

# A Turbulent Spring

**Algeria**, Sudan, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, The Occupied Territories, Afghanistan, Turkey, Yugoslavia, The new Republics of the Ex-Soviet Union, Peru, Mexico, Burma, The Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sera Leone, Germany, and the United States of America. This is only part of the list of uprisings, chaos, violence and instability in the spring of 1992. It makes you wonder what is going on? Could it be a polluted spring weather bringing people to the edge of their nerves and making them lose control? Is it spring fever, new world order style, causing loss of rationality and nurturing repressed racial, ethnic, and other discriminating and destructive feelings? And then there are environmental catastrophes such as ozone layer depletion, global warming, outrageous levels of sea, water, noise, air pollution; chemical leakages and explosions, and the list goes on. On the health agenda there is cancer in all of its glorious forms and then there's Aids. Some skeptics may interpret such morbid happenings as the end of the world. Others suggest that they are expected and temporary symptoms of change.

Well?! Why hasn't one form of change settled in? Is it in any way healthy? I, personally, would like to catch my breath if the world doesn't mind?

The threats and dangers to life and its continuity are alarming. Most frightening is the spread of wars as if a contagious epidemic. Once you get over the panic which hits when you first hear the news, you start to wonder about other components of our lives.

Hence, where does that put women's rights and human rights on the agenda of priorities? Normally, non-supporters and even supporters may justify the urgency of the other imminent problems at hand.

For instance, Algerian women's rights have been reduced to less than the bare necessities. Brilliant and active groups like the Arab Women's Solidarity Association of Egypt directed by Dr. Nawal Saadawy have been SHUT DOWN, for speaking against wars, and for daring to press for linking the women's issue to the other sectors of society. In Kenya, Wangari Maathai, an activist and ecologist who dared to speak up was arrested and imprisoned. In Peru, Maria Elena Moyano, leader of the popular women's movement in Peru was murdered and her body was blown up with dynamite.

At first, hearing women's claims sounded ridiculous. Eventually, women made themselves heard, by organizing themselves. Now that they gained exposure and coverage and achieved significant change and development, they have become dangerous.

The punch line here is that the women's movements succeeded in taking things into their hands and are powerful enough to exert pressure and achieve results. This is the success of the women's Liberation movement.

Hence, women's groups are organized and networking all over the world to support their sisters in Algeria, in Peru and other countries

where the systems are deliberately curtailing already established progress and rights. Nowadays, women have gone beyond speaking and being heard to implementing change and pressuring for guarantees of equality and privileges. This is not acceptable, furthermore, there are enough other things and more important issues to worry about.

Women have gone from being the excluded/passive sex to becoming indispensable, thanks to specialized knowledge, credibility and experience. Even in countries which are considered under-developed and lacking resources, there exists, at least a cadre of professional, experienced and capable women who reinforce and are reinforced by international networks, institutions and media.

International Women's Day this spring raised these questions in the minds of people. There is a global discontent and revolt against the negative developments taking place, if we may call them as such. The deterioration of the quality of politics, logic, education, morality, health, environment is a very noticeable.

**Does anybody expect things to change for the better without a woman's touch ?**

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