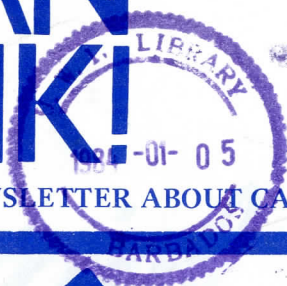


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WOMAN SPEAK!



WEST INDIES COLLECTION

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ABOUT CARIBBEAN WOMEN No. 12 • OCTOBER 1983



DECADE FOR WOMEN

WOMEN and THE MEDIA

WOMAN SPEAK!



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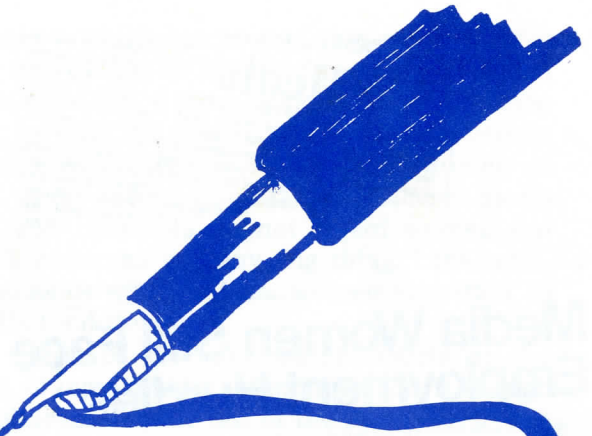
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Editorial



The mass media are probably the most penetrating institution in our society in terms of influencing our attitudes and opinions. Several studies have shown that the mass media— newspapers, magazines, radio, television, commercial advertising, the cinema — not only communicate public opinion, but are influential in shaping it by presenting models, encouraging stereotypes, and so on.

Where women are concerned, the media have consistently perpetrated the traditional stereotypes of women, that is, the housewife, consumer, mother, sex object.

Here in the Caribbean women have played, and continue to play, a vital role in the development of their societies yet, as the articles in this issue demonstrate, the media have not kept pace with the social changes in which women are viewed outside the context of home, family and children.

Still, we have not left readers without some hope, for we also look at women's own search for an alternative to the established media; an alternative channel by which they can present their problems, focus on their struggles, and herald their successes from their own view.

Apart from examining the issue of women's portrayal in the media and, to a lesser extent, their participation, we also focus on some positive projects and programmes which deal with women and the media.

This issue also retains our usual features and other news of women's activities around the region.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation for assistance in preparing this issue to Grace Barrett, a CARIMAC student who did her summer apprenticeship with WAND. We hope she gleaned some understanding and appreciation of WAND's work, especially in the area of consciousness-raising where we are seeking to raise the level of awareness of men and women to their changing roles in our society.

Let's keep in touch. In sisterhood.

ASSOCIATION in Media

The four-day CARIMAC-UNESCO seminar on "Women and Media Decision-Making in the Caribbean" ended on September 30, with the appointment of a seven-member steering committee to oversee the implementation of recommendations from the seminar.

CARICOM Secretariat media person Tobago is to be named. Some 40 recommendations are to be taken to improve the media, emerging which aimed at how the media contribution made by development. Sp

WOMEN IN BROADCASTING AND MEDIA CAN AFFECT TRADITION

BY MARLENE CUTHBERT

KINGSTON, Jamaica, Oct. 8 — It is impossible to... the impact of broadcast media from the other



because of the difference between her background and present social status. Most of the non-music foreign programme on can radio is devoted to a which occupies five per cent of total time. Foreign programming often is on individualism and therefore, destructive of communal community-values. is particularly true of "programme," the world is a mixture of pro- Anglo American, religious propaganda. il the Jamaican movement imposed foreign

Media Women Still Face Employment Hurdles

Broadcast media have the potential to spur social progress. But they also can be strong supporters of the status quo — as clearly indicated by their poor record of employing women.

In the July issue, *WBN* explored some failings in broadcasters' portrayal of women, revealed in a UNESCO

technical work (for example: Australia, five percent; United Kingdom, 10 percent; Sweden, nine percent), and most of these women are employed in the lowest grades.

Management is another area largely closed to women, especially at the higher levels. In the US, for example, the Commission for Civil Rights found



As this woman enters the studio, she is taping a multiplex ATR-100.

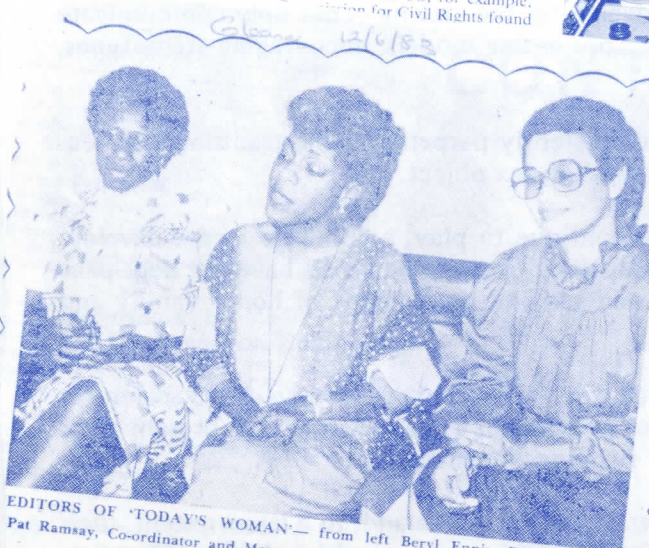
recruitment practices. Stereotypes that categorize certain jobs as "men's" or "women's" work are frequently reinforced in recruitment advertisements and literature; even the names of some jobs ("cameraman," "script girl") help channel prospective workers into "appropriate" slots.

The roots of this kind of discrimination lie once again in the traditional attitude that women are unsuited, physically or mentally, to certain kinds of work. Gallagher refers to the plethora of research data that show that most of these attitudes are unfounded in fact; even so, they continue. Women are often assumed to desire less advancement than men do; another deep-rooted fear among managements is that women entering all or nearly all-male fields will act as sexual distractions.

The differences in education between men and women often put women at disadvantage, especially in those situations where job applicants are expected already to possess certain skills. Only do women usually have less access to such training, but the skills they already possess — for example, secretarial skills — are looked down upon. Training programs sponsored by broad organizations often do not train rigorously enough and are employed in the traditional fields, such as secretarial and typing.

One solution that Gallagher suggests is a women's action program that would include on-the-job training. An example of this is the National Press Club Building in Washington, D.C., USA.

of "equal pay for equal work" in the United States it can be hard to find horizontal and vertical equity for women in broadcast media. In Singapore, for example, women tend to work at different levels than men, and equal pay regulations are often unenforced. A report by the International Labour Office indicates that the structure of the men from realizing an ambitious man to a top position in many countries. Work for two or three years to raise a family. He break into the male those in domestic work with a salary aid.



EDITORS OF 'TODAY'S WOMAN' — from left Beryl Ennis, Editor-in-Chief; Pat Ramsay, Co-ordinator and Margaret Lecesne, Managing Editor.

New magazine for women

A group of women got together. The idea was to publish a magazine which every woman could identify with. The result was a magazine, *'Today's Woman'*, to be launched by the St. Andrew Business and Professional Women's Club at the Mutual Life Gallery on June 25. The publication, which grew out of the group's need to raise funds for the

Lecesne, Managing Editor; Pat Ramsay, Co-ordinator and Barbara King, Recording Secretary spearheaded the project. Other members were assigned to write, sell advertising space and deal with the distribution after the publication was officially launched. It was perhaps the first project of its kind in which women had worked alongside other women in the print medium to produce a

France may ban sexist ads

Paris, Monday, (AP) — French Parliament is voting on a bill to bring a ban on sexist advertisements and the prospect used a stir in a nation bare-breasted women even on the currency measure was dubbed "the law of the left" by the left. The bill was introduced Thursday, and by a photograph of a woman growling in a

after reporters pressed her for an example of advertising that oppressed women. "Feminist groups have sought this Bill with ardour," Mrs. Roudy said. "We will see what they do with it." The Bill's main focus is to eliminate sexual discrimination in hiring policies. But the media's main focus has been on a clause in the Bill that would prohibit degrading and debasing women in advertisements and publications.

The measure outlines no procedures to determine what would constitute sexist advertising, nor punishments for those violating the Law.

phrase "Vive La Difference!" For the background of its 100-franc note, the French Treasury chose a Eugene Delacroix painting that depicts victory as a woman, one arm raised with a flag, the other holding a gun and her dress torn open to the waist. The note is banned in Ireland and semi-nude women French advertising began causing a stir last summer of 1982. A billboard company strip-tease company was fined for advertising a woman in a bikini. "On September the top," a bikini said on hundreds of Paris

protest made Myrnar

worse of a system of and slipping into the last 15 years, who has not feared the bewilderment of parents who all of a sudden, the boy stopped having any interest in getting a job, and just about.

Urged to consider plight of male

A plea to consider the plight of the male in the Jamaican society was made in the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Robert Goldings, to the Media on "Women and Men" recently concluded. It was not Jamaican men, even West Indian men, who were responsible for whatever inequalities might exist. Those inequalities were the result of a system of and under which, I believe, men were worse off than women. Mr. Robinson said "our low challenges or positive models for the growing high school were cut down were 15, dropping out and slipping into the last 15 years, who has not feared the bewilderment of parents who all of a sudden, the boy stopped having any interest in getting a job, and just about.

Female boss Mr. Robinson said that the problem in the Caribbean was racism rather than sexism. Whether the problem was how to get people in order to and yet preserve their self-respect. A woman boss is a bully, he said, just as a man boss is a tyrant. He has to assert his authority, just as a woman has to assert her authority. He has to intimidate the spirit-killing qualities of his one-time white boss, he said.

Mr. Robinson agreed with the seminar participants that we must be concerned with the conditions of women but, he warned, "if this concern blinds us to the collective plight of women men like ourselves world with a sense of brutality and violence."

MEDIA WOMEN MOVE FORWARD STRONGER

By SUNDAY Feature
ONE DECADE ago, it would have been unthinkable for women journalists to have been accommodated for any but social reasons at the National Press Club Building in Washington, D.C., USA.
arranged by the Institute for Women's Studies, a group of women from various parts of the world, when this breakthrough

EDUCATION: A professional qualification for membership in an accountancy firm. Chartered accountants are required to have a minimum of five years' experience in accountancy. The firm's series of seminars are designed to help experienced accountants to advance their careers. Applications should be sent to the firm's recruitment department, 10, West Street, London, EC4A 3DF. For more information, contact the firm's recruitment department, 10, West Street, London, EC4A 3DF.

How Media Values Affect Caribbean Women

by Barbara Gloudon

The Caribbean media, like their metropolitan counterparts, pride themselves on carrying out that "sacred trust" to inform, educate and entertain. These are the pillars of the communication tradition and the guidelines which we have chosen to interpret in the context of how they affect Caribbean women.

In gauging the "purity of intention" of the information process, it is necessary to look at the ownership structure of our media. Where ownership is within government hands, there is usually legislation which seeks to ensure that the particular branch of media serves the common good which, being interpreted, means to carry the "common-good line" as envisioned by the particular administration in office at any given time. Hence, in relation to the information process and how it affects women, where a particular government feels that it has a vested interest in furthering the cause of women, then women come in for positive attention in government media.

In Jamaica, for example, during the past administration, there were certain pieces of legislation designed to benefit the cause of women. As a result, the government-owned media, during times of the relevant debates, showed a heightened sensitivity to women's causes. It served, at that time, to foster a new standard of self-awareness, particularly among working-class women.

Conversely, the privately owned media, which were not under any constraints or had no moral obligations to support the relevant legislation, did not go out of their way to highlight women's struggles.

In the general course of daily information women, just like men, run the risk of being informed to a greater or lesser degree on certain matters, depending on what is the source of information. The purists in media management are not happy with this idea, because it is not quite in keeping with the ideals of "freedom of the Press."

The essence of that premise is that all news reaches the people and that it does so because of the dedication and unselfish commitment of those who fight to the death to keep the Press free.

Besides the very important factor of ownership, there is the context of society and history.

A society which has no tradition of respect for women can hardly be expected to view events and circumstances in a way which accords women respect, or even the benefit of the doubt in certain circumstances. Where a society sees women as "toys" and, more importantly, where media owners and operators do not regard women and women's concerns as "any big thing," the selectivity of news which affects women is certain to reflect that indifference.

One thinks of the international debate on the banning of commercial infant formula. Although the Caribbean, like the rest of the Third World, has reason to be concerned about the effects on children of the poorest families who are fed watered-down formula because their mothers responded to advertising, news of the debate received cursory coverage in our media.

In the case of Jamaica, where a breast-feeding and infant nutrition programme has been underway for some time, sensitive discussion of the formula question could have served as a valuable point of comparison and a way to enforce the lesson about proper infant nutrition. For whatever reason, the debate was reported in the media then went the way of other such matters, with little or no local follow-up or local interpretation.

Is it the way that women regard themselves which influences the media to portray them in a certain way, or is it the media which tell women who and what they are?

Take the matter of beauty contests. Do women enter because the media give extensive coverage to such events, or are the media justified in saying that they are only reporting on what exists? It is of interest to note that almost every Jamaican beauty contestant, when questioned as to why she chose to compete, replied she did so "because of exposure."

Each of these contests receive lavish coverage in all the media, with our scribes hanging on every utterance of the winners, all of whom certainly receive more coverage than those "boring women" who wish to talk of the continuing rise in the cost of living. Beauty, not survival, seems more newsworthy.

The media in the Caribbean, as indeed everywhere, like novelty. The "first" this or that is newsworthy, but even more so is the "first" woman who becomes the "Top." Thanks to the media, we have on record a pretty impressive collection of Caribbean women who have made their mark in their chosen field and proven conclusively that the society does provide room for initiative and reward for diligence.

We are grateful to the media for teaching us something about ourselves. In most interviews about us "Women at the Top," every effort is made to assure that "we're not for women's lib."



The interview invariably includes a catalogue of superwoman feats, all designed to show how "Women at the Top" can juggle office, home, prep school and market at the same time without upsetting the "Boys."

In this case women impose their value system on the media. One is tempted to say it is us women who never give a chance for the "girls in the middle" to be noticed, for which medium would want to feature "one in the middle" when the "Top" is so much more exciting and competent? In a society where a high percentage of women are unskilled and unemployed, there must be a way that even middle level of achievement can be hailed by the media. Will women help to press for that recognition?

As far as the media's efforts to educate are concerned, I believe radio has moved the furthest in the Jamaican situation in using its power to assist in the education of women.

With the cost of medical services soaring, and insufficient medical personnel in hospitals and public clinics, the Radio Doctor has become a source of comfort for some women who are very often in real trouble because they do not have access to even basic health care. Calls to the Radio Lawyer and Radio Advice Specialist are instructive also in revealing the level of abuse which is wreaked by one group of women upon another: A high percentage of these calls often concern employers of household help who underpay, overwork and even cheat their helpers of legally due time and money. Employers and employees are invariably women.

From examples such as these, it is clear that media can and do play a role in education. A family planning page in one newspaper, a consumer guide in another, advice programmes on the air — all add up to something positive. If one has to be critical, it is to question the proportion of time and space accorded such positive features, as compared to some other "vital news" such as: How many seed pearls were on Lady Di's wedding dress or, Does Maggie Thatcher spray her hair?

In terms of entertainment, maybe women have a better sense of humour than we realize; we seem able to take many a joke against us. Where the going gets a little heavy, however, is in television.

Because developing countries still are not in a position to produce their own programmes, what we have come to accept as "entertainment" is often a sad joke against us culturally, racially, and as women. For multiracial societies such as ours, television provides a singular lack of role models of bright and witty women who can make people laugh without degrading themselves. Lacking such models, we accept the stereotypes of the metropolis and even resist change which we feel might rob us of our "entertainment."

In conclusion, I believe that media values affect women to the extent that women wish to be affected, and that some of our responses are conditioned by the history of the media and the sociological and historical context in which Caribbean women are informed, educated and entertained by all branches of the media.

Barbara Gloudon is a communications consultant in Jamaica. The above article was first presented at the "Women and Media Decision-Making" Seminar, Kingston, Jamaica, 1981.

WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

An Uncomfortable Relationship

The mass media have become a powerful tool for shaping public opinion on political issues, for offering social definitions and encouraging stereotypes, and for promoting certain cultural patterns — all of which to a certain extent determine the ways of thinking and feeling of men and women.

Our immediate concern here is the uncomfortable relationship which we detect between women and the media.

In the economics of the capitalist world the media are controlled by the interests of the ruling class, and the ideas of this class are disseminated and become the normative ideas of the community. The ideology of a patriarchal order pervades this system, thus male superiority and male dominance are inherently part of the system.

Men control the means of expression — from the press and broadcasting to advertising, films, publishing and even criticism. Historically, women have been excluded from decision-making, policy formulation or the execution of business within this sphere. Thus women have come to fill a certain role in the world of mass communication media and, through the influence and interests of the media this role persists and continues to fashion the perceptions of women in society.

Women are always the “consumers”, the target group for advertisers. The assumption used by these advertisers or film makers is that women make the majority of consumer decisions, and this assumption is valuable to the survival of not only the commodity producers but to the media as well.

The traditional role of woman as housewife/mother appears to be the most popular and beneficial to both the mass media and industry. But the stereotyping of women as housewife/mother and domestic worker ignores the numerous other roles attached to women in our society today. It ignores the fact that a large number of women form part of the employed labour force and thus have jobs outside the home.

There are two roles, other than that of housewife, traditionally allotted to women in media portrayals. The first is that of the employed woman and the second that of the “sex object.”

The role of the working woman is never viewed as incompatible with the housewife or mother role. The focus is now on selling the employed woman products which save time on housework, such as



labour-saving devices, canned foods, pre-cooked meals, disposable diapers, and so on. But even more significant is the media's stereotyped image of the woman worker outside the home. She is invariably a secretary (to a male boss of course), nurse, or a similar type-cast position. Even when she is portrayed in a previously male-dominated post, she is made to appear unique and in competition with men.

In their portrayal of women as sex objects the media perform the greatest dysfunction to all women. In numerous advertisements and films women are portrayed as sexually attractive and appealing, and the prize for the successful man. Success is equated with wealth and luxury, and only the beautiful woman can achieve a measure of success in society — not by her intellectual capabilities or work achievements, but by her physical appearance and attractions. Invariably, also, the ads which use this stereotype of woman to sell products are those which purport to sell the “good life” through luxury items, such as alcohol, perfumes, and cigarettes, to name a few.

There are several other images of women portrayed in the media. One is the way women themselves and women’s issues are seen and interpreted as non-news items. The pressure exerted by the women’s movement has had some small measure of success in this area, but a recent survey carried out cross-culturally reveals that any improvements are minimal.

Apart from very few exceptions, which are themselves viewed as exceptions, women are displayed as non-political, unauthoritative persons, and issues which are their concerns are pervasively trivialized. By focusing on issues which they consider to be women’s issues, and underplaying women’s actual productive and instrumental role in many spheres of activity, the media continue to assure the public that the traditional female role persists.

Not only are women’s concerns made inconsequential, but some media forms seem most reluctant to reverse the image of women. Some actually show a tendency in news reporting to provoke hostility towards women who challenge the traditional, and approve of those who keep up tradition. Such findings have emerged from content analyses carried out on the Asian media. This has also been the experience of the Concerned Women for Progress, a group in Trinidad — coverage of whose activities in the less progressive newspapers has been greatly discoloured at times and less than accurate.

Another aspect of the media’s “mistreatment” of women is that of programmes or features which are geared specifically to women. Programmes, such as soap operas whose main audience is the middle-class housewife, romanticize the ideals of love and marriage, exaggerate the incidents of misfortune, and nurture a make-believe world for a sector of women whose social and existential world is already limited.

Other programmes denoted as “women’s” do little to re-educate women or men. They either deal with helpful housework hints or provide information on beauty care. Significantly also, and despite the reshaping of women’s role and the gains

made by the women’s movement, magazines especially seem unresponsive to social change and the focus is still food, fashion, beauty, and how to get your man — just pick up the latest issue of *Cosmopolitan* or *Glamour*.

Finally, in advertising, the recurring image of women is western oriented. Although some effort has been made in Trinidad to relieve past trends, the prevailing tendency still persists and imported ads are very much used in local media.

But how does this treatment of women by the media affect and influence our perceptions? The media do not simply convey information; the biased and weighted content of media presentations determines the way we think and feel about many issues.

For instance, we have now come to associate certain characteristics with the female personality, as a result of constant stereotyping. Some familiar ones are the careful, home-loving housewife; the tramp or sex-object; the single-minded, purposeful career woman; the devoted mother; the efficient secretary; or the “femme fatale.” Women are portrayed as passive, expressive, temperamental, supportive, nurturing, contented, and politically naive, while men have a host of activities outside of the home, are almost always active, confident, ambitious, and are politically involved. From an early age children are thus exposed to these images of male and female roles and this in turn can influence their emotional make-up, their intellectual capacities and motivations.

In the same vein, the portrayal of what is effectively one-half of the country’s population as unproductive, unambitious and in other negative images, is an incorrect representation of women’s position in society.

While the areas of work in which they have been concentrated over time have differed from those of men, women have participated fully in the various sectors — in agriculture, industry and the social services. Today they are to be found in almost every occupation and at every level. Yet the media stereotyping of their role as a subordinate one, still persists.

The flagrant use and misuse of sexuality by the media has some of the most far-reaching effects on the values and cultural customs of a society. Sexuality has become one of the most widely used tools in the capitalist system to create markets for new products as well as retain profits for older ones. A whole world of femininity and masculinity, a fantasy world of marriage and romance, are sold to us in bottles and packages. The constant replay of short-lived fantasies make these appear as the desired reality we should all strive for, in spite of the fact that different cultural and ethnic customs demand other ideals.

Thus we are torn between tradition and novel

and exciting exposures, and our education has not prepared us to sift truth from fiction. This is especially true for a society such as ours where multiracial customs compete unevenly with imported western values. And the situation is even further complicated by the unequal distribution of resources which allows this exposure to all, while limiting the participation to a few.

It should be noted here that attempts have been made in the media to adopt the new ideas of women generated by the struggles of the women's movement, through the "sexual sell" — a phrase coined by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique*. Advertisers and dramatists have gone to town on the "liberated female" theme, but instead of challenging the system they have reconstructed it to still suit the male and dominant cause. Examples are found in films like *Charlie's Angels* and *Police Woman*.

But one of the most unfortunate consequences of the persistent stereotyping of male and female in the media is the social and psychological effects it has on the everyday lives of men and women.

In a sense, at both the subliminal and conscious levels, the messages communicated to us by the media become factual. The dream world of pictures and advertisements has a stronger pull because the dream now becomes a shared one. Although people's real experiences are often similar, these are isolated experiences, while the impact of the media and social imagery make the latter a more universal experience and thus a more real one.

The manifestations of the influence of the media on society are many. For example, certain women now become the ideal types while others, because they do not possess stereotyped attributes, are labelled differently. Based on purely visual criteria, men have expectations of certain women and, to be fair, the obverse also operates in that certain men also become stereotyped. But it goes even further than the level of expectations, in that both women and men attempt to pattern their behaviour on ideal types which in reality do not exist.

Even more significant here is the harm done to women to live out another self which must be constantly beautiful, well-groomed, and efficient at work and at home.

They are forced to resent each other and compete with each other, rather than unite on the commonality of their sex, because they are fed with the idea that they are competing for a scarce resource, that is, the desirable male in a world in which they are made to feel incomplete unless linked to a man.

It is clear that the mass media are highly influential in determining our perceptions of women in society, and that there are many benefits to industry and the media in retaining traditional images — especially if, in cultural traditions, it is more useful to perpetuate that image. It poses, however, a serious obstacle to promoting changes in the status of women in this society.

Some content analyses of the treatment of women in the local media should be carried out, for a truer assessment of how pervasive this influence actually is in Trinidad and Tobago. Such studies have been carried out for many developed and developing countries and have yielded very useful information for policy guidelines and policy makers.

There exists a certain contradiction in the role of the media and their treatment of women. If, in their wider role of conveyor of information, they persistently portray aspects of women which are culturally supported, on the other hand they also inadvertently convey the achievements and more positive contributions of women — thus exposing the changes that are actually taking place in our society.

Social attitudes and perceptions are difficult to change, being very deep-seated and emotionally charged, but given time and proper circumstances these changes do come about.

The work of progressive women's groups will be instrumental in bringing about these changes, but part of the onus lies with women themselves to question, and — if the answer is found wanting — to become organized and demand that changes be made.

Patricia Mohammed is a Junior Research Fellow at the Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, St. Augustine, Trinidad.

In Search of an Alternative

Women have created what they cannot find in the mass media: tools for sharing information about their lives, for identification of themselves and their roles, for reflection and analysis of their situations and needs, for linking and organization.

An independent women's press has appeared in nearly every part of the world and women have begun to build up national and international networks through which to share their experiences and organize. The upsurge in feminist publications and communications networks reflects the re-awakening and renewal of a militant women's movement in many parts of the world.

Although still young, these networks have already succeeded in carrying out some effective international actions. Some examples are: the spread of information about the harmful side-effects of depo provera, an injectable contraceptive; the sharing of knowledge of alternative health measures; investigation and mobilization of support for women in the textile and electronics industries in Southeast Asia.

These publications and networks suffer from lack of money and technological resources. However, since they are independent of male-dominated organizations, they do not have to compromise their positions or content. Their circulation and reach are as yet tiny compared to the transnational media systems, but they are beginning to act as a leaven among women around the world.

It is clear, however, that the mass media continue their damaging practices of neglecting and distorting news and information about women and women's roles, and keeping women from access to information and communication. While the media of the women's movement have had some impact, they are still easily marginalized and isolated. They do not reach the masses in the same way as the establishment media.

Women must devise an overall strategy for change in the information and communication of the world.

Our goals are clear: We want media which are responsive to our needs as women; which enable us to communicate with each other; which give us the information we need to make choices and decisions; which do not distort, belittle or demean women, or confine us to stereotyped behaviour roles; media in which women participate and share in determining the content, in decision-making, and control.

How can we obtain these goals? Is it possible to obtain them through the reform of existing mass media structures, or will we need to radically change these structures? Or should we try to create

and strengthen alternative structures, such as independent women's networks and publications? Is it desirable and possible to work on several levels at once?

Some voices are calling for women's participation in the new international information order, in what seems to be a process similar to that of "integrating women into development," that is, integrating women into the information and communication systems of the world. This call has been raised mainly because of two interrelated factors: the pressure exerted by women and women's groups on the information and communication circles, and the growing recognition of the need for women's participation if a new order is to succeed.

The implications of integrating women into either present communication structures, or a new order to be created, must be carefully analysed, otherwise women may end up being "integrated" into a new international information order as detrimental to themselves as their "integration" into much of "development" has been.

Any strategy calling for women's greater participation in the media must consider the quality, as well as the quantity, of that participation.

For instance, the presence of more women in media positions is not in itself a guarantee that the media will no longer present stereotyped or distorted images of women. There is always the danger that a small number of women may use increased job opportunities in the media to make careers for themselves in a male world.

On the other hand, women may also find themselves as "tokens" within the male-dominated media, isolated and powerless to bring about any real changes. The massive presence of women might be helpful in bringing about changes in the media's treatment of women. However, the "integration" or participation of women in a male-dominated system is not sufficient; other basic changes are needed as well.

Another approach being taken is that of trying to get more media coverage about women, more stories and positive images, especially in the press. The goal is to help change attitudes about women among the public, and the self-images of women themselves. This is certainly a goal to be pursued, but again attention must be given to the quality and quantity of the coverage.

The media could very easily increase the amount of information about women without becoming any more responsive to the needs of the vast majority of women. Even the increase of positive images of women in the news will not by itself be very helpful. A few success stories of women who

have made it in a basically oppressive society will do nothing to change that society which keeps most women in chains.

Closely tied to efforts to increase women's participation in, and coverage by, the media is the pressure being exerted from outside to influence or force the media to discontinue those practices most damaging to women.

Here and there some small victories have already been won through the pressure and action of women's groups: sexist advertisements removed from a magazine; editorial policy changed in a local paper; guidelines handed down on the use of non-sexist language in journalism; more attention given to women in programming. Yet, by and large, these represent only a small dent in the huge anti-woman bias of the media.

Hand in hand with these efforts is the patient work of research and documentation of the media's anti-woman bias; the collection of data on the negative images of women, on the lack of appropriate information, on the discrimination of women in media jobs. This is the new material for consciousness raising and changing public opinion.

All of the approaches described here could be carried out within either a strategy for reform of present media structures, or in a strategy which aims at radical restructuring of media systems.

If they remain at the level of reforms they could result in increased participation of women in the media and improved coverage of women, without changing the basic structures. The very same reforms could be much more effectively carried out within a long term strategy for basic change. Women currently organizing around these issues must give more thought to developing a long term strategy, and to involving more women.

If we opt for strengthening the independent women's press and communication network, great efforts will have to be made to move out of the "ghetto" and into wider circulation. We must try to avoid the dangers of becoming restricted to a small circle, a new elite. We must find ways to make a greater impact on the rest of the mass media. There are no easy solutions to this.

On the other hand, if we choose to work within existing media structures, we must be constantly vigilant to avoid all the dangers involved, not the least of which is co-optation.

Our history of the movements and struggles of women have shown us, however, that only when women form our own powerful organizations — whether inside or outside the institutions, whether working alone or with others — have we been able to achieve the erosion of patriarchal dominance and effect lasting changes beneficial to women.

Extracted from an article by Marilee Karl in "Women and the Media" ISIS International Bulletin 18, 1981. ISIS, C.P. 50, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland. One year subscription U.S. \$15.

NETWORK SERVES CARIBBEAN WOMEN

An alternative communications system for Caribbean women was created as early as 1978 with the establishment of the Caribbean Women's Features Syndicate (CWFS).

The project aims to create a viable news and features/information service which will secure media coverage of women's developmental activities, while initiating alternate media exposure for women.

The Syndicate seeks to remove prejudices against, and stereotyping of, Caribbean women and promote their integration into the development process as equal partners with men.

Features for print and broadcast media have been submitted by correspondents throughout the region to a co-ordinator who edits and distributes the material, from her Barbados base.

The Syndicate has produced features covering a variety of topics from women and agriculture, industry, nutrition and politics, to women and development, media, and so on.

Following an evaluation of its service in 1982, the Syndicate is currently being restructured and revitalized, but it remains part of the global network of features services initiated by UNESCO in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

Women in

Calypso

by
Elma Reyes

A poor showing -

Can women, by their entry as performers in the calypso world, help to change the negative image of themselves as portrayed in some of the more popular calypsos of Trinidad and Tobago?

Such change is doubtful if the past and current crop of calypsos are any indication, for these portray Caribbean women as money-crazy, promiscuous, evil schemers. Persons who are critical of this image will recognize that women's rights do not seem to be adaptable as a suitable theme by the exponents of calypso — male or female.

For example, in 1980, only two calypsonians seemed to have considered a theme relevant to women's concerns and one of them was a man.

In *Take the Number the man*, Scrunter, highlighted the frightening prevalence of sex crimes against women. He sings of the advice he overheard his neighbour giving her teenaged daughter, shaping into a catchy refrain her insistence that the girl "take the number" of any car she happens to travel in if she misses the school bus.

Scrunter's popular calypso, *Woman on the Bass*, is a tribute to the only woman member of a well-known steelband, and serves to document in song the increasing number of women playing in steelbands, a previously male-dominated cultural medium.

Calypsonian Lady Jane also elected to use calypso to deplore the increase in rape, annoying as she did many male members of her audience by her suggestion that the authorities should:

Send those rapermen to jail
Beat them with the birch 'til they wail
Then send in Calypso Jane
To throw some cat in dey tail



Although 13 women had been advertised as participants in the tents that year, the majority of them could only manage tuneful ditties with superficial lyrics. They included the acknowledged "big three": Calypso Rose, Singing Francine and Singing Diane.

The latter has attempted a follow-up to Francine's 1979 hit *Run Away* with her song *Ah Done Wit' Dat*, but it is not as strong either in lyrics or music as even her own sexist hit *Give It Away* in which she indicates that she is what is known internationally as an "easy lay." But, in *Ah Done Wit' Dat* she takes a completely different stance; she tells her violent partner she is leaving him because she can no longer tolerate the ill-treatment she has been subjected to:

If I don't leave now
Is licks in the morning,
In the evening.
I telling you flat
I done wit' dat.

In 1979, Singing Francine attacked the subservient role which so many Caribbean women accept if they want to be regarded as "decent" and "respectable" in their communities. In *Run Away*, she rebukes the violent man:

Just because you put gold teet' in she mout'
When you come home vex you licking it out.

and advises the injured woman:

Dog does run away
Cat does run away
Child does run away when you treating them
bad
Woman put two wheels on ya heels
You should run away too



In earlier years, when she was the only woman calypsonian, Lady Iere had expressed similar discontent about men for whom:

You cook dey food
And you wash dey clothes
When dey come home vex
Dey does give you blows

She warned:

Dey got to love me or leave me
And live wit' Miss Dorothy
The times is too hard
For me to keep a man that is bad

This calypso was as popular during the early 1950s as *Run Away* was in 1979, but neither have had any impact in swaying the popular degrading and demeaning image that women have traditionally been accorded in calypso.

The society as a rule has been more tolerant of the macho image of men which is projected in calypsos, such as this one by the "Calypso Monarch" the Mighty Sparrow:

Every now and then
Knock them down
They love you long
And they love you strong
Take a piece of iron
And bruise dey knee
And then they love you
Eternally

This was one of the most popular hits some years ago. Before that, and since then, calypsos have been sung by performers portraying women in very questionable roles. In a more recent calypso, "human rights activist" and schoolteacher the Mighty Chalkdust informs us of his desire to see an Ayatollah take over the administration of Trinidad and Tobago. With such a leader in power, he sings, women who commit adultery would be publicly punished. No mention is made, however, of what punishment would be meted out to the men who are consenting partners in the same act.

Any woman who objects to the sexist treatment of women in calypsos encounters the argument that most other women are not bothered by it. She is told that women are the staunchest calypso fans and that the Mighty Sparrow has been most popular, during his 28 years in the field, when he produced songs relating to his sexual encounters with women.

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DEVELOPMENTS AT THE INTERNATIONAL . . .

The Women's International Media Network (WIMN) was born in April 1982, at a meeting of media women from around the world called to discuss strategies for developing an international press and information service for women.

WIMN is made up of contact persons from the world regions of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the South Pacific, the Middle East, Europe, and North America. The 22 regional contacts form an interim international working committee whose priority will be regional and national outreach, and determining what further steps need to be taken at the international level.

They will also be responsible for locating other women in their respective regions who wish to become contacts, and developing a mailing list of interested women within these regions.

The operating principles of the Network are: all people have the right to speak for themselves; the media should be viewed as a tool for education and liberation and should be available to everyone on an equal basis; the basis for the network is feminist analysis which incorporates the political, economic and social aspects of issues; the views of oppressed groups and persons are crucial and should be sought out, and their participation facilitated; information flowing in the network, and particularly between the Third World and the West, must be shaped to maximize its usefulness for the mobilization of people for action; the resources/ programmes/ activities of WIMN should be accessible to all women, and respect differences of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, and politics.

..... AND REGIONAL LEVELS

At their second meeting in April, CARICOM Ministers of Information recognized the 12 recommendations directed to Caribbean governments by the first regional seminar on "Women and Media Decision-Making in the Caribbean."

The recommendations formed part of 41 proposals which were drawn up at the seminar in Jamaica, in September 1981.

The recommendations to Caribbean governments urged them to:

- take the necessary steps to ensure women's representation in the formulation of national information systems and communications policies;
- ensure a fair representation of women on the boards of directors and advisory management committees in both public and private sector media organizations;

- ensure the representation of women at the decision-making levels of all major regional institutions, so as to guarantee the incorporation of women's views and opinions on the programmes and strategies for regional development;
- support and finance where possible the continuity and expansion of the efforts of the relevant agencies to eliminate sex-role stereotyping from educational curricula and instructional materials;
- take urgent measures to accelerate the training of women in professional skills suitable to all branches of the media. In particular, special training programmes should be devised to train women in the use of media technology and courses offered by developed countries considered, with due regard to content relevance and the level of technological sophistication of each territory;
- facilitate the entry of women to communications training institutions in the region through the provision of scholarships, student loans and other forms of support;
- support and strengthen the information components of national machinery for the integration of women in development, to ensure the widest dissemination of relevant information about women from women.

The governments were also urged to:

- recognize the disproportionate percentage of broadcast time allotted to the transmission of imported programmes, and move promptly to encourage the production and dissemination of indigenous and culturally relevant programmes by introducing incentives to local production and collaborating in the development and exchange of regional information products;
- direct their attention to the need for revision and harmonization of legislation dealing with advertising, copyright, performing rights, cinematography, etc.;
- take immediate steps to alter or create communications structures accessible to, and capable of facilitating, the participation of rural communities; recognize the importance of radio in rural development and its potential to develop and reorder non-formal education in offering learning continuity to women; ensure that all national development projects include a communication component for rural women;

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Women with a Vision

An international women's television series has brought together 13 women, six of them from developing countries, to make television films about issues of importance to women.

Under the provisional title *Women and Development*, topics as diverse as polygamy, women and peace, and sexual discrimination, will be treated in half-hour documentaries to be completed at the end of this year. They will then be exchanged among the participants and televised in their respective countries.

The series will also be available for wider distribution.

The inspiration for the series comes from a mandate contained in the programme of action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women, and is being organized by the U.N. Division for Economic and Social Information.

For developing countries, more so than for industrialized ones, the struggle to survive provides the cutting edge for a film on women. Indian television producer Rita Dutt's film on Indian women who move with their families from rural to urban areas in search of work, illustrates this in a dramatic way.

The film will focus on the struggle of two middle-class women to force the contractors to provide these women — the bulk of India's unskilled labour force — with equal pay, creche facilities, and medical services.

Another participant in the project, Brazilian producer Irede Cardoso, is producing a film which aims to reveal the ways in which sexual discrimination prevents women from playing an effective role in Brazil. She hopes to juxtapose images of football and carnival against the drab realities of women's lives as they remain excluded from all the major avenues of power, influence and control.

The project has emphasized that while the countries involved may share certain problems, their problems and preoccupations often diverge wildly.

When Japan proposed a film on abortion, Rita Dutt said it would be of little use to an Indian public and Nigerian television producer, Gold Oruh, remarked that her compatriots would be opposed to such a programme. Irede Cardoso's suggestion that she explore the problem of child prostitution was also rejected by Gold who felt that a film on such a subject "would be repulsive to Nigerians."

As the controller of current affairs on the Nigerian National Network, Gold feels that a film on women in politics is more relevant to her viewers than one on child prostitution. This is

most probably the case, but it does perhaps dodge the moral imperative to pose awkward questions or, in this case, allow others to do so.

The Nigerian film eventually chosen for the series is called *Off the Sidewalk*, a government clarion call to potential women politicians. Says Gold, "If you look at Nigerian society you will find that the Nigerian woman has made a mark on almost every aspect of life except politics."

The Nigerian film thus hopes to inspire women to enter politics, and juxtaposes the traditional role of women with the portrayal of Nigerian heroines who "damned tradition to make their mark."

Despite the different perspectives of the participants, this is a goal all the producers can identify with and, one suspects a good majority of their audience.

Extracted from an article by Florence Kabba-Diallo in Development Forum, Vol. XI No. 5, June-July, 1983.

TRINIDAD — BROADCASTING WOMEN'S ISSUES

The National Commission on the Status of Women in Trinidad is continuing its thrust in the area of consciousness raising through a radio programme entitled *Focus on Women*.

The three-minute programme features the ideas expressed by both men and women representing a variety of interests, as well as those views recorded in the publications of regional and international agencies, and non-governmental organizations. The programme is aimed at creating an awareness of the changing roles of women, and stimulating thought and discussion on this subject.

The brainchild of a Commission member, the programme began in April 1982 and is broadcast as a public service on Radio Trinidad.

One of its immediate results has been the extent to which it has provided information on men's perceptions.

Concern about the media's portrayal of women also prompted the Commission to sponsor a seminar on "The Portrayal of Women in the Media and the Perceptions of Women," last November.

Papers presented at the seminar included "The Portrayal of Women in the Media — A Journalist's Viewpoint" by Therese Mills, Editor, *Sunday Guardian*; "Some Observations on the Media" by Enid Kirton, Commission member; and a paper on the seminar's theme by Patricia Mohammed, research fellow, Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI.

The seminar, which was held in Scarborough, Tobago, was one of three seminars sponsored by the Commission in different parts of the country. The others were "Women and the Family" and "Women in the Workplace."

PROFILE

Nora Peacocke - A voice for Media Women

“When women have been recruited into the media they have to face, in many cases, resentment from their male colleagues and criticism from their readers, listeners or viewers much more harsh than that accorded to men. Should a female editor be lucky enough to obtain a measure of approval before the fact that she is a woman becomes widely known, the peak of the compliments handed out is known to be ‘You write like a man!’”

The voice of experience? Maybe, for the speaker has spent more than three decades in the media; she has seen women throughout the Caribbean enter the demanding, male-dominated fields of the media — some making it while others floundered. But, Nora Emily Peacocke has remained to become a household name in her native St. Vincent where she has been editor of *The Vincentian* newspaper since 1973.

She laments the scarcity of women working in the media and the limited opportunities provided them.

“Women are few and far between in Caribbean newspaper media — except in areas regarded as the women’s special province. These include household information like recipes and flower arrangements, advice on affairs of the heart especially to love sick teenagers, and clerical jobs. The sparsity of female newspaper editors and reporters at workshops and conferences for communication personnel bears testimony to the lack of encouragement given to women in this field of endeavour.”

Her own involvement in the media dates back to 1949 in Trinidad where she was research assistant (publications) and editorial assistant of the *Year-book of Caribbean Research*. Two editions of this book were published between 1949 and 1952.

Before her stint in Trinidad, Nora had spent four months in British Guiana (as Guyana was then known). Prior to that, she worked for 18 years in the Agricultural Department, St. Vincent, some of them in the Cotton Experiment Station. The young Nora joined the Department soon after she left school in 1929.

On reflection, one can perhaps say that even in her youth Nora was a feminist. This was demonstrated by her presence in the cotton fields at the Experiment Station alongside of her male colleagues.

Once her work in Trinidad was completed, Nora moved on to Venezuela and then Jamaica in 1956.

In Jamaica she held a number of jobs, all media-related and all priming her for a future in the media. For example, she assisted in the preparation of a report on a survey of sugar workers by the Jamaica Government’s Department of Statistics. This having been completed, she joined the firm of City Printery and Public Opinion in 1957 where she edited the *Year-book of Industry and Agriculture in Jamaica*, as well as the *Public Opinion Annual*.

During this period she also edited the *Sugar Worker*, a quarterly designed for workers in the sugar industry.

On leaving the firm, Nora joined the staff of Scientific Research Committee (later the Scientific Research Council) as technical information officer — a post that required her editing several publications, such as *The Bulletin of the Scientific Research Council*.

At some stage of our lives, however, the longing for “home” returns and so Nora Peacocke returned to her homeland in 1973, where with her wealth of editorial experience she was soon installed as editor of *The Vincentian*. This newspaper is the country’s only national paper; there are three political party organs.

Very few women are afforded, or are in a position to seize, such opportunity in the media. Perhaps this situation has a lot to do with training, or lack of it. As Nora points out:

“A great deal of the training of media personnel takes place after recruitment. Consequently, since far fewer women than men are recruited, far fewer women receive training. However, we believe that this is not the whole explanation. In our opinion male employees are frequently given preference over women for training opportunities.

“Examples of discrimination such as these often follow a national pattern of attitudes, regulations, and even laws. Citizenship rights, for example, are not identical for the two sexes in St. Vincent and the Grenadines under the country’s constitution. Consequently, the denial of equality for women to take their place within the media, share training opportunities and progress on just terms in pay and promotion is not regarded as an issue of urgent importance.

“I am confident that no country that discriminates against women can possibly fulfil its potential or attain true democracy.”

She urges women in the media to take the initiative in correcting this situation.

“Females who have succeeded in establishing themselves in the media must make a concrete effort to help other women obtain entry and training, and assist their progress. A fellow feminist, who had attained a position of eminence so far rarely acquired by women, observed in my hearing not too long ago that part of her contribution to the correction of the undoubted discrimination between the sexes was to give women applicants preference in job awards once their qualifications were as good as their male rivals’.

“There is no doubt that the media in the Caribbean need more women in their ranks to supply a point of view and angle of approach that is often lacking. Consequently, there is not only justification but need for the policy of my friend to be adopted by the comparatively few women who have acquired sufficient status in the media to implement it.”

Known by Vincentians to be an active feminist, Nora uses her membership of the National Council of Women of St. Vincent to demonstrate her support of her sex.

In her role as editor of *The Vincentian* she claims that women employees of her organization have demonstrated intelligence, adaptability, loyalty and stamina as great as any man, and greater than most.

She also feels the feminine point of view is different from the masculine one and must seek expression, for as she says: “Sometimes we are wrong but sometimes we are certainly right. In any case, it is good that while information should be conveyed factually, opinion which is both unprejudiced and varied should be laid before the public, so that decision can be based on as wide a concept as possible in matters of import.

“Consequently, women in the media have a duty to be true to themselves. To ape the male point of view for the sake of popularity, or because of the innate fear — developed in the brainwashing process to which our society has exposed women for generations — that ‘men know best,’ is to be involved in some terrible risk.

Nora Peacocke



“Communication of the truth is the job of the media. But the truth is deeply affected by the angle from which it is presented. For example, a mother sees the prospects of a war entirely different from a politician. And, a pregnant girl looks at unemployment differently from the street corner ‘limer’ who has fathered her unborn child.

“On the whole, the sensitivity of women is greater than the sensitivity of men. Women in the media should never forget that their responsibility is as women as much as journalists.

“To forget is to betray.”

This profile was compiled from an interview by Jeannette Duncan, Programme Organizer, Radio St. Vincent, and from an address by Nora Peacocke to the Seminar on Women and Media Decision-Making in Jamaica, September 1981.

It's a Fact

- Nearly 60 per cent of the Caribbean's women struggle under the dual yoke of domestic manager and income supporter (full time or part time), while the media either ignore their plight or commercialize their condition.
- A sampling of 50 issues of eight regional newspapers covering the period July 7 – September 7, 1981 revealed 80 per cent of the women making the news in the following categories: educators and politicians delivering speeches – 30 items; women in various fields of entertainment – 27 items; women writing letters to the editor – 15 items. The remaining women were deemed newsworthy because of some act of notoriety (15%), or they were giving beauty and health care tips (5%).
- Jamaica has a higher proportion of women media professionals than most countries of the world. However, women are not represented in media organizations in proportion to their numbers in the Jamaica society and are usually under-represented at senior and management levels.

(Source: Women and Media Decision-Making in the Caribbean CARIMAC/UNESCO 1981 Seminar Report.)

- Women have always had their own informal communications systems, whether it be exchanging news and information around a village well or handing down lore from mother to daughter. With the advent of mass communications and sophisticated technology, however, women have been left out; the control of the mass media – television, radio, cinema, the daily press, periodicals and advertising – is solidly in the hands of men.
- Although almost half of the labour force in the USA and Canada is female, studies show percentages of working women in television portrayals which vary from 30 per cent to as low as 12 per cent. Studies world-wide also show a concentration of women portrayed as employed in a limited number of jobs and in predominantly female fields and roles.

(Source: The Portrayal and Participation of Women in the Media, Margaret Gallagher, UNESCO, 1979.)

- The popular men's magazine Playboy uses 54 per cent of the female advertising characters as sexual or decorative objects.
- In advertising, the substantial decrease in the number of housewives appearing in advertisements has been accompanied by an increasing emphasis on the physical appearance of women.
- Research has shown that as a mechanism to control societal conflict generated by the emergence of the women's movement, newspapers withhold information about it (the latter) from the general public in order to minimize its impact.

(Source: Mass Media – The Image, Role and Social Conditions of Women, UNESCO, No. 84, 1979.)

Plan of Action

The World Plan of Action for the U.N. Decade for Women recommends, in regard to those who are responsible for the media, that:

- Those in control of the media should seek to raise public consciousness with respect to (women's) changing roles, and the serious concern that both women and men have about important issues that affect their families, communities and society at large. They should be urged to project a more dynamic image of women (as well as of men) and to take into account the diversity of women's roles and their actual and potential contribution to society.
- They should depict the roles and achievements of women from all walks of life throughout history, including women in the rural areas and women of minority groups. They should also seek to develop in women confidence in themselves and in other women, and a sense of their own value and importance as human beings.
- Women should be appointed in greater numbers in media management decision-making and other capacities, as editors, columnists, reporters, producers and the like, and should encourage the critical review, within the media, of the image of women projected.

MEDIA IMAGES OF AFRICAN WOMEN

Whether in Africa, Europe, or the Far East, advocates of change for women face a common problem in modifying the prevailing images of women.

As an example, the image of the African woman soldier was viewed with admiration in the West, as she fought for independence alongside men in Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, Angola, Mozambique, and most recently Zimbabwe. Ironically, the female ex-combatant is now seen as something of a social misfit.

Post-independence newspaper stories recount men's preference for marrying the girls they left behind instead of the pants-clad comrades with whom they lived in the bush. A flurry of letters to the editor, either refuting or explaining this phenomenon frequently follows such stories, and marriages between ex-combatants continue to receive prominence in the press.

In the Zimbabwean setting, the media reflect prevailing attitudes toward women and an image of what they should be, despite official government policy supporting sexual equality and non-discrimination against ex-combatants, male or female.

What is the African ideal woman portrayed in the media?

A perusal of magazines, newspapers and television in southern Africa reveals two clear images of women — the mother/wife and the “young modern woman.” The former is portrayed with her husband and children, preparing food, sending the family off to school and work, or engaged in household chores. The latter is “with it,” dresses well, and is often seen outside the home, leaving a department store, buying the latest cosmetics, or jetting off for a fantasy trip overseas.

Southern Africa is characterized by racial differences. Advertisers saw the need to develop images to which blacks could relate. Because whites largely controlled the media originally and because multinationals had the principal interest in advertising, projecting white images was not a problem and advertising copy was readily imported.

Advertising is not the only means by which women's images are portrayed. Stories in newspapers and magazines and on television, or the absences of them, reflect how women are perceived in society.

The “women and style” pages of the newspapers and women's magazines are replete with recipes, hairstyles, and ads for cosmetics, but

contain little of political or economic substance. Not surprisingly, the most widely circulated women's magazines in southern Africa come from South Africa.

The media can also reflect their own points of view about women. The editor of Zimbabwe's *Sunday Mail*, Willie Musarurwa, readily admits that he is a traditionalist in his view of women and believes that feminism and advocacy for change in women's status is “reflective of less than one per cent of Zimbabwean women.”

When a continent-wide, U.N.-sponsored meeting was held in Zambia in 1979 in preparation for the Copenhagen World Conference on Women, the Lusaka daily paper carried a front-page story on the meeting. After praising Zambia's progressive



attitude toward women, and the aims of the conference, the article concluded with an admonition against women's abandoning their “most important role in life” — that of good housewives.

And who says something with regard to women can be as important as what is said. In Zimbabwe, an outspoken proponent of women's rights was criticized in the newspaper for being single and therefore not qualified to hold militant views on marriage. Culture dictates that a married woman has more stature than an unmarried one.

The media can be an agent for positive change in the African development process, both in terms of the role of women in society and in political, economic and social evolution. Culture is not static, and change involves incorporating the new and modifying the old. The media, like literature, can help explain the process.

Women in Calypso

Although newspapers or television may not be able to control all the advertising they transmit, they can feature articles or programmes that address how women are presented in the media or in relation to specific issues such as employment, education, social change, and politics.

Because of the colonial legacy in southern Africa, which denied African culture, the media and the educational institutions have enormous responsibilities. In addition to adapting to changes in women's role in society, they must also rewrite the past.

If information is power, then those who control it possess the power to create the images. Who controls the media in southern Africa? Men do, and until recently those men were usually expatriates.

In Africa, it is mainly men who are the authors and publishers of books, the film makers, the singers, the photographers, and the newspaper and magazine editors. This, however, is a universal problem, being also the pattern in the West.

Yet in Africa, it is the women who have been the storytellers, the spirit mediums in touch with the past, the teachers of culture for the coming generations. Since modern media is a relatively new phenomenon in Africa, is it not possible to change the patterns that exclude women?

Men and women must work together in creating positive media images of women. African women are very firm about the fact that their struggle is not one of men against women. They have seen and rejected the separatist approach adopted in the West. Moreover, with limited resources and pressing priorities, a separatist approach is inconsistent with African reality.

Africa's own images are still being created as is its perception of the role of women and whether women's rights will be a priority. At this juncture, there are opportunities to train women in equal numbers with men in order to shape the institutions in the media that will in turn shape people's values and perceptions.

When the values of colonial Africa are shaken off and the male defenders of African "tradition" have been successfully debated, then a true picture of the southern African may emerge, one that incorporates the woman who not only toils in the field but also fought for her people's independence.

Extracted from an article by Gayla Cook Isaacs, media producer and consultant and a former director of the Women and African Development Program of the U.S.-based African-American Institute. This article appeared in Africa Report, March-April 1983.

One record shop operator even claimed that Sparrow's beautiful tribute to mothers, *A Mother Loves You Best*, has never been as popular as *The Village Ram*, *Everybody Go' Get*, *Theresa*, and the most famous of his compositions, *Jean and Dinah*.

He observed, "When Sparrow sang *Education* he pointed out that educational facilities were available to every little boy and girl, and he did not place a sexist image on any of these facilities. What happens? Even when people have it on an L.P. they don't play it. They pick out the hot, sexy numbers and this is what their children learn to sing!"

He pointed out that while there were "endless" women's organizations in Trinidad and Tobago, none of them had done what the Hindus did in 1979 and the Spiritual Baptists did in 1980 — that is, complain that their image would be disrespected through public response to derogatory calypsos about them. He insisted, "The women in Trinidad and Tobago are as a rule perfectly content with the way they are portrayed in calypso. Women have not shown overwhelming response to any calypso sung in praise of, for example, "Netball Queen" Jean Pierre.

Traditionally, calypso has been a medium of social protest. It is time that women too use it to protest the negative image of themselves in contemporary calypsos.



...NEWS FROM WAND...

Workshop Shows Results

A positive result of the small business management workshop sponsored by WAND in St. Kitts, in April, is the formation of a Small Businesses Association in which training is seen as an integral and ongoing part of business activities.

The St. Kitts workshop was part of a series of small business management workshops planned and organized by WAND Programme Officer, Jeanette Bell. A workshop has also been held in St. Vincent, and two more were scheduled for August and September in Antigua and St. Kitts.

The workshops are aimed at improving small business management skills in the Caribbean, with differing emphases according to the specific needs of the individual island. The topics dealt with include pricing, marketing, bookkeeping, financial management, and human relations.

The participants were small-scale proprietors and traders, and unemployed women involved in special projects, such as the sewing project in Rose Hall, St. Vincent. It is hoped that these projects and the training received through the workshops will enable the participants to develop income-generating skills which also meet community needs.

Funds for the workshops were contributed by the Inter-American Foundation, and the programme used the services of a resource person in each island. These persons contributed by bringing information to the level of the participants, while they themselves learnt participatory methods of education.

Co-ordinator Addresses Conference

Peggy Antrobus, Tutor/Co-ordinator of WAND, addressed the Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World, held in Vancouver in June.

In her address, entitled "Equality, Development and Peace — a Second Look at the Goals of the U.N. Decade for Women," Ms. Antrobus attempted to show the intricate connection between these goals and the extent to which they relate to the individual at a personal and political level.

She identified the commonality of women's powerlessness, marginality, and vulnerability within their personal, public, political and domestic relationships as transcending the categories of "developed" and "Third World." These, she said, may form the basis of a united women's movement towards equality, development and peace.

She went on to discuss the extent to which the Caribbean experience — financial, political, and economic crises — has adversely affected women, and to show how the assistance which is given towards "development" does not automatically benefit women.

Ms. Antrobus concluded her presentation by observing that justice corresponds to the theme of equality; expediency to the theme of development; and wisdom to the theme of peace.

Unit Included in Evaluation

WAND was one of three major UNICEF-funded projects in the Caribbean which were evaluated recently, in keeping with UNICEF's efforts to improve the situation of women and children in the Caribbean.

The evaluation took place at a conference in Barbados from May 20 - 22, 1983.

The other projects were the Regional Pre-School Child Development Centre (RPCDC) and Social Services Training (SST) — both in Jamaica.

Participants from the relevant institutions, UNICEF representatives, and a participant from

the UWI attended the meetings.

The territorial representatives focused on the major plans, activities and areas of need, with special reference to how these related to WAND, RPCDC, and SST.

Discussion and evaluation exercises followed the presentations.

The conference concluded with an examination of plans for future directions, priorities, linkages and recommendations as to how the projects can more effectively meet the particular national needs of the islands involved.

...NEWS FROM WAND...

WAND Attends Anglican Youth Workshop

Norma Shorey-Bryan, WAND Programme Officer, recently attended a workshop on "Women and Men Working Together for Christ," at the invitation of the Anglican Youth Council of Barbados.

The general objective of the workshop was to help participants examine more closely their attitudes to the roles of women and men in the Church in particular, and society in general.

Workshop activities included role-playing and discussions on the part men and women have

played in the Bible. Participants identified the less well known facts about the significant role of women and offered new interpretations to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul on the subject of women.

The emphasis was on bringing into focus the types of relationships which should be encouraged between men and women in order to foster respect for the capabilities and worth of both sexes.

CCW REPORT

The second in a series of one-day seminars planned by the CCW for women in agriculture in St. Vincent, took place on June 2, 1983 at the Walter Rodney Centre of the Rural Transformation Collective (RTC).

The nine women participants came from the North Leeward area, Diamond and Mesopotamia. Resource persons included Johnny Joe Cabral and Harvey Caine of the National Farmers' Union; Simeon Greene of RTC; and Cyp Neehall and Horatio Skeete of ESG/CDP.

In his presentation on the role of women in agriculture, Mr. Greene pointed out that although women represented half of the Vincentian population they were not given the credit due them. This was unjust, he said, since women's contribution to the nation's economic development as peasants and estate labourers was equal to that of men.

During the discussion which followed, it was pointed out that women were only now realizing that it was their right to be justly credited for their role in the nation's economic development; that the society and its institutions had perpetuated the male dominance in the society; and that women needed to understand the benefits of uniting.

Three estate workers shared their experience of fighting for their rights on the Richmond Vale

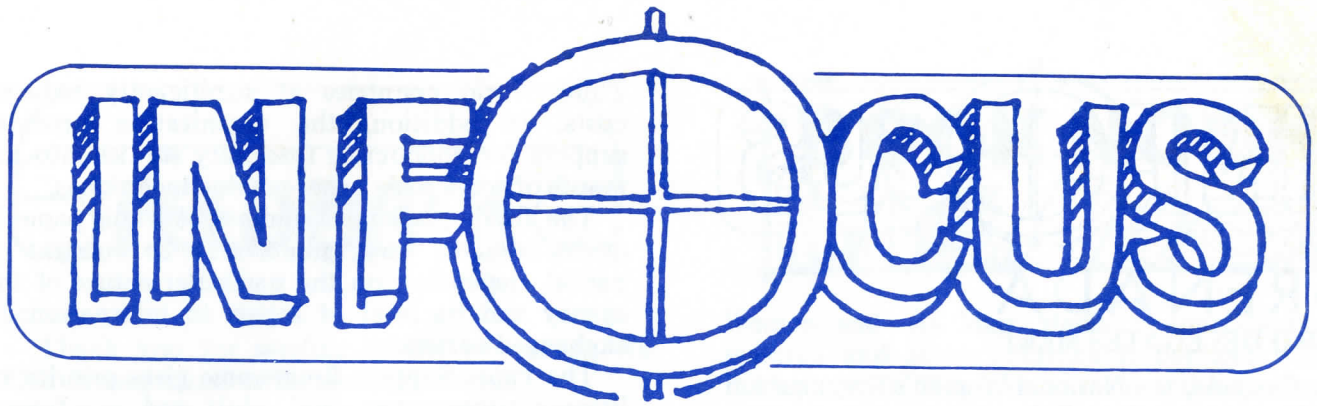
Estate. They gave a brief background to their struggle to organize and form a union, the repression which followed, and the eventual breaking up of the estate by management and government into five-acre plots.

The workers pointed out, however, that they continued to meet as a union to study their situation and plan collective efforts to alleviate some of the hardships they suffer.

The seminar showed concern for the women's experience with and in the union, but the women maintained that membership in the union had contributed to their involvement in the community and their improved understanding of their situation.

The day's programme concluded with an examination of the importance of farmer organizations by Mr. Caine. He stressed that farmers' organizations afforded their members the opportunity to discuss problems and work out solutions, together. These organizations also meant more bargaining and purchasing power to farmers, he added, and offered a greater sense of security and protection.

In the discussion on this topic it was pointed out that the reluctance of many people to join farmers' organizations stemmed from various factors, such as: fear of organizations; the high rate of illiteracy; the structure and operation of the organization; and fear of making a commitment.



ANTIGUA

— WOMEN'S DESK DRAWS UP PLAN OF ACTION

To achieve its primary goal of assisting in the process of reconstruction and development in Antigua and Barbuda, the Antigua Women's Desk has set itself a number of tasks to accomplish between 1983 and 1986.

In its Plan of Action, the Desk states that its main focus will be to: provide information on, and continue to educate women in, consumer education, budget counselling, and improvement of skills for income-generating activities; aim at alleviating problems faced by all women, especially low-income women; counsel women on ways of managing themselves and the stress periods in their lives; encourage women and men to be kinder to women generally and to avoid battering them; strive to work with government in development programmes, at the decision-making level.

Other areas on which the Desk will focus are: improved housing conditions; service of women on Boards, especially as chairpersons; improvement in agricultural programmes; adequate financial and health assistance for the elderly and the disabled; education of young women to enter the higher paid, male-dominated jobs; provision of employment for young adults; and training in management skills.

The Desk also seeks to: encourage self-confidence in women, and love, respect and understanding for the contributions of others to the improvement of the society; encourage women to become aware of the importance of their role in politics; use the vast experiences of persons in the community; plan and develop programmes for group activities.

The Desk plans to carry out research into women's activities in their homes and society; and to provide training in food preparation, food processing, nutrition education, literacy programmes, small business management, backyard gardening, clothing construction, weaving and spinning, and crafts.

GUYANA

— WPA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Over 100 women from throughout Guyana attended a national conference of women called by the Women's Section of the Working People's Alliance, on July 4, 1983.

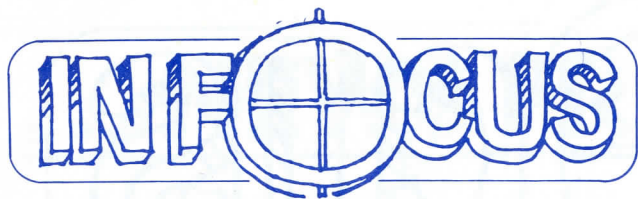
Under the theme "Women in the Struggle for Bread and Justice," the conference served to bring together a wide cross-section of women to discuss the economic crises in the society and the way in which the lives of women and their families were being affected.

During the first half of the all-day meeting, a panel discussion — on the theme "Working Women Speak" — gave several women the opportunity of relating the daily crises they face.

Participants were split into workshops during the second half to discuss and report on women in relation to food, education, health care, social and family breakdown, Amerindian rights, and conditions of work.

Among the resolutions passed, participants resolved to:

- form working groups of women in all the regions represented at the conference, and to bring other women from their communities and workplaces into these groups, to organize against the ban on essential foods;
- form an organization powerful enough to carry out an ongoing struggle against any abuses against women, children and the elderly and, within three months of the conference, hold a larger nation-wide conference of women at which such an organization would be launched.
- build the multiracial unity of Guyanese women of different strata, paying special attention to defending the rights and interests of Amerindian women and children.



GRENADA

— NWO DELEGATES MEET

In Grenada, the National Women's Organization (NWO) held its first Delegates meeting for this year in June.

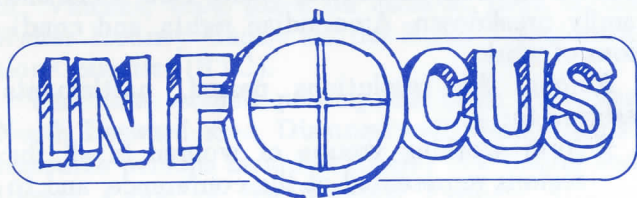
During the meeting, group co-ordinators reported on work in the areas of political education and leadership training; adult education; culture; non-traditional work; and health brigades.

It was generally felt that more groundwork must be done if the organization's work programme is to be achieved and completed as planned.

Members gave several concrete suggestions and recommendations on how to strengthen the groups and the work. They called for more leadership training and political education, more contact with executive members, and better mobilization.

Phyllis Coard, NWO President, said in her closing remarks that the delegates' immediate task was to strengthen the groups through mobilization of old members and implementation of those activities which the groups chose within the overall work plan.

Approximately 200 delegates from throughout Grenada attended the meeting which was earlier addressed by Bernard Coard, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.



CHEAPER PAPER FOR THIRD WORLD GROUPS

Education and literacy programmes in the Third World often encounter a variety of difficulties and setbacks. One such is the increasing cost of educational material.

Governmental and non-governmental organizations in the Third World — particularly those administering educational programmes now have a source of assistance. The Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) is a non-profit organization which has committed itself to making a contribution in the form of cash grants, books and paper.

Under its Paper Support Programme, printing and writing paper is being made more readily available to educational and literacy projects in

Third World countries at significantly reduced costs. In addition, the organization provides support for conducting feasibility studies into the merits of small-scale paper-making techniques.

The funding schemes under which this paper is made available vary; grants may be outright or partial, depending on the particular nature of the agency and its level of access to internationally exchanged currencies.

The Paper Support Programme gives priority to literacy programmes, and adult and non-formal education projects. Requests for paper must be related to specific projects. Non-specific paper requests and those for programmes of an overtly political or religious nature are not eligible.

Requests are limited to bond (No. 7, white, 40M), newsprint (high or regular quality), mimeo paper (white, 48M), and cover stock (130M, various colours). In addition, recipients of paper supplies must be willing to participate in some evaluation work.

Letters of application or requests for further information should be sent to:

Paul Eastman
c/o The Paper Support Programme
Canadian Organization for Development
Through Education
National Office
321 Chapel Street
Ottawa, Canada
K1N 7Z2

Continued from page 14

- take measures to upgrade and improve the communications capabilities of the CARICOM Secretariat to ensure that information pertaining to the affairs of the regional integration process is adequately conveyed through all available channels to the various publics;
- establish and finance appropriate mechanisms to facilitate research into all aspects of the relationship between the media and society.

The other recommendations of the seminar were directed to media organizations, communications training institutions, media workers' and women's organizations — proposing practical strategies and methodologies to resolve the problems raised.

These problems ranged from the virtual invisibility of media women at policy-making levels of media structures, to various forms of discrimination which suppress worker mobility and activism, and the continued negative portrayal of women and men in society by the major mass media.

Continued on page 25



Thank you for sending us the two issues. We find them packed with good information.

Dr. Donna Allen, Director
Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

WOMAN SPEAK! is quite informative, for I learn about our sisters in the different Caribbean islands.

Miriam Gumbs, President
National Women's Council,
ANGUILLA

I have used the newsletter in many ways, and it has helped me a lot especially with documentary programmes on women's issues, giving talks on women in media and so forth.

Lucy Baru
National Broadcasting Commission
Papua, NEW GUINEA

WOMAN SPEAK! has been a most useful and informative document which I read and circulate among co-workers and friends.

Faith Edwards
Diego Martin,
TRINIDAD

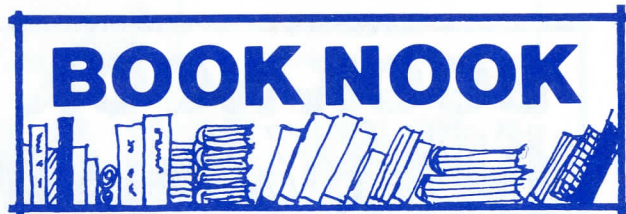
NEXT ISSUE

Issue No. 13 of WOMAN SPEAK! will focus on "Women and the Law."

Areas we'll try to cover include: the legal status of women; changes in the laws relating to women and employment; women's rights and obligations in marriage and common law unions; laws which discriminate against women, and so on.

As usual, we also welcome news of general interest on women's projects, activities or programmes.

Deadline for submission to the editor is November 15, 1983.



Women and the Mass Media — sourcebook for research and action. Matilda Butler and William Paisley, 1980. This book provides the first systematic study of the complex and changing roles of women in all phases of mass communication. In addition to theoretical and historical studies, the authors present concrete suggestions for legal, economic and social action to promote informative and unbiased media content. Examines the psychological and social portrayal of women in media, and documents the growing participation of women within media organizations. A survey is also provided on the training, hiring, compensation and career selection of women. Published by Human Sciences Press, 72 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011, U.S.A.


"Women and the Media" ISIS International Bulletin 18, 1981. This issue of the Bulletin aims to show how the media is one of the most important tools in the subordination and oppression of women, and how the international women's movement is organizing to counter it. The articles reveal the same treatment of women across geographical and cultural boundaries. Published by the ISIS Collective, Case Postale 50 Cornavin, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland or Via S. Maria dell'Anima 30, Rome, Italy. Subscription: US\$15 for individuals and women's groups; US\$25 for institutions.

Continued from page 24

The seminar also appointed a seven-member steering committee whose terms of reference included dissemination of the recommendations, the task of lobbying for greater representation of women in media decision-making, and the task of canvassing support among media workers for the formation of a Caribbean Media Workers Association.

The thoughts and views of media workers concerning such an association have already been solicited and presented in a report to UNESCO and the Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication, co-sponsors of the seminar.

BOOK NOOK



Women and Media Decision-Making in the Caribbean. Marlene Cuthbert, Editor. Report of the first regional seminar on women and media decision-making in the Caribbean sponsored by UNESCO and the Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication (CARIMAC) from Sept. 28 – 30, 1981, in Jamaica. Includes the seminar recommendations, as well as 11 background discussion papers on various aspects of the mass media's portrayal of women, and women's participation in the media. 223 pages. Published by CARIMAC, UWI, Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica, it is available at a cost of US\$5 or \$8 Caribbean currencies (not including postage).

Unequal Opportunities: the Case of Women and the Media by Margaret Gallagher, 1981. Based on world-wide analysis of research and action programmes in the area of women and media, this study examines the two interrelated factors – portrayal and participation of women in the media – seeing them as mutually reinforcing elements of the wider problem of access to knowledge and control in society. The author shows that the overall picture is remarkable only for its consistency from one country to another, both in the lack of women's participation in the media, and in the stereotypical portrayal. She also examines some of the alternatives women have started creating in new communication patterns and media structure. Published by UNESCO Press, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.

Letter from Switzerland

DON'T BLAME WOMEN FOR MEN'S BEHAVIOUR

*I would like to offer my congratulations on an over-all fine issue of **Woman Speak!**, covering violence against women. I would like to voice one criticism, however, which applies to one article in particular, but which related to other articles as well.*

*Far from analysing – as the title would suggest – why men sexually attack girl children in their families, "Why Fathers Abuse their Daughters" is instead an indictment of the **daughters' and mothers' "responsibility"** for incest.*

To keep this brief, I'll try not to do a point by point critique of the article. I would like to state, however, that insofar

*as incest is in fact **rape**, that the analysis of rape applies to incest. As **Woman Speak!** itself pointed out, rape victims do not provoke their attackers. Neither do incest victims. Recent research has shown that the average age at the commencement of incest is between 5-8 years old, hardly supporting the myth that incest victims are "budding nymphets".*

*The role of the mother is, to be sure, more difficult as she would seem to have more control over the situation. But again the analysis of yet another aspect of violence against women – wife battering – furnishes us with important insights. The same economic constraints which keep a woman in situations which are abusive for herself also apply to a situation where it is her child(ren) who is/are the victim(s). This article also seems to be proposing that it is a woman's (wife's) **duty** to submit to the sexual advances of her husband, or be responsible if he sexually attacks another woman.*

*In short, then, whereas rape is not just "sex with a stranger", neither is incest just "sex with a member of the family". As **Woman Speak!** itself has stated, although sex is the vehicle, rape - - and incest - - is more about power and violence than sex. Let us stop putting the burden of responsibility for men's behaviour on women of every age.*

I'm including here the titles of a few articles which expand on the issues I've raised here:

"Daddy Said Not To Tell" Dynamics of Child Sexual Abuse

*Part I in September/October 1978, **Aegis***

*Part II in November/December 1978, **Aegis***

"Who Will Speak for the Children? Child Sexual Assault"

"Incest Victim/Incest Survivor"

"Incest: Whose Reality, Whose Theory"

*All of the above three articles appear in Summer/Autumn 1980, **Aegis**, Box 21033, Washington DC 20009, USA.*

*The views expressed in my letter are of course my own. This letter is a personal one from me to the women of **Woman Speak!***

In Sisterhood,

Roxanne M. Claire

c/o Vuffray

6 croix de Levant

CH-1220 Avanchet

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MISS CHARLES!

THE Caribbean's first female prime minister, Dominican, Mary Eugenia Charles, warned yesterday, she would be asking no quarter because she is a woman, and said she expected to be treated as an equal with her male counterparts throughout the region.

The 61-year-old lawyer, who led her Dominica Freedom Party (DFP) in a sweeping 17-4 majority victory at Monday's general election, said she intended to stand on equal terms with government leaders in the Caribbean.

"I don't want anybody to say she is a woman, we are going to deal with her as the new prime minister said."

She told a Roseau press conference that she would be asking no quarter and giving none, and quoted company with the feminist movement, pointing out she was herself a person, who can do this job as this one that said.

The new prime minister, daughter of a Dominican nation, led spearheaded the formation of the Freedom Party in 1968, took a seat in the Dominica legislature as a nominated member when her party won the seats at election that year, and in 1975, won her first election to the House of Assembly at Roseau.

She has been official opposition leader since April, 1977.

The DFP leader attributed Monday's triumph to the work her party had been doing over the past five years, the fact that the elections were free and fair, and because the DFP candidates contested in their own constituencies.

She will be sworn in today, as Dominica's new head of government.

Thousands jammed in the streets yesterday, and

Dominica's new prime minister says she wants to be treated as a person . . . not as a woman



From our man AL GILKEU in Roseau

celebrated the Freedom Party's election victory with music, dances, transforming the Roseau town into a carnival city. The party also held a thanksgiving meeting in the city last night.

But while the DFP and its supporters, basked in their victory, the whereabouts of interim prime minister, Oliver Seraphin, remained unknown, and up to the time of writing, no word was available from deputy leader, Patrick John, both men lost their seats on Monday.

Even while savouring the sweets of victory Miss Charles set her position clear about her relations with her Caribbean neighbours.

She expressed a desire for the maintenance of close relationships with all Dominica's neighbours, including Barbados, Grenada and Venezuela.

Miss Charles thought Barbados had erred in extending a "gigantic state reception" for Seraphin, but she explained she did not think that would affect future good relations between

the two countries. As far as Grenada was concerned, she pointed out that her new government had planned no special arrangements with that country.

Prime Minister Charles, who described her party as "Democrats" believing in "the most good for the most people" stressed it was not her intention to interfere with other people's ideologies.

If other countries in the region wanted to go completely socialist, that was not her concern, as long as they do not come in and try to impose it on Dominicans", she warned.

Grenada she emphasised, will be treated like any other Caribbean state. But Miss Charles expressed a desire for any deeper relationships with Cuba, than what now exists within the non-aligned movement.

Dealing with the removal of certain building materials sent in Hurricane David victims last year, the new Dominica prime minister lambasted Seraphin for "unlawfully invading the warehouses of another country and taking away material without that country's consent" (meaning the United States). But she also made her stand unequivocally clear on the allegations of corruption, and said she did not believe in governments engaging in witch-hunting.

Such crimes, she pointed out, were police matters, and the police will be given a free hand, "with no political interference" to investigate allegations of corruption against the governments of Seraphin and Patrick John.



Charles

Caribbean's first female PM Page 11. No surprise page 12. Results Page 12



