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POSITIVE ACTION—SELF DEFENCE FOR WOMEN

BROADSHEET

NEW ZEALAND'S FEMINIST MAGAZINE

SIXTEENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

JUNE 1988

ISSUE 159

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STRIVING FOR HEALTHY MAORI WOMEN

WAIRETI WALTERS RATIMA

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SCREENING
PORN
RE-VIEWING
CENSORSHIP

THE YOUNG & THE RESTLESS
FIGHTING & FINDING FEMINISM



**POLITICAL
CONTROVERSIAL
UNCOMPROMISING**

BROADSHEET

• C • O • N • T • E • N • T • S •

JUNE ISSUE 159 1988

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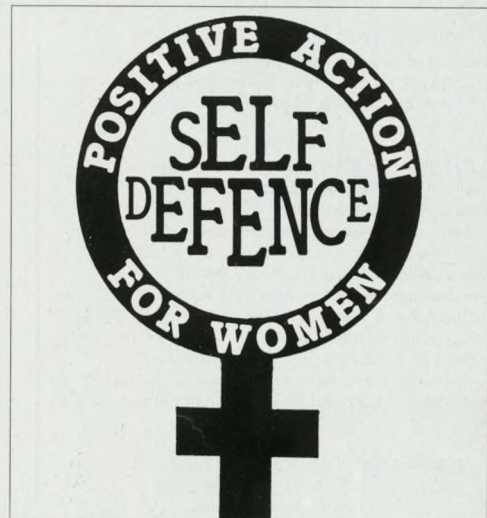
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HERSPECTIVE is written each month by a
member of the collective or an invited contributor.
This month's writer, Hilary Haines, was involved
with the magazine in its very early days.

LETTERS POLICY: The Broadsheet collective
may not agree with or endorse views expressed in
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considered by the whole collective and edited in
consultation with the writer. We do not publish
personal attacks. Letters from men are published
only when they correct matters of fact. We particu-
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HERSPECTIVE

Dale Spender's writings document
encyclopaedically the ways in which
women's ideas, both spoken and written,
are devalued by men.

Her recent New Zealand visit set me
thinking again about the fragility of the
gains made by our current feminist move-
ment. Despite the liveliness of our efforts
and the immense social impact of feminist
ideas in the '70s and '80s, the feminism we
know could well be buried by history only to
be disinterred by feminist historians in
some future "wave" of feminism. Is con-
temporary feminism mainly rooted in a
generation who were in their twenties in the
early seventies, are now late thirties-early
forties and will become a breed of strop-
py old women a few decades hence? It is im-
perative that we find ways of passing on our
hard-won ideas and achievements to pre-
vent them from disappearing into historical
oblivion.

One strategy which is infrequently
mentioned in feminist writings is men-
toring. Mentoring is a "buzz" word now in
the sycophantic literature on personal suc-
cess. Traditionally, a mentor is an experi-
enced person who guides, facilitates and en-
courages a younger person to succeed in a
career. Studies of "successful" men have
shown that many believe that a mentor was
a significant help. Male mentoring, reeking
as it does of favouritism and old boy net-
works, is clearly a factor in the perpetuation
of discrimination.

But mentoring can be a richer process
than the narrowly exploitative literature of
success suggests. Carolyn Heilbrun, an
American feminist, defines a mentor as
"something more than a mere teacher, in
fact, a guide or exemplar in dealing with the
central concerns of one's life." She explains
that the term derives from Mentor, a friend
of Odysseus, who was entrusted with the
education of Telemachus. My Oxford Clas-
sical Dictionary tells me that for this educa-
tional task, Athens took over Mentor's
body. So, there is a women's spirit at work
in the origins of mentoring.

Mentoring does not have to be confined
to the professional, academic and business
worlds. A mentor can be a poet, a carpenter,
a photographer, passing on her art or craft to
another woman who wants to learn. She can
be a kuia, a mother, a spiritual guide. She
may be a prisoner or psychiatric patient
showing a new inmate the institutional
ropes. She may be a lesbian helping a
woman through the coming out process by
talking, listening, introducing to friends, ac-
companying to social events. Mentoring
occurs whenever someone takes a special
interest in the growth, learning and develop-
ment of another.

Many of us may remember having
mentors. The experience may have been
wholly positive or it may have involved

struggles towards individuality and separa-
tion from the mentor, particularly if he was
a man. Many women have married their
mentor, which can turn around from facili-
tating to inhibiting development. Biogra-
phies of "successful" women often point to
male mentors - fathers and teachers, par-
ticularly - an unsurprising connection,
since these are mostly women who have
"made it" in a man's world. Many more
women "make it" unmentored with a fierce
and lonely struggle, perhaps giving the psy-
chological background to the oft-voiced
anti-feminist statement: "I made it on my
own", with its implication that "you could
have, too".

Mothers can be mentors and that is
something we feminist mothers try to do.
But mothers who are modelling traditional
female roles will not be mentors for femi-
nist women. Lucky Alice Walker, who said
of her mother, "She has handed down
respect for the possibilities - and the will to
grasp them".

Soon after reading Walker's "In Search
of Our Mother's Gardens" I had a dream. I
was just about to move into a very demand-
ing work role and was anxious about my
ability. I dreamt of a woman who is older
than me, in a senior position professionally
and who has been something of a mentor to
me. In my dream she took me by the hand
and showed me her garden, which was a
luxurious growth of extraordinary sized
vegetables - giant silverbeet, cabbages and
potatoes. My feeling towards her in the
dream was a strong, loving but not sexual
emotion. When I woke, I felt strengthened
and reassured by the feeling that I had an
ally, someone who had been over that path
before, who wished the best for me, and
who would open the way for me to express
myself creatively in my work.

I suspect that many of us are more open
to being mentored than to mentoring. My
generation has put a tremendous effort into
trying to achieve equality in personal rela-
tionships, as well as in the world at large.
Mentoring can smack to us of ego-tripping
and unfair discrimination. Women often
have low self esteem, too, in spite of our
personal achievements. We may think,
"What could I possibly have to offer some-
one else?" And we may be so exhausted by
our own often unsupported struggles that
we have little energy to be a mentor for
another woman.

Although we've tried hard to form close
family-like bonds of friendship, for support
and warmth, we may have neglected the
role these networks could have in men-
toring younger women. Feminists of my
generation must make that step if we want
to pass on the knowledge and achievements
we have won at great cost, our women's
studies, our arts and literature, our crafts,
skills, spirituality, our political analyses.

Hilary Haines

LETTERS

WOMEN CONNED?

Dear Broadsheet,
"The Woman's Show" – slickly promoted as "by, for and about women." A female-oriented weekend of events at one of Wellington's largest indoor venues – sounds great, wonderful idea.

Then why do I have the nasty feeling that myself and every other woman who visited the show buildings April 15-17 are the victims of a massive con-job?

My cynicism may be proved unfounded by the event's organisers, Auckland-based Complex Promotions, but I suspect all those fivers passed over at the door were not destined to assist any women's cause.

Nowhere in the event's catalogue, which conveniently listed every exhibitor's address for my "future reference", was there any mention of why I was required to pay five dollars to be confronted with blatant mass advertising.

If the entry fee proceeds were going to help refugees, rape crisis centres or some other form of women-assisting or promoting group, then okay...but I wish I had known.

If, however, the door charge was paying for the hire of the venue...if the exhibitors' stall fees were supplemented by all those fivers, then I want my money back. I object to being duped into paying for the promotion of businesses whether they are insurance companies or antique shops or state-owned enterprises.

The organisers should have had the humility to ask the women who attended the show their opinions of it and suggestions for future events.

Instead they asked tick-the-answer questions on why the women had come (for the seminars, the exhibits, etc), where she had heard about the show and would she want to exhibit at next year's show.

While I accept the 80 stallholders were interested in self-promotion I feel many exploited the show to push their role-enforcing products and ideas on a paying audience.

Maybe at next year's show a greater impetus could be placed on the proven and potential strengths, talents and abilities of women.

I would rather know that the proceeds from such a show were destined for a cause "by, for and about women" than straight into some promoter's pocket.

I am hoping someone can convince me this year's "Woman's Show" was not a precedent for similar events aimed at women and exploited by commercial interests.

JAQUI LYNCH
Palmerston North

MEASURED PRAISE

Dear Broadsheet,
Bought you out of duty, read you with pleasure. Thanx for a stimulating lunch hour. May issue packs a punch. Love,
LORA MOUNTJOY

LESBIAN LUST REVISITED

Ed note: this letter was published in the May issue of *Broadsheet* but unfortunately 19 words were omitted. Our apologies to Louise Malone for our error. We reprint the letter in its full, correct form below.

Dear Broadsheet,
Just who are these "political lesbians" who don't really enjoy sex with women (referred to by Sharon Alston and Claire-Louise McCurdy, *Broadsheet* Jan/Feb 1988)?

I first identified as a lesbian and left the man I was living with when I realised that my female lover aroused me far more than I'd ever been aroused before. I finally acknowledged that I love looking at women's bodies, I love the feel of my woman's skin, I love her touch and that I love the sexual pleasure I get from her far better than anything else. To me that is what being a lesbian is all about and I can't believe my story isn't the same as that of thousands of other lesbians.

That is why I'm alarmed at the puritan streak I perceive in Sharon Alston's and Claire-Louise McCurdy's comments in *Broadsheet* Jan/Feb 1988. McCurdy comments that "a homophobic society is not likely to differentiate between categories of lesbians", implying that it's not fair on those squeaky clean women who choose to be lesbians for political reasons, but somehow it's not so unfair on those of us who choose lesbianism because we lust after women. It's bad enough that my lover and I get taunted by drunken men for holding hands in the street, without having our sexuality judged by other lesbians (eg Alston's comments on butch/femme relationships, women in "men's clothes", long-handled mops, etc).

To define lesbianism as some-



HELEN COURTNEY

how the purest form of feminism (McCurdy's "woman-loving woman"), without taking lust into account, may be fine for some women, but let's not hold it up as some kind of ideal for us all to aspire to. This attitude ignores those of us for whom sex is an important part of life and also belittles the struggles of both straight feminists and non-feminist dykes.

Let's try and keep tolerance as an ideal, especially with regard to sexual pleasure, which is a complex and precious thing not likely to survive rigorous political analysis. I believe that those of us who know this pleasure must tread warily when discussing the rights and wrongs of pornography, expressions of lesbian sexuality and so on, as we run a severe risk of becoming total hypocrites and will undoubtedly lose any fight for a cause in which we do not truly believe.

LOUISE MALONE

Dear Broadsheet,
With regard to the current debate over the acceptability or otherwise of butch/femme relationships – it disturbs me that we later twentieth century lesbians have learned so little from either our historical or our immediate experiences that we are now prepared

to judge each other on the issue of our sexual preferences.

Why shouldn't any "expert" who wants to tell me I suffer from an immature, repressed or otherwise unhealthy or deviant sexuality (from a feminist ideal this time), because I enjoy a particular power dynamic, share a place in my esteem with people who have always described my lesbianism in these terms? They are attacking as integral a part of me.

Both my lesbianism and its sexual focus made themselves felt in my life at the same time (in approximately my eleventh year – I am now 33) and from the same deep source. They both feel very strong and natural to me.

I am probably prepared to accept that both are socially constructed, but I am not prepared to be shamed into sacrificing my hard-won and deeply personal pleasure in dimly hopeful pursuit of some lately prescribed feminist ideal – or worse – correct line.

I am certainly not opposed to any study or exploration of lesbian sexuality with a view to increasing both our understanding and our enjoyment, or even possibly changing the way we relate, should that prove genuinely desirable. (And that is for individuals to decide). But let's respect the depth and complexity of the issue

FRONTING UP

DEADLINES

For the July/August issue
24 May, for Sept 24 July.

ADVERTISING

Our advertising rates are very competitive. Basic rates for Black and white advertising inside the magazine (excluding GST) are: fullpage \$600; half \$300; quarter \$150; third \$200; classified 30c per word prepaid, 40c per word if we bill you. Further details on request. Phone Tanya, (09) 607162

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A sub is \$40 per year - you get your magazine posted to you. Add a donation for a sustaining sub of \$60 or consider a two-year (\$75 or \$105 sustaining) or three-year (\$110 or \$150 sustaining) subscription. Overseas rates (these plus the horrendous costs of overseas postage) on Pg 2.

DONATED SUBS

These are really appreciated by women who cannot afford to renew (see letters). Just send \$40 to the office and we will arrange for a subscriber to continue to get the magazine.

APOLOGIES

To Gil Hanly who did the photos for "Dale Spender - Women of Ideas". We didn't give her a credit. The phone number on the article "No Choice" in the March issue should have been 728-273.

SUB EXPIRY

We now have a line at the bottom of mail out labels stating the issue number at which your subscription expires. (The issue number is on the cover and the contents page of every magazine.) We hope this will alert subscribers to renew their subs before they expire - the renewal notice that we put in the magazine seems to often get overlooked. If the number on your label is the same as the issue number on the cover, we won't be sending you any more until you renew.

OBITUARY

IN MORE THAN MEMORY: FOR RUTH CHARTERS

Ruth was born in Sunnyvale in Auckland, May 5, 1954. The first daughter and third child in a family of two girls and three boys. Her father worked long hours in a city law firm - debarred from legal practice for some years for being a CO during the war.

In 1967 Ruth set off to Kelston Girls' High School, worked hard and "did well" - very well according to the cryptic school reports though sports held no appeal. By 1972 she had followed the family exemplar and her own clear inclination into Law School at Auckland University. A scholarship took her to Geneva for a year in 1976 where she studied law in French and the dubious arts of conversing with strangers. 1977 and she was in Wellington working consecutively for Trade and Industry, Bell Gully and Co (a legal firm - she was admitted to the Bar in 1979), Consumers' Institute, as a Private Secretary to Margaret Shields, and with the Ministry of Women's Affairs. In her "own time" she also worked with the Wellington Women's Resource Centre, Women Against Pornography, WONAAC, Lesbian Line and the campaign for Homosexual Law Reform. She wrote letters and speeches, addressed meet-

ings, went on marches and pasted-ups and challenged the ideas and stereotypes of others.

So much for chronology and the impersonal understatement of her own meticulous C.V.

Ruth was a lesbian, a lover, a friend, a family member, a feminist, a humourist, a committed and passionate woman, a curious blend of personal conservatism and political radicalism, a fine thinker and speaker, a person beset by her own personal doubts and contradictions...In her own words she was "a very ordinary person who has lived a very ordinary life"

In October 1983 cancer became a part of her life. Five months after an operation to remove the cancer of the bowel Ruth wrote:

"I am trapped in a vast iceberg. Beyond I can see the warmth and colour of the countryside. I have to get out. I close my eyes tight and concentrate intensely to create inner warmth. Slowly, the ice which has been a tight suffocating skin all around me, begins to melt. I can flex my fingers and toes. Soon I can shrug my shoulders. But I am tiring with the effort and there is still so much to do to get out. Then I am bathed in light. The iceberg is being melted from the outside - much faster than I could do it myself. But the area closest

to myself I have to melt myself, or I will remain trapped even though most of the ice will be gone. But together my force and the outside force can complete the job and I will be free."

Five years on and Ruth has won her freedom. She took new risks with her life and her loves. She challenged her own horizons and learned to live more easily with her strengths and fears.

Her ability to face her death, to make it a "familiar" was part of her stern expectation of herself, of her desire to do it well. It was also part of the gift she gave.

Ruth died peacefully in the Mary Potter Hospice in Wellington on the morning of Saturday 26 March 1988. She was 34 this May.

And now
your death
is like sea waves
the ebb
and pull of it
and sometimes
the surge
that throws all memory
at my feet.
With all my love
fare well.

Robin Peace
8 May 1988

and avoid premature, narrow-minded and moralistic conclusions. We, of all people, should know better.

PAM MULHOLLAND
Auckland

MORE MEDICS MAY NOT HELP

The May issue of *Broadsheet* carried a partial review of my article on the comments the women made on their health services, from the Otago Women's Health Survey. The review was followed by comments from a GP putting the blame for the poor services the consumer receives on economics.

One of the points that I made in my article is that a number of criticisms the women made could be corrected with very little expenditure. Waiting times at GPs' surgeries could be drastically reduced if appointments were scheduled at realistic intervals, and a little old-fashioned politeness would go a long way.

Another area of change which may be painful, but not expensive, is medical education. Medical

students are selected for their intellectual abilities, with no regard to their personal qualities or interpersonal skills. Courses on interpersonal relationships and communication skills ought to be part of the core medical curriculum instead of entirely absent as at present.

Doctors in this country are also resisting any change in the funding of their services. At present this is done on a consultation basis. Therefore, the more patients a doctor can see each day, the greater his monetary rewards. One of the good things about the National Health Service in Britain is that doctors are funded per capita, ie, the doctor's salary is related to the size of his permanent list of patients. He can, therefore, allocate his time as he feels appropriate and worthwhile.

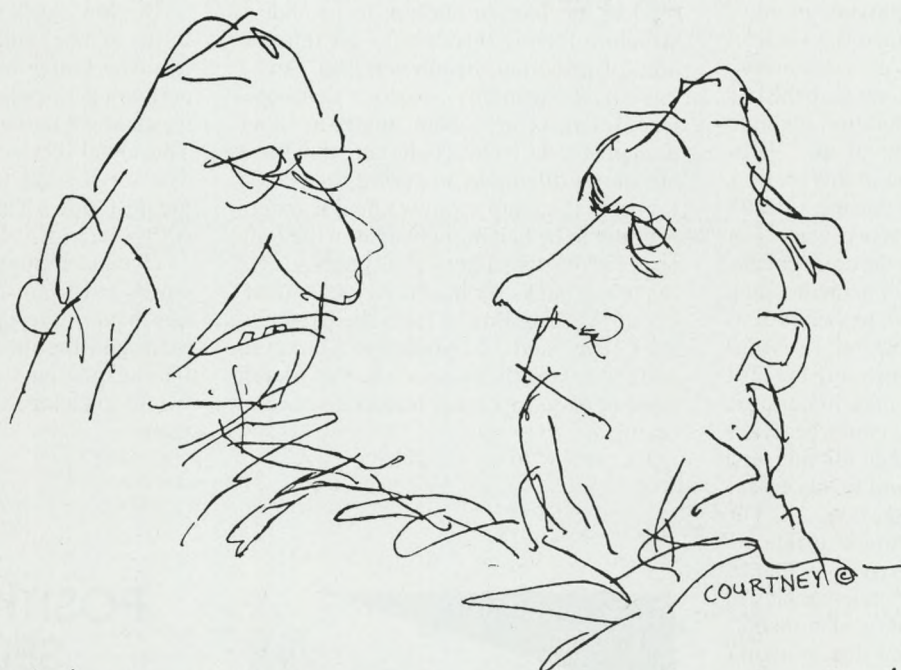
Women have spoken highly of the role of practice nurses in their communities. They offer basic nursing care, advice and home visiting, moving around the community, keeping an eye on folk, in

a way that doctors appear no longer able to do. The practice nurse saves the GP an enormous amount of time, while making basic health services accessible to the patient. The economic cost involved in employing a nurse in a practice appears to be balanced by the improvement in the quality of the GP's life, and patient satisfaction. It would be good to see more employed.

More doctors does not necessarily make for a better service. The quality of the service comes from the quality of the doctors.

VAL WALTON

Department of Psychological Medicine
University of Otago



I liked being a Doctor better when I was God.

Doctors are working on changing the procedures they use for disciplining those who transgress professional codes. There is an increasing body of opinion that medical disciplinary procedures should be taken out of the control of doctors altogether. Helen Courtney makes a cartoon comment.

THE GIBBS REPORT

Emotively called "Unshackling the Hospitals", this report, produced by a group of three, of whom Alan Gibbs, successful businessman, was the chair, claims to have the cures for a particularly sick part of the health system, hospitals and their related services. Pat Rosier discusses the report.

"Most New Zealanders," the report states on its first page, "have come to believe that a wide range of health services will be available as of right, when they want them." I guess most of us agree that we're not getting this at the

Gibbs' recommendations read to me like an attempt to provide a structure for big business to get into the area of providing health services

moment and some of us are fighting to make sure we do in the future, although what the "wide range" includes needs to be spelt out in detail.

The problems of existing hospital services are examined, and I think this section of the report is rather good, although it has some startling omissions.

The government has to be involved if we are to have an equitable and fair system, it says. Agreed. Inequities are iden-

tified as "variety in waiting times across the country and between specialties; subsidies which favour medical practitioners over alternative suppliers such as nurses, traditional Maori healers, diet specialists or acupuncturists; benefits which vary according to where you live and the kind of institution to which you have access."

Medical staff have too much control (which they don't necessarily want) over waiting lists, it says, and indeed waiting lists get a huge amount of attention, as they should.

Other points raised include, "The discrepancy between what is technically possible and what is affordable," how to ration high tech medicine, and, "areas where the priorities of patients, who are the consumers of health services differ from those of the professionals who provide ... [them] ... and the ... boards who fund them." Strangely, the example given is that of women with fertility problems seeking more resources for IVF programmes. Strange, because the really effective way to use such funds would be on infertility prevention. (A huge proportion

of fertility problems arise from sexually transmitted diseases and very little prevention work is done on this.)

The need for more resources to be put into community care is identified, and the dissatisfaction of many with the overall power of doctors. The procedures for dealing with bad experiences with doctors and for informed consent are identified as inadequate.

Then we come to efficiency. "Hospitals form the largest industry in New Zealand and are the largest employers in most towns where they are situated." Lack of information is identified as a main contributor to inefficiency, along with the fact that there is "little consideration given to the issue of management at all." Efficiency seems to mean cost in this section, and that is a worry – the cheapest health services may not be what we want. For example, after comparing the costs per day for a geriatric patient in an acute hospital (the range was from \$64 to \$657) it is suggested that, "The substantial savings that would result from improving the efficiency of the delivery of care in geriatric and psychiatric hospitals could be available to pay for the greater nursing and community care that would be necessary as a result of shorter bed stays ..." The implication is that the "most efficient" care equates to the cheapest now available, hence the worry. There's a terrible lack of information in some of these statements.

A specific inefficiency that is identified is the lack of information-sharing between the primary (general practitioners etc) and secondary (hospitals etc) sectors. Poor morale within the public hospital and health systems is also identified.

Although some useful points that could be explored further to improve the existing hospital system have been named there is one appalling omission, and that is any consideration of the particular services provided by psychiatric hospitals. "Efficiency" seems the wrong word here unless it means providing the best possible support and services for as long as people need them, and there is no indication that it does mean this.

There is some good analysis in the section "Management Deficiencies" that could be one strand in action to improve hospital management. But I can't see how Gibbs' proposed solution, separating funders and providers, will particularly do anything to improve management. He seems to be suggesting that competition will improve efficiency, which may well be true, but how will that, in itself, provide the country with better health services?

The management section of the report concludes, "The first priority in reforming New Zealand public hospitals must be to make them more efficient and responsive to the consumer. They must have basic information systems, know their costs, have good role definition and accountability." That makes good sense, but I can't see how the proposed solution will achieve it,

it seems to me to be just as likely to make the situation worse, particularly for those of us who are already ill-served.

At the time of writing the indications are so strong that Health Minister David Caygill will reject the Gibbs "solution" that there is little point in discussing it in detail. (In a speech delivered on Caygill's behalf on 3 May Under-Secretary Dunne acknowledged the need for improvement and expressed a commitment to a public health system.) Gibbs' recommendations read to me like an attempt to provide a structure for big business to get into the area of providing health services. And I have never seen any evidence that business interests are about anything other than profit. As well as believing that there are moral dilemmas in caring for people for profits I cannot see how a health system is going to be better or cheaper in the long term for the consumers, if its purpose is to make big bucks for business. I refer readers to "Making Profits from the Cradle to the Grave" and "To Market to Market to Milk the Health System" in the March issue of *Broadsheet* for further discussion on this.

Reactions to the recommendation of the report have been interesting for what they say about the people involved. Anyone connected with high tech medicine, medical insurance, private hospitals, or Treasury seems to be for them. Like Dr Hylton LeGrice, surgeon, and a director of the Southern Cross Medical Care Society, who got half the main news page in the *Herald* (3 May) to expound his views, which can be summarised as "go with Gibbs".

David Caygill needs to be encouraged in his stance, and these words of Prime Minister Lange rattled loudly: "The government is responsible for the social services and we know how essential they are. The social services aren't a market place. The service has to go where the need is greatest, not where the purse is deepest." (Press statement 19 April 1988.)

Cynical though we may be about the words and promises of politicians we actually have more opportunity to influence them and the members of public bodies like hospital and area health boards than we do to change the thinking of business men.

POSITIVE ACTION SELF DEFENCE

Mary Irwin and Jenny Morgan
write about an exciting new
concept in self defence
for women.

Rape is far more than a single violent act. Rape is not going to disappear overnight, because of the complexity of the problem. The whole of society, its values, conditioning and attitudes must change before we will be free of the threat of violent attacks.

The rapist is dependent for his existence on the presence of "victims". If there were no victims, rape could not exist. Women are conditioned into a "victim" mentality. Statements like these perpetuate our status as "victims":

"If you fight back you'll just make him angry."

"If you're going to be raped, just lie back and enjoy it."

"Women ask for it."

"Women shouldn't go out alone at night."

Until we learn to fight back effectively, see ourselves as worth protecting and refuse to accept our status as "victims" we will continue to be raped. It's ironic that it's us who are punished, while men are the offenders and the attackers. Should we be forced to live under a curfew because of the threat of rape and violence?



Many of us have no idea of how to defend ourselves. We don't know what to do in an attack, such as how or where to kick and punch. We owe it to ourselves to become equipped with basic skills for defence.

Since 1983, the women's self defence movement has continued to grow, evolve and make significant contributions in all areas of the community. In 1983 Sue Lytollis, in association with national YWCA, trained approximately 16 other women to teach self defence to women and girls throughout the country. The courses for women were then marketed as "YWCA/Sue Lytollis Self Defence."

The trained instructors founded the National Association of Self Defence Teachers of Aotearoa (NASDTA) in 1983, and since then have been meeting regularly for support and to share resources, new ideas and teaching innovations, and to network with other women's groups working in the area of rape prevention and education.

With more women being trained during the past five years to meet growing demand for classes and to cover smaller areas of Aotearoa, the self defence network is expanding in numbers and in its outreach.

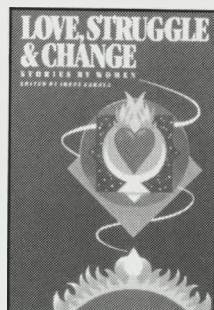
A National Maori Women's Self Defence Team, Whakamaru Tinana, has also been formed and has active members throughout the country. They can be contacted through Parekotuku, 32A Maarama Cres, Brooklyn, Wellington, Phone (04)848-475

At all stages teachers have recognised the value of individual teaching styles and course content, collective decision making at meetings and the often very different perspectives we bring to the courses, while maintaining the common base of feminism in the empowerment of women. Drawing on the sixty years collective experience in the field of women's self defence, the teachers continue to adapt course content and teaching methods to better meet the needs and strength of women coming to classes.

Since May 1987, teachers working under Sue Lytollis contract have been free to teach independently, and now do so, still with close contact with National and local YWCAs.

We have since launched a new name for the women's courses - Positive Action Self Defence for Women. The courses cover mental, verbal and physical aspects of self defence, assertiveness, self belief, exploding myths of rape and women's strengths. In classes, women look at ways of using their natural resources and inner strengths to deal with threatening situations (eg, using "mediator" skills to talk your way out of a situation), as well as practising simple and effective physical techniques to build confidence.

Special courses for 7-12-year-old girls have been very popular too, and focus mainly on personal safety, self confidence and sexual abuse discussion using games,



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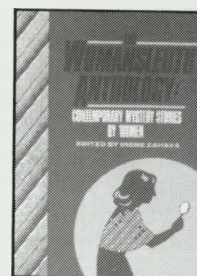
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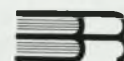
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stories and role playing.

All teachers are self-employed, working full or part-time. We hope to attract women particularly from smaller/rural centres to train as instructors. A training programme organised by three amazing South Island women has been held in Southland (see below).

NORTH ISLAND TRAINING SCHOOL

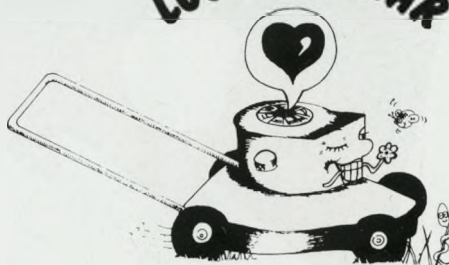
NASDTA is committed to working with and training new self defence teachers in Aotearoa to provide high quality feminist based self defence courses to women and girls in all areas. With this

aim in mind, we are planning to run a North Island Training School for new teachers later this year. We have as a priority trainees from smaller centres. In many of these areas there is already an active women's support system (eg, Rape Crisis), and a local self defence teacher would be valuable.

We envisage a North Island training programme to happen over two weeks, possibly in/near Wellington. The trainers would include qualified instructors from the association, (some previously YWCA/Sue Lytollis tutors, now Positive Action tutors). We will also draw on the skills of the trainees where possible.

pg >

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THE OLDEST SUFFRAGETTE

Catherine Griffiths, the oldest survivor of the militant suffragette campaigns in England in the years before 1914 and a prominent figure in London Labour politics, has died, aged 102.

"She had a notable last year, upstaging Prince Edward at the opening of Barbican's Edwardian Era exhibition – where she turned out terrifically in an embroidered Suffragette sash and apron under the Fawcett Society's banners – and receiving a standing ovation and a Merit Award [!] from Neil Kinnock at the Labour Party conference.

"The daughter of a Glamorganshire miner, she began her brilliant career in militancy as a student nurse before there were unions and took part in a famous attempt in 1912 to put tin tacks on Lloyd George's seat in the House of Commons 'to make him sit up'. During the First World War she ran a field hospital in France and afterwards worked in local government politics, becoming Mayor of Finsbury in 1960.

"Even in her nineties she remained active, doing voluntary work at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, and serving as a Governor of Dulwich College. **From the *Guardian***

LOCAL BODY DUMPING

Helene Ritchie has been dumped as Wellington's deputy mayor. "I challenge the system. As a woman I probably see more things to be challenged, and that's one of the difficulties for women in politics." The trigger for the action and removal of Helene from the chairman(sic)ship of several committees was her challenging the legality of a meeting to confirm a decision to change Wellington's rating system from land value to capital value. She was right about the (il)legality of the meeting but dumped anyway. She can't be "fired" as a councillor because she was elected – as part of a Labour ticket. It's a Labour council that has demoted her, and she has withdrawn from the Labour block and remains as an independent council member.

Ms Ritchie describes herself as in politics to challenge. "We need strong women there, but not to be damaged. We have lots of people with lots of talent in this country but we have too great an ability to cut people down."

From the *Sunday Star* 1 May 1988.

SEOUL FILM FORUM

Shortly before the Olympic Games are due to start in the Korean capital of Seoul, the city will also be the site of the First Seoul Film Forum on Women.

The Korean Women's Development Institute, which was established in 1983 as

IN BRIEF

a national focal point for women's affairs, is calling for presentations from women all around the world. President of the Institute, Ms Hyung-Deok Kim, said that the film forum aims to raise the problems of women of different cultures, to contribute to women's development through the media, and to build cooperative relationships between women's organisations involved in development issues.

The forum will present 16mm films, video tapes and synchronized soundslides which identify the concerns and define issues related to women. Films can cover as broad a field as women's participation in national development, education, employment, health, women's efforts toward equality, development and peace, and women with specific problems. It's envisaged that the forum will also provide the opportunity for discussion for media critics, students in the women's studies field, and the audience, on the image of women as reflected in the films, women's problems and methods of eliminating sexual discrimination in movies.

The Forum is non-profit, and non-competitive and runs over three days in early September.

All correspondence should be addressed to The First Seoul Film Forum on Women, Korean Women's Development Institute, San 42-4 Eunpyung-ku, Bulkwang-dong, Seoul, Korea. Telex: MOHSAS K 23230.



THE ABORIGINAL FLAG

This distinctive Black (top), red (bottom) and yellow (the circle in the middle) flag is a common sight on Aboriginal rights material.

It was designed by Harold Thomas of the Arrente people, was first flown in Victoria Square, South Australia on Aborigines Day 1971 and then at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy on the lawns of Parlia-

ment House, Canberra in 1972.

Black represents the Aboriginal people whose ancestors have lived in Australia for tens of thousands of years. Yellow represents the sun, the giver of all life. Red represents the colour of the earth and the blood spilled by aborigines in defence of their land.

From the *Aborigineland Big Red Diary*, 1988

THE WOMEN'S STUDIES JOURNAL

The *Women's Studies Journal* has, since the first issue in 1984, been edited by Margot Roth and produced by a collective in Auckland. Its varied and lively contents, sound editorial policy and attractive format have been a joy to its faithful readers. The New Zealand Women's Studies Association, which produces the *Journal* never intended it should be edited in one centre indefinitely. The time has come for a change and the Wellington Women's Studies group is taking over the editing and distribution of the *Journal* in 1988. Anne Else will be the editor and she will be helped by a collective.

We intend to continue the *Journal* on the same general lines but we hope to increase circulation substantially. Please consider taking out a subscription either for yourself or (if appropriate) for your organisation. There is something in the *Journal* for every woman. Topics in previous issues have included: childcare workers, lesbian women, homes for single mothers, Ripeka Evans talking about Maori women, learning to lose in the classroom, Canterbury's rowdy women, women in the 1950's.

Subscriptions: \$25 waged, \$20 hardship, \$33 institutions, to P O Box 5067, Auckland. Back issues are available at reduced rates from Gay Simpkin, 14 Waripori St, Berhampore, Wellington. Ph (04) 896798.

We would like to receive articles written from a feminist perspective and under 5,000 words for consideration for publication. These should be sent to: **Anne Else 8 Woburn Rd, Northland, Wellington.** **From the Wellington Women's Studies Group**

RURAL WOMEN STUDY

Changes in rural communities and their particular impact on women will be the focus of a nationwide two-year study funded by the Social Sciences Research Fund Committee. The committee has approved a grant of \$55,000 to the project, the idea of the Southland representative of the Federation of Rural Women, Vivienne Allan. Dr Geoff Kearsley of the University of Otago is the research director for the study.

From *The New Zealand Herald* 18 April 1988

BROADCAST

Pre-requisites for attending this training programme would be: to have already attended a YWCA self defence course; to have had previous martial arts training or a willingness to do so; involvement in some feminist activities, eg, Rape Crisis, Women's Refuge, women's support groups. Because we are applying for Labour Department money priority goes to unemployed women (who must be registered for a minimum required time prior to the training programme), women returning to the paid workforce and beneficiaries.

We are particularly aware of a need for trainees in the following areas: Wanganui, Gisborne, Rotorua, Tauranga, Whakatane, Taupo, Masterton/Wairarapa, Coromandel and Northland. Some of these areas have local YWCA offices with which we have mutually beneficial working relationships. The training programme is planned for late 1988. There is no guarantee of funding at this stage but we are keen to hear from and work with potential trainees. Please contact **Jenny Morgan, YWCA, P O Box 9563, Wellington, phone (04) 850-505 or 897-946.**

SOUTH ISLAND TRAINING

Alison Broad reports on the South Island training programme.

Strange things were happening in February in the small seaside town of Riverton, near Invercargill. A group of over 20 women were observed running, swimming, laughing, and moreover, fighting together. What could all this unfamiliar activity portend? The women were attending a training camp for instructors of women's self defence. Seventeen women trained as instructors in an effort to rectify the shortage which previously existed in many parts of the country.

The camp originally aimed to train women from the southern part of the South Island, but the final count was: Invercargill, 4; Gore, Te Anau Queenstown, South Canterbury, Blenheim, Palmerston North and Tauranga, 1; Dunedin, and Hawkes Bay, 2.

The camp was the first intensive training opportunity since Sue Lytollis trained a group of women several years ago. A new development is that many of the women trained at Riverton are already in jobs into which they can incorporate self defence teaching. Some are Polytechnic tutors who are able to use their new skills in that setting, others are primary or secondary school teachers. One, as a nurse, intends to teach self defence to nurses at Southland Hospital - this is particularly appropriate given the perceived vulnerability of women living in nurses' homes, and given the hassles many nurses receive from male patients and colleagues. An-

other woman works in trade union education, and hopes to pass on self defence and assertiveness skills to women through this network. Others, not previously in paid work, are now available to teach public courses for women and girls and to teach part-time for educational institutions and other agencies and groups.

The Riverton course was an intensive two weeks of training. All aspects of self defence teaching were included: physical techniques, verbal self defence, attitudinal aspects, legal issues relating to violence against women, information about agencies like rape crisis and refuge, which deal with different angles on the same issue, the special requirements for teaching children's classes and organisational and administrative matters.

The training camp was the culmination of many months of work for the organisers - Mary McFarlane and Cerridwyn Young, Dunedin-based teachers of women's self defence, and myself, community education organiser for Southland REAP. One of the main challenges which faced us was that of getting funding. We felt that the trainee instructors should not have to bear the full costs of the programme by themselves: this would have made it impossible for most to attend. Instead, each woman was responsible for getting herself to the camp, so had to meet costs of travel, childcare, loss of income and so on. The other costs (totalling about \$12,000) were met from other sources: major funding from the Roy McKenzie Foundation, the Community Health Initiative Fund (CHIFS) of the Department of Health and COGS, and smaller amounts from a number of other sources.

It is hoped that the self defence courses that these women will now be teaching will reach many hundreds of women and girls throughout New Zealand. Already,

only two months after the training camp, the newly trained instructors have taught several hundred women and girls. In Southland alone the first four months after training will see over four hundred taught effective self defence.

The benefits of being able to defend oneself, and of being able to live without fear, are incalculable. They reach far beyond the disproportionate threat of possible stranger attack into the whole issue of women's control over their lives.

WANTED: A NON-SEXIST RESOURCE CENTRE FOR NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS

Helen Watson, Women's Officer for the PPTA, puts the case.

New Zealand teachers who have had the good fortune to visit the non-sexist resource centres financed by state education departments in Sydney or Melbourne know how much we need one here. These centres have their own budgets and are staffed by seconded teachers, chosen to run the centres because of their experience in and commitment to non-sexist education. The state centre in Melbourne has six staff. There are also satellite centres in other general resource centres around the state of Victoria.

The Australian centres are available to all teachers by mail or visit. Also, the staff



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work with teachers in in-service courses or on the job. The centres have a wide range of resource material - conference and seminar reports, teaching programmes, pamphlets, posters, resource lists, bibliographies and guidelines for teachers on non-sexist education.

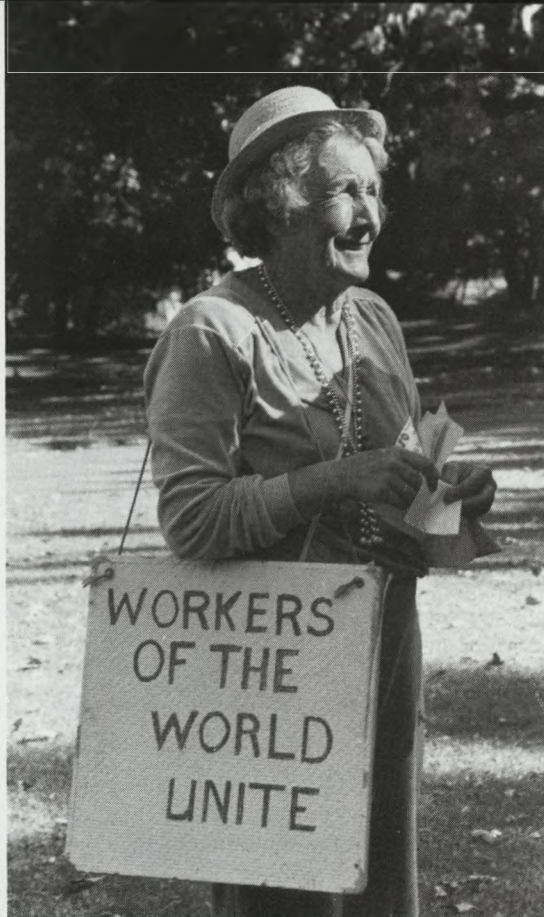
The two centres publish substantial newsletters. So does the Western Australia centre. The newsletters take a theme, such as girls and sport, or classroom interaction, and contain articles, lesson plans, resources, teaching ideas and teachers' accounts of their work. They are invaluable sources of information and much copied for distribution by those in New Zealand who get them. In Australia they go to every school in the state.

Feminist teachers have been lobbying for several years for a non-sexist resource centre like these. A Wellington group of primary school teachers, the Non-sexist Resources Group, have taken proposals to previous Ministers of Education for several years. The Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) has been pushing strongly over the last two years for the establishment of a centre. The 1987 Women in Secondary Education Conference had as its major recommendation the call for a non-sexist resource centre. When the previous minister, Russell Marshall, was informed of PPTA's policy, his response was that the Education Department was investigating the matter.

From the Australian experience, such a centre should have its own budget and staff. Responsibility for non-sexist education should not be tacked on to the responsibilities of an already-existing centre. A non-sexist resource centre could be on the same site as an existing centre, but the staff must be seconded specifically for work on non-sexist education and selected on the basis of their commitment to that.

The Women's Advisory Committee on Education (WACE - which has no teacher union representative on it) put out a discussion paper on a non-sexist resource centre, giving several alternatives, last November. The paper said a stand-alone centre would be expensive and therefore was not a favoured option. PPTA and NZEI (the primary teachers' union) both responded to the paper stating that a stand-alone centre was the *most* desirable option and crucial to the success of such a centre. No further information has come from WACE about the responses it received or its final position.

While teachers wait for a slow-moving Department of Education to respond to the teachers' needs and wishes, enormous amounts of feminist teachers' energy is wasted. Without a central collection point of material resources and experience on



■ Margaret Jones at Auckland's Mayday rally in Albert Park. Stalls, music, clowns and a fine day all contributed to a great experience. Margaret has been an activist since 1925. *Broadsheet* interviewed her in issue 112, September 1983.

non-sexist education, dissemination of information is haphazard, relying on personal contact and chance. Women teacher groups and PPTA's women's network provide some ways of spreading knowledge, but they do not have the time or money to do a thorough job. If a teacher in Taumararui or Cromwell or Kaikohe wants to know about a programme to develop assertiveness in girls or needs resources about women mathematicians, where or who does she or he contact?

New Zealand schools have barely begun to explore what non-sexist education could be like. Without a resource centre to provide help by means of overseas and New Zealand material, and the expertise of experienced feminist teachers, the task of changing New Zealand schools is virtually impossible.

The Department of Education must be challenged to establish a non-sexist resource centre this year. The Minister of Education must be persuaded that this is an urgent priority. Teachers, and parents who would like their daughters and sons to receive an education that gives equal significance to both sexes in all areas of school life, need to make their views known to the people who make the decisions on priorities in spending on education - politicians and the Director-General of Education

NORTH SHORE MARAE

Susannah Walker writes about moves, headed by women, to have a marae built on Auckland's North Shore by the end of next year.

Women make up most of the 12-strong Awataha Marae Incorporated Society, says chairwoman Rangitini Wilson. The group is working on raising local awareness of the marae before fundraising starts, and the response so far has been very positive, she says.

"There's a lot of support for the marae from Pakeha people, up to a point. I guess that's why we're now looking at more promotional work. It's a cause and a lot of people want to put their energy into helping the cause. But there are some who need to know more about the marae, its functions and the culture."

Rangitini says she thinks the marae will stick with traditional values, but that change is inevitable. "The Maori people themselves have to agree that changes are made. I have no doubt there are strong women who feel they could speak on the marae, and they should be able to do that, but somehow it's something that people

have to sort out themselves. If that happens, and I feel strongly that it will happen, that women will speak, it would be because the people allowed it to happen. I think it would be detrimental to women if they pushed. It would be detrimental to the concept of the marae that I see in this day and age. It has to be by agreement, and that will come later because at this time our main concern is with the actual building of the marae."

Most of the Pakeha women in the committee have skills and resources and have made time for those to be utilised, Rangitini says. The Pakeha women are learning to work in a new way: "In some ways Pakeha women can push their own thing - 'let's do it this way,' or, 'this is how it should be done'. I listen to what they're saying, but when it comes to actually making decisions, that's left to me. There's a small group I always discuss things with even though they're not on the committee, so the decisions are made through consultation with other Maori people."

Despite the committee being made up of both Maori and Pakeha, some Maori people haven't come forward because they see the committee as "another Pakeha organisation". But Pakeha are putting themselves at the disposal of the committee and understand they must move back

when more Maori people come forward, Rangitini says. This doesn't mean they can no longer participate. The resources they offered will have been used to get the project off the ground, but they will still have a role to play.

Building plans have been approved and the marae will be built on leased land in Northcote. Rangitini says the local council has been very supportive and local mayor Jean Sampson has shown very strong support.

Rangitini says the marae must have a strong economic base. "The tangihanga takes priority but at the same time we realise that we need to have an income – the koha isn't going to be enough to run the marae, so we have to look at other ways of generating income." These include plans for a craft shop, coffee shop and flower and vegetable gardens.

Local people need a place to gather which has a Maori kaupapa, Rangitini says. "The marae is a focal point. Children learn more, they grow up with the marae – it's part and parcel. They see what's going on and hear whaikorero, they see the tangi, it's part of their lives. Without a marae, that's not possible, especially in an urban area – it's not possible to be able to see all those things, so you become isolated."

Young Maori people who were born on the North Shore see it as their home, so it is more important to establish a base they can identify with locally than for them to seek it in another marae their parents may have been part of, Rangitini says.

Because of the committee led by local women, a marae will soon be a part of the lives of North Shore people.

THE ECONOMIC PACKAGES – WHAT DO THEY MEAN FOR WOMEN?

This article was prepared by Prue Hyman, economics consultant to the Ministry of Women's Affairs, following discussions with Ministry staff.

The general approach accords with ministry policy but the detailed views should be attributed to Prue rather than the ministry. A shortened version appeared in *Panui* 8, March/April 1988.

The government's economic statements of 17 December 1987 and 10 February 1988 include far reaching changes to the tax system and other aspects of government economic policy, and anticipate

further radical changes, for example to youth support, child care, housing and primary health care assistance. This article can only touch on some of the most important points in a few areas – primarily tax rates and family/beneficiary assistance, outlining the objectives and measures, giving an assessment of their impact on various groups of women and voicing doubts about some aspects.

While the February announcement withdrew some elements of the December package (for example the replacement of the family support scheme by an enhanced guaranteed minimum family income is not to go ahead at present), its objectives are intact and all its elements could still be on the agenda of Treasury and the Minister of Finance – though waiting for the May report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy. It is therefore still worth looking at these objectives and how they bear on the realities of women's lives.

The objectives of the income assistance and personal taxation reforms

- To ensure that all income is taxed, to provide sufficient revenue, and to ensure that the taxation system is fair;

- To lower effective marginal tax rates (the tax on the top level of income) in order to strengthen incentives to work, save, invest and innovate;

- To provide an adequate base level of income for full-time workers to ensure that people have an incentive to seek work;

- To ensure that beneficiaries have sufficient income to enable them to be participating members of society.

The emphasis on *incentives* to enter the full time paid labour force involves the assumptions that willingness to get a job is

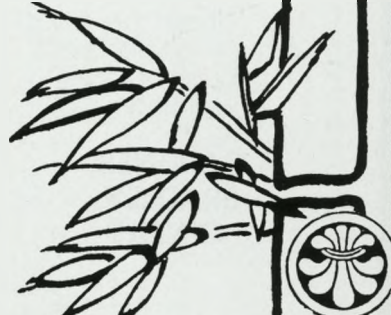
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enough and that paid work is of much greater importance than unpaid childcare and voluntary work. It thus seems to overlook the problem that unemployment is high and jobs are often not available, particularly for women heads of households. It also appears to ignore the constraints of inadequate child care facilities and un-

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equal training opportunities, which particularly affect women. Achievement of the third objective was to be through a minimum family income *for all full time wage and salary earners* with children, at a level significantly above benefit rates. (\$370 for a household with two adults and one child was the weekly guaranteed amount envisaged for October 1988 under the scheme: about \$70-80 more than a similar household relying on a benefit.)

What looks like a good scheme has a number of pitfalls. Households headed by part time workers, mainly women, and the self-employed, were to be excluded. Emphasis on the nuclear family is accentuated, with little attention to low income single people and different household structures, particularly extended families and other Maori and Pacific Island households. The supplement was to be calculated on last year's income, with no immediate allowance for changes in circumstances such as a reduction in pay or the break up of a marriage. If this scheme had replaced family benefit, there would have been some families in which the female caregiver lost her only independent source of income. Attention must be paid to the distribution of income within households and families, as well as between them, and for the individual to be the main unit for tax and benefit assessment, rather than the household or family. Little progress has been made on this.

A further effect of a guaranteed minimum family income would be for employers to be tempted to hold down the wages of the low paid, with women and Maori people again over-represented, since the government would make up the difference. Further, if a substantial gap between beneficiaries and paid workers was established it is likely that benefits would be held down.

Incentives to work, as well as to save, invest and innovate, are also given as the rationale for the reduction of marginal tax rates – so that the individual keeps more of every dollar earned. However, evidence that low tax rates are necessary at high income levels to encourage effort is sparse. Instead, high income earners or self employed people may have a target after-tax income and if the marginal rate is lowered so that this target is reached with less effort, they may in fact increase their leisure rather than their work. It is likely to be more important to have low marginal tax rates on lower incomes, since it is for this group that the effective tax rate is above the stated rate, due to the phasing out of family assistance (whether family support or guaranteed minimum family income) and, for some, accommodation benefit. If these various benefits and rebates are reduced sharply it may not pay some people to take paid work or longer hours, particularly if there are extra costs of child care.

In the past, progressive rates of taxation (higher rates paid on extra dollars of income at higher income levels) have been justified on the grounds of equity – or greater ability to pay. The rationale for the current moves to flatten the rates is in terms of incentives, discussed above, and reduction of evasion and avoidance, but the claimed benefits of the change are arguable, particularly as they benefit high income people rather than those on lower incomes. It is claimed by proponents of the change that the dynamic effects will induce faster growth which will benefit us all, but this has yet to be established.

The details of the personal income tax changes are as follows: in December a completely flat rate was envisaged, but this is now changed to rates of 24% for incomes up to \$30,875 and 33% on income above that level (compared with 15% to \$9,500, 30% from \$9,501 to \$30,000 and 48% above \$30,000 at present). However, a low income earner rebate means that the rates will in fact be at 15% to \$9,500, 28% from this figure to \$30,875 and 33% on higher levels of income. This implies that those eligible for the rebate will have after tax income unaffected by the rate changes up to incomes of \$9,500. However, it had not yet been announced which groups will be eligible for the rebate – it is possible that teenagers, the self employed and part time workers will be excluded. If so those on these categories on low incomes will be worse off.

As income increases so does the benefit of the lower tax rates. The effect is reduced

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- Gem Essences
- Nutritional Guidance/Allergies
- Crystal Balancing
- Spiritual Healing
- Past Life Regressions
- Age Regression Healing
- Aura & Chakra Balancing
- Trance Work
- Spiritual Guidance/Insight Readings

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& create change*

by the abolition of some tax rebates and deductions, including superannuation and life insurance payments, school fees, charitable donations and most employment related expenses. It is argued that the better off benefited more from these deductions and that widening the tax base is desirable. However, those on higher incomes have a more sharply reduced tax burden from which to absorb the effect, compared with the loss of any such deductions claimed by those on low incomes.

An issue which will continue to be debated is that of universal versus targeted benefits. Targeted benefits are attractive in theory, in that they are intended to be directed to those most in need, but often their administration and the availability of information is culturally and class biased so that take up is low and some feel that stigma is attached to receiving them. If universal benefits paid to those on higher incomes are recouped by progressive tax rates, their cost disadvantage is reduced. Further, targeted benefits, abating as income rises cause the problem, mentioned earlier, of effective high marginal tax rates on low incomes.

The economic package envisages policies to better integrate housing assistance in the public and private sector and to avoid such high tax rates. While consistency between accommodation benefit and Housing Corporation assistance is to be welcomed in principle, any reduction in

public sector rental subsidies is likely to adversely affect many solo mothers who are the largest group of Housing Corporation tenants. Special benefits, payable largely because of high housing costs, have risen sharply in recent months and house prices and rental rates are highest in exactly those places, especially Auckland, where jobs are most likely to be available. Hence measures to encourage work and housing assistance need to be well integrated.

The December statement, happily, included enhanced tax deductability for child care payments, and increased direct government expenditure on child care. However, details were sparse and the situation under the new package is unclear. More information is needed in this area and also on the funding of voluntary organisations. Tax exemption for some of their activities has been removed and a scheme to compensate them for lost income is to be worked out.

It is important that women's organisations and individuals are well informed about the changes and issues and make their views known. Economic matters are basic to all our lives!

PALESTINIAN WOMEN STAND STRONG

Eileen Cassidy writes of a recent visit to Palestine. She has not given the names of any of the people she spoke to because of the possibility that they will be victimized.

When women are attacked they stand strong. When the children are attacked the women become a fury of strength. This is what I saw in the Occupied Territories.

Palestinian women are in the front line: building barricades, planting their bodies between their young and the battering and shooting by Israeli soldiers. Four Palestinian women have died recently from soldiers' fire. Three were shot deliberately while they were trying to rescue children who were injured or about to be beaten, and the fourth was shot apparently accidentally.

I saw evidence of the wounded and battered in Shifa Hospital in the Gaza Strip. With two American and three Palestinian women I visited the hospital on a "quiet" day. Prior to my visit, and subsequently, the army had cordoned off the hospital, taking some of the injured – who should have remained in hospital for treatment – to prison. Some nurses and doctors I spoke to had been battered trying to prevent it.

We visited the wards full of the injured,

from tear gassing – particularly the young children in the confined space of their homes – from rubber bullets and from beatings. Young men are regular targets. We spoke to several. All had bruising, broken arms or legs or head wounds. Two had all three. Both legs and both arms in plaster and head bandages. The voice of one was weak but it still contained anger. That was the emotion most evident – bewilderment, but surmounted by anger.

One woman, herself beaten, had three sons battered. Soldiers had invaded her house on several occasions. On one, when she had attempted to intervene, she had been beaten. We saw the bruises on her back and arms, and her broken wrist. But it had not broken her spirit, nor that of the woman whose four-year-old son was in hospital with kidney trouble three weeks after a tear gas canister was thrown in their home, and whose two-and-a-half-year-old boy had lost most of the sight of his right eye from a rubber bullet. We saw the evidence of rubber bullets in the upper lip of a two-year-old girl, and marks on her arm and body. Several women had bad bruising and broken limbs.

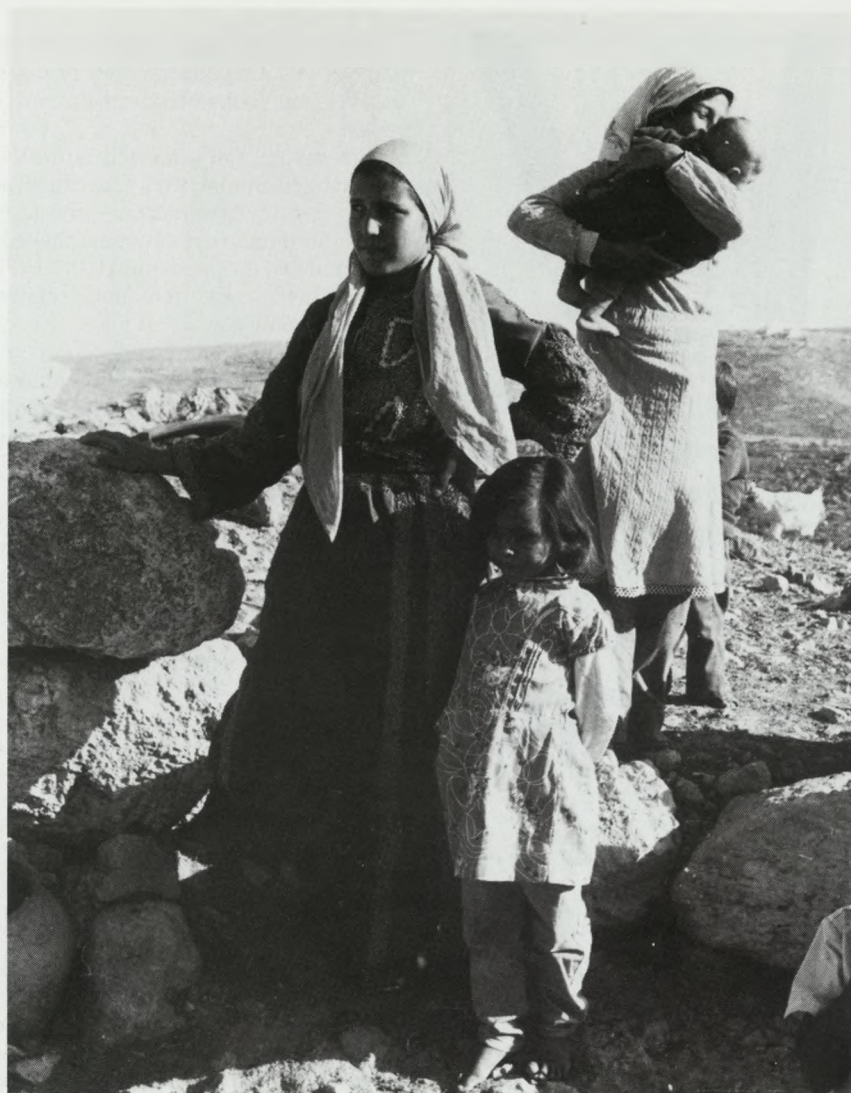
I heard from the women's unions and medical relief committees of the ten-fold increase in still-births in pregnant women who have been tear-gassed in their home

during a curfew. Anyone in the street is liable to be beaten by soldiers or now, as the oppression grows, shot. Ten Palestinians have been killed in the last few days. Women, as mothers, have inspired and given strength to entire families in the mass uprising.

The women's unions have defied the soldiers in order to bring food and medical supplies to families in curfewed refugee camps. They have given material and moral support to the families of prisoners and martyrs, the injured and political deportees.

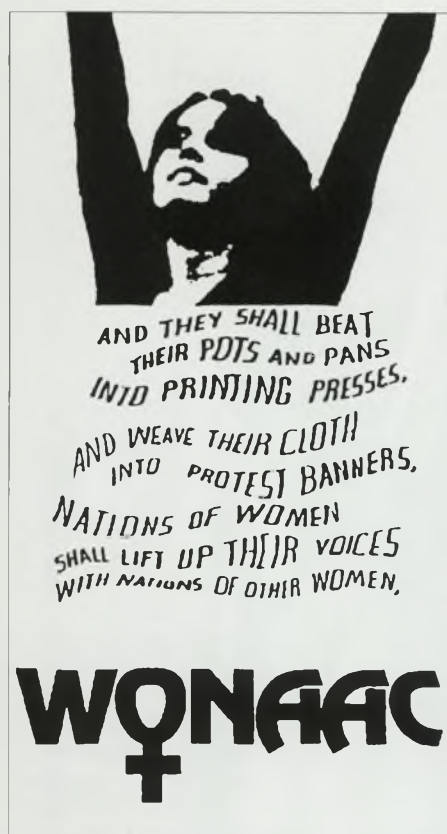
From school girls marching, chanting nationalist slogans, to the marching of the combined women's organisations, to the defiance of perhaps the most militant, the grandmothers in the refugee camps, the women are united. They need the support of women everywhere. They ask for justice and self-determination after a generation of oppression. In this they are supported by some concerned and outspoken Israeli Jewish citizens.

On my last night in Tel Aviv I had a long and earnest talk with a young Jewish woman, a member of a peace and equality group who has spoken inside and outside the country on the rights of the Palestinians. Her courageous stand needs our support also.



A family group outside Yatta cave following the demolition of their home.

PHOTO: JOOST HILTERMAN



EX-NUPTIAL HYSTERIA

A reprint of facts and figures
from the latest WONAAC
Newsletter.

The past 20 years have seen some remarkable changes in the lives of New Zealand women, perhaps the most significant of which are changes in our fertility behaviour. These changes were outlined in the New Zealand Official Year Book of 1985. Rather than bury you beneath a mountain of statistics, here is a simplistic summary of the key trends:

Women are having fewer children – a woman born in 1946 could expect by the age of 30 to have had 2.13 children, but a woman born in 1956 would by age 30 have had 1.72 children.

Women are marrying later and having fewer children within marriage – in 1971 the average age at first marriage was 21.2 years and by 1983 it had increased to 23.6 years. The 1981 level of fertility within marriage was two thirds what it was in 1971 and the numbers of families with more than two children had markedly declined.

Child-bearing is being delayed – women born from 1947 to 1950 were more likely to have children between the ages of 20-24 than women born since 1950. The commonest age for child-bearing is now 25-29.

Fewer brides are pregnant when they marry – in 1971, one in every five brides was pregnant compared with one in 11 in 1983.

But it's not only married fertility that has changed, unmarried women of all ages are having fewer children – the rate of births to unmarried women peaked in 1971 and had dropped quickly by 1975 to a level which has remained relatively stable since then.

This fact appears to have escaped the critics who engage in an hysterical outburst each year when the ex-nuptial births are announced. This hysteria is historic. It does not recognise social reality ...

More women are remaining single for longer – In 1971 45% of the women aged 16-30 had never married and by 1981 this had risen to 52%. Half of all women under 30 were unmarried in 1981 in both a legal and a defacto sense.

The number of people living in de facto relationships is increasing – in 1981 approximately 40,000 women over the age of 15 were living in de facto relationships.

More marriages end in divorce – in 1971 5 out of every 1000 marriages ended in divorce and by 1983 this had more than doubled to 13 in every 1000. Many of the women who divorced in the 1970s had been teenage brides (40%) and a further 40% had married before the age of 25.

Re-marriage is less popular as many divorced or separated women now prefer to live in de facto relationships or remain single – in 1981 15% of divorced or separated women were living in de facto relationships.

Society has not yet caught up with these changes, which suggest greater self-determination for women. Women are exercising choice.

Fewer babies are being given in for adoption – in 1975 1 in every 6 babies born to an unwed mother was adopted, compared to 1 in 18 by 1981.

More single women are raising children – the number of never married women raising children increased to 13 in every 100 solo mothers in 1981, compared to 8 in every 100 in 1976.

A lot of the ex-nuptial hysteria is related to the fact that people look at the number of women in the particular child-bearing age groups and they overlook key demographic changes.

The age structure of the New Zealand population is changing dramatically – take these three key child-bearing groups:

Year	No of women by age group		
▼	15-19 yrs	20-24	25-29
1981	149,820	132,219	119,940
1986	146,300	137,800	131,600

The ten per cent increase in the main child-bearing group – women aged 25-29 – has certainly had an impact on birth rates. These three groups contributed the following number of births to the population in 1985:

	15-19	20-24	25-29
Nuptial	736	9779	16,590
Ex-nuptial	3768	4177	3363
	4504	13,956	19,935

The age specific birth rates for 1985 are not available but there has been little change since 1984, when the rates were:

	303.6	205.6	167.8
Nuptial			
Ex-nuptial	25.0	52.2	68.3

These last rates are per 1000 women in the specific age groups, ie per 1000 married women aged 15-19, compared with per 1000 unmarried women aged 15-19. A small number of births expressed as a rate per 1000 may appear high if the number of women in the group is small. Conversely, a high number of births may be expressed as a low rate if the number of women in the specific age group is large. For example, compare the 15-19 year nuptial birth rate with the 25-29 nuptial birth rate. Confusing, but it is necessary to exercise caution when interpreting statistics.

Where does all this lead us? To the inevitable conclusion that times have changed and that the categories we used in Victorian times to measure social reality must change too. One very effective way to put an end to the historical hysteria generated by the term "ex-nuptial" is to drop it from the record books. Who would miss it?

OPEN EYES

Open Eyes is a publication of writing by women from Waipereira (West Auckland), women who have been part of aWEA Adult Literacy Programme. Tutor, Diana Nicholson, writes, from the book's introduction.

All the women joined the group to improve their reading, writing or spelling. Some have been coming for over a year, some have only been with us for a few months. One member has now left to take up a full-time job.

Most of us meet twice a week. We read, talk and write about our lives, our experiences and topics that interest us. Many of these topics are issues that affect our lives as women, and you will find this reflected in the book.

At first none of the women in the group put pen to paper themselves but dictated to the tutors what they wanted to say. Even this wasn't easy. When you have difficulty with reading and spelling and have been regarded all your life as stupid or lazy it is hard to believe you have something worthwhile to say, let alone to be committed to paper. But gradually, with the support and encouragement of the group, it became easier. Now all the women write for themselves. Spelling is still sometimes hard, but it is no longer as important as getting down what we want to say. As Colleen writes, "It's just another world when you can sit and write and not worry too much about your spelling."

When the group started, the writing was a way of getting confidence and practice and expressing ourselves on paper. The idea of a book came later. As the group read their own and each others writing, it led to more talk and more writing. We thought that what worked for us might work for others. Producing a book has been hard work but very exciting. None of us has done it before. We have all made the decisions. Which pieces should go in? Do we want to make any changes in the writing? How should it look? What shall we call it? How many pages and photos can we afford?

All the writing has been printed as it was written or dictated, only the spelling and punctuation have been changed. Some of it is poetry. Some of it looks like poetry but isn't.

We have had it printed
in short lines like this
because it is easier to read.

Here then, are the voices of women who have for too long been unheard, whose strengths and hardships have for too long been ignored. The book is a tribute to the courage, determination and generosity of its writers. They have overcome their fears of being identified and their difficulties with reading and writing to share some of the important things in their lives with others in the same situation as themselves.

They hope that other eyes will be opened to the power and excitement of writing, to the value of working in a group, sharing ideas and experiences and producing a book. For we need more voices to add volume to the demand for adequate provision for adults who have difficulty with reading or writing. As Margaret wrote, "The government should give more money to adult literacy schemes, not just push us aside as though we don't belong."

And from the women whose work is in the book:

All the books that I wanted to read, all the letters I wanted to write, I thought were beyond me. But now my eyes are open to a world that I have longed for. At last my life is complete.

Irene



Finally I can see the light. I never thought it would happen. I can read and write. I know I can.

Jane

Once I was blind but now I can see. This is what the scheme has meant for me. Thank you all.

Margaret

My eyes have been opened coming to this group of all women. My thoughts and feelings about learning, listening and speaking and writing down on paper have changed. I certainly have grown as a person through all these changes in my life.

Margaret T

To have opened my eyes has been a light flowing through my soul giving me new life.

Carlene

To read, write and spell – what a relief! I'm not the only one that has problems. Coming to the Programme has given me so much confidence in myself as a woman.

Sheryl

Copies of *Open Eyes* are available from WEA Adult Literacy Programme (West Auckland) 9 Henderson Valley Rd, Auckland 8. Cost: \$5 plus GST and postage. They are also available from Broadsheet Bookshop.

WAIROA HOSPITAL

The women of Wairoa are fighting to retain services at their local hospital.

Information from Anne Robinson of the Wairoa Awareness Group.

Women in Wairoa are fighting to be included in the decision-making process as the Hawkes Bay Hospital Board moves towards the changes that will make it an Area Health Board. People in Wairoa have not been given the opportunity to decide whether they should be included in the Gisborne or Hawkes Bay areas and are really angry at the lack of community consultation by the Hawkes Bay Hospital Board.

From a letter to David Caygill, Minister of Health, 14 December 1987: "The Hawkes Bay Area Health Board Consultative Committee is comprised of board members only and Wairoa has no representation; this is because the Hawkes Bay Hospital Board, in our view, has one po-

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litical objective for Wairoa – the deliberate downgrading of our hospital facilities. We reject this Consultative Committee and their recommendations.”

One recent example of the downgrading is the cessation of surgery at Wairoa Hospital. From the letter quoted above: “...overnight all abdominal surgery was cancelled. No statement by the Board. Women cannot even have tubal ligations. Now this surgery is performed in Napier. Patients are flown out in small aircraft.... We have requested a full time Surgical Superintendent and anaesthetist, to work with our highly skilled theatre staff, so that surgery may be performed in Wairoa. We have also suggested that Wairoa alleviate surgical waiting lists in Napier and Hastings.”

The other major worry is what is happening to mothers giving birth. In 1987, of 354 maternity admissions to Wairoa Hospital 203 were transferred to Napier for delivery. No reason is given for the transfer, which involves women in labour in an hours' travel, 20-30 minutes of it in an uncomfortable small aircraft. “We see this as intervention by specialists in Napier. They make the decision by telephone to Wairoa as to whether or not a woman in

Wairoa Hospital, in labour, should be flown out. Our doctors have lost confidence as a result of these specialists demanding more deliveries. Two babies have been born in the aircraft and we wonder if there have, or will be, more.

Mother and baby are then referred back to Wairoa. Mothers in their dressing gowns and slippers, babes in arms on commercial flights. We question: the risk of infection; the safety aspect of babies travelling this way in turbulence; the stress on mother and baby; the effect on new babies' ears.

We totally reject the necessity for these women, many young Maori women, many having had episiotomies, being subjected to this kind of treatment. We also note that the executive and Board officers when travelling to Wairoa prefer not to fly because of previous bad experiences, but travel the two hours by car. We have a perfectly adequate maternity facility here in Wairoa....

We were informed that a young mother and baby were left sitting alone in a cold aircraft for over an hour due to weather delays. She then experienced a frightening trip home.

There are times when the weather puts

all planes out of action throughout Hawkes Bay. If this occurs at the weekend there may be no anaesthetist available – one woman had to be flown out (in a most distressed state) in very bad weather to have a Dilation and Curettage because no anaesthetist was available in Wairoa. In October 1987 three women were flown out to have their babies at different times in the same evening. ...

As a result of this downgrading we are concerned particularly that Maori women may choose not to go to hospital for their deliveries. Families cannot now always be with the patient – Napier can be up to three hours travel away.”

Meetings continue, with women from the Wairoa Awareness Group feeling that they are not making any progress. The hospital board arranged a public meeting but decreed that it would be in the form of workshops! The women fear that the formation of the Area Health Board will accompany a further downgrading of the local hospital for an area that is geographically remote. The facility is there, there are many ways in which it could be fully utilised – if health professionals and bodies cannot think of them they have only to ask the Wairoa Awareness Group.

TOWARDS 1990

NO COMMONWEALTH GAMES, NO CELEBRATIONS IN 1990, PROMISES THE AUCKLAND TREATY ACTION COALITION WHICH MET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MAY. PAT ROSIER REPORTS.

The Maori group within the coalition is called He Taua, and made the following statement:

“The primary objective of He Taua is to stop the commonwealth games in 1990, to smash every event purporting to celebrate 1990 and to liberate Aotearoa.

“He Taua has sent messages of support to the people of Kanaky who marched on Noumea and condemn the French Government for its continued illegal occupation of Kanaky and its murder of Kanaky people. We see the French Prime Minister as the Hitler of today, prepared to kill innocent patriots to try and win further political power.

“As the tangata whenua of this land we order the French Em-

bassy to be closed and its staff to be repatriated immediately. The people of Kanaky have set alight the flame of revolutionary fervour in the Pacific which will die only when the tangata whenua of Moana Nui A Kiwa are all free. We are inspired by their example.”

The non-Maori groups and individuals made the following statement: “We have felt a growing unease with the fast moving plans for major government celebrations in 1990. These plans are to celebrate 150 years since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, a treaty that remains unhonoured, and 200 years of Pakeha occupation. The disease grows as we observe the government's moves to make the celebrations culturally diverse and with a strong Maori presence. There are no signs, however, of the government giving over any of the power which is necessary for the treaty to be honoured and still no land claims

settled.

“We feel we must protest beautifully crafted celebrations designed to gloss over the very deep problems that exist in Aotearoa as a result of the domination of Pakeha values, to the detriment of the tangata whenua of this land.

“It appears that the government will use the events in 1990 to make a display of racial harmony and understanding that belies the reality. The treaty may well have a focus as the 1990 Commission claims in its goals, but little will be done to come closer to effectively honouring the treaty.

“The commonwealth games will see an international focus on New Zealand, but when the esteemed visitors and overseas guests return to their homes nothing will have changed. Nothing except that the bitterness and tensions that exist already will be even more pronounced. It seems vital that we be there to protest such hypocrisy.”

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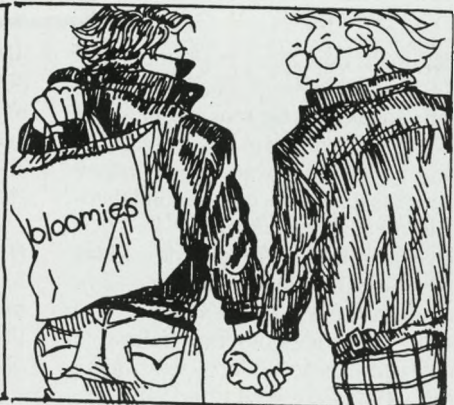
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IN YOUR FEMINIST NAIVETÉ, YOU
THOUGHT THEY DIDN'T EXIST. BUT
NOW... THEY'RE OUT OF LAW SCHOOL!!

LOOKOUT! IT'S
Luppies

* LESBIAN URBAN PROFESSIONALS

THEIR
LEATHER
JACK-
ETS
COST
SEVEN
HUNDRED
DOLLARS
!!



WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT

...BOND ISSUES...



THEY'RE
NOT
DISCUS-
SING
THEIR
RELATION-
SHIPS
!!!

...BUT WHAT GOOD IS THE REVOLUTION IF I'M
OUT OF SHAPE WHEN IT HAPPENS?!

GOOD
POINT.



AND
THEY'VE
RE-
EVAL-
UATED
THEIR
PRIOR-
ITIES!!

ALISSA OPENHEIMER

TO BE or NOT TO be



YOUNG WOMEN & FEMINISM

AS a belligerent and persistent questioner of all aspects of the social structure we operate in, feminism has often been ridiculed, belittled, even exploited. And like women, feminism has also been seen as the work of the devil, an instrument of destruction bent on paving the way to the end of "civilisation"

LISA SABBAGE ASKS WHY SO MANY YOUNG WOMEN ARE TURNING THEIR BACKS ON FEMINISM?

IS IT BECAUSE THEY'VE NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD, OR BECAUSE OLDER FEMINISTS ARE PATRONISING THEM?

middle-class movement. Perhaps these middle-class origins help to explain the dependence of feminism on language and structures exclusive of young women. For middle-class women unconsciously absorb a vision of their own sex as a homogenous group which does not take into account difference - age, colour, culture, class or sexuality for instance. The walls of conditioning seem to fall only one at a time.

Accessibility must always be a key concept. Feminism was not born in the universities, which after all have been built by and for men. Language should not become divorced from, or a barrier to, the principles it is trying to share and express. A recent trend toward academicising feminism must not be allowed to co-opt it.

I remember going to a lecture in 1985 by American feminist critic of literature, Mary Jacobis, and leaving it furiously because I understood very little of what she said. I felt that the complexity of her language was intent on addressing the academics and lecturers, rather than on talking to women. The words she offered were very detached from the lives of women, who are the readers of the literature she offers critiques on. From her lecture I judged that her theories were formulated in isolation, in the insular, clinical conditions of a library, in response to what other theorists had written. It struck me as ironic that this feminist critic was preserving her ideas within her professional realm, a realm dominated by men, rather than communicating them to women, replicating a male tradition instead of revolting against it.

"I think that's another trap feminists

Feminists now face yet another challenge, this time from young women, outside and within the movement, some of whom feel feminism has had its day, some of whom are wary of what they perceive as its jargon, cliques, and theories divorced from reality.

Easy as it is to make generalisations about cynical, seasoned feminists or reactionary young women, there is a need to examine both the failure of many feminists to address why many young women are rejecting feminism, to examine their apprehensions and misapprehensions, and to respond to criticisms from young feminists.

A real contradiction exists between needing young women to be a part of feminism in order for it to survive, and condemning them for a mood of "moderation" foreign to women active in the sixties and seventies.

Helen is the 23 year old daughter of a well-known feminist. She feels comfortable about calling herself a feminist, yet sees feminism as something people do that she agrees with but exists outside of.

"Established feminist organisations can be intimidating, there can be a lack

of acceptance. There seems to be an established network. Feminism looks a bit like a clique, especially if you're a person who has ideas but isn't sure about them and lacks the confidence to speak up."

This is a valid criticism and one that Helen is not alone in levelling. In *Girls Are Powerful*, an English compilation of young women's writings, Sally and Ilona express the same sense of alienation and being unwelcome.

"... Most of us have sought out the women's movement, with some considerable difficulty. It doesn't exactly reach out and grab you, especially if you live in the provinces, or are Black, or are working class.

"In fact, at first, when we did find the women's movement most of us were completely intimidated by the structure and jargon... We sat for six months in meetings with our mouths shut. We were forced to learn the political language of feminism. What this means in real terms is the exclusion of all the women who don't have access to the knowledge of this language."

In the past women have slammed feminism for being a basically white,

can fall into – that you can't be a credible feminist unless you've got a degree or gone through hard times."

Ironically Helen's comments suggest that you can also be a feminist if you've been through the school of hard knocks. I think this is a prevalent attitude among some young women who believe that a tough life is a prerequisite for feminism. If a woman is white and middle-class, she somehow isn't good enough to be a feminist?

Where does this attitude come from? Possibly from an acknowledgement in the last 15 years by feminists that yes, the movement was and is generally middle-class, and a subsequent bend over backwards guilt-complex in many women desperate to prove that they are "worthy" of feminism.

Guilt isn't worth a pinch of salt if it pushes women away from feminism. Being described as middle-class should not necessarily be seen as an attack on a woman's integrity or "right" to be feminist. The label makes a point about a social structure which again has been created by men. The attack comes when women blindly choose to defend that class privilege at all costs, ignorant that it ultimately oppresses them as well as other women, and men.

It is important to remember too, that the image of a feminist as a brow-beaten, working-class woman in opportunity shop clothes, is a lot easier for the media to dismiss than a white, designer-dressed professional woman even though both women are actually saying exactly the same things.

So, are young middle-class white women turning their backs on feminism out of guilt? Is it perhaps because in times of economic strife and recession people do tend to become more individualistic? Or is there a sense that the battle for women's rights has been fought and won, and the world is as good as it's ever going to get?

"I'm a daughter of a feminist. I am proof of the success of my mother's fights. I can cope with harassment, I know my rights, I'm well-educated, I feel good about myself and have confidence. Feminism is still fighting the mothers' fights, I haven't found where I fit in because I'm almost redundant,

I'm, the baby. I suppose this is what feminists wanted, to have daughters like me, but I'm here, what do I do now?"

It is a modern day myth, but one which many hold true, that women have nothing left to fight for and nothing to gain by continuing to be politically belligerent and stropky. Women's rights are old hat - it's all been said and done a thousand times before. True enough, the issues women such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Sojourner Truth wrote and spoke about, continue to be

their teachers probably had other ideas, and their prospective employers certainly disagree. The media, perhaps the most powerful indicator of women's status, still struggles to deal with women who do not conform to the wriggle and giggle mould.

Immunity to society's oppressive ideas about women may be inherited from their feminist mothers, but not all women are so lucky, and even daughters of feminists occasionally need booster shots. The mothers' fights must be carried on and made the daughters'.

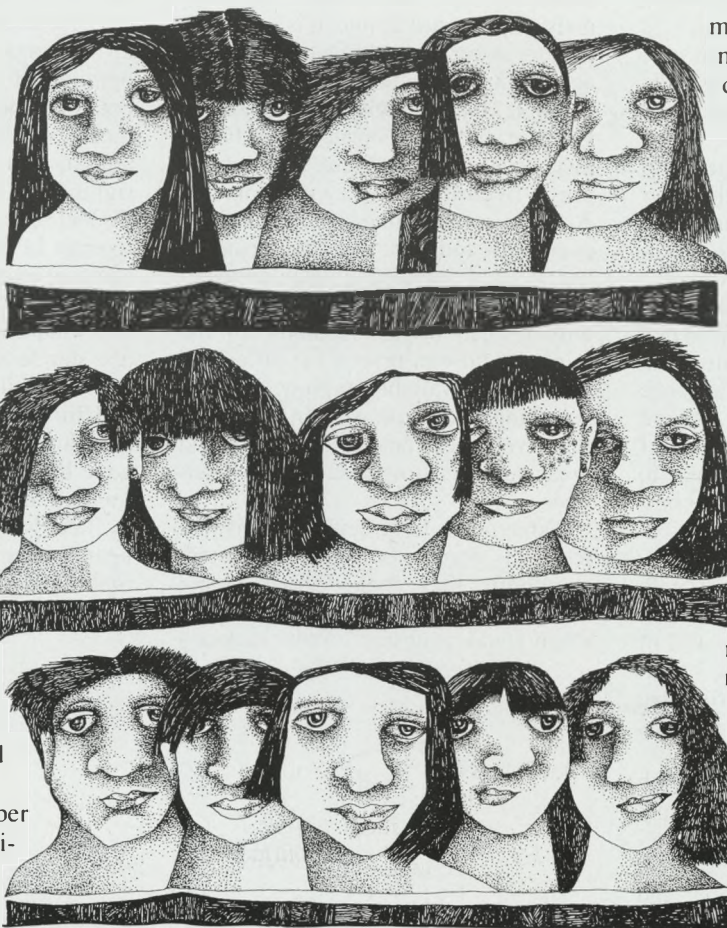
"Young women I know are mainly white, well-educated and middle-class. They're more concerned with stuff like nuclear and chemical warfare, which they perceive as a more real danger. They're getting into peace and environmental issues more than feminism."

What of this commonly held attitude that sexism poses no tangible threat to the human race compared to the nuclear build-up, pollution, or the destruction of the ozone layer? Feminism is about making connections, looking for the source of these menacing oppressions. A lot of women, not just young women, are not making these connections.

Who are the politicians and military strategists running the nuclear arms race, building bases in the Pacific? Who are the producers of toxic waste and the owners of companies fighting for the right to explore for minerals in Antarctica? Reduce these antagonists to their common denominator and you'll find that they are men, operating

in a male system without respect for land or humanity. All these issues are manifestations of the fact that fundamentally, the world's power is in the hands of men.

Secondly, feminist women have always been involved in these struggles because feminism is a philosophy that makes you aware of all oppressions and injustices. Who are the women camping at Greenham Common if not feminists? Who are the women involved in the fight to stop mining in Coromandel if not feminists? Who are the women involved in the anti-racism movement if not feminists? And if individual women in these battles do not call themselves feminist it is precisely because they have not made these links. The next time you are on a march against colonisation of the Pacific, against nuclear weapons, against racism, or against the



written and spoken about – education, sexual violence, legal equality. But stop and think, if more women than ever are still demanding the same things, campaigning about similar issues that they were two hundred years ago, there must be a damn good reason.

There is indeed.

Women as a group are still perceived as the second sex, subordinate to men. What the daughters of feminists and young women in general must never forget is that their individual position in society is not yet shared by all women. Daughters of feminists may have been taught by their mothers that they can do anything, but

government's economic policies, take a long hard look at just how many women are walking and how loud they are shouting for change.

A measure of exactly how revolutionary feminism is, and how much men have invested in their own sexism and structures, came to me from a conversation with my mother, a 42 year old unemployed artist. She was talking about the reasons she thought some young women are rejecting feminism. "A lot of them are afraid of what they think feminism is. They're frightened because it does demand change from a middle-class white society, which is basically male. Feminism is seen as a threat to everything that happens, it is labelled a threat to protect the male power position."

"The thought of women uniting across the board, giving each other support and the knowledge that there are alternatives to the status quo, fighting the system, scares them to death."

Stereotypes again come into play. Many young women are convinced that feminists are aggressive, polemical, fat and hairy man-haters. For instance when I first began university straight from my Papakura secondary school, I expressed a timid interest in going up to Womenspace, the women-only common room at the Students' Association. The response I got soon put a stop to my idea that I could take my friends with me. Looks of horror passed over their faces, and I was told that it was full of strident lesbians. Nevertheless, I ventured bravely forward, only to find that the room was full of young, nervous women like myself studying and looking for somewhere quiet to eat and drink tea. So much for stereotypes. As Jenny Phillips writes in her booklet, *Introducing Feminism*, "We are not all the same. There are different kinds of people, and there are lots of different kinds of feminists. There are moderate feminists. There are radical feminists. There are those who believe we must work outside the system and develop our own ways. There are those who believe we can't make changes unless we work in the system."

There is a need for young women to examine their own stereotypes of feminists and the origins of such generalisations. I have touched on the role of the media a couple of times in this article. By the media I mean the sources of information which dominate our senses of sight and sound in the 1980s, and are increasingly the primary source of information for young people – television, radio, newspaper, film, and video. In the context of television for example, young people are rarely presented with images of feminists, and when they do occur they are shown as the sour grapes

type who always spoil the fun. Amanda, the feminist journalist in the programme *Girls on Top* for instance, is your archetypal "fat feminist", bossy, pretentious, and hypocritical. Of course she's funny, and it's great that feminists can laugh at themselves, but what is being communicated to young people who have no other contact or knowledge of feminism, is that it is not a real political movement and not to be taken seriously.

Dale Spender, in her recent visit to Aotearoa, spoke clearly about the contribution of the media to painting feminists as the lunatic fringe. It is somehow a more acceptable thing to campaign against nuclear testing in the Pacific for example, than to campaign against restrictive and sexist abortion laws. Feminists never get good press, they get bad press. Even the Ministry of Women's Affairs is not immune to a little bashing every now and then, first for investigating ways of supporting disabled lesbians, and then for having a library filled with lesbian books. Actually all the ministry did was print a list of lesbian books now available in New Zealand. Anything to do with women's rights is perceived as extreme by the media, and great stuff for a few sensationalist headlines.

What needs to be said finally is that feminists need to be wary that the assumptions they make about young women are not based on "where I was at when I was your age". What makes a

feminist is not simply age or colour, sexuality or religion, but experience. There are some very old twenty year olds out there who have embraced feminism, consciously or not, since their early teens. Similarly there are women of thirty and forty who still sneer at the whole concept of equal rights. We all come to feminism from different places.

To my mother, feminism means "the right to view myself as a woman, the right to have feelings, questions, and ideas about being a woman and the role that womanhood encompasses – daughter, mother, worker, lover – which may all be in opposition to the generally held opinions of others and more often than not, in opposition to men. Feminism means not feeling so alone and being able to stand up for my own personal rights in whatever role I find myself in. To feel supported and united with other women in this way gives an amazing sense of strength."

"As a mother and an artist, feminism was what enabled me to hold onto my art as a source of independence. Without it I wouldn't have been able to survive."

Ultimately, daughters and mothers, grandmothers and granddaughters, gave birth to feminism, and will continue to foster it. Perhaps it will be in a cyclical way, with daughters rebelling against their feminist mothers only to make it possible for their own daughters to choose feminist nappies. ■



NICOLE HOLLANDER

My Daughter Lahela

A true story by Gwen Paora

I'd like to tell you about my daughter Lahela. That isn't really her name, but we once spent some time in Hawaii with some Hawaiian people - yes there really are indigenous Hawaiians surviving in Hawaii - and Lahela was the name they gave her. It's a beautiful name and it has become my special name for her.

Lahela is a very special person - now, I know what you are going to say but it really is true and I'm sure you're going to agree with me when you've read this story

You see my daughter is Maori and is determined to be proud of it. In actual fact she is both Maori and Pakeha because her Dad is Maori and her mother (that's me) is Pakeha, full-blooded too which means I have a bit of everything in me from Black African to English, French etc and I'm proud of it.

My genealogy is rich with cross-cultural conundrums and I could happily spend a lifetime researching it all. However, Pakeha seems like a good name for any kind of heritage. It's an Aotearoa word for someone of mixed heritage, other than Maori, so it puts me right here, but it also recognises my mixed and distant heritage - I like that.

But to get back to Lahela. She has chosen to be Maori. Like her brothers and sister before her she learned at an early age that in this country the reality is that you have to make a choice. You're not really allowed to be both.

Remember those mid-year statistics that teachers always had to fill in saying how many Maori and how many non-Maori children there were in the class? Imagine the fuss if some kid insisted on being recorded on both lists.

Lahela's brother tried to take the Pakeha choice when he was in the sixth and seventh forms. There were no other Maori pupils in his class and he is the most Pakeha looking of all our children. The pressures on him to turn his back on anything Maori and be like his peers was very great. However, it meant he had to go along with all the racist jokes, and the snide innuendos directed at his own cousins, the white superior attitude towards all the "nigs" in the lower part of the school, the references to the brown monkeys in the Maori cultural group. Well, he did it, and lost the respect of his cousins and burdened himself with a load of guilt in the process, a load of guilt that he is still trying to rid himself of today and he's now 26. But I'm getting off the track.

A couple of years ago we moved to the city for a time. Lahela decided she wanted to go to an all-girls school to get away from



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outright lies**

the over-powering sexism she felt was suppressing her at her old co-ed school. With the influence of a feminist Mum it had become plain to her that sexism coupled with racist attitudes were especially oppressive on young Maori women.

So off she went to her new school. One of the annoying little problems here was her bone carving. It was carved especially for her by a relative who meant a lot to her. He had carved it to express the bi-cultural nature of her heritage, as well as her personal life-struggle to maintain a spiritual balance in her life. It was carved with love and a deep spiritual perception. To Lahela it is a living part of her wairua.

You don't really understand all that?

Well, few of the teachers at her new school understood it, either, and some constantly tried to get her to remove it. Others were more tolerant and so long as it was hidden under her clothes it was okay.

It was a catholic school and only jewellery with catholic religious significance was permitted to be worn.

She managed to keep it out of sight most of the time, but from time to time it would be noticed by teachers who, I suspect, thought it suggestive of devil-worshipping superstition, so she would be hauled over the coals. It was an on-going battle but she coped with it.

Then, in 1987, she reached the seventh form. Throughout her school life she showed a willingness to share her taha Maori. She led the school Maori cultural group, and responded willingly when invited to offer a Maori view. In a Geography class the teacher asked her if her Dad would come and talk about Maori spiritual values that applied to the land.

But in the seventh form it all caught up with her. The year began badly. You may remember that Christmas period of 86/87, when the media got into a real bout of "brownie bashing". It began with the hysteria over the mythical Maori Loans affair. For some reason many of Lahela's peers thought she ought to answer for all these things, and from the beginning of the year never a day went by without her being expected to parry questions, try to dispel myths, and expose downright lies. At first she coped, but as the weeks went by the questions became attacks and the attacks became more and more personal.

By March she was becoming sick. Constant vomiting, incredible tiredness, loss of interest in sports and cultural activities. My outgoing, bubbling, positive daughter was becoming withdrawn, thin, and clinging to Mum.

After three trips to the doctor I decided it was time for serious talking. She had kept a lot of the problem from me, but I had suspected the truth for a while. I've seen it all before. So we talked. She felt she was in a no-win situation, she couldn't buckle and say yes Maori people are to blame for all their problems, they are basically lazy, violent, dishonest and a thorough bad lot. To do that was to sell out not only the people she loved, including her Dad, but it

YOUNG, FEMINIST & LESBIAN

MARNIE WRITES ABOUT HER LIFE IN PROVINCIAL NEW ZEALAND

Well, here I sit in my first flat, the walls covered with photos of friends and my own radically women-oriented art work. I'm sprawled in my favourite shabby chair, drinking a can of Tui (true shearing shed booze) and smoking menthol cigarettes after a hard Saturday's work in the woolshed.

I am writing about my life as an 18-year-old feminist lesbian.

To me being a lesbian is a wonderful and natural way of life, although at times I find it tedious and very upsetting. That's why I have decided to address this article to all the young lesbians out there as well as the women living in small or isolated towns.

At the age of 17 I was feeling lonely and isolated. I'd just slept with a woman for the first time and I felt really and truly confused about what and who I was, although I knew deep down inside that I had done the right thing. The woman, who was 20 years my senior (old enough to be my mother), had been lesbian for some time. She made me feel absolutely wonderful but she also made



Five year old Marnie

I was raised in a small country town, often feeling very isolated from the real world

me feel inferior and often very insecure.

Throughout the relationship I felt like yelling out "I'm a dyke" but I didn't – I couldn't. I'd often walk down the street in the middle of town singing to myself "I'm a dyke, I'm a baby dyke, I'm a little baby dyke and I don't give a stuff."

It's funny to look back at my behaviour during this relationship. The change was drastic – hair clothes and attitude. For the better, I feel, but straight friends might disagree.

The relationship lasted a mere four weeks and when we broke up it never really hit me until a week later and then I thought, "Oh my god, you stupid bitch," and sat and cried for hours, smoked heaps and wrote really depressing poetry about love, which made me feel even worse.

I walked around in a daze for weeks, but it eventually wore off. I blamed myself for the break-up, partly because I was really unsure of my feelings and very afraid of rejection. Nowadays I'm a lot more confident and able to show my real feelings, although I am still (even if I hate to admit it) a little bit

afraid of rejection.

As a child I was raised in a small country town, often feeling very isolated from the real world. I was always a bit of a tomboy, following Dad around and getting extremely agitated when he wouldn't let me help. (My father is a fair but hard man, who has all the qualities of a male chauvinist.) As the years went on I was allowed to do more and more (but he still didn't let me near the chainsaw), until my sister, who is two years younger than myself, decided that she wanted to work on the farm.

As we fought terribly, I moved over and out of the farming scene and left her to it. At this time I was in my early teens and just emerging into young womanhood. All my friends began to socialise so I joined in and began to go out with guys. Often I would go out with extremely shy guys so that I could play boss. It was quite a good, but selfish, scheme.

I had a couple of relationships that lasted a couple of months, but I never really felt anything. I did it because it was trendy to have a steady boyfriend and trendier to sleep with him.

When I was at school, magazines like *Cleo* and *Cosmopolitan* were a real craze. I would often look at my friends' copies (I refused to waste my money on sexist rubbish) and comment on how the media portrayed women in situations that were rarely true.

My friends began to call me a feminist and I really loathed this. I had fallen into the more than common mistake of thinking that a feminist and a lesbian were the same thing. I thought, "feminists sleep with women and I certainly don't do that," so I couldn't possibly be one, but the issue still bugged me.

It was only after a trip to the faithful library that I discovered the difference between a feminist and a lesbian and came to the conclusion that I was and always had been a feminist.

Living in a small, isolated, country town, I thought I must have been the only feminist living there. At school I often spent time helping female teachers, who at the time I just thought I admired a lot, but it was more than likely that I had failed to read the signs of being in love. Once I started Polytech I began to meet a lot of feminists and a few lesbians.

At this time I was just coming out as a lesbian and didn't either hide or publicise the fact. My two tutors, both male, found out that I was a lesbian and told one of my friends that I would grow out of it, it being a passing phase that I

My greetings go to all the young women out there who are struggling with their sexuality

would supposedly regret later in life. "Ha!" I thought.

I started to produce very women and feminist oriented work, which was shunned and rearranged by the tutors until it was "suitable" – in other words not resembling feminism in any way.

After five months of the two year course I left, mainly to take a breather from the sexist world. I went on the dole for two months and lived in almost complete isolation. It was during this time that I learnt to cope and bring my true feelings out. I learnt to confide in myself. Then I began another course in spinning/weaving/wool fibre for a couple of months.

Now I'm out working in the woolsheds and loving it. The shearers leave me alone because they know I'm a lesbian. There are three lesbians in the gang so it's a really open and friendly atmosphere.

It can be a seven day a week or a one day a week job, depending on the weather. It's hard work and a rugged life, but the money's good and the people are neat. I can wear old, patched jeans and sneakers and not have people look at me strangely. They accept me for what I am, not for what I am not.

Right from the moment my first lesbian relationship began I said to myself, "This is it, kid, you're a dyke now and there's no turning back." I've now been openly gay for a year. (My friends are giving me a first year party.) Some older lesbians may laugh at this and say, "Wow, a big buzz," but to someone who's never been able to stick to anything before, it is!

Most of my friends know that I'm a

lesbian. If people ask me I tell them, but I try not to publicise the fact. I haven't told my parents yet, but when the right moment comes up I will. I think my mother might have guessed that I'm more than a feminist, but my father will probably dis-own me.

When I first came out I was very separatist and vowed that I would never become involved with a man again, or a woman who thought she was a man. Unfortunately I recently became involved with a very male-identified woman who, when I told her that I wasn't interested any more, started abusing me verbally in the middle of a party. She cooled down but only after reducing me to tears and a very hurt state.

I thought that was the end of it, but it wasn't. As the party was winding down I went into the kitchen and she was there. When I tried to leave, she knocked me to the floor, when I rose she did it again and again for what seemed like hours but was actually about 20 minutes, before I escaped, covered in bruises, crying and unable to stop myself from shaking. I'm still terrified she'll arrive on my doorstep one night in a drunken state.

I often feel that I shouldn't be a lesbian (mainly because of my age) and should have a steady boyfriend. But to me living a straight life would be so "run of the mill". I've always been different and I love it. It wasn't until I had my first lesbian relationship that everything clicked and as I became more and more out I began to grow at peace with myself and gain confidence. (Something I had always lacked.)

What you are reading is written proof that young lesbians do exist and can survive in the world today, but only with a lot of dedication and tears. My sisters and I have been lucky enough to grow up in a world where lesbians are more readily accepted, so my sincere thanks must go to the older lesbians who have fought extremely hard to get themselves accepted into society. They have made it much easier for us. It isn't easy being a young or old lesbian, but if what you are doing feels right, keep doing it.

I'm an 18 year old lesbian feminist who is proud, dedicated and determined to be lesbian for the rest of my life. My greetings go to all the young women out there who are struggling with their sexuality. It's not easy, but if you hang in there you'll reap the benefits of being lesbian (yes, there are some!), if not today, then tomorrow. ■



NGATI KURI
TE AUPOURI
TE RARAWA
NGATIKAHU TE IWI E

TE PAATU TE HAPU
TE KOUOTI TE WHENUA
TE PAO TOKI TAHI TE TIPUNA

KIA ORA KOUTOU NGA WAHINE O AOTEAROA
GOOD HEALTH TO WOMEN OF AOTEAROA

In 1986, as a community health worker Waireti Walters-Ratima was involved in many projects, most of them targeted at young Maori women, including a stop smoking programme, self esteem, reproduction and other programmes in schools. She felt she was into too many different things and needed to focus on something specific. It became the Whanau Room project, a project of the Te Umere Branch of the Maori Women's welfare League (MWWL), of which Waireti is president, and was supported by many women.

ME ARO KOE
PAY HEED TO

Many meetings and much lobbying preceded the setting up of the room, the purpose of which is stated at the beginning of the proposal submitted to hospital authorities: "...that the Auckland Hospital Board set aside space at National Women's Hospital and employ two Maori community health workers to provide a Whanau atmosphere where traditional Maori attitudes to caring for expectant mothers can ease the transition into Pakeha institutions and attitudes to health care." "When I think back on it they already knew that what we wanted was what they wanted," says Waireti, "But they put us through the wringer to get it, even with all the work we did making a submission. All good things have come out of it."

The Whanau room actually began on 4 October 1987. "The concept from the beginning was to bring the girls into an area where they felt comfortable, where we could give them some heritage, some culture. Most of them are so isolated from it. So that when they give birth to their child it comes through into a world of Maori. This was my dream. Over nine months they build up that environment from the outside, but it's also taken into their wairua. All the Maori things are absorbed from the outside to the inside where their wairua and the wairua of their child is growing. The spirit of the child is actually growing, cloistered and protected by all these beautiful things that is our culture, being born into the Maori world and having an identity. It's a matter of not only giving the mother an identity but giving the child an identity as well."

The background to this vision of Waireti's is set out in the proposal: "Traditional Maori society took great care of the mother-to-be, but the breakdown of traditional society and the anonymity of

This article about the work of Waireti Walters-Ratima was written by Pat Rosier.

PHOTOS
GIL HANLY



DAME WHINA COOPER
SPEAKING AT THE OPENING
OF THE WHARE RAPUORA

TE HA O HINE AHU ONE

THE DIGNITY OF WOMEN

life in urban areas, has resulted in many young Maori women finding themselves alone and insecure, struggling with the demands of motherhood and unresolved feelings about their family and cultural identity. Shame and fear immobilise them and they do not ask for help from either culture. In fact, access to the care offered by both modern Pakeha medicine and traditional Whanau is their greatest asset. The whanau means more than the extended family, it is also the verb "to be born", and implies nurturing and care, and belonging. It is one of the most powerful concepts in the Maori world.

"An equally powerful emotion is that of whakama – translated as shyness or embarrassment. Maori children were brought up to be humble and not to ask questions or challenge the authority of elders. While they are raised with lots of physical contact – touching, cuddling, massage – they are also taught that some parts are very tapu, especially heads and genitals. They are taught not to display their bodies to strangers. To the young

Maori woman who does not have the supportive presence of elders the medical examination produces conflicting emotions that are extremely hard to handle. Any misunderstood action, word, or instruction results in whakama – shame and withdrawal.

"Case study: Pania is a 17 year old referred by her GP to antenatal clinic. At her first visit she found herself being examined by not one but six doctors, all looking at and touching her in ways that she did not understand and could not cope with. She did not know that she could have asked to be examined by only one doctor, but, humiliated by the experience, she did not return until the birth. When she did return, insecure and afraid, she was reprimanded for not attending the clinic regularly, thus compounding her sense of inadequacy."

Waireti continues, "One of things we wanted was our women to know about the beauty of birth, the beauty of all women that give birth. We remember the positive things about birth. Even now I can't

explain labour pains because when you see your child you forget what the labour pains were even about. I know there are some who really feel bad about giving birth but the majority of women see it as a beautiful experience. After all, that's why we're on this earth, to reproduce our own kind.

"We encourage the young women coming in to learn to identify with all those things in the Whanau Room. From there we talk to her about the beauty of birth and the beauty of nature. I want to do such things as taking them into the bush to feel the growth of nature, the tranquility, to see the things blossom forth, and take them to the sea where we see Tangaroa. Not the sea surrounded by houses, but the beauty and the lapping of the waves and the pohutakawa blossoms dropping onto the sand, the beauty of nature. The child is growing with all the natural elements being imbibed slowly into its spirit. And at birth there should be a cry of welcome. "Nau mai Haere mai ki te whai ao ki te Ao marama." (Welcome, welcome o child to the realm of life and light.)

"But the workers are so busy doing the practical side like picking the women up, getting them up to the clinic, that the spiritual side, talking about the whanau, gets left. A lot of the young mothers don't really know the significance, about the placenta and it going back to the earth. That's why they are both called whenua. And people say, "Oh but Maoris have no



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land now". Not all Maoris have land, true, but they have tribal land, they have their urupa, their cemeteries, we all have that. We should take the placenta back. -Ki o tatou tipuna, to the bones of our ancestors. Not many young girls know that, this saddens me. Our traditions give us identity.

"The next step of course is to have our own midwife and our own doctor, so that the mother always sees the same person. And a doctor who knows about the whenua and knows about our spiritual side. It's going to take a long time to get that. I know two Maori registered nurses as well as a midwife but it takes some more energy to put up a submission to get that midwife attached to the whanau room, with appropriate salary and resources.

"We would love our own ante-natal clinic attached to the whanau room. At the moment it is just like a large room a long way from the clinic and it's hard for some, when they are heavy in pregnancy, to walk over to the clinic especially at the end of waiting four or five hours to see the clinic doctor."

There were some despairing processes gone through negotiating the space for the Whanau room. Hospital authorities recognised the priority as the Te Umere branch of the MWWL presented it but they couldn't make priority space. Statistics about the numbers of Maori babies that were dying were put before them and they tried to keep focusing on these, as they demonstrated a crisis situation for Maori people.

SOME STATISTICS

Ex-nuptial Maori births: 1980 - 54%
1984 - 62%

Neo-natal deaths: 10 per
1000 live births

Post-natal deaths: 10-20 per
1000 live births

Causes of death: respiratory illness
congenital disease
cot death

Eventually the hospital gave an office that had been used by social workers and agreed to knock down a wall. The hospital has high expectations of the two workers at the room, who are paid as community health workers, but it is not well resourced: they scratched around for furniture and Waireti ended up buying an electric jug herself. There is one car between them, which creates problems as they work in different areas and it's important that they be able to pick some of the women up. Transport is a real problem for young and inexperienced Mums.

"The focus for the Whanau Room is on the unsupported mother and her unborn child. The workers have to make up their minds about who is unsupported and focus on them. As soon as the word gets out, all Maori mothers seem to think they're unsupported. The street children, the ones with no support at all are the ones we are aiming at, when they're bringing children into the world. For me the ones with family, partners, plenty of skills, knitting beautiful garments, they are not the ones who most need our support. It's the ones who are living in terrible conditions, without family support, or at home being made to look after all the other little ones. Those are the ones we need to focus on.

"There are many facilities there and we think how best they can be utilised but then again, we're only in our earliest stages and if the mothers we support through their pregnancies by the Whanau Room have their babies and everyone is fine ... well... They are actually acknowledging that since the Whanau Room more and more Maori women are coming to clinic. We feel that we have contributed to the numbers increasing and them keeping their appointments.

"They were quite thrilled at National Women's except, sadly, when they saw *Top Half* on television and what I said. I said on that programme that white professionals are insensitive, cold and uncaring. Generally, this is how they appear to Maori women, because you very rarely see Pakehas laugh or cry. And that's what I meant. They're trained to hold in their emotions. You people find it so difficult to laugh joyously or cry sadly, you're trained not to get involved with the



MOANA MANIOPOTO AT HER DESK IN THE WHANAU ROOM.

patients. Leave your work at work, don't take their problems home. With us Maori, we take it all right through our lives, we can't switch off at half past four. That's what I mean when I say cold and uncaring. Even some Pakeha say that."

"The Whanau Room is serving a practical purpose but I also want to have a wider influence. A mother really loves her first born and just imagine if that mother heard the doctor say 'Bless this beautiful baby, and bless her mother too.' Just imagine that mother going home, that doctor has made her child special. In pre-European Maoridom as soon as a baby is born the spirit is blessed, and all the things from the ancestors are bestowed on him or her. It would be the simplest thing out for the doctors to do. I remember everything about the birth of my first baby. And I said to some sixth year medical students, 'Just imagine what it would do for the mother if you have delivered a child and you said something beautiful like that.' And then somebody said, 'What if the baby is crippled or has something wrong?' And I said, 'It needs that blessing even more.' Those are the sorts of things that I want to develop. I want humanity to come back into the birthing process.

"You need somebody with a heart there, to bring back the human side of birthing. Carrying a baby around, wiping

it's nose, it all makes it more human. Those are some of the things we have tried to bring into the Whanau Room. Because whanau means to give birth and it means family. Whenua is land and it is placenta. Everything is connected.

"One of my biggest worries is about the smoking of young Maori mothers. As part of their pre-natal treatment I want them to be shown the neo-natal clinic and the underdeveloped babies. I feel that they should see what the smoke and the drink is doing to these babies. It may be harsh but we are looking at lives, the lives of those little Maori babies. It breaks my heart to see those Maori mothers sucking that smoke in.

"If I could get all that beautiful spirituality that I speak about as well as the education on smoking, and put them together, what a happy, happy Maori world we will have in terms of babies. Our babies are our future."

Another of Waireti's dreams that she is bringing into reality, again with the support of the Maori Women's Welfare League and other women, is Whare Rapuora, a women's health clinic in Glen Innes that will be run by Maori women. "Too often Maori women put the health needs of their husbands and children before their own. It comes home to me when travelling by plane, when the stewardess tells you that if you are caring for a child, you must put your own oxygen mask on first and then you are able to attend to the child. It is the same for Maori women. They must attend to their own health needs before they can properly look after their families' needs."

The kaupapa of the centre is taken from *Rapuora*, the Maori Women's Welfare League study of Maori women's health. There will be an initial focus on cancer prevention, with the Health Department paying part-time hours for a doctor, who will do screening programmes for breast cancer, blood pressure and cervical cancer. Health education programmes – including some on giving up smoking – will run from the centre. A further component of Waireti's vision is for a computerised data base for Maori women, starting in the Glen Innes area and extending in time all over Auckland.

"This is another dream that is all to do with the inspirations and the aspirations of the Maori Women's Welfare League and my own personal commitment to Maori women and children. Maori women really do not get much attention in terms of health care. After a lot of talk with Maori support people I decided that if the Health Department gave me that old Health Dept office in Glenn Innes, we would get something going. With the Whanau Room started, it was only natural for me to focus on Maori Women's health, cervical smears, breast cancer, blood pressure and sugar and diabetes etc.

"I am developing my own presentation on cervical cancer, and in May at the

WHARE RAPUORA

It's Saturday morning and we gather in Mayfair Place Glen Innes for the opening of Whare Rapuora. Dame Whina Cooper is there, members of the Te Umere branch of the Maori Women's Welfare League, people from Waireti's whanau and support groups, the medical superintendent and (male) principal nurse of the Auckland Hospital Board, Dr Hassall from the Plunket Society, a representative of the Hospital Board/Area Health Board-to-be, and many supporters, Maori and Pakeha.

We are called in, we move around the rooms of the clinic, touching the walls, and gather in the largest room for karakia, speeches and waiata. People spill out into the corridor and the next room. Two young Maori people are videoing the proceedings.

The feelings are extremely positive, as are the speeches. The Rev Mac Kaa, Winston Maniopototo and kaumatua Steve Kirkwood speak of the kaupapa of Maori women's health. Dr Lesley Honeyman shares information about the changes the Hospital Board will make as it vanishes in favour of an Area Health Board. There's a lot said about taking responsibility for our own health, about resources, it's great, it's heart-

warming. Dr Pat Alley, North Shore and Te Umere member of the MWWL, called on all health professionals to support the concept of Whare Rapuora.

A running joke develops with Dr Hassell, Mr DeWitt, Drs Collison and Honeyman (and others) all saying they are present because Waireti summoned them, and they always run when Waireti calls. It suits the occasion, but thinking about it afterwards it's a bit of a hollow joke unless there's lots of follow-through with real, practical support. Like discussing, seriously and with goodwill funding for four community health workers at Whare Rapuora, provision of cars, equipment ...

Dame Whina Cooper speaks and formally opens the centre. Waireti, and a number of those present, speak. Lunch is at the Ruapotaka marae across the road.

This has been an important occasion, one that is important for Waireti and her dreams, and for Maori women all over the country, who have dreams of a healthy Maori society, encompassing Te taha Wairua, Hinengaro, Tinana, and Whanau, as Waireti does, and who work, work, work, to turn them into reality.

Maori Women's Welfare League National Conference I have been given time to do my presentation to 800 Maori women. I am going to have to be pretty slick, but still pretty Maori. I have to know in my head that what I do is correct but also present it in a way Maori women will accept. It has to be not too slick but slick enough for them to think, yes, she knows what she's talking about. And my presentation is Maori – a kami kami flower, a kumara. I always try to use Maori images when I talk about cervical smears. Maori relate to things Maori.

"The MWWL wants four Maori women to be trained to actually take the smears. I've been pulled all around. They pull strings and I jump here they pull another one and I jump there. It seems they are all playing games on me. But I'm hoping it's worthwhile in the end. I was told to go to the Medical Superintendent, let her make a commitment to this. I front up with all of my whanau. She says, go over here, and I jump over there. But hopefully, something will happen. There's another one I've been told to go and see. I have to make another meeting, but I don't know who with, I don't know who has the power, the Auckland Hospital Board or the Medical Superintendent. I

want to force them into making some sort of commitment to this training programme. Great news from Karen Poutasi. A programme for training is being structured.

"In the meantime I am developing my Maori women's data base, so I can send out every month to invite the women to come and take part in this health plan. While developing the data base there is a need for promotion and publicity about the clinic. Over a year we will encourage the women to come in each month. In January all the ones whose names begin with A and B will come and so on. The computer will organise the names in months so everyone is covered. But there are going to be those who will not come and those are the ones I want these workers to visit and do the smears in their own home. If and when we get our women and resources and work to a set plan, we fervently hope all Maori women in Glen Innes and surrounding districts would have visited Whare Rapuora within a year.

Like Martin Luther King, 'I have a dream.' My dream is for a more beautiful, healthy and strong Maori woman. Give me the resources and I will give society the realisation of the dream." ■



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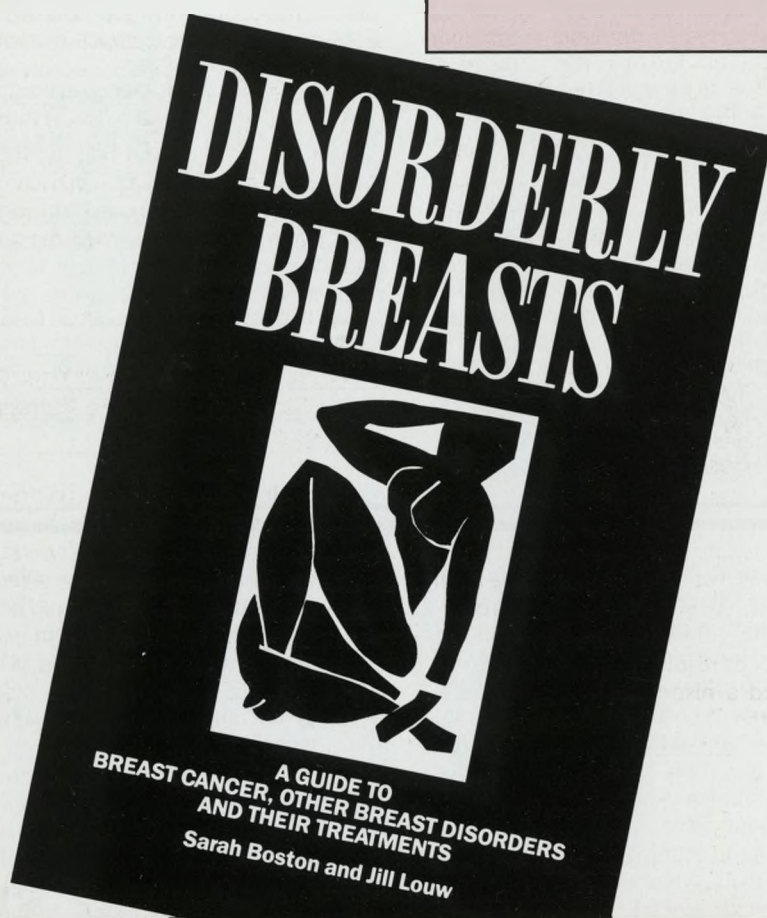
H HEALTH ...

DISORDERLY BREASTS

A Guide to Breast Cancer, Other Breast Disorders and Their Treatments.
Sarah Boston and Jill Louw
Camden Press 26.95

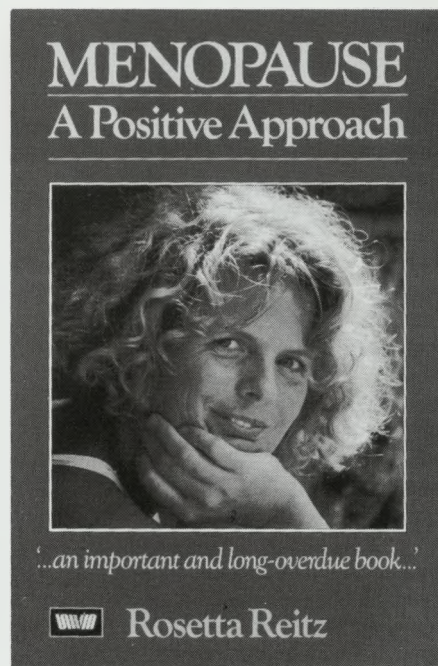
HEALTH

Women's health is the focus from the shelves this month. If you know of any really useful books in this area and want to recommend them, just pick up the phone or a pen and paper.



MENOPAUSE

A Positive Approach
Rosetta Reitz
Unwin Paperbacks 17.95



'Rosetta Reitz has tackled a sensitive subject with courage, honesty and an endearing sense of humour ... an optimistic book'
- Spare Rib

Using her own experience of menopause, Reitz talks about this subject with honesty and humour, demystifying it and reappraising it. Through talking with many women and doctors, Reitz has produced a book which covers almost every aspect of menopause you can think of - the hot flushes, nutrition, orgasms, the taboos and fears surrounding menopause, differences in experiences, psychological and physical changes, and so on. What is strikingly unique about this book is that it views menopause as a positive experience and stresses the importance of loving and enjoying our bodies and the aging process. Reitz says "it is a conscious attempt to undo the damage the American culture has done to us as women, especially as middle-aged women...I'm trying to pull menopause out into the open, remove the cobwebs, clean it off, and look at it." She achieves that and much more.

This book began when Sarah Boston, aware that Jill Louw was suddenly absent from their children's playground, heard the other mothers whispering in hushed tones that she had breast cancer. Sarah turned to Jill for a second opinion when she suffered her own breast "scare", and wrote an article about Jill's experience and her refusal to have a mastectomy. Each chapter is prefaced by women's accounts of their own experience - the

first visit, the referral, the diagnosis, and dealing with a medical system that has actually kept information from women. The book asks important questions based on the experience of women and the way they wish they had been treated. It argues for a radical change in the detection and treatment of breast disorders. Includes a moving chapter of women telling their own stories, and a useful glossary of medical terms.

SAVE THE MIDWIFE

Joan Donley

New Women's Press 22.95

A readable book that explores what has happened to midwives and midwifery in Aotearoa this century. Donley looks at the way medical men have co-opted childbirth and how the status of the midwife has been undermined. Well researched, with lots of information, graphs and insights from the author's personal experience as a midwife. The book includes a telling chapter on the impact of European attitudes and power on the birthing experience of Maori women. A useful and genuinely interesting books.

STAND TALL

Every Women's Guide to Preventing Osteoporosis

Morris Notelovitz and Marsha Ware

Bantam Books 16.95

Written clearly and illustrated with lots of pictures and graphs, this book explains the process of aging in terms of its affect on women's bone structure. Chapters examine the risk factors, signs of bone loss, simple steps to lessen the risk of the disease, a summary of estrogen replacement therapy and its side effects, and much more. Perhaps most useful about this book is its matter-of-fact analysis and the chapter on how to stop osteoporosis from getting worse if you already have it. Includes exercise and nutrition strategies and extensive food and dietary supplement charts.

THE PATIENT PATIENTS

Women and Their Doctors

Helen Roberts

Pandora 8.00

"He's a right vet," "He was that kind it choked me." What do women really think of their doctors? Women go to their doctors more often and spend more time looking after other people's health than men do. Helen Roberts investigates the relationship between women and doctors. What makes women ill? Are their families any help? What are the doctors' views of their women patients? What changes could benefit women patients? This is an English study, so some of the information does not relate to the situation here, but most of it is pertinent and easy to read. The best thing about this book is that it is based on Roberts' interviews with women and doctors, observations of consultations, and doctors' notes about women patients.

CERVICAL CANCER

And How to Stop Worrying About It

Judith Harvey, Sue Mack, Julian

Woolfson

Faber and Faber 16.95

The number of women dying from cervi-

cal cancer is increasing every year, yet it is a preventable disease. This British book explains what puts a woman at risk of cervical cancer, and how to reduce that risk. The authors, two doctors and a social worker, run a colposcopy clinic where women with abnormal smear tests can receive information, counselling, assessment and treatment. Gives some helpful tips, like questions to ask your doctor, and what a smear test actually involves.

BABY CARE BOOK

A practical guide to the first three years

Dr Miriam Stoppard

Penguin 21.95

Contrary to popular belief, not every woman finds mothering instinctive and natural to their personalities. This book provides a fundamental and truly useful step-by-step guide to things every parent needs to know - how to change nappies, how to bathe a baby, feeding, sleeping and crying, home safety, when to call a doctor, for instance. It is illustrated with diagrams, graphics, charts and photographs, and includes a section on home medicine and what to do with simple ailments like styes, bites, and earaches. This is the type of book which is honest and manages to ease parents' fears and doubts at the same time.

THE INFERTILITY BOOK

A Comprehensive Medical and Emotional Guide

Carla Harkness

Volcano Press 29.95

Harkness decided to write this book after years of infertility and treatment, the birth of one child, and another seven years of infertility before the birth of her second. In the process of resolving her own struggle she created a resource book for others, collating the insights of more than 70 concerned specialists, psychologists,

adoptive parents, attorneys, surrogate mothers, birth mothers, and other women striving to have children. Gives an extensive bibliography.

LET'S TALK ABOUT S-E-X

A read and discuss guide for people 9-12 and their parents

Sam Gitchee and Lorri Foster

Planned Parenthood of Central America 17.95

As a guide for parents who feel nervous or unsure about answering their children's questions about sex, this is a very useful book. It is separated into two sections, the first for adults and the second for adults and children alike. The first section makes suggestions to adults about how to feel more comfortable about discussing sex, the importance of listening to their child and building her/his self esteem, and making a careful distinction between facts and value judgements. The second section is full of fun graphics and questions for kids to ask themselves as a way of consciousness raising about both female and male sexuality. This is an American book and is slanted toward sex as a heterosexual experience, but it deals with the subject frankly.

WOMANCARE

A Gynecological Guide to Your Body

Lynda Madaras and Jane Patterson

Avon 27.95

An encyclopedia of health information about the female body, it also discusses a broad range of issues and problems such as birth control methods, dealing with doctors, and self examination. A good book to have for references and to find something out in a hurry. It offers a range of info, treatments and alternatives. It also includes lots of drawings, graphs and tables and an index of symptoms.

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POLICING PORNOGRAPHY

A SOLUTION

JOCELYN GIBSON, DEBBIE HAGER AND FIONA McLAREN OF WOMEN AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY (WAP), AUCKLAND, HAVE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON PORNOGRAPHY AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT FROM THAT EXPRESSED BY ALLANAH RYAN IN "POLICING PORNOGRAPHY — A REPRESSIVE STRATEGY" IN THE MAY ISSUE OF *BROADSHEET*. THEY DISCUSS HOW THEY SEE PORNOGRAPHY AND THEIR IDEAS FOR DEALING WITH IT.



This incest video is available from a number of regular city video outlets. It is promoted with the statement "the family that plays together stays together" and involves (among other sexual acts) two female teenagers inviting their mother and father to join them in group sex.

the name of sexual stimulation or entertainment". That's a definition from a WAP group in the States and one I like.

Fiona That's why I think it is very important to have a distinction between pornography, as we define it, and erotica. Allanah disagrees with this distinction but I believe there are some legitimate

Jocelyn We are not anti-sex. There are things about positive sexual images that are important. To remove pornography it is not necessary to remove all sexual images, but to remove the negative and damaging sexual images of women's sexuality that pornography confronts us with.

Fiona The explicitness or implicitness of the images is not really relevant, it's the *sexism* we object to. Pornography is not about sex for the sake of sex, pornography uses sex as a weapon for securing men's power and domination, as with rape.

Debbie That's why we agree that there should be more sex education, more discussion about sex. The whole idea of sexu-

ality should be opened up for discussion so that it's not something that is hidden away and is titillating *because* it is forbidden. A part of why pornography is popular is that it's the only thing that people have that's got anything to do with sex. It's often the only thing they ever see that explores the thing we are all interested in, which is sex. If we could really bring sex out into the open and talk about it, then pornography would lose some of its appeal. People would realise that it portrays things that their friends and relations and lovers don't do.

When we talk about pornography we are talking about "material that objectifies, degrades and brutalises a person in

forms of sexual expression and some illegitimate ones and there's no getting away from that. Censorship may have been used as a tool of oppression or whatever, but the fact is, every society draws a line. The first line is usually drawn at incest and then it works its way up through particular structures of society. I think it's interesting that Allanah uses the word "propaganda" when she quotes Angela Carter saying pornography is just propaganda for fucking. She talks later about the need to explore sexuality, which I think is the antithesis of the function of propaganda, which is not explorative, it's dogmatic. It doesn't open up possibilities, it narrows them, and that's what we object to.

Jocelyn And pornography sets limitations on sexuality, it sets limitations on the way we use sex. And those limitations are within the power system of our society.

Debbie I think there's a lot in her article that we agree with, but we see it in a different perspective. I agree that images of sexuality should open up your consciousness and allow you to explore alternatives. But if those alternatives have really strong role stereotyping in them and if they portray the same images and ideas - that women are submissive, and men strong etc then they are not allowing exploration. That's just not allowing anyone to open up past where we are now.

Jocelyn I've never seen any pornography that presents me with an alternative view of sexuality. All the pornography that I have seen has reinforced the stereotypes - women as constantly available to men for sex, for example. All the messages are always the same.

Debbie A lot of those images turn women on, a lot of pornography turns women on. If it's not particularly violent women say they enjoy watching it too. That's okay, but it's not extending them into other ideas.

Fiona It actually hampers our creativity, instead of allowing us, through access to information which generates a healthy attitude towards sex, to explore our own fantasies. All we are doing is simply lifting the blueprints provided by a patriarchal society, the most extreme forms of which are found in pornography, and they are destructive. It's the great con of the sixties sexual revolution, the whole ideology of so-called liberation where all these hitherto perverse practices became prescriptions for sexuality - you had to do things to show you weren't inhibited. And so you simply swapped one side of the coin for the other. It meant never say no. And now we're fighting for the right to say no, and for the right not only to say no to men, but to say yes to women.

That's one of the main things about pornography in terms of the context of the power relation of male supremacy, the whole enforcement of heterosexual relationships, where sex is defined as penetration of the vagina by the penis. Because our closest emotional as well as economic ties are often forcibly made to be those with men, then we are being forced to seek the protection of one man from the rest. That is a cruel irony, and he of course then can turn around and abuse us.

Jocelyn I was surprised to see how personal Allana makes the discussion of pornography. She talks about individuals, the individual consumer and user of pornography and I approach pornography by talking about it more generally as a tool of the patriarchy rather than as a tool of an individual. Because somebody has to actually make decisions about what will go into the books and videos and what images will be presented. The people making those decisions are not the consumer, and they are making them for all sorts of rea-

▼
**DEFINITION:
PORNOGRAPHY IS
MATERIAL THAT
OBJECTIFIES, DEGRADES
AND BRUTALISES A
PERSON IN THE NAME OF
SEXUAL STIMULATION OR
ENJOYMENT**



▼
**YOU SOMETIMES HAVE TO
MAKE A DECISION ON A
WIDER BASE THAN
AN INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHT TO
WATCH PORNOGRAPHY IN
THEIR OWN HOME**

sons in addition to what is titillating for the consumer. Profit is a main reason, pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry. It's about what they can provide the consumer with at the lowest cost.

Debbie I also think it's linked into the way that the images have become worse, more extreme, over the last 20 years. The pictures have got much more explicit. And the things that they are writing about have got more explicit and more violent, pushing the boundaries of what people find acceptable. I don't think that comes just from the people consuming it.

Fiona The extension is linear, the same images of male/female sexual interaction are being rehashed in a more extreme form. Thus, pornography provides only an illusion of alternatives and sexual liberation. In fact, the images are narrowing, not broadening.

Jocelyn I don't believe consumers have any control over what they buy. If you've got a choice between buying *Playboy* or nothing at all then you buy *Playboy*. It doesn't really matter whether you've got a choice among *Hustler*, *Playboy* or *Penthouse* because they're all pretty much the same.

There's an article in *Take Back The Night* (Laurer Lederer, ed) about research into *Playboy* which traced the trends through two editions a year over a ten year period. One trend started with jokes about incest and progressed over time to a Forum column about incest, "keeping sex in the family". And there was a general move towards incest in sexual behaviour. That's the whole thing about pushing boundaries.

Debbie I work as Family Planning educator with people on Access groups. Some of them are not very verbal people, they haven't learnt analysis in the education system and they don't appear to come from families where there is discussion.

In her article Allana assumes that we're all going to look at pornography and analyse it, and I find that most disturbing. I think the images presented in videos and magazines are very often accepted at face value. When given the very unusual situation of a discussion about sexuality, people might find that there are questions that arise for them from having looked at a lot of pornography, like, "Do women really like being fucked by animals?" (This one actually comes up quite a lot.) On the whole people have never discussed the relationship of pornography to reality, whether it's fiction or extending their fantasy life. People don't think about these things. They watch it. I can't say that people model themselves on the images but I believe that they absorb the stereotypes.

They certainly don't read anything that might give them a different point of view. They are going to end up with pornography as their main knowledge source. And if people's sex education comes from pornography, that is how they view the world and that is how they behave towards their partners. The images they have are

that women are sexual, they fuck all the time, they're available. Most men that I speak to believe that if someone indicates that they don't want to have sex you keep trying until they give in. Most young women that I talk to are not able to say no because they don't have that kind of assertiveness, where they can stop someone and say "no". And the sort of pornographic material available in New Zealand now reinforces these attitudes constantly.

Fiona The awful power of stereotypes is that they usually contain a partial truth, which lends them credibility and masks the distortion. This creates a barrier to analysis because you do just accept it. That's why we *must* look at the context of sex as part of a power relation. Otherwise, the process by which we remain oppressed appears mysterious – it could even seem to be our fault.

Debbie Allanah says that she doesn't see anything wrong with wanting to be the object of someone's desire. That's fine, it's personal, it's between me and another person. But I do not have the choice about being objectified in every pornography magazine or video, which as a woman I am. But I'm not making a choice, somebody else is making it for me.

What we're talking about here is attitudinal impact. I don't believe that every man who watches pornography, or every woman for that matter, is going to go out and copycat what he or she sees, but I do believe that they will take some of the attitudes portrayed on board. I don't believe that images have no impact on human behaviour. I mean, what the hell do advertisers spend billions of dollars a year on if not to affect people through images. The image must have some impact. Censorship does not mean there will be no sexual material! You could censor anatomy diagrams or nudity if you were really getting into censoring, or anything that vaguely reeked of two people having it off. We feel that images that really degrade people or show them being hurt or put down or abused is not doing any good to society. You sometimes have to make a decision on a wider basis than the individual's right to watch pornography in their home.

Fiona I think it's very true that you have to tread with caution because the legislature is basically male and those who are going to enforce any legislation are principally men, who aren't really into analysis or sexual politics. But I think we should frame the argument as a moral rather than a political one, and work to outlaw material on moral rather than political grounds.

We can say that in a morally just and creative society the quality of every individual must be respected, and anything that impinges on that is repugnant and is rightfully censorable. Therefore, while pornography may be cut down on such grounds, feminist arguments and other political dissent that should be preserved in a healthy, democratic society, don't fall within this category.

▼
**THERE HAS TO BE SOME
MEASURE OF CONTROL
WHERE THE STATE,
TO A CERTAIN EXTENT,
PLAYS MORAL GUARDIAN**

Debbie I think all of us have a problem with censorship because we can see how easily it could be abused. That's why I think that alternative education is really really important. At the moment people don't have any other point of view to draw on. They have pornography, and they have their own experience and if that has been violent and oppressive that they see no alternative.

But if, right from the beginning of school, (and I think school is the place to do it because there are lots of kids in one place), the whole subject of sex is opened out and discussed and points of view offered on everything from sex organs to homosexuality – (to try and get away from the horrific homophobia that is so violent in our society and has nothing to counter it) – that would counter a lot of what pornography does.

Jocelyn One of the worst aspects of pornography is the lies and myths that it portrays and reinforces. One of the biggest lies is that a woman wants to fuck any man that gets anywhere near her. Another is that women like being raped.

Fiona And yet providers of porn seem to see themselves as some sort of frontiersmen. "We are breaking all the old taboos." They see it as some kind of heroism.

Debbie There's also the aspect that women who are seen as the most sexually desirable are getting younger and younger. The least powerful. You can see that as another marketing tool, too. We've seen the mature woman and the teenager, and now we're down to the kids.

Jocelyn What we want to see is honest portrayals of sexual encounters between people.

Fiona We have internalised pornographic images and ideas so we are locked into that whether we like it or not. Hopefully we are doing something about that on a personal level, but I also feel that there has to be some measure of control where the state,

to a certain extent, plays moral guardian. Which is dangerous, as we have already said, because of the men who are the guardians. But I think the role of the state applies to everything, not just to pornography. Like the welfare system and the economic structure. They're all inter-lacing.

Jocelyn In addition to moral guardianship, which of course we can call censorship, there are things like education, sex education, which are completely essential.

Fiona But the lead in that would probably come from the state and the school. Allanah seems to find that objectionable but I can't see any other practical way of going about it. Mass public meetings? Who will conduct them?

Debbie I think using sexual harassment type procedures against pornography, as Allanah suggests, could be educative, but it isn't going to eliminate it.

Fiona You're always reacting, then, never initiating.

Jocelyn The main problems I have with it, apart from it being reactive are, firstly, you wouldn't be making an impact on the people who profit most from pornography – the manufacturer and the distributor – and, secondly, any sexual harassment type procedure that requires the woman to take the initiative is going to be very stressful and expensive for her. But a simplified procedure which minimises these problems is certainly worth considering.

Fiona It puts the onus on the victim to make the complaint. Often the victim is in the least powerful position, firstly to be aware of her rights, and secondly to have access to the system through which to enforce them. Some people use the catharsis argument, that people get these things out of their system by watching them. In fact pornography is doing the opposite because it is using all these terrible things, to charge you up, not to purge it. The image is therefore reinforced, because it is necessarily associated with pleasure (ie, sexual stimulation) if it is successful as pornography.

One thing we haven't really talked about are the effects and the harm generated by pornography. The constant theme in all of WAP's work is defamation. Pornography is defamatory because it tells lies and distorts in the name of fun. Because this is a diffuse connection of cause and effect a lot of people say you can't censor because there isn't sufficient evidence that pornography actually damages people. That's where the latest US General Attorney's report comes in: one of the main points it makes is that the whole role of secondary harm generated by pornography is constantly under-estimated. By secondary harm the report committee is referring to attitudinal impact, as opposed to copycat action, which is not well established.

Jocelyn The report supported the argument that pornography pervades society and has direct impact on attitudes. This is hard to measure, but the report strongly endorsed that connection.

Fiona Nobody else, other than WAP, has

▼
**PORNOGRAPHY
REINFORCES
THE STEREOTYPES**

▼ PORNOGRAPHY SETS LIMITATIONS ON SEXUALITY

actually come up with a coherent pragmatic procedure by which to fight pornography. Censorship, if nothing else, is pragmatic. It does something, it has symbolic and practical impact. Allanah and others seem to me to be arguing that if we censor pornography we will drive it underground and therefore make it more desirable. Even if that were true, you are still restricting access. Only those who are really determined will get it. To suggest that an underground pornography industry does not already exist is naive.

Debbie Allanah talks about the unreliability of the empirical evidence. I wonder, if you went to a group of women, how many of them have had the experience where the person they had been having sex with wanted to try something out that they had seen or read about, without regard for whether they themselves actually wanted to take part in it. I think a large proportion of women would have had that experience.

Jocelyn I find the whole criticism within the article of the methodology of that research difficult – it's that whole thing of feminists having to fit within male scientific methodology in order to make their research acceptable.

Fiona I think we should be striving for objectivity in our methodology, but that's what male researchers have *never* done, they've just claimed to. I would like to see the Committee of Inquiry into Pornography recommend censorship on the basis of the definition we gave earlier. And it should go along with a much broader public education campaign. I don't think censorship will ever function properly in a vacuum.

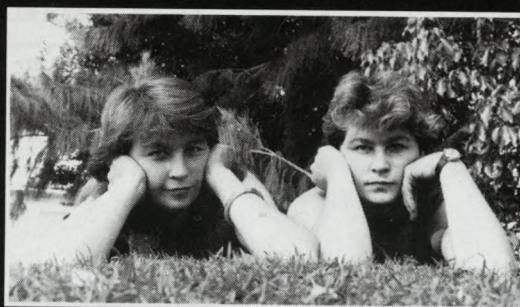
Jocelyn I think censorship does create a vacuum and that has got to be filled with something. The first thing I would like to see is more positive images and some way of providing incentives for people to make positive images of sexuality.

Fiona I really think it's important to make sure that there is a broader base of people on the censoring board. I just don't think that one or even three people are able to decide on something for the whole population.

Jocelyn One of the things that we have always been concerned about is that the more pornography you see the less impact it has, that you become desensitised to it. So it's becoming more and more dangerous or violent. I think the censor is in the same position. The more the censor watches the less sensitive they become to what the limits are.

Fiona Another point is that we are not

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trying to be prescriptive, which is what we are constantly being accused of. We don't want to say "this is good sex this is bad sex". We are trying to get people to ask questions, to challenge pornography and the broader issue of sexism. We don't want women to feel bad about themselves, we don't want to compound any feelings of guilt they may already have. Our function is first of all to ask women what sexuality actually means to them. It's only when we understand our sexuality that we can define it and celebrate it.

I think it's also important for us to explore male sexuality to a degree. Because if you see pornography, as I do, as an institutionalised form of male control – not the one and only by any means, but certainly one tool of oppression, then to understand it you have to understand something of male sexuality too. Pornography is in fact regarded as legitimate, in spite of all the apparent disapproval. It is part of the male initiation into adulthood and an affirmation of masculinity. All men, regardless of whether they actively consume pornography or not, benefit from it by virtue of their membership of the oppressor group.

Debbie I would like the committee to come up with a new definition of pornography. I think pornography is still being defined as sex, and so I think a new definition has to be developed which says that sex is okay. What needs to be defined is what isn't okay.

Jocelyn Also to move away from the current legislative definitions of indecent and obscene, which really mean nothing (although to some they mean sex per se).

Debbie The definitions as they exist at the moment in various bits of legislation are just ripe for mis-use by right-wing groups.

Jocelyn To have, as we do at present, three

pieces of legislation that deal with film, video and publications, is ridiculous. There should be one piece of legislation and a clear definition of what is and what isn't acceptable. The channels for individual objection must be a lot freer. You should be able to do it for nothing and it should be easy. I don't have enough money to buy a hundred dollar book of David Hamilton's photographs of young women to complain about them. It also costs \$100 just to lay the complaint. There should be some mechanism where, if there is a censorship body, and I make a complaint about a particular video and it is upheld, then that video and every other copy of it in the country comes off the shelf. Not just that one copy.

Fiona As it stands you cannot win. Pornography is being produced a hell of a lot faster than anyone could take a case against the items. If we are very clear about guidelines then we can stop it at its source, which is the best possible solution there is.

Jocelyn We haven't talked about why we are fighting pornography specifically, rather than working for rape crisis or any manner of other things. For me pornography is visible and targetable. Even if they've never read or watched any, people know what you're talking about and have some understanding of some of the concepts. It enshrines women's oppression very well, it contains everything about it in a tangible form. I also think it is in itself very damaging – the whole thing about secondary harm that we mentioned earlier – and it pervades everyone's life in some form or another. It influences men's attitudes to women.

I know that removing pornography is not going to change the world overnight, but it is a very good first step. ■

TAKAPARAWH A

THE STORY OF BASTION POINT

PHOTOS GIL HANLY



**It's a long story of
"bad dealings and
unjust decisions"**
(Hohepa Hawke)

Ngati Whaatua have a long tradition of acting within the law and made many "proper" attempts to keep and regain their lands at Orakei. The occupation, legally a "trespass," began on 5 January 1977 in response to the then National government's plan to sell off part of the Point for high-cost housing. (The views are magnificent.) The tenth anniversary of the eviction of Ngati Whaatua people and supporters who had



occupied the land for 506 days, was commemorated with a hui at the Point on 25 May. Rene, Rahera and Sharon Hawke of Ngati Whatua, talked to Pat Rosier about the struggle to regain their land. Additional information is from the *Orakei Report* of the Waitangi Tribunal.

Rene In late 1976 the government was planning to develop Bastion Point.

Rahera At that time the committee that most of the people living in houses here in Kitemoana St looked towards was the Orakei Maori Committee, which we were all members of at that time. There was no division at that stage. We were concerned at a development that the National government was pushing ahead for high-cost housing.

Sharon I remember hearing Dad say "Well, we're going to need a thousand tents up on the point to stop the bulldozers." I was 13 then, and I thought he was crazy!

Rene I heard him on the telephone, talking to a reporter. He kept ringing around everybody, then we were packing a trailer with a tent and half the household goods and up we went. I looked around and thought, "where's the thousand?" That was January the fifth 1977.

Rahera We were still all together as a whanau, there was no division.

Sharon I wasn't actually there. I was in Dunedin playing softball. I saw this guy on the news and he looked like my father! And I thought "Hell, he did it!" That was when I realised that it was quite serious. A lot of my family was there with us, my

uncle, a cousin of Dad's who was coach of the team. Their reaction was just as surprised as mine. It was a joy to come home about ten days later, and drive down the track and see the tents. It was just an amazing feeling, it was for real, and we ended up staying there.

Rene We have to go back to a people's meeting where we were concerned about housing up here. Rahera and her family were living away from here, and they wanted to be here with the rest of the family, so we tried to get them a house here. We finally did and they wanted to buy it. (It was a state house.) State homes in this area had been sold to Europeans.

Rahera The Orakei Maori Committee went into this in detail, because it wasn't only us, other families in the street wanted to improve their lifestyle and stand as equals with the Europeans in the area. We had a meeting with a Mr Baxter from the State Advances and he told us that the houses weren't for sale to Maoris. And that's where it all stemmed from. It led from one thing to another. We came to a realisation that we were just wards of the state, paying rent. We had no marae, we were just visitors and we were going to lose the last open space.

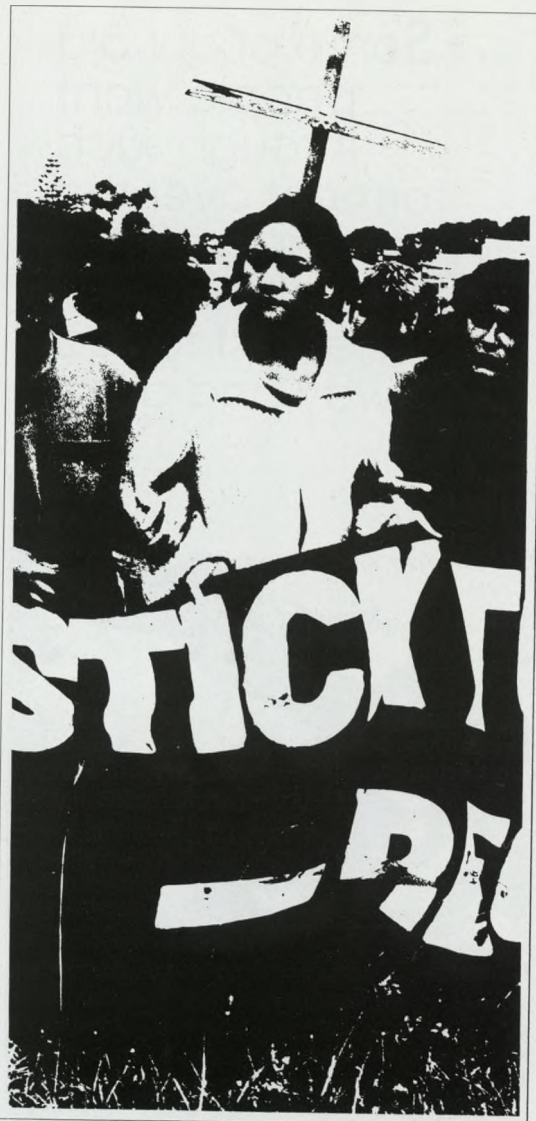


From the Waitangi Tribunal Report: "A new marae was built but not by Ngati Whaatua. At first, it seemed, it was being built for them, but it was not, for it was never built on tribal terms or vested in their control. To their total humiliation it became known in Maori circles as 'the pakeha marae' where things are ordered on pakeha lines. It symbolised not only Ngati Whaatua's loss of their land, but the takeover of even their culture – by Europeans and Maori from other places.

"The belief, stated in Court in 1959, that the 'natural control' would remain with the Orakei people was sadly misguided. Of the 16 trustees, only four were Ngati Whaatua ..." (page 97).

The development of the marae was influenced by the Education Centre, which began an association with the marae trustees in 1964 and put the first building, Te Puawai (the spring), on the marae site. In 1969 the marae trustees arranged that the centre "handle the routine management of the marae." A Pakeha woman, Margaret Boyce ("Quite rightly she enjoys the love and respect of many") was then and is now treasurer for the centre and for the marae trustees.

Rahera So we had this meeting with the people in the street. The Orakei Maori Committee – every marae has a Maori committee – and from that Maori Committee they would have a representative on the New Zealand Maori Council. Maori Council have contacts back to govern-



ment, but that didn't do us any good.

Rene Rangi Walker did have some influence in getting that information – that we could not buy these homes.

Rahera The people put Joe Hawke and Michael Rameka from that Maori Committee in charge of housing and the land.

Rene They were to investigate and do whatever was necessary to try and improve the situation regarding the housing and the land. When we were going to occupy the land Joe called a big meeting. Every family here was represented. One of the kaumatua, who has since died, said to Joe, "When you start something, you make sure you finish it." And Joe replied to that – it was all said in Maori – "I can do it provided you keep my back warm," meaning that he needed the support behind him. When you say that in Maori it has a very strong meaning. So with that authority, Joe went ahead and organised what became the occupation of Bastion Point.

Joe went to several lawyers for advice and one, who was at the time one of the top lawyers in the city, told him to get the people – the Maori people in State Houses in Orakei who were not being allowed to buy them – to stop paying their rent. Then the government would have to listen to what we were trying to say.

I worried about my children being arrested and having a police record when they were children.

Rahera We couldn't get all the people to do that, because they feared that they'd be out on the street. But a few did it, and there was a big default in rent payments. The only ones the State Advances took to court were myself and my father-in-law. Even today there are thousands and thousands of dollars owing on that rent but we were the only ones taken to court, and it was deducted from our wages.

Rene There was a definite vendetta to try and weaken the Hawke whanau. And after the Point, anyone with the name Hawke couldn't get a job. Or you were sacked. Joe was out of work for four years, and I had to do whatever work I could get.

Rahera We went to Australia, it was so bad. We took our children away from here. We've been back six months.

Sharon The actual living up there, during those 506 days, was hard and it was easy and it was happy and new, and then it was old and it became a way of life.

We all worked together and ate together, and there were the different fund-raising projects, and we'd go way out to South Auckland to pick potatoes to make some money, and get firewood, always there was something. The winters especially were very hard. Especially for parents who had young kids, it was too cold for them. Some people had to go because of their kids. They still supported the struggle, but they couldn't stay living there. If you can imagine living in a swamp ... and the Point is so exposed to the wind. I remember one time when there was a huge storm, there were roofs blown off in Auckland, and all we had were these corrugated iron shelters, and no roofs came down from our shacks ...

And finally there was a break in the clouds. Right over the Point there was a big circle with no black clouds.

Rene I remember the night of that storm. It was the strongest recorded wind that Auckland had experienced. We could feel it battering our big building. We were having a big meeting that night, so we told everyone to sit on the western wall, to hold the building down! Everybody laughed, but they did move to that side of the building. And it didn't blow away!

Rahera The young people grew to matur-

ity at a faster rate than they would normally have done had they just lived a normal life. The leadership that came out amongst the young women was really something to take stock of because the emotional as well as the financial and moral responsibility that was placed on them matured them beyond their years. We notice now that the young ones – Sharon's age group – leave us for dead as far as the struggle is concerned. We were much older when we went in to the struggle. They learnt much quicker and their leadership roles came to them much earlier in life.

I think it's right across the board with Maori people – more and more young women are realising their potential and accepting it, and not waiting until this "matured age". Even among the young men. It's really heart-warming, because you feel that you will leave things in the hands of capable young people. We were all in our thirties when we went onto the Point. The young people today are speaking a language that we were speaking in our thirties and they are only hitting their twenties.

I feel that Bastion Point became a focal thing as far as accepting leadership is concerned. It affected all the Maori tribes, because it divided many families and people had to take stock of what was happening, not only to us but with them in their land struggles.

Rene Maori people who were supporting us came from all around the country. If they had a white partner, it was usually the white partner who said "Can we afford it?" and brought the financial arguments into it. The Maori people were moved to support us, not because we were Ngati Whaatua, but because it was supporting themselves, their Maoritanga. So it caused upset in a lot of families.

Rahera During the school holidays we had what was really a Kohanga Reo going up there, to keep the kids occupied. I would say we had the first Kohanga Reo of them all.

Rene I can remember, being a mother, wanting to protect my children from the police and the arrests. We always thought they could come at any time. So I'd get my children together and instruct them on what was to happen. "Now, you have to come down to Nanny's and stay with Nanny, because if I get arrested then I can't look after you and Social Welfare will take you off me." But Nanny was prepared to be arrested too. She was so strong, she was prepared to lie down in front of a bulldozer. But anyway, my children said they weren't going away, they were part of it all. That's when I realised that they were more aware of what was going on than I had thought.

Then I worried about my children being arrested and having a police record when they were children! That bothered me a lot.

Some of our old people went through such torment over the earlier evictions from our lands that they just faded away and died.



But, as Sharon said, it was a new lifestyle that we lived up there, and a really happy one. It was probably close to what the Maori pa experience was for Maori people. All one, together, anything that happened to one person affected all of us, anyone who had personal hassles, we'd sort it out. It was wonderful.

Sharon We were there 506 days, two seasons from the garden, one and a half winters.

Rene When we first went up there I said to Joe, "Right. I'll keep working. You stay up there and I'll pop up in the afternoons, I'll keep the household running and I'll give you a month. We can keep going a month on my wages." Three months later I said, "We can't survive." We had our own home, a mortgage to pay which was already in arrears, children at school. Sharon was in the fifth form, so she had school cert. I was worried about the interruptions to her study. But she did her homework by candlelight, and she got her school cert. We were so proud of her.

Sharon This was a time when I realised that there are certain establishments that rule your life and you have to do what you

are told. School was one of them. I saw Mum and Dad and Auntie Rahera and Uncle Grant fighting the government, and school was trying to govern my life. But the Point was my school too, that's the learning I recognise now. It changed all our lives. We wouldn't be where we are now if we hadn't gone through that whole experience. And I don't think a lot of Maori people would be striving now if they hadn't been at the Point. A lot of them have moved home and are cultivating their own lands.

Rahera Maori week at that stage was a greeting on the radio in Maori and greeting before the news in Maori and a few little pictures in Maori and that was it. And that has changed! All of a sudden the Maoris working behind the scenes, they got courage, and other people started to jump up and down and a whole new system evolved.

We were saying too that schools should be in Maori – being really radical. Because we had our Kohanga Reo up there we had Maori school teachers coming up to help. And then we found out that parts of the education system were actually interested.

Sharon When the eviction came we had planned for it. There were lots and lots of people who had come and it was necessary that we were organised. The main kaupapa was that in the event of arrest by the police we would resist by becoming limp. We were all informed about the legalities of being arrested and what we could do to make it difficult for them to arrest you, which was to go dead weight. We were not to strike anyone and not to abuse them.

Rene That was hard, getting hundreds of people to do that.

Rahera We advised people to sing, because that takes away wanting to be verbal. And if you saw anyone wanting to use their fists, you were to call out words of encouragement to stop them. Clap them, and sing to them, that's how we did it. We never got into conversation with anyone who was arresting us, we just sang to them.

Rene We knew who the people were who could get violent so some of the committee very cleverly organised them to be in charge of keeping people passive. That was their responsibility and it kept them so jolly busy that they didn't have a chance to get violent. It was a very clever move.

Sharon Everyone was up early that morning, everyone had been assigned to their different places. We wanted to protect the people who were there, and the house and the memorial that we had for Joanne. These were very precious spots up at the Point, so we had people stationed at them. We had some guys up on the rooftop, they were keeping us informed and they said they would light a flare. It was all on. There were heaps of waiata. Did anyone make an inspection, did they have any time to?

Rahera No, they just yelled out "They're

coming across the bridge, they're driving up the motorway." And the helicopters were coming. There were a lot of police there who didn't want to be. We heard afterwards that some resigned. Lots were forced to be there, or they'd lose their job. They put Maori people in charge of the army, in charge of the Lands and Survey people there. They picked on Maori to do all the dirty work. At the time we could have done away with the lot of them! The guy that arrested me was my own bishop, from my church! Gee, he could have got lost – why come and do this dirty, rotten job. You had to look at them afterwards, that was the sickening part.

Sharon That was the most painful part. It was a quick, hard pain.



From left: Sharon, Rene and Rahera Hawke

This is what the *Orakei Report* has to say about the eviction: "It came on 25 May 1978 when some 600 policemen, army personnel in a fleet of army vehicles, buses, bulldozers and overhead helicopters arrived at Bastion Point. The protestors were surrounded. In the glare of full media coverage 222 people (108 Maori, 104 European and 10 Polynesian) were spectacularly but passively arrested, escorted to vans and buses and charged with wilful trespass under section 3 of the Trespass Act, 1968. Included was J P Hawke, his parents, wife and children."

Rahera Ten years on, this is the most joyous part in my life, the Waitangi Tribunal findings, that established who I am. It has brought me the most joy that I could ever wish for.

Rene That Tribunal finding is the first time our claim has ever been recognised and written down in an official document. The Tribunal recognises that everything we ever fought for was right and just. Some people opposed the way we went about it in 1978 but that's a load of nonsense, because without that protest we would never have got anywhere. We had tried everything else.

Sharon What we have to celebrate, I think, is that we are all still alive.

Rene And still sane, and still here and still fighting.

Sharon There have been plenty of times when we could have got lost out there.

Rene Some of our old people went through such torment over the earlier evictions from our lands that they just faded away and died. A group would go to Wellington to petition the government and would

come back with no joy because everything was geared against them, and then there would be tangi after tangi.

Sharon It takes a long time for a tribe to rejuvenate, to get our strength back.

Rahera We saw some of our people take their lives after the Point. They were there all the way through with us, but in the after period the humiliation just got too much for them. Every avenue was blocked off. They weren't allowed to act on their convictions. We lost our little girl, Joanne on the point. We shouldn't have had to go up there in the beginning.

Rene To march in a protest was a new thing for me. I used to be shy and embarrassed. I hated it when they said we were going to be marching.

Rahera I used to think if only people knew us, they'd find out that we are just ordinary people, the same as they are.

Sharon They'd taken us off the Point, and we thought that once they'd done that we would go back. When it came down to it that was impossible. For two weeks they had army tents up there with flood-lights, they busted down our new ablution block that Uncle Grant had built. We had long-drops for 500 days and for the last six days we had flush toilets, and the army had bulldozed the bloody thing down.

Rahera Our lovely septic tank!

Rene Then they had to turn around and build themselves some loos, which weren't half as good as our ones.

Sharon So there we were. We had to somehow revive. What we didn't give ourselves time for was to grieve and to re-organise. Because there was that pressure from our supporters who wanted to know what we were going to do. The reality of it was that it was like a death. Something inside was just taken away.

Rahera A lot of people hadn't woken up to what was happening on the Point. They thought, "It's just those Maoris with nothing much else to do, who want to live in squalor with dogs and chooks and snotty-

nosed kids who don't go to school, with tattoos all over them." A lot of people had a low opinion of us because a lot of our Maori people had been suppressed for so long that they accepted the white system as the only way that you were ever going to get on in this world. Once they saw what happened on the Point on 25 May it was a rude awakening for a lot of them.

Rene What the government did was a good thing. Bringing in that military force enlightened a lot of New Zealanders as to what was happening to Maori people.

Rahera Having that "over-kill" at the arrests ended up to be in our favour.

Sharon They just wanted one of us to hit out ...

Rahera ... They wanted a blood bath ...

Sharon ... but it didn't happen.

Rene The navy, over on the North Shore, had their guns pointing in this direction.

Sharon They had police, air force helicopters ...

Rahera SAS! But we knew they were going to use all that on us because they had a practice run in town, they were all up here in Auckland. It was unbelievable. The SAS! The fiercest thing we had on the point were these roosters – we thought they were chooks, so we kept them for laying, but they were all blasted roosters. They attacked the police and all sorts.

Sharon They impounded our animals, they took our dog. The ferret ran away. You could say they even arrested our animals. Some of us are still being charged the pound fee.

Rahera We had a lot to overcome, due to the emotional and spiritual attack that had been going on for years.

Sharon In 1982 we went in again because we heard that the bulldozers were going to come in. We got all this support that was an overflow from the Springbok tour, all these aware people who had experienced brutality from the police, who were being led to face the racism and the land question in their own country. So in March there was another arrest. There were about 100 police for 13 women. A month later they said again that the bulldozers were coming in so we got more people and 117 people were arrested. So it was a continuous thing. And then there was a change of government and more tribunal hearings leading up to where we are now.

In 1986, after the passing of a Bill that allowed the Waitangi Tribunal to consider matters prior to 1975, on 7 April, Ngati Whaatua lodged a claim with the Tribunal. The full details of the claim are lengthy and complex, but in simpli-

fied form they amount to: "the extensive parks of Orakei – but not the Savage Memorial site ... the Housing Corporation land, though it has been developed for subdivision, and the Okahu Sports Domain, though they would seek that subject to existing leases and licences. They ask that the park land be held by the Board rate free so long as free public use is maintained. They claim the title to the marae of Orakei, extinguishment of a \$200,000 debt on Ngati Whaatua land

... and 'such other and additional relief as to the Tribunal seems just.' They also seek a pardoning of past convictions remission of fines and compensation." In actual fact the Housing Corporation land was only partly developed. A road and pathway and drains had been put in, but there were no buildings.

The findings of the Tribunal, published in its *Orakei Report* are, again, lengthy and complex, but basically uphold the claims. The fight is not, however over. It

is up to the government to act on the Tribunal's recommendations.

Sharon Back to fundraising, back to talking at meetings, rallying support.

Rahera Bastion Point is an easy struggle to speak about. It's a struggle that you can carry on year after year after year because it's right here in the middle of the city and we have a lot of support out there. It's a matter of not forgetting the kaupapa and carrying on. ■

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BASTION POINT

1840: Ngati Whaatua invited Governor Hobson to establish the capital on the Waitemata and ceded 3000 acres for a cash value of £200. 48 acres of this land was sold one year later for £27,455.

1858: Four acres at Orakei were given to the Anglican Church for use as a school, church and burial site. The land was used by the church for only a short time and was bought by the Crown for £1,000 in 1926.

1859: The tip of Bastion Point, totalling 7.5 acres, was gifted to the Crown for defence purposes on condition that it be returned once the Crown no longer needed it. It was never used for this purpose and the Crown acquired the land by "private treaty" in 1915-16. Compensation was paid.

1865: The Native Land Act was passed which established the Native Land Court and gave the Court the power to adjudicate over Maori land. This act was the basis of the Fenton decision.

1868-9: Apihai Te Kawau, the paramount chief of Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki, had become increasingly concerned at the way his people's lands were dwindling. He therefore applied to the Land Court for 700 acres at Orakei to be made "absolutely inalienable". Chief Judge Fenton ruled in Apihai's favour.

1873: Acting on Judge Fenton's decision, the Crown issues a Crown Grant for the 700 acres. Though Apihai had died by this time his name was listed at the top of the grant.

1882: The Orakei Native Reserves Act allowed the Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki to lease land in the 700 acre Orakei block but also confirmed the Crown Grant of 1873.

1889: The Battery Reserve of 13 acres on the sea front at Bastion Point was compulsorily taken by the Crown for defence purposes. Compensation was later paid.

1898: The Orakei block was partitioned among 13 individual titles, thereby destroying the inalienability of the block and opening the door to its acquisition. At the partition hearings 40 acres of the papakainga at Okahu Bay was set aside as a reserve.

1908: The Stout-Ngata Commission investigated the Orakei lands and questioned the legality of the 1898 partition. It reluctantly recommended the validation of illegal leases on the land and recommended that the reserve area on the papakainga be increased to about 80 acres.

1909: The Native Land Act of that year was the legal basis used by the Crown in much of its later dealings with the Orakei block.

1912: Against the objections of the Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki, a sewer pipe was constructed along the beach frontage at Okahu Bay. Compensation was paid.

1913: As the result of an Appeal Court decision, the green light was given to the alienation of the Orakei block. The Crown decided to acquire all the land and issued a series of Orders in Council forbidding its alienation to anyone but the Crown.

1915-6: The Crown officially acquired Block Orakei 5 of 7.5 acres See 1859 entry for background.

1926: Approximately 600 acres of the Orakei block had been acquired by the Crown by this date, most of it between the period 1913-18.

1926: The Crown acquired the 4 acre church site. See 1858 for background. The Orakei Maoris who were still living on the land were all evicted by the early 1840s.

1920s: The Hammond Plan, a town planning scheme for the government's projected Orakei "model suburb" was adopted.

1930: In response to two petitions by Maori owners in the Orakei block, Judge Acheson of the Land Court presided over an inquiry into the Crown's land dealings there. When Acheson endeavoured to investigate matters embarrassing to the Crown, the Crown withdrew from the hearing and rendered it useless.

1930s: The controversy over the Orakei lands continued and led to a deputation to Prime Minister Savage in 1936.

1939: The Kennedy Commission investigated the Crown's dealings in the Orakei block and basically white-washed the Crown's actions. Today the Crown still relies heavily on this report.

1940s: Princess Te Puea and the Auckland trades Council came to the defence of Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki. Appeals were made for government assistance to upgrade the Okahu Bay village and the government was petitioned to restore the 40 acre papakainga. By this time only about 12 acres of the Orakei block remained in Maori hands.

1946: Prime Minister Fraser made an oral agreement that the Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki would be allowed to keep their marae and village on the flat at Okahu Bay.

1950-1: The newly elected National government compulsorily acquired the last remaining acres on the papakainga, totalling 12 acres, and forcibly evicted the Maori people off the land. They were

installed in overcrowded conditions in 27 State Houses on the hillside in Kitemoana St. The promise that more houses would be built was never honoured. The marae, Te Puru o Tamaki was burnt to the ground in a mysterious fire. The Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki now had no marae of their own and were totally landless but for the quarter acre urupa (cemetery) at Okahu Bay.

1977: On 5 January the Orakei Maori Committee Action Group, led by direct descendants of Apihai Te Kawau, occupied the land at Bastion Point after trying all official channels to have the government reconsider its development plans for Bastion Point. The Auckland Trades Council backed this up by putting a "green ban" on the land.

1978: In February, after following a cynical policy of dividing the Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki, the government "negotiated" new proposals with the "elders group" behind closed doors in the Auckland Town Hall. In these proposals the Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki are to be charged around \$200,000 for the return of about 29 acres.

1978: In April the Crown took four leaders of the land occupation to the Auckland Supreme Court and succeeded in getting an injunction against them.

1978: On 25 May the government mobilised hundreds of police and army personnel against the land occupation. 222 were arrested, most for "wilful trespass" on "Crown land". The marae, Arohanui, and all the surrounding buildings, were demolished.

1978: May 28 hui held on Orakei marae. Kaumatua Eruini Hawke asked 400 people who attended to return to their tribal lands to light their ahi kaa.

1982: 117 people arrested once again protesting against the Housing Corp selling the land to the highest bidder.

1986: A statement of Claim for return of the land was submitted to the Waitangi Tribunal by Joseph Hawke, Hilda Harawira, Rene Hawke, Grace Robertson, Sharon Hawke, Rebecca Evans, Lance Hawke, Ana Meihana, Kelly Pene, Sophrenia Stockman, Gloria Abraham, Mere Taylor, Waataru Mihi.

1987: On 26 November the Waitangi Tribunal released the Bastion Point *Orakei Report*. The *New Zealand Herald* headlines "Report Vindicates Struggle of Generations". ■

WHAT'S NEW

AUCKLAND

Non-Alcoholic Lesbian Space, every Wednesday night, 7.30 pm onwards. Music, games, food, drinks and various entertainment on selected nights at Just Desserts Cafe. Contact Linda, 893352 for information.

Takaparawha poster marking the tenth anniversary of the eviction of Ngati Whatua from Takaparawha (Bastion Point). Available from Broad-sheet Bookshop for \$5.50 or by sending \$5.90 to Action For an Independent Aotearoa, Box 453, Christchurch.

Dynamic Dance Happening at the Limbs Studio Theatre, 9-12 June, 8.30pm. Montage of dance, film, music and theatrics with choreography by Rozanne Worthington, Pita Te Tau, Graeme Humphreys, Shona McCullough.

HAMILTON

Lesbian Links, A Hamilton information and support service provided by lesbian women for lesbian and gay women. Phone 395939, Wednesdays 7-10pm. Drop in also at this time.

DUNEDIN

Lesbian Line Update, Lesbian Line is now run from the Women's Centre at 111 Moray Place, on Thursdays from 7-10pm, phone 778765. The Women's Centre can give contacts for Ladders, the new lesbian group; and the Crone Club, for mature lesbians.

NATIONAL

American Author Visit, In July, Judy Norswegian, foundation member of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective will be in New Zealand for one week. Phone Sue, Auckland 592495 or Auckland 836 7982.

Women's Spirituality Newsletter, subscriptions to the newsletter, a quarterly, can be obtained by sending \$10 to Pauline at 2/32a Bellevue Rd, Mt Eden, Auckland.

Women's Mental Health Gathering. To be held in Auckland 25-27 November at Nga Tapuwae College in Mangere. Creche, wide range of food, marae, good access and facilities for

disabled women. More information from Women's Mental Health Gathering, c/- Mental Health Foundation, PO Box 37-438, Parnell, Auckland.

"The Case of Katherine Mansfield" starring Cathy Downes, is touring the country. The play will appear in Hamilton 14-18 June, Auckland 21 June-July 2, Dunedin July 12-16, and Christchurch 19-24 July.

Media Women's submission to the Royal Commission on Social Policy is now available by sending \$8 to Media Women, PO Box 275, Wellington.

INTERNATIONAL

Nemesis is seeking written work and photographs from Separatists, Lesbians, and Radical Feminists which tell our tales of heteropatriarchal disruption and womyn-positive reality building. For more information send a SASE to: Nemesis, c/o Amber L. Katherine, PO Box 417042, Chicago, IL 60641-7042, United States. Deadline for submissions is 1 December 1988.

Adelaide Lesbian Feminist Conference and Celebration 13-15 January 1989. For more information and an update on workshops etc, contact Pam Price, Adelaide Women's Health Centre, 64 Pennington Tce, North Adelaide 5006, Australia.

► From page 21

meant selling out on herself, accepting a lie about herself.

On the other hand, because she was on her own she couldn't cope with it any more. The last straw was when her closest friend had "kindly" explained to her that she just had to understand that Europeans were the dominant people, and it would be better for her to just accept that. This was advice given with genuine concern.

As she unburdened herself I felt coldly angry. As I said, I've been through it all before, and I've learned to be calm and sensible about it (qualities inherited from my solid English ancestry, no doubt, and not to be sneezed at at times like this).

My first thought was to offer a ray of hope and comfort to a very desperate young woman, just to give her breathing space. So I told her that as far as I was concerned she didn't have to go back to school. Her peace of mind was more important than bursary exams. However, if she wanted to go back to school, that was okay, too. May holidays were only a few weeks away, and we were going on a very special holiday - our son was to be married in Fiji. So Lahela and I decided to look

▼
*My daughter
is Maori and
determined
to be proud
of it.*

forward to a great holiday and when that was over we'd be in a better frame of mind to sit down and make some decisions.

Together we battled on 'til the end of term. Lahela stayed home a lot, the vomiting continued, she became very thin, but she worked on at her school work and tried to avoid trouble. I went up to the school and spoke with each of her teachers. Some were aware of what was happening and were genuinely concerned. Others had no idea and were shocked. Only one was openly sceptical.

Fiji was a fantastic experience for our whole family - in spite of the coup - but when we got home it was decision time.

Lahela had made up her mind that she was not going back to that school. So we decided to return home, and Lahela would go back to her old, co-ed school. She felt that in spite of the sexism and racism here, at least she had some measure of support. In a way she felt she'd copped out, but she knew she couldn't fight the world and all its injustices on her own, so she wasn't too hard on herself.

Well, that wasn't all that happened to Lahela in 1987. She went to court as a defence witness for some of her Black Power whanaunga and learned some nasty truths about our justice system at first hand, but that's another story.

At present she's at university. She wants to be a lawyer like her older brother. She's seen how hard it has been for him as a Maori male, coping with the legal system and keeping his cool as he sees his own being kicked even further down.

She knows it will be even harder for a young Maori woman who really cares about her people, but she's going to give it her best shot. Didn't I tell you she was special? She'll have to be if she's going to make it. ■

THE CRIPES OF ROTH



Do you ever feel that Life is a bit, well, samey? That your needle goes relentlessly round and round in the same groove? Now there's a concept that dates me. What would today's version be? My controls don't equalise any more? My compact disc has gone floppy? - and ain't that the truth!

What brought all this on was finding myself writing a letter to a (male) organiser of a forthcoming sociology conference pointing out that it was unsatisfactory to decide, belatedly, to add women and anti-racism to the programme and stir. Goodness, I was part of a similar exercise in 1982, which drew attention to that conference's failure to build in the feminist contribution to theory and practice. Indeed, as I arthritically peer back through the mists of time, I locate myself in the 1940s (not a misprint, kiddies, that is Four Oh) writing in some publication or other that the few women journalists of the time (I was one) were as competent as men and shouldn't be sneered at and given inferior assignments - I seem to recall providing examples of brave women war correspondents. (Heard a reference to World War 2 at school did you? Maybe you've seen the movie?)

My persistent harping on the Girls Have Always Done Everything theme (altered wording of Girls Can Do Anything courtesy of Dale Spender) could be seen as EITHER a boring knee-jerk reaction OR good old Wonder Woman permanently on call to react positively to those boring jerks. One might ask, for instance, whether most women are really affected by the fact that today's academic conference is just a dreary replica of past annual rites of (male) passage. (An improvement on most sociology conferences is a good read of the feminist *Public and Private Worlds* edited by New Zealand sociologist Shelagh Cox). In the short run, academic Me Tarzan antics aren't likely to affect the woman in the street or

workplace (whether this be home and/or other) But if - just as a trio of for instances - feminist, anti-racist and class perspectives are excluded (with or without intent) then basic insights are in danger of being ignored or adapted or colonised. And the adapters and colonisers have easier access to publishers and to the ears of journalists than most of the population. I'm not suggesting that most of us do just hang about holding our expectant breaths and hoping that Top People will shower us with ideas and Great Thoughts. The process is much more complex: e.g. penniless *Broadsheet* published Donna Awatere's *Maori Sovereignty* which became part of our national political consciousness well in advance of academic awareness. I do believe, though, that we need to check constantly for quality as fresh approaches to the dilemmas of our times are slowly drawn into the public domain (i.e. get the nod from chaps).

Among the many strengths of Women's Studies are its inter-disciplinary nature and its emphasis on the validity of personal experience. Now, men everywhere are leaping on the bandwagon, and in New Zealand two recent publications are *A Man's Country?* by Jock Phillips and *One of the Boys* edited by Michael King. Unlike most contributors to the King book, historian Phillips provides interesting facts and figures to explain the painful development (for women and men) of the Kiwi tough guy stereotype - but without really explaining the alleged change to a New Improved Model. Very disturbingly, both books depict war and rugby as the Meaning of Life bleakly hammered into males, poor devils.

Such books are catching up with feminist research and theorising about the *social* construction of gender, that is how and why we become female and male. It's OK girls! The jokers have got it sussed. In a 1988 *Women's Studies*

International Forum (Vol. 11, No. 2) Jill Radford gives qualified praise to *The Gender of Oppression* by a British male author. She says: "The development of 'gender studies' may be a solution for those institutions embarrassed by uppity women running women's studies. With 'gender studies' we can be brought to heel, subjected to the control of these right-on men. The focus of attention can be redirected back to ... a proper subject, 'men and masculinity'. So watch out for the 'new man' and his validation of our work because otherwise the future may lie with him and not only may we be depending on him for the development of critical theory, but our jobs may be at risk."

Then, blow me down, in *Signs* (Autumn, 1987) I find a report on the first conference in the USA run by the Program for the Study of Women and Men in Society. The report suggests some fraught moments: "... a distinction between *pro-male* men who focus on the victimisation of men and their need to find ways to get in touch with their feminine selves, and *pro-feminist* men... Many women had little patience with *pro-male* men, viewing them as threatening feminist efforts by co-opting their rhetoric and diverting energy and attention from women's political needs." (How well we know that type!). In the same issue of WSIF mentioned above, Robyn Rowland gives us "News From Nowhere" after reading publisher Sage's autumn/winter list. "... titles on the following subjects occur: *Family Studies; Men's Studies*. There is no section for Women's Studies. Can it be that men have now colonised Women's Studies so effectively that we have been subsumed, erased, silenced, made invisible once more?"

Margot Roth

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STROKES AND ART ATTACKS



"Fleshy Intruder", Acrylic on board, Sally Smith.

MONSTERS

Sally Smith

Proba Gallery, Auckland

There are plenty of strong emotions in the worlds of Sally's paintings. "I like the way she's not careful with either the ideas or the paint," said Fran at the exhibition opening.

The exhibition is made up of eight large paintings and while most of the figures are female there is ambiguity in many of them. The most cheerful of all the women portrayed is in "Bastet and Herbak-Herbak". Bastet is the Egyptian cat goddess – very cleverly painted – looking, to this viewer a bit sinister. Herbak-Herbak, however, is jumping, joyous, hands raised.

Anger shows in the expressions and actions of a number of the figures, in the use of colour in some paintings (red/green) and in the way the paint swirls about. "Fleshy Intruder" with broken door

and penile-necked figure shows an anger that is clearly the painter's. The body is female but ambiguous. It's red, white, ghastly – the invader and the invaded. Very powerful.

There's anger, too, in "South Pacific Mutation", a work with very rich imagery. Is that squat, red figure *meant* to make me think of Muldoon? And the carrot-orange one with the machine head and jagged mouth looks like *someone* – Australia's Hawke? Or maybe that's a bit too fanciful. The fish is more or less okay – so far.

There are a number of pig images in the works, that evoke many associations – pig/cop, pig/Muldoon, pig/male chauvinist even the idea that "not all pigs are men" (Now there's an idea to get used to – hush, say it softly, Sally!). "The Bride and the Pig" certainly challenges my stereotypes of pigness. Pig does not equal cops or Muldoon here, but the male chauvinist association works, except that the pig figure is female, all aggressive breasts and genitals, harsh pink and barred teeth.

There is just as much to jar and jolt my responses in "It's too much to ask, pig", which is what the red figure, head in a swishing turn is saying to the pig figure standing behind. Whose hurt eyes and almost-pretty body seem to be doing a how-can-you-be-doing-this-to-me number. This one has a green and blue background, "ordinary" grass and sky. Hmmm. There are heaps of associations here.

"Big Bambinas" is the friendliest of the paintings. It has friendly, soft colours – nursery blues, pinks and peachy colours – and it's a line of women, bodies more than faces, in contact with each other, warm and friendly, except perhaps for the occasional facial expression.

The confident, "not careful" as Fran said, handling of paint gives all the works a strength and aliveness. There are no idealised female forms here, none of the ideals of the sexist world nor those of feminism. They are great, invigorating, challenging paintings.

Pat Rosier

CHILD OF HER PEOPLE

Anne Cameron

Spinsters/Aunt Lute \$24.95

NZ dist Benton Ross

I've been giving and lending Anne Cameron's *Daughters of Copper Woman* to friends for years. It was my first introduction to North American Indian mythology and culture and it's fascinating. It's basically the tales told, through the narrator's granny, of the coming of the white conquerors, of the older Indian values and myths. I have often retold the account of the first Woman – the copper woman, who was so lonely as the only created being that she wept and wept, and out of her trails of snot and mucus she created the "snot boy" – the first male.

Child of Her People is in a more conventional form – it's an historical novel following the life of a white girl who is brought up by Woman Walks Softly as her daughter and one of "The Good People" – the Cree nation. The Good People are shown as having established a life style that harmonizes with their natural environment, as having education and rituals that are wise, beautiful and sensible. The Good People see themselves as "The Human Beings", and the Newcomers as crazy.

The novel is an account of the appalling effect of European settlement and the near genocide of the Indian Nations. *Child of her People's* family and tribe are slaughtered, the remainder pushed back onto infertile reserves, and their major food source, the buffalo, are destroyed wholesale, with reckless disregard for the ecological consequences. For most of us, brought up on films and TV serials of cowboys and Indians, this story is a revelation.

Child of her People, although not Indian by blood, is one by upbringing. The novel implies that the values and mana of the indigenous peoples can be adopted by others, even the Newcomers. The contrast between the independence and strength of the Indian women, with their women-centred rituals and celebrations, and the European women, is striking.

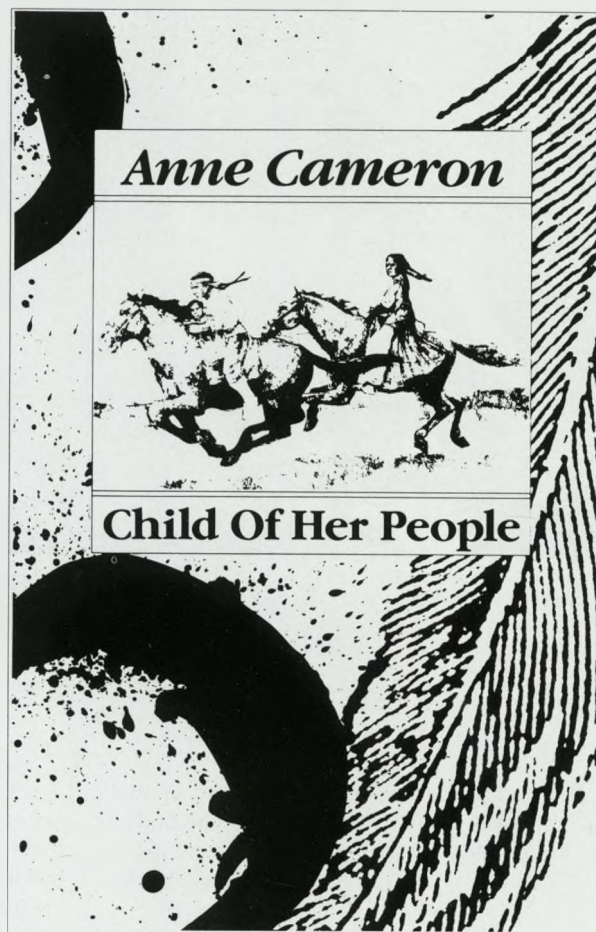
"How is it," an old woman asked, "that a woman of the Crazies speaks the language of the True People?"

"I am Child of her People", she replied, "My mother was Woman Walks Softly, her mother was Strong Heart Woman who was the daughter of Moves With Certainty. We are the daughters of People of the Wolf, and some of my aunts and other mothers are healers."

It's a woman-focused book, and depicts the Cree's culture as one that is woman

orientated. The protagonist and her mother together speak the woman's language, the soft language, the one with "the largest vocabulary for emotion and shades of feeling." The central emotional ties are between mother and child. The novel ends with a dramatic and gut-wrenching account of the mother tracking down her stolen and raped children.

Told from the perspective of the young *Child of her People* and her mother *Woman Walks Softly*, it's a moving story of disaster, endurance, love survival, and extreme heroism. I often wiped away tears reading it. It's well-written, exciting, fast-moving, full of intriguing cultural details and both tragic and triumphant. It's a very good read indeed. It's a book which should appeal to every reader and here, in suppos-



edly bi-cultural New Zealand, such an account of the past and possible interactions between the indigenous people and the European settlers should be of particular interest and relevance. It's the ideal present for almost any woman from 13 to 103. How about the next birthday?

Aorewa McLeod

LIMBS DANCE COMPANY

There are a lot of women involved in Limbs. There's artistic Director, Catherine Cardiff; Admin Manager, Dianne Wilson; Promotions Manager, Gail Richards; Technical Director, Phee Phansell; Rehearsal Directors, Shona

Limbs

McCulloch and Debra McCullagh; dancers, Catherine Cardiff, Lisel Grigg, Debra McCullagh, Catherine Chappell, Shona McCulloch and Marianne Schultz (half the company); stage manager, Lynda Topp; and set and costume designer, Elizabeth Whiting.

It's a lean company, preparing for a new show, *Extensions*, an annual event where dancers (this year five of them) get to make works, with the company, for performance. Shona McCullagh talks about the process of making a dance and the company.

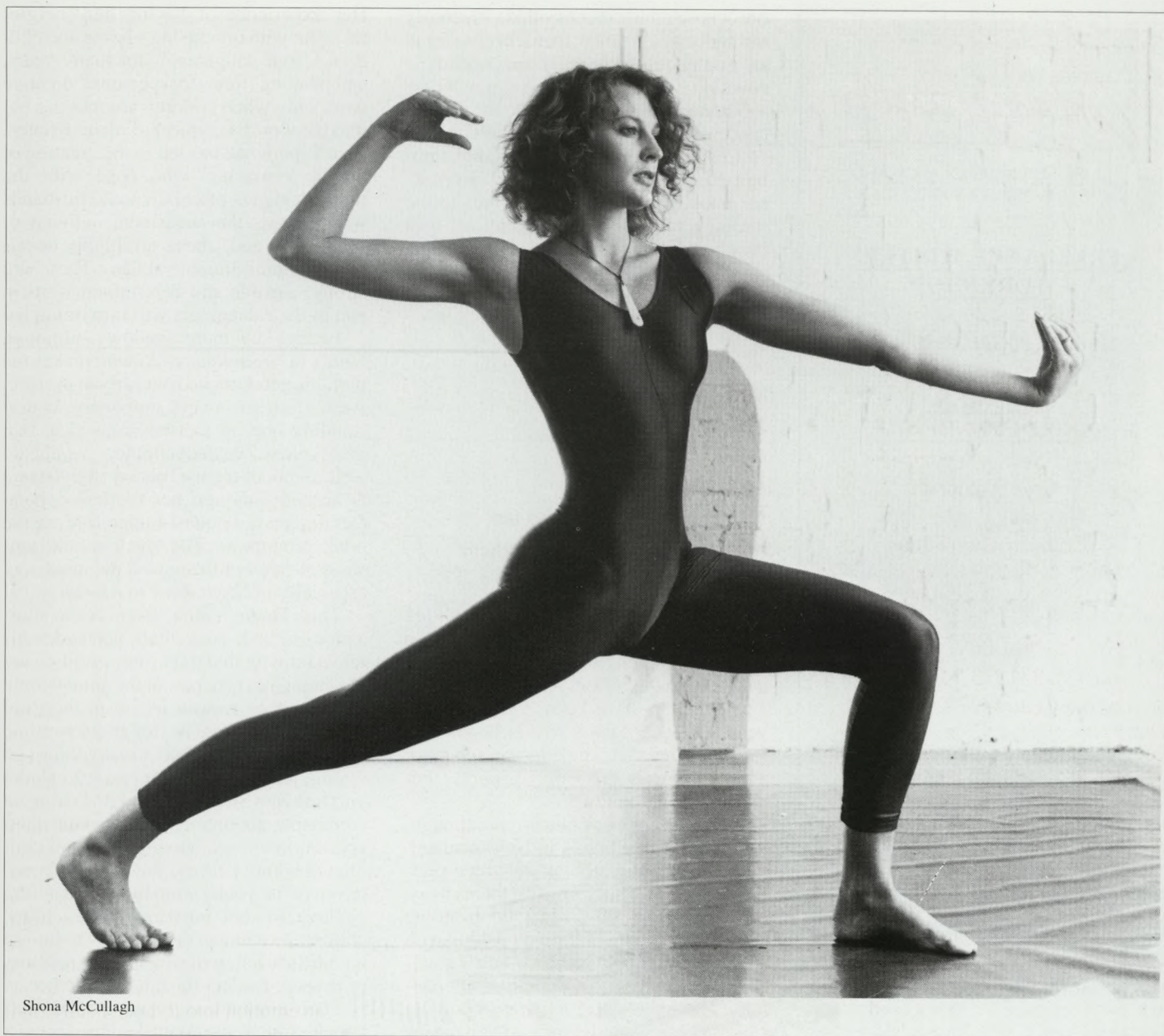
"One of the important things about Limbs for me is that dancers, like myself, get the chance to make a dance, to choreograph. With a lot of companies dancers just do other people's work, you don't ever get the chance to choreograph.

"The process of choreographing varies a lot, there are different ways of approaching it. You can be inspired by a piece of music and make a dance for that, or you can have a concept, make the work and then find a piece of music, which is what I'm doing at the moment. It's the first time I've ever done that, so it's really exciting. Or you can do it from a pure movement point of view, which is very hard to do, because it's very easy to put reasons, an idea or an emotion into it. I personally find it quite hard to make a pure movement dance.

"The piece I am working on arose from some experience I had in Melbourne in taking a movement phrase and doing absolutely everything possible with it. Then I found this absolutely fantastic music from Faust's *Mephisto*, a song sung by a German soprano that is a cross between a beer hall song and an aria. So I made the first section of the dance and then put the music on, which has added this really bizarre feel to it. It's not "about" anything, and that's really exciting for me because usually I have to have a concept, an idea to work from. I think the finished piece will be about ten minutes long.

"But everyone's varied, that's what's so exciting about these *Extensions* programmes. Everyone goes off into their studios, you don't know what everyone else is doing, and you end up with five completely different works. When we start to learn the dances we are all working for each other.

"At any time the company has a repertoire of dances, that we draw on when we



Shona McCullagh

are asked to do a cabaret performance or a school show. We usually have them on video. That's necessary for when a new dancer has to learn the repertoire.

"We try to have a new programme each year. Some of the pieces from *Extensions* might get into the programme. We all sort of hope that our dance will get chosen, but it's not a real pressure. That's another good thing about *Extensions*, the process is as important as the product.

"This year *Extensions* will be performed at the Maidment and at other venues," says Gail, Promotions Manager, "to try and make it more accessible to people who wouldn't come to the Limbs Theatre." This is not like a country-wide tour, but it may mean doing performances in venues that are not ideally suited to dance, like school halls.

"It's really hard, programming-wise, deciding what to take on tour," says Shona. "Because we are actually a small company. If there are say six pieces in the

programme, the dancers can end up on the floor at the end, they're so tired. So it's a matter of working the programme so that everyone gets a break. Sometimes we alternate roles.

"One of the good things about this company is that you're not in a solo situation, as opposed to, say, a ballet company where it is very hierarchical. Also the nature of the work that we are doing is very equal in terms of the male and female roles. We all do the same sorts of movements and I've never had to compromise my values.

"Someone might make a piece that is portraying a sexist point of view but it will be done tongue-in-cheek. It never feels like I'm working in a sexist environment. I guess because it's always been so female-oriented."

Limbs is a company, it has a board of trustees, is seeking corporate sponsorship – a real necessity these days – and has a general manager (Greg Fahey) who has

overall responsibility and is answerable to the board. They have some Arts Council Funding and do some commercial cabarets and promotions. As well as bringing in money, these activities give them an opportunity to perform and become known to people who might otherwise not be aware of their work.

"We are relatively well-known," says Gail, "but we're always wanting to build positively on that." "Because new work is always being created," adds Shona, "people can't judge *Limbs* on what they saw five years ago or last year. It's a growing thing, and we've got to work out ways of letting people know that."

Extensions will be performed at the Maidment Theatre, Auckland on 28, 29, 30 June and 1 July. Bookings at Bass. There may be performances in Whangarei later.

Contact Limbs (04) 762-420.

Pat Rosier

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THE ROCKING OF THE CRADLE AND THE RULING OF THE WORLD

Dorothy Dinnerstein

The Women's Press \$27.95

Any book that calls motherhood a congenital deformity can't be all bad. And give or take an Oedipal complex or two, some of the wild and wonderful theories seem all too plausible. Whereas Freud saw alienation as fundamental to social life, Dinnerstein examines why people go on consenting (still) to intolerable gender arrangements. She claims that motherhood produces childish women and childish men where women share men's anti-women feelings. The patriarchal lie – "let us go on venting, through the demand that this power be male, our old anger at the inevitable power of nurturant adult over helpless infant, an anger we have never outgrown because we are still hooked on the sense of being taken care of that went with it ... if women were not available to bear the whole brunt of the unexamined infantile rage that permeates adult life, the rage could not so easily remain unexamined; the infantilism could be more easily outgrown."

What men want in a wife is a mother, but one whose power they can limit and control. What women want in a husband is – a mother, a protector and nurturer, but

one whose power is controlled vicariously through men. Women, then, collaborate in an existence of "socially sanctioned ... cowardice".

Dinnerstein doesn't go into the significance of lesbianism much except to say, "the lesbian alternative, to be viable, must be a matter of political principle". Even so, her book may give us some clues to the meaning of a woman stripping off to a bunch of strangers in the context of a women's nightclub within a patriarchal society.

Helen Courtney

NIGHT RACE TO KAWAU, JELLYBEAN,

ALEX

All by Tessa Duder

All published by OUP, the first
two available in Puffin (Penguin)

Tessa Duder's novels for young people are just what New Zealand girls (and boys too) need to counter-balance all the fiction available to them from America and Britain. Teachers have been crying out for years for New Zealand-written books with local settings their students can relate to. The number is growing, certainly, but there are still too few.

Tessa Duder does much more though, than just set her books in New Zealand. The central characters in her three published books are girls who test themselves, have ambitions and dreams, confront the complexity of life and relationships with others, and finally achieve self-knowledge and success, physically and mentally. Her novels also tell very involving stories – you want to know what happens next, you care whether Sam in *Night Race to Kawau* can reach that rope or Alex in *Alex* wins that race. They are emotionally involving, reach exciting climaxes and end positively. Tessa Duder is a first class writer for young people.

The settings of her books and the interests of her characters result from her own experience. As Tessa Staveley, Duder was a teenage champion swimmer in the 1950's. The world of competitive swimming provides the setting for her latest book, *Alex*. The theatre and music, also lifelong interests of Duder's, play a part in *Alex* and are central to *Jellybean*. Her experience of yachting, after marriage into a Devonport yachting family, provides the setting for *Night Race to Kawau*. The variety of her interests come together particularly in *Alex*, with Alex trying to balance her sporting and theatrical interests and do justice to them all. Reading the book, one feels that Duder has personal experience of that conflict.

Another satisfying aspect of Duder's books is her depiction of mothers and family life. Although in her late 40's, she didn't publish her first book until 1982.

Her experience of having her energies taken up with organising a home and children – four daughters – for many years, and finding time for personal creative work only when children are moving out into the world, is typical of many women. That experience has led to the creation of mother characters who cope with the many demands of children and husbands with energy, the occasional outburst of frustration, and, above all, highly developed organisational skills. They are strong, capable and determined women, just as their daughters will turn out to be.

Fathers are more shadowy, although Sam's in *Night Race to Kawau* makes the plot – he gets knocked out early in the race. Alex's father is a very supportive, understanding one, in fact he is an ideal that many New Zealander fathers would do well to model themselves on. Jellybean's is absent, although her mother's friend Gerald, plays a quasi-father role as the book progresses. The rivalries and tensions of family life are well depicted, too, especially in *Night Race to Kawau*.

This, Duder's first book, is the most action-packed. Nick Starr persuades his reluctant wife that their three children are old enough to take part in the annual night yacht race to Kawau Island in their old keeler, "Arataki". The day of preparation is graphically described – many things go wrong, just as they do in real life. Duder puts into Mrs Starr's mouth some stringent comments about men who pursue their sporting interests, leaving wife and children at home. Perhaps the scene at Westhaven of the young woman arriving with a pavlova for her husband's yacht, three children bawling in the car, only to find he has already left, will sink into the memory of teenage readers for future reference.

Soon after the race starts father gets knocked out by the boom, leaving his wife, inexperienced in navigation, to sail a heavy boat with only her 12-year-old daughter able to give her any real assistance. Their struggles to get to Kawau and help for the concussed man are vividly described, with Mrs Starr proving resourceful and capable, even to diving into the water to retrieve a dinghy in the pitch darkness. and Sam rises to the occasion admirably. By the happy end of the story Sam and her mother have drawn closer together, gaining mutual strength from their endurance test. *Night Race* is a taut, exciting adventure story.

Jellybean, Duder's second book, the story on an orchestra cellist's only daughter – eleven-year-old Geraldine, nicknamed Jellybean – is quite different in pace and style. Instead of a busy family, Duder depicts with great sympathy, the efforts of a single mother to earn a living and care for her daughter, as well as the girl's loneliness and yearning for a place of her own in her mother's world.

Jellybean is a much more introspective character than Sam, and I'm sure many girls of 10 to 13 would identify with her in her attempts to sort out what she really

wants. She is helped by seeing a woman conduct an orchestra and then gets the chance to do so herself, facing and passing a difficult personal test. Although the ending is rather pat – mother's friend Gerald ready to become a father substitute, visit planned to see London and real father – *Jellybean* is an appealing and sensitively written story, giving interesting information about music-making as a by-product.

Alex, published in 1987, is Tessa Duder's most complex and satisfying novel. It is deeply felt and totally involving. Alex, at 15 a champion swimmer, is trying to qualify for the 1960 Olympic Games. She has a rival, Maggie Benton, whose ambitious mother controls her life and drives her to extreme competitiveness with Alex, really against her will. The final qualifying race begins the book and continues between the chapters, which tell the story of Alex's everyday life in months leading up to the vital race. This device creates and sustains the narrative tension throughout the book – I was desperate to know if Alex would win."

The use of the first person involves the reader most successfully in Alex's life – the challenges, embarrassments, sorrows and successes, the sections describing the races are vividly and convincingly written. You really feel the terrible physical demands of competitive swimming. Here's an example:

"Breathing is uphill and every arm stroke a circle of pain. My legs, shaved so carefully in the shower tonight, are tingling, almost as though being massaged by the water. It's a feeling I've not had often; a signal that my body is about to go into another gear.

"I think I'm gaining. I can no longer see much. I dare not upset my rhythm and take a breath to the right. I never learnt to breathe right-handed. It always felt as awkward as breathing to the left was natural. The water is choppy and I can't tell whether the arms and legs flailing away next door are ahead or even with me. But I think I'm gaining."

But Alex's life isn't all swimminig. She's in the school show *The Wizard of Oz*, plays hockey, does her school work and has a deepening relationship with a young man, Andy, another swimmer, which ends in tragedy. The stress of trying to balance it all tells on her and she has to call on all her skills of endurance to survive the challenges of her school and personal life.

The difficulties of adolescence, especially for a tall, physically strong girl, when girls are meant to be feminine and petite, are dealt with with humour and common sense. Many girls would identify with her concern about her broad shoulders and height. Her growing awareness of the strength of her feelings, sexual and emotional, for Andy, is sensitively and honestly depicted. Duder manages to include some messages about drunken driving which I hope teenagers register.

Alex is a very successful book. Here is



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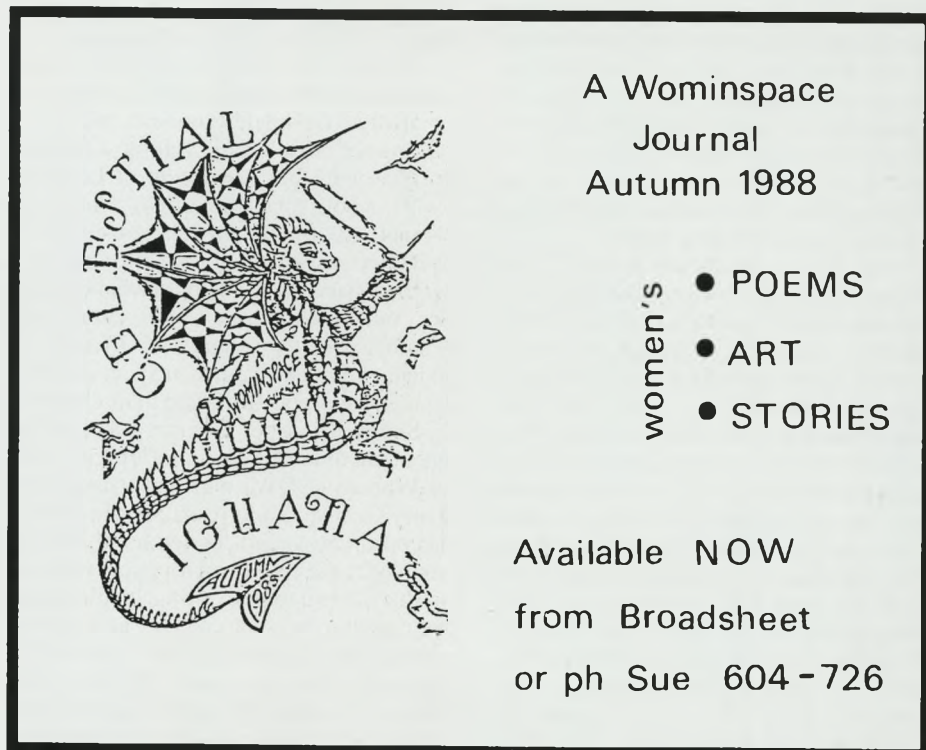
a New Zealand protagonist, a complex and interesting young woman who enjoys life, has courage and spirit and who makes the reader care deeply about her.

All Duder's protagonists show the capacity to face challenges which test them to the limit. They endure difficult situations and are not found wanting. All have close relationships with their mothers, who encourage them but also demand performance from them. Duder's mothers are not soft, male-dependant women, they too are survivors who face the tests life has served up to them – whether it's family life, earning a living or sailing a boat. Their relationships with men are portrayed as

equal ones and although they give they also expect to receive.

Duder is a fine writer, telling gripping stories with real New Zealand settings about real New Zealand girls and women in a language and style which is showing increasing confidence and range. Her novels deserve to be widely publicised to girls, bought for school libraries and given as presents. I'm sure girls will cherish them.

And for myself, a 1950's contemporary of Duder's who spent much time in my youth swimming up and down the Tepid Baths with my eyes stinging from chlorine, I can't wait to read the sequel to *Alex*.
Helen Watson



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Journal
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GOING OUT OF OUR MINDS

The metaphysics of Liberation

Sonia Johnson

The Crossing Press \$29.95

(New Zealand dist Benton Ross)

GOING OUT OF OUR MINDS: THE METAPHYSICS OF LIBERATION



SONIA JOHNSON

She fasted for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the American constitution, she joined the race to become president of the United States, she is described as a "radical feminist speaker and writer". She was a Mormon for the first 43 years of her life and wrote a book about her excommunication from the Mormon church called *From Housewife to Heretic*.

Going Out of Our Minds is Sonia Johnson's retrospective analysis of her life and political actions since she became a radical feminist (and, not too long afterwards, a lesbian). Her analysis of feminist political action is based firmly on her own experience and subsequent reflection. She calls it the "suddenly she realised" school of philosophy, and claims it (correctly, I think) as a true feminist process.

The basic argument of the book is that engaging with the enemy (who she refers to most often as the patriarchy), whether to collude or to agitate, dissipates and wastes women's energy and power. She puts it like this in the preface: "... the old methods of working for social change were never more than illusory accesses to power encouraged by the men in power to take up our time, to confuse and distract us. I saw that whatever purposes these methods may once have been thought by activists to serve, their true nature was in fact always deeply collaborative and therefore not able to stem but only to add to the avalanche of violence that is crashing down upon us."

She traces the development of her ideas

through her own political actions, including a number of civil disobedience events, which she felt at the time would guide women "into and through that process of extinguishing fear and illuminating potential". An important thread of her argument is that if we, as women, can cast off fear, then we have unlimited potential to create change. As in, "As women we have borne our oppression because we have been afraid that the alternative was to die. But when we learn that we die in the same numbers anyway, and that a life lived in fear is also a death, then a life without fear is the only life worthy to be called 'life', then we prepare for freedom. When we understand that the penalties are the same whether we disobey a little or disobey completely, but that the rewards come only when we disobey completely, then we are ready to be free. And when we are finally ready to be free, the avenues to liberty will open before us, and for the first time in fifty centuries we will see the road signs clearly." I agree with what Sonia Johnson says about fear, but have some problems with what she says in her last sentence: I think it takes more than being "ready".

She talks a lot about taking ourselves as women seriously – something that needs to be said loudly and often – and makes some penetrating analyses of why we don't.

"They had to lose weight, anyway," is a chapter about the fast she and others did to draw attention to the need to include women's rights in the United States Constitution through the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The ERA did not get passed, but for Sonia the fast, as with everything else, was an experience to learn from. "We cannot work through men, It's like trusting the slaveholders to represent the slaves". And, "Ordinary women can do extraordinary things," were two immediate lessons, she says.

There's a "coming out" chapter, which caused me to wince a couple of times. It is, as always, completely honest, and she is talking for herself, but I felt most uncomfortable with her separation of Lesbians (with whom she identifies) from gay women (with whom she does not). Whether we (or they) like it or not gay women, bar dykes, call them what we will, are our foremothers and sisters and whether or not we share their lifestyle or values we must, I think, respect them as lesbians and not invalidate their choices.

She looks at her attempt at becoming president of the US National Organisation of Women (NOW) with her usual "suddenly I realised" approach. She sees NOW as conservative and conventional, but the visible face of feminism for many women, so she wants it to be exciting, challenging, welcoming. No chance. Her attempts to change the organisation are personalised as her trying to "take over". She loses. And reflects. Always, she reflects on her experiences, regardless of their outcome, and

this process is one of the most valuable things *Going Out Of Our Minds* has to offer. It's not a new idea, but Johnson presents it vividly and as a tool we all can and should use.

She explores the "need" she sees in women's groups for power struggles which no-one can "win" and suggests how to overcome this destructive behaviour. Refuse to co-operate is one strategy, don't engage with the "attacker"; leave. But, she says, "... we must learn to know in our bones and blood that women are not the enemy ... we must give highest priority to hanging in there with one another no matter what and working out our difficulties with skins of unparalleled thickness and the largest of hearts". (Which is not a contradiction of the suggestion to leave – that is to break a pattern and take time to think.)

NOW rejects Sonia's candidacy for president of the organisation. "The other candidates stood for reform and white gloves and making the men respect us. Because I didn't ... I lost." She initiates a "think tank" and tries some ideas-generating techniques which don't quite work. Again, reflection – why weren't we inspired to action? Affirmations and envisioning are not often presented as radical political tools, but they are for Sonia Johnson.

If we can conceive (envision) it we can do it. If we "take our eyes off the guys" and get the patriarchy out of our heads we can make change. There's an exciting simplicity in this, but in the end I find it unsatisfying. Sonia gives an excellent analysis of the way we get "sucked into" ways of behaving with each other and acting/reacting politically that are destructive to ourselves and our aims. I agree that we can usefully sort out our ideas, thoughts and feelings and seek a clarity of vision, but I don't agree that this is enough. We have to have a feminist vision about how to act with each other, but we also have to exist in the present world. This is, obviously, easier for some of us than for others. We all have to pay the rent and very few of us can earn a living as a feminist activist, so we have to engage with the world on a day to day basis.

What I wanted *Going Out Of Our Minds* to do was to encourage me and give me skills to keep my own mind, analysis and strategies clear while I do whatever it is I have to do in the world. It does the first part, but not the last – for me the end of the book was disappointing in that it seemed to be saying that if we (feminists) got our minds and emotions "together" that would be the revolution. I'm stuck with a belief that there's more to it than that.

Nonetheless, I think *Going Out Of Our Minds* gives valuable insights into some processes that are both feminist and powerful. Like Dale Spender and Alix Dobkin, two recent visitors to New Zealand, Sonia Johnson is unreservedly for women, and that's a buzz in itself.

Pat Rosier

LISTING

BOOKS WE DON'T HAVE SPACE TO REVIEW

All titles can be bought or ordered from Broadsheet Bookshop.

Death Comes Staccato by Gillian Slovo (The Women's Press) is a fast-moving convoluted whodunit. The sub-plot has a rather flimsy connection with the main story line, which moves in fits and starts to a somewhat unlikely conclusion. The drug addict, the alcoholic doorman, the bent cop, the unscrupulous boss, the statutory Black, among other cardboard stereotypes, contribute peripherally to the main action, involving a society mother and detective Kate Baier, employed to guard the brilliant, unstable daughter. It's undemanding entertainment and at that level a good read if you're able to suspend belief.

Val McDermid's **Report for Murder** (The Women's Press) is a delectable piece of classic detection written with style. Lindsay Gordon, cynical socialist lesbian journalist is commissioned to write an article in support of a fund-raising weekend to save the playing fields of a prestigious girls' school from a developer whose daughter attends the school. There's a murder during the evening concert, for which Lindsay Gordon's friend, Paddy Gallagher, is arrested. How Lindsay and Cordelia Bruce (who's written a play for the weekend) bring the true murderer to justice, while exploring their immediate attraction for one another and beginning the stressful task of acknowledging their many differences, is the substance of the book. There's a genuine warmth in the author's characterisations so that the reader feels these could be real people facing ups-and-downs which are neither uncommon nor particularly far-fetched. It makes a nice change to read a mystery almost totally without violence.

Edith Gorringer

In Other Words: writing as a feminist is edited by Gail Chester and Sigrid Nielson and published by Hutchinson's as part of their "Explorations in Feminism" series. It's based on papers and workshops from a conference, which has resulted in a wide-ranging collection of short pieces. By the end of the book I felt this was a strength in that it gave space to a big variety of contributors and a weakness because most of the pieces did not get to develop their ideas very far. It's a valuable addition to the small body of work that is actually about feminist writing.

There's a heap of newly published fiction about, with Naiad (New Zealand distributor Benton Ross) continuing to turn out new titles at an impressive rate. Last September by Helen Hull is a collection of stories which were originally published before 1920 and have been re-published to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the writer's birth. The title story, about two old women, reminded me a little of May Sarton. The others are about difference, identity, separation, with lesbianism more implication than fact. Historically fascinating.

Two more from Naiad are **The Other Side of Venus** by Shirley Verel and **To The Lightning** by Catherine Ennis. *The Other Side...* was written in 1960. The protagonists talk rather self-consciously about themselves as lesbians, but it's an interesting book for what it shows of lesbians' attitudes to themselves thirty years ago. Some elements of the plot of *To The Lightning* are too unlikely for my taste, but the story is really about a lesbian relationship between two women who have to live totally isolated and self-reliant in nature, and not from any choice of theirs.

Naiad keeps them coming (!). **The Secret in the Bird** by Camarin Grae is certainly compelling reading, it kept me up half the night finishing it. But I'm doubtful about some of the content, like using army mind-breaking techniques in "therapy" and dashing all over the United States and Europe without once stopping at a bank or worrying about taking two terms off from a university teaching job. The story includes some exploration of dominance/control themes but in the end

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the explanations were pretty bizarre.

Shoulders by Georgia Cottrell is published by Firebrand. This one's a lesbian novel that follows one woman's emotional/romantic journey to a long term relationship. I liked the way she presented relationships as complex and dynamic.

There's science fiction/fantasy about too. I'm a real Joanna Russ fan but I found her **We Who Are About To ...** (The Women's Press) incomprehensible and depressing ... I think. The most gripping sci fi novel I have read since Suzette Elgin's *Native Tongue* is **A Door Into Ocean** by Joan Slonczewski. The writer uses her knowledge as a biologist to create a landless world where she explores themes of fear, death, interdependence and more in a credible and compelling story. It's a great read and thought-provoking with it.

Fiona Kidman's **A Breed of Women** put New Zealand women of the seventies in a political/historical context, and has been an important novel for many. Penguin make it available again in a new, paperback edition.

Pat Rosier



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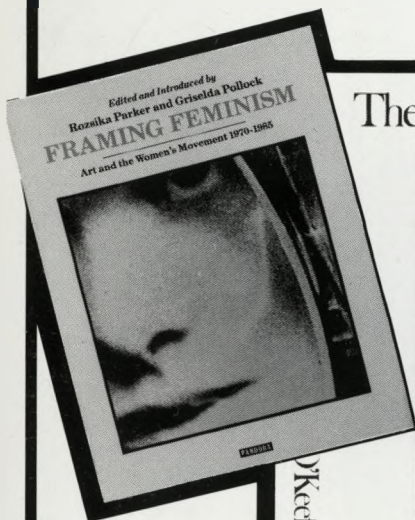
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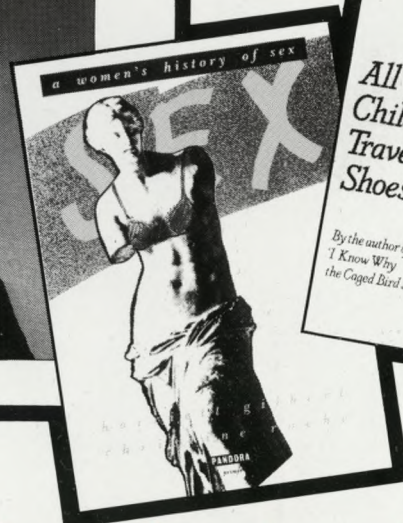
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