

# WOMAN

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## Struggle

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### BHOPAL HEALTH STUDY

A recent study conducted in field clinics in the slums of Bhopal, India suggests that the gas leak disaster there might have caused an epidemic of gynaecological diseases.

The study reveals that of the women examined, 94% had leucorrhoea (a white vaginal discharge), 79% had Pelvic Inflammatory Disease, 46% suffer from excessive menstrual bleeding. Other reported effects include suppression of the production of breast milk, still births, miscarriages and impotence among husbands.

Medical relief through existing polyclinics and hospitals is inadequate because of the strain on facilities.

Some gynaecologists are of the opinion that the findings are not a consequence of the gas leak, attributing the high incidence of disease to poverty and poor hygiene.

There has been a call for women's organizations to bring pressure to bear on the authorities to investigate and treat the health problems of Bhopal women, for a research project to be set up immediately and for the establishment of more field clinics and training of women paramedics.

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FEMINIST PARTY OF SPAIN CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY ON ABORTION

The Spanish Feminist Party is engaged in an international information campaign soliciting support for free and legal abortion for Spanish women.

After years of struggle for the legislation of free abortion, the feminist movement in Spain saw the ruling Socialist Party draft what the President of the Partido Feminista describes as "a miserable depenalization project" which considered abortion on three grounds: risk of the mother's life, foetus malformation and rape of the woman.

Feminist organizations in Spain denounced the project on the grounds that only 5% of women having abortions in Spain do so for one of these reasons.

In December, 1983 the Parliament approved the Socialist project. The leader of a right wing party, who had been a minister in the Franco era, appealed against the law in the Constitutional Court.

The outcome of this appeal, sixteen (16) months later, has been a pronouncement against the depenalization law saying there are not enough guarantees for the foetus. Three Thousand (3,000) women die each year in Spain from illegal abortions. The penalty for having an abortion is six (6) years in prison.

The Spanish Feminist Party is appealing to "every feminist organization, every pacifist group, all progressive, humanitarian people...for solidarity with our struggle, with the ten (10) million women in Spain (who are of childbearing age) but cannot decide when and how they want to procreate, cannot decide over their own body".

They ask for letters, signatures, folders to be sent to Partido Feminista de Espana, C/Bailen, n18, 30, 1a, Barcelona (10) Spain.

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#### WOMEN POLICE TEAM STORM WOMEN'S DEMONSTRATION

A nine month long occupation of South London Hospital for women was ended when forty (40) London policewomen stormed the building.

The hospital had been the only one for women in Western Europe and as a protest at its closure last July had been occupied by former patients and other supporters who set up an advice and self help centre to continue some of the services which the hospital had provided.

The policewomen broke down barricades and arrested several women who resisted their entry. It was the first operation employing an all women team by the London police.

Speaking on behalf of the demonstrators, one woman said, "The fight will go on. There are hundreds of women who want to be treated by women doctors". The women are looking for premises at which to continue the services provided during the occupation.

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WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTRE FOR MEXICAN UNIVERSITY

The National Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City has set up a Centre for women's studies.

The result of years of research and initiatives in the field, the Centre will encourage research on women's issues and is expected to become a focus for interdisciplinary women's studies and a clearinghouse for groups working both within and outside the University.

Programmes initiated in poor neighbourhoods and in the workplace will be run by the women they affect. The Centre seeks to collaborate on these projects and to learn more about conditions for women working in the household and at the workplace.

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WRAPPING THE PENTAGON

Justine Merritt, retired teacher and convert to Catholicism, has enlisted the help of thousands of people in sewing a giant ribbon which will be "tied" around the Pentagon, the seat of US military power.

Applied, quilted and embroidered segments each 36 inches by 18 inches depict scenes of "what I could not bear to think of as lost forever in a nuclear war", says Justine referring to the needlework pictures of friends, families,

children's faces, plants, animals, landscapes, etc.

She is presently co-ordinating the stitching together of the segments by people from various parts of the USA.

On August 4, 1985, in a peaceful demonstration recalling the destruction of Hiroshima, the ribbon (completed it will be over a mile long) will be tied around the Pentagon compound. "A reminder that we love the earth and all its people".

Mother Jones, June 1985

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