

# WOMAN

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

# Struggle

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## GIRLS STRIKE FOR EDUCATION

According to the Chinese newspaper People's Daily, a group of girls in Jia Cui Village in Guangxi province in South China is striking because they are not allowed to go to school. The girls, aged 8 to 15, are refusing to do housework, work in the fields or take care of their brothers and sisters unless they are allowed to go to school. In rural China, as in rural areas in others parts of the world, there is a tendency for parents to keep their children, daughters especially, at home to work instead of sending them to school. About 83 percent of the country's 2.7 million children who do not attend school are girls.

(Info from People's Daily 12/3/88)

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## FEMINISTS MARCH TO RECLAIM THE NIGHT

Feminists all over Australia and New Zealand held Reclaim the Night marches on October 28. Eight hundred women and children marched in Perth, 600 marched in Melbourne, 300 marched in Northbridge in West Australia, and 300 marched in Sydney. At a march in Canberra, some feminists burned an effigy of man, while others complained that this action departed from the nonviolent policy of the march and that the decision to do it was not made by consensus. Women in Sydney chose to march in the suburbs to highlight the fact most violence against women occurs in the suburbs and at home rather than in the city center.

(Info from The Grapevine)

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### BRITISH MOTHER BURNS RAPIST

A mother of four children was jailed on January 17 for two and a half years for attacking the raper of her five-year old daughter. Outraged by the abuse of her child and trust, she poured a kettle of boiling water over the rapist's penis and beat him with a broken table leg before throwing him out of her house. The child's father and 17-year-old brother also participated in the attack and each received a sentence of 21 months.

The 19-year-old rapist, Lee Roberts, had been a lodger in the child's home and had been treated as one of the family. He received a nine-year youth custody sentence for the rape of the girl.

The judge's decision on the sentencing of the mother has been received with anger as cruel and unnecessary. Valerie Howarth, director of Childline, a recently established organisation attempting to deal with the growing phenomenon of child abuse, stated that the child had become a double victim. She would now be deprived of her parents' support at the very time she needed them most.

by Angela Karach.

(Info from the Independent, I/17

The Daily Telegraph I/17

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### ABORTION RIGHTS MOBILIZATION

The National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) had launched a national campaign called "Millions of Voices, Silent No More" to demand that the Supreme Court uphold women's right to choose abortion. The Supreme Court's decision to hear the case of Webster v. Reproductive Health Services is, according to NARAL executive director Kate Michelman, "without a doubt the most serious threat to reproductive choice in America in decades."

The campaign is a grassroots mobilization effort involving pro-choice activists in every (USA) state. Activists will be gathering signatures to a pledge for action against attempts to interfere with women's rights to make their own decisions about abortion.

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## UNDERMINING BP

A newly formed women's anti-nuclear group, women working for a Nuclear Free Future, has protested at the opening of a controversial new uranium, copper and gold mine in South Australia. The mine, at Olympic Dam/Roxby Downs, was given its official grand and promotional launch on 5th November by John Bannon, the South Australian Premier, with 600 guests invited from all over Australia and overseas.

The huge mine will produce 1.5 million tonnes (of all types of ore) annually, with 0.5 tonnes of waste, and it is estimated that production could continue for up to 200 years. Initially, 50% of uranium produced from the mine will go to South Korea, Japan and Sweden, and 20% to the Central Electricity Generating Board, U.K., with more likely to go to Japan in future.

The women's group baked yellow cakes and distributed leaflets in Port Adelaide's market, pointing out that the uranium oxide, or yellow cake, from the mine will be exported from the port. They also put up Nuclear Free Zone signs, since Port Adelaide has been this on paper for many years, though in practice no action has been taken. The women received coverage in the local press.

The joint ventures in the mine, British Petroleum (Australia), who own 49% of the mine, and Western Mining Corporation, who own 51%, are still refusing to compensate the Kokotha people for the sites destroyed by the mine's development, despite recommendation that they do so by a government sponsored report.

Sigrid Shayer.

Outwrite: Issue 71.

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## AN INTERNATIONAL LINK.

I took the late night train from my home town in West Bengal to Calcutta last March. The train was packed out with hundreds of women peasants from surrounding villages. They were on their way to demonstrate against the prices of fertilizers and electricity which had gone up in the preceding months. The colourful clothes, giggling or crying children, or the tiffin boxes did not diffuse their spirit of militancy. The CPI(M) - the ruling Communist Party of West Bengal - represents the Mazrul (Peasant) Union - the trade union of the peasants to which these women belong. But as they whispered significantly, 'It is run by men'. The day was organised by women unionists especially to remind their party and their men that they, too, counted - not only as mothers and homemakers, but also as producers.

The jubilant as well as the defiant gestures of the poor, protesting peasant women, remind me of the demoralised state of the women's movement in Britain, my adopted home. Did I know the reasons? In New Delhi at the end of my journey, I met Ela Bhatt, the charismatic leader of poor self-employed women in Ahmedbad: 'You know, Swasti, the poor are the majority in a country like India. That gives us strength because of our number. In a country like England, absolute poverty affects still only the minority - perhaps the working class and Black women in the inner cities. Would it not be better if they linked with us?' This, perhaps, is the future path - to cross national boundaries in forming an international link. For initiating this link Outwrite will die not with a whimper, but with a bang.

Swasti Mitter.

Outwrite: Issue 71.

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#### COURT OKAYS ABORTION

Martin Klein had to battle in court (New York) with anti-abortionists to obtain an abortion for Nancy Klein, his comatose wife; some doctors had said the abortion might improve her chance of survival.

Nancy Klein was injured in a North Shore, Long Island, car accident in December and has been in North Shore University Hospital; she sustained brain damage in the accident. On January 26, Martin Klein filed a petition asking to be appointed her guardian so he could authorise an abortion. A reporter from the New York Post who was in the court building when Klein filed the petition decided to telephone anti-abortion activist John Short to stir up some action. Short has opposed abortions since he was fired in 1972 from the Nassau County Social Services Department because he refused to process paperwork for a hospital that performed abortions.

Short and another anti-abortionist, John Broderick, sued to prevent Klein from becoming Nancy Klein's guardian and to make Broderick the fetus' guardian, with Short as the guardian for Nancy Klein. Neither Short nor Broderick had ever met the Kleins.

A New York court appointed Klein guardian and the New York State Court of Appeals denied Short and Broderick's appeals. U.S. Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall rejected the anti-abortionists' request for a stay of the Lower Court decision. Nancy Klein finally was given an abortion.