



**And still, It is Moving!**  
**International Feminist Movements**

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## International Feminist Movements

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### IMPRINT

2019 

*transform! european network for alternative thinking and political dialogue*

Square de Meeûs 25

1000 Brussels, Belgium

transform! europe is partially financed through a subsidy from the European Parliament.

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Editors: Heidi Ambrosch, Hilde Grammel, Barbara Steiner

Layout: sanja.at e.U.

Cover illustration: Izquierda Unida



## And still, It is Moving!

### WOMEN'S RESISTANCE IN TIMES OF GLOBAL CRISES.

*Bärbel Danneberg, journalist and author*



Source: flickr.com : Izquierda Unida

From women's history we know that it is the weakest first that are affected by social distortions. The "class-war from above" follows the same, monotonous script: the elderly, ill, people from migration backgrounds, the poor and the uneducated – with many women in all these groups due to economic and sexist exploitation – are the first victims of a restrictive social policy. They are the first for whom the social network begins tearing apart. In many countries of the world, women rise and demand what a patriarchal, capitalist society withholds from them. By means of strikes, demonstrations and subversive actions of resistance they draw attention to their demands.

"When I was a young woman, I thought that the politics of gender equality was always moving in one direction, sometimes faster, sometimes more slowly, but still moving forward. That is not the case", Hanna Herbst is quoting SPD-politician Katarina Barley in her book *Feministin sagt man nicht* (*You Don't Say Feminist*). The great surprise about

a backwards movement regarding the achievements women have fought for is replaced by the realization that resistance is necessary and more so than ever before. "Resistance requires a perspective, a 'where to' and it requires more than one individual" (Frigga Haug). Our short reports about women's resistance in other countries show that in times of global crises the same principle of economic, sexual, misogynistic exploitation rules everywhere.

The short spots on women's struggles in Argentina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey show that sexism, discrimination of women and antifeminism are international. "Never doubt that a small group of attentive, determined citizens can change the world. In fact, they are the only ones who have ever brought that about", Margaret Mead is quoted in the book mentioned above. And still, it is moving, the women's movement.

SPAIN:

## And Now We Want Everything

*Nora García Nieves, responsible for Feminism of Izquierda Unida of Madrid*



Source: flickr.com : Izquierda Unida

Last year's 8<sup>th</sup> March strike in Spain was not a spontaneous action. Instead, it was a process of accumulation of the forces that began 10 years ago with the economic crisis and the terrible consequences for us women. We were condemned once again to be the reserve army of capitalism.

During this neoliberal phase of capitalism, capitalism must remove its mask, and we women must remove our bandages. We live in a time where capitalism is restructuring itself once again, pushing the working class a bit further in order to make more profit. For that, it needs its old friend patriarchy, as well as the many puppets of politicians and governments to do its dirty work for it. Capitalism is looking forwards, opening new markets for the sake of a supposed individual freedom, such as surrogacy, Uber, etc. Our society is becoming increasingly polarized between rich and poor people, seeking to repeat the same economic schemes of Asian competitiveness in the "developed world" and introducing fear and hate amongst the working class. Our governments are contributing to destroying the public welfare state, causing us women to lock ourselves back in our homes and take care of life's reproduction once again.

Since we find ourselves in formally egalitarian societies, capitalism and patriarchy are trying to seduce us. They are trying to naturalise our situation and convince us that our precariousness is the result of our own individual decisions based on personal problems: It is all our fault; we aren't enough; we can't deliver what is expected from us, which

is, being super women. And throughout this process, women have become aware that, instead of being individual problems, they are collective ones, and the response should also be collective.

We, as Marxist feminists, have to take advantage of the cracks in the alliance between capitalism and patriarchy. On the one hand, it needs us, but on the other hand, it wants to suffocate us. We have to plant the seed of an emancipating alternative focused on a structural change.

So, there has been a change in our point of view, and also, in our strategy. We are moving on from concrete, isolated, defence actions, attacking our systemic inequality and oppressions. And now, we want everything!

The most inspiring thing to come out of the Spanish Feminist Movement is that, after long discussions, difficult accords, agreements and disagreements, we have drawn up our argumentation, a document with our social and political stands that we achieved through great willingness for dialogue. If you analyse it, it is fairly radical and anti-capitalist.

This awareness has provoked a reaction from capitalism and patriarchy. On the one hand, they have called us feminazis. In 2014, the past government, representing the heirs of fascism, tried to remove the current abortion law, returning to the 1985 one. Do you know what happened? The minister involved is the only one to have resigned from





Source: flickr.com : Izquierda Unida

that corrupt government. We have experienced an increase in mass rapes, and we are fighting with the media to stop them saying that femicide involves women who are “found dead in their houses”, rather than being murdered.

On the other hand, neoliberalism is trying to define what being feminist means. It is trying to neutralise the subversive essence of our fight, trying to induce women to strive to enter the privileged man’s club instead. This is what Nancy Fraser calls the feminism of the 1% versus the feminism of the 99%. And we know that you can’t be a feminist if you fight for your own individual improvements.

This global framework provides an understanding of a cross-sectional feminism. So, we are supporting the demands of the Moroccan women who work on the Andalusian farms.

We are against current immigration laws. We want secular education, etc. We are expanding our political battlefield. It is not that our message is being diluted, but it is a vision that understands our oppressions from a systemic point of view. We think that this global perspective is the path to amplifying the fight and awakening consciences.

So, the welfare social state isn’t what is on our horizon. Instead, we want to change the whole system. As Clara Zetkin said, referring to the differences between bourgeois feminism and class feminism: They want to enter the privileged club of rich men, we want to change that club.



GEORGIA:

## Women's Solidarity March Against Violence and Ultranationalism

Salome Chagelishvili, Program coordinator Women's Fund in Georgia



Source: Misha Meparishvili, Netgazeti

Women's Solidarity March against Inequality, Violence and Oppression was held on July 19, 2017 in one of the main streets of Tbilisi, Georgia. The Woman's March was a response to a xenophobic march that was held 5 days earlier, encouraging misogyny and violence against women. The participants of the xenophobic march, who called themselves "Georgian March", having nationalist and misogynist appeals and rape threats, were demanding from the authorities to immediately extradite all the illegal migrants from the country and ban the oppositional "United National Movement" (UNM) Party.

The Solidarity March was a very important precedent in Georgian reality in order to clearly bond two problematic and raising issues – violence against women and ultra-nationalism. The Women's March, which was organized by up to 20 CSOs, including the Women's Fund in Georgia, demanded from the government of Georgia to impose legal

liability on the participants of the xenophobic march, to react on racist, homophobic and sexist hate speech and also, to adopt the law against sexual harassment.

The motto of the March was: "We cannot be silenced with threats and hate! We will not tolerate oppression and violence! It is time to wage a war against the oppressor. We have to unite against hate and make sure that in this unequal fight our solidarity and unanimity is decisive."

Text prepared by the Women's Fund in Georgia (WFG)

**BULGARIA:**

**The Feminist Struggle Must Start Again**

*Julia Vladimirova, journalist at Baricada.org*



Source: LevFem / LevFem

2018 was a tragic but also alarming year for Bulgaria. The year ended with the statistics that 28 women in our country were killed by men – their husbands, lovers, relatives and seldom strangers. But the year marked the emerging demands of new feminist powers against this. With their brutality, these cases highlighted the urgent need to find ways to combat this everyday, ‘ordinary’, gender-based violence. One of these ways is to go politically into the structural problems that have identified women as unequal and that further enhance their subordinate role in society economically. Earlier in the year, the Bulgarian Constitutional Court voted to declare the Istanbul Convention against women’s violence unconstitutional.

More than ever before, we are seeing that we have to unite and create powerful collectives of women. The murdering of women as part of our everyday patriarchal lives has given rise to a wave of public disagreement against the high percentage of domestic violence and the necessity of legislative politics to fight it. Thus, the *Bulgarian Fund for Women*, along with dozens of other organisations for gender equality and human rights, united with a large protest in Sofia on 26<sup>th</sup> November. Hundreds of people gathered

to demand the criminalisation of gender-based violence through changes to the Criminal Code and the need for early childhood information and education to combat this problem. The breaking of silence around women’s problems in Bulgaria also led to the creation of a new left-wing feminist group called *LevFem* (<https://www.facebook.com/levfem/>). It is a group that aims to combat any form of violence against women, trans and queer people, any form of racism, and structural conditions that increase inequality and oppression. In January 2019, we also joined the *Women’s March Global* with the *Women’s Wave Sofia* demonstration on Vitosha Street.

On 8<sup>th</sup> March, we are taking to the streets for a mass protest of women calling for progressive social policy on maternity and decent pay for women’s work in all spheres. We are demanding laws and networks to fight against gender-based violence.



TURKEY:

## 2019 Has Begun and, as Women, We Are Now Stronger and More United!

Selin Çağatay, University of Gothenburg, Department of Cultural Sciences, Post-Doc.



Source: Selin Çağatay

On 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> January 2019 in Istanbul, we got together at the Turkey Women's Gathering (*Türkiye Kadın Buluşması*), arranged following a call from 165 women and LGBTI+ organisations. Close to a thousand women participated in this historic gathering from more than 35 provinces around Turkey. We discussed common areas of struggle and strategies to act in a more united manner, and agreed that "our rights, our lives and our gains belong to us!"

There was a wide array of issues on our agenda: sexual harassment and abuse; femicide; impunity and justification of male violence; draft laws targeting our rights (e.g., the right to alimony); the state's increasing misogynist policies; rising inequalities of all kinds; the recent change of regime in Turkey that further consigned our gains to the decisions of one man; poor implementation of the Istanbul Convention and of Law no. 6284 (to protect the family and prevent violence against women); sexism and conservatism in education; homophobia; transphobia; rising militarism and the economy of war; the lack of social policies that address the precarious condition of women in paid employment; female workers' struggles; organisation surrounding

8<sup>th</sup> March; the upcoming local elections on 31<sup>st</sup> March; solidarity with migrant women; resisting the negative consequences of religious policies on our lives; ecological issues; economic crises; state oppression on civil society; the global rise of feminist opposition; and many others.

Taking the Turkey Women's Gathering as a fresh start, we are finding the strength to deal with all these issues and to build solidarity despite our differences as women. In the coming months, we will create a communication and coordination network to strengthen our solidarity across different locations, to have more contact, and to find ways of acting together. Ahead of us, we have the 8<sup>th</sup> March. We are discussing the possibility of participating in the International Women's Strike through simultaneous action in different forms, including demonstrations, panel discussions, social media activism, and the use of common symbols on 8<sup>th</sup> March. We want to add our voices to the rebellion of those women who are claiming their lives and their rights from all over the world.

**WOMEN ARE STRONG TOGETHER!**



## PORTUGAL:

**Feminist Strike Also in Portugal**

*Andrea Peniche, Portuguese feminist activist from A Coletiva. Translation: Tatiana Moutinho*

Source: Greve Feminista Internacional



The feminist movement in Portugal has been growing and asserting itself as an organizing and mobilizing pole of various resistances. The fight against gender-based violence is part of the agenda, in particular regarding the monitoring of femicide with the claim for, and actually putting forward, proposals to combat it and protect the victims. Feminists have taken the streets, denouncing patriarchal justice since we realize that, however advanced the laws are, they do not grant fair justice, given that those who apply them often base their decisions on male prejudices about women's behavior.

The International Feminist Strike will also take place in Portugal. The process towards this strike has allowed us to build up and articulate a national network of feminist activists – from north to south, from the interior to the coast – working on four main axes: paid work strike, care work strike, consumption strike and student's strike. We intend to render visible several inequalities, especially with regard to paid work and the free work we perform. In the labor market, the gender pay gap in Portugal is 15.8%, in addition to the fact that women make up the majority of workers only paid the minimum wage, which means that women face a higher risk of poverty when reaching retirement age. Most of us do paid work as well as domestic and care work, which is reflected, on average, in a surplus of 4 hours and 23 minutes of daily working time. This work is not only carried out for free, but is also devalued and in-

visibilized; therefore, one of our demands is precisely the urgency of the recognition of the caregiver's status, as well as the demand for public responses regarding support services (laundries, kindergartens/day care, canteens ...). Hiring domestic services often reproduces various inequalities – racial, gender and class inequalities. Domestic work is often performed by migrant and racialized women, without either work contracts or rights, that only some privileged can afford. One of the goals of this strike is, indeed, the reconfiguration of the concept of work, because the prevailing one is clearly insufficient to encompass women's experience.

In solidarity and demanding justice for Marielle Franco we took the streets, becoming part, in our country, of the outcry that the # EleNão movement in Brazil represented, denouncing and confronting Bolsonaro's fascism and misogyny, creating resistance, and further demonstrating that one of the main and major forces of the feminist movement today is its capacity for international articulation at the proposal and concrete solidarity levels.

## SLOVENIA:

## Struggle for the Amendment of the Law on Rape and Sexual Violence

*Nika Kolač, director of the Institute of 8<sup>th</sup> March*



Source: Inštitut 8. marec

In 2019, the Programme Committee of Inštitut 8. Marec (8<sup>th</sup> March Institute) started a petition to change the definition of the crime of rape and sexual violence. In Koper, a coastal town in Slovenia, an individual was acquitted because he had begun raping his victim while she was asleep and had resorted to the use of force only after she woke up. When she attempted to push him away, he covered her mouth and used the weight of his body to hold her in place for as long as was needed to finish the act. Nevertheless, the court ruled in favour of the accused. Such a ruling is made possible by Slovenia's Penal Code that defines rape as an act requiring the perpetrator to compel the victim to submit to sexual intercourse:

1. By force or threat of imminent attack on life or limb.
2. By threatening him/her or his/her relatives with large loss of property or with the disclosure of any matter concerning him/her or his/her relatives which is capable of damaging his/her or his/her relatives' honour or reputation.

Although Slovenia ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence, requiring that consent "must be given voluntarily as the result of the person's free will assessed in the context of the surrounding circumstances", the Ministry of Justice has no intention of amending the current outdated legislation that defines rape by the presence of force.

With this petition, we at the Institute are calling for immediate action on two levels:

1. That Slovene judicial authorities hold the members of the High Court of Koper accountable for their ruling, which is indicative of the high tolerance towards rape and sexual violence, as evidenced by the grounds of their latest judgement.
2. That the Penal Code be amended and a "No Means No" or "Yes Means Yes" law be adopted, so that the presence of force determined on the basis of visible signs of struggle can no longer be the only proof of rape. These changes are necessary in light of a ruling that proves how narrowly the use of force is currently defined.

The petition received over 5,000 signatures in ten days. Following a meeting at the Ministry of Justice, the decision was made to accept our proposal and amend the current legislation. This campaign was a continuation of the #MeToo campaign, launched in the previous year. We have received over 150 anonymous testimonies recounting instances of sexual harassment and violence that we have subsequently analysed from a class perspective. Our goal for next year is to continue our work through this type of political action.



## GREECE:

**Note on Feminist Struggles in Greece**

Angelina Giannopoulou, facilitator of transform! europe programme “European Integration and the strategic perspectives of the radical Left”

Source: EUROKINISSI/ΣΤΕΛΙΟΣ ΜΙΣΙΝΑΣ



Over the last three years, the feminist movement in Greece has been experiencing a powerful renaissance. For a long while, the Greek feminist movement had been numb and isolated, especially when compared with other social movements, such as the university students' movement. However, in recent years, within the new frameworks that have been shaped in Europe, the USA and Latin America, feminist demands and the feminist discourse are gaining more and more ground, especially under the threat of a neoconservative, sexist and misogynist agenda from the new Far Right. In Greece, various feminist organisations have been upsized and the feminist argument is present at any kind of political debate concerning gender inequality, gender violence, rape culture and femicide (of both cis and trans women). Over the past six months, two tragic murders have pushed the feminist movement to take to the streets in all Greece's major cities.

The first one was the hideous killing of Zak Kostopoulos/Zackie Oh, a gay, HIV-positive activist, drag queen and active member of the LGBTQI+ community. He was brutally murdered (his death was caused by an ischaemic event, i.e., a heart attack, provoked by multiple injuries) by a bunch of passers-by and policemen in the centre of Athens. Zak went into a jewellery store and the owners of the store incorrectly assumed that he was a robber. The two shop owners began beating him and repeatedly kicking him in the head as he tried to escape through a shattered display window. By the time police arrived on the scene, Kostopoulos was lying on the pavement. They started abusing his life-

less body. One of the most disturbing observations is that a person had been killed in front of an uneasy crowd, which had neither the courage nor the desire to stop the murder, nor even to share the video that showed what had happened.<sup>1</sup> The second repulsive incident, which was all over the news, was the gang rape and femicide of 21-year-old Eleni Topaloudi by two young men on the island of Rhodes. As the two accused men tried to put the blame on one another, one of them said, “Eleni was begging us to take her to hospital. I proposed the same to my friend, but he pressed me to get rid of her. He said: ‘Let’s go to finish it. Let’s go to throw her on the rocks, wherever we find an appropriate place’. Finally we left, the three of us, in the van, from the house and went to throw her, while she was still alive, in the sea, in the area of Pefkous”<sup>2</sup>

Big demonstrations took place for both despicable murders. The debate in the media, especially on social media, was heavily politicised. Many conservative and crypto-sexist popular commentators were disturbed by the term “femicide”, using the typical patriarchal argument that “by dividing people into women and men, you are creating the difference”. On 25<sup>th</sup> November and 14<sup>th</sup> December, mass demonstrations and activist activity demonstrated the new feminist dynamic that is currently being born. Many young women are being educated under a feminist imperative that is awakening and empowering. It is not yet clear what is being planned in Greece for International Women’s Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March. Nevertheless, it seems that, despite its divisions, the Greek feminist movement has realised that now is the time. Another feminist world is possible!

1 K. Poulis, *Zak Kostopoulos was beaten to death. So what do we do now?*, [www.thepressproject.gr](http://www.thepressproject.gr)

2 S. Vovou, *21 year old Eleni Topaloudi: Gang rape and murder in Rhodes*, [tomov.gr](http://tomov.gr)

## ARGENTINA:

# Ni una más!

*Claudia Krieglsteiner, social worker*

Since 1985, a large annual Women's Congress has been taking place in Argentina, with women from all over the country, as well as neighbouring countries, taking part. In 2018, this congress took place in October in Trelew in Chubut Province, in the south of Argentina, with more than 50,000 women participating.



Source: Claudia Krieglsteiner

They are demonstrating against sexualised violence against women and girls. They are fighting for legal abortion and against harassment and sexual assaults. Indigenous women, in particular, are a strong force in this women's movement.

The 2018 Congress took place against the backdrop of the legal initiative for the legalisation of abortions, which had failed just a short time before. This change in the law would have made it possible for women to have an abortion within the first fourteen weeks of pregnancy. The costs should have been covered by the health system. The draft for this law was adopted with a small minority in the Chamber of Deputies but failed to reach a majority in the Senate.

A demonstration of women (see pictures) on 5<sup>th</sup> December in Buenos Aires, which took place only a few days after the protests against the G20 Summit, remembered a young woman who had died from the consequences of an illegal abortion not long before. Furthermore, in this demonstration, under the main slogan "Not a Single One More!", more than 70,000 women took part.



**SWEDEN:****Reclaim The Night***Josefine Landberg, Lund University*

Reclaim the Night is a woman and trans separatist event co-organized by multiple feminist organizations every year in connection to International Women's day. The demonstration walks through the streets of various cities around the country to highlight sexual violence and reclaim public spaces. In the city of Malmö, the demonstration call for unity, anger and resistance under the slogan "Your perpetrator is our perpetrator".



Source: Julia Österholm



The following is in their statement for this year's demonstration.

**UNITY**

We will find strength in our communities, we will believe each other, not question one another and back each other. We will out our perpetrator, even when they are our brothers, partners, comrades. We must have each others backs even when its uncomfortable, if we don't support our siblings, who will? Your perpetrator is our perpetrator

**ANGER**

The state won't protect us. Workers rights are threatened and that threatens our possibilities to stand up for ourselves and our colleagues when we are subjected to sexual harassment. Our predators wear uniforms and are contracted entrepreneurs with the right to use violence. When we report them, they investigate themselves. Your perpetrator is our perpetrator

**RESISTANCE**

It's time for our predators to be uncomfortable, it's our time now. We will continue exposing them. We will continue organizing at our places of work, at our schools in our organizations and in our homes. It's up to us to organize against our oppressors and place guilt where it belongs. It is them who should be afraid, look over their shoulders and move over!



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