

WOMAN

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Struggle

ISSUE NO. 37/38 - NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1985

THE DEPOPULATING OF PUERTO RICO

Statistics compiled in 1980 show that Puerto Rico has the highest incidence of sterilization in the world, with the operation having been performed on more than 40 per cent of the women in that country.

The New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence and Socialism (NMSPRIS) claims that the government offered women US \$100 five years ago to get sterilized. According to NMSPRIS a large-scale sterilization programme was introduced in Puerto Rico during the 1930s as part of the US response to the upsurge of nationalism and the development of a strong anti-colonial labour movement.

The sterilization rate has surged in recent years, with the US continuing to subsidize sterilization programmes in Puerto Rico. The success of the programmes lies in part in the support received from the Puerto Rican Government and the medical establishment, both of whom see population reduction as a way to lessen the country's economic crisis.

In addition, factory employers have favoured sterilization as a way to free women from childbearing and use them as cheap labour.

Plexus, Vol. XII No. 9, Nov. 1985

RESEARCHING WOMEN'S ISSUES

Popular education activities, a newsletter in Swahili, media programmes on battered women -- these are just some of the projects of the Women's Research and Documentation Project (WDRP)

2/.....

in Tanzania.

WRDP was set up in 1982 to promote the study and research of women's issues in Tanzania and to encourage documentation, writing, publication and seminars.

An inter-disciplinary body, WRDP is organized as a collective with 19 members, half of whom work at the University of Dar es Salaam while the rest work in other institutions.

The collective critically examines relevant general theoretical materials and information dealing with Tanzania and elsewhere, with emphasis on the problems of women and socialist transformation.

WRDP would like to make contact and exchange materials with other education and research projects. For further information, write: Alice Nkhoma-Wamunza, Convenor, WRDP, c/o University of Dar es Salaam, P.O. Box 35108, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Women's Program Newsletter, ICAE,
Fall 1985

DOUBTS ABOUT THE IUD

Two recently published studies have suggested that women who have never had children should not use an IUD (intra-uterine device) for birth control because it may cause them to become sterile.

The studies, which were published in the New England Journal of Medicine, were done by researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston and at the University of Washington, Seattle.

One study found that the risk of infertility rises rapidly in the first few months of IUD use, and both concluded that plastic IUDs are more dangerous than the copper-covered devices.

Herizons, Vol. 3 No 6, Sept. 1985

ORGANIZING AGAINST VIOLENCE

The Women and Development Programme of the London-based Commonwealth Secretariat is to become a clearinghouse for information on violence against women.

This development is a result of a meeting held in London in September and organized by the Secretariat's Women and Development and Legal divisions.

The meeting also proposed the establishment of short-term shelters for abused women; development of training kits for community health workers; collection of data on judicial interpretation so as to devise appropriate strategies for influencing the courts; and publicising the problem through posters, puppet shows and other media.

It was agreed too that an analysis of the effectiveness of legal responses to domestic and sexual violence should be prepared for the 1986 meeting of Commonwealth Ministers in Zimbabwe; and that the issue should also be considered by Commonwealth Health Ministers at their meeting in the Bahamas next year.

Commonwealth Currents, December 1985

SOME ARE MORE EQUAL

While women's participation in the labour force has increased substantially since 1979, the pursuit of equity still remains a problem throughout the 24 industrialized countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

This is one of the findings of an OECD report on "The Integration of Women into the Economy."

The 184-page report notes: "while female labour force participation rates have increased, higher degrees of occupational segregation persist; female unemployment rates are higher than male rates in a number of countries; and, to a greater extent

than men, women are subject to involuntary part-time work and hidden employment."

The report shows that significant differences remain between the sexes in education; that a variety of disadvantages persist in social security and taxation; and that while migrant women represent a relatively minor proportion of the total female population, they continue to be subject to special disadvantage.

The report is available from: Publications Division, OECD, 2 Rue Andre-Pascal, 77577 Paris Cedex, France.

Women's Program Newsletter, ICAE,
Fall 1985

SUPPORT FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SISTERS

Some black American women have formed a group specifically to support black South African women in their daily activities.

SISA - Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa - was started by author and political activist, Gloria Joseph, to link hands and resources with black sisters in South Africa who are fighting the day-to-day battles for survival.

So far the group has raised money for two projects in South Africa: Zamani Soweto Sisters, a group where neighbourhood women are encouraged to become self-productive; and the Maggie Magaba Scholarship Fund.

SISA would also like to bring black South African women over to America to talk, since they don't envisage going to South Africa themselves under the present conditions.

Outwrite Women's Newspaper, No. 40
October 1985

WHO HAS HEALTHIER CHILDREN?

In the U.S., the National Center for Health Services Research Study has found that children of women who work outside

the home are as healthy as children whose mothers stay home.

The study showed that children with working mothers have just as many days sick as the other children, and that whether the mother stayed home, worked part-time, or worked full-time, had no effect on the number of times she took the child to a doctor.

The study is based on a survey of households with 5,538 children between ages one and 11.

The study concluded that employment of women had not affected the way in which they seek care for ill children.

Off Our Backs, Vol. xv No. 9, Oct. 85

ABORTION LEGAL IN SPAIN, BUT....

Abortion is no longer a punishable offence in Spain if it is performed by a doctor because of danger to the mother's health, if the child is likely to be born with a serious mental or physical defect, or if the pregnancy resulted from rape.

But, many of the first requests for abortion were refused by doctors on grounds of conscience. As a result, a 14-year-old girl pregnant from a rape had to seek an abortion in another province because the medical staff in her native province refused to handle her case.

The Spanish Medical Association says the method of case referral, without consultation of the doctors who are expected to operate, put doctors at risk of being sued for malpractice.

People, Vol. 12 No. 4, 1985
