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Iran

A Revolutionary Feminist Position on Iran: Vs. Authoritarianism, Vs. Imperialism, Vs. Zionism, and NO TO WAR!



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A REVOLUTIONARY FEMINIST position on Iran must refuse the false and damaging binary that demands choosing between defending the Islamic Republic and endorsing US-imperialist and Zionist intervention. This is a constructed choice designed to collapse political judgment into campism. It converts solidarity into a competition of moral allegiances and leaves ordinary people, workers, women, youth, and minorities to a reality shaped simultaneously by internal repression as well as external militarized destruction. [1]

Iran today confronts a layered and interlocking crisis: a crisis of political legitimacy, a crisis of social reproduction and everyday survival, and a crisis of sovereignty intensified by war, sanctions, and external coercion. These crises are not experienced evenly across society. Their burdens are borne most heavily by the working classes, by women, by ethnic, sexual, and religious minorities, by students, intellectuals, artists, labour organisers, and by the poor.

A serious radical feminist analysis must therefore refuse simplification. It must hold together the structures of state repression, the material effects of sanctions and geopolitical pressure, and the lived struggles of all those most affected by them. Only by analysing these dynamics together can solidarity remain accountable to the people whose lives are shaped by them.

Opposing Authoritarianism and Supporting Emancipatory Struggles

There is nothing progressive about authoritarian theocratic rule. The Islamic Republic has systematically repressed basic freedoms, violently crushed dissent, and denied labour, democratic, and civil rights. It has engaged in mass arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings, and the suppression of activists, intellectuals, artists, lawyers, journalists, and union organisers. Ethnic, sexual, and religious minorities, including Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs, Sunnis, Bahais, and others, have faced long standing discrimination and state violence.

Within this context, the Woman Life Freedom/Jin, Jiyan, Azadi movement represented an emancipatory horizon that cannot be reduced to statist slogans. It has articulated a profound rejection of gendered oppression, compulsory hijab, patriarchal policing, and structural exclusion. Its appeal has been broad, extending across workers, students, families, and youth. This movement points toward a politics that seeks to dismantle patriarchal domination alongside authoritarian rule, and it deserves sustained and principled feminist revolutionary solidarity.

Authentic support for emancipatory struggle means opposing both state terror and the social relations that sustain it. Gender and sexual oppression in Iran are not incidental. It is structurally embedded in education, legal frameworks, labour markets, welfare regimes, and everyday forms of policing and discipline. A revolutionary feminist position must therefore place women's rights, bodily autonomy, gender and sexual equality at the centre of any emancipatory horizon, not as an afterthought or symbolic gesture.

Rejecting Authoritarian Nationalism and Imperialism

Revolutionary feminists must reject reactionary alternatives that present themselves as democratic while reproducing patriarchal and racist authoritarian logics of power. Monarchist and Pahlavist currents do not represent a progressive or emancipatory alternative to the Islamic Republic. They are rooted in authoritarian nationalism, social hierarchy, and nostalgia for a political order marked by repression, inequality, and foreign dependence.

Monarchists have increasingly aligned themselves with Western capitalist imperialist interests and with Zionism, openly endorsing sanctions, military intervention, and external pressure on Iranian society. Such positions place them in direct opposition to the working classes who bear the costs of economic warfare and geopolitical confrontation. Replacing theocratic authoritarianism with secular one, particularly one aligned with imperialist/Zionist powers, is not liberation. It is subordination by other means.

Opposing Imperialism, Sanctions, and War

Opposition to authoritarianism does not entail endorsement of capitalist imperialism. Sanctions, economic blockade, and military threats inflict profound and lasting harm on ordinary people. United States led sanctions against Iran have been explicitly designed to impose maximum economic pain on society. Their effects are cumulative, hollowing out living standards, degrading public services, and strengthening predatory networks that thrive under conditions of scarcity and crisis.

War only deepens this catastrophe. Military escalation generates siege conditions that empower the most repressive elements of the state while exposing civilians to destruction they neither choose nor control. Military intervention does not open democratic horizons. It closes them. Western governments that have inflicted decades of economic warfare on Iran do not act in the interests of Iranian women, workers, or democratic forces. The fact that figures such as Donald Trump, whose policies have immiserated millions of Iranians, now posture as champions of Iranian freedom is not merely cynical. It is grotesque.

Against Statist Anti-Imperialism and False Binaries

Equally corrosive is statist anti-imperialism, the idea that authoritarian states must be defended simply because they oppose Western imperialism. This position mistakes geopolitical alignment for emancipation and substitutes loyalty to states for solidarity with peoples. There is nothing revolutionary and feminist about defending repression in the name of sovereignty or resistance.

At the same time, it is politically dismissive to treat capitalist imperialist powers as irrelevant to Iran present crisis. No mass political struggle is ever purely national. All are shaped by regional and global structures of domination. A serious revolutionary feminist politics must be capable of opposing authoritarian repression while also confronting capitalist imperialist violence without collapsing one into the other.

This also requires rejecting the zero-sum logic that pits Iranian lives against Palestinian lives or imagines solidarity as a scarce resource to be rationed between struggles. Solidarity is not a competition, and human life is not subject to geopolitical accounting. Every life carries equal value. Recognising differences in how violence operates, how denial is organised, or how credibility is distributed across contexts does not create a hierarchy of suffering. It is an analytical and political necessity. Distinct systems of domination produce distinct forms of harm, visibility, and erasure; naming these differences is part of taking them seriously.

When these realities are collapsed into a single undifferentiated moral register, analysis is flattened and politics becomes punitive. The result is not deeper solidarity but its distortion — turning solidarity into something transactional and coercive rather than principled, relational, and accountable to those living through these conditions.

What a Revolutionary Feminist Position Requires

A principled revolutionary feminist position therefore rests on several commitments:

- Support for Iranian self-determination without prescribing outcomes or endorsing externally imposed regime change.
- Clear opposition to authoritarian repression with sustained solidarity for workers, women, sexual, national and religious minorities, political prisoners, and civil society actors.
- Solidarity with struggles against gender and sexual oppression and patriarchal control, including the emancipatory horizon opened by the Woman Life Freedom movement.
- Unequivocal rejection of sanctions, economic siege, and war as forms of collective punishment that devastate the working classes and poor.
- Rejection of authoritarian nationalism and philo-colonial projects that seek to co-opt popular anger in the service of foreign power.
- Respect for civil, political, national and religious rights as integral to any revolutionary feminist politics, not as liberal addons.
- Refusal of false binaries between authoritarianism and imperialism or between sovereignty and human rights.
- Political seriousness grounded in historical memory, analytical clarity, and humility about what external actors can and cannot shape.
- The political future beyond the Islamic Republic, if it comes, will be fiercely contested. Domestic elites, foreign powers, and their local intermediaries will all seek to shape what follows. In such conditions, political naivety is not simply an intellectual error. It is a material danger for the working and popular classes already battered by repression at home and imperial violence from abroad.
- Finally, our task is to exercise critical judgement, oppose domination in all its forms, and build solidarity rooted in struggle and radical principles.

Additional Resources

["Iran and the 'Axis of Resistance': A Brief History."](#) by Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, Jadaliyya, May 19, 2025

["Iran in Crisis: Seven Essays on the Obstacles to Freedom \(Introduction\)"](#) by Ida Nikou and Manijeh Jadaliyya, February 24, 2026

Source: [Against the Current](#).

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[1] Photo: Day 12 of protests. Tehran, Iran. January 2026.