

ISSUE NO. 19 MAY 1984

ARGENTINIAN WOMEN PRESS THEIR DEMANDS

Some 5,000 women in Argentina recently held the first exclusively female political rally in three decades, at which they demanded their rights.

The women demanded the ratification of the U.N. agreement against all forms of discrimination against women; a change in the present law which gives the father the exclusive legal right to decide over the affairs of children; equal salary for equal work; day care centres for working mothers; and the establishment of a national secretariat for women's affairs.

Argentine President, Raul Alfonsin, responded positively to the demands by strongly backing the U.N. agreement, and revealed his intention to seek a drastic revision of the law to give both parents equal rights to provide legal authorization for their children.

Latinamerica Press Vol 16 No. 12, April
1984

NESTLE BOWS TO PRESSURE

Activists from 26 countries have suspended the boycott of the Swiss-based Nestle Corporation for six months, during which time they have pledged to monitor the company's adherence to a code on marketing breastmilk substitutes.

The suspension of the seven-year boycott followed a January 26 accord between Nestle and the International Nestle Boycott Committee. Under the agreement, Nestle will comply with marketing standards and guidelines of UNICEF and WHO. Specifically, the firm has pledged not to distribute free samples of powdered milk in hospitals and to doctors.

Nestle is the world's largest producer of infant milk powders, misuse of which has been blamed for the deaths of up to one million children a year in Third World countries.

Common Concern, No. 41 March 1984

THE MIDWIFE IS A MAN!

A role regarded as the exclusive preserve of women in traditional societies - the midwife - is performed by men in Bali, Indonesia.

This unusual phenomena is supported by the loose, non-dogmatic moral code of the Hindu religion, since there are no taboos in Hinduism that prohibit a man from touching intimate parts of a woman's body if the intention is to aid or heal.

In addition, neither the dukuns - as these traditional birth attendants are called - nor the mothers express any awkwardness at the practice.

Indonesia's Department of Health has been keen to preserve this source of traditional expertise in midwifery, through training courses which impart new knowledge about how to deliver infants safely.

The dukuns are also alerted to the kinds of complications which might require more sophisticated medical care. The training therefore helps establish a formal link between the dukuns and the health centres.

UNICEF News, Issue 118

LUNG CANCER: TOP WOMAN KILLER

The U.S. National Cancer Institute has predicted that lung cancer will be the number one cause of women's deaths from cancer in 1984, replacing breast cancer as the leading killer.

The forecast is based on statistics from major centres around the U.S. that showed death rates among women rising from 10.7 per 100,000 in 1970 to 20.3 in 1980.

The Institute attributes this increase almost entirely to the growing numbers of women smoking since World War II. Up until then, lung cancer mainly affected men.

WORLD HEALTH March 1984

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RAPE AN INCIDENT OF ARMY LIFE?

The U.S. Army has rejected a claim for damages filed by a 26-year-old woman who was beaten and raped by two other soldiers while she was confined to an unguarded barracks.

Said the chief of the Army's general claims service in a letter to her: "Since you suffered your injury incident to service as a member of the Army Reserve, your claim is not payable."

The woman, Betty Ann Buckmiller, is pursuing the case with a civilian attorney. "There's no job I've heard of where rape is incident to any type of working conditions," she pointed out.

At the time of the rape, Buckmiller was confined to barracks after turning herself in for being absent without leave. While she was sleeping, two male soldiers who were also in custody slipped into her barracks and attacked her. There was no guard on duty.

The soldiers were convicted and sentenced to 20 and 40 years in prison, but Buckmiller is claiming damages for the humiliation, back injury, smashed nose, cut hands, bruises, chipped tooth, and other injuries she suffered in the attack.

Off Our Backs Vol. xiv No. 3, March 1984.

NEW BOOK ON THIRD WORLD WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

Where do you find women working as blacksmiths, or as bakers, or making roofing-sheets? Can women successfully earn a living planting trees, manufacturing hospital equipment, or running a bus service?

The answers to these questions are to be found in a recently released book by Marilyn Carr entitled Blacksmith, Baker, Roofing-Sheet Maker: Employment for Rural Women in Developing Countries.

Dr. Carr is an economist with the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG).

The book is a source of ideas for those helping develop cash-producing work for Third World women. It is also essential reading for anyone wanting to know how and where traditional ideas of "women's work" are being challenged.

The author uses over 50 case-studies to show how some projects have succeeded in developing women's earning power through involvement in activities more competitive than traditional crafts, such as sewing and basket making.

She suggests why some ventures fail and what untaken opportunities still exist. With evidence from 22 countries, covering 38 trades, she produces a convincing case for substituting "new jobs for old" as well as, where appropriate, upgrading traditional projects.

The book may be ordered at a cost of Bds. \$16.79 from Intermediate Technology Publications, c/o Element Books, The Old Brewery, Tilsbury, Wiltshire SP3 6NH, England.
