

Beyond March 8th: Toward a Feminist International

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The International Women's Strike is part of a transnational feminist wave, and women around the globe are fighting against reactionary political forces and standing up for the most oppressed and exploited.

For the third consecutive year the new transnational feminist wave has called for a day of global mobilization on 8 March: legal strikes from waged work – like the five million strikers of 8 March, 2018 in Spain and the hundreds of thousands the same year in Argentina and Italy; wildcat strikes for women with no labor rights and protections, strikes from care and unpaid work; students' strikes, but also boycotts, marches, and street blockades. For the third consecutive year women and queer people around the globe are mobilizing against femicides and all forms of gender violence, for bodily self-determination and access to safe and free abortion, for equal pay for equal work, for a liberated sexuality, but also against walls and borders, mass incarceration, racism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism, the dispossession of indigenous communities, and the destruction of ecosystems and climate change. For the third consecutive year, the feminist movement is giving us hope and a vision for a better future in a crumbling world. The new transnational feminist movement is shaped by the South, not only in a geographical sense, also in a political sense, and is nurtured by each region in conflict. This is the reason why it is anti-colonial, anti-racist and anti-capitalist.

We are living in a moment of general crisis. This crisis is by no means just economic; it is also political and ecological. What is at stake in this crisis is our future and our lives. Reactionary political forces are growing and presenting themselves as the solution to this crisis. From the USA to Argentina, from Brazil to India, Italy, and Poland, far-right governments and political parties erect walls and border fences, attack LGBTQ+ rights and freedoms, deny women their bodily autonomy and promote rape culture, all in the name of a return to “traditional values” and of the promise of protecting the interests of majority ethnicity families. Their answer to the neoliberal crisis is not to address its root causes, but to target the most oppressed and exploited among us.

The new feminist wave is the first line of defense to the rise of the far-right. Today, women are leading the resistance to reactionary governments in a number of countries.

In September 2018, the movement “Ele Não” gathered millions of women who stood up to the candidacy of Jair Bolsonaro, who has now become a worldwide symbol for the far-right's plans for humanity and the catalyst for reactionary forces in Latin America. The protests occurred in more than three hundred cities in Brazil and all over the world. Today, Bolsonaro is waging war on the poor, on women, and on LGBTQ+ and Black communities. He has passed a draconian social security reform, and relaxed gun control laws. Femicides are skyrocketing in a country that already in 2018 had one of the highest numbers of femicides in the world, 70% of assassinated women being black. 126 femicides have already occurred in 2019. The Brazilian feminist movement is responding to these attacks and preparing to mobilize on 8 March and again on 14 March, the anniversary of the political assassination of Marielle Franco, while information is emerging about the strong ties

between Bolsonaro's sons and one of the militia-men responsible for her murder.

Similarly, Non Una Meno in Italy is today the only organized movement responding to the misogynistic and anti-immigrant policies of the rightwing Northern League and Five Star government. In Argentina, women have led the resistance against the rightwing neoliberal policies of Macri's government. And in Chile, the feminist movement is fighting against the criminalization of indigenous struggles and the systematic sexism of a very expensive education system.

The feminist movement is also rediscovering the meaning of international solidarity and transnational initiative. In the past months the Argentinian feminist movement has used the evocative name of "Feminist International" to refer to the practice of international solidarity reinvented by the new feminist wave, and in a number of countries, like Italy, the movement is discussing the necessity of transnational meetings to better coordinate, share views, analyses, and practical experiences.

In the face of a global crisis of historic dimensions, women and LGBTQ+ people are rising to the challenge and staging a global response. After the upcoming 8 March, the time has come for taking our movement a step further and calling for transnational meetings and assemblies of the movements: for becoming the emergency brake capable of stopping the capitalist train running at full speed, and hurtling all humanity and the planet we live in, toward barbarism.

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