

CA7RA

NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION FOR FEMINIST RESEARCH AND ACTION
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CAFRA News is the quarterly newsletter and primary networking tool of the *Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)*.

Its main purposes are to:

- *Inform members and other interested persons about the activities and programmes of the association.*
- *Provide a forum for discussion and debate on key issues of concern to women in the region;*
- *Promote the sharing of experiences and foster links among individual feminists, activists and women's organisations;*
- *Assist in breaking down language barriers in the region;*
- *Stimulate women's creative expression; and*
- *Contribute to the development of the women's movement regionally and internationally.*

We welcome letters, articles, poems, reviews, opinions and artwork for editorial evaluation and selection. The newsletter committee has a final right to edit content and to reject material not appropriate for publication, e.g. that does not further the aims and objectives of CAFRA and promote a spirit of sisterhood; or that is racist, sexist or "maternalist." Individual authors and reviewers are solely responsible for views and opinions expressed in published articles.

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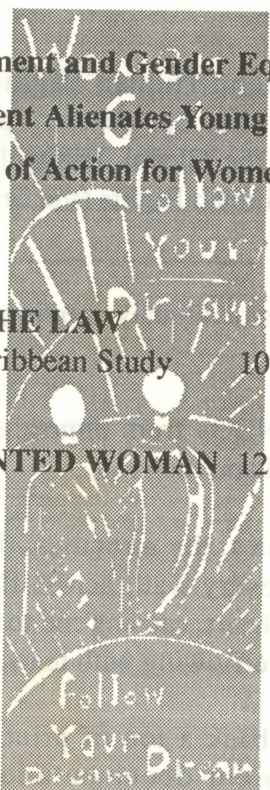
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EDITORIAL

“Human rights of women” is but one of the many areas to which CAFRA gives priority. This issue of CAFRA NEWS focuses on some of the disturbing revelations of discrimination against women, as well as other thought-provoking issues on Human Rights which were recently highlighted at the World Conference in Vienna.

Despite our ethnic and cultural diversity in the Caribbean, we are not immune to the influences which fuel intolerance, discrimination and inequality as occurs in other parts of the world. Contrary to popular belief, the increasing economic hardship in the Caribbean has provided a good breeding ground for discrimination between ethnic and other groupings.

If we were to do some serious stocktaking and self-assessment we would realize that discrimination or prejudice is being fostered against people whose gender, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, etc, are different to our own. Not only is the “we” and “they” complex a very superficial way of addressing the current issues of discrimination but it is a convenient way of saying that it is not a “BIG” problem.

As Elaine Hewitt made mention in her article: “Human rights are as important as the more commonly accepted right to food, health and jobs.”

Also included in this issue is the regular round up of news, upcoming events, conferences and new books in the CAFRA library.

In sisterhood

Allison Apparicio

LETTER

• TO EDITOR •

Dear CAFRA News

Dear Sisters,

At the Second Human Rights Conference in Vienna, Austria, I presented a paper on behalf of CAFRA at the Global Tribunal on Violations of Women’s Human Rights (the first conference was in 1948).

It was a tremendously moving experience in so many ways.

Women’s NGOs from almost every nation were represented and men too...

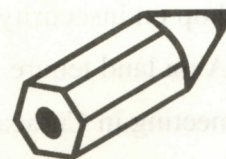
The tragedies, the atrocities, displayed at every booth, on every wall, across floors and ceilings, tore at my heart, causing me to hurry by, my eyes averted, overflowing with tears.

I brought back a ton of print to share with all visitors to our documentation centre (WAND, Pinelands, St Michael, Barbados).

In solidarity and sisterhood

Elaine Hewitt

With much affection.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND WOMEN



Elaine Hewitt

This paper (testimony) by Roberta Clarke, Gaietry Pargass and Elaine Hewitt was prepared for presentation by CAFRA at the Global Tribunal on Violations Against Women, part of the UN World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993. The inclusion of women's rights and women's reproductive rights at the Vienna conference was the result of two years of international mobilisation. This testimony from the Caribbean represents work done around violence against women as a major social issue in this region. CAFRA has focused on the legal aspects of the problem and WAND is encouraging a network of women and groups against violence.

Testimony presented by Elaine Hewitt on behalf of CAFRA, in Vienna.

Caribbean women live in the New World but there is nothing new in our stories of suffering and human rights violations. Along our historical voyage, Caribbean women have witnessed

and experienced:

- the genocide of indigenous people; the enslavement of Africans and the indentureship of Indians for the purpose of economic exploitation.

Women are still reeling from the social, political, economic legacy of this brutal and inequitable history. Despite the reports that we women in the Caribbean have progressed, that we have attained equality with men; that we have every opportunity and are taking these opportunities, still our everyday experiences in our homes, work places and in all aspects of our lives speak of oppression and violation because we are women. I am here on behalf of my Caribbean sisters to testify to the everyday violations of our human rights.

The majority of States in the Caribbean have signed and ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). These States, therefore, have accepted the principle of freedom, equity and equality as between

women and men and between nations.

Despite all that our nations have agreed to, our reality is one of discrimination on the basis of sex. If the Women's Convention is a human rights document that defines equality within the family as well as the role of the State in protecting that equality, then we observe significant non-compliance in the Caribbean.

There are countries where:

- women still are not guaranteed equal rights under the Constitution;
- wives of nationals are entitled to citizenship while the same is still not true for husbands of nationals;
- unmarried female pregnant teachers can be dismissed upon a second pregnancy. No such disability is placed on a single man with children; and
- the real property of a man who dies intestate passes on to the eldest son. Discrimination also continues indirectly when the law fails to take account of the social and economic reality of women's lives.

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HUMAN RIGHTS AND WOMEN

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I want now to speak to you of reproductive rights and violence against women.

Many Caribbean States have yet to legislate in areas of the private sphere, (the home), where women are most vulnerable to abuse by men. By failing to pass laws which would stem domestic violence, these States condone that violence and subordination of women.

In no country in the English-speaking Caribbean region is rape criminalised within marriage. In one country, Trinidad and Tobago, where the women's movement unsuccessfully tried to have marital rape criminalised, the dominant response can be typified by the comment of the then deputy Prime Minister: "I am opposed to it [criminalisation of marital rape] on religious grounds. What happens between a man and his wife in the privacy of the bedroom is their business."

The procedural and emotional difficulties which a woman must overcome before asserting her rights to the protection of the law cannot be understated. Women victims of sexual violence can expect years of traumatic court appearances and delays with no guarantee of having justice done on their behalf. I think of the seven-year old Trinidadian girl who was raped and sodomized by a man in her village. After 12 years of delays in prosecution, her case was dismissed on the grounds that the undue delay was a violation of the human rights of the accused. And there are still judges who feel that the principles used in sentencing first time offenders are equally applicable to rapists. Giving long jail terms are therefore seen as unnecessarily "sentencing a man



away for life." The attention given to the treatment of sexual offenders, whilst a valid human rights concern, speaks to the male bias in the legal system and in the cultural norms which underpin that bias.

There is little concern for the victim's rights, and still less for the collective right of all women to security of person.

When population policies require it, women are pressured into the use of unsafe contraceptives or are victims of forced sterilisation. Men's agendas are determined by their gender. And their agenda constantly denies the right of women to control their own bodies. If rights refer to a body of protections to which women are entitled, then we have no reproductive rights in the Caribbean.

I now turn to socio-economic rights

Article 23 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights both address the individual's rights to social and economic security. In this regard, many women in the Caribbean have the sole

responsibility for the economic wellbeing of their children. Over 40 per cent of all households are female-headed. Given the low levels of wages and high levels of unemployment, the contribution of low-income women to family income is significant. Still, in many countries of the Caribbean, there are no laws which grant women the right to maternity leave and pay. Women reproduce the society at their own economic risk. In many countries, the lowest level of minimum wage is accorded to the household assistant. Indeed, in one country, the minimum wage for the household assistant is even less than the minimum wage for a juvenile. These workers are women. The undervaluing of this type of work - cleaning, cooking and child care - reflects most poignantly the societal perception of women's worth.

Women's economic vulnerability is deepened by the structural adjustment policies dictated by international financial institutions. In countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Guyana and Barbados, resources are used to

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service the external debt at the expense of the social sector. Cutting government expenditure under Structural Adjustment Programmes has meant for women, reduced access to health care, education, housing and social security benefits. The majority of those who have lost their jobs under these policies are also female since women predominate in the social sector. In sum, this means greater poverty for women. The sector of the population which benefitted the least from the international loans (women and children) is now being made to bear the greatest burden.

These international linkages between the Caribbean countries and the multi-lateral funding agencies have perpetuated the economic inequality which has always characterised the relationship between the North and the Caribbean. More so, this relationship may doom generations to come to dire poverty and dependence.

Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which calls for international cooperation for the realisation of social and economic rights has never been honoured. Women, bearers and rearers of children, carers of the aged and disabled, managers of households and producers of goods and services, feel most acutely the effects of the violation of these articles.

And there is a relationship between national economic under-development and violence against women. While violence against women occurs within all classes, there is no disputing that the economic crisis reduces a woman's power to resist. Studies from Guyana, for example, suggest that women of low-income status suffer violence more frequently. Women with few resources have less options.

I think of Tara's tragic story. Battered for 15 years by her husband, she finally found the courage to seek refuge in a shelter. Because she had to leave in emergency circumstances, Tara was forced to leave her children, two teenage sons and a daughter, behind. Tara has no resources of her own. She can't find other accommodation to house her children and herself. There are no governmental support services to help her. She worked as a domestic employee, but lost her job because of her husband's threats to the employer. The children who had witnessed and hated the violence, now hate their mother for leaving them in order to save her own life. Battered women are always forced to make difficult choices. These choices are more tragic because women make them knowing that their quality of life may not improve. I can attest to domestic violence.

I am a survivor. I lived that life for more years than I care to remember. Why did I stay? I was a prisoner of the conspiracy of silence. I felt powerless. In believing that tomorrow could be better, I finally left, penniless, homeless and with two children to support. It took many years to recover. But I recovered despite the censure of society. What I have today is my self-esteem and my spiritual wellness. My sons only now understand the choice which I had to make. In conclusion, I would like to point out that Caribbean women don't have the luxury of addressing only political and civil liberties. We don't have the luxury of only concerning ourselves with economic development issues. We don't have the luxury of compartmentalizing women's rights. For us, women's rights are human rights. Women's rights to equity, personal safety and integrity are as important as the economic rights to food, jobs and health.

And as women from the Caribbean, these rights cannot be attained so long as our resources are controlled and appropriated by the North, and by those in our own societies who benefit from the exploitative practices of capitalist development.

In conclusion, we the women of the New World are wondering "when will this New World come for us?"

In solidarity and sisterhood,

I thank you.

(Editor's note: Elaine's presentation and testimony at the Human Rights Conference was so effective that it won the attention of the Weekend Nation newspaper in Barbados. Elaine's story was featured in a four-column article captioned: "She brings hope to abused women.")

Excerpts of testimony from speakers at Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Rights

"Women are ready for global leadership of the world. We accept the challenge." *Johanna Dohnal, Austrian Minister for Women's Affairs,*

"Rape in war should be treated as a war crime and the perpetrators should be tried by women - a panel of women. All we want is justice, not revenge."

"For too long, women's bodies have been treated as battlefields." *Nelia Sancho Liao, Director of Asian Women Human Rights Council,*

"How many opportunities have been lost because a woman could not physically, emotionally or mentally afford to go to work? How much is our productivity affected because we have to take time out to heal?"

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Women's Testimonies . . .

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Bernice Aquino See, Philippines, describing violence against her community from paramilitary activity by government. Bernice is a member of the Kankanaey ethno-linguistic group in the Cordillera region of the Philippines. She is now Secretary General of the Regional Federation of Women's Organisations in the Cordillera.

"The first night of our journey, Mario raped me while Robert took pictures. They threatened to send the photos to my mother if I refused to cooperate. I was afraid that as a strict Roman Catholic, my mother would have a heart attack."

Statement by *Gracia*, Polish woman trafficked to the Netherlands and forced to work as a prostitute.

"Justice, made available to the claims of men in the past, must be made available to women today. After all, gender-free justice is the only kind of justice."

"At some point, it is the responsibility of leaders of human rights groups around the world to recognize that in addition to the abuses that affect all human beings, there are specific and heinous abuses that are inflicted only upon women."

"Such violent treatment of women must be seen as a violation of human rights. We must condemn it, we must indict it, we must prosecute it and we must stop it."

Ed Broadbent, Tribunal judge, previously a Canadian Member of Parliament and now President of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montreal.

"We don't have the luxury of only speaking of civil and political rights, of compartmentalizing human rights ... appropriated by the North."

"When will the New World Order come for us?"

Elaine Hewitt, from Barbados, telling of abuse within the family as related to political, social and economic life. Elaine is a Programme Officer for the Women and Development Unit (WAND).

"I was not born to be a judge, because judges are supposed to be impartial, but in this case I cannot and will not be impartial."

"It is time for the 21st century to recognize women."

Charlotte Bunch, director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership, Tribunal co-sponsor.

"Women's power will develop and one day - not very long from now - all these atrocities and injustices will be stripped away."

Justice A N Bhagwati, Tribunal judge, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India and Chair of AWARE, the Asian human rights NGO.

CALL FOR CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

An appeal has been made for an international conference on Reproductive Health. The call comes from Marion Bethel, CAFRA's National Representative for the Bahamas, who attended the UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna, Austria, in June.

Marion has suggested that a specific convention, under the auspices of OAS/CIM, should be called on Reproductive Health as is being done for Violence Against Women.

Reporting on the proceedings of the Human Rights conference, Marion said the NGO forum as a whole hosted a series of captivating events, each competing heavily for wide participation.

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VIENNA DECLARATION ADOPTED - Women's Rights Are Human Rights

At the otherwise sharply divided UN World Conference on Human Rights, women appeared to be the sole interest group that won much of what it sought.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by consensus and without any objections, calls for universal ratification of the women's human rights treaty, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by the year 2000, and for the human rights of women to be integrated into the mainstream of UN system-wide activities.

The Declaration stresses "the importance of working towards the elimination of violence against women in public and private life..." and also states that violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict - including systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy - are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law.

More than 160 nations adopted the final declaration on June 25 but failed to agree on the controversial appointment of a UN Human Rights Rapporteur with executive powers. Developing countries expressed fears that such an office could be manipulated by rich countries to their own benefit. The matter was referred to the next session of the UN General Assembly.

(sources: *Time Magazine*; *The Women's Watch*; *the Muslim World*)

Women, Development and Gender Equity

In May this year, CAFRA's Acting Coordinator, Gemma Tang Nain, presented a paper to the 6th Meeting of CARICOM Ministers responsible for the Integration of Women in Development, held at the Trinidad Hilton. The paper entitled 'Women, Development and Gender Equity: An NGO Perspective' is excerpted here.

The position of CAFRA and other regional NGOs on the issue of Women, Development and Gender Equity has been articulated through various channels. It was officially communicated to governments of the region via the NGO intervention at the Regional Economic Conference (REC) in Trinidad and Tobago in February 1991 and, subsequently, at the West Indian Commission (WIC) in November of the same year.

The core of this position is that the dominant model of development with its emphasis on economic growth at the exclusion of almost all other factors is exploitative and dehumanising of the vast majority of people, especially women.

The model, NGOs asserted at the REC, is grounded in a set of assumptions about women's time and labour, resulting in the super-exploitation of women's paid and especially unpaid labour. It was argued that women's unpaid or reproductive labour which maintains and reproduces both the current and future labour force through housework and childcare, in fact subsidizes production as currently organised.

The situation is worsened by current policies of structural adjustment as studies have shown that these policies impact more adversely on women, especially poor women.

It is important to point out that this NGO position is not based on mere common sense knowledge, though the legitimacy of such knowledge should not be invalidated, but on research findings and on work done by NGOs at the "grassroots" and community levels. CAFRA conducted two major research and action projects in the region between 1986 and 1992 and the recommendations contained in this paper flow logically from the findings of these research projects.

The main findings of the CAFRA Women in Caribbean Agriculture project, carried out in St Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica, highlighted the following:

- **lack of basic infrastructure in terms of roads, pipe-borne water and waste disposal, a situation that impacts more heavily on women given their responsibility for most domestic labour;**
- **the reality that women's access to land is primarily**

through men, either spouses or male relatives, which has implications for women's day-to-day survival, as well as for their access to credit;

- **a fairly rigid sexual division of labour existed in the home with women spending upwards of three hours per day on household chores whereas men spend a mere 24 minutes per day.**

CAFRA's Women and the Law Project, carried out in Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, identified as critical to women the need for legal reform in the areas of child maintenance, the

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Call for Conference *continued from pg. 5*

Through seminars and workshops, the women's NGOs presented powerful, painful experiences/exposes of the tortures, degradation, cruel and inhumane treatment of women worldwide.

Of particular interest to Marion was the workshop on Military Sexual Slavery organised by the Asian women NGOs. "I was impressed with their clear and articulate position and their lobbying strategies on the issue of "comfort women," reparations and the links between patriarchy, war, rape and etho-centrism and the violation of women's human rights."

In the midst of the pain there was a palpable sense of real achievement and more victories to come as they prepare for the tribunal in Japan.

"The International Women's Tribunal was the major event of the Conference for me. I was pleased to have participated in one of the strategic planning institutes at the Center for Women's Leadership, Rutgers University, (Feb '93) which organised the extremely successful tribunal. The presentation by Elaine Hewitt was excellent in terms of content, and delivery. I thought that all of the issues were covered and that the structural adjustment impact on women was well articulated.

"With regard to the Reproductive Rights Workshop in Vienna, the most significant event for me was the presentation by Rebecca Cook, an international lawyer and human rights professor at the University of Toronto. I met her in May this year at the Inter-American Commission on Women where I represented the Bahamas as a member of the "Group of Experts" on the Draft Convention- "Women and Violence Against Women."

Rebecca's research on the application of international human rights instruments/treaties to reproductive health issues was, to say the least, stimulating. Her novel construction of such traditional rights as the right to life, liberty and security in regard to reproductive health was extremely engaging. "I am keenly interested in continuing research in this whole area of human rights and violence against women and reproductive health."

Women, Development and Gender Equity

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status of the common-law spouse, abortion, violence to women (especially rape and domestic violence) and the minimum wage structure which allocated the lowest wage to household workers who are usually women. Additionally, the need for laws to be enacted to deal with sexual harassment and paid maternity leave was stressed.

Despite the fact that women continue to suffer from all these hardships and disadvantages, there is evidence in the region of a male backlash to the few advances secured by women over the last decade or two. A crucial figure in this backlash is Professor Errol Miller of UWI, Mona, Jamaica, who has written about *The Marginalization of the Black Male* and, more recently, about *Men at Risk*. It is important to note, however, that even Miller was forced to conclude that: **"uneducated women are among the most marginalised persons in Caribbean society. They not only feel the full force of the double burden of both productive and domestic labour but they also experience the double jeopardy of belonging to the lower strata of society and of being women. They are the lowest paid in the labour force; they experience the highest rates of unemployment; and they are the least protected workers."**

The following recommendations are presented for consideration and appropriate action, as we prepare for the 1995 Women's Conference in Beijing, China

- Take steps to improve women's access to key the Advancement of Women reads: resources, especially land, housing, credit, income and training in a wider range of non-traditional skills.

- Count women's work: Paragraph 120 of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for "The remunerated and, in particular, the unremunerated contributions of women to all aspects

and sectors of development should be recognised, and appropriate efforts should be made to measure and reflect these contributions in national accounts and economic statistics and in the gross national product. Concrete steps should be taken to quantify production, reproduction and household activities."

- Take concrete steps to combat the ideology of male dominance through research and policy changes related to infusing a gender perspective into the media, teacher education

and schooling;

- Provide resources and tools for institutions and programmes concerned with monitoring the status of women to enable them to carry out their mandate. These would include the provision of adequate infrastructural support for national women's desks; and regular collection and publication of sex-disaggregated national and regional statistics to provide more accurate data for development planning.

- Regionalise legal reform through:

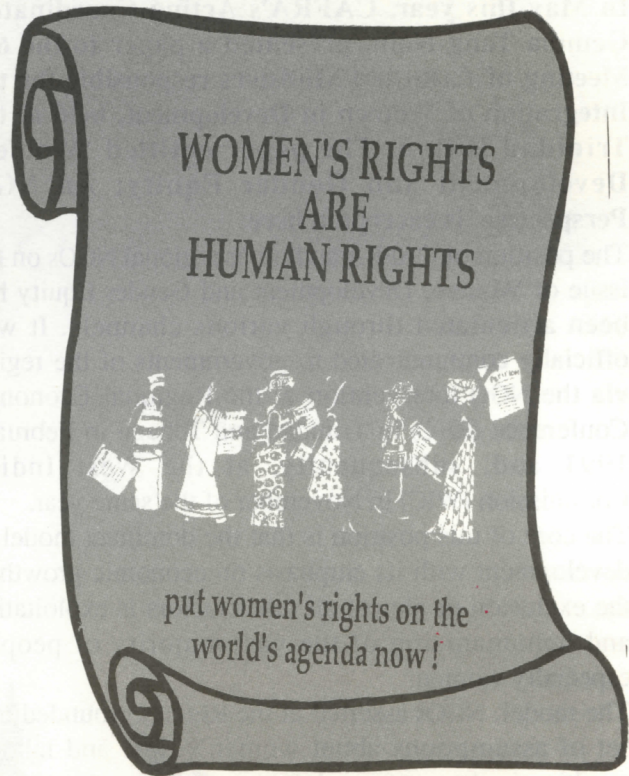
- eradication of laws which continue to discriminate against women directly or indirectly;
- implement legislation, based on the CARICOM model, with respect to domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual citizenship, inheritance and paid maternity leave;
- ensure that women's rights are legitimised as human rights; and provide gender training for legal personnel.

Challenge IMF structural adjustment policies; Pay particular attention to the needs of rural women and women involved in agriculture, especially in the area of access to pipe-borne water, adequate roads and electricity, availability of land, marketing and the practice of unequal pay to women and men working in agriculture.

Support the informal sector, giving particular attention to the needs of women traders (hucksters or higglers) who supply both local and regional markets with fruits and vegetables.

Remove restrictions on freedom of movement for citizens involved in regional institutions and arrangements with special reference to inter-territorial traders, particularly agricultural produce; people who need to travel for health care; people with direct family links (child, partner, relative, etc) in other CARICOM territories; and people working in regional NGOs and other programmes.

Institute a quota system to ensure that women constitute at least 40 per cent of the representation in national houses of government.



Women's Movement Alienates Young Women

Young women's views on gender issues are different in many ways from those of the older women who are the most visible leaders of the women's movement in the region. The modern women's movement in the Caribbean has largely ignored these differences. As a result, young women do not feel a part of the women's movement and feel alienated in their forums.

Let us take as example some of the gender issues and how the views of the young women on these issues differ from those of the older women.

In relation to marriage, the older women were and are still struggling for recognition of their economic rights within marriage and against male domination and abuse in marriage. The modern young woman is not looking to marriage for an economic base; she is establishing her own economic base, as a guarantee of her independence. That is what she feels will allow her own choice; for example, career, who to deal with, if and when to have children, whether or not to marry, etc.

In relation to organizing practices and approaches, the older women needed to emphasize the right to organize separately as women. In youth forums it is now accepted as a principle that young women have the right to caucus, and in most cases this is provided for formally on the agenda, and the issues discussed in these caucuses are incorporated into the general documents/ conclusions/plans of action.

In the older days, if men called women together it was to support the men's agenda. If women met separately, men felt they were organizing against them. Now, in the youth movement, there is a recognition by the young males that despite the fact that we are all youth together, young women have specific concerns, and hence need to dialogue among themselves to decide what action is needed around these concerns.

Young men do not see this caucusing as being against them, nor do young women feel threatened if men wish to participate. Furthermore, it is understood that what the women decide, the young men will also have to support as part of the general plan of action. In the women's movement, there have been instances where males have

been ejected from women's forums because women felt intimidated to express their views in the presence of the men. Young women also see a need for men to be involved in gender education alongside women, to address the difficulties that young men are now facing in dealing with the new woman. We will be constantly facing the same issues if we only educate one gender. Many young men are more open, but do not really understand.

How is the women's movement going to address the alienation of young women in order to ensure continuity? What are the attitudes in the present women's movement that are making this difficult? Does the women's movement see young women as women or as minors whose time has not yet come? Why is there no conscious effort in the women's movement to involve young women, to listen to their views, to facilitate expression of those views? How does the women's movement intend to deal with the issue of continuity? Are young women to start the process all over again "when our time comes?" When in their view, will our time come? Why is the women's movement not grooming young women to carry on? Where and when is the dialogue going to take place so that young women can benefit from the rich experience of the older pioneers who have paved the way for us, and from whose struggles we have benefitted? When are they going to listen to us?

What is an appropriate strategy for involving young women in the women's movement at this time? Should we, as some say, simply deal with the all-female young women's groups such as the Girl Guides and the YWCA? Or is important gender-



related work actually taking place among the mixed organisations of youth? Should we not recognize that mixed organisations such as the International Union of Students, the Caribbean Environmental Youth Network and ASEED now have as operational principles the equal representation of women in all forums, increasing women's participation in decision-making and examining issues from a young people's gender perspective.

It is in this context that I am once again proposing to CAFRA to host a Young Women's Conference to dialogue with the veterans on appropriate approaches to gender work among youth.

Pamela Redwood, CAFRA member and Secretary-General, Jamaica Environmental Youth Watch

International Day of Action for Women's Health

Press statement issued by CAFRA on the occasion of the sixth International Day of Action for Women's Health.

At an international meeting on Women and Health in May 1987, a campaign was launched to prevent maternal mortality and morbidity. Following that meeting which was held in Costa Rica, the date, May 28, was chosen as the International Day of Action for Women's Health.

This year, the sixth year of the campaign, the focus is on illegal abortion which is one of the most significant causes of maternal mortality and morbidity. In a brochure released to highlight the issue, mention is made of the startling figures of at least 200,000 women dying every year from illegal abortion and an estimated 20 million illegal abortions performed annually.

The brochure further states that criminalization of abortion does not stop women from having it, rather it forces them to have abortion in dangerous conditions which threaten their health and lives.

Conversely, abortion in legal circumstances and performed by trained personnel is an easy and a very safe procedure up to the 13th week of pregnancy. On the issue of women being traumatised by abortion, the

brochure notes that in countries where abortion is legal, where information about abortion is readily available, where there are good quality abortion services, including the provision of counselling before and after abortion, abortion may be a difficult decision for



women but is hardly ever a traumatic experience. On the occasion of this sixth commemoration of the International Day of Action for Women's Health, CAFRA joins other organisations of women and feminists around the world, including Catholics for a Free Choice, Women Living Under Muslim Laws and the International Women's Health Coalition, in calling on governments, in states where abortion is illegal, to swiftly move to decriminalise this service to women.

CAFRA supports the view that women must have the right of choice - the choice of having a child or having an abortion.



Women and the Law

CAFRA recently completed a comprehensive three and a half year Women and the Law project which was conducted from 1989 - 1993 in ten English-speaking Caribbean countries. This project is the first of its kind in the English-speaking Caribbean.

All the components of the project - research, training and popular education - was implemented in Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. The research component alone was conducted in The Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

The basic objectives of the project which was based on a survey conducted in 1987/88 by CAFRA in collaboration with the Inter-American Legal Services Association, were:

- to create an awareness and understanding of laws which impact upon women's daily lives; and
- to generate knowledge and information which would enhance the effectiveness of women's legal services and women's rights campaigns.

Project personnel conducted outreach programmes with rural and low income women, at the community level, and among women's organisations in the various islands.

PROJECT FINDINGS AT A GLANCE:

ANTIGUA

The law continues to find fault before a divorce is granted: example - adultery, cruelty, desertion, etc. This should be substituted by a means test. The absence of occupational health and safety regulations to protect pregnant women was addressed.

There are also no laws protecting women from sexual harassment in the work place.

The law does not recognise common-law unions and therefore no duties or



*Roberta Clarke, Coordinator,
Women and the Law Project.*

DOMINICA

obligations are imposed upon parties to such a union. The wife of a person born in Dominica belongs to Dominica but there is no mention of a husband of a Dominican women being deemed to belong to Dominica.

There is no legal provision related to sexual harassment in the work place.

While there is no distinction between male and female workers for the payment of a minimum wage, the category of home assistant is associated with the lowest minimum wage. The minimum wage for juvenile workers is set at \$EC1.50 per hour and for the home assistant it is \$EC1.00 for the same time.

Married persons (men and women) are under a duty to provide reasonable maintenance for spouses and elderly parents in the event such persons cannot maintain themselves because of old age or mental/physical disabilities. A similar duty is placed on single women with respect to her children and elderly parents. No such duty is placed on single men.

A woman may be fined or imprisoned

for one month for neglecting or deserting her child. No corresponding provision is applicable to men.

The common-law spouse is totally ignored by existing law. Regardless of how long an unmarried couple lives together, the law does not recognise the union nor imposes any duties or obligations on the parties towards each other, such as property rights, maintenance and succession.

There is no satisfactory provision creating an offence of domestic violence.

GRENADA

The common-law spouse is totally ignored by existing law.

Children are only entitled to be maintained by their parents up to the age of 14. The minimum maintenance order is \$EC7.00 per week, per child. Enforcement of the order requires further court proceedings. There is no attachment of earnings law with regard to maintenance orders.

Rape within marriage is not criminalised. The trials are traumatic for the victims because the law requires some material corroboration before conviction of alleged rapist.

The law should address the need to empower the magistrate to make a personal protection order for the victim of domestic violence.

There is sex discrimination in the minimum wage for agricultural workers. The rate for men is \$EC16.90 and for women \$EC16.45. There is no other minimum wage legislation.

ST LUCIA

The law permits the inclusion of the father's name on the illegitimate child's birth certificate within one year of the child's birth. This child can receive maintenance but is incapable of inheriting the father's estate if he dies without leaving a will. The law does not recognise common-law unions and as such no duties or obligations are imposed on parties to that union. There is no right to maternity leave.

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Trinidad and Tobago Graduands of the Legal Education Workshop, CAFRA Women and the Law Project. The Ceremony was held in January 1993 at the Eric Williams Financial Building, Port of Spain. Also in picture: Minister of Community Development, Culture and Women's Affairs, *Joan Yuille-Williams* (extreme left) and Canadian High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago, *Dilys Buckley-Jones* (extreme right).

Women and the Law

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Women become entitled to such leave through collective bargaining agreements. An unmarried teacher can be dismissed on a second pregnancy.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

A husband can only be guilty of rape if he has sexual intercourse with his wife without her consent where:

his wife has obtained a decree of judicial separation or a decree nisi of divorce; a separation agreement or an order against molestation; and notice of divorce proceedings by one party, judicial separation and where husband and wife are living apart. Once paternity has been established, a child born out of wedlock is entitled to maintenance and can benefit where the father dies without a will.

The Domestic Violence Act creates an offence for the many acts of violence which may occur between spouses (married or common-law).

An abused person can apply to the Magistrate's Court for a protection order for a domestic violence offence or for conduct of a harassing or offensive nature.

In the case of Non-Muslim and non-Hindu marriages, a boy can get married at age 14 and age 12 for a girl. In a Muslim marriage, the boy must be

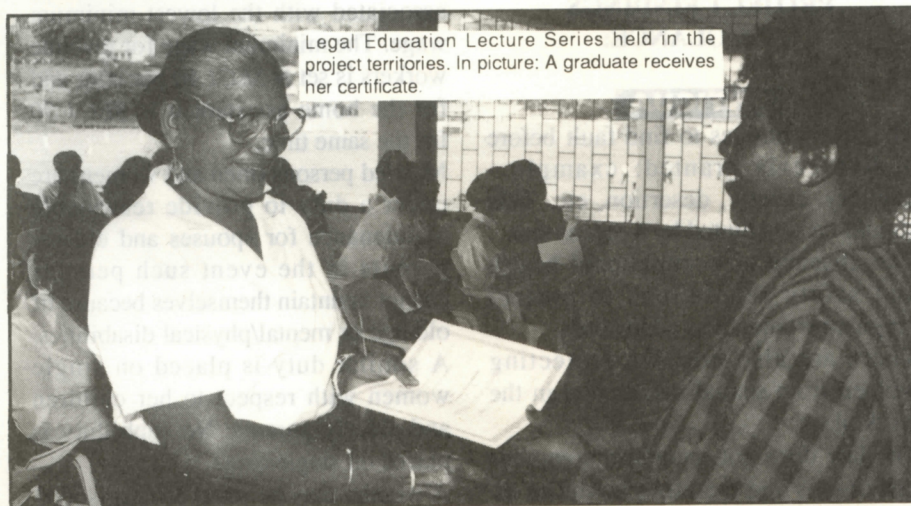
at least 16 or 18 in a Hindu marriage. On the other hand, a Muslim girl need only be 12 and a Hindu woman, 14. Under the present law, a household assistant is not entitled to paid maternity leave. This class of worker also has to effect her own registration and pay all contributions in the area of national insurance without a contribution from the employer.

The Minimum Wages Board fixes the minimum wage for shop assistants and gas station attendants. However, household assistants are given the lowest minimum wage.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

In all the project countries, participants expressed an interest in further legal education training programmes. In some countries like Dominica and St Lucia, follow-up training has been planned for this year. In Antigua, a women's organisation has been formed - "Women on the Move."

Women who attended the programme in St Lucia have assisted in the setting up of the Women's Action Council. And in Grenada, a number of female trade unionists have now formed a network of female trade unionists for solidarity among women workers.



Legal Education Lecture Series held in the project territories. In picture: A graduate receives her certificate.

A Multi-Talented Woman

Meet a woman of many parts with impressive firsts to her credit. She is the first customer relations officer at the St Lucia National Commercial Bank. She is also the founder of the local chapter of the American Field Service (AFS) International, an intercultural exchange programme for high school students still going strong in St Lucia today.

Not only that, this 44-year old woman is a farmer and member of the St Lucia Banana Growers Association. She has served on several government-appointed committees and NGOs and was once president of the Business and Professional Women's Club. She is also an active member of the all-female pan orchestra - Allegro Pan Groove.

St Lucian-born Cheryl Skeete has somewhat of a rags to riches story to tell. The year was 1979. Cheryl was just 24 and impelled by her love for the land she bought some ten acres of family property that her ailing mother could no longer manage.

That was the beginning of her uphill climb. The local Agricultural Development Bank questioned her ability as a woman to manage a city secretarial job and a banana plantation in the country and refused to lend the \$500 needed to purchase banana plants.

Undaunted, Cheryl pressed on. She was able to persuade "sympathetic" farmers to lend her some tools and plants. "On bended knees," she was also able to persuade a family hand on the original property to return to Barre de L'Isle, in Dennery. "He has not regretted returning," Cheryl said.

Each fortnight, she takes on four or five extra hands for harvesting and packing. The harvest is good. Some 100 boxes of bananas for market, every two weeks. Sometimes, she can earn as much as \$1200 in banana sales.

Today, Cheryl can be described as a professional



Cheryl Skeete

woman who easily exchanges the office three-piece for the rough coveralls of the rustic farmer. She is as comfortable at the office desk just as when driving bananas to market.

Her day begins at 5 am with a half-hour walk. If it's a nice day, she'll have a half-hour swim at the nearby beach. At 7.15, it's off to work. Three days a week, she has piano lessons. When she's home early, she'll spend some time in the flower garden or "messaging around" on her Yamaha keyboard. She has her own tenor pan too. Purchased from the Trinidad and Tobago Pan Institute, Cheryl has no intentions of taking it to the panyard.

As for marriage and a family, Cheryl gives one of her easy smiles. "I'm not sure you can say I have no children. I've raised a nephew from the age of three months up till now. He's now 25."

Cheryl says she has always had a parenting instinct, being the fourth in a family of four boys and two girls. It is that instinct that led her to "give up" ten years of her life caring for her mother. After her mother's death in 1981, Cheryl says "I blossomed again."

And the flowers are still blooming. Cheryl considers herself a very successful woman. But she's not stopping there. Though still a closely guarded secret, Cheryl has on the drawing board plans for a banana diversification project. So far, the bank's response has been negative but in her characteristic style, Cheryl doggedly says "I'm going to pursue."

REPORTS OF CONFERENCES/MEETINGS/COURSES

WINFA CALLS FOR REGIONAL POLICY ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS

At its seventh Annual General Assembly held in May this year, the Windward Island Farmers Association (WINFA) called on the governments of the region to urgently address the issue of land reform and end the mis-use of prime agricultural lands. WINFA is also requesting that dialogue begin with the region's farmers.

WINFA pointed out that agriculture is the primary productive sector in regional economies and that land is a basic resource in the development of this sector

In a statement on the land issue, WINFA pointed out that agriculture is the primary productive sector in regional economies and that land is a basic resource in the development of this sector.

The statement noted that the governments have failed to address, in a meaningful way, the fundamental question of land tenure since there are no clearly defined land use and distribution policies. If such a policy exists, it is done in a "suitcase" manner by foreign consultants, rather than getting our people involved in the formulation of such policies.

Further, the statement said, failure to address this issue has impacted negatively on the environment since "landless" farmers were forced to enter into reserved forest areas or marginal hillsides resulting in pollution of water supply, loss of wildlife and destruction of tourist attractions, among other things.

During the opening ceremony for the seventh assembly, WINFA was congratulated for its bold stand on the banana issue, the Brussels Mission on the banana question and mobilization of farmers for Banana Week.

Coordinator of CPDC, Joan French, who also addressed the assembly, spoke on the effect of structural adjustment on poor people - farmers, women, the marginalized; the Free Trade Policy of the North and the effect of those policies on the poorer South countries.

French also dealt with the role of WINFA in this new, challenging economic era and the need to increase the flow of information, networking and the fostering of greater understanding of the global economy.

Submitted by Josephine Dublin, CAFRA's National Representative, Dominica.

WORKSHOP ON INSECURITY IN THE '90s

The global economic and political changes of the past decade and in particular, the retreat of the state provided the impetus for an international workshop on "Insecurity in the 1990s: Gender and Social Policy in an International Perspective."

The workshop was held at the London School of Economics and Political Science and was attended by women from Asia, Latin America, the United States of America and Europe. Gemma Tang Nain, Acting Coordinator of CAFRA, was the only representative from the Caribbean. There was no representation from Africa.

Gemma presented a paper on "**The Retreat of the State in the English-speaking Caribbean: Its Impact on Women and their Responses.**" She felt the sharing of experience from the various regions of the world was very useful. While opinions differed, many were of the view that the state ought not to relinquish its key role for provision of social services.

CAFRA AT ACE MEETING

CAFRA's Acting Coordinator, Gemma Tang Nain, was invited by ACE (Association of Caribbean Economists) to be a discussant on a panel addressing: "**The Regional Economic Crisis, Human Development and Strategies for Survival.**"

The panellists, representing Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico and Trinidad and Tobago, are all involved in a regional project of ACE which is investigating this issue, and their presentations focussed on the work that has so far

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REPORTS OF CONFERENCES/MEETINGS/COURSES

ACE MEETING

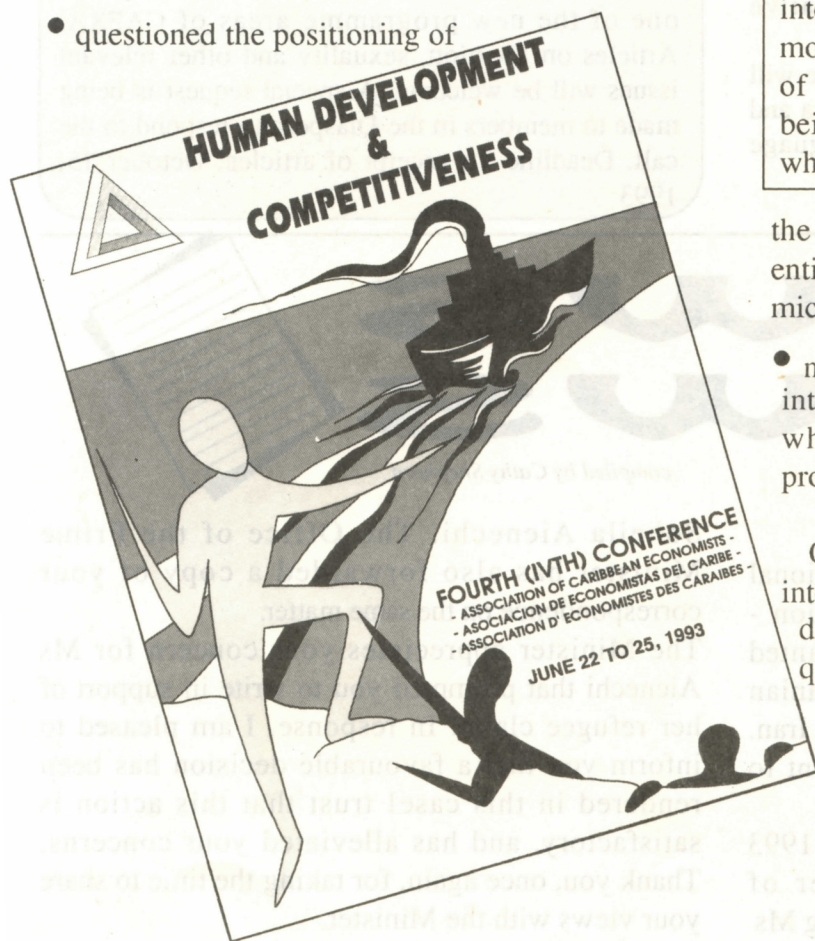
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been done. An overall report on the project was presented by Pedro Rivera of Puerto Rico and, of special interest to CAFRA, the researcher for the Curaçao aspect is CAFRA member and DAWN Steering Committee member, Sonia Cuales.

The project will focus on several micro-economic units, among them households, informal financial activities and community enterprises, in order to first determine the strategies employed by these units before attempting to assess the impact of macro and meso (intermediate) policies.

My comments as a discussant

- applauded the 'bottom-up' approach of the study but expressed concern that the 'gender question' was not fully integrated throughout the study;
- questioned the positioning of



**CAFRA DOMINICA
HOSTS RETREAT**

Ten members of CAFRA Dominica met at the Pastoral Centre, Morne Bruce, on June 10, 1993, to discuss issues of concern to the branch and to formulate strategic plans with CAFRA's overall plans in mind.

Participants felt there should be an increase in branch membership and requested a greater involvement by CAFRA members in the Women in Caribbean Agriculture (WICA) and Women and the Law programmes. They also called for more networking among organisations such as Sisters in Solidarity (SIS), SPAT Women's Association for Progress (SWAP) and the CAFRA local branch.

In reporting on the retreat, CAFRA member for Dominica, Josephine Dublin noted that the meeting was being held at a time when members themselves were reflecting on internal issues as well as the general women's movement. The retreat also looked at the issue of male marginalization which they said is being blamed on the women's movement of which "we" form an integral part.

the household within the study given that this entity is key to an understanding of all the other micro units;

- noted that some of the activities were more integrated than others into the formal economy, which could have implications for policy proposals.

Overall, the fourth ACE conference was interesting and informative and one could discern an attempt to focus on the 'gender question' by what is still a very male-dominated association. The participation in the meeting of representatives to the DAWN meeting which immediately preceded the ACE meeting assisted in increasing the focus.

INTRA-REGIONAL LANGUAGE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

CAFRA members in the non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean now have an opportunity to improve their competence in Spanish. Details are as follows:

- *The person must already have some competence in Spanish.*
- *She must be willing to spend a minimum of two months in a Spanish-speaking territory;*
- *CAFRA will arrange for her to work with a sister organisation in the host territory (Puerto Rico, Cuba or the Dominican Republic) and will pay her a small stipend;*
- *CAFRA will also pay for her to improve her Spanish-speaking and writing skills;*
- *CAFRA will cover the cost of the airfare, accommodation and meals at a modest guest house or within a household, and transportation costs within the territory;*

Interested CAFRA members please contact the Secretariat or your National Representative immediately, by September 30, 1993 at the latest. In subsequent years the scope of the programme will be broadened to include members in the Diaspora and to allow for an exchange among all the language groups.

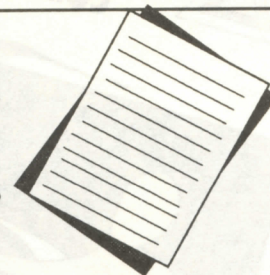
Call for Submissions

Anthology of writing and artwork by mixed race women seeks submissions. Send fiction, poetry, articles, interviews, etc. Artwork or photography must be suitable for reproduction in black and white. Written material must be typed, double spaced or neatly handwritten. IBM Wordperfect 5.1 diskettes also helpful. Taped interviews must be already transcribed. Do not send originals. Enclose SASE if you wish to have your work returned. If you live outside of Canada, send an international reply coupon rather than stamps. Submissions must be relevant to mixed race ancestry. Please be specific about your ancestry either in your piece or your bio. Preference will be given to unpublished works. Send to Carol Camper c/o SisterVision Press, PO Box 217 Station E Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6H 4E2. Deadline - September 30, 1993. Submissions outside of North America will be accepted till October 31, 1993.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

In the next issue of CAFRA news, the focus will be on "Women's Health and Reproductive Rights," one of the new programme areas of CAFRA. Articles on abortion, sexuality and other relevant issues will be welcome. A special request is being made to members in the Diaspora to respond to the call. Deadline for receipt of articles: October 15, 1993

News



compiled by Cathy Shepherd

CANADA GRANTS IRANIAN WOMAN REFUGEE STATUS

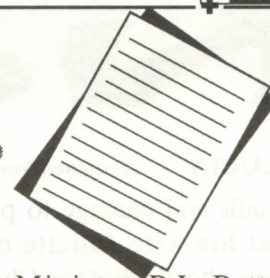
In response to several calls from international organisations and one regional organisation - CAFRA, the Canadian government has granted refugee status to Soheila Aienechi, an Iranian woman, who fled persecution and torture in Iran. The response of the Canadian Government to CAFRA's letter is reprinted below.

Thank you for your letter of February 8, 1993 and enclosure, addressed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration, concerning Ms

Soheila Aienechi. The Office of the Prime Minister has also forwarded a copy of your correspondence on the same matter.

The Minister appreciates your concern for Ms Aienechi that prompted you to write in support of her refugee claim. In response, I am pleased to inform you that a favourable decision has been rendered in this case. I trust that this action is satisfactory, and has alleviated your concerns. Thank you, once again, for taking the time to share your views with the Minister.

News



BARBADOS - EFFECTS OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY

A study on the effects of early childbearing on women's status in Barbados, supports existing fears by family planners that persistently high teenage birth rates have a harmful effect on the lives of the young mothers. The study, conducted by Jamaican researcher Pauline Russell-Brown, found that younger mothers differed significantly from older mothers on several variables: they had less education, were more distant from the child-father, had a subsequent child more quickly and earned less income.

However, the data also quashed two widely held beliefs: that the average teenage mother was doomed to poverty and a pattern of multiple births; and that "child-fathers" were generally an irresponsible lot. The findings were presented at a seminar in Barbados in June, at the end of which over two dozen participants pledged to come together and form an "action coalition" to help maintain and improve programmes dealing with early childbearing in the island.

GUYANA - ABORTION DEBATE

Guyana's Health Minister, Gail Teixeira, set up a Committee comprising women's organizations, to review the country's anti-abortion laws, after a study revealed that young girls comprised a third of all

hospital admissions for botched abortions. Teixeira's announcement in May, provoked a heated national debate which, judging from letters published in the press, seemed to have been dominated by the anti-abortion lobby. Letter-writers argued that abortion is murder and violates the laws of God and its legalization will reinforce irresponsible sexual behaviour.

The Government was criticized for ignoring the moral and cultural aspects of the issue and for using questionable statistics to drum up support for its action.

Even though abortion is illegal in Guyana, the procedure is done openly at hospitals and by "alley operators", posing serious health consequences, ranging from infections to infertility and even death.

JAMAICA

"Boom bye bye to all batty bwoy"

Jamaicans were caught up in a heated debate at the end of May, on legalizing homosexuality. The debate began after the Jamaica Herald newspaper reported that legislation was being prepared to decriminalize "buggery" between consenting adults, as part of a wider proposal for rape law reform.

The newspaper reports triggered heated responses with many people voicing disapproval on Jamaica's popular call-in radio shows. There were calls for every type of action, from isolation to mass killing of male homosexuals.

Prime Minister P.J. Patterson quickly denied even considering the matter and reportedly said that such a proposal would receive no support whatsoever from his administration.

Under Jamaican law, male homosexuality is illegal but there is no similar provision criminalizing female homosexuality. The legal position is similar in most CARICOM countries. In the Bahamas, however, former Prime Minister Sir Lynden Pindling, tried to introduce a 20-year jail term for lesbianism. Only in Bermuda has there been serious discussion of law reform. (Judith Lewis/Caribbean Week)

ST. LUCIA PETITION TO DISMISS WOMEN'S AFFAIRS MINISTER

The Women Action Council, St. Lucia Crisis Centre, and the St. Lucia National Youth Council sent a petition to Prime Minister John Compton, calling for the dismissal of Women Affairs, Youth and Ecclesiastical Affairs Minister, Desmond Brathwaite. The petition dated June 23, stated that a domestic dispute involving Mr. Brathwaite, rendered him an ineffective advocate for the portfolio of women's affairs. The organizations urged the Cabinet to "at the very least, transfer that responsibility to any other suitable Ministry."

The Minister's domestic life received widespread media attention when he brought charges

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ST LUCIA *continued from pg. 16*

of assault and damage to property against his wife Juliette over an incident shortly before Christmas last year. The couple was separated at the time. The Minister maintained that on the day in question he had gone to his estranged wife's home to deliver mail and to see his children. His wife slapped him and kicked his car.

Mrs. Brathwaite testified that she had assaulted her husband in self-defence, and that he was in the habit of thumping her on the head when she talked to him. She also stated that her husband had beaten her up once.

In June, Magistrate Florita Nicholas rejected the argument of self-defence and reprimanded and discharged Mrs. Brathwaite. However, she did not order any compensation for damage done to the Minister's car. Mrs. Brathwaite has since filed for divorce from her husband and media reports indicate that she has also filed an appeal. Leaders of the women's and youth movements as well as church authorities have been criticized for not publicly calling for the Minister's removal from office.

DOMINICA HOSTS

WOMEN'S HEALTH DAY

The women of Dominica got together recently for a Day of Action for Women's Health. The celebration also coincided with an important gathering held by the Cancer Society which emphasised the need for early testing to detect breast and other cancers.

Information received from CAFRA was circulated to the Nurses Association, SWAP - which has a yearly health workshop and other individuals doing work on the issue. Women, the issue of abortion (not legal in Dominica) and reproductive rights continue to be high on the agenda of CAFRA Dominica.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

UWI SHUT DOWN

On Friday, April 30, students at the St. Augustine Campus, University of the West Indies (UWI), padlocked the gates, refusing entry to all lecturers, staff and visitors, to protest the inadequate level of security in and around the campus.

The student protest was sparked by the early morning attempted abduction of a female student just outside one of the entrances to the university. The protest was called off shortly before midday, following lengthy talks between the student body and Principal, Prof. Max Richards.

Since the shutdown, new security arrangements were introduced, including a shuttle service, parking card system and increased patrols by Campus Police.

Rape and Race in Trinidad

Member of Parliament for Chaguanas, Ms. Hulsie Bhaggan, became embroiled in controversy arising from a letter she sent to the Minister of National Security, on the escalation of crime in Central Trinidad. The letter, dated June 25, was written on behalf of her constituents and alleged that men of African descent were committing acts of rape against East Indian women. The letter also referred to "ethnic cleansing and the establishment of a Bosnia in Trinidad and Tobago." Needless to say, once the letter became public knowledge, the focus shifted from the escalation of crime in Central to the allegations of serious crime by one race against another.

In their investigation of Ms. Bhaggan's allegations, the press and the Police concentrated their attention on statistics, trying to reconcile the difference between rapes reported to the Police and those reported to Ms. Bhaggan by her constituents - 75 per cent of which were unreported.

When a whirlwind tour to the area by the Minister of National Security and the Police Commissioner failed to corroborate the allegations, the Trinidad Guardian, satisfied that the "talk" had been "exposed as so much rubbish", chastised Ms. Bhaggan for her "irresponsible statement", questioned her leadership qualities and insisted that she admit that she was wrong so that the nation could put the matter to rest.

But the nation could not. A team of concerned citizens of Central Trinidad conducted a one-week survey and pointed to the urgent need for a study of the gender, ethnicity and economics of crime. The Hindu Women's Organization accused the police, media and the authorities of being more concerned with racist allegations than investigating the crimes and dealing with the offenders. An outpouring of letters to the editor either vilified Ms. Bhaggan for stirring up racial hysteria or praised her for her fearless condemnation of the crime wave in Central.

Women's groups also came in for criticism for their silence on the wave of violence against women in Central Trinidad and on the shameful performance of the police.

By mid-June a research team had been commissioned to conduct an independent, professional assessment of the race/crime controversy in Central Trinidad. Led by Dr. Ramesh Deosaran, Head of the Sociology Department at the University of the West Indies (St. Augustine Campus), the team is expected to submit a final report by July 15.

HAWAII COURT RULES

GAY MARRIAGES LEGAL

In a landmark decision, the Hawaii state supreme court ruled on May 5, 1993, that lesbians and gay men have the right to get married. Once the case

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GAY MARRIGES

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goes through the circuit court for a final ruling, Hawaii could become the first state in the United States to permit same-sex marriage.

The case began on December 17, 1990, when three same-sex couples applied for and were denied marriage licenses by state Department of Health director John Lewin. The denial was based on a state attorney general's opinion that Hawaii's state law defines marriage as a special union between a man and a woman. Because of this denial, the couples decided to sue the state, taking the case first to the circuit and then to the state supreme court.

Genora Dancel and her partner, Nina Baehr, said they first experienced discrimination because of their sexual orientation when Dancel tried unsuccessfully to list Baehr as her domestic partner on her health insurance forms. Similarly, Patrick Lagon and Joseph Melillo, said they are not regarded as a real family because they are gay.

"Just because I write a will and leave everything I own to Joe, doesn't mean he'll get it. Even though it would be my wish for him to have everything we own together, my (biological) family would come in, contest the will, and take things we have shared for years and years," Lagon said.

After the circuit court denied the couples the right to marry in 1991, the supreme court overturned that decision, saying that the denial violated the equal protection clause of the state constitution. Originally, the circuit court had said that people must marry the opposite sex to "promote the general welfare interests of the community by sanctioning traditional man-woman family units and procreation." The supreme court disagreed with the ruling, saying that the "opposite sex" requirement was illegal because it was based on sex discrimination, where men were

permitted to marry women but women were not, for example. The supreme court decided not to review the case on the basis of sexual orientation discrimination, reportedly to circumvent the burden of proving that the denial of marriage licenses was based on discrimination against homosexuals. The state now has to find a compelling reason to prohibit same-sex marriages and present it to the circuit court in order to stop the ruling from going into effect. If the state can find that reason, it must then convince the court to deny all same-sex marriages.

Advocates for the case estimate that it will be another two years before the Hawaii supreme court makes its final ruling.

(excerpted from Sojourner:

The Women's Forum (June 1993)

IMF/WORLD BANK "SUCCESS STORY" IN COSTA RICA

A new study on Costa Rica by the Development GAP debunks the myth promulgated by the World Bank, IMF and USAID that the country's structural adjustment programme has been a success. The report, *Structural Adjustment in Central America: the Case of Costa Rica*, provides damning evidence that Costa Rica's decade-long economic reform programme has, in fact, led to increased poverty, environmental degradation and social tension.

Given its long tradition of democracy and equitable development and the high levels of foreign aid it has received, Costa Rica should have been a "best case scenario" for the application of adjustment policies in Central America. As in the other countries of the region, however, wages have fallen, small farmers have been losing control of their land, and income distribution has become increasingly skewed under

adjustment, notes the report. Some of the report's findings were: the percentage of the Costa Rican population living in poverty increased from 21 per cent in 1987 to 28 per cent in 1992; • With health care spending per capita falling by 45 per cent between 1979 and 1988, infant mortality rates have begun to rise for the first time in decades; • the incidence of infectious diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and measles has increased dramatically; • In spite of the massive amounts of money and technical assistance poured into export-promotion programmes, Costa Rica's trade deficit increased by over 400 per cent between 1984 and 1990;

• Costa Rica's external debt rose from US\$2.7 billion in 1980 to US\$3.8 billion in 1990, despite participation in the US "Brady Plan" debt-relief scheme.

OUTSMARTED BY WORLD BANK?

(sourced from Panoscope 36 (July 1993)

Only 19 countries met the World Bank's June 30, 1993 deadline for producing a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP). Another 30 are rushing to complete plans in coming months and will be squeezed by conflicting pressures for public participation and for a plan acceptable to the Bank.

The demand for environmental plans stems from pressure on the US government by NGOs critical of the Bank's environment record. According to the Bank, the plans should identify "key environmental problems, set priorities for dealing with them and lead to a comprehensive national environmental policy." The plans must also be "an integral part of the country's policy and investment strategy in a manner satisfactory to the Bank."

The fallout from this is that traditional land tenure systems in Africa are condemned and a proposal has been made for the creation of more private

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News

UN Secretary-General (Caribbean News Agency)

WORLD BANK

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property. Planned reform of existing land relations are also a recurrent theme in NEAPs. There are growing fears that these environmental plans are just another way of imposing a Northern notion of sustainable development - something to be done to the South.

There is also a growing concern that the World Bank only wants an early warning system to ensure that its programmes do not create major scandals over environmental damage.

WOMEN IN THAILAND DIE IN FACTORY FIRE

According to official reports, 240 workers were killed in a fire at the Kader Industrial factory in Thailand, on May 10, this year. Local workers fear that casualty figures could be much higher as many employees are still missing. News reports say this is at least the third fire to hit the factory in the last few years.

The government has launched an investigation but local non-governmental agencies are worried that without an independent investigation, the truth will be covered up and the real issues of workers' health and safety will be ignored.

Local organisations have formed themselves into the Working Group to Monitor Assistance to Kader Fire Victims and have also launched an international campaign to put pressure on government and management.

They are calling for a revision of policies concerning health and safety problems in factories and foreign investments. They have requested petition letters to Thai Embassies throughout the world and for letters of solidarity to be sent to: *Working Group to Monitor Assistance to Kader Fire Victims, c/o Center for Labour Information Service and Training, 273/51 Soi Pongpetnivet, Prachachuen Road, Ladyao, Bangkok 10900, Thailand. Fax: 66.2.5860158*

NGOs PROTEST

Latin American and Caribbean non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sent letters to United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali protesting the exclusion of NGOs from the drafting committee charged with crafting the final conference document to augment the UN's 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Protests raised by China and some Latin American countries succeeded in blocking the NGO involvement. Among NGO concerns were:

- the violation of human rights by harsh structural adjustment policies imposed by international lending agencies;
- a demand for an investigation by the International Court of Justice to



CAFRA's National Representative for Suriname, Nadia Raveles (right), presents a copy of *Creation Fire* to Elfriede Alexander - Vanenburg, Director of Culture, Suriname, at the book's launching in Paramaribo.

determine whether the practices of international lending agencies conform to their mandate;

- persons holding public office who seriously violate human rights, should not be allowed to escape punishment on the grounds of constitutional guarantees of impunity.

The exclusion of the NGO representatives was criticized by the Dominican Republic's representative, Dr. Ramon Martinez-Portorreal, who joined colleagues from the region in protesting to the

CAFRA OFFICE

GOODBYE SYBIL: At the end of May, CAFRA staff said farewell to Sybil Seaforth who worked as part-time Coordinator of the Women's Creative Expression Project since May, 1989. No doubt she will continue to contribute her knowledge and experience to CAFRA's Women's History and Creative Expression programme. Readers who enjoyed Sybil's first novel *Growing Up with Miss Milly* (Callaloux Publishing House, 1988), can look forward to her second novel, "*When December Comes*", the manuscript for which she has recently completed.

NOTABLE FIRSTS

CREATION FIRE: Since our last report (see CN, Vol. 5, nos. 2-3), the CAFRA anthology of Caribbean women's poetry was launched in the

following countries:

Belize: Bliss Institute,
October 30, 1992

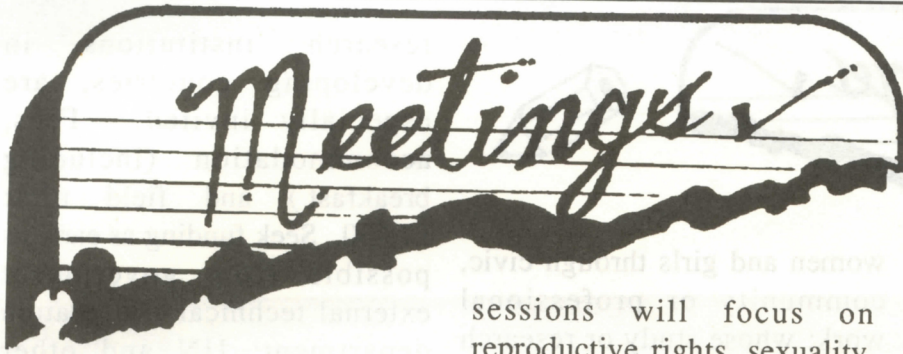
Suriname: Tori Oso, June 1, 1993

Bahamas: Bahamian Art Gallery,
June 11, 1993

Curaçao: Public Library,
June 18, 1993

June was quite a month for women. Lawyer Sonia Grant made Bermuda history by becoming the first woman councillor in the 200-year history of the Corporation of Hamilton. The corporation runs the affairs of Bermuda's capital. Kim Campbell of Canada and Tansu Ciller of Turkey

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Meetings

August 1-14

6th Cross-Cultural Black Women's Studies Summer Institute: The Black Woman; Five Centuries of Resistance and Cultural Affirmation in the Americas, Caracas, Venezuela. Provides an opportunity to analyze the participation of black and indigenous women in the socio-economic development of the Americas. Emphasis will be placed on analyzing the external debt that affects the economies of underdeveloped countries and has severely deteriorated the living conditions of their peoples. Includes a two-week seminar, workshops, public forums, visits and cultural events. Write to: *Black Women's Summer Institute, Information Headquarters, Medgar Evers College, CUNY, 1150 Carroll St., Brooklyn, NY 11225, USA. Fax: (718) 270-5126.*

September 12-18

7th International Women and Health Meeting, Kampala, Uganda. Held every three years, this year's conference is the first to be held in Africa. The theme is "United We Stand to take Action on Women's Health." Plenary

sessions will focus on reproductive rights, sexuality, the women's health movement in Africa, population, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS and such global concerns as structural adjustment policies and violence. Contact the Coordinator, 7th IWHM, P.O. Box 1191, Kampala, Uganda. Fax: 230-784.

October 21-24

Association for Women in Development (AWID). Sixth International Forum, Washington, DC. The annual AWID Forum offers opportunities for networking; and to learn innovative and successful approaches for solving economic, political and social problems faced by women; workshops for developing leadership and negotiation skills, business plans and community-grounded programmes; and a platform to express perspectives on issues of concern to women throughout the world. AWID is a non-profit, international professional membership association. For information, contact: Conference Office, Division of Continuing Education, College Court Building, Manhattan, KS 66506-6006, USA. Fax: (913) 532-5637

October 31 - November 4
6th Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Meeting, Costa del Sol, El Salvador. For more information, contact: *Encuentro Feminista, Urbanización la Esperanza, Av. Las Américas no. 211, Ed. Girón No. Local no. 7, San Salvador, El Salvador, C.A. Tel. & Fax: (503) 261870.*

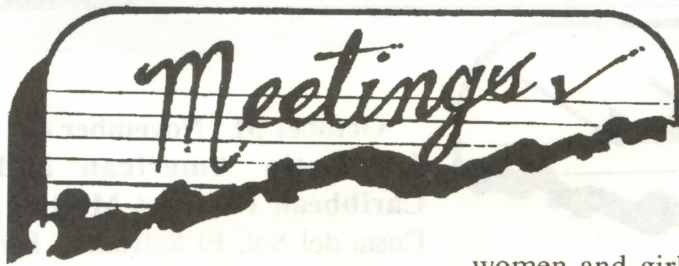
November 1-5

1st International Scientist and Technologist Congress and Convention, Singapore. Aims to promote the international exchange of ideas and experience in science and technology. Brochures and registration forms are available from the CAFRA office, on request.

November 17-20

3rd General Meeting of CAFRA, Forte Crest Hotel, Guyana. After meeting in Barbados (1988) and Trinidad (1990), CAFRA members are moving to Guyana for their 3rd GM. Members will have an opportunity to share experiences on the activities of the women's movement in their countries and review the work of CAFRA during the past three years. Simultaneous workshops will be held on Women and Reproductive Rights; Gender Relations among Youth; Women, Development and Sustainable Livelihood; and Women and Politics.

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November 17-20

In addition, panel discussions will address the following themes: Women's Rights and Human Rights; Population and Development; and the Family. The highlight of the meeting will be the presentation of an award to an outstanding feminist in the region who has contributed significantly to CAFRA's development. CAFRA's founding members will also be honoured at a cultural show during the meeting. The General Meeting will be preceded by a workshop for outgoing and incoming National Representatives. For more information, contact your National Representative or the CAFRA Secretariat.

women and girls through civic, community or professional work; whose study or research proposals show a continued interest in the advancement of women; who can verify that there is a definite position to which they will return in their home countries. Eligibility: applicants must hold a B.A. or its equivalent before December 1, 1993 (previous and current recipients of AAUW fellowships are not eligible to apply). Completed applications and supporting papers must be postmarked no later than December 1, 1993 and sent in a complete package. For application forms, contact: *the AAUW Foundation, P.O. Box 4030, Iowa City, IA 52243-4030, stating qualification to apply for the fellowship.*

research institutions in developing countries, are especially invited. Fees, accommodation (including breakfast) and field trips: £7,630. Seek funding as early as possible from government external technical cooperation department; UN and other funding agencies; or from the local EC delegation (ACP countries only). For information contact: *Course Administrator (SC28), Teaching Area, Institute of Developing Studies, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9RE, UK. Fax: (0273) 691647/621202.*

News

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CAFRA OFFICE

became Prime Ministers, their countries joining Bangladesh, Dominica, Norway, Nicaragua and Poland as nations with governments headed by women (Iceland and Ireland have women presidents, the Netherlands Antilles has a woman Prime Minister and Barbados has a woman Governor-General, but none are heads of government). Both women reached their posts after only a few years of experience in national politics, and both face major challenges to improve their countries' economies and build confidence in their parties' leadership.

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS

The American Association of University Women Educational Foundation is pleased to announce its 1994-95 International Fellowships for Women who are not citizens or permanent residents of the United States for graduate study or research in the US. Stipend: US\$14,850. Criteria for Selection: strong preference for women whose credentials prove prior commitment to the amelioration of the lives of other

COURSE

May 31 - August 19 1994

Women, Men and Development (a course for all those concerned with gender equality and social change), Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, U.K. The course enables participants to evaluate policy, plan, implement and evaluate projects from a gender perspective and to prepare for policy focused research. Applicants from government offices, NGOs, grassroots organizations, universities and

ON THE

BOOK
SHELF

1. Centro de Asistencia Legal Popular (CEALP). *Los derechos humanos*. El Dorado, Panamá: CEALP, 1993. 30 p. (Serie Orientación Legal, no. 4)

Popular education booklet, providing basic information on human rights, mechanisms for protecting human rights and the status of human rights in Panama.

2. Cook, Rebecca J. "Women's international human rights: a bibliography." *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics*, Vol. 24, no. 2 (Winter 1992): pp. 857-888. (reprint)

3. Daly, Stephanie. *Child and family law: Trinidad and Tobago*. Port of Spain: National Family Services, Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Social Services, 1992. 161 p., xi.

Reviews legislation relevant to minors and to formal and informal domestic units (as well as laws which impact upon the ability of adults to fulfil their roles within such a context), in order to assist in strengthening and rationalising these laws and identify any areas which should be modified if the government is to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4. Duarte Sanchez, Martha P., et al. *Ayuda breve y de emergencia: un modelo para todas*. Mexico, D.F.: Colectivo de Lucha contra la violencia hacia las mujeres (COVAC), 1992. 31 p.

Outlines the main features of a crisis intervention model used by COVAC in the treatment of victims of gender violence.

5. Fraser, Arvonne and Miranda Kazantsis. *CEDAW #11: the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and violence against women*. Minneapolis: International Women's Rights Action Watch, August 1992. 44 p.

Reports on what happened at the eleventh session of CEDAW, and explains how CEDAW members are elected, how the Committee works and why NGO involvement is essential to effective monitoring and implementation of the women's Convention.

6. International Women's Tribune Centre. *A call to action!* New York: International Women's Tribune Centre, March 1993. 16 p.

A special bulletin reporting on the worldwide campaign to get women's rights onto the world's human rights agenda.

7. International Women's Tribune Centre. *Women's human rights, Vienna June 1993*. New York: International Women's Tribune Centre, 1993. 16 p.

Contains information on women's human rights activities prior to and during the 1993 World Conference in Vienna. Includes a glossary of terms and a map of the conference centre.

8. Isis Internacional. *La mujer ausente: derechos humanos en el mundo* (Absent women: human rights in the world). Santiago, Chile: Isis Internacional, 1991. 210 p.

Collection of essays on women and human rights.

9. Miedzian, Myriam. *Boys will be boys: breaking the link between masculinity and violence*. London: Virago, 1992. xxviii, 346 p.

10. Mohammed, Patricia. "Structures of experience: gender, ethnicity and class in the lives of two East Indian women." In: Kelvin A.

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BOOK SHELF *continued from pg. 22*

Yelvington, ed. *Trinidad ethnicity*. London: Macmillan, 1993. pp. 208-234.

Uses oral history techniques to explore the 'structures of experience' of two East Indian women in Trinidad in order to investigate how the dynamics of ethnicity, class and gender operate in their lives.

11. Nieves Rico, María. *Domestic violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean: proposals for discussion*. Santiago, Chile: Women and Development Unit, ECLAC, 1992. 51 p. (Serie Mujer y Desarrollo, no. 10) (LC/L.690)

Seeks to provide an analytic vantage point from which a fuller understanding of the roots of the problem of domestic violence in the region can be obtained. The study covers the nature of domestic violence; legal aspects and judicial treatment of domestic violence; significant advances and experiences with respect to dealing with domestic violence; institutional approaches to violence against women taken by international organizations; and shortcomings of baseline assessments and action proposals.

12. Reoch, Richard; Inter Press Service. *Rights or privileges? An independent guide to the World Conference on Human Rights*, Vienna, June 1993.

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Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)

We are a network of individual researchers and activists and women's organisations who define feminist politics as a matter of both consciousness and action. We are committed to understanding the relationship between the oppression of women and other forms of oppression in the society, and are working actively for change.

Membership spans the Dutch, English, French and Spanish-speaking countries of the region as well as the diaspora. It is open to women living in the Caribbean and Caribbean women living abroad who support CAFRA's general aims and objectives.

A brochure outlining the aims and objectives of the association is available on request.

Structure of the Association

The decision-making bodies of CAFRA are:

- (i) The General Meeting of the membership of the association;
- (ii) The Regional Committee of elected national representatives and members;
- (iii) The Continuation Committee, a sub-committee of the Regional Committee; and
- (iv) The Secretariat, comprising programme and administrative staff headed by the Coordinator.

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