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BROADSHEET

NEW ZEALAND'S FEMINIST MAGAZINE

FIFTEENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

AUG/SEPT 1987

ISSUE 151

\$3.50

FEMINISTS LIVING WITH MEN

HANGING IN THERE — AT WHAT COST?



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— QUESTIONNAIRE —

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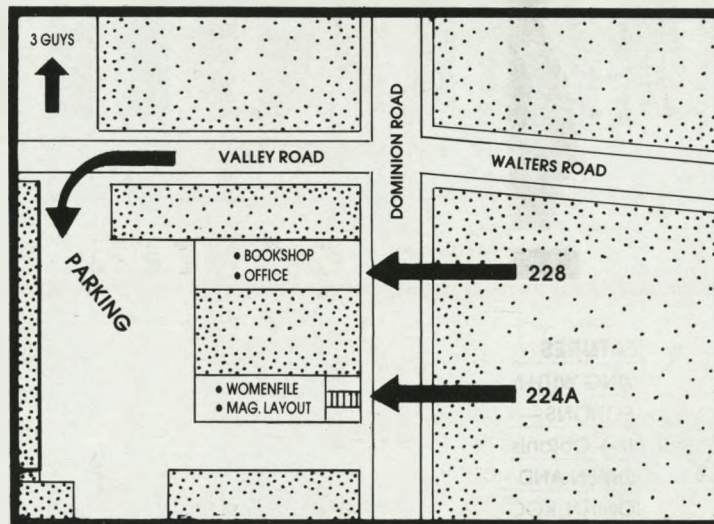
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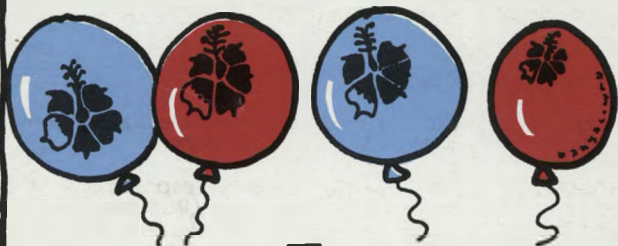
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THESE WOMEN HELPED AROUND BROADSHEET THIS MONTH: Janet Charman, (poetry reader), Julie Sargisson and Carol from Labrys Press in Hobart and the enveloping women.

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LETTERS



ABORTION ACTION CRISIS

Dear Broadsheet,
I expect that many Broadsheet readers heard the recent Insight radio programme which examined abortion as a parliamentary issue. A representative of SPUC spoke of their large resources and Di Cleary of WONAAC of the relative poverty in numbers and money that both WONAAC and ALRANZ face. I am a member of both groups and am disturbed by this situation.

I am often told by feminists, "If there's a real crisis we'll rally round." Rally round WHAT? If all the work is left to a handful of people, a crisis could find feminists rallying around nothing at all and finding then that they have to rebuild organisations and networks from scratch. In any case, when a crisis comes, there is often very little time to act. We need to be ready all the time. The other side seems to be.

I'm sure that if an even worse abortion law were passed there would be outraged cries about the patriarchy from feminists. But I hope they would stop to ask themselves what precisely they had done to work for a better abortion law.

What can you do? You can:

Support WONAAC and ALRANZ. We need money but perhaps even more we need workers. WONAAC's box number is 25067 Wellington, ALRANZ's is 19052 Wellington. ALRANZ has associations also in Auckland, Christchurch and the West Coast.

Find out the views on abortion of the candidates in your electorates. When appropriate, write letters to the papers and lobby your Hospital Board.

There are masses of concerned Christians and Concerned Citizens trying to limit women's rights. Let's see some Concerned Feminists trying to protect them.

Beryl Hughes

Executive member, Abortion Law Association of New Zealand, Wellington

CHANGING REST HOME RULES

I read with interest the article on rest homes for the elderly in your June/July issue.

Unfortunately the article coincided with the announcement by the Ministers of Health and Social Welfare of new measures to restructure the special rest home subsidy. These address the same concerns mentioned in your article.

In summary, the aims of this restructuring are to:

- a) establish three graduated levels of care based on degrees of dependency (some, moderate, appreciable) of people requiring rest home care;
- b) establish the reasonable costs of each of the three levels of care;
- c) assess people's degree of dependency, and thereby the level of care they require on admission to a rest home;
- d) pay subsidy according to the accepted reasonable charge for the level of care required by the particular person;
- e) grade homes according to their ability to provide care of an acceptable standard and to a given level so that subsidy is paid only where a home is known to be able to properly care for a person being admitted.

I certainly agree with you on the importance of rest home care to women, and hope that you would take an early opportunity to up-date your readers.

Ann Hercus

Minister of Social Welfare

A NAMING PROBLEM

Dear Broadsheet,
With the impending arrival of our first child in September we are currently at a stalemate over naming the baby. Not the first name, but the surname. Neither of us is happy with automatically imposing my husband's name on the child, but we aren't too thrilled about the alternatives either. I use my name before marriage (but that's still my father's name)

and we are not keen on hyphenating our two names. Calling the baby just by my name, while redressing the balance somewhat, seems to me to just be replacing the patriarchal system with a matriarchal one.

I realise that ultimately we will have to decide on one option, but I would appreciate comments from readers who have made this decision already, so that we are aware of potential reactions, pitfalls, and the variety of choices made by free-thinking couples.

Please write to us direct as we are running out of time.

Anne Goswell

Lowburn 2RD
Cromwell

CLAIMING POWER

Dear Broadsheet,
Marilyn French, in her book *Claiming Power* mentions that now that men have become irresponsible about their children there is a new poor, women and children. My own experience would lead me to believe this.

Twelve years ago my husband was imprisoned for embezzlement. A year later my son, who was a very bad asthmatic, died.

I was working to support the family but owing to overwork and grief succumbed to a lengthy bout of psychiatric illness which I thought I would never get over. I was described as a paranoid schizophrenic and certainly did suffer from paranoia. However, I have been totally and completely sane for three years now, although still on medication but of increasingly low doses.

However, by dint of working most of the time when I was ill I have been able to buy my own home from the Housing Corporation. My daughter, now 23, is in her third year at university, passing all her papers, having left school with only school certificate.

I feel I can offer useful and practical assistance to other women who have been placed in positions of financial and

emotional poverty.

I was planning to return to university myself to finish my own degree, of which I have 15 papers, all done extra-murally when I was younger. However, financial considerations have precluded this and I am instead training as a voluntary worker in the community.

I am a great believer in women owning their own houses. It protects them against men.

Someone quoted to me a little homily which I found to be very true: "Endure and persist; this pain will turn to your good."

I have a great deal of peace of mind these days, there were years when I used to think, "O god, will this pain never end?"

The future success of the feminist movement ultimately rests, I think, on the ability of women to gain control of their own money and property and showing men how to use it responsibly.

Janne Hewitson
Phone 276-8478
Auckland

HOME BIRTH SURVEY

Dear Broadsheet,
The New Zealand Home Birth Associations are conducting an informal, retrospective survey into the demand for home births. This has been prompted by the fact that the Health Dept is reviewing its contract with Domiciliary Midwives for the first time since 1938. Currently only 1-2% of all births in New Zealand occur at home. We know that this figure does not reflect the demand for home birth. No adequate contract can be drawn up based on figures for current usage of domiciliary services. In many areas there is no such service and, in places where a domiciliary midwife is available, restrictive criteria applied by obstetric committees and individual GPs often prevent women using the service.

We are asking women who have tried to arrange to give birth at home, but were unsuccessful, to write to us. We will

be collating the information and forwarding it to the Health Dept. It is important that you state when, where and why you were unable to give birth at home. Please send your letters to — Auckland Home Birth Association, P.O. Box 7093 Wellesley Street, Auckland.

Brenda Hinton
Spokesperson AHBA

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

Dear Broadsheet,
As a reader of *Broadsheet* and a member of Overeaters Anonymous (OA) I've noticed that OA is not listed in the Directory. I have been going to OA for four years and recovered as a bulimic three years

ago after seven years of bulimia.

OA is the same programme as Alcoholics Anonymous. There are groups throughout New Zealand. Members are 99% women — maybe you've heard about it.

In Wellington there are two groups — Lower Hutt, Phone 678655 or Porirua, phone 358202. The post box is 38 027, Petone. We don't publish our names, to keep anonymity. Auckland OA is listed in the telephone book. Their office will soon be shifting premises.

OA groups are self-supporting and caring. Our organisation has no leaders, it is based on group decisions.

Susan C.

Petone

Editor's note: *Broadsheet* would be interested to hear

from other women who have been with OA. Write to Pat Rosier, PO Box 56-147, Auckland 3

WHO DIRECTED?

Dear Broadsheet,
Julie Sargisson's revue of Auckland Metropolitan College's *Votes For Women*: in your June/July issue interested me for several reasons. Firstly, I was delighted to read a revue of a feminist play performed by students of school age. Non-professional productions are frequently very polished, and if the feminist content sounds interesting (as indeed is the case with this play) then I would go along not "dutifully" as Julie did, but rather in anticipation of a good evening's

theatrical experience.

Votes For Women was, as Julie recorded, a thought-provoking and entertaining production. However, just as when I read a film revue I expect to discover the director's name, equally when I read a revue of a play I expect to learn the director's name. It seemed a glaring omission to make such positive statements without ever mentioning the director, Carole Beu Barrington. She deserved at least a mention as the director of this highly polished feminist production.

Eleanor Bassett

Editor's note: The director's name should have been included in the heading, for which the editor is responsible. My apologies to Carole.

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 Saturday morning from 10 to 1. The phone is now connected and both the bookshop and magazine can be reached at Auckland 608-535.

DEADLINES

For the October issue is 24 August and for November 24 September. We are back to our normal publishing schedule.

ADVERTISING

Our advertising rates are very competitive. Display 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. Advertising rates will increase considerably from 1 October. Regular advertisers will be given a staggered increase 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.

BACK ISSUES

Bundles of back issues up to December 1983 are available in the bookshop for \$33. Complete sets of available back issues are \$77. It's a solid cubic foot of feminist history and ideas.

STUFFING

From this issue of *Broadsheet* we are contracting out the packaging and posting of the

magazine to the Blind Institute at a very reasonable rate. We regret that we will not have the same regular contact with the women who gave up weekend time to help with stuffing. We are taking the opportunity to reduce the strain in workers by changing the system.

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.

APOLOGIES

Most particularly to the women at *Kinesis*. In the last issue we did not acknowledge that the story "Greek Women On The Cusp Of Change" was reprinted from the Dec/Jan issue of *Kinesis*, a Canadian feminist publication from Vancouver Status of Women, 400A West 5th Ave Vancouver BC, V5Y 1J8, Canada.

The graphic from *Standing Strong* on p13 of the last *Broadsheet* was by Candace Bagnall.

POSTAL COSTS

With the further increase in postal rates we have had to stop sending out late renewals right away. If your renewal for, say, March comes in after the

bulk mailing of that issue has been sent (we get reduced rates for this) your March *Broadsheet* will be sent out with the bulk mailing for April.

PRICE INCREASE

From 1 October a year's subscription will be \$38.60 and *Broadsheet* will cost \$3.80 in bookshops. We always hate putting the price up but costs go up relentlessly. The offer of two new subs for \$40 is available until 30 September — there'll never be a better offer! From 1 October we will be offering two and three year subscriptions. Full details in the next issue.

DONATED SUBSCRIPTIONS

We have had a wonderful response to our request for subs to be paid for women who cannot afford to renew. Thank you to those women who sent them in.

CHANGE OF PRINTER

The design changes that we are planning from the October *Broadsheet* mean that Wanganui Newspapers, who have been our printers since July 1974, will no longer be able to do the job. We have valued the understanding and cooperation that the workers there have shown us over the past 13 years and are sorry that we are leaving.

BEHIND THE NEWS



VIOLENCE RULES, OK?

An anti-violence march where people demanded the return of the death penalty. Pat Rosier reports.



Metropolitan College Students on the march.

Photo: Gil Hanly

The death of Teresa Cormack was a tragedy. On the day of her funeral, 1 July, people in a number of New Zealand centres — Hamilton, Taumarunui, Whangarei, Auckland — marched to demonstrate their outrage at the sexual assault and murder of a six-year-old girl. In Napier, her home town, 1500 people went to her funeral.

In Auckland there was a 2000-strong march up Queen St to Aotea Square. It was an

alarming march. There were banners reading "Hang them", "Show no mercy", "Bring back capital punishment". At Aotea square the speakers were overwhelmingly male. John Banks, national MP for Whangarei got cheered for his call for harsher penalties. Labour's Mt Eden MP, Richard Northey, was heckled and booed when he called for a change in the attitudes that lead to violence.

Barry Reid, frequent spokesperson for the forces of the far right, made this extraor-

inary statement, "We don't want an anti-nuclear New Zealand, we want a non-violent New Zealand", while encouraging the call for harsher penalties for sex offenders.

Josie Haines, Sesame Takle, and ten other students from Auckland Metropolitan College, were there. "I heard about the march on Radio BFM", said Josie, "and so did other people at school. Some went around saying 'Do you want to go?' Some didn't want to go because they might be

mistakenly thought to have the same views as the 'red-necks' there, so I made a banner that said 'Prevention, not punishment' to make it clear what I thought.

"When we got to the post office where the march was starting there were all these banners saying things like, 'hang them' and 'death penalty for sex offenders'. We were standing next to this guy who had a dummy being hung.

"On the way up Queen St it felt like a normal march except

the occasional person would walk up to me and look at my banner and question me about it. 'Why don't you believe in punishment', 'They deserve it', and, 'She didn't have any choice', were the sort of things they said.

"About half way up Queen St some builders had a dummy hanging off the edge of a balcony with a sign saying, 'Hang 'em high'. People cheered as they went past. It was then that I got a feeling that they really meant it. Before that I thought they may have been half-hearted. I thought it was sick — they were wanting to be just as violent as the people they were protesting about. My banner got some attention from reporters and photographers.

"There were twelve of us together and when we got to Aotea Square we stood on some seats at the edge and held our banners up. There were some speakers, who we couldn't hear very well. One was John Banks. He said something like if you vote national we'll bring in capital punishment — and everyone cheered. This woman walked up and read my sign. She said she'd been raped when she was six and she wanted to kill them.

"Some politicians were going on about politics", said Sesame, "and one of my friends said it wasn't about politics."

"All these speakers were saying things about heavier sentences and the death penalty", Josie said, "and I was fuming away. And one of our

group said, 'Why don't you go up and speak?' I was feeling really angry at this time so we went over. I asked for the microphone but the woman with it said there wasn't much time and then gave it to this young guy who was raving on in a religious fashion. When he said, 'Bow to god', nearly everyone did. Then the woman didn't allow anyone else to use the microphone and got everyone to sing, *God Defend New Zealand*.

"The people with me started calling out 'Give young women a chance to speak, we're the one's at risk', and the crowd started going 'Speak, speak, speak...' I didn't have the microphone but I went into this big rave about how they were being just as violent as rapists and capital punishment was bad and wasn't going to help anything. Then all these people started yelling at me. I couldn't tell what they were saying except for 'Shoot him'. They were waving banners. One banner said, 'Castrate him — slowly'.

"One of the organisers was standing next to me. When I stopped talking she asked me why I went on the march and was saying how I should expect them to be angry. I burst into tears from it all about then. This woman who had earlier come up and told me she thought my banner was the best one came up and hugged me. So did my friends.

"Afterwards there were all these people — young women — coming up and saying they agreed with me. They were in

school uniforms and hadn't been allowed to speak. I found out that there were a lot more people there who were against capital punishment than I had thought because they hadn't been very vocal.

"The march consisted of people you wouldn't normally see on marches — a lot of old people, a lot of young mothers and a lot of working men.

"I didn't realise there were so many people in New Zealand that would want capital punishment. It felt like a dictatorship with a guy standing up the front yelling out all these things like 'Capital punishment!' and 'Bigger sentences!' and all the crowd cheering."

Sesame also spoke to the crowd. "I can't remember much of what I said, but I know I talked about trying to cure people instead of killing them, and I said that two wrongs don't make a right. I was saying you shouldn't have to hang people, it shouldn't be allowed to happen in the first place. I got a very aggro reaction. They were yelling back at me, 'What if it was your kid?'"

"A friend of mine knows someone who was at the march and agreeing that people should be hanged, but afterwards she changed her mind — she had been really aggro on the march but now she just thinks she was very influenced by what was happening around her and she doesn't really agree with those things.

"I'm a pretty quiet person usually and don't like speaking in front of people, but I felt so

strongly about it that I had to say something."

It's not at all clear what the organisers of the march wanted. We got a phone call at *Broadsheet* the day before from a woman who said she was from a group called "Women Against Violence" asking us to publicise the march. But it does seem as though they really only wanted people who agreed with harsh prison sentences and capital punishment to be there.

The only people speaking out for prevention seem to have been the young women. And they were not just referring to what happened in Napier, they were calling for the prevention of all violence against women and children (and men). And this, surely, is the point. It is unlikely that any prevention programme would be able to stop the occasional, terrible attack of a stranger on a young girl. Dreadful though these are, they account for only a few sexual abuse incidents. The huge majority occur in a place familiar to the girl and are by someone she knows. Yet the people calling for a non-violent New Zealand, condemn sexual abuse prevention programmes as attacks on the family. They cannot see them as what they are — measures to make families safer for children.

Nor do they see the inconsistency in fighting violence with more violence. Or acknowledge the evidence that the degree of punishment an offender gets is more related to his race and class than to the nature of the offence. □

HEROISM ON 143-DAY PICKET LINE

Jacqueline Steincamp reports

A long drawn-out, acrimonious and little publicised strike in Christchurch has brought out heroic qualities of solidarity and determination among the mainly women strikers. Up to 23 Public Service Association (PSA) members, all of them laborat-

ory workers, picketed the premises of the New Zealand Wool Testing Authority from 3 December 1986. The strike was terminated after 143 days, on 1 May, when the 15 remaining strikers received redundancy pay and the guarantee that

jobs would be open to them next season.

They were 143 days of pain and anger. Days which should burn the consciences of management, the Employers' Federation and the PSA.

It was a strange strike, with many issues behind the

animosity between management and picketers. It could be seen as a straight union issue — and that was the way it was presented in the media. It was also a revolt by young, educated women against typical male management practices. It showed that bad times are

affecting more people. Many of the young women strikers had middle-class backgrounds; they were mostly better educated than the male managers under whom they worked. Seven of them held particularly responsible positions in the laboratory. For some it was their first job. The picket line included students on vacation jobs in the laboratory who stayed on the picket until the end of the vacation.

What was it about? Perhaps the only fact that was unarguable was that it was by far the longest strike in the history of the PSA. But management of the strike has not been to the association's credit. Some unionists feel that as a voluntary organisation dealing largely with white collar workers the PSA has had little experience with the mucky business of strikes and picketing; little experience in walking the razor's edge of long drawn-out disputes in which the balance between winning and getting the strikers back to work on amicable terms with management becomes increasingly difficult.

Indeed the voluntary nature of the PSA meant that the majority of the laboratory workers (those that did not choose to strike) were not unionised.

The ostensible causes of the strike — the failure of the Wool Testing Authority to give a four and a half percent catch-up pay rise under the PSA provisions, and its failure to recognise the PSA as the body representing the laboratory workers, were just the tip of the iceberg. There was deep animosity between the striking women and management, with the strikers claiming continual mismanagement and poor human relations; unpleasant and sometimes dangerous conditions in the laboratory; continuous 12-hour shifts with little advance notice; lack of job security; and double standards for different types of workers. Management and the non-striking workers strongly rejected these claims.

The range of grievances and the history of industrial problems in the laboratory were not addressed in Arbitration Court hearings in mid-February. The issue under deliberation was one decided by management. It was whether or not the court could assist the conciliation process in get-

ting negotiations under way between the Woollen Workers Union and the Wool Testing Authority.

Yet the fact is that the PSA has represented the laboratory workers since 1982, with the full agreement of management. The problem lay in the rejection of the PSA late last year by the majority of laboratory workers. This group chose to remain at work, resigned from the PSA and applied for membership of the Woollen Workers Union. Management endeavoured to lodge their union fees with the Woollen Workers Union but they were returned.

The strikers had strong loyalties to the PSA and its charismatic representative, Phil Butler and his wife Caroline Potter, who stayed with them on the picket line throughout. (Potter came over from Lyttleton weeks on end to picket the 5.30 am shift change.)

Management stressed the difficulties of its position, claiming also that its own preference for the Woollen Workers Union was because of the non-voluntary membership. But it laid itself open to PSA claims that, by raising the union coverage issue, the authority was trying to evade the wage catch-up. Nor did the failure of arbitration to focus on anything more than this one point help resolve the conflict.

"The strike should have lasted one day — and been solved the next", Catherine Crosado says. "We think that the employers abused the arbitration system to set the unions against each other and to evade their responsibilities to the workers. The underlying problems were not addressed."

The strikers have been depressed, angry and frustrated by the lack of remedies to the dispute. Neither side would back down, and management was seen as being scared of giving in to "a bunch of girls". But determination to achieve what they regarded as justice kept the women out on the picket line long after most "sensible people" would have thrown in the towel.

As the strike ground on, there were increasingly frequent allegations from the picketers about the behaviour of the police, about verbal sexual harassment by management, and about "false" assertions made by both management

and police regarding their violent behaviour. Submissions on police behaviour were sent by both the PSA and the Federation of Labour to Minister of Police, Ann Hercus.

In the end the arbitration ruling was for the "Woollen Workers". The strikers were paid off — with redundancy pay and the guarantee of jobs next season, should they want them. A complete disaster, you might think.

How valid were the strikers' claims? Did anyone investigate them fully and properly? No-one. Sadly, the supposedly free media did little to clarify the issues. A talkback session on 3ZB in late February was the only time both sides were able to get anything like their respective sides of the story across to the public. Apart from an article in the *Christchurch Star*, journalists in the written media were so confused by the claims and counter-claims that they ran for cover. Stories were largely a careful balance of official statements from either side. The PSA's Phil Butler and a male striker gave union-oriented backgrounders in the February and March issues of *Monthly Review*. Little of the human significance of the disagreement and none of the women's feelings came through.

The women felt that the animosity of the other workers and management, the attitudes of police and the public, will mark them for life — feelings that are shared by management and the other workers. They are politicised, antagonistic and bitter. The most positive aspect for them has been the sense of solidarity on the picket line and the courage and strength each has found in herself.

"We've become very close friends, and everyone has become so supportive of each other," union delegate Nicole Daubier says.

"I feel I will be a better person because of it, and I have given up fearing about the future," said Catherine Crosado, union delegate and quality supervisor in the laboratory.

"It is about who has power and who hasn't. I used to think that New Zealand was a classless society, but now I know that it is not. People at the top like us to think this way. It suits the bosses," said contract technician Fiona Shaw.

Other comments: "Very

educational — what people have learnt here they'll remember for the rest of their lives." "The police are bending over backwards for management, in contrast to traffic officers who've been very helpful." "My ideals are totally shattered; I believe now that workers are regarded as less than animals." "I'm frightened by capitalism, frightened by the lies, frightened by a government that doesn't give a damn."

The events surrounding the 143 days have been educational too, for their families, who mostly have no experience of the nastiness of industrial action. One mother told me, "I feel as though I have lived in a dream world all my life and that the blinkers have only just fallen from my eyes."

In the face of a media that did not want to tell their story, the strikers endeavoured to get their views across to the public through placards along the picket line. A battered placard-bedecked caravan was parked outside the authority's front door on St Asaph St throughout the strike. The male strikers mainly sat there, while the women were out on the street at the back entrance. Placards gave their grievances and urged motorists to toot if they were sympathetic. Few did — for few Christchurch citizens were aware of the strike's existence. If they did know it was on, few knew what it was about.

Were those 143 days worth it? "I'll say!" says Fiona Shaw, "I'd do it again tomorrow. None of us can allow people to run all over us."

"Yes," says Catherine Crosado, "If I had to, I'd do it again." □

PAKEHA ADDRESS THE TREATY: PUBLIC ANTI-RACISM WORKSHOPS. You are invited to come to either or both of the following:
WORKSHOP 1: 9.30-5.30 Saturday 1 August, Sunday 2 August at Whakatuora, Mangere.
WORKSHOP 2: 8 pm Friday 25 September to 3 pm Sunday 27th at Muriwai. Cost \$50 waged, \$30 unwaged. For more details phone Rosemary, 370391 or Tony 784744. Workshops organised by Pakeha Anti-Racism Coalition (PARC).



Gil Hanly

CONGRATULATIONS, GIL HANLY

Gil has won first prize in the photographic exhibition "War and Peace in the Nuclear Age" in Moscow. The exhibition was held at the seventh world congress of International Physicians For The Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW).

One of the photographs Gil sent to "War and Peace in the Nuclear Age"

WELL-WOMAN MONEY DECIDED

IN Broadsheet 144, November '86, some issues were raised ("Well-Woman's Clinics" p6) regarding this trial. The money has been granted, as follows: Dannevirke Women's Health Group (\$50,000) The Health

Alternatives for Women (THAW), Christchurch (\$50,000) and Waikato Women's Action Centre (\$25,000). The Ministers of Health and Women's Affairs have commented on the number and high standard of

applications. Mary-Jane Rivers of the Women's Ministry who was on the selection committee said, "... the three successful groups were chosen on the basis of their strong community support, their representing a wide range of women, their

ability to work cooperatively existing health services, and evidence of their being friendly, accessible women providing services where women can feel at ease in working out their own health needs."

Karen Brown Reports on the effects of the money at THAW.

THE first thing it means is that the women at THAW can forget about raising funds for at least a year and concentrate on doing what is best — helping women look after their own health.

Apart from that, there won't be a lot of changes to THAW's current activities. They plan to establish a network of women's health resource

centres around the South Island, and have already made contacts with a number of interested and committed women in other centres.

Another priority is extending contacts and making their services more accessible in the local community. Towards this end they are working with a Samoan woman — Luisa Laupola, who is spending time in the community and who will

also be simplifying some of the pamphlet information THAW uses. They are also establishing contacts with existing networks of Maori women.

One of the collective members, Ann Currie, says that there are no guarantees of receiving more money next year, particularly as there may be a change of government in that time. "Knowing the money is only for a year has motivated

us to get as much done in that time as possible," she said. "Getting the Well Women's grant along with some money from COG's gave us a lot of encouragement at a time when energy within the collective was particularly low."

A reality of gaining such a highly publicised grant from the government is the pressure to be answerable to the public and to the Health Department.



Christine Bird in the THAW office.

One of the other collective members, Karina Thorpe estimates that they will probably spend as much time working out evaluation procedures as they have done in previous years applying for funds.

Karina says that the evaluation process is involving a lot of negotiation with the department, which is not all bad as they have a lot of influence over what's going on. The guidelines that have been set so far for the evaluation process involve: herstory of the way THAW began; the services THAW provides; who the workers are; the function and various backgrounds of the staff; the satisfactions and disappointments of collective members; consumer satisfaction; the financial status of the group; and effectiveness within the given time frame. Both Karina and Ann think that the evaluation process could turn out to be worthwhile as the group have not had a comprehensive look at themselves since they were established six years ago.

Nicola Roberts and Bibby Plummer sent in information from Dannevirke.

Women in and around Dannevirke have been active in the women's health area for ten years. A group from an outlying rural community got an overwhelming response to a women and health seminar they held in 1978, and out of it

They are intrigued by the interest they are now getting from the medical profession and from the public, who all have very different ideas about just how important THAW actually is and what influence they have on the local health scene. A newsletter going out to GP's from the Royal College of Medical Practitioners included a paragraph designed to reassure doctors that THAW was not in fact a clinic in the true sense of the word, and that they pose no real threat to practices!

Meanwhile the seven women who work at THAW continue to deal with the problems they have always dealt with — trying to reach as many women as possible to let them know that they can have some control over their own health care, and reminding the medical hierarchy that they are not as infallible as they would like to think. □

See also the article in this issue by Christine Bird, "Professionals Against the People".

there arose a call for a local women's health clinic. It would have provided screening and family planning services, but the call fell on deaf ears.

A Health Department requirement that Hospital Boards consult with their

communities came into play in the eighties, so the demand for a clinic was repeated. This time — after 12 months — a watered down version of what had been sought was provided.

At this time a group of us were meeting and talking about health issues, and just as we were about to encourage the board to broaden its approach to the clinic the well-women funding was announced.

The Dannevirke Women's Health group decided that our attention was better focused on doing it for ourselves rather than wasting energy trying to push unenthusiastic administrators to respond. So the 12 of us worked really hard putting the application together.

On Christmas Eve we got the exciting news that we had been successful. This, however, did not mean that funding came straight away — in fact we had to wait four months for the money to come through from the Health Department, which made the setting up and organising difficult.

We are spending a lot of time talking to women's groups throughout the region about the centre and listening to what they want from it. A hundred women came to a public meeting we held to discuss the centre's objectives and hear Dr Libby Smales speak on "How Best to Use Your Health Centre."

Our basic philosophy at the centre is to focus on health in a holistic sense. We see good health as embracing spiritual, emotional, mental and physical dimensions and intend to work in these areas.

Our aims are to:

1. Collect information so that we can be used as a resource centre. We also plan to organise seminars and courses on health in its widest sense.
2. Provide support for groups and individuals concerned with health. As well as liaising with existing support groups we will assist individuals to make contact with groups.
3. Provide a community base, which Dannevirke does not have at present. It will be available for meetings as well as having a "drop in" function.
4. Provide a first point of contact for women with health concerns. We know we won't be able to "solve" many of the problems brought to us so will refer people on to the appropriate professional health service.

5. Take the health centre out into the eight areas around Dannevirke — women in rural areas get no services. We will make regular visits and the plunket and public health nurses are working with us by making their networks available.

It has become clear that the centre will fill another major role as a home for various clinics: we have blood pressure clinics planned for July; a pre-school dental care session; a Levin nutritionist will visit monthly. But most exciting, the hospital-based women's clinic has been transferred to the centre, and on 3 July we are having a full day cervical smear clinic, to be run by a Hastings woman doctor.

The staffing of the centre has been a major concern for the Women's Health Group. Three co-ordinators have been employed to job-share the running of the centre, each with specific areas of responsibility (rural women, Maori women, older women and so on). We rely on voluntary help to keep the doors open between 10 am and 3 pm four days a week. In July we have a training course for volunteers. □

IN BRIEF

WRITE ON Is a group of women writers who meet monthly to share their poetry and prose in a non-threatening and supportive environment. It grew out of an association with *Broadsheet* and started in the bookshop. However, the new premises are not suitable and the group now meets at the WEA.

Two guest readers each month bring prepared readings of poetry or prose.

All women are invited to the monthly meetings, with or without work to share. Just listening to other women writers can be a source of inspiration. Ideas for meetings always welcome.

The group meets on the last Wednesday of each month at WEA, 131 Williamson Ave, Grey Lynn (opp Foodtown) from 7.30.

EXPERIMENTING ON WOMEN

A doctor is able to treat patients as he or she wishes, but this right is being challenged. Jenny Rankine reports.

FOR 20 years, say Fertility Action campaigners Sandra Coney and Phillida Bunkle, many women who went to National Women's Hospital in Auckland with cervical carcinoma in situ (CIS) were given inadequate treatment after diagnosis. Associate professor Herbert Green thought the condition was "probably benign in the great majority of cases", so despite continuing abnormal cervical smear tests, the women he, and possibly other clinicians, monitored received this "limited" treatment.

During the 20 years, some women developed invasive cancer of the cervix, and eight of the women who received "limited" treatment died. Under normal management, CIS would have been treated at an early stage, so that the disease did not progress, say Coney and Bunkle.

In an article in Auckland's Metro magazine, they outlined what one medical worker described as "an unfortunate experiment", and the retarding effect the attitudes of this major teaching hospital have had on cervical treatment and screening in New Zealand. Dr Green believes, contrary to accepted practice, that "the idea that we can prevent cervical cancer is a no-hoper."

The cervical cancer rate has dropped by two-thirds in countries which systematically test for abnormal cells with cervical smears, but in New Zealand, which has no organised screening programme, the death rate from cervical cancer is increasing. US cancer expert Richard Reid, guest speaker at a symposium on cervical cancer at Auckland Medical School late last year, said "there's nowhere else in the world where the benefits of a screening programme are doubted".

An inquiry into cervical cancer treatment, stimulated by the Metro article, is expected to start on 4 August. Headed by Judge Silvia Cartwright, the hearing will investigate whether the hospital failed to properly treat CIS, and

if so, for how long. Coney and Bunkle were unable to ascertain whether the experiment formally concluded, or whether it was ever investigated by the hospital ethics committee.

Judge Cartwright will also decide whether women with CIS who were referred to National Women's should be contacted for further advice or treatment. Coney and Bunkle believe up to 40 women could still have untreated invasive cervical cancer. The inquiry will assess the hospital's training about cervical cancer, and whether patients at the hospital are informed about their medical treatment and options.

Discussion of the issue in many medical circles in New Zealand focusses on whether Dr Green's theories have been disproved. "People see it as a legitimate medical controversy," says Coney. "But anywhere else in the world it is not a controversy. Everything is discussed here in a climate affected by National Women's. The hospital doc-

tors talk of CIS and invasive cancer as two separate diseases, whereas overseas it is accepted that they are two stages of the one disease."

Dr Leopold Koss, who wrote a paper on cervical cancer for the World Health Organisation, says not all pre cancerous lesions progress to cancer. "As far as this issue is concerned, Dr Green is completely correct." But no-one can predict which lesions will progress to cancer and which will not. "Therefore all must be treated", he says.

The issue of experiments being performed on women without their knowledge or consent has been ignored or glossed over in much of the discussion. Hospital consent forms protect only the doctor. Trials involving registered drugs, or non-use of drugs, do not have to go through any approval process. If they are based in hospitals, this is the responsibility of ethics committees, which are dominated by doctors appointed by the hospital. "In present day New Zealand," say Coney and

Bunkle, "individuals have no absolute right not to be used in an experiment without consent."

Fertility Action is calling for assessments by independent doctors of women inadequately treated at National Women's. These women and the families of women who died need to know their legal rights. And the inquiry needs to investigate the lack of any legally enforceable concept of informed consent in New Zealand; the lack of any protection for humans who are the subjects of experiments; and the legal immunity of the medical profession because of the Accident Compensation Corporation.

"We are the most vulnerable health consumers in the world," says Coney, "because doctors in New Zealand are immune to being sued."

The two women's investigation about the experiment met with closed ranks from doctors and initial disinterest from the media. "Doctors said to leave it alone, it was in the past and no good would be



National Women's Hospital, Auckland

Photo: Gil Hanly

served by revelations in the lay media," say Coney and Bunkle. "It was seen as a matter for the medical profession, not the public."

Large sections of analysis at the end of the article submitted to Metro were cut from the final version, says Coney. Coverage in other media was very hard to get initially; "it was dismissed as just feminists making trouble."

The inquiry is being held in public and is expected to run for at least two months. It will be open from 10am to 4.30pm in room 107, first floor, Bledisloe Building, Wellesley St, Auckland city. Judge Cartwright has written to more than 1,000 women who were treated at National Women's. Any women who want to see their medical records can write to the inquiry.

It is important that Auckland women attend to support women women giving evidence. Any submissions are acceptable, and women from outside Auckland who have been turned down for a smear or had nothing done about abnormal smears should write to

Judge Cartwright c/- PO Box 6214, Wellesley St, Auckland, 1. Fertility Action will help women write submissions.

Coney and Bunkle are key witnesses in the inquiry. Fertility Action has received some donations towards their costs, 1. Fertility Action will help women write submissions.

Coney and Bunkle are key witnesses in the inquiry. Fertility Action has received some donations towards their costs, and the government is assisting them with legal fees, but they have no funding for administration, travel or time off work. They need donations to last for the length of the inquiry. □

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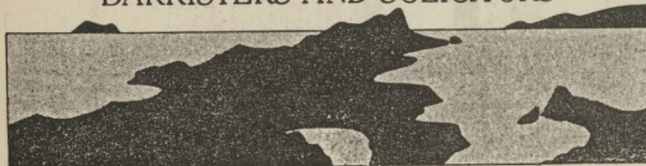
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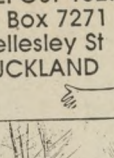
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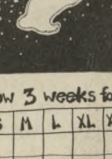
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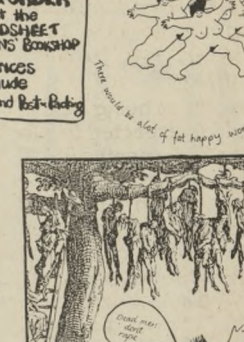
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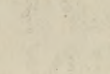
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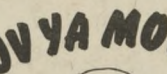
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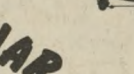
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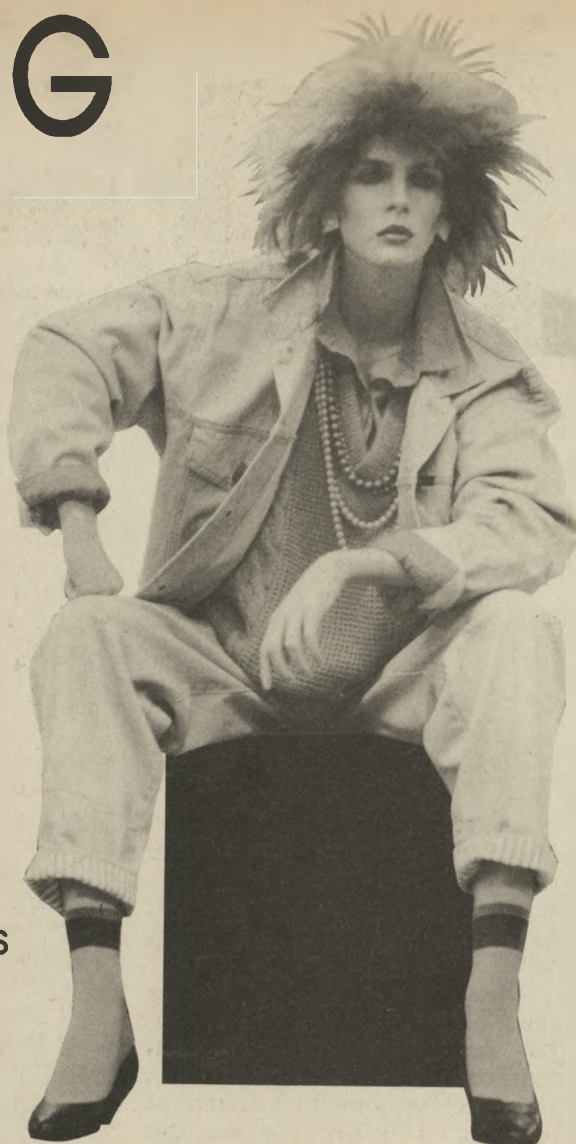
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LIVING WITH MEN

SUSAN GRIMSDALL
GIVES HER
VIEW OF SOME
OF THE DILEMMAS
AND COMPROMISES
FACED BY
HETEROSEXUAL
FEMINISTS.



Most women, including many feminist women, are attracted to men. This is not surprising, considering that alternatives like lesbianism or staying single are not presented as positive choices. The majority of us end up marrying or living with a man. Every year in New Zealand 25,000 women marry and by the age of thirty-five over 80% have been or are married, for better or for worse. Too often it turns out to be for worse, particularly for women. Part of the reason is that one requirement for a happy, healthy relationship — equality between the partners — is not met when a man and a woman pair up. All men have power whether they like it or not, from women's very real fear of male violence. Also, they earn more, they are treated as being more important than women, and they exert almost total control over every aspect of life.

This does not change when they enter into a partnership with a woman. Their power is with them always.

But who thinks about power when they're in love? We just want it all to happen. Whether it is via a wedding or by simply starting to live together, we yearn for love and closeness, fulfilment as a wife or partner and maybe as a mother. We know women's role well, having been surrounded by images and models of it all our lives, so away many of us go, cleaning, shopping, cooking, washing, tidying. Some of us get into the "superwoman" trip, with career, housework and mothering.

If at times we get fed up, bored, exhausted, angry or resentful we try to keep it to ourselves. If those feelings

are so overwhelming that we erupt, we are later filled with guilt — we call ourselves bad-tempered, we tell ourselves we don't appreciate what we've got.

Whether a woman is married or in a partnership makes little difference. The power imbalance between herself and the man usually becomes more and more entrenched over time without either one of them even being aware of it. He dominates, she defers. His needs and wishes take precedence whenever any dispute arises or when any major decision has to be made. She compromises.

Some women, however, decide that they have no intention of letting things work out that way for them. Their hopes and expectations are different because of a change in their thinking that occurred at some stage.

These women look critically at male-female roles and relationships, they read, they talk to one another and they see that if they go along with the usual sex role divisions they're not going to have much time or energy to develop any of their skills or talents other than those to do with nurturing and cleaning.

Besides that, their idea of a good partnership is one where the woman as well as the man has the chance to contribute equally to share equally, and to be equally respected and considered. The powerful/weaker, dominant/dependant dichotomy is all too apparent to them and it does not appeal. They recognise that traditional sex roles are not "natural" any more than exclusive heterosexuality is "normal". Both are cultural, created by social pressures. They can be changed.

It is these women, feminists, that I have been thinking about. Like everyone else feminist women want intimacy, to matter to other people, to feel safe, loving and loved. Some feminists have their relationships with women but many still feel attracted to men, despite intellectual reservations.

If a woman follows her heterosexual inclination and entwines herself with a male partner can she at the same time retain her individuality, her self-respect, her independence? Can she grow and flourish?

I discussed this with several feminist women. Two of the women (Katherine and Judy) are in their forties and divorced. Two are married, Athina for thirteen years and Fiona for eighteen months. The fifth woman, Moana, is living with her second par-

tner. Three cultures were represented. Differences in the women's expectations that came from cultural differences in sex role stereotyping were there, but were modified due to the women's exposure to Pakeha culture.

We looked at the balance of power in their relationships, whether the women's own needs were met and if not, why not.

We also talked about whether they found themselves making compromises in order to sustain the relationship.

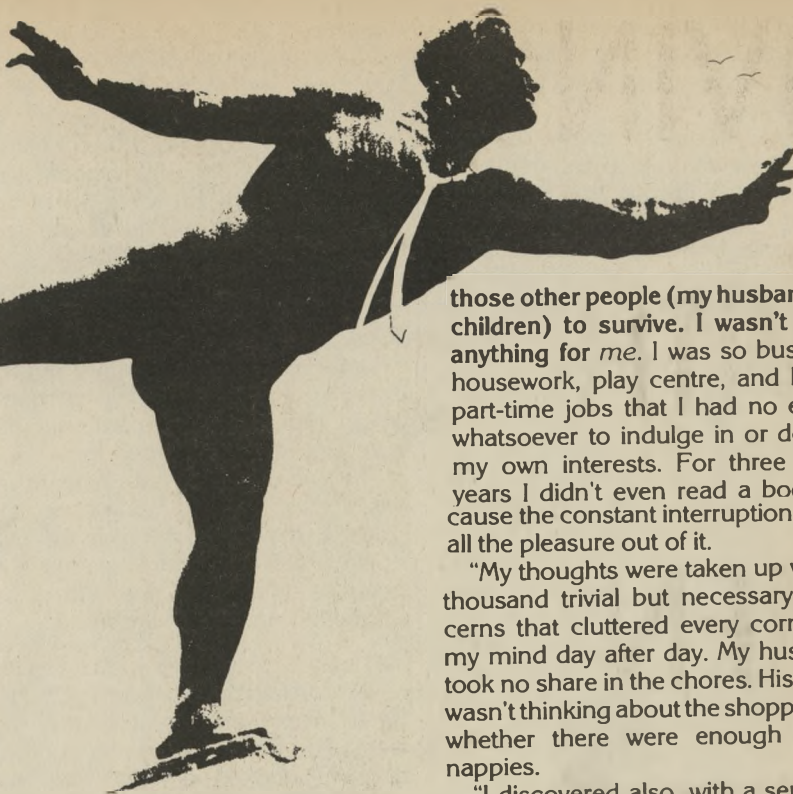
Katherine's marriage was fairly conventional. She stayed, home, he earned the money. "We both had ideas about what our roles were to be. I accepted the usual one of wife and mother, but I never felt it really suited me or that I was very good at it.

"Perhaps because he was the one who brought in the money we both made the implicit assumption that his decisions, his standards and his rules would prevail. I had little or no say in these. In many instances I didn't even agree with them, but it was my job to implement them.

"I see now that for a long time I suppressed my own ideas about how things should be. In that way I was making a lot of compromises because I thought that if I didn't fit his image of the good wife there must be something wrong with me. He behaved very badly in many respects — he drank, he put down the children, he avoided doing any share of the housework or the parenting, yet instead of assigning responsibility to him for these deficiencies I blamed myself and tried to change myself.

"The turning point in my attitude to our relationship came when I read Simone de Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex'. The feelings and thoughts I had only partly articulated to myself suddenly came into focus and made sense. I began to realise I had a right to expect more from life than I was getting.

"I think I became aware that I could lose a core part of myself if I continued to deny my own feelings and needs.



"I started to distance myself from him. Our communication had never been anything other than superficial, but it became almost non-existent. Eventually the marriage disintegrated.

"I think that if my feminist awareness had not been raised I wouldn't have had the courage to take up my independence. Since I've been on my own I feel I've gone from strength to strength. I now have a relationship with a woman and yes, of course I still have to make compromises and so does she, because we're two separate people with different personalities, but the difference is that in my relationship with my husband I had to make a whole lot of extra compromises simply because of my sex."

Judy's marriage also followed the traditional pattern. "I grew up imbued with the traditional myths and stereotypes, so when I got married I was content to play house for a while, then after my first baby was born I played dolls and took it for granted that I was happy.

But there came a time after two or three years when I realised that all I was doing was meeting other people's needs, spending all my days doing chores to make it possible for

those other people (my husband and children) to survive. I wasn't doing anything for me. I was so busy with housework, play centre, and boring part-time jobs that I had no energy whatsoever to indulge in or develop my own interests. For three whole years I didn't even read a book because the constant interruptions took all the pleasure out of it.

"My thoughts were taken up with a thousand trivial but necessary concerns that cluttered every corner of my mind day after day. My husband took no share in the chores. His mind wasn't thinking about the shopping or whether there were enough clean nappies.

"I discovered also, with a sense of bitter disappointment, that the romantic myths I had grown up with had not come true for me. My husband and I did not grow closer and closer, becoming as one person. No way! Things I loved to talk about — human relationships, motivation and emotions did not interest him.

"If I tried to tell him what bothered me in our marriage he considered it nagging or moaning and simply walked out of the room. It was a real power play. I would be enraged by his lack of response and his total rejection of me and go absolutely berserk, while he retained his cool and his dignity.

"I found myself becoming a different person, one I didn't like. I was losing my self-respect, my confidence and even, I felt, my intelligence. I knew the only way to save myself was to leave him.

"Now I revel in my ability to be independent and to support myself and my children. I love being beholden to no one. I feel so strong, so capable. I feel I can do anything.

"As for whether it's possible for a feminist to find happiness with a man — I look around me and I see men who call women "the wife", "girls" or "tarts", who say things like "No one could call me sexist. Why, my accountant is a lady and I think that's just great!", men whose life is playing rugby and going to the pub with their

mates. I see colourless men with nasty little sexist minds, or slick, successful businessmen, entrepreneurs and lawyers.

"I look at them and I think the likelihood of my finding a man I could respect among them is about one in a million. I started out heterosexual but I'm learning that my real pleasure comes from women, and when I look back I realise that in fact it always has done."

At the time of Katherine and Judy's marriages feminism had barely surfaced in New Zealand. Only a few women thought to question the differences in the roles assigned to men and women. Why, it went without saying that the woman should look after the babies because she was the one who *had* them! And because she was home obviously she should do the housework. It was equally obvious that the man had to go to work, therefore he needed more education, therefore he should be paid more...

For Katherine and Judy marriage involved a radical change of lifestyle, but one they had been led to believe would be totally fulfilling. Their discovery through their own experience that this was not so provided the incentive for them to take a critical, analytical look at what was happening to them.

Marriage brought no such major change in the husband's lives. Their jobs, their status, their economic independence continued as before. Any change was for the better — they now had someone to take care of all the tedious household matters, just as their mothers had done in the past.

There was little conflict between their images of marriage and the reality, to force them to look more closely at it. They made little attempt to recognise inequalities because it did not occur to them that there were any. Their wives were complaining, but then all wives nag.

For Katherine and Judy staying in marriage under those conditions became impossible. Things have not changed so much since that time. Today, as then, a feminist woman could have no hope for herself in a marriage based on traditional, sexist assumptions.

Moana's father was inclined to bash her mother up when things got too much for him and when she got

married Moana soon found she had landed herself in exactly the same situation, tied to an alcoholic husband good with his fists. That sort of power show is not one that a woman can adjust to, although Moana tried hard. She finally left when her oldest child was seven and her fourth and youngest was fifteen months.

"I was terrified of taking that step, but I knew I had to if I was going to keep any last shred of my dignity." Moana got a job, supported herself and the kids and started to feel good about herself. She became self-assured, proud and independent.

"People called me stuck-up, but it wasn't like that. If I hadn't had my pride I think I would have broken down. I built a wall and lived inside it because I had been the butt of so much that was bad in the world.

"I learned to take stock of myself, to really look inside myself and be truthful about my shortcomings and my strengths. I knew I'd want another man so I looked at what I was and what I wanted. I asked myself, 'Are you going to compromise and end up in the same mess or are you going to stick to your principles?'

"I became *very* critical and any man who didn't match up just didn't have a chance. He had to respect me and like me as I was because I had no intention of trying to be nice just to please. He had to be able to converse, to communicate with me all the way. This is what I have with my present partner, and it's the most important thing of all."

Moana and her second partner have been together for 19 years. They have sidestepped many of the sources of power imbalance in male/female relationships: they started a business together, so there is no economic disparity. They lived on the business premises so whoever was not busy tended to the children, and they employ a housekeeper to do the cleaning.

"I'm not aware of any inequality in our relationship and if there was we'd be able to have it out because we can talk to one another. We set the rules at the start of the relationship. If one of us is angry we leave it until we calm down and then we talk. This good relationship didn't just happen. I've had to teach him how to meet my emotional needs and I also had to teach him that he didn't know it all because he was pretty egotistical to begin with. I feel I'm an equal partner only be-

cause I was strong and independent before I met him and I insisted on staying that way. That's the only way a woman can live with a man and survive."

After trying out a range of different relationships Patti has opted for — in her own words "the most conventional option — the one-to-one, marriage and mortgage syndrome.

"I have an ambivalent relationship towards living with my partner. In many ways I'm very happy with him but there are some real problem areas which have to do with our radically different upbringings — in terms of sex, culture, and class. In basic terms — he was brought up to expect a maid to pick up after him, and I was brought up to pick up. Obviously I get pissed off when I'm wasting my time tidying up his mess as well as my own. One of my greatest fears is getting caught in the trap of the 60s — nappies and madness — all that kind of domestic nightmare stuff. So I rant and rave about it, and he's learning to be domestic. I don't know how it'll work when we have children.

"But I'm optimistic — otherwise I wouldn't live with him. If things don't change it's my dream to live in adjacent bedsits. That way I can have the best of both worlds.

"I do feel angry and frustrated with the 'mother and wife-nagger' stuff. This is countered to a certain extent by the emotional satisfaction I get from him. He is one of those rare men who is able to show his feelings and vulnerabilities. Above all he's a good friend. We were just under the illusion that sharing a domicile was romantic. The most important thing for me — sorry, this is a bit *Ms* magazine — is that we have a relationship very firmly grounded in both of us pursuing our related careers. He was brought up by a Betty Friedan feminist so there is, and always was, a basic assumption that our work and our relationship are equally important aspects of both our lives.

"I think in a heterosexual relationship there is always the problem of structural power imbalances. The ways it's expressed in my relationship are the kind of strong man/weak woman, mother/son games. Always with the same kind of ambivalence — it serves some kind of conditioned emotional need — in a totally politically unsound way of course!

Another aspect is dealing with finances. He's supporting me at the moment while I finish a course, and that brings up all sorts of traditional purse string stuff. I won't bore you with the details because it's too complicated, but it is interesting because we're always challenging each other's expectations — bread-winner, dependent wife roles versus financial independence from each other. We've got a kind of uneasy balance at the moment. Men and women strike different bargains — they dance around each other. I guess I'm saying I do compromise. The important thing is that he does too."



The image of women that Athina absorbed as a child did not include submissiveness, economic dependence or devotion to household duties. Her mother, who came from European peasant stock, was a strong woman who always had a paid job outside the home. She was always outspoken with Athina's father, making it quite clear when he did things she didn't like. She did not cower or placate!

"I had a good role model. I learned to fight back, not to give way as soon as a man raises his voice. Women in New Zealand are always so *nice*, even to offensive men. They hold back from expressing themselves in a man's presence. They seem afraid to contradict men. I didn't learn that behaviour."

Athina became strong in other respects too.

"I always had to be independent because my mother was not around to look after me a good part of the time. I knew I had to cope by myself. We were always poor so I started to earn money when I was 12. I was self-reliant from as far back as I can remember.

"I'm very demanding of men and I wouldn't waste my time on men who felt threatened by a strong woman or who didn't have the capacity to meet me on equal terms. My partner was attracted by my outspokenness and my independence.

"I feel I had a lot going for me in my relationship from the start. My partner did not expect me to fill the conventional role of wife and mother, and we have always considered housework and childcare to be our joint responsi-

bility. Even when I was home with the babies he did a lot of the housework and cooking to make sure I had time to myself.

"We deliberately tried to avoid letting the usual inequalities seep into our marriage and I think we've succeeded to a certain extent. We both have an income and the earnings are 'ours'. I do all the accounts and have far more control over our finances than he does.

"I think I should emphasise that it hasn't been all that easy to come to this level. It has taken a long time and if the communication between us had not been as good as it is perhaps we would never have got there. Problems can only be sorted out if both people recognise their importance and want to work on them.

"If a woman is going to find real satisfaction in a relationship with a man there's more involved than just working out the problems of day to day existence. To me that's of first importance and without it there hardly can be anything else, but the emotional side of the relationship is of immense importance too. Structuring household and childcare duties have been the easy parts for us. Coping with our male/female socialisation on an emotional level has been more difficult. Most men have difficulty expressing their emotions and disclosing their personal selves. This can have an inhibiting effect on women because it places them at such a disadvantage. A man who remains aloof, abstaining from self-revelation while the woman freely reveals her innermost feelings and her vulnerabilities is in a position of power and dominance over her, whether he realises it or not. Men who have learned to associate their masculinity with control and repressing their emotions will not find it easy to talk about them. It's usually the woman who has to battle to overcome this male reluctance. She has to constantly create the conditions that will foster communication on this deep personal level. She has to draw him out, ask questions and be ready to listen uncritically, which is not always easy. I've tried to do this with my partner because I can't feel free to fully achieve my own self-expression if he withdraws from me.

Success depends on whether the woman is strong enough to keep trying. At some stage the temptation is to say to hell with it, give up, and seek out someone else who will meet your

emotional needs but then it would mean starting out all over again, because any male partner will have the same problems expressing his emotions. It needs a real commitment between the two people for this aspect of the relationship to be successful. I'm still working on it."

The structure of our society presents many almost insuperable barriers to equality for women: violence, economic disadvantage, poor employment and scarce childcare. The only women who can hope to get around any of these barriers are affluent women who can afford labour-saving devices and perhaps a housekeeper. These women are very much in the minority and even in their care they, rather than their men are almost always the ones landed with responsibility for organising and supervising the running of the household.

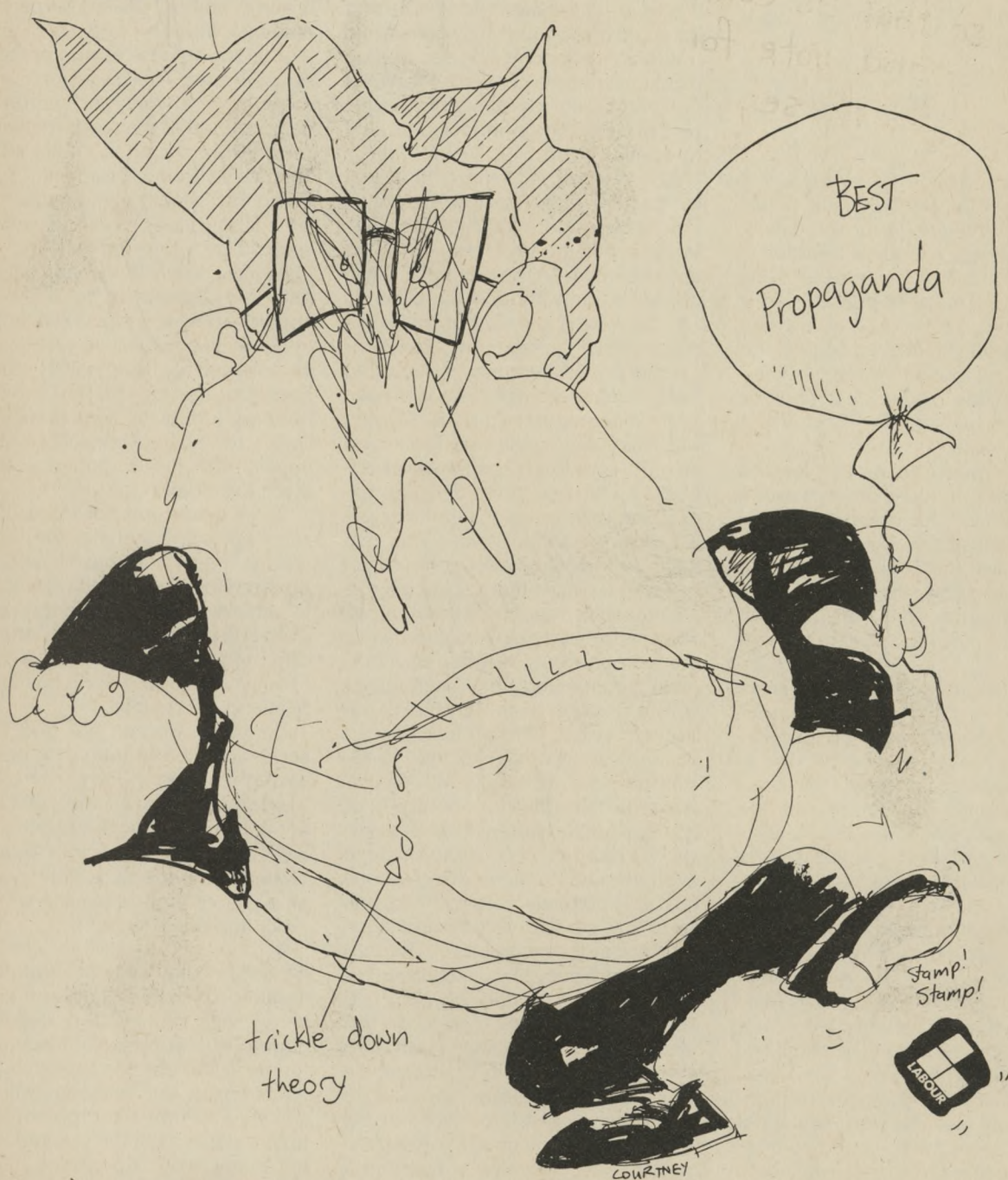
As long as a woman retains full responsibility for housework and childcare, she will remain subordinate and dependent. Yet if the man continues as breadwinner while she's at home all day it will be very hard for her to insist that he do half the chores. Even if she gets a paid job (and that's not easy today) the man is most unlikely to share household tasks equally with her. Experience shows that it just doesn't happen.

To eliminate areas of inequality in a marriage or partnership the man as well as the woman has to recognise the need for change and work actively to achieve it. For the man this means giving up some of his power and it's a rare man who would do this willingly. From his perspective he has little to gain and a lot to lose.

So many women will find themselves forced into the same position as Katherine and Judy. For once a woman has realised the constraints her wifely role places on her things can never be the same again. If changing the structure of her partnership proves impossible she will have no option but to leave.

If there comes a time when her heterosexuality leads her to look for another man she will at least have a better idea of her own needs. Of course, this won't make it any easier for her to find one she can relate to on equal terms, but her focus will have shifted. This time her problem will be to find a man with the potential to be her equal, who is prepared to work with her and take initiatives to change his attitudes and his behaviours. □

Cartoon Opportunities



Think of how those
brave Suffragettes struggled
so that we could go
and vote for...
these.



FIJI — COMPILED AND REPORTED BY JESVIER SINGH

Colonialism, Class, Coup

NIKHAT SHAMEEM, (AN INDO-FIJIAN WOMAN,) SPOKE ABOUT THE ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT IN FIJI AND RESISTANCE TO THE RECENT COUP.

NIKHAT is a member of the Fiji Anti-nuclear Group (FANG) in Fiji. The anti-nuclear movement began with a group called ATOM in the early 1970s. It then changed to the Nuclear-free Pacific Movement (NFP). Anti-nuclear feeling gathered momentum and in 1981 it restructured. Nikhat says that in the past ATOM and NFP were associated with students, "We wanted everybody to be involved, so we decided to call it FANG. The response was really good. People were beginning to identify strongly with the anti-nuclear issue and so it just grew and grew. But most of our support still comes from the educated — teachers, journalists and students."

Kamisesse Mara's Alliance government openly supported United States nuclear ship visits. They prevented anti-nuclear protests through police harassment and arrests. The United States embassy would only advise the public 12 hours before a nuclear ship visit was due. Since protest groups required a government permit seven days before the protest was to take place, this effectively limited protest. Permission to protest was often refused. Nikhat says FANG would manipulate restrictions by "meeting together in groups of three, standing six feet apart with one placard. The police always had our photographs, names, addresses and phone numbers on file."

Nikhat believes FANG was responsible for increasing awareness for a nuclear-free Fiji and this was reflected in the ousted Labour/National Federation government's policy of non-



Women grow, prepare and distribute food some of which is sold in the marketplace.

Photo: Peta Joyce

alignment and banning visits by nuclear-powered and armed ships. "Their policy was important for the people of Fiji. It gained a lot of support. It gained our support and because of that, many of us went around lobbying for Bavadra's party — campaigning and talking to people about how it would benefit them."

When the coup happened it was a terrible shock. We didn't know what to do, where to go. We couldn't even ring each other up. The telephones were cut off. The newspapers couldn't publish for five days and later were censored so were not reliable. Radio stations were under armed

guard. In protest, radio stations started to play Peter Tosh's song "Equal Rights and Justice" and Rootstrata (a local band) wrote a song "Once upon a time in a beautiful Fiji." The songs were banned. The military kept a close watch on everything. Once they control information, they control everything."

After the coup, members of FANG organised resistance groups. "We painted graffiti, duplicated and distributed leaflets, putting them under doors at night. The leaflets asked for unity, strength and to stand firm for democracy — to fight for our rights. We wanted people to know they were

not alone in resisting the coup — that there were other people around who dared to protest. Some of us were searched and our phones were tapped. Others were arrested and interrogated. My husband was arrested for singing the national anthem because it includes the words 'freedom' and 'democracy'. He asked why he couldn't sing the anthem. They refused to answer. Under a military coup you cannot question authority." Sympathisers of the Labour coalition and members of FANG were named on a "hit list" and most were forced to go underground.

Prayer meetings, says Nikhat, were the only way to organise protests after the coup. A prayer meeting was arranged on 20 May in Albert Park in Suva. Timoci Bavadra was to appear. The meeting was attacked by about 100 Fijians, some of whom were known thugs. Indo-Fijian vendors and stalls at Suva market were destroyed. Shops and offices were set on fire, houses stoned and people threatened. Nikhat believes the riots were organised to create an impression of racial violence. "For a while they succeeded . . . After the riots we no longer wanted to go out. We were very frightened."

Nikhat had found that teaching offered an effective way to get students to question the use of nuclear armaments. "I had been teaching for six years in Fiji. Our teaching syllabus was wide. We talked about nationalism, multiculturalism, protest and dissent. I taught topics which were close to my heart. I was very vocal about these issues." After the coup, Nikhat felt silenced. "It was impossible for us to express ourselves openly because word would get out. I could not teach! You cannot teach where you can't teach children to question."

Nikhat for the moment intends to stay in New Zealand. She is deeply concerned about events in Fiji. "People's lives have been totally messed up. It's really hard to find any direction. I had never dreamt that I'd want to leave Fiji. I liked my life in Fiji. It was wonderful. As a teacher I had the opportunity to do many things - to educate and encourage my students to question. After the coup, I couldn't be vocal about what I was feeling and so I left."

Nikhat says that now people in Fiji are very depressed. "They fear people outside will forget and they are. The trade bans may be lifted soon. David

Lange has withdrawn support for Bavadra. The mood is very low. People in Fiji were counting on the trade union movement and on New Zealand for support." It is difficult for people in Fiji to obtain accurate information. Nikhat collects articles published here, photocopies and sends them to friends in Fiji, who in turn copy and distribute them. "This way we distribute information and keep people's spirits up".

Nikhat believes the future for Fiji is bleak. "The people in Fiji have always been very peace loving. They don't want any kind of trouble but they also don't like being hassled." Nikhat fears that if uncontested elections go ahead there will be violence. "I am not sure to what extent the people can be pushed before there is violence." In fact, the violence has already begun: there have been 49 reported rapes and two schoolgirl suicides as a result of rape. As usual, the worst violence is directed at women.

REAPI BLYDE, DIA ULUVITI
AND CLAIRE RAIKUNA SPOKE
ABOUT THE TRADITIONAL
ROLE OF FIJIAN WOMEN. ALL
THREE WOMEN ARE FIJIAN
AND LIVE IN NEW ZEALAND.

FIJIANS live within extended families or *vuvale* which are bound by mutual obligation, blood and marriage ties. Tradition and culture are learnt through example. Even if traditional expectations are not complied with, kinship bonds remain strong. The *vuvale* extends into a *mataqali* (sub clan) or *yavusa* (larger clan). The *mataqali* is paternalistic — male members give life, strength and prosperity to the *mataqali*. Women who marry serve their husband's *mataqali*. Traditionally, Claire says, "a woman's place is not to discuss matters amongst men — they can listen but it's not polite to offer an opinion. Men make the decisions." Children are helpers and protectors and give security, so more members means a stronger *mataqali* economically and socially. Children are therefore the most important asset of the family and hold a special place in Fijian society.

Dia emphasizes that, "There's a lot of richness in the traditions of Fijian

culture — in the value system. There's always a line of respect to any Fijian. When you find out where someone is from, you know exactly what relationship this person has to others. It maintains that social structure — it's very solid. There's no disrespect towards anyone. Even amongst the chiefs — no matter how high your rank, you still consider those under you. But that doesn't seem to be happening in Fiji now amongst the chiefs where the paramount chiefs are completely disregarding the lower chiefs. This breaking away from tradition is very sad."

British colonisation and Western development bear much of the responsibility for the erosion of the traditional economic unit and communal structure in Fiji. Existing divisions have been strained further, creating conflicts between women and men, chiefs and commoners, and work and the household. In traditional Fijian society women were not only wives and mothers, but also craftswomen, traders, horticulturalists and fisherwomen. Women combined work and family responsibilities. However, since colonisation and Western development, production and employment have been removed from communal households in villages to isolated family units in the cities.

Mere Puleau in *Pacific Perspective* points out that development projects in Fiji are modelled on Western capitalism, emphasizing economic interests at the expense of traditional structures and values. Projects ignore the needs of women. Men tend to reap both the economic and social benefits of development projects through employment, income and status. Women are confined to marginal work, which tends to be unskilled, labour-intensive and low paid.

The health and welfare of the family suffers as women are forced to juggle household and childcare responsibilities with the demands of waged work. Mere Puleau sees the increasing dependency on processed and imported foods as an example of the impact of waged work on family health. She says, "the villagers are now eating more of what they do not produce. Tinned fish, beef, biscuit, etc . . ." Communal life also suffers as women must bear the added burden of village commitments and responsibilities. Expectations upon women to continue fulfilling traditional roles creates enormous tension and con-

flict. Western disregard of household tasks and childcare as constituting "work" has been imposed upon Fijian society.

Compounding this are both a paternalistic structure and traditional attitudes which regard women as subordinate to men. Consequently, much of women's work remains unrecognised. Cema Bolabola, in *Pacific Perspective*, shows that in rural areas women are forced to endure long hours and harsh conditions meeting basic food needs, for example fetching water from wells and collecting firewood for fuel. For these women, she says, the priority of development projects ought to be basic food needs, labour-saving devices, piped water, better cooking facilities, food preservation and storage, and improved sanitation and education.

Reapi says that some Fijian women believe they must marry outside of their race to gain access to resources and to break away from the confines of tradition. "If I married a Fijian, I'd only go so far. I wouldn't go beyond that. Once you're out... it opens your mind to other things." However Reapi and Dia point out that this attitude stems from colonisation. "You marry those who have resources and money — the Europeans. The Indian people were brought out as indentured labourers. The didn't have money so you shouldn't marry them. Its a very materialistic outlook. Marry a European man and he's going to give you a washing machine — you won't have to scrub your clothes on a board." But marriage outside your race, says Reapi does mean the loss of your language, culture and identity. "If I marry a Fijian man, I retain my bloodlines. If you marry a European man and have kids you lose your connection to ancestral land — you lose your heritage."

Over recent years educational opportunities have increased for Fijian women as families realise the benefits, economically and socially. Education increases access to employment and status, and is a valuable service to the community. Education is encouraged, says Reapi, "If you showed a sign of intelligence or good grades families would put all their resources into your education." But limits are still imposed. Although attitudes are slowly changing raising a family remains a priority. "Women could get educated but they (men) didn't want women to use that education. Reapi says that, "it is important

women know their place — that the man was still above them, even if they were working outside the home."

The proportion of women in politics, for example is very low. There have only been two prominent women politicians. Dia says, "They gained prominence through their husband's status. But women only go so far. Politics in Fiji goes hand in hand with tradition. So you can only reach a certain limit and tradition forbids you to go above that. But the Alliance party also never encouraged women to be active politically." Women are most active in paid work which is traditionally defined as women's work, such as teaching and nursing. Men continue to dominate political and economic areas.

Claire came to New Zealand for her education. She has been living here for 19 years. Yet, for Claire the cost of greater access to education and independence has been high. Claire feels caught between two cultures, not entirely identifying with either. She says, "Having a Western education means being exposed to different cultural values and attitudes.

"When I go home, I feel very inadequate. I'm in a limbo. I don't know where I fit in. I feel an outsider here (in New Zealand), but when I go home I'm not treated like an ordinary member of the family - they put me on a pedestal. They make excuses for you. When somebody says I should do this or that, my family say, 'Leave her, she's alright — its because she's over there (in New Zealand).' Even when you speak, they say, 'Oh, listen to her speak. She sounds like a White person.' It makes me feel alienated. I try to fit in, but sometimes I try too much. Most of my family are very poor yet they go out of their way to get butter and milk for me because they believe I must have these things. It's a real luxury for them. They're constantly making sacrifices and it is always the women who make the sacrifices."

Fijians, says Claire, are subjected to considerable racism in New Zealand. This is reflected through patronizing comments. "People classify me as a visitor which makes me angry. Pakehas always ask me 'Where do you come from?'. Really, people want to know why I am Black. Being exposed to Western values and attitudes makes me appreciate my Fijian heritage."

Additional sources:
Pacific Perspective Vol. 11 no. 2 "Women on the

move."

Women in Development In the South Pacific. (papers presented at a conference in Vanuatu in 1984).

THIS ARTICLE IS COMPILED FROM A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS WITH SHAISTA SHAMEEM. SHAISTA IS AN INDO-FIJIAN DESCENDANT OF AN INDENTURED LABOURER. SHE TEACHES WOMEN'S STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO. SHAISTA SPOKE ABOUT THE INDENTURED LABOUR SYSTEM AND EXAMINED CLASS, RACE AND GENDER DIVISIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF FIJI'S POLITICAL ECONOMY.



Shaista Shameem

Photo: Jesvier Singh

THE upward social mobility of many Indo-Fijians since the indentured period has not eliminated the oppression and exploitation of the majority of Indo-Fijian women. The Fiji Bureau of Statistics in 1979 revealed that:

- Indo-Fijian women have a lower life expectancy than all other women in the population.
- Infant mortality is generally twice, sometimes three times as high for Indo-Fijian babies as for any other infants.
- Adult Indo-Fijian women have a lower literacy rate than all other women in the population. This is even more marked in the older population, where more than half the women aged 40-59 have never been to school.

- The fertility rate for Indo-Fijian women has declined rapidly since 1970: 134 to 118 per 1000 in six years.

- The standardised death rate of the Indo-Fijian population over most of the past 15 years has been higher at most levels than for any other section of the population.

- The suicide rate of Indo-Fijian women under 30 years of age is higher than for any other component of the population.

- Up until 10 years ago 73 percent of Indo-Fijian women were regarded as economically inactive and described as doing "unpaid home duties".

Why are Indo-Fijian women so far behind the rest of Fiji's women in health, work, status and life expectancy? The reasons lie in the combination of class exploitation, racism and sexism, the historical origins of which can be traced back to 1874 when Fiji became a late addition to expanding British imperialism. Taking advantage of tribal conflicts, Britain took possession of Fiji in return for protection of Fijian political and economic interests. Fiji offered Britain yet another opportunity for plunder.

At the invitation of the British government the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) of Australia began operations in Fiji in 1880. Sugar production was labour intensive. Having acquired the land, Britain sought cheap labour. Slavery had been abolished, not by philanthropists as many historians claim but because it became too expensive to maintain. Yet colonial officials, White settlers and capitalists in Fiji still needed a subservient, bonded labouring class. Britain turned to one of its own colonies — India.

Between 1879 and 1916 some 60,000 Indian women and men were coerced, cajoled and tricked into signing contracts for periods of five to ten years to work in Fiji. Slavery was maintained under the guise of the indentured labour system. At the end of five years labourers could return to India, on the condition that they paid their own passage. Their passage was paid for them if they reindentured for a further five years. Since wages were below subsistence, most remained and then moved onto small farms.

Of the total number of labourers recruited, 28 percent were women. Women provided the capitalists with the possibility of further profit. They were confined to unskilled field

labour on piece rates whereas men had the option of mill work. Mill work involved more skill, better working conditions and higher pay, which was based on times rates. Men received one shilling per day, women nine pence per day and children (under 15 years) were paid in proportion to the amount of work they did. Both women and men worked six days of the week and for the entire indenture period — 41 years — wage rates remained the same.

The CSR company made super-profits during the indenture period from enormous savings in labour costs. In 1912, an Indian male labourer on Fiji's sugar plantations, only received one-fifth of the wages of a White worker in Australia. The comparison against women's wages is worse. Although the minimum wage for women was nine pence per day, in fact average wages did not reach this level until 1917. Women, therefore suffered a much greater level of poverty than men under more brutal working conditions. Women's field labour involved: digging 150 sugar cane holes (24' x 18' x 12"), weeding and thrashing 10-15 chains six feet wide, draining 250-270 cubic feet, cutting three tons per day and shovel ploughing 7-10 chains.

It's hardly surprising that within the first year of indenture, 4.10 percent of adults died (female deaths were higher than male), and 19.21 percent of children died. These figures are even more horrifying, considering adult labourers were compelled under the regulations to undergo two medical examinations for fitness (one in India and the other on arrival in Fiji). The main causes of death of children were diarrhoea, malnutrition, debility and congenital syphilis.

The children's deaths were blamed on their mother's indifference and incompetence. That Indian mothers were poverty stricken and unable to spend time on childcare was completely ignored. Since women were unable to earn a proper wage many were forced into prostitution. Indian men often preyed on the women's vulnerability and made fortunes bartering their bodies in exchange for payment of labour fines or bail money. The women had no choice; at least they and their children got fed.

The benefits of women's unpaid labour was recognised by company officials. Women cooked and cleaned for their male partners and also relieved the sexual frustrations of over-

worked and bitter Indian men who could not take their anger out on the all-too-powerful company. Burdened by low wages and heavy field work, women were also expected to cater for the domestic needs of their husbands and/or children. For this they were not paid. In addition to the burden of plantation labour and household labour women were brutalised by overseers and Indian men.

Indentured labourers could be fined or imprisoned for labour offences which included desertion, unlawful absence from work, failure to show diligence or to complete a task, and using insulting language or disobedience. Work time lost through absence, court appearances and imprisonment resulted in the extension of indentures. Women who resisted their exploitation and domination faced violence and brutality from both the companies and men. At times, the proportion of women sent to prison, fined or forced to work beyond their indenture period exceeded the male proportion. Women resisted by with-holding their labour and through physical violence upon male overseers. Women would get together in gangs and beat up cruel and abusive plantation personnel, using hoes, knives and other work tools as weapons.

Women also resisted the domination of Indian men by challenging traditional expectations of the sanctity of marriage and the lifelong faithfulness of a wife. Many women refused to continue living with husbands or would take lovers. Women's attempts to control their sexual lives led to brutal crimes against them. For example, between 1890 and 1921, 68 indentured women were murdered, apparently due to the sexual jealousy of men. White men also forced themselves upon women — those who resisted were submitted to harsher working conditions. There were countless cases of assault and battery of women. Between 1885 and 1920, 200 men were charged for committing sexual offences against women. Women endured violent abuse and rape. Resistance in many cases cost them their lives.

AFTER the indentures of Indians expired, most settled near the mills, leasing land from the CSR to plant cane on 10-12 acre farms. Others were wage workers on estates. Two systems operated during the indenture period — the

plantation system and small farm production. Initially, small farms supplemented the supply of labour on plantations. After 1912, companies began to replace the plantation system of production. Companies retained their control over production by controlling prices and production methods. For example, the company would regulate cultivation, maintain surveillance of crops and control harvesting. Women cultivated family vegetable and rice plots as well as carrying out household tasks. This division of labour was created by the need to restructure production to maintain company profits as it became difficult to continue the indenture system. Labourers were in demand for India's growing textile industry. This labour shortage led to the transition from bonded labour to free labour.

From this point women lost their status as agriculturalists and farm labourers. They were now "engaged in domestic duties." This shift in occupational status rendered women marginal to production. In reality, women were *not* marginal to production. They were in fact burdened by two roles; household tasks and food cultivation as well as reproducing the next generation of workers for Fiji's sugar industry. This new system of production altered relations between women and men. Men completely dominated the public sphere as wage labourers and lease holders. The CSR only allocated leases to married men. These farms were only productive if a farmer used the unpaid labour of his wife and children. Men also dominated the private sphere, claiming superiority over women in the household and by controlling resources. The institutions of marriage, family and religion merely reinforced women's subservience. At this time, women's so called promiscuity on plantations was used as a justification for forming patriarchal families. Women, confined to households, continued to do the same amount of work as under the indenture system, but now for no pay.

Separate development for Fijians and Indo-Fijians was a deliberate colonial policy. Fijians' determination to retain their land rights and Britain's costly exploitation of other colonies forced Britain to adopt a more accommodating attitude towards Fiji. However, the priority remained maximum use of and gain from the colony's resources. Fijians were en-



A soldier outside Suva Civic Centre watches the crowd as Lt. Col. Rabuka reads out the list of people appointed to the Governor-General's Committee of Advisors.
Photo Mathew McKee

couraged to stay on the land by colonial administrators, company officials and their chiefs. They served a dual role as subsistence producers and tax payers. They were denied the benefits of wage labour. Through subsistence, Fijians cultivated a small surplus for the market, and through taxes filled the colonial state's coffers. Indians laboured on plantations and when this became uneconomical were transferred to small cane farms. Cash-cropping (in this case sugar), dominated the economy — a common strategy used by Britain in its colonies.

During the 1930s, Indians were again encouraged to emigrate to work in Fiji's ailing commercial sector. Unemployment was high in India as land was being divided up there and people were forced to find work in the cities. It was these circumstances which brought the agriculturalists from the Gujarat in India to Fiji for work and the *belief* of a better life. But they discovered on arrival, that no work was available on plantations or small farms and so set up small businesses. Gujarati's were not, contrary to popular opinion, more "commercially-minded" than Fijians, but came to dominate Fiji's commercial sector through a deliberate colonial policy. In fact, two separate groups of Indians emerged, those who had worked as a subservient, bonded labouring class and those who moved into small businesses. Resentment and conflict emerged between the two groups of Indians as sugar cane farmers were forced into debt to small businesses, because they often had to wait over a year for sugar cane payments.

Even political rights were defined and divided on colonialist terms. Indian men with property were given voting rights in 1930. But Indian women could not vote until 1963, despite working under the same conditions. Fijians, also were not given voting rights until 1963 because they were not seen to own property by the colonialists. Although Fijians owned land, it was communal land, not individual ownership.

The increasing dominance of Indo-Fijians in the commercial sector and the realisation in 1946 that they were beginning to outnumber Fijians created political fear and resentment. The colonialists manipulated Fijian fear and resentment to endorse their own political and economic strategies. They formed alliances with a Fijian elite of political leaders, administrators and chiefs, and successfully depicted Indo-Fijians as exploitative, crafty and acquisitive. As a result, many Fijians refused to renew farm leases. Attempts were made to control the fertility rate of Indo-Fijian women. Family planning centres were set up and contraceptives made available. Information booklets were translated into Hindi rather than Fijian. Indo-Fijians were perceived as the threat, and targeted.

Between 1930 and 1950 there was a huge gap in the lives of Indo-Fijian women. Little was written about them.

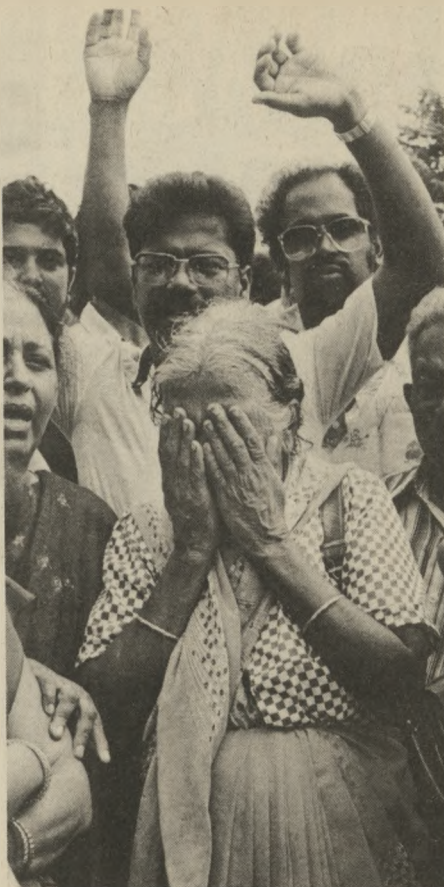
The majority were isolated, devalued and excluded from mainstream society, confined to subsistence farming and household labour. They lived under appalling conditions and in ill-health. Employment opportunities were restricted to teaching and nursing. Most women hired themselves out as domestic workers or "house-girls". During the 1940s, only about one percent of Indo-Fijian women were wage workers, mostly in small factories. The priority was to get married and raise a family.

Fiji's entire colonial economy was restructured from the 1960s towards external needs and consequently the vulnerabilities of external market forces. Sugar was still Fiji's largest industry but tourism began to emerge and boom at this time, and manufacturing increased. The CSR diversified into byproducts of sugar like molasses as well as releasing land on leases for pineapple and banana crops when it suited them.

Australia and New Zealand began to transfer factory production to Fiji because of escalating labour costs in their own countries. Using cheap labour in Fiji, factory production included steel, iron, consumer products, a Japanese fish processing and canning plant and timber processing. Goods were targeted for the internal Fijian market, other Pacific countries and some returned to the raw material source — Australia and New Zealand. Both Australia and New Zealand were involved in building roads, an international airport, hotel construction and port facilities for Fiji's tourist potential.

Fiji began to rely more and more on imports. Despite Fiji's abundance of land and agricultural potential, it heavily depends upon Australia and New Zealand for basic food items like flour, processed sugar and rice. This is why the trade bans after the coup hit Fiji so hard.

Tourism offered massive profit potential and accelerated the turn towards an external economy. The colonial administrators provided incentives and subsidies for local businesses — the extent of its potential was realised the doors were opened for foreign investment. Foreign firms began to dominate, making huge profits from accommodation, shopping, travel and tours. Although only 4.6 percent of tourist firms in Fiji were foreign-owned, they earned 65.6 percent of the total tourist receipts in 1977.



An Indo-Fijian woman weeps during speeches being made to a group of supporters and relatives outside Veiuoto (the official PM's residence in Suva), Saturday 16 May. Within the next 24 hours, the military separated out the Indo-Fijians from the Taukei Fijian captives and shifted them to Borran House on the other side of Suva. Nobody knew where Bavadra, Baba and company were so that the only point of protest/vigil was outside Borran House. The regime tried to say "see, nobody cares about Bavadra, we were just being used by the Indians."

When people found out Bavadra was still at Veiuoto, his clan (Yavusa), formed a vigil as near as they could get to Veiuoto. Indian supporters, journalists, Red Cross, etc, were not allowed near them. So the military can say "see, only Taukei support for Bavadra..."

Text and photos Mathew McKee.

Meanwhile local businesses, owned mostly by Indo-Fijians, had to compete fiercely against each other for the rest. Production resources and profits were still in the hands of White companies.

This expansion in factory production, tourism and the emerging bureaucracy led to large numbers of women joining the workforce. So, once again, women were drawn into the workforce to meet the needs of industry. In addition, greater access to education increased women's expectations, giving them other options besides marriage and raising a family. Yet once again women paid a high

price. Both Fijian and Indo-Fijian women were confined to low paid and low status jobs in factory production and in the tourist industry.

In the tourist industry women were employed in two types of work. As "maids," housekeepers, laundry workers, kitchen hands and cleaners or as sex objects. Fijian women were marketed for White male tourists portrayed as hula-skirted, alluring and available on tourist posters, and worked as waitresses, receptionists, entertainers, tour guides and travel staff. For both Fijian and Indo-Fijian women on the poverty line, tourism offered work in prostitution on the night club and hotel circuit, the streets and on visiting naval and fishing vessels. In fact, the Alliance government recommended that prostitutes be taxed on their earnings, completely disregarding the fact that it is poverty which forces women into prostitution.

Concern was being expressed about the "economic backwardness" of the Fijian people. Lack of education and lack of financial expertise were presented as the problems. Fifty percent of state scholarships were set aside for Fijians, an institute to train Fijians in business was set up and Fijian companies were encouraged with financial assistance and advice. But they were destined to fail, because loans were too small and investments were made in already well-established areas. Lack of education for Fijians was not in fact the problem. Missionaries, the initial "invaders," translated bibles and books into Fijian and encouraged Fijian education on a Christian basis. The colonial policy of separate development meant that Fijians and Indo-Fijians were concentrated in separate regions and therefore were educated in separate schools. The later absence of Fijians in small businesses was not due to lack of education but because the Fijian elite — the colonial administrators and chiefs, kept the Fijian people on the land as subsistence farmers and taxpayers. This economic division continues to be disguised as a racial one.

But for Indo-Fijian women, the situation was worse. In the past, Indo-Fijian women were never encouraged by their families, employers or government administrators to read or write. Their literacy rate is lower than all other sectors of the population.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

WOMEN AND AIDS

UPDATE

Pat Rosier
looks at
recent information

There is such a lot of ignorance about AIDS still, and ignorance leads people to act out their prejudices, to behave rudely, like the elderly woman who wouldn't have a cup of tea at her friend's house because the friend's nephew, who was ill with AIDS, had recently visited. Or worse, like the tutor who wanted a whole class of 15 adult students to have the antibody test because he suspected one man in the group to be homosexual. (The presence of the AIDS virus is tested for by examining the blood for antibodies. If the antibodies are found the person is said to be HIV positive or seropositive.) "No stigmatisation," the tutor said, "test everyone". (The students refused.)

There are many things wrong with this attitude:

1. Only some homosexual men engage in sexual activities that have a high risk of AIDS transmission so being homosexual does *not* mean being "likely" to have AIDS.
2. As far as anyone's relationships with classmates or a tutor are concerned it's irrelevant in the course of their interactions as fellow-students or tutor whether or not anyone has tested as HIV positive — AIDS is transmitted only by very specific types of intimate contact.
3. To act on the *suspicion* of someone being anything is unsupportable. The tutor did not talk with the person concerned.

There are countless other examples of reactions to individuals that just do not make sense if one knows anything at all about AIDS. It must be said over and over again that AIDS is



transmitted from one person to another only by the exchange of body fluids. Semen and blood carry the virus in by far the heaviest concentrations. Small amounts of the virus can be found in saliva and vaginal secretions. It is in the menstrual blood of an infected woman. Not all those who are seropositive will develop fullblown AIDS, but little is known about what factors influence this. Those who do develop fullblown AIDS will almost certainly die.

The people who need to take precautions against becoming infected are those who have what is generally described as "intimate sexual contact involving the exchange of body fluids" with someone who is already infected (there are some problems in establishing who is infected — see below), and those (most often IV drug users) who have contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids in a situation where that blood is in contact with theirs. Infected blood on unbroken skin will not transmit the disease.

HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN

A lot of recent new information about AIDS and women concerns its transmission among the heterosexual population. The figures come from the United States. They make it clear that the virus travels more readily from male to female than from female to male. A study of the partners of people with transfusion-associated infection, (not a problem any more, as blood used in transfusions can now be tested and treated),

Photos by John Thornton

showed that of the 50 infected men, eight transmitted the virus to their wives and of the 20 infected women, one transmitted the virus to her husband. The number of times they had sexual intercourse did not seem to be a factor and all had had only vaginal intercourse. It is generally believed that women transmit the virus less effectively than men, but the reasons for this are not clear. The speculations include: a very high percentage of the people in Western countries that are already infected are men; men give their partners a big dose of the virus (in semen) and women do not; the walls of the vagina are a very receptive area.

The proportion of women who have developed AIDS from sexual contact has more than doubled since 1982: heterosexual activity now accounts for 26% of all new female AIDS cases, compared to 0.4% of male cases. Seventy per cent of these women are Hispanic or Black. The numbers of heterosexual people getting the disease is increasing faster than any other group in the US at present.

Katie Leishman, reporting in *The Atlantic Monthly*, of February 1987, "In the United States the number of reported domestic cases of heterosexually transmitted AIDS has increased by over 200% in the past year (while cases among gay men and IV drug users grew by 80%). But the total heterosexual caseload was still only 1,079 last December, or four per cent of the 28,523 cases reported. It must be remembered, however, that these counts are of cases of AIDS in which infection occurred, on the average, five years ago. No-one has any idea how many people are infected but asymptomatic, or how much transmission is going on. It has been estimated that in California there are 60 cases of AIDS for every reported one, and reporting is more complete in that state than anywhere else."

PREVENTION

American heterosexuals are apparently very resistant to taking precautions (which usually means either saying "no" or using a condom). Condoms are recommended for use in oral sex also, where the man may be infected. An ingredient in many spermicidal gels and foams, nonoxynol-9, is considered a possible repellent to the virus. Condoms are heavily prom-

*None of us can
catch AIDS
through ordinary
social contact.*

oted for "safe sex", but it must be remembered that they are associated with a 10% failure rate as a contraceptive and a woman is fertile only part of the time, whereas if someone has the AIDS virus it is always there. However, they are a protection.

What people say about their sexual history is not reliable. Men who are bisexual — they may be married and have occasional sex with men, or they may have either women or men as sexual partners — may pose a particular risk for women, but they also may have a variety of reasons for not disclosing their bisexuality.

A person may be infected with the AIDS virus for anything up to ten years without having any symptoms. This, combined with the tendency of many to be less than honest about their sexual past, means that it's really difficult to know whether any particular sexual partner has the virus. So it's "safe sex" (probably "safer sex" is more accurate), or celibacy, or sticking with one partner whose sexual history you are confident about, or take some risks.

Homosexual male populations in America, and New Zealand, have been more responsive to education programmes about safe sex than the heterosexual population. This is possibly because they are very well aware that the public health system does not serve them well, so they had better take responsibility for their own health.

It may be, also, that people who have had an antibody test and been found negative, then feel they have some sort of immunity. In fact, a negative antibody test does *nothing* to prevent future infection, it is only limiting behaviour that will do that. The basic preventative guideline for heterosexual women was described in the earlier *Broadsheet* article as, "... not to allow blood, semen, urine or faeces from a partner to enter your body through your mouth, vagina, anus or open cuts or sores." To achieve this, with any sexual partner who may be infected: use condoms

with men who may be infected, along with a spermicide such as Durex pessaries, Ortho-crem or Delphen foam, which contain nonoxynol-9; always use condoms for anal sex as the anus wall tears more easily than the vagina; use condoms with a good tasting lubricant for oral (woman on man) sex.

A woman who was involved in making what is claimed as America's "first safe-sex porno film", "insisted that each of her partners wear two condoms in case one broke. 'First I put the nonoxynol-9 on the man, then a condom, then more nonoxynol-9, then a condom... In fact a lot of men say they like the sensation of two condoms better than one. More friction.'"

Prostitutes are particularly vulnerable to infection from men — more at risk than the men are from them. Many prostitutes use condoms as a contraceptive, which may have worked for them as an AIDS preventative during the years when people were getting infected but no-one knew about it. They are talked about as a "high-risk" group despite the fact that only one to two percent of prostitutes who don't use IV drugs have contracted AIDS. It seems that the real concern may be about the risk of white men being infected by prostitutes.

There is some evidence that good overall health may make a person better able to resist AIDS. Getting enough sleep, a good diet, not using drugs, and keeping your stress level down are the factors that are usually mentioned.

There is little information about the possibility that certain contraceptive methods may increase susceptibility to the HIV virus. It is known that IUDs can scratch the cervix, and this must be an increased risk. There is a link between the use of the pill and a lower resistance to gonorrhea, but nothing is known about any link with the chances of contracting AIDS.

LESBIAN WOMEN

Women whose sexual partners are women are an extremely low risk group, unless they are also IV drug users. There is only one documented case in America of lesbian to lesbian transmission of the virus through sexual activity. It is described like this:

"The case involves a 26-year-old New York City woman who developed fever and enlarged lymph nodes in 1982, about a month after the start of a lesbian relationship with a 25-year-

old woman who had already been infected with the AIDS virus, possibly through intravenous drug use.

"Both women tested positive for the AIDS virus. An extensive investigation... strongly suggested that the virus has been transmitted by lesbian sexual contact with the rectum and vagina.

"As a result of 'traumatic' sexual activities both women developed vaginal bleeding, which the researchers speculate may have contributed to the transmission of the virus... The researchers could not prove the case for lesbian transmission of the virus 'beyond a shadow of a doubt' because the second woman had several heterosexual contacts as well."

Choosing to have a child by artificial insemination is a definite risk area for lesbians. A lesbian research project in San Francisco which surveyed about 60 women who used gay donors for sperm in the late seventies and early eighties found that none were HIV positive.

ROUTES OF TRANSMISSION

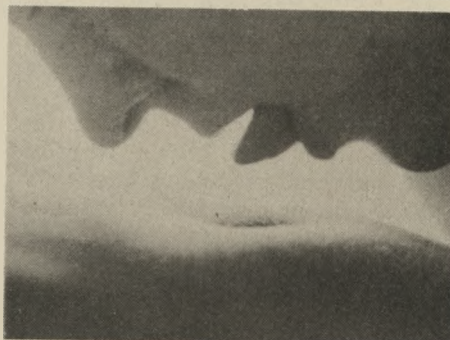
(This section is reprinted from an article by Susan Ardill and Sue O'Sullivan in *Spare Rib*, April 1987.)

Infected man to non-infected woman

PENIS IN VAGINA (Fucking, penetration, intercourse). Absorption of semen into vagina or cervical ulcers, or through the tiny lacerations caused by friction during vaginal intercourse. It seems entirely possible that HIV can be absorbed through the mucous membrane of the vagina, without any cuts or tears being present. The physiological environment of the vagina is a good one for the virus to live in, and it could be slowly absorbed through the walls. The large amount of HIV in the semen of an HIV positive man makes the possibility of this greater than in other exchanges of body fluids. If the man's penis were bleeding this could also enter cuts or sores in the woman, but this appears to be a less likely occurrence.

PENIS IN MOUTH (fellatio, blow jobs, oral sex)]. There would need to be an absorption of semen either through the man coming or leaking semen, through mouth ulcers or sores or bleeding gums, or cracked bleeding lips. The inside of the mouth is also a mucous membrane, so there seems a possibility of absorption of blood or semen into the tissue, similar to the vagina. There is no evidence

Lesbians are an extremely low-risk group for sexual transmission of AIDS.



that swallowed semen is dangerous unless the woman has stomach ulcers, although things like aspirin can cause small amounts of bleeding in the stomach. As acids in the stomach probably destroy the AIDS virus this is probably not a major route of infection.

PENIS IN ANUS (arse fucking, penetration, buggery). Absorption of semen through the tiny lacerations in anal tissue which apparently always accompany penetration. If his blood enters her anus it could also be absorbed. The make-up of anal mucous membrane appears particularly able to absorb HIV.

HER FINGER(S)/HAND IN HIS ARSE. Possible transmission if she has open cuts and tears him; but what is the likelihood of this?

HIS FINGER(S)/HAND IN HER ARSE. He would have to have cuts/open sores on his hand.

HER HAND ON HIS PENIS (masturbating him, wanking him off). Again she would need to have open cuts on her hand and absorb semen directly into them.

HE EJACULATES, COMES, ONTO ANY EXTERNAL BODY SURFACE. Open cuts would have to be present in her skin.

KISSING. Although HIV has been found in saliva in very low concentrations, most commentators say that oral transmissions would only occur if there was blood in the mouth (coming from bleeding gums, open sores); and this would have to find its way into the other person's mouth. That's why

they tell us the risk from kissing is virtually nil.

Infected woman to non-infected man

PENIS IN VAGINA. The tiny abrasions in the penis caused by very vigorous friction, or any sores, could allow absorption of any vaginal fluid carrying HIV. The strongest contender though is menstrual blood. Interestingly, as it is dry sex which is most likely to cause penile abrasions, there is a strong case for men to consider women's need for lubrication, brought about by pleasure and excitation!

PENIS IN ANUS. The tears in her anal walls would allow direct passage for her blood into the exposed abrasions in his penis. And haemorrhoids pose a big risk.

HIS FINGER(S)/HAND IN/ON HER GENITALS OR ANUS (finger fucking, fisting). He would have to have cuts on his hands for there to be any possibility of transmission.

HIS MOUTH IN/ON HER GENITALS (cunnilingus, eating cunt, going down on). Open sores in his mouth make more likely absorption of her secretions or menstrual blood, but absorption is possible simply through the mucous membrane.

HIS MOUTH IN/ON HER ANUS (rimming, tongue fucking). Again, he would have to have open cuts/sores in his mouth in order to receive infected blood or shit with blood in it.

Infected woman (A) to non-infected woman (B)

A'S MOUTH/TONGUE IN/ON B'S GENITALS. A would have to have bleeding gums or sores in her mouth, tongue or lips in order to transmit infected blood or lymph. It's unlikely that saliva on its own would transmit HIV.

A'S MOUTH/TONGUE ON/IN B'S ANUS. The same as above except that there's a higher chance of having microscopic tears in the anus which would more easily permit transmissions of the virus.

A'S FINGER(S)/HAND ON/IN B'S GENITALS AND ANUS. A would have to have cuts/sores on her hands and B on her genitals. We want to point out here that sometimes abrasions or lacerations happen, unnoticed, during vigorous sex. Transmission is much more probable from penetration of the vagina or anus than from stimulation of the clitoris.

KISSING. As above.

B'S TONGUE/MOUTH IN/ON A'S GENITALS OR ANUS. B could absorb menstrual blood, or vaginal secretions into her mouth. This seems one of the riskiest woman to woman activities if one partner is infected.

B'S FINGER(S)/HANDS ON/IN A'S GENITALS OR ANUS. If A were menstruating and B had open cuts/sores on her hand this could be very risky. If A isn't menstruating the same questions are raised as in the infected woman to man section on hand/genital anal contact.

● Sex toys

What are sex toys? Well practically anything, but the examples we'll use here are vibrators, dildos, restraints, whips.

Any risk of transmission with "toys" comes through sharing. In relation to AIDS it seems a sensible idea to wash all toys with a soap and warm water between shares, or even better, each have your own.

We feel it's important to stress here that sexual practices which are sometimes considered "extreme" or even "dangerous" aren't necessarily any more so than more conventional sexual activities in relation to AIDS. No one can give a dildo AIDS unless it hasn't been cleaned properly.

RESTRAINTS or whips of any sort are not dangerous unless they have broken the skin, and blood comes into contact with the other person's mouth or vagina. We would like to add here that no one seems to know for sure if, and for how long, dried blood constitutes any danger. Scabs do not.

URINE AND SHIT. There is no physiological reason why these would contain HIV in themselves. Urine does not appear to be especially dangerous. (Shit isn't either, but other very strong health risks, eg Hepatitis B, must be borne in mind.) However, as either pass from the body, they can collect blood cells through infection or trauma to the bowel or urethral walls. So care should be taken in regard to excretions from infected people.

Remember that in every one of the situations we have described above the practices may be risky only when one or more people taking part are already infected. You don't get it simply from having anal sex, in itself. An inevitable outcome of the AIDS atmosphere is that our generalised inhibi-

tions, fears and guilts about sex, bodily functions and excreta are being reinforced, so that we are liable to end up feeling both distaste and distrust around a lot of sexuality.

(End of reprinted section.)

PREGNANCY, CHILDREN, THE FUTURE

A study of 15 children born to HIV positive women showed that one died a month after birth, two (aged eight months and two years) are seronegative, 11 are seropositive and one was not available for follow-up. Three of the seropositive children are older than eight months and only one is healthy. There is quite a lot of discussion going on about whether HIV-positive women should be encouraged to abort pregnancies. Some more American figures, for the period June 1981 to October 1986: 361 children ages up to 12 years reported with AIDS

82% of these are Black or Hispanic

Current estimates by the New York City Department of Health show that in 1986 about 500 children will be born with HIV virus.

One writer, Constance Wofsy, noted that "women have received more attention for their potential role as infectors than for the problems they face as infectees". Special problems she identifies as facing women with AIDS are:

- * A profound sense of isolation. As women with AIDS are still a small group, much-needed support groups are difficult to form.

- * Profound grief for the loss of health, body image, sexuality and childbearing potential.

- * Mothers with AIDS may be too sick to care for their children with AIDS, and may feel overwhelmingly guilty.

- * As AIDS has so far affected mainly men, women may find it difficult to find health-care professionals "educated in the issues that relate specially to women and who are sensitive to their needs".

Wofsy is critical of a morality that prevents us from talking about sex, keeps condom advertising off television and prevents discussion of AIDS in schools. The limitations on sex education in New Zealand primary schools are particularly relevant here.

For the future it seems necessary to be aware of the risks, to make changes for ourselves in what we do

sexually that puts us at risk, and, above all not to behave with ignorance towards anyone, whether they be in a particular high risk group, or openly seropositive, or ill with AIDS. None of us can catch AIDS through ordinary social contact. □

NEW ZEALAND INFORMATION, JUNE 1987

45 full AIDS cases have been reported, 31 of them in Auckland, the rest scattered throughout the country.

21 have died

5 are now overseas

19 are alive and living in New Zealand. They are likely to die.

There are as yet no known cases of fullblown AIDS from heterosexual contact in New Zealand, but there are three cases of people with positive antibodies in the category called heterosexual and three in that called bisexual.

Of a total of 253 people with antibody positive eight are known to be women. There are 18 instances where the gender of the person is not recorded.

The categories of people with antibody positive results are as follows, with figures for those with full AIDS in brackets.

Homosexual male 96 (37)
Haemophiliacs 24 (1)
Transfusions 13 (1)
Heterosexual 3
Bisexual 3
IV drug users 4
Homosexual male/
IV drug users 2 (1)
Unknown 108 (5)

New Zealand figures are increasing at a lesser rate than the earlier ones in America, which shows that education programmes are working. They were put in place before transmission of the virus was as extensive as overseas.

AIDS Foundations, Burnett Clinic, Wallace Block, Auckland Hospital (by the Domain gates) PO Box 6663, Wellesley St, Auckland 1, ph 33124.

National AIDS Hotline (toll-free and confidential) (09) 395-560.

WOMAN, KOORIE, ACTIVIST

Aboriginal writer, filmmaker, actress, storyteller, bridge-builder and political activist Lorraine Mafi Williams spent two and a half days in New Zealand recently as a guest of the Tauhara Centre in Taupo. Helen Yensen spoke with her during her stay.

LORRAINE was born on the north coast of New South Wales in 1940. She identifies as a Koorie woman. The indigenous people of Australia do not like always being classified as Aboriginals, as each area has its own language or dialect and a tribal tradition of the land. They see themselves as the Koories of New South Wales and Victoria, the Murries of Queensland, the Noongars of South Australia and the Nungars of Western Australia.

When the white colonisers failed to kill all the Aboriginals they brought in the Aboriginal Protection Board Acts early last century, which determined Aboriginal life until 1967. "For their own good" Aboriginals were confined to reserves: they had no education, no land, were not allowed to leave without permission and were discriminated against socially, economically and politically. The only training was for jobs as labourers or domestics. Children could be taken away from their parents and "educated" in institutions.

That is what happened to Lorraine. Her father had served in World War Two and on his return to Australia he took his family out of the mission reserve and to Sydney, where he attended bible college. Lorraine was taken from her parents when she was 12 and put in the Cootamundra Girls Home, at which the aim was not to educate but to make good domestic servants. Lorraine remembers that of



Lorraine Mafi Williams in Auckland

Photo: Gil Hanly

"For their own good" Aborigines were confined to reserves: They had no education, no land, were not allowed to leave without permission and were discriminated against socially, economically and politically

all the 300 or so Aboriginal girls who went through the home while she was there only one escaped this pattern. She was secretly trained as a nurse by the hospital matron she was sent to work for.

Lorraine did not see her parents again until she was nearly 20. Like so many other Aboriginal children she had missed the opportunity to learn the language, as well as her mother's skills as a healer and her father's knowledge as a tribal linguist. "I have picked up bits and pieces since then ... I was very bitter and hated all whites." She challenged the elders/wise men/magicians of her tribe, "Why not wipe all the whites off the earth with your powers ...?" But they did not see violence as an answer. "The anger is still there, but now I don't let it interfere with my work."

Lorraine was directed by her people's spirits to become a bridge-builder between black and white. In one way or another she has been involved in most Aboriginal self-help endeavours in New South Wales over the last 20 years. She helped found the Aboriginal Family Education Centres in 1964 after a visit by two Maori women and a professor of education from Aotearoa. This pre-school organisation became very strong, but as it received neither recognition nor funding from the Education Department it folded in the early 1970s.

For six years she served on the board of directors of medical services in Sydney. She was a founding member in 1974 of the Aboriginal Community Health Workers, which is still working successfully today, and has lectured to community groups on "Aboriginality" to raise money for Aboriginal medical services. She also lectured periodically at Macquarie University in the department of Aboriginal studies during 1972/3.

Lorraine could stay in New Zealand for only two and a half days as she had just been engaged once more as an

advisor for Australia's special broadcasting services "Vox Populi" programmes on Aborigines, one of which asks the question, "What do Aborigines think about 1988" — When White Australia celebrates its bicentennial.

Lorraine has also acted in various feature films and TV series like *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*, where she played the mother of a radical part-aboriginal who, under enormous pressure, went on a violent rampage. She has also had roles in *Women of the Sun*, a four-part series on Aboriginal women from early settling days to today, in *Cyclone Tracey*, and in an adaptation of Henry Lawson's *The Joe Wilson Story*.

In addition Lorraine takes an active part in the struggle of her people for self determination and land rights. She prefers not to publish details of her political work as yet, for it has in the past made life more difficult for her and her family. Police harassment of Aborigines is alive and violent, despite the active Aboriginal Legal Aid Services.

LORRAINE'S roots lie in a traditional culture where women were highly esteemed. Women followed their mothers' line, had their own cultural ceremonies, and like the men, went for months on secret teaching trips to become professional people in their own right. Aboriginal women are traditionally the "community developers". The men's role was to carry on the language, law, culture, and history. Though governing councils consisted of men and women in 4-3 or 3-4 ratio, the overall decision maker was the oldest woman.

Women, as the community developers, are in the forefront of the Aboriginal struggle for self-determination. Their role is, however, only recognised in Aboriginal society, not in the white one. "In a way it is fortunate," says Lorraine, "that the traditional tribal women have been ig-

nored, because they are in a position now to pass on their knowledge to our younger women, who are living in two worlds, black and white. As we are living in a society of utter confusion, we need Aboriginal guidelines based on cultural tradition."

In Sydney, the Aboriginal legal aid, medical, children's and pre-school services, as well as the cultural dance theatre, and the South Sydney Community Aid Service, are all run by women, though the governing boards are mixed.

Aboriginal women have acted to protect their sacred sites from being "developed", and a 500-strong Council of Aboriginal Women from "the top" of Australia are responsible for re-introducing women's ceremonies connected with Uluru (Ayer's Rock).

Lorraine also talked of her many years of active involvement in the New South Wales women's refuge movement. "Violence for Koorie women comes in many forms: legal, institutional, domestic, verbal, physical, cultural... Australia is a very violent country." More Koorie refuges are needed as well as more training for Koorie workers in all aspects of health, housing, employment, education, law, and other fields. Workshops are held with Aboriginal experts from health and other government departments, and with elders who have been chosen to hand down their traditional medical and other knowledge.

As Lorraine spoke at the Tauhara hui at Easter, her anger at white reluctance to let go of any real power broke through: "We have more than 60,000 years of spirituality and survival in this country to offer the whites, plus 200 years of sacrifice — yet we are still rejected and hated. We are invisible to most whites..." Aboriginal cries of anger and hurt arise out of poverty, powerlessness, massive injustice, alienation from their culture, and loss of human dignity, continuing from the past into the present. The Aborigines are still the hidden people

... women followed their mothers line, had their own cultural ceremonies, and like the men, went for months on secret teaching trips to become professional people in their own right

Next year white Australia celebrates its 200 years of "nationhood". "How ironical! We can claim 60,000 or more years of nationhood here"

of Australia: invisible, unseen, unheard... They want social justice, self-determination, and economic wellbeing.

"Often I feel discouraged and a fool to do what I am doing. But then I think of my grandchildren (five girls and one boy at present, all under five). I hope we can make some changes for when they grow up. I'd hate them to go through what I went through, as a child and in raising my three sons." One of Lorraine's sons is a parks and wildlife officer, training to be a senior sacred-sites officer. He will be handed the guardianship of some sacred sites when the present guardian, a woman, dies. "We really worked and fought to get him there: a guarantee for the preservation of some of our sacred sites with official government backing." The other two sons are involved in part-time panelbeating and local council work.

When I ask what support she gets from white women her answer is a surprisingly mild, "We understand that they have their own struggle." White women often fail to appreciate that "feminist" concerns have a different focus for women of different cultures. Lorraine and her friend Joyce joined Sydney women who went to Pine Gap a few years ago to protest at the American presence there. On arrival at Alice Springs Lorraine and Joyce consulted with the local tribes. They were asked to delay their trip to Pine Gap for a few days as male initiation rites were taking the boys on a path near Pine Gap. It is against Aboriginal law for women to witness male ceremonies and for males to witness women's rites. Some white women considered the Aboriginal women "uncooperative", and some were also rather upset when local Aboriginal women joined the protest bringing some of their men. When women were arrested and put in jail in Alice Springs the white women were crowded into a totally inadequate space. Many of the women were badly beaten and there were reports of rape. The nine Aboriginal women arrested were segregated, given even less space, and generally treated worse.

Aborigines were the only indigenous people who did not get title even to reserve lands after white occupation. For them too, land cannot be

judged in purely economic terms. Land is a responsibility and held in sacred trust. They have a spiritual relationship with it. The land belongs to them and they belong to the land. Self-determination is linked to land-rights; Aboriginal communities need land where they themselves can work out their social economic health and political problems.

IN 1967, a referendum brought Aborigines under Commonwealth legislative power. They can now move into cities and towns, mingle with the whites and "enjoy" the fruits of white society. Departments of Aboriginal health, education, and so on were set up, but only limited resources are allocated and racism continues unabated: "Integration/assimilation — we tried it for 20 years, but it does not work, because the whites don't really want to know."

Even today the federal government is loath to use its constitutional powers to bring delinquent states into line. Queensland is the worst; repressive laws continue there to this day. Pastoral and mining lobbies in the various states have been particularly effective in preventing full implementation of social, economic, and land-rights for Aborigines.

By 1973 Labour had allocated \$117 million to Aboriginal Affairs, but \$70 million is estimated to have gone into white bureaucratic pockets. The policy even today remains paternalistic and does not encourage self-determination. Self-help programmes often fail because of underfunding of white bureaucratic takeovers.

New South Wales is a good example of what happens with the land. A 1983 NSW land law gave Koories a chance to acquire unused crown land, via a local council with 10 members from the Aboriginal community, 12 regional councils, and a Metropolitan Land Council in Sydney. \$16 million has been allocated to last 15 years. After administrative costs, this leaves enough for each region to buy/build one house a year for approximately \$60,000. Funds cannot be accumulated over a few years to give greater purchasing power, but must be spent in a given year. And the sale of crown land can be overridden by shire councils if they want it for

something else, and in nine out of ten cases, they discover they suddenly do. The outcome; something promising on paper, but in practice still not much land for Koories in NSW. Recently, three land councils pooled their allocations and bought a small rural property with a homestead, a strategy the lawmakers had obviously overlooked!

And what if the Australian government changes this year? The opposition Liberals have said they will cut all special grants to Aborigines, abolish the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and disallow all further landright claims in the Northern Territory. Lorraine favours the abolition of the Aboriginal Affairs Department, because it is very paternalistic and white dominated, and wants the appointment of a Minister of Aboriginal Affairs who is an Aboriginal, so that they can sort out their own affairs. The Liberal "promise", however, is seen as a major setback.

The 1981 World Council of Churches Report on Aborigines stated that "only international solidarity can bring the necessary pressure to achieve, at the least possible cost, the goals of the Aboriginal people, and a peaceful multicultural society for Australia." That still holds today.

To women's groups and the peace movement in general in Aotearoa, Lorraine pleads for the practical recognition of Aboriginal people as Australia's "people of the land". When invitations are extended to Australia, Aboriginal women need to be invited separately and in their own right. They need to share concerns and resources, and believe that they also have a great deal of wisdom to contribute.

To Lorraine, the future lies with the black races: "They have preserved their spirituality ... The world is going through very troubled times. We need to become part of the world to give it our culture to help the world change..."

Next year white Australia celebrates its 200 years of "nationhood". "How ironical! We can claim 60,000 or more years of nationhood here!" □

ON THE SHELF

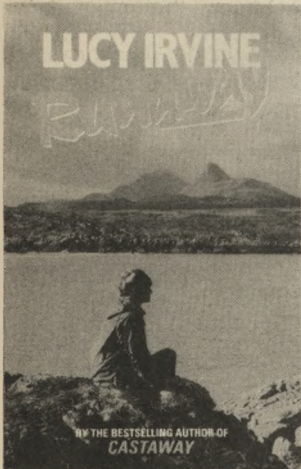


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Allegiance to family and familiar territory shapes the personal histories of Aborigines in ways scarcely appreciated by people raised in nuclear family households in cities. The strength of family life and communities can be better

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MY HOME MY PRISON Raymonda Hawa Tawli

The passionate, controversial autobiography of a Palestinian journalist well known for her

outspoken support of her peoples rights. Raymonda Tawli's book makes clear in personal terms just what damage the Middle East conflict has wrought and what it means for Arabs to live under Israeli occupation. Zed Press. pbk. \$10.95

A PIECE OF MINE J. California Cooper

These larger-than-life women struggle for love, money, happiness, and sometimes revenge. Told with enormous warmth and humour, these twelve stories centre on the lives of black women and their men in the small southern states of America. Womens Press. pbk. \$15.39

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PROFESSIONALS AGAINST THE PEOPLE

Christine Bird writes about how the medical profession defends its territory.

TWO YEARS AGO,

after getting training from a sympathetic GP, The Health Alternatives For Women (THAW) in Christchurch began doing PAP cancer smears and vaginal swabs for women. Women came to us because they had had bad treatment in the past; they preferred a women's centre as less formal and more sensitive and information-sharing; or they didn't see why they needed to go to a GP.

Though our tests were of a satisfactory standard, the Health Department, upon a gynaecologist's complaint, threatened both THAW and the doctor who had given the training with legal action. So we had to stop doing them. Two years on Aotearoa's poor record in preventing cervical cancer deaths has sparked a reappraisal of the restricting of PAP smear testing to doctors only. At the cervical cancer symposium this year Dr Boyd of the Health Department asked one of the key speakers, a pathologist concerned with smear testing, whether lay people could be trained in testing. Dr Lavery said that with training they could do as well as anyone. Other countries have had women successfully doing preventative health care, such as taking cervical smears, for years. There is no reason to suppose we are any less capable.

In fact, doctors spend only a tiny proportion of their training on PAP smears and sometimes they use unconscious patients to practise on, without their knowledge. At THAW we learnt co-operatively, a group of women of equal status learning from our different medical herstories, cycles and physiques. By each experiencing both having and taking smears we also learnt about vulnerability, sexuality, trust and responsibility. Very different from the medical model.

In most Western countries, cervical screening programmes have cut the death rate by two thirds. This hasn't happened here, where low income and Maori women have the highest death rates (Maori women three times that of Pakeha women as a whole), and the disease itself is increasing among younger women. Doctors assure us that this increase among the young has nothing to do with



Helen Courtney

Other countries have had women successfully doing preventative health care, such as taking cervical smears, for years

increased use of hormonal contraception, though a 1983 Family Planning study published in *Lancet* said that they were concerned that all of its 16 cases of invasive cervical cancer were in women who were "pill" users. The death rate for the 15 to 24-year-old age group has increased four-fold.

Abnormalities can develop quickly. A Christchurch Family Planning study showed that the time interval between the last normal smear and a severely abnormal one averaged only 2-3 years. Ten years behind most comparable countries, we are now finally discussing a screening programme. The need for an effective programme that would reach all women had led to talk of allowing nurses and community health workers to take smears. Though a survey in Christchurch showed that 38% of low paid women had never had a smear, doctors are strenuously resisting lay, and even nurse, involvement.

THAW recently attended a meeting at the Anserch conference in Christchurch where health professionals met to discuss who should be involved in

doing smears. They were in favour of only health professionals doing them until Elizabeth Rehu-Murchie of the Maori Women's Welfare League said that though doctors should be mainly involved, there were times when lay people with mana would be needed to do the tests. No objections were raised to this proposal, in fact it got high priority. However, when THAW women said that lay women at Well-women Centres also wanted to take smears the objections were many. Suddenly there were problems with quality and follow-up, though when we explained exactly how we'd done them no specific objections were maintained. The value of working class women reaching working class women was not seen, though the benefits of Maori women reaching Maori women were obvious. The fact that the much valued "professionalism" was a resource of the privileged middle class, who could afford the training to get it, and that lay health workers could be an asset for the working class was never acknowledged. In the plenary session Elizabeth Rehu-Murchie spoke again for marae clinics and said that lay participation was necessary for "cultural reasons" not for reasons of "resentment". (Certainly Maori women have more reason to oppose the present system.)

THAW has always supported a range of choices for women, marae clinics, "suitcase" clinics with doctors and nurses using community centres and workplaces, Family Planning clinics, and decently trained GPs. But we got no support for our involvement. Though the women's health movement has done a marvellous job in educating professionals about the consumer experience and problems with health care, those middle class professionals were not about to reciprocate by sharing their skills and status. These, after all, are the basis for their careers and privileges.

Community involvement in health care is welcomed by the professionals when they need the knowledge of consumers to overcome their own ignorance. But when consumers try to develop their skills or ask for recognition or status, they soon learn that they are

seen to be "poaching" on medical territory.

Three years ago a group of women were asked to teach fifth year medical students how to conduct sensitive and educative internal examinations. I was one of that group, which hoped to improve doctors' treatment of women in such a vulnerable situation. The idea was that we were the teachers, we would be in control. It wasn't the easiest thing I've ever done, and was sometimes painful. But there were some funny moments, like when some visiting relatives decided I must have a strange sexual hang-up. I learnt about the vulnerability of doctors too, who usually learn in a competitive and alienating environment.

AS FAR AS the students were concerned the course was judged both the most challenging and the most worthwhile experience of that year. But many of the women felt otherwise, like walkie-talkie teaching aids. We got no official recognition, were not asked to participate in the paper written on it, and were not allowed to train other women. (But at least we were conscious, unlike the anaesthetised women many doctors use for internal examination training.) It wasn't until the Health Department prevented THAW from doing smears and swabs for women that I truly realised how we'd been used. We were allowed to teach, but not to learn. The doctors could take our knowledge, but we could not be "allowed" to share it with other women. We could aid the careers and fatten the pockets of GPs, but we could not be allowed to provide a service to our own community. So that profits and power remain within the medical profession, this area of preventative health must remain something that doctors do to women. They are given the training and resources to overcome the barriers they created, while we go without.

Because THAW is a political group concerned with changing attitudes about health as well as the health system itself, we see the problem in greater depth than any health professional, who wants only to get women along in greater numbers. Women are deterred from getting smears, not only because they can't afford to go to a doctor but because of inaccessibility, fear and embarrassment. Many, particularly those of a different race or class from the doctor, will avoid preventative health care because they find the whole medical process alienating. It's easier to get smears from women who speak, act and live like yourself than from those who make you feel at a disadvantage.

At THAW a smear test was only part of a process of discussing past experience, feelings about our bodies, learning about how we look and function, and learning to

recognise natural changes and the early signs of possible health problems. A woman who had learnt breast and internal self-examination spoke of her experience with a gynaecologist.

"After waiting over an hour a nurse took my blood pressure, which I noted was high. I mentioned this to her and she replied that the gynaecologist would speak to me about it. I read another magazine before the gynaecologist took some details then left while I undressed. The room was cold and the window faced a two storey house. The light was on so the net curtains offered little privacy. The dressing gown I was given also offered little privacy.

"The breast and internal examination was gentle but I wasn't asked whether I wanted to be examined on my side or my back or whether I wanted to see my cervix. I was given no further information other than if I had more than one sexual partner a year I would be best to have an annual smear, otherwise one every two to three years was satisfactory. The feeling I got from the gynaecologist was 'I am in control, there is nothing for you to worry about.' For me that trust would be misplaced. My blood pressure wasn't mentioned, the wear and tear on my cervix was not explained until I asked about it, and the big lump on my breast was missed." At THAW we know this is a typical experience.

A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that doctors detected only 40% of lumps in a simulated test. Women who have learnt breast examination can more easily detect changes, but they won't learn in the current unequal, fearful and disease-oriented climate. A study at Harbour General Hospital family planning clinic in California discovered that when women paramedics were trained in contraceptive fitting and cancer screening the clinic experienced a 500% increase in patient visits. The questioning of 800 patients revealed that 83% preferred the women paramedics, 1% the doctor, and 16% didn't care either way.

THAW has decided that we don't want to duplicate the services that are already available, nor do we want to set up as an alternative clinic. Our education and political work on women's health comes first. But when our natural and valuable initiatives are threatened for reasons of class dominance, opportunism and self interest we have to expose and oppose those interests. Attitudes do slowly change. The best thing for me at Anserch was hearing a doctor present a study based on women's experience of a health problem, for which she (the doctor) sought out the medical explanations of what the women said, and to which she was daring enough to add her own personal experience. The results were informative, and certainly justified this approach.

Several of us from THAW went to the

Anserch conference, held at Christchurch Medical School. Issues that we had brought up three years ago — for example, doctor insensitivity during internal examinations, inability to listen to what women are saying and lack of information-giving — were being discussed. But we have moved on. So we find ourselves always in the position of being the critics, and controversial. We leave in our wake people who are doing things now that were only recently unacceptable because, in comparison to us, they look respectable. And they try to explain our actions as arising from individual motivation to be "stirrers" and focus on our personalities rather than what we are saying. They don't see that we are acting on the basis of information given to us by women and our understanding of the reality of women's experience of the health system.

THE ANGUISH

of the mother of a 13-year-old girl who suffered the medical equivalent of rape during an examination, gave me the motivation to go in the student training group. Working class pride motivates me now. When the clothing factory managers told me and my workmates that we could do no more than rote work, I didn't believe them. I still don't believe them. I distrust and dislike authority because it oppresses my class and most of my sex. Yet when working class women can take the few opportunities to learn and contribute to this society, what strength and richness they bring, and how quickly they develop. So I'm doubly angry when the middle class are fearful and wasteful of these opportunities, and deny them to us.

Recently Family Planning approached THAW for women to join in their internal examination staff training programme — that is, to act as models for doctors or nurses to use. Nothing was offered in return. Basically it was another glorious opportunity to help develop their skills so that they could turn around and charge us for doing what we could for each other, better and more cheaply. (No THAW women hurt me, or made me bleed.) I'll use the classic language of female exploitation and call their invitation to what I think is, they were hunting cunt. If this choice of words shocks you, the reality they describe would shock you more. But the professionals were one up on the sleaze balls, they prostituted not only our bodies, but our ideas. Not consciously of course, but because they are maintaining control of their "professional" power and income. Their role is such, they cannot do otherwise.

THAW wants to do PAP smears and swabs again. Not only because women will come to us who won't go elsewhere, but also because we want to show what women can do for each other, and ourselves. □

On Being A Single Mother

Meliors Simms writes of her experience and a book she is planning.

I didn't plan to become a mother at 19 but now, a year later, I don't regret it at all. I am a single mother (don't call me solo mum) and it has never been part of my plans to share parenting. Bringing up a child alone is hard work, but I don't think it's much harder than being the half of the couple that stays home all day doing 90 percent of the childraising. I have my independence and I relish the responsibility it entails. I am very lucky, perhaps more than most single mothers, because my daughter has two sets of adoring grandparents and a father who babysits on demand. I receive moral and financial support from my family and friends. More than most mothers, single or otherwise, I am doing what I want to at the same time as being a mother: I am writing a book about my experience and that of other single mothers.

When I conceived I was an adult student, finally getting my UE after two years away from school and home. My relationship with Louise's father was brief and I hadn't seen him for a couple of weeks when my pregnancy was confirmed. I knew immediately that I wanted to have the baby and adopt in an open situation. I had day-dreams of finding a gay or lesbian couple to bring it up and of being able to have a little contact with the child as he/she grew up.

My decision to adopt was not unconditionally accepted by anyone. At best my family and friends thought I would regret it or were sorry but supportive. At worst I came into conflict with a teacher who tried to coerce me into having an abortion. As the pregnancy progressed and the search for suitable adoptive parents seemed hopeless, I eventually contacted the Social Welfare Department. I was counselled by a wonderful adoption social worker who encouraged me to consider keeping my baby but I was still adamant I wanted an open adoption.

Suddenly, Louise's father re-appeared with a plan to bring up our child himself. Though in hindsight, and in everyone else's opinion at the time, this was completely

unrealistic. I agreed enthusiastically. For the first time in eight months I let myself imagine my baby. I wish I had spent more time in that state — daydreaming of a real baby in my arms, a toddler, a child. I started buying and dying op shop baby clothes.

About two weeks before I was due I stayed with a friend and her two-month-old. It was my first real contact with a baby in years and I was entranced. While there I read *The Continuum Concept* by Jan Liedloff, which inspired me with a new/old idea of child rearing. I think it was then that the sub-conscious seeds were sown for me to keep Louise, but I was still sure her father would bring her up.

Now Louise is one year old. It has been a long year and mostly a difficult one, character building for both of us. We started out in a flat full of students, then moved to an isolated house for a long, cold, depressing Dunedin winter alone. Then a holiday in Australia (originally planned for post-adoption distraction) that cheered me up no end. We returned to Dunedin in spring, a new house and I finally learned to love living alone.

During my pregnancy I tried to find books on adoption from the natural mother's point of view. Until a few months ago I hadn't come across anything. After I had Louise I was searching for books about single mothers. I found plenty on solo parents — those who were in a relationship and are no longer. While these books had some useful information for women in my position, a large amount of space was devoted to "coping with a man around" and with loss or grief, which I found I could not relate to. It seemed as if women like me were completely ignored. I needed to have my experience confirmed, to read what other women had felt and done in similar situations. So I decided to write the book I wanted myself.

I am interested in women who went through most or all of their pregnancy and the first year of motherhood not in a stable relationship with a man. Being pregnant is a very emotional experience and sometimes I was so incredibly lonely I thought there must be some biological need to be in a couple while pregnant. I'm sure that isn't true but being pregnant alone is totally different from being in a couple. Women in a totally unsupportive relationship may share some of the emotions of single mothers-to-be but they have legitimacy in the eyes of society. Being single makes you and your baby public property.

No mother needs to be told how difficult the first few months are. A lot has been written about the trauma and exhaustion of the new lifestyle. In such books the father is either helpful or unsupportive but never not there. Being single has certain advantages — there is not that relationship to be maintained, no hassles with sex, no need to have food on the table at six o'clock. You are free to do what feels natural to many women, to devote all your time and energy to getting to know the baby.

I am compiling the experiences of as many single mothers in New Zealand as I can. I am accepting contributions through any medium. The questions included with this article can be used to inspire writing, talking into a tape or answered as questions. If you live in the Dunedin area I can interview you. I am eager to hear from older women, women from different cultures, teenagers, lesbians, women who became single mothers more than ten years ago, women who adopted, women with more than one child, women who's pregnancies were planned, unplanned and anybody else.

THE QUESTIONS

Pregnancy

When you got pregnant were you working, at school, unemployed?
What was your relationship with the baby's father? How did it change?
Was the pregnancy planned, half-planned, unplanned? How old are you?
Was this your first pregnancy? If not, what were the circumstances of the other(s)?
How did your friends and family react to the news of your pregnancy? Did their attitudes change — during the pregnancy — after the birth?
How did your co-workers/classmates and boss/teachers react to the news of your pregnancy?
Why did/didn't you choose to have an abortion?
Why did/didn't you choose to have the baby adopted?

Expectations

What contact did you have with mothers and small children before, during, after pregnancy? How have they influenced you?
What influenced your attitudes to single mothers before becoming pregnant yourself?
What were your expectations of pregnancy? motherhood?
How have they been or not been fulfilled?
What aspects of pregnancy and motherhood surprised you?

Birth and Medical Care

What was your birth experience like?
Do you think that the attitudes of people in your antenatal care/antenatal classes/attending the birth/in the postnatal/Plunket were affected by your lack of a partner?
Did you have a birth partner? If so, who?

Social Welfare

Was the availability of the DPB a factor in your decision to keep the baby? If so, how much?

How much information did you have about the sickness, domestic purposes and emergency maintenance benefits before receiving payment? Where did you get that information?

Did social welfare inform you about extra benefits like advances for bond or fridge, capitalisation of the family benefit, discounts for travel and telephone? (Note: many of these are no longer available.)

How long did it take for the DPB (or EM) to be granted? To be in the bank?

How do you feel about your treatment by social welfare? Have you had any major hassles? If so, what? Anything good to say?

Motherhood

How has your living situation been affected by having a baby?

How have your relationships, platonic and romantic, been affected by motherhood?

Is the baby's father involved in any way? Are his family? What sort of support — emotional, practical, or financial did you receive during pregnancy and as a new mother from your family? Friends? Other groups?

How has becoming a mother changed your lifestyle? How do you feel about those changes?

Do you work outside the home? Do you intend to, part or fulltime, at any time during your child's school years? Are you educating/retraining?

Any comments on anger, frustration, loneliness, childcare, housework...

What have you learned about yourself, others, society, your own body, sexuality, feelings and attitudes?

Do you have any regrets?

● Please include your name and address and indicate if you want your contribution to be acknowledged or anonymous. Your privacy will be respected and if you don't want your contribution returned it will be destroyed on completion of the book.

Meliors Simms PO Box 6127 Dunedin North ☐

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Now they had to battle even harder against a system, which favoured Fijians. Most Indo-Fijian women went into wage labour after leaving school at an early age. Those who could afford to continue began to emerge as the new middle class, moving into the professions. Education and wage labour also contributed to a reduction in the fertility rate of women.

Like everywhere else in the world, the privileged in Fiji had the greatest access to education. The Europeans in Fiji had always had access to education; the children of Fijian chiefs were more likely to receive scholarships and were better off financially, to continue to university level; and the children of wealthy Indo-Fijian businessmen also had easy access. So the elite in Fiji has the greatest access to resources and continues to reap the benefits. The elite in Fiji is not divided along racial lines, but remains united economically — a monument to the success of multiracialism! Colonial policies of separate development have created and manipulated racial tension to disguise the concentration of economic power in the hands of this elite. This elite is in turn supported and sustained by foreign interests which include Australia and New Zealand.

Subsistence farming, household work and reproduction of the next generation of workers have traditionally been portrayed as marginal to the Fijian economy. As shown, both are in fact *crucial* to capitalist production. They are kept as a reserve pool of labour to be drawn into waged work when necessary. Consequently, it is the rural poor and urban working class who bear the brunt of the vulnerabilities of Fiji's dependency on external markets and external investment. And it is women who continue (with women everywhere else in the world) to carry the added burden of unpaid work.

In paid work, women are discriminated against in every sphere. A woman cannot marry a non-Fijian and retain her citizenship to Fiji. There is no basic wage for women. Many women earn as little as 40c an hour in factory work. As "housegirls" they have no protection, working full-time for as little as \$10-\$15 a week. Their work involves cleaning the house, cooking meals, taking care of the children and washing laundry by hand. Women have no political voice. Women continue to be victims of domestic and sexual violence —

most of which are unreported. Women, therefore remain the most vulnerable and most exploited.

The private struggles of Fiji's women are emerging through Fiji's Women's Crisis Centre and the Women's Rights Movement. But an understanding of the poverty of Indo-Fijian women as indentured labourers, household workers, mothers, subsistence farmers, factory workers and prostitutes must involve a class, race and gender analysis in the context of Fiji's colonial economy and its restructuring towards a neocolonial economy. Class, race and gender relations are deeply ingrained in Fiji's social, economic and political structures. Women in Fiji must transcend racial divisions and align themselves with the rural poor and urban working class for meaningful social change.

Additional Resources

"Class Gender and Race Dynamics: The Sexual Division of Labour in Sugar Production in Fiji," by Shaista Shameem (unpublished)

"When Can We Be Free" The Struggle of Indo-Fijian Women", by Shaista Shameem. *Race Gender Class*, December 1985

"Turning to Tourism: The Effects of Restructuring in Fiji" by Willi Sutherland. *Race Gender Class*, July 1985

Race and Politics in Fiji by Robert Norton

THE COMPLEXITIES OF FIJI'S RECENT MILITARY COUP WERE LOST IN THE WAVE OF SHALLOW AND SENSATIONAL REPORTS FROM THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA. THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF A MULTIRACIAL ELITE WERE DISGUISED BY AN APPARENT "RACE WAR" AND THE OVERTHROW OF "DEMOCRACY."



Shaista Shameem's analysis of the historical origins of divisions of class, race and gender in Fiji reveals an economy designed to protect the

interests of a powerful elite created and sustained by British colonialism. Fijian-owned land and Indo-Fijian labour have sustained local and foreign business interests, and so-called democracy and racial divisions have served the interests of an elite.

The Labour coalition headed by Timoci Bavadra threatened to meet the needs of *all* Fiji's people, particularly the rural poor and urban working class. The Labour coalition promised to address unemployment, increasing crime, lack of housing and low wages. It offered free medical services and transport concessions, promised an "open" and "caring" government from a platform of multiracialism, and was committed to a foreign policy of non-alignment and banning nuclear ship visits.

But, worst of all, it began to examine the Alliance government's financial records. This was more than the Alliance party and its overseers (White capitalists and the United States government) could stomach. Members of the Alliance government, in its 17 years of rule, accumulated enormous personal wealth. Kamisese Mara, Fiji's former Prime Minister, built up an estimated personal fortune of F\$4 million to F\$6 million. His investments within Fiji include farms, hotels, real estate, shipping, stocks and shares. He bought the island of Curu for \$200,000 in February and owns a large proportion of Vanua Balavu in the east. His investments also extend beyond Fiji to Australia and Hawaii. All this, and much more on a Prime Minister's salary!

Other members of the Alliance Party accumulated money through enormous salaries, payoffs in return for relaxing import regulations and misappropriation of aid funds. A recent Auditor-General's report on the state of Fiji's economy revealed departmental fraud, waste and misuse of funds amounting to millions of dollars.

Although Bavadra's coalition received only nine percent of the total Fijian vote, this figure is misleading. A regional breakdown revealed that in some parts of Fiji, up to 25 percent of Fijian people voted for Bavadra's coalition. Dissatisfaction with the Alliance government's performance was highest amongst those forced to live in poverty, the educated and young people from both races. The official level of unemployment was nine percent, but most people be-

lieved it was around 15 percent. Sugar cane farmers often had to wait a year for payment after harvests, and so were forced to take out loans. When payments were eventually made, they were absorbed by loan interest payments and debts at local shops. A wage, rent and partial price freeze had been imposed for 18 months from November 1984. Fijians are forced to pay enormous taxes — a village tax, provincial tax, district tax (which is administered by their chiefs), and then personal tax.

Militancy by workers against low wages and appalling working conditions have often been curbed by military intervention. For example, the 1959 oilworkers strike and the 1960 canegrowers strike. Such "irresponsible" worker actions continue to be blamed for unemployment, inflation and economic crises in Fiji. Garment manufacturers paid Mara \$52,000 to ensure that workers wages would not be raised. In 1984, Mara threatened to call in the military if the Fiji Trade Union Congress carried out a national strike. Fiji's power elite has clearly defined the military's role as protectors of local and foreign business interests.

For the Alliance party's backers, The United States, the main issue in the recent elections was the Labour coalition's nuclear free policy. A former ambassador to Fiji, William Bodde Jr, said in 1982, "The most potentially disruptive development for United States' relations with the South Pacific is the growing anti-nuclear movement... a nuclear free zone would be unacceptable... given our strategic needs... The United States must do everything possible to counter this movement." The United States has future plans for a military base in Fiji. It has made staggering investments to ensure Fiji is more responsive to the United States' political and military needs. It provides US\$300,000 in military aid per year and US\$2.5 million in non-military aid. Fiji is the richest country in the South Pacific (apart from Australia and New Zealand), and gets more aid than any other country in the region.

Steven Ratuva presented a paper at a peace conference in 1986 which predicted the circumstances which would lead to military intervention. He says, "We cannot discount altogether... the possibility of an anti-left wing military coup. The penetration and consolidation of United States'



economic and political interest in Fiji over time would lead to more dependency and the fragility of the economy, thus laying it bare to manipulation of all sorts. A right-wing government like Mara's would provide the favourable political environment for this neocolonial domination of Fiji and a left-leaning government would prove absolutely intolerable to the United States." Fijians' fear and insecurity over land due to ignorance of their constitutional rights, combined with racial divisions created through policies of separate development, have provided the necessary "destabilisation" for the right-wing controlled military to intervene.

Regional divisions amongst Fijian people can be traced back to tribal conflicts, from which the eastern chiefs emerged as the dominant group. Traditionally, chiefs gain their status and position from the people. Pampered by the British colonials, the chiefs have gained enormous wealth and power. The traditional tribal system exists uneasily with capitalism under Fiji's ultimate paramount chief — the Queen. Her representative, the Governor General, who was also a former deputy of the Alliance party, is seeking constitutional legitimacy for an unconstitutional act.

Severing links to Fiji's paramount chief (the Queen), would be totally unacceptable to Fijians. His actions are therefore plagued by contradictions as he seeks some compromise. The chiefs have manipulated the



traditional tribal structure and loyalties to serve their own interests and the interests of foreign investors. The people of Fiji, through race and land issues have simply been used as instruments to achieve the aims of this elite.

Fiji's military coup has profound implications for the entire Pacific region. Many New Zealanders have condemned Indo-Fijians as "second-level colonizers" ignoring both the historical and contemporary situation of Indo-Fijians. Using this slogan conveniently removes the focus from the real colonizers — Britain. Indo-Fijians are an immediately identifiable scapegoat whereas the mechanisms of elitism are not. Fijian use of land, resources and tradition, and the Fijian's right to self-determination were removed by British colonisation, not by indentured labourers from India. The protection of Fijian political and land rights are entrenched in the constitution. Fijians own the most valuable resource — land. Deprived of a land base, some Indo-Fijians have cultivated personal resources and now dominate the commercial sector. But with no land, most cannot even maintain a subsistence existence.

The military coup also raises complex questions on the Maori struggle for self-determination. Some New Zealanders simplistically regard the coup as a Fijian "indigenous struggle." Others conveniently use it to dismiss Maori attempts to reclaim a history, culture and language decimated by the economic and political interests of a Pakeha elite. Sitiveni Rabuka, the coup leader, crossed over the fine line between nationalism and fascism. This highlighted the way in which indigenous rights and national fervour could be manipulated to serve the interests of a powerful elite. A structure which exploits and oppresses people who cannot claim to have arrived first, on the basis of "a struggle for indigenous rights," has not moved beyond the dynamics of British colonialism. Ultimately, the struggle will be a class struggle between the Fijian people themselves. □

Sources: Reapi Blyde, Claire Raikuna, Shaista Shameem, Nikhat Shameem, Dia Uliviti, Shashi de Zoete Sharma.
"Militarization in Fiji" by Steven Ratuva, unpublished conference paper.
"US Involvement in the Fiji Coup" in *Wellington Confidential*
Three magazines: *Islands Business*, *Pacific Islands Monthly*, *New Zealand Outlook*.

Writing The Razorblades

Fay Weldon talked
with Athina Tsoulis
and Pat Rosier
Photos: Gil Hanly

Pat: We are particularly interested in the whole business of women and body image and what the media myths do to women. Would you talk a little about that?

Fay: It seems a very fundamental part of the myth that women are other than what they are. The social definition of a woman is somebody who has babies, stays at home and is supported by her husband. The facts of the matter are obviously different. Also there is the view that a woman is a very pretty, dangerous creature who will twist men around her little finger and therefore does not need power. This is also very far from the case.

My mother says that as you get older you become more and more invisible and by the time you reach fifty-five nobody knows you are there. The only visible women are those whose body image conforms to society's myth. If you do not have this type of body you are very miserable and the only way you can make yourself visible is to acquire the desired body type by dieting or all the other things we are led to believe will make us become this mythical creature.

Pat: When the women in your books take power, like Ruth in *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* and the woman in *The Fat Woman's Joke* what happens is bizarre, it's like taking it beyond the thinkable.

Fay: Yes, you take the story to its extremes. The sensible thing to do is to abandon the trappings of wife and motherhood and domesticity and go out into the world and be a properly functioning human being. But Ruth doesn't do that, she turns tail because she finds it hard out there and lonely. It is part of her conditioning or female nature that she wants to be "had".

Pat: But *she* decides to have herself



remade in the image of the woman who "took" her husband.

Fay: Yes, she decides and the men are slightly appalled.

Athina: That is how you challenge the whole idea that women should distort themselves, by taking it to its extreme.

Fay: I have a feeling that I am not challenging it. It is just that I'm saying that that is what Ruth wanted, so we will let her go. From her point of view

it is extremely difficult for women to live without men because they become invisible. Unless you happen to be intelligent and independent enough to get yourself into a women's society you are left with having to have a man.

But *She Devil* does have a lot of themes running through it and some of them are contradictory. Ruth seduces a lot of the men who control women's lives, like doctors, priests,

accountants, judges, all those male authority figures. However she fails with the doctors because she allows them to remake her.

Athina: It is interesting that all the men that Ruth comes across are still fascinated by her even though she is portrayed as hideous and grotesque, there is still something in her that attracts them. She probably has more substance.

Fay: Yes, it maybe pushing it to its limits (lots of laughter) but I think that is what the appeal is, that she is a substantial woman. Again in the real world sexuality is not aroused by the romantic Mary Fishers but by real personal relationships.

On another level the story is about envy. You know the criticism that is levelled at feminists, that you're envious of your pretty sisters. It's a good putdown, that we are jealous and that is why we behave as we do. Ruth acknowledges that feeling and that is her downfall, because she works to become the other woman. It is not revenge but envy.

Athina: It is like a teenage fantasy where you dream of what you would like to look like. The ambivalence women feel about their bodies is there in your novels. And this is something we all feel, but it is one thing to be aware of what society does to us, it is another to try and shake it off.

Fay: Yes, women are so ambivalent about their body image.

Society is ourselves. You cannot say that society is out there because it is within ourselves, we are part of it and are partly responsible for those feelings and must come to terms with them and deal with them.

Athina: I wouldn't go so far as to say that I was responsible for them.

Pat: Food is a strong theme in *The Fat Woman's Joke* and *The Shrapnel Academy*. What do you see as the themes in *The Fat Woman's Joke* for instance.

Fay: I wrote that book a long time ago and I always feel that it should have become obvious, irrelevant and outmoded and I'm disconcerted to find that it is just as relevant as it always was and that nothing has changed. These same messages come anew to a whole generation of young women.

Pat: I re-read *The Fat Woman's Joke* recently and was fascinated by the ideas on women's complex relationship with food and control. It

seemed as though the woman in *The Fat Woman's Joke* was taking control when she left to live in a grotty place and do nothing but eat, which she saw as the only safe and comforting thing she could do. But nobody else could stand it so she gave up and went back with her husband. In *The Shrapnel Academy* food is something different.

Fay: Yes, it's a sort of attack, eating dog meat and food that is so indigestible.

Pat: I have this image that the inside of your mind must be this mass of seething little razor blades, that cuts things up, in a metaphorical sense of course, because it seems that your books get nastier and nastier.

Fay: Yes, but people behave so extraordinarily. It is a fusion of roles that food and nurturing are mixed up and also there is a great satisfaction, on a basic level, in food. It gets spun out into something else when you start denying food and it can in conventional terms become self-destructive, but in another way it is an act of defiance.

Athina: And it is an act of defiance because in western cultures so much emphasis is placed on food. It is wicked, immoral or it takes on all the sexual overtones that we associate with naughty pictures. In other cultures it is considered good to enjoy your food and it does not have all these other negative connotations.

Fay: Our present attitudes to food are very recent. The whole health movement is another form of them. I'm sure they are right but the way that it is done is so self-righteous. Sex is now okay, it's food that we become hung up about.

Pat: Everyone is so nasty in *The Shrapnel Academy*.

Fay: I rather like them. They don't behave nicely, but I rather like them. I am quite patient with people. I don't have to approve of them in order to like them.

Athina: But are your characters likeable, because I find the Mary Fishers of this world very unlikeable, although you do start to sympathize with her towards the end of the book.

Fay: She turns into a good woman and it kills her. Mary Fisher and Ruth just switch roles, Ruth gets bad and

Mary Fisher gets good and as soon as Mary Fisher gets good she dies.

Pat: I like the idea that being good is bad for you.

Fay: Well, life is full of paradox and often the most destructive people are the most most likeable, the most charming. Part of the idea of *The Shrapnel Academy* was to demonstrate the humanness of the enemy, to see yourself in the enemy. It is like not saying that everything is society's fault as opposed to ours, but recognising that everyone has the same feelings and that once we recognise them we can control them and they cease to be destructive. In a way it makes you better able to deal with them because if you think that all "those" people are mad and so awful, you are so lost in your own self-righteousness and not attempting to understand the situation at all.

Pat: Do you plan what you write next or do the books flow spontaneously out of this bed of razor blades?

Fay: Out of this seething bed of razorblades!

Athina: Are people fearful when they speak to you that they might appear in your next novel as some nasty character?

Fay: I have noticed that I don't come across much opposition in my daily life. People are very polite on the surface but underneath it is probably a different story. I am in a privileged position and the milkman is polite as is everyone else. In the real world there are far more disagreeable people than I get to see and it is not difficult to see where this stock of razor blades comes from. I have got a rather strange book coming out in September called *The Hearts and Minds of Men* which started out as a serial in a woman's magazine and that turned into a novel. Now that is full of razor blades.

Pat: Do you find it difficult to write?

Fay: Not the actual writing, but what you're writing and why you are writing is much more difficult. That is the tricky part.

Pat: You have had a lot of exposure in the New Zealand media. We saw an English documentary on you which had some old clippings of you crouching on the floor by the heater to write, which was quite romantic. And then there was a more recent image of you writing on a train, none of which has anything to do with the

image I have of writers sitting at desks with typewriters. Do you write by longhand?

Fay: It is much easier to handwrite and then someone else puts it onto a word processor and prints it out.

Athina: Do you find that the themes



that you write about change as you get older? What themes are you exploring at the moment?

Fay: I don't know what theme I am working on at the moment. You have to wait until you have written the novel in order to see. You see what you have written and then you can work out what your preoccupations have been.

Athina: I have been quite intrigued by some of the statements you have made like "If I was a proper feminist I wouldn't be living with a man". I am interested to know what your conception of a feminist is.

Fay: I don't know what a true feminist is, it depends on the company you keep. Alongside a radical lesbian separatist I am a very poor specimen indeed but if I'm with a fairly moderate sort of feminist or with men then I'm very savage.

Athina: Are you not accepting the view that lesbian separatists are the only "true" feminists when you make statements like that?

Fay: Well, perhaps they are. They are people who are prepared to live by principle rather than by convenience or inclination. I can see that point. It is like if you are going to be a catholic it's better not to use contraception.

The pope is quite right, he has to be, if you believe in the catholic doctrine.

Athina: Except there is not one set of principles that feminists abide by. We do not have a doctrine which says you must give up all men. Every feminist lives by a certain set of principles and it would be self-righteous for lesbian separatists to claim that they are living by principles and others are not.

Fay: No there is no group membership, but I don't live by principle do you? (much laughter)

Athina: (even more laughter) Well I try to!

Fay: If you live by principle as a feminist I think you should be trying to work out a world where women do have equal dignity with men and if you consort with men — well the whole sexual act is in one way an act of invasion in every possible way.

Athina: But it doesn't have to be seen as invasion, it can be seen as capturing.

Fay: Yes but that is an easy way out, what you are then saying is that you like it. And so do I.

Athina: If you are a feminist you are trying to change society and you have to live by your principles in your relationships, and if you can manage to do that with one man then you are living by your principles. I'm not necessarily saying I could live with any man, but if I can have a fair and equal relationship with the man I live with then I am living by my principles, therefore I am a "true" feminist.

Fay: Okay.

Athina: There seems to me to be great confusion around the word feminist and feminism and the media seize upon one stereotype and push it all the time. A lot of women can't relate to it and they feel "feminism has nothing to do with me".

Fay: Well that is because lesbian separatists refuse to relate to other women and that I think is their error. They are not the least worried about the problems of ordinary heterosexual women trying to get by. They are more interested in the doctrinal differences they have at meetings.

It is what happens in any revolutionary movement when it forgets the wider issues because it is so taken up with itself. But in a way you are succumbing to the media by saying these women have given feminism a bad name, therefore they should shut up.

Athina: No I don't think they should shut up. The media should stop focusing upon them, because what the media is doing is subverting feminism by constantly portraying this image of a feminist. There are a lot of ordinary women who are feminists and who identify with feminism but are never seen in the media. So the media has controlled the impact of feminism by portraying it as something the bulk of women cannot identify with. Every time the word feminist is mentioned women (and men) think of lesbian separatists.

Fay: It would seem simpler to change the word.

Pat: Whatever word was chosen would eventually be given the same connotations by the media.

Fay: I feel that those extremists are very valuable because they do set up an alternative world and shake people. Otherwise to be a feminist can become such a comfortable thing that no effort is required at all. You just go on living as you have been and saying I am a feminist by virtue of being married to a reasonable person.

Athina: That is a danger, but I also see it in the same way that I saw the hippie movement, that it is easier in one sense to opt out rather than to stay in and fight for change. I prefer to see myself as doing that, staying in the system, because we are never going to abolish men. Separatists challenge us and get us to question what we are doing. But I do not agree that it is comfortable to stay on living with a man because I work hard every day of my life to try and have an equal relationship and it is not easy.

It would be easier for me to go and live on my own and not have to work so hard at a relationship. I know that

there are women who call themselves feminists but still live in traditional relationships but there are also a growing number of feminists who live with men who are actively trying to change their relationships according to their feminist thinking.

Pat: There is also more to feminism than relationships, that is just one part of it.

Gil Hanly: (Who came along to take photos and got caught up in the discussion). The same thing has happened to the peace movement as the media has placed certain connotations on the word "peace". I keep trying to think of a different word from "peace" because as soon as you mention it everyone starts yawning.

Fay: Yes but the word doesn't actually mean anything. It is vague, and it just means a state of not war.

Gil: But it also means non-violence and feeling good about yourself and a whole heap of other things, but it is not given those meanings in the general media.

Pat: In one interview you said that feminism has failed, do you remember saying that and remember what you meant when you said it?

Fay: I don't remember saying that. What I may have said is that contemporary feminists have failed their sisters, which is really a reference to an ideological dispute — that there is a generation of women growing up who have not been exposed to feminist thought at all. That feminists have lost interest and only see women as their sisters if they think the way they do and don't have what those early feminists had, an awareness of consciousness raising amongst all groups of women, heterosexual women and women with children who would benefit from feminist thought. If you choose to be subservient to men there is not much help from feminism, but it used to be recognised that you were allowed to think that way because that was how you had to function. You were still a woman and deserving of attention. There is "correct" behaviour now.

Athina: There seems to be this attitude that I have only got so much energy and I'm going to put this energy into where I think it will help me most, and I think a lot of women did turn away from certain women because they thought they weren't worth the fight. I can see that in

England this would be a stronger attitude because it is a larger movement. In New Zealand the feminist movement is quite small and we all need each other so it is not as divisive.

Fay: You see this in left-wing politics and in radical feminism where there is almost an inversion to the truth so that if something is inconvenient it does not exist. If something comes along that contradicts the notion that the world should act or be a certain way then you deny it and that is dangerous. This used to be the case over babies, that you weren't supposed to have them or to think they were important. Now it has changed again and there is a kind of earth mystique and a motherhood mystique and menstrual blood magic. Now there are other areas that are not allowed.

Pat: I've got a daughter of 23 who used to say "I don't feel as if I have ever been discriminated against because I'm a woman."

Fay: Thanks to you she probably hasn't been much. Thanks to a whole movement of women that discrimination is not as obvious as it was. Employers are a lot more careful of what they say, they may well be discriminating but it is not so obvious and it is some time before you become aware that you are disadvantaged. There is a whole new generation who do not understand what has been achieved for them by other women and until things get hard for them they will go on thinking like that. They do not have to start from square one just as the 1970s wave of feminism didn't start from the same base as the suffragettes.

Athina: We've had countless programmes made about the depression and the war and how difficult it was and feminism hasn't really done that. It hasn't produced things saying "well look where we were and look how far we have come". It has not pushed this message to young women growing up so they do not know what it was like.

Fay: I quote things that were said to me and people fall over backwards and say that's impossible, did people really say that sort of thing? They can't believe that after you had been offered promotion at work you were taken aside and told that you were being stood down because a man had to work because he has a wife

and children to support. The new generation is astonished at this thinking. The assumption however, is still there that a woman in a relationship need not work.

Athina: When I was first told that women were oppressed, when I was 18, I was extremely puzzled because I thought "but there are washing machines, and vacuum cleaners." I was used to seeing my mother do everything by hand, and didn't understand how women could be oppressed if they had all these modern conveniences!

Fay: Economically everything has changed so much. There was a time when it was possible for many women to stay home and look after the children, but life is such now that most women have to go out to work. And their wages are less than men's and their work is less interesting. Nowadays you do think that for a woman to be allowed and able to stay at home and have a rest and look after the children without constant agitation about how she is going to juggle all her responsibilities, is not so bad a thing.

Athina: But there's no prestige in it and it's never been based on choice, either. It's always decided by economics that have nothing to do with the women.

Fay: My solution would be for all women to hand over the babies to their fathers when they're six weeks old and go off.

Athina: Most of them would do a thoroughly rotten job!

Fay: No. If you put a man in charge of a child he's fine. But he always opts out, because you're there. If you are not there men can be just as good.

Athina: Some men do, but I wouldn't go so far as to say that most would. I would feel more uneasy about men doing violence to young children. In a lot of cases where children are abused it's a man who's been left with a child and he can't cope with it crying. I think women and men have been socialised in two different directions and I don't think men have been given that nurturing ability.

Fay: But the only way you are going to give a man that is to hand the baby to him and say, "Now look after it." Just as a mother learns, a father can. Society would change no end. Very quickly we would have two-year-olds toddling around computer rooms and in all sorts of places. It's my "solution". □

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STROKES AND ART ATTACKS



Two pieces from the stone sculpture symposium at Western Springs, Auckland during March and April. Left: "Quest" by Lauren Kitts, right: "Big Mother" by Gwenda Maude. Both pieces are carved from Hinuera stone from the Waikato. "Big Mother" has been bought by the Manukau City Council. Photo: Gil Hanly

INTERVIEW WITH LYNDA MORGAN

**The author of two
books about the
sexual abuse of
children**

**Katy's Yucky Problem
and Megan's Secret
Spoke to Pat Rosler**

I live in Christchurch with my two sons who are 16 and 18. I have been doing safety education for children classes for some time. I usually take them outside school hours with girls in the 7-12 age group. Initially they were basically self-defence classes but I felt more and more that there needed to be some changes. The focus has always been more on the attitudes than on the physical

things, and I spend a lot of time with girls' classes talking about being a girl, what the positive aspects of that are and getting them to feel good about themselves and strong, and giving them the information I think necessary for their safety.

I get them talking about their bodies, how they feel about them and what they call parts of their bodies. We look at all sorts of aspects of looking after themselves, like how they bath and wash their hair, brush their teeth. We establish that there are lots of ways that they look after themselves, then we talk about good touching and touching that's not okay and how they can tell the difference by the way it makes them feel. We go on to look at what to do if they get a touch that feels bad, who do they go and talk to, how do

they know who is a safe person in their lives, and then we go into all the aspects that they bring up. They ask some amazing questions.

Who arranges these classes?
Usually a parent or a teacher. Often a teacher will ring me and ask if I'll do a class and then she'll find out that it can't be done in school time so she'll organise it in the school hall or the gymnasium after three o'clock.

Do you get paid for doing this work?

The parents pay for their child to come. I'm self-employed. The classes fill really quickly. I like to keep the numbers down to about 30, with a maximum of 36. I used to always do two hours a week for four weeks, but because some people arranged groups out of the city I've been doing Friday night and Saturday classes. By hav-

ing that whole day we can do all sorts of things, like reading stories and playing games. The stories and games are all around the theme of feeling positive, clever and strong.

It's really demanding work. By the end of the day I'm really tight from the intensity of it. The children get really involved, they don't get bored. I get as many parents along as possible, usually mothers or aunts or sisters, sometimes grandmothers of the girls in the class. Fathers or mothers' partners come to the last hour so the girls can actually practise and do role plays.

I get heaps of men. If I've got a class of 36 I'll usually get 10-15 "Dads" along. I guess they come to support what their daughters are doing. Some of them may have been pushed into it, but they come. Initially they are quite apprehensive,

they don't know what's going to happen to them, but I get lots of good feedback from them and they give the girls good feedback too. There's that awful thing of how it's not enough to get praise from a woman — I can praise them and say they're neat and they're doing great and so can the Mums but getting it from Dad means a lot to them.

I also use the opportunity while I've got the men sitting there to talk to them about what I've done with the kids and the whole thing becomes more open than it has been before in that family. I usually try and have lots of information for the parents.

I really love working with the girls. They come in at the beginning all quiet and shy and when we go around the circle you can hardly hear what they're saying. And by the end of the class they are feeling really good about who they are and asserting themselves and speaking up. It's great, I love it. I really hope that it carries on after that.

We talk about television and books and I get them to question the values in those. It's teaching them to question, making them aware of sexism. I ask questions like "What are the women in that programme like?" and they usually see them as either "bad" or "good" and then I say "What do the men do?" and they pick up on the men being heroes and actually doing things really quickly. Then they bring up other things they see on television, and it's good. It's good for the mothers too!

I'm not doing so many of those classes now, I'm pulling back, and having a look at it all to see whether I can develop some new ways of doing things. I haven't taught any women's self-defence for a while. I'm still really involved in lots of sexual abuse areas, I still go out and do talks and I do some sexual abuse counselling.

How did you get involved in sexual abuse counselling?

It just happened, really. I became the contact person for incest survivors so I got lots of calls from people wanting to arrange talks and that sort of thing, but I also got heaps and heaps of women ringing up. Eventually it got too much and I had to stop doing that. I was setting them up into survivor groups and that might involve talking to a woman on the phone two or three times and



going out to see them. After a while I couldn't cope with the numbers. I did have some good support, I worked in quite closely with rape crisis.

I got involved in the first instance by being in a group — there were five of us — of incest survivors. We met regularly for about two years and I think about 15 months into this time we heard about a big conference that was being held in Palmerston North on child abuse. We got really angry about all those professionals running it. So we wrote and asked if we could do something about it. They agreed and so we presented this paper — which was actually published in *Broadsheet* (issue number 111, July/August 1983) along with other things we had written and that was when the whole thing went public.

Have you got other directions you want to move into?

Sometimes I think I'd like to do something completely different. Like I'd really love to be a book rep and sell non-sexist books. And I would love to write more. I've got a book that I've already started, on healing for women who have been sexually abused. I'd really like to write an adventure story.

How did you come to write Katy's Yukky Problem?

I needed a story to use with kids in the classes. I was teaching lots then. And I'd talk to them about touching but I always thought that stories were a good medium. I'd looked and looked and at that stage there was nothing. So I wrote that up and I used it for about a year just written in an exercise book with some pictures drawn by a young woman I know. Then various people started suggesting that I do

something with it and the kids started asking "Can you buy that book somewhere?" and so I got in touch with Miriam Saphira and it went from there.

It sells amazingly. We're in our second print now, and there's not many of that left. There's a lot of material coming through all the time on sexual abuse now, but still not many story books. Some of the books that are being used in training — with social workers and the police and so on — are not very good. One I saw had a dreadful chapter on mothers, it just blamed them. *Did Megan's Secret, which is aimed at an older group, arise out of the success of Katy's Yukky Problem?*

A few people said to me "Why don't you write a book about a closer relative?", seeing the man in *Katy's Yukky Problem* was a stranger. And I said, "What do you mean, a father?" And I just couldn't imagine doing that. I had two abusers, one of whom was my father. I had read a couple of American fictionalised stories but they were rather vague about what had been done, they didn't have any descriptions.

I was driving home from a class one night and this stuff just came into my head. It was basically the first page. And that night I sat up until three o'clock in the morning and it absolutely poured out. I have a funny way of writing. I don't write day after day, I sit up until all hours of the morning and write what might turn out to be a couple of chapters and then I might not write till the following week. Or I might write three nights in a row. It's quite a weird process. It's just when it comes in. So *Megan's Secret* just sort of happened, really.

We are getting big orders from overseas for both books, but I really want them to sell here, in New Zealand. It's lovely to sell them everywhere else, but I want kids here to have them.

Somebody said to me the other day, "Why don't you write a story about boys?" and I said back, "Well hopefully some man out there will do that." I don't feel like I want to. I can only write about what I know and anyway I don't want to do it just to "balance" things, like one of the newspapers said.

Standing Strong (see *Broadsheet* June/July 1987) is another really good resource. I

use that with my classes.

It's really difficult using the media to get these resources out to the general public. I always find that if I have to ring a paper or radio station I always get the feeling that they don't take me seriously because I'm doing it myself, not someone hired for public relations. I'm constantly disappointed at the attitudes of lots of the media and I'm sure that it has something to do with being home grown, being a New Zealand author. I'm quite sure that if I was an overseas author they'd fall over themselves to talk to me. I find it really hard, and I'm actually quite pushy, I can go out there and sell my product. Sometimes I wonder whether it's to do with my subject — would it be different if I had written a science fiction novel?

The media handle sexual abuse material incredibly badly. There was a policeman on television recently talking about a case where a man had enticed three children into doing things they didn't want to and he commented that these children were brought up really well and strictly — and he was kind of saying they were exceptional because of this and so they did what the man told them to do. And he went on to say how this showed that we needed to talk to our children about "stranger danger". My reaction to that was "Why don't you tell the bloody truth!" Just give me three minutes on television in that situation! They weren't exceptional children they were quite ordinary, any other child would have acted the same way, they're all taught to obey adults, generally, and be obedient and do what they're told, because that's the way we bring up our kids. And because of that they are in more danger. And then the media always blows it up when it's a stranger, and they just ignore all the stuff about known abusers, which is most of it.

You consistently talk about "incest survivors" rather than "incest victims". Is there any particular reason for this?

I believe that being a victim is being caught up in the patterns and behaviours and self-blame and self-doubt. I consider myself a survivor because I have confronted what happened to me and I don't allow those patterns to control my life. I have control of my life on the whole and feel good about who I am. A victim is still

stuck in those negative patterns.

I was reading something recently where a woman was saying that the word survivor can alienate some women because it has connotations that you've survived something really traumatic and big. So if a woman was abused as a child once and it never happened again, or if the nature of the abuse as she saw it was "mild" then she may feel alienated by the word survivor because she saw her experience as not so big. I thought about that for a long time, and I don't agree. Knowing what I do about sexual abuse and how even one

incident can be exceptionally destructive I still go along with using survivor.

I often get asked an awful question: "Are you ever completely healed?" We grow up with so many traumas and crises, and I usually say that it's a really difficult question and I think we all get to points in our lives where we feel good, we have some control, we get on with things, that whatever it is, sexual abuse or violence or emotional neglect... that somewhere in the healing process you will find a place for it that's more comfortable so your whole self is not focused on it, you can actually put it

away for a while and get on with life. It may pop out again from time to time, and you have to deal with it some more. But life's pretty much like that for everyone.

I've known women who have felt really messy and awful who have gone along to one-to-one therapy or a group, and they might have only done that for three months and they feel like different people, they've made amazing changes and they say "Great! I've had enough for now, I'll get on with my life." They'll go out and do things and in six or twelve months they may say "Oh, well, that

was a bit quick," or, "I'm stuck again, I have got more work to do." But that's all part of the process. I still have times when something from the past rears its ugly head, but on the whole my life is fine. You get clearer and faster at recognising your own patterns too, which helps. □

CONTACTS

HELP Foundation, Auckland, phone 389622 or 399185. Incest Survivors Group, contact Bev Cooper c/- Glen Innes CAB, phone 589151 and leave a message.

Incest Survivors Group, Christchurch, phone Rape Crisis, 794202.

Other areas: contact your local Rape Crisis Centre. See Directory in *Broad-sheet*, May 1987.

COPING WITH MISCARRIAGE

by Kitch Cuthbert and
Sandra Van Eden Long
Reed Methuen \$14.95

Kitch Cuthbert and Sandra Van Eden Long state in the preface of *Coping with Miscarriage* that they wanted to provide a practical book that looked at the real issues involved. They have certainly provided a very practical handbook on miscarriage. I found it easy to find my way around and lay my hands on any specific information that I wished to know. The headings are clear, information is often listed in an accessible way, illustrations and diagrams are large and simple, and one is directed around the book for further information on specific topics. Within the text are outlined boxes of personal experiences that move from the onset of bleeding to what happened to the foetus, through the feelings of grief to the relationship with a partner and other children. They cover diverse responses and emotions about the event including those of the father. I found these personal experiences very validating and helpful and they are powerful factors in the readability of the book. Jody saying, "My partner at my request, buried the foetus under my harakeke bushes" touched me as a profound statement of the recognition of a life and acceptance of a death. That the authors have given "ordinary" women this voice, is for me the highlight of this book. The personal experiences go hand in hand with practical ways of recognising accepting and moving through the difficult

WOMEN WRITER'S WORKSHOP



Wendy Harrex, Arapera Blank and Cathie Dunsford, organisers of the weekend, held in Auckland in May. Photo: Gil Hanly

About a hundred women went to Auckland Girls Grammar School (AGGS) for the weekend workshop. New Zealand women writers — Patricia Grace, Fiona Kidman, Laura Mountjoy, Lauris Edmond, Sue McCauley and others — ran workshops.

The Maori welcome at the whare wananga, Kahurangi Ki Maungawhau, was delayed by a series of travel misfortunes that held up the arrival of women from Wellington. During the wait informal readings on the lawn set a warm friendly tone for the weekend.

The AGGS Maori Club prepared food,

as part of a fundraising effort, and produced a series of feasts, including breakfast on the Sunday. The whole weekend was very friendly, with plenty of free time.

Women gathered in the generous breaks and talked about the workshops, their writing and their lives. The weekend ended with a magnificent feast and more informal discussions and readings until late in the evening.

A similar weekend is planned for later this year. We hope that this time there will be a creche. □

Julie Sargisson
Athina Tsoulis

emotions connected with loss using Elizabeth Kubler Ross stages of grief.

Chapters one and two, "The Process of Miscarriage" and the "Medical System" are mostly written by Doctors Lynda Childs and Toni Upton.

They move carefully and with excellent detail and diagrams through first trimester miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy and late miscarriage. Under headings such as "How Do I Know I Am Threatening to Miscarry" and "How Do I Know I Am Mis-

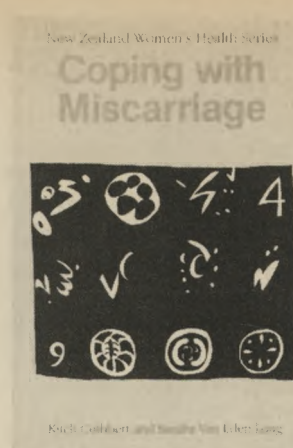
carrying", personal experience is combined with explicit information as to colour of blood, the level of pain and possible responses. However, when it comes to what one should do, I felt that options other than the doctor and the D and C

could have been given space. The following chapter, "The Medical System", goes on to give details of what the doctor will do and why, including blood tests, vaginal examinations, scans and D and C. If one must or wishes to have these things then it is essential to know why. However what is not mentioned is that many women have miscarriages without any of them, and that it is also an option to seek the help of a midwife who may offer homeopathics (often used successfully) and may use acupuncture instead of D and C. Her recommendation to simply go to bed makes miscarriage a natural process one need not fear to go through outside of the medical system.

The authors are very uncritical of D and C procedures and use. For instance, they don't mention the dangers or trauma to the body of an anaesthetic, nor that it can be damaging to the lining of the uterus, among other things. (Refer to *Women under the Knife* by Herbert H Keyser). Also if it's unwise to have sexual intercourse if in danger of miscarrying, why is a bimanual examination (which involves both penetration of the vagina and external pressure) advisable? And further, why have a blood test (for identifying blood group or anaemia) during the miscarriage, or why do a scan if the miscarriage is proceeding normally? I wanted the book to present more alternatives to the straightout medical processes, so that women have the information to take control and choose to what degree they use the medical options. In contrast, the IUCD is looked at in an empowering way, with its very real drawbacks being pointed out.

A great many areas are covered in these two chapters, but the view is from the standpoint of the medical profession, which I find limited. There is a cautionary word later in the book that the health food industry is big business — why is it that the medical industry is not recognised there as big business also? Women are encouraged to ask and given practical advice on asking questions, these are mine.

The chapters "Grief and Support", "Endings and Beginnings", and "For the Men" deal carefully, sensitively and practically with the aftermath



of a miscarriage. The authors have put a great deal of effort into covering as many situations and emotional responses as they could, including the needs of the mother, family and friends. There is acceptance that there has been a death and "all reactions are valid". The personal accounts make up a lot of these chapters and it is wonderful to read such validation of all the different experiences. Sections like "Support — What Is It?", "Active Comfort", and "Verbal Support", give family and friends practical cues as to how exactly to go about caring for someone who has just experienced miscarriage. In a culture where there is little understanding of the emotional aspects, I found it extremely helpful. The listed dos and don'ts of helping someone through a miscarriage acknowledge that women can and frequently do support each other through the whole process.

Illustrated with personal experiences is the emotional issue of needing to acknowledge the end of the pregnancy in a real way. Kitch Cuthbert and Sandra Van Eden Long are here handing back the power to women — you know what you need and you not only have the right to do as you need with the foetus, it is essential that you do it for your healing. Women give accounts of unique ways in which they said goodbye and how it felt. It was much harder for the women who did not have the opportunity to see the foetus to come to terms with the loss — the emptiness of "no grave, no face to remember, just an instinct inside of me". One woman was told that she was morbid to want to see the foetus.

I couldn't relate to what the authors quoted from the Rev

Warren Carter, representing "mainstream" religious thought, about what happens to the spirit and found what the women had to say covered a much wider vision of spirituality and understanding of death.

The five men who wrote the chapter "For The Men" ask men to look at their feelings about the loss of their baby but not block them off. "Not talking about your miscarriage is not handling your miscarriage". Practical details of how a man can support his partner are listed. There is acknowledgement that miscarriage can put a relationship into crisis and that men have a vital role in both the physical and emotional side of it. Listing ways of seeing it, things to do when it's happening and ways of facing the emotional aftermath make this an important contribution to the whole process.

All the known reasons why miscarriage occurs are gone into in great detail in "Causes and Remedies". This information will clarify many issues for women experiencing fear of the same thing happening in another pregnancy. It covers the foetus, problems with implantation, the mother's reproductive system, the mother's general health, the father and the environment, including some naturopathic advice on good diet. Clear diagrams show uterine and chromosomal disorders. All the information is easily accessible and points the way to helping oneself to a full term pregnancy.

Coping With Miscarriage is full of clear information, much of which is based on discoveries new technology has given us, and I think it is an important book for women to read or have as a reference. However, I did feel sad that the authors left out the history of women dealing with miscarriage successfully using herbs, acupuncture, chants and mutual support for thousands of years. Maori women had a profound knowledge of the healing roots, ferns, barks and so on in their environment for women's processes and the knowledge with regard to miscarriage is still there. European women did also. Women in the Pacific Islands still use this knowledge.

The medical profession has, in the recent past, made incredible "blues", such as prescribing the drug DES

(which has caused many more problems than are stated here — see *Women and the Crisis in Sex Hormones* by Barbara Seaman and Gideon Seaman, MD). These "discoveries" that went wrong or were mishandled should make us cautious about just how far we have come and what price we may eventually pay for this progress. Therefore I feel that it is essential for women to have as much information as possible to enable them to make their own choices; there are choices open to women, and information that have been left out of this book.

With the limitations I have stated I still found *Coping With Miscarriage* a helpful book, clarifying many areas of miscarriage. Its chapters on dealing with the death and the grief are invaluable. □ Julie Sargisson

FREDERIQUE

by Yvonne du Fresne
Penguin \$19.95

It's a cliché of romance that the heroine should nurse her sick hero back to health somewhere near the end of the novel. This gives her a chance to get her hands, chastely, on his hairy chest. And in his delirium he reveals that he's not really the insensitive brute we took him to be, for the first hundred pages.

Yvonne du Fresne's *Frederique*, contains a reversal of the usual formula. We are introduced to the heroine through the feverish impressions of William Cooper, missionary. We grasp what he does not. Frederique is independent, forthright and bewitchingly foreign to all Williams's stolidly middleclass presumptions.

Frederique, by contrast, makes an unflinchingly accurate assessment of the character of William Cooper. He is "tight shut against life", she decides, and she returns undistracted to her rich inner fantasy world. A world which spills over unexpectedly into the dull dangerous reality of her existence on the Manawatu plains of 1860. Du Fresne does this with a series of flashbacks that gradually illuminate the mysterious European tensions Frederique is still a part of.

Frederique is also a teacher and she is determined to inter-

pret the actual reality of the land she is in, in a meaningful way to her students. Yet they, and their parents, are conditioned to think of education as a body of esoteric information whose only value is to allow admission to the elite of society. Of course they're right. And yet Frederique, with her nature walks and class discussions, is able to enrich all their lives.

The paradox here is that she herself remains emotionally and spiritually tied to people and events half a world away.

The romance formula moves the action along with only an occasional jolt as the implications of colonization are examined in terms of their effect on Maori land ownership and culture.

The focus of the novel remains private and personal in spite of the intrusion of Huguenot politics into the Manawatu.

The land wars here become a catalyst for Frederique to make painful changes in her personal relationships. And the novel ends in the traditional way...

Perhaps the lasting message here is that Maori grievances against the Pakeha may be felt as intensely as Huguenot against Catholic. It takes more than a tender love story to resolve the conflicts of centuries but this romance raises some interesting parallels. □

Janet Charman

BORN TO CLEAN

Written and directed by

Renee, music by

Jess Hawk Oakenstar

and Hilary King

at Limbs Studio,

Auckland, in June

I enjoyed *Born to Clean*. Four women, Bernadette Doolan, Andrea Kelland, Jess (where did you get that tie?) Hawk Oakenstar, and Hilary King sang and danced their way through the life stories of three women, all called Amanda — as well as Red, Spike and Bubby. The birth scene was a delight, with Andrea's totally convincing miming of pregnancy and giving birth, and the doctor's preoccupation with his golf swing.

The songs, written by Hilary and Jess, are performed with grace and style. I especially liked the title song "Born To

Clean" and the opening one which included the words, "We're a natural three, you two and me." It's a lovely song about friendship.

The performance was sprinkled with "advertisements" for the products that clean. Brilliantly sending up the real thing and most credibly performed — some of those "ooh-aahs", wide, wide smiles and earnest tones could have come straight from the telly. Although "torpedo tampons", and "furtive filth" could only have been invented in a feminist mind. The ads highlight one of the themes of the show: women are born to clean and women become involved in promoting this message — women like Bubby's ("Learn to cope") and Red's ("Do it for me and for Jesus") mothers, as well as the women in the advertisements.

The message "don't be there" for the roles is made in the first song, but not really developed. The role expectations that are made of women are challenged but nothing much offered in their place. Red marries Jason, who wants a "good wife and mother", Bubby gets into the heterosexual scene, marries for a while, parties. Spike comes out as a lesbian and is rejected by her two friends. Hilary sings a lovely, sad song at this point.

The singing of all four women is great. And the dancing and movement. And Renee's direction had some lovely touches — Jess's turning away at the end of Spike's coming out song, the women acting as men, the bridging between episodes, the commercials.

On reflection, I feel that the ending was hopelessly romantic. The rest of the piece dealt with realities, so I was disappointed that the ending didn't. Homophobia doesn't disappear just like that — even when "the weather's right".

However the show is an affirmation of women and of our struggles to be ourselves — a struggle which some of us don't survive and others do. I hope lots and lots of women went along and enjoyed it. □

Pat Rosier

BODY AND SOUL

Jenny Morris

WEA Records \$

Jenny Morris' new album does

not do justice to her talents. Of ten tracks only a handful stand out. "You're Gonna Get Hurt", "Pass It Over", "Trust Yourself" and "Tested Sentences", are the least memorable. The musicianship on these tracks is consistent but pedestrian. The strengths are some good base lines plus fresh and interesting vocal arrangements from Jenny.

The pick of the bunch for me would have to be "You I Know" written by ex Split Enzer Neil Finn. This is a fine song with wonderfully balanced vocal harmonies, perfectly suited to Jenny's voice. My next choice is "Beating On The Same Drum", another gem from Finn, a natty little number with a catchy beat and the kind of lyrics you find yourself singing after one hearing. "Body and Soul", "Light-hearted" and Animal Magnetism", all written by Jenny, are well-crafted songs but fail to take off. They lack the lightness and spontaneity of Finn's numbers.

The cover of this album leaves a lot to be desired. With a title like *Body and Soul* I would have hoped for more gutsy realism. But no, the

cover photo shows Jenny in a sentimental, romantic setting looking like a cross between Barbara Rush and a youthful Joan Collins. But don't let this aspect of mass marketing put you right off — the album is definitely worth listening to for the goodies. □

Jude Worters

THRESHOLD An installation by Juliet Batten on the theme of menopause. **OPENING RITUAL:** Celebrating menopause, Monday 10 August 7.30 pm, women only.

PLAYBACK THEATRE: Menopause and women of wisdom: our stories reenacted. Friday 14 August, 8.00 pm.

VIDEO (Irene, 59), poems, songs etc on menopause, wisdom and ageing. Friday 21 August, 8.00 pm.

EXHIBITION Kate Millington Sept 15 — Oct 18 Last and First Cafe, Symonds St. Works on paper.

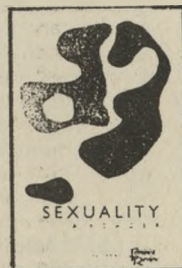
LET YOURSELF GO is an album by Sweet Harmony, just released by Emmatruck Music. Available on record or cassette from *Broadsheet* \$14.00

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A wide-ranging review of all aspects of sexual politics, edited by *Feminist Review*

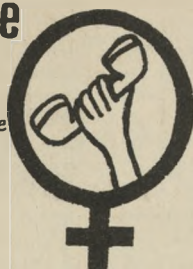
IS THE FUTURE FEMALE?
LYNN SEGAL

A controversial book in which the author challenges many of the current feminist orthodoxies



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10.30 and 5.00; Part Three, 8
Aug 10.30 and 5.00. Cost: \$5
per session, block bookings
by arrangement. Showings
will be attended and intro-
duced by Peter Watkins and
there will be opportunity for
discussion. Contact the New
Zealand Foundation For
Peace Studies, 732-379 for
more information.

**TAURANGA WOMEN'S
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