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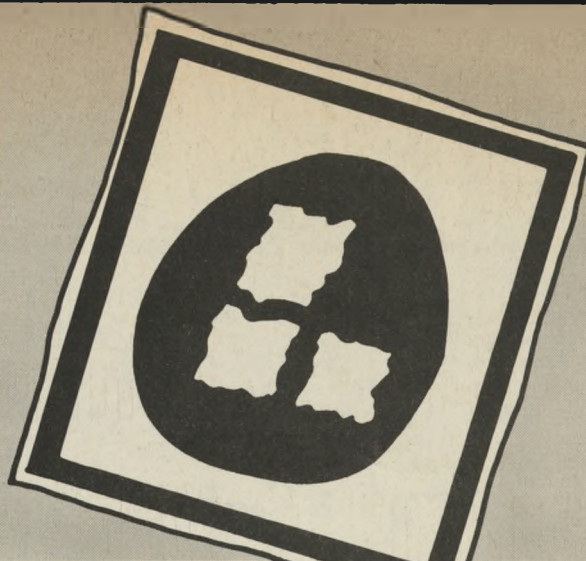
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THESE WOMEN HELPED AROUND BROADSHEET THIS MONTH: Janet Charman, (poetry reader), Julie Sargison, Susan Grimsdell and the enveloping women.

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LETTERS



AIDS, FEMALE CIRCUMCISION AND AFRICAN WOMEN

Dear Broadsheet,
The spread of AIDS in Africa may be connected to the practice of female genital mutilation, according to an anthropologist with the University of California. Mi Linke, a doctoral candidate, has been struck by the fact that the epidemiological pattern of AIDS in Africa, where the disease strikes men and women equally, differs from that in the United States, where it has predominantly affected intravenous drug users and homosexual men.

As she read the research literature on AIDS, Mi Linke noticed a "Prevailing assumption that the same cultural factors were at work in the transmission of AIDS in Africa as those in Europe and the US — namely, sexual promiscuity, (the use of unclean) hypodermic needles and (male) homosexuality. None of these points explain the equal ratio of men and women contracting the disease in Central Africa."

The bottom line in the transmission of AIDS is the exchange of body fluids, particularly blood, "which gave me the idea that it might be related to female circumcision", Mi Linke says.

This new theory has disastrously increased the dangers that have befallen millions of African women in the countries where female circumcision is widely practised, and has prompted an urgent need to eradicate this barbaric practice.

We of the Women's Centre in Nigeria have been aware of the dangers inherent in the practice for some time now and have vehemently condemned this practice by our women and have frequently called on various African nations to legislate against it. Only one country to our knowledge (Sudan) has done this but no action has been taken to enforce the legislation.

It is in this circumstance that we have recently taken the first

local initiative to launch a massive campaign of education by home visits, countryside enlightenment tours, newspapers and television against this age-old practice. The campaign has been launched in two African countries, including Nigeria — and we are a non-governmental voluntary organisation without a solid financial base. We have sent letters of appeal to all our women's groups, networks and organisations to come to our aid by donating to our campaign fund. Unfortunately the response has not been encouraging. So far, over 38,000 people have died of AIDS in Africa since 1984 and three quarters of the victims are women and we are convinced that their deaths may be connected to the practice of female circumcision as this research has revealed.

We therefore once again appeal through your magazine to all our womenfolk and other interested persons to come to our aid by donating to our cause as our greatest problem is lack of funds to run the campaign. The reason many of our rural women are suffering from obsolete, dangerous and superstitious age-old traditions such as the so-called female circumcision is lack of practical information that could change their lives. We shall accept donations by cash (banknotes only) or cheques and material aid such as public address system, projectors and literature. Send to:

Hannah Edemikpong
Women's Centre
Box 185 Eket
Cross River State
Nigeria
West Africa

CLASS CONFUSION AND APATHY

Dear Broadsheet,
Since you asked for comments, everyone I know who has read the article "Talking about Class" in the March issue, has been disappointed by it. I thought that it perfectly mirrored the confusion and apathy among feminists about

class, though it gives me no satisfaction to say so. A discussion among women which reached the conclusion that feminism hasn't come to terms with class, and needs a clearer analysis, when I made the same points in an article four years earlier, provides a good gauge of feminists willingness to educate and act on class.

Amazingly enough, the troubled consciences of female executives and bureaucrats on \$30,000 plus a year, don't trouble me. "Why should we be poor?" was the question asked on their behalf. Obviously a spiritual relationship with the working class is preferable to actually sharing their grotty living conditions. (If you've got any energy left over after improving your own.) I'm also fascinated by the feminist version of trickle-down economics, that supporting female high-flyers to get the same exorbitant salaries as their male colleagues, advances the cause of women. Which women?

"Who exactly are the working class?" was another question. A woman brought up with middle-class advantages but temporarily poor? The fact that this absurd example was used at all is significant. A little like responding to Maori land rights by asking about the purity of Maori bloodlines. Once again, an individualist and cultural approach to class which ignores the actual structure, capitalism.

Last winter a young woman who had to live in an unelectricified house, used to come into THAW to get warm. She was often sick. It sickens me to be in the position of handing out charity to women too poor to see doctors, and that happens more frequently now. Around me friends struggle to get basic rights and necessities. So this is not just an intellectual commitment for me, and the irritation I feel over that article stems from its being so half-hearted at a time when the working class are under such deliberate and concentrated attack.

I think the article needed the

input of women who are actively working on current issues from a working class perspective, because the women I know found it too theoretical, and irrelevant. We need to know what other working class women are thinking and doing. We need to define specific goals for action, as well as education. There is great potential for adapting feminist methods in this work, and this needs discussion. The factual evidence of class domination was useful, and I'd like to see more of it. But I think a class analysis of Aotearoa which truly includes the oppressions of women and Maori, will not come except from those directly experiencing and learning from their conflict with capitalism. Neanderthally yours,
Christine Bird
Christchurch

MALPRACTICE COMPLAINT CONTINUES

Dear Broadsheet,
I thought you might be interested in further developments regarding the complaint of malpractice against a Wellington psychiatrist.

The complainant was asked if she would like to meet the College of Psychiatrists. Note that all along the responsibility for action has been put on her, the college has not been willing to initiate action themselves. A meeting was arranged in February, in Auckland, with the secretary and president of the college. The woman was accompanied by Sylvia Bell, legal officer with the Mental Health Foundation and a friend for support. She was questioned for an hour and a half.

Some of the points that arose were: the psychiatrist involved has now destroyed all his case notes and treatment records; the reason given for this was that the doctor retired recently, destroyed his notes, and then went back into practice (no-one has ever heard of him retiring); a Wellington GP has written in support of the complaint. At the end of the questioning it was agreed that

the woman had a valid case and she was asked if she would like the college to question this doctor. Again putting the responsibility on her. She answered "Yes", and was told that the college would question him and then the case would go to the medical council.

Nothing further has happened, except that the president of the College of Psychiatrists told Sylvia Bell on the phone that he would "write when he had more concrete information to give".

This is the first case in New Zealand of a malpractice complaint against a professional mental health therapist. The official complaint was received and acknowledged by the College of Psychiatrists ten months ago. The doctor concerned is still practising.

There should be some sensible, moderate way of having any complaints of this nature investigated as quickly as possible.

Marjorie Morgan
Rotorua

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES IGNORED

Dear Broadsheet,
Recently a private member's bill was introduced into Parlia-

ment. This was to do with the Special Education Act and was presented with the aim that a clause be added which would mean that specific learning disabilities would be recognised and included in the category of special needs. Children labouring under these difficulties are ignored by educationalists. Although they have average or above-average intelligence, any verbal information these children receive seems to get scrambled and so they have the utmost difficulty in learning to read and write.

Tonight on *Close-Up*, a documentary on this topic endeavoured to show the problems encountered by these children and the efforts made by their parents to get appropriate tuition but the director of special education is adamant that there is absolutely no need for learning disabled children to be placed into the special category. He said there is no way to sort out these children. This statement he made notwithstanding the fact that SPELD has been testing and defining these children's problems for some fifteen years. At the same time they have been fruitlessly trying to persuade the Department of Education

to accept the responsibility of helping these children in school.

It is usually the mothers of these children who liaise between home and school and who are concerned because their children are miserably sitting out their school-days, frustrated by their inability to learn and rapidly losing their self-esteem. I wonder, if more fathers got into the act would something be done?

Gloria Wells

Rotorua

BRIGADES TO NICARAGUA

Dear Broadsheet,

Could you please publish this letter advertising the work brigades to Nicaragua? In late 1986, the first coffee brigade went to Nicaragua and was a great success. We are now planning to send another brigade this year.

Those interested in further information should write to "Nicaragua Brigades Group", P.O. Box 61175, Otara. We want replies by 29 May, 1987, but will consider a response after that date. The requirements for participants are to learn to speak basic Spanish prior to departure, and have a commitment to ongoing Nicaragua solidarity work. Be-

cause the work is physical, brigadists should be reasonably healthy.

The brigade will be in Nicaragua for about 6 weeks which will involve 4 weeks picking coffee, a week of meetings with different groups, and a week for your own travel. The cost of travel is approximately \$2300, and there are additional costs for visas, administration, and a payment to the Nicaraguan group which organises the brigades. These costs total about \$800. Allowing for your own spending money, an overall budget of \$3700 would be realistic.

We are also hoping to send a construction brigade which would be for a longer period. If you are interested in this project, please write to us at the above address.

If you have read this letter and know that you are unable to participate in a brigade but would like to assist, we would welcome donations which could be used specifically to fund brigadists who cannot raise sufficient money. Send donations to the above address.

B. Gribben
Labour Party Nicaragua
Support Group

FRONTING UP

WHERE WE ARE

The magazine and the bookshop are now at 228 Dominion Rd, Mt Eden, Auckland. We are open from 10am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and Fridays until 8 o'clock. Saturday morning opening is from 10 to 1. We are still waiting to be allocated a phone. Messages can be left at 602-021 weekdays from 9am to 11am.

DEADLINES

We have altered our publication scheduled to allow time for a whole range of changes to many aspects of Broadsheet. This issue is June/July, the next one will be August/September, out at the beginning of August (editorial deadline 26 June), then the October issue and back to our usual pattern.

ADVERTISING

Our advertising rates are very competitive. Design ads are \$96 per quarter page, \$192 a half page, \$384 a full page (GST incl), inside covers more, and more for all ads that are not camera ready. Special rates for regular advertisers on request.

BOOKSHOP 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 have a rapid turnover of secondhand books at the moment — many women are

donating women's/feminist books to us (selling on your behalf can also be arranged), and sought after out of print copies turn up regularly.

STUFFING

Stuffing of the June issue will be on 30 May. Join us for a shared lunch and good company and help get the magazine ready for posting.

VOLUNTEERS

There is always a lot to do around Broadsheet. If you have some spare time and would like to do clerical work, proofreading at production time, typing, help in the bookshop or paste cuttings please get in touch with us. And don't forget stuffing.

MORE ON SUBS

Can anyone donate one to a woman in prison, who has contacted us? Each month we are getting a few letters from women being hit by hard times who cannot afford to renew their subs, and we've used all our donated ones. If

you can afford to pay a year's subscription for another reader we'd love to hear from you.

SPECIAL SUB OFFER

We hope that our loyal and regular subscribers will not feel cheated by the special subscription offer of two new subs for \$40 that we are introducing from 1 April to 1 September. The figure represents the cost of one sub plus the mailing costs on the second. Subscriptions are the main source of income for the magazine and this is our latest attempt to entice readers to become subscribers. Please tell your friends about the offer (full details inside front cover) and encourage them to take this opportunity to support Broadsheet and get a really good deal for themselves.

APOLOGY

To Rosie Ash for spelling her name wrongly on page 18 of the May issue.

BEHIND THE NEWS



ANN HERCUS

Judie Alison, active Labour Party member and Gisborne City Councillor from 1980-1984, writes about the cabinet minister's resignation from parliament from the forthcoming election.

"THE woman who has flown highest in New Zealand politics" (according to her leader, Prime Minister David Lange), announced on April 21 that she was retiring from Parliament at the coming election. Ann Hercus, MP for Lyttelton since 1978 and Cabinet Minister since 1984, said "The price of political life has become too high for me."

Feminists need to look at the reasons for her resignation. She cited the human costs of a huge workload, absence of private life, and being the victim of abuse epitomised by the arrival of a parcel of excrement in her mail late last year.

She did not say that these costs were any higher for women than for men, but in recognising the costs and setting her priorities as she has, she may be demonstrating the tendency for women in our society to be more concerned than men about the quality of personal life and relationships. How many men we see sacrificing everything for career or political "success".

Ann Hercus has had an appallingly burdensome group of portfolios — more than most of the higher-ranked men in Cabinet (she is ranked 11th). She has been Minister of Social Welfare, a portfolio generally regarded as enough on its own, she has been responsible for setting up the new Ministry of Women's Affairs, and she has been Minister of Police. All at the same time.

A number of commentators have reminded us of David Lange's admission soon after the last election that he had given Ann Hercus three demanding portfolio "to bridle



Ann Hercus with the 1893 women's suffrage petition. In 1979, as Member of Parliament for Lyttelton, Ann presented a notice of motion commemorating the 46th anniversary of the election to parliament of the first New Zealand woman MP, Elizabeth McCombs. Afterwards she commented that she was disappointed at the "shabby response" of some male members to her motion, "which was a sincere attempt to pay tribute to a courageous woman and evoked nothing but smart-alec remarks and sniping." Reported in *Broadsheet*, November 1979.

her". At that time she was still perceived as having leadership ambitions, having stood for Deputy Leader in 1983 but come a poor third behind Geoffrey Palmer and Mike Moore. Since that time she has made no further gains on that score, and she said that her belief that she had probably got as high in the parliamentary party as she would ever get was a factor in her retirement decision, though not the main one. Clearly the time has not yet come when the men who still dominate the political parties can handle the idea of a woman prime minister.

Ann Hercus has been the first declared feminist to reach such a high ranking in New Zealand politics. In announcing her retirement, she said she felt good about having tackled jobs which women had not previously undertaken, such as being the first women police minister in the world. She saw this as "the role modelling of showing that anything is possible". I have been asked why I want a woman to be Minister of Police anyway, because of the negative things which we feel about having a police force at all. But the point is, in the foreseeable future we are going to have police in New Zealand, so we need to try to change that system for the better too. I will not accept the argument "It's too dirty — as women we're too pure to get involved in that system." If that's bad, all the more reason for us to be in there working to improve it. How about a woman Minister of Defence in the next Cabinet?

I am angry at the way she has been treated by the Police Association. As Minister of Police she gained for them in July 1986 a \$6.4 million boost

in police funding, putting another 125 constables on the beat, hopefully out of their cars and into more personal contact with the people they should serve. And yet she has faced a no-confidence vote from the Police Association simply because she proposes to install an independent examiner of complaints about police conduct. For many years civil rights activists have criticised the resistance of the police to having their behaviour scrutinised by an independent body, and she has shown guts in taking on that cause. I am sure the police reaction contains a high degree of male chauvenism. I would have thought that the police would have been grateful at being given such an effective and hardworking minister, after having suffered Ben Couch in the previous government!

As one of the more left-wing members of cabinet and a feminist, she must have found her position as Minister of Social Welfare full of contradictions. As Rogernomics sweeps through the land, littering it with the corpses of the victims of market-oriented economics, the Ministry of Social Welfare has plodded along behind picking up the pieces. First the Family Care (now Family Support) scheme, designed to feed state funds into households where private employers were failing to pay adequate wages — a strategy which left-wingers see as letting employers off the hook. Yet in her position could she do nothing, and see people suffer even more? Then there are the various special services in areas of mass redundancies. Her role has been to act as a buffer zone between the "more market" camp in cabinet who want

everything, including the welfare state, to be cost-effective and efficient, and the left wing of the party who are angry about the apparent departures from traditional Labour values. A good example of this is the teams set up recently to investigate benefit fraud. Such teams make really good vote-catchers in an election year — bashing didn't end with Bert Walker — and must appeal immensely to the Rogernomics camp for its cost-savings. But in acceding to that pressure and setting up the teams, has been careful to say that our level of fraud is one of the lowest in the world, that the team members are being selected on the basis of their sensitivity particularly in the area of cultural difference, and that there will be a month-long amnesty before the teams commence their work. It may be that she was subject to pressure to set up such teams as a result of her extraordinary success in extracting money out of treasury for both social welfare and police — according to Ian Templeton in the *Auckland Star*. "Only recently sources close to Finance Minister Roger Douglas were complaining that for every dollar saved elsewhere Mrs Hercus was succeeding in spending an extra two dollars."

The Ministry of Women's Affairs started amid the furore of the women's forums — a well-intentioned but probably naive attempt at consultation. Since then the Ministry has consolidated its position to the extent that the National Party is now having to review its earlier intention to abolish the ministry. There has been a real effort in the ministry to set up structures and operate according to feminist principles. In her role as advocate for the ministry within cabinet, she must

have been subject to considerable pressure to modify or abandon these efforts at change. The ministry has an awkward role in that it aims to be a vehicle for change within the whole of government, and this requires criticizing other departments.

If, as I have heard claimed, Ann Hercus has sometimes appeared wishy washy on this, we should remember the kind of horse-trading that is the stuff of male politics — if she backed down on something, it may have been to gain something else she judged even more important.

The nature of horse-trading is that it is usually secret — blow the gaffe and you've lost your deal. Also, the art of successful politics is to be seen to succeed most of the time. When burdened with a cause which looks destined to lose, the skilful politician will usually decide to shelve it until it becomes feasible, or attempt to achieve it in a piecemeal or more indirect way. To be defeated loudly and publicly is something a politician can afford to risk only a few times in their career if they are to avoid ignominy — look at Winston Peters.

Which introduces the whole thorny issue of how we feel about women participating in politics as the game is played now. I have heard some feminists say that they respect Ann Hercus more now she is retiring than they did before. This makes me angry. I feel it shows how little trust we have in the women who take the lonely path of trying to succeed in the male system. We really need to decide whether we want any of us to participate within the system as it is and try to change it from within, or whether we are going to give up on that al-

together and set up alternative systems. I believe in working on both fronts at the same time. I feel as bitter as anyone about the "Queen Bees" who succeed in the male system then say "If I can do it, anyone can — these feminists talk a lot of hogwash about the problems." But Ann Hercus has never done that. The thing that has probably not endeared her to some feminists is that she has always appeared in control of herself and her political roles. The consequence of this is that she has never appeared vulnerable, and she doesn't give off a lot of "warm fuzzies". However, we need to realise that to succeed in politics as of now, you have to appear continuously competent and in control. Vulnerability will be read as weakness.

Ann's little problem on the Chathams when she seems to have had a bit much to drink and let her guard down, combined with her retirement disclosures of the pain of being an MP, have won her friends among feminists who distrusted her when she was playing the political game closer to the rules and winning.

In announcing her retirement, Ann commented on how much she valued the support of the increasing number of women MPs, and said that their presence had made life in Parliament easier for her. It may be that only other women MPs can really understand the agony of trying to retain one's integrity as a feminist within a system which conspires against that.

I think parliament will be the poorer with the loss of Ann Hercus, but in taking the stand she has and asserting that holding power is less important than having a high quality personal life, she has shown a wisdom I can admire. □

AFTER 1 APRIL

Moira Dwyer writes about women and corporatisation.

THE nine new corporations — government departments that have been turned into commercial enterprises — introduced their jazzy letterhead overnight. On 1 April I got told at my local post office that I had to go elsewhere to sort out my automatic payments problem

because they were now "New Zealand Post". In little but significant ways the nine new businesses were making their mark.

It will be some time before the impact of corporatising so much of the state becomes clear: user pays, on which it is based, means people with

money get more and those without get less. Most women haven't got much money so it's pretty obvious we will get less.

But it won't just mean that you get no more than what you pay for. We can expect to see the energies of the new moguls being directed to-

wards expanding services in profitable areas. While businesses will reap the benefits of a whole new range of communication technologies, we'll probably have to wait much longer to get telephone repairs at home. And if you live in an isolated area or depend on a phone box, forget it!

And there'll be differential charges. In the same way that banks now pay a lower interest rate to someone with \$200 in savings than to someone with \$20,000 to stash away. So we can expect cheaper prices for the big users of the new corporations. This discriminatory pricing will be disguised by words like "bulk", "wholesale" or "discount", but what it will mean is that firms will pay less for electricity, phones, timber and so on than individual consumers.

Women workers have already felt the impact on their working conditions—in many corporations, maternity leave

provisions have been reduced. A range of employment conditions that made for equal employment opportunities, like preferential re-entry after child care, tangihanga leave, childcare provision, and recruitment schemes for Maori and Pacific Island people and those with disabilities have also been dropped from many of the transitional employment deals.

It makes good business sense for those seeking to make a profit to exploit workers if they can. Collectively we benefit from proper training, adequate sick leave, and the ability to take time out from

the paid workforce to have and rear children without jeopardising future work prospects. Individual firms, however, may not see much in it for them. Once governments and economists were very clear that government regulation of services was required when decisions that individuals make in their own interests do not result in decisions that are in the collective interest. Such ideas seem to have disappeared from sight.

The fundamental clash between equal opportunity policies and the free market was clearly demonstrated at a recent "Women on the Move"

show in Wellington. On receiving complaints that the exhibition was very elitist and promoted only a white, middle-class image of women the organisers responded that the company was a profit-making one and that 16 stalls for voluntary organisations had been provided at a subsidised fee of \$250!

Those that make a profit in money terms will survive, the rest will go. Our taxes are no longer seen as entitling us to a certain level of public services. The corporations are there to make money for the government, not to serve the public. □

"THE LAST MAORI LAND GRAB"

Jenny Rankine, with help from Celine Kearney, reports on one impact of corporatisation

THE biggest wholesale confiscation of Maori land in 120 years is planned as part of the transfer of government assets to state-owned, commercially run corporations.

Half the land in Aotearoa is "crown" land, much of it dubiously acquired, and kept despite Maori protest. Much of that land is scheduled to be sold to the government's new corporations, especially Landcorp, which will control productive farmland, and the Forestry Corporation, responsible for commercially exploited forests.

All these state forest lands, land development blocks, coal fields and urban lands will in future be freehold, a private commodity under the control of the corporations, not the government.

When they've bought the land, the corporations can sell it off to someone else, or exploit it by mining, logging and other processes that damage it permanently. The Waitangi Tribunal cannot stop the corporations from doing this, nor can the government.

The State Owned Enterprises (SOE) Act has a clause: "Nothing in this Act shall permit the Crown to act in a manner that is inconsistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi."

Nganeko Minhinnick, of Ngati Te Ata, calls this to-



kenism at its worst. "The SOE act contravenes the treaty," she says. Clause 27 of the act provides that even where land is in dispute and subject to a claim in the Waitangi Tribunal, the only way the crown can get it back from a corporation is to buy it.

"If you believe this is consistent with the treaty," says Nganeko, "the gap of understanding is so wide I'm not sure what it will take to make you understand. There is no protection for us under the act.

"For us it is the one that's broken the camel's back, and

to present it has having protective clauses is the biggest insult."

The chances of getting land returned under existing laws are slim at best. If Maori land is taken for schools, roads, hydro development and other public works, and is not used for that purpose, it can be returned under existing law. But Maori people have surrendered land for public use, and not known what is happening to it. It takes months to investigate the legality of these kinds of confiscations, and get all the information needed for a claim.

Then taking a case to the Waitangi Tribunal means more money and months of effort. The tribunal can only recommend about compensation, it cannot enforce its decisions. Nothing has been done about its 1985 recommendations about the Manukau harbour, for instance.

Any claims about land due to be transferred to a government corporation had to be in to the Waitangi Tribunal before December 18 last year, although the SOE act was not due to come into effect until April. An extension was granted until 31 March. These claims would stop any immediate transfer of land. Very few Maori people knew this.

The Court of Appeal was hearing an application of the New Zealand Maori Council at

the time of writing, asking that the government be prevented from transferring land to the corporations on the grounds that it contravened the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. The court has made a temporary stop to any land transfers while the case is being decided. The Court of Appeal is the highest court in New Zealand so the only further right of appeal is to the Privy Council. And the government can change the law.

The corporations are meant to break even or make a profit, and use commercial criteria as the index of success. Their boards are made up of business executives. This way the government can cut its running costs, and attempt to deal with economic difficulties common to much poorer countries — mounting overseas debt, persistent inflation, permanently paying more for imports than we get for exports, and trading terms that look worse and worse.

Under National, the Forestry Corporation would be a likely candidate for privatisation. The Thatcher government in Britain is already selling public assets, like the British telecommunications system, to private owners, who then make private profit out of them.

Under Labour, the corporations will merely taste, smell and act like businesses out for a profit. The government gets money from selling its assets to the corporations. They have to pay taxes, get their loans privately, and fund their services from their users, rather than

supplying them below cost using taxpayers money. Any corporations that find themselves without enough capital are likely to sell off any "surplus" land to raise money.

The SOE act is another colonial law, which views land in the same way the colonial state has always seen it — as a commodity to be sold and exploited. Pakeha settlers have exploited it for 150 years as an offshore farm for Britain. Producing a narrow range of pastoral products, and needing a lot of foreign investment to do it.

A Maori view of land, in which it has spiritual value and is held in communal guardianship, is an inconvenient nuisance in the free market of Rogernomics.

Corporatisation will concentrate state assets and power in the hands of a few businessmen, further away from the influence of the people who use state services. The trade union movement and the left generally have failed to slow the corporatisation steamroller.

The Maori challenge to the SOE act is the only opportunity to stop wholesale selling of Maori and "crown" land for profit and provide concrete implementation of the treaty. It could lessen the impact of the steamroller and make room for the beginnings of indigenous economic alternatives.

Anti-racism networks are fundraising for the court case. Contact the Auckland Anti-racism Network, Box 9573, Newmarket, ph 784-744 evenings or 817-4403. Project Waitangi, PO Box 825, Wellington, ph 781-734.

Most of the claims before the Waitangi Tribunal have a history of repeated confiscations and broken promises.

● **1864** Maoro, 43,700 acres extending from the Waikato river mouth to the Manukau harbour entrance was confiscated, as punishment for a rebellion that never happened.

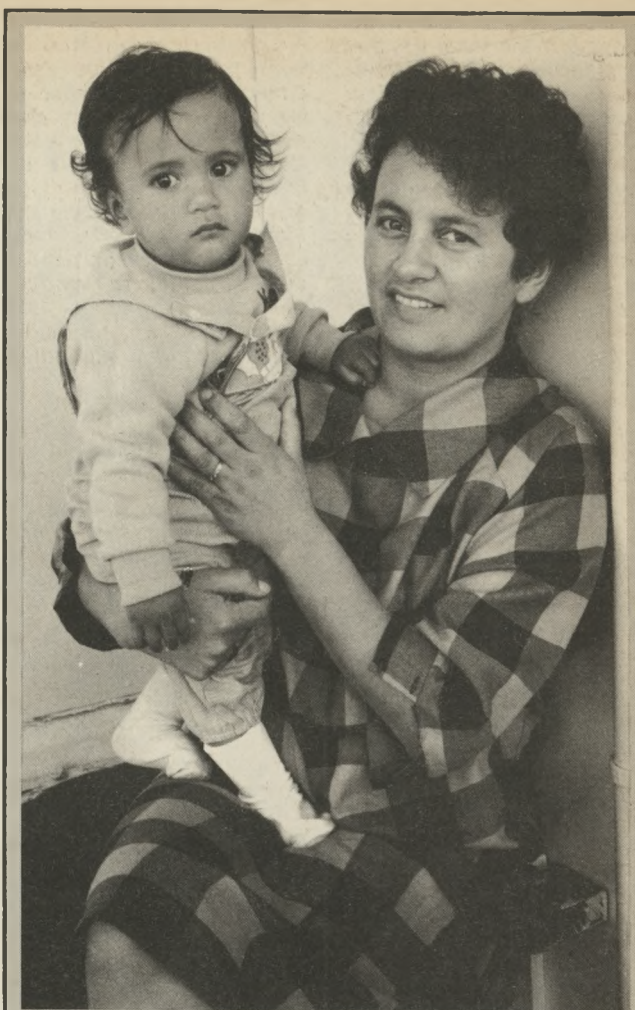
The whole area is considered sacred, wahi tapu, by the tangata whenua, Ngati Te Ata, because it was a traditional site for burial rituals as part of the once densely settled area at the mouth of the Waikato. People were buried at Maoro at least until 1939.

● **1865** 723 acres, including the 63 acre wahi tapu Tangitanga were returned.

Tangitanga extended north from the Waikato mouth across a low riverside area to the top of a high dune.

● **1959** NZ Forest Service confiscated most of the remaining Maori land, including Tangitanga, under the Public Works Act for afforestation, without advising Maori owners or paying compensation. Ngati Te Ata was left with a narrow five acre strip along the river, described as a fishing reserve.

● **1966** The Tangitanga block was set aside for iron-sand mining, which began in

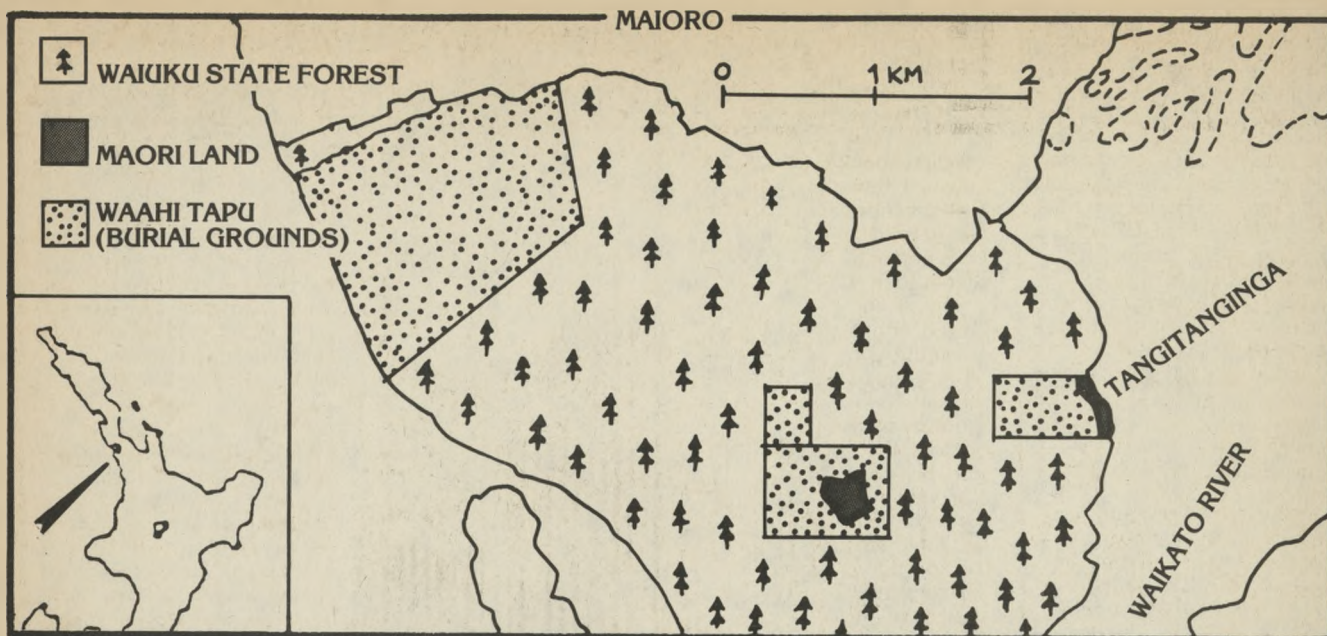


Hilda Halkyard-Harawera with her youngest daughter

Photo: Gil Hanly

PEACE PRIZE AWARDED

Congratulations to Hilda Halkyard-Harawira for being awarded the Danish Peace Foundation 1987 Peace prize. As secretary of the International Steering Committee of the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC), Hilda will travel to Europe to receive the award and to raise funds for the newly restructured PCRC. The PCRC grew out of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific movement (NFIP). From its office in Hawaii the PCRC have been doing a wonderful job of providing information, coordination and strategy in support of a nuclear free and independent Pacific, but this was too heavy a load for the limited staffing and funding. PCRC's work is now divided up around the Pacific region, with the Pacific Bulletin Newsletter published in Sydney, the Resource Centre operating in Hawaii, campaigns coordinated from Fiji, and fundraising in Aotearoa. PCRC need support for their ongoing campaigns, and for the 5th NFIP Conference in the Philippines in November. Donations can be sent to PCRC/NFIP Office, P.O. Box 9295, Newmarket, Auckland. Hilda shares the Danish Peace Prize with Helen Clarke.



1969.

● **1972** \$129.17 plus \$80.60 interest was paid as compensation out of the blue to the Maori Trustee for the 1959 acquisitions. No money was paid to individual owners. No compensation was paid for previous use of the land, timber or minerals.

● **1980s** NZ Steel mining around Tangitangia was starting to destroy the high part of the site as the mining face moved southwards.

● **1985** The Waitangi Tribunal recommended that a settlement be negotiated about the compulsory acquisition of Maoro, now the Waiuku state Forest, possibly by Ngati Te Ata reinterring burial remains.

It also recommended that NZ Steel mining licences in the area be reviewed to protect sacred sites and adjoining Maori land.

The New Zealand Forest Service offered at the hearing to return the land to the tangata whenua for a nominal

sum, but with a 99 year lease to the forest service and protection of NZ Steel mining rights.

Ngati Te Ata felt the tribunal finding didn't go far enough. They see the whole area as tapu, and want mining to stop. This would put 1,000 Glenbrook steel mill workers out of jobs, as well as coal miners.

None of the tribunal findings have been put into effect.

● **1986** Belated intervention by the Historic Places Trust stopped the further destruction of Tangitangia, and had the mine stepped westward around the wahi tapu, leaving the high north and west faces of the site as steep unstable sand cliffs.

The northwest corner has eroded back 10 to 30 metres. This land has gone and cannot be restored. Attempts to stabilise the sand cliffs have been completely inadequate.

The lower slopes of Tangitangia are buried under several metres of mine waste. Discharges on this part of the site

have caused toxic contamination of ground and water.

The four designated areas of wahi tapu (see map) make up about 25% of NZ Steel's mining rights. The company says in eight months it will not be possible to backtrack and mine Tangitangia efficiently. The mines division of the Ministry of Energy has pressured the company to mine the site.

● **1987** All the Maori land not included in the sacred sites of the Waitangi Tribunal claim, 75% of the forest, is scheduled for transfer to the Forestry Corporation. The 725 acres of wahi tapu will remain as crown land, administered by the Lands Department.

An Auckland Regional Authority report suggested that:

- the land in the four wahi tapu be returned to Maori owners

- the Maori Trustee return the 1972 compensation and interest

- the mining rights for the wahi tapu be revoked

- the ownership of the rest of Maoro be vested in Ngati Te Ata

- the very low royalty rates NZ steel pays be reviewed

- a decision be made on whether royalties should pass to Ngati Te Ata, and be retrospective.

Despite the involvement of the Waitangi Tribunal, the Historic Places Trust and the ARA, all the meetings, delegations, lobbying and reports have not stopped the mining, returned the land, or gained Ngati Te Ata any guarantees of control.

"Because none of the recommendations from the tribunal have been implemented," said Nganeko Minihinnick, "because we don't believe any will be implemented, we've been preparing for occupation. But we've stopped that because of the pending claims to the Court of Appeal about the SOE act. Approaching a Pakeha legal system, a Pakeha forum, is not perceived as justice by Maori people." □

MORE ANTI-ABORTION ARSON

Jenny Rankine reports on attempts to stop women getting legal abortions.

ANTI abortion terrorists closed Auckland's Epsom Day Hospital for six weeks with five carefully lit fires in April.

The official silence about the increasing severity of

arson attacks and harassment of patients and clinic staff was deafening. The fire barely made the news in Wellington, and there was no government statement condemning the attack.

The Women's National Abortion Action Campaign (WONAAC) sees the arson as the latest in a consistent series aimed at a legal and government-funded service and asked what the Security Intelli-

gence Service is doing to investigate direct action anti-abortion groups. The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child's leaflets and newsletters, for instance are inflammatory; they talk about abor-

tion as genocide and war on the unborn, and the implication is that the anti-abortion fight is also a war.

Anti-abortion terrorist attacks in the United States have escalated and clinics are now being bombed during the day. It is only a matter of time before those in the US whose rhetoric is full of concern for life kill someone.

The private Auckland Medical Aid Clinic, which has been at times the only operating abortion clinic in the country, has been set fire to three times. Last year, mainly for this reason, it moved from its rambling wooden building to a concrete block clinic.

The worst anti-abortion fire attack, on Easter Monday in 1978, gutted the Ponsonby house of Sisters Overseas Service. SOS was a national feminist network which arranged trips to Sydney for New Zealand women seeking abortions at a time when no clinics were operating.

While the Epsom operating theatre is out of operation, women will be counselled there and have their terminations at National Womens Hospital. Nursing union officials are concerned for their members at the clinic, angry at the "emotional blackmail" they have to deal with, but feel powerless to protect them.

Hospital boards have to recognise the consistent campaign of harassment and attack on their facilities and take

better preventative measures and care of their clients, staff and clinics.

The Wairarapa Hospital Board has been unable to provide any service for women needing abortions recently because of the refusal of medical superintendent Leo Buchanan to hold a licence for abortions under the Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion Act.

The licence, which is renewed annually, was applied for and granted while Buchanan was on holiday, but he has refused to hold it under the grounds usually used only by doctors; that it is inconsistent with his conscience. He has also written to local operating surgeons telling them to look out for their own position as the abortion service is technically unlicensed.

Justice Minister Geoffrey Palmer's legal advice was that the licence actually belongs to the hospital board, but the CS&A act only mentions the superintendent.

While the legal wrangles continued, Wairarapa women were denied any local abortions during April and early May, and have had to go elsewhere. The huge gaps, delays and obstructions to a freely available abortion service around the country are a scandal. Women need to apply pressure to make the Labour government live up to its promises.

Write in protest to Ann Hercus or David Lange at Parlia-

COPING WITH MISCARRIAGE

Any woman who has ever had a miscarriage or a threatened miscarriage will be familiar with the pain, sadness, fear and grief that surround the experience.



\$14.95

Kitch Cuthbert and Sandra Long have written an authoritative and sensitive book. It offers information, reassurance and support for women and their partners, and it gives health professionals an insight into their role in helping women during and after miscarriage.

A Quality Book From Reed Methuen.

Coping with Miscarriage

has been written to help women and their partners cope with this distressing event. It explains the process and aftermath of miscarriage in physical and emotional terms; it suggests ways in which women can help themselves come to terms with their miscarriages and derive support from their families, friends and the community; and it examines the possible causes of miscarriage. There is also a chapter written for men, explaining how they can help and support their partners and cope with their own feelings.

ment Buildings, Wellington (no stamp needed). For more information, write to

WONAAC at P.O. Box 2669, Wellington, or ALRANZ, P.O. Box 19052, Wellington. □

ALTERNATIVE AIRWAVES

Ali Bell gives her impressions of Auckland's two weeks of Access Radio.

THE dull ache of my disbelief was temporarily abated last month when New Zealand's largest and most ethnically diverse city had Access radio for twelve dignified days. Not to mention diversity, represented by fringe types like feminists and lesbians. Or is it women generally? We got a fair representation with women's groups and women's communities putting in good work and getting on air a reasonably professional sound.

I was most impressed by the Lesbian programme presented by Lesbians In Print. It was a half hour on the three



Sundays at 9.30, so I preferred to stagger out of bed on the 26th to turn on the tape recorder so I could listen at a more civilised hour. In a good established radio style the news messages were interspersed

with (lesbian) music. Music's always a winner on radio. Well, maybe not quite the boy's choir that followed in the next programme. The news was promotion of LIP, some info on softball and an interview, and good advice on how to deal with "the manner of (lesbian's) departing". The interviewer and interviewee were articulate and natural-sounding.

Death, dying, wills and funerals couldn't've been discussed with any more integrity and information.

The Women's Peace Group did a rallying effort on Thursday the 16th entreating listen-

ers — "don't despair, work, be part of that endless effort."

Sandra Coney was interviewed about the history of the YWCA, and the women of that part of New Zealand's herstory earlier this century she wrote about in *Everygirl*. The interviewer, who asked very intelligent questions, was too modest to back the programme with her name (but I think she hails from Birkenhead and Woman line). Sandra Coney is an experienced and natural speaker, and it was good to hear *talking* language (as in not read off a rustling page) about a fascinating topic.

The Women's Centre's

programme was full of important information — phone numbers, policies and practises of the New Mother's Support Group, the Health Collective, Rape Crisis, and the Council for the Single Mother and her Child. Next time the women involved will hopefully speak their answers, not read them (bloody difficult when you're hearing and not looking as an audience), and use voice to the potential I know some of

them have. Is the feminist community small or what? But it'll be great.

Talking about the next time. Francine talked to Wally the Race Relations Conciliator about the future of Access as a full-time venture in Auckland. He was enthused by the participation, planning, and sharing of the seventy ethnic and community groups that contributed. Why had it taken so long to hit Auckland? Basically

because of slow awareness but "we've seen the light". And negotiations are underway "a little down the track yet" but "we're really behind it — all the way." Plans are for the radio station, which is produced by volunteers with technical help from staff, to be funded by the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation as part of the (flagging) public broadcasting system. The idea being that the government should red-

ress the imbalance of Pakeha monocultural broadcasting we have on commercial radio (and TV), and on the already existing public broadcasting channels — the concert, the national, and zm programmes. Access, situated at the Polynesian Resource Centre will reflect the multicultural make-up of Auckland (albeit in an arguably strange place for it!) recognizing the special place of the Maori people. □

NATIONAL TURNING RIGHT?

Some alarming things are happening in the selection of National Party candidates in Auckland for this year's elections.

IF you are not a Brierley, Goodman, Trotter, Renouf or Jones, or servicing their growth industry and smugly and happily investing on the stock exchange, but are deeply unhappy with aspects of this so-called Labour Government, take a look at what the National Party is allowing to happen in safe Labour-held seats around Auckland. It might make you eschew politics forever and concentrate on growing delphiniums and carrots!

In Papatoetoe, Mt Albert and Onehunga the National Party candidates, chosen and endorsed by the party, are all hard-line right wing radicals in complete empathy (although conveniently denying card-carrying membership) with the Coalition of Concerned Citizens, a group which fought hard to disrupt the women's forums of 1984, organised the 830 000 (suspect) signature petition to stop homosexual law reform in 1986, and have as their basic philosophy a determination to return to what they call "Christian values". They are said to be joining the National Party in droves and what upsets them more than anything else is uppity women who do not know their place — two steps behind their man! Barry Reid, spokesperson for the coalition, suggests that a master (sic) plan is rolling slowly into action.

Dorothy Wilson, at the Hamilton Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) conference warned us about these people:

"They are *not* supporting the family. They are not trying to improve the status of women. The people who fought the ratification of the UN convention to eliminate discrimination against women, who picket abortion clinics, who fight sex education in schools and who want to stamp out homosexual men and women, are in fact anti-woman and anti-family. They are working to keep men in positions of power. In this they are very well funded by powerful men."

Is the National Party naive

enough to think that by allowing such men to contest unwinnable seats the party gathers to itself the "moral majority" vote without actually incorporating any of its sexist, racist, religious fundamentalist attitudes into National's policy? Yvonne van Dongen, writing recently for *National Business Review* suggests that the reality of this situation is that "Inexperienced Coalition of Concerned Citizen supporters are being groomed by the National Party for the political arena". The National Party

is giving "the pulpit populists" a political education. The danger lies in this beginning. Next time round, having served their apprenticeships in an unwinnable seat they will naturally expect to progress to something more rewarding. They will certainly be in a much stronger position to promote their simplistic arguments at party conferences. They will have their feet firmly in the parliamentary doorway. They will be well into the political infrastructure, no doubt welcomed by National's spokesman on the family, Graeme Lee and others.

Dr Paul Spoonley, interviewed in the *Dominion Sunday Times* on his recent book *The Politics of Nostalgia: Racism and the Extreme Right in New Zealand*, points out that there are many New Zealanders who feel their traditional ties with both major parties have been undermined — the relationships are weakening and "a new political generation is currently being formed with the potential to adopt a reactionary political position."

Isn't the National Party being irresponsible in accepting openly this fanatical, radical right into its party organisation? It is certainly scary enough for women to think very carefully where they can safely put their vote this year. It may mean we have nowhere to go at all, three years from hence. □

Reprinted from WEL National Newsletter, No 87, April 1987.



Illustration: Helen Courtney

FARMING OUT HOSPITAL CARE

Hazel Armstrong writes about more alarming possibilities on the health care scene.

THERE'S a buzz around Wellington that new policies are being developed that could radically reshape hospital services. Dr Salmond, the Director General of Health, acknowledges that health is now targeted for change.

Hospital services are under review by an interdepartmental health/treasury task force, made up of officials from those departments and on contract: Dame Dorothy Fraser, Professor John Scott and Allan Gibbs. They're due to report back in August.

The impetus for change is coming from commercial interests. Peter Smither, the Chief Executive of New Zealand largest medical insurance company, said, "commercial enterprise is waiting in the wings to enter the health care sector." Mr Smith of Southern Cross said, "health care in New Zealand is seen as a growth industry by New Zealand and overseas companies. Indications from Government

suggest some form of corporatisation within the public hospital sector and deregulation with the private sector", is on the cards.

Public hospital management could go in several directions. One option I've heard talked about recently sees the ownership of public hospitals remain in the hands of the community, but the services would be contracted out. This is one of the future directions mentioned in the Health Benefits Review. Basically the hospital would put out to tender services such as maternity, surgical, long stay care etc. The Hospital Board would accept the most competitive quote for the service. The service could either use private beds within the public hospital or use private hospital facilities. This is the most favoured option of private enterprise. Again, let's hear from Peter Smith, "Our politicians have publically considered the merit of contracting out surgical care to the private sector."

Former cabinet minister

Derek Quigley is well placed to take advantage of that trend. He's the chairman of Wellcare, a corporation which is moving into the health care field in a big way. It has bought the 123 bed Calvary Hospital in Wellington and is looking to expand into occupational health and diagnostic clinics. He's got plenty of capital behind him. Australia's main private health care company, Hospital Corporation Australia, has signed an agreement with Wellcare to run hospitals in Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland. Hospital Corporation Australia is a subsidiary of a US corporation, has spent \$58m in Australia since 1978 acquiring and upgrading hospitals.

If we want to maintain public ownership and provision of hospital services we will have to mount a campaign both to government and to the public. Dr Michael Bassett is well aware of this, he said in a recent speech to the Hospital Boards Association, "Boards are constantly under pressure.

Wild accusations are often made in the press to the effect that the hospital system is a shambles or on the point of collapse. It is neither. But I should warn you there are barrow pushers all around us."

He is quite correct, the barrow pushers see health as a boom area. *Australia Business* in August 1986 reported on investors moving into medicine, where there are millions to be made.

Where does the Royal Commission On Social Policy fit in? Will they be able to head off the investment plans of these health transnationals who see our health care as a marketable commodity, rather than as a universal right. If we are to head off the Gibbs taskforce from making recommendations that will cut across the Royal Commission's findings, we will have to be quick and effective, in mounting a case for the efficiency, cost effectiveness and equity of publically owned, managed and run health services. □

Hazel Armstrong

IN BRIEF

THOUSANDS OF MEN STOP SMOKING

According to the Health Department, 47,000 adults, mostly men, have quit smoking since the 1986 budget (which put prices up) and smoke free week, but the number of women smokers has increased slightly. The 47,000 is a net figure after allowing for new ex-smokers, re-starters, smokers dying and new teenage smokers. The average ex-smoker now has \$1,000 a year to spend on other things.

The total cigarette smoking population is now estimated at 699,000, an overall drop of 32,000 since the budget and smoke free week. The average

number of "ready-mades" sold per smoker fell 30%, from 23 per day in the year ending June to 16 per day in the last quarter of 1986, but because of cost increases the average smoker is spending about 20 cents a day more on smokes. As sales fall the tobacco industry raises prices. "The 'death and disease' price tag of cigarettes is also getting more attention, with a fatal outcome promised to one in four smokers. Many become respiratory cripples from emphysema", said the department's Dr Laugesen.

Cutting down on smoking, like quitting, is apparently being done almost entirely by men, including Maori men. "While it is good news that men are getting the message about the benefits of giving up, it is vital to look at the issues surrounding the high numbers of women smokers", said a Health Department spokesperson. How about some money spent on research and education aimed at women?

ADVANCED STUDY HARD FOR WOMEN DOCTORS

Women doctors with children face severely restricted career options because of the almost impossible demands of combining post graduate study with caring for a family, according to Otago University professor of surgery, Barbara Heslop.

In an article in the latest *Medical Journal* she says the intense workload and long hours of post graduate study mean women who undertake it are forced to delay having children, or may even opt to stay childless.

"It follows that the decision to have children in the 20s will often be professionally costly," Professor Heslop says.

While women now represent about half of all medical students, they remain under-represented higher up the profession, and in most clinical specialties. Paradoxically, Professor Heslop says, those

specialties include obstetrics, gynecology and pediatrics.

She says many women medical students are unaware of the obstacles they will face, and the decisions they may be forced to make about whether and when to have children. And she says the current situation appears unlikely to change.

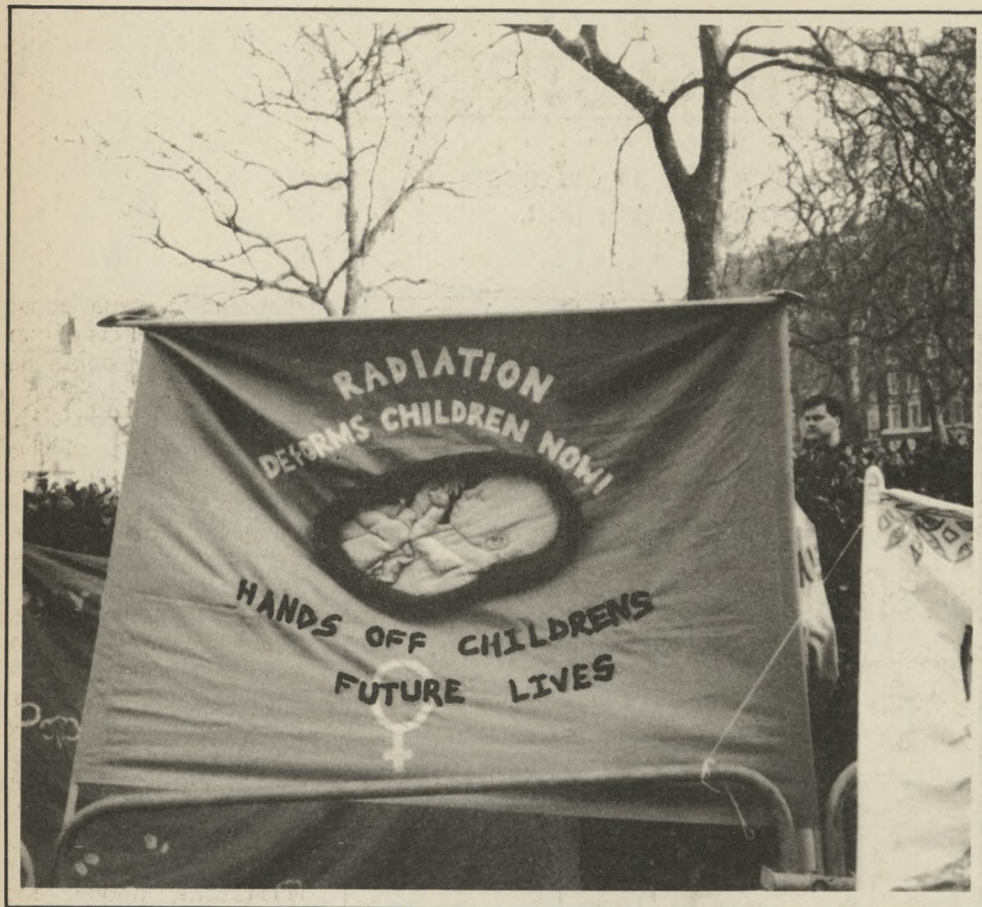
"The specialties whose training programmes virtually exclude women with young families will remain the prerogative of men, women without children, and perhaps a very small number of women with children who can cope with the system," Professor Heslop says. From the *Dominion*

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN AUSTRALIA

All Australian companies employing 1,000 or more staff are now obliged, under federal legislation, to act on affirmative action programmes to ensure that women are given equal opportunity to get ahead within their organisations.

ABUSE OF TRUST

Sigrid Shayer writes about an action in London protesting about the US in Micronesia.



ON 28 February nearly 500 women from all over England and Wales took part in the first major women's action against United States activities in Micronesia. Scottish women organised their own action.

The event was organised by women working for a nuclear free and independent Pacific and took place outside the US Embassy in Central London. It had the theme "abuse of trust" in reference to the mal-administration by the US of the United Nations Strategic Trust Territory (see below). It was taken as an opportunity to publicise this unfamiliar but crucial part of the world and to act on our knowledge, including the legacy of nuclear testing, denial of human rights and military takeover. It was felt to be particularly urgent in the light of US manoeuvres in its own congress and in the

United Nations to illegally end the trusteeship.

From the beginning of the action the women had the upper hand over the police, who were unable to contain the lively demonstration behind barricades as they had intended. For most of the afternoon it spilled out onto a third of the road from the embassy steps. This despite worries over the implementation of the new Public Order Bill. However, riot vans, paddy wagons and motor cycles were waiting in side streets.

A large collection of women street musicians provided the initiative for song, dance, mime and energy throughout the demonstration with huge puppets, model coconut trees, wreaths and many very well made colourful banners visually presenting some of the issues.

On the following Monday

the embassy was officially presented with a new booklet, *Pacific Women Speak, Why Haven't You Known?* which is made up of edited talks of nine indigenous Pacific women, many of them from Micronesia, who have been speaking in Europe. The following information about Micronesia is from the booklet:

"In July 1947, Micronesia, one of the three large island groupings in the Pacific, was designated the world's only United Nations Strategic Trust Territory and was to be administered by the United States. The fierce fighting to control these islands between the armies of the US and Japanese governments during the second world war reflected their crucial strategic role in the Pacific.

The US administration was obliged by the United Nations agreement to positively and constructively help the islanders

improve and protect their physical and social well-being, leading to their eventual political independence. Many of the traditional island and clan communities had suffered through various colonial invaders. However, far from fulfilling its obligations, the United States government has used Micronesia to develop and test its nuclear weapons technology and expand its strategic military presence in the area. The United States has no intention of relinquishing its economic or military presence.

"This is reflected in the terms of the recent agreements to end the UN trusteeship, negotiated under US pressure, between the US and the four new political entities in Micronesia. In 1969, when negotiations began, the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger remarked, 'there's only 90,000 people out there, who gives a damn?' Of the four nations emerging from the artificial political boundary of Micronesia, three — the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Northern Mariana Islands — have each signed different agreements that tie them closely with the United States and deny them access as independent nations to the United Nations. The agreements grant the US government almost perpetual and exclusive rights to the military use of the islands, control their external relations, and strengthens the islands' dependency on the US economy.

"The trusteeship over the whole of Micronesia cannot be formally terminated until all four nations have signed their own political agreements with the United States. The nuclear-free constitution of the fourth nation, the Republic of Belau, has critically delayed the proceedings, as it has flawed the US military designs for the islands." □

Pacific Women Speak — Why Haven't You Known? is available from NFIP Sydney, P.O. Box A391, Sydney South, NSW 2000, Australia, or Celine Kearney c/- Wand P.O. Box 5510, Auckland.



STANDING STRONG

Helen Courtney reports on a new resource for sexual abuse prevention.

Some techniques for repressing women are sophisticated, others like incest and rape are more crude, but very effective. The rate of sexual abuse of children is always being revised for the worse. Pre-schoolers are treated for venereal diseases and, in both human and material terms, the resources to combat this huge social problem are negligible. Knowledge of the extent of sexual abuse provided the necessary urgency and determination to make *Standing Strong* a kit for the prevention of sexual abuse which is aimed at young people.

The project was the idea of Jackie Young, once employed by Whangarei Rape Crisis to teach self defence in Northland schools. "I was zapping around Northland like a zombie. It occurred to me more and more that we would go on forever picking up the broken pieces. Teaching girls to defend themselves, which changed them but didn't change the fact that males raped, didn't change the fact that by the time they did a course at the age of 12, 14 or 16, a quarter of them were already rape victims and most of the others knew what it was like to be intimidated, felt up, humiliated and have lucky escapes."

At the end of '83 she went to teach and live in



north Hokianga.

"I became the unofficial counsellor . . . out of this idyllic settlement came stories of horror and violence. After the quick removals of two young incest victims from their homes. I realised how inadequate the system was. Those girls were not happy . . . but when I instigated actions by social welfare and the police their lives became a

living hell. Now in foster homes with Pakeha strangers, away from the family and friends they loved. It fired me even more to move towards a change."

Whangarei Rape Crisis came in solidly behind *Standing Strong*, which was published jointly by them and the HELP Foundation, Auckland. It is a package of four booklets. "Face Value", or attitudes

that lead to sexual abuse, looks at the effects of conditioning on people's behaviour; "My Body Belongs to Me", what to do about sexual violation, outlines sexual abuse and some choices about where to go for help; "Rape", information for young people, shows the options for a woman who has been raped; "Teacher's Kit" provides background information, a reading list, further exercises and discussion topics. The kit can be used with minimal supervision with both single-sex and mixed groups.

It uses glossy full colour illustrations, photos and comic strips to get the message across. The language was kept simple and straightforward. "We used good designs, personal stories and lots of colour to produce magazines which young people are going to enjoy reading and want to keep", said Sally Liggins, a co-writer, and also a self defence teacher who worked with other writers, illustrators and designers for two years to prepare it for publication. The aim is to get teenagers to talk about sexual abuse, to recognise it and to learn how to protect themselves. She adds, "That is not enough, young people are encouraged to develop positive caring attitudes so they will not want or need to sexually exploit others."

The kit has been designed to go with *The Rape Tape*, a 20 minute video already being used in many secondary schools. It uses young Pakeha and Maori actors, music and humour to introduce issues of sexual abuse.

The initial grant for producing both resources was obtained from the Marsden Point Levy, a fund set up to cushion the social impact of the refinery project there. Additional backing for the printing of the kit came from the HELP Foundation and the McKenzie Education Foundation, a major sponsor which also said they would look favourably at further funding for Maori projects.

Te Kakano O Te Whanau, a national network of Maori women working against sexual abuse and rape, has criticised *Standing Strong* as culturally inappropriate.

Criticism has also come from the National Collective of Rape Crisis and Other Related Groups, claiming the funding was not shared with Maori groups and that *Standing Strong* is not a suitable national resource.

The response from schools is positive. "We have used the kit with our entire fourth form. I have never seen young people so engrossed in a school-book", says Jill Naden, guidance counsellor at Penrose High School. "All our pupils, Maori Pakeha and Pacific Islanders, responded to it with great enthusiasm, as have the Maori teachers and parents of our school. We welcome this excellent resource for sexual abuse prevention."

At Reparoa College (near Taupo) the kit has also been used enthusiastically. Jackie Young, a self defence teacher, reports,

"The boys genuinely wanted to know what the girls thought of them. One girl proposed to the boys that they would stop calling them jocks and jerks if the boys stopped calling them sluts and bitches and so on. They agreed to try and call each other by their names."

The emphasis for reporting sexual abuse is that it is to a trusted person, whether it be to a teacher or a member of the whanua. The teacher's kit states that agency help may not always be the most culturally appropriate for the child. Jackie Young comments, "I worked with Maori girls a lot in Northland. Yes, there are differences. Initially they are a lot more shy of you as a Pakeha and tend to be very diffident in discussions. However, once the action starts they generally have heaps of anger. Their anger is not just about being repressed as a

woman but as a Black woman. Our system of dealing with incest does not work for them. Even more than the Pakeha girls they want their families: they need to belong. I worked very closely with Sophie Stockman, of Black Woman's Rape Crisis, Kaikohe, at the beginning of the kit and her input was very valuable."

The present system of dealing with incest may not work well for anybody. *Standing Strong* and *The Rape Tape*, were produced as resources for the prevention of all forms of sexual abuse. □

For copies of *Standing Strong* and *The Rape Tape* contact Whangarei Rape Crisis, P.O. Box 913, Whangarei. Single copies available at Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, Family Planning Education Units. Also available at Broadsheet bookshops.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Vivienne Allan, editor of WAgmag, reports.

The image of country women is a negative one. We are superwomen — we bake superb scones and sponges inches (sorry, millimetres) thick. We have big families, big houses and bigger mortgages than anyone else. We are also tweed-skirted, brogues-shod; we knit and crochet and keep large vegetable gardens and grow wonderful dahlias to show at local exhibitions. We man(?) stalls to raise money and cater at local functions. At the same time we are supposed to be affluent, board our kids at exclusive schools like St Cuthberts and Christs College, and have a crib at Queenstown or a batch at Taupo.

But what are we really like? In essence no different from urban women. Same sizes, same problems, same struggle for recognition of our worth. At the same time we are now collectively battling the

elements in a climate that is socially and economically crippling us and our industry.

Women in Agriculture (WAg) is a loosely constructed network which aims to sup-

port rural women and provide them with an information outlet through a quarterly newsletter (WAgMag), which was originally funded by the Advisory Committee on Women's Affairs and taken over by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. WAg offers an alternative to rural women who do not want to belong to either of the other two country women's organi-

sations, the Women's Division Of Federated Farmers or the Country Women's Institute. WAg women may also belong to other organisations, and there is no criteria for membership other than being a woman. Because WAg has no formal structure in that it exists through the efforts of the women who consider themselves part of the network, it has no funding sources, nor does it represent anyone, or anyone represent it.

Women contribute to WAgMag by sending in anything they consider interesting that

is happening in their area, or information and reports on anything they as WAg women have organised. The mailing list now tops 3500 and not all the women on it are country women: it goes overseas to women involved in agriculture or in social services working with women in agriculture.

In recent times WAg has seen a real change, with women having to cope with the severe adjustments required of them through the upheaval in the agriculture industry. Managing change comes only after coping and many women, together with their families, are only now beginning to emerge from that cocoon. To understand that change we have to go back, not to the pioneering women, who were recognised as having struggled to eke out their living on the land, but back to the rural wealth of the 1950s and 60s.

WAgMag

A Newsletter for Women in Agriculture

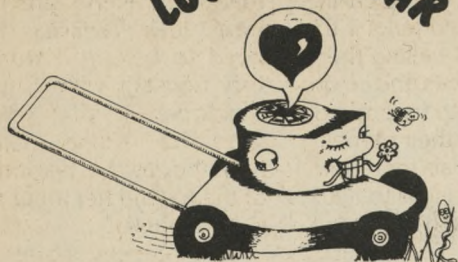


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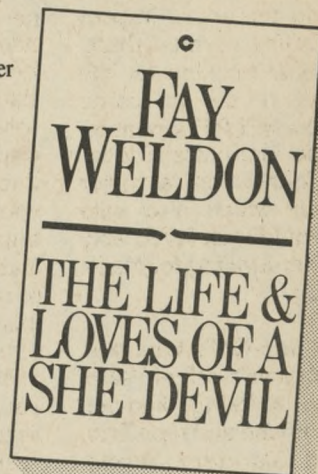
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There used to be more than 15,000 farm workers in New Zealand, now there are only a few hundred. The farm workers association folded recently because they had too few members. Farm workers have moved to the cities where the work supposedly is. This has contributed to many of the changes: reduced rolls in rural schools, with some closing; the closing of village stores; rural parishes with part-time ministers because there is either insufficient money in the parish to pay a full stipend, or no longer enough people living in the area.

Ideas and perceptions of the way we live die hard in the eyes and minds of those who do not live the same lifestyle, and who wish for greener pastures. Kiwis have always hankered after the land and to own a bit. A farmer with 500 acres was seen to be affluent, no matter what the size of the mortgage. Being a person in her own right, having the choice to utilise her energies and skills, was not something that came the way of the woman on the farm, the wife.

Marilyn Waring said in 1980,

"The rural woman in New Zealand has a contribution that is unrecognised, invisible, unquantified and unpaid. She is often unremunerated family labour... she is a central figure, a pivot, but is in no sense recognised as an equal partner..."

The Matrimonial Property Act did much to redress the imbalances, but prejudice still existed, and to some extent does now. The difference is that the rules have changed. Faced with the biggest crisis of their lives, with the rural recession, the women have returned to the paid workforce in droves. I say paid workforce because, as Ms Waring said, women worked the land for nothing. They did it because they felt they should. If they did not the farm would not survive. There is nothing new there.

Many rural women, particularly those belonging to the WAg network, are younger and have more marketable skills than their elders, and often more than their spouses. They are trained in many trades and professions and have taken on paid work to augment the farm income. They

travel miles every day, some returning home only at the weekends. They car pool and share resources to work in town and go back to the farm at night.

You may say, so what — urban women do the same. True. The difference is that rural women had work before — unpaid it may have been but they fed sheep, lambed ewes, made hay and helped with harvesting as well as growing a vegetable garden, keeping house animals and a mass of other activities.

Farms are being sold quietly every week, and it will get worse as the Rural Bank cuts back its number of debt restructuring applications and farmers find they have no more money. The picture is depressing, gloomy and getting worse.

Where two years ago WAg field days were mainly concerned with learning to drive a tractor or fence a paddock, they are now concerned with coping with stress, managing change, learning about the grief of being uprooted from an environment and forced to do something else. We are now learning about returning

to the paid workforce and how to cope with the sexism we endured as farm women. The change has not come without criticism from within. Those with their heads still firmly entrenched in the muddy paddock have looked with suspicion on the women who have gone to town to seek work, but as more and more do it, it is becoming acceptable in areas where conservatism rules and everything else is seen as feminist, communist, unhealthy, dangerous, downright radical. Male farming leaders have been quick to see the economic implications of change and slow to recognise the social ones.

Women are beginning to move into the male preserves of farmer boards and organisations, and the "sanctity" of county councils and other rural ad hoc authorities. Not in great numbers, but sufficient to be a start, WAg provides a supportive network of information sharing.

The future of farming in New Zealand is insecure. So is the future of the Ministry of Women's affairs, without which there would be no WAg-Mag. □

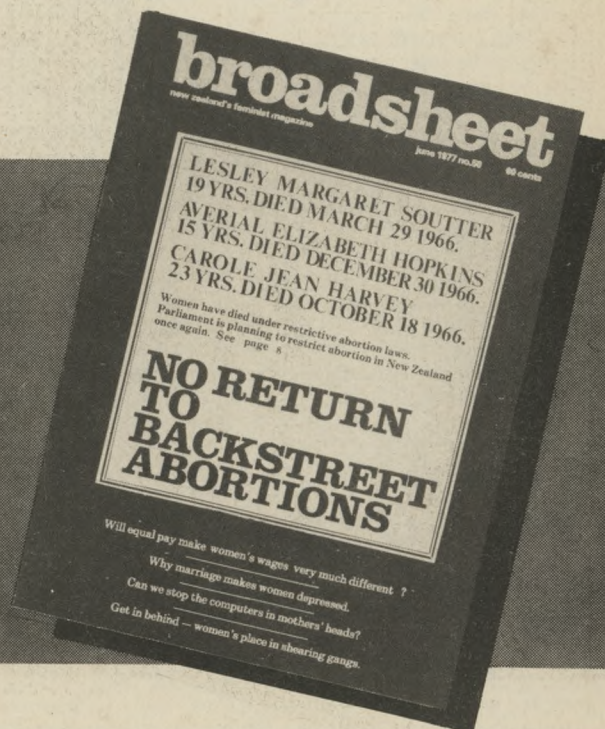
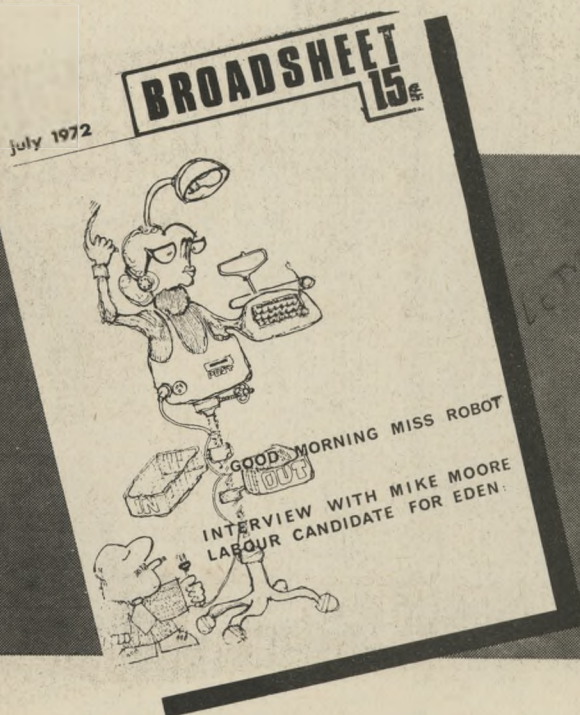
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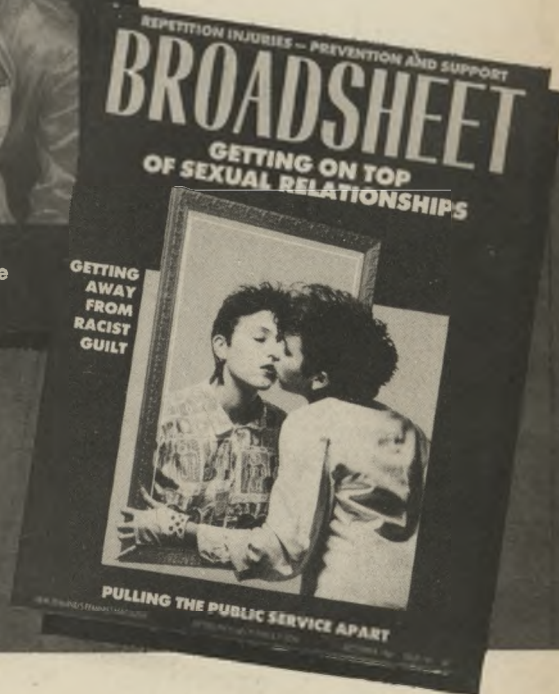
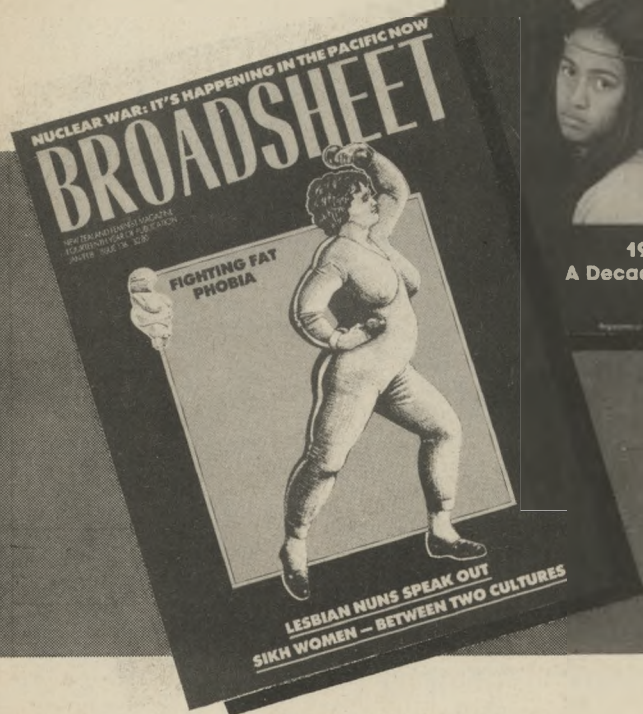
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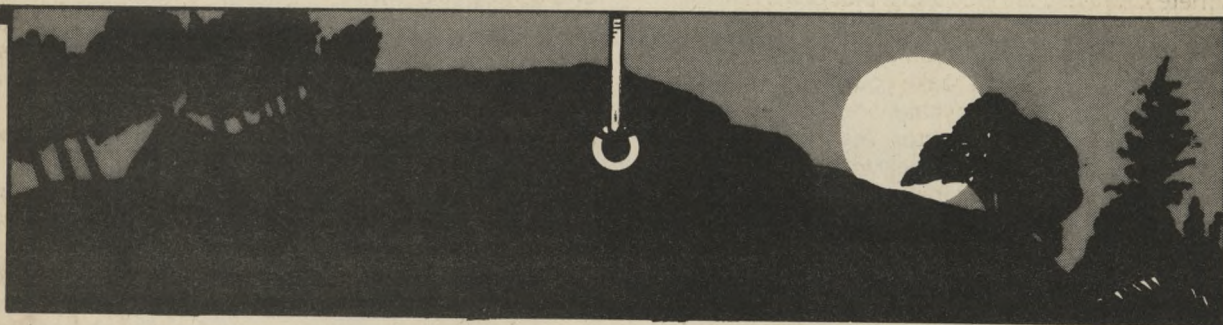
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LESBIANS AND DEATH



After reading the *Broadsheet* article "When a lesbian is dying . . . is there room for her friends." (October 1986), a group of Pakeha lesbians living in Auckland started talking about how little we know about the processes of death. Peta Joyce and Pat Rosier write about some of the things the group found out.

Because Pakeha culture has difficulty dealing with death we've allowed the "experts" to take over. After the first meeting each member of the group set out to find out about one aspect of death, and we pooled the information. We had a lawyer and a celebrant come and talk to us at different times. Our focus has been to find out how lesbians, their lovers and friends can protect their interests and wishes, but a lot of the information is relevant to everyone.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

When a woman dies a doctor is required to sign a death certificate. If she has been receiving medical treatment and the cause of death is clear this is done by the doctor who was treating her. Then the "next of kin" (see section on wills) can claim the body. The other legal requirement is that the body be buried or cremated in a place set aside for that purpose, and a burial certificate will be signed at that place. It is now required that the body be contained for transportation and burial/cremation in a casket.

In the event of a sudden death or one where the cause is not clear, the coroner must be notified. The police act

on the coroner's behalf, so they will become involved. The police arrange for formal identification of the body by a relative or close friend, and for it then to be taken to the mortuary. The coroner will decide whether an inquest (a hearing to establish the fact that a person has died, their identity and when, where and how they died) will be held. The body is held at the mortuary until the coroner authorises its release for burial or cremation, usually as soon as the post mortem examination (to find out the cause of death) is completed.

"The family" usually decides where the body will be released to — usually, but not necessarily, an undertaker's parlour. An undertaker will take care of all arrangements from this point if asked to.

So, where the cause of death is clear and a death certificate can be obtained, a burial certificate and a casket for transportation and burial/cremation are the only further legal requirements.

WHO "OWNS" THE BODY?

The immediate next of kin (parent, children, spouse or siblings, unless otherwise stated) have rights over the

body. For anyone other than the next of kin to obtain the body for funeral arrangement they must have their permission. It is possible to have the body at home, in a setting of your choice. For example, the woman could be laid out in her bed and the casket used just for the final moving and disposal. Embalming is not compulsory but is usually necessary, and desirable if the body is to be viewed or burial or cremation delayed for a few days. It is usually done by trained staff at their premises, most often a funeral parlour.

Burial regulations differ according to the local authority or church in charge of the cemetery. Burying the body anywhere other than in a cemetery is not allowed. Ashes can be disposed of anywhere but cremation must take place in a designated crematorium. Burial plots can be pre-purchased, or arranged by a funeral director. At Waikumete Cemetery in Auckland a plot costs about \$500 and the total cost of burial fees could be \$1000.

What happens to you when you die can be determined by you to some extent if you make your wishes known. You can write it in your will or make prior arrangements with an executor or funeral director. Your family can override your wishes but this is less likely to happen if these are recorded. A funeral director should also take your wishes into account, but these must be made clear from the start otherwise it will be assumed that the "normal" arrangements apply.

WILLS — WHAT THEY CAN AND CAN'T DO

Most of the information in this section comes from the pamphlet put out by the Auckland Lesbian Support Group (contact phone, 888-325): "A will is a document that sets out how you want to dispose of your property after your death. It speaks from the date of your death. It can also state your wishes about how you wish your funeral to be carried out, although these wishes are not legally binding."

You can make a will for nothing with the Public Trust, but they must be made an executor, and they charge a set percentage fee for administering the will after your death, which can be higher than the fee charged by a lawyer for the same work. To make a will through a lawyer costs \$30-50, and it is a worthwhile cost, particularly if you have made some enquiries and found a lawyer who you trust to understand and act on your wishes as a lesbian.

If you die without a will (intestate) your property will be divided among member of your family — even if you have lived with a lover for several years she will have no rights to any property in your name.

When you make a will you can say who you want your belongings to go to — in as much detail as you like. Making a bequest or two to your favourite lesbian group or project (or even to *Broadsheet!*) can be done at this stage. It may be important to say why you are not leaving anything to people who may be either expecting something or who feel they have a right to be left something. Then, if you have left everything to a lover or friend and your family fight the will in court, There is a better chance that your wishes will be upheld. You can appoint a trustee or trustees in your will, who can be anyone who you trust to see that your wishes are carried

out.

You can also appoint an executor, whose role is to be responsible for the disposal of your body. This person should be someone who knows your wishes, who you trust, who can deal with your family, and who can diplomatically bridge the gap between your family and friends if necessary.

At the time of your death doctors, nurses, police, anyone involved will assume that a member of your family is your next of kin. If you are estranged from your family, or you consider your lover is your next of kin, then list her as this everywhere — in your will, on the hospital admission paper, in the front of your diary. If you enter hospital whoever you list as next of kin will be contacted by the hospital on your death. That person will have the body released to them and will then be able to make funeral arrangements.

If you have children and your lesbian partner is involved with their care it is essential to ensure that your wishes about her involvement with them are clearly stated in your will, along with what you *don't* want. This will not be legally binding but greatly increases the chances of your wishes being followed and your partner being able to continue her involvement with the children. The Lesbian Mothers Defence Fund (P.O. Box 11009 Dunedin) can give samples of suitable wording.

There seem to us to be three main points about wills: make one, preferably with a lawyer you feel you can trust; change it as your circumstances and wishes change, keep it up to date; tell everyone who your lawyer is and what you want and give copies of the will to family, executor, trustee and so on.

A SERVICE OR CEREMONY

For many lesbians a religious service of any kind is at best not appropriate and at worst totally offensive. Pakeha society has not provided us with alternative models and we often just don't know what to do.

The position can be further complicated by the conflicting wishes/needs of people closely connected with the woman who died. A funeral can be the one time that all the different groups of people a lesbian was close to — family, lover and friends, workmates — come together. Usually it's the family that has, and is given (because it is assumed by everyone that that is their role), the power to make decisions about what will happen. And in extremes cases the lesbians in the woman's life can be totally excluded from her death.

Organising a service that includes all the people who were important in a woman's life, and validates all aspects of her life is an ideal. If she was "out" to everyone, and had made her wishes very clear to everyone concerned, and if there is no ill-feeling among the groups, then it is possible. But families do tend to get possessive about the body.

All the legal requirements to do with death concern the body. Anyone can organise any sort of service or ceremony in any way they like. And there can be as many different ceremonies as anyone wants to organise, but they may be without the body present. For instance lesbians can organise a memorial just for themselves. There does not have to be anyone "official" involved. Our feeling is that it is better to have someone taking some

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sort of organising/facilitating role. Most Pakehas find it really difficult to express grief in a public situation, so bringing people together without some structure can cause awkwardness and embarrassment. Someone who knew the dead woman, who can talk to those closest to her, who has some confidence with a group, can help to create a situation where grief is acknowledged and expressed.

Picture this:

People have gathered at a hall where lesbian events are held regularly. The body has been brought there in an open casket from the women's home, where it had been through the previous day and night. It's two in the afternoon. There's no seating order, people are standing around in groups, some focusing their attention on the body, others not. There's a lot of lesbians there, quite a few of them openly distressed. Her brother and his wife and children are there, with her father who is very old and frail. Her two children, "one of each" are there, with their (heterosexual) partners. And a couple of male colleagues, one letting his grief show, the other rather stony-faced. After a while a woman moves to stand by the casket and gets everyone's attention. People sit, on the forms, the few chairs, the floor. She identifies herself as a friend of the dead woman and asks everyone to remember for

themselves the ways in which they knew her, to cast their minds over their memories of her and to think of the ways in which they will miss her. After a few minutes silence she talks to the body about a few of her memories and how she feels the loss of a friend. She cries while she is talking and has to stop for a few minutes. Then she invites anyone who wishes to speak to do so. A woman reads a poem. Several people, including her son, speak to the body. A lot of people cry. After about 40 minutes, a woman gets up and says that there are refreshments in the next room and the body will be taken to the crematorium in an hour. People disperse, gather into small groups, some comfort each other, some continue to focus their attention on the body, talking to her, touching her face or arm, others leave. At the end of the hour six women carry the coffin out to a waiting vehicle. A few cars go with it to the crematorium, her lover and friends, her children and their partners...

It's a fantasy, but one that could be a reality. And in many other forms. It's much more likely to happen as she wanted it if the woman has made her wishes clear in advance, and if she has told everyone that she doesn't want the others excluded. □

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΔΕΣ

GREEK WOMEN

ON THE CUSP OF CHANGE

*TWO CANADIAN WOMEN,
MURIEL K L SIBLEY AND
PATRICIA A CLARK
REPORT ON THE LIVES
OF WOMEN IN
GREECE TODAY*



WE CREEP AND SLITHER DOWN THE STEEP TRAIL FROM THE ROAD TO THE CEMETERY, THE MAY SUN WARM ON OUR BACKS AND THE FAMILIAR, PUNGENT SCENT OF WILD THYME PRICKLING OUR NOSES. We have to scramble to keep up with our friend, Katerina, the young Cretan country-woman; her surefootedness, as well as the many runs in her stockings, indicate how often she has made this trip through the thistles and scrubby bush.

At last we reach the stone walls of the little churchyard — the special “burying church” used only for funerals — and go inside. The graves are raised, rectangular tombs, like cement beds, with “headboards”; glass-fronted cases containing photographs of the deceased, oil, incense and plastic flowers. We wait inside the gate while Katerina goes to the newest grave.

Only 29 years old, Katerina is a widow of six months and

has become a member of that vast army of Greek women in black, who mourn. Traditional mourning periods are long, years and even decades long in the case of a close relationship, so that most mature women are in black for most of their lives, mourning for one relative or another. Katerina has lost her young husband early — he was murdered — and years from now, when her mother and father die, she will still be wearing black.

Katerina moves briskly, cleaning the glass, filling the oil lamp, straightening the picture. She lights the incense in the censer and circles the grave, praying and swinging trails of sweet smoke as she walks. In her black clothes, the sweater sleeves pushed up over thin, strong arms, she carries out all her prescribed duties despite the heat, her visitors and her own sadness. In many ways she epitomises both the strengths and the strictures of traditional Greek womanhood.

Like women throughout the world, Greek women have had to bear both the burden of societal discrimination and a statutory framework that supports it. In the long run, neither can be changed without the other, though sometimes, in present day Greece, the laws have outstripped the culture. When the socialist party of Andreas Papandreu came to power in 1980, sexual inequality was identified as one of the major problems of the country, and a programme of specific statutory changes and social mechanisms was begun, to liberate women and help the family as a whole. In April 1983, the government created the Council for the Equality of the Sexes, whose stated aims were: "To promote and put into practice the equality of the sexes in law and in reality. To propose the necessary and feasible measures which the state, local government and the social agencies should take to bring about that equality. And to monitor and control the implementation of these measures."

IN THE THREE YEARS SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT, SOME POTENTIALLY REVOLUTIONARY LAWS HAVE BEEN PASSED. THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN WAS RATIFIED. Women and men now share jointly in the responsibilities and rights of marriage; women are required to keep their own names when they marry; and the dowry, which by implication reduced the woman to a burden to be shouldered by her husband, and for which indemnity had to be paid by her father, was abolished. Formerly only attainable by adultery or insanity, divorce by mutual consent was introduced, as well as equal rights for children born outside of marriage.

The Ministry of Labour's Law 1483 has permitted, among other things, the granting of "parental leave" for up to three months for each parent during the period from the end of maternity leave to the point at which the child reaches two and a half years of age. This was the first time, in the legislation of any country, that the father's right to share in the upbringing of the child was established by statute in a personal and intransferable form.

Vitally important for the large population of rural women was Law 1287 of the Ministry of Social Security, which provides the Greek woman farmer with her own full and independent pension.

These are only a few of the impressive statutory changes which have been enacted to safeguard the equality of the sexes. Social services and benefits are also being established to support these laws, though because of lack of funds, these are still few and spread thinly, with such amenities as government-sponsored day care centres, family planning clinics and career counselling services usually only available in the large urban centres.

Under the aegis of the Council for Equality, the Mediterranean Women's Studies Institute was created to research and dispense information on the status of women. We visited its office and met with its director, Eleni Arnopoulos-Stamiris.

The day we visited she and her two assistants were busy with last minute preparations for the annual women's studies summer programme to be held on the island of Spetses. Its title "Building Strategies for Mediterranean Women" suggests the focus of Ms Stamiris's working life.

"The most important thing is to help women to get economic power. Out of that will come political power. It's not that the women don't work." She waved her hand in a

dismissive gesture. "Thirty-one per cent of the total workforce is women, and nearly half of those are agricultural workers. Yet they have controlled none of the money and have been subordinate to men in all spheres. We women in Greece are far behind you in the west. The only books we have in women's studies are in English. Translations are expensive. How can you educate people without books in their language? There's not enough money. We have such a long way to go."

We protested that some of the new Greek laws were more progressive than we had yet in Canada.

Ms Stamiris shrugged her shoulders. "Well, yes, the laws are good, but it is hard to implement them at the grass roots level. The old court structures are still in place, with the same judges and lawyers filling them. Age-old attitudes are hard to change."

Who is a better symbol of those age-old attitudes than Katerina, dressed in black? Five years ago she was on the eve of marriage to the "catch" of the village, Costas, a young ship's engineer who worked part-time for the merchant marine and part-time on his farm. They had waited ten years to marry; Katerina had had to assemble a dowry, and Costas the money to build a house. Katerina had little education but was skilled in housewifery and farm work. Costas was better educated, largely because of his years of foreign travel, and spoke English fluently, often acting as our interpreter in the early years of visiting their village, located in a mountain in central Crete. By village standards they had married late, but their marriage was quickly followed by the arrival of three children in four years. Twelve days after their third child and second girl was born, Costas was shot and killed by a man who had quarreled with him over a right-of-way to sheep pasture.

IT WAS A COMPLICATED FAMILY QUARREL; THE MURDERER (WHO HAS SINCE CONFESSED AND BEEN SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT) WAS KATERINA'S UNCLE. Seventy years old, his values are from an earlier era, when questions of honour and territory were commonly settled with knives or guns. (Land disputes are still frequent, largely because of the dowry and inheritance systems which divide and subdivide property into small and sometimes widely separated parcels only accessible by rights-of-way through other people's land.)

When we visited the village Katerina talked about her uncertain future. She has found part-time, menial work in a nearby town, but it is not enough to support her and the children. Her parents are helping her, but they are old, and she knows that not only can she not count on their help for much longer, but they may themselves become an additional burden. Her house is mortgaged and she worries that the bank may foreclose. Above all, she fears for the life of her son. Her uncle's family has made direct threats, and in Crete such threats are neither made nor taken lightly.

She could move the family to a different city where she could find better work and feel safer, but Katerina has never been out of her valley and lacks the education and training to find a better job.

Katerina now lives for her son, little Yorgos. If she manages to hold onto the house it is for him, she counts on him to finish the house, to take care of the family, and in some way to put right the great wrong done them. She has more faith in the four year old boy and his destined authority than in the authority and efficacy of the government and its laws.

After the visit to the cemetery, we leave Katerina at her

house, saddened by the thought of the enormous burden that the small male child is already carrying, and by the reverence with which he is regarded by his mother, grandmother and tiny sister. Almost the last sight we had of the children was of them standing together, the little girl leaning trustingly against her brother, while he put a protective arm around her.

FOUR HOURS BY CAR FROM KATERINA'S VILLAGE HOME IS THE CAPITAL CITY OF CRETE, IRAKLION, WHERE HELEN, HER FRIEND AND OURS, LIVES AND WORKS. Helen is from the same village and is about the same age, but there the similarity ends; Helen, by all appearances, has moved beyond Katerina in independence and freedom. She was sent to school by her parents and then to a hotel on the island of Rhodes. She worked in hotels for several years and studied simultaneously to be a tour guide, which she eventually became qualified for. It is a demanding career, requiring expertise in several languages as well as knowledge of Greek history, culture and archaeology, and it is also one of the highest-paying jobs to which Greek women have access.

While in her early twenties Helen married a fellow-employee at the hotel, and although he left that job and worked fitfully thereafter, they were happy for a few years, until the baby came. After six months of staying at home with little Alexandra in a small apartment, Helen was frantic with boredom. Her husband at first refused to let her go back to work but then said that if her mother, the baby's grandmother, would care for Alexandra, he would agree to it. Helen's mother, who had taken a job in a small factory when her husband died, is an unusual Greek woman: she preferred the independence that widowhood had given her to coming to care for her grandchild.

Things were at an impasse for a while, with Helen growing more unhappy and the husband staying out more. He was becoming absorbed by the men's life-style of Greece, which meant hours spent at tavernas with male comrades and occasional not-too-discreet adventures with other women. His jobs grew even more erratic. Money became a problem for the family and eventually Helen had to return to work. Her husband came home infrequently and finally moved in with another woman; Helen's mother capitulated and came to look after the child.

Helen is now seeking a divorce. But she is worried about money. She worked steadily all through the marriage, except for the year that Alexandra was a baby, while her husband worked sporadically and at lower-paid jobs. Often she worked overtime and with the extra money she made they invested in real estate. She has two jobs now: running her own little shop, which sells patterns and materials for lace and embroidery work, and guiding tours of Crete on the weekends.

Under the new Greek family law a divorced wife is allowed to keep at least one-third of the family assets — a great gain for most women, who, after years of unpaid labour in the home would often be left with nothing — but in Helen's case, a less fair division. She told us that already her husband had sold some of the real estate they owned, without consulting her and without giving her any of the money.

"They say women will be treated fairly", she says in her precise English, "but who can believe them? The judges in the courts are the old ones; they will do things the old way, the way they always have before. Margareta Papandreou (the wife of the prime minister and active and outspoken

on women's issues) may say this and that about equality of women, but what difference will it make here in Crete, where the judges give everything to men?"

Helen had echoed the words of Eleni Stamiris, of the Women's Studies Institute. Ms Stamiris had also said that the key to women's equality was economic power, and had recommended a visit to one of the women's cooperative set up under the Council for the Equality of the Sexes. The first one was established on Lesbos, Sappho's island and a symbol of women's power and value since ancient times.

IT IS ABOUT A THREE-HOUR BUS TRIP FROM MYTILINI, THE CAPITAL OF LESBOS, ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS TO PETRA, A VILLAGE ON THE NORTH-EAST COAST. The bus stops at the main square, just above the beach, where fishing boats tie up and octopi are hung to dry on clotheslines, fastened by red and blue clothespins. Beside the square is the Women's Agri-tourism Cooperative of Petra. It comprises a store-front office, a restaurant, and, still under construction, a gallery to display the crafts and agricultural products of members.

A friendly secretary arranged for us to stay the night with one of the co-op members and within five minutes of the phone call a white-haired woman dressed in black came into the office. We shook hands with her and followed her through cobbled streets to her house.

Maria joined the Petra Co-op soon after its inception three years ago. At that time there were 25 members; now there are more than 50, and more continue to join. Through the co-op Maria rents out rooms, sells her bottled watermelon sweets, and works in the restaurant. She meets people from all over the world and has the dignity of work for which she is paid.

Before we left Petra we met the president of the co-operative, Eleni Chioti, a young woman who spends much of her time travelling around Greece helping to set up similar organisations. We asked her how men in Petra felt about the co-op.

"Well . . . they like the extra money coming into the family, of course." She laughed and rubbed her finger and thumb together in the universal gesture. "But they resent the hours that their wives spend here, and they are uneasy about the new ideas. Some of them are changing, though. It takes time."

How slow is cultural change, how unpredictable, erratic and inequable. Our three friends, Katerina, Helen and Maria, are representative of millions of Greek women today, some of whom have been swept into the main stream of change, while others are caught in cross-currents or trapped by back-eddies.

Katrina seems arrested in time, her present arduous and fearful, her future difficult at best. Anxiet-rooted tragedy has circumscribed her life and she can see no way out.

Helen is on the cusp of change; she doesn't believe that the entrenched male system can help her, but she has some small faith that her daughter may reap the benefits of the battles she and other women now wage.

Maria of Petra, however, in the right place at the right time, has benefited already. New ideas and legislation have come in time to make a difference in her life. We leave Petra with hope, taking with us an image of our hostess on her sunny porch, standing sturdy and independent, waving farewell. □

REST HOMES - FO



Marilyn Cox
interviewed
some rest home
residents

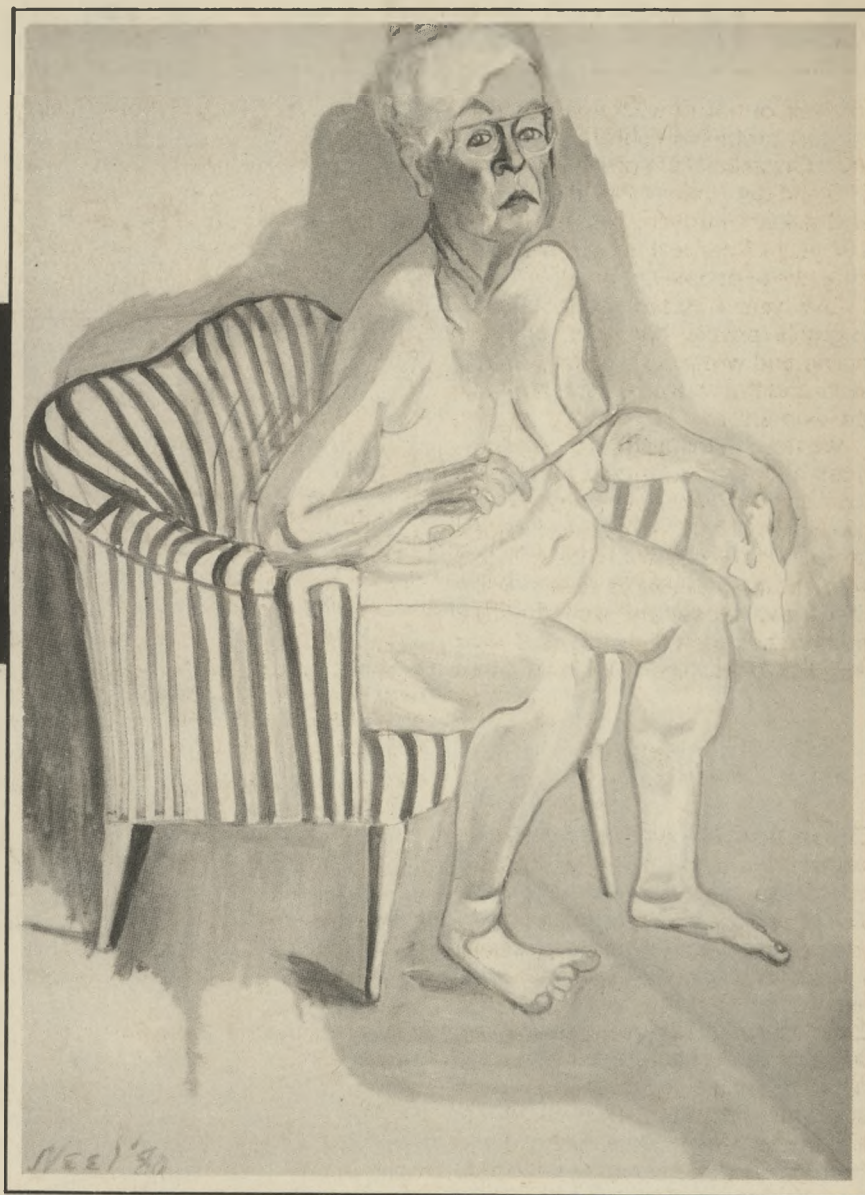
Photos: Gil Hanly

THESE INTERVIEWS
MEAN A LOT TO ME. I
HAVE HAD STORIES,
NOT THESE, BUT THE
STORIES OF OTHER

old women I knew when I worked as a nurse aid in a rest home, locked inside my head for a long time.

I worked in the mornings and helped those women to get out of bed, and wash and dress. I remember them vividly, the words they used, how Mrs Kelly liked her hair brushed hard and plenty of powder and Miss Annette stalking about with her stick and her dry cough.

I liked listening to them reflecting on their lives. They had cared for children, run households, gone to work, lived alone and in families. I learnt a lot from them which has been valuable in my own life.



The hospital I worked in was an inhuman place. I saw some horrible things being done to those old women. I don't want to list the things I saw here. They involved gentle and dignified old women being deprived of their dignity. Where-ever people are powerless, as those women were, cruelty is a possibility.

Today over 17,000 New Zealanders, mostly women because women live longer than men, live in "homes". We in the outside world don't hear much about them. Nobody goes and asks for their opinion about whether the government of the day is doing its

Alice Neel. *Self Portrait*, 1980. Oil on canvas

R CARE OR PROFIT?

Over 17,000 New Zealanders, mostly women, live in "homes"

job well, or not, or what they think the biggest problems facing the country are. Occasionally somebody turns 100 and gets their photo in the paper and asked about the secret of their 100 years. For most of us, most of the time, these people are invisible.

Last year I visited some of Wellington's private hospitals and rest home and wrote up accounts of my visits and the conversations I had with the women I met.

We need to think about these situations and about our own future. We women tend to see ourselves as care givers and don't envisage or plan for a time when we might need care. What I want these interviews to do is to show that these people are alive, they are human they are interesting, and what they say and do and think is valuable.



Oriana Duncan has mercifully found a place where she feels comfortable in which to live out the rest of her life. Two years ago she felt no such security. She remembers emerging from a period of blankness and finding herself in the hands of a therapist at Ewart Hospital. The therapist had her between a set of parallel bars and was trying to teach her to walk. "I don't know how long I'd been blanked out. It must have been quite a while. When I came round the first thing I thought was 'Shoot me, just get a gun and shoot me'."

She had lived alone in the house she and her husband owned freehold in Newtown. She had lost her husband three years earlier. Her sister was staying with her and she was feeling well. "Everything seems to come on me unexpectedly." She had just finished taking a bath and collapsed coming out through the bathroom

door. Her life changed dramatically at that moment.

When she regained consciousness she could no longer, walk, she couldn't dress herself and she had to be spoon fed. Gradually, and with an intensive programme of

WARNING

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple

With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me,
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.

I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick the flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
or only bread and pickle for a week
And hoard pens and pencils and beermats and things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry
and pay our rent and not swear in the street
and set a good example for the children.
We will have friends to dinner and read the papers.

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised
When suddenly I am old and start to wear purple.

Jenny Joseph

physiotherapy, she has regained some control over her limbs. She can walk with the aid of a push-along walking frame and eat with a spoon. For a long time she drank through a straw but can now hold a coffee mug. And she can get herself in and out of the toilet. "It used to be very, very embarrassing." It still is a bit embarrassing

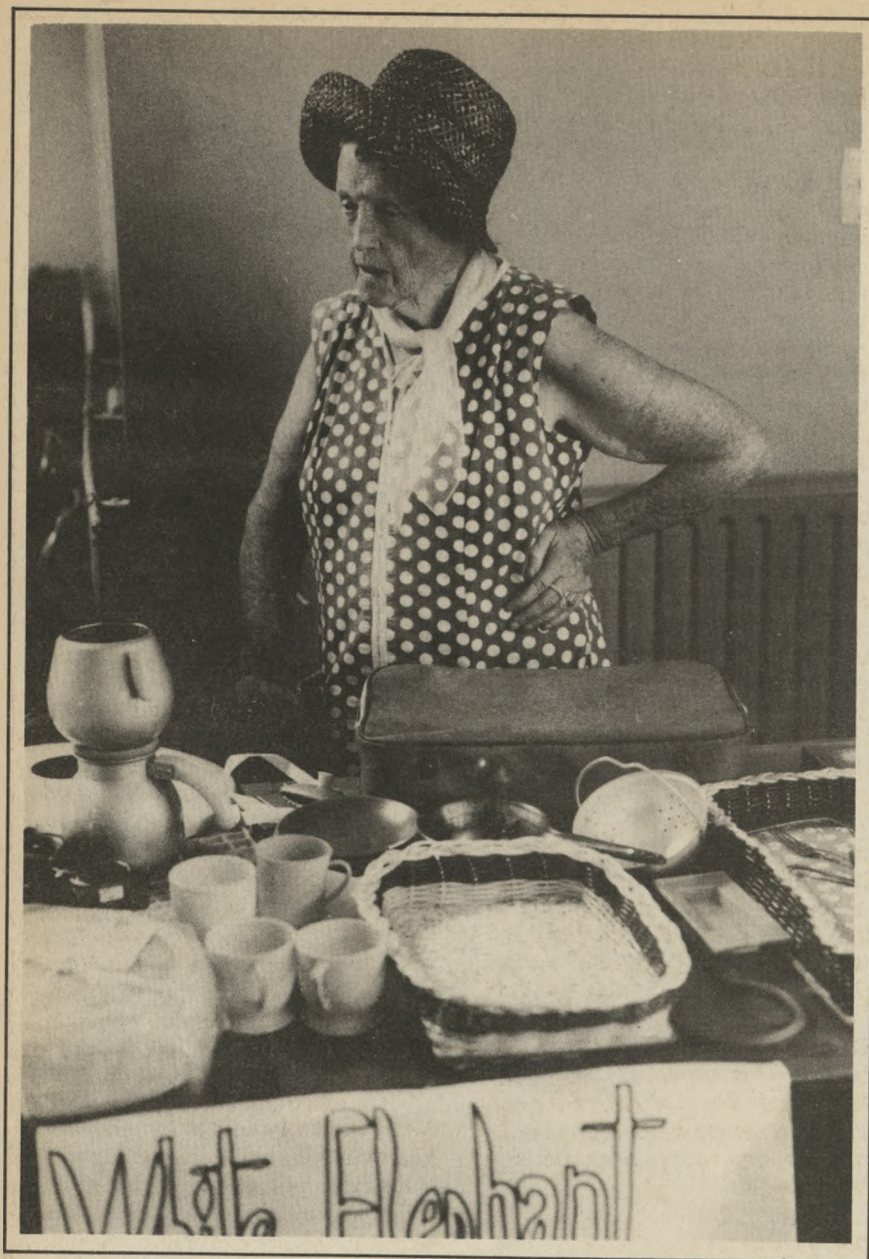
that she can't dress herself, especially when one of the hospital's male staff is sent to do the job. "They say I'm being silly but I can't help it. It's just what I'm like." She finds it frustrating not being able to brush her hair. "I hate being untidy."

After nine months in Ewart hospital undergoing therapy and having her situation assessed, Oriana Duncan knew that she would never be able to manage on her own again and that she would have to find a place where she could be cared for. She was reasonably well off. "I sold my house and I had a good bank account", so did not need to remain in a public hospital.

She had only a limited number of choices. She was shown a list of possibilities and picked out three or four, knowing that she would have to go to the first one where a vacancy came up. "I had been waiting quite a while. My social worker came to me at the dinner table on Friday and said, 'You will be going into a home on Monday morning.' Of course I wanted to ask her questions but she said she was going away for the weekend and didn't have time to talk to me. I cried all night. I thought, 'Where the devil am I going?'"

On Saturday the matron of the private hospital Oriana was moving to came to see her. Oriana asked if Mrs Rouse and Mrs Black, two women she had known in Ewart, were living there. "Yes, and the old sods are waiting for you." Oriana Duncan knew she had found a kindred spirit. "In Ewart you were on your mettle all the time. You couldn't say 'bum' for sixpence, if you'll pardon the expression."

Oriana likes to let the nurses know what she thinks of them. She tells a nurse who comes in and grabs a towel for an emergency he is coping with across in the bathroom that he is "ignorant" to come in when she has



got a visitor. "I pick on the nurses. When I think it's necessary I go crook at them. A lot of notice they take of me, though!"

Oriana still finds it a bit hard living with so many other people. She spends a lot of time watching television with a friend in her room, but when the friend has visitors she goes into the lounge. "There's a woman there who claps and sings and another who swears whenever you speak to her. There are two women, funny they should have the same complaint, but they can't sit still and one is calling out "Oh lord, help me!"

all the time. It's difficult to put up with but I can see the funny side. I don't think I would have the same freedom anywhere else as I have here."

Some alterations are being made to Oriana's bedroom and she was given the option of moving temporarily to another home or sharing an upstairs room. Oriana said she would rather sleep in the bath than go anywhere else.

"A while back I had a virus and I said to the matron 'Don't worry, I won't die on you', and she said, 'You old sod, you'll be here forever.' This is my home now."

Ruby Barclay wears saucer-shaped, slightly horn rimmed glasses and from her perspective I think they must be rose tinted. She is suffering from Paget's disease. The bone of her skull has grown abnormally thick and life and the world have become confused. In the nicest possible way. The large plastic iceland poppies on the table, she says, were bought this morning from her own garden. "Ice-land poppies were one of my favourites. I grew them every year, but I could never, ever, not in a million years, grow them as big as those ones there." Her voice rises in appreciation. She still has plenty of enthusiasm.

Most of the people in the rest home where she lives suffer from senile dementia of one sort or another. There's a little chubby woman in a pink knitted jumper who rubs her hands incessantly over the television set, over the table, polishing, polishing. "That's our Bonny, always working." And there's a Polish woman shaking her fist and scolding.

The Polish woman comes over, angry about something, shaking her fist in Ruby's face. Some one else might be intimidated but Ruby stands her ground. "I wasn't talking about you, I was talking about my own family, which doesn't include you, thank goodness."

Two of Ruby's daughters come visiting while I am talking to her. They can't find Ruby's hearing aid. "She had it with her last night", says a nurse, and eventually it is located under a bed. Life with 15 forgetful people can be chaotic.

To Ruby it is highly amusing. "I looked in my drawer this morning and the first thing I saw was a pair of men's underwear. I have no idea how they got there."

Ruby's daughters said that Ruby had been living with their father, who was 93, until two years ago when he needed hospitalisation. "Mother couldn't live on her own." At first Ruby went to the Hutt Hospital but eventually had to move out. "She was taking up a bed that was needed."

They enlisted the help of the Social Welfare Department to find a place where Ruby could be cared for. "It was very difficult. At the time this home (in

Oriana still finds it a bit hard living with so many people

By the year 2000 18% of New Zealand's population will be over 60, compared to nine percent in 1975. Approximately three percent of those over 65 live in rest homes, ten women to every seven men. Many of the women with no remaining family supports, which makes them very vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Many will have physical or mental disabilities or both. "It is likely that abuse and neglect of the elderly in rest homes remains hidden, ignored and thus exacerbated because of the relative powerlessness and impoverished social, political and legal status of the people who live in these facilities."

There are places that provide good care, but not enough of them, and they have long waiting lists. Inadequacies in rest homes can relate to food, warmth, and medical services and treatments; lack of or restricted access to facilities such as a telephone; lack of personal privacy; lack of the freedoms of movement, speech (particularly to make complaints) or association; denial of personal property rights, including access to and management of personal effects and finances; invasion of property and person.

Unless they are informal or committed patients under the Mental Health Act, rest home residents are ordinary citizens with the same legal and civil rights as any other adult citizen.

LEGISLATION/REGULATIONS APPLYING TO REST HOMES

Rest homes are required to be licensed by the Health Department under the Old People's Home Regulations, 1980, which set out minimum standards which must be met before a licence will be granted or renewed, as it must be annually. Fire regulations are set down by the relevant local government body.

"The Department of Social Welfare (DSW) operates a fee subsidy which makes up the shortfall between a rest home resident's national Superannuation income and the cost. There is no ceiling on the payment, therefore no control on the amount of subsidy, nor is its payment in any way dependent on provision of any minimum standards of care or services. DSW will also pay up to \$100 a year as a clothing allowance, without there being any check on how this is spent.

The regulations which do exist are "minimum standards", which relate almost solely to physical conditions such as the number and size of rooms, sanitation, and staffing requirements. There is only cursory recognition of the need for privacy in bedroom and bathroom layout, no upper limit for the number of persons who may share a room, and the minimum floor area per bed is only 5.6 square metres. There are no requirements for the location of bedrooms and bathrooms. The minimum staffing ratio is one to five, with no requirement that there always be a staff member on the premises.

Fees must be approved by the Department of Trade and Industry, but there is apparently no upper limit and the Department can apply no sanctions or recommendations, only approve or not the fees sought.

Hospital boards supply rest homes with nearly 50% of their residents but have no powers to monitor standards. Neither their social workers nor those from DSW can enter a rest home without the general permission of the proprietor. Nor do residents' relatives have particular rights of access.

"It has been suggested that Health Department supervision has operated on a 'trust basis' at least as long as there are no prob-

lems sufficient to achieve public notoriety through the media. Where supervisory checks are carried out they are . . . done typically by prior arrangement with the management and usually in their presence, so that the likelihood of discovering any inadequacies are minimised."

Several factors get in the way of what regulations there are being rigorously applied. One is the numbers of administrative bodies involved — particularly as those that are essentially funding the homes through benefit subsidy payments (DSW) are not those with the power to enforce standards. No one body or agency is ultimately responsible, and they all lack sufficient staff. A second factor is that there are inadequate sanctions or legal mechanisms for enforcing regulations. The strongest sanction under the Old People's Home regulations provides for a maximum penalty of \$100 and a further \$10 a day for a continuing offence. For the Health Department to revoke or refuse to renew a licence it first has to give notice to the proprietor, who has an immediate right of objection or appeal to a district or high court. So the situation can remain unchanged for the months it takes to get a court hearing and decision.

"It should be questioned whether the residential care of such vulnerable populations belongs with private enterprise at all. The goals of profit-making and promoting the welfare of the elderly and disabled would seem to be mutually inconsistent, and the statistics show clearly that standards in church and charitable organisations' homes are consistently higher and almost invariably adequate." □

This information is from an article, "Rest Home Accommodation for the Elderly: a Civil rights Perspective", by Pam Oliver, published in *Community Health in New Zealand* Vol 3 No 1 November 1986.

Karori) was all we could get." One daughter lives in Lower Hutt, the other in Masterton.

As far as Ruby is concerned she's on holiday in a hotel in Australia. "I came here and liked it so much I decided to stay. I have a very good bed

to sleep in and there's always flowers in the vases, always. The food is wonderful and they are absolutely scrupulous about cleanliness." Her husband is at home tending his vegetable garden. He was always reluctant to go away on holiday. "I have

been all over the place without him."

But sometimes she remembers that he is dead. How long ago he died, how long they were married and how long she has been here she can't remember.



JUST THROUGH the bus tunnel in Hataitai there is a small rest home where six elderly women sit out their days watching television, drinking tea, reading — if their eyesight is good enough — and occasionally walking outside.

It's run by Judy, who has her own ideas about the care of elderly people. "I worked in some other homes before I bought this place and some of them I wouldn't put a pig in."

The women here have breakfast in bed if they want it, are encouraged to walk outside — mostly they prefer to sit — and are not given any sedatives beyond what is absolutely necessary. "They get more confused and then you get all these other problems like

bed wetting," said Judy.

One woman collects up the afternoon tea dishes and is thanked for her efforts.

Ethel Blanche Black has lived here for seven years and will be 104 on Christmas Eve. She is a gentle soul, not overly willing to talk about herself. "I've always been quiet, never talked much." According to her room-mate, in all the time she has lived there she has never complained about anything.

She is small and dark and thin, with wispy white hair pushed back and eyes that are cloudy but look at you directly. According to Judy she has still got muscles in her arms from years of floor scrubbing, washing and

polishing. In the days when running a home meant chopping wood the night before and rising at the crack of dawn to light the fire and boil the copper she was a good housekeeper. Judy, herself hardworking, hanging out the washing when I arrive, has a lot of respect for her.

"Ways of living", says Ethel, "Have changed a lot over the years." She laughs at herself and the things she used to do, like collecting the tea leaves and throwing them over the carpet, then sweeping them up with a big straw broom. "Nowadays you just pick up the vacuum cleaner and off you go."

Judy has just bought a microwave oven and I tell Ethel that soon she will be eating roast dinner cooked in a plastic bag inside the microwave in ten minutes. "I've never heard of it, but you could never cook a roast in ten minutes."

Until she was 85 she went to dances in Levin and until she was 95 she played housie. At 95 she was knocked over by a car and broke a leg. "It was marvellous how it knitted again but now you see I have to use a stick."

She was married three times. "Wore out three men", says Judy and laughs — gently. Her last husband died 24 years ago when he was 85 and she 80.

She is deaf, you have to shout to communicate with her and she can no longer read as her eyes are not strong enough. But until recently they have been good. "They're not bad eyes for 104 and I have never worn glasses in my life." She has a feeling of respect and affection for the body she has lived with all these years.

What does she do while she sits here, think? I ask her, and she just laughs. She's keeping her thoughts to herself, with no desire or need to talk. Self contained.

Her room-mate sitting next to her describes how neither of them sleep at night. "She says the alphabet over and over, counting sheep I suppose. The nights are interminable," and Ethel Black agrees. "If only I could get into bed and sleep until the morning, how wonderful that would be. It seems like I have never been able to sleep."

SOMEONE'S SCREAMING "Help! help! help! Let me out!" It sounds like rape or murder or the most horrific of nightmares and it doesn't stop. For an hour and a half while I'm talking to some of the other patients in

the living room of this private psychiatric home, it doesn't stop.

I ask a woman I am talking to what she thinks the sound is. She says there are playing fields outside and a rugby game is in progress. She is an optimist. The voice sounds young and strong. I'm surprised when its owner, Grace, is led out into the sitting room. She is a little, bent, wrinkled old woman with broken skin and bruising on her forehead where she has fallen or hit her head against something.

I go over and sit beside her and ask what she was shouting about. She says she was waiting for Laurie and he was taking so long.

Grace is blind and her eyes roll about as though she is looking at the ceiling. She hears everything and everything worries her. The television set beside us is making bubbling noises. Grace jumps around nervously, "What's that water?"

"Who are those people? Who's looking after them? Laurie!" Her voice rises until she is shrieking, "Laurie, bring those people in."

"Men don't think. They are always going and talking to people and bringing them home." She keeps picking and worrying at the broken skin on her head. I draw her hand away and she thrashes out at me. "Oh leave me alone."

Sometimes in the darkness she is locked in a car, trapped in a confined space, panicking. "Let me out. Let me out." She wants to go home. Where's the door? Heading towards the wall. "I have to get out of here. I have to go home."

And she wants her husband. The most impassioned thing I heard her say was, "Oh, I do miss my husband so." She is leaning on my arm, resting her head on my lap, rubbing her hand up and down my arm, reaching up to my face. I'm beginning to panic. I hope she is not thinking that I'm Laurie. I sit her up gently. Where is Laurie? He is dead.

Grace is starting to pray. "Oh dear Jesus save me." There's a woman sitting over on the other side of the room. She is stern and domineering. She keeps everybody here in check. "I wouldn't pray dear. Not here. Not out loud."

"Oh dear Jesus save me. I feel ill. I want to lie down. Are the dishes done? Those children should be in bed. I feel ill. I want to go home."

She is trying to get up. Two nurses are here. "I'm afraid it's time for her to

come away now." "Look at her, she's getting worse, more demented." One nurse on each arm they lead her away.



Edith Randell came to New Zealand 15 years ago. In a life span of 82 years that isn't long.

She sold her home and left her friends and two grand-daughters and came to join her son and a daughter-in-law she didn't know in Rotorua.

● A WORKER'S VIEW

The Chase Corporation is best known for its mirrored Queen St towers, few people associate it with the gracious old villas called Time Life Care Rest Homes and Hospitals.

Prior to beginning my comprehensive nursing training I spent some time working as a nurse aide, and it was several weeks before a colleague whispered that we were actually employed by Chase. Caring for our aging population is a major "growth industry" and although very labour intensive, it is a potentially very profitable one.

The nurse administrator had to run the hospital to a very tight budget, and staff were advised to rinse out empty milk bottles with one third water and pour this back into the milk jugs! I have since spoken to several qualified nurses who left when Chase took over the hospital because they considered that changes made at that time were incompatible with a safe and caring environment.

Like many people, I had believed that being put into a "home" was literally a fate worse than death and was relieved my mother died peacefully at home before this became necessary. My first impression was to be pleasantly surprised by the quality of the care given by nurses and aides. The woman I worked with were very warm and loving, taking time to listen and talk with clients, stroke their cheeks and give them hugs. A phrase I often heard was "we're supposed to do it that way but I do it like this because it's nicer for them". The day shifts were very busy, including domestic cleaning, and it wasn't easy to make time for these "extras".

Unfortunately, one uncaring nurse is enough and in the time it took to fire

She described her feeling of desolation as she stood on the deck of the ship as it moved out of the mouth of the Thames River. "I was standing there ready to cry, thinking, what am I doing?"

Now she lives in a rest home in Johnsonville, Wellington. Two years ago when she first moved in her son lived nearby, but he has been transferred to Australia for seven years. "A posh job with an insurance firm." So she is alone.

She has very little money. "Everything I get goes into my rent here."

an unsatisfactory staff member several clients sustained bruising from rough handling.

Nurse aides are paid very poorly (my sixteen year old son earned \$2 an hour more in his cleaning job), and the work involves constant heavy lifting and handling urine and faeces.

What made this job very special was the poignant dignity, gentle humour, overwhelming warmth, and muddled wisdom of the elderly residents. They maintained all this having been taken from their homes to share unspeakable intimacies with strangers, often three to a room. Not surprisingly the highest praise for a room-mate was "she keeps herself to herself".

The elderly women in the home and hospital were mostly very "easy" (when rest homes are sold "all women residents" is quoted as a market benefit). They quietly accepted indignities and conformed to the will of others, trying "not to be a bother", as they had done all their lives. What will my "my late baby boom" generation be like I wonder? Irrascible as hell I hope. But I suspect that when we are that powerless we will also accept, gratefully and unquestioningly.

The bad (and unsurprising) news is that even at the end of our lives we are being manipulated to make rich white men richer.

Footnote:

The Nurses' Association has recently asked for a commission of inquiry into elderly care in private hospitals and rest homes. Issues they have raised are the lack of a formal complaints procedure and a code of rights. They are also asking for enquiry in to the handling of residents' money and the maintenance of facilities such as showers. □

Lauren Lethal; "Out of the Woodwork"

'.... works use painted domestic furniture as vehicles for enlivened social commentary....'

DOWSE ART MUSEUM,
LAINGS ROAD, LOWER HUTT
JUNE 6 TO JULY 31

There is only cursory recognition of the need for privacy

Sometimes her son sends her 50 dollars. But she has made friends.

A woman from across the corridor who Edith helped when night after night she fell out of bed, keeps her supplied with fresh fruit, and a high school girl who regularly visits the home brought some patches — Kermit and Miss Piggy — to sew over the holes in her slippers.

The home is new and was built to be a rest home. Edith has her own room and just along the corridor there is a small sitting room where she can watch television and make herself a cup of tea. She regularly goes along every morning with a friend. They make a pot of tea and bring it back to share in Edith's room. She eats her main meals in the common dining room. The breakfasts, she says, are lovely. "Big dishes of peaches and apples with cream on the top if we want it."

Morning teas, though, she is not so enthusiastic about. "Sometimes the scones are like bombs." But she is a woman who is accustomed to making the best of the situation and if the scones are hard she feeds them to the birds. She has begun to hope each morning that the scones will be hard. "The birds are out there waiting for me."

Edith's life has been an eventful one, most of it spent in and around London. Her parents owned a shop in South End. She has a photo; A.C. SAVALL: Tobacco, Stationery, Confectionery and Toys. "My school days were spent going to school and working in the shop."

At 18 she wanted to marry but her parents refused permission so Edith decided to leave home. She rented a room in a boarding house and all week as she took her two adopted baby brothers for an outing in their pram, she smuggled belongings out of her parents home.

"I met William my young man, and we sat and talked and then he said to me, 'What are you doing for your tea?' I didn't know. I had no money and of course I was hungry. He went and bought me two saveloys and a glass of milk. I thought it was so romantic."

So they talked and then William escorted her to her rented room. He left her there and she climbed into bed and went to sleep. She was woken by a thumping on the door. It was her father come to fetch her with a policeman.

Edith did eventually marry William and they had a daughter and a son. Beautiful children. They lived in London during the second world war —

right near the airport. The Battle of Britain was fought over their heads. Edith blames the years of bombing and the stress it caused for the multiple sclerosis her daughter died of when she was 35.

In the early sixties Edith helped her son run a rock and roll club in South London. He had a motorbike with a side car and she used to ride around in it with a bucket of glue looking for hoardings to paste advertising posters on. "At night we would get about 250 kids up there. We had Tommy Steele up from London once. Keith used to go to Marks and Spencer's to buy a box of cakes. I used to do sausages on a stick. it was marvellous."

When her son married and settled down in New Zealand Edith came out to join him. She lived in a pensioner flat in Rotorua and then in Palmerston North but began to have trouble with blood circulation in her legs. "I was in a terrible state. My legs were covered in ulcers. A woman came around and made a cup of tea, but I thought, 'This is not what I want.'"

She moved to Wellington and lived with her son and his family for a while but kept having falls, finally breaking her leg. She felt her daughter-in-law wasn't really happy about having her there so she moved into the home. □

WHAT'S NEW

AUCKLAND

BORN TO CLEAN written and directed by Renee, songs and music by Hilz King and Jess Hawk Oakenstar, with Bernadette Doolan and Andrea Kelland. Presented at Limbs Studio, cnr Brown and Fitzroy Sts, Ponsonby, 17-21, and 24-28 June. Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8.30, Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 6.30.

WOMEN'S RESOURCE NETWORK aims to be a focus for women in the community, to network and link with other women's groups, to provide access to information and learning opportunities for women. We also have a consumer's file on North Shore doctors. All women are welcome to attend fortnightly meetings held in Devonport. For information phone 456-888.

LESBIAN BALL. The fourth annual lesbian ball will be held at the University Cafe, 4 July from 8.00 p.m. Chips and drinks for sale, and accommodation will be arranged for out of towners. \$6 in fancy dress, \$10 if not. For information phone 888-325.

AUCKLAND RAPE CRISIS CENTRE, 63 Ponsonby Road, phone 764-404.

A WOMAN'S FESTIVAL is planned for 29 June - 9 July at Auckland University Students Association. If you have any ideas for workshops, seminars, speakers, forums, entertainment, stalls, social events or anything that you would like to either stage or just see happen, phone Biddy or Sue Adams at 390-789 during working hours.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: The Way The World "Works", Women men and the Ecosystem. Marilyn Waring Sat 13 June, Sat 20 June. \$44 includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch. Contact: Centre for Continuing Education Ak 737-999

N.Z. — CUBA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY is organising a work brigade to Cuba for January 1988. During the month-long trip, one week is spent picking fruit, and the remaining time is given to touring, attending meetings and participating in social and cultural activities. Cost should not exceed \$5000. For details contact the Society, P.O. Box 6716, Wellesley St. Auckland. Phone 641-350.

WEA COURSES for the second term:

The Law and You, covering topics such as civil liberties, women, young people, getting loans, consumer rights. Tuesdays, 2 June - 14 July 6-8 pm. at WEA.

Womens Issues. Tuesdays, 2 June - 21 July, 10 a.m. - 12 noon. Phone 485-279 to enrol.

Learning the Fijian Language. Tuesdays, 2 June - 4 August, 7 - 8.30 p.m. at WEA.

School Certificate Human Biology. Tuesday throughout the year, 7 - 9 p.m. at Auckland Girls' Grammar School (AGGS).

Getting to Know the Kitchen in the Tongan Language. Saturdays, 6 - 27 June, 1 - 5 p.m. at WEA.

Healthy Food means Healthy Body. Mondays, 22 June - 6 July, 6 - 8 p.m. at WEA.

Woodwork for Women: at Introduction. Saturdays, 27 June - 11 July, 10 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. at Auckland College of Education.

Developing Video Skills for Women. Saturdays, 27 June - 4 July, 9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. at WEA.

A Basic Introduction to Computers. Saturday, 4 July, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at University of Auckland Education Department.

The Art of Public Speaking. Saturday, 11 July, 9.30 a.m. - 4 p.m. at WEA.

Word Processing and its Skill. Mondays, 13 July - 10 August, 6 - 8 p.m. at AGGS.

How to Use Facilitated Role-Play. Saturday, 1 August, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at WEA.

Advanced Woodwork for Women. Saturdays, 1 - 15 August, 10 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. at Auckland College of Education.

Note new address: WEA, 131A Williamson Ave, Gery Lynn. Phone 764-857

WEA NEEDS TUTORS in self-esteem courses for women, School Certificate subjects for revision courses in Term III, and Te Reo Maori. Phone 764-857 if interested.

CREATION SPIRITUALITY, the first of a series of workshops facilitated by Betty Wendelborn will run for eight weekly two-hour sessions. Betty, a teacher, musician and creative drama instructor, will use the expressive arts as forms of meditation leading to spiritual release. Venue: Pentlands, Buchanan St, Devonport. For enrolments and further information phone Linda Grey, 456-888.

HAMILTON

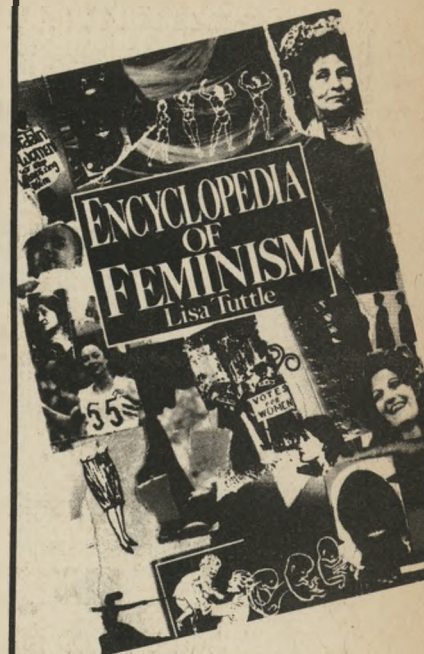
UNUHA KI TE AO MARAMAI: Multicultural women's literature, a weekend course facilitated by Cathie Dunsford to look at fiction and essays of American Indian, Jewish, Maori, West Indian, Black African and Asian women writers. Saturday and Sunday, 6 - 7 June, 9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m., at AG. 10 University of Waikato, Hamilton. For information contact Gillian Marie, Centre for Continuing Education, Univ. of Waikato, Phone 62-889, ext. 8195.

WELLINGTON

SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE for peace and justice in South America. Union Hall, Victoria University, 17-19 July. This is a national anti-war conference in solidarity with Nicaragua and other struggles in Central America. Organised by the Nicaragua Must Survive Campaign and Latin American solidarity groups. Contact: Conference Organising Committee, c/- P.O. Box 9716, Wellington.

ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS

This directory is published irregularly. It is important to keep it updated. We cannot check addresses and details, so please advise us of any changes. Please say if access is available for wheelchairs or women with walking disabilities. Thank you to those women and groups who sent in corrections.



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FEMINISM

by Lisa Tuttle

A concise, one volume reference guide to the history of the feminist movement.

399pp

\$29.99

Macdonald Publishers

coping with miscarriage

I went looking everywhere for information . . . and found very little.

SANDRA My first miscarriage was a great shock to me. Like most women I knew absolutely nothing about it, even though I knew that my mother had almost miscarried me. She had simply gone to bed for six weeks and eventually produced a perfectly healthy baby.

That didn't happen to me. After a week of threatening to miscarry I did lose the baby. I felt right at the beginning that it would happen this way. It has surprised me to discover since that many women have this inner knowledge of which way things are going to turn out. In fact, half of threatened miscarriages end in a healthy pregnancy. I miscarried at six weeks and was really devastated. Everything I knew about pregnancy at that stage didn't tell me anything about what I was going through. The pregnancy felt painful right from the beginning, almost like period pain, and then I started to bleed, just spots, and then it would get better. I tried to be positive, but that was always tempered with the black despair of knowing I was going to lose the baby. When I did lose it, it was a relief in one sense because this dreadful up and down was over.

I felt an enormous sense of loss — not so much of the baby but of my own self esteem. I knew women who were having babies in much more difficult circumstances than I was in. I was in a stable relationship, we had our own home, I had a stable job. And I knew women who were going through successful pregnancies without any of those positive aspects in their lives. So when people said it was stress I really didn't see their point. I really felt I was being punished in some way for something I had done earlier in my life. Which doesn't seem very sound, but I had

an absolute feeling of grasping at straws, I had to have some explanation.

I had two more miscarriages, at nine and ten weeks. The one at ten weeks was very very painful. It was as I imagine a full term labour might be. In all three cases I saw the foetus, it got flushed down the toilet with all the other stuff. I wasn't hospitalised at all until the last one.

I eventually found out that my miscarriages were caused by a deformity in my uterus. My GP had the point of view that these things happen in about one out of five

cases, and it was just bad luck that I had a second one. I wasn't with him when I had a third. He suggested that I go home and have fun trying again! He said that I would probably feel a bit weepy, but it wasn't a big deal.

So of course I told my husband exactly what the doctor had said and he thought it all sounded quite reasonable, so neither of us could understand why I wasn't reacting in this way, why I fell apart periodically, why I didn't seem to be able to cope with my job or my relationship with my husband. I just couldn't cope with anything, and I thought it was my weakness. I didn't know that nearly every-

body who has a miscarriage goes through that experience. I never thought of it as being a death, or that I was grieving. It was just a little lump, I never thought of it as a baby. It wasn't until one of the doctors who was helping us write the book suggested to me that I was grieving that it all fell into place. It took eighteen months from the time of my first miscarriage to stop the tearful, upset behaviour.

The end of this grieving was actually quite a special process for me. After my last miscarriage — I call it my third

Sandra Van Eden Long and Kitch Cuthbert talked to Pat Rosier about their experiences with miscarriage, which led them to publish a questionnaire in *Broadsheet*, *The New Zealand Women's Weekly* and the Parents' Centre bulletin in 1985, (they got 800 responses) and then write a book, *Coping With Miscarriage*, which has just been published.



Kitch Cuthbert (left) and Sandra Van Eden Long

Photo: Gil Hanly

I was so overjoyed to find out the *cause* of my miscarriages. I conceive very easily and I could see myself just having six miscarriages a year and never having a baby. So it was wonderful to know that was going to end. And even if it had meant that I could never have a baby I think I would have been satisfied.

KITCH I had my miscarriage at 11 weeks. It was my first pregnancy and I was delighted to be pregnant. I had never

pret for her and explain what was happening.

When I bled, before I miscarried, I went looking for all the information I could find about it. I searched book shops and public libraries and found very little. Afterwards I talked with a social worker friend about the idea of a pamphlet with information about miscarriage, and she said why not a book. I liked the idea of doing it with a group of women, and mentioned it to Sandra and the idea grew

The two questions women most wanted answers to were what caused their miscarriage and what sex the foetus was.

heard about miscarriage, I hardly knew what one was, and suddenly I was miscarrying. As soon as I saw the first blood in my knickers I felt absolute terror. I just screamed. I had the miscarriage at home by choice but was hospitalised later. I had a scan and they said there was no baby. We had looked carefully in the bowl, at home, to see what had come away. I later discovered I had probably had a "blighted ovum" where the baby stops developing at a very early stage. So what had come away was the placenta and all the other pregnancy tissue.

It was while I was in hospital that I came to see some of the other women's reactions to miscarriage. I was in a room with three other women, one of whom was Samoan. She was absolutely terrified and thought she was dying. In a miscarriage there is an awful lot of blood, it's like a tap's been turned on, and no-one had explained to her. In the end we got one of the cleaning women to come and inter-

from there.

We decided that we wanted the book to do more than reflect our experiences. To do that we thought of producing the questionnaire. And the publishers were interested! So two and a half years and two babies (Kitch and Sandra each had a child while writing the book) later, the book is complete. One of the things we both felt quite strongly about was that we wanted it to reflect many women's experiences, so the medical people we used would preferably have had miscarriages themselves. And both the doctors we got to help us were gynaecology registrars at National Women's Hospital, and both had had miscarriages.

We also wanted a place somewhere in the book for partners' response to miscarriage because that was one of the things that came out very strongly in the survey, that the New Zealand male's response to emotional things was to be "strong and silent" So our partners wrote that chapter.

foetus was. They wanted to know the sex to help them grieve. Like Sandra I didn't know at the time that what I was experiencing was grief. In fact I thought I was going mad. I was suicidal and depressed and I thought I was the only woman in the world going through this, it was just me, and I was mad.

The depression and the grief for me were very short and intense, probably three or four weeks. I conceived the next month. One discovery we have made is that women who miscarry and don't get to deal with their loss and grief are much more likely to suffer from post natal depression if they later have a child.

SANDRA It seems to us that the women who have the

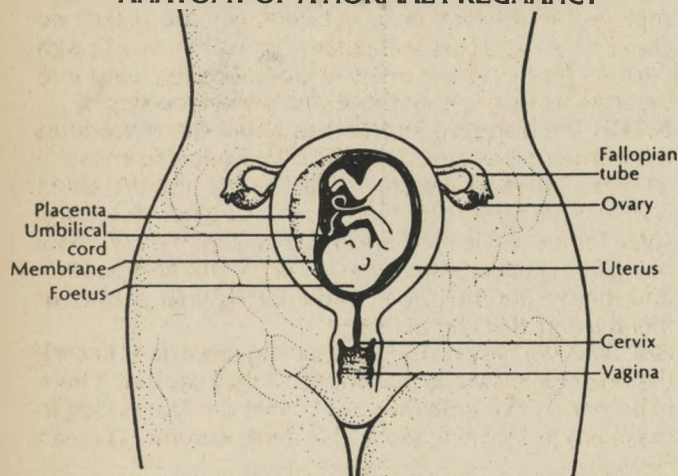
generally assumed that miscarriages were self-induced. Still today older women don't like talking about miscarriage because it's used as a synonym for abortion.

KITCH When I arrived at the hospital staff used the phrase "spontaneous abortion", and I said no, it isn't an abortion, and they explained that is the medical term. With more and more planned pregnancies in New Zealand, with women being able to control their fertility more accurately, more miscarriages are treated with sadness rather than relief. Older women have said that in their child-bearing years they have had six or seven children and three or four miscarriages and the miscarriages have been a relief. We have a chapter in the book that looks at these historical

With women being able to control their fertility more accurately more miscarriages are treated with sadness rather than relief.

greatest difficulties dealing with miscarriage are women who have had some other trauma in their lives and have repressed that. The miscarriage is then the trigger that lets this out. Very often they are women who have had an abortion, perhaps when they were very young. All they may have felt at the time was relief. Perhaps they didn't have any counselling. There was a woman who had suffered incest, quite a few who had been raped. And they had simply shut these memories away.

ANATOMY OF A NORMAL PREGNANCY



KITCH There was a woman who had had an abortion at 14. She was dealing with her two miscarriages very well, it was the abortion, which she had shut out at the time that she hadn't really dealt with. She was young, she hadn't ever told her parents. And then there was the conflict with later losing babies that she wanted. So that raised a whole lot of guilt.

I absolutely believe that abortion should be freely and safely available to all women, but having a miscarriage has changed my feelings about ever having one myself.

We discovered from the questionnaires that many women who miscarried 30 and 40 years ago had been treated very badly because it was assumed that they had tried to procure their own abortion when they presented at the hospital.

SANDRA Doctors and nurses were told in their training to look for signs of selfprocured abortion in women who were miscarrying and then to administer this lecture to them about the dreadful thing they had done. I think it was

changes.

Another thing that came out in the questionnaire, though, was a number of women who remember in most graphic detail miscarriages from thirty and more years ago and who have still not completed their grief. One woman wrote, "My husband is bloody pissed off with you for digging it all out again."

SANDRA When I was having miscarriages I could have rung my doctor every day with another question. Every answer added more information and led to more questions. And I certainly wasn't encouraged by my doctor to ring him. I felt it was my own weakness that I wasn't coping, it was my own stupid mind that wouldn't leave the topic alone. It never occurred to me that what I was going through was a healthy process, that I should talk and cry about it, and seek information. That was why, 18 months later, when I discovered the cause of my miscarriages it was such a wonderful release and relief.

KITCH I wrote questions down before I went to my doctor and she was really excellent, and gave me all her attention. And when people said, in an ordinary way, to me "How are you?" I would reply that I was not good, that I had just had a miscarriage. I'm sure that's why my grieving was completed very quickly and intensely. I would cry while I talked to people. A lot of people I thought were friends said the dumbest things, and we've got some advice about what not to say in the book.

SANDRA Our two experiences are almost case studies in opposites. Kitch's grief was short because it was intense and lived through to its completion, where mine just ambled on and on and on because I didn't recognise it and didn't do anything about it, except be overwhelmed from time to time, and continue to feel inadequate and weak.

That feeling of personal failure came through a lot in the questionnaire. Plummeting self-esteem. Many women had far more difficult times than I did.

KITCH One woman had 17 miscarriages and one live child. There were also women whose husbands absolutely ignored it, whose parents thought they were being "silly". Women in rural areas who had very little contact with other women had the toughest time of all. These were the women who wrote pages beyond the questionnaire.

SANDRA At one stage in the process of writing the book we had to stop working on it and try to raise funds for childcare. It just wasn't possible to work with my little boy around and the \$500 advance we got from the publishers was soon used up. They wouldn't give us any further ad-

The women who have the greatest difficulties dealing with miscarriage are women who have had some other trauma in their lives and have repressed that.

vance so we got the women's funding handbook and tried to get some money. We were asking for a total of \$2500 to pay for childcare and some sundry expenses like photocopying and postage. Out of all our attempts we got \$450 from the Federation of University Women and \$250 from the Mental Health Foundation, and that was all.

KITCH We couldn't believe that we didn't fit anyone's criteria. Miscarriage just doesn't fit in anywhere! So we plugged on regardless. We won't make any money out of the book. We are setting up a trust fund and all the proceeds will go to help set up support groups for women who have had a miscarriage.

SANDRA We wrote together for a year, and sorted out chapters. It was perseverance that got us there in the end. We just plugged on and on. After a year Kitch had to go back to full time teaching, so I carried on my own. I worked 20 hours a week during the day while Alasdair was in day-care centre and then two or three nights a week I'd work from about eight in the evening until two or three in the morning. And we eventually got it finished. Well, we thought it was finished, but there was proofreading the galley, hassles about the cover and so on.

KITCH We got lots of help all along the way. Like Alexa Johnston at the City Art Gallery helped us find something for the cover.

SANDRA I had never thought in my life that I would be involved in writing a book. In fact I didn't get UE English. So never thought writing was in any way a strength of mine. But when Kitch asked me to be involved I never thought of saying no, because I was very aware of the great need for a book on miscarriage. I don't know that I'd ever write another book, unless something else traumatic happened. I don't think of myself as a writer. It did teach me that if you feel strongly enough about something even though you think you've got no credentials at all, you can do it, and there will be people who will help. It can be easier to think of it as a collection of smaller tasks — like seven chapters of 5000 words, rather than a 35,000 word book. We were never sure at any stage that we could actually write, or that the book would get finished or be successful, although we always hoped that, or we would never have started.

KITCH Remember that first meeting with the editor. She took away the chapters we'd written and brought them back and we felt like little school kids, we wanted to know if it was all right.

SANDRA She didn't have anything positive to say, which was a great blow. Initially we were far too negative and bitter, especially towards doctors. The ones we choose to help with the book obviously were aware and understanding. But out of 800 replies to the questionnaire we had less than a dozen that were positive about the medical care they received. Nurses tended to get more pats on the back than doctors, but as far as their overall medical attention was concerned less than a dozen women were satisfied. We realise that our questionnaire doesn't represent an unbiased group, because only those who felt motivated to respond did, and an unhappy experience would be more likely to give that motivation.

KITCH We were so angry after reading 800 replies that were mostly very critical of medical care. The women

complained about not being told anything, being whizzed in, sent up to theatre "cleaned out" and sent home.

SANDRA Women would be told that they would have a D and C to clean out the uterus, but were not told the most basic things about the process — like whether it was done through the vagina and cervix or by incision through the abdomen. Many women had never been anaesthetised before, and were told off for their tears. It really depended on the individuals giving the care. In a rural area there may be only one gynaecologist, and that's it, take it or leave it.

KITCH I got angrier and angrier and I thought when we came to the medical chapter that we'd give it to these doctors, we'd tell them. No doctor really took the time the energy or the patience to even consider the emotional aspects. Miscarriage was just a hiccup in the whole process, a very minor health problem. But we had to agree with some of the editor's comments. Our hope with the book was that it be practical, positive, cheap, and easy to understand without being patronising.

SANDRA The anger we wrote in that chapter at first helped us, but it wouldn't have helped anyone reading the book. So we decided to write something that was practical. If doctors aren't talking with their patients well, that may be the doctor's fault, but what can the patient do about it? So we listed techniques for women to use with their doctor to get information. Doctors often leave it to the patients to ask, even those who want to be helpful.

KITCH We also give information about the procedures the women will be going through. We wanted to answer a lot of the questions before they arose. We also talk about how to get a new doctor, about not being put off, getting value for the service you are in fact buying. We talk about being in a situation where you are in a vulnerable position and they've got the power, about taking your partner or friend along, that sort of thing.

SANDRA We have no medical training so we don't know if the doctor's answer is reasonable. If they say that it happens one in five times we don't have the knowledge to make any judgement about what these statements mean for us.

We got two naturopaths to write information for us, but a lot of it was edited out at the end because one of the professors of obstetrics and gynaecology who looked at the finished text felt that it was unacceptable. We point out that there are alternatives and hope that anyone who wants to use them will seek out people who know about them.

KITCH We didn't really look into the role of midwives in miscarriage because most miscarriages occur in the first trimester of pregnancy. We talk about having a miscarriage at home and try not to direct women as to what to do but empower them to decide, by giving them information.

We go into the causes of miscarriage a lot, because that is information that women so badly want. We want the book to be useful to women who are threatening to miscarry, or have had miscarriages in the past. We also hope that it will be used by nurses, doctors, anyone who has contact with women. As long as there is life there will be miscarriages, so there will always be a need for information about it, and for strategies for coping. □

ON THE SHELF



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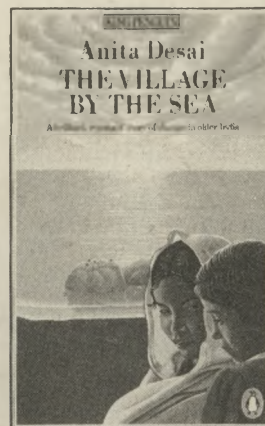
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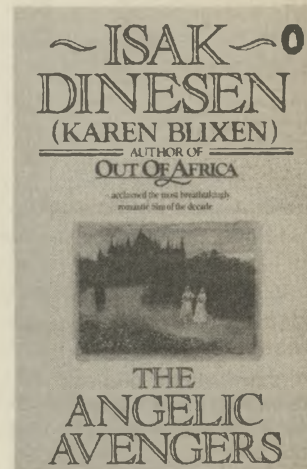
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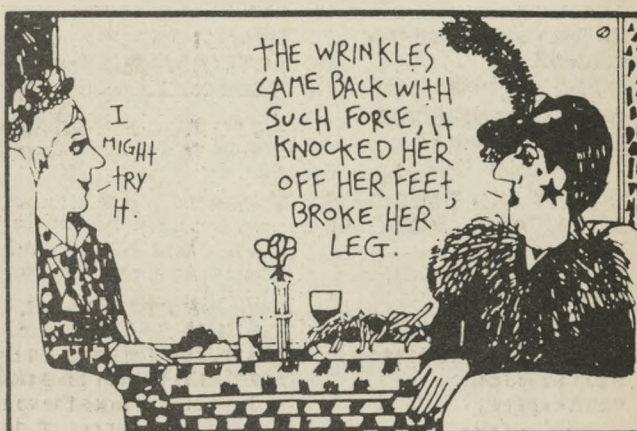
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THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

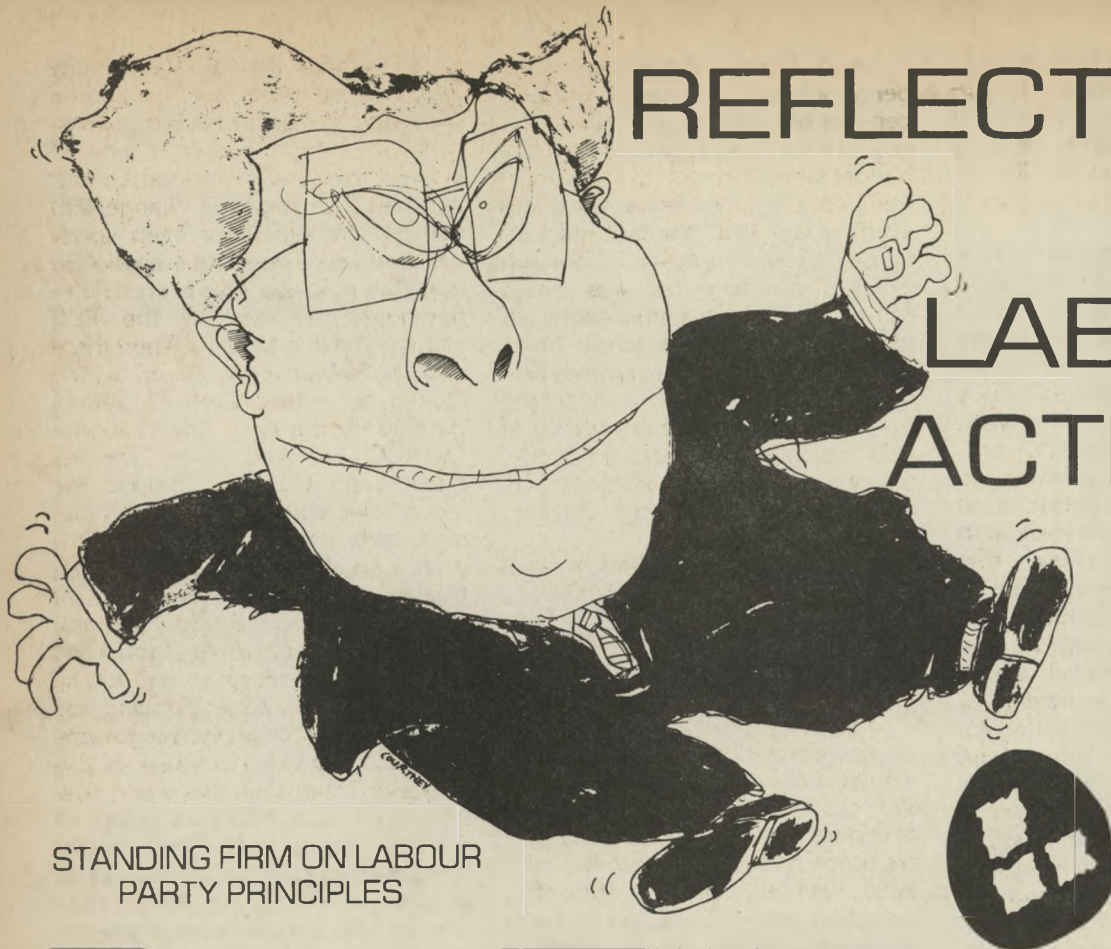
Maureen Freely \$10.99

CRUSOES DAUGHTER Jane Gardah \$17.55

THE BLOOD OF OTHERS (\$13.95), OLD AGE (18.95), MEMOIRS OF A DUTIFUL DAUGHTER (14.29), ALL SAID AND DONE (\$18.70), THE SECOND SEX (\$20.85), THE PRIME OF LIFE (\$19.99) All by Simone de Beauvoir.



Nicole Hollander



STANDING FIRM ON LABOUR PARTY PRINCIPLES

CERTAINLY the past three years have not been easy for me, nor for many of those I know within the Labour Party. That this has been so is for two reasons: the first is that a significant portion of the policy being enacted by the government had not been part of the Labour Party manifesto, particularly in the area of economic policy. The second reason is the way in which party activists, especially the more independently-minded, were treated by those in power. The use of dishonest smear tactics, and the hostility and contempt heaped upon the very people who had worked extremely hard to get those cabinet ministers and backbenchers into power had to be seen to be believed. And this continues, most recently visible in the attack upon some of the union candidates selected in safe Labour seats. I do not believe that democracy is well served by uncritical loyalty to any person or party. If we do not seek to understand and exercise our independent judgment, particularly in politics, then we are not good citizens.

Here, then, is the perspective of a down, but not out, socialist feminist

When it was first suggested that I write something on the forthcoming election from the point of view of a Labour activist, I was so depressed at the state of the Labour Party and government that I felt I owed it to *Broadsheet* readers not to inflict my angst upon them. However, later it seemed not such a bad idea to clarify how I felt about the past three years of a Labour government, especially since voting would be upon me before very long. I am not attempting to provide a comprehensive appraisal of the Labour government, this article is more of a highly subjective snapshot viewed from the perspective of a socialist feminist, who is certainly to the left of the present Labour administration, if not of many of those within the Party itself.

and member of the Labour Party. I would describe the present Labour government as Liberal, almost in the classical sense. It is strong on individual freedom (which makes me wonder if the party's women's policy on pornography will ever be implemented). I think it is important to remember that without Labour in power, it is highly unlikely that the Homosexual Law Reform Bill would have passed. While I know this was not a government measure, and owed more to Fran Wilde and activists in the community for its success, it is probably the most important measure in terms of democratic rights passed in the last three years, and depended ultimately on more liberal MPs — mostly Labour ones — for its ultimate passage through Parliament.

Emphasis upon personal freedom has also been applied to the economic sphere, in terms of market forces and capital accumulation. Although I am going to look at specific policy areas separately, I do not in fact believe it is right to separate the economic from the social. Indeed, I believe that social policy should determine economic policy and not the

other way around as it is at present. But the present government has apparently favoured an individualist libertarianism in economic thinking which is likely to dominate its approach to social as well as economic policy.

It is the government's economic policy that I have the most difficulty in accepting. I certainly can see that the New Zealand economy was in dire need of a drastic overhaul, with an impossible overdraft (as it were), heavily invested in large projects that were dead ducks, and with the state subsidising industries such as farming to a degree that was unrealistic. It all began reasonably optimistically, with summits and conferences that looked as if consultation between all parties would be taken seriously. But it has certainly not worked out that way. Planning is essential in an economy, although the degree of how much is certainly open to debate. But the government, in the end, let large private industry (euphemistically known as "the market") get on with it and withdrew as far as possible from the process. Unions, representatives of those in industry and the public service, have had minimal influence. Indeed, they have been reduced to fighting to retain what they already have or minimising job losses. There has been no move towards any form of industrial democracy, which I find deplorable. Direct participation in the economic decisions that fundamentally affect our working lives is essential for any truly democratic society. And if you think the concept of industrial democracy is wildly utopian, see the article by Rex Jones in *New Nation* (the Labour Party newspaper), in March 1987. It is certainly still on the Engineering Union's agenda, and it should be on that of any Labour government.

Instead of this, the government appears to subscribe to a "trickle-down theory", whereby through "deregulation" and "tax reform" those with capital are allowed to make lots of money. This in turn is supposed to cause some of it to trickle down to the bottom. The government seems unconcerned that those with capital may choose many different options, for example: investing offshore (where labour costs are cheaper), playing the financial capital market (visibly popular these days) or buying land or plant that does not result in more employment. None of this appears to have registered with the gov-

ernment. Despite the current prosperity of some companies, the percentage of company tax paid to the government is steadily declining: in a budget table released by Treasury in April, covering the eleven months to 28 February 1987 the individual income tax take was, in \$m, 7620.4 (up 21.8%); company tax was 340.3 (down 11.2%). This philosophy, of giving freedom to the rich or those with access to money, was surely also behind the tax cuts, which benefited the better off, and the imposition of GST which inflicts more hurt upon the poor. In a recent article in *The New Zealand Monthly Review*, Brian Easton wrote:

"Wealth has not trickled down from the rich to the poor anywhere else in the world: it is not going to happen in New Zealand. There is not a skerrick of evidence that major reductions in taxation on the rich will generate so much prosperity that the poor will get an even bigger share of an enlarged cake."

While Labour has been in power we seem to have seen the growth of a new class of the very rich, dabbling in the stock market and financial markets, flaunting conspicuous consumption and heaping scorn upon those who are seen to be unable to make it in the competitive environment. This group has launched an all-out attack on the welfare state and the union movement.

WHAT then has Labour done for its traditional constituency, the least well-off in society, and the union movement? Certainly there were schemes in the early days of the government, such as family support, to ensure income maintenance. I know that this made a great deal of different to friends of mine. The innovation of paying half (but why not all?) to the caregiver was very much on the right track. But I am actually unhappy with the general principle of subsidising wages, except in exceptional circumstances. People who work should earn a living wage and not have to be dependent upon government goodwill. And thinking of that, has either family support or the minimum guaranteed income, been increased to allow for the enormous inflation of the past few years?

Nearly all of us have been adversely affected by the unbelievable interest rates: my mortgage currently demands an interest of nearly 20%; others I know pay more. Rents in Auckland have gone through the roof. It

is no wonder that a recent study found, for example, that Maori home ownership is steadily declining. I suspect that Maori people, many of whom have long supported Labour and had high hopes of change with this government, have been sorely disappointed. The sharp recession in the regions, loss of jobs in some corporations, the end of the PEP scheme, have a hit hard. Then there was the "Maori Loan Affair" which should never have been allowed to develop the way it did. And the transfer of "Crown" land — see "The last Maori Land Grab" in "Behind the News." Two important changes, however, have been first, the new emphasis on the Maori language, (although the secretary of the Wellington Language Board has criticised the government's Maori Language Bill as "deceptive and toothless"), and the better funding for Kohanga Reo. Secondly, the government did expand the scope of the Waitangi Tribunal so that it can now investigate land injustices going all the way back to 1840. The Tribunal now faces an enormous task, and as its power is only to recommend possible redress or grievances, a government prepared to act accordingly is still needed in power.

Nor has the union movement fared particularly well. There appears to have been little genuine consultation with the movement and much more of the traditional Labour preoccupation with disassociating themselves from being tarred with that brush. The new industrial legislation was not to the unions' liking, and contestability for union membership was only partially averted. On the other hand, the Union Representatives Education Leave Act (1986) has been passed, setting up the Trade Union Education Authority. This gives union representatives paid time off to study, and is a welcome measure. The employers, predictably, fought against it, and it might well be lost under a National government. Unemployment has risen, although it is still considerably lower than in other OECD countries employing the same method of counting, the Household Labour Force surveys, which were brought in by Labour. But this is of little comfort to those who cannot get a job or find work in the field in which they are trained.

Perhaps it is worth remembering, at this point, National's promise to abolish the unemployment benefit,

which appalls many people I know. Certainly National carries no torch for any of the above groups, and their policies are likely to be even less friendly. We would undoubtedly see the return of voluntary unionism, and probably policies hostile to workers in general.

Many women, in particular, in the Labour Party, seem to be teachers, and education policy concerns them a great deal. Personally I find Russell Marshall a good Education Minister who has attempted some long overdue and worthwhile changes in the education system. But the vague threats of user-pays in tertiary education, affecting both the technical institutes and universities, fills me with anger. Women and the less well off would be particularly disadvantaged by any such measures. Education is one of the areas that has not been heavily pruned by Treasury-inspired cuts so far, but I need reassurance that this will remain the case. One of the positive aspects of the education policy of this government has been the return of some funding to groups such as the W.E.A. Under National there is little doubt in my mind that education would suffer. Ruth Richardson has outlined some of her ideas, and while her philosophy of freedom of choice in education sounds superficially appealing, the practical consequences of measures such as the ending of zoning are grim. Schools in the "desirable" category would presumably be able to choose their students, obtain more funding, and we would end up with a two-tiered education system.

HAVE Labour followed through on their promises to women? When the Ministry of Women's Affairs was initially established I was not a great enthusiast. But since then the Ministry appears to have had a positive influence in a number of ways: both in helping provide research to make an argument for women, and in having Ann Hercus in Cabinet. Her departure from politics is to be regretted, for it was important having a woman of such ability and high profile to argue on occasion for us. I know that her interventions behind the scenes have at times been critical to the success of a particular case.

There have been other good moves: the transfer of child care to the Education Department; making

available increased grants towards trained childcare workers' salaries, and the provision of establishment grants under the State Services Commission. Of course much more needs to be done. The whole atmosphere of hostility to child care has, if not evaporated, at least receded. Permanent part-time work has been brought in the public service, which gives much more choice to women. The funding for women's health projects was encouraging, even if the sums were not large. I don't wish to appear unrealistically euphoric, for there is still so much to be done. And I think this has come about despite the chauvinist behaviour of many of the male members of cabinet, but I do think the whole environment for feminists has improved. Perhaps it was so dreadful it could only get better. But I do see, around where I work at least, some efforts to accept feminist ideas. Perhaps I should get back to you in a year or so on this one.

I mentioned the women's health project. Health is a difficult portfolio due to the entrenched power of the most powerful and privileged union in the country, that of doctors. But again, as with education, I do not want to see health spending cut. Representatives, such as Dr. Ridley-Smith of the GP's union, appear to want a form of user-pays in the health service, and may find National more receptive to their aspirations. Private medicine does not improve the health of a society, as a study of the welfare state by Harold Wilensky found: "a rich supply of physicians, practicing mainly in private offices" he only half facetiously comments, could be argued to *increase* the death rate.

I have left until last the measure for which this government will probably be remembered most of all, and which I know represents its greatest achievement to many in the party and the peace movement. Making New Zealand nuclear free was courageous and an important gesture on the side of sanity. I'll never believe that we need to be protected by nuclear weapons. But this would be lost under National, whose urgent desire to return to the nuclear embrace of Anzus has been made painfully clear. There have been other positive aspects to foreign policy under Labour: the adoption of a clear policy on South Africa is one. We have turned our face to the Pacific, which is where we belong.

So where does that leave us? First

of all, I think that the present electoral laws, which provide for a first-past-the-post or "plurality" system which tends to concentrate power in two parties only, give us a very imperfect democracy. I believe that a form of proportional representation would reflect the wishes of the population far more accurately. This would mean that the proportions of votes gained by the political parties would more accurately determine the proportions of MPs representing each party in Parliament. Smaller parties (like Values, for example) would then have a chance of having a few MPs. A recent visit by a member of the German Green Party convinced me on this point. And just recently I read of the success of the woman's Party in Iceland with 10% of the vote. In New Zealand a party with that level of support may not get a single seat. In Iceland, feminists may be able to bring down a government and demand real equal pay from its successor. With proportional representation, no longer would one party, on winning an election, be able to exercise "unbridled power", as Geoffrey Palmer put it. The different sorts of macho politics practiced by this government and its predecessor would no longer be possible, and we could have a more consensual and reasonable style of government. And many more women MPs too. So I urge you to support the proposals of the electoral reform commission.

Secondly: how shall I vote in this election? My ideal scenario would be a Labour victory by about 2 or 3 seats. So that pressure from the party members would be much more effective in moderating the government's actions. There is, it seems to me, no alternative. The whole philosophical debate in politics has moved to the right of the political spectrum, and National will have to out-flank labour on the right if it is to carve a distinct identity. The prospect is chilling. At the moment the Opposition appears so dis-organised that it presents little alternative to Labour. But there will be no New Zealand Party in this election, and Labour will have an uphill struggle to win. Remember they only had 43% of the popular vote last time. So, unless you will puke when you enter the polling booth (and voting for some male Auckland Labour M.P.s would make me do just that) you might as well vote Labour. I shall have to. □

Rose Thorn

STROKES AND ART ATTACKS

OUT OF THE WOODWORK

An exhibition by Lauren

Lethal.Dowse Art

Museum, Lower Hutt,

6 June — 2 August

Lauren Lethal has "dabbled" in art-making since the age of five. For most of her artistic career her major concern has been related to painting in one form or another. While at school she spent many hours in the art room although it wasn't until her marriage broke up, when she was 25, that she became seriously involved in making art.

Now, at 37, Lauren works full time as an artist and identifies as lesbian. Her earlier careers include working as a chef and as a social worker. She lives in the Aro Valley, Wellington and has two teenage daughters. She says that her art has moved ahead in leaps and bounds since her children have grown up. One of her daughters, Astrid, is also an artist and they support each other's work and often bounce ideas off each other. Mutual support with other women is particularly important to her in periods of doubt.

Generally speaking Lauren finds women's art work more "real" than the work of men. She was once told by a male artist that she would "never make it as an artist". Perhaps because of this she admits to feeling a bit of the "I'll show you" in concentrating on art.

Although she is now strong enough in herself to "not give a fuck" what men think about her art, she feels that negative attitudes towards female artists has had a detrimental effect on many women or, in her words, "has taken the soul out of their work."

Lauren's art is directed towards women. The fact that women relate best to her work makes her think that something of a "secret" society exists around her work, with women talking to each other through the vehicle of her art. Her work belongs in the city — she feels that if she went to work in the country she would



"Dressing Fable" Enamel paint on wood. Lauren Lethal.

become too bovine. Her fantasy of herself is in the lapping-it-up-in-a-New-York-penthouse-apartment mould, rather than the romantic artist starving in an attic.

Out Of The Woodwork is her first exhibition in a public gallery. It consists of "everyday utilitarian wooden furniture transformed into active, almost living works. The humour aspect I see as most important, both for comedy's sake and as an effective political mechanism..."

Humour, as a way of making a serious statement is an important element of Lauren's work. There is also an undercurrent of political comment, relating particularly to the treatment or perception of women in heterosexual society today.

When Lauren began working on "Dressing Fable", a painted dressing table, she had a strong image running through her mind, of a young woman getting ready to go out on a date sitting in front of her dressing table surrounded by all the usual paraphernalia. The piece suggests that young women should be told the truth about these social events rather than being presented with the usual romanticism. "He may not kiss your lips, but punch them..." The pop song "It's All In The Game" was also in Lauren's mind while she was working, and the idea that song lyrics reinforce women's subordinate conditioning.

"Nest Of Labels", a painted set of nesting tables, arose from thinking about all the bird-related labels used on women. All the oppressive bird titles occupy the top table space, while pushing up from the bottom are positive bird images. One is an old Spanish saying, "Cria Cuervos" — raise ravens and they will grow up to peck out your eyes. This is a work Lauren particularly likes and one that she can see as belonging only to a woman.

Lauren does not want to be remembered as an artist who paints furniture, something she has been doing for only the past two years. Although there are still some items of furniture she wants to paint she has other projects planned for the near future, like going to Auckland to learn welding and compiling a book of the cartoons she has worked on for many years. On a grander scale she would like

to apply her art to a house or a car. □

Laurence Hall

BORN TO CLEAN

Writer and director

Renee and performers

Hilz King, Jess Hawk,

Oakenstar, Andrea

Kelland and Bernadette

Doolan talked with Pat

Rosler about this new

musical, to be performed

at Limbs Studio,

Auckland from 12 June.

Renee wrote and directed the two *Broadsheet* road shows, *What Did You Do In the War, Mummy* and *Asking For It*.

Renee It all started when Sandi Hall rang me one Thursday night and said could I write the opening for a *Broadsheet* seminar. The people who had been going to do something were no longer able to do it. I had a week. I said I'd have to think about it and I did. I quite liked the idea of it so I settled down and worked like mad and got a script done. It was about 20 minutes long. The music wasn't original, but I put new words to it. Then I asked Bernadette and other women to go in it and we did it and it was very successful. Then I joined the *Broadsheet* collective, and it was their tenth anniversary and we toured an expanded version, with more women in it.

Jess It was only going to have one musician, but by a strange and wonderful coincidence, Hilz had come up to Auckland for two weeks, and my Dad was very sick at the time so I didn't know whether I would be able to go or not. Both of us started rehearsing, so one of us could go on tour. But we were so wonderful together! and both became so much a part of it that we both went.

Renee That tour was with Judy Wishart, Margaret Blay, Jess, Bernadette and Hilz.

Bernadette *Asking For It* was virtually the same line up but instead of Judy Wishart we had Angela Boyes-Barnes.

Renee *What Did You Do In the War, Mummy?* was for women-only audiences, and we got taken to the Human

Rights Commission for that. There were two complaints. One was that it was a lesbian plot — that we just wanted to get women along there, and then we would hug and kiss them and everyone knows what happens then! It came to nothing of course. There were a few picketers, too on that first tour. I remember one lone man in Tauranga, who was anti-war — he thought the title suggested we were for war. *Asking For It* was a much longer tour, and very expensive. QEII provided some money. We went to lots of little places.

Bernadette When we came back we were exhausted and never wanted to do anything ever again. It was for six weeks, we were performing at night, maybe two shows, and packing up and travelling to the next place during the day. I think we had about three days in that whole time when we weren't travelling or performing.

Jess We were staying with people which was wonderful but meant we were continuously being sociable and partying and performing — we all had crack-ups along the way. **Bernadette** Nonetheless it was a really amazing experience for all of us. It did make it very hard to think about doing another show the next year!

Renee I've never got into a van since.

Pat Is *Born to Clean* a review? **Renee** No, it's a musical, and it's very coarse and vulgar.

Jess Last year we were talking about doing a lesbian revue and that was a big topic of conversation. I wrote a couple of songs and Hilz started working on a musical piece. It was only as the songs began and your ideas developed, that it turned into *Born to Clean*.

Renee It wasn't that, it was changing the title. We were going to call it *Still Asking For It*. I did a script, but it wasn't very good, although it had some quite nice little pieces in it. A couple of weeks ago I took an executive decision(!) and said I wanted to call it *Born to Clean*. I just kept on saying that was what I wanted to call it. We have a song called that, which strengthened my case. **Bernadette** The other thing we're really lucky about this time is that we've got Andrea as a cast member.

Andrea I can't think how I got roped into it. It was way back last year.

Renee You said that you'd love to be in it, that you'd do anything you could to help, but would specially like to be in it. So I thought, great! I'll grab her! I've known and admired Andrea's work for a long time. And Hilz suggested doing the music.

Pat Does that mean you're writing original music for the songs?

Renee No, they're writing the songs as well. *In Asking For It* I didn't use other people's music. We had had the experience of doing a snippet on TV and having someone writing to us and threatening to sue. Also, I had written once to Irving Berlin asking if I could use the music to "The Girl That I Married" in *Setting The Table* and I had to provide the words that I wanted to change it to — it was to be about the boy that I married — and of course they turned that down. For this show Jess and Hilz are writing the lyrics and the music.

Bernadette the title song *Born to Clean* is absolutely wonderful. It's very, very funny. It's a real take-off of the idea that women's place is in the home and the man is at the head of the household. The song takes it to absurd lengths, which makes it really, really funny. The style of the song is quite rollicking, country and western. We've had the script for about a week. It's a working script at the moment, which means that it's fairly well set but, as it has been with all the shows we've done it's all up for grabs if you've got ideas.

Andrea We're going to take the mickey out of some of the worst television ads we can lay our hands on.

Pat What happens if you're in the middle of rehearsal and somebody wants to do something different from the script?

Jess We're all agreed that Renee has got the final word on it. If we feel like doing something different we try it out, but if it doesn't look good, Renee will say. She's the only one that can see it from out front as it were.

Renee I'll always try it. In terms of the actual directing or presentation the cast at times come up with things that are far better than what I had thought of, even to changing the rhythms of a particular piece, which has just made such a difference. That will probably happen this time. It is true that I'm the only one out front and that I am where the



audience will be.

Bernadette If it doesn't work we all have to work on it to find something that does. It's not just Renee saying we will do this and we will do it this way. Some of the best moments we've had in both revues have actually happened when there's been a break in rehearsal.

sal for some reason and we're fiddling around and all the ideas start to flow. We always try them and quite often they've ended up in the final show.

Pat So there's a certain amount of sparking off each other?

Renee Yes, there's a lot of that.

Would you like to talk about the music you two? I ring up and say I want a song called "Dear Gertrude Stein" and Jess says, "Right, okay..."

Pat So what happens after that?

Jess Hilz comes around and says "I've worked out that we've got to have something

at the beginning and something at the end" and I say "And something in the middle."

Hilz And it just all naturally falls into place after that! Once we've made this momentous decision about how to do it.

Jess We start off by working separately and then we get to-

gether. And sometimes I've got the beginnings of something and Hilz can add to it, or whatever.

Hilz Jess is wonderful because she actually just chucks in everything that even vaguely suits. Whereas I sit around and go ponder ponder until I'm absolutely sure about something. So from Jess's large amounts of stuff we just refine, don't we? I get all worked up about it and start throwing in a few bits myself. It's the same process as writing a script, really. It's just a matter of refining ideas. And the more ideas you've got to work with the more varied your songs and music are going to be.

Jess I find it really easy to write because Renee says, "This is what I want it to be about". It's difficult when I get the urge to write a song and I don't know what I want to say. Once the title is there, what the song is going to be about, then the style comes and the words can come.

Pat I suppose only a musical illiterate would ask, but what comes first, the music or the words?

Jess They sort of both come together generally.

Hilz It depends what you're writing. Sometimes I've written one line, and I sing it away in my head and get a line of music, then a line of words and the music, and the whole thing comes together. But sometimes I can write a whole screed of words and put music to them, or think of a tune and the words come later. Or get a style. I thought at a particular point in *Born To Clean* it would be nice to have a blues sound, a blues guitar, sing a few lines of blues, and have that come into a stronger line with everyone joining in. That is just a style, without any words or melody lines.

Jess I usually sit down holding the guitar and just start strumming away and see what happens. I have to start singing something with it, so...

Bernadette Well, I'm certainly dying to get into it.

Jess Yeah. It's four years since we've done a revue and we've done a lot of living in there.

Bernadette It's quite a different way of coming to it, too. It was actually Andrea who arranged our first meeting this year.

Andrea I was dying to get my body on the boards again, so there's some personal interest there.

Bernadette It gets everybody. We've all got such varied schedules for the year that when we did get together we found we had only a certain period of time to do the show in. So if you hadn't got us together then to sort out the dates the show would never have happened.

Andrea It seems to be a good year for women this year, everybody's really busy. A lot of women I know are getting off their bums and saying "I'm sick of being poor and I'm sick of waiting for the crumbs to drop. I'm going to get out there and do it for myself."

Pat Talking about being poor, what about money for the show? Have you got any?

Renee QE II have given a \$3000 grant, which they do for the first performance of any new script. That will be taken up with the set design, and the set itself and publicity and the rent for the venue. We'll be sharing whatever we get from the takings.

Andrea We're looking for rehearsal space at the moment. It's very desperate to find reasonably priced space.

Renee The reason we're not touring is not just my dislike of vans, it's the fact that it's very expensive. Hopefully people will be able to come and see us at Limbs Studio. Hilz is going away...

Jess She's jumping a tramp steamer to Korea...

Renee... but when she comes back, we may consider doing it at another venue, but we're not making any definite plans. This is a Working Title Theatre production.

Andrea It's really good to have an umbrella like that to apply for funds.

Renee Well, then they know that it's going to happen, it's got some credibility.

Andrea Your name helps, too, Renee.

Renee They look at everything on it's merits. Sure, anything that I write they'd take a look at and be interested. But if they didn't like the idea or felt that it wouldn't work or something they might turn me down.

Pat Well you're obviously not in it for the money, so what are you in it for?

Andrea The fame and the glory!!

Renee I haven't directed anything since '83 so I'm keen to do that.

Jess I haven't played for the last couple of years, so for me it's getting started again.

Hilz I love acting!

Renee And I love Hilz' acting, too.

Bernadette There's all the things like practising your craft, but most of all there's the buzz you get from performing. It's hard bloody work too, so there are two sides of it. As you get closer to opening night the stress goes up and we'll be saying "Why on earth are we doing this? Why?" The pressure of your nerves and fears — I'm going to forget my words, I'm going to jump five pages and nobody else will know where the hell we are...

Andrea And often these things come true. And you've got to get yourself out of it.

Hilz It's terrifying for a musician to be acting, because if you forget the words in a song you can go "La da deda, doo bop a dah...", but on the stage you actually have to come up with something or this person's going to be looking at you very oddly. I find that absolutely terrifying.

Pat What's it going to cost to go to *Born To Clean*?

Renee Well I still have to check it out with the others by my suggestion is \$12.

Bernadette With a \$10 concession for bookings of ten or more.

Pat How long is the show?

Renee An hour and a quarter.

Jess Will there be a reduction for beneficiaries?

Andrea Unfortunately I have found in the heaps of experience I have had in the box office, that if you have a special rate for beneficiaries nine times out of ten, unless they are incredibly honest, people will pay the lower rate. So beneficiaries suffer for other people's dishonesty.

Renee I just feel that \$12 won't provide huge wages, even if we have full houses. The venue's expensive, so is advertising. The cost of the set and the costumes is going to be at least a thousand dollars, so I think that's a reasonable amount.

Pat There must be something extra for you in working as a group of women.

Renee Particularly in a show like this, that's about things that concern us as women and which has a lot of humour in it. **Jess** We're just such jolly good pals, anyway. So it's fun. □

THE INANNA CYCLE

Performance and works

on paper by Juliet

Batten. Pacific Gallery, Auckland.

I went to *The Inanna Cycle* knowing nothing of the myth and having no idea what to expect. I was offered a bowl of purifying water at the door to dip my finger into and place on my forehead, my third eye, to rid myself of negativities. Inside the Pacific Gallery, high reedy flute music was playing. Juliet, dressed in black, was seated on the floor in meditation with a small drum, maracas, bowls and jugs, a platter of earth and candles and incense all carefully placed on a black cloth before her. Her works on paper on the surrounding walls told three stories of the ancient Sumerian myth of the goddess Inanna. As I was a bit early, I followed the cycle told in words and pictures around the room — each work had a few lines of the myth on it, each one a crystallised still in the movement of Inanna's life. Juliet says "Each day began with my reading aloud from the poems. The moment an image took hold I stopped and painted". It was evident in her work that she had somehow "become" the myth — the rivers, the reedy watery place, the clay pots, the powerful sexual/sensual love, the death and the resurrection of Inanna.

Juliet's performance was the ritual reenactment of the "Descent of Inanna." With the audience seated around her, she lights candles and incense and repeats/chants to the sound of maracas "Inanna from the great above, she opened her ear to the great below". The goddess Inanna is opening to her deeper self. She beats the drum she hangs around her neck and chants Inanna, Inanna ey; she pours milk into the glass bowl and deep blood red juice/wine into the pottery bowl introducing Ereshkigal, queen of the underworld, Inanna's other side. As she tells the story of Inanna's descent, she blows out a candle for the abandoning of each temple. The teller/Juliet/Inanna removes her jewelry piece by piece at each gate giving up all her earthly powers. She enters the throne room and is condemned.

Juliet, now a kind of priestess of ritual, pours the blood red liquid into the clear bowl of white milk; the red dramatically stains, then merges with and dyes the milk. The silver platter of dirt is placed on the bowl as the story is told — "Inanna turned into a corpse hung from a hook on the wall" the mood changes. She replaces the drum around her neck and to the urgent beating becomes the agitated servant hunting for Inanna and then searching for someone who will save her. The "Father of the Above" announces (rather typically) "She who receives the knowledge of the underworld does not return". Only Enki, the god of wisdom, will save her by sending creatures neither male nor female, created from the dirt beneath his fingernail. Juliet/priestess/story teller becoming each person in turn, allowing the myth to come through her, now becomes a wonderful dramatic Ereshkigal, queen of the underworld who has destroyed an aspect of herself and is in intense pain. "Ooh my outside, ooh my inside, ooh my belly, ooh my heart" she wails. To the intense excited sounds of maracas, the creatures bargain with Ereshkigal that they will free her of pain if she returns the corpse of Inanna.

Ritually, the food and water of life are poured onto the plat-

ter of earth, Inanna's corpse, and a candle is lit in the centre. Inanna has arisen again — the joyful drumming and chanting the performance began with are resumed but she chants also "who will take my place, who will journey through the dark reaches of the soul now" It will be Demuzi, the grain-farmer who was her lover. The performance is over; a basket of simulated Sumerian seals are handed around the audience for everyone to take one. I still have mine and it is quite special as a reminder of this story.

The ritual enactment of Inanna's descent amazed and surprised me. I had not expected it or how much the symbolism would stay with me. Juliet did not become the actress but rather appeared to silence herself to allow the myth to come through her. It was more ritual than performance and she the channel or priestess. I liked the simplicity of it — of her own appearance and of the objects chosen — all of which had the feeling of some ancient earth culture. It felt as though she had deeply perceived the essence of the myth and had remained true to it in her own way; it felt valid. That it was the story of Inanna's journey through the death of her earthly identification and rising of her spiritual self had power for me. But more than that — because it

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was the story of a woman's journey; it could be any woman's journey today.

As Carol Christ says in her book *Diving Deep and Surfacing* "Women's stories have not been told. And without stories there is no articulation of experience. Without stories a woman is lost when she comes to make important decisions in her life. She does not learn to value her struggles, to celebrate her strengths, to comprehend her pain. Without stories she is alienated from those deeper experiences of self and world that have been called spiritual or religious. She is closed in silence."

There was recognition and personal meaning for me in the nature of the symbols. The ritual removing of jewelry to

find the deeper self is my own story; the blood staining the milk — a powerful image — the destructive darker self emerging, is also mine. This is an ancient Sumerian myth of a goddess but it is a story that we relive as women in society today. "It begins in the experience of nothingness. Women experience emptiness in their own lives in self-hatred, in self-negation, and in being a victim; in relationships with men; and in the values that have shaped their lives. Experiencing nothingness women reject conventional solutions and question the meaning of their lives, thus opening themselves to the deeper sources of power and value. The experience of nothingness often precedes an awakening similar to a conversion experience, in which the powers of being are revealed. A woman's awakening to great powers ground her in a new sense of self and a

Juliet Batten in performance at her
Inanna Cycle exhibition
At the Pacific Gallery, Auckland

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new orientation in the world. Through the awakening to new powers, women overcome self-negation and self-hatred and refuse to become victims". (Carol Christ)

After the performance was over, I wandered around the works on paper again, their story and the feeling of the goddess really alive for me after the telling of the myth. They were like tarot cards, their images symbols of women's stories and much deeper truths. Many of them were exquisitely perfect both visually and symbolically. "Inanna and Enki at the Palace of Wisdom" was one of these for me. It was a pattern of a number of brown clay pots with liquid flowing in and out of the mouths of each. On it was written "She is equal, I gave her all" said Enki". It was very simple. I had thought at first viewing that it would be difficult to remove one of these paintings from the rest but the more I remained with them, the more I realised that each had its own story. There was the energy of the myth itself connecting each picture

and the energy behind each symbol — the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates — sources of life, fertility, the huppah tree, the tree of life, the recurring image of the vulva — womanhood and female sexual energy, another source; the reed boat full of wisdom to be treasured and saved. In the love between Inanna and Demuzi, the image of the vulva and the womb recurs in each painting. The vibrant kernel-shaped work of "Eager Like The Young Moon" in ecstatic blues and pinks glowed with this sexual/sensual energy. It had written on it — "my vulva, the horn, the boat of heaven is full of eagerness like the young moon". And the last one in this series, a simple blue pool with what might have been rain and fallen leaves generated incredible calm, fulfillment and peace. This was true of many of these small simple images and the longer I stayed with them the more I felt it.

The story of the descent brings darker colours to the works. I particularly liked the descent itself which was made

up of the words of the abandoned temples which were beautiful in themselves — Uruk, Nippur, Abad, Zabbalam — until she finally reaches the huge black word at the bottom, underworld. There is a work for each gate where she leaves an earthly possession/identification — her crown, her beads, her breast-plate, gold ring and robe. And then shockingly her body in lurid reds and browns hangs on a meathook. The last of this series was again a watery blue image with a leaping red slice in it crystalising beauty and hope and resurgence of energy.

I liked the combination of words and pictures and was fascinated by the ritual of the myth. I related strongly to the story of Inanna and felt that Juliet uncovered the essence of it — in her performance, but most especially for me in her works on paper. □

Julie Sargisson.

GODDESS IMAGERY

AND RADICAL/

SOCIALIST FEMINISM

We're pretty much of a radical and/or socialist and/or lesbian feminist bunch on the *Broadsheet* collective. Some of us have a passionate interest in the women's art movement and all of us believe that *Broadsheet* should continue to review and discuss the work of women artists.

When Julie Sargisson's revue (see above) of Juliet Batten's *Inanna Cycle* came in it stimulated some very lively discussion, which Julie took part in.

What people were reacting to was the content of Juliet's work. The use of goddess and underworld imagery and of symbols like purified water (and the whole idea of "purifying" in a spiritual sense), the third eye, incense, blood-like liquids, black and white was problematic. As was the ritual use of candles, incense and chants, "Just like the church, when I was a child, I rejected that and I reject this, it doesn't make any difference whether it's a male or a female god, it's all part of the same search for solutions outside of the world we live in. It may make individual women feel better, but it doesn't change anything", said one woman.

It didn't work for some as al-

legory, or as a story, either. Again, exploring/changing one's spiritual dimension through the recreation of goddess myths is seen as individual, apolitical, avoiding the realities of the material world.

It began to sound to me like the argument between cultural and radical feminism, which I always found it impossible to take sides on. "You sit on the fence", I was told. And it's true (who was it said that's where you get the best view?) that I agree with elements of both sets of arguments. I can't dismiss spirituality, either as an experience or as a need, but neither can I see it as a "solution". I'm for paradise on earth, and think we'll only get it by achieving economic and social justice. But my paradise does include a sense of the connectedness of things, past present and future, and that's usually called spiritual.

Focusing on the spiritual, in this instance by exploring a goddess myth, is only one aspect of Pakeha women's art in New Zealand, and it has its place. Art, after all, should be able to draw on all possible sources, while artists in dominant societies have to be wary of plundering "exotic" elements from other cultures.

The integration of the spiritual and the worldly is not a problem for all cultures — for Maori people, for example, it's a matter of course. Those of us for whom it is difficult seem to put the two in opposition to each other, rather than see them as aspects of the same reality. But we are often working from a rejection of the ideology and trappings of christian religions and will be suspicious of forms of exploration that echo them. And neither "god" nor "goddess" is ever at hand to deal with poverty or violence. □

Pat Rosier.

VOTES FOR WOMEN

Auckland Metropolitan

College Women's Social and Political Union

At Owen Gilmore Theatre

Secondary Teachers

College

I went to Metropolitan College's *Votes For Women: An Evening of Women's Political*

Theatre, rather dutifully, and came away inspired. It was more like being caught up in a political rally than attending theatre, with actors and hecklers yelling from the audience during speeches, and exits and entrances and spotlighted activity coming down the aisles during the plays. This created an immediacy that transcended the long skirts and large hats and English accents and could have been the fight we fight today.

Time-honoured and decade-surviving clichés like "I wouldn't like to be her husband" hurled out of the audience at gutsy young speech-making women, contributed to this.

One of the posters on stage read: **THE GOVERNMENT IS TO BLAME FOR MILITANCY: Votes for Women**, and that was the tone of the evening. These women were united and militant with lines like . . . "women are not exercising full rights of citizenship" and "the bravest man can't cope with ridicule but ridicule steels a woman" and "let men take life — we give life".

The pale-faced and earnest figure of Emiline Townsend was convincing . . . "working class women are overworked and the children are underfed" . . . "I've brought up seven, I know" . . . "men have tried to do the National Housekeeping without the women" . . . and of course, "less wages for the same work".

Mrs Holbrook had learned from her charwoman that the law gives women no say in the education, religion and so on, of the children she brings up . . . She was converted. "A husband and wife are considered one in the eyes of the law," she says . . . "which one?" These are strong speeches and the young Metro women speak them like they really mean it.

In the play "The Apple," Jane Allen as Helen portrays a stropky young woman questioning the status quo at home and at work. Why should her spoilt brother be the only one with a future, why should she be hassled sexually at work, why should her sister be a martyr to everyone's needs.

A broadly accented sympathetic speech by a working class man and rally song for audience and actors were followed by what was for me the most powerful speech of the evening. Danni Burke-Kenedy as Miss Vida, recounted

pitiful tales of being at court and a thin little boy being prosecuted for stealing milk .

"How The Vote Was Won" is the last item of the evening; a hilarious play about women right across society uniting and striking and choosing their nearest male relative to support them, to force the men to acknowledge their full rights of citizenship.

I was inspired and absolutely entertained, moved to tears and laughter during this evening of political theatre. It was a journey back to the grass roots of women fighting for their rights and a reminder of whose shoulders we stand on. The Metro students handled the evening with style and conviction and had the audience right there with them.

□

Julie Sargisson.

LISTING

The Alexander Turnbull Library Endowment Trust Board has published a collection of six reproductions of original works from the Turnbull collection. It's rather unimaginatively called **A Woman's Work**. The photographs are historical and beautifully produced on light card. A sixth card has information on each of the photographs and the whole thing is contained in a packet which has a seventh picture on the outside. The set costs \$22.00.

Harrington Park Press publishes a lot of collections of essays. Some are excellent and others, like *Women as Elders: the Feminist Politics of Aging*, edited by Marilyn J. Bell, are disappointing. It does some of the things it claims, like discussing some issues which "need to be addressed now to ensure changes in social policies, to shatter stereotypical myths", but on the whole the essays are pedestrian, with the exception of "Health Care For Older Women: Curing the Disease" by Doris B Hammond, which gains from being very specific.

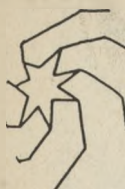
Pat Rosier

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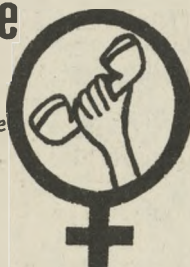
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