

WOMAN

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Struggle

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ICELAND'S WOMEN'S ALLIANCE REFUSES TO JOIN COALITION

Iceland's feminist party, The Women's Alliance won an unprecedented ten per cent of the votes in elections earlier this year. However, the Alliance failed to gain a place in the coalition government which was formed by three ideologically dissimilar male parties.

The Alliance made a precondition of their joining the government that the minimum wage be substantially increased, an action which would primarily have benefitted women. The male-dominated parties refused, offering instead the creation of a ministry for women and increases in government funding for day care. The Alliance would not compromise on the minimum wage issue.

Party members claim the Alliance has no leaders. They intend to rotate the six seats they hold in the sixty-three (63) member parliament, giving them up in six years to a designated alternate member who campaigned along with the member in parliament.

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SPANISH LABOUR UNION RELEASES SEXUAL HARASSMENT STUDY

The women's department of Spain's largest labour union, the General Worker's Union has released a study which is sparking attention to the problem of widespread sexual harassment in the nation's workplaces.

The study says that eighty-four (84) per cent of respondents have been subject to sexual harrassment on the job. Seven hundred and twenty-two (722) women working in such diverse workplaces as government offices, hotels, hospitals, newspaper offices and chemical plants responded to the survey. Almost one-third had been subjected to "unwanted physical contact". More than half had been treated to verbal harrassment.

The women most intensely harrassed by co-workers were new employees, women under age thirty (30), divorced, separated and widowed women, and women who were non-practicing Catholics or atheists. Journalists and flight attendants said they were most often harrassed by supervisors and bosses.

Many women also claimed they had not been promoted in their jobs because they are women.

The study urges the passage of laws to ban sexual harrassment and initiation of government programmes to inform employers that they have a responsibility to prevent harrassment. The recommendations will be presented by the union which is linked to Spain's governing Socialist Party.

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WOMEN'S GROUP SAYS THAT FRATERNITY SYSTEM "TRAINS MEN TO BE RAPISTS"

A group identifying itself only as 'a women's group' said in a press release it was responsible for spray-painting anti-rape slogans on two University of Illinois fraternity houses, and promises to start "a campaign of direct action" against a system that "trains men to be rapists".

The spray-painted graffiti, said Lambda Chi Alpha President Phil Krader, "basically called us rapists"

Vandals also painted slogans on the Beta Theta Pi house nearby.

Krader noted the vandalism occurred shortly after The Daily Illini, the campus paper published a story about how a fifteen (15) year old girl was raped in a UI fraternity house in late September.

The unnamed fraternity house was on the same street as Lambda Chi Alpha and Beta Theta Pi.

Last year, fires were started at fraternity houses at Western Illinois University, Colorado School of Mines, and the universities of Denver and Colorado, amid anonymous notes and police suspicions they were related to recent sexual assault and harassment complaints leveled at local fraternity members.

Police, however, were unable to establish any connection between the arsons on the different campuses.

In a press release that mysteriously showed up at the Daily Illini offices last week however, the anonymous group promised more anti-greek "direct action" because "local social-service agencies have received an alarming number of calls from female victims of rape occurring in fraternity houses."

College Press Service

The Emory Wheel, October 20, 1987

MALAYSIA: MULTIPLE MARRIAGE HARDER

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA - Malaysia's new Muslim Family Law restricts the conditions under which men who already are married can take other wives. Men are allowed four wives under Islamic law, but the new law specifies that this is not an absolute right.

The married man seeking to contract a new marriage must first get the written permission of his current wife or wives. He must present that consent form and a declaration of his income, assets and dependents to an Islamic religious court, and the court will determine whether he can marry.

The court has the authority to reject the marriage application if the man does not have the means to support another wife or if the marriage would lower the standard of living of his current wife or wives and dependents.

Also, the proposed marriage is supposed to be "just and necessary, having regard to such circumstances as sterility, physical infirmity, physical unfitness for conjugal relations, willful avoidance of an order for restitution of conjugal rights, or insanity on the part of the existing wife or wives."

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JAPAN: DIVORCE EASIER

TOKYO - Japan's Supreme Court has ruled that courts must consider divorce suits even if they are filed by the party who is at fault. The ruling came in the case of a seventy-five year-old business man who has been trying to divorce his wife for thirty-eight years so he can marry the woman he has been living with. His wife did not consent to the divorce.

In Japan, people have been able to sue for divorce only if they charge their spouse with adultery, desertion, incurable mental illness or maltreatment that makes continuation of the marriage impossible.

The immediate impact of the decision is likely to be that more men divorce their wives.

There is little legal provision for child support, alimony or property division, which creates a serious problem for the women involved, because most have been pressured to be full-time homemakers. Recently, more women have been filing for divorces.

Info from Washington Post

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CHEMICAL DUMPING

Thirty-five percent of the women in the town of St. Gabriel, Louisiana, USA have had stillbirths or miscarriages in the past five years, and many of these women believe the eighteen (18) nearby chemical plants are responsible.

State officials dispute these figures, saying the stillbirth and miscarriage rate in St. Gabriel is lower than the statewide and national averages, but Gov. Edwin Edwards has nonetheless initiated an investigation.

The plants discharge 196 million pounds of chemicals annually under permits. In 1986, the plants also reported 77 accidental spills. Many of the spilled chemicals are known to cause cancer or birth defects.

Info from USA Today

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