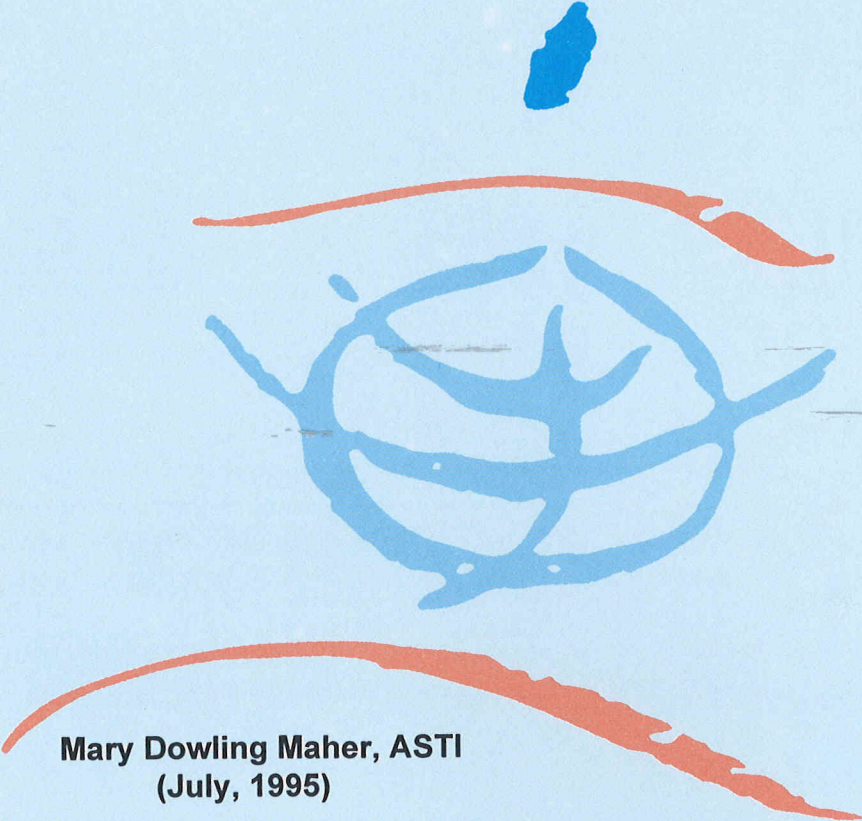




# VIOLENCE IN THE HOME



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(July, 1995)



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***My comrade***

Just a minute!  
Before you strike my cheek with your uplifted hand,  
Just think for a minute!

Was your hand lifted  
Against the industrialist  
Who sucked your life out  
Making you work for more than eight hours a day  
For a pittance?  
No, it wasn't!

Was your hand lifted  
Against the politician/leader  
Who made a thousand promises  
During all the past election campaigns  
But quickly forgot you and his promises?  
No, it wasn't!

***But you lift your hand against me  
Just because a cup of coffee has gone cold!***

You, who allowed your humanity to be trampled on  
So as to ensure your next meal,  
You who allowed your humanity  
To be debased.  
Are you going to debase my humanity  
Just for a cup of coffee?

My comrade,  
Before you strike my cheek  
With your uplifted hand,  
Just think for a minute

Subadhra<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from the original Tamil - Gnanadason, P 23

## Myths about Violence in the Home

### **Only a Small number of Women are Battered or Abused in their Homes.**

In the U.S. battering is the leading cause of injury to women. 4,000 women are beaten to death every year by their partners. In France 95% of victims of violence are women, 51% at the hands of a spouse or lover.

At present in Ireland there are no statistics on the extent of violence against women in the home. However, the experience of Women's Aid indicates that it is a widespread and daily reality.

Many women do not know of services provided by a refuge and many more, for all the reasons listed below, choose to stay silent and put up with violence and abuse.

Domestic violence is by no means a rare event.

### **It's just the odd domestic tiff.**

Women who come to refuges have usually been severely beaten or threatened with it on many occasions. Many battered women experience violence which includes rape, having their hair pulled out, being punched or hit in the face and body, having their throat squeezed, or being so abused as to sustain serious injuries ranging from cuts and bruising to broken bones and internal damage.

No behaviour which so degrades and violates a human being can be dismissed as "just the odd domestic tiff".

### **She must ask for it or deserve it.**

Of all the myths about battered women this is probably the most degrading. No woman "deserves" this sort of treatment.

In a situation of domestic violence where there are repeated attacks, women know that the more they resist the greater will be their suffering. Thus submission should in no way be confused with consent.

### **She must enjoy it if she'd leave.**

Women stay with violent men because it is extremely difficult for them to leave. Many women still do not know refuges exist. Women worry about how the disruption of leaving will affect their children, how they will provide alone for their children, how they will manage as parents on their own. The prospect of poor housing; lack of day care facilities, poor employment opportunities and poverty are all reasons why women stay.

### **Leaving the home is bad for the children**

Many women only leave their home when they realise the effects of the violence on their children or when the children themselves are threatened. The physical and mental/emotional health of many children actually improves and blossoms during and after time spent in a refuge.

### **Nobody has the right to interfere in the domestic affairs of man and wife.**

Domestic violence is a social problem, not a private affair. The abuse of any human being by another is everyone's business.

