

BROADSHEETS

NEW ZEALAND'S FEMINIST MAGAZINE
FIFTEENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION
OCTOBER 1986 ISSUE 143 \$3.30



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

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THESE WOMEN HELPED AROUND BROADSHEET THIS MONTH: Susan Grimsdell, Jess Hawk Oakenstar, Margaret Fitzgibbon, Hazel Sargeant, Jill Segedin, Lynda Earl, Teuila Grace Xavier Tualaulelei.

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Jane Mitchell competing in the 100 metres hurdle, East Coast Bays.

Molly Ringwald in 'Pretty in Pink'

LETTERS



CHALLENGE TO BROADSHEET CONTINUES

Dear Broadsheet

We are writing as another feminist publication in response to the four pages in *Broadsheet* issue 139 devoted to correspondence with Uma ('Broadsheet Challenged'). Your editorial decisions and selection of material for publication are presumably based on the politics you wish to promote, which is surely to contribute to international feminism. Uma's arguments are contradictory, personalised and offensive. Her criticisms of *Manushi* and Zed Press are not based on political differences but on the self-righteous assumption that she is in a better position than anyone else to articulate Indian women's demands. At no point does she acknowledge her own privileged position in being able to attend international conferences. If she had used this position to agitate and denounce the brutal exploitation of Indian women (as the editors of *Manushi* have done for years) all well and good, but instead she attacks *Manushi* and Zed Press (a radical publisher, which incidentally does not make profits from its books) as though they were agents of capitalism and imperialism!

If the *Manushi* anthology is exploitative and Zed Press is ripping off Indian women in publishing it, who does have the right to spread such information? Or does Uma wish to silence everyone other than herself?

We welcome *Broadsheet's* increasing coverage of international and indigenous women's struggles but we fail to understand what criteria could have been used in deciding to publish personal correspondence, an uninformative statement about a conference which took place two years ago and a book review which gives no insight whatsoever into its content.

In Sisterhood,
The Outwrite Collective
England.

Dear Broadsheet

Re: Challenging Broadsheet,

Issue 139, May 1986

If *Broadsheet* was genuinely interested in reporting on women's struggles in India, it should have done precisely that rather than publishing ill-conceived arguments posing as political analysis. I refer to the correspondence about and review of 'In Search of Answers' (an anthology of writings from *Manushi* magazine, India).

Certain points made and questions raised in letters and her review not only need clarification but must be exposed as false, uninformed and dangerous.

What is the controversy that Uma refers to in connection with the publication of 'In Search of Answers'? If it is related to her own suspicions of the motives behind its publication then surely it is a controversy of her own making? In any case, why should any suspicion befall the publication of an invaluable and vital documentation of a variety of Indian women's struggles as perceived and analysed by feminists and activists in India?

Uma declares that "no clear commitment has been made towards the vast majority of Indian women" — clearly a ludicrous accusation, and one which displays ignorance about the history and role that *Manushi* (the magazine) has played for several years. Both editors of the book are founding members of *Manushi* and have worked tirelessly and on a voluntary basis not only for *Manushi's* survival but also in grass roots organising amongst women. What is the commitment that Uma is questioning? Surely the very existence of *Manushi* is in itself an obvious expression of commitment from the women and supporters who have worked on it and for it. Any attempt to discredit these women and insidiously hint at motives other than political commitment for publishing the book is tantamount to political sabotage.

Questions about the channeling of profits made from the book are also raised, and Uma asks if these will be

ploughed back into women's organisations in India. Any meaningful investigation into these "profits" would reveal that costs cover Zed Press' overheads and enable them to survive. (Zed Press is a workers' co-operative, unfunded, publishing some excellent titles by Third World women). All royalties go to *Manushi*, incidentally also unfunded, and are used by *Manushi* in ways they deem appropriate and necessary — *Manushi* remains the best judge of that.

The point about the book being available only in a foreign country/the West is also inaccurate. Not only has it received substantial coverage in the Indian press, it is also available in India with demand for it always increasing. Yes, it is available outside India, and why not? The exchange of information is crucial to the development of political understanding and consequently, a feminism that is internationalist and not confined to insular boundaries. And yes, it is published in English, the language of our colonisers but, ironically, also the language that unites Black women from different parts of the world. Again, any cursory investigation into the complexities surrounding the usage of English in India by the literate public would have revealed that a book published in English would reach a wider audience, in India and abroad.

In the review itself, which *Broadsheet* mistakenly elevates into "an analysis of the politics of the publication of the book" Uma claims that the dedication of *In Search...* which says, "...To all those women of India, some known, but mostly unknown, whose lives have been devoted to the struggle for freedom and dignity..." is "empty and a bitter irony". Is Uma really the best judge of that? *Broadsheet's* original decision not to publish the 'review' was quite correct. Surely a decision about what to publish is based on political principles, i.e. the selection of material depending upon its political merits, its facts and information, and its analysis and contribution to

political understanding, rather than airing of unsubstantiated and ludicrous views on areas into which little research has been conducted and even less thought given.

I have found many sections of the review and correspondence insulting to Indian women, offensive and politically dangerous. For Uma to write (and you to publish) a diatribe which does everything to cast aspersions on the political integrity of the editors and authors of the anthology, and nothing to even begin to raise questions about the complexities of women's oppression and the fightback, is to be censured. Political criticism and analysis of the book would have been welcomed. Instead, we are being assaulted with a barrage of highly charged personal statements in the guise of some kind of Black feminist morality.

Finally, for Uma to conclude that the book is "another voyeuristic rip-off of Black and indigenous women" is totally outrageous and offensive. If the editors and authors of the book — all feminists and activists — are not "permitted" (or so it would seem) by Uma to publish such a book, who is?

Sheila Shah
England

Manushi is available from CI-20 Latpat Nagar — I
New Delhi
110024 India

Dear Broadsheet

I really like the stimulating range of stuff in *Broadsheet* these days. One reservation — the article of May 1986 on a 1984 controversy on the non-publication of a review by an Indian New Zealand woman. Current readers did not have the information to understand the issues at the bottom of the controversy so publication of the correspondence so long after the event was not enlightening. It also put Sandra Coney personally in the hot seat for a decision which was a collective one. This seems churlish in view of all the work Sandra has done over the years.

The tone of Uma's letter is one of irrational guilt-tripping

and it appears that the present collective was hooked by this tactic into opening up old wounds. While it is important for Pakeha women to take responsibility for our own racist attitudes and behaviour, we don't have to buy everything hurled at us by anyone with a brown or black skin. We have to have a coherent analysis of racism. Responsibility and action are needed, not emotive irrational accusations and equally irrational guilt-prompted responses.

Viv Porszolt
Wellington

BROADSHEET RESPONDS

The present collective decided to publish the correspondence between Uma and *Broadsheet* and the Brixton Black Women's statement for a number of reasons.

One of these was *Broadsheet's* long delays in responding to Uma's correspondence, which arose from disagreement among the collective on whether to publish and subsequent delays in making a decision. We give full and careful attention to everything we publish, without expecting that everyone will agree with our decisions.

Uma's review contains a response to *In Search of Answers* rather than an evaluation of its contents. We felt that the fact that we did not agree with everything that she said was indicated by the printing of a second review focusing on the contents of the book. We published Uma's review as a result of our decision to publish all the material to allow readers to form their own opinions. It is in this spirit that we also publish these letters.

We do not agree with *Outwrite's* statement that the Brixton Black Women's statement about the Amsterdam conference was "uninformative". It actually raised some live issues about the running of conferences. Issues that are being discussed elsewhere — as in the July '86 *Off Our Backs*, in connection with a Women in History conference held in the United States. These issues are certainly relevant to the running of conferences in New Zealand.

The *Broadsheet* collective does not publish only material that it is in complete agreement with — one of our aims is to provide a forum for dis-

cussion.

The Broadsheet Collective
Auckland

WOMEN'S PLACE OLD AND NEW

Tena koutou wahine ma.
We wish to let you all know the debts from the previous Women's Place Bookshop are now paid off.

We have come full circle since our opening, Winter Solstice 1981, and we want to thank all the women who have supported us over the years... all the books and records you bought, the orders you sent to us from different parts of the country, the word-of-mouth publicity you gave us. Without your ongoing sustenance we would never have survived so long.

Thanks too, to all the women who helped us in so many other ways — from donating plants and chairs, giving legal advice, showing us how to set up cash-books and struggling with balance sheets, to lending a hand at stalls, giving of your time in the bookshop and donating money. We are grateful for your energy and enthusiasm — you all were a part of it too.

We urge you to continue to support the Women's Place Bookshop in its new cycle at 58 Courtenay Place.

Kia ora,
The Cuba Street Collective
Wellington.

AUTHOR REPLIES TO REVIEW

Dear *Broadsheet*

I would like to make a reply to Joy Florence's review of *Rape Crisis Handbook* which appeared in your July/August issue. I do not wish to make a point by point analysis of her criticism as she is entitled to her opinion as a reviewer as I am to mine as a writer, but I would like to take issue with some errors and misconstructions in the review.

The *Handbook* attempts to provide useful information for anyone who wishes to use it, regardless of age, race, religion or sex. I doubt that there is anything in it which prohibits its use by any individual, and I therefore do not regard it in any way as monocultural. In writing it, I would also like to point out that I was extremely aware of multiracial issues, and consequently the text speaks for itself and bars no-

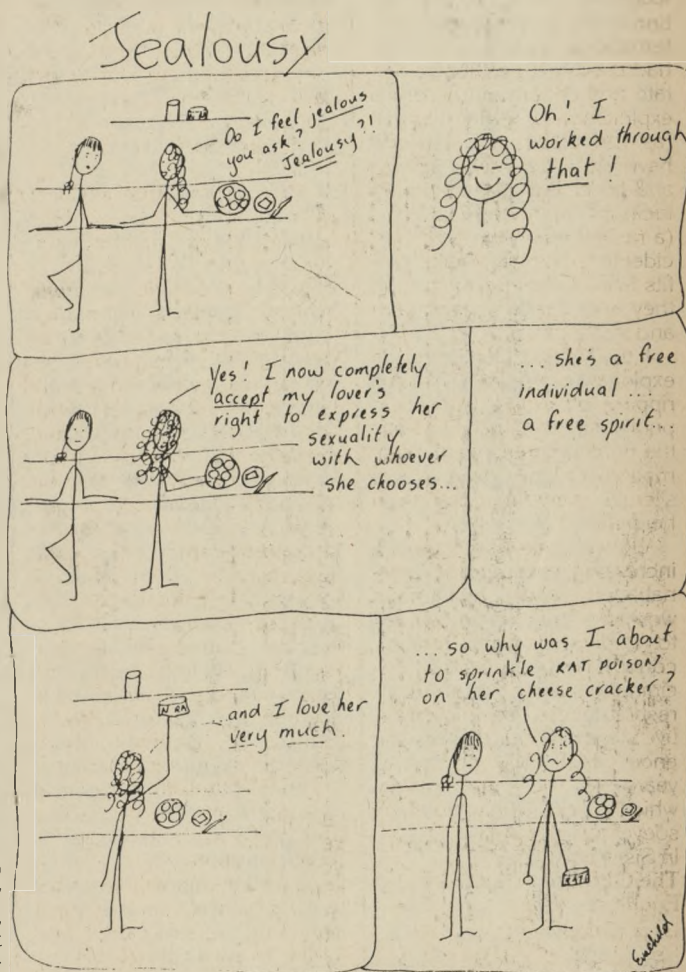
one.

Joy Florence wonders what I was aiming at when I used what she calls a "more detached, moderate?, academic? approach". What I was aiming for was objectivity, fairness and an informative approach. To use the example she quoted: the 1982 Handbook states "Just as men are trained to be perfect rapists..."; I changed this to "Just as men are socialized in such a way that predisposes them to be rapists..." I would change this again now to "Just as men are socialized in such a way that predisposes some of them to be rapists..." I would content that the 1982 version is generalized ("Just as men" = "rapists") and emotive ("trained"). My version reduces the generalization and removes the emotive term: I therefore think it more accurate and objective. This example is probably a good illustration of my approach and intentions throughout the Handbook.

I was asked by the Wellington Rape Crisis Centre to write part of a new handbook

to replace the old one so that it would coincide with changes to the law on rape. Eventually because there was no one else to do it, I agreed to write all of the handbook with help from informed people within the community and from collective members, using the 1982 Handbook as a guide. The process of researching and writing the new handbook took me eight months, and what had begun as a revision actually became substantially a new work. In fact, about 8-10% of the 1986 book is a repeat of the earlier one, although Joy Florence several times suggests it is an inferior copy. I omitted to acknowledge the debt the new handbook owes to the old because they are organically linked, one having been produced by the Wellington Rape Crisis Centre collective in 1982 and one having been written for it and as part of it and, fortunately, with its blessing in 1986.

Ginette Sullivan (author)
Vicki Owen (Chairperson collective of Wellington Rape Crisis)



IN DEFENCE OF CENSORSHIP

Dear Broadsheet,

To reply once again to Athina Tsoulis on her second article on pornography: surely articles in *Broadsheet* (especially those by members of the collective) are written to inform and enlarge our feminist perspective. Thus it is of great importance that readers take the trouble to write back to agree/disagree or add more information and individual perspective to the debate. NOT in "attempts to silence" * the writer of the original article. If letter writers are accused of this *Broadsheet* will lose credibility fast. Annette Kuhn does indeed speak wisely if she says "feminist is a political practice". . . And it is not a monolith: it comes in different varieties, offers a range of analyses and positions of women, and different strategies for social change."

So to the matter of defending censorship to control pornography. All liberties must be balanced one against the other. Complete freedom from censorship would allow books or videos instructing people how to make simple home made bombs, or simple home-baked heroin to be freely available. This would be deleterious to society for obvious reasons. Similarly unrestricted pornography, (the aim of a billion dollar industry) not only says this is OK but would say it frequently to those in society who are our future, the young of both sexes, with

"their sexuality and attitudes . . . still forming".

Pornography may well be only one symptom of our oppression now but why do we have to allow it to become a cause of the future enslavement of women?

* all quotes are from Athina Tsoulis's articles.

Elizabeth Scott

Riwaka

PALESTINE/ISRAEL

Dear Broadsheet,

I agree with Ruth Gold's statement (Letters, March Broadsheet), except for her use of the words "Jewish" and "Arab" in the same context and her views on anti-semitism.

Jews are not part of the semitic branch of the human race, but the Arabs are so; Jews are a religio-cultural group of varied ethnicity, and some semites (Arabs) have the Jewish faith. Zionist Israeli actions against Arabs are therefore anti-semitic, but Ruth Gold is correct in writing that anti-Zionism is not anti-semitic, it is clearly pro-semitic.

I am glad to read that she stresses the long term close links between South Africa and Israel, after all they both have similar anti-social laws, policies and activities, (HART please take note!), and are both racist. Scratch a racist and you find a fascist and vice versa.

I think that much of the reason for our propaganda system's continual castigation

of South Africa, although correct, is also to detract international attention from what the Zionists have been doing during the three generation long Palestinian holocaust.

In other words, negroes in South Africa are allowed human rights because they are very Christian and the system there is very capitalist, whereas the semites in Palestine and very nearby are not generally allowed human rights because they are very infidel (ie against Judeo-Christianity) are "Wogs", and have no capitalist system. The semites also fight back too much for our comfort.

Christians (capitalist) are still crusading against the "infidel", and in this century, for capitalist control of Middle East oil as well, using Zionist Jewish religionists as their mercenary armed forces.

No wonder that Israel, at great monetary cost, is the third powerful military force in the world; the control of the Middle East from the Nile to the Euphrates is worth the cost.

Frederica Vicente
Wellington

WHICH TREE?

Dear Broadsheet

Your correspondent in the July/August issue (letters, "Dubious Play in Schools") seems to be barking up the wrong tree when concluding that our cautionary doggy tale in "Mad Jokers, Fighters and Biters" is "dangerous mate-

rial".

As the actor interpreting the role of Miss Finklebottom, one who attempts to solve a few problems of inter-personal relationships through reverse psychology, it falls on me to re-train Mr Duffy, a widower, in his attitude toward his daughter Shirlene, who has begun to display an unhealthy empathy with sheepdogs. The issue is clearly stated: "Treat a person like a dog, and they'll behave like a dog". The "insidious implication of incest" is a complete enigma. Or is it to be inferred from Miss Finklebottom's innocent suggestion that a cuddle might be preferred by Shirlene to a doggy pat on the head? Alas it is not only beauty which is in the eye of the beholder! I would also like to point out some manipulation of statistics in the suggestion that one quarter of the girls in our audiences would have been sexually abused, since we play only to primary schools.

Incidentally, parents are welcome to attend any of our performances (space and school principals permitting). Many of those who do have stayed behind to congratulate the performers on their light-hearted attempts to "hold, as 'twere, a mirror up to nature". It is reassuring to conclude that there are still many who are entertained, along with the children, by the spirit of fun in which it is presented and, normally, received.

June Harvest
Christchurch

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 Thursdays until 8 o'clock. Saturday morning 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.

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, and more for all ads that are not camera ready. Special rates for regular advertisers on request.

BOOKSHOPS AND BOOKSTALLS

The shop continues to offer an extensive collection of books by and for women and we have a large selection of badges, t-shirts, jewellery, posters and cards. We now have secondhand books and some lovely silver jewellery. Call in and browse. We offer 10% discount to students and beneficiaries on new books.

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.

WE'VE BEEN SOLD!

The building we are in is being sold to Baker Developments — the whole area is to be turned into a "live-in city". The sale is still subject to the approval of the full City Council, but seems likely to go through. So we are looking for new premises for the bookshop and magazine. Sympathetic land agents, any wealthy women interested in buying a place and leasing it to us, anyone with constructive ideas, please contact us at P.O. Box 68-026 or phone Ak 398-895 or 794-751.

NEW SECTION

We started "Against All Odds", a page of positive gains made by feminists, last month. We intend to run it about every second month, in response to comments that a lot of what

we print is discouraging. Send in your contributions.

STUFFING

Stuffing of the November issue will be on 25 October. Join us for a shared lunch and good company and help get the magazine ready for posting.

GST

We hate it, but it's with us from 1 October. Subs will now have to include \$2.90 GST and 10% has to go on to everything we sell in the bookshop. That means that a regular subscription to *Broadsheet* will cost you \$31.90 and we have to do the work to send the money to the tax department.

BEHIND THE NEWS



NO LONGER JUST HOME ECONOMICS



Photo: Diane Goodwillie

Diane Goodwillie, with 29 other women, went to a Papua New Guinea workshop that wrote a new handbook for non-formal women's education.

Society is changing rapidly. We must know what is happening. What is being said in videos? How are women's rural chores changing? What legal right does a woman have if her husband starts living with another woman? Why are there so few women agriculture officers when women provide the food for their families?

Why are women told food preparation and cleaning clothes is women's work when in the hospital kitchen and laundry men are paid cash to do these jobs? What is a man's responsibility towards his family and why does he spend so much of his cash on alcohol and gambling? These and other "hot" questions occupied 30

women from Papua New Guinea at a recent one week workshop titled *New Directions in Non-Formal Education For Women*, sponsored by the Educational Research unit of the University of Papua New Guinea.

Few non-formal education programmes exist for women in Papua New Guinea, despite

women's education being a priority for funding. And those that do exist mostly teach home economics courses that have changed little in 20 years.

Despite constitutional clauses that guarantee equal rights to women, and policy intended to increase equal participation in all areas, many political and economic

changes have victimised women.

Formal education was started in the colonial era, often by colonial women who saw men as "breadwinners" and women as "housewives". Much women's education trained Papua New Guinea's women to become good wives, mothers and housekeepers, passive rather than active in their communities. Little or no value was given to women's agricultural and other productive work while men's work and social role was given more importance.

This workshop set out to review and update the content of non-formal education programmes for women. It developed alternative teaching aids and materials for use in women's groups, village development centres and vocational training centres. Careful notes about critical issues were prepared, case studies illustrating the teaching points were identified and in the afternoons small groups brainstormed about practical exercises to use within the classroom or women's club.

Some of these ideas were tested out. Slide shows, movies and videos about women's domestication and sexuality were discussed as possible resource materials for groups. Videos rented at the Mt Hagen video club were viewed (with some shock) and analysed for the message they portrayed about women. It seems that videos available in PNG are the only teachers of sex education. Parents don't know how, education officials say it's the parents' responsibility while on school and village videos, violence, racism, male power and sexual domination unobtrusively shape attitudes.

Newspaper advertisements, cartoons and articles were examined with the conclusion that newspapers are giving negative images of women and more efforts like the *PNG Times* comic "The Triumphs of Tessie" are needed. Many of the ads are directly imported from overseas and use white women in suggestive poses. "Nearly all advertising agencies in Papua New Guinea are foreign owned and managed and since advertising pays for the paper, newspaper editors with sensitivity have difficult choices to make," said Anna Solomon, editor of *Wantok Nius*.



Two days after the start of the workshop a team from Skul Bilong Wokim Piksa in Goroka arrived to take direction from the participants so that a video would be created identifying issues and planting questions in the minds of viewers about the changes affecting their lives. Eight topics will be covered: education, media, health, technology and tools, business, women's work and production, violence and the law, women's organisations, participation and politics. Within two months of the workshop all participants will have copies of the half hour video and by December 1986 the resource book will be available.

The final day of the workshop found the participants wandering the streets of Mt Hagen (trailed by the video team) discussing questions

like "what housing benefits do female civil servants get?" "Do men think that women doing subsistence gardening are working?" "What are the police procedures when someone reports a domestic dispute?" "How much sales are done by female market vendors and what problems does she face?"

Elizabeth Cox, one of the organisers for the workshop had this to say: "Although equal participation of men and women seems to be a fundamental national policy, it does not seem to be seriously taken up by educators. We cannot simply accept women's position as it appears or as it is stereotyped. We must critically analyse the changing role of women, asking women about their situation, their problems and how they would like things

to change. We must look carefully at what causes problems and educate women and girls as well as men and boys about them."

A group at the 1985 Goroka Non-Formal Education Conference identified over 25 current problems facing women today. These included polygamy, gambling, alcoholism, mismanagement of small family incomes, adequate fuel, safe water, marriage problems, sexual assault, desertion by migrant husbands, lack of family planning education, household crowding in urban areas, low status and heavy subsistence workloads in rural areas. In the vocational centres and educational institutions, in women's fellowship groups and councils of women, who is dealing with this? Western styled home economics courses have divided and closeted females for many years... but finally at the end of the women's decade, Papua New Guinea women are not only examining and questioning but also beginning to create a new approach to learning and development. □

Workshop Contact:
Elizabeth Cox,
Educational Research Officer,
University of Papua New Guinea,
Box 320,
University P.O.,
National Capital District,
Papua New Guinea.

EQUAL PAY

The campaign's hotting up again. Elizabeth Pritchett reports.

The Equal Pay Act of 1972 was supposed to ensure women got paid the same as men, but today they get only 74% of men's wages. There are several reasons: women occupy a narrow range of occupations — 54% of women work in five major categories that are seen as "women's work". We work in the lower grades, our work doesn't get bonuses as often; childrearing responsibilities mean we are more likely to work part-time and have gaps in our paid work records so we

miss out on higher positions; and we can lack union consciousness and bargaining strength.

Then there's the old concept of a "family wage", based on the assumption that a man works to support a non-earning wife and children, although this grouping is no longer common.

The struggle for equal pay has gone on for a long time. In the 1940s, the Clerical Workers Union took the employers' organisation of the time to

court for equal pay and lost. The Council for Equal Pay and Opportunity was set up in 1957 and won equal pay for the public sector, which was phased in between 1960 and 1965. Many other women's organisations have fought for it. The current phase of the campaign is fighting for equal pay for work of equal value, a concept similar to the "comparable work" campaigns in England and America.

Following a meeting in Wellington, an equal pay meeting

in Auckland in June called by the Working Women's Resource Centre drew about 40 women from a variety of backgrounds. Therese O'Connell and Evana Belich from the Clerical Workers Union spoke about the issues involved in equal pay and the history of moves towards equal pay in Aotearoa. Activity on equal pay is happening in Auckland, Wellington and other centres.

Evana summarised the case the Clerical Workers Union took to the Arbitration Court in February to show the limitations of the Equal Pay Act. Their 80 page submission said the principle of equal value was embodied in section three of the act and the original policy-making body believed it would be in the act. The pointed out a 25% gap between men and women, and the erosion of historical relationships between male clerical workers and skilled tradespeople. But the definition of equal pay differs between the preamble and the body of the act, which doesn't include the concept of equal value, and the court's answer had to be bound by the second definition. The court found the case was outside their jurisdiction under the act.

Therese said that to get equal pay we also need freely available childcare, men sharing domestic tasks, women in non-traditional jobs and the status of traditional women's jobs upgraded.

"Comparable work" or "equal pay for equal value" means comparing traditional women's jobs with men's jobs. The criteria used for comparison in Canada include skill, effort and responsibility, and in Britain skill, effort and decision. In Britain recently, an outside consultant was called in to compare a trainee cook and a shipbuilder's jobs, and the factors taken into account included numeracy, responsibility for cash, physical hazards and lifting. The trainee cook's job has more lifting and the greater physical hazard of intense heat in the workplace that can make cooks faint unless they take salt tablets. In Australia the latest equal value decision assessed working conditions, skill and effort. "Equal value shakes the whole concept of relativity," said Therese, "and I think there are a lot of people who don't want to talk about it."

In comparing work, sexist values of caring for machines or money rather than humans can discriminate against traditional women's jobs. Therese said she asked a class of school children whether a nurse or a truck driver were more important, and a small boy said the truck driver because he is responsible for a very expensive rig. "Women's work" is widely regarded as non-productive, especially housework, voluntary work and childrearing, and the paid jobs which use similar skills. Therese said "Equal value means a revolutionary look at society, where things to do with people are properly valued."

The Employers' Federation believe we already have equal pay, and like the young boy, think that economic factors alone should determine relative values. The concept they're pushing now is for the employer's ability to pay to be taken into account in wage negotiations. (See "Labour Market Flexibility" July/Aug. *Broadsheet*, No 141)

Women have been receptive to the idea of equal pay for work of equal value, and our industrial strength is growing. The Clerical Workers Union

recorded an unprecedented number of strikes last year, and more disputes centre on equal pay for equal value work. Boarding school workers' award negotiations broke down early this year and about 200 workers went on strike for equal pay with school cleaners. Cleaners were getting \$6.83 an hour, while boarding school workers received only \$5.03 an hour. After five days, they accepted the employers' offer of \$6.04, about an 18% increase.

The Equal Pay Review Committee didn't meet in 1982 as was scheduled, showing the lack of official interest in the issue. The government response this year has been to fund a \$60,000 plus Department of Labour study on how to achieve equal pay. The first tenders were asked for in May, but since then, the department has retendered and reorganised the study into three phases, the first two at least to be tendered separately. The first phase is to identify the information needed to decide action about equal pay, and determine whether any new studies have to be done. The Labour Department has not consulted the equal pay steering committee about these

changes, which will extend the process to more than a year. Equal pay campaigners and researchers believe there is enough information about gender and pay differences for the government to act now, but the Labour Department's delaying tactics will mean no official action until after the next elections.

The New Zealand Nurse's Association will present a case soon to the Higher Salaries Commission for the chief nurse of the Auckland Hospital Board to get pay equal to her associate board members, the chief executive and the medical superintendent. She receives only \$58,000, while the other two get around \$82,000. At the moment, the chief nurse is paid by the Health Services Personnel Commission, and if she won parity, her pay would be set by the Higher Salaries Commission. An increase in the chief nurses' salary would have implications for the whole profession.

Anyone interested in supporting the Auckland Equal Pay campaign can contact the Working Women's Resource Centre, ph 762-156, Private Bag, Newton. □

LESBIAN/GAY TEACHERS ORGANISE

The first national gathering of lesbians and gays in teaching was organised by a small group of Wellington lesbians and gays and held at Victoria University during the August school holidays. The conference was organised at short notice and poorly advertised, at least in Auckland. Around 50 people from around the country, mostly lesbians and almost all Pakeha, came to the weekend. The venue was very hard to find, partly because the signs giving directions were regularly ripped down.

The gathering was informal, with an agenda set by participants after they arrived. On the first day they divided into kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary areas, and shared

their working experiences and actions they might take for support. Most people who came worked in secondary schools; many were going on to the Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) conference, which started the day this one ended.

Three lesbians who had been involved in the campaign to get rights for lesbian and gay teachers supported by the PPTA discussed how the campaign had been organised. The New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI) for primary school teachers, has no specific policy of support for lesbian and gay teachers except for its adoption of the Working Women's Charter. On the second day, partici-

ants talked about ways of continuing public education about lesbians and gays. Two Auckland lesbians were interviewed for the Lesbian Programme on access radio. In the afternoon there was a big workshop on classism and racism.

The group decided to concentrate on building closer networks in their own areas; along the lines of the lesbian teachers group currently meeting in Auckland. Participants wanted the support of a similar conference next year, open to lesbian and gay parents and students, and in a more encouraging environment for lesbians and gays from other cultures. □

Jenny Rankine.

Judie Alison outlines the progress of the PPTA discussion paper on lesbian and homosexual teachers.

The failure of the human rights sections of the Homosexual Law Reform Bill has made it more important to fight discrimination on the basis of sexuality in work environments. Action in the PPTA could serve as a model for other unions.

At the 1985 PPTA conference a lesbian caucus raised the issue of rights for lesbian and homosexual teachers and suggested that a working party of lesbian and homosexual teachers write a paper for the 1986 conference. All the recommendations in the paper were passed by the conference. They require action at all levels of the union, from head office down to individual members. A report will be prepared for the 1987 conference on progress in implementing the recommendations.

The first recommendation asked the PPTA executive to negotiate with the Department of Education to have changes made in statutory, regulatory and administrative provisions so that it does not discriminate on the grounds of sexuality. The executive will also ask for a more exact definition of the terms "unfitness" and "unbecoming conduct" in the Education Act, under which attempts can be made to fire a teacher. The working party felt that the vagueness of these terms posed a threat to all teachers, but especially lesbian and homosexual teachers, who could become the targets of homophobic board members.

The union's own code of ethics will be amended by making it unethical to discriminate against colleagues or students on the grounds of sexuality. The fourth recommendation passed means that branches (teachers in individual schools) will be negotiating with their own boards of governors on behalf of lesbian and homosexual teachers. They are asked to get a guarantee from their boards that the job security and right to work of teachers will not be jeopardised on account of their sexuality, and a commitment by the boards to "maintain the school free from

intimidation and harassment, including harassment on the grounds of sexuality or supposed sexuality..."

A proposal for negotiations on new leave provisions met with unanimous support. It recommended that cumulative compassionate leave replace the present leave for family reasons, to be in addition to sick leave. Leave for family reasons currently assumes a nuclear family household, and tends to discriminate against lesbian and homosexual teachers and others whose relationships do not fit this model.

Individual members of the union were asked to combat the use of derogatory language about lesbians and homosexuals, and guidance counsellors are to be educated in the needs of homosexual and lesbian students.

The recommendation about which most controversy centred, both in branch and regional debates and at the conference, was "This confer-

ence recommends that... where resource material about homosexuality is used in schools it should be presented positively."

Heterosexual teachers seemed to have trouble seeing that heterosexuality is presented positively in schools now, and that this motion was simply asking for the same for homosexuality. Movers of the paper, under this pressure, changed the word "positively" to "in ways that will enhance understanding and acceptance of homosexuals and lesbians", and with that change the recommendation was carried. Peter Verner of Auckland pointed out that if the recommendation had said "fundamentalist Christians" instead of "homosexuals and lesbians", they would still want to pass it.

A working party of lesbian and homosexual teachers will write a discussion paper on heterosexism for the 1987 conference. Heterosexism was described as prejudice in favour of heterosexual attitudes and behavior at the expense of those with alternative identities. This working party will review progress in removing discrimination against lesbian and homosexual teachers for the 1988 conference.

Virtually all the recommen-

dations were passed with only three or four votes against, which suggests that a lot of hard work must have been done at branch and regional levels of the union to carry the vote in support of the paper, and to ensure that opponents were not elected as delegates to the conference.

The only major speech against the paper was from Bruce Logan of Orewa College, who said there were two widely divergent views in society on what was normal and abnormal, and that the paper, in asking schools to affirm lesbians and homosexuals, was imposing a change of attitude. He said schools should reflect community values, not those of a minority or majority of teachers, and that schools should not be accepting environments for homosexuals, although compassion for them was acceptable.

However, this view was countered many times over. Suzanne Jungersen of Wellington said it was a matter of self-esteem, and that failure to pass the paper would result in lesbian and homosexual students "shuffling through life while others walk tall". Shona Hearn of Auckland said "we want schools to be places which affirm the rights of everyone who works and studies there." □

CHINESE LESBIANS MEET

A report from a Chinese lesbian weekend, held at Whanganui-a-tara (Wellington) in April.

"I remember when I first came out. I knew of no other Chinese dykes or Asian feminists, a situation which left me at times feeling somewhat out-of-place, isolated and more 'queer' than usual."

Perhaps for the first time in the herstory of Aotearoa, eight Chinese lesbians and a Japanese lesbian met for a weekend gathering. Friday morning saw six of us at the Wellington lesbian club. There was a definite air of uncertainty and newness, which gradually disappeared as the weekend progressed.

We started with introductions and welcome, sharing folders of resource material,

articles and poetry about Asian women; ate huge quantities of toasted sandwiches followed by many cups of tea, then began slowly to talk about who we are and why we had come to the gathering.

The next two days flowed more easily as more women arrived, and we went for yumcha to indulge our senses and bellies. Back to talk more, covering issues like coming out, being Chinese and Chinese lesbians, our families, relationships, racism, where we are now and what our priorities are. We listened to Hiro's herstory, her experiences and ideas as a Japanese lesbian feminist travelling in

this country. We cooked for each other, ate lots of rice, listened to Merle Woo on tape, reggae by the fire, danced and laughed together at the club, feeling unusually relaxed, walked on the beach and sat by the blue-grey sea musing about lovers.

And suddenly it was time to wind up, feed back and say reluctant goodbyes with promises to each other that we would get together in the summer.

"I suppose I had initially thought that in calling a meeting such as this one, we would naturally come together as a group because of how we identified ourselves. Instead, I



Photo: Hiro Kamimura

found that there was lots of groundwork to be done, lots of talking and sharing to get to know one another and lots of differences to acknowledge."

"Before this gathering, I had never really felt completely 'at home' with any group of women. With Pakeha lesbian feminists, I had felt unaffirmed as a Chinese. With Chinese heterosexual women, however, I had felt unaffirmed as a lesbian. But with these women at this gathering, I felt for the first time affirmed as a Chinese, feminist and lesbian."

"The gathering was the best single thing that had happened for me in years. Not so much what we did (the meal we cooked and ate and the night at the club were great) or who was or wasn't there — but simply that we *were* there (we are here!)."

"Through this experience I discovered that I identified myself as an Asian woman and I felt sympathy for Asian women who live in Western countries and are subjected to racism. I had never thought about this in Japan, where just one race exists."

"I look forward to sharing knowledge of ourselves as Asian/Chinese lesbians, to building up resource materials about ourselves, both here in Aotearoa and other countries. I look forward to standing up and making myself visible at last."

"...that there is a real group of Chinese lesbians in New Zealand. Despite our differences, I am excited by the thought — Yes, we *are* here!"

□

The Chinese lesbian group can be contacted through *Broadsheet*.

HERE'S LOOKING AT US

The Women's Studies Conference, one of the few national annual women's gatherings, happened this year in the shadow of Taranaki. Jenny Rankine gives her impressions, assisted by information from Judie Alison.

Around 300 women came to the New Plymouth Girls High School in August to enjoy two days of stimulating and varied workshops, papers, videos, meetings, good food and unusual New Plymouth sunshine. This was the ninth New Zealand Women's Studies Conference. Topics covered included work, lesbian issues, relationships, violence, literature and theory. There were fewer total topics offered than at previous conferences, and a higher proportion of workshops compared to academic papers. This reflects, in part, a greater awareness of Pakeha

feminist ways of sharing knowledge non-hierarchically. Areas like historical research and education were less in evidence this time.

There were no papers or workshops offered which concentrated on the experiences of Maori women or women from other non-Pakeha cultures. As usual, workshops varied in quality. No particular provision was made to cater for women with disabilities.

The organisers wanted to encourage a diverse and fun conference and started this off on the Friday evening with a relaxed welcome which in-

cluded a brief karanga, singing Karangatia Ra and a long hongi line. On the first morning everyone was divided randomly into small groups so that women at their first conference could get to know other women and find out things they needed to know.

A room for Maori women and one for lesbians were provided and proved useful and relaxing spaces. Each learning session lasted for one and a half hours, which meant some bleary eyed early starts. The organisers also provided a time on Saturday afternoon where special interest groups

could meet. Feminist teachers, nurses and artists, therapists, community house workers, sportswomen, and university women's studies tutors all used this opportunity.

"Carry it on", a song adapted to a Joan Baez tune by the Women's Subcommittee Choir of the Wellington Trades Council, was sung near the beginning and the end of the gathering. The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery opened on Saturday evening for conference goers to see the exhibitions by Taranaki photographer Fiona Clark and Australian feminist artist Davida Allen. The wealth of Taranaki talent at the Saturday concert provided great entertainment, with Christine Quinn's inspired blues piano being especially popular.

A paper on the Parker-Hulme schoolgirl murder case of 1954, entitled "Mad, Bad or Neither", attracted good numbers. Julie Glamuzina and Alison Laurie are currently writing a book on the subject, and they presented some of their findings and drew on participants' memories of the case.

Hilary Page's workshop "Movement and Bodywork to Illustrate Power Relationships" used action methods to focus on power in intimate relationships. As was the case with a number of workshops which restricted numbers, it had to be run a second time.

"The Politics of Pornography" by Christine Cheyne and Allanah Ryan proved a popular paper, and raised some new perspectives on the pornography debate. They claimed that currently the debate is about the politics of outrage, in which anger is the motivating force, and pornography is seen as a symbol of defeat. This offers relief, but causes a shift away from critical analysis. It also exaggerates the power of pornography, and they felt it was not in our long term interests.

They said the view of pornography as the root of our oppression overstates the centrality of sex, and ignores such oppressive institutions as motherhood and marriage and the social and economic structures that make women dependent on the sex market.

They saw the anti-pornography movement as accepting the ideas that women need to be protected from men, that we are the moral guardians,

and that male/female sexuality are polar opposites, with men being vicious brutes and women passive victims.

They insisted that the stress should not be on content or explicitness, but on the view of sexual relations portrayed. They used the example of the video "I Spit on Your Grave", frequently cited as hard-core pornography, which can be seen as having a strongly anti-sexual violence message. They saw the anti-pornography movement as one which women couldn't belong to if their desires don't fit.

The only workshop about rural women was run by Jenny Simpson of Inglewood and Danna Glendinning from the Wairarapa. They pointed out that August was the worst time in the farming year for women to leave the land and travel to conferences. They dispelled some of the urban myths about farmers and outlined the organising rural women have been doing, like the Women in Agriculture network, and the pilot Farmline telephone counselling project in Taranaki.

Pat Rosier's workshop on a feminist critique of assertiveness training attracted about 45 women. It questioned the assumptions that underlie some assertiveness courses: that if we ask for things properly we will get them; that it's easy to know what we want to change; that there is goodwill on the other side; that there is equal power between individual women and the partners or people they need to be assertive with.

The conference has become a forum for feminist women in institutions to report what their institution is and isn't doing for women generally, and to share some of the resources and networks they have developed. Women from the Women's Ministry, the Labour Department's Positive Action Programme, the Human Rights Commission, universities and adult education centres ran sessions to do this. Women's Ministry staff reported an encouraging response to their workshop, but little meaty criticism of the ministry's role and plans.

At the Women's Studies Association (WSA) AGM held on Friday night, the \$500 Rosemary Seymour annual award was presented to Helen May, for transcribing and editing interviews with early childcare

workers. It was suggested that the next award be given to a Maori women's project, and the way in which the fund is advertised and awarded be reviewed next year.

Several remits were passed in the final session. The conference supported the inclusion of sexual orientation within coverage of human rights legislation, and efforts by unions and workers to get employers to agree not to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. The lesbian caucus was concerned that there was little reference during the conference to the failure to enact the anti-discrimination part of the Homosexual Law Reform Bill, and that some workshops failed to build on last year's conference themes of heterosexism and racism. The caucus also recommended that conference organisers ensure that the outline of all papers and workshops describes clearly the limits of experience being presented.

The conference supported equal pay for work of equal value and condemned the government's delay in starting its equal pay study. It also expressed women's anger at the Pathologists' Society's proposal to charge women an extra \$15 for each cervical smear test. It felt women were being used as a tool in the pathologists' negotiations with government.

An anti-racism workshop recommended that the WSA share its resources with Maori women and establish an anti-racism group within the association. It suggested that a levy be added to the association membership and conference fees that could be distributed to Maori women. The workshop recommended that the next conference reflect a bicultural perspective, promote anti-racism workshops and investigate, with Maori women, an alternative hui run at the same time for Maori women.

Both the lesbian caucus and the anti-racism workshop suggested that the aims of the association, first written in 1979, be reviewed to include an awareness of racism, heterosexism and classism. Ways to put these ideas into practise will be discussed in the quarterly WSA newsletter, which will be sent to all members and conference participants.

The 1987 conference will be held in Dunedin. Each one is organised by a different, autonomous group of women. This provides some advantages — sharing organising experience and workload, expressing regional differences and decentralising the conference. The disadvantages are the discontinuity in organisation and approaches and the slowness of changes. The New Plymouth women will be sending copious notes to



Dunedin. The association has encouraged conference organisers to take notes and send them to the next group, but it would help continuity if the passing on of information about improvements, perspectives and approaches that were useful was a definite part of the conference organisers' task.

Each conference reflects the research and activity of feminists around the country. "We didn't organise the papers and workshops," said Karen Johns, a member of the conference core group. "We encouraged focus on the themes of racism and heterosexism, but we also welcomed diversity. If few women are taking a bicultural perspective in their women's studies work during the year, this will show in the papers and workshops they run at the conference."

Everyone works together in smaller centres like New Plymouth, and in looking for people with special skills to draw on, it is a matter of calling on individuals, not specialist groups as would be the case in the big cities, Karen said. "The conference reflected our local way of working. We talked a lot about biculturalism as a group, but a lot of ideas seemed forced and artificial, and wouldn't reflect where we are on the path towards biculturalism. We tried to have an open door, to ensure women felt welcome. It is more than just counting Maori faces."

This conference was one of the best organised and relaxed that I have been to. It was also monocultural, which is one of the reasons I, as a Pakeha, felt comfortable. There has been a lot of debate about racism at the last several conferences, yet except for the 1985 Hamilton conference plenary sessions, they have all been monocultural. This reflects both the networks of the feminist groups which organise the conferences, and the Pakeha-based agenda of women's studies as a discipline. Organising a separate hui for Maori women is one way around this, but it can take the pressure away from changing the Pakeha agenda of women's studies, and it offers little to women from other cultures.

I am hesitant to make criticisms about racism, because they tend to fall into the moral "shoulds" and the guilt-tripping atmosphere which surrounds the issue in feminist circles. This is the atmosphere that tended to form during challenges about racism at the conference, and it disturbs me. No-one learns or changes positively through guilt; I find self-interest a much stronger motivation. I want to hear the perspectives and ideas of women from cultures other than Pakeha in women's studies; it loses strength and insight without them.

I am also feeling increasingly uncomfortable with the lengthening feminist list of oppressions — sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism, able-bodiedism, agism — and the way we are all divided into goodies and baddies on the basis of where we stand with each. This way of seeing the world was dominant at the conference, at least at the final session, and I am increasingly finding it confusing and unhelpful in understanding our position as women. It is used to focus on our personal behaviour, instead of the structures that keep us from power. It creates a feminist moral hierarchy, and a self-righteous attitude to those on the other side of our particular oppressed group. It's important for us to be aware of which groups are still invisible or unheard in our movement, but a moral hierarchy of multiplying oppressions won't help us create clear strategy for women's studies or any other feminist activity. □



KATE SHEPPARD'S ON THE MOVE

Karen Brown writes about the women's bookshop in Christchurch.

Four years after it opened its doors at 202A High Street, The Kate Sheppard Women's Bookshop is leaving... for bigger and better premises about two minutes walk from its present location.

I talked to Joy, one of the partners in the bookshop, about the reasons for the move and the features of Kate Sheppard's that make it stand out from other local bookshops. Steadily increasing patronage (turnover is now three times what it was in 1982) and a lack of space are the main reasons behind the move... a decision that was made before discovering that their old shop is under threat due to the massive demolition-construction job going on on the other side of the shop wall. The shop they are taking over at 145 Manchester Street will be open longer hours and will require the four co-owners to put a lot more energy into a project that even now takes up a lot of their time.

Joy, Noreen, Anne and Erin initially got together through a shared interest in women's spirituality... and decided to begin a business partnership to answer a need for local women. Their business provides what is in several ways a unique service for women in Christchurch and those that travel through the city. Customers know that there will always be a woman behind the counter... something that is important, particularly for women seeking information on personal subjects — perhaps sexuality, violence against women, or health questions. They also know that Kate Sheppard's is more than just another bookseller — it is one of the focal points for women in a city with no women's centre... the shop acts as a referral centre, information dispenser and as a place for women to discuss is-



From left: Joy Lloyd, Erin McGifford, Ann Rowlands, Noreen Penny.
Photo: Karen Brown

suess and be guaranteed of a sympathetic ear. It's also the only place in Christchurch that carries any kind of range in women's music from overseas.

As a bookshop run by feminists, Kate Sheppard's carries stock on subject areas that may not be considered acceptable or even relevant by many other bookshops... for example there is a comprehensive selection of books on women's sexuality and also novels, poetry and non-fiction by lesbian writers. Something else that is rare amongst "mainstream" bookshops is the section on women's spirituality... with material ranging from christian feminism to goddess spirituality and wicca. Because there is so little support for women

wanting to express their spirituality outside the traditions of the christian church, Joy considers this part of the shop to have particular importance. She thinks that women in this position are aware of what Kate Sheppard's has to offer in that respect... and says they keep coming back for more!

Kate Sheppard's has also played a big role in the local women's movement by attracting women to Christchurch who may not otherwise come here. Part of this is to do with their support of book launches by feminist authors. Recent launches organised and publicised by the shop include Nancy Mannahan's *Lesbian Nuns* and Pauline O'Regan's *A Changing Order* (not all the launches

are books by nuns! — they were also involved in the launch locally of Sue Kedgley's *The Sexual Wilderness*). They are a familiar sight with their bookstalls at women's gatherings... and at a wide range of venues throughout the community, including Christchurch Teachers' College and the Polytechnic.

Joy Lloyd, Erin McGifford, Noreen Penny and Anne Rowlands are business partners in this all-women venture.

Each has a vested interest in the success of the business. Their decision-making is done by consensus on any major issues... in the day to day decision-making there is a policy of having at least two partners agree on any particular issue. The four women meet regularly to discuss things that come up in the running of the shop — like the shift to new premises... and the purchase of their first "real" cash register. They decided the new shop should be adorned by a suitably high tech money machine... rather than the cutlery drawer that has been their cash container for the last five years!

Joy acknowledges the assistance of the women (and men) who helped in the big shift and also their regular volunteers who help out in the shop. She says that despite the fact that the bookshop is moving on to bigger and better things, they would not be able to continue providing the service they do without the support and encouragement of local women. In the present economic climate (dominated by Douglas-inspired disasters) nothing can be taken for granted, and the larger shop and longer hours mean higher overheads... in other words, it vital that the number of women coming into the shop keeps on growing. □

WORKING PARTY ON DRUGS

Cathie Menzies talked to Pat Rosier

The Women's Working Party on Women and Drug Use (WWP) was formed in March 1985 because women working in the area of substance abuse were becoming concerned that the special needs of women were not being recognised or met. They felt also that women working in the area needed a forum for liaison and support.

WWP acts as a group where areas of concern to women can be collectively discussed and acted on. They use a consensus style, which means that decision making and responsibility is shared. Group members are predominantly Pakeha women working in the area of substance abuse, dealing with issues of prevention, education and treatment.

AIMS

The Working Party's aims include recognising differences of culture, sexual orientation and class among women, political lobbying for change and working at grass roots level. They wish to promote research in the area of women and substance abuse using methods where the participants are actively involved. A key aim is to "Actively ensure the differing needs of women in treatment are acknowledged, and their implementation given priority. We aim to see treatment programmes set up for women by women, operating on an empowerment model."

ACTIONS

In November 1985 WWP sent two women to a conference on women and alcohol/drug abuse in Melbourne. From that the Working Party has applied to the Alcoholic Liquor Advisory Council (ALAC) for funding for a New Zealand conference.

They have made submissions to the working party reviewing liquor laws, had a racism workshop, and encourage non-alcoholic functions. Some of the women involved in the Working Party have taken part in running non-alcoholic dances in Auckland



which have been a huge success. A treatment task group has put out a pamphlet "A Guide for Women With Alcohol and/or Drug Related problems in Auckland 1986", and done a report on women's treatment needs in Auckland.

WWP has facilitated and encouraged the opening of a women's house which will house to up eight women who have completed treatment or counselling. It will eventually provide accommodation for partners of drug abusers and children needing to get out of situations of violence or abuse at short notice.

"IT'S JUST YOUR NERVES"

A seminar of this name, held in Auckland in May, was an important event organised by the group. It brought together many women working in the area to workshops and strategy sessions around the themes of prevention, education, intervention and treatment. Dr Robyn McKinley, who spent time in Canada in 1985 looking at substance abuse programmes for women, was the guest speaker. She talked about three of the programmes that she had seen in Canada: the Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre; a play, *Side Effects*; and a resource kit, "It's Just Your Nerves".

The Amethyst Centre operates a woman-only outpatient

treatment programme that was started in the late seventies. People working in the addiction field had become aware that the causes of addiction were different for women and that they had different treatment needs from men. The programme covers assertiveness training, stress management, family dynamics, sexuality, and sexual abuse. Community Alcohol Services in Auckland has begun to work towards a similar type of service for women by starting a one-day-a-week programme at Carington Hospital.

Side Effects is a show that was toured throughout Canada by a women's theatre group. It consisted of a series of skits and songs making specific points about substance abuse and its social and political implications for women. In every centre where the show was put on a group was formed to organise a venue, do promotion, sell tickets and billet players (shades of the *Broadsheet* Road Show). The same group is given a kit on arranging meetings so they can respond to the interest aroused by the show. These groups then form the nodes in a national network for distributing further information. WWP have sent for the script of this show and would be interested to hear from any women's theatre group that could be interested in performing it.

"It's just your nerves" is a resource kit that was developed in Canada to deal with the issue of women's use of minor tranquillisers and alcohol. The kit consists of a facilitators' guidebook, women's stories, a 21 panel flipchart and a video, "All In The Same Boat". Training sessions on using the resources were offered with the material.

The kit was developed for use by both community and professional people to stimulate the exploration of women's substance use in a group setting. It is a broadly based educational resource which can be used in a wide range of contexts. Indeed,

evaluation of use of the kit over a total of 278 sessions showed that 50% were presented to women's and other community groups, 25% were used as part of ongoing treatment programmes, 19% were to health and social service professionals and 12% to educational facilities. The title of the resource, which was chosen as an example of how women's concerns are treated as trivial, reflects the beliefs behind it. An increased awareness that women's addiction problems are different from men's is linked with a move to look on such problems as linked to a social context, and its accompanying pressures, rather than just as individual concerns. "It's Just Your Nerves" presents the question of women and substance use in relation to women's social role and the conditions of their daily lives.

Plans for a similar resource for New Zealand are already under way. The Working Party applied to and received funding from the Interdepartmental Committee on Substance Abuse to employ a worker to develop a local kit based on this model. Anyone interested in applying for this job should contact Ingrid at Auckland 686-111.

SUPPORT

For one day every six weeks there is a meeting in Auckland. Some women come from Hamilton and Tauranga. Most interested women are able to get time from work to attend, although some have problems getting away from their workplace for this purpose. There is a regular group of 15-20 women but all women working in the area of women and drug and alcohol use are welcome at the meetings. Referral guides are available from Jennifer Hewitt, Auckland Hospital Board Co-ordinator for alcohol services, phone Auckland 496-013.

The Women's Working Party on Women and Drug use can be contacted through P.O. Box 46444 Auckland, or Ingrid on Auckland 686-111.

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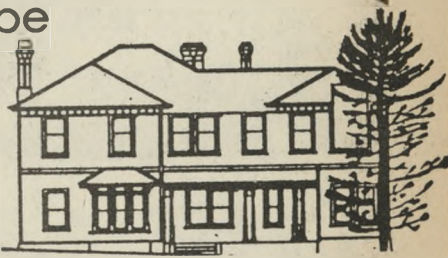
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NIGHT WORKER

Alison
Aitken
interviewed
a woman
who cleans
Wellington
offices.

THE offices of central Wellington are largely white during the daylight hours. At night the white is sleeping and the black gets up to work. In my building it worked like this anyway and it seems generally so elsewhere with, of course, some exceptions.

I often worked in the evenings and saw the Polynesian workforce arrive from Porirua to start their night's work, cleaning up after the bureaucrats.

Sometimes in the "ladies" toilets I would sit talking to a Samoan woman, who was one of the cleaners. She told me a lot about herself. Nearly a year later, just a month ago, I found out she had been forced to give up her job, partly because of our conversations. She'd been told, as had her workmates, not to talk to us — the remnants of the day's white office workers. They must keep to themselves. But she had said no to this.

"I cannot work all night and not talk, I get sad and I get lonely." She persisted with our friendship, even though her rejection of this petty apartheid led her to be reprimanded several times by her boss. It culminated in an angry exchange between TM and her boss over this issue and another relating to a faulty pay cheque with TM walking out of that job — even though the family needed her income to survive. She got another job in another building cleaning different offices at night.

She says she's happy for me to write down what she told me about herself. She speaks slowly, worrying about her En-

glish, pausing often to cover her mouth in embarrassment. She's never heard of this magazine *Broadsheet*. She plucked up the courage to suggest I do not use her name.

TM was born in Western Samoa. She came to New Zealand 11 years ago when she was in her early twenties. TM says she's not sure how old she is. Both her parents died and no one can remember her date of birth. TM has never seen some of her eight brothers and sisters. Her grandmother told her that some of them live in Hawaii, some in New Zealand and some remain in Western Samoa. TM now lives in Porirua East, about 20 minutes' drive from Wellington city where she works.

TM and the other cleaners in my building have "supper" at midnight. She and I hid in an empty room, because I wanted to ask her questions and she had agreed to answer them.

TM: When I grew up I didn't see any of my parents alive, they both die. And I feel miserable and I feel lonely because I really need a parent to love and I thought my grandmother was my real mother. But she said something to me and she explained what happened with my parents — my father and my mother. She said she's not my real mother, my real mother she die and my real father too.

When I grow up and I look at my grandmother I feel sorry. I want to see them, you know, to see my mother and my father.

When I get used to staying with my grandmother I love them, I love them both very much. And, they send me to school, I go to school but they stop me from going to school when I am 13 because they can't afford to pay the bill. But I really want

to go back to school when I am 15. But I still look after them then. My grandmother write a letter to my uncle — would it be alright if he can pay my fare and then I can come over and stay here.

Alison: Did you want to come here?

TM: Yes, I want to come over here because I want to see what New Zealand's like. Is it all better than Samoa?

When I arrive on the plane and I look at the lights I think "Oh, New Zealand's very nice", you know. But, when I wake up in the morning (because we come at night time) it's different, it looks different you know. It's busy all the time, everyone wakes up and gets ready to go to work and only myself in the house. And I feel lonely, I feel I want to go back.

TM says that when she arrived she spoke little English. She stayed with her uncle in Auckland and on her first day in New Zealand he sent her to the shops to buy some groceries.

TM: It makes me ashamed when I go to the shops and when I didn't see anything I want in the shop I don't know what to say to the shopkeeper. But it's lucky, sometimes I can see things lying on the shelves and then I can point to which one I like and which one I want then they give it to me.

Alison: Was it hard trying to make people understand you?

TM: Yeah, and it's hard to remember what it's (the food) called you know, and the food it's different. Over there, in the Islands, we don't have to cook meat all the time. We like taro for tea. We can eat bread for breakfast, but not like New Zealand... we used to eating fish... we don't have to eat potato all the time. We eat breadfruit, taro, banana...

Alison: How did you find the people?

TM: Some they're good, some they... I'm not very happy to see them because they not look very happy to see (she pauses)... look at us.

Alison: When did that happen?

TM: Oh, when I first came here to New Zealand. When I get a job in a factory it's hard for me because it's hard to understand hard English words, you know.

Alison: What was the first job you had when you came here?

TM: Machine. I used to sew something and then I find out it's hard for me because I put my feet on the sewing machine, I feel scared, you know, it's the first time I've used that kind of a sewing machine and then I ask my sister, would it be alright if she can find another job for me. She said alright. Then I wait for a week then I get a job. I work at Tanner Couch making christmas cards. And it was good, I liked it.

I like it when it's warm, you know, but in the winter time I don't feel like getting up early in the morning and get ready to go to work. Over there, in the Islands, I used to wear my summer dress. I don't have to wear any cardigan or coat. But when I am over here I wear cardigan and I feel funny to wear a heavy coat on me. I still wear it because I feel cold.

TM is now married and has five children — three sons and twin daughters — who all go to school. Her husband works during the day. TM travels to work on a bus from Porirua East to Wellington with a group of women who spend the night cleaning.

TM: I really want to find a day time job but there is nobody else to look after my children. I wake up in the morning and ready the kids to school. When they go to school I go to sleep then I get up in the afternoon about 12 o'clock and make some lunch for them and at a quarter to one they go back to school and I go back to sleep too, then I wake up about three o'clock when they come home.

Alison: And you stay awake until you go to work?

TM: Yes, when all my family — my husband come from work and my kids come home from the school, I already make some tea for us, we all have tea then I ready to come to work too. I leave home about seven thirty in the evening. Then we arrive in Wellington.

Alison: There's a whole group of you who come from Porirua on a bus?

TM: Yes, none in Wellington, all of them from Porirua. I work from eight o'clock till four o'clock in the morning. We all go and wait for the bus at the bus stop about four and when the bus comes we all go back home. It's lucky we've got our own transport to bring us to work and take us back home.

Alison: How did you get used to working so hard and staying awake — not getting tired — is it hard?

TM: Yes, it is hard, but I don't like them to

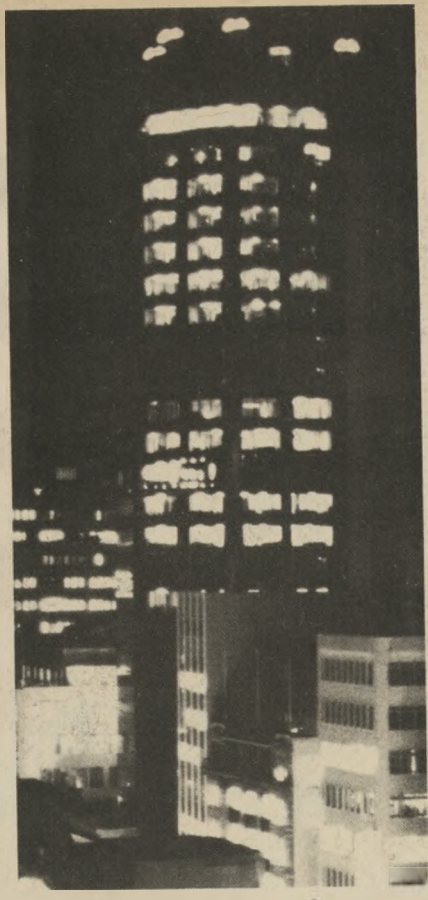
get hungry.

Alison: Your children?

TM: Yes. Sometimes the kids come home about lunchtime and they cry. They said some other kids take their lunch. That's why I change (to a night job) I told them at lunchtime, all of them come home and I will ready some lunch for them.

Alison: Is it hard to pay the bills and, you know, look after five kids with what you earn?

TM: Yes, it's hard if only him (TM's husband) of our family who works. Because if he brings some money and then I spend it for the food and pay the rent sometimes the bills come out to 78 dollars and it's not enough for us. And the children need some money for the school and it's hard for me to ask for some money and I haven't got it. I haven't got any money in my hand or in the bank. That's why I find this kind of job. But, I don't like to work at nights, I like to be with my family at night time. And my children told me they want me to stay home at night time and I said to them "I know all of you need both of us, but the thing is if I stay we... I don't know where to get the money to buy some food," (she pauses) and buy some clothes, things they need and I don't know where to get it — that's why I told them I don't want to leave this kind of a job... maybe sometime but not now. But when they grow up, you know, they 15 years old it's alright for me to look for a day time job.



Alison: Do you worry about not being at home with your kids?

TM: Yes, I do worry. I need to be with them about that time, night time, you know. Sometimes they bring their books to me to read but it's about time for me to get ready to come to work.

TM has worked eight hours a night, five and occasionally six nights a week for nearly five years. She says because they're often short staffed she hasn't had a holiday.

TM and her family rent the house in Porirua East where they live but for a while they were staying with relatives in Wellington and it was TM who finally decided they needed their own place. TM said although she was scared and shy she knew she had to ask for help to find a home.

TM: I go and see the Housing Corporation and see if any people can help me to fill in the form... apply for a house. Then, me and my kids go and see the Housing Corporation and I ask the lady in front of the counter about the form because we need a house. And she give me a form and says "you fill in that form and you bring it back to the Housing Corporation." I ask her if she can help me to fill in that form because I can't understand much in English and she said "alright I will help you", because at that time there's not many people there, you know. We go back home and wait and wait and wait and one day I got a telegram from them. They said "you got a house" then I'm happy, you know. But, we need a house because the house we live in now, we're renting it. We really want to buy a house but the thing is, not enough money, because we got five kids and we have to pay for everything. You know things are very expensive. Power's gone up, rent's gone up.

Alison: Are things now harder than they were in the past?

TM: Yes, when Mr Kirk was the prime minister we used to spend ten dollars for our shopping and we still can save some money, forty dollars or something like that. But from now on we can't save anything. Sixty dollars is not enough for us because we got a big family. I have to work hard say if I want to buy a house.

Alison: You must get very tired.

TM: Yes, sometimes when I come to work I got a headache and I take some disprin and come to work but in the middle of the night I feel better.

Alison: Do you feel like falling asleep?

TM: Yes, when we have our supper I am falling asleep and then I get up and I think "oh, it'd be better for me if I go and do some work or else I sleep here until the time we knock off."

Alison: You must not see your husband very much.

TM: No, not much. I can only see him when he comes from work and at the weekend too. That's the only time I can see him... all of them... him and my kids. If I think about it (working) there's not enough money to help him to take care of our family. □

SPORTING SUCCESS

Erin Baker, 1985 world champion woman triathlete was interviewed by Maryann Franklin, who also looks at some of the issues for feminism and for women who are successful in sport.



"One program we have to push in the future is for junior women. Their physiology is of course different from that of junior men. Women develop much faster. Men develop much slower, but will be much stronger later. Women develop faster but have different bodies. Women cannot compete with men at the highest level. In gymnastics perhaps, but in power and endurance, no. So this is very nice for young women, who can enjoy being successful in their sport while they are growing up . . ."

Eddie Borysewicz — US national cycling coach 1986.

Above: Champion triathlete Erin Baker
Photo courtesy of NZ Triathlete

Despite such ill-informed sentiments, women in sport have been getting increased media attention recently. There appears to be a change of attitude in the air. Television recently gave live coverage of the women's world softball championships and the Milo netball series. The new Sunday Star has actually devoted a whole page in its sports section exclusively to women's sports, while Anne Audain's latest running triumphs have even had a mention on the 6.30 news. Susan Devoy achieved the pinnacle of success in New Zealand by being named as Sportsman of the Year, in the same year as Belinda Cordwell managed to hold off the so-called "mannish" Martina Navratilova in tennis. And the list goes on.

To many, this indicates a distinct swing towards a gen-

eral acceptance of women achieving in top level sporting events. The accompanying increase in sponsorship deals and live TV coverage is considered the ultimate acceptance of women in the male domain of organized sporting competition. Women athletes can rejoice, they have value on the open sporting market. So the cry is that women are "catching up" and, in some instances, will soon be surpassing male records. Gone are the days when women athletes were an oddity, abnormal, unfeminine creatures. Now they can demand equal prizemoney, run the marathon and 10,000 metres in the Olympics, and even be used in advertising. Equality is here. So much so, that some writers have felt prompted to point out that women may in fact be "taking over". (Bob South in a *Sunday Star* article "Frontrunners" 11 May.)

So on one hand we have the claim that "to suggest... that women's sports suffer from overwhelming media bias is inane if not totally inaccurate." (Bob South again). And on the other, "the present structure of the wider society, with women being under-represented... this type of imbalance has led to the undervaluing of women's sport..." (*The Sports Development Enquiry Committee*). Feminists naturally fall into the second camp.

More media coverage does not automatically mean that the barriers have all come down, or that a few well-known women athletes signify a revolution in this country's attitude to sport. Yet there have been few in-depth analyses of institutionalized sport by feminists, or of

women's place within it. It is a topic conspicuous by its absence in feminist theory.

There is no doubt though, that, empirically speaking, things are a-changing. But anybody can play the numbers game—quote statistics, point to budgets, focus on our few high-profile women athletes and come up with a persuasive argument either way. Yet certain questions go unanswered: what is sport (particularly, is there a feminist perspective on this); is sport as it is presently organized, the only or best approach; is more sponsorship i.e. increased commercialism for women's sport a positive development; are there any real changes, or awareness, of the usual feminist concerns over women's body-image, sexuality, social roles, being made through the increasing involvement of women in sport?

These questions are complex and, interwoven as they are with social and biological issues, not easily answered. Feminist cries of "women are stronger than men" per se, ignore certain physiological differences (whether they are socially induced or not), as much as the establishment justifications of "women are biologically disadvantaged, naturally weaker" etc. There is a tendency everywhere to retreat into ideological statements or assumptions when confronting this issue.

It is not my intention here to fully discuss these issues, but rather to highlight them through the following interview with one of New Zealand's leading sportswomen.

Erin Baker has recently been named in *Ultrasport Magazine* in the top ten endurance athletes in the world, and this year, came 11th overall in the New Zealand "Ironman" event in Auckland. Her chosen sport is relatively new and her rise to fame has been meteoric. Both these factors make her an interesting example of how attitudes to women in sport have been developing in the last few years. The triathlon is a multi-discipline event involving swimming, cycling and running in succession. It can involve any combination of events, like paddling-cycle-run or ski-cycle-run and so on. As a sport it is on the crest of a wave of popularity. Only born over the last ten years or so, it has a particular role in the development of women as credible endurance athletes.

I interviewed her the morning after her win in the women's section in the "DB Ironman". She had covered the 3.2km swim, 161km bike ride and 32km run in 8 hours 26 minutes, 33 seconds; 20 minutes ahead of the next woman home, and 51 minutes behind the first man. These times will have little meaning to the average *Broadsheet* reader I know, so just

bear in mind that she is the first woman to go under 10 hours, (and just lately has slashed that time by half an hour), over the full Ironperson course (as measured by the famous Hawaii "Ironman" which ends with a full marathon), and is capable of running under three hours for a marathon after swimming and cycling. Erin is a professional triathlete and as such, has been at the vanguard of demands for equal prizemoney for men and women.

Erin is 25 years old this year. She comes from an athletic background, having competed at national level in both swimming and running. Brought up in Christchurch, she attended a girls school which she considers had a good sporting environment. As a teenage athlete, she was aware of herself being one of the few — late to class because of training schedules etc. — and considered somewhat odd at times by her schoolmates. Erin feels that her early experience taught her greater efficiency with her time and she applies this to her present training. Between 19 and 22 she didn't compete due to the need to study for radiography. Although she obviously kept herself fit, competitive sport was not a priority.

► LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of 1984, Erin was living and working in Sydney, and this is where she had her first taste of triathlons. She did well in her first events (won in fact), which provided her with an excuse to give up working and devote herself fulltime to training. This meant she took the risk of supporting herself on sponsorship and prize money — her income depended on her performance. Erin follows a rigorous and to some incredibly huge training programme. In answer to the claim that someone has to be slightly odd/obsessive/mad to physically exert oneself so much, she replies, "I think people who go to work eight hours a day are crazy — who would want to sit in an office eight hours a day!"

The only difference for Erin is that she trains in the time that most people work. Yet Erin's training schedule in itself is a challenge to the notion that women are biologically unable to withstand such hard physical activity. Julie Moss, the American triathlete who came second to Erin in the DB, conceded that she has "set new standards in training and has a nice jump on the opposition". Otherwise, Erin states that "I am basically

normal" and feels that a lot of exaggeration goes on as to her character traits . . . "hardly anything that is written is correct".

► ON FEMINISM

Erin's stand on the issue of equal prizemoney, where she has refused to compete in events that failed to offer parity with men, has had a definite effect on triathlons, in this country at least. Although the issue is far from resolved, her stand has made her (along with Susan Devoy and Allison Roe) somewhat of a spokesperson on women's rights in sport. But as to whether Erin classifies herself as a feminist, she is more circumspect.

"I consider myself feminist because I understand feminist things . . . I am aware of the sort of things people are going on about."

Her reservations lie with what she perceives as the dogmatism of some feminists, but she agrees that there are misunderstandings as to what being a feminist means. There is no doubt that Erin has an awareness, particularly over the use of language in sport. Having to run behind a car with "Leading Lady" scrawled across it, really grated on her, as does the tendency to use terms lady and girl when talking of women athletes. She herself endeavours to use woman and feels it important enough to make a point of. After all . . .

"Lady is a man's impression of what a woman should be . . . and I think that's right... they think we are ladies and I just hate it. It mean, I'm a woman, I don't consider myself to be a lady... I think that it is an intimidating term... lady to me seems weak, feeble."

Coupled with this principle is Erin's firm belief that equal prizemoney is the woman athlete's right. "We're doing the same thing that the men are doing." Her contention is that the women work as hard and, in the top places, are of an equivalent standard to their male counterparts.

Now this is a tricky issue, countered by many triathlon organizers with the argument that women comprise a very small section of the total number competing. Consequently, their rewards should be in proportion to their representation. The implicit part to this argument of course, is that women are (and by implication, always will be) slower than the men. Yet the standards are lifting all the time.



Photo: Maryann Franklin

As Erin points out, it is only the first three places that really count in terms of prizes. After that, times fall away very quickly in the women's section. Those top few women are of an equivalent standard to the men, are doing as much work and to her, it is irrelevant that they may not be first over the line. It is worth noting at this point that Erin herself is well on the way to proving that women can have speed as well as endurance — her place of 6th overall in a short-course triathlon (known as a sprint tri) in Christ-

church, put her only 11 minutes behind the male winner — proof of how close these "inferior" contestants could be.

In economic terms then, lesser prizemoney seems justified. But the allocation of prizes has always involved values and attitudes that go beyond economics. The interesting aspect of triathlons is that like the marathon, they are one of few events where men and women compete together ostensibly as "equals". Yet in this sense, it is secondary to Erin who comes over the line first. The problem is that the public and the media are preoccupied with the first three placegetters — an attitude that is becoming more and more prevalent and accepted in sport.

"It's two races in one, but because we don't cross the line first, as in first overall, we just lose everything. The people think, 'well the first few are in, now it's time to go'... Now it doesn't happen to me because they know what I think, they know I'm coming, I'm in the race . . . But if you were the first woman coming across the line, nobody would be interested by the time you got there. And that's all it is. It's only because I've got a name now that people are interested."

"But then I don't want to see all my races just against women. Because I like to — for myself — I like to be chasing the men. Because I want to get better . . ."

Many women are in Erin's position. There is a desire to compete with the men as well as the women. Apart from a few exceptions though, modern sports organisation has decreed that sex should be the primary category. It is assumed through tradition that the biological definition of sex is the bottom line for any differences in athletic performance between men and women. K.F. Dyer has written (*Challenging the men: Women in Sport*) that the biological division in sport is an irrational one and no longer tenable in the light of increasing evidence that women can be equal or better (potentially) in certain events.

► WOMEN ONLY EVENTS

There are implications in this debate for the future of women generally in triathlons. Such a sport, with its emphasis on endurance, attracts many men. A large proportion of them are convinced that it is muscle size and

strength that will get to the line in good time. Anyone who has watched some of these Mr Atlas-type guys stagger across the finish, at the tailend of the field, will know that bulk does not equal endurance. Yet for women just starting out and wanting to taste the fun, this can be very intimidating. Triathlons have a strong element of the macho stereotype and this is the strongest point in the case for women-only triathlons. Kapiti already holds a short tri for women only, and events such as these are strongly supported by Erin. There is less intimidation and so more opportunity for beginner women to get involved. If anyone has been subjected to some of the aggressive tactics at the swim start, they will understand how some women would be loath to throw themselves into such a whirlpool.

Women's triathlons and their present short form are a two edged sword though. Erin feels that, to be credible, they must be the proper distance (1.5km swim, 40km cycle, 10 km run). The shorter distance automatically assigned to women-only

events is to her, patronising. With the right sort of training — and this doesn't mean mega-hours — Erin is convinced that any woman has the potential to do an official length triathlon. Events like the "Golden Girl" recently staged in Auckland, although attracting a large number of entries, are condescending, through the name and the lesser distance. Erin's sister, married with 2 children, completed her first event recently, and following a programme that need not be time-consuming, so can anyone. Erin outlines such a programme in the box.

► BODY IMAGE AND THE MEDIA

In many ways, triathlons exemplify the current fashion of slim-but-fit for women's bodies. Gone are the Twiggy days where slim-and-thin was the norm. The popularity of aerobics and gym work-outs is due, in part, to the large number of women taking up these pastimes to obtain that lean, healthy, well defined look. Magazines and TV cash in on this sports craze

with their appropriation of sportsmen and sportswomen as models of healthy lives, healthy bodies. Leotards and sportswear are a whole new industry, as manufacturers vie for this corner of the market. Many a triathlete who is a woman has this bodyshape, but just as many (and this includes top performers) do not.

Sportswomen walk a very thin line. The battle to gain acceptance as an athlete and as a suitably feminine female is usually fought unconsciously. Lipstick, mascara, carefully applied foundation, are common sights around women athletes prior to the start of a race. No one questions a woman's athletic ability, or casts aspersions on her femininity in this context. It is when women start breaking certain records (as in Erin's case last year), or fail to conform to the athlete-but-I'm-a-woman-first stereotype, that questions are raised. Sex-tests (only for women of course!) have been institutionalised for years at the Olympic Games. (Eva Klobukowska, one time Polish co-holder of the 100 metre world record . . . was disqualified from international

ON TRAINING FOR A TRIATHLON

Erin's main point is that a programme like this requires only one to one and a half hours a few days a week. The main aim is to build slowly and gain the benefits of greater fitness as it comes. There are many books available on triathlon training and a regular magazine, *Triathlete*.

"I think you can do it easily — like you don't want to go out and race your first one. I think you can complete it, with the right sort of training. That's a problem — people just don't know what to do. I want people to build up two months to it, even ten weeks. Decide, there's a race in ten weeks and I want to do it.

I would advise, if you've done any sport, to pick up that sport for the first week. Get more confident at it — and be training at it; instead of a jog make it a run.

In week two start to incorporate say, the thing you fear most, say swimming. Force yourself twice that week to go down to the pool. Once that week get on to the third thing like go for a cycle.

And then it's just a question of building up. What you aim to do is decrease what you're good at (especially if you are capable of completing the distance). Once you know you are capable of completing that distance, maybe just decrease it a little, and work on the others.

By week five be swimming the distance at least

once a week, and a lesser distance two more times that week, say 1500 metres once and 800 metres twice. For another event, say biking, do the distance required at least once, maybe twice.

By week seven or eight be able to, three times a week, do two of the sports. And once that week, everything. So, you go down the pool, and do for example a kilometre swim and a 30km cycle, and a 3-5km run.

I think it's really important that you get used to, especially, getting off the bike and running. Because, the first couple of times you do it, it's really hard. But it really is surprising how easy it becomes. So at least once or twice before the race do all three things — not the full distances but a 1 1/2 — 2 hour workout.

I find there are a lot of men really supportive of the women doing it, but I'm sure there are women who don't get a lot of support at all. Saturday morning, for example, there must be someone, boyfriend, friend, husband who can look after the kids — make them look after the kids!

Triathlons are not a young sport — it's an older sport. But a lot of women have got children and other commitments, or financially they could not afford not to be working. So there are these problems." □

competition in 1967 after failing to pass a chromosomal test . . . Eva's boyfriend said that he was amazed that anyone should consider she was not a woman.) The controversy over steroids aside, the implication is that women who achieve excessively must be more "male".

This attitude can be hard to pin down, deeply enmeshed in social and cultural attitudes as it is. Yet it becomes quickly apparent when a woman oversteps the line. This can be in various ways; her strong competitive ability (the ability to win, or beat other men in this case), or her physical appearance. A common comment is, "Oh, but she's a very masculine competitor", or "I thought it was a man passing me", or "all those muscles-she looks like a man". The worst part is, it is not only men who say these things!

Such subtle and not so subtle put-downs, are just one of the factors preventing women athletes from reaching their full potential at this time. To Erin, such attitudes are unimportant. She chooses to ignore them.

"I don't mind if I look like a man, because I've got muscles. Of course I've got muscles — I train to have muscles!"

She is very aware of this ambivalence towards women athletes whose bodies challenge the norm — "Heaps goes on what you look like — for promotional purposes . . . I don't look as elegant as other people look, maybe that's why they say I look like a man."

The idea of wearing make-up is ridiculous to Erin. She laughs as she pictures "everything running at the end." Neither does Erin relish the media's portrayal of sportswomen as sex-objects. She is very conscious of the slim-as-beautiful image pushed by sports magazines and general media alike — "it pisses me off to see models advertising sports products".

Erin is not tall, particularly long-legged, or prone to self-display. She sees herself as "borderline". Her body is carefully honed into top condition with the aim of competing at her utmost potential. It is Erin's disinterest in conforming in this way that sets her, in my mind, apart from other athletes. Although many of her colleagues are attractive women — in the conventional sense — Erin is enthusiastic about any women learning to be more active. She thinks different shaped bodies are a good thing, and



Photo: Maryann Franklin

that there is nothing wrong with being big. To her, it is a matter of what one is happy with — "confidence in yourself is No. 1". She acknowledges that social norms can prevent bigger people from taking part in physical activities, and of the pressures on big people to "cover up".

"I'm really pleased to see big women wearing shorts and tops . . . it doesn't worry me to see the biggest woman there is in bikini or shorts, because that's what it should be like . . .

who wants to be covered up."

► COMPETITION

Erin is one of many women who are directly challenging male assumptions about women's athletic potential. Her own times, and her total dominance in womens triathlons at present, is breaking new ground in a sport which is itself, providing a context for women to realise their potential as endurance athletes. Sport at her level is highly organised and highly competitive. This latter aspect, and its assumed partner — aggression — are seen as essentially "masculine" characteristics. Women who achieve in sport, are often said to have a large degree of these "masculine" traits. Sociologists analyse this in terms of a "conflict in role behaviour". Many sportswomen don't see this conflict, but even so, they are caught in the middle of society's rigid definition of masculine and feminine.

Whether modern sport's preoccupation with winning/being the best is a good thing, is an issue in itself. Some feminists see wanting to win as a male hang-up in an area dominated by men anyway, and so it is not a thing women should strive to do. Consequently, even feminists, in their own way, are critical of women competing. The ideas of co-operation and sharing are seen as incompatible with the individualistic notion of winning a race.

Erin is very emphatic on this issue. She doesn't see competing as a male prerogative or as a negative thing, at all. Women are just as competitive as men, and this is not anything to be ashamed of. She cites her own family as an example; four out of six girls are highly competitive whereas of her two brothers one is just not interested, while the other, although quite gifted and a representative rugby league player, lacks Erin's competitiveness. Granted, sportspeople get far too much recognition, and she is aware that her own example is not the norm. Athletes like Anne Audain and Lorraine Moller have been excelling for years, but have only recently been awarded particular media attention.

"I just happen to be like this. I believe sportspeople get put on this incredible pedestal and we get far too much recognition for what we do . . . It's (triathlons) a real 'in' sport and I've been given an incredible amount of publicity. But I can only say I've re-

ceived far more than my fair share ... I think there's still a lot of chauvinism around."

► ROLE MODELS

As a woman athlete who can achieve on her own terms, Erin could be seen as a role model for others wanting to enter the sport. She herself doesn't have any in particular. Allison Roe's marathon victories and world record in that event, did make an impression. She is more concerned over the myth that top women athletes cannot be friends, and the media's role in spreading it.

"When I race against her (Roe), I'm incredibly competitive towards her, and she is towards me. And that's the way it goes. But outside, I consider we're good friends, I hear things you wouldn't believe, and I know that's not correct."

► PROFESSIONALISM

There is much debate at present amongst sport administrators over what constitutes a professional sportsperson, and its implication for the Olympic games. Triathlons originated, in their present form, in America and are big business over there. To many, amateurism is a sacred notion and should be protected. (This debate goes beyond the scope of this article but does warrant a mention) Erin has strong feelings on the issue.

"Professionalism and amateurism are just the biggest sham there is ... people have been ripping off sportspeople for years."

Erin sees any value judgements as "rubbish" as sports has been big business's for a long time. Neither does she downgrade the notion of sport for its own sake.

"Trying and finishing is a reward in itself. The people that want to try and finish are as, or more elated than I am. But I've done it. I've been there and I've done that, and I've won. I still love my sport and I would still do it if there was no money in it. But I'm in a position now that I can do it and get paid for it. So now I've established myself in that position, I cannot go back to earning no money because I have no income."

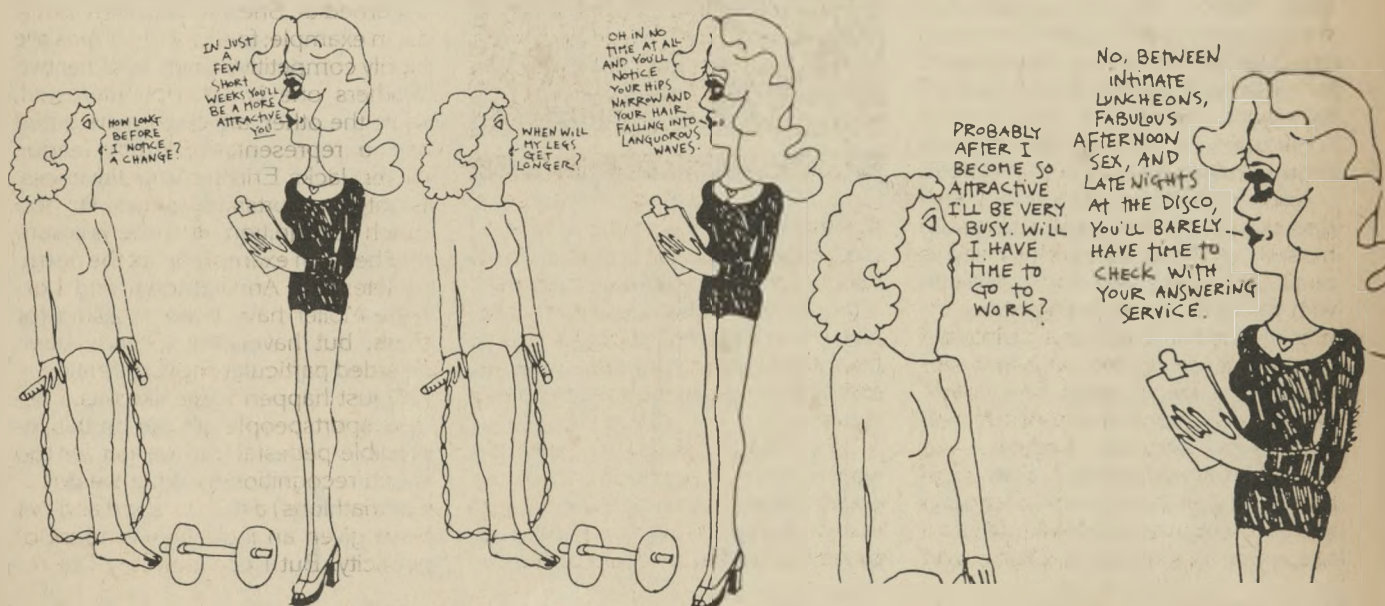
► CONCLUSION

It may seem surprising, and yet is no accident, that very few top-level sportswomen are feminists. Margaret Talbot puts it well when she says "The ambivalence towards women in sport ... is shared by both men and women, in respect of the conflict which is seen between femininity and sports competition. The value conflict is seen as inevitable when the competition is at top-level, or where the sports event is not congruent with the "female attributes" of passivity, nurturance etc ... The challenge to culturally determined stereotyped notions of femininity presented by female sports participation is further strengthened by recent questioning of the inevitability of men's superior performance in all sports and, in a wider context, by the current controversy over relative innate or cultural influences on sex-typing."

Despite themselves, many

sportswomen are challenging male notions of "feminine" activity. But it is an uphill battle. Restraints and social pressures come from without and within. Increased publicity has yet to have a real effect on women's sport as the poor cousin to men's. Neither is it a sure sign that social attitudes and expectations have radically changed at grass-roots level — in school playgrounds and physed programmes. Women such as Erin Baker are pioneers in a sense, in that they are directly challenging the men on their own ground. Although thousands of young women take part in organised sport in their teens, it is with boys that it seems to play its most powerful role. Those women who do continue into adulthood, do so at some sort of cost (realised or not). The general conservatism of most sportswomen is a barrier in itself to further progress. Yet it could also be seen as a kind of protective mechanism, where traditional social roles taken by women, outside the sports arena, balance the challenge to men in one of their most sacred domains.

The Feminist movement has obviously had a part to play in the changes in sporting attitudes to women. But this has been with very little direct input on the subject. Feminists seem as wary of sportswomen as most sportswomen are of feminists! Still, such issues as raised in this article and elsewhere, must be grappled with in feminist theory. Attitudes to sport are changing fast and we need to be aware of it. Sport is a feminist issue. □



AUCKLAND TO WELLINGTON ON A BICYCLE

JULIE GLAMUZINA UNEARTHED THIS PIECE OF WOMEN'S HERSTORY

The herstory of women's cycle racing and riding in New Zealand is, like so much of women's sporting herstory, forgotten and hidden. In the 1890s there were various women's cycling clubs, including the Mimiroladies Club in Otago and the Atalanta Ladies Cycling Club in Christchurch. In the Cyclopedia of New Zealand published around the turn of the century, not a word was written about the existence of these and other women's clubs. Only men's cycling clubs and activities were mentioned.

From 1932 New Zealand cyclists competed at the Commonwealth and Olympic games. Only men competed because there were no cycling events for women. The first time that a women's cycle racing event appeared on the programme was at the Los Angeles Olympics in 1982. The New Zealand cycling selectors at that time would not nominate a woman to represent New Zealand, but Auckland cyclist, Kathy Ragg, took advantage of her dual New Zealand/Fiji citizenship and rode for Fiji instead.

In 1964 there were twelve women registered as racing cyclists compared with 1,185 male cyclists. By 1986 the numbers for women had risen to only about 30, most of these registering since 1981, when the first national cycle racing championship for women was held.

Until recently, women who wanted to race received very little encouragement. One woman who had raced in England where women's cycling had greater acceptance was told when she wanted to race in New Zealand in the 1960s that "sheilas couldn't race". Instead, she was told that she was "welcome" to help the other women in making the post-race afternoon teas.

In spite of such attitudes, in January 1936, Violet Baird, a 25 year-old Auckland machinist, set a new women's record for cycling from Auckland to Wellington, breaking her



previous record of 79 hours and 40 minutes, set in 1932.

Violet was the secretary of the Auckland Ladies Amateur Cycling Club which had been formed in 1931. Its members competed in the weekly cycle races which were part of the programmes of athletic meetings in Auckland.

Violet left Auckland at 6.15 am on 6 January. Fifty hours and thirty-three minutes later, she arrived in Wellington. Under the heading "Girl's (sic) Endurance", the Dominion reported that "she did not find it necessary to go to bed after her 470 miles journey, and ... was quite fresh". She had had only four hours sleep — taken by the side of the road in Mokau, Taranaki — since her departure from Auckland.

With her rode her two brothers. One drove a motorcycle carrying all the food and gear. The other, a racing cyclist like Violet, cycled alongside her.

The route she followed took her down the main highway out of Auckland to Mokau in Taranaki which she reached at midnight on the first day. Starting off again at 4.15 am, she rode through Waitara and Inglewood, reaching Stratford around midday. From there she followed the coast line down to Wanganui. The days were sunny although some showers fell at this part of her journey. Between Sanson and Bulls she had to contend with a metal road which caused her to lose at least a half hour. From there on, in spite of having to ride into the wind, she made good progress to Wellington.

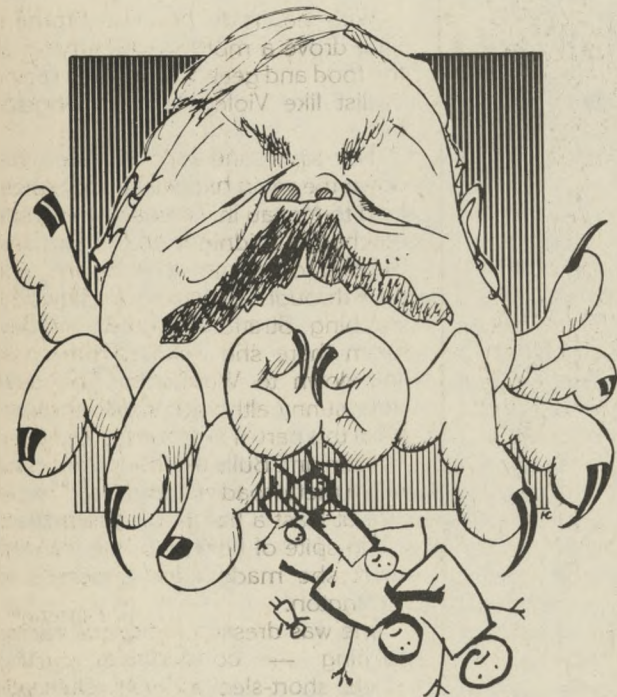
She was dressed in normal racing clothing — comfortable cycling shorts, short-sleeved jersey and cycling shoes which were clipped and strapped into the pedals for maximum efficiency. Her bicycle was equipped with gears which enabled her to ride up the hills, including the Paekakariki hill. The bicycle tyres were sturdy by heavy, unlike the modern tubular tyres which glue on to the wheel rims and are very light.

Interviewed after her ride, Violet said that she had trained for eight months, covering over 2000 miles (3200 kilometres) in this time as preparation for her ride. She said that she had no plans to attempt the ride again but hoped that other women would attempt to lower her record. At that time other women in Auckland were contemplating improving her time, but it was not until early March, 1986, that another attempt was made. This was by Julie Burns, 24, of Cambridge. She was well on the way to breaking Violet's record when, just 60 kilometres from Wellington, she was struck and injured by a car in very bad weather conditions and had to abandon the attempt.

So the women's record for this event still stands. □

TAXING US HARDER

In this, the third of three articles, Mary Slater looks at the issue of taxation. Mary is a member of the Wellington Social Wage Group.



WHERE DOES TAXATION FIT IN?

The government has a responsibility to intervene in the New Zealand economy, to actively manage and plan the economy so that it works in the interests of people, and not solely in the interests of business.

But to intervene in the economy, to plan and provide goods and services, to make sure that regulations and laws are enforced, requires money. Taxation is simply the method of raising money for government to operate.

Without taxation, the New Zealand government could not have produced anything — no railways, no roads, no telephones, no mail delivery, no airways, no shipping systems. It is taxation that enables us to have a free, compulsory education system and free medical treatment in public hospitals.

The alternative is that only people with sufficient money will be able to buy goods and services. Everyone else will have to rely on whatever services private charity throws up.

Taxation provides us with an extremely wide range of goods and services — provided free, or at an affordable cost. The weather forecast, trade statistics, national parks, lands and survey maps, the police, to name but a few. It is taxation which enables the government to effectively provide a range of services from which we all collectively benefit.

If the government doesn't get enough money from tax it will have to collect it in other ways:

- state house rentals will increase, or the houses themselves will simply cease to be built
- services to the public will be reduced. Job levels themselves will decline.
- postal and electricity charges will have to be raised

These higher charges are a type of tax, but, they have a much heavier impact on lower income people. Lower income people spend a higher proportion of their incomes on electricity and telephone rent. They also depend more on services such as state housing. Access to quality services at affordable cost will be at risk if our tax system doesn't collect enough money, and if the government turns to its own agencies to make up the difference.

WHAT KINDS OF TAXATION ARE THERE?

Basically tax gathering in our system falls into three categories.

INCOME TAX:

This is tax on incomes of wage and salary earners, and on company profits.

INDIRECT TAX:

This is tax on the sale of goods and services.

WEALTH TAX:

This is tax on the ownership of wealth, whether money or property. Examples include death and estate duties. In 1985, the proportion of tax under each of those headings was:

Income tax 70%; Indirect tax 29%; Wealth tax .008%

But that is just a brief snapshot of the kind of taxes there are now, and the contribution they make to government revenue.

Before looking at what's happening now and in the near future, it's worth looking at our tax history. We have taken three historical snapshots, which illustrate two significant points:

- Forms of taxation have failed to keep up with changes in the structure of the economy. With new structures and forms of economic activity, our tax system has become out of date.
- There has been a gradual movement away from any requirement that the owners of wealth should contribute towards taxation.

THE NEW ZEALAND OF 1912

In 1912, commercial activity revolved around land-based production and the consumption of items that were imported, usually from Britain. The tax structure reflected that sort of economy. Land taxes, death duties and estate duties brought in 19% of the total tax collected. Customs and excise duties brought in a whopping 64%.

BEFORE THE WAR

By 1938 the economy was starting to diversify and more of the consumption needs of the local economy were being met by local producers. It was also clear that taxes on wealth were starting to diminish. Land and other wealth

taxes had fallen to 7.5% of the total and customs and excise duties to 29%. Income taxes were starting to surge forward as the centrepiece of the tax system, bringing in 39% of all tax. The shift to almost complete reliance on income taxes was the dominant feature of the post-war era.

THE END OF THE "LONG BOOM"

By 1970, two-thirds of all taxes were being collected from income tax. The owners of wealth had more or less been excused from tax obligations, contributing only 2% of the total. Customs duties had dipped to just below 10% and taxes on alcohol, cigarettes and other items brought in about one-fifth. In the last 15 years there have been small changes in these proportions. The big difference, however, has been within the income tax component of the tax structure. Taxes on individuals have come to dominate and the contribution of company tax has been gradually falling. Whereas company tax made up about one-third, and individual income tax about two-thirds of the income tax take in the mid 1960s, by 1985 individuals were paying nearly 95% and companies were paying less than 10% of the income tax burden.

REASONS FOR THE CHANGES

There are two main reasons behind the shifts in the distribution of tax during this century. One is political. The owners of wealth have been successful in persuading governments that they should not contribute as much as previously. The second is structural. As the economy became more complex, forms of taxation did not develop to tap new forms of economic activity. The development of the financial sector, the growth of speculative activity and the growing dominance of the share market are all areas that have not been tapped by modern forms of taxation. This has meant that taxes have intensified in the more traditional areas of the economy. The proportion of the tax bill met by ordinary wage and salary earners has grown out of all proportion to their role in the economy.

WHERE IS TAXATION POLICY HEADING?

As we've seen, there has been a shift through New Zealand's history away from taxing wealth and towards taxing wage and salaries. Change in taxation policy is speeding up under this Government. Three areas show this change.

THE GOODS AND SERVICE TAX

By now it's well known that GST came into force on 1 October. Everything that's bought and sold will become a method of collecting tax. The arguments advanced by the government in favour of GST fall into two categories:

- it's impossible to avoid
- it allows reduction in income tax, and that reduction will encourage people to stay in New Zealand and exercise entrepreneurial initiative. The arguments advanced, mainly by the union movement, in opposition to the tax are:

It falls more heavily on the poor than the rich, because the poor spend more of their money on goods and services than do the rich. Technically, that makes GST a "regressive" tax. It differs from taxation policy in the past which was "progressive" — taxation designed to fall more heavily on the wealthy than the poor.

AN EXAMPLE:

Mrs Smith has a disposable income after rent of \$100 a

week. She buys groceries and other essentials worth \$90. GST of 10% is \$9. That is, the tax rate on her disposable income is —

\$9 TAX

\$100 INCOME = 9% TAX RATE

Mr Fitzherbert has a disposable income after rent of \$300 a week. He buys groceries and other essentials worth \$150. GST of 10% is \$15.

That is the tax rate on his disposable income is —

\$15 TAX

\$300 DISPOSABLE INCOME = 5% TAX RATE

That is, even though Mr Fitzherbert pays more tax in \$ terms, he pays a *lower* proportion of his income in tax. That's what makes GST a regressive tax. That would not be so bad if Mr Fitzherbert was also paying a fair amount of income tax on his salary. But from 1 October, the income from GST is being used to fund [but only partly] a reduction in income tax which will have far more benefit for high income earners than low and middle income earners.

- There are other ways of coping with tax avoidance which have been ignored.
- There is no evidence that people are leaving New Zealand and/or failing to exercise entrepreneurial initiative because of the taxation system.
- In addition, it's probably a tax which will discriminate against women, who tend to be the shoppers and who will have to cope with the impact of GST on their house-keeping money, and discriminate in favour of men who tend to be those with higher incomes and to control the wealth, and who will therefore be the principle beneficiaries of the plan to reduce tax, particularly on the incomes of high income earners.

NEGATIVE INCOME TAX

(Family Support and the Guaranteed Minimum Family Income — GMFI).

Also introduced on 1 October was a new system where people on low incomes with dependent children will be given tax top-ups to subsidise their wages.

That is, when low income people don't get enough from their employment to support them and their children, their employer will be given money by the Inland Revenue Department to top up their wages.

Unions constantly struggle to try to make employers exercise their social responsibility to workers by paying a living wage. The Family Support and GMFI schemes effectively undermine that responsibility.

REDUCTION IN COMPANY TAX

The third area of taxation policy change is concerned with tax on company profits. Taken together with GST and the lowering of the rates of income tax on high earners, it represents a major shift for the responsibility of paying for public services away from the wealthy and towards ordinary working people. The system is known as imputation.

On 20 August 1985, the Minister of Finance told parliament that "the government proposes to introduce a full imputation system in 1988/89, subject to consultation with the business sector". That announcement may seem to have nothing to do with working people but it is a key tax issue for the labour movement.

Stripped of all the jargon, imputation is a mechanism for a massive reduction in the tax paid by those who get income from the ownership of shares. If the government

goes ahead with its intention we will be faced with either:

- extra taxes being imposed on the rest of the community, or
- cuts in government services.

HERE IS HOW "IMPUTATION" WORKS

Company A makes \$100 profit, pays \$48 tax and distributes \$52 as a dividend.

The shareholder declares the full \$100 as his or her income but also claims the \$48 as tax paid.

Since 48 per cent is to be the new top tax rate, shareholders will never pay any tax on the dividend. If they are on tax rates of 30 cents, or less, they will get dividends and a tax rebate to "repay" the so-called "excessive" tax paid by the company!

There will be four main effects of this type of system:

- there will be no taxes paid on dividend incomes;
- there will be some rebating to shareholders of tax that might have been paid by companies;
- because shareholders would need to receive dividends before they can get full advantage of the rebate, they will demand much higher levels of distribution of profits in the form of dividends;
- higher levels of dividend payout will leave less money in companies for reinvestment.

Imputation will therefore have effects on job levels as well as on the distribution of taxation and on the social wage.

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A FAIR TAXATION SYSTEM?

We have to begin by acknowledging that taxation is necessary if we are to have public services which are fair or at an easily affordable cost when we need them.

Then the question becomes one of who should pay, rather than a lemming like rush to the mindless "less tax" policies presented at election time to catch votes.

Our history is that a fair tax system is one which gathers more from those who can afford to pay, whether individuals or companies, and less from those who can't.

Recently the Federation of Labour and the Combined State Unions held a national taxation seminar to look at developing a comprehensive taxation policy for the union movement.

The facts of the matter are that those who can afford to pay tax can also afford to pay lawyers and accountants to help them devise ways of reducing their tax burden. Therefore a fair tax system needs to be one which has the broadest possible definition of income and the narrowest definition of exemptions. □

If you're interested in getting to know more about the details of the union proposals as they were developed at the seminar, write to:

The Secretary, NZFOL, PO BOX 6161, TE ARO

or

The Secretary, CSU, PO BOX 5103, WELLINGTON

Women in History

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Edited by Barbara Brookes, Charlotte Macdonald and Margaret Tennant

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TEEN MOVIES



Ali Bell looks at the roles played by women in the co-ed world of movies made about teenagers.

If you're an avid film-goer no doubt you have noticed the recent abundance of teen movies. Big teen attendance at picture theatres is big bucks. In main centres all round New Zealand and throughout the world teenagers pour into the main streets on Friday and Saturday nights looking for any entertaining excuse to get out of their family homes and be with their friends.

Above:
Molly Ringwald and Andrew McCarthy
in "Pretty in Pink." Photo: courtesy Amalgamated
Theatres.

So what is there in the cinematic wilderness for the young woman, or the adult viewer with nothing better to do on a windy wet afternoon? The movie magnates have come a long way since the Tarzan movies at the Saturday matinee. But how far has Jane moved along with the times?

At the youngest end of the teenage spectrum the video/computer age has produced a fair share of boy-genius movies — consider for example *War Games*, *The Starfighter*, *D.A.R.Y.L.*, even *Back to the Future*, where the teen male adventurer has the loyal and undying passive support of an outrageously characterless

girlfriend. Female viewers are forced to identify with the more weighty and exciting male characters.

Going from bad to worse we move on to what *Time* magazine dubbed the "teenage gross-outs" — male-oriented sexual comedy with the male protagonists peering through the eternal hole in the girls' changing sheds, the losing of virginity (an eternally momentous event). You know the kind of thing — lots of closeups of large breasts and blonde toothy co-eds that don't seem to exist outside of the fantasies of the American men who created them. The women say next to nothing. When they do you

want to die out of embarrassment (or kill!) for the scriptwriters' lack of perception of female sexuality and intellect.

The young women exist merely as sex symbols (if they're not brunette help-mates) and objects of the double male gaze — the filmmaker's, and the male audience's. Humour is centred around the visual gag — for example in *Bachelor Party* the hero's fiancée lies squealing on a sexy kitchen table as he lewdly stands over her presenting her with a frightfully phallic egg-beater, whirring away. I don't know about you but rather than hilarious I found the idea of what was to come decidedly uncomfortable! That sort of smutty humour is based on the insistent degradation of sex and women's bodies. I never could debase myself enough to see *Porky's* but I suppose it's a case of when you've seen one you've seen them all. I should've stopped at the supposed classic of the genre *Animal House* back at the tender age of sixteen! Back then I even bothered to try and understand what the boys enjoyed. Now I'd prefer not to know!

Recently, however, there is a breath of ambiguously fresh air on the scene. A scene the 18-year-old Hollywood actor Molly Ringwald seems to have well and truly cornered. Her roles are always protagonistically feminine — a kind of teens' answer to Meryl Streep. She's certainly the same type of box-office attraction. She's invariably in her last years at high school coping with social differentials like money and status, indulging herself in the favourite drama of romance and soft-centred sex. I've seen all her movies (except *Tempest*) and I'm still not sure if those kisses were supposed to be sexual metaphors or not. Perhaps I'm reading into things! Anyhow, more often than not the climax in these sensitive high school dramas is the high school prom dance. By then Molly should have her boy.

The male supports are sometimes interesting, but most often not, as in all the female-focused teen movies. By and large any personality is subsumed to the time-honoured and time-warped role of the knight in a shining Mustang. John Hughes is the man to watch (or not depending on your taste) for having his creative fingers in *Sixteen Candles*, *The Breakfast Club* and *Pretty in Pink*. If you have any doubt about Molly's magnetising effect take a note of that vul-

nerable pout, the sensitive but intelligent brown eyes petulantly rolling from time to time. But even I, a sucker for vulnerability, have gotten just a little tired of her mannerisms. The scripts can be horribly superficial, she never has any real gumption, and I can't stand a story where she wins her man by perseverance and a sickeningly moral sweetness. I'm sure Meryl Streep was *never* like that as a teenager!

The most interesting thing to note about teen movies is that women in the film industry seem to have gotten into the power-pulling roles of editing, directing and producing in significant numbers. First from farther afield Lisa Gottlieb directed *Just One of the Guys* as her first feature film, a switched sex-role comedy that poses the dilemma of being ambitious and attractive, when being attractive means she doesn't get taken seriously as she tries to get ahead in a man's world. A warning — this is still a male scriptwriter's view of the state of affairs. Terry takes some humorous lessons in appropriate male behaviour from her gross-out brother and does an excellent rendition of moving balls to one side of a jean leg.

By posing as a boy at a neighbouring high school she becomes a social outcast male where before she was so terribly terribly *popular* (a crucial concept). But she does get to write an original piece on being one of the boys which casts a new light on the changing-shed theme. And another warning — the discerning female viewer might be somewhat startled by the opening pan up Terry's body! You can't even trust a woman to scrap that one! The prom scene is distinguished only by its wetness.

Girls Just Want to Have Fun written by Amy Spies didn't end with a prom, but had as its climactic moment a televised dance competition. I went to see it because I liked Cyndi Lauper's song, and that was the best part of it. The closing credits that is.

Baby It's You is worth checking out, directed by John Sayles, a "sensitive male" interested in the female experience. His script is based on Amy Robinson's own experiences of growing out of adolescence in the 1960s. Rosanna Arquette plays a character realistically distasteful in parts, her immaturity refreshingly real and complicated. So's her boyfriend Sheik, vividly named after a condom brand. Nor is sex just kissing followed by the curtain. Even dope and alcohol

feature, complete with realistic spewing and freaking consequences. Need I add it finishes at the school prom!

Although not strictly a teen movie Susan Seidelman's *Desperately Seeking Susan* (written by Leora Barish) has marked appeal for teenage girls and young women. They went in droves to see Madonna play the free-wheeler with raw sex oozing out of her black lacy pores. Not to mention Arquette's performance as a bored housewife who recovers her identity by changing men and abodes. It's always good, I would argue, to see a film produced, directed and scripted by women on commercial release. And as Susan Seidelman's star can only be described as rising we should see more from her in the future.



Sometimes American films featuring teens with more thoughtful and interesting characterisations inhabiting the darker (read poorer) side of life, reach our shores.

Films like *Mask* about a young male teen's coping with enormous facial deformity, sounds bizarre but is actually very moving, with Cher playing a realistically flawed and sensitive mother brilliantly. *That Was Then This Is Now* is based on the novel by S.E. Hinton — a woman who writes about strong teenage male characters, with unfortunately the same insipid but attractive female supports in the role of the girlfriend. Coppola's *Rumblefish*, a cult classic of the genre, was also penned by her. That film has very real cinema merits in terms of technique and style, and the story does narrate something important about a certain situation young teenage men can find themselves in. But don't expect to find the young women reflecting any of your own experience.

The last film from the US I'll comment on is *Valley Girl*. Directed by Martha Coolidge, it's worth more than a cursory look. In many ways it's nothing better than a stark teen movie in the Romeo and Juliet mold — but this time Juliet is Julie from the Valley and Romeo is Randy from Hollywood High. It has the favourite dramatic focal point — the difference in social class *Pretty in Pink* is supposed to be all about. It's a mix of a good wry expose of Barbie and Ken Californian life and a simplistic love story that



Joyce Hyser as Terry the guy and Terry the Girl in "Just One Of the Guys"
Photo: courtesy Amalgamated Theatres

uses differences in life style (clothes, lingo, night-life and peer groups) to put an interesting twist in a boy meets girl film.

The difficulty is that the Julie character is horribly bland. American teen films seem obsessed with the popular girl-prom queen tedium — boring in that the young maiden in question always discovers that the fascinating people live on the other side of the railway track, and she, poor thing, has been missing out because she's one of the rich airheads. I think Coolidge was genuinely trying to reveal some home truths to American youth audiences, but the (male) scriptwriters didn't seem to know how far to go.

The soundtrack, incidentally, is marvellous. In the most visually poetic of all the prom scenes I have seen, Josie Cotton and her band sing "Johnny come on tell me — are you queer?" Come to think of it — where are the "queer" teens in the movies? They almost had the next great male American writer in *St Elmo's Fire* being gay but they copped out. I've never seen a lesbian teen on the screen to date, except for one or two I'll mention later, but even they're more connotations than the real thing.

Closer to home is Gillian Armstrong, director of *My Brilliant Career*, an adaptation of Miles Franklin's novel written in Australia at the turn of the century. Whilst not targetted for a mainly teen audience Judy Davis plays a "positive role-model" type teen, Sybylla, who flouts convention and Sam Neil to pursue her quest for independent selfhood and fame — an inspiring theme to say the least. Obviously there's something a little disquieting about a story that suggests it is only possible to find

oneself when one has rejected love (and perhaps sex), but a period piece it is and I'm all for putting it in its historical perspective to continue to relish its very real merits.

The Getting of Wisdom directed by Bruce Beresford is another adaptation of a turn of the century novel of Australian girlhood by Henry Handel Richardson (really Ethel Florence). This film is a kind of buck-toothed homage to life at a girls' boarding school. Like Sybylla, Laura has an especially outgoing and talented personality, and she too goes about finding her place in the great adventure of life with a career tucked under her belt. Laura in *The Getting of Wisdom* is pictured having a romantic friendship with her friend Evelyn, but I'm afraid it's like most of the "sensual scenes" in movies depicting teenagers — the kisses and hugs somehow diffuse any passion rather than intimate it.

If with the mention of *Picnic at Hanging Rock* you're beginning to see an Australian obsession with young women in lacy bloomers in the early 1900s you can be forgiven — but this one is an incredibly mystical piece all about the effect of an ancient land on teenage girls' sexuality! Enter here the tragic — and dead — lesbian!

Moving into more modern times and on to New Zealand's own Jane Campion. She trained at the Australian Film School and continues to work in Australia but even so her images — such as in *A Girl's Own Story*, a black and white short — could just as well be set in New Zealand. It's a story about schoolgirls in the 1960s coping with teenage pregnancy, kissing posters of popstars and strumming a tennis racket along to Beatles albums. But far from being

light-hearted and fun, it has a haunting atmosphere, an air of doom and despair.

I'll never forget the image of those girls huddled in front of their heaters in white cotton singlets singing "I feel the cold" — that certainly is a bit closer to my adolescence than Molly Ringwald choosing her prom dress! Campion's latest contribution, *Two Friends*, a TV movie we got to see at the recent Auckland Film Festival uses the popular blonde/brunette friendship formula. The brunette is more serious of course. It's a heart-rending tale of the problems besetting young females who are at the mercy of the whims and fancies of the parents in power. The brunette has a terrific mother (I think I detect the scriptwriter in there somewhere) and my biggest problem with an otherwise compelling story of how life can go so wrong and friendship along with it, is that the mother has the most fully developed character. This isn't really good enough when the two main protagonists are the young women. In all fairness to writer Helen Garner, this could have been because of the less than magnetising performances of the two young actresses playing the roles. But *Two Friends* is worth seeing, if only for the brilliant opening shot of the blonde (having more fun of course) sitting on a dark white beach with a blonde fellow next to her. They stand up and walk away leaving three or four trash cans standing in their absence, appearing to bend with the wind. A poignant comment on life! Other images of mother/daughter and female relationships stand out, like buying the school uniform, adolescent appetites and lunchtime tanning sessions. The two young women are *real* people, with real choices and futures ahead of them.

Puberty Blues is a little noted but very good Australian movie scripted by Margaret Kelly and based on a book written by two bona fide teenage sheilas. Two female friends in this one find themselves by first trying, and then succeeding, to get in with the "in set" down on the beach. Watching the male surfies, lying around trying to get laid, or not as the case may be. But Debbie and Sue do finally win their own identities and autonomy (especially Debbie) — expressed in their learning to surf themselves rather than being merely insipid passive viewers. I'm sure there's a moral in that somewhere! □

WHAT'S NEW

AUCKLAND

A TALK BY JULIET BATTEN on women artists working together will be given at the Auckland City Library, 3rd Floor, 1-2pm Friday 26 September. The video of the 100 Women Project will be shown. This video can be purchased from Juliet Batten, 98 Marsden Ave., Mt Eden, for \$40.00.

CELEBRATING OURSELVES, a festival by and for lesbians will run at the Ponsonby Community Centre, Ponsonby Tce, Tamaki Makaurau, from November 13-16. Workshops, videos, sport, art displays and activities, lesbian craft, books, childcare, story telling and singing, plus continuous food and drink. Saturday night dance with women's bands, and Sunday night concert. This is an alcohol and drug-free festival. Contact Dee, 85 Clarence St, Auckland 2, ph 768-914 or Cathy 686-111.

ANY WOMEN INTERESTED in alternative systems of fundraising and investment for women, with special emphasis on making funds available to Maori women contact Charmaine Pountney Phone Ak 774-229 P.O. Box 68053 or Tanya Cumberland Ak 794-810.

AI'OREXIA AND BULIMIA SUPPORT GROUP offers telephone counselling, full-time field worker, self-help support groups and a drop-in afternoon 1-3 pm Mondays at Outreach, 1 Ponsonby Rd. Write to P.O. Box 21-489 or phone 678-493.

WOMEN WOODWORKERS and women interested in woodworking (carpenters, joiners, cabinet makers, turners and carvers, etc.) meet to give one another support, exchange ideas and information, and to discuss effective ways of lobbying for women-only courses at technical institutes. All women who share this interest are invited to attend these meetings. The AGM, followed by a party, is to be held

27 September, 7.30 pm at 23 Castle St., Grey Lynn. All women welcome. For details or for a copy of the group's newsletter phone Harriet 412-3448 or Sandi 762-935.

WOMEN'S HEALTH HUI, 9am Saturday 25 October — 1pm Monday 27 October at Orakei Community Centre, 156 Kapa Rd, Orakei, Tamaki Makaurau. The hui is organised by the Tamaki Makaurau Women's Health Network, a network of Maori, Pacific Island, Pakeha, women from other cultures, women with disability and lesbian women. A priority is to ensure that as many Maori women as possible attend the hui. Women are welcome to share experiences and areas of common interest in the themes of Reproductive rights population policies; environmental health hazards/drugs; community health; health care systems; indigenous professionals. Estimated cost — \$45. Koha appreciated. Twenty beds are available at the Independent Living Centre for women with disability and their support people. Write to the network at P.O. Box 6611, Wellesley St, Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland), or ring 836-6381.

HAMILTON

POSITIVELY GAY A seminar focussing on issues of concern to lesbians, homosexuals, their families and friends, is to be held Friday night 10 October and Saturday 11 October. Through sharing joys, fears and anxieties, it is hoped that gays will gain strength to cope with the discrimination faced every day in the workplace, the courts, and on the streets. Contact Gillian Marie, Centre for Continuing Education, University of Waikato. Ph 62-889, ext 4706.

LOWER HUTT

ART EXHIBITION: "People and the Land", a mixed media installation, and "Drawings and Books", both by Christine Hellyar will be exhibited at Dowse Art Museum, Laings Road, until 5 October. For details contact Neil Anderson, Education Officer, Box 30396 Lower Hutt. Ph 695-743.

WELLINGTON

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. Three groups fighting violence against women have moved into an office together: Te Kakano O Te Whanau, a national Maori Women's Network against sexual abuse (P.O. Box 6218, Te Aro); the National Collective of Independent Refugees (P.O. Box 6386, Te Aro); and the National Rape Crisis and Related Groups Collective of Aotearoa (P.O. Box 6181, Te Aro) are now located on the 2nd floor, Reid House, above the furniture shop on the corner of Vivian and Cuba Sts. Contact them on 856-767 or 856-768.

OVER THE FENCE new Wellington feminist magazine available from mid September from P.O. Box 9712, Wellington or the Women's Place bookshop, 58 Courtenay Place. Take out a sub for \$6.60.

SOUP KITCHEN: Fresh vegies, meat and other food, as well as volunteers, are needed for an inner city soup kitchen at the back of St Peter's Church, Willis St. on Sundays and Mondays. Phone Kiri Paipa, 847-163 (wk), 858-596.

MAORI WOMEN'S SELF DEFENCE TRAINING HUI from Sunday 2 November to Sunday 9 November. The Kaupapa of this hui is for Maori women to come together and share/learn how to teach self defence courses for Maori women, and also develop a course involving a Maori philosophy of self defence for Maori women, incorporating traditional methods of fighting and identity awareness.

The hui is open to all interested Maori women, and funding may be available for travel. Contact: Parekotuku Moore, c/- 154 The Terrace, Wellington, ph 731-820 or Kiri Paipa, Community Volunteers, P.O. Box 15098, Wellington, ph 847-163. Nau mai haere mai mehemea ka watea wahine ma.

NATIONWIDE

LIMBS DANCE COMPANY is in the midst of a ten-week tour, performing three new works: "Tarawera — Beneath the Mountain", "Drum Sing", and a jazz-dance piece. Programme: 25-27 Sept. at State

Opera House, Wellington. 1 Oct. at Opera House, Palmerston North. 4 Oct. at Opera House, New Plymouth. 7-12 Oct. at the Mercury Theatre, Auckland. 17-18 October at Forum North, Whangarei. 30 Oct. at Founders Theatre, Hamilton. 2 Nov. at Civic Theatre, Rotorua, and 5 Nov. at Baycourt Theatre, Tauranga.

VIDEOS: "Prejudice and Stereotyping", "Women in Management", "The Power Pinch", "Women's Changing Role", "Creating an Equal Workplace", are a few of the videos available on loan free of charge from the Australian Human Rights Commission's Auckland Video Library. Other videos focus on women in non-traditional jobs, on sexual harassment, and on ways of recognising discrimination. For information write to Human Rights Commission, P.O. Box 6751, Wellesley St.

INTERNATIONAL

Berlin Lesbians' Week, 25 October — 1 November will focus on togetherness — the aspects of our lives that are satisfying and strengthening, and, conversely, on negative aspects such as manipulation, heterosexual norms and stereotyped images of womanhood. Women who wish to participate can contact Frauenzentrum, Lesbenwoche, Stresemannstr. 40, 1000 Berlin 61, Germany.

NEW YORK: viewpoints: A Conference on Women, Culture and Public Media. Producers, programmers, journalists, critics, community and media activists will meet at Hunter College in N.Y. City to share perspectives on the impact of news media on women's lives and to discuss the roles women are playing in the media. For details write to Women Make Movies, Inc., c/o Celia Chong, 41-22 54th Street, 10 Woodside, N.Y. 11377.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE in Atlanta, USA, from 24-28 June 1987. The conference theme is: Weaving Women's Colours; a Decade of Empowerment. Details from NWSA, Emory University, P.O. Box 21223, Atlanta, GA 30322.

WHEN A LESBIAN IS DYING...

When Jan was dying of cancer Gloria discovered how dependent lesbians are on the goodwill of families. She talked to Pat Rosier, which she found distressing to do but she feels it is important that the story be told.

Jan's parents had only just discovered she was gay the week before she died, and wanted to keep it a secret. And I believe that is why we were not allowed near her. That's why I am worried — I don't want to hurt her family, but if something comes out about this, well it might just stop it happening to one other person. I want people to realise and think a bit before they do these things.

Going back to about a year ago, the first thing to establish is that Jan and I had been friends for seven years, and were lovers for a time. We had parted as lovers in rather sad circumstances because both of us were sick and neither of us knew it. There was a lot of anxiety about what was happening between us — we thought we'd just stuffed up again. Then the contact with her was very little until a year ago when she contacted me and said she was in hospital and asked me to visit. At that stage she had very little chance of living. She had T-cell lymphoma, which is a type of cancer than comes from the bone marrow. It is a terminal illness, with remission sometimes brought about by chemotherapy.

She had to make this decision whether to go ahead with chemotherapy or not. We spent a lot of time talking it over and talking about death and the whole thing and that was one of the reasons I got so very close to her. We became closer even than when we were lovers — I was the only person who would talk to her about the fact that she was dying, no matter what. Her parents totally denied the fact that she was dying, they wouldn't discuss her illness or anything. She was 37, she turned 38 during the year that she was sick. She had had very little contact with her family at all because of the fact that she was gay. She spent most of her life away from home.

There were only loose family ties, her women friends were, as with so many of us, the replacement for family, where her support and everything came from. Until she got ill the family ties were very very slight.

She came out of hospital and had to make a decision whether she was going to start treatment or not. She decided to give it a go, there was nothing to lose. The treatment itself was absolutely shocking, it was really horrific what it did to her, and that was very bad for everyone to watch.

I chose times to visit her when normally the family wouldn't be there, out of consideration for her. She was living at her parent's house then. She would even have to ring up when her family weren't there because of how she would talk things over on the phone and the phone was in the main living area. So she'd ring when her mother went down the road and got the milk and her father was out on the farm, or whatever. And she'd ring up and say

when they weren't going to be there, and I'd go out and visit her. There was this gap between friends and family. They had been separate for most of her life.

And when she went back into hospital the same thing happened - the people in hospital knew she was gay and in the ward — it's a very special ward — you can come in and out as you please. You could even ring up at three o'clock in the morning and have a chat about what was happening. And because they understood the situation with the family and the friend, the gay friend, which at that stage was only myself, they allowed the visiting to happen at odd hours. I started work at six o'clock in the morning at that time and would go and visit her after eight o'clock at night when the parents had left.

This went on for a year. She had times of being out of hospital and being sort of well, and we had an amazing time, her and Ilene (the woman I live with now) and I. I was finding though, that my involvement with Jan was getting very emotional, I was finding it difficult to define the whole thing and what was happening. There were times when she used her illness to get closer to me, to manipulate me more and more into her life, so I tried to pull back a bit, and encouraged her to go to the lesbian support group.

There she got to know a group of women who gave her a lot of support. They visited her, took her a lot of cheer, because they hadn't been run down like I had. They had all new things to talk about, it was really wonderful to see. There was a group of 12-13 who shared then with her support. And the last time Jan went into hospital — she was there for five weeks — and she had some treatment which, within ten days virtually wiped her out completely. Chemotherapy kills the good cells as well as the bad, and if you're very lucky you've got a few good cells to hang in there, and if you're extremely lucky they multiply, and if they don't you stay down, and that's it. This is what happened to Jan very quickly. Some of the support group couldn't cope, and dropped back, because it was a shocking thing to see. When it was discovered that this time there was no coming back, she was not going to pick up at all, she said she wanted to go home. Her doctor at the hospital didn't want her to go home. She wanted to go home so she could have all her friends around her.

She had spent four years in the Solomon Islands and had seen how they deal with death, with touching and loving and singing and she wanted that. We felt we could give her that, more than her being in a little hospital room. So on the last day that she was in hospital I took her and gave her a shower, we had a fantastic time if you can

IS THERE ROOM FOR HER FRIENDS

Imagine that with a person who's so ill that they're in a bath chair. I have to tell this bit because it makes people understand how bad the situation was, what it was actually like. There's internal bleeding all the time at this stage, because the platelets which cause blood coagulation have gone, and they bleed from the nose, mouth, anywhere, a scratch, it just doesn't stop. There's no bowel or bladder control. In the shower with all this happening, we still had fun. I took my clothes off and showered her all over. She was heavily sedated with morphine but she really enjoyed it.

Her parents were coming up at ten o'clock to take her home with them. That was the only place really for her to go. I wasn't well enough to bring her back here. Her parents were coming at ten o'clock to have a meeting with the doctor, to show that they could take her and care for her. I promised her I would stay, to be sure that her wishes were seen to, that she could die outside the hospital, where she could see the green and that. But I had a doctor's appointment myself, and I just felt also that I needed to leave. And they got later and later in coming, so I left. They took her home.

That night I rang to say that I was coming out to see Jan and they said, "Well it's best if you don't come, she's in a coma, and her mother's not handling it very well." So I said okay, it never clicked. It was her sister that I talked to. So I left it then because that suited me as well, I was having a bit of a breather myself and getting ready for the whole thing because I knew it was going to be two or three days of just being there. I rang again the next day and was told the same thing. I said that I wanted to come out anyhow. I just wanted to be there.

"Well we don't want you to be here, mother isn't very good," I was told. The mother isn't a very well person. "We will ring you, when it gets closer to the time." And I said that I was not happy about that, but I still accepted it, I trusted them that that would be all right. The support group rang to see if they could go out and were told the same thing. Then they rang me to see if I would be able to get them in to be able to be with her. We were all completely barred from the place.

Three of the support group decided that they weren't going to accept that, they just went anyhow, and walked in. And from being in a coma Jan sat up and talked and laughed — it seemed to them that she was just lying there waiting. I still didn't go, I just couldn't bring myself to invade their privacy, in their home. I just couldn't believe that they would keep me away all the time, anyhow. So the Saturday came and I rang again and they said she's in a coma, we'll ring you. Nothing happened.

Sunday morning I rang at eight o'clock and they told me that she'd died at 11 o'clock on Saturday night and they'd never contacted me or anything. And then I was told that the funeral notice would be in the paper. So I waited, and on Monday the funeral notice in the paper said private family internment. So I rang up and said when was the funeral going to be, and these people — I've been in their home they'd been in our (Jan's and my) home as well, I just still didn't accept what happened, didn't believe it — well, the father was brought to the phone and he said, "Well, Gloria, we don't want you here. You people put Jan under duress to act in a certain way

and we just want a private family funeral, none of us are coping very well."

I was devastated by that, but I've got a funny thing about christian-type funerals anyhow. My main concern was the fact that they weren't going to carry out Jan's wishes. She had not wanted a christian funeral, it was to be just some things read out. Her and I had also picked out her plot together, where she wanted to be buried, and I just felt totally powerless. And I kept getting this funny feeling that she really wasn't dead, that they were hiding her. I still feel that. All the girls from the support group didn't believe that we weren't allowed to go to the funeral either. One by one they each rang the home to find out when it was going to happen and what was going on. And the last thing one of them was told was "It's happening right now." That was virtually it.

When the mother told me that Jan had died the night before, she said "I believe there are a lot of your things at Jan's flat, if you would like to make a list then we'll return them to you." I did that, never thinking anything past it and I would have liked a lot of her things, just to have kept. But I didn't want to be grabby, I'd been told that "She's left you some things, but as you know she wasn't a very mercenary sort of person, nothing of financial value has been left to you." And that sort of told me, "That's your lot", and I didn't want to ask for anything else, even though I would have liked to. A little while later all the things arrived that were mine, that I'd listed, by carrier, just dumped off on the front doorstep. And that was it.

And then I heard that Jan had had a lot of books that people (mostly from the support group) had lent her, and they'd got in touch with her family for the return of the books, and what they'd done was boxed all the books up sent them to the salvation army. Most of them were feminist and lesbian books. Most of them had names and phone numbers of who they belonged to.

I still haven't been out to see the grave, I still have done nothing about the whole thing because, although she's dead I don't believe it. I know that sounds a stupid thing, but I saw her in that bad state once before and she managed to get better again, and I've just got this awful feeling that they're hiding her. And yet I know that's so bloody stupid.

They wouldn't even let me go out to see her dead. They just didn't want me there at all. We decided to have a little service of our own. After the funeral her sister rang up and talked to me, told me there were some things left for me and asked me if I held a grudge against the family. And I said yes I did, I was very hurt and very upset, and although I understood, I still was angry, I couldn't accept what had happened. I said we were going to have a ceremony of our own. And she said, "Oh, that's lovely. Would you like a tape of the service that we had to play at your service?" I said I would like the tape, but we wouldn't play it then because what we had decided was to have was each of us just saying something that came from our own hearts, maybe a bit of singing, whatever happened. We certainly didn't want their service on a tape, if we couldn't be there at the time. And she said "Well that's really nice."

When the support group went to put the ad in the

paper, because Jan had lots of different friends, and she kept different groups separate in her life — she kept her gayness as one thing, her christianity as a worker in the Solomons as another, her family life as another, they all touched very rarely. I was accepted out there in the past as a gay woman because I don't look like one. I've got children. I have known them for as long as I've known her. They didn't take a great shine to me as a person, because I was outspoken. But I had this close contact with them.

Anyway, the lesbian support group rang up to put the ad in the paper. It had nothing in it except that it was a service for her friends. People were going to come here and there were two contact phone numbers for rides out to where she is buried. The *Herald* office asked whether the family knew that this was going in, and I said yes, and she asked for a contact number, so I gave it. The sister denied any conversation with me and they refused to allow the notice to be put in the paper. Nothing could go in the death notices, only in the memorial section. I was supposed to ring the sister and talk it over with her, but in everything to do with this whole thing I've done a denial thing on myself.

The service that we had planned went ahead, but I didn't go. I just couldn't bring myself to go. The other girls did, they went out, they planted some spring bulbs and it sounds like they had a really nice time out there. And they say they are going to go back when the flowers are blooming.

The family must have known for a long time that Jan was gay, but because they didn't hear it in any words they could pretend not to know. When Jan and I were lovers we lived together, we slept in the same bed, they saw the bed — they helped move the bed. They did all those sort of things when we lived together. They even went through the motions at one stage of buying a house for Jan and I, to live in so that I could care for her. But actually Ilene and I have bought this house up north and Jan was going to come with us.

She only told them on the Monday before she died that she was gay. She was a real coward about the whole issue. Under the morphine she could tell. It came about because her father said, "Who are these funny looking women who keep coming to see you?" She said, "They're the women from the support group," "What support group?" "The lesbian support group." "Why do you go to lesbian support?" "I'm a lesbian." "How long have you been that?" "Well, at least 15 years." Jan told me all this.

The whole attitude from then was shocking. If our visiting happened to cross over — they would come in and I'd be sitting on the bed massaging her feet and legs, whatever, or just holding her — the looks were absolutely horrific, almost as bad to contend with as her illness. The fear on the faces of those people walking in and looking at me like that, it was terrible. They knew me, and my kids, yet suddenly it was made very clear to them that I was a gay woman too and they virtually blamed me for Jan being gay, as though she didn't have anything to do with it. Well, she was gay a long time before I met her.

It just brought it all out, just how vulnerable we all are. I went into hospital and had surgery just three weeks ago and it made me realise just how much a family can come in and take over, even if they don't really know you. You're powerless when you're sick. The family can just push the

other person out, the lover, the friend, the other people who've been your support all that time. And I just can't help but wonder how many times it's happened to other gay people, how many times it's going to continue to happen. It's a terrible thing. And I don't know what puts it right. I believe this is a really important issue that has to be talked about.

The family actually resented a lot of the care that I gave Jan when she was sick. They really resented it. The father is a chronic alcoholic, all the children had a shocking childhood. They had so little time to spare for her that they resented any care that anyone else gave, except for hospital staff. It was like making all the past right.

After her first lot of treatment at the hospital, Jan found it so difficult to live at home that she went and got a flat. She went home to live with her parents because they've got room, and they've got money, they've got everything that you could have. And they live out in the country. She went home because that was the only thing she could do. When you can hardly put one foot in front of the other you don't have many options. But she actually ran away from home for two or three nights and got a motel because she couldn't stand it at home any longer — the lack of privacy, the arguments between her parents, and her father's drinking. Then I convinced her to get a flat.

I have quite a lot of guilt about the whole thing, because once she got on her feet a bit I stepped back a bit, I had to step back a bit. Like, she would ring up and say she was sick, so I'd go there, but otherwise I wouldn't go there much, I had my own life to live. So I feel a little bit guilty about that.

What I would like now is to be able to talk to the parents, but that's impossible. I feel like it's impossible. I want the whole world to hear this story. I want every parent of a gay person to hear and to know the power they actually have and can abuse. And I want them not to do it.

Jan's parents have missed out on having contact with a lot of people that Jan knew. There are many things about Jan's life that they knew nothing about and they could have talked with these people about them. They don't know Jan, and I would really like to tell them who she is, what she was. They put in the paper that she had a life dedicated to others. Well that was utter bullshit — she ran away from things. She travelled the world, she'd lived in kibbutz, she'd been to jail, they know none of these things. She didn't dedicate her life to others she dedicated it to herself and her own preservation — I just couldn't believe it when I read those words.

The whole thing has to do with education. I don't think the passing of the Homosexual Law Reform Bill will make much difference to this sort of thing, which is to do with people being bigoted and narrow-minded. It's to do with fear, being frightened — no laws will change that. I believe that it will help a little if people who look, speak and act "socially acceptable" speak up and say this is what's happening, this is what you are doing to your sons, daughters, friends and it's got to stop. It is a matter of education.

We have to educate each other, too, to tell our parents, "Don't do this, if I get sick, don't do this." We have to tell them before we are sick. They have the power, and they are given it by the authorities because they are the family. □



I DIDN'T THINK COURT WOULD BE LIKE THAT

Paula Wallis writes about what can, and often does, happen after a child has told someone that she is being sexually abused.

The principal phoned the social worker mid-morning. "We've got a 12 year old here who's told her teacher some story about a relative sexually abusing her. I got the deputy to talk to her, then I talked to her and she won't change her story. I've put her in the reading room. I don't want her mixing with the other kids. Can someone come up and check out her story? This is making things very difficult for us here."

"This lady is a social worker", the principal said to the child. "Just be sure you tell her the truth now", "I hope things get cracking pretty smartly" said the deputy principal over his shoulder as he left the room. "She shouldn't be here. It's not right."

The social worker waited until they'd left the room. "Been giving you a hard time?" After the preliminaries the story spilled out. "I can only tell it backwards" said the child and started to cry. "I can't tell it forwards. I can tell it backwards from last night. I can't tell it forwards from when I was little." The child had skinny arms and legs and wispy blond hair.

The social worker explained to the child what they could do and what could happen. "You decide everything" said the child "make it like it was for the other girl you told me about. The one you saw yesterday whose father did it to her. I want it to be like that. I don't want to go home. They'll kill me when they find out I've told."

Back at the office, waiting for the paperwork to be completed, the child became silly with relief. She tore around, picked up phones, swung in chairs. "When are we going? Where are we going? Which is your car? Can I answer your phone? What shall I say?"

WHY CAN'T HE BE TAKEN AWAY?

On the way in to make the police statement, they stopped off for lunch. The child had two pies and a milkshake. She was terribly pleased with herself. At the counselling centre where she was to make the statement, she became afraid and didn't want to leave the car. Inside, bad news. "You said it would be a policewoman, not a police man" said the child, edgy with tears. They had a long wait before a policewoman arrived.

"I was four when he first did it said the child to the policewoman. I can't remember if he used to take my pyjama top or pyjama bottom off first. I think he did it every night but it might have been just the nights Mum was out. I can't remember when I started bleeding down there. It was before I started school. I thought I was dying. I was too scared to tell anyone. I thought it was a game at first. But he only played it with me. He had this bed-thing in the garage. It smelt of petrol. I bet all the white stains are still on it. You could go and see it if you don't believe me," said the child to the policewoman.

"No, he didn't ever say anything when he was doing it. I didn't either. I didn't tell him to stop doing it but he knew because I used to cry. I told Mum though and she said don't be silly, he's like a father to you. I told Nana and Grandad had a talk to him. He stopped doing it for a

Above: Lisa was molested many times by three male relatives and drew this when she was eleven years old. From *The Sexual Abuse of Children* by Miriam Saphira, second edition.

while after that. Then he started again. The same as before. He didn't stop for long. Shall I tell her about when he did the white stuff in my mouth" whispered the child to the social worker. The social worker nodded. The policewoman wrote it all down.

"It's a good statement," said the policewoman. It seemed an odd comment to make given the circumstances. "Even if he denies, there's such a lot in it. You'll make a good witness won't you," the policewoman said to the child. "I'm not going to court if he's there" said the child. "I don't want to see him again. I don't want to get him into trouble. He'll say it was my fault. They'll believe him. If he goes to prison he'll blame me. It's not fair."

The child sat in her foster home the next day. "I hate him because he won't admit it's true. He did it. He knows it's true. I hate her because she believes him not me. She knows it's true. I hate them. I feel sick" said the child. "I've got a pain here in my stomach. Last night I had nightmares. I was scared and I wanted to put the light on but I couldn't remember where the switch was. I think I'm homesick but I'm scared to go home."

"I didn't think court would be like that" said the child as they drove back to the foster home after the Children's Court hearing. "It's not fair. Why can't he be taken away? No-one asked me what happened. I hate having to wait in the same room as him. He kept looking at me. I hated it. What did that man in the court mean when he asked you if my story was fantasy?"

"I had nightmares again" said the child as they walked up the drive to the foster home. "I feel sick all the time. It's those pills the doctor gave me. I hate putting that ointment down there. How long do I have to do that for? I miss my little sisters. It's not fair he won't let me see them. Just because they're his kids and I'm not. Some boys at school have found out and they're calling me names. I don't want to go to that school any more. They're calling me rude names. What's a slut?"

"Why doesn't everything happen in the same court" asked the child as they drove in for the High Court trial three months later? "Why is there one court for me and a different one for him? Anyway, how come I keep going to court? I haven't done anything. It's stupid. We've been to that other court three times and they've never done anything. They just keep telling us to come back on another day."

"They didn't believe me" said the child as they drove back to the foster-home after the High Court hearing. That lawyer tried to make out I was lying. He made me feel stupid. It wasn't fair him asking me those questions with uncle sitting there listening. I couldn't say it in front of him. I didn't want to cry. He got me all confused. It wasn't fair."

"But what's going to happen when he gets out?" said the child back in her own home. "He only got six months. What if he starts doing it again? I'm scared of him. Mum gets angry with me. She's worried about money. She's got to be on a benefit because he's in prison. That's because of me telling. I'm scared about when he gets out. My little sisters miss him and they blame me because he's not here. Mum cries all the time. I'm scared."

This is a fictionalised account of what can happen to a child from when she first tells someone she has been sexually abused. It is based on the experiences this year of a number of girls who have been sexually abused and who have told. For these girls the aftermath

of telling about the abuse — making a police statement having a medical examination, making court appearances, being removed from home, being fostered — constituted another type of abuse no less real than the abuse they had already suffered. When they were living through the upheaval and confusion that followed their telling, many expressed a wish that they had never said anything. They had wanted the abuse to stop. They had not wanted all this.

The aftermath for the child can be confusing and frightening in a number of ways:-

- If her abuser is prosecuted she will have to give evidence at a depositions hearing in the District Court. The abuser will be present while she relates what he did to her.
- If the case goes to the High Court she will again have to give oral evidence in the presence of the abuser and a number of other people. She will probably be subjected to cross-examination by the abuser's solicitor. This cross-

WHY DOESN'T EVERYTHING HAPPEN IN THE SAME COURT?

examination will be designed to discredit her story.

- If she is in need of protection herself there will also be proceedings in the Children and Young Person's Court. This will probably involve about four appearances in the court. If the abuser is a parent or guardian he will also be present at these court hearings.
- She will probably have to wait at least three or four months for the conclusion of these court cases. This will ensure that the details of the sexual abuse are kept continually in her mind during this time.
- She may be subjected to considerable emotional pressure to withdraw the charges or change her story.
- She will probably be kept in Department of Social Welfare custody for her protection because the abuser will probably be bailed. This means that the child, the victim, is held in custody while the perpetrator, the abuser, remains at liberty.
- For the child this means removal from her home and separation from her family while the abuser remains in the home and continues his usual way of life as though nothing had happened.
- The child will probably be placed in a foster-home. This may be in a different suburb which will mean that in addition to living with strangers she will have to attend a new school and be surrounded by unfamiliar people both at home and at school.
- During the lengthy waiting period the child will probably be assailed by worries and doubts — should she have told? what questions will she be asked in court? will they believe her? will the abuser find out the address of the foster-home? will they know about it at the new school? does everyone really think it's her fault? □

The child fictionalised has experienced the complex and confusing court procedures outlined below:

THE CHILD VICTIM AND THE COURTS

- Preliminary Children and Young Persons Court hearing. No plea is entered by the mother and the alleged abuser. Another date is set for

a pre-trial conference in two weeks.



- Pre-trial conference between all parties involved.



- Second Children and Young Persons Court hearing. The mother and alleged abuser denied there was any truth in the child's allegations. Another date is set for a denied hearing in three months.



- Depositions hearing in the District Court. Evidence is heard in order to ascertain if the alleged abuser has a case to answer. A High Court trial date is set in three months.



- Third hearing in the Children and Young Persons Court. This is a denied hearing where witnesses are called and cross-examined. The case is proved and a date is set for disposition.



- Fourth hearing in the Children and Young Persons Court. A two week postponement is made to await the outcome of the High Court trial.



- High Court trial. The child must give evidence and be subject to cross-examination.



- Fifth hearing in the Children and Young Persons Court results in the disposition of the case: the child is to return home.



Illustration: Dorna Hoyle

MY SAFE PLACE

Some girls I've heard of have their own room
And some have their very own bed,
But I've got a place high up on the wall
Where I've tied my doll so she can't fall
And I know she's safe instead.

And when in the night I'm woken up
And there's fingers in my hair
I try to pretend I'm up on the wall
Tied tight to my doll so I can't fall
And it isn't me down there.

Gillian Edwin

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN HE GETS OUT?

Once the court proceedings are over and the abuser imprisoned, the child will probably return home. The abuser will probably receive a fairly short sentence — nine months, 12 months, 18 months. Once back home again the child will live with the knowledge of his pending release and probable return home.

Telling about sexual abuse is an immense undertaking for a child. Unfortunately it doesn't end there. For many children, telling about the sexual abuse signals the beginning of a new period of abuse.

The abuser is no longer the child molester. The abusing agent is now the system set up to "protect" the child. □

Letters about the way the court and social welfare systems treat sexually abused children could be directed to the Minister of Justice, Geoffrey Palmer, Parliament Buildings, Wellington; your local district law society; your local member of parliament. Send a copy of letters to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (and tell them if you don't need them to answer). They will work on problems like this at departmental and ministerial level if they get the information.

ON THE SHELF



HEALTH

OVERCOMING FOOD ALLERGIES

Gwynne H. Davies

This book explains to the lay person how to identify food allergy and then to remove its causes. Subjects include testing for allergy, foods predominantly at fault and the relationship of allergy to problems such as arthritis, asthma, depression and pre-menstrual tension.

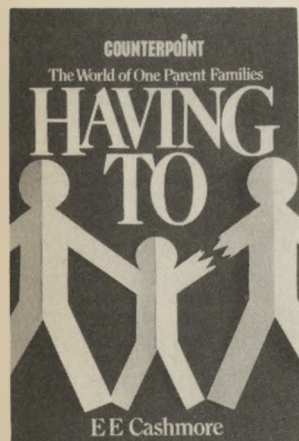
Ashgrove Press, pbk, \$14.95

HAVING TO: The world of one parent families

EE Cashmore

One parent families have broken free of many of the constraints of the conventional family and have entered a world where their choices are limited by a society clearly not equipped to deal with this new type of family. This important, readable and thought-provoking book is based on over 200 detailed and frank interviews. The result is a revealing and moving account of what life is like in the world of one parent families.

Allen & Unwin, pbk, \$16.95



VOICES IN THE NIGHT

Toni McNaron, Yarrow Morgan

This book is on women speaking about incest — a book only women could publish. The authors believe "... We must print our voices ourselves and review those printings and write serious criticism of

such literature. We must do it because otherwise this huge reality for one-third of all women will be romanticised or buried or trivialized or mocked, like so much else of our history and culture." Cleis Press, pbk, \$24.50

WHY ME?

Lynn B Daugherty

This book was written to be read by victims of child sexual abuse who are now teenagers or adults. It is also intended for counsellors or other people who want to understand and help these victims.

Mother Courage Press, pbk, \$15.95

THE POLITICS OF HOUSEWORK

Ellen Malos

Ellen Malos examines the economic history and political economy of housework revealing the contradictions in the centre of the family which reproduces in a horrifying parody all the unequal power relationships and injustices of the wider society.

Epitaph for a Tired Housewife

Here lies a poor woman who always was tired
She lived in a house where help was not hired.
Her last words on earth were,
"Dear friend, I am going
Where washing ain't done, nor
sweeping nor sewing;
But everything there is exact to
my wishes,
I'll be where loud anthems will
always be ringing;
But having no voice I'll be clear
of the singing;
Don't mourn for me never;
I'm going to do nothing for
ever and ever."
Allison & Busby, pbk, \$18.50

NEW ZEALAND

THE HOUSE OF TALKING CAT

J C Sturm

J C Sturm began writing in the 1940s, the first Maori short story writer to be widely published. But it was not until 1983 that this collection of her stories was published by Spiral, a women's collective, and

thus earned a richly deserved but long-awaited critical acclaim.

Spiral/Hodder & Stoughton, pbk, \$14.95

THE ROUNDNESS OF EGGS

Lisa Greenwood

This startling first novel is about the chill winter of self-discovery that begins when delusions fall away in the face of the demands of others. Deadly accurate in its observations.

Benton Ross, pbk, \$17.95

FICTION

THE HANDMAID'S TALE

Margaret Atwood

Brilliantly conceived and executed, this powerful evocation of 21st century America under post-feminist totalitarian rule gives full rein to Margaret Atwood's devastating irony, wit and acute perception.

Johnathan Cape, hbk, \$25.95

JEAN RHYS: The Early Novels

Diana Athill

These four novels collected in one volume reveal a writer who was ahead of her time in style and content. These stories hold and haunt their readers because they call up emotions, places, atmosphere, even physical sensations with such a powerful freshness.

Andre Deutsch, hbk, \$35.95

SPIRITUALITY

CRYSTAL VISIONS

Diane Mariechild

This book outlines nine meditations for personal and planetary peace by Diane Mariechild author of Motherwit. She believes "Peace is a personal choice. It begins with the individual willing to make peace with internal conflicts, transforming doubt and fear into certainty and love."

The Crossing Press, pbk, \$21.00

MOTHER WIT: A Feminist Guide to Psychic Development

Diane Mariechild

Mother Wit is a collection of

exercises, affirmation, meditations and other psychic tools for furthering feminist growth. Feminism is the foundation of Diane's commitment to the ethics of nonviolence, love, concern for others and for self-responsibility. The Crossing Press, pbk, \$27.25

INITIATION

In Ancient Egypt...
In Twentieth Century Europe...



The story of one woman's spiritual and psychic odyssey through two lifetimes

Elisabeth Halch

INITIATION

Elisabeth Halch

This is the story of one woman's spiritual and psychic odyssey through two lifetimes. In Ancient Egypt a young girl is prepared for her initiation into the mysteries of the priesthood; in twentieth century Europe a woman who is at once mother and child struggles to conquer the power of a corrupt civilisation.

Allen & Unwin, pbk, \$16.95

MAGAZINES

ILLUSIONS

The second issue of this New Zealand magazine of film television and theatre criticism is now available. Published quarterly it provides thoughtful and provocative writing. Single issues, \$3.00.

RACE GENDER CLASS

This journal publishes both in-depth and shorter contributions to assist understanding of Maori self-determination, feminism and socialism. Its hope is to encourage analysis and research through debate, linking the struggles against

all forms of oppression: race, gender and class. Single issues, \$6.00.

PORNOGRAPHY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

This is a research paper produced by women against pornography. It examines the areas of media violence; pornography, — attitudes and behaviour; pornography models and actors; and some characteristics and trends in pornography. \$13.50 (fundraising venture).

NONFICTION

WINTER IN THE MORNING Janina Bauman

Using diaries she kept as a teenage girl, Janina Bauman's rare eye witness account describes the horror of the siege and surrender of Warsaw in 1939. This is an extraordinary story of courage and survival. Virago, hbk, \$25.95

WOMEN, REASON AND NATURE

Carol McMillan

This book argues an original

and provocative case: that feminism, far from presenting a radical challenge to sexism, actually shares its most fundamental and mistaken assumptions about women's place in society. Carol McMillan argues that in attacking the "tyranny of nature" and "oppression of sex roles," feminists are missing the point. What are really at stake are the popular misconceptions that ultimately lead to an undervaluing of women. Blackwell, pbk, \$25.95

POISONED REIGN Bengt Danielsson, Marie- Therese Danielsson

Poisoned Reign traces the history of French nuclear involvement in the Pacific. It also shows how the tests have been used to strengthen colonial rule in French Polynesia. Levels of radioactive fall-out and sea contamination, and the extent of damage to Moruroa itself, have remained a closely-guarded military secret. Using personal accounts, research and documentary material the authors expose French nuclear colonialism. Penguin, pbk, \$13.99

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OCTOBER
PENGUINS



I thought it only happened to

Other Women

by **Lisa Alther**

BY THE AUTHOR
OF KIN FLICKS

Other Women (Penguin paperback) \$10.99 Inc. G.S.T.

Caroline Kelly is thirty-five and feeling isolated and bewildered. All her life she's been a member of the caring professions, but now, after a series of unsuccessful relationships, she finds she is in need of some care and comforting herself. Now she tries psychotherapy, in a mature story of her road to self-understanding and greater awareness. In a more serious vein than **Kin Flicks**, Lisa Alther's previous bestseller, **Other Women** has all the humour, irony and honesty that makes it a telling insight into the contemporary woman.

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NZ HERALD
AUGUST

from the **HELP Women**,
Auckland

**WANT A
HAPPY
MARRIAGE?**

**BUY HER A
DISHWASHER**

SAYS LONDON DOCTOR

A London doctor has some new advice for those who want a happy marriage. Buy her a dishwasher. "These machines are given too low a priority when a couple set up home," says Dr Richard Rycroft, a skin specialist. "They should be considered well before a video for a happy, harmonious life. After all, a woman is much more alluring if she doesn't have rough unsightly hands."



**New breed
of female
driver**

ADVERTISEMENT
"DAILY NEWS"
JULY '86

There was a time when the little lady of the house did not know how to open the car's bonnet, let alone know how to change a tyre.

She did not have to watch the petrol gauge or worry about checking the oil, water or tyres either because the car was hubby's department.

But those days have gone forever. The reason, is that today, lady drivers often don't have a man-of-the-house to call on. And not all these independent girls are lucky enough to have motor mechanics for dads, brothers or boyfriends.

So the female driver in New Zealand is a new breed... more and more she has no-one but herself to rely on in caring for her car.

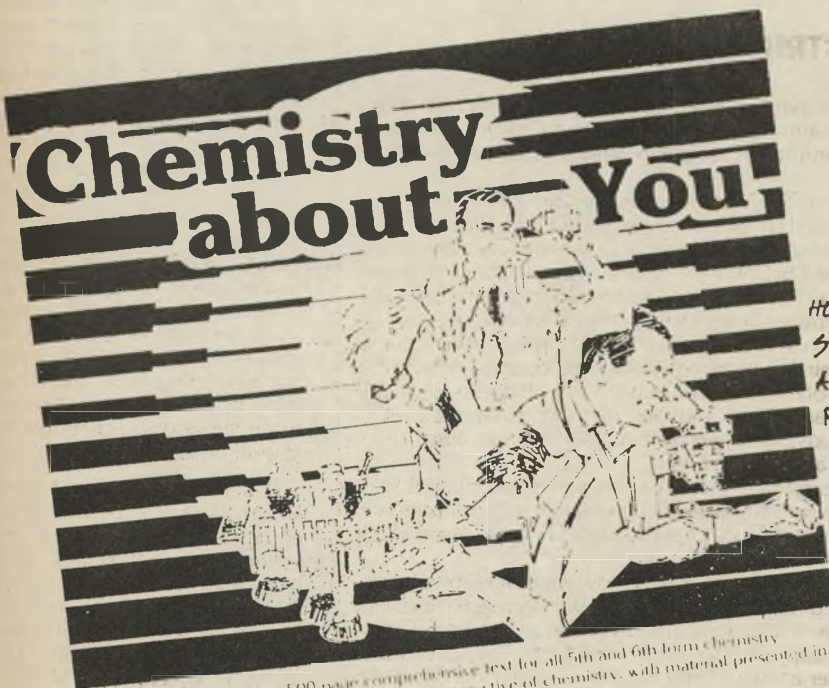
And most women cope well. It is the rare bird today who is unable to check her own water, oil or tyres. Many think nothing of changing a tyre either.

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P.P.T.A. JOURNAL
TERM 2 '86

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Chemistry about You is a 500 page comprehensive text for all 5th and 6th form chemistry students. This text provides a very balanced perspective of chemistry, with material presented in an easy and informative manner.

STROKES AND ART ATTACKS

WHISKY AND WHITEBAIT

A profile of Keri Hulme devised and presented by Susan Battye and students of Epsom Girls' Grammar School and

STORIES FROM THE RIVER

by Sylvia Ashton-Warner
Published by Hodder and Stoughton 1986
\$14.95

It happened that I was given these two works to review at the same time. I choose to write about them together because they have both raised questions for me about Pakeha people using Maori material in our creative work. In both cases the presenters of the work are people with whom I have a lot in common in terms of interest and experience and therefore the questions raised are ones that are important to me.

I went to *Whisky and Whitebait* twice; once at Theatre Corporate where the presence of so much unadulterated young woman-energy on the stage delighted me. My second viewing in the Epsom Girls' drama room was very much a family affair and with the relaxation I saw more clearly some of the elements in the piece and its performance which I'd sensed earlier.

Senior students of drama at Epsom Girls' Grammar School, working with their teacher Susan Battye, have created a vivid, varied and faithful portrait of Keri Hulme through a compilation of her poetry and prose. The selection is skilful, the dramatisation of stories ingenious, the direction simple and effective, moving us smoothly through a succession of brief scenes. Movement is used, with live music in the form of a superb violin/cello duo, as the main adjunct to the spoken word



Janet Potiki

Photo: Nicky Brown

THE ELECTRIC BALLROOM

A new but temporary venue in Wellington, formerly a disco, destined for demolition, was taken on by Angela Main and Julie Reidy and turned into a homegrown music and food space.

They called it The Women's Festival and it ran from 22-24 August. It started off with a real festival feeling. Highlights for dancing were *Putty In Her Hands*, Charlotte Yates and Christine Jeffs joined by Debbie Frame on sax and Alison Wallace on violin. *Dead Famous People* proved a popular act, a mixture of ex-Freudian *Slips* and *Wahine Disaster*.

Christchurch's *Thunderbirds* didn't really deliver as a group but their saxophonist Debbie Frame proved herself a real favourite of the weekend. Janet Potiki, an artist with many talents, gave an original rendition of song, story and poetry. *Out of Compost*, an acoustic trio, gave a good measure of clever music and harmonics.

Many performances however seemed experimental. Performing from behind pieces of paper and for 30 minutes at a time, proved a bit much even though the lyrics were often clever.

Women film-makers screened and discussed their work, and impressed us yet again with their down to earthness. No Hollywoods here. The whole three days was videoed by Patsy Deverall with support from Karen and Kene. The sound settled down after a few teething problems, thanks to Sue Barlow. Lighting was adequate but not flashy. □

Di McMillan

which is rightly the primary focus of this production. Sometimes the delivery of poems becomes too self-conscious — I preferred the solid matter-of-fact style of Gina Howe's presentation of a poem from *Moeraki Conversations*. The acting on the whole is good — I'd like to mention especially Taryn-Fiona Banks' impressive portrayal of the dying kaumatua of the bone people.

The final words of this character are cried out: "How do you weigh the value of this country's soul?" In the audience I echo his question. Maori words are sometimes not understood (piu piu for pupu) and for the most part poorly pronounced by this mainly Pakeha group. The anguish of "Aue... my bones are flour/ground to make an alien bread" was accompanied by giggling and shuffling behind the scenes. This moment disturbed and angered me.

I think that in the world of 1986 Pakeha people have to look very carefully at our reasons for using Maori material in our creative work, knowing that we may exploit and denigrate Maori culture and people without even being conscious of it. I felt that this happened at moments in *Whisky and Whitebait*. Ngahua Te Awakotuku says in her conversation with Elizabeth Eastmond and Priscilla Pitts in *Antic* "because the Maori world is still heavily under siege, we are still a threatened society in many ways, we are consolidating our resources, we are reclaiming our strength... And I think the making of art, the creation of more items of cultural beauty should be our right."

It is not my intention to say as a piece of dogma that shows like this *should not* be written and performed. But once they are made the spirit in which they are carried shows the extent to which the artists have the stature or strength to sustain and fully present the content of the work. I had the feeling that these young women are learn-

ing about this as they continue to perform their theatre piece.

There is no doubt about Sylvia Ashton-Warner's stature as anyone who has read her autobiography *I Passed This Way* will know. Yet her book *Stories from the River* fills me with an uneasiness similar to that I felt at moments during *Whisky and Whitebait*. These eighteen stories are a mixture of fairy tale, legend and realism. Some of them are "children's stories", others obviously intended for adults.

They are all marked with the emotional intensity and sense of verbal dramatics that characterise Ashton-Warner's writing. A sense of place, a magical mythical version of the Wanganui River valley pervades all the stories, giving them a full exotic atmosphere: "See once more the colours of pua and the iridescent plumage of Tui; the feasts and the brawls, the House and the Store, the storms and the sun and the Landing and lovely Lindens."

This writer also articulates insights which are remarkable, especially for the time in which she was writing. Hers is a voice that still hasn't been fully heard or honoured in her own land, at least partly because she was a woman who refused to conform to the dictates of the male-controlled establishment. As such she is an important part of the tradition of Pakeha women and I find much of her writing compelling.

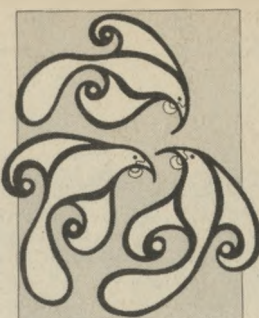
Yet she is also capable of a gross stereotyping that I find embarrassing and appalling. Such phrases as "his Maori smile" (p 66) or "the Maori communal mind" (p 91) are evidence of a psychological distancing from Maori people which underlies all of this work and seriously taints it.

I see Pakeha people as being in a double bind at this moment in our cultural evolution: we can't write or perform as if we were in Europe, yet neither can we simply appropriate Maori material in our attempt to come to an identity as people of Aotearoa. What we are involved in is much more complicated — the sticky uncomfortable process of deconstructing the colonialism that still governs our thought and feeling processes. □

Felicity Day

NGA KOKAKO HUATARATARA

The Notched Plumes of the Kokako



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The Notched Plumes of the Kokako

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Published by Araperha

Blank and the Walata

Toa Trust \$12.95 add GST

E kui, Araperha, he wahine rongonui o o tatou kaituhi, tena koe. *Ko wai au?* I have asked myself this question and agonised over the enormity of the task set me by the *Broadsheet* collective. *Who am I* to voice an opinion about the work of so skilled and able a user of words?

I feel very whakaiti as I begin. More so because I am not a fluent speaker of Maori though I understand a little and am learning more each day. However, I do know enough of the reo to appreciate your expertise and ability, e kui, both in Maori and in English.

The composition of many of your poems in both languages gives a wider perspective to an idea/a theme — helps to round it out. Each poem was able to stand on its own yet, at the same time, each complements the other.

Writing is a means of communication. Some do it well, some not so well. E kui, you do it remarkably well. Your writings not only engaged my sense of sight but also brought into play my sense of hearing, the cadence of your poems I have heard on marae in whaikorero and waiata. "Rangitukia Reminiscences Soul

Place" conjured up memories and even smells of my own turangawaewae...

"... muted bush in hollows lie, with bones of whanau undisturbed..."

You allow both Maori and Pakeha to identify with, experience and understand mutual values of aroha, whanaungatanga, whenua, rangimarie, and whakama. Kia ora.

Why are your talents, which are expressed so admirably in this most beautiful collection of poems, not more readily available to the people of Aotearoa? It is not often that I get to experience work of this calibre and it makes me sad to think that others are not able to have the same opportunity. (I have not seen this book on any bookshelves here in Dunedin.) I don't even know how much it costs, but I am sure it is worth the asking price. (The copy I have enjoyed was sent to me by a member of the *Broadsheet* collective, which I reluctantly returned.) I do intend to purchase my own copy when I find an outlet.

Kia ora to *Broadsheet* collective for giving me the opportunity to acknowledge a woman of talent, a Maori woman of talent, a Ngati Porou woman of talent. □

Hei teina,
Na Powhiri Rika-Heke

A CHANGING ORDER

Pauline O'Regan

Allen and Unwin, 1986

\$15.95. Pauline is

interviewed by Pat

Rosier

Pauline O'Regan is a nun and a feminist. She is living now, as she was some years ago, in a house in the Christchurch suburb of Aranui. Allen and Unwin have just published her book, *A Changing Order*. She feels that, at 64, she may well have more books to write — which she does in longhand on the backs of used papers, "very fast, as it comes." The typing comes later.

A Changing Order starts in 1973, at the point where Pauline and two other nuns left the convent and went to live in a state house at Aranui, a move taking them away from the secure, structured, familiar life they had lived in the con-

vent for the past 30 years. Pauline talked about the background to this move.

"Once the call went out, the call to move out of the convents and into the community, the nuns took it very seriously. One of the interesting things about changes that have taken place in convents is that the women did it themselves. They took their lives and shook them out like a rug — and it was very painful. There was some very deep polarisation. We had lived what we had thought was a community life — and it was to a very great extent, but it was quite institutionalised — and we thought we got on well together. It's a pretty supportive kind of set up, a convent. But when we started to talk about our lives in community meetings, our yardstick was the woman who founded our order in 1841, and she had set out to meet the needs of the Dublin poor at that time. And when we asked ourselves what would she do if she were here now it became apparent that she would be doing some pretty radical things.

"We tried to see how we related to the world we were living in — I suppose the most obvious thing was our dress, which we had really never questioned. It was a symbol in many ways. But the fact was that nuns I thought I was quite close to, women that I felt I had a lot in common with, could suddenly take, when it came to deeper issues, a stand right at the other end of the pole from say where I might be. That was a really painful experience for all of us.

"All this had started in the mid-sixties, and it was so bad, our polarisation went so deep, that in 1970 I think it was, we invited a nun from America to come and facilitate us towards reconciliation. We stopped all talk of change for the time being and nearly 200 of us gathered in one place and just spent two days looking at what had happened to us. That was a watershed really because we looked at polarisation, we looked at tension and the conflicts that had arisen between those who thought there had to be change and those who resisted it. It didn't always fall into the old and the young, it was mainly nuns in their middle years who had the difficulty really. Some of the old women were very radical.

"We had never had any ex-

perience of conflict on this scale. And this woman from America, who had been through it all — nuns in the United States were at least five years ahead of us — really provided us with skills of discernment and looking at tension, and also not being too terrified of it. She was pretty good. We came out of that a bit euphoric, but of course all the hard work was still ahead of us. And it isn't finished yet.

"Our move, the three of us into the house in Aranui, was quite a tension point, even though the order supported us, strangely enough. But there is a gap between theory, in terms of saying "that's a good thing to do", and accepting the implementation of it. I find one of the most interesting things in all change is that gap, and I imagine that it's true far beyond anything that I saw in our lives. Religious orders tend to make quite good statements about how things should be, but they don't always get on and do it. And nothing happens until you actually act! I find that with sexist things, too. Everyone can live with the theory but it's the moment that you want people to actually act differently that the reaction begins. I read somewhere that sometimes we mistake heated argument for action."

Pauline writes at the beginning of the book: "We had only one goal: to try and be good neighbours and to do everything we could to build up neighbourliness all around us. It was simple and realisable, and in the intervening years we have had no reason to modify it." Part One of the book describes how they came to "perceive the depth and quality of women in our society", and how they gradually became part of their community. In Parts Two and Three Pauline writes about her early life and work as a Catholic nun in the order of the Sisters of Mercy. Part Four deals with the changes within the convent and outside that led to the women in the Aranui community and the Sisters of Mercy re-defining their relationship to each other. The book ends in the new suburb of Parklands, talking of community actions over power bill increases and unwanted developments. Pauline is now back in Aranui and says of it today:

"The context has changed



Photo: Courtesy Allen and Unwin

quite a lot. A fairly high proportion of the Samoans that live in the South Island are living in Aranui. And Vietnamese. People that come new to the country and new to Christchurch. They get a state house. Quite sadly, there is a mentality that you move up and out, there's a lot of mobility. And I think that our stability in staying in the one housing unit for 14 years has done something important. It shows that we think it's a good place to live and we enjoy it and make no bones about it. When we moved into that unit — it's on the corner and opposite the burger bar and there's a terrible lot of noise — the longest anyone had stayed was 18 months. We live there as ordinary tenants. The good things about that unit are that it's not a place that anyone aspires to live in and it's a real community place where people come in easily. We feel that's very important.

"Most of our work has been with women because that's who are there, right in front of us. We didn't know that before we went, we were absorbed in school life, all of us were teachers. To be really honest we didn't know anything very

much. But of course once we got there our lives became intertwined with those of the women in their houses on the street. A really marvellous experience."

When asked whether she called herself a feminist, Pauline replied: "Yes. And for me this means at the bottom line, that women, right in their houses, and their families get greater control over their own lives, and greater freedom. It might be something as small as a course at the local high school. We see it in quite small things because it has to start there before another decision is made, and another one. When women make that first decision for themselves we get inordinately excited, no-one else would understand why, but we have seen it so often — once you've done it, once you've made a decision for yourself and acted on it, you're on your way. On another level I think that the mess the world is in has got a lot to do with the lack of women in policy-making areas.

"For me an area of great importance for women is lack of self-confidence. The low self-esteem, women looking down on themselves. We had been brought up in a climate where to some extent there was a value put on not thinking highly of yourself, but because we had lived with other women who affirmed us we didn't really know what it could mean to have such low self-esteem and to really believe it. I don't think I ever believed that I was the dirt under anyone else's feet, even though I sounded nicely humble. I had a good appreciation of myself. So it was really shocking because what we saw was something so different from what they perceived in themselves. Just to see their courage and the resources that they called on — solo women particularly. We thought they were marvellous, and yet they thought so badly of themselves.

"I think society and the church (all churches) are responsible for this low self-esteem. Society doesn't do anything to build up the esteem of women, particularly women in the house. Attitudes that developed in the seventies to women on the DPB were absolutely monstrous: the women felt ashamed, yet they had every right to it. And we have all these high-faulting things said about mother-

hood, it's supposed to be top of the heap for value and yet the people who are actually doing it, and doing it very well, are made to feel as though they are sort of spongers or something. Our response to this was one of considerable anger and that anger was quite high in motivating us to get involved in issues."

"Sometimes I think that perhaps a real feminist would think we soft pedal too much. We certainly see the ideal, but we are terribly conscious of the effects that certain changes will have in women's lives and we want to reflect with them about that. I have got a rather exalted, and perhaps quite unreal picture of feminists, but of course being a real feminist is having wisdom, and caring about what happens to women. When we run our assertiveness courses for the local women we regard them as just a beginning, because the local Polytech does wonderful things. Change has got to be an ongoing process. I generally do the course, because I've always sidestepped being assertive and I always share where I've failed and share the excitement of actually saying no. For most of the women the whole matter of saying no is possibly one of the biggest. We use role play a lot, but we're always very supportive of the woman who comes back and says 'I didn't do it.'"

Pauline writes about a community action where local people paid only 3/4 of their power bills, because they were incensed at having to pay more for electricity than industries were. They eventually had their power cut off and lived without it for a month. Pauline has a strong belief in the power of community actions:

"I think that anywhere where people step out of line and do something different and lacking in respectability and are prepared to live with that it's very important. Another thing I liked about that particular action was that no-one could have done it as an individual. It involved women and men, and I thought it did the men a lot of good because things like status and respectability are so important to them. It brought home to me the power there is in people acting together. There wasn't enough incentive in the electricity bill thing to create a revolution, but it did show how far people can go if

they have the incentive to act together! A month without electricity is quite an experience, as we discovered. Another thing it brought home to me was that this is what is being done to people. I think having your power cut off is a very heavy retribution on people who don't — who can't — pay their power bill. Many of the people in that action went in to the Power Board and asked to see someone and told them what it was like to be without power. The women in Aranui that we knew who had had their power cut off couldn't do that. There is just an incredible strength that comes from doing something together."

A quote from the book: "Those with power hate protest and dread any public examination of their actions, but they do not change one moment before they have to. More than that, when protest starts to become effective they will ruthlessly try to break it. We could easily come to think that all protest is useless. But that is not so. History shows that where people act together to confront unjust systems, they awaken awareness in

others that is passed on imperceptibly until enough people are empowered to bring about change. But it is a slow process and those who take the initiative seldom live to see the good that is ultimately effected."

Pauline does not see the Pope's visit to New Zealand as very significant, apart from its historical aspects. She says, "The only really significant reality that I see that the church has is in local communities. It can be quite an important presence there, to help create more human environments. It's got a lot going for it in terms of people coming together, quite apart from the religious role, which I'm also committed to, I don't want to pretend otherwise. But I'm not into evangelising or proselytising. Our ideal really is the very early church of the first two or three centuries after Christ, where women actually played a very big part and that's all just being discovered now through fantastic research that women are doing. The church for me is to provide people to give service, that's all. My understanding of church is of some people

making a commitment to a community of people that is grounded in eucharist and coming together — it's quite a powerful thing — and then, from that, going out. I think it comes together only to go out, and if it doesn't go out I don't think it should come together. These ideas go right back — people say it's a radical concept, but it's a very ancient one. During those early centuries after Christ Christians were persecuted. The end of that early Christianity came with the emperor Constantine who saw that instead of persecuting these people he could make them the official religion of the empire and use that to unify the empire. That was in the 4th century and that is what created the church as we understand it, which is so tied up with status. It's quite a time to be in, feeling that you can turn the centuries back — it's worth a try."

I asked Pauline about the support the women had had from the church in what they were doing, and whether they had practical support in money terms.

"No we didn't get money from the church, and we didn't

seek it. We had two things that we were very clear about (the rest were mostly unclear). One was that we were going to be financially independent, and that has been the most important step that we took. We managed it by having one of us always being the breadwinner and gradually we got older, and just by turning 60 we bring in some money! It turns being 60 into something really worthwhile. We are financially independent and that gives us greater freedom to make the decisions we feel are appropriate. At different points, you see, we have nearly left the religious order but we would have carried on as before, just as a group of women. It would not have made any difference to our practical lives. Where we are specifically different from any other group of nuns is that we are not in any way dependent on the church or the state for funds. The one bit of funding that we have is for a co-workers' scheme. It is our belief that people doing work in the community should not be expected to do it for nothing, especially women, and it is mostly women doing it. To begin with we paid them our-

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selves, it was a small amount, but it did make a lot of difference. As the scheme got bigger we got funding from the McKenzie Trust and they're very 'no strings' kind of people. They trust you. That's the only money we've got from outside ourselves.

"At the beginning the order wanted to support us — they couldn't conceive of a situation where you were not dependent on the order because we had always been. They were a bit shocked, thinking we couldn't survive. But we knew we would. I went and taught at Aranui High School and I got a salary that three of us could live on. It is all getting tougher, but that's all part of other people's experience too. If you always have a backstop that you know you can fall back on then you're in a different situation. It is a question of being secure. We have chosen to be insecure.

There are a lot of references to power in *A Changing Order*: Pauline O'Regan is a nun with a strong feminist analysis, a statement I would have thought of as contradictory before I read her book and talked with her. Her ideals about the church have nothing to do with hierarchies, wealth, or the passive acceptance that I associate with Christian religions.

It is worth reading *A Changing order* for the analyses of change, and the processes of change, that it offers. There is plenty of food for thought for feminists concerned with process here. □

HEAD AND SHOULDERS

Interviews by Virginia

Myers

Penguin \$19.99 (add GST)

BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

Edited by Margaret Clark

Allen & Unwin 1986

\$19.95 (add GST)

I read *Head and Shoulders* twice, the first time compulsively. Here were the stories of nine New Zealand women, who are described on the cover as "outstanding" and having "blazed a trail to public success". Virginia Myers interviewed Fiona Kidman, Merata Mita, Helen Melrose, Wendy Pye, Helen Clark, Elspeth Kennedy, Anne Audain, Mira Szaszy and Miriam Saphira

and used mainly their words to tell the stories. Each chapter begins with a photograph and an introduction/summary by Virginia. She says in her general introduction, "I wanted to find out how some of these women had succeeded, what and how great the obstacles were, and how they overcame them. What were their motives? How did they resolve being wives and mothers as well as career women? Above all, how did they feel about their lives and the choices they made?"

The result is a very gutsy book, as Virginia Myers got a high level of self-exposure from all the women. She admits to a "subjective" (what other kind is there?) choice of women to include as "women whom I admired and whose experience seems a particularly rich resource."

There weren't any obvious things in common among these women, except their determination to achieve. But success does not mean the same thing to them.

For Merata Mita, Maori woman, film-maker (*Bastion Point, Patu*), success is "that my children still love me in spite of what I've done and become publicly, and all the hardship they've had to endure with me." She is working on a feature film about an old Maori woman bringing up her granddaughter. "I'll do anything for the survival of the Maori people. They had so much to offer New Zealand in terms of nationhood and were totally ignored. I'm making this feature film because the revolution isn't just running out with a gun and shooting somebody, it's the arts as well. And if a film I make causes Maori people to feel stronger about themselves and lose some of their inferiority, then I'm achieving something worthwhile for the revolution." Mertata had earlier rejected a "success" path that she saw as possible for her in teaching, working with Maori and Polynesian students for whom the education system had failed. She said, "what looks like success is very hollow. I had the same origins as them, yet by some quirk of fate I'd ended up somewhere they weren't going to get to."

For Mira Szaszy, leader in the Maori Women's Welfare League, advisor in the setting up of Te Ohu Whakatupu within the Ministry of Women's

THE OLD-TIME MAORI

by Makereti (Maggie Papakura)



This book, the first published work by a Maori woman, has been out of print for almost fifty years and offers 'a woman's sighting of the Maori world' (Ngahua Te Awekotuku, in her introduction).

Now published \$19.95.

NEW WOMEN'S PRESS

Affairs, strong proponent of education for Maori women, "There were many heartaches, but they weren't as significant as having achieved in human terms. As a Maori — woman or man — service to your people is the number one qualification... If I'd followed another career I wouldn't have had the same sense of fulfilment."

Fiona Kidman spoke of a double-edged sword of public success. "I was not prepared for celebrity status!... sought out by people who wanted me to party along with them or get on your coat-tails a bit... I started to have hangovers when I should have been doing other work... there was a double cost... to my family... to the important things in my own work." She says later, "Success to me now would be to be recognised as a good craftswoman and somebody who remains true to herself."

Helen Melrose, lawyer, sole woman partner with 35 men in a commercial law firm, has achieved success in the terms defined by her profession, at considerable personal cost (and a similar cost has been paid by all the women in this book) and now questions the

male goals of high income/long hours at the expense of everything else. "My dream is to have an excellent women's law firm staffed by women who are acknowledged to be top in their field and would attract clients, even if they were available only part-time. I'd want to work on women's terms. More co-operative decision-making with a lot of give and take, and also material support systems like having someone to do our banking and take our cars for a warrant of fitness. Something like a wife's role, but properly paid..." Helen discusses the sexism in the legal profession and the gatekeeping that meant it took her 12 years to achieve a partnership, when some of the men she went through law school with did it in four or five. And getting to be a partner did not bring any of this to an end.

Wendy Pye sees success as being "best" and making a lot of money. She offers some quite specific advice about how to get on in a corporation, including lobbying ("all the real work has to be done before the meeting"). Some of her statements seemed con-

tradictory to me, like "I'm really very romantic" and some of the things she said about strategies. And I found this statement a little strange: "Many women are their own worst enemies. I find they aren't prepared to sacrifice very much." Or maybe it's me that's strange because I don't see why success shouldn't be possible without sacrifice. Of course, it is going to depend on how we define success.

Politician Helen Clark does not see being a member of parliament as any ultimate success — although she does see herself as having had successes, (for her they seem to be in terms of having an influence on the Labour Party). This is in spite of an inherent shyness: "I don't think you come out of the New Zealand growing up process with the feeling that you are an individual of worth that others will want to meet." She describes parliament as "an extraordinarily unhelpful atmosphere", but still manages to say, "Provided I'm happy with what I'm doing I'll stay in this job," I was left with a strong feeling of respect for her integrity.

HEAD & SHOULDERS

Successful New Zealand women
talk to Virginia Myers



I developed the same feeling for Elspeth Kennedy, local body financier, first woman metropolitan member of the New Zealand stock exchange. She chose a career in business over one in singing and for her success has meant arranging finance for, among other things, sewerage schemes all over New Zealand. She perceived it as a crisis when she realised she was thinking about her work in terms of the fees it earned rather than whether she was doing the best for her clients (mostly local bodies). She says, "The facade I live in the

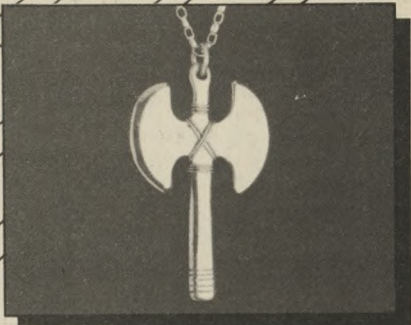
corporate world isn't what life is all about. Life is at the grass roots, how you pay your bills, how you are looked after in hospital, whether or not you have running water."

Anne Audain, athlete, sees success in terms of winning races, which has led on to some financial success through sponsorship and advertising. Her hurdles have certainly not all been on the track — sexual harassment, for instance seems to have been a fairly constant factor but it's not one she makes a lot of. She sees herself as feminine — "my makeup gets in a terrible mess when I race" — but very determined.

The only "out" lesbian in the book, Miriam Saphira, is also the only woman represented who actually works on feminist issues — sexual abuse, incest, lesbianism, lesbian mothers. Which is not to deny some of the other women a feminist perspective. For Miriam success has been getting an education and educating others through writing and talking about the issues she sees as important. "I saw education as the key to a new world. It seemed to be the only way to get enough information to make sense of the world and my part in it." A high commitment to women and children and high energy have created a success that's got nothing to do with material rewards. "I think turning my anger round into high achievement has been one of the most resourceful things I've ever done. I've seen other people get depressed by their anger, and I also have bouts of depression. But if I can twist that rage into something productive I can overcome the depression."

There is so much in this book that I would like to have written about — the obstacles the women faced, and their strategies for dealing with them; being "emotional"; their relationships to partners; children; the ways in which they have been hurt; their own childhoods and how they see that as influencing them; how they perceive power, and who they see as having it; and the very strong "buzz" that they all get out of the actual work that they do and out of being really good at it. And there are things that I wanted that are missing: an analysis of success and power; an exploration of the values the women were

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operating from; some economic analysis — who earns the big salaries, and why. Another chapter containing some feminist (and therefore, economic!) analysis of these things is what I wanted. But that lack does not stop *Head and Shoulders* from being a really valuable book for New Zealand feminists, as well as a bloody good read.

Beyond Expectations is also a book about New Zealand women that in some sense have "made it". It's about 14 mainly professional women and is fascinating rather than compelling. It's fascinating for its glimpses into New Zealand's Pakeha past (only one woman is Maori and she is the youngest in the book) but lacks the punch of *Head and Shoulders*. Each woman wrote her own chapter, which gives a lively variation in styles, but the lack of an interviewer probing a little deeper makes for a less exciting collection. And the subjects are more homogenous, even though both Margaret Wilson and Sue Wood are included; all except one are Pakeha. Kathie Cameron, the one Maori woman calls her

chapter "Born Into Conflict"!

Lesbianism is invisible, and although there are some class differences in the families of origin, it reflects the variety that is New Zealand women even less than *Head and Shoulders*. But then for some women to be "successful" a lot have to be "unsuccessful". Or do they? I more and more want some analysis of success.

I got a little irritated, particularly in the first half of *Beyond Expectations*, with the recurring tributes to significant men — but maybe that's just my prejudice showing. And I was appalled by Diana Mason's concluding paragraph, both for her assumption that her anti-abortion stance "saved" those particular children (whose mothers most likely never sought an abortion) and for her apparent belief that mothers exist through their children. I found Cath Tizard's chapter enthralling and Mary Ronnie's evoked my respect. Jacqueline Fahey is a great raconteur and always a delight to read (and I loved what she said about *Broadsheet*). But she and Raewyn Dalzell ended very abruptly, just when I

thought we were getting to something really meaty. In fact most of the chapters were about early life, rather than the present. I always liked to read stories from women's history in New Zealand, but I wanted more "now" as well.

I hope that neither of these books is used to "prove" that women can "succeed" if they really want to. It would be harder to do it with *Head and Shoulders* because the women talk so specifically about the awful things they have to put up with. And would anyone out there like to write an article for *Broadsheet* that examines the idea of success and what it means for feminism?

Pat Rosier

**REPORT OF WOMEN'S
HEALTH PROJECT (INC)
1985 P.O. Box 2315
Tauranga**

This community project was carried out in the Tauranga and Matamata area between 1981-1985. It was made possible by a grant from the Mental Health Foundation in 1981. Originally a slightly smaller grant, for the same project, had been awarded to one of the project's core members Sarah Calvert but the uplifting of the grant was paralysed by controversy and conflict between Tauranga hospital senior medical staff and other members of the hospital board. One of the conceivers of the project Dr John Radcliffe (Director of Community Services) finally withdrew his support. He is now serving as the new conservative superintendent at Carrington hospital in Auckland. The failure of the board to uplift the grant united the Tauranga community and led to a community group becoming an Incorporated Society to re-apply and regain the research grant.

A community and woman-oriented viewpoint quite clearly underlies the design and philosophy behind the research. The report goes to some pains to describe the process involved in the research and give credit to all project workers. Despite the grant (dished out in bits over a 3 year period) the project had constant financial problems which meant finally that Stage II of the project (community intervention based on

gathered data) could not be carried out. I found the report's description of the project's process and hassles inspiring, as you gain a sense of the determination and commitment of a group of women to win through (against major odds), achieve a goal and not compromise their ideology. The project women say (p 7) "Doing social research has not become easier and more readily accepted over the 14 years which separates SROW (Society for Research on Women) from WMHP (Women's Mental Health Project)." A sobering comment. Many women's projects stumble and fail in their attempts to try to achieve things differently from existing models because the strain is too much or there is no history to learn from. I liked the fact the project women reported in detail the hidden costs of funding and other problems.

The project attempted research similar in design reporting to such innovative feminist research as Shere Hite's *The Hite Report*, in the sense of being determined to allow women to say how they saw themselves, to speak for themselves.

In their report the researchers make good use of individual respondents comments, giving the report feeling, a subjective viewpoint of the respondents' lives rather than just academic figures and discussion. The design and method of the research has and is likely to get more flak from academic researchers. By allowing women the option of unquestioned refusal to respond the sample of data was reduced and I do feel the final in-depth study of 75 respondents is too small a sample upon which to make any wide-ranging conclusions. I do not want to comment on method and design as I understand and agree with the ideology underpinning the project. The project's conclusions are interesting but must be treated with some caution.

The overall conclusions from the main study are that women cope with their lives remarkably well (and healthily) but they lack control and power to change their lives, especially stress sources. Women seem to adapt to their situation with optimism despite 33% admitting strain, 29% admitting unhappiness and 47% admitting some form

of anxiety. They remind me of the way prisoners adapt to prison. After a while most of them "settle" are "happy", almost "content". Most women in the study regard the family as very important; they also regarded companionship, friendship and security as important. The latter are things that families (on the whole) provide. What I don't know from the project report is what "family" in the respondents' context means. Does it mean nuclear family? If it does it makes me wonder if women will ever seek other options in great numbers because the majority see their lot as "not too bad". This conclusion would be a real asset for the platform of the new conservative right.

The frequency of social crises and life crises are the main factors (from the project's data) forcing women into major dissatisfaction with their lot and also into depression. I ponder on whether it is women whose sense of self-esteem and well-being are high or those who are totally dissatisfied who finally make major changes in their lives? Are we providing self-esteem classes for happy prisoners? We also have to ask the question (as the researchers do) does this research project represent Aotearoan women in general. I say NO. Minority group women (Maori, disabled, lesbian) and working class women are either under-represented or not represented at all. (p. 93) "Few women in the survey had experienced problems meeting rental/mortgage payments." I do not believe this is representative of other urban/rural areas in Aotearoa. I realise the data came from a restricted Tauranga/Matamata area and this must be remembered in drawing conclusions.

One major significant finding that I could hypothesise would be found nation-wide was women's dissatisfaction with contraception. I also found interesting the finding that rural women experience greater stress, particularly with pregnancy, and transport is seen by so many as a problem (Town planners mostly men?). The researchers found the only social-economic scale developed in this country (Elley and Irving) unsatisfactory when applied to women (housewives not rated) or rural people (a variety of occupa-

tions not allowed for).

When I started writing this review I wondered whether my criticisms should be last or first but because there are some issues I feel strongly about I left the criticism to last. In a project where women have been really careful to detail process and where academic flak can be expected I found it extremely irritating to find major fact errors as well as presentation confusion. An example of the former is the reference to the neighbourhood watch scheme, when in fact the scheme the researchers are referring to is the neighbourhood support scheme. Discrimination between the two schemes is very important as proponents of the "watch" scheme are presently highly critical of the pro-women content of the "support" package. An example of the presentation errors is in the review of research section where numbers and sub-headings appear to be erroneous or unclear. By the way where is the appendix with the maps used for the grid system referred to on page 54?

The researchers admit to some omissions in the problems/issues covered in their questionnaire. I feel they have also neglected important areas of women's present and future mental health by omitting questions to do with ageing and smoking in particular (admittedly the 70+ age group was only 1% of sample) I consider the worst omissions are in the area of discrimination (racism, ableism and homophobia) and something that makes me very angry as a lesbian is — *nowhere in the whole report is there any reference to lesbian women*. In regard to the low number of responses from Maori women the researchers say only "We had no Maori interviewers". There is no analysis of the possibility Maori women found the questionnaire very white and culturally unacceptable. I appreciate Maori women were members of the core group of researchers but I find the lack of analysis on this issue appalling.

When I first saw that the questionnaire referred to "marriage or partnership" I was pleased, believing that relationships such as lesbian were included. Then I found question 79... "Is he away for the time being or have you

stopped living together for good?", and when I looked back at preceding questions I realised they were all worded "Does your husband or partner" ... and in "employment of partners" there were only references to "tradesmen" etc. Once again lesbians are invisible, don't exist as part of the population of women. I wonder how many of the non-respondents were lesbian? I would not have answered the questionnaire.

I congratulate women from the women's mental health project for your commitment, tenacity and energy. You have gathered some valuable data in a non-traditional women-oriented way but I also want you to know my anger at the negation of my lesbian sisters.
Sue Fitchett

THE PIRATE MOON

Composed by Gillian Whitehead
Libretto by Anna Maria Dell'oso
Directed by Paul Sonne

This opera was written for the students of the school of music as part of their festival to mark the opening of the new music building at Auckland University.

The story concerns two lovers — the man, Miron, is uncertain of his loyalties, while pregnant Willa wants his commitment and support. Via the apparition of the "time ship" they are transported to a sci-fi future (or could it be their own dream world?) where they gain insight into the seeds of the tragedy that lies in their future.

The music of the opera is difficult to approach for those unfamiliar with contemporary classical idiom (no tunes, love) and one of the complaints I had, as did many others, was that inaudibility of words precluded full understanding of the plot and meaning of the piece. Dare I say it, I did find the music a little monotonous stylistically, but there were times when the combination of high voices chanting or singing with an accompaniment that frequently had no fixed pitch achieved an almost "electronic" effect which was very exciting.

There were some marvellous performances from this group of mainly women students and their tutor Anthea Moller. Anthea's beautifully



Photo: Hiro Kamimura

modulated singing and musical integrity centred the opera and the stamp of her teaching technique lent it wonderful vocal unity. The ensemble singing could not be faulted especially considering the technical demands of the score. The opening of act one by the Futuries was magical.

There was some lovely solo work from the students — Carmel Carol's assured singing of the imposing priestess combined with her physical commitment to the role provided a lovely cameo, as did Susan Boland's delightfully vulnerable Willamore. I heard some lovely sounds from Jennifer Barrat's Miramore, and enjoyed Kathy McGredy's singing of the Sphinx.

The lack of intensity and initial tendency towards petulance by the two leads later gave way to more creative performances, more so from Jennifer Maybee. The initial woodenness from all the cast settled down, and by the climax of Act 2 some highly committed performances were in evidence.

The orchestra was superbly disciplined by John Elmsley in its playing of what must have

WELLINGTON LESBIAN CLUB FINALE

Friday 22 August was the final night at the Wellington Lesbian Club in Wigan St. Wellington. Dykes celebrated with a wind-down gala evening of poems, plays and lip-synching, all presented by "Witchcraft".

The programme began with the video *What Lesbians Do In Bed?*, which was followed by two lip-synching numbers by Glenda of Gene Pitney's "24 Hours From Tulsa" and "It hurts to be in love". She closed the evening later with another number "I am what I am". There followed a series of poems for lesbians only — sensual stuff — and plays.

The first play had a little of everything including a Tux-clad dance routine by the "Good-Lookers Dyke Detective Agency". It also gave whole new meaning to the phrase "Shall we have a rest?" and was about the many kinds of lesbian relationships. Very appropriate I thought, in view of the recently published *Broadsheet* article. A short skit about political lesbians was

quite funny: "Love? Love? Who's got time for love? I've got a meeting to go to."

The Wellington lesbian club committee can be congratulated for presenting a very entertaining evening enjoyed by lesbians from throughout Aotearoa (there were quite a few from Auckland) and other ethnic origins.

The dancing that followed went into the wee smalls, but we left at about 1.30am. Thanks for a wonderful night's entertainment; I've always enjoyed myself when I've come down to Wellington and wish you all the best of luck on your new premises.

The new Wellington lesbian club opened on Saturday 20 September. It will be operating on Saturday for a while instead of Friday, and as usual will have one non-alcohol night on the first Saturday every month. The club is run by an open collective which meets every Monday fortnight on the premises. Entry is \$2 for unwaged and \$4 for waged lesbians. For more information, contact The Women's Place Bookshop, 58 Courtenay Place, phone 851-802. □
Shirley Tamihana.

been a tricky score, and some exciting sounds emanated from the percussion and woodwind sections.

And finally we come to the visual feast provided for us by designer Tracy Collins' set, props and costumes. A complete story was evident in each characters' get-up as colour, attention to detail and futuristic fantasy combined. A wonderful imagination that knows no bounds was obviously at work here. One tiny quibble — the "crackling" of the plastic garments sometimes pulled a bit too much focus!

Well done, music women and Tracy and Paul. *The Pirate Moon* was a stimulating night out. Great to see a work by a New Zealand woman composer, with such scope for women performers, and to hear young singers get to grips with such a challenging task.

Stephanie Arlidge

BROKEN MIRRORS

Directed by Marlen Gorris. Screened at recent film festivals.

General release planned

Marleen Gorris' *Broken Mirrors* is a film I went to see because I felt I should rather than because I wanted to. Whilst it proved a harrowing experience, this film turned out to be the highlight of my film festival viewing. *Broken Mirrors*, a powerful feminist film, deals with a difficult subject, prostitution. The film had to tread a fine line between clearly illustrating the position of women in western society and avoiding the danger of titillating males in the audience with the sex/violence of the images presented.

The film is set mainly in a brothel — a clean (if somewhat tacky) orderly place of the type found in countries where prostitution is state sanctioned — and follows the ritualized servicing of males (a common theme in most cultures), and how the women cope with their incessant daily tasks. Parallel to this we follow the movements of an abductor who captures a woman, chains her to a bed in a cold barren cellar, slowly starving

ier to death. He gets his kicks from having *total* control over his victim who is forced to lie in excrement, pleading for food, water and mercy. He observes in silence, periodically photographing her agony for his large wall collection — a sinister array of past victims. The two stories, seemingly unconnected, fuse into an uncompromising exposition of the misogyny necessary to sustain patriarchal societies, and how this is expressed in male sexuality.

The tone is established from the first image — bleak, unrelenting realism. In the distance a car emerges amidst a stark, snow-laden landscape. A man (we never see his face) dressed in a long grey coat and gloves, drags a tarpaulin bundle from his car boot. He unwraps the contents on the bank of a canal to reveal the dead body of a woman, calmly photographs her, and then drives off.

His long coat and gloves haunt us throughout the film. Every time a customer rings the brothel bell we see the vague outlines of a coat through the tinted glasses. Is it him? The point, perhaps, that Gorris is making is that the murderer could be any one of them. Our abductor merely displays in extreme form tendencies which early become part of the male psyche.

Marleen Gorris has not allowed any of the myths about prostitution to pervade her film. These women are not sex therapists performing an important job in relieving male hang-ups. The prostitutes despise their customers and have learnt techniques to distance themselves from their demands, as Doris vividly informs the newly arrived Diane. Their aim is to get the men in, make them come as quickly as possible, and get them out again — not an unfamiliar practice for women in general. The faces of the women as they service the males is one of resigned boredom, certainly not of enjoyment.

The sex sequences are sensitively shot so that the camera avoids the voyeuristic display of women's bodies so common in "male gaze" films (i.e. *Hail Mary*). The cold realism and matter of factness of Gorris' images also negate any titillation value. There is nothing erotic about rubbish bins full of used condoms, or vomit-filled hand basins.

Gorris does not portray the prostitutes as being crippled by their victim status — a popular image which also abounds in feminist circles. All women, whether prostitute or no, cater to male needs. It is pertinent to pose the question "how many women actually freely choose, as opposed to being 'freely compelled' to undertake a particular form of labour"? (*Broadside*, v 7, no 6, pg 9). The prostitutes have been "freely compelled" to choose this type of work and Gorris presents them as strong and supportive women, enduring in order to survive. They are doing a job so that they can feed their children, and exist in a society which is based on a model of exploitation. It is good to get away from the heroin-addict stereotype of prostitutes — though they do exist.



Lineke Rijxman is Diane in *Broken Mirrors*

Photo: Sigma Film Productions

This film can be read as exposing the economic exploitation of women which is inbuilt into the power structures of western societies. The chained woman in the cellar is a symbol of the wholesale economic dependence (and enslavement) of women. We see this in the prostitutes who are paid by men. Gorris makes a point of showing repeated images where money is handed from male to female, as in the handing of money from the male clients to Ellen, the brothel manager, and of the male brothel owner who keeps the prostitutes waiting whilst he counts their earnings, handing them out personally with a magnanimous gesture. We see it in the devoted wife of our abductor who has been busying herself at home preparing a gourmet

three course dinner for her husband. It is no accident that Gorris has the abductor one minute torturing his captive and the next, walking into a comfortable homely atmosphere with a loving wife to greet him. The impact of this sequence is chilling!

The only male in the whole film who does not threaten women is Andre, an old derelict living in a disused shed near Doris' boathouse, babbling away about the pure and good virgin Mary. (A subtle reminder of the two roles women have been traditionally forced into — madonna or whore.) Andre does not threaten because he has no power. He is old, "crazy" and has no economic status. His treatment illustrates the hypocrisy and seeming irrationality of society in its defini-

tion of what is dangerous. Because Andre is old, poor, dirty and nonconforming he is seen as a threat and subsequently removed by the authorities to an institution. Yet the really dangerous men, represented by the abductor, are able to assume invisibility behind the guise of respectability and status attained through wealth. The more economic power men have the more dangerous they become as it gives greater access to avoiding the shallow sanctions of society. Andre also serves to expose the other hypocrisy of so-called christian societies. Doris, condemned as a whore, showed more compassion and embodied more christian charity in caring for Andre than her respectable neighbour who reported the old man to the police.

Gorris allows little room for ambiguity in *Broken Mirrors*, yet her film is powerful, cleverly avoiding the preaching tendencies of some feminist films. Her images are real and highly effective. The hoard of university students who descend upon the brothel frantically queuing for their turn, anxious to get their "end" in (one wonders why they didn't just fuck each other and be done with it), repel us. Or there is the scene set in the restaurant where the prostitutes are farewelling one of their workmates who coped by suiciding; they sit around a large table singing "I kissed a frog but instead of turning into a prince, he stayed a fat, green, slimy frog".

Obviously this film could not have a happy ending. But it did end on a slightly positive note where women were shown to seize the little power they could. The chained woman comes to the realization that her captor enjoys her pleading and has no intention of releasing her from his power. She makes a conscious decision to stop indulging his perversion and to die with dignity. She decides not to speak another word to him, thus empowering herself. The abductor is besides himself and breaks his silence. It is his turn to beg *her* to speak. In disgust she spits into his face. An important statement is being made here. Even in the worst situation women can wrest some measure of control once they realize that males get off on power, and if they stop giving men what they want. Diane and Doris also take positive action. To reveal how would be to detract from the film's power for those yet to see *Broken Mirrors* — and see it you must! With great adeptness and superb timing Gorris ties the two stories together and reveals the abductor's identity.

This is a brilliant film; more important, it is a brilliant feminist film. The faces of the audience after the Auckland film festival screening was testimony to the brutal reality contained within *Broken Mirrors*. Our society is structured on economic exploitation; women are used to service male needs. Propped up by misogyny, it is these exploitative structures that chain us just as firmly as the woman chained to the bed. □
Athena Tsoulis.

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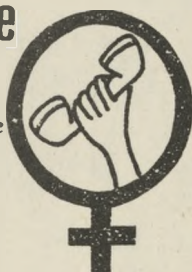
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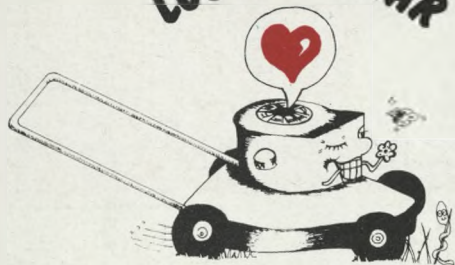
● WOMEN AND CULTURE EXHIBITION ●

This exhibition, curated by Priscilla Pitts for the Association of Women Artists, opens at Outreach, 1 Ponsonby Rd, Auckland at 5.30 on 13 October.

At the opening Juliet Batten will begin a performance piece, "Un-earthing". The performance will continue daily throughout the two weeks of the exhibition, probably between 12.30 and 2.00. Juliet is inviting women to collaborate in this piece by sending bits of information about women's culture in Aotearoa to her at 98 Marsden Ave, Mt Eden, Auckland. Please include the source and your name and address. Any small "artefacts" that symbolise women's contribution to culture would also be welcomed. Using archeology as a metaphor Juliet will "unearth" the information. Women will be invited to take part in this process. All contributors will be acknowledged.

Another aspect of the exhibition will be the presentation of two videos (Outreach, 20 October 7.45), one by Wallis Barnicoat on women and work, the other Juliet's piece, "Knitting the Tide".

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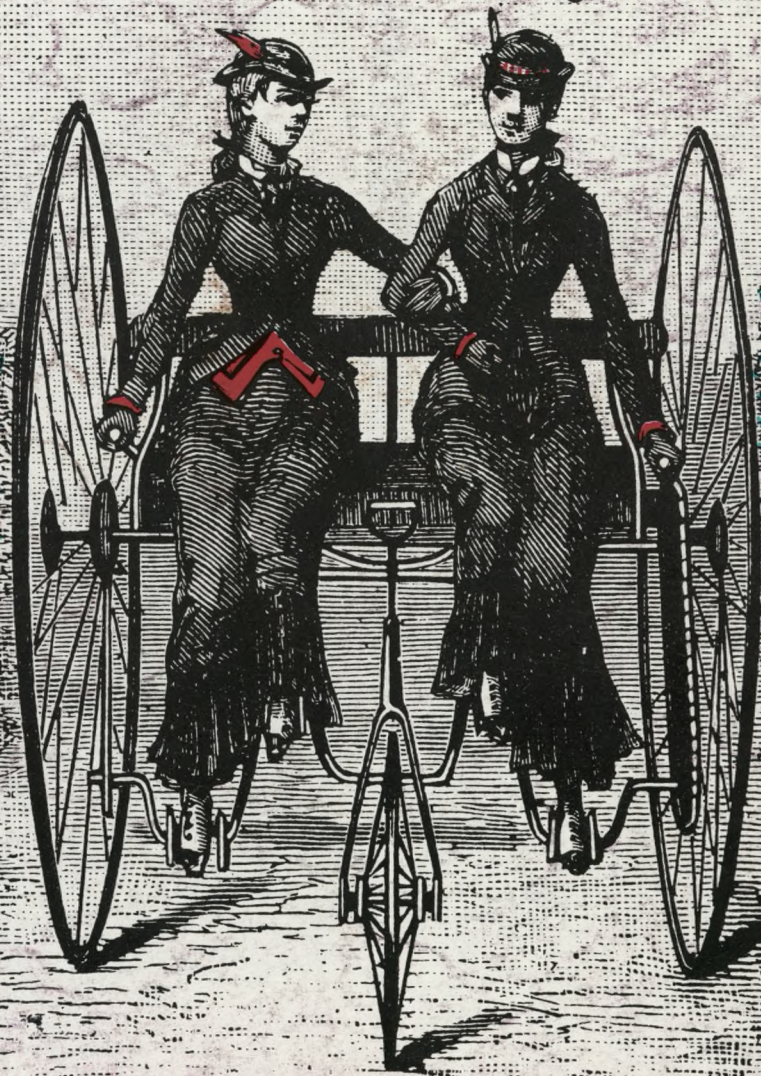
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