

Status of Women Around the World
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January is a good time to see how women are doing around the world in the past year. The status of women has changed more in the past century than it had in 10,000 years. But these changes for the better (recognition that women are citizens, not property), has not changed in many of the darker, religious, backward places outside of the English-speaking world and Western Europe. Elsewhere, even with cautious new changes, there is unfortunate backsliding in recent years.

The backsliding is where western democracy is being replaced by the older autocratic systems, changes prompted by autocrats (testosterone-poisoned men) and traditional religions.

A number of aspiring democracies in the Middle East have had a plague of violence in their parliaments: men beating each other and resorting to fisticuffs, conservatives against modernizers. Jordan, a monarchy that has attempted to have a parliament was shamed around the progressive world because the fighting was about the status of women.

In most Muslim-majority societies, women are definitely second-class citizens (if citizens at all). Jordanian women and their supporters wanted the language in their constitution changed to identify women as "citizens," a notion of equality that offended traditionalists.

Israel's nearly century-old community of "Ultraorthodox" continue to vex the secular majority. They remain fixed in the 16th century socially, yet use cell phones and other elements of modern technology. They are currently resorting to cursing and throwing things at a small group of women who want the same rights that men have: to pray and read from the Torah at the ancient "Western Wall." The Ultraorthodox prohibit women from reading from the Torah.

To people not smothered by fundamentalist religion, this is an unreasonable position. For a people whose religion has promoted literacy for 2,000 years, it is strange indeed to withhold it from women, who are children's earliest teachers.

Modern Jews have discarded this prohibition, have an equivalent ceremony for 13-year-old girls, and have admitted women to serve as rabbis, which horrifies the Ultraorthodox.

Why should such a modern state as Israel care about what the Ultraorthodox think and do? The handful of surviving Ultraorthodox men managed to find women young enough to start a huge population growth, and they are now a voting bloc.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the world, the painfully ignorant Muslim Taliban has regained power in Afghanistan and are going about their usual poisonous behavior, depriving women of rights.

The current plague of fascism and authoritarianism has pulled once aspiring democracies back into their former histories. Putin is waging a war against liberal democracies, which he considers weak and feminized. He is working to restore to Russian authority parts of the former Soviet Union that are now supposedly independent.

He supports all parts of the former USSR to return to fascist and authoritarian dictatorships. This requires attacking journalists (many of them women), removing women judges, and banning abortions and birth control, urging women to bear more foot-soldiers for them.

There is a male rebellion in other once patriarchal countries in Asia and Africa that had been slowly emancipating women. Young South Korean men are bitterly attacking women (Feminazis) for "taking their power from them." No wonder that women just won't marry them.

Our own Trump conservatives, such as the White Supremacists, hate Blacks, Jews, and uppity women. Their religious colleagues endlessly attack abortion, a right they think women shouldn't have.

The women are not cooperating, as can be seen in plummeting birthrates in all the dictatorships. Hate women, do you? Pretty stupid, fellows!

683 words

Dr. Laina Farhat-Holzman is a historian, lecturer, and author of "How Do You Know That? Contact her at Lfarhat102@aol.com or www.globalthink.net.