

FREE IQBAL BEGUM

Iqbal Begum is an Asian woman, who is serving a life sentence at Styal Prison for the 'murder' of her husband. On the 5th October 1981, she was unjustly convicted by Birmingham Crown Court of 'Murder' which carries a mandatory life-imprisonment. Iqbal Begum is believed to have suffered violence at the hands of her husband. It is also quite clear that during the time of the trial, Iqbal was under mental stress due to the shock of her husband's death.

Iqbal Begum did not speak English and understood very little of what was going on at the time. At the trial she did not have an interpreter present. She pleaded "guilty" to a charge of 'murder' although it is clear that she did not understand the implication of this. She then received a mandatory life sentence after a trial that lasted only for fifteen minutes.

Iqbal's own relatives are not in the U.K. Her 4 children are being looked after by her husband's brother, all living in overcrowded condition. Iqbal has not seen them for over 12 months. Prison life means suffering for everyone but Iqbal is further isolated being one of 2 Asian women there.

We feel that Iqbal Begum is suffering this injustice because she is a black woman, as a white woman in a similar situation was recently freed by the court.

On 1st November, 1983, M. Ripplly a white woman who had suffered violence at the hands of her husband for many years shot her husband after showing the gun to the warden of the hostel where she lived, saying she will kill her husband with it. She was freed at Court hearing and given suspended sentence for manslaughter. So she is now free whereas Iqbal is serving a life sentence.

Similar cases exist where men have been freed in cases of domestic violence.

On 5th November 1973, S. Turner, a husband aged 38 years, suspected his wife of having other "affairs". He found out that a particular which he thought was over had revived. The husband alleged that on confronting the wife she had taunted him. He hit her and then strangled her. The judge at Bristol Crown Court sentenced him for manslaughter not murder on grounds of provocation. The judge said he had suffered enough, had shown remorse and sentenced him to two years imprisonment - suspended sentence. Women victims in such cases are judged to be amoral and deserving their fate and accused women as violent or mad.

We have shown these two examples above but there have been numerous other cases where men and women in domestic situations have been freed on grounds of provocation diminished responsibility etc. We feel Iqbal is innocent of murder and should be freed to care for her four children.

FREE IQBAL BEGUM PUBLIC MEETING

AT: Small Heath Community Centre, Muntz Street, Small Heath.

ON: SATURDAY, 21st July At 3 o'clock

SPEAKERS INCLUDE: SOUTHALL BLACK SISTERS

MARGARET PARCHMENT

P&P Free Iqbal Begum Campaign, c/o 101, Villa Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham 19
We meet fortnightly on Mondays at 7.30pm at this address. Next one 16th July.