

ISSUE No. 75 JANUARY, 1989

INCREASE IN VIOLENT CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN BARBADOS

Crimes of sexual abuse and violence against women are escalating in Barbados.

Police statistics show last year there were thirty-eight rapes, twenty-two cases of carnal knowledge and fifty-one incidents of indecent assault.

Up to October 1988 there were forty-seven rapes, nine more than last year, twenty cases of carnal knowledge and forty-two of indecent assault, figures bound to rise even more before the year is out.

Those statistics were derived from the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Police and relate solely to indictable crimes and cases dealt with summarily. The figures do not include minor crimes from the Magistrates' Court or unreported crimes.

According to a report on Physical Violence Against Women in Barbados, by Merna Jordan for the Bureau of Women's Affairs, violence against women knows no social barriers or class distinctions.

"Domestic violence may appear to be a problem primarily of poor women because the middle and upper-class women often have the resources to hide it", according to a pamphlet circulated by the women's bureau.

The pamphlet went on to explain that rich women can hide violence by going to private doctors or paying for hotel rooms to escape abuse. Poor women, said the pamphlet, are forced to go to public institutions for help, where their problems are documented.

Jordan's research also revealed rape to be a rising concern in Barbados, with an average of fifty cases reported on a yearly basis. The lowest figure occurred in 1979, when twenty-three cases were recorded.

In her report, Jordan said the evidence was that in most cultures, and certainly in western culture, women were considered to be inferior to men.

"In the Caribbean, where 70 percent of households are headed by single women, the degree of male control of women is widespread. It is from this group that most cases of violence are reported to the police", the report stated.

"There is need for more efficient method of prosecuting cases in the courts. The prolonged period taken to collect evidence and assemble witnesses is one reason for the low level of convictions", Jordan wrote.

The Nation

November 11, 1988

DEBT SIZE REVEALED

"Commercial Bank Loans account for more than 13 percent of the debt of the poorest African countries, but constitute only 1.3 percent of total bank-owed Third World debt. 'Cancelling these debts would not be costly for the banks, yet it would significantly help to reduce African debt to a more sustainable level'."

Quoted by North-South News from a study by Roy Culpeper, the North-South Institute's program director for international finance. Observes the News: "Culpeper was able to reveal, for the first time, how much is owed by which debtor groups (by size of debt) to which groups of creditors (banks, official agencies, multilateral lenders)".

Meanwhile UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has been quoted in the Washington Times as saying that "By the year 2010,

Africa's debt will be more than 280 percent of its total export income". From a statement by UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar as quoted in The Washington Times.

From World Development Forum
Vol. vi No. 19 October 31, 1988

CANADIANS CALL FOR FILM, VIDEO FESTIVAL

"In Visible Colours" is a Canadian festival of videos and films planned for November 15 to 19, 1989.

The organisers are urgently requesting submissions of film and video "directed, written or produced by Women of Colour or Third World Women". They are looking for the most recent productions of any length and in all categories: documentary, narrative, experimental, animation, etc. There is no entry fee and artist fees will be paid.

"In Visible Colours" is sponsored by the National Film Board of Canada. Submission deadline is May 30, 1989. For more information or entry forms, please contact:-

Lorraine Chan or Zainub Verjee
Festival Coordinators
c/o National Film Board of Canada
300 - 1045 Howe St.
Vancouver, B.C., Canada
V6Z 2B1

BETTER RHYTHM

The Catholic Church "has now become the world's most active proponent of natural family planning, a more effective version of the old unreliable rhythm method", and has been particularly aggressive

in promoting it in the Third World, reports Time magazine. A 1976 study by the World Health Organisation concluded that it prevents conception as effectively as artificial means. Called the ovulation or Billings method, it enables a woman to determine her fertile period by monitoring her cervical mucus. Sister Cecilia, who runs eighteen Natural Family Planning centers in Brazil, says it is the ideal method for the poor and illiterate because it "doesn't cost anything, and the women don't have to read or write to figure out which are their fertile days". Unlike the artificial methods, however, the method requires a period of training, usually about four months. The method's other principal disadvantage is the monthly requirement of voluntary abstinence during the woman's fertile period, which may not elicit the cooperation of macho males.

From World Development Forum

Vol. vi No. 9 October 1988

SOCIAL WORK CONFERENCE PLANNED FOR GUAM, MARCH 29 - 31, 1989

The Guam Association of Social Workers 9th Annual Social Work Conference is scheduled for March in Guam. The theme of this year's conference is Uncle Sam in Micronesia: Social Benefits, Social Costs.

The objectives of the conference are:- to increase awareness of the social impacts of the American military presence in the region; to facilitate dialogue and analysis among human service professionals, the military community, and policy-makers; to document such analyses in order to contribute to the policy-making process.

For more information please contact:- Vivian Dames, #8 Dean's Circle, University of Guam, Mangilao, Guam 96913. Telephone: (671) 734-2921.

WOMEN, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

The Fourth IWRAW International Seminar in Vienna, is planned for February 1989. The theme, Women, Human Rights and Development commemorates the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and draws worldwide attention to the linkage between the Women's Convention, development, and human rights.

WOMEN'S AND MEN'S ROLES IN THE ECONOMY OF THE FUTURE

The International Economic Association will hold a World Congress in Athens on August 28 - September 1, 1989. One of the features of the Congress will be an all-day session on women's and men's roles in the economy of the future.

The format will be 15-30 scheduled short talks, with plenty of time for discussion from the floor. The talks may take various forms: summary of results of scholarly research, descriptions and projections of sex roles, policy-oriented discussions, more broadly philosophical essays.

The organizers hope that the session will facilitate both professional and friendly cross-national contacts of people interested in these issues.

Anyone wishing to present a scheduled talk should send the proposed title and short abstract to:-

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