

# Not a coincidence



**#ResearchMesearch**  
**NADINE SHAANTA MURSHID**

**O**N this International Women's Day – the one day that we women get to call our own – we had the Women's Strike. But, I went to work because I wasn't sure I had a choice in the matter. Turns out I did, but that is another story for another day. The strike reminded me that as workers (just because we are academics does not mean we are not workers) we should be upset that this used to be International Working Women's Day, that thanks to bourgeois institutions that benefit from homogenising women, it was decided that all women should be treated as one, that all women experience the same things. That made me think about why a day like this is important: 1) because women's rights continue to be trampled upon on a daily basis across the world; and 2) because many of us have the impression that gender inequality is no longer a problem,

deviation, which in turn act as enforcers of such norms. We have been taught to not question such norms so well that we even have a word for those who do in Bangla: *beyaddob*. We have been taught that the pay gap (in the United States, for example) is either a myth or justified. We have been taught that because we can now work outside the home, we are free. We have been taught that equality means that women should be like men. So, when we find ourselves in positions of power we emulate what men do. A classic example is that of mothers-in-law who, in the absence of their sons, readily use tools of punishment, including violence, to reprimand their daughters-in-law when they are "out of line." We have had to accept, for the most part, the double burden of providing paid labour for capitalists and unpaid labour at home, both of which can be and are often exploitative. At the same time we have also learnt how to provide for the needs of the family, including child and elderly care, in a system that de-

success, safety, responsibility, even freedom, and choice. These are words that we feel an emotional connection to, good or bad, and we fall for it, every time. These words are used to manipulate us, change us. But yet, every time someone says they're setting us free, we dare to dream. That is where lies a shadow of hope. Let us not marginalise this day for women in the same way that we marginalise women in general - this day is not "just another day" - we need a day like this to highlight that women do not have the same economic, political, and social rights as men - anywhere in the world. We need it to recognise the plight of trans women who are among the most discriminated women in the world. We need to recognise that some women have more privilege than others. We need this because we have many identities, we have many experiences, our class position, race, education, gender, sexual orientation, religion and other identities intersect in ways to create different experiences for all individuals. We need a day to talk about those experiences. We need to discuss that if we are low-income minority women, say from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, that means that we are more likely to be in locations that are violent for us. If we are garment factory workers in urban areas we have to navigate the inadequate transportation system that expose us to sexual harassment to take on the streets by travelling in groups with our heads covered with ornas. We need to talk about how that isn't enough, that we still need a safe transportation system. We need to talk about how social class does not prevent women from experiencing domestic violence, about how women experience victim blaming and increased chances of being killed when they seek help for domestic violence and try to leave abusive relationships. We also need to talk about how to raise boys, how to meet their emotional needs, how to model the right behaviours to them, and how to make men a part of the solution because men are well positioned to challenge and break down patriarchy/neo-patriarchy as allies. We need this day because every other day we are so busy navigating this neo-patriarchal world that we don't have time to think. About solutions. Or about ourselves. Come to think of it, that is probably not a coincidence.

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particularly in some parts of the world. We believe that because that is what we have been taught to believe. We have been taught that men and women already have equal rights, just in different domains. We have been ascribed gender roles and have been told that this is how things are done. We have been taught certain ideas about what "normal" looks like. Examples include heteronormativity (the idea that people are heterosexual male or female with prescribed gender roles), beauty standards (imposed by media and society), and values (decided upon by those in power) - deviation from which makes us more likely to feel shame and/or stigma, based on the extent of the

prioritises both. Meanwhile, we have had to deal with the guilt of not being there for our families, particularly our children, especially when we have to work long hours. That guilt, in turn, taught us to accept it when our husbands use violence against us for not being good mothers or wives. We then learned to take blame and internalise that violence, and pretend that everything is fine to the outside world. In sum, we, without question, believe in the myths produced by the capitalistic neo-patriarchal system in which we live, while taking responsibility of the ills that it creates. These myths are sold to us in the form of tradition, nationalism, fear,

## DECLASSIFIED CIA FILES ON 1971

### "Yahya and Mujib have already agreed to the broad outlines of a solution"



Bhutto arrives in Dhaka on March 21, 1971.

Today we are publishing four documents from the recently declassified CIA files. These documents reflect on the discussions held between Sheikh Mujib and Yahya Khan from March 20 to 24, 1971. Though initially Z. A. Bhutto refused to join the talks, he took an about turn and went to Dhaka on March 21 to participate in the discussions.

**The [US] President's Daily Brief 20 March 1971**  
**FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**  
**PAKISTAN**  
 President Yahya Khan and Mujibur Rahman continued their talks today, despite several deaths yesterday in what appears to have been the most serious clash involving the army in almost two weeks. Mujib again took a tough stance on Thursday when he rejected Yahya's proposal to conduct an investigation of killings earlier this month, partly because the probe was to have been held under martial law. At the same time the refusal of Z.A. Bhutto to join the talks in Dacca, at least for the time being, underlines the pressures against making concessions which West Pakistani politicians and military are bringing to bear on Yahya.

National Assembly that had been scheduled to begin writing a new constitution on Thursday. [Few words redacted] he and Mujib have already agreed to the broad outlines of a solution. Although many details remain to be worked out, martial law would end, civilian provincial governments would begin to function, and an interim national cabinet formed. With all parties apparently in agreement that more time is needed for negotiations among the political leaders, it seem unlikely there will be a repetition of the violence that followed Yahya's earlier postponement of the assembly on 1 March.

**The [US] President's Daily Brief 22 March 1971**  
**FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**  
**PAKISTAN**  
 President Yahya Khan and Mujibur Rahman, apparently made some progress in the last three days, but both sides are being very tight-lipped about the substance of their talks. The Western press speculates that Yahya will give in to Mujib's demands, which would mean that Pakistan would remain one country but almost all power would be in the hands of the provincial governments. The two leaders are scheduled to meet again today, and Z.A. Bhutto, in a complete about-face, flew to Dacca yesterday to participate in the discussions.

**The [US] President's Daily Brief 24 March 1971**  
**FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**  
**PAKISTAN**  
 The disputants appear to have made some progress behind the scenes toward a political agreement, despite their sharply conflicting public statements. Bhutto says he is examining an "agreement" reached by Mujib and President Yahya. Presumably this is the one noted in The President's Daily Brief yesterday calling for an end to martial law, the start of civilian governments in the provinces, and the formation of an interim central cabinet.

**The [US] President's Daily Brief 23 March 1971**  
**FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**  
**PAKISTAN**  
 President Yahya, after a meeting with Bhutto and Mujib, has postponed the convening of the

Bhutto may be overemphasizing the progress made thus far in an attempt to enhance his own role and to forestall other West Pakistani leaders now in Dacca from eroding his position. Mujib, for his part, denies the existence of any agreement. However far the discussions have gone, Mujib may believe that unsettled matters such as the division of powers between the provinces and the central government are more important than any of the agreed points. At least until this is settled, he would be loath to admit to agreeing to anything short of full provincial autonomy.

**BEETLE BAILEY**  
 I WANT YOU TO PUNISH SOMEONE, MAJOR!  
 WHO?  
 GREG + MORT WALKER

**BY MORT WALKER**  
 THAT SHORT LITTLE SOLDIER WHO DIDN'T SALUTE ME WHEN I WENT BY

**BABY BLUES**  
 HOW WAS YOUR DAY?  
 LET'S SAY "CHALLENGING"

**QUOTABLE Quote**  
**EDUARDO GALEANO**  
 URUGUAYAN JOURNALIST, WRITER AND NOVELIST  
*Utopia lies at the horizon. When I draw nearer by two steps, it retreats two steps. If I proceed ten steps forward, it swiftly slips ten steps ahead. No matter how far I go, I can never reach it. What, then, is the purpose of utopia? It is to cause us to advance.*

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

1 Black Sea port	33 European capital
7 Litmus reddener	34 Buzz in space
11 Like some lines	37 Medicos
12 Trim	39 Wading birds
13 Hosted	43 Singer Paul
14 Scheme	44 Respectable
15 Set upon	45 Prone to prying
17 Fit of pique	46 Unwavering
20 Clothing brand	
23 Gardner of movies	
24 Ill repute	
26 Brynner of "The King and I"	
27 Wisdom bringer	
28 Soup buy	
29 Writer Ralph	
31 Model buy	
32 Dark fur	

**DOWN**

1 Keats poem	10 Home in the woods
2 River blocker	16 John of Plymouth
3 PC key	17 Grant's successor
4 Collection of papers	18 Throat dangler
5 Looks upon	19 Contingency plans
6 Includes	21 Speedy messages
7 Rome's -- Way	22 Slow tempo
8 Second auditions	24 Headquartered
9 401 (k) kin	25 In the past
	30 "Ain't that the truth!"
	33 In reserve
	35 Frees
	36 "Yeah, right!"
	37 Dapper fellow
	38 Music's Yoko
	40 Isle surrounder
	41 Cease
	42 Pig's place

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER**

B	A	B	A	R	E	A	L	M
A	L	O	N	E	E	M	C	E
S	A	L	T	M	A	R	S	H
E	N	D	A	W	E	E	R	A
				M	I	L	A	N
M	A	Y	A	N	D	A	L	E
A	L	E	X		D	I	V	E
D	E	N	I	M	B	I	T	E
				M	A	N	I	A
A	D	S	T	O	T	U	S	E
P	E	P	P	E	R	M	I	N
E	M	E	R	Y	A	C	T	U
D	O	D	O	S		P	E	O
				P	E	O	N	Y

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