

THE POWER OF WOMEN AND THE SUBVERSION OF THE COMMUNITY

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**Women and the subversion
of the community**
by Mariarosa Dalla Costa

A woman's place
by Selma James

with an introduction by Selma James

Up to now it has been assumed that the class struggle is a masculine domain. The factory, we are told, is where revolutions are made. The struggle of women in the home has been ignored or seen out of the context of class. This book gives a new dimension to our understanding of what the class struggle is. No longer can it be fragmented by sex or place of work.

All over the world the feminist movement has shown that women want change. Mariarosa Dalla Costa's analysis of the relation of women in the home to capitalist production explains the material base of this phenomenon. The housewife is a worker too, a worker for capital. Dalla Costa shows the source of women's power and gives us a tool for finding new ways to struggle.

As in the Italian edition, her essay is complemented by "A Woman's Place", written 20 years ago. Simple and concrete, it shows that women have always known the truth of their condition and struggled against their exploitation. Starting from this expression of the struggle, from a Marxist tradition, and on the basis of a growing women's movement, Dalla Costa makes explicit the implications and potential of women's rebellion.

The Introduction relates the two essays to the state of the movement and explains how an international movement of women, by its very existence, changes the terms of struggle for women and for men.

80 pages

Published jointly by the Falling Wall Press and a group of individuals from the Women's Liberation Movement in England and Italy

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Already published

Women Workers Struggle for their Rights by Alexandra Kollontai 16p

An account of the organisation of women at the beginning of this century, in which Kollontai argues for the importance of separate women's organisations. The pamphlet includes an introduction to Kollontai's life and work by Sheila Rowbotham. Translated by Celia Britton.

Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle and Love and the New Morality by Alexandra Kollontai 15p

These two essays contain an early and graphic description of how our personal life is shaped and distorted by capitalist society, and an appeal for recognition that changes in sexual morality taking place in Russia were part of the struggle of a class to take power. There is an introduction by the translator, Alix Holt.

Women's Liberation and Revolution: A Bibliography by Sheila Rowbotham 15p

This lists books, pamphlets and articles for people concerned to explore the relationship between feminism and revolutionary politics. There is a comment on almost every item.

Language and Class: A Critical Look at the Theories of Basil Bernstein by Harold Rosen 12p

Bernstein's work on the relationship between language and class is widely known, widely accepted and used by many educational writers, on both the left and right. This paper suggests why these ideas were so readily accepted, points to some basic deficiencies in the theory, and suggests what new directions might be taken in the study of the language of the working class and, more generally, the study of the relationship between language and class.

Forthcoming

Shop Stewards 1960-1972 by Huw Beynon

During the 1960s many of the conflicts experienced by workers found their political expression through Trade Unions and the shop stewards committees. The pamphlet argues that this kind of politics was sustained by a working class factory consciousness which was structured by Trade Union organisation. The contradictions and limitations of this 'new politics' are demonstrated by an examination of the activities of shop stewards in the motor industry.

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We pose, then, as foremost the need to break this role of housewife that wants women divided from each other, from men and from children, each locked in her family as the chrysalis in the cocoon that imprisons itself by its own work, to die and leave silk for capital.

Women and the Subversion of the Community

Men workers talk about how the union is separated from the men. If this is true of the men's unions, it is doubly true of the women's. To many women it seems that the only thing that they do is collect dues and try to keep the girls in line for the company. . . . Yet the girls will defend the union if the company attacks it. They know, however, that if anything is to be done, they will have to do it themselves.

A Woman's Place

MARIAROSA DALLA COSTA was born in Treviso, Italy. She took her *laurea* in law at the University of Padua in July 1967. Immediately after she began to work as lecturer in the Institute of Political & Social Sciences of the Faculty of Political Sciences at the same university.

"I must make clear that my research and study have always been centered on the relation between capitalist development and the development of political and legal institutions. The Marxian description of capitalist development has constituted the basis of every phase of my research.

The most decisive turn in this research, what has allowed me to have a deeper understanding of the relation between capitalist development and anti-capitalist struggle, has been and continues to be the analysis of the place of the woman within and against this development.

My reorientation and my commitment to the women's movement I owe to that movement as I have known it in the US and the UK, and to my association with Selma James whose political experience, as a housewife and factory worker, in the West Indies, the US and Europe helped me to clarify many crucial connections in the imperialist division of labor starting from the Third World of the kitchen in the metropolis.

I am active in the group of Lotta Femminista (until recently in some cities known as Movimento di Lotta Femminile). The considerations developed in these pages constitute a large part of the ground on which this group is moving."

SELMA JAMES was born in Brooklyn, US, in 1930 and has been active in the extra-parliamentary left since 1945. She left the States in 1955 and since then has lived five years in the West Indies and the rest of the time in England. She has been writing and speaking about women since 1949.