

WOMAN

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Struggle

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TWO CARIBBEAN TERRITORIES

FAVOUR DAUGHTERS

A review done this year (WHO/UNICEF) of the "Scanty" data available on the subject of sexual discrimination in childhood indicates that negative attitudes toward girl children prevail in virtually all societies of the developing world.

Of 40 developing countries surveyed only two, Jamaica and Venezuela show a clear preference for daughters. Bangladesh, Jordan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea and Syria have the strongest son preference according to one source. Boys are preferred for reasons that are cultural, religious and economic. In some societies sons are expected to bear the prime responsibility for the care of parents.

The review looks at implications for the health of girls. Studies show they are not as well fed as boys, less cared for during illness and that less money is spent on them, particularly for education. "This kind of neglect is not necessarily wilful... (but) more a conditioned response to a situation of scarcity." The results in some extreme cases is lower female life expectancy. "Every sixth death of a female infant in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan is due to neglect and discrimination."

(World Health June 1986)

"SEX CAPITALISTS" UNDER FIRE IN SWEDEN

A campaign is being waged in Sweden for the reintroduction of controls on pornography on the grounds that it is dangerous and degrading. A multi-million dollar porn industry has developed in Sweden since 1971. At that time, Swedish liberals, in the name of sexual freedom, had supported the

removal of the old restrictions. However, the Swedish Sex Education Association reports that rather than sexual freedom, "the sex capitalists moved in and what we got was pornography which was cold, mechanical, violent and degrading."

An existing law banning excessively violent films and videos will be extended to include sexual violence, if the reforms proceed.

(Her Say in Herizons Vol.4 No.5, 1986)

'Y' WRITES REGAN

The National Board of the YWCA of the USA has sent a message to President Ronald Regan expressing "the strongest possible opposition to the use of military force as an instrument of United States foreign policy."

The letter which was sent after the US bombing of Libya, reminded the President that the YWCA of the USA had long opposed both acts of violence and terrorism and "counter-productive military initiatives that lead to new and increasing levels of violence."

The National Board urged the President "to cease American participation in renewed violence and to seek a way to negotiate solutions that will reduce the tide of vengeance by addressing the basic social, economic and political problems that lead desperate people to confront our nation and the world with a policy of deliberate terrorism."

(Common Concern No.51 September, 1986)

WOMEN GETTING UNFAIR DEAL IN COURT

A study of the New York State judicial system has concluded that the bias against women in courtrooms there is so widespread that women "are often denied equal justice."

A 23 member panel reported that female lawyers are "routinely" insulted by male judges and attorneys. The credibility of female witnesses is attacked by judges who see them as emotional and untrustworthy. The study also found some judges do not view family violence in a realistic way and blame the women for their plight. Others are unfair in the division of property in divorce cases because they do not recognise women's contribution to marriage.

The panel, The New York Task Force on Women in the Courts urged the naming of a special assistant to monitor discrimination against women and to set up a training programme to reduce bias in judges.

(Her Say in Herizons Vol.4 No.5, July/August 1986)

MARRIAGE LAW IN MAURITIUS

The Women's Liberation Movement of Mauritius is fighting for the repeal of a law which will re-establish the right of parents to "marry off" their daughters before they are of legal age to refuse. The government and opposition members passed the bill with a unanimous vote.

(Connexions in Herizons Vol.4 No.5 July/August, 1986)

NEW DIALOGUE ON FUNDING INFORMATION

The problem of funding is a continuous one for Women's programmes as they strive to provide services, create alternative development approaches and participate in country, regional and international networks.

The Womanshare Project of the International Women's Tribune Centre is in the initial organizing stage.

According to the current issue of Tribune (IWTC's newsletter), the Project "combines technical assistance, information networking and advocacy to promote increased access to financial resources and a broader, more in-depth discussion on ensuring the long-term financial survival and growth of Women's programmes."

Among the goals of Womanshare is the encouragement of continued discussion of ideas and issues by women in Third World countries so that their concerns and visions are introduced into a broader arena.

IWTC has requested ideas and suggestions about involvement in the Project.

Write to:

International Women's Tribune Centre
777 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
U.S.A.

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