

WOMAN

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Struggle

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BILLS AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Women's Affairs Commission of Puerto Rico will continue to lobby this year for legislation barring sexual harassment on the job and incorporating conjugal abuse into the penal code.

At a news conference Vazquez Ramirez, Commission President said the two Bills pending before the legislature are of vital importance for women on the island.

She also announced plans to intensify cooperation between the commission and feminist groups, government agencies offering services to women, and individuals in different fields working to improve women's rights.

(AP) Barbados Sunday Advocate
January 12, 1986

TRAFFIC - STOPPING DEMONSTRATION TURNS INTO MARCH

A demonstration held in Paris last September which was initially planned for a gathering of women to block rush hour traffic at the street site of a public rape turned into a march supported by 1500 women.

The protest against public apathy in the face of violence against women followed a wave of rapes in public places where witnesses did nothing to stop the crimes. Incidents included the rape of a 17 year old woman in a suburban train in full view of witnesses; one 18 year old raped in a subway station in the middle of Paris and a rape in a busy city street after which, witnesses merely looked on as the young woman made her way alone to the nearest hospital.

The demonstrators took off through the streets of Paris, with the women chanting anti-rape slogans, singing, blocking traffic all the way, and handing out leaflets explaining why this action was necessary.

Off Our Backs Vol.XV #10 November 1985

KUWAITI WOMEN STILL CAN'T VOTE

Kuwaiti women's efforts to win the vote have received a set back. The Interpretation Committee of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs has declared that "the nature of the electoral process befits men, who are endowed with ability and expertise: it is not permissible that women nominate other women or men."

Kuwait is the only country in the Arab world with an elected legislature that does not allow women to vote though they have been trying since 1971. In 1980, Crown Prince and Prime Minister Shaikh Saad al-Abdullah el-Salem al-Sabah said it was time to consider votes for women, but the assembly has not approved suffrage yet.

(info from the Guardian and Middle East)

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INFANT MORTALITY HIGHER AMONG US BLACKS

The mortality rate among black infants in Oakland, California is nearly three times as high as that of whites. A panel of community organisers and health workers has blamed this fact on the failure at all levels of government to fight poverty, hunger and poor medical care in the black community.

The statistics quoted resemble national figures. In 1984, the Washington-based Food Research and Action Center reported that non white infants in America have twice as high a death rate as do white infants.

"A profile of a woman who gives birth to a small baby is one who is single, poor, often a teenager, sometimes a drug addict, and by and large in this community, also non white.

"These women require special prenatal care, including counselling and health education."

In the words of one panelist, governments should "Live up to their responsibilities to bring quality health care to everyone".

Plexus Vol.XII No.9 (November 1985)

SAVING THE MOTHER TONGUE

Organisers of a campaign initiated in 1981 to preserve the native tongues of the Inuit ("Eskimo") peoples of northern Canada realised that the people fluent enough in the languages to be competent teachers were middle-aged women. These prospective revivors of imperiled dialects, however, could not forsake their families for long teaching stints far away from home.

A rotation plan patterned after oil drillers' work schedules, made it possible for teachers to spend more time in their own communities. Graduates of the teacher training course now instruct local school children. Organisers say the project will serve as a model for saving other endangered languages native to North America.

Herizons Vol.3 No.7

CHICAGO NUNS TAKE A STAND AGAINST ARCHBISHOP

A group of five hundred (500) Roman Catholic nuns and churchwomen have issued a statement accusing Cardinal Joseph Bernadin, Archbishop of Chicago and head of US Bishops' pro-life committee of falling into "a dictatorship syndrome" and urged him to "take a serious look at the immoral sexism of the Catholic Church".

The Chicago Catholic Women, a 10 year old organization which promotes the role of women in the church and society has accused the church's all male hierarchy of grave insensitivity to women's issues.

The statement came in response to the Bishop's warning that Catholics may not dissent from the church's teachings on abortion nor may they support those who disagree. The Cardinal's remarks seemed to be directed at a group, Catholics for a Free Choice, who support the right for women to abortion, as well as to a group of Catholic academics, priests and nuns who had signed a newspaper advertisement during the 1984 presidential campaign asserting "a diversity of opinion" about abortion among faithful Catholics.

(info. from the Washington Post, Off Our Backs
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FEMINIST BOOK FAIR AND FESTIVAL

The second International Feminist Book Fair will be held in Oslo, Norway from June 21 - 27, 1986 at the campus of Oslo University.

In conjunction a book festival open to all participants (exhibitors and visitors) is being planned. A comprehensive programme of seminars, workshops, discussions, lectures, readings, cinema and theatre events and concerts will be held.

A preliminary programme lists among other participants Ellen Kuzwayo, South Africa to talk on "Call Me Woman" and show her films "Isiamelo - a Place of Goodness" and "Awake From Mourning"; Naval El Sadaani, Egypt, readings; Lauretta Ngcobo, England, a lecture on African women authors; Ding Ling, Ru Zhijian and Tie Ning of the People's Republic of China, "Women and Literature in China". Other subjects planned for presentation include: "Science Fiction and Fantasy"; "Women and Literature in the USSR" "Women and Erotic Language"; "Women Writers of Children's Literature".

Requests for information on the Book Festival, financial assistance, and accommodation may be sent to: The Second International Feminist Book Fair, Elisabet W. Middelthon and Elisabeth Bjelland, P.O. Box 2959, Toyen, 0608 Oslo 6, Norway.

BUSINESS WOMEN MEET

Business women from fourteen (14) countries met to share experiences and pool entrepreneurial skills at the first Asia-Canada Women in Management Conference held recently at the University of Victoria.

Bank officials, factory managers, small businesswomen, commodity traders, consultants and corporate officers compared notes on the challenges of doing business as a woman. There were many similarities between the problems expressed by the women who came from Burma, Nepal, China, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Fiji, the Philippines and Canada.

One recommendation arising from the conference was that countries should become affiliates of Women's World Banking, a financial institution established to assist women entrepreneurs.

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