

The police have stepped up their manhunt, forming a task force which visited prostitutes at their usual places, inviting the women to visit police stations to have their fingerprints and photos taken and their personal details recorded on a database. The information will be used to keep track of women and, if the killer is not caught, help to identify the victims.

More than 200 frightened prostitutes responded and were interviewed by police by mid-January, volunteering information about themselves and offering new clues about the killer.

This unusual co-operation between police and prostitutes has raised hopes of continued sympathy for sex workers from officialdom. However, a police spokesman said that the police would have to comply with the law, which prohibited acts of indecency for reward.

Ilse Pauw, coordinator of the Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Group (Sweat), welcomed the police's new cooperative approach to catching the killer by working with prostitutes and said she hoped police protection would continue in the future.

The organisation was aware of numerous incidents where women prostitutes were abused by their clients. "But they tell us they can't go to the police station to report what happened to them because they were involved in an illegal activity at the time of the assault," Pauw said. "What they want is to be taken seriously and their cases to be treated equally with other women."

While the decriminalisation of prostitution would improve

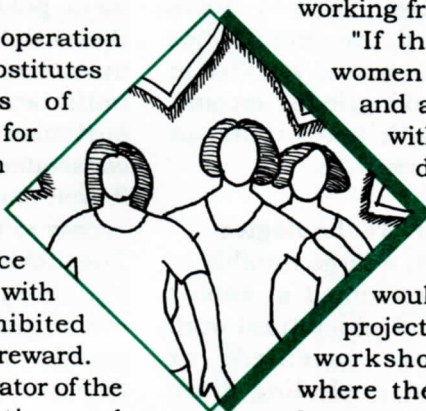
the service prostitutes receive from the police, Pauw said it would probably take time to remove the stigma attached to the profession. Pauw said while police deserved credit for their effort to catch the serial killer, she had no doubt that their reaction time had been slower because the victims were prostitutes.

Pauw said while it was assumed women working street corners were more at risk, all prostitutes were vulnerable to assault or murder by their clients. "It's too simplistic to say they're safer at an agency or working from home.

"If the clients knew the women could report abuse and assaults to the police with impunity, I have no doubt sex workers' safety would improve tremendously."

Pauw said Sweat would undertake a major project this year to provide workshops to sex workers where they can discuss and learn the implications of decriminalisation, or the legislation of prostitution. "People don't always understand their options and we want to ensure they make informed choices."

Source: Mail & Guardian, 1 February 1996



WORLD MEDIA EMPIRES

The international media scene points to empires that practically determine what's news and what's not.

Among these empires is Time Warner Inc., formed by a merger of Time Inc., and Warner Communications, and is the largest media corporation in the world. It owns Time, Life, Fortune and Sports Illustrated

with a worldwide readership of over 120 million. Its assets (\$15.9 billion in 1994) are greater than the combined domestic product of Bolivia, Jordan, Nicaragua, Albania, Liberia, and Mali. It is also the second largest cable company in the world and one of the largest book publishers.

Last year, Time Warner merged with Turner broadcasting which further raised its combined revenues to \$18.7 billion.

Reuters, established since 1849 has become the main provider of print and broadcast news from developing countries, thus determining what is foreign news. It also owns part of the British Independent Television News (ITN) network and the Worldwide Television News (WTN).

News Corp. Ltd., controlled by Rupert Murdoch, has the highest newspaper circulation in Australia, almost half of the circulation in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the South and East Asian market. He controls Fox Broadcasting Network and 20th Century Fox movie studios, is part-owner of CBS/Fox video and is the world's largest distributor of videocassettes.

Wire Services

Wire services are instrumental in determining the flow of information. For decades, international news has been gathered and distributed by five major wire services: AP (US), United Press International (US), Reuters (UK); AFP (France) and TASS (Telegranfnoi Agentsvo Sovestkavo Soyuzo of the former USSR).

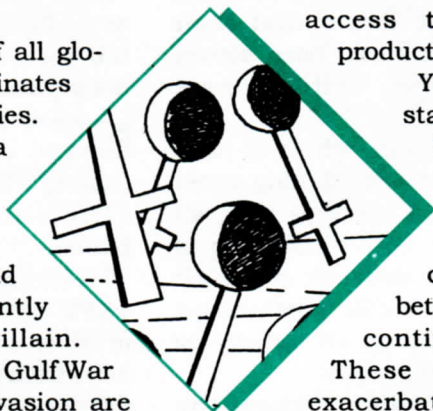
The dominance of these wire agencies has resulted in disproportionate coverages of first world news and a

corresponding lack of interest in and/or ignorance about issues in developing nations.

News concerning the latter are mostly those concerning disasters, calamities and in general those labelled as "bad news."

Ninety percent of all global news, in fact, originates from only four countries. So it is not much of a surprise that during times of global conflicts, only one side is played up and the other conveniently portrayed as the villain. Media coverage of the Gulf War and the Panama invasion are classic examples.

Source: IBON Facts and Figures, "Who owns what?" Vol. 19, No.11, 15 June 1996



development (IWD) were initiated. The whole point was to find solutions that would do away with two major constraints on the expansion of women's activities both in rural and urban environments, namely, access to credit and to production means.

Yet, in 20 years, the status of rural women has evolved very little.

Governments continue to give priority to cash crops. The inequalities between men and women continue to be ignored.

These two factors have exacerbated the imbalances between the sexes, whether in decision-making, in the appointment of work and profits, or access to resources.

Unaware of Technologies

And yet, a large number of technologies aimed at easing domestic and agricultural work have been invented or modernised, including grain mills, improved cooking bobs, hydraulic pumps, wheelbarrows, trolleys, solar-ray captors, processing and conservation equipment for food products and oil extraction presses. When questioned, some women say they are unaware of these technologies. Others, on the other hand, complain about the high cost of these technologies or that the implements are difficult to use. Also, spare parts for tools and machine-tools are not always available in the countryside. The slightest breakdown is a problem and it is sometimes necessary to go to the nearest large town, or even as far as the capital located hundreds of kilometers away, to find a repairman.

Moreover, some of these technologies, because they are ill-suited or costly and are limited in use, have only resulted in increasing the workload of women. Studies also revealed that, due to the inequality of relations between the sexes, it is not always in the interest of women in some societies to gain access to technology which allows them to increase their productivity and, hence, their income. Why? Because the men who control the women keep the extra money generated in this way for themselves.

Finally, structural adjustment policies have resulted in the withdrawal of government incentives that promoted private initiatives to support women's agricultural activities. As a consequence, women are finding it even more of a problem to gain access to technology and credit. The development of popular initiatives is therefore an even more pressing item on the agenda than ever before.

Source: AIRD News, March 1996

BARE HANDS

by Codou Bop

Women peasants play a vital—though unseen, unpaid and undervalued—role in agriculture.

The majority of women in the South live and work in a rural environment where they play a vital role in agriculture, frequently a dominant sector in the economy of countries in the South. Yet, women rarely have access to credit and production means. According to an estimate by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), women's agricultural work contributes from 60 to 80 percent of food production. Apart from food, women are also present in the cash crop sector.

As if to acknowledge this vital role of women in agriculture, the year and then the decade for women was proclaimed in 1975. Policies for the integration of women in