

Only When Women Sing

Do not show me tiny crowds of handpicked men;
do not regale me with films of gunfire in the air—
these mean nothing.

Show me instead the mothers,
pictures of long-dead sons at their breast;
show me their sisters, whose brothers
and husbands never came home;
let me see their joy, if they have it.

Show me battalions of little girls, if you can—
healthy and learned, with futures and names.
Show me their mothers, with homes all arrayed
in abundance and peace, with color and song.

Do not pronounce victories, missions accomplished,
when tyrants go skulking from palace to hole:
show me the women, show me the old,
wreathed now in hope, with a sense of 'it's over',
formerly broken, now a little more whole.

It will only be victory when women sing in the streets,
their veils firmly chosen and anchored in place,
or off and waving, if they have the taste,
but both equally safe—to choose, to live, to learn, to love.
It will only be victory when the women sing.

Carole R. Fontaine
December, 2003

PANELISTS

Prof. Donna M. Hughes

She is a Professor and holds the Eleanor M. and Oscar M. Carlson Endowed Chair in Women's Studies at the University of Rhode Island. She is one of the leading international researchers on trafficking of women and children and has completed research on the trafficking of women and girls for prostitution in the United States, Russia, Ukraine, and Korea. She was a research consultant to the Council of Europe on the use of new information technologies in the trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation. Working with pro-democracy activists, Professor Hughes has been able to collect information on trafficking and prostitution of women in Iran, and the connection between Islamic fundamentalism and sexual exploitation. She is frequently interviewed by the media on topics related to trafficking. Professor Hughes has testified before the U.S. House International Relations Committee, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Moscow Duma, and the Czech Parliament.

Louise Akers, S.C., D. Min.

Coordinator of the Office of Peace, Justice & Integrity of Creation, in Cincinnati, Ohio and has presented numerous workshops, courses and reflection days on justice related issues. Her past ministries include justice education & advocacy in formal classroom teaching at both the high school and university levels, parish coordinator in the Archdiocesan Social Action Office of Cincinnati, founder & coordinator of Cincinnati's Intercommunity Justice & Peace Center, social concerns director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and represented the Leadership Conference at the Fourth World UN Conference on Women, 1995.

Her master's thesis in theology focused on the "Prophecy of Martin L. King, Jr." She completed her Doctor of Ministry with a project entitled "Patriarchal Power and the Pauperization of Women". Ministry opportunities include working with migrant farm workers, involvement with the civil rights & women's movements along with international experiences in Malawi-Africa, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico, Czechoslovakia, East/West Germany, Italy, Mondragon-Spain and Auvers-sur-Oise, France to celebrate the first anniversary of Maryam Rajavi's release from prison.

Prof. Carole R. Fontaine

Carole R. Fontaine is the Taylor Professor of Biblical Theology and Religion at Andover Newton Theological School, in Newton, MA. She joined the faculty in 1979, as a graduate of Yale Divinity School and Duke University. She is the author of *Traditional Sayings in the Old Testament and Smooth Words: Women, Proverbs and Performance in Biblical Wisdom*, as well as over 85 journal articles. She co-edited the study notes for the Book of Proverbs for the *Harper Study Bible* NRSV. A well-known lecturer on prayer, healing, and feminist spirituality, Fontaine has extensive media credits.

A Human Rights activist, Fontaine sits on a variety of NGO boards: International Network for the Rights of Female Victims of Violence in Pakistan (INRFVVP); Women Engaging in Bridge Building-International (WEBB); Women's Forum against Fundamentalism in Iran (WFAFI); the Inter-religious Center for Public Life (a Hebrew College-Andover Newton initiative on peacemaking and public theology); and the Women's United Nations Report Network (WUNRN), where she is Boston Director of the East Coast Workshop Project. She serves on the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Task Force on Violence, and she is the founder of the Council of Human Rights at ANTS.

Maryam Rajavi

Maryam Rajavi was born in 1953 to a middle class family in Tehran. She joined the anti-Shah movement in the early 1970's and soon became one of the leaders of the student movement while studying in Sharif University of Technology, where she received her degree in metallurgy. She was a candidate for parliamentary elections in Tehran in 1980. Despite widespread rigging she received more than a quarter of a million votes. She played a key role in organizing two major nonviolent demonstrations in Tehran in April and June 1981 against the government's increasingly repressive policies.

Two of Maryam Rajavi's sisters were executed by the two brutal dictatorships of the Shah and Khomeini. Narges was executed by the Shah's notorious SAVAK, and Massoumeh was killed under torture in 1982 while she was eight months pregnant.

In August 1993, Maryam Rajavi was elected as Iran's future president for the transitional period following the overthrow of the Iranian regime by the Iranian resistance. Her election gave great hope to Iranian women in their quest for equality and a bright future.

In June 1995, Mrs. Rajavi unveiled the "Charter of Fundamental Freedoms", a platform guaranteeing respect for human rights in post-theocratic Iran. During a trip to Norway in October 1995, Mrs. Rajavi called for the formation of a united international front against fundamentalism.

On December 15, 2004, Mrs. Rajavi purposed a third solution to the European Parliament, stating that neither appeasement nor invasion is the answer to dealing with Iran. A third option is within reach, the Iranian people and their organized resistance have the capacity and ability to bring about change.