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BROADSHEET

NEW ZEALAND'S FEMINIST MAGAZINE SEVENTEENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION ISSUE 166 \$3.80

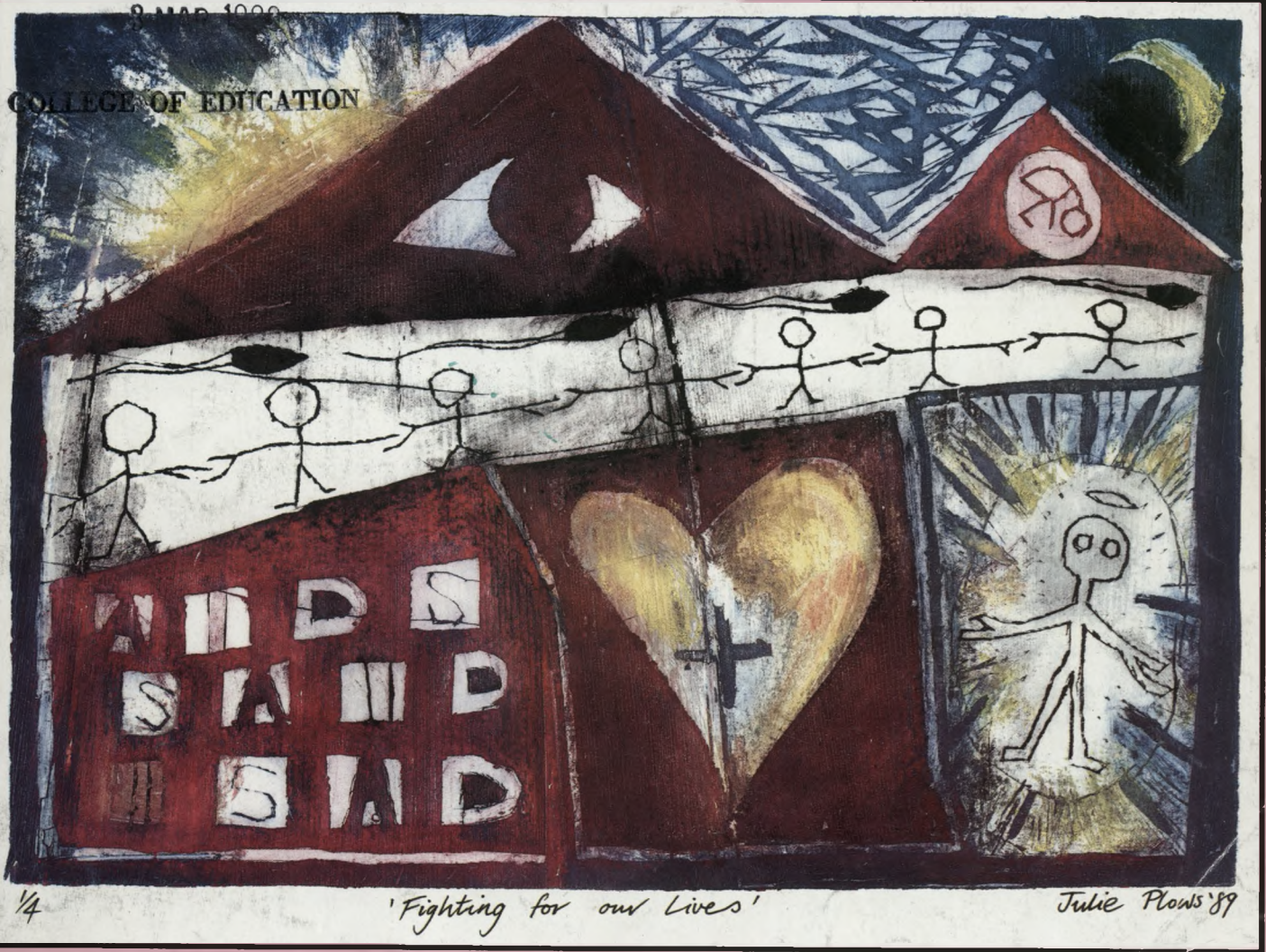
DISPLAY

FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES Women and AIDS

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- ▶ **BRINGING UP BOYS**
- ◆ **WHO IS MY MOTHER?**
Having someone else's baby
- **A DAY IN THE LIFE OF BROADSHEET**
- ★ **TOPP TWINS** **ON** **TOUR**

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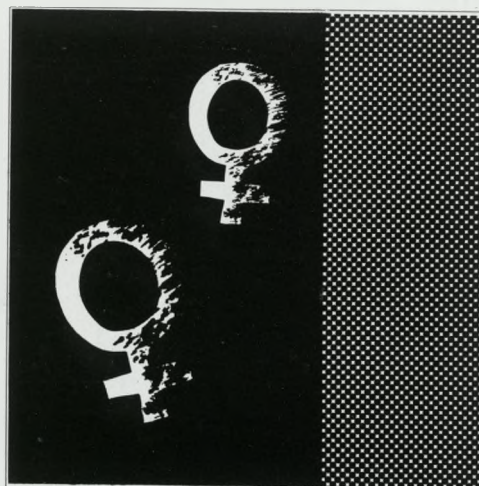
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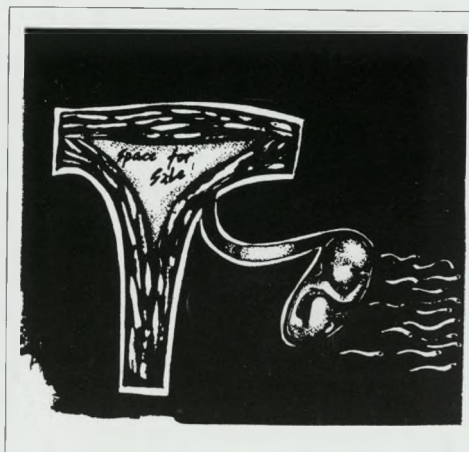
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BROADSHEET

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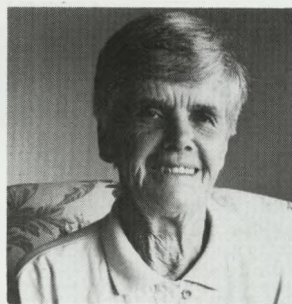
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HERSPECTIVE is written each month by a
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is a collective member.

LETTERS POLICY: The Broadsheet
Collective may not agree with or endorse
views expressed in letters. Nearly all the
letters we are sent get published. Those
that are not published in full are edited in
consultation with the writer. We do not
publish personal attacks. Letters from
men are published only when they cor-
rect matters of fact. We particularly wel-
come letters about the content of the
magazine. Letters that are addressed to
the collective or to the editor are assumed
to be intended for publication. Please
indicate clearly if they are not.

ADVERTISING POLICY: Advertise-
ments are accepted at the discretion of the
collective and all copy and artwork is
subject to approval by the collective,
which reserves the right to decline or
cancel any advertisement. We do not
advertise cigarette or alcohol products.
We ask readers to support our advertisers
as a way of sharing your enthusiasm for
Broadsheet.

BROADSHEET is on file at the women's
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HERSPECTIVE

Some years ago the post delivered
a letter telling me that a relation-
ship which had been central to
my life for a long time was over. The
painful grief of that rejection was well
nigh intolerable. In my search for
something to divert my mind from the
inevitable, interminable inner dia-
logue, I happened upon what was for
me a whole new world, the world of
women. The librarian at one of our
suburban libraries, in answer to my
request for a book by Adrienne Rich,
suggested I try *Broadsheet*. That was a
name unknown to me but remember-
ing the age-old dictum, nothing ven-
ture nothing win, I made a few inquir-
ies and discovered the bookshop in K
Rd.

I walked along from my Symonds
St bus stop until, from across the road,
I saw the billboard – then I turned
around and went home, berating my-
self for my timidity. How well I re-
member the day I actually plucked up
the courage to go into the shop, rather
unattractive really, but goodness
knows what I was expecting. The
woman at the table didn't raise her
head from her book so I wandered
round touching the books on display
and feeling hopelessly lost and forlorn.
Beside a noticeboard mostly offering
accommodation I didn't need was a
stand displaying the magazine,
Broadsheet. With relief I realised that
I could buy a copy and escape – take
my discomfort and uncertainty and
retreat to the familiar and comfortable.

Looking back my anxiety seems
little short of ridiculous.

The women who work in *Broad-
sheet* are delightful, warm and wel-
coming, outgoing too as I found once I
made the move into their world. An ad-
vertisement asking for volunteer help
with cataloguing, with stuffing the
magazine and with filing – all things I
could do – provided me with a legiti-
mate ticket of entry. That was three
years ago and I've since become a
member of the collective – another
new learning for me and a hugely sig-
nificant one too.

But now it's like I live in two differ-
ent worlds – the suburban housewife,
now widowed, mother, grandmother,
worker in various voluntary organisa-
tions, following much the same pattern
of day to day activity which, with
variations, I have always followed,
and this newly discovered world of
feminism. There are conflicts of val-
ues too, and times when I am guilty of
staying silent, not challenging biased
and judgemental statements, espe-
cially those generalisations which
scream out to be debunked. It's a very
real dilemma for me, which I don't
seem to resolve.

Central to my difficulty is that I
have no place in the world of women,
although I have made several attempts
to find a place where I might belong.
Whereas I fit easily, without stress,
into the suburban scene, I know how to
behave, I know what the expectations
are, the language and conventions are
familiar and I can play all the "games"
with my eyes shut. If I leave *Broad-
sheet*, the tenuous ties I now have will
disappear because *Broadsheet* is my
only link with feminism.

It's not that I'm sorry for myself, or
that I'm dissatisfied or discontented
with my life, it's just that I am discov-
ering a way of life, a way of looking at
our world that is exciting and stimulat-
ing and I have so few years left to live.
I am constantly meeting women in this
world too, but they are all at least 20-
30-40 years younger than I am and
that's kind of sad too.

Where is the door that leads into
that other world? What is the password
which will open the door and where,
oh where, are my contemporaries?

Edith J Gorringer

LETTERS

WIN AGAINST THE WET

Dear Broadsheet,
Looking over an old *Broadsheet* recently (September 1988) I was interested to read the article on page nine about a national Wet T-Shirt contest. We've just had an "episode" here in Nelson with a local nightclub hosting (or trying to) a series of them.

Just as was pointed out in the article, you've got to hit these people where it hurts – their pocket. A group of us belonging to Women In Nelson Inc. (WIN) and the local branch of WAP (Women Against Pornography) agreed that picketing might have the opposite effect, that of drawing people in and so line the pockets of the seamy promoters.

So, we spent \$90 and placed an ad in the local paper on the night the contest was to be held. The ad read "WOMEN IN NELSON INC. AND WOMEN AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY implore all fair-minded and responsible people to BOYCOTT ZHIVAGO'S Nitespot due to their staging a demeaning and humiliating Wet T-Shirt competition."

The effect of this ad was tremendous. Local newspaper and radio were "eager" to talk to WIN to get their further comments on the contests. Suddenly there was community discussion and for those Nelson residents who tend to be more conservative, finding out just what a Wet T-Shirt contest was produced a barrage of letters to the editor expressing disgust and shock. A letter from the local Changing Men group openly challenged the promoters and would-be viewers to respond to their fact-laden letter about the effects of pornography. It was great.

Of course there was debate but it was overshadowed by our opposition. WIN did offer a challenge to the promoters to hold a Wet Y-Front competition but pointed out that due to men's physiological reaction to cold water the whole thing would be a non-event!

Would you believe it – the promoters accepted the challenge (getting a wee bit worried/harrassed by now) – such a shame it had to be cancelled due to lack of interest!

But while they could just still see through the egg yolk they tried one last ditch effort – an "anything goes" contest, and you guessed it – cancelled.

That's how to effectively get these people – plus the other



COURTNEY © 1989

things like ringing and complaining, threatening never to go there again etc. We did plenty of that too. They suffered pretty badly commercially (financially no doubt and definitely image-wise). It was \$90 well spent.

SHELLEY BURT
Nelson

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Dear Broadsheet,
I would like to thank Annamarie Jagose for her article in the September 1988 issue of *Broadsheet* (I'm a bit late, I know), on behalf of several ethnic minorities, including myself.

We are a group of Social Work students at Massey University who are neither Maori nor Pakeha, and who are frequently overlooked and ignored in terms of a subject that is very personal to us – that is, racism.

We would like to thank Annamarie for bringing attention to what we call being "minorities among minorities", and for her courage in committing her feelings and thoughts on paper.

We look forward to the time when we are recognised and acknowledged as having something of value to contribute to the anti-racism movement, and to our society in general.

SARAH DESOUSA
Palmerston North

MORE SMOKE SIGNALS

Dear Broadsheet,
J. Bellwood's letter (November *Broadsheet*) objecting to the activities of Deirdre Kent and other members of Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) misses the point of what ASH is trying to do. It is not trying to deprive smokers of the comfort which smoking gives them – instead it is drawing attention to the fact that the long-term cost of such short-term comfort is unacceptably high.

Every year nearly one thousand New Zealand women die of diseases directly related to smoking – cancer, lung, and heart diseases. New Zealand women are among the "Top Ten" in the world when it comes to deaths from lung cancer, with a rate of 22.4 deaths for every 100,000 women. Maori women are particularly at risk, since 59 percent of Maori women smoke.

Any feminist who cares about women's health has got to point out these horrific statistics, and try to do something about them.

Recent New Zealand research shows that smoking is a legitimate matter of concern to non-smokers. Leaving aside the considerable taxation burden on the majority of non-smokers which goes towards financing medical care for those who have contracted smoking-related illnesses, there is the physical burden endured by non-smokers subjected to smoke

in workplaces and public places. We know that nearly 50 New Zealanders die each year as a result of illnesses contracted in the course of "passive smoking" (breathing the smoke from other people's cigarettes). We do not know how many people have respiratory illnesses exacerbated by passive smoking but it is well known that smokers take more sick leave than non-smoking workers and most non-smokers experience physical discomfort (sometimes pain) if consistently exposed to smoke.

So – as a feminist opposed to women being killed and disabled, and particularly worried by the current trend towards increased female smoking; as a citizen concerned about health spending who would rather see her taxes spent on health promotion and non-preventable illnesses; and as an individual who suffers from stinging eyes, shortness of breath and impairment of mental concentration after thirty minutes exposure to tobacco smoke, I wish ASH every success.

However, I sympathise with Ms Bellwood's position as a woman suffering the stress of unemployment. It is certainly an indictment of our society that people need drugs to help them make it through the day. Women are particularly at risk, as rising rates of female alcoholism, smoking and psycho-active drug abuse show. *Beating the Ladykillers*, a book on women and smoking by Bobbie Jacobson, addresses this problem head on. Her research shows that women are more likely to take up smoking as a form of stress management – which is why it is often so hard for women to give it up.

So attempts to guilt-trip women, or appeal to their willpower, as a means of getting them to give up smoking, are unlikely to succeed as well as they do with men, who tend to take up smoking for pleasure and can give it up using "masculine" willpower when they realise that their pleasure is poisoning them. Jacobson, an ex-smoker, argues that women must first identify what need smoking serves for them, and then see if they can work out ways to meet that need which will not harm their health. Her book gives details on how to do this, and I would thoroughly recommend it to any woman who wants to quit smoking, or help others to quit.

I hope Ms Bellwood comes

FRONTING UP

DEADLINES

For the April issue 26 February, for May 26 March.

ADVERTISING

Our advertising rates are very competitive. Basic rates for Black and white advertising inside the magazine (excluding GST) are: full-page \$660; half \$360; quarter \$185; eighth \$120; classified 30c per word prepaid, 40c per word if we bill you; classified display box \$40. Further details on request. Phone Tanya, (09) 608-535

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. Regular readers please note: we get a better return from subs than from bookshop sales.

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.

STILL ON SUBS

Recent changes of address may have been affected by a "blip" in our computer operation. If your Jan/Feb magazine was sent to your old address, please let us know. Changes of address since the end of December will not be affected. We apologise for any inconvenience.

APOLOGIES

To Benita Kape, whose second name was wrongly spelt on her poem on page 4 of the December issue and to Charmaine Poutney for leaving the "e" off her name on the cover of the Jan/Feb issue.

into the job of her choice, or some similar good fortune, in the very near future. In the meantime I hope she will think over the reasons why others have a legitimate interest in her smoking, especially when she does it in public, but even when she does it in private. If smokers (and tobacco manufacturers) had exercised voluntary restraint in the past, rather than pushing the extremely spurious "right to pollute" and "right to make big profits", we would not need organisations like ASH which are pushing for compulsory restraints today.

CHRISTINE DANN
Dunedin

JOB-SHARE BLUES

Dear Broadsheet,

In anticipation of the arrival of our first child in March I applied for three months' leave from my job as manager of small company.

We were surprised at how long it took to find the right person to fill the position for that period, with the possibility of a job-share afterwards. It was difficult to locate some of the women who may have been interested, as they have fewer links with the business world.

As a result I am interested to hear from any women who are interested in this whole concept of job sharing/returning to the paid workforce to contact me as I have begun keeping records in the hope that we can all help each other to continue to do whatever balance of paid work/home work that we prefer. You may be: a) wanting to ease out of the paid workforce to spend more time in other areas, and thus would be creating a job-share position; b) wanting to return to the paid workforce in a job-share capacity; c) unemployed and willing to accept a job-share position in your area of expertise; d) wanting to offer support in the form of informally arranged, quality, paid childcare/gardening/other help to those women who wish to continue their involvement in the paid workforce; e) wanting to be on stand-by for occasional, specific projects that require your skills.

All these options exist but it is up to us to become organised so that we may all do what we prefer. We can't go any further without your suggestions and support so if you are remotely interested, contact me at 41 Prospect Terrace, Mt Eden. Phone 688 491.

LIZ CAUGHEY

EXECUTIVE ANSWER

Dear Broadsheet,

It may be worth correcting some of the errors in a recent letter by one of your correspondents, Fiona Stevens (*Broadsheet*, December 1988).

Firstly, as a matter of explicit Government policy the Ministry

is directed to focus on the equality of women. It is, of course, important that the question of equity - the relative fairness with which women are treated - be addressed. It is, however, my primary objective, and the purpose of the Department, to provide policy advice on the achievement of equality, especially for Maori women, women in low or unpaid work, and Pacific Island women.

There are numerous situations in which positive discrimination is necessary. I have no idea why Ms Stevens thinks that the Ministry has not supported this viewpoint. We do, and will continue to do so wherever this appears to be the most effective way to ensure equality in practice, as contrasted with a theoretical possibility.

In a recent submission on resource management law reform, for instance, the Ministry has argued that the "unit of assessment" in evaluating alternative uses of natural resources, should be the benefits and costs to Maori women. The emphasis on Maori women appeared to us to capture the significant issues for Maori, within the framework of the Treaty of Waitangi, and for women, given their long-standing concern to protect and conserve the natural environment, and the disproportionate costs they bear, and have borne for centuries, as a result of inefficient, exploitative or casually destructive environmental mis-management. Your readers are most welcome to a copy of this submission, which was premised clearly on the view that positive discrimination in the interests of women applies to a far wider field than, say, recruitment and employment practices.

I am not entirely clear about what Ms Stevens means in suggesting that women should or might be asked to compete for resources on unequal terms. This does not sound to me like a policy proposal that would appeal to the Government, and would certainly not form part of any advice offered by this Ministry. On the contrary, the Ministry is explicitly required to direct its attention, and focus its advice, on policies which are explicitly intended to equalise the opportunities, substantially increase access to resources and expand the social and economic capacity of women, especially Maori women, to reduce the gaps which are now so apparent.

There is no-one in the Ministry, including me, who supports in the slightest degree the "political/economic rape of women by the present Government" - in the past, now or in the future. It would be non-sensical to interpret any of the Ministry's activities, or any of the advice that it provides, in this entirely unwarranted manner. Your readers should be assured that our work is about supporting,

promoting, and advancing women's equality, and actively identifying any area of public or private sector activity which is or could be exploitative, or damaging, to their wellbeing or their equality.

JUDITH AITKEN
Ministry of Women's Affairs.

WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Dear Broadsheet,

It was good to read Susan Gore's article "The Politics of Money" in the November 1988 issue of *Broadsheet*. I would like to respond to your request for further information for your readers about Credit Unions.

A Credit Union is a member-owned and operated financial co-operative. Each Credit Union accepts members from a pre-determined "common bond", e.g. employees of XYZ Ltd, workers in XYZ industry, residents of a specified community, or any other viable grouping.

Members pool their funds through a variety of savings accounts to form a loan fund. Personal loans are made to members at below-market interest rates. Modest returns on savings are paid to members as an annual dividend. Many Credit Unions also offer a range of services such as bill payment, Christmas Club, children's accounts, term investments, etc.

There are some 200 Credit Unions in Aotearoa (NZ) affiliated to the NZ Credit Union League with \$104 million of members' savings. Unfortunately many people are not covered by the common bond of any Credit Union - a situation that is slowly being rectified as Credit Unions merge and expand to ensure their survival.

Credit Unions are threatened by both the changes in the financial services sector (so-called "deregulation") as well as the effects of "economic restructuring". Redundancies in industries served by Credit Unions reduces the membership and financial base of those Credit Unions.

Readers who may wish more information about Credit Unions, or about a Credit Union in their area are invited to contact: NZ Credit Union League, PO Box 383, Hamilton. Phone (071)390 033.

GREG PIRIE
Manager-Consultancy Services.

Dear Broadsheet,

I've been told that there is a request for information about ethical investment opportunities in last month's issue of *Broadsheet*.

Trade Aid is a local non-profit alternative trading organisation which offers an opportunity for ethical investment. Trade Aid operates as a "normal" business, in most ways, but one notable

exception is the relationship Trade Aid has with producer groups. Briefly this means – paying a fair price – set by producers – pre-paying many groups, always the most disadvantaged groups – working to ensure that maximum benefits remain in the developing country, i.e. with tea, all blending and packaging is done in country of origin.

Trade Aid has a positive discrimination policy towards women's groups, recognising the added oppression experienced by women in developing countries, and towards groups working to preserve their culture through traditional craft work.

Trade Aid has also launched a special Commodities Action fund, an account to raise capital for importation of everyday items such as tea, coffee, spices, soap, papads, cocoa, etc. As Trade Aid operates in an entirely different way from the transnationals, there is always a need for huge capital input to ensure a competitive place in the market place for Trade Aid goods. Much more information could be supplied if you are interested from Trade Aid (Importers) Ltd, PO Box 18620, Christchurch.

MARIE VENNING

OWNING UP

Dear Broadsheet,
I am a woman with a schizo-affective disorder. That is schizophrenia and manic depression rolled into one.

I want society to accept that I have moods that are really big and powerful, from highs like drug-induced highs to lows where I feel I would be better off dead. In between times I am fine.

Sometimes I have delusions, perform strange rituals and write crazy letters, at other times I work, rest and play like anybody else.

I want society to understand that I need acceptance, friendship and love as others do.

I live in a community house and have a part-time job subsidised by the invalid's benefit. I derive a lot of satisfaction from my four-hour-day job and feel I am a valued and useful part of society. Doing anything, work or otherwise, is beneficial. It boosts my fragile self-esteem.

Can you accept people like me for what we are? Like us and love us?

YVONNE TURNER
Wellington

ANARCHO-FEMINISM

Dear Broadsheet,
We are two women who believe that any real change in society must come from outside the "system". We believe it is not necessary for anyone to have authority over another; we can control our own lives. It is important, we feel, to have a wholistic approach to

life, and the oppressions we have in society. We want to stress the interconnectedness of all issues – racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, pacifism, animal rights, children's rights, etc, etc. These are all related to each other in various ways, and to separate them out runs the danger of dispersing our energy, and losing sight of the whole picture.

This is a brief letter that cannot fully cover or explain our beliefs; we wish mainly to contact other women who may be interested in sharing their thoughts on these matters with us. We are primarily challenging patriarchal power and would love to communicate with anyone who wants to discuss anarchist-feminism/non-hierarchical living/challenging the state and all forms of coercive power/ etc...

We have a magazine "The Joy of Anarcho-Feminism" which we will gladly send to anyone interested. Issue 2 is forthcoming – contributions are most welcome!

If you'd like to get in touch, maybe ultimately linking to form some sort of network of like-minded women, please write to us at PO Box 63, Hamilton. In anarchy and peace,
JO AND TREASON

AIDS AND AFRICA

Dear Broadsheet,
Two years ago we launched this educational campaign against AIDS, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices that endanger the lives of women.

Education has been recognised all over the world as a great agent of change and with this realisation we launched this campaign to forestall the myths often associated with some of those cultural practices in order to induce our women to refrain from them. Some societies believe that if the clitoris is not excised it will harm the male organ during intercourse. Some believe that a woman without excision is unclean and will smell, and that the clitoris excretes things that make a woman smell. Others believe that if the clitoris touches the baby's head the baby will die. This led us to believe that if women don't have any contrary information, they cannot risk the death of their baby. Just de-mystifying or giving information can contribute a lot of change.

Moreover, the campaign was prompted by the fact that unlike Europe and America where AIDS have occurred in men mostly homosexual, the opposite is the case in Africa where women are noted carriers. In addition, it is the sexual aspects of AIDS that has riveted public attention over the disease and it is not without good cause, but in Africa recent research has shown the sexual aspects coupled with female genital

For My Mother and her Friends

These are all my mothers, I carry on their line
their shrewd approval shores me up against the world.
They're so familiar to me, all my childhood
I have known these faces lined with love and griefs
their knowledgeable eyes, I've heard them mourn
with friends, laugh over troubles in wicked helpless mirth
their intellect is like a flame that keeps me warm.
These women raised their children marched for peace
they went on strike and walked for weary miles
to change the laws, they took for granted common good.
The furnace of their lives has rendered down this faith
to truths as clear and pure as glass – justice for the poor,
oppressed, and peace on earth, common cause to bind us all.

They're growing old, still wear their soft brown sixties clothes
they've kept the faith of other harder times as well,
I know the thirties bred them, set them
on their lifelong passionate path. Yet they surprise me still
I see them holding up the weight of dangerous truths
and never losing hope, this burning tenderness
of women bent on bringing back the world from war.

Rosie Scott

mutilation is the cause of the present wide spread of AIDS. Uli Linke of the University of California, Berkeley, USA, has associated the spread of the disease in sub-Saharan and Central African countries to the practice. In a letter to the professional *Science* journal in January 1986, she said that "infibulation is associated not only with chronic pain, but with lesions in the vaginal tissue and bleeding leading to the presence of blood during intercourse. In some cases full penetration can take up to nine months during which time anal intercourse is a common alternative. It is noteworthy that the recent outbreak of AIDS in Africa correspond geographically to those regions in which female genital mutilation is still practiced."

We have also attested to this fact, for since the mutilation is performed with special unsterilised knives and blades often gummed with strata of blood victims, the AIDS virus is easily transmitted from one woman to another.

Since the launching of this educational campaign two years ago over radio, television, newspapers, public enlightenment and through home visiting, we have

met with failures and successes. Some traditionalists have labelled us traitors to our own people for exposing the shameful practices of our women in the public. Government agencies have considered the subject too sensitive to assist educational programme with funding and we have therefore been thrown into such serious financial difficulties that this year we were forced to cut our budget by 49 percent. Nevertheless, our gains during the period have been very rewarding and encouraging. Our field workers have covered over 150,000 square kilometres of our sub-continent and have met with 7 million rural women and school girls whom they dissuaded from the practice.

Through the radio, television and newspapers we have counselled our women that purity is spiritual and comes from within and not by ritual mutilation of vaginal organs. As we mark this occasion, this educational programme is being launched in The Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Central Africa for the rural women of that region. This is another milestone in our struggle for freedom from age-long traditional and cultural practices which have become instruments of oppression, abuse and exploitation; and another bold step in fulfilling our ultimate aim of making this programme a continental one.

I wish on my behalf and that of our women to express our sincere gratitude to you for your moral and financial support to the programmes of our centre through which we were able to make such gains during the period under review. As we enter the third year of our struggle, it is expected that our budget might be near \$100,000 considering the new sectors that we have opened. As in all campaigns military or otherwise, enough funds are needed for effective execution to ensure victory. We therefore earnestly appeal to you for your continuous support as our task is such that cannot be accomplished overnight. As a non-governmental Women's Organisation we depend mostly on donations from our friends and supporters for the running of our programmes and services, our success so far is made possible by your support which is a clear indication that you care.

Once again, thank you for your support and solidarity in this difficult time of our struggle. We believe that many little steps of many little people can change the face of the world.

For sending of donation or inquiries write to: Hannah Edemikpong, Women's Centre, Box 185, Eket, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, West Africa.
HANNAH EDEMIKPONG
Nigeria

AIR NEW ZEALAND CABIN CREW

The Equal Opportunities Tribunal found for the Air New Zealand female cabin crew who had brought a case of sex discrimination against their employer. Pat Rosier looks at some of the issues and implications that the case highlights.

Details of the case were reported in *Broadsheet* 156, March 1988.

In brief, the complaint centred around the fact that 17 women who had joined Air New Zealand as cabin crew before 1975 had been held at the bottom level of the four-tier career structure. (Since 1975 women and men have joined the airline on the same conditions.)

As I said in the March 88 *Broadsheet*, "The claim is against the airline for not promoting the women, but the battle is also with the male-dominated union." The men have opposed a fair deal for the women because if they were promoted to the equivalent position in the cabin crew hierarchy as men who began service when they did, it would affect the men's seniority and slow their promotion.

The antagonism of the union towards the women's case has created great difficulty for many of us. We do not want to join the "union-bashing" that has become a favourite sport of the media in recent years, nor do we want to condone its attitude and actions towards this group of its members. In a climate where both employers and the government are undermining the union movement in the so-called interests of a "flexible labour market" and economic development (which is serving the interests of capital rather than workers) it is important to support the union movement, the only organised movement for workers. But within that overall support we have to be critical of a union that fights for a few of its members at the expense of others. This was described in the Equal Opportunities Tribunal (EOT) decision on



PHOTO: GILL HANLY

the case as "a fundamental conflict between the demand for equality made by a small group of senior female air cabin crew and the career expectations of their male colleagues."

Women working for pay and employment equity for women have been saying for a long time now that while legislation will not in itself bring about change it is a necessary first step. The need for ongoing struggle is well established by the fact that, on average, a New Zealand woman in paid work earns two-thirds of what a man earns. They also often miss out on Occupational benefits such as length of service bonuses, loans, promotion opportunities, superannuation and cars. The Working Group on Equal Employment Opportunities and Equal Pay was convened by Margaret Wilson. It reported last year on

the need for "government to legislate against the undervaluation of women's work in the paid workforce, and to redress the obstacles to equal employment for women." (*Broadsheet* 162, October 1988, p 6)) The findings of this report have been, in general, endorsed by women in the union movement.

The EOT report further supports the need for legislation, when it says:

"It is admirable that the seventeen women involved in this case have had the will to persist for so long with their demand for equality. Many others would surely have given up in despair years before. That these women have had to wait so long for a remedy however, is a depressing illustration of how desperately slow the process of change can be. The Tribunal has been reinforced in its view that, while education has a major role to play in fighting sex discrimination, there are occasions when the law must intervene if a remedy is to be provided."

The tribunal goes on to totally vindicate the women's claims and direct the airline to re-align each of them in a position in the cabin crew seniority and career structure that it has determined they would have reached had they been fairly treated. Thus, there are now, for the first time, three females in the highest rank of chief purser. (Four were re-located at this rank, one did not take it.)

The EOT would not apportion blame between the union and the airline because damages are claimed by the women for amounts (over \$12,000) above the level for which the EOT has jurisdiction. If not settled out of court the damages claim will have to go on to the High Court.

Throughout the hearing Air New Zealand kept a low profile, one interpretation of which is that they didn't take it very seriously, another that they were embarrassed by it. There is no mistaking the fact that any efforts they made to redress the complaints of the women (which were made repeatedly, through the union, the Human Rights Commission and directly to airline management, over 14 years) were less concerned with justice than with not antagonising the union. Which again points to the need for legislation: had there

been an equal pay and opportunity act in force the airline would have had no choice but to act decisively and justly. The EOT report comments: "We gained the strong impression that Air NZ regarded the real protagonists as the complainants and the Union and wished to avoid appearing actively to support either." (p 8) The Tribunal came to believe that the union was supporting selected members, as is shown by this statement:

"Although the Union Executive accepted that some kind of solution had to be found for these women, there can be little doubt that its sympathies were for the complaints of the men; and that it was committed to finding a solution which would not disrupt their career expectations.... The demand for re-alignment was seen to be so unreasonable as to be fanciful." (p 22) The union was, "...unwilling or unable really to appreciate the inequity of the women's position ..." (p 29)

But, finds the tribunal: "Responsibility in the end, rested with the Airline." Arguments that the women were less experienced in various ways, that some had shown their satisfaction with earlier options by accepting them, that men and women joining the airline in the early seventies had different career expectations, do not in the Tribunal's opinion, negate the women's claims. "We are satisfied that the disparities between the respective ranks of the complainants and their male counterparts were not due to any material difference other than the difference of sex." In fact, a 1975 agreement, "failed to afford the complainants any credit for their past years of experience in cabin crew work or recognition of their individual merits. What it did was 'lock' in the differences in rank and position between men and women that existed at that time..." (p 41)

The issue of harassment is dealt with in

the report. It states that Air New Zealand's "policies and practices contributed to a situation in which hostility towards many of the complainants has been able to flourish." Media reports on the harassment that was revealed during the hearing totally failed to acknowledge the way in which this particular exercise of male power is so successful in silencing women; complaining is just "not worth it". Air New Zealand has an educative responsibility here.

So the women won their case in that they have been re-aligned in their rightful places in Air New Zealand's cabin crew hierarchy. Compensation has still to be decided and there is some suggestion that the union might appeal the Tribunal's decision. In many ways the struggle for this group of women will not ever be over, but what they have accomplished is a victory for all working women.

PROSTITUTES

The avant-garde or the traitors of the women's movement?
Saskia of the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective (NCPC) writes.

In October last year the NZPC opened its office in Wellington. So far a network with bases in Christchurch and Auckland has been established.

The initiative was started by a group of working girls interested in setting up a support and education group targeting the sexwork industry. There was also an approach by the Health Department expressing concern about Aids and its implications for sexworkers. Recent statistics indicate clearly that we don't have to consider ourselves a high risk group because we have always used condoms. There are no high-risk groups, just high-risk behaviours and we are setting up an education programme to make it clear that we simply cannot afford to let Aids infiltrate our scene.

The collective has established a lot of contacts with different groups around the country as well as internationally. Seeing the need to exchange experiences and to support each other indicates that we consider ourselves not only as AIDS/STD (sexually transmitted diseases) educators but also as being aware of political implications concerning our scene.

Therefore we would like to speak out to the women's movement to show how we see and analyse the old battle ... prostitutes contra feminists.



A lot of what has been written about feminists from the women's movement point of view has been published by non-prostitutes. Working girls are therefore often pictured in a stereotypic fashion. Some feminists see us idealistically, as independent, the money-making avant-garde of the women's movement, using our sexuality as a tool to get what we want out of men with casual sexual encounters.

Another group gives us no credit at all: we're just the traitors of the whole movement, ignoring all the implications of women's exploitation by profiteers and the link between prostitution and the objectification of women's sexuality. Some women's groups see us only in the role of a victim who needs help to find the way back to society. These women offer quite a lot of understanding as long as the prostitute remains in that role and is willing to change sides in sisterhood.

A quite huge group of feminists have the realistic and broad-minded approach that prostitution is a capitalistic reality and would like to create a society without it.



They see the need to change the situation which exploits all of us, actually realising the need to protect all women against discrimination and exploitation. This statement will include all other forms of prostitution, meaning situations where women are not determining their own sexuality, therefore losing a lot of its significance. It still seems to remain a moralistic issue for these feminists to make a statement about prostitution.

Analysing all these different views and statements from an experienced broad field of women's groups, it seems to me that the prostitutes themselves miss out. There is a lot of talk about prostitution but seldom talk *with* prostitutes. There is an image, but there are never real people whose opinions are asked for. The women's movement has published quite a lot about prostitution and how feminists see that particular group. Prostitutes never speak about what they think of feminists.

As a result both groups seem to have no real communication or ways of co-operation at all. Unfortunately there have been a



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FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

few occasions when the feminists widened that gap of misunderstanding even more by joining in demonstrations, boycotts and statements against a whole part of the sex industry without realizing that this is an important working space for a lot of women.

We hope that with the founding of the collective we will have a chance to fill that gap of misunderstanding with real facts and that we also start a discussion that will benefit all women!

For further information please write to the NZPC, P O Box 11-412, Wellington.

THE WOMEN'S AGENDA – WHAT IS IT?

What is your vote worth when all the parties have the same lacklustre policies on women's issues? Is a choice between Tweedledum and

Tweedledee a real choice, Christine Dann writes.

Ninety years ago women thought that having the vote would make a big difference. With access to the ballot box, women would have a say in government and could start promoting women's rights and redressing women's wrongs through Establishment political channels. Only it wasn't quite that simple...

The Suffragettes' dream of a "women's vote" did not materialise and there seemed to be no discernable difference between male and female voting behaviour. Until now...

Pollsters and political analysts in recent years have noted a new phenomenon in the polls, and they have dubbed it the "gender gap". The political opinions of men and women have started to part company, with women being more likely to endorse candidates or parties who promote peace and environmental protection, and show concern for social welfare issues.

Some Wellington women thought it was time to give the politicians a hand with policy making, since policies attractive to women are now definite vote catchers. The idea of a Women's Agenda was launched at the 1988 Women's Studies Association Conference and it is starting to spread. The Women's Agenda is a loose coalition of regional groups, all developing and pushing policies attractive to women, which they want political parties to promise to implement if elected to government. The "mother" group is The Women's Agenda (Wellington), but regions are encouraged to use their own initiative.

Remember – "1990 is coming: women will elect the next government".

The Women's Agenda has already spread south. The fifth of November – sacred to the memory of Guy Fawkes, the only man to enter parliament with honest intentions – was an appropriate day to launch The Women's Agenda (Otago), dedicated to the honest expression of women's political preferences. The 40 women who attended the inaugural meeting were enthusiastic about the idea of developing a women's political programme which would be presented to all parties as what they should offer if they want women's votes. A two hour brainstorming session came up with the following policies which The Women's Agenda (Otago) would like to see put into place:

● ECONOMY

- graduated tax rates
- guaranteed minimum living income for all
- state investment in productive enterprises, especially those working towards co-operative self-reliance, eg Maori enterprises
- more money to the poor

● EMPLOYMENT

- redefinition of work to include useful but currently unpaid labour (and hence eligibility for minimum living income)
- redistribution and protection of employ-



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ment hours, ie same protections/ privileges for part-time workers as full-time workers; highly paid full-time jobs to be split and shared among two or more part-time workers

- revalue "unemployment" - the unemployed are "national martyrs", those employed in high-paid jobs which could be shared are "job robbers"

- no youth rates

● EQUITY

- legislation for pay and opportunity equity
- establishment of Pay Equity Bureau
- ensure female representation by preventing parties from contesting elections unless they have a minimum 40% female candidacy (this is the situation in Iceland)

● EDUCATION

- establish and support a national Gender Inclusive Resource Centre
- the real uses, ie employers, should pay for tertiary education via company taxes

● CHILDCARE

- recognise childcare as a universal right and a state responsibility
- all large work places should provide childcare
- after school care should be available for all children
- the Human Rights Commission should research/support improved child care provisions as part of a "children's rights" brief

● VIOLENCE

- full government funding for women's refuges, rape crisis centres etc (to be run independently)
- mandatory rehabilitation referrals for violent men
- better police training/accountability

● SEXUALITY/REPRODUCTION

- repeal CS&A Act
- Human Rights Commission legislation to prevent discrimination against lesbians/gays
- improved enforcement provisions for Human Rights Commission
- human relationships/sexuality education available in schools from primary school onwards.

Otago invites other Women's Agenda groups to discuss these policies, develop (and share) their own, and start putting pressure on the chaps in power.

There was some time left over for the "serious" side of political campaigning - sloganeering. After 30 minutes slogging away at slogans the group came up with some good ones - please feel free to use them on bumper stickers, letterheads, cards or anywhere else you fancy:

- User pays isn't paying half the users
- Women support women who support women

- Corporate managers can't
- A male government is a minority government

- Real men share power
- Our country needs us
- No kidding around - state funded child-care now

- Let equal pay start today

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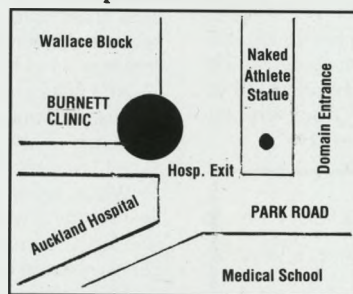
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- The hand that rocks the cradle can rock the boat

- Electricorp is on a big power trip

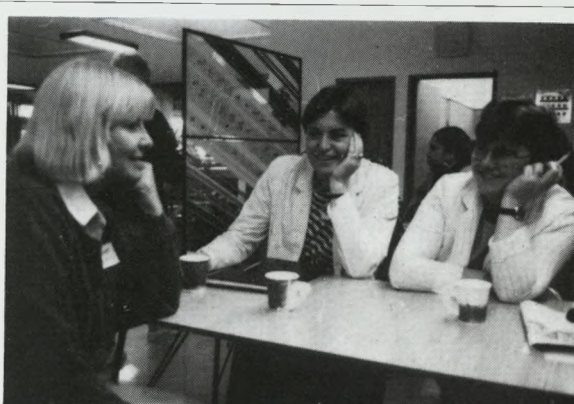
- A woman's place is in the House

Otago women who would like to join The

Women's Agenda (Otago) should write to P O Box 6231 Dunedin North or ring Christine on Dunedin 710-313. Canterbury women who want to join the Agenda network should contact Helen Leahy at 49 Derby St, At Albans, Christchurch 1. The Women's Agenda (Can-

terbury) held a weekend get together on February 25-27. Women from all over the South Island are attended. The Women's Agenda (Wellington) contact is P O Box 9014, Wellington. Wellington has purple & white bumper stickers for sale at \$1 each, with the slogan "1990 is coming: women will elect the next government".

Are there any other Women's Agenda groups out there? Please send a report of your activities, slogans, fund raising ideas etc to Broadsheet for a regular "Agenda Update". Would you like to start a Women's Agenda group in your area? Contact Pat Rosier at Broad-sheet or Christine Dann at Women's Agenda (Otago).



Politically active women, Margaret Wilson, Maryann Street and Sandie Beattie.

PHOTO: GIL HANLY

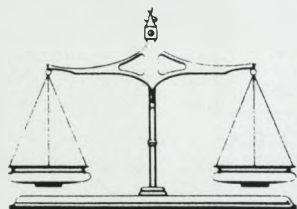
OUR WOMAN IN THE HOUSE



ALISON McCULLOCH

As the Health Minister charged with ushering in the Government's new-order health system, Helen Clark is set to become Labour's highest profile woman.

THE promotion brings her nearer her stated goal of getting "to the top of what I'm doing, which eventually means being a front bencher and in office if the opportunity arises" (from Virginia Myer's book *Head and Shoulders*).



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Whether **Helen Clark** finds herself moved from seat 22 in the House was undecided at the time of writing. Nevertheless, she now has a portfolio which is a political make-you or break-you job.

Clark's predecessor in Health, **David Caygill**, handled the portfolio to the benefit of his career, moving on to the lofty heights of the finance job. On the other side of the political coin, former Health Minister, **Dr Michael Bassett**, was not quite as successful in the job and went on to local government and internal affairs.

Helen Clark is expected to largely continue the quietly assertive style of Caygill. This means sticking to the rigid budgetary constraints the Government is pursuing, and being loyal to Cabinet and Caucus decisions, even if they go against Clark's personal views.

In health, there are the perennial issues which politicians blanch at – like abortion and contraception, the up and coming reproductive technology issue, the endless calls for more money, and arguments about priorities in health care: heart transplants or preventive medicine?

It is unclear how Helen Clark will handle issues like abortion. At a brief interview about her appointment, she asserted that her views were well known and that it was a matter of the individual choice of the woman involved.

But on the question of whether or not she would lead a charge to liberalise the law, Helen Clark is not yet being drawn.

This is one of those articles written without the benefit of an interview with the subject concerned. At time of writing Helen Clark was refusing interviews which would involve questions of detail about her new portfolio. This was because she herself was still being briefed and "coming up to speed".

And there is a lot on which she has to come up to speed, not the least of which is the huge shake-up of the public health system introduced last year by Mr Caygill.

While he mapped out the structure the health system would take, there is much left undecided. This means Clark will be able to put her own stamp on the final product.

There are many areas where she is committed to act, because of past Government promises. Of most recent relevance to women is the Cartwright report on cervical cancer treatment, and also the Mason report on psychiatric services. Mr Caygill committed the Government firmly to act on those reports.

Under the new system the Government will have to negotiate with the area health boards to get many of the recommendations of the reports implemented. That delicate task will be up to Helen Clark.

The negotiations between the Government and the boards will take place this year – it's not known exactly when – and will include funding levels, services the Government wants to see carried out and performance criteria.

The Government and the boards are supposed to AGREE on these contractual arrangements – a seemingly impossible task for many reasons, and especially because health services ALWAYS need and want more money.

Much of any success to be had in the health portfolio may hinge on what sort of relationship the Government, more particularly Helen Clark, strikes with the boards, and how well these crucial negotiations proceed.

Clark has said she will be a "hands on" minister. She has decided not to keep on Mr Caygill's former parliamentary under-secretary Mr Peter Dunne, a political ally of the former Minister of Finance, **Mr Douglas**.

Clark will take seriously the consultation now expected with the Labour Party's industrial wing, although she has already said it is unlikely that the higher prescription charges introduced on February 1 will be able to be cut as preferred by the party.

While Clark is labelled as one on the "left" in the Labour Caucus, she has been strict with her other departments – conservation and the Housing Corporation – about overspending. She restructured the Conservation department after it overspent its budget, but managed to retain a strong state involvement in housing in the face of the Roger Douglas economic revolution, wherein the state was rapidly removing itself from all sort of business activities.

She endeared herself to greenies and many on the left by taking on the mining industry in Coromandel. But although vetoing a mining venture by Spectrum Resources was a courageous move, Helen Clark was careful never to step outside what the governing legislation allowed her to do. However the High Court later ruled that the minister should reconsider her decision.

It has not been an easy road to the health portfolio for Clark. Her frank interview, printed in Virginia Myer's book about successful New Zealand women, outlines the personal anguish and frustration Helen Clark has faced in party and Parliamentary politics.

"When I married a lot of personal criticism stopped. But I felt really compromised. I think legal marriage is unnecessary and I would not have formalised the relationship except for going into Parliament. I have always railed against it privately," she says in *Head and Shoulders*.

Then, once she got into the House she had to face male colleagues.

She said: "People get totally out of control in caucus. Men in particular lose control entirely. They scream and shout and are personally abusive. It's really quite extraordinary. I

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never scream and shout, that's not my nature. I've learnt to deal with their behaviour by taking notes while they're shouting and screaming to make sure that I reply to all the points they've made. That infuriates them. Fran Wilde takes shorthand, which infuriates them too."

Clark was hurt when she failed to be selected as an under-secretary following the 1984 Labour win. She says she was "as deserving as anyone, but I was left out for factional reasons."

But now she is IN. As such Helen Clark is a team player, something which may frustrate activists who long for a minister who, where necessary, will break ranks and speak out on what they believe is an important issue. Going by her past record, Clark is unlikely to take the maverick route. She did not follow her old ally, Jim Anderton, down that path to rebellion and has reiterated her commitment to the team since her health appointment.

In an interview with National Business Review's Linda Clark, Helen Clark said that every person who was honest about their role in any political party would say that they gave up a lot of what they would do as an individual when they accepted the disciplines of working within a system.

In 'Head and Shoulders' she said that besides helping rebuild the Labour Party (with Jim Anderton in the pre-1984 years) her other main achievement had been being influential in Labour's foreign policy. In that role she chaired the Foreign Affairs Select Committee. At one stage it was rumoured she might become Minister of Defence, and it was said that even some of the most conservative defence bureaucrats believed she would be a plus in the job, considered professional and capable.

"I'm an optimist by nature and I like to think there'll be a better day. Perhaps my chance will come with the fifth Labour Government. That could be about 1996 and I'll just be in my prime." (From *Head and Shoulders*). ■



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RESHAPING LOCAL BODIES

Jenny Rankine writes about
some implications of
proposed local body
changes.

The three Rs – roads, rats and rates – were the traditional preoccupations of local bodies in New Zealand. Practical and uncontroversial stuff.

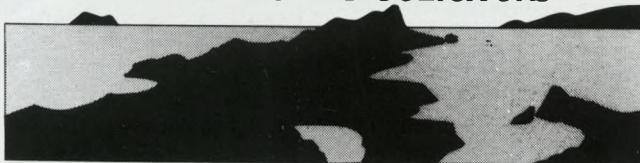
Not many councils have delved into the dangerous waters of social audits, childcare provision or community development. And most shove the buck of Maori consultation and

the Treaty of Waitangi straight back to central government as soon as it's mentioned. Maori kawa (protocol) sits very uneasily in these institutions. After all, our chaotic system of pest destruction boards, noxious plant authorities, drainage boards, borough and county councils, harbour boards and the rest was established by central government as a direct transplant from England in 1876.

The seventh Local Government Commission's jargon about "efficient service delivery" just clothes the traditional preoccupations in the current market speak. It proposes the abolition of hundreds of special purpose boards and territorial councils. They will be replaced with 14 regional councils, which will set policy and have one member elected from every national electorate within their boundary. These boundaries are based largely on water catchment areas. Elections for all the new local

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bodies will be held in October this year.

Within regional council areas there will be smaller district or city councils proposed, amalgamated from existing ones. Most of these councils will be required to have district service centres where locals can register their dogs, pay rates, apply for council housing, get information for planning and permit applications, or about recreation and community services. Local councils will be divided into wards, often bigger than present whole councils, but with only around one to five elected representatives. The commission has suggested the formation of ward committees made up of local people and councillors to represent "sub-district identities". But their composition and number has been left up to the councils.

Public outrage about the changes proposed in this massive reform has concentrated on the forced amalgamations of small boroughs and county councils. The lack of any requirements for Maori partnership under the treaty, gender equality in elected positions or assessment of the social impact of local government decisions has drawn little comment.

Maori input to the reforms has been minimal. The commission was appointed in 1985 and received submissions and reports from local bodies before the Government decided on a more comprehensive review in December 1987. After all that had happened a Maori consultative group was appointed by Local Government Minister Michael Bassett with members recommended by Koro Wetere, Minister of Maori Affairs. It first met early last year.

It was meant to report on treaty issues and the representation of Maori interests and its existence has pre-empted iwi(tribe)-based criticism of the reorganisation proposals. At least one of the group's members is Pakeha and as elected mayors or local body staff, group members are not directly accountable to iwi.

To some Maori the group doesn't have the mana to make the decisions needed. It also seems to have few resources, because its report was not finished in January, two months after the commission's final draft report hit the bookshop shelves. Another instance of setting Maori consultation up to fail. The "Maori perspective" from the group's report was meant to be included in the first legislation covering the reorganisation, planned for introduction to parliament this month.

The group's report had no chance for the detailed consultation and feedback necessary for Maori decision-making about national issues before the bill's introduction. And the only other chance for a say is at the select committee stage, where alterations to bills about proposed new structures are usually minimal.

Auckland Regional Authority Maori planner Hirini Matunga has suggested the creation of a Maori Local Government Commission (LGC) representing the iwi and recommends a raft of changes to the commission's proposals in a report to the group. They include:

- Requiring local and regional government to give effect to the treaty.
- The creation of a Maori constituency or ward in all local councils to elect two members.
- The setting up of Treaty of Waitangi standing committees in all regional councils.
- Tangata whenua (indigenous people) representation on all local and regional council committees dealing with land use and resources.
- Affirmative action policies for appointing Maori staff.
- A requirement that local and regional bodies appoint a Maori cultural adviser.

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- Maori secretariats in all regional councils.
- A requirement that local and regional government include Maori kawa into all standing orders and codes of practice.

These ideas are supported by Auckland City councillor Betty Wark, one of two Maori on the council, and Waereti Norman, Northern Maori representative on the ARA. They are part of a group of Maori councillors who have been trying to meet the commission chairman to talk about these issues since December.

But the chances of any of these proposals being included on the reforms are slim, given the institutional racism inherent in the Pakeha concept of democracy and the vested interests of companies which are exploiting natural resources in denying Maori their treaty rights.

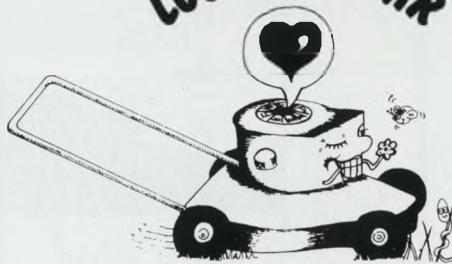
Te Aroha Henare, of the Ministry of the Environment's Maori secretariat in Auckland,

says iwi authorities are pushing ahead with plans for tangata whenua representation on local bodies, Maori purposes zones and iwi management plans "in spite of statutory or commission resistance". The secretariat expects to compile iwi proposals on these constitutional changes in April.

Pakeha feminists' actions on the reforms have focused on blocks to women's participation in local government. They want childcare provision or a childcare allowance as a right for elected councillors and good enough pay to live on. All this has been left out of the commission's brief.

Women in local bodies have been pushing for a childcare allowance for elected members through the YWCA and WEL for five years, says Margaret Cousins, a member of WEL and three Wellington region local bodies. Basseett

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has promised legislations allowing childcare expenses to be reimbursed, but so far nothing has eventuated.

Meeting times are still organised for the schedules of men who are not responsible for children. Some chairmen are sympathetic and alter times to allow women councillors to drop children to school, but others stick to the rule book and the women just can't participate. Margaret gives the example of a two-day meeting on amalgamation organised for the last week of the summer school holidays.

Bassett has also made promises about lifting pay for councillors and mayors. It currently depends on the size of the local body.

Men in local bodies tend to see women's push for a living wage for the work as simple greed. But \$10,000 after tax for the mayor of a small district council means only women with their own run-by-itself business or women whose partners can subsidise them can afford the job. Local body involvement is still out of the question for women in low income families, because not only would it lower their full wage, but their partner's income would go down as s/he picks up more of the housework or childcare.

ARA member Judith Tizard says: "As long as ward committees have a real say in planning and setting priorities for their areas they will be good for women."

With wards now the size of many current councils, all women will have a harder time getting elected, says Betty Wark. More money will be needed to pay for campaigns, especially for regional elections and positions on big city councils. Margaret expects tickets and party groupings to become much more important with the abolition of so many elected positions. "This means the newer younger councillors will be left off. We'll have to go through two or three elections to get back to the broader representation achieved in the last few years."

As with most Rogernomical changes, women in Aotearoa will have to push for a reform of the reform to get any power over the local body decisions which have a big influence on our lives.

TOWARDS 1990

What is the 1990 Commission, who's on it, what is it doing?
Pat Rosier reports.



The 1990 Commission is the one that is not connected to the Commonwealth Games.

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Intending applicants are invited to write for further particulars which are available from the Registrar, University of Otago, P.O. Box 56, Dunedin.

Applications, quoting reference number A88/73 close with the Registrar, Mr D.W. Girvan, on 15 March 1989.
"Equality of employment opportunity is University policy"

It's goal, the brochure states, is to encourage events to take place which will: ensure the Treaty of Waitangi has a central focus; highlight the natural advantages of the nation and the need to conserve them; increase cultural understanding and appreciation of alternative points of view and different cultural backgrounds; encourage harmony, goodwill and tolerance to improve our quality of life; create opportunities for sharing and partnership between all New Zealanders; encourage thinking and planning for the next 50 years. "1990 is your chance to take up the challenge and organise a project" the brochure goes on, and "selected projects" will get some financial support. Others will be "developed", "recognised" and allowed to use the 1990 logo. Most of the Commission's budget will in fact be taken up by the costs of running itself.

It's a good list of liberal aims - to make us all "feel better" without making any substantial changes. No mention of actually honouring the treaty, and words like harmony, goodwill, and tolerance rather than pay and employment equity, justice and resource sharing.

Who is on the commission? It has 13 members: Michael Bassett (chairperson - their word is Chairman), Ronald Scott (deputy chairperson), Peter Boag, Louisa Crawley, Sharon Crosbie, Bruce Gregory, MP, Samantha Johnson, Maurits Kelderman, Jim McLay, June Mariu, Keith Sinclair, Bill Steele, and Rangimarie Te Maiharoa. There are four patrons: Governor General Sir Paul Reeves; Prime Minister, David Lange; Leader of the Opposition Jim Bolger; and Maori Queen, Dame Te Atairangikaahu; and three offices, in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

The Commission explains its logo, a stylised white heron (see illustration), thus: "Before this land was settled, it was a 'place of birds', a sanctuary for many species, as it remains today. The Kotuku, the white heron, is like the people who followed it to these shores - none is native and all have had to adapt to their new environment. In Maori mythology the Kotuku is held in high regard. It was the Kotuku which guided Tane to the three baskets of knowledge. The year 1990 commemorates

milestones in New Zealand's history and launches the nation towards a new horizon. As it guided Tane, so too does the Kotuku symbolically guide New Zealand into that future."

Project Waitangi explain it rather differently: "The Kotuku, the white heron, came to this land, adapted to the natural environment and lived. The Maori came to this land, adapted to the natural environment and lived. The Pakeha came to this land and adapted the environment to them. The Kotuku is dying. The Maori people are dying. The environment is dying."

The question is, "1990, what is there to celebrate?" ■

STOP PRESS

We have sold Broadsheet Bookshop. It will re-open at new premises soon. Full details in April issue.



Margot Roth's column does not appear this month because she is on holiday.

What's nExT

Hot Topics In The April Issue

- ★ Elizabeth Kane - surrogate mother now campaigning against surrogacy.
- Self defence for beginners.
- ◆ Dealing with disability.

BRINGING UP BOYS



— ROBBIE GREENWOOD —

I am a 34 year old European woman and I've been an only parent for nine years raising my four sons. My family is a mixture of genes, backgrounds and cultures. When my firstborn, Dan, was four months old I adopted a newborn part Maori baby from a young friend who was staying with her sister, my best friend. His birthmother and I named him Simon. We keep in touch and "our" child is now 14. In the same week I was asked by Social Welfare (who predicted our open adoption would never work) to care for a three year old physically and emotionally abused severely retarded Maori boy, Drew, for three weeks – and I kept him. That year my IUD failed and I grew and birthed my lastborn, Joe. I had just turned 19 when Dan was born and was mother of four at 21.

I breastfed all the babies and at times overlapped with a toddler and a newborn. Life was incredibly busy, full of giving and organising and nurturing and trying to get enough sleep and getting a local playcentre going to save my sanity.

In the afternoons I'd lie on my double bed with all the babies reading stories and feeding the youngest and singing until they all drifted to sleep. I'd creep ever so carefully cat-like off the bed and out of the room, make a pot of tea and sit on the porch by the bedroom window and sigh blissfully at the quiet and having some time of not being touched or climbed or sucked on! At the first whimper I'd leap up and snatch whoever was waking first and creep out so as not to disturb the others. Then I had time with one baby alone and that was nice.

I had a playpen and Dan used that to sit in to do his drawing and jigsaws with the babies and Drew crawling and running around the outside. Sometimes I sat in it to sew or read the paper and have some space. I was constantly tired and often catnapped till one day I woke to a small fire on the kitchen floor and four delighted toddlers. I stayed awake after that.

I seldom went out socially, it was such a strain to organise and the breastfeeding ones had to come. I loved what I was doing but I was desperately lonely for adult company. I fixed my mind firmly on the day they would all be at school and set about enjoying their babyhood. When Joe, the youngest, was four I got a job driving the school bus and left my husband – not a bad chap but weak and ineffectual and inconsistent in his responsibility to the children.

I've never looked back. We've struggled through some extremely stressful times and financial quagmires – money has always been short and sometimes I have felt quite desperate about

our next meal or rent or school shoes or books. I tried to adopt my foster son, Drew, but was not allowed to without his parents' signature, which they wouldn't give. They never contacted him in all the years he was with me though I took him to see them a few times and they seemed pleased with this.

Medical and educational opinion was that Drew was too retarded to learn and ought to be institutionalised but I spent lots of time with him and with his brothers, we loved him well and he did learn. He went to special classes at a normal school and we taught him at home. Now he can read and write and works three days a week as a waterblaster and two days doing housework for his aunty and uncle with whom he now boards. he has found his own whakapapa, is learning to speak Maori and comes home often at weekends. I am very proud of him.

Now I live with my three younger sons, all teenagers. I am a tall woman but Drew, Dan and Simon are all taller than me now and I find it amazing to grow a child who then grows bigger than me before he is adult! Feeding and clothing my family is a constant struggle and when I go out with friends with fewer or no children I realise what I go without to raise them. It's not only material things, it's headspace, thinking time and time itself – teenagers are high consumers of body and soul food.

Being an only parent means always considering them, working my life and work around their needs, thinking and planning about them and the stages they are at. This feels like a tightrope age – I could lose my influence or it could help them become exceptional and loving men. I feel an incredible responsibility raising males. Also, as they all pass into puberty, grow whiskers, deep voices, hairy legs and huge feet, I become increasingly aware of being one woman in a house-ful of men and at times feel swamped.

However my sons are among my best friends. They are loving and supportive of me, they see me as strong and capable, as the breadwinner, storyteller, organiser, healer, anchor and wise-woman. I have had woman lovers and they are matter of fact about this and don't hide it or ask me to modify how I relate to my lesbian friends. They tell their close friends. During this time when the Maggi ad came on TV singing "My Mum's a Maggi Mum and Maggi Mums are much more fun" they sang "My Mum's a lesbian and lesbians have much more fun"! They learnt this from a friends children.

I've chosen to have long periods of celibacy because the demands of childrearing and work leave little extra time, money or energy and what there is over I want to spend on myself –

reading, walking my dog, dreaming, writing, drawing, painting the kitchen, being close to and having good times with friends. I've missed the intimacy and loving in these times but in a society where little help or support is available to wimyn raising sons, it's been Hobson's choice. At times I've felt out of it in the heterosexual world and an oddball in the lesbian one.

Three years ago I decided to become self employed, after trying many jobs over the years. I wanted to work my own hours and have more control over my life. I trained and now teach courses in stress management, communication skills and assertiveness and also self defence to women and girls. I belong to the Positive Action Self Defence Network (PASDTA) and some of my dearest friends are other self defence teachers around the country. Their support and constant communication by mail helps keep me going through rough patches and the aloneness of being self employed.

Last year my precious sister and soulmate died, the hardest blow of my life. With her grief came all the unexpressed grief over my daughter who died after a minute and a half of life 14 years ago. There were too many children to care for and I didn't take time or space to grieve for her then. I still miss my sister, perhaps I always will. I miss my daughter too, especially as my lads grow into men. Charlotte would be becoming a woman now.

Parenting has been and still is the hardest, longest, hugest, most stressful, wonder-filled, loving, exhausting, joyful, draining, character-building task I have ever done. At times it's been the most delightful but it's also been the loneliest and there have been days when I lost the belief in my ability to cope – a dreadful feeling. To stay sane I've squeezed lots of activities and achievements into my life but there are many directions I've had to forgo and sometimes I resent this. I've worked hard at getting what I want and need to survive happily – a high priority is to have lots

of good times and fun. I laugh heaps and still feel young and enthusiastic about life. These days I have more time to myself and the family workload is much less. I cook three nights a week and they cook one each. They do a quarter of the housework each and so do I. They do their own mending, sewing and shoe repairs and bake for school stalls and clubs. In a few years they will be independent and I'm looking into the future and wondering about and planning for my new life as I've never been an adult and not been a full time live-in mother. I shall make the most of every minute. World – here I come! ■

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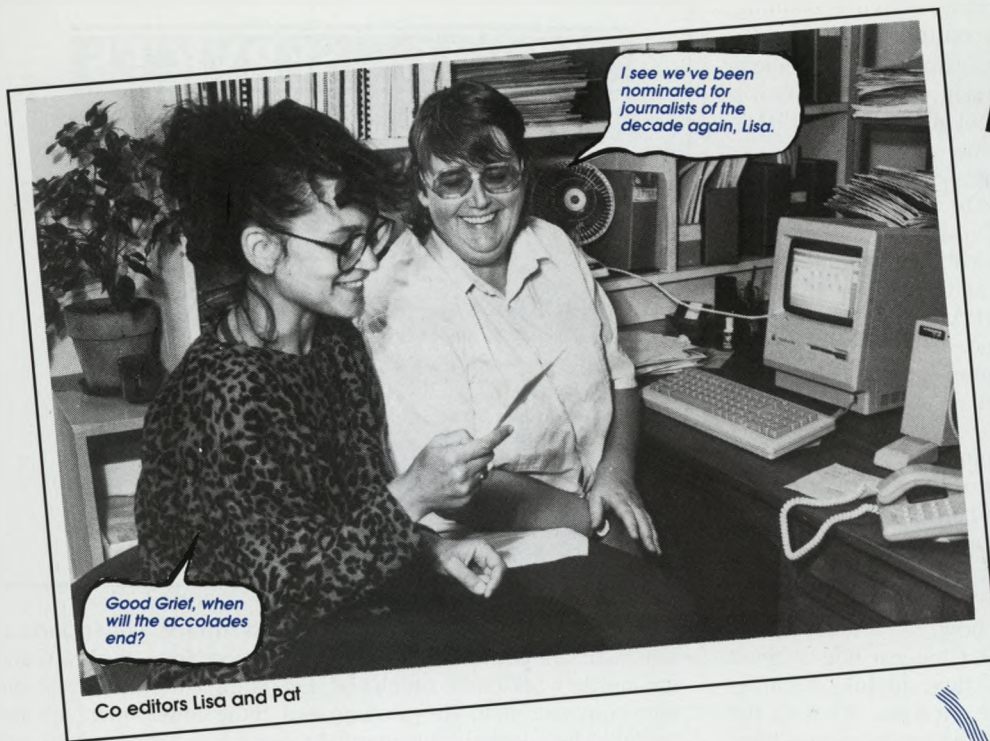
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*By Anton
Chekhov*

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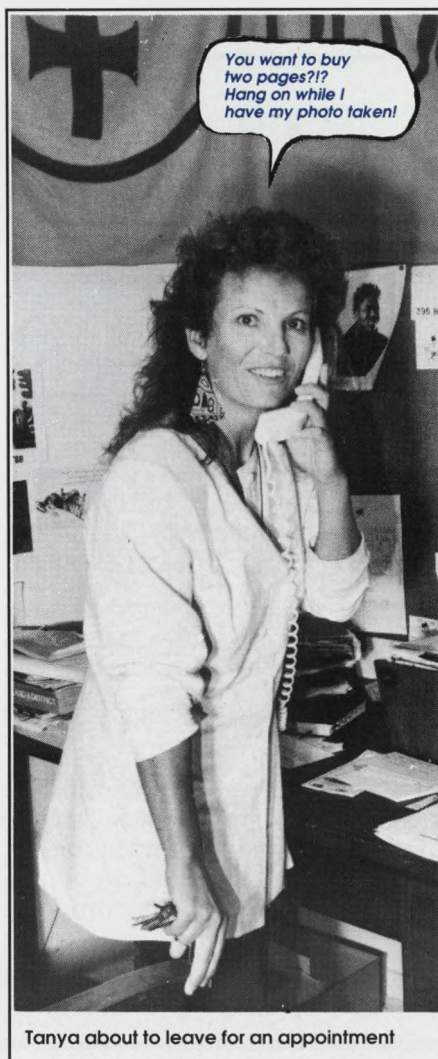
It's nine o'clock on a Thursday morning. Pat is fumbling for her keys at the back door to the office. Lights on, computer on, jug on. Carol arrives. Greetings, Carol sorts the mail for posting, goes to clear the post box, Pat's printing out a story. Lisa and Sharon arrive. Deadline week. Lots to do. Damn, no milk. Tanya rushes in. She's been to one appointment with a potential advertiser already this morning and she's got another at ten. Lisa is fretting about the article she's writing and waiting for her turn on the computer. Carol's got to put the new subs on first and Pat's not even halfway through printing out! Sharon breezes through, copies a few pictures and announces she's off to Monoset and will be back in an hour. The phone rings.

Another issue of *Broadsheet* magazine will be off to the printer in a few days. Ten times a year, since 1972, *Broadsheet* magazine has rolled off the press. Every issue seems like a miracle when you think about the constant money struggles and the small number of paid workers (four full-time jobs, five workers). But the letters, and comments like: "Broadsheet is my life-line," "It's my treat, for me, every month," "I get information I don't get anywhere else," are a constant inspiration, and it is stimulating and exciting to work on a feminist magazine and in a feminist environment.

Here's Edith, come to do sub work, Michelle will be in on Friday to send out advertising invoices, Barbara does the shop on Saturday mornings, the other Pat has already been in this week to work on subs promotion. This volunteer help is so necessary and valuable. Some of the workers are collective members, some are not

but they are all needed.

The *Broadsheet* collective has 11 members at present, and that's about as big as it ever gets. We meet fortnightly. Everyone who has a paid job automatically becomes a collective member. (Information about collective members is always



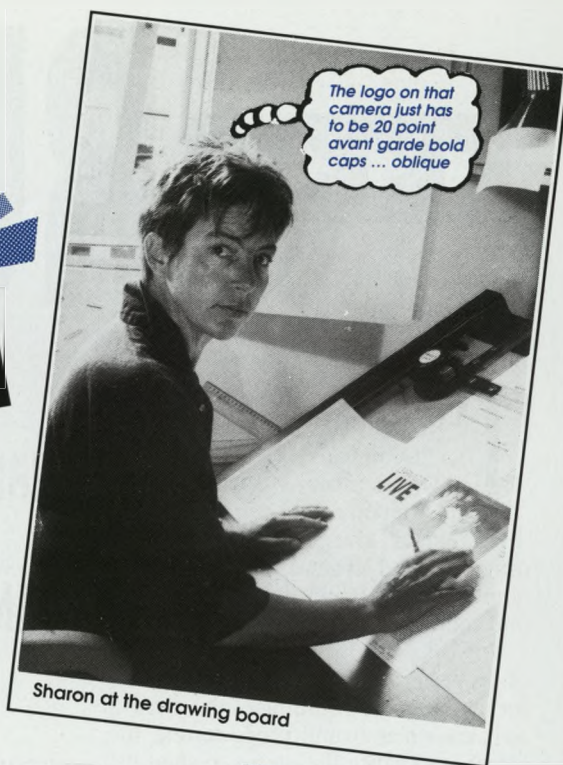
on page 2 of the magazine, alongside "Herspective".) The collective is the editorial and policy decision-making body, but those of us with paid jobs make day-to-day decisions within broad policy. An editorial group, to which all collective members can go, meets regularly to plan content for the magazine. Women also send in articles that they have written because they feel they have something to say. All material for the magazine, except letters (the letters policy is on page 2 of every issue) go through the same process, whether it is an article written by a collective member, one we have asked a woman to write or one that has simply come in through the mail.

First stories and articles are put into a box for collective members to read and respond to. Everything has to be read by at least three collective members. If they all agree on its publication and if there is room for it in the current issue, it will be keyed into the computer, proofread, and passed on for design and layout, all "done by computer". If there is any disagreement about whether it is suitable for publication or if changes are felt necessary one of the editors will discuss this with the writer. If there are strongly opposing views on its publication it will be read by all collective members and discussed at a meeting. Changes to articles are always done in consultation with the writer. When all the changes are done, printout and disk go to Sharon for design, then off to Lucinda at

In

The

Life ...



PHOTOS GIL HANLY

tive" in the April '88 issue), the accounts, the advertising, the grumbles about retail distribution, the phone calls for information, help, advice, contacts and so on.

And always, there are the worries about money. The magazine has three main sources of income - subscriptions, advertising and sales through retail outlets. These never add up to enough, no matter how tightly we operate, which is why the fourth source of support, from women, is vital. We're into social change and justice for women and that's never popular. We won't advertise cigarettes or alcohol and we won't accept sexist advertising, we don't have any grants or subsidies (many overseas feminist publications do), so we have a number of ways in which those women who can afford it can support women's liberation in New Zealand by supporting *Broadsheet*: the 15th anniversary debenture issue, sustaining subscriptions, automatic payments ("share your

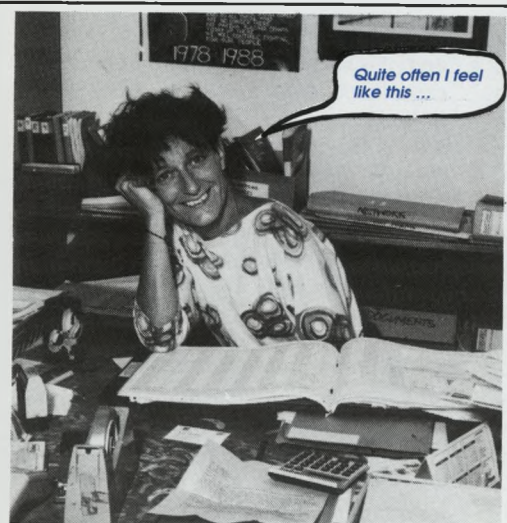
success with *Broadsheet*"), donations and advertising their businesses.

We have to deal with our own embarrassment at always asking readers for money, one way and another. Our present drive is to ask those women who can afford to for automatic payments. Some have already responded, and we include a form with this issue for those who lost the one sent out in December. Please contribute if you can - *Broadsheet* can remain autonomous, independent and publishing only with the support of women who believe in her.

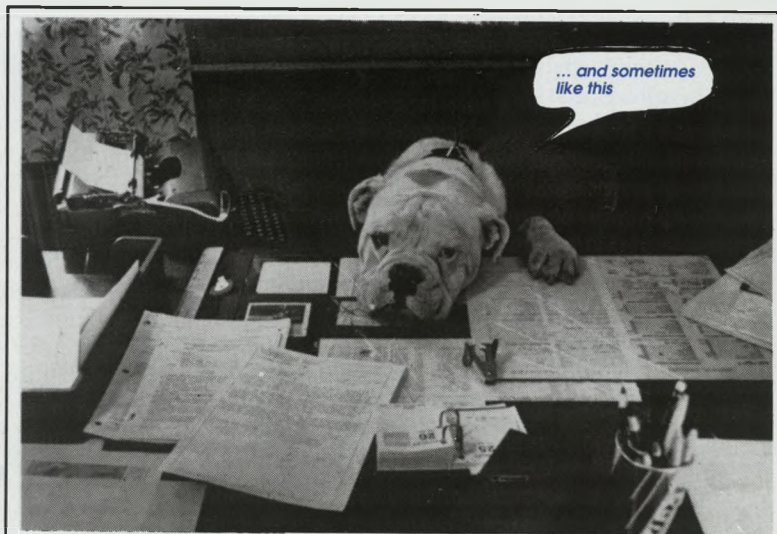
Our glossy pages are our only resemblance to the *Gloss* of TV fame. No Maxines, Magdas or Jasmines in here (see photos!), no carpet, designer clothes or receptionist. Just a bunch of dedicated feminists who think *Broadsheet* is unique (for example, where else would you get the health and contraceptive information we publish?) and important. ■

Lasergraphix. There might be a phone call to Gil for photos, to Helen for a cartoon, or to one of the other artists who do illustrations. We all rush to see the cover image or photo when it comes in - the colour makes it particularly exciting. There's lots of consultation throughout the processes, but this bald description does not convey the lively discussions that go on around the office when articles are being considered and cover images chosen.

There is of course more to producing a magazine than getting words and pictures onto the page. There's the subscriptions list, the mail (see Carol Jillsun's "Herspec-



Carol at her desk



Carol's alter ego at her desk

RU486

The RU in the name stands for Roussel-Uclaf, a pharmaceutical company based in France. The number is apparently an experimental number that stuck. The generic name for the drug, derived from the progestogen norethisterone which is used in some oral contraceptive pills, is mifepristone.

It works by blocking the body's use of progesterone, the hormone essential for maintaining the lining of the uterus, so is known as an anti-progesterone. Its effect is to cause the uterus to shed its lining, including any fertilised egg attached to it. It is more effective when used in combination with prostaglandin, which also reduces side effects (nausea, vomiting and sometimes heavy bleeding). The main advantage of RU486 is that surgical intervention can be avoided in most cases.

France's National Ethics Committee ruled that RU486 can be used during the first ten weeks of pregnancy from the last menstrual period. It is also being tested as a contraceptive, and as a morning-after method, but correct dosage and timing have not been worked out for these yet. It is being tried with prostaglandin to induce late abortions as well. Other possible uses that are being explored include inducing birth (because certain doses produce uterine contractions); reducing premenstrual syndrome symptoms (if there is in fact a link between these symptoms and progesterone); and inhibiting the growth of certain kinds of breast cancers. None of these are any more than possibilities at present, but they do indicate that the drug is being widely studied.

There have been some recent trials of its effectiveness, with and without prostaglandin. The following reports on these trials are taken from the Women's Global Network on Reproductive Rights Newsletter, (WGNRR) Jan-Aug 88.

"In California 50 women were given a single oral dose of 600mg (12 tablets) of RU 486 at or before 49 days from last menstrual period. Forty-four aborted completely. Five had incomplete abortions and had to have suction curettage, and one was lost to follow-up. RU486 became less effective the longer the pregnancy. At 34 days or less from last

PAT ROSIER WRITES ABOUT A DRUG WHICH INDUCES AN ABORTION EARLY IN PREGNANCY

menstrual period it was 100% effective. At 42 days or less it was only 85% effective. Most women began to bleed within three days, with a range from 1-16 days. No blood transfusions were required. Of the 44 women who aborted completely, 35 experienced some cramping, 27 nausea and six had vomiting. No other complications occurred and none required hospitalisation. There was greater blood loss than with suction curettage. (D Grimes et al in *Abortion Research Notes* Dec 87 p5.)

"In a study in Edinburgh, 100 women were given 400-600mg doses of RU 486 followed 48 hours later with a synthetic prostaglandin analogue vaginal pessary. They were all less than 56 days beyond last menstrual period. Ninety-five had complete abortions; the other five required surgical aspiration. Only 10 women had diarrhoea or pain requiring opioid analgesia. (Roger and Baird *The Lancet* 19-12-87, in *Abortion Research Notes* July 88 p5)

"In a comparative trial in Edinburgh, vacuum aspiration was compared with prostaglandin used alone, 600mg over four days of RU 486 used alone, and 600mg of RU 486 over four days used in combination with one prostaglandin pessary on day three. The women were all 56 days or less after last menstrual period. It was found that RU486 with prostaglandin was 95% effective, and RU 486 alone was only 60% effective. [However, 96% complete abortions with vacuum aspiration is a low figure. It is usually 99% with a skilled practitioner.] There was little difference in the number of days of vaginal bleeding after abortion between the four groups, although there was wide individual variation (mean 10 days, range 1-34 days). Blood loss was described as

being similar to having a heavy period in one earlier study. (Cameron and Baird "Early Pregnancy Termination" *Brit Journal Obs and Gynae* March 88 pp271-276.)"

In all the trials it appears that suction curettage was given if the abortion was incomplete. The effects of RU486 on an embryo which survives are completely unknown: as it is administered in early pregnancy damage is a real possibility. The effects on women mentioned are immediately following use. There is no information about long-term effects or the effects of multiple use.

Medical supervision is necessary because of the (albeit small) risk of haemorrhage and to allow checking for incomplete abortion and vacuum aspiration if necessary. The drug would not terminate an ectopic pregnancy. For these reasons it should not become possible to get the pills and pessaries and "do it yourself".

Anti-abortionists hate RU 486 and are lobbying against it in France, the US and the UK. At one point a threatened boycott of all Roussel-Uclaf products had it withdrawn in France, but the French government ordered the company to keep it on the market. The National Right-To-Life Committee in the US has threatened to boycott any company that tries to market RU 486 there. Even if a company takes it on there would be a delay of several years before federal safety requirements were met. The drug is apparently available in China.

The Mouvement Francais pour le Planning Familial (MFPP) in France give a qualified approval to continued experience with the drug under controlled conditions. The points that they see as needing further attention are (from WGNRR Newsletter):

1. A knowledge of miscarriage in the person administering it as it causes a spontaneous abortion.

2. Early and precise pregnancy testing so the length of gestation is known.

3. A careful watch for ectopic pregnancy.

4. Follow-up to check that the abortion is complete. Retained products could lead to problems like infection and anaemia and other medical problems could be affected.

5. The prescribing doctor should be readily available by phone for information, reassurance and advice.

MFPP also consider that the psychological consequences for women of using the drug should be given more attention. Women like the idea of the drug but worry about going through the process alone and not knowing what to expect. They also note how unusual it is for a new type of molecule like this to be commercialised after only five years. They consider this to be an important political implication.

Does the drug have any potential for use in New Zealand? As reported by ALRANZ, abortion laws in New Zealand apply only "after implantation", a process which takes several days – usually from about the fifth day after fertilisation to about the 14th. The law does

not say whether abortion laws apply after the start or the end of implantation, a deficiency which becomes more obvious with the development of new techniques. Margaret Sparrow, writing in the ALRANZ newsletter, says its principal use would be for contrageston (any method that destroys or dislodges an early implantation such as menstrual extraction) and the abortion laws would apply when implantation was complete. "This would mean certification by two certifying consultants and administration in a licensed institution, both unnecessarily cumbersome but possible. Technology has already taken over our abortion laws! Another reason for their repeal."

Dr Helen Roberts, medical director of New Zealand Family Planning, agrees that our present abortion laws

create some problems for the potential use of RU 486. She would like to see it available in New Zealand as another choice.

The women at WGNRR generally agree with the MFPP position. Marge Berer reports, "We also note the lack of information about long term effects, which is no small issue. And we think a distinction should be made between supporting the laboratories and supporting controlled and well organised trials of the drug which are independent of commercial consideration. Lastly, we feel strongly that in itself, this method is not a solution for clandestine abortions." ■

Information from: WGNRR Jan-August 1988; ALRANZ December Newsletter, P O Box 28-008, Wellington; off our backs Dec 1988.

WHAT'S NEW

■ AUCKLAND

Feminist Ritual Class Six weeks starting Feb/march. Contact Juliet Batten, 696-123.

■ HAMILTON

Waikato University Continuing Education Health Advocacy and Lobbying, Sat 18 April; The Superwoman Syndrome, 6 Tuesdays, 7.30-9.30, beg 7 March; Assertiveness in the Workplace, 8 Wednesdays, beg 15 March; Practical Management skills for women, 15, 16, 17 March all day and 6 April morning; Women's Creative Residential Weekend, 17-19 March; Honouring our Foremothers, four Thursdays from 6 April, beg 7.30; There is life after incest, 31 Mar - 3 April; Nga ahua-tanga mo nga wahine maori e hiahia ana ki te tiaki ki te whakahaere nga Kohanga Reo me nga komiti a iwi, 3-4 and 10-11 April. For more information Phone 62889, Extn 8195

Patients Rights Advocacy Meetings first wed of month at 7.00pm, 65 Tawa St, Hamilton, phone (071) 435-837

Lesbian Links Tuesdays 7-10, phone 80341

■ WANGANUI

Lesbian Line available for information and support on Mondays, 7-10pm, phone (064) 56833

■ DUNEDIN

YWCA 97 Moray Place. P O Box 5146, Dunedin. Childcare centre, programme director and community youth worker. Nearly new clothes shop and hostel accommodation (mixed). Ph 776-781.

■ NATIONAL

Not the 1990 Calendar! Produced by the He Taua/Atac Coalition. \$10 plus GST per copy to P O box 68553, Newton (Auckland) Tamakaura Makaurau

Women Against Pornography Latest policy available in a booklet called "Speaking Out – an anti-pornography proposal." This is a good overview of WAP's definition of pornography and what can be done about it legally and non-legally. Cost \$1.50. Write to WAP. Box 475, Wellington for a copy.

■ INTERNATIONAL

Directory of Women's Media 1989 edition available for US\$15 from WIFP, 3306 Ross Pl, NW, Washington DC 20008, USA

Pink Ink is inviting lesbian and gay writers to contribute to an anthology of recent lesbian and gay writing to be published late 1989. Closing date for contributions: 30 April. Write to: Pink Ink collective, P O Box 378, Newtown 2042, Australia.

Journal of Women's History Beginning May 1989 from Indiana University Press. Indiv subs US\$20, Institutions US\$40 to Indiana University Press, 10th and Morton Sts, Bloomington IN 47405, USA

Scratches Records Specialises in women on record, 91 King St, Newton, NSW 2042, Australia.

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FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES

WOMEN & AIDS



GLOBALLY, more men than women have AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). Consequently researchers and medical practitioners have often ignored women in studies and treatment of the disease. And until recently education and preventative work has been targeted at gay men. Yet it is among heterosexual women that AIDS is growing the fastest.

In New York City the leading cause of death in women between the age of 25 and 34 is AIDS. In 1986, 186 young women died of the syndrome, 63 more than died from all types of cancer.

Australia has 34 reported AIDS cases in women, six of these are recorded as having been infected through heterosexual transmissions, 23 through blood transfusions, one through intravenous drug use, while the transmission mode for the remainder is unknown.

Here in Aotearoa only one woman is recorded with the Department of Health as having AIDS, contracted while she was overseas. But 13 out of this country's 402 HIV positive people are women.

♦ A DEARTH OF RESEARCH

The glaring need for research about the way AIDS affects women was made obvious last year when an article entitled "Reassuring News About AIDS: A Doctor Tells Why You May Not Be at Risk,"

A shocking four letter word, AIDS became a common part of our vocab in the 1980s. But as a new decade fast approaches and brings with it fresh, often conflicting information, what does AIDS mean for us as women?

Lisa Sabbage
dipped into the files

appeared in the January 1988 issue of *Cosmopolitan* magazine.

The article was written by a clinical professor of psychiatry and clinical professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at New York Medical College, Dr Robert E. Gould. In the article he maintained that if the genitals of both heterosexual partners are "healthy and intact – that there are no lesions or other openings due to infections," then HIV cannot be transmitted. Although Dr Gould acknowledged that his conclusions were not supported by all experts, he went on to write that "there is no denying that the only undisputed route of transmission is through direct introduction of the virus into the bloodstream. And

I maintain that it is the *only* route. Which is why I believe that if the conditions of heterosexual intercourse as I have outlined them are met, a woman is quite safe from contracting AIDS."

Dr Gould gave several justifications for his belief that women were safe, including that the secretions of the vagina act as protection against lacerations and "would also neutralise the virus if present," and that all bodily secretions, including saliva and gastrointestinal fluids, dilute the HIV virus, rendering it impotent. He explained that data about the 2,000 cases of AIDS in which heterosexual intercourse with an infected partner was the only reported risk factor was unreliable, due to falsified statements by those infected!

Health professionals and AIDS workers criticised the article as dangerous and irresponsible, especially as the magazine is widely read by young American women who could now be at risk of infection. Gould's ideas contradict studies which clearly imply that penile-vaginal sex can infect women unless precautions are taken. Needless to say, Gould's New York teaching colleagues were quick to disassociate themselves from his unfounded conclusions.

Gould's hypothesis ignores that it is almost impossible for women to know if their mucosa is intact. Women are susceptible to many conditions that have no symptoms such as candida vaginitis, (a common infection in women of childbearing age), chancroid, and chlamydia (quite common in sexually active young

Cartoon by Alison Bechdel
From *Making it a Woman's Guide to Sex in the Age of AIDS*. Firebrand.

women). These infections and others like herpes and syphilis can cause genital ulcers which have been associated with increased HIV transmission. Because these conditions don't have symptoms a woman may not know of her infection and therefore her vulnerability.

All of this only highlights the gaps in research about AIDS as it affects women and the danger of misinformation that lies there. What little research has been done suggests that the AIDS virus affects women differently from men.

◆ TRANSMISSION AND EFFECTS

Women appear to become infected with the AIDS virus more easily than men. Although the AIDS virus can be found in saliva and vaginal secretions and the menstrual blood of an infected woman, much higher concentrations of the virus are found in semen, so during unprotected sex women receive a much larger dose.

Studies suggest that a woman who has repeated sex with an infected man will become infected about 53 percent of the time, while men become infected only about 33 percent of the time after repeated sex with an infected woman. This is significant in the light of attempts to blame prostitutes for the spread of AIDS. In fact clients are more likely to infect sex workers than the other way round.

Some co-factors seem to make women more vulnerable to AIDS. One of these is the use of oral contraceptives, although this may be for social rather than biological reasons. In *Off Our Backs*, (August/September 1988), Janis Kelly cites a study of high-risk women. Ninety one percent of those who became infected during the study period had used oral contraceptives vs. 73 percent of those who remained uninfected. But as Kelly points out, this could be because women who don't use the pill are more inclined to use condoms, or because oral contraceptives make the vaginal and cervical cells more susceptible to the virus.

There is very little information about other contraceptive methods in connection with AIDS. IUDs can scratch the cervix, which must increase the risk of infection as the virus can be transmitted through infected blood entering any cut, scratch or open sore.

Once infected, women develop different opportunistic infections from men. Cells in the cervix can be directly infected by HIV, and this causes a characteristic cervicitis in the majority of women with HIV infection. This HIV cervicitis appears to be the precursor of cervical cancer in some women and develops very early in the disease – well before serious immunodeficiency. It's being recommended that HIV-posi-

tive women get a colposcopic examination and cytology every six months.

Also, while men are more likely to develop a rare form of skin cancer called Kaposi's sarcoma (KS), women with AIDS tend to contract an uncommon pneumonia, *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP), and/or herpes simplex virus infections. People with KS have a better chance of surviving, although PCP can be treated effectively with antibiotics if caught early enough.

Some claims are being made that women with full blown AIDS die sooner than men with the same condition. But, in Australia at least, this claim is based on data showing that women are in hospital for fewer bed days than men. The fact that women are usually the least able to afford hospitalisation and conscious of responsibilities like children, is one possible explanation for this disparity. Again, this shows the need for research designed to look at social as well as medical factors in the way AIDS affects women.

In the *Australian National AIDS Bulletin*, Elizabeth Reid states that there is some evidence (though not overwhelming), that pregnancy accelerates the progress of the disease. She rightly concludes that women must therefore retain their right and access to termination of pregnancy, and protect their right to procreate. In the United States where 50 percent of women with AIDS are Black and 21 percent are Latinas, people are advocating the enforced sterilisation of AIDS infected women, particularly of poor Black women. This move toward non-consensual sterilisation violates the rights of women, and also has racist connotations in its focus on Black women and Latinas.

About half of the children born to AIDS infected women will be infected themselves, although that estimate is disputed

and different sources put it at from 20 to 60 percent. Babies can acquire the disease perinatally, that is before they are born or during the birth process. There is also some data which implies that the virus can be transmitted from mothers to babies during breast feeding.

It is not known whether hormonal changes during the menstrual cycle affect a woman's risk of infection.

◆ LESBIANS AND AIDS

Many women believe that lesbians are in the lowest risk group, and while this is true, safe or "sensible" sex is a good idea for lesbians too.

In the United States there have been 27 reported cases of AIDS in lesbian women and 42 in bisexual women. Most of the lesbians acquired AIDS through the use of injectable drugs and there has been only one documented case in the States of lesbian to lesbian transmission. Researchers speculate that as a result of "traumatic" sexual activity both women developed vaginal bleeding which may have contributed to the transmission of the virus. However, the case could not be proven because the second woman had a number of heterosexual contacts as well.

Artificial insemination with sperm from a donor is an area that women should be cautious around. It is important to get a full medical and sexual history from a possible donor.

The danger for lesbians is complacency and fear. Some women may be reluctant to reveal that they have slept with men, others may feel that it is unnecessary to ask a partner about her sexual history. Honesty and responsibility are the key words here.

Janis Kelly in *OOB* believes that an especially dangerous point for both lesbian and heterosexual sex is oral sex during or around the time of a woman's menstrual period. If a woman has HIV her menstrual blood will contain the AIDS virus.

◆ TREATMENT

Just as there is a dearth of research about AIDS and women, women have until recently been excluded from clinical trials of potential AIDS drugs.

A number of antiviral drugs and immune-boosting drugs are being tested, and while none of these are cures for the illness, they have been successful in slowing down its progression. The latest drug hope is called azidothymidine (AZT), but while it has cut death rates among some American AIDS patients, testing is not complete and has not yet looked at the drug's effects on women.

AZT is the only drug the US monitoring body, the Food and Drug Administration has approved for trials. But the FDA



PHOTO: LLANKAVU COURTESY JPAPE RIB

says it cannot regulate the price of treatment, about \$8,000 per year, which excludes those with the least money, Black and Latina women. The trials require women to be sterilised, and IV drug users are considered unreliable and are excluded from tests. So far scientists don't know whether the drug has any side effects in women.

That scientists have recently planned to test AZT on pregnant women in the hope of preventing infection of their fetuses before birth is telling. Women are not being considered as infected people who need help, but as potential infectors who need to be protected against. The only evidence that AZT may prevent infection of fetuses is some studies of pregnant mice that suggest that the drug may moderate the effects of the virus.

Another concern is around experimental AIDS vaccines, which will no doubt, be tested on large numbers of high risk African people before being allowed into America and other western countries like New Zealand. Janis Kelly writes: "I suspect that women of childbearing age and sex workers will be high on the list of prospects. The issue here is not, of course, that African people cannot give informed consent to such experiments. The issue is that they are not likely to be thoroughly informed, or asked to give only reasonable consent, or perhaps even told what they are being injected with."

◆ LEARNING TO SAY NO TO THE WHITE KNIGHT

Beyond the purely medical factors that place women at risk of AIDS, there are a number of social factors.

Women are encouraged from childhood to be socially passive. As they grow older this extends to their sexuality. The net result of this is that many women lack assertiveness in day to day activities and relationships. Saying no to sex or insisting on safe-sex becomes difficult, even when women are aware of the risk of transmission. To refuse sharing a needle in a peer group becomes almost impossible. This social conditioning makes women vulnerable to AIDS infection in a different way from men.

Also, the myth of Romantic Love, far from floundering in the 1990s, appears to be gaining strength. Surprisingly pervasive in both gay male communities and among women, a strange kind of double

standard exists in which safe sex is practised when the casual affair or one-night-stand is involved, but may not be where True Love is concerned. Women are placing themselves at risk for love. For instance, American studies reveal that many female prostitutes insist on condoms for clients, but not with their regular partner.

All of this leads one to think that infor-

of transmission, yet less than half took precautions against infection. Most of the young women said they did not see AIDS as a real threat and that none of their friends would have AIDS anyway. Peer pressure reared its ugly head with many young women feeling that carrying a condom is to appear to be "prepared" for sex and will lead them to be labeled as sexually active and "wanting" sex.

During discussion embarrassment about asking partners to wear condoms was voiced. The young women wanted to know how to get their partner to wear a condom. Communicating with partners about sexual issues was a problem, as was saying no to sex. Thirty eight percent of young women said they had sex when they did not want to.

Education should be directed toward changing attitudes: carrying a condom should be seen as a responsible precaution not an invitation to sex.

All areas of the community need to involve themselves in this education work. It should not be solely the role of a "Big Brother" Health system disempowering those that AIDS affects. In a society in which we are not all equal, we do not have an equal ability to protect ourselves. Education work needs to cater for these differences of identity, values, economic realities, lifestyles and culture.

◆ SAFER SEX ◆

SAFER SEX

AIDS is caused by a virus called human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). This virus attacks the body's immune system and leaves it open to infections and cancers which healthy people with intact immune systems can fight off. This virus can be transmitted from one person to another only by the exchange of body fluids, through sexual activity or sharing needles for instance.

The virus can be found in semen, vaginal and cervical juices, blood and menstrual blood, but these have to enter the bloodstream of another person to spread the virus. HIV can also live in breast milk, saliva, urine, feces or tears, but cannot be transmitted through saliva or tears.

RISKY SEX

Penile-vaginal intercourse without a condom.

Anal intercourse without a condom. Sharing sex toys (anything like vibrators, dildos, restraints, whips) from one person to another without condoms or cleaning them between usage.

Any kind of sex where blood, including menstrual blood, is shared between people.

Using several fingers or your hand inside the vagina or anus followed by intercourse without a condom.

LOW RISK (Some cases of AIDS may be from these)

Oral sex on a man without a condom if he

comes in your mouth.

Oral sex on a woman during her period if a barrier or dental dam (a small square piece of latex placed over the vagina) is not used.

Using several fingers or your hand inside the vagina or anus, if a glove is not used and you have open sores on your hand.

VERY LOW RISK SEX (May be possible but no known cases)

Oral sex on a man without a condom if he pulls out before he comes.

Oral sex on a woman not having her period.

One or two fingers in the vagina or anus if you have open sores, rashes or cuts on your hands.

SAFER SEX

Protected vaginal or anal intercourse using a condom. It's even safer if spermicidal jelly or cream containing nonoxonyl-9 is used with the condom.

Touching or masturbating each other, body rubbing, hugging, dry kissing, licking nipples or skin, massage, fantasy.

You could use latex barriers on women for oral-anal sex. There are no known cases of women catching AIDS from oral sex.

Use condoms on your sex toys, clean them between people with soap and water, then soak them for 10 minutes in rubbing alcohol and rinse well with hot water.

Adapted from *Healthsharing*, Fall 1988.



mation on its own is not enough, that education must be undertaken to change the attitudes of women, and particularly those of young women.

An Australian survey of 97 women between 16 and 18 years old found that the women had a high level of understanding

◆ AIDS IS A WOMEN'S ISSUE

Like it or not, AIDS is going to be around for a while and will continue to affect women, not only as sufferers of the illness, but as care-givers to the sick.

The virus does not exist in a social or political vacuum. It is not coincidental that research has paid little attention to women except as stereotyped prostitutes and childbearers, both of whom are portrayed as potential infectors rather than as sick people. Women have to protect themselves against the AIDS virus, and continue the same old battle for resources, information, and the right to protect themselves that is common to other issues of concern to women. ■

I drew heavily on the following sources to write this article:

The Global Impact of AIDS on Women, Janis Kelly, *Off Our Backs*, Aug/Sept 1988.

Women and AIDS, Elizabeth Reid, *AFAO National AIDS Bulletin*, Aug 1988.

Talking About AIDS, Susan Abbott, *AFAO National AIDS Bulletin*, Aug 1988.

Policing AIDS: Social Control and Sexual Disease, New Doctor, no. 46, Dec 1987.

WHO IS MY MOTHER?



ILLUSTRATIONS: LINDA SABBAGE

PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO CONTROL REPRODUCTION. Infertile women have sought ways to conceive; fertile women have tried to prevent conception and aborted unwanted pregnancies. After a long history of trying to control the occurrence (or not) of birth it is perhaps surprising how ill-prepared we are to respond to the many questions raised by the most recent developments in reproductive technologies.

Perhaps we never expected to be able to separate sex and reproduction so thoroughly, or to fragment the role of mother into parts for different women – a genetic mother who “donates” an ovum, a gestational or birth mother who carries the foetus to term and a nurturing mother who raises the child. We didn’t know we would be able to decide before someone’s birth

**AN EXPLORATION
OF SOME OF THE
ETHICAL ISSUES THAT
ARISE WHEN A
WOMAN IN A
WESTERN CULTURE
(BRITAIN, NORTH
AMERICA, AUSTRALIA,
NEW ZEALAND...) HAS
A BABY FOR
SOMEBODY ELSE**

This article is an adaptation (with permission) by Pat Rosier of a longer paper written by Americans Sandra Schwartz Tangri and Janet R Kahn, published in *American Psychologist*

whether she or he is the kind of person we would like to have as a child, a neighbour, a co-habitant of the planet; or to decide for each of them whether, given their genetic make-up, their life will be “worth living”. Whether we expected these things or not we have, in fact, given ourselves these powers.

One of the opportunities these powers present is the chance to create and value a wider variety of relationships between adults and children, a wider variety of family types. One of the dilemmas is deciding how to name these roles. Language has great power, it both reflects and shapes our attitudes and feelings.

The power of labels was demonstrated during the Baby M trial in the US, where a woman who had contracted to have a child for the man who provided the sperm and his wife, decided after the birth that she wanted to keep the child. In that trial, the

father and his wife (William and Elizabeth Stern) referred to the mother (Mary Beth Whitehead) as the "surrogate" mother, while Ms Whitehead referred to Mr Stern as the "sperm donor". Each party attempted, through their choice of words, to downplay the other's parental relationship to the child. Each party attempted through their language to label the others' role as more mechanical and less familial.

Since the pregnant woman, whether or not she expects at the outset to raise the child, is both the genetic and the birth mother, it seems unreasonable to suggest her mothering, or her body, is surrogate in nature. If she is serving in any "surrogate" capacity, it is as a surrogate wife since she is doing something that the man's wife cannot or will not do. (In fact, artificial insemination (AI) could take place between a woman and a man who has no wife.)

The humanity of everyone involved will best be served by recognising everyone as a real something-or-other and no-one as a surrogate. Then we can refer to genetic mothers and fathers who contribute ova and sperm, birth mothers who carry and deliver the babies and nurturing or social mothers and fathers who raise the children. Instead of "surrogate" parenting, we can use the terms "contractual parenting" or "collaborative parenting".

We will explore contractual parenting in the light of the following feminist principles: the belief that a woman has a right to control her own body; our commitment as feminists to combat objectification, whether that refers to women being treated as sex objects, people with disabilities being seen as simply the disability and so on; the positive value feminists place on diversity – our vision of a world in which differences are valued and respected; the notion that the personal is political and that understanding this will help us to see the connections between individual needs and social good; and the importance of the individual's right to informed consent.

These principles are not so much rules to live by as things to think about: often helpful and sometimes troubling, especially when they seem to be in conflict with each other. How helpful each principle is depends on whether we concentrate primarily on the matter of protecting individual rights or on the question of what kind of society we want to create. For instance, the feminist ethic of controlling our own bodies mirrors the values of the larger society in emphasising the rights of the individual. But feminism is not simply an argument to extend individual rights to women (and others), but proposes a profoundly different vision of how society could operate. So we are thinking and speaking about the interests of individuals at the same time as we try to remake society.

The basic principle of feminist ethics that a woman should have control over her own body and hence her reproduction underlies the feminist position that



THE HUMANITY OF EVERYONE INVOLVED WILL BEST BE SERVED BY RECOGNISING EVERYONE AS A REAL SOMETHING-OR- OTHER AND NO-ONE AS A SURROGATE

women should have access to abortion on demand and freedom from coerced sterilisation, among others. How can we apply it to consideration of contractual parenting?

At first glance it seems straightforward enough to say that this principle means that women have the right to choose whether, when and how to get pregnant as well as whether and when to end a pregnancy. For example, a woman has the right to use AI to get pregnant. Feminists have long supported the right of women to do this, whether because of a sterile male partner or absence of a male partner and desire to raise a child, either alone or with a female partner.

Prenatal care can also be considered in relation to this principle of control over our bodies. One feminist position is that only the pregnant woman – including a contractual mother – and no-one else, should have control over her medical treatment. She should also be able to refuse any medical intervention, including tests, procedures, medications and surgeries. The pregnant woman should be free to have or refuse any medical intervention, including abortion.

Of course, most birth contracts violate the spirit and the letter of this principle entirely. They may stipulate, for instance, that the birth mother must not drink alcohol or smoke, must eat certain foods, must have medical exams at specified intervals, must undergo amniocentesis. In some cases they stipulate that, depending on the results of prenatal testing, the birth mother must be willing to abort the foetus. Some agencies require that she keep them informed of all changes in residence, employment, health, marital status etc. As the contracts are written, they require the woman to give up considerable control over her body. We suggest that collaborative parenting contracts that do not protect the mother's control over her own body and pregnancy should be illegal, whether

or not the arrangement is brokered (ie, involves financial compensation).

Closely related to the principle of control of our bodies is the notion of informed consent – that in any situation where they are asked to do something which involves some risk to themselves, individuals must be made fully aware of the procedures and risks. Clearly, contractual parenting is a situation calling for informed consent. We should stipulate matters about which women must be informed – eg, the risks related to the genetic history of the father, to pregnancy and birth, to alternative insemination and the possible psychological effects.

At the same time, it can be argued that the concept of informed consent has no real meaning in relation to the essence of the parenting contract – that is, that a woman cannot predict how she will feel about giving up a child to whom she has not yet given birth, and therefore cannot give informed consent to do so. That is why adoption agreements stipulate a grace period of up to a year post partum during which the birth mother may re-consider.

However, there are arguments against this position as well. First, informed consent is often required precisely in situations where previous experience is absent, as in surgery, participation in research etc. Yet there is a movement towards limiting the range of any single informed consent agreement and creating or acknowledging multiple steps where possible.

It has also been suggested there is a danger in arguing that women cannot give informed consent in matters of reproduction – it is so easy to imagine how that might be used against women in abortion decisions, for instance. Some have voiced the concern that arguing that women cannot know their minds in advance of the birth would reinforce unfavourable stereotypes about women as flighty, emotional and subject to changes of mind. If women cannot live up to birth contracts, they may not be viewed as responsible agents in other contractual situations.

It is important that women are regarded as responsible contractual agents, but at the same time we are not comfortable with the idea that we would protect a woman's right to decide to abort during, say, the fourth month, but if at the time a birth mother realised she did not want to surrender the child she could not make that decision. Instead, we propose that contracts or statements of agreement written prior to conception constitute a statement of agreement *at that time*. In most cases, we predict, those plans will continue to reflect the desires of all parties and will be carried out. The problems arise only when one or more parties has a change of heart. Such changes can happen in any direction and create, in the extreme, situations where all parents want to raise the child, or none of them do. It is our opinion that the birth parents and designated nurturing parents should all be considered to have

both rights and responsibilities of parenthood.

A birth mother who changes her mind and wants to raise the child must be considered a parent and become one of the rearing parents, but that right does not transcend the parental rights of the other adults. No one can erase the other people from the picture. Knowing this in advance may make all parties to these arrangements proceed with extreme caution and respect for the other adults. This structure would encourage them to enter into such agreements only with other adults with whom they could imagine sharing the parenting of a child. This caution and this requirement to see the other adults as full human beings will be further encouraged by removing the element of the fee – for it is with the fee that the factor of exploitation is strengthened. This factor will be developed more fully below.

Should contractual parenting happen at all? We cannot look only at the principles of informed consent and women controlling their own bodies because the social consequences of the current commercial practice of contractual parenting conflict with another strongly held feminist principle, namely that people should not be objectified – as sex objects, handicaps, or wombs, for instance. This applies not only to adults but to children as well. They should not be objectified as gene carriers, reproductions of ourselves or our wishes or as property.

Does child production for a fee lead to what has been called “commodification” of children? Is it different from babyselling? Will it lead to the creation of a class of breeder women, whose humanity is reduced to the capacity to procreate? These questions show that, as well as considering individual rights we must take a larger perspective: the consequences for society as a whole, both nationally and globally. The technical ability to transport frozen embryos which have been fertilised outside the womb, implant them in poor women anywhere in the world and “return” resulting babies to their “owners” raises global implications.

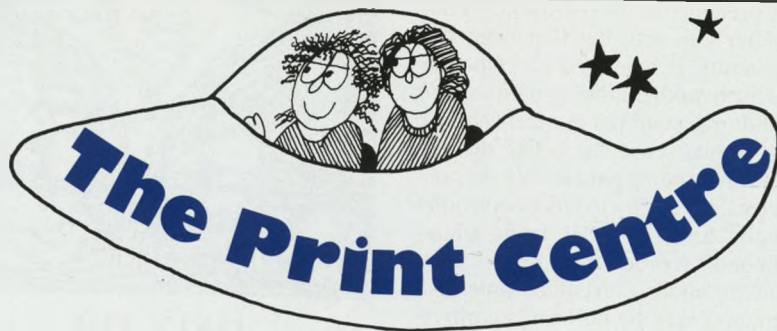
Prenatal testing is almost certain to be a part of any commercial birth contract, because the parents do not just want a baby or just a genetically related baby, but a “normal” or “healthy” baby. Thus, developing more accurate and earlier prenatal tests has become a research priority. But the willingness to abort a foetus based on “negative” information, even when it is only probable, or indicates a disease that occurs only later in life, may be greater in the contractual situation, where all of the parties have a more tentative commitment to the would-be child. When you are paying around US\$30,000 aren't you more likely to insist on getting a “perfect” baby? And if your expense is reduced propor-

tionately to the length of the pregnancy, won't you insist on having such information as early as possible?

For the pregnant woman too – contractual or not – early diagnosis is preferable because it is psychologically and physically easier to abort an early pregnancy than a late one. Current research will soon make such diagnosis possible even earlier: prior to implantation. Will our standards for keeping a foetus rise, or become more idiosyncratic as the psychological, physical and monetary costs for aborting decrease? Will the hard to adopt become the impossible to adopt? The technology of prenatal screening encourages the objectification of people by focusing on their

genetic properties as a basis for evaluating their worth.

Objectification leads readily to treating people as commodities – things to buy. This issue is at the heart of public response to birthing for a fee – both the acceptance and rejection of it. We believe cars are appropriate things to buy and sell. Babies, on the other hand, we have agreed are not. Babies, we have agreed, are not things at all. They are people. But acting as though they could be bought and sold, acting as though they are commodities, reduces them to a state of thingness. This is what commodification means. Because we don't want to face up to this, we do not say that birthing for a fee is baby-selling. In-



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stead, we pretend that the baby is never the birth mother's to sell, but that from the very beginning it belonged to someone else. The birth mother is being paid for her genetic and/or gestational services, not for her baby. In that sense she is like the car salesman who is being paid for his persuasive services, his ability to talk people into buying cars. "In the abstract, being alienated from one's reproductive powers (as a birth mother under current commercial arrangements) may be no less exploitive than being alienated from one's productive powers (as a worker)." But because it is an alienation which is not yet commonplace, we see it for what it is and we react with fear and repulsion. We must ask ourselves whether we are willing to become a society which retails children and rents parts of women as though they were nothing more than cars.

It is more complex than buying and selling cars. For example, organ and blood donation are situations in which, within certain limits, we do accept having one person use another person's body parts. Even here distinctions have been made. Under current US law it is generally legal for an individual to sell her/his body fluids such as blood and semen (this is not so in New Zealand) but illegal to sell organs. Babies, like organs, and unlike body fluids, are not self-replenishing parts of our bodies. (To argue that the mother can have another baby to "replace" the one she gives away would be to argue that a baby is a thing that can be duplicated, which we know it is not. Parents who have lost a baby at birth know that later born children



ONLY THE PREGNANT WOMAN, AND NO-ONE ELSE SHOULD HAVE CONTROL OVER HER MEDICAL TREATMENT

do not replace the lost one but are separate individuals in their own right, as was the one who died.)

In addition, we simply feel differently about our sexuality and our reproductive capacities than we do about our livers and our blood. The former are a part of our identity in a way that our renal and circulatory systems are not. We can think about whether or not to be reproductive – whether and when to have a child. These decisions arise from our sense of self. The same cannot be said of our renal or circulatory functions. They are not voluntary. They go and they stop without any input from our conscious minds. We are not, and we do not feel, identified with them in the same way.

Most importantly, however, in organ donation we are talking about giving away something which is only a part of ourselves while in contractual parenting we are talking about selling or giving away another person, an independent (and dependent) thinking and feeling being.

So, what is the meaning of parenthood? It could be viewed as a property right, with children belonging to their parents as other things belong to people. Within this framework buying and selling children appear reasonable, and in fact would not need to be limited to infants. Alternatively, parenthood could be viewed largely in terms of being a responsibility to look after a person through their first 18 or so years. This would be a responsibility assumed by or assigned to everyone responsible for the child's conception. Our own view is nearer this last proposal and is the basis for our earlier statement that all birth and social parents have both rights and responsibilities.

In keeping with our view of parenthood as more of a responsibility to guardian than a right of ownership we oppose commercial birth contracts. We do not think that children or reproductive capacity should be bought or sold. We believe that people should be allowed to create multi-parent arrangements which divide parenting responsibilities (genetic, gestational, nurturant, financial) in any way that

they see fit provided that: a) no-one is being paid for their "services" (although the pre-natal and child-rearing costs may be covered in any way they agree); b) whatever arrangements have been planned, all parties recognise that they have taken on the responsibility of creating another human being and that if the "deal" falls through they are all both responsible for and entitled to parent the child.

And so we have already engaged another feminist principle: that the personal is political. The mere availability of techniques like prenatal screening and selective abortion thrusts upon a woman or a couple the "obscene" choice between knowingly wishing a cruel, degenerative disease on their future child by not aborting – in the case of Huntingdon's disease – or aborting and saying in effect that their own lives have not been worth living because they will someday sicken and die of the disease they are carrying. This personal agony has its political meaning as well. Making this decision an individual matter privatises the tragedy – makes the grief of losing the foetus the individual's alone. Society does not feel the loss, and does not pay any consequences, therefore is not moved to do something about it, like undertake research that might find a cure for the disease, create public programmes which would make the environment more hospitable to people with disabilities or develop support programmes to lessen the financial and other burdens on the families. These are some of the action implications that follow from the principle of



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valuing rather than wiping out diversity. People make their decisions – about whether to have prenatal screening, whether to abort a foetus with a known problem – within the context of these political and economic realities. In other circumstances they might make different decisions.

In this culture, in this political context, infertility and childlessness is for many an agonising, very private experience. But why is this so? Much of the answer lies in the heavy emphasis on having one's own children. For if there were not this emphasis on genetic continuity people would more easily and happily move to the decision to adopt, to foster parent, to become "auntie" or "uncle" to non-biologically-related children; and if child-rearing were not so privatised and adults were not so wedded to the notion of children as chips off the old block then we could more easily imagine having important and satisfying relationships with "other people's children".

In an extended family context, for instance, childless adults' desires for relationships with children, and children's interests in on-going relationships with adults beyond their parents, are more eas-

NO-ONE CAN ERASE THE OTHER PEOPLE FROM THE PICTURE

ily met. With families being more and more geographically spread this slack must be picked up by friendship networks or social service agencies. Many adults want relationships with children that resemble parenting: shared and/or collaborative parenting outside the limits of genetic relationships has great potential and many possible variations. The introduction of payment into these relationships, with its potential for exploitation, can only be harmful.

There are many more issues which we could have raised and which need to be discussed. We have not talked about the origins and implications of our society's strong emphasis on producing perfect children and the eerie way in which it echoes the past language of those who have promoted eugenics. We have not discussed variations on the insemination theme – such as when the embryo is created in vitro using the ovum and sperm of

the couple who will raise the child, making gestation the sole function of the birth mother, nor of embryo transplant (also known as lavage or flushing) in which conception takes place in one woman but gestation and birth take place in another. How do these further compartmentalisations of the maternal role alter our analysis of the ethics of the situation and of the protections needed for everyone? Furthermore, IVF raises the issue of the fate of multiple unused frozen embryos.

What links all of these seemingly different technologies is that they are each part of the continuing medicalisation of reproduction and birth. Juxtaposed against the movement for home births, midwives, humane birthing centres in hospitals, Le Boyer baths and the like, we see a real struggle over who will control this central aspect of human life. It is essential for women to be involved in the discussions and decision-making about all of these developments. ■

IN THE APRIL ISSUE OF BROADSHEET WE WILL PUBLISH AN INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH KANE, WHO GAVE BIRTH AS A SURROGATE MOTHER IN 1980 AND NOW CAMPAIGNS AGAINST SURROGACY.

THE SPOTS ON THE APALOSA

© LNK 1988.



Mothering G IS A MUG'S Game

GRETA JORDAN



I'm at the wrong wedding. I must be. A year ago if I had shown my daughter a photograph of this party she would be laughed, "You must be joking."

All these suburban people, "Plebs", my youngest son calls them. The sort of people that eat watermelon with lashings of sugar and dollops of cream. Washed down with a can of coke.

The splendid garden room of this Federation style house is bursting at the seams with Beryl Cook characters. She's up there at the top table, my size eight angel from a Botticelli painting, the joy of my life, the one who was going to make it all worthwhile, next to her new husband who's fagging it. Last year she had boasted he had given up his nicotine addiction for her.

We drove eight hundred kilometres to attend this wedding and there he was practically smoking two cigarettes at a time. Well, no need to pretend now he had got her. My golden girl kissing a chimney. Their brand new show-home and her designer dresses, smelling stale. All her life she had lived in a smoke-free-zone. A "No Smoking" sign propped up in her green Mini car. And now she's cuddling up to a human chimney.

My carefree happy go lucky daughter tied down with a mortgage. No more walking out of good job and on the first flight to Acapulco. Is she really over the long affair she had there with a Lebanese chauvinist that took her to the point of anorexia; "I'll show him how unhappy I am, I won't eat...". But have any of us escaped falling for a rotter? The few that go from school and doting parents to marrying their first love, who just happened to be a caring male, end up too smug for words. In that difficult, poor, but free six years I had between marriages, she saw

me knocked sideways mentally by the wrong sort of male. Naive of me to think she would learn by my mistakes.

I have to stand back watching my grown up children getting into a mess, and pick up the pieces, bathe the wounds, and build up their precious self-esteem again and again. How I longed for my own days, when we left home the minute we left school, full employment and peppercorn rents meant our parents didn't have to see it all.

She's looking at me with wary eyes, she knows I know her better than she knows herself. Finally she wants to break the chord, the knife is hidden in her Freesia bouquet. We've been too close going from mum and daughter to friends, a friend that never repeated confidences, and my that's rare. "Get off my back mum." If I had my time over again I would've stood back a lot more, she will be on this planet long after me. We expect that but my eldest son died at twenty seven, another story...

Why? My darling. Why? I ask silently. You, who had the world in front of you. Was it because you had reached the "big three O"? Not wanting to be described as "one of the desperates". She had dreaded being a little housewife, worrying about what to give her man for his dinner, sharing "the master bedroom", expected to reproduce herself to justify her existence. I remember when Ann was a leggy eleven year old, a friend of mine brought her new baby to the house. Whilst we were taking turns to hold the diminutive bundle she quickly moved to the other side of the room, plopped herself down next to the new father and asked, "What do you drive?"

I could understand her if she were a second time around forty-plus with a pair

of kids to support or a lonely fifty-year-old tired of coping with all the jobs husbands take on, poor devils. But not at thirty – the beginning of her best years. It will be Sunday roast dinner at his mother's, where they will be eyeing her twenty-inch-waistline for signs of another grandchild to add to the pack assembling on mother's day. "You will be lonely in your old age...". (The prospect of spending mine with my off-spring makes me vote for euthanasia). My daughter opts for expensive holidays, meals in the latest restaurants and luxuries she works hard for. But having an affair these days is a risky business. Men jetting into town with their full wallets, gifts, promise of the good times are finding it not so easy. Unless they pay for it. Women are seeing them for what they are – shop-soiled.

Though never promiscuous, Ann knew sex could be lovely, in the right surroundings with a man astute enough to know a woman's most erogenous zone is her ears. The right chemistry helps. Sex isn't essential, women can give themselves orgasms, but it can be wondrous with the right man. AIDS has changed all that. Shame. Women haven't had their freedom for long. Now Mr Nature, holding all the Aces, always getting back at them.

Now Ann has settled down with this regular boyfriend, and we've all had those ones that are always there, waiting in the wings, nice enough but you feel drained after a date with them. They make you act mean. The magic is missing. Here's my Ann wearing the old (though the same age) faithful's ring. The one she was always going to finish with. Who kept turning up



ILLUSTRATION FROM WOMAN AND HOME, 1943

beards”.

We used to have a mum and daughter joke when we spotted bearded males. “What about when he has a cold?” Serving soup on purpose or custard with the pudding. Was he covering a non-existent chin or a pockmarked face like Richard Burton without the sexy voice. Or just too lazy to shave everyday? It went with the rubber thongs and “going with the flow”.

Her wide, green, honest eyes avoid mine. I vow not to say anything. In the past when she had fallen in love, infatuated, whatever we like to call it, and then suddenly couldn’t stand the guy anymore, we would go for long walks giggling about them.

“Oh Mum”, she would say, “there will never be anyone good enough for me in your eyes.”

Sitting there at her wedding, surrounded by his relatives, our’s were at the other side of the world, I think back over the years, recalling the fiances she had introduced to us;

“Are you sure this is the one...?”

“Don’t worry mum I’m not going to marry him. I just like being engaged...”

“You forget you are talking to a mother of sons madam.”

Other times, if I said I was fond of her latest friend, she would snap, “Well, you don’t know him.”

I had to be careful not to be one of those tiresome mums that flirt with their daughter’s men. They weren’t my type anyway. I prefer the odd sort of fellow, ones that have done interesting things in their lives. Tall dark and handsome, be-my-slave types – I’ll treat you badly and you’ll love me for it – leave me as cold as snow. The AIDS scare has put women off the roving eyed, so-called exciting men, you don’t know where they have been.

I gaze at my new son-in-law. I know he’ll take care of my daughter. Not enough to stop polluting the air she breathes but he’ll make her a hot dinner. Better than arriving home from a difficult day at work to a mate sulking, can in fist, behind the sports page, demanding to be fed. But will he hold her or will she follow her mother through the divorce court? Thank god we live a long way away. They’ll want to spend well earned holidays on exotic islands, not with us in an industrial city.

They look relaxed, chatting together, maybe that’s what she needs. Not the hectic, magic, love that tears you apart. She tried that. She must have told herself, never, never again. Maybe this, the safe companionable sort of love will lead to strong bonding. Arranged marriages have a lot to be said for them. I would like to have had a crack at that.

I knew she was sick to death of sharing flats and all the complications that go with it. The one who never saw the dirt drove my Virgo daft. Three young women with international friends made the arrival of the phone bill a catastrophe. She wanted something to show for her money, her own home. Prices constantly escalating kept

putting that out of her reach. So much easier with a mate to share the bills. Especially someone as practical as he is, give a man his due.

Travelling alone had lost its appeal. Never as much fun in reality and no longer safe. Convenient as it was, (and she never wondered how we liked turning our dining room into a place for her), she felt past coming back to a bedroom at her mother’s. We had had enough of her sudden phone calls from the nearest airport, “can you come and get me?” All three of my off spring had done too much coming and going from the fold, to lick their wounds, re-charge faded batteries, save up at our expense, to be off again.

I had had the mother role, it had gone on far too long for my liking.

Speech time. I’m back at home recalling the fiances she had introduced to us.

Turning from the sink I asked, “Are you sure about this, Ann?” Where do owners of sophisticated washing up machines have their heart to hearts with their daughters?”

Tea towel in hand, she replied, “No, I’m not.”

Another time, “Now look love, I don’t want to go to all the expense of this engagement party if you’re not going through with it...”

“Of course I am.”

But of course she didn’t. Times when a white-faced intended, banged on our front door demanding to know where she was. When all we knew was that she had crept out at first light, with well-worn pack on her back, leaving us to worry until the first post-card plopped into the mail box.

“I wish I was like other people!” she had sobbed onto my shoulder, “I don’t like being different. I would be so much happier...”

Well Ann, you are marrying into an ordinary family now. That’s where your chimney comes from. I’m definitely at the wrong wedding. I sigh, turning to my soul-mate, the one I had to wait until I was in my mid-forties to find.

“I know how you feel,” he says, “I give them five years.”

But, I think, she’ll get tied down with possessions and go to her grave bored out of her mind.

Sitting there in my expensive dress – I had wanted to do her proud – I wished I could take it back, change it for a walnut tree to plant for posterity and a heap of Cedar wood to build a gazebo. Gardening was my passion. A lot more rewarding than having a family. (Once the cannon fodder for old men’s war-games and now they don’t know what to do with them.) Though I enjoy other people’s children there isn’t one of mine that I would choose from a shop. You can’t divorce your kids, you are never free. All that tugging at the heart strings goes on forever. I wouldn’t have a family if I had my time over again. It’s not worth all the agony. Never again.

“Not,” as my father used to say, “Not, if its bottom’s hung with diamonds.” ■

on the off-chance that she would be in, when she was all dressed up to go out with the opposition. Worst of all, the one she giggled at on her all-girl-night dinners. His lack of style, no real money; drives a ute!

Unfamiliar without her Jag jeans the same best friend, gorgeous in pink silk, clutching her tulip glass of champagne, appears at my side, “Look at these people!” she says, “I just can’t believe this is Ann’s wedding.”

“Nor me,” I laugh, “I should be wearing black.”

“Is that a Sarah Shepard dress?”

“Yes, but you are the only one here that would know.”

I sound such a snob but I guess we all are at different levels. I recall her arriving home early from an evening date. Grabbing the Disprin box, she turned to me and said: “It was so noisy Mum, I had to leave. He said, you’re not looking down on these people are you Ann? Of course I said no, but I was really.”

“It’s just that you are different love.”

“I wish I weren’t, I’d enjoy myself more...”

This is the sort of thing mothers went through forty years ago when their precious daughter had got herself in “the pudding club”. Then six or seven months later, prematurely of course, a little bundle of love arrived that thankfully numbed people’s memories. A few of them thinking, “there but for the grace of god goes our so-and-so”.

“What’s got into her?” I whisper to my husband, natty in his interview, wedding, best and only blue suit. “She always hated

Passionately Political

THIS IS PART ONE
OF AN INTERVIEW WITH
CHARLOTTE BUNCH WHICH
HAS BEEN SHORTENED
AND REPRINTED (WITH
PERMISSION) FROM
WOMAN OF POWER ISSUE 7,
SUMMER 1987.

Who is Charlotte Bunch?

I came to feminism from the sixties and the civil rights movement in the Southern United States of America.

My vision has its early roots in a spiritual vision – to talk about the best of the spiritual, which is, I believe, that which integrates all aspects of life, including the political – which came out of the belief that the civil rights movement could not only achieve liberation for blacks, but could bring a new vision back into this country of what it means for human beings to live and work together. It was a vision that tried not just to cross race lines, but to deal with differences in a new kind of way, and to show that political movements are not only about change and power – they're also about a change in the vision you have of what society can be like. And this is central to my vision of feminism – that transformational feminism is not just about "add women and stir;" it's not just about women getting a piece of the action; it's about women having a different vision of what society could be like. I think that most dispossessed and oppressed groups have always had the possibility of this different vision because they're not necessarily as incorporated into the existing frameworks. That is not to say that all of them have such a vision, but the possibility is there.

Being in the civil rights movement convinced me that I wanted to spend my life in movements for social change. From there I went to Washington DC in 1966. It was a time when many of the political groups I had been involved with were becoming divisive and splintered; the vision was being lost amidst an emphasis on confrontation and power. Feminism felt like a way to recapture that vision of new possibilities and to become engaged again with the population as a whole. For me as a woman, it was a way that came closer to my own experience. There was a sense of excitement among women that there was an alternative to the competitive, male-domination model for political change. I felt that the Left *did* have a good positive analysis, but that it had alienated itself from the majority of the people because its critique had become so cynical. This has been one of my major concerns as a political organiser, that when we become radical, although we have, very often, a good political analysis of society, we can also



PHOTO JOANE BIREN 1987 REPRINTED FROM WOMEN OF POWER

CHARLOTTE BUNCH

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involves all the
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learn and do*

alienate ourselves from the population because we become so critical of people – not of their politics, but of the persons themselves.

To be a good organiser you have to have some belief that people really can change, and that in some fundamental way they *want* to do what is best. This is what has always sustained me as an organiser: the belief that the majority of people really *would* prefer to live in a way that is not oppressive to others. That if you can hold out another way of really seeing the world, people will respond.

I have never seen the domestic and international as separate spheres. Everything we do has both dimensions and has implications in both directions. Global interaction is not something we choose to do or not to do; it is something we are already participating in. We can only choose how consciously we try to understand the interrelatedness of both dimensions.

As an American feminist deeply involved in a growing international women's movement, can you give us some insights on how global feminism is changing Western feminist perspectives?

In 1975 when the United Nations Decade for Women started, a lot of United States feminists were still very American and insensitive to the way in which people in this country approach anything international; that is, with the assumption that we're ahead of the world and we have the answers.

There was enormous resentment of this attitude among women in other parts of the world. Some feminists in the Third World talk about how the event was, on the one hand, helpful in letting them know about feminism, and on the other hand, set them back because they felt American feminists were so dominating and insensitive.

The other problem with a lot of American feminists working internationally has been the opposite tendency. In trying not to be insensitive, some go to the other extreme and become apologetic for their existence as American. This is not very helpful to other women either. They are not interested in guilt or shame, but in our actions, and how we can have a genuine interaction about both our similarities and differences. This quality of interaction comes from being clear about who we are and what our politics are, and then being able to listen to others without assuming that everyone else is going to be the same. Such interaction usually changes both parties.

When I interact in any setting, internationally or domestically, things people say affect me and often clarify or change my perspectives – I think openness is critical to taking in differences. We often have rigid notions in this country of what it means to be political, as if it meant working out your line or theory and then defending it from change. I think being political involves all the interactions of life, and necessarily means growing, changing and evolving according to what you learn and do. You go into the world with an analysis and some assumptions and see how they work, and as you take actions and hear other people's viewpoints, yours shift. Sometimes those shifts are small and sometimes big, but that's part of what makes politics exciting. Someone once said to me, "But you didn't say that in 1974!" If I had to say the same things in 1987 without any changes, I'd be pretty bored, as well as irrelevant to a growing movement. It is often hard for Americans to find a balance between these two poles of what I call arrogance and apology – yet somewhere in between there is authentic interaction.

How has this process of interacting about our similarities and differences been affected by the UN Decade?

Since 1975 the situation for feminism in the world has changed dramatically with the emergence of women's movements throughout the world. The leadership for new ideas in feminism is coming from the Third World and from women of colour in the West. This is not to say that everyone else is irrelevant, but that crucial new perspectives are coming primarily from these places. I consider this exciting because it means that all of us can realise how many sources and varieties of feminist thought there are, and none of us have to carry the burden alone. A wide diversity of women are now seeking to define and hold up the possibilities of feminist visions and feminist change.

Third World feminists were also much stronger and not in the minority in Nairobi Decade conference in 1985. At the 1975 UN Conference, there were not very many feminist groups in the Third World. In 1980 at the UN mid-Decade Conference in Copenhagen there was a kind of transitional period in which some Western women were still arrogant, but others were

***Every group
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listen***

These conflicts in 1980 got the debates out into the open and between 1980 and 1985 an enormous amount of learning and struggling took place. By the time of the Nairobi Conference, half of the participants were women of colour, and most had been working for several years in their countries building their own movements and analysis of feminism. They did not need to be as confrontational because they were no longer the unheard minority.

I had seen this same process in the lesbian feminist movement: we *had* to be separatist and confrontational and demand attention for lesbians at one point in time. It was almost as if no matter how reasonable someone's objection, we had to not hear it because if we took all the objections into account at that moment, we would lose the possibility of really following through with what we felt we had to say. Every group that has been oppressed has to have a period of very strong single-minded confrontation until people start to listen. Once you've been heard, and it's clear that you're not going to be denied, then we can talk about working together. More women of colour can talk about working with white women once they feel confident that racism is on the agenda, and that it is understood as a feminist priority. Or women can work together internationally once it is understood that colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, race and class are not separate from our lives as women. Going through this confrontational phase seems to be the only way that we know how to bring new perspectives into the arena. As a group goes through its first assertion, it is also building a base for people who feel the same way. Thus, as we asserted our presence as lesbians, we discovered how many of us there were, and how strong we were. And women of colour have been doing something similar. They felt invisible, but in asserting themselves they've been discovering how many women of colour are feminists. So that assertion puts new perspectives on what we thought was reality.

Women who are becoming interested in working internationally today need to know that even a decade ago there were feminist efforts in this direction; that there were feminist efforts in this direction at the turn of the century. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was an outgrowth of the first wave of feminism trying to become international. It's important to know that there have been women writing and working to make feminist connections globally for over a hundred years. Feminists sometimes fall into the old trap of wanting to promote ourselves as being the "first" this or that, but often we're just the next wave of women trying to make connections. There is so much rich history that we need to draw on as sustenance for what we're doing today.

Many women don't know, for example, that ISIS has been publishing volumes of material about women throughout the world since 1974. There are also other global networks – the International Women's Health Network, the Women's Network Against Reproductive Rights. The FINNRRAGE (Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering), Women on Global Corporations Network. The Decade has helped to nourish and develop these inter-

***It is not just that
feminists are also
concerned about
war, race and class,
they are all
interrelated***

national networks.

Third World women's groups are also building their own regional networks – there's the Asian Women's Research and Action Network (AWRAN) and the Pacific Asian Women's Forum (PAWF). The Latin Americans have an informal network every two years when feminists from the region gather at a conference called a Feminist Encuentro; first held in 1981 in Columbia, in 1983 in Peru, and Brazil in 1985, the 1987 Encuentro was held in Mexico and the 1990 one will be in Argentina. Through these events, women from different countries get to know each other over a period of time, and they build a sense of what Latin American feminism is even though there's no one structure for it.

In the early stages of the women's movement in this country, two important assertions that feminists made were that "the personal is political," and that matters dealing with sex or gender *are* political – that the power relations between men and women are political. We defined a whole series of issues, not previously considered political, having to do with violence against women, rape, lesbian rights, reproductive rights, equal pay, and other equality issues. We stressed that these things affect women's lives deeply, but since they had previously been considered private, they were not seen as important or as matters for public action. For instance, if you didn't want to be beaten, you could try to get your husband not to beat you, but you couldn't go to the state for help. So what we did was change the agenda of what was political, demanding that the private sphere of issues, what are called "women's issues," be taken seriously.

In doing that, we had to define a whole series of feminist issues and we had to get them out there so that they would be seen as public and important – and in so doing, we had to, in a sense, turn away from the issues that were already seen as important. Those of us who came out of the sixties movements knew that questions of war and race were important to women, but we had to focus on "women's matters" because if we gave any ground, we would find ourselves back in the trap of someone saying, "well these other issues are the really important things, these are the broader issues." What happened was that oftentimes we became very defensive about what feminist issues were; we felt we simply had to put on blinders which then became hard to take off. Part of what happened with the women of colour movement was their saying, "Hey, you have to loosen those blinders because we can't take that separation." So, in a sense, it is a very natural evolution, but natural evolutions are often quite painful.

This moves us to the next stage, which is not just that feminists are also concerned about war, race, and class, but that they are all interrelated. We've got acceptance now that other issues *are* feminist concerns, but most people still see them as separate. You still work on peace and war and racism here and violence against women and equality there. The next stage is understanding that they *are* interrelated. As we broaden feminism to be about the whole world, we have to continue to define women's specific needs while we take on the rest of the world's issues. What women have learned, for example, around violence against women, teaches us a great deal about militarism. If we start to apply the ideas we now understand about male violence and see it as a spectrum from the family to the global militaristic system, we confront the two together – we see the connection.

Similarly racism is not a separate box, but the manifestation of attitudes about differences among people, and not unlike those around gender or class. Each manifestation has its particularities, but we need to weave our understanding of them together. That's the challenging path for feminism now; we have to weave those analyses and strategies together so that we strengthen our efforts and eliminate the bind that so many women feel of having to

choose between working only on one or the other.

Feminism has not sufficiently challenged the dualism of Western patriarchal thought, which has set everything up as opposites – either you're this or you're that. Feminists need to make a clearer breakthrough in terms of understanding the damage this does to us. For example, I've resisted the notion that you are either a cultural feminist or a political feminist; a socialist feminist or a radical feminist. I feel that my feminism combines elements of all these insights, and strives to find a new place to go with them, because I see feminism as a whole perspective on life and a whole way of living. To me the exciting thing about feminism is that it has political, economic and cultural, and spiritual manifestations, and it tries to break down the mentality that these things are always separate. You may have to choose a priority for your work at any given moment; or you may do a particular activity better, or find it more interesting to address a particular

aspect of feminism. People who work best in each of these areas are bringing out the truth of feminism in these areas, but if they don't see that the work they're doing has other dimensions, they lose some of the strength of feminism in the process. We also need to have more respect for each other's work as important for us, even as we do something quite different.

This is what I am striving for with the concept of non-aligned feminism. That we stop saying people "ought" to be doing this or "ought" to be doing that, and instead see how each of us can do what we do best and learn from each other in the process. We can and should still argue over any number of issues and strategies, but do so from a point of respect and vision rather than

mean-spiritedness. I would like to see sharp, intellectual, political debates from generous spiritedness.

The pornography debate (in the US) is an example of this. The issues discussed are important, but the debate is so mean. It assumes that one group is loyal to feminism and one group is treacherous, that one is out to get the other. The intellectual and political issues are vital, but I think we must recognise that we don't know everything about them yet. We're exploring, but all sides of this particular debate are new territory. Important things have been said on both sides that need to be brought into dialogue, but in a different way. That's where the spiritual dimension of our movement needs to assert itself and provide a different outlook. This is only one example of the way we get bogged down in immediately saying that one side is right and another wrong.

So you are really developing a synthesised feminist politics, one that integrates all of the dimensions of women's lives.

Synthesis is a fine word of you can see it in terms of transformation – that it isn't adding different things together, but that there really is a transforming thing taking place. Each piece of analysis helps us to go another step forward and changes what we understood before. The Nairobi Conference was an example of this. Its sum was so much greater than its parts and more than we could have imagined; but it wasn't just that women were there from all over the world, nor that they were added up to reach a certain point of awareness. The bringing together of all those parts created something more.

I had been working on international feminism for seven years and I was still moved by what happened in Nairobi; I felt it was a quantum leap that brought us to a new place. I knew groups in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East were developing feminist perspectives on issues from development and militarism to violence and sexual torture of women, but when we got to Nairobi, we sensed that the sum of the parts really *could* change

the world. To be there in 1985 with the world in such an economic and political depression, with the situation so dreadful for so many women of the world, and still see women's incredible powers and visions to make something different was the most spiritual event of the decade as far as I'm concerned. It was tremendously moving, so clarifying and so contrary to the kind of short-sighted pessimism that I feel is in vogue in the United States among feminists today.

It is popular to be down on the women's movement in the US but I think it's wrong, because the movement is becoming more diverse and going deeper. There are many problems – I don't mean to say that there aren't – but the possibilities have grown in the past decade for a broader vision and movement. To just see the problems and not see this possibility is very sad. I want women to understand what's happening and to be energised; I want women in the West to take energy from this world-wide possibility, and to see that we're still moving – we're moving and by the nineties we could have the most creative explosion of feminism yet! Even within the US women are organising all over the place; it's just not in the same format as the seventies. Some feminists are nostalgic because the early days were so exciting, but what's happening

now is just as important. There are so many ways in which feminism has infused itself into the lives of ordinary women that, far from failure, we're dealing with the problems of our initial success.

Feminism has had an enormous impact on women's lives, and now women are trying to work out psychic and societal structures to cope with how their lives have changed. I feel that what some see as depression and decline in the movement is simply women taking a pause to figure out how to integrate what has happened to them, and, in a collective sense, how to find ways to live that out in their lives.



Part two of this interview will be published in the April *Broadsheet*.

Woman of Power, a magazine of feminism, spirituality and politics, is published four times a year. It costs \$US22 from overseas. Send to P O Box 827, Cambridge, MA 02238, USA

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STROKES AND ART ATTACKS

TOPP TWINS & TOUR



THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND GYPSY CARAVAN TOUR

Topp Twins

Jan - Mar 1989

The Puhoi hall, 90 minutes drive north of Auckland city, was packed on Auckland's first fine evening in January for the launching of the Topp Twins' "Great New Zealand Gypsy Caravan Tour". The audience was an even mix of locals and women from the city. The crowd was hot, mostly friendly, and enthusiastic.

The first bracket is straight from the TV special, including the costumes. Some of the material was very familiar to those of us who video'd the TV show and have showed to it many overseas visitors as an example of New Zealand culture, but Linda on the spoons is always a winner for me. Lots of laughs and applause, a real country feeling. There's a man in the audience who won't shut up - one of those who can't bear not to be the centre of attention - Linda and Jools have plenty of techniques for dealing with him, but would obviously rather not have to bother. Ditto most of the audience.

Carol, sitting two along from me, laughs fit to burst at the jokes, I admire the yodelling and get caught up in the sheer fun of it. There are some new songs in the second bracket, including a nice romantic love song. Jools and Linda look smashing in black suits and wonderful red straw hats. This show - but not others on the tour - will finish with a bracket from Horsin' Around (see January *Broadsheet*), we are

promised, with Linda joining them as a guest singer. And so it is. They are getting nicely into it when the lights go out and the sound dies away - a power cut it turns out, the whole district is in darkness.

The people lighting matches in this old wooden hall make me nervous. A few torches appear. Jools finds her acoustic guitar and they decide to finish with an unassisted (no microphone) rendering of "Untouchable Girls". Very popular with the women. Someone has driven the tractor around to the hall door and turned the lights on so we all file out. It seems like a very "country" ending. Just as we city types get into our cars the lights go back on. But we're in motion, on our way home and we carry on. Vintage Topps and a fun night out. And stars as we drive home, stars we haven't seen for several rainy weeks.

But it's not back to the city for the tour, it's north to Mangawhai. Kaiwaka, Ruawai, Dargaville, Opononi, Kaikohe ... through January, then Waikato and Coromandel through February, a total of 65 centres. Part two of the tour from November 1989 to February 1990 will cover the east and west coasts of both islands. Jools and Linda call it the realisation of a burning ambition to travel the length and breadth of New Zealand in a (vintage) tractor-drawn caravan - see photo. "Following the economic uncertainty, droughts, earthquakes, floods and other hardships endured by the rural community in recent months, the Topp twins plan to bring some hope and fun into people's lives," says the press release.



Dir John Waters

Charley Gray's Theatre, Auckland

The latest film by John Waters is said to be less offensive than his previous offerings. After the screening I attended, I found several acquaintances heaving a sigh of relief that Waters had mellowed. As I was fortunate enough to miss films like *Polyester* with the little scratch/smell card that was handed out, I saw *Hairspray* knowing very little about it except that many people (whose opinion I could trust) said it was a laugh - and over the Christmas period I was desperate for one.

The positive aspect of this film was that the protagonist, Tracey Turnblad, was a self-assured, positive young woman whose figure did not conform to the adolescent shape that is pushed down our throats ad nauseam! She did not let anyone's opinion of her body hinder her from doing exactly as she pleased. Many of us older feminists still remember those TV shows in the sixties compered by a jerky character, with wholesome, toothy white young men and women dancing to the latest tunes. At home we would be dancing right along with them. Well this was a real nostalgia film of that era.

Divine, a female impersonator (now deceased) who has featured in other Waters' films, plays the heroine's mother (as well as the nasty boss of the show who won't have "coloureds" on the programme). Divine has rather a majestic appearance and Waters does set her up as a figure of fun, a bit of a freak - one of the aspects of the film I felt uncomfortable with. When Divine was in a scene it was shot in such a way as to make the audience laugh at her huge body - and the hoons sitting in front of me grunted with laughter everytime Divine made an appearance. On the positive side, Divine's warmth as a mother who is delighted to see her "little girl" dancing away on TV, transcends her ridiculous outfits.

Our protagonist, deciding that she can dance just as well as, if not better than the TV dancers, attends one of the show's open programmes and dazzles everyone. Tracey becomes a regular and the most popular dancer on the show, much to the chagrin of the current favourite, Amber von Tussle, a blonde "girl most likely to succeed" type (and her equally blonde mother, played by "Blondie" Debbie Harry) who is partnered by a "tall, dark and handsome" mediterranean. Our heroine gets it all, the popularity, the fame and the boyfriend. And Waters gives her a political conscience too! This conventional structure is relieved slightly by the introduction of the concerns of the American civil rights movement, a feature of the sixties. Tracey champions the demands of the black teenagers to be integrated into the dance show instead of being relegated to a black-only slot once a month.

Add the music of the early sixties, the forgettable teased and lacquered beehive hairstyles of the "hairhoppers", and the wacky clothes and bingo, we have a cult film in the making which appeals to a wide audience.

Not a film to see if you are feeling angst-ridden but worth seeing in a light hearted mood.
Athina Tsoulis

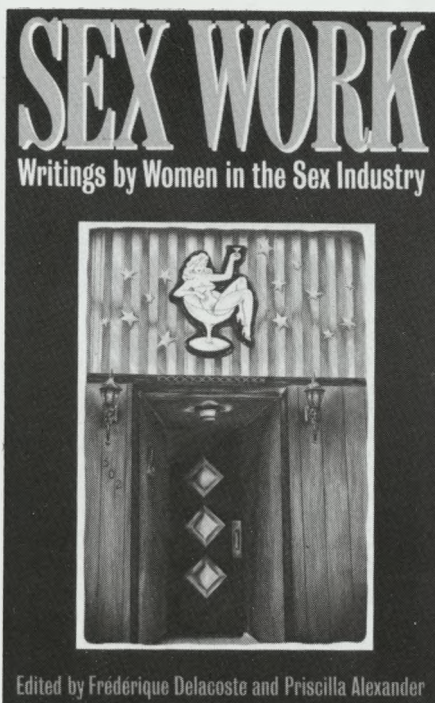
SEX WORK

Writings by Women in the Sex Industry

Edited by Frédérique Delacoste and

Priscilla Alexander

Virago \$19.95



This was a very valuable book for me to read. Despite having known sex workers I unconsciously had a stereotype of prostitutes being helpless victims. In my head I still had all the pictures of abused women addicted to drugs being beaten by their pimps, that film and TV have capitalised on for so long. *Sex Work* cuts through all these well-worn stereotypes by letting women in the sex industry talk for themselves. The result is very challenging.

The book is divided into three parts. "In the Life," the longest section, is a collection of poetry, fiction and prose written by workers and ex-workers themselves. I enjoyed this section the most because of its directness. It spoke of the diversity of the women involved in the sex industry, who they are, where they come from, their reasons for working, their anger, hate, hope, contentment, humour, isolation, victimisation, and will for change. Some of the pieces made me laugh: Emma Marcus' story of the man who freaked out after having sex with her because she told him she was menstruating. "'You must never do that again,' he announced as he stepped back into the room. 'Never, never! I'm going back to the hotel now. I have some penicillin ointment in my suitcase and I'll put it on immediately. I'm a physician and I know about these things, so I'm sure it will be all right. But you must never do that again,' he said..." 'I hope you don't get too bad a case of it,' I said, pulling the sheet off the mattress. 'The penicillin will probably take care of it if you put it on soon. Just make sure you put a lot of it on.' His eyes, registering alarm, suddenly disappeared behind the hugely billowing white sheet I had snapped into the air."

Other pieces angered me and more than one brought tears to my eyes: Cecilia Wardlow's piece entitled "Dream Turned Nightmare," was one. Cecilia's story is about turning tricks and forming a dependency on heroin, being beaten by her woman lover, and losing her house and job. "After I was fired, I managed to land a nursing position with a temporary agency. I

was also seeing my john three or four times a week. Money was better than ever, but life was hell. My john was paying the rent, buying the groceries and giving me two hundred dollars each time I saw him. I was on methadone, which meant that my physical need for heroin was no longer a factor. Linda and I fought constantly about that fact. I was being beaten regularly and made several feeble attempts at suicide.

"There was one counselor at the meth clinic whom I would call whenever I had been brutally beaten. She said, 'When you've had enough, you'll do something about it.' And I did. It took months, but I did leave."

Part Two is called "Connections" and it contains four essays by Joan Nestle, Gail Pheterson, and Priscilla Alexander. As its title suggests this chapter draws parallels between the legal and social oppression of prostitutes and other forms of oppressions. I found Alexander's essays on the reasons why feminists have found prostitution a difficult issue, and the scapegoating of prostitutes for heterosexual AIDS, particularly interesting. Much of this section (and the entire book) is relevant to the situation in Aotearoa.

Double standards abound when it comes to prostitution - the justice system makes women feel like whores when they have been raped, but takes the attitude that a whore cannot be raped. Police deliberately pounce on prostitutes and confiscate their condoms, which they often buy in bulk quantities.

The same police system ignores murders of prostitutes. For instance in Los Angeles at a time when a serial murderer was operating the police failed to warn the public until 10 women had been murdered. The LA police reassured the public that non-prostitute women were safe. When they could not dig up a prostitution record on the seventeenth victim they described her as a "street women." As Alexander writes, no woman is safe until prostitute women are



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Why Can't Sharon Kowalski Come Home?

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(Spinsters/Aunt Lute)

WHY CAN'T SHARON KOWALSKI COME HOME?

By Karen Thompson & Julie Andrzejewski
(Spinsters/Aunt Lute)

Sharon is unable to move or communicate as a result of an accident. Her lover, Karen, has been denied visitation rights. Sharon has lost the right to choose who she may see, who she may like, and who she may love. Her case has raised an important human rights issue which is still before the courts.

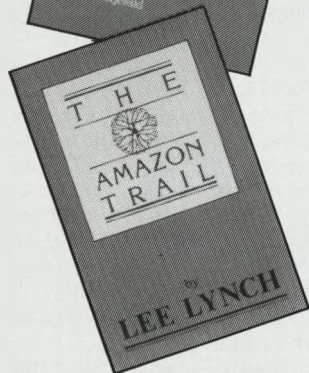
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THE AMAZON TRAIL

By Lee Lynch
(Naiad Press)

Author of OLD DYKE TALES and other popular titles, this is a collection of Lee Lynch's syndicated column THE AMAZON TRAIL. She covers the lesbian scene from inside bookstores and bars, from campfire to coven to careers, into and out of love.

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safe.

This section presents a clear analysis of who really benefits from the present system of illegal prostitution – most massage parlours and escort services today are owned by men. In the States before the prohibition of prostitution was enacted most brothels were owned and managed by women. When the brothels were closed it forced many women to work on the streets, facing greater risks of violence and disease.

The final section, "United We Stand, Divided We Die: Sex Workers Organized" deals with groups that sex workers and non-sex workers have formed to protect women, educate and agitate for change. There are many such groups all around the world, and if prostitution was not illegal, they would serve much the same function as unions. The United States

has three organisations: WHISPER, COYOTE, and the United States Prostitutes Collective or US PROS. In Holland where prostitution is not prohibited but where sex workers are segregated from the rest of the community, Red Thread and Pink Thread operate. England has the English Collective of Prostitutes which is part of an umbrella group called International Wages for Housework Campaign.

Some of these organisations (like COYOTE) work from the perspective that women have the right to determine how to use their bodies and that most problems associated with prostitution are related to its prohibition and the stigma attached to sex and sex work. They don't think prostitution is caused by the economic status of women alone or that if classism and racism disappeared, prostitution would go with it. US PROS and the English Collective of

Prostitutes see prostitution primarily as a class issue. Priscilla Alexander reads a subtext in most of their writings that prostitution should disappear when women can earn enough to support themselves and their families without it. WHISPER believes that all prostitutes are victims, that no woman ever chooses to work as a prostitute, and that patriarchy created prostitution to control and abuse women.

Despite these different approaches, all want the laws against prostitution repealed.

Sex Work gives the reader a glimpse of the potential political power of women in the sex industry. It deals with the herstorical conflict between a feminist analysis which saw prostitution as the ultimate objectification of women's bodies, and prostitutes who share feminist values like independence, financial autonomy, sexual self-determination. Ultimately it leaves the reader to reach her own conclusions.

Lisa Sabbage

WITH WINGS

Edited by Marsha Saxton and

Florence Howe

Virago \$18.95

I am not one of those women who counts herself fortunate to be disabled, although I have friends who do.

Being disabled is about turning minuses into pluses by dint of unending struggle, beating against practical limitations, societal neglect and my own "ornariness" about it all. So I approached *With Wings* with some trepidation. Last time I read a somewhat similar book (*With the Power of Each Breath*, ed. Susan E Browne, Debra Connors and Nanci Stern, Cleis Press, which is described by disabled women friends as "The Bible"), I had such a physical reaction that I thought I was heading for the psychiatric hospital (been there, done that).

This time it wasn't so bad but it's still strong meat. It might be called *With Wings*, but the moment by moment accounts of a woman with asthma's sleepless night or a mother with arthritis' attempts to cope are decidedly earth-bound.

"Oh who will unsnarl my body
Into gestures of love?
Who will give my heart room
to fly free in its rickety cage?"

— Vassar Miller

The book is an anthology of poems, stories, and essays by thirty women writers from North America all of whom have a disability or physical difference. There are three sections: Living in These Bodies, These Minds; Seeking Help and Love; and Transcendence.

The writing is good. "In the selection process we chose those works of highest literary quality that portrayed the loves of disabled women accurately, addressed important issues, challenged stereotypes and presented fresh perspectives." (Preface).

I felt regret that only thirty women's scripts (including those of prestigious Adrienne Rich and Alice Walker) were selected from the 350 offered. For such books are part of consciousness raising for both physically disabled women and TABs (temporarily able-bodieds). The sort of needs that Judy Chicago fulfilled for all of us in her marvellous work *The Dinner Party* – the need for role models, self esteem, celebration of our talents, strengths and creative abilities, the need for recognition – *With Wings* begins to fulfil for disabled women.

Here the medium is literary, and the ap-



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proach less uncompromisingly feminist. Nevertheless it raises issues of great concern to feminists, and succeeds, I think, in its aim of "encouraging readers to contact their own feelings about physical limitations, appearance and standards of beauty, about dependence and vulnerability." (Preface).
Marilyn Woolford.

PASSIONATE POLITICS

Charlotte Bunch

St Martin's Press \$21.95

It was over five years ago, during one of those recurring discussions about reform vs revolution and working in "the system" vs working outside it, that someone gave me a photocopy of Charlotte Bunch's essay "The Reform Tool Kit". From then I was a fan of Bunch's ideas and writing. Here was a feminist thinker/activist who welcomed complexity, wrote of processes rather than one-way "solutions," and used language that carried ideas without drowning me in jargon I didn't understand.

I have not been disappointed by work of hers I have read since. *Passionate Politics* is both political and personal in the best sense of each, and likewise the writing of a theorist and activist. Analysis that connects with action, action arising from analysis: for me this is feminist writing at its best.

In the introduction Bunch gives an overview of what she calls "the evolution of my life's work," which is useful as a context for the essays. These are organised chronologically within five divisions: a feminist overview; movement strategies and organising; lesbian feminism; media and education; and global feminism. I would have liked more information about how she has managed financially over the past 20 years -

maybe for American readers it is obvious which of her activities were income-generating, but from this distance it is not - as so many feminists have to "earn a living" separately from political activities, and she appears to have integrated the two.

I perceive Bunch's politics as firmly based in radical feminism, although she argues for what she calls "nonaligned feminism" where nonaligned, "Does not mean neutral; it does not mean uninvolved, inactive, separated, or disinterested. ... is not a withdrawal from politics. It simply means that one is not automatically attached to one of the dominant lines or factions.... [it] means simply that actions are taken according to an assessment of the particulars involved from an independent feminist perspective ...". (p49) Which is what many of us do, even though it tends to get us labelled as simplistic or lacking analysis.

The discussion ranges over separatism, "the Left" and the destructiveness of polarisation between the "political" and "cultural" camps of feminism. "The issue," writes Bunch, "is not whether you work in the cultural, political, economic or spiritual arena, but what perspective and analysis you bring to your work and how you understand its relationship to other areas." And further on she says, "Our assertion of nonaligned feminism involves keeping the feminist struggle and perspective at the fore as we evaluate all questions, coalitions and issues. It also recognizes the need to expand what is called 'feminist' so that the term responds to the realities of all women, across class, race, sexuality and national boundaries in order to avoid merely reflecting the interests and needs of only one group." That could just about be a statement of aims for *Broadsheet*, as it was, in different form, for *Quest*, a journal that Bunch was involved with founding and publishing.

There are so many ideas and discussions in *Passionate Politics* that I can touch on only a few. Quoting short sections does not do credit to the development of ideas contained in each essay, but I hope they stimulate many women to seek and read the book.

"The Reform Tool Kit" is included in the collection, and 12 years after initial publication (*Quest* 1977) it remains entirely relevant. As well as discussing the co-option of "our visions by incorporating radical rhetoric while distorting the original meaning of the words and ideas" (doesn't that remind you of the Labour government and "consensus"?) it offers five criteria for evaluating any reform action, beginning with: "Does it materially improve the lives of women and if so, which women, and how many?" It's a powerful tool kit for evaluating priorities.

There are essays on diversity, leadership and power, coalitions, the history of *Quest*, lesbian feminism, separatism, the Right, the ERA, publishing, education, "going public", global feminism ... each reasoned, provocative, thought-provoking.

Whether or not one agrees with what Bunch has to say on any of these, they are all live issues for feminism now. The value of the collection is not that it presents the definitive feminist view on anything (Bunch would argue there is no such thing) but that it articulates feminism as an ongoing process and gives us concrete examples, actions, and ideas against which to measure our own.

Pat Rosier

Virago 

SEX WORK

Writing by Women in the Sex Industry: Edited by Frederique Delacoste & Priscilla Alexander:

A bold new book which succeeds in presenting evidence of women's resistance in an area where such resistance was previously considered impossible or non-existent. \$19.95

WITH WINGS

An Anthology of Literature by Women with Disabilities: Edited by Marsha Saxton & Florence Howe:

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EYEBROWZ-UP

ID espite the drought in Canterbury, a group of women called Eyebrowz-Up are making a big splash.

The five piece band have had two of their videos on the "late" programme Friday Nite, and you may have caught them on Radio With Pictures a few months ago when part of their video clip "Fantasy Wave" got a showing.

Danice Dearborn (vocals, guitar, sax and drum machine) got together with Laura Horton (bass guitar), in 1987 to play and talk music. Within three months they were joined by Megan Browning (vocals, guitar, percussion) after she arrived in Christchurch from Wellington. With the scope of the band enhanced, Eyebrowz-Up was ready to take its first tentative steps into the public eye.

At that stage the main objective of the band was to record a six track demo tape. In January 1988 their tape "You want Inspiration?" was completed and released on University FM stations around the country. A song from the tape, "Rotissary Jaine" went to number one on Canterbury U.F.M. "The Drinking Song", with its streak of self-mockery and cynicism about alcohol, has been released internationally.

Eyebrowz-Up was then joined by Maree Sheehan (keyboards, vocals) and Jackie Phillips (vocals, guitar, sax, percussion) who's been songwriting since the age of twelve. Finding themselves ready and able to perform as a live band they hit the circuit in Christchurch

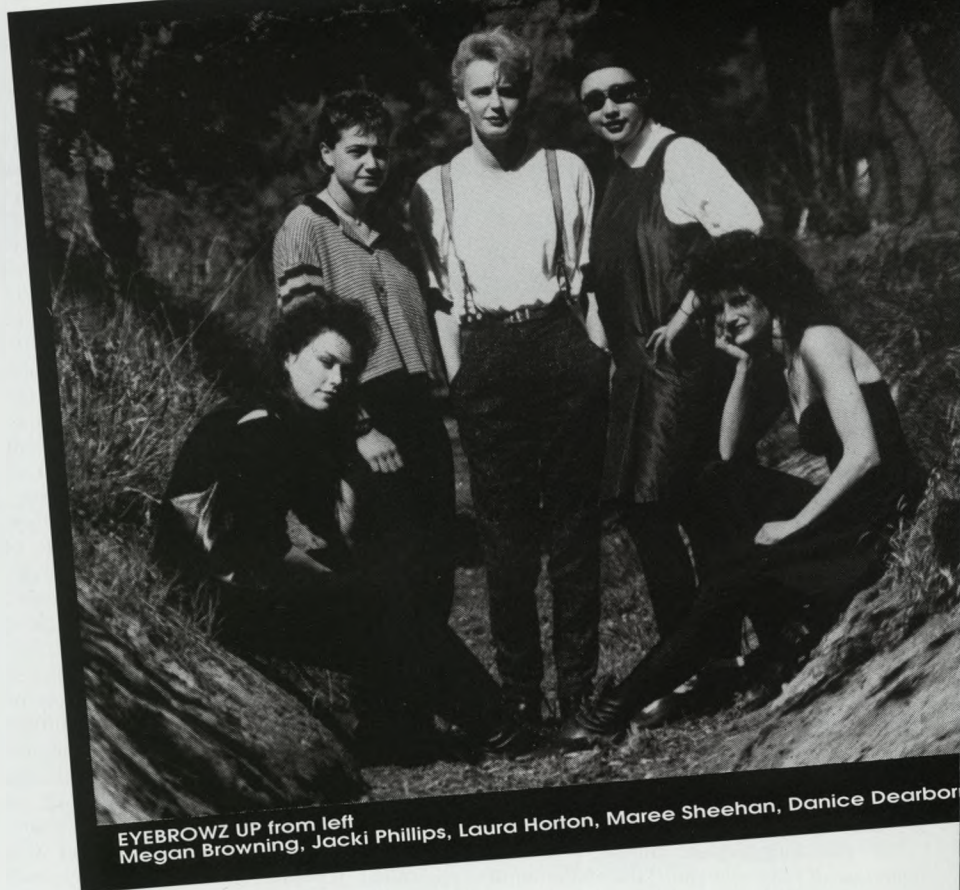
and have been playing at various bars, clubs and functions ever since.

I was fortunate enough to catch them over the summer hols and was impressed with their versatility as musicians, their songwriting ability and arrangements of dance covers. Their range of pop, jazz, blues and reggae certainly raised a few eyebrows and got the audience up on its feet. The band is comfortable and spontaneous on stage (something that went down really well with the audience was the invitation to come up and share a joke). It would be great

if a fairy godmother could make it possible for Eyebrowz-Up to do a national tour, they're well worth catching up with.

As Megan Browning says, the band has everything for a record release and video, except the money!

Lisa Sabbage



EYEBROWZ UP from left Megan Browning, Jacki Phillips, Laura Horton, Maree Sheehan, Danice Dearborn



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Touted as the Queen of High Energy in England, Hazell Dean was in Aotearoa over summer. *Broadsheet* managed to track her down.

In England and Europe "High Energy" is the term used to describe what we loosely call dance music here. Hazell is unashamed of her success in this area of music and enjoys her popularity in nightclubs. She's not a one-hit-wonder, she's been around for a long time, and as they say in the music business, she's paid her dues.

Hazell's career began at the age of 11 when the music teacher at her Chalmersford Comprehensive School in Essex offered her the chance to learn the guitar. From that moment on Hazell said she was single minded in her ambition to be a musician.

"I committed myself very early to music. I continued to learn simple songs, practised all the time, had a school band. I joined a local jazz band at 14 as the guitar player and learnt more complex chords. It was then that I started singing, initially standard jazz songs and blues stuff.

"I left school then, basically because I knew that I wanted to be involved in the music business. I took a 'proper job' as they say, and worked in an office for a year. In that time I took piano lessons, began learning the theory of music, took singing lessons, and continued doing weekend gigs with the jazz band. At that time the thought of making records never entered my mind, I just wanted to sing and earn a living from it. Really, at that point I still didn't know how I was going to get involved in music as a profession."

Over the years Hazell continued to work in bands and concentrated on her singing, branching out into more popular songs.

"I can adapt to most circumstances, I didn't lack confidence. I threw myself into the deep end and came out lucky. But if I had been a guitar or piano player going for a job I would have found it much harder. I'm a singer, the type of jobs I went for were specifically for female singers. A friend of mine who plays the sax has had trouble finding herself work. You have to learn to cope with the situation of being a woman in a man's world, you have to be ruthless and a bit tough in a subtle sort of way. Nine times out of ten, though, I prefer working with women, they're more logical in some ways."

It wasn't until 1983 that Hazell had her first hit record, a dance song called "Searching". In England it was the first time a local artist had success on the high energy chart until then it had been dominated by American singers like Gloria Gaynor. Since then she has had two



HAZELL DEAN
PHOTO: LAWRENCE LAWRY

For the English media who love scandals and sex symbols, Hazell poses a bit of a problem. Not being a sex symbol can sometimes count against her, with the tabloids resorting to patronising her instead.

"The press have called me the 'singing secretary' because I don't drink, smoke or throw TVs out of hotel windows. They never have an angle on me because I refuse to talk about my personal life so they make it up, for instance one paper recently headlined 'Red Hot Hazell is Nuts about Sex.'"

Hazell is suing that particular newspaper.

Hazell comes across as a performer with her feet firmly on the ground, aware of her abilities and her limitations. She's co-produced one of the tracks on her latest album *Always* and it's something she'd like to try again. When it comes to being a successful woman in a male business, Hazell doesn't have much trouble, and when she does there is one easy solution:

"My manager (a woman) knows how to deal with men."
Lisa Sabbage

other big singles in England and is trying to crack the American singles market. However she is realistic about her fifteen minutes of fame.

"The great thing about high energy music for me is that it works because I have a melodic powerful voice. I enjoy the songs, but I don't want to sing dance songs forever. If I ever become mega I'd like to think I could sing and record other styles. I've been in this business for 20 years, and done cabaret and session work. I think I've done everything but there are certain things I don't want to do like getting stuck in cabaret in the North of England. I want to enjoy my music.

"I enjoy my career, but I wouldn't be pissed off if I didn't make it big, there are other things in life. I don't want to get into the space where I have to go out and sing. I've tried to be business-like with the money I've earned because this business is so fickle. My theory about the music world is that you've got to learn that there is a difference between music and show business. Image is as important as a good voice these days and I've had to package 'Hazell Dean'. I've also had to get used to the fact that some people can't sing and that it's a plastic world. It's taken me a long time to come to terms with that, but you either accept it or get bitter and twisted."

The biggest segment of the record buying public are kids, particularly young girls, who tend to buy George Michael records before Hazell Dean. But Hazell says that she does provide a role model for the kids; they often come up to her after a show and invite her home for coffee.



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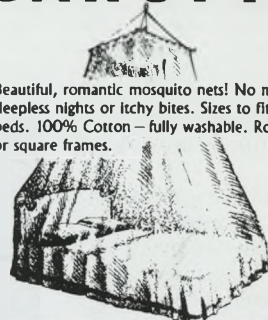
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