

**Iran's "Election" and The Progressive Women's rights Movement**

By: Fouzieh Khalediyani

Nothing is more alarming to the Islamic regime than a strong and progressive women rights movement. Suppressing women's rights was one of the first priorities for the Islamic regime to stabilizing itself after grasping power 26 years ago. Since then institutionalized hostility against women has become a daily routine in Iran. Moreover, the Islamic state has brutalized women in every aspects of their life. Painstakingly as time has trudged by over the years, the regime's dream of restraining women as a method to prolong their unacceptable governing period is descending. Increasingly more women in every social category are rejecting the barbaric Islamic rule and are struggling for their rights and move forward to end the systematic containment. Furthermore, it has become apparent that the progressive women's

**The Humanistic Position of Marxism on Abortion**

By Azam Kamguian

**"The Discussion on respect for human life is not about biology, it is about philosophy. The respect for the biological human life is a reflection of philosophical respect to the nature of human life. This respect is a symbol of human intellect not religious or superstitious ideology." Mansour Hekmat**



Azam kamguian

**Religion, right of life and abortion**

Unfortunately up till now the banner for the defense of fetus life and opposition to abortion have been raised by religious groups which hypocritically call themselves pro-life. Religions including, Christianity, Judaism and Islam which in the history of human life have proven to be institutions against humanity, deceitfully they portray themselves as supporting the right to life. Furthermore, those who are in favor of abortion, pro-choice, take their stance by opposing pro-life's religious

discussion. However are religious or not, by relying on the humanist position of Marxian atheism, and by the genuine pro-choice's view points, one could demonstrate that abortion is an an-



cient and inhumane way against human norms and values, and that it has to be put aside. This is the only way through which the society could prevent religions from taking advantage of fetus' right to life by hypocrisy and deception.

**Fetus and the right to life**

Many defenders of abortion, whether they

declare that identifying when fetus life is initiating is a religious matter so it cannot be accountable to values or laws of a humane society. Of course

this claim is to their benefit because in western society life begins when the baby is born, and not from the physical initiation of life in an embryo. Upon the discussion on "When is life started?" It is rarely asked or comes under consideration: when does the actual physical existence of human life initiated? In western societies the

issue of beginning of human life is when a human life is accountable and qualified to the regulations, rules and values accepted in society.

Nevertheless, the question "When is life started?" can be answered scientifically as well as socially.

The answer is "when the physically existent human life starts". However the time when this human life can qualify for its rights completely depends on the degree of value given to human dignity and to social justice. In the days behind us, women in religious minorities, minority races, and children, had no social rights. Unfortunately in the 21 century this applies to fetus as well, which has a physical existent life and is in the process of development to becoming a baby, into a child and later, to adult life.

But **cont.on.pg.2**

**Stop Gender Apartheid!**

**Huma...fromp.1** what not eventually going definition of fetus. All cellular creature is not The rights of the fetus and its parents have to be protected. Parents, society and government are responsible for the fetus's well being and development. Abortion apologists defend their ideas by saying that if a fetus is a human being; its mother is not responsible for providing nutrition from her own body for it. But in any society where basic human rights are acknowledged, a child would be supported both by the parents and the society. Parents are responsible to provide shelter, clothes, food and health care. When a child is considered a human aren't the parents responsible for her/his welfare? Many pro-choice defenders answer "no" to this question. They are saying that just as parents can not be forced to contribute blood to save their child's life, the mother can refuse to provide nutrition from her own body to the fetus even if causes fetus fatality because based on the social principals, fetus considered as independent human and qualifies for all social rights. In the opposite side pro-choice defenders say fetus is not an independent creature. It is a part of a woman's body therefore a woman can make decisions for her own body. This group obstinately defend **cont.on.pg.4**

is a "human"? What makes him or her human and gives this qualification to his/her life? Why must human beings, regardless of the degree of their brain or physical development, enjoy their basic human rights? As a response to this question many are saying that human intellect, reasoning, and the power to make wise decisions distinguish human from animal. Based on the argument stated above, a creature that possesses these characteristics can be considered human. If humans didn't have these powers, there would be no question of human rights of people. It is obvious that creatures which have cognition are able to make decision and act in a particular way, are called human. The ambiguity and problems of the discussion arises when you have to qualify human rights for a fetus or a comatose person who are not able to act the way a human would. In the case of a comatose person, the situation is clear because the person has qualified for human rights prior to coma and after coming out of coma, her/his identity remains the same and can have the same rights as she/he had. However, a fetus has no identity and has no intellection or decision power. The question is why? Is the fetus to be a human infant? If the infant did not have the right to live why does it grow and develop in to a complete human being? Therefore the infant has the right to be counted as human and be qualified for all human rights. Human characteristics are hidden in the nature of the fetus and will materialize with its development. In the west the rights of the fetus are not recognized. In reality, the rights of an infant are preserved for the time that they can benefit from them. This is a certain fact in the legal system. But why do these certain rights are not considered natural and indisputable rights for unborn fetus? Why is it not possible to consider a fetus as human from the moment of women's pregnancy? Why does a newborn qualify for human rights but fetus is deprived of those rights? For creatures that are regenerated from sexual intercourse between male and female, life begins as a result of reproduction and the creation of a living organism. A human genetic construction is exactly the same as the unborn fetus of the same person. Meaning my genetic and biological composition as an adult human is exactly the same as when I was an unborn fetus. This is a real, materialistic, and acceptable other definitions, for example on the basis on when the fetus becomes human, is either religious or self defined. Fetus is not a spirit that solidifies in a multi-cellular organic system deposited by god or it has not been created by god. Becoming a human is not a separable process from being a human. Some people say up to twentieth week, the fetus is potentially a human but not a real human; however this reasoning is similar to religious interpretation that the spirit comes into multi-cellular organism and makes it a human. Power of intellect and reasoning is not an outside force that enters in to fetus. In opposition to religious interpretations, it should be noted that the process of brain development is a manifestation of the genetic sequence that takes place in the fetus DNA. During the process of human life, from fetus to late adulthood, a human is genetically never exchangeable to any none-human creatures. Human identity, philosophically, biologically and genetically is the same. This connection is obvious in the process of physical and psychological growth. A human is always undergoing change. This process continues. It is also said that the fetus as a multi-cellular creature is not a human because does not possess human characteristics. To accept this reasoning would mean that the new born baby should not be considered a human either because the baby's physical characters are not yet completed. An uncompleted human is a human, whether the human is 10 years or 10 minutes old. To judge the development of a human on the basis of physical maturity is illogical. Humanity shouldn't be based on any criteria such as nationality, religion, age, race, or the degree of intellectual and physical development. Humanity has to be evaluated based on human principals such as genetic and biological development. Usually in the beginning of fetus development there is no bonding between fetus and the surrounding. Therefore, potentially, the fetus is not considered as a human. According to this logic and norm, only a complete or mature human is as a human. We know that all of us have been a fetus at one point in our lives. Long ago in our past, new born babies could be killed, or abandoned because they were not considered as human beings. But with social development, infants and children are recognized equal as adults and would qualify for social rights.

# Marathon run in Lahore, Pakistan



On May, 21, 2005, in one of the central squares in the city of Lahore, Pakistan, a marathon run was performed by 400-500 women and men. The participants were carrying placards with slogans such as: "The society can't go back wards!", "We confront Mullahs and Talebanization of Pakistan!", and "Women want to enjoy their human rights!" Women were wearing t-shirts over their traditional clothing to show their support meanwhile others had left their scarves on their shoulders rather than covering their heads. These

women were displaying to the world media that they want to live life on their accords. A group of Mullahs, whom were on the street at the time, were opposing the marathon run and tried to prevent it. The Marathon run in Pakistan attracted much attention and sympathy from Pakistani society. And at the same time many discussion arose on the issues of women's rights and struggle against Islamizing Pakistani society. Also in April, many women rights organizations carried out another marathon run. During the event the Islamic supporters had thrown benzene bombes toward the runners and had assaulted one of the women very cruelly. The leader of these

invaders is the leader of the Islamic party of practical assembly which is in power in the north west of Pakistan. This party has prohibited music, dance, and also enforced gender segregation in the public places in territories under it's power. This party is in alliance with Parviz Moshref, and up till now has carried out parts of their agenda in many areas of Pakistan. Furthermore, the Pakistani police, on the day that the marathon runners were being attacked by the invaders, had arrested the women rights activists instead of attackers. Meanwhile the government of Pakistan did not permit the marathon run. During these runs 13 women rights activists were arrested and impris-

oned. Simply stated, Mullahs are against women running in the public. They declare that this is against Islam and Pakistani culture. The mullahs want women alone (not with men) to have their physical activity in places that are out of public sight. They say that "the marathon runner women are indecent and deserve indecency". On the other hand, to answer these insults the marathon participant had held placards with slogans of "your (Islamic Mullahs )idea and thoughts are indecent." The Marathon run in Pakistan is a symbol of the struggle between political Islam and the needs of the youth whom are thirsty for freedom and equality. Simply,

this generation is not satisfied by living under barbaric and stone-aged laws of political Islam. The Islamic forces in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and other parts of the world, are trying to keep women in the closet and empower a black scenario in people's life. Moreover, the struggle against this has broadened in all angels of the region. The Marathon run in Pakistan is continuation of the struggle of people in Tehran, Sanandaj, and Shiraz to end the barbarism of political Islam which for two generations has made life harsh and bitter. The marathon run in Pakistan as a symbol to defend equal rights for women is highly regarded for all women rights activists internationally.

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## A symbolic rally against the ridicules election of the Islamic regime of Iran

Women rights activists from The Organization for Emancipation of Women (OEW) in Denmark, Copenhagen, organized a rally on June 16, located in the central part of the city. The demonstrators displayed the sexual apartheid and lack of rights for women in Iran. Demonstrator also highlighted their

opposition to the election in Iran by displaying the barbaric rules and policies against women. In this rally a group of women showed lack of rights for women by wearing chador and chain and a man showed barbaric rule of Islam regime by wearing Islamic robe and turban while having a sword in one

hand and carrying a placard of "women are evil" and "a woman is half of a man" in the other hand. Other demonstrators were holding placards with slogans against Islamic regime in Iran. Nahid Ryazi from the OEW presented a speech on the situation of women in Iran and the ridicules presiden-

tial election going on there. The demonstration ended in front of the European Union's office in Denmark. This rally and the struggle for human rights in Iran is supported by the Council in Denmark which has 2 million members, International women's March in Denmark, Demos women group,

The Youth Organization of the Socialist Folk Party (SFO), Youth Socialist Organization and the Left Union Party in the parliament. **The Organization for Emancipation of Women / Denmark branch**  
**Nahid Ryazi**  
**Tel: 00 45 40 54 39 92**

**Long Live Freedom and Equality!**

**Hum.from.p.2**abortion from 12 to 24 weeks or more of gestational life of fetus.

It is clear that there are many differences between contributing blood and a pregnancy. Blood transfusion is an urgent action to save a person's life and is not a routine action like providing nutrition to a fetus in pregnancy. Parents are responsible to provide proper care for their children but they are not obligated to donate their blood for their child to survive. The issue of providing welfare and care for the fetus of a pregnant woman is different. Women and men have voluntarily chosen to have sexual intercourse which has resulted in pregnancy. Thus socially and legally, the parents and the society are responsible for providing care and welfare. Just as providing welfare for children is a parent's responsibility, their survival before birth is also their responsibility, and especially fetus's mother whom is naturally responsible. Therefore father and the society are responsible for proper and humane living conditions for the mother.

When a pregnancy is resulted from rape, the existent legal system generously allows abortion and justifies this by saying the mother did not choose to become pregnant therefore she is not

responsible for the fetus's growth and survival. These mothers do not have to think that only abortion can help save their reputation or the only way to survive after a rape is abortion. Allowing abortion for raped mothers releases the govern-



ment and the society, from the social and human commitments towards the mother and the unborn baby. Here, ethically, a humane approach is necessary to guarantee mother's physical, mental, social and economical well being as well as the right to life for the fetus.

**Abortion and women's rights**

Pro-choice defenders consider themselves as women's rights defenders. Defending abortion is called to be defending women's rights and consequently opposing abortion is considered

to be against women, because they argue that abortion opponents ignore women's hardships during pregnancy. Of course with this propaganda they can collect financial support to provide abortion clinics. But this is an inhumane way of facing this im-

portant issue. It is a reality that an unwanted pregnancy has many social, financial and occupational difficulties. It is very unfair to women to be totally responsible for looking after the child. On top of this, many women are deprived of services and effective facilities that provide sex education and contraceptives. But why does the weight of these problems have to be all on the women's shoulders? Why not make changes in the unjust social system which is the root cause of inequality and the

source of pressure on women. Why, instead of getting rid of injustice, the right to life of the unborn baby has to be taken away? Why should the human rights of a woman contradict the right to life of the fetus? Why the mother and the unborn baby are victimized by this oppressive system?

The pro-choice people, who claim and insist that abortion is always necessary for women, see a few basic issues as evident and unchangeable. First, they say a humane society won't be able to provide prosperity for born and unborn children. Second, there is no hope to change the unjust social system therefore there is no chance of having a system that women would not be in need of an abortion. Also violence against taking away his/her rights is not only an acceptable method; it is also a necessary way of dealing with social issues in the society.

Abortion is an obvious and evident suppression of the right to life, and the dignity of mother, child and unborn child. Unfortunately, today's people are imposing their own will and decision on the weak and defenseless, and the worse case is that the physical termination of this existing human is considered equal to support for women's

rights, population control or preventing the growing poverty. Human society is responsible for the death of thousands of unborn children. Deprivation of right to life for the most defenseless, e.g., the human fetus, is in fact a holocaust.

It has been argued that being recognized as an individual and being qualified for human rights is based on rules and values that are made and recognized by society. This is both correct and incorrect. Abortion is acceptable to many people, and at the same time many people see abortion as a contradiction to the rights of living of a human. For instance a hundred years ago, women, workers, slaves, "blacks" and the disabled were not eligible for human rights. Millions were tortured and killed because of their race, religion, nationality or class differences. With progress and advances in human values, future generations also judge us in the same way that we did to the past generations. The future generation will judge our thoughts and ideas regarding the rights of fetus and unborn child. Accepting abortion as a solution for society's issues and problems is another characteristic of the existing unequal system. Abortion is an inhumane and

**Human...from.p.4**  
 discriminatory way to solve very serious social issues. Abortion is a fast but inhumane way to solve society's deep down problems. When society is based on respect for human values and responsibility towards human rights, abortion wouldn't be validated. The inequality of the system is more obvious when a woman has been put in a situation that she has to choose between having a baby and live in poverty with lack of rights or get rid of the unborn baby and continue with her education and profession. This puts women in a very painful situation. Why does the fetus's human right have to contradict his/her mother's human rights, interests or future?  
 If there is no social, financial or economic security for women and her unborn baby, women's situation has to be changed. Taking the right of the fetus to life, is unacceptable. Instead of choosing this exchange, there should be improvement in women and children's social prosperity. For instance, when there would sufficient sex education and safe and accessi-

ble contraceptives, financial and social support for children, ending sexual assaults, emancipation of women from religion and patriarchal culture in sexual relationship, freedom in having children without being forced into marriage and providing an environment within which women's sexual life is being respected, abortion wouldn't be chosen as an option by women.  
 The need for abortion shows clearly that the society needs change. There is an urgent need for equality and more rights for women and children. Abortion is antique and inhumane. Human society should progress in a humane way so that legal or illegal abortions will stay in history. Resorting to abortion because of helplessness is not an untreatable disease. Abortion is not like earthquake, thunder storms or volcanic eruptions which are unavoidable and it does not need a very advanced technology which human have no access to, yet.  
 The advanced and effective equality seeking social movements are those which broaden human rights

for all human being including workers, "blacks", slaves, children and women. Exclusion or physical termination of these people is against humanity and human progress. Unfortunately, some people under the guise of defending women's rights, justify this inhuman act.  
 Illegalizing abortion in present situation is a punishment to many women and girls who are the victims of this unjust social system. Unwanted pregnancies or feeling regret from wanted pregnancies, financial hardships, cultural and societal pressures, in effect, unfortunately, force many women to choose abortion as the only way to face difficult situations. At the same time, as long as the adverse social circumstances do drive a large number of women to resorting to backstreet abortions, in order to prevent abuse by profiteers and ensure protection of women's health the introduction of the following measures is necessary:  
 1 - Legalization of abortion up to the twelfth week of pregnancy.  
 2 - Abortion after the

twelfth week to be legally permitted if there is danger to the health of the mother (until that time when Caesarean section and the saving of the fetus are possible given the latest medical expertise). Such cases to be ascertained by the competent medical authorities.  
 3 - Wide and freely available facilities for pregnancy tests. Instruction of people in their use to ensure quick detection of unwanted pregnancies.  
 4 - Free abortion and free post-abortion care in licensed clinics by gynecologists.  
 5 - The decision whether to have or not to have an abortion rests with the woman alone. The state has the duty, however, to inform her before her final decision, of the dissuasive arguments and recommendations of the scientific authorities and social counselors as well as of the financial, material and moral commitments of the state to her and her child.  
 6 - To reduce the number of abortions, the worker-communist party also calls for the introduction of the following urgent measures to prevent unwanted pregnancies

and to free women from economic, cultural and moral pressures.  
 7 - Broad sexual education of people on contraceptives and on the importance of the issue. Widely accessible advisory services.  
 8 - Wide and free access to contraceptives.  
 9 - Allocation of adequate funding and resources to help the women who are considering having an abortion because of economic constraints. The state should stress its duty and readiness to take care of the child should the mother decide to give birth to the child.  
 10 - Resolute campaigns against prejudices and moral pressures that drive women to abortion. Active state support to women against such pressures, prejudices and intimidations.  
 11- Campaign against the ignorant, religious, male-chauvinistic and backward attitudes that hinder the growth of people's sexual awareness and, specifically, impede women's and young people's wide use of contraceptives and safe-sex devices.  
**(From "A Better World")**

**News..from.pg.7**  
**Iran focus**  
 Industrial Aeronautic University defied agents of the State Security Forces when the latter harassed them on campus and tried to arrest

them for violating the dress regulations.  
 There have been increasing student protests on university campuses across Iran against a recent government clampdown on young

people and women.  
**Women not admitted to Iran hospital without chador Mon. 4 Jul 2005**  
**Iran Focus**  
 Tehran, Iran, Jul. 04 – A hospital belonging to

the Revolutionary Guards in the Iranian capital is refusing entry for women not wearing the head-to-toe covering known as chador, according to local residents. Security guards

outside the main entrance of Baqiyatollah Hospital were seen turning away women who were not wearing the chador.

## The membership request from the Persian Gay and Lesbian Organization (PGLO)

**From: The Persian gay and lesbian organization**

**To: The Organization for Emancipation of Women**

We are announcing that the Persian Gay and Lesbian Organization (PGLO) is requesting membership in the OEW. We would like to have your hospitality and partnership in our activities to achieve freedom and equality based on universal declaration of human rights.

PGLO has always supports homosexuals. And now by being member of your respectable organization many important issues of homosexual women, who are under so much pressure and discrimination, can be resolved. The reality is that homosexual women have to tolerate more discrimination and much more inferiority on top of common discriminations and pressure.

We hope you will accept our request and support us to achieve our goal.

**With regards,**

**Aryan Verjavendy**

**General- Secretary of PGLO**

## The reply to the membership request from the PGLO

**From: Mehrnoush Mosavi**

**Executive director of OEW**

**To: Arvyn Verjandy**

**General Executive director of PGLO**

**With greetings and wishes for success,**

We are glad that your organization, in pursuit of strengthening its own struggles against Islamic oppression and discrimination and organized violence in Iran, has requested membership in our organization. Our organization believes having freedom and equality is a right to all people regardless of their gender, nationality, religion, race and socio-economical situation. We are struggling against all shapes and forms of oppression and violence against women and we are in support of all homosexuals' social rights against Islamic rules and regulations. There are no obstacles in the way of your membership in our organization. However as you are already aware our organization was formed 9 months ago by 50 well known women rights activists. On one front, we are struggling against Islamic regime and all kind of violence against women, and in the other front we are in the constant examining, constructing, and restructuring all aspects of the structures of our organization. Prior and following you request we have received more letters from other organizations in Iran and out side of Iran for membership in the OEW. Firstly, because of the novel-ness of this request and efforts for the completion and publication of the organization's statements we ask you for a short time to make this statement accessible to you. With no doubt, our statement must be uncomplicated and clear so that different organizations and individuals which, for what ever reason, request membership and cooperation in the OEW can have a greater involvement. Furthermore, our organization sets no membership terms and conditions for any individual (s) or group (s). Also we have no ideological, organizational terms or gender restriction on our membership policy. We want in our immediate action on the publication of our statement that all the rights and responsibilities of other organizations, groups, and even different fractions are made precise and clear. Moreover, this will make it better and easier for their membership and participation in our organization. You will agree that in this way, by reviewing your own organization's rights in our statement; you can have more light on your decision to join us. We will publish our statement as soon as possible and we will make it accessible to you. Till then we are asking you to continue your political and social contact with us.

**With regards**

**23/05/05**

**Iran.from.pg.8** their struggle forward. thematic discriminative fought back with reso- rising in women's  
women attending these The students from the regime. lution and voted for situation in Iran.  
matches where con- University of Tehran However the none- freedom with their There has always been  
fronted with heavily countered the state's stop women's struggle voices in the streets. a strong pressure from  
armed personnel. Fur- new policies by rally- in the past years to end They cried and stated women to counteract  
thermore, the Islamic ing against the on- gender apartheid is that women's right the indecent proce-  
regime has also slaught on "social becoming more in- can't be achieved unde- dures brought about,  
banned women and Voice, shops and pub- tense. Women wish der the dominance of almost daily by the  
girls from visiting hos- lic places". In addi- for abolishment of all this discriminative regime. Simply one  
pitals without the tion, the students de- laws and regulations scheme. The presence approach to facilitate  
proper Islamic attire- manded the immediate that are purposely ar- of thousands of revolution in women's  
(Chador). As a result and unconditional re- ranged to restrain women in the city of situation in Iran is to  
of the greater intensity lease of all political them. In the 2005's Tehran and many carry on none stop  
among the oppressive prisoners. Neverthe- sham election, women other cities in Iran and protest to every ele-  
forces, the women's less, women in Iran demonstrated their outside of Iran protest- ing against the elec- ment of the system.  
rights movement has have taken a central resistance to the sys- tion was an explicit  
gained greater mo- role in the process of tem's daily organized representation for up-  
mentum and vigor in bringing down the sys- oppression. They

# Demonstration in France against presidential election of Islamic regime in Iran

Payam Azar, a member of the Organization for Emancipation of Women, a week before the election in Iran had obtained a permit to have a demonstration at the election centre in the French city of Lyon. A night before the day of the demonstration, French police had come to Payam's residence to give him a cancellation notice. However, Payam and Faryba Azar rejected the police cancellation notice and stated that French police is more concerned about the political and economical relationship be-

tween France and The Islamic Republic of Iran, then the continuous human rights violations going on in Iran for years. On the day of the election, the members of the OEW gathered at the election place organized a demonstration and begun their opposition to the election in Iran by revealing the Islamic regime's barbaric rules in the past 26 years. Fariba Azar asked the voters, "Do you vote for execution, for stoning, for torture, for amputation, for compulsory hejab, for a regime which has caused mil-

lions of youth to fall into addiction and prostitution?" She continued by declaring: "Shame on you, for signing the validity of all these crimes." The French Police asked the demonstrators to leave the area, but the demonstrators rejected the police's request and continued their demonstration. The representatives of France's lefty organizations, Youth Communist Organization and Communist Party of France and many more people were present there and announced their strong support for the demon-

stration. The women rights activists from OEW continued their demonstration with carrying posters of execution, stoning and lack of rights for women in Iran. Furthermore the Police continued asking the demonstrators to leave the area but the demonstrators refused. At this time however, the French police started attacking the demonstrators. A female protester was hit by the police and was sent to the hospital. The protestors continued their demonstration against the election till 9 pm. The

organizer of this demonstration had a meeting with France's left organizations to arrange another demonstration for the 2nd round of the elections. Police once again went to Payam's residence giving him a cancellation note for the demonstration. And at the same time police had changed the election centre to Ger-noble city which is 100 km away from Lyon. The protestors of this demonstration stated that they will never give up and they will continue revealing Islamic regime crimes against humanity.

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## News on women's issues

### Iran: Changes in abortion law on medical ground

The Islamic parliament has voted to liberalize the country's abortion laws. Under the law approved, a pregnancy can be terminated in the first four months if the fetus is mentally or physically handicapped. Both parents must give their consent and three doctors to confirm that the fetus is damaged. They need three doctors, as well as the coroner's office, to confirm the fetus is damaged or the mother's life at risk. The law still has to be approved by the Guardian Council. Previously, abortion was only allowed if the mother's life was proven to be in dan-

ger. Under this new bill, even if a woman is pregnant as a result of rape she still doesn't have the right to an abortion. Under the existing law, an illegal abortionist and the mother in question can be sentenced to between three to 10 years in jail. But according to the local media that hasn't stopped tens of thousands of Iranian women undertaking expensive and sometimes dangerous backstreet abortions.

**Canada: Quebec rejected the use of Islamic tribunals**  
**Canadian Press:** Quebec rejects Sharia system Thursday, May 26, 2005

In a unanimous vote Thursday, the Quebec

legislature passed a motion against allowing Sharia to be used in the legal system.

"The application of Sharia in Canada is part of a strategy to isolate the Muslim community, so it will submit to an archaic vision of Islam," Fatima Houada-Pepin, a Liberal member of the legislature, said as she introduced the motion against use of the Islamic law.

"These demands are being pushed by groups in the minority that are using the Charter of Rights to attack the foundation of our democratic institutions." The debate over Sharia surfaced in Canada two years ago when a Muslim group in Ontario

proposed the arbitration of family disputes according to Islamic law.

### Afghanistan: Widows denied right to re-marry

In a country full of young widows due to 25 years of war and the loss of men this problem has become acute. According to tradition, they can only marry close relatives of the deceased husband, even though 6 years ago, during the Taliban's ultra-conservative reign, its leader Mullah Omar issued a decree allowing widows to marry whom-ever they wished. Since the fall of the Taliban, a little over 3 years ago, a woman who has lost her husband has very little choice about

her future. If she is allowed to marry again, it will be to her brother-in-law or another close relative in her husband's family.

Fauzia Amini of the Women's Affairs Ministry says, "The custom of forcing a widow to marry her brother-in-law or another close relative of her dead husband is very bad; we are trying to break the hold these traditions have on the population." The ministry is working with mullahs, or religious leaders, to try and get more freedom of choice for women whose husbands have died.

### Female students clash with Iran security forces on campus

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Iran.from.pg.1v i t a l and are entrapped in a rights movement is brutal ancient culture playing a key and ruthlessly imposed on role in turning the them. The regime ex-



wheel of struggle in the path of revolution in Iran. However, during years, women have paid a costly price under the heels of this gender apartheid regime in Iran. In short, women’s private life, social life, love life, profession or skills options, schooling, sports, selection of outfits, amusements, choice to travel, children’s custody rights, est... and all the essential and fundamental rights that a person can enjoy in a westernized society, is under close control of the Islamic regime. In this way, the Iranian women are systematically deprived of enjoying the life as human being in the twenty first century

and are entrapped in a brutal ancient culture ruthlessly imposed on them. The regime exercises countless forms of suppression in Iran; among these are multiple techniques of torture, imprisonment and execution in order to further delay their social and political downfall. Just a few days ago two young teenager were brutally executed in the city of Mashhad. These teenagers were flogged and tortured prior to their execution. And also since the turn of the month, following the presidential sham election, six adults were executed and many are sentenced to death or facing execution. As a result of the empowerment of the ultra-conservative faction of the regime, there is further crackdown on people’s already re-

strained social life. A senior security official of the Islamic regime chillingly describes the state’s further oppressive agenda to the media by declaring “Un-veil or mal-veil women outside and inside of cars would be more target of arrest” In the past two “elections” in the Islamic regime, Khatami was taking complete advantage of the oppression, which the system that he was representing in Iran, had imposed on women for years. His position as a so called “reformist” was a strategy used by the state to delay the inevitable downfall of the regime by giving false hope of loosening the Islamic republic grip on women. During Khatami’s eight years of presidency he proved that he has no intentions to make any changes in women’s situation. Under his time a 16 years old Atefaeh Rajabi was executed, 13 year old Zhila Eyzadi was flogged and like many other young women she was imprisoned as well. In addition, Zhila was also sentenced to stoning; but the public

pressure along with never expected much the protest of many more than this from international human Khatami’s presidency. rights organizations Endless attack on



such as the campaign women’s right makes to save Zeila and the backbone of an Baxtyar from The Or-Islamic regime in Iran. ganization for Emancipation of Women Iran are clashing against this patriarchal system to achieve equality. Teachers, nurses, students, workers, housewives are all participants in this struggle. Continues strikes are being organized daily by teachers, nurses and workers for their unpaid wages and to combat against their inhuman working conditions. They oppose the segregations in their social and political life. Also, this battle in people’s daily social life has taken a new face, i.e. the barbaric regime banned “democracy” that women from attending soccer matches, and The women in Iran the cont.on.pg. 6

Contact address: Executive Director: Mehrnoush Mousavi [mehr\\_musavi@yahoo.de](mailto:mehr_musavi@yahoo.de) Editor: Fouzieh Khalediyani [fouzieh@yahoo.com](mailto:fouzieh@yahoo.com) Tel: (416) 754- 2427 [Emancipationofwomen@yahoo.com](mailto:Emancipationofwomen@yahoo.com)

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