

Women's Fightback



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womensfightback.wordpress.com

20p

Violence is not "part of the job"

By Becky Crocker

25 November is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Both the International Transport Workers' Federation and the European Transport Workers' Federation have publicly marked this day and raised the profile of their ongoing campaigns to tackle violence and harassment against women who work in the transport industry. The UK Rail Maritime and Transport (RMT) union will mark this year's day with a meeting for all women trade unionists and allies.

The core of the international campaign in the transport industry is to raise awareness among all workers of all genders and to get employers to recognise that this is a serious issue. It

should not be just "part of the job".

According to a statement from the ETF:

"Transport is an industry with high incidence of violence. Many women transport workers work in desk-front jobs, being in direct contact with clients and customers, and are often exposed to aggressive behaviour, be it verbal or physical.

"Companies do too little to tackle third party violence. On contrary, they practice a tacit policy of 'client is always right'. Women workers are instructed by their employer to de-fuse violence rather than report it back, and complaints are hardly taken into account or dealt with.

"Transport is also a highly segregated industry, but women do get gradually recruited in male-dominated jobs. Many however leave

the industry soon after they get employed. Workplace violence and harassment stand as one of the main reasons for the poor retention of women in transport professions."

Women in the RMT want to replicate the international union campaign. Last year the union conducted a survey among its members of all genders focused on sexual assaults at work (rather than the broader issue of all violence). While the survey returns were small (not unusual for a survey of this type) the union did get a lot of qualitative material to add to the knowledge we already have about how prevalent and serious an issue this is.

For example on the London Underground in 2013-14 there were 31 reported sexual assault on staff members, 23 on women and 8 on

men. Sometimes sexual assaults are recorded as general assaults and not all assaults are reported. We also know that the culture of acceptance of sexual harassment against women seafarers is very bad.

In our union we have produced a model workplace agreement on domestic violence which includes such things as ensuring that women absent after suffering violence are not disciplined. We also want to educate our reps, most of whom are men.

The RMT-organised meeting on the 25 November will be a chance for women across different unions to meet up, to share experience and to identify areas we can campaign together on.

•More information here: <http://bit.ly/1GLuOKi>

an **RMT** women's event



END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

On 25th November, the UN day for the elimination of violence against women, please join an evening of discussion with trade unionists and feminist campaigners on how to eradicate violence against women from our workplaces and society.

CAMPAIGN SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- Gona Saed, Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation, on honour killings in Iraqi Kurdistan
- A speaker from the campaign to end female genital mutilation
- Eileen Best, Chair of Unison's Women's Committee
- Plus Janine Booth, RMT rep and European Transport Workers' Federation women's committee, performs her poetry

Tuesday 25th November at P21 Gallery, 21 Charlton Street, London NW1 1JD.
Light buffet at 6:30PM, speakers and discussion at 7:30PM followed by music and socialising.
Email: j.webb@rmt.org.uk Facebook event: <http://on.fb.me/1DEKQTK>

ALL THE RAGE 2015 a socialist feminist conference

Women have never enjoyed equality: in pay, politics or society. And capitalism is trying to push us back even further.

Women in Workers' Liberty are organising a conference to celebrate and learn from women's struggles in Britain and around the world, and to consider how socialist feminist ideas can make a difference.

fb.com/alltherage2015
[@alltherage2015](https://twitter.com/alltherage2015)



**Saturday
February
28**

**UCL,
Gower
Street,
London**

Austerity cuts closing refuges

By Rosalind Robson

Refuges across in England and Wales are being shut down as money for domestic violence services are cut and the national network of specialist safe houses is under threat.

The threat comes from the competitive tendering process being adopted by local authorities. According to refuge workers this process is weighted towards larger housing associations and businesses, money is being channelled to preventative work, and for some councils is directed away from specialist refuges for women, because they do not take in men (although 89% of violence is directed at women, by men). Another issue is that time limits being put on length of stay.

Specialist refuges that take in victims of violence in forced marriages and of female genital mutilation have been particularly affected. And in Sheffield, the Ashiana refuge for black and minority ethnic women victims has shut after 30 years.

Local authorities are not obliged to put domestic violence services out to tender, yet under the pressure of overall budget cuts that is what is happening.

According to Polly Neate, chief executive of Women's Aid, "There are areas where there aren't any refuges, other areas are specifying beds must be for local women only and some areas are commissioning so-called refuges which are not refuges."

DIFFICULT Women may increasingly find it much more difficult to get away from violent partners.

If no refuge is available and next to impossible to find alternative social housing, where do you go? Private accommodation? The rents and deposits are extortionate. Sleeping rough on the streets may be the only option for you and possibly your children.

Specialist refuge workers and refuges are important because they can support women to understand what they have been through, to stay safe, access

health services, legal advocacy and provide immigration advice.

These cuts have been affecting refuges for some time. According to one refuge worker, in one day alone in 2013, 155 women with 103 children were turned away from the first refuge they approached.

A *Guardian* investigation (3 August 2014) found that refuges have closed, or are under threat of closure, in Gloucestershire, Cheshire, Devon, Dorset, Sheffield, Nottingham, Somerset, Leeds, Leicestershire and Coventry. Coventry and Wolverhampton were places where a new focus on providing accommodation for male victims had led to cuts for women's refuges.

The preventative measure that is being promoted is the government's domestic violence protection orders. The orders exclude an alleged perpetrator from the women's home for between 48 hours and 28 days and are seen as a way of keeping a victim in her own home; but many domestic abuse workers are sceptical of their overall ef-

fectiveness.

Cheshire West and Chester council says it is "modernising old fashioned" services. It plans to replace the refuges with a "hub" offering eight places, and four units in the community for male and female victims. Access to women from outside the area has been capped at 20%, and the period of time families can stay limited to 12 weeks.

Behind the talk of "modernisation" and concern for all victims, and not just women who have been hurt and abused by men (an issue which should be tackled, but not at the expense of women!) lies a grubby drive to save money.

One of Gloucestershire county council accommodation options includes "temporary accommodation with friends and family"! Which is like telling victims, look after yourself!

•A new campaign has been set up in London to fight these cuts. Sisters Uncut can be found here: www.facebook.com/sistersuncut

Stalinist misogyny reborn

By Ann Field

A woman's place is in the home, especially the kitchen. Women should be good mothers and look after their menfolk. If they go to cafes, pubs or night clubs, they should be arrested.

These "words of wisdom" were spoken by Alexander Mozgovoy — commander of the separatist Prizrak Battalion in south-east Ukraine — at the first "trial" staged by a "people's court" in the so-called Lugansk People's Republic.

The two defendants in the "trial" had already been found guilty of rape. The role of the "people's court" — held in late October, attended by about 300 inhabitants of Alchevsk, and presided over by Mozgovoy and two other military officers — was to decide on the penalty by a show of hands.

One defendant was sentenced to death by firing squad. The other was sentenced to be sent to the front line, so that he could "atone for his guilt with blood" and "die with dignity".

Mozgovoy took the "trial" as an opportunity to expand upon his views about women:

"If I see even just one girl in a café or a pub tomorrow, she will be arrested. A woman must be the

guardian of the hearth, a mother. But what kind of mothers are they after going to pubs? How can they bring up their children? What example are they giving?

"If you want to remain an honest person and devoted to your husband, stay at home and do embroidery. All pubs are full of the female population, all night clubs. What kind of female population do we have here? Are they all prostitutes, or what?"

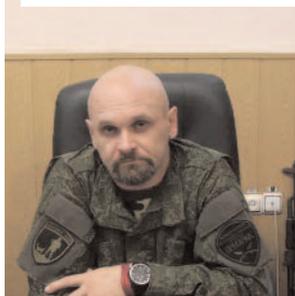
(Interrupted by another military officer on the "bench" commenting that "they all need to be raped", Mozgovoy responded — in a "trial" which itself dealt with two rapists — with the words: "There's an element of truth in that.")

"So, I repeat. A special order will be issued to patrols: to arrest all women who are found in pubs. [Commotion in the auditorium.] I said: *all!* And then let's see whether you drink. Stay at home, bake pirozhki, and celebrate 8th March [International Women's Day]."

"You don't like what I've said? It's time that you remembered that you are Russians. It's time to regain your spirituality."

In the following days Mozgovoy tried to backtrack from his statements. In an interview with Radio

He wants you to embroider



Moscow he claimed:

"Nobody is speaking of a ban. Just about people taking a look at themselves. It was a trial of two rapists. But people began shouting and making a noise because of women not being allowed to have another glass of vodka. These were not suggestions or instructions. Just an attempt to get people thinking that it's time to think a bit about morals."

The Lugansk authorities themselves are so proud of creating a "legal system" which represents a throwback to 1930s Stalinist Russia, peppered with Islamic State misogyny, that they have recorded the entire proceedings and even created a trailer to encourage people to watch them.

- Trailer: <http://bit.ly/1uifBLh>
- Proceedings: <http://bit.ly/11dY8ZP>

How do we fight back?

Gemma Short reviews *Everyday Sexism* by Laura Bates

***Everyday Sexism* is based on a project which collected hundreds of thousands of stories, anecdotes and testimonials from women, contributed via Twitter and the everyday sexism blog.**

These make for uncomfortable reading. Many of the testimonials speak of explicit and violent sexual assault. Much of it makes you angry. It is a condensed reflection of sexism in all areas of society.

The *Everyday Sexism* project was set up in 2012. By 2013 it had over 50,000 entries. Now it has 177,000 followers on Twitter. The project expanded quickly and has gained enormous media coverage. It reflects a desire amongst many women to have a voice, to be able to do something about sexism.

The fact that contributions to the project can easily be made anonymously, that women can read the testimonials of others, was important in giving that voice to women.

In the book, Bates frames a selection of contributions with commentary constructing an argument that sexism still exists in society. On the blog Bates states "it seems to be increasingly difficult to talk about sexism, equality and women's rights in a modern society that perceives itself to have

achieved gender equality", recognising that legal equality has not created an equal society.

However Bates often seems surprised at this fact, and in fact succumbs to arguing for the same type of measures that have failed to eradicate women's oppression until now.

In discussing the disproportionate effect of cuts on women since 2010 Bates argues, by quoting Caroline Lucas MP, that if there were more women in parliament, issues that are demonstrably unequal in terms of their impact on women would be picked up and stopped.

Having more women in parliament does not erase sexism from society.

CHANGE

It certainly will not change the hearts of neo-liberal politicians or prevent capitalism having crises!

In fact Bates argues for what she calls a "cultural shift" in attitudes towards women to allow more women to enter politics and to give established [women] politicians more power. She does not see the need for a radically different society.

In a chapter on women in the media, Bates discusses some of the most "in your face" sexism, that we see everyday. It is also, along with street harassment, the arena of sexism currently most discussed amongst feminists and online in the project. She, rightly, catalogues the plethora of in-

grained sexism in the media, from *Blurred Lines*, to *Page 3*, to female politicians being defined by their clothes.

Yet Bates seems to fall into the trap of thinking that tweaking media coverage, banning sexist songs, or not giving sexist views a platform is a solution. In talking about chat show debates such as one on "are women who get drunk and flirt to blame if they get attacked" Bates appears to be surprised that viewers called in to share reactionary views, despite the fact that her book is an argument for the fact that sexism exists in society. If these sorts of debates did not happen, sexism would not disappear, it does not make the world a safer place. If we cannot effectively challenge these views, we cannot hope to eradicate them.

It would be impossible to summarise the many testimonials given in *Everyday Sexism* that expose the levels of sexism in society. It is worth reading the book for these testimonials alone. The voice given to women through the project is valuable, as is a mainstream-published and widely-reviewed book that exposes the levels of sexism in society.

However Bates has nothing to say to the women who engaged in the project of how they can organise to fight back on anything more than an individual "#shouting-back" basis.

Teaching men to sexually abuse to attract women... what?

By Rachael Barnes

A petition, launched on Saturday, calling for the denial of a visa to American "pick-up artist" Julien Blanc, has been signed by nearly 25,000 people.

Blanc has already been removed from Australia, for organising a tour of seminars "teaching" men how to prey on women by "short-circuiting their emotional and logical mind". His seminars and Youtube videos are not only verbally derogatory to women, but are racist and contain solid evidence of him harassing

and sexually assaulting women. He provides tips on how to overcome LMR (last minute resistance [to sex]).

Similar social media campaigns, which have already proved successful in Australia, are also currently in place in Canada and Japan.

Whilst it is crystal clear Blanc is a danger to society, and more specifically women, using state measures to ensure he doesn't enter the country sets a dangerous precedent.

Sure, arrest the man as soon as he sets foot here (there is surely enough evidence to do so!), but

strengthening the state's ability to revoke and refuse visas is not our policy.

This misogynistic culture of "Men's Rights Advocates" and uploading videos of women being sexually harassed has become extremely prominent. You only have to google names such as Sam Pepper and Dapper Laughs to see it.

And while the response from the large majority of people is promising, it is clear the politics of such responses needs to be discussed and thought out a lot more.

Pro-choice campaigners in Ireland take the pill train

Campaigners took a train to Belfast and back to Dublin on 28 October to bring non-surgical medical abortion pills into Ireland where they are illegal. The action recreated a similar one taken in the 1970s to bring the contraceptive pill to Ireland.

Ireland's "8th amendment" recognises the right to life of an unborn child and equates it with the right to life of the mother. Abortion is also classed as illegal under the Offences Against the Person Act.

Many women travel to mainland UK to gain access

to abortion. However campaigners say that with increasing austerity, women who cannot afford to travel resort to unsafe unlicensed pills bought on the internet.

Women on the pill train protest also took the pills on arrival back in Dublin to demonstrate their safety and to defy Ireland's laws.

Socialist TDs (members of parliament) from the Socialist Party, People before Profit and Anti-Austerity Alliance also took part. Women on Web, an organisation that coordinates getting safe abortion pills and reliable advice on abortion to



women who need it in countries where abortion is illegal, also took part.

Feminism is cool now, but where are the politics?

By Beth Redmond

The number of young women openly calling themselves feminists is, in my experience, constantly increasing.

In the four years between me starting university and now, the attitude of a large number of student women has shifted dramatically, for the better, but there is an exceptional way to go yet.

Feminist is a word that has been positively banded around in pop culture outlets solidly for the last year or two. When celebrities are interviewed for magazines, television shows and newspapers, "are you a feminist?" will often be asked, and the answer is usually yes. Beyonce recently performed at the MTV Video Music Awards with "FEMINIST" emblazoned on the stage behind her, with extracts of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's speech on feminism and expectations for girls playing in the background.

Whilst I am critical of specific aspects of "celebrity feminism", there is no doubt that putting the concept on the radar of so many young people is a good thing.



Beyonce being a feminist at this year's VMAs

On a more specific level, feminist societies and women's groups in universities are reflective of the liberal ideologies of "celebrity feminists". Whilst I don't think this is conscious, and in fact, lots of fem-socs are highly critical of them, and rightly so (for example, Lena Dunham's erasure of women of colour in her very popular television series 'Girls'), but the spike in popularity among both celebrities and young women, hand in hand with the lack of political substance, is interesting nonetheless.

In some cases, people assume having a feminist society in itself is incredibly radical and left-wing, forget-

ting that right-wingers have also been known to identify as that. And that assumption leads to the obliteration of the link to class struggle. There is another debate to be had about what it means for student activists to call themselves left-wing. Fem-socs are seen as "friendly" spaces, where debate can often be shut down on the basis that political disagreements lead to "unsafe people or spaces".

At this year's National Union of Students Women's conference, National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts Women produced a political bulletin, highly critical of both the NUS and its women's campaign. We were told that "Trot behav-

our" is reserved for national conference only, and that by handing out our bulletin we were breaking the idea of women's conference being a "safe space". Why spend your time "Trotting" when you could be telling some right-wingers how inspiring they are for setting up a fem-soc, eh? Leave the bulletins to the men.

Debate shapes our politics. How are we expected to grow and develop if we can neither convince people of our own arguments or be prepared to think about other people's ideas?

The film 'Pride' solidified some thoughts I had on the radicalisation of liberation societies, both in universities and more generally.

Encouraging people to take part in specific campaigns, like the miners' strike, or today, the Focus E15 campaign, forces people to see the link between how the government and the media scapegoats and demonises different oppressed groups in a similar way, reinforcing the idea of the class struggle being an intersectional one.

No socialism without women's liberation, and vice versa.

Malala Yousafzai: activist, feminist and socialist

By Vijay Jackson

Recently, the Pakistani education activist Malala Yousafzai was much-deservedly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her courageous stand against the Taliban's oppression of women.

She was jointly awarded the prize with Kailash Satyarthi, an Indian activist who fought against child labour. In a year of stiff (but more controversial) competition from whistleblowers such as Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning, Malala's award is a change from recent years in which the Nobel committee has been criticised, such as

Obama's pre-emptive 2009 Peace Prize given before even a full year in office, and during both the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

However, one side of Malala is often neglected in the mainstream media — her support for socialism and her association with the International Marxist Tendency. Her one and only known quote on the topic is from a message she passed to the 32nd Congress of the Pakistani IMT section last year, which is as follows: "First of all I'd like to thank *The Struggle* and the IMT for giving me a chance to speak last year at their Summer Marxist School in Swat and also for introducing me to

Marxism and Socialism.

"I just want to say that in terms of education, as well as other problems in Pakistan, it is high time that we did something to tackle them ourselves. It's important to take the initiative. We cannot wait around for anyone else to come and do it. Why are we waiting for someone else to come and fix things? Why aren't we doing it ourselves? I would like to send my heartfelt greetings to the congress. I am convinced socialism is the only answer and I urge all comrades to take this struggle to a victorious conclusion. Only this will free us from the chains of bigotry and exploitation."

The message of solidarity,

sent during her recuperation in Birmingham after her shooting in October 2012 has been largely ignored (except ironically by *The Spectator*), and is symptomatic of the tendency of radical figures to be appropriated over time as figures of secular Western liberalism, regardless of their true personal politics, and in Malala's case sooner than later.

Congratulations to Malala (who had been risking her life ever since writing on a BBC blog in 2008) and her comrades who uphold the right of girls in Pakistan to attend school — her father Ziauddin Yousafzai among that number.

Two women every week

By Janine Booth

In England and Wales, women are killed by current or former male partners at the rate of two a week. Thanks to Counting Dead Women for its work in telling these truths.

One hour in every eighty-four

Another body hits the floor

A hundred women every year

Killed by one they once held dear

Nine a month, four a fortnight

Do these figures sound too forthright?

Facts don't lie; the truth will speak

— Two women every week

So where were you one week ago?

At home, at work, or on the go?

The seven sunsets passed since then

Saw two more women's living end

At hands of those who hands they'd hold

Who held their trust til trust turned cold

An open-ended killing streak

— Two women every week

Lisa, Gemma, Jade, Chantelle,
Poonam, Debbie, Yvonne, Janelle,
Sarah, Hollie, Kate, Sameena,
Kanwal, Sandra, Anne, Madina,
Reece bashed Ashley round the head,
David stabbed Linah, now she's dead
Their daughter saw and heard her shriek
— Two women every week

Of women who were here on Monday

Two have left us by this Sunday

Some stalked by those who can't accept

That's she's moved on; he won't respect

'Cos she was his, possessed by man

If he can't have her, no-one can

Deadly hunt, she hides, he seeks

— Two women every week

So where's the headline, where's the rage?

Why's this not on your front page?

If there's a hook that grabs attention

Maybe her murder merits mention

Model slaughtered, beauty slain

Psycho monster loose again

Otherwise, it's just not news

— Our women dead, our ones and twos

The time has passed for being meek

— Two women every week

The time has come for us to speak

— Two women every week

Take action now cos talk is cheap

— Two women every week

We will not let this matter sleep

— Two women every week

The stories of the women in this poem can be found by clicking on the names on Janine's blog: janinebooth.com

What's wrong with "identity politics"?

We reprint the following article, first published in *Workers' Liberty's* 1986 pamphlet *The Case for Socialist Feminism*, to start a debate about the role of "identity" and "experience" in feminist politics.

It talks about how experience, subjectivity and identity came to be the defining reference points for feminist activism in the late 1980s. This emphasis has become important to some strands of feminist activism today, in different ways.

Workers' Liberty is not automatically hostile to issues of identity and experience in political struggles. For instance we are sympathetic to the national identities of peoples who have been suppressed by bigger, stronger states. The fight for national rights, is often just and necessary. But ultimately such a fight is judged on whether it is a step towards building a strong united working-class movement against all the inequalities created by capitalism and imperialism.

Similarly building a recognition of gender identity and other experiences of oppression, of race, sexuality into our Marxist politics is important. But the purpose of our discussion is to "objectify" experience. It is not the same thing as using "experience" as the end point for understanding the world. Strong and effective anti-capitalist and socialist feminist alliances will be built by keeping constantly in mind the systematic structural causes of oppression.

We welcome contributions, including radically different ideas!

By Lynn Ferguson

"The personal is political" was one of the main slogans of the women's movement of the late 60s and early 70s. It meant making "personal" issues into issues for collective action; telling women that their problems were not just a matter of personal inadequacies, but part of a social oppression directed against all women; and enlarging socialist ideas with a wider humanism.

With the ebb of the movement, the slogan has been inverted: the political is personal.

This is obviously so for the versions of radical feminism concerned with "releasing our Selves" and asserting the hidden "Cosmic Commonality of women". But the same approach also emerged amongst socialist feminists. Sheila Rowbotham argued in *Beyond the Fragments* (1979) that "Our views are valid because they come from within us and because we hold a received correctness. The words we use seek an honesty about our own interest in what we say. This is the opposite to most left language which is constantly distinguishing itself as correct and then covering itself with a determined objectivity."

A Marxist critic commented: "Sheila Rowbotham appears to believe that the less well thought out ideas are and the more spontaneous the better. Difficulties are experienced by women because of our conditioning, particularly in analysing ideas and articulating our thoughts. However, the last thing we need is to glorify these difficulties and mystify them under the guise of sisterhood (or, as it might be today, 'autonomy'). Sheila Rowbotham sees subjective experiences as being pure and honest. However... subjective attitudes can be extremely dangerous and reactionary," (Pat Longman, *Workers' Action* no.149).

More women can be mobilised to oppose abortion rights than to support them. Some women campaign for peace: others wave flags for troops. There is no single subjective "women's view".

Any politics basing itself on women's essence thus has to argue that some women are not real women. If what you say is the authentic feminist line because it reflects authentic women's experience, then anyone saying different is either a man (of course) or a woman whose experience is not really a woman's experience or who is brainwashed.

Often women do feel the need to claim authority for personal experience, for example in trying to get issues open for discussion in the face of resistance by arrogant and articulate men. But something different is happening today.

Susan Ardill and Sue O'Sullivan put it like this: "With the increasing dominance of 'identity' as the organising factor of so many feminist activities and discussions... 'naming' and 'claiming' came to be invested with a particular moral authority. Just to name yourself as part of a given group is to claim a moral backing for your words and action.



"What was being invoked was a particular feminist ideology... an analysis of the world as made up of a fixed hierarchy of oppressions... around gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, age and ability; and notions of the 'authenticity' of subjective experiences — experience which can be understood only with reference to the hierarchy. In this context, any clash, whether between groups or individuals, becomes a matter of rank determining righteousness. Taken to extremes, if there are divisions within the same 'rank' or group, suppression becomes necessary, so as to protect the 'official' version's claim to define and describe the oppression" (*Feminist Review* No.23).

Ardill and O'Sullivan are writing about a dispute where some political lesbians tried to ban sadomasochistic lesbians from the London Lesbian and Gay Centre. Here "naming" and "claiming" was being used not to swat down arrogant men, but to proscribe other women.

And the argument can go further.

Jayne Egerton (in *Sweeping Statements*, pp. 199-202) defines "male sexuality as the crucial instrument of our control" and concludes: "I cannot see (a feminist sexual politics) as being synonymous or compatible with the pursuit of pleasure, given that we live under male supremacy and may have internalised male sexual values... What gives us pleasure may not always be in our best interests... Our needs, desires and preferences have all been constructed under male supremacy and our subjective response to our powerlessness and subordination cannot be prioritised if they further enslave us..." Here the politics of experience have come full circle.

BURIED

True "female values" are buried so deep under the influence of male supremacy that only a few women can perceive them; but in the name of those values, those few women condemn the "desires and preferences" of most women.

Jayne Egerton is in fact criticising a feminist journal which argued for a libertarian attitude to sexual politics, including pornography: the same sort of argument has been used against women having heterosexual sex because they want to. "Q. But I like fucking. A. Giving up fucking, for a feminist, is about taking your politics seriously" — *Leeds Revolutionary Feminists*, 1979). Only lesbian sex, and only the right sort of lesbian sex, is permitted! A Victorian moral code could hardly be stricter.

In the 1980s the "politics of experience" has been substantially exploded within the women's movement by the protests of black and Jewish feminists. The result has been, however, not a return to rationalism, but the construction of more and more hierarchies of oppression and the oppressed-group identities conferring moral authority.

In truth the Palestine question is the most dramatic illustration of the unviability of the politics of experience. In terms of "the views that come from within us", Israeli Jews and many non-Israeli Jews are Israeli nationalist. Palestinian Arabs are Palestinian-Arab nationalists. Jews are oppressed, Palestinian Arabs are oppressed. Yet neither Israeli nationalism nor Pales-

tinian-Arab nationalism can provide a progressive solution. It is necessary to rise above all instinctive, subjective responses, to analyse objectively.

This is the condition of all scientific thought. Generally, science demands that we distance ourselves from immediate reactions and impressions. No individual can claim that her personal experience represents or sums up the universal experience of all women. Indeed, she can only know that her personal experiences are even typical of women's experience to the extent that women's experience is objectively analysed and described. And then conclusions follow from the objective analysis and description, not primarily from the individual experience.

Hegel stated the case boldly when he condemned "the sort of ecstatic enthusiasm which starts straight off with absolute knowledge, as if shot from a pistol, and makes short work of other points of view simply by explaining that it is to take no notice of them... Since the people of common sense appeal to their feeling, to an oracle within their breast, they are ready to meet anyone who does not agree. They have simply to explain that they have no more to say to anyone who does not find and feel the same as themselves. In other words, they trample the root of humanity under foot. For the nature of humanity is to impel people to agree with one another, and its very existence lies simply in the explicit realisation of a community of conscious life. What is anti-human, the condition of mere animals, consists in keeping within the sphere of feeling pure and simple, and in being able to communicate only by way of feeling-states" (*Introduction to the Phenomenology of Mind*).

Feminism generally has been a daughter of rationalism and humanism here enounced by Hegel. It appeals against the common-sense appearance of women's subordination as a fact given by nature to the higher authority of rational analysis; it appeals against sexist dehumanisation of women, to a principle of treating every human being equally as an individual. Not only the ghetto-feminists, but also "rainbow coalition" politicians, who see politics as a range of oppressed groups all striving for status, have here broken from classic feminism, and from the foundation which classic feminism shares with democracy and socialism.

Science and logic as they exist have, it is true, been shaped by men; and probably that has warped them. But Simone de Beauvoir gave the reply to any feminist who might therefore wish to abandon science and logic: "Culture, civilisation, universal values, have all been the work of men, since it is they who have stood for universality. Just as the proletariat, challenging the bourgeoisie as the dominant class, does not throw out the whole bourgeois heritage, in the same way women have to use, on an equal basis with men, the instruments men have created, not reject them totally" (quoted in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, eds., *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*).

Better this approach than one which reproduces the old sexist notion of "feminine intuition" in a new feminist guise.