

WOMAN

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Struggle

ISSUE No. 71 SEPTEMBER, 1988

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES SPEAK OUT

The most pressing issue for disabled people in the Caribbean is to come out of hiding from their homes into the community. This was one of the conclusions drawn by sixty-five disabled women and twenty disabled men from twelve Caribbean countries, Canada and the United States who met in Dominica, July 18 - 22, 1988 for a "Disabled Women in Development Seminar sponsored by Disabled Peoples International. The participants discussed employment, sexuality, parenting, independent living and leadership skills.

The meeting culminated in a number of recommendations which the participants will take back to their government for action. Among these were calls for governments to provide daycare for children with disabilities, the enforcement of existing legislation for non-supportive fathers to support their children. Many women with disabilities in the Caribbean are single parents whose partners are not supporting their children. Often men are willing to have children with disabled women but not to marry disabled women. In addition seminar participants called on governments to ensure accessible education for children with disabilities. For example, children are often unable to attend school because there are stairs and no wheelchair ramps into buildings, or because there is no transportation. As a consequence disabled people in the region are further disadvantaged by low levels of literacy.

Participants also called on governments to introduce legislation prohibiting discrimination against disabled people in employment.

The seminar was sponsored by Disabled People's International a self help organization with members in seventy(70) nations. The impact of the seminar was in creating solidarity among disabled women to face social barriers. Ways to encourage disabled persons to move out were discussed, such as self-help organizations, holding social events or visiting disabled persons in their homes and encouraging them to attend. Disabled people's reluctance to move out is a result of social attitudes - disabled persons are generally ridiculed and stared at. In fact, their presence in a family is sometimes viewed by the community as a punishment from God. Marie McQueen from Guyana explained:

"It (the seminar) has helped me and others gain a feeling of unity with other people with disabilities. Sometimes it feels like it's only me, but there are disabled people all over the world ... You tend to draw strength from each other."

(from release by Diane Driedger,
Programme Officer, North American/
Caribbean Region, Disabled
People's International)

"SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY"

On Tuesday August 9, 1988 women from City of London Anti-Apartheid Group occupied and closed down South African Airways, Oxford Circus, to mark South African Women's Day and protest about the continued detention of women such as Theresa Ramashamola and Daisy Modire.

Since 1956, South African people and their supporters all over the world remember all the women in prison, the mothers of detained and imprisoned children, the mothers whose children have been executed and those awaiting execution on August 9 of each year.

From Spare Rib

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DULCIE SEPTEMBER KILLED IN FRANCE

Dulcie September, chief representative of the African National Congress in France, Switzerland and Luxembourg was killed, her body riddled with bullets at point-blank range by what French police described as a professional.

Alfred Nzo, Secretary General of the ANC has called her murder, "part of a larger pattern of terrorist attacks and criminal assaults perpetrated against members and leaders of the ANC in every country where we have an organized diplomatic presence". In March of this year in Gaborone three Botswana women and a male South African refugee were killed during an attack on a house there.

The ANC has once again appealed to the International Community "to take measures necessary to demonstrate its abhorrence of the continuing criminal activities of the apartheid regime - South Africa, in Southern Africa and the world at large."

(from Voice of Women
Journal of the ANC Women's
Section No. 1, 1988)

STOCKHOLM MEETING ON AIDS

At the fourth (4th) international conference on AIDS held in Stockholm, Sweden this year further data on the disease was released. Although current HIV research pays little attention to women, even such fragmentary data available now shows that HIV infection behaves differently in women than in men. Women appear to become infected more easily than men do.

A woman who has repeated sex with an infected man will become infected about 53% of the time, whereas men become infected only about 33% of the time after repeated sex with an infected woman. In addition, some co-factors make women particularly susceptible to the AIDS virus, among which are the use of oral contraceptive pills, previous or present chlamydia infections,

genital warts or genital ulcer disease. Women who progress to AIDS appear to die sooner and to suffer more opportunistic infections than males.

Women are likely to be among the first affected as resources are shifted from preventive and community programs to acute care of people with AIDS. At the Stockholm meeting it was stressed that education must assume a greater role in the struggle against AIDS, since researchers are not even close to developing a vaccine.

from "Off Ourbacks"

Volume xviii No. 8

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AOTEAROA PEACE CAMP

A group of Hamilton women have set up a peace camp and begun non-violent direct action to stop the construction of a satellite 'spy' station in the Aotearoan (New Zealand) Waohopai Valley.

The government-built station (costing over NZ\$300 million) will listen to and could monitor all satellite communications in and out of Aotearoa and the greater Pacific - ie. all long distance phone calls, telexes and faxes. There is little democratic control over the Communication Security Bureau: who will operate the station? Who will receive the information and what will they do with it?

The women see the protest as being in the spirit of Britain's Greenham Common. They say the station indicates that Aotearoa is still very much tied to the Western nuclear alliance.

The women have been greeting the contractors with songs and and decorating their machinery.

from Spare Rib

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