

BROADSHEET

NEW ZEALAND'S *f*EMINIST MAGAZINE FOR 24 YEARS \$7.50 Winter/Hotoke 1996 Issue 210

Policy on women

War rape

Lesbian
marriage

Feminism
in Cuba

Tax cuts



P**OLITICS**
AND POLICY



BROADSHEET RESOURCE KITS



Collections of articles from the magazine have been grouped together under general headings. There are new topics, updated favourites and historical classics. More detail about the content of each kit is available on request.

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Including - Keri Hulme, Nadine Gordimer, Joy Crowley, Fiona Kidman, Fay Weldon, Dale Spender, Andrea Dworkin, Juliet Batten, Rita Angus, Jacqueline Fahey, Olivia Bower

17. Women Artists \$14

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Treaty of Waitangi

20. Maori Women \$14

Health; feminism; women's issues

21. Maori Sovereignty \$6

Donna Awatere's articles that became the basis of her book.

22. Women in Non-traditional Roles \$8

Taranaki women; woodwork; women in sport; sheep shearers; fisherwomen

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Employment equity; reasons for unequal pay; changes in work for women; unemployment

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cover art

photography
Johanna Bannister

.....

Johanna Bannister is a social worker for Auckland Health Care. Her interest in photography began at the age of eighteen when she purchased her first Minolta, which she still uses today.

After studying in Sydney she returned to Auckland where she freelanced for various magazines, including 'Stilletto' and 'Glow' and completed her social work degree.

She also worked as stills photographer on the late lesbian film maker Sally Smith's last movie, and has participated in various group exhibitions.

Johanna's work explores the beauty of human and natural form and is very woman oriented.

A single parent she expresses the desire of so many women 'to have more time and resources to pursue my art work in more depth'.

Go girl!

collective comment

regular



Great feminist minds think alike!

You'll notice it in this issue. There are a number of cross-references and slight subject overlaps between articles - which is only to be expected when you ask a bunch of feminists to write about political issues. After all, both patriarchy and the New Zealand government are systems, aren't they, under which all sorts of things connect.

A feminist view of politics is wide, as this issue demonstrates. Lesbian marriage, the royal marriage (yes, of course royalty is political!), the universal basic income, the tax cuts, MMP and the Parties on women's policy, the politics of sport, and feminist news from Cuba, Bosnia and Burma. Rounded off with a touch of culture - book and film reviews, and some light reading from a new Australian feminist sci-fi!

No 'Gripes of Roth' column this time. Margot Roth is off enjoying the good life with relatives in France. We miss her, but we know she'll be having a great time! We welcome Lisa Sabbage back in print with her regular column, 'London's Burning', at the heart of European happenings - making us a truly international magazine.

Lots of Collective changes. A notable departure is that of Ali Bell, an enthusiastic and passionate member of Collective who was responsible for the coordination of each issue last year. We thank Ali for a very hard year's work. Sarah Buxton has gamely taken on the task of organising *Broadsheet's* advertising and we're confident she'll do a great job.

We almost had two other new members, but our numbers have remained a bit too low and the voluntary workloads a bit too high! Thanks to Helen and Cary for the time they were able to give. If there are any other women out there who'd like to experience working in a unique feminist environment, please get in touch. You can try Alex on (09) 849-7717.

Happy Winter reading!
On behalf of the Collective,
Jacqui Fill and Linda Hill



FRONTING UP

EDITORIAL DECISIONS

Jacqui Fill
Linda Hill
Lisa Howard-Smith
Deborah Mann
Claire-Louise McCurdy

CO-ORDINATION

The Collective

EDITING

Linda Hill
Lisa Howard-Smith

DESIGN

Kate Millington

THANK YOU

Barbara Bennett
Sarah Buxton
Edith Gorringe
Cathy Hall
Cary McDermott
Nerida Phillips

NEXT ISSUE is Spring 1996. Due on sale early September. Editorial deadline is July 9. The theme is *The End of the Relationship* - marital property, law, custody, violence, refuge - all of it!

CONTRIBUTIONS: Women are welcome to send articles, photos, letters, and cartoons. We appreciate writers sending graphics with their articles. Always include a contact phone number and your address so we can contact you regarding editorial decisions. If sending a disk please label document name and word processor system name. We welcome Mac 4 or higher, IBM Word 2 or higher, and WordPerfect. If you have interviewed people, please send their signatures on your article to show that they have checked the piece. Material should be sent with a SSAE to PO Box 56-147, Auckland. Writer's Guidelines are available on request.

LETTERS: The Womanfile Collective may not agree with views expressed in letters. Some letters may be edited for length or clarity. We do not publish personal attacks. Letters from men are published at the discretion of the Collective. If you do not wish a letter to be published, please mark 'Not for Publication'.

ADVERTISING is now being handled by Sarah Buxton (09) 360 1880.

RETAIL AND WHOLESALE are co-ordinated by Anne Hunt (09) 817 4349

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POLITICS AND POLICY

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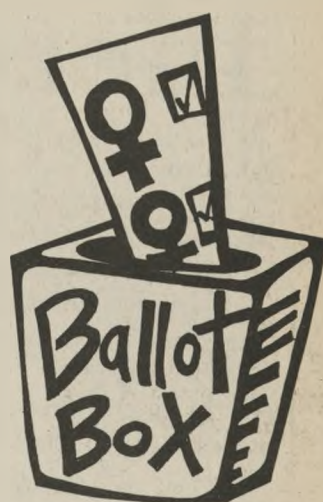
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Herspective



My brief, as a lesbian feminist economist, is to assess in 300 words the impact of the economic and social changes (or should I say cataclysm) of the last 12 years on women in Aotearoa, suggest where to go from here - and be witty.

That task is funny in itself - or ridiculous - and as I don't have the wit of a Margot Roth, I think I'd better just be predictable old me. So, some thoughts on feminist agendas in the MMP era.

I veer between optimism and pessimism all the time. How can you help but be pessimistic when the (1992) figures showed one third of children and most sole parents (read mothers) in poverty - and the report gets the usual knee-jerk discrediting from Jenny Shipley? And sure it isn't third world poverty, but we are meant to pride ourselves on wanting all to share the supposed new prosperity.

The statistics (and less are collected now - deliberately) show unacceptable and widening inequality, with women and Maori over-represented in both non-paid employment and the part-time and casualised work created by the Employment Contracts Act.

One element in the government's simplistic remedies is for us all to live in two parent nuclear families again. (Presumably heterosexual - even if some do want to recognise lesbian and gay marriage - on which I have reservations, but 'their' reasons against almost make me

favour it!) Never mind the family violence (read husbands beating up wives) and unhappiness that led to the DPB. Help! - where's the optimism? Oh yes. The Domestic Protection Act - when it gets to implementation day. At least they're taking the matter a bit more seriously.

Pessimism. The assumption and praise of self reliance (read selfishness) and independence. The re-creation of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor, which deliberately sets one under-privileged group against another and leads to the above assumptions becoming self-fulfilling prophecy. Some feel they have to take out private health insurance (many simply can't find the money) and save individually rather than collectively because the welfare state is being dismantled. Even if many of us on high incomes would rather have a top tax rate of 50% and a decent public health and education system. And all that is in the name of choice. For whom? And which groups have all the constraints and little of the choice? Still, David Green's stuff [*From Welfare State to Civil Society*, NZ Business Roundtable] can be quite seductive. Of course we want to avoid the cycle of disadvantage and abolish welfare dependence - but not his way. Charity and poor law in the old days allowed even wider inequalities. Community responsibility should be at all levels, including the childless like me paying taxes to help bring up children we col-

lectively want.

Optimism? Voluntary initiatives of all sorts - from Green Dollar schemes to Angel Funds - to ignore 'their' economy, establish our own, which values sustainability. This is one aspect of deregulation/devolution which has some attractions. If accompanied by real money flows, rather than the government shifting responsibility without relinquishing power, it could mean real resources, empowerment and autonomy for feminist and Maori initiatives - in health, Kohanga Reo and other initiatives which are usually starved of funds.

Remedies? Reassert collective values. Create a thought revolution to value all useful activity, including unpaid household, caring and emotional work (but not necessarily by counting it in GDP, which lets them get away with money being the only measure of value). And reduce the links between personal identity/status and paid work, because the traditional type of full employment may be unattainable. Do this through a Universal Basic Income, through sharing around all the work, getting rid of over-employment and under-employment. Limit the difference between top and bottom full time earnings to, say, three to one.

Yes, I know it's all a pipe dream at the moment, but it's my long term agenda - and not much over 300 words.

Prue Hyman

B

Your write

Dear Women,
I'm so grateful you sent me the copy of *Broadsheet* which has your interview with me.

Incidentally, in case anyone ever wonders, the 'matching Macs' (at the end of our interview) aren't raincoats - I meant Suniti and I have identical Apple Macintosh word-processors so that we can work on things separately/together without having to re-key or 'translate' anything.

I hope one day I/we will have a chance to spend time in New Zealand and to meet feminists there. Meanwhile, my warmest good wishes to feminists endeavour there, and to *Broadsheet* in particular.

Women from New Zealand and Australia are specially welcome at the Centre for Women's Studies, Exeter University, UK, where I am Co-Di-

rector. Research degrees (MPhil/PhD) and course work Master's degrees (MA) are available full-time or part-time. Annual part-time fees from October 1996 are 1,250 pounds sterling. For more information, contact me at the address below.

All good wishes,

Gillian Hanscombe
Co-Director, Centre for
Women's Studies
University of Exeter, UK
EX4 4QJ

Greetings!

We are writing for two reasons:

1. Your readers may be interested in developing skills in public speaking and participating in public speaking competitions.

2. Your readers may be interested in adjudicating debates, for both school and adult

competitions. We provide training for those interested in learning to adjudicate. We especially appreciate women adjudicators as they provide a valuable role model, especially in the school debating competitions.

We believe it is very important for young women at secondary school to see women in leadership with authority and strong verbal skills. We believe that some women in your organisation may be prepared to provide this balance and example in our team of adjudicators.

We would be grateful if you would convey this to your readers and provide our contact details. If you would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact me.

Wayne McDougall
Auckland Debating
Association (Inc)

PO Box 3233 Auckland,
Ph: 09 630 9164
Fax: 09 630 7739

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Yourwrite

Dear Women,

I'm writing because I'm bloody angry at the direction the 'Women's Movement' appears to be taking, and I feel a need to be listened to. I refer, of course, to the opinions being expressed about women of European origin (call us Pakeha if you like). Being of European origin myself, I feel treated like a second-class citizen in my home country, which Aotearoa is.

While I am aware that Maori and other women of colour have been, and still are, oppressed on the basis of their colour, this is no excuse for denigrating Pakeha women. I feel denigrated, treated personally responsible for everything that has happened. I know other Pakeha women also feel this way, but are too afraid to speak up about their concerns for fear of being ridiculed or labelled 'racist'.

The Women's Movement began out of a concern for the plight of all women in patriarchal societies. The current elevation of other cultures at the expense of my own does nothing to make Pakeha women feel better about ourselves. Trying to please all cultures means that none is treated equally or equitably, and there isn't any culture in the world that could be described as free from patriarchal attitudes anyway! Why support others at the expense of one or two? This goes against the ethos of the Women's Movement as I see it - equal value placed on all human beings.

This raises serious issues for those women who are still being marginalised. While this racism

and hatred is being fostered under the name of 'Feminism', disabled, working class and poor women are missing out. Women's Centres don't cater enough for disabled women, and often have inadequate access. And women with little money to spare miss out on activities because things cost money. We need to be fair, and to put the same energy into the needs of these women as we do into the needs of Maori and other women. Fair's fair.

Women need to be empowered to help themselves. Pakeha women who spend their energy trying to help women of other races also need to be aware of the risks. Are you any better than the white christian men who came to this country with bibles in their hands?

I am aware that I will be labelled 'racist' for stating my opinions. I am also aware that the very act of labelling discourages further dialogue. The Women's Movement seems to demand a blind acceptance of the value of anything that is not Pakeha, and too many bloody little Hitlers are all too willing to attack anything that disagrees with their own stated point of view.

If your self-esteem were great, you wouldn't need to put down yourself or anything that belongs to you. Neither would you want to put others down or feel superior to them. All women would be treated as valuable.

Get real!

Caroline Aurora
Wellington

An Apology...

Broadsheet would like to apologise to Peta for a proofing mistake in her name on her poem 'Freedom' (No.209, p.26).



WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAMME

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MASSEY
UNIVERSITY

Broadcast

BERNICE REAGON AND SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK IN NEW ZEALAND

In August of this year Bernice Reagon will be giving the Sir Douglas Robb lectures at the University of Auckland. Her female acapella group, Sweet Honey in the Rock, will come at the same time and be touring in New Zealand. Their music is a mixture of blues, jazz, gospel and recently rap.

Bernice Johnson Reagon is a Distinguished Professor of History at American University in Washington and Curator Emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History. She is a specialist in African American oral, performance and protest traditions.

Bernice is also founder and artistic director of Sweet Honey in the Rock, a world renowned acapella ensemble. During the group's twenty one years she has composed many of its contemporary songs, providing the rich African American traditional song repertoire that makes the group so distinctive. As a solo singer, Reagon describes herself as a 'song leader in the 19th Century African American choral tradition in search of a congregation.'

During the Civil Rights Movement, Reagon was a member of the original SNCC (Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee) Freedom Singers.



THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY RE-OPENS

The Women's Library at the Auckland Women's Centre, 63 Ponsonby Rd, was reopened at an Anzac Day launch that was packed out. Over 40 members joined the Library in the first 24 hours. Librarian, Jocelyn Logan, reports that it is being well used, for reasons as varied as students doing projects on violence against women, to lesbians wanting a few Naiad novels to read on holiday. This may well be the only library in the country which has purple stickers on books with lesbian content!

The Women's Library is a library for women, containing books on women, and largely by women. It specialises in feminist and lesbian titles. A core of feminist books comes from the Women's Library established by Womanline when it was at the Women's Centre in the early 1980s.

At the opening Carole Beu presented a carton of new books as a present from the Women's Bookshop. Most acquisitions are by donation - more books and journals on women are very welcome.

Women can join for a subscription of \$5, \$10 or \$20 a year - a sliding scale on which you can place yourself. For more information phone (09) 376 3227.

THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Between February and July meetings are being held throughout New Zealand to discuss the Platform for Action agreed to by 185 countries at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing last year. The Platform is an agenda for women's empowerment and reaffirms the human rights of women and girls.

Each workshop, held by local women, will discuss local women's concerns and their views on the most urgent issues to be addressed. Women of all ages, backgrounds, interests and opinions have been invited to participate.

A display, *Beyond Beijing - the New Zealand Way*, has been designed to familiarise New Zealanders with the Platform for Action. It tells the story of the work of non-governmental organisations and women before Beijing and challenges New Zealanders to discuss the issues identified in the Platform for Action. The display will be set up in public areas such as shopping malls and libraries.

Meetings have already been held in Wellington, Napier, Gisborne, Tauranga and Rotorua. Meetings are still to be held in the following areas:

Venue Auckland South
Display 5-8 June
Workshop 8-9 June
Contact Christine Knock
ph. 278 4373

Venue North Shore
 Display 12-15 June
 Workshop 15-16 June
 Contact Glenys Todd
 ph. 478 7209
 Venue Whangarei
 Display 19-22 June
 Workshop 22-23 June
 Contact Jan Jessop
 ph. 438 7721
 Venue Auckland Central
 Display 26-29 June
 Workshop 29-30 June
 Contact Stella Gukibau
 ph. 838 8700
 Venue Hamilton
 Display 3-6 July
 Workshop 6-7 July
 Contact Noeline Nuttall
 ph. 843 6375
 Venue New Plymouth
 Display 10-13 July
 Workshop 13-14 July
 Contact Anne Francis
 ph. 758 6278
 Venue Palmerston North
 Display 17-20 July
 Workshop 20-21 July
 Contact Pauline Charlton
 ph. 357 0444

For further information, contact the NZNGO Coordinating Committee, PO Box 5131, Dunedin.

MIDWIVES CONFERENCE

The New Zealand College of Midwives is holding its 4th National Conference from 28th - 31st August 1996 at Lincoln University. The key note speaker will be Barbara Katz Rothman, Professor of Sociology at Baruch College and the Graduate Centre of the City University of New York. Professor Rothman has written extensively on issues of childbirth politics. Dr Jane

Fisher, a clinical psychologist interested in the psychological aspects of pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period, will also be addressing the conference.

For further information contact the New Zealand College of Midwives PO Box 21-106 Christchurch. ph (03) 377 273, fax (03) 365 2789.

A NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH POLICY

New Zealand does not have a national policy on women's health. Members of the Women's Health Committee of the Health Research Council have developed a statement in support of a health policy.

They argue that although there are currently policy statements in specific areas of women's health (such as cervical screening), policy discussion papers (such as breast cancer screening) and advice to providers of services for women, there is no overall health policy for New Zealand women.

A policy would allow the establishment of goals and targets for addressing and improving women's health. It would provide a guide for Regional Health Authorities when purchasing services so that resources could be used in the most effective way. Above all an overall framework would establish priority areas in which action taken would materially improve the health of women and where the greatest health gains could be made.

For more information contact Emeritus Professor

Nancy Kinross, Department of Management Systems, Massey University, Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North. Phone (06) 356 9099.

Abridged from the *Health Research Council of New Zealand Newsletter*, 16, March 1996.

NORTH HEALTH DRAFT POLICY ON WOMEN

North Health is currently circulating a discussion paper, *The Health of Women: Strategies to Improve the Health of Women*. Women are invited to add their suggestions and complete the questionnaire. It is available from Private Bag 92 522, Auckland.

GENDER PAY GAP WIDENING

We can thank the Employment Contracts Act for introducing flexibility into the New Zealand labour market. The latest statistics show that men on average now earn a total of \$188.85 more a week than women and that the gap is widening.

Press release, Dianne Yates, 7 March 1996.

DE FACTO AND MARRIAGE MATTERS

Recently an Auckland woman made a claim on her contents insurance policy for stolen clothes. The company would not pay out on her partner's clothes as his name was not listed on the policy and the couple were not married. Consumer rang six insurance companies to determine whether they treat married and de facto couples differently. Answers varied. Some pay out on a de facto's belongings if the

policy specifies both names. Others make no distinction.

Consumer recommends that everyone living with a partner, whether married or not, should identify on the policy who it is to cover. If you are in any doubt, check your existing cover and tell the insurance company if your situation changes.

Consumer 345 January/February 1996

IS THERE A DOC IN THE HOUSE?

A feisty twenty six year old woman has just become the youngest woman ever to take a seat in the Australian Federal Parliament.

Natasha Stott Despoja attributes her political activism to her mother, a feminist, who taught her to be outspoken.

A seasoned politician, she beat eight male candidates for the Presidency of Adelaide University's Students Association. Two years after university she joined the Democrats as a researcher, adviser and speech writer.

Stott Despoja readily agrees that Parliament is a bully boys' club driven by male egos and testosterone.

"The combination of being not only female but being young is a little unsettling for some. Until there are young people in the Parliament, the culture won't change, the attitude towards our parliamentary system won't change and certainly the issues effecting young people won't be dealt with."

Although entitled to a car she is a firm believer in public transport and catches the bus to work - wearing a good sturdy pair of Docs! *Abridged from Vogue Australia February 1996*

SPOT THE SEXISM.

GET REAL TELECOM - THIS IS THE NINETIES?

When former Broadsheet collective member Helen Warren married for the second time in 1984, she went to enormous trouble and expense to keep the business and romantic aspects of her relationship separate. She writes:

"I had already been ripped-off once (emotionally and financially) and I was determined not to repeat the experience. I had contracts drawn up to cover everything - income, bank accounts, mortgage, telephone, power, rates, insurance and death.

"Two weeks ago, I decided to update the technology in the household. I bought myself the latest state of the art fax/answerphone. I wanted a separate fax and phone number, and applied to Customer Services Telecom to have this change made.

"I was informed in a polite (and customer focused way) that the phone was in my husband's name and I was not authorised to make changes to the account. However, if I liked to get him to give them a call and authorise the installation of the fax, they were sure they could accommodate me.

"Armed with a copy of the original application to have the phone connected in joint names (and a copy of Telecom's acceptance of this application), I recontacted Telecom to have the current situation explained and rectified.

"The explanation: Probably when we went over to computers in the early 1990s it was easier to just use your husband's name.

"Rectifying the problem? 'I'm not sure whether we can do that, I will have to go and ask someone.'

"The outcome: I have been informed that the problem has been rectified and that I now have authority over my own phone account."



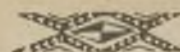
MAASAI WOMEN BUILDERS

We all know that women do different types of work in different cultures. If you're short on examples you may be interested to know that Maasai women have control over housing. When a woman marries her first task is to build her own house, helped by other women in the homestead. This house belongs to her and no-one else may enter without her permission. Throughout her life she will build a new house every 10 years or so.

Traditionally land and housing had no value. Status was related to the number and quality of cattle owned - tended by men of course.

The New Internationalist February 1996





THE MICHIGAN WOMYN'S FESTIVAL

The 21st Michigan Womyn's Music Festival will take place on 13-18 August 1996. In addition to over 300 workshops and a six day women's film festival, a program of 42 concerts will feature performances by an eclectic group of artists including Dorothy Allison, Marga Gormez, Hattie Gossett, Tish Hinojosa, Franc, 7 Year Bitch, and Jane Siberry. International artists will include Cobra (China), Nela (Mexico), Kick La Luna (Germany), and New Zealand's own Shona Laing.

The Festival, which attracts 7-8000 women annually, is the oldest and largest of the outdoor women's music festivals in the United States. It is held on 650 acres of secluded country land where women live communally for the week.

For information regarding the 1996 festival, write to WWTMC, PO Box 22, Walhalla, MI49458, or call USA 616-757-4766.

NATTERING ON THE NET

For those of us well connected (to Internet of course!) the following World Wide Web sites may be of interest.

Abortion and Reproductive Rights

Includes information on options, full text decisions on documents such as the American Roe vs Wade case, etc.

Address: <http://www.matisse.net/~kathy/caral/abortion.html>

Avoiding Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

A guide to avoiding occupational overuse syndrome.

Address: <http://www.cais.com/agm/>

FeMiNa

A web directory and information resource containing information about women and girls.

Address: <http://copper.ucs.indiana.edu/~shecha/cts.html>

Pleiades Networks

A site offering guidance for getting into the Internet, a directory of women's organisations all over the world, a calendar of events and discussion groups.

Address: <http://www.pleiades-net.com/>

Women in Cinema

A reference guide offering information on bibliographies, anthologies, collections, reviews and cinematographies on women in film.

Address: <http://poc.acc.virginia.edu/~pm9k/libsci/womFilm.html>

The Women's Bureau, Department of Labour, USA

Great for American statistics on women workers, publications etc.

Address: <http://bubba.dol.gov/dol/wb/>

Women's Issues on the Internet

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feature

Feminists will be familiar with 1970s critiques of marriage as a patriarchal institution. But what about the latest 1990s political issue - the right of lesbians to marry? And what are feminist goals for female independence in all relationships?



graphics Kate Millington

FOR BETTER OR WORSE?

The marriage debate continues
by Jenny Rankine

Justice Minister Doug Graham plans to introduce property rights law to Parliament this year for de facto heterosexual and, under protest, for same-sex couples. Social Welfare revision of benefit rules to include same sex couples is on the way. And six lesbians have taken the state to court to get the right to legally marry.

Marriage and de facto relationship issues haven't had this kind of airing among feminists and lesbians since the 1970s. And while all these law changes are being debated, drafted and introduced to Parliament, feminists have their best opportunity in years to radically boost all women's autonomy in relationships. I believe the most positive change for women will come from rejecting marriage as a model for all couple relationships, and insisting that the state treats

everyone as an economic individual.

Heterosexual resistance to marriage is one of the more obvious social changes during the last generation. Dunedin women in de facto relationships who were interviewed by Vivienne Scott Melton did not want to be constructed as "wives" by their partners, relatives or others. They deliberately chose not to get married because they wanted equality and independence in their relationships.

I'd like to thank Ruth Busch for checking the first draft of this article.

About 50% of couples live together either before or as an alternative to getting married, according to the New Zealand edition of *What Every Woman Should Know About her Partner's Money*. Marriages are also not lasting as long as they did when women had no other options. Almost half end in divorce or separation, and it's more likely to be the woman who makes the move to leave.

At the same time, benefit rules and other laws have gradually recognised these "de facto" (as opposed to "de jure" or "in law") heterosexual relationships. The marriage model, of one wage-earner supporting a dependent caregiving partner, has been extended to these "relationships in the nature of marriage". Since Doug Graham believes marriage has a higher moral status, his proposed property Bill is likely to retain some distinctions between married and non-married couples as an economic incentive for people to marry.

Lesbians have also moved slowly towards visibility in family law, partly on the coat tails of heterosexual de facto couples, and partly because of the Human Rights and Bill of Rights Acts. The full weight of these two Acts will not be felt until the year 2000, the government's deadline for removing discriminatory provisions from pre-existing laws.

Despite all the legal changes hovering in the wings, lesbians and bisexual women have barely begun to discuss how

they want the law to treat them. The personal campaign for the right to marry waged by three lesbian couples has galvanised this major debate in lesbian communities.



Lesbian Marriage Challenge

The lesbian High Court case was argued by human rights lawyer Rodney Harrison in April on behalf of Jools Joslin and Jenny Rowan in Wellington, Lindsay Quilter and Margy Pearl in Auckland, and Sarah Anderson and Sam Court of Christchurch. If the lesbians win, the government will probably go to the Court of Appeal. Auckland barrister Errollyn Jones believes lesbian marriage is such a fundamental change to common law that the appeal may go all the way to the Privy Council. Whatever the outcome, the case will generate more lesbian visibility and debate about what marriage means in the 1990s.

The couples are testing the 1955 Marriage Act against the Bill of Rights. The Bill includes the right to be free of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. If existing laws don't specifically discriminate - the Marriage Act doesn't specify partners' gender - then the courts have to interpret them consistently with the Bill. At the moment, it is not the Act but the bureaucrats at the registry offices who are effectively prohibiting lesbian marriage.

It will enable
judges to rule
on lesbian
relationships
using
heterosexual
criteria

Hamilton lawyer Ruth Busch says the case is straightforward, and the only logical conclusion is that the three couples should be able to marry. However, Judge Kerr could decide that politicians should resolve the issue, and duck the irresistible legal argument. "If that happened, I would be asking what are the rest of my rights under the Bill of Rights Act worth?" says Ruth.

To the Christian Right, who regard marriage as the core of their patch, the possibility of same-sex marriage is a major attack. However, many people share the Christian Right's ideal of monogamous marriage as the only valid environment for successful child-rearing and positive family values. To assert that lesbians raise well-adjusted children and create valuable new kinds of families is a radical challenge to the ideas of "marriage" and "family". Many lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual feminists live their relationships as conscious alternatives and challenges to mar-

riage. If lesbians argue for same sex marriage by saying "We can't help it" or "We're just like you", the radical potential of these challenges is undermined.

In an internet debate on the issue, law professor Barbara Cox asked "What is more anti-patriarchal...than clearly stating that women can commit to one another with no man in sight?" Lindsay Quilter and Margy Pearl argue that legal lesbian marriage invalidates the concept of male "ownership" of women, and overturns patrilineage - inheritance in the male line. English lesbian psychologist Celia Kitzinger believes marriage would have to change if dykes did it. "You can't simply add lesbians to institutions developed by heterosexuals and leave the institutions unchanged," she says.



While I share some of these views, I don't agree with some lesbians' assumptions that legal recognition of their relationships must automatically be good for lesbian communities. When the government wants to push as many women as possible into economic dependence on their partners, I cannot see lesbian pressure to be included in marriage as merely a personal "choice" or a simple human rights issue.

Feminist Views on Human Rights

From a radical feminist point of view, "human rights" is a very limited lever for change. In New Zealand law only individuals have them, not groups. There is no provision for class action suits. Change to many exploitative situations relies on some gutsy person with enough money and privilege to survive two years of harassment or unemployment while their test case chugs slowly through the Human Rights Commission process.

The law also protects everybody from every kind of discrimination, ignoring structured inequalities in Aotearoa. So the commission gets as many or more complaints from Pakeha about Maori "racism" and men about women's "sexism" as the other way around. The Act protects the rights of heterosexuals and bisexuals against discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation, which makes women and lesbian-only venues and groups vulnerable. Human rights is a double-edged sword, able to cut us as it protects us.

For radical feminists, lesbians wanting to get married is akin to women wanting to join the army. Both are male-dominated institutions. Feminists might support a women's right to be a soldier, but we'd rather work to abolish the need for armed forces at all.

Other Impacts of Marriage on Lesbians

Couples where one partner is looking after children and the other is in paid work make up only a small percentage of lesbian relationships. They're the ones who will be directly affected by the sexist bias in Family Court judgements. However, unemployment is high. The courts are likely to treat wage-earning lesbians better when couples split up, while unemployed partners will do worse.

Once benefit rules include lesbians, couples who split up would have to separate before either of them was entitled to a benefit in her own right. This could leave a non-earning partner in poverty if they can't agree on a separation agreement and she has to wait over a year for a property settlement.

Feminists of all sexualities have resisted the compulsory coupledom of marriage. Married couples are supposed to act as a unit, sleep together all the time, satisfy each other's emotional needs and share any money or property. However, ex-lovers are often part of lesbian extended families and many feminists and lesbians value economic autonomy and independent friendships.

Lesbians and feminists have created a wide range of partnerships and living patterns. We live with flatmates and a lover, in different households from lovers, with lover and kids, with two lovers at the same time, with

whanau or aiga, co-parent children as a couple, act as matua whangai for whanau, co-parent with friends or ex-lovers, co-parent with gay couples who have fathered our children, have no parenting role with our lover's kids, practice serial monogamy, non-monogamy, non-genital lover relationships.

Heterosexuals already judge monogamous-live-together-share-everything lesbian relationships as more legitimate than other common lesbian patterns. The opportunity to marry will further validate this type of lesbian relationship, undermining other patterns. It will enable judges to rule on the nature and quality of lesbian relationships using heterosexual criteria.

Feminist Views on Marriage

The point of view so far missing in the public debate on lesbian marriage is the feminist critique of marriage as an anti-woman institution. The discussion has been between Christian Right opponents of everything lesbian, and those lesbians and liberal Christians who support marriage as a human right.

Adding lesbians to marriage still leaves married couples with legal privileges which non-married couples don't get. It also doesn't touch benefit structures which force parenting, caregiving, unemployed, sick or

disabled women to be economically dependent on a partner.



(This section spells out the ways in which marriage itself disadvantages women. Readers who feel I'm telling them how to suck eggs can skip to the next one.)

For most heterosexual women marriage is an economic arrangement shrouded in talk of "building a life together". A relationship with a man who has a paid job usually ensures young working women have a better standard of living than they could aspire to on their own or with another woman. The traditional assumption about marriage - that a woman swaps sexual and emotional services for a man's economic support - is never spelt out, although benefit rules make it brutally clear.

These days, most men expect their female partners to bring some money into the house if they can, but still be economically dependent. Most people still expect mothers in paid work to care for the household as well, while their male partners are only expected to do one job. Nineties young women may sometimes scoff at feminist analyses of marriage. But five years on, when they're caring full time for toddlers and he's the one in paid work, they often find they've lurched from supposed equality to a dependence they hate.

As long as women are primarily responsible for raising children and caring for sick relatives, women's jobs are treated as less important than their partners', are paid less than men's, and men's jobs make it impossible to care for children as well, marriage will mean economic dependence for childrearing or caregiving women. If you think things are different now, talk to women who've left their kids to be raised by their male partners, or men who stay at home while their female partners earn a good wage. They can tell you about the strength of societal expectations.

However, while marriage means dependence for non-earning women, those in paid work find the economic support is supposed to flow two ways. Women in employment may have to support unemployed, sick or student male partners for long periods.

There are many possibilities for radical changes to relationship law. For example, we could demand a coherent, flexible law which can deal with the wide range of living arrangements we choose, and which will override our choices only in clear cases of unfairness or where a vulnerable partner needs protecting. We could argue for a range of legal partner arrangements, of different durations with different conditions. We could lobby for

We can decide whether to register our relationships or make our own arrangements

the state to treat all relationships equally for parenting, inheritance, property division, immigration and other aspects of our lives where discrimination exists. Then we can decide whether to register our relationships or make our own arrangements.

Marital Property

Many women assume that marriage has changed because they no longer have to promise to obey their husbands. They are unaware of the sexist laws underlying marriage until they split up.

Women in the United States lose up to 70% of their standard of living when they leave a marriage, while their husbands gain up to 40%. Before the Marital Property Act in New Zealand, women did even worse. Current New Zealand information isn't available, which in itself is telling. Family law observers agree, however, that the outcome is still much poorer for women than for men. Says Wellington lesbian social worker Anne Ruck, "Two years after a split, most of the women with children have descended into poverty, while husbands are 30% better off." No one knows whether lesbian partners do it any better, since there's no research about how lesbians divide shared assets.

Family court judges persistently devalue the contribution of long term homemakers to families, according to *What Every Woman Should Know*. They also assume unrealistic opportunities exist for older women in the paid

workforce. When women care for children, their skills and knowledge from their paid work gradually become out of date. Ruth Busch says the myth that equal property shares lead to equal outcomes for men and women ignores a sexist economy. The law focuses on past and present earning ability. Judges don't consider the breadwinner's future earning potential as a major relationship asset.

Women and children are carrying most of the social and economic costs of divorce, says Lynne Dempsey, policy development co-ordinator for lobby group Divorce Equity. The group wants a comprehensive review of all laws governing marriage, domestic property, custody and the Family Court. They want the system to use a gendered analysis rather than the current assumption of equality between husbands and wives.



Although marriage splits up disadvantage wives, heterosexual women in de facto relationships come out even worse. Marital property law starts from an assumption of half shares in any property acquired after the marriage, no matter whose name it's in. It's the breadwinner's job to prove the non-earner should have a smaller share. The Family Court uses constructive trust law to judge de facto splits. This law assumes a woman has no share of property in the man's name,

and it's the woman's job to prove she contributed.

To show faith in their man, women often give up control over pooled money or let their partner keep the financial records. Men with money are more likely to know how to hide assets during a breakup, and their partners often don't have enough of their own money to hire experts to find and value these assets. Women not in paid work often can't support themselves during a lengthy separation process, so settle for less than they should. Many women can't afford lawyers at all.

Property and De Facto Relationships

Many lesbian couples and heterosexual women go into relationships assuming that any earnings and property each one has will stay theirs. Doug Graham's proposed property law is likely to change this. Christchurch les-

bian lawyer Ocean says 'legal recognition' of lesbians in other countries has enabled greater state "surveillance and regulation of lesbians in return for the legal 'right' of lesbians to fight each other in court over property".

In other countries with domestic property law, heterosexual and lesbian women without a partnership contract have not been able to choose whether the law will apply to them. "Scandinavian registered partnership legislation requires that both lesbian partners register their relationship and this act...presumes that lesbian couples agree to share their property," says Ocean in an article in the April 96 *Otautahi Lesbian Outpost*.

Property law overseas hasn't changed other discrimination about inheritance or next of kin rights. Since cases are unpredictable and expensive, the court is a poor option for a caregiver left without economic support at the end of a relationship, Ocean says. If she does take a case, the judges will decide whether the couple's relationship is legally acceptable. "This is an intolerable prospect for lesbians who wish to keep their power to define their own lesbian relationships." Property law which is designed to deal with inequalities between men and women will impact differently on same sex couples, and is likely to have severe consequences for lesbians, since

their earning potential as women is generally lower, she says.

'Legal recognition' which enables lesbians to slug it out in court is also likely to lead to much greater policing of lesbians on benefits, says Ocean.



Discrimination Between Marriage and Other Relationships

Lesbians, bisexual and heterosexual women in de facto relationships still face fewer rights than married couples in property splits, inheritance, immigration, parenting and other areas. These laws will each need to be changed to provide equality for all kinds of relationships. Some selected anomalies -

Property All couples, not just married ones, should have any property they have jointly contributed to divided equally, and future earning power should be a major consideration. However, the law should not assume that couples will automatically share property. Married couples can already contract to keep some property separate, or to opt out of the Matrimonial Property Act provisions. Other couples need to do this too, especially women holding Maori taonga, assets from a previous relationship or a family business.

Parenting If two lesbians decide to have a child and raise it to-

gether, the non-biological parent has to apply to the court for guardianship too, whereas married lesbians would automatically both be guardians.

Immigration People who marry New Zealanders automatically get residency. De facto and lesbian partners of New Zealanders have to prove a "genuine and stable" relationship by showing shared accommodation, income, bank accounts and photos. De facto partners must have been together for two years and same sex couples for four. The Act should treat all relationships equally.

Next of Kin Your automatic next of kin are set out in the Law of Succession, which ignores de facto and same sex relationships. Your next of kin can visit you in hospital, get medical information and coroners' reports and make decisions about your care if you are unable to communicate. Single women can't choose a close friend over biological family members. De facto and same sex partners may be included as part of a major review of the law. Says Nigel Christie of the Law Commission, "It wouldn't stop a family from contesting it, but they wouldn't have the same chance of success as they have now." All people should be able to easily nominate a legal next of kin, say, by filling a form at a Post Shop, rather than having to pay lawyers' fees.

Official Definitions of Family The Department of Statistics defined a family as an adult heterosexual couple or parent/s and children

We need to fight for recognition of all kinds of families.

in their analysis of the 1991 census. Government policy on families remains rigidly heterosexist and monocultural, ignoring families of choice and extended families. We need to fight for recognition of all kinds of families.

Official Recognition of Lesbians How many forms have you read that just ask for "marital status"? In the last few censuses, some dykes have written "lesbian" over every option. Just because some lesbians might be able to tick "married" in the future may not make lesbians any more visible. Demand that the government recognises and counts lesbians.



Women and Benefits

Marriage and benefit laws are like two parallel mazes, which go in different directions when you reach the same corners. Both sets of rules can affect you at once. For example, marriage law doesn't assume that a new partner is responsible for supporting kids from a previous relationship, but benefit rules do. (Advice for the modern girl - he or she is *always* "the flatmate".)

"The current benefits system is grossly unfair to women," says Errollyn Jones. Women on benefits whose sexual partner moves in are treated like prostitutes, she says. The state won't pay them if some man is around

to do it. This is the marital model stripped of romance.

Although married women and women in relationships "in the nature of marriage" pay equal rates of tax on their incomes, they are not entitled to unemployment, sickness, disability or domestic purposes benefits unless their partner's earnings are very low. This assumes that men share their money equally, when most heterosexual women get a lot less than half. Only accident compensation and superannuation are independent of a partner's income.

Errollyn, who has an adult daughter with a disability, says, "Women rearing children or caring for others deserve a wage for that work, regardless of who they sleep with".

"Benefits are one of the few areas where it pays to be a lesbian," says Shona Solomon, former co-ordinator of DPB Action in Wellington. When Social Welfare treats lesbian relationships the same as heterosexual ones, she predicts "horrific" consequences for lesbian mothers on the DPB. "The misogyny of Social Welfare and society towards women on the DPB will combine with homophobia," she says. "It's no coincidence that women on the DPB are treated worse than women on the dole. It's a statement that women don't need men. If they're also living in lesbian relationships, they're obviously not redeemable."

If a lesbian mother comes out to any state agency, especially Social Welfare, the way

she's treated changes immediately, Shona says. "The most common assumption is that we have sex in front of our children."

Older lesbians are currently invisible to the state if one of them has to go into a rest home. If they're doled in, both their hard-won assets will get eaten up to pay for geriatric care as heterosexual women's savings are. When benefit rules change, thousands of women living together on super, the dole or the DPB will lose income.

The government has been reluctant to include women's relationships in benefit definitions, says Errollyn, "because it's a nightmare. You can get two women doing the washing, cooking for each other, sleeping in the same bed and perceived socially as a couple, and they may not be in a sexual relationship. Two lesbians living together are so similar to two heterosexual women friends living together."

Treasury and other right wing policy makers want the state to spend less on benefits. Under

this regime, closing the benefit loophole around lesbian relationships has been on the cards for several years, especially since the Human Rights Amendment Act and the Bill of Rights Act. However, the lesbian High Court marriage case may have pushed the policy makers along.

Financial Independence

Joint income tests overwhelmingly disadvantage women. I'm not saying lesbians should keep their invisibility and the protection it gives them from snooping, dobbing in and punitive Social Welfare responses to women's sexuality. No one should be treated like this. The most obvious way towards women's economic independence is for everyone to be treated by the state as economic individuals, whether we're in relationships or not.

Lindsay Quilter and Margy Pearl support this idea for all couples. The Royal Commis-

sion on Social Policy in 1988 recommended a standard individual benefit rate, with an extra 20% for people living alone. The state already treats us as individuals for taxes except when we have dependent children, where they decide family support on aggregate parental income.

Leonic Morris outlines the concept of a Universal Basic Income on page 19 of this issue. A strong movement supporting this kind of concept is essential to counter the government's insistence on the marriage model for benefits. Any universal payment would go to bank accounts controlled only by the individual, rather than joint accounts.

Several different social groups are fed up with unjust benefit and relationship structures. While some of these systems are getting a major shake up, let's try to build coalitions which will get all of us greater independence and autonomy, in and out of relationships.

B

Legal
recognition
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surveillance
of lesbians
in return for
the right
to fight each
other in court

Groups

Divorce Equity

c/- Lynne Dempsey, PO Box 7010,
Te Ngai, Rotorua, phone 07 345
7350

Lesbians Who Don't Want a Bar of It

PO Box 6649, Te Aro, Wellington,
phone 04 382 8556

Parity in Law Fund,

c/- Pride Centre, PO Box 5426,
Wellesley St, Auckland, for
donations to the legal costs of the
lesbian marriage case

Resources

Lesbian and Gay Marriage by Suzanne Sherman, and "Gay Marriage: Are We Ready?" in *10%* magazine, available at LILAC, the Wellington lesbian library.

Internet - <http://www.eskimo.com/demian/index.html> for overseas information about gay marriage

Out Law: A Legal Guide for Lesbians and Gay Men in New Zealand, by the Auckland Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Group, 1994

What Every Woman Should Know About Her Partner's Money, by Shelby White and Lynne Spender, New Zealand editors Trish Lynds and Janet McLeod, Hodder Moa Beckett, 1995

Lesbian Quarterly Vol 1 Issue 2, March 1996 PO Box 11882, Wellington

Women and Economics, by Pru Hyman, Bridget Williams Books, 1994

Women and Taxation, ed Claudia Scott, Institute for Policy Studies, 1993



FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE FOR WOMEN - THE UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

By Leonie Morris

For most women, one of the main obstacles to self-determination is lack of financial independence.

Many interrelated factors work to reduce women's earning capacity - low wages in the 'caring professions', assumptions about what work women should perform, and the fact that much of the work that women do is unpaid work: housework and caring for children, sick people and the elderly.

Further hindering women's financial independence is our social security system. Established in 1938, it was based on a household of a male 'breadwinner' and a dependent wife and children. Since then the status of women has been transformed, but for heterosexual couples, social welfare entitlements are based on their combined income. Although a

woman pays full taxes while in employment, her partner, married or de facto, is expected to support them when ill or unemployed - or vice versa.

Treating couples as one unit, instead of as two taxpayers with individual entitlements, can also disadvantage men, but because the woman is more likely to be the lower income earner, women are at the greatest disadvantage.

Ironically, gay and lesbian couples have so far escaped this enforced dependence, and benefited relative to heterosexual couples, because their relationships are not recognised. Unfortunately, it is only a matter of time before the government re-evaluates this. (See Jenny Rankine's article in this issue. Ed.)

While Bolger's government romanticises the nuclear family, the current situation means there is an incentive for low income heterosexual couples with young children to split up, so that the mother can receive the Domestic Purposes Benefit. There is anecdotal evidence that this is in fact happening. There is also an incentive to commit benefit fraud. If a woman with low earning potential and young children wants to stay with her male partner, the only way she can receive an independent income for herself is to claim the DPB illegally. In this way, our current social welfare provisions can be said to have criminalised a basic human right to financial independence.

Research shows that low paid women frequently leave their jobs when their male partner becomes unemployed. (1) The man then receives a married rate benefit for the two of them. This leaves the woman extremely dependent and vulnerable.

Within government, it is taken for granted that income within families is distributed equitably. Recent New Zealand research on Pakeha families with older children has confirmed what common sense suggests - that men consume a far greater share of the joint family income. (2) This was found to be true regardless of the level of family income. Robin Fleming and Susi Easting found that, in families where the man's income was high and the woman's low, there was a tendency for the woman to have little control over

Incentives for couples to split up or commit benefit fraud



how the money was spent. In the low income families, while women had responsibility for trying to stretch the money to cover the children's needs,

far more money was spent on the father's personal needs than on the mother's. The main factor in household money being shared equally was the woman being on a reasonably good wage.

The Universal Basic Income

These problems could be ameliorated by the introduction of what is known in New Zealand as the Universal Basic Income. This is a benefit or tax rebate available to every adult as a right of citizenship. The UBI would replace all existing state cash payments, e.g. social welfare benefits, national superannuation, student allowances, etc. As a citizenship right, it would be based on legal residence, and would not be work tested or means tested.

Proponents of the UBI have different ideas about the exact form it should take. Below is the UBI proposal put forward by the Aotearoa Network of Unemployed and Beneficiaries to the Employment Taskforce, using 1993 figures.

1. Every adult (aged 19 and over) would receive a benefit or tax credit/tax rebate of \$7,650 pa. The same amount would be paid to 16-18 year olds who had left school, but this would be paid through a 'nominal employer' - an educational or training institution, employer, community organisation, or anyone providing some form of employment or training.

2. In addition, \$3,980 would be paid

to each household with at least one dependent child.
3. A third payment of \$1,900 would be paid for: each subsequent child, each adult over 60, and to any household in which there was only one adult.

For those with special needs - for example, with high accommodation costs or disability related expenses - a Supplementary Benefit would be implemented.

The UBI has many advantages for women. It would ensure an independent income when a woman was not in paid employment, whether she was single, married or in a defacto relationship. For mothers with partners, it would provide an income if they chose to remain at home with children. The universal nature of the UBI would remove any stigma from the Domestic Purposes Benefit.

An important aspect is that the UBI would abolish the poverty traps that prevent people in poverty from benefiting from earning additional wages. Under the present system people on low incomes effectively pay tax rates of up to 100% on additional income. This is because of the rapid abatement of Family Support and other benefits and also through loss of entitlement to low medical fees and prescription charges. There would no longer be any discrimination on marital status or with a person is living with someone in a 'relationship in the nature of marriage'. We would be rid of the surveillance of beneficiaries and the whole apparatus of blaming and inspecting people on benefits.

Some wealth would be transferred from those on very high incomes (mainly men) to those on low incomes (mainly women).

Women (and men) could afford to make more choices about what they wished to do. They could choose to train or retrain, set up their own business, stay at home and look after children, follow an artistic or community work career.

Because there would no longer be people desperate for any sort of work, the wages and conditions for unpleasant work - often done by women - would have to be improved.

Could New Zealand Afford the UBI?

The Aotearoa Network of Unemployed & Beneficiaries suggests that the UBI be partly funded by a tax rate of 52% on personal incomes. (3) There would also be an increased tax base if UBI was introduced, as unemployed people and other beneficiaries could move into part time work without being disadvantaged. In the ANUB's view, the current welfare system encourages the black economy, under the table wages (which can't get union protection), benefit fraud and crime.

One single system based on simple criteria would replace all the current state payments and benefits, based on complex criteria which constantly change. Vast savings would be made by the reduction in bureaucratic systems and associated costs involved in administering the income support services, student allowances and loans and the income tax system.

Huge cost savings could also come from the fact that most people would once again have a stake in society. This would mean much greater social stability and far less crime, with related savings in the areas of health, policing and justice.

Re-defining Work

Some people will be opposed to the UBI because they view it as paying able, working-age people to do nothing. Ironically, the current system already pays unemployed people for doing nothing - and then penalises them when they find part-time or temporary work. If the UBI were introduced, few people would opt to live on such a low income and do nothing. People would choose to live on the UBI only if they had some other motivation, such as caring for children, study, exploring their personal creativity, etc.

The UBI deliber-

ately redefines work. Currently those who do unpaid work in the home and in the community - mainly women - lack not only income, but recognition and respect. Yet much unpaid work is of greater social value than much paid work.

The UBI is not a panacea that would solve women's financial problems. It is a reform, one that would reduce poverty and increase real choices. For the UBI to really increase choices for women with children, its introduction would have to be coupled with a huge increase in the availability of low cost, high quality childcare and after-school care.

Election year is an opportune time to encourage debate on the UBI in our communities, and to lobby the Alliance and Labour Party to adopt UBI as party policy.

For more information, contact:

The Manawatu Working Party
on the UBI

c/- Private Bag 11 042
Palmerston North.

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**The Universal
Basic Income is
a right of citizenship**



LONDON'S *burning*

MOVE OVER, *NEW IDEA*! ONCE AGAIN *BROADSHEET* HAS THE HOTTEST GOSS ON ROYALS! BY LISA SABBAGE

What's hot in London? Not the weather, that's for sure. But Princess Diana and Susie Orbach have turned up the heat on the Royal Family. Or have they?

In London there are three themes that regularly crop up in conversation - the weather, sex, and the Royal Family. Each topic can lead to heated debate as people reveal their true colours and declare themselves to be anti-freeze, sex-free, a rampant royal, or - worst of all - completely indifferent.

On odd occasions the subjects intersect - as they did when rumours surfaced that, in the not too distant past, Charles and Camilla had enjoyed vigorous outdoor pursuits. "No! How could they?" came the shocked, indignant response in pubs and sitting rooms all over the nation. "It was at least six below zero!"

But it seems the British are not alone in their preoccupations. I have been puzzled recently by one particular question that keeps popping up in letters from home. "What's the goss with Di?" my so-called friends want to know, having speedily dispensed with Hi and how are you. Di, I thought, feeling guilty. Do I know a Di? Then it dawned on me. They

meant Diana, Her Royal Shyness, Queen of Farts (sorry, another British preoccupation), Princess of the People, For the People.

What's she got that I haven't, I wondered petulantly, dredging my rich and busy life for the answer. Gradually I realised it could only be one thing: Susie Orbach.

Susie, author of that fabulous epic, *Fat is a Feminist Issue*, has helped the princess realise it wasn't her fault the fairytale didn't come true, and that when the not-so handsome prince took her to be his awfully bedded wife, it wasn't true love so much as a good career move.

He - and the institution that is the monarchy - literally banked on Diana being soft, malleable, fertile and above all, not too bright. They didn't want the princess and the pea, they wanted her to be the pea. A well minted pea, I'll grant you, but a pea all the same.

What happened to the fairytale, Diana wondered. Maybe if she was slimmer, being a pea would have more job satisfaction. But a few bouts of bulimia later, she was still being ignored, rolled out only for the occasional photo

opportunity on the prince's arm.

Enter fairy godmother Susie, whom Diana began seeing in 1994. Her entrance heralded the rebirth of Diana as a shiny feminist icon who stood up to the monarchy and refused to be exploited. In doing so, she not only regained her power and identity but, according to some cultural observers, challenged the very notion that Britain should be ruled by a monarch in the first place.

But has she really? As she and Charles embark upon their tug-of-war divorce, it has become pretty clear that her title is all important. Charles wants it back. She wants to keep it. Her status, after all, comes not from being Diana Spencer, but Princess Diana, mother of the heir to the throne. Her identity remains defined by and dependent on her relationship to the monarchy.

What's she
got that I
haven't?
Susie Orbach



It is true that Diana and Charles have very different visions of the role of royalty. While he represents a kind of Victorian romanticism in which the King is a paternal figure who defends his people's traditional values - architecture, pastoralism, good spoken English (and unspoken adultery), Diana is a populist who famously likes to talk.

"I would like a monarchy that has more contact with its people," she said in her ratings winning BBC interview, adding that she is training her sons to understand 'people's hopes and dreams'.

"The British people need someone in public life to give affection, to make them feel important, to support them, to give them light at the end of their dark tunnels."

But the condescension implicit in her words is not new. In wanting to be the 'Queen of Hearts', to 'give love for a minute, for half an hour, for a day, for a

month', she is not looking forward but harking back to the 16th century model of the monarch as a divine power with a telephone to heaven, spreading love, light and healing among the common people.

Neither Charles nor Diana are advocating any fundamental change to the fairytale. The British people - unlike their counterparts in other European countries with royal families - remain subjects rather than citizens, because there is no written constitution here. Instead there is an unwritten constitution premised on the notion that the law is whatever the monarch deigns to let Parliament pass.

Without any written obligations, the only tool the Royal Family has to prove its legitimacy is its good behaviour. When that bubble bursts - as it spectacularly has - its undemocratic (as Diana can testify) centre is exposed.

Diana and the royal divorce have not created a

a divine power with a telephone to heaven

constitutional crisis. They are symptoms of that crisis.

For Diana (and Susie) the worry should be that having escaped one fairytale, she doesn't become trapped in another - a modern day Rapunzel allowed to climb down from her tower only as long as she doesn't try to tear down the castle. R

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THE TAX CUTS

An Economic Episiotomy

by Deirdre Kent

THE recently announced tax reductions illustrate why women are needed in government. After a decade of hearing Roger Douglas talking about "families" on TV, we now have to suffer Bill Birch and Jim Bolger doing the same. And to cap it off, on Monday night we had three other male politicians - Jim Anderton, Michael Cullen and Winston Peters - all joining in with their comments, which ignore the role of women in families other than as additional breadwinners.

We heard how "working families" would be better off, and saw illustrations of how if you had two children you would bring home more money. Two "working families" were interviewed. Both parents worked for pay in each case, while their work in nurturing and caring for children was all assumed to be of no economic value.

I think it was Jim Anderton who noted that children of employed people got more out of the package than children of unemployed. Never did the word "mother" or "woman" cross the lips of male politicians. As though trained by public relations gurus, they all talked of "families" and "children" - great stuff, if you don't see through it.

I recall once phoning a talkback and asking Roger Douglas how he defined "family". His reply was that he hadn't really

An episiotomy is when
they snip you during
childbirth. Good for some
but not so
good for mothers.

thought about it and he would have to do some thinking on that subject.

As a grandmother and former full time mother of four children, I argue that those who care about families should reclaim the word "family" to include the work of the one who usually cares for the family. We cannot have politicians continually leaving women out of the picture. If we care for families we should care for women.

Once again it seems as though men are going to get tax deductions because their wives work doing the lion's share of the unpaid family work. It just happens to be work which saves us billions in health bills, social welfare bills, and prison bills since we have known for decades, if not centuries, that loving care of children is critical for their physical, mental, social and emotional development.

Oh, I know you are going to say that it all goes towards "family income" and you are right. The only problem is that the balance of power within the family once more moves towards the "breadwinner" who is rewarded because the unpaid partner does most of the family work. A new 'family tax credit' is to be introduced. Why, if sexes are supposed to be even, does one sex

get the financial credit for the work of the other? No matter how much we love our "working partners", we don't want them getting the credit for family work that we do.

I believe this to be an anti-family package. It is anti-family because it takes no account of the core work of a family, the nurturing and the raising of children. According to our tax and welfare system this is work of no economic value. It is not counted in the GDP. Despite years of hand-wringing about the importance of "recognising unpaid household work", women's traditional work still remains invisible in our census and in the way we keep our national accounts.

Women's reproductive and all household productive work still remains unvalued. Despite years of rhetoric about how men should help with the household cooking and cleaning, the women still do the main work of feeding and clothing the family, not to mention caring for their health and education.

The tax cut package is anti-family because it penalises full time mothers and puts pressure on them to join what is nicely called the "work force" - as if all mothers aren't working mothers. The unpaid work caring for dependents and keeping a household running remains totally

unrecognised. It also says that the partners of unemployed men are to be penalised because their man isn't working for pay. It is unfair that two sisters working equally well to bring up families are treated differently because the men they love have a different employment status.

Many years ago when I was president of Tauranga Branch of the Federation of Women we invited the late Dr Erich Geiringer to be a guest speaker at a fundraising dinner. In 1973 the women's movement had begun and Erich had spent lots of time thinking through his talk. Those who recall him will know that when he thought he was very productive. His brilliant talk has remained with me for years, and I hope I still recall it accurately. He argued that the women's movement was going in the wrong direction by encouraging women to join the paid work force. Liberation did not come from having two jobs, one paid and one unpaid, he argued, especially if the paid job was working in a factory. He said that if women wanted feminine values of cooperation, nurturing, sensitivity and peace to have any political influence, then women needed half the economic power. The way to get economic power was to transfer half the money from the men to the women.

Women, he said, would not get equality in the work force because the job of reproducing and raising children - their traditional job - still remained outside the economic realm. So that job had to be paid.

For two decades the women's movement has struggled

to find a suitable method of bringing the traditional caring work of women into the money economy. It has rightly resisted promoting a "carer's wage" because that wage ties women to the home. The women's movement was supposed to be about widening, not narrowing choices.

The time is now overdue for a fair tax system - one that transfers money from men to women, from breadwinners to car-

I believe this to be an anti-family package

ers, one that gives women economic power by paying for our traditional work. One solution is to have the state give women a "Carer's Responsibility Wage". The carer would be given money for the responsibility. She (or he) still has the option to pay a neighbour, a grandmother or a child care centre, but where responsibility for that dependent lies with the person who receives the wage. It is quite different from a carer's wage and is, I admit, inspired by ACT's philosophy that the individual knows better than the state how to help themselves.

This Carer's Responsibility Wage would relieve the politicians of the need to devise systems to "support families". They should support families by supporting the person who does the core family work. For too long we have overburdened our men and under-utilised our women. We need

to relieve men of the major burden of family financial responsibility.

But isn't heterosexual "family" one where a man supports a woman? Yes, but through the tax system, please. He pays taxes and she gets her pay from the government. Families won't decline if individuals are treated separately. The paradox is that while families are the most important unit of our society, they will only thrive if each adult is treated with full respect as an individual through the tax system. We need a tax and welfare system which stops interfering in families by giving "breadwinners" in families special benefits like tax deductions. Within families there are two separate working adults. The system already treats gays and lesbians in committed relationships as individuals, ironically because their family partnership is not officially recognised.

The women's movement of the 1970s has ensured that the 1940s concept of a family comprising a working man and an unpaid homemaker, has been replaced by allowing the possibility of two breadwinners and two unpaid carers. This is not enough. We must bring caring into the money economy. Families will be stronger when we allow free and loving relationships to exist between working adults who are economically independent of each other, yet who pool their finances because of their love for each other and their dependents.

I am sorry, Mr Birch, the patriarchal family of your tax and welfare system must go. You can't kid us this package will strengthen the family. **B**

Deirdre Kent is a writer and political activist of Christchurch. She was formerly Director of ASH.

This October 12th we'll be changing New Zealand's electoral system....or will we? You get 2 ticks to decide...

MMP Might Mean Progress ?

by Linda Hill

- | | |
|---|-----|
| Masses Make Protest? | () |
| More Members of Parliament? | () |
| Many Mini Parties? | () |
| Means Media Pandemonium? | () |
| More Maori Parliamentarians? | () |
| Might Minimise Personalities & | () |
| Maximise Meaningful Policy? | () |
| Male Members Predominate? | () |
| Mediocre Male Priorities? | () |
| Hope Springs Eternal | () |

In 1993 a large majority of New Zealand voters opted for a major change in the political system. I believe that was what we were all voting for, after a decade of radical right slash-and-burn never mentioned in pre-election manifestos.

However, all we were voting on was a choice between systems of voting for our Members of Parliament: First Past the Post, or Mixed Member Proportional. There is little in that to ensure that the policies of a party are carried through into government, or that the Parliamentary tail, once in power, doesn't wag the dog. In fact, some of the new tails which have popped up in anticipation of MMP don't even seem to have dogs.

Nor does it ensure that politicians in the House will recover from their two-party adversarial mind-set and cooperate like reasonable adults with an important job to do. For the few days of 'hung Parliament' in 1993 I hoped that cooperation could begin right away, without waiting for MMP. But no, in accepting the non-voting Speaker's role for one of its MPs, one party apparently preferred losing power to sharing it.

What MMP will do is redress an unfairness that has resulted from every election since 1978. The party which won by the most votes did not win the majority of seats. Governments were decided by a few thousand votes in a few marginal seats, and this was then taken as a mandate for any policy that the government chose to implement. Votes in safe seats did not need to be chased, and in unwinnable seats weren't worth chasing. This pushed parties towards marketing themselves to the 'floating voter' in Remuera, Horowhenua and Eden - or just towards political opportunism.

Under MMP a party can win seats in Parliament through the total number of votes it polls, as well as by winning electorates, so every vote counts.

One argument around at the time of the MMP referendum was that party lists would assure jobs for party hacks. A more attractive argument was that proportional representation was likely to lead to a high proportion of women MPs - and of Maori MPs. A pamphlet put out by the Women's Electoral Lobby and the Electoral Reform Coalition explained it like this:

"At present, well-qualified women candidates often fail to gain selection. When a party chooses a candidate for a local seat such as Auckland Central or Invercargill, it must choose either a man or a woman. With party lists the party can select both men and women - and parties will be judged accordingly. This makes it easier for women to gain selection."

Towards the 1996 Election

With this in mind, *Broadsheet* decided to take a look at how things were shaping up for women in the next election. Normally elections are held in November, but there has been speculation about a possible earlier date. So we wrote to the major parties, the minor parties and as many of the microscopic parties as we could call to mind and find a likely contact address for. We asked them to tell us about their

women's policy, about any policies they thought would be of particular interest to women voters, and about the gender composition of their candidates list. Some replied, some didn't.

A week is a long time in politics, someone said. I recognise that *Broadsheet's* ridiculously long lead-time makes it unreasonable, if not totally ridiculous, to request a policy position six months before an election - given the speed at which principles and policies have changed over the last 12 years. However, we present this material as some indication of where parties are at in the policy development process with regard to gender equity in politics and policies on women.

So, once over lightly, with the usual alphabetical bias...as at the end of April 1996.

Act

No response to our letter. Not even a copy of Prebble's book to review. Too busy thinking, probably, though Roger seems to have given up, thank god. However, given their generous advertising budget, we have a fair idea what they are thinking about. The individualisation of health, education and old age support. Let's help them think it through from a women's policy angle.

Since women have less access to income than men - by the hour, by the week and over a lifetime - some of us will live longer past working age. It makes more sense for us to spread the running costs and the risks. However, a lot of women's health care is the normal cost of producing the next generation, and a lot of our time out of the workforce is about caring for them. Maybe there's something in Act's logic of individual responsibility and user pays. We could present hubby with the bills for the gynae and gynaecologist and anything we do beyond a strict half

share of the domestic and childcare workload. And we can present the kids with the maternity bills on their 18th birthday. That should stack up to a nice little retirement nest-egg.

Alliance

A detailed women's policy has been developed and accepted by all five parties (with a little resistance over some hoary reproductive rights issues). I had better declare some involvement back in 1994-1995. The Alliance Auckland office said the policy was not yet publically available, as aspects were being costed for the Alternative Budget. But Women's Spokesperson Phillida Bunkle sent it to us anyway. "We do now have some reasonable policy," she says.

Goals are, briefly, that women's work is recognised, health needs met, equal education and employment opportunities ensured and a 'harmonious and safe

environment' created by 'eliminating the underlying causes of violence'. (A radical feminist analysis might make this last point a very wide agenda indeed!) There is 'absolute commitment' to abolishing the Employment Contracts Act, effective employment equity legislation will be introduced, *under-* and un-employment addressed. There is a caregiver's policy, 12 weeks paid parental leave, free contraception and the feasibility of a Universal Basic Income will be explored. So, some commitments and some possibilities.

The Alliance 'recognises that women's issues need to be at the heart of social policy'. When asked about women's policy, Alliance people always say that their economic, health, education, tax and income support policies are intended to benefit people on the lowest incomes, who are of course disproportionately women, Maori and other ethnic minorities. It would be easier for us to recognise



SANDRA LEE . ALLIANCE



HELEN CLARKE . LABOUR

that if they sometimes used the 'w' word in writing all those other policies.

The Alliance's 'bottom line' policy is 60:40 - either way - which has been achieved with 40% women candidates in the List's top 30, and 30% women among the candidates standing in every electorate in the country. Certainly, the top end of Party always looks good with Sandra Lee and Jeanette Fitzsimmons.

Christian Heritage

Christian Heritage sent their 1993 policy manifesto, although it has been 'softened' (their word) at a recent party conference and is being worked through with their coalition partner, the Christian Democrats. (No reply from Right of Centre but aren't they going in here too?) An interesting document. If they had become government in 1993 Christian Heritage would outlaw Activities which Damage Family Life, such

reducing social workers' powers in relation to child molestation. They support full employment, voluntary unionism, equal employment opportunity and equal pay, but oppose pay equity 'based on artificial comparisons'. I liked the pornography policy and the day of rest on Sundays best, and there's a lot to be said for honouring the role of the homemaker. The number of homemakers on the candidates list has not yet been released.

Labour Party

The Labour Party sent us a bushel of policy papers with lots of 'w' words. Their official women's policy for 1996 wasn't yet public either, for similar reasons to the Alliance's. However, there have been some pretty open meetings presenting some good stuff. This includes six weeks' paid parental leave, and strong policy on adult education and the elderly which is directed at women.

Labour has taken a specific women's policy to the last five elections. With strong organisation

as abortion and euthanasia, pornography, obscenity and blasphemy, prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse, homosexuality, as well as abolishing no-fault divorce, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and

through women's branches, it has a good track record on feminist issues. Diana Yates says that many of the gains displayed on New Zealand's stall at Beijing 'were achieved by Labour women and under Labour governments'.

What let good Labour women down was Rogernomics - and what did any of us know about economics in the early 1980s? Credibility is still a little stretched by the time it has taken to turn around Labour's economic, fiscal and industrial policies and to come out clearly against National's policy directions, such as the ECA.

A pre-MMP mind-set continues in standing Judith Tizard against Auckland incumbent Sandra Lee. I know many Alliance and Labour supporters who are pissed off at such a waste of energy and good women candidates. Although Labour has plenty. They are achieving their goal of standing 50% women candidates in 1996 - including Helen Clark as possible PM.

National Party

The National Party sent a policy paper on Women and Families, as requested, for *Broadsheet* to write a brief overview', adding that the papers were protected by the Privacy Act 1993 - the strangest use I have yet encountered.

Prefaced with some interesting statistics about women, it claims a substantial record of achievement on women's issues. Some points assume a degree of amnesia about feminist political

campaigns and election issues. National claimed credit for 'reaffirming' the Ministry Women's Affairs in 1992 and for MWA's 'friendly to families' campaign - Dale Little's idea, I thought. The Film Videos etc was put through by National; Jenny Shipley ensures priority for policy on porn and, more recently, on contraception issues.

But did you know that the Employment Equity Act was repealed because National knew that it would reduce job opportunities for women? They don't mention that the gender pay gap has increased under the Employment Contracts Act. Did you know that the ECA has led to greater flexibility for women in terms of hours, annual leave, sick leave and other working conditions? Yes, I did, and I'd love a proper job.

We also received the Auckland Region list of constituency candidates showing 4 women out of 20; the party list was still being ranked.

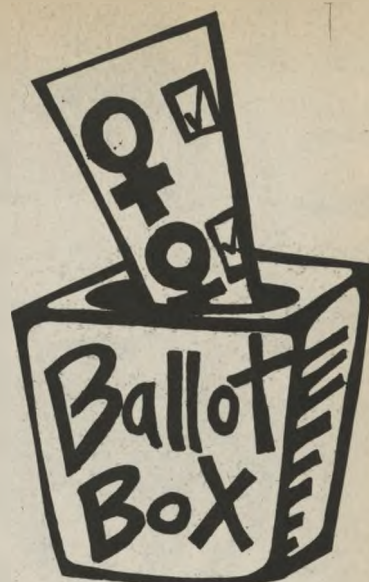
New Zealand Party

No response to our letter. And I'm afraid I have no idea what a New Zealand Party Policy on Women might look like. Do you?

United Party

This new 'centre party in the liberal[?] tradition' appears to consist of two women and five men, all familiar Parliamentary faces.

Policy positions so far include 'Caring for Kids', focused on the first ten years of life, and Moving On Up, about 11-20 year olds. Their general Position Statement was extremely bland, and apparently gender neutral - except for their support of the Employment Contracts Act and current free market economic directions, which is not.



So there it is - all the political party news so far that's fit to print. No doubt there will be so much more over the next few months.

Don't forget to vote. Don't forget to vote twice. Don't forget to have fun by asking stroppy feminist questions at political meetings. Because MMP has just doubled your lifetime share of democracy. And it's still not a lot.

B

Milne Ireland Walker

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WHAT IS JUSTICE FOR A RAPE VICTIM?

BY PHYLLIS CHESLER

Rape - a weapon in the war against women...

This disturbing and important article is reprinted, slightly abridged, courtesy of *On The Issues: The Progressive Women's Quarterly*, New York, Winter 1996

There she was, on the front page of the American newspapers, a 20-year-old Bosnian Moslem girl, hanging from a tree, a suicide, dead by her own hand, her death a cry for help. Our silence, deafening.

We cannot say: "We didn't know, no one told us." We know. We've seen it on TV, read the detailed reports, seen photos. I knew, *feminists* knew what was going on in Bosnia. True, we had trouble sleeping over it, and some of us sent money, gathered evidence, drafted lawsuits, petitioned the U.N., counselled and consoled the victims, quietly helped rape-refugees to leave the country, but, as a movement, we failed to mount even one Israeli-style Entebbe raid, even one mass "pacifist" action on Bosnian soil. We wrung our hands and waited for the patriarchal governments to "do some-

thing": convene a war crimes tribunal in The Hague, bomb Sarajevo, lift the arms embargo, fight it out, man-to-man.

We are the Good Feminist Germans. We - and our respective governments - did even less in the matters of Rwanda, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Liberia, New Guinea, East Timor, Jammu and Kashmir, Haiti.

In 1971, when I first heard that retreating Pakistani soldiers had begun to gang-rape Bengali women in what would become Bangladesh, I called for the rescue of "our own." I had once lived in the Moslem world, I knew what would (and did) happen to those raped and raped-and-impregnated women. "Many will kill themselves", I said, "if their brothers and fathers don't kill them first." I called for immediate feminist airlifts of the raped women.



graphic Sharon Alston

The assembled feminists cheered, thought I was being funny, grandiose, *metaphoric*: unrealistic. As feminists, we had no place on earth to which we could bring our raped Bengali sisters - assuming they'd agree to leave certain death for uncertain freedom.

Well, it was only 1971, we weren't yet organised, we had no Feminist Air Force, no sovereign territory, not even a parachute to drop behind enemy lines. It's 1996, and we still don't.

While the war in Bosnia raged on, millions of women, worldwide, endured rape. Moslem women in Bosnia were not the only Moslem women to be systematically raped by soldiers. In fact, rape has consistently been used as a political weapon against Moslem women by Moslem men for the past 15 years in Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, India, Iran, and Pakistan.

According to attorney Karima Bennouna, from 1992 on, Algerian fundamentalist men have committed a series of "terrorist atrocities" against Algerian women. Bennouna describes the "kidnapping and repeated raping of young girls as sex slaves for armed fundamentalists. The girls are also forced to cook and clean for God's warriors ... one 17-year-old girl was repeatedly raped until pregnant. She was kidnapped off the street and held with other young girls, one of whom was shot in the head and killed when she tried to escape." As in Iran, "unveiled," educated, independent Algerian women have been seen as "military targets" and increasingly shot on sight. According to Bennouna,

"the men of Algeria are arming, the women of Algeria are veiling themselves. As one woman said: 'Fear is stronger than our will to be free.'"

I heard no outcry on their behalf - did you? - neither in the United Nations nor among Moslem nations. Of course not. These Moslem women "belong" to the Moslem men who are raping them. In Bosnia, however, men (Serbian Christian, mainly, but not exclusively) have been raping the wrong women: women who "belong" to other men.

The information coming out of Bosnia defies belief, confirms the worst nightmares of Second Wave feminists. The former Yugoslavia has been re-balkanised, cursed really, by paramilitary fascist/nationalists, virulent racists, misogynists. No matter who the aggressors were, their victims were mainly civilians. Male soldiers attacked civilians (who were often their neighbours) with a ferocity and hatred that was surreal. Male soldiers treated female civilians the way "kinky johns" treat whores, the way psychotic batterers treat their wives.

Perhaps this is what some men think is "manly" in the Balkans.

According to Alexander Stiglmayer, the editor of *Mass Rape: The War Against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Serbian male soldiers made their entrance cursing, often drunk; broke into houses where frightened women huddled; taunted, shoved, punched, slapped, beat the women; put cigarettes out on their flesh; cut them with knives; called them "whores"; demanded they "smile"; ripped

their clothes off; raped them right there, where their children or mothers could see it; then herded the "terminally dishonoured" half-naked or completely naked women away to rape-camps where many other soldiers repeatedly gang-raped the starving, naked, soiled women. Bosnian women were also kidnapped off the street, blindfolded, held in cellars/gymnasiums for one to three months, and repeatedly raped. Afterwards, they were often killed, although many were released, especially if they were pregnant with "Chetnik" babies. The men gang-raped seven and eight year old girls to death, but did not allow the grown women to comfort them as they lay dying.

The rapists did not use condoms. They beat women if they thought they were using birth control. They filmed some of the rapes and they aired some live, both on radio and television.

Many - certainly half - of the rapes were committed by men whom the women knew. When the rapists were co-workers, neighbours, former teachers, they were harder, not easier, on their victims - especially if the women called them by name.

The rapists were not out of control; they were implementing Serbian military "ethnic cleansing" policy. They were only following orders. Yes, fascist/nationalist Croat and Moslem male soldiers raped women too, with as much ferocity, although on a smaller scale.

Some people say: "You see, both sides did it." No, "both sides" did not do it. Only men raped women, women did not rape

men; only men, not women, did the killing.

What did Bosnian Serb Christian soldiers do to civilian men between the ages of 16 and 60? In a ghastly replay of World War II, the soldiers ordered the men/Gypsies/Jews out of the house, lined them up, shot them in the street, or marched them out of town and shot them down into mass graves. Those men "lucky" enough to survive endured beatings, starvation, and hideous tortures in concentration camps. Serbian soldiers sometimes castrated and killed those Serbian men and boys who refused to systematically rape women.

The soldiers slaughtered the able-bodied men outright and they sentenced the women to living deaths.

This is the behaviour of ghouls, not men. Ah, the ghouls *are* men. What conclusions are we to draw?

A number of jurists and intellectuals are eager to see rape tried as a war crime and as a human rights violation; I am too. However, I am more convinced than ever that all rape is a political crime against female humanity, not just in Bosnia, but everywhere; not just in times of civil or national war, but also in times of so-called peace; not only when it occurs between strangers, but among intimates.

At the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, some feminist lawyers wanted to amend the Geneva Convention to say that "any rape,

not just mass rape in war, is a crime."

Rape is "gender cleansing."

The intended effect of rape is always the same: to utterly break the spirit of the rape victim, to drive her out of her body and out of her mind so as to render her incapable of resistance. Rape has been systematically used by men of every class and race to destroy their own women and the women of enemy-men. This terrorist tactic, coupled with childhood sexual abuse and shaming, works. Most women do not resist, escape, or kill their rapists in self-defence. When women do, they are often killed by their rapists, jailed for long periods of time, or executed. (In the fall of 1995, Sarah Balabagan, a Filipino maid, was condemned to death for having killed her employer-rapist in Abu Dhabi.)

In Beijing, the Bosnian Ambassador to the UN said he "could find no [raped] woman in condition to speak." Alexander Stiglmeier found the (Bosnian) raped women "broken", "intimidated", "withdrawn", "crying", "afflicted with nightmares", "insomnia", "depression", "panic disorders", "suicidal". Stiglmeier says: "Most of the rape victims [in Bosnia] are broken, not thinking about revenge, for the horror of their rape and expulsion has also taken away whatever

also noted "anxiety, inner agitation, apathy, loss of self-confidence, an aversion to sexuality. Rape is one of the gravest abuses, with consequences that can last a lifetime."

According to Karima Bennouna: "Terrorist attacks on women [in Algeria] have had the desired effect: widespread psychoses among the women; internal exile - living in hiding, both physically and psychologically, in their own country." In Bennouna's view, "the collective psychosis" is due to the "escalation of violence" by the "soldiers of the Islamic state." According to Michael Curtis, MD, an American volunteer-physician for Doctors Without Borders, "In Bosnia's Tuzla camp, the leading cause of death is suicide, probably the only refugee camp in the world where that is the case."

Many raped women do go on with their lives; they have to, there's no alternative. Many raped women dislike, intensely, the idea that they have been "diminished", victimised, wounded, by a hateful assault. During the Gulf War, US Major Rhonda Cornum was raped by

**No, "both sides" did not do it.
Only men raped women**

power of resistance they might have had." In addition to these typical peacetime Rape Trauma Syndrome symptoms, Zagreb psychiatrist Vera Folnegovic-Smalc

her Iraqi captors; they broke both her arms too. Admirably, Cornum says that this is what war is, and that worse things can happen. Maybe her training as a soldier

For the first time, rape is being defined as a weapon of war and a war crime

and her clarity about rape being an act of war is, indeed, a useful frame of reference. However, this doesn't mean that one is the same, untouched.

Many survivors of rape, torture, and genocide say that the most lasting and haunting harm resides not only in the atrocity itself, but in how others, afterwards, have dealt with it. Survivors are haunted by those who heard the screams but turned their backs; those who blamed the victim and collaborated with the rapist/torturer/killer; those who minimised, or exaggerated, or merely misunderstood what rape or torture is about; those who preached, authoritatively, righteously, against revenge, but envisioned no justice.

Women and men can survive the rape/torture: if they are believed; if others are outraged on their behalf; if others denounce and attempt to stop the atrocity. Thus, the victims of rape and torture are more upset by what "good" people fail to do than by the crimes actually committed by the "bad guys". Sins of omission are *psychologically* experienced as greater than sins of commission. (The mothers who stood by and did nothing as their daughter or son was being incestuously abused are "hated" even more than the abuser.)

Women's hearts, men's

hearts, are irretrievably broken when "good" people default on the dream of a common, moral humanity (we are all connected; what happens to one happens to all) and do nothing, or promise to help, then do nothing. At the Beijing conference, Bosnian Munira Hadzic said: "It's the shame of the world. We were promised UN protection and we were abandoned." *New Yorker* writer David Rieff quotes a Bosnian: "For me, the UN is worse than the Serbs. At least, the Serbs admit they are our enemies ... Don't write any more books about us, you bastard. Give us back the guns the UN took from us."

Everyone watches, no one stops the male violence. It's the Kitty Genovese phenomena. It's also something new: namely, rape as spectacle, entertainment, warning. For example, the gang-rape on the pool table in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where the male onlookers cheered the rapists on. As City University of New York Law Professor Rhonda Copelon writes: "War tends to intensify the brutality, repetitiveness, public spectacle, and likelihood of rape."

When I was young, I believed that if "good" people only knew about the atrocity-in-progress, surely they'd stop it;

that reason, sanity, justice would prevail. I'm older now and I understand that stopping the atrocity is rare, miraculous, difficult; that "good people - you and me - have our own sorrows, limitations, crushing responsibilities to contend with; we earn our daily bread, fall in love, fall ill, reach for joy, die, while Auschwitz smokes, Rwanda hacks itself to death, Bosnia surrealistically destroys itself.

Indifference is worse than hate. Evil flourishes when it is ignored. If we each do what we can do it will make a difference.

Because stopping the atrocity-in-progress is so difficult, it is crucial that women learn how to defend ourselves, not wait for others, men, to "protect" us. How many women (and men) need to be raped and killed before women and/or feminists are ready to start thinking strategically, militarily, planning ahead for the rape-free survival of the coming generations? There is no point in waiting for the "good" men to rescue us. The information is in: they can't. We may even have to rescue them. There is no point in baring our throats to the rapists as a way of showing them that we won't "stoop to their level"; our self-sacrificing example fails to educate them.

I think of Phoolan Devi, the real-life Indian Bandit-Queen who, in 1980, was gang-raped for three weeks by 22 higher-caste men who then paraded her naked through the village; Phoolan became a bandit and killed all 22 gang-rapists. Phoolan: we need your fighting tiger-spirit! As yet, not a single raped Bosnian woman is known to have picked up a gun to defend herself - although many have wanted to. (Also, there is an arms embargo on.) Some Bosnian women have joined the armies, but most have children and aging parents to take care of. One woman said: "I cannot pick up a gun but I can tell about what happened." This is a very brave thing to do.

More important: not a single feminist organisation has organised a military and/or pacifist raid into Bosnia (or Algeria, Iran, Pakistan, Thailand, Korea, the United States) to rescue raped women being held hostage in rape-and-death camps and brothels.

Most white middle-class women I know, myself included, have been carefully taught to prefer being hit to having to hit. We'd rather die than kill - even in self-defence. Worse, some of us are convinced that our inability to defend ourselves somehow constitutes a free choice, a moral virtue, a political philosophy. We don't know the first thing about how to hit, disarm, or kill someone who's attacking us; we'd have to be carefully taught.

Only someone who lives in her body, who occupies it fully,

who knows how to fight - but refuses to do so - can freely choose to practise pacifist politics. That's not most women, feminists included. We're possessed, colonised. They've chased most of us right out of our bodies; we're nothing but bodies, but "we're" not in there any more; we're elsewhere, in a fog, in a fugue state, disassociated: Hitler's House-keepers, Stalin's Sweeties.

Pacifists are not passive; they put their bodies on the line, actively, aggressively; they risk poverty, illness, jail sentences, beatings, even death, in unarmed political confrontations. They are physically very brave. Ghandhi's followers chose to stop the British trains with their bodies, not with bullets. They acted vigorously and collectively and hoped that the train engineer's humanity would, at the last moment, compel him to stop the train.

Three million pacifists did not converge on Bosnia, lay their bodies down, refuse to move until the men put the guns away, their penises back in their pockets, their heads in their hands, and a terrible lamentation was heard in the land...

Given how prevalent rape is, in both war and peace, why do we resist teaching women how to defend themselves? In Bosnia, not only are Serbian soldiers raping women, Moslem, Croatian and UN soldiers (!) are also raping vulnerable "enemy" women. Attorney Catherine A. MacKinnon noted: "This pointedly poses a problem women have always had with male protection:

who is going to watch the men who are watching the men who are supposedly watching out for us? ... The UN [male] presence [in Bosnia] has apparently increased the trafficking in women and girls... Perhaps intervention by a force of armed women should be considered." . . .

... Let the Criminal and Civil Tribunals begin. For the first time in history, rape is being defined not as the "spoils" of war but as a weapon of war and a war crime. An International Criminal Tribunal, convened by the United Nations, is meeting in The Hague to hear evidence of the mass rapes, rape-impregnations and other genocidal atrocities in Bosnia. Some people hope that our global perception of rape may shift, radically, once it becomes known that rape is not merely a "personal misunderstanding" between a rapist and his victim, but is, rather, a crime against humanity and a war crime.

Even though the UN Tribunal does not have the power to impose the death penalty or to ensure that those who gave the genocide and rape orders do not remain in power, it's crucial that the UN Tribunal indict and convict rapists as war criminals. Rhonda Copelon noted that "the recognition of rape as a war crime is a critical step toward understanding rape as violence." Harvard Law School professor Nancy Kelly "If we can get an international body to recognise rape as an act of torture, that could change things for women all over the world."

TO SUM UP:

Clearly, the evolving legal status of women may influence our global views of rape. Women were once expected to marry their rapists: this is no longer true. Women were once advised to "keep quiet" about being raped; this is no longer true. In the past, when women attempted to have their rapists prosecuted, they were rarely believed or treated humanely in the court-room - where most were "raped" again, this time legally. This is somewhat less true today.

Some people believe that the entrance of women into military, religious, athletic, corporate and blue-collar trades, i.e. into previously all-male arenas, will either inspire more fear or more respect for women as a class or caste; and that this, in turn, might decrease the incidence of rape. Others have said that "backlash" rape is upon us precisely because women are daring to enter previously all male professions. Some say there is no "backlash", only more reports of rape and better record-keeping.

... **W**hat do raped women experience as essential to their survival and dignity?

Bearing witness is important; being supported, not punished for doing so, especially by other women, is also important. Putting one's suffering to use - educating and supporting other victims - is important; drafting, passing and enforcing laws is important, as is continuing to hope that law is indeed a civilising force. ...

We need ongoing, well-funded, international feminist criminal tribunals on crimes against women, with enforcement powers. The Hague Tribunal is in urgent need of additional funding. In August 1995, Dr M. Sherif Bassoni, a leader of the UN Commission on War Crimes, told a US Senate hearing that once they testify, the "privacy" of Bosnian rape-survivor witnesses "will be shattered" and their "safety seriously compromised". The survivors have requested "relocation" and other "support services". Bassoni stated that the "Tribunal needs more resources to protect the witnesses properly."

We also need: compulsory self-defence training for girls; compulsory military training for girls; swift, effective prosecution of rapists; civil suits, for money damage, in addition to but separate from criminal prosecution. (I suspect that cities and countries may begin to do something about rape when they are sued, successfully, for money, for having failed to prevent the rape.) We also need rape victims or would-be rape victims exonerated for killing their rapists in self-defence; rape prevention education. What can this be but the most radical of feminist educational and political agendas?

Where are our freedom fighters, our resistance heroes ready to be dropped behind enemy lines? We are too few in number to make much of a difference. Are women so disasso-

ciated from our bodies and from each other that simple resistance terrorises us more than our daily dose of humiliation and death?

Are most women so opportunistic, so cowardly, that we are willing to die for our Masters but not live for ourselves?

What have they done to us? What have we done to ourselves? Each woman knows that if she sides with another woman against a man or against men's laws, eventually the king's men on their high horses will drag her away: imprison, interrogate, rape and burn her to death as a witch; she knows no one will save her.

A woman is brave when she knows what can be done to her but despite such knowledge resists, helps other women anyway. A woman is brave when she resists the 'good little girl' within; the voice that tells her to mind her own business, tend her own garden, don't do anything that will get you in trouble, you'll get caught, you'll be sorry, you'll be punished, *no one will like you...*

Women are safe if I am brave: I'm only as safe as other women are brave.

Otherwise, it's open season on us all.

B

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Vice Versa (Some Subversive Verse)

As a woman I have trouble
Understanding 'big boys' rules'.
They're very rarely spoken,
Not exactly taught in schools.

So being a keen student
Of all of humankind
I've been looking at these precepts
With a very open mind.

I've been studying male logic
And who's responsible for what;
It's really changed my thinking
And my attitudes a lot.

I've learned that my assumptions
Must always win the day
And I've a RIGHT to act on them
No matter what men say.

Now take the other evening
I was at the local pub,
Having a little sherry
With the Ladies Croquet Club.

Well we all got to talking
About those darling men
And how they don't know which way's up
Or why, or where, or when.

We said that they don't really know
What it is they think or feel
And how WE know that all they want
Is a slap-up, home cooked meal.

Then Vi, and Rose, and Ethel
(Who've been known to share a joint)
Asked me if I'd be willing
To prove this very point.

I can't resist a challenge
And didn't have to look too far
As I spied a likely rooster
In a group beside the bar.

You can tell the men who want it
By the clothing that they wear,
And this guy's jeans showed he had needs
Of which I'd take good care.

So I went and stood beside him
And winked, then gave a smile
And asked him about his diet
As his needs stood out a mile.

One thing led to another
And by the hour of nine
He said he'd come to dinner
And bring a nice red wine.

He said he'd come on Friday
As he didn't have a date.
I said, "Let's make it seven
And don't you dare be late!"

I shopped all Friday morning
And cooked all afternoon.
I knew that all my efforts
Would have a payoff soon.

I made a tasty goulash
And a pate from some goose,
But the 'piece de resistance'
Was a sinful chocolate mousse.

He came on time at seven
And we drank a little wine
Then settled down to business
Which was of course to dine.

He said he loved the hors d'oeuvres,
I could tell that he was keen,
Till I ladled out the contents
Of my antique soup tureen.

The soup was rich tomato
With a hint of orange rind.
I knew then when he tasted it
His comment would be kind.

But he peered at it forlornly,
There was sweat upon his brow.
He said, "This looks delicious
But I cannot eat it now."

He said he felt a bit unwell,
Perhaps it was the shrimp.
I said, "How dare you lead me on,
You sleazy little wimp!"

Again he said he couldn't eat;
I know it wasn't so.
It's common knowledge men mean "yes"
Whenever they say "no".

I thought of all the time and cash
I'd spent on this fine fare,
So I did what anyone would do
And tied him to the chair.

He thought that I was playing games.
He said, "Don't act the goat."
So I got the Wiltshire Staysharp
And held it to his throat.

Of course I slapped him round a bit;
Men like you to be rough
(In the bar with all his mates
He was acting pretty tough).

Saying, "Open wide" I pinched his nose
Till he did it like a lamb
Then I popped in my big funnel
That I use for making jam.

I told him, "Wise Confucious say,
And listen well, my boy,
When dinner is inevitable
Just sit up and enjoy."

The soup went down quite nicely;
It really hit the spot
(Though tears that rolled out of his eyes
May have meant it was too hot).

The main course was a problem
And I do hate any waste,
So I put it in the processor
And ground it to a paste.

I thinned it down with Beaujolais,
It was a lovely hue,
And just to speed things up a bit
I threw the mousse in too.

I know he really liked it
For he gave a little moan
And rolled his eyes in ecstasy;
He wasn't made of stone.

I thought about a coffee
And an after dinner mint,
But his face had gone a trifle pale
With a sort of greenish tint.

The things he said when sated
Were really very rude.
I took them as an insult
To the standard of my food.

He left without a thank you
Or even a goodbye.
The ingratitude of some men
Is enough to make you cry.

We all know he asked for it -
He got what he deserves.
He'd gone part of the distance
By accepting the hors d'oeuvres.

He shouldn't have come to my place
If he didn't want to eat,
For women just can't stop themselves
Once the ovens on to heat.

He had no right to lead me on
With his lean and hungry looks.
I bet he plays around a bit
Enticing other cooks.

Did he honestly imagine
That I wanted him to chat?
I've heaps of lovely girlfriends
With whom I can do THAT.

Men who drink in public bars
And wear their jeans too tight
Are sending signals to us girls
That they're dying for a bite.

Well I guess I learnt a lesson
Though it's caused ME lots of pain
And I'll never ask a "cook tease"
To dine with me again.

But I'm nothing if not generous
And I know how hunger feels,
So for those sweet men on their own
I could do meals on wheels.

Janet McDonald

WHAT DO WOMEN ACTIVISTS DO ON-LINE?

It's not just netting and webbing.

Scarlet Pollock writes enthusiastically about the electronic potential for feminist activism.

Women activists on-line do what activist women do off-line. We use the tools we have to promote equality, to exchange experiences and information, to care for each other, to improve our understanding of issues, to monitor government policies, to organise for social change. We create time and space for women to participate in using, assessing, exploring and developing the new arena of electronic communications. We are developing new skills and ways of thinking.

The Internet offers us a new set of tools which supports our offline activities, and extends our ability to do feminist work. Our networks can reach further, and our understanding can be more inclusive. Monitoring

government policies, and their implications for women, is made more effective through the use of electronic communications. Finding information and contacts is easier, and less expensive, especially for those living outside the large cities.

It will take us all some time to learn to use this new technology effectively, to gain the experience to assess what works best. The process can be very exciting as we leap into new ways of thinking about old questions. We need to explore as many ways as possible to use the Internet to achieve our aims, and our visions of equality.

Pioneering women have begun this work for us all. On-line activists are seeking new directions, opening up new arenas and trying out new ideas from which we can all learn. The achievements of feminists on the Net prompt us all to think about how we can use electronic communications.

BRAINSTORMING

Groups of women can spark ideas off each other, whether they are in one room, share an on-line chat space, or join a focused Internet mailing list. This is a valuable way to explore unknown territory, and develop new approaches to women's issues. It's a fun way to create reality out of what might at first seem to be an impossibility.

Women on-line are engaged in working out new rules. Group work is familiar ground, but we are not yet certain how group processes can best operate here. Much of what goes on is for the moment experimental, as we discover the benefits of each process undertaken, as well as the needs which emerge.

NETWORKING

Getting in touch with other women who are working on similar issues, or projects, is basic to all feminist activism. The Internet enables an extended reach across countries and continents, which increases

our effectiveness and the extent to which we are able to learn from each other's experiences. Email and mailing lists improve the speed of networking.

They also enable calls for information, and getting information out, to be multiplied by forwarding mail to numerous related mailing lists and newsgroups.

Meeting women like yourself on the Net is an invaluable part of breaking down the geographical cultural and social isolation in which women often find themselves.

There is real joy to be found by connecting with others who share your situation, finding you are one of many women facing particular issues and having specific needs. To find a community of women who share your situation, to gain the confidence to claim one's rights as part of diverse groups of women, and to share ways of resolving issues, are central to feminism.

MENTORING

Encouraging women to participate in any new activity involves

Women'space Internet Magazine

Yes, it's printed on paper, not cyberspace. A contradiction in terms? Or a necessary aid to those of the transition generation - that's you, me and Dale Spender.

Women'space is directed towards women who are thinking about getting on-line, those who are using the Internet, but are too busy to spend much time browsing, and for activists who are using the Internet in their work, and want to think about the many ways we can use this new tool.

Woman'space started life in June 1995 as a community newsletter to share ideas from the Internet. In August they got on the World Wide Web and in September went to Beijing on disk as an example of women networking. In January 1996 attention from mainstream media led to a print run of 2500 by their fourth issue. Ah, how wonderful, sighs the *Broadsheet* collective.

For more information, contact *Women'space*, RR1 Scotsburn, Nova Scotia BOK 1FO, Canada. Fax 902-351-2283 or email dlamond@fox.nstn.ca



Illustration by Juliet Breeze

ing. In turn these women can bring other women into the circle of learning.

Activists on the Net are also working to help women to develop their own Web pages. There are mailing lists to help with technical problems, as well as a team of women who mentor women's groups to put their information on the WWW, women who help with web design and women who are ready to sponsor women's groups on their Web sites by providing them with free or inexpensive space.

DEBATING ISSUES

a process of 'taking someone with you'. On-line activists have created women-only and/or women friendly mailing lists and WWW sites which are designed to help

As our networks extend, we often become more aware of different perspectives on a range of women's issues. Using mailing lists and newsgroups to exchange our views helps to clarify our own thinking and to contribute to an often more inclusive understanding.

Women can make contributions to a debate where they have the time to think about how to make their point, especially to those working in a second or third language. Also women who have difficulty writing can take the

The technology can work with us, not against us.

newcomers to learn more easily, and join in more readily.

Women Internet educators often link up with one or a few women who want to learn to use the Net, to guide them and make their efforts more reward-

time needed to participate. Contributions tend to be relatively short and focused, which enables many women to speak and be heard.

Because we do not physically see each other, what matters is what women say. This lends itself to a greater diversity, where contributions are equally weighted as they would be in the ideal group. The fact that women can participate from a range of locations and situations allows for greater inclusiveness, from which we all benefit.

CAREGIVING

Women often use Email to keep in touch with family, friends and co-workers. Care and concern can be offered and received despite long distances. It is less expensive than phoning long-distance, and sometimes preferable as a way of keeping in touch while carrying on with demands of work or other family responsibilities.

Mailing lists and newsgroups are frequently used by women and men with specific health concerns. Sharing health experiences, information about alternative treatments, support for individuals and families, are central to the important caregiving work being done online.

Women dedicated to choice in health care alternatives for women have been amongst the first feminist pioneers on the Net. They have established WWW sites which include information, discussion, news, directories of women's groups and professionals, and opportu-

nities for women to get involved in achieving social change in health care for women.

PROMOTING AWARENESS

Visibility of ideas helps to encourage other people to think about women's equality, and how it can be achieved. Women demand by their participation in mailing list and newsgroups that women's perspectives be taken into account.

Women also create places in cyberspace for women to work together to engage in debate and strategising. The presence of this process on the Net makes it possible for more of us to understand and engage with these new ideas and issues for women. It is a hopeful struggle as the essence of electronic communications technology is participation with minimal gatekeeping and censorship. The Internet is primarily oriented towards a process of open communication between individuals who share similar interests. The technology can work with us, not against us.

The World Wide Web is increasingly being used by women's groups and organisations to highlight their community resources and services. Web sites carry valuable information about programmes, helplines, emergency services, funding, publications, research, community projects, and contact networks. Millions of people are made aware of the latest news on legal battles, government policies, corporate actions, or other specific events which are reported on Web pages.

TAKING ACTION

Electronic communications enable immediate relaying of news. Response activities can happen very quickly. Petitions are circulated, addresses and phone numbers of public representatives are shared, fact sheets are disseminated, meetings are organised and events are publicised. Networking actions happen on a scale we could hardly imagine previously. At the same time, we are aware that those who would like to see patriarchy firmly re-established, class, race, sexual orientation, ability and other social divisions secured, are also using electronic communications to organise. This adds to the urgency of our own efforts.

This is an exciting time to be part of the women's on-line community. Acknowledging women's efforts in this new forum is a wonderful part of the netiquette which has been evolving on the Net. Everyone's work is important and appreciated, and every pioneering effort contributes to women's access to the new technologies for equality and social change.

The more of us who take part in this process of discovery, the better we will be able to shape the ways in which the new technologies can be used to enhance women's participation.



Email:
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Overage

by Mitch

"Hi, Mitch - Rainbow Youth is having a meeting to elect a committee next week and we really need as many members as possible to get things up and running this year. 6.30, at the office, see you there!"

"Mitch, we are having Icebreakers training for the new facilitators next weekend. Can you make it? We need current facilitators there."

"Mitch, would you like to write an article for the next Broadsheet?"

"Mitch, we are having a party for all volunteers Saturday night. I know you have Ashleigh but I thought you might be able to organise a baby-sitter."

Being a single mum in the 1990s feels, at the best of times, like a major balancing act.

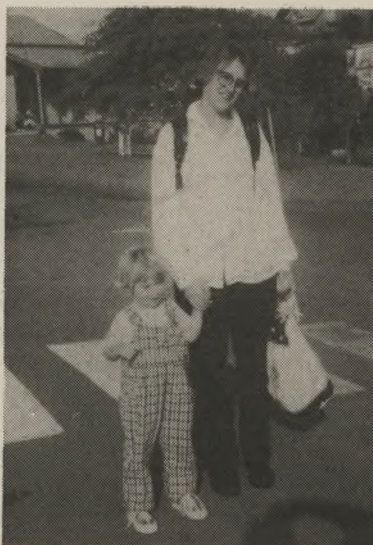
Bringing up a child, work, study, involvement in school projects and fund-raising, after school activities, and the usual domestic chores all seem to be demanding precious time and attention.

I've found since I came out as a woman loving woman, and needed to be involved in the queer community, that there are so many other things that I need to focus on. I needed to nurture and build my new queer identity, and meet other people who had been through some of the situations and feelings that I was suddenly faced with.

So, as well as all the other ones, I found myself taking on exciting new commitments and responsibilities.

Becoming a facilitator for Icebreakers, a support group for young women who are or think they might be lesbian or bisexual. Getting involved in Rainbow Youth, an organisation to promote visibility and pride of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth. Volunteering for the Pride Centre. Gayline/Lesbianline telephone counselling training.

With these came requests for help in other areas - the Hero Parade, Coming Out Day Parade, Pride Centre events and various publications and performances - as I got to know more about the queer community.



All of this involvement peaked with setting up a safe space for queer women on campus in the form of a club for women-loving women.

All very rewarding stuff. Providing services for other queer women, their families or the community as a whole. All play an important part in my own development as a queer woman finding my niche in society.

But what about my development as a mother - oh, and let's not forget that precious adorable little five year old girl! She is much more reliant on me than anybody else. Where in all this does she fit in? The desire to know who I am and develop competes with the desire to give wholly to that little girl, when in fact the first needs to happen for the second to take place fully.

The balancing act becomes a juggling act. To add to this, there is a lack of support from other women to help get services established, and to keep them going. I personally have seen many wonderful women set up support groups, organisations, clubs, bars, sports teams that other women will happily benefit from. But there are so few, in my experience, who will put in a little effort and support to see that they continue. As a result the initiators burn out after a year or two. Then that service, taken for granted, is sadly missed.

A prime example of this is women's bars. In the time I've been out - not long - the Midnight Club, 161, the Lovebox, Footsteps have come and gone because of insufficient support from our community.

The same goes for many of the services in our community. So many women who have needed skills decide, because of lack of support from others, not to offer their help at all. As queer women we need to support each other, recognise each other's individual needs and different situations and appreciate what we give each other.

[B]



PHOTOS: The authors with Rose Aurora a delegate from Mexico Housing on the Malecon Havana Cuba Workshop at the Women's Studies Conference, University of Havana 20-25th of November 1995

Viva , Hermanas Feministas de Cuba!

by Ruth Margerison &
Pamela Gerrish Nunn

In November 1995 we went to Cuba to attend a conference organised by the Women's Studies programme at the University of Havana.

With the sonorous title 'Women on the Threshold of the 21st Century', the conference promised a long list of topics and themes from Women and Development to Women in the Plastic Arts. It lasted five days and was attended by about 150 people (some men among the local contingent) aged from about 16 to 70. While Cubans predominated, as was to be expected, other women had come from Mexico, Spain, the USA, Canada, Britain, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Colombia and Uruguay. We were the only visitors from Australasia. We were welcomed as if from another planet, so pleased were our hostesses that we had taken the trouble to come from a country not known for its sympathy with or interest in Cuba.

It was indeed a tiring journey to Havana to find out what life is like for women in the most famous revolutionary state still resisting the western, northern capitalist giant. Our route - ironically, given the USA's continued policy of destroying Cuba by economic and political isolation - was via

Los Angeles, then on to Mexico and thence to Cuba's capital. A Caribbean island - Jamaica and Haiti are near neighbours - Cuba is hot, sunny, rainy, beachy, bright, busy, loud...but also crumbling, struggling, hungry and somehow faded because of its troubles. Queues are obvious every day - for buses, for food, for taxis, for money. The decaying beauty of the once magnificent architecture makes a depressing comment on the daily efforts of Cuban people to outlast this latest phase of external oppression, which dates back to the 1500s.

The most pressing topics at the conference were not the food shortages, the closing of schools and childcare centres because of decreasing resources, and the deterioration of the country's famous healthcare system, which currently concern the women of Cuba on a daily basis. They were the themes that recurred. The fate of the family, the apparent rebirth of prostitution and the machismo of the average Cuban male are questions just as urgent for the survival of women's quality of life thirty-five years after the 'trionfo de la revolucion'.

These problems have, arguably, always existed for women in Cuba. But they have certainly been exacerbated by the government's recent decisions to promote tourism as a money earner to compensate for the economic hardship that has increased rapidly, drastically and irrecoverably since the demise of the Communist bloc. As Germaine Greer observed in her essay on Cuba for

Women: A World Report in 1985, the revolution of 1959 has made life good for women in many real ways, but capitalism, it turns out, is not the only block to female happiness. Men seem to be pretty much of a problem wherever they occur!

From our observation (admittedly limited to urban Cubans),

the rebirth of prostitution and machismo

this was recognised by the gamut of Cuban women - whether they were married or single mothers or young students, whether they were part of the Federation of Cuban Women that advises the government and is consulted by Fidel Castro and led by Cuba's greatest heroine, the former guerrilla fighter Vilma Espin, or independent-minded academics keener to criticise the regime. They will all have accounts of the 'double shift' that women do in the workplace

and the home, of the expectations of femininity and the assumption of maternal feeling, of the sexual inequality of a culture that allows libido free expression but continues to revere the family. Some of them - but shockingly few, we suspect - will also have an understanding of the limitations on women's potential maintained by a society which doesn't understand the meaning of lesbianism except as a form of personal gratification.

The women we met in Havana expressed great interest in making contact with women overseas - just knowing that women world-wide support their struggles is so important. Even more useful to women in the Women's Studies programme is information, which in the continuing US embargo is extremely difficult to acquire.

We are interested in hearing from any women who might want to be involved in a feminist support/solidarity group. Write to us at PO Box 13 740, Christchurch. And the Cuba Friendship Society in Christchurch and Auckland (mixed groups) welcomes new members. **B**

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Olympics: The Games Boys Play

On the eve of the selections for New Zealand/Aotearoa's next Olympic team many fine athletes will be anxiously waiting for confirmation that they have been chosen, fervently hoping that the years of training and dedication will pay off.

Anne Woodley's appraisal of the Olympic games indicates that for women the stiffest competition has not been for glory or medals, but for inclusion in this most prestigious of all sporting occasions.

You can divide the Olympics into two periods. Then and now - neither welcomed women. *Then:* in ancient Greece they can trace the origins of the event back to 776BC when the cook, Coroebus of Elis, was recorded as winning the one and only event, the stade which was a distance of about 200m. *Now:* we have the so called 'Modern' Olympics, started in 1896 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

The Olympics are so ancient they are twisted into Greek legends, and there are several. Some give explanation as to the beginning of the Olympic Games. One myth tells of the young god Zeus fighting with his father, Cronus, for control of the universe - Zeus won. Thus Zeus became the ruler of Olympia and proceeded to organise contests such as wrestling and boxing to commemorate his victory. In this way the Olympic Games began. Another involves one of the 10 tasks of Hercules - to clean the King's stables in one day. Hercules fulfilled the challenge by diverting the river

Alpheus through the stables. While both are myths they have the common theme of martial strength and competition.

Women weren't welcome at the games either as participants or as spectators. Only one woman was permitted to attend the games and she was the priestess, there to preside over the events as a religious observer. It was a stiff punishment for any woman discovered as a spectator; they were to be executed by being thrown from the top of the nearest mountain (although there are no recorded cases of this happening). The only woman that came close was Callipatira. She was the daughter of a great Olympic winner and had come to the Olympics with her son, Peisirodos, who was to run in the foot race. In order to watch Peisirodos take part, she dressed as a trainer and entered the stadium. When Peisirodos won the race, Callipatira became so excited that she ran forward to meet her son. Unfortunately her tunic caught in a railing and her woman's body was revealed. Callipatira was immediately arrested and tried, but she was pardoned because of her family's unusual and honourable association with the Games. Who knows how many other women snuck in to the games without their tunics getting caught in poorly placed railings?

In the 1000 or so years that the ancient Olympics spanned there is only one known female champion in the games and that was in 396 BC. The Spartan princess Kyniska became the first

Graphics Kate Millington





BARBARA
KENDALL

female Olympic champion by virtue of owning the horses which won the chariot race!

The Olympics were actually part of what was known as the Pan-Hellenic games

that were run throughout Greece at other religious sites. The only recorded games held for females were on a much smaller scale. These races, run by young girls, were dedicated to the goddess of fertility, Hera. There was only one or two foot races for them to compete in. This bias against women competing in the games has continued to be evident in the development of the modern games as well.

The Olympic games petered out around 400 AD, although there were occasional attempts to introduce the idea but it wasn't until the 1890s that it was taken up again. The French Baron, Pierre de Coubertin, was an educationalist and a misogynist; he was an avowed opponent of women's participation in sport. Women were only accepted as spectators, in the stands, 'to reward with a smile the efforts of athletes'.

Mind you, the first few Olympics weren't the international, Coca Cola induced hype then that they are now. They only attracted a little over 300 competitors. It was a bit like turning up to the Waipu games, anyone

could enter and more than a few tourists did!

There were no events for women at the first Modern Olympics at Athens in 1896, they had to wait until the next games in Paris in 1900. However a woman did compete at these games, if only informally. Melpomene, a Greek woman, decided that she would like to take part in the classic marathon race and did so. Unacknowledged, Melpomene finished it in a little over 4 hours. (Interestingly the distance for the marathon wasn't standardised until the 1920s. Until then the marathon was run over varying distances of between 20 and 30 miles.)

The first time women's participation at the games was acknowledged was in 1900, at the Paris Olympics. However, the women were not officially invited to compete. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), a separate entity to the organising committee for those games, were unable to intervene when the Committee decided to hold events for women. Indignant at the lack of seriousness the IOC withdrew huffily to its tent, thus allowing the organisers to introduce two women's events: tennis and golf, each with six participants.

Charlotte Cooper distinguished herself by becoming not only the first official female gold medal winner, but also the first female double gold medal winner. It was her only Olympic appearance.

It had been only 15 years earlier that women had made their debut at Wimbledon. Men had been playing tennis at Wimbledon since 1877, but it was argued that 'tournament play was all too tiring for the weaker sex'. The first ladies singles, allowed in 1884, was described as: "A leisurely affair, the more so as the distinguished charmers participating were weighed down by heavy dresses over multi-petticoats and were permitted to simper, or take a rest, if their service broke down - in a final which provided more titters than jitters."

The Olympics themselves had a shaky existence over the first two decades. The games of 1904 at St Louis, USA, were almost a disaster. They seemed more like a freak show than a competition of sporting prowess and good sportsmanship. It didn't help that most people felt that the

Americans were cheats - they were known to *train!* Based on the wealthy upper class ideal of amateurism, the Olympic Games were the ultimate in reflecting those ideals. Professionalism was frowned upon. At these games the only sport for women was archery, with eight competitors - all American. Again the IOC refused to recognise these events, which were dominated by Ms M. C. Howell.

The suffrage movement in Britain got into the act, in 1908, to convince the IOC of the benefit of allowing women in the games to be held at London. Emmeline Pankhurst threatened disruption of the Olympics in that city if women were excluded. Forty-three women representing four countries competed in three sports: figure skating, tennis and archery.

In the seven-metre yacht race the winning crew of *'L'Heroine'* included a woman, Mrs C. Rivette-Carnac. However, only the owner, Mr Rivette-Carnac, received a gold medal and the crew (there being no other entrant in the competition) received silver medals and diplomas. Thus the IOC sanctioned a mixed event for the first time.

At the next games, in 1912, fifty-five women representing ten countries went to Stockholm, but for only two events: tennis and swimming. The swimming event was absent of American women, since the US Olympic Committee was opposed to women participating in events which made it impossible to wear long skirts.

Women tennis-players walked out in sympathy.

Again the IOC refused to allow the games organising committee to include women's track and field or gymnastics. These were considered 'un-ladylike'. "Let women participate in all sports if they wish but let them not exhibit themselves in doing so," said de Coubertin. Baron de Coubertin had hoped to settle the question of women's events by confirming a ban on women's participation, but the First World War intervened and changing attitudes made that impossible.

One hundred and thirty-six women turned up to the 1920 Olympics in Antwerp. They came from 20 countries to compete in tennis, swimming, archery, figure-skating and yachting. New

Zealand sent its first official Olympic team along to these games.

There were four athletes, and among them our first female competitor, swimmer Violet Walrond. Violet's father was the team manager. However, New Zealanders had already competed in the games. The earliest confirmed athlete being Maurice Champion, who swam for the 'Australasian' team in 1908.

In 1922 the IOC was given a shake up. Alice Milliat and Sophie Elliott Lynn, of the International Women's Sports Federation (IWSF), took on the might of the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF), which excluded women. They organised the 'First Women's Olympic Games' in Paris, comprising 11 athletic events in one day. Women athletes from eight countries competed before a crowd of 30,000. The IOC, faced with such competition, was forced to take action and admit women's track to future games. However, these women's games continued to run successfully until 1936 when the IWSF was 'absorbed' by the IAAF - after then the women had to struggle with the male dominated IAAF.

It was in Amsterdam in 1928 that women first competed in track events at the games, with five track and field events included for women. Prior to these games the IOC had been involved in a dispute with the Vatican over the inclusion of an 800m race for women, and de Coubertin had allied himself with the Pope. It wasn't a great debut. Five out of the eight competitors in the women's 800 metres collapsed, fuelling IOC distaste for women's sport and leading to the omission of the event for the next 36 years.





This was absurd. Men had been finishing distance races in distressed conditions for years. When Dorando Pietri, the little Italian, staggered to the finish of the 1908 marathon in London, then collapsed and was rushed to hospital, no one suggested men should not be allowed to contest the marathon anymore. For some reason officials, nearly always male, dealt more harshly with women, whether out of bias or misguided concern for their health. (Women would apparently be unable to fulfil their prime function in life - giving birth - if they became athletes.) The officials conveniently ignored other women's obvious fitness, such as Melpomene's run at the 1895 games.

In 1952 the first woman to compete against men in an Olympic Equestrian Event, Lisa Hartel from Denmark, won the silver medal. The games in Helsinki were significant for New Zealand also.

Yvette Corlette, the young woman from Dunedin, won New Zealand's third ever gold medal and the first ever for a woman in track and field. It

was for the long jump and it is also the only gold medal New Zealand has ever won in a field event. It would be another 40 years before another New Zealand woman would win a gold medal in the Olympics.

As with the changing attitudes after the first World War, World War Two was also significant for women. Whereas in 1936 fewer than 1% of Olympic athletes were women, by 1948 this had increased to 9.4%. 1984 saw the biggest turn around in women's participation in the games. Suddenly a whole raft of new track and field events were added to the programme including the first official women's marathon. Synchronised Swimming and Rhythmic Gymnastics were also introduced. However, even now in 1996 women don't have full participation in the games. Women are unable to compete in boxing, wrestling, modern pentathlon or baseball. And men do not compete in synchronised swimming or softball - although synchronised swimming is under threat.

What is encouraging is that while there are fewer sports for women and lower participation by them, there has been gradual progress over the last few decades. Participation at the games is at an all time high. Every four years more countries select even more athletes to participate in the games.

The games themselves are modernising. Sports such as triathlon, tennis, windsurfing and mountain biking have recently been added to the programme. As these newer sports have

higher female participation than some of the traditional sports, then it seems that women's participation can only increase. And it also seems that sometimes, despite the best interference tactics that the opposition can put in front of them, women just win through regardless.

We will all watch with eager anticipation the Olympics in Atlanta this August, to see the best women there are in sport today. E

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Christchurch *Comment*

by Pat Rosier

Nelson Notes has become Christchurch Comment during the most difficult time of my life. Those who saw the last issue will know that my daughter, Helen Wernham, died suddenly in Darwin in January. The flowers, cards, letters phone calls, email messages, love, support and 'being there' that I have received, from Glenda, from dear treasured friends and from many people I know well and not so well do make a difference. The messages and support create a cradle in which I can experience the unspeakable pain and grief and loss brought by the death of a child. I resolve to always send a message, when I hear of the death of a person close to someone I know.

And bless the ones who don't know what to say, and can say just that. I have felt an awful invisibility on top of the loss when Helen's death is unmentioned, often I suspect when people don't know what to say. I haven't wanted to dwell on it, just to have it acknowledged.

It is only now, three months later, as autumn paints its colours on Christchurch and balmy, sunny days are interspersed with cold, dank foretastes of winter, that I am beginning to actively promote my work. I am developing a practice/consultancy doing work supervision and workshops with people involved in voluntary and service oriented organisations. Organisational structures that work effectively are a particular passion of mine, along with working with difference and/or conflict, and ... well, there's a book in there trying to get out. I would like to be in contact with others doing this kind of work, especially from feminist and other political perspectives. I am also looking for Internet contacts relevant to this work. So far, the World Wide Web pages I have found have all been commercial, the only discussion group I know that occasionally throws up something relevant is soc.org.nonprofit and I haven't found a mailing list - which is what I would really like. I would be grateful for any help from Broadsheet readers.

Write to me at PO Box 33 272, Christchurch, or email to prosier@chch.planet.org.nz

I wonder how many readers scanned the last paragraph with the speed of familiarity with Internet jargon and how many were bemused, confused and bewildered or 'felt dumb'. (Men tend to dismiss the thing-they-don't-understand as dumb, not themselves.) When first encountering the vocabulary of the Internet it reads like so much double dutch to most of us. Like most specialised language, it creates an Internet-clite of those who can

(a) get connected, as they say, for free through work - often a university, polytech, government or local body employer, occasionally a business workplace, or

(b) own the computer equipment and pay the fees to join up via a commercial provider (that's me).

I guess someone could learn the language without joining the 'net' but I don't know why any woman would bother. I want women who don't yet have access to the Internet to know that its language is the same as sports language or building language or sewing language. You only need to learn it if you are doing that activity and it does not carry with it any extra savvy or intelligence or make you a better person.

It is one of the pre-winter days as I write, cold, wet and dreary. This suits my mood; Glenda and I are having a difficult time with each other at present as we struggle with wanting different and contradictory things in and from our relationship. "The ship that sailed into the living room," as Sonia Johnson puts it, is taking much of our time and energy at present.

This is my first winter living so far south. It will be colder than I am used to and I already bless the inventor of polypropylene, the wonder material of warm underwear. I'll write my next column in the spring thaw.



STROKES AND ART ATTACKS

book review

unfortunate the New Zealand experiment

Jane Kelsey:
The New Zealand Experiment: A World Model for Structural Adjustment?
Auckland University Press, 1995

This is the book I would like every New Zealander under 30 to read. It worries me to realise that we now have a whole generation of adults who have experienced only market-newspeak, economic fundamentalism, and the cult of the individual. The values of mutual support, security and participation on which my parents' generation rebuilt the economy after Depression and war seem forgotten, and were certainly not fully debated against the free market rhetoric. Questions of value, rather than of cost, have been marginalised as the New Right captured not only economic policy, but the whole political machinery in which so many of us once participated.

As Jane writes in her introduction:

'New Zealand used to claim credit as the first country to give women the vote, as the birthplace of the welfare state, for harmonious multiracial society and more recently for being "clean, green and nuclear free". Today it is becoming infamous for what is known as the "New Zealand Experiment" ...[a] model of pure neo-liberal theory...applied...to a complex, real-life community with generally cavalier disregard for the social or electoral consequences.'

Governments of both main parties have assumed as given

the 'fundamentals' of market liberalisation and free trade, limited government, monetary policy, deregulated labour market and fiscal restraint. Jane documents the rapid and radical restructuring of the economy and the state, with an analysis of how the changes were deliberately embedded against reversal. For many women of my generation this detailed account of simultaneous policy change explains our apparent helplessness as we tried to resist on so many policy fronts, and our initial bewilderment as our own radical language and critiques were used to destroy what we were working for. In her image of a New Right 'blitzkrieg' I see us, always too desperately stomping fires on our own patch of rooftop to be able to unite effectively and counter the Business Roundtable agenda.

Jane notes that the social consequences of structural adjustment - less employment, lower incomes, few services - have been disproportionately borne by women - particularly Maori women - and their children. Women rely on all state services - from benefits to transport - far more than men. Many better jobs for women in health, education and social services have been severely cut back



I've been thinking.



About time

or are under attack. Roughly equal rates for male and female unemployment obscure the disproportionately part time, temporary and low wage nature of many typically female jobs, most of which have been deunionised under the Employment Contracts Act. Maori women, especially those under 30, have had the highest unemployment rates, are more likely to be solo parents and to have low income jobs.

'The ultimate indictment of the structural adjustment programme was its effect on New Zealand's youth. The 1991 Census figures showed that a quarter of all children belonged to families where either parent or parents did not have paid work...60% of children living with one parent were in the lowest 20% income group. Yet the proportion of children living in solo parent families had increased from 12 to 22% between 1981 and 1993; the figure for Maori in 1993 was 40%.' (p.289)

There *were* alternatives, she says. Other countries besides New Zealand had to adjust to an increasingly polarised global economy, but some countries - for example, Australia - chose to use

social and other policies to cushion the economic blow. Between 1985 and 1992 - from Labour's dollar float to National's benefit cuts - Australia's economy grew 16.8%, the OECD average was 19.7% and New Zealand's went backwards at -1%. Our inflation was marginally lower, our unemployment had risen more sharply and there is nothing in the present 'recovery' to suggest that we will outperform Australia in the years ahead.

Any reversal of present policies is vulnerable to business backlash, particularly since free market policies have markedly increased the globalisation of the New Zealand economy (though Jane acknowledges that full economic sovereignty was lost in 1840). She notes the view of the Aotearoa Network of Unemployed & Beneficiaries (ANUB) that by selling state assets the government not only lost a significant income flow but much of its ability to influence economic directions. However, in her view, without some state regulation of 'the frenzy of unregulated and amoral finance markets', ... 'the seemingly irrepressible power of trans-national capital would never be secure. The neo-liberal economy has never been the smooth-working and self-adjusting model its theorists make out.'

For this reason, alternatives to present policies are possible. Jane suggests a number of adjustments within the present policy framework which could cumulatively destabilise it. A number of economists and social analysts like Prue Hyman, Ian Shirley and Tim Hazledine go further, calling for a fundamental rethink of economic values. Keith Rankine and

the ANUB are working on a model which implementing such values, in the 'universal basic income' which 'costs little more than the present system, while doing away with all the iniquities...' There are also models to be found in Maori economic development based on control over resources and the transmission of knowledge culture and values.

'...[N]ationalist, community and Maori economic models place priority on people-centred development over market driven economic growth, and offer varying roles for the market and the central state. All celebrate what is unique about Aotearoa New Zealand. All believe that the future of economic development lies in the hands of the people themselves.'

Linda Hill

A World Model for Structural Adjustment ?

"There is a huge hunger in other countries for information about New Zealand" says Jane Kelsey.

"All they have been getting is government propaganda and the kind of myths and selective information that Roger Douglas and Ruth Richardson have been promulgating."

In fact, *The New Zealand Experiment*, published jointly with Pluto Press in Britain, was written in response to requests for fuller information made to Jane while overseas. Following publication she was invited to meet with policy makers and public sector unions in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, where the Labour Party is taking a New Right turn. Copies made available at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Auckland last year also aroused interest. Jane is currently on another trip - to Guyana which is trying to find alternatives to structural adjustment; to meet politicians and Commonwealth diplomats in London; to Sweden to meet with regional government Directors responsible for social policy delivery; and to Iceland where Ruth Richardson has currently been offering economical advice. Jane Kelsey is able to offer a different analysis of New Zealand's situation.

"At least we can tell others, you don't have to be in our situation."

In New Zealand, Jane's book is in its third print run, but has not met the same media interest and coverage. In fact Jane was strongly criticised in *The Dominion*. She feels this kind of media response closes off possibilities of critique and policy development.

"A lot of people are doing good work, but it's not being heard about. The worrying thing is that in this climate, people are beginning to say, we are not prepared to stick our heads up any longer."



She's Fantastical Book Review
 LUCY SUSSEX AND JUDITH RAPHAEL
 BUCKRICH (EDS),
 WITH FOREWORD BY URSULA K. LE GUIN
 Sybylla Feminist Press, 1995

She's Fantastical is the first anthology of Australian women's speculative fiction, magical realism and fantasy. In Australia the genre of science fiction has been dominated by male editors, writers and themes. In many cases, science fiction and fantasy anthologies have allocated less than 20% to women's contributions. *She's Fantastical* opens up a space for women writers. It showcases fiction and poetry that appropriates, challenges, and subverts the speculative genre.

The literary fantastic includes a pregnant spaceman, a witch, time-travellers, the nuns of St Mary Magdalene, were-marsupials, a knight-errant princess, love and lyrebirds. The anthology features work from: Carmel Bird, Gabrielle Lord, Rosalynn Love, Hyllus Maris, Isobelle Carmody, Nadia Wheatley, Maurilia Mcchan, Lucy Sussex, Daisy Utemorrhah, Ania Walwicz and Lisa Jacobson. **B**

SYBYLLA FEMINIST PRESS

The Sybylla Feminist Press, Melbourne, began in 1976 as a printing co-operative and is now an independent publisher run voluntarily by a small group of women. Since its inception, Sybylla has operated on principles of collectivity, non-hierarchical decision-making and skill-sharing. Occasional grants have been awarded for particular projects, but Sybylla receives no regular funding from government or other bodies for its operations. With increasing concentration of media ownership in Australia, Sybylla is committed to independently owned, alternative publishing. The small publishing programme produces women's writing, both fiction and non-fiction. It aims to expand and enhance Australian women's creative opportunities by fostering new writers and by publishing work that is innovative in style and content.

These include two general anthologies, *Frictions* (1982) and *second degree tampering* (1992). *Frictions* considers the categories and conventions of writing, women's writing and feminist writing, while *second degree tampering* addresses the possibilities of reworking and re-inventing personal and collective identities in the forthcoming anthology *Motherlode* thirty writers and artists have taken the term 'Mother' and gone mining for meaning, searching beyond the conventional definitions and looking for alternative ones. In *Taking the Revolution Home* (1987) Joyce Stevens documents the history of work among women in the Australian Communist Party between 1920 and 1945. *Quilt* (1985) by Finola Moorhead considers the relation of women writers to their craft in a selection of prose, short stories, poetry, essays and reviews. In *Between the Lines* (1985) Bernice Morris turns to letters, security documents and recollections to recreate Australia of the 1950s, under the influence of the Cold War and McCarthyism. Jan McKemmish's *A Gap in the Record* (1985) looks at the deliberate and accidental ways in which power can operate - and be resisted - in a novel about a group of women who control a world-wide spying. Mary Fallon's award-winning *Working Hot* (1989) explores the dynamics of a lesbian love affair, and speaks more broadly of sexuality, challenging the uncritical, unreflexive representations of femininity and female sexuality that still infiltrate contemporary fiction.

Sybylla Feminist Press
 247 -251 Flinders Lane
 Melbourne, Victoria 3000



LEE FLEMMING (ED)

TO SAPPHO, MY SISTER: LESBIAN SISTERS WRITE ABOUT THEIR LIVES Spinifex, 1995

I've always been fascinated and curious when I've met, or heard tell of, lesbians from the same family. This book tells the stories of lesbian sisters from Canada, the United States, Germany, Sweden and Australia. Some readers will already know of the two sets of sisters who run feminist book shops in Australia. There are lesbian sisters in New Zealand whose stories would be equally interesting.

The subject raises a illogical jumble of 'explanations' in my mind. When I was young the least deviation from rigid 1950s conformity was always the mother's fault - maternal deprivation, domination or any guilt inducer in between. So my first thought tends to be, how did the mother get it so right? Despite gay male political strategies, or perhaps because of them, I don't believe it's in the genes. More that somehow the hetero-socialisation didn't stick. I believe that we resocialise ourselves constantly through our lives, through our judgements and choices and the interaction with people we hang out with. 'Any woman can be a lesbian', I guess. So why am I surprised if the mythical '10% gay' isn't evenly spread through the population, but crops up in one family?

These stories are about family relationships and 'coming out'. Some are about three sisters, in one the mother is also lesbian. A couple of chapters are perhaps difficult reading - the dialogue between sisters gets a little intense. Most are light and pleasant narratives that will reflect some of your own sisterly experiences, lesbian or otherwise. And if your own coming out was a bit of an identity crisis, what about this from the tale of identical twins!

"The most unsettling...a teasing comment about not being sure, when we were babies, which of us was Sharon and which of us was Sandra. Mom claims that she and Dad just called both of us both names and eventually we each responded to a particular one."

Linda Hill

B

Naya Zamana A SHORT FILM BY MANDRIKA RUPA

Naya Zamana can be roughly translated as 'Modern Times', and in this ten minute film the transition from traditional to modern is woven visually with the music selected. It was recently written and directed by Mandrika Rupa and funded by the Arts Council. It will be submitted for this year's International Film Festival.

Naya Zamana works with the sense of time within each character and their place in the world. The opening shots are of the main character, 20 year old Shabnam, in a factory, with noise pollution mixed with sitar music. Quickly the tempo changes to a busy scene outside the airport, where her aunt is arriving from Fiji. Here a voice poem, or 'sholus', sung by an Indian woman's voice rises above the air traffic. The beat is a classical dance footwork rhythm.

Natural sounds slow the 'sholus' down in the next scene outside the family's state house. The porch is being swept, the mother is humming while doing chores, and visually it is much softer, far quieter. She shuffles in the back door after plucking patra leaves to cook up, and the kitchen is steamy and sunny as she rolls chappatis, whispering to herself.

There is a tension of sound and silence in this film, and the music contrasts with the visuals to give an idea of traditional juxtaposing modern. The characters move in and out of their spaces of time, whether it be the weight of constructed factory time or the brother's sense of no time because he is in the ether of drug time. The mother is in her own quiet world of repeated rituals, and the aunt from Fiji, although perpetuating the ancient time by coming to arrange the girl's marriage, refutes tradition by being a drinker.

Naya Zamana shifts back and forth from modern to traditional. It incorporates what an immigrant may experience of both traditional and modern expectations. It gives a brief glimpse of Indian immigrants in the South Pacific in the mid 1990s, and an evolving pulse is sensed. This new beat is what is meant by 'Modern Times'.

Virginia Harlick

B

book review

From the first pages of this book, one is reminded of one's own experiences and of others in similar situations to those of the seven Maori women who have so frankly shared their very personal journeys within violent relationships.

The following excerpts from stories in Part One of *Te Puna Roimata* are daily experiences for far too many Maori women.

About the violence...

'I can't remember the first time he was violent...It was frightening...It was a gradual thing, everything was gradual...I don't know if I could have stopped it. I hardly even noticed that it was happening...It started with the verbal...it was a push and a shove...punching and kicking...violent from the beginning...possessive and jealous...then he beat me black and blue....I was convinced he was going to kill me...'

About the children...

'I was afraid for my son's life...my boy with scratches on his face...gave this almighty scream, his bum was burnt...brain had swollen and his skull had been fractured...'

Others outside the relationship...

Church

It's the duty of a wife to be there for your children and your husband...ostracised me once our problems started...the wife play the submissive role...husband head of the house...forgive and forget...

Mātua Whangai:

She talked me into getting back together...I thought she was there to help me....'

MAREWA GLOVER

Te Puna Roimata Maori Women's Experience of Male Partner Violence

Bound to Last,
PO Box 91 610,
Auckland

Family, his family...

'His family very odd...women are nothing...his father very violent...he was an alcoholic...his mother used to pull out the knife...she just in and whacked me across the face.. Your wife's not very good, is she...made your bed, you lie in it.'

Racism...

'I could only eat traditional meals back at my parents' house...poke fun at their way (her family)...he would never sleep on the marae...

Reading these stories reminds me of the courage and strength of women. Their survival strategies. Some may still be experiencing victimisation, yet within their stories there are triumphs.

As well as the women's stories in Part One, Part Two: The Research offers interesting data in an easy, readable style, covering the objectives of the research and a literature review including popular imported theories on wife abuse, the Battered Woman Syndrome, the DAIP Power and Control model as well

as Moana Jackson's Power to Protect theory. In the Cross Case Analysis we find comments about the women's upbringing and values, the men's upbringing and values, the violence, the use of children in abuse, isolating tactics and the various forms of violence used. An excellent section on the women's responses discusses reactions to violent incidents, the effects, the role of outsiders, outcomes and where the women are in their lives today.

Part Two also includes discussion notes as well as methodology and references - useful for those readers who might wish to continue studying this topic. Marewa Glover points out that further research needs to be done, especially in regard to the effects of men's violence on children. She suggests that males frequently beating, raping and, I'd add, killing women does not appear to be enough to attract nation-wide support for government funding for stopping violence programmes. Heightening the plight of children may elicit a stronger response from the public and from political sources whereby programmes might more swiftly be put in place.

This book is suited to all women, especially those who have experienced or currently are experiencing male violence.

A must-read for all Maori and tauwi working in agencies which deal with male violence where women and children are the victims.

A welcome contribution to the New Zealand scene, where too often we hear the words (p.63), "HELP ME. PLEASE, HELP ME"

Huria Chisholm 

Cultural Resistance: Challenging Beliefs about Men, Women and Therapy

KATHY WEINGARTEN (ED) Harrington Park Press, 1995

The editor hopes this book, its chapters written by a number of authors, might answer the post-modern question, 'What's not in this picture?', addressing the need to attend to absence and other omissions in dominant stories in our culture.

I found the book interesting. Some of its chapters introduced me to different viewpoints and ways of engaging in therapy. The book is quite comprehensive in terms of covering major political areas - gender, race, sexual orientation - although some chapters appear to have less depth than others. Chapters that particularly caught my attention included 'Fathering our Sons: Refathering Ourselves'; 'Some Thoughts on Transforming Masculine Legacies'; 'Opening Therapy to Conversations with a Personal God' (the title doesn't sound particularly feminist but I found aspects quite challenging) and 'From Study Debate to New Conversations on Controversial Issues: A Report from the Public Conversations Project'.

Each chapter is followed by a commentary/response from another author to create, in the hope of the editor, a conversation/debate. Some of these commentaries seemed too much like pats on the back to really advance a different viewpoint.

I was disappointed by the commentary on one of the longest chapters, 'A Narrative Approach to So-Called Anorexia/Bulimia', one of whose authors is an Auckland based family therapist. I would have been curious to see a conversation about why other therapists are often not as successful as David with his method of therapy for Anorexia/Bulimia. The therapy literature has noted that the innovators of a therapy are often most successful at that method and wondered about the role of personality in therapy outcome.

One subject omitted from the book is the cultural belief that therapy is a 'good' approach to dealing with life's serious problems.

I think feminist readers will find the last chapter, 'From Stuck Debate...', one of the most interesting if not challenging reports. The project the authors have been involved in has related to starting new conversations between the different sides on abortion. They suggest that public politicised debates on such issues as abortion are not genuine democratic debates/dialogues and lead to 'stuck' binary/bi-polar positions. The authors have created safe environments where 'individuals' from the differing camps can reveal their differences (even from their own side),

their uncertainties and also listen in a curious and respectful way to the beliefs of people whom they may regard as the 'opposition'. This seems to create a more comfortable, less emotive-controlled process but it is not clear whether it can lead to a resolution or agreement on action for such an issue as abortion (e.g. strict laws or liberal laws). Nor does it address the issue of whether there is a point at which a viewpoint/stand is too compromised or watered down, so that knowledge about how to act becomes murky and grey. There is of course a complexity of political/ethical issues in the abortion debate, but the tricky question of 'bottom lines of values' is not raised as an important conversation which may lead to resolving how we can/might act in given situations.

On the other hand, creating a more respectful climate for dialogue might restrain more extreme actions, such as the murder of abortion clinic workers in the United States.

Sue Fitchett

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