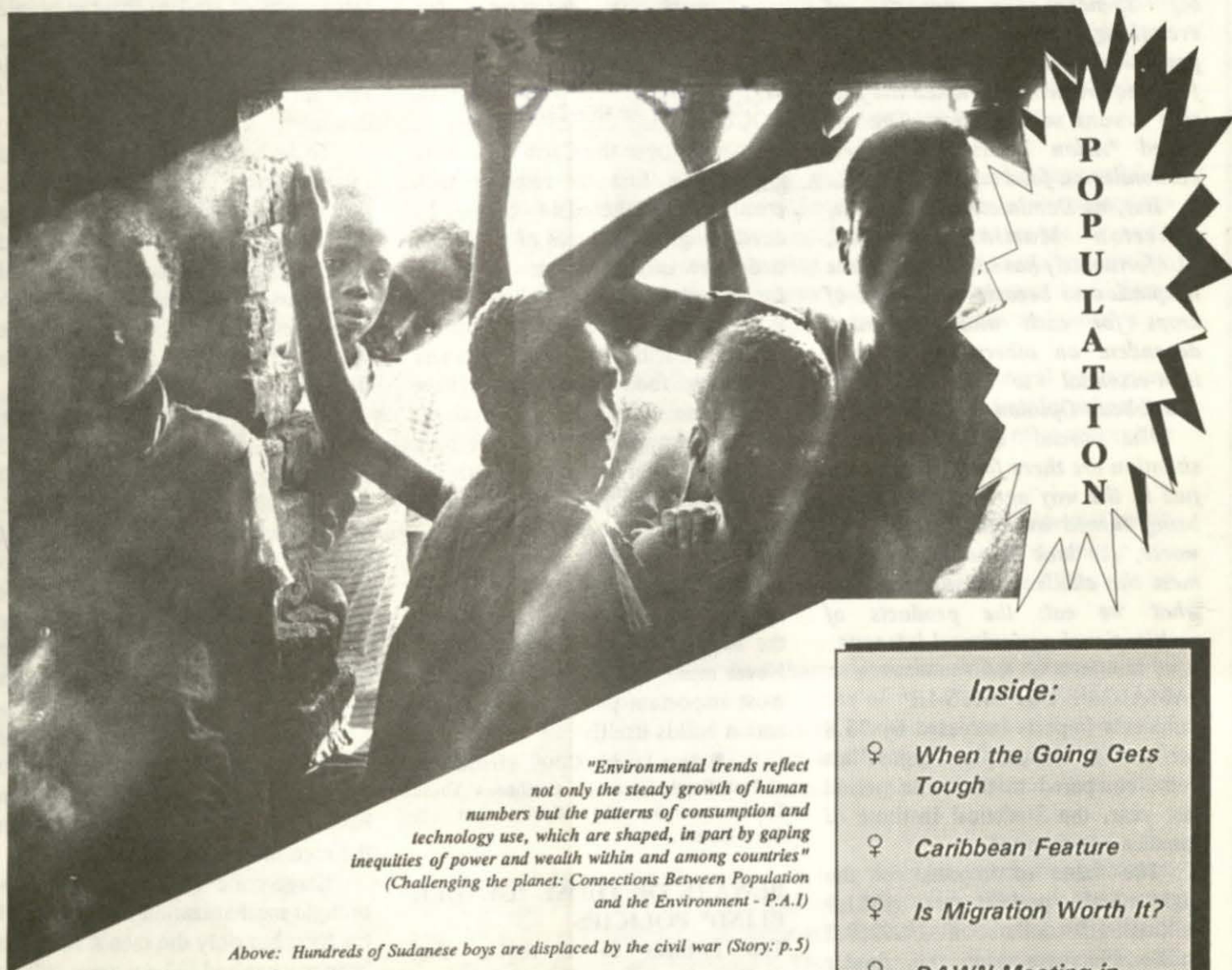


NEW WOMAN Struggle

WAND's News Bulletin

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"Environmental trends reflect not only the steady growth of human numbers but the patterns of consumption and technology use, which are shaped, in part by gaping inequities of power and wealth within and among countries" (Challenging the planet: Connections Between Population and the Environment - P.A.I)

Above: Hundreds of Sudanese boys are displaced by the civil war (Story: p.5)

The widespread prejudice that poor women are victims who multiply indiscriminately, putting their families at risk is gradually being exposed as a dangerous error in population thinking. "We are turning upside down the narrow views of the population field" remarked Sonia Correa of Brazil speaking in Barbados recently. Feminists are challenging the assumption that the main concern of population policies should be fulfilling an unmet need for contraception. They propose that health care needs of women are the central issue and for these needs to be met policies cannot remain preoccupied with the size and density of human populations. As things stand now, the word "population" conjures up "daunting numbers of people seeming threatening, of people moving or consuming too much and ruining the environment" (Joan Dunlop of the International Women's Health Coalition). *(continued on page 8)*

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Credits:

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● *Food First*

Caribbean populations have traditionally been producers of export crops and, in recent times, big spenders on imports of everything including food. A population who supplies its basic food requirements has taken the first step toward self reliance. The so-called "Asian Tigers" built their economies on food security.

But, as Dominican Agronomist, Atherton Martin remarked, "Unfortunately has succumbed to the temptation to become cultivators of crops for cash while becoming dependent on others for the one item-essential to life - food! (Caribbean Opinion Vol. 1 #4 1991)

The social effects of this situation are there for all to see, not just in the way agricultural land is being turned over to housing, but worse, the lack of political will to meet the challenge ensures we are what we eat: the products of multinational agricultural interests.

JAMAICA'S IMPORTS UP

Jamaica's imports increased by 23.8 per cent for January to August last year, compared to the same period last year, the Statistical Institute of Jamaica has reported.

The value of imports for the eight-month period was 1351.9 million US dollars, a US\$259.8 million increase over the similar period a year ago.

At the same time exports moved from US\$730 million for the eight month period in 1992 to US\$747 million this year, an increase of 2.3 per cent.

■ The Nation December 02 '93

Some readers may remember that in 1986 the Standing Committee of Ministers of Agriculture called for a

Regional Agriculture Plan. It is still to be implemented. In our region it is the traders who have done the most work in redressing the production/consumption imbalance.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

Women all over the Caribbean, were among the first to respond with creativity to the debt crisis, by developing new sources of goods for trade, new markets and new strategies for capital formation. If it were not for women traders, especially in the Eastern Caribbean, small farmers producing food crops would have little or no outlet for their produce, since government services have been most exclusively concerned with big cash crops which, in their view, is more valuable because of the foreign exchange they earn. Never mind, that the only area of significant growth in agriculture in recent years, has been the export of non-traditional crops. Never mind, that food security is the most important plank on which any nation builds itself!

■ Joan French, CPDC, presentation at Post Earth Summit - Caribbean Youth Conference on the Environment & Development.

BEWARE OF THOSE "GENDER BLIND" POLICIES

The farmers in a region that traditionally produced staple crops were invited to convert to raising rice on an industrial scale - as a cash crop. This would make it possible to modernize their agricultural practices, while it would also give the farmers more cash income and generate export revenues to the national treasury.

The men, who make all the economic decisions in the village and in their households, thought the project sounded good. They agreed to

lease all the land around the village to the state for a term of 50 years including the land the women had inherited from their mothers for raising the rice and vegetables their families lived on.

Modern tractors plowed up the large tracts of land so that the people could plant rice. The women's fields, where the rice plants stood nearly ripe for harvest, were also plowed down.

To find a place where they could raise the crops their families needed the women now has to walk long distances. Breaking new ground meant a lot of hard work, and the soil there was of poorer quality, which meant less food. The people of the village experienced hunger for the first time .

As far as the women are concerned, the rice plantation had many dire consequences. They lost the land they had the right to farm. Their work was made heavier and more time-consuming. In addition to their work in their own fields, the women had to work for others in the rice fields. Before the plantation came the women had been able to earn money from the surplus their fields produced. Their new fields produce no surpluses, and so they have no income. Consequently, the women have become even more dependent on the men in several respects.

Large-scale rice production has brought mechanization in the form of tractors, but only the men's work has been mechanised. The women still do all the planting and weeding by hand.

But, one may ask, have the men benefitted in any way from the project? One advantage is more cash income. But, at the same time they have been turned into wage-labourers/sharecroppers instead of autonomous farmers. What is more, unless they manage to produce a specified quantity of rice, they will lose their right to the fields.

■ Report on a UN supported project in an African country. Source unknown.

CHANGING THE THINKING BEHIND POPULATION POLICIES

by Audrey Roberts

In Jamaica in the 1950s and 60s the introduction of contraceptives was very much resisted by certain categories of society. Poor people felt that it was a plan to kill out poor people, to kill out black people. We have almost come full circle to that position. Contraceptive programmes aimed specifically at Jamaican women have proven most successful. That is what the policy said we should do and we have done it; women have done it. Our fertility rates are down (except, for like Haiti, where women in the teenage years and over are having 4 and more children, all other countries in the Caribbean, have high rates in the teenage category only).

People who believe that family planning has a sinister side, could say then, that the plan has been successful in the sense that there are far fewer poor people having children. Yet, there is still more poverty, still tremendous migration of poor people out of Jamaica looking for work at the same category in which they looked for work before: as domestic helpers. We even have teachers leaving Jamaica, coming to the Bahamas to work as maids. So there are tremendous contradictions between what was supposed to happen and what we see now. And, if you are looking for an explanation, you can put right in there the structural adjustment programmes and policies.

In the Bahamas, a smaller and far wealthier society than Jamaica you have not had structural adjustment programmes, you have not had explicit population control policies, and interestingly, unlike in Jamaica where we had Depoprovera, you have had the introduction of a very sophisticated and expensive methods of contraception such as Norplant.

Why are we seeing such an interest, attraction and usage of Norplant in our health care system in the Bahamas? We don't know. We don't have statistics. Studies have not been done. In a country where resources are supposedly quite sufficient to the number of people, why these very clandestine methods of introducing contraceptives?

Why do you see Norplant being introduced into the Bahamas when the Bahamas government has no reason to be concerned about the Bahamas population? We don't know, but there are some of us who feel that there is a connection between the introduction of Norplant and who it is that is receiving health services at the expense of the government. Haitians are coming into the Bahamas, bringing families and having families. The system is primarily used by Haitians and other poor people in the country. Many Bahamians go to Miami and other places for health care.

There are certain connections between Haiti, the Bahamas and Jamaica. In fact, there are connections between all of us. We need to understand a lot more about population policies and why they exist. What are the forces that drive them? I would like to affirm what Dinnys Luciano said about population policies. Let the policies consider **population** as human beings, not as producers and consumers. That approach includes or affects: the necessity of survival; identity; solidarity; understanding, recreation and all those things that make us human beings and not numbers.

Audrey Roberts speaking at the DAWN Caribbean Regional Meeting on Reproductive Rights/Population, Barbados, November 1 - 3, 1993. She is currently based in Barbados as a Consultant to UNIFEM.

Dinnys Luciano is a member of Centro de Apoyo Aquelarre - Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Depo-provera is a synthetic hormone contraceptive administered every 3 months by injection in a woman's arm. A 1983 report named Jamaica as having the highest reported percentage of women in the world using injectable contraceptives.

Norplant is a set of six capsules about the size of book matches placed under the skin of a woman's upper arm through a minor surgical procedure. The capsules filled with a contraceptive hormone called levonorgestrel. They prevent pregnancy for up to 5 years.

● *Political Complexion of Refugees*

During the Cold War, refugees in Europe were celebrated as heroes in the fight against communist dictatorship. "Many were articulate; most were white and Christian." They found homes in the countries where they sought asylum or were welcomed as immigrants. In those days there was "consensus among governments as to the obligations of states towards refugees." After World War II, the United Nations set up an office of High Commissioner for Refugees to help governments handle the task. But in the 1970s and '80s, most people forced to leave their homes for Western Europe assumed "a different profile". These refugees tended to be victims of circumstances which Western Governments helped create such as the political crises in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Haiti, Iraq, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Zaire. "More often than not they were neither white nor Christian."

When we take a look at our own region we notice the difference in the treatment of people attempting to enter the USA from Haiti and Cuba. One can only conclude that race and political ideology are very important factors in the USA's policy on refugees.

■ Info from: Sadruddin Agakhan
Populi Vol 20 #8, Sept '93

HAITIAN REFUGEES DETAINED ON REACHING US

MIAMI - A boat jammed with 352 Haitian refugees arrived on U.S. territory yesterday, and its passengers taken to a detention centre where about 160 of their countrymen are on a hunger strike to protest U.S. immigration policy.

U.S. Coast Guard officials said the Haitians were being bused to the Krome Processing Centre, just south of Miami, for processing by the

Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS).

Coast Guard vessels are under presidential orders to interdict and automatically repatriate Haitian boat people attempting to reach the United States.

Most Haitians are deemed economic refugees rather than political ones. Unlike Cubans fleeing a communist government, who are easily granted political asylum under a special 1966 Cuban Adjustment

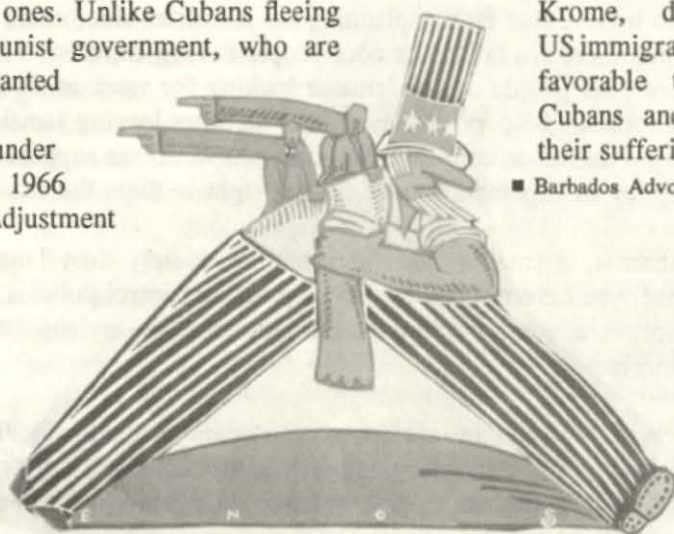


Illustration: TIME Nov. 1, 1993

● *Migration for Survival*

The distinction between immigrants and refugees becomes more difficult as the combined effects of structural adjustment policies, militarism and declining food security undermine a people's prospects.

Today "increasing members of people fleeing their homes do so because life has become insupportable there. They may not be pushed out at the end of the rifle but regional conflicts, environmental degradation, and absence of work opportunities continue to encourage it not force them to leave." (Populi Vol. 20 #8 Sept 1993).

Arrivals find themselves unwelcome in countries whose social

Act, Haitians fleeing a repressive government imposed in a military coup face a long battle to win asylum and the right to become U.S. residents.

Three of the Haitians in a letter released through their lawyer said they were protesting against mistreatment from the staff at Krome, discriminatory US immigration policies, favorable treatment of Cubans and an end to their suffering.

■ Barbados Advocate Jan. 06 '93

and economic problems have also worsened in the present economic climate. The callously written item from the Economist below illustrates both the problems suffered by "economic refugees" and the contempt shown by some members of the public in the Western European countries to which they run.

NORTH AFRICA'S MISERY COMES TO EUROPE

North Africa, never quiet, will force itself more and more on the West's attention throughout 1993. Grabbing the emotional headlines will be the ever-growing number of boat people

and their inevitable disasters: in the summer of this year at least 20 Moroccans were drowned while sailing across the Strait of Gibraltar to Spain. Nobody knows how many Moroccans reach Spain but the number is substantial and increasing. The Moroccans are not fleeing political oppression; their goals are simply a better life. More Moroccans, and their fellow North Africans from Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt, will try to make the crossing by boat or by air in 1993 - adding to the hundreds of thousands already in Western Europe.

The reason for the exodus is economic. Morocco is undergoing painful reforms prescribed by the International Monetary Fund; Algeria's economy, apart from its oil and gas, is in ruins; Libya is feeling the pain of low world oil prices; Tunisia has never been able to attract enough investment to provide jobs for its people; and over-populated Egypt suffers from a swollen state sector, excessive subsidies and heavy dependence on foreign aid.

■ Roland Dallas - *The World in 1993*, Economist Publications

ONE WOMAN ASKS: IS IT WORTH IT?

When we have discussions on migration, we tend to focus on what happens to the family after the woman has left. I want to focus on what happens to the woman when she migrates, or the isolation a woman is subject to when she moves to another country.

She has left her home, left her family support, or family support she thought she had when she decided to migrate might not prove as supportive as she had expected, and she has to work her way in an entirely new environment. She feels dislocated. She has to find a new point of entry into a new work market. Sometimes women from professional fields have to take jobs in non-qualified areas.

The money she makes out of that must maintain herself in the new country. She has at the same time to provide for the family that she left and always, she has to provide more because she must care for the children and somebody in whose care she has left them. She does it with a lot of anxiety as she's always over compensating, to send enough "so that they don't ill treat my children" What's happening to the woman in that situation? Her health suffers. She's in competition with nationals for employment, for housing, for health services. What is her capacity to improve herself, at the same time she's trying to maintain her family overseas?

There are several factors involved in the issue of migration and I would just like us to focus on the woman because in most instances they have tremendous pressure, their health suffers, their personal development suffers and I really ask myself do women who migrate really benefit from this migration?

■ Source: Keturah Babb speaking at DAWN: Caribbean Regional Meeting on Reproductive Rights and Population. Nov 1 - 3, 1993

EXODUS TO NOWHERE

Sudan, the largest country in Africa has been in a civil war for 27 of its 37 years of independence from colonial rule. Northern Sudan and Khartoum, the capital, are governed by the Revolutionary Command Council of Lieutenant General Omar al Bashir who took power in 1989. The government is fighting the Sudanese People's Liberation Army under Dr. John Garang, which controls the countryside, in the southern half of the nation. There is also a conflict being waged within the SPLA between the Dinka and Nuer peoples.

The Revolutionary Command Council are Muslim fundamentalists (armed, it is claimed, by Iran) seeking to "Islamise" the Sudan

whose southern area is populated by Christians and Animists (people who believe in a spirit force or soul which gives matter form). While soldiers from both sides routinely rape, kidnap and put to death the displaced inhabitants of the region, it is generally agreed that the Bashir government has been the main persecutor using the weapons of famine, political repression, torture of dissidents and slaughter.

The latest, four-year phase of the civil war has been the most vicious and costly, with countless numbers dead, their bodies plowed under by bulldozers, in communal graves, and a total of four million people displaced. The region is a map of upheaval and uprooting.

The central figures in this mass and bewildering migration are the boys of southern Sudan - 100,000 or more, aged 6 to 15, who have embarked on a long, unending journey to escape. The boys were tending cattle in the fields, as is the custom, when the government troops marched into the villages and slaughtered their families. From a distance, some saw their parents and sisters murdered; others learned what was happening and ran.

From village after invaded village they fled - one, five, hundreds. They banded together in groups of thousands and tens of thousands. They were occasionally accompanied by adults, who were also escaping government soldiers, but most of the time they were on their own. The boys walked barefoot 200 or 500 or a thousand miles for weeks, often months, to find camps where they would be safe - a modern re-enactment of the long marches of exile in the Books of Exodus and Lamentations.

Since 1989, these boys have been in continuous aimless motion, living by their wiles, moving from camp to camp, hunted, terrified, hungry, ill, benumbed. It is difficult to say which

has been more of a hardship, being refugees in another country or being continually displaced in their own. Phillip Thon Leek, the director of the Friends of African Children Education (FACE) Foundation, observes that "to be displaced in one own's land is like being lost in one's own house. You are sure you belong there, but you don't know exactly where. Or perhaps you are no longer sure you belong there, but you are sure you do not belong anywhere else.

■ From: "Tragedy In the Desert: The Sudan's Quiet Death" by Roger Rosenblatt, *Vanity Fair* Vol. 56 #7 July 1993



Cover illustration of *Immigrant Women's Health Handbook*, Toronto, Canada

The ethnically varied Caribbean diaspora has taken root in Canada's cities. That country scored the No. 2 position in the UNDP's Human Development Index in 1993. However, the jobless rate is on the rise. Canada is a signatory to the U.S. led North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico.

● *Poverty Doesn't Add Up*

There is a widespread belief that overpopulation is the cause of poverty. In fact, population issues are usually discussed as if they are a result of "natural" forces, the simple arithmetic of too many people with too few resources equals poverty. But as the items below show, the condition of peoples is related to political forces. The options available to a people have as much to do with issues of power as with population pressures.

For example, Joseph Palacio notes that the poverty of Amerindian peoples in the Caribbean area is related to the fact that they are few in number, have not been allowed access to resources, and have been subjected to a policy of assimilation imposed by governments in which Amerindians are not represented.

The second item from the USA shows how an otherwise wealthy country tolerates inadequate public provision and degrading welfare bureaucracies. These systems define the life chances of the citizens of "the Other America".

RURAL NEGLECT REINFORCES AMERINDIAN COLONISATION

Aboriginal peoples are among the poorest in the region because of the neglect that their governments have inflicted upon the rural area. It has worsened within the past two decades as governments hastened their search for tourism and non-traditional export commodities, where they see only a limited role for Aboriginal Peoples. Children do not see any future for themselves in what their parents and grandparents are doing. The impact on de-culturation of the younger generation is fundamental.

The minimal contribution to the national economy is reflected in the low level of education, health and public utilities that Aboriginal People receive and could demand. Electricity, telephone and piped water are unavailable in most villages. Diminished budgets of the countries within the past decade has lessened even the limited supply of all social services with dismal results. For example, Guyana and Belize, countries that had eradicated malaria, are facing a resurgence and as rural dwellers, Aboriginal peoples are the most affected.

Poor economic conditions, make the rural area of most of the countries the last place where anyone would want to live. Unlike others, the Aboriginal Peoples have fewer opportunities to leave.

Using any index of growth in the matters of government, land and environment, economy and social services, the focus of dominant society has been to reduce Aboriginal Peoples to be the poorest of the poor and further more to continue the colonialist policy of de-culturation. All of this continues to take place under the guise of assimilation namely the efforts by the newly independent state to corral citizens into the process of nation building. In becoming assimilated Aboriginal Peoples have contributed to the political, social and economic welfare of the state and in return have lost large part of their culture. It is conditions such as these that led the formulators of the 1960 ILO Convention No. 169 reject the policy of assimilation in favour of having Aboriginal Peoples determine the way in which they want to be integrated.

■ Joseph Palacio Trinidad & Tobago
Review, Sept, 1993

WELFARE POLICIES COLONISE U.S. POOR

In 1989, 52 percent of families in poverty in the USA were headed by women (up from 23 percent in 1959); The author of "Lives on the Edge - Single Mothers and Their Children in the Other America" argues that single mothers and their children sink into poverty not because of their individual or family or cultural failings as because of the failings of public policy, and that such "constructed inequity," made by public policy, "can be unmade by public policy."

She indicts preschool teachers for following a "deficit" model, assuming in advance that poor children lack discipline, intelligence, creativity and the basic ability to get along in social situations. Poor children (especially poor black male children), she argues, are condemned even before they enter the classroom or playroom. They are seen as "the repositories and perpetrators of their family's suspect life styles", and are destined to be labeled as having "attention deficiency disorder," "emotional impairment" or some other shortcoming.

Rigidly organised preschool classrooms, which value obedience more than development, create the deficits in poor children, imposing a self-image of marginality and failure. She insists that schools must embrace a role in community life and that educators must gain an awareness of, and empathy for, poor children's experiences of stress and want. Fortunately, Ms. Polakow has observed some exceptional preschool classrooms where teachers do display flexibility and respect for children as individuals; and this sustains her belief that a "nonsegregated, high-quality, generously subsidized national child care system" is an important goal.

■ Nancy F. Cott

- New York Review of Books

● Reproductive Rights and Population

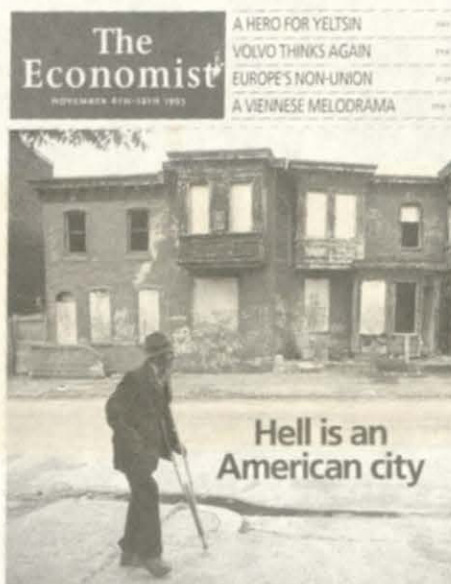
Caribbean territories encompass such a range of population models, such a variety of problems and solutions that the region has been described as "poised for leadership" in the global population debate. For example, a Cuban woman, despite the blockade has access to services and technology in her search for the contraceptive that suits her best. In Curaçao, however, illegal immigrants from Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic are afraid to make use of health care provisions for fear of being identified and deported. Puerto Rico, has one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the world while the latest figures from family planning sources say in Barbados the birth rate among teenagers has been reduced from about 25% of all births a decade ago. One fifth of all births in Barbados today are to teenage mothers. (*Sunday Sun* 5.12.93)

Guyana, Belize and Surinam have pronatalist population policies (that means governments there want the population to increase). Yet in Guyana there has been a decline in fertility rates. This has also happened in Jamaica, which introduced policies

to reduce fertility. While poor women in Jamaica are pressured into having less children, women in Guyana are "choosing" to do so risking their health, and sometimes their lives, having illegal abortions.

Quality of Care in this region is affected by the state of health and education systems in a particular country. It is also affected by migration, legal status and the access by women to services or women's varying access to money to buy the health services we need. In Haiti, until international and internal forces cease their collusion, and conditions for a democratic social order are in place any discussion about rights will remain in the realm of dreams. At best, family planning in the English-speaking Caribbean is tied to medical services. However, when the governmental system is collapsing under the burden of market forces and SAPS, the quality of care declines while NGOs are used as back-up and, in some cases, expected to be the main providers.

■ Source: Rapporteur's notes on Day 2 DAWN Regional Meeting on Reproductive Rights and Population (Nov 1-3, 1993)



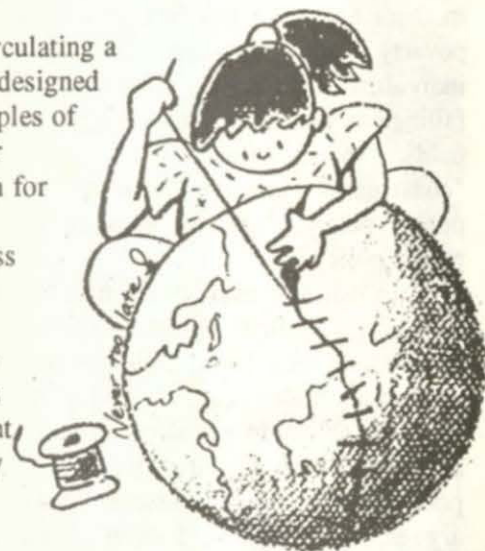
People started coming together in urban centres 5,000 years ago. In 1950 only 18 percent of humankind lived in cities. Today nearly 50 percent of us do. The growth of cities in the 20th century is related to industrialisation and the migration of populations from increasingly neglected rural areas. Demographers anticipate that "urban populations in developing countries will surge from under 2 billion in 1990 to 4 billion in 2025" (UNFPA, 1991 p.21) WHO has classified New Delhi, Mexico City, Seoul and Beijing among the 10 most polluted cities in the world.

(continued from page 1)

There is similar caution from other sources against the "real danger of an era of direct or indirect imperialism" contained in a modern version of the white man's burden. In the argument about global warming, for example, the cost of reducing carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere over the next 40 years "is trivial for developed countries, it will not be for many poor countries. They are therefore right to ask the developed countries to pay the cost of their (doubtful) eco-morality... third world populations, polluting the atmosphere and degrading its natural resources and habitats for plants and insects, can easily be turned into the enemy on Spaceship Earth." (Deepak Lal Green Imperialists, the World in 1993, Economist Publication).

Women's Voices 1994, a global initiative of women's health advocates is circulating a **Women's Declaration on Population Policies**. Advocating population policies designed and implemented under just, humane and effective development based on principles of social justice, the widely circulated petition is currently reshaping the debate for the upcoming **International Conference on Population and Development** plan for Cairo, 1994.

We could understand population issues better through a greater consciousness of power relations. Human sexuality and development were the major areas of discussion at the DAWN: Caribbean Regional Meeting on Reproductive Rights and Population in Barbados in November. Joan French, of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre: "Within feminist analysis we have defined reproduction as not simply biological but social. If we take that and link it into how development models affect people's capacity to reproduce a society which can make us happy then we are getting to the essence of what the perspective needs to be."



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