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HEC

The Great Goddess Hecate is anathema to those who worship Western father gods, governing as she does the aspects of strong women who demand the exercise of choice and individuality. Hesiod, no admirer of women, wrote that she was "almost the chief of all the gods"; typically, this statement has been either dismissed, misunderstood or regarded as an unfortunate error by male classicists. If anything, Hesiod was too cautious. Hecate is the ruler of life and death, fertility and infertility, medicine and poison, the kindly assistant of women in childbirth or the compassionate goddess who relieved the burden of unwanted pregnancies. To women she has good intent but she can be 'destructive' to men. In other words, she was the Goddess invoked by women who desired freedom from male tyranny.

Magic, inspiration and understanding are her gifts; she governs the creative, unconscious mind; she can grant women the power of awakening or dampening male desire; she has the power to curse conquerors or unjust rulers and 'Zeus himself honours Hecate so greatly that he never denies her the ancient power which she has always enjoyed; of bestowing on mortals, or withholding from them, any desired gift.' (Robert Graves.) Hecate was around long before the father gods appeared on the scene and one whose powers were so great and so basic that they could only be obscured, never eroded.

Hecate was too fearful (to men) to be allotted a spouse and so she escaped the dreary fate of most other matriarchal goddesses. She represents the cycle of the seasons; a triple goddess. Persephone is her maiden aspect, Demeter her life-giving maternal role and as herself she is the dark moon, the goddess of the underworld. But the seed must be buried (Hecate) before its sprouts (Persephone) and bears fruits (Demeter). Hecate is at once crone and virgin, as Persephone is virgin and mother, and Demeter is mother and post-menopausal woman. Hecate is Everywoman.

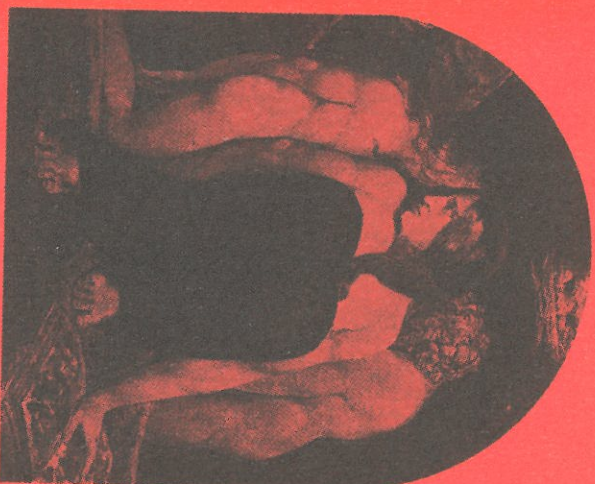
Hecate has been traduced as the goddess of evil, the queen of hell, the ruler of succubae, ghouls and vampires. Such a powerful Goddess who could not be tamed could only be vilified lest by worshipping Her, women could learn to control their fertility and invoke a power superior to that of the quarrelsome, silly, rape-prone and vainglorious 'deities' worshipped by the Hellenes, or the vindictive father god of Christianity.

Despite the arrogant sexism of the Greeks and Romans, Hecate was accorded a frightened respect. The life-denying misogyny of the Christian Church Fathers' terror of female sexuality exceeded even that of their predecessors so that Hecate became a demoness, an embodiment of everything gruesome and perverted. The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to birth control, abortion and autonomy for women is well known, but in previous centuries such forbidden practices were apt to end in one being tortured and burnt alive if one were caught or even suspected of 'witchcraft'. In the middle ages rebellious women worshipped Hecate as Diana or Aradia, the Queen of Elfin or Faerie, the Goddess of the Crossroads or the heath. She was the patroness of the midwives and the women healers whose traditional knowledge of medicine passed from woman to woman over the centuries.

Accordingly, we have named our journal 'Hecate', a symbolic gesture to all that is proud, unnameable, autonomous, compassionate, angry, strong creative, intelligent and brave in women that, although repressed and denied for thousands of years has never been crushed, and now pushes towards the light like shooting blades of barley. Hecate is mythologically represented as a bitch and as the witches would have said 'So mote it be.'

# HECATE

## A Women's Interdisciplinary Journal



VOLUME IV, NUMBER 2,

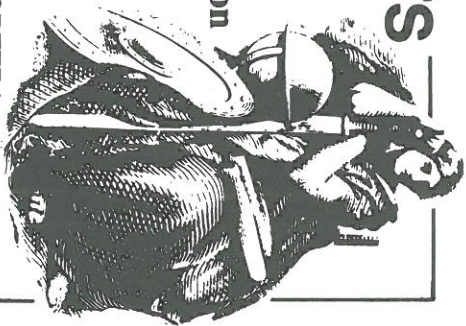
FALL 1978

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## HECATE

A Women's

Interdisciplinary Journal

VOL. IV, No. 2

JULY 1978



## EDITORIAL

Over the past four years, HECATE has been a forum for new information about the oppression of women under patriarchy and capitalism. It is aimed to help the development of new methods of analysis to both draw on what is most useful in the various areas categorised as academic disciplines and also develop a methodology that can, through the use of feminist, marxist or other radical models in some kind of synthesis, most adequately help us to understand our past and present, in order to achieve change.

The recent history of the women's movement has been uneven. While continuing cutbacks in funding have threatened some activities, several campaigns around issues of special concern to women have been energetically conducted, especially around all women's right to work with an equal rate of pay for the job, free abortion on demand, and maternity leave (with paternity leave). Although there are many problems with theorising the question of rape, the campaign against rape continues to be strongly supported. More serious attempts to gain a mass base for campaigns around these issues than have hitherto existed are at present under way in some sections of the movement.

The Women and Labour Conference in Sydney in May gave a boost to the movement in demonstrating the mass of material available for the study of women's history and in bringing together more than a thousand women presently engaged in this work. It may also have given some women an impetus towards generating a more adequate practice in their specific areas of work. We hope that Stone's bibliography, "Women, Work and Struggle" will also be helpful in this direction. Two of the papers originally prepared for the Conference, those by McGrath and Summers, are printed in this issue. Unfortunately, however, many of the papers employed under-developed methodologies that could not usefully explain the complex questions raised by the information they included. The organisers of the Conference did not give a lead in this direction, and a general methodological parochialism found concrete expression in the banning of all bookstalls and literature except a limited range of 'feminist' material. Women need to organise separately but not to seek answers through methods of enquiry that fail to recognise class differences and divisions between women.

Since a purely feminist approach is not adequate, some kind of synthesis of different approaches must be arrived at to clarify the most productive way forward. Foxton's review of Hamilton's book raises some of these questions. Many of the articles we have printed in the past have, explicitly or implicitly, demonstrated the possibilities of alternative critical approaches. The material we will be looking for in the future will break new ground in terms of methodology, or offer new information about the various areas of women's activity past and present or do both. Only thus can theory be developed to help advance the struggle against patriarchy and capitalism, in which the women's movement plays a central and vital role. □

## Aboriginal Women

### Workers in the

### N.T., 1911-1939

**F**ollowing the initial conquest stage, which normally involved the expropriation of the indigenous population from their land, it was a common feature of colonial societies for the new settlers to exploit the indigenes for their labour, and specifically the women for sex.<sup>1</sup> Yet the role of Aboriginal women as workers for white settlers is an aspect of Australian history which has received little attention. This may not be surprising considering the male dominated nature of history and anthropology, but even recent feminist writers have made only scant attempts to redress the imbalance, and sometimes an attitude of 'tokenism' is apparent. Just as male historians cannot validly justify perceiving women's role in society as extraneous from history, feminists perpetuate an ethnocentric vision of analogously one-sided dimensions if they continue to focus so little serious attention on the living and working experiences of black women. While a richer analysis will undoubtedly emerge when black women begin to narrate their own histories,<sup>2</sup> this is no excuse for women's studies to neglect or trivialise their crucial significance in Australian history.

Novels such as Katharine Susannah Prichard's *Coonardoo*, set on a remote cattle station in the Kimberleys, Western Australia, and Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia*,<sup>3</sup> set in the Northern Territory, provide a grim portrayal of the exploitation of Aborigines, including some valuable insights into the nature of black women's oppression. While more detailed work must be undertaken throughout Australia before we are able to analyse the extent and nature of their labour, research so far conducted<sup>4</sup> shows that in the Eastern settlements during the nineteenth century black women often performed domestic and sexual services for the white settlers. This paper attempts to explore and elucidate the working experience<sup>5</sup> of Aboriginal women in the Northern Territory, between 1911 and 1939. Hopefully it will encourage further historical debate on this subject.

The Territory, which has long been neglected by historians, is an interesting starting point. During these years it remained a frontier; even by 1932, there were only 3,300 whites compared with approximately 17,500 Aborigines.<sup>6</sup> There were few resident white women at this stage, and travellers and local workers alike claimed they could travel hundreds of miles or go for months at a time without ever seeing a white woman. In fact, the debate as to whether the Territory was 'any place for a white woman' continued throughout this period. The white woman who did accompany the men to the frontier has been stereotyped as an heroic pioneer, and idealised as the 'sacred white woman.' No such historic acclaim, however misdirected, was extended to laud the black woman, who tended to bear the main weight of the pioneer's burden. Contemporary white observers underrated the significance of black women as a labour force. A notable exception, however, was J.W. Bleakley, Queensland's Chief Protector of Aborigines, who was commissioned to investigate Northern Territory conditions in 1928. He voiced the opinion that the Aboriginal woman was the mainstay of the Northern Territory frontier, reasoning that without her the white man could not have carried on, especially in areas where there were no white women. Even where the white woman had actually ventured, he reported that "the lubra has still been indispensable to make life possible for her."<sup>7</sup>

The neglect of the black woman's role corresponds with the way most female work at this time was ignored as being either 'private', not worthy of consideration, or better 'hushed up' because of still-prevalent Victorian sexual morality. Furthermore, contemporary racism allied with sexism meant that she was ranked lowest in the social hierarchy. The scientific thinking of the late nineteenth century, especially notions of 'Social Darwinism',<sup>8</sup> influenced current thought, providing convenient explanations for the condition of the Aborigines. For example, the declining black population was considered to be evidence of the pattern of 'survival of the fittest.' They were viewed as a 'doomed' or 'dying' race gradually giving way to a 'superior' civilisation. A contradiction was evident, however, in the fact that Aborigines were called mongrels, yet their labour was indispensable and Aboriginal women were desired and taken. As R.L. Evans argues, "such a dichotomy could only be resolved psychologically by a process of exploitation coupled with a constant denigration of the exploited one."<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the underplaying of their significance as workers was a means of keeping blacks in their place. In a society which ranked intelligence on a strict scale according to 'breed', the racial status of Aborigines had forced them into jobs which were generally disliked by whites—the most demanding and arduous occupations. In 1915 Atlee Hunt, head

of the Department of External Affairs,\* had aptly described their function in the Northern Territory as being "the hewers of wood and drawers of water."<sup>10</sup>

### Occupations—A Wider Range?

On stations, many Aboriginal women earned a living through domestic service, or by providing sexual services for white men on a casual basis as prostitutes, or on a semi-permanent basis as concubines. During this period, most pastoral properties were managed by single men,<sup>11</sup> who required black women to perform basic domestic chores, usually in conjunction with sexual services. When a white woman was present, more domestic labour was required, and the Aboriginal woman's sexual function was somewhat reduced, or at least driven underground. The white 'missus' tried to teach her servants to observe the fine details of British etiquette,\*\* the manager and family ate alone in the dining room, and would ring for the smallest table service, to be attended by black servants clad in 'fitting' dress for this duty.<sup>12</sup> The homestead domestics scrubbed, cleaned the house and verandahs,<sup>13</sup> did the laundry—bleaching, starching and ironing—helped the cook (usually Chinese), sewed, washed dishes, polished the silverware and cutlery, and cared for the manager's children. Certain members of the staff acted in a supervisory capacity, or were entrusted with more responsible tasks, and sometimes this altered status would reflect back to the tribe.<sup>14</sup> Other women worked on outstations as 'Camp Cook', 'Camp Cleaner' or in general domestic duties as 'Camp Lubra'.<sup>15</sup> Anthropologist C.H. Berndt concluded that since European contact, women were afforded greater opportunities to enhance their status in the Aboriginal community:

They were admitted more readily into the central living quarters of these stations. . . . Their opportunities for observation of new things and new ways were numerous. In many cases, they came to serve as 'hinges' or 'pivots' occupying a crucial position between the newcomers and their mentfolk—intermediaries. . . . On the whole, then, outside contact enhanced women's already strong domestic and economic status and at the same time decreased the extent of her formal submission vis à vis men.<sup>16</sup>

Historical evidence suggests, nevertheless, that outside contact did not necessarily work to the women's advantage, as will be demonstrated below.

\* The Department of External Affairs was responsible for administering the Territory after 1911, when control was handed over from the South Australian government to the Commonwealth.

\*\* A fuller discussion of the role of white women in influencing white/black relations is not possible in this paper, as the complexity of this issue would detract from my primary purpose. The relatively small number of white women, especially on large properties run by absentee landowners, made their influence less significant than in the southern settlements. Readily available evidence tends to present only the middle class white woman's view. Judith Murray-Prior argues in her thesis "Women Settlers and Aborigines" (History Department, University of New England 1973) that the

Especially in more isolated areas, black women performed a wider range of jobs than their European counterparts: they mused cattle, went droving, accompanied camel teams,<sup>17</sup> acted as shepherds,<sup>18</sup> worked at road<sup>19</sup> and fence building, and repairing<sup>20</sup> and ochre mining.<sup>21</sup> On stations, women often worked in a group, sharing a specific responsibility, such as caring for the mules, or taking charge of the goats or cows, which included feeding, milking and transporting them to often-distant outcamps.<sup>22</sup> Others tended the vegetable garden, and a woman occasionally worked in the manager's office.<sup>23</sup> Female employees prepared horsehair for the saddler and hides for tanning; they pulled the punkah fans, disposed of rubbish and nightsoil.<sup>24</sup> Aboriginal men, on the other hand, usually worked with cattle, horses or camels, or with transport facilities such as the wagons, trucks or cars.<sup>25</sup>

How can we explain this distribution of work between Aboriginal men and women? For one thing, many of the women's jobs—notably fence and road-repairing, and gardening—were notoriously disliked by the men.<sup>26</sup> It seems that the men were better able to influence the type of work they were asked to perform than the women, not least because of the resistance they offered employers, which sometimes went as far as outright physical violence.<sup>27</sup> More commonly, when the men found tasks tedious, they would 'go slow' or become 'cheeky' or impudent, refusing to work as the 'happy blackfellow' was expected to, or leave on a 'walk-about'<sup>28</sup> or nomadic excursion, where they would return to their traditional economy, performing tasks imbued with spiritual and mythical significance. Sometimes women joined in such excursions, or absconded singly or in pairs.<sup>29</sup> The women were less inclined to 'walk off the job', generally because they were tied more closely to the headquarters. Probably they had children to support, or perhaps found it easier to adapt to their new means of subsistence. Women were certainly regarded by their employers as more tractable and submissive than the men.<sup>30</sup> And so the astute manager allotted them the more onerous tasks such as fence repairing.

Such a division was perhaps close to the sexual demarcations of traditional Aboriginal society, where women were relied upon by their direct family to provide the most regular and consistent food supply. Their role of food gathering and hunting smaller animals was more routine and required more constant application compared with the men's hunting activities.<sup>31</sup> While the apportioning of occupations did not accord with European sex-roles, employers could accept the anomaly because the women—and men too for that matter—were only "niggers" (as they were popularly called in the Territory).

whether this pattern was applicable to the Northern Territory, where black women were more heavily relied upon for domestic help, and for a longer



Aboriginal women drawing water from a well, Victoria Downs Station. (Mitchell Library, Sydney.)

In the 1930's, in response to criticisms made by humanitarians and opponents of Aboriginal labour, managers emphatically denied putting women to such 'unfemale' work. Nevertheless, this practice was quite widespread. At the Rumbalara ochre mines in 1935, for example, women assisted the men by filling bags with ochre. No licenses had been issued "to employ female Aborigines in mining or other work usually performed by males", and Arthur Harvey, the employer concerned, claimed he did not know why women went to the mine.<sup>32</sup> In 1938, a road gang at Wave Hill Station, under a white overseer, consisted of three male Aborigines, and seven females who reportedly "worked harder and longer hours than the bucks". In this case, the manager claimed that the overseer had no authority to work the women, for they were actually consorts of the black male employees.<sup>33</sup> The Aboriginal women, however, had obviously accompanied their husbands to this kind of work, knowing that they would be required to perform a major proportion. Many managers and overseers were probably quite uninterested in who performed the task, as long as it was done, so the Aborigines—or at least the males—were themselves able to apportion the work between the sexes.

In towns, the employment situation was somewhat different: Aboriginal women were more confined to positions corresponding with white sex-roles. There was a greater pool of available labour in the towns, comprising Aborigines who had been dispossessed of their land and consequently thrown into even greater dependence on employment by whites. In Darwin and Alice Springs, black male prisoners, sometimes in chain gangs, were forced to perform road-work, build walls, garden and other jobs which they normally avoided, thus narrowing the range of female employment.<sup>34</sup> While most black women in towns worked as domestics or prostitutes, some were employed as gardeners and nurses' aides. Some part-Aboriginal women worked as laundresses, waitresses, assistant nurses and typists.<sup>35</sup> Because of their 'white blood' they were allowed partial upward social mobility, enabling them to rise in educational and occupational status.

### Domestic Labour

Domestic service was viewed as a fitting, if not ideal vocation for Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal women. White women considered such help essential to the running of a household, especially in the tropics. The occupation was far from glamorous, with its long hours, isolation and low wages. As there were so few white women in the Territory—and these almost all married—the general shortage was there especially pronounced, leading to woeeful descriptions of such Darwin residents as the "poor hard worked housewife" and the "careworn . . . mother."<sup>36</sup> Aboriginal women were the obvious expedient, providing an abundant source of cheap and amenable labour.

it was claimed that employers were frequently unable to "control and protect" them after dusk. Some slept at their employer's home during the night, while those with children or whose employer refused to house them were sent to the cramped and inadequate compound, where their movements were severely restricted.<sup>37</sup> A curfew between sunset and sunrise was enforced for Aborigines, with the aim of 'protecting' the workers from the 'vices' of the city, and more importantly to keep them under the control of their white supervisors. Strict censorship was applied to the picture shows, to remove the possibility of Aborigines seeing scenes of blacks defying whites or appearing braver or more intelligent.<sup>38</sup>

The Government's stated policy by the late 1920's was to "breed out colour altogether." The dominant colonial ideology asserted that the full-bloods were dying out as a natural process, this providing a rationalisation for allocating only minimal expenditure to their needs. On the other hand, the Government feared that the growing numbers of part-Aborigines would 'swamp' the white population and consequently a policy aimed at 'uplifting' the part-Aborigine closer to the level of a white was introduced. Girls were forcibly taken from their mothers at infancy and placed in institutions. As C.E. Cook, the Chief Protector,\* stated at a 1930 Conference on Aborigines:

We are endeavouring to bring these girls up in such a way that they will be good wives to the class of white man they are likely to marry . . . with principles of economy, etc. . . .<sup>39</sup>

Until 1930, the only way a female part-Aborigine could be released from the control and guardianship of the Chief Protector was through marriage to a European. They were discouraged by law from any contact with men of Negro or Asiatic origin, as these unions would have resulted in 'non-European' racial strains.

Government and missionary 'half-caste' homes also tended to act as labour pools for local employers.<sup>40</sup> While boys received training of a "utilitarian nature", girls were taught domestic work from an early age: "sewing and making of clothes for themselves and shirts and trousers for the men." When they reached their early teens, girls were released into "approved homes" under strict conditions regarding "preservation of morality and general training as citizens."<sup>41</sup>

\* In 1911, the Aborigines Department was established under a Chief Protector (male), who was under the Police Department. He was represented by a Protector in each Protector's district, and was to be legal guardian of every Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal child. In 1927, the duties of the Chief Protector was transferred from the Commissioner of Police to the Government Health Officer in North Australia, though in Central Australia they remained within the Police Department. Protectors were usually police; their duties were only part-time, secondary to their 'full-time' occupations. There were no female Protectors at this stage, though in the 1940's women were lobbying for this privilege.

As Beverley Kingston reasons in her article on domestic service in Australia, its existence not merely permitted "a leisured and stylish existence" for the middle classes:

It kept the women of the lower classes both accessible and in their place, and it ensured that [white] middle class thinking and attitudes to such things as cleanliness, diet, the raising of children . . . were instilled.<sup>42</sup>

This occupation was intended to teach black women the observance of white cultural norms and middle class etiquette—at least while in the employer's home. Such productive subservience was considered an ideal means of 'uplifting' the part-Aboriginal woman. The domestic training they received from the Matron of the Half-caste Home was a means of making them useful—"an asset to the State"—rather than a liability.<sup>43</sup>

Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal domestics were in great demand, which actually exceeded supply in the case of part-Aborigines, though employers complained of the usual servant problems. In 1914, Mrs. Gilruth, wife of the Northern Territory Administrator, wrote in a newspaper article:

The lubra can be made a good domestic and is perfectly willing to learn, and tractable, but black women are not self-reliant. They could not be left in charge of the house or of children, but if anyone is over them they are alright.<sup>44</sup>

In a similar vein, Ernestine Hill wrote of black domestics:

One survey of the washing up, a little dalliance with the broom and bucket, and unless watched with lynx eyes, mysteriously they disappear to the garden.<sup>45</sup>

In 1928, Sergeant Scott, Chief Protector in Alice Springs, had claimed that because they "required constant supervision, were neglectful, thoughtless and, at times, stubborn," half-caste domestics only deserved the fixed Aboriginal wage of five shillings per week.<sup>46</sup> Two years later Cook noted that there were instances of employers paying as much as thirty shillings a week to capable Aboriginal domestics.<sup>47</sup> He did not increase the stipulated rate, however, payment being left to the employer's discretion.

Prevalent stereotypes depicted Aborigines as a 'child-race' with low intellectual and mechanical ability—indifferent to their work and unreliable unless under constant and 'firm' white supervision. Mrs. Gilruth believed that her servants were "like children in many ways, always wanting to play . . . you must give your servants in Darwin playtime if you want to keep them."<sup>48</sup> And "Like children," wrote a correspondent to the *Northern Territory Times* in 1919: "these simple black people . . . work when they feel inclined, and they loaf when they think they have worked enough."<sup>49</sup> Parallel patterns of stereotyping were applied to the Melanesian and Asian indentured labourers who were imported to work on colonial Queensland's sugar plantations, pastoral properties and

workers, confined to low-status, menial occupations disliked by whites. Both 'landless' groups were forced into a position of dependency on their white masters. This, combined with the power structure of the dominant society, enabled their employers to wield an extraordinary degree of control over them.<sup>50</sup> These coloured workers thus had to accept remuneration at a level of mere subsistence.

Whereas the stereotypes suggested that Aborigines were lethargic, unreliable, and therefore poor quality workers, contemporary records reveal that they performed tasks requiring prolonged physical exertion, and sometimes a high level of skill—often with little or no white supervision. A memorandum by Atlee Hunt in 1915 argued that under existing conditions, the services of these Aboriginal domestics were "practically indispensable . . . the presence of these docile, cheap, cheerful, loyal people alone makes life tolerable . . . their services are of the highest value."<sup>51</sup> In 1930, Mrs. Turner, wife of Tom Turner, her native servants as "kindly and humorous", and asserted that if given a share of the produce, they even became keen gardeners.<sup>52</sup> Evidence thus implies that the employer's behaviour towards her or his Aboriginal servants was an important determinant of work output. Adapting themselves to the circumstances of their new means of subsistence, Aborigines often performed just sufficient work to keep them supplied with a few basics.<sup>53</sup> If given incentives, there may have been more room for enthusiasm.

In an effort to prevent them from reverting to a traditional lifestyle, some part-Aborigines from Darwin and Alice Springs were sent to work as domestics in Melbourne and Adelaide. In 1927, Eileen Cooper, a part-Aboriginal girl working for an Adelaide family, was sufficiently upset about her predicament to write to Sergeant Stott in Alice Springs. She seems to have internalized the middle class value system inculcated from youth, insisting that she was "careful with money" and liked to "mix up with other nice girls from the Bible class." Unlike most Aboriginal women, her education had enabled her to express herself in writing; she thus explained: "I want to get on in this world by looking after my own affairs. I'm not dissatisfied or unhappy, but I feel I ought to have freedom." Despite her apparent 'assimilation', she hinted at the longing she felt for her home area.<sup>54</sup>

Another contracted domestic, Topsy Fitz, aged 24 years, wrote to demand her bank book, into which a percentage of her wages had been held in trust by the Chief Protector. She complained:

I am fed up with working for almost nothing. . . . I don't think that it is a fair thing to keep us girls working hard like this for a paltry 3/- per week when we are old enough to earn more; we have to work such long hours.

Fitz explained that she had not had a single holiday in her eight years' employment, protesting: "It has been nothing but work from one week to another." Aware of the debt she was supposed to owe to her white 'benefactors', she wrote:

I . . . am very grateful to you for sending me down here and giving me the chance to be decent and learn to be a useful woman instead of living up there to be useless and good for nothing and ignorant.

But she reasoned that for the work she performed: "I have to wash, iron, clean the place and cook and do everything that is done in this place", her services were worth far more than she was paid,<sup>55</sup> which was less than a quarter of what was paid to white domestics.

### Sexual Role

Another prevalent means of subsistence available to Aboriginal women was providing what was known as 'black velvet' on a casual basis as a prostitute, or on a more permanent basis in concubinage, though domestic work usually went hand in hand with sexual services, and *vice versa*. 'Wife-lending' under certain circumstances was an accepted practice in Aboriginal society, providing that the husband's permission and some payment was received. But in the colonial context the black man had virtually lost his bargaining powers and the coloniser assumed almost total control, so the interaction between white man and black woman was one marked by compulsion. The young Aboriginal woman often lived almost simultaneously with her Aboriginal husband and a white man who in practice had more rights over her than her husband because of the great discrepancy in status between them.<sup>56</sup> She was thus placed in the unenviable position of having simultaneously to meet the demands of two men, and often two families.

W.B. Spencer, the Chief Protector in 1911, wanted to bring those who were "using or detaining a female for immoral purposes without the person being legally in . . . employment" under some form of control. The Aboriginal Ordinance which he formulated to include this under the heading of 'employment' was not given official sanction, since it raised vehement objections from those who felt that to condone any miscegenation was a threat to the White Australia policy.<sup>57</sup> Cohabitation of black women and white men was consequently prohibited.\* In spite of legislation against it, the practice of using black women for sexual purposes was firmly entrenched, and the part-Aboriginal population was consequently increasing. Explaining his concern for the preservation of racial purity, and the morality of single white men, the Administrator, J.A. Gilruth, claimed in 1915:

Ignore it or not, there is no denying that the tropics—especially during the first period of sojourn—exercises a stimulating effect on the sexual appetite of whites.

He expressed no anxiety for the coloured women<sup>58</sup> who were often forced against their will to cater for these demands, and whose 'availability' was the more likely reason for increased sexual activity. Obligation-free except for the payment of some food or a few sticks



TWO 3 YEAR OLDS

ALEXANDRA STATION



RUBY - THE PEARL

\* It was not considered within the province of . . .



of tobacco, Aboriginal women were considered the ideal in exploitable human flesh. In order to ease the 'half-caste problem' the Government tried to "educate public opinion" so that a "combo" (a man who lived with a native woman) would be "despised by his fellows."<sup>59</sup> When in 1918 somewhat stricter laws were introduced, they provoked numerous objections. One correspondent to the *Northern Territory Times* wrote in favour of the legislation, though he noted that many difficulties were involved in its enforcement. He asserted:

I have known of young lubras forced to cohabit with white men against their wills, and their husbands flogged or knocked down for protesting. I have known of white brutes, rotten with venereal, outraging children of nine or ten years of age. And these brutes have knocked senseless the mothers or sisters who strove to prevent the children being outraged.

The white man could not be trusted to act responsibly, he pleaded: "let us shield them from hard drinkers and livers who believe black races were created merely to satisfy the lusts of the whites."<sup>60</sup>

The law against cohabitation with black women was extremely difficult to enforce, especially since many police officers 'kept' black concubines with part-Aboriginal children. Aboriginal Protectors were in a unique position to exploit these women sexually. This often led to disturbances of the peace, so that by 1932 single men were prevented from qualifying for this job.<sup>61</sup> Earlier, in 1919, a Constable and Protector on the Roper River had what was termed a 'harem' and was the father of four part-Aboriginal children by different mothers. The white and patriarchal bias of the legal system was underlined by the fact that he was later dismissed of several charges, including "serious ill-usage of certain native women" because the Judge claimed that all fifteen Aboriginal witnesses were liars.<sup>62</sup> In the rare case when the white offender was convicted, only a relative-by small fine was imposed.

Bill Harney, well-known Northern Territory authority on Aborigines, affirmed that this law was disregarded, noting sardonically that single white men could be divided into two categories: those who had lived with black women and would admit it, and those who wouldn't admit it.<sup>63</sup> The 'Native Affairs Taboos' as he labelled them, were ignored, for "in those days that thing was as much accepted as the feudal Baron's rights over his serf's daughter in days gone by."<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the young women of a tribe were commonly used as 'bait' to attract and hold the single white men to their jobs. An employee of the Victoria River depot complained that while some white men had their black women taken from them, it was unfair as the "big station managers and satellites are still at liberty to run a [gin-house] if it suits them."<sup>65</sup> One manager had induced a white man to enter his employ by offering him the pick of the best "black velvet", informing him and other employees that there were

were viewed as a side benefit of working on remote cattle stations. In one instance, a white pumper on an isolated outcamp had sent a message to the manager demanding either a new pumper or a young 'gin', he was promptly sent two girls.<sup>66</sup> In 1938, Mr. S.J. Russell of Tennant Creek, after a tour of several Northern stations, asserted:

The conditions of the gins on some stations is deplorable. On many stations there are what are called 'studs' of young gins, who are well guarded. It is very difficult to get much evidence of the way they are treated, but you can imagine how they get on.<sup>67</sup>

A ballad sung as drovers drove round the herd ran as follows:

Home, home on the range,  
Where the gins as young heifers will play,  
And a 'Ringer's' supplied with a 'Girl' for a bride,  
And wages at ten bob a day.<sup>68</sup>

More than one ballad was composed about the popular sport of the 'gin-burglars', or working class men who went out to steal some of the 'flock' away from the managers or 'gin-shepherds', as they were known. The tone of this ballad typified the inter-class rivalry:

He will lock up his 'Studs' and we'll steal them away  
To our paper-bark fires till the breaking of day.<sup>69</sup>

While conducting a survey on the health of Aborigines throughout the Territory in 1928, Dr. W.D. Walker was told that on one out-back station certain women 'belonged' to the manager and the staff, but he could have any other black women he wanted for the night. They were surprised when he declined with thanks.<sup>70</sup> The leader of the British Museum Expedition to Australia told of his meeting with a young girl who had worked for a time on the nearest cattle station, and who on sighting the white men had tried to hastily cover her body with rags of calico: "She craved for a dress and tobacco . . . and in understandable English voluntarily offered her all in exchange for these things, especially tobacco."<sup>71</sup> Women were paid in many areas with opium ash or methylated spirits, consequently becoming hopeless addicts. One policeman neglected to act when he witnessed women using opium because he would only deprive her employer . . . of her assistance and she would get a month . . . while at Parap, near Darwin, the "Police boys' lubras" were also dependent on the drug.<sup>72</sup>

In his 1928 report, Bleakley pointed out that motor car loads of men from bush townships and construction camps bent on 'ginsprees' raided the station camps for women.<sup>73</sup> A stanza from a ballad sung to an Irish drinking tune and entitled "The Combo's Anthem" clarifies the real nature of these practices:

So hail Borrooloola, the Ord, V.R.D.,  
The 'Nash' and the 'Hill' for a cracker old spree.  
We are riding with cheques and we sing as we come  
For a gut-full of wooing, a gut-full of rum.<sup>74</sup>

These black women—allegorically referred to as "spinifex" or "pandanus fairies" in the ballads—were regarded as vessels to be used and

which resulted from such unions, and the Government allotted minimal expenditure to the treatment of the widespread venereal disease among Aboriginal women.<sup>75</sup> In keeping with the usual pattern of white/black relations, rape and casual sexual relationships were the most common and accepted intercourse between white men and black women. The white man who treated a black woman as a permanent partner, or who in the rare case married her, was usually ostracised by his fellow whites. White women reacted with particular disgust to these unions, if characters in Herbert's *Capricornia* are typical.<sup>76</sup>

### Conditions and Treatment

In return for services rendered, Aboriginal workers received a few basic commodities or a small payment which kept them at a level of bare subsistence. There were no stipulated minimum standards or quantities of rations for Aborigines, and as an effective system of inspection to determine their treatment was noticeably lacking, conditions varied according to the benevolence or callousness of their employers, and the attitude of the company in control. Usually black workers received flour, tea, sugar and cheap "Nicky-Nicky" tobacco. On the stations salt beef or portions of bullock were also distributed. At a 1930 Conference of Wages for Aborigines, Mr. Rowe, representing the unions, asserted that

The custom is to give the black in the stock camps a cup of tea out of a billy and the cook saws off a lump of bread, or at least damper, and beef. That uneatable damper for the white man is given to the black. That is their sole diet.<sup>77</sup>

Food was reportedly of the poorest quality, and vegetables were rarely supplied, as they were considered "far above their natural requirements." Employees were often unable to gather native foods as a supplement to their monotonous diet, since the area in the vicinity of the camp was quickly exhausted.\* When bullocks were killed the blacks often only managed to obtain the offal.\*\* After the whites and Chinese, the working males were given the next selection of the slaughtered animal, as they were considered the most important station workers, while the women and camp dependents such as old people and the disabled would receive the remainder. The old men refused to eat offal, so passed it on to the women. The classification of Aboriginal women as 'dependents', even if they were in regular employment, enabled employers to justify the inferior rations they received, by arguing that their husbands should provide for them.<sup>78</sup>

Domestics and other women who worked around the house received a somewhat more varied diet, being allowed to eat scraps of

\* Most Aboriginal workers took part in tribal excursions during the slack season. This was one opportunity for them to have a change of diet. Women in more arid areas were then sometimes able to gather traditional foods.  
\*\* This may have been convenient for some Aboriginal groups, since offal was regarded as a delicacy. Nevertheless, it is deficient in essential nutrients.

broken pastry and other leftovers from the table of their employer. Their unbalanced diet, with its emphasis on cheap carbohydrates, caused many women to become obese, some reaching eighteen stone—"too fat to breed"—the formulation of one exponent of contemporary sexist and racist ideology.<sup>79</sup> The diet was deficient in all essential nutrients, especially Vitamins A and C, and calcium.<sup>80</sup> Accommodation was rarely supplied, although Aborigines occasionally attempted to make shelters for the rainy season out of waste materials such as old tents, bags or scraps of iron. Yet, as Bleakley explained, "for lack of materials they were mere kennels and most insanitary."<sup>81</sup> In contrast to the traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle, station Aborigines had to live in a fixed abode. Few station managers attempted to provide toilet or tank-water facilities, let alone convey to black residents ideas about hygiene which might have mitigated the difficulties of their living situation. Consequently, areas near the camp and natural water supplies became polluted with excrement. These factors, combined with scant medical attention, contributed to the high rates of disease and infant mortality.

In addition to rations, female employees were entitled to at least three dresses a year, and a blanket 'hand-out'. As a general rule, they received fewer goods than the men. One woman, Kool-Ka, renamed "Mary-Jane", of Victoria River Downs received dresses, some cotton, a towel, and eye-lotion for working as a gardener from 1934 to 1935. Black stockmen received such items as riding boots, spurs, shirts and trousers, knives and hats. Women received 'female' goods such as sewing requirements,<sup>82</sup> from which they were expected to make their own clothing.

Employers hoped that the master-servant relationship would function harmoniously, with only a little 'coaxing' perhaps necessary. As Mrs Gilruth advised in 1914:

You should never punish natives. They can only be taught by kindness . . . and gentleness . . . and coaxed and coaxed to do what you want them to do.<sup>83</sup>

But most employers, including the then current editor of the *Northern Territory Times*, ridiculed such "softness," claiming that "too much kindness" only spoilt the blacks, making them lazy. The argument that Aborigines only understood physical force, misconstruing kindness as fear, was popularly invoked to justify forceful methods such as floggings.<sup>84</sup> The assertion that "their habits and ways are that of children and [they] require treating as such" was used to support the paternalistic controls applied to domestics. While "sympathetic kindness" was recommended to obtain their confidence, frightening tactics, such as threatening the untractable servant with seizure by police and detention in a Reformatory were unhesitatingly implemented.<sup>85</sup> It was popularly claimed that a good way to punish Aborigines was through their stomachs,<sup>86</sup> and indeed the withdrawal of rations or banishing them to the depleted bush, where they were often unable to obtain food, was a principal method used in order to coerce

control, for, as Bleakley realised, "with the loss of their subsistence, the tribe are so dependent on the station they can only yield to circumstances."<sup>87</sup>

Men who employed Aboriginal women on a more permanent basis might have been expected to treat them with a greater degree of care. A conflation of sexist and racist ideology led to extreme dehumanization of the black woman in the mind of the white man. R. Stott lamented that the part-Aboriginal girl was "tempted with every inducement by white men, to their going to live with them." He continued:

Half-caste girls who have chosen to live with the white man for immoral purposes, in the course of a few years are often discarded by their seducer, who either leaves the district or gets married.

The girl, or woman, was consequently compelled to return to the Aborigines' camp, usually with her children to support.<sup>88</sup> Some men insisted that they treated 'their' black women well—and perhaps some did, though definitions of what constituted 'good' treatment varied. A correspondent to the *Northern Standard* in 1922 argued, however, that the 10/- licence necessary to employ Aborigines

... seems to empower the stations to flog, enslave or ravish any number of Aborigines or perform fiendish acts only the mind of the sexual maniac could suggest.<sup>89</sup>

Black women who dared to abscond from their masters frequently met with rough treatment, which received tacit legal approval. In 1920, a reader of the *Standard* alleged that police did not make the slightest effort to investigate when employers had flogged absconding Aborigines, but instead disclaimed all knowledge.<sup>90</sup> On one northern station in 1922 the Chinese cook had appropriated the wife of an Aboriginal youth, and would not allow him to speak to her, so the Aboriginal couple absconded. A passing traveller described their capture, and later prolonged chaining and flogging, and claimed that this was only one instance out of many.<sup>91</sup> In the mid 1930's reports of women being beaten repeatedly, kicked, forced to eat raw salt and drink salt water, being tied or chained up by their employers, were published in southern and foreign newspapers, bringing the exploitation of these women into wider public view. The strong reactions to these and other cases of "spectacular injustice" caused a swing to more "protective policies" which actually meant greater restriction and control of Aborigines,<sup>92</sup> partly through increase in the size and the jurisdiction of the reserves.

Given the dominant power structure, it took an employer who really overstepped the boundaries of the black employee's endurance for the servant to be incited to resist. Aboriginal men tended to be more aggressive than the women, who were more restricted and thus less able to offer overt resistance.\* For these women there were

\* It is difficult to find examples of more subtle means of resistance from written

additional pressures: the necessity of adaptation to and assimilation into the imposed capitalist economy by acquiring new job skills and learning to conform to different cultural norms, and simultaneously coping with the pressures of redefining their role within the changing black community.

The role of Aborigines in the work force, and the relative importance of black women as workers were important determining factors in the nature of white/black relations on the frontier. Oppressed by an interaction of racism and the economic imperatives of colonialism, Aborigines were harshly exploited for their labour. The patriarchal nature of contemporary society meant that Aboriginal women were subject to further specific oppression by both Aboriginal and white men. They have been typecast as capable only of roles and deserving only of treatment deemed unworthy or undesirable for that more highly-valued, rarer 'commodity'—the white woman. When Aboriginal women begin to narrate their own history, we must listen intently. For then a richer understanding of their reactions and also the mechanisms they evolved to cope with their subordination, will emerge.

Ann McGrath

#### Acknowledgements:

I am indebted to John Hirst, La Trobe University, and Kay Saunders, University of Queensland, for their helpful criticism and many suggestions.

#### FOOTNOTES:

1. For a detailed analysis of the patterns of colonial conquest, and their particular application in Queensland, see Parts 1 & 2 of R. Evans, K. Saunders and K. Cronin, *Exclusion, Exploitation and Extermination*, Sydney ANZ, 1975. Evans employs John Rex's race relations model. As he explains, 'colonial' enterprise involves first the capture of the land and other physical resources, then the indigenes who have been dispossessed of their land are compelled to work for the new settlers. Evans produces convincing evidence that compulsion after a form of "military conquest" resulted in a labour situation which was highly unfree. (pp. 109-10).

2. Black women discuss aspects of their past and present experience in Kevin Gilbert, *Living Black*, Melbourne, 1977. Several anthropologists, including Dr. Francesca Merlan, and Mr. and Mrs. P. Ried are currently compiling life histories of Aborigines, under the auspices of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. Bobbi Sykes has written a general summary entitled "Black Women in Australia: A History" in Jan Mercer, *The Other Half*, Penguin, 1975 pp. 313-21.

3. K.S. Pritchard, *Coomardoo*, A & R, 1961. (For a discussion of this novel and the author's other works, see Jane Sunderland, "Lines Driven Deep": Vol. IV, No. 1, especially pp. 16-17. ) Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia*, A & R, 1938.

4. R.L. Evans has written a perceptive analysis of the exploitation of black women in colonial Queensland, see "Harlots and Helots": The Exploitation of the Aboriginal Remnant," in Evans, Saunders and Cronin, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 102-12. Diane Barwick's article, "And the Lubras are Ladies Now," in Fey Gale, ed., *Women's Role in Aboriginal Society*, A.I.A.S., Canberra, 1974, pp. 51-63, discusses Aboriginal women in Victoria, 1860-1886. Some mention is made of the work they performed, pp. 54-60. Gale's book is recommended for all who are interested in the subject of Aboriginal women. Jan Labalester has written an article, "Black Women in Colonial Australia," *Refactory Girl*, 13/14, pp. 43-53, and is conducting further research in this area.
5. This paper deals with Aboriginal women who worked for the government and private industry. I have not discussed their role as workers on mission settlements, which demands a separate study.
6. In 1931, there were about five white women to every nine white men. By 1938, the female population had increased, but the ratio of women to men was lower—less than one woman to every two men.

Year	Population of the Northern Territory		Masculinity %
	Males	Females	
1911	2734	576	
1921	2718	1011	
1931	2803	1655	169 m to every 100 f
1938	3825	1820	210 m to every 100 f

The disproportionate number of males was far higher than any other State or Territory of Australia. (*Commonwealth Year Book*, 1912, 1922, 1932, 1939).

Figures for the Aboriginal population are only rough estimates. The population of Aborigines in the Northern Territory were as follows: 1788, 35,000; 1901, 23,363; 1911, 20,000; 1921, 17,973; 1947, 15,147; 1954, 17,157; 1961, 19,704; 1966, 21,119. It appears that the decline of the full-blood population was arrested by the early 1950's, and evidence suggests that the population is now increasing. (C.D. Rowley, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*, Penguin, 1970, p. 385.)

7. Report of J.W. Bleakley, "The Aborigines and Half-castes of Central Australia and North Australia", 1928. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*, No. 21, 1929, p. 7. Bleakley became the Chief Protector in 1913, remaining in charge of the Department until 1940. He introduced a wage for Aborigines in Queensland, at about two-thirds the rate of the white award, in 1919. Compulsory banking and saving through the Chief Protector curbed the employees' freedom to spend the wage. He was noted, however, for his innovative approach to Aboriginal administration.

8. Social Darwinists believed that Darwin's evolutionary theory could be extended to encompass human development.

9. See Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
10. Memorandum by the Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Melbourne, Government Printer, 1916, in *Mahon Papers*, MS, National Library, Item 937/1311, p. 48.

11. In fact, Vestleys and other companies had a definite policy to employ only single men.

12. For white women's reminiscences, see A. Gunn, *We of the Never Never*, Hutchinson, 1907. Helen Skardon, "The House Gals" in *Walkabout*, 1 March, 1937, p. 49; H. Drake-Brockman, "Coloured Characters" in *Walkabout*, 1 June, 1945, pp. 13-16. Elsie Masson, *An Unnamed Territory*, Macmillan, 1915.
13. R.M. and C.H. Berndt: "Aboriginal Labour in a Pastoral Area", privately distributed manuscript, cited in Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 334.
14. For an example of this pattern, see Pritchard, *op. cit.*
15. Bovril Australian Estates, (B.A.E.), Australian National University Archives (A.N.U.A.), Register of Aboriginal Employment, 1932-9, 87/5/1.
16. C.H. Berndt, "Digging Sticks and Spears, or 'The Two Sex Model'" in Gale,

17. H.M. Barker, *Droving Days*, Rigby, 1972, *passim*.
18. Return of Half-caste and Quadroons in the N.T., 1925-6, Australian Archives (A.A.) CRS A1, item no. 26/5350.
19. *Northern Standard*, 11/8/36.
20. B.A.E., A.N.U.A., Register.
21. *Northern Standard*, 15 March 1935.
22. B.A.E., A.N.U.A. Register and Manager's Diary, entry 6/6/20, item no. 87/6/1.
23. B.A.E. A.N.U.A. Register.
24. R.M. and C.H. Berndt, *The World of the First Australians*, Ure Smith, 1977, (2nd edition).
25. B.A.E. A.N.U.A. Diaries item nos. 87/6/1, 87/6/2 and 87/6/4 elucidate this pattern on a day to day basis.
26. F. Stevens, *Aborigines in the Northern Territory Cattle Industry*, A.N.U. Press, 1974, p. 113; *Northern Standard*, 20 August 1937, in A.A., CRS A1, Item no. 36/9978.

27. For example, a stockman was speared to death at Auvergne Station, 1932. Wave Hill employees were dissatisfied with their rations, and a group confronted the manager wielding sticks, and laughed in his face when he threatened them with a gun in 1935. At Willetto, an overseer who offended the men was speared.

28. *Alroy Downs Records*, A.N.U.A., J. Story to J.C. Schmidt, 23 March 1914, 1914, in Deposit 4, Series 1, Correspondence.

29. B.A.E., A.N.U.A. Register.

30. C.H. Berndt, *op. cit.*, p. 71. See also Barwick, *op. cit.*, who explains how Victorian women were 'approved' by superiors, and considered generally more trustworthy than the men, pp. 54-6.

31. R.M. and C.H. Berndt, *op. cit.*, p. 119; P.M. Kaberry, *Aboriginal Woman—Sacred and Profane*, Routledge, London, 1939, p. 186.

32. *Northern Standard*, 15 March 1935.

33. *Ibid.*, 20 August 1937, and W.L. Abbott, Protector, to Chief Protector of Aborigines, 1 February 1938, in A.A., CRS, A1, item no. 36/9978.

34. More complete details are in files on "Fannie Bay Gool Wall—Use of Prison Labour", A.A. CRS A1, item no. 11/1127 and "Black Prison Labour—Alice Springs", A.A. CRS A1, item no. 36/5356. Also Report of Administrator, N.T. 1923, in

35. Return of Half-castes and Quadroons in the N.T., 1925/26. A.A. CRS A1, item no. NT 26/5350.

36. *Northern Territory Times*, 27 November 1913. Memorandum of 1915 in *Mahon Papers*, *op. cit.*

37. Report by J.W. Bleakley, *op. cit.*, p. 12. Cook to Administrator, N.T., 26 November 1936, in A.A. CRS A1, item no. 49/376; "Missions to Aborigines in Qld, W.A., and N.T.", in A.A. CRS, A3, item 23/4594.

38. Restriction on attendance at picture shows was also an attempt to keep the half-caste 'problem' down, since young girls were escorted home by white men who would cohabit with them. Compound numbers were growing as a result. Report of Administrator, 1923, in A.A. CRS, A3, item no. NT 24/4098.

39. Minutes of Conference on Wages of Aborigines and Half-castes, N.T., 1929, in A.A. CRS, A1, item no. 38/329, p. 86.

40. For an example of how reserves were intended as labour pools in Queensland, see R.L. Evans, "Queensland's First Aboriginal Reserve, Part 2: The Failure of Reform", in *Queensland Heritage*, Vol. 2, No. 5, especially pp. 5-6.

41. "Commonwealth Government Policy in Respect to the N.T.", Pamphlet, National Library, p. 12.

42. Beverley Kingston, "Poor Mary Ann: Domestic Service as a Career for Girls in Australia during the Nineteenth Century", *Refactory Girl*, Summer 1974-5, p. 7.

43. Edwin Ashby to Hon. Hugh Mahon, Minister for External Affairs, 14 March 1916, in A.A. CRS, A1, item no. NT 17/2277.

44. *Northern Territory Times*, 30 July 1914.

45. Ernestine Hill, *The Cheant*

46. R. Scott to Home and Territories Department, 29 October 1926, in A.A. CRS, A1, item no. 36/7846.
47. Minutes of Conference, 1930, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
48. *Northern Territory Times*, 30 July 1914.
49. *ibid.*, 24 May 1919.
50. For a detailed analysis of Asiatic labourers in colonial Queensland, see Ann McGrath, "Exile into Bondage: An Analysis of Asiatic Indenture in Colonial Queensland", Unpublished B.A. Hons. thesis, University of Queensland, 1976.
51. Memorandum of 1915, in *Hugh Mahon Papers, op. cit.*
52. *Adelaide Chronicle*, 27 February 1930.
53. A.P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, A & R, 1938. Revised edition, 1974, p. 365.
54. Eileen Cooper to Stott, 18 February 1927, in A.A. CRS A1, item no. 36/7846.
55. Topsy Fitz to Stott, 22 February 1927, in A.A. CRS, A1, item no. 36/7846.
56. R.M. and C.H. Berndt, *The World of the First Australians, op. cit.* p. 511. In many cases, Aborigines expected whites who cohabited with their women to fulfil reciprocal kinship obligations within the black community, though settlers usually disregarded these obligations.
57. S.J. Mitchell to Office of Administrator, 7 September 1911, and V. Collins to Mr. Quinlan, 9 June 1911, in A.A. CRS, A1, item no. 12/2937. Collins believed the greatest fault of Spencer's ideas was that they "practically condone miscegenation", and were thus "vicious in the extreme [striking] at the root of the great 'White Australia' policy."
58. J.A. Gilruth, 22 December 1915, Comment on Memorandum, 1915, *op. cit.* p. 60.
59. Memorandum, 1915, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
60. 'Karnia' to *Northern Territory Times*, 30 November 1918.
61. Memorandum by J.A. Carrodus in A.A. CRS, A431, item no. 49/1047.
62. *Adelaide Observer*, 22 March 1919. Also in *Aborigines Protector*, October 1936, p. 8, and June, 1937, p. 2.
63. B. Harney, *Life Among the Aborigines*. London, Hutchinson, 1957, p. 14.
64. *ibid.*, p. 19.
65. *Northern Territory Times*, 17 April 1913.
66. Harney, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
67. *Northern Standard*, 11 August 1936, in A.A. CRS, A1, item no. 36/9978.
68. Harney, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
69. *ibid.*, p. 73.
70. W.D. Walker to Minister, Home and Territories, 28 August 1928, in A.A. CRS, A1, item no. 28/10743.
71. *Adelaide Chronicle*, 21 February 1925.
72. P. Lynch to P.E. Deane, 11 March 1930, in A.A. CRS, A1, item no. 31/2923, and P. Lynch to Minister of State for Home Affairs, 27 July 1929 in same.
73. Report of J.W. Bleakley, *op. cit.* p. 9.
74. Ballad cited by Harney, *op. cit.*, p. 173. "V.R.D." is short for Victorian River Downs Station, "Nash" for Lake Nash, and "the Hill" for Wave Hill.
75. *Labour Daily*, 21 December 1935, and draft letter by J. Carrodus to Minister of Home Affairs, before 6/12/1935 in A.A. CRS, A1, item no. 35/11742.
76. *ibid.*, p. 62; C.H. Berndt, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
77. Minutes of Conference, 1930, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
78. This was the case of Victoria River Downs Station, as displayed by its Register of Aboriginal Employees. On the husband's file, women are classified as dependents, even when they are working as domestics or with the goats. Children are listed as the woman's dependents, not the husband's.
79. H.M. Barker, *Cameles and the Outback*, Adelaide, Rigby, reprinted 1976, p. 189.
80. Northern Territory Investigation Committee, 1945, information sheet 15,

83. *Northern Territory Times*, 30 July 1914.
84. W.D. Walker to Minister, Home and Territories, 28 August 1928, A.A. CRS, A1, item no. 28/10743.
85. D.E. Kelsey to Stott, 14 October 1924, in A.A. CRS A1, item no. 36/7846.
86. "Mallabob" Darwin, to *Northern Standard*, undated, in newscuttings book, *Tom Turner Papers*, MS Mitchell Library.
87. Report of Bleakley, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
88. Stott to Atlee Hunt, undated, in A.A. CRS, A3, item no. NT 17/277. In the *Northern Territory Times*, 8 April 1915, J.T. Beckett wrote: "Cases of grossest cruelty to half-caste women at the hands of men have come under this notice [of Dept. of Aborigines] cases in which nothing could be done for the helpless victims because they are practically outside the law."
89. *Northern Standard*, 25 April 1922.
90. *ibid.*, October 1920, in newscuttings book, *Tom Turner Papers, op. cit.*, p. 197.
91. *ibid.*, 25 April 1922.
92. *Sunday Express*, 3 June 1934, and J. Bleakley to Under Sec., 8 December 1934 in A.A. CRS, A1, item no. 34/8852; also see Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 304 and Chapters 16 and 17 generally. □

Aboriginal women, Barkly Tablelands, N.T. Note the caption's derisive sexism.



A NORTHERN TERRITORY BEVY OF DEBILITY