

International Centre for Ethnic Studies

The International Centre for Ethnic Studies has been recently established in Sri Lanka to meet the following objectives:

1. to provide a clear institutional focus and identity for the study and understanding of the management of ethnic conflict;
2. to stimulate cross-national comparative research to ethnic policy studies;
3. to bring together scholars, policy-makers, academics and those in public life for dialogue and mutual learning and;
4. to encourage experimentation with innovative policy and action approaches that hold promise in the resolution of ethnic conflict.

The following objectives will also be covered:

1. the impact of economic development on the human rights of indigenous populations;
2. the link between ethnic conflict and international migration,
3. the way ethnic policies affect women.

Sri Lanka was chosen as the home for the Centre because of its geographical location and its relatively free intellectual life.

Address: **International Centre for Ethnic Studies**
494/3 Piachaud Gardens
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A Silent Protest: Lebanese Women Sit-in

On the morning of the 22nd of September 1983, more than 400 women belonging to various organizations gathered together in silent protest against the last round of war in the Mountain.

They sat in front of the UNICEF building carrying banners on which was written: "Stop the fighting immediately"—"We demand Lebanese Reconciliation"—"Return all Refugees to their Homes"—"Implementation of Security Council Recommendations Nos. 508,509 and 520."

The two-hour long protest started with a minute of silence in memory of the victim of war, followed by the Lebanese National Anthem. After that, president of the "Child Welfare Society", Zahia Salman, gave a short speech in which she said: "We women refuse what is happening on Lebanese soil, we condemn the suffering

inflicted on people, institutions and the dignity of human beings."

Mr. Ikbal Akhund, High Commissioner Delegate of the UN Refugee Commission and Mr. Mohammed Baalbaki, President of the Lebanese Press Syndicate, spoke next, followed by Member of Parliament, Mr. Zaki Mazboudi, who declared: "A woman is the strongest pressure force on her husband, brother and son. I hope that all fighters in Lebanon will drop their arms."

At the end of the rally, Mother Doumian, head of the "Convent of the Cross" in Jall el Deeb spoke to the audience saying: "I heard about the sit-in and came to join in and testify that the Lebanese people love each other and care for their unity which has not been shaken by the fighting. I also came to say that the deep wish of all citizens is to break down the barriers erected by war".

At last, the Lebanese Council of Women called for another meeting on its premises in order to coordinate emergency and aid campaigns for all displaced people: old, young, women and men.

Campaign Against Crimes of Honour ⁽¹⁾

Minority Rights Group (MRG), a consultative body to the United Nations based in England and winner of the 1982 UN Media Peace Prize, is planning in conjunction with several other organizations a campaign against the practice of "crimes of honour" in the Mediterranean and the Arab World.

The aims of the campaign are:

- To create public awareness of the existence and extent of these crimes.
- To give information and advice to those who wish to work further on the subject.
- To channel funds for practical projects aiming at eradicating this practice and helping its sufferers.
- To work at government and international levels to prevent such crimes and extend refuge for victims.

(1) "Crimes of Honour" are crimes committed to save the honour of the family i.e. any man who surprises his wife, his sister, his daughter, or other kinswoman in flagrant act of adultery and kills her without premeditation, benefits from alleviating circumstances. See **Al-Raida**, No. 4, P. 10, 1978 and No. 7, P. 6, 1979.

— To press for a change in the Geneva Convention of 1951 to allow victims who have managed to flee their countries and find asylum in the West to be given "refugee status". At present these women are not classified as a "social group" suffering persecution and cannot be given refugee status under UNHCR criteria.

Speaking at the UN Working Group on Slavery and Slavery-like practices in Geneva on the 10th of August 1983, Mrs. Hoda Dubray, an Egyptian lawyer living in Switzerland said that not only were many young women tortured, poisoned or killed because they had transgressed the laws of "family honour" but they were also driven from their village and country.

Mrs. Dubray hoped that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Commission on Human Rights would take up the cause of these women and extend them proper legal protection in the international arena by granting them refugee status. Such status would enable victims to find the security to develop a new life.

For further information on the campaign contact:

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Associated Country Women of the World Conference

"Living in Today's World" was the theme chosen by the Associated Country Women of the World's (ACWW) 17th Conference held in Vancouver, Canada, between the 19th and 29th of June 1983.

Representing Lebanon at this conference was Zahia Salman, president of the Lebanese Child Welfare Society. Commenting on her trip to Canada and on the role Lebanon played at the conference Mrs. Salman said: "This is the first time Lebanon could participate in an ACWW event because of the situation in the country for the past years. The participants in Vancouver had a lot of sympathy for Lebanon and they expressed their willingness to help. I drew their attention to the fact that if we were asking for help it's because we



feel human beings are brothers and sisters and should support each other, not because we want pity."

The recommendations that came out of the conference centered around the future of humankind and the necessity to raise future generations to love peace and to be sound in body and mind. The importance of breast feeding, protecting the environment and food chemicals, and the non-discrimination of women at home, work and in local and government institutions were other issues of concern. In addition, the conference recommended the participants to ask their governments to issue special bank notes for the blind and to press the UN for organizing a "World Year for the Family".

(Al Hasna', 19 August 1983)

Kali Press: New Women's Publishers.

The **Kali Press** is a new publishing house in India which aims to publish material **On Third World Women**, written by Third World Women produced in the Third World.

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(Outwrite: issue 14, May 1983)

Secondary School Girls in Saudi Arabia ⁽¹⁾

On the occasion of **The International Year of Communication**, two seminars were organized on the 5-8 March, 1983 by the Egypt Women's Association together with the Hoda Shaarawi Association, the African representatives of the World Association of Women Journalists and Writers, the Egyptian Ministry of Information and the El-Nil Centre for Education and Training.

The first seminar discussed the role of women in direct communication to promote development. It covered Egyptian women's historical role in development, health conditions, local and international legislation.

The second seminar held at the same date, discussed **Communication - Key to the Future** with papers on basic and practical communication based on the understanding of cultural differences and international relations. Representatives of different branches of the media also exchanged working methods, in addition to celebrating International Women's Day.

(International Women's News)
(Vol. 78, 1983.)

Universal Childbirth Picture Book

Universal CBPB is available in English from Women's International Network, WIN. Will also be available in Arabic 1984.

Cost: \$3.00 US (\$1.00 ship mail/\$3.50 air mail)

Address:

187 Grant Street
Lexington, MA 02173
U.S.A. (Tel: 617-862-9431.)

Secondary school girls in Saudi Arabia regret the absence of physical education in schools and complain of unequal treatment of the sexes. These are some of the findings of a thesis **Problems facing school-girls in Saudi Arabia**, written by a psychology student of King Seoud University in Riyadh.

The author asked a sample of 850 women students living in the Saudi Capital 24 questions related to scholastic matters. Seventy percent said they regretted the absence of physical education at school and 38% declared they were not being treated equally to male students.

More than half of the respondents mentioned they suffered from excessive shyness which, according to the author, results from family socialization that considers decency and timidity as being one and the same thing.

Created in 1960, secondary female education in Saudi Arabia is at all levels completely separated from its male counterpart. Teachers are exclusively women, and when this is impossible, men teach female students through a closed television circuit. Moreover, women in the Kingdom are not allowed to drive a car, nor share public transport with men.

(Arab News, 4 June 1983)

(1) See **Al-Raida**, May 1, 1983, No. 24, p. 6, "The New Saudi Woman".

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