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**“Who Wants to Do Something About Rising Prices?”:
Consumer protest and the Campaign Against Rising Prices in Aotearoa New
Zealand, 1966-1981**

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of the requirements for the degree
of
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Abstract

This thesis is a historical analysis of the Campaign Against Rising Prices (CARP), an organisation of women that fought against rising prices in Aotearoa New Zealand between 1966 and 1981. They were particularly distinguished by their use of targeted economic boycotts in the late 1960s and 1970s, and they were also prolific in their correspondence with governments of the day. Using archival records left by the two main branches in Auckland and Wellington, this thesis pieces together the story of CARP and its branches, and asks: Why did CARP emerge when it did, and why did it choose to take the actions it took? What was CARP able to achieve between 1966 and 1981, and to what extent was CARP successful in achieving its goals? Why did CARP dissolve in 1981? Where does CARP fit within the bigger picture of Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s?

In answering these questions, this thesis will show that, during its time, CARP was a complex and flourishing site of protest, engaged in multiple different forms of protest and able to command attention, from the Government, the media, and the public. They cultivated strong ties with the trade union movement of the 1960s and 1970s, enabled by personal links between many of the women who led CARP and union leaders in Auckland and Wellington. They consistently maintained a rigid focus on 'rising prices', and attempted to position themselves as 'non-political' in the face of an antagonistic relationship with multiple governments, and accusations of being a front for Communist agitation. CARP were always an organisation led and supported by women, and initially collectively identified itself as a 'housewives organisation', but over time CARP de-emphasised gendered identity, and as such remained outside the larger 'women's movement' of the 1970s. This thesis argues that we can understand the reasoning behind CARP's formation, and decision-making, by understanding the background context of New Zealand's socioeconomic conditions in the 1960s and 1970s, and the connections CARP had to growing domestic protest, the trade unions, and second-wave feminism. Understanding how CARP operated, and the context of the late 1970s, also allows us to understand why CARP dissolved in 1981, after several years of winding down. In the process, this thesis seeks to position CARP within the wider historiography on protest, labour, and gender in Aotearoa New Zealand, and bring it out of the obscurity it has had within New Zealand history since its dissolution in 1981.

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literally have been impossible. I hope this thesis does justice to the memory of the organisation you led.

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List of Abbreviations

CARE – Citizens’ Association for Racial Equality

CARP – Campaign Against Rising Prices

CND – Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

CPI – Consumer Price Index

COV – Committee on Vietnam

FoL – New Zealand Federation of Labour

NCW – National Council of Women

NZPPA – New Zealand Purchasers Progressive Association

PSA – Public Service Association

SPA – Stabilise Prices Association

Introduction

“Who wants to do something about high prices?”¹ This quote, originally from the year 1966, is a question that could be asked about the economic situation in Aotearoa New Zealand in the early 2020s. The COVID-19 pandemic, and its global ramifications; the impact of Cyclone Gabrielle in early 2023; a supermarket industry that has been under intensive scrutiny for its duopolistic structure: together, a number of factors have caused consumer prices to rise faster in the early 2020s than at any time since the Global Financial Crisis of the late-2000s.² The resulting economic situation has been called a ‘cost-of-living crisis’, in the media and in political circles.³ This phenomenon is not isolated to New Zealand: other countries have also seen similar issues with rising costs of living.⁴ Responses have come in multiple forms: a Commerce Commission inquiry in the early 2020s, for example, called for reforms to lower the barriers to competition in the supermarket industry, and the cost of living was a major electoral issue in the 2023 general election for all parties.⁵ In this environment, “who wants to do something about high prices?” becomes a signifier of discontent, and a desire for action.

The quoted question came from a different historical context, where the economy was also slowing down. It originated from a small group of Auckland housewives who asked the

¹ *Auckland Star*, 15 November 1966, p. 11.

² Ashleigh Yates, ‘Cyclone Gabrielle: Serious concerns about food supply, prices after masses of crops destroyed’, *Newshub*, 16 February 2023 <<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2023/02/cyclone-gabrielle-serious-concerns-about-food-supply-prices-after-masses-of-crops-destroyed.html>> [accessed 20 January 2024]; Commerce Commission, *Market study into the retail grocery sector: Final report* (Wellington: Commerce Commission, 8 March 2022); Statistics New Zealand, ‘CPI All Groups for New Zealand (Qrtly-Mar/Jun/Sep/Dec)’, *Stats NZ Infoshare* <<https://infoshare.stats.govt.nz/Default.aspx>> [accessed 27 August 2023]; Toby Boraman, ‘Strikes, protests and collective action: How fighting a cost-of-living crisis wasn’t always about tightening your own belt’, *Radio New Zealand*, 11 April 2023 <<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/487751/strikes-protests-and-collective-action-how-fighting-a-cost-of-living-crisis-wasn-t-always-about-tightening-your-own-belt>> [accessed 20 January 2024].

³ Brianna Mcilraith, ‘By the numbers: The groups struggling the most during the cost of living crisis’, *Stuff*, 29 July 2023 <<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/132642189/by-the-numbers-the-groups-struggling-the-most-during-the-cost-of-living-crisis>> [accessed 20 January 2024]; Jogai Bhatt and Tiffany Salmond, ‘Is New Zealand alone in facing a cost of living crisis?’, *Radio New Zealand*, 13 October 2023 <<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/500087/is-new-zealand-alone-in-facing-a-cost-of-living-crisis>> [accessed 20 January 2024]; Sam Sowman-Lund, ‘Election 2023: The cost of living policies in two minutes’, *The Spinoff* <<https://thespinoff.co.nz/politics/13-10-2023/election-2023-the-cost-of-living-policies-in-two-minutes>> [accessed 1 February 2024].

⁴ See, for example, Bhatt and Salmond. This report made specific comparisons between food prices in New Zealand and France, finding that there were mixed results on which country had higher prices at the time of reporting.

⁵ Commerce Commission; Sowman-Lund.

public “Who wants to do something about high prices?” through an advertisement in the *Auckland Star*.⁶ The response from the public led to the founding of a new protest organisation: the Campaign Against Rising Prices. The Campaign Against Rising Prices, also known as CARP, was a group of New Zealand women, initially identifying themselves as ‘housewives’, who sought to fight against price increases in Aotearoa New Zealand. Their most distinctive action was the multiple economic boycotts they held in the 1960s and 1970s, directed at companies they felt were unfairly increasing the prices of their goods. They also engaged in multiple forms of correspondence with the Government: sometimes in the form of complaints on behalf of members to the various departments responsible for commerce, and sometimes in the form of submissions to Parliament and to Committees of Inquiry. They also had a strong presence in New Zealand media, and published their own newsletters and bulletins. As this thesis will demonstrate, through their public activities CARP were vigorous protestors against rising prices in New Zealand in the late 1960s and 1970s.

The Campaign Against Rising Prices is the subject of this thesis. I seek to analyse CARP, its leadership, its actions, and its relationship with other historical actors, and my research questions are: Why did CARP emerge when it did, and why did it choose to take the actions it took? What was CARP able to achieve between 1966 and 1981, and to what extent was CARP successful in achieving its goals? Why did CARP dissolve in 1981? Where does CARP fit within the bigger picture of Aotearoa New Zealand’s history in the 1960s and 1970s? To broadly synthesise CARP’s fifteen years of history upfront: I suggest that CARP’s history can be divided into two three periods corresponding to ‘two peaks and a tail’. 1967 and 1970 were the two notable peak years for CARP in New Zealand, and CARP went into a clear decline from 1977 onwards. The two peak years were both marked by active economic boycotts, various degrees of national branch-building, and influxes of media and public attention as a result of their boycott activities. In other years, submissions and correspondence with Government departments were more prominent activities for CARP. The early 1970s, in particular, was a key time where CARP became a regular submitter to

⁶ *Auckland Star*, 15 November 1966, p. 11.

government inquiries and tribunals, and by 1975 they had become institutionalised as a long-term organisation dedicated to struggling against rising prices.

CARP existed as one protest organisation amongst many others of its time, and in particular the bulk of CARP's leadership brought with them strong ties to the trade union movement. CARP also initially self-identified as an organisation of 'housewives', but in the 1970s they increasingly distanced themselves from this initial label and came to instead identify as 'consumers'. I argue this reflects the politics of CARP's leadership, on whether women should prioritise gender struggle or economic struggle. CARP was an organisation made up of women, but not necessarily a 'women's movement', so to speak. Outside of the main branches in Auckland and Wellington, smaller branches had their own opinions on union ties and the value of boycotts, leading to schisms in 1967, and in the 1970s CARP activity was mostly confined to Auckland and Wellington. In their later years, CARP was undone by several factors. One was a decline in active membership in the late 1970s, and failure to replace the first generation of CARP leadership. Another, I argue, was the political-economic situation of the time: the hardline attitude of the third National Government led by Rob Muldoon, and its second-term policy of abolishing price controls, impacted CARP's will to continue.

The extent to which CARP were successful in achieving their goals was mixed. CARP claimed that their 1970 boycotts were successful, and Government initiatives like the Consumer Information Act 1969 and the Maximum Retail Price scheme proposed in the mid-1970s can be attributed to CARP pressure. In the long run, however, CARP failed to achieve their vision of comprehensive price controls, and prices continued to rise in successive years. Indeed, the Rogernomics reforms after CARP's time went completely opposite to CARP's goals in 1967. Despite this, CARP were nevertheless an organisation with a reputation: they were able to attract media and Government attention for more than a decade despite never numbering more than a few thousand formal financial supporters.

CARP was a product of its time: influenced by prevailing economic anxieties in the 1960s and 1970s, situated within a larger wave of protest at home and overseas, and with leadership bringing with them ideas and debates from the unions and the women's movement at large. I argue that, as a case study, CARP adds to our understanding of protest in Aotearoa New Zealand last century. During their time, CARP filled a niche of its own in the fabric of post-

World War II New Zealand. This thesis will demonstrate that, far from a union auxiliary or a one-dimensional sidepiece, CARP were a complex, and for a while flourishing, site of protest in the 1960s and 1970s.

Historiography

Since dissolving in 1981, CARP has largely been forgotten by New Zealand historiography, and by the public at large. In a 2023 piece on historical reactions to rising prices, labour historian Toby Boraman mentions CARP as a ‘consumer campaign’ “mostly organised by (unpaid) women domestic workers, and often supported by unions”.⁷ The focus of this article, however, is on collective action undertaken by the trade unions, and CARP is not discussed in detail by Boraman. In October 2023, lawyer Oliver Neas wrote in the *New Zealand Listener* about rising prices today, and his piece contains the longest public discussion on CARP that I am aware of since the 1980s.⁸ The focus in this piece, however, was on today’s economy, and why no groups like CARP might exist today. The *Listener* piece itself provided little detailed information on CARP.⁹ The most recent academic discussion on CARP comes from labour historian Cybèle Locke in a piece in the *Labour History Bulletin*. This article was written based on her initial research into CARP Auckland’s archives, and in it Locke provides a short narrative account of CARP Auckland’s history between 1966 and 1973 from the perspective of its leaders. Locke prominently focuses on the women who led CARP Auckland, giving the spotlight to people like Flo Humphries and Ella Ayo, and rightfully places emphasis on the working-class, unionist, background shared by many of CARP’s leaders.¹⁰ This is the significant addition to CARP’s historiography that stands out in Locke’s piece.

Before 2023, there were two scholarly works discussing the Campaign Against Rising Prices. Both were written as Masters theses by students in the field of political science, and both date from the 1970s, when CARP was still an active organisation. Barry Chisholm’s 1971 thesis on CARP, at the University of Auckland, discussed the state of the branch between 1966 and 1970. This was accompanied with some general background in New Zealand’s economic conditions in the mid-1960s. Chisholm argues that the Auckland branch of CARP

⁷ Boraman, 2023.

⁸ Oliver Neas, ‘Opportunity cost’, *New Zealand Listener*, 2 October 2023, pp. 16-21.

⁹ Neas.

¹⁰ Cybèle Locke, ‘Campaign Against Rising Prices, Auckland, 1966-1973’, *New Zealand Labour History Bulletin*, 87 (April 2023), 20-23.

were overall unsuccessful in their goals, but that they contributed “some understanding to the changing political and social scene” in New Zealand.¹¹ His thesis refers to CARP Auckland in past tense, and generally seems to assume CARP were already a thing of the past in 1970: we will see later on that 1970 would be a year of resurgence for CARP, but Chisholm could not have been aware of this when he was writing. In short, he studied CARP as a case study to understand a changing political scene in the late 1960s, and he understood them to be a genuine grassroots movement amongst housewives dissatisfied with the prevailing political system.¹²

Christine Williams’ 1976 thesis, at the University of Canterbury, is not focused on CARP, but uses the Wellington branch of CARP as one of three case studies of New Zealand protest organisations in the 1960s and 1970s. Her research interest was analysing New Zealand protest groups using organisational theories in political science.¹³ She ultimately argued that the existence of these groups was not contingent on any measure of success, but instead they justified their existence as a means to “(keep) the lines of communication open between public and government”, and to represent interests that had no other representation within the political system at the time.¹⁴ In other words, in the specific context of CARP, Williams argues that they existed because its membership and leadership felt that there was a need to protest rising prices, and they continued to exist because the need to protest continued to exist. In both cases, CARP was being studied from a contemporary perspective, in order to understand the sociopolitical situation of New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s.

Taken together, there are gaps and omissions in the existing scholarly works on CARP. Two specifically focus on CARP Auckland, and one focuses on CARP Wellington: none, however, provide a true national history synthesising both branches, and between the three pieces the branches outside Auckland and Wellington only get cursory mention in Chisholm’s thesis. None discuss what happened to CARP after 1976: in Locke’s case because her initial

¹¹ Barry Chisholm, ‘Active Consumers: A Study of the Campaign Against Rising Prices’ (Masters thesis, University of Auckland, 1971), p. 167.

¹² Chisholm, pp. 166-168.

¹³ Williams’ own term for the groups she studied was ‘pressure groups’; in retrospect I would label the groups she discussed as ‘protest groups/organisations’.

¹⁴ Christine M. Williams, ‘Three New Zealand Cause Groups: A Look at Motivation’ (Masters thesis, University of Canterbury, 1976), p. 126.

research only took her to 1973, and in the other two because they were written while CARP was still active. I also argue that there is more to be said about CARP even before 1976: on gender, the relationship with unions, schisms, the relationship with politicians, and more. This thesis seeks to expand upon these works by looking at CARP as a national movement, acknowledging shared interests and disagreements, and by examining CARP's history after 1975 to account for why CARP disappeared after Chisholm and Williams wrote their theses.

The historiography of CARP does not stand in isolation from the rest of New Zealand history. CARP, for example, was a woman-founded and woman-led organisation, and thus fits into the historiography of gender history. Some parts of this historiography are focused on bringing attention to individual women, and the way women have contributed to history: works like Ann Else's *Women Together* and *The Book of New Zealand Women / Ko Kui Ma Te Kaupapa* have done this in New Zealand for women's organisations and for individual women.¹⁵ The importance of these works is to emphasise the presence of women as important historical actors with agency; in many older histories women, in New Zealand and overseas, were relegated to the margins of history, and in recent decades books like these have used biographical approaches to call attention to women who once had been forgotten by the discipline.¹⁶

Other writers have focused on narratives around gender, and gender identity. Barbara Brookes' *A History of New Zealand Women* is an example, weaving together many different threads of history about women in New Zealand to investigate change over a long time. In particular, Brookes argues that the 1960s and 1970s (the temporal focus of this thesis) were important as decades of 'discovery', when second-wave feminism challenged the unequal status of women in society.¹⁷ More specific examples of change from those decades are discussed in Chapter 1, but as Brookes discusses, ideas around what it meant to be a 'woman', and around gender inequities, were rapidly shifting in the 1960s and 1970s, and during these years women organised and pushed for a better, more equal, position in society.¹⁸ Wāhine Māori have their own history with shifting gender identities and the

¹⁵ *Women Together – Ngā Rōpū Wāhine o te Motu*, ed. by Ann Else, 2nd edition (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 2018), Introduction; *Ko Kui Ma te Kaupapa The Book of New Zealand Women*, ed. by Charlotte Macdonald, Merimeri Penfold, and Bridget Williams (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1991).

¹⁶ Macdonald, Williams, and Penfold, p. vii.

¹⁷ Barbara Brookes, *A History of New Zealand Women* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2016), p. 6.

¹⁸ Brookes, pp. 1-4.

continuing impact of colonisation, and the historiography on gender also includes the voices of wāhine telling their own stories.¹⁹ Many other authors have also written about the women's movement, the waves of feminism, and gender history in New Zealand.²⁰

In this thesis, the gendered makeup of CARP's membership, and their shifting relationship with gendered identity, can be best understood in light of the rise of women's movements in the 1960s and 1970s, but also the debates within feminism, and amongst working-class women, in New Zealand at the time. Analysing CARP's shifting identification with gender can provide an example of an organisation affected the debate between class struggle and gender struggle within second-wave feminism in New Zealand. It definitely appears to have influenced the way CARP chose to identify themselves later on.

Internationally, the role of gender in history and the social sciences have been considered by authors like Joan Wallach Scott and Judith Butler. Historians like Scott and Judith M. Bennett have argued for the importance of gender as a category of analysis in all forms of history: this has involved arguing for the importance of specifically feminist history, while also fighting against the isolation of "women's history" as a separate field from the rest of the discipline, and combining the study of gender with the study of other historical attributes like class and ethnicity to analyse, for example, working-class women's histories, or indigenous feminism.²¹ The concept of 'gender' has also been deconstructed and analysed: Butler, for example, argues that gender is a performative act rather than an expression of essential reality, a post-modern conception that has been influential in modern scholarship

¹⁹ See Tania Rei, Geraldine McDonald, and Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku, 'Ngā Rōpū Wāhine Māori – Māori Women's Organisations', in *Women Together – Ngā Rōpū Wāhine o te Motu*, ed. by Ann Else, 2nd edition (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 2018); Lachy Peterson and Angela Wanhalla, *He Reo Wāhine: Māori Women's Voices from the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017); and *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*, ed. by Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf, Jeanne Perreault, and Jean Barman (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).

²⁰ See *The Vote, the Pill and the Demon Drink: A History of Feminist Writing in New Zealand, 1869–1993*, ed. by Charlotte Macdonald (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1993); Melanie Nolan, *Breadwinning: New Zealand Women and the State* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2000); Bronwyn Labrum, *Real Modern: Everyday New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2015); Christine Dann, *Up from Under: Women and Liberation in New Zealand 1970–1985* (Wellington: Port Nicholson Press, 1985); Patricia Grimshaw, *Women's Suffrage in New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1972); and Grace Millar, 'Women's Lives, Feminism and the New Zealand Journal of History', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 52.2 (2018), 134-152.

²¹ See Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 30th anniversary edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Judith MacKenzie Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); and Suzack and others.

on gender.²² While this thesis will not be a thorough deconstruction of gender, it will highlight the role gender played in CARP's membership and identity, and how this shifted over time.²³

The trade unions were one of CARP's key allies, and thus CARP's history also intersects with New Zealand labour history. The early key author for this is Bert Roth: his 1973 book *Trade Unions in New Zealand* was one of the first systemic histories of the union movement. In this work Roth wove the history of the unions between the 1840s and the 1960s with discussion on how unions operated in his present, the 1970s.²⁴ His historiographic goal was to increase public awareness of the unions, and in the process attempt to reduce contemporary antagonism towards them.²⁵ Since *Trade Unions in New Zealand*, there have been plenty of further contributions to the historiography on trade unions and the working classes: Roth, Olssen, and Boraman, to name a few, have all made important contributions since the 1980s, adding to the historiography by looking at both individual unions and the larger movement, and collective bodies like the Federation of Labour, as well as considering identity and politics within the trade unions, shifts within the left-wing of New Zealand politics, and more recently the impact of events like the Rogernomics reforms and the Employment Contracts Act, and the overall decline in union activity since then.²⁶ More recently, Locke's 2022 book *Comrade* uses the biography of prominent 20th century communist-unionist Bill Anderson to explore many events important to New Zealand history in the latter-half of the 20th century, including the 1951 waterfront strikes, increasing left-wing discontent in the late 1960s and 1970s, and the Rogernomic reforms in the 1980s and

²² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

²³ See also Anne Munro, *Women, Work, and Trade Unions* (New York: Routledge, 2017), and Jennifer Curtin, *Women and Trade Unions: A Comparative Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2018), about women in trade unions globally.

²⁴ Herbert Roth, *Trade Unions in New Zealand: Past and Present* (Wellington: Reed Publishing, 1973).

²⁵ Roth, 1973, p. xii.

²⁶ See Herbert Roth and Janny Hammond, *Toil and Trouble: The Struggle For a Better Life in New Zealand* (Auckland: Methuen New Zealand, 1981); Erik Olssen, *Building the New World: Work, Politics and Society in Caversham, 1880s-1920s* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995); Erik Olssen, *The Red Feds: Revolutionary Industrial Unionism and the New Zealand Federation of Labour, 1908-14* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1988); Toby Boraman, 'A Middle-Class Diversion from Working-Class Struggle? The New Zealand New Left from the Mid-1950s to the Mid-1970s', *Labour History*, 103 (2012), 203-226; Linda Hill, 'Feminism and Unionism in New Zealand: Organising the Markets for Women's Work' (Doctoral thesis, University of Canterbury, 1994), and Melanie Nolan and Shaun Ryan, 'Transforming Unionism by Organising? An Examination of the 'Gender Revolution' in New Zealand Trade Unionism since 1975', *Labour History*, 84 (2003), 89-111. Many of these histories cover events that took place long before CARP existed, but many CARP leaders were connected to the 1951 waterfront industrial actions, a key turning point in New Zealand labour history.

1990s.²⁷ Today, historians working in union spaces emphasise the important of personal stories as well as those of collectives: *Comrade* and Locke's other book, *Workers in the Margins*, emphasise the personal as much as the collective.²⁸ This thesis mostly focuses on the organisational history of CARP, but CARP was also made up of many individuals with union connections, and this thesis will discuss these key leaders and their backgrounds. I also acknowledge the ongoing work of the Labour History Project in New Zealand, a collective of New Zealand labour historians, to meticulously preserve all different kinds of working-class history in a variety of different ways.²⁹ While this is not an explicit piece of labour history, union struggles were nevertheless key experiences for the leadership at CARP.

CARP also fits under the banner of 'protest history'. New Zealand, like many countries, has its own long traditions of protest, and through authors like Mark Kurlansky, the protests of years like 1968 have been marked as a key global turning point.³⁰ The recent book *Protest Tautohetohe*, for example, depicts an object-oriented history displaying objects used in, or related to, many different protests, ranging from Māori hīkoi and occupations to the anti-nuclear movement to the women's liberation movement.³¹ *Protest Tautohetohe* makes it clear a lot of protest was happening during the time when CARP existed. This is a text focused on the bigger picture, but there have also been works on more specific movements. Geoff Chapelle, for example, wrote a comprehensive history of the 1981 protests against the South African Springbok rugby tour to New Zealand. This work is more focused on narrative than historiographical argument, but Chapelle intended it as a 'people's history' of the tour, meant to capture the views of the people who protested in 1981.³² Thus, its importance to

²⁷ Cybèle Locke, *Comrade: Bill Anderson – A Communist, Working-Class Life* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2022).

²⁸ See also Rebecca Macfie, *Helen Kelly – Her Life* (Wellington: Awa Press, 2021); a biography of former New Zealand Council of Trade Unions President Helen Kelly, which is very similar to *Comrade* in the way it interweaves biography with wider history. See also the work of the Labour History Project; part of their work involves interviewing union members and union leaders to tell their stories, and through them preserve the stories of union activism for future generations.

²⁹ Including through the use of oral history techniques including interviews and discussions (as discussed in the previous footnote), publishing the *Labour History Bulletin*, and through lectures and papers.

³⁰ See Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World* (London: Jonathon Cape, 2004); George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston: South End Press, 1987); and Martin Halliwell, and Nick Witham, *Reframing 1968: American Politics, Protest and Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

³¹ Stephanie Gibson, Matariki Williams, and Puawai Cairns, *Protest Tautohetohe: Objects of Resistance, Persistence and Defiance* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2019).

³² Geoff Chapelle, *1981: The Tour* (Wellington: Reed Publishing, 1984), p. viii.

protest historiography comes from its comprehensive documentation of a key event in New Zealand history. Aroha Harris' *Hīkoi* recounts decades of 20th century Māori protest, discussing both the protest actions and the results of Māori protest (Treaty settlements, the Māori Language Act, kura kaupapa Māori, to name a few), and emphasises that Māori protest was a popular movement of the people, not just of radical activists.³³ Maire Leadbeater's *Peace, Power and Politics* tells of the history of the anti-nuclear movement, using her own personal experiences to trace from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the 1960s to the nuclear-free law of 1987.³⁴ There are many other examples of historical protest literature in New Zealand, but a common emphasis across these books on protest is historical documentation.³⁵ From the particular examples cited, Leadbeater and Chapelle were both activists who participated in the movements they were writing about. There is therefore a passion in the protest histories they write, a keen interest in detail and continuing connections to day, and an intent to preserve their stories for future activists.

In broader terms, Bronwyn Labrum's *Real Modern* is another text that provides valuable context on CARP's time and place. This book is another object-oriented history, like *Protest Tautohetohe*, but this time the focus is on 1950s and 1960s New Zealand. Labrum's historiographical argument is that these decades were a time of change for many New Zealanders, and that a large chunk of 'Kiwiana' nostalgia comes from these decades.³⁶ The changing socio-economic conditions of the 1950s and 1960s, and the ideals of the time, can help us to understand CARP's formation in 1966, and the initial identity it took as a 'housewives' organisation'.

This thesis seeks to add to the historiography on CARP by filling out the time periods that previous authors have not discussed, and by providing a fresh perspective on the organisation. In a similar vein to other protest historians, I hope to add to the historiography on New Zealand protest. In addition to adding to the documentation on what CARP did and

³³ Aroha Harris, *Hīkoi: Forty Years of Māori Protest* (Wellington: Huia, 2004).

³⁴ Marie Leadbeater, *Peace, Power and Politics: How New Zealand Became Nuclear Free* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2013).

³⁵ Some of the works cited as part of the historiography on gender can also fit into this trend: see also Dann and Macdonald, 1993. See also Melani Anae, *The Platform: The Radical Legacy of the Polynesian Panthers* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2020); Donna Awatere, *Maori Sovereignty* (Auckland: Broadsheet, 1984); and Gay Simpkin, 'Women for Aotearoa: feminism and Maori sovereignty', *Hecate*, 20.2 (1994), 226-238.

³⁶ For example, Crown Lynn ceramics. Labrum.

who they were, I hope that, by analysing CARP's final years and collapse for the first time in a scholarly fashion, this thesis can say something about why some protest movements disappear, and I also think that looking at the dissent that existed within CARP in 1967 can serve as one example of how dissent within protest organisations can play out. While this thesis is not a work of pure 'labour history', it does discuss an example of an organisation *adjacent* to the trade unions, and this thesis may provide an example of how women related to the union movement engaged in parallel forms of protest alongside the trade unions. I have already discussed how what this thesis attempts to add to the historiography on gender history: discussion on another organisation made up of women, and their shifting relationship with gendered identity. These additions to New Zealand historiography are part of the aim of this thesis.

Research Methodology and Limitations

This thesis is based on archival research undertaken during 2023. There are two collections of records left by CARP branches in New Zealand, and these form the bulk of the primary sources cited by this thesis. One of these collections contained the records of CARP Wellington, and was deposited in the Alexander Turnbull Library by Cath Kelly in 1978 and 1980.³⁷ The other held records from CARP Auckland, and this collection, held in the Special Collections at the University of Auckland Library, combined a donation from Ella Ayo in 1978 with some of Chisholm's notes from his thesis.³⁸ In their theses, Chisholm and Williams were able to interview members of CARP Auckland and Wellington, and additionally they published some information that was not found in either collection. I have therefore also used their theses as primary sources in fill in some gaps in the record. As far as I have been able to determine, CARP's key leaders died between the 1980s and the 2010s. Therefore, I have not been able to use oral history techniques, or personal correspondence between myself and CARP members, as part of this thesis.

³⁷ Campaign Against Rising Prices: Records. Includes Committee minutes, 1967-1979, correspondence, 1967-1980, press clippings, 1967-1976 and files covering specific products, 1967-1977, CARP leaflets and newsletters; some branch material, 1967-1969; financial records, 1970-1977. MS-Group-1150. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. (Hereafter abbreviated as CARP Wellington records, ATL.)

³⁸ Campaign Against Rising Prices (CARP) records, 1966-1973. MSS-Archives-A-220. Special Collections, University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services, Auckland. (Hereinafter abbreviated as CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL.)

As will be seen in Chapter 4, the reliance on surviving archival collections means that there are gaps in this narrative I have not been able to fill. It is possible that family members of CARP members may have stories to tell in the future, or that other documents left by CARP may survive in private hands; future historians may be able to follow up any leads in these directions. I also have not had access to any records left by any of the CARP branches established outside of Auckland or Wellington. Because of the many years since CARP dissolved, and the acrimonious relationship some branches had with CARP Auckland, it is likely that these records are now lost to time. The story of CARP's other branches has been reconstructed from my main primary sources.

It is important to note that the archives were created by CARP leaders, and mostly reflects CARP's own perspective as a historical actor. This means that, for example, the Government's perspective on CARP is only represented through the direct correspondence with CARP that CARP's leaders chose to save in the archive. Records from the former Department of Industries and Commerce, the offices of CARP's former Minister-correspondents, or tribunals and inquiries that interacted with CARP, might provide a different official perspective on CARP for future historians. This also means that this thesis cannot fully reflect the views of similar organisations like the Stabilise Prices Association, or the Housewives Boycott Movement. There are currently no known archive collections for either movement, which means that studying CARP's records is currently the best way to understand similar movements and how they differed from CARP.

This thesis is primarily focused on events that took place in the largest cities in New Zealand, and therefore tells an urban-centric history.³⁹ Where branches were established outside the main centres, they tended to be in larger settlements, like Whangārei and Tokoroa, and not in smaller towns or farming communities. This thesis will therefore not focus in any detail on rural New Zealand, or on any possible rural actions taken against rising prices. How rural New Zealanders perceived CARP is also unknown, and not covered in this thesis. In recent years farmers in New Zealand have engaged in their own protests against the policies of the

³⁹ For further discussion on urban history in New Zealand, see Ben Schrader, *The Big Smoke: New Zealand Cities, 1840-1920* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2016), which argues for the importance of urban living to New Zealanders as long ago as the 19th century, and Melissa Matutina Williams, *Panguru and the City: Kāinga Tahī, Kāinga Rua An Urban Migration History* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2015), 2015, which tells a story of Māori urban migration in the mid-20th century and explores the resulting cultural negotiations of Māori urbanisation. Suburbanisation, an ongoing process in the 1950s and 1960s, is also discussed in Labrum.

Sixth Labour Government, but in the past, for example, many in provincial New Zealand supported sporting contact with South Africa.⁴⁰ I suggest, then, that rural protest on rising prices might have looked different to CARP, but I leave this line of inquiry open to future researchers.

CARP was also an organisation primarily made up of Pākehā women, and so I acknowledge that tangata whenua are largely absent from this thesis. The women who led CARP at the top were all Pākehā women, and as far as I can tell, most of the committee members and dedicated supporters were also Pākehā; Māori women specifically did not have much of a presence within CARP. CARP temporally co-existed with movements like the land occupations by tangata whenua of the late 1970s and the 1975 Māori Land March, and as discussed wāhine had their own history of protest, and their own organisations in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴¹ Overall, CARP as an organisation was mostly uninterested in matters of race, because of its narrow focus on rising prices. While the Auckland branch was interested in one point in racism in housing, the Wellington branch chose not to endorse an anti-apartheid economic boycott because they saw it as beyond CARP's scope. This may have made CARP unattractive to politically minded Māori activists. The primary sources are silent on the relationship between CARP and Māori, and while absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, I think in this case it suggests a lack of engagement with Māori. This is not to suggest that Māori activists were not interested in economics or prices, and it is likely that there were some Māori members of CARP, but it is clear that Māori concerns were not a priority for CARP's leadership. I do not believe these points about rural and Māori perspectives invalidate the findings of this thesis, but it is important to point out upfront who CARP cannot be said to represent.

I also note this thesis is geographically confined to events in New Zealand. There was also a Campaign Against Rising Prices in eastern Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and I believe their name and actions were influenced by CARP in New Zealand. CARP branches in Australia were in contact with CARP in New Zealand.⁴² CARP were also in touch with the

⁴⁰ Brooking, Tom, *The History of New Zealand* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 148; Chapelle, pp. 14-19.

⁴¹ See Rej, McDonald, and Te Awekōtuku.

⁴² Letter from E. Rose to Flo Humphries, 11 August 1970; Letter from E. Rose to Flo Humphries, 15 October 1970. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/3. The Newcastle branch of CARP eventually changed its name to the Association for Consumer Education in 1970; I do not know what happened to the organisation after 1970.

consumer movement in the United States, and a Japanese housewives group that also kept watch on rising prices in Japan.⁴³ Unfortunately, I did not have the time or means to further pursue these international links, and as far as I can tell the actions of CARP in New Zealand were homegrown, and not imported from overseas. This thesis will not further discuss international movements against rising prices, but it is important to remember that CARP existed during a time of protest across the globe. The protests of 1968, soon after CARP formed, have already been referenced as an example. International protest is a piece of CARP's historical frame, alongside protest at home.

Chapter Summaries

The main temporal focus of this thesis is the years between 1966 and 1981, the years that CARP existed in New Zealand, with background discussion stretching back into the 1950s. This thesis is structured temporally: each chapter sequentially covers a different period of CARP's history. I argue that CARP's history can be divided into three sequential periods, and that these can be summarised as 'two peaks and a tail'. Chapter 1 covers the background to CARP's formation in 1966. It begins with discussion on the immediate background to CARP's formation: the collapse of the price of wool in 1966, and the political-economic repercussions. This chapter then discusses the larger protest scene in New Zealand when CARP existed, and particularly focuses on the thriving trade union movement and women's history in post-World War II New Zealand. This chapter provides necessary context that allows us to understand CARP's formation, actions, and decisions.

Chapter 2 covers the period between 1966 and 1969: the first peak was in 1967, and followed by a few years of decline. This was a period when CARP rapidly spread across New Zealand and set itself up as a non-political, grassroots movement, ready to engage in boycotts and lobbying. This was also where CARP's leaders learned that 'unity was strength': when CARP started to grow it was united by common goals, but CARP soon splintered after disputes between branches and spent several years in recovery. In terms of national spread, 1967 was the high point, but CARP spent 1968 and 1969 in building back support. This first

⁴³ Telegrams between Flo Humphries and the International Speakers Network, June 1972, CARP Auckland records; Letter from Nanako Itoh to 'the Consumer Movement New Zealand' [sic], 10 October 1971, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/6.

period was also where CARP's alliances and battlefronts began to be drawn: the unions become key supporters, and conservative politicians like Rob Muldoon became enemies.

Chapter 3 covers 1970 through to 1975, from CARP's second peak in 1970 through to Rob Muldoon's election as Prime Minister. The second peak was highlighted by the 1970 boycott against Wattie's canned goods. In this period CARP's economic targets became more focused: 'monopolies' became the key economic target, and CARP spent much of their time in the second period fighting monopolies, particularly Wattie's and Unilever. CARP were particularly busy in the early 1970s, and their key actions were boycotts, submissions to the Government, and lobbying. We can see in this period CARP's changing relationship with gender identity: 'housewives' became 'consumers'. We can also see the complicated relationship between CARP and government, through CARP's relationship (and fights) with the Kirk-Rowling Labour government.

Chapter 4 finishes off CARP's story through the years 1976 to 1981. This was the tail period, so-called because it was when CARP went into its terminal decline. I attribute CARP's final decline to a combination of factors. The Muldoon government was one key factor: Muldoon's hostility to CARP, and the removal of price controls in the late 1970s, were both demoralising for CARP supporters. While CARP was able to command some attention, in the 1970s it never counted more than several thousand supporters, and in 1978-1979 there was a failure to hand over leadership to a new generation of price activists. 1978 also saw a new anti-rising prices movement, the Housewives Boycott Movement, and the contrast between this movement and CARP highlights both CARP's changing attitude to gender identity, and how CARP could have taken a different trajectory. In the end, CARP was 'punch-drunk with rising prices', to quote one of CARP's last leaders, and dissolved in 1981.

Across these three periods of CARP history, we will see why CARP formed when it did, why it chose to take the actions it did, why CARP dissolved in 1981, and where it fits into the historiography of Aotearoa New Zealand. For a grassroots organisation with a relatively small membership, CARP were successful in their heyday at gaining national attention on issues around rising prices. They may not have been able to force a system of comprehensive price controls, or completely halt inflation, but they were able to carve out a niche of their own in the fabric of Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s. This thesis will explore CARP and its niche, its relationships with other historical actors, its actions, and its background

and demise. In the background of the 'cost-of-living crisis' of the early 2020s, the story of CARP may still have significance, as an exemplar, for New Zealanders seeking to fight rising prices in the future.

Chapter 1: Historical Background – All Rivers Lead to CARP

Introduction

Why did a group of Auckland housewives ask the public “who wants to do something about high prices”? The question implies that prices are too high, and that someone should do something about them. Why were prices rising? Why someone want to do something about high prices? Why specifically ask in December in 1966? Knowing what CARP chose to do, why would they be motivated to support boycotts and protests? We can understand the answers to ‘why’ by understanding the larger historical background surrounding the Campaign Against Rising Prices. This first chapter will therefore be a discussion on several different threads of history within Aotearoa New Zealand during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, all connected to CARP.

I will begin by discussing the economic, and political background during the post-war period up until 1966, when CARP was founded. This will segue into discussing the larger protest scene in New Zealand during CARP’s time. We will later see that CARP maintained close ties with the trade unions, and so I will then provide a short discussion on the state of organised labour in New Zealand from the 1950s through to the 1970s. Finally, CARP was a self-identified ‘housewives organisation’, at least in their earlier years, and CARP’s membership was mostly made up of women. Therefore, I will also discuss post-war gender history in New Zealand. These are many different strands of history, but I argue that, together, they explain why CARP formed when it did, and why it took on the form it did (namely, an incorporated organisation engaged in boycotts and lobbying, among other things). I will also include a few words on the state of the retail sector when CARP was established: the ‘supermarket boom’ of the 1960s and 1970s is a minor, but still notable, part of CARP’s background given that CARP had a few interactions with supermarkets in the 1970s.

Economic Background: Prosperity (and when it failed)

In retrospect, the 1950s and 1960s have been classified by historiography as a time of economic prosperity and social unity. This observation is where Labrum begins her work on everyday New Zealand and ‘modernity’.⁴⁴ In 1949, the Labour government that had

⁴⁴ Labrum, p. 11.

governed since 1935 was defeated by a resurgent National Party, and for the vast majority of the period discussed in this thesis a conservative National government was in power.⁴⁵ The Korean War in 1951 led to a global rise in demand for wool, and pastoral products in general. For New Zealand, whose primary exports at the time were pastoral products, this rise in demand led to an economic boom.⁴⁶ The incumbent government also oversaw policies, including a universal family benefit, that led to a ‘baby boom’. By 1961 children made up a third of the national population.⁴⁷ The official policy on employment was ‘full employment’: every New Zealand man was, in theory, guaranteed a job, and a common joke told of how the Prime Minister personally knew the names of everyone receiving unemployment benefits.⁴⁸ Labrum’s book *Real Modern* covers a history of objects from the 1950s and 1960s in New Zealand, documenting the fashion, the décor, the entertainment, the transport, and more from the time.⁴⁹ *Real Modern* documents a time of change, going forward into the 1960s, but also the images of ‘prosperity’. Brooking headlines this time as ‘the last good years’.⁵⁰

Of course, calling this time ‘the good years’ masks the fact that ‘prosperity’ was not as uniform as the last paragraph may make it sound. The wharf strikers in 1951 would probably have disagreed with the idea that their era as ‘prosperous’, but that is a thought I will return to later. New Zealand *men* benefitted from full employment, and traditional gender roles still existed in New Zealand social spheres, but again I will return to this later. In the post-War years, many tangata whenua migrated from their traditional rohe into urban areas. Many Māori took up jobs in the new urban factories, and as Williams documents for families from Panguru in Auckland at the time, urbanisation was a complex process of negotiation, preserving identity, and balancing their place in their new urban home with ‘keeping the home fires burning’.⁵¹ The Government’s policy, expressed through documents like the 1961 Hunn Report, was the ‘assimilation’ of Māori into wider society; in practice, this meant

⁴⁵ Brooking, pp. 134-135, 137.

⁴⁶ Brooking, p. 135; Geoff Bertram, ‘The New Zealand Economy, 1900-2000’, in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. by Giselle Byrnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 537-572, (p. 541).

⁴⁷ Labrum, p. 12.

⁴⁸ Brooking, p. 139; Bertram, p. 541. Please note the deliberate reference to ‘every New Zealand *man*’.

⁴⁹ Labrum.

⁵⁰ Brooking, p. 137.

⁵¹ Brooking, p. 138; Williams, 2015.

disconnecting Māori from their whenua, their reo, and their tikanga in the long-run.⁵² Discrimination against Māori remained the norm in urban spaces throughout the mid-20th century.⁵³ The joke cited earlier about the list of beneficiaries implied only seven or so people were collecting unemployment benefit at the time: in fact the census indicates that there were many more unemployed people who were not on the benefit, and over time the value of benefits went down due to inflation anyway.⁵⁴ In other words, the benefits of this 'prosperity' largely accrued to middle class, Pākehā, family units.

There were two big shocks in the New Zealand economy during the 1950s and 1960s. One of these came during the Second Labour Government's tenure between 1957-1960, one of the two terms that Labour formed the Government between 1949 and 1984. A fall in the national external account ahead of the 1957 election was kept from the public by Sidney Holland's government, and only revealed after Labour won that election. The then-Minister of Finance, Arnold Nordmeyer, responded in the 1958 budget by hiking taxes on alcohol, petrol, and tobacco, to counter the fall and pay for Labour's manifesto promises.⁵⁵ This budget became known as the 'Black Budget', and was politically unpopular, perceived as a teetotaler budget by a puritanical Finance Minister.⁵⁶ The historiography goes that this budget contributed to the return to power of National in the 1960 election, and according to Gustafsen this led to a decline in Labour Party membership in the early 1960s.⁵⁷ In the first quarter of 1958, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 4.63%, which was the largest quarterly increase between 1949 and 1969.⁵⁸

The second shock came in 1966, and in retrospect this shock was a key turning point for the post-war economy. New Zealand's economy still depended on primary sector exports, particularly in dairy and wool. By the mid-1960s there was a glut of agricultural production

⁵² Williams, 2015, p. 82-87.

⁵³ Labrum, p. 12.

⁵⁴ Bertram, p. 548.

⁵⁵ Brian Easton, *Not in Narrow Seas: The Economic History of Aotearoa New Zealand* (Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington Press, 2020), p. 348.

⁵⁶ Easton, p. 348. For an example of popular response to the 'Black Budget', see *Press*, 9 July 1958. Nordmeyer already had a reputation as a strict teetotaler, and the 'Black Budget' would only further strengthen this perception.

⁵⁷ Barry Gustafson, 'Labour's Lost Legions: The Second Labour Government 1957-60 and Grassroots Party Membership in the Auckland Region', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 10.2 (1976), 143-161, (pp. 156-157). This article at large provides further context on the 'Black Budget', and the reception it received.

⁵⁸ Statistics New Zealand.

in the Western world. As Brooking notes, “by the 1960s there was plenty of food for everyone, if only distribution systems could be reformed”.⁵⁹ For New Zealand, the most significant shock in this context was a sudden drop in the price of wool. By the mid-1960s, synthetic fibers, like nylon and rayon, were replacing wool in textile production, and in 1966 there was a sudden drop in global demand for wool as a result.⁶⁰ On 14 December 1966 in particular, the global price of wool dropped by 40%. Wool made up 40% of New Zealand’s export earnings at the time, and the price drop that day meant an immediate 16% reduction in New Zealand’s terms of trade.⁶¹ For several years afterwards, exports were down for several years, and New Zealand faced a balance of payments crisis.⁶² In terms of prices, the CPI rose by 2.51% in the first quarter of 1967, and by 2.73% in the second quarter.⁶³ I attribute these rises to the wool price collapse the preceding quarter. Easton argues that many of the economic difficulties New Zealand faced during the 1970s could be traced to the effects of the 1966 wool price collapse, calling the day a significant turning point in New Zealand’s post-war history.⁶⁴ The 1970s would see attempts to restructure the New Zealand economy away from dependency from primary products: in particular the late 1970s saw the Muldoon Government’s attempts at industrialisation and import substitution through the ‘Think Big’ projects.⁶⁵ Regardless, inflation would continue to be a problem for the Government from 1966 onwards well into the 1980s: in this thesis we will see attempts at price and wage freezes, a common tool of economic management for the New Zealand government in the post-WWII era.

Political Background

Even before 14 December 1966, politicians had expressed concern around the potential for rising food prices. In 1964, the Labour Party called out the National government on the issue. A speech by Leader of the Opposition Norman Kirk on 2 July that year called out that “a considerable amount of dissatisfaction exists in New Zealand today about the constant increases in prices which have characterised the whole of the life of the present

⁵⁹ Brooking, p. 140.

⁶⁰ Easton, p. 362.

⁶¹ Easton, p. 362.

⁶² Bertram, p. 566, Easton, p. 362.

⁶³ Statistics New Zealand.

⁶⁴ Easton.

⁶⁵ Bertram, p. 558; Brooking, pp. 144-145.

Government”, listing several price increases in food stuffs as a political issue.⁶⁶ After the election, in February 1967, the government introduced a mini-budget to tackle the ramifications of the wool price collapse. One of the proposals to tighten government spending was to remove the subsidies on wheat and flour. Subsidies were another key tool of government intervention in the post-war era, and slashing these subsidies was estimated to save the Government about £18.7 million.⁶⁷ The trade-off, however, would be an increase in the price of key food staples, and many housewives in New Zealand expressed concern about the effect this would have on consumer prices.⁶⁸

1966 was an election year, and Chisholm’s analysis of this election indicated that there was increasing discontent with the Government and the main Opposition party, partially over economic concerns surrounding the lead-up to the December wool price collapse.⁶⁹ At the polls that November, a candidate for the Social Credit party was elected. This was the first time a candidate not from the two large parties had been elected in decades, and Chisholm calls this an expression of political discontent.⁷⁰ Chisholm argued that the rise in discontent towards the two large parties, combined with the wool price collapse, were key factors in the foundation of CARP Auckland in November 1966.⁷¹ Labour were still associated with the ‘Black Budget’. Nordmeyer was elected party leader in 1963, but he was never able to shake the public association with his time as the ‘Black Budget’ Finance Minister.⁷² The other large party, National, were the incumbent government, and as incumbents during the wool price collapse the mini-budgets and ongoing concern was associated with them.

I would add to Chisholm’s argument that the wool price collapse, memories of the ‘Black Budget’, and the Labour attacks on rising prices from 1964 onwards also had parts to play in

⁶⁶ *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, v. 338, pp. 492-493. The food stuffs Kirk specifically mentioned included bacon, soft drinks, ice cream, baking powder, biscuits, chocolates, cordials, and cornflower.

⁶⁷ *Press*, 10 February 1967, p. 1. \$37.4 million in decimal currency.

⁶⁸ *Press*, 11 February 1967, p. 1. The article quotes an unnamed Christchurch housewife as estimating the mini-budget’s subsidy removals would cost a ‘typical family of four’ 10s 1d extra per week. (approx., \$1.01 in decimal currency)

⁶⁹ Chisholm, pp. 12-16.

⁷⁰ Chisholm, pp. 12-16. Social Credit advocated for the implementation of ‘social credit theory’, a heterodox economic theory developed by Major C. H. Douglas in the United Kingdom during the 1930s. Social credit theory is largely forgotten today, but saw particular success in Alberta, Canada, where a ‘Social Credit Party’ dominated the government for many years, and New Zealand, where Social Credit emerged as the third largest political party between the 1950s and about 1987.

⁷¹ Chisholm, pp. 12-16.

⁷² Peter Franks and Jim McAloon, *Labour: The New Zealand Labour Party, 1916-2016* (Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington Press, 2016), pp. 161-162.

the formation of CARP. National were connected to the ongoing price rises and economic troubles in 1966, and Labour's leadership were connected to the Black Budget, and hence economic trouble. CARP was formed during a time when both major parties were struggling with their track records on managing the economy, and one of the functions they performed was holding political actors accountable on rising prices. CARP struggled with both National and Labour governments, and always called themselves 'non-political'. Their non-political stance can be understood in light of this background of mistrust towards the major political parties.

A Time of Protest

CARP was obviously not the only protest organisation formed during the 1960s. Indeed, as we will see in subsequent chapters, there were a couple of other movements, during the 1960s and 1970s, that also sought to combat rising prices. In fact, even before CARP, the Government had formed its own Consumer Service in 1959 as an advocate for the interests of the public at large against consumer abuses.⁷³ By 1966, this body was known as the Consumers Institute. They co-existed alongside CARP for many years, and still exist today as Consumer NZ.⁷⁴

Outside of the sphere of the consumer movement, CARP fits within a much larger history of protest in New Zealand after the Second World War. The most apt statement can be found in Williams' thesis, where CARP was one of three protest organisations in her study.⁷⁵ The other two movements she studied were the Citizens' Association for Racial Equality (CARE) and the Committee on Vietnam (COV). CARE was formed in Auckland in 1964, and as the name suggests they were an organisation devoted to fighting against racism.⁷⁶ In the mid-1960s CARE were particularly interested in opposing the system of apartheid in South Africa and the white-minority government in Southern Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe).⁷⁷ As time went on, they also became interested in analysing racism at home in New Zealand: in 1967 they submitted in opposition to the controversial Maori Affairs Amendment Bill and began to take

⁷³ Ian Brailsford, "Enlightened Buying": From Consumer Service to the Consumers' Institute, 1959–1964', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 41.2 (2007), 123-142, (pp. 126-127).

⁷⁴ Brailsford provides a summary of the first five years of the Service/Institute, from 1959 to 1964.

⁷⁵ Her term for them was 'pressure groups'. Williams, 1976, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Williams, 1976, p. 21.

⁷⁷ Williams, 1976, p. 47.

an interest in New Zealand's immigration policy.⁷⁸ Later on in the 1970s they worked with Ngā Tamatoa and the Polynesian Panthers in Auckland.⁷⁹

The COV were founded in March 1965, around the time of a visit to New Zealand by Henry Cabot Lodge, a former US ambassador to Vietnam, to protest against New Zealand potentially sending troops to support the American war in Vietnam.⁸⁰ There was overlap with membership in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), but the COV adopted a specific focus on the Vietnam War, and from 1965 onwards protested against New Zealand involvement in the Vietnam War, aiming to persuade the public to oppose the war.⁸¹ Later on the COV called for the New Zealand government to recognise the communist-aligned People's Revolutionary Government in South Vietnam, and to work towards a broader peaceful resolution of the conflicts in the Indochina region.⁸² Williams' thesis, in structure and content, shows how CARP, CARE, and the COV all co-existed as forms of protest. While these organisations held different focuses, and the COV stands out as a more 'politically'-oriented protest, the effect is to show how CARP was one part of a much larger protest scene. In fact, a key member of CARP in Wellington, Cath Kelly, was involved with the COV and the anti-apartheid movement in Wellington, so in particular we can see that CARP did not exist in isolation from other protest movements in New Zealand, but rather was one of several organisations together covering diverse areas of interest.

The protest scene at the time was much larger than just these three organisations, and stretches over a period of time beyond just the 1950s and 1960s. Gibson, Williams, and Cairns note that Māori forms of protest reach all the way back into the 19th century, and even an event as long ago as Hōne Heke cutting down the flagpoles at Kororāreka is part of the story of New Zealand protest.⁸³ I cannot, in this thesis, discuss every single form of protest over more than two hundred years as background context, but in the 1960s and 1970s there was, in my opinion, a flourishing protest scene in Aotearoa New Zealand. There had previously been pushback against conscription and arguments for pacifism while New

⁷⁸ Williams, 1976, pp. 47-48.

⁷⁹ Williams, 1976, p. 57.

⁸⁰ Williams, 1976, pp. 27-28.

⁸¹ Williams, 1976, pp. 32-33, 94-95.

⁸² Williams, 1976, pp. 81-85.

⁸³ Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, pp. 19, 23.

Zealand fought in both World Wars.⁸⁴ During CARP's time, the Vietnam War particularly aroused protest. There were protests against visits by South Vietnamese officials, including against Premier Nguyen Cao Ky in 1967, and many street demonstrations from the 1960s through to 1971.⁸⁵ The development of nuclear weaponry in the 1940s and 1950s drew a lot of attention from the political left and the counterculture movement. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was founded in Britain in 1958, and branches popped up in New Zealand in 1959.⁸⁶ 'Peace squadrons' were often formed in New Zealand harbours whenever nuclear-powered ships visited New Zealand, and the Labour Government in 1973 endorsed taking action against French nuclear tests in the South Pacific.⁸⁷ The culmination of these protests came after CARP was long gone, with the decision to refuse port visits from United States naval vessels and the 1987 nuclear-free act banning all nuclear weapons and nuclear-powered ships from territories under New Zealand jurisdiction.⁸⁸

Outside of matters of war and peace, there were the many protests against all forms of racism. Apartheid in South Africa is one of the best remembered targets of anti-racist protest today; the protests against separating the different ethnic groups that lived in South Africa were global, and spanned multiple decades. CARE, who have already been mentioned, were active against apartheid in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1960, there were protests against the exclusion of Māori from the upcoming All Blacks tour to South Africa, and in 1970 Halt All Racist Tours (HART) was formed to combat the 1970 All Blacks tour in South Africa.⁸⁹ Incidentally, the year CARP dissolved (that is, 1981) was also the year New Zealand anti-apartheid protest hit its peak, with the mass demonstrations and actions against the 1981 rugby tour by the South African Springboks.⁹⁰ The bitter divisions between New Zealanders for and against the tour, the Red and Blue Squads, the pitch invasions and the flour-

⁸⁴ Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, pp. 50-67. This book in particular tells its narrative through the objects of protest; these pages cover protest against World War I and II.

⁸⁵ Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, pp. 77-83.

⁸⁶ Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, p. 99; Leadbeater.

⁸⁷ Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, pp. 104-109; Franks and McAloon, p. 177; Leadbeater.

⁸⁸ Leadbeater.

⁸⁹ Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, pp. 168-170.

⁹⁰ Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, pp. 171-209; Chapelle.

bombings, and the mass street protests in all major centres, are well documented, and what happened then needs no further introduction for most New Zealanders in 2024.⁹¹

In addition to anti-apartheid protest, the 1970s and 1980s saw increasingly active protest from tangata whenua, which has been labelled as a resurgence or 'renaissance'.⁹² During this time, the 1975 Land March from Te Hāpua in the north to Wellington petitioned Parliament to recognise Māori land claims and acknowledge breaches of Te Tiriti.⁹³ Local Māori organised several notable land occupations, asserting their mana over their whenua. Prominent examples include the Bastion Point occupation on Ngāti Whātua land, and the occupation of the Raglan Golf Course led by activist Tuaiwa Rickard.⁹⁴ Activism also focused culturally on preserving te reo Māori: Māori Language Week began in 1975 to encourage the preservation of the language, and groups like Nga Tāmatoa and the Te Reo Maori Society pushed for te reo to be used in primary schools.⁹⁵ In time, Māori protest would push successive governments to introduce measures including the Treaty settlement process between iwi and the Crown, kura kaupapa Māori (Māori language schools), the Māori Language Act 1987, and the Waitangi Tribunal to investigate breaches of Te Tiriti. Activism continued to this day, seen through the 2004 hīkoi against the Foreshore and Seabed Act and the occupation at Ihumātao in the late 2010s and 2020s.

I will discuss other connected forms of protest soon, but the point so far is that, between the 1960s and 1980s, New Zealand had a thriving protest scene. We can see some of the many different causes, including war, peace, anti-racism, tino rangatiratanga, and feminism (which will be discussed further soon). Many different methods of protest were in use: petitions and meetings, street protests and organised marches, occupation, and confrontation, and in a moment, we will be introduced to striking. Economic management was not the only issue that National and Labour were attracting criticism for: more broadly, protestors were also calling for many different forms of change. The elimination of racism, the establishment of

⁹¹ For the unfamiliar, Gibson, Williams, and Cairns provide a pictorial history, and Chapelle provides an insider account of what happened on the ground from the perspective of a protestor.

⁹² Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, p. 126; Brooking, p. 146.

⁹³ Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, pp. 132-141; Harris. Māori petitions to Parliament or the Crown, calling for redress of Treaty breaches, date back well into the 19th century.

⁹⁴ Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, pp. 143-147; Harris. The 2019 occupation of Ihumātao is a prominent recent example of this trend.

⁹⁵ Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, p. 131; Harris.

peace and nuclear disarmament, respect for and acknowledgement of indigenous peoples, equitable restructuring of the global economy, the promotion of human rights for all: all of these were the subject of protest globally during the 1960s, and 1968 particularly stands out as a year of protest in countries like the United States, France, and Czechoslovakia.⁹⁶

Politicians around the world, from Lyndon B. Johnson to Charles De Gaulle, were under fire from dissatisfied protestors, and this pressure extended even down to New Zealand. While 1968 was not a particularly special year for protest in New Zealand, the years immediately before saw the same distrust of establishment politics and push for massive social change. The time when CARP emerged was a time when many other groups, in New Zealand and overseas, were out on protest. CARP's particular concern was just rising prices, and not wholesale revolution, but I argue that their emergence in 1966 was enabled by the active protest scene that already existed, and that would exist in the next few years. CARP were not formed to protest just because everyone else was protesting, but the anxious response to the wool price collapse's impact can be seen as a specific, narrow form of discontent within larger socioeconomic discontent expressed by the larger protest movement.

Labour History: CARP's Friends in the Trade Unions

A long-standing venue to express economic discontent in New Zealand, even before the 1950s, was New Zealand's trade union movement. In the post-war era, the trade unions in New Zealand were influential economic actors, and a traditional support base for the Labour Party. The system of compulsory conciliation and arbitration set up by the Liberal government in 1894 gave the unions an important role in setting the conditions of labour in New Zealand, and with modifications the system remained in force until 1987.⁹⁷ In post-World War II New Zealand, this meant the trade unions were key actors in negotiating wage rises over time. Within unions, there was debate in the 1950s over the approach to take with the government and industry. Militant members called for confrontation and in the early 1950s they took their chance to push for more action. Disputes within the New Zealand Federation of Labour (FoL) led to militant unions, led by the Waterside Workers' Union (WWU), walking out of a FoL meeting in 1950.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ See Kurlansky for more on global protest in 1968.

⁹⁷ Brooking, pp. 82-84.

⁹⁸ Locke, 2022, p. 49.

In 1951, members of the WWU (also known as ‘wharfies’) were locked out of their workplaces by their employers, who deemed the wharfies to be on strike after a series of pay disputes at the start of the year.⁹⁹ National Prime Minister Sidney Holland, a political conservative, seized the chance to strike back at union militants and imposed a national state of emergency, deregistering the WWU and criminalising association with the striking wharfies.¹⁰⁰ The wharfies received little public support at the time: both the FoL and the Labour Party distanced themselves from the striking wharfies, and Holland overwhelmingly won an election he called to capitalise on the fallout from the strike.¹⁰¹ While the militants ultimately lost the 1951 strike, it is a key event in the labour history of New Zealand.¹⁰² While Brooking emphasises that most New Zealanders opposed the strike, it was a significant formative event for many militant trade unionists. We can see from Locke that the 1951 strike was a key event for leaders like Bill Anderson.¹⁰³ Well-known unionist families like the Humphries and the Kellys were involved in the 1951 strike, and later on women from these families would be key leaders in CARP.¹⁰⁴ I argue that the 1951 strike was a formative moment for some of the people who would later lead CARP. In a way, the ties between CARP and the trade unions were already being built 15 years before CARP even existed.

The 1951 wharfie strike was the largest industrial action in New Zealand in the 1950s, and the rest of the decade was relatively quiet for unionists. The FoL had opposed the strike at the time, and the public at large appear to have opposed the strike. In general, the system of conciliation and arbitration continued to operate much as it had before.¹⁰⁵ The 1951 strike was driven by militant unionists who sought revolutionary change, and after the wharfies failed the rest of the decade was spent organising and rebuilding militant strength. For one example, Bill Anderson moved into the Northern Drivers Union after the strike ended, and politically the rest of the decade was spent building up support for the Union, and

⁹⁹ Locke, 2022, pp. 49-50.

¹⁰⁰ Locke, 2022, pp. 50; Roth, pp. 74-81.

¹⁰¹ Franks and McAloon, pp. 136-140; Brooking, pp. 136-137; Roth, p. 80.

¹⁰² See also Dick Scott, *151 Days: The Great Waterfront Lockout and Supporting Strikes, February 15-July 15 1951* (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2001), and Michael Bassett, *Confrontation '51: The 1951 Waterfront Dispute* (Wellington: Reed Publishing, 1972).

¹⁰³ Brooking, p. 136; Locke, 2022, pp. 57-66. In fact, the aftermath of the 1951 strike is what brought Anderson into the Northern Drivers Union, the militant union he was well-known for leading for several decades.

¹⁰⁴ Locke, 2022, pp. 51-53. Flo Humphries was, for the purposes of this thesis, a particularly important person connected to both the 1951 strike and CARP's leadership.

¹⁰⁵ Brooking, pp. 135-136.

organisationally building up the Communist Party of New Zealand.¹⁰⁶ For an example of union action in this decade, we can look at the 'Black Budget', which unions strongly opposed. The Wellington Seamen's Union held a meeting where they expressed concern that "increased prices constitute the inflation of our economy, and will erode the value of savings and pensions".¹⁰⁷ Ken Douglas from the Wellington Drivers Union defected from the Labour Party to the Communist Party in light of the 'Black Budget', and in general this budget caused Labour to lose many supporters within the union movement.¹⁰⁸ There were, however, no significant strikes undertaken as a result of the 'Black Budget'.

In the 1960s, the system of conciliation and arbitration began to come under attack, from business interests and the Holyoake National Government elected in 1960. First, in 1961, came the end of 'compulsory unionism'. Previously all workers covered by the industrial arbitration system (in other words, nearly all workers outright) were required to be represented by a union; the new law meant that workers were not required to be members of a union if their employer objected to requiring union membership as a condition of employment.¹⁰⁹ In practice, this meant unions theoretically no longer held a monopoly on representing workers, which undermined the value of their collective bargaining. This change had little impact at the time, which Locke attributes to "active unionism", but as time went on, individual unions began to be discontented with the idea of national awards setting uniform national wages and conditions, and began to directly negotiate with employers.¹¹⁰ National conciliation and arbitration would weaken from the 1960s onwards until 1991. The big challenges to unionism as a movement would come under Rob Muldoon in 1975. Muldoon, elected as Prime Minister in 1975, and a long-time Minister of Finance, was well known for his anti-communist public pronouncements, and for many years engaged in 'red-baiting' techniques of calling out union opponents as 'communists'.¹¹¹ In short, the 1970s

¹⁰⁶ Locke, 2022, pp. 62-84.

¹⁰⁷ *Press*, 9 July 1958, p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ Locke, 2022, pp. 77-78.

¹⁰⁹ Locke, 2022, p. 86.

¹¹⁰ Locke, 2022, pp. 86, 94.

¹¹¹ Locke, 2022, pp. 175-178. See also Ryan Bodman, "'The Public have had a Gutsful and So Have We": The Alienation of Organized Labour in New Zealand, 1968-1975', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 48.1 (2014), 78-108, about the shifting representations of trade unions in New Zealand media, which moved from representing unions as roughly aligned with the national interest to being an opponent of economic recovery.

were a time of increased confrontation between the Government and trade unions, in particular resurgent militant unions like the Northern Drivers Union.

The reason for discussing this very abbreviated history of trade unions in New Zealand is because this history too is part of CARP's background. Many of CARP's leaders came from the unions, either directly as union officials, or as wives of union officials. One of CARP's key tactics, as we will soon see, was economic boycotts targeted at businesses that were considered guilty of unfairly raising their prices. This could be seen as an economic parallel to the principle of striking. In both cases, economic activity is being withdrawn, on an organised basis, in pursuit of a desired end goal. For unions, the withheld activity is labour, with the goal of winning better terms of employment; for CARP, the withheld activity is consumer spending, with the idea of hurting business and convincing them to not unfairly raise prices. Roughly speaking, agitation within the trade unions increased in the 1960s and the 1970s. Perhaps, then, the state of the trade unions also played a role in why CARP organised the way they did. CARP leaders coming from the unions appear to have brought with them their networks with the trade unions. It is therefore clear why CARP counted the trade unions as close allies.

Out of the identified areas of protest in New Zealand in the 1960s, the unions are the protest organisations CARP were always closest to. In fact, this may potentially explain why some contemporary authors treat CARP as simply a union adjunct: without knowing the broader history of CARP, it makes sense that a movement led by women adjacent to, or in, the union movement would appear to simply be an extension of the trade unions. I argue that CARP was not just a trade union satellite organisation: the 1967 split detailed in the next chapter shows the complications with such a simple linkage. Nevertheless, understanding the links between the trade unions and CARP's leaderships help to show why CARP formed when it did and how it did. There is no evidence that the techniques of boycott were deliberately, consciously, copied from the trade unions, but I argue that the personal links enhance our understanding of the rationale behind CARP's decisions to engage in economic boycotts.

Gender History: A 'Housewives Organisation'

One key part of CARP's identity, at least in their earlier days, was that they were a "housewives' organisation": they were established, organised, and supported by self-identified 'housewives'. This means that CARP's background also includes gender history in post-war New Zealand. To condense a lot of history very quickly, the Second World War was a time of massive social upheaval, particularly for women. A large chunk of New Zealand's employed men left the country to serve in action against the Axis powers across the globe, and in their absence women sought to contribute to the 'home front'.¹¹² This meant many Pākehā women entered the work force, and earned money independently, in varied jobs such as nursing, farm work, and law enforcement.¹¹³ New policies around families, like the universal Family Benefit introduced in 1946, also sought to reinforce the gendered role of women as mothers.¹¹⁴

After the war, in the 1950s, in the prevailing dominant discourse there was a renewed emphasis on 'family', and on the role of women as domestic workers. In the home, a housewife "(spent) a great deal of time doing dishes, sweeping, mopping, dusting and vacuuming, cleaning bathrooms and toilets".¹¹⁵ This quote from Labrum was written about 1950s ideas of cleanliness, but also shows the expectations on wives – husbands are not listed as doing cleaning! In school, girls were expected to be interested in dress-making and materials, with one goal being "to enable the girls to use colour, texture, and pattern with discrimination". Boys, on the other hand, were officially set completely different expectations.¹¹⁶ In the 1950s, according to Labrum, women made up less than a quarter of the total employed workforce, with many "(staying) at home to look after children" instead.¹¹⁷ The face-value picture, then, was that the 1950s were a time of renewed cultural conservatism, and gender separation: the theory was that men should be employed and women should manage the house.

¹¹² Brookes, pp. 258-260.

¹¹³ Brookes, pp. 260-264.

¹¹⁴ Brookes, pp. 274-275.

¹¹⁵ Labrum, p. 68.

¹¹⁶ Labrum, p. 145.

¹¹⁷ Labrum, p. 177.

While female employment during World War II was, in government circles, seen as a temporary expedient, ‘just for the duration’ to borrow from Brookes, in practice the new sense of independence this created could not simply be undone post-war.¹¹⁸ While the discourse may have been that women should be domestically-minded, many Pākehā women were still working in the 1950s as nurses, as teachers, as tailors, as typists.¹¹⁹ From at least the mid-1950s the concept of the ‘male breadwinner’, that men were (or should be) the sole economic ‘providers’, came under ever-increasing scrutiny. Such cases as that of Jean Parker, a senior public servant who in 1956 challenged the fact that three junior cadets were automatically given seniority over her because they were male, highlighted increasing discontent with unequal conditions.¹²⁰ The arguments between the Public Service Association (PSA), the Public Service Commission, Prime Minister Holland, and the National Council of Women helped to shift public sentiment towards support for the principle of equal pay for women. The Government Service Equal Pay Act 1960, legislating equal pay for female public servants by 1963, was one notable outcome before CARP’s time.¹²¹

The 1950s also saw the beginnings of attitude shifts towards sexual subjects. For example, traditional views on menstruation in young girls (namely, that menstruation was ‘dirty’) came under fire, and period paraphernalia such as pads and pins began to be seen in New Zealand schools.¹²² The ‘Pill’, that is the contraceptive pill, was introduced in the 1960s, and with its ability to control pregnancies led to family planning, and the promise of sex without pregnancy worries.¹²³ The 1960s through to the 1980s are identified with ‘second wave feminism’ – a successor to ‘first-wave feminism’ that fought legal changes such as women’s suffrage and legal rights in general and within marriage. Brookes particularly calls the decade between 1967 and 1977 a ‘decade of discovery’ for women.¹²⁴ Young Pākehā women, particularly women students, were involved in the protest groups mentioned earlier in the

¹¹⁸ Brookes, p. 257.

¹¹⁹ Brookes, pp. 308-309.

¹²⁰ See Brookes, pp. 312-313.

¹²¹ Brookes, pp. 312-313. See also Sarah Christie, ‘Women and the New Zealand office, 1945-1972: Keystrokes to a rewarding life?’ (Doctoral thesis, University of Otago, 2022), about women clerical workers in New Zealand in the post-WWII era, their stories, and their role in second-wave feminism in New Zealand.

¹²² See Brookes, pp. 317-319. See also Barbara Brookes and Margaret Tennant, ‘Making Girls Modern: Pakeha women and menstruation in New Zealand, 1930-70’, *Women’s History Review*, 7 (1998), 565-581.

¹²³ Brookes, pp. 329-330. See also Barbara Brookes, Claire Gooder, and Nancy De Castro, “‘Feminine as her Handbag, Modern as her Hairstyle’: The Uptake of the Contraceptive Pill in New Zealand”, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 47.2 (2013), 208-231.

¹²⁴ As seen in the title of Chapter 11 of *A History of New Zealand Women*. Brookes, pp. 338-377.

chapter. They also travelled overseas, and brought back with them overseas tastes in fashion, music, politics, and sexuality – in particular ideas around ‘hippies’.¹²⁵ Women’s liberation, feminism, and lesbian identity, entered the discourse, and the privileged position of men in New Zealand society came under scrutiny.¹²⁶ New laws passed in the mid-1970s improved women’s position after a divorce. In principle, the new system was that matrimonial property was to be shared between the divorcing partners.¹²⁷ Abortion laws were reformed in 1977, after many years of political campaigning for change; they were more restrictive than women’s groups desired, placing precedence on the rights of unborn children, but compared to previous laws the new laws were more permissive of abortion.¹²⁸ This is a heavily condensed version of women-centric history in 1960s and 1970s New Zealand; other historians have gone into more detail on feminism and the various parts of the women’s movement, and there were criticisms from wāhine Māori in the 1970s that the burgeoning women’s movement was failing to examine intersectional issues of race and sex in New Zealand that would continue well after CARP was gone.¹²⁹ The point is that the position of women (at least, Pākehā women) was rapidly changing in the 1960s and 1970s, the time when CARP existed.

Working women were becoming increasingly involved in the trade union movement during the time after the Second World War. In 1951, for example, the wives of striking wharfies set up auxiliaries to support the strikers, to organise sympathetic women, and to present a women’s voice on the ongoing industrial actions.¹³⁰ These auxiliaries were not allowed to attend the meetings of the lockout committee; Locke notes that “entrenched gender roles meant women’s auxiliary members were prevented from doing as much support work as they would have liked”.¹³¹ Broadly speaking, according to Melanie Nolan, “few unions defended the male breadwinner wage and female domesticity more than the watersiders”.¹³² While they may have been militants on economic matters, the wharfies

¹²⁵ Brookes, pp. 340-341.

¹²⁶ Brookes, pp. 346-348. See Macdonald, 1993, for examples of feminist writing.

¹²⁷ Brookes, pp. 359.

¹²⁸ Brookes, pp. 367-371.

¹²⁹ See works previously cited in this thesis: Brookes; Nolan; Gibson, Williams, and Cairns; Macdonald, 1993; Else; Macdonald, Penfold, and Williams.

¹³⁰ Locke, 2022, pp. 52-54.

¹³¹ Locke, 2022, p. 53.

¹³² Quoted in Locke, 2022, p. 53.

were conservative when it came to gender. According to Locke wharfies were an extreme example on gender conservatism within the union movement, but it highlights the broader point that in the early 1950s strict gender roles were normalised within sections of the trade unions.¹³³ In the late 1950s, however, there were women to be found as trade unions secretaries: Flo Humphries and Ella Ayo, who I will introduce in the next chapter, were both union secretaries before, and while, they were leaders in CARP Auckland. Locke documents several other women in private-sector unions who she calls ‘union trailblazers’; they faced challenges in being taken seriously by industrial bosses and by other union men.¹³⁴

By the 1970s, Pākehā women working within the unions pushed for equal pay for women and equal employment opportunity to work the same jobs as men. Additionally, ideas around women’s liberation and feminism began to enter unionist discourse.¹³⁵ Outside of the unions, groups like the Working Women’s Alliance (WWA) emerged. The WWA was a Wellington organisation that existed between 1974 and 1978, established by working women and housewives, that pushed for radical economic restructuring, and emphasised the idea that the best way to secure equality for women was the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.¹³⁶ Women like Sonja Davies, a well-known Shop Employees’ Union organiser and Labour Party supporter, pushed for the recognition of women’s rights, encountering opposition within the FoL to their proposals, and therefore also relying on organisation outside of the union movement.¹³⁷ Note that this tied in to a larger debate within feminism at the time: should ‘class struggle’ or ‘gender struggle’ be the focus of the feminist movement? This was a debate that unionist women like Joyce Hawe were engaged in: there was a reluctance to identify as ‘feminist’ for fear of betraying the workers at large.¹³⁸ Similar debates were occurring around whether racial struggle or class struggle should be the priority for Māori unionists, nearly leading to a split in the unionist movement in the 1980s.¹³⁹ Activists like Donna Awatere and Atareta Poananga were, at the time, pushing for

¹³³ Locke, 2022, pp. 51-53.

¹³⁴ Cybèle Locke, *Workers in the Margins: Union Radicals in Post-War New Zealand* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2012), pp. 54-61.

¹³⁵ Locke, 2012, pp. 63-69.

¹³⁶ Locke, 2012, pp. 69-70. Records show that CARP and the WWA were in touch in 1977.

¹³⁷ Locke, 2012, pp. 70-75.

¹³⁸ Locke, 2012, p. 75.

¹³⁹ Locke, 2022, p. 214.

unions to consider the implications of both gender and racial struggle for wāhine Māori.¹⁴⁰ The key point is that, by the 1970s, Pākehā working women were pushing for radical change to improve their position in society, both through the union movement and outside, while grappling with their relationship with feminism and race outside of union militancy.¹⁴¹

The point of including this summary of gender history in 1950s-1970s New Zealand, particularly Pākehā working women's history, is that this is another key part of CARP's background. Brookes' 'decade of discovery' began in 1967, the year before CARP was established. CARP initially identified themselves as a 'housewives' organisation', and even though in later years they usually replaced this with 'consumers' organisation', we will see through the thesis that CARP was always led by Pākehā women, and does not appear to have developed a substantial base of male membership. The label 'housewife' harkens back to the idealised 1950s family unit, that still held sway in union circles for many years through ideas around 'male breadwinners'. In reality, many CARP leaders were Pākehā 'working women': they also held responsibilities as trade union officials, and in any case their husbands would be classed as part of the unionist 'working class'. Note that organisations like the WWA were interested in economics: working women were interested in the impact of rising prices on working-class households, as part of their anti-capitalist stance. Even in more conservative middle-class households, more influenced by ideals of gender roles, 'housewives' were the shoppers for the family. Price rises, therefore, were something they would have keenly followed.

Knowing the active role Pākehā women played in protest movements at the time, and the interests of working women and housewives, helps make sense of why CARP formed when it did, and why thousands of Pākehā women were willing to join CARP's protests. The economic changes brought about by rising prices affected women in particular, whether they were interested in the destruction of capitalism or in buying for the family. CARP fits in to the bigger picture of women's protest: while abortion and divorce were cultural targets, rising prices were an economic target of women's protest. The 1967 schism we will see in the next chapter complicates the relationship between CARP and 'working women'; the branches that split do not seem to have been run by 'working women'. But through women

¹⁴⁰ Locke, 2012, pp. 125-128; Awatere; Harris; Hill; Simpkin.

¹⁴¹ See also Nolan and Ryan.

like Humphries and Ayo we can see the links between unionist women and CARP's leadership. In short, gender history can help us understand why Pākehā women came together to form CARP in 1966 and 1967, as well why CARP's initial identity as 'housewives' changed in the 1970s.

Retail Groceries in Transition

Finally, I wish to briefly lay out the state of the grocery sector in New Zealand in the 1960s, to complete the background surrounding CARP as an urban movement. Until about the 1950s, food in urban New Zealand was sold through separate shops each specialising in specific subsets of the grocery sector.¹⁴² For example, bakeries sold bread, pastries, and cakes; butchers sold mince, meat cuttings, and meat byproducts; fishmongers sold fish; and greengrocers sold fruit and vegetables. These shops were independently owned by local grocers, and customers were served by assistants who packaged food at the request of their customers.¹⁴³ These local businesses were the primary way urban residents acquired food in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In rural New Zealand farmers might grow or raise a good portion of their diet, outside of systems of retail, but as discussed in the introduction this thesis does not focus on rural responses to rising prices, so this discussion will not explore this idea further.¹⁴⁴

The 1920s onwards saw changes to the way food and groceries were sold in urban New Zealand. First, in 1924, a group of Auckland greengrocers banded together to combine their branding and purchasing power, and the result was New Zealand's earliest 'chain' of grocers, Four Square.¹⁴⁵ From the late 1940s, Four Square transitioned from a chain of traditional greengrocers towards customer 'self-service', a model imported from overseas where customers would choose their own groceries, laid out pre-packaged on shelves.¹⁴⁶ In 1958, a group of Auckland businessmen opened a new 'all-convenience' store named Foodtown,

¹⁴² Ray Bailey and Mary Earle, *Home Cooking to Takeaways: Changes in Food Consumption in New Zealand During 1880-1990*, 2nd edn (Palmerston North: Massey University, 1999), pp. 39-40.

¹⁴³ Bailey and Earle, p. 39.

¹⁴⁴ For information on rural provisioning of food in the late 19th and early 20th century, and on rural kitchens during that time, see Catherine Elizabeth Cooper, 'Hearth and Home: A History of the Rural Kitchen in New Zealand, 1840-1940' (Doctoral thesis, University of Otago, 2017).

¹⁴⁵ John Winters, *Checkout: Revealing how and why New Zealand's supermarkets operate the way they do* (Auckland: New Zealand Trust Group, 2013), p. 44. Note that Winters cites 1925 as the year that Four Square was formed, this seems to be an error on his part.

¹⁴⁶ Winters, p. 21.

New Zealand's first modern supermarket.¹⁴⁷ More supermarkets emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, like New World and Countdown, and in time the department store Woolworths would also transition to becoming a supermarket chain.¹⁴⁸ According to A. N. Laird, a contemporary author, in 1961 New Zealand had three supermarkets, but by 1964 there were 28, and in 1965 there were 50.¹⁴⁹ Laird connected this apparent 'supermarket boom' to ongoing processes of suburbanisation in the 1950s and 1960s. Suburbanisation is the process of suburb development on the outskirts of cities, and migration from city centres to suburbs. This was another aspect of the story of the wool boom and the 'baby boom' in 1950s New Zealand. One key part of many new suburbs were supermarkets, as shown in Laird.¹⁵⁰ The 'supermarket boom' that existed in the same decade as CARP was a key part of the move from small, independent food vendors to today's supermarket-dominated regime. Despite this, supermarkets were not a special target of CARP's attention. The large boycotts of the 1970s were not aimed at retailers, but at the producers and suppliers: companies like the Wattie group of companies, or Unilever, not Foodstuffs or Progressive Enterprises. CARP Auckland's first target was bakers in Auckland, and debate on that first boycott involved discussion on the impact of boycotts on small businesses, so to some extent CARP existed with both the old and the new systems of retailing. I therefore argue that CARP would have existed, in a very similar form, whether there had been a 'supermarket boom' in the 1960s or not. Supermarkets, and the shape of the retail sector, will therefore not be examined in much further detail in this thesis. Nevertheless, supermarkets were an increasingly key part of the economic system the CARP sought to change in the 1960s and 1970s. While CARP did not initiate major protests against supermarkets, they did have interactions with them at various points. A key event discussed in Chapter 3 is the relationship between CARP and Albert Gubay's 3 Guys chain, and CARP Wellington at one point attempted a private prosecution against Woolworths. CARP's first major target in 1967 was 'bakers', a key vendor in the old system of food retail, but in their later years there were no protests against, say,

¹⁴⁷ Winters, p. 22. Here I define a supermarket as a retail shop that sells the widest possible range of food and groceries in one combined site run on a self-serve basis (in other words, run so customers can pick their own food). First 'modern' supermarket here means a supermarket that would be recognised by consumers in 2024 as a 'supermarket'.

¹⁴⁸ Winters, pp. 23, 44.

¹⁴⁹ A. N. Laird, 'The Supermarket and Its Influence Upon The New Zealand Market Structure for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables' (Masters thesis, Massey University, 1967), p. 45.

¹⁵⁰ Laird, p. 46; Winters, p. 23.

'butchers' or 'fishmongers'. This could, in part, be attributed to the changes brought on by the 'supermarket boom', and the decline of old-style retailers. The 'supermarket boom', therefore, had a minor part in CARP's background: at the very least, as context to some of CARP's interactions with businesses in the 1970s.

Conclusion

Taken as a whole, the diverse historical background presented in this chapter helps us to better understand the reasons why CARP formed, why it formed when it did, and why the leadership chose to take CARP in the direction it took. CARP was one part of a larger sea of protest: organisations, like CARE and the COV, and topical protests around issues of race, war, and the nuke, are all part of this larger network. While the extent of 'prosperity' in New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s is contestable, the wool price collapse in 1966 was the definite end of an economic era for the country. In one sense, CARP was a grassroots response to the ramifications of the rippling effects of December 1966. Pākehā women were engaged in increasing vocal protest in the 1960s, and in another sense, CARP can be seen as a form of specifically female economic protest.

The 1951 wharfies strike, and rising tensions within the trade union movement in the 1960s, was also a key event for many of CARP's leaders, who held positions within, or were closely linked to, unions. The idea of economic boycotts shows parallels with traditional union tactics, and the parallel is made clear when we understand that CARP had a strong unionist element in its leadership. This is not to say that the women who led CARP were directly copying union tactics; I argue instead that the background of women like Ayo and Kelly helps us to understand why they decided, as CARP officials, to lead economic boycotts. CARP was not formed for the sake of having another protest organisation, but, as the experiences of global protest in 1968 show, CARP was formed in a time when direct, organised, action against social problems was comparatively common. In 1966, all these factors together enabled the creation of a movement like the Campaign Against Rising Prices, with the leadership that it had, and influenced the direction it took. In short, CARP was very much a product of its time: it was firmly situated within an era of flourishing protest, economic anxiety, and demands from women and unions for change.

Chapter 2: “Unity is Strength”? – 1966-1969

Introduction

In 1967, “unity is strength” was a sentiment being raised within CARP in light of ongoing schisms. I originally encountered the quote in a 1974 photo of a CARP protest, but versions of the saying cropped up amongst the women pushing against rising prices in 1967.¹⁵¹ This chapter will discuss the first phase of CARP activity, beginning with the founding of CARP Auckland in December 1966 and ending in 1969. The high-water mark of CARP’s national influence was in 1967, when branches were rapidly spreading across Aotearoa New Zealand, with the intent that these branches would incorporate into a unified permanent national association. After the peak in 1967, CARP entered an organisational decline through 1968 and 1969: they continued to operate, but at a reduced level and with branch activity almost completely cut back to Auckland and Wellington. We can see how ‘unity is strength’, as a statement, highlights the state of CARP’s organisation in 1967: everyone agreed ‘unity was strength’, but this could not prevent a schism which CARP would spend several years building back from. I will also set out the relationship between CARP and other historical actors, including political parties and trade unions. These relationships continued throughout CARP’s life, and we will see that these could be rather complicated. I end the chapter with a discussion of CARP activities during 1968 and 1969, both quieter years for CARP compared to the rush of activity in 1967.

CARP’s Formation and Leadership

In the lead-up to the November 1966 general election, discussed in the previous chapter, a group of Auckland women with backgrounds in left-wing politics formed an unofficial ‘housewives committee’ to take collective action against economic woes. Chisholm documents them as being alienated from the two main political parties and desirous of action beyond what National and Labour were committed to in the election.¹⁵² Members of the group included Flo Humphries, a well-known trade union activist in Auckland, and Ella

¹⁵¹ See, for example, SPA News, July 1967, p. 4, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01, where it is reiterated that organisations like CARP are “all working for the same principles”. Photo comes from *Evening Post*, 18 June 1974, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/06.

¹⁵² Chisholm, p. 20.

Ayo, a member of the Socialist Unity Party, a pro-Soviet New Zealand communist party.¹⁵³ After considering what action to take, the 'committee' placed an advertisement in the *Auckland Star*, asking "Who wants to do something about high prices?" and listing the telephone numbers of the 'committee' members to contact.¹⁵⁴ The response was positive, and several local housewives' associations quickly endorsed the idea of acting against rising prices. The result was a meeting organised by the 'committee' on 1 December 1966 in central Auckland, where 200 attendees decided to set up an organisation to fight rising prices, and adopted the name "Campaign Against Rising Prices".¹⁵⁵ The meeting also elected officers for the new organisation. Humphries was elected President of the Campaign, Auckland housewife Gloria Schmidt was elected the first Auckland Secretary, and an Executive was elected to co-ordinate the Campaign.¹⁵⁶ Many Executive members, including Humphries, Schmidt, and Ayo, were on the earlier 'housewives committee'. The organisation immediately sent letters to the leaders of the three largest political parties at the time, and called on Prime Minister Keith Holyoake to "immediate investigate prices and increases and say when and how he intends to keep them at an economic level".¹⁵⁷

The first meeting led to further meetings throughout Auckland's suburbs, and CARP's leadership hoped to build from these meetings towards a larger, all-Auckland, protest meeting in 1967.¹⁵⁸ The outcome of the suburb meetings was the formation of local area committees to carry out the decisions made by CARP. A meeting in the North Shore on 8 February 1967 led to the first local affiliate of CARP, and soon more affiliates were formed in Mt Roskill, Tāmaki, New Lynn, Mt Eden, Pakuranga, and other suburbs.¹⁵⁹ During this wave, outside Auckland, the Wellington branch of CARP was founded. On 13 February 1967, the Wellington Housewives Association opened a meeting to the public to discuss rising prices. The meeting passed resolutions calling for economic boycotts and deputations that the Association ruled invalid because they were proposed by non-members. Non-members

¹⁵³ Chisholm, p. 20.

¹⁵⁴ Locke, 2023, p. 20; *Auckland Star*, 15 November 1966, p. 11.

¹⁵⁵ This is an abridged version of the story told by Chisholm; see Chisholm, p. 20-22, for more.

¹⁵⁶ Technically the body elected was a provisional body called 'the steering committee', and the Executive was formed as a permanent replacement later. However, the Executive and the steering committee seem to have had many members in common. Chisholm, p. 20, *New Zealand Herald*, 19 December 1966, p. 5.

¹⁵⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 19 December 1966, p. 5. The three leaders were Keith Holyoake for National, Norman Kirk for Labour, and Vernon Cracknell for Social Credit.

¹⁵⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 30 December 1966, p. 1.

¹⁵⁹ Chisholm, pp. 28-30.

dissatisfied with the Association's response organised a second meeting within a week, and several further meetings at Victoria University established a Wellington Campaign Against Rising Prices and elected a committee to lead the organisation.¹⁶⁰ Women involved in Wellington included Cath Kelly and Marion Findlay, who both had husbands actively involved in Wellington trade unions. Findlay was elected as the inaugural secretary of CARP Wellington, and continued in that office for the next three years, while another housewife, Ann Turner, was elected Wellington President.¹⁶¹

Williams believed that CARP Wellington was not directly formed in reaction to CARP Auckland: to quote her, "it was the mini budget, not Auckland CARP, that produced Wellington CARP".¹⁶² The Housewives Association meeting was called after the mini-budget was presented, and no-one from CARP Auckland appears to have been involved in these early meetings. Indeed, outwards correspondence from CARP Auckland suggests they were completely unaware of CARP Wellington's existence until several weeks into March.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, I see no reason why the Wellington women would have chosen to use the name 'Campaign Against Rising Prices' unless they were aware of the organisation being set up in Auckland. While there is no surviving documentation regarding the choice of name in Wellington, I think it is safe to assume that the name CARP must have come from Auckland. The two branches were quickly linked together in the media: the *Evening Post* called the Wellington organisation "a Wellington branch of Auckland's Committee Against Rising Prices [sic]".¹⁶⁴ The long-term trend would be that CARP Auckland and CARP Wellington acted as two separate organisations, but they shared similar interests and were often exactly aligned in belief and action. In a sense, the independent founding of an identically-named organisation is the first proof of this trend.

¹⁶⁰ Williams, pp. 34-36. Note that Williams' primary source for the formation of CARP Wellington was interviews with Cath Kelly and other CARP leaders; these interviews appear to have been lost to time, leaving Williams' thesis as the only known documentation of some of these facts.

¹⁶¹ From press clippings, it seems that Marion Findlay and Ann Turner had much less national prominence than Flo Humphries or any of the secretaries of CARP Auckland. The Wellington leadership would become much more prominent during the second phase of CARP's history; see Chapter 3.

¹⁶² Williams, p. 37.

¹⁶³ For example, on 17 February 1967 Gloria Schmidt, on behalf of CARP Auckland, believed that the Wellington Housewives' Association had chosen to run a campaign against price increases, and seemed to consider CARP Wellington's existence as a rumour. Letter from Gloria Schmidt to Mrs Sheehan, 17 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2.

¹⁶⁴ *Evening Post*, 20 February 1967, p. 20, quoted in Williams, 1976, p. 37.

There are three women who were particularly prominent leaders for CARP Auckland and Wellington, and here I will expand on their backgrounds. Florence Dunlop was a working-class woman who grew up in the shadow of the Great Depression in the 1930s. In the 1940s she was a single mother who fought against the then-prevalent stigma against single mothers. Her second husband, Bill Humphries, was a unionist seaman who was involved in the 1951 waterfront strike, and from the late 1940s onwards Flo entered union circles.¹⁶⁵ For 24 years from 1954 she was the secretary of the Auckland Drug and Chemical Factories Employees' Union, and she represented the FoL overseas as a conference delegate in 1971.¹⁶⁶ As mentioned, she was a driving force in the initial setup of CARP Auckland, and she served as the branch's president from its founding in 1966 until the end of the branch's existence.

Ella Ayo came from a similar background to Flo: she was a member of the Communist Party of New Zealand from 1933 until she joined the breakaway Socialist Unity Party in 1966.¹⁶⁷ In the trade unions, she was a strong supporter of equal pay for women and advocated for expanding women's rights.¹⁶⁸ She was another founding member of CARP, but her name was often omitted from public advertising to avoid associations with communism and communist parties.¹⁶⁹ In 1968, however, she became secretary of CARP Auckland, and remained in the position until the end of the branch.

In Wellington, Cath Kelly was a well-known left-wing activist. She was a member of the Communist Party along with her unionist husband, Pat, until being expelled in 1970 during the Maoist reorientation of the party.¹⁷⁰ As well as being the secretary and public face of CARP Wellington from 1970 until about 1978, Cath was also involved in the fight against apartheid, and she was a member of the COV. Her daughter, Helen, would later be elected President of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions in the 2000s.¹⁷¹ From these three

¹⁶⁵ Margot Roth, 'Florence Humphries, 1916-1981', in *Ko Kui Ma te Kaupapa The Book of New Zealand Women*, ed. by Charlotte Macdonald, Merimeri Penfold, and Bridget Williams (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1991), pp. 317-318; Locke, 2022, pp. 36-37.

¹⁶⁶ Roth, 1991; Locke, 2023, p. 20.

¹⁶⁷ Locke, 2023, p. 20.

¹⁶⁸ Locke, 2023, p. 20.

¹⁶⁹ For example, her name was not included in the original Auckland Star advertisement. Her membership in the Communist Party and the Socialist Unity Party was well-known publicly. Chisholm, p. 22.

¹⁷⁰ Locke, 2022, p. 119.

¹⁷¹ For further information on the Kelly family, see Macfie's biography on Helen Kelly; Cath is the subject of the first chapter. Macfie, pp. 15-29.

women we can see a general pattern in CARP leadership: most of CARP's leaders were left-wing activists, involved in the trade unions and/or the various communist parties, and came to CARP already having experience in grassroots activism and protest.¹⁷²

The Early Proliferation of Regional Branches

After the founding of CARP Auckland and CARP Wellington, early 1967 saw a wave of branch activity taking place throughout Aotearoa New Zealand for CARP. There were of course the local affiliates of CARP throughout the suburbs of Auckland, and in Wellington a sister branch was established in Porirua.¹⁷³ Outside these centres, there was a flurry of activity in Hamilton: by the first week of February, CARP Auckland was receiving letters of support from the city, and by March local housewives were organising public meetings with representatives from CARP Auckland.¹⁷⁴ Unfortunately, no newsletters or other ephemera from this Hamilton branch appears to have survived, and the only documentary evidence I have discovered are the letters from Hamilton kept by CARP Auckland and Wellington. However, in his commentary on the later attempts at national union, Chisholm notes that 'the Waikato' was one of "three distinct groups of leaders (that) ... had headed the mobilisation drive".¹⁷⁵ It would seem, then, that Hamilton was one hotspot for CARP outside of Auckland. A branch was formed in Christchurch, and this appears to have been the most active one in the South Island. CARP Christchurch was particularly interested in adapting the boycott initiatives in Auckland and Wellington to the local situation.¹⁷⁶ Their early focus was on researching the nature of price increases in their own region.

¹⁷² Other women leading CARP, including Marion Findlay, first secretary of CARP Wellington, also came from similar unionist backgrounds. Not all CARP leaders, however, came from unionist backgrounds: Schmidt, for example, denied being a member of any sort of political organisation. *Dominion Sunday Times*, 25 December 1966, p. 5, quoted in Chisholm, pp. 72-73.

¹⁷³ Per the records of CARP Wellington, the Porirua branch seems to have acted closely in tandem with the Wellington branch; bulletins for the capital in 1967 and 1968 often referred to the Wellington and Porirua branches jointly, and it appears that by 1970 the Porirua branch assimilated into CARP Wellington. However, they published at least two newsletters of their own in 1967.

¹⁷⁴ Letter from B. G. Langdale to Gloria Schmidt, 8 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2; Letter from B. Hill to Ella Ayo, 1 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

¹⁷⁵ Chisholm, p. 33.

¹⁷⁶ Letter from Rosemary Phillips to Gloria Schmidt, 4 April 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/5. Note that, again, evidence on South Island branches was discovered amongst the archives of the North Island branches.

More branches were established in regional centres around the North Island. In Tokoroa, a local branch was printing several circulars for interested persons in September 1967.¹⁷⁷ In Palmerston North, a branch was formed with support from across the Manawatū, and Wellington representatives were invited to their first meetings.¹⁷⁸ In Whakatāne, an association was formed to “investigate and combat rising prices”; in the second quarter of 1967 they were particularly frequent correspondents with CARP Auckland.¹⁷⁹ Organisers for the Whakatāne branch were particularly pleased by a visit by Humphries to the area in March 1967, sending letters ahead of time discussing local sentiment towards CARP.¹⁸⁰ Another notable branch existed in Rotorua, founded at roughly the same time as the Whakatāne branch. They held more conservative views regarding the trade unions, and generally closely aligned with their sisters in Whakatāne. In Waihi, a branch was formed that independently corresponded with the Minister of Finance, Rob Muldoon, regarding concerns around price rises and currency decimalisation.¹⁸¹ In Whanganui, a “Housewives Association” was formed by housewives concerned about rising prices, and requested to affiliate with CARP Auckland.¹⁸² CARP’s response to this request reflects their desire to focus singularly on rising prices: they queried whether the housewives were attempting to form a Housewives Association or a branch of CARP, noting only the latter could become affiliated.¹⁸³ There was a similar occurrence in Whangārei: a meeting of the Whangārei Housewives Association led to a committee to fight rising prices, but upon asking to affiliate, Auckland’s response was to suggest the committee separate from the Association.¹⁸⁴ The final instance to note is an early attempt at a Dunedin branch, which according to Chisholm vanished as quickly as it started.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁷ Letter from C. Haumaha to Marion Findlay, 4 September 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

¹⁷⁸ Letter from Ida L. Watsons(?) to Marion Findlay, 12 April 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

¹⁷⁹ Letter from P. A. Miles-Kingston to Gloria Schmidt, 17 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

¹⁸⁰ This sentiment is particularly relevant to upcoming discussion about what happened to the other branches, so I will discuss it further later. In short, they favoured emphasising local decision-making as opposed to national co-ordination, and were concerned about the economic ramifications of housewife boycotts. Letter from R. Kirby (?) to Flo Humphries, 9 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

¹⁸¹ Letter from A. Heinch (?) to Rob Muldoon, 10 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

¹⁸² Letter from S. E. Groppt to Gloria Schmidt, 7 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

¹⁸³ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to S. E. Groppt, 23 (?) March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

¹⁸⁴ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to Mrs. Jackson, 17 February 1967; Letter from (?) Ross to Gloria Schmidt, 21 March 1967. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2.

¹⁸⁵ Chisholm, p. 31.

CARP Auckland and Wellington actively encouraged the formation of branches throughout New Zealand. When local housewives wrote in, they would write back encouraging local initiative and local leadership against rising prices.¹⁸⁶ CARP would call their growth across New Zealand ‘completely spontaneous’.¹⁸⁷ CARP’s self-description of the formation of new branches was that local contacts were publicised in suburban papers, leading to public meetings and local committee organisation.¹⁸⁸ This indicates that the rapidly forming branches of CARP were grassroots efforts, although the helping hand of Auckland was often felt when Humphries or Schmidt would visit. The Executive in Auckland ambitiously hoped to gain CARP 100,000 members nationally.¹⁸⁹ It is difficult to know how many people were actual members of CARP during the first half of 1967. Chisholm cites the Auckland branch as claiming 3000 members, but asserts that many of these ‘members’ were not active participants after February.¹⁹⁰ The Auckland meetings in February attracted a maximum of several hundred participants, providing one potential measurement for how many people were actively supporting CARP at that time.¹⁹¹ CARP originally had a fluid understanding of membership: in January 1967 a letter declared that “we will consider anyone who is active in the campaign a member of C.A.R.P.” without requiring payment.¹⁹² Eventually, CARP Auckland and Wellington levied subscription fees to receive copies of their respective newsletters and bulletins, and branch membership figures would be quoted on the basis of copies of the newsletters printed in the 1970s, but the idea of a larger body of ‘supporters’ that were not paying members carried forward in CARP’s thinking.¹⁹³

CARP’s Overarching Aim, and Developing Union Ties

Right from the beginning, the Auckland Executive decided that CARP would adopt a singular, narrow, focus on fighting rising prices. CARP Auckland’s first newsletter in January 1967 said “C.A.R.P. is formed for the sole purpose of building a campaign which will force prices down

¹⁸⁶ CARP Auckland emphasised local leadership to the housewives of Kawerau, for example. Letter from Gloria Schmidt to D. V. Green, 23 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

¹⁸⁷ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to L. Board, 22 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

¹⁸⁸ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to Mrs. Meaclen, 22 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2.

¹⁸⁹ Chisholm, p. 34.

¹⁹⁰ Chisholm, p. 36.

¹⁹¹ 400 in New Lynn, 350 in Myers Park, 200 in Mangere East. Chisholm, p. 30.

¹⁹² Letter from Gloria Schmidt to Margaret Bosson, 19 January 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

¹⁹³ Many of Kelly’s statements during the 1970 Watties boycott indicate that she held to the idea of a larger body of boycott supporters not formally part of CARP, but supportive of their efforts. See Chapter 3.

to a reasonable level within the reach of our pockets”.¹⁹⁴ CARP Wellington similarly resolved at their inaugural meeting that the branch would be established simply “with the aim of bringing down the cost of living”.¹⁹⁵ This was a focus that CARP refused to deviate from in their early years. Correspondents variously asked CARP Auckland to endorse, for example, co-operative buying and local credit unions; the response was that CARP could make material available to their members, but their policy could ‘deal with one question only’: rising prices.¹⁹⁶

The long-term goal for both branches was the reintroduction of a comprehensive system of price controls. CARP Wellington stated this in their bulletin as “we feel the Government ... should accept responsibility for (forcing up the price of basic goods) and should reintroduce effective price control on essential goods”.¹⁹⁷ While CARP talked about criticising ‘the Government’, they made it clear that they saw themselves as a non-political organisation. Right from the start, CARP Auckland said that “we are not affiliated to any political party”.¹⁹⁸ The declared policy of CARP was that “we must criticise any government that allows prices to rise beyond our means”.¹⁹⁹ Of course, during this first period of CARP’s history, ‘the Government’ always meant the National Party, and so a good chunk of time was spent fighting the Holyoake government. It will become clear in Chapter 3, however, that the Labour Party were not a consistent ally either: suffice it to say for now that the two groups did not always get along well. I mentioned, through the three earlier examples, that a good chunk of CARP’s leadership came from the trade unions and left-wing politics. I find it significant, then, that CARP’s leadership chose not to form an explicitly left-wing organisation. CARP were willing to criticise major left-wing political parties (which, at the time, meant Labour). Williams observed that “nobody from ‘right-of-centre’ would ever have

¹⁹⁴ CARP Auckland Newsletter, January 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

¹⁹⁵ Minutes of a public meeting held to form a body to Campaign Against Rising Prices, 23 February 1967, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/02.

¹⁹⁶ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to R. E. Jones, 24 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1; Letter from R. Willis to Flo Humphries, 24 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2.

¹⁹⁷ Emphasis taken from the original. CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, April 1967, CARP Wellington records, p. 4, ATL, 79-076-4/12.

¹⁹⁸ CARP Auckland flyer, 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

¹⁹⁹ CARP Auckland flyer, 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

the initiative” to form a group like CARP, but they were still willing to criticise both the right and the left.²⁰⁰

Even though CARP explicitly did not endorse traditional left-wing politics, the trade unions quickly sent CARP their support. In February, the Auckland Hotel, Hospital, Restaurant & Related Trades Employees’ Industrial Union of Workers sent a £25 donation.²⁰¹ The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of New Zealand sent signatures supporting CARP petitions.²⁰² The Carpenters and Joiners Union sent in a letter of moral support, as did the New Zealand Railway Tradesmen’s Association and the Northern Drivers Union under Bill Anderson.²⁰³ These letters went to the Auckland branch, but Marion Findlay reported that they had been in contact with ‘about 50’ local unions, and many has similarly promised money or moral support.²⁰⁴ As will become particularly apparent in Chapter 3, the unions were always big supporters of CARP activity. The *New Zealand Truth* conducted a probing inquiry into CARP Auckland’s relationship to trade unions in 1967, asking in particular if the FoL had donated: the intent seems to have been to smear CARP as a union front.²⁰⁵ In later years, there would be less internal dissent within CARP regarding the close relationship to the unions, for reasons that will be discussed later in the chapter. However, I draw attention to a passage in the first newsletter printed by the Rotorua branch pointing out that “we are NON-POLITICAL and NON-UNIONIST”.²⁰⁶ While all branches of CARP claimed to be non-political, this branch chose to go further and distance themselves from the trade unions. This suggests that there was a section of CARP that was uncomfortable with explicit connections to left-wing groups like trade unions. While the leadership in Auckland and Wellington largely came from left-wing activism, the broader membership appears to have reflected a diversity of opinion, and in particular regional branches seem to have taken more

²⁰⁰ Williams’ source for this sentiment was Wellington member Ann Turner. Williams, p. 38.

²⁰¹ Letter from G. Armstrong to Gloria Schmidt, 24 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2.

²⁰² Letter from Craig Duffy(?) to Gloria Schmidt, 3 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

²⁰³ Letter from A. Russ to Gloria Schmidt, 20 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2; Letter from R. B. Gough to Gloria Schmidt, 20 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2; Letter from G. H. Anderson to Gloria Schmidt, 7 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

²⁰⁴ Letter from Marion Findlay to Gloria Schmidt, 9 March 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁰⁵ This at least was how CARP interpreted the act, and Chisholm reports that the *Truth* in general was highly critical of CARP as an organisation. Letter from Gloria Schmidt to Frank Haigh, 25 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/4; Chisholm, pp. 55-56.

²⁰⁶ Emphasis taken from the original. CARP Rotorua Branch, Newsletter No. 1, June 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, Eph-B-CONSUMER-CARP-1960/1970s.

conservative positions regarding trade union support. This will become more apparent when I discuss the disputes within CARP in 1967.

First Actions – Boycotts and Political Activism

The newly elected Auckland Executive decided their first target would be sugary foods from bakeries.²⁰⁷ The Executive noted that baked goods with ‘high sugar content’ had seen massive price increases, and therefore felt they were a justifiable target.²⁰⁸ It is also worth noting that housewives could make their own cakes and biscuits, instead of buying them. In theory, this made a boycott on baked goods easier to adjust to than, say, a boycott against flour or milk. In January 1967 the Executive announced a complete boycott on buying biscuits, cakes, and confectionary.²⁰⁹ This was considered a last resort: they initially hoped that writing to the Government would be sufficient to get an intervention, and the decision of the Holyoake Government to do nothing pushed CARP Auckland into action.²¹⁰ When the Wellington branch was established, they initially decided to follow the Auckland initiative and announced a similar boycott.²¹¹

The boycott was applied to all Auckland bakeries and vendors of baked goods, but the intent of CARP’s leadership was to press against big businesses in particular. This was the position Schmidt took when she said “the little man, the small shopkeepers and the actual producers aren’t making the huge profit”.²¹² Here we see the beginnings of a pattern in CARP history: one of their key ‘enemies’ was large businesses, and monopolies. It also became an early point of friction within CARP: the Tāmaki branch, led by Odette Leather, came to the opinion that the boycott was not hurting large businesses, but that most of the economic fallout was being felt by small, independent bakers.²¹³ Humphries countered that “the government and CARP were not to blame if any of these bakeries were put out of business”, and while there were discussions around modifying the boycott or introducing a CARP endorsement scheme,

²⁰⁷ I note that CARP, and Chisholm, variously referred to this boycott as being against ‘cakes and confectionaries’, ‘confectionaries’, or ‘cakes, biscuits, and confectionaries’. My own labelling of this boycott in this thesis uses these terms interchangeably when referring to the boycott. For clarification, this first boycott was against all baked items with a high sugar content.

²⁰⁸ Chisholm, pp. 124-125.

²⁰⁹ Chisholm, pp. 124-125.

²¹⁰ Chisholm, p. 124.

²¹¹ Williams, p. 98.

²¹² *New Zealand Statesman*, January-February 1967, p. 5, quoted in Chisholm, p. 127.

²¹³ *New Zealand Herald*, 21 March 1967, p. 1.

the Executive decided to make no changes to the boycott terms.²¹⁴ This was perhaps CARP's most notable early action, taking up much of their time during the first half of 1967. It also provoked a response from Auckland bakers. For example, Tip-Top Cakes took out an ad 'wishing to draw to the attention of the public' that they had not increased the prices of their products despite rising flour prices.²¹⁵

Another early CARP target was against soap products, particularly products owned by the Lever Brothers' New Zealand operations. The Unilever²¹⁶ conglomerate is a globally active company with interests throughout the globe. They were founded through the merger of the Lever Brothers' soap business in Britain and the Margarine Unie company in the Netherlands in 1929.²¹⁷ Today, and in the 1960s, Unilever was the world's largest soap manufacturer.²¹⁸ However, in New Zealand, CARP believed Unilever were using underhanded tactics in the marketing of their soap products. The Wellington branch's second newsletter said their soap lines "do not give value for money", and representatives of the Auckland branch accused Unilever of using deceptive packaging to make their products look like they contained more soap than they actually did while charging higher prices than competitors.²¹⁹ This boycott was more targeted than the sweet foods boycott: while the ban on buying cakes, biscuits, and confectionary was targeted at all stores in Auckland, the soap boycott was specifically targeted at Unilever products. The December 1967 newsletter from CARP Auckland reminded "our members do NOT buy Lever Brothers' products", and specifically endorsed Velvet and Launderine soaps as approved alternatives.²²⁰ Thus, in this case, CARP were providing consumer shopping advice to their supporters. The Tāmaki branch, while disputing the bakers boycott, still endorsed acting against Unilever soaps.²²¹ This boycott led to discussions with Unilever representatives that I will discuss further later. CARP Auckland

²¹⁴ Chisholm, pp. 130-132; *New Zealand Herald*, 27 February 1967, p. 1.

²¹⁵ Advertisement by Stormonts Limited regarding Tip-Top especially fine cakes, 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/4.

²¹⁶ CARP sources from this time refer to the company as 'Lever Brothers', but I have chosen to call them by the name most commonly used today; the Unilever name had been in use since the 1920s. For accuracy, quotes from primary sources will say 'Lever Brothers', and my writing will call them 'Unilever'.

²¹⁷ 'Unilever', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Unilever>> [accessed 15 December 2023].

²¹⁸ 'Unilever'.

²¹⁹ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, April 1967, CARP Wellington records, p. 2, ATL, 79-076-4/12; Chisholm, pp. 134-136.

²²⁰ CARP Auckland Newsletter, December 1967, CARP Wellington records, p. 3, ATL, 79-076-4/03.

²²¹ Chisholm, pp. 134-135.

noted that Unilever products were being sold with lower selling prices in March 1967; while calling this an attempt at breaking the boycott, they felt it demonstrated progress attributable to their actions.²²²

Boycotts were paired up with lobbying for government action against rising prices. The Wellington branch decided to send a delegation to meet with government ministers, and after some negotiation over the date, Jack Marshall, the incumbent Minister of Industries and Commerce, agreed to meet CARP representatives and receive a letter written to them on 5 May 1967.²²³ At this meeting, CARP put several questions to Marshall, and their newsletter that month said “we were very satisfied with the visit, in that we felt we made our points strongly”.²²⁴ Noting Marshall’s points on the Government’s policy regarding price controls, the newsletter ended with the phone numbers for the Trade Practices and Prices Division in his department, and from then on the Wellington branch encouraged supporters to contact the department themselves regarding price disputes.²²⁵ Correspondence with the Government was one of the major actions CARP would undertake from all the way into 1981; I will return to this later in the chapter. This is an example of a relatively friendly contact between CARP and National Party figures.

It was more common, however, for the National Party to take a hostile approach to CARP. National politicians like Rob Muldoon often accused CARP of being a front for Communist activity, and Ayo’s name was kept off the original 1966 ad in the *Auckland Star* specifically to try and avoid accusations of being a Communist front.²²⁶ Schmidt specifically denied being a member of the Communist Party, and later asserted that “support came from all sections of the community, including rabid National Party supporters in Remuera who are sick and tired

²²² Letter from Gloria Schmidt to all CARP branch secretaries, 8 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

²²³ Letter from Marion Findlay to Jack Marshall, 14 April 1967; Letter from Jack Marshall to Marion Findlay, 19 April 1967, Letter from Marion Findlay to Jack Marshall, 24 April 1967. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/13.

²²⁴ Handwritten notes documenting Marshall’s statements, 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/13; CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, May 1967, CARP Wellington records, p. 1, ATL, 79-076-4/12.

²²⁵ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, May 1967, CARP Wellington records, p. 1, ATL, 79-076-4/12.

²²⁶ Chisholm, p. 22.

of the ever-increasing prices".²²⁷ Despite this, hostility between CARP and National Party governments continued well into CARP's later years.

At the same time, the Auckland branch was corresponding with the leaders of other political parties. I have already mentioned their first wave of letters to the major political party leaders: Holyoake responded in December 1966, and would regularly be in correspondence with CARP Auckland through 1967.²²⁸ In February 1967, the Labour Party's Auckland Representation Committee invited Humphries and Schmidt to address a party-sponsored meeting regarding rising prices.²²⁹ This would be the start of a long but tenuous connection between the Labour Party and CARP.

Vernon Cracknell, the leader of Social Credit, also acknowledged CARP's existence.²³⁰ Social Credit and CARP never established much of a relationship: CARP criticised Social Credit for not sending a representative to a March rally where other parties sent representatives, and it was discovered the invitation was never sent because CARP could not contact the party.²³¹ The Social Credit party at the time sought widespread economic reform on the basis of the economic theory of 'social credit', and felt that CARP's focus simply on rising prices was insufficient to drive any real change in the New Zealand economy.²³² Chisholm characterised Cracknell's response as "expressing his solidarity with protesting housewives".²³³ I believe, however, the expression of solidarity was meant to touch up the politely veiled criticism otherwise expressed.

Correspondence with the Public

As an organisation founded on grassroots publicity, the leadership of CARP Auckland received a lot of mail from interested housewives from the very beginning. Even during low

²²⁷ *Dominion Sunday Times*, 25 December 1966, p. 5, and *Dominion Sunday Times*, 12 February 1967, p. 24, quoted in Chisholm, pp. 72-73.

²²⁸ Letter from Keith Holyoake to Gloria Schmidt, 20 December 1966, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

²²⁹ Letter from M. Canning to Gloria Schmidt, 20 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2.

²³⁰ New Zealand Social Credit Political League press statement, 15 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/5.

²³¹ *New Zealand Herald*, 3 March 1967, p. 3; Letter from Gloria Schmidt to the Hon. Secretary of Social Credit Auckland, 22 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/4.

²³² New Zealand Social Credit Political League press statement, 15 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/5. In Vernon Cracknell's later correspondence, this difference would often be emphasised.

²³³ Chisholm, p. 75.

points in their history, they regularly received letters from many major cities and towns. As early as December 1966, mail was coming in from around Auckland. Housewives wrote in expressing their support for the CARP founders taking action against rising prices.²³⁴ On 19 December they received a small donation from the City Housewives Association.²³⁵ A self-identified 'old-age pensioner' wrote in from as far as Thames "wishing you good luck with your meeting".²³⁶ Another pensioner couple wrote in from Rotorua reminding the organisation "you ladies must never forget the POWER YOU POSSESS".²³⁷ Other women wrote in asking how they could support the new movement.²³⁸ Letters also came in from Matamata and Morrinsville.²³⁹ Some of this correspondence shows the concerns that potential CARP supporters wished for the organisation to address. For example, in early 1967 one correspondent expressed concern that the upcoming switch to decimal currency would lead to price increases, and called for CARP to take action.²⁴⁰ Unfortunately the correspondence that CARP Wellington received in early 1967 did not survive in their archives.

CARP also received some correspondence in this formative period critical of their approach. A Waimaukau woman wrote in February criticising the organisation for their boycott on cakes and confectionaries as hurting business, and blaming price increases on "the root of the trouble, namely the Communist-controlled Trade Unions". This correspondent concluded by daring Schmidt to read the letter to her 'confederates' and expressing interest in hearing

²³⁴ Letter from M. X. to the authors of the Auckland Star ad, 29 November 1966; Letter from Mrs. X to (?) Butler, 3 December 1966. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

²³⁵ Letter from the President of the City Housewives Association to Mrs. Hadfield, 19 December 1966, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

²³⁶ Letter from an anonymous old-age pensioner widow to Gloria Schmidt, unknown date in 1966, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

²³⁷ Letter from W. D. Taylor to Gloria Schmidt, 30 December 1966, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

²³⁸ Letter from Beryl Symonds(?) to Gloria Schmidt, 30 December 1966; Letter from Pamela Mayhew to Gloria Schmidt, 29 January 1967. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

²³⁹ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to Margaret Bosson, 19 January 1967; Letter from Gloria Schmidt to Mrs. Harris, 19 January 1967. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

²⁴⁰ Letter from V. Mullinger to Gloria Schmidt, 4 January 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1. While decimal currency would be discussed within CARP Wellington bulletins, ultimately CARP did not take much action against decimalised price increases except for warning housewives to be wary in newsletters. I note, as an interesting sidebar, that an anti-decimal group in Britain would later write to CARP Auckland asking for evidence regarding price rises as a result of New Zealand decimalisation; this group argued against decimalising the pound sterling both on price grounds and the grounds of long-standing tradition back to Roman times.

if CARP would be 'just another carp'.²⁴¹ A Whanganui economist also wrote in to CARP regularly urging they support social credit theories.²⁴² However, these negative pieces of mail appear to have been the exception, not the rule: the vast majority of letters to CARP I have read (and cited) express solidarity and support for CARP, at least in the broad terms of supporting 'fighting rising prices'.

Correspondence also came from businesses. A key example of business correspondence to CARP is a letter from the manager of bakery company A. W. Irvine & Sons Ltd, written about the boycott on cakes. This letter was an attempt to put their views on rising food prices, arguing that "we have always endeavoured to minimise the effect of wage and raw material price increases by absorbing as much as possible by improved production techniques and setting out only to recover costs".²⁴³ After asserting that their prices had not risen beyond the prices charged in 1964, they requested the Executive reconsider applying the boycott to A. W. Irvine cakes.²⁴⁴ The letter sent back by CARP Auckland simply noted that the Executive would discuss the letter. Since the boycott was not duly amended, clearly the letter did not inspire the hoped for change of heart.²⁴⁵

Unilever representatives were also in touch with CARP during this time. Letters show that CARP held a meeting with company representatives to discuss the price of Unilever products, although no changes to CARP's demands or Unilever pricing seems to have occurred as a result of this meeting.²⁴⁶ This shows that, even during ongoing boycotts, targeted businesses were willing to, and did, hold discussions with CARP about their concerns. Whether these discussions led to change is another thing entirely: the A. W. Irvine letters show that business concerns had no effect on CARP's boycotting decisions, and the meeting with Unilever came to nothing. The effectiveness of correspondence with business seems to have therefore been questionable for CARP. In later years, CARP had more correspondence with the Government than businesses, suggesting that correspondence

²⁴¹ Letter from an anonymous Waimaukau housewife to Gloria Schmidt, 13 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2.

²⁴² Letter from Dr. Ulric Williams to Gloria Schmidt, 5 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/4.

²⁴³ Letter from J. D. Free to Gloria Schmidt, 27 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2.

²⁴⁴ Letter from J. D. Free to Gloria Schmidt, 27 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2.

²⁴⁵ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to J. D. Free, 22 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/2.

²⁴⁶ Letter from H. L. Healy to Gloria Schmidt, 15 May 1967; Letter from H. L. Healy to Flo Humphries, 12 May 1967. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/6.

with the Government was more effective in gaining attention and change than correspondence than direct correspondence with businesses.

CARP's Early Relationship to Gender

Before we can continue further temporally into CARP's history, we need to address CARP's relationship to other women's movements in 1967. Remember that the initial advertisement, and meeting, was called by a 'housewives' committee. The Wellington branch grew out of the Wellington Housewives' Association, and several regional branches arose from other "Housewives' Associations". When understanding how CARP attracted supporters in the cities and the regional centres, it is important to note the unifying use of the identifying label "housewife". In Chapter 1 we saw the gender roles of the 1950s: the 'housewife' stayed at home, cooked, cleaned, and looked after her children. This was the collective identity that CARP initially claimed: their newsletters self-identified CARP as a 'housewives' organisation. Indeed, some of the new regional branches blurred the distinction between 'Housewives' Association' and CARP: Whanganui saw the local 'Housewives' Association' attempt to become a branch of CARP under that name.²⁴⁷

However, we must note that, in fact, it is possible to dispute the accuracy of applying the label of 'housewife' to CARP and its leadership. On the one hand, women like Ayo held down jobs: Ayo was still a union secretary at the same time as being an officer of CARP, and noted in 1968 that she and other Executive members were often kept busy by union responsibilities and/or their families.²⁴⁸ Kelly did not have paid work in the 1960s, but she was actively working in the Communist Party.²⁴⁹ Increasing numbers of women were entering the workforce in the 1960s and 1970s, as discussed in Chapter 1. Locke notably prefers the term 'working women' to describe the women of CARP: she identified CARP's supporters as belonging to the 'working-class'.²⁵⁰ Locke's research was focused on the Auckland branch, and whether the anti-union Rotorua branch, or the Wanganui Housewives' Association, would have identified as 'working-class' seems debatable.²⁵¹ Nevertheless, I

²⁴⁷ Letter from S. E. Groppt to Gloria Schmidt, 7 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3.

²⁴⁸ Letter from Ella Ayo to Mrs. Barnett, 5 May 1969; Letter from Ella Ayo to Tom Skinner, 17 April 1969. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/4.

²⁴⁹ Macfie, p. 43.

²⁵⁰ Locke, 2023, p. 20.

²⁵¹ See Dalziel's essay on the Federation of New Zealand Housewives in Else. Housewives' "unions" tended to come from left-wing, working class backgrounds, while housewives' "associations" were more conservative.

agree that the Auckland and Wellington branches had strong ties with working-class organisations and attracted support from ‘working women’: trade union support clearly demonstrates this point.

The political views of CARP’s leadership on feminism also need to be acknowledged. While Kelly in Wellington supported the equal pay movement, she did not identify as a ‘feminist’. To her, “feminism was regarded as a bourgeois diversion and an erosion of class solidarity”.²⁵² Ayo too did not identify as a feminist: in line with the broader policy within the Socialist Unity Party at the time regarding women, she believed “women’s subordination would not radically change until the real cause of inequality, capitalism, had been dismantled”.²⁵³ We encountered this political view as part of Chapter 1, that is, the idea that gender struggle was really just one part of economic struggle. This was a view that was shared by key leaders in CARP’s hierarchy. Even though CARP were an organisation mostly made up of women, and they identified in the first period of their history as ‘housewives’, CARP’s interests were in economic struggle, not gender struggle. This rationalises why CARP did not accept ‘Housewives’ Associations’ as branches: they were more interested in economic action than gendered action.

Also worth noting is that there were men who engaged with CARP’s call to action. The letter from Rotorua reminding CARP to never forget “the POWER YOU POSSESS” was written by a man, on behalf of himself and his wife, and another man wrote in from Avondale on behalf of himself and his wife.²⁵⁴ Schmidt replied to a David Jennings who wrote in expressing support: “Please don’t think we exclude men. We welcome them in this campaign.”²⁵⁵ In other words, CARP membership was not denied to men; they were welcome to count themselves as members. Other letters indicate that there were men who wrote in with details regarding price rises for CARP’s information.²⁵⁶ While CARP was open to male membership, men do not appear to have become leaders of any known CARP branches, with

The fact that the housewives group in Whanganui called itself an “association” implies it fell into the latter category.

²⁵² Macfie, pp. 27-28.

²⁵³ Locke, 2023, p. 20.

²⁵⁴ Letter from W. D. Taylor to Gloria Schmidt, 30 December 1966; Letter from C. R. Mayson to Gloria Schmidt, 19 January 1967. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

²⁵⁵ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to David Jennings, 19 January 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

²⁵⁶ Letter from R. Weatherburn to Gloria Schmidt, 6 February 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/1.

one known exception (see Chapter 3). Most letters that have survived in the records of CARP Auckland and Wellington came from women, suggesting that while men were allowed to join, most CARP supporters were women.

An enlightening example of how men engaged with CARP comes from Flora Anderson. Flora was a member of the Glen Innes branch of CARP Auckland, and her husband was Bill Anderson.²⁵⁷ Bill was in the unions, and Flora was in CARP. A similar relationship can be seen through Cath Kelly in Wellington too: her husband Pat was a union leader amongst the Wellington drivers. Thus, while CARP initially labelled itself as a 'housewives' organisation', it was also open to male membership. In spite of this, women were the clear leaders of CARP, and surviving correspondence indicates that the vast majority of CARP supporters were women. The examples illustrate the ties between the trade unions and CARP, and points to a gendered pattern: male interaction with CARP went through personal ties to women members, and organisationally through union ties, while female interaction with CARP was directly with CARP leaders and organisers. Going forward, CARP's identity as a 'housewives' organisation' would change, an idea that will be returned to in the next two chapters, but even in CARP's early years their membership and reach was broader than 'housewives'.

1967 Schism – Who Split Off, and Why?

The observant reader will note that most of the primary sources I have cited so far this chapter come from before May 1967. So far, we have discussed the early boycotts and actions taken by CARP, its early leadership, and early branches. At this point, at a national level, the Campaign Against Rising Prices went into a period of internal crisis. In Christchurch, the local branch came to believe that price increases in Christchurch were not as severe as those reported by North Island branches, and their research showed that the boycotts imposed by North Island branches proved ineffective in Christchurch, leading them to decide to call off the initial boycotts.²⁵⁸ The branch also felt local consumers were not interested in boycotts. Ultimately, in light of the brewing discontent among North Island branches, the Christchurch CARP decided to split from the North Island branches and changed their name to the New Zealand Purchasers Progressive Association (NZPPA).²⁵⁹ The

²⁵⁷ Locke, 2022, p. 97.

²⁵⁸ Letter from Rosemary Phillips to Gloria Schmidt, 4 April 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/5.

²⁵⁹ Letter from Rosemary Phillips to all CARP bodies, 4 May 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/6.

Wellington body particularly objected to the accusations made by the Christchurch branch expressing dissatisfaction with the North Island branches, and observed “doubt whether a change in name will do much to dispel that terrible South Island apathy”.²⁶⁰ This was, however, comparatively benign compared to the other split in 1967.

Almost from the beginning, relations between the Tāmaki branch of CARP and the Executive in Auckland were strained. The leader of the Tāmaki branch, Odette Leather, was described by Chisholm as “a woman of great energy and determination”; within CARP, she became the leader of internal opposition to the direction taken by the Executive.²⁶¹ Some of the disputes may have been personal: Chisholm records that Leather had felt ‘affronted’ by not being invited to meetings of the Executive in February.²⁶² However, my analysis of the records that have survived lead me to believe the two key factors in this dispute were ideological, not personal. The first reason, already mentioned, was disagreements over the course of action to take against businesses with high prices. The Tāmaki branch strongly opposed the boycott against bakers because they believed the boycott was hurting smaller, local bakers at the expense of larger corporations. This led the Tāmaki branch to unilaterally cancel the bakers boycott on sweet foods early.²⁶³ Branches like the Rotorua and Whakatāne branches sympathised with the arguments made by women like Leather.²⁶⁴

The other reason was a disagreement with the moves towards incorporating a national ‘Campaign Against Rising Prices Incorporated’. After several months of operation in early 1967, with branches spreading across the country, the Auckland Executive decided to take steps to organise CARP as a permanent organisation.²⁶⁵ They had support from the Wellington branch, and surviving letters from the Tokoroa branch indicate they too supported the move in principle.²⁶⁶ The Executive called for national meetings to be held in

²⁶⁰ Letter from Marion Findlay to Rosemary Phillips, 11 May 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁶¹ Chisholm, p. 36.

²⁶² Chisholm, p. 36.

²⁶³ *New Zealand Herald*, 21 March 1967, p. 1.

²⁶⁴ Letter from D. D. Thirsk to Odette Leather and other CARP secretaries, 20 June 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁶⁵ Chisholm, p. 33.

²⁶⁶ Letter from Marion Findlay to Flo Humphries, 14 April 1967; Letter from C. Haumaha to the Secretary of CARP Rotorua, 11 July 1967. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

March to discuss co-ordination between local branches, and a draft constitution arose as a result by the next month.²⁶⁷

The proposed constitution would have established a national organisation with three organisational layers: a national Executive to set nationwide goals, 'regional districts' to translate national goals to account for regional conditions, and 'local branches' to implement the policy and decisions of CARP.²⁶⁸ The existing Executive felt this provided the basis for a strong national organisation, but many of the local and regional branches were concerned about the effects this would have on local decision-making. In particular, the Tāmaki branch and its lawyers argued that the proposed constitution was 'undemocratic', and that the proposed constitution "did not have the support of the majority of the original body they claimed to represent".²⁶⁹

Ultimately the tensions between the Tāmaki branch and the Auckland Executive turned into a legal battle: after getting word that Leather intended to incorporate her branch under the name "CARP (Auckland) Incorporated", the Auckland Executive pre-emptively filed its own application for incorporation without consulting other branches.²⁷⁰ This led to a battle in the High Court between Humphries and Leather over who had the right to incorporate under the name 'Campaign Against Rising Prices'. This case was where the Tāmaki branch and its lawyers argued the constitution was 'undemocratic', and the result of the litigation was a complete breakdown in the relationship between the Executive, Leather, and the Tāmaki branch.²⁷¹ In the end, the High Court ruled that Humphries and the Auckland Executive could incorporate under that name since they filed to incorporate before Leather could.²⁷² There was some hope at various points in time that the rift could be healed: Leather still expressed

²⁶⁷ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to all CARP branch secretaries, 5 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3; Chisholm, p. 33.

²⁶⁸ See the Rules of Campaign Against Rising Prices (Incorporated), CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/1, and Chisholm, pp. 33-34, for a brief overview of the broad principles.

²⁶⁹ 'Group Fighting Rising Prices 'Not Democratic'', unknown newspaper, 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁷⁰ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to CARP branches, 17 April 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁷¹ 'Group Fighting Rising Prices 'Not Democratic'', unknown newspaper, 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁷² See Chisholm, pp. 40-42 for a longer account. See also the letters sent between the Auckland branch and the Wellington branch, and the Wellington branch and Odette Leather, for an exchange of views. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

a desire to remain within one national CARP, and for a time friendly contact continued between Leather and CARP Wellington.²⁷³

In the end, however, the two sides formally split; Leather formed a new organisation called the Stabilise Prices Association (SPA), and the Executive became an incorporated society.²⁷⁴ The Whakatāne branch went with Leather to the SPA, stating that “we cannot, in a free society, accept the Constitution put forward by Mrs. Humphries, in any form”, and suggested the new name.²⁷⁵ This breakaway continued to be active throughout 1967: at least one newsletter was published, and Norman Kirk spoke to the breakaway branch in Tāmaki in May.²⁷⁶ This decision was condemned by the Executive: they wrote to Kirk warning that continuing with the meeting would “alienate our support and confidence” and suggesting a different venue than the one prepared by the Tāmaki branch.²⁷⁷ This again highlights the way the complicated relationship between CARP and Labour. Kirk seems to have thought he was meeting with housewives to discuss a political hot-topic, and failed to realise the ‘turf war’ he was stepping in to.

This split cooled any desire outside Auckland for a national CARP organisation. Wellington wrote in that “a National conference at present would not be of value”.²⁷⁸ This comment came in response to a comment from the Tokoroa branch that they “(did) not feel that another mass meeting, including those branches that have broken away from the main body, (would be) of any consequence”.²⁷⁹ From this time, until the end of CARP, no further attempts at national unification would be attempted, and CARP Auckland and CARP Wellington continued as separate bodies sharing a name. Soon afterwards, the Rotorua branch decided to disband. Their letter to CARP Wellington cited a dissatisfaction with the

²⁷³ Letter from Gloria Schmidt to Marion Findlay, 30 April 1967; Letters from Odette Leather to Marion Findlay, 20 and 28 May 1967. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁷⁴ Letter from D. D. Thirsk to Odette Leather and other CARP secretaries, 20 June 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁷⁵ Letter from D. D. Thirsk to Odette Leather and other CARP secretaries, 20 June 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁷⁶ CARP Tāmaki and Ōrākei flyer regarding meeting with Norman Kirk, May 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/6.

²⁷⁷ Letter from T. F. Baker and others to Norman Kirk, 16 May 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/6.

²⁷⁸ Letter from Marion Findlay to C. Haumaha, 11 August 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁷⁹ Letter from C. Haumaha to CARP Rotorua, 11 July 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01. Note that attempts were made at organising a national meeting between the remaining portions of CARP, the SPA, and the NZPPA. A meeting was scheduled for July but this meeting appears to have been cancelled, and no meeting would be held between the three before the disappearance of the SPA and NZPPA.

court case, an unwillingness to accept the national constitution, and “very strong feelings” regarding union support.²⁸⁰ They also cited mass committee resignations as a problem for the branch.²⁸¹ This was a problem in Auckland too, where in May at least two members resigned, one asking to have her name stricken from CARP records.²⁸² At the same time there were multiple resignations from the Tokoroa branch, including their secretary, Mrs. Treliving.²⁸³ Gloria Schmidt also resigned as secretary of the Auckland branch because of personal ill-health in July 1967, and was replaced by Pat Beale from the North Shore branch.²⁸⁴

Meanwhile, by May the Hamilton branch, which Chisholm had called ‘a leader’, was running itself into debt, and were resorting to begging the Auckland branch for urgent financial aid.²⁸⁵ The branch lost many members over the coming months, and remaining leaders expressed concern that “our branch is not being run in a democratic way or according to the Constitution”.²⁸⁶ This led to a mass resignation from the Hamilton committee in October, and by the middle of 1968 the Hamilton branch was no more.²⁸⁷ At the same time, the Whangārei branch similarly face dwindling interest to the point where only 8 people were showing up at meetings by the end of 1967.²⁸⁸ Maria Ross from Whangārei commented that “our end of the organisation fell down when we lost our ladies to jobs and their time was then too full”.²⁸⁹ We already discussed how more and more women were entering employment in the 1960s, and how members of the Auckland Executive struggled to balance CARP with other responsibilities. Balancing responsibilities seems to have been a struggle too within the regional branches: the result seems to have been that many potential leaders deciding to back out.

²⁸⁰ Letter from M. L. Kemeys to Marion Findlay, 14 July 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁸¹ Letter from M. L. Kemeys to Marion Findlay, 14 July 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

²⁸² Letter from Rela M. Beckett to Flo Humphries, 14 May 1967; Letter from L. P. Beanland to Flo Humphries, 12 May 1967. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/6.

²⁸³ Letter from Flo Humphries to Mrs. Middlemiss, 30 May 1967; Minutes of Committee Meeting of CARP Tokoroa, 14 May 1967. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/6.

²⁸⁴ Chisholm, p. 45.

²⁸⁵ Letter from M. Stevenson to Ella Ayo, 6 June 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/6.

²⁸⁶ Letter from M. Stevenson and others to Pat Beale, 12 October 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/1.

²⁸⁷ Letter from M. Stevenson and others to Pat Beale, 12 October 1967; Letter from M. Stevenson and others to Ella Ayo, 5 September 1968, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/1. The last few members from Hamilton actively interested in CARP assimilated into CARP Auckland by September 1968.

²⁸⁸ Letter from Maria Ross to Ella Ayo, 17 June 1968, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/2.

²⁸⁹ Letter from Maria Ross to Ella Ayo, 17 June 1968, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/2.

The cumulative effect of the splits from CARP, the mass resignations, and difficulties faced by regional branches, was that by the end of 1968, all of the original CARP branches outside Auckland and Wellington had completely ceased to exist.²⁹⁰ Some branches, like Rotorua and Hamilton, outright dissolved. Other branches, like in Palmerston North, Tokoroa, and Whangārei, simply disappeared from CARP Auckland and Wellington's radar.²⁹¹ As for the schismatics, they too disappeared rapidly. The SPA published one known newsletter, in July 1967, and newspaper clippings show that Leather and the Tāmaki branch continued to agitate against price rises in local dairies in 1967.²⁹² By 1969, the SPA had changed tactics: they merged with another woman's organisation to form the Women's Independent Party, which sought to establish an independent voice for women in Parliament. Four women ran under this party's banner, including Leather in the North Shore electorate. They failed to win any seats, and appear to have disappeared after the 1969 election.²⁹³ The NZPPA (née CARP Christchurch) fared slightly worse than the SPA: in 1967 they published three newsletters, but appear to have received no significant media coverage and disappeared by 1968. Interestingly, the Women's Independent Party were just as interested in improving the position of married women as they were rising prices.²⁹⁴ This possibly suggests that some of the women who split from CARP held different views on the gender struggle versus class struggle debate, compared to Kelly and Ayo.

In summary, there are several reasons for the collapse in regional branches: political disagreements over the direction CARP was taking, internal disagreements over national unification, a lack of continuing will to keep CARP going by filling voluntary positions, and financial difficulties. The leadership that set up CARP Auckland and Wellington were from left-wing backgrounds with close ties to the trade unions and to Communist parties, while branches in places like Rotorua and Whakatāne seem to have attracted a more conservative

²⁹⁰ Ann Turner from the Wellington branch told Williams that "Auckland and Wellington were the only active CARP bodies remaining by 1969", so this mass disappearance of CARP branches was well-known and confirmed by CARP officials. Williams, p. 99, footnote 4.

²⁹¹ The Whangārei branch probably wound up by the end of 1968. References to the Tokoroa branch continued in CARP Auckland newsletters into 1969, but the branch was no longer an active force and itself would disappear by the end of the year.

²⁹² SPA News, July 1967, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01; *New Zealand Herald*, 7 April 1967, p. 1.

²⁹³ *New Zealand Herald* (?), 11 May 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-7/1/a. Leather would later be cited commenting on CARP's political affiliation in 1971; see the next chapter. Note that this party was still concerned with rising prices, but was more broadly concerned with matters affecting women's interests.

²⁹⁴ *New Zealand Herald* (?), 11 May 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-7/1/a.

crowd of housewives willing to combat rising prices, but who otherwise were afraid of disrupting small businesses or working with the unions. Considering how close Leather was to the Rotorua and Whakatāne branches, and the expressed views of all three parties, I argue they likely all agreed on a pro-small business anti-union platform. I argue that the disagreements over the proposed national constitution were also reflective of this duality: the constitution was drafted by the Auckland Executive, many members of which were left-wing or left-wing sympathisers, but bitterly opposed in the more conservative branches.

In the long run, 1967 would be one of the key peaks of CARP's organisational history. The first half of the year marked the spread of CARP branches across New Zealand, with many housewives from different political perspectives choosing to organise and fight rising prices (by boycotts or other means). In terms of geographical spread, 1967 was the definitive high point for CARP. In terms of boycott activity, 1970 might tie with 1967 as the peak, but the political rallies, and the political letter-writing, also mark 1967 as a peak. The Executive in Auckland was excited by the prospect of forming a permanent, non-political, price-rise-fighting organisation through the national constitution. However, the political differences between the left-wing leadership and the regional branches would prove too much to accommodate, and ultimately, faced with resignations and a declining membership base, CARP would enter a period of decline beginning with the second half of 1967. Ultimately, it would never achieve the same geographical reach. Even in the 1970s, CARP would never manage to claim the same spread of branches outside Auckland and Wellington as they could in 1967.

1968 and 1969 – Rebuilding, Corresponding, and Pushing for Consumer Protection

Of course, CARP Auckland and Wellington both survived into 1968, but in that and the following year, things would be far quieter for CARP than they were in 1967. Indeed, the physical archives bear some testament to this: the University of Auckland Library holds eight folders of correspondence involving CARP Auckland from 1967, the same number as the total number of folders of correspondence for 1968 and 1969.²⁹⁵ The next big CARP boycott would not be organised until 1970. Some small boycotts were organised: in November 1968

²⁹⁵ Two each are exclusively devoted to 1968 and 1969 respectively, but roughly another four combine correspondence from both years.

another boycott was called against sweet foods, this time specifically targeting biscuits, in response to concerns that recent biscuit price rises were unjustified.²⁹⁶ This boycott did not receive the same publicity as the initial sweet foods boycott in 1967, and appears to have ended by 1969.

The original boycott against Unilever soaps continued into 1968. The Auckland branch was still in contact with a local Unilever representative to discuss their concerns, and boycott reminders were being printed in the Auckland newsletter as late as November.²⁹⁷ Action against Unilever continued beyond 1970, and will be discussed further in Chapter 3. Also, in 1968, CARP Auckland applied for affiliation to the National Council of Women (NCW), a federation of organisations collectively interested in advancing the position of women.²⁹⁸ This affiliation was accepted, and the branch President (Humphries) and Secretary (at the time Beale) were accepted as representative to the Auckland branch of the NCW.²⁹⁹ In other words, CARP were formally positioning that year themselves as a part of the larger ‘women’s movement’, consistent with the way CARP grew out of ‘housewives’ associations’.

The key publicity-raising event in 1968 came from the Wellington branch. At the annual opening of Parliament, held on 26 June in 1968, a demonstration around the Parliamentary grounds was held. This demonstration was primarily organised by the trade unions of Wellington and university students. Attendees were concerned about many different issues, ranging from rising prices to the Vietnam War to Māori land rights.³⁰⁰ CARP Wellington agreed to send representatives to join the protest.³⁰¹ The demonstration ended up being widely reported in the media. According to CARP Wellington, media reporting was full of “incredible half-truths and distortions”. In their words, there was an ‘incident’ involving a car driving the Australian High Commissioner, and there were a few ‘odd scuffles’ in the front row.³⁰² The press reported this as “mob violence” and a “rabble”, and accused CARP of directly participating in violence.³⁰³ CARP’s own description was that “CARP women, and

²⁹⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 6 November 1968, p. 5 (?), CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/2.

²⁹⁷ Letter from Pat Beale to H. L. Heatley, 1 July 1968; CARP Auckland Newsletter, November 1968. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/2.

²⁹⁸ For more on the National Council of Women, see Else.

²⁹⁹ Letter from Betty Holt to Flo Humphries, 26 July 1968, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/2.

³⁰⁰ Locke, 2022, p. 98.

³⁰¹ CARP Auckland Newsletter, July 1968, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/03.

³⁰² CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, 1968, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/12.

³⁰³ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, 1968, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/12.

their children, (were) standing a little to one side”, or in other words, not involved in any scuffles. The exact full details of how CARP were involved in incidents at the demonstration may never be known, and I am not able to evaluate who was more truthful, but either way, there are two key points to note. The first is that the demonstration again shows the links between CARP and the trade unions. While initiated by unions, both they and CARP Wellington agreed on the need to make a statement that something had to be done about rising prices at Parliament’s opening, and CARP’s participation in the demonstration was the result of their agreement.

The second point to note is the impact this event made in Auckland. CARP Wellington made the decision to demonstrate without discussion with the Auckland branch beforehand, demonstrating their independence and continued status as separate organisations. The Auckland Executive voted to endorse the Wellington branch’s actions, but the demonstration led Beale to immediately resign as Auckland Secretary. Her resignation letter set out that she believed “it was absolutely wrong and unforgivable for CARP to have taken part in this sort of protest”, and that she could not “condone or associate with such action”.³⁰⁴ The Wellington branch defended their decisions to her, strongly disagreed with her reasoning, and felt her statements discredited the branch, but in the end Beale was replaced by Ayo as Secretary in July 1968.³⁰⁵ This again highlights the clash between the left-wing activism amongst many of CARP’s founders and the conservative views other members held regarding trade union co-operation. Beale seems to have had a conservative opinion regarding participation in public protest, although her long-term replacement belonged to CARP’s left-wing.

I also note that, across all three periods of CARP’s history, the 1968 opening of Parliament was the only time that CARP were accused of engaging in violent protest. While it is unclear whether CARP members were caught up in violent protest that day, even if they were, this would have been the only time CARP might have been caught up in ‘violent’ protest.³⁰⁶ Their public demonstrations, otherwise, were always peaceful, and their submissions, boycotts, and lobbying, were not physical protests, and hence not violent. There is a contrast here to

³⁰⁴ Letter from Pat Beale to Flo Humphries, 30 June 1968, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/2.

³⁰⁵ Letter from Marion Findlay to Pat Beale, 2 July 1968, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/01.

³⁰⁶ Even if they had been caught up in violence, there is certainly no evidence that CARP intended to take violent action at the 1968 opening of Parliament. It is possible any actual ‘violence’ was simple self-defence.

some other protests in New Zealand: the protests against the 1981 Springbok tour notably involved public clashes between protestors and Police riot squads.³⁰⁷ The 1968 opening of Parliament was a (possible) exception that proved the rule: CARP, as protestors, used non-violent, 'lawful' methods of protests.

CARP took particular interest in the price and wage freezes imposed during 1968. In June, a temporary price freeze was announced by the Holyoake government, which was to last for two months.³⁰⁸ This was in response to the increasing concerns around rising prices expressed throughout 1967 and 1968 through organisations like CARP. CARP themselves linked actions like the 1968 Parliamentary protest to the government's decision to introduce a price freeze.³⁰⁹ However, the price freeze was affected by another type of economic freeze in 1968: on 17 June, the Arbitration Court delivered a 'nil-wage order', freezing all wages across New Zealand.³¹⁰ The unions, of course, bitterly opposed this move: they had originally applied for a 7.6% wage rise, and strikes were organised in Auckland and Wellington.³¹¹ Effectively, inflation from before the nil-wage order meant that prices were frozen at an unfavourable level for New Zealand consumers. This meant that CARP were upset at the price freeze as 'too little too late', and ultimately the Wellington branch argued after the price freeze ended that it had failed to keep prices down in the long-run.³¹² No boycotts or other direct economic actions seem to have been initiated by CARP in response to the two June freezes, other than attending the 1968 protest.

The most common action that CARP undertook during 1968 and 1969 was more behind the scenes: they were a regular correspondent with the Department of Industries and Commerce. As mentioned, one outcome from CARP Wellington's 1967 deputation with Jack Marshall was that CARP learnt how to contact department officials, and publicised this information. From then onwards, both branches would regularly write in to the department to complain about price actions they felt were unjustified. In late 1969, CARP Auckland was

³⁰⁷ See Chapelle for specific information about key protests in Hamilton, Wellington, Auckland, and elsewhere.

³⁰⁸ *Evening Post*, 6 August 1968, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-5/04.

³⁰⁹ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, 1968, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/12.

³¹⁰ Locke, 2022, p. 98.

³¹¹ Locke considers this order to be a watershed moment for industrial relations in New Zealand, arguing that the order shattered union confidence in the existing conciliation and arbitration system, and led to a rise in direct employer-union bargaining. Locke, 2022, pp. 98-99.

³¹² CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, 1968, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/12.

corresponding with Industries and Commerce officials regarding sharp rises in meat prices: a request for an investigation was “received ... quite favourably”, and I believe this was part of the impetus behind a Commission of Inquiry I will discuss in Chapter 3.³¹³ The same year, CARP Auckland was also in touch with Industries and Commerce regarding dental surgery charges on behalf of a Mr. Kiernan.³¹⁴ As well as contacting officials, they were in contact with Government Ministers: Jack Marshall, who was still Minister of Industries and Commerce in 1969, corresponded with CARP Auckland several times during 1968 and 1969. For example, a surviving letter documents his response to CARP inquiries regarding the price of fish and direct sales of fruit.³¹⁵ The Minister of Agriculture, Brian Talboys, was also in touch regarding the price of cream.³¹⁶

The Wellington branch, too, was busily corresponding with the Government in 1968 and 1969. One letter from 1968 records a complaint made on behalf of a Wellington member who believed she was charged unfairly high transport costs for half a dozen bags of rags.³¹⁷ Another letter expressed concern around the rising price of potatoes in fish and chip shops, as part of larger concern around rising potato prices.³¹⁸ They also corresponded regarding enforcement of the price freeze in 1968, with CARP calling out cases where they saw unlawful breaches of the freeze.³¹⁹ In 1969, the surviving letters of CARP Wellington to Industries and Commerce show there was correspondence regarding court cases under the Control of Prices Act 1947, the rising price of shoulder bacon in a Wellington butcher, and the price of the *Dominion* and the *Sunday Times*.³²⁰ These are just a few of the many letters

³¹³ Letter from Ella Ayo to T. P. Kelly, 20 October 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/6. I am not sure if documentation from the Department’s side survived to confirm this connection.

³¹⁴ Letter from Ella Ayo to Mr. Kiernan, 23 August 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/6. The outcome was a determination that “there is no evidence of excessive charges”, which CARP disputed but could not appeal.

³¹⁵ Letter from Jack Marshall to Ella Ayo, 11 August 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/6.

³¹⁶ Letter from Brian Talboys to Ella Ayo, 11 July 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/5.

³¹⁷ Letter from Marion Findlay to the Secretary of the Trade Practises and Prices Division, 29 February 1968, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/10. The conclusion drawn by CARP Wellington was that the rags were sold at the normal price and the driver delivering the rags quoted the price breakdown incorrectly.

³¹⁸ Letter from Marion Findlay to the Secretary of the Trade Practises and Prices Division, 20 February 1968, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/10. The department response was that the price rises were not unreasonable. A meeting would be held between Jack Marshall and a deputation from CARP Wellington approximately during August, again setting out CARP views that price control was necessary in this situation.

³¹⁹ Letter from G. W. Campbell to Marion Findlay, 26 July 1968, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/10.

³²⁰ Letter from C. E. Beard to Ann Turner, 9 May 1969; Letter from G. W. Campbell to Ann Turner, 30 May 1969, Letter from G. W. Campbell to Ann Turner, 25 February 1969. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/10.

sent between CARP and the Government in these two years: many more may exist in private collections, or perhaps in surviving Department records.

These letters received Government attention: in each case Industries and Commerce would investigate and come to a determination whether CARP complaints were justified. They demonstrate how CARP acted as a consumer watchdog, and this correspondence would continue throughout CARP's existence. But this correspondence had its limits, and the newsletters from CARP Wellington indicate how they felt about the responses they received. To quote the third bulletin from 1968: "Although the Department has been dealing directly with these complaints, we can see that with the present few inspectors policing prices and profiteering, it is virtually impossible to carry out this activity adequately."³²¹ In other words, they felt the Department response to rising prices was inadequate due to under-resourcing. CARP was also annoyed that virtually all complaints were found to be unjustified.³²² Ultimately, correspondence would be one of CARP's key activities after the splits of 1967. I would call it a more cautious form of protest than direct boycotts, effectively a form of lobbying, and thus less likely to upset conservative supporters of the organisation. Correspondence had its limits, which CARP acknowledged to its members with some bitterness, but it would continue to be a key activity for CARP well into the 1970s.

The last major CARP action of note during this time was their lobbying for legislation to protect the consumer against unfair packaging and trade practices. Starting with their actions against Unilever in 1967, CARP became concerned that the way products were packaged meant that misleading weighting and labelling was being used to rip off the consumer.³²³ The result of public pressure to do something about deceptive packaging was the Consumers Information Bill, introduced by National backbencher George Gair in 1967.³²⁴ This bill proposed to "provide for the improvement of information available to ... purchasers of pre-packaged foodstuffs", requiring accurate labelling of quantities, compositions, and

³²¹ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, 1968, p. 3, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/12.

³²² See letters from the preceding footnotes for some examples.

³²³ This was arguably their key complaint against Unilever, and Unilever products, during the 1960s.

³²⁴ In 1968, George Gair was a first-term National Party backbencher. He remained in Parliament for nearly 25 years, and became well-known as a 'liberal' member of the National caucus, strongly opposing restrictions on abortion in the 1970s and later supporting the Homosexual Law Reform Bill during a crucial vote deciding its fate. To my knowledge, this bill was his first major intervention in the New Zealand parliamentary arena.

liquid volumes.³²⁵ Gair's bill was endorsed by CARP Auckland, and while his bill ended up languishing on the Order Paper, the Government introduced their own bill, the Consumer Protection Bill, in 1968.³²⁶ The bill would end up being progressed through Parliament and passing into law during the first half and middle of 1969.

Much of CARP's political attention during the second half of 1968 and 1969 was spent on lobbying regarding the Consumer Protection Bill. CARP Wellington sent a lengthy submission on Gair's original Consumers Information Bill, supporting the intent of the bill but calling out the need to strongly enforce the bill if enacted and suggesting amendments to cover concerns they felt were not covered by the bill as introduced.³²⁷ Both CARP Auckland and CARP Wellington submitted on the later Government bill. These submissions were shorter, focusing on technical amendments.³²⁸ They also directly wrote to MPs concerning the bill: when the government changed the name of their bill to the 'Consumer Information Bill', CARP wrote in protest that this language represented a watering-down of the bill's language.³²⁹ The response was a curt acknowledgement from the Minister of Finance, Rob Muldoon, and multiple letters from Labour Party MPs.³³⁰ Kirk responded with a copy of the Labour Fair Prices Policy they had adopted for the 1969 election; it is clear Kirk wanted CARP to explicitly endorse this policy publicly.³³¹ Warren Freer, who was the Labour spokesman responsible for consumer affairs, responded with sympathy, promising to push the Government to tighten their bill up.³³² Similar letters arrived from Auckland Labour MPs Jonathan Hunt, Bob Tizard, Norman Douglas, and Martyn Finlay. Vernon Cracknell from Social Credit also responded, again with the statement that broader economic reform on social credit lines would be better than the bill.³³³

³²⁵ Consumers Information Bill, 1967, as introduced to the House of Representatives.

³²⁶ Letter from George Gair to Ella Ayo, 25 August 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/7; Letter from Keith Holyoake to Pat Beale, 5 December 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/8.

³²⁷ Submission presented on behalf of CARP Wellington to the Commerce Committee regarding the Consumers Information Bill, 1968, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/03. One concern they wished to see covered by the bill was gimmicky television advertising, which they say as distracting and excessive.

³²⁸ Williams believed this was due to CARP's dissatisfaction with the Government bill, which they saw as a watered-down measure. See Williams, pp. 102-103.

³²⁹ A letter was sent by Flo Humphries on 18 May 1969; unfortunately, this letter is not held in the collection at the University of Auckland Library, and I only know it exists because of the replies.

³³⁰ Letter from Rob Muldoon to Flo Humphries, 4 June 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/5.

³³¹ Letter from Norman Kirk to Flo Humphries, 29 May 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/5.

³³² Letter from Warren Freer to Flo Humphries, 27 May 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/5.

³³³ Letter from Vernon Cracknell to Flo Humphries, 27 May 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/5.

Ultimately the bill passed and became the Consumer Information Act 1969, which came into force in 1970.³³⁴ The Wellington branch continued to express their discontent with the Government's changes to the bill in their bulletins, but ultimately, some measure of consumer protection was passed.³³⁵ A sizeable chunk of the lobbying and momentum towards the passage of the Act came from the lobbying and deputations made by CARP during 1968 and 1969. In 1967, Labour MP Findlay introduced his own bill on the same subject, the 'Control and Reasonable Pricing Bill'. In other words, the CARP Bill. The parliamentary debate on the CARP bill also made direct reference to the organisation.³³⁶ In the debate on the Consumer Information Bill, Marshall made his own appeal to CARP Wellington to support the Bill as being in their interests.³³⁷ These points, combined with the correspondence with Labour, shows that CARP were a key political influence on the development of the Act. They were not the only submitters on the Bill, of course, and Industries and Commerce made this point clear in a letter to CARP.³³⁸ Despite the watering down, I would argue that the political influence CARP had during the Act's passage means that the Act can be counted as an achievement of CARP during the first period of their history.

The first period of CARP's history ends in 1969, after the fight to pass the Consumer Information Act. Towards the end of the year, the only public measure of any note would be the election questionnaires prepared by CARP Auckland and Wellington. Responses from political parties were published in their respective newsletters in late 1969. 1969 was again an election year, and politicians like Kirk sought to make rising prices a key issue.³³⁹ The National Party ultimately declined to reply to either branch's questionnaires, and their views went unrepresented in the ensuing newsletters.³⁴⁰ Wellington received responses from several Labour candidates, several socialist parties, and Social Credit, while Auckland

³³⁴ *Consumer Information Act 1969* (1969, no. 12) (Wellington: Law Drafting Office).

³³⁵ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, July 1969; CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3; September 1969. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/12.

³³⁶ Chisholm, pp. 79-80.

³³⁷ *Evening Post*, 18 June 1969, p. 31, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/01.

³³⁸ Letter from J. H. Stothard to unknown CARP representative, undated, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/01.

³³⁹ The existence of the Labour Fair Prices Policy, prepared as early as the first half of 1968, is one example of this. Letter from Norman Kirk to Flo Humphries, 29 May 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/5.

³⁴⁰ A National Party response was eventually received by Auckland the day after their election newsletter went to print, too late for inclusion. Letter from Ella Ayo to Keith Holyoake, 27 October 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/6.

received replies from the non-National parties in Parliament, the Socialist Unity Party, and the Country Party.³⁴¹ Both newsletters were meant to educate their readers on the views of the various parties regarding prices, and hoped to help members decide on who which party to vote for.³⁴² By the end of 1969, the sentiments of CARP leadership was that, in spite of the decline in CARP following the splits, very soon “housewives (would) reach desperation and realise the need to act”, and that CARP would be there ready to respond.³⁴³ They were anticipating a new spike in CARP activity, which would ultimately come in 1970.

Conclusion

Thus ends the first major period in the history of CARP. While they would never have the same branch outreach they developed nationally in 1967, CARP Auckland and Wellington had survived their first few years, and had set out the major patterns for organisational activity they would continue to follow in the second period of CARP history: representations to the government, co-operation with the trade unions, and when they felt it was justified, boycotts. We can see from this first period of CARP history that the leadership of CARP was strongly connected in to the trade union movement, and many Auckland and Wellington members were union sympathisers or in the working class. However, we also see that there were conservative elements in CARP’s membership, uncomfortable with direct boycotts and trade union alliances. In later periods of CARP history, there would be virtually no publicly-aired internal conservative dissent.

CARP would continue to emphasise their non-political stance, but CARP’s opponents, like Muldoon, would continue to make accusations of Communist influence. In the bigger picture, we see that rising prices in Aotearoa New Zealand was an issue with cross-partisan appeal: CARP was drawing in supporters that voted (and thought) across the political spectrum. Even the dissenting elements that split from CARP to form, for example, the SPA, still believed in fighting rising prices.³⁴⁴ I would compare this to, say, the anti-apartheid protest movement: the Springbok tour protests in 1981, for example, generated more

³⁴¹ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 4, December 1969, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/12; CARP Auckland Newsletter, September or October 1969. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/03.

³⁴² In the end, in November, the incumbent National Party government was re-elected to a fourth consecutive term; a changeover to a Labour Government is discussed in Chapter 3.

³⁴³ Letter from Ella Ayo to B. Greenhalgh, 8 September 1969, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-2/6.

³⁴⁴ In the SPA’s case, by running for Parliament as the Women’s Independent Party; see discussion earlier in this chapter.

political division than CARP did in 1967. It is more likely that, say, a National Party supporter would have actively supported CARP than the 1981 protests.³⁴⁵ While not perhaps achieving the same numerical support as groups like CARE, it appears that, for a time, CARP was able to gain the attention of a politically diverse body of opinion.

The first period of CARP history set the scene for the two later periods of CARP activity. The people who established CARP envisioned it as a grassroots, non-political, platform for women to fight rising prices. The collective identity these women initially chose was 'housewives', but as we have seen many leaders were working women. Within several months, CARP and its leadership were organising boycotts against businesses who they felt had unfairly put their prices up, and were receiving political and national attention. They quickly became friendly with the trade unions, who would become persistent allies throughout CARP history. However, CARP just as quickly fell into factional strife between the original, left-wing, leadership, and members and branches that opposed boycotts and trade union support. This led to several splinters, and an organisational decline that would last until the end of 1969. On the other hand, CARP activity continued, and the pattern of correspondence with Government officials would become a characteristic of the second period of CARP history. We can see that CARP represented a grassroots response to rising prices, in the form of political correspondence, public agitation through demonstrations and meetings, and boycotts. CARP were carving out their own niche in the protest scene: they were intently focused on protesting for economic change, and were utilising political and economic tools like protest and submissions to achieve CARP's goals.

³⁴⁵ In provincial New Zealand, at least, National's 1981 election victory can partially be attributed to anti-protest feelings amongst older, or more conservative, voters. Brooking, p. 148; Franks and McAloon, pp. 196-197.

Chapter 3: “Monopolies or Near Monopolies are Fixing Our Prices”

– 1970-1975

Introduction

The first bulletin CARP Wellington printed in 1970 declared that “monopolies or near monopolies are fixing our prices”.³⁴⁶ This quote was written as part of CARP’s advertising for a significant boycott that year, and a wider extract from the bulletin appears later in the chapter. The quote summarises one of the key focuses of CARP’s action in the 1970s: corporate food monopolies. The second period of CARP’s history spanned from 1970 to 1975, and the first big action was a boycott on tinned goods produced by the Wattie group of companies and Unilever, two large companies that CARP considered monopolisers. This period of CARP history was spent, in part, fighting these monopolies. They also spent time raising concerns around the state of the fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, and bread industries, concerning prices and quality. CARP faced two governments during this time, one being the National Government in power before 1970 and the other the Labour Government elected in 1972. They would have rocky relationships with both, but one of their key activities during this time was communication and lobbying the Government and Government agencies. In addition to lobbying and boycotting, CARP published bulletins, pushed for rent control and better social security, produced a unit cost calculator, and closely watched the activities of a British ‘supermarket king’. That is a condensed list of activities.

During the second period of CARP history, unity proved to be strength: the departure of dissenting branches and leaders in 1967 meant that, during these five years, CARP faced no known internal dissent or schisms. I argue this strengthened their efforts at protesting, and meant that they could continue to build ties with the trade unions and boycott as they saw fit without facing hostile members. This must be tempered with the note that there was no ‘national’ Campaign, but two main branches that usually agreed, but could disagree on occasion. This period of CARP history was, in my opinion, their organisational peak; while they did not have the same reach outside Auckland and Wellington that they began to develop in 1967, CARP was at its most active, and possibly most fruitful.

³⁴⁶ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1970, p. 5, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

CARP versus Monopolies: 1970 March Boycott Month, and the Aftermath

CARP's Auckland leadership at the start of the second period carried over directly from the end of the first. Flo Humphries remained President, and Ella Ayo was still the Secretary. There would be no further changes in leadership at the top in the Auckland branch from 1970 onwards. Members on the Auckland Executive would come and go, but Humphries and Ayo remained in their positions. In Wellington, on the other hand, the beginning of the second period was marked by a change in the branch's leadership. Ann Turner resigned at the end of 1969; she and her family left New Zealand to move overseas.³⁴⁷ Soon afterwards Marion Findlay also resigned as Secretary. Her reason was the pressure of working while holding CARP office.³⁴⁸ These resignations led to Cath Kelly being elected as the new leader of CARP Wellington. She initially served as President, and later moved to being Secretary with another woman, Keren Cook, taking over as President.³⁴⁹ From 1970 onwards, Kelly became the public face of CARP Wellington: all external correspondence was written in her name as far as I can determine, and she was the woman quoted in the media as CARP Wellington's representative.³⁵⁰ I note again that 1970 was also the year Cath and her husband Pat were expelled from the increasingly-radical-Maoist Communist Party, along with the rest of the Wellington branch. According to Macfie, the Party were "denouncing ... CARP as agents of the capitalist establishment, guilty of lulling the working class into believing the system could be reformed to their benefit".³⁵¹ In the last chapter I discussed apparent-conservative criticism of CARP, accusing them of hurting small businesses and criticising their union ties; here we can see left-wing criticism of CARP.³⁵² Regardless, the election of Cath Kelly, wife of a Wellington trade unionist, as CARP President/Secretary

³⁴⁷ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 4, December 1969, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/12.

³⁴⁸ Letter from Marion Findlay to Flo Humphries, 8 February 1970, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/1.

³⁴⁹ Fellow housewife Lorraine O'Neill was elected as Secretary in 1970, but seems to have played a lesser role in the position than Marion Findlay immediately after being elected due to her newborn baby: for example, Kelly as President took over correspondence with Auckland, a role that originally belonged to the Secretary. Letter from Cath Kelly to Ella Ayo, 16 March 1970, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/1.

³⁵⁰ On the other hand, Kelly's election as President was accompanied by a reshuffling of responsibilities amongst junior officers in CARP Wellington to decrease the load on the shoulders of the President and Secretary. Williams points out that there were multiple committee members that developed specialised roles in CARP Wellington. Williams, p. 98. I note that Williams places more prominence on Keren Cook as a public face of CARP as opposed to Kelly; the archives left in the Alexander Turnbull Library do not appear to corroborate this account.

³⁵¹ Macfie, p. 58.

³⁵² See Chapter 4 for further discussion on left-wing criticism and 'rising prices' activism.

solidified the links between CARP Wellington and the local trade union movement. The trade union links would continue onwards into the second period of CARP history, as will be seen in CARP's big protest action in 1970. I would say that the Communist Party criticism had little impact on CARP's popularity within broader left-wing circles, most likely because of these links.

The agenda for 1970 was already being written in 1969, and one old opponent from 1967 was just as important in 1970 as they had been when CARP was forming. Unilever was a company that CARP had been investigating for multiple years, and continued to be a key target in 1970, but in 1969 CARP began paying attention to another large food conglomerate, this time based in Aotearoa New Zealand: the holdings of Sir James Wattie. Sir James was a very well-known businessman in New Zealand during the middle of the 20th century. After growing up in various parts of rural New Zealand with his farming family, and working several odd jobs, he moved into the fruit business, and in 1934 opened a fruit cannery and processor with several associates in Hawke's Bay. This would become J. Wattie Canneries Ltd., Sir James' core holding, and from there Wattie moved beyond fruit into vegetables and other New Zealand crops. In the 1960s his businesses acquired many other New Zealand canneries and food manufacturers, and by the time these holdings were consolidated into Wattie Industries Ltd, Sir James and his companies held a dominant position in the New Zealand food industry.³⁵³ During the time when CARP was interested in Wattie and his companies, he was busy expanding ever further. In 1970 he was in the process of acquiring his way into being a major player in the Australian food industry to the point where his companies were under federal investigation for participating in an illegal cartel agreement. In 1971, he was one of the key backers of the New Zealand expansion of Kentucky Fried Chicken.³⁵⁴ In 1974, his last year alive, his companies secured a deal to supply

³⁵³ See Geoff Conly, *Wattie's: The First Fifty Years* (Hastings: J Wattie Canneries Ltd, 1984), for a history of the Wattie group from 1934-1984. But note that this history was published and sponsored by Wattie Industries Ltd., and therefore takes a very positive view of Sir James and his companies. Indeed, CARP is briefly mentioned, but lumped in with the Otago Drivers Union and the Kirk Government and described as 'opportunists', no doubt reflecting the official views of Wattie's on CARP.

³⁵⁴ *Evening Post*, 9 September 1971, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

canned foods to the Green Giant company in the United States.³⁵⁵ In short, the business holdings of Sir James Wattie were rapidly expanding in the late 1960s and 1970s.³⁵⁶

The minutes of the Wellington branch indicate that in mid-1969 they were engaged in publicity actions in Hawke's Bay concerning the price of Wattie's goods.³⁵⁷ In August that year, CARP sent a letter to Prime Minister Holyoake documenting their concerns about the difference between pricing of Wattie's goods in New Zealand and the United Kingdom.³⁵⁸ In this letter, they particularly called out 29 ounce cans of sliced peaches being sold at 2/4d (on special at 1/10½d) in the United Kingdom, and 34-38 cents in New Zealand. In accordance with the fixed exchange rate in force in 1969, the prices in New Zealand dollars would be about 27 cents, on special at 20 cents, roughly 20-40% less than the New Zealand price. To quote the letter, "Sir James Wattie claims that it costs him more to transport goods from Hastings to Invercargill than it does to send them to London. CARP finds this difficult to understand."³⁵⁹ In other words, CARP felt Wattie's goods were being sold at unfairly high prices compared to overseas markets for no good reason. The Auckland branch held similar views to the Wellington branch, and both agreed to make action against Wattie's a high priority in 1970. Wattie's received unfavourable reporting in CARP Wellington's last bulletin for 1969, and a piece the Wellington branch prepared was printed in CARP Auckland's last newsletter that year.³⁶⁰ These would set the scene for the first big CARP activity in 1970.

After their first meetings for the year in February 1970, CARP Wellington resolved to call a boycott against all tinned fruit during March 1970. This received front-page coverage in the first Bulletin of 1970, and posters were prepared for public advertisement.³⁶¹ This boycott was called for a one-month period, from the start of March to the end of the month. At the same time, the Auckland branch were investigating Wattie's for their own reasons. They were interested in concerns raised by poultry producers regarding Wattie's recent move into

³⁵⁵ *Dominion*, 23 March 1974, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁵⁶ In the rest of this chapter the group of companies collectively owned by Wattie will be referred to as 'Wattie's' for convenience.

³⁵⁷ Minutes of CARP Wellington committee meeting, 23 September 1969, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/05. Unfortunately, these minutes are the only available record of this publicity action.

³⁵⁸ Letter from Ann Turner to Keith Holyoake, 5 August 1969, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/10.

³⁵⁹ Letter from Ann Turner to Keith Holyoake, 5 August 1969, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/10.

³⁶⁰ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 4, December 1969, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13; CARP Auckland Newsletter, September or October 1969, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/03.

³⁶¹ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13; 'Boycott All Tinned Fruit This Month', CARP Wellington poster, 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

their industry. Wattie's acquired Wood Bros, then a big player in New Zealand poultry, and the poultry industry in Christchurch were concerned that Wattie's could use this foothold to abuse their market power.³⁶² As CARP Auckland noted in a letter to Minister Norman Shelton, the 'poultry men' were calling Wattie's "a monopoly".³⁶³ The Auckland branch would also support the call for boycotts against Wattie's products, and sought to combine this with a continuation of boycott action against Unilever products.³⁶⁴

Notably, calls for action received support outside of CARP's bases in Auckland and Wellington: in Dunedin, the Otago Drivers Union and Otago Trades Council sponsored a public meeting that decided to form a new Dunedin branch of CARP.³⁶⁵ This was significant, as an attempt at forming a branch of CARP in Dunedin had failed in 1967 during the wave of national branch-building, according to Chisholm due to local competition for members with the Consumers Institute.³⁶⁶ I am not certain what had changed in the intervening years, but the new CARP Otago was even more integrated with the unions than the older branches. In 1967 it had been 'housewives' organisations' driving branch building; now, in Dunedin, it was the unions. This branch immediately endorsed acting against Wattie's, following the Wellington boycott in identical terms, and in solidarity at the same time the Otago Drivers Union announced a complementary protest: its drivers would refuse to carry any goods produced by Wattie's.³⁶⁷ In Wellington the unions also provided support: the PSA particularly had helped to distribute leaflets supporting the cause. CARP Wellington also put out posters, and reportedly publicised their cause at places including the city central train station.³⁶⁸

Finally, CARP Auckland were not alone in their endorsement of the Wellington tinned fruit boycott. In fact, they had the support of a larger meeting of unions and consumer groups held in February, which included CARP representatives, as well as several housewives' associations, unions covering multiple trades, wharfies, engineers, and seamen, and

³⁶² *Evening Post*, 18 December 1969, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁶³ Letter from Ella Ayo to Norman Shelton, 2 February 1970, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/1.

³⁶⁴ Correspondence between Cath Kelly and Ella Ayo indicates that CARP Wellington were also interested in boycotting Unilever, and 'tinned fruit' was meant to include products sold by Unilever. Letter from Cath Kelly to Ella Ayo, 16 March 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02.

³⁶⁵ Letter from N. L. Gough to Ella Ayo, 26 March 1970, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/3.

³⁶⁶ Chisholm, p. 31.

³⁶⁷ *Evening Post*, 28 March 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁶⁸ Letter from Cath Kelly to Ella Ayo, 16 March 1970, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/1.

featuring Bill Anderson from the Northern Drivers Union as a prominent speaker.³⁶⁹ The drivers union in Otago had been a key force in organising CARP Otago. I argue they were probably inspired by the co-operation between CARP, and the Northern Drivers Union in Auckland, who had been interested in rising prices as part of campaigning to improve the position of the working-class since at least the 'Black Budget' in 1958.³⁷⁰ Just like in the first period of CARP history, the trade unions would remain prominent allies, as the tinned fruit boycott/driver's strike action demonstrates. Unlike the first period, there was no internal opposition inside CARP to the close union ties, or at the very least, members who were opposed kept quiet. The branches, like Rotorua and Whakatāne, that had been uncomfortable with union solidarity were long gone by 1970. I would argue the Wattie's boycott represents the time where CARP and the unions were most closely aligned. CARP had achieved unity behind their fight against Wattie's and Sir James, and as the quote went, "unity is strength".

Sir James Wattie, of course, spoke out against the boycott while it was in force. According to news reports, he accused CARP and the unions of "victimising" his business, boasting "the boycotts have made no differences to the sale of our goods except for those still lying in stores on the Dunedin wharf".³⁷¹ He also publicly stated his belief that Wattie's peaches were cheaper than they had been on 1 March 1966, and the whole idea of comparing prices in New Zealand and the United Kingdom was a 'red herring'.³⁷² Sir James had his supporters. An anonymous Hastings correspondent wrote in to the *Dominion* accusing CARP of ignoring actual statistics and accusing them of following Otago Trade Council 'childishness'.³⁷³ Government speakers took a moderate position of supporting consultations on price rises while opposing 'blanket price control'.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁹ Incidentally, the Stabilise Prices Association was represented by Odette Leather at this meeting, speaking on "the question of selecting the right items to boycott". Whether she agreed with CARP's boycott is not recorded. Minutes of Meeting of Unions and Consumer Groups, 26 February 1970, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/1.

³⁷⁰ Locke, 2022, pp. 79-80, 97-98.

³⁷¹ *Dominion*, 25 March 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁷² *Dominion*, 23 March 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁷³ *Dominion*, 18 March 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11. The correspondent seems to have been unaware that CARP had conducted international price comparisons.

³⁷⁴ *Dominion*, 25 March 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11. Since these were members of the National Party, I interpret these statements as tacit support of Wattie's position.

However, the boycott does appear to have received wider support. One piece commenting on Sir James' response included a snippet on increased demand for glass preserving jars among Auckland manufacturers. Apparently, sales of these jars had increased because housewives were choosing to preserve at the same time the boycott was ongoing.³⁷⁵ While the price of Wattie's canned peaches in New Zealand does not appear to have directly gone down because of the boycott, Kelly called the March boycott a success. As she noted, the boycott had "aroused immense interest and prompted discussion and consumer resistance", and her consultations with shops and wholesalers indicated that there was a decrease in tinned fruit sales in March 1970 in favour of alternatives.³⁷⁶ Also, the combined meetings with multiple trade unions and union backing of CARP Otago indicated that the boycott had strengthened CARP's ties with the union movement. I argue that CARP's 1970 boycott on Wattie's canned foods was more successful than the original boycotts of 1967 against confectionaries and baking. Those boycotts, while having an economic impact, would end up being a catalyst for CARP's split. In 1970, by contrast, the fight against Wattie's brought CARP and its key supporters together. Without Rotorua or women like Odette Leather or Pat Beale to express opposition, CARP was united and stronger.

The March boycotts against Wattie's products were defined to last for one month, and this initial boycott was not extended. CARP Otago does not appear to have survived past this boycott. Like the many regional branches that disappeared in 1967-68, CARP Otago simply faded away after March 1970. The new CARP Otago had specifically been founded to pursue the boycott against Wattie's and Unilever, and unlike the older branches which were formed as spontaneous housewife grassroots movements, Dunedin unions, particularly the Otago Drivers Union, are documented as being the key force driving CARP Otago's foundation. The account in the letter informing the Auckland branch of CARP Otago's formation emphasises the organising role of the Otago Trades Council, but says nothing of 'housewife', or 'woman's', leadership.³⁷⁷ In fact, the documented Secretary of CARP Otago was Norman Gough, a man: the only case of a male CARP Secretary that I am aware of.³⁷⁸ I believe the initial boycott action was the key driving force that pulled CARP Otago into existence. With

³⁷⁵ *Dominion*, 23 March 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁷⁶ "'Great Success" Claimed For Boycott', unknown newspaper, 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁷⁷ Letter from N. L. Gough to Ella Ayo, 26 March 1970, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/3.

³⁷⁸ His name is documented in Letter from Norman L. Gough to Cath Kelly, 15 April 1970, ATL, 79-076-2/02.

the end of the boycott, interest in the branch appears to have quickly dried up: the foundations of the branch (the unions, not grassroots efforts, with male leadership) were completely different to the foundations that the Auckland and Wellington branches were built on in 1966-1967. CARP Otago would end up being the most notable attempt at forming new branches of CARP during the second phase of their history.

There were a few other attempts at branch building. The Tokoroa branch was revived in 1970, and a new Manawatū branch based in Palmerston North started up the same year.³⁷⁹ A housewives committee in Twizel inquired into affiliating with CARP in 1970; Kelly's response was that she had never heard of Twizel before!³⁸⁰ However, none of these branches would last. The contact with Twizel appears to have ended after one letter exchange, and both the new Tokoroa and Manawatū branches disappeared from CARP's records by 1971. Overall, CARP Auckland and CARP Wellington would remain the only significant branches during their second period.

While the initial boycott ended in March 1970, Wattie's would remain on CARP's radar for the next five years. At the end of 1970, the Wellington branch was calling for the New Zealand government to conduct a probe into Wattie's and their increasing monopoly control of the local food industry. CARP Wellington particularly expressed concern at a proposal to can fruit on behalf of Unilever, which CARP saw as market collusion.³⁸¹ At this time Wattie's was a respondent in an investigation by the Australian federal government. The investigation was into an agreement between the major Australian frozen vegetable companies to fix frozen vegetable prices.³⁸² An Australian tribunal ruled that this violated the local Trade Practices Act; J. Wattie Canneries was a party to the pact, and hence were named and shamed in the ruling.³⁸³

³⁷⁹ TUC Committee Against Rising Prices Bulletin No. 2, 1970; Letter from Cath Kelly (presumed) to Catherine Imrie, 30 July 1970. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02.

³⁸⁰ Letter from P. X. Phelps to Cath Kelly (presumed), 24 July 1970; Letter from Cath Kelly (presumed) to Catherine Imrie, 30 July 1970. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02. Twizel is a South Canterbury town that was founded in 1968 to service a nearby hydroelectricity scheme, and so it is believable that Kelly had never heard of the town.

³⁸¹ 'CARP Backs Probe Into "Monopoly"', unknown newspaper (possibly *Dominion*), 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁸² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 June 1971, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁸³ *Evening Post*, 7 August 1971, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

Over the next few years, CARP would investigate Wattie's for further monopolistic practices. In 1972, they raised concerns with the government over Wattie's acquiring the Crest brand from Unilever, a concern that was dismissed.³⁸⁴ In 1974, after a change of government, CARP was involved in public lobbying against a Wattie's proposal to increase the price of many of their canned goods. Under the pricing schemes in force at the time, the price increases needed to be approved by the government Prices Tribunal, and so J. Wattie Canneries applied for, and was granted, approval to raise the prices of many of their products. In total, CARP estimated the rises to add up to \$3 million dollars in pricing relief.³⁸⁵

Eventually, a public hearing was allowed by the Tribunal, and Kelly gave a statement there on behalf of CARP Wellington. In it, she, and through her CARP, expressed concern that J. Wattie Canneries was already a hugely profitable company, and while the company was claiming their canneries were becoming unprofitable, "we read the company's annual reports which each year shout its profitability both present and future".³⁸⁶ She concluded then at "if Watties did in fact have the interest of consumers at heart, they would absorb the rising costs".³⁸⁷ In saying this, she was attacking Watties' public position that he was interested in looking out for the consumer. Of course, the Tribunal had already approved the price rises before this hearing, and it appears that their initial ruling was not overturned. I believe, instead, this statement was aimed at the public, and was meant to put CARP's case into the media.

The material generated by CARP Otago during its short existence clearly summarises what CARP was trying to say about Wattie's, and why it was a target: CARP had become interested in monopolies. A publicity poster noted that Wattie's position in 1970 meant that "fewer and fewer compaines [sic] are getting more and more control of the products we use and so competition becomes less and less until now it hardly exists".³⁸⁸ Unilever has received less

³⁸⁴ Letter from Brian Talboys to Cath Kelly, 9 March 1972, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁸⁵ Letter from Cath Kelly to the President of the Prices Tribunal, 14 March 1974, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11. I believe the '\$3 million' pricing relief approved meant that Wattie's could increase their prices so that their corporate annual revenue would increase by \$3 million, but this is not explicitly clarified in any of the documents I have seen. Products that were proposed to be increased in price included baked beans, which were meant to go up in price by 3c, canned beetroot, going up by 1c, and tinned peaches, going up by 2c.

³⁸⁶ CARP Wellington Statement at Public Hearing of Price Tribunal into Wattie Canneries, 1974, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁸⁷ CARP Wellington Statement at Public Hearing of Price Tribunal into Wattie Canneries, 1974, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/11.

³⁸⁸ 'Who Owns What?', CARP Otago publicity poster, 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02.

focus in this chapter in favour of Wattie's, but they too were blasted as a monopoliser: the same Otago poster listed off the many brands owned by Unilever, and the different holding companies under the larger Unilever corporation.³⁸⁹ The Wellington bulletin announcing the tinned fruit boycott included a section reproducing this list, and set out their view that "in most of the essential goods competition hardly exists and monopolies or near monopolies are fixing our prices!"³⁹⁰ From 1970 onwards, CARP became very interested in the effect of monopolies on the New Zealand food industry. Their advocacy continued throughout the second period of CARP history: the Wattie's Price Tribunal statement was made four years after the tinned fruit boycott, showing CARP did not forget about Wattie's. Advocacy against Unilever also continued: all of CARP Wellington's bulletins in 1970 included a section detailing the continued rise in Unilever prices and continued to urge consumers not to buy their products.³⁹¹

1971: CARP Targets the National Government's Policies

Going into 1971, CARP were grappling with the National Government's latest proposals to fight rising prices. The initial economic woes arising from the 1966 wool price collapse continued rippling through into the 1970s, and prices, particularly of food, constantly continued to rise. During this time Finance Minister Rob Muldoon introduced a series of 'mini-budgets' attempting to control the economic situation. One in 1967, proposing the removal of subsidies on basic food items, was attacked by the then-new CARP.³⁹² Another in 1970 increased income taxes and introduced further surcharges on government services, including the post office, in an attempt to strengthen the economic situation and shore up the Government's coffers to support, for example, the agricultural sector.³⁹³

In November 1970, the Government introduced a two-month price freeze, with the intent that the government would set up new schemes to control wage and price increases, and stabilise prices in the lead-up to a new scheme.³⁹⁴ Minister of Industries and Commerce Norman Shelton called on the public to report any breaches of the price freeze during the

³⁸⁹ 'Who Owns What?', CARP Otago publicity poster, 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02.

³⁹⁰ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1970, p. 5, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

³⁹¹ See CARP Wellington Bulletins No. 2, 3, and 4, May, July, and September 1970 respectively. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

³⁹² See Chapter 2.

³⁹³ *Evening Post*, 28 October 1970, p. 15, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/02.

³⁹⁴ *Dominion*, 17 November 1970, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02.

two months, essentially delegating the task of enforcement to consumer organisations.³⁹⁵ CARP's response was cautious – they pointed out that there were many exemptions to the proposed freeze and that it fell well short of the system of complete price control they were advocating for.³⁹⁶ At the end of the November 1970 freeze, the Government finally announced the details of a new 'price justification scheme' that the Department of Industries and Commerce had been developing since April. In short, the Department would draw up a list of essential items, meant to cover about 60% of food items sold in New Zealand, including basic staples. Items on this list would be subject to 'price surveillance', and any price increases would need to be justified to the Prices Tribunal.³⁹⁷ The system was meant to control price rises, by requiring manufacturers like Unilever and Wattie's to explicitly justify their price increases.

While, in theory, this was meant to appeal to organisations like CARP, CARP were critical of the scheme. It fell short of complete price control, which remained CARP's publicly stated end-goal. Fruit, vegetables, meat, and fish were all excluded from the scheme, which CARP strongly criticised as excising major family food staples from price control.³⁹⁸ They also expressed concern that the justifications required of manufacturers were not required to be made public – only the grocers agreed to publish details.³⁹⁹ Ultimately, CARP would be critical of the scheme throughout 1971 and 1972. Every bulletin from the Wellington branch in 1971 devoted a section to the price justification scheme, documenting approvals for rises in Unilever prices, rises in most biscuit prices, and the lack of information in Department releases on weekly price rises.⁴⁰⁰ Thus, CARP continued to be a critic of the Government into the 1970s.

The Government, in turn, bit back at CARP. Rob Muldoon, then the Minister of Finance, was the key Government figure to publicly speak out against CARP. In 1971, he publicly accused CARP of being a subversive Communist organisation. He also engaged in 'red-baiting' against the trade unions at the same time, accusing them of 'industrial anarchy', but in particular, he

³⁹⁵ *Dominion*, 17 November 1970, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/02.

³⁹⁶ CARP Wellington Circular Letter to Members, December 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

³⁹⁷ *Evening Post*, 23 December 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/03.

³⁹⁸ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1971, p. 6, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

³⁹⁹ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1971, p. 6, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴⁰⁰ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, June 1971, p. 3., No. 3, August 1971, p. 7, No. 4, October 1971, p. 8. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

singled out CARP as being 'Communist-directed', pointing to Ella Ayo in particular as an open member of a Communist movement.⁴⁰¹ CARP once again asserted their non-political stance in their response. As the Wellington bulletin stated, "as an organisation CARP does not attach itself to any political party or group", and Kelly commented that soon Muldoon would be looking under his bed for Communists.⁴⁰² CARP Auckland also wrote up their own response, pointing out issues with his statements regarding CARP, including his claim that CARP Auckland had the same President and Secretary for over ten years, and denying they were an 'off-shoot' of the Socialist Unity Party.⁴⁰³ One commentator agreeing with Muldoon was none other than Odette Leather, who was cited in the media as saying that split in 1967 was precipitated, in part, by concerns around Communist influence.⁴⁰⁴ Whether this is true or not is debatable: she had never publicly made this claim in 1967.⁴⁰⁵ However, she remained a strong critic of CARP. In early 1970, she published a piece criticising CARP as ineffective and silent and chastised them for becoming a union associate.⁴⁰⁶

CARP continued to act as a non-political organisation in the second period of their history. In fact, they rejected requests to engage in overtly political protests. For example, Williams documents that CARP Wellington declined to join a proposed boycott against South African goods in 1974, on the grounds that this boycott was not related to fighting rising prices.⁴⁰⁷ Many members are likely to have privately supported the boycott. Kelly, for example, was an opponent of apartheid, and was involved in the anti-apartheid movement in the 1980s. The branch leadership decided, however, that apartheid was outside of CARP's concerns.

⁴⁰¹ *Evening Post*, 9 August 1971, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/03. As a reminder, Ella Ayo was a well-known member of the Socialist Unity Party, a pro-Soviet communist party founded in 1966 as a split from the original Communist Party.

⁴⁰² CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, August 1971, p. 3, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13; *Evening Post*, 9 August 1971. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/03.

⁴⁰³ 'CARP: Questions and Answers – Mr Muldoon', August 1971, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/3. Indeed, CARP had not even existed for ten years when Muldoon made the statement; it had only been around for five.

⁴⁰⁴ *Press*, 10 August 1971, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/03.

⁴⁰⁵ Although she had expressed her opposition to CARP association with the trade unions, like the old Rotorua branch, which could be read as implicit association with Communism depending on what you read into these statements.

⁴⁰⁶ *Sunday News*, 31 January 1971, p. 40, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-7/1. Odette Leather reduces CARP's activities in 1970 to "the odd newspaper comment" and seems unaware of the tinned fruit boycott or the activities of CARP Otago. Thus, I would question her reliability as a commentator on CARP activities and direction; at the very least her later criticism seems to turn a blind eye to CARP activities.

⁴⁰⁷ Williams, p. 116.

Additionally, CARP Wellington were invited to send speakers to organisations like the League of Mothers, a Christian mother's organisation with the object of "uphold(ing) the sanctity of marriage" and promoting the idea of steadfast housewives.⁴⁰⁸ If an organisation with a comparatively conservative outlook on women's issues at the time was willing to correspond with an organisation like CARP, then this suggests, even after the 1967 schisms, there were more-conservatively minded women who were interested in joining CARP and fighting rising prices. Regardless of its stance and contacts, CARP had become associated in politically right-wing circles with communism, and by association with subversion. Their relationship with the National Party was greatly damaged by these accusations, and through to the end of CARP's existence CARP and National would never really be friendly with each other.⁴⁰⁹

Non-Boycott Actions: Correspondence and Submissions in the early 1970s

Despite this political disagreement, CARP also spent a lot of their time in the second period of their history in contact with the Government. In addition to their focus on monopolies, CARP adopted a focus on monitoring the prices of a range of 'staple food items' and calling for government intervention to stabilise prices. These items were: bread, fruit and vegetables, meat, and fish. That CARP would focus on bread is not a surprise, given that their first target back in 1967 was the bakeries. Cake, biscuit, and general baking boycotts would sporadically continue in the early 1970s, but never with the same publicity or scale that was seen in 1967.⁴¹⁰

Eventually, in 1971, CARP Wellington had come to focus in on bread as the key baker's item to target. In early 1971, they publicly called for the reinstatement of price-controlled wrapped bread. Certain categories of wrapped bread had been covered by price controls in the early- to mid-1960s that had been abolished by 1969.⁴¹¹ CARP circulated a petition around Wellington early in 1971 calling for the reinstatement of these price-controlled

⁴⁰⁸ Letter from M. Haswell(?) to Cath Kelly (presumed), 6 April 1970, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/01. More information about the League can be found in Else.

⁴⁰⁹ As a post-script, CARP Auckland would later consider taking Muldoon to court for defamation over his continued accusations in 1974, when he was Leader of the Opposition. Letter from Ella Ayo to Cath Kelly, 2 September 1974, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/12.

⁴¹⁰ See CARP Wellington Bulletin, No. 2, May 1970, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13, for an example call to action.

⁴¹¹ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1971, pp. 1-2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

categories, and particularly received support in Porirua.⁴¹² The result was an urgent public inquiry into the bread industry in mid-1971, in response to CARP's public lobbying. CARP were critical of the decision to hold sessions of the inquiry in secret, deploring the possibility of "private agreements between the Government and the bakers to raise prices".⁴¹³ This inquiry was reportedly repeatedly delayed, eventually taking place in 1972, and in the meantime, CARP continued to advocate for bread price control.⁴¹⁴

In 1972, commissions of inquiry were set up to report to the Government on the distribution of meat, fish, fruit, and vegetables.⁴¹⁵ These were large inquiries, and many questions were referred to them for consideration, including the state of competition in selling these items and the changes in the structure of wholesales and retailing.⁴¹⁶ With their interest in food prices, CARP Auckland and Wellington both made submissions to the commissions setting out their perspectives. For the inquiry into fruit, CARP Wellington sent a submission on behalf of itself and CARP Auckland, setting out their perspective with a particular focus on apples and potatoes. In their eight-page submission, CARP Auckland expressed their concern with the current system of marketing apples, which they felt led to unnecessary price increases and too many stale apples being sold in stores, and argued that direct sales from orchards to suburban areas should be encouraged and not restricted.⁴¹⁷ They also reported their disgust with the quality of potatoes and Ecuadorian bananas sold in New Zealand. Potatoes particularly received an entire page of comments regarding their quality, and CARP Wellington called for quality standards to be introduced for potatoes.⁴¹⁸ In short, they felt

⁴¹² CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1971, p. 3, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13. The Porirua branch appears to have retained some degree of independent identity as they were called out as a driving force behind this particular petition.

⁴¹³ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, August 1971, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴¹⁴ The inquiry report was finally published in February 1972. Subsequently, CARP Wellington accused Auckland and Christchurch bakers of colluding with each other to stop baking standardised sizes of bread to ruin the possibility of price control. CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, August 1972, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴¹⁵ The records are slightly confusing here: this seems to have begun as one larger inquiry that eventually split into two: one on fruit and vegetables, and one on meat.

⁴¹⁶ Public advertisements regarding the Committee of Inquiry into the Distribution of Meat, Fish, Fruit, and Vegetables, 1972, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/4.

⁴¹⁷ Submission by CARP Wellington to the Committee of Inquiry into Fruit and Vegetables, 12 September 1972, pp. 1-2, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/4.

⁴¹⁸ Submission by CARP Wellington to the Committee of Inquiry into Fruit and Vegetables, 12 September 1972, pp. 4, 6, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/4.

consumers were being ripped off by the prices of fruit and vegetables, and called for controls and regulations to improve quality and value-for-money.

Meanwhile, both CARP Auckland and Wellington made submissions to the inquiry into meat. The three-page Auckland submission called out their belief that “sole reliance on competition (to reduce prices) is inadequate” in the meat market, and suggesting New Zealand ownership of freezing works as the best way to restrain price increases in meat.⁴¹⁹ They also pointed out a 47% increase in retail meat prices since 1967 (to 1972), steeper than increases in the CPI, suggesting this needed examination, and called for the meat industry to publish further data relating to profits and margins in the sector for greater transparency and in the hope that this would restrain price increases.⁴²⁰ CARP Wellington’s nine-page submission expressed similar concerns to the Auckland submission, and concluded with the recommendation that the local meat market should be subject to a regime of strict price control.⁴²¹ It is clear from the Wellington submission that they had conducted extensive research into the Wellington meat market in preparation for their submission, and their submission touches on a wide range of factors, including ticketing regulations, grading and weighing, the impact of supermarkets, and the role of specials in justifying what CARP saw as anti-consumer practices.⁴²²

The campaign to lower the prices of meat, fish, fruit, and vegetables, and to improve the quality of these foods took up a lot of CARP’s attention in 1971 and 1972. The fourth bulletin from the Wellington branch in 1971, for example, was a ‘meat special’, calling on supporters to report violations of food industry regulations and informing them of the things to look out for at butchers and supermarkets.⁴²³ In combination with the 1970 Wattie’s boycott, I think these examples highlight how CARP operated during the second period of their history. They were not as nationally spread as they were during the peak of 1967, and their membership was relatively smaller than that same peak. My own estimated count for CARP Wellington’s

⁴¹⁹ Submission by CARP Auckland to the Committee of Inquiry into Meat, 1972, p. 1, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/5.

⁴²⁰ Submission by CARP Auckland to the Committee of Inquiry into Meat, 1972, pp. 2-3, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/5.

⁴²¹ Submission by CARP Wellington to the Committee of Inquiry into Meat, 17 August 1972, p. 9, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/5.

⁴²² Submission by CARP Wellington to the Committee of Inquiry into Meat, 17 August 1972, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/5.

⁴²³ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, October 1971, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

membership at this time is no more than 2000, based on how many newsletters were being printed. Recall that in 1967 the Auckland branch asserted a membership of 3000: in a letter in 1974, Ayo admitted that the Auckland branch only counted 150 financial supporters, although she stressed this was not how CARP counted its membership.⁴²⁴

Regardless of size, by 1970, CARP had become a regular fixture of the New Zealand consumer scene. Odette Leather had complained that CARP was inactive and useless by 1971, but this was far from the truth: CARP were very busy with their activities. They continued to boycott, as seen in 1970, but now their boycotts tended to be more targeted: specific brands, like Wattie's or Unilever, or specific foods like bread. This stands in contrast to the initial, broader boycott in 1967 against practically all goods sold by bakers. They had also become a regular submitter to government inquiries into the food industry, and a regular critic of government policy regarding price control. As a protest organisation, CARP was becoming more and more entrenched as an organisation in it for the long-haul. They were making a name for themselves as a consumer pressure group on the specific subject of rising prices, ready to engage in boycotts or in Government lobbying. I would draw comparisons between CARP's institutionalisation and how Williams described CARE and the COV as long-term protest organisations.

Additionally, CARP were also interested in educating housewives about what they saw as the causes of rising prices, and in the practices used to justify them. Recall the 1974 statement to the Prices Tribunal regarding proposed increases in Wattie's prices: at the time, the decision to approve price rises had already been made, and the Tribunal hearing was simply a review of the decision. My analysis is that the statement they made was meant to garner media attention for the cause of CARP, and for their position on monopolies in the New Zealand food industry. Throughout this time, the Wellington branch continued to publish four or five bulletins each year, between six and eight pages long. These covered the key activities of the branch between each bulletin, and sometimes could be focused on specific issues. A particular example of a dedicated-issue bulletin was the 'meat special' bulletin from 1972.

⁴²⁴ Chisholm, p. 36; Letter from Ella Ayo to Cath Kelly, 7 September 1974, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/12.

I would also point out the ‘unit-cost calculator’ created by CARP Wellington in the early 1970s. The ‘unit-cost calculator’ was a circular device, with two independently-rotatable layers, that could be used to easily calculate price-per-weight values. The calculator could be used to compare prices of items that weighted different amounts, or calculate prices per-pound.⁴²⁵ This was a response to CARP’s long-running concern that differently weighted products were being used to confuse the public and hide increased prices.⁴²⁶ The calculator was enclosed with several bulletins, and according to CARP they had ‘good sales’ for the calculator through networks of supporters and CARP meetings.⁴²⁷ This is an example of consumer education, and while this was a less prominent example of CARP’s activities, it echoes the emphasis the old Christchurch branch placed on the importance of research.⁴²⁸

CARP’s Non-Food Concerns – Rent, Fireworks, Medicine, and Prosecutions

So far, I have focused on CARP’s campaigns regarding food items, and their ongoing areas of concern. They were, however, interested in ‘rising prices’ outside of the food industry as well. Locke was interested in CARP Auckland’s actions regarding rent control in 1972. In April that year, the branch sent a letter to the Prime Minister forwarding on a statement from the Auckland Executive regarding the state of housing in New Zealand. In this letter they deplored shortages in the State housing market, and greed amongst landlords, and called for “immediate control of rents”, “increases in State building”, “bring(ing) a greater range of building materials under (price) control”, and a full public investigation.⁴²⁹ These arguments, and demands, were repeated in CARP Auckland’s newsletter of May 1972.⁴³⁰ The letter to the Prime Minister also received favourable coverage in the *Sunday News* and endorsement from Auckland Labour MP Eddie Isbey.⁴³¹ Several trade unions also wrote in supporting CARP’s stance, and approval also came from the Western Suburbs Housewives Association.⁴³² Locke also points out that CARP Auckland’s platform included a call for an end

⁴²⁵ For example, the examples cited in the enclosed instructions stated it could be used to compare a soap powder packet weighting 2 lbs 4 oz and costing 36c to a 2 lb 10 oz packet costing 54c. ‘Instructions on How to Use Your Unit Cost Calculator’, CARP Wellington, 1971, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴²⁶ For example, see the long-running battle with Unilever.

⁴²⁷ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, August 1972, p. 3, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴²⁸ That is, the branch that became the NZPPA. See Chapter 2.

⁴²⁹ Letter from Ella Ayo to John Marshall, 12 April 1972, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/6.

⁴³⁰ CARP Auckland Newsletter No. 2, May 1972, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/6.

⁴³¹ Letter from Ella Ayo to Cath Kelly, 22 April 1972, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/6.

⁴³² Letter from W. D. A. Crossfield to Ella Ayo, 24 May 1972; Letter from Georgina Barber (?) to Ella Ayo, 24 May 1972. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/6.

to racial discrimination in renting.⁴³³ Racial discrimination went beyond the normal CARP interest in 'rising prices', and CARP Wellington took an opposite position on racial discrimination in refusing to endorse anti-apartheid boycotts. Given that Locke was writing about the Auckland branch, this tells us that the Auckland and Wellington branches probably interpreted CARP's scope and boundaries differently: in fact, this will become more apparent later in the chapter.

The Wellington branch also endorsed a proposal that went beyond their normal focus on 'rising prices'. In 1972, they endorsed calls to completely ban sales on fireworks, joining 'dozens of other organisations' in supporting a ban on the grounds of protecting young children and the safety of members of the public.⁴³⁴ 1972 was not the first year CARP Wellington had expressed interest in firework sales. Indeed, their interest had stretched back into the late 1960s, during the first period of CARP's history.⁴³⁵ However, 1972 was the year these calls began to gather increasing levels of support. Many major retailers, including Woolworths, Foodstuffs, and Foodtown agreed to endorse proposals to restrict sales to a one-week period, and support also came from the New Zealand Retailers Federation and at least 18 MPs.⁴³⁶ While firework sales restrictions definitely come under the banner of 'consumer protection', there appears to have been no connection between 'rising prices' and the calls for a ban, and CARP Wellington certainly never made prices an issue in this campaign. This, and the point about racial discrimination in renting from Auckland, suggests that occasionally, during this period of CARP history, the two branches were occasionally willing to take positions in matters beyond 'rising prices'. However, these examples are the exception, not the rule, and in general CARP stuck close to its original focus on 'rising prices'.

Other interests of CARP focus in this second period included medical fees. In 1972, the first bulletin included a section documented a procedure which they advised members to follow if they felt they were being overcharged by their doctors.⁴³⁷ This arose from correspondence between CARP, a concerned housewife, and the New Zealand Medical Association. CARP were not completely satisfied with the Medical Association's responses, which were fairly

⁴³³ Locke, 2023, p. 22.

⁴³⁴ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 4, November 1972, p. 3, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴³⁵ Letter from Cath Kelly to Beverly Pentland, 8 November 1972, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/10.

⁴³⁶ Letter from Beverly Pentland to Cath Kelly, 14 December 1972, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/10.

⁴³⁷ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1972, p. 6, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

dismissive of CARP concerns, but ultimately settled with the information they got.⁴³⁸ CARP had previously been interested in medical fees in the late 1960s, but even then, they received dismissive responses from the medical establishment. In 1970, the Auckland branch wrote to the Government supporting resolutions from a protest meeting calling for general increases in all means-tested social security benefits.⁴³⁹

In general, correspondence with the Department of Industries and Commerce regarding price complaints continued onwards in much the same way as in 1968 and 1969. In addition to correspondence regarding meat, fish, fruit, and vegetables, CARP Wellington were in touch in 1970 regarding Jockeys underwear, pharmaceutical advertisements that CARP claimed encouraged profiteering, and profit margins on coffee.⁴⁴⁰ In 1971, CARP Wellington sent correspondence regarding profit margins on furnishings, ice-cream price increases, and alleged profiteering in superphosphates.⁴⁴¹ In 1972, they also inquired into school lunch price increases with the Department.⁴⁴² This is not an exhaustive list of correspondence between CARP and the Department, but even this sampling reflects the diversity of interests CARP were willing to pursue, and the fact that one of CARP's most important functions remained corresponding with, and lobbying, Government Ministers and their departments.

I wish to draw further attention to one of these examples in a little more detail. In late 1971, CARP investigated prices of superphosphates in several Wellington retailers, and concluded that Woolworths Porirua were engaged in profiteering. Woolworths Porirua were selling 28-pound bags of superphosphate for \$2.28, more than a dollar more expensive than any other surveyed retailer.⁴⁴³ The Department ultimately declined to pursue the case, so in 1972 CARP Wellington decided they would privately prosecute Woolworths for profiteering themselves. After considering how to make a prosecution on behalf of CARP, they decided to

⁴³⁸ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1972, p. 6, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13; Letter from Executive Secretary, Medical Association of New Zealand to Cath Kelly, 16 December 1971. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/10.

⁴³⁹ Letter from Don McKay to Ella Ayo, 21 December 1970, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-3/3.

⁴⁴⁰ Letter from D. J. Gasson to Cath Kelly, 14 September 1970; Letter from M. Hicks to Cath Kelly, 17 August 1970; Letter from D. J. Gasson to Cath Kelly, 16 April 1970. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/10.

⁴⁴¹ Letter from A. C. Kenny to Cath Kelly, 24 June 1971; Letter from D. J. Gasson to Cath Kelly, 12 November 1971; Letter from Cath Kelly to the Secretary of the Department of Industries and Commerce, 19 August 1971. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/10.

⁴⁴² Letter from B. D. V. Stacey to Cath Kelly, 19 September 1972. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/10.

⁴⁴³ Letter from Cath Kelly to the Secretary of the Department of Industries and Commerce, 19 August 1971, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-3/10. The next cheapest price was at Plantwood Centre for \$1.25.

finally incorporate and prosecute Woolworths in the name of the newly incorporated body.⁴⁴⁴ Unfortunately the outcome of this prosecution is not amongst the records kept by CARP Wellington, and their own internal correspondence seems to indicate an uncertainty as to whether they could win in court.⁴⁴⁵ However, it is clear from the correspondence that their intent was to send a message to the Government and challenge their lack of enforcement, and win public support for CARP's position.⁴⁴⁶ As far as I can determine this was the only time CARP ever took a business to court as part of their campaign, and as such is not one of their more significant actions, but I believe this is a key example of CARP's determination and drive during the second period of their history.

Labour and CARP's Hostile Relationship in Power

Up until 1972, CARP had only ever existed under while the National Party was in power. Earlier that year, John Marshall had become Prime Minister after Keith Holyoake's retirement at the beginning of 1972. Marshall had long been in contact with CARP branches from his days as Minister of Industries and Commerce, but his time in office lasted less than a year and Marshall's brief premiership led to no policy changes in favour of CARP's position. After 12 continuous years in power, the National Party was defeated in the November 1972 election, losing to the Labour Party under Norman Kirk. Kirk had been the party leader since 1965, and had previously lost the elections in 1966 and 1969, but in 1972 finally won with a proposed progressive political agenda.⁴⁴⁷ The agenda included a system of rent appeal, speedy implementation of equal pay, the environmental preservation of Lake Manapouri, and anti-nuclear agitation in the Pacific.⁴⁴⁸

Kirk, and Labour, had been courting CARP for support for several years. In the last chapter, we saw how they sent MPs to speak at CARP Auckland meetings and supported measures

⁴⁴⁴ Letter from Cath Kelly to Ella Ayo, 27 June 1972, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02. Note that, until 1972, CARP Wellington did not have a separate legal identity. The result of the wrangle over incorporation in 1967 was that CARP Auckland inherited the national incorporation, and in the aftermath of that fight CARP Wellington declined to join the incorporated body or set up their own. Cath Kelly considered prosecuting Woolworths in her own name before the decision was made to incorporate the Wellington branch.

⁴⁴⁵ Letter from Cath Kelly to Ella Ayo, 27 June 1972, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02. I am unsure if the High Court records for this prosecution survived, and I do not believe the outcome made it into newspapers at the time.

⁴⁴⁶ Letter from Cath Kelly to Ella Ayo, 27 June 1972, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02.

⁴⁴⁷ Also, the incumbent National Government had held power for 12 years, and were being perceived as 'tired'. Franks and McAloon, pp. 169-170.

⁴⁴⁸ Locke, 2022, pp. 128-129.

along the lines of the Consumer Information Act 1969. The CARP Bill in 1967 was also a clear attempt at wooing the Campaign Against Rising Prices. As soon as the Labour Party were elected, CARP Auckland were in contact with Norman Kirk, this time as Prime Minister, congratulating him on his election and putting forward CARP's proposals for new policy directions.⁴⁴⁹ From then on, CARP Auckland and Wellington would be in regular contact with Warren Freer, the new Minister of Trade and Industry. Freer was a long-serving Labour MP, and a senior member of the Kirk-Rowling Labour Government.⁴⁵⁰ He had been in touch with CARP since 1967, supporting their work fighting for the Consumer Information Act 1969, and at various other times exchanging views with them. By January 1973, CARP Wellington had scheduled a meeting with him, this time as Minister, in much as they had with Marshall in 1967.⁴⁵¹

If you skim-read the documents CARP had left in the first period of their history, it would be easy to assume that CARP would have gotten along well with a Labour government in power. They would appear to have shared the same concerns regarding rising prices and the need for stability. However, in the end, CARP's relationship with the Labour government would be as fractious as it was with the preceding National government. The epitome of this came in 1974, when Warren Freer publicly lashed out at CARP during a convention of Australian supermarket managers. He called them "a disruptive group that tends to distort the facts", and remarked "the name CARP is a very apt name".⁴⁵² He also hit out at the media's reporting on prices, and industry profits, arguing they were leaving out key information, and in the process 'aiding and abetting' CARP.⁴⁵³ At the same time, he unfavourably compared CARP to the Consumers Institute that had existed before CARP, saying the Institute "(did) a lot more because it is being objective – rather than people who say there should not be any increases".⁴⁵⁴ Humphries and Kelly both hit back, with Humphries saying she was "disgusted"

⁴⁴⁹ Letter from Ella Ayo to Norman Kirk, 28 November 1972, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1. CARP specifically proposed in that letter to appoint a Minister of Consumer Affairs, inspired by a similar ministerial post in Canada, to advocate for consumer protection.

⁴⁵⁰ Franks and McAloon, p. 176.

⁴⁵¹ Notes for Discussion with Minister (Warren Freer), CARP Wellington, 18 January 1973, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/11.

⁴⁵² *Auckland Star*, 12 October 1974, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/4. Freer was not the first commentator to make the pun on CARP 'carp'ing on. The pun went all the way back to 1967, and had been used by Odette Leather and the Whakatāne branch during the 1967 split.

⁴⁵³ *Auckland Star*, 12 October 1974, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/4.

⁴⁵⁴ *Dominion* (?), 14 October 1974, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/4.

with Freer's actions.⁴⁵⁵ Humphries at the time identified herself as a Labour supporter, and felt that Freer had "destroyed the confidence of the people of the working class".⁴⁵⁶

The dispute at hand was around access to Freer for discussions on rising prices. According to his statements, he was willing to hold discussions with CARP on the same basis as he held them with manufacturers and retailers, and on a "completely confidential basis".⁴⁵⁷

Humphries indicated publicly that CARP were sick of the veil of secrecy being thrown around discussions between the government and stakeholders in the food industry.⁴⁵⁸ CARP Wellington said "CARP does not want to be bound to confidentiality and become a part of the circle of secrecy that surrounds all commercial dealings and the operation of price measures".⁴⁵⁹ At the same time Freer made his statement, CARP were calling for greater transparency and publicity about the rationale behind decisions made by the Price Tribunal. In 1973 and 1974, they wrote to Freer multiple times regarding public submissions to the Prices Tribunal, indicating they were deeply unsatisfied with the meagre provision made for public submissions at Tribunal hearings.⁴⁶⁰ Several times they were granted the opportunity to jointly make submissions with a combined delegation of Wellington trade unions, but this was considered highly unsatisfactory, and in the end the matter continued to fester until the defeat of the Labour Government in 1975.

This dispute highlights two factors. The first is CARP's continued commitment to grassroots activism. In theory, the possibility of 'confidential' discussions with Government representatives could have given CARP a major advantage in putting their case to public agencies, but in short, they felt this would be a betrayal of the people they claimed to represent. I think this is connected to the left-wing ideals of Kelly, Ayo, and other CARP leaders; their own positions on the food industry could be described as anti-corporate. There is a clear determination to be an *independent* voice for those affected by rising prices in their stance. The dispute also highlights, however, the complicated between CARP and the Labour Party: while they appeared to be friendly when Labour was in opposition, the same

⁴⁵⁵ *Sunday News*, 13 October 1974, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/4.

⁴⁵⁶ *Sunday News*, 13 October 1974, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/4.

⁴⁵⁷ *Auckland Star*, 12 October 1974, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/4.

⁴⁵⁸ *Auckland Star*, 15 October 1974, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/4.

⁴⁵⁹ CARP Wellington press statement, 1974, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/06.

⁴⁶⁰ Letter from Cath Kelly to Warren Freer, 31 October 1973; Letter from Cath Kelly to Warren Freer, 11 February 1974. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/04.

person who had been an ally in the late 1960s (Warren Freer) was now a clear antagonistic figure.⁴⁶¹ Kelly would be critical of the Kirk-Rowling Government's record on rising prices: even when writing to Ministers she would lambast their record.⁴⁶² Chisholm spent some time talking about the Labour-CARP relationship from the pre-1971 era, and concluded "while Labour and CARP combined to criticise the Government, the alignment was neither close nor consistent".⁴⁶³ In consideration of what happened after 1971, I agree that CARP and Labour had, at best, a fractious relationship. CARP always emphasised their identity as a 'non-political' organisation, and I think this is backed up by their clashes with right-wing and left-wing governments regarding price controls and rising prices.

1973: The 'Gubay Affair' and How CARP Was Not a National Movement

During the Kirk-Rowling Government, CARP's biggest public battle, in my opinion, concerned the ambitions of newly-arrived entrepreneur Albert Gubay. Gubay was a Welsh businessman, and made his name in the United Kingdom as a supermarket entrepreneur in the post-war period. Starting small as a sweet seller in northern Wales, he founded a chain of discount supermarkets named 'Kwik-Save', inspired by the methods used by German retailer Aldi and American discount stores.⁴⁶⁴ He developed a reputation as Britain's 'supermarket king'.⁴⁶⁵ After building the chain up, he sold his business interests in the United Kingdom and moved to New Zealand in January 1973. Rumour had it that Gubay planned to start a similar chain in New Zealand, and despite his initial denials of any plans, stock in the owners of Foodtown immediately fell dramatically.⁴⁶⁶

Gubay had indeed immigrated to New Zealand to enter the local grocery industry, and in 1973 he launched a new supermarket chain, '3 Guys'. His plans for the chain were on a similar basis to Kwik-Save and Aldi: simple, no-frills stores without gimmicky 'specials', oddly

⁴⁶¹ A similar episode where Freer publicly criticised CARP came in June 1975, again over the matter of private consultations and Price Tribunal representation. When Labour returned to opposition, CARP would again correspond with Freer regarding price increases as an opposition member, but the relationship between CARP and Freer never seems to have recovered from these attacks.

⁴⁶² Letter from Cath Kelly to Bob Tizard, 15 November 1975, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/14.

⁴⁶³ Chisholm, p. 92.

⁴⁶⁴ Marcus Williamson, 'Albert Gubay: Founder of Kwik Save and Total Fitness who became one of Britain's most generous philanthropists', *The Independent*, 18 January 2016, <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/albert-gubay-founder-of-kwik-save-and-total-fitness-who-became-one-of-britain-s-most-generous-philanthropists-a6820066.html>> [accessed 28 October 2023].

⁴⁶⁵ *Salient*, 7 March 1973, p. 8.

⁴⁶⁶ *Salient*, 7 March 1973, p. 8.

weighed products, or huge advertising budgets.⁴⁶⁷ These plans ran into opposition from other retailers, who feared Gubay would undercut their revenue, and a large portion of the New Zealand food industry. Specifically, Unilever, Wattie's, and other suppliers refused to directly supply Gubay's chain with their products.⁴⁶⁸ Eventually, after discussions between Gubay and Warren Freer, the Department of Trade and Industry approached the suppliers who refused to work with Gubay. Refusing to deal with Gubay was, under the Trade Practices Act, illegal discrimination, and the threat of prosecution convinced all suppliers but one to back down and negotiate with Gubay.⁴⁶⁹ The one company that refused to change their mind was Unilever.⁴⁷⁰

CARP Auckland had been in contact with Gubay from the moment his plans were made public. They were impressed with the proposed structure of the chain, because 3 Guys seemed to align with the no-frills no-gimmicks model of retailing that CARP had supported since 1967.⁴⁷¹ Unilever had long been a target of CARP Auckland, and so, after Unilever's refusal to back down, CARP Auckland immediately renewed their boycott against Unilever soap products. CARP Auckland specifically cited Unilever's refusal to supply 3 Guys with their products as the reason for the boycott.⁴⁷² A CARP leaflet mentioned Unilever's status as a monopoly, and cited the refusal to supply Gubay's business as an attempt at entrenching their monopoly.⁴⁷³ CARP Auckland protested at the St. Lukes shopping mall, distributing leaflets to passers-by setting out their position, and in the process had multiple run-ins with mall security.⁴⁷⁴ Support for the boycott readily came from the Auckland trade unions. They were involved in the meetings that led to the decision to boycott, and Tom Skinner, President of the FoL, endorsed taking action against Unilever after discussions with Gubay.⁴⁷⁵ The fight between Gubay and Unilever continued throughout 1973, with a flare-up between the two occurring in November, and along the way CARP Auckland continued to endorse

⁴⁶⁷ Statement from CARP Auckland after meeting with Albert Gubay, 9 February 1973 (?), CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1.

⁴⁶⁸ Letter from Ella Ayo to Cath Kelly, 14 April 1973, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1.

⁴⁶⁹ *Salient*, 7 March 1973, p. 8.

⁴⁷⁰ Letter from Ella Ayo to Tom Skinner, 22 February 1973, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1.

⁴⁷¹ Statement from CARP Auckland after meeting with Albert Gubay, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1.

⁴⁷² Untitled CARP Auckland leaflet regarding Unilever boycott, 1973, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1.

⁴⁷³ 'Boycott Unilever', CARP Auckland leaflet, 1973, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1.

⁴⁷⁴ Letter from Ella Ayo to Frank Haigh, 8 May 1973, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1.

⁴⁷⁵ CARP Auckland Newsletter, December 1973, p. 5, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/3.

action against Unilever.⁴⁷⁶ The Gubay incident also again solidifies who CARP targeted and why. Once again, Unilever were the target, and just like in 1970, the topic of the day was 'monopolisation', just like in the 1970 boycott. While Wattie's was not targeted for boycotts in 1973 over the Gubay affair, they were one of his reluctant suppliers, and thus connections to 1970 can still be drawn from their involvement.

Here, however, we can see a case where CARP Auckland and CARP Wellington disagreed with each other. CARP Auckland had hoped to gain national support for the boycott, and particularly hoped that CARP Wellington would give the boycott their endorsement. However, the Wellington branch expressed their deep reservations about co-operation with Albert Gubay. They noted that he was a wealthy multi-millionaire 'supermarket king', and they felt that CARP should not come to the aid of businessmen like Gubay.⁴⁷⁷ They particularly stated that they were concerned Gubay would run his business on a cut-price model for several years, eliminate his competitors, and then raise his prices, becoming a new monopoly.⁴⁷⁸ While CARP Auckland had attempted to communicate that the boycott did not necessarily mean Gubay's business had special CARP approval, CARP Wellington felt that they should not take sides in favour of one particular business.⁴⁷⁹ I noted that, after 1967, CARP Auckland and Wellington retained their separate existences as two organisations, but in 1972 a National Committee, with two members each from CARP Auckland and Wellington, had been set up to improve co-operation on matters of national interest.⁴⁸⁰ CARP Wellington expressed their annoyance that the Unilever-Gubay boycott had never gone before the committee, and CARP Auckland accepted fault for this organisational failure.⁴⁸¹ In the end, both sides agreed not to publicly air this disagreement, and while CARP Wellington distanced themselves from the boycott in their bulletin and in press statements, Ayo indicated she was satisfied with the Wellington statements.⁴⁸² I note, however, that the

⁴⁷⁶ Untitled CARP Auckland leaflet regarding Unilever boycott, 1973; 'Boycott Unilever', CARP Auckland leaflet, 1973. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1.

⁴⁷⁷ Letter from Cath Kelly to Ella Ayo, 10 March 1973, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02.

⁴⁷⁸ Letter from Cath Kelly to Ella Ayo, 10 March 1973, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02.

⁴⁷⁹ Letter from Cath Kelly to Ella Ayo, 10 March 1973, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02.

⁴⁸⁰ CARP National and Local Organisation, CARP, November/December 1972, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/3.

⁴⁸¹ Letter from Cath Kelly to Ella Ayo, 10 March 1973, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/02; Letter from Ella Ayo to Cath Kelly, 14 March 1973, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1.

⁴⁸² Letter from Ella Ayo to Cath Kelly, 14 March 1973, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/1.

National Committee seems to have completely vanished from existence after this incident, and no further attempts at national integration would be made in CARP's lifetime.

The Gubay incident emphasises the independence of CARP Auckland and Wellington from each other after the early attempts at unification in 1967. Chisholm's thesis centred on the Auckland branch with only peripheral attention given to CARP Wellington, and similarly William's thesis treated the Auckland branch as peripheral to CARP Wellington's existence.⁴⁸³ The archives left behind show clearly that Ayo and Kelly were in constant contact during the second period of CARP's history, and the overall tone of their correspondence indicates they shared a warm working relationship.⁴⁸⁴ It seems, however, both branches came to their own conclusions and made their own decisions on who to target and why, without reference to the other branch, and attempts at co-ordination were quickly ignored. Williams believed that the Wellington branch made decisions based on consideration of local market conditions in Wellington, and in the case of Gubay, I note his operations were concentrated on Auckland and the upper North Island.⁴⁸⁵

In the Wattie's boycott in 1970, the various inquiry submissions, and Freer's attack on CARP, unity between CARP Auckland and Wellington can be observed, but the Gubay affair in 1973 shows where CARP Auckland and Wellington were not a united front. When recalling the opposite approaches the two branches pursued on racial discrimination, the differences in action are even further underlined. Each branch was internally united: as noted, there were no Rotorua branches or women like Pat Beale or Odette Leather to speak out and divide CARP Auckland or Wellington. But nationally, there could be disagreements. Most of these disagreements were not important: for example, CARP Auckland and Wellington technically worded their calls to boycott Wattie's goods slightly differently, and housing (and race) was not, in the long run, a headline concern for CARP. What the differences do reveal is that the branches of CARP, in the 1970s, acted independently, often aligning, but not always agreeing.

⁴⁸³ Chisholm; Williams.

⁴⁸⁴ This is particularly interesting considering that Ella Ayo and Cath Kelly were, in the 1960s, on opposite sides of the split in the original Communist Party.

⁴⁸⁵ Williams, p. 99. Her statement on CARP Wellington's activities in 1974 and 1975 can be summarised as "focused on local issues".

Ultimately, Gubay would end up leaving New Zealand in April 1974, returning to the United Kingdom apparently due to ill health. While at the time he promised he would be back soon, he ultimately stayed in Britain until his death several decades later.⁴⁸⁶ 3 Guys were eventually able to obtain access to Unilever goods, and the chain continued to exist until the early 2000s. Gubay eventually sold the 3 Guys chain to Progressive Enterprises in the mid-1980s.⁴⁸⁷ Beyond what has already been discussed, CARP initiated little new activity in 1974 and 1975. Their concerns around meat, fish, and bread continued, and they continued to lobby the Labour Government in much the same way as has already been discussed.

During 1973 and 1974, Freer was toying with the idea of a Maximum Retail Price (MRP) scheme, wherein certain goods would be subject to a 'maximum retail price', which would have to be clearly labelled. The goal was to limit price increases and ensure government oversight without imposing full price controls.⁴⁸⁸ It was also planned to regulate profit margins for goods covered by the MRP scheme.⁴⁸⁹ CARP supported the idea in principle, but in the end the scheme was delayed and watered down multiple times over 1974, and the Wellington branch repeatedly expressed its disappointment at this.⁴⁹⁰ The scheme was finally introduced in October 1975, and almost immediately abandoned because of the change in government after the 1975 election. CARP Wellington was disappointed, and felt "that it was a useful information measure, (and) that it should have been introduced firmly in 1973 on the full range of goods envisaged at that time".⁴⁹¹ At the same time the Commerce Bill was introduced to Parliament in 1974, proposing a new Commerce Commission to, among other things, replace the Prices Tribunal, and further tightening of consumer protection laws. When the Bill was introduced, CARP were pushing to gain status as an important party to consult at the Prices Tribunal, and lobbied for consumer groups to be recognised before the new Commission.⁴⁹² These actions can be compared to CARP's earlier lobbying for price controls, and their submissions regarding the Consumer

⁴⁸⁶ *Press*, 7 February 1975, p. 2; Williamson. Gubay continued to own 3 Guys for over a decade, eventually selling the chain to Progressive Enterprises in 1985. 3 Guys was ultimately merged into Woolworths in the early 2000s.

⁴⁸⁷ See Winter.

⁴⁸⁸ *Evening Post*, 15 August 1973; *Evening Post*, 24 May 1973. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/05.

⁴⁸⁹ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, September 1973, p. 10, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴⁹⁰ CARP Wellington Annual Report 1975/76, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴⁹¹ CARP Wellington Annual Report 1975/76, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴⁹² *Dominion*, 14 May 1975; Letter from Cath Kelly to Warren Freer, 17 April 1975. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/04.

Information Act in 1969. At the end of the second period of CARP history, they were engaged in the same type of work as they had in 1969 and 1970.

CARP's Changing Identity as a 'Woman's Organisation' in the 1970s

Before wrapping up this chapter, we need to discuss CARP's relationship to gender during the second period of their history. The leadership at CARP remained overwhelmingly female. In 1970, there was apparently a male Secretary leading CARP Otago, but this is the exception that proves the rule. Organisations with a stronger emphasis on identity as women, like the League of Mothers mentioned earlier, and an anonymous 'women's liberation group' were still corresponding with CARP in the early 1970s, showing that they did keep links with other parts of the women's movement.⁴⁹³ The Auckland branch of CARP had become a member of the NCW in 1967, and their membership continued into the 1970s. On this evidence, it would appear that CARP remained a 'housewives' organisation'.

If we look at written material, however, we can see, at least in Wellington, identification as a 'housewives' group' was vanishing in the early 1970s. On the one hand, CARP Wellington's 1970 December letter to members congratulated a "group of women" in Porirua, emphasising their identity as women.⁴⁹⁴ On the other hand, the bulletins written by CARP Wellington in 1970 contain no references to housewives, or women, only to 'members'. Bulletin No. 1 in 1971, discussing bread, remarks: "CONSUMER PRESSURE BROUGHT THE CAMPAIGN ON BREAD TO ITS PRESENT STAGE; WE MUST NOT LET UP NOW!".⁴⁹⁵ "CONSUMER PRESSURE", not "HOUSEWIFE PRESSURE" or "WOMEN'S PRESSURE". In June 1972, a special bulletin was written on legislation that "exists for the consumer", and which was supposed to "protect the consumer".⁴⁹⁶ The 'consumer', not the 'housewife'. In writing with the Government regarding representation before the Price Tribunal, Kelly referred to "the rights of consumer groups".⁴⁹⁷ Again, the emphasis is on CARP as a 'consumer group', not a 'woman's group'. And in a newspaper report on the replacement of the Price Tribunal

⁴⁹³ Letter from Secretary, 'A Women's Liberation Group', to Cath Kelly, 25 October 1971, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-1/08.

⁴⁹⁴ Letter from CARP Wellington to its members, December 1970, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴⁹⁵ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1971, CARP Wellington records, p. 1, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴⁹⁶ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, June 1972, CARP Wellington records, p. 1, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁴⁹⁷ Letter from Warren Freer to Cath Kelly, 25 September 1975, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/04.

with the Commerce Commission, Kelly referred to constant criticism from “Carp and some other consumer organisations”.⁴⁹⁸

In other words, during the second period of CARP’s history the collective identity shifted from ‘housewives’ organisation’ to ‘consumer organisation’. CARP was now identifying with the collective label of ‘consumers’, a non-gendered term. ‘Consumer’, as an amorphous label that could be applied to anyone operating in a market economy, encompasses a broader range of people than ‘housewife’, a term that was bound up in the ideals of time around gender roles. In other words, they were replacing an overt focus on identifying as ‘women’ with an apparently-genderless collective identity. While CARP were always a woman-led organisation with a base of membership that skewed overwhelmingly female, as time went on CARP increasingly ceased to identify as an organisation for ‘women’ exclusively. Instead, the collective identity became that of the ‘consumer’.

There are several possible reasons why CARP’s gendered identity shifted. The first is the fact that many of CARP’s leaders, and supporters, were in fact working women, also holding down jobs. They may have felt that the label of ‘housewife’ was increasingly not applicable to them. The second comes down to the political positions of CARP’s leadership. We saw in Chapter 2 that Ayo and Kelly explicitly did not identify as ‘feminists’, and that these women saw gender struggle as one piece of a larger class struggle. CARP Auckland and Wellington had always chosen to solely focus on ‘rising prices’, and, after the 1967, the SPA discussed Chapter 2 became the Women’s Independent Party, with a focus on (married) women’s issues beyond rising prices. This is tied in to the larger debate on gender struggle versus class struggle that was referenced in Chapter 1, and CARP’s changing identity reflects the position its leaders took in that debate. I suggest that CARP’s de-emphasis of its original gendered identity can be understood in light of the politics of the leadership and their decision to focus CARP on economics. Of course, gender would still be an important identity for other women fighting rising prices, as we will see in Chapter 4. CARP, however, increasingly chose not to identify as a ‘woman’s organisation’, or as ‘women protestors’.

⁴⁹⁸ *Evening Post*, 1 November 1975, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/04.

Conclusion

The second period of CARP's history ended with the return to power of the National Party in November 1975. In my opinion, CARP ended the second period of their history much stronger than when they ended the first period of their history. The disunity of 1967 was (relatively) ancient history, and now that groups like the Rotorua branch or the SPA had left the fold, there was no-one left within CARP to challenge the union ties or the boycotts. 'Unity was strength', so to speak, as during this time CARP were able to initiate boycotts against large New Zealand food companies, and had a clearer focus for their boycotts in the form of monopolies. They were able to submit to a wide range of inquiries regarding multiple food stuffs to advance the case for price control. Through the bulletins, the unit cost calculator, and public advertising in places like train stations and shopping malls, CARP made their position known to the public, and could draw support for their bigger boycotts. Of course, CARP was not fully 'united' as a national organisation, because, as the Gubay affair highlighted, the Auckland and Wellington branches operated independently, and the failed attempt at a national committee was the last attempt at some sort of national unification. CARP did not have the same reach into the regions that they began to form in 1967. The Otago branch formed in 1970 was the only notable attempt at a new branch, and it failed within months, likely due to its singular focus on supporting one specific boycott.

The second period of CARP history shows what the Campaign were able to do when it was internally united. 1970 to 1975 were the peak years of activity for CARP. Their spread into the regions was stronger in 1967, but the Auckland and Wellington branches showed strong internal unity, much more than in 1967. They were able to count several successes: the reports from Kelly indicate that the 1970 boycott was considered successful because of the publicity it raised and indications that retailers had lowered their prices on Watties goods. They were successful at building ties with the trade unions, and despite their rocky relationship with the two governments in power, CARP were able to regularly submit and make their views known; whether or not they were able to change the Government's mind, they were prolific submitters. Resistance to rising prices, through the Campaign Against Rising Prices, was becoming institutionalised, and I think it is safe to assume that the leadership of CARP in the mid-1970s expected their organisations to continue onwards well into the 1980s.

It could be said that CARP was becoming to rising prices what trade unions were to industrial relations: a permanent body, deriving support from a grassroots base, organising to agitate for the interests of the people they represented. For the trade unions, the people they represented were the working-class, and for CARP, they represented 'consumers' as a collective. The parallels between CARP boycotts and union strikes, identified in Chapter 1, supports this interpretation of CARP's activities. 'Consumer' increasingly replaced 'woman' or 'housewife' as CARP's collective identity; ideologically, economic and class struggle won out over gender struggle at CARP. Within the protest movement, CARP were becoming a more long-term organisation. After nearly eight years of existence in 1975, they were a co-ordinated body with a reputation and a cadre of supporters, and I think Williams' choice to compare CARP to CARE and the COV is apt, because like those organisations, and groups like the CND, CARP were eking out a long-term niche for themselves. CARP were, in short, becoming institutionalised, as a long-standing anti-rising prices organisation with a distinct voice, in the early 1970s.

Chapter 4: ‘Punch Drunk’ with Rising Prices – 1975-1981

Introduction

The very last documented statement from CARP contained the suggestion that people were “‘punch drunk’ with rising prices”.⁴⁹⁹ In other words, people were not willing to keep fighting rising prices. This quote came as part of a *de facto* post-mortem on why CARP dissolved. Yet, ironically, only a few years before, CARP was still vital and active in Wellington. Thus we turn to the last period of CARP’s history, stretching from 1975 until 1981. I have chosen to start this period with the election victory of Rob Muldoon and the National Party in November 1975. It will become clear as the chapter progresses that his government was intimately tied with the demise of CARP. The first few years progressed in much the same way as in the second period of CARP’s history. Indeed, 1977 would be another important year for price activism in Aotearoa New Zealand, with the emergence of another, short-lived, national movement to fight rising prices.

Yet, by 1978, CARP had run out of steam. The first generation of leadership retired that year, and no one stepped up to replace them. After this CARP was rapidly wound down. This chapter will discuss the apparent contradictions, and elaborate on why CARP dissolved in the early 1980s. The Muldoon government, a small membership base, unwillingness to step up, and a sense of defeatism all played their parts. For an organisation that, in 1975, seemed to have become more and more permanent, the end of CARP came swiftly. The experiences of 1977 show that there was still interest in fighting rising prices, but the Muldoon government was rapidly abandoning the systems of price controls that did exist. I argue that CARP’s disappearance can be accounted for by increasing disinterest combined with government policy.

CARP Auckland: The Hole in the Records

Before discussing the third period of CARP’s history further, I must begin by acknowledging one of the main unresolved mysteries surrounding CARP: when did the Auckland branch cease to exist? At the moment, this is a question I cannot answer, and furthermore I cannot fully explain why they disappeared. Chisholm’s thesis in 1971 was written while CARP

⁴⁹⁹ *Press*, 13 June 1981, p. 6.

Auckland was definitely still active, and Williams' thesis in 1976 was focused almost exclusively on the Wellington branch. The best evidence for a potential date comes from the organisation of the branch archives in the University of Auckland Library. There, the last year for which a full set of correspondence exists is 1973. No collections exist for correspondence in 1974, or any year afterwards. Locke stated in her recent article that the branch appeared to go into decline after 1973, based on the apparent lack of correspondence.⁵⁰⁰ While full correspondence disappears after 1973, there is documented evidence that the branch continued to exist in some shape or form after 1973. For example, multiple letters from schoolchildren to CARP Auckland have survived in the archive, and several are dated May 1976.⁵⁰¹ Most correspondence to CARP Auckland was either directly addressed to Humphries or Ayo, or to the 'President' or 'Secretary'; by contrast, these letters are addressed to 'CARP', or to the 'Organiser', which was not a title used by either CARP Auckland or Wellington. This could suggest that the adults supervising these children were not sure who exactly to address correspondence to at CARP in 1976.⁵⁰² Certainly, the responses CARP Auckland sent did not make it into their archive, assuming replies were sent.

On the other hand, there is scattered correspondence from 1974 that has surfaced. One letter from CARP made it to Jim Knox at the FoL, discussing Unilever and the events of 1973.⁵⁰³ Another letter was sent to CARP, from the Department of Trade and Industry, responding to a 1973 complaint about an advertisement in the *Woman's Weekly*.⁵⁰⁴ The archive also contains several clippings indicating CARP Auckland were still in the media during the 1974-1976 period. One clipping from the *Sunday Herald* in early 1975 included a picture of Humphries, and quoted her view on hopes for falling prices that year.⁵⁰⁵ Another clipping from the *Auckland Star* quoted Ayo counting 400 price rises in one week in April 1975.⁵⁰⁶ In the end, I could find no material dated after 1976 in CARP Auckland's surviving

⁵⁰⁰ Locke, 2023, p. 22.

⁵⁰¹ Letter from C. van der Sande to Campaign Against Rising Prices, 14 May 1976; Letter from Karen Mills to the Organiser of CARP, 17 May 1976. CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/3.

⁵⁰² For clarification, the letters written by schoolchildren to CARP were written as part of school projects relating to CARP and its aims. I am presuming that these children were given an address for CARP by their teachers or parents, and clearly if the letters ended up in CARP Auckland's archives they must have reached CARP.

⁵⁰³ Letter from Ella Ayo to Jim Knox, 22 February 1974, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/3.

⁵⁰⁴ Letter from J. H. Stothard to Ella Ayo, 8 January 1974, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/3.

⁵⁰⁵ *Sunday Herald*, 5 January 1975, p. 14, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/4.

⁵⁰⁶ *Auckland Star*, 30 April 1975, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-4/4.

records, and no evidence of contact between CARP Auckland and Wellington after approximately 1974 exists in the Wellington branch archive either. The only bits of information I can confirm about CARP Auckland after 1973 are that they still existed, and Humphries and Ayo remained in office as President and Secretary. The schoolchildren letters also indicate that interested members of the public may have had trouble finding contact information for the branch. When exactly the branch came to an end is a mystery. Further, the scant information from post-1973 leaves no clues as to the reasons why CARP Auckland disappeared, or why the trail of records goes cold from 1974 onwards. While I cannot explain why, I can concur with Locke's sentiment that CARP Auckland went into some sort of decline after 1973.

This provides a window into the main issue with researching the Campaign Against Rising Prices 50 years after its existence: there are now holes in the record that are very difficult to fill. I am exceedingly lucky to have found the amount of material on CARP Auckland and Wellington that I did. To my knowledge, no branches of CARP adopted a formal system of archiving or preservation, and with how busy women like Ayo were with work outside of CARP, it is unsurprising that there are holes in the record 50 years later. The post-1973 absence of evidence from Auckland means that I cannot discuss why the branch disappeared without indulging in speculation. The best postscript I can provide is that Flo Humphries would pass away in 1981, with her tenure as CARP President perhaps being her most important legacy.⁵⁰⁷ Ella Ayo continued as a union activist after her time in CARP, and as a member of the SUP, hold office as vice-president of the SUP at least in 1980.⁵⁰⁸ I am certain the Auckland branch ceased to exist by the time the Wellington branch dissolved in 1981.

It is completely possible that branch records may still exist, in the possession of Ayo or Humphries' relatives, and, because of time constraints, I have not been able to do a complete check of all Auckland newspapers from 1974 onwards for any further newspaper mentions. If further records are discovered, these may be able to shed some light on CARP Auckland after 1973. It is also possible that oral histories could fill in some of these gaps: while CARP's former leadership are now likely gone, it is possible that former supporters, or

⁵⁰⁷ Roth, pp. 317-318.

⁵⁰⁸ For how long she was vice-president I am unsure. Locke, 2022, p. 124. Ayo passed away in 2004.

relatives of leaders, may be able to shed some light on this time for CARP Auckland.⁵⁰⁹ Oral history has been a useful tool, for example, in documenting New Zealand's labour history.⁵¹⁰ However, from here on out, the rest of this chapter will be focused on the Wellington branch of CARP. My own opinion at the moment, based on this absence, is that the third period of CARP's history was marked by the dominance of the Wellington branch.

1976: CARP's Small Membership and the Last Regional Branches

Now that the fate of the Auckland branch has been addressed, we can properly turn to the third period of CARP's history. This period begins in November 1975, with the return to power of the National Party after defeating the Kirk-Rowling Labour Government. When National was defeated in 1972, the outgoing Prime Minister was Jack Marshall, but in 1974, he was replaced as National Party leader by Rob Muldoon. Muldoon had been Minister of Finance from 1967 to 1972, and already had a reputation as a populist and firebrand for the political right.⁵¹¹ We already know that CARP was one of his targets for 'red-baiting'. Shaming his opponents for supporting 'communism' became one of Muldoon's well-known political tactics.⁵¹² In 1975, the National Party campaigned vigorously, with scathing attacks of Labour as implementing backdoor communism and playing on Pākehā fears of immigrants.⁵¹³

This period of CARP's history was marked by their terminal decline, but while I cannot comment on the state of the Auckland branch at the time, the Wellington branch was still going strong in 1976. Cath Kelly was still the leader of CARP Wellington, and a piece in the *National Business Review* counted a circulation of 2000 copies for the CARP Wellington Bulletin.⁵¹⁴ Precise measures of CARP membership were never kept, but I would estimate

⁵⁰⁹ Indeed, later in the chapter I will mention a woman who led another organisation fighting rising prices, who I believe is still alive at the time of publication.

⁵¹⁰ See the Historiography section of the Introduction. Additionally, I note the use of object-centred history to study protest movements in New Zealand in recent years; see Gibson, Williams, and Cairns. These show how other New Zealand historians, in fields adjacent to CARP, have used various forms of history to unveil historical narratives on labour and protest.

⁵¹¹ Brooking, pp. 143-144, 196.

⁵¹² See Locke, 2022, chapter 10, for a discussion on Muldoon's 'red-baiting' against Bill Anderson. For clarity, I put 'communism' in quotes because while some of his targets, like Anderson, were actual communists, others were simply political opponents he disliked; for example, the Labour Party and CARP.

⁵¹³ Brooking, pp. 143-144. For example, see the Hanna-Barbera cartoons commissioned by the National Party that aired on New Zealand television in 1975.

⁵¹⁴ *National Business Review*, 31 March 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

from this clue that CARP Wellington's membership was at roughly the same level as it was in 1970. 1976 would proceed in much the same way as the last few years had. In June, CARP leadership had a meeting with the Associate Minister of Trade and Industry to discuss their concerns around drops of household incomes in real terms, through loss of overtime.⁵¹⁵ Meetings with Ministers, of course, had occurred as long ago as 1967, and the proposals presented to the Minister by CARP included a call for open hearings on price increase applications, exactly as CARP had been calling for since at least 1973.⁵¹⁶ The CARP bulletin continued to be published several times a year, maintaining the same length as it had always been. In the 1976 bulletins, information was published on new price freezes introduced by the Muldoon government, profiteering, Commerce Commission hearings, and calls for readers to keep an eye on prices in their local supermarkets.⁵¹⁷ Two letters from the records of CARP Wellington indicate that they continued to make complaints to the Department of Trade and Industry: one complaint was about price increases on Anchor milk powder products, and the other concerned Sanitarium and Airborne honey.⁵¹⁸

In 1976, CARP Wellington again submitted to a committee of inquiry. This time the committee was the Committee of Inquiry into Inflation Accounting. Their task was to determine the best method of accounting to use in New Zealand that recognised the effects of inflation.⁵¹⁹ Unfortunately, I could not find the actual submission CARP Wellington made to the inquiry, but a response they made to the final report has survived. The committee ultimately recommended the adoption of current cost accounting, to be phased in over several years, and CARP believed this recommendation was "little more than an elaborate attempt to disguise what is, in substance, a ruse for evading the effects of price control and limiting the tax obligations of companies".⁵²⁰ In other words, CARP believed the committee's report was an excuse for businesses to raise their prices. No mention of the inquiry made it into the bulletin, and CARP Wellington's annual report for the year simply says they made a

⁵¹⁵ *Evening Post*, 18 June 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

⁵¹⁶ *Evening Post*, 18 June 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

⁵¹⁷ CARP Wellington Bulletin Nos. 2, 3, 4, June, August, October/November 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁵¹⁸ Letter from H. M. Donaldson to Cath Kelly, 22 September 1976; Letter from C. S. Lian to Cath Kelly, 31 May 1976. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/05A.

⁵¹⁹ *New Zealand Herald*, 23 June 1976. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

⁵²⁰ Response of CARP Wellington to the Minister of Finance regarding the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Inflation Accounting, 1977, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/06A.

submission to the inquiry without elaborating further.⁵²¹ We can see from this that CARP was still making submissions to government inquiries in much the same way they had done in the early 1970s. Of course, the effectiveness of their submissions is clearly questionable in this instance: their views were obviously not accommodated in the committee's recommendations. 1976 was still an active year for CARP, and while no new boycotts were initiated according to the archival sources, they were still engaged in newsletter writing and government submissions.

At the same time, CARP's opponents had begun to make their own criticisms that the organisation was small and unrepresentative. The *National Business Review* piece on CARP cited earlier used the statistic of 2000 bulletin copies to dismiss CARP's relevance. To quote the piece: "Carp has been around long enough to have many more people on the membership list, which apparently means signing up for the bulletin, if it is as representative of consumers as it claims."⁵²² The implicit claim was that CARP was not actually representative of consumers. The article further draws comparison to the 130,000 members cited by the Consumer Institute, and pointedly refers to the Council as 'politically independent', a status long claimed by CARP but which the *National Business Review* writer clearly did not agree on.⁵²³ Soon afterwards, a piece appeared in the *Evening Post* repeating the numbers from the *National Business Review* and explicitly stating that "clearly Carp Wellington doesn't have mass membership", and that CARP received more media coverage than it was entitled to by its size.⁵²⁴ The piece also quoted representatives of the Consumers Institute and the New Zealand Retailers' Federation, who respectively responded with passive neutrality (from the Consumers Institute) and outright hostility (like the Retailers' Federation attack on CARP's position on Wattie's) towards CARP.⁵²⁵ CARP Wellington objected, of course, to this media coverage, and in the next bulletin attacked the *National Business Review* for refusing to publish a CARP response and noted the irony that "CARP is never forgotten".⁵²⁶

⁵²¹ CARP Wellington Annual Report 1976/77, p. 2, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁵²² *National Business Review*, 31 March 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

⁵²³ *National Business Review*, 31 March 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

⁵²⁴ *Evening Post*, 8 May 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

⁵²⁵ *Evening Post*, 8 May 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

⁵²⁶ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, June 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

We saw in Chapters 2 and 3 that CARP had not previously been concerned about low membership numbers, and this did not change in the late 1970s. Kelly's comment to the *Evening Post* in 1976 about CARP membership also reflected a fluid understanding of 'membership', simply involving 'supporting CARP ideals', that cannot be reflected through a formal 'membership' system.⁵²⁷ It must be noted that, as a business paper representing business interests, it is clear the *National Business Review* would be inclined towards unfavourable coverage of CARP. Nevertheless, it is true that CARP was never a particularly large organisation. CARP never came close to counting 100,000 formal members nationally, the initial ambitious target the Auckland branch desired in 1967. The Consumer Institute, numerically, had many more supporters, and it cannot be denied that, with an upper bound of 2000 members, CARP Wellington could not compare. On the other hand, the Consumer Institute was a completely different organisation to CARP. While they also published a newsletter, they never initiated boycotts, and generally had much better relationships with businesses than CARP ever did. CARP arguably demanded more of their membership than the Consumer Institute. Subscriptions to receive the bulletin are one thing, but boycotts required personal sacrifice and a willingness to act in solidarity. The political maligning of CARP as 'Communists' cannot have helped either; I note the *Evening Post* piece repeated the old equation of CARP with 'Reds'.⁵²⁸ Thus, while CARP remained active in 1976, it was being called out as 'small' and 'unrepresentative', and CARP's size at this time is very relevant to the decisions being made several years later.

The year 1976 also saw the last attempts at forming CARP branches outside Auckland and Wellington. On May 27, sympathisers in Blenheim organised a meeting to attempt to organise a local branch of CARP, with Kelly attending on behalf of the Wellington branch.⁵²⁹ To my knowledge, this was the first attempt at organising a branch in the Marlborough region – none were founded during the 1967 boom or in the early 1970s. In April, an attempt was made at restarting the old branch in Hamilton. Kelly received correspondence from Hamiltonians interested in starting a new branch, and in response she notified the

⁵²⁷ *Evening Post*, 8 May 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09. Recall the original 1967 statements from Auckland that all who supported CARP's ideals were considered 'members'. While this idea was replaced with financial membership quickly, clearly the idea was still being echoed nine years later.

⁵²⁸ *Evening Post*, 8 May 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

⁵²⁹ *Marlborough Express*, 27 May 1976, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

locals on CARP's mailing list and the local PSA secretary.⁵³⁰ Neither attempt seems to have turned into an actual organised branch. The Hamilton attempt is only documented by the three letters cited, and there never appears to have been any further follow-up in Blenheim. As far as I can determine, there were no new attempts at forming branches of CARP outside Auckland or Wellington after 1976. This is a simple continuation of the trend throughout the 1970s: any new attempts at forming regional branches of CARP simply withered away after initial expressions of interest. I cannot say for sure exactly why. Unlike the 1960s, where discontent with the political leanings of CARP Auckland and Wellington is well-documented, the reasons why new regional branches never stuck are not documented. Correspondence from 1976 indicates that there were members of the public still sceptical about CARP's political leanings, and it is possible these concerns survived in the regions.⁵³¹

The only other point of note about the regional branches is a statement Kelly made during the attempt at forming a new branch in Blenheim: according to the press "Mrs Kelly described CARP as not a women's organisation but a consumer organisation".⁵³² In short, this statement encapsulates the end-point of CARP's changing view of themselves as a 'woman's organisation'. They were founded by self-identified 'housewives', and the Auckland branch had initially joined the NCW, but now the Wellington branch was distancing themselves from gendered identity and fully embracing the label of 'consumer'. This was already a clear trend by 1975, but I think this quote perfectly summarises CARP's new position on gender: they saw it as irrelevant. Remember that leaders like Kelly and Ayo always believed that class struggle and economic struggle were a higher priority than gender struggle. We can see that by the mid-1970s economic struggle was more important to CARP's identity than gender struggle: 'consumer' was now the collective identity CARP expressed, and identity as a 'woman's organisation' was being explicitly repudiated.

⁵³⁰ Letter from K. V. Perrott to Cath Kelly, 4 April 1976; Letter from Cath Kelly to K. V. Perrott, 9 April 1976; Letter from Cath Kelly to Graham Perry, 9 April 1976. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/05B.

⁵³¹ See Letter from J. A. Hayward to Cath Kelly, 23 February 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/05B, in which Hayward queries whether CARP is 'politically oriented' because "I have no wish to deal with certain political parties" – which I interpret as politely querying whether or not CARP is a Communist front.

⁵³² *Marlborough Express*, 27 May 1976, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-2/09.

1977: The Housewives Boycott Movement and the United Womens Convention

The year 1977 is particularly notable in this history, because that year there was a short-lived new movement fighting rising prices. This movement was called the Housewives Boycott Movement, and it arose in Christchurch in the middle of March that year. This meeting was attended by roughly 300 people, and Christchurch woman Kathy Himiona became its public representative.⁵³³ Members of this movement identified themselves as ‘housewives’, and Himiona talked of the power of ‘housewives’ as a “very, very strong” collective.⁵³⁴ The initial meeting chose to boycott coffee, chocolate biscuits, and tinned fruit.⁵³⁵ While the movement started in Christchurch, the organisers planned a national boycott movement, and reportedly branches were established in Dunedin and Auckland.⁵³⁶ They also quickly received endorsement from multiple political parties, including Labour, Social Credit, and the Values Party.⁵³⁷ For a time, the Housewives Boycott Movement were able to rapidly attract support and attention, and begin a new wave of consumer boycotting to protest rising prices.

The parallels to CARP ten years prior are obvious. CARP also started off as a ‘housewives’ movement, and also boycotted sweet baked goods and tinned fruit at various points. CARP’s initial reaction to the new Movement was muted support. CARP felt it could only play a ‘supportive role’ in the proposed national boycott, and believed that there was insufficient support for a boycott in Wellington.⁵³⁸ In time, however, Himiona and Kelly would establish contact with each other, and by May there were discussions about exploring co-operation between CARP and the Housewives Boycott Movement.⁵³⁹ By June, the CARP bulletin was also calling on CARP supporters to join in the Housewives Boycott Movement boycotts.⁵⁴⁰ However, according to Kelly a “mass rally” called by CARP in support of the boycotts was only attended by 30 people, which she seems to have considered disappointing.⁵⁴¹ This

⁵³³ *Dominion*, 13 April 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/02.

⁵³⁴ *Dominion*, 13 April 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/02.

⁵³⁵ *Southern Times*, 17 March 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/02.

⁵³⁶ *Dominion*, 14 April 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/02.

⁵³⁷ *Press*, 13 June 1977, p. 6, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/02.

⁵³⁸ *Dominion*, 14 April 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/02.

⁵³⁹ Letter from Cath Kelly to Kathy Himiona, 9 May 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/02.

⁵⁴⁰ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, June 1977, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁵⁴¹ Letter from Cath Kelly to Kathy Himiona, 17 July 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/02.

suggests that the Wellington public was, indeed, not supportive of a national boycott in 1977.

In 1977, there still was no Christchurch branch of CARP, and no attempt was made to form one by capitalising on the Housewives Boycott Movement. The attempt in 1967, as a reminder, split off in dissent from the North Island branches, changed its name, and quickly vanished. The Housewives Boycott Movement, simply through the publicity it got, was clearly more popular in Christchurch than CARP ever was. I have not specifically investigated the full history of the Housewives Boycott Movement, so I do not know exactly why this was. Remembering that the former Christchurch branch of CARP expressed concern that North Island branches were ignorant of South Island conditions, I suspect the Housewives Boycott Movement benefited from being a homegrown, Christchurch, organisation.

While the Movement and CARP shared similar aims, they had significant differences. For one thing, there appears to have been no formal attempt at incorporating the Movement or forming a permanent body to continue advancing its aims. I would categorise it as a loose, informal organisation. CARP, by contrast, quickly sought to permanently incorporate, and despite the schism that incorporation caused in 1967, CARP could be described, from the perspective of 1977, as a permanent organisation. The Movement does not appear to have built significant ties with the trade unions, or with working class organisations specifically, and maintained their identity as 'housewives'. CARP, on the other hand, was particularly close to the trade unions, and we know that leaders like Kelly came from the working class, and that they eventually discarded the label of 'housewives'. I argue that, as a boycott movement focused on rising prices, the Housewives Boycott Movement represents a different direction that CARP could have chosen to take in 1967. CARP did not have to incorporate in 1967, and neither did it necessarily need trade union support. Indeed, if CARP had not built strong union ties in 1967 the public split between the Auckland executive and the branches that became the SPA may have been avoided. The difference, in my analysis, comes down to the strong left-wing leanings of CARP's early leaders. While I cannot be sure what political position the Himiona and the Movement leaders subscribed to, the apparent lack of union ties might suggest a movement interested in avoiding perceptions of being 'political'. I certainly see no evidence that the women who founded the Housewives Boycott

Movement shared the same political ties that CARP women like Ayo and Kelly had, but further research into the Movement is needed to clarify this point.

A letter from the Victoria University student newspaper *Salient* demonstrates one left-wing response to the Movement. The anonymous letter criticised the movement for wanting “a reduction in prices for selfish reasons only”, arguing “have they never thought that increased prices could be resultant from a fair deal for those who do the work, namely the coffee and cocoa bean pickers?”.⁵⁴² The piece then argued that Himiona should cancel her outstanding insurance policies and boycott foods from countries with problematic systems of production and concludes that, in short, supporting the Housewives Boycott Movement means accepting the existing system of capitalism.⁵⁴³ This is a very clear left-wing critique of the Housewives Boycott Movement. In the past, CARP had received advice that the only way to fight rising prices was to fundamentally change the economic structure of Aotearoa New Zealand. This had been the position of Social Credit and Vernon Cracknell in 1967, and the Communist Party in 1970 had condemned CARP, and Kelly, for being insufficiently revolutionary. The letter’s example of a problematic item to boycott was Ecuadorian bananas to protest anti-worker plantations and environmental issues. CARP had commented on Ecuadorian bananas in the 1970s, but their concerns were about food quality, and not worker’s rights or the environment.⁵⁴⁴ In other words, many of the criticisms the letter voices about the Housewives Boycott Movement could also have been said about CARP. Yet the author does not condemn CARP in this letter. I do not know who wrote the letter, or if they were aware of CARP and its history, but I cannot find any similar critique letters about CARP. This suggests that left-wing critics of the Movement did not feel the need to critique CARP, which could come down to CARP’s ties to the trade unions, although this could also be because CARP flew under their radar because of their lack of engagement with the Movement’s boycotts.

The Housewives Boycott Movement also appears to have been represented at the United Womens Convention that was also held in Christchurch in 1977. This was the third such convention held in New Zealand during the 1970s; earlier conferences had been hosted in

⁵⁴² *Salient*, 16 May 1977, p. 18.

⁵⁴³ *Salient*, 16 May 1977, p. 18.

⁵⁴⁴ Submission by CARP Wellington to the Committee of Inquiry into Fruit and Vegetables, 12 September 1972, p. 4, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-5/4.

Auckland and Wellington. These were forums where women could discuss issues particularly relevant to women. For example, one of the keynote items for the convention was abortion rights, in response to the then-recent Royal Commission of Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion.⁵⁴⁵ There was also discussion around whether the women's movement should direct their focus at men or the capitalist system, and around women's position in the peace movement.⁵⁴⁶ One of the speakers at the conference, Elsie Locke, explicitly praised the Housewives Boycott Movement as "a striking example of women asserting themselves".⁵⁴⁷ Her words more broadly were making the point that women should be considering the links between New Zealand's economic structure and the position of women in society.⁵⁴⁸ As CARP had, through the 1970s, been distancing themselves from identifying as a 'woman's organisation', it is clear that, however distant the Housewives Boycott Movement may have been from sections of the political left, they were closer to the women's movement at large in 1977 than CARP. Unlike the Movement, CARP seems to have received no attention at the United Womens Convention. The Convention and the Movement, in my opinion, highlight how CARP's identity regarding women had changed since 1967: CARP's initial self-identity as a 'housewives organisation' had fallen by the wayside, and by 1977 they were not particularly involved in larger discussions around women in New Zealand. Here, the Movement provides a clear contrast to show how CARP's position had changed: they were at the 1977 United Womens Convention, and they were involved in platforms where bigger issues than 'rising prices' were being discussed by women.

In the long run, the Movement would not have the same durability as CARP. The original boycott against coffee, chocolate biscuits, and tinned fruit was still ongoing as late as August 1977.⁵⁴⁹ A proposal to boycott car licensing fees, to protest their increase, was rejected, and a proposed boycott against Weet-Bix seems to have been divisive nationally.⁵⁵⁰ After August, I have no idea how much longer the Movement continued, but from what I can determine

⁵⁴⁵ *Salient*, 4 July 1977, p. 5.

⁵⁴⁶ *Salient*, 4 July 1977, p. 5.

⁵⁴⁷ *Salient*, 4 July 1977, p. 5.

⁵⁴⁸ *Salient*, 4 July 1977, p. 5.

⁵⁴⁹ *Press*, 24 August 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/02.

⁵⁵⁰ *Press*, 18 June 1977; *New Zealand Herald*, 27 June 1977. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/02.

Incidentally, CARP Auckland's name seems to have been attached to the proposed Weet-Bix boycott, but my interpretation of the cited article is that they had taken a backseat role in this matter and that the Housewives Boycott Movement in Auckland were firmly in control of the proposed action.

the Housewives Boycott Movement did not continue into 1978.⁵⁵¹ Whereas CARP had incorporated and continued after the initial spike of boycotts in 1967, the Movement seems to have died out after its initial burst of interest. It is possible that supporters moved on to other causes in the women's movement, or that without strong organisation there was no drive to keep the movement going. Himiona would continue on as a locally-known Christchurch activist: she was still active in anti-capitalist circles as late as 2003, and she may possibly still be alive in 2024.⁵⁵² At the very least, in 1977 the Housewives Boycott Movement was arguably more prominent than the much-older CARP. It had a wider geographic reach than CARP in 1977, and leadership on price boycotts that year seems to have been held by the Movement.

CARP's Actions in 1977: Setting Down Roots and the Monthly Price Index

While CARP had a less prominent role in the fight against rising prices in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1977, it was still a busy organisation in its own right that year. For the first time, CARP Wellington finally managed to open a permanent office of its own. Since 1966, none of the various branches of CARP had secured permanent accommodation specifically for themselves. Public meetings were held in public spaces, and private committee meetings were held in leaders' homes. If anyone wanted to ring CARP, they had to ring the home of one of the leaders. Humphries and Kelly in particular took calls from Government officials on their private home phones.⁵⁵³ In 1977, however, CARP Wellington finally managed to rent an office in Newtown, at 123A Riddiford Street.⁵⁵⁴ Initially, this office did not have a phone connection because of cost concerns, but soon after opening a phone connection was established full-time specifically for CARP purposes.⁵⁵⁵ When the office was opened it was

⁵⁵¹ The Wellington branch's records do not hold any evidence of the Housewives Boycott Movement post-1977, and a perusal of the Christchurch *Press* indicates that media coverage on the Movement dried up.

⁵⁵² In that year she spoke at an Anti-Capitalist Alliance meeting in Christchurch on the growth of poverty. The press release announcing the meeting cited Himiona as the founder of the 1977 Housewives Boycott Movement. Anti-Capitalist Alliance, 'Christchurch Anti-Poverty Meeting December 17', *Scoop*, 10 December 2003 <<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO0312/S00089/christchurch-anti-poverty-meeting-december-17.htm>> [accessed 28 November 2023]. Online digging indicates that Himiona was still alive as recently as 2021, and I have found no evidence she had died as of the time of publication.

⁵⁵³ This is often documented explicitly in follow-up letters. Many previously cited letters between the Department and Humphries or Kelly include a note summarising previous telephone conversations. No known transcripts have survived.

⁵⁵⁴ CARP Wellington Financial Appeal, mid-1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁵⁵⁵ CARP Wellington Financial Appeal, mid-1977; CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, August 1977. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13. The number was 892-054.

also announced that CARP planned to hire a part-time worker to run the office, and by the end of 1977 the CARP bulletin announced there were 'several people ... helping on the roster' and a Community Volunteer working two half-days per week.⁵⁵⁶ The purpose of this office was to be a forum where members of the public and CARP supporters could come and discuss their concerns about prices, and receive the information that CARP Wellington had collected over the preceding decade.⁵⁵⁷ In light of the knowledge that CARP would be gone only four years later, this development is very interesting. An office, a telephone number, and volunteers were all new developments for CARP in 1977, and I find it fascinating that these actions of setting down permanent roots came right at the end of CARP's existence. Clearly, Kelly and the leadership at CARP Wellington in 1977 felt that their organisation had many years of action ahead of them.

What I consider CARP's most prominent public action in 1977 came not from boycott activity, but from what they managed to get into the newspapers. In the middle of 1976, the Caretakers and Cleaners Union in Wellington proposed to write up an advertisement each month showing how 'grocery prices are shooting up'.⁵⁵⁸ The union took this proposal to CARP, and after several telephone conversations between Kelly and the *Evening Post*, the *Evening Post* agreed to place an ad from CARP in their newspaper regularly in 1977.⁵⁵⁹ The result was what CARP called "the CARP Monthly Price Index". Each month that year, the *Evening Post* placed an ad from CARP in their newspaper on the second Tuesday each month. The included the CARP logo, a count of how many grocery items had risen in price, and a selection of goods listing how much they had risen in price.⁵⁶⁰ Each time the information was prepared by CARP, through regular observations in Wellington stores, and passed on for publication.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁶ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 4, November 1977, p. 8, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁵⁵⁷ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 4, November 1977, p. 8, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁵⁵⁸ Letter from Cath Kelly to the Secretary of the Wellington Trades Council, 11 May 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/08.

⁵⁵⁹ Letter from Cath Kelly to the Secretary of the Wellington Trades Council, 11 May 1977; Letter from Cath Kelly to Mr. Bezzant, 12 August 1976. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/08. Initially the ads were planned for August 1976, but at the time were cancelled because of a 1976 price freeze by Muldoon. The ads eventually began in January 1977.

⁵⁶⁰ For example, see *Evening Post*, 8 February 1977, p. 3, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/08. This Index listed 'over 180' price rises, and particularly called out Beehive matches, Marmite, and Sunlight soap as price rise offenders.

⁵⁶¹ See Letter from Cath Kelly to the Chief Reporter, *Evening Post*, 8 June 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/08, for an example of the raw information CARP sent to the *Evening Post*.

The *Evening Post* were the most regular publisher of the Monthly Price Index, but other newspapers also carried the CARP Monthly Price Index in 1977. In CARP's records, for example, copies of the July Index are shown published in the *Taranaki Herald* and the *Southern Times*.⁵⁶² In August, the *Wanganui Herald* published the Index CARP had prepared that month.⁵⁶³ The November Index made it into the *Marlborough Express*.⁵⁶⁴ A posting list for the Index that survived in the archives lists 14 newspapers that received copies at various points, including the *New Zealand Herald* and the *Dominion*, as well as Radio New Zealand, South Pacific Television, several women's magazines, and Himiona for the Housewives Boycott Movement.⁵⁶⁵ In other words, the Index was widely circulated: many newspapers, national and regional, were publishing copies, and the Index also may have made it on to radio and television.⁵⁶⁶

For an organisation derided by sections of the press as 'small' in 1976, CARP were very good at receiving press time in 1977. Even though they were not leading the price boycotts in New Zealand in 1977, they were still able to put out information to a large number of New Zealand's media consumers, despite still only having no more than 2000 members that year.⁵⁶⁷ In a response to a school student's inquiry about CARP in July, Kelly said that "we (CARP Wellington) think that we have become a voice to be listened to in consumer affairs", and letters received by Kelly for CARP in 1977 show that the Index had aroused public interest.⁵⁶⁸ Thus, while in terms of boycotts it could be said CARP were taking a more passive role in 1977, the Index and the office opening shows that the year was still busy for the Wellington branch of CARP.

⁵⁶² *Taranaki Herald*, 14 July 1977, p. 7; *Southern Times*, 17 July 1977. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/08.

⁵⁶³ *Wanganui Herald*, 11 August 1977, p. 7, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/08.

⁵⁶⁴ *Marlborough Express*, 7 November 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/08.

⁵⁶⁵ Posting List for Monthly Price List, 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/08.

⁵⁶⁶ I cannot prove for sure that the Index was aired on Radio New Zealand or South Pacific Television, but if they were on CARP's Index mailing list I am reasonably confident they must have used it in their material at some point in 1977 or 1978. I see no other reason for them to have wanted to be put on the mailing list for the Index.

⁵⁶⁷ The figure of 2000 members comes from CARP Wellington's annual report for 1977/1978. CARP Wellington Annual Report, 1977/1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13. Because of the Index's inclusion in regional newspapers, like the *Taranaki Herald* and the *Wanganui Herald*, it would have received good coverage in local media even though CARP had no branches in New Plymouth or Whanganui.

⁵⁶⁸ See, for example, Letter from Marianne Piri to Cath Kelly, 15 April 1977, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/06B. This letter discusses boycotts and collective action by women (clearly inspired by the Housewives Boycott Movement), with "(CARP's) advertisement" as the opening point.

CARP also kept up their correspondence with various political figures. CARP were still in touch with the Labour Party in 1977, who were once again in opposition. Warren Freer was still in Parliament, but his portfolio no longer covered CARP's interests. Instead, CARP's primary contact in the Labour caucus was now Roger Douglas. Douglas needs no introduction for most New Zealand historians, but he is best-known today as Minister of Finance from 1984 to 1989, and as the initiator of the 'Rogernomics' reforms of the 1980s.⁵⁶⁹ In 1977, Douglas was Labour's Spokesman on Consumer Affairs, and as Spokesman he met with representatives of CARP Wellington several times in 1977.⁵⁷⁰ Correspondence from late October shows that Douglas intended to share Labour's upcoming policy drafts on price control and consumer issues.⁵⁷¹ While it must be remembered that only several years before CARP and the Kirk-Rowling government had been at each other's throats, the correspondence suggests that Douglas and CARP enjoyed a better relationship in 1977 than Freer and CARP had in many years.

At the same time, CARP were still in touch with officials at the Department of Trade and Industry. For example, in November CARP raised concerns with the Department about new regulations controlling professional fees, seeking clarification which was received from department officials.⁵⁷² In September, CARP expressed concern about price rises in Sanitarium mueslis and Weet-Bix, leading to a brief exchange where the department concluded no action needed to be taken.⁵⁷³ CARP also attempted to arrange a meeting with the Minister of Trade and Industry, Lance Adams-Schneider. As far as I can tell, the best they could get was a meeting with the Associate Minister.⁵⁷⁴ While contact with civil servants in the Trade and Industry continued, no correspondence between CARP and Adams-Schneider personally has survived, and I doubt the two ever met in 1977. Muldoon had been a vocal

⁵⁶⁹ Many of the historical works already cited, including Easton, Brooking, Bertram, Locke, and Brookes, talk about the 'Rogernomics' reforms. In general, readers with a background in New Zealand economic history are likely well aware of 'Rogernomics' as a key turning point.

⁵⁷⁰ Letter from Cath Kelly to Roger Douglas, 2 May 1977; Letter from Cath Kelly to Roger Douglas, 17 July 1977. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/06A.

⁵⁷¹ Letter from Cath Kelly to Roger Douglas, 13 October 1977; Letter from Roger Douglas to Cath Kelly, 23 November 1977. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/06A.

⁵⁷² Letter from Cath Kelly to the Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry, 8 November 1977; Letter from W. E. Scanlan to Cath Kelly, 29 November 1977. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/06A.

⁵⁷³ Letter from Cath Kelly to the Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry, 7 September 1977; Letter from H. M. Donaldson to Cath Kelly; 26 September 1977; Letter from H. M. Donaldson to Cath Kelly; 17 November 1977. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/06A.

⁵⁷⁴ Submission made to the Associate Minister of Trade and Industry, CARP Wellington, 17 June 1976, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/06A.

opponent of CARP in the early 1970s, and as Prime Minister, it seems that Ministers in his government mostly spurned contact with CARP, Kelly, or representatives of the Wellington branch. It seems that there was far more contact between left-wing Labour representatives and CARP than right-wing National representatives and CARP in 1977: it will become clear later on that this played a part in the end of CARP.

Ultimately, 1977 was a strong year for activists against rising prices in New Zealand, and while CARP ceded some of their leadership to the Housewives Boycott Movement, the year was still productive for them, between their new office and their Monthly Price Rise Index. I would call 1977 the high-point for CARP during the last period of their history. This peak was perhaps lower than their peak during the early 1970s. In 1970 CARP were the clear, undisputed leaders of advocacy for price control in New Zealand, and had slightly wider geographic reach (at least back then, CARP could briefly claim a third main branch in Dunedin). By 1975, they had become institutionalised as an organisation strongly committed to protesting against rising prices, and the roots they put down in 1977 showed that CARP were planning on continuing on for several more years. They may have left boycotting to others that year, but through their lobbying and public presence, CARP were still institutionalising themselves as grassroots activists against inflation.

1978: The Beginning of the End

In some ways, 1978 was little different to 1977 for CARP. The Monthly Price Rise Index continued to be published in newspapers across the country. For example, the Christchurch *Press* carried the August edition, and the *Southern Times* covered the Index for May.⁵⁷⁵ The office continued to operate. Letters indicate that two or three people were working in the CARP office in October 1978.⁵⁷⁶ The office shifted from its original location to the Newtown Community Centre in early 1978, and according to CARP's bulletin "quite a number of people" rang the office for advice in the first half of 1978.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁵ *Press*, 22 August 1978; *Southern Times*, 18 June 1978. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/09.

⁵⁷⁶ Letter from Cath Kelly to Frances Acey, 3 October 1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/07.

⁵⁷⁷ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 2, May 1978, pp. 1, 8, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13. According to correspondence, the reason for the shift was a desire by the office's neighbour to expand; reportedly he "really needed the room". Letter from Cath Kelly to the Secretary, Newtown Community Centre, 13 April 1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/07.

CARP's engagement with political actors also continued in 1978. On Sunday, 28 May 1978, the Labour Party held a 'Consumer Conference' at the Wellington Trades Hall.⁵⁷⁸ This conference was held in preparation for the election held that year: earlier in the year the Labour Party had announced they were considering appointing a Minister of Consumer Affairs if they won, and that consumer issues like prices and monopolies would be one of their focuses.⁵⁷⁹ CARP were invited to the conference, as a representative of 'consumer organisation', and material from the conference shows that CARP were cited as the most active example of a consumer's organisation.⁵⁸⁰ Participants at the workshop on consumer organisation also indicated that, if a Consumer Affairs Ministry was established, organisations like CARP should 'elect their own people to it'.⁵⁸¹ The Conference did not make it into CARP's bulletin, but a reference to Labour Party policy made it into the August bulletin in the run-up to the election.⁵⁸²

The inference I draw from CARP's role in the Conference, and their mentions by participants, is that, within Labour Party circles, CARP were seen as the most active and important representatives of 'consumers' as a larger body. This provides an interesting contrast to the unfavourable coverage of CARP's size in business circles several years earlier, and it also shows how, even as late as 1978, CARP still had some influence in political circles. Additionally, the correspondence with Trade and Industry continued as always. For much of 1978, CARP and the Department were in touch regarding the price of kerosene at Woolworths, with CARP alleging Woolworths were marking up their prices.⁵⁸³ Letters have also survived showing CARP were also in contact regarding toilet cleaner prices and cocoa bean prices.⁵⁸⁴ In other words, some of CARP's activity in 1978 was business as usual.

⁵⁷⁸ 'The Consumer Gets a Voice With LABOUR', Labour Party Consumer Conference handout, May(?) 1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

⁵⁷⁹ *Southern Times*, 4 June 1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/09.

⁵⁸⁰ Consumer Conference – Consumer Organisation, May 1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/06. No mention was made of CARP as a 'woman's' or 'housewives' organisation – of course, right on trend for CARP at the time.

⁵⁸¹ Consumer Conference – Consumer Organisation, May 1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/06.

⁵⁸² CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 3, August 1978, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁵⁸³ Letter from Cath Kelly to the Secretary of Trade and Industry, 22 July 1978; Letter from Cath Kelly to the Secretary of Trade and Industry, 2 September 1978; Letter from J. P. McDiarmid to Cath Kelly, 8 September 1978; Letter from J. P. McDiarmid to Cath Kelly, 8 December 1978. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/07.

⁵⁸⁴ Letter from D. L. Shroff to Cath Kelly, 17 October 1978; Letter from H. M. Donaldson to Cath Kelly, 11 April 1978. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/07.

However, 1978 also marked the beginning of the end for the Wellington branch. At the annual meeting in April, Kelly announced her decision to resign as Secretary of CARP at the end of 1978, and in November sent out a personal letter announcing her plan.⁵⁸⁵ She had served on the branch committee since 1967, and by her count she had spent nine years as President or Secretary.⁵⁸⁶ Members of the committee had come and gone, but Kelly had remained the public face of CARP Wellington. Her reason for resigning was that she “(felt) CARP needs new leadership and I need to do something different”.⁵⁸⁷ Kelly had broader interests beyond just rising prices as a left-wing activist: she was also a member of the COV and an anti-apartheid activist in Wellington. She had served for many years, and clearly, she was ready to stand down. The letter was more than a personal announcement, but also an appeal to CARP’s supporters. To quote the letter: “Other members of the committee are continuing, but they need more people to join the committee. Everyone who appreciates CARP will have to consider seriously whether they can now put some work in themselves.”⁵⁸⁸ In this letter, Kelly was calling for a new generation of CARP leaders to step up, and take over the reins in the Wellington branch. The direct outcome was another woman, Louise McCaffley, being elected to lead the Wellington branch. I do not know much about McCaffley, other than that she had been a member of the CARP Wellington branch committee for several years, and how and why she was chosen to lead the branch is not documented in the branch’s records.⁵⁸⁹

Despite this apparent change of leadership, Kelly was still acting as a *de facto* leader after her purported retirement. She was still sending mail on behalf of CARP in 1979, where she acknowledged that she had “retired from the committee after twelve years of activity”, but that “there is rather a gap ... until someone new takes up the reins”.⁵⁹⁰ Even though Kelly had retired, no one had answered her call to arms. This is where the conservative arguments

⁵⁸⁵ CARP Wellington Letter to All Members, November 1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁵⁸⁶ Actually eight, since she first became President in 1970.

⁵⁸⁷ CARP Wellington Letter to All Members, November 1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁵⁸⁸ CARP Wellington Letter to All Members, November 1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13.

⁵⁸⁹ No direct documentation for her election survived, she simply began to be quoted as the leader of CARP. See *Evening Post*, 8 March 1979, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/09. Furthermore, notice how I do not refer to McCaffley by her title at CARP. Primary sources variously call her ‘Secretary’, ‘acting Secretary’, ‘President’, ‘Convenor’, and ‘National Convenor’, seemingly interchangeably. ‘Convenor’ appears to have been a new title, that was particularly used in the announcement that CARP was dissolving in 1981.

⁵⁹⁰ Letter from Cath Kelly to Mary John Mananzan, 27 July 1979; Letter from Cath Kelly to Brent Giblin, 27 July 1979. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

against CARP's credibility back in 1976 became more relevant. CARP was still only an organisation with no more than 2000 supporters or members in 1978, despite the boom in interest in fighting rising prices in 1977. In fact, considering the 1977 rally that only had 30 attendees, 2000 may be an exaggerated number. I do not have reliable membership figures post-1976, so it is possible that CARP's active membership was even smaller: actively attending meetings, or attending rallies, is different to simply receiving the bulletin, and there were possibly no more than a few hundred in this category.

The first generation of leaders were stepping down: according to Kelly several "one or two other (unnamed) old hands" had also stepped down at the end of 1978.⁵⁹¹ While McCaffley stepped up to become the new leader of CARP Wellington, there was apparently no one else willing to form a second generation of leadership for CARP Wellington. In 1979 a letter sent out to CARP's supporters made it clear that "there is not enough active support from the membership to enable us to be the kind of fighting body that is needed in the present situation".⁵⁹² With Kelly stepping aside, CARP Wellington was now bereft of leadership. A letter from April 1979 counted "only four or five people willing to put some work in, only one ... who is willing to make public statements, etc."⁵⁹³ Four or five out of about 2000 supporters was clearly not enough to keep CARP Wellington alive.

The Collapse of CARP Wellington

1979 would end up being the year that CARP Wellington practically wound itself down. The lack of new leadership in 1978 was one key factor, and another can be found by understanding the economic and political context in New Zealand leading up to 1979. Inflation had been on the rise in New Zealand since 1974, and rising prices had been a thorn in the side of the Kirk-Rowling Labour government.⁵⁹⁴ Muldoon had spent several years attempting to slow the rise in the CPI. In 1978, according to the CPI, inflation fell to its lowest point since 1974, about 2.5% in the third quarter, adding up to an annual increase of

⁵⁹¹ Letter from Cath Kelly to Mary John Mananzan, 27 July 1979, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

⁵⁹² Letter from Louise McCaffley to CARP Wellington membership, 23 April 1979, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

⁵⁹³ Letter from Cath Kelly to N. M. Pumfleet, 30 April 1979, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

⁵⁹⁴ Economically, Muldoon was an interventionist. His tenure as Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was marked by massive state-funded development projects and plans to develop agriculture and domestic industry. Brooking, pp. 143-146; Bertram, pp. 557-558.

11.1%.⁵⁹⁵ The annual increase in the CPI had exceeded 10% for several years, peaking at 17.2% in 1976, and Muldoon cited this as a positive step for the New Zealand economy.⁵⁹⁶ CARP, of course, felt this was not an accomplishment to be proud of, in light of the last few years of high inflation.⁵⁹⁷

With this in mind, the New Zealand Retailers' Federation put out the call in 1978 to completely get rid of price controls. The President of the Federation was quoted as saying "it is difficult to see what net benefits consumers have gained from eight years of price control".⁵⁹⁸ National promised that, if re-elected in 1978, they would review the entire system of price control.⁵⁹⁹ CARP's goal, ever since 1967, was a comprehensive system of price control to stop all unfair rises in prices, and now the Government was planning to scrap what price controls did exist. In the end, in 1979 price controls were removed for all goods except for those with Government subsidies.⁶⁰⁰ In the early 1970s Muldoon had branded CARP as communists, and now his government were completely dismantling the few systems CARP could legally use to halt rising prices. This is inextricably linked to CARP's final fate: the dismantling of the very controls that CARP sought to benefit weakened their power to push for Government action. The Government now had policies completely opposed to those of CARP, and powerlessness led to despair. Even if the officials CARP corresponded with in the Department of Trade and Industry had been sympathetic to their cause, the tools that CARP pushed for them to use (namely, price controls) would no longer exist, and hence, corresponding with complaints would be useless.

In 1979, CARP Wellington only released one bulletin, in March, and compared to bulletins in 1977 and 1978 it was short: the front page was devoted to calls for subscriptions, recruitment, and a reminder to 'actively' support CARP Wellington.⁶⁰¹ A special meeting in February, and the Annual General Meeting in April, were both devoted to discussing the future of CARP. The minutes for the February meeting have survived, and indicate that

⁵⁹⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, 14 October 1978, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/09.

⁵⁹⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 14 October 1978, p. 1; *Evening Post*, 7 July 1978, p. 5. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/09.

⁵⁹⁷ *Waikato Times*, 12 July 1978. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/09.

⁵⁹⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 5 September 1978, p. 5, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/09.

⁵⁹⁹ *New Zealand Herald*, 23 August 1978, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-8/09.

⁶⁰⁰ *Press*, 2 November 1978, p. 3; *Press*, 7 April 1979; p. 3.

⁶⁰¹ CARP Wellington Bulletin No. 1, March 1979, p. 1, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 79-076-4/13. Underlining taken from the original piece.

proposed ways forward included discussion with 'Island people', attending a Victoria University seminar on the media, publicly exhibiting a film for consumers, and public exhibitions.⁶⁰² After the AGM, however, it was formally decided that "CARP should take a back seat for some months", noting that "the solution lies with members".⁶⁰³ A caretaker committee was appointed to administer CARP Wellington in the interim, and future correspondence was formally issued "for (the) caretaker committee".⁶⁰⁴ The office was closed and returned to the Newtown Community Centre organisers, and the phone number from 1977 was swiftly disconnected.⁶⁰⁵ CARP's remaining volunteer, Jan MacDougall, had her placement terminated immediately, and the report on the placement noted that she was "without ... strong support from CARP".⁶⁰⁶ The annual donation from the PSA was refused for 1979.⁶⁰⁷

CARP Wellington went into recess within weeks of the AGM. Only very minor correspondence continued: a matter between the Ombudsman, Trade and Industry, and CARP dragged on into 1980, and several schoolchildren wrote in inquiring about CARP for school projects, unaware that CARP as they knew it was inactive.⁶⁰⁸ Kelly was still receiving correspondence for CARP in 1980, as a letter from the Ombudsmen in January was specifically addressed to her.⁶⁰⁹ I do not know whether this was because the Ombudsmen did not know that Kelly had retired, but it seems Kelly was still active on behalf of CARP. In 1979, there were no new protests, boycotts, submissions, or campaigns from CARP Wellington.

⁶⁰² CARP Wellington Minutes of Special Meetings at the Newtown Community Centre, 12 February 1979, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-6/14.

⁶⁰³ Letter from Louise McCaffley to CARP Wellington membership, 23 April 1979, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

⁶⁰⁴ Letter from Cath Kelly to Mary John Mananzan, 27 July 1979; Letter from Cath Kelly to Brent Giblin, 27 July 1979. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02. Both letters have been previously cited, and both include the line.

⁶⁰⁵ Letter from 'the committee' (unclear author) to Pat Cummings, 10 May 1979; Letter from 'the committee' (unclear author) to Telephone Services, Wellington, 11 April 1979. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

⁶⁰⁶ Co-ordinators Report – CARP Placement, Frances Acey, May 1979, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

⁶⁰⁷ Letter from 'the committee' (unclear author) to the Public Service Association, 11 April 1979, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

⁶⁰⁸ Letter from the Chief Ombudsman to Cath Kelly, 11 January 1980, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02. This was the final letter in three-way chain. Letter from Cath Kelly to Brent Giblin, 27 July 1979, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

⁶⁰⁹ Letter from the Chief Ombudsman to Cath Kelly, 11 January 1980, CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

The hope was always that the branch would soon be reactivated, and that there would be a new surge in supporters. This was certainly what Kelly and the committee told their correspondents.⁶¹⁰ In spite of the end of the formal system of price controls, CARP could have decided to follow the lead of the Housewives Boycott Movement and begin a renewed campaign of boycotting. By the mid-1970s, CARP had become institutionalised as a long-term advocate against price rises, and in favour of price control, with a history of boycott activism and Government lobbying. However, in 1980 there was, as far as I can determine, no CARP activity in Wellington.

The end of CARP's history came in June 1981. The last record of CARP comes from an article in the *Christchurch Press*, announcing the formal end of the Campaign Against Rising Prices. The main source for this article was McCaffley, announcing that CARP had "dissolved itself last year and wound up its bank account".⁶¹¹ Its remaining assets went to a small Christchurch group fighting power price rises called Campaign Power Pool.⁶¹² In this article McCaffley cited three reasons for CARP's dissolution: firstly, "that people were 'punch drunk' with rising prices", second, that there was no-one left willing to voluntarily put in the work to keep CARP going, and third, the wider context of the Muldoon government's actions.⁶¹³ McCaffley stated that the Muldoon government "led to a defeatist attitude, a feeling that there was no recourse to the Government, and that the Government was not interested".⁶¹⁴ The piece goes on to cite a Consumers Institute spokesperson disagreeing with CARP on the need for, and effectiveness of, price controls.⁶¹⁵ Nevertheless, this piece marks the end of the downwards spiral that started in 1978.

Overall, the spiral can be summarised as follows. The first generation of CARP Wellington's leadership were retiring, ready to move on to new ventures. But CARP was always relatively small as an organisation, and no second generation of leadership emerged. The Muldoon

⁶¹⁰ Letter from 'the committee' (unclear author) to the Public Service Association, 11 April 1979; Letter from Cath Kelly to N. M. Pumflett, 30 April 1979. CARP Wellington records, ATL, 81-271-7/02.

⁶¹¹ *Press*, 13 June 1981, p. 6. 'Last year' indicates that CARP may have dissolved in 1980, and yet because of the timing of the article I still cite 1981 as CARP's last year.

⁶¹² *Press*, 13 June 1981, p. 6. Aside from one letter sent to CARP in 1980, I know nothing about Campaign Power Pool, except that it only seems to have lasted a year and some files about them can be found in the National Library.

⁶¹³ *Press*, 13 June 1981, p. 6.

⁶¹⁴ *Press*, 13 June 1981, p. 6.

⁶¹⁵ *Press*, 13 June 1981, p. 6.

government was dismantling the price control systems, and heading in a direction completely opposite to CARP's aims. In spite of the business and Consumers Institute support for these reforms, they had a demoralising effect on CARP's supporters, and combined with the amount of energy leading an organisation like CARP required, no one within the pool of supporters were willing to take over. Even if CARP could no longer lobby the Government to use price controls, as they had for over a decade, the Housewives Boycott Movement shows that other methods of protest could still have attracted support to CARP's banner in the late 1970s. In practice, however, the old leadership who had led the boycotts of the 1970s were standing down, and no-one was ready to replace them. It seems that CARP was not able to change direction because there was no-one left willing to step up and change CARP's direction. The sudden collapse of CARP, therefore, shows that CARP's institutionalisation depended on active support *and* a leadership to capitalise on that support. While I argue that Kelly should not be seen as a 'dictator', it is clear that without her, there was no-one to lead and pull the branch together. Without leadership, the branch decided to go into recess, and the few remaining leaders, like McCaffley, could only hope that soon there would be a resurgence in support leading to the resurrection of CARP Wellington. Unfortunately for them, the resurgence would not come to pass, probably because of continued demoralisation and 'punch drunkenness'. In the end, the remaining leaders felt they had no choice but to end the branch, and with the dissolution of CARP Wellington came the end of the Campaign Against Rising Prices in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Conclusion

We have now reached the end of CARP's history, and the end of the third period of that history. CARP's trajectory during these years was volatile: one year, they faced a resurgence in interest in fighting rising prices and were setting down roots, and the next, the drive to continue had shrivelled up. We cannot ignore the shadow the Muldoon government cast over CARP and their aspirations during this time. While Muldoon had earlier been a vocal opponent of CARP, now he was silent on CARP specifically, but his policies were completely antithetical to CARP's desires and interests. Though CARP had flourished in the second period of their history, they remained small compared to organisations like the Consumers Institute. The contrast with the Housewives Boycott Movement in 1977 shows how CARP's collective identity evolved: the former 'housewives' group' was now no longer clearly

identifying with 'women's interests', instead identifying with the consumer movement. We have discussed the debate over gender and class struggle within women's circles; it seems that class and economic struggle had won out at CARP.

While the Housewives Boycott Movement was short lived, it seemed to have had a vitality, while it lasted, that CARP simply did not have in 1978. On the other hand, considering the roots that CARP were putting down in 1977, it would have seemed at the time that CARP was going to survive as an institutionalised anti-inflation organisation well into the 1980s. The undoing of CARP's institutionalisation in Wellington in 1978 was based on the sudden loss of its established leadership, Muldoon's abolition of what price controls existed, and the membership losing their drive to fight rising prices. While, as established, the evidence from Auckland is missing, perhaps they faced similar issues in the mid-1970s.

Overall, CARP collapsed because it ran out of steam, and ran out of leadership. While CARP had been through slumps before, as in the late 1960s, the drive to organise remained then. CARP was always small in comparison to organisations like the Consumers Institute, and it is possible that, by the late 1970s, the remaining members felt their effort was better spent elsewhere. CARP could have reoriented in the direction of, say, the Housewives Boycott Movement, with new leadership. In the end, this would not come to pass, and CARP would be gone nationally by 1981.

Conclusion

It has now been 43 years since CARP dissolved, and 58 since a group of Auckland housewives asked “Who wants to do something about high prices?”. Since then, as far as I know, there have been no further efforts to form an organisation in Aotearoa New Zealand dedicated to fighting rising prices. There have been many changes to New Zealand’s socioeconomic structure since 1981, many of which CARP would likely have opposed. When CARP was founded in 1966 the economy was tightly regulated by the Government, and market interventions (like price controls) were political orthodoxy. Soon after CARP dissolved, the neoliberal Fourth Labour Government abandoned decades of economic regulation, and since then all New Zealand governments have adhered to some form of free-market low-regulation economics.⁶¹⁶ In 1991, the Employment Contracts Act completely dismantled the 100+ year old system of industrial conciliation and arbitration, and deemphasised collective bargaining in favour of individual agreements.⁶¹⁷ The trade unions did not receive any special recognition in the new system, and while the ECA has been replaced with a more moderate regime in between the ECA and the old arbitration system, the unions are still today far weaker than they were when CARP existed. If CARP had existed in the mid-1980s, it would probably have been horrified with the advent of Rogernomics, an ideology that ran completely counter to CARP’s original solution to rising prices. Humphries died in 1981, but the Kellys were certainly horrified by the weakening of the unions.⁶¹⁸

Of course, public protest has continued onwards. The same year CARP was dissolved, the protests against the Springbok rugby tour in New Zealand erupted: this is one of New Zealand’s most notable public protests.⁶¹⁹ Māori protest has continued through to the present day: the 2004 hīkoi against the Foreshore and Seabed Act and the 2019 occupation of Ihumātao illustrate this continuity.⁶²⁰ In recent years, young New Zealanders have organised strikes pushing the Government to take action against climate change; the organisers of these strikes are teenaged school students.⁶²¹ This form of ‘climate strike’ is

⁶¹⁶ Bertram, pp. 558-559.

⁶¹⁷ Brooking, p. 164.

⁶¹⁸ Macfie, pp. 91-93.

⁶¹⁹ Chapelle.

⁶²⁰ Harris; Gibson, Williams, and Cairns, p. 46.

⁶²¹ Radio New Zealand, ‘Climate strikes: Thousands march around New Zealand to demand action from government’, *Radio New Zealand*, 3 March 2023 <<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/485231/climate->

inspired by similar initiatives organised by youth around the world. Protest has survived: if the climate strikes are anything to go by, youth are increasing willing to participate in organised protests. Protest has survived, and yet no successor to CARP has arisen. Boraman suggests that today, the response to rising prices comes through individual action.⁶²² People look for new jobs, or go find secondary work, or else 'tighten their belts'.⁶²³ He also notes that the unions are weaker today, and thus there are fewer strikes today because of the decline in unionism in New Zealand.⁶²⁴ Unions were a key ally of CARP back in the day, and we have repeatedly seen that many of the women leading CARP had personal connections to the union movement 50 years ago. Perhaps we have not seen a CARP arise today because there are fewer people who are willing to be part of a collective response to economic downturn.

The goal of this thesis has been to analyse CARP in new ways: to understand why it emerged when it did, why they took the actions they did, how their actions were or were not successful in achieving their goals, why they dissolved in 1981, and its relationships with other historical actors. Having studied CARP's background, and the three periods of its history, we can now answer these questions. Why did CARP arise when it did? CARP arose from an economic and political situation where rising prices were becoming a hot-button issue, during a time when protest was flourishing in New Zealand. It was founded by leaders who were willing to act, and had ideas on how to act, and was able to attract women who were ready to collectively act against rising prices. CARP were able to keep themselves going for fifteen years. For an organisation that demanded members change their spending patterns to accommodate boycotts, this was no mean feat. By the mid-1970s, CARP had become institutionalised: they were a dedicated organisation against rising prices, that could gain attention, had a history of noted consumer boycotts, continuously engaged in Government lobbying and public outreach, and were in for a long fight.

So why stop after fifteen years? In the case of CARP Auckland, I cannot report for sure why, but in the case of CARP Wellington, there was a failure to inaugurate a new generation of

strikes-thousands-march-around-new-zealand-to-demand-action-from-government > [accessed 20 January 2024].

⁶²² Boraman, 2023.

⁶²³ Boraman, 2023.

⁶²⁴ Boraman, 2023.

leadership. In the 1970s, CARP could count no more 2000 supporters, not all of whom appear to have been active supporters, and with the influence of the changes brought in by Muldoon, the will to keep going among those supporters was weakening. When leaders like Kelly stepped down after a decade of leadership, no-one was willing to replace them, and adapt to the changing economic and political conditions of the late 1970s and 1980s. The lesson, perhaps, is the importance of strong leadership to organisations like CARP. It is clear that Humphries and Kelly were influential, strong leaders in their respective branches. Both consistently represented their organisations in the public sphere, and they both commanded respect amongst CARP sympathisers. Their leadership was one of the key contributors to CARP's institutionalisation in the mid-1970s. In 1967, several of the new branches expressed their thanks to Humphries for their help, including some that would later schism off to the SPA.⁶²⁵ In the long run, CARP's strong core of leadership seems to have been both a blessing and a curse for CARP. A blessing, because women like Humphries, Ayo, and Kelly were the reason CARP was able to power through the 1967 schism through to the 1970s, but a curse, because when they were gone no-one else was willing to carry CARP onwards.

CARP was a movement largely made up of women, and led by women, but as time went on CARP chose to instead identify as 'consumers'. Initially, the collective identity CARP adopted was that it was a movement of 'housewives': the committee that drove the founding of CARP Auckland used this label, and many women came to CARP from 'housewives associations'. Yet, even in the early years, many of CARP's leaders better fit the label 'working woman'. Women like Ella Ayo and various committee members had other work outside of CARP, and politically leaders like Ayo and Kelly felt that economic struggle was a higher priority than gender struggle. This is reflected in the changing terminology: 'housewives' was replaced with 'consumers' by the mid-1970s, and in later years Kelly rejected the label of 'women's organisation', as seen in the Blenheim branch attempt in 1976. The archives are clear that CARP was a movement predominantly made up of women, but in their later years CARP chose not to identify as a 'woman's organisation': I would call CARP a movement of women, but not a 'woman's movement'. The example of the Housewives Boycott Movement shows that CARP could have chosen to identify more closely

⁶²⁵ Letter from R. Kirby (?) to Flo Humphries, 9 March 1967, CARP Auckland records, SCUoAL, A220-1/3. This letter in particular came from the Whakatāne branch, which was one of the leaders of the SPA schism.

with other women's organisations. I believe this decision can be understood by understanding the political beliefs of CARP's leadership. CARP does fit into the historiography of gender history in New Zealand as an organisation made up of women, temporally co-existing with the second wave of feminism, but I am not sure if CARP fits in to the larger 'women's movement' in the same way the Housewives Boycott Movement did in 1977.

The archives show that CARP always had closer links to the trade unions than to other women's organisations. In the 1970 boycotts, the unions were a key ally, sponsoring a (short-lived) Otago branch and co-ordinating actions in support of CARP's boycotts. The links between CARP's leaders and the unions were clear, and deeply rooted: Humphries, Ayo, and Kelly all attest to this. There are parallels between the idea of economic boycotts and industrial strikes: both involve withholding economic activity with the goal of creating pressure for favourable outcomes. While I do not think CARP deliberately chose to simply copy the trade unions, I think that understanding the personal links between union leadership and CARP leadership provides the key to understanding why CARP chose to engage in boycotts, and their interest in 'monopolies'.

At the same time, CARP was not just a 'women's auxiliary' counterpart to the trade unions. Beyond boycotts, they also engaged in public advocacy for action against rising prices, and in communication with the Government in pursuit of their goals. The Monthly Price Rise Index in 1977 is one key example of CARP publicising the impact of rising prices, and out the Unit Price Calculator was designed to be a tool to help the public sniff out unfair prices.

Communication with the Government could mean submissions to committees of inquiry, or it could mean writing to the department responsible for commerce on behalf of a member complaining about unfair price rises. It could also mean trying to submit to the Prices Tribunal, an act that would bring CARP into conflict with the Government in the mid-1970s. These highlight that lobbying against rising prices, to the Government and to the public, was also important to CARP in achieving their goals. CARP's ideal goal was always a comprehensive system of price controls to keep rising prices in check, but they were always open to input from supporters and the public. In their later years, their Wellington office and telephone number were meant to solicit support directly from concerned citizens. In the mid-1970s, they rejected the idea of confidential meetings with Government Ministers, or

secret Price Tribunal hearings, which brought them into conflict with the Government, but demonstrated their refusal to deviate from their origins as grassroots protestors.

Understanding CARP's lobbying actions helps us to understand what CARP did, but it also helps us to understand the ways in which CARP were able to succeed, and possibly why they kept going for fifteen years. It shows us that CARP were successful in gaining attention, relative to their small size, particularly from the Government, but also from the public: I doubt CARP would have opened an office or rented a phone in their last years if they did not expect any public attention. On the other hand, the economic changes brought in by the Muldoon government in 1978 meant that lobbying officials to review price rises would be much less effective. Again, the example of the Housewives Boycott Movement suggests that there were other directions CARP could have taken their protest actions in the late 1970s. The lack of new leadership, and the demoralisation of CARP's supporters, appears to have precluded a potential resurgence in CARP boycotting in the late 1970s.

On the surface, CARP would seem to have been a national organisation, and most of the branches of CARP did agree on targets and actions. More recently, Neas seems to have assumed CARP was a national organisation.⁶²⁶ An essential point to note, however, is that CARP was *not* a single national organisation, and did not have full national reach. CARP Auckland and CARP Wellington were formed independently, with their own founding stories, and after the 1967 schisms branches outside Auckland and Wellington never lasted more than a few months. The Gubay affair in 1973 shows that, at times, CARP Auckland and CARP Wellington could respectfully disagree with each other. At least in 1967, there were members and branches of CARP that openly disagreed with the value of economic boycott, and with courting trade union support, and when these left it led to several years of recovery for the remainder of CARP. At the same time, unity really was strength for CARP. No one within CARP opposed the 1970 boycotts, for example, and these boycotts were one of CARP's most prominent actions. In the long run, the splits in 1967 and 1968 might have overall been healthy for CARP: it left the organisation smaller, but the people who were left were determined to keep CARP going well into the 1970s.

⁶²⁶ Neas.

CARP positioned themselves as a non-political actor, and I would add that as a protest organisation they were non-violent. With the possible exception of the 1968 opening of Parliament, CARP's protests were peaceful, and they stuck to following legal means of protest; I would contrast this with the 1981 Springbok tour protests, which were notably violent and involved conflict with the police.⁶²⁷ It is easy to see how CARP drew support and friends from left-wing New Zealand politics, but CARP also drew National Party supporters to their banner, particularly in 1967, and CARP had public stoushes with governments on the left and right. The fights with Rob Muldoon have come up time and time again in this thesis, but Freer from the Labour Party was also an opponent of CARP during his time as a Minister. CARP repeatedly chose not to take positions on matters unrelated to rising prices. CARP Wellington chose not to endorse economic boycotts against South Africa, and CARP Auckland ignored advice to embrace social credit theory as a viable alternative.

We have seen how CARP were branded as a 'Communist organisation' by their opponents; it is true that many CARP leaders were communists, but CARP as an organisation never publicly endorsed communist ideology. Indeed, the Communist Party had denounced CARP in 1970 as counter-revolutionary: an odd statement to make if CARP was indeed a communist front. I suggest that the women who led CARP chose to form an explicitly non-communist movement to attract greater support for the specific issue of fighting rising prices. They were able to attract National Party supporters, so the strategy must have seemed viable to them. Thus, while CARP did engage in political conflict, it would be wrong to align them with any particular political party. In this sense, CARP was indeed 'non-political'.

So, CARP were an active, relatively durable, protest organisation, solely focused on rising prices, and led and supported by women. They professed to be a non-political organisation, and clashed with governments of different partisan leanings. They were friendly with the trade union movement, and while they were a movement of women, they were not necessarily a 'women's movement'. Their most distinguishing action was their direct economic boycotts, against a variety of businesses, but most notably against what they perceived as monopolies, particularly Wattie's and Unilever. They were also keen

⁶²⁷ Chapelle. The 1968 opening of Parliament is only a 'possible' exception because, as discussed in Chapter 2, it is unclear whether CARP members at this protest engaged in violence or not.

Government lobbyists, as submitters and as a representative for its members, and they were interested in public education on matters relating to rising prices, particularly later in the 1970s with the opening of a dedicated office. They had become institutionalised, but their longevity was fragile, and ultimately collapsed in the late 1970s. What does this thesis contribute to New Zealand historiography; why tell this story? On a basic level, this thesis may be the first work on CARP's last five-to-seven years. But, in a bigger sense, I think it can contribute to in several ways to New Zealand historiography.

Many of the other protest movements in New Zealand at the time were focused on social or political causes: the anti-apartheid movement, the anti-nuclear and peace advocates, and the many hīkoi, for example, all sought social or political change in New Zealand and abroad. CARP, by contrast, were almost purely focused on economics: their goal was always fighting rising prices. This is not to suggest that other protest movements were completely disinterested in economics (the anti-apartheid movement, for instance, called for economic boycotts too), but I suggest that the focus on economic change as the end goal, rather than a short-term was a distinguishing point for CARP, and adds a new dimension to the historiography on protest in New Zealand. We have repeatedly seen the clear links between CARP and the trade unions. Beyond being a base of support for CARP boycotts, several CARP leaders had backgrounds as union officials: Humphries and Ayo were both union secretaries, and Ayo was concurrently an officer of a trade union and CARP. Family links are also key to this relationship: Humphries and Kelly were both married to union officials. The economic boycotts undertaken by CARP can also be seen as a comparable technique to trade union strikes. While bearing in mind that CARP also drew support from outside the union movement, I think that CARP fits within New Zealand labour histories. In methodology and membership, at least, there are clear labour movement influences on CARP. This does not mean that CARP was just a union 'women's auxiliary', but CARP's leadership clearly had personal ties with trade union leaders. Perhaps CARP serves as an exemplar of the ties between trade unions, wider protest, and politics discussed by authors like Locke and Boraman.

CARP also highlights a key debate within the women's movement in the 1970s: the debate between whether to emphasise gender struggle or economic struggle. By the mid-1970s, the women at CARP had chosen to emphasise economic struggle, inspired by their political

beliefs, and thus their original identity as 'housewives' was replaced with the label of 'consumers'. Despite this, it is important to remember that CARP in its early years drew in support from self-identified 'housewives', and the original body that called CARP together called itself a 'housewives' committee'. In its later years, I would contrast CARP to the Housewives Boycott Movement, which did choose to affiliate with the larger women's movement during its brief existence. CARP were largely made up of women, many of them from the working-class, but after its few years they showed no specific interest in 'women's issues'. They never took a stand on, for example, abortion or women's health. CARP, therefore, highlights a historical debate between women activists at the time: is gender struggle or economic struggle the priority? While CARP may not have been a part of the larger 'women's movement', this was a question being debated amongst feminists in the 1970s. This was, after all, a point of discussion at the 1977 United Womens Convention, attended by the Housewives Boycott Movement.⁶²⁸ So, while CARP may not have been in the 'women's movement', they were influenced by debates within the movement, and the political stance some working-class women, like Ayo and Kelly, took on gender struggle. The changing identity that CARP chose in relation to gender can be an example for the historiography on how the debate on gender versus economics impacted organisations made up of women.

What relevance, then, does CARP have today? Could there be a revival of the Campaign Against Rising Prices? As mentioned at the start of this thesis, concerns around the cost of living are very relevant at the time of writing. The unions are weaker today than they were when CARP was founded, and Boraman has argued that the Rogernomics reforms were devastating for working-class organisation.⁶²⁹ The youth climate strikes show that protest in New Zealand has continued, in different ways. Indeed, youth protest may show what actions a new CARP would likely undertake: awareness building through social media platforms, in a similar way to CARP's newsletters and bulletins.⁶³⁰ The decline of the unions since the 1980s means that a modern-day successor would probably not inherit the same strong union links from the original. I can imagine that the ongoing effects of Rogernomics in the 1980s would

⁶²⁸ *Salient*, 4 July 1977, p. 11.

⁶²⁹ Toby Boraman, 'The Independent Left Press and the Rise and Fall of Mass Dissent in Aotearoa Since the 1970s', *Counterfutures*, 1 (2016), 31-70, (pp. 32-33, 68).

⁶³⁰ Shelly Boulianne, Mirelille Lalancette, and David Ilkiw, "'School Strike 4 Climate": Social Media and the International Youth Protest on Climate Change', *Media and Communication*, 8.2 (2020), 208-218, (pp. 215-216).

influence the ideology of a successor to CARP: this is something the union movement has been grappling with since the Employment Contracts Act in 1991.⁶³¹

Overseas, protestors have been engaged in fights against global neoliberalism; for example, the protests in Seattle aimed at the 1999 WTO conference were organised by opponents of neoliberal globalisation.⁶³² A new CARP would likely fit within this pattern, particularly considering the overseas ownership of many New Zealand supermarkets.⁶³³ The focus of discussion around rising prices in New Zealand today is retailers: the supermarkets, for example, have been under scrutiny for their role in raising prices in New Zealand.⁶³⁴ CARP, in their day, primarily targeted producers: Wattie's and Unilever produced goods, but their goods were sold by retailers, not directly to the public. The supermarkets, of course, were still new and building up in New Zealand when CARP existed.⁶³⁵ Today, a modern successor would probably target retailers (i.e. supermarkets) instead of producers.

The key lesson from CARP to modern protest organisations is that, with smaller membership and mixed successes, it is possible to survive with a dedicated core of leadership to keep the fight going. With consistent leadership, from women like Humphries and Kelly, CARP had the durability to survive for more than a decade. The comparison could be made to the anti-nuclear movement: a grassroots movement that kept itself going for several decades, was finally successful in its goal of getting New Zealand declared a nuclear-free zone after decades of advocacy, and was fuelled by a dedicated, passionate cadre of supporters.⁶³⁶ The same could be said for Māori protest, which has stretched as far back as the beginning of colonisation and continues to be renewed by young Māori leaders to this day.⁶³⁷ Today, CARP retains some practical relevance as an example of how it is possible to organise collective action against rising costs of living, as long as people in Aotearoa New Zealand are willing to ask "who wants to do something about high prices?".

⁶³¹ See Locke, 2022.

⁶³² 'Seattle WTO protests of 1999', in *Britannica Academic*, <<https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/Seattle-WTO-protests-of-1999/605847>> [accessed 15 February 2024]

⁶³³ See Winter for further information on the structure of New Zealand supermarkets in the 2010s, and their relationships with suppliers.

⁶³⁴ Commerce Commission; Winter.

⁶³⁵ See Laird.

⁶³⁶ See Leadbeater.

⁶³⁷ See Harris.

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