

THANKS TO "TIME", "NEWSWEEK", "SIETE DIAS", "O CRUZEIRO"
AND OTHERS.

EDITORIAL

For 14 years the hansenological periodicals of the Institute of Health of São Paulo, Brazil, have been insisting that any attempt to enlighten the public about "leprosy" will be aborted immediately after conception by an array of agents, and especially by the monstrous and overwhelming "counter-enlightening", stigmatizing and ignorance-spreading material of the local, national and international news media ; and that any person or organization that recommends "education on leprosy" is simply driving impoverished endemic countries to further impoverishment by wasting money on "educational" material which practically nobody reads, watches or listens to.

Our last editorial "The technically impossible education on leprosy, plus a warning to the endemic world"¹ was published soon after the 11th International Leprosy Congress (Mexico. 1978)

repeated the old — and unpracticable — recommendation to educate (on "leprosy") "continuously" and "at all levels". The same Congress, contradicting itself, also recommended the "cautious use of the word ("Leprosy"), due to its "socio-historical connotation, besides the medical". (How to reconcile a "continuous education on leprosy, at all levels" with the "cautious use of the word", remains a mystery to us).

Since then, defamation and degradation of "lepers" and "leprosy" have continued unchecked in most countries, through the literature, press, religious sermons, cinema, theater, radio and TV — as chronically as the disease itself.

It seems, however, that an "acute reactional exacerbation" has taken place — the flare-up or "akuter Schub" which Professor Walter Belda qualifies as "a festival of leprotic non-sense"²

Medicine

Herpes: The New Sexual Leprosy

"Viruses of love" infect millions with disease and despair

(1) ROTBERG, A. A "tecnicamente impossível educação sobre lepra" — e uma advertência ao mundo endêmico. **Hansen. Int.**, 3(2):109-111. 1978.

(2) BELDA, W. Festival of leprotic nonsense. **Hansen Int.**, 5(2):135, 1980.

In quick succession the two leading American news magazines have inflicted fallacious notions under equally fallacious captions about "leprosy" on their millions of readers throughout the world.

Time" "HERPES SIMPLEX : THE NEW SEXUAL LEPROSY": "I re-

gard myself as a carrier of an invisible, incurable disease". "...caesarean deliveries, a less emotionally jarring practice than segregating mother and baby behind doors marked ISOLATION : HERPES." "...a reading instructor turned on departure to shake hands. The doctor would not extend his."

'America Treats Us Like Lepers'

INTERVIEW: DOM MINTOFF

"Newsweek" 4: "AMERICA TREATS US LIKE LEPERS" "Q. Why are you so hard on the American Government? A. The American Government treats us as if we have leprosy. It prefers to deal with us by proxy, instead of directly — as the Soviets have done" (Dom Mintoff, Prime Minister of Malta) .

To spice the international "festival" with recent South American events, Brazilian TV networks keep periodically misinforming about "leprosy". The Buenos Aires weekly "Siete Dias"⁵ in a cover caption and story, admires the "courage" of Pope John Paul II for having visited the "maledict leprosarium of Marituba", Brazil (*vide* editorial in Portuguese). The same caption and story appeared in the Bra-

zilian periodical "O Cruzeiro" ⁶. Meanwhile, S. Paulo cinemas and TV stations show their 15th or 20th revivals of the "leprous" fantasies of "Papillon", "Cabaret", "El Cid", and the thousandth, perhaps, of "Ben Hur's".

We have grounded hopes that some day our hanseniasis patients will be liberated from this infernal slandering and begin to cooperate with our health services, for their own sake and for the control of the endemic.

Meanwhile, we sincerely thank "Time", "Newsweek", "Siete Dias", "O Cruzeiro", the producers of TV programs, "Papillon", "Cabaret", Miss Liza Minelli, etc, etc, for their precious contribution to the practical demonstration of the validity of our viewpoints.

A. ROTBERG

(3) HERPES simplex: the new sexual leprosy. **Time**, New York, 116(4):38, 28 Jul. 1980.

(4) AMERICA treats us like lepers. **Newsweek**, 97(20):60, 18 May 1981.

(5) VINCENTI, Lorenzo. El Papa en el leprosario maldito de Marituba. **Siete dias**, Buenos Aires, 14(681):19-25, 3/9 Jul. 1980.

(6) AMÉRICO, Romualdo. Marituba: a cidade maldita dos leprosos. **Cruzeiro**, Rio de Janeiro, 15 ago. 1980. p. 118-121.