



prepared personally or socially for this role. In a sense therefore, the book also tells us much about women who stay at home with young children.

In addition to the case studies, the book contains a number of general and sociological comments which point up similarities, link the accounts to social theory and provide some information about the context within which these families live. Chapters 6 and 8 are very important in this regard. They examine the literature on fathering and discuss the implications of the traditional models of fatherhood for all of us in the modern industrial society.

There is one aspect of the study which detracts from its many virtues. This is the selection of a new name for fathers at home, actually the borrowing of a name from the Swedes. A new name often draws attention to unrecognised elements of a phenomenon and helps us to see it free from some of our biases. However, "hemmaman" is foreign and confusing. How many people would have bought this book if the title was *HEMMAMEN*. Despite this criticism I would strongly recommend this book to anyone interested in parenting in the urban industrial society. I would also recommend its use as an example for students of the techniques necessary for researchers who want to explore and elucidate small but important areas of social life that do not lend themselves to survey research.

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**The Last Resort — A Women's Refuge.**  
Compiled by Vivien Johnson.  
Penguin, Australia, 1981.  
\$7.95, 204 pages.

After some five years of collective meetings at one of Victoria's women's

refuges, **The Last Resort — A Women's Refuge** brought back memories of old ideological tussles, shifts of emphasis, compromises, battles fought with State and federal bureaucracies, and lasting friendships developed at meetings into the early hours.

For those reading this book without past or present involvement with the feminist refuges in Australia, it offers an opportunity to read about a practical application of feminist theory and the evolution of the ideas of the people involved in the setting up of the refuge.

**The Last Resort** is an account of the inception and growth of the Marrickville Women's Refuge. Much of the book is taken up with interviews of residents and ex-residents who talk about their past lives, their experiences at the refuge and their hopes and fears of the future.

Marrickville was one of the first twelve refuges funded in mid 1975 by the Federal Labor Government. It was opened in April 1976 in Sydney. It is now, some six years later, one of approximately one hundred funded refuges around Australia. Awareness of the need for refuges had been developing during the early seventies among various women's groups and health and welfare workers who were conscious of the difficulties faced by women with children and single women wishing to leave violent or unsatisfactory relationships. The view that women stayed in violent relationships because they simply had nowhere to go was becoming widely accepted as opposed to the more cynical idea often put forward in the past that they enjoyed suffering. This need became even more apparent in Sydney in March 1974 when a group of feminists squatted in a couple of inner city suburban houses and offered accommodation to women and children in need of shelter. The houses were inundated with people. Pressure was then put on the Federal and New South Wales Governments to respond to this obvious crisis. After a considerable wait and nine months of arguments with

the State Government and Local Authority Marrickville opened.

When the shelter first started the refuge movement was emphasising, for the purposes of publicity in many cases, the issue of domestic violence. What emerged as Marrickville developed were the more insidious problems of loneliness, unsuitable housing, inadequate pensions, and non-existent or expensive child care.

It was found that many women felt constrained to return to the relationships they had tried to escape. To quote from **The Last Resort** "beyond the refuge does not lie 'a viable new life in the community'. There lies an abyss of loneliness and poverty, with its attendant anxiety and depression."

The book documents honestly, and usually in residents' own words, the difficulties several families face in sharing one house — the arguments over house work and child care, racial bigotry, hierarchies which develop between old and new residents and the tension caused by a three year waiting list of priority public housing.

However, it also makes clear the support women can give each other and the enjoyment some women get out of communal living. One ex-resident illustrated this when she said "The kids still talk about the Refuge. We liked it there. We went back for the Christmas party. Ronny still keeps talking about Betty. He likes Betty. I tell you what, they're good things, aren't they, refuges? I didn't know about 'em".

There are several interviews with children in the book where they express their confusion over their parents' conflicts and show the divided loyalties experienced when parents separate.

In an interview of one of the refuge's child-care workers, the difficulty of offering anything positive to help the children cope with the changes occurring in their lives in the transitory atmosphere of the refuge is apparent. However, the worker also comments that the situation has improved greatly as, at

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Ruth Stewart**



the time the book was written, Marrickville had three workers for the kids as opposed to none when the refuge first opened.

Finally, **The Last Resort** covers the change in the thinking of the women who originally set up the refuge. Refuges set themselves up as an alternative to the "professional vs. client" version of welfare but, as one worker comments, "Though it was easy enough to sate our opposition to the 'social worker' mentality, it was much more difficult to put this into practice.

At Marrickville the practice has entailed a group of ex-residents eventually being employed to work alongside other workers. Now Marrickville has operated for over eighteen months run totally by ex-residents. This is seen as being the obvious way for refuges to resist being absorbed completely into the established welfare network which in many ways refuges are now part of.

Whether or not this will prove a solution for a refuge movement becoming increasingly involved with its own survival and internal confrontations remains to be seen, but for Marrickville it has proved the answer.

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## **PARENTING & DELINQUENT YOUTH**

**by Alice Parizeau,  
Lexington Books, 1980.  
Toronto  
\$32**

This book is about child welfare, child rights and the issue of community attitudes towards provisions for child preventative services. It consists of three main sections.

In the first section, the author outlines the legislation and service provisions for

children in need of care and juvenile delinquents in both the Canadian and Quebec legislatures. In Quebec, Social Service centres were created under the Youth Protection Act and where parents are agreeable, one of several measures are used:

1. Assistance to the family
2. Assistance given to the child by a Social Worker.
3. Temporary or permanent placement of the child in a home other than that of his or her parents.
4. Placement of the child in a special institution.

Where the parents are in disagreement, the Directory of Youth Protection in S.S.C.'s can take action, but it is up to the juvenile Court to hear the case. The operations of the S.S.C.'s also include the provision of the probation service to minors.

Notwithstanding the recognition of children's rights in legislation, (citizens can report cases of child maltreatment without having their identity divulged, and children are given the right of a choice about where they want to live). Alice Parizeau still considers there are serious inadequacies in both the legislation and its implementation. There is a lack of definition in the legislation, both of children's rights and what constitutes good parenting. This leads to children whose parents maltreat, are indifferent or criminal, receiving no help from the community, simply because they are not troublesome.

She further contends that some natural parents may not have the capacity to love and thus a child's family need not be established on the basis of parent/offspring. Moreover, where it is recognized that parents are inadequate, regardless of whether maltreatment has occurred, society should have the right to intervene. However, the provision of care in institutions has the dual problem of high cost and a lack of effectiveness in outcome in terms of the child's rehabilitation. This raises the need for

family care and the role and significance of foster care, and of family support and intervention.

"In short, I believe that the prevention of deprived childhood will never be regulated by legislation or an official system of treatment, and that to exercise effectively, direct aid must be given to certain groups of parents by assigning them guardians and offering them socio-educational treatment". (p.xxi)

In the second section, the study involves a survey of the dossiers of 14 young adults who appeared before the Criminal Court. For these young people, their dossiers illustrate the failure of legislation on child protection to ensure the rights of children. Their records show some of the experiences they had as children and the failure of their parents to fulfil their responsibility and the inadequacy of the administration to intervene effectively. These cases had several common denominators:

1. As children, they generally appear in juvenile court under the Youth Protection Act and while receiving supervision, keep returning.
2. There is a progressive seriousness of offending.
3. They demonstrate a poor school record both academically and in their relationship with peers.

Unfortunately, the presentation of these dossiers take up 57 pages of the book. This information should have been condensed and presented in summary form in the book or appended, rather than page after page of records. These dossiers certainly illustrate the author's case; however, her generalizations must remain limited, without a more vigorous approach to research, apart from the very small and limited sample.

The third section contains a study of a sample of 48 parents selected among common law prisoners. Again the author includes some 24 pages of resume on the prisoner's response to interviews, plus an interview schedule which could have been appended.