

South, Central, and West Asian Liberation

We South, Central, and West (SCW) Asian people are by nature good, smart, loving, lovable, creative, zestful, kind, and powerful. We are inherently beautiful and peace loving. We come from a part of the world that has thousands of languages and dialects and rich histories of music, art, poetry, architecture, science, and math. The landscape is as varied as the people—lush green forests, deserts, mountains, valleys, and seacoasts.

South, Central, and West Asia is home to nearly two billion people and more than thirty nations, including India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in South Asia; Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan in Central Asia; Iran, Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, the Emirates, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen in West Asia. (There are additional Arab-identified and Muslim nations in North Africa.)

This vast geographic area is the birthplace of nine major religions: the Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. These religions began as revolutionary philosophies that directed their followers toward ideals such as freedom, liberation, justice, fairness, generosity, love, friendship, health, clarity of thought, women's rights, and the abolition of slavery.

FEUDALISM

Until the 1950s and '60s, feudalism prevailed in most South, Central, and West Asian nations. Many of them were kingdoms. Our modern cultures are still rooted in feudal modes of production, and capitalism has not permeated relationships to the extent that it has in the "Western World." People identify strongly with the group. They also carry internalized oppression from the feudal economic system, more than patterns connected to capitalism.

Under feudalism, male domination expresses itself in the absolute power of the king, the feudal lord, and the oldest male in the family. Life is kinship oriented, with little room for individualism or individual rights. Class status is bestowed by divinity and cannot be questioned or changed. Everyone has a defined role to play in making society work. People are segregated by class (lords and peasants), caste (Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, and Dalits), and sex. Though both sexes are involved in producing food and goods, men and women function in different spheres.

Individual rights do not exist. Women and children can be killed at the will of the kin leader. Individuals don't function by themselves. They don't live or work on their own. They are always surrounded by their immediate family and other relatives. The task of individuals is to benefit the whole. Women and children often have no sense of their individual rights or of the possibility of liberation.

PEASANTS, NOMADS, AND URBANIZATION

For hundreds and even thousands of years, millions of SCW Asian people lived as peasants. Until the late twentieth century, a sizeable portion of the population was nomadic and tribal. In the 1900s, rural and nomadic peoples were pushed into villages and cities in huge numbers, rupturing the social fabric of long-standing feudal-style communities and the lives of tribal nomads (for example, Kurdish people, Qashqa'ls, and Bedouins). This urbanization was fueled in part by strict national borders; war; and global warming, including the desertification of pastoral land.

COLONIZATION

For many centuries, SCW Asians conquered, looted, and colonized each other's nations. As capitalism developed in the sixteenth century, England colonized SCW Asian nations to get raw materials, cheap labor, and new markets. The resulting unequal access to resources influenced events for many years to come. Privileged members of society drew new political and geographical boundaries, created new administrative rules, and entered into agreements with other countries. The consequent turmoil, wars, and human suffering continue to this day.

The colonizers used violence and threats of violence to stay in power. Male workers brought the violence home, targeting their wives and children. Patterns of abuse were handed down from generation to generation.

By stealing the resources of South, Central, and West Asia, Britain, a tiny nation, became the richest, most powerful nation in the world. Meanwhile the SCW Asian economies stagnated. Eighteenth century India was relatively prosperous, its pre-colonial textile industry accounting for twenty-three percent of the global economy. By the time the British were forced out in 1947, India was one of the poorest countries, accounting for less than four percent of the world economy.

The colonizers pitted groups against each other. For example, they rewarded communities that played a middle-agent role, segregated people by caste, and granted administrative jobs and senior appointments only to the upper castes.

One of the worst effects of the colonization was the internalized oppression left in the minds and hearts of SCW Asian people. Racist propaganda had told us that everything British was superior, desirable, and more valuable and that everything of the colony—culture, language, skin color, music, art, food, history, education—was inferior, ugly, undesirable, and sometimes illegal. This left us feeling chronically defeated, victimized, inferior, less than, not as smart as, not as beautiful as, too dark, and so on, in relation to European-heritage people.

After anti-colonial movements successfully evicted the British from South, Central, and West Asia, the United States moved in and exerted its influence. Unlike the European imperial powers, it did not directly colonize. It carried out coup d'états, installed pro-U.S. dictators, and used its economic and military aid to dominate the nations and intensify capitalist exploitation.

IMPERIALISM AND WAR

War generates huge profits for the owning classes of wealthy nations.

From the 1940s to the mid-1970s, the United States instigated and fought wars in East Asia (Japan, Korea, and Vietnam) and used racist propaganda to vilify East Asian people, especially East Asian men, so that USers would agree to go to war and kill them. A powerful U.S. anti-war movement in the 1960s and '70s forced the U.S. military to leave Vietnam in 1974.

Beginning in 1978, the United States initiated wars in West Asia and other Muslim countries. Arab and Muslim men—in particular, Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden, and Muammar Gaddafi—were targeted with powerful propaganda campaigns. These campaigns were built on anti-Palestinian rhetoric that equated Arabs with terrorism in an effort to discredit the Palestinian liberation movement.

Decades of misinformation have misled USers into “agreeing” to war against Arabs and Muslims and accepting other “military interventions,” like drone warfare. Since 9/11, Arab and Muslim people have been even more intensely targeted as “evil,” “terrorists,” and “the enemy.”

THE TRUTH ABOUT TERRORISM

No human is born a terrorist. No group of humans is more prone to terrorism than any other. Humans are pushed into acts of terrorism and other violence by being forced to endure unbearable conditions. West Asian people who have been terrorized for

generations by Western military interventions are currently committing violent acts of revenge.

Terrorist attacks are the desperate acts of individuals. War is organized violence, publicly funded and waged by professional militaries. Though neither is rational or defensible, the latter is far more destructive and lethal.

MIGRATION AND ASSIMILATION

Most SCW Asian people who have migrated to the West (Europe, Canada, and the United States) have been political, religious, economic, and, increasingly, climate refugees. If conditions had been livable back home, we would not have left our lands.

We have traveled to places where everything is new, where we are complete strangers and often not wanted. Many of us have lacked the emotional resource to look back and feel how hard it was to leave our loved ones, lands, cultures, and all that we knew.

We can take our histories of migration to sessions and discharge the grief, terror, defeat, hopelessness, and loneliness. What did we have to give up to be accepted in the new land, to “make it” in the West? We had to assimilate, to give up who we were in an attempt to get a piece of what we came for. We had to compromise ourselves and give up our minds. We had to give up our languages, our identities, and our cultures.

Many of us or our families had lived under feudal or tribal economic and social systems and had a feudal mentality that was deeply entrenched. Along with challenges related to language, religion, and culture, we’ve had to learn to function under capitalism, which requires everyone to give up a piece of integrity and of caring for and valuing other humans.

Our countries of origin are good. They’re not better than any other, but they are not inferior. They are part of benign reality. We don’t need to change anything about who we are. We just need to get rid of the oppression and its effects.

WORK THAT SCW ASIANS CAN DO

In the past few years, SCW Asian Co-Counselors have been developing theory and deepening our liberation work. There are many rich areas for discharge. We will benefit from telling our stories in detail and discharging on the following:

- Our people’s histories; what we are proud of

- What we love about our people, languages, and cultures; how good our people and families are
- Feelings about colonization, male domination, class and caste, race and ethnicity, war, divide-and-conquer divisions among our people, and imperialism
- Our histories of migration to the West (Europe, Canada, and the United States), reasons behind the migration, and its individual and collective impact
- The effects of war and colonization on our families—any addictions; violence, including sexual violence; suicide; trafficking; prostitution
- Arranged marriages and polygamy in our families, tribes, and kinship communities
- Assimilation and racism, including early decisions to give up connection with our people
- Early defeats, discouragement, hopelessness, and isolation
- Reclaiming our heritages, cultures, and languages
- Our victimized and colonized identities and deciding to give them up
- Any feelings that come up around other SCW Asian people, including negative feelings about participating in SCW Asian liberation in RC
- Our fears of the U.S. government and what everyday life is like when we are, or suspect we are, under surveillance
- The oppressor roles we may have adopted to become “middle class” so we could survive (we can do this work with each other—it’s nearly impossible to do with European-heritage Co-Counselors)

WORK THAT ALLIES CAN DO

Humans are inherently curious about everything. Allies to SCW Asians cannot rely on us for information about our countries of origin and our cultures. They need to do their own research—not as a favor to us but for their own awareness and liberation.

Allies can also discharge on the following:

- Their cultural and national identities, including being from the United States, and taking pride in those identities
- Their early memories of people from South, Central, and West Asia and all they have heard about these populations and their religions, languages, and cultures
- September 11, 2001—although the oppression and targeting of SCW Asian people started long before 9/11, following it surveillance and scapegoating increased in the West
- The words “terrorist” and “terrorism”—these terms are used almost exclusively for Muslims and SCW Asians, and discharging on related early memories and current feelings may help allies interrupt anti-Muslim racism
- For European-heritage women, and women of global majority raised in the Northern hemisphere, any feelings of superiority based on the myth of being “free” compared to SCW Asian women
- For European-heritage men, any feelings of superiority based on the myth of SCW Asian men being more sexist than other men
- For all allies, claiming their people—all of them, including national leaders who are responsible for atrocious crimes (SCW Asian leaders are framed as the most tyrannical, which is another lie)
- Migration stories—what their people had to give up in order to move and assimilate
- Their countries’ roles in colonization, imperialism, and war in South, Central, and West Asia

We can move SCW liberation forward in our RC Communities. South, Central, and West Asian people are good.

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