

Our Feminist Future Includes a Liberated Palestine

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In 30 years, on some fall morning like today, we wake up and turn on the news. No one is talking about banning abortion or “legalizing abortion” because we don’t talk about wombs like they exist to be legislated around anymore. Instead they are announcing the closing of U.S. military bases in the Pacific, and returning the land to its stewards. Once a place of pollution, sexual violence, war buildup, these bases are something else now. And all over the south of the United States, communities have been given billions of billions of dollars to replace their infrastructure to better protect against natural disasters.

For a couple decades, the world has been working together to slow climate emissions; the only competition is who can save the world the fastest. Something that seemed unfathomable thirty years ago, when Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton destroyed Florida and North Carolina – when the government sent money to Israel for genocide instead of sending money to hurricane relief. Palestinians rebuilt Gaza, and people born in Gaza are free to visit their families in Jerusalem, Tulkarem, or Beitunia. The apartheid walls finally came down.

Any devastating moment can be the one that makes us change course in this timeline – natural disasters or coming to the brink of a world war could have been it. From the bottom up, the people demanded better priorities. Feminists thought holistically about what women ought to demand. If war and imperialism is killing women and children directly through bombs and indirectly through climate destruction – then feminists ought to demand an end to war. So they did. The money that was so tied up in the war industry every year, over one trillion dollars, flowed into communities to meet beyond their most basic needs.

The world and its people have a sense of stability. We are all less filled with anxiety and trauma. That’s an example of the feminist future we can imagine.

If Utopia is a world where uteruses can’t be legislated or Palestinians can move freely throughout their land, then we are guilty of being utopians. Having a social imagination is useful because we can’t start walking somewhere if we have no idea where we are going, or else we risk walking in the complete opposite direction. The “feminism” of **Hillary Clinton**, **Kamala Harris** or any other woman of the ruling class has no vision for the future because their feminism very plainly endorses the status quo of endless war and capitalism. This brand of feminism might make it so women have the right to an abortion, but with no way to afford one if they need it, for example. We argue that the co-opted war mongering feminism of this era is leading us down a path that puts all women who aren’t in the ruling class in the line of fire. And we also argue that we can practice our feminist values to create a crawl space to reach a feminist future.

Any dehumanization is antithetical to feminist values. **“Feminists” who haven’t said a**

word about the genocide in Gaza are leaving out Palestinian women – thus dehumanizing an entire population of oppressed people and giving discursive cover for a genocide. If you look at any atrocity at any moment in time, there were people, even “feminists” justifying those atrocities and injustices. Even if they don’t mention Palestine at all and only discuss abortion rights, omitting it from their demands demonstrates dehumanization all by itself. They are saying aloud who is important to them and who is not.

With each exclusion, the war machine and patriarchy (they are the same thing) will just go to the next oppressed group of people that feminists are willing to leave behind. The first weekend of November, a Women’s March, hoping to stir the women into the streets like it did in 2017, is planned. It declares it is a feminist movement; “By 2050, we will be a feminist-led movement that ensures anyone and everyone has the freedom to lead empowered lives in safety and security in their bodies, in their communities, and throughout the country.” We wonder if our feminist vision should demand a little bit more, and if it’s really useful to have a vision that only includes “the country”. In a globalized world where our “country” has over 700 military bases and supplies weapons for every major conflict – don’t feminists within the US owe a vision that transcends borders? If our oppression flows to every inch of the earth, so should our solidarity.

Patriarchy is a stomach that is never satiated and is constantly looking for people to swallow up – so it encourages us and pressures us to leave people behind. At this present moment, we are being encouraged by western feminists to put women in the U.S. ahead of women in Gaza, even when we see videos of pregnant Palestinian women being shot in the street. Western feminists are insisting we try to race to the top, leaving our sisters in Gaza ailing and starving in our dust. Unless part of the ruling class, Western feminists gain nothing by excluding Palestinian women from their politics and future aspirations – without the practice and value of true solidarity, they will leave everyone living under the boot of capitalism and imperialism in the dirt.

Having a social imagination is key to our feminist world view. To quote Bill Ayers’ new book *When Freedom is the Question, Abolition is the Answer*, social imagination is “the collectively creative, inventive, resourceful forces that embrace all of humanity and are explicitly pro-emancipation and pro-liberation for the many, for all.” Any feminist framework that doesn’t include the masses lacks what is necessary for social imagination.

Here’s what western feminists are presented with: women in the Senate, women in the House of Representatives, and women in “power” vaguely. Let’s zoom in at the women in Congress who CODEPINK has been educating on the plight of women in Gaza for years now. When confronted with the reality of the human suffering they knowingly support and materially make possible, people like Nancy Pelosi shake their fists at us and insist they are focusing on the issues facing women here in the US. Not only is western feminism exclusionary, it also thinks you’re stupid. Congress, and women like Nancy Pelosi have had multiple opportunities to codify abortion rights in the United States. During this time, and in the last year these same women have promised iron clad support for the genocidal state of Israel as it destroys families and sexually abuses Palestinian women and men.

So, what have these “feminists” in power delivered for the people? They give us an image of a woman sitting in the seat of power and “breaking the glass ceiling”. Is having a woman who sat where a man once sat to vote in favor of the same austerity or war spending that the man voted for “breaking the glass ceiling”? Sure. But, what about that is meaningful if the walls that hold up the ceiling keep the masses in poverty, trauma, and war? Feminists

seek to tear the walls down altogether. .

A plea for the status quo (that includes institutional violence against women) is not liberatory nor is it an example of social imagination. Liberatory values like feminism are all-encompassing, they are aspirational and inspiring. Above all, they are rooted in love.

We want a different future. So, what's the alternative to exclusionary, western feminism that doesn't mind Palestinian women being murdered en masse as long as maybe, one day they can codify the right to an abortion in one, singular country?

It's feminism - feminism in practice, feminism that truly believes every person deserves dignity in this life. Feminism that can actually imagine and cultivate a future worth living to.

To begin to break out of the racial capitalist patriarchy is to begin practicing feminist values in our everyday lives. At CODEPINK, we call this moving from the war economy to the peace economy. Here are five simple steps you can start taking today:

1. Talk to and meet a new stranger every day. On the bus, at a cafe, on the street. Anywhere. Get outside
2. Practice curiosity. When you hear information relayed to you about another person or issue, ask why that might be the case, or even if that's the case at all. Curiosity can help us sift through mass media and interpersonal drama with a more critical lens.
3. Practice patience. Remind yourself to not be condescending to people who know less than you about politics or anything at all!
4. Practice generosity. When we live from a place of abundance, we are actively rejecting the scarcity the war economy instills in us.
5. Practice all-encompassing care. You care about the people directly around you. But you also care about the people around them, and then the people around them. You can't possibly have a feminism that is exclusionary if your empathy reaches everywhere.
6. More practices and our support of you at codepink.org/peaceeconomy

Yes, the atrocities the U.S. government carries out in our name aren't necessarily our fault. Our politicians are bought off and don't represent the people, we know that. But practicing our values as we build our movements is critical. If we can see little glimpses of the world we want to live in by just being with each other, then we are tangibly moving in the right direction.

This constant practice of our feminist values makes sure no one gets left behind and prevents our movement from being sucked into co-option. In the U.S., our struggle is with our own government's priorities. They thrive on getting rich from war and the power they

draw from it - they never had and never will be concerned with life, ours or the planets. When our government's oppression spans the entire world, the people's struggle is always one.

So, when we imagine a world where our priorities shift to the people, and we look past the horizon and over the Mediterranean, there is also a liberated Palestine.

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