

# **INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR A HALT TO RESEARCH ON ANTI FERTILITY 'VACCINES'**

**(immunological contraceptives)**

## **Background information about the Campaign**

In June 1993 an International action workshop to discuss concerns about the development of contraceptive 'Vaccines', took place in Bielefeld, Germany. The workshop was jointly organised by BUKO Pharma Kampagne Germany, the Women's Health Action Foundation in the Netherlands and the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights based in the Netherlands. There were nineteen participants in the workshop, mainly from women's health and reproductive rights groups from the following countries: Argentina, Chile, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Finland, Germany, India, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Women from Brazil and Peru who had been invited could not attend.

The workshop was preceded by an International Conference: Vaccination against pregnancy, Researchers' dream - Women's nightmare? organised by BUKO Pharma Kampagne.

Many serious concerns about the development of this completely new class of contraceptives were discussed in the conference and in the workshop. Both ended with the same conclusion, namely that the research on contraceptive 'vaccines' should be stopped. To this aim the workshop participants wrote an Open Letter. Call for a Halt to Research on Anti Fertility 'Vaccines' directed to the main Research Institutes and Funding Bodies involved in the research on these methods.

November 8 1993 was agreed as date to actually send off the letter.

Please find attached a copy of the Call in which you can read what are the main concerns that have been raised in the workshop.



**WOMEN'S GLOBAL  
NETWORK FOR  
REPRODUCTIVE  
RIGHTS**

NZ Voorburgwal 32  
1012 RZ AMSTERDAM  
THE NETHERLANDS  
Tel. (31-20) 620 96 72  
Fax (31-20) 622 24 50

## **Call for a Halt to the Research widely discussed and supported**

Participants of the workshop committed themselves to discuss the Open Letter in their own groups and organisations but also to further disseminate it and to raise the issue in important regional and international conferences, which happened for example in the International Women and Health Meeting in September '93 in Uganda and in the Latin American Feminist Encuentro in the beginning of November '93 in El Salvador.

## **Launch of publication: 'Vaccination against pregnancy: Miracle or Menace?'**

This publication, written by Judith Richter and published by BUKO Pharma Kampagne and Health Action International/Europe was launched on September 14 '93 during the International Women and Health Meeting in Uganda. This very well documented study was handed out to all participants in the meeting and served as a solid basis for discussions.

By November 8 1993, 232 groups and organisations from eighteen countries had signed the Call for a Halt to Research on Anti Fertility 'Vaccines'. The list of signatories is put at the end of this report, as well as the list of Research Institutes and Funding Bodies to which the Call has been sent.

## **Activities by groups and organisations around and on November 8 1993:**

- \* Several groups took the initiative to translate the Call to stop the research. Presently it is available in six languages (see further on).

- \* Groups and organisations in eighteen countries discussed and disseminated the Call and collected signatures
- \* **SOS Corpo** in Recife Brazil organised a pressconference on November 8.
- \* **The Colectivo Mujer y Salud** (Women and Health Collective) in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic organised a women's meeting on November 8 and a press conference in the week after. The Colectivo also raised the issue and disseminated the Call in the Latin American Feminist Encuentro in El Salvador. They are working on an information brochure on the contraceptive 'vaccines'.
- \* **BUKO Pharma Kampagne** in Bielefeld, Germany issued a press-release on November 8. They sent letters to three German researchers who may be involved in contraceptive 'vaccines' research and asked them for more information.
- \* **The Forum for Women's Health** (before called the Forum against sex determination and sex pre-selection) in Bombay, India held a meeting in September to address the state controlled population control programmes (in view of the UN ICPD conference, see further on) which are becoming more and more coercive and in this context also discussed the development of the contraceptive 'Vaccines', including the Indian trials.  
On October 30 they held a press conference and on November 8 a public meeting to call for a stop on the research.
- \* **Saheli** in New Delhi, India organised a protest meeting on November 8 on one of the main street corners of New Delhi near the Headquarters of the World Health Organisation.
- \* On the initiative of several women's groups in Madras, India the Call was disseminated and discussed in a regional meeting of women's groups in Tamil Nadu in the beginning of October.
- \* **The Women's Health Action Foundation** (WHAF) in Amsterdam, the Netherlands organised a discussion evening for Dutch groups and organisations in October. On the request of the editor, Nicolien Wieringa wrote an editorial about the anti fertility 'vaccines' for the 'International Journal of Risk and Safety in Medicine' (this can be requested at the WGNRR office). **WHAF and the Coordination of the Women's Global**

**Network for Reproductive Rights** (WGNRR) jointly organised a pressconference in Amsterdam on November 8. On the same day WHAF and WGNRR sent letters to the Dutch Ministries of Health, Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation to request a stop of the funding of the research and a redirection of the funding for contraceptive research.

- \* **The Women's Health Group of the South African Health and Social Services Organisation** (SAHSSO) in Western Cape organised and planned several activities. From their letter of November 16:
  - letters to researchers based at different institutions have been sent requesting relevant research information;
  - a public information meeting is being planned;
  - a press statement will be released after the ground work has been done;
  - an article and the petition to halt research on anti-fertility 'vaccines' has appeared in the Witwatersrand Women's Health Project (WWHP) Newsletter -the collection of signatures for the petition is being co-ordinated by the WWHP;
  - a package on the anti fertility 'vaccines' Campaign has been distributed to all SAHSSO regions in South Africa;
  - a report on the conference (June '93 in Bielefeld, Germany ed.) will be published in our next national Newsletter.
- \* The Bern Declaration Group in Bern, Switzerland sent out a press release which was taken up by almost all newspapers. Anna Sax from the Bern Declaration and Agathe Bieri from the Women's group 'Antigena' against genetechnology and population policy in Zurich, wrote articles which were published in the Swiss weekly Women's Newspaper of October 8 1993 (articles can be requested at the WGNRR Coordination office).

### **Activities by the WGNRR Coordination office as agreed in the workshop in Bielefeld:**

- \* A letter with background information and the Call have been sent to hundreds of groups and organisations;
- \* Lists have been put together of all signatories to the Call that were received until November 8;

- \* Faxes have been sent with the lists of signatories to those groups and organisations of which it was known that they were organising press conferences or meetings on or around November 8;
- \* A short cover letter and the Call, including the list of signatories have been sent on November 8 to the main Research Institutes and Funding Bodies involved (see for the list at the end of this report);.
- \* A start has been made with the set up of documentation files for all the information regarding the anti fertility 'vaccines';
- \* This report has been made for the WGNRR Newsletter 43 as a Campaign update. The report will also be sent to the participants of the workshop in Bielefeld as well as to the participants of the workshop and/or action meeting which were held during the International Women and Health Meeting in September in Uganda.
- \* Updating those involved in the Campaign on activities taking place in various countries through the WGNRR Newsletter and other mailings.
- \* Communicating by mail and possibly through meetings with involved groups about ideas for further development of the Campaign.
- \* The United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (UN ICPD) and parallel NGO Forum in September 1994 in Cairo will be another opportunity to draw attention to the development of the contraceptive 'vaccines' as a very clear example of yet another kind of long acting contraceptive method -even more problematic than existing methods- which is being developed in the context of population control.

### **If you like to JOIN THE CAMPAIGN, then please:**

### **THE CAMPAIGN WILL CONTINUE**

The sending of the Open Letter was the first step in a growing International Campaign to:

1. stop the research on anti fertility 'vaccines' and
2. to call for a radical reorientation of contraceptive research, not guided by population control ideology but aimed at enabling people -particularly women- to exert greater control over their fertility without sacrificing their integrity, health and well being.

### **Activities:**

- \* **The collection of signatures for the Open Letter 'Call for a halt to the research on anti fertility 'vaccines' continues!** Many more signatures have already been received since November 8. Signed letters should be sent to the office of the Women's Global Network.

**N.B.** The Open Letter is available at the WGNRR Coordination office in Dutch, English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish.

- \* In May 1994 the World Health Assembly will be held, which offers an important opportunity to put pressure on governments to stop supporting the research on anti fertility 'vaccines'. The Call with the additional signatures collected by then, will show the broad support for the call to stop the research.
- \* Collection of further information and informing women's groups and organisations, for example about planned trials in their country, by the Coordination office of WGNRR.

- \* discuss the Call in your group or organisation;
- \* disseminate the Call among other groups;
- \* raise the issue whenever you consider appropriate in national and regional meetings;
- \* write to WGNRR that you like to join the Campaign and want to be kept informed;
- \* try to collect information about the contraceptive 'vaccines' in your country. Any information is of interest, like press clippings, research articles, articles which appeared in the media, t.v. programs, information about trials etc Please send any information which you collected or came across to the office of WGNRR.
- \* if you organise(d) activities about, the contraceptive . 'vaccines', please send a short announcement or report to the WGNRR office.

### **Information which recently has been received by the WGNRR Coordination office that may be of interest to others:**

1. "A new era of fertility control. Subheading: Scientists around the world are convinced that finding a universally acceptable contraceptive vaccination is the key to controlling population growth in developing countries. Dr John Aitken is at the forefront of this field through fundamental research into the immunology involved".

Article by Jenny Hope, medical correspondent based in London of Organon's Magazine on Women & Health 2/1992. About Dr Aitken the article mentions

that he is head of the gamete biology section at the Medical Research Council's Reproductive Biology Unit in Edinburgh, UK. He is involved in contraceptive 'Vaccines' research and his work is partly funded by Organon (a Dutch Pharmaceutical Company).

2. The Content pages of 'Vaccines Report: a current view of the status of development of vaccines by the international pharmaceutical industry, giving you a comprehensive and expert report of practical and strategic value to your business' published by Scrip Reports, Richmond Surrey in the UK, May 1992.

NB by WGNRR. This report deals with anti-disease vaccines, but interestingly (and very confusing!) chapter fourteen, which deals with 'other infections for which vaccines are under development', point 14.22 is about 'contraceptive vaccines'.

3. Dr M.N.G. Dukes, editor of International Journal of Risk and Safety in Medicine and Professor in drug policies at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands wrote a letter (October 25 1993) -after reading Judith Richter's publication-to the Women's Health Action Foundation in which he made the following comment: 'years ago, when I was myself working in endocrinological research, vaccination ideas like this were raised and promptly dismissed as unethical and dangerous; I do not think the balance of argument has changed, except that the threat has come closer, and people are now actually being exposed' (Mr Dukes gave permission to publish this quote).

\* No 1 and 2 are available from the WGNRR Coordination office.

### **Phase two trials will soon start in Sweden**

According to information from a Swedish contact (November 93), the Human Reproduction Program of the World Health Organisation will soon start phase two trials on the anti-hCG (contraceptive) 'vaccine' in Sweden. Phase two trials in contraceptive research in general means trials 'which are carried out on up to a few hundred fertile volunteers during a six month to two year period. Phase two trials differ from phase one in that effectiveness is tested as well as safety and pharmacology. (Hardon 1992; HRP 1988, page 13 of Vaccination against pregnancy' by Judith Richter)

Several groups in Sweden have been informed by WGNRR and by HAI/Europe about the upcoming trials and have been asked to find out more details and to report about it

Information about the anti fertility 'vaccines' presently available:

\* **'Vaccination against pregnancy - Miracle or Menace?'** by Judith Richter. Publication by HAI Europe and BUKO Pharma Kampagne, August 1993. Costs are 8 US dollars. Free for low income groups in LACAAP<sup>1</sup> countries.

The publication can be ordered at

– HAI Europe, Jacob van Lennepkade 334-T, 1053 NJ Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Phone (31-20) 683 3684. Fax (31-20) 685 5002.

– HAI Clearinghouse & ARDA c/o IOCU, P.O. Box 1045, Penang, Malaysia. Phone (604) 371 396. Fax (604)366 506.

– AIS Latin America c/o Accion para la Salud, Avda Palermo 531, Dpto. 104, Lima, Peru. Phone/Fax (5114)7123202.

– BUKO Pharma Kampagne, August Bebelstrasse 62, D-33602 Bielefeld, Germany. Phone (49-521) 60 550. Fax (49-521) 63 789

\* **Video 'Antibodies against pregnancy'** by Ulrike Schaz (1992) about the development of the 'vaccines' and about the ongoing trials in India.

This video can be hired or bought at FINNRAGE International Coordination, PO Box 201903, 20209 Hamburg, Germany. Phone (49-201) 784248. Fax (49-201)779761 FINNRAGE also made two information packs about contraceptive 'Vaccines'. One contains detailed information and one has just basic Information. Both can be requested at their Coordination Office in Hamburg.

\* New updated information packs, compiled and written by Judith Richter will be ready in the beginning of 1994.

\* These can be requested at the VVGNRR Coordination office

Reports by: Beatrijs Stermerding, staff member of the WGNRR Coordination office and contact person for the Campaign, December 8, 1993.

<sup>1</sup> LACAAP - Latin American, Caribbean, African, Asian, Pacific.

## **List of Research Organisations and Funding Bodies to which the Open Letter CALL FOR A HALT TO RESEARCH ON CONTRACEPTIVE “VACCINES”**

### **Research Institutes**

Contraceptive Research and Development Programme (CONRAD)  
Dr Henry Gabelnick, Director  
Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, Virginia, USA

National Institute of Immunology  
Dr G.Pran Talwar, Co-ordinator  
New Delhi, India ,

National Institute for Child Health and Human Development  
Dr Florence P. Haseltine, Director of the Center for Population Research  
Bethesda, Maryland, USA

Organon International Inc  
Mr P.K. Brons, President-Director  
Oss, the Netherlands

Population Council  
Ms Margaret Catley-Carlsson, President  
New York, USA

World Health Organisation, Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP)  
Mr Giuseppe Benagiano, Director of HRP  
Geneva, Switzerland

### **Funding Bodies**

International Development Research Centre  
Mr P. Keith Bezanson, President  
Ottawa, Canada

Rockefeller Foundation  
Mr Peter Goldmark, President  
New York. USA  
South to South Co-operation in Reproductive Health  
Dr Esimar Coutinho, President  
Salvador, Bahia  
Brazil

United Nations Development Programme  
Mr James Gustav Speth, Administrator  
New York, USA

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)  
Dr Nafis Sadik, Executive Director  
New York, USA

United States Assistance for International Development (USAID)  
Mr Duff G; Gillespie, Director of Office of Population  
Washington D.C., USA

World Bank  
Mr Lewis T. Preston, President  
Washington D.C., USA

Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Germany, India, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom