

better see his character, his humour, his passions, his reactions to the ups and downs of his daily life, and his delight at the curious social circle in which he enveloped himself.

One small complaint I have about the book is the printing. The publisher has used an ink which is not waterproof, and which, as I discovered on a grey and drizzly day, tends to 'bleed' immediately when it meets any liquid.

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Marilyn Waring: The Political Years. By Marilyn Waring. Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 2019. 376pp. NZ price: \$39.99. ISBN: 9781988545936.

MARILYN WARING'S PARLIAMENTARY CAREER was a long time ago and, as she says, the older woman is not the young woman of whom she is writing. Clearly, Waring's eight-and-a-half years were difficult, traumatic and laden with expectation. Confronting her past required 'a good dose of self-forgiveness' (p.iii).

The book is valuable on a number of levels. The literature on the Muldoon years is still relatively thin. Waring's contribution, based on voluminous notes that she kept at the time, is, therefore, important, not least for its detailed accounts of caucus and of divisions within the National Party. There are many surprises and some reputations are enhanced (others should suffer). Moreover, of course, she and Colleen Dewe were one of the fourteenth and fifteenth women elected to Parliament; initially, she was one of four women in the House. I imagine young women reading this memoir will find much of it hard to believe.

It is not only Waring who was different 45 years ago. Parties were, too. One is reminded of the liberal progressive tradition in the National Party, espoused by some of Waring's mentors and allies, like George Gair and Jim McLay. One is also reminded of a strain of authoritarian moral conservatism in the Labour Party, exemplified in the first paragraph of the first chapter: Norman Kirk's hostility to homosexual law reform prompted the 22-year-old Waring to join the National Party. From there, in International Women's Year, a series of apparently unlikely steps took her to nomination for the safe rural seat where she grew up. Her account of selection and campaigning is engagingly modest, while showing how very hard she worked and how supportive and open-minded many constituents were. It is also refreshing in today's world of ever-more calibrated political messaging.

Muldoon had initially supported Waring's selection. Their relationship soon chilled, unsurprisingly, as Waring was no fan of foreign policies that agitated for US warship visits and gave aid and comfort to apartheid; even less could she accept the dominant line on abortion. There are interesting suggestions that Muldoon made Keith Holyoake Governor-General to get his liberal voice out of caucus, and that Muldoon was highly attentive to what he thought was the Catholic vote. Initially, Waring kept her head down and looked after her electorate, picking her fights (on some issues the divisions went across party lines).

In her first year, *Truth* despicably outed her. She received a surge of support from across the country, and felt liberated in that she had nothing left to lose. Her political creed became even more independent, perhaps almost a Burkean view of the role of a parliamentarian as a representative (she almost says as much on p.325). Certainly she objected to Labour's caucus rule, a view which placed her alongside liberals from an earlier time. At the same time, she continued to listen and to engage, from deerstalkers to prisoners' aid. Getting around was also an antidote to the toxic atmosphere in caucus, although Waring gives full and generous space to the support she received from some colleagues.

Waring narrowly won selection for the new Waipā seat in 1978. In that second term she was the only woman in caucus. It would have been extraordinary if she had been appointed to Cabinet after the election, at the age of 26, but she made it clear that collective responsibility was not for her. She thereby saved her reputation, at the cost of continuing stress, with endless battles with an ever-more autocratic Muldoon. Waring came to ally herself with some of those identified with the market-oriented right, such as Derek Quigley. Partly this was, one infers, because she respected them as thoughtful and principled politicians, partly because she perceived that Muldoon's extreme interventionism was becoming more counterproductive. She was increasingly vocal, too, in defending women of all backgrounds (again, some of the issues she took up would seem incredible now).

The 1981 Springbok tour was for Waring a source of shame, and sometimes opprobrium, in being connected to the government. She chose, however, to continue for another term – her last, as she intended. By then Waring was thinking deeply about women's unpaid work, a topic on which she would later be influential. Abortion law reform continued to be a priority, as did sexual violence. Nuclear disarmament was becoming more pressing (it is hard now to explain how dangerous the world was in 1983), and as most know it was this issue that led to the final breach with Muldoon and the party. The last straw was ministers threatening to refuse to present an anti-nuclear bill for the Royal assent if it were passed. This flew in the face of parliamentary democracy.

Waring's account of her departure is brief and clinical, with the book finishing almost abruptly. Some readers might have wished for a retrospective, but my only complaint about this absorbing memoir was that the text could have been justified.

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