

### *Wartime Labour Shortage*

The labour shortage which occurred during the war served to speed the feminization process. Many men were unavailable for work precisely when the shift to Corporate Capitalism created increased demands for clerical staff. Women provided a readily available source of relatively well-educated workers.

### *Patriarchal Attitudes*

Having discussed the economic forces which prevailed, Lowe goes on to examine the social climate which also influenced the movement of women in a hitherto male-dominated profession. The war effort made it respectable for women to work outside the home and clerical employment evolved in such a way that it became defined as suitable for women. As a consequence of mechanization and scientific management, clerks were no longer given the opportunity to develop or exhibit the skills necessary for movement into management. Thus, it was acceptable for women to perform these dead-end jobs while men were selected for positions which offered a training ground for more lofty endeavours. Resistance to female office workers was minimal because this new type of clerical work did not threaten "men's jobs." The words of William Henry Leffingwell, North America's leading exponent of scientific office management, precisely depict the new definition of clerical work as "women's work" which arose during the early 1900s.

A woman is to be preferred for the secretarial position, for she is not averse to doing minor tasks, work involving the handling of petty details, which would irk and irritate ambitious young men, who usually feel that the work they are doing is of no importance if it can be performed by some person with a lower salary. (p. 176)

Social definitions were brought in line with labour demands and occupational gender segregation became entrenched.

Although it is possible to identify four primary factors which interacted to bring about pronounced changes in the nature and structure of clerical work in the 1900s, there were many irregularities in the effects across industries, firms and occupational groups. Some firms were quick to adopt new female workers whereas others clung to old patriarchal attitudes. The banking industry in particular resisted the entry of female office workers and went so far as to request that male clerks be exempt from conscription on the basis of their special qualifications and vital role in the economy (p. 68). Even within the clerical field, sharp

contrasts could be drawn between female stenography and other more demanding clerical positions which continued to be filled by men.

Lowe's critique of the Neo-marxist position illustrates that the decline in the relative wage of clerks was as much due to the lowering of status initiated by the influx of female workers, as it was to more traditionally understood proletarianization. Generalizations based on aggregate salary data miss the essential contribution of the feminization process and the influences of particular firm and industry characteristics.

Through his dedication to detail, Lowe has provided an insightful reappraisal of the many conditions which coincided to change the very essence of clerical work. Even though other authors have discussed the general downward mobility of office workers, a thorough examination of relevant historical events was needed to uncover the underlying complexities of this process of change.

Margaret Dechman  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

### **Each in Her Own Way: Five Women Leaders of the Developing World.** Marion Fennelly Levy, *Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988, Pp. 181.*

The purpose, style and content of *Each in Her Own Way: Five Women Leaders of the Developing World* are a tribute to feminist observation and action. The inspiration for the book arose out of Marion Fennelly Levy's appreciation for the work that women do. Conscious that women's contributions to society remain largely invisible in the records of world history, Levy embraced the goal of documenting the work and spirit of five women who, in her evaluation, are extraordinary leaders in the field of the Third World development.

Ranging in length from 27 to 34 pages, each of the five biographies unite Levy's observations, research and analysis with the women's own words. Levy's effective use of quotations from her interviews with the women and from material they have written provides the reader both with a direct link to each of the women's insights and ideas, and with a rare opportunity to contact the depth of their experiences and emotions as captured in the women's analogies, metaphors and song.

In five diverse geographical, political, social, and economic contexts, Levy's work highlights the interplay of

public and private forces on personal growth. Describing each woman's childhood, family, the society in which she grew up, and her education, Levy focuses particular attention on those decisions, factors and events that shaped the development of each woman's career. Hence, the reader finds out how Hasina Khan became actively involved in non-formal education and integrated rural development with women in rural communities of Bangladesh; why Elvina Mutua decided to establish a network of women's groups engaged in small business enterprises in Mombasa, Kenya; how Reyna Calix de Miralda, mother of seven and member of the lowest class of peasants, helped to form the Honduran Federation of Peasant Women (FEHMUC); why Aziza Hussein became an international spokesperson for women struggling to improve family law and family planning in Egypt; and what choices and challenges link Elizabeth O'Kelly's involvement in the initiation of the Corn Mill Societies of the Cameroon and the establishment of Women's Institutes in Sarwak.

In line with a socialist feminist conception of women's oppression, Levy's biographies illustrate how social, political and economic, reproductive, and psychological forms of oppression can combine in ways that together result in an oppression that is even greater than the sum of its parts. Hasina Khan's dreams of expanding Save the Children's women's programmes are silenced through personal attacks by her own family. This indicates the extent to which the uneven division of labour within her family is reinforced by deeply ingrained gender ideology and identity. Unable to accept that Hasina was able to arrange satisfactory care for her two daughters when she was away from home, members of Hasina's family accused her of "saving the children but killing her own" (p. 57).

Since each of the five leaders attempt to change the status quo as it relates to women, the book provides its reader with the opportunity to learn about planned processes aimed at changing gender relations, and to observe in the context of specific circumstances what factors appear to have influenced change. Whether attempting to create a political power base for women, to increase their economic opportunities or legal rights, to eliminate some of the time and burden of their work, or to increase women's control over reproduction, all the leaders seem to have encountered formidable male resistance to their activities. In one village she visited, for example, Hasina Khan was informed by an important male leader "that the last time a delegation of women had come to the village, 'we had floods and a plague of frogs. We don't want to suffer more by the arrival of women and women's development in our village'" (pp. 47-48). In the face of opposi-

tion voiced by male family members, colleagues or community leaders, the women in Levy's book respond with creativity and persistence.

One of only a "few studies of female leaders below the highest level of media prominence" (p. 26), Levy's work stands out as valuable for both the study and practice of women and development. In the variation of leadership styles, goals and objectives that it documents, the book communicates the richness of international feminism while actively stimulating discussion around a series of important and topical development issues. As Sue Ellen M. Charlton clearly points out in her introduction to the book, the biographies

...raise a number of questions about effective leadership, the strengths and weaknesses of women's organizations, and the contradictory effects of state institutions on the efforts of women to participate fully in the search for life-enriching development strategies. (p. 3)

Moreover, by making otherwise invisible efforts visible, Levy's work opens up the opportunity for its readers to learn from the lives of these women. In particular, the women's successes, trials and tribulations are experiences from which other leaders, who are actively engaged in women and development activities, can draw inspiration and solidarity.

While, on the one hand, highlighting the courage and stamina of unique individuals faced with numerous obstacles, the book, on the other hand, leaves its reader with hope and optimism that women's organizations, such as those used and built by the five leaders, can provide women throughout the world with new space in which to analyze their situations, articulate their needs and interests, and act with the power to change gender relations. Levy's book is a well-written, interesting and informative piece of feminist literature.

Valerie du Plessis  
University of Guelph

**Social Change and Women's Reproductive Health Care: A Guide for Physicians and Their Patients.** Nada Logan Stotland, M.D. *New York: Praeger Press, 1988, Pp. 253 hardcover.*

Feminist writing has typically emphasized the oppressive nature of childbearing and childbirth. The ideology of coercive motherhood, the medicalization of pregnancy, the dependency on hospitals and male professionals are a