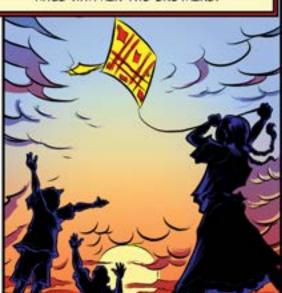


SULULE -WOLIEV-

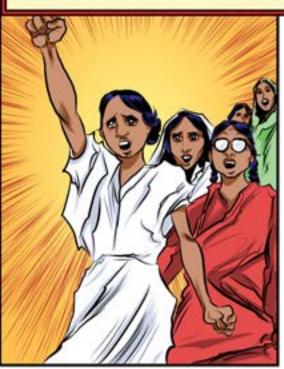
Jayaben Desate 1655 - 2010

JAYABEN DESAI WAS BORN IN 1933 IN DHARMAJ, A VILLAGE IN GUJARAT, INDIA, TO A LANDOWNING FAMILY. SHE WAS ALLOWED TO DO THINGS THAT GIRLS WERE NOT EXPECTED TO DO IN THOSE DAYS -

DO IN THOSE DAYS -LIKE PLAYING ON THE STREETS AND FLYING KITES WITH HER TWO BROTHERS.



AS A TEENAGER, SHE TOOK PART IN THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT AGAINST THE BRITISH RULE, GOING ON DEMONSTRATIONS IN HER VILLAGE WHEN SHE WAS A STUDENT.



WHEN SHE WAS 22, JAYABEN GOT MARRIED TO SURYAKANT DESAI, WHO MANAGED A FACTORY IN DAR-ES-SALAAM, TANZANIA. AFTER THE WEDDING, JAYABEN STAYED ON IN INDIA TO COMPLETE HER TAILORING COURSE, WHICH IS WHEN HER FIRST CHILD WAS BORN.



SHE JOINED SURYAKANT IN TANZANIA WHEN THEIR SON WAS NEARLY TWO. AFTER THE BIRTH OF THEIR SECOND SON, JAYABEN RAN HOME-BASED SEWING CLASSES FOR A FEW YEARS.



AFTER INDEPENDENCE, MANY EAST AFRICAN COUNTRIES ADOPTED POLICIES TO PROMOTE THE AFRICAN POPULATION.

TOGETHER WITH THOUSANDS OF OTHER ASIAN FAMILIES IN UGANDA, KENYA AND TANZANIA, THE DESAI FAMILY LEFT. THEY CAME TO INDIA IN 1964. BUT THIS WAS NOT THEIR FINAL DESTINATION.

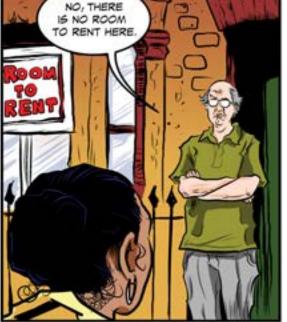




JAYABEN AND THEIR CHILDREN JOINED SURYAKANT IN LONDON IN OCTOBER 1968.



THERE WAS A LOT OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE UK IN THE 1960S AND 70S AND IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR MIGRANTS TO GET HOUSING.







JAYABEN TRAVELLED ACROSS THE COUNTRY
TO WIN SUPPORT FROM WORKERS AND
THEIR LINIONS.

WE WILL
NOT GIVE UP!



AS SUPPORT FOR THE STRIKERS GREW, THERE WERE MASS PICKETS WHICH BROUGHT THOUSANDS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE AND WORKERS FROM OTHER PLACES TO THE NARROW STREETS OUTSIDE GRUNNICK. THE POLICE WERE ALSO OUT IN FORCE AND WERE QUITE AGGRESSIVE TO THE STRIKERS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS.





IN PROTEST, FOUR GRUNWICK STRIKERS STAGED A HUNGER STRIKE OUTSIDE THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS ON 21 NOVEMBER 1977.

WHAT BEGAN AS
A FIGHT FOR UNION
RECOGNITION HAS ENDED
UP WITH US CHALLENGING
OUR OWN UNION!
DON'T FORGET,
WE WON PEOPLE'S HEARTS.
SO MANY ORDINARY MEMBERS
OF THE UNIONS CAME TO
SUPPORT US, EVEN IF THEIR
LEADERS HAVE TURNED
THEIR BACK ON US.

BUT THE UNION DID NOT CHANGE ITS DECISION AND THE STRIKE WAS FINALLY CALLED OFF IN JULY 1978. JAYABEN WENT ON TO TEACH AN ASIAN DRESSMAKING COURSE AT HARROW COLLEGE, WEMBLEY.





THE GMB UNION RECOGNISED HER CONTRIBUTION
WITH A GOLD BADGE OF HONOUR AT THEIR NATIONAL
CONFERENCE IN JUNE 2007, JAYABEN, WHO DIED
ON 23 DECEMBER 2010 AGED 77, IS NOW
CELEBRATED FOR CHANGING THE TRADE UNIONS'
ATTITUDES TOWARDS NON-WHITE AND
WOMEN WORKERS.

SUMMUC _WOMEN_

Javince Laur 1850 - **

JATINDER'S FATHER WENT TO ENGLAND FROM A VILLAGE IN PUNJAB TO FIND WORK DURING THE 1950S. SHE LOOKED FORWARD TO HIS YEARLY VISITS HOME. WHEN SHE WAS IS AND ABOUT TO BEGIN HER FINAL YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL THE FAMILY JOINED HIM IN ENGLAND, SHE WAS EXCITED BUT ALSO SAD AT THE THOUGHT OF LEAVING ALL HER FRIEND'S BEHIND.





LIFE IN THE UK WAS VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT SHE WAS USED TO, SOON AFTER SHE CAME HERE, JATINDER BEGAN WORKING AT A PETROL STATION.



WHEN SHE WAS 23, SHE GOT MARRIED TO RAJ, WHO WAS ALSO A RECENT MIGRANT FROM PUNJAB. THEY MOYED TO SOUTHALL, IN WEST LONDON, WHERE THEY RENTED A ROOM IN A HOUSE. RAJ WORKED AT A POST OFFICE, WHILE JATINDER DID ASSEMBLY WORK IN A FACTORY.

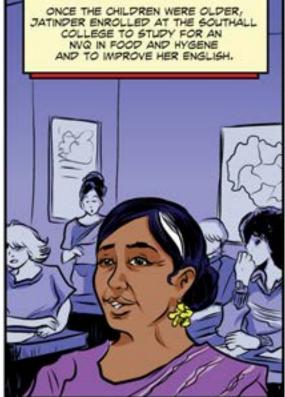




AFTER SHE HAD HER THIRD CHILD, JATINDER
WORKED AS A CLEANER, DOING THE NIGHT
SHIFT AT THE NEARBY HEATHROW AIRPORT.
SHE WAS HAPPY TO WORK WITH OTHER WOMEN,
AND MADE MANY FRIENDS.

MY SISTER
LOOKS AFTER THE
CHILDREN WHILE I
CATCH UP ON MY
SLEEP, WHAT
ABOUT YOU?

MEANS I FEEL
TIRED ALL
THE TIME.













THEIR UNION, UNISON INITIALLY SUPPORTED THEM, BUT THE WORKERS REPUSED TO ACCEPT THE AGREEMENT UNISON NEGOTIATED WITH THE COMPANY. THEY TOOK THEIR CASE FOR UNFAIR DISMISSAL TO AN EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL. WITH THE UNION'S SUPPORT THE WOMEN WON THEIR CASE IN OCTOBER 2000.

THE SACKED WORKERS AT
HILLINGDON HOSPITAL HAVE WON
THEIR CASE AND ARE TO BE
AWARDED BACKDATED PAY
AND REINSTATED TO THEIR JOBS.

AFTER 5 LONG
YEARS, THIS FEELS
GOOD!

TODAY, THOUGH PAST THE OFFICIAL RETIREMENT AGE, JATINDER WORKS PART-TIME AND LOOKS AFTER HER GRAND-DAUGHTER WHILE HER DAUGHTER, MEETA, WORKS AT A COMPANY THAT PREPARES MEALS FOR AIRLINES, GATE GOURMET.



MEETA WAS CAUGHT UP IN A SIMILAR SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN BRITISH AIRWAYS SUBCONTRACTED TO GATE GOURMET.



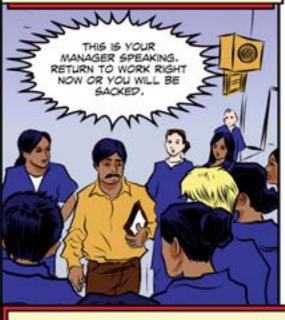
GRADUALLY, THE COMPANY STARTED MAKING CHANGES TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE WORKERS AND THE MANAGEMENT BECAME INCREASINGLY HARSH, THE WORKERS RESISTED THE CHANGES.



ON 10TH AUGUST 2005, WHEN THE WORKERS RETURNED FROM THEIR MORNING TEA BREAK...



THE WORKERS ASSEMBLED IN THE CANTEEN TO DISCUSS WHAT HAD HAPPENED, THEY WERE JOINED THERE BY SHOP STEWARDS FROM THEIR UNION.



BY THE NEXT DAY MORE WORKERS HAD BEEN SACKED BRINGING THE TOTAL TO JUST OVER 700.



144 WORKERS WERE SELECTED FOR REDUNDANCY BECAUSE THEY WERE OLDER OR HAD HEALTH ISSUES. THIS TIME, THE WORKERS ALSO LOST THEIR CASE FOR UNFAIR DISMISSAL AT THE EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL. I ALWAYS THOUGHT
THAT ALL THE STRUGGLES
OF MY GENERATION WOULD
WEAN THAT LIFE WOULD BE
EASIER FOR YOU.

DON'T WORRY MUM,
SOME THINGS HAVE GOT
BETTER! BUT I HAVE ALSO
LEARNED FROM YOU THAT
WE HAVE TO KEEP ON
FIGHTING FOR OUR

RIGHTS.



STRIKING WOMEN

www.striking-women.org

'Striking Women: South Asian workers' struggles in the UK labour market from Grunwick to Gate Gourmet' is a Follow-On project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

We have produced three kinds of resources. The first is an educational site about migration, women and work, rights and responsibilities at work and the story of the action by South Asian women during the Grunwick and Gate Gourmet industrial disputes. These resources can be found on www.striking-women.org. This site includes student-friendly research findings, workbooks, time-lines, case studies, learning objectives and activities for students. The second is a two part comic which depicts the life stories of two South Asian women involved with these disputes, downloadable from the site. The third is a mobile exhibition which can be borrowed by community groups and organisations. For further information, contact sanitha@lincoln.ac.uk

This project builds on the work of an earlier research project entitled "Subverting Stereotypes: Asian Women's Political Activism" carried out by Ruth Pearson, University of Leeds, with Linda McDowell (University of Oxford) and Sundari Anitha (University of Lincoln). Detailed findings from the original research can be found on www.leeds.ac.uk/strikingwomen



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