Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0819

Cameron, Annette

(1920 - 2008)

Born	19200106, Middle Swan Western Australia Australia
Died	20080125, Redcliffe Western Australia Australia
Occupation	Feminist, Political activist, Political candidate, social activist

Summary

Annette Cameron was born in Middle Swan WA in 1920. Her interest in politics was sparked by the Spanish Civil War, prompting her to join the Modern Women's Club, the Anti-Fascist League, and, in 1941, the Communist Party. She was an active campaigner for peace, human rights, and Aboriginal causes.

Details

Annette Elizabeth Moore was born in 1920 in Middle Swan, Western Australia. Her family had helped develop the area; her great-grandfather's brother, George Fletcher Moore, had arrived from Ireland in 1830 and obtained a grant, which he called Millendon, on the Upper Swan. Annette's grandfather, William Dalgety Moore, had represented Fremantle in the colony's Legislative Council from August 1870 to May 1872, and in 1890-94 was a nominee in the first Legislative Council.
Annette was educated in Perth, and gained a reputation as a rebel while attending St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls. Her interest in politics was aroused by the Spanish Civil War, and after attending meetings of the Modern Women's Club and joining the Anti-Fascist League, Cameron became a member of the Communist Party of Australia in 1941. She then moved to Sydney, worked in the Party offices, and began what was to be a lifelong friendship with Katharine Susannah Prichard. She was jailed for a short time after her arrest during a campaign supporting Indonesian independence from Dutch colonialism.

Annette moved back to Perth after the war, joining Sam Aarons, who she had met in Sydney. They had a son, Gerald, in 1949. In the late 1950s, when Sam was travelling in China and suffered a heart attack, the Chinese Authorities flew Annette and Gerald to China to be with him during his lengthy recuperation. Banquets were held in their honour, and Annette apparently made a lasting impression on Chairman Mao. According to Perth newspaper *The West Australian*, he was so impressed by her 'beauty and intelligence' that he 'made it clear that a place was waiting for her as his consort.' The Aarons family returned to Australia after about a year, however, and resumed working for the Party. Sam Aarons died in 1971, and Annette later married Duncan Cameron.

Annette Cameron worked in many different capacities for the Communist Party, including painting political slogans and selling *Workers' Star* and *Tribune*. She was also active on a number of committees, attended countless meetings, addressed audiences on the Esplanade, and directed the campaigns of political candidates. She stood as a Communist Party candidate in State elections, for the Senate in 1955 and 1958, and for the House of Representatives in 1966.

In the 1960s, Annette was at the forefront of the Communist Party's anti-Vietnam War marches. At the Vietnam War Moratoriums, which attracted thousands of people, Annette and Duncan became leading activists at large-scale rallies and assisted young men who refused conscription. Annette and Duncan also campaigned actively for Aboriginal rights.
Annette Cameron suffered from multiple sclerosis for thirty-five years, making the years following the death of Duncan in 2005 particularly difficult. She died at the age of eighty-eight in 2008.

Published resources

Finding Aid
Well read : a bibliography of Communist Party & other sources collected in Western Australia by Annette and Duncan Cameron, Bosworth, Michal, 1997

Book
The first furrow, Williams, Justina, 1976

An Index to Parliamentary Candidates in Western Australian Elections 1890-1989, Black, David, 1989

Newspaper Article
Mao took shine to Perth 'red' activist, Mendez, Torrance, 2008

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Western Australia
Records, 1938-1973 [manuscript]

Cameron collection, 1919-1995 [manuscript]

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