

## Los Angeles:

# Celebrating Resistance and Internationalism INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Revolutionary Iranian singer, Gissoo Shakeri, February 28 concert to benefit International Women's Day 2009

**1** For International Women's Day 2009, the March 8 Women's Organization (Iran and Afghanistan) put out a powerful Call. This statement called on people living inside the U.S. to join with the women of Iran and Afghanistan in their struggle against the woman-hating regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the imperialist U.S. empire. A serious and moving challenge was posed: "Let us be clear: We who have been in a kind of civil war with the Islamic Republic of Iran for the last 30 years are not fighting to trade one oppressor for another one. We are not fighting to liberate ourselves from the clutches of one outmoded social, ideological, political system like the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to let another outmoded system like US imperialism replace it. The very workings of this system perpetuate misogyny and woman-hating religious fundamentalism in the US and around the world. Nothing is a more deadly trap for the oppressed than to prefer one set of oppressors to another set of oppressors. There are no 'good oppressors' vs. 'bad oppressors.' We did not need GW Bush to 'liberate us.' And we do not need the Obama-Hillary kiss of death! *But we do need and want the support of the people living in the US!*"

What we see in contention here with Jihad on the one hand and McWorld/McCrusade on the other hand, are historically outmoded strata among colonized and oppressed humanity up against historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system. These two reactionary poles reinforce each other, even while opposing each other. If you side with either of these "outmodeds," you end up strengthening both.

Bob Avakian,  
Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA  
From the talk, "Why We're in the Situation We're in Today... And What to Do About It:  
A Thoroughly Rotten System and the Need for Revolution"



Torchlight march, Westwood Village, March 7, 2009

**5** On March 7, some 300 people marched and rallied in the Westwood section of West LA. They chanted "Zنده bad roozeh Jehaneyeh zan!" ("Long live International Women's Day" in Farsi) and Women of the world are catching hell, against this madness it's right to rebel! in English, Farsi and Spanish, as they marched through the Iranian district along Westwood Boulevard. People on the street showed support and some joined the march. That night a torchlight march electrified the streets of Westwood Village.

**2** Think of how significant this is. Here are women who have been living in the middle of an horrific nightmare of oppression, a place where women have no human rights at all. For 30 years the women of Iran have been struggling against this. Many of them have been tortured and executed. But the struggle has not been crushed. It continues to grow inside and outside of Iran. And they have carried out this struggle keenly aware that U.S. imperialism holds only greater suffering and horror for women and all people, not liberation; that America and the Islamic Republic of Iran are part of the same matrix. As the Call says: "Women's oppression under US occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq is equally ugly and bestial. In Afghanistan, honor killing, stoning to death and forced marriage are rampant in areas under the rule of the US's Islamic Republic, as well as in areas under the Taliban. Afghanistan is run by pro-US tribal chieftains, warlords and drug lords. Women can not even show their face while walking outdoors. Since occupation of Iraq by the US, medieval rules of Sharia have come back to hound women, and at the same time thousands of schoolgirls have been thrown into the prostitution market in the Gulf countries, encouraged by globalization and US occupation. This is how the US war has 'liberated' women of the Middle East."



Tom Morello, The Nightwatchman and the Freedom Fighter Orchestra

**3** Those living in the U.S. have a special internationalist responsibility in this regard—to do all we can to support this struggle of the women of Iran and Afghanistan against both their home regimes and against the U.S. imperialists. This is especially important as the U.S. steps up the war in Afghanistan and threatens Iran with a whole new war.



International Women's Day March down Westwood Boulevard, March 7, 2009

**4** This Call and the challenge it poses were taken up and answered by hundreds of people in Los Angeles during a week of International Women's Day events celebrating resistance and internationalism. 450 people turned out for a concert featuring the Iranian revolutionary singer Gissoo Shakeri; Tom Morello, the Nightwatchman; and La Banda Skalavera; alongside others, all of whom took part in this concert after reading the Call.

**7** A whole new way, a revolutionary path that rejects all oppressors: this is what the women of Iran and Afghanistan bring to the world today.

In many ways, and particularly for men, the woman question and whether you seek to completely abolish or to preserve the existing property and social relations and corresponding ideology that enslave women (or maybe "just a little bit" of them) is a touchstone question among the oppressed themselves. It is a dividing line between "wanting in" and really "wanting out"; between fighting to end all oppression and exploitation—and the very division of society into classes—and seeking in the final analysis to get your part in this.

Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA



International Women's Day March down Westwood Boulevard, March 7, 2009

**6** One high school student talked about why she and her friends really liked one particular chant: U.S. can't liberate/They're the masters of murder and rape. "I know that in the U.S. we have some of the highest rates of abuse towards women, some of the highest rates of rape—just so much violence against women, more than anywhere in the world where women are considered equal. And at the same time women are kept silent about it; rape is the most under-reported crime in the U.S. The U.S. has so many of its military bases all over the world. It has the biggest army and it uses it the most, so the U.S. can't go around to any country talking about liberation, talking about equality, it can't go anywhere talking about democracy because that's not the reality here.... The U.S. is an incredibly oppressive country and at the same time it's masking it with words like 'equality' and 'freedom,' but that's not the reality—and people need to start realizing it." A UCLA student said one reason she marched was because, "Women all around the world—and men—need to come together and reconsider the direction that our world is going."



Torchlight march, Westwood Village, March 7, 2009



La Banda Skalavera