

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

NOUR JAGHAMA - GRACE SIEGELMAN

17.10.2024

Does Your Feminism Include Palestine?



Image by Codepink.

Women's Marches are being planned across the country ahead of Election Day to “show the strength of our feminist movement.” However, curiously missing from the talking points around the strength of the feminist movement is the women of Palestine – who have endured the brutality of anti-feminist policies for decades under the illegal occupation by Israel.

Nour, CODEPINK's Palestinian-American organizer, shares a story of her grandmother's sacrifice to take care of her children under occupation:

“In Palestine, Israeli forces routinely impose curfews on Palestinian villages, forcing Palestinians to stay confined in their homes after dusk. The penalty for the slightest movement outside — or even within their homes — can mean immediate arrest or being shot on sight. My mother often recounts a story of my grandmother risking her life during curfew one night. My uncle, who was an infant at the time, was crying for milk, and my

grandmother, with no other choice, had to slip out into the night. She moved silently through the shadows, hiding from Israeli soldiers as she crossed the village to find milk for her baby. My mother still remembers the fear she felt, thinking it might be the last time she'd see her mother alive. But my grandmother returned safely because Palestinian women, shaped by decades of occupation and resistance, have learned to navigate the militarized reality that surrounds them, finding ways to perform even the most basic acts of care under unimaginable conditions.”

This story is not new or singular; Palestinian families have faced it on a daily basis for decades. It sparked our reflection on the co-option of feminism in the belly of the beast—where we're writing from.

Nadia Alia wrote about the 2014 Israeli invasion in Gaza, citing many reporters detailing the “disproportionate” number of women and children victims during this violent attack. She then begged the question, what is a proportionate amount of women and children harmed during war and conflict? When did gender-based violence and violence towards the oppressed become an inevitable part of world relations? And if simply men were killed, would the crime scream quieter? When did we start weighing the scale of a tragedy based on gender — and when did we decide Palestinian men being murdered and imprisoned doesn't impact their entire community?

Feminism may not be definitive, but at its heart is a commitment to family and community care — a stark contrast to militarism, which injects itself into every aspect of human life and erodes these fundamental values. Palestinian women embody this incompatible relationship between feminism and militarism through their constant resistance to the occupation's infringement on their health, education, and ability to provide for their families. When the women of Palestine are forced to become breadwinners and protectors because Israel has murdered or imprisoned every man in their family, the necessity for feminism to include the women of Palestine is undeniable. To narrowly define feminism is to be inherently anti-feminist, as we are building new ways to be just, to be equitable, and to show up for our community every day — just as the women of Palestine do. However, co-opting feminism to enact harm and destruction to people and the planet is against all feminist principles and praxis. And to further assume a false sense of superiority over the communities that have been harmed by imperialism is not only inherently anti-feminist, it's anti-human. Feminism, at its core, is antithetical to all forms of oppression, exploitation, and violence. Feminism devoid of intersectionality becomes a weapon for imperialists by depriving it of its otherwise inherently liberatory nature.

Alia's writing from 2014 still rings clear today. We just passed a year marker of the October 7 act of resistance from Gazans defending their homeland and 76 years of Palestinians living in an open-air prison inside their own homes. Meanwhile, we head into an election season using feminism as a gateway towards further surveillance, policing, and genocide, both at home and in all corners of the earth. Women's marches throughout the country won't even utter the names of the hundreds of thousands of women killed in Palestine to date. What is feminist about wanting to be the most lethal force in the world? What is feminist about continuing to arm a genocidal war against Palestine and Lebanon? What is feminist about using our tax dollars that should go towards natural disaster relief and healthcare to fund murder? Supplying militarism under the guise of women's empowerment is again not new. Still, the complacency and ignorance we see from elected officials here in the U.S. and those who appear to care for the well-being of women is always horrific and devastating. It cannot be overstated: there are no feminist bombs, feminist prisons, feminist cops, or feminist wars. There are only paid actors who have convinced people that their eventual demise and the demise of the planet is what will empower their lives today.

Israel's occupation of Palestine creates a constant state of fear and instability, eroding the rights, safety, and dignity of millions, particularly Palestinian women who bear the weight of war and imperial feminism in devastating ways. CODEPINK started as an immediate reaction to the 2002 Bush Administration creeping closer to invading Iraq based on 'saving women and children' only to cause over 15,000 women in Iraq to be killed. The 'rescue' narrative we have seen play out in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Palestine, and all across the globe from imperial players like the U.S., Great Britain, and Israel has truly shown the lengths that liberal, western feminism will go to justify the oppression of the women and children it claims to save. It reveals the true intent this movement has for feminism: to keep the status quo and to keep marginalized lives, as Marc Lemont Hill describes it, "directly tied to the needs and interests of the powerful." Feminist education, activism, and community care must always come from a place of love and understanding but must also be in steadfast values of abolition and divestment. We cannot let ourselves be co-opted to kill Palestinians. We cannot allow our work to be undermined to kill the people of the Congo, of Sudan, of Yemen, of Ukraine, of Russia. And we must not let our lives and choices be tied to a small group of people reaping the benefits of war.

To support Palestinian liberation means embracing a vision of feminism that stands firmly against militarism, imperialism, and colonialism. It means committing to fight for the rights of Palestinian women and all women who are oppressed in the name of advancing imperialist

interests. Feminism calls us to see the connection between the liberties we fight for at home and the rights denied to women and girls across the globe. A genuinely feminist stance fights for a world where no woman, no child, and no community live under the constant threat of violence. Supporting Palestine is about embodying this vision, standing in solidarity, and fighting for a world where imperialism and colonialism are universally resisted.

Nour Jaghama is CODEPINK's Palestine and Iran Campaigner. Nour graduated from DePaul University with a bachelor's degree in International Studies in June 2022. She has been advocating for Palestinian liberation for over 5 years, including organizing within her university. She also organizes around related issues, such as abolition. Grace Siegelman is CODEPINK's digital engagement manager and feminist foreign policy project coordinator. Her organizing and research focus on prison and police abolition, queer theory, gendered violence and anti-war efforts. She connects her own work to the communities in Chicago and communities across the globe, in Palestine, Yemen and Cuba.

OCTOBER 16, 2024