

NOTE FROM THE FRONT LINE

Women's uprising in Iran

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The humiliation and suppression of women during more than four decades of Islamic rule in Iran finally led to the most important revolution in the history of the world in the name of women in Iran. This revolution or change in society's attitude towards women was like a spark in the gunpowder of Iranian women's anger. The government, which during the four decades of ideological domination, always announced the safety of women in the form of following its rules, killed a young woman in its moral police centre. Mahsa Amini was a young woman from Saghez, who came to Tehran for a short trip and was arrested by Tehran's morality police at Haqqani metro station in Tehran on the 22nd of Shahrivar. She was suspiciously killed within two hours of her presence in this morality police centre.

Iranian women, many of whom had been degraded by the morality police in the streets and workplace, were outraged by Mahsa Amini's death. Additionally, this murder became famous worldwide as a symbol of the revolution of woman, life, freedom! In fact, the organised oppression against Iranian women, which deprived women of their natural and human rights, had now manifested itself in the murder of Mahsa Amini.

Legalised discrimination against women in Islamic republic laws is actually the definition of gender apartheid, which has deprived women of all their human rights for more than four decades and defending femininity has become a security crime in Iran. Most of the female activists in the field of protecting civil liberties and human rights are in prison under the title of disrupting national security, and even ordinary women have faced long prison sentences for being women and defying the mandatory veil.

The new wave of the women's movement has been a development over centuries in the region. One could argue this started in the month of Dey 1396, with the protest of Vida Movahed in Enghelab Street. Vida Movahed climbed up from the power box at the

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intersection of Enghelab and Wesal Shirazi, hung her white shawl on a stick, and without any slogans, she just shook her white shawl and uncovered her hair. A close parallel being what Rosa Parks, a Black American woman, did by sitting on a white seat on a bus in America. Great global movements can start from these simple actions.

Vida Movahed and after her, the girls of Enghelab Street, were ordinary women who did not have any grandiose or idealistic claims, rather they are women and girls who simply want to have an experience of being seen, able to achieve the right to choose—a common right in all societies. These ordinary women, who comprise the largest population of Iranian women, have no political or ideological orientation other than to enjoy their human rights.

Because the government has made fundamental human rights subject to the observance of religious laws for women, the moral security police are enabled to oppress, imprison, and kill women who want the right to choose their clothing. Indeed, the revolution of women's right to freedom is the revolution of Iranian women against the government's laws that have deprived women of having a life.

The revolution of 'woman, life, freedom' is actually a modern revolution of the 21st century, which not only focuses on the issue of women but also challenges outdated beliefs and demands social and human rights for all citizens of the society. This uprising in Iran has felt close to me as an Iranian woman and psychotherapist working here in England. The impact and my embodiment of the meaning of freedom in my work with my clients, from the point of working with counter transference and transference, is manifest in many ways. In particular, I am affected when working with clients who are women in domestic violence situations, which seems to represent the psychological hijab they wear without the knowledge of knowing they wear it. They know they are free in the Western sense of meaning of the word, yet they don't feel free or brave enough to leave.

The illusory and the syntonic processes that I have looked at in my supervision and my attention to my inner diversity is close and yet far as I notice how the news comes and goes. The effect being that the support and feeling for these women among my colleagues also comes and goes whilst I personally feel propelled back to my motherland feeling the pain, the anguish, and outrage. In the consulting room, we work to create an atmosphere of reflective space, though right now that doesn't touch the kind of vitality we see with these social uprisings. Such movements burst through our communities forcing the truth upon us, compelling us not to forget.

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