The people putting on “Islam-Fascism Awareness Week”—the October 22–26 series of events at universities and colleges purporting to oppose “Islam-Fascism” and to develop support for the “war on terror”—pose as champions of the rights of women. And so, at a time when the Supreme Court has thrown the right to abortion into question, when the operatives of the Bush regime have brought birth control increasingly under fire, when violence against women in this country continues and intensifies with vengeance, and when the culture is saturated with ritual shamings of women who “go bad”… Horowitz and his allies have proclaimed their intent to hold sit-ins at Women’s Studies Departments, “designed to protest the absence of courses that focus on Islamic gynephobia,” in order to coerce them into signing the statement “Calling on Feminists to End Their Silence on the Oppression of Women in Islam”!

The hypocrisy of these newly minted feminists is stunning. But behind the hypoc- risy lies an ugly and dangerous agenda. Horowitz is seizing on the truth of the real oppression of women in countries ruled by Islamic fundamentalists in the service of a very big lie. There is a way to oppose this oppression—but it is not by entitling in Horowitz’s crusade. Indeed, if you really do oppose the oppression of women—in Islamic fundamentalist countries and movements and on the rest of the planet as well—opposing Horowitz’s “week” is the most important thing you can do right now.

“Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week”

Horowitz has manipulated and thieved language and tactics from the 1960s to make it look like campus brownshirts are the new wave of student activism—using tactics like sit-ins and protests at Women’s Studies Departments “with the goal of encouraging them to provide course offerings on the abuse of women in Islam.” The scholarship and teaching currently going on in Women’s Studies is dismissed as “trivial” or “imagined” and criticized for the “numerous hours…spent…dis- secting the reasons for the ‘wage gap’ in America, violence against women and the ‘privileges’ accorded Caucasian males. But courses on the plight of women in Islamic regimes are strangely absent.” (Sara Degan—Frontpage, 10/9/07)

Phyllis Chesler and Robert Spencer have written a pamphlet for the week titled The Violent Oppression of Women in Islam, which marshals partial truths about the opp- ression of women in the service of a gigantic lie—one that has been told by colo- nial powers since the 19th century—and was trotted out most recently in service of launching the opening act in the war on terror in Afghanistan. “We here to save the women! We’re ready to fight the ‘war on terror’ not to extend the violence of empire but to protect the weaker sex!” And now the same war propaganda is being drummed up all over again, to reinforce this “war on terror” and to mount support and consent for attacking Iran.

Chesler and Spencer also exhibit a xenophobic worldview that includes passages that warn of the danger of allowing Islamic people to immigrate—spreading the dice that creates an atmosphere where rendition, detention, and torture for “your” safety” are tolerated. And their rhetoric is an echo of the war propaganda from the State Department said it “had other priorities.” The occupation authorities consistently undermined Iraqi women’s efforts to secure their legal rights. The U.S. threw its weight behind Iraq’s Shiite Islamists, calculating that these forces would be adept at spreading the war propaganda and to mount support and consent for attacking Iran.

A Cautionary Tale—Afghanistan and Iraq

In this land of short attention spans, let’s recall the justifications for war against Afghanistan. Before that war, TV specials about the plight of women forced under the burkah were brought into millions of living rooms—people sympathized and to develop support for the “war on terror”—pose as champions of the rights of women. And now the same lies and hypocrisy are evident in the Iraq war as well. In summer 2003, L. Paul Bremer, the top administrator of the U.S. occupation, assembled the Iraqi Gov- erning Council (IGC). Among those appointed by Bremer were Islamists who openly stated that the “rights of women will not be negotiable” as the State Department issued a “Report on the Taliban’s War against Women.” And then it stopped. Barely two weeks after the invasion, when questioned about the status of women’s rights, the State Department said it had “other priorities.”

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Horowitz and Chesler once again take some truths about honor killings to more generally to also make their case that there is something unique and intrinsi- cally worse about Islam than any other ideology or religion. To be clear: honor kill- ings are barbaric. They are one more reason that this whole world needs to be turned right side up through communist revolution and a radical rupture with all traditional property relations and all traditional ideas.

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The National Project to Defend Dissent & Critical Thinking in Academia

The Hypocrisy of “Newly Minted Feminists”… And David Horowitz’ Dangers Agenda

By T. Redtree (Revolution #105, 21 November 2007)