

peals to fight this move. They collected signatures and held a meeting attended by about 600 people. Another urgent meeting was sponsored by the Center for Christian Response to Asian Issues and the Feminism Religion Peace Association.

More than 200 participants attended the meeting, with several sharing their own experiences and opinions. In addition, teachers and historians have also started holding their own discussions and meetings.

When the war ended in 1945, Japan did not take clear responsibility for the harm it inflicted on other Asian countries. The next 40 years were spent focusing on economic development and material affluence. As a result, Japanese people failed to really consider the need for their government to apologize and compensate women and people in other Asian countries for causing them harm during the war.

Japan will have to change drastically if it wishes to take the road which leads to peace and life together with other Asian countries. We welcome comments and opinions on this matter from people of other countries.

Source: *Resource Materials on Women Labor in Japan*, 19 March 1997

### **WOMEN AGAINST OFFENSIVE ADVERTISING**

Israel Women's Network (IWN) has joined Emunah, Na'amat and other women's organizations to create a new Women's Forum whose aim is to combat offensive advertising on Israeli TV. The forum aims to encourage new standards and ethics in advertising in order to prevent the exploitation of women and women's bodies in sales campaigns.

Forum delegates met with representatives of Tempo Soft-Drink Company to protest against offensive material in their current TV advertisements. The company promised to change its advertisement policy within six months and committed itself to bringing together other soft-drink companies in order to define new norms and standards in advertising.

Source: *Networking for Women*, July 1997

### **IMMUNIZE, OR LOSE CASH**

Australian parents who fail to immunize their children will be punished by loss of childcare assistance and a new cut in maternity allowance under a new carrot-and-stick plan to boost the country's alarmingly low immunization rates.

Under the plan which begins on 1 January 1998, maternity allowance will be increased from a one-off payment of \$A882 to two payments totaling \$A950. The first \$A750 will be paid after the birth of a child but the final \$A200 will be available only when the child is 18 months old and immunized.

Families will also be refused child-care payments, including the child cash rebate, if they cannot prove their children have been immunized.

Source: *The Age*, 26 February 1997

### **PROMOTING EDUCATION CHANGES IN ZIMBABWE**

In the last few years the Ministry of Education and Culture of Zimbabwe has developed and applied various strategies in order to promote education among girls and young women. The following are worth noting:

- ◆ establishing flexible conditions and admission criteria for women

at certain levels of education;

- ◆ continuing to offer opportunities for scholarships, educational subsidies and favorable conditions to girls, especially those who have the academic aptitude but are economically disadvantaged;

- ◆ creating public awareness through publicity campaigns highlighting women who have triumphed in life, with the purpose of promoting role models that can be imitated;

- ◆ giving women preference in professional job promotions even in cases where they may not possess all the merits that their male counterparts may have, in order to establish more women in positions that will be imitated as role models and to infuse hope in women;

- ◆ promoting a proposed plan to eliminate gender-based school activities between boys and girls (boys would no longer be sent to carpentry workshops while girls are sent to do needlepoint);

- ◆ adopting a criteria of impartiality for both genders in the elaboration, selection and use of academic materials, in language, use of language, in the selection of role-models and in the means of instruction;

- ◆ the creation of a scholarship fund reserved for women who are interested in obtaining their high school degree.

Translated from *Perspectivas Isis Internacional* No. 6, 1997

### **THREE U.S. ARMY INSTRUCTORS IN GERMANY ACCUSED OF SEXUAL ASSAULT**

The United States Army acknowledged on 15 February that three male training instructors had been suspended from duties and two of them detained after 11 women soldiers complained of sexual mistreatment at a base in Germany. The accusations

against the instructors include rape, forced sodomy, indecent assault, cruelty and maltreatment of subordinates, according to an army statement. No details of the accusations have been made public by the Army.

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### **JUSTICE AT LAST FOR ASSASSINATED DOMINICAN WOMEN**

According to journalist Larry Rohter, history and the Dominican people have found a particularly appropriate way to avenge the assassination by the dictator Rafael Trujillo of three of his enemies. The current vice president and deputy foreign minister of the Dominican Republic are descendants of “the Butterflies,” as the Mirabal sisters were known in their days as members of the anti-Trujillo underground. A change in the country’s political climate has completed the transformation of the Mirabal sisters into symbols of both popular and feminist resistance. Throughout Latin America, the Mirabals are regarded as feminist icons.

The most visible manifestation of the Mirabals’ vindication will soon be on display along the Malecon, the capital’s seaside promenade. There, a 137-foot obelisk that Trujillo put up in his own honor is now enveloped in scaffolding in preparation for the installation of a mural with the image of each of the three dead women and their sister. The Mirabals are also given recognition in Dominican textbooks as national martyrs.

### **LAND REFORM IN NEPAL HAS BEEN REFORMED TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION**

The Land Reform Act 2021 in Nepal was challenged in court by the Forum for Public Interest as discriminatory to women. The Act contains a provision, which de-

nies the transfer of tenancy rights to the daughters of a tenant, whether married, unmarried or widowed. The Forum for Public Interest used the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women to argue the case. In January 1997 the Act was amended and now confers tenancy rights on daughters and daughters-in-law who are at least 35 years of age.

### **U.S. CLOTHING RETAILER AGREES TO A CODE OF CONDUCT**

According to the ICFTU newsletter, *Free Labour World*, the U.S. clothing retailer The Gap has agreed that its subcontractors, who operate in one of El Salvador’s Free Trade Zone (FTZs), should abide by a Code of Conduct concerning labor standards that would be independently monitored. There has been considerable negative publicity worldwide concerning poor working conditions and subsistence wages received by the mainly female workforce that assembles clothing for The Gap.

The labor news in El Salvador isn’t all so assuring, however. *Free Labour World* also reports that in the same year at least six enterprises in the country closed down to avoid being unionized, and then reopened under another name, having sacked all the unionized workforce.

### **VIENNA PHILHARMONIC AGREES TO ADMIT WOMEN MUSICIANS**

In February, Anna Lelkes, a female harpist who had been working with the orchestra on an adjunct basis for 26 years, became the first woman to formally join the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra since its founding 155 years ago.

Consideration of the policy change raises both unique and

common objections—that the sound of the orchestra is attributable to its “maleness” and that maternity leave would cost money.

Facing public pressure, and particularly the protests of women’s groups during an overseas tour, the orchestra gathered in an extraordinary meeting and agreed to admit women, beginning with Lelkes. The decision was made possible by the government’s guarantee to pay the salaries of players who were substituting for women on maternity leave.

Source: *The Women’s Watch*, March 1997

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### **DRAFT LAW ON SEXUAL OFFENSES**

After 10 years of awareness-raising through workshops, mass media campaigns and the like, the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement (FWRM) submitted its draft legislation on sexual offenses on 21 November 1996. The draft was received by Anthony Gates, one of the three lawyers appointed by the Fiji government to review the Penal Code.

The criminal legislation and the common law are unsupportive and unfair to rape survivors. The current law requires the survivor to “prove” the assault, resulting in low reporting of the crimes of rape and indecent assault. Despite this, police records show an 84 percent increase in rape and attempted rape cases over the past 10 years.

These statistics are only of cases which have been reported and many remain unreported. The trauma associated with the court system and the stigma attached to the survivor act as major deterrents. Added to this, the rape trial is almost always conducted in the magistrates court.

◆ The magistrates court has jurisdiction only over cases where the maximum penalty is five years imprisonment. Moreover, there is a

