

# CLASS STRUGGLE

Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

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30p



**Afghan  
Leader  
Killed**



**Women's Struggles,  
Women's Lives.**

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**govind kelkar**  
*fighting for rights  
in India.*

**women's  
work -**  
*in Britain and  
the Philippines.*

**International Women's Day »»»» 8<sup>th</sup> March**

# CLASS STRUGGLE

## EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...EDITO

To mark International Women's Day, 1990, we should strengthen our understanding and solidarity with women around the world.

In Britain today, the majority of women still do a double shift of paid work outside and domestic work in the family. At work they face continued discrimination, low pay and few rights. At home, they face extra burdens as the services of the welfare state are cut back.

Black national minority women face racism as well as sexism, as do Irish women in Britain. In the north of Ireland itself, women are playing an active role in the struggle for Ireland's freedom and face the full brunt of repression.

There is a rising tide of chauvinism in Britain today, both racist and sexist. Two forms that this takes in relation to women are the right wing "moral" campaign against abortion rights and the fundamentalist Christian campaign to reinforce the family. This latter is being carried out in particular through bringing back a strong Christian element in our schools as well as the campaign against single parents.

Such campaigns are not unique to Britain. They go along with the rising tide of racism in Europe as a whole. The concept of the 'Common European Home' whether in its Eastern or Western form, depends on increased repression of black people in Europe and a stepping-up of the exploitation of the Third World.

Our response must be to step up our solidarity and links with women all over the world engaged in struggles against our common enemy, imperialism, in all its various forms.

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# DEFEAT FOR THE AMBULANCE WORKERS ?

by Joe Steel

At the time of writing, the outcome of the ambulance dispute cannot be predicted.

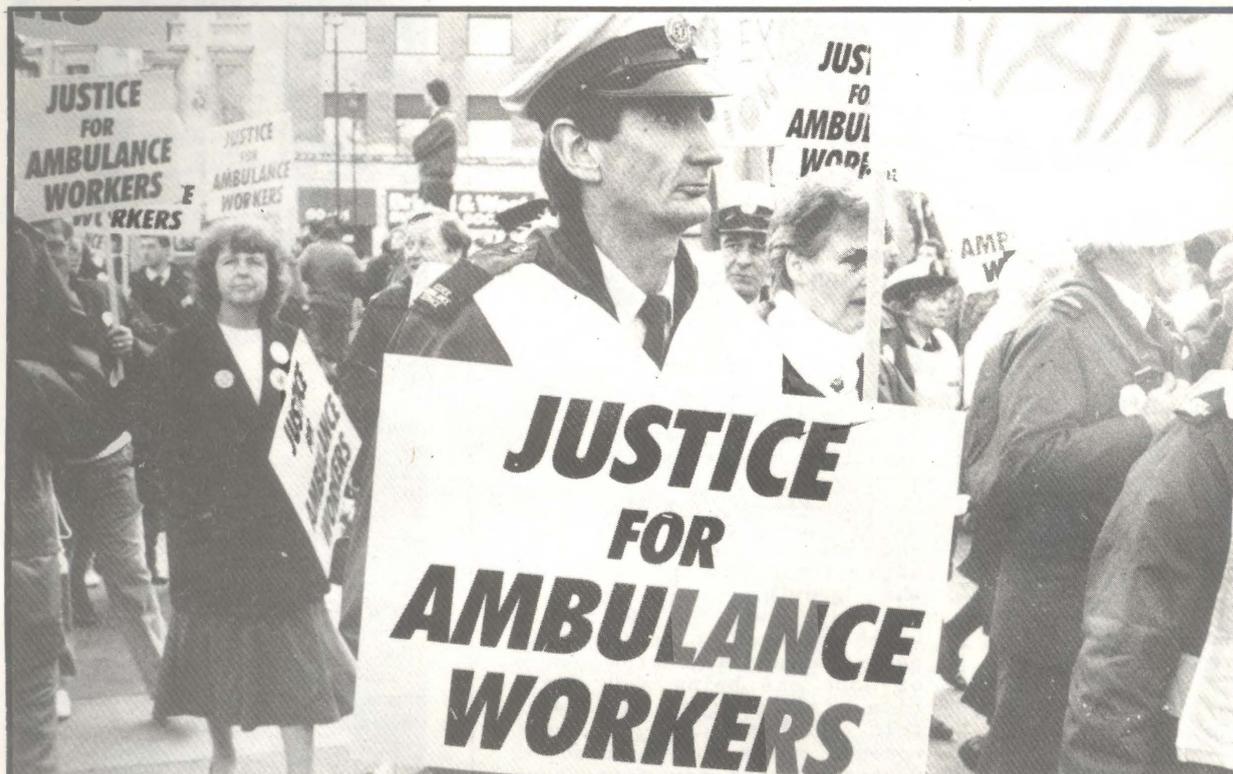
The central issue of a pay formula has not been won. The two-year pay deal on offer is a con trick. The crews are clear that the new offer is not a real increase from that offered last November. There is widespread criticism of the union leadership. Not much to show for six months of hardship and struggle.

there has been a decision to go back to work. In places such as Staffordshire, there has been a vote to return to normal working.

## STRONG SUPPORT BUT WEAK LEADERSHIP

Clearly, this has not been an easy dispute to win. 22,500 workers versus the government was always going to be an uphill struggle. The workers had no industrial muscle.

All-out action was always going to be difficult for the ambulance crews. They have a strong conviction of the need to provide the service to the sick and injured. However, it is clear that the growing frustration about the dispute dragging on and lack of leadership at national level was pushing the crews to the point where something had to be done. By the beginning of February, it was clear that the option of a strike ballot



Photograph: Allan Naldo

Should the outcome of the ballot be a 'Yes' vote, the government will be left in a strong position. It will not have given in to the massive public support for the workers. The pay rise over two years will work out less than the rate of inflation. It will have established the right to start local bargaining which will divide and weaken the unions. Moves towards a two-tier ambulance service with an elite of paramedics separated off from the rest will increase. More routine work will go out to private tender.

Already the offer has split the ambulance workers. Some, such as those in Merseyside, and parts of London, have gone out on all-out strike. In some areas such as Birmingham, existing action is continuing until the ballot. In West Sussex, one of the first areas to take full strike action,

Despite the problems, the men and women have put up a magnificent struggle and won massive support. In response to differing tactics from local management, they were very creative in adopting different counter-tactics to further their claim. However, this meant that action varied and national leadership was weak. Following the January 30th Day of Action, it was clear that the leadership had no idea, or will to develop the struggle.

All-out action by the crews was always a gamble. Would it gain the necessary support? Would public support be lost? It was clear that the TUC would not organise further extensive solidarity action. The union leadership would not advocate any action that could be used by the Tories to tarnish the Labour Party's election hopes.

should have been considered by the leadership. However, that did not happen and with some crews drifting back to work, it is difficult to see how the dispute can now be escalated. Not only have the ambulance workers got the Tory government against them. The Labour Party supports the offer and they would be fighting the union leadership as well. Should the result of the ballot be a 'Yes' vote, they will be left in a weakened position to fight the plans to further cut the ambulance service.

As with most of the industrial disputes taking place at present, this one has highlighted the weakness and undemocratic nature of the trade unions as fighting organisations of the working class. It shows the extent of the struggle necessary to transform them into really independent working class organisations.

# WOMAN'S WORK IS

This article looks at the importance of women's paid work in Britain today and makes some comparisons with other Western European countries. It also looks at the link with women's unpaid work in the home and different ways that women can build links and work in solidarity with each other, both in Europe and internationally.

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## WOMEN'S PAID EMPLOYMENT

If we look at the official figures for women's earnings, we can see the gap between men's and women's earnings. At the top of the earnings league, average weekly earnings for the top 10% of women were £306.02 a week in 1989, compared with £391.07 for men. For the bottom 10%, the figures were £113.08 for women, compared to £147 for men. Averaging out the levels across the earnings scale, the figures are: £182.03 for women and £269.05 for men.

It should also be remembered that official earnings figures in Britain overestimate women's average earnings. Official statistics are based on the New Earnings Survey which only covers those who pay tax. Many part-time women workers, often the lowest-paid, such as cleaners, care assistants, homeworkers etc., do not count officially because they do not earn enough to be paying tax. The averages, therefore, are exaggerated.

In spite of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts, inequality at work persists and is in some ways increasing. This can be seen in two ways. Firstly, the figures show that women are a minority in many of the "top jobs". Even where there are a majority of women in a particular area of work, the senior jobs are held by men. Secondly, women tend to be concentrated in low-paid and undervalued occupations.



## TOP JOBS

6.5% of MPs and 13% of life peers are women. In the judiciary, only one woman sits in the Court of Appeal and a handful are judges, stipendiary magistrates etc. Women make up 0.5% of executive directors and 3.9% of non-executive directors. At universities, women are in a tiny minority in the top jobs.

## LOW-PAID SECTORS

1987 figures show the concentration of women in low-paid sectors of work: Almost 80% of those employed in medical and other health services are women. In footwear and clothing, 73.5% are women. In personal services (hairdressing, cleaning) 71%; hotel and catering 66.6%; in education 68.5%; in retail and distribution 63%; in sanitary services 60.4%. It is worth noting that many of these jobs reflect the jobs that women are traditionally supposed to do at home, domestic work servicing the family.

## PART-TIME WORK

The low pay associated with such sectors is reinforced by the growing importance of part-time work. Half the women employed in Britain work part-time and a growing number of jobs are being made part-time. Although we are always told that this is to suit women's needs, the spread of part-time work now means that many women who want to work full-time are forced into taking two or three part-time jobs. Part-time workers have been shown to be consistently lower-paid than full time, with fewer benefits such as sick pay or pension rights and fewer employment rights.

## HOMEWORK

The most extreme examples of low pay in Britain today are of those doing paid work at home. In a recent survey of 21 women doing paid work at home in West Yorkshire, over half (11 women) were earning less than 50 pence an hour. They were working in a variety of industries ranging from knitting and clothing, electronics to printing. In all but three cases, the women gave the lack of childcare as the main reason for taking on work at home, however badly paid.

Enough research has now been

done to show that homeworking, at these extreme low rates of pay, is common in many black communities in Britain. On top of the difficulties all women face in combining their work at home and outside, black women face racism both in the wider community and at work outside. For many black women, homework is the most important source of income.



## DOMESTIC WORK

In Britain, today women still do most of the work in the home, particularly caring for dependants, both children and elderly or disabled relatives. This work has always been undervalued. Unusually, in 1987, an insurance company, the Legal and General, actually put a figure on this unpaid work:

They estimated that: ...the British housewife had a commercial value of £370 a week, which was twice the average weekly wage. In working out the figures, our research revealed that a housewife is on call all seven days of a 92-hour week. Her jobs include shopper, waitress, window cleaner, nurse, driver, cleaner, cook and child-minder. She is also the financial expert. In nine out of ten households, the wife does the finances."

Only 1% of children under five have places in local authority day nurseries. Only 28% of women with children under five go out to work and the majority can only work part-time. Most women have to make their own arrangements with childminders and many have found that even with the low hourly rate of many childminders, they cannot afford to pay for childcare out of the low-paid, part-time wages they can earn.

The current campaign from the government and others to promote the 1990's as the decade of the working woman

# NEVER DONE



has had little impact outside some firms which are beginning to provide better opportunities for some of their top women and expensive nurseries for some top-paid women. The current cost of childcare in central London, for example, is over £400 a month,

Other campaigns have got off the ground to provide cheaper childcare to more women, with various schemes such as childcare vouchers, to be paid for by employers or workplace nurseries. These are, of course, to be welcomed. But they are mainly concentrated in the Southeast

It is widely known that Britain has the worst record on childcare in Europe. However, recent figures show that as important as childcare is the responsibility for elderly dependants or disabled relatives. As the state cuts back on care and promotes 'care in the community', this means more work for women in the home.



## FLEXIBILITY FOR WHOM?

Women in Britain and other countries of Western Europe will play an increasing role in the workforce but we are being told that we have to be flexible. Although women welcome any flexibility that fits in with their needs, present trends to make work more flexible seem to be more about reducing costs for employers and finding ways round employment law.

In Britain, by 1985 one third of all workers, and half of working women, could already be classed as "flexible" in that they did not have full-time permanent jobs. European employers look with envy at Britain, where temporary working is so widespread.

Present restrictions on temporary working are under attack in much of Europe. Holland has a ban on running more than one temporary contract end to end (a common trick in Britain).

It is feared that 1992 will be used as a reason to lower standards of employment law to the British level.

A newer form of casual labour has been widely used in the Netherlands where women have zero hour contracts. Women are not guaranteed any work or pay but break their contract if they take other work or stray from the phone and thus make themselves unavailable. 125,000 women in the Netherlands are on such contracts and supermarkets in Britain are beginning to use them.

In France, temporary employment crept in under a 1979 law which permitted fixed term (i.e. temporary) contracts for the first time. Since then, there have been a series of measures culminating in a 1986 order which gives the employer a free hand provided the contract refers to a task not a job. The West German government brought in temporary contracts in 1985, arguing that it would reduce overtime. Now a substantial number of new workers are only given temporary contracts.

Many more examples could be given to illustrate these trends. Most European countries also now have stronger employment protection than in Britain, for example, minimum wages. However there are many ways that employers find to get round such laws. For example, they make homeworkers self-employed to avoid minimum wage laws. In some countries, minimum wage legislation excludes part-timers.

## SOLIDARITY

1992 will be used to try and reduce gains that have been won. But we can learn from women's position in different countries of Europe that capitalism has compromised in different ways in different

countries. We should use the opportunity to build unity with women elsewhere and learn from positive examples of struggle and solidarity.

In Norway, for example, the Women's Front promotes the fight for a 6 hour day for all workers. As long as "normal" work is seen as being the eight hour day, women part-time workers will always be treated as second-class workers. The demand for a six hour day for all workers enables this gap to be closed.

In the Netherlands, the tradition of linking community and union organisation, has been revived through the Women's Union whose membership includes women in paid employment and those not in paid work. The Norwegian Women's Front also campaigns on issues other than workplace struggles, for example, against pornography and sex tours in Third World countries.

We know also from our own experience in Britain the importance of broadening struggles away from narrow trade unionism. The strength of the miners' struggle, for example lay in the broad involvement of whole communities, particularly of women. This was also the case in struggles fought by black workers, such as at Grunwicks or Imperial Typewriters. They relied primarily on the support of their communities not on the union bureaucracy.

Particularly important for women in Europe will be the need to build solidarity with national minority women here and women in the Third World. The steps to bring in "Fortress Europe", extending and strengthening controls and repression of black people in Europe and at the same time, increasing exploitation of the people of the Third World, are already underlay.

Homeworkers campaigns in Britain have already begun to make links with some organisations such as SEWA, the Self Employed Women's Association, in India who have internationally given the lead in organising women working at home and in the "casual" economy.

Imperialism operates on a world scale and it is also gives us many opportunities to build solidarity with women around the world, as the following example from the Philippines shows.■

Women do two thirds of the world's work, earn less than five percent of the world's income, and own one percent of the world's assets.

# THOUSAND WORKERS LOCKED OUT

On September 20th, 1989, a company called Intercontinental Garments Manufacturing Corporation (IGMC) in the Philippines locked out its 1,000 workers and announced that it was closing for good from that same afternoon.

IGMC is one hundred percent owned by William Baird PLC, which holds IGMC through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Telemac Ltd. The Philippines factory produces coats and jackets under the labels Canda (C&A), Telemac, Nautical and Broadstone. These are sold in major high street stores such as Debenhams, C&A, House of Fraser, John Collier, Hepworths and Next.

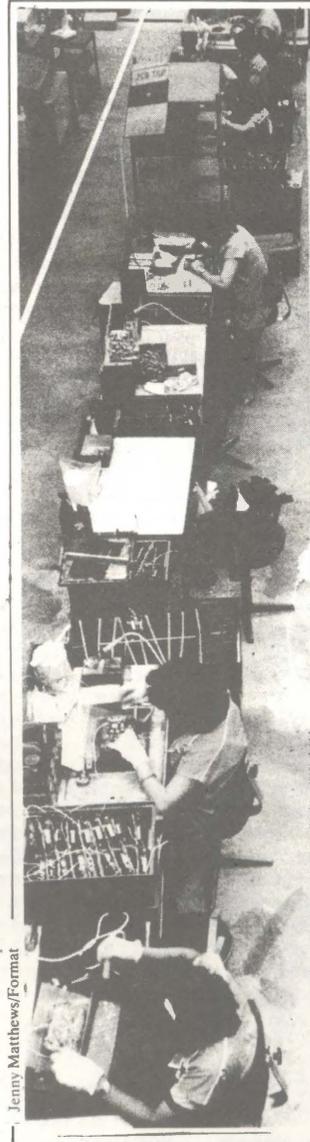
IGMC is located in a special Export Processing Zone in Bataan, near the capital Manila. The Bataan Export Processing Zone is surrounded by high barbed wire fences and has a private armed police force to enforce repressive anti-labour laws.

Most of the workers are young women who have migrated to the Zone to escape rural poverty. They earn the equivalent of about £2.00 a day. Within hours of the closure announcement, the women began a night and day picket outside the factory, often bringing their children with them. With only makeshift shelters to protect them from the blazing sun and intermittent rain, they say they will not move until the factory re-opens.

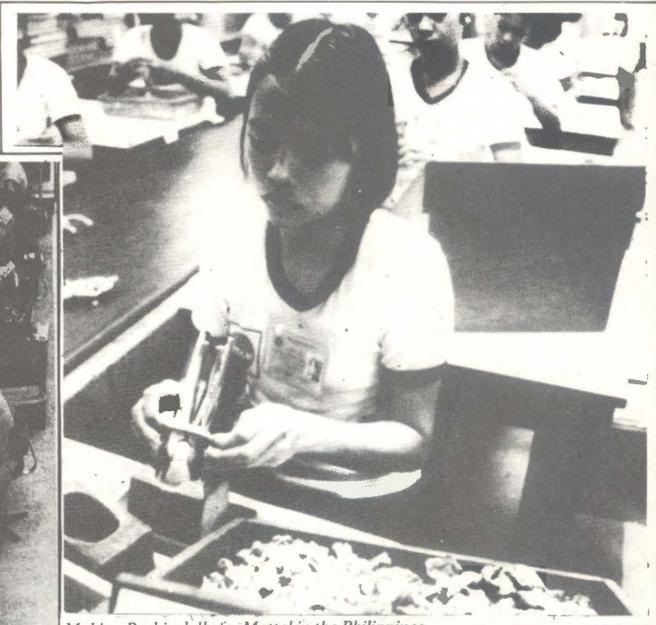
## FACTS OF THE CASE

In May, the trade union movement in the Philippines staged a successful General Strike to press for an across-the-board wage increase to keep pay up with inflation. A law was passed that all workers should get an increase of about 75p a day.

Rather than comply with the law, IGMC refused. The company also started to sub-contract cutting and sewing outside the factory to sweatshops in Manila, where wages are lower and conditions even worse than in the Zone.



Jenny Matthews/Forman



Making Barbie dolls for Mattel in the Philippines.

The IGMC workers have nowhere else to go. The Zone is the only source of employment in the area. Many of the women are the sole breadwinners for their families and they are often supporting several children.

## BUILD SOLIDARITY

IGMC is a British-owned company whose products are sold in British high street stores. Workers in Manchester have already lost their jobs when the Telemac factory in Stockport closed down in the 1980's and shifted all its production to the Philippines factory. Both British and Filipino workers are treated as dispensable in the company's scramble to find ever cheaper sources of labour.

The campaign in this country is being co-ordinated by Women Working Worldwide. The producers of the garments, both in Britain and the Philippines, are women, and the consumers are mainly women. A boycott picket has already been held in Manchester.

## What You Can Do:

1. The IGMC workers' union is calling for an international boycott of IGMC garments while the lockout lasts.

2. Write letters of protest to: William Baird PLC, 79 Mount St., London.

For further information, contact Linda Shaw, Women Working Worldwide, 061-275-2515.

Now the company says it is going to close the factory for good, and move somewhere else where there is no union and wages are even lower. As Union President, Lucy Salao says: "IGMC is engaging in plain and simple union-busting."

The company says it cannot afford to pay the workers more. But let us take a look at the profits of parent company William Bairds. Between January and June 1989, Bairds made pre-tax profits of £11.82 million. In 1988, profits were a staggering £31.4 million, nearly three times 1984's profit level of £11.9 million.

# Mandy's Diary



1985: Balwant Kaur Panesar was stabbed to death by her husband in a women's refuge in Brent in front of her three daughters all of whom were under the age of six.  
Above: Women demonstrate outside the courthouse during the murder trial.

February 14th: Victory has arrived for the women of Greenham Common. The airbase is now being closed completely: all the Cruise missiles are going and the Americans are pulling out. For the last ten years, the Greenham Common women have stood firm day and night, in heat and cold, through police raids, court cases, bad publicity, and they have come through victorious.

Looking back over the last year, there has been quite a downfall in the prestige of nuclear power, and women have been influential in rousing public reaction against it. The decision to stop the building of the nuclear station at Hinckley C in Somerset is one example.

February 17th: A survey recently carried out among 4,000 readers of 'Cosmopolitan' magazine revealed that in the Midlands, at any rate, a massive 81% see a link between pornography and violence against women. More than 9 out of 10 Midlands women find 'adult' magazines offensive. Only 6% consider pornography to be harmless.

February 19th: More than 1,500 women annually contact Birmingham's Rape Crisis Centre, and about 20% of them have been raped by their husbands. It is still legal in this country for a man to rape his wife. Apparently the reasoning is that by getting married a woman consents to intercourse any time her husband wants it. But now Home Office Minister, John

Patten, has announced that the Law Commission is to investigate the possibility of a change in the law, to make rape within marriage a criminal offence. This move is very welcome, but unless more support facilities are made available to victims, changes in legislation will not help them. A spokeswoman from the Rape Crisis Centre said that women come under tremendous pressure not to report attacks to the police. That could be even greater if they were reporting their husbands.

February 25th: I have just read an interesting article in 'The Observer' today, entitled 'Wifebeaters - Men Say Why They Batter Women'. My first reaction was: "Who cares why they do it? I want the bastards stopped, and punished." But after ploughing through some horrifically gruesome stories of what some men do to women, I read about a self-help centre for violent men in London which forces the men to confront their sexism and take responsibility for their actions.

"Men who abuse women physically and/or emotionally suffer an inability to perceive women as separate, independent people," says Adam Jukes, who runs the centre. No prizes for guessing why they think that way, when everywhere women are regarded as dependants, possessions, objects for men's desire, or plain domestic slaves. He goes on:

"We live in a culture where women are defined as what we men need to complete ourselves. Because they withhold that, we find them utterly uncontrollable. And we try to control them by inflicting pain...."

"Anger derives out of failed expectations. That's what we work on. We try to restructure the beliefs and attitudes that justify sadistic behaviour...."

"The issue is not whether your wife has a drinking problem. The issue is whether you therefore have a right to batter her and beat her up."

And he gets results! Gradually, of course. Sexist attitudes and behaviour don't change overnight. One of the men is quoted as saying:

"I was very hypocritical. I was scared of anything happening to her if she came home alone. On the other side of that, it was happening here, and I was doing it myself. It might be over something trivial. She would disappoint me by reacting in a way that wasn't the way I wanted. She didn't do what I said. And then I would explode. I was determined to make her think my way. I now see that I did want to control her."

And in a sense, every women's issue comes down to this: the inability of men to let women be separate, independent people, in control of their own bodies and their own lives, making their own decisions.

The bad news is that this work costs money and the Home Office refuses to fund it. "We won't give money to perpetrators," they said. Maybe they would rather spend public money on keeping men in prison, and women in hostels on Social Security? But the reality is even worse than that. The government's social policies are making it harder for abused women to leave violent men. Child Benefit is frozen. Social Security payments are cut back. Women's refuges are forced to close for lack of funds. And the government is exerting a constant pressure to keep the family together at all costs. Ignore the problem and maybe it will go away. But it won't. The only effective solution is to work on men's attitudes.

# Govind Kelkar

The article below is part of an interview with Govind Kelkar, a woman political activist from India, who has recently toured this country, addressing meetings about her work and the political situation in India. Govind works in Bihar. She is employed by the Nehru Fellowship to do work on women's history.

Govind's book 'Women, Land and Forest' (a study of the Jharkhand indigenous communities) is to be published by Zed Press.



## ON WOMEN'S

**Class Struggle:** Would you tell us about the women's movement in India and the struggles that women take part in?

**Govind:** The leadership and main thrust of the women's movement in India is definitely socialist feminist. I say this because all the trends in the women's movement take the questions of class, caste, nationality and the religious/cultural fundamentalism. No women's group in India looks primarily at the men/women relationship. Some small groups do put the question of ecology, etc. But when it comes to the question of attacks on the Moslems or the Sikhs, or the question of Jharkhand (demand for regional autonomy), they have supported all these movements.

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

But violence has played a very important role in the formation of their struggle. In 1979, a young tribal girl was raped by two policemen, and the court case said that because nobody heard her cries, and there were no bodily injuries, and she had had sexual relations previously, therefore the rape was not committed. This became a nationwide movement. It was called the Matura movement. Matura was the name of the girl. And this kind of violence - custodial rape by the state - was highly questioned.

Four of the jurors at the time wrote open letters against the Supreme Court, which in normal circumstances would be treated as contempt of court. But .... there was such a mass movement against it. After that the question of dowry murders also came up.

Dowry murders have occurred among Gujeratis in Northwest India, and also in many states of Northern India. In a report as early as 1919, when the British colonial rule was there, in Gujerat, it was found that a number of young women, soon after marriage, were so-called committing suicide. The government investigated, and all they found was that there were a lot of suicides among young married women. In fact, they were not suicides, they were murders. The doctors, lawyers and police would all combine and make these murders into suicides.

Now the women's movement protested: they did not allow the doctor to give a false certificate, and they did not allow the lawyer to distort the case. So the real nature of the murders came out.

While we are discussing the class and caste aspect, that does not mean that women's specific oppression does not exist. We say that women's specific subordination cuts across the class and caste situation. Even in the middle class: we do not take this dismissive attitude, which unfortunately left groups and some Marxist-Leninists have taken, that

feminism is only a bourgeois, elitist, Western, white syndrome. This is an attack on feminism and we fight it. There is a debate going on and I have written about how the question is treated. Women's specific oppression both within and outside the family exists in all classes and castes.

### CLASS AND CASTE

We also question the social analysis with regard to women. For example, social scientists tend to put women in the classes or castes where their husbands are. A Brahmin woman cannot perform those religious and caste functions which a man of that caste does. So she does not have the equivalent caste status which her husband has.

With regard to class: the women are property-less in India. Well, legally since 1956 they are allowed to inherit. But in practice it is negligible. Moslem women sign over their rights to their brothers when they get married. Women in Northern India cannot inherit agricultural land because this conflicts with the personal Hindu law. So the 1956 law is a hoax: it is meaningless because it is not put into practice. If women do not have any resources in terms of equivalent access to the means of production, then putting women in those classes where their men are, is also meaningless. Women's status is denied both in terms of caste and class. It is mediated by male authority, which social analysts have not really acknowledged. And they have taken a dismissive attitude: these women are upper caste, and upper class, and they do not have the link with working class women and agricultural labour women.

Let me go back to the question of violence against women.

It is not just that men are violent against women. One of the main sources of violence against women is the state, both in terms of law and in terms of perpetrating violence. The other source of institutional violence is the family. The women's movement and the Marxist-Leninists criticise these institutions. 42% of rape cases are committed by policemen, and this is a conservative estimate, from police records. So the state is involved on a large scale in perpetrating this kind of violence.

### WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

We had a women's conference in 1988 which was a landmark in terms of the women's movement. We had it in Bihar which is politically a very active area. We wanted to discuss firstly how the Marxist-Leninist groups relate to the question of women in their analysis. We asked them to participate and they did.



# OPPRESSION IN INDIA

Secondly, we wanted to see to what extent our analysis of patriarchy, state, violence, family, is correct. How do the Dalit ("untouchable") women, agricultural labouring women, landless, tribal women, understand these questions? Whether we have anything in common or not. And 700 women participated in the conference, and that was after we told the women's organisations not to send more than two representatives. Women from all over India came, and we were a bit nervous as to how we would manage. We had a rally and 10,000 women came to it. 70% were agricultural labouring women, and their statements on patriarchy, violence and the question of ecology were the same as we had been discussing.

There are ups and downs in the movement. For example, there have been incidents of sati. Some leading social scientists, in the name of culture, said: "Oh, these feminists, they do not understand part of the culture. They are out of touch with reality and that is why they are objecting to this kind of thing." (Sati is when a widow is burnt to death on her husband's funeral pyre - Ed.)

Our debate was whether you would allow women to be murdered in the name of culture. What kind of culture is this? We went to the village, we protested, but fundamentalist forces are also very strong. They mobilised their own women to say: "We want sati, and sati has been our tradition." So this kind of duality is there.

**Class Struggle:** What kind of women's organisations are there?

**Govind:** From the late seventies, and throughout the eighties, there has been a mushrooming of women's organisations.

There are three main kinds of organisations:

1. The non-party political organisations which belong to the autonomous women's movement: autonomy not from politics but from political parties.

They treat women's subordination as a political question, but also it derives its legitimacy from traditional culture, so we do not take all culture uncritically. We have to critically examine the caste system, and the feudal mode in which women were property-less, and which also subscribed to sati and female infanticide. We cannot say that everything before the capitalist development was fine.

2. The trade unions and party organisations. All these have women's wings or women's cells within the party, except for a few of the Marxist-Leninist groups. They question their party in terms of how they are treated: the real decision-makers are the men. And in terms of mobilising and relating to

other organisations they have felt very restrained in commenting on the woman question.

The question of trade unions is even grimmer. These have been very economic. If a man dies at work, his job is given to his widow, and when this happens some trade unions have intervened and persuaded the widow to sign away her right to work in favour of her son or another male relative, and he should give part of his salary to her, because the man is the breadwinner. The women's movement has questioned this.

Two major trade unions have arisen in India. One is SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) and the other is the Working Women's Forum in Madras. These have a membership ranging from 12,000 to 20,000. But they have given a new definition to trade unionism, in terms of who is the employer. In SEWA, they say the public is the employer, so hawkers, street vendors, vegetable sellers, cart drivers, have asked the public for better working conditions, better remuneration for their work and better prices. And they have their own bank, because women were not getting bank loans. And all this has progressed very well.

Working Women's Forum has organised lace workers and other home producers, and there have been unions of domestic workers in some parts, so things are going on which are a very welcome change.

3. The charity and welfare organisations. They are large organisations and have existed quite some time, since we were struggling against the British in the thirties and forties. The All India Women's Conference, and the National Federation of Indian Women, which is a front of the Communist Party of India.

They have not really treated the question of women's subordination in a fundamental sense. They would do a bit of charity and welfare: "Oh, these poor women, let's do something for them."

We asked them: "Why don't you organise these meetings on Sundays?"

And they said: "But our husbands are home." So they do not want to disturb any kind of familial setting. While in the women's movement we are discussing social relations within the family and our attempts is to transform these relations.

There have been some changes. For example, normally they would not come onto the streets or join a demonstration. But when there is a dowry murder or sati, then they have come together. They are willing to question the violence but not the framework of women's oppression. So these are the three major trends in the women's movement.

# WOMEN OF THE INTIFADA

by David Evans

The Palestinian Uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has had a major effect on social relations among the Palestinians. Changes which were occurring very gradually suddenly accelerated. Established elites have been largely by-passed by young activists who have come to the fore through organising the revolt. Older people treat the views of young men and women with a lot more consideration than they once did, because of their dynamic role in the popular struggle. Not least among the changes taking place have been those concerning the relationship between men and women.

In Palestinian society, it is traditional for families to negotiate marriages, and for the bride's father to demand a large sum of money and goods for his daughter as a bride price. Young men in the West Bank and Gaza Strip might have to save up for a couple of years and go into debt in order to find the money needed. This meant that men who had left to work in the Gulf States, or who came over from the large Palestinian community in the USA would effectively "outbid" those who remained in their historic homeland.

The tradition of the bride price is an old one. So it was not likely to disappear suddenly. However, during the Uprising, there has been a great deal of shared hardship, and in response to this, the normal price has been lowered to well under a tenth of what it was before the Intifada began. This was not only a result of new social realities, but also in response to calls issued by the Unified Leadership of the Uprising. Because of the enhanced standing of young people in their communities, there is more scope for them to determine which marriage partners they will get. Weddings used to be planned weeks or months ahead, and the celebrations would last for two days and involve hundreds of guests. Now, once a marriage has been agreed in principle, it is normal for people to wait for the next of the communiques of the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU), set out schedules for protest actions for the fortnight following their appearance. They then decide on which would be the best day for a wedding, taking into account the dates for the main Palestinian actions, such as general strikes, and the likely timing of Israeli measures to counter Palestinian protest, such as curfews. As it is dangerous

for people to travel about at night (even when this is possible), weddings normally only last two or three hours and are concluded well before nightfall. The celebrations take place at home, rather than in a hired hall or hotel.

Before the Intifada, wedding parties would often spill out onto the streets, but now they stay indoors, as there might well be people in the neighbourhood who have recently lost a family member at the hands of the Israeli army, and it is felt that they should not be disturbed by joyful celebrations. If there is a shooting in the neighbourhood shortly before the wedding was scheduled to take place, it will be postponed.

## MORE WORK

While there have been significant changes in the last two years, sex roles within the family have not changed much. Women still do the cooking and shopping. But the Intifada has affected this, too. The shops still strike daily for half a day, which determines when goods can be bought. As people are now poorer, and some may run short of food due to extended curfews or the payment of fines, neighbours help out by sharing food and it is normally women who arrange this between themselves. As in the rest of the world, Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip used to keep all their food in one place. But now they try and disperse it a little. This is because when the Israeli army raids a house, it is quite common for the soldiers to pour flour, sugar, cooking oil and other food out onto the floor in a heap and mix it up, leaving the family with nothing to eat - just another way of punishing Palestinians for defying the occupation.

Nearly all the 13-14,000 Palestinians in detention at any time these days are male, and were often the main income earners for their families. This has meant that a lot more women have taken up paid work. In a few places, the Women's Committees have helped groups of women to establish production cooperatives. Some make clothes, while others produce food. For example, one project in the Gaza Strip produces baby food, while another near Ramallah raises chickens. The women take it in turns to look after the coop.

## HIGHER STATUS

In the past, conflicts between husband and wife in the countryside which became very

bad would be dealt with on a community level by the intervention of the elders of the village. Now it is the young members of the local Uprising committees who step in. They are less socially conservative and more inclined to take the wife's point of view seriously. Previously, if a woman was at odds with her husband's family, the elders would try to persuade her to reconcile herself to them so as not to upset relationships within the extended family. But now the Uprising Committees are more likely to stress the woman's rights.



Women in other countries sometimes ask Palestinian women activists if, having enhanced their status through their role in the national liberation struggle, Palestinian women will not just have their gains taken away from them once liberation is won. They frequently point to Algeria as an example of what they fear will happen. A West Bank woman activist responded to this point when she spoke to Class Struggle recently:

"Firstly, I don't think this is true about Algeria. Certainly, women there lost ground after the victory of the liberation struggle in 1962, and that was disappointing. But it is not true to say that they went back to the position they'd had at the beginning. Algerian women are among the most emancipated in the Arab world to this day.

"Secondly, we won't let our gains be taken from us. That's one of the reasons why we are organising ourselves as women. This is within the national struggle. But we don't only concern ourselves with the national struggle. We work for the interests of women, to empower women, so that some of the negative experiences of some other liberation struggles will not be repeated."

# MANDELA FREE!

The release of Nelson Mandela, the world's best known political prisoner was a great victory for the people of Azania. At the same time, other concessions were made. Black nationalist organisations were unbanned, namely the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO).

Some political prisoners convicted of being members of banned organisations and all detainees, will be released. No hangings will take place for the foreseeable future and there are changes in laws governing detention without trial.

These concessions are however very small. There is no change in the apartheid laws. The State of Emergency Powers have not been lifted. There is little prospect that negotiations will lead to black majority rule. The ANC's refusal to abandon the armed struggle indicates their awareness that there is still a long way to go.

The Pan Africanist Congress has reiterated its dismissal of the possibility of negotiations with the South African regime, stating that these could only be on the regime's terms. The PAC's terms are that apartheid must be dismantled before any negotiations could take place. There is no possibility of reforming apartheid: it has to be smashed. Their standpoint comes from a commitment to self-determination for the African people, and the right to the land stolen by white settlers. To this end, the armed struggle must continue.



## UNEXPECTED DEFEAT OF SANDINISTAS

The defeat of the Sandinist in the February elections can be seen as a surprise. The elections meant victory for the United National Opposition alliance led by Mrs Violetta Chamorro, funded and backed by the United States.

The war against the US-backed Contras since 1982 has cost about 12 billion dollars. It has disrupted agricultural production, destroyed the infrastructure and necessitated high spending on defence, which accounts for about half of all state expenditure.

As a result of US hostility, Nicaragua is now the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, poorer even than Haiti. It has survived the past years by means of aid from the Soviet bloc, Cuba and few European countries and because of the determination of the people to resist the USA.

The Sandinistas came to power when they deposed the Somoza dictatorship in 1979. They began by nationalising foreign trade, expanding health care and education. They resettled 100,000 farmers and put 40% of farmland under state of cooperative control.

But the war against the Contras has taken its toll and the continuing US trade embargo has led to a decline in exports from 63 million dollars in 1984 to 1.3 million in 1987. In the same period, imports fell from 123 million dollars to 3.7.

The Sandinista government has been forced to change its policies to some extent by US policies. Last year, it laid off 30,000 public employees, slashed its budget by nearly half and returned to a free market. As a result, inflation fell from a massive 33,600% in 1988 to 1,689% in 1989.

### BACKED BY THE USA

Mrs Chamorro heads a family which has wielded power since Spanish colonial days. In 1849, the first Chamorro hanged the first Somoza.

Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, husband of Violetta, was gunned down in the streets by allies of General Somoza in 1978. His death was said by some to be the strongest single precipitate of the Sandinista victory.

The Chamorro family has direct links with the the Contras. It is large and powerful in Nicaragua, but it is one in which there are deep divisions. For example, Violetta's daughter edits 'La Prensa' newspaper, which has supported her campaign, whereas her son (who edits 'Barricada' accuses Violetta's party of siding with his father's murderers.

It seems that the people of Nicaragua have elected Mrs. Chamorro's UNO alliance because they are tired of war and want peace. But there is no doubt that this result is a setback for them. One of UNO's policies will be to return the land to the big landowners from whom it was expropriated. This will mean more repressive measures for the ordinary people and a widening of the gap between the rich and the poor.

The Sandinistas are still the largest single party in the country despite their defeat. The inevitable result of UNO's policies will be that in the long term the Sandinistas will rally popular support once more.

We print below a statement from SAMA - the Organisation for the Liberation of the Afghan People:

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Afghan Leader Killed

According to information of the "Organisation for the Liberation of the Afghan People" (SAMA), Abdul Qaium Rahbar, 48 chairman of this organisation and chairman of the "National United Front of Afghanistan" (NEFA) fell victim to political terror on January 27th, 1990, in Haitabad/Peschawar, Pakistan. Rahbar was one of the outstanding political leaders of resistance in Afghanistan, who stood for freedom, democracy and social justice in his country as well as for political pluralism.

Rahbar studied law and Islamic law at Cairo. He did research work in West Germany at the Max-Planck-Institute. Until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan he was a teacher at Kiel university. Then he went to Afghanistan to take part in the liberation struggle. Until he was murdered, he did effective political work for the liberation of his country and for the unity of democratic and national forces.

Nationally and internationally, the news of his death caused deep mourning in his family as well as among unnumbered friends.

Rahbar was the brother of Madjid Kalakante, the legendary leader of the SAMA who was executed in the Soviet Embassy on June 6th, 1980.

Cologne, January 29th, 1990.

# MARTYRED LEADER INTERVIEWED

**Why was the Soviet Union forced to agree to a withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan?**

From the beginning, the Soviet Union had lost the war, politically, in Afghanistan. They were there militarily, but politically, they were always isolated from the people. The troops in Afghanistan were a great burden for the Soviet economy. Also, the ordinary people in the Soviet Union were horrified at this unjust war.

But the deciding factor for withdrawal was the just struggle of the Afghan people, who in ten years could not be broken.....

Since the withdrawal of Soviet troops, there is a political vacuum which may lead to chaos... The resistance forces are not strong enough to take over power.

For one thing, the Soviet army still has military advisers in Afghanistan... at present.. more than 15,000 people.

Secondly, the Soviet Union has been building up its KGB troops during the last ten years so that they can simply mingle with the Afghan troops and fight side by side with them. So, even if the official troops are not there, the KGB troops are, and they are well trained and speak the Afghan language....



**How do you describe the military situation shortly before the withdrawal? And how will it go forward now?**

The Geneva Convention is not there to bring about real peace. It only helps the superpowers to regulate their influence in Afghanistan. There is no peace, and no ceasefire. The Kabul regime, which was installed by the Soviet Union, has no military or political or governmental power. Officially, it has more than 100,000 armed people. But in reality, they are simple folk who were forced into military service .....

**What principal tendencies are there in the Afghan resistance?**

Firstly, the religious extremists. They are described as fundamentalists in Europe. They want exclusive power for their bloc. They are partly connected with religious extremists in Pakistan or Iran. They reject all working together with other political groupings. In particular, they are strongly opposed to the national democratic tendencies.

Secondly, there are traditional religious groups, the so-called moderates. They are partly under the influence of the religious extremists. This tendency is based on traditional institutions in Afghanistan. They support the monarchy and the old bureaucrats who today live mostly in the West. They want an Islamic regime in Afghanistan but with the involvement of the old bureaucracy and the old king who at present lives in Italy.

The third tendency is the national democrats. They are fighting for Afghanistan's independence, together with changes in the social and economic structure and existing power relationships.

**Have the USA and the European powers any influence on these movements?**

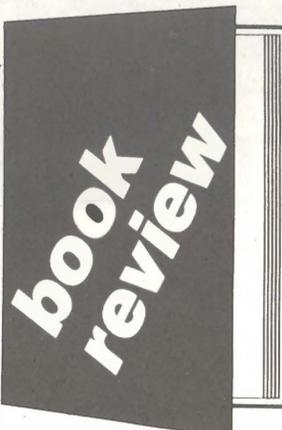
From the beginning, the USA has supported the two religious tendencies in Afghanistan. The extremists have about 60% of their support, the traditionalists about 40%. The European countries support either the traditional religious forces or the more moderate among the extremists;... Neither of them support the national democratic forces....

**What is, in your opinion, important for solidarity with the liberation struggle in Afghanistan?**

...We have been fighting social imperialism for ten years now, unfortunately alone.

Solidarity with the liberation struggle in Afghanistan is very important for the revolutionary advanced and democratic powers in Europe and America. For Afghanistan is a test case for a just war against social imperialism. Up until now many on the left consider the Soviet Union to be different from the USA. When the USA invaded Grenada or Vietnam, they protested straight away without thinking. But when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, when it stretched its hands towards Angola, when it oppressed the Eritrean people in Ethiopia, the left are wary. We need clarity so that we can fight imperialism in whatever form it takes....

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★  
 The article above consists of extracts from an interview, given by Abdul Qaium Rahbar to Rote Fahne (Red Flag) 6/1989. (Red Flag is the weekly paper of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany, MLPD).  
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**IMPERIALISM AND THE CONTROL OF WOMEN'S FERTILITY**  
 by Sumati Nair

The very definition of the "population problem" in the Third World has come almost solely from the industrialised countries, particularly the USA. They fear that famines resulting from over-population will give rise to political uprisings and the loss of raw materials.

The West's proposed solutions to the Third World "population problem" today are blatant and selfish, showing a disregard for Third World women's lives.

Tried and tested methods of contraception are not effective enough. They give individual women too much control. If a woman has too many problems with the pill, she can stop taking it.

New long-acting hormonal contraceptives have been developed in the form of injections, or capsule implants, or a vaginal ring containing hormones. Their long-term effects are little known or inadequately studied, but have included cancer and sterility, as well as menstrual changes, headaches, nausea, depression and rashes. There is also the risk of abnormalities to the foetus in pregnant women.

The book provides detailed information about the methods currently being developed and used. It reveals the connection between Western governments, privately funded international bodies and the multi-national drug industry. It highlights the role of the World Health Organisation. 164 pages.

£1.75 + 45p P&P

**MALCOLM X**  
**THE LAST SPEECHES**  
 Edited by Bruce Perry

This book contains Malcolm X's last speeches prior to his assassination on February 21st, 1965. This year marks the 25th anniversary of his death.

Malcolm X was a brilliant revolutionary thinker and leader. His primary concern was the oppression of the African-American people. But he was also an internationalist, and he sought to establish links between the African-American people's struggle and the struggle for international human rights.



Unlike other "Civil Rights leaders", he vigorously called upon the African-American people to oppose the war in Vietnam.

In the face of brutal state repression, he was one of the first to call upon black people to reject the pacifist stance, as advocated by the misleaders of the Civil Rights movement. Instead, he taught the oppressed blacks to use whatever means necessary, including arms, to defend themselves against racist state violence.

Malcolm X has been accused to being a black racist but this concept must be rejected. Black people are victims not perpetrators of racism. In this way, he has been greatly misunderstood. Nevertheless, this revolutionary ideas are still as relevant today as they were then. 189 pages.

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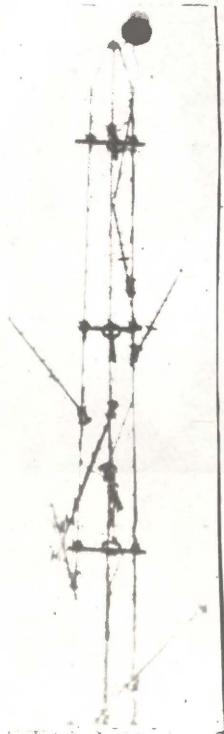
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## HIDING THE TRUTH

Disclosures about Britain's dirty tricks war in occupied Ireland continue to leak out despite government attempts to silence any questions about the army's undercover activities. Much was revealed about the Clockwork Orange allegation by the former Army Disinformation Officer, Colin Wallace, in a 'Sunday Times' article on February 11th.



The communications tower of Anderstown barracks.

Two of the army's top generals during the time Wallace was involved in his undercover role, Sir Frank King and Sir Peter Leng, were both quoted as knowing about the suppression of the sexual abuse case at the Kincora Boys Home which involved certain loyalist politicians and about the smearing of MPs of all parties. This article appeared in the paper's first edition but was subsequently dropped from later editions.

In early February, Michael Taylor, a former colleague of Wallace, who had worked at army headquarters at Lisburn, supported Wallace's allegations about the smear campaign against senior politicians. He said that one of his duties was to guard files containing forged documents. "At most, ten people in our branch at Lisburn would have known about

and would have had access to, the Clockwork Orange operation. All of them were senior officers. Wallace was one of them."

### DEMANDS REJECTED

Demands for a full inquiry into all of Wallace's allegations, and not just the circumstances of his dismissal from the army in 1975, have been rejected by the government, not surprisingly. Any probe would reveal that Clockwork Orange was part of a bigger campaign that included smearing the Irish Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, who was considered to be "unreliable" by sections of the British security service. It would have exposed how the vilification of Haughey was code-named Operation Brogue (as revealed in a book by the same name by John Feehan).

The British government claims that since the mid-seventies, it has not been "the policy to disseminate information in Northern Ireland in ways designed to denigrate individuals and or organisations by propaganda purposes." The admission that previously there had been an officially sanctioned dirty tricks campaign in Northern Ireland came only after a year of planning how to limit the damage if such an admission had to be made.

### INFORMATION RESEARCH DEPT

Dirty tricks in Northern Ireland are not of recent origin. The 1945 Labour government set up an Information Research Department (IRD), as a department of the Foreign Office with a brief to oversee a secret propaganda offensive against the Soviet Union.



The spy post on Divis Tower, equipped with cameras and microphones, watching and listening over Belfast.

Later, it was to expand its targets to include the Fianna Fail party, led by Jack Lynch, in an attempt to split it in the early seventies.

The MI6/IRD propaganda campaign began with the faking of a pamphlet called 'Fianna Fail and the IRA' which contained a mixture of lies, gossip, speculation and twisted truth. What was actually believed by the British was found in a secret document that fell into the hands of the IRA who gave it wide publicity in 1979.

A report drawn up by Lieutenant General Sir James Glover noted that: "We have no reason to suspect that the IRA obtain active support from either Fine Gael or Fianna Fail or that it will not do so in the future."

It was not until the mid-seventies that the IRD was closed down.

### RECENT DISINFORMATION

The fact that the campaign of disinformation continues is shown by recent examples: the way former Assistant Chief Constable of Manchester, John Stalker was taken off his investigation of the army's shoot-to-kill policy; the media hounding of Carmen Prota, eye-witness to the SAS execution policy in Gibraltar and events connected with Robert Irwin, the Belfast police surgeon who spoke out about torture.

Two things stand out from any investigation of the Wallace affair. The intrigue and distortion of events in the North of Ireland has been going on for many years, irrespective of whether there has been a Tory or Labour government in Westminster.

Secondly, the aim is clearly to manipulate public opinion in order to serve the interests of those who benefit from a continuation of the status quo.

The fact that more information is coming out into the open is good. But there is a danger in concentrating on one aspect of the army's work, its dirty tricks and covert operations, we miss out the wider aspects of its main purpose, the suppression of the national liberation struggle taking place in the North of Ireland.

# WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN STRUGGLE

Extracts from an interview with Mairead Farrell, by Jenny McGeever of 'Spare Rib' on 20th September, 1986.

Mairead Farrell was twelve years old in 1969 when British troops went on the streets of the North of Ireland. She saw internment without trial or charge, curfews, deaths by plastic bullet and the first shoot-to-kill of peaceful demonstrators on Bloody Sunday. She believed that the only way towards peace for Ireland is the withdrawal of all British influence and for the Irish people as a whole to determine their own future. At nineteen, she was convicted of causing explosions and being a member of the IRA. She had planted bombs in Conway's Hotel, Dunmurray, frequented by the security forces. Asked if she had any regrets, she replied:

"No, it was worth it because I went on that operation. There's no regrets, except that I got caught...."

"We realised we couldn't have hit legitimate targets, i.e. the British occupation forces there, without killing innocent people, so we gave a warning. We had planned the operation and knew that it would be successful - you have to weigh up all the elements involved and see, is the target worthwhile - and we were 99.9% certain nothing could have gone wrong, like the bombs going off early."

This was April 1976, and Mairead spent the next ten months on remand in Armagh women's prison. "Special category" status had been withdrawn just one month earlier.

"We all felt angry we were not getting political status. We felt very strongly that we were political prisoners and as such, shouldn't given in to the Brits' attempts to criminalise us, but even worse, criminalise the entire republican movement .... It was a measure designed to denigrate us."

## PRISON PROTEST

Mairead's sentence was fourteen years, of which she served ten and a half at Armagh and later Maghaberry prisons.



"I suppose I've always believed we had a legitimate right to take up arms and defend our country against the Brits' occupation. I wouldn't have got involved in the movement if I hadn't believed that."

The day after her trial, the no-work protest began. It continued until 1983, when it was replaced by a "go-slow" protest, so that the prisoners would no longer have to lose remission and privileges.

The dirt protest, which began in February 1980 and lasted thirteen months, was forced on the women after prison staff locked up the landing toilets, the wash basins and the baths, and locked the women in their cells. When some of the toilets were later opened, the women decided to continue on the no-wash as a protest.

The decision to end the dirt protest was made in preparation for the imminent hunger strike of Bobby Sands in March 1981. But before it ended, Mairead Farrell, together with Mary Doyle and Mairead Nugent, began their own hunger strike in December 1980, in protest at the loss of political status. They called it off after nineteen days because they heard that the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) had agreed to their demands. Later the NIO denied this.

The high point for Mairead in Armagh was hearing that Bobby Sands had won a seat in the Westminster elections for Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

They held a commemoration in the yard in May 1981 when Bobby Sands died. The thirty women involved were charged under the "good order and discipline" regulations of the prison for holding an illegal parade.

Most of the women cried most nights as the ten deaths of the hunger strikers took place.

Strip searching was introduced in Armagh in November 1982. It applied only to those entering or leaving the prison, whether on weekly remand to the courts or going on an inter-prison visit. The remand women refused to be strip-searched. Reinforcements were called and they were forcibly held down and stripped. Mairead refused to be strip-searched and as a result lost the right to visit her fiancé in Long Kesh. She did not see him again until her release four years later.

Catherine Moore, a remand prisoner, was held down and forcibly stripped, and got badly bruised in the process. The officers later charged her with assault.

The worst aspect of strip searching was the regular beatings of those who refused. Other punishments were three days in solitary, loss of privileges for fourteen days or loss of remission.

The republican prisoners decided to give up their resistance to strip searching after a number of assaults on remand prisoners.

The only occasion Mairead was strip-searched was the day she was released from Maghaberry in September 1986.

"I felt like it was the final insult. It's designed as a psychological torture, as a way of intimidating. The only way to beat it is to mentally turn off. The screws make remarks about your body."

Eighteen months later, Mairead Farrell was killed by the SAS in Gibraltar.

# WHERE WE STAND

At its Congress held in 1989, the RCL adopted an initial position on the question of women's oppression and agreed to give a high priority to work round this question in the coming period.

Although the RCL has both positive and negative experience in its work on women, much of the time it has held incorrect positions and in order to move forward, we had to make clear self-criticisms of these incorrect positions. The central points of self-criticism were:

1. The RCL had had an economist view of women's oppression which was part of the view that only the oppression of working class women was important and that the workplace was the only arena where we should be working with women. At times this position was even reduced to the demand for equal pay for women at work.

2. We viewed the women's movement of the sixties and seventies as a bourgeois movement that had nothing progressive to say to Marxist-Leninists. We dismissed this movement as bourgeois feminist.

3. We saw the family as subordinate to class. We said that whereas women were oppressed in bourgeois families, it was possible to build class unity between men and women in working class families, to build fighting units of the proletariat.

Our present position clearly criticises these incorrect positions although it does not make a full analysis of the question of women. We are still engaged in work round this question. The main points of our present position are:

A. In imperialist society, women suffer different forms of oppression and exploitation. Working class women face class oppression and national minority women face national oppression on top. However, women also face a common oppression as women which affects all women, although in different ways and to different degrees.

Women's oppression takes many different forms and works on different levels, social, political and economic. It cannot be isolated to one aspect of women's situation, for example, their relation to work although we think that women's struggle for the right to work is an important strand of women's struggles and one that we should support. Women's role in the family is central to their oppression and this is reflected in many different ways: domestic violence and rape; ideological and social attitudes; reproductive rights; educational and cultural questions.

Women are not only oppressed by imperialism in general and its institutions, but also by men, either through the family or in other ways.

B. The women's movement is a progressive movement which raised again the question of women's oppression and has led the fight against it. It was wrong to class the movement as bourgeois because as women's oppression is cross-class, the main aspect of the fight against it is not its class nature. Feminism in general is a progressive ideology that we should unite with.

C. In Britain, the main aspect of the nuclear family is that it is oppressive. It is a structure which meets the needs of imperialism and is built on the isolation and oppression of women and on violence towards them.

D. We stand by the basic Marxist method of historical materialism in our analysis of women in society today but need to look critically at the original analysis of capitalism and to apply and develop it in the concrete conditions of today.

E. We need to unite with the many struggles of women for their liberation and we support the right of women to organise separately. It is crucial that we work in solidarity with national minority women in Britain, support their organisations and support Third World women who are in the forefront of the world struggle against imperialism.

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