women caring for parents takes over as children leave home and there may be a brief respite before caring for an ageing husband. Women who choose to follow a diffe-

rent path to most by not marrying or not having children are just as likely as the rest to face this problem.

Feminists have addressed the issues of child care more thoroughly than issues surrounding giving care for the elderly. In fact, the issues are linked together strongly. Caregiving is seen as women's work, it can be endless and it is unpaid. The conditions of caregiving are highly stressful and mothers of young children and women caring for dependent adults are very prone to depression and stress. The state provides arid institutional care as a last ditch alternative for when the caregiver cracks (the psychiatric hospital, Social Welfare homes for children or else it lets out care to commercial interests, as with the rest home business). State provided care is so far-removed from the conditions for a humane lifestyle that the caregiver is inevitably made to feel guilty when she can no longer cope.

Large institutions providing care are expensive to run and although they should, on the whole, be consigned to the history of inhumanity, the transferring of care into the community to save money should be eyed with concern. "Care in the community" at its worst can mean more tasks heaped on women, who can be sustained for longer at a level where they barely cope.

At its best, care in the community should mean that the whole community takes responsibility for the quality of life of more dependent members, shares out care more equally, and devises strategies to maintain dignity, self-respect and quality of life for

people with illnesses such as Alzheimer's. Our patriarchal social structures, with their emphasis on "every man for himself", independence and autonomy, the nuclear family and so on place all the responsibility on women for the basic tasks of providing the "felicities of life", to quote Marilyn French from *Beyond Power*. To devise means of empowering women without creating a community with even more solidly entrenched male values is a major dilemma for feminism. □

Hilary Haines

TE KAIHAU/

THE WINDEATER

By Keri Hulme

Published by

Victoria University

Press \$18.95

This latest gift from Keri Hulme is a collection of short stories and scripts that are really poems, and a poem that is a story/script/ poem, all in one.

To match the variety of forms and the exuberance of the language, the characters tumble out at you, energetically grabbing hold of your imagination. Sometimes mysterious, allusive, reflective, sometimes jaunty, rollicking, careless . . . and sometimes tugging you fearfully towards a world you'd rather not enter, then making you glad you did.

It's a hard book to review because you want to linger over each piece and share the specialness, the wholeness, which like a good wine, remains long after you've drained the glass.

I've always remembered "One Whale Singing" (published in *Broadsheet* May 1976), partly for what it says and partly for what Keri allows to lie under the surface, mirroring so deftly the song/story of a woman, a whale and a sea.

I like the way so many of the stories address "you", engaging me in a dialogue where I'm drawn into so many worlds which are all, in the end, one world, the writer's. I like the way Keri expects me to work for this engagement because it means she respects me enough to know that the mixture of accessibility/hardness of her words is what I'm hungering for. There's a satisfaction, a sense of completeness that a voracious reader like me doesn't find very often.

"I have always asked the wrong questions and I have always got answers", says the persona in the title story. I'm glad I journey with her between these two parameters because on the way I realise that there are no wrong questions, just answers which I may not like, but which cry out to me, to be faced. □
Renée



CLOTHESLINE

CONVERSATION

Mahina Tocker

Emmatruck label

In a 1984 catalogue of women's music put out by the American record distributor, Ladyslipper, the Web women's record, *Out of the Corners* received a small writeup. In it the reviewer said, "This is a typically high-cost import, but it's worth it to hear the indescribable voice of Mahina Tocker on "Songs for Mothers" and the acapella (unaccompanied song) "Arohanui . . ." Someone should send a copy of *Clothesline Conversation* to that reviewer. that reviewer.

In this first solo record, Mahina has expanded a hundredfold on what she did on the Web record and then built on, on the *Auckland Acoustics* album — rather like a caged bird being set free at last and being able to show what it is capable of.

Clothesline Conversation is crisp, tight and well-produced and incorporates a range of styles from the rich unaccompanied harmonies on "Wahine Toa", through the reggae-style "Mothers and Daughters", to the laid-back, jazz-moody

"Cloud 29".

Helping to fill out the music are some talented-plus musicians and singers; Clare Bear playing a lovely liquid bass; Nicki May playing lilting, soaring, tumbling, flying sax and clarinet arrangements; and Mahina's two sisters, Kimai Tocker and Mahara Volkman putting on some beautiful tight harmonies.

It is here that Mahina's superb instinct for arrangement stands out. She arranged all the musical parts for her songs, except for one bass part by Clare, trusting only to the sounds she heard in her head and hoping to hell that they all melded together "on the day". They did — faultlessly!

The one song not by Mahina is "Young Maori Woman", composed, sung and played by Hinepounamu. It's a hard-hitting song asking, "Young Maori Woman, what will become of you?" and Hinepounamu's clear voice combined with Mahina's airy harmonies lift it into something quite special.

My favorite songs on the album are "Wahine Toa" and "No Lines on My Face", a song ringing on many levels of meaning and feeling . . . but then why don't you play the album and see what you think? Copies of the album, and tapes, available from *Broadsheet*. □

Jess Hawk Oakenstar

MOTHERTONGUE

Written by Kate

Winstanley and

Kathleen Gallagher

To be performed

at Free Theatre,

Christchurch

"When I said no
I meant of course yes
I knew I could rely on you to
understand that.
Men know ... they always seem to
know what women mean.
When we say no we mean yes
And when we say yes we mean
yes ...
Men just know what women want.
This is male intuition
This is rape."...

This is an excerpt from the rape segment in the new work *Mother tongue* about to premier in Christchurch. The play is written, directed, choreographed and performed by

women. It offers to local audiences a true alternative to conventional theatre being performed in the city.

I attended a rehearsal of *Mother tongue* about three weeks before it was due to begin its season at Christchurch's Free Theatre, and talked to three of the women involved in the production: Kate Winstanley, one of the writers and also a director of the piece, and Katy Yiakmis and Annamarie Jagose the two performers.

The two authors, Kate, and Kathleen Gallagher had both written plays before, although Kathleen is probably best known in Christchurch for her poetry. The two of them got together with the idea that they wanted to create a play for and about women without using conventional dramatic techniques.

Each of the writers has a distinctly different style. Kathleen's writing is usually in poetic form that lends itself to chanting, while Kate's work is either more highly stylised with lots of repetition, or straight dialogue. The result is a piece that covers many aspects of women's experience of life, conveyed through the use of chanting, dance, song, direct communication with the audience and pieces acted in a more conventional sense using parody to add the required edge.

Mother tongue starts with a birth and ends with a death. What comes in between are segments covering menstruation, incest, education, work, domestic violence, sex, being lesbian, rape, war, old age — and all in some sort of chronological order. The performers relate to the audience as themselves, rather than as characters they've been written to play. Their roles change from segment to segment as they narrate or act out different aspects of any woman's life, at times with one of the two taking on a male role.

Although the piece is strongly political it does not bog down in feminist slogans or making didactic statements. Kay and Annamarie don't think that women will leave the theatre feeling beaten. They say that parts of the work are heavy but not unrealistically so, that there is a balance created by those segments that celebrate women. They feel also that the very fact such theatre is being written

and performed in New Zealand is cause for celebration.

There is something exciting about theatre produced outside the norm of director/dictator determining what happens onstage with little input from the performers and none from the audience. *Mother tongue* is an example of women working collectively to put together a performance that has depth, and wide appeal and is more clearly focused than anything resulting from one person's vision.

The lines that begin and end *Mother tongue* talk not only of the birth of woman, but could apply also to the birth of this kind of theatre...

"She was born in the heat
Air bubbled sulphur,
Rain rippling sunlight...
She was born, warm in the middle
of an open ditch
Earth warm she was born
Mud scrambled ... she came red
and screaming
She was born, sulphur in the air
and the trees
She was born red cheeked and
laughing
Howling she was born, a babe
wet and howling.
Fire dancing twilight sky
The night dawning."

Karen Brown

AGNES OF GOD

Directed by

Norman Dewson

Showing at Kerridge

Odeon Theatres.

I went to see "Agnes of God" (not "John of Menstruation", unfortunately), on Saturday night. I wasn't expecting miracles, I knew about the male writer and director, but I was expecting to see a film roughly about women's lives. Anne Bancroft is a powerful actor, and so too I discovered, is Meg Tilly. Jane Fonda was in it but you can't have everything.

I walked out at the end feeling furious, a menace on the pavement and the bus.

At a surface level, this movie is well written and slickly presented, which is precisely why the concepts lurking beneath are dangerous. Ostensibly about religion, the film's message was that women's greatest problem is women. Just who were the nasties of the piece? Women, or more accurately, mothers.

There were mothers everywhere: a vague and vin-

dictive mother in a rest home who couldn't get her daughter's name or identity right and didn't like her much when she did, a malicious and promiscuous mother who abused her female child, a hardnosed mother-boss at the convent who joined up having failed at the secular family bit, hoping for a better deal in god's, and another failed or thwarted mother (these are the antagonists) who displaces all her neurotic mothering energy into her job, her cigarette packet and onto the romantic hero of the piece — "Agnes of God". Where are the real nasties?

The men in this movie are invisible, they all think they're

Burts (no, not berks, Burt, as in "Soap"). These men are so invisible that the rapist is disguised as a dove — no really. At least he was represented as one. If that were the case, it would probably make life a lot easier for us. We could go to self defence classes and learn how to use slingshots, we could probably kill lots of birds with one stone. We could put them in pies, we could have roast rapist, rack of rapist. Who were all the good guys? The father, the son and the holy ghost — apparently.

The brutality in the life of Agnes the real is portrayed with candlelight, choir singing and fluttering feathered things. Her suffering is sen-



Agnes of God. Meg Tilley (centre) Anne Bancroft (right)

timentalised, made romantic and mystical and male culpability is made invisible. As with footbinding and female circumcision, the people seen to be doing horrid things to women are other women. Well, that's not how it really works. What happens in a patriarchal society is that actual men rape and abuse women and children, actual men starve and beat them and lock them away in institutions. The church is a patriarchal family too, although I can see the attraction in joining a nunnery.

I thought this was an insidious piece of woman-blaming. Unfortunately, it is very well done. □

Belinda Trainor

FESTIVAL FILMS FOR FEMINISTS

1986 FILM FESTIVAL

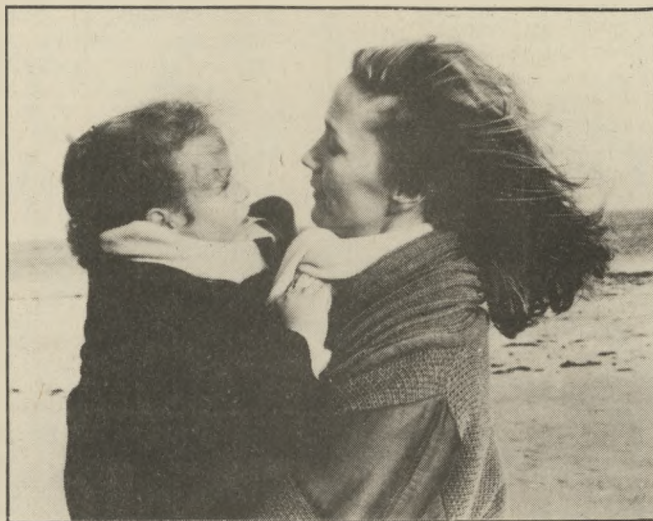
Below is a brief description of films that may be of interest to *Broadsheet* readers.

DATES AND VENUES

WELLINGTON, JULY 11-27,
EMBASSY THEATRE
AUCKLAND, JULY 18-31,
ST. JAMES THEATRE
DUNEDIN, JULY 25-AUG 7,
OCTAGON THEATRE
CHRISTCHURCH, AUG 1-14,
THEATRE TO BE
ANNOUNCED

The Future of Emily — Directed by Helma Sanders-Brahms, West Germany/France, 1984.

"In her new film, Helma Sanders-Brahms — explores mother-daughter relationships over three generations, in the confined space of a house by the sea and in the restricted time-span of about 24 hours. Isabelle is a successful actress whose five-year-old Emily is cared for by Paula and Charles, Isabelle's parents, while she is away making a film. Isabelle completes a film in Berlin and flies to the small town in Normandy where her parents live, and her co-star, Frederick, follows her, and checks into a small hotel. That's the setting for a series



Future of Emily

of extraordinarily effective scenes in which the lives of Isabelle and her family are dissected. *The Future of Emily* confirms Helma Sanders-Brahms as one of the top-ranking German directors." D. Stratton, Filmex.

Faces of Women — Desire Ecare, 1985, Ivory Coast.

"This African film is a study of people making the transition from bartering to a monetary system. We're confronted with the problems involved in

learning to cope with money. We don't know what 'money' is. It's a god from hell, come to transport us into worlds we never dreamed we'd see.

"In Treichville, a suburb of Abidjan, Bernadette, a one-time fish seller who now sells loincloths, is trying to better her position by adopting rational business methods. She tries to keep abreast of the times by acquainting herself with the phenomenon of money, and bridge the gap between bartering and using money. But she can't do anything without the permission

of her husband, a civil servant.

"The banker's attitude, reminiscent of colonial times, family traditions which oblige anyone of means to support the rest of their family whatever the circumstances, the reactions of the other traders who won't tolerate a woman in their midst, and her own ignorance of the laws of trading all combine to undermine her chances of success.

"In the village of Koffikro, the tragic fate of N'Guessan unfolds. Fed up with being a mere possession of her husband, she insists on her right to her own love.

"While Bernadette has decided to fight men with their own Weapons, and N'Guessan dares to offend the village mentality of her community, Fanta Karate learns to evade the moods and manias of the man's world. She intends to defy them by using something that until now has been used by men alone: brute force.

"They all want to escape from the guardianship of men and live according to their own ideas; emancipated in love, in the world of business and in strength. But their methods are incompatible with their goals.

"The film is made up of three interconnected stories, with the women's songs and dances forming an internal

narrative element. We Africans should not simply make pale copies of others' cinematic models. We should bring to cinema the spirit of our race, finding our own cultural parallels for the ways of telling a story — even for shooting scenes of love, death or happiness. The dances and songs which comment on the action are like a breath of fresh air; they symbolise the whole spirit of the film, its celebration of joy." Desire Ecare.

Desert Hearts Directed by Donna Deitch (1985).

"This film is based on the novel by Jane Rule, *Desert of the Heart*, a powerful but sensitive story about friendship, love and self-discovery between two women amid the dude ranches and casinos of Reno in 1959. Deitch has transformed the original prose into a visually impressive movie.

"Vivian, a professor from Columbia University, arrives in Reno all set to serve her six-week sentence at the dude ranch in order to exit with a "quicky" Nevada divorce. She sheds her city-slicker suits for western duds, lets her hair down (literally) and begins to face up to what she might be inside. Helen Shaver as Vivian updates the myth of the teacher's coming out with exquisite precision and believable eroticism. It's the ranch bohemian Cay's engagement party that provides the catalyst for Cay and Vivian's relationship to emerge. Then it's Cay's turn to be the teacher not only in an extremely funny and then tender love scene, but equally important, on the inevitable morning after, when Vivian is hit by flat out panic upon realising that she's now a social outlaw.

"*Desert Hearts*" embodies a wonderful sense of female adventure, acknowledging that the greatest adventure for women may still be romance. The film manages to convey the particular atmosphere and intensity of women falling in love with each other for the first time — not the coyness of the sexy but voyeuristic *Entre Nous*, not the punish-me morality play of *Lianna*, not the dead-end neurosis of *Another Way*, but the heady pleasure of an emotional drama allowed its physical consequence." Ruby Rich, Voice, April 1986.



Broken Mirrors

Broken Mirrors — Directed by Marleen Gorris, Netherlands, 1984.

"The film contains two stories in one — first is set in a high-class Amsterdam brothel. The other story involves the abduction and persecution of Bea, by Jean, a man whose face we never see. Despite the grisly settings there is not a touch of prurience or sensationalism in Gorris's direction, nor does she succumb to the opportunity to give us characters who are merely one-dimensional 'poor girls who have been wronged'. *Broken Mirrors* is an indictment of the way in which men use their power, both physical and economic, to repress women. Marleen Gorris is a confrontationist. She sets out to provoke her audience — not just the men — and shake their complacency."

Rocking the Foundations — Directed by Pat Fiske, Australia 1985.

Rocking the Foundations is a lucid, passionate documentary about working people who began to act for themselves and make decisions about issues that affected ordinary people. In so doing, they challenged the notions of what a labour union could be and just how far they should stretch their strategic muscles.

"This film looks closely at the internal workings of this unique organization, at the new policies that saw women

introduced into the building industry, limited tenure of office and the use of union power to assist disadvantaged groups within the community. "But on March 24, 1975, under extreme pressure the NSW Builders Labourers Federation ceased to exist. *Rocking the Foundations* explains why." □

Before Stonewall — Directors: Greta Schiller, Robert Rosenberg, USA (1984). A documentary which traces the history of the American gay movement, compiling archive film, interviews, snapshots and personal reminiscences to cover the period from the early twentieth century to the riots at the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, in 1969. An apparently routine bust by police was fiercely resisted, marking the beginnings of contemporary, militant gay politics in America.

"In attempting to reconstruct a history of American gay communities, the makers of *Before Stonewall* were faced with an almost impossible task. The very existence of gay sub-cultures had long been denied, and their visual iconography suppressed, not only by a homophobic society, but by gay people themselves, terrified of discovery by their peers and their nearest and dearest.

"Many people refused to be interviewed at all, others refused permission for personal photographs to be used.

Those who were willing to contribute, and who had a wealth of reminiscences, scrapbooks, home movies and photo albums, were hard to track down — a symptom of the secrecy surrounding homosexuality. As Andrea Weiss, archival researcher on the film, has said: 'Considering the tendency towards erasure, it is amazing we've been able to reconstruct our history at all'."

"The secrecy is double-edged — on the one hand oppressive, relegating homosexuals to the fringes of society; on the other, producing a creative richness, an imagery which is both wittily self-reflective and subversive, parodying "normal ideals. (There is much evidence of this richness in the film, from rare film clips of gay performers, to Carroll Davis' recitation of an outrageously bitchy poem about a 'best friend, and Ann Bannon's all-too-brief reading from her 50s lesbian novel *Odd Girl Out*.)" Pam Cook.

Vagabonde — Directed by Agnes Varda, France, 1985

"The film is about a young drop-out who roams a wintry south of France with a knapsack containing a tent on her back. She sleeps and eats where she can, a fiercely independent character little understood by even those who knew her best. What she seeks is freedom, and her tragedy is that society extracts from her too great a price for it.

"The film interweaves between Mona and those who witnessed her journey — other runaways, a garage owner, and his son, a Tunisian vineyard worker, a rich old woman and her maid, a tree surgeon, an agronomist. We get glimpses of lives and move on.

"I hope it will move people to tears... As in my earlier film, *Cleo*, *Vagabonde* contains a moving story and a meditation on one of my ideas fixes. Here it is the idea of 'freedom' (a much manipulated word!) for those who decide to pay the price to get it. The path is not a romantic one. The film shows the reality of a runaway's life. If Mona chose the road, she got what goes with it — hunger, thirst, fear and cold. But she coped with all this and didn't give a damn about anything or anybody." Agnes Varda. □



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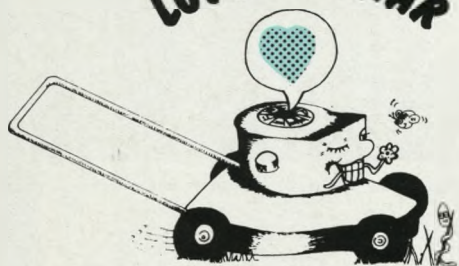
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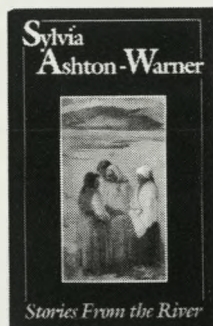
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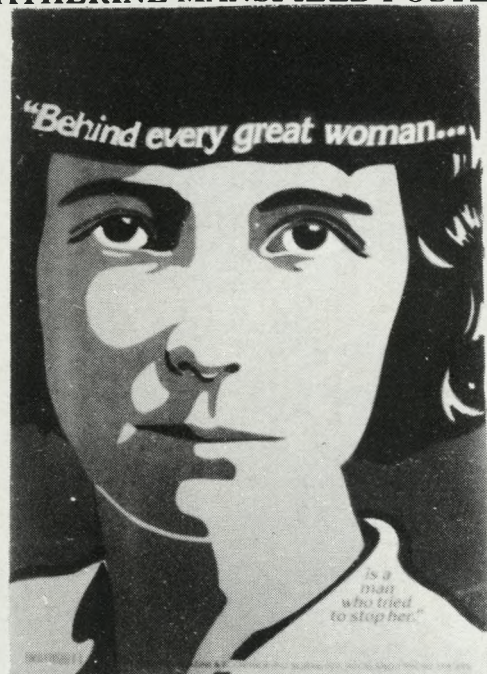
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