

for health, education, local production, social affairs and provisions. The administration and organisation is strong and effective. There are fully functioning schools, health care clinics, and nutrition centres. Aid is given directly to the Saharawi people, through their own administration. This is the only way the Saharawis can control the aid they receive for the running of the camps. Before 1975 over 90 percent of Saharawi women were illiterate, but measures were taken to make education accessible to all. Women now manage the training centres, and the creches, hospitals and clinics, do the training, teach and nurse, organise, distribute food and other supplies, and bring up the children. Women's rights have been protected by progressive reforms. Arranged marriages can no longer take place without agreement, dowries have disappeared, and women work and argue as equals.

The Saharawi have created an organised, caring society with the full dynamic of women positively involved, both in the struggle for liberation and for their own respect and status, alongside the necessity to survive as nationals of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.

While this publication is a rigorously researched collection of essays which will serve students of the Saharawi conflict well, there is a tendency to use oppressive academic language which may exclude a wider reading public. In the study of refugees, the refugees themselves know what is best for them, and they deserve to be asked and listened to. All who work in the field of refugee relief, aid and development would be wise to take a look at the Saharawi way of doing things.

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**Child Abuse and Its Consequences. Observational Approaches,** Rachel Calam and Christiana Franchi, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987 (x+226 pp, US\$13.95 pbk, ISBN 0 521 316114 6 pbk).

The rather sweeping title of this book is misleading, implying a major theoretical statement or overview of research in the area. In fact the book reads more like a dissertation, being a report of research undertaken by the authors in an English day centre for at risk children. The title 'Family Centre' for the day centre is also misleading, since siblings and fathers or other family members did not attend. Basically it was a day nursery run by highly qualified professional staff with compulsory attendance by mothers at certain times.

The main body of the book details the behavioral observation of eleven children at the centre, in interaction with staff, peers and their own mothers. The account makes valuable reading for anyone considering undertaking research into child abuse, with its emphasis on the importance of direct observation of the child and child-parent communication process, the summary of constraints, and the discussion of the different uses of statistical versus the case study approaches. The lack of a control group is explained, but is nevertheless a weakness. The authors do not discuss the possibility that criterion behaviours might be equally common in controls and there is no way of assessing from the study how much nonabused children might also exhibit watchfulness, hostility, etc.

Another weakness in the book lies in a theoretical discrepancy which might be particularly troublesome in a culture such as ours where some physical chastisement is normative. The authors seem to assume implicitly that any corporal punishment is undesirable, in spite of the fact that they themselves point out that degree of injury has no

correlation with psychological damage in abused children, and that many children may suffer from emotional rather than physical abuse. I am in no way justifying harsh physical treatment of a child, but it could be argued that a smack or hiding may be a psychologically 'cleaner' means of control than emotional coercion, especially in young children who might still have a limited understanding of environmental dangers. This is a controversial issue, possibly because the boundaries are not quite as clear as many first world theorists indicate.

How applicable is the book generally to Zimbabwe? The research design and details, as suggested above, could be very usefully applied here. The day centre concept, on the other hand, might need considerable modification. The Family Centre described makes intensive use of professional labour, we simply could not afford such facilities in Zimbabwe. Apart from cost, the authors point out a major disadvantage, even in the English context, that the mothers learn little and are disempowered, handing over the management of their children to the professionals. A much more useful approach would be to work with families to increase and improve their nurturing and disciplining competence. Day centres to give parents a break from parenting, or the use of the extended family for the same purpose, would of course be valuable.

All in all this book is rather dry reading, but useful for those concerned professionally with the problem of child abuse, particularly researchers.

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