

with having in his possession implements capable of being used for housebreaking. This was an indictable offence, a conviction for which would probably have resulted in revocation of his parole. The implements alleged to be capable of being used for housebreaking were the playing cards found on the floor of the car. He went to trial; he was acquitted - why was he arrested in the first place?

Other areas of concern regarding Aboriginal/Police relations include the continual harassment of Aboriginal Legal Service solicitors and field officers in certain NSW Aboriginal towns, the use by police of unsigned records of interview, and the rarity with which police exercise their discretion not to proceed against an Aboriginal juvenile first offender.

[Further reading: Anti-Discrimination Board, Study of Street Offences by Aborigines, ADB, June 1982 and references cited.]

## **Sydney Women Against Rape Collective Deborah Allen**

On Anzac Day, 1983, over 500 women gathered in Sydney to mourn women raped in war. Of those who marched, 161 were arrested in the middle of a solemn and dignified procession to Hyde Park.

Although there were no confrontations or violence with the police, the women were all charged with 'causing serious alarm or serious affront' to a 'reasonable person'. The police said that our presence was like the invasion of a private funeral service.

Since the march, SWARC has lodged a series of complaints with the Ombudsman about the behaviour of the police and the condition of the cells. In one cell, women were kept from 8.30 a.m. until 6.00 p.m. without food and even one cup of water. In another cell,

overcrowding was so bad (71 to a cell) that only half were able to sit down. Women were kept in paddy waggons for up to two hours and refused requests to use the toilet. Women were subjected to both physical and verbal harassment. Before being thrown into the paddy waggons they were photographed with their arresting officer for the purpose of 'identification'. We know that these photographs were turned over to the Special Branch. Many women reported having their hair pulled and their arms twisted hard behind their backs - despite the fact that we offered no resistance to arrest and at no stage made any attempt to provoke or confront either the police or the public.

Women had their glasses taken away from them, creating headaches, dizziness and considerable stress. During fingerprinting and photographing women were subjected to verbal harassment. At Central, police made wise-crack remarks like 'I'm going home to rape my wife now'.

[See also Ronalds, C. "Anzac Day and the Aftermath, Legal Service Bulletin, Vol.8, No. 3, June 1983, pp.133-134]

The initial prosecution under S.5. O.P.P. Act. ("serious alarm and affront") was dismissed by a magistrate and the police appeal against the magistrates decision was dismissed in April 1984. An application that the remaining 160 cases be dropped has been made to the Commissioner of Police.

Again in 1984 the N.S.W. Supreme Court granted an order, on application by the Commissioner of Police prohibiting a S.W.A.R.C. march. This time 400 women marched successfully to the war memorial via a different route from the main March. There were no arrests.