

WOMAN

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Struggle

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RADICAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

A 30-page section, "Women Working Towards a Radical Restructuring of the Communications System", is now a regular feature of the annual DIRECTORY OF WOMEN'S MEDIA in the 1989 edition, just released. The previous four-page section entitled "A Radical Feminist Analysis of Mass Media" has been expanded now also providing a wealth of information, ideas and analysis.

In addition to this significant section, the DIRECTORY OF WOMEN'S MEDIA has grown in the number of entries, now 1,873. With 702 women's periodicals (the 1988 edition listed 603) worldwide, it is encouraging to see the increasing communication among women dealing with such a wide diversity of issues and concerns.

Following the periodicals section, the DIRECTORY describes 111 women's presses and publishers, 11 women's news services, 7 radio-TV groups, 39 regular radio/TV programs, 31 women's video and cable groups, 19 women's film groups, 55 women's music groups, 60 art/graphics/theatre groups, 11 women writers groups, 18 women speakers groups, 47 media organizations - professional and media change, 93 women's bookstores & mail order, 86 special library collections on women, 32 selected directories and catalogues. And more!

As well as women's media groups, the DIRECTORY contains the listing of 518 media women and media-concerned women. Each woman tell her particular interests and resources, providing helpful networking among all media women, whether in our own media or in mass media.

The Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press (WIFP) has been publishing the DIRECTORY OF WOMEN'S MEDIA annually since 1975. Founded in 1972, WIFP is a non-profit, tax-exempt research and publishing organization of women who are concerned with the expansion and restructuring of the communications system in order for media to be in the hands of all people, not just wealthy and predominantly male media owners.

To order a copy, send \$15 (low-income women, \$11) to WIFP, 3306 Ross Place, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20008, U.S.A. (202) 966-7783.

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PLAY EXAMINES WOMEN'S STRUGGLE

They examine issues from the apparent powerlessness of exploitation to the creative power of rebel consciousness and lay bare the realities of Caribbean life while offering some ray of optimism for the region's social development.

They are **SISTREN** - a group of Jamaican women with a total concept of educating through the medium of entertainment, a concept which is evidenced in their exploration of the past and addressing the needs of the present.

In **BUSS OUT** audiences witness an interpretation of machismo and weaknesses, exploitation and violence. It is the story of the many threats and challenges faced by Caribbean families, especially those of the lower income brackets. The play combines music, song and dance to effectively educate through entertainment.

In the play the women of Chiggerfoot Lane are up in arms. A child has been killed by the agents who are forcing them off land they have squatted on for years; land where they have planted flowers to make the "rattacastle" look liveable and where they have raised their children. Different members of the community try different approaches to righting the situation according to their respective personalities, but things do not work out very smoothly.

The women recognise that they need to change a social system that treats them as property. They each offer one another their own solutions and pool their strengths. The play examines the scramble for housing, which is a life and death struggle for the women of this community.

Traditional drum and dance rhythms liven up the play and cool tempers between the women. Flashbacks to childhood experiences give audiences glimpses of backgrounds of different "girl-children" - backgrounds that induce the rebel consciousness and the motivation to change their situation.

Though the production is set in Jamaica and is performed essentially by a Jamaican cast, BUSS OUT speaks to the entire Caribbean.

But what or who is SISTREN? SISTREN, which simply means sisters, is a theatre collective developed from the initiative of a group of working class women in 1977, when 13 women from the poorest parts of Kingston met on a Michael Manley Government Emergency Employment Programme.

Developed from the initiative of this group, and focusing on issues which directly affect them, SISTREN has done numerous theatrical productions and conducted hundreds of workshops. The group works with a wide cross-section of women from different social strata - sugar workers, factory and domestic workers, students among others, and the unemployed.

In its 11 years of existence, SISTREN has become a major force in the Caribbean popular education network, and in the regional women's movement.

The group works in reverse order to most theatre companies. They come together, relate experiences, identify a theme around which they improvise, and eventually what emerges is the beginnings of a full-scale production. In fact they go from actor to script rather than script to actor. And many of their plays are not scripted before the first public performance...

TOGETHER MAGAZINE published in
EC NEWS, 14 - 15 April 1989.

WOMEN - THEY WAY TO CLEANER POLITICS.

UNITED NATIONS - Dame Nita Barrow, Barbados' Ambassador to the United Nations, wants more women in the Caribbean to enter politics because they may help to clean up dirty campaigns.

"I say that if you had more women they would possibly change this because they would certainly change the emphasis if they didn't like it",

she said with regard to the type of campaigning that focusses on people's personal lives.

"The question is what are we doing about changing the attitude that as some people say, politics is a dirty business, meaning that it penalises the family. You know women are very concerned about the family".

Dame Nita, who is considered a leader in the international effort to promote greater involvement of women in all aspects of economic, social and political life, said that women often shied away from politics because of the adverse impact it could have on their families.

To get around that roadblock, she declared, there would have to be a change in the roles of women in the family unit.

"If a woman goes into politics, she needs the unfailing support of both husband and family", she said.

"A man accepts that as his right and expects it. If a woman went into politics, how many of our families would accept that there are many things a woman couldn't do around the house. She might also have to give up a paying job".

Dame Nita believes an increase in the number of women jumping into the political fray would be a "boon" because they would bring level-headedness to the issues.

The Nation
14th March 1988

WOMEN AND WORK: A MAN'S VIEW.

"Have you many children?" the doctor asked. "God has not been good to me. Of sixteen born, only nine live", he answered.

"Does your wife work?" "No, she stays at home".

"I see. How does she spend her day?" "Well, she gets up at four in the morning, fetches water and wood, makes the fire and cooks breakfast. Then she goes to the river and washes clothes. After that she goes to town to get corn ground and buys what we need in the market. Then she cooks the midday meal".

"You come home at midday?" "No, no. She brings the meal to me in the fields - about three kilometres from home".

"And after that?" "Well, she takes care of the hens and pigs. And of course, she looks after the children all day. Then she prepares supper so that it is ready when I come home".

"Does she go to bed after supper?" "No. I do. She has things to do around the house until nine o'clock".

"But you say your wife doesn't?"

"No. I told you. She stays at home".

"Women and Development Resource Pack".

The Catholic Fund for Overseas

Development, London.

SISTREN: Vol.10, Nos. 2 & 3, 1988, p.14.

ZIMBABWE WOMEN ON THE MOVE

In Zimbabwe, women in rural areas outside the capital are making their own radio programmes which are broadcast on a weekly basis. Working with professionals at the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Company (ZBC), each week the women use radio cassette recorders to record their own discussions, stories and problems. If any questions are raised, ZBC staff approach authorities to get a response. ZBC professionals are also responsible for editing the women's materials.

The ZBC co-ordinator for the project visits the women's groups regularly to collect the cassettes, bring batteries and check on the equipment.

"Radio-listening groups", in AWC
(Association of Women's Clubs) News,

Zimbabwe, Vol. 1, 1988

THE TRIBUNE Newsletter 41,

March 1989, p.11.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN THE PACIFIC.

Domestic violence was identified as the single most important issue for women in the Pacific by participants attending a women and communications workshop sponsored by the World Association of Christian Communications (WACC). In response to an awareness of widespread violation of women throughout the region, (surveys on domestic violence in Papua, New Guinea, alone show that 67% of women in rural areas and 56% in town have been assaulted by their husbands), the participants requested that three of the ten days of the meeting be used to focus attention on using communication skills and strategies to combat domestic violence and rape.

Among the recommendations, radio and writing skills were identified as important to enable participants to communicate the problem more effectively to the public, and be able to mobilize regional support for action on the issue. The meeting, which brought together 20 women communicators and women leaders from seven Pacific island nations and Australia, was part of a global series of WACC-sponsored sub-regional and national workshops designed to discuss issues confronting women in communication.

Action, the Journal of WACC.

THE TRIBUNE Newsletter 41,
March 1989, p.13.