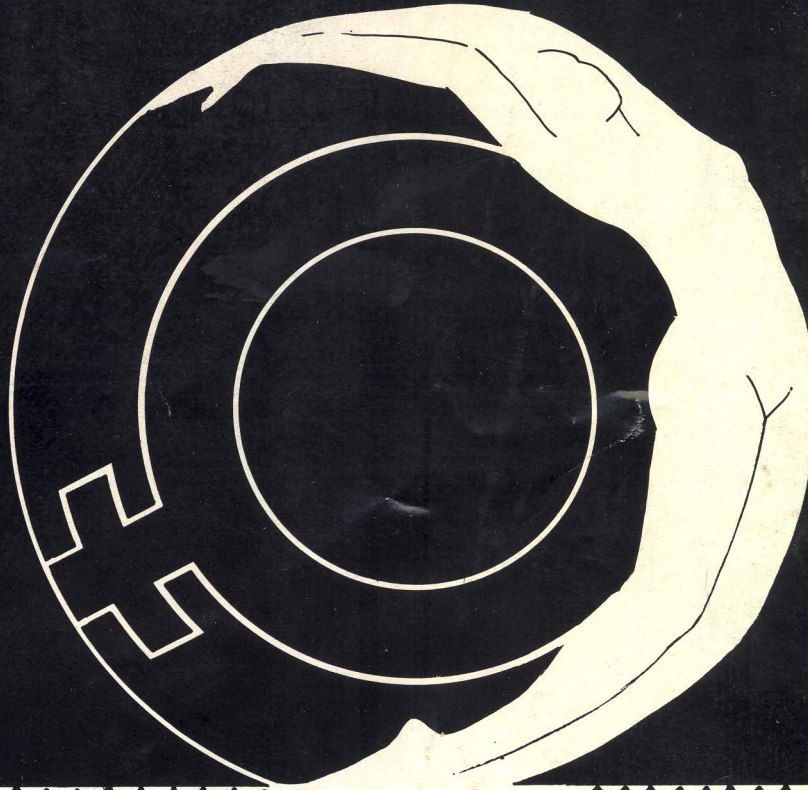


SIREN

40

VOL. 13 NO. 2 & 3 1991 (Bumper Issue)

J\$20.00



WOMEN, SEXUALITY and HEALTH

● BEYOND RAPE

● EXPLORING THE MYTH THAT
WOMEN LIKE PAINFUL SEX

● MASTECTOMY IS NOT THE END

SISTREN OUT DEH!

Bess & Joy attended the ADA-sponsored Community Development Seminar in August. It made us all think about "empowerment".

We ran group-building workshops again in two communities: **Seivwright Gardens** (Kingston) and **Canterbury** (Montego Bay).

It felt great to make personal contact with **Winnie Mandela**: to meet, hug up, and give her our **Lionheart Gal** book and cassette.

Gender, race and class were the issues explored in a workshop which **Sistren** ran with CUSO cooperants, October 11.

Sistren worked alongside CAFRA to launch "Creation Fire", an anthology of poems by Caribbean women. **Honor, Hilary** and **Pauline** read their works as well as contributions from across the region.

"Sweet Sugar Rage" and "Miss Amy and Miss May", **Sistren's** two videos, have been circling the globe. Viewers in Nigeria, Germany, Canada, Zambia, Austria have been showing much interest. Also shown at the **Atlantic Film Festival** in Halifax.

We've been busy as members of the **Association of Development Agencies**, as we are involved in several task-area committees (Membership, Networking, Finance, and the newly formed Public Affairs Subcommittee).

Sistren's Theatre Team is doing a series of improvisational workshops on the **Generation Gap** - first step towards a new production.

Lana Finikin joined other members of **Groots International** in NY during **July** to plan **Groots** Networking activities including the **1995 Women's Conference** in China. She helped facilitate, and took part in workshops at the **Vermont Leadership**

Training Institute, organized through the **National Congress of Women (USA)**.

Members of **Sistren** took part in the **Regional Conference on Violence Against Women**, Sept 23-25, hosted by the **Women's International Democratic Federation** and **PNP Women**, in Kingston. We learned of courageous actions being taken by women against violence in the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Nicaragua and elsewhere.

Between Nov 13-18, **Pauline** and **Becky** were at the **University of Calgary** (Canada) where they performed, ran workshops and took part in panel discussions, during the Conference - **Women, Theatre & Social Action**: "Breaking The Surface".

Ritual and the Contemporary Stage was the focus of the **Commonwealth Theatre Laboratory**, Sept 16-29 at the **University of the West Indies**. **Sistren** members **Annie, Beverley, Hilary, Joy** and **Pauline** participated alongside theatre artists, directors, poets and musicians from the Caribbean Region and many parts of the Commonwealth - from Belize to Bangladesh. We shared a wealth of information on musical forms, dance, rituals and traditions which could enrich our various styles of theatre.

Annie & Bess ran workshops on **Advocacy** during the **Women's Leadership Training Workshop**, Nov 19-28 organized by the **YWCA** and **World Council of Churches**.

COMING UP (OUT DEH!)

● **Starting February**: **Sistren's** School Workshop programme focusing on: self-esteem, girl/boy relationships; sexual abuse & sexually transmitted diseases.

● **Sistren's** new video directed by **Cynthia Wilmot** is ready and waiting on its launching pad.

● We'll be embarking on a major evaluation of our 14 years work & development

to be conducted by **Easton Lee** and **Cheryl Ryman**. We might be calling on you for feedback.

AT THE MEETING PLACE

● **Sistren's** Schoolers' Workshop in August introduced tots and teenagers to **Popular Theatre** and **Media Issues**; this is an annual summer training opportunity for youngsters.

● **Wesley Women's Drama Group** meets weekly at **Sistren's** headquarters for theatre technique and group building workshops.

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SISTREN	
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Sistren is produced three times a year by the Sistren Theatre Collective as part of its on-going efforts to highlight issues of concern to women in the society. Sistren is a non-profit making collective of women. Other activities include theatre, workshops using Drama-in-Education methodology, and research. Sistren has also experimented with film and video and produced a book of members' life stories, Lionheart Gal. Sistren Textiles is the group's income-earning project. Contact: 20 Kensington Crescent, Kingston 5, Jamaica, West Indies. Tel: (809) 92-92457/92-96171).	

ACQUAINTED



Marion Bernard

SISTREN PROFILE

Introducing **Marion Angella Bernard**, Co-ordinator of the Sistren Research Department.

Baby Rose, as Marion is sometimes called by her nieces and nephews, was born at the Victoria Jubilee Hospital in Kingston. "She born unda de clock," as some people would say.

Auntie Rose is the second of eight children, six boys and two girls and an extremely efficient person.

She came to Sistren in 1988, the year of Gilbert. She came then to act as Co-ordinator, because Lana Finikin was about to leave for a course in London.

Marion came to Sistren with a feminist perspective, a defender of women's rights and an activist fighting for peoples rights. During her stint as Acting Co-ordinator, Marion also worked with the Research Team, and when she resigned two and half years later, she moved to the Research Department.

"Sistren has put me in touch with the international women's movement, and the women's movement in the region. I am really grateful for that," Marion said.

She believes that she has made a big contribution to the Collective in terms of interesting and new ideas. This is supported by Bev
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PERSONAL NOTES

BRIGHT NEW FACES AT SISTREN: Welcome to new editor **Zadie Neufville** and her assistant **Elaine Nelson**; **Marva Johnson** part-time secretary, and **Joan Brown**, clerical assistant in the Research Department; sales representative, **Veronica Lovindeer**. We're glad to have you all with us.

CONGRATULATIONS: To **Merlene Ottey** on her first international gold medal; and to the other women of the 4x100 sprint relay team, **Dahlia Duhaney**, **Juliet Cuthbert**, **Beverley McDonald**, who won gold in the recently concluded World Athletics Championships. ... And of course **Merlene Frazier** who anchored the team in the semis to break the national record and on her Junior Olympics gold; and to the Junior Pan American women's team on their splendid performance; Also to the **women's netball team** who placed third in the World Championships and took the Caribbean title again this year.

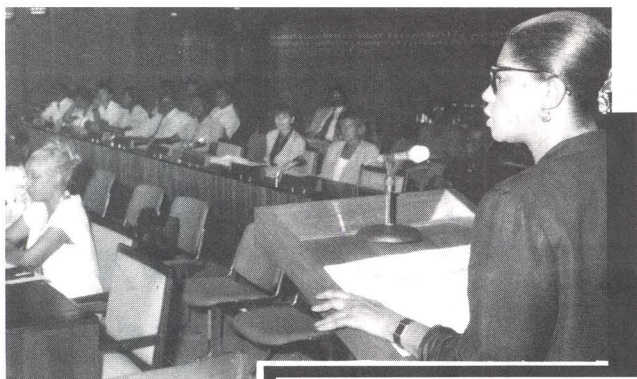
* To **Dr Alafia Samuels** on the birth of her son- thanks for the many years of work for the Association of Women's Organisations in Jamaica (AWOJA).

* To the Household Helpers Association on the launch of their **HELPLINE**.

* On the birth of a daughter **Jolee**, to **Angela "Punkie" Stultz** of "Woman A fire" Writers Group, and **Joel**.

WELCOME: To the new AWOJA Co-ordinator, **Claney Barnett**, who takes over from **Alafia**.

FORTY, FIT AND FABULOUS: **Honor Ford-Smith** recently celebrated a birthday. She is pursuing her MA in
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SISTREN

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"I hope I will be able to fill the very capable boots of past editor Joan Ross Frankson...." 5

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Candace interviews women who have been rape victims and examines the psychological effects. 8

"Their silence might be due to an unwillingness to let go of their other social ties, (money, name, social position)..." *The Women's Crisis Centre, an answer to abused Jamaican women.* 14

Do women enjoy feeling pain during the sex act? *Exploring the myth by carrying out a survey among men and women in St Andrew.* 21

"A few days later, the doctor confirmed what Edna had suspected— she had cancer..." *Eulalee Thompson speaks to Edna Robotham about her mastectomy, and her life after the operation.* 24

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SPECIAL

- * Pictorial of Woman Inc's Trade Fair
- * From the conference on "Violence Against Caribbean Women," *Pauline Mullings' story and Elaine Hewitt's presentation.*
- * Organisations for the Welfare of the Jamaican Woman - list of Women's organisations in Jamaica.
- * "...I'll be damned, Miss Piggy's twin sister in a beauty pageant..." *Pauline Crawford writes home about her reign as Miss Jamaica, a humourous look at Beauty Pageants.*
- * Sister Lillian Speaks - on intimate relationships.
- * Jo Eekhoff visits Madame Francois School of Fashion (and karate?)
- * Peggy Autrobus speaks on Women and the Environment
- * Violence Against Women: Baby Fathers - they do care
- * AIDS/HIV Infections on the increase

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FACELIFT FOR SISTREN'S MAGAZINE

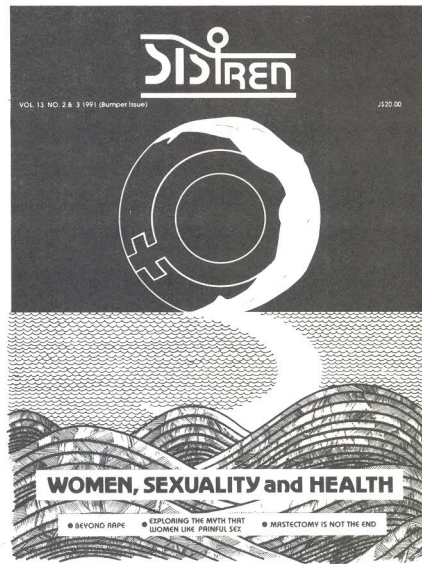
As the new Editor of this publication, I have a real tough job ahead, and that is trying to fit into the capable boots of Joan Ross-Frankson. I can say here and now that it is indeed a frightful step for a rookie like myself to take.

I hope that I will do very well and remain in the position for as long as Mrs Ross-Frankson did.

Woman, sexuality and health are difficult topics to deal with, especially when one realises all the problems we as women have to undergo. Examining the various problems women have concerning their health, it seems that even nature discriminate against us, but men too, have their fair share.

In this issue, we could not look at all the health problems women face, nor could we take into account all the sexual problems women bear; we have barely scratched the surface, but we intend to examine these in every issue of SISTREN magazine. In respect of health, we will be introducing a health page as a regular feature.

You will notice that several new features have been added. These we intend to make regular. Our "Women around the World" feature will offer much more in the months to come as we make every



effort to get information on what is happening around the region and indeed around the world, and present them to you.

Our environment page has been introduced with the intention of getting you more aware of what is happening in the world and how it will affect our lives, with the hope of

forging the missing link between women and the environment.

Hope you will enjoy too, the excerpts from "Lionheart Gal" so much that you will get the book, and don't forget to look out for Pauline 'Alfoshade' Crawford's "Tenement Yard" a new feature which examines the lives of the residents in a Jamaican tenement yard.

We are hoping to make the magazine more enjoyable and interesting for you, our readers. We invite male readers to share their points of view, respond to our articles and let us know what you think. Do you agree with what we have to say? We enjoy the feedback, this tells us that we are reaching you.

Your Editor



Sistren Out Deh *cont'd from pg.2*

- The "Gender Group" will meet to rap and reason: our new male member brings fresh insight on the views of male and female roles.
- During July and August we hosted several groups of overseas students shared ideas on popular methodologies, and drama-in-education. Students came from the Universities of California, Michigan & Boston; from Roxbury Community College (Boston) and Newfield (New York). We screened the ADA video **Debt Crisis: An Unnatural Disaster** and had a good session!

- We were lucky to have **Pat Cawley Reid** (ex-Hopewell Women's Group) working with our **Textiles Dept** for two weeks in August & did a workshop on **recycling materials**.
- Visitors passing through: **Habte Selassie** from **Pacifica Radio, NY**, **Frank Whittaker** from **CESO**, **Morgan Cleveland**, post grad student, reps from **CEBEMO** (Netherlands) and **UNICEF**.
- We're getting help from **Brenda Coughlin**, Harvard Univ. Student, who is on a placement study sorting out our Documentation Centre, and from **Louise Murray**, long-time Friend of **Sistren** from Birmingham, now teaching here.

MY SMALL CORNER

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE FAMILY CENTRE



She walked from one room to the other inspecting her plants, issuing instructions to her household worker and answering the phone which rang incessantly, that is Dr Patricia Burke, Founder/Director of the Family Centre.

In between doing all of these, she talked about AIDS, the Family Centre and her clients.

"They (the clients) are from the lower socio-economic group, so one of the first things the Centre has to do is to instill a sense of worth; build up their self esteem," she said.

"The women who come to The Family Centre are vulnerable because they are illiterate, poor, unemployed or under-employed and dependent. Like most Jamaican women out there, they are not in a position to negotiate their sex life. The Family Centre teaches them to protect themselves from reinfection, she explained.

Dr Burke spoke with a tinge of annoyance of the social stigma attached to persons infected with AIDS.

"We are aware of this stigma at the Family Centre and this is why an important activity on clinic day is sitting down together

with staff and clients to have a meal. This gives them a sense of belonging. It is important that we show them that we do not scorn them" she said.

While the cure for this '20th Century scourge' continues to elude medical practitioners, Dr Burke and her clients are waging a mental war against AIDS by practising "holistic medicine".

"In practising holistic medicine, one goes beyond the physical, the body, to the mind and spirit. The mind, you know, is a powerful organ in the body," Dr Burke noted.

She should know, as, since starting her campaign against AIDS in Jamaica in 1983, she has lost some of her clients. But despite the pain and frustration, she feels that if she had to live her life all over again, she would make the same choices.

Maybe the explanation to this undying commitment lies in this poem (see poem on pg. 15), one she wrote in memory of one of her AIDS children.

JAMPRESS

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS HOUSECRAFT INSTITUTE

Our Lady of the Angels Housecraft Training Institute has been in existence for over seven years. Consisting of 34 women and one man, the project is funded by the Food for the Poor.

Mrs Maedeene Card, Principal of the Institute says the organisation trains young women between the ages of 18 and 35 years in housecraft.

The project includes two phases; the training centre, and the income generating project, the factory, which employs four women. The women make stuffed toys, pillow cases, cushions, appliance covers and pot holders among others.



Picture shows, Mrs Maedeene Card, (centre) principal; Miss Violet Henry, Mrs Majorie Fox, Ms Marcia Shakespeare and Miss Julian Leslie. The women exhibited their products at the Woman Trade Fair, put on by Woman Inc. on Oct. 26 -27 at the Oceana Hotel.

POEMS

WOMAN

by Christene Clarkson

Thy name is 'Woman'
Thy name is 'Mother'
You alone can "feel" first life
You alone know the touch of
the unborn

You are creation's flowers
For from you comes the male
And from him comes the
seed of life
A seed with little power
until it manifests itself
Growing deep within you -
The Woman, the Mother

You alone can nurture the
seed of man
And feel it grow and grow
Till your belly bulges -
with the love of creation
Fiery form of love
Look upon thyself!
You resemble your brother man
But you are different . . .
Where else did nature merge -
strength and tenderness so
completely
Than in you the woman, the
mother

You are like a soft petal
Kissed by the tropical sun in
early morning
Yet, you are Vibrant
Determined
And strong . . .
Woman, you are forever.

IN THANKSGIVING

by Meryl James-Bryan

Ah want to take off meh hat to women . . . Caribbean women.
Burnished ebony and copper skins; and firm solid flesh; and
strong white teeth tipped with gold.
Arms as strong and graceful as coconut trees, with a thousand jingles . . .
gold and silver bracelets, musically accompanying every move.
Floppy Panama hats, gay tie heads and regal airs
Firm breasts that suckled a thousand brown babies, and saucy
rounded buttocks that rock and roll as if struggling against containment.
Africa. Proud, bold and determined, in spite of Europe.

Ah want o pay tribute to Caribbean women.
To those who were, and are, and might have been.
To those who will be, despite the evils from afar
That try in vain to control our destiny
To those who will be, despite the evils from afar
That try in vain to control our destiny
To those who broke through the lady chains; and the colour chains;
and the picki-hair chains; and the thick-lip chains; and the flat-nose
chains;
and the middle-class chains; and the gossip chains; and the Europe chains.
To those who suffered silently their wandering men
And those who cunningly dropped an idea, then quietly let their men take
the credit
Eve was not all evil; Nefertiti, a realy beauty.

Ah want to say thanks to Caribbean women.
To Lila St. Hill . . and Sybil James . . and Glen Byam . . .
and Audrey Jeffers. . . and Elaine Thorne. . . and Dada. . .
and Beryl McBurnie. . . and Molly Ahye. . . and Calypso Rose. . . and
Louise Bennett and Mrs P. . . and Miss Delcina. . . and Auntie Kay. . . and
Amy Garvey. . . and Beverly Jones. . . and Tourist Annie too.
Yes ah want to thank them all
For giving me the strength and courage to deal.
For carving a helluva path to follow
May Sojourner Truth continue to reign in us all!



RAPE - *the aftermath*

by Candace

While the two men were raping Faith, she "allowed" her spirit to drift from the scene. "All they have is my body," she assured herself. "Nothing is going to get to my "vibes".

Then there are women like Elaine, who buried themselves in activities in a bid to wipe away the memory of the assault. She took up self-defence classes to build her crushed self-esteem and to prepare herself, just in case...

Louise, on the other hand, opted for a change of address, while it took Asha three years, before she could bring herself to return to the Cross Roads area, the site of her rape.

It is ... possible for a woman to be raped without actually being hurt - to submit ... out of fear of being harmed.

There are very few things that are as devastating as rape, concludes well known Psychologist Dr. Leahcim Semaj. This, he says, is because rape invades the most personal part of the person's being.

Many women, he declares, never recover.

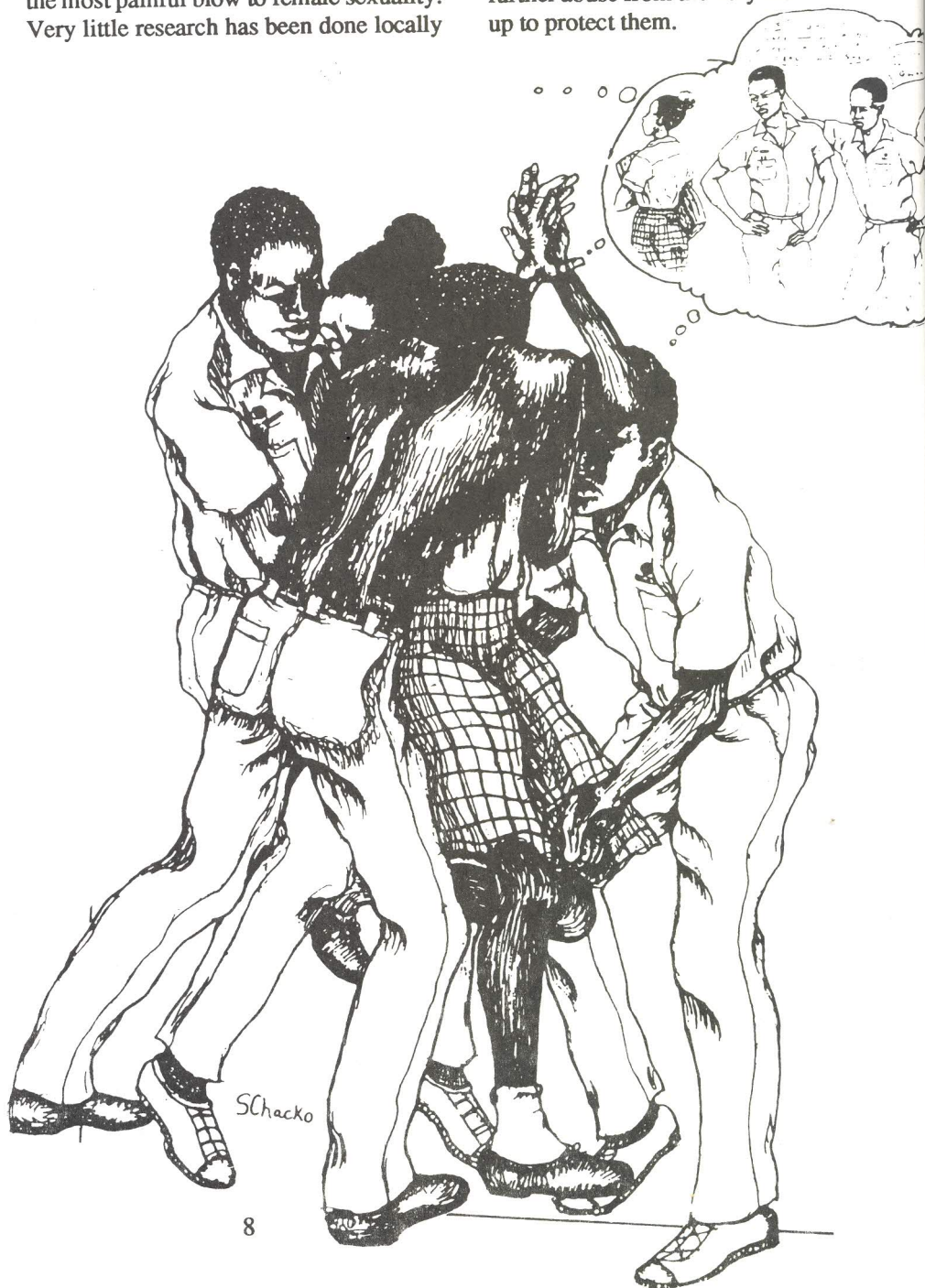
Rape laws here and abroad define it as "forced penile - vaginal intercourse," or simply put, forcing a woman to have sex against her will. But psychologists incorporate more into the definition. They say the forced intrusion of any object into the vagina, anus or mouth is rape, and according to Dr. Semaj, this means that a woman can be violated without being subjected to the sex act.

He agrees that rape is an act of violence or sex by coercion. It is even possible, he asserts, for a woman to be raped without actually being physically hurt - to submit to the assault, out of fear of being harmed.

Psychologists have suggested that men see rape as a weapon; often a means of humiliating women. For the victims, it may yet be the most painful blow to female sexuality. Very little research has been done locally

on the after-effects of rape, and even less on the psychological effects. However, SISTREN, in its booklet entitled, "No to Sexual Violence" has to some extent, dealt with the issue.

The booklet, investigating the roles of medical, criminal, and legal institutions, concludes that very often, victims suffer further abuse from the very institutions set up to protect them.



and beyond.....

Some women feel unclean and guilty even though it is not their fault.

The treatment, psychologists suggest, is an offshoot of the age-old myths associated with rape. Victims are prodded about their previous sexual experiences, questioned about their reputation, and it is put to them that any healthy woman can resist rape, "after all, only bad girls get assaulted".

Psychologists have identified a group of symptoms known as Rape Trauma Syndrome in victims. First there is the immediate reaction, and then, a long term reorganization phase. In the early stages, the victim may show fear, anger or anxiety, or on the other hand, the person's reaction may be controlled, the feelings hidden.

In addition, says Ronnie Salter, Psychologist and Counsellor, the victim withdraws and experiences a feeling of unreality as she tries to distance herself from the crime. The woman also has difficulties providing details of the rape, she points out, because the assault is something a woman would rather forget.

Some women feel unclean and guilty even though it is not their fault. The guilt, she says, is very often fuelled by the misconceptions and myths associated with rape, and very often heightens the victims' tension and anxiety.

At this stage, Ms. Salter explains, the victim is also faced with the issue of personal safety, and challenged to regain control of her life.

The long term reorganization process is that phase when the victim tries to restruct-

ture her life. This, according to Ms. Salter is influenced by support from friends and family, and in particular, the immediate family, which is important at this time.

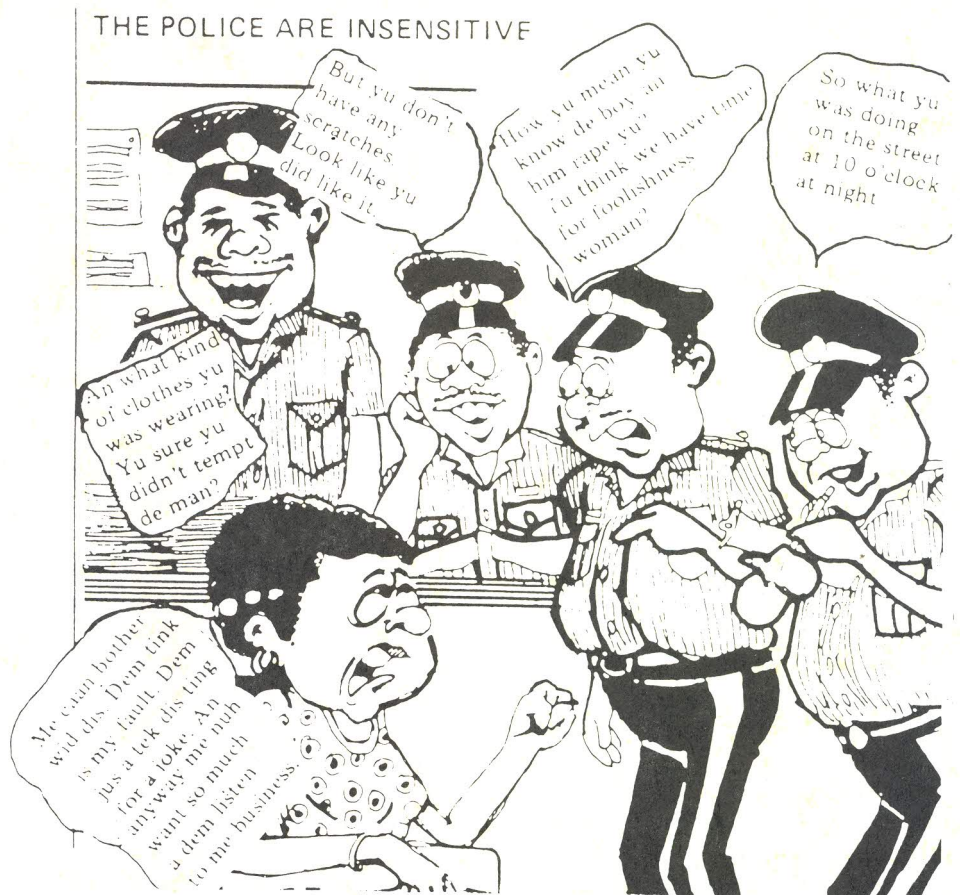
If a partner is around, it is extremely important for him to support her through this crisis in her life, Ms. Salter emphasises.

She says there were times when spouses reject the women, and cited cases where men have become temporarily impotent, especially if they were witness to the assault. This reaction on the part of the man, Ms. Salter says, serves to reimpose the feelings of guilt felt by the woman, heaping extra strain on the relationship. On the other

hand, she says, relationships have become even stronger as a result of the crisis.

Ms. Salter agrees with research findings from the United States that conclude that resumption of sexual relations can prove stressful for some women, whether they had a partner at the time of the assault or not.

Living with rape beyond the assault, is a reality for hundreds of Jamaican women. Some report it, some don't. Police say the number of incidences has dropped over the years, but the true picture is to date not known, because most cases are still never reported.



MY REIGN AS MISS JAMAICA

My dear,

Time certainly flies! I haven't written to you since elimination night, because I have been very busy. You must know by now that I won the Miss Jamaica title. My reign is over and I wish I could say all was well.

Let me fill you in on some of my activities before the final night.

Tips on "how to walk graceful" were given in Rump (author's substitute for ramp) Walking exercises in spike heel (stiletto heels) shoes each day. All along I thought that beauty queens walked as normal people, until Mrs Entwine taught us that beauty queens do walk a different way.

are too short to keep my elbows off the table.

My dear, you know how I love to suck and chew my meat bones. Well, I had to make a decision to avoid any meat dish that provided my plate with juicy bones, so that Mrs Entwine doesn't have to tell me "it's in poor taste."

On coronation night, one of the beauty's mother declared, "History will certainly change its course tonight. I'll be damned, Miss Piggy's twin sister in a beauty pageant!"

When I was announced winner, a woman from one of the Arcades said, "Well if

too, that kept telling me we were in the same class. I wanted to tell them they were mistaking me for someone else, because I am 21 and they were all in their late 40s and 50s, but I was too busy receiving gifts from the dons and donnettes. Papa Gold Miner gave me a two-inches-thick gold anklet and two gold chains; one has the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus in a halo pendant and the other had on New York City's sky scrapers.

A higgler from one of the high Arcades gave me a life-sized bunch of grape earrings. During all this gift giving, the other beauties had already cleared the changing room.

Most of the uptown patrons, except for some of my new-found friends, hastened to the comforts of their homes in the various mews, meadows, commons, acres, estates, courts, heights and valleys. I later found out that Dicky and Pingsley were mobbed by some of the beauties, because they (the beauties) felt that they took a joke too far. Some of them kept asking why the judges weren't briefed? Warned? Threatened? Bribe?

Anyway, coronation night came and went and my body ebbed and flowed like the sea for a few days and nights well, before I felt calm and at peace again.

My duties as queen included: -cutting ribbons for the opening of certain buildings that the public only see in the newspaper; several visits to children's and old people's homes - where even if the sight and smell made me puke, all the pictures which were taken of me frowning, showed up in the papers with a big smile on my face, larger than Bimbo the Clown's.

Although I was not permitted to visit any of the Arcades, I went to the one where the bunch-of-grapes-gold-earrings-giver had a stall.

My visit resulted in what was for me, the most heart-rending part of my reign. I left feeling angry and disappointed. First, to

... one of the beauty's mother declared: "History will certainly change its course tonight. I'll be damned, Miss Piggy's twin sister in a beauty Pageant!"

By the time my left foot tripped my right foot and caused me to lose balance and I fell off the ramp for the third time, I told Mrs Entwine quite frankly that "mi nah compete wid statue eena showcase."

Dicky insisted that I wear the tiger-skin-and-siamese-fur G - string bathing suit for video promos (promotions) on coronation night. It promoted the video all right, because the first pool-side shooting we did at the Grand Limbo, Jamaica's only 10-star hotel, my G-string snapped like the rubber on a sling-shot - POW!! Dicky and his business friends congratulated me because they thought it was intentional and a good picture for their calendars.

No matter how much modern European Etiquette classes I attended, I still insisted on using only one of the five glasses, three knives, four forks and five spoons at my place on the dinner table... And my hands

Donald Duck first cousin can win Miss Jamaica Beauty Contest, mi have high hopes. Mi a enta nex' year, by di hook or by di crook!"

The Dons fired shots in the air, despite the heavy presence of the security force, the military, all the private security firms and a few overseas security diplomats. One of them shouted, "Gal yuh body good!"

One balladeer alone could not sing "Here she stands a vision of loveliness", so a choral and ensemble served as back up, because for the first time, it was being sung in Betoven (Beethoven) Back (Bach), Sherbert (Schubert) and Trykosky (Tchaikovsky) in sea (C) sharp and hiss (S) minor.

Despite the strong objection of the security, a few 'Dons' and higgler made their way backstage. There were some other faces

begin with, as I entered the Arcade, most of the higglers left their stalls unattended (for the first time in history) on hearing "Miss Jamaica ah come!"

The same men and women who were at the Arena saying, "Ah long time a dawta like she shou'da win the title", They were the same ones who looked at me and laughed, "Miss Jamaica fi who?"

Di Excitement ova!!

Browning come een, Blackie Tutus, vamoos!!!

I asked one of the sisters who was standing close to me if they didn't mean it when they said they wanted someone looking like them to be Miss Jamaica. They laughed in unison and with runny eyes and noses, some of them holding their crotches (crotch), they pointed at me and said, "me love, look pon wi hair style".

One of them had a hairstyle with all the colours of the rainbows and a few other shocking colours. Another had one called 'wings of the fallen angel'.

Yet another held on to her dress and said, "which beauty queen can wear dis as casual wear? Cause mi only wear dis come work". It had rhinestones and sequins all over with layers of laced frills attached. Her dress reminded me of the costume worn by the female ballerina in "Dance of the Unforgotten Swan". She went on to say, "mi have outfits for 24 sevens and mi never repeat and mi nuh wear freeness. So how yu fi represent me?"

Then she paused and said, "Mi love, di excitement ova, yuh stale now. Wi waan some fresh excitement now, ki ki ki ki ki ki ki keeh (laugh)."

I felt like cursing them, I wanted to fight, I felt my head swelling. I ended up saying, "Sisters and brothers, my skin will not promote the sales of bleaching creams nor my hair chemicals that makes natural hair go with the wind.

"The private parts of my body will not grace the calendars promoting B-Jays



and his nephew's rums, wines, spirits and other beverages.

"I will never wear rhinestone, sequined, satin and lace mermaid fitting dresses to the market, but I know I am black and I am proud."

My reign is over now, but don't believe I am now rich and famous.

Apart from the cash prize which all kinds of tax took away, the other prizes were a volvo, a house and a trip abroad. I gave Uncle Bertie the Volvo to operate as a taxi. Up to this day, its mysterious disappearance from the Senior Intelligence Command office cannot be accounted for. The police took it away from Uncle Bertie when he went to get a PPV license.

The house I got was situated in one of Jamaica's meadows. I couldn't afford to live in it, nor could I afford the upkeep of the acres of lawns that accompanied it, so I rented it to a lawyer and his family. When I went to collect the first month's rent, I was handed papers that said he was the legal owner.

The trip abroad was just a ticket, a ticket-booked to nowhere in particular. I tore it to pieces and mailed it to Dicky.

WOMEN F.Y.I.

- A mother's education is the single most important factor in keeping her family and her children alive.
- In Kenya, for every 1,000 babies born to mothers with no education, 109 children under five are lost. This compares to 72 for mothers with primary education and 64 for those with secondary education.
- If women in Bangladesh were to stop having children when they wanted, 72 per cent of maternal deaths among older women would be averted.
- Women with seven years education tend to marry four years later, and have 2.2 fewer children than those with no formal education. Educated women in Africa are four times more likely to use contraception than their uneducated sisters.
- Women are responsible for 70 per cent of food production in Africa, as well as child-rearing and housework. Because of the African woman's burden she is more likely to take her daughters out of school to help her at home. Girls out of school are likely to marry younger and have more children. Birth spacing reduces the women's burden and so helps break this cycle of sacrifice.

source: UNFPA



ANNALEE DAVIS SPEAKS A NEW LANGUAGE

Annalee Davis, artist, has made a lot of people uncomfortable. When her hard-hitting new-wave exhibition opened in Barbados last October, reactions were extreme.

Some viewers felt the artist had identified many of their own deepest emotions and experiences. Others were repulsed by her graphic images and 'aggressive frankness'. Very few left the exhibition untouched.

But the young Barbadian artist is committed to making her views known, and she is creating a new visual language to achieve this.

Her exhibition, entitled "Woman Scream Niche" was held at the Barbados Museum, and was easily the island's most outstanding and controversial exhibition of the year.

Davis' work explored and challenged preconceptions concerning race, class and gender. Many of her themes were universal - sexual harassment, segregation, alienation, prejudice and stereotyping. But she placed these within a Caribbean context. Canefields rolled through her compositions and palm trees dotted the horizons.

One of her works, "My friend said I was too white" reflects the anguish of the commonly held stereotype, that Barbadian whites had nothing to contribute outside of economics. But this is not true, Davis insists.

Perhaps the most controversial issue was the treatment of the nude figures, the exposed genitalia. She examines the woman as part virgin, part whore, the Queen of Heaven and the downfall of man, divided

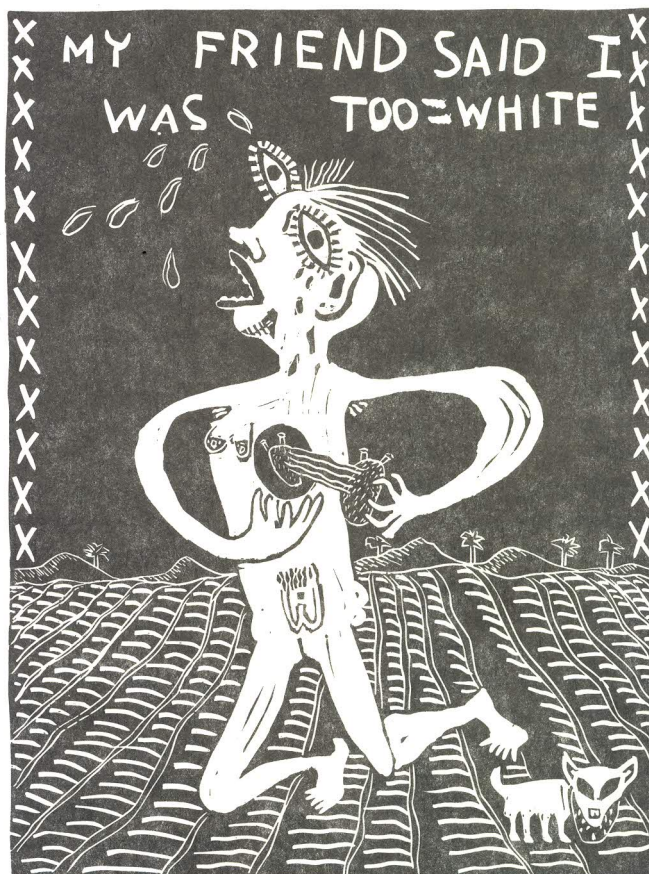
and condemned by her own sexuality. Man on the other hand is identified and glorified by his sexuality.

Some of the works were completed in the United States, where Davis earned her MFA from Rutgers University, while some of the works were done on her return to Barbados.

Her work illustrates that a culture is enriched by the diversity of its members and by the recognition of what it is that they all share.

Davis believes she has a message to deliver, and explains that she is trying to develop a language.

"It's important that we don't always borrow a language from somewhere else. We need to have enough faith in ourselves to create a language that can define who we are and set trends outside of Barbados, outside of the Caribbean, that we don't always have people coming in to define who we are for us," she said.



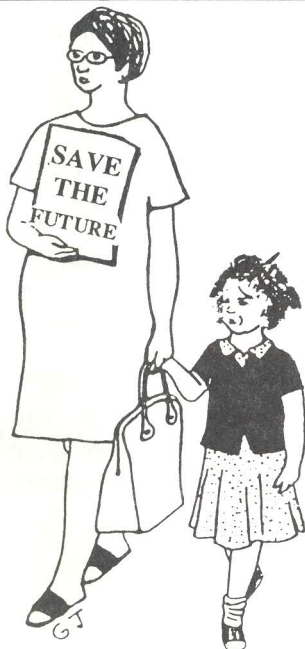
MY FRIEND SAID I WAS TOO WHITE

A heart wrenching experience of racial prejudice.

TOBACCO SMOKING

Women/children at risk

by Zadie Neufville



The World Health Organisation (WHO) has reported that despite publicity on the dangers of cigarette smoking, the number of smokers in Third World countries is on the rise.

A survey of local shops shows that the price of cigarettes is no deterrent to the habit. In fact, the cost of a week's supply of cigarettes at \$1 each and \$20 per packet, at a packet per day, equals the weekly wages of some people, eg. domestic helpers and some casual workers.

According to WHO, the consumption of tobacco increases 2.1 per cent each year in the developing world, and Jamaica is no exception. The increase, WHO says, could be attributed to advertising and promotion on the part of the tobacco industry.

But while the economic gains from the sale of cigarettes seem to be great, when weighted against the problems associated with the habit, it just is not worth it. The loss

in production hours, medical bills from cigarette-related diseases, fires caused by careless smokers and premature deaths weigh heavily against the profits.

Throughout the world, more than two million persons die prematurely each year from tobacco-related diseases. The WHO report states that in developed countries, 85 percent of all deaths from lung cancer and 75 per cent of deaths from bronchitis and emphysema are linked to cigarettes.

The worse part is, non-smokers are also at risk. Each year in the United States alone, the report said, 4,000 to 5,000 deaths are

*... nicotine
takes only seven
seconds to reach
the brain after it
has been
inhaled ...*

attributed to smoke inhalation. The report also states that non-smoking wives of husbands who smoke, recorded a higher rate of lung cancer than women married to non-smokers.

This underlines the fact that passive smoking is more than a nuisance, it is a health hazard. Children are the most unfortunate, and often become the unwilling victims of smoke inhalation, even while they are still in the womb. A mother who smokes, puts her unborn child at risk.

In pregnant mothers, smoking increases the

risk of spontaneous abortion; fetal and neonatal death; premature birth and low birth weight, which are closely related to perinatal morbidity and mortality.

The most dangerous substances in tobacco are carbon monoxide, nicotine and tars. Carbon monoxide is the same gas that is released from a motor vehicle exhaust system, and tars are cancer-causing agents. Nicotine, takes only seven seconds to reach the brain after it has been inhaled and is said to be as highly addictive as cocaine.

Research has shown that smoking can be associated with cancer of the lungs, the oral cavity, larynx, the trachea and bronchia, the oesophagus (wind pipe), the pancreas, the kidney and the bladder, among other disorders.

It is alarming to note that while the dangers of smoking have enjoyed widespread publicity, many would rather go without food rather than do without tobacco.

The time has come for the Jamaican authorities to take the health and well being of the public to heart. Think about the losses to the economy in terms of person-hours and make the move to place a ban on smoking in public places. Cigarette packages began carrying warnings only fairly recently in Jamaica; this is after years of campaigning by the Medical Association of Jamaica.

As the mothers of the nation, we too must make a stand and call for a ban on smoking in public places. By so doing, we are protecting not only ourselves but, our children, our future. Why should non-smokers be forced to inhale tobacco smoke and risk their health for the satisfaction of a selfish few?



Woman's Crisis Centre:

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

by Rhoma Tomlinson

Battered, raped and psychologically abused women will always find a listening ear and valuable advice at the Women's Crisis Centre in Kingston.

Set up against the background of increasing reports of domestic violence, particularly sexual abuse against women, the centre seeks to provide counselling and support to persons who find themselves in these situations.

*"... their silence
might be due to an
unwillingness to let go
of other social ties
(money, name, social
position) ..."*

Since its inception in February, 1984, the Centre has addressed the deep-rooted problems of battered, raped, and incest victims over age seventeen.

According to Senior Administrator of the Centre, Mr. Canute Thompson, women from various social backgrounds seek counselling at the Centre, with the predominant group being the "lower middle class".

He was quick to point out, however, that this predominance was not an indication that women from more prestigious backgrounds did not suffer similarly. He suggested that their silence might be due to an unwillingness to let go of other social ties (money, name, social position) or their ability to seek help elsewhere.

It is often hard to determine the background

of victims initially, as they were usually dealt with on an anonymous basis. Identification was usually determined only when the victim visited the Centre. This, Mr. Thompson said, remains one of the organisation's major policies as "some people's concern was normally somebody to talk to, they do not always want us to get involved".

He pointed out, however, that this anonymity was not always possible as counsellors sometimes needed to examine the victim's self-esteem which, he said, was almost always negatively affected by these experiences.

Are cases of domestic abuse more prevalent in married or single status homes? Most cases dealt with at the Centre involve unmarried couples. However, the question of whether victims were married or single was not given status, the Crisis Centre Senior Administrator claimed, as "we operate with a definition which is, do they have a partner living with them or not?"

"The only relevance of the person being legally married or not is in relation to the action the woman might want to take through the courts if she decides to leave...what would she be entitled to in terms of maintenance or other benefits due to her as a wife."

The emotional state of the victims, especially those raped and molested by relatives are paramount, he claimed, as most persons were ambivalent, unable to think straight and usually had no where to go or no one to turn to. This is what is usually pinpointed, he noted.

Desperate victims who need immediate relief from their situations are often offered temporary abode at the Centre's Shelter. Having begun in 1988, the Shelter has served as a secure haven for victims "to sort themselves out". Built to facilitate eight persons at any one time, the Shelter is

situated in Kingston "at a classified address, not disclosed to members of the public".

This, Mr. Thompson claimed, was so for obvious reasons as: "The security of the women who are sheltered there is the main concern, their spouses may want to get to them and take them back into the situation, or be abusive to them..."

He described the Shelter as "a transition house which gives battered persons some time to reflect and make plans where necessary."

Access to the Shelter can only be done through the Centre, however, as persons would need to make consultation through the 24 hour counselling service. Consequently, their situation would be assessed and if needs be, they would be sent to the Shelter.

*"Many of the men
who beat their wives,
do so in daylight
consciousness...so I
don't think that drugs
play a significant
role."*

It was not always smooth sailing, the Senior Administrator said, as there were victims who "needed to get out of their situation but at the same time did not want to".

He cited the case of a woman who lived in her spouse's home and had nowhere to go.

"There are instances where the woman is given a total package, that of mother,

housewife, lover and beating stick. It is difficult for her to separate them and if she is going to deal with the question of being beaten she is going to lose everything..." There are others, he pointed out, who begin to question whether they are still loved by spouses and also their own feelings for the man.

He attributed the reluctance of most women "to them feeling trapped as once they leave the home, the spouses come back to beg for another chance", swearing that love will be better the second time around. Of course, the cycle usually repeats itself, he said. Economic dependence on the man is usually another factor.

...there were a few instances where men, who violently abuse women called the centre seeking help...

Mr. Thompson knocked the general feeling that men usually abuse women while under the influence of drugs. He saw it as "nothing more than his own decision to do so". "Many of the men who beat their wives, do so in daylight consciousness...so I don't think that drugs play a significant role."

Asked whether there was help for these men, Mr. Thompson cited education as their greatest need as "a relationship is a context in which persons will need some kind of coaching in order to handle it in a non-destructive way".

Examining the trauma experienced by rape victims, Mr. Thompson disclosed that despite popular belief: "The greater number of the cases of rape is carried out by persons known to the victim. This is why it is difficult to take legal proceedings for two reasons. First, the victim may or may not have had some sexual relation with the person before and the presumption that the society operates under is that once you say yes, you cannot again say no. This also raises the question of credibility."

The second issue: "Society was not likely

"... it is a blow to his ego to find that his wife goes to somebody else to seek help."

to believe a girl who says this man who takes me to work everyday or who works in the office everyday, raped me... Who is going to believe that?" The burden of proof, he said, is great on the victim.

Surprisingly, it was disclosed that there were a few instances where men, who violently abused women, called the Centre seeking help for themselves. He related instances where night counsellors had received calls from men complaining of their "uncontrollable compulsion to beat their spouses".

There are some men who, after finding out that their spouses have sought counselling, "attempt to appease their own disappointment by admitting that something might be wrong".

This Mr. Thompson claimed, is usually done because "it is a blow to his ego to find that his wife goes to somebody else to seek help. However, these instances were not many.

Answering questions about the type of counselling given to incest victims, Mr. Thompson said the aim was to incorporate the hurt in a manner that would reduce its destructiveness to the person's future.

"We are entering the person's experience at a point where they have accumulated some amount of hurt...our concern at that point is to enable them to address their thoughts to what has happened and to make the experience something they can live with...

"Since it is something that cannot be undone, there is a question of how far they can put it away from themselves and proceed to live a normal life" he said.

Mr. Thompson noted that since persons came in as victims, the Centre enabled them to transform these experiences into good

use, forgetting it, using it to help someone else, using it in a victorious way so it does not continuously keep them victims. This, he said, was the Centre's ultimate aim.

What are the effects of domestic abuse on victims? While some persons recover from their experiences, some never do! For those who recover, the process might be very long.

"In the case of incest, one of the end products might be that the victim becomes a frigid wife, as sex is always a reminder of a painful experience." Mr. Thompson pointed out that other problems might arise, as the men might feel that their women are not giving themselves freely during intercourse. 

My Small Corner *cont'd from pg. 6*

The Dream

Frustrated by my humanness
and saddened by the separation
of life from your tortured body
I rocked with sobs and felt
myself travel over rough paths in
a carriage of sleep.

And there you were again
in evergreen meadows
as right as rain sprinkling flowers
you were beautiful, happy, perfect
and assured that you had completed
on earth's plane your work
to teach me that life is
forever manifested only through love

The smile from your eyes
like light rays
penetrated my body and mind
destroying doubt and pain.

I awakened filled with understanding
and love.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Statistics provided by the Women's Crisis Centre shows the level of abuse meted out to women by men through Rape, Incest and Domestic Violence. A glance at these statistics over a five year period confirms that despite the efforts of women's organisations, "the fairer sex" continues to live in an increasingly male-created violent situation.

Year	Rape	Incest	Domestic Violence
1987	40	0	30
1988	68	16	83
1989	84	19	138
1990	140	35	135
1991	66	10	91

Statistics for 1991 were recorded between the period January to June.

Amidst the police's report that the incidences of rape is on the decrease, the statistics do not actually reflect this.

The following was compiled by the Police Rape Unit.

Year	Reported Cases	Solved Cases
1986	910	421
1987	1007	479
1988	1118	508
1989	1090	521
1991	unavailable	unavailable

The police has said, however, that a large number of cases go unreported for many reasons. NB. Sistren is aware of the difference between the police report of a decrease in rape cases and the statistics provided.

Cancer of the Cervix

Cancer of the cervix is the most common form of cancer in Jamaica, this according to the Cancer Society of Jamaica. The chances of getting this disease are increased in women who become sexually active at an early age; from having too many partners; practising poor hygiene and many pregnancies.

The disease may lie dormant within the lining membrane of the neck of the womb, but as it spreads, it is extremely deadly. The only cure then, is perhaps by radiation.

When discovered early, cancer of the cervix can be cured by proper treatment. Early detection can be made by a pap test (papicolaou test). This is done by scraping a small amount of mucous secretion from the neck of the womb, and testing it.

All women should have this test done regularly.. at least once every year. The pap test or pap smear, is painless, harmless, easy to do, and is a very important test for the sexually active women, and all women over 35 years.

This simple test can be done at any family planning clinic or at the offices of the Jamaica Cancer Society. They are in Kingston, at 16 Lady Musgrave Road; in Mandeville, at the Hargreaves Memorial Hospital and in Montego Bay at the Calvary Educational Centre, Corindaldi Avenue. Tests can also be done on the Centre's mobile clinics or at your private doctor.

(Information courtesy of the Jamaica Cancer Society, 16 Lady Musgrave Road, Kingston 5.)

A Healthy Environment Starts at Home

Changing our habits is difficult. Especially when it means getting rid of some of the things we say, make our jobs easier. But while we cannot stop large manufacturers from polluting our waters, air and the earth in general over night, we can certainly cut back on some of the toxins we spend our hard earned dollars on.

Start with the easiest things first. Newspapers, glass bottles and cans can be recycled and reused. Petroleum-based household chemicals such as cleaners and degreasers, many of these come as paints, polishes, cleaners, glues, correction fluids and thinners. They evaporate quickly, releasing toxic fumes in the air.

Aerosols too are a problem. Aside from the fact that the containers cannot be reused, they are long term pollutants. Every time you use an aerosol product, minute particles of the propellant - along with the polish, paint or hair-spray contaminate the air you breathe.

Some of the things you take for granted around your homes can be used instead of the expensive and toxic substances you now buy. Baking Soda or Borax, cleans and deodorizes. It also helps to cut down on the cost of soap powder. Introducing baking soda to the water you use for washing will increase the sudsing and cleansing power of the soap, by softening the water. It can also be used as a scouring powder.

Washing soda other wise called 'sodium carbonate' cuts grease and removes stains as well as disinfects; while vinegar cuts grease and freshens. Borax can be used as a substitute for bleach. Use $\frac{1}{2}$ cup borax for each washload to whiten whites and brighten colours; or if possible non-chlorine bleach.

Sister Lillian Speaks On:

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Having a steady and intimate relationship means caring, sharing, and healthy communication with a common understanding.

Many relationships have fallen or are falling apart. Why? Is it a matter of give and take, win or break? What do I want from you, or what do you want from me? Could it be work pressure cuddled up with late nights, that becomes a priority? Could it be a problem of personal hygiene less attended to; unpalatable meals; distaste of dress attitude; or could it be another relationship that you are more interested in? These are some of the many obstacles that, if not carefully handled, could lead to serious calamities in any relationship.

The art of making a relationship stable and meaningful is not very easy. It sometimes takes years for one partner to really get to know the other. You will also find, that as the relationship progresses, you will discover new things about each other. Things you may or may not like.

Having discovered these things, you should both be honest enough to admit it when things go wrong, and try to solve the problems. If you are able to do this, then there should be no problem. But this is not the end. You have to develop trust, and continue to work on this trust and your relationship overall. Learn to share your feelings with each other so that one can learn from the other.

Love at first sight? Ha Ha Ha!!! This is just emotional feeling. I don't believe this is possible. In any case if you feel you have fallen in love at first sight, then feel so by all means, but be rational.

After you have observed and searched each other to a point, (I say to a point, because one must bear in mind that there will be some things about each other that cannot be changed or will not change overnight) you

will learn to appreciate each other more. But never try to change anyone, we have to learn to accept each other as we are.

If it becomes necessary to change someone, then sadly, the relationship won't last.

Learning to accept your partner as him/herself will heighten the respect you have for each other. You can now look upon yourselves as role models, to your family, your community, and to the society.



CELEBRATION

Until the very moment that our naked bodies touched in that old brass bed that creaked in the insulated sunporch on Walker Road, I had no idea what I was doing there.

I had no idea what making love to another woman meant. I only knew, dimly, it was something I wanted to happen, and something that was different from anything I had ever done before.

I reached out and put an arm around Ginger, and through the scents of powder and soap and hand cream, I could smell the rising flush of her own spicy heat. I took her into my arms, and she became precious beyond compare. I kissed her on her mouth, this time with no thought at all. My mouth moved to the little hollow beneath her ear.

Ginger's breath warmed my neck and started to quicken. My hands moved down over her round body, silky and fragrant, waiting. Uncertainty and doubt rolled away from the mouth of my wanting like a great stone, and my unsureness dissolved in the directing heat of my own frank and finally open desire.

Our bodies found the movements we needed to fit each other. Ginger's flesh was sweet and moist and firm as a winter pear. I felt her and tasted her deeply, my hands and my mouth and my whole body moved against her. Her flesh opened to me like a peony and the unfolding depths of her pleasure brought me back to her body over and over again throughout the

night. The tender nook between her legs, moist and veiled with thick crispy dark hair.

I dove beneath her wetness, her fragrance, the silky insistence of her body's rhythms illuminating my own hungers. We rode each other's need. Her body answered the quest of my fingers, my tongue, my desire to know a woman, again and again, until she arched like a rainbow, and shaken, I slid back through our heat, coming to rest upon her thighs. I surfaced dizzy and blessed with her rich myrrh-taste in my mouth, in my throat, smeared over my face, and the loosening grip of her hands in my hair and the wordless sounds of her satisfaction lulling me like a song.

Once, as she cradled my head between her breasts, Ginger whispered, 'I could tell you knew how,' and the pleasure and satisfaction in her voice started my tides flowing again and I moved down against her once more, my body upon hers, ringing like a bell.

I never questioned where my knowledge of her body and her need came from. Loving Ginger that night was like coming home to a joy I was meant for, and I only wondered, silently, how I had not always known that it would be so.

Audre Lorde

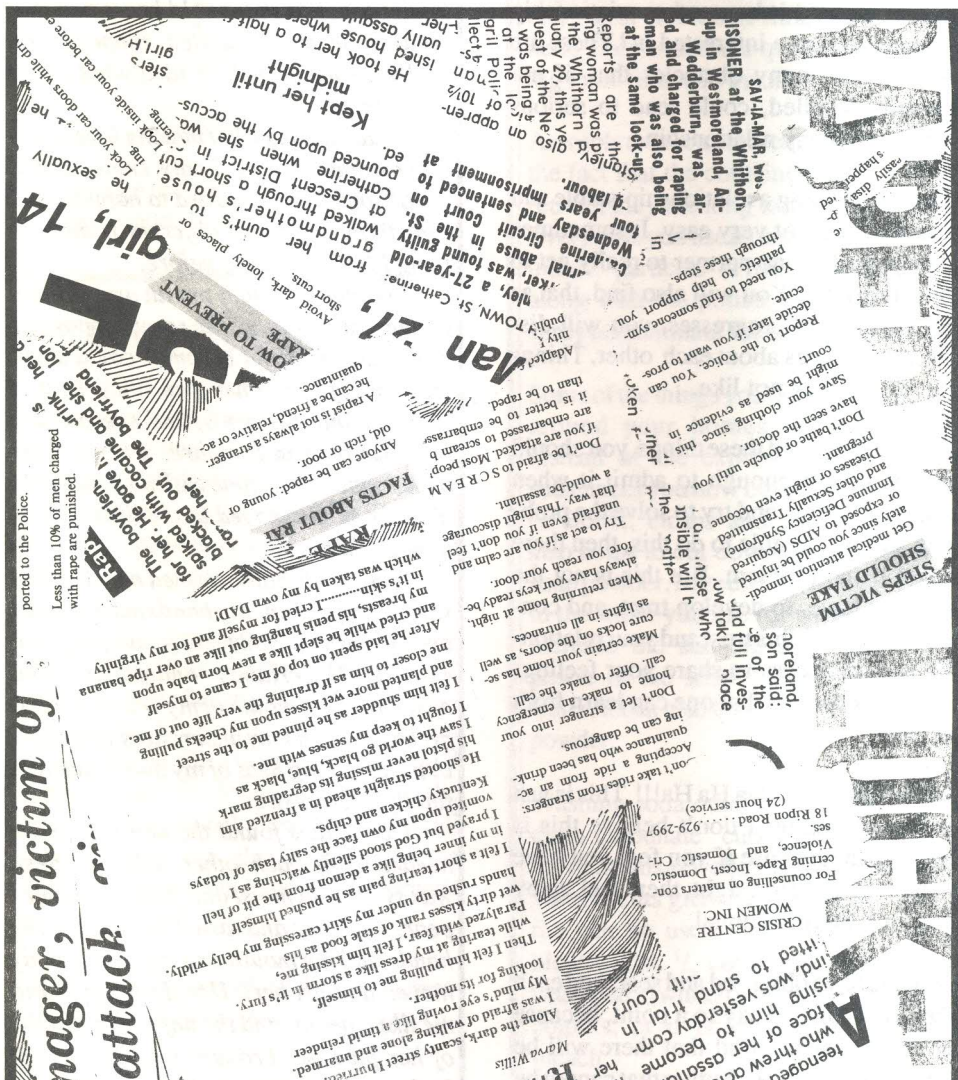
from *Zami: a new spelling of my name*,
Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1982

by Jo Eekhoff

In Arnis, you are trained to use a rattles with

"Confidence is key," Cherry says. She feels that when someone sees a fearful woman, they play on that fear. But as a woman develops the discipline to train her body, strengthen her muscles and her mind, she develops a sense of self-confidence as well.

Cherry appreciates Madame's concern for the well-being of her students. She kicks at her students until they learn the correct maneuvers. She makes sure their feet are planted firmly to the ground, even if it means toppling Madame from behind with a poke at the knees.



Minnette Wilson:

ATHLETE EXTRAORDINAIRE

An outstanding athlete, Minnette has won 16 medals in international competitions. In the 1988 paraplegic games in South Korea, Minnette broke the world record in the Javelin throw and was the only Jamaican athlete to return to the island with a medal.

She attributes her success to: her determination to succeed, the fact that she has accepted and come to terms with her disability, even though she has to try very hard to complete even the simplest of task; and having the courage to do whatever she wants despite the odds stacked against her. Having to do her daily household chores is just one of the many challenges she has to face.

"Things a normal person would take for granted is a tremendous effort for me," she says. "For example I find it impossible to push a trolley in the supermarket, or reaching something from a shelf. I have to get someone to do it for me."

Minnette was admitted to hospital at age eight and was not released until four years later.

Minnette was a victim of polio early in life. Polio is a viral disease which often attacks the nervous system or muscles of its victims. For many who contract the disease, it may mean death as a result of a failure of the respiratory system or many months in the 'iron-lung' (a machine to aid respiration). This happens when the muscles used during respiration fail. Those who suffered attacks on the nervous system, recovered so much easier; but the unfortunate ones whose muscles were attacked, suffered varying

Her eyes sparkle as she describes going through the obstacle course, without touching any of them.

degrees of paralysis. Some eventually walked again,...if they were lucky.

Minnette was admitted to hospital at age eight and was not released until four years later. She remembers feeling ill at the dinner table one evening and being sent to bed.

As the story goes, her mother took her to the Doctor where she was given medicine and sent home. However, the medicine did not work and her mother took her to see another doctor. That was when the disease was discovered.

The time she spent in the Linstead Hospital before being transferred to the Kingston Public Hospital were lonely ones, as she was isolated. She says that at that time, fear of the polio epidemic was running high among the health care personnel at the hospital. Those four years were spent in bed, as Minnette had lost the use of her legs and one arm. She was finally transferred to the Mona Rehabilitation Centre where the recovery began.

It was here that she was introduced to athletics. Minnette began playing basketball from her wheelchair, in 1986 at the age of 24. She says the coach at the Mona Rehab invited her to get involved in the activities and with that she began with the shotput, track and salaam obstacle race. The shotput is a steel ball weighing between four and eight pounds. The trick is to get the ball as far away from the athlete as possible. The person who throws the ball the farthest, is the winner. The sport re-

quires great strength, which is one of the reasons why Minnette lifts weights.

The salaam obstacle race is one in which the athlete is required to propel his or her wheelchair through obstacles on the track within a given time. Her eyes sparkle as she describes going through the obstacle course, without touching any of them. The joy of the race, she enthuses, is competing inside the time allotted.

Minnette's involvement in sport has taken her all over the world as Jamaica's representative in international competitions. She has visited Canada, Brazil, Holland, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and South Korea.

"I enjoy competing," she says excitedly, "but I think most of all I enjoy meeting people, knowing places, learning how other people live. It is also recreational therapy."

According to the Extraordinary Athlete, sports is one of the things she gets most enjoyment from. But there have been disappointments. Perhaps her biggest to date, is the response of the sporting fraternity to the successes of the paraplegic team in international competitions. Her eyes fill with tears as she recalls her most disappointing experience to date, when at the 1988 Careras Sports Awards Ceremony,

She feels that not enough attention is being paid to the team by the sporting community

only the paraplegic team and not individuals of the team was presented with an award.

Her disappointment was made worse by the fact that despite being the only member of

Women like pain during sex, say more than half of the persons interviewed in a recent street survey.

The forty persons polled by SISTREN, were exploring the myth that women wanted rough, painful sex. The 20 men and 20 women candidly aired their thoughts and experiences for SISTREN Magazine.

Eleven men, or 55 per cent of male interviewees felt that women were masochists, delighting in painful intercourse, while 60 per cent or 12 women said this was true of other women, but denied loving pain.

But only one female admitted to enjoying the pain, while only two men could supply details to back up claims that women like painful

EXPLORING THE MYTH:

Women want to feel pain during the sex act...

by Candace

intercourse. One man recalled that his partner who bled during the act, said "if that had not happened, the relationship could not be considered worthwhile."

On the flip side, only two of the 20 men admitted meting out rough sex, while only five women had actually experienced painful intercourse.

Word on the streets, however, is that women "wanted it hard and stiff", and that a man would be seen as "saaf" if he could not "hangle de wuk".

Interpreting the street lingo for SISTREN, one man said a male who was "saaf" did not have the techniques to please women and could not maintain an erection.

Reports are that the ghetto girl accuses men of being "saaf" to save face. It is her only

recourse, says one woman, to the bragging man who can claim he has "damaged her".

Sixty per cent or 24 interviewees saw sexual masochism as actions of the working class ghetto dwellers, but only 30 per cent or 12 of the respondents said it spanned every social class.

According to Fluff, the working class woman is more expressive and less inhibited. "...the down town girl, she just rail up and everything. She know wha fe do fe mek you feel good".

But in a blunt confession, less than half the men interviewed said men who thought women were into painful intercourse were ego-tripping. One respondent claimed that it was easier to give pain than to provide pleasure during sex, so many men opted for

the next best thing by "t'rowing dung de haggany".

Some even went as far as to say that men mistook a grimace, groan or gasp during the act, and often did not know if women were in the throes of ecstasy or excruciating pain.

Experts list education, socialization, exposure and power, to the need to experience or give pain during sex.

One Psychologist suggests that for some persons, sex is warfare with its own terms of reference. The more agony and brutality one inflicts, he says, the more power that person wields. Some men use their financial power to get their own way with a dependent partner, he says. And being in a disadvantaged position, the women may "shet har eye for the greater glory".

The Women's Resource and Outreach Centre

by Carmen Hanson

There is help available for poor women in need of help and advice. The Women's Resource and Outreach Centre (WROC) is a project of the organisation of Women for Progress. It opened its doors to the women of Jamaica as an International Women's Day Gift in March 1973.

At the beginning, the organisation operated out of one room at 9 Central Avenue, Kingston 10, until 1985 when the offices were removed to 47 Beechwood Avenue, Kingston 5, where it still exists.

They offer medical, legal and social services to women and children up to age 12 years. On Mondays, the children's medical clinic is held between 3:30 and 6:00pm, and on Wednesdays and alternate Thursdays, the adult clinic is open between 3:30 and 6:00pm.

The Family planning clinics are held every Thursday between 9:30am and 12 noon.

On the last Wednesday of each month, there is a gynaecological clinic held between 3:30 and 6:00pm at a minimal charge of \$20.

The legal clinic is open on Saturdays between the hours of 1:00 and 3:00pm, and offers a wide range of expert advice on all matters including employment rights; property rights; child maintenance; deed poll application and advice on motor vehicle accidents.

The social worker is available for consultation on Saturdays between 10 am and 1pm. She provides advice to women on specific problems. Referrals are often made to other organisations and institutions, if the service is not available at WROC.

There is also a thrift shop where new and

used clothing, school books and uniforms are collected and given to very needy cases, or sold at a minimal cost. The Thrift Shop also facilitates WROC's assistance to women in emergencies such as floods and hurricanes.

Other services include a JAMAL class for persons interested in learning to read and write. There is also a sewing project, the first course runs until December.

Monthly educational sessions on social and political issues affecting women and the family are held at the centre. The meetings are open to all women. The topics include personal hygiene, teenage parenthood, teenagers and parent relationship, nutrition, child care, women's rights and man/woman relationships.

Despite the wide range of services offered by the WROC, the organisation is aware that it cannot solve the problems of all Jamaica's oppressed women. With your support, however, they hope to assist in

whatever way they can. The WROC invites you to continue to do your part:-

- Give donations of clothing, school books, furniture, utensils and material for our thrift shop;
- Pledge and give financial assistance;
- Provide supplies and material for our existing services;
- Give your time and advice in our existing services;
- Call WROC, -47 Beechwood Avenue, Kingston 5. Phone 929-6945 & 929-8873;
- Tell us where you can be contacted for your contribution.

You can also become a part of WROC, and show your concern in another practical way and strengthen the struggle for the betterment of women.



Violence Against Women

Violence against women is one of the leading health problems worldwide. Until women are free from personal violence their role in healing the planet will be limited.

Fact Sheet

- * A recent women's conference in China reported, that when participants were asked what was the worst aspect of being female—"fear of male violence" was the almost unanimous response.
- * Women constitute 95 per cent of all victims of violence in France
- * Wife beating is the leading source of injuries to women in the United States with a woman being beaten every 15 seconds.

- * A female rape victim will be imprisoned for adultery in Pakistan unless she can provide four adult male witnesses who will substantiate her charge.
- * Worldwide, from 30 to 65 per cent of female homicide are committed by male family members
- * In Quito, Ecuador, over 80 per cent of women interviewed had been beaten by their partner
- * In two years (1986-87), 18,000 cases of wife beating were reported to Sao Paulo, Brazil police
- * In Peru, 70 per cent of all crimes reported to the police are of women being beaten by their partner

Information courtesy of the Family Peace Centre

"W

e are different women, (but) women nonetheless." Women's reality is mediated by class, race, age, physical endowment, geographic location.

These differences must not be ignored, they determine our professional perspectives. For example, the perspective of a professional woman who is part of an institution like the World Bank or IMF, or a government, will be different from that of a poor woman.

And yet there are experiences which transcend these differences:

- The exploitation of our time and labour - in unremunerated housework, subsistence agriculture and voluntary work in our communities;
- The often conflicting demands of our multiple roles as caretakers, workers and community organisers;
- Our primary 'responsibility' for taking care of others;
- Our concern for relationships;
- Our daily struggles for resistance as we seek to ensure survival for our families or dignity for ourselves in a world that is often harsh and hostile to humankind;
- The exploitation of our sexuality by men, the media and the economy;

World Women's

*The Real World for
Women: Political,*

*Economic, Educational and Cultural - Testimony
from WAND's Peggy Antrobus - Nov 10, 1991*

Congress for a

Healthy Planet

- Our vulnerability to violence - psychological as well as physical;
- Our 'otherness' alienation, and exclusion from decision-making at all levels.

No doubt we can add to the list.

These commonalities reflect values of:

- Cooperation
- Resistance to hierarchies

cont'd on pg 42

THERE IS LIFE AFTER

by Eulalee Thompson

Edna Robotham took a shower one morning as she did every day just before going to work.

Only, there was a difference that morning. She will never forget that day. For some reason, she looked across the bathroom and into a mirror hanging on the wall opposite. She saw a small indentation just above the right breast, and wondered what it was. She placed a finger on the spot and felt a small lump.

"I didn't hesitate after this. I rang the doctor and told him. He said to come see him right away," Edna said.

A few days later, the doctor confirmed what Edna had suspected— she had cancer—"the Big C". The entire right breast would have to be removed. The mastectomy was done a few days later.

A few days later, the doctor confirmed what Edna had suspected— she had cancer—"the Big C"

Breast cancer is the second most common form of cancer in women in Jamaica, but it causes more deaths than cervical cancer, the most common form.

According to the 1990 Social and Economic Survey of Jamaica, last year, the Jamaica Cancer Society, on Lady Musgrave Road in Kingston, screened 7,020 female



clients, diagnosed 218 breast problems and 18 cases of cancer of the breast.

Fortunately for Edna, the cancer had not spread too far to areas outside the breast tissue so during the operation, only the cancerous tissue was removed without touching the muscle under the arm.

That was ten years ago and technically, Edna is considered cured, but she must do a check-up once a year for the rest of her life.

While breast cancer cannot be prevented, medical experts advise women to do monthly breast self-examination (BSE) to detect lumps early and prevent any spread.

Edna, now chairperson for the Jamaica Reach to Recovery, a support group for breast cancer patients also endorses this.

She advises women to begin the examination in the shower (since, when the skin is wet and slippery it is easy to feel any lump or thickening) then move gently over every part of each breast while raising the arm on the side being checked.

"It was a traumatic experience but if you approach it with a negative attitude you are going to have all kinds of problems...I tried very hard to be positive."

She remembers that at that time, with two teenage children and a husband, her sudden illness loomed over the family like a millstone.

But, she had complete attention of her children and a supportive husband.

"He was very worried because I suppose as you say cancer, its the Big C, every body gets uptight about it...(But) he soon got over the initial shock and the operation didn't change him in any way."

But inevitably Edna had to rely on herself— her resilience and awareness of her responsibility as a parent— to pull her through.

"When you have two children and a husband you don't just give up and say it is the end of the world... I couldn't give in."

Life after mastectomy included mild, though uncomfortable exercises for the right arm, by lifting the arm above the head.

*... inevitably Edna
had to rely on herself
... to pull her
through*

Edna said the exercises had to be done as soon as possible after surgery or else full mobility of the arm muscle would never be regained.

Of course, the hardest part of after-surgery life is getting used to having only one breast, but Edna could. Regardless of what she felt then she could laugh about the experience now.

"During your various health problems, you realise how many parts of you are just spare parts you can do without," she quipped.

A MASTECTOMY

Women have the option of two different types of breast prosthesis, individually measured to fit for size. One of the prostheses is made of silicone, feels like a real breast and even has a nipple. This is more expensive than the other type which is fitted in the bra, but just as effective in filling the gap.

Some amount of counselling is necessary for the woman at this stage. Mentally, she must adjust herself to the new apparatus and different appearance.

"You have to get used to the fact that you are not going to look the same when you take it off... but don't hide it and don't be ashamed."

After only eight weeks, Edna thought that she was ready to reappear in the working world. She was a kindergarten teacher and she knew that further adjustments would have to be made.

She couldn't lift anything heavy with the right side, and as she worked with small children, it meant that she would never be able to pick them up again.

The after-surgery adjustment continued at home as well. When working in the kitchen, Edna is careful, even now, not to get burned or injured on that side of the body as she says, after the surgery, that side of the body would have been weakened and more susceptible to infections.

But she took all the adjustments in stride and it was easier with help from family,

*... she has only
heard of one case
where the marriage
was dissolved...*

*"There is a close link in their minds
between the breasts and
their sexuality...."*

friends and co-workers. Life after the operation was never a bore for her. No, she started swimming for exercise and later her children persuaded her to start playing badminton.

Now, at age 57 years, and with a wealth of experience behind her, Edna spends a lot of her time visiting and counselling women before, and after they have had mastectomies or lumpectomies.

According to Edna, those women go through serious mental trauma. There is a close link in their minds, she said, between the breasts and their sexuality, so their greatest fear is whether they will be able to perform as well afterwards.

They are also worried that they might not be totally accepted by their partners and if they will be less of a woman—or a whole person afterwards.

While talking to patients at the bedsides, Edna tries to calm these fears. She explains that in the 'Jamaica Reach to Recover', (an organisation of over 100 members), she has heard of only one case where the marriage was dissolved because the husband could not deal with the woman's appearance.

Generally, she says, partners are supportive.

"I believe if you discuss things together and thing positively it will make a difference," Edna says.

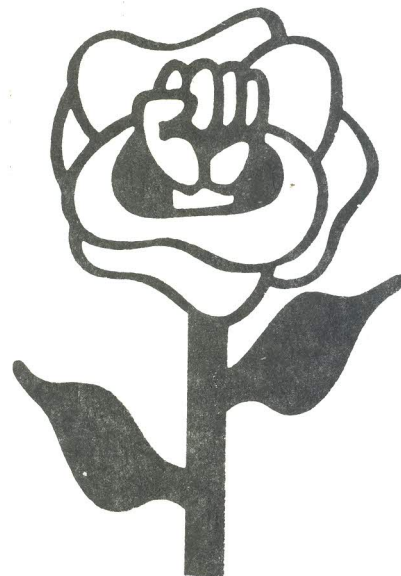
The disfigurement of the body is also discussed with the patients. This she prefers to

do with the partners and children present, so that the family can act as a support group.

"You have to tell them that there might be disfigurement, some can't bear the thought of looking—the skin might not heal as well, if the person has keloid skin, but this is not something to dwell on."

The fears are sometimes greater in younger women who have not yet started a family, or established permanent relationships, but Edna encourages them not to see a dismal future. Her very happy, normal life, Edna believes, makes a difference to the patient.

"They like to see somebody who had a mastectomy, walking on two feet and looking good before they have surgery...it really gives them a boost," she said.



The Question of Legal Reform

Can changes in the law relating to sexual offences reduce the incidence of violence against women? Would a separate law relating to domestic violence help victims?

These questions have been discussed in public fora during this past year, more than ever before, on television and radio talk-shows, in workshops, seminars and recently at the Regional Conference on Sexual Violence, held in Jamaica in September. Yet cases of sexual violence continue to be reported and there is every reason to look at the causes of the problem and to highlight these on November 25, the International Day Against Violence Against Women.

Legal reform is very important in the area of sexual violence. By acknowledging in law that a crime has been committed when sexual violations occur, we are making a first step to removing the very gender inequalities which underlie sexual violence, - inequalities which are imbedded in our societies. This was recognized by the 100 participants at the first Regional Meeting on Women Violence and The Law, held earlier this year. However, legal reform alone does not ensure social reform. Changes in the law are limited by the gender ideology underpinning rape and its relationship to power relations between men and women.

The meeting was attended by participants from every country in the region: lawyers, magistrates, judges, police officers, counsellors, rape crisis personnel, women's desk personnel, researchers, popular educators. Their normally very different approaches to the problem of sexual violence (from Courtroom judge to feminist activists) created a rich mix of viewpoints. It enabled the participants to share experiences and strategies, and develop a more integrated approach to dealing with sexual violence. The diversity of participants was a strong point of the meeting, which was organized by Caribbean Association for Feminist Re-

search & Action (CAFRA), United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (UN-ECLAC), and the Trinidad Rape Crisis Centre.

A major recommendation coming out of the three-day meeting was that while we work to prevent sexual violence, we must at the same time question the prevailing gender stereotypes and ideology in our various societies. Society's response and insensitivity to sexual violence is determined by gender biases - assumptions about male/female roles. Police "hands-off" attitudes to domestic violence, sensational media reports of tragic cases of abuse, all reflect a lack of concern about the issue, based on social attitudes and cultural norms. We must question these.

Progressive lawyers were challenged to demystify the law, and get involved in legal reform as an outcome of the meeting. Women's organisations were also chal-

lenged to help develop ways of sensitizing police, policy-makers and legal personnel on gender biases. A major recommendation was that public education at all levels must be done to sensitize people on the gender-related causes of violence. Popular education programmes need to go hand in hand with our campaigns for legal reform. Popular education should be implemented in the community, in schools, in churches and with justice departments. Full use of the media should be made in this area.

How do we implement such public education? The participants felt a key mechanism is strategic coordination between crisis centres, women's bureaux, the police, women's organisations non-government organisations (NGO's), and commissions on the status of women. Too many of us have been working very hard, but in our own little corner.

(information provided by CAFRA)

One-Third Jamaican Women Without Children

One third of all Jamaican women between the ages of 15 and 49 is childless. This was the finding of surveys carried out by the National Family Planning Board and published in the 1989 Jamaica Contraceptive Prevalence Survey. The results suggest that childbearing begins relatively late in Jamaica.

According to the report, over 80 per cent of women under the age of 20 had never had children while nearly two fifths of those in the 20 to 24 age group are childless. It was found that women living in the rural areas are less likely to be childless.

The report also states that women with higher levels of education tend to have less children than those without and that religion had little or no impact on the levels of childlessness.

Only two per cent of the women interviewed in the survey had children before the age of 15, however, 37 per cent had at least one child while in their teenage years. There was a reported decline in the average age at first birth for women over 25, while the average age for women 45 years of age was 24 years. Between the ages of 25 and 34, the average age at first birth was 20 years.

With reference to interval between births, it was found that Jamaican women preferred long intervals. Over 70 per cent of those interviewed preferred intervals of three years or more. Seven per cent of the interviewees were found to be pregnant, while four per cent wanted to be.

Most women reported a preference for small families.

FROM THE CONFERENCE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Elaine Hewitt Speaks:

"I am Elaine Hewitt from WAND (Women & Development) Barbados. From India via Barbados, so I am a Caribbean Woman. I want to thank the organizers for inviting me to tell my story.

Jamaica says "Out of Many One People" that is what we are, **Women** (one people) from many nations. Like the flowers in the room all together making a beautiful bouquet. We women are not anti-man, but we are **Pro Women** and we want our Place in the sun.

The featured speaker said 'We women are responsible for the behaviour of men.' I say we give men life, we nurture men and guide them, but the Society with its attitudes of male dominance macho image that leads our sons in the usual role actions.

The Minister of Justice spoke about restraining orders but the Police are mainly men and that answers that. He said women can say no, but men feel NO is maybe and sex is dessert or payment for a night out. He says militant women, educated women are putting Caribbean men in crisis, to that I say a MAN of QUALITY is never intimidated by a woman seeking equality.

I am a battered woman.
Can you hear my cry of pain?
Is there anybody out here
to help me hide my shame.

Do you care when I holler?
Do you care I look a sight?
I am your Mother, Sister, Daughter
I am your Lover, Child, your Wife
Is there anybody out there
I can run to, day or night
Is there anybody/anyone who care about
my plight
Or is my life one of constant fight, fight,
fight.
I am a Lover not a Fighter
I am a Woman not a man
Violence terrifies me



Dr. Beverly Manley, Consultant to the Bureau of Womens Affairs addresses participants at the third workshop for the Elimination of Violence Against Women held on Nov. 25 at the Jamaica Conference Centre to mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Won't you take my hand
Help me, lead me, love me,
Don't abuse me. Let me go
I am a Loving Woman
I want the World to know..

I wrote this poem in 1988 but in fact I have been writing that in my heart and soul for twenty years. You see I was a victim of the conspiracy of silence. YES! That is what keeps violence being perpetuated against us - because **We keep Silent**.

Can you imagine I claim to be a woman of conscience and I was not going to give you my intimate details - even after ten years of Freedom - these Memories **Still Hurt**.

I had long hair my husband would grab it wrap it round his hand and bash my head on the wall - I often became unconscious. Many nights I slept under the mango tree. I was ashamed to tell my friends, but they knew (I thought none knew). I had no family in my Island to run to.

Why do We keep Quiet?

I am the victim. I am the abused. I have nothing to hide; to be ashamed of, but it is

not true. I am to blame, I am dirty - I am dirt. It is true marriage has problems, its **Ups and Downs**. Woman wants Respect, Equality, Love and Affection. No one has the right to use violence physical, verbal, psychological, emotional violence. Men use violence to keep their place. Violence is not to be tolerated.

Woman in and out of marriage don't agree to be man's punching bag to release his frustration on because he can't beat his boss, his friends, his life, his shortcomings - so he beats his wife and kids. So it's **Power - Domination and Keep Women in their Place**.

Do you understand, gender domination, power domination? Woman is male property - Government, Military, Poverty, the I.M.F., law, the Police, the Churches, - the schools have taught this, that man must dominate woman.

It's Power over - subjection - that women are nothing.

I took one year to counsel myself that I am important - next to GOD. I am the most precious thing on this earth.

Elain Hewitt Speaks *cont'd from page 27*

Ifelt dirty, used, misused and abused. Thank God I had some good friends to reassure me, and give me their solidarity, love and a shoulder to cry on. But you can't cry forever - you must pick yourself up, dust yourself off and start all over again.

It is this CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE that is killing us. You have to put your money where your mouth is. In my case, no money. I walked out of my home with my clothes in a bed-sheet. All my life I gave my husband my pay cheque so I had no money. I worked and educated him. My husband was an educated black man, a disciple in the Black Power like Malcolm X, Patrice Lumumba etc., yet he believed in women as second place and in her place.

Woman become militant when men became brutal. Him standing alone is a threat. She is crazy crying out for another man. Woman can't live without a man - these myths damage us. But the most important person we have to hold on to is ourselves our God and/or our real friends.

So please ladies do yourself a favour, stand up and say "NO" to "VIOLENCE," violence stops with me, I will not be a party to violence anymore.

I have spoken on domestic violence but rape is a common component and it's not a sex crime but a crime of violence and violation of power. I have lived it. I heard my sisters stories - we cry together. I say as Bob Marley - "No Woman Nuh Cry". There is sexual harassment child abuse, so much violence, too much.

What can we do to help women - to give women hope - give them life.

We have Woman Power - Voting Power - we can network and stand together in solidarity.

Join Women's Movements - Join Crisis Centres; Protest - March - Write letters - Stand Up and be counted.

Talk is cheap - Take Action Now.

Let no more women cry in shame and pain

Please hold hands and in your hearts promise to do something good for yourself - NOW - please promise in your hearts to do something good for other Women.

Reach Out!!!!

MY OTHER LIFE

*I wore our secret
like a stolen garment
and curled into its
quiet moments when
angry stares swirled
cold around me*

*I trapped your touch
side
and waited
like a fugitive
until the cruel hours
tripped
on the edge of dawn
and tumbled into
silence*

*then I'd unleash my
memories of you
and dare to smile
as they lift me
eagerly
into another day
where you wait with
my other life
stored safely in your
eyes*

Profile *cont'd from page 3*

Hanson, who felt that the organisation made huge strides during Marion's term as Acting Co-ordinator.

"There is still a lot more I can do for Sistren, but the Collective won't let me. However, I still maintain a close relationship with the members and offer to advise and assist when necessary," she said.

"As the Co-ordinator of the Research Department," she continued, "my aim is to make the department into a resource centre for Caribbean Women."

Marion lives for the day when she can invite every and anyone to Sistren's Research Department: the centre which

provides information on women's issues; women's failures and successes in written form, on audio or video cassette.

When Auntie Rose is not working she watches TV or 'take-in' a good movie. She loves taking the kids out, organising their birthday parties - just being there for them.

She enjoys challenging people, helping them to 'reach for the sky'. It is her belief that nothing is too difficult to accomplish... And Sistren is no exception. She hopes that one day, very soon, the Collective will become more powerful and be a role model for the young in the Jamaican society, the Caribbean and the World.

Personal Notes *cont'd from page 3*

Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto). Honor, we said "good luck and break-a-leg" but we are so sorry to hear you actually broke your hand. Get well soon and enjoy your holiday from dish-washing.

MOVING ON: Carol Lawes, theatre artist of excellence member/co-ordinator of Groundwork Theatre Company - to her new post as Cultural Officer at the CARICOM Secretariat in Guyana. We miss you.

MOVING IN: as Groundwork's co-ordinator - Owen BLACKA Ellis. Well done!

CONDOLENCES to Joyce and Myrtle Thompson on the death of your grandmother.

AIDS/HIV INFECTIONS ON THE INCREASE

Jamaica recently reported over 700 HIV infected persons, and more than 250 persons with the disease AIDS. The sad reality is that most of those infected have been women.

This is yet another blow to us women, more fingers pointed in our direction, even as we try to assert ourselves in the world and win some respect from our men. But while the fingers are being pointed, the epidemic is spreading, and only responsible action on the part of both the male and female will have any effect on the problem.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that as of April 1991, there were 345,000 cases of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, (AIDS) worldwide. Taking into account under-diagnosis, under-reporting and delays in reporting the symptoms, WHO states, it has been estimated that more than one million adult cases of AIDS may have occurred since the disease was first discovered.

As of April this year, some eight to 10 million HIV infections may have occurred worldwide, in adults, and about one million children may have been born infected.

It is alarming to note, that while the incidence of HIV infection appears to be slowing in some industrialised countries, developing countries are showing increases, and the Caribbean is no exception.

In late 1988, WHO, using the "Delphi" survey method, predicted a possible total of

15-20 million adult HIV infections worldwide by the year 2000. Recent information, however, indicates approximately three million new HIV infections over the past three years. This suggests that the 1988 projection may be reached by the mid to late 1990's. WHO's current projection is a cumulative total of about 40 million HIV infections in men, women and children. The total previously projected by WHO, was 25-30 millions.

HIV Transmissions

WHO also estimates, that as of early 1991, about 70 per cent of global infections are estimated to have been spread by heterosexual relationships, that is sex between man and woman. It is projected that by the end of the century, 80 per cent of all HIV infections will result from heterosexual sex.

Three million Women Infected

With more than 3 million women estimated to be infected, the problem of the disease being passed on to the children becomes acute.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, as early as 1991, the cumulative total of adult infections had been estimated to be close to a million. WHO reports that there had been a marked increase in infection rate among women of child bearing age, and this has resulted in a rise in perinatal transmission.

The Condom

The condom will now have to be seen in a new light. This piece of rubber may now be the difference between life and death. The arrival of AIDS has brought one positive factor to the fore, that is a possible increase in the use of the condom. The fact is that the condom is the only available protection against the transmission of HIV during sexual intercourse. It has also forced men to become more responsible partners in the sex act.

The onus, however, is on each and every person to protect themselves. The problem is no longer pregnancy, but saving ones life.

We have to come to terms with the problem and live with it the best we can. Keep the following in mind:

- ☛ Anyone who is sexually active could get HIV.
- ☛ Anyone who will have sexual intercourse one day, eg the youth, could get HIV.
- ☛ Safe sex protects you from HIV.
- ☛ Abstinence protects you from HIV.
- ☛ HIV is sexually transmitted, but you could also get it if you are an intravenous drug user.
- ☛ If one contracted STD, eg Gonorrhoea, he or she may have also contracted HIV by having unprotected sex.
- ☛ Having a faithful sex partner is not enough, one needs a faithful **Uninfected** sex partner.
- ☛ Trusting your partner could protect you against heartbreak but not against AIDS - use a condom.

You cannot tell by looking at a person that they have AIDS. Many HIV infected persons look healthy and do not know that they are infected.

Remember that using a condom, is the best protection for the sexually active. 

ROCK STONE A RIVER BOTTOM NO KNOW SUN HOT

Me cyaan figat dem lickle tings weh me madda used to tell me. 'Member seh man a green lizard,' she

used to say. 'Man is a ting weh change. Di instant when dem see one next woman, dem no waan bodder deal with yuh, especially when dem see yuh tight pon yuh money.'

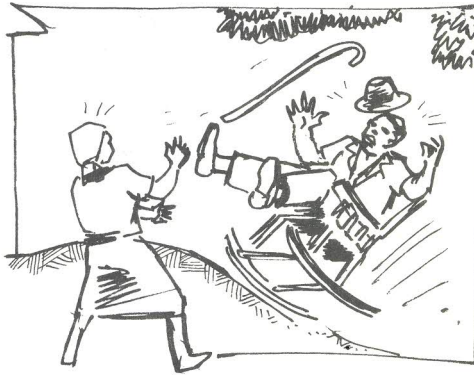
Yuh see, she was disappointed by a man and dat cause her fi go tru a whole heap. While she was living wid me faada and pregnant wid me, him plan fi married to smaddy else and never tell her. When she find out, dem argue it out and den she tek time go back home a fi-her yard, as she never waan box him down or notten like dat. She always lick it inna me head seh man a one no good sinting

It happen dat Mama meet dis lickle short man name Mr. Jimmy and dem married. Me and him gree to a certain extent, but him and mama couldn't gree at all for him wouldn't give her no money fi food. Dat a di first me see di direct oppression weh fi really mek yuh mawga down over life.

Mr Jimmy could a trace. Him used to siddung pon a chair pon one lickle bump where di kitchen deh and trace Mama. 'Gweh yuh warra-warra bitch! When yuh say yuh gone a church, yuh gone ketch man.' When Mama hear dem tings and know seh a no true, she would a use all a piece a mortar stick and come 'Woofen!' inna him side. Den yuh hear him, 'Lawd!' Him cyaan fight. Di ongle ting him have a him mouth. Him trace like a any batty man! Him talk and fling off him hand.

One day, when him a tell her some breed a someting, she just tek di chair wid him and him felt hat and bend-mouth walking stick, and throw him a gully. Him and di chair roll down deh and me madda not even look pon him. If yuh ever see him, him turn up him eye like when yuh fling way puss! When

him come up him say, 'Yuh bitch yuh! Yuh waan me fi dead and lef me land, but if yuh kill me, ah gwine tear out yuh whats-it-nots-it!'



It happen dat Mr Jimmy ketch pneumonia and a Mama same one did haffi nurse him. Dem tell him no fi mek rain wet him. Him wouldn't hear. Him go a bush and rain wet him and him dead.

After dat, a just Mama and me live. She used to say we talk one language. When she cook di food she always dish it out inna one pudding-pan and me siddung deh so, and she siddung yah so, and we eat. she cook meat and throw it inna one dish and di two a we eat out a one dish.

So, she always show me seh, 'Be independent fi yuh pon fi yuh own. Depend upon yuh own income. If dem give yuh notten and yuh save sinting out deh, no mek him know. Save dat to yuhself. No go show him seh, "Me a save dis fi me and yuh," cause at

times him will tek it way from yuh and run yuh way and yuh no have notten.' It just grow inna me seh me must have someting fi meself. She say to me seh, 'First ting in life,

yuh must try and have a bed fi yuhself. Dat mean when di man put yuh out, yuh have yuh bed. Yuh no haffi go beg anodder woman cotch. If yuh even pack up yuh clothes inna carton box, remember yuh fi have a bed fi lie down pon.' Again, she used to say, 'If di man have a bed, di man can run yuh off a di bed and yuh haffi bounce it pon di floor. Wherein, if yuh have yuh bed, yuh can say, "Come off a me bed!"' Wherever him waan go, dat a fi him business. Mek sure seh him cyaan put yuh off a di bed, for a fi yuh bed.

'A iron board is essential. A wash pan is essential. Yuh musn't borrow dem deh from woman. When clothes-iron time, mek sure yuh have, if a even ONE clothes-iron fi yuhself. Yuh no fi go next door go borrow dem tings deh.'

Me always have dem ting deh in me mind.

From me have sense tek over meself, me always a throw me lickle pardner. Me waan know me have sinting fi meself and him have fi-him own too, so none a we cyaan show off pon we one anodder. Me have me bed too, dat if him put me out me have me bed fi move wid. Me no haffi inna no problem wid him. Me no haffi go wid so-so bundle. No! When me come out a me house, it haffi empty like smaddy move out.

Yes! Me madda show me what and what is essential fi a woman have. And me mek sure have dem. All di same is not all di time me and Mama used to gree...

from Sistren's book 'Lionheart Gal' edited by Honor Ford Smith. See translation on pg. 35



Women Around the World

UNIFEM NEWS

♀ Five hundred women in 12 drought-prone villages of Rajasthan, India, have been encouraged to plant and harvest mulberry trees. The trees will provide natural fencing and help to anchor the soil against erosion, and will also provide the women with income.

♀ In the community of Al-Habeel, Yemen, women have been shown how to construct bio-digesters which produce gas for their cooking stoves and ovens. The basic biogas technology has spared nearby forests which previously supplied about 85 percent of Al-Habeel's energy and has relieved the women of the need to collect firewood for about three hours each day.

♀ In the northern Mexican county of Tempoal, women have been trained as mechanics to build hand-operated water pumps. The project has grown from workshop to factory scale, employing 250 women in the production of 5,000 pumps per year.

♀ In Mali, previously unemployed university graduates received training equipment and credit in 1988 to establish a waste disposal business in the capital city, Bamako. Today they provide garbage removal services for 18,000 residents.

Source-United Nations Development Fund for Women

WOMEN IN CHRISTIAN PUBLISHING

"Women in Christian Publishing" was the theme chosen for the seminars organised by World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) for the Frankfurt Book Fair held October 2-7.

Thirteen women who held senior positions in publishing houses around the world were invited to take part in the seminar. They were drawn from Africa (Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania); Asia (Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Philippines); Latin America (Argentina, Brazil), the Middle East (Cyprus) and the Pacific (Fiji, New Guinea).

AFRICANS STIMULATE MEDIA EDUCATION

A workshop on Women in Media Education was held November 4-8, in Harare, Zimbabwe, by the African Council on Communication Education (ACCE).

The aims of the workshop were to stimulate the production of media education textbooks and resources for the African context, to equip more people, especially women, as trainers, and to draw up plans for a media education programme in south-

ern and eastern Africa, starting in 1992. Some 18 participants, mostly women in journalism and communication, were invited.

WORLD WOMEN'S CONGRESS FOR A HEALTHY PLANET

Fifteen hundred women from 83 countries met for five days (November 8-12) at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Miami, Florida for the drafting of an Action Agenda to be presented to the United Nations.

On Tuesday November 12, The World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet presented their action agenda to Maurice Strong, Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

The agenda will be presented at UNCED, in June 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It called for women to have an equal say in decisions which will affect the world.

"We come together as a privileged few who speak on behalf of those who could not be with us, the millions of women who experience daily, the violence of poverty, environmental degradation and exploitation of their work and bodies, due to an international economic order that places capital before human and ecological well-being," it said.

It continued: "We have listened to each other speak of the ills of our societies, our families and our sacred nature. We have been inspired by the courage and commitment of our sisters throughout the world who protect and repair our natural heritage. Yet we know their efforts will be in vain if pollution, over-exploitation and disregard for the integrity of nature does not cease."

The 12-page document went on to list the demands by the women, which they see as important to the preservation of a healthy planet. These demands included a call on all governments to comply with the requirements of the Nairobi Forward Look-

ing Strategies and the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the immediate forgiveness of all debts; and a total ban on the export of all goods rejected for local consumption in or by the country of origin.

The document also called for time use studies of women's work (household), cottage industries, subsistence agriculture, child care, elderly care, voluntary community services; that the risk of bio-technology be made available in clear lay-person language; and that all technology transfer should be appropriate and sustainable with special attention paid to long-term costs and benefits for people and the environment, among others.

Several recommendations were made for the improvement of the global environment.

BRITISH LORDS RULE HUSBAND CAN BE GUILTY OF RAPING WIFE

Britain's highest appeal court ruled recently that a husband can be guilty of raping his wife, a decision hailed by women's rights campaigners as the end of

250 years of "sexual slavery".

Five law lords, members of the House of Lords who hold high legal office and have judicial responsibility- made the historic final judgement enshrining a wife's right to say "no".

They supported an earlier appeal court ruling that the principle that a man could not be guilty of raping his wife, was "an anachronistic and offensive fiction."

The Lords dismissed a last appeal by a man seeking to overturn a three-year jail term for trying to rape his estranged wife.

About 50 women's rights campaigners cheered when the decision was announced in the ornate chamber of the House of Lords. They were earlier evicted from the public gallery. "The Lords have finally nailed a legal lie," said Women Against Rape spokeswoman, Clare Glasman.

"It overturns 250 years of legal sexual slavery which has been based not on a court case but on an 18th Century judge's decision that a husband could not rape his wife," she said. The judgement establishes the principle for England and Wales. A 1982 judgement in Scotland found rape in marriage to be a crime there.

Lord Keith, one of the five law lords, said that

a statement in 1736 by Chief Justice Hale, that by marriage a wife gave her body and irrevocable consent to sex with her husband under all circumstances, was quite unacceptable in modern times.

Women Against Rape estimated that as many as one in seven women were victims of marital rape. The ruling could also mean married women may claim criminal injury compensation for rape.

Seed Grants

Brazil

Casa de Passagem in Recife, a previous grant recipient was awarded ICAF's first Medium-Term Grant of \$10,000 to expand its project entitled "Teatro da Saude" or health theatre.

This project will involve young women in low-income communities, in the distribution of condoms and educational materials on AIDS and STDs. Indicators of effectiveness, a critical component of IUCAF's Medium-Term Grants initiative, will include audience awareness of themes presented, referrals made, condoms distributed as well as the impact of the programme on the young women involved.

Costa Rica

Centro Feminista de Informacion y Accion (CEFEMINA) in San Jose, an international agency run by women, received \$4,000 to train youth promoters, establish a youth centre, and initiate contraceptive services for teens through their community clinics.



Participants in a recent workshop on the 'Elimination of Violence Against Women' organised by the Bureau of Women's Affairs



Violence Against Women

by C.A. Burton

We are all well aware that violence against women is prevalent in all parts of the world and no less in Dominica. We also know that men are the number one cause of violence against women.

Violence occurs in many different forms i.e. physically, emotionally and economically.

Violence against women is not isolated to one class of society; it has no boundaries. It occurs both in and outside marriage, in the office, in the home (incest) and certain countries culturally (circumcision).

What can women do to control violence against them? One of the first things we need to do is to understand and appreciate our worth as women, for it is only then that we can convey an image of self worth to our male counterparts. We can convey this image by the way we walk, dress, speak and conduct ourselves generally. If we respect ourselves, then others will respect us.

Another essential point is that as women we need to realise that there is dignity in any form of honest work and we must educate our children likewise. In so doing we will become economically independent and not have to rely on others for our daily bread.

Proper socialization of our children is most important if we are to create a new peace-loving generation. Children who are nurtured in a loving atmosphere, grow up with a sense of security and self confidence, having the ability to discuss openly.

Those who have been brutalized in their childhood know no other way of expressing their emotions except by violence. Let me say here that there is a definite need for women to plan their families so they can provide each child with quality time.

Many children today are left to the mercy of the television programmes where so many

films and cartoons shown are of a violent nature. The children begin to view this violence as being normal and some of them will think nothing of using force to their benefit.

Not even the television advertisements are safe. They too convey negative images of the worth of a women. One particular advert comes to mind where Crix Biscuits are being advertised: after eating Crix Biscuits for the week, the only reason this guy can give for making up with his wife is his love for his Sunday dinner! This advert could only have been made by a man and it is against those negatives fed subtly to our young ones that we must guard against.

We need always to be on the alert for various forms of violence against women and speak out against them.

Women who are sexually harassed on the job, need to be heard and this can only be so if they are encouraged by other women and supported by the law.

The worst visible form of violence is that of a battered women. She is not only physically damaged, but is humiliated in front of her children, neighbours and society at large.

It is against these that we must unite as women and call upon the government to assist by:

- * revising the laws to address domestic violence specifically
- * ensuring that all cases involving domestic violence and sexual harassment are heard in "closed courts"
- * ensuring that the Police investigate all cases of domestic violence and respond immediately to such cases when called
- * censoring television programmes which encourage or give negative images of women

As far as men are concerned, programmes

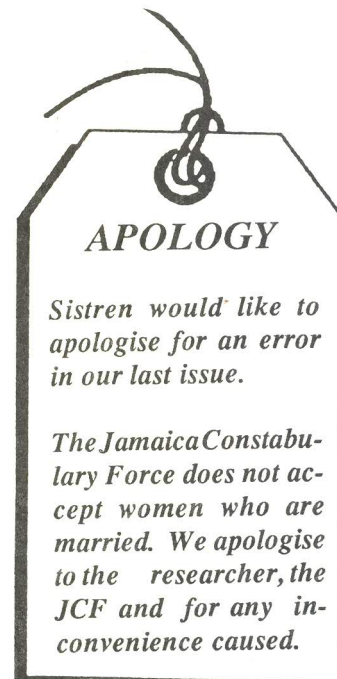
must be structured to re-educate them as to their roles in society. They must be made aware of their responsibilities and the law must be enforced to ensure that they accept these responsibilities.

To the women, I say continue to educate yourselves and know that you have a vital and valuable contribution to make to society. Encourage and support each other and do not hesitate to speak out against all forms of violence.

The Dominican National Council of Women, in recognition of the fact that violence against women is an increasing problem, is in the process of establishing a "crisis mechanism". Victims will have access to counselling facilities in order to help them cope with their situation.

This is just a small step towards alleviating this enormous problem which can only be effectively addressed through concerted national effort.

C.A. Burton is Programme Co-ordinator for the Dominica National Council of Woman (DNCW)



What about the 'Baby Fathers'?

by Rhoma Tomlinson

Many young men who father babies with teenage girls, do not run off and abdicate responsibility, but stand by the often distraught young mother, sometimes going with them to the Women's Centre for counselling.

The young fathers, usually themselves as confused and disillusioned as the teenage mothers, are in need of love and care and very often have no one to talk to.

*...the centre not
only caters to
girls, but also to
boys...*

Mrs Pamela McNeil, National Director of the Women's Centre in Kingston, dismissed as "just a myth", the widely held view that youthful fathers can almost be expected to deny paternity and run away from their responsibility.

In an interview with JAMPRESS, Mrs McNeil says too often young men are severely pressured by society and are given the wrong advice by adults.

"At every one of the seven centres island-wide, we try to give emotional support to the mother and the child when it is born, stressing that "parenting is very important".

The Women's Centre programme, set up in January 1978, to help adolescent mothers and their families during the often traumatic experience of sometimes unwanted pregnancy, has catered to the needs of some 7,500 girls since its inception.

Mrs McNeil emphasized that the centre did not only cater to girls, but also to boys who were an equally important part of the situation. It also caters to the parents of the young mother.

"Teenage pregnancy has to be looked on as a family matter, the girls are not isolated, they belong to their family and we prefer not to remove them from their homes," she said.

Publicity in respect of teenage pregnancy, is usually more heavily concentrated on the teenage mother, frequently ignoring the male side of the equation.

Mrs McNeil cited statistics taken by the centre, showing that the young fathers were usually about the same age or slightly older than the girls, and were usually unemployed.

Even though aware that sex produced children, many were uninformed about how to properly use contraceptives. Like the girls, they were often unaware about how to deal with the emotions at that age.

Of 133 fathers researched, 75.9 per cent accepted paternity and 57 per cent offered support.

Seventy-eight per cent of 'baby fathers' were in favour of contraceptive use.

Most of the centres have found the boys willing to help out with odd jobs, a further indication of support.

"We try to encourage them to assist our programme. Here in Kingston, you will find them making stands for the netball court, painting or repairing the fence," Mrs McNeil noted.

Asked who was most blamed for the pregnancy, the Director said the young fathers often placed full blame on the girls getting pregnant.

"But the boys are only putting forth what society has taught them in the past," she insisted. Society tend to emphasize contraceptive on the market for women, while only the condom was available for men, said Mrs McNeil.

*"We could talk about a girl taking
money from a boy for lunch or
busfare...then feeling she has to
have sex with him..."*

The Women's Centre Director explained, that even though 'baby fathers' did not come in as often as the girls did, quite often they were busy seeking employment.

The statistics show that the majority of boys were supportive of teenage mothers.

The question of pregnancy by rape or incest, the Director said, also underlined the importance of bringing fathers and parents to the centre.

She related the case of a 12 year-old girl

cont'd on pg. 43

ROCKSTONE A RIVER BOTTOM

The Translation

I cannot forget the little things my mother used to tell me. "Remember men are green lizards," she used to say. "Men are things that change, the instant they see another woman they don't want to pay any attention to you, especially when you are careful with your money".

You see, she was disappointed by a man, and that caused her to go through a lot of problems. While she was living with my father and was pregnant with me, he planned to marry someone else and never told her. When she found out, they argued about it and then she packed up, and went back home, as she never wanted to box him down or anything like that. She always 'knocked it' into my head that man is not good.

It happened that Mama met this little short man named Mr Jimmy and they got married. He and I got on to a certain extent, but he and mama could not get on at all, because he would not give her any money for food. That was the first time that I saw the direct oppression that really made you lose weight over (conditions of) life.

Mr Jimmy could argue. He used to sit on a mound of earth near the kitchen and argue with Mama "Go away, you little whats-it-nots-it (used as expletives) bitch! When you say you have gone to church, you are gone to look man (ie. accusing her of having an affair)."

When Mama heard those things, and knowing they were not true, she used a mortar stick and hit him hard in the side. Then you heard him call "Lord!" He cannot fight, the only things he had was his mouth (he argued a lot). He argued as if he was a homosexual (it is said in Jamaica, that homosexuals imitate women). While talking, he flashes his hand (said to be trait of the homosexual).

One day he told her some bad things, and she took the chair with him and his felt hat and curved handled walking stick, and threw him in a gully. He and the chair rolled down and my mother did not even look at him. If you had seen him, he rolled over his eyes and looked like a cat that had been thrown away!

"You bitch, you want me to die and leave my land, but if you kill me, I am going to tear out your whats-it-not."

It happened that Mr Jimmy developed pneumonia and it was my mother who had to nurse him. They (the doctors) had told him not to go out in the rain. He would not heed. He went to his farm and got caught in the rain, and he died.

After that it was just Mama and me living together. She used to say we spoke the same language. When she cooked the food she always placed it in one big-container and we would sit together and eat. She cooked the meat and poured it into one dish and we ate from that one dish.

She always told me, "be independent, be on your own and depend on your own income. If he (the spouse) gives you anything, you must save something from it and don't let him know, keep that to yourself. Don't go and tell him, "I am saving this for me and you", because at times he will take it away from you and put you out and you will not have anything." It grew on me that I must have something for myself.

She said to me, "the first thing in life you must try to have is a bed for yourself", that means when a man puts you out, you will have your bed. You won't have to beg another woman for a place to stay. If you even (have to) pack your clothes in a carton box, remember you must have a bed to lie on."

Again she used to say, 'If the man has a bed, he can put you off and you have to sleep on the floor. But if you had your bed, you can say "get off my bed!" Wherever he wants to go, that is his business. Make sure he can't put you off the bed because it is your bed.'

"An ironing board is essential. A wash pan is essential. You must not borrow those things from other women. When you need a clothes iron (manually heated, once prevalent in rural Jamaican homes) make sure you have even one clothes iron for yourself. You should not go to your neighbour to borrow those things."

I always have those things on my mind. Ever since I have sense (common sense/grown up) and can manage myself, I always throw a little partner (informal way of saving among friends). I like to know I have something for myself and he has his own too, so none can show off on the other. I have a bed too, therefore if he puts me out, I have my bed.

I do not have to be in any problems with him. I do not have to go with only a bundle of clothes. No! When I come out of my house, it has to be empty as if someone moved out.

Yes, my mother told me the things which are essential for a woman to have, and I make sure to get them.

Anyway, it was not all the time that Mama and I used to get on.....

See the next issue for the continuation of the story.

WHY FATHERS ABUSE THEIR DAUGHTERS

Father/daughter incest is the type most commonly reported to authorities. Perhaps for this reason, it also is the type most commonly studied and about which most is known.

Reported characteristics of fathers who commit incest include an emotionally deprived childhood and chaotic family life, an extreme emotional dependence on their wives, and a non-aggressive and ineffectual personality with poor impulse control. In addition, they often have an immature sexual orientation and poor sexual adjustment.

Although some are poor providers with a history of frequent separations from the family, others are socially well-adjusted and appear to be good fathers and husbands. Many have been found to have a history of alcoholism.

Studies have shown that most of the fathers are in their thirties or early forties when the incestuous relationship begins. For many men, increased marital stresses occur at this time, and there is often a pubescent daughter present in the home. Their sexual overtures toward their daughters may be rationalized as expressions of love or as part of their responsibility to be both the child's protector and her initiator into sexual experiences.

It is often the mother who provides the key to the father/daughter incest relationship. Reports of psychiatric case studies indicate that father/daughter incest sometimes involves at least unconscious participation and/or sanction by the mother, although few of the reports of incest are made by the mother.

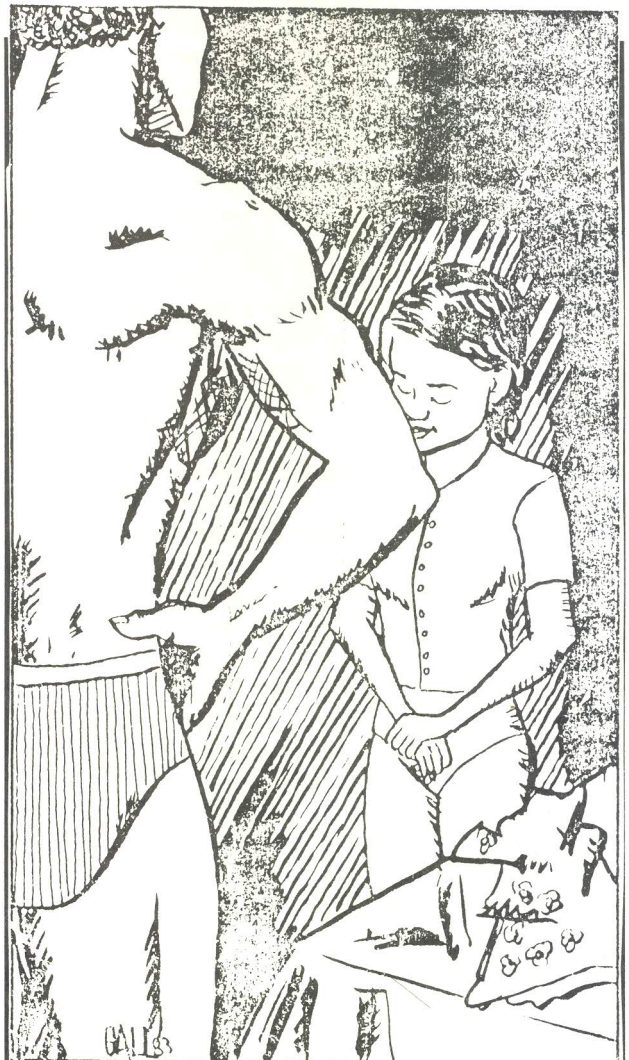
The mother in such a family usually has experienced physical or psychological desertion during childhood; as a result, she often has strong remaining dependency needs. Because of her early experiences of maternal deprivation, however, she may feel great hostility toward her own mother. Her poor concept of mothering and her own need to be mothered may cause her to cast her daughter in the maternal role. She may become both hostile towards and dependent on her daughter. In addition, the mother usually fears any close relationship and frequently sexually rejects her husband. Eventually, this role reversal of mother and daughter may place the daughter in a position where she is called upon to meet the father's sexual needs.

The child-victim of incest is usually the oldest daughter. Although often sexually immature, the daughters usually exhibit pseudo-maturity and are often caretakers of the home and younger children. They often assume this role at an early age because of the disrupted state of the family unit. The child may fear her mother and receive little affection from her.

Prior to the actual incestuous relationship, the child may exhibit coy or flirtatious behaviour toward her father, not with the intention of obtaining sexual gratification, but in an

attempt to secure the affection she is denied by her mother.

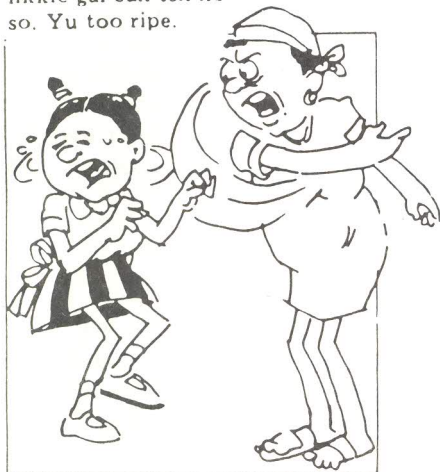
This behaviour, combined with her fear of family disruption and her sense of maternal responsibility, allows the child eventually to become involved in a physically close, giving and receiving relationship with her father. The relationship may evolve gradu-



ally, with the daughter assuming a passive role and offering no physical resistance to her father's increasingly aggressive sexual advances. Sexual intercourse between the two may be the result of this increasingly intimate contact.

Abrupt disruption of the incest pattern may never occur. However, in some cases, the child, after achieving some degree of social and sexual awareness, leaves home, seeks help for herself, or request protection for her younger sisters. At times, the relationship comes to the attention of authorities when the girl becomes pregnant.

Seh Wilton a trouble
yu? Yu out of yu mind
gal? Is how oonu
liddle gal can tell lie
so. Yu too ripe.



Occasionally, a history of incest is obtained from a runaway, who refuses to return home or from a child who has made a suicidal gesture. Complaints from other family members may terminate the incest, though such complaints are sometimes motivated by anger over some unrelated matter.

The accusation of incest against a family may awaken painful guilt feelings, associated with denial and depression. If the mother has been aware of the situation, she may deny any knowledge of the matter, accusing her daughter of lying. Her inadequacies as a wife and mother are exposed, and she fears the disintegration of her family and the loss of her husband. The father's guilt, shame and fear of repercussions may be overwhelming, and he may totally deny his daughter's allegations.

The effects of incest on the daughter vary and depend on her age, her level of func-

tioning prior to the relationship, and her experiences in the social and legal systems after disclosure.

Pre-adolescent girls may be less affected by an incestuous relationship than older girls, perhaps because young children do not have such firm concepts of right and wrong and lack awareness of the possible social repercussions. Some case-studies indicate that adolescent children may be relatively unaffected. If they were well adjusted prior to the experience, and if both parents display little guilt or anxiety when the incestuous relationship is discovered.

Other studies show that incest can result in serious confusion for the child over her sexual identity and may lead her to fear her own sexuality. Such girls may exhibit learning difficulties or physical complaints;

A coulda true, yu know.

But a can't say anything
or Wilton wil ef me. Me
jus haffe mek it gwaan.



they may become runaways, attempt suicide, or become sexually promiscuous.

The potential for damage appears so great that the children and families involved in incestuous relationship must be seen as in need of immediate help. They require long-term support by social and legal agencies, for such support can make a difference in the lives of all family members and, in many cases, allow the family to again function as a healthy unit.

*The above article by Dr. Raylene A. Devine,
first appeared in "Sexual Abuse of Children:
Selected Readings".*

POISON EYES, POISON MOUTH



Why are you watching me?
When you are the one to be watched?
Why do you criticise me?
When you are the one to be criticised?
My brother, my sister, this is the
question.

It's a long time you have been
demoralising me,
But have you noticed anything?
Haven't you noticed that with all
your efforts
Of grave and ugly thoughts for me
You have achieved nothing
worthwhile?

Don't you think it would be better
To encourage me, instead of putting me
down?
Does your ambition find it a pleasure
To humiliate ones presence,
ones doings, ones sayings?
Stop a while, then you'll discover that
you have
Travelled the wrong road.

Have you tried hard enough
To rid this nasty stain from your
system?
If not, rise up!! Shake up!!
And don't allow your bad heart and
corrupt mind
To destroy your confused soul.
Think Positive

L.E.F.

Woman and Sexuality

Looking at all the things which affect women, we decided to get their responses on how women felt about themselves, and their sexuality.

ZADIE:

"I am not a feminist, (I still like to have the doors opened for me, my chairs pulled out), but I believe in equality. I believe in Woman, the strength of women, and the woman as an independent soul. I think women can do anything they want to, which is why my dearest wish is to see all the women in the world educated.

Education is the key to all doors.

I would love to see the day when men look on us as equal and not feel threatened. You see, once a woman begins to assert herself, then men begin to see them in a different light. A woman can never be friends with a member of the opposite sex without everyone becoming suspicious of her. 'She deh wid him!' If a woman dresses nicely, then she must have a date.

Why can't I dress-up because I feel good about myself, and because I want to, just to look and feel good?

If a woman has a good male friend, one she goes out with, spend time with, everyone now sees her as the kind of woman who sleeps around and everybody wants their 'piece of the pie'. If the guy is married, then even his wife suspects that she is carrying on with the husband.

Never-the-less I am proud to be woman. Proud to show the world that one does not have to depend on a man to be strong, to be somebody. And in the process you learn to take what goes with being a strong woman, the names and all, live above it and gain the respect you deserve."

SIMONE:

"I am proud to be a woman though it calls

for a lot of 'tolerance' especially against the background of derogatory comments made by males. I don't view them very highly for this reason. I feel that I am better than them because of the values coming from the typical male.

On the other hand I feel honoured that the society is at least recognising that women have made valuable contribution.

I feel relieved now that society is recognising that battering is reality.

For the latter I feel that it is a bit late, as far too many women have suffered as a result of battering not being a criminal offence.

The woman's sexuality has to be suppressed. If one displays it, then we are labeled as whores. So I suppress it to conform to sexual mores and order.

GAYON:

"I don't see myself as a woman per se, but more as a person with my own potentials. I don't have to prove myself.

Traditionally women are considered to be baby mothers and wives, and your conditioned to feel that if you don't have a baby, then you are not a woman.

For me a woman must realise that she has other sides. Marriage places limitations and restrictions on women. Many of them don't realise that they can live on their own without a man.

You have to establish yourself, your independence and self-worth first.

On the topic of sexuality; society is biased so that a man who goes around is seen by his peers and family as a 'don-man'. He has to 'sample the field' before settling down. He is a woman's man. On the other hand, the society sees the woman as a whore if she does the same. In the end she is considered to be used out and she is re-

jected. Even in marriage, a man can fool around.

This view of woman is partially from the bible which has subordinated woman.

The bible speaks highly of Esther, only because she slept with a King to save her country. (Here her sexuality is positive not to her but because she submitted herself to a man). I don't know if this was what God intended or if King James had certain biases and painted things in that fashion.

Women are now realising their potential and breaking out. When they do they are called feminists. They don't want to be labelled. They only want to self-actualise."

WINSOME:

"I love being woman, feminine, but I get annoyed when men see you and say, 'Hi sexy, hi sweetheart', he is reducing me to nothing more than someone seen only in the light of being a sex object.

On the subject of sexuality, I am not conscious of suppressing it and I don't go around flaunting it either.

Although I don't consciously suppress my sexuality, I would prefer if it is not noticed by some people. When these people look at you as a woman - they simply see a 'a thing with attractive features and female genitals' - it is degrading.

I feel dirty, tainted, when they allude to my sexuality or are 'tempted to touch'.

On the other hand, I like to be a woman. It feels great to be appreciated by someone who respects you and loves your body at the same time. I enjoy sex; the only times I've had bad sex is when I feel that the guy is using me/my body to satisfy an urge and nothing more. If I have an experience like this with a guy I would usually feel so bad I never want to set eyes on him again."



Measures to Eliminate Violence



Sistren's Annie Blake (l) chats with a visitor at Sistren's Offices at Kensington Cres. in Kingston.

The past two decades have been marked by the development of measures designed to eliminate violence against women.

The developments in the Public Sector,

though less numerous than those in the private sector, have been very significant.

- A Family Court was established in 1975.

- An on-going program of special training on the needs of the abused woman has been in existence in the police force for the past five years.
- In 1989, a number of special units, located in different parishes, were established within the police force to deal with the investigation of rape and child abuse. These units are staffed by police personnel, the majority of whom are female. The structure includes the provision of counselling, medical attention for victims of abuse, and finally, preparation for court action against the abuser.

The establishment of these units, with the attendant training of police personnel, has had major impact on the attitudes both of the police and abused women.

The same period has been marked by the establishment of a number of groups within the private sector, all of which include in their objectives the intention to provide facilities for the welfare of abused women.



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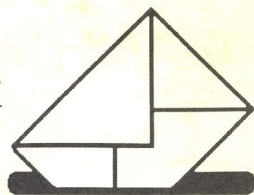
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FROM OUR MAILBAG



Dear Sistren and Editor,

I am writing this letter to you all at Kensington Crescent, as I see from my latest magazine that Joan has left her editor's chair and a new face will appear in her place.

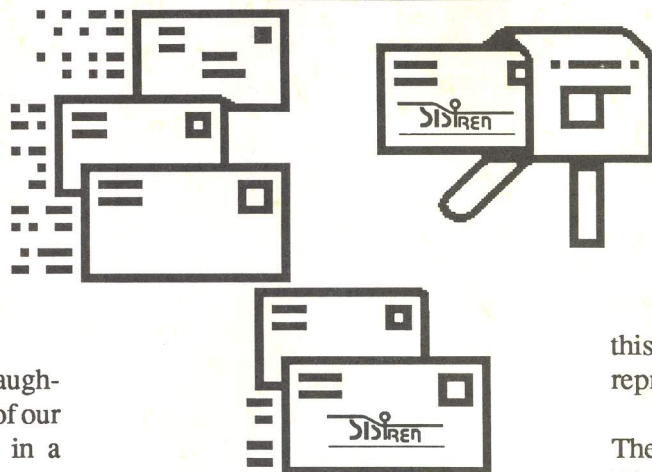
Joan is the dearly loved "extra" daughter in our family, and the mother of our eldest grand child. I am sorry in a purely selfish way that Joan has gone, as it kept us in touch with the work she was involved with in Kingston, and when we talk on the phone we don't often talk about work.

However I would like to wish her successor every good wish, and I am sure we will all see new ideas in the magazine, and also to tell all of you - you all work so hard- when we visited the textiles shop in 1989 I bought some squares for cushions and I have to tell you one of them was "Life wid Grandpa" that cushion never fails to make all who see it smile. I like that and I would like you all to feel that you can give pleasure in very far away places, with the things you make.

I want to remain on your mailing list and my sub, is now due, however, Leone Ross will be in Kingston for X-Mas and if I may, I will send it with her without fail.

My best wishes to all the projects at SISTREN, keep up the good work that Joan started.

Sincerely Yours,
Marjorie Ross
Northumberland, England.



with 36 from the corporate area and nine from the rural areas.

We wish to bring to the attention of the Conference one case in particular, which we are seeking to turn the international spotlight on, in order to ensure that this courageous lady be protected from reprisals.

The matter has been brought to the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Commissioner of Police by the Jamaica Council for Human Rights. Copies of statements were submitted to them by letter dated 9th September.

We trust that at the end of your deliberations, the conference will be minded to pass a resolution calling on the Commissioner of Police to:

- a) undertake thorough investigations into allegations;
- b) ensure required disciplinary action to be taken; and ,
- c) call upon the Minister of National Security to take all the necessary steps to protect the physical integrity of Miss Mullings .(See pg. 46 for Ms. Mullings story)

We wish you every success in your deliberations.

Yours fraternally
Florizelle O'Conner (Ms.)
Co-ordinator
Jamaica Council
for Human Rights

The Following is an open letter to the delegates at the Conference on Violence Against Women held at the Jamaica Conference Centre in September.

Dear Sisters,

The Jamaica Council for Human Rights presents its compliments to the delegates attending this very important seminar on "Violence Against Caribbean Women" and takes this opportunity to extend to you a hearty welcome.

In your deliberations the Council wishes to bring to your attention, the present status of violence against women by agents of the State, which is on the increase in our country.

Our reports show that for the period July 1990 to June 1991, a total of 45 females came in to report cases of abuse,

Breast Cancer - What should I know?

The first thing you need to know is that most breast lumps are not malignant. But only your doctor can make the diagnosis and tell you for sure. If breast cancer is found early, and treated promptly, the chance of a cure is excellent. But because the disease is often detected too late many women in Jamaica die needlessly.

Practise self-examination

You owe it to yourself to learn and practise simple breast self-examination or BSE. It could save your life.

Examine your breast once a month. The best time is about a week after your period. If you have reached menopause, then check your breast on the first day of each month.

Here is how it is done

Start in the shower or bath when the skin is wet and slippery. It is easy then to feel any lump or thickening. Move gently over every part of each breast while raising the arm on the side being checked.

There are three body positions for practising BSE. The first is to stand in front of your mirror with your hands at your sides, then stand with your hands raised above your head, and again with your hands pressing down on your hips. Look for any changes in contour, swelling, dimpling of skin or changes in the nipples.

Another way is to lie down with a pillow under the shoulder of the breast you are going to examine. Put that arm overhead.

Then with the fingers of the other hand flat, press gently in a circular motion around an imaginary clock face, the upper part of your breast being 12:00. Move in an inch towards the nipple and go around until every part of your breast is examined. Gently squeeze the nipple and look for any discharge. Repeat the same procedure on the other breast.

REMEMBER, a lump is the most common sign of breast cancer but if you notice any discharge clear or bloody, it should be reported to your doctor immediately.

Your risk increases if:

*There is a history of breast cancer on your mother's side of the family

*You have a history of previous breast lumps.

A warning for men!!!

Though breast cancer is less common in men, it can and does occur. The preceding warnings also apply to men and should be taken seriously.

If you discover a lump, chances are that it is not malignant, but you must check with your doctor. If yours is a case that requires surgery, it is not the end of the world. Women who have had mastectomies, can and do lead normal lives. It should be thought of in the same light as any other surgical procedure.

*Information courtesy of The Jamaica Reach to Recovery through the Jamaica Cancer Society,
16 Lady Musgrave Road, Kingston 5.*

From our Mailbag *cont'd from page 40*

Dear Sistren,

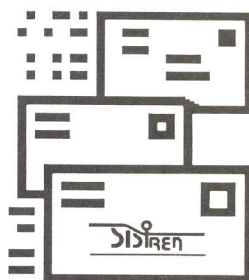
I first heard of your organisation while at Primary school and am impressed with the strides you have made over the years. I am extremely proud because the organisation was not formed by women with "big-time" degrees, and it has lived, I believe, longer than many thought it would.

SISTREN is a testimony to the fact that "grass-roots" women can make good, with a little initiative, motivation and drive. That they too have dreams, and can make an impact where it will be

appreciated and where it will count the most.

I wish you all continued success with your organisation.

Sincerely yours
Patricia Williams
Orlando, Florida.



Dear Readers,

In 1992, SISTREN Magazine will take on a new look. The magazine will now carry advertisements, as we strive to make the magazine pay for itself.

You can also look forward to seeing SISTREN magazine four times yearly.

In recent months, publications costs have sky-rocketed, but we endeavour to keep our subscription rates down for the time being. Next year, we will have our new computer, so we will be able to do the layout ourselves.

We also encourage you to write to us, and especially look forward to letters and contributions from our male readers.

Happy New Year

World Women's Congress *cont'd from pg. 23*

- Sharing
- Accountability
- Commitment to peace

And now, in relation to the environment, we are the ones expected to clean up the mess, to heal the soil, to save the planet...to **Mother the Earth**, which is threatened by an economic model which is fundamentally exploitative of both the natural and human environments; a model expressing a culture which places things before people.

A few days ago, at the UNCED/World Wide Global Assembly, we heard the stories of over 200 women from different countries who had initiated a variety of projects to deal with environmental problems in their communities. Many were inspiring.

The reality of these women from the north as well as from the south was that of struggling:-

- to grow food on depleted soils
- to stop the contamination of their water supplies by pesticides and fertilizer and the sale of milk and cheese contaminated by the nuclear accident at Chernobyl;
- to clean up garbage dumps;
- to recycle;
- to harness the energy of the sun for their cooking;
- to plant trees against encroaching desert;
- to challenge government, corporations and, military establishments which act against the interest of people.

But by themselves, these projects will not solve the problems of massive environmental degradation at global, regional, national and local levels.

Indeed, women are often the victims - not

the perpetrators - of these trends. As someone has said, "women do not destroy forests - they don't have the technology to do it - they merely pick up the twigs after the bulldozers have done their work."

But, as the stories showed, they do not remain passive victims. They fight back with ingenuity, resilience, and determination.

If women are to "clean up the mess," they have a right to challenge the people and institutions which create the problems.

To do this, they need to understand the links between environmental degradation and the structures of social, economic and political power, and the links between policies and actions in far off places - in the Parliaments, board-rooms and military command centres of the north and south - and the conditions under which they live.

They also need to understand the structures of their own subordination and the processes by which this serves to perpetuate all other systems of oppression.. Research and reflection has shown that the destruction of nature and the subordination of women have proceeded hand in hand in the process of industrialisation.

Along with women's efforts to deal with the immediate impact of these problems at the level of our communities and countries, a primary task must be to do an analysis which can help to identify their root causes.

We can start with the central reality of the inequitable distribution of wealth and power, and thus to ask the questions:

- What were the processes that drove so many of the world's women to struggle for existence on marginal, ecologically vulnerable land in the first place?
- What are the processes which lead to the deprivation of thousands of families of a source of livelihood?

- What are the processes which lead to the exploitation of humankind and nature in the interest of profits?
- What are the processes which have led us to equate happiness and a sense of well-being with material possessions, and development with economic growth?

Without the answers to these questions our "solutions" to environmental problems will be to no avail. We have to link the experience of women - their daily struggles to survive - with the macro-economic policies which impact on every aspect of our lives.

Many of the women who told their "success" stories drew attention to the need for a more holistic analysis, one which would take account of prevailing macro-economic trends and policies, and of the structure of gender-power relations which resulted in the exploitation of women's time and labour and sexuality...

The women from Africa drew attention to the impact of debt and structural adjustment policies on their countries' human and natural environments, and stated that the starting point for any discussion on the environment would have to be the elimination of poverty in Africa.

For the key to the environmental crisis lies in the economic model we have adopted - or which is being thrust upon us... a model which is fundamentally inequitable and exploitative of human and natural environments. The ecological crisis is the other side of the coin of the dominant model of development - a model which has been further reinforced by the changes in the socialist countries and the apparent triumph of the ideology of the "free market."

I am amazed at the lack of reference to these current trends in the global economy in the discussion on environment: is it that there is a deliberate effort to ignore these connections, or do people not realise the implications of the unrestricted market on the environment?

It seems to me that one of the causes for stalemate in the debate on environment so far has been the failure of the chief negotia-

tors of north and south to make the connections, to recognise the contradictions between the promotion of the free market and free trade, and environmental protection. I think it must be one of the primary tasks of women to make these connections and to draw attention to these contradictions.

But first we must examine the contradictions in our own lives, contradictions of colour, of class, race, etc. We can then build on our diversity to find commonalities of our identities as women - our structured powerlessness, alienation and inequality - to empower ourselves and other women to create an alternative agenda and to act on it ourselves.

It is on this basis of an acknowledgement of these differences that women from the north and south can build a solidarity capable of challenging the dominant cultural and economic model.

Finally, we must give special support to those women who are at the forefront, in their action and advocacy, in challenging the dominant economic system. Someone has said that acting individually, women make a difference and that acting collectively, they can make a revolution. But collective action must be based on an holistic analysis. That kind of collective action will start the revolution.

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Baby Fathers' *cont'd from pg. 34*

who was gang raped, got pregnant and was brought to the centre. "We had her here for almost a year before she started to talk," Mrs McNeil said.

"A lot of these cases are caused through circumstances and a lot are caused by so called step-fathers. Really, most are just visiting males who come by to visit the mother, get a chance with the girls and they just go ahead," she explained.

The other person involved also has to be counselled, if he can be found. Counselors often had to go out to find these persons, she said, adding, "clearly, they too have a problem".

Ghetto Rape

Mrs McNeil said there was another kind of rape that she called "ghetto rape" which also occurred when young girls from the deep ghetto areas became victims of circumstances.

"Rape is one thing when a man has a gun at your head, but when you live in a one room situation, the yard situation.... We could talk about a girl taking money from a boy for lunch or busfare so she can go to

school, and then feeling she has to have sex with him," she complained.

"We can talk about the tenement yard where the boys are able to look at the girls while they bathe, and where if a mother has a boyfriend, everything happens in the room... it is a different life. It is the ghetto that has raped that child, and it is about time we understood this," Mrs McNeil pleaded.

New Organisation to help Youth

As a further dimension to the Women's Centre programme, she announced that a "Knowledge, Education for Youth" (KEY) programme, will be set up at the back of the Kingston Centre located on Trafalgar Road.

KEY will operate as "a haven for young people with any problem... this will be some place where the youth can come, and be able to talk in confidence".

A doctor, nurse, and counsellor will be available daily at the KEY centre.

JAMPRESS



WOMAN TRADE FAIR



Lady B and Bev...



Something to think about



Fascinating...



Hair, hair, hair



Cherry and Little Natural, getting down...

JAMAICAN WOMEN HAVE COME A LONG WAY BUT, WE STILL HAVE FAR TO GO...

LOOK OUT FOR THE THIRD ALL ISLAND WOMEN'S CONFERENCE - MARCH 1992
TOOK OUT FOR THE THIRD ALL ISLAND WOMEN'S CONFERENCE - MARCH 1992

sponsored by

**The Association of
Women's
Organizations of
Jamaica (AWOJA)**

AIMS:

- *To bring together women's groups to examine current socio-economic conditions*
- *To identify priority for collective action*
- *To make policy recommendations to the Government of Jamaica*
- *To formulate an action plan to garner popular support for the implementation of policy recommendations*

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Sistren Theatre Collective
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Kingston 5
Phone: 92-96171/92-92457

**National Organization
of Women**
25 Dominica Drive
Kingston 5
Phone: 92-98020

Bureau of Women's Affairs
18 Ripon Road
Kingston 5
Phone: 92-97144-6

**Women's Resource and
Outreach Centre**
Organization of Women for Progress
47 Beechwood Avenue
Kingston 5
Phone: 92-96945

The Pauline Mullings Story

On 12th July, 1991, Pauline Mullings, aged 22 years and her sister were served with a summons by Detective Walters advising them that it was necessary for them to go to Court in a tenant matter.

It is alleged that on serving the papers the policeman remarked that the sisters did not have to go to Court.

Pauline countered by saying "we have to go to court" and commented, "but what is dis, we get paper to go to court and de man ah tell we no fi go."

The policeman's response to her comment, was to grab Pauline by her hair and pull her from her room, into the yard. She managed to free herself. However, in the process the policeman's track suit top fell into water which had been spilt when he grabbed her hand.

He became angry and began dragging the seven months pregnant Pauline down the slope on her belly towards the gate.

Pauline said she fell in a trench and had no recollection of what had happened for a few seconds. After regaining consciousness, she asked what had happened, but the policeman began to pull her along the ground once again. She said she was unable to get up from the ground because of severe cramps in her belly.

When she recovered from her ordeal, Pauline went to the Matilda's Corner Police Station, from there she was sent to Mona but instead went to the Papine Police Station, where she signed a written statement.

Pauline attended the Jamaica Council for Human Rights offices on July 30 but had to leave in the midst of filing her statement

because of severe pains in her belly.

She left the Council's offices for the Kingston Public Hospital where she delivered still-born twins that evening.

The head of one of the babies was a bloody mass.

Pauline has since been charged with assault, uttering indecent language and resisting a member of the Constabulary in the "lawful execution of his duty".

It has been the experience of the Council that citizen who stand up for their rights against the Police generally face threats of reprisals.

Since the incident, the police man involved, along with other members of the force have visited Pauline's home on five separate occasions asking for her.

Pauline is determined to seek redress for the mental and physical abuse she suffered even though such redress would not give her back her two babies.

Women and Contraceptive Use in Jamaica

The fact that most Jamaican women have children late in life may be because, at some time or another, most have used some form of contraceptive.

According to a survey, seventy per cent of all Jamaican women between the ages of 15 and 49 had used a contraceptive at some time. This has also accounted for the increase in the use of contraceptive in 1983 and 1989.

The survey which was carried out by the National Family Planning Association, showed that nearly 100 percent of the women interviewed knew of at least one effective method. The information also suggested that the use of contraceptives increased, as women got older, as lowest

use was reported in the 15 to 19 age group. It was also found that the use of contraceptives was much higher in women who wanted no more children. Women who have had one or more children recorded a higher user level at 80 per cent, twice the number of women who had none.

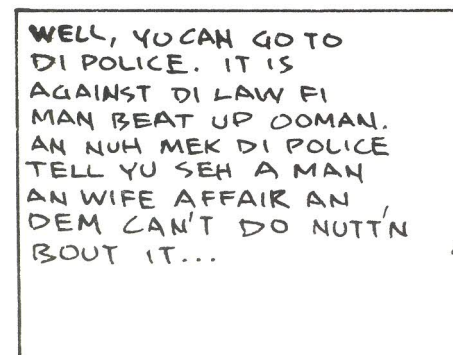
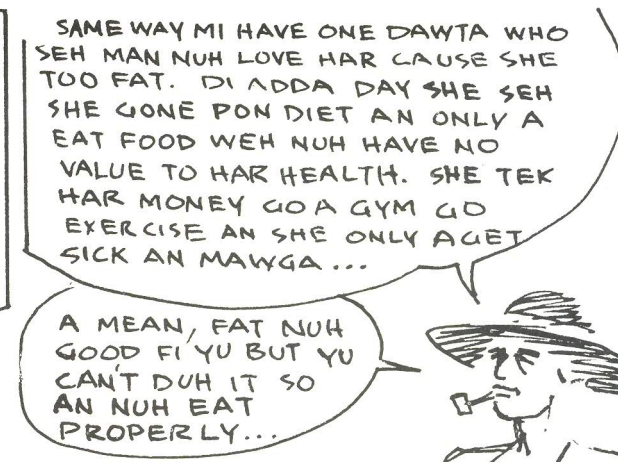
While the pill is the most well known and used method of contraceptive in Jamaica the condom and injection was also well known and used. Other well known types were Intra Uterine Device (IUD), injection, foaming tablets, female and male sterilisation. Over 90 per cent of the women between the ages of 15 and 49 knew about the pill, condom, injection and female sterilisation. The percentage of those with knowledge of IUD was about 80 per cent in both age groups.

Women living in urban areas are also more aware of birth control than their rural counterparts. Contraceptive methods such as the injection, female sterilisation, IUD, diaphragm and withdrawal among others are not very familiar to women between the ages of 15 and 19 years.

The Billings method was not well known, even among very well educated women, most women were aware only of the more popular methods. Only about $\frac{1}{5}$ of the number women, mainly those who were either married, or had a boyfriend knew the time when a woman was most fertile during the menstrual cycle... But even then only about a $\frac{1}{4}$ of those, knew the exact time when the female could safely indulge in sexual intercourse.

Of interest was the fact that birth control methods were seen as a threat to sexuality of both men and women, as is childlessness.





MAR 28 1996

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