

WOMAN

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Struggle

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A WOMAN WHO STRUGGLED

Young and energetic Wanda Reid has made history in Barbados. At the tender age of twenty-three, she has broken the barriers of a twenty-seven year old male dominated organisation, the Barbados Youth Council (BYC). She became its first ever Female President by defeating the other candidates who of course were male, at elections on the 27th February 1988 at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic in Barbados.

As President, Wanda brings to the organisation a wealth of experience, since in her job of Programme Assistant, with the People of Tomorrow, a programme launched by Women and Development Unit (WAND) in collaboration with Voice of Barbados she works specially with the young people, with a growing concern for high unemployment among the youth and their full human development.

Of course all eyes will be on Wanda as she continues to keep the struggle up. We are right behind you Wanda!

Diana Inniss

WAND, UWI

CHIANG CH'ING RELEASED

Jiang Qing (Chiang Ch'ing) former wife of Chinese Revolutionary Leader Mao Zedong has been released from prison. Jiang Qing has been confined for her political activities during the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1976).

The story of her release appeared in a Hong Kong Magazine The Far Eastern Review However, Chinese officials contacted by the New York Times refused to comment on the story.

Jiang, now seventy-three years old is reportedly ill and living in a suburb of Beijing. In 1981, Jiang was convicted of persecuting communist party members when she had a leading role in the Cultural Revolution. She was sentenced to death, but her sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in 1983.

Reportedly, the other three officials who along with Jiang were branded "The Gang Of Four" also may be released soon.

(Info. from New York Times 12/27 in
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BLACK WOMAN DEATH SENTENCE

An international campaign is underway to stop the execution of Theresa Ramashamola, the first Black woman in South Africa to receive the death sentence. She was convicted in December 1985, along with five other members of the "Sharpeville Six," for the 1984 murder of Khuzwayo Dlamini, the deputy mayor of a black township, during an uprising against rent increases and the corruption of the local government.

On September 1, 1984 rents were increased in the Vaal area. On September 3, the Vaal Women's Organisation, the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Sharpeville Anti-Rent Committee called on local councillors to resign in protest and urge the residents to boycott the (Black) counsellors' shops because of their corrupt way of going along with the government and accepting the rent increase. What began as a peaceful protest march to demand a reduction in the rent led to the police killing innocent people.

On the day of the march, residents had asked Dlamini to join them. He refused. Dlamini, as an official in the township's puppet "government" was seen as a collaborator of the Pretoria regime. He was stoned and burned to death.

The government arrested eight people, of whom two were later released. Theresa Ramashamola and the five others were tortured while in custody. A year after their detention, the trial was held. Despite conflicting testimony from state witnesses, the six were sentenced to death.

An appeal was lodged against the sentence, but the appeal has been rejected.

For more information contact: Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) 212 Church Road, Willesden, London, NW10, England

Info. from Spare Rib, 1/88
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PAKISTAN WOMAN SENTENCED TO STONING

Pakistan's courts have sentenced a woman to death by stoning because she was convicted of committing adultery. Shahida Parveen, the woman sentenced, was divorced in 1986 by her husband because she was childless and he wanted to marry another woman. Parveen later married another man, at which point her first husband brought charges of adultery against her. The public arrested her and the court held that the divorce had not been valid. Both Parveen and her second husband were sentenced to death by stoning under Islamic law.

There is allegedly no public record of the divorce, but under Islamic law, all that is necessary is for a husband to say, "I divorce you."

Parveen says her stepmother incited her ex-husband to bring the charges against her because she refused to take as her second husband a man the stepmother had chosen.

Parveen is appealing the case to Pakistan's Supreme Court.

This is the third death sentence for adultery to be handed down since President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq decreed eight years ago that Pakistan would be governed by Islamic law. In two earlier cases protests prompted the government to commute the sentences to flogging or imprisonment.

Women's groups are protesting Parveen's sentence.

Info from Washington Post 1/13

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SOUTH AFRICA: WOMAN "HOMELAND" LEADER FOR TRANSKEI

In February 1987, Stella Sigcau became the first woman "prime minister" in Africa, but her elevation was no great victory for women or for Africa because she was made "prime minister" of Transkei, one of the so-called independent homelands to which South Africa has relegated Blacks. However, Sigcau has suggested that she might not be entirely a puppet but may sympathize with the liberation movement.

South Africa has set up the so-called homelands on poor land as an excuse for saying that Blacks are not citizens of South Africa.

Stella Sigcau was elected prime minister following a coup which overthrew her predecessor George Matanzima. She has released many of Transkei's numerous political detainees and has sent half her cabinet on a peace mission to the neighboring

"homeland" of Ciskei (the two "homelands" had been pitted against each other as part of the South African government's "divide and rule" policy).

More importantly, Sigcau has said she was considering lifting the ban in Transkei on activities by the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress, South Africa's major liberation groups. Whether the white South African government lets her stay in office if she does this is another matter.

Info. from article by Rizu Hamid in Spare Rib, January 1988 in Off Our Backs Vol.xviii No.2 February 1988

MORE THAN JUST A ROOF

Over 100 people gathered on October 29 and 30, 1987 for the YWCA of Metropolitan Toronto Conference on shelter for women, which focussed on the nuts and bolts of how to use the non-profit programmes in place in Ontario to lessen homelessness and underhousing.

A set of "how to" workshops were held on funding, zoning and municipal regulation, community acceptance and "bricks and mortar". Other sessions examined different models of household and community organisation in a non-profit development: shared accommodation, self-contained apartments, co-ops and types of "women's housing."

A key issue in the provision of assisted housing in community attitudes, and participants were introduced to a guide on successful community relations prepared by the Supportive Housing Coalition. However, while the solution to acceptance lies in public education and the reduction of regulatory obstacles, level of funding is a far bigger obstacle to meeting housing need: even with no regulatory community barriers to non-profit development, the number of units currently funded would only make a small dent in the need. Ultimately, going beyond the terms of reference of the conference, the question is whether we can manage the housing market, land use and incomes policies so that unsubsidized housing is affordable by more women.

Greg Sutter

Women And Environments, Winter 1988
