

C A F R A

N E W S

NEWSLETTER OF THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION FOR FEMINIST RESEARCH AND ACTION.



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CAFRA NEWS.

CAFRA News is the quarterly newsletter and primary networking tool of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA).

Its main purposes are to:

- Inform members and other interested persons about the activities and programmes of the association;
- Provide a forum for discussion and debate on key issues of concern to women in the region;
- Promote the sharing of experiences and foster links among individual feminists, activists and women's organisations;

- Assist in breaking down language barriers in the region
- Stimulate women's creative expression; and
- Contribute to the development of the women's movement regionally and internationally.

We welcome letters, articles, poems, reviews, opinions and artwork for editorial evaluation and selection. The newsletter committee has a final right to edit content and to reject material not appropriate for publication, e.g. that does not further the aims and objectives of CAFRA and promote a spirit of sisterhood; or that is racist, sexist or "maternalist". Individual authors and reviewers are solely responsible for views and opinions expressed in published articles.

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CAFRA News is published quarterly by the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA), P.O. Bag 442, Tunapuna, Trinidad and Tobago. Tel: (1-809) 663-8670. Fax: (1-809) 663-9684 (Attention: CAFRA).

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Editor's Note

F_{eedback}



Since the CAFRA office is located in Trinidad and Tobago, we have chosen to concentrate a large part of this issue to reflections on the attempted take-over of this country by Abu Bakr on July 27. Included are our own press release; some thoughts from CAFRA Secretariat member Rhoda Reddock, and from Michael Ramcharan of Collaboration for Ecumenical Planning and Action in the Caribbean (CEPAC) Network; and parts of a statement made by some Caribbean nationals based in Washington, U.S.A. There are lessons here that need to be learnt not only by our own country but by the region as a whole.

The issue also contains updates on two of our projects - Law and Agriculture - and a look at the situation of women in Dominica and The Bahamas, as well as our regular features.

Sadly (for me), this is the last issue of *CAFRA News* that I will be editing/producing as I am moving out of the region (to Mexico). I've thoroughly enjoyed the time I've spent working on the newsletter and seeing it develop; fortunately, its being left in very good hands, so look out for signs of a new guiding hand from the next issue.

Tina Johnson

Gender Jargon?

I continue to enjoy your newsletter and find the articles very interesting and informative. However, as a West Indian woman of colour, I must express my concern over the current use of the term "gender" and development, or the use of the term "gender" when referring to women.

I realise that lately this term is used by academics and government officials. However, I do not find it appropriate. The word "gender" is a neutral term which refers to one's sex, i.e. being either male or female. Hence the word "gender" when used in the context of women's issues detracts from our concentration on women's experiences in particular.

As your newsletter is meant to empower women, I see the danger of falling into the trap of using government and academic jargon. Women in developing countries need to push their struggle ahead by continuing to focus on their issues, and part of that is using precise terminology.

Charlene Shehnaz Ali, Ontario, Canada.

Thank you, Tracey

I wish to commend Tracey Johnson for the beautiful cover illustration she gave us for the newsletter's issue on Women and

Health. As women's issues in health mainly centre around our reproductive organs and the whole reproductive system, illustrations generally tend to play with those parts of the female body directly. Tracey's illustration incorporates the beauty, keeping the organs and the system inside of that, suggesting the importance of caring for all of it to keep it beautiful. Thank you Tracey.

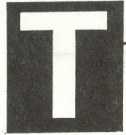
Sonia Cuales, Trinidad and Tobago

Black Women's Identity

We of the Movement for Black Women's Identity are aware of our history of oppression and discrimination in all its manifestations. We have emerged with the motivation to develop alternative policies on the problems of race and gender which would allow us to recover from the traumatic historical memories of our past, and through this build our true identity.

We are interested in initiating a process of interchange of experiences. This should enable us to identify some mechanisms or medium of permanent action such as bilateral meetings, exchange of magazines, books and videos, as well as participation in each other's activities.

Claudia Valdez, Apdo. Postal 130-12, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.



he law and sexual offences

by Roberta Clarke

The 'Women and the Law' project has stirred up a lot of enthusiasm and excitement in the region. It has several components, including the production and dissemination of popular education materials on legal issues affecting women; and the development of training programmes for organisations whose work brings them into contact with women who have legal problems, e.g. trade unions, halfway houses and rape crisis centres.

In addition to these two components, CAFRA in collaboration with the Rape Crisis Society of Trinidad and Tobago will be hosting a conference in early 1991 which focuses on the legal issues surrounding sexual offences and the work of rape crisis centres in the region. The proposed dates are January 28-29-30.

The aims of the conference are:
i. to situate the extent of sexual violence in Caribbean society and to explore the manner in which the same has been confronted by non-governmental organisations; social work agencies; the police departments and the judicial administration;
ii. to discuss the legal issues inherent in rape crisis work and other sexual offences with the view to developing proposals for legislative and judicial administration reform; and
iii. to share the outreach experi-

ences of rape crisis centres in the Caribbean region so as to develop strategies for maximising the impact of advocacy work.

The target participants are rape crisis centre personnel (both the legal advisers and the outreach workers); organisations whose work focusses on the women and violence issue; police departments; judicial administration personnel; and social workers.

We would like to make this conference a truly participatory one. We wish, therefore, to have inputs on the agenda, and to identify plenary speakers, workshop facilitators and other resource personnel. Also, in order to provide an indication of the magnitude of sexual offences in the region, CAFRA is preparing a background paper which will include statistics on the number of rapes and other sexual offences, the number of complaints/charges laid, the number of prosecutions of such offences and the number of convictions for the period covering the last decade. To facilitate this compilation, we are asking national representatives from each country to collect and forward such statistics to the CAFRA office.

Roberta Clarke is the 'Women and the Law' Project Co-ordinator.

Call for Papers

The organisers of the regional meeting of Rape Crisis Centres are calling for papers or other relevant input in the following areas:

- * The status of laws on rape and other sexual offences in the region
- * The issues involved in reporting of sexual offences and the laying of complaints and charges from the perspective of the survivors, social workers, crisis centres, police departments, etc.
- * The judicial process and the prosecution of accused rapists
- * The ideology which informs the treatment of rape survivors by the police, the judicial administration and the society at large
- * The legislative reform needed both in the substantive and procedural law
- * The experience with legislative reforms of the laws related to sexual offences
- * Advocacy strategies

W

ork on WICA

projects' update

by Joan French and Nelcia Robinson

Dominica: getting on stream

The 'Women in Caribbean Agriculture' (WICA) follow-up in Dominica was disrupted by the May election and has been further held up by lack of programme staff in some of the key organisations, such as Small Projects' Assistance Team (SPAT) and the Social League. Staff vacancies have now been filled, and things are expected to be on stream by mid-September. This will pave the way for completion of the credit directory for women; the airing of the radio series for women in agriculture (Dominica National Council of Women); and the analysis of the findings of the Survey on the Effects of Aerial Spraying (SPAT) which will hopefully give more detail on the effects of aerial spraying on vegetables, mostly grown by women. This was one of the problems identified in the WICA research. The conclusions of the study by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on how women are affected by land reform in the Grand Bay area are still being awaited. This research was conducted with the assistance of Development Alternatives, one of the members

of the follow-up team.

Martha Joseph, researcher in WICA Phase I, has continued mobilisation towards work on an organic vegetable growing project in her home community of Marigot. To further prepare her for this work, Pensey, as she is affectionately known, attended a two-week course in co-operative development in Zimbabwe in July. This was followed by field work



Rini Templeton

with two women's groups in Botswana, a women's bakery co-operative and a horticultural project.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines: action on the land

The project proposal submitted by the Committee for the Devel-

opment of Women (CDW) to HIVOS received favourable consideration, and funds were approved for administrative purposes. In addition, WAND had already allocated technical and financial assistance for community mobilisation specific to the WICA project.

CDW has continued to maintain contact with the communities of Lauders, Orange Hill and Buccament, and community women have been invited to participate in, for example, Women's Day celebrations and activities organised by the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD).

Orange Hill has been the community of highest focus. The community took action of historic significance when the people, mainly women, claimed a large area of land for housing purposes. They were subsequently given permission by government and the management of Rabacca Farms to occupy the land. To reinforce their claim, CDW felt that the most meaningful contribution to the project at that time would be to assist with trucking of stones to the individual lots.

Regular meetings were held with the women during this period. Subsequently, a committee comprised of representatives of agen-

cies working north of the Dry River discussed the Orange Hill situation and gave needed guidance to the community. A block-making project is currently in process. Blocks are built on a community basis to be distributed to prospective householders. An architect is also preparing a blue-print for a model house on which residents can pattern their individual holdings.

The WAND Consultant is expected to commence training following the appointment of a Field Officer.

Priscilla MacDonald from the Orange Hill community has been invited to attend 'I am Your Sister: Forging Global Connections Across Differences', a conference celebrating Audre Lorde and her work in Boston, U.S.A. from October 5-8, 1990. The organisers read about her involvement in the WICA project in *CAFRA News*, and want her to share with the other participants the experiences of the land struggle in Orange Hill.

Belize: completing the proposal

The Belize Rural Women's Association (BRWA) has completed the redraft of the preliminary project proposal for WICA - Belize after lengthy and careful preparation involving CAFRA and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government agen-

cies.

The preliminary research on the situation of women in agriculture in Belize continues, and the report is expected soon.

Trinidad and Tobago: seeking assistance

CAFRA is seeking the collaboration of the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD) in getting this project off the ground.

Suriname: sample survey

Suriname has requested assistance with a sample survey on "The Social and Economic Position of Women in Suriname". CAFRA has spent material from WICA Phase I and is considering sending someone to Suriname to assist with project preparation and research design as requested.

Joan French is the WICA Project Co-ordinator, while Nelcia Robinson is the Co-ordinator of the CDW, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Products of the 'Women in Caribbean Agriculture' research/action project

Reports:

Country Reports for Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (approx. 300 pp each) at a cost of US\$10.00 each, and the Overall Report and Summary of Main Findings, by Joan French (75 pp) at US\$5.00, are obtainable from the CAFRA office.

Videos:

'The Unending Day', St. Vincent and the Grenadines and 'Famn Té' (Woman of the Earth), Dominica are obtainable from the Committee for the Development of Women (CDW), P.O. Box 554, Kingstown, SVG and Small Projects' Assistance Team (SPAT), 6 Fort Lane, Roseau, Dominica respectively.

Popular Education Booklets:

'Dis a Hard Wuk, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and 'Famn Té', Dominica (see addresses above).



from 'Dis a Hard Wuk' cover

R

eflections on the attempted coup

Committed to widespread participation

CAFRA news release

On 27 July, 1990, Trinidad & Tobago witnessed the dramatic capture of its Prime Minister, members of his Cabinet, and other members of Parliament in an attempted coup d'etat by members of an Islamic fundamentalist grouping known as the Jamaat-



Rini Templeton

al-Muslimeen. The state-owned television station was also seized and the Police headquarters burnt down.

The insurrectionists, led by the charismatic Imam Yasin Abu Bakr, were all male and many in their teens, some as young as age fourteen. It has been reported in the local media that the stated motives for this action ranged from the desire to practice their religion without harassment, to a concern for socio-economic oppression and inequality at the national level, to the establishment of an Islamic fundamentalist state.

Throughout the five days of the crisis, members of the government not in captivity remained in control with the support of the armed forces. By 1 August (ironically, this day is commemorated annually as Emancipation Day), all the hostages were freed and the insurrectionists incarcerated. But the action took its toll on the national psyche as a number of persons were killed (including civilians, Jamaat members, and members of the protective services); there was widespread looting; and the country remains in the grip of a State of Emergency, with all fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the Constitution suspended.

There is now need for deep reflection on the causes of this incident and the impact that it is likely to have on the socio-political cul-

ture of Trinidad & Tobago. What is abundantly clear is that the action cannot be satisfactorily categorized and dismissed as just the work of a small fanatic clan. Whilst it was that, it is true that at least part of the group's concerns about the government's insensitivity to class inequality and the effects of its Structural Adjustment policies on the poor are widely shared by the population. Therefore even while Trinidadians and Tobagonians recoiled in the face of the Jamaat's guns and tactics, and condemned them, some of their stated concerns are not without societal support and legitimacy.

The national chapter of CAFRA members has been involved in an umbrella grouping of peoples' organisations of which the Jamaat is a member. This grouping has been calling into question the government's economic and social policies, and proposing alternatives. Because CAFRA is committed to participating in the creation of people-centred development alternatives, we cannot support the non-participatory and violent process to achieve social and economic transformation used by the Jamaat.

CAFRA remains committed to the development philosophy which calls for the widespread participation of all segments in the society in national decision-making. We remain convinced that a people educated and conscious

of all the developmental options, and who will take collective action is the best guarantee to achieving sustainable economic and social democracy.

Backs against the wall

By Michael Ramcharan

What began as a decade of hope, independence and people's power ended with a roll-back of such and the 80s are now being perceived as the decade of devastation. Grenada 1983, Nicaragua 1990; militarisation and conservatism; economic chaos and debt crises; CBI and Enterprise of the Americas; backyard; basin and lake; market force economy and fall of "Eastern Europe" are some of the tragedies which our Caribbean faces as we move into the 90s and beyond.

One Prime Minister has been known to say that 80% of our agenda is set by external forces and we should be careful in planning the rest so as not to lose all. The impotence with which our people have been forced to live is due not only to the ever-bullying USA, but also to the failure of our leadership to chart new directions.

Powerlessness as a sense of not being able to rise above the ills of the region is a pervading factor

which is now being promoted by several regional agencies offering integration as the only viable solution. But what of the ground work? What of the ethnic rivalries, the misperceptions that cloud the class issue? They have not been worked out to be the foundation for a wholesome Caribbean civilization.

The reality evoked a response (beginning 27 July, 1990) which was dramatic and potentially destructive, but reflective of the region as one where the vicissitudes of life force our people against the wall, there to react erratically, dangerously and suicidally.

The week leading up to 27 July was a particularly terrible week for us in the "saving sector". We were swamped with requests for assistance as parents pursued the results of the 11-plus examination (an entrance exam to Secondary School level). Hundreds of parents were asking for transfers of their children to more recognised schools or away from

those with bad reputations. Mainly assistance was being requested for the purchase of books, uniforms and food. The food cartons provided by St. Paul's Anglican Church, for example, could only satisfy a quarter of the requests by parents. By midday Friday, we were depressed, appalled and grieved at the suffering of God's people.

Other colleagues were equally depressed, for across the country, across the denominational lines, our people begged for the barest necessities to satisfy the demands of a "normal" life.

Return to "Normalcy"

The most identifiable cause for these ills in our reality is the introduction of fiscal measures demanded by agencies to which the present government applied for rescheduling of loans, assistance in covering budget deficits and injection of foreign currency to bolster the economy. The main agencies are, of course, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the



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World Bank and the Paris Club to which the majority of the 3rd World debt is owed. These suitcase-swinging jacketed officers are no better than the loan sharks who operate the territories of the U.S. mafia.

These agencies deal the cards in a deck which is always stacked against the people of the 3rd World. Dr. Davidson Budhoo, a senior economist who resigned from the IMF, details the case of Trinidad and Tobago where the officers of that institution deliberately misrepresented data on our economy so as to make impertinent and stringent conditionalities for granting our application. These conditionalities forced on us a process of massive wage cuts or freezes; retrenchment; privatisation of state-owned sectors of the economy; devaluation; and increased taxation and all the attendant ills. So that the frustration of our people has to do with the continued hardships of survival in an economic system which now iterates "balancing the budget as the premise for economic improvement".

So that "Normalcy" is now being used to describe the situation of exploitation, victimisation, pauperisation, illiteracy, drug-addic-

tion, malnutrition and associated evils. "Normalcy" is now mooted as a surrender to the inevitable state of poverty without a murmur of protest.

Freedom and Rights

The State of Emergency and the curfew hours which exist at present ensure sweeping powers for the armed services, suspension of individual freedoms and rights and the increased surveillance on those persons suspected of political thoughts and ideas which are contrary to those of the government.

The right to information was also infringed over the period of the crisis when the members of the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) took control of the state-owned media. We were only able to get a picture of the extent of the crisis from foreign news media. At the same time, several of our social commentators have complained about the attitude of the government towards their adverse treatment of the situation in the country prior to July 27. The point is that this government has over the past three years - and its predecessor - taken for granted our good na-

ture, with the regular comments that we are not conscious of the real situation, can easily fall for minor diversions, etc.

The rights to life and liberty have been curtailed now. But the right to employment, to food, to shelter, the right to education all have been denied not *de jure* but *de facto* throughout our existence under slavery, indenture, internal self-government and independence.

Security

The security of the State has now become a prime focus of the government. The fact that over one hundred members of the Jamaat could obtain military training and leave their compound, on which the armed forces are stationed, to attack with so much fire power the Parliament of the country means that the intelligence units which are supposed to be in charge have failed miserably.

Trinidad and Tobago has another serious problem which threatens the security of the state far more than that of armed groups penetrating its defences. Last week the police seized hundreds of rounds of ammunition and arms from a Venezuelan drug dealer on the Southern shores of Trinidad close to the Venezuelan coast. The impudence of these persons, that at the height of the crisis they will attempt to bring in arms and ammunition, shows a total disre-



Cayenne

gard for our State.

More than this, however, is the idea of strengthening the Regional Security System (RSS) which now exists in the Eastern Caribbean and which came into being after the Grenada Revolution. The idea is to include all territories of the region in this system so as to provide a force to counter any such insurgency as occurred in Trinidad. The RSS has closely aligned itself through training programmes with the United States. As a military force, it is no doubt an extension of the policy to deter challenges to the governments of the region.

We heard the purported plea for outside intervention by the now Acting Prime Minister Winston Dookeran after he was released by the Muslimeen members. Yet all reports emanating from other hostages reveal the Muslimeen's willingness to have general elections and to recognise an interim government headed by the very Acting Prime Minister. There have been rumours of a counter-coup by the right wing of the ruling party, members of which now have control of the government. Can

there be security to counter the political machinations of the small cliques which always seem to gain control after general elections under Westminster-style democracy?

Reconstructing what?

Since 1980, Reconstruction has been a key word in the vocabulary of the politicians who now control the government. Now, again, this word has surfaced. The question is: reconstruct what? Prior to 27 July, our society was wrecked with racial tension, etc. which has been described as a state of normalcy. So that Reconstruction does not take into account the fact that the rivalries

which exist need to be exposed as destructive forces before any type of construction can happen.

The efforts, therefore, to bring normalcy to

the country through a process of reconstruction will be cosmetic, as has already been identified in a broadcast by Mr. Dookeran to the nation recently. The tourism industry, for example, which is now a bulwark of economic reconstruction, has been promoted

very extensively - but the crisis has certainly put a damper on the progress.

The introduction of Export Processing Zones will be set back since the exploitative nature of these areas is based on a passive population and work force which would not trouble their waters. So that, in a real sense, the reconstruction efforts are aimed at creating a society where exploitation would have been the norm.

The way forward

A commitment to our Republic is necessary at this point. Without it, we are doomed to petty squabbles, internecine strife and economic woes. The involvement of people in our country needs to be enhanced, recognised and compensated by a high quality of life. Our leaders need to be committed to the cause of the vulnerable in our midst. Compassion for each other, passion for our country, respect for morals and ethics and truthfulness are needed. Those leaders who claim that our Westminster-style democracy has been raped should understand that this has been done by politicians on numerous occasions through lack of respect for the spirit of the Constitution, which urges resignation of leaders who are immoral, ineffective and inefficient (as practiced in Britain, the origin of our system). Democracy is raped not only by armed force but by these same



Mujeres en acción

inconsiderate actions by those who use their office for personal gain.

Commitment and reconciliation are the necessary tools for us to move forward. Commitment and reconciliation are the bases for any liberation. And our country needs them now more than ever. We need to understand the imensity of the hostage release and Muslimeen surrender on Emancipation Day. Our bondage to financial institutions, to imported models of development, to systems of oppression must be broken. Maybe our chance at authentic reconciliation reflecting our commitment has again been lost since the call for a national unity government to oversee the crisis went unheeded. Certainly this could have been the basis for a movement towards authentic liberation.

This liberation would maximise people's participation in determining our future.

Extracted from "The Caribbean Reality: A Faith Perspective", a paper presented to the Workshop for Documentalists hosted by the Caribbean Project for Justice and Peace (CPJP),

Puerto Rico, August 1990. Michael Ramcharan is the Coordinating Secretary of the Collaboration for Ecumenical Planning and Action in the Caribbean (CEPAC) Network.

Innocence Lost

by Rhoda Reddock

After getting over the initial shock and disbelief, which I know was the response of most people, my feeling was one of anger. Anger at, in my opinion, the small group of macho men who, like most men when in the possession of weapons or potential weapons, get carried away by the power of

their own rhetoric. For me, the deliberate and conscious exclusion of women was not accidental, but was part

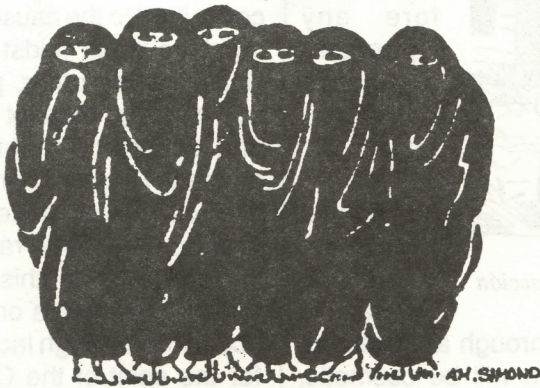
and parcel of this politics of men and the ways in which too many "real men" deal with conflict.

My anger, however, was not only directed at these specific actions, the long-term impact of which had certainly not been well thought out by their executors, but at the long term consequences for the society. These developments would lend credence to all those who wanted to militarise the country, to link us more closely into the Regional Security System, and even to those clamouring for greater freedom of the private ownership of firearms.

The involvement of Abdullah Omowale, formerly Andy Thomas, (who received a presidential pardon last year, Ed.) would lend support to those who had denounced the actions of the Mercy Committee in freeing certain prisoners and would jeopardise the situation for potential deserving cases in the future. These are possible developments which the traumatised population would welcome with open arms.

Most importantly, I feared that such an action would also serve to turn popular opinion against those of us who, in our daily life and work, strove for a more equitable and just society and were currently challenging the unjust economic policies, many emanating from powerful institutions outside our country.

Just over one week later, my anger has abated somewhat as I listen, read and discuss, and in doing so come to terms with the many



Women's World

facets of this complex situation. One thing is clear: this event marked the end of an era in Trinidad and Tobago. The possibility of violent overthrow of the government, for military takeo-



Rini Templeton

ver, and the potential of armed groups to unleash violence on the population is now out in the open. In many ways, this country has lost its innocence. Clearly, the implications of this for national security within the context of human rights must be uppermost in our considerations for the future.

At the same time, however, like most negative situations, this one does have positive potentialities. The extent to which these are recognised and exploited depends on each one of us. In other words, the impact can be beneficial or disadvantageous depending on what we make of it. For example, it is important for us to study, observe and analyse the increasing alienation of large

sections of the population in our increasingly individualistic, "get rich by fair means or foul" society. There are persons who more and more find identity, community and even material support - food, clothes, etc. - within fundamentalist religion, whether Christianity, Islam or Hinduism. Significant proportions of these individuals are also to be found in the nation's secondary schools where middle-class oriented teachers are unable to communicate with or even comprehend the milieu of the students and so impart knowledge and a sense of self-worth, and maintain discipline among them. It is these same wayward, indisciplined, ill-mannered youths who are magically moulded into different human beings in a more communicative, less alienating environment.

The widespread scale of the looting raised questions about the respect for the rule of law, and the burning of business places shocked many, that such acrimony, alienation and pure "bad mind" could be alive and well in our happy "La Trinité".

Could it be that the consistent reports of corruption in high places and the flagrant displays of ill-gotten wealth now wearing respectable (laundered) dress have contributed to this free-for-all attitude - an attitude where normally law-abiding citizens actively seek the opportunity to get for themselves, to loot? Is this an attitude

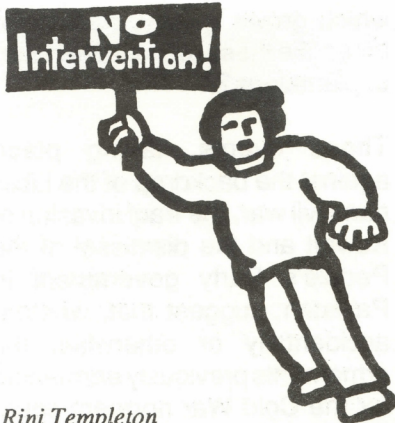
which grows quietly, waiting for times like these, or are there other explanations?

These events, taking place against the backdrop of the Liberian civil war, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the dismissal of the People's Party government in Pakistan, suggest that, whether accidentally or otherwise, the armaments previously earmarked for the Cold War northern countries will now find ample markets in the Third World.

As we mourn our dead and grieve for this loss of innocence, maybe some humble reflection on the events and the factors underlying them could provide us collectively with the clues to ensuring that the future impact on the society and the economy is a positive and mature one.

Making global connections

The sudden and tragic disruption in the lives of the people of Trinidad and Tobago caused by the events in Port of Spain on Friday 27 July, 1990 has caused deep concern and anguish among Caribbean people here. Our concern and that of all Caribbean and other



Rini Templeton

peace-loving people, is for a peaceful and early settlement of this crisis.

We are mindful of the fact that the deteriorating economic situation in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as throughout much of the region, is a source of concern to all of us who have the interests of our people at heart. We are aware that the worsening trade, debt and balance-of-payments situation is evidence of this deterioration, which is also painfully manifested in the collapse of essential social services available to the local situation.

We recognise that this collapse has not occurred overnight but has its roots in the inexorable collapse of development efforts over the last four decades. As persons living in the policy centre of the United States, we are acutely aware of the contribution of a deepening global economic crisis to the collapse of these de-

velopment efforts. We note, for example, that the accelerated downward slide of the Trinidad and Tobago over the last five months has been exacerbated by International Monetary Fund (IMF) introduction of measures intended to stabilize the economy and get growth going. The austerity measures that have accompanied these policies of the IMF have been particularly hard on the poor in Trinidad and Tobago as well as on workers in the public and private sectors due to wage cuts, currency devaluations, budget cuts and the accompanying decline in business investment.

We know that the efforts of the Government to raise funds in order to meet these outstanding problems have not been successful and that the small loans made available by the IMF, the World Bank and other international debtors in return for the institution of painful adjustment measures have barely scratched the surface of the country's capital needs. Under these circumstances, it is inevitable that the conditions in the society would rapidly worsen.

In Trinidad and Tobago, as in most countries of the region, there is a time-honoured tradition of the peaceful resolution of conflict through discussion and negotiation. We are pleased to note that the response of the government of Trinidad and Tobago to the events of last Friday has been to enter into dialogue with the per-

sons initiating those events. We commend this effort on the part of all concerned and urge the steadfast adherence to this approach.

We understand and share the deep concerns of Caribbean governments about the unwelcome departure from our tradition of peaceful dialogue that the events of last Friday represent, but urge our government leaders to avoid being drawn into a course of action that includes a short-term military response to the situation in Trinidad and Tobago. Recent conflicts in our region have taught us about the implications of the quick-fix approach to situations of conflict, particularly when the military response is likely to involve personnel, material, equipment and the strategic interests of a non-Caribbean country, the United States. Our strict adherence to the principle of non-intervention is paramount here.

No matter how tempting the military approach may be, we urge our governments to see in these events an opportunity to turn away from the military and return to our own traditions of peaceful and constitutional settlement of disputes. In this regard, we see a vital role for our regional institutions, both public and private.

These are trying times for Caribbean people. It is not easy in the heat of the crisis to step back and remind ourselves of the connections between our situation and

the larger, deeper global crisis. We consider it incumbent upon those who have the luxury of distance from the immediate situation to remind our brothers and sisters in the region of those annoying complexities.

Extracted from a Press Statement from a Group of Concerned Caribbean Citizens, Greater Washington Area, U.S.A., Monday 30 July

The 'haves' and the 'have nots'

It is with great concern that Women Working for Social Progress (Workingwomen) has witnessed the unfolding of events over the last three weeks. We believe that these events give the country opportunity to reflect fully on the direction we must now take to attain social, economic and political development.

For some time, Workingwomen has wondered at the government's apparent insensitivity to the plummeting social conditions of a majority of Trinidadians and Tobagonians. Health care is in crisis; unemployment is rising; poverty is becoming entrenched and education is being priced out of the reach of

many.

In the face of these declining social conditions, the government has decided to stick to the structural adjustment course of forcing bitter medicine down the throats of the people. It has done so without



Gabriela

any meeting of the minds of the citizenry. There has been precious little dialogue between the executive and the rest of the population.

Of course, neither the government's insensitivity to the plight of the population nor the declining social conditions exculpate the Jamaat-al-Muslimeen. Workingwomen, because it is committed to popular participa-

tion in national development, cannot support the non-participatory and violent methods employed by the Jamaat. Yet these social conditions go some way in explaining the vulnerability of young boys to the mission of Imam Abu Bakr. Those factors also help us to understand the disheartening incidences of looting and the destruction of the city of Port of Spain.

The looting may be a manifestation of rabid individualism and greed, but so too is it a reflection of the deep psychological divisions between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in the country. It also reflects the alienation of the mass of the population. People do not feel that they are a part of the process of policy-making and national development.

In the face of this crisis, it is clear that the country is in need of leadership which will move away from cheap politicking and partisanship. But more than needing leaders, the country now requires the active commitment of all its members, women and men, towards the task of nation-building. Social transformation is never quick and easy. Development will occur only when a people, educated and conscious of their potential for making change, harness their energies in a disciplined manner and make their leaders accountable.

We lament that, notwithstanding

Minister Johnson's new and welcome understanding of the plight of poor youths, the government's first priority has been seeing about the concerns of big business. The government as a whole does not seem to have learnt anything from the experience. This we glean from the responses so far - the posturing of Ministers; the hasty, shallow "solutions" put together by a chosen few; the firm refusal to involve any but the usual narrow elite interest groups. "Reconstruction" has been mainly identified as putting big business back on its feet, developing a more aesthetic Port of Spain and restoring our image abroad. Nowhere in this "new beginning" is there any real indication that the government intends to undertake a serious examination of the root causes of recent events, and to involve the people in developing solutions.

Finally, Workingwomen would like to remind the authorities that this state of Emergency was proclaimed because there was an abuse of the rule of law. We are therefore concerned about reports of victimization and harassment of Muslim members of our community.

Press Release, 17 August, 1990

Victims

by Jacinta B. Phang

This world has become a solemn place,
We have made it so.
We have caused the wars, made the laws, the fights,
We became the victims of this strife.

We never looked to see the beauty,
It surrounded us everywhere.
We created things towards our misery.
Then cried out in despair.

These things, why should they happen,
Where is the world we once knew?
The past never changes when we review,
Only the future we choose to do.

Jacinta Phang lives in Trinidad and Tobago.

Round and about ...

Dominica - lack of recognition

by Josephine Dublin

Our national policy statement on women states in its introduction that "women have always contributed to the development of Dominica economically, socially and culturally, but this contribution has been undervalued, taken for granted, and sometimes not recognised at all. Programmes to sensitise the public to the role women have played in the development of the society and the potential for increasing that contribution are therefore essential".

This salient point made in the policy statement has not been vigorously acted upon, and because of the lesser importance attached to women's issues, major national programmes fall short as far as the involvement and participation of women are concerned. A look at recent data on the socio-economic status of women suggests that there is need for more systematic social planning involving women for the improved participation of women in all sectors of national development.

The women's movement in Dominica gained prominence after the UN Decade for Women (1975-85). As in many other territories of the region, a Women's Bureau was established to pro-

mote the participation of women in all aspects of national development. However, Government's recent decision to merge the Women's Bureau with the Youth Division clearly shows the unimportance attached to the former. Moreover, under the new minimum wages established by Government, Domestic Servants (women only) are to be paid



Sistren

EC\$1.00 an hour with meals and EC\$1.25 without meals, and in that same package juveniles are to be paid EC\$1.50 an hour.

Despite the increased talk about women in development, the majority of grassroots women remain unemployed and their contribution is still not recognised and valued in some quarters.

The Dominican National Council of Women (NCW) is able to mobilise a number of women who have benefitted through participation in the Council's activities

by way of increased confidence and self esteem. There has been increased research and discussion on issues such as 'Women in Politics', 'Women and Family Violence' and 'Women and the Law'. Also, the women's movement has been able to utilise the media to highlight issues related to women in agriculture as a result of the research/action project sponsored by CAFRA and hosted by the Small Projects' Assistance Team (SPAT) and some other agencies in the NGO community. The issue of violence against women in Dominica has brought together SPAT's Women's Association for Progress (SWAP) and the NCW for a Carnival band called 'Women Against Family Violence'. The members of the band wore T-shirts bearing slogans such as "All Dominican Women say No to Rape".

The NCW has decided to establish a counselling office or crisis centre to assist the victims of family violence. The service will also be decentralised when persons identified from different communities are trained to give that service in their communities.

Josephine Dublin was a researcher with CAFRA's 'Women in Caribbean Agriculture' project and is the National Representative for the Commonwealth of Dominica.

The Bahamas - reproductive rights

by Marion Bethel

One of the issues around which women in The Bahamas are mobilising is the Sexual Offences Bill, which was debated in Parliament last year but has not yet been passed. In fact, it has been placed on the back burner of the Parliamentary agenda while 'more important' political and economic issues are discussed. Even though the bill is highly controversial and purports to be in the interest of women, it remains to be given serious debate.

Women have supported the general motivation behind the Bill, and many of its provisions, such as the sections dealing with incest and sexual harassment. Concern has been expressed, however, about the criminalisation of female and male homosexuality, which is seen as a violation of the constitutional right to privacy. More public discussion has also been called for with regard to the criminalisation of prostitution.

On June 28-29, Developing Alternatives for Women Now (DAWN - see *CARIFEM Update*, p 28) held its annual Women's Awareness Seminar. The topic was 'Women and Reproductive Rights'. On the first night, the focus was on reproductive rights and the general reproductive health of women. Dr. Madeleine

Sawyer addressed the audience on the topic "Menstruation through to Menopause", highlighting the physical, emotional and psychological problems associated with these stages. Maternal morbidity and mortality were also looked at and there was an emphasis on ovarian, cervical and breast cancers with respect to symptoms, prevention and survival chances.

June 29 focussed on "Contracep-

It has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration as a birth control method in the United States, yet it is widely used in developing countries on women of colour, and on poor and Black women in the United States. A video was shown called "The Ultimate Animal Test", which examines the use of Depo-Provera. It takes us inside government hearings, health centres, women's homes and refugee camps to reveal the story of the Depo-Provera lobby's quest for FDA approval, and documents efforts of women's health groups to educate women and to block the approval. The video raises disturbing questions about racism, sexism and classism in health care, population control versus birth control, and how drugs are tested and marketed.

As a result of the two-day seminar, DAWN is at present working out a plan of action to demand the establishment of a regulatory board for the specific control of reproductive drugs (i.e. drugs used during pregnancy and as a means of contraception) and drugs in general. DAWN is also calling for satisfactory representation by women on this board.

Marion Bethel is a founding member of DAWN.



Women's News

tive Technology", including the use of the controversial injectible hormone Depo-Provera ("The Shot"). It is used frequently in The Bahamas as a means of birth control and the public's attention was drawn to the international controversy surrounding this drug.

**Puerto Rico -
domestic violence**

by Marilucy González-Baéz

Approximately 8 months have passed since the "Law for the Prevention of Domestic Violence" (better known as Law 54) went into effect. This law is the result of a long process of consciousness-raising with regard to the alarming problem of domestic violence on the island. It has a dual function: to respond to the conflict, and to prevent it by providing social remedies. Law 54 characterises the offence and recognises that domestic violence is a felony. It is an improvement with regard to civil remedies, provides for a re-education process for the aggressor and foments education as a preventative tool. All of this is seen within the context that the violent conduct occurs between persons who have an affective relationship.

Since Law 54 went into effect, various groups have expressed their reservations with regard to it and have made recommendations ranging from possible amendments to its elimination. Some criticisms have been: the large number of voluntary dismissals of domestic violence cases; prison overcrowding; the fact that the judicial system was not prepared for the large number of cases presented; scope of the definition of the offences; and others.

We have pointed out that not enough time has elapsed to be able to make a critical and re-

sponsible evaluation of how the law has been implemented. At the same time, we have identified some steps that would facilitate an effective implementation of the law. For example, that the police and other related law enforcement personnel be trained in the implementation of the law and the remedies it provides; and that judges be given seminars on the social causes of domestic violence, the cycle of violence and the emotional and physical consequences it has on the victim and her children. In addition, in order to carry out the stated public policy of preserving "the physical integrity of the victims of violence, especially women and children to ensure their safety and save their lives", we have emphasised the need to assign public funds for shelters for women who are the victims of domestic violence and their children.

We have recently accepted an invitation by Senator Velda González and Representative Zaida Hernández, to meet with the different directors of government agencies to discuss how to make the law more effective. We are also compiling information from organisations which provide services to victims of domestic violence, to be able to detect not only the law's effectiveness, but also its flaws. Our objective is to point out adequate solutions that can guarantee the success of the law.

We will definitely not permit this law to be used as a scapegoat for sexist attitudes and justifications for social problems, whose origins are not in the legislation to protect women, but in social and



Mujer/Fempress

economic inequality, discrimination and the absence of adequate government policies that can respond to these problems.

Marilucy González-Baéz works with the Instituto Puertorriqueño de Derechos Civiles (IPDC).

Dar es Salaam declaration

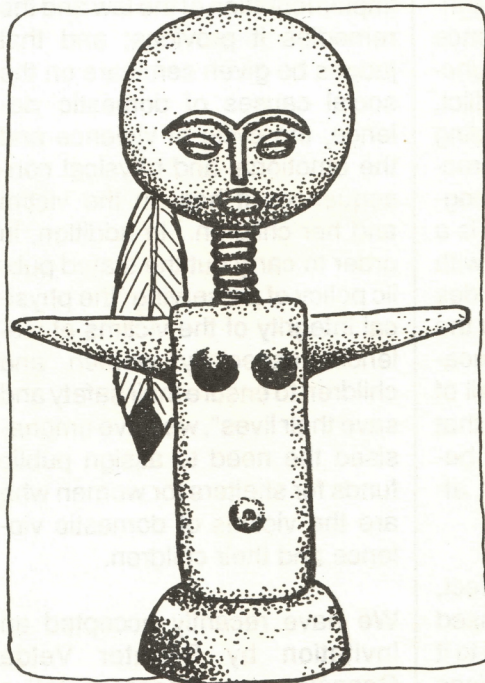
Alternative Development Strategies for Africa

Participants in a conference on 'Alternative Development Strategies' held at the University of Dar es Salaam in December 1989, representing the academic community, churches, labour, women, NGOs, Government officials and students across Africa, issued a declaration which noted with alarm the sharp decline in living standards of the great majority of people in Africa, the faltering economies, the fall in educational standards and the collapse of social services.

The conference condemned the policies imposed on African peoples, with or without the complicity of African governments, by multinational companies such as the IMF and World Bank which are enforced through harsh conditionalities tied to Funding in pursuance of Structural Adjustment or Economic Recovery Programmes. It further noted that the Group of Seven industrialised countries seem to be committed to the stance of the IMF and World Bank and are probably the architects of their policies.

Previous calls on African governments to form an African Debtors' Cartel to match the creditor cartels and link up with Latin America and South East Asia in a Third World Debtors' Cartel were sup-

ported, and a moratorium of ten years on all external debt repayments and the cancellation of all the debts or their conversion into grants were called for. Failing this, the conference felt that Afri-



can countries should collectively repudiate the external debts as unjust, immoral and oppressive.

The conference also called on governments to replace the IMF and World Bank programmes with alternative programmes based on the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes which aim at creating a new social order based on people-centred development, popular de-

mocracy and social justice. This reorientation of African development should focus on planned disengagement from international capitalism, regional food self-sufficiency, satisfaction of basic needs for all, development from below through the termination of anti-rural bias as well as concentration on relevant small and medium scale enterprises.

The declaration went on to state that alternative strategies in agriculture and rural development must empower the peasant majority, ensure access and control to agricultural inputs for all cultivators especially women, and reorganise agriculture on a cooperative basis with increased investment for improved technology.

The conference maintained that alternative development must ensure women's equity in the transformation process. Hence it supported the declarations on women that establish specific targets for women by the year 2000 in top executive posts, general employment and the elimination of discriminatory legislation. This would require the mental decolonisation of men and women in a framework of democratic social development with equity and solidarity through networking with African women.

D

ocumentation for peace and development

Documentalists' Workshop, Salinas, Puerto Rico 9-12 August, 1990

by Cathy Shepherd

A Workshop for Documentalists was organised by the Caribbean Project for Justice and Peace (CPJP) and held in the Albergue Olimpico (Olympic Village) in Salinas, Puerto Rico. Originally carded for November 1989, the workshop had to be postponed due to the effects of Hurricane Hugo.

Organisations represented at the workshop were: CPJP (Puerto Rico); Association of Development Agencies (ADA - Jamaica); Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC); Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD); Caribbean People's Development Agency (CAR-IPEDA); Centro de Estudios sobre America (Cuba); Centro Dominicano de Estudios de la Educación (CEDEE, Dominican Republic); Collaboration for Ecumenical Planning in the Caribbean (CE-PAC); Small Projects' Assistance Team (SPAT - Dominica); Society for the Promotion of Educa-

tion and Research (SPEAR - Belize); and CAFRA.

The idea of a workshop was suggested in October 1987, at a meeting of organisations interested in developing an information and communications network at the service of popular organisations in the region. Its objectives were:

- to identify the topics being

tion;

- to discuss appropriate technological alternatives; and
- to make recommendations for follow-up activities.

The workshop was work-intensive, with sessions beginning at 9.00 a.m. and ending after 10.00 p.m. each day. Unfortunately, the participants from Trinidad and Tobago missed the first day due to

flight cancellations following the attempted coup on July 27. This report is based on the rapporteurs' reports and background papers.

The first day of the workshop was devoted to sharing experiences in documentation work in the Caribbean. Jesus Gonzales of the University of Puerto

Rico reviewed trends in the library profession and developments in information technology. Nilda Sanchez spoke about a project for the co-operative indexing of newspapers in Puerto Rico and plans for its automation.

Presentations by the participating organisations revealed differing levels of development among documentation centres of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Caribbean. Some



Participants in the workshop (Cathy standing at right)

documented by participating organisations and the systems used by each for information processing and retrieval;

- to adopt a common system for information processing and retrieval, or agree upon mechanisms to achieve compatibility among systems used;

- to examine the criteria for a regional and/or national division of documentation work, taking into account the needs, possibilities and priorities of each organisa-

E xperiments with drama

were computerized. At least two NGOs were just beginning to organise their collections. There were similarities in information processing techniques and in problems faced. Several centres use the Macrothesaurus for indexing (some of these use it for classification as well) and the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules. Among constraints highlighted were inadequate staff, lack of or minimal training and financial skills, lack of financing and lack of a system for information processing.

On the second day, we were reminded of the purpose of our documentation work (documentation for peace and development) by Michael Ramcharan of CEPAC, who offered an analysis of the Caribbean Reality. A substantial part of that presentation addressed the recent events in Trinidad and Tobago. (see page 6, Ed.)

Bob Thompson of AlterNET, Canada, identified technological alternatives for the advancement of information exchange in the region, touching on the mechanics of information exchange and cost considerations. (AlterNET is an electronic magazine, messaging, conference and files service for social change organisations).

On the final day, participants broke up into three groups, to discuss and made recommendations on (i) documentation techniques;

(ii) problems of financing; and (iii) technology. Specific recommendations of the workshop will be made available upon completion of the final report. A committee is to be established to co-ordinate follow-up activities.

The programme included a field trip to the Asociación de Pescadores, a fishing co-operative in La Playa, Salinas. Representatives of the co-operative, the Committee for the Development of Salinas and a cultural organisation called Arte Sur talked informally of their work in the community.

The workshop ended on a joyous note as support staff and participants were presented with commemorative T shirts for their hard work. Later that evening, we celebrated our cultural heritage with Puerto Rican music and dance, good food, poetry from Dominica and the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago extempo, and Jamaican reggae.

Congratulations to the Caribbean Project for Justice and Peace for a well-organised workshop.

Cathy Shepherd is a member of the newsletter team. She will be joining the CAFRA staff in October as Documentalist/Administrative Assistant.

Popular Theatre Workshop, Workingwomen Headquarters, Curepe, Trinidad and Tobago, July 20-22, 1990.

by Paula Thomas

The orientation for the Popular Theatre Workshop for Social Transformation didn't just break the ice; it melted us into a unified



Tracey Johnson

workforce. Friday 20 July, from 5-9 p.m., was devoted to the orientation session. There we expressed our feelings through the medium of songs and games. During the other two days we looked at and experimented with

Gender on the curriculum

the use of dramatic forms, dance and poetry in addition to traditional songs and games. In all, we were exposed to an alternative way of communicating and dealing with people.

One of the definitions that the group came up with for "popular theatre" is that it is a process of mobilising people through drama, as a tool of communication which will educate people in dealing with reality and finding solutions. Two of the main characteristics of popular theatre were identified to be (i) providing a dramatic situation in which local problems are highlighted as they exist in reality; and (ii) fostering co-operative thinking, rather than individual thinking. Its aim then is to assist in solving problems that affect people's lives.

Present at the workshop were representatives of the Rape Crisis Centre, Women Working for Social Progress, CAFRA, Collaboration for Ecumenical Planning and Action in the Caribbean Network (CEPAC) and New Life Ministries. The facilitators were Halim Abdulwali, Co-ordinator of the Grenada Popular Theatre Organisation, and Denise Noel-De Bique of Working Women for Social Progress.

Workshop on Curriculum Development in Women's Studies, St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago, June 12-13, 1990

by Claudia Kadera

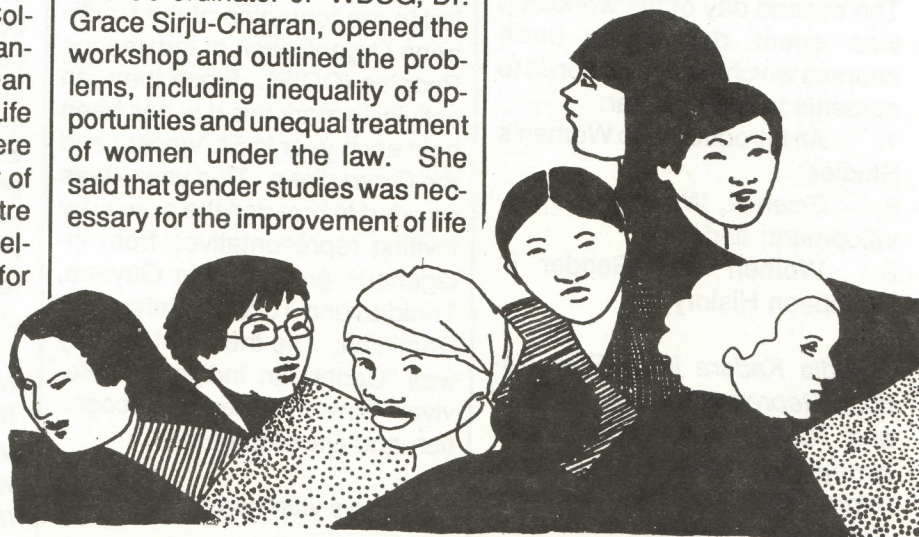
The workshop held by the Women and Development Studies Group (WDSG) was attended by the Deans of faculty as well as representatives of three women's organisations: Women Working for Social Progress, the Hindu Women's Association and CAFRA. It was held to discuss the status of women at the University as well as to put together courses which could be offered to University students during the coming years.

The Co-ordinator of WDSG, Dr. Grace Sirju-Charran, opened the workshop and outlined the problems, including inequality of opportunities and unequal treatment of women under the law. She said that gender studies was necessary for the improvement of life

in general as well for the improvement of human relationships.

Dr. Sirju-Charran's remarks were followed by a report on the status of women by various deans of faculty at the University. All of the deans felt that there was a fairly equal number of women and men enrolling in their faculty, except in Engineering and the Medical Sciences. The deans also pointed out that women who choose these careers have major problems of discrimination in employment. Women engineers have a great deal of difficulty getting jobs. Women doctors suffer from discrimination in the workplace as well as sexual harassment, high rates of divorce and low promotional opportunities.

The deans pointed out that in neither of these fields was any attention paid to gender issues, nor were there courses which place



Mujeres en acción

I ndigenous people's day

special emphasis on issues which affect women. The Dean of Medical Studies, Dr. St. Omah felt a need to include a course on medical sociology on the curriculum. However, the Dean of Engineering did not see the value of introducing gender issues into the engineering programme. He felt that there was no time for it in an already crowded schedule which is dictated by the professional body.

Reports by the deans were followed by a discussion of the advantages of having women's studies as interdisciplinary or as a separate department with its own staff and place on the budget. While most of the deans argued for interdisciplinary courses, the Dean of Arts and General Studies, Helen Pyne-Timothy, the only woman dean at the university, pointed out that both were needed.

The second day of the workshop was spent developing three courses which could be offered to students from next year:

1. An Introduction to Women's Studies;
2. Science, Women and Development; and
3. Women and Gender in Caribbean History.

Claudia Kadera is CAFRA National Representative for Trinidad and Tobago, and was until recently Co-coordinator of the 'Women's History and Creative Expression Project'.

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St. Vincent and the Grenadines, August 14, 1990

by *Nelcia Robinson*

The decision to observe August 14 as Indigenous People's Day was taken following a Conference



of Indigenous Peoples held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines from August 14-17, 1987, which also led to the formation of the Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous Peoples (COIP). Since then, an activity to mark this day has been held each year in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This year it was decided to broaden the activity by inviting representatives from indigenous groupings in Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize and Dominica. The theme of the day was "Caribbean Indigenous Revival - Towards Greater Recognition and Development".

Interviews with some of the visit-

ing participants were aired on the radio and the rally was widely advertised. A massive crowd gathered on 14 August at Sandy Bay, one of the indigenous communities, to hear Phyllis Cayeto of Belize deliver the feature address. She made several recommendations for greater linkages between indigenous communities, particularly between St. Vincent and Belize because of their historic connection. She went on to say that indigenous people have to use their own skills and resources to develop themselves and their villages. She stressed that they must be inwardly motivated, and urged that action take place.

Other activities at the rally included cultural presentations of song, dance and poetry, and solidarity messages from several organisations.

The presence of the representatives of the indigenous communities from other territories has impacted strongly on the local indigenous people as well as the wider community. Practical solutions for ongoing work were put forward, and there is a renewed commitment to carry forward the recommendations of the 1987 conference.

Nelcia Robinson is the CAFRA National Representative for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and was part of the organising committee for the above activities

B

ig plans for CAFRA BGM

Two years have passed quickly since the first ever Biennial General Meeting of the CAFRA membership held on 12-13 November, 1988 in Barbados. Now plans are underway for the 2nd Biennial General Meeting of the association. Originally carded for Jamaica, the location has been moved to **Trinidad and Tobago** because of the limited funds available. Venue is the Hotel Normandie, and the tentative programme is as follows:

Thursday 25 October

Day: Participatory Workshop for Current and New National Representatives

Evening: Free

Friday 26 October

Day: Free for National Representatives

Arrivals of general membership
Evening: Formal opening with guest speaker; displays by member organisations

Saturday 27 October

Day i. Presentation of a Composite Report (Co-ordinator's; Project Co-ordinators'; National Representatives'; Diaspora Representative's);
ii. 4 Regional Analyses (Dutch, English, French, Spanish);
iii. Recommendations from the National Representatives' Workshop; and
iv. Small group discussions

Evening: Trinidad and Tobago Launching of *Creation Fire: A CAFRA Anthology of Caribbean Women's Poetry* (see below)

Sunday 28 October

Day: Rapporteurs Report - implications for CAFRA's programme, The Vision

In countries in which there are 2 or more CAFRA members, national meetings will be held before the Biennial General Meeting to include the selection, if necessary, of a new National Representative; discussion of CAFRA's Overall Payments' Scheme and the 1989 Audited Financial Statements; evaluation

of the work of the association over the last two years; proposals for the new two-year programme (1991-1992); and any other business. These discussions will help to inform the country reports of National Representatives.

The Biennial General Meeting will review the work of CAFRA, examine the changing context of the regional women's movement; propose directions for the next two years; and do the business of general meetings. It is hoped that *Creation Fire: A CAFRA Anthology of Caribbean Women's Poetry* will be published by then, and we'll be able to launch this long-awaited product of Caribbean women's poetic experience.



Voices Rising

I am

by Lynette Atwell

I am the beat of a drum,
The rustle of a breeze
In the dark equatorial night,
I am sugar cane bending in the breeze,
The sands at Maracas,
Both silver and gold
For as I grow,
I change.

I am Caribbean woman,
Of slavery and indentureship,
Of freedom and change
All these things
And more,
Part of you,
Part of me,

A wholeness echoing through time,
Because I am made up
Of all these parts of history,
That have come together
To make me Caribbean woman
Of Africa,
Of Asia,
Of Europe.

I am Clarinet from down the Main,
Stepping onto the sands of Mayaro,

I am Ramdoolarie,
Who could not go back to India,
I am Zoe who left all
in Montserrat,

I am Augusta from Barbados
Who came here with a dream

I am all these links,
Which make me
Caribbean woman.

Job Announcement

Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales (CRIES) is looking for a Research Co-ordinator for its Caribbean programme. Responsibilities include developing and co-ordinating the research programme for 1991, and co-ordinating the CRIES-FONDAD (Forum on Debt and Development) programme in the Caribbean and Central America; designing research project proposals on Caribbean issues as well as co-ordinating relations with funders; co-ordinating CRIES's relationships with institutions in the Caribbean; and ensuring proper representation of Caribbean issues and institutions in CRIES programme.

Requirements include a minimum of 2-3 years research experience in social sciences with specialisation in Caribbean studies; an M.A. or postgraduate degree in social studies; fully bilingual (English and Spanish); and professional experience in Central America or the Caribbean.

The contract will be for a minimum of one year, at a base salary of US\$750 per month. CRIES will cover the round-trip airfare to and from Managua. Please send a copy of C.V. and writing sample via fax (505-2-26180) or to Apartado Postal 3516, Managua, Nicaragua c/o CRIES Caribbean Programme.

M eetings, conferences, courses, etc.

October 1990

Popular Theatre Workshops on 'Women and the Economy', Trinidad and Tobago.

On the initiative of Working-women, Church Women United,



Dulcemaria, Fem

CAFRA and CEPAC (Collaboration for Ecumenical Planning in the Caribbean) Network, a number of organisations have been meeting recently to consider a programme for bringing women more fully into the shaping of economic policy.

There are two major policy-making events scheduled for the end of this year: the Regional Economics Conference involving all the governments of the English-speaking Caribbean, due to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in November 1990; and the deploy-

ment of the annual Budget Plan for Trinidad and Tobago. It is felt that as a beginning, both of these exercises should be influenced in some way by the thinking of women.

The approach to be used for addressing the issues is that of popular theatre for problem-solving. In October, five small workshops will be held in five different venues at which participants will identify problems and work out solutions through a combination of drama, song, dance,

poetry and discussion. Working-women has been carrying out training in this field and can therefore provide workshop facilitators. Each will address a different issue. The topics will be Access to Social Services; Production; Mobilisation of Women; Food; and Work. Each workshop will produce a short two-part presentation: (i) Problems; and (ii) Solutions.

All five workshops will then come together in a One-day Assembly to share and discuss their presentations with a larger gathering.

The findings of this exercise will be publicised and it is hoped to film the presentations.

This programme is seen by the organisers as part of a longer-term process of involving women in national development issues.

October 1990

Collaboration for Ecumenical Planning in the Caribbean (CEPAC) Annual Gathering, Arima, Trinidad and Tobago, 6-10 October, 1990.

The purpose of the Annual Gathering is to facilitate dialogue among participants representing ecclesiastical and secular organisations to identify emphases, resources and strategies for empowerment. Last year's gathering was attended by representatives of Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica; Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR), Belize; the Grenada Community Development Council, Grenada; the Folk Research Centre, St. Lucia; and the Caribbean People's Development Agency (CARIPEDA), amongst others. This year's theme is "Doing Theology towards a wholesome Caribbean Civilisation". For further information, contact Michael Ramcharan, c/o St. Paul's A.C. Rectory, 12 Harris Promenade, San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago.

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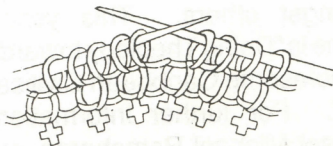
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May 1991

International Seminar on Gender and Economic Restructuring, May 5-10, 1991, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

The meeting will extend discussion of topics explored at the first Workshop on Gender and Development in April 1989 at the University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, U.K. Possible topics include gender and the environment; migration; informal sector work; basic needs provision; gender and the provision of social services; and the impact of the debt crisis. Emphasis will be on networking and on generating conceptual and methodological contributions to the study of geography and gender.

For further information, contact Lindsay Dorney, Director of Women's Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1 or Dr. Janet Moinsen, Dept. of Geography, University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Newcastle, England NE1 7RU



Belize: On the Air

"From the Other Half" is the name of a new call-in radio programme produced by the Belize Organisation for Women and Development (BOWAND). Initiated with the help of NETWORK, and with funding from UNICEF, "From the Other Half" is on the air every second Wednesday from 8.00-9.00 p.m.

The programme covers issues of concern to women in 3-part series. The first series dealt with the problem of 'Street Children', and the second with 'Women and Mental Health'. The public response has been good so far, with the first show drawing 15 callers. For more information, call BOWAND at 02-45196 or write to P.O. Box 1243, Belize City, Belize.

(Information from BOWAND's newsletter *A Woman's Turn* Vol 2, No. 2, June 1990)

Trinidad: Women in Rice

"We go to the fields as early as 6.30 a.m. and work until about 2.00 p.m. Others might work until 4.00 p.m. Rain or shine, dry land or flooded lagoons, we have to bend our backs to the ground to clean, and to plant". The speaker is Kaloutie Pooran, a 44-year old widow who heads the new organisation Women in Rice

(WINRE). WINRE, the women's arm of the Trinidad Rice Growers Association (TIRGA), was formally launched on April 22, 1990.

Most of the rice growers in Trinidad are women. Women, especially Indian women, have contributed



Gabriela

substantially to the development of agriculture in the country. Since the colonial period, women have adjusted themselves to do household chores and tend to the fields. They must make breakfast for children and husband before their day in the lagoon and prepare dinner and do the laundry, etc. on their return home in the evening. And a day in the lagoon is no easy task. Lunch is taken standing on the *merhi* (bank) and the women are exposed to sun, rain and insects as they work.

WINRE does not plan to move as

a shadow of TIRGA, but to expand nationally in the hope of addressing the problems that affect family life - child abuse, battered women, promiscuity and alcohol abuse by women. They also expect to get into the cottage industry and to manufacture craft items out of the rice industry.

(Information taken from an article by Phoolo Danny in the *Sunday Express*, July 22, 1990)

Roofs over our heads

Habitat International Coalition (HIC) is the international body representing NGOs dealing with shelter issues. It focusses on the rights of poor people worldwide to land and shelter. Since women form the majority of the poor, HIC set up a Women and Shelter Group to deal with the particular issues affecting them.

Among these issues are women's unequal rights, or access, to land and dwellings. They suffer additional burdens where services such as water and fuel are lacking, because of their traditional role in providing these for their families. There are increasing numbers of very poor female-headed households lack-

ing adequate shelter. The Network feels that there needs to be concerted global action on these issues, as well as on women's increased access to construction and other shelter related skills.

The focal point for the Women and Shelter Network in the Caribbean is Sarah Power who can be contacted c/o 166 1/2 Hope Road, Kingston 6, Jamaica. She is in the process of gathering names of groups and individuals interested in being part of the Network. If you are working on women and shelter issues, including land, shelter, health, income generation, credit, services or community organising, and are concerned with taking or supporting action at community level, she would be

which is sent to members.

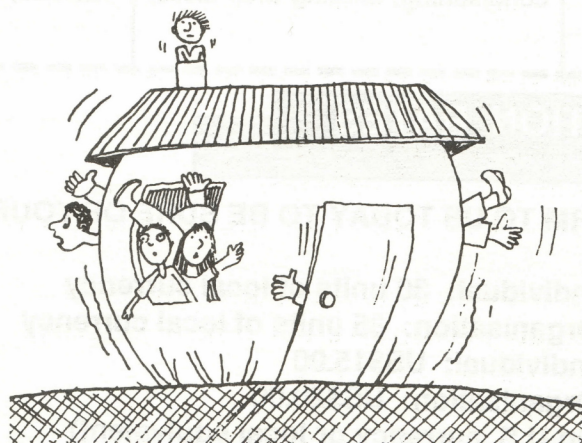
Sarah works with the St. Peter Claver Women's Housing Cooperative, which has made an 18 minute video about the progress of the co-op from its beginnings to the occupancy of the first house. It is available for 100 units of local currency from 33B Waltham Park Road, Kingston 13, Jamaica.

New in Print

Women's Movements and Organisations in Historical Perspective: Project Summaries and Evaluation, edited by Saskia Wieringa

In this evaluation report of the research project of the Women and Development Programme of the Institute of the Social Studies, The Hague, all project summaries are contained. In this project, research was conducted in the Caribbean, India, Indonesia, Peru, Somalia and the Sudan. Topics included: the documentation of the beginning of various women's movements (Jamaica, Peru); the analysis of specific women's organisations (Sudan, Indonesia, India); the analysis of a women's trade union (India); and women's oral poetry as a form of protest.

The report is 196 pages with photographs. Send US\$15 to: account 51-55-50-00, ABN Bank The Hague, Women's History Project, ISS, Badhuisweg 251, The Hague, The Netherlands.



Mujeres en acción

pleased to hear from you. Information about the work people and organisations are doing will be collected and published in the *Women and Shelter Newsletter*

Carifem update

The Bahamas

Developing Alternatives for Women Now (DAWN)

In March 1986, a meeting of twelve women convened by Marion Bethel was held to discuss the idea of founding an indigenous women's association that would address the needs and aspirations of women in The Bahamas. As a result of the enthusiasm expressed for such an association, a series of stimulating bi-monthly meetings attended by about 25 women were held, and after much sharing and active dialogue the philosophy and objectives of the organisation were established. In October 1986, DAWN was launched as a fully constituted body, and in July 1987 it became incorporated as a non-profit organisation.

It is the philosophy of DAWN that women in The Bahamas should continue or begin the process of their self-definition as women, both individually and collectively. This will be achieved through a heightened awareness and understanding of the cultural, legal, religious and political structures that affect the quality of their lives. Their goal is to encourage and assist women to direct their own lives, be self motivated, feel confident to express themselves, seek independence, be full and equal participants at all levels of society and be supportive of women and their interests.

Among their objectives are organising women to counteract the negative effects of their social conditioning; sharing their skills,

knowledge and experiences with each other; encouraging and supporting women's creativity; and exploring their heritage as women.

Their achievements include a 'Prevention of Child Abuse' week; a play, *Dreamin' and Strugglin'* performed by DAWN's cultural committee; interviews with suffragists which were featured in the local newspapers; and participation in the critique of the 1989 Sexual Offences Bill.

Members of DAWN meet monthly, and annually it holds a Cultural Weekend, an Awareness Seminar, and a Luncheon.

For further information, write to DAWN, P.O. Box N-1147, Nassau, Bahamas.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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**Caribbean: Individual: 30 units of local currency
Organisation: 35 units of local currency**

**Elsewhere: Individual: US\$15.00
Organisation: US\$20.00**

(payable in U.S. currency or local equivalent)

NAME

ADDRESS

Return to CAFRA, P.O. Bag 442, Tunapuna, Trinidad and Tobago

Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)

We are a network of individual researchers and activists and women's organisations who define feminist politics as a matter of both consciousness and action. We are committed to understanding the relationship between the oppression of women and other forms of oppression in the society, and are working actively for change.

Membership spans the Dutch, English, French and Spanish-speaking countries of the region as well as the diaspora. It is open to women living in the Caribbean and Caribbean women living abroad who support CAFRA's general aims and objectives.

A brochure outlining the aims and objectives of the association is available on request.

Structure of the Association

The decision-making bodies of CAFRA are: (i) The biennial **General Meeting** of the membership of the association; (ii) The annual meeting of National Representatives, a representative of the diaspora, Project Co-ordinators and the Secretariat (also called the **Regional Committee**); (iii) Bi-annual meetings of a **Consultative Committee**, made up of one representative from each of the four major language groups in the region, the Project Co-ordinators and the Secretariat; and (iv) **The Secretariat**, made up of the Co-ordinator, the Financial Officer, the Administrative Assistant and a few members of the feminist movement in Trinidad and Tobago.

Annual Membership Fee

Individuals: 25 units in currency of residence
Organisations: 35 units in currency of residence
(Payable by cheque, money order or cash in currency of residence or US\$)

Founding members

Peggy Antrobus
Sonia Cuales
Joan French

Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen
Honor Ford-Smith
Rhoda Reddock