

When Goliath Becomes David's Best Friend!

It is the repeated astonishing courage and tenacity of the Iranian people that I have witnessed in the last few weeks that compels me to write in their defense. I see these brave women and men, not to mention children, on the streets relentlessly facing beatings, imprisonment and live ammunition by their oppressors in order to have their voices heard. And they have shouted slogans to make clear what they reject with their deserved fury and revulsion: such as "Death to the Oppressors, be it a King, be it a Supreme-Leader!", "I will Avenge whoever Killed my Sister!", "Be Afraid of the Day We Arm Ourselves!", "We are Female and Male Warriors, You want War, Bring it on!", "Down with the Islamic Republic!" and "Down with Dictators!"

These slogans which directly target oppression, are both radical and revolutionary. This demonstrates how people with no discernible leadership but only their harsh and bitter experience to depend upon, know exactly what they adamantly and totally reject. In comparison, the slogan "Women, Life, Freedom" is not used as often in Iran although it has become a worldwide phenomenon outside of Iran. Perhaps that is because approximately 70% of the Iranian people live in poverty. One can be sure that Iran's oil workers that have recently gone on strike and even shut down streets are not shouting it. In fact, the oil workers at state-owned petroleum facilities in two provinces are chanting, "Death To The Dictator!" and "Don't Be Afraid, We Stand Together!"

So the question begs to be asked: how did this relatively minor slogan "Women, Life, Freedom" become such a worldwide phenomenon outside of Iran and why?

These three words, in my opinion, call for the liberation of women against oppression, and for a free life within the domain of civil society. That might work for the middle class (the petite bourgeoisie) everywhere who as a stratum do not see the necessity for anything more. However, the majority within Iran who lack either one or all the necessities of life, being oppressed by one ruler or another will only prolong their misery.

And here is my defense of the Iranian people. It is a warning and wake-up call to all their true and sincere friends. And the hows and whys of this slogan holds the key. The American and European ruling class seizing upon the most suitable slogan that arose in Iran for their own malevolent purpose, have played their role of fogging up the clarity of truth for the people by popularizing it outside of Iran. The ruling class, as a class, possesses astute class consciousness giving them a great advantage to prevent any possible development of awareness which in turn may threaten the capitalist system which is their lifeline as an exploitative class. By spreading this slogan worldwide with the help of a consortium of politicians, intellectuals and NGOs at their fingertips, they have pushed to the background the revolutionary radical slogans being chanted widely in Iran and have placed this benign platitude in the forefront.

There are numerous, both Iranian and non-Iranian, female writers, professors and human rights activists, many of whom have written best selling books and or have received various awards for their activism. For example, Masih Alinejad has no less than 10 million followers on her social media account. She met with former CIA director and then the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo in 2019 where a US State official thanked her "for her bravery and dedication." On September 30, 2022, during a TV interview, she proudly stated that she was on the American government's payroll. She insists the slogan "Women, Life, Freedom" is the slogan symbolizing the movement.

Another example is Nahid Siamdoust who published her latest article in Newlines Magazine titled “Women, Life Liberty: A Slogan One Hundred Years in the Making” where she writes: “The Women’s protests now engulfing Iran have roots in decades of feminist struggle dating back to the 19th century.”

Borzou Daragahi, an international correspondent for The Independent also serves as a senior fellow on the Atlantic Council, a Washington think tank. He writes: “It is vital that a proposed transitional government reflects the rich tapestry of Iran.” The concept of socio-economic equality is quietly swept under the rug.

Then there are all the renowned so called NGOs who have also joined the choir proudly stating the well rehearsed phrases regarding human rights and civil society without even a whisper about the devastating hardships borne by the suffering working class in Iran. For example, Amnesty International, who claims they do not accept donations from governments or political parties, received £842,000 in 2011 from the UK Department for International Development as part of a four-year award commencing in 2008 totaling £3,149,000.

The head politicians of the imperialist powers have joined the chorus limiting the awareness of the movement to the gentile face of civil society. The British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office announced sanctions against the morality police for “committing serious human rights violations”. I guess the murderous dictator, Pinochet, was exempt when he was given sanctuary by the UK and referred to as a “dear friend” by Thatcher. Oh the hypocrisy!

Foreign secretary, James Cleverly said Britain “stands with the people of Iran who are bravely calling for accountability from their government and for their fundamental human rights to be respected”. Is it also a human right to be hungry?! Hunger now is so rampant in the UK that more and more mothers and children are stealing food to avoid starvation. US President Joe Biden proclaimed in the UN: “Today, we stand with the brave citizens and the brave women of Iran who are now demonstrating to secure their basic rights”. My only hope is that Iran is not “liberated” the American way yet again as was done in Afghanistan and Libya not to mention Central and South America!

Women's rights are undoubtedly crucial just as minority rights and for that matter, human rights are. However, how can one attain their just rights within this class system, capitalism, which is built upon human exploitation? Are not the words “women’s rights” within capitalism a contradiction in terms? Please correct me if I am mistaken, but is it not so that in every country in the West that wears their civil society badge proudly on their flags, also ignores the shame of working women who do not get equal pay for equal work despite decades of the women liberation movement?! Do they not ignore the shame that 25% of women are traumatized by rape?! And do they not ignore the ugliness that their societies excrete misogyny in every facet of life? What about the lives of immigrants, refugees, the Natives, not to mention the descendants of slaves whose lives are poisoned by water, air, racism and poverty. After looking at the hypocrisy that Women and Life entail within the capitalist system in the West what about Freedom? Together with albeit, a limited amount of freedom of speech, people also have the freedom to be jobless, the freedom to be homeless and the freedom to be hungry.

The Iranian people deserve to be free of this vicious Islamic regime. They deserve an equitable and democratic society. They do not deserve for the cruelty of this regime to be replaced by another. They do not deserve the economic and social deprivation that another ruling force within the capitalist system would impose upon them. To the friends of the Iranian people: beware of the imperialist charlatans who may do so in the name of so called "democracy and freedom". Only a socialist revolution can give the Iranian people the social equality and self determination they, as do all the people of the world, so richly deserve.

Rachel

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