

SPECIAL
DOUBLE ISSUE

Connexions

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Forum '85 Nairobi, Kenya



D. ARMSTRONG

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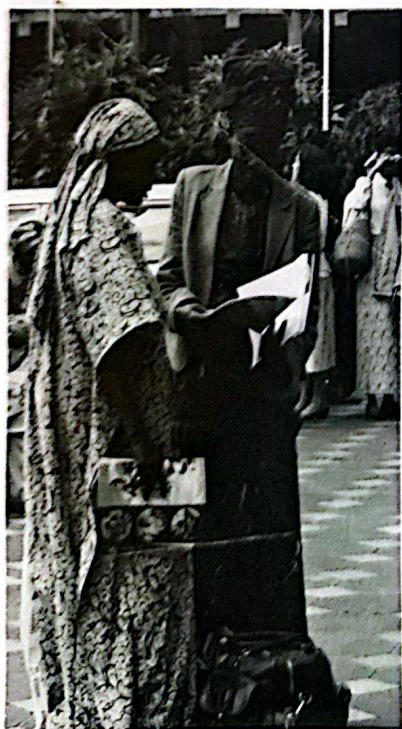
Connexions is the collective product of femin-
ists of diverse nationalities and political perspectives
committed to contributing to an international women's
movement.

We want to go beyond merely providing facts
and information, and hope that by passing on—as
directly as possible—women's writing generally unavail-
able in the U.S., we will be helping women here to
understand and connect with the experiences and
viewpoints of women in other parts of the world. We
also want to contribute to the growth of a worldwide
network connecting women working on similar projects
by researching, establishing contacts and exchanging
information with other women's organizations.

To a large extent, the economic and political
conditions under which we live determine the issues to
which we give priority. Women do not live in a
vacuum, but in what is still largely a man's world. It is
essential for us to understand the working of that world
if we are to understand each other. We hope that *Con-
nexions* will be one step toward building an interna-
tional women's movement.

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CARMEN VAZQUEZ

Participants continue their discussion on the Great Court at Forum '85.

The Women's Decade

The UN Decade for Women has come and gone and one could debate endlessly on what women have gained. In quantitative terms women's status has not significantly improved—in fact, in many cases it has worsened due, in part, to the growing economic crisis. But other changes have occurred that may very well have positive repercussions, though they cannot be easily measured and may not be fully recognized for years to come.

The limited media attention that the Decade received has left most of the world's women unaware that ten years have passed in their honor. Among women who have received some benefits as a result of the Decade, it is likely that many do not realize from where they have come.

Discussions of having a UN conference on women began in 1972. In light of the growing international women's movement, the UN was prompted to declare 1975 International Women's Year and call a world conference to be held in Mexico City in June of that year. Thirteen hundred official delegates from 133 nations met to work on the World Plan of Action, a ten-year program which provided guidelines for governments to promote women's full integration into society. With the unanimous adoption of the World Plan of Action, the next ten years were established as the UN Decade for Women with its goals to be Equality, Development and Peace.

While the UN delegates were working out their political differences, close to 6,000 women representing a variety of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world were hashing out a broad array of political, economic and cultural arguments at an alternative conference called the Tribune. Although NGO conferences are often held parallel to UN conferences as a means of offering viewpoints often neglected by government representatives, the Tribune was the first time that NGO participants outnumbered UN delegates.

NGOs are groups or individuals with interests in any issue in which the UN is involved. Their influence on UN policy varies as do the political affiliations of individuals and the concerns of the groups themselves. NGOs range

in size from small grassroots groups to well-funded international giants which have formed for a variety of purposes, many having to do with social change.

Although they are not officially part of any government body, some NGOs receive funding and direction to carry out programs that governments are concerned with, especially in the areas of development and world population. Others must operate exclusively on funds that they have raised themselves. Officially registered NGOs gain observer privileges at UN meetings as well as rights to lobby UN delegates. During the Decade, many NGOs formed with the intent of implementing some of the recommendations that came out of the first women's conference in Mexico City.

Participation in NGO conferences is open to all who can hurdle the economic and political barriers which, over the Decade, stopped untold numbers of women from attending. That certain Palestinian women living in Israel's Occupied Territories and Black South African women were denied exit visas became general knowledge at Forum '85. But how many others have we not heard about?

In Mexico City, political controversies riddled both NGO and UN conferences as the divergent priorities of industrialized and Third World nations became apparent. Such subjects as the need to redistribute the world's wealth and power as a prerequisite for the improvement of the status of women, the condemnation of imperialism and the equating of Zionism with racism created many heated debates and set the stage for future conferences. In particular, the bugaboo of equating Zionism with racism has obsessed the US delegation as well as NGO participants and become the darling of international media. At the end of the UN Conference, the priorities and the political perspectives of the Third World were summarized in a 12-page paper known as the Declaration of Mexico, which the United States did not sign.

Western-centered feminist ideology received a cool reception at the Tribune. Global issues such as the relationship of women's poverty to development and the glo-

bal economy, and the importance of incorporating into feminist ideology an understanding of anti-imperialism and national liberation struggles were introduced by Third World women.

For many Western women, the Tribune was dubbed a consciousness-raising experience. For Third World women it was an opportunity to reject a Western-biased feminism that did not include or address their needs. It was in Mexico that the incredibly diverse situations in which women live were first shared and that the term "women's issues" began to be more broadly defined.

FIVE YEARS LATER—COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

As part of the World Plan of Action, a mid-decade conference was to be convened in 1980 to review and evaluate the progress made. Quantifying women's oppression was one of the tasks the Decade delineated in Mexico City. With statistics in hand, governments were forced to acknowledge what women already knew—that women are one half of the world's population, do two-thirds of the work, earn one-tenth of the income and only own one-hundredth of the land.

Many governments responded to these dismal findings by adopting more favorable legislation toward women, establishing women's bureaus and welfare organizations, funding research groups to further measure and study women's status and reserving a limited number of governmental positions for women. For the most part, these are cosmetic changes and many will evaporate with the close of the Decade when funds will be moved to the latest UN designated theme. But in some countries, these UN-sanctioned beginnings have provided women with an avenue to do work that previously would not have been permitted or considered legitimate.

The statistics gathered in attempting to document women's status revealed that of the 16 million refugees accounted for in 1980, the majority were women, many of whom were widowed or heads of households. Copenhagen was the first international forum where the situation of women refugees was addressed, and it was there that the UN was pressured to develop specific aid and education programs for them.

Meanwhile, the NGO parallel conference, this time called the Forum, attracted over 8,000 participants, with approximately 41% coming from Denmark. Whereas Mexico City provided the setting for women from around the world to present their ideas and their differences for the first time in an international conference, Copenhagen became the place where the differences became unmanageable, resulting in frequent clashes.



A media workshop at the Copenhagen Forum '89

Many Western women came believing they had the answers to all women's oppression, while Third World women pointed out that Westerners shouldn't be so quick to label the oppression of others. The issue of female circumcision was a major example of this trend. The preoccupation of many Western women with this topic was considered, at best, inappropriate by women living in countries where it is practiced. Some perceived this Western obsession as a cultural assault and an indication that some Western women were overlooking both their own role in the oppression of the Third World and the oppressive circumstances that exist in their own countries.

The conflict in the Middle East again took on special significance at the Forum and divided many participants. In comparison to Mexico City, things had only gotten worse. Discussions revolving around the Palestinian/Israeli conflict permeated all areas of the Forum, while at the UN Conference, they again battled it out over the Zionism is racism equation. At the closing session, the World Programme of Action was passed by an overwhelming majority, although the US cast one of the four "no" votes in part due to the inclusion of Zionism.

Networking and women's media also received particular attention at the Copenhagen Forum. There were a number of workshops devoted to the need for communication systems and how they can be developed with limited resources. The discussions were filled with controversy over the questions of who would control it and how the North-to-South media dominance would be checked. The proposal for an international women's news service that would provide news about women and be produced by women from around the world received a lot of enthusiastic support.

Despite the fact that the Forum itself was stricken with communication problems, a lot of networking efforts were initiated. This is perhaps one of the more vital and positive aspects of the entire Decade. Through women's media networks and through private exchanges, women have become increasingly informed about what women around the world are doing. This exchange promotes communication among women engaged in similar projects and is a beginning for an international support network.

THE END OF A DECADE

Out of Copenhagen came the decision to hold an End of Decade Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the Decade for Women in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985. As 1985 drew nearer, knowledge and interest in the Decade for Women began to increase. Many of the NGOs that attended the Copenhagen events were determined to make Nairobi an environment for dialogue. Forum '85, which began five days before the UN Conference, ran from July 10-19 and attracted over 13,000 NGO participants. About 3,000 delegates attended the UN Conference which continued for a week after Forum '85 ended. Despite the usual controversies stemming from the expected split between Third World nations and the West, a general tone of compromise pervaded the UN Conference. They had gathered to put the finishing touches on the Forward Looking Strategies, proposals for implementation of the conditions, programs or policies that would affect women's status through the year 2000.

The Conference was preceded by a mandate from the United States and its supporters that both the UN and the NGO conferences better keep to those so-called women's issues if the UN wanted to see the US stick around. The



One of the entrances to the University of Nairobi, site of Forum '85

IRIS WESTERMAN

push by the US to have all resolutions passed by consensus, so that they could have the power to veto anything they deemed undesirable, was not successful. But they did get their way in excluding the mention of Zionism in Paragraph 95 of the Forward Looking Strategies. This concession, made by the majority of the UN member states, was done so that the formulation of a final set of guidelines and recommendations could proceed.

Because the two Nairobi conferences only overlapped by a few days, there was less interaction between the two than at previous conferences. Another reason why contact was at a minimum was because public demonstrations were not permitted, thereby squelching any spontaneous reactions by the NGO participants toward decisions made at the UN Conference. However, one of the more important statements at the UN Conference was made by African National Congress (ANC) representatives attending the Forum. On the first day of the UN Conference, the ANC occupied the seats of the South African delegates, who had decided not to participate. On the second day, the ANC decided not to occupy the seats to demonstrate to the world community that the South African government was absent.

For the most part, the participants of Forum '85 paid little attention to the advice that they stick to "women's issues." However, unlike Copenhagen, the atmosphere surrounding political discussions was of a more accepting tone. A higher percentage of Western women came prepared to listen, rather than to dictate. And despite particularly heated conflicts, there was a desire to take everything one step further now that some of the initial groundwork had been laid. There was a general mood that our differences do not have to divide us, and can at times even be appreciated. Women were prepared to hear about future strategies; where do we go from here. Unfortunately not many came with suggestions, and at times it was difficult to leave behind the safety of rhetoric and information gathering.

But the women who came to Nairobi do not want the work started during the Decade stopped with the closing of the UN Conference. After ten years, women are prepared to work toward an international conference independent of a UN-sanctioned event. Perhaps at that meeting, proposed in five years, women will have developed creative solutions to the problems we face.

Forum '85

The interpretations of what went on at Forum '85 vary as much as the participants who attended. Ten different people could easily describe ten or even 20 different conferences. With this special issue of *Connexions*, we have tried to provide an overview of what went on in Nairobi. Included are transcriptions of workshops, interviews with participants on some of the issues central to the Forum, and documentation that the eight of us who went collected.

The fact that Forum '85 was held in Nairobi, Kenya was significant in terms of the atmosphere and outcome of the conference. The location attracted many women from the Third World as well as an unprecedented number of Afro-American women. For some women attending Forum '85, it was their first visit to a Third World country. Rural Kenyan women also got the opportunity to participate in an international conference which otherwise they could never have afforded to attend and most likely would never have known about. Although it was significant that the Forum was held in an African country, for many African women travel was prohibitively expensive, as it often costs more to travel within the continent than to fly to Europe.

The decision to hold the End of the Decade conferences in Nairobi was made in 1980 when the Kenyan government, with the interest of becoming a major stop on the international conference circuit, offered to host the event. But over the years and one attempted coup later (August 1982), the government began to reconsider having thousands of outspoken women besiege the city and harass UN government representatives who would be there for the serious business of setting policy for half the world's population.

In the end both conferences were held in Nairobi, but unlike the Mexico City and Copenhagen conferences during which both meetings took place concurrently, the Nairobi Conferences overlapped by only five days. This meant that most of the NGO participants had left a week before the UN's more heated discussions took place and the final resolutions were passed. Although it is hard to evaluate how much influence NGOs have on government policy, their activities are of concern to those whose interests lie in maintaining the status quo.

In the United States, the Heritage Foundation, a right-wing think tank with growing influence on the Reagan Administration, was concerned enough to issue a report in February 1985 entitled "A US Policy for the UN Conference on Women." In it they accuse NGOs of being dominated by the "most extremist and anti-American members" and point out the increasingly important roles played by NGOs in the UN system. The Heritage Foundation urged against the "intrusion of extraneous political issues"—especially apartheid, colonialism, Zionism and the New International Economic Order. They strongly recommended that the two conferences not take place simultaneously and suggested restricting visas and using the "lack of hotel space" as an excuse for holding them at different times.

This document appears to have had some influence as talk began to circulate that there would only be enough room to house the UN delegates in Nairobi. A year or so before the event, mention was made that visa applications for NGO participants would be screened and limited.

Protest

I went to protest against the surveillance of workshop participants by repressive military regimes. For example, in the workshop on West Papua in Thursday night, a male Indonesian photographer took photographs of all participants who spoke in support of the rights of West Papuan women.

This collection of intelligence information was done in a biased and offensive way, but failed to intimidate workshop participants. The practice of sending a team of spies to ask naive questions and present official propaganda is

another technique used in the region and others.

This is a response and a distraction to those who are seeking genuine dialogue and real solutions to women's problems. A more sinister practice is the use of representatives of oppressed minorities to speak against their own people.

In the West Papua workshop, one young West Papuan woman, obviously distressed, read a paper describing her country women as "retard" people. Another West Papuan woman was introduced as an Indonesian "member of Parliament" for Irian Jaya (West Papua) but was unable to answer questions

without information from her Indonesian companions.

Both of these women were prevented from talking with colleagues. West Papuan women and men instead got off to the Indonesian "official party" before the end of the workshop. It is most regrettable that the meeting of the world's women in Vienna '85 should be plagued by political surveillance and coercion, but such events serve to remind us that we are a real threat to the forces of global violence and destruction and are dealing with matters of life and death.

Wendy Pousgaard,
Australia

Letter to the editor, Forum '85, July 23, 1985.

Rumor had it that radicals and lesbians would be denied entry. This, in fact, did not occur, although the International Lesbian Information Service was asked on the first day of the Forum to remove their literature from the lawn of the University, the site of the Forum. No clear explanation was ever offered as to why the two conferences could not run simultaneously. There were claims that there were not enough beds to go around, but then how did they manage during the five-day overlap?

To prepare for the thousands of guests and the onslaught of media, Nairobi was transformed: the streets were swept clean of vendors, beggars and prostitutes, some "finding" temporary quarters in mental institutions and prisons. Plagued with a high crime rate, the city took precautionary measures by bringing in 1,000 patrols. One would often see three patrolmen on a city street, armed with weapons ranging from baseball bats and night sticks to guns.

The daily papers ran editorials recommending that citizens be kind and courteous to the delegates and that men should consider adopting the role of hostess for the duration of the conferences. Kenyan women participating at the Forum were advised to assist in keeping it limited to "women's issues" and to steer clear of such controversial subjects as imperialism and neo-colonialism which, according to the *Kenyan Weekly Review*, "are standard ritual with the most radical delegates."

Upon arrival, many women were greeted with doubled hotel rates. Then, just as everyone was adjusting to the rigors of choosing from over 100 workshops a day, those women lodged in Nairobi's most expensive hotels discovered eviction notices in their boxes. They were to be cleared out to make room for the arriving UN delegates. Some women protested this injustice by refusing to leave. The Forum convener, Dame Nita Barrow, tried to mollify the evictees by reminding them that "many of our sisters throughout the world have no beds at all." In the end, some solutions were found: either women moved to dormitory lodging situated a half-hour and a ten dollar cab ride from the Forum site or they got individual hotels to agree to allow them to triple and quadruple up.

It is hard to believe that such poor planning was purely accidental. More people did attend both conferences than originally expected, but it is difficult to forget the Heritage Foundation recommendations in their policy report that housing problems be used as a means of disrupting the Forum. The confusion that ensued due to the evictions did disrupt people's participation in the Forum for a few days, absorbing their attention and energy.

Confusion and complications were at a premium. The simple task of providing maps of the various workshop sites around the city seemed to have eluded the organizers. Then, on the first day of the Forum, the 13,000 participants were introduced to the "security" system. Although prior to the Forum people roamed in and out of the University, entrance then became restricted to two locations. Bag-checking security guards with metal detectors went through everyone's personal belongings. Besides delaying everything (getting 13,000 people through two entrances takes time) and harassing people, the perfunctory manner in which searches were conducted offered little in the way of providing security.

That it is so easy to seal off the University is an interesting fact in itself. Located right next to the police station, the University has been a center of criticism toward Kenya's single ruling party. The most recent confrontation between students and government took place in the beginning of 1985 and resulted in the murder of 12 students during a peaceful prayer gathering in the Sports Field—the site of the Tech & Tools exhibit at the Forum. The University was then shut down for several months and reopened shortly before the Forum. The University is a riot-proof structure: doorways are purposefully narrow to prohibit quick passage; the Great Court, a large grassy area located in the center of the buildings, has limited access and is walled in on three sides by low-lying barbed wire decoratively covered with bougainvillea.

But despite many of the inconveniences and the restrictive political atmosphere, Forum participants made the most of the situation. While standing in line for security checks, women took the opportunity to meet other women. Or if one couldn't find a workshop room or the panelists didn't show, or if boredom set in, one could go to the Great Court. It was on the Great Court where some of the most exciting activity of the conference took place. Its size and openness provided a spot conducive to displaying literature, networking, chatting, or simply hanging out. It was here that participants could continue discussions begun in the workshops, or exchange the personal stories that have become so integral to the growth of the women's movement.



Access to the Forum was difficult for reasons other than language. Due to physical barriers, participants in wheelchairs were restricted from most of the workshops. No attempt was made to modify the basically wheelchair inaccessible University. At their first workshop, a group of disabled women drew up a series of suggestions on how to improve access to the Forum, and how to plan future conferences with disabled women in mind. They presented these suggestions to the NGO Planning Committee, but there is no evidence that access was improved while they were there.

FORUM '85



Security check at Forum '85

The Great Court provided the best place at the Conference for networking. Since the formal structure of the workshops didn't allow for much sideline activity, women displayed their literature for perusal or purchase there. Flyers were passed out, petitions were signed, posters, magazines and books were sold. The amount of literature available was staggering. (As an example, we at *Connexions* brought home 75 pounds worth.) There was constant movement on the Great Court: women often sang, chanted and danced, sharing the rhythms and movements of their culture and successfully breaking through language barriers.

Since demonstrating outside the walls of the University was legally denied, the Great Court became the only site for planned and impromptu demonstrations. When the film *Leila and the Wolves* was seized, women acted immediately to express their outrage. A rally was held in solidarity with the people of Central America, Ukrainian women held a silent march for their political prisoners, and Filipino women organized a human chain calling for the end to the Marcos dictatorship.

Another indication of the control being exercised over the political activity of the Forum was the censorship of the Filmforum, an international program of more than 160 films and videos. The censorship of films was particularly frustrating for participants who live in countries with their own strict censorship, for this was their only opportunity to see this international assortment of women's films. When the right of the Kenya Censorship Board to censor the Filmforum was challenged, the NGO Organizers responded in a conciliatory manner. We were warned that it was not polite to criticize our hosts.

The *Forum '85* newspaper was very careful to heed this policy. *Forum '85* was published daily by an international all-woman staff of journalists from the beginning of the Forum until the closing of the UN Conference. Published predominantly in English, the newspaper's strength was their feature articles and the daily revised schedule of Forum workshops. Regarding controversial issues, it appeared that *Forum '85* preferred to ignore them. Yet the paper was entrenched in political debate internally. The name and nationality of the news team were listed in the staff box. In the midst of the growing controversy over the conflict in the Middle East, the country of origin of *Forum '85* reporter, Nadia Hijab, was removed, as it was decided that Palestine is not a country. Despite strict government censorship, coverage of the Forum in Nairobi's three English-language dailies was often more gutsy and interesting.

In general, English was the unofficial language of the Forum. If you didn't speak English, participating in

workshops was difficult, since only a few rooms had facilities for simultaneous translation. Otherwise women who were able to translate English would whisper translations into participants' ears.

Within the workshops, an unbridgeable gulf sometimes arose between the panelists and "audience," but some of the liveliest, most heated discussions often ensued there, too. At other times, comments from the floor were disappointing since they consisted of nothing more than worn out political rhetoric or the brandishing of one's pet issues at the expense of exchanging ideas on the specific issue at hand.

Because the Forum was a microcosm of global politics, the attempts to undermine the political nature of the workshops took many forms. In keeping with the "official" US position, women of various nationalities demanded that panelists refrain from discussing "political issues and talk about women." In other cases, government apologists tried to squelch other women's voices. For instance, at a workshop organized by women in exile from East Timor, many of the Indonesian participants, acting in the interests of the military dictatorship, intervened in the discussions and the dissemination of information. [East Timor has been resisting Indonesian domination since its independence from Portugal in 1975.]

Nonetheless, political positions were made clear in many ways in and out of workshops. Hundreds of flyers and informational brochures were distributed throughout the Forum. Petitions were circulated condemning US intervention in Nicaragua, El Salvador and elsewhere; demands were made for the release of political prisoners around the world; and women from countries engaged in national liberation struggles and civil wars, such as South Africa, the Sahara and the Philippines, consistently made their situations known. During one workshop convened by the International Prostitutes Collective on "Prostitutes in Developed and Third World Countries," one participant brought up the fact that prostitutes in Nairobi had been jailed in preparation for the conferences. Immediately, workshop participants decided that the issue warranted action and drew up a petition which was signed by 700 participants.

The University of Nairobi was the site for several projects unique to Forum '85. Because it was held in a developing country, the Forum included exhibits related to appropriate technology and development. Maendeleo Ya Wanawake (Swahili for Progress for Women), the largest Kenyan women's organization, sponsored one of the events that was especially popular with rural women. Not only did it include hands-on activities that had practical application to their lives, but it was one of the few events



that was accessible to Kenyan women who were not fluent in English. Like the Tech & Tools exhibit, an appropriate technology village, the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake event gave rural women something concrete to take home from the Forum.

The Peace Tent, located near the Great Court, was constructed on the first day of the Forum to provide a calm atmosphere in which to discuss potentially volatile issues. The Peace Tent was conceived of and organized by the Feminist International for Food and Peace. Women from Iran and Iraq, Palestinians and Israelis, and US and Soviet women came face to face to share their often opposing viewpoints.

As at the previous conferences, the conflict in the Middle East had a central place, and at times appeared in the most unlikely settings. Although there were attempts at fostering dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis, most of the efforts were undermined by angry words and heated emotions. The over 30 workshops on the region did at times provide new information, but often deteriorated into the usual rhetoric with each side doing a lot of talking but not much listening. Although dialogue did not for the most part happen publicly, women privately were making efforts to work toward acceptable solutions for the conflict in the Middle East.

Religion and religious practice were highly visible at the Forum. Aside from the many workshops with religious content, there were Bible study groups and invitations to worship, mostly from Christian organizations. The Forum was opened and concluded with a prayer session, and an Ecumenical service was organized to "bring to God the goals of the Decade Conference." Many Forum participants were concerned about the rise of religious fundamentalism all around the world. While women in the US are fighting a right-wing backlash masked as Christianity, Pakistani women are organized to halt the repressive social legislation that is cloaked in the guise of Islam. The issue of religious fundamentalism is of particular concern to women living in the world's many theocracies.

The use of religion to control women's lives was one of the major topics of a series of workshops on Third World women and law. Although legislation favorable to women has been introduced in different countries over the Decade, too often women are not informed about their legal rights. One outcome of this series on law was that an international commission of women's rights was established in Nairobi in order to exchange information and coordinate research.

Another exciting development was women's growing efforts in working toward regional strategies despite many

cultural and linguistic differences. Cohesiveness and emphasis on action characterized the workshops that were put on by representatives of Caribbean and Asian coalitions. AWRAN (Asian Women's Research and Action Network), which has been active in formulating regional solutions to dilemmas facing Asian women, prepared a 14-nation alternative report on how women's status has changed during the Decade. Working from a firm foundation in their own countries, women are joining forces with their neighbors.

In general, Forum '85, compared to the previous two conferences, exhibited a different tone and a stronger willingness to accept differences. Although issues like the global economic crisis and the desire for world peace have been prominent themes throughout the Decade, a broader internationalist perspective was adopted in Nairobi. Some of the polarization that has inhibited women from taking steps toward resolving conflicts was diminished. The growing arms race affects the security and well-being of all women. The unequal distribution of wealth which Third World women have had to contend with is now being increasingly felt by women in industrialized countries. This increase in awareness has surpassed the "networking" that occurred in Copenhagen. It is part of a growing understanding that we are all in this together.

In ten years the definition of feminism has broadened dramatically. In Copenhagen the women's movement was marked with explosive divisions. In Nairobi the tensions had eased, partly due to the fact that feminism no longer represents a narrow Western view. Many Third World women now choose to adopt the label of feminist because they have created a definition for it that suits their particular priorities and strategies for change. □

Major international women's media and information networks:

- International Women's Tribune Centre, focuses on women and development and was the major center for disseminating information about NGO activities throughout the UN Decade for Women. Publishers of The Tribune, available in English and Spanish, a women and development quarterly, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017.
- ISIS (International Information and Communication Service), is a major international feminist network. Currently based in Geneva, Rome and Santiago, ISIS publishes Women's World, and Women in Action in English and Mujeres en Accion in Spanish. As well they maintain the International Feminist Network, a communication network to mobilize international support, and the Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (WICCE) program. Isis-WICCE, Box 2471, 1121 Geneva 2, Switzerland. ISIS International, via Santa Maria, ma 30, 00186 Rome, Italy or casilla 2067, correo central, Santiago, Chile.
- For addresses of regional women's media news services see page 23.

Further Reading:

- off our backs, October 1985, includes Forum '85 coverage, 1841 Columbia Road, NW, Room 212, Washington DC 20009.
- WomaNews, September 1985, includes Forum '85 coverage, Box 220, Village Station, NY 10014.
- Women's Studies International Forum, an international evaluation of the UN Decade for Women, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1985, Pergamon Press, Fairview Park, Elmsford, NY 10523.
- Plexus, September 1985, includes Forum '85 coverage, 545 Athol Ave., Oakland, CA 94606.
- "A Historic Gathering: Women of the World Meet in Kenya," Ebony, October 1985.
- Africa Report, special issue evaluating the UN Decade, March-April 1985, Vol. 30, No. 2, TPC, Dept. 8010, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NY 08903.
- Heritage Foundation's "A US Policy for the UN Conference on Women," copies available from Connexions, \$2.

Contact:

- United Nations, Public Inquiries Unit, Rm. GA-57, New York, NY 10017 for UN documentation such as the Forward Looking Strategies established at the UN Conference in Nairobi.



Things Have Changed

Claudia Hinojosa at the lesbian press conference

While in Nairobi, *Connexions* interviewed Claudia Hinojosa who is currently involved in feminist radio programming in Mexico City and is a founding member of *fem*, a feminist Mexican magazine. Because she attended both the 1980 Copenhagen Forum and Forum '85 in Nairobi, *Connexions* asked Hinojosa to discuss her impressions of both meetings.

Q: How would you compare the Decade conferences?

A: First, let me tell you that I didn't attend the Mexico City Conference, which might come as a surprise since I'm Mexican, but in 1975 feminist groups were still quite new in Mexico. When I heard there was going to be a women's conference sponsored by the government, I thought it would only be a lot of rhetoric and a very official thing. At that time I wasn't very well informed about feminist groups. In general, the Conference was trivialized and sensationalized by the media—one of the highlighted scandals was the lesbians speaking out. I regretted having missed that part.

By 1980, I had been in a feminist group for three years. We raised money and I was able to go to Copenhagen. The Conference made a big impression on me because it was the first time I was in a women's conference of that size, and I wanted to listen to everything which, of course, was impossible. The difference for me in Nairobi is that I know how things work now and I've made my own program based on my interests, so everything seems less chaotic. I think I also understand feminism and what is happening in the world a bit better.

In terms of the press, I don't think that Copenhagen was covered any better than Mexico. Currently an international comparative study on the coverage of this Conference is being conducted in order to assess the media's depiction of the women's movement. The way these last two Conferences have been trivialized and sensationalized just shows that old, male inability to deal with women's role in politics and to put women's issues on the global agenda.

In relation to the continuity of the three Conferences, it was in Mexico that the problem was defined. Women's oppression is something that happens in different ways all over the world, and it has to be discussed on an international level—governments have to deal with it. On another level, the Mexico Conference was the first time that there was an international conference on women's issues, so I don't think there was very much understanding about what this meant. And I don't think it was taken seriously by the public, by the media or even by many women.

During the Copenhagen Conference, more information about women was available, and some strategies were being discussed in relation to institutions and programs. And today, as a woman from the UN said, the challenge is implementation. There has been so much rhetoric already. Forum participants,

feminist groups, and even many of the government delegates are no longer willing to listen to rhetoric without having some proof of the efforts to implement strategies that promote women's development in our different countries.

Q: Are you referring to the Forum or to the official UN Conference?

A: They are not separate; I am referring to both. Many delegates speak for their governments and don't bring up what we call women's issues. At Copenhagen, there was an avoidance of what we call "women's issues" by talking about world politics but from a male perspective. Today, the world political situation is so tense that governments are avoiding talking about what they call politics. They're willing to talk about women's issues, such as illiteracy, sexual violence against women, and so on, to avoid major political issues.

Ironically this is happening while feminists and NGOs are becoming more aware that all issues are women's issues. I think in the last five years there has been a shift away from what we labeled women's issues toward a call for the legitimization of gender as a tool for analysis. A few years ago, what constituted women's issues was narrowly defined because there was a need to bring up the things which nobody had dealt with publicly before. This was a hard struggle, but now, as Third World feminism has been growing over the last five years, I think that we've learned that women's oppression and women's liberation is not one but many things, and that all issues are women's issues.

A woman from the UN said that to talk about women's liberation today, one must talk about inflation, the foreign debt of Third World countries, increasing interest rates and so on. You have to see the linkage between women's status and how the world economic crisis is affecting them. You cannot talk about women's liberation or development if you don't address those matters. Governments, especially the US government, haven't been willing to deal with this. It was Maureen Reagan who said, okay, we'll speak about politics, but only in those cases where it concerns women. More and more, women are pointing out that to speak about national liberation, pacifism or new alternatives to development, we have to deal with feminism.

I think this comes partly as a result of the world's current political situation, of the networking that women have done since 1980 until now, and of the incorporation of very diverse types of women into the feminist movement that has expanded the scope of what women's struggle and liberation is.

I think there is a much greater sensitivity to differences in Nairobi than in Copenhagen. The voices of Third World women, women of color and working class women have been integrated into a feminist discourse. It has inevitably made women more sensitive to differences in women's experiences, and also much more sensitive to the need to learn to struggle and to accept diversity.



Forum '80, Copenhagen.

For me, it was very important to discover in Nairobi that my feeling that so little has changed is untrue. But just look at the number of Third World feminists that I can speak with today. This to me is enormous progress for the feminist movement. In many countries, feminists who have been very active in recent years sometimes feel that this revolution hasn't happened even though we have worked so hard for it. But if you look at how few years it's been in comparison to centuries of oppression and feminism's enormous task of wanting to change mentalities, institutions, patriarchy...I mean, you can't do that in only 20 years. So, I think one of our challenges today is to over-

come this impatience we feel and the disillusionment that comes from it.

There is an American feminist, Linda Gordon, who says we have to know very well what we've won and what we've lost and not go away with the idea that nothing has changed, because societies all over the world have been changing in very important ways. In my country, for example, the concept and the cultural integrity of "machismo" is undergoing very interesting transformations. "Macho" used to be a compliment for men, but it is becoming a word that makes them uncomfortable. I think this is the outcome of the ideological work feminists have done. Still, Mexican law imposes a harsher punishment for the theft of a cow than for the rape of a woman, and abortion will probably remain illegal for several more years. And then there is the enormous work and survival problems that most Mexican women face daily. But the fact of the matter is that every day there are more cases of women denouncing rapists—something that wasn't ever dealt with or spoken of before. And women who get an abortion no longer feel as much guilt.

At the Forum I met women from other countries who talked to me about how women's organizations have grown and how public discussion is being undertaken by feminists in their societies. It is very important to place our achievement in an historical perspective, and I feel I can do that better now than five years ago.

Q: What do you see as the major topics of the last two Conferences and how that reflects the changes?

A: For me that is a difficult question, because as I told you, in Copenhagen I was overwhelmed by the number of topics and issues. There was ecology, peace, technology, development, equality...I think I absorbed it in a very positive way but I don't think I have the mental order now to say what the principle issues and topics were at the Copenhagen Conference.

What I see today, in general, is that economic issues are growing in importance for women. At the same time, it is very important to avoid the argument that today economic issues are more important than those specific issues that we once rallied around. I think that survival issues, which are the ones that we're dealing with today, have always been women's issues, but there hasn't been a feminist or women's perspective on those issues.

Take, for example, the discussion of integrating women into development. After all the programs that have been designed, women have actually been integrated into development. As one woman said, we have been too integrated: we work



On the Great Court at Forum '85.

FLORENCE GARDINER

too much and we don't get benefits. Strategies have to be made so that this so-called development process gets more resources and benefits to women, and so that it doesn't only represent an extra workload. What we have now in front of us is a challenge to bring our feminist perspective to these vital economic issues.

I tell you, I have learned so many things from so many women. It is true that economic issues have been growing increasingly important for women. But also, more and more women are asking if the right to have a satisfactory sex life is only the right of women who have enough food and money or if it is a basic priority for all women. So, I think there is a new discussion about priorities. I do think making lists of everything is a male tendency, but why not make an integral, multiple proposition of what our liberation is? That has been something I think we are doing today that we did not do in Copenhagen.

Q: There's a new trend toward regionalism among Caribbean and Asian women. Is this happening among Latin American women as well?

A: This awareness of regions is a new development since Copenhagen. But I think Latin America has been the least cohesive Third World region up to now. Actually, I think that after seeing the cohesion of the others, we realized the need to get together. We have gotten together [three feminist Meetings have taken place in Latin America in which hundreds of women have participated], but we have not begun to do the type of work that African or Asian women are doing.

The Asian women, for example, brought an alternative report on their region to the Forum, which we didn't, of course. For us in Latin America, it is still a challenge for women to produce such a report. Up to now, there have been lots of regional strategies, but proposed by governments. Feminist and women's regional analysis and strategies still haven't emerged. Probably it's because feminism is a rather new phenomenon.

Q: The political situation in Kenya is considerably more repressive than it is in Denmark. How has that affected the structure of the Conference? Do you feel that there were differences?

A: I know that Kenya was hesitant about having the NGOs here. To be honest I couldn't analyze how this has changed the Conference. Well, there is one point which has touched me directly—the issue of lesbianism. Male homosexuality is illegal in



Forum '80, Copenhagen.

JULIE JESSEN-PETERSON



CHRISTOPHER CHESOLI

At Forum '85, Nairobi.

Kenya. Since the Kenyan law is a heritage from the British, lesbianism is completely overlooked. Ironically, it is the assumption of the nonexistence of women's sexuality that enabled us to speak about women's sexuality here in Nairobi.

This is not to say we felt completely uninhibited. For example, we wanted to have a panel open to everyone to speak about lesbianism, and we hesitated; in fact we didn't do it. Instead, we held small informal talks on the lawn with people who were interested because we were afraid that people would be sent in to disrupt the session.

On the other hand, yesterday I was at the UN Conference where the Dutch delegate spoke about lesbianism for the first time in the history of the UN. She not only said the word but aligned lesbian rights with the whole struggle for women's liberation. It wasn't just a token mention; it was a feminist analysis of what women's rights to sexuality are and why lesbians are included in this.

Q: And in Copenhagen, how was the issue of lesbianism dealt with?

A: There were two or three workshops, but it wasn't considered an important issue. I don't think it was, but even here at this conference I heard lesbians from Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Peru speak, which I didn't in Copenhagen. In fact, I remember, in Copenhagen I think I was the only Third World lesbian who spoke, and today there were so many more. I am very happy that despite the repressive situation in Nairobi, the issue of lesbianism was addressed more extensively here than in Copenhagen.

Q: You were saying that at this conference the main focus was implementation, but do you think there was a move forward in this implementation? What do you see as the next step?

A: Well, it's very hard to say just now. What I did feel is that in the UN Conference, even many official delegates are fed up with rhetoric. Too many years have passed and too much said and nothing done, so it's not so easy to continue doing the same.

And in the NGO Forum I felt that as women, every day we are more resistant to talk about abstractions and rhetoric. We won't take it any more. We want to listen to concrete proposals and new ways of analyzing. It's not that we've turned to pragmatism but I think this complacency with rhetoric and only rhetoric is less each day. There is an increasing eagerness to listen to strategies, actions and concrete proposals. And that is a shift from five years ago. Let's wait for some more years to see what implementation means. □

(The following interview conducted by *Connexions* is with Kaveta Adagala, a professor at the University of Nairobi.)

Q: How did Nairobi come to host the NGO? Can you give us some background about Kenya's participation in the Decade for Women?

A: The history of Kenya's participation in the NGO Forum has been sparse. People attended the UN conferences in Mexico City and in Copenhagen, but there are no official reports. Apparently the Kenyan women who went to Copenhagen sided with the Israeli, South African and US delegations against discussing the issue of apartheid.

Q: Are you speaking about the official delegation or NGO participants?

A: I think it was both. They didn't want apartheid or the Palestinian issue discussed because they didn't want politics brought into the women's question and the Decade. This is one of the reasons why Kenya was chosen as a venue for the Conference. Kenya accepted for the prestige of it.

About two years ago, they started to prepare for the Conference and think about Kenyan women's participation. A meeting took place to determine who would lead the NGO. In my view, the rightful person would have been Wangari Maathai, the chairwoman of the National Council of Women, an umbrella for all the women's associations. She is also involved in environmental issues and has engaged in grassroots activities to combat the adverse environmental assaults by so-called development activities.

Even though she is the best candidate, Maathai was not selected. She is a rebellious and powerful woman. In the process of her divorce, she was jailed for contempt of court because she had accused the court of being corrupt and collaborating with her husband. It was decided that a divorced woman, accused publicly of adultery, cannot be the representative for Kenyan women. When I found this out I was livid. I thought, okay, let's take count, who has not committed adultery? As a single parent, I thought, what is this, why can't she represent Kenyan women?

The Women's Bureau, the official governmental section set up as a result of the UN Decade, decided on Eddah Gachukia as chairwoman of the NGO Organizing Committee. Gachukia chose her friends to be members of the committee, and she made these selections with a tribal bias.

Most of the official organizers were urban-based, the wives of rich and prominent men. Sub-committees were organized to formulate workshops and report on the status of Kenyan women on various subjects: food and agriculture, peace, media. A planning meeting was held last August [1984] to discuss the issues. In actuality, however, many of the committee members that went learned about the Decade and the NGO Forum for the first time.

Statements were made there which upset the whole nation. One of them was that prostitution should be legalized because it's an income earning activity for women. Another one was that women should have 50% of everything, specifically 50% of the cabinet posts. Also there was a hastily written paper presented to President Moi and when he read it, he was livid. The committee members then retracted the paper and dissociated themselves from it, explaining that these recommendations came from the floor. Actually, we don't know all that was in that paper, since it was never released.

Most of the women who knew about the UN Women's Decade were academicians, yet most were excluded from much of the preparation. The problem was how to involve local women, since they had little knowledge of the Decade. If this Conference had taken place somewhere else, Kenyan women wouldn't have known about it, as in 1975 and 1980. The UN delegation that went in 1980 was led by a man, the Minister of Culture and Social Services.

When the Kenyan UN delegation went to the regional meeting in Tanzania last September [1984] in preparation for the Conference in Nairobi, it was once again led by a man. The ECA (Economic Commission of Africa) regent said that this is



Kenyan women at Forum '85.

ridiculous. The entire African region hit the ceiling. This is the president of the Conference? Don't you have any prominent women who can head the delegation? We will not have this kind of shameful thing happening. All of the countries represented had a country report to submit, except for Kenya, which had no documentation or stand.

The Kenyan government was forced to see that there was no justification for having a man lead the delegation, so they appointed Margaret Kenyatta, the daughter of Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first president after independence. She was also mayor of Nairobi and a politician in her own right. With her presence, preparation for the Conference gained some sanity. The infighting diminished. However, the whole situation was still chaotic. Time was short, and Kenyatta knew little of the NGO's history and context. But she was willing to do the work and so plans did move ahead.

Although research for Kenya's country report began two years ago, the project was shelved until just a few months ago. Some of the officials in charge didn't think that this women's affair was a serious thing. The proposal sat in someone's drawer for two years. Then last spring it was realized that this research was indeed necessary, however, by that time, none of us had the resources to carry it out. We worked like mad.

Rockefeller Foundation funds of US\$50,000 were channeled through the University for research purposes. In the meantime the country report was written. It was rejected by the all-

male cabinet who labeled it inadequate. None of this was public. The rewriting of the report and its resubmission was all done quietly, but information was leaking. With the rejection of this paper came President Moi's announcement that he wanted rural women to speak for themselves. When I saw his announcement on the television, I thought he was quoting from my own work. He said that rural women are never asked or consulted directly.

As far as preparation for rural women goes, there was a lot of talk about what women's groups were doing, but actually no one told women that there was a Decade going on. Three weeks before the Forum took place, Moi suddenly announced that the representative for rural women was Maendeleo ya Wanawake [Progress of Women. This is Kenya's largest grassroots women's organization with a membership of around 300,000 women from all parts of the country] and the NGO Organizing Committee was deflated. By the time this occurred, there was very little time for preparations. Maendeleo ya Wanawake organized the hands-on workshops which were about health, water, birth control and regional craft production. But there was no theoretical framework.

Some rural women came to the Forum to participate in the workshops. The NGO committee itself brought women from the countryside. As the university students you met told you, it was for show. These women had incredible accommodation problems. Even before this some of us had asked the hospitality committee whether they were preparing for the rural women. Where will they stay? They talked about the possibility of a hotel or one of the residence halls on the campus, but they weren't going to do that because they could make good money on the halls. If there were arrangements, they were inadequate. At the closing of the Forum, many women were stuck and couldn't afford transport home.

During the Forum, they were walking around lost. Even I was lost and I've been on this campus for 10 years. Some of the women had been told that the Forum would be held in Kiswahili. Finally there was an announcement that there were some workshop rooms with translation facilities, but then no one told them where these halls are located.

The rural women weren't at all prepared for this Conference. Some of them simply didn't know what they were participating in. They were sent from rural organizations and then they have to go home and report on the Forum. But how? They genuinely came with the intention of being a participant, but they could not because they weren't prepared. If they had been prepared, they would have come with information, posters from their groups.

Q: The Forum was held at the University, but it seemed that few students took part.

A: About three weeks before the Forum, when preparations started being made—the place was being painted and all that—some women students asked me, "Should we not be participating?" I replied that they should and perhaps they could form a temporary organization and ask the NGO officials to address them. In the end this is what happened: The NGO officials came and showed them pictures of the Copenhagen Conference, of Kenyan woman, and so on. No analysis, not even accurate reporting. And most amazing of all is that they were addressing the male students and explaining to them that there is nothing to be afraid of. And they were not addressing the women. They were telling the men students that this doesn't mean that your girlfriend will now demand this and that. It was ridiculous. And so the women students were only told that their services were needed as guides. They were never informed about participating in workshops, just as workers. And there is no student who doesn't need a job.

Q: What effect do you think the Conference will have on the campus or on the city of Nairobi?

A: I think because of the seriousness of the Conference, and its political orientation, those who are around now [many students had gone home for the summer break] have taken a serious view of women. And I think that the women who came here, brilliant women, confident women, women who are involved in struggles, will have a lot of impact on the city. □

Further Readings:

- For more information on Wangari Mathai, see "Expanding the Greenbelt," *Connexions* #15, Winter 1985.
- "Kenyan Women in Politics," *Spare Rib*, August 1985.
- "The Kenyan Women and Situation and Strategies for Improvement" by Mumbi Gakuo, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1985.



Checking the Forum bulletin boards.

IRIS WESSELMANN

Payment for Kenyan women

We are two resource people working with the NGO Planning Committee, living in Mary's Hall in Nairobi University, and we have recently discovered a situation which angers us.

The Kenyan women responsible for cleaning our rooms, scrubbing the floors, bath-tubs and toilets, from approximately 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. have not yet been paid for their work. Yet they have been working here for over a week. To make matters worse though they were originally promised 100/- per day (a little more than US\$6.00), today they're being told they will only be paid 30/- (a little more than US\$1.00) per day!

In other words their labour has decreased in value in the time we have been here. We cannot tolerate this situation. These rooms are paying at least US\$17.00 per day and full meals sometimes cost us 70/- per day. Where is the women's pay?

We urge the NGO Planning Committee and all delegates to look into this situation and pressure for the full payment promised the women (100/- per day if not more). This is a slap in the face for all of us and for the women of Kenya.

Lourdes Garcia,
Esmeralda Brown.

FORUM '85 JULY 22, 1985

(Ed. note: Many Kenyan university students were hired to serve as assistants for both the Forum and the Conference. The students were originally told they would be paid 50 shillings per day [about US\$3]. As of July 26, the last day of the UN Conference, the NGO Local Planning Committee refused to pay wages to student workers with the excuse that most students had been laid off as of the second day of the Forum. News of these lay-offs were a surprise to the student workers. Because of political restrictions on the campus which prohibit students from voicing their grievances and the fact that the NGO Planning Committee was to be disbanded, students believed they had little recourse in demanding wages due.)

not a passing cloud

Upon arrival at the conference, many delegates heard remarks about how different Nairobi looked of late. "Come back in a couple of months and see what Nairobi is really like," was not an infrequent comment. Not only were "undesirables" swept from the streets, but the police force had grown significantly. Armed patrolmen every few hundred feet were a common sight. And the only street vendors one would see were those catering to tourists.

To get a better sense of what Nairobi is normally like, *Connexions* women spoke with Grace, a Masters Candidate at the University, she has been living in Nairobi for the past four years. In the following piece she talks about everyday life for women in Nairobi and about how the city was transformed for the World Conference on Women.

The highest percentage of unemployed people in this country are women. In order to support themselves and their families, most of them make their living as hawkers. Since these women do not have selling permits, they must be on the alert at all times. All of their goods are displayed on sacks and if the *askaris* [guards] come to kick them out they have to run away very quickly. Sometimes they lose their produce or cars crush their goods.

Recently it was decreed that all hawkers should get out of the city, because it was thought they were making the city dirty and it had to be clean for the visitors. But these women cater for us. We need to buy things for cooking. If they are thrown out of the city, we have to walk a long way. We come home from work very tired at 5:00. We have to look for them, make our purchases, get home, cook, and get to sleep at 11:00. It's so tiring!

These women, these hawkers, are now beginning to awaken. About two months ago, they marched to City Hall. It was a frightening crowd, there were so many. But in Kenya, the people who give the orders are faceless. I may go to one who refers me to someone else who refers me to yet another person. [The authorities] said that something was going to be done about their problems, and that in the meantime these women should just go back and sell from where they were outside the city. But the women didn't want to do that because it was too far away from town. Also, there was discrimination in the allocation of the plots given to the women for setting up and selling their wares. The rich hawkers had bribed the *askaris* and had gotten better plots. The poorer ones, the ones who deserved these plots, didn't get them at all. Now [during the conference] they have come back, but they are still being thrown out.

The same thing happened with the beggars. In 1981, for the OAU [Organization of African Unity] conference, they collected all the beggars and took them away. Probably to Mandari Mental Hospital or to the jails. They got free food but were hidden away from the public. I think they did the same thing this time because I saw some blind beggars getting out of a police Land Rover. But you can never hide all of the beggars.

As a woman in Kenya, you don't walk around alone at night because they think that every woman who walks around at night is a prostitute. But if you're white it's okay because you must be a tourist. That means you are decent and up to no mischief. Normally there are police swoops, and they come for you, sometimes even when you are with a man. They tell the man to go. Even if it's your husband they tell him to go away and leave you behind. In Kiswahili they say, "You go on, we don't want you. She's the one we want." An ID is mandatory but even though you have it they ask you for *both* your job ID and your civilian ID to make sure you're not a vagrant. After you show them, they still say you must stay and explain the next day. Usually they ask for a bribe before you can go—something small,

say a pound, which is 20 shillings [\$1.25]. This happens to many women. I'll tell you my own experience.

It was about 11:00 at night. I thought I was safe because I was walking with my boyfriend. But he had just turned the corner so he didn't know what was happening behind him. This Land Rover came and stopped me, and the police told me to get in. You're not supposed to question them. But I asked, "Why should I get in?" I told them I was from the university and that I had my college ID but they refused it.

"We don't want any explanations. Either you get in or we will take you by force."

I had to ride around town with them while they picked up other women. First they took us to CID headquarters [Central Investigation Department] where they investigate crime, prostitution and internal security. They asked, "Who wants to stay here?" Since it was a Friday night, if I hadn't gotten out of there, they would have locked me in until Monday morning. And there was no guarantee they wouldn't rape me.

We stopped in the wilderness and one of the policemen got out and ordered one of the women out of the Rover. She was so frightened that she got out. After the policemen have had enough of working during the day they want to pick up women to sleep with at night. Now you know what happened to her. That's the story of many women in Kenya.

We went further until we reached a residential area and a policeman got out and told me and another girl to get out. I was not going to get out. If they were going to rape me, it was going to be by force. So I started to cry.



Women suppliers at Nairobi City Market.

They said rudely in Kiswahili, "We don't want you to cry. Stop pretending you are a child. Are you trying to tell us you're a virgin? Just because you've been to university, don't think we don't know what you people do there. You're the ones who take the pill. You're a prostitute anyway. All women are prostitutes, especially those who have been to university."

They hate university students here. Anyway, they tried to force me, but I wasn't going to get out. The advantage I had was that since it was a residential area somebody else—maybe their boss—might have heard.

They threatened me. They took me to police stations all along the way and said, "Do you want us to leave you here? You deserve to be left here until tomorrow morning." I begged and begged. Eventually they got me home at around 2:00 in the morning. They told me to get out of the car, run as fast as possible and not look behind.

In this country, all intellectuals as well as women are suppressed. You can't go somewhere, criticize the government and expect to come back. You would just have problems. They think women are stupid. If you stand up and start arguing for equal rights they think you're crazy and try to put you down.

Before the delegates came, there was an NGO meeting for Kenyan women which was opened by the President. He told us not to listen to what the other women say. He said they don't know our situation here and so it's irrelevant. In other words, they are just like a passing cloud. But to those of us who have listened, maybe something will change. The experience of Kenyan women watching the women visitors talk openly here will change our expectations. □



KENYA NEWS

BULLETIN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL
PRISONERS IN KENYA
76 Stroud Green Rd.
London N4 3EN

JUNE 1985 ISSUE 6



THE KENYAN WOMAN: A DECADE OF OPPRESSION

The United Nations Decade for Women launched in Mexico City in 1975 and now coming to an end in Nairobi in July 1985 was intended to improve the conditions of women worldwide.

But for the Kenyan peasant and working woman and indeed for the society as a whole, it has been a decade of increased repression, general harassment and police brutality. The woman peasant and worker has borne the brunt of the massive economic, political and cultural repression in the country. The decade has seen the Kenyan peasant woman continue to be a beast of burden without any rights and security of food, housing and adequate clothing. She is the first to produce food: the last to eat it. The worst jobs and lowest wages in coffee, tea, sisal plantations and in factories are reserved for her. Women trying to eke a living by selling vegetables in Nairobi live under daily terror from police and municipal askaris. The city has to be kept clean and tidy for tourists and delegates of international conferences. Many women have been hounded into the ever increasing prison population. Others have been mauled to death by Alsatian guard dogs at Kenya Canners, Thika, a subsidiary of the multinational corporation, Del Monte.

Thus whether in US-led multi-nationals; US-sponsored population programmes; US military facilities; or indeed at her home, place of work and in the streets, the peasant/worker woman has been the main victim in neo-colonial Kenya. Perhaps the most scandalous have been the effect of population control measures and the impact of US military bases on the Kenyan woman.

The population control programme in Kenya is part of the cover-up for the massive corruption and economic mismanagement, the drainage of Kenya's wealth to western countries and all the policies which together have created a country of "ten millionaires and ten million beggars." The resultant poverty and misery of the masses have been blamed on the fertility of Kenyan woman. "Breeding like rabbits", "too many mouths to feed", are some of the phrases in the official jargon of abuse and contempt for the people, as if it is not the peasant woman who produces the very food and crops the regime sends abroad.

Therefore no experimentation however risky, no method however controversial, and no drugs however unsafe have been spared the Kenyan woman.

The Kenya government was among the earliest to accept and promote the widespread use of Depo-provera on Kenyan women. The high-oestrogen pills and the Dalkon Shield IUD, which has been the cause of numerous cases of serious uterine infections and even deaths in the US and Britain, are used widely in Kenya.

Indeed, over the decade Kenya has become a major dumping ground for defective medical devices, lethal drugs, known carcinogens, toxic pesticides, cosmetics containing corrosive mercury and petroleum, contaminated foods and other products found unfit for the US and the West. Over the same period, there has been a marked increase in cancer especially among women.

What of the US bases? In exchange for food 'aid', the Moi regime in 1980 secretly granted military 'facilities' to the US, thus putting the lives of 19 million Kenyans, and indeed all East

African peoples, at nuclear risk. Of course the regime has been at great pains to deny that these 'facilities' include bases. They say they are only for "rest and recreation" for US marines. But even this aspect alone has meant the most cynical and ruthless abuse and exploitation of Kenyan women. The resulting prostitution and drug-trafficking has brought enormous profits to the top brass. But for a significant section of the unemployed Kenyan women and girls, it has meant rape; sexually transmitted diseases; battering and depraved treatment; and murder at the hands of these servicemen. In 1980 for instance, Monica Njeri was brutally murdered by the US marine Frank Sundstrom. Sundstrom was set free on a good behaviour bond of £25 (US\$30). In April 1983 Lucy Kabura was murdered by James William Tyson, another US marine. Tyson was set free. The national and international outcry and exposure about these two cases led the regime to clamp down on further press coverage of any incidents involving US servicemen in Kenya. In Mombasa, US intelligence police and their Kenyan counterparts work together!

The Kenyan woman has also been among the victims of the regime's massacres. In February 1984 the Moi regime massacred over 1,000 people in Wajir District. The carnage was such that for a long time the regime would not allow even their beloved agencies into the area, a measure that made 14 Western ambassadors to Kenya protest to Moi. In October 1984, hundreds of civilians were massacred in Pokot in North West Kenya. These areas have now been parcelled out to Western oil companies for prospecting.

Recently in Nairobi the police bludgeoned over 12 university students to death. More than 150 had to be hospitalised with serious injuries. That was on Sunday February 10, 1985 as the students were conducting prayers for peace. Among the victims were women. One was pregnant and suffered a miscarriage.

Why this terror? The Kenya regime has long lost legitimacy but it needs to sell its image of stability to the West. To do this it needs a population under a state of fear and silence.

The reign of terror is therefore in response to people's rising discontent. Within the limitations of her situations, people have been showing signs of resistance. Strikes by workers have to be suppressed continually. Women have been a crucial element in this mounting resistance. Thus peasant women have been known to lead attacks on corrupt land company officials; and on money-milking bureaucrats in cooperatives. They have led demonstrations against police harassment of street traders in the city. In 1983 some two women appeared in court charged with publishing an anti-government document. On January 1, 1984 wives of detainees held a vigil over the detentions of their husbands.

The repression and resistance are however not reported in the press. The international press exercises self-censorship and the national press is itself a victim of repression. Because of their cosy relationship with the West, Kenya has been able to host a number of international conferences, which like the UN Decade for Women Conference, have helped in building the image of "peace, stability and democracy".

The above article has been excerpted from the *Kenya News*, a newsletter produced by Kenyans living abroad. This copy, as well as the May 1985 issue disclosing government repression and student massacres which took place in February 1985, were smuggled into Kenya by several Forum participants to be distributed among the delegates. The type of news and information found in the *Kenya News* would not be allowed in the Kenyan press.

Further Reading: Race & Class, a special issue on "Kenya: The Politics of Repression," No. 3, Winter 1983.

The Decade Has Been Good For Us

During the Decade, the visibility of lesbians and lesbian issues has continued to increase at the NGO meetings. In Mexico City, when discussed at all, the issue was considered scandalous by the media, NGO officials and some of the participants. Informal lesbian caucuses sprung up at the Forum in Copenhagen, but there were no officially scheduled lesbian workshops. In contrast to this, lesbianism was an issue in Nairobi that escaped the attention of no one. Preparations by the International Lesbian Information Service (ILIS) and other lesbian organizations began well before the Forum. Workshop proposals on topics such as lesbians and employment and international networking had been submitted, and a leaflet and collection of articles had been prepared for distribution. This popular reader, *Women Loving Women/Nous Sommes Partout*, is a collection of articles reprinted from the Global Lesbianism issues of *Connexions* and from *Clit 007*, a Swiss French lesbian publication.

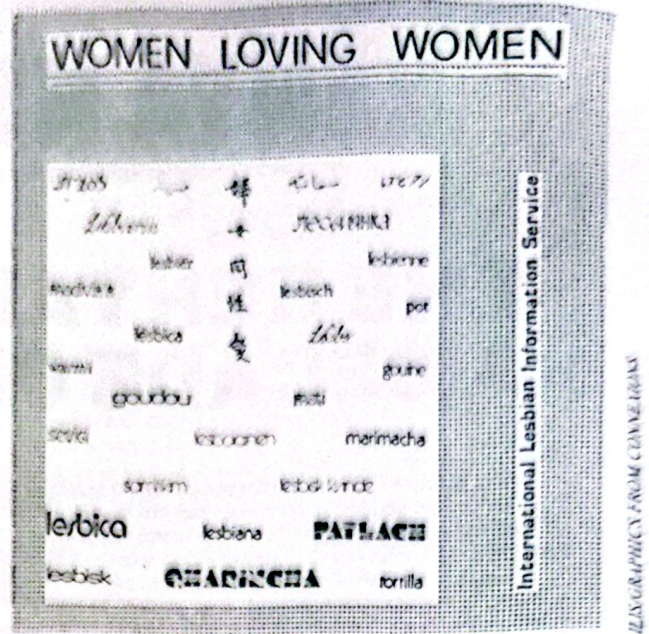
Not confined to the seven scheduled workshops, a group of lesbian women sat on the lawn all day, everyday, to field personal questions from Forum participants, many of whom have no other access to such information. In the first days of the Forum, a lesbian caucus was formed, one of the few groups that held spontaneous workshops during the weekend that separated the seven days of scheduled activities. During the lesbian press conference held July 17, the atmosphere of openness and fusing of personal and political issues continued. After the reading of statements by lesbians of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, questions and answers sparked a fresh discussion among lesbians themselves, the media and other Forum participants. Everyone seated or standing in the packed lecture hall was involved.

The following resulted from an interview conducted by *Connections* with Sylvia Borren, a founding member of ILIS. Borren currently lives in Holland and works with the COC, a Dutch gay rights organization. ILIS is a lesbian-feminist coordinating body working for the liberation of lesbians from political, legal, social, cultural and economic oppression. Their work includes organizing international conferences, preparing reports on these conferences, and the publication of a bimonthly newsletter.

The first time we talked about doing something for Nairobi was at the April 1984 ILIS conference. Our aims were twofold: we wanted ILIS to become better known in order to network; and we wanted to further our discussions on a number of issues which we already deal with, such as education and health. We decided to set up national lesbian networks to try to get some idea of what the situation of lesbians is in our own countries. We met again a year later and found that only two or three countries had done some work on this.

In Holland we formed a political lesbian network through which we presented a report with our demands to the Dutch government. We also managed to get some of our material included in a government publication on the situation of women in Holland. At the ILIS conference [to prepare for Nairobi], we drafted five basic demands [see box] which we had printed up in a pamphlet. We're not sure yet, but we think we might actually get money for the printing from the Dutch government. This is important to us because it implies recognition.

We also wanted to get our demands and material officially recognized and have the Dutch delegation present something about the position of lesbian women at the United Nations conference. We decided that Holland would probably be the only country we could get to talk about lesbian issues. We were surprisingly successful. A lot has happened in the last few years. I guess the Decade has been good for us. This will be the first time that the word "lesbianism" will be mentioned at a United Nations conference.



Cover of the ILIS flyer distributed at Forum '85.

We had quite a lot of fun getting our material here. Since we had about 4000 pamphlets and 500 magazines, it was too heavy for us to carry by ourselves. So we made lots of little parcels of two kilos each and asked other Dutch women to take a few to Nairobi. Some women were wonderful about it; some were afraid and didn't want to.

The day we arrived was the first day of registration. We expected that we would be able to network with Western women. We also hoped we would be able to network with Latin American, Asian and African women as well. We had no idea how many women would be here. A few of us started to hand out our pamphlets and we found that women were really very supportive. It was quite strange for me in comparison to the Netherlands where, when you hand out pamphlets, you usually get some negative reactions. Here people said "Yeah, women loving women, good, wonderful." Or sometimes women would giggle or laugh. By the end of the day there weren't any pamphlets lying around.

On the second day of registration, we borrowed a table from the library, set up a stand and hung up posters announcing when the lesbian workshops would take place. We hadn't been there for more than a quarter of an hour when Dame Nita Barrow, convener of the NGO Forum, came. She was very angry and said we had to go. It was terrible. She told us that absolutely no one was to hand out material on the lawn and that material had to be handed out at the controls. At that point there weren't any other people giving out material. We argued with her for awhile, but she kept on saying, "I must protect you from the authorities. We have made arrangements with the Kenyan government." I think it was a homophobic reaction, or at least she panicked, I reckon.

So, we got rid of the table and put our posters on the ground as we have been doing every day since. That afternoon we were watched by about three different groups of Kenyan police. We felt quite strange about it, but women still came to us and asked us things. That was when we first started having conversations with women on the lawn.

The incident with Dame Nita Barrow was reported in the newspapers the next day. They said that we'd been kicked out of the Forum or something like that. At least that's how many people interpreted it. In effect, it made us very visible. And though I don't particularly like it being the first way people heard about us, in fact it worked extremely well. Two days later Dame Nita Barrow told both the mainstream and the NGO press that all women were welcome here. Her only concern was that we were handing things out on the grass. I think she felt embarrassed or worried about it. And, of course, after the Forum got started, everyone was handing out materials on the lawn, so the issue became totally irrelevant.

Because of all this coverage, whenever we sit on the lawn, there are always between five and ten, and at times up to 100

people, mostly Kenyans around us asking questions. They just don't know what lesbians are. They ask lots of questions. How do you find out? Do you want to have children? How do you have a relationship? Do you have sexual relationships? What do you do? How do you organize a dowry? Who looks after your parents? Who has the property? Who is the boss?

At first, we were mainly talking to the men because women were not asking many questions. After about the second day, there were so many men around that the authorities began to get worried. At one point they told the meeting to break up. They said it was an illegal meeting. The next day, they asked a few men for their identification but they left the women alone. Then we ourselves decided to focus more on the women. When men and women were around, we answered the women's questions. The first day lots of women couldn't find us because they didn't think that that great big group of men was us. Since then things have been going fine. There have been men around but not such large groups. So basically this has been going on all day, every day.

Apart from that, we caucus every day at five behind the Peace Tent so that lesbians can connect. They're just short little meetings which usually last about 20 minutes, and we sit around and chat with each other. It's been a good way to get to know one another.

We decided to have a special extra lesbian workshop on Sunday while the Forum wasn't meeting. I think altogether 120 women came. We split up into six workshops. Then we had a plenary to compare notes. That session was dominated by Western women, but there were women from Latin America, Asia and Africa. There were also a few Kenyan women who were, as far as I'm concerned, identifying themselves as lesbians. One or two were quite clear about it; the others were not.

Yesterday, we had our first officially scheduled workshop on lesbians and employment. When we walked in half an hour before the workshop started, it was already packed with Kenyans, mostly women. I think there were only about five men there. We talked about the importance of economic self-sufficiency, employment, the situation in different countries, the discrimination of lesbians on the job, the prices you pay for being in or out of the closet, compulsory heterosexuality and the constant pressure it puts on us. Then we discussed our basic demands and that we see ourselves as a liberation struggle. We talked about being in anti-racist groups or in the peace or feminist movements and being able to identify yourself as a lesbian.

The workshop was so crowded. At the start there were 150 women and they were still coming in. The corridor was also crammed. It was amazing. There was a lot of pressure coming from the corridor, as well as anger, because women wanted to get inside. In the end there were about 170 women in the room. I guess we can't complain about lack of popularity.

One of the things which was yelled from the corridor was, "Observers out. Lesbians in." I got pissed off about that because I feel we shouldn't make judgements. A number of times during the workshop a Kenyan woman would get up and say, "In our country it does not exist." Then a whole group of Kenyan women would yell out, "Yes it does! Yes it does!"

We talked about equality in relationships and how we think heterosexual women should also have control over their bodies and stand up to their husbands if they boss them around. More and more recognition came from this. In some ways, it isn't just the issue of lesbianism; it's the issue of having the freedom to control your own body. There is a kind of hunger for this information. I guess this is why they are coming to us. We are saying, "Well, you don't have to put up with it." I have no idea what the result of this will be, but lots of women have been taking the material.

In the workshop, some Western women talked about coming out. I had the feeling that some of these very concrete personal stories made the situation of lesbians much more real for Kenyan women. They realized it wasn't just a private matter of what you do in bed, but has to do with every aspect of your life. If you have to be in the closet, you become very schizophrenic about it.

At the end of the workshop, I told them what the symbol of the pink triangle is. I made it very clear that we use the pink triangle because there had been homosexuals killed during World



Sylvia Borren

War II, and most people don't even know about it. It's all sort of a lost chapter in history. We wear the pink triangle to identify ourselves and to stand up and say we will not be murdered again. □

Further Readings:

- *Global Lesbianism I and II*, Connexions #3, Winter 1982, and #10, Fall 1983.
- *International Lesbian Information Service Bulletin*, published in English, French and Spanish. Centre Femmes, 5 Bd St., Georges, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland.
- *Lesbisch Archivar*, resource list and collection of articles from the Lesbian Archives in Leeuwarden, mostly in Dutch, Postbus 4062, 8901 EB Leeuwarden, Netherlands.

Contact:

- ILIS, Centre Femmes, 5, Bd St. Georges, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland.
- N.V.I.H. - COC, Rozenstraat 8, 1016 NX, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Five Basic ILIS Demands:

1. **Girls and women have the unconditional right to control their own bodies.** This means the freedom to develop and live their own sexual preference, the freedom from sexual use and abuse, the freedom to reproduce or not to, the freedom from poverty, hunger and ill-health.
2. **Girls and women have the right to education which is not heterosexist.** This means that it includes positive information and identification about lesbians and lesbian lifestyles.
3. **Lesbians have the right to self-organization.** This means they can meet, publicize and that they can advertise.
4. **All governments must get rid of legislation which criminalizes or which discriminates against homosexual women or men.** A start in this direction has been made with the Council of Europe in 1981 and should be also decided upon by the UN.
5. **All governments must pass human rights legislation to protect individuals against discrimination on the grounds of colour, class, creed, sex and sexual preference.**

Excerpt from ILIS flyer distributed at Forum '85.

Lesbians in the News...

Lesbians unwanted at Forum?

FORUM '85 newspaper has confirmed reports appearing in two Kenyan daily papers of the presence of lesbians at the NGO Forum. At least 200 of them have already arrived in spite of reports that their presence has offended other forum participants.

Lesbians have defied a "pack-and-go" order, reportedly issued to them by Dame Nita Barrow, who was reported in *The Standard* as having issued the order in response to delegates' annoyance at the lesbians' presence. Dame Nita is the convenor of the NGO Forum.

A spokesman for the International Lesbian Information Service, Ms Sylvia Borren, dismissed anticipation that they would be thrown out of Kenya where homosexuality is illegal. "We asked the Dutch Ambassador to Kenya whether we would face any problems coming here, and he assured us that we were not going to be thrown out," she said. "So we believe it when the Kenya Government says we are welcome."

However she expressed the fear that police were keeping an eye on their movements.

Apart from the 200-strong team from Europe and the Americans which had already arrived in Nairobi, at least 30 others had signed up by yesterday. "We expect many more on Sunday when we intend to hold a meeting at one o'clock in the afternoon."

Asked if they were aware that homosexuality was illegal in Kenya and that it was considered to constitute an unnatural sexual offence, Ms Borren, who was surrounded by members of her group, said that on the contrary, they were already receiving information from African women who wanted to join them.

They disclosed, however, that they would be having workshops on July 16 and 17.

FORUM '85, JULY 11, 1985

in Nairobi



The lesbian press conference.

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Lesbians misunderstood

All women are welcome at Forum '85, Dame Nita Barrow said yesterday, clarifying a press report that Lesbians had been made to feel unwelcome.

The misunderstanding arose as a result of the efforts of Forum organizers to keep the area around the Educa-

tion Building clear while the final touches to the organization of events was being completed and while registration was in progress. Lesbians were only one of a dozen or more groups which were asked to help keep the area clear.

As reported in Forum '85 yesterday, the Lesbians will hold workshops on July 16 and 17.

FORUM '85, JULY 12, 1985

"This will be the first time that the word 'lesbianism' will be mentioned at a United Nations conference."

-Sylvia Borren

FOCUS ON FORUM '85... FOCUS ON FORUM '85...

LESBIANS RUN INTO TROUBLE!

Standard Correspondent

A LESBIAN group, officially registered with the United Nations Women Decade Conference, yesterday ran into trouble when they tried to advertise their movement by distributing their literature at the University of Nairobi's Great Court.

The Lesbian group, led by Sylvia Borren from New Zealand and the Netherlands, ran into trouble when they were seen displaying and distributing information about their movement to delegates who had arrived for registration.

Acting on a tip off from a delegate, annoyed by the Lesbian activities on the main campus, the Forum '85 Convenor, Dame Nita Barrow, went personally to the group and ordered them to pack their things and leave.

She explained to the group that although they were officially registered, they would have to wait for a reply to their application in which they requested a workshop stand.

THE STANDARD, JULY 10, 1985

To See Them In Person!

(The following is an interview by Adi Gevins with Esther who worked at a family planning exhibit. Esther is a distributor for a Kenyan family planning organization.)

Q: Did you go to the lesbian workshop?

A: Oh yes, I wanted to hear what they have to say—you know it's always good to listen. However, we didn't learn much about them when we were there. They said that they couldn't answer our questions at that time. They were talking about lesbians and employment. They want their rights.

We had never heard of such a thing ourselves. In African culture, sex is very private. As a woman, to say that you love your girlfriend is very strange to us!

Q: Maybe you can go to another workshop.

A: Yes. In fact, I want to hear more. It is good to learn from many groups so that you can help your people. But I wouldn't like anybody to be a lesbian, myself, because we were not created that way. We women, we should have men. One thing they were saying is that in Kenya and in other African countries, we have women who are not married. Women who want to have their freedom. Yes, we have them, but that doesn't mean that they are lesbians. Here we don't have divorces, but I may separate with my husband. That doesn't mean that I'm a lesbian. If I want to move, I move with a man, not a woman. So it is quite different. Their argument was quite weak, but we had only 30 minutes.

At least I learned something through them. I learned that they exist. I have read Western books about lesbians, but to see them in person! They are very interesting; I want to hear more about them.

Q: Did many people go to the workshop?

A: Yes, so many. Really, it was so crowded. Most people wanted to come—from the United States, and from everywhere else including Africa. Everyone wanted to come and hear, but they had to lock the door after a while. They talked for about 15 or 20 minutes. Then they asked for questions.

What I did understand is that at least they should have their rights. They shouldn't be sacked from their jobs if they are not interfering because they are also human. You should understand that. They are human. You know, working and your personal life are quite different. When I am working, like now I am working with the family planning, I work. But when I go home, my personal life is mine. So even with those girls, those lesbians, if they are good workers, I don't see why they should not have their rights to be employed. But if they are messing about saying, "I don't like men"—and most bosses are men—then, in fact, they are going to be sacked.

Here in Africa we are not curious about [male] homosexuals because we know that they exist, but with women I, personally, did not know that they exist. I did not understand a lot of things from the workshop because we really had no time. I don't know whether the word lesbian just means sex or also other things. The sexual part is what Africans cannot accept—sexual intercourse with another woman. That is very dirty in Africa. I think that is what I understood from them, if I am not wrong. And it wouldn't be accepted here. If your clan hears that you are a lesbian, I don't know what would happen to you. It's a bad thing. I'm not talking about employment. Employment, they can work.

What they want is to be legalized. Or at least for people to recognize that they exist. But I can't see how they will ever be accepted. Although you might accept them without knowing it.



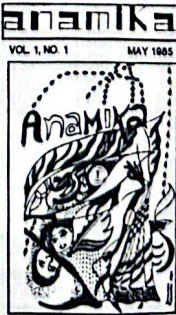
They say that it is only in Norway that they won't be sacked [from a job]. But I think they must also misbehave and that is why they are sacked. If they work silently, they can exist.

Q: Do you think there is danger in lesbians being at the conference?

A: Ah, that's just crazy. People hear things and then they forget them. In fact, nobody will change just because they are here. Those who are to change have changed, and they are hiding themselves wherever they are. But their being here can't change our country. I know that. As we say in Kikuyu, they are just a passing storm. It will just pass. And then I will read the word lesbian someday and I will remember, "Oh, yes, they were here in Nairobi and they went."

You know, if you learn many things, you make your mind very broad. You can't close your ears; you have to hear this and that. Somebody can come and tell you, "You know, I saw your husband here and there." And you have to listen, but you don't have to react. Find out first. It is the same with these women. We go to listen to them. You can always learn something. We read books and we learn, but even if you read a book that says that a woman tells her husband that he must wash the clothes, you can't go and tell your husband to wash his clothes just because you read it from a book. You can't. And that is my principle. I am going to listen and I'm sure nothing will change. □

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anamika
VOL. 1, NO. 1 MAY 1985

Anamika, a newsletter for South Asian lesbians, is pleased to announce the publication of our first issue. Our goal is to provide information by and about ourselves—South Asian lesbians and lesbians of South Asian descent living around the world.

The publication of *Anamika* is the result of several years work of informal networking, searching each other out and sharing our stories. We are soliciting articles, letters, poetry, graphics from South Asian lesbians around the world for our next issue with the focus of "OUR LIVES." We ask \$5, or more if possible, for a yearly subscription. *Anamika*, c/o ALOEC, Box 850, New York, NY 10002.

Filmforum

Filmforum '85, the international women's film festival held at the NGO Forum in Nairobi, originally projected a program of over 160 films and videos with workshops designed to complement them. Screenings were scheduled for each day of the conference and were described in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Swahili) in a detailed program available at the NGO registration. The scheduling conflicted with the Forum workshops which forced Forum participants to choose between the workshops and films during the day while nothing was scheduled in the evenings. But even more distressing was the fact that the original schedule was not even followed due to the actions of the Kenya Censorship Board.

Planning for the film festival began in March 1985. Hannah Fisher, coordinator of Filmforum '85, assembled an international steering committee to help collect films and videos. She then met with the director of the Kenya Censorship Board where it was decided that the films and videos would be reviewed for censorship on the basis of written descriptions, rather than actual screening. Censorship review was required even though the Filmforum '85

was part of the Forum, and in general the films were not for public viewing.

Immediately prior to the start of the Conference, the organized planning of Filmforum '85 began to deteriorate. The director of the Censorship Board apparently did not recall ever having met with Hannah Fisher. It was decided that all films and videos had to be screened after all (even though the government had no equipment with which to view the videos). To no avail, the Canadian government, having spent \$340,000 to set up the Filmforum, tried to intervene by requesting immunity for censorship under the United Nations.

A complete list of censored films and videos is not yet available and even Hannah Fisher does not know the extent of damage to the Filmforum program. It is known that two Brazilian films were censored for being "too political." One, *The Third Age*, addressed the subject of menopause; the other, *Women of the Red Light District*, was about prostitution. In addition, two Australian films were edited by the Board without the consent of the filmmakers or the Filmforum '85 Steering Committee. And

Women at the censors

"Damn it, we've beaten them," exclaimed an euphoric Hannah Fisher, Filmforum director. She was just back from a meeting with the Kenya Film Censorship Board at which it was agreed there would be no restrictions on the films selected for the filmforum. If everything goes as Hannah expects, the Board will approve all the scheduled films without actually seeing them. "We agreed there must be no restrictions since they were films for women, by women and on women's issues that were going to be shown not on the national distribution network but to the women attending the NGO Forum," Hannah Fisher said.

If there are no further snags, it means the end of a two and a half week nightmare for her. She has spent her days going from ministry to ministry to get the films on the screen. She didn't manage to get them approved on time, though. Only one of the three film venues, that at the Kenya National Theatre, showed films yesterday and then not what was planned. Up till now, the videos were at risk of not being screened at all because the censorship board did not have the facilities to view them. Hannah Fisher now hopes that the rest of the filmforum will run smoothly and will make up for the shaky first day.

FORUM '85, JULY 11, 1985

THURSDAY, JULY 11
9 TO 11:30 AM: WOMEN AND THE LAW

- 14) *Pena Prisoa* (Sentence: Prison) Brazil: 1983. Colour. 35 minutes. 16mm. Portuguese Dialogue, English Subtitles. Director: Sandra Werneck. Pena Prisoa looks at daily life in a women's reformatory and examines the meaning of justice, both within and outside prison walls.
- 15) *No Es Por Gusto* (It isn't For Pleasure) Mexico: 1982. Black and White. 52 minutes. 16mm. Spanish Dialogue. Directors: Maru Tamez and Mari Carmen de Lara. The daily life of prostitutes in Mexico City is documented through interviews with the women about their lives, the jail system, society and their work.
- 16) *Pena Máxima* (Elvira Luz Cruz: A Perpetual Penalty) Mexico: 1985. Colour. 40 minutes. 16mm. Spanish Dialogue. Directors: Dana Rotberg and Ana Diez. An innocent woman is accused by her husband and mother-in-law of murdering her four children. The true story tells of the injustices Elvira Luz Cruz suffered at the hands of a biased legal system.
- 17) *Women Prisoners* Brazil: 1983. Colour. 31 minutes. 16mm. Portuguese Dialogue. Director: Inés Vilares. A view of everyday life in a women's prison where fear, death and guilt live side by side with dreams of freedom.

JEUDI, LE 11 JUILLET
DE 9 H 00 À 11 H 30 LES FEMMES ET LE DROIT

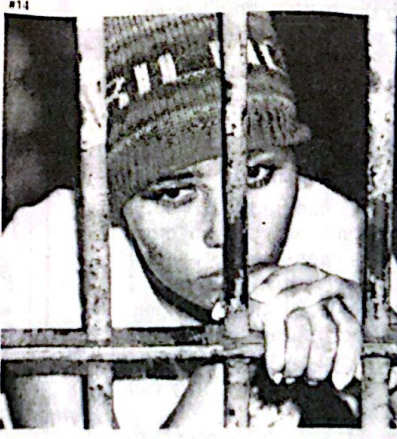
- 14) *Pena Prisoa* (Le verdict: Emprisonnement) Brésil: 1983. en couleur. 35 minutes. 16 mm. dialogue en portugais, sous-titré en anglais. Metteuse en scène: Sandra Werneck. Pena Prisoa observe la vie quotidienne d'un centre pénitentiaire de rééducation pour femmes et se penche sur la signification de la justice à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de la prison.
- 15) *No Es Por Gusto* (Ce n'est pas pour le plaisir) Mexique: 1982. en noir et blanc. 52 minutes. 16 mm. dialogue en espagnol. Metteuses en scène: Maru Tamez et Mari Carmen de Lara. Un documentaire sur la vie quotidienne des prostituées dans la ville de Mexico. tiré d'interviews avec ces femmes, sur leur vie, le système pénitentiaire, la société et leur travail.
- 16) *Pena Máxima* (Elvira Luz Cruz: Condamnation à perpétuité) Mexique: 1985. en couleur. 40 minutes. 16 mm. dialogue en espagnol. Metteuse en scène: Dana Rotberg et Ana Diez. Une femme innocente est accusée par son mari et par sa belle-mère d'avoir assassiné ses quatre enfants. Cette histoire vraie raconte les injustices qu'Elvira Luz Cruz a souffertes dans un système judiciaire enlaid de préjugés.
- 17) *Les Femmes emprisonnées* Brésil: 1983. en couleur. 31 minutes. 16 mm. dialogue en portugais. Metteuse en scène: Inés Vilares. Une description de la vie quotidienne dans une prison de femmes, où la peur, la mort et le sentiment de culpabilité côtoient les rêves de liberté.

JUEVES 11 DE JULIO
9 A 11:30 AM: LAS MUJERES Y LA LEY

- 14) *Pena Prisoa* (Pena: Prisión) Brasil: 1983. Color. 35 minutos. 16mm. Dialogo en Portugues, Subtitulos en Ingles. Directora: Sandra Werneck. Pena Prisoa analiza la vida cotidiana en un reformatorio de mujeres y examina el significado de la justicia, tanto dentro como fuera de las paredes de la prision.
- 15) *No es por gusto* (It isn't For Pleasure) Mexico: 1982. Blanco y Negro. 52 minutos. 16mm. Dialogo en Español. Directoras: Maru Tamez y Mari Carmen de Lara. Un documental sobre la vida cotidiana de las prostitutas en Mexico City mediante entrevistas con las mujeres sobre sus vidas, el sistema de prision, la sociedad y el trabajo que realizan.
- 16) *Pena Máxima* (Elvira Luz Cruz: Condena a perpetua) Mexico: 1985. Color. 40 minutos. 16mm. Dialogo en Español. Directoras: Dana Rotberg y Ana Diez. Una mujer inocente es acusada por su esposo y suegra del asesinato de sus cuatro niños. Esta historia verdadera relata las injusticias que Elvira Luz Cruz sufrió en manos de un sistema legal parcial.
- 17) *Mujeres Prisioneras* Brazil: 1983. Color. 31 minutos. 16mm. Dialogo en Portugues. Directora: Inés Vilares. Una descripción de la vida diaria en una prision de mujeres donde el temor, la muerte y la culpa van lado a lado con los sueños de libertad.

ALHAMISI, JULAI 11
9A 11:30AM: WANAWAKE NA sheria

- 14) *Pena Prisoa* (Hukumat: Kikosi) Brazil: 1983. Ya rangi. Dakika 35. Mimita 16. Mazungumzo ya Kireno, na mawasiliano ya Kikundi. Mkurugenzi: Sandra Werneck. Hukumu Kikunguoni mabwana masha ya kila siku ya wanawake gerezani na inachunguzwa mwanay haki, ndani na nje ya huku la gereza.
- 15) *No Es Por Gusto* (Sisi Kwa Rahisi) Mexico: 1982. Nyarua na Nyeusi. Dakika 52. Mimita 16. Mazungumzo ya Kihispania. Mkurugenzi: Maru Tamez na Mari Carmen de Lara. Masha ya kila siku ya katika Mexico chini ya wanawake katika mahotoni ya wanawake, kuhusu masha yao, mwanawake wa magezazi, amba ya kazi na gereza.
- 16) *Pena Máxima* (Elvira Luz Cruz) (Adhabu ya kila: Elvira Luz Cruz) Mexico: 1985. Ya rangi. Dakika 40. Mimita 16. Mazungumzo ya Kihispania. Mkurugenzi: Dana Rotberg na Ana Diez. Mwanamke asiye haki aliyekwewa na kike kwanta amewaua watoto wake wanne. Hadithi hii ya kwele inaonekana kama Elvira Luz Cruz aliyetawala na kunyimwa haki katika muundo wa sheria wenye upendeleo.
- 17) *Women Prisoners* (Wanawake Wanawake) Brazil: 1983. Ya rangi. Dakika 31. Mimita 16. Mazungumzo ya Kireno. Mkurugenzi: Inés Vilares. Mzamo wa masha ya kila siku katika gereza la wanawake ambako woga, maoni, na hata vinakwepo pamoja na nje za kuwa huru.



Pages from International Women's Film Forum Program

Censorship: How it works

Although the Censorship Board at first gave permission for *Leila and the Wolves* to be screened, it later reversed its decision and confiscated the film (see accompanying article).

There is much speculation as to why these films were censored. Those who believe it was a simple "misunderstanding" between the organizers and the Censorship Board overlook the political nature of censorship. As the issue of censorship became more volatile at the Forum, most discussion revolved around where to place the blame for the disintegration of the Filmforum. Fingers pointed at the Steering Committee, at the directors who "failed" to send their films in time for review and at the Director of the Censorship Board who couldn't remember meeting Hannah Fisher, but an actual critique of the act of censorship, especially in the context of a women's film festival, was sidestepped. The following articles from the NGO daily newspaper are one illustration of the "self-censorship" that was an alarming element present at the Forum.

10AM TO NOON VIDEO SERIES

18) The Disabled Women's Theatre Project (Le projet d'un théâtre de femmes handicapées)
Etats Unis, 1982. en couleur. 60 minutes. Vidéo-U-Matic. Dialogue en anglais.
Productrices: Women with Physical Disabilities

Dealing with everything from employment and public transportation to household problems, this program uses humour to convey the absurd and painful moments that are part of disabled women's lives.

19) Mothers in a Foreign Motherland
Netherlands, 45 minutes. Vidéo-U-Matic. Dialogue en anglais.
Directrice: Ingrid Oustrup Jensen

Women from Turkey and Pakistan living in Denmark face the conflicts of two divergent cultures.

NOON TO 2PM: WOMEN AND EDUCATION

20) Delani, veechny smutky zahani (Work Displeas Sadness)
Czechoslovakia, 1984. Colour, 17 minutes, 16mm.
Directrice: Hana Pinkavová

This documentary depicts the lives of young women apprentices at their vocational school and shows how work affects their view of the world.

21) Y Si Eres Mujer (And If You Are A Woman)
Mexico, 1981. Colour, 5 minutes, 16mm. Spanish Dialogue
Directrice: Guadalupe Sánchez

The way in which education prescribes different standards of conduct for boys and girls is described in this simple animated film, set to a popular song.

22) The Double Day
Latin America, 1975. Colour, 53 minutes, 16mm. Spanish Dialogue
Directrice: Helena Solberg-Ladd

Mexican factory workers, Argentine maids, Bolivian miners' wives and Venezuelan peasants all participate in a consciousness-raising session, revealing their efforts to achieve equality at home and in the workplace and to break down the double work day.

DE 10 H 00 À MIDI SÉRIE VIDEO

18) The Disabled Women's Theatre Project (Le projet d'un théâtre de femmes handicapées)
Etats Unis, 1982. en couleur. 60 minutes. Vidéo-U-Matic. Dialogue en anglais.
Productrices: Des femmes handicapées

Ce programme qui traite de tous les problèmes, depuis l'emploi et les transports publics jusqu'aux problèmes domestiques, se sert de l'humour pour faire comprendre les moments absurdes et douloureux qui font partie de la vie des femmes handicapées.

19) Mothers in a Foreign Motherland (Des mères dans une patrie étrangère)
Hollande, 45 minutes. Vidéo-U-Matic. Dialogue en anglais.
Directrice: Ingrid Oustrup Jensen

Des femmes de Turquie et du Pakistan mènent la vie dans le Danemark tout en confrontant les conflits de deux cultures divergentes.

DE MIDI À 14 H 00: LES FEMMES ET L'ÉDUCATION

20) Delani, veechny smutky zahani (Le travail dispense la tristesse)
Tchécoslovaquie, 1984. en couleur. 17 minutes. 16 mm.
Metteuse en scène: Hana Pinkavová

Ce documentaire décrit la vie de jeunes apprenties dans leur école des arts et métiers et illustre comment leur travail affecte leur philosophie du monde.

21) Y Si Eres Mujer (Et si tu étais une femme)
Mexique, 1981, en couleur, 5 minutes, 16 mm, dialogue en espagnol. Metteuse en scène: Guadalupe Sánchez

Ce dessin animé très simple fait pour une chanson populaire montre comment l'éducation prescrit des normes de conduite différentes pour les garçons et les filles.

22) Deux emplois par jour
Amérique Latine, 1975, en couleur, 53 minutes, 16 mm, dialogue en espagnol.
Metteuse en scène: Helena Solberg-Ladd

Des ouvrières d'une usine mexicaine, des servantes d'Argentine, les femmes de mineurs boliviens et des paysannes vénézuéliennes, toutes participent à une réunion de prise de conscience qui révèle leurs efforts pour obtenir l'égalité à la maison et au travail, et pour supprimer la contrainte de deux emplois par jour.

VIDEOS

18) The Disabled Women's Theatre Project (El Proyecto de Teatro para Mujeres Invisibles)
Estados Unidos, 1982. Color. 60 minutos. Video-U-Matic. Dialogo en Inglés.
Productoras: Women with Physical Disabilities

Este programa que trata de todo, desde empleo y transporte público hasta problemas domésticos, utiliza medios humorísticos para presentar momentos absurdos y dolorosos que son parte de las vidas de las mujeres inválidas.

19) Madras en una Patria Extranjera
Países Bajos, 45 minutos. Video-U-Matic. Dialogo en Inglés.
Directora: Ingrid Oustrup Jensen

Las mujeres turcas y pakistaníes que viven en Dinamarca afrontan los conflictos de las culturas divergentes.

MEDIODÍA A 2PM: LAS MUJERES Y LA EDUCACIÓN

20) Delani, veechny smutky zahani (El Trabajo Disipa la Tristeza)
Checoslovaquia, 1984. Color, 17 minutos, 16mm.
Directora: Hana Pinkavová

Este documental describe las vidas de las jóvenes aprendices en su escuela vocacional y muestra como el trabajo afecta la manera como ellas ven el mundo.

21) Y Si Eres Mujer
México, 1981. Color, 5 minutos, 16mm. Dialogo en Español.
Directora: Guadalupe Sánchez

Esta película sencilla de dibujos animados que tiene como fondo musical una canción popular, describe como la educación estipula normas de conducta diferentes para los niños y las niñas.

22) El Día Doble
América Latina, 1975. Color, 53 minutos, 16mm. Dialogo en Español.
Directora: Helena Solberg-Ladd

Las obreras mejicanas, empleadas domésticas argentinas, esposas de mineros bolivianos y campesinas venezolanas participan en una reunión en la cual ponen de manifiesto su situación revelando sus esfuerzos para lograr igualdad en el hogar y en el lugar de trabajo y para acabar con el día de trabajo doble.

SAA 4 HADI 8 MCHANA: MAONYESHIO YA VIDEO

18) The Disabled Women's Theatre Project (Mwazi wa Kufikia wa Wanawake Vilem)
Amerika, 1982. Ya rangi. Dakika 60. Video. Mazungumzo ya king ereza Welayarishay. Wanawake Vilem

Kimwibana na kila kitu tokea kazi na uaini hadi mataizo ya nyumbani, kundi hiki kunatuma vichelele kufikia nyakati za maunio ambazo ni sehemu ya maisha ya wanawake vilem.

19) Mothers in a Foreign Motherland (Mama Mama Katika Nchi Yote Moyo)
Netherlands. Dakika 45. Video. Mazungumzo ya Kingereza. Mkurugenzi Ingrid Oustrup Jensen

Wanawake kutoka Uturuki na Pakistan wanaishi Denmark wakabiliana na mgongano wa mila mbili tofauti.

SAA 6 HADI 8 MCHANA: WANAWAKE NA ELIMU

20) Delani Veechny Smutky Zahani (Kazi Inaondoa Masikitiko)
Czechoslovakia, 1984. Ya rangi. Dakika 17. Milimita 16. Mkurugenzi: Hana Pinkavová

Filamu hii ya maelezo inaonyesha maisha ya wanawake vijana wanajifunza katika shule ya ufundi, inaonyesha jinsi kazi inavyoathiri mizamo wao wa dunia.

21) Y Si Eres Mujer (Na Kama wewe ni Mwanamke)
Mexico, 1981. Ya rangi. Dakika 5. Milimita 16. Mazungumzo ya Kihispania. Mkurugenzi: Guadalupe Sánchez

Jinsi ambavyo elimu inatoa vipimo mbalimbali vya tabu kwa wavutana na wasichana inaelewa katika filamu hii ya wanyama iliyo na mwimbo maarufu.

22) The Double Day (Siku ya Mara Mbili)
Amerika ya Kitalini, 1975. Ya rangi. Dakika 53. Milimita 16. Mazungumzo ya Kihispania. Mkurugenzi: Helena Solberg-Ladd

Wafanyakazi wa viwandani wa Mexico, watumishi wa nyumbani wa Argentine, wake wa wachimba mgodi wa Bolivia na wakulima wa Venezuela wote wanashiriki katika kupindi cha kuamsha hamaa, ikionyesha budi yao ya kupata usawa nyumbani na kazi na kuvunjiia mbali kazi mara mbili kwa siku.

The International Women's Film festival, "Filmforum 85", was officially opened by Kenya's Assistant Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Hon Omar Soba at a function attended by Dame Nita Barrow, Forum 85 convener and Dr Eddah Gachukia, Kenya NGO chairman.

In their speeches, all three talked about the importance those concerned have placed on this activity as it is one of the most important events of Forum 85.

The fact that screenings at the 20th Century cinema and the National theatre were able to start as scheduled on July 9, was as a result of the team work of an international steering committee.

Twenty six members on the Kenya government film Censorship Board have had to screen all the films coming into the country and are still doing so, in accordance with Kenyan law. Any film coming to the country for public viewing for commercial or non-commercial purposes must be censored by a board appointed by the government, a regulation which is not unique to Kenya as the film board points out.

The Kenya Film Censorship Board has been sitting for over eight hours every day to see the films, most of which only arrived in the country shortly before Forum 85 opened.

So far, the Censorship Board has seen about 100 films out of the 180 films already here and they have given priority to films on the catalogue schedule as provided to the by Filmforum director, Hannah Fisher. This has been done to ensure that there is as little disruption to the programme as possible.

Thus, when Hannah Fisher says that it has been a nightmare to clear the films, as reported in yesterday's Forum, the Censorship Board feels that this gives a totally incorrect impression of the Kenyan government. The government, and the Minister of Culture and Social Services, the Hon Kenneth Matiba, have done their utmost to make Filmforum a success. This has included waiving charges normally incurred on films of this nature, which would have been over KSh 2 million.

FORUM 85, JULY 12, 1985

#18



Skirting the Issue

Filmforum

Leila and the Wolves by Lebanese director Heiny Srour had passed the censors and was scheduled to be screened the second to the last day of the Forum. A good-sized crowd had turned out to see this provocative film on the history of Lebanese and Palestinian women only to discover that it had been confiscated by the Censorship Board.

This unfortunate incident symbolized the merging of two battles that had permeated the conference for ten days: the exercising of censorship by the Kenyan government and the conflict in the Middle East. The comprehensive film schedule, which revealed extensive preparation, had been made worthless by the Kenyan Censorship Board. Daily there was talk of some film being censored or detained. Concurrently, heated exchanges were taking place over the situation in the Middle East. Not only could no middle ground be reached, but most mention of Palestine or Israel deteriorated into argument, accusation or denial. The Kenyan government appeared to panic over the ongoing battle between Palestinians and Zionists.

It was in this atmosphere that *Leila and the Wolves* was withdrawn. Regarding the issue of censorship, it became the straw that broke the camel's back. During the entire conference participants and organizers had been frustrated by never knowing from day to day which films would be screened. Furthermore, the NGO Organizing Committee would not take a stand against censorship. Instead, the attitude that "these are the rules and we must not object because we are guests" was put forth by the Committee as well as the Forum newspaper. The act of censorship was not questioned and, indeed, even discussing the issue became taboo.



Dame Nita Barrow speaking to the protesters in the Peace Tent.

The following is a transcript of a spontaneous demonstration which took place after everyone heard that the film had been confiscated. While at the movie theater, a petition was immediately drafted. The audience then debated what plan of action should be taken. Some wanted to march to the Censorship Board, others wanted to return to the Forum site to collect more people. The fact that demonstrations are illegal put a damper on the first suggestion. So everyone returned to the Forum, where the shouting attracted Dame Nita Barrow, the NGO convener. The article begins with the director addressing the crowd outside in the main court.

Heiny Srour: *Leila and the Wolves*, which is part of the Filmforum, was supposed to be screened today at 2:30. Two days ago we had the agreement of the Kenyan Censorship Board, so we thought everything was alright. Then 24 hours later they withdrew the permission to screen it. And they withdrew it by force from the Kenyan National Theatre. They have no right whatsoever to do that. If they respect themselves a little bit they should not go back on something they agreed to do.

The film is about the historical role of women in Palestine and Lebanon. And I would like to say that a similar film on the history of Israeli women called *Anou Banou* was screened without any problem. Now please listen to Dame Nita Barrow who has been doing everything she can since this morning to release the film. And she's on our side.

Dame Nita Barrow: May I ask that women of this Forum please return with me to the Peace Tent where I can speak with you over a microphone there. The Peace Tent has been put here as a place to resolve differences. There have been many problems in relation to the films. We are more aware of them than any of you could be.

[After assembling in the Peace Tent] Please take every man I see out of here. I say out of here and I mean out of here. Please get the man out of the back of this tent. You women are marching about the wrong things. You should be marching for the privilege to be able to resolve your differences yourselves. Get the men out of the tent. If there are any men in any sight of the tent, this meeting cannot go on. If those men do not move, find security immediately and say that the problem I have is not with the women of the Forum, it is with the men who refuse to do what we ask.

Members of the Crowd: You're diluting the issue. Let's get to the background of this.

Dame Nita Barrow: I'm fully prepared to have the background, but first I would just like to ask what purpose you expect to achieve when you go out of the grounds of this University. Because in this country, which I've made clear and I repeated this morning several times, you have no right to march unless you obtain official permission. As long as you are on the grounds of the University, you are under a certain amount of protection.

If you have a question to discuss, as I have been discussing all day about this particular film, then we find alternatives. If there are no alternatives, we find what steps we can take. I hear hotheads saying it is the government, it is the films, we want the films. Do you really believe that by marching out of here downtown you're going to get the films?

Members of the Crowd: Do you really think we'll get it by talking here?



Filmforum representative Perminder Vir at a press conference discussing censorship.

DAWN ARMSTRONG

Dame Nita Barrow: You may not get it by talking here, but you have far more chance of getting it talking as we are doing. You are not going to get it shown, I can assure you. You might not even get it back; and I know and respect this producer. In fact I was delighted when she came. She stated to me early this morning that her film had first passed and then they had come and taken it away and removed the passing.

I hope she told you that it was because some women had violated something that we worked very hard to obtain, that the films would be passed by documentation to expedite them. The documentation was taken at face-value. And as I have found out, some of her own countrywomen showed a film which violated that. Now I hope she told you that. As a consequence, she has suffered with a film that is very good. But let me say now, that it is not going to increase any chances if you proceed to march. It puts you in personal jeopardy. I only wish that those who wish to march do so after I've explained the case. But as you leave you leave by one entrance and you give up your Forum badge because you are not marching in the name of the Forum.

Now I want to be clear. I have no protective rights over you. The choice is yours. Alternatively we can get a caucus on what is to be done. We still have 24 more hours. The floor is over to you.

[Hubbub from the crowd] I'm not having a cacophony of sound. One person at a time can speak. After that those who wish to march can proceed to do so. We'll have your badges collected.

Heiny Srour: Sisters, I'm going to explain the case. Now the organizers of the Filmforum, Mrs. Hannah Fisher, gave a priority list to the Kenyan government three days ago. It included my film so they would have enough time to screen it. Two days ago we had a piece of paper stating it had cleared the Kenyan Censorship Board. And then 24 hours later, they came to the premises of the Kenyan National Theater, right here at the University, and took the copy by force. And that you have to know is illegal. They have no right whatsoever to take back a copy which does not belong to them.

Dame Nita Barrow: Just a moment. Just a moment.

Heiny Srour: With respect, Dame Nita, really, honestly. Thank you very much for everything you are doing. I know you have been working on this case since the morning. But I think it is also, with respect to everything you've said, a fact that the Kenyan government is doing something illegal by taking the film forcibly after having given their permission to show it.

Now I heard, and I don't know the facts, so maybe you will be able to document this. I heard that in fact they are withdrawing this film because some Lebanese women showed a film about the issue of the Lebanese war and the Israeli invasion. I don't know what happened. But I know certainly something, which is that I am part of the Filmforum. I am part of nothing else. I am a filmmaker; I am an artist. Now why on earth is it

that a film showing the contribution of Arab women in history is not shown?

I think that the whole issue of censorship first should be opposed, whether for me or for the rest of my colleagues in the Filmforum who have been censored, especially the video filmmakers. First of all the issue of censorship is wrong because I happen to believe that we are old enough to make up our minds and we shouldn't be treated like little girls. I think it is extremely insulting. Number two, on this particular film, I think the Kenyan government ought to respect themselves enough that once they have given the agreement on paper to show it two days ago, they should stick by that. I don't know whether it is true that other Lebanese women violated the laws or didn't violate the laws. I know one thing. I am part of the Filmforum and I should not be punished as a Lebanese for mistakes other Lebanese have or have not made. I just cannot accept this logic. I will also not accept that an Israeli woman makes a mistake and that other Israeli women get punished. That's wrong.

My issue is not just over my film being censored and being withheld illegally. I am sick, me and all the women filmmakers, and I would like them all to speak. All the women filmmakers who came from all over the world to show their videos and films are sick and tired of the disruption of the Filmforum because the Kenyan government has been treating us like little children who are not adult enough to make up our own minds. It is sad that on an occasion like this, when women are coming from all over the world, and it's a very exceptional occasion, we are going to be censored and treated like little children. On which occasion on earth are women not going to be censored? This is the whole issue quite frankly. Censorship touches all women, so I would now like to debate this important issue here.

Dame Nita Barrow: I'm sorry, the Peace Tent is closed to that debate because for us the issue of censorship has been an ongoing battle. And what is more, the people who brought things here knew there was censorship. We have tried to short-circuit it. □

Further Readings:

- "Beyond Symbols: An Interview with Heiny Srour," *Connexions* #16, Spring 1985.
- "Leila and the Wolves: Liberation and Feminism," *Outwrite* #34, March 1985.



FLORENCE GARDNER

Spontaneous demonstration protesting the confiscation of *Leila and the Wolves*.

Subversive Acts



In the face of development schemes which have been detrimental to women's lives, and political, social and economic turmoil, an International Third World feminist group has emerged to propose alternative development strategies for Third World countries. DAWN, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, formed in August 1984 at a meeting in Bangalore, India. From that meeting, a paper was produced which soon was expanded into the book, *Development, Crisis and Alternative Vision, Third World Women's Perspective*.

DAWN was one of the more visible groups at the Forum. They organized a number of workshops covering such topics as the effects of development on women, the global political, economic and cultural crisis, and feminist writing and publishing from which the following excerpts are taken.

Panelists at the "Feminist Publishing in the Third World" workshop included representatives from Kali for Women, a Third World women's publishing house in Delhi, India; the Women of Africa Series of the Zimbabwe Publishing House; Simorgh, a new women's resource and publication center in Pakistan; ISIS Internacional based in Chile; *Mulherio*, a Brazilian feminist monthly newspaper; and *Asian Women's Liberation*, a Japanese feminist publication. Publishing took on an expanded definition as songwriters and women who produce slide shows also participated as panelists and demonstrated how their work effectively includes all women regardless of their level of literacy.

The following papers were put together by Moroccan author and academician, Fatima Mernissi and members of Kali Press for Women.

Subversion in Patriarchal Societies

Is writing a subversive act? How do women experience writing? Is it a liberating act? And why is it so? Is it a dangerous act? And why is it so?

Many Third World women writers have had to jeopardize their careers, their family lives, or their own lives to be able to write at all. Many women experience writing as a dangerous, lethal act. Why is this so?

We should never as women forget that power resides with the ones who write—whether it is sacred texts, sacred laws, or advertisements, or even revolutionary manifestoes.

If writing is an exercise in power for everyone, it is more so for women. The next time we are in a revolutionary setting we should let the men carry arms and grant ourselves the privilege of writing revolutionary dogmas, revolutionary manifestoes and revolutionary laws.

Underestimating the power of writing is one of the best techniques established authorities have found to discourage intellectuals in general and women in particular. We often hear that intellectuals do nothing but write. Nothing but write? We often hear international agency circle experts differentiating research from action, as if you can act without research, without knowing where you are going, which path you should take among all the various possibilities. In revolutionary circles we often witness a glorification of the act of taking the gun and scorn for the act of writing, of thinking. This is one reason why Third World revolutions have so often been reduced to a change of power elites, not a change in mentalities, in vision. And this is why often, after the revolutionaries take over, women's oppression does not change.

Writing was, and still is, in many societies, a male privilege. There is nothing more abnormal in many societies than a woman writing. And this is not only in the Third World. Remember the time, not so long ago, when English and French women novelists in sophisticated and "progressive" Europe, had to hide behind masculine names to be able to express themselves through writing? Remember George Eliot and George Sand? Writing and interpreting the sacred texts in Christian Europe was the privilege of the Church for centuries. In present Muslim theocracies it is still considered the privilege of male imams.

Writing was, and still is, in many societies, the most inaccessible privilege of the power elites, since writing is an act which necessitates long years of training. Peasants of feudal Europe did not write. They could and did make revolutions, behead kings and disrupt dynasties, but

once that was done they witnessed helplessly the takeover of what was once *their* revolution, by the ones who could manipulate the most absolute instrument of power: writing.

Writing is about power because it fixes ideas in material forms; it escapes time; it defies the fleeting nature of events. Such is the power of religion; such is the power of law. Often religion and law are confused and indistinguishable. In many Third World societies women's inferiority is legitimized, institutionalized, embodied in two fundamental texts which create societal order: Religion and Law; and women's access to both religion and law in theocracies is billed as a sacrilegious act. The whole debate about women's rights in Islam for example, is centred around the



privilege of law-making which, in the case of women, is synonymous with the interpretation of the Quran, of the religious texts. Whoever has the power to interpret religious texts has the power to write the laws. It is evident in theocracies, be they Muslim or Catholic or Hindu or Confucian, that texts both legal and religious, are against women because women are excluded from the act of conceiving of the text, the act of writing.

Women have been, and still are, oppressed because they have not gained access to the most significant act of privilege making: writing the world for others: it can be in writing religion, interpreting the sacred texts, or writing advertising (interpreting sexual identity, defining femininity, etc.). Writing advertising scripts for the American television and film industries is the equivalent of interpreting religious texts in theocracies such as Pakistan or Morocco; and if our image in both media advertising or religious ordering of the world is what it is today, it is because we women are not allowed to exercise that power. And any one of us trying to do so, is shaking the foundations of the unjust orders.

Writing is always about power: you



need not be writing about religion or advertising for modern media, to shake the foundations of power. A tiny little poem can transform reality and give you what power is about: that feeling in your stomach which makes you forget about the danger of dissidence, which gives you the courage to resist.

Feminist Publishing

Without exception, feminist publishing has come about as a result of, and in response to, women's growing consciousness regarding themselves and their status in society, and—again without exception—the symbiosis between the women's movement and the literature it has produced has radicalised and energised both.

In the Third World, this phenomenon is so new, that the attempt of this panel will be first to articulate it, then look at examples as they exist in different regions of the Third World, and finally, explore the directions it can take in the future. Case studies and overviews from all regions will form the basis of discussion, and serve as examples of successful initiatives.

More important sometimes than the answers one arrives at in such an enquiry, are the questions one poses. Is the political content of feminist publishing more evident in the Third World? Can one say that the link between the content and defining one's identity as a Third World woman is more apparent? What are the dynamics between feminist writers and theoreticians and feminist publishing? Is the writing primarily political or can it be political and creative?

Given that the link between feminist publishing and the women's movement is indisputable, it might be appropriate here to see how the movement in the Third World differs from that in the West: what are its primary concerns? What are the issues? Equally, what are its values and priorities? Is there a qualitative difference between feminism here and in the West, and if so, how does it influence the pub-



Panelists for the workshop *Feminist Publishing in the Third World*.

lishing, both in its nature and content?

The controversial (and convenient) notion of the subject matter of women's writing has been revolutionised by feminist publishing: women's concerns are now seen as "central" rather than "peripheral," integral to the content of feminist publishing. Again, one might ask: can such writing take a different path in the Third World? Need it always be separatist? Can it, for example, listen to men talking, sharing, responding to the women's movement? Can this legitimately be part of its scope? Are there, in fact, "legitimate" and "illegitimate" subjects? Are the poor a valid subject and the elite not? In First World feminist publishing there has been tremendous guilt about "middle-class" preoccupations, backgrounds, lifestyles. Should Third World writers fall into a similar trap? Should we not resist class guilt and refuse to be marginalised? Should we not challenge all rules that tell us what is forbidden and what sanctioned?

While being always alert to the pitfalls of self-censorship in the choice of subject matter, one must be equally vigilant about the overt censorship that is prevalent in many societies, where the objective is to silence dissent, muzzle enquiry and negate the expression that either runs counter to the dominant ideology or seeks to expose

it. Examples of these abound. The challenge of feminist publishing is twofold: for the writer, the very real danger of being jailed, for the publisher, insolvency as a result of published material being banned or proscribed.

The panel seeks to broaden its base by considering those women who are engaged in publishing and promoting women's writing, but from within the mainstream. Is the decision to operate in this manner a deliberate one? What is the relationship between a feminist writer and her mainstream publisher; between a Third World writer and her First World (albeit feminist) publisher? What are the dynamics here? The choices or alternatives? Are there any?

An attempt will be made here to initiate a dialogue between First and Third World writers and publishers to see whether a publishing strategy can be evolved between them and whether feminist values can provide the *modus operandi* that has long eluded mainstream attempts at doing so. Successful attempts at South-South and North-South collaboration can serve as examples. □

[See next page for quotes from workshop panelists.]

Women's media networks

by Eunice Mathu

Unless women develop their own alternative media, the dominant established media will continue to reflect women's social, political, emotional, sexual and other problems and concerns with a lot of bias, hence leaving many of the world's women ignorant of the causes which have led to their present condition.

These conclusions were drawn out of a workshop on "Women's alternative media networks" organized by the International Women's Tribune Centre and with panellists from Women's Alternative Media Unit of Latin America; Media Women in Africa Features Service; Depthnews Features Service of Asia; Caribbean Women's Features Service and Association des Professionnelles Africaines de la Communication of French-speaking West Africa.

All the services run with a team that developing alternative of correspondents who are paid media for women has not been either on a monthly basis or per easy, but at least has raised a feature contributed. The features awareness of the pressing cover a variety of issues affecting women's issues. Said Estellera women such as health systems, Miniques of Depthnews, "there is legal, political, education oppor- a great demand for our features in tunities, working conditions, the Asian region and the women's cultural battles and many others. features have the highest pick-up rate by the clients of the Press Trust of India under whose auspices Depthnews operates."

Some of the services have other lines of publications such as "Mujer", the monthly 30-page bulletin of the Women's Alternative Media Unit and African Women Link, the quarterly development newsletter of the Media Women in Africa Features Service.

All the panellists gave the backgrounds of their media networks and it was apparent that all of them started within this decade and through efforts of UNESCO, who, although they do not fund these networks any more, were instrumental in their establishment in the late 70s and early 80s.

It was clear from the panellists high quality articles on women's

issues available to them.

They have also made journalists, particularly female journalists, more aware of their responsibility in the destiny of women, increased the flow of alternative information for and about women at regional and international level, and also organized women to exert pressure on their local media to change the images of women.

Networking amongst the alternative media was also discussed and the possibilities of exchanging features from one region to another, as this would help create an awareness of what is happening to women all over the world. However, financial constraints were seen as the main drawback to this kind of networking. Already, some of the regional networks services exchange their features.

For further information contact:

- *Unidad de Comunicacion Alternativa de la Mujer, Mujer, Casilla 16-637, Correo 9, Santiago, Chile.*
- *Depthnews Women's Features, Box 1843, Manila, Philippines.*
- *Caribbean Women's Features Service, WAND, Extra Mural Department, University of the West Indies, Bridgetown, Barbados.*
- *Media Women in Africa Features Service, Box 50795, Nairobi, Kenya.*
- *Association des Professionnelles Africaines de la Communication, BP 4234, Dakar, Senegal.*
- *International Women's Tribune Centre, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017.*

FORUM '85, JULY 16, 1985

Quotes from Workshop Panelists



All of the songs that I have are in fact not mine. They have emerged from our movement, they have emerged from our discussion groups, they have emerged at the time of crisis. All I have done is to just sketch what is in the air when all of us are together.

The words are floating in the air, the spirit is floating and it's just this which has been put together and put to folk tunes. In that sense all of these songs are songs of all of us wherever we are.

We need to question this whole notion of authorship. You give me the words, you give me the feelings and I put my name on it. Is that right? And why do I continue to do this? I think we need to challenge this. We need to ask ourselves if our values are going to be any different, or is the capitalist value, the free market, going to define for us the rules of authorship or copyright or whatever. I do not believe in it. I think we need to create new rules, new kinds of authorship and we need to move away from "this is mine because it's mine!" It's all a product of the group, of the air which I breathe, and that air is created by all of us together.

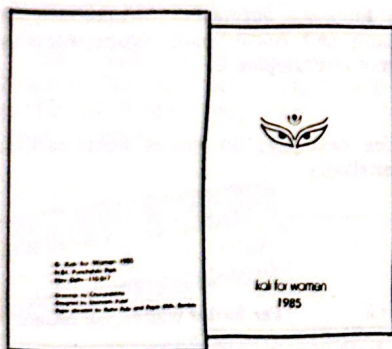
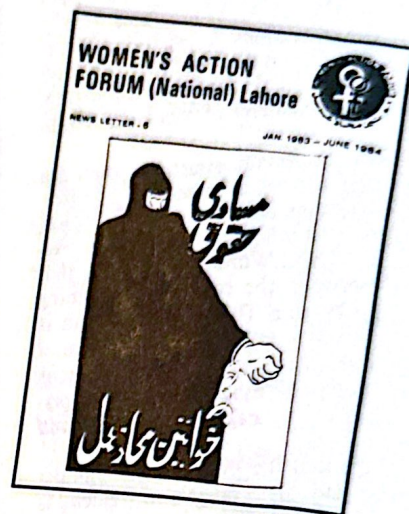
— Kamla Bhasin, Action for Development, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The poetry of women is taken as a diary, not a creative process; and there lies the universal problem. Any woman who is writing anywhere is never taken seriously as a writer of the times but as a writer of personal history.

The women writers before me used the male gender as their perspective when writing poetry just like the male writers. When I started using the female gender, people said that what I wrote could not be poetry. The female gender [in the first-person] has rarely been used in Urdu, Persian or Arabic poetry. If it was ever used, it was by Hansa in the pre-Mohammad period and she used it in poetry expressing love for her children and her father, not to describe physical love.

In 1960, when I started writing poetry, I addressed it to women. Traditionally, ghazal [love poetry] is written by men and addressed to women. The general reaction to my poetry in all the newspapers, literary magazines and media was: "She cannot write ghazal just because ghazal means 'to speak to women.' She is a woman. How can she talk to herself?"

— Kishwar Naheed, Pakistani poet and author



We have benefited from the developments in Western feminist theory and analysis. Their debates have had meaning for us. For example, the Marxist feminist analysis describing the relationship between class and patriarchy, between production and reproduction and between ideology and economic base are relevant. But at the same time, I think we recognize that feminist theorizing in the First World is done in the particular context of advanced capitalism, of a highly industrialized urban society. Women in the First World fail to recognize the relationship of imperialism and colonization in their theoretical writings. This is, therefore, one of the challenges to feminist writing in the Third World—to take account of our particular situation and to make links.

— Bina Agarwal, Indian feminist

Contact:

- Kali Press for Women, N-84 Panchshila Park, New Delhi 110017, India. Upcoming titles Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Women, Religion and Social Change edited by Diana L. Ecks and Devaki Jain; and Truth-Tales, contemporary writing by Indian women.
- Simorgh Women's Resource and Publication Centre, 19-B White House Lane, Sunderdas Road, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Zimbabwe Publishing House, Women of Africa Series, Box BW-350, Harare, Zimbabwe.

- See "Resources," pages 62-64 for addresses of participating publications.

Further Readings:

- Connexions #16, Media: Getting to Women, Spring 1985.
- Connexions #13, Women's Words, Summer 1984.
- The Tribune #14, Women and Media, First Quarter 1981 and The Tribune #23, Women and Media 2, Second Quarter 1983, women and development quarterly in English and Spanish, International

Women's Tribune Centre, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017.

- Quest, Communication and Control, vol. III, #2, Fall 1976.
- Isis WICCE: Women's World #2, Women Transform Media, 1984.
- Isis International, Women and Media: Analysis, Alternatives and Action, #2, 1985.
- Rolling Our Own: Women as Printers, Publishers and Distributors, Eileen Cadman, Gail Chester and Agnes Pivot, Minority Press Group, 1981, London.

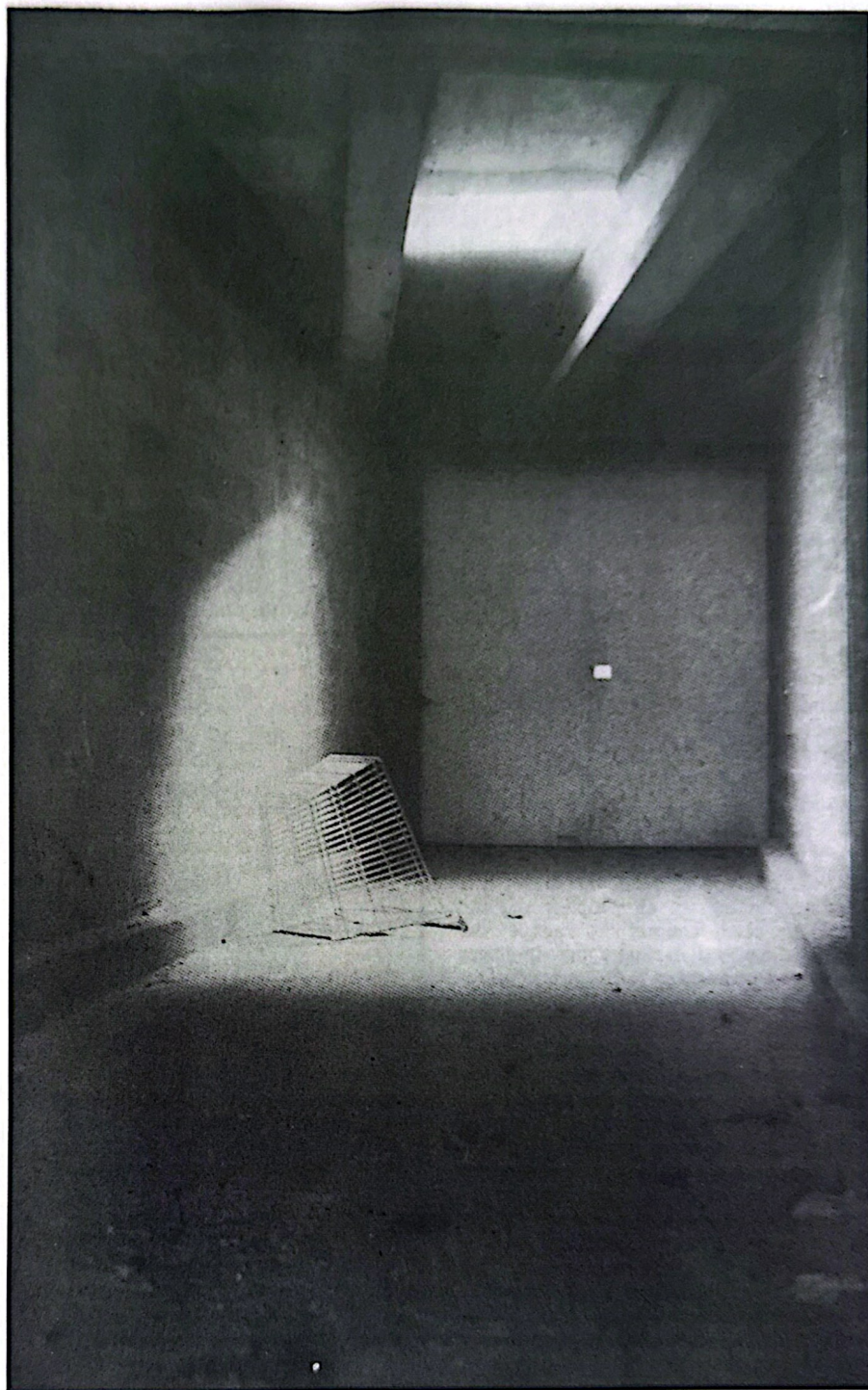
The One Trillion Dollar Question

In 1974 the UN, recognizing the need for a restructuring of the global economy in order to eliminate the economic causes that threaten world peace, called for a New International Economic Order (NIEO). When Luis Echeverría, then president of Mexico, opened the first UN Women's Conference in Mexico City a year later, he stressed that the NIEO was a precondition for improving the status of women in the Third World. For without a fundamental change in the economic disparity between the Third World and industrialized nations, and the conditions that create this disparity, the goals of the Decade for Women—peace, equality and development—are unattainable.

The global economic crisis and a call for a new international economic order were the focus of a number of workshops at the Forum. Women around the world have borne the brunt of the world's worsening economy as unemployment rises and the standard of living declines. For women of the Third World, this crisis is heightened by the increasing debts owed to international lending agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Based in Washington, D.C., the World Bank and the IMF work closely together, even sharing board members. Although there are 143 member nations in the IMF, control is maintained primarily by the US, with Great Britain, West Germany and Japan exercising a strong influence. Voting power is determined by each country's investment in the bank. These two institutions have been instrumental in implementing economic and developmental policies that have favorably served transnational corporations, but have generally had a negative impact on Third World countries.

Today, many of the countries who have been targets of these policies are finding that they cannot possibly pay back these loans. Decisions concerning the repayment of foreign debts is a central issue for many Third World nations. A recent conference in Cuba included 1200 representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean who came together to discuss a regional strategy for not paying back their debts. The conditions that are stimulating these discussions are being felt more and more by the industrialized nations. As domestic lending institutions fold and corporations move their plants to countries that provide cheaper labor, women in the industrialized countries are beginning to discuss the need for global economic redistribution.



PEKKA PÄÄKKÖ

"If the colonizers had to give us back everything that they took unjustly over time, their present economy would crumble."



A market in Colombia.

The following article presents excerpts from papers delivered by Rahantavololana Razafindrakotohasina Andriamanjato of Madagascar and Parvati Krishnan of India in a workshop entitled "Women and the International Economic Order" convened by the World Council for Peace. The other two panelists were Nour El Sadik from Sudan and Leonor Alda Concha from Mexico.

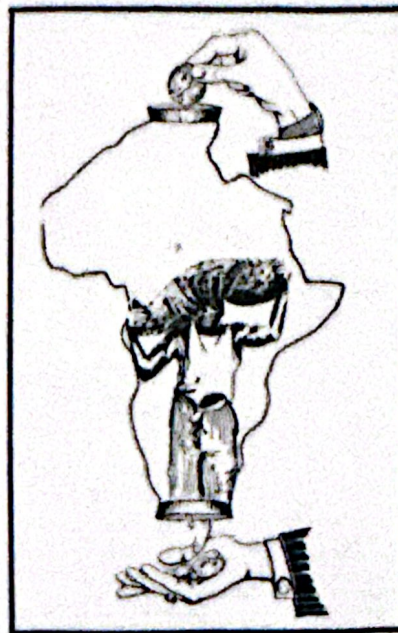
Rahantavololana Razafindrakotohasina Andriamanjato is president of the Women's Science and Development Association and a civil engineer for public works. Her paper was translated from the French by Connexions.

The NIEO is founded on 20 principles. I will only cite the most important: the sovereign equality of the states; the self-determination of all peoples; and the right of each country to adopt the economic and social system that it judges to be the best adapted to its own development. Thus, the NIEO rejects colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, forceful acquisition of territories, interference in the domestic affairs of other states, and the economic or political coercion that prevents states from following the social regime and the mode of development that they choose. Because these principles have not been respected on the international level, we have witnessed a lot of destruction and suffering during this Decade.

The presently developing countries have all, at some time, been colonized countries. With the end of the colonial era, many of these countries found themselves left with a legacy of malnutrition and hunger, illiteracy and semi-literacy, sickness and premature death.

Colonization did not bring civilization. On the contrary, it degraded and exhausted the land's natural resources as well as the cultures of many of the colonized people. This is why one of the most important principles of the NIEO is the right of colonized and formerly colonized countries to obtain restitution and compensation from the former occupants for the exploitation of their natural resources.

Since the NIEO was declared, this principle has received the least amount of publicity because the media is not interested in disseminating it. In effect, if the colonizers had to give us back everything that they took unjustly over time, their present economy would crumble. If, in addition, we asked them for interest on the capital that they utilized, it is they who



would be bankrupt and not us, the "developing countries." The so-called aid that our former colonizers give us is far less than the amount they took from us.

After World War II, Germany was obliged to pay damages to countries devastated by the Nazis. Why shouldn't we also be repaid for our losses during colonization? We should not speak of aid but of restitution. They are the debtors.

This year, 1985, the foreign debt of the developing countries rose to the astronomical sum of one trillion dollars. For the countries of Africa south of the Sahara, the debt was \$60 billion in 1970. Today, in 1985, it has reached \$150 billion, with \$15 billion in interest to be paid each year.

(For Latin America, the debt is more than \$300 billion, with \$37 billion in interest.) By investing in developing countries, the TNCs do not lose one cent. On the contrary, they profit quite quickly, because for every dollar they invest, they get more than three in return. Who then is helping whom?

Furthermore, what we import from the industrialized countries costs us a disproportionate amount compared to what we receive for the raw materials and agricultural goods we sell. The prices of our goods stagnate or fall, whereas the prices of the products we import rise without end. Thus, as President Fidel Castro said, if in 1961, 200 tons of bananas could buy a bulldozer, in 1985 it takes 800 tons. And that's true for all our countries. That means that we must work four times harder in order to have the same standard of living as in 1961. To aggravate things, populations have drastically grown and many countries have suffered catastrophes such as floods and droughts.

It is the law of maximum profit that pushes certain governments and the leaders of the TNCs to prevent the implementation of the NIEO. What does it matter to them that in the Third World a child dies every two minutes or that poverty kills as much as wars do? What's important for them is that they themselves live well.

We call, therefore, for the solidarity of our sisters living in affluent countries. Just as you take initiatives in the struggle for peace, why don't you take part in the fight for development? You do marches for peace, you make human chains of friendship, you have camps such as Greenham Common.

And for development? Out of friendship or charity, you can find old clothing and surplus food to send us. But you need to find the means to force your governments to institute a more just and equitable economic order so that the objectives of the Decade of Women can someday be reached.

Parvati Krishnan is in the leadership of the World Federation of Trade Unions and is an active member of the Indian branch of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Since World War II, a whole series of countries have attained their political independence. But the clock seems to have been turned back. The Western countries are endeavoring to bring those countries back under their political leadership through economic control. Because of the armaments race, because of the mad global strategy that is being followed by the Reagan Administration, developing countries are being forced to spend money on their own defense budgets which would be more wisely spent on development. Developing countries are spending 6% of their budget on defense and only 1.9% on development work. So you can see how important it is for us to understand that the issue of the New International Economic Order and the issue of disarmament and peace are very closely interlinked. But this is not just a question of

money; it is a question of developing countries being allowed to develop the way they see fit.

Under the present international economic system, most Third World countries are suffering from dwindling export incomes, worsening trade terms and growing balance of payment deficits. From 1970-78, the outflow of funds from developing countries in the form of interest and profits that were being repatriated by the TNCs amounted to \$120,000 million. In 1980, the foreign debt of all these countries reached the enormous sum of \$400,000 million. Today the financing of the debt and the repayment or repatriation of profits is fivefold the original loan or aid. These developing countries are getting robbed by the World Bank, the IMF and the other commercial financial institutions.

The people who suffer most are women. Today, 570 million women are living in conditions of grinding poverty, malnutrition, disease and with no protected water supplies. So you can imagine the magnitude of the problem.

The Seventh Summit of the Non-Aligned Countries which was held in Delhi in March last year [1984], took up the matter of the NIEO. But what has happened, I'm sorry to say, is that except for some organizations like the World Federation of Trade Unions [WFTU], the majority talked about a New International Economic Order without understanding what it's all about. The bourgeoisie in those countries think it means that they'll be able to share profits or that there will be an increase in investments by transnational corporations in their countries which will somehow benefit them. Nevertheless, when a TNC in France closes down its concerns and shifts everything to Malaysia or India because labor is cheaper, we continue to pay the same price for the finished product even though the workers are paid less. Meanwhile, thousands of workers in France are jobless. So we don't consider the NIEO to mean that a TNC can set up its concerns at the cost of the French or the American workers.

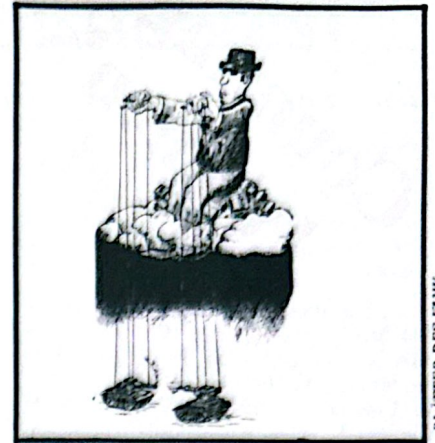
We understand the difference between aid that comes to us on the basis of equitable terms—aid that is given to help us to develop and progress—and aid which is there for mere profit-making. □

Question and Comments

A WOMAN FROM BRITAIN: One of the solutions of the New International Economic Order is the non-payment of debts by the Third World. I passionately sympathize with the problems of the Third World but what I'm worried about is that I haven't heard a single constructive proposal of how it can be done without bringing the rest of the world into poverty too, because the non-payment of those debts or the interest on them will result in the collapse of the international monetary system. Now you might say, "Great! The collapse of the international monetary system would be fine and would bring about revolution," [laughter and cheers from the crowd], but I'm worried that it can't be done at this moment. So are there any constructive proposals to prevent the chaos that will result?

ANDRIAMANJATO: For every dollar invested in our country, a profit of \$3.00 is realized. They have already been repaid threefold. So we don't need to pay them back.

Just as you
take initiatives in
the struggle for
peace,
why don't you
take part in the
fight for
development.



A WOMAN FROM BRAZIL: The industrialized countries should take the money that they would use in armaments and give it to the banks to pay them back.

PARVATI KRISHNAN: Don't forget that bank propaganda is very strong. Even some wings of the trade union movement argue against disarmament which they say will create unemployment. This is exactly the type of propaganda that is used against us.

A WOMAN FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF NEW FILIPINAS: Actually if only 10% of the money spent on armaments by the Western countries would be paid back to the banks, their economies would grow even more.

A WOMAN FROM CANADA: If the world monetary system collapses from the non-payment of the debts, I say, "Viva la collapse!" [laughter and applause] It's not the people of the developing world who are causing the collapse. It's the economic policies of the developed countries and there's already an economic crisis there.

A WOMAN FROM CUBA: What shocks me is the talk of chaos when in Latin America, 15 million children die each year, there is a threat of nuclear holocaust, and for 27 years we have suffered under a blockade from the US, and the US is now doing the same thing to Nicaragua. So I'm wondering what you mean by chaos when the developed countries have already created a situation of chaos in our countries. □

Further Readings:

- From Dependency to Development edited by H. Muñoz, 1981.
- "Throwing Off the Silken Chains: an Interview with Paulo Nyerere," South, August 1984.
- "The North-South Dialogue Revisited: Some Personal Reflections," by I. Fishihata, Third World Quarterly, July 1983.
- "Pointers to the Eighties: UNCTAD in Belgrade" by F. Claremonte, Raw Materials Report, Vol.2, No.3.
- "Trumping the Third World" by Federman, South, March 1982.
- "The Remaking of Africa: African Partners in Development" by G. Alagiah, South, December 1984.



A Jamaican handicrafts factory.

Counting Women's Work

The Wages for Housework Campaign has been organizing since 1972 for recognition and compensation for houseworkers worldwide. At the 1980 NGO Conference in Copenhagen, they raised the issue of housework being economically uncompensated labor and soon after launched a petition campaign to get all women's work included in the Gross National Product (GNP).

Faced with the regulation that only registered NGOs and media are allowed to enter the official UN Women's Decade Conference, Wages for Housework formed the NGO, Housewives in Dialogue. They were then able to attend the Preparatory Commission meeting held in Vienna in March 1985. There they proposed an amendment to a paragraph concerning women's labor in the document, Forward-Looking Strategies. They spent the next few months lobbying, so that by the time the amendment was presented by a delegate from Sierra Leone at the Nairobi Conference, it was passed with no objections.

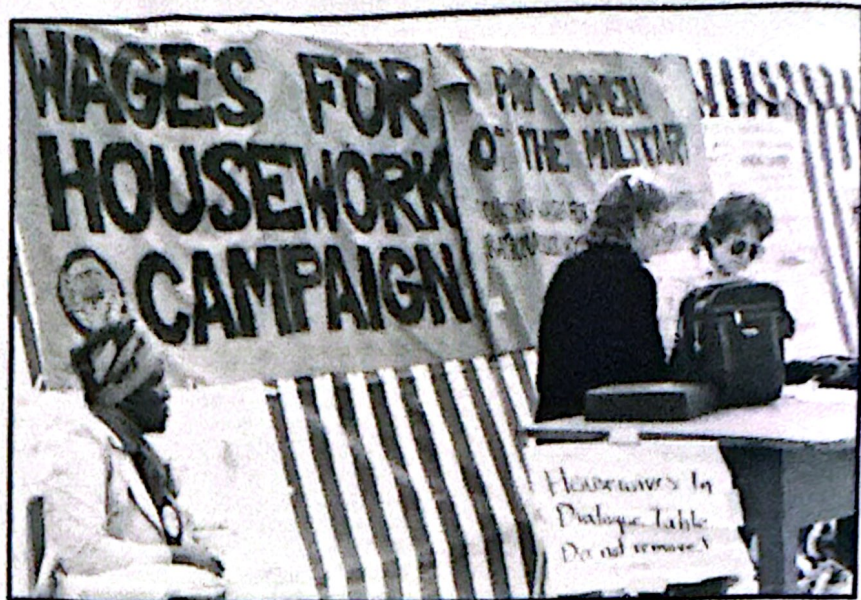
(Compiled from a Wages for Housework press release, July 19, 1985 and *Wages for Housework International Campaign Journal*, Summer, 1985.)

A VICTORY FOR WOMEN

On July 18 at the UN World Government Conference in Nairobi, the International Wages for Housework Campaign won a major victory. Governments in committee agreed to include all women's work, paid and unpaid, in the Gross National Product of every country. The GNP is supposed to be the total value of goods and services produced, but up to now it has only included goods and services exchanged for money. Women's unwaged work, which is estimated in some countries to produce as much as 50% of the GNP, has been left out.

The governments in committee agreed to amend Paragraph 120 of the Forward Looking Strategies document which the conference is considering. It now reads:

The remunerated and, in particular, unremunerated contributions of women to all aspects and sectors of development should be recognized, and appropriate efforts should be made to measure and reflect these contributions in national accounts and economic statistics, and in the Gross National Product. Concrete steps should be taken to quantify the unremunerated contribution of women to food and agricultural production, reproduction and household activities.



This victory is the result of massive pressure from the women gathered in Nairobi, and from women who have raised this issue in every country of the world. It will mean that women everywhere will be better able to pressure their government to recognise women's contribution and therefore to recognise the justice of all our demands.

The Wages for Housework campaign has made available in a dozen languages a Women Count—Count Women's Work petition that will be used to ensure that governments implement the resolution passed in Nairobi.

A one-day work stoppage by the women of the world has also been called. The day is set for October 24, which coincides with the 10th anniversary of Icelandic women's general strike. Icelandic women marked the beginning of the UN Women's Decade by demonstrating that when women stop work, everything stops.

A PETITION FOR ALL WOMEN TO ALL GOVERNMENTS

WHEREAS women do 2/3 of the world's work, we receive only 5% of the world's income and own less than 1% of the world's assets;

WHEREAS women are the poorer sex, and Black and Third World women are the poorest of all, and the poorer we are the more work we are forced to do;

WHEREAS women produce all the workers of the world, yet this is not considered work and we are not considered workers;

WHEREAS women, with the help of children, grow at least 1/2 of the world's food, yet we are denied the right to the technology of our choice;

WHEREAS women do the work of caring for children, we are often threatened with the loss of child custody;

WHEREAS most of the work women do is invisible and unpaid, and any welfare, pensions, benefits or services we receive are

considered not a right, not a wage, but a charity;

WHEREAS despite our enormous contribution and despite lip service to women's equality, women everywhere are denied equal pay, occupational safety, health, housing, education, information, childcare, birthing conditions and birth control of our choice, in other words all basic human rights;

WHEREAS there is no peace as long as people anywhere, beginning with women and children, are struggling to survive the holocaust of overwork, ecological devastation and famine;

WHEREAS because of women's pressure internationally, the United Nations has called on all governments to count "the contribution of the unpaid work that women do in the farms, at home and in other fields" (UN Decade for Women Draft Programme of Action, 1980);

THEREFORE, we petition every government to count the contribution to the economy of all women's work, so that it is recognized and reflected in every Gross National Product. □

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Contact:

• Wages for Housework Campaign, P.O. Box 14512, San Francisco, CA, 94114, USA or c/o Kings Cross Women's Centre, Box 297, London NW6 5QU, England.

Further Readings:

• All Work and No Pay—Women, Housework and the Wages Due, edited by Wendy Edmond and Suzie Fleming.
• The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community, by Selma James with Mariarosa Dalla Costa.

Both available through Falling Wall Press, 75 West St., Old Market, Bristol BS20XB, England or any Wages for Housework office.

A Conflict of Interest

The following are excerpts from a workshop facilitated by the World Council of Churches entitled "Women Organizing in Transnational Companies." TNCs play a major role in the world economy, directly affecting women as workers, consumers, or farmers. Today it is widely acknowledged that TNCs have had an adverse effect on development policies as well as on the quality of life in general. This workshop was called not only to discuss the problems caused by TNCs, but to develop strategies in organizing against them. The article begins with a paper presented by Theresa Chimambe of Zimbabwe, and concludes with comments from the audience.

I wish to discuss the role of transnational corporations [TNC] in the development process in Africa: how they have affected women, and how women can organize to fight against the negative effects of TNC-related development.

First of all, I would like to define the term "transnational corporation" [which is the same as "multinational corporation"]. In a report entitled "The Impact of Multinational Corporations on Development and on International Relations," a United Nations group of "eminent persons" defines TNCs as "those enterprises which own or control production or service facilities outside the country in which they are based. Such enterprises are not always incorporated or private: they can also be cooperatives or state-owned entities." This is the definition which I adopt throughout my paper.

In the early 1970s, there was growing concern and misgivings felt about the impact of TNCs on the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society. Since then, the notion of TNCs as agents of growth has increasingly been questioned.

Now, in analyzing the development potential of TNCs, I think one needs to ask if the very nature of TNCs—that is that they are foreign-owned and controlled, profit-oriented, dependent on the use of capital-intensive methods of production and promote export-oriented growth—is consistent with the development goals of African countries.

And as Africans, what are our development goals? They include the attainment of growth with more equitable distribution of wealth, creation of employment, and elimination of balance of payment deficits. In short, it seems to me there is a fundamental conflict between the objectives of TNCs and the developing countries in Africa.

The first argument in favor of TNCs is that they supplement a nation's resources by providing vital foreign exchange. Secondly, they help to fill the country's deficiency in management, entrepreneurship, technology and other skills. Thirdly, they provide vital contact between local managers and overseas companies. And fourthly, they transfer sophisticated technology, machinery, and equipment to capital-poor countries.

Based on these arguments, governments are urged to provide TNCs with the necessary incentives, such as cheap labor, tax holidays, unlimited exportation of profits, removal of any forms of foreign exchange controls, and so on. Africa's experience shows that these arguments don't hold any water.

The main criticisms of TNCs are that they tend to benefit much more from the developing country than the developing country benefits from the TNC. The tax concessions, for instance, mean that a gain in government revenue is greatly minimized. The exportation of profit means that a country is deprived of potential sur-

pluses which should be reinvested within the country.

Secondly, TNCs promote an uneven pattern of development and worsen the rural/urban imbalance as they acquire new tracts of land by dispossessing the peasantry. Also, in reality, few people gain employment because of the use of capital-intensive technology.

The types of goods that TNCs produce are not necessarily in keeping with the immediate needs and requirements of African countries. They produce luxury goods for the small wealthy minority and invest in hotels when there are slums everywhere.

In Africa TNCs are increasingly becoming associated with injustice, exploitation, pollution, social differentiation and waste. They have dictated to us, and have enmeshed us in a web of undesirable and dependent development, which is based on outward-looking export-led growth. Consequently, Africa has failed to evolve a development strategy of its own. The monopoly advantages TNCs have, in fact, killed local imports and initiatives. However, despite the negative impact of the TNCs, African governments are inviting more and more of them to Africa in the belief that they will answer development needs.

As in the colonial era, they have taken huge tracts of land, forcing landless Africans to work for low wages on agricultural plantations. TNCs have also exploited minerals as Africans supplied the labor at again very low wages. TNCs have also created and maintained a large labor reserve, so that the system of low wages can be perpetuated.

Although most of this was undertaken during the colonial era, in Africa today, the pattern of land ownership has hardly changed. No major land reforms have taken place. In Zimbabwe, where I come from, we were colonized by the British. The British South Africa Company in 1890 came and allocated land to the settlers, pushing the African peasants into very dry areas. The whole proletarianization process was undertaken through land confiscation. The colonial regime also passed laws in alliance with the settlers. I would say that this was the trend in many African countries.

Women have suffered most in this situation because when they were forced to work on the farms, they were in most cases given lower wages than the men. This is still the trend in most African countries. In my country, the government has legislated equal pay for equal work, so this discrepancy has been resolved.

These land alienation policies forced the men to go work in the mines while women stayed in the rural areas. Then the mine owners would justify paying the men low wages by arguing that the women were supporting their husbands by sending food. So, I think women played a significant role in the whole accumulation process in



STUDENT/ASIE

Africa, because they were subsidizing the low wages of their husbands in the mines.

Other problems which have occurred in a lot of African countries are balance of payment difficulties as a result of TNCs importing products which could actually be produced locally. This lack of financial resources has resulted in substantial cuts in social services, such as health care and education. Women have been seriously affected by this.

I would like to specifically mention the situation of the Southern African region. Today this region can rightly be referred to as the heart of TNC activity, with South Africa as the headquarters. TNCs are in all sectors of that economy—in agriculture, mining, manufacturing and banking. Here again you find that land alienation policies, discriminatory credit policies of international financial institutions, and low wages have resulted in the poverty of millions. South Africa, I wish to emphasize, is one of the most glaring examples of how amoral and inhuman TNCs can be in their unbridled greed for profit. They continue to operate and support the oppressive racist Pretoria regime in defiance of the better part of millions of Black South Africans. The Botha regime offers attractive investment terms, such as low wages, anti-union legislation and homeland policies, at the expense of the majority of Blacks in South Africa.

In cases where governments have passed legislation to control TNCs, what has happened is that the TNCs have simply moved on. In Zimbabwe, the introduction of a minimum wage and the control of foreign exchange has caused TNCs to close down and move on to Botswana where wages are lower and incentives are higher.

To conclude, I briefly want to mention some strategies that we, as women, can adopt. We need to understand the complex situation, to identify the negative effects of TNCs. Women, through trade unions or other mass organizations, should press their governments to pass laws to change these practices or, if they can, go on strike against low wages. In this vein, I would like to say there is a need for more support for a withdrawal of investments from South Africa. Women in countries outside Africa can play an important role by lobbying their governments. Many people say that this will affect the masses of Black people, but I have heard people from the ANC say that it is better to suffer temporarily and have independence and freedom, than to suffer eternally under the apartheid system.



LAWG Newsletter/Canada



The following section is excerpted from the last part of the workshop in which strategies and suggestions were presented by various women as to how to change the destructive role of TNCs throughout the world.

A WOMAN FROM THE U.S.: My suggestions are that the conference take some position on TNCs in terms of restrictions and regulations, if that is possible. The other areas I thought of are in establishing some fixed work-day and work-week lengths, minimum wage, overtime, percentages of profits, restrictions and penalties on runaway shops, [companies that pull their business out of one country to set it up in another where labor is cheaper], health and safety regulations, and rights to union organizing.

THE FACILITATOR: In keeping with these suggestions, you know that there is the International Labor Organization [ILO]. They meet regularly, and recommendations are written each year. What most of us could do to help the situation is to go back to our respective countries and try to lobby to get them to ratify these recommendations. We might sign them, but unless we have them ratified, they do not form a part of the laws of the country and therefore, cannot be enforced.

A SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: With regards to the ILO, what is important to remember is that its delegations are composed of representatives of workers, employers and governments. I have been there twice and I can say to you that the absence of women is evident. I would think that one of the strategies would be that women push to be members of the delegations. Also, that women go to these conventions, because the TNCs are all there lobbying.

A WOMAN FROM KENYA CURRENTLY LIVING IN THE U.S.: One thing I would like to mention is that the TNCs in the U.S., or even in Europe, do not stay there because the people demand high wages. So they move to the developing countries and that's how exploitation has continued. They are the new imperialists and the people who are the victims are women and the children. So at this point, in time it is very important that women work together and fight the TNCs. I think if we do it together, we can win, but if we do it individually, I think we will be singled out and will be punished for it.

Looking at the African situation, women have always been in business, but nowadays they work for TNCs earning less money and sacrificing their health. African women should resume their normal traditional business ways instead of working for TNCs. Look at what these corporations have done. Things that were once produced

by women are now being produced by TNCs at the expense of women and children. Women must look at this critically: they can make more money from selling these things themselves. I'm sure that in Kenya if women stopped working in the pineapple industry, or the coconut industry, and started selling bananas on the side of the road, they would be better off than working for these corporations where they cannot take their children. These women could breastfeed their children and sell their bananas, or whatever they have, and still take care of their families.

I am highly opposed to this quiet submission to the corporations. At the same time we are losing our own culture, our own identity to these corporations and giving them power. I think that educated women all over the world should help educate the rural women, get them information on how to do things, how to manage the little products we have. That is what the people need. We have responsibilities to each other as women. We have to work together. We can't leave women in the U.S. and Europe out of this; we can work together with them.

A WOMAN FROM BARBADOS: I recognize what you're saying, that women have to be able to market their own products. But the reality is that we don't control the markets. I look at the Caribbean, at the banana industry, which is controlled by Gist, a British multinational corporation. I have discussed with the people in the banana association why we can't just sell our bananas ourselves. But we don't have the ships. If the people do not sell to Gist and if we do not sell to the companies that own the ships, we don't sell to Europe. The TNCs would just say, "Don't buy their bananas. If they don't come to us, don't buy their bananas." How do we sell our goods in the bigger countries, which are the mainstay of some of our economies in the Caribbean, if we do not have the market? That is the critical issue which we have to confront.

A WOMAN FROM KENYA RESPONDING: I think this is a good point. What I was trying to say is that we cannot isolate ourselves. If, as in your situation in the banana industry, the women refuse to go to work for the corporation, and if the women in Europe and the U.S. decide to work with you as a group on this, I'm sure there is a way. The problem is, though, if some women refuse to work, there will be other women willing to do the job. That's where we have failed. But that's where networking comes in. The people who buy these products after all are usually women. And if women say no more for Dole, no more for this, I'm sure we can win. But we have to be committed to do it if it is to succeed.

A WOMAN FROM FINLAND: I think the most important thing for women is to get



An electronics factory in the Dominican Republic.

governments in all countries to back us in our fight against TNCs. In my country, and I am a member of Parliament, TNCs have become much more important because our government says that we must maintain international competition. But as all the speeches here have shown, international competition is not good for people. Of course we need international trade—not through competition, but through cooperation. That is what we should demand in all countries—cooperation between governments.

A WOMAN FROM SURINAM: I don't think that governments are able to fight against TNCs. Only if they are very progressive, which there are very few in the world. A few days ago I was at a workshop and there was a woman who was in a social democratic party in France, and someone said, "I can't understand, you are in the government in France and you are against TNCs, but your whole government isn't doing anything." And then the lady said, "Well, in fact TNCs are more powerful than governments." Now, I think that the only power in the world that can fight TNCs are the laborers who do the work in these corporations. [Audience applauds.]

A WOMAN FROM INDIA: Is there anything women in the developed countries can do as consumers about this?

A WOMAN FROM INDIA: [in response to a comment by a Norwegian woman involved in an international campaign against the use of Nestle's infant formula]

So, your main emphasis has been on advertising and promoting breastfeeding. Suppose we were talking about the clothing industry which is where the maximum number of women are involved in the Third World. This is where the clothes bought in the western countries are produced. Is there anything that can be done by the women who buy these goods?

A WOMAN FROM THE U.S.: I know that internationally there are union organizations that organize around different trades. I know that there is an international organization of hotel and restaurant workers and one of plantation workers. I know that one restaurant union was organizing an international boycott against Coca Cola because of anti-labor activities in Guatemala. As consumers, women could organize around these international boycotts, especially if we have access to these international trade organizations. The other way is to join a boycott, such as the one happening around Nestle's.

A PANELIST FROM ZIMBABWE: Just to comment on the suggestion of boycotts, I think that TNCs have such a big monopoly advantage. They have lots of funds; they can advertise and promote all types of products through the media. It is very important that women's organizations educate people. We need women to fight against TNCs misusing the media to promote undesirable or harmful products.

I wanted to make a small comment about what someone said about not being able to trust the trade unions to fight some of these practices. I would say that in many

African countries, the kind of trade union movement you get is very docile. In Zimbabwe, for instance, we have an umbrella organization for all trade unions called Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. But people in leadership are people trained in a program which is funded from the West. So I think that through control of training programs for trade union leaders, you can easily influence trade unionism in a negative way. You can make them very docile. I think efforts should be made for more locally-generated funds to be directed towards trade union activity. And to reduce dependency for funds for training programs on those countries which may be anti-union. □

Further Readings:

- Multinational Monitor, PO Box 19405, Washington, DC 20036.
- Women and Global Corporations, American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.
- Women in the Global Factory, Annette Fuentes and Barbara Ehrenreich, Institute for New Communications, 1983.
- For an extensive bibliography on TNCs, see *Of Common Cloth*, edited by Wendy Chapkis and Cynthia Enloe, Transnational Institute, 1983.

Contact:

- Women Working Worldwide, c/o War on Want, 1 London Bridge Rd., London SE1 9SG, England.
- Transnational Information Exchange, Paulus Potterstraat 20, 1071 DA Amsterdam, Holland.

Peace Tent



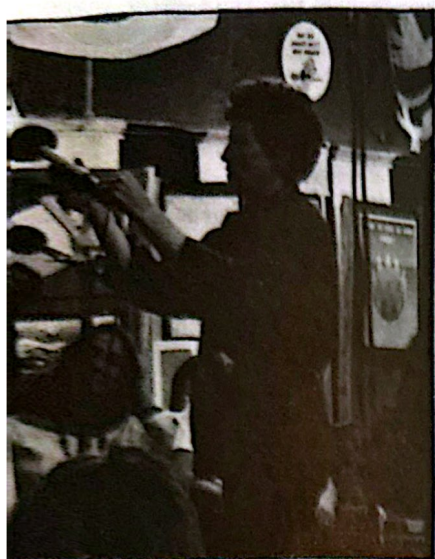
All photos by Dawn Armstrong



From the first day the Peace Tent was constructed, it became a central spot for women to gather, relax or converse. A large blue and white striped tent, it was set up to provide a place for women to express their problems and ideas as a step toward resolving conflicts. The Peace Tent was the work of the Feminist International for Peace and Food, a collective of 40 women from 15 countries, who wanted to create an environment where women could develop a "feminist alternative to men's conflict and war."

As women entered the Peace Tent, they were greeted by billboards covered with flyers and posters advertising upcoming workshops, appealing for solidarity or petitioning for signatures. Along one wall, Chilean *arpilleras* [tapestries] wove the country's history since the 1973 coup. The soft light filtering in through the blue and white stripes and the scent of newly cut wood helped create a calm and special atmosphere. On the wall behind the open mike, a poster in sampler embroidery-style script proclaimed, "This house is a nuclear-free zone."

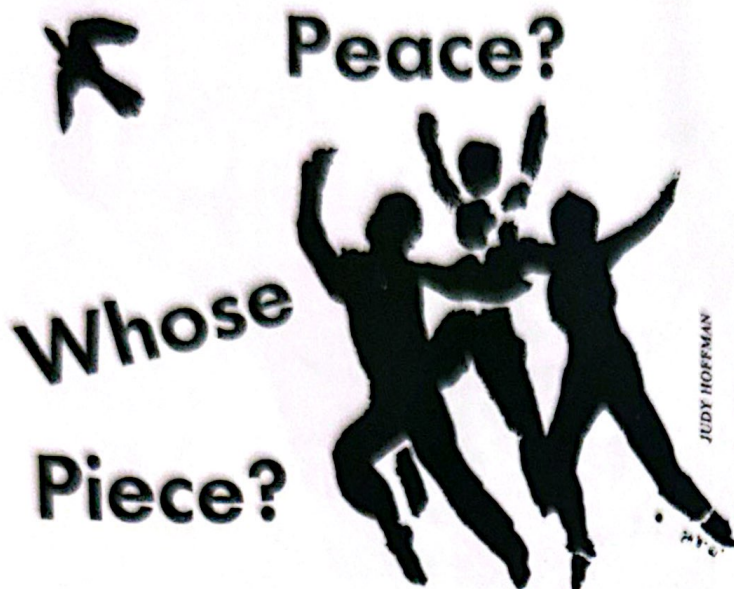
In quiet moments, the Peace Tent offered a space for women to sit alone or talk in small groups away from the excitement and noise of the Great Court and the workshop rooms. An open mike, surrounded by a semi-circle of wicker chairs, was available for impromptu discussions. Although the format of the Peace Tent was generally



loose, allowing for spontaneous events to be held, formally-scheduled gatherings also took place there. Soviet and American women held a lengthy dialogue on peace and disarmament, workshops were held on Latin America and the Pacific, and Arab and Jewish women participated in a tightly controlled discussion on the Middle East.

As Fawzia Hassouna, a Palestinian and one of the coordinators of the Peace Tent who helped organize the Middle East dialogue, explained, "All of these are important issues, and we let the women talk about their experiences in order to make a connection between international violence and international peace. We provided the space to discuss such problems as the issue of Palestine and Israel. That's unique to this conference because in Copenhagen we couldn't speak with each other. This is the first international conference in which we deal with each other as human beings.

"In listening to women express their ideas and discuss their problems in the Peace Tent, I have found that women's consciousness has advanced in the years since the Copenhagen Conference. And that's what the Decade has accomplished. Although there are still serious problems and a gap still exists, the relationship between Third World women or women of color and non-colored women has also improved." □



As in past conferences, the situation in the Middle East took center stage, at times appearing in the most unlikely places. In general, most discussions were heated and gave one the impression that nothing was moving forward. However, there were a few attempts at fostering a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, that in comparison to the general tenor, appeared successful.

Most notable of these dialogues were two workshops occurring on the same day early in the conference. The first, organized by several women, took place in the Peace Tent. The other was organized by the U.S. group New Jewish Agenda, which promotes dialogue between Palestinians and Jews. In both sessions, the discussion was opened up to the audience after the scheduled speakers had the floor. To best maintain an atmosphere conducive to dialogue, participants were asked not to vocalize their approval or discontent and to speak for a limited amount of time. Although a strict adherence to the highly structured format did provide an arena for a calmer exchange of words, many expressed frustration since the format's rigidity prevented some people from having a chance to speak.

While the morning Peace Tent dialogue managed to escape emotional collapse, by the time the afternoon workshop took place, one could feel a current of frustration charging the air. Five hundred people pressed into a room built for only half that number. Tensions began to mount as people realized there would never be enough time to accommodate all those who had something to say.

Although these two sessions offered a promising beginning for a Middle East dialogue, as the days of the Forum rolled by, the level of discussion deteriorated. One got the sense that things were going nowhere as people resorted to rhetorical statements. It was for this reason that Debby Lerman called an impromptu workshop on the last day of the Forum. Entitled "Israeli and Palestinian Feminist Dialogue on the Middle East," it never accomplished its goal since the invited speakers failed to show up. Instead Debby Lerman took this opportunity to express her views on why Israelis and Palestinians at the Forum were unable to reach a common ground to work toward peace.

Debby Lerman is a member of the Progressive List for Peace, a political party which currently has two seats in the Knesset (Parliament), one held by a Palestinian, the other by an Israeli. Originally part of a collectively-run women's center in Tel Aviv, she left because she felt the center did not adequately integrate feminist concerns with Israel's national problems.

What follows are excerpts from Debby Lerman's workshop combined with an interview conducted afterwards. *Connexions* very much wanted to get commentary from both a Palestinian and an Israeli on how the conflict in the Middle East was handled at the Forum. However, due to unfortunate confusion, we were unable to get an interview with a Palestinian woman.

Q: You mentioned in the workshop that there are difficulties in communication between Palestinians and Israelis.

A: Yes, despite the obvious differences, there are a lot of practical problems for Israeli or Palestinian women who want to work with each other. Israeli women mainly live in cities, while most Palestinian women live in villages. The largest percentage of urban Palestinian women live in Haifa, while our group is mainly located in Tel Aviv. So, whenever we do work, we are dealing with the encounter of two different cultures—rural and urban. Then there is the geographical distance. Every time we want to meet each other, we have to drive 100 miles or so, which makes it very difficult, especially because most of us have commitments of work and children. But still somehow we manage.

Another problem is language. We Israeli women can only discuss things with women who speak Hebrew because we don't know Arabic. And even though some of us are going through crash courses in Arabic, it doesn't get you very far when you want to have a complicated political discussion.

But Palestinian women are interested in the issues we raise. For example, in the trade union movement, which has been an area where much organizing has been going on, the Progressive List for Peace went to talk with Palestinian women about concerns that affect women. We got a very strong reaction from the men, especially from the Israeli men who said, "What the hell are you doing? They're not interested in talking to you about these questions." And this has happened throughout the history of leftist women trying to work with Palestinian women. We are told that this is a secondary issue and it should be left alone. But when you really start working together, the most incredible sessions happen.

What I like the most is when you start comparing experiences and you find out that many things are the same. My husband does this, my husband does that and this is what I'm missing and this is what I don't have. Partly based on these personal discussions and partly based on the political issues, we found a common platform addressing the national struggle, how both Israeli and Palestinian women are affected by militarism and racism, and that the trade union was not providing things that we needed as women.

Q: What sort of groups or individuals are in communication with Palestinians in Israel?

A: Besides ourselves, there is Women Against the Occupation who have contacts with Palestinians as well as Palestinians in the organization. There is Neve Shalom which is an incredible group of Israelis and Palestinians trying to live together with mutual respect for culture and trying to build some kind of conjunction of cultures that will show everyone else that it is possible. For example, their children are taught in Arabic and Hebrew.



Middle East dialogue.

You also have people in academic or semi-academic institutions trying to establish a bridge by using educational programs that teach people how to live together. Some people are doing this with high school students. They bring a whole class of Palestinian and Israeli students together for a weekend and try to show them the roots of prejudice and how everyone suffers from it. They work at showing the students that they're not so different from one another and at establishing friendships that will last.

Q: So there is some communication between Israelis and Palestinians. What happened here at the Forum? Why did one get the sense that nothing is happening?

A: I think it's two-sided. First of all I think Israelis came to the Forum on the defensive. They were sure they would be attacked, so with that expectation they did not come ready to listen and they did not come ready for a dialogue. They came with very clear positions and they wanted to put them across. However, the Israelis would say that the Palestinians are not willing to listen either—which is true.

The Palestinians came here prepared to try to convince as many people as possible of the terrible injustices that have been done to them and continue to be done. With that in mind, any dialogue becomes impossible.

If I'm trying to put my position across and you're trying to put your position across, all that we get is a declaration of what my position is and a declaration of what your position is and a counter-declaration from both sides, but nowhere do you get a dialogue. People are not willing to put their declarations and positions aside for a while and see whether there is any way to reach over to the other side. I think this conference has been a mess for the Palestinians and Israelis.

Everybody wanted to make their position clear, but nobody was really willing to say, "Okay, apart from my position, these are the areas where I'm willing to sit down with you and talk." Nobody wanted to; everybody wanted to put their point across. I think that this is very unfair to both sides especially because this would have been a very good opportunity for the Israelis to express to the Palestinians that some of them are willing to sit down and listen.

Let me say that there were some Israeli and Palestinian women here who sincerely tried to understand one another. There were formal and informal dialogues where people did talk although they didn't get far.

I thought, and maybe I was wrong, that Nairobi would be a very good arena for dialogue. But when I look at it in retrospect, I think that this being an international conference has made discussion less likely. Everybody came here not for dialogue, but to try to convince others of their opinion. This was not the case for only the Palestinians and Israelis, but also for a lot of other groups and delegations. Maybe if workshops had been planned in a different way it would have helped. Unfortunately, we will have to go home and resume our work with little accomplished.

Q: So why did you put together this last-minute workshop and what were you trying to achieve?

A: I came here to participate in a dialogue on women in emergency situations in the Middle East. Then, due to all kinds of political considerations, the people that put together the workshop decided not to have an Israeli on the panel, so I didn't have a chance to speak. After that, I just went from one workshop to another getting more and more frustrated. This was not something only I experienced; a lot of other Israelis felt the same way. In fact there is a small group of Israelis who are trying to have a dialogue, but that wasn't apparent. And there is also a small number of Palestinians who are trying to talk as well, but they were put into positions where there was no dialogue going on. So I thought if it wasn't being done in the official pre-planned workshops, then I would try to do it some other way. And it's a pity that my Israeli friend just walked in and walked out, but didn't really participate as I expected her to. And the Palestinian friend I thought would come didn't show.

Actually, I have given a very lopsided view of the situation in the Middle East. One of the problems of the organization I am in is that we are ostracized in Israel because of our position



Middle East dialogue in the Peace Tent.

regarding the PLO and the Palestinian right to a state. So I haven't really given you the Israeli position, which is completely different from mine, and I haven't given you the Palestinian position.

Most of the Palestinians here are not from Israel and are also not willing to have a dialogue. I think what turned them off was that I called this workshop Israeli and Palestinian women accept Palestine as a state? Mustn't you come forth and declare, we think you should have the West Bank back; we must withdraw. Mustn't you say that before you can even start a dialogue?

Q: I can see that Palestinian and Israeli women might have a lot in common, but is there any means to a dialogue unless Israeli women who engage in dialogue with the Palestinian women accept Palestine as a state? Mustn't you come forth and declare, we think you should have the West Bank back; we must withdraw. Mustn't you say that before you can even start a dialogue?

A: That's what the Palestinians put forth all the time: "You must accept our premises on what the dialogue should be." On the other side, Israeli women say, "I'm willing to talk with you if you say that terrorism must stop." Now from those two positions nothing will start up. The minute that preconditions are set—I'm only willing to talk with you if you agree with me—nothing will go on because no one will be willing to talk.

Q: So you believe you can talk without getting into those issues?

A: I'm this kind of stupid idiot that believes you can start a dialogue even if you don't agree. I think that even if you only agree in a very limited way, you can continue onward. For example, I see that you don't have any positions of power inside the Palestinian movement; I don't have any positions of power inside the Israeli peace movement. So we can start on common ground because we are both put aside by both our movements.

Q: The Palestinian women here are not complaining about that.

A: No, they are not, but in Israel they are. The difference is that the Palestinian women in Israel and the West Bank have to deal with questions of survival which I think are women's questions. The organizations only want to address political questions without considering women's problems. Israeli women have the same problem. Because there is a very strong military scare, women are told that they have to be brave, they have to be heroes, they have to fight for their country, they have to take care of the men when they come back home. We are supposed to sit back and take care of the kiddies and make sure everything will be fine for the warrior when he comes back from war. So women's issues are pushed aside because we are told that we aren't the ones fighting so we have no right to talk. Palestinian women have the same type of problem more or less.

Q: What is the role of the religious parties regarding the conflict in Israel?

A: The majority of Israelis pray for a secular state where the religious parties would not have such strength. Now without entering into too many details, there are two reasons why the religious parties are so strong. One is because of the parliamentary system that we have, they are always somehow able to have power, which is completely disproportionate to the actual number of MPs [members of parliament] that they have. The other reason is that world Jewish religious communities give a lot of economic support to Israel, and as you all know money usually comes with ties. But the power of the religious parties is a very day-to-day thing, and is not directly related to the political conflict. I don't think there is any way you can say that the minute the religious parties get out of the picture, the whole Israeli state will go toward a peaceful solution because that's not the case.

Q: What about the issue of racism?

A: When two peoples are struggling for the same land, one of the tools used to fight the other side is racism. From the very beginning, Israelis used race as a means to convince the entire Israeli population of our common identity. The first settlers, who came mostly from Europe, believed themselves superior to the people who lived in the region and they tried to ignore their existence. This attitude continued and served as a tool to convince the Oriental Jews [Jews who mostly come from Arab countries] that they were different; we are all Jews and although you might culturally identify with the people living here, you are not the same. You are superior to them because you are a Jew.

This attitude that we are better makes us feel like we have something to teach the Palestinians. This colonization ideology makes us think that we have come to help the people here who are just eager to listen to what we have to say. During the last six or seven years, a lot of parties which are very blatantly racist have been increasing, and the number of people that listen to them and support their policies is also growing.

Racism is used against the Palestinian population and also against the Oriental Jewish population. But since 1977, with the change of the governing party, there has been a rebirth in the Oriental Jews' pride in their culture and their ethnic identity. Nowadays, every Ashkenazi Jew [most Jews of European extraction] is very careful not to say anything against the Oriental

Jews. Racism can still be seen in the economic arena and most government posts are still held by Ashkenazis.

There is a very small, but strong current today trying to fight racism. There are a lot of programs now being integrated into the school curriculum to teach against racism as well to teach Arab culture and language. There are also demonstrations any time some racist event happens.

Racism is a very big issue in the peace movement. Everybody feels that the strong current of racism is overwhelming the whole political and social network of Israel, and if we don't fight it, we are going to find ourselves in a war. And it will be a bigger war than the war we are having with the Palestinians. It's going to be an internal war with everybody against everybody.

Things don't look very good in Israel now. Next week, the Knesset will vote on a law which will forbid any Israelis not working in an official government capacity to make contact with Palestinian representatives within Israel or abroad. They are defining a Palestinian representative as anyone who is either in an official organization or belongs to a group inside the Palestinian movement, which is, of course, open to interpretation.

The law will almost surely pass because it is being presented by the ruling coalition government. The sentence would be three years for anybody found guilty. This law would stop any kind of civil rights movement or organizations like Peace Now from having dialogues with Palestinians. This means you stop the peace movement from going ahead. Now I know it won't be the peace movement who is going to sign the peace treaty, but these dialogues are the only kind of bridge we have to try to get some kind of thing going. After this everyone would be so careful about talking that it would in fact stop. The only way this law won't pass is if the government realizes that there is large opposition to it by the people. □

Contacts:

- *Women Against the Occupation*, Box 2760, Tel Aviv, Israel.
- *New Jewish Agenda*, 149 Church St., Suite 2N, New York, NY 10007, U.S.A.
- *Progressive List for Peace*, Knesset, Jerusalem 9100, Israel.

Further Readings:

- "Women Against the Occupation," *Connexions* #11, Winter 1984.
- "Rebel with a Cause," *Connexions* #9, Fall 1983.

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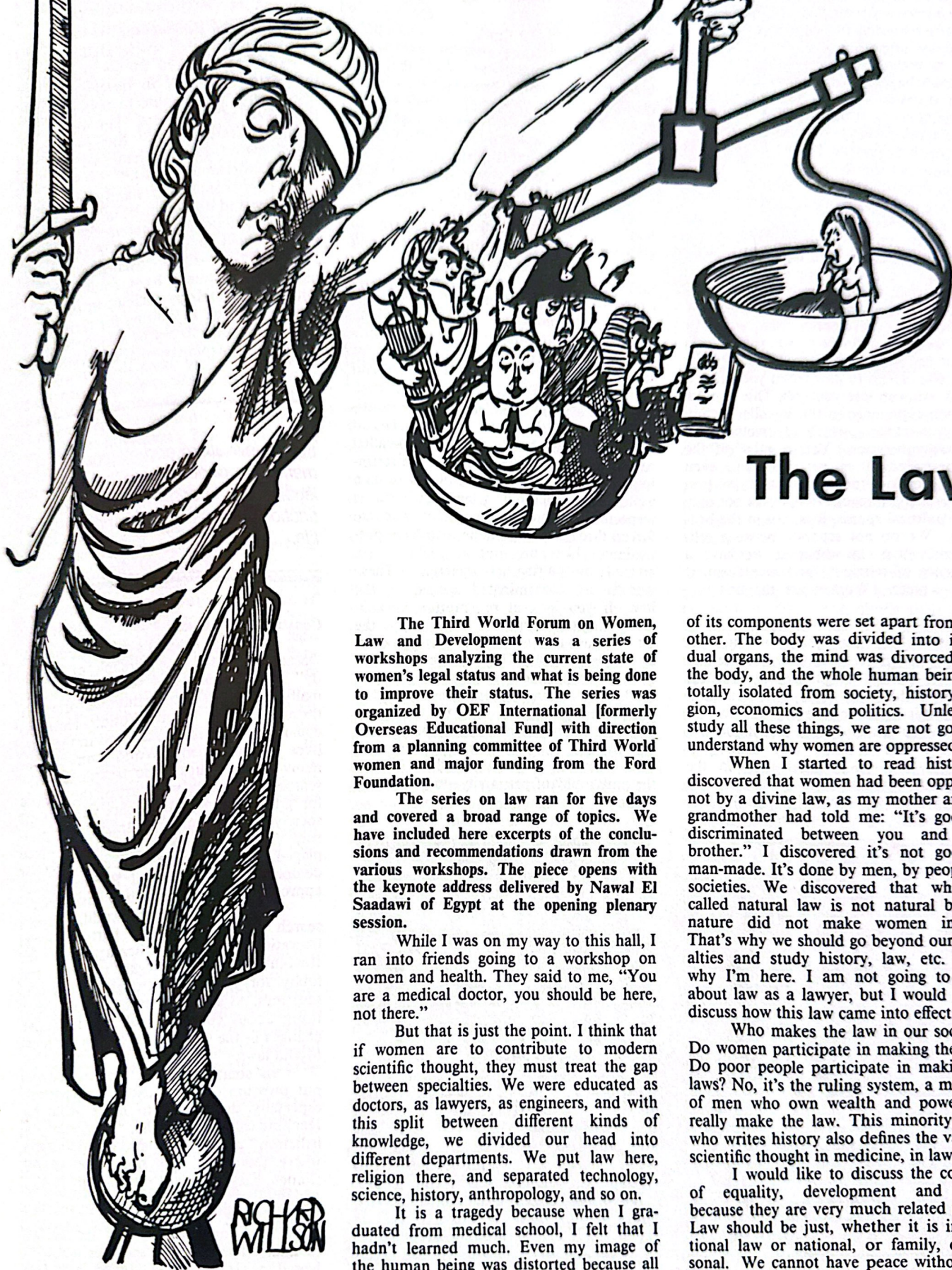
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Taking On



The Law

The Third World Forum on Women, Law and Development was a series of workshops analyzing the current state of women's legal status and what is being done to improve their status. The series was organized by OEF International [formerly Overseas Educational Fund] with direction from a planning committee of Third World women and major funding from the Ford Foundation.

The series on law ran for five days and covered a broad range of topics. We have included here excerpts of the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the various workshops. The piece opens with the keynote address delivered by Nawal El Saadawi of Egypt at the opening plenary session.

While I was on my way to this hall, I ran into friends going to a workshop on women and health. They said to me, "You are a medical doctor, you should be here, not there."

But that is just the point. I think that if women are to contribute to modern scientific thought, they must treat the gap between specialties. We were educated as doctors, as lawyers, as engineers, and with this split between different kinds of knowledge, we divided our head into different departments. We put law here, religion there, and separated technology, science, history, anthropology, and so on.

It is a tragedy because when I graduated from medical school, I felt that I hadn't learned much. Even my image of the human being was distorted because all

of its components were set apart from each other. The body was divided into individual organs, the mind was divorced from the body, and the whole human being was totally isolated from society, history, religion, economics and politics. Unless we study all these things, we are not going to understand why women are oppressed.

When I started to read history, I discovered that women had been oppressed not by a divine law, as my mother and my grandmother had told me: "It's god that discriminated between you and your brother." I discovered it's not god, it's man-made. It's done by men, by people, by societies. We discovered that what we called natural law is not natural because nature did not make women inferior. That's why we should go beyond our specialties and study history, law, etc. That's why I'm here. I am not going to speak about law as a lawyer, but I would like to discuss how this law came into effect.

Who makes the law in our societies? Do women participate in making the laws? Do poor people participate in making the laws? No, it's the ruling system, a minority of men who own wealth and power who really make the law. This minority group who writes history also defines the value of scientific thought in medicine, in law.

I would like to discuss the concepts of equality, development and peace because they are very much related to law. Law should be just, whether it is international law or national, or family, or personal. We cannot have peace without jus-

tice. Yet a powerful military machine is allowed to invade a country. Is this justice? Regarding development in the Third World, how can we develop our countries unless we control our resources, unless we have economic independence? But how can we have economic independence if we have an unjust international economic law? We have to make a link between international law and the other unjust laws that govern other domains of life. The international information law is also not just. We in the Third World, because of the media technology, are brainwashed by the culture of a few countries that have power and wealth. We cannot speak about justice without exposing these international economic, political and military laws.

These unjust international laws are based on patriarchy and class. Patriarchy and class are reflected in every law that governs people, especially women, and particularly women in developing countries. We women in developing countries suffer from lack of democracy, we suffer from lack of freedom of thought. If you write a book, you can go to jail. When you make a speech, you can lose your job. This is not a common experience in the so-called democratic countries, which I would call pseudo-democracies. Yet in most of the developing countries, we still don't even have a pseudo-democracy. For us, religion has a very big impact. Religion is not only in the political rooms, it is also in the bedrooms. We do not separate between religion and state, so whenever we have a resurgence of religious fundamentalism, it affects women. Women are the first victims.

One of the main characteristics of the patriarchal class system is injustice. They say law is just and they use the balance, the symbol of justice, to illustrate this, but I think the scale is not equal at all. There is injustice in every law because it's based on sex and class discrimination. You find this division and duality in economics and in personal life. In the family code, the man owns the woman, but the woman does not own the man. I'm not only speaking about the Arab countries,

I'm speaking about almost every country: Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist—under all religions, women are inferior to their husbands. It is the husband's duty to provide for his wife, and it's her duty to obey him. It's more or less a master-slave relationship.

Changing the family code takes political power. Changing any law takes political power. In many countries, the labor laws are progressive because the working class fought for their rights. But women never had the political power to change the law, especially the family code. That's why you find that the most backward, the most unjust law in any country is the family code. You find that the labor laws are much better for women. They say men and women are equal with regard to employment. This equality, this right that is given to women is taken back in the family code which says that the husband can prevent his wife from working. Lately, due to a universal religious revival, societies are starting to make the family code more oppressive. You cannot separate politics and law. The powerful political groups in society change the laws. If women start to organize and have political power, then they can change the laws.

Women, who do not have so-called respectable professions, are also discriminated against. As a medical doctor or as a writer, I am respected. A lawyer, a judge is respected. But how about women who are forced through economic need to have professions, like prostitution, which are created by patriarchal societies? These women are discriminated against by the law. If you look at prostitution laws in many countries, you find it is always the same. Man is innocent. Adam is innocent; Eve is responsible. They do the same act, but it's the woman who pays the price. In the laws, the man who practices sex with a prostitute is a witness; he is not punished. The profession was created by the patriarchal system, but still women are the victims. They are the ones punished. This is the philosophy of patriarchy—to punish the victim. □

Third World Forum on Women, Law and Development

Interim Report

State, Law and Development

The nature of law in a given society is inextricably linked to the character of the State. Especially in developing countries where "autonomous legal institutions" have yet to take root, law cannot be separated from politics. Any understanding of law must be supplemented by political and economic analysis.

One cannot understand the issues of state, law and development in Third World societies without reference to the exploitative international system. Problems of foreign debt, unequal exchange and multinational investment have made women's struggles increasingly difficult in the Third World. Women, in fighting for their rights, must join other forces in society in struggling against exploitation at all levels.

Ethnic revivalism and religious fundamentalism contribute to the duality in legal systems and the artificial distinction between public and personal life.

Constitutional Issues

There was general agreement that the Decade witnessed the principle of "equality" between men and women being formally enacted as a constitutional provision throughout the Third World. However, equality has yet to be achieved in the daily lives of most Third World women. For many women during the last decade, the search for equality was part of the struggle for greater democratic rights within their society. For example, in Brazil, after pressure from women's organizations which played an active part in the struggle for democracy, the House of Representatives approved the project of a new Civil Code.

In other parts of the world, women's search for equality was part of social liberation struggles. In Nicaragua, after the Revolution, women began to draft and lobby for just laws through large public meetings. As a result they have managed to bring about constitutional and legislative changes in the Civil Code, and in the Mass Media laws.

In some countries, women activists put pressure on the existing legal system, especially the courts, to bring about far reaching changes. In India, "open letter jurisdiction" allowed courts to entertain cases where there has been oppression against women, such as dowry violence and rape.

Land

Traditional patterns of landholding in many Third World societies are often biased against women. Inheritance laws



Women in Iran are now required to wear the chador in public.

and systems of community property often ensure that women do not receive their due share. Many campaigns in the Third World have, therefore, centered around making the family law more equitable with regard to inheritance.

Modernization, especially in the rural areas where land has been nationalized or sold to large corporations, has resulted in hardships for women who have been primary producers in the agricultural sector. Women's organizations in Asia and Latin America have been organizing women to secure their legal property rights. In the Philippines women have begun to organize themselves and squat on their land in order to put pressure on the authorities. When bulldozers arrived to level the forest, women of the Chipko movement in India hugged the trees that had provided them with firewood, forcing the authorities to halt the leveling.

Family

Family law and especially customary law is generally weighted against women in the spheres of divorce, property, maintenance and custody. Women's organizations during the last decade have pushed for amendments in the family law so as to remedy this imbalance. For example, in Kenya, new succession laws have been enacted; in Indonesia, new marriage laws have been passed; and in Zimbabwe, women's status as a minor has been elevated to that of an adult.

Although progressive laws have been passed and family law has been made a little more equitable in several countries, this is meaningless unless women are aware of their rights. Women's organizations have thus become involved in fostering legal literacy. For example, Peru Mujer in Peru and the Women's Legal Services Project in Nepal have been actively engaged in legal literacy programs. The Family Law Center in Nigeria and projects in Zimbabwe and Venezuela have been connected to grassroots discussions on gaps in the law that could be amended. In the next decade the objective of legal literacy can be seen as a major goal in Third World countries. In addition it was felt that legal clinics must not be the monopoly of lawyers, and that paralegals, social workers and women themselves must defend their rights.

Labor

Occupations which primarily employ women usually offer little protection in terms of labor rights. In addition, these occupations are devalued and are located at the lowest level of the wage structure. These women are often unorganized and are, therefore, subject to greater exploitation.

The productive and reproductive value of women's labor is either underestimated or ignored. Moreover, the organizing of women in some sectors, particularly in domestic labor, has been difficult due to the fear of losing one's job in a context of high unemployment as in Mauritius and Colombia. But, where legal aid organizations and other concerned groups have been successful in encouraging women in



Protesting against British nationality laws.

such occupations to mobilize or unionize, the women have become sensitized to issues particular to women workers.

Women vendors in the informal sector are an important part of Third World social reality. Mobilizing and unionizing these women enables them to gain greater dignity for their occupations and to ensure some minimal level of monetary remuneration and reasonable working conditions. In India, women vendors have forced the State to respond to their demands by setting up facilities relevant to their needs.

The Decade witnessed a large exodus of women from their native countries as domestic servants and unskilled laborers, searching for opportunities in other parts of the world. Little attention has been paid to this situation where women are separated from their families and have to suffer difficulties due to ignorance of the customs of other societies. They are often the victims of international labor brokers who provide them with no protection and little security. During the next decade women should strive for international regulation which will prevent this type of female exploitation.

ism and religious fundamentalism contribute to the duality in legal systems and the artificial distinction between public and personal life. Laws regarding "public" life grow and change with time but laws and practices regarding personal life are kept stagnant, unchanging and oppressive to women.

Ethnic minority women within a particular nation-state have special difficulties in demanding their rights because they do not wish to dilute and divide their group identity. Special strategies are necessary to help these women come to terms with both their ethnicity and their womanhood. It was noted that minority communities remain tied to their traditions while their sisters in countries where their community is a majority have begun to enjoy equal rights.

Existing legal concepts, institutions and strategies are not adequate to confront the many dilemmas of ethnicity and religion, especially with regard to the status of women. What is needed are strategies and concepts which will allow for diversity of cultural traditions without isolating fundamental human rights.

Custom and Customary Law

Several Third World countries, particularly those in Asia and Africa, have more than one body of law used in the implementation of justice. There is a body of state law or general law, and one or more bodies of customary law. The general law usually has its roots in the laws imposed by colonial powers while customary law refers to pre-colonial law. Today, while the general law governs transactions in the so-called public sphere, customary law regulates interpersonal relationships and dynamics within the family. Since it is applied in the instances of inheritance, divorce, maintenance, etc., it affects women to a significant degree.

The colonizing powers at first usually permitted indigenous peoples to maintain their customary laws, while bringing with

Ethnic minority women...have special difficulties in demanding their rights because they do not wish to dilute and divide their group identity.

Custom, Law and Ethnicity

Throughout the Third World, especially in Asia and Africa, there appears to be an ethnic revivalism, often connected to nationalism and national liberation movements. There has also been a resurgence of religious fundamentalism. Ethnic revival-

TECH & TOOLS

Tech & Tools, the appropriate technology fair, took place concurrently with Forum '85. Just a short walk from the main campus where most of the Forum workshops were held, participants gained first-hand knowledge about innovations in easily made, low-cost appropriate technologies. The exhibits were grouped into six areas: agriculture, food processing, health, energy, communications and income generation, and each was housed in its own shelter built from scrap wood, fiber cement, corrugated tiles and makuti branches.

Exhibitors from all over the world demonstrated their products and gave people a chance to construct their own clay cookstoves, water purifiers or solar food dryers. Workshops were also held to discuss policy issues and devise strategies to increase women's access to and control of appropriate technologies. The emphasis at Tech & Tools was on technologies that use locally available materials, are easily implemented and generally promote self-reliance.

In addition to the Tech & Tools events, the Environment Liason Centre (ELC) ran a series of workshops on environmental issues. The ELC is a Kenya-based international non-governmental organization that works closely with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Their workshops covered such areas as forests, water, sustainable agriculture, food and energy as they relate to women. Although the ELC put on many workshops, their format consisted mainly of the presentation of papers and lacked the hands-on experience that Tech & Tools provided.

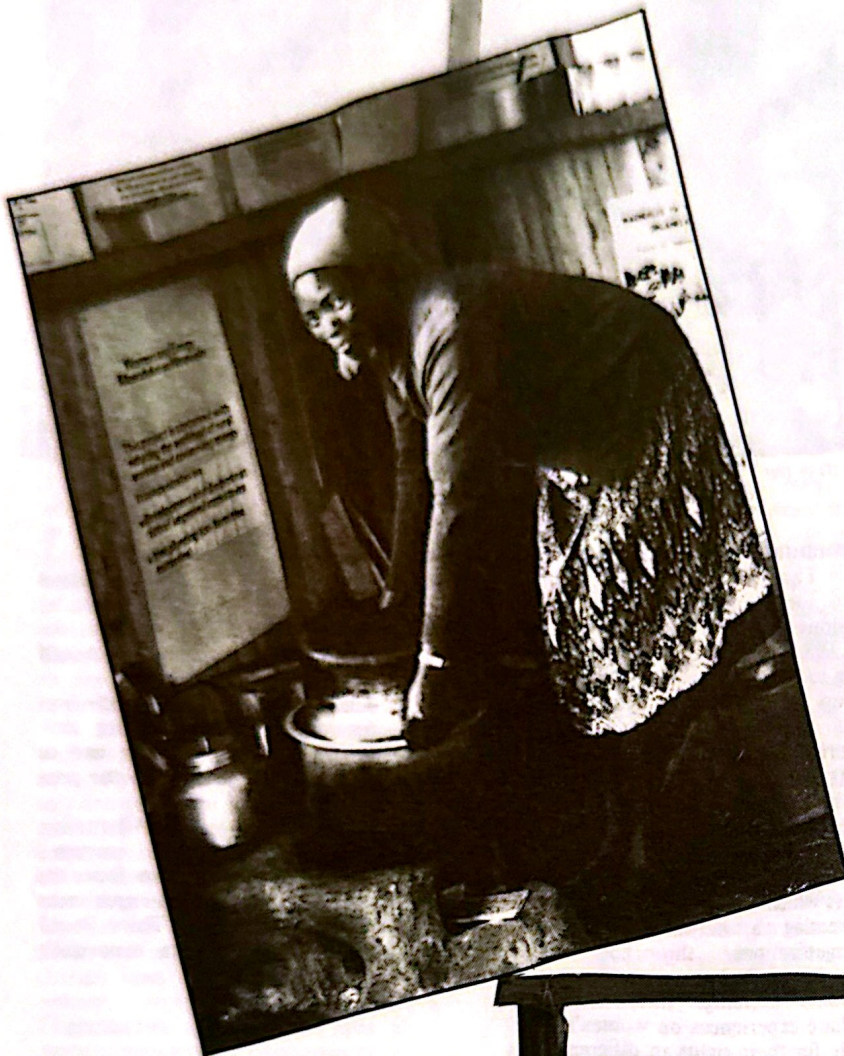
Tech & Tools was sponsored by the International Women's Tribune Centre, the World YWCA, and the Appropriate Technology Advisory Committee of Kenya. By December, the first Tech & Tools book will be published, examining appropriate technology issues and strategies for women. It will be available through the Intermediate Technology Development Group in London and the International Women's Tribune Centre in New York. □

Contact:

- Environment Liason Centre, Box 72461, Nairobi, Kenya.
- International Women's Tribune Centre, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017.

Further Readings:

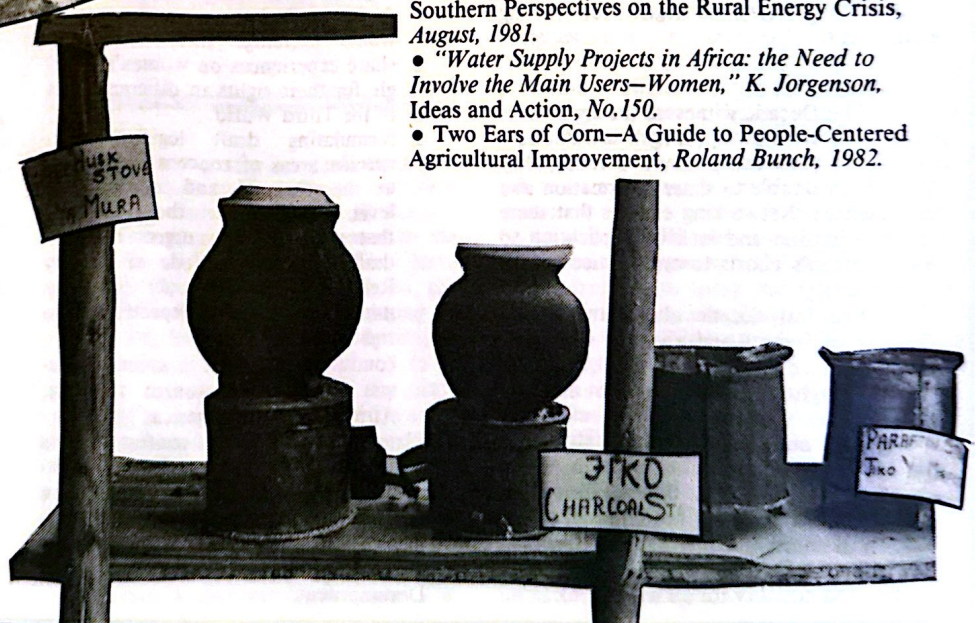
- Development and the Environmental Crisis, M. Redclift, 1984.
- "Energy Options for the Third World" A. Reddy, Southern Perspectives on the Rural Energy Crisis, August, 1981.
- "Water Supply Projects in Africa: the Need to Involve the Main Users—Women," K. Jorgenson. Ideas and Action, No.150.
- Two Ears of Corn—A Guide to People-Centered Agricultural Improvement, Roland Bunch, 1982.



A Kenyan woman demonstrating improved clay cookstoves.

"Firewood is one of the main problems in the rural area I come from, Homa Bay, South Nyanza, in Kenya. I am so happy to have found out about this stove—they say it will burn charcoal and just a little will give a lot of heat and do a lot of cooking. Now I will not have to use so much firewood." (Damaris Okelo from the Forum newspaper, July 22)

Clay-lined stove made from tin drums, a very simple and inexpensive design. The clay is used for heat retention. Charcoal, paraffin or coffee husks can be used for fuel.

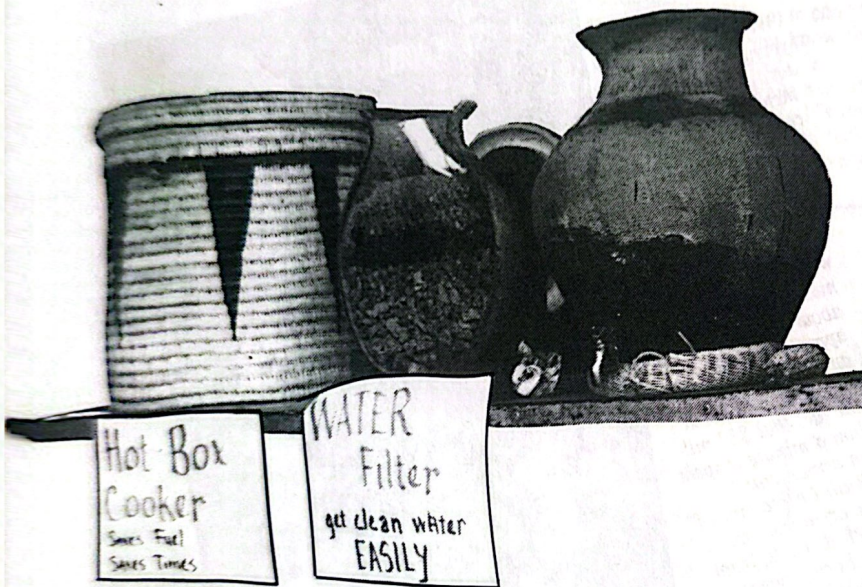


The two billion plus women on this planet—half of humanity—make up a third of the "officially active" population. But accomplish two-thirds of the work for only 10% of the global earnings. Women provide the majority of global food production (three quarters in Africa), but they only own a hundredth of the land. (Jeune Afrique, August 21, 1985)



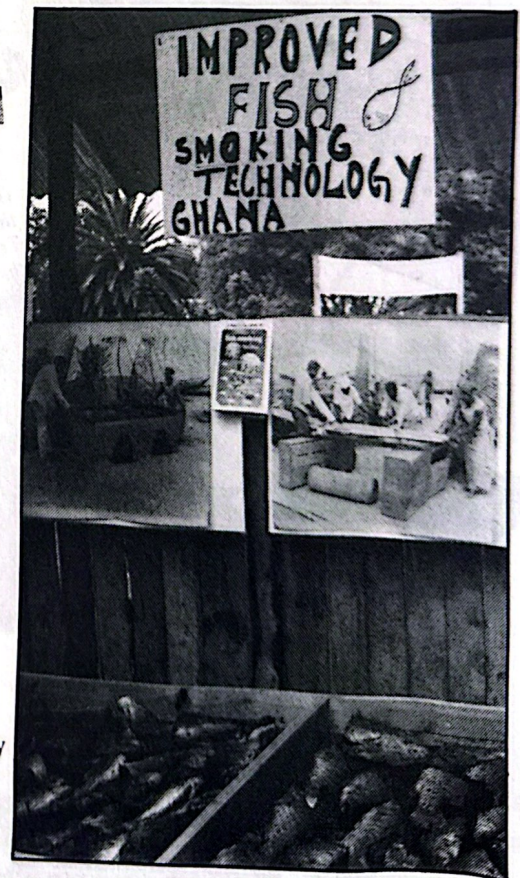
PHOTOS BY FLORENCE GARDNER

An exhibit on sago processing from the Philippines. Sago, an easily stored starch derived from the sago palm, is an inexpensive dietary supplement.



From left to right: a hot box cooker which can be a well-insulated container used to prolong the cooking process without fuel by maintaining heat after food has been removed from the fire; a simple water filtering system (shown in cross-section) that employs natural and easily available materials such as sand, charcoal and rocks to leach impurities out of the water; a clay water storage pot.

Improved fish smoking technology from Ghana. Trays are designed for space and time efficiency. Smoking preserves fish without refrigeration.





A demonstration of a leaf nutrient processor which extracts protein from green leafy vegetables, otherwise indigestible by humans. The result is a dark green, tasteless, high protein liquid that used in food preparation, while the fibrous by-product can be fed to cattle. For more information write to: Find Your Feet, Ltd., 13-15 Froggnal, London NW3, England.



"We had a group of young people here today and talked to them about the political side of appropriate technology—about what to do if people decide to build a huge dam instead of mini-hydro projects, and who decides to build nuclear power plants, about what is appropriate and applicable in particular places and about the fact that \$17 million a minute is spent on armaments." (Ruhi Lechte, one of the organizers for Tech & Tools, from the Forum newspaper, July 15)



A simple biogas digester. Cow dung goes in one end and out the other comes methane gas and a by-product which is a very good fertilizer for use in the fields. The methane gas can be used as fuel for cooking, lighting, or operating machinery. The dung from three cows can provide fuel for a family of six.

Tackling Tradition

The following interview by Adi Gevins is with Assitan Diallo of Mali, who went to Nairobi to discuss her work in the area of female circumcision, the practice of cutting or removing some or all of the external female genitalia. She is involved in research and grassroots organizing toward the eradication of female circumcision and is a member of the Inter-African Committee, a multi-national organization established in 1984 in Dakar, Senegal which also works toward eradication.

Q: What got you interested in female circumcision?

A: I was circumcised when I was four, so I personally identify with the topic. Moreover, in my society, which is Muslim, our family and elder people have too much power over us. It is not like in Europe or the Western world. We are ashamed to say my own life, my own being, nobody would say that. I don't see myself saying to my father or mum "that's my life" or "that's my daughter." For example, I don't want my daughters to be circumcised. I know, though, that it's not enough for me alone to decide, because my aunt can do it or my grandmother. They won't ask me. When I'm at work and my husband is not at home, they can do it. What can I do? Put them in jail? So every woman must say "I'm against female circumcision and I don't want to circumcise my daughter and I will fight against it." The best way to be sure it won't happen is to fight for its eradication. So that's my goal.

Until I was 24 years old, I knew that female circumcision involved cutting, and I knew that it was painful, but that was it. Then there was a French lady teaching at my school, and she wanted to find out about female circumcision. She kept asking us questions. I was the only girl in my whole class, so she harassed me with questions about female circumcision. Fortunately I had an old grandmother, she was 108 at that time. The older you get, the more democratic you get in our society. So when my teacher asked me a question, I would go back to my grandmother. I knew if I went to my mother she would say, "God, you are disgusting." So I would go to my grandmother who likes to talk. In fact, you have to stop her once she begins. I made her talk about it and then would go back to my teacher. In the end my teacher said: "You know so much about female circumcision, can't you write a paper about it?" That's how I began. And as I read more and more, from doctors, etc., I began to learn about the harmful aspects of it.

Islam has nothing to do with it. The meaning given to it in traditional society cannot be given to it now because the specificity of the operation has changed. It has no social meaning now. I have become convinced that it had no purpose. That we don't need it. That we are just doing it mechanically. It was something that once had a role in the traditional world, but now that we are much more modern, it doesn't have a place.

Q: What sort of work are you doing to eradicate female circumcision?

A: As far as my work in Mali is concerned, most of my activity so far has been academic. In 1978, I did the first survey on female circumcision in French-speaking West Africa. It was mostly quantitative but also an attitudinal study. I interviewed people and also recorded some 200 songs on circumcision. Through these songs I show how our people express their norms, their rules, their education. I also show what the meaning of female circumcision is through these songs, what message is given in traditional society.

One part of my work was to interview people to show what their attitudes are toward female circumcision, how they understand it, and what the difference is between the type of female circumcision they have been subjected to and the traditional type expressed through songs. My conclusion was that there is no initiation rites attached to it anymore, and education is no longer provided. I also found that a lot of people are against it, but nobody wanted to be marginalized by standing out as an example. So they will say "We are against it, but we will do it."

There are a few ways I am trying to make more people in my country aware of the practice. I am a teacher in a professional school. Every four years, at the end of their study, the students must present a paper. We teachers can propose topics, and this year I suggested three subjects dealing with excision [of the clitoris]. We have at least 15 ethnic groups in Mali, and each ethnic group is almost a country in itself. I wanted to have a comparative study of the practice in my country.

The other thing that I'm doing is helping to put together a special magazine issue on female circumcision. We only have one magazine in all of Mali; we have many different newspapers, but only one magazine and it's more academic than political. I will contribute to this special issue when I return from Nairobi. It will be sold throughout the country.

Also we are currently setting up a network of women from different countries working on female circumcision called the Sister-to-Sister Programme. We want to take a new approach on female circumcision, a sexual approach. It's so easy to talk about health, health, health. Before I came here my mum said: "Are you going to talk about your crazy stuff again? Female circumcision, sex, sex. You should be ashamed to talk about sex among all those people." I told her it was important, but she asked, "What do you have against it?" I mentioned all the health inconveniences. She said, "You didn't die, I didn't die. How many people can you cite who have died?" "Well, I don't know, but do you know that people have infection, and leaking?" "But," she said, "people who haven't been circumcised have that. Even white women have that."

It's that kind of statement which gave us the idea that we have to tackle the problem from another angle. Our project will include very deep research into sexuality and sex education in



"Useless Pain", poster used in African/Arab campaign against circumcision.

FORUM '85, JULY 25, 1985



Women in Bamako, Mali.

traditional Mali and Mali today. And through this we'll show how traditional sex education supports female circumcision. They tell us that sex is dirty, taboo, you should be discreet if you talk about it. They also say that it is important to be faithful in marriage.

Now, what is the justification of female circumcision? They think it diminishes sexual desire, so that means you will be faithful. They say also that female circumcision purifies women, that means our sex genitalia is dirty. So we want to show the ideas which are in our society and the way the society sees women's sexuality and sexual life. To them, female circumcision is very necessary to support their view of women's sexuality. When we understand all this, we can suggest how to change this view, and be able to provide adequate sex education for our young people.

We know it will be hard because people don't want to talk about this part of sex. It is easier to tackle the problem with health, but it is not enough. There is a cultural part and sexual part that's important.

You might not know it, but the field of women's writing is

growing by leaps and bounds. You might not know it, because most mainstream review periodicals don't cover the majority of women's writing, printing only occasional reviews of books by women writers too famous to ignore. You might not know it, because even feminist publications can't cover it all within the confines of a book review section. You might not know it—unless you subscribe to *The Women's Review of Books*.

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Q: What do you think about Westerners getting involved in the fight against female circumcision?

A: You know, it is easy to see that something is wrong with the system when you are outside of it. Easier than when you are inside. We should keep in mind that many Westerners have more experience in dealing with the subject than we do, because they were the first to talk about it. And now we are also talking about it. As we said in social science: don't overlook previous work if you want to do good work. So in our relationship with the Western world, I will say we need them. But again, life is complex. We have been colonized by this Western world and we have, let's say, something against them. That means we don't want them to overwhelm our lives anymore.

For my part, I want their help. I want to collaborate with them. But I don't think I can be in the same group with them to fight something in my own country, because I will feel, "Here they go again, colonization." But I love being asked by people working on female circumcision, "What are the specifics in Mali?" And suggesting to me, "Why don't you do that in Mali?" Suggesting means that I can say no, or yes. That's different than, "Do that in Mali, do that in Senegal." So in my view, they can be like advisors. They can also say to me, "You know, people do circumcision in France and we French people want to fight against it." I want them to allow me to say, "I'm suggesting you do it this way, because these people are from my country, and I think this will be better." Again, I'm suggesting something, not imposing it on them. That's the kind of working relationship I want between white and black women on the topic of female circumcision. □

The following interview by Adi Gevins is with Stella Efua Graham, a Ghanaian woman currently living in London. She is also part of the Inter-African Committee and does her work with African women living in Great Britain.

We recognize that excision is a very deep-rooted practice and has a ritualistic aspect to it. It also has a deep psycho-sexual aspect to it, so you simply can't legislate against it and then expect it to stop. People who practice female circumcision feel strongly about it and there are many factors that force women to give in. For example, women are worried about whether their daughters will be able to marry. African women living in London are very concerned about whether their daughters will be accepted back into their communities. So we want legislation to be combined with intensive education programs.

The challenge that remains for us is to find an alternative to certain parts of our social structure. We need to find a replace-

ment, but we need to maintain certain structures. For example, the secret societies and the initiation rites [led by women] are very positive things, and we must recognize the fact that in Africa women's power has been eroded with modernity. Because of that, quite a lot of societies' structures are breaking down, and people do not know where they are. I think that the challenge for African women is for us to look at the positive aspects of our culture and to build upon them. And there are many positive things.

The secret societies are an extraordinary power base for women. When we hear about secret societies, or initiation rites, maybe our first reaction is that this is primitive behavior. But actually it is not. It's an advanced kind of social structure which gives people a definite place in society, which socializes people to recognize their roles and responsibilities.

In the secret society, women, such as those who have been circumcised together, have the possibility to bond together as a group for life, like blood sisters. So wherever they are, if they are in trouble, they can help each other out. I think that when a lot of African women say, "What right does anyone have to interfere in excision," they are not talking about excision per se. What they are talking about is the goodness in women being together, the identity of bonding.

So the challenge is not to say that these initiation rites are backward, but to discover how we can take away the actual excision without destroying the women's power base. A group of women as a secret society can have the power to influence the politics of society as a whole. They could come together as a group in a male-dominated society to put pressure on politicians to do something positive for women. In fact, during this Decade, the feminist struggle in the West is to get women together, to get the bonding, and already in Africa we have the bonding, we have the structures, all we need to do is direct the power of these structures.

One good example is that if the secret society is really brought up to date with present developments, we could overthrow our governments if we wanted to, because we know that in African society women outnumber men. We need to use the power of the group to initiate change for our benefit. So the work of the women's activist network is not to condemn but to replace what we have; we've got to build on it. We want to have the resources to further research the structures that exist at the moment and find entry points into them. We want to confer with powerful women leaders about how not to destroy the structure, and how to project it internationally so that other women can see the benefit and use it for themselves.

Q: Were you initiated?

A: Unfortunately, I wasn't. I went to school without having gone through the initiation ceremony. I come from a matrilineal group

and fortunately excision is not part of our initiation. In the tradition of my society, during the initiation period we learn about childcare, about relationships with other people, about religion in our society, and how the society operates. The girls also learn how to recognize their femininity, their sexuality, and sex education was not purely biological, it was also psychological. Our society recognized the sexuality of women as important to the totality of the group. They taught women what sex involves and it was taught in such a way so that she herself would enjoy sex with her partner. They did not encourage promiscuity, but sex as part of marriage and part of life was recognized as important.

I understand from my grandmother that they even made wooden dummies which the teenagers used as part of the whole process of sex education in the initiation ceremony. So when they came out of this ceremony, they were really well informed about themselves, about the menstrual cycle and other aspects. Women were encouraged to have more control over their own sexuality. But unfortunately, with colonization and the introduction of Christianity into our communities, these ways were regarded as pagan. It is now a remnant of our culture found in very rural areas. But we would like to recapture what we were losing. We want to develop new forms of sex education for our youngsters that are different from the traditional ways in that they take into account the urban modern sector. We are hoping that through our network and research work, we will be able to bring these issues out. □

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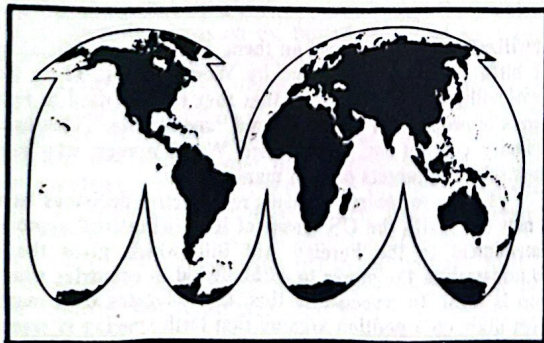
Health Professionals International is in the process of establishing nonprofit status so that donations may be channeled to the Inter-African Committee, grassroots projects abroad and those serving US immigrants affected by this practice. For more information, contact HPI at 75 Buena Vista East, #305, San Francisco, CA 94117.

Further Readings:

- Sister Links, 38 King St., London WC2E 8JT, England. Sister Links is the magazine of FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development) of which the Sister-to-Sister Programme is part.
- Woman Why Do you Weep? by Asma El Dareer, Zed Press, London.
- Sisters in Afflictions: Circumcision and Infibulation of Women in Africa by Raquiya H. Dualeh Abdalla, Zed Press, London.
- The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World by Nawal El Saadawi Zed Press, London.

family of women

Stories from a world gathering



The Family of Women: Stories From a World Gathering is a series of radio documentary programs based on material gathered at **Forum '85** in Nairobi, Kenya. Created by five award-winning independent producers, each program will focus on a major topic of discussion at the conference: Work, Political Participation, Reproduction, Health, Family Law, Peace. The programs will be available in celebration of International Women's Day. They are also available on cassette for non-broadcast use. For more information contact **RadioWest, Box 785, Venice, CA 90294.**

The expenses of **The Family of Women** project have been paid for by a grant from National Public Radio's Satellite Program Development Fund, and generous donations from individuals and private foundations.



UNITED NATIONS

Mothers and children at the rural health center in Villa Colon, a village near San Jose.

Let Him Withdraw

Family planning was a central issue at all three of the Decade Conferences. While access to birth control can be a welcome option, women from Third World countries often resent the attitudes of "experts" who claim that poverty and starvation are simply the result of women bearing too many children. Unequal distribution of wealth and economic control by governmental and multinational interests are not often cited as part of the problem. Instead programs aimed at diminishing the role of women in reproduction are heavily funded, while the need for social change is ignored.

Any exploration of family planning must include an examination of the intentions of those who promote it. Respect for the health and judgment of women in the Third World is conspicuously lacking: hazardous contraceptives are imposed on them,

sterilization is often forced on them, and their traditional methods of birth control are replaced by Western ones. These practices have political implications in that they may be used to reduce the ranks of people who are considered "undesirable." This has been a primary concern for many Third World women who have seen themselves as targets of such manipulation.

Efforts to control women's reproductive decisions have taken a new twist with the US House of Representatives' approval of an amendment to the Foreign Aid Bill, which gives the Reagan administration the power to withhold aid to countries where abortion is legal. In response to this, UN delegates from many countries drew up a petition arguing that birth spacing is essential for the health of mothers and children, and presented it to the US delegation.

Demonstrating the varying viewpoints on family planning present at the Forum, excerpts from two interviews follow. The first speaker is Dr. Grace Delano, coordinator of the Fertility Research Unit in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the College of Medicine Hospital in Ibadan, Nigeria. The Unit offers reproductive health services, training and research in maternal and infant health care. The next speaker, the Director of Maternal and Child Health in the Ministry of Health, is a medical doctor and a member of the Sudanese Women's Union. [We have been unable to get her name]. Both interviews were provided by Adi Gevins of the project *Family of Women*.

Dr. Grace Delano

When you talk about serving areas in Africa or, specifically, in Nigeria, we believe in an integrated approach. We want to look after the mother and the baby. So if we are talking about fertility control, we are not just referring to controlling fertility and leaving aside the health of the mother and the child. We always try to have the type of program that would guarantee the child's life, too. Underlying factors that result in infant mortality must be taken care of.

In Ibadan, we were prompted to start talking about traditional methods by the misconceptions about family planning that most people had. They tend to give the wrong impression about what family planning stands for. They think that it is another way of trying to impose new ideas onto African culture as though family planning has not always been part and parcel of our culture. Another misconception, whenever the Western countries talk about family planning, is that they tend to think of genocide. This is all rubbish. There is no genocide whatsoever.

Trying to motivate someone to improve their quality of life by educating them on how to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates cannot be interpreted as genocide. But this accusation prompted us to investigate the traditional methods of birth control used by our ancestors in order to refute the claim of those who think that because we are from developing countries, we are ignorant. They think we are all illiterate and can't think, that we are all backward and don't want to progress. So we collected information on traditional methods and actually some of them are still being used; they are culturally and religiously enforced. We have not been able to analyze these methods yet, but we are told that some of them are very effective.

One very important thing is to respect the culture and beliefs of the people you are treating. If you are going to introduce any new methods, you must discuss it with them. Let them see why you are introducing a new method and never put down their own traditional method. You might ask, "Would you prefer the injectable modern method or the scarification of the traditional?" In examining the two, she would weigh the balance and see that one of them is more hygienic, straightforward, the dosage is easily available, there is no tetanus involved unlike the other method where you use an unsterile blade, and then you apply a mixture coming out of an unsterile container. So, you can see, you are not forcing her to use injectables, you are just telling her that there is a traditional method and a scientific method.

We always believe in voluntary acceptance when using birth control. We believe in telling you everything about all methods including the side effects and complications. And they really appreciate that we take the time to explain things.

Another thing that we are always told is that the Western countries are dumping drugs on us. But whenever we have new contraceptive methods or drugs coming to us, we test them, too. We have scientists, many of whom were trained in developed countries and have returned to work in their own countries. So they should be so happy that those who were given the knowledge are now putting what they learned into practice in their own countries. But instead, they have the impression that people in the developing countries cannot conduct research although research is a requirement in getting our degrees.

We do have a Food and Drug Act in our country, so it is not like these drugs just get dumped at our doorstep. If the developed countries would just take some time to see what regulations we do have, they would see the misconceptions and misinformation they have had in the past.

So when you talk of African people, you must realize that

we have ways of doing things that are different from your approach in the United States. The sooner that people in developed countries trust us and credit us with some sense, the better for us and for you, too.



During one session in a series of workshops entitled "Family Planning Techniques, Counseling Services," Dr. Delano described some of the traditional birth control methods still practiced in her region.

We have a traditional injectable method which we call scarification. You make an incision above the pubic region or on the spine of the woman. When she starts bleeding, you rub a concoction that has been prepared by the herbalist. It then gets absorbed through the blood stream and is supposed to be a long-acting method of contraception. This is still used today, but I do not know how effective it is.

In oral contraceptives, we have herbal teas that the woman takes and also a chewing stick. The chewing stick can either be used to get a woman to start contracting to induce labor or it can be used to procure abortion.

There is also a diaphragm. Traditionally, limes are cut in half and the inside is scooped out leaving the skin which is used to plug up the cervix.

Spermicide consists of things like cooking oil, vinegar, soap, potassium, caustic soda and other things. They are used in conjunction with some local herbs, leaves or roots that have been soaked in these things and then put into the vagina to plug it up. You can conduct your own experiment at home by taking some oil and dropping a bug into it. You will see that it will die because of lack of oxygen and reduced movement. So you can see that these people were very knowledgeable.

Withdrawal is a method that is common to everyone of us. In addition, we have exercises that can be performed to expel the sperm. After sexual intercourse you can either wriggle vigorously or go into the vagina and vigorously mop out the sperm.

There are also charms. We use the snakeskin. It can be worn as a pendant or a waist band. The belief is that wherever a child is not wanted, the child will not go there, just as the snake who sheds its skin will never return to the place where it molted.

Then there is the barrier method. This is normally used on adolescents. When a child goes traveling and the mother fears she might be raped or get pregnant, a special mixture made with red parrot feathers is put on the ground. When one crosses over it, an invisible barrier is created in the vagina of the woman or girl. If any man tries to penetrate her, he eventually gives up out of frustration of not being able to penetrate.

Then, of course, we have another one which is usually practiced by jealous husbands who want to prevent infidelity. A substance is given to the woman so that if anyone tries to have intercourse with her, the vagina goes into spasms and locks. The couple will be locked together and have to go to hospital to be separated. Of course, this will cause a lot of shame.

Physician from Sudan

In a country like ours where the infant mortality rate is 140 per 1000 births, where infectious diseases kill so many children, where malnutrition affects about 30-50% of the people, where malaria is a killer disease, where measles is a killer disease although it could be stopped by immunization, how can you tell us to stop having children? When a mother has 12 children, only



Social worker operating a family planning clinic in India.

three or four may live. I am a doctor, but I would not go for family planning.

Q: What do you think of governments encouraging family planning?

A: You know, this is a very sensitive question. In my country, there are four family planning organizations. So far, not many people go for it. The government had to agree to offer family planning, but it was not successful. It was included in maternal-child health clinics so that if a mother comes to the clinic, you can see if she needs family planning or not. You know, mothers used to breast-feed for two years and they used to get physiological amenorrhea. My mother, for instance, used to breast-feed for two years and she would never get pregnant before the third year.

Q: Are your objections to family planning related to a religious objection?

A: No, I don't think religion has anything to do with it. In my country, children are security. I care for my mother now; she is

75 and is an invalid. My sisters and I take care of her in rotation. If she had no children, nobody would look after her. There are no homes for the elderly here. If you have children, you have security. Now, if a woman cannot have children for health reasons, then I advise them not to have children. But it should not be offered to every woman.

Q: Are there agencies in Sudan that are trying to promote family planning?

A: There are Americans. I'm not a member of any of the family planning committees, but I know that the Americans pay a lot of money to push family planning. In a country like ours with only 22 million people in 2.5 million square kilometers, that means you have two to three people per square mile. And still we go for family planning.

Q: What do you think their motivation is?

A: I think the multinationals, imperialism and the new colonialism have to do with pushing family planning into the undeveloped world. They want to have a Third World market. They don't want us to be developed. They don't want us to be educated. Once we are free, they won't be staying in Africa anymore.

Q: Ronald Reagan has threatened to withdraw aid from African countries because of the pro-abortion policies of some of the family planning agencies.

A: Let him withdraw all his aid. Let him withdraw all his bases. Let him withdraw all the Americans from Africa. □

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Further readings:

- The Right to Live: Poverty, Power and Population Control, by Betsy Hartman, *Institute for Food and Development Policy*, available Fall 1985.
- Indigenous Abortion Practitioners in Rural Bangladesh, by Shamima Islam, available from *Women for Women*, Road No. 4, House No. 67, Dhanmondi R.A., Dacca, Bangladesh. \$3.00 plus postage.

WOMEN'S STUDIES INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Edited by Dale Spender

The policy of this bi-monthly journal is to provide a forum for feminist discussion and debate from a global perspective which acknowledges and celebrates different cultural and political viewpoints. **WOMEN'S STUDIES INTERNATIONAL FORUM** seeks to critique and reconceptualize existing knowledge, to examine and re-evaluate the manner in which knowledge is produced and distributed, and explore the implications this has for women's position in society.

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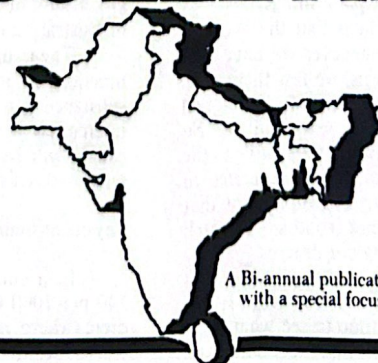
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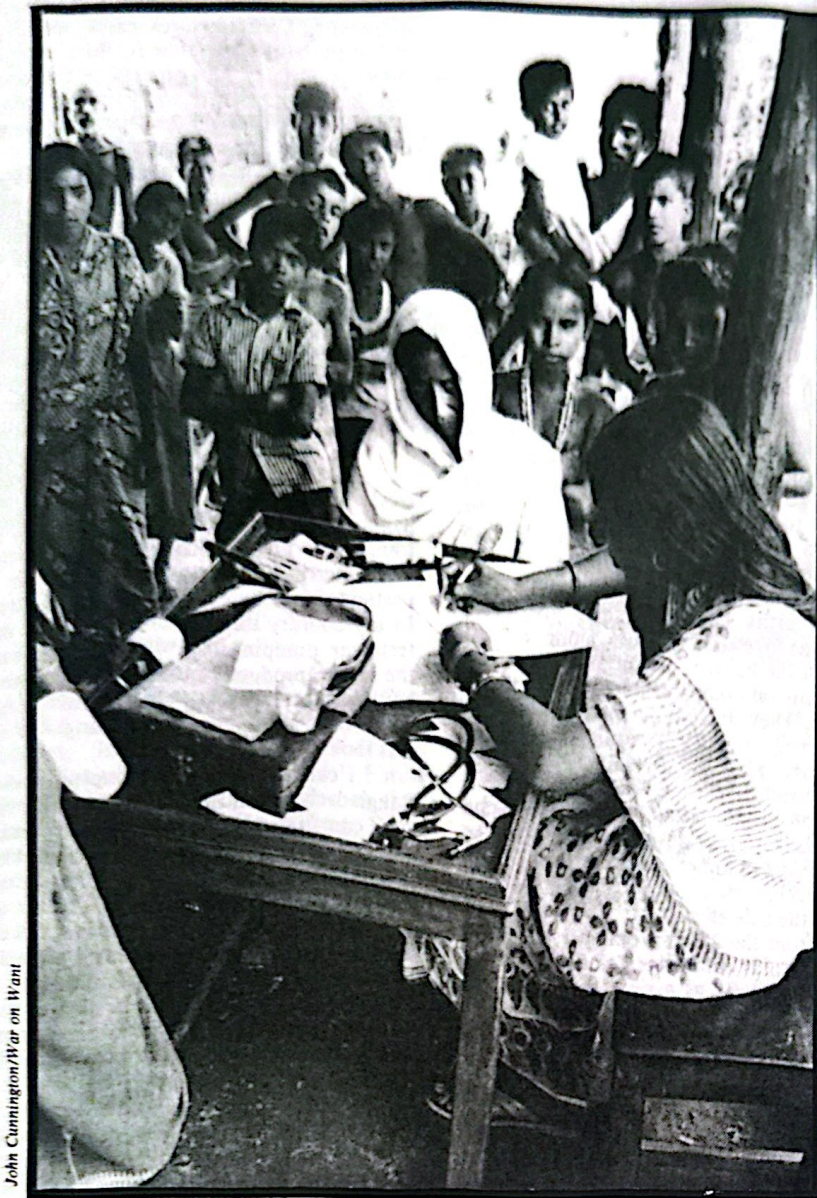
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Sterile Solutions



John Cunningham/War on Want

Health worker at a non-government clinic in Bangladesh.

Helga Satzinger

I am going to explain a little bit of what the new reproductive technology is, what we call reproductive engineering. I will begin with in vitro fertilization (IVF), which is a way of impregnating a woman and is done in a hospital or a laboratory. With IVF, the eggs of a woman are removed from her ovaries through very painful surgery under anesthesia. After that, the eggs are fertilized with a man's semen in the laboratory, although this doesn't always work. After that the eggs are replanted into the womb of a woman. She doesn't have to be the one who produced the eggs; the doctors can give one woman's eggs to any woman they want to. This method then allows for selection of those women who are to give eggs, and those who are to carry the baby.

The second implication of this method is that if you have a fertilized egg in a laboratory, you can manipulate it. You can perform surgery, you can make twins out of it, you can select for sex, you can check what genetic properties are in this fertilized egg, such as whether there is a predisposition for diabetes, or heart disease or cancer—diseases which often have environmental causes. You can use these fertilized eggs to do genetic engineering. That means you can add or remove genetic information. This is not yet being practiced, but they are working on it in the industrialized countries.

IVF is being promoted because of increasing infertility among men and women in the industrialized countries. They are even promoting IVF in response to men's infertility. They say it is easier for semen to fertilize an egg in a dish than in a woman. So a treatment that does definite harm to a woman's body is being used to treat infertile men. Imagine, operating on a completely healthy woman! This is already being done in the United States.

The reasons for infertility are environmental pollution, psychological problems, IUDs and other contraceptives, or damage to the tubes from surgery. They say that infertility is sometimes the consequence of doctors' treatments. Now they offer a treatment to counter it.

One form of prenatal diagnosis is amniocentesis. In this procedure, cells are removed from the liquid surrounding the fetus and checked for genetic disorders. You can do that in the sixth month of pregnancy. In West Germany it is commonly done to women over 34 years old to check for hereditary diseases. The women then have the right to abort the fetus.

The methods of prenatal testing are now improved, so that they can do it in the sixth or seventh week of pregnancy. This method, which was developed in China, is called chorion villi biopsy. With this test, as with amniocentesis, you can check the child's sex and what kind of genetic make-up it will have.

I don't know if you've noticed this stall outside in the courtyard. It says "select the sex of your child. Baby girl or baby boy." It's by a Nigerian family planning organization called PLAN. I asked them why it is necessary to select the sex of

In July 1985, an international emergency conference on reproductive technology and genetic engineering was held in Vällinge, Sweden. Women from 16 countries came together to discuss current research and experimentation in the field of reproductive technology, and to develop strategies for women to maintain control over their bodies. This meeting was called by the Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering. Recognizing the growing international trend toward the development and use of reproductive technology, the group hopes to become a broad-based, international resis-

tance movement. Their upcoming events include a meeting for women of Common Market countries in 1986 and an international conference on the medical and scientific crimes against women in 1987.

At Forum '85, three of the women who had attended the meeting in Sweden—Farida Akhtar of Bangladesh, Jalna Hanmer of Britain, and Helga Satzinger of West Germany—presented a workshop entitled "New Reproductive Technologies" as a means to get other women to organize around the issue. Presentations from Helga Satzinger and Farida Akhtar are excerpted here.

your child, and the women told me, "Oh, you know there are societies where the women are so disappointed if they have five girls and they want to have a boy. For the hereditary line it is necessary to have a boy. So we give the women some help, so that they can have a boy and not have so many problems." They say they do it with a natural method, based on when to have intercourse. They say it's the natural way, and a very Christian way because it increases the love between parents and children.

This is one way to predetermine the sex of a child. It won't be 100% effective; there will be a lot of failures. And it's the woman who will be the guilty one if she has another girl. Another way of preselecting sex before conception is by discerning which sperm are responsible for a girl or for a boy. They are working on this in Japan.

Once you are pregnant, you can use amniocentesis or chorion villi sampling to determine the child's sex. Then the woman has the choice, whatever that means, to abort or not to abort. In India, there are clinics which perform amniocentesis for the purpose of telling the woman whether she is carrying a boy or a girl. There are many cases where women abort the girls so that they can get pregnant again and have a boy.

Women undergo this procedure because of the social pressure to have boys. They say it is better for women not to have girls, because her status will rise [if she has boys exclusively]. This procedure is fairly common and inexpensive in India, and not just in the cities but in the rural areas. Today throughout India there are more men than women and the Indian government is presently not prepared to do anything about it, although the feminist movement has taken it up and tried to call attention to it. But what choice do we have with these new technologies in a society where women are not respected as human beings? What choices will these technologies give us if we can select a girl or a boy, but it is not socially acceptable to have a girl?

Just think about the possibilities that are arising from these techniques. For example, there is an Australian company that sells the technology of IVF to Singapore. Those who make population policy in Singapore are saying that intelligent women have to bear more children than the poor ones. They seem to think that intelligence is hereditary. So now they can take the eggs from those women who are allowed to reproduce and transfer them to other women who are not allowed to have their own but have to carry someone else's.

Furthermore, there are experiments now going on to develop an artificial uterus—to have a pregnancy be completely independent of a woman. They've done it in animal research with half the pregnancy of a mouse. The people who are promoting this in West Germany are saying "Oh, it will be very, very good to see the pregnancy process, which at the moment is hidden in the dark of a woman." They want to get control of every little bit. They are

really promoting the development of these technologies just to get the production of human beings away from women.

Farida Akhtar

Women's reproductive activities have always been an area of interest to scientists, corporations and policy-makers. Up until now, childbearing remained the entire responsibility of women. In the biological sense, reproduction can only take place when the sperm fertilizes the egg. Socially, it has meant that women have carried the men's children. That is, men are the owners of this product called a child, produced in a woman's womb.

Historically, the natural phenomenon of reproduction became a constraint for women rather than a source of power as women are the ones who can reproduce the species. We have found that women could not say, "It is me who carries the child, so I should decide whether I have it or not." Women were considered to be machines to reproduce the human species. When women of the developed countries realized this, the first women's lib movement started to take shape. They wanted the right to control births, but the solution came in the form of contraceptives.

Women could take contraceptives to control births, but this did not give them reproductive rights because along with it they got the hazards of contraceptives. The multinational companies ended up gaining from it. They made different kinds of contraceptives, which of course prevented births and gave women some liberty, but they became associated with all different kinds of health hazards. These so-called side effects are not dealt with because they are considered minor problems. So women have a choice of either getting pregnant or getting the side effects.

From the Third World perspective, I must say that contraceptives do not go to the Third World as a right for women or because women want them. They come to Third World countries because somebody is worried about our population, or because some multinational companies have problems marketing their products, or they need to get rid of their products which have been rejected in the developed countries, or they need to test their new drugs. Population control policies and manufacturers' marketing policies resulted in the so-called family planning programs funded by developed countries.

I want to denounce this policy that says we are poor because we have too many children. We are told our families are too big, but sometimes we need many children for economic purposes because in the absence of other means of production, we need sons and daughters to help. We are losing the control to make this decision.

We now have lots of contraceptives in our country, like IUDs, Depo Provera, and pills, which are hazardous to women. Women are forced either to take one of these temporary methods or go for sterilization because it is a government policy that has been reached in conjunction with

developed countries and their multinational corporations.

The new reproductive technology is something we don't know much about. Currently, we are involved only with fertility control. We did not think we had to concern ourselves with the new reproductive technology because they focus on treatment for infertility. But now I see things differently. Contraceptives cause sterility, and then, before we know it, the multinational companies who brought in the contraceptives will offer us treatment for infertility. They will always find some problems for which they can provide solutions.

We know that in the capitalist system, the relationship between the underdeveloped world and the developed world is one of creating new markets. So it won't be surprising if some day they come up with statistics showing increased infertility and then dump all the new reproductive technologies which have either been discarded, overproduced or resisted in the West. We have to do something about resisting this trend at an international level.

These new technologies also have a relationship to other economic sectors. For example, at the conference in Sweden we found that there are studies that indicate that infertility was caused by the use of pesticides and by environmental pollution. In my country there is much pesticide and fertilizer dumping. So when we denounce the new reproductive technology, we really have to make a package of all these things, we have to think about everything and not just look at one issue.

I can give you one example. Land in Bangladesh is known to be very fertile. You can put a seed in the ground and it will definitely grow. But we had a problem of irrigation because we couldn't control rain and water supply. But we never got much help in the field of irrigation. Instead we got fertilizers and pesticides. Our fertile land was made infertile so that the multinationals could have markets for their fertilizers. I'm saying this because again our fertile women are being made infertile for their marketing. I'm relating this for us to understand that it is a political question and it is an economic and social question. We have to remove all the conditions which lead to infertility. □

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- Pills, Policies and Profits: Reactions to the Bangladesh Drug Policy by Francis Rolt, *War on Want*, 1985.
- The Mother Machine by Gena Corea, Harper and Row, 1985.
- Test Tube Women edited by Rita Arditti and Renate Duelli-Klein, Pandora Press, 1984.
- "Ova Easy" and "To Womb It May Concern," *Connexions* #15, Winter 1985.

Contact:

Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering, Box 571, Winchester, MA 01890 or Box 583, London NW3 1RQ, England.

Philippines

Pressure is Mounting



The Philippine group GABRIELA (General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action) came to Nairobi to tell Forum delegates about what is happening in their country under the Marcos regime. While government officials were painting a rosy picture at the UN conference, GABRIELA was actively disseminating information which revealed the other side of women's status in the Philippines.

GABRIELA, a coalition consisting of 87 women's groups from around the nation, was formed in early 1984 during a forum which included women from many sectors of society. Prior to this, women's organizations formed a small part of the broad opposition. Although there has been resistance to the Marcos government for years, the situation has escalated with the assassination of popular opposition leader Benigno Aquino in 1983. Since then people have been active and vocal in expressing their political discontent. GABRIELA represents this growing interest among women in liberating the nation from an unjust regime and in organizing themselves around women's issues.

GABRIELA held a well prepared, organized workshop entitled "Women and the Strategy for Genuine Peace and Development." The room was decorated with posters from GABRIELA and other Filipino groups. In the back, there were tables displaying books, magazines, posters and Filipino handicrafts for sale. As women moved comfortably around the room, looking at literature or finding seats, a Filipina woman played guitar singing songs in Tagalog.

The three-hour workshop was a combination of Filipino liberation songs, reports on the status of women and their organizations and a slideshow. There was also time for questions and statements. As each woman spoke, the reality of the popular movement in the Philippines unfolded. What follows are excerpts from that workshop.

GABRIELA is so named in honor of a woman revolutionary leader who, in the 17th century, led one of the massive revolts against the Spanish colonial masters. When her husband, a general of the revolutionary forces, died, she was made the general. She led successful forays against the Spanish until she was captured and executed. So GABRIELA stands for Filipina womanhood, for her role in the struggle for emancipation, and against oppression and exploitation.

Formerly a Spanish colony, the Philippines is where East meets West. It is strategically located because it is the gateway to Asia and the Pacific. It's one of the world's largest archipelagos with 7100 islands. The people are of Malay-Indonesian extraction mixed with Chinese and Spanish. We have a population of 54 million people in a country the size of the British Isles.

Peasant Women

Peasants comprise the largest sector of our community and yet they get the smallest share of the wealth. The majority

have had only three or four years of schooling, if any. Their economic survival is continually being threatened with possible eviction from their own land. The very low income of peasants is due to the low profits of tenant farmers, the exorbitant cost of pesticides and fertilizers, and the lack of participation by the peasants in the pricing of their products. In addition, the blatant cheating in the measurement of their farm produce and the greed of multinational corporations has turned cultivators into landless workers. The rural areas are so underdeveloped that many peasant women go to the big cities to work as domestics, where they often become victims of sexual exploitation. [It is estimated that there are 120,000 prostitutes in the Philippines.]

The intense militarization has caused a lot of problems for our farmers. In parts of Mindanao the people have suffered chemical bombings, which have caused birds and monkeys to fall dead from the trees and people's skin to peel off. [Much of the armed opposition to the Marcos regime is based in Mindanao which is predominantly Muslim. An oppressed minority in a Christian country, the Moro National Liberation Front has been waging a war of independence since 1972.] These incidents have forced farmers to leave their land. While being resettled in crowded huts fit for chickens and pigs, many have become victims of measles and influenza epidemics. When they return to their farms, they often find the area has been cordoned off by the military to become new acquisitions for multinational corporations. [More than 100 multinational agri-

business corporations now control more than 74% of the cultivated land area in Mindanao.]

Military abuses such as stealing chickens, firebombs, sexual molestation of women, disappearance of men, and arbitrary arrests and detention are rampant. Women are placed in the position of searching for missing husbands and sons or becoming the family wage earner if their husbands are killed.

Socially and culturally, women are relegated to a very humble position because they cannot acquire education. They are also the most malnourished because the best food is given to husbands and children. They are burdened with child rearing, housekeeping, tending the gardens, raising poultry, weeding, planting, harvesting—all without pay. In the prevailing Philippine system of landlord/tenant relations, Filipino peasant women and children are expected to help on the farm and their labor is not compensated.

WATCH: Mindanao (Women's Alliance for True Change: Mindanao) is the umbrella organization for militant women's groups in Mindanao, the second biggest and southernmost island of the Philippines. **WATCH: Mindanao** actively supports the peasants' demands for debt reduction, elimination of usury and genuine land reform. It is also fighting against exploitation of women and child labor, as well as pressing for the expansion and improvement of essential services such as health, communication, nutrition and water.

Women Workers

In the export-processing zones, 85-90% of the workers are women, all of whom are exposed to health hazards and toxic substances. High work quotas are imposed, especially on those in the electronics industry. In fact, if a worker meets her quota one day, it will be raised on the next.

There are a number of anti-labor laws in the country. Workers on picket lines can be legally fired or killed for going on strike. This year alone in Mindanao, eight women have been killed and scores have been injured on the picket lines. But women in the export-processing zones, especially electronic workers, are still organizing by staging protests and actions.

The Urban Poor Women

The underdevelopment and poverty of the countryside push women to the cities in search for a better way of life. But more often than not, they end up in congested slums.

In the Philippines, women hold the purse strings. This is not necessarily a privilege because when the money is short, it becomes a burden to buy enough food to feed the family. For the urban poor

woman, education for her children is a luxury.

There are no jobs. So she washes clothes for a neighbor or sells things in the streets like barbecued chicken feet—not even the other parts, which are too expensive for her and her neighbors. She receives no social services, and in the eyes of the government, she doesn't exist.

In the name of development or progress, her home is demolished for a new office building or monument. Women have protested the demolition of their homes by fighting the police and military. Many women have been successfully mobilized by the Alliance of Nationalist Women in Unity, which has some 4000 urban poor women, and around 20 middle class women. These women are working together to change the system and protect their rights.

Middle Class Women

The business community and the middle class have also been affected by the political and economic crisis. With an inflation rate last year of 125%, production costs have risen. In general, there is a loss of confidence in the government as the economy becomes less stable. Decrees are often issued at the whim of the President making it difficult to conduct business. It is a rule of thumb to plan only for two months at a time.

Women Professionals in the Philippines (WOMB), is the only women's organization based in the middle class that is anti-fascist and anti-imperialist. In spite of this, WOMB has managed to reach out to others in the middle class as more and more people have decided to fight the dictatorship and the US presence in the Philippines. Even people of the business sector have joined in mass demonstrations and rallies.

The Decade of Women

When the UN Decade started in 1975, 30% of Filipinos were living below the poverty line. Today, that figure is 72%. Over the last ten years, militarization of our country has also increased. In 1972, when Martial Law was declared, we had 50,000 military personnel. Today, we have more than 250,000, as well as several thousand paramilitary units. Whereas the military used to be confined to security affairs, now you will find military men in the judicial, legislative, administrative and executive bodies. They are partners with the dictator in several businesses.

Military operations are overt. They arbitrarily pick up people and kill them. They go inside barrios, ransack houses and take whatever they can. If the military suspects that one area of the countryside is

infiltrated, they will occupy the area. Frequently they use other tactics, such as political assassination.

We have done a study of the effect of militarization on women. Our primary sources are women who have been affected by human rights violations, such as political prisoners and women who have been tortured and arrested. Based on our study, there are about 15,400 people who have been direct victims of human rights violations—a conservative estimate because we could not talk to everyone who has been a victim. Of these, 10% are women. Most are from Mindanao. Martial law was supposed to have been repealed in 1981, but statistics state that there has been no significant change in the number of human rights violations despite this.

What is more important about these human rights violations and the increased militarization of our country is the support from the United States. Reagan has given \$500 million in direct military aid to the Philippines. The United States has huge economic and military interests in the Philippines as demonstrated by the network of transnational corporations and the presence of two US military bases.

Throughout the years of colonialization, Filipinos have fought and died for freedom. We are nearing a point where we might become Asia's next Vietnam. Just before we left the Philippines, Marcos, threatened by the response of the people, called for assistance from the United States. If the US provides military assistance, there will be a bloodbath in the Philippines. During the Philippine-American War in the 1900s, [a war which ensued after the US acquired the Philippines at the end of the Spanish-American War] 60,000 Filipinos and thousands of Americans died.

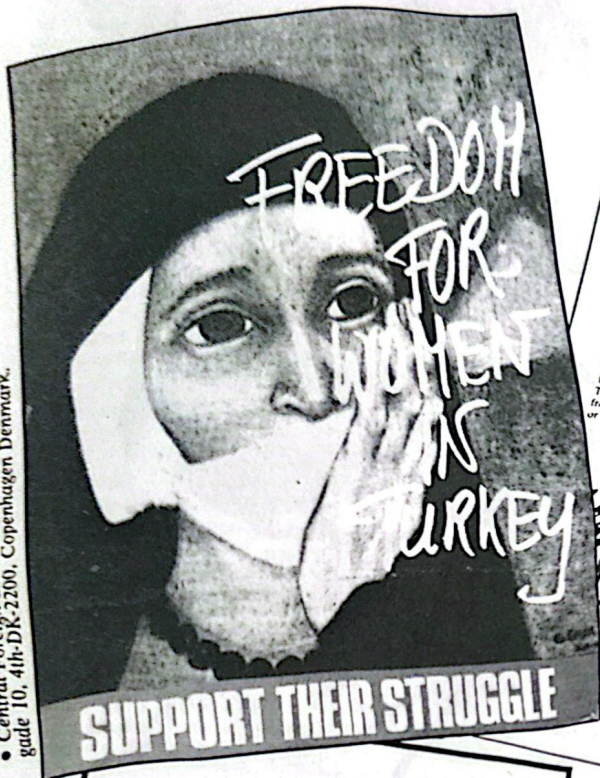
So, we ask our sisters here to unite with us in solidarity to dismantle the US-Marcos dictatorship, to establish a democratic coalition government in the Philippines, to oppose increasing US aid and intervention in the Philippines, and to support the women's mass movement in its struggle for national liberation, emancipation and peace. □

Further Readings:

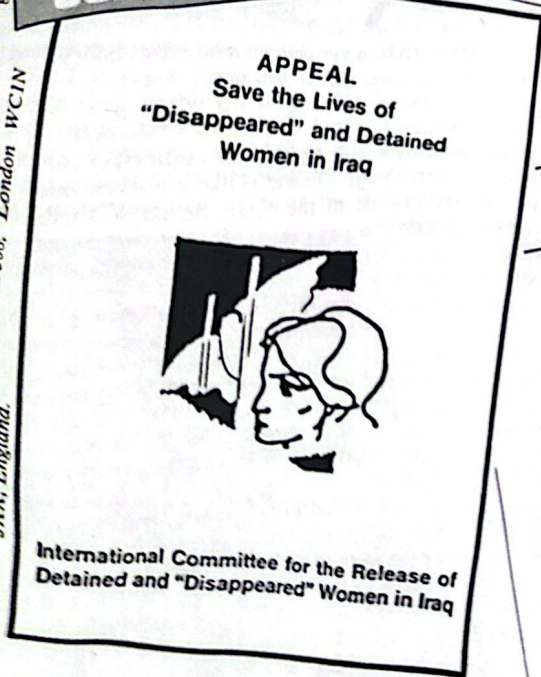
- "GABRIELA Goes Nationwide," *Womenews*, March 1985, *Women Studies and Resource Center*, Room 303 Francisco Bldg. San Pedro Street, Davao City 9501, Philippines.
- "Taking a Share of History—The Women's Movement in the Philippines," *Philippine Report*, March, 1985, v.2, #3.
- *Filipina 1 and Filipina 2—Essays*, edited by Mila Astorga Garcia, Marra P.L. Lanot and Lilia Quindoza Santiago, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, Philippines, 1985.

Political Prisoners

• Central Foreign Bureau of the P.W.D., Elmsgate 10, 4th-DK-2200, Copenhagen Denmark.



• ICRODDWJ, BM Box 9308, London WC1N 3XX, England.



At home and in exile, women are campaigning for the release of political prisoners. At Forum '85, this was made apparent through the numerous flyers and pamphlets distributed describing the physical and psychological torture that political prisoners face. Although there were few workshops devoted to the subject, many groups were actively passing out information and talking to all who were interested. They appealed to all women intending to show their concern and support for the rights of these

prisoners by:

- sending letters of protest to embassies and heads-of-state
- sending solidarity messages to women in prison
- organizing fact-finding missions to document their situations
- signing petitions for their release
- publishing and distributing material that will call attention to the prisoners' plight. □

TAPOL

British Campaign for the Defence

of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia

TAPOL Bulletin No. 66 Supplement

March 1989

Repression and resistance in East Timor since August 1983

In the last few months, more documents have been smuggled out of East Timor, reporting on military operations during 1984, on living conditions in the military villages always referred to by the Timorese as concentration camps, and on the atrocities perpetrated by the forces of occupation since General Buncur Murdan launched his new offensive in August 1983. In view of the importance of this information, TAPOL has decided to devote most of the this supplement to a report on conditions in East Timor since the start of the offensive. Details from the different documents have been compiled into a single report to do as far as possible a comprehensive picture of the situation in several parts of the country.

Some documents bear the signature of Xanana, President of the Revolutionary Council of National Resistance and Commander-in-Chief of Falintil, the armed wing of Fretilin. One is a letter to Xanana, commander of the First Autonomous Company of Falintil in the eastern sector. Others bear no signature, but are assumed to have been compiled by Fretilin. It is no mean achievement to have obtained this material abroad. As Mr Filipe Ximenes Belo, head of the Catholic Church in East Timor, wrote in a letter to Catholic contacts in Europe on 5 December 1984: "All the mail in East Timor is censored. Thus it takes a lot of effort on our part to find suitable means to mail our letters out."

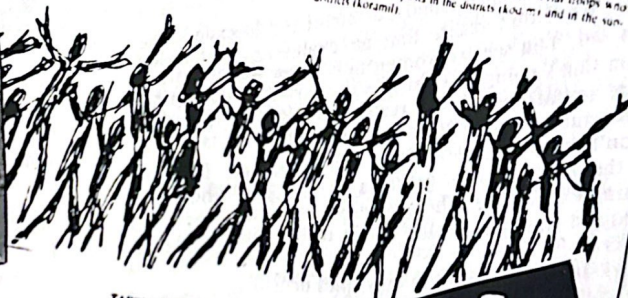
Introductory remarks

1. Putting together the details, it is evident that a number of Timorese abandoned Indonesian-controlled territories or deserted from Indonesian army units on or around 8 August 1983 to join or rejoin Falintil. It is difficult to tell whether this was an

organised move or a spontaneous response to Indonesian military operations, but it did occur in a number of places.

2. Many of the victims of the atrocities inflicted on the population have been people in the "civil defence" (chupur or pertanahan sipil), the "trained people's corps" (tatah or rakyat terlatih) or low-level officials in the Indonesian administration. So much for General Murdan's "hearts and minds" policy!

3. Both elite troops - Kopassandha para-commandos - and territorial troops are involved in the terror. The para-commandos are now always identified as "Nanggela" soldiers with a reputation for extreme brutality. Different Nanggela units operate in different parts of the country. In the district of Baucau, they are referred to as "Nanggela 2", while in the eastern sector, they are referred to as "Nanggela 4". A number of men in the military posts in the districts of Baucau and in the sub-district (koramil)



TAPOL Bulletin No. 66 Supplement

• TAPOL, the British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia, 8A, Trepot Street, London SW18 2BP, England.

FREE WOMEN PRISONERS IN IRAN

The Committee for the Disappeared and Detained Women in Iran is a participant of the Human Rights Conference on the U.N. Charter for women, organized by the campaign of women, lawyers and scientists in Iran to highlight the campaign of women, including the prominent figure of Dr. Maryam Mirzazadeh, all women political prisoners, including the prominent figure of Dr. Maryam Mirzazadeh, all women political prisoners, including the prominent figure of Dr. Maryam Mirzazadeh.

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• Committee for the Disappeared, United Nations, Commission for Human Rights, UN Plaza, Geneva 10, CH1211 Switzerland.

CO-MADRES

Few Latin American women were present at the NGO Forum; they numbered around 350 according to Inter Press Service. For most Latin American women, the trip was too costly, and others chose instead to go to the third Latin American Feminist Encontro (Meeting) which took place in Brazil two weeks after the NGO Forum. Many Latin American women voiced frustration with the planning of the Forum because translations were not provided for the majority of the workshops.

From the first day of the Forum, a petition was circulated condemning US intervention in Central America. Before the Forum ended, a demonstration was held on the Great Court to express solidarity with the people of Central America.

The following interview is with Alicia, a member of the Committee of Mothers and Relatives of Political Prisoners, Disappeared and Assassinated of El Salvador Monseñor Oscar Arnulfo Romero (Co-Madres). The interview was conducted and translated from Spanish by *Connexions*.

We Salvadoran women found out about the Decade at the end of 1984. We didn't realize that an evaluation was taking place. That's sad. You see, we women only know about the war and repression that's going on right now. It's very important for us to be here to talk about our reality and to give our own evaluation. We put a lot of effort into getting here.

We don't have any workshops scheduled. At first, we didn't know the procedures for getting a workshop or who made up the Planning Committee. Then, when we asked for workshop times, our request was denied. It's not in their political interest for us to be here.

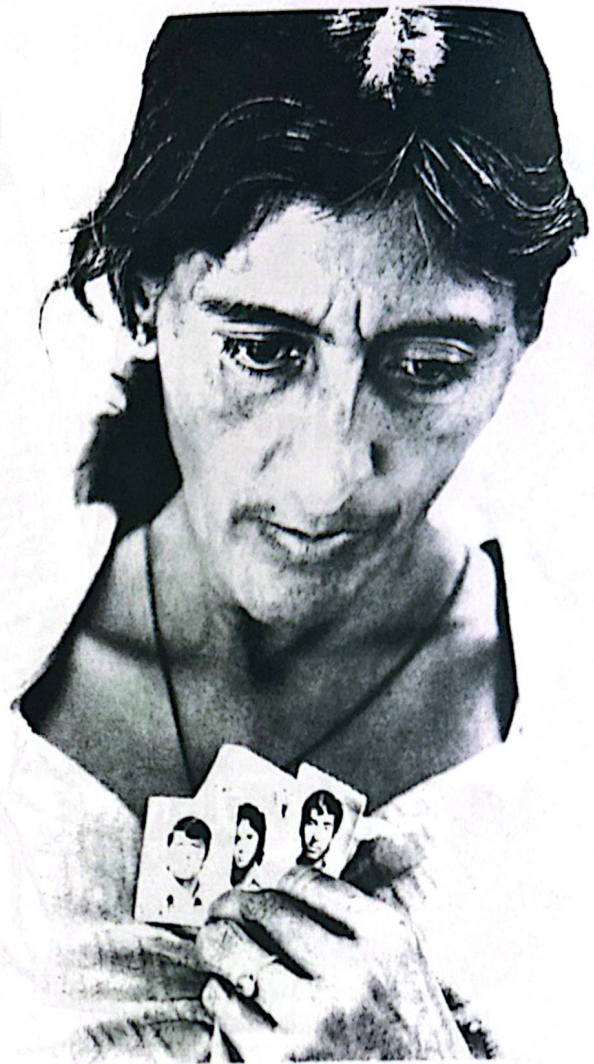
Our workshops were not the only ones denied or cancelled because they dealt with political issues. It's well-known that there is a political force here that wants to depoliticize the Forum so that women will just talk about "women's issues." They wanted to disconnect us from our reality. And that is a political position. But at the same time that they've been blocking our participation, we've also been receiving a lot of support, and getting some attention. There are a lot of progressive people here who want peace and who know that we want peace.

Whenever we talk about problems such as hunger, employment or education, we have to look at the causes of these problems. For us we cannot talk about the Salvadoran people without talking about the war under which we live. Also, we believe that without social change, there won't be good consequences for women.

Co-Madres was established in 1977 by nine mothers. It uses the name of Monseñor Romero [who was killed by a death squad in 1980] because he was the one who advised us to unite our voices for more strength to reclaim our children who have disappeared. As the repression grows, so does Co-Madres. I joined in 1978 after my 13-year-old son was arrested by the National Guard. At that time there were 150 members; now we have more than 550. Some of our members have disappeared, been arrested, or assassinated.

At first we marched and had meetings at the markets to inform young people about the situation. We went to the cathedral and the churches to denounce what was happening. We presented letters to the government, the Ministry of Justice, and the Assembly, but all of our legal efforts to find our children were in vain.

Since 1983, we have been holding a sit-in for peace every 15 days in front of the cathedral. At the last sit-in we had at the end of June, 6000 mothers showed up. We also hold peace marches. We still present our demands to the Assembly, the Ministry of Justice and the Napoleón Duarte government, which responds with North American planes and counter-insurgency.



WOODFIN CAMP

"Voicing our strength to reclaim our children who have disappeared."

Duarte's government is without power or authority; the power is in the hands of the military. Duarte is like a flower vase because if he is put in the middle of the table, he stays there. If they move him to one side, he stays there. If they move him to the other side, he stays there too. His government does not respond to the needs of the people.

We have an office in central San Salvador where we have a photo exhibition every 15 days and put out a weekly newsletter. Daily we receive 10 or 15 reports from mothers whose children have been killed. There have been days when as many as 50 or 60 people have shown up and we couldn't take in all of their reports. From our office, we broadcast a daily 15-minute radio program of all the information we have received in the previous 24 hours.

Twice a week, a Co-Madres delegation visits the political prisoners and gives them food, clothing and medicine. Also, once a week we distribute food to their families. In all of these activities, we demand the end to the bombings, the massacres, the military aid. All the military aid that the US gives to El Salvador goes for murdering defenseless people. There is a lot of scorched land as a result of the bombings and so many people are burned by the white fire—napalm.

We know of at least 2500 orphaned children. It is our responsibility as mothers to give them attention, food, medicine, whatever the children need. Co-Madres was threatened in 1982 by the mayor of San Salvador, Roberto D'Aubuisson [a 1984 presidential candidate and leader of the right-wing party ARENA, reputed to have connections to the death squads] who said in one of the newspapers that he would decapitate the mothers one by one for denouncing the government. During this time,

they kidnapped 84 of our orphaned children, one of whom turned up dead. They are in danger because their parents have disappeared, been murdered or are political prisoners.

Since 1983, we have been taking to the streets. We wear black dresses as a sign of mourning for the over 50,000 known dead. If you add those who have not been found, the figure is at least 60,000 [out of a population of five million]. We wear white handkerchiefs on our heads to symbolize peace. We also wear red flowers to symbolize the spirit of our struggle and the blood spilled, white flowers as a tribute to the disappeared, and green leaves to symbolize the hope that they are still alive. Our form of dress, besides being a visible expression of our unity to the national and international press, also gives us some protection from the death squads. It is one thing to gun down a diverse group of women, but it is another when the women are all dressed in black and are known to be part of Co-Madres.

During the election campaign, Duarte promised Co-Madres that he was going to dismantle the death squads. But, on the contrary, they are stronger and more active than ever before. There are now two new US-trained death squads that use more sophisticated means of capturing and killing people.

The death squads are at the heart of the armed forces. I say this because when the death squad captured me, the men that came in my house—maybe 20 of them—were wearing military decorations or army uniforms with civilian shirts. A week before the death squads came to my house, a man came up to me saying he was a Jehovah's Witness selling books. He passed by my house a few times. The day they came, he was the one that led the death squad platoon. He was a North American and could hardly speak Spanish. He hit me with the butt of his rifle, kicked me in the gut. He said, "Get her, get her," when they tried to rape my 12-year-old daughter. Miraculously, she managed to escape. They raped me, then they left me bleeding terribly because the rifle barrel they pushed in my vagina had scraped me. When they told me to walk to the door, I couldn't get up, so they kicked me over to the door and hit me.

In November 1984, Co-Madres was awarded the Robert Kennedy Foundation prize for our human rights work in El Salvador. The US State Department denied visas to our group, but I was able to get one, and toured ten states. The tour was a great success, but I was followed by a man who, I was told, was a CIA agent. Everywhere I went, he would stick to me like a flea. This man interviewed me twice.

The US State Department has also accused four mothers who took a trip to the US of being terrorists, of planting bombs; they were implicated in some police assassinations. This was all invented to denounce Co-Madres and to isolate us because we have the support of the Salvadoran people. Accusing the mothers of terrorism is like saying to the death squads, "Look, there

they are! Seize them!"

On June 13, 1985, the offices of the Human Rights Commission and Co-Madres were attacked. Documents, written testimonies and lists of people who are collaborating with us were taken. Whatever happens to those people, the Duarte government is responsible.

On June 2, 1985, the army invaded the social security hospital where a labor strike was going on for higher wages and better working conditions. They arrived by helicopter and paratroopers came down. They captured the staff and doctors who were in the labor room where women were giving birth. As a consequence, one of the babies died. This happens today in this supposed democracy of the Duarte government.

With this in mind, we ask that the Duarte government renew the talks with the FMLN [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, the organized opposition movement which the government is fighting]. The government at first accepted the idea of dialogue, and talks were begun in La Palma and Ayualo. But after Duarte returned from a visit to the US, he flatly refused to resume a dialogue. We believe he is directed by the US government so that they can carry out their plans. The elections were a North American plot, as well, so that the US public would believe that the money poured into El Salvador is strengthening a democracy. We as mothers and as Salvadorans call for an honest dialogue in which the Salvadoran people will have ample participation. □

Contact:

- CO-MADRES, 2a, Avenida Norte y 17a, calle Oriente 1003, Planta Alta, San Salvador, El Salvador or CO-MADRES, AP 7-825, Col. Roma Sur, México DF 06700, México.
- Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), PO Box 50139, Washington, DC 20004.
- Women's Association of El Salvador (AMES), PO Box 40311, San Francisco, CA 94140.

Further Readings:

- Women and War in El Salvador, from WIRES, 2700 Broadway, Rm. 7, New York, NY 10025.
- El Salvador: A Gross and Consistent Pattern of Human Rights Abuses, a compilation of material from Amnesty International, US Section, 304 West 58th St., New York, NY, 10019.
- Reagan, El Salvador and Central America: Roots of War, a 100-page clippings packet, \$6.50 postpaid from Data Center, 464 19th St., Oakland, CA 94612. Bulk discount available.
- "What Do You Expect, We Organized," Connexions #14, Fall 1984.
- The Long War: Dictatorship and Revolution in El Salvador, James Dunkerly, Junction Books, 1983.



FLORENCE GARDNER

Demonstrating at the Forum in solidarity with the people of Central America.

ASIAN WOMEN SPEAK OUT!



Women from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangla Desh, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Hongkong, Singapore, Japan, Korea, Australia and the Pacific discuss the gains and gaps and the impact of the Decade on the lives and struggles of grassroots Asian women.

During the Decade various attempts have been made by Asian feminists to reach out to each other, and while recognising the commonalities and the differences of our lives, situations and our struggles, we have been trying to evolve a common conceptual framework and common strategies towards the new society that we seek. To this end, women from 16 Asian countries decided to work on individual country reports on the impact of the Decade on the women in their countries and to undertake an analysis of women's struggles and feminist consciousness in each country.

Representatives from these 16 countries met under the banner of the Asian Women's Research and Action Network to assess the Decade on the Asian level. Fourteen of the reports were subsequently brought together in a Consolidated Asian Report.

From the individual country reports, it became clear that despite the diversity in this region, Asian women were exploited and oppressed in the home, at work, in society, and that this situation was getting worse.

The reasons for the subjugation of Asian women are political, economic and cultural with patriarchy cutting across all three spheres. The liberation of women therefore must encompass all three spheres and must, at the same time, fight against patriarchy. In other words, Asian women must see their struggle as all-encompassing and this struggle must be for national, i.e., structural transformation.

Women's Groups and Movements

The Women's Movement in itself was discussed in great detail in terms of what constitutes the movement. The different kinds of women's organizations that exist in the region were analyzed. The organizations identified fall into the following categories:

1. Professional organizations usually with an international or national identity.
2. Women's social welfare organizations which usually do charity work. They may exist at all levels — from national down to the village level.
3. Women's wings or arms of mixed groups such as political parties, trade unions, peasant organizations and religious organizations.
4. Women's equal rights groups which seek equal rights within the existing system.
5. Women action groups which come together for specific issues.

6. Feminist groups. This category may be differentiated in terms of the following:

- a) Those which challenge patriarchy and have a democratic collective structure with a feminist perspective.
- b) Those which have the four dimensions of national, class, gender and cultural — religion/ethnicity/caste.

While all the above have specific roles to play in the movement, we believe that it is the feminist movement working side by side with the movements of other oppressed masses that will fully achieve the national transformation and the new society that we seek.

The feminist movement works hand in hand with progressive, democratic and left forces for national transformation of society. But we believe that it must remain autonomous from the political parties to be able to influence such forces, so that the women's issue will not be subsumed. The feminist movement must continue its efforts at networking — within the nation, within the sub-region and also internationally.

With this perspective in mind, AWRAN planned transnational Asian researches and common action programmes on the following subjects:

1. Impact of population control policies on the Asian women.
2. Violence against women; use of women as sex symbols.
3. Industrial health hazards.
4. Tourism and prostitution.
5. Creative works of women in terms of stories, poems, songs, theatre, etc.
6. Women and rural technology; vocational education.
7. Migrant women workers.
8. Women and peace; disarmament.
9. Problems of minority women.
10. Training/organizing technology, joint workshops, inventory of researches, bibliography of women's studies, internship programme exchange.

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Tel: 7-95-58, 6-39-49

Teresita Quintos Deles
AWRAN Secretariat
c/o Pilipina
12 Pasaje dela Paz
Project 4, Quezon City
Philippines
Tel: 77-53-41

AWRAN flyer distributed at Forum '85.

Alternative Voices

Asian Women's Research and Action Network

The flyer on the preceding page was handed out at the Forum by members of the Asian Women's Research and Action Network (AWRAN) to publicize their workshop. In preparation for the Nairobi conference, women representing 14 Asian countries (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Australia) prepared alternative country reports on women during the Decade. These were then presented at a three-day conference in May 1985 in the Philippines.

The three-hour workshop in Nairobi included a panel of seven women from India (two representatives), Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan and the Philippines, who offered a summary of the conference held in May. Included here are excerpts from the publication *Asian Women Speak Out! A 14-Country Alternative Asian Report On the Impact of the UN Decade for Women* which was also available at the workshop. Some of the topics covered in the workshop were religious fundamentalism, prostitution/tourism, changes in women's employment, reproductive technologies, strategies of the women's movements and networking. For copies of the reports, please see the contact address at the end of this article.

AWRAN began when a group of Asian women from 10 countries gathered together at the International Conference on Teaching and Research Related to Women in Montreal in August 1982. At several meetings we discussed the need to define feminism in specific Asian terms. We also expressed the need to integrate research and action to bring about vital changes in the lives of women, especially those in the grassroots realities of Asia.

AWRAN operates through Country Networks which draw on the relevant resources within the country to feed into the Regional Center. The Country Networks receive and promote information and initiatives from the Regional Center. They also initiate activities as well as undertake expansion of AWRAN within the country. The Regional Center collects, collates and disseminates information on research on women being carried out in the region. It also promotes the growth of interaction between feminist research groups and feminist action groups.

Our objectives are: to build an Asian network of women involved in research and action for their mutual support and development; to exchange information and experiences; to identify gaps in research subjects or methodology, and to promote work in these areas; to bring research and action groups into ongoing interaction with each other's work and output; and to engage in action on common issues.

The Alternative Asian Report

The objective of the Alternative Asian Report was to evaluate the Decade on Women from the point of view of equality and justice, rather than mere growth. This meant examining the development relating to women from an Asian perspective. To understand this phenomenon, a brief historical review of development is essential.

Most of the countries in the Asian region have moved from traditional societies through colonial, dependent economies to post-independent societies, which still bear the marks of economic and cultural dependence. During the recent decades, many development models have been experimented upon in these countries. In the 1960s, the growth model was tried out and an annual growth of 5% had been achieved by most countries. Nevertheless, unemployment increased and disparities in people's income widened. In spite of a rise in the GNP, poverty did not disappear.

Since the growth model did not bring the expected results, the developing nations became increasingly militant and began demanding a New International Economic Order—a fairer share of the world's resources and better terms of trade. The so-called experts had to develop a new strategy—Basic Human Needs Strategy—which was a ploy to avoid dealing with structural issues.

In the early 1970s the concept of integrating women into development was discussed. As early as 1970, it was pointed out that women in developing countries

had not benefited from the type of development that had taken place there. In fact, their status had declined. Many reports on the status of women prepared by the governments for the UN World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975 also came to that conclusion. It was revealed that women's status had deteriorated in most developing countries in education, employment, health, politics and decision-making and other areas. Thus, the World Plan of Action was presented at this conference demanding that the governments should make efforts to remedy the situation by "integrating women into development." Consequently, the UN organizations, the World Bank and donor agencies all began to talk about women and to include a component on women in their programs.

The new strategy of "the integration of women into development" meant in most cases getting women to work in market-oriented production and thus bringing them into the world market economy. The strategy did not include the idea that women should expand subsistence production for their own sake. Income-generation in this approach meant money income. Money income could be generated only if women could produce something which could be sold. People who could buy these products live in Western countries. This meant export-oriented production.

At around the same time that the "integration of women into development" came into vogue, the new international division of labor was designed and put into practice. In the old world division of labor, raw materials were produced in the Third



Harvesting grain near Lunauada, Gujarat, India, 1977.

UNITED NATIONS/I.P. LAFFONT

World, transported into industrialized countries in Europe and the USA, later also Japan, and transformed into industrial products which were then marketed in the industrialized countries or exported back to the Third World. During the early period, the machine-made textiles, which were cheaper, were forced on the Third World markets and this ruined their own textile industries. This phenomenon resulted in industrialized countries getting richer and the colonies or ex-colonies getting poorer.

Around 1977, national and multinational companies in Europe and the USA realized that the boom of continuous growth was over and the recession was going to end the entire system of the world economy that they were controlling, if a radical change did not occur. A new model was introduced: labor cost intensive processes were to be exported into the Third World, i.e., industrial plants were to be shifted and the Third World cheap labor was to produce the industrial products. And the agriculture was to be modernized through new technologies and agricultural products to be produced for export to the rich countries.

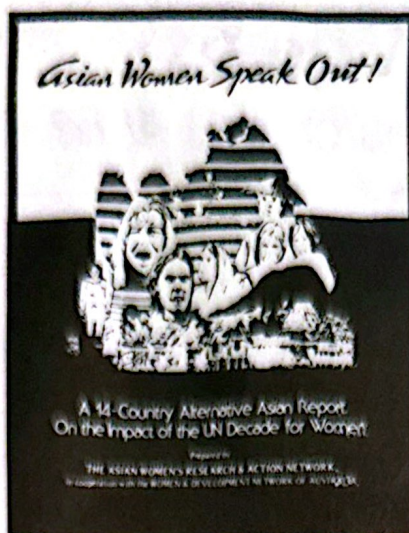
Thus, the Free Trade Zones (or the Export Promotion Zones), World Market Factories and Export Production Villages are being set up in Third World countries. This partial industrialization does not mean that Third World countries have much control over these industries. In most cases, factories are relocated in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, etc. Third World governments have agreed to restrict trade union activities in these Free Trade Zones to facilitate smooth production.

The integration of women into development also emphasized certain prerequisites for women to move into development such as education, technical training, decision-making positions, initiating legislations, etc. However, it is easier to adopt reformist measures like income-generating projects, education, job skills, nutrition programs, etc. than to examine the root causes of sexism, the commercialization and marginalization of women. Women's oppression at home, at work and in society generally are not examined. Rape, wife-beating and other forms of violence against women are not discussed.

Most importantly though, the nature of development that the women were going to be integrated into was not questioned. It was generally accepted that the present economic system of Western capitalist growth and the new development strategies were suitable for the Third World; the only unsuitable aspect was that women were left out of the mainstream of growth and increased economic production.

No model, neither the economic growth model nor the Marxist model, has addressed the problem of patriarchy. Society's acceptance of male domination and control of women by men has pervaded development work. Traditional patriarchal structures of society have not been questioned.

The challenge for women in development work lies in initiating dialogues on the type of society that they want and



Cover of the AWRAN report distributed at Forum '85.

developing strategies to achieve these objectives. The direction and basis for change should look toward the vast majority of the people, not the microscopic minority elite.

Government Initiatives—Mostly Lip Service

Most governments subscribe to the Decade's goals of Equality, Development and Peace, but without any real commitment. Many government programs—aiming only for women's access to credit, water, education, etc.—do not challenge development models or confront the sexist bias of program designs and processes.

In almost every country, women's income-generating projects are confined to traditional areas, especially sewing projects. The questions of how much income can actually be generated, who benefits from the income and what changes the program makes in the subordinate status of women are never raised. Training programs are often confined to traditional "feminine" skills such as cooking and embroidery, although the market demands other skills.

Laws either stop short of granting genuine equality or are shot through with holes. Where laws are good, the support structures are lacking or nonexistent. In Pakistan, because laws are becoming more regressive, women have to struggle to hold back the considerable erosion of their rights.

Some initiatives are made for the wrong reasons. The provision of childcare facilities in Singapore is seen as a costly but necessary measure to relieve women's childcare responsibilities and to free them to enter the work force. They are not seen as a social investment to release women's potential to work and live a full life. As such, the planned expansion of affordable childcare facilities is nowhere near the scale needed to enable the majority of women to participate fully in the work force.

Because women are seen as passive beneficiaries, they rarely participate in identifying their own needs, making their priorities and planning their activities.

However, there are programs which genuinely benefit women—such as the Change Agents Program of Sri Lanka [a state-run program that encourages village groups to analyze power structures, identify their own problems, and take action to meet their needs] have the full participation of women.

Government structures (as well as non-governmental organizations or NGOs) which deal with so-called women's affairs are headed either by elite women or, as in the case of Thailand, by men! In some cases (as in Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka) the wives of government officials from the highest to the lowest village unit take charge of women's development programs for the government. Usually these ministries or bureaus have little or no funding, compete with other agencies or lack sufficient motivation and enthusiasm.

Some short-term economic gains come out of these government programs, although in most cases these are achieved at the expense of women's basic rights to organize and, in the case of income-generating projects, to get a just return for their labor.

As for the NGOs, they are often so small in scale that they have no meaningful impact on the condition of women. Most of the funds that were made available for women's development projects during the Decade were allotted to established groups, rather than small, emerging ones.

Many NGOs confine their activities to functional types of work, such as childcare, welfare and health matters and income-generation. They are wary of taking on legal issues and therefore address women's issues inadequately. However, some of the best NGOs have worked with grassroots groups doing consciousness-raising, organizing and mobilizing. In these programs they have been able to develop a new type of democratic leadership among the most disadvantaged sectors of women.

Contact:

- Irene M. Santiago, AWRAN Secretariat, c/o Pilipina, PO Box 208, Davao City 9501, Philippines.
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Pacific Action

Women from Japan were well-represented at the NGO Forum with 800-1000 in attendance. They conducted workshops on such topics as policy-making, prostitution, discrimination, sex education, women's liberation and peace—with the topic of peace attracting the largest and most diverse group of Japanese women. In the following article by Seona Martin excerpted from *Forum '85*, several Japanese feminists explain why so few participants from their country were feminists.

"Yes, we were worried about the large numbers of us," said Kyoki Katsuki, an English teacher and member of the Agora feminist group. "But at the first workshop we ran, an African woman said she was surprised to hear us present such critical material, and women from Canada, Britain and other industrialised countries told us they had similar problems. So it was important that we did come, important for us to know this."

Chiyo Saihoh, an editor, estimated that only about 10 per cent of the Japanese women at the Forum were feminists. She said some local governments in Japan funded visits to conferences and that some women would have used the Forum as an excuse, and then gone off on tours after a few days at the workshops.

The number of real feminists in Japan was very small and many women's organisations did not advocate women's rights, Ms Saihoh said.

Feminism was a bad word in Japan. Ms Iketani, a radio journalist and labour union leader, said that although her women's union was in fact a women's rights organisation, it kept the image of a labour union because that was more acceptable.

Many of the Japanese workshops dealt with the problems of working women.

Ms Ishihara, who works for a construction company, told how two women who had worked 30 years for a company recently got a promotion — to the same level as a man who had begun work this year.

Japanese women were kept on the lowest levels of power and pay, and "treated as housewives" in the workplace. Even university graduates were affected, Ms Yamashita said.

One of the reasons for discrimination against women workers and their lack of opportunity for promotion was the belief that they would leave work when they married and had children, the group said.

Japanese men usually joined a company for life and expected to spend their whole career with one organisation. Women, because they were expected to leave when they married, were not considered lifetime employees and were therefore not given training, promotion and pay rises.

Considerable pressures existed on women to marry, they said, and single and divorced women were discriminated against, often by other women.

There had been little about women's rights, the Forum and the UN Conference in the Japanese media "because the big companies don't like it" and the women felt that if they came to Nairobi and talked about their problems, the information would eventually leak back to Japan.

They also wanted to tell others about the Japanese situation, but considered their biggest task was to change the attitudes of Japanese women.

"But we do not like it when Western feminists come to Japan, see how discriminated against we are, and say that we are 10 or 20 years behind the Western world. We have our own unique way of improving the status of women, which will not necessarily follow the West."

FORUM '85, JULY 18, 1985

Pacific women pull together

by Seona Martin

Women of the Pacific had been exposed to radiation dangers, made a dumping ground for contraceptives and dangerous medicines and pesticides, subjected to over advertising of inferior imported foods, drugs and alcohol and made dependent on the wage economy which they could enter only at the lowest wage levels, they said in a statement prepared this week in Nairobi.

Pacific women at the Forum have formed a group which includes representatives from the Pacific islands, Australia, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Philippines, Kanaky (New Caledonia), East Timor, West Papua (Irian Jaya) and Philippines.

They are taking the statement to the country delegations to the UN Conference. The statement says the women see the Pacific region as an economically dependent area, increasingly reliant on external aid, and increasingly susceptible to political manipulation.

"We see our people migrating out of the Pacific, being drawn into low wage employment in developed countries and suffering cultural alienation and racism."

"It is our responsibility as women of the world to combine to bring this exploitation to an immediate halt."

Non-indigenous Pacific women give their support in the statement to all indigenous people's right to self-determination and ownership of land, and deplore continued suffering and violence in East Timor, West Papua, Australia, Aotearoa, Belau, Kanaky, Polynesia, Marshall Islands, Philippines and Easter Island.

The statement includes separate sections on Australia concerning Aboriginal rights; Aotearoa on indigenous people's rights; on West Papua supporting self-determination and independence and calling on governments to stop military assistance to the Indonesian Government and recognize border-crossers to Papua New Guinea as refugees; on

Kanaky call for a stop to French repression and re-land of New Caledonia on the agenda of the UN Committee of 24; on East Timor calling for a ceasefire and withdrawal of Indonesian armed forces and support of the restored East Timor; Australia radio links; and on the Philippines calling for support for dismantling the United States Marcos dictatorship and building of the people's democratic coalition.

In a section on peace and disarmament the statement affirms the right of all Pacific nations to self-determination in their foreign policies and freedom from overt and covert domination by superpowers and other powerful nations in the region.

The statement supports a total nuclear ban and an end to all nuclear explosions and denuclearization of the lands and waters.

"We have heard our sisters from many different Pacific countries speak of cancer and other radiation induced illnesses and deaths which they have endured since nuclear testing began."

"We have heard of land being forcibly taken out of use for people's living needs and used as military bases, testing grounds and weapons storage."

"We have heard of radioactive contamination of the oceans, and at present there is an average of one nuclear explosion a week."

The statement calls on greater support for the United Nations and machinery for conflict resolution, and participation of women in peace initiatives and during the International Year of Peace.

FORUM '85, JULY 18, 1985



Men, the obstacle in the pacific

by Seona Martin

For many in the South Pacific islands region the impact of the Decade has had all the excitement of dead fish.

New Zealand is the only country in the South Pacific to have signed the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

In some countries, women were better off traditionally than the UN could possibly make them. In Samoa for instance, where women traditionally have high status, they will give careful thought before urging their Government to sign.

Ruth Lechte, who works for the World Young Women's Christian Association in the South Pacific, says that modernisation, the move to cash cropping and western education had reduced both the status of females and their involvement in their societies.

In some countries, such as Fiji, where some women have leadership status, they have contributed to preventing the escape from oppressive tradition, even perhaps unwittingly. They see women's

organisations as bodies for teaching and preserving the traditional arts and crafts of women.

Representatives of Pacific Women's NGOs, meeting in March, said: "Cultural, traditional and religious beliefs continue to be obstacles to solving women's health problems. Such things as access to sex education, contraception and good food during pregnancy are examples of this."

Not only have Pacific governments not signed the UN convention, but some have avoided planning for women altogether, usually by claiming that women were traditionally equal anyway, or that they were fully included in the country's overall development plans.

The Fiji National Council of Women, after gaining awareness at the Mexico and Copenhagen meetings, produced a national plan for the second half of the decade and submitted it to the government in April 1981. The government is "still considering it".

In Fiji, and several other Pacific countries, women marrying citizens of those countries, may apply for citizenship, but a woman citizen marrying a non-citizen

may be forced to leave the country because the right of citizenship is not available to her husband.

There are also laws which discriminate against women by insisting that the children take the race of their fathers; laws in inheritance and land; and employment laws which discriminate against them as well as lack of laws which fail to help them in areas of equal pay and conditions.

Women's work is often invisible to planners and decision makers, and national statistics do not reflect women's contribution to the economy.

Yet there are many Pacific women who have been affected by the Decade.

The Pacific women who went to the Mexico conference in 1975, were nervous, confused and had little understanding of what the theme "equality, development and peace" was about. They lacked organised regional or national plans for improving the lot of women.

But they did come away with something important — an awareness that the international women's movement was something which also involved Pacific women, and that Pacific women had to get

together to make their voices heard.

By the end of the Mexico meeting, Pacific delegates made a joint statement on two issues of unique importance in the Pacific: opposition to French nuclear testing in the South Pacific, and support for independence for colonial territories.

Such "political" statements are the sort which often arouse opposition to feminists by people who believe the women's Decade should be confined to areas such as health, nutrition, child care and craftwork.

Even the names of women's organisations and national agencies reflect this attitude. "Women's interests" office, "social development office", "women's affairs department", run by "home demonstrators" and "women's interests officers". Tonga is the only country which has taken its women's department out of the realms of home economics, renamed it the "women in development unit", stated it with "women's development officers" and placed it in the Agriculture department.

At Copenhagen, for the Mid-Decade meeting, Pacific women were much more aware and organised,

although still comparatively ill-prepared because of the absence of any co-ordinating "machinery".

Some things have happened, among them the establishment of the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau, several countries have recently set up national women's programmes, and some have put women's sections into their plans while Papua New Guinea has rights for women written into its constitution.

Writer Vanessa Griffen says that Pacific women have learned to press for their issues and to demand greater representation.

"However, I feel the momentum has slipped away from us. How much thinking are we actually doing for ourselves? Men are clearly the biggest obstacle to the progress of women in the Pacific. They are in power, make decisions and control women."

"The women's movement must begin with women being able to see their oppression and, separate from what is being offered to them, define their own solutions. In this sense we in the Pacific have not got a women's movement, but we must develop one. It does not require funds. It requires ourselves."

FORUM '85, JULY 15, 1985

Resources



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Viva! (Spanish), feminist publication of the Flora Tristan Investigative Center, Jirón Quilca 431, Lima 100, Peru.

Voice of Women (English), publication of the Women's Section of the African National Congress, PO Box 31791, Lusaka, Zambia or African National Congress, 801 2nd Ave., Ste. 405, New York, N.Y. 10017, USA.

Voice of Women (English, Sinhalese and Tamil editions), journal for women's emancipation, 18/9, Chitra Lane, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka.

WAF (English), feminist bi-annual of the Women's Action Forum, Box 3287, Gulberg, Lahore, Pakistan.

We the Self-Employed: Voice of the Self-Employed Workers (English), publication of the Self-Employed Women's Association, SEWA Reception Centre, Opposite Victoria Garden, Ahmedabad 380 001, India.

Resources (continued)

Webplaner (English), feminist quarterly newspaper, PO Box 1573, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2N7, Canada.

Women and Environments (English), feminist tri-annual on housing, development, ecology, planning and design, c/o Urban and Community Studies, 455 Spadina Ave., Toronto, Ontario M5S 2G8, Canada.

Women of China (English), women's monthly, 50 Deng Shi Kou, Beijing, People's Republic of China.

Women of Europe (Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek and Italian editions), bimonthly bulletin on women's status in the European Economic Community, Commission of the European Communities, Directorate-General Information, 200, rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels, Belgium.

Women of the Whole World (Arabic, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish editions), quarterly affiliated with the Communist Party/PSR, Women's International Democratic Federation, Unter den Linden 13, 1080 Berlin, East Germany.

Woman Speak (English), quarterly on Caribbean women, University of West Indies, Women and Development Unit, Pinelands St. Michael, Barbados.

This is by no means a complete list of alternative international publications.



Books Received

- *Women Workers in Fifteen Countries* edited by Jennie Farley, ILR Press, Ithaca, New York, 1985.
- *Recovery—How to Survive Sexual Assault* by Helen Benedict, Doubleday, New York, 1985.
- *Mohawk Trail* by Beth Brant, Firebrand Books, Ithaca, New York, 1985.
- *Early Spring* by Tove Ditlevsen, The Seal Press, Seattle, 1985.
- *Toward Economic Justice for Women* prepared by the Women's Economic Agenda for Change, Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, D.C., 1985.
- *Of Primeval Steps & Future Leaps* by Ardea Skybreak, Banner Press, Chicago, 1984.
- *Directory of Collectives 1985* P.O. Box 5446, Berkeley, Ca, 94705.
- *Women of Wisdom* by Tsultrim Allione, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston, 1984.
- *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy* by Kathy Ferguson, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1984.
- *The Working Mother* by Alice Cook, ILR Press, Ithaca, New York, 1983.
- *Gendered Subjects—The Dynamics of Feminist Teaching*, by Margo Culley and Catherine Portuges, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston, 1985.
- *Places of Interest to Women 1985* Ferrari Publications, P.O. Box 35575, Phoenix, AZ, 85069, \$6.00.
- *The Religion of the Machine Age* by Dora Russell, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston, 1985.
- *Good and Mad Women* by Jill Julius Matthews, George Allen & Unwin Publishers, Boston, 1984.
- *The Work of a Common Woman* by Judy Grahn, The Crossing Press, Trumansburg, New York, 1978.
- *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature* edited by Edith Hoshino Altbach, et al, and *French Feminism in the 19th Century* by Claire Goldberg Moses, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1984.
- *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman* by Candace Falk, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1984.
- *Risking a Somersault in the Air: Conversations with Nicaraguan Writers* by Margaret Randall, Solidarity Publications, San Francisco, California, 1984.
- *South Asian Women at Home and Abroad: A Guide to Resources* edited by Jyotsna Vaid, Barbara Miller and Janice Hyde, Metropolitan Studies Program, Syracuse, New York, 1984.
- *A Dialogue on Third World Women: Learning Through the Humanities* published by the Third World Women's Project of the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, D.C., 1984.
- *Fed Up! The Food Forces That Make You Fat, Sick and Poor* by Brett Silverstein, and *Gift of the Devil: A History of Guatemala* by Jim Handy, South End Press, Boston, 1984.
- *The Self-Publishing Manual* by Dan Poynter, Para Publishing, Santa Barbara, California, 1984.
- *State of the World—1985* by Lester R. Brown, W.W. Norton and Co., New York, 1985.
- *This Place* by Andrea Freud Loewenstein, Pandora Press, Boston, 1984.
- *Sex Roles, Family and Community in Turkey* edited by Cigdem Kagitcibasi, Indiana University Turkish Studies, Bloomington, Indiana, 1982.
- *Population Factors in Development Planning in the Middle East* by Frederic C. Shorter and Huda Zurayk, The Population Council, New York, 1985.
- *Triangles* by Ruth Geller, and *Clenched Fists, Burning Crosses* by Cris South, The Crossing Press, Trumansburg, New York, 1984.

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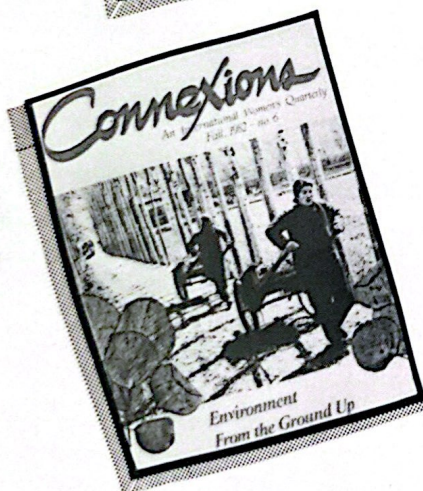
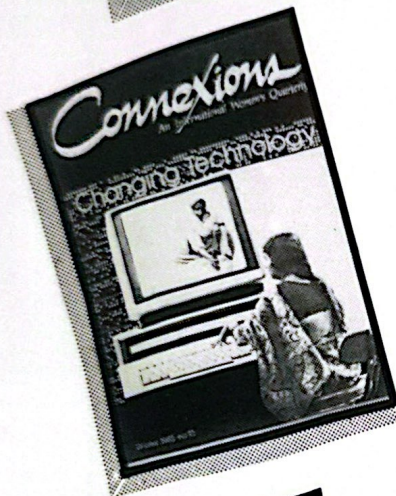
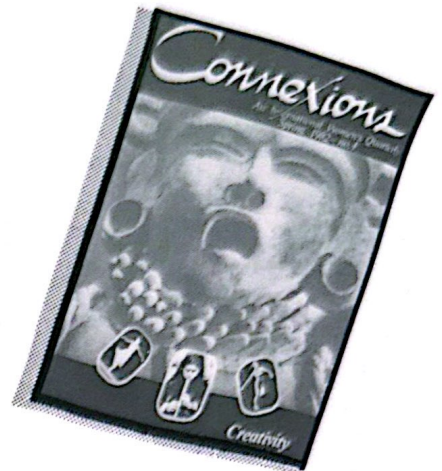
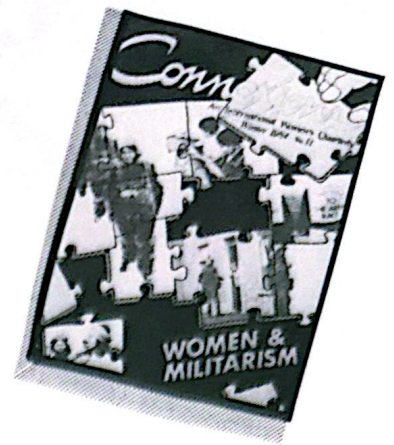
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