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### Samir Amin's maldevelopment: A feminist critique

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# *Samir Amin's Maldevelopment:<sup>1</sup>* *A Feminist Critique<sup>2</sup>*

Colette Harris

It was with great delight but also with an increasing sense of frustration that I read Samir Amin's *Maldevelopment*. Delight because I am wholeheartedly in agreement with the central theme of the book, that the countries of the Third World cannot progress socially and politically while they allow their economies to be dominated by the existing global economic system. Mr. Amin's splendid analysis gives compelling evidence as to the reasons for this.

Frustration because here is yet another book that fails to incorporate women into the framework of the analysis. At least Mr. Amin shows sympathy with the aims of the women's movement, unlike a great many other men on the left, and realizes that feminism is a positive political force. What he lacks is an understanding of the problematic of women in relationship to the problematic of development.

*Maldevelopment* starts out with an analysis of the bases of different types of social formations—pre-capitalist societies are based on politics and the fetishism of power while capitalist societies are based on economics and the fetishism of commodities (2). What is omitted is a discussion of how both types of society are based on patriarchy and the fetishism of the phallus. Patriarchy has an important place in pre-capitalist societies<sup>3</sup> but it has become an indispensable cornerstone of advanced capitalism<sup>4</sup> and the belief that gender roles are biologically determined and hence universal could perhaps be compared with the belief in the free market, both phenomena obeying "the laws of nature." Because patriarchy is missing from his theoretical framework<sup>5</sup> Mr. Amin has no conceptual base for incorporating women into his analysis of maldevelopment.

Southern women are briefly acknowledged in *Maldevelopment* but remain peripheral, while feminism is referred to solely as a middle-class Western movement. The women's movement in the Third World is apparently invisible, even though it has been extreme-

ly vocal, particularly in Latin America and India. Africa has its own women's movement, growing in momentum, but one would never know this from reading *Maldevelopment*. It is a reflection of the power of patriarchy that it has succeeded in making women so invisible that they are as unnoticed by left-wing analysts as by capitalists.

The main thesis of *Maldevelopment*, as stated above, is that the countries of the Third World cannot develop in any way beneficial for the population as a whole while they keep their doors open to external economic forces which determine internal wages and prices. Therefore, the only way to democratic development is through auto-centrism.

Meaningful autocentric development strategies depend on "peasant control over agricultural projects, genuine co-operatives" (161). There is no mention of women's control of the land they farm, of their rights to sell the produce of their labor on the market for cash, nor of who is to pay for the maintenance of the household under the new strategies.<sup>6</sup> On all these matters complete silence.

In the discussion on the problems of urban employment it is specifically stated that it is estimated that half the potentially active male urban population has no steady income (8). One wonders whether the female urban population is not mentioned because it does have steady income, because its not having steady income is so taken for granted that it is not necessary to mention it, because women are not supposed to have incomes at all or at any rate not steady ones, or simply because women's incomes are not important enough to consider. Could it be that Mr. Amin subscribes to the capitalist ideology of viewing Third World women as non-productive housewives? The use of the word male here makes gendered thinking explicit for once.

At the start of chapter 3 Mr. Amin poses a series of questions about the state, including alternative social forms, of which the feminist movement is one. He states his intention to "go on to consider some of these issues in order to highlight the specific character of the African situation" (76). But once more hopes are dashed—feminism, apparently only as a Western phenomenon, appears briefly but there is no mention of the importance of the analyses the women's movement—including the African women's movement—has made of the specific character of the African situation.

One is left with the distinct impression that the author of *Maldevelopment* has little understanding of gendered oppression and, therefore, does not grasp what feminism is essentially about. Class

struggle is paramount: Although Mr. Amin goes on to say that “feminism in the West, with its aim of attacking at least some of the roots of autocracy, stems from the . . . logic of an alternative concept of social power,” (113) and urges the reader to “consider the impact of feminism on day-to-day social relations [in the West]” (220) it is far from clear what he understands by this alternative concept of power and if he has thought through the implications of it. Certainly there seems to have been no attempt at incorporation of it into his general world vision.

Leaving aside any discussion of the real political, economic, and social gains by the old organizations mentioned above, one thing is clear: women have remained firmly subordinated. Even today, despite the women’s liberation movement patriarchy is not yielding, if anything it is more firmly in place than ever. Feminism is not just an alternative concept of social power but a movement dedicated to removing the yoke of oppression from round the necks of over fifty percent of the world’s human inhabitants. This yoke is kept in place not just by capitalists and imperialists, not just by the elite, but also by poor men world over who often have no other possession to exploit than their womenfolk.

As a logical sequel to the neglect of the subject of patriarchy in the first part of *Maldevelopment* the treatment of alternative development strategies for the South in the second part of the book does not mention the need for freeing Southern women from exploitation either from their own fellow citizens or from the patriarchal institutions of global capital.

By not taking into account the problematic of women in the developing world Mr. Amin distorts a large number of issues. By omitting an analysis of how institutionalized male domination leads to inequality not just between men and women but between different races and classes he fails to focus on one of the most important impediments to the development of democracy. That is—a democracy which, as Mr. Amin himself has stated on numerous occasions, grants the individual the right to live a decent life, at a decent economic level and with feelings of self esteem, a democracy far from the mere right to vote for a plurality of political parties which is the generally accepted liberal definition of democracy.

It is impossible to analyze the increasing poverty, marginalization, and famine, particularly in Africa, without an understanding of their relationship to gender oppression—that is, to the marginalization and exploitation of women. In order for true democracy to be

achieved at some (however far-off) future time the institutions of patriarchy must be destroyed. It is also important to focus on how Eurocentric ideology arriving in the South through colonialism and neo-colonialism has contributed to this marginalization. Any analysis, therefore, of inequality, poverty, and famine in the developing world must take women into account.<sup>7</sup> I should like to discuss here how discrimination against women as a result of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation creates serious problems for the South. In order to do this I will concentrate on the following areas: 1) employment; 2) education; 3) health; 4) population increase; 5) food production and agriculture.

My discussion of these areas will show how women's disadvantages result in disadvantages for all. Bad employment conditions for women help to drag employment standards down for men as well. These conditions include low wages and poor safety and health standards. Poor education means not only a work force that is not able to deal with new technology but lower standards of family hygiene and higher rates of infant mortality. Too great population increases are a threat to the whole world. Famine means death for millions and severe malnourishment of women results in unhealthy children. The information presented below could serve as a starting point for theoreticians wishing to consider incorporating women into their analysis.

## 1. EMPLOYMENT

Writers on women in the South often comment that if the currently most impoverished and marginalized countries are considered to be Fourth-World, then women as a whole could be held to form a Fifth World. Mr. Amin severely criticizes the acute inequalities between the North and the South but fails to mention that women are *almost always* to be found in a lower economic category than their menfolk.

During the last twenty years of world-wide falling incomes women's have fallen much more than men's and, even in the West, women have become increasingly impoverished, the poorest women being single mothers.<sup>8</sup> The size of this category is also on the increase in the Third World due to higher rates of divorce, abandonment, and migration, whether of women with their children to the cities as in Latin America, or of men without their womenfolk to places where wage labor is in demand as in Africa. Asia is the one continent where the female-headed household is not significantly on the increase.<sup>9</sup>

This impoverishment is in many ways a direct result of the imposition of traditional European<sup>10</sup> gender roles. Men are held to be the family breadwinners. Their wages are, therefore, tailored to their having to support a family—this is known as the family wage. Women's wages on the other hand are for pin money; women are supposed to be supported by fathers or husbands and certainly not to have to support a family themselves, so their wages can be kept much lower than those of men.

Even if women are economically independent for a few years before marrying, keeping their wages low will just ensure that they do not get inflated ideas of their continued independence as it will become very clear to them that only by marrying can they hope to acquire a decent living standard. As most men are not in a position to pay a housekeeper the only way they can acquire a comfortable home life is to marry. In this way the institution of the family in the West is encouraged by wage policies.<sup>11</sup>

In pre-colonial times women in many parts of the South had considerable economic independence.<sup>12</sup> This not only protected them from destitution but gave them a relatively high status in the community in their own right, a status which has now very often been lost, with the dire results discussed below.

Under colonialism Southern women were used in whatever way seemed most beneficial to the ruling powers at any given stage. After independence the development agencies, including the World Bank and the IMF, took over a large part of the task of keeping the Third World in line. As far as women are concerned there have been two strategic stages. Prior to 1970 women were not considered except to keep them firmly in their places as housewives. From 1970 onwards women were needed in the global economy in the new transnational plants in the Third World and for the informal sector. The development agencies changed direction to include women, ostensibly under the guise of bringing them into development, but actually with the sole aim of bringing them into the global economy in order to exploit their production for capital.

Colonial and neo-colonial interventions have done their best to ensure the adoption of the Eurocentric "ideal" division of labor in the Third World—the woman in the home doing the housework, the man working for a wage. The attempt to push women into total economic dependence started in colonial times with the missionaries<sup>13</sup> who tried to keep women virtuous by removing them from all work outside the home and considered that increases in male prosperity

would increase the prosperity of the entire family, making it unnecessary for the woman to earn. Nowadays the image of the ideal woman as housewife is propagated in the media while in reality few families can afford their women not to produce at least part of the family subsistence; the above-mentioned increase in female-headed households often makes women the only breadwinners.

The transnational companies that moved their plants to the Third World, starting in the early seventies, in search of cheap and biddable labor found the women ideal for their purposes and began to hire them *en masse*. These plants are now among the largest employers of female labor in those areas. Wages are low, and employee turnover high. Most supervisory staff and those in higher positions are men, while the most menial positions are taken by women. Women are the majority of the work force whenever the plant is labor- rather than capital-intensive and men are substituted when this changes.<sup>14</sup> There is no training,<sup>15</sup> and experience in these jobs does not lead to higher employability for these women; on the contrary, since their health is very often impaired by the working conditions it can worsen rather than improve their position.<sup>16</sup>

However, the image of women as housewives and not workers has remained. It is this that has made it possible to view their employment not as work but as an activity to fill in time for a few years before they get married or at least before they start having children. This allows employers to justify paying them extremely low wages, employing only very young single women, and getting rid of them when they get married or become pregnant. As such conditions are not conducive to mass organizing and unions rarely attempt to include these women or to help them organize when they are included, they have no option but to accept this exploitation in order to survive.

The same image is responsible for the fact that at times of high unemployment women are laid off at a greater rate than men<sup>17</sup> as it is considered that they will have their husbands' income to fall back on and, in any case, are not in a position to make strong protests. In addition a very high percentage of women work in part-time and home work not just because of compatibility with household responsibilities but also because of inability to find full-time, formal-sector work.<sup>18</sup>

In many Third-World countries sex-tourism is the largest employer of women in the informal sector. Sex-tourism is the neo-colonial version of the white man's sexual exploitation of the Third

World during colonial times; it began with the turning of South-East Asian women into prostitutes for the U.S. army during the Vietnam war and has now become a huge industry. It is estimated that about 200,000 to 300,000 women serve the tourist trade as prostitutes in Bangkok alone (Mies 1986: 138). Many of these prostitutes are young girls sold into prostitution by destitute families.

Until the early seventies development agencies aimed no part of their projects at the earning power of women; the only notice they took of them was to offer the occasional domestic-science course. In 1970 a book on the role of Third-World women in economic development (Boserup 1970) appeared; this sparked a torrent of writing on women in development, which, together with the U.N. women's decade (1975-1985), acted as a catalyst for the current trend of development as if women mattered.

This latest ideology is aimed at developing so-called income-generating activities for women. These activities are called income-generation and not work so that the women can still be viewed primarily as housewives supplementing family income, usually by producing for export goods that had hitherto been produced for local consumption. Work in subsistence production remains invisible.

The projects set up by the development agencies have as their aim the incorporation of women as workers in the informal sector into the global market, with all the added exploitation that implies. Indeed the conditions under which income generation is organized are very often highly disadvantageous and the women end up in a worse position than before (Mies 1986: 130-131).

Just as in the West, Southern women also do housework without pay. However, the housework in these countries, especially in rural areas, is heavy labor of a type that few Western women have had to do during this last century. As housework is not paid in cash, it does not show up on cost-benefit analyses of neo-colonial development projects, which tend to concentrate on those things that appear to give the highest returns (in straight economic terms). The provision of water wells, grain mills and other labor-saving devices, which could cut women's working days by many hours, has rarely been part of these projects. As, in addition, most projects with high cash returns are reserved for men (Whitehead 1991: 76), (Rogers 1980), (Joekes 1987: 65,78),<sup>19</sup> women are denied yet another opportunity for economic independence.

The lack of affordable day-care centers is another major obstacle to urban women's employment. This also hits particularly hard at



single mothers making it difficult for them to accept full-time employment.

The net result for capital is that Third-World women are now being productive in the global economy, both in the formal and informal sectors. The net result for the women is lowered living standards and often damaged health, through low-paid work under bad conditions, with little chance of significant wage increases through promotion in the formal sector, and very low returns in the informal sector. This keeps them dependent on their husbands, the only alternative being almost total destitution.

## 2. EDUCATION<sup>20</sup>

Women's educational levels in most countries are lower than men's.<sup>21</sup> The two principal reasons for this are: sexual discrimination in schools, and the ideology in the family that women's education is not important.

Educational discrimination is a major factor in keeping women in low-paid work. In pre-colonial times such schools as there were in the South gave a fairly equal education to both boys and girls. The colonial powers set up their own schools, in a large number of cases administered by one or more of the Christian churches. In line with the emphasis on domestic work for women, girls either were not allowed in the schools at all, or else were taught domestic tasks while the boys were taught a trade or prepared for a professional career.

In certain Catholic schools, girls were not even taught literacy, since it was held that this would make them neglect their households.<sup>22</sup>

Even where girls were taught a trade or academic subjects in schools these were restricted to those traditional for (Western) women. This means that most of the new jobs and careers, and all the high-prestige, well-paid ones, that were developed in the South under the auspices of the colonial powers were limited to men.

These conditions have not greatly changed in many countries since independence. When they are added to local traditions of the role of women and the need for girls to contribute their work to the household it is hardly surprising that they always take second place when a family is considering which of its children to educate.

Although in many societies girls enroll in primary school in almost equal numbers with boys their enrollment levels drop from puberty onwards. By the time university levels are reached the proportion of women to men (again with the exception of the East up

until now) has significantly fallen (Bowman and Anderson 1982). This can be attributed to a number of factors:

2.1) Many societies consider that girls are at risk in co-educational situations once they reach puberty. Also they are often married off at this age.

2.2) Girls are socialized both at home and at school to have lower career expectations than boys. In school text books world-wide women are portrayed as staying at home, as having low-level, boring jobs, as being subordinate to men.

Since there are relatively few professional and semi-professional jobs open to women, and since women are typically discouraged from studying for the better-paying careers, higher education may be perceived as producing limited returns. Foregone benefits must be reckoned in as well as the direct costs of education—fees, books, uniforms, and food where the child cannot live at home. These can include the loss of learning the women's tasks traditional in the community (since she will not have the time and contact with her mother to absorb all of these) as well as the economic advantages to the family of the daughter's labor at an earlier age (Robertson 1986:100).

In societies where males traditionally remain with the family all their lives while girls become members of their husbands' families (especially India and China) the education of girls is often seen as bringing in insufficient return.<sup>23</sup>

2.3) In many communities girls start contributing to the family work force at an age at which the boys are still playing so that even primary school education can result in foregone benefits.<sup>24</sup>

As for less formal education, on-the-job training is still far more limited for women than for men. This is partly because of women's time constraints but also because men are seen as dealing with new technology and women are not. In factories and agriculture when new technology is introduced the jobs are taken away from the women and turned over to men, even when the latter have no previous experience with this technology either. It is simply taken for granted that women do not work with advanced technology and no training in it is offered them.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the above, educational levels of women in the South are slowly rising, even though they are not yet on a level with those of men. Even basic literacy and numeric skills give women the chance to participate somewhat in the outside world, to keep their own accounts, fill out their own forms and so on. But the fundamental

problems remain of how to keep girls in school long enough and how to reverse the discrimination in schools against their studying for those careers which are the most lucrative.

### 3. HEALTH

Health problems need to be mentioned as another factor in Southern impoverishment which affects women far more than men, largely because of obstetric and gynecological complications. Their major causes are:

3.1) Lack of education on the part of the mother which results in a lack of understanding of basic hygiene or lack of access to clean water, etc;

3.2) over-work, under-nourishment and too much child bearing under poor conditions;

3.3) Violence in the home, on the streets and at work;

3.4) Work-related exposure to toxicants, eye strain, and so on;

3.5) AIDS and other epidemics;

3.6) Insufficient quantity and quality of medical practitioners, institutions, and other services.

3.1) It has been shown that many cases of illness and particularly infant deaths are related to the mother's lack of education<sup>26</sup> which prevents her from knowing the rules of elementary hygiene (McSweeney and Freedman 1982: 100-101). Lack of time and energy can force women to fetch water from contaminated wells rather than going far afield to find clean water. Lack of resources, time and education can keep families from boiling or filtering the water when it is contaminated.<sup>27</sup>

3.2) In the South the cumulative effects of too much child-bearing<sup>28</sup> and too long working hours, often coupled with heavy physical labor and poor diet, wear women out at an early age.

Poor women world-wide are worse nourished than men.<sup>29</sup> This has been accentuated since malnutrition all over the poor South has been greatly increased with the aid of the IMF and the World Bank who have pressured debtor countries to remove all subsidies on basic foods.

In Mexico, which was forced to remove subsidies from all basic foods during the eighties, the consumption particularly of protein has dropped tremendously during the last ten years since the poorest families can no longer afford to buy milk for the children and very rarely consume meat.

After the removal of subsidies in Sri Lanka the price of rice rose 158%, that of wheat flour 386%, and of milk powder 345% between 1977 and 1984. In Zambia the price of maize, the basis of food for poor households, rose 50% in one step in 1985.

At the same time wages were being kept static which has meant a significant fall in real incomes in all IMF/World Bank dependent countries. Between 1980 and 1984 real wages fell 50% in Tanzania and 40% in Ghana (Elson 1991:47).

3.3) Gender violence, particularly in the form of battery in the home, is one of the leading causes of death and injury to women world-wide. Aside from the physical aspects of the injuries women are psychologically intimidated by the fear of violence<sup>30</sup> which renders them incapable of taking measures to escape even where such escape is possible.<sup>31</sup> Violence, even just the threat of violence, is one of the best ways to ensure that women remain submissive and bid-dable and it is used for this, not just in the home but also on the job.

3.4) Exposure to toxic substances is a major factor in health problems for everybody. Communities living near factories can have their water supply and air contaminated with toxic chemicals.<sup>32</sup>

As few, if any, health and safety regulations exist, or are enforced where they do exist, in the South, job-related contamination is very high. In agriculture the spraying of dangerous chemicals is carried out with no regard for the health of the workers involved.<sup>33</sup>

On the Mexican border with the U.S., one of the world's most polluted areas, the contamination from the maquila plants has reached such proportions that large numbers of children are being born with very serious mental and physical handicaps.

3.5) The part that AIDS will play has yet to be fully realized, although it is still far from the leading cause of death even in highly infected countries. Meanwhile, to be a woman is to be in a high-risk group. Women are being infected through heterosexual sex in far greater numbers than men, especially through prostitution, where very young women and children are preferred on the grounds that they are less likely to be infected. Apart from the horrors of the effects of this on the individual women and their resultant children, the cumulative effect their early deaths will have on those communities most severely affected, particularly in Thailand and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, is bound to be tremendous.<sup>34</sup>

Due to poor hygiene generally and the often crowded living conditions of the urban poor as well as insufficient stocks of vaccinations and insufficient organization on the part of local health authori-

ties infectious diseases spread more quickly in the Third World than the First.

3.6) These health problems are occurring in communities with little or no public health facilities and result in death or incapacitation at an early age for many women, as well as a high level of infant mortality. These same communities have no social benefits nor services so that many sick women who are no longer supported by their families have become destitute. In less drastic cases bad health causes low productivity and is a factor in the poor general level of life of these women.

#### 4. POPULATION GROWTH

The question of population growth in the Third World is a tricky one. On the one hand, even in Africa, there is now considerable pressure on agricultural land, on the other hand much if not most of the incapacity of the Third World to feed its population can be attributed to the use of land for the production of cash crops for export. Subsistence farming is seen in the global market as wasting land that could be used productively for export crops.

The current ideology that states that the Third World is overpopulated is based in part on a strategy of turning the poorer Third-World citizens into producers for the West and keeping their consumption to a minimum. This requires a careful balance between the number of productive workers needed and the number of mouths to feed. Where the latter is seen to be too high there is considerable emphasis on birth control and this has even been forced on the women by international agencies, particularly in South Asia (Mies 1986: 143, n. 3). Where women's work is not important for global economic strategies, there have also been moves to implement sex selection through amniocentesis<sup>35</sup> and other techniques—female foeticide is very high in many parts of Asia (Mies 1986: 123-5).

This is just the latest trend in Third-World reproductive control which started with the beginning of colonialism. In pre-colonial times most Southern communities controlled their populations fairly well. The growth rate was even kept in some cases at zero.<sup>36</sup>

The colonial powers, however, wanted to increase these populations in order to have enough workers to serve the needs of the North. Large population growth in the South started when Christian missionaries aided their countries' policies by encouraging couples to have as many children as possible.<sup>37</sup> Christianity's hostility to birth control, abortion, lengthy breast feeding, and other practices previ-

ously used in population control was the major tool for this from Latin America to Africa. Today growth is fueled by different considerations:

4.1) The production of children (especially, of course, male children) is the best, if not the sole, way for a woman to gain status in a society which prizes her only as the mother of sons.

4.2) One of the side effects of the mismanagement of rural development projects has been that women can experience significant increases in their work loads, especially in Africa, since they end up helping their husbands produce cash crops without any reduction in their labor for family food production; where cash crops appropriate communal land formerly used for gathering fuel or leave only the poorest land for subsistence farming it can even result in more labor for subsistence. Women see an increase in their families as the only way to cope with this situation.

4.3) In those places where it is not considered necessary to force population reduction, access to birth control is extremely limited. Where contraceptives are available they are often of types banned in the First World owing to severe side effects or administered in such an insensitive way, that women could not accept them.

Unless they have incentives for having large families, women are generally receptive to birth control where this is not against their religion and when it is administered by a local woman in private and in such a way that no-one but the two of them would know about it (Rogers 1980: 109) and when they feel in control of their own fertility. In societies where husbands will not accept the idea of birth control privacy is especially important.

4.5) Safe abortion is rarely available in the South, largely as a result of male colonial policies, and as of early 1993 all women's clinics which receive any funds at all from the U.S. government are forbidden even to mention the word on pain of having all funding withdrawn.

4.6) Male chauvinism, whether individually expressed through macho acculturation or collectively through such religions as Catholicism and Islam, not only refuses to use birth control (condoms) but will not allow women to do so either unless they do so in secret.<sup>38</sup>

The greater the poverty level, the lower the educational level and the less control women have over their own lives in general, the harder it is for women to have any control over the size of their families.<sup>39</sup> Since men do not accept full responsibility for their

children, often simply abandoning them, and since they feel their masculinity is at stake in using contraceptives, they have no motivation to limit their families, except when the state provides this, as in the case of China.

Only full autonomy for women would significantly decrease the birth rate. Only full autonomy for women will allow them control over their own fertility. Women who are able to exercise such control tend to keep the population within the limits that can be supported by the resources available.

## 5. FOOD PRODUCTION AND AGRICULTURE

The provision of an adequate food supply for its population is important for any country. For obvious reasons, the poorer the country, the more important that it be self-sufficient in agriculture.<sup>40</sup> Recent history has shown the disaster that can ensue when production fails. In the Sahel region of Africa during the late 1960s to early 1970s hundreds of thousands of people died through famine, to a large extent because of the drought.<sup>41</sup>

In trying to discover the reasons for this disaster Samir Amin totally ignores the impact that the marginalization of women has had on food production, particularly in Africa.<sup>42</sup> He discusses the problems of peasants as a whole, but does not take gender differences into account. Women and men have different roles in agricultural production and a grasp of these differing roles is crucial to an understanding of the problems involved.

In order to examine these problems in detail I shall first give an account of the attempt by colonial powers and neo-colonialists to remove women from independent farming, and then discuss the implications of this for famine, low food production, and malnutrition.

### 5.1) The colonial roots of women's subordination in agriculture.

In pre-colonial times many communities in the South farmed their agricultural land communally. The land belonged to the community; each family inherited the right to farm a certain amount of it, but no member of that family could sell or give away these rights outside the community. The person in each family who actually received the rights differed according to community laws, but there were many instances of matrilinear inheritance.

In those communities where women inherited the land they also worked it. The men sometimes helped with this, and sometimes had nothing to do with it, depending on local traditions, but the farmer was the woman and the farm passed on through the female line<sup>43</sup> not through the male. The woman was not only economically independent but, as families were generally matrilineal, she had the power to throw out an unsatisfactory husband. This was contrary to the ideology of the colonial powers.

From the earliest Spanish colonies in the New World to twentieth-century Africa, the European governors, with the more than adequate support of the Church,<sup>44</sup> made attacks on the pagan cultures of their charges. These attacks were mainly against the women since they had to be forced to conform to the differing but always highly subordinated roles the colonialists needed them to play at each different stage of capitalist development.

From clothing to sexual relationships and marriage, child-birth and education the colonial powers stamped their imprint on the lives of the women in their power. The result this had on population growth has been discussed above.

Matrilineal succession was naturally anathema to the Europeans and they did their best to force a change to patrilineal succession, which took away the use of the land from the women and passed it to the men. By the end of colonialism there were few matrilineal communities left, mostly in Africa.<sup>45</sup>

Southern societies prior to European colonialism, although in many cases hierarchical, tended to be relatively equalized in living standards and status. This was changed by the white male colonial administrations. Thus, the exploitation of women was part of an overall exploitation which produced racial, religious, and gender inequalities. At independence many countries found their new administrators reproducing the prejudices of their former "masters," particularly where gender inequality was concerned.<sup>46</sup> Such inequalities have increased in post-colonial times largely through neo-colonialism in its different guises of the IMF and the World Bank, the United Nations, and other international development agencies.

The administrators of these organizations, mostly male, have a Eurocentric definition of the family. A woman's place is in the home. Her role is to be fertile, raise her family, do the housework and attend her man. His role is to earn money, a sufficient amount of which is to be handed over to the wife for housekeeping. The power in the family is always the man.



The household is identified with the nuclear family<sup>47</sup> and the husband is automatically head of the family if he lives even part of the year, however small, with it. Even if the wife farms the land by herself, even if she is economically more powerful than the man, she cannot be head of household while there is a man available.<sup>48</sup>

When development agency staff, in conformity with capitalist, neo-liberal economics, attempted to destroy the whole system of community-owned land in favor of individual ownership<sup>49</sup> they followed a policy of registering the land in the name of the head of the household which was tantamount to a policy of registering it in the name of the man. Where the land had previously been cultivated by the women the result has been that either they no longer farm it or else they have no power over it nor often over the produce from it, even where this is the result of their own labor.

Where the woman has been deprived of the use of family land for subsistence farming this can mean almost total destitution for her and her children, since, contrary to the philosophy of neo-liberal economists, men—and especially poor men—tend to keep cash income for themselves and studies have shown that men's incomes are rarely used to feed the family in the Third World but rather for investment or recreation. In some African communities where there was an attempt by development agencies to register the land in this way there was a strong revolt which ended up in the registration having to be abandoned since it was clear to the women that they could not survive without their land rights (Rogers 1980: 129-130).

Where women still farm the land, agricultural development has been hindered by development agencies' refusal to include them as autonomous subjects in agricultural projects. This can end in the total failure of the project. There have been cases where projects were set up to help the men to farm certain crops as cash crops. Since these crops were traditional subsistence crops, women's crops, the men refused to grow them. The project directors would not restructure the project to help the women improve their yield<sup>50</sup> so they allowed it to fail.

Prior to the seventies development agencies tried to create a cash-based economy for men from which women were almost entirely excluded. The current goal of development projects as far as women are concerned is to make women into petty producers for the export market, keeping their remuneration down by encouraging a conception of women as housewives who do not sell their labor on the free market.

One of the consequences of this ideology has been that women's economic independence and hence their status in the community is reduced. This creates a problematic of its own which is the general devaluation of women of which domestic violence is one symptom. Others are female infanticide, the abortion of female fetuses, deliberate neglect of baby girls to the point that they die, lack of interest in educating girls, refusal to see women as capable of handling technology, refusal to give women positions of responsibility at work, particularly when this would result in their supervising men, refusal by men to do women's work, which is seen as demeaning.

Second, since the same mentality prevails in agriculture as in the factories, when technology is introduced it is for men only. Giving women access to technology would mean acknowledging them as agricultural workers, something that development agencies refuse to do because it is not in conformity with their aim of keeping women's status low. Where men and women work the land together, each has their traditional tasks—men do the ploughing, for instance, and women the weeding. Where weeding becomes mechanized the task is taken over by the men while the women are kept to the hard labor, the repetitive tasks or are forced off the land altogether. Where the woman is working as a wage laborer or where she gets a percentage of the land's produce according to her input into it this can mean a drastic reduction in her income or even destitution.

5.2) The relation of women's subordination to famine, low food production and malnutrition.

5.2.1) Land which was formerly common land is now used for cash crops so that wild produce and fuel can no longer be gathered on it.<sup>51</sup> The consequences of this are that:

- the lack of these foods contributes to malnutrition;
- extra time must be involved in fuel gathering which takes away time and energy from food cultivation and preparation;
- the resultant acceleration of deforestation is a root cause of drought.

5.2.2) Family malnutrition is considerably increased in those cases where women have been forced out of subsistence farming and into the cash economy since their cash earnings are insufficient to replace the quantities and qualities of food that they could grow.

5.2.3) Women are given no high-quality inputs, such as seed, fertilizer, and technology, nor training and help in intensive farming methods which could help increase their yields. The consequence of

this is falling food production as the land becomes exhausted. The best land is used for export crops leaving the least fertile for subsistence.

The severe environmental degradation of huge tracts of land in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>52</sup> is in part due to the lack of high-quality fertilizers in subsistence farming and has had dire consequences for the region, being one of the root causes of famine. Most of the refugees from these areas as a result of this famine are women and children since there are few men left on the land.

5.2.4) Since women farmers receive no technical help and the degrading of the farmland makes it ever less productive, food production becomes increasingly labor-intensive. The result is a high birth rate as women seek to increase the labor available to them in the only way within their control. The consequence of this is a growing need for food, and even more exhaustion of the land, together with population pressure on food supplies.

5.2.5) Women are discouraged, if not barred, from cash crop growing, in their own right and so have neither incentives nor aid to increase productivity on the land they farm for subsistence. This further contributes to low food production.

5.2.6) In many African countries, since subsistence food production is considered women's work, and since women's work is unimportant, local governments place a low emphasis on it, thus reinforcing the development agencies' neglect of subsistence farming and resulting once more in land degradation due to lack of high-quality inputs, low production and so on. This is related to the concern of international capital to keep the amount of land for subsistence farming low and encourage use of land for export crops.

5.2.8) Official labor statistics tend to concentrate on men's work and omit much of women's work with the result that little emphasis has been given to the relation of the treatment of women to falling food production. The fact that most subsistence food production in the Third World has traditionally been done by women, very often without any significant help from men,<sup>53</sup> and that, in addition, a very large proportion of most cash-crop farming in the Third World, especially in Africa and Asia, has high input from women is ignored in most statistics. Since unpaid labor is rarely considered in statistics and women's agricultural labor is rarely paid for in cash, if it is considered at all it is just as part of general family labor. This is the only point on rural Third-World women that Mr. Amin does mention:

"Obviously, the prices paid for peasants' labor decrease as they correspond to an increase in the quantity of 'unpaid' labor, that is the non-commodity labor by the peasant man, *and much more often of the peasant woman.*

For want of the means, it is rare to find a precise measurement of the quantity and character of the total labor supplied by the entire peasant family." (Amin 1990: 16-17) (My emphasis).

The result of this is that, since the development agencies and especially the World Bank continue to fund projects that are seen as producing high cash returns, women's projects are grossly underfunded.<sup>54</sup>

The alleviation of famine and chronic and severe undernourishment from the poorest parts of the Third World, particularly South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, can only take place when women's role as an integral and vital part of the food-production chain has been understood and women are not excluded from autonomous farming. Emphasis must be on food production to support the local population and not on cash crops for export.<sup>55</sup>

### CONCLUSION

I have shown above that gender oppression is a major cause of starvation, death, incapacitation, and destitution. It cannot, therefore, be treated as a matter of secondary importance.

There is currently a feeling in the West that feminists have been making a great deal of fuss over nothing and that they need to be put back in their places. Women, particularly in the United States, have been made to feel that feminism is not useful and should be abandoned. The above analysis has shown, on the contrary, that feminism<sup>56</sup> is absolutely vital to improving the quality of life, for all.

I am forced, however, to agree with Mr. Amin's comment that he deems it "necessary to express reservations on the real *extent* of ['the remarkable breakthroughs in social consciousness exemplified by the women's movement']. They can be *absorbed* by a system that remains basically capitalist and imperialist in its relations with the periphery, or, on the contrary, become nodes of positive change." (Amin 1992:76). (original emphasis). If feminists keep the discourse on a cultural rather than political level then the women's movement could be absorbed. It is vital to realize that the basis for gender oppression is political and to ensure that the struggle continues on this level.

Capitalism allows most males' desire for dominance full reign in only one sphere, the private, the family. Although socialists have claimed that the establishment of socialism in a society would automatically create equality for women, male domination within the family has persisted in all existing socialist societies and is intimately bound up with totalitarianism. It is now realized by many that the liberation of women is a precondition for truly democratic socialism.

Such liberation would carry within it the seeds of the destruction of capitalism which needs to exploit women in order to survive. That capitalists well understand this is shown by the strong efforts of the new right under Reagan to return women to subordination and to restrict their control over their fertility, and the encouragement of the portrayal in the media of violence towards women and of women as (sex) objects.

Leftist analysis which takes patriarchy into account as one of the roots of the capitalist system will be able to elucidate aspects of society that cannot be logically accounted for by other means. It is to be hoped that the incorporation of the theory of the exploitation of women into analyses of the exploitation of the working classes and the Third World will provide new and compelling insights for future struggles.

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## NOTES

1. Samir Amin, *Maldevelopment* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1990).

This article follows the same usage of First, Second, and Third Worlds, and North, South, East, and West as *Maldevelopment*. Although Amin occasionally differentiates between the more and less developed Third-World countries—using the term Fourth World, for instance, I do not think this difference is significant.

Mr. Amin defines a First-World country as “a bourgeois national state capable of controlling internal accumulation and subjecting [its] external relations to this accumulation” (173), while Third-World countries are subjected to “the heavy constraints of ‘adjustment’ to the demands of the expansion of central monopoly capital” and do not have significant levels of internal capital accumulation (173). The level of development in an individual Third-World country is irrelevant.

2. I should like to thank Paolo Possiedi for reading the drafts of this article and for his comments on them.

3. Marx, in the *Ethnological Notebooks*, “showed that the elements of oppression in general, and of women in particular, arose from *within* primitive communism, and . . . began with the establishment of ranks.” (original stress) (Dunayevskaya, 1991: 180-181) Marx also pointed out that in primitive societies patriarchy and thus society’s control over women as opposed to men was not as strong as under advanced capitalism, although they still existed. (Dunayevskaya, 1991: 182).

4. Central to patriarchy is the subordination of women to force them to assume their assigned role in the reproduction of labour power, both biologically and in regard to household labor. Many writers have treated the subject, see Mies (1986), Ng and Mohamed (1988).

The patriarchal view of man as intellectual human, and woman as “other”, as part of nature, as physical body, was extended under capitalist Eurocentric ideology to all “other” ethnic groups. So we see non-white men take on female characteristics—earthy, non-intellectual, non-human, highly-sexed (Amin 1989: 95), conquerable—and serve, as women do, as providers of the comforts of life for capitalists. Non-white women are doubly “other”, with all the added discrimination this implies. Colonialism and racism must be examined against this background.

5. Most (male) Marxists do not consider patriarchy to be a fundamental aspect of repression in society; this is subsumed under the class issue.

A study of Marx’s writings, including his newspaper articles and letters, and especially the *Ethnological Notebooks*, which include an examination of the institution of patriarchy in pre-capitalist societies, would reveal the importance Marx gave to the question of subjugation on the grounds of sex (and

race). Generally when Marx's ideas on women are discussed it is in the context of Engels' *Origin of the Family* which quotes only a few paragraphs from the *Ethnological Notebooks*, and should not in general be taken as representing Marx's views but only Engels'. (Dunayevskaya 1991: xxvi, 105).

However, although Marx is much more sensitive to the problematic of the oppression of women than many male theorists including most Marxists, he is nevertheless writing within a definitely male intellectual tradition and his analysis of reproduction is distorted by his lack of consideration of the role of women both in mothering and domestic labor. His view of nature as something that should be dominated by man has serious implications both for women—who appear in European thought as part of nature as opposed to men who are intellectual beings—and ecology. There is a wealth of feminist Marxist critiques—including Mies (1986), Eisenstein (1979), Hartsock (1983), O'Brien (1981), Benhabib and Cornell (1987)—which would be helpful in a reappraisal of the concept of oppressions other than of class.

The current attempts in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union both at ethnic cleansing and at the removal from women of the very few benefits they had under the socialist regimes demonstrate only too clearly the utter failure of previously existing socialism—through its refusal to acknowledge the importance of any social distinctions other than that of class—to destroy either patriarchy or racism within its own society.

6. See note 3.

7. Women in sub-Saharan Africa have traditionally been the food providers. According to Lele (1991: 50) women contribute up to three quarters of the labor required to produce the food consumed in Africa, 90% of the labor for processing food crops and providing household water and fuelwood, 80% of the work in food storage and transport from farm to village, 90% of the work in hoeing and weeding, and 60% of the work in harvesting and marketing. According to Joeke (1987:63) 87% of female labor force in low-income African countries is in agriculture, 74% in China, 66% in other low-income Asian countries (excluding South Asia), 55% in middle income Asian countries and 14% in Latin America (although the figures for Latin America may be far too low (Flora and Santos, 1986), and the Economic Commission for Latin America gave the figure of 40% in 1978). According to Charlton (1984:64) over 90% of female workers in India are rural and 80% of these are in agriculture. Nearly 70% of rural women in the Philippines work in agriculture. In Sub-Saharan Africa women tend to farm for subsistence by themselves while in Asia they tend to work together with the men on family land.

8. In 1984 women in the U.S. represented 63.5% of all poor adults. According to the U.S. census of that year one in three households with female heads as opposed to one in eleven households with male heads were designated as poor. Almost half of all people living in poverty were in a household with a female householder, up from one third in 1965. 3.1 million children were

living in poverty with a female householder. The principal cause of this poverty in the U.S. is divorce (Gelpi, Hartssock, Novak, and Strober 1986:2-4).

9. As of 1986 40% of rural families in Kenya, nearly 50% in Ghana and in parts of Zambia around 33% lived in female-headed households while only 10-15% of rural Asian families were female headed. (Joekes 1987:70).

10. Historically gender roles have changed within Europe itself. When advanced capitalism started to develop in Western Europe at the time of the industrial revolution gender roles changed and the ideological construct of the family was elaborated in such a way as to facilitate the reproduction of wage labor (Hall, 1979).

The Socialist states have not been able to eradicate patriarchy either. Much of the tremendous advance in women's rights during the early days of the Soviet Union was wiped out during Stalin's regime when the image of woman as Mother was an important part of state ideology in order to increase the number of workers available for the State (as it also was in contemporaneous Nazi Germany—for an in-depth analysis of the position of women in Nazi Germany see Bridenthal, Grossman and Kaplan (eds.) *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985).

Although post-Stalinist governments allowed women more rights—abortion was legalized once more, for instance—there was no attempt to destroy patriarchy nor to re-educate the population with regard to traditional gender roles. On the contrary, the feminist social movements which were started up in the seventies were severely repressed and the ideology that the woman should bear the responsibility for the well-being of the whole family, including her husband, was even strengthened during the last years of the regime. (Holland 1985). In post-communist Eastern Europe those few rights women had gained—the right to economic independence and abortion upon demand, for instance—are rapidly being leached away as women's unemployment figures become far higher than men's and abortion rights have been lost in both Poland and East Germany as of May 1993.

Various attempts to reduce patriarchy in China have also failed and it continues to be one of the few countries in the world where women are in a minority of the population—due to female infanticide, murder, and forcing women into suicide. According to the Chinese Ministry of Justice as many as 80,000 women die annually from murder or suicide (Staudt, 1990: 13). Cuba and Nicaragua are two of the Socialist states to have made the most progress towards equality of women and even in these countries there is a very long way to go.

11. In the West white women generally earn around 60-65% of white men's wages. The average wages for non-whites are generally lower, with somewhat more equality between the sexes (LBO 1991: 8).

This was Soviet policy also—in the 1980s women were earning only 65-75%

of men's wages and the government was doing all it could to encourage white women to marry and to have as many children as possible (Peers 1991: 122).

12. This independence was vigorously opposed by colonial powers and the traditional system of matrilineal land inheritance in much of Africa was systematically undermined by the colonial and neo-colonial powers.

In Zambia during the colonial period the government reduced land available to women for subsistence farming and tried to remove their labor power too. The land was put to use for the cultivation of cash crops by the men, who do not give the money back to the family. Thus the women became increasingly poor. (Schrijvers 1988).

In South India the State of Kerala had never imposed patriarchy as strongly as the Northern Brahmin culture. There were matrilineal communities where women were not at all dependent on their husbands economically. The British were able to achieve what the Brahmins had not been able to and destroy the matrilineal family structure, forcing women into dependence on their husbands (Liddle and Joshi 1986: 28, 29).

A quite extraordinarily explicit account of the need to establish patriarchy in Burma is given by a Mr. Fielding Hall in his book *A People at School* (published in an anonymous text, *Militarism versus Feminism*, in 1915 by George Allen and Unwin Ltd. (Mies 1986: 93-94, 111 n.5). Mr. Hall was Political Officer between 1887 and 1891 in Burma in the British colonial administration. His aim is to civilize the men by militarization ("It would open their eyes to new views of life." (264)) and the women by destroying their means of livelihood and making them dependent on their husbands ("With her power of independence will disappear her free will and her influence. When she is dependent on her husband she can no longer dictate to him. When he feeds her, she is no longer able to make her voice as loud as his is. It is inevitable that she should retire . . . It has never been good for women to be too independent, it has robbed them of many virtues." (266)).

It may be noted that the Burmese military took over the country in 1962 and has been ruling it by violence ever since, while women are still more independent than in most countries.

13. The imposition of European-style patriarchy on the Third World was not just incidental to the imposition of imperialism but an intrinsic part of it. Christian ministers and missionaries acted as civilizing agents for their governments by opposing any violation of what the Europeans considered decent morality. Such violations included indecent exposure, polygamy, extra-marital sex, birth control, and the autonomy of women.

14. See note 32.

15. See section on education below.

16. See section on health below. The women who are employed by the transnationals very often come from rural areas with no previous tradition

of waged labor for women. The transnationals typically employ women aged between 14 and 25 who migrate to the towns at an early age and in large numbers and become urbanized. When they are no longer able to work in the factories they cannot return to their villages as they do not fit in with the culture any more and so emigration to the United States seems to be the only solution. (Sassen 1988: 19). These women form around 50% of the emigration from the periphery to the United States mentioned by Mr. Amin (87).

17. In Haiti, Jamaica, Venezuela, and Taiwan during the 1974-75 recession women's employment dropped around 14%, while men's only dropped 8% (Joekes 1987:96).

18. This does not only apply to the Third World. In England, for instance, both men's and women's full-time employment fell in the 80's, but part-time employment, very largely female, rose considerably.

19. An example of this is the Gambian wet-rice cultivation development project of the 1970's, which started off with the assumption that men controlled the lands and rice-growing in general although it was women who were traditionally the rice growers in the area. A lot of time and energy were wasted on male resistance to growing women's crops. But in the end the land which had formerly been used by women was registered in the name of the men who also got the inputs to farm it intensively.

The women had still to find land to farm for food, since they remained the providers of household food, and in addition to work on their husbands' land to help them to grow rice for cash crops. Since they received no part of the cash return for this many refused unless they were paid a cash wage which made it very difficult for the men to employ them. The net result was greater dependence for the women and a much lower yield from the project than had been anticipated. (Charlton 1984:88) (Whitehead 1991:77).

20. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss educational ideas and the problems for the developing world of accepting Eurocentric educational ideologies, or to discuss the problems for girls of accepting patriarchal educational ideologies and whether women are made more autonomous merely through higher educational levels. I want here simply to address the problem of education as a precondition for a decent job, leading to some sort of economic independence.

21. In the mid eighties 85% of men in Latin America were literate but only 81% of women. The figures for Africa were 57% men, 36% women, for most of Asia 65% men, 44% women, for the Indian sub-continent 56% men and 31% of women. As of 1986 fewer than half of all girls in developing countries were in school. (Joekes 1987: 16).

For a more detailed break-down of figures for a few third-world countries see Bowman and Anderson (1982:14).

22. "To learn to read and write is usual for our boys. But the majority of our female savages have none of it and it is reported even that certain ones, who have learned to read, neglect the care of their house." From the report of the *Missions Belges de la Compagnie de Jésus*, September 1907, p. 328, (Yates (1982: 134, n. 14).

23. In communist China many attempts at equalizing the position of men and women have been made. Certainly the position of women has greatly improved. But their status is still seen as lower than that of men and this is related to the still prevalent custom of the woman joining her husband's family at marriage which can also entail moving to another village or town. Therefore daughters do not provide economic and social security as sons do. Training village leaders of party cadres also suffers from the same type of reasoning—why should we train leaders when they may marry and benefit another village? (Johnson 1980). This also accounts for the high female infanticide rate, especially since the imposition of the one-child-per-family rule.

24. However, evening primary schools have been provided in a number of countries so that girls can attend school while not neglecting their household duties.

25. This attitude is illustrated by the following quotation from the U.S. manager of a transnational "maquiladora" plant in Mexico: "Five years ago, the work force was 90 percent women. But as more technology—electronics, pneumatics—is being brought in, that naturally generates more jobs for the male population" (*American Labor* nd: 3).

A similar attitude also exists in the Soviet Union. (Allott 1985).

Women's factory work in the South is always in labor intensive industries. For instance, food production industries in Hong Kong, the Philippines and South Korea are capital intensive and employ few women. In India where they tend to be labor intensive the work force is predominantly female. When technological change leads to enormous productivity increases so that higher wages can be paid men are hired. Men are given long-term apprenticeships, which are generally denied to women, and then hired on the basis of being more highly skilled, even when the jobs do not warrant this. (Joeke 1987:83-85).

26. Life expectancy of children whose mothers had had at least some secondary education was between 10 and 17 years longer than of children whose mothers had had no schooling, depending on the women's age group (LeVine 1982:289).

27. For East Africa it has been estimated that water carrying absorbs 12% of day-time calorie usage and up to 27% in dry or steep areas. A study in Tanzania showed an average of 4 hours water carrying time a day by women for the average household plus 1 hour of child time. In rural Delhi women spend almost 1 hour a day fetching water (Rogers 1980: 153).

28. In some African countries these burdens are made even heavier by the complications of female circumcision with the resultant increase in pain and gynecological and obstetric complications. It is estimated that eight million African women are circumcised. (Arungu-Olende 1993).

29. Men eat first, male children second and women last, especially where there are shortages. ("She may eat only if there is food left and then only after the man"—(Sankara 1990: 18)). Significantly more women both in the South and in poor Northern families are undernourished than men according to the findings of the United States Presidential Commission on World Hunger (1980). Children also suffer from the low wages of women since it is their mothers who pay for their food. (Even where fathers live with the family they contribute relatively little towards food in poorer households.)

30. "Violent acts against women, the world over, attack their dignity as human beings and leave them vulnerable and fearful. Conditioned to undervalue their skills and abilities and paralyzed by real fears of violence and retribution, women are marginalized in society and forced out of the decision making processes which shape and determine the development of their communities. Violence against women is not limited to any one country. The acts range from battering, incest, assault and rape worldwide to female circumcision in Africa, dowry deaths in India, and militarization in the Philippines. Along this continuum one must also include the limited employment opportunities for women, the lack of access to education, women's social isolation and the sexual harassment that women experience daily. The manifestations of violence against women simply alter their forms according to the social, economic, and historical realities in which they occur." (*Match News*, 1990 quoted in Carrillo (1991:21).

31. Given that men are traditionally held to have power over their womenfolk, which can include beating and even killing them with impunity (In Iraq a law was passed in 1989 legalizing the killing of wives whom their husbands suspected of adultery. Mere suspicion is enough—no proof is necessary (Gulcur 1993)), there is often no one to help or counsel a battered wife. Giving asylum in these cases has been found to be difficult and complicated even in large Western cities, where a wife can be hidden. In smaller communities it is impossible.

32. In the Malaysian town of Bukit Merah the Asian Rare Earth Company has been dumping tons of radioactive thorium in the open, contaminating the water supply and raising the level of radioactivity in the atmosphere, since 1982. Lead levels in local children have been shown to be very high as are the peri- and neo-natal mortality rates, and numbers of miscarriages (Ling 1991).

33. For instance, paraquat—a highly toxic herbicide, banned in the North—is sprayed on Malaysian plantations, where 80% of the sprayers are women,

some pregnant, working 8 hours a day with the chemical without protective clothing (Ling 1991).

34. The world total of known cases of AIDS as of June 1993 was 20% higher than a year previously. WHO estimates that 13 million people have been infected so far. Over eight million people in sub-Saharan Africa have been infected but the biggest rise has been in Latin America and South-East Asia. (Hunt 1993). Sex-tourism is also a factor in the spread of AIDS.

35. A Bombay hospital reports 99% of female fetuses identified by amniocentesis were aborted (Bunch 1991:6).

36. Mr. Amin makes the point in several of his books that European emigration has made modern prosperity possible since it prevented the type of over-population found in many third-world countries today (which he does not seem to realize was largely produced through colonialism). He calculates that today's European population would otherwise equal that of Europe plus that of the other countries colonized by Europeans, coming up with an enormous figure which certainly could not be supported adequately in Europe alone (Amin 1990:72, 163).

But to add these population figures together makes no sense at all. Had there been no European emigration during the nineteenth century, the total population would still not now be anything like as large as this. Governments would have put pressure on their citizens to keep the birth rate down. Instead the newly colonized countries encouraged high birth rates and little was done in Europe to discourage them. Birth control was not welcomed by governments until well into this century.

37. Missionaries campaigned vigorously against measures for controlling fertility. Mary Kingsley in her book *Travels in West Africa, Congo français, Corisco and Cameroon*, London: Frank Cass & Co 1965, pp. 212-4 described a missionary in West Africa at the end of the nineteenth century promoting bottle feeding as a means of encouraging sexual relations between married couples (Rogers 1980: 111).

38. In Mexico, for instance, working class and peasant men do not even like their wives to be examined by a gynecologist. Where the women are not in a position to visit a doctor in secret they often cannot go at all. This tends to be the case in rural areas. A woman from the Mexican countryside told me that her mother had died of breast cancer after her father had refused to allow her to visit a doctor when she discovered a lump in her breast.

39. There are various reasons for this. One is the natural result that the higher the education the more time it takes and therefore the later the woman marries, thus cutting out some of her most fertile years. Another is the effect that increased education has on the woman's self-esteem and capacity to stand up to her husband, her chances of marrying an educated man willing



to consider limiting the family, and her understanding of and exposure to birth control (LeVine 1982). But this is a complex subject and education does not always result in lowered fertility (Cochrane 1982).

40. A few decades ago it was thought that sufficient food stocks internationally would provide enough food for all. More recently it has been realized that even national self-sufficiency is not enough and there must be regional self-sufficiency in rural areas to prevent dependency, rural-urban migration, and local famines.

41. Drought is known to be a result very often of ecological destruction. It is not due only to lack of precipitation but also to soil erosion, deforestation, damming or diversion of rivers, and destructive agricultural practices. Drought has become commonplace in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1984 there were severe food shortages in Ethiopia, Sudan, the Sahel, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, and Zambia according to the FAO. "Critical among [the reasons for the continuing crisis in the Sahel] is the lack of *integrated* policies toward farming, timber use, and water management. The crises of food, water, and rural energy are linked together through environmental and demographic processes, themselves the result of short-sighted policies and existing power structures." (Sen and Grown (1986: 55)—the whole of this note is based on Sen and Grown (1986:55-56).

42. See note 7 for numbers of women involved in Southern agriculture.

43. The subject of inheritance in matrilinear societies is an extremely complex one which I am simplifying here for the sake of brevity. For more details see Robertson and Berger (1986:5) and Vellenga (1986).

44. In fact without the Christian church it is difficult to see how they could have done this without even more brute force than they already were exercising. The same could be said of Europe, of course. It is clearly no accident that organized religion and the state developed around the same time. It is also no accident that organized religions have far more rules for suppressing women than men. Organized religion is one of the major weapons of patriarchy.

45. See note 16.

46. The more direct personal contact these administrators had had with the colonial powers the more they echoed their prejudices. Thus the educated male elite was often much more hostile toward women than those men who had remained within the more traditional society. (Rogers 1980: 39). Contact with male development agency staff seems to be producing the same effect. (Rogers 1980: 176).

47. Despite the fact that the extended family is still a common household unit in the South today.

48. This definition holds true for the North also. No matter that the wife works and the husband does not, or that the wife has a much higher income than the husband, the husband is always head of household. A female-headed household is by definition one without a man.

In contrast, Nadia Youssef and Carol Hetler propose using a combination of three statuses which could be used to determine a head of household who may be of either sex: the person must reside in the unit, must be the primary provider, and be manager of household resources such as land, labor and goods. (Clark 1986).

49. The destruction of communal land and life styles has been a clear goal of colonialism from its beginnings in the sixteenth century—at a time when capitalism was already beginning to formulate some of its basic principles. Satisfaction with communal property and putting the good of the community before personal gain is naturally directly opposed to these principles.

During the past five centuries European capitalism has introduced the ideology of individual greed to the whole world, when necessary forcing it on alien cultures, with the result that this is now held, in the popular conception, to be yet another law of nature. In fact one might say that, as far as capitalist disinformation goes, the three laws most important to disseminate are the free market, biological sexual determinism, and personal greed. A belief in these three keeps the populace on the right track and commodity consumption chugging along.

50. See note 23.

51. This is a special problem in Africa where a large number of subsidiary foods were gathered from uncultivated common lands.

52. One of Samir Amin's complaints is that sub-Saharan agriculture is mostly extensively rather than intensively farmed. This is attributed to imperialism in general without any attempt to understand how it is the negative attitudes of local governments, the World Bank, the IMF, and other development agencies towards women's role in African subsistence farming that have prevented the development of intensive techniques.

53. In many parts of rural sub-Saharan Africa men have been forced to migrate to look for work elsewhere, leaving the women in sole charge of the farm and the family. Very often, where the man cannot find enough work to support himself he receives assistance from his wife. This increases rural impoverishment still more. Mr. Amin discusses this rural exodus at various points in *Maldevelopment* (8, 14, 17, etc.) without mentioning that it is largely of men and that the mass exodus of women and children has in many cases been to refugee camps at times of famine.

54. It has been estimated that only 0.05% of total agriculture allocations of all United Nations development-related agencies in 1982 went to programs for rural women and that the increase in spending on women in agriculture between 1974 and 1982 was less than half the increase in all other agricultural subsectors. (Sen and Grown 1987: 44).

55. But see Bennholdt-Thomsen (1988) for a caution against trusting international development agency funding for such purposes.

56. By feminism I mean a movement, or movements, dedicated to ending gender oppression and to building up "a non-hierarchical, non-centralized society where no elite lives on exploitation and domination over others" (Mies 1986: 37).