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Patriarchy, Misogyny, and Sexism: A Dialectical Analysis

— By Jennifer Gann

We've all heard the saying, "The more things change, the more they stay the same." This is particularly true in regards to the so-called post-feminist society of today, where women have yet to attain full equality and patriarchy still rules.

Since the passage of federal mandatory minimum sentencing drug laws in the 1980's, the number of women in prison has risen by 400%, and the percentage of women incarcerated on drug law convictions now surpasses that of men.¹

Sex-discrimination lawsuits across the U.S. have revealed a misogynistic police state culture that oppresses women. Studies show that domestic violence is much more prevalent in police officers' families than the general public: 40% compared to 10%.² In local jails, 80% of staff sexual assault victims are female and 79% of the perpetrators are male.³

In fact, at least 216,600 inmates are sexually abused every year in the U.S., including 17,000 juveniles,

according to government statistics. Of the 7,444 official reports of sexual abuse filed in prisons and jails nationwide in 2008, only 931 were substantiated, only 42% of confirmed cases were referred for criminal prosecution, only 23% were arrested, and only 3% were charged or convicted; 15% were allowed to keep their jobs.⁴ This includes all genders. However, in the general population, 97% of sexual violence reports women are the victim and the perpetrator is generally male (around 98%).⁵

The above statistical facts show that misogyny and sexism is alive and well in the U.S. In fact, violence against women is rampant! In spite of the civil rights reforms gained by the suffragist and feminist movements of the past, the oppression of women has outpaced the progress of women's rights.

Such widespread conditions of gender oppression in the U.S. and "the West" can be traced back and attributed to the early Roman Catholic church, "Malleus Maleficarum" ("The Witches' Hammer"), published by the Catholic Inquisition, indoctrinated the world to "the dangers of free-thinking women", and instructed the

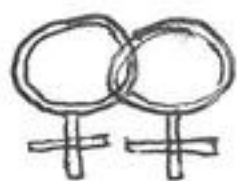
the clergy how to locate, torture, and destroy over five million European women.⁶

In today's world, however, such misogynistic forms of violence has been forgone in favor of the mass incarceration of women under U.S. patriarchy. Political analyst Denna Brazile noted that "The number of women in prison has grown by more than 832 percent since 1977, while... Two thirds of women in prison are there for non-violent and drug offenses."⁷

March 8, 2013 is the 102nd anniversary of International Women's Day, which coincides with the Harvard-born "Feminist Coming Out Day" — devoted to publicly embracing the F-word and publicly declaring your commitment to gender equality and Women's Liberation.⁸

As a trans-woman and radical feminist myself, I urge my sisters to take it a step further — embrace the revolutionary feminist concept of Amazon national liberation and join the struggle!

Down with Patriarchy!
Viva las Amazonas!



Notes

1. "Women in Prison - A Fast Growing Population", Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter, Vol. 1. 36-C, No. 3, March 2011. <http://www.realcostofprisons.org/coalition.html>.

2. Stephanie Hallett, "Rape Is Rape", Ms., Spring 2011 (Liberty Media for Women LLC, 2011), p. 30.

3. U.S. Department of Justice, Sexual Violence Reported by Correctional Authorities, 2006, (August 2007), <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/svrca06.htm>.

4. Action Update, March 2011, (Just Detention International, 2011).

5. U.S. Department of Justice, "Sexual Violence Reported by Correctional Authorities - 2006", August 2007;

6. Dan Brown, The Da Vinci Code.

7. Donna Brazile, "Behind Bars", Ms., Winter 2011, p. 63.

8. <http://www.internationalwomensday.com>. <http://feministcomingoutday.com>.

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