

Statement from March 8 Women's Organization (Iran-Afghanistan).

For An Internationalist March 8—The International Women's Day

Revolutionary Women Cry Out: Revolution Is the Way Out for Humanity

Revolution newspaper received this statement from March 8 Women's Organization (Iran-Afghanistan):

Pause and ask yourselves: what kind of society is this (in the world) that the subordination of half of humanity to the other half is one of its pillars and moral canons? What kind of world are we living in that from one end to the other, organized (state sanctioned) women's oppression and religious ignorance are used for maintaining "social coherence"? Honor killing, stoning to death and forced marriage in parts of the world like Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Kurdistan, and India are rampant, while hidden conjugal violence in the "civilized" West kills women in silence, and yet all this is said to have resulted from the "weakening of family values," "abortion," and the "weakening of religious beliefs"—these are all too pervasive features of our world.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is the most reactionary oppressive state that the women of Iran have experienced. But the imperialist ruling classes of the U.S. who are preparing new rounds of aggression and war in the Middle East are no better and their attempts to justify their crimes in the Middle East with hypocritical words about liberation of women is disgusting. They equally benefit from the oppression of women in the U.S. and around the world. In fact this oppression is built into their world capitalist system.

Trade in women's flesh is accepted as another legitimate capitalist commodity to be bought and sold. Marx said capitalism generalizes prostitution. Indeed, we see that today. In Iran and Afghanistan, ruled by Islamic Republics, women are stoned to death for sleeping with the wrong man but prostitution is increasingly one of the most accessible jobs offered to women.

Women's overall conditions in societies across the world can only be defined as modern-day slavery. This it is not in spite of the way overall human society is organized today across the world, but rather because of it. It is not "collateral" damage of the system: women's oppression is inscribed in every cell of our present social systems.

Pause and ask yourselves: How is it that women's oppression becomes more aggravated with any turning of the wheel of the capitalist system, the launching of imperialist wars of aggression? How is that with downward and upward movements of the stock markets, we have witnessed an upward movement of women's oppression and the rising star of clericalism in the world? This is a world in which young girls are sold by fathers who "own" them. Capitalism has turned these children into commodities and thousand-year-old religious tenets have been revived to give it legitimacy and a "moral" face.

Women's oppression has everything to do with the oppressive and outmoded political, economic, social and belief systems which dominate our countries and the world. U.S. imperialism invaded Afghanistan and Iraq in the name of a "war against terror" and the "liberation of women." It ended up pouring terror on the people of Afghanistan and Iraq and reinforcing all patriarchal, tribal, and religious authorities. Before the U.S. occupation of Iraq women had more equal status. They could move around in cities freely without the Islamic hejab. Now they have to accept the ultimate humiliation of shamefully hiding their bodies and hair from men who do not own them. In most Gulf States in the Middle East which are run by U.S. imperialism (and their Islamic Sheiks), women are even deprived of driving. What CNN ads about the fantasy islands of Dubai do not inform you of is that part and parcel of this big world casino-real estate market involves trading young girls from Iran, Iraq, the Philippines, Afghanistan, etc. as prostitutes. The invasion and occupation of Iraq have fueled this slave trade across Middle East.

All of this is a profound sign of something: the system dominating the world is rotten and stinks, and calls upon us to overthrow it. Pause and ask yourselves: what kind of system is running our human society? Why should we tolerate it? Why should we be accomplices to this monster by "business as usual" behavior?

We are approaching March 8, which is a day of struggle against women's oppression and a reminder to everybody that our movement for uprooting women's oppression has a say on all kinds of oppressions that the system metes out to different parts of humanity.

Obama has promised to be different than the Bush regime; he says he will only pursue "good" wars. He asks us to respect the holocaust of the Palestinian people by Israel. Is this supposed to be "good" Holocaust vs. "bad" one just because it is carried out by children of the victims of the fascist Nazi Holocaust?

What kind of world is this that warmongers can pose as "peaceful" and wars of aggression as "self-defense"? This is the same sick system that makes people respect women's oppression under the name of respecting "life" and patriarchal "family values" are at the heart of its morality. This is the same sick system that makes people respect religious obscurantism as a timeless "human spirituality."

This system destroys us in a variety of ways. And once we rebel, its executioners suppress us and then show us the magic ballot box which supposedly holds the key to our emancipation. They tell us we should

hinge our hopes on their democracy and that we should help boost their capitalist markets because these are supposedly the apex of human achievement. They rob us of all our humanity and instead they present us with a different looking president and say this is a "revolution." But this greedy and war-hungry system requires and can only produce a bloody, ruthless leader, and Obama will prove no exception.

Just think a bit: how is it possible that an African-American (or a woman for that matter) sitting on top of a system of exploitation and oppression would or could change our situation of oppression and exploitation? It can only make us doze off for a while. The same hypocritical game is played in Iran. Leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran too, in their attempts to neutralize the rebellious mood of the masses against their rotten clerical state, use electoral games. They sometimes come up with the choice of a "moderate Mullah" and sometimes with a "justice loving" leader. But these are just different brands of poisons offered to the masses.

The Islamic fundamentalists as well as the imperialists are reactionary forces. There are no "good oppressors" vs. "bad oppressors." This is a deep lesson that the peoples of the world should draw from the bloody experience of women in Iran and Afghanistan.

It is a system that we are facing. Misogyny and women's slavery, poverty, homophobia, racial and gender apartheid, child labor, religious slave mindedness, wars, holocausts and genocides are continuously produced by this system.

While weaving and integrating the whole world under its thumb, capitalism has reached the apex of its rotten existence. It offers absolutely no way of reforming or moderating its dreadful way of life. But this system will not go away on its own accord. It must be pushed out of existence by conscious people. We declare, if this system lives longer, it will tighten its noose around our necks and the lives of majority of the people of the world will become even more horrendous and amongst them, as usual, women will receive most of the brunt.

In our countries of Iran and Afghanistan and in the Middle East overall, Islamic fundamentalist forces claim to be an alternative to the world capitalist imperialist system. But Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East as well as the Christian fundamentalists in the U.S. who reside at the core of the U.S. ruling class, share the basic principles of the imperialist capitalist system, among which are sacred private property laws and women's oppression along with using organized ignorance to keep the people phased out and confused. The ideal society of the Islamic fundamentalists is based on the total subordination of women to men at every level of society. The morality of their ideal society absolutely hinges on women knowing the role assigned to them as loyal sex objects of the men they belong to and actively producing offspring for them—especially of the male variety.

It is more than one hundred years that we women have been fighting against our imposed inferiority and subordinate position. Through the ups and downs of this battle we have better grasped the nature of the class systems that perpetuate this oppression. We have come to know that we must fight in an organized way. We have come to know better that having a crystal clear and uncompromising perspective for our battle is vital, because otherwise our fighting energy would be diverted in false directions such as a simple restructuring of women's oppression and keeping the system intact. We can not allow ourselves to be duped by false promises and false roads. Revolution is our only way out. Women have the most to gain from revolution. Common oppression makes the women of the world a vast and powerful army of the wretched of the earth who have nothing to lose and a world to win. Women's oppression is international and the struggle to uproot it can and must have an internationalist character.

The road to the world capitalist imperialist system has been paved by the enslavement of women. The road to its undoing deeply depends on the women of the world consciously rebelling against it.

Therefore, let us celebrate IWD 2009 in the U.S. and around the world with this conviction. Let us unite and decide to rise to the challenge: let us be the clarion call of revolution in this age of amazing affluence and rampant cruelty, discrimination, injustice, destruction. Let us dare to break our chains and be emancipators of humanity.

**March 8 Women's Organization (Iran-Afghanistan)
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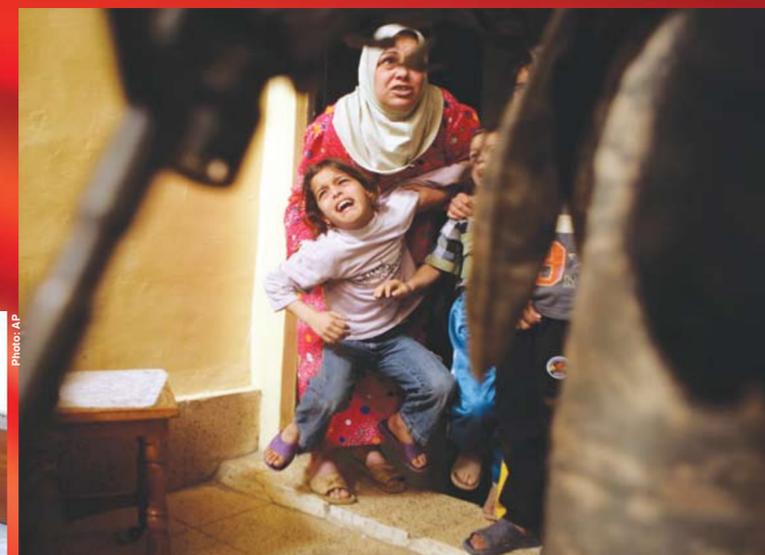
A woman tends her critically injured 12-year-old daughter at a Hyderabad, Pakistan hospital. The girl's father became enraged when he found out she had been going to school. He killed her two younger sisters.



In the U.S. women's oppression is often veiled in patriarchy and "family values." Women in prison for violent crimes were most often defending themselves or their children against abuse and were themselves victims of abuse as children. Black women are twice as likely as white women to be convicted of killing abusive partners. In jail, women are vulnerable to sexual abuse from guards as well as administrators and staff. Above, women prisoners work on a chain gang in Phoenix, Arizona, 1996.



On March 7, 1979, the Ayatollah Khomeini—the leader of the one-month-old Islamic regime—declared Hejab (the Islamic head cover for women) to be mandatory. The day after, tens of thousands of women burst into the streets of Tehran in defiance. High school girls, university students, nurses, office workers, factory workers and housewives, joined by good number of men, chanted in angry voices: "We did not make revolution to go backwards!" Street fighting started between courageous women and Khomeini's fundamentalist thugs, the Hezbollah. After hours of protest and street fighting, thousands of women, with torn clothes, broken umbrellas and tousled hair attended the March 8 International Women's Day celebration at Tehran University.



U.S. soldiers search a home in Mosul, Iraq, March 2008.



Christian fascists in the U.S., a powerful force in the U.S. ruling class, want to impose a literal reading of the Bible, which means women are to be treated as inferior, as servants of men, as private property. Above, anti-abortion Christian fascists attempt to close down the only clinic in Mississippi that performs abortions.



Honor killing, stoning to death, and forced marriage in parts of the world like Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Kurdistan, and India are rampant. Above, an 11-year-old girl in Pakistan is sold into marriage to a 60-year-old man to pay her family's debt.