

# WOMAN

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

# Struggle

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### TWO SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR DOWRY MURDERS

In two separate judgements, an Indian Court has sentenced two people to hang for burning to death two women. The women had been killed for not providing sufficient dowries. "Dowry murder" is notorious for the casual treatment it receives from the authorities but in this case the judge declared, "Atrocities on women are increasing at a fast pace and in the interests of social justice, demonstrative, exemplary, and deterrent punishment is necessary to prevent them."

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### GREENHAM COMMON WOMEN ACQUITTED FOR BUS HYJACKING

Twenty-one women charged with taking a U.S. Air Force bus and driving it to the Greenham cruise missile base were acquitted by an all woman jury.

The only eye witness for the prosecution, a member of the Royal Air Force, said he had followed the bus for the last 3/4 of a mile of its journey. The bus was being driven erratically he reported, in fact, he suspected at the time it was being driven by a drunken American! When the bus stopped, numerous women ran out some brandishing belt cutters. (Greenham women are known for their expertise at cutting through the fence that separates the English countryside from the United States military base). However, the witness could not identify any of the women.

Another prosecution witness verified that over 1,000 women had entered the base during the three month period when the incident occurred, and that a large hole had been cut in the fence near the silo area (where the missiles are kept) in an eight hour period. This evidence strengthened the women's claim that ten other women had reached the silos that same night had been detained, and later released without charge.



Cross-examination of the prosecution witnesses was sufficient for the women to prove their case, and they were acquitted by a historic all-woman jury.

After the acquittal, one woman said, "We chose an all-woman jury not because we expected greater leniency but to give women the opportunity of working together and to redress the balance in the courtroom which is primarily a male domain". "Once again we have succeeded in highlighting the appalling lack of security inside the base".

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#### BRITISH WOMEN TO FIGHT IUD MANUFACTURER IN USA

About forty (40) women from Britain will add to the 3,800 figure from the USA who are seeking damages from the manufacturers of the Dalcon Shield contraceptive. The British women who became ill or sterile after using the device have won the right to fight for compensation in the States from A.H. Robins.

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#### RELIGIOUS FANATICS ATTACK U.S. ABORTION CLINICS

Attacks on abortion clinics in the USA are on the increase, according to the National Abortion Federation, with three major arson reports in one week last autumn. A total of \$100,000 worth of damage was done to the three clinics in Louisiana and North Carolina, and one of them was razed to the ground.

At Clinic Eva in Los Angeles continual harassment included a man dressed in red-spattered butcher's apron waving a fake meat-cleaver chasing patients round the parking lot, and threats from anti-abortion leaders that 'God will see to it that this clinic burns down.'

Meanwhile Reagan-backed agents of the Lord in the Senate and House of Representatives are doing their best to advance an amendment which will cut off federal funds to family planning clinics who tell clients that abortion is an alternative to unwanted pregnancy.

Organisations which use their own non-federal money to counsel women on abortion, to make referrals or perform abortions would also be barred from getting funding.



The effects of this amendment, if it's passed, would be devastating - clinics would be forced to shut down or comply with an anti-counselling policy, and state health departments and hospitals, which now get half the federal money, would lose their funding because they perform abortions.

Women's and various medical groups are out in force to oppose this manoeuvre which could accomplish the pro-life agenda in one fell swoop.

(Sue Houligan)

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(information from Off Our Backs)

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#### POLISH TEXTILE WORKERS STAGE STRIKE

Using a form of strike that was successful earlier this year, women at Zyrardow Stella Textile factory in Poland refused to turn on their machines after the breakfast break, in an action that commemorated the historic strike in the Gdansk shipyards on August 27th. The silence of the machines soon spread, and the strikers refused to talk with the factory director and reportedly laughed out of the hall the prosecutor who threatened them with jail for staging an 'illegal' strike. Refusing to send representatives to negotiate with the Ministry of Labour and Wages, all the women took turns to speak for everybody. They won a wage rise in two days, and the management agreed to reinstitute free Saturdays as soon as the demand was made.

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#### RUNNING RINGS AROUND SOLDIERS

At a meeting of Palistinian and Israeli held in Tel Aviv last year one of the speakers described the resistance shown by young women in the West Bank and Gaza strip during the first demonstrations against the Israeli occupation, 'In one case the army commander spotted a small girls' demonstration and ordered his soldiers 'Stop those girls! Those are the leaders!' They cut off a little demonstration here and <sup>/another would start in</sup> another place. The army would get there, arrest the girls, and the commander would say 'over there, those are the leaders.' And you should have seen that army run around! As soon as one group was arrested, another would appear like the Vietcong, and each time the commander would yell 'Those are the leaders!'

The Tel Aviv meeting gathered together 150 Palistinian and Israeli women to hear women from the occupied territories speak of their lives and of the effects of the current political situation with Israeli peace and human rights activists.

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