

Engrossing read in new edition of Clift's essays

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Page 17 | Section: OPINION

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SNEAKY LITTLE REVOLUTIONS

Author: Charmian Clift ed. Nadia Wheatley

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Reviewer: Mary Ann Elliott

SELECTED Essays by Charmian Clift is a new edition of Clift's powerful essays, selected and edited by her biographer Nadia Wheatley.

Clift was a pioneer in progressive opinions and wrote through the turbulent and transformative

years of the 1960s, speaking out for women's and migrants' rights, Indigenous justice and so much more that is still relevant today.

After Clift and her writer husband George Johnston returned to Sydney after 15 years on the Greek island community of Hydra, she wrote copiously, immersing herself in events of the turbulent sixties.

Imagine a time when there was no internet, no email, and no social media.

A patriarchal autocrat, Robert Menzies, was Prime Minister for more than 15

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strong views and challenging a complacent society, at a time when women were viewed as second-class citizens.

But as she says, nothing

was ever accomplished by inaction or resignation.

Full of wit and humour, and much wisdom, these essays are not only a fascinating window into the sixties; Clift also offers many delightful vignettes on her own experiences as a homecoming 'migrant', travelling in the magnificent Red Centre, and living alone as an 'empty-nester'.

Her perceptive, luminous observations, highlighting both the political and the personal, are an engrossing read.

