

*Latin America-Woman is mobilized for her rights*

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**LATIN AMERICA-WOMAN IS  
MOBILIZED FOR HER RIGHTS**

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## Introduction

Translated by Sanchia Holder

This time, LatiCe is sharing with you a Latin America of strong and decisive women who are organizing themselves to fight against the patriarchal structure of society and in defence of their rights. In any case, apart from the march of indigenous women of Argentina, there are national chapters of global organizations because the problems and social structures to tackle are the same. Women who write here, through their articles, share the projects and experiences of these groups of women, organized women, decisive and strong women, women who march in protest and fight for their rights.

The World March of Women is represented in this publication by two articles, one from the coordinator in Brazil and the other from the Argentinean chapter. The WMW is an international movement organized in 62 countries by national coordination bodies, also has groups of contact in another 90 countries. It began in 1995 in Canada as a march of women who were claiming economic demands. In that first march, which lasted 10 days, 850 women participated. The WMW is a World Movement of feminist actions that seeks the elimination of causes that give rise to poverty and violence against women. Latin American women unite with women living in various parts

of the planet to mobilize together and fight for economic justice, political and social change and the reproductive rights of women, including for the decriminalization of abortion and in Argentina for the legalization of abortion.

The other article included in this publication is of the March of the Whores, more specifically, of the experience of this mobilization of women in La Paz (Bolivia). The March of the Whores also began in Canada, in 2011, and was a feminist reaction to police comments during a conference on civil security that if women would not want to be victims of sexual violence they did not have to dress like sluts. The March of the Whores wants to raise awareness on sexual harassment affecting women in society and the justification the macho discourse makes of it while blaming women themselves. Violence against women is a structural problem of the patriarchal system and it is necessary to implement concrete actions for its prevention and eradication. The March of the Whores has already been to 60 countries; in the article published here the author shares how Bolivian women of La Paz provide momentum in their city.

Reproductive rights are a common reference in current feminist struggle, which acquires even more significance in a country like Chile since it is one seven countries in the world that penalizes abortions under any circumstance. In Valparaíso, where this article comes from, which sheds light

on the fight of Chilean women for their sexual and reproductive rights, there are various forms of feminist articulation. Women are getting organized to fight to ensure gender equality, respect of sexual rights and reproductive rights, gender deconstruction and (de)colonization of bodies and eradicate all types of violence against women.

The last article of this publication is a presentation made by the women of the Indigenous Women Movement in March for Life of their organization. This movement is very recent, since 2012, with the intention of organizing a Conference of Indigenous Women of Argentina in 2013. This conference has been entitled the First Decolonizing Conference of the movement and in this article indigenous women share their struggle and their demands. Their most important demands are land titling, housing, education, health, potable water, access to electricity and for eradicating violence. And they are pleading for value of their own work, indigenous art, legacy of their ancestors.

Thank you to each of the women who, with valour, freshness and honesty, shared their struggles and their dreams, their worries and dwellings. Thank you for making us a part of your struggle. Thank you to those who left a little of them in this publication and this is our Latin America-woman.

# Feminism on the march to change the world

Nalu Faria<sup>1</sup>

Translated by Nick Hardy

The World March of Women (WMW) is an international movement currently organized by National Coordinating Bodies in 62 countries and territories and with contact groups in 90 other countries. The inspiration for its creation was a demonstration that took place in 1995, in Quebec, when 850 women marched 200 miles symbolically asking for "Bread and Roses". The motive for this march was the assessment that the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) meant more impoverishment for women and that, at the same time in a globalized world, a global type of resistance should be built. Thus, the March proposed the construction of a global mobilization of women, with an agenda of their own, independent of the logic of the United Nations which was hegemonic in the 1990s. The concern was precisely how to build a response to the conservative offensive established from the victories of neoliberalism, upon the base of the movement at the

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<sup>1</sup> A National Coordination Committee member of the World March of Women in Brazil

time, when patriarchal attitudes and capitalism were mutually reinforcing.

## **The WMW and its International Actions**

A key element in the methodology and construction of the March is the organization of international action every five years, in which objectives, formats and common symbologies are defined. The preparation of these actions has marked the international processes of synthesis of the platform of the WMW.

### **2000 - Reasons to march against poverty and gender-based violence**

The first international action in 2000 came in the form of a long-distance call, a step in towards the construction of the WMW as an international movement, the moment to present its proposal and to look for more supporters. The March mobilized thousands of women's groups in more than 150 countries and territories which then got involved in popular educational activities and public demonstrations in support of 17 world demands. The 5 million signatures gathered in support of these demands were delivered to the United Nations on 17 October 2000, while 10 thousand women from 80 countries marched through the streets of New York there were simultaneous demonstrations in 40 countries. The day before a delegation from the WMW had denounced the structural adjustment policies and their

devastating effects on the lives of women in front of the leaders of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

### **2005 - Change the world to change the lives of women in order to change the world**

In 2005, we developed the Women's Global Charter for Humanity after extensive discussion and collective construction of a common position among women with different experiences and political cultures. This was based on five values: freedom, equality, solidarity, justice and peace. On 8 March 2005, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, during a march in which 30 thousand women participated, this Charter began its journey around the world. Up until 17 October 2005, the Charter has passed through 53 countries and territories. In these countries on scraps of cloth, the National Coordinating Bodies expressed their vision of the south the world that we want - and that we are already building - on the basis of these values. These scraps of cloth were stitched together in a blanket of solidarity, which was finished on the last stop, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, which is considered one of the poorest countries in the world. Meanwhile, at noon on October 17, a 24-hour vigil of feminine solidarity with other actions was carried out on each meridian. The "wave" began on the Pacific Islands (New Caledonia, Samoa, among others), continued at the

same time in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe; and finished in the Americas.

### **2010 - We will be in March until we are all free**

The third action, in 2010, had a sense of affirmation of alternatives to the proposed 10-day march around four fields of action: Work and economic empowerment of women, violence; common services and public peace and demilitarization. The motto of the action was "We will be running until we are all free", and was organized around three foci: to express the national demands through marches and / or queues of cars; to signal the 100th anniversary of the declaration of International Women's Day through the recovery of the history of combatant women; and to expand the voice of women who suffer violence in situations of armed conflict, support them in their efforts to expose the causes and find solutions to overcome them. The great contribution of the third international action was to invite the 75 participating countries, not only those who are in situations of open conflict, to reflect on the militarisation of everyday life and its relation to the capitalist and patriarchal model. This item was present at the European regional action that took place in Turkey, especially the contribution of women in the Balkans and Kurdish women. The action was also organized at regional level in Asia, the Philippines, and the action of the Americas in Colombia, where demonstrations took

place against the presence of United States military bases. In Colombia and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo international missions were organized in communities affected by the conflict. The closing ceremony of the action in Bukavu, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was a unique experience of people's diplomacy and international solidarity. Ten years after the delivery of 17 international demands to the UN, the objective was to question this institution in the territory in conflict and to remind people that the rights of women who are enrolled in the conventions, treaties and resolutions only have any real meaning when they are real for all the women of the world.

In addition to the five yearly actions, a feeling of belonging to the WMW internationally strengthens the solidarity with the resistance that women continuously undertake in their communities, in particular against the criminalisation of situations of social struggles that are lived through by many of our companions. Another permanent construction of our common identity is the work we do in alliance with other social movements. We participate in the struggle for food sovereignty, for environmental justice and, together with the *Via Campesina* and Friends of the Earth International, against the violence against women in the countryside. We have contributed to the construction of the Assembly of Social Movements and their common agenda of mobilizations in the framework of the World Social Forum.

Groups that participate in the WMW are diverse and have their own dynamics. This is also the reason why communication has a strategic significance for us. During these years of the history of the WMW, dialogues have been established between women activists who speak different languages, come from different generations and ethnic groups, and have different political cultures and experiences of sexuality. We strive to write our history, our analysis of the context in our own words, using our categories of thought, reacting to the concentration of the media in the hands of a few, who impose their ideology as if they were events reported with neutrality.

### **The WMW in Latin America**

In Latin America, the WMW set of a critical debate on the structural causes of poverty and the possibility of building a positioning and articulation of women in relation to the issue of the economy. Brazil has made an important contribution to this process through the creation of an approach that enables you to relate the subject of globalization to the everyday life of women, including young women.

The debate took up the discussion of class, not as a criticism of neo-liberal globalization, but as an anti-capitalist critique, which simultaneously analyses the overlap between capitalism and patriarchy. The WMW was built on the basis of strategic actions and a critical discourse against

the commodification of the body and the extensive inroads that market society has made within globalization.

In various sectors of the women's movement this was considered paradoxical, that while work was in progress in the formalization of rights, there was a reverse in the economic conditions and other accomplishments of the past, such as in social policies. In the quest to build an in-depth analysis of what actually happened, we build an approach that explains that, while recognizing the rights of women in the UN conferences, it is the market which rearranges the lives of women. In addition, we are incorporating the thought of Danièle Kergoat which says that globalization has created a duality among women. Daniele says that, for the first time in the history of capitalism, some women had access to capital themselves and not because of kinship or inheritance, as daughters, wives, or lovers. But that this occurred at a time when mostly, it meant having a precarious job without rights, in addition to an overload of work caring for others and household chores and a reduction of social rights because of neoliberalism.

With this perspective, the WMW continued focusing on patriarchal violence as part of the mechanisms of domination over women. In the same way, in developing countries, the battle for the legalization of abortion focusing

on women's autonomy, organizing debates and protests in the street such as, for example, slogans and graffiti.

Criticism of the commodification of the women's body and the life of the women has allowed us to reflect upon the connection between globalization, transnational corporations and control over work, the bodies and the territories. For example, the same transnationals which work on technologies based on the control of the body and reproduction are also employed in the production of transgenic seeds. In the same way, there is a connection between increased militarization, the control of territories and natural goods and violence against women, as well as the use of women as spoils of war.

Based on this division, the WMW considers the need for global changes in the model as being central, this is expressed in the slogan: change the world to change the lives of women in order to change the world, on the assumption that equality is going to be for all women or none. In other words, it starts from the point that within the framework of capitalism there can be progress regarding some rights that have resulted in improvements in the situation of some women, but not for all.

Another key element was to have replaced the concept of patriarchy in the context in which the women's movement was under the hegemony of the trivialization of the concept of gender and in the middle of a process of

institutionalization and loss of radicalism. This helped to place the emphasis on the dimension of the oppression of women. It is recognized that capitalism has incorporated patriarchal domination as structural to its economic model and to its practices; that it has at its base the sexual division of labour; control over the woman's body; the imposition of the patriarchal family and of the heteronormativity of sexuality as models. Also, racism is incorporated, and this dimension is used to even organize the hierarchy and inequality among women, even within the working class.

It is from this political understanding that the WMW bases its analysis on feminist economics. In this way, it presents and argues that the economy goes beyond the mercantile and monetary dimension, and that work goes beyond employment, by placing the need for the recognition of the economic contribution of women in domestic work, care and consumption. In this way, it expresses the need to reconceptualize what the "economy" is and that it is "work", and to question the paradigms that focus on the market. Reconceptualization means incorporating the practices, the knowledge and the experiences of women in everything that was historically constructed.

Today, in Latin America, the debate is present as seen by the recognition of the rights of nature, the whole question of the Pachamama, mainly on the part of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia and Ecuador. In this debate there's a fine

line with an essentialist vision regarding the identification of nature with women, in terms of motherhood. Today, the question of building ourselves up in a harmonious relationship with nature means, confronting patriarchal racist capitalism that destroys the environment. In other words, recognizing that the impact on nature is no stranger to the economic model, nor is domestic work and or care either.

In this sense, there is a relationship between the analysis conducted by feminist environmentalists about the fact that women's time and work, just as in nature are, in this model, seen as inexhaustible resources. Historically, the fact that women have been identified with nature has led to their devaluation especially because men were identified with culture. The argument is, precisely, to advance the critique of androcentrism and also in that of anthropocentrism.

Women are involved in specific experiences of building alternatives, as in the example of agroecology. They are participating in training 'spaces', in meetings and in exchanges of experiences and knowledge. And, for the first time, they are beginning to feel that their work is valued. But that is a counter-hegemonic process and, therefore, maintains a different relation to time, it is set against the vision of capitalism and its greed for profit. In agroecology the time it takes to regenerate the earth is considered. This requires a strong recognition on the part of the State and

the development of public policies for agroecology, taking as the central point the need for an integral agrarian reform.

Another critical issue is domestic work and care, which in general is complex, even within the feminist movement. In the WMW an effort an effort is made not only to incorporate this theme into our analysis, on the platforms, but also to discuss it in training activities and in the daily life of the groups. But the question of the division of labour at home, when women are married and with children, is complex. In an attempt to go beyond pamphlets and analysis, the WMW has incorporated the words of protest regarding the topic of its 'batucada'. By the year 2003, in one of the March's protests, when words of protest against violence were shouted out, there was no reaction from the men in the streets. But when we shouted out "João, Joao, cozinha seu feijao" (José, José, cook your beans) or "João, Joao, cozinha se quiser" (José, José cook if you want), they responded with criticism.

### **The struggles and the processes of alliances**

The WMW asserts that it acts on the basis of two principles: the self-organization of women and the building of alliances. The WMW was involved in the process of struggle against free trade, the construction of the movement by another kind of globalization. The struggle against free trade took place between actions and mobilizations along a structural axis.

The struggle against the FTAA and the World Trade Organization (WTO) has marked our presence in Latin America and was instrumental in the rebuilding of a political space to the left in the region and in particular, in the women's movement. We had a discussion about the positive and negative impacts of globalization and an eventual FTAA anti-system to a global vision and reviewed the model, while we recovered mobilization and social struggle as our main tools.

The World Social Forum process was also crucial. The WMW stated the importance of the movements created inside the Forum as a space of articulation that could then go beyond and propel joint actions. The Assembly of Social Movements was formed like this.

### **Women in Movement Change the World**

Within the March, both at international level and inside Brazil, the recognition of diversity and the differences between us means that the struggles of women against gender inequality are not treated as only a matter of identity. We recognize the diversity of women and we are looking to build common actions that might be able to combat the current global order of domination and oppression, in a clear political project of change. From our everyday experience we learned how to involve a large number of women who arrive with their life stories and militancy, and we realized that it is necessary to promote

interaction and mutual learning, to build new syntheses and new points of departure in the pursuit of a joint utopia, in terms of who we would like to become.

A strong value of the WMW is the construction of a consensus of different realities, not only in the economic and cultural, but also regarding the processes of the women's movement in the country. A fundamental point of departure for this is a common vision about the need for structural changes in society and social relations upon which we can build equality for women. There is a deep understanding that this equality can only be achieved if it relates to all women. This refers not only to the incorporation of the dimension of class, but also to other forms of oppression and discrimination with which women live, like the question of racial oppression, sexuality and the generational question.

Our action is based on the recognition of women as political subjects. It is from this strong grass roots movement, popular, both in the countryside and in the city, that we can build a feminist practice that crosses over and promotes alliances with other sectors involved in the struggle for change. It is from collective action that we women have the strength to revolutionize society and build new social relations and overcome all the mechanisms that maintain oppression. For the WMW, the construction of its own force of women is essential even for the articulation of the

necessary alliances with other movements and organizations.

The feminist experience comes from the construction of a new collective identity of women and their recognition as subjects. This includes forging a new subjectivity of the de-commodification of sexuality and autonomy as a basis of this recognition as subjects. And as part of this point of view there is a need for feminism to be coherent between the private and the public and to construct new relationships. We cannot uncritically accept the existence of contradictions between what we defend in public and our personal lives, our everyday lives.

In this sense, it forms part of the strategy of running the creative actions that are based on the experience and knowledge of women. The use of other forms of expression beyond the spoken language is imperative. Combining practices of popular education with feminist groups of reflection is the basis of the work of the WMW, and part of the contribution of feminism to the construction of these emancipatory practices, is to raise awareness of oppression and the way it is expressed in our body, in our identity and our self- perception. Thus, we work to recognize the value of each one, which is the basis of self-esteem and personal autonomy.

In this trajectory, solidarity as a value and practice is central. The mechanisms of oppression are still in force in

all societies, even though there are cultural, economic and social differences and they have conquered certain rights, in some countries more than others, the mechanisms of inequality and hierarchy remain the constituent base of society. Therefore, not only the globalization of our struggles, but also the construction of a global force, with actions rooted in each site will be able to ensure an irreversible emancipatory process. This means that each group of the March becomes stronger when you know that there are more women who are in the same struggle in many other countries.

We want to build a common project in which we learn about other struggles in order to expand our programme, and we also want to print the label of being feminist so that it opens up the anti-patriarchal struggle to everyone.

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## WMW-Argentina, movement for popular feminism

World March of Women – Argentina

Mariana Abramovich- Alicia Coca

Translated by Rosa Paredes

For several decades, a wide range of grassroots activists and organizations have shared a social policy building path in Argentina.

With an identity forged in the past and present history of the working class, as well as an expression of the extraordinary resilience and capacity of our people, we've managed to get through dictatorship, neoliberalism, the "fall of the Berlin Wall", and the consequences of capitalist recipes applied to our country: inequality and poverty. Within that history, we also share the search for truth and justice, and the vindication of the struggle of our male and female detained/missing comrades.

On this path, we were able to build the highest expressions of popular initiative and organization in the resistance. The crisis of 2001, a corollary of an intense wave of popular protests, roadblocks and actions organized throughout our country, and providing new social experiences, revealed the exhaustion of a power scheme in Argentina. Accompanied by the experience of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre

and the gradual emergence of transformative policy initiatives in Latin America. A world where all worlds fit was the watchword. A new continental time was emerging, with the help of popular expressions, of youth, of women, of workers, human rights organizations, students' movements, indigenous peoples, etc.

We, women, have taken part in these great deeds, organizing, discussing, taking responsibility, shoulder to shoulder in the roadblocks, uprisings and occupations. But moving through various reflections we have found that, like other women in Latin America, we certainly are meant for more. That speech [sic] contained everything that was accumulated by other partners in recent history: a strong expression of anti-patriarchal content. A new feat of the people could not be possible repeating patterns and recipes of much of the cultural and political traditions, where machismo replicates the sexual division of labour, the objectification of women, and all the practices that prevent us from building a truly fair and egalitarian society for men and women. It was during those years that we came into contact with the MMM in debates and international forums. We thought it was of great political and strategic importance to build a bond with an international organization working for popular feminism. Since then, becoming part of the MMM was a challenge: forming a Global Movement of feminist action works to eliminate the root causes of poverty and violence against women, joining

hundreds of women in the fight for economic justice, political and social change and women's reproductive rights, including the decriminalization of abortion and the legalization of abortion in Argentina.

With this perspective we began to shape our country's MMM, currently composed of the CTA (*Central de Trabajadores de Argentina* - Workers Central Union), the Dario Santillan Popular Front, *Corriente Nacional* [National Movement], *Pañuelos en Rebeldía* [Popular Education Movement] and MuMaLa [*Mujeres de la Patria Latinoamericana* – Women of the Latin-American Motherland], among other militant women's organizations.

The World March of Women must be an ongoing movement in Argentina and the world: Our story

In order to re-stimulate, strengthen and give visibility to the World March of Women in Argentina in late 2010 and early 2011 we proposed a meeting with one of the key figures of the MMM Latin America, Nalu Farias, with women's organizations. Our Objective was to share experiences of gender building and to coordinate the actions of MMM-Argentina in relation to March 8, International Working Women's Day.

We reworked definitions then: our perspective is anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal, because we understood that there is an objectification of women; "control over her body

and sexuality and the imposition of models of beauty", in addition to agreeing on identification and elimination of the causes of women's poverty and violence against women.

Within this framework we have developed basic constructions, everyday organization of the unemployed, and have generated collective proposals to address hunger. Such proposals have become part of public policy; we have developed alternative unionization of workers, promoted the policies for auto-fabricated housing, and strengthened the secondary and university student movement, and created territorial experiences, etc. We understood that this accumulation of experience would give us a strong push to incorporate in our organizations the axes of the MMM would strengthen us and provide this perspective to other organizations and women's movement.

Our collective challenge is to become a permanent movement in Argentina and incorporate ourselves to the International Agenda and International Action. To do this we established the need to plan actions, to define a concrete agenda and to create opportunities for training in addition to integrating the women's agenda in Argentina.

We started with regular meetings and the challenge of considering common ground ahead of the formation and action, thinking of public positions of MMM, increasing knowledge of organizations about what each of us were doing and trying to get in the action all together, with ALL

organizations who make up the MMMA, such as March 8, the International Day of action for Women's Health, the Latin-American day for Abortion Rights, the International Day of No Violence against Women. We organize, consider how to finance initiatives and also call on broader allied sectors of the women's movement and new organizations that could be added.

In our capacity as MMM Argentina we also fulfil an important objective of making visible all forms of violence against women in a National Day against violence against women in August 2012, with a street action in the major cities of our country. This put on the political agenda the Emergency Law, Femicides, among other demands.

We came from a training process, around the four priority areas for action: the right to the common good and public services, labour and economic empowerment of women, combating all forms of violence, peace and demilitarization. These are essential fields that need to be dealt with and developed from our national and continental perspective. That is why we moved mainly in 2011 to call 4 seminars with 4 branches.

In August 2011: Labour and Economic Autonomy

In September 2011: Fight for Legalization of Abortion and Women Body.

In October 2011: Peace and Demilitarization

In November 2011: Violence Against Women

Participation became a reality in the international agenda of the MMM, so that in September we participated in the Youth Meeting in Fort Brazil and, in October, in Paraguay in Feminism Socialism-Seminar.

We also faced the challenge of making the MMM visible in the National Women's (MND) -held in Bariloche in 2011 and Posada in 2012- which gathers in Argentina more than 30,000 women from all over the country during three days to discuss sexuality, work, equation, education, housing, and dozens more topics. Hand-outs were distributed during the meetings on the four topics and our position in regard to the situation that existed in Bariloche (Rio Negro) and Posadas (Misiones), provinces and cities that are affected by the social exclusion, poverty, trafficking and disappearance of women for prostitution. Activities were also conducted with a panel of Latin American Women.

Most street actions, in the City of Buenos Aires, the hinterland and the ENMs were very positive experiences that strengthened us in the internal organization of MMM and helped bridging together many of the leftist organizations and women and feminists' movements in Argentina, in addition to presenting as a political space with ability to call broader initiatives. Outreach days were hard

work, with art exhibitions, tents with our different themes, discussions, some of them culminating in a mass mobilization to Congress in colourful sunsets with chants and slogans making visible urgent demands such as the Legalization of Abortion, the elimination of precarious work, the promulgation of the Law on Femicide, regulation and funding for the Law on Protection of Women, etc.

Another major challenge was to define tasks to help the MMM spread in the country.

On May 28 we conducted a street action where MMM had a strong presence, we lead a panel called "Women's Health: A Right", with contributions towards building a comprehensive view of health. Triggers used were: Institutional Violence, The Role of Female Health Workers, and Women's Access to the Argentine health system. Abortion: Legalization and non-punishable Abortion. We assessed the importance of discussing the integrity of the body, sexuality and reproductive health of women, as a right to access health and as part of the requirement of public policy in relation to this particular demand.

We held meetings to get to know each other better and establish a common ground on feminism. Talks and exchanges pertaining Young Workers precarious conditions and non-union work; we participated together with them in the third Regional Meeting of the Americas of the MMM in Guatemala.

We were called to the People's Summit and accompanied WMW Brazil, Paraguay, and Chile, took part in discussions and presentations and carrying forward our positions in the anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal statements. We were part of the Formative School in Chile, following the People's Summit, where we learned more -together with fellow Southern Cone comrades- about Feminist Economics and the various proposals and alternatives which strengthen our autonomy as feminist women of Latin America.

A delegation of 14 MMM-Argentina comrades from different regions participated in the 9th International Meeting of the MMM in Sao Paulo, Brazil which brought together union leaders, students, environmentalists, land activists, from various disciplines. For an entire week, we shared discussion panels which culminated in a colorful and numerous *batucada*, songs, slogans and feminist chants in the streets of Sao Paulo.

The fourth International Action Movement took place for the first time in Latin America and the International Secretary and National Coordination gathered for three days to assess the general situation. International Action Movement from 8 March to 17 2015, World Day against Poverty.

We believe we have done quite a bit, but we certainly have much to do still. The arteries of the global march are very current in Argentina; this year, the struggle for sovereignty

and the common good will be very present in the forthcoming National Women Meeting in San Juan.

San Juan is today a province with an extractive policy management, the current context lays bare the strongest period of capitalist and patriarchal development and its corresponding accumulation model. One example is the open pit metal mining for export and its intensive water extraction.

The logic and dynamics of these extractive economic groups destroy the territories in which they are located, as well as the lives of the people, especially of women. This certainly highlights the importance and relevance that the MMM has in Argentina. With its territorial development, this is an international organization that can report corporations, financial institutions and governments which lead to exploitation and degradation of our resources, climate change and loss of our biodiversity. This development model impoverishes and marginalizes women and increases violence toward us. No doubt it is necessary that the MMM becomes more visible to generate greater action in the women's movement and our organizations in Argentina.

Great challenges await this young and vibrant organization.

## The March of the Whores: No is No

Tux Belmonte

Translated by Karen Chalmers

**No is no!**

**I am not a vagina, I am not breasts, I am a woman  
demanding her rights!**

**Bastard judges are worse than rapists, I demand a  
judgement!**

**My short skirt doesn't make me easy!**



These were some of the slogans of the March of the Whores in the city La Paz in 2011. The March of the Whores has been held in 60 countries, starting in Toronto, Canada because of the statements of a policeman who said that "women should stop dressing like whores to avoid being raped".

This street protest initiative against violence towards women has manifested in various forms throughout the entire region. In many countries the march has been focused on protesting against harassment on the streets, some specifically against sexual violence and others, such as the one in La Paz, encompass all types of violence toward women.

How did the idea come about for the March of the Whores in La Paz? It all happened via the social networks, especially Facebook. But the call to action had a major boost via Facebook, and the initiative for this march in Santa Cruz came from the city's *Agitadoras Sociales* (Social Agitators) collective.

Two girls created the page "Organización de la Marcha de las Putas La Paz" on Facebook, to which we added many people, guys, girls, groups, activists, organizations, etc. Seeing of the March on the city of Santa Cruz, which in the opinion (or prejudice) of the west is more conservative and/or judgemental than the city of La Paz, we believed that the impact could be greater in La Paz.



The next step, after long discussions and contributions on the internet, was to meet up and get to know each other, to commit ourselves personally, since there were still doubts as to whether these users who were interested in organizing the march really existed. And one night in July, a group of girls (women only) met or re-met (Although La Paz is large it has a small middle class) to discuss various types of violence toward women and how the March should be organized.

The process of determining the aim of the March was long and complicated, new members were joining at the following meetings who provided initiatives and ideas of how to include or show their peers that violence toward

women is a structural problem that affects us all. Because of the structural violence of the patriarchal system, we determined that the purpose of the March of the La Paz Whores should be focused on ALL kinds of violence toward women. We are also reclaiming the word WHORE, embracing it as a symbol of freedom and vindication and rejecting its violent use.

Another of the tough discussions within the group which had been formed was: who did we want to reach? Obviously, the answer was ambitious: we wanted to reach the whole of society. After the March we realized how naive we were.

We had various initiatives for reaching the goals of the March; to carry out these initiatives we needed the participation of as many people as possible, so we needed more publicity than Facebook, since it is limited to a specific population with internet access. So, we got ourselves organized and shared the duties of writing letters and attending meetings with organizations that work within the fields of violence toward women, market sellers, trade associations, indigenous women's organizations, as well as street graffiti activism to attract the attention of the people of La Paz. We managed to obtain the resources needed for a slot on the radio (the whole script was written by the group), pamphlets, a street march and access to television magazines and programs that gave us the space for our call to action.

One of the best promotional initiatives was to meet with groups of feminists, lesbian-feminists and young people and teenagers working with sexual and reproductive rights. This type of group opened doors for the mass-participation of teenagers in the March of the Whores.

From July to September intensive work was carried out to achieve all of the above. Over 300 people gathered on the day of the march, including young people, children, women, men, teenagers, groups, organizations, etc. Everything happened spontaneously, the March of the Whores was a protest march but with a difference: there was a festive atmosphere, with music, dances and songs against violence towards women.

Once the March was complete, we had various plans with the group that had formed, for street demonstrations and/or talks about violence, but the origin of this group was spontaneous and for a specific action, so its purpose was determined at the same time.

One of the strongest criticisms the March has received was that it was like a canning production line: it comes from outside and we adapt it to fit. I think it is a valid criticism and totally accurate. While there has been successful exploration of this topic for future action and reaction, neither a serious discussion about violence toward women, nor a discussion in the various strata of society, have been achieved through the March. However, we are carrying on

with discussion processes relating to this topic, we now have a law against femicide (perhaps not with the best approach) and discussion has been successfully generated within society and its representatives and non-representatives on the decriminalization of abortion.

All these discussions from the State have generated reaction in young people, teenagers, women, men, to once again use the street as a means of fighting. Today we see other marches with other initiatives, not the ones that are all fireworks and monotony that the citizens of La Paz are bored with, but marches with music, drums, and symbolism, and above all, the participation of young people.

## Avatars of the feminist movement in Chile

Daniela Castillo Moya

Translated by Nick Harding

*"And I still think, as always, of certain bodies always half-way along a complex, tormented but liberating and decidedly political tunnel"*

*Diamela Eltit*

In the last few decades, the feminist movement's path in Chile has been characterised by a zigzag route. It arises from the framework of the fight against the military dictatorship with unusual power to act and feminist articulation, reaching unusual visibility in the public arena. Such a level of organization was the result of the raising of common objectives, which not only rose up in opposition to the authoritarian regime, but also against the relations of power and domination which were obvious private life. Under the slogan *"Democracy in the Country, in the Home and in Bed"* women entered the political discussion by questioning the patriarchal system and its own logic of oppression.

Despite the strength that the movement gained during the decade of the eighties, with the end of the military

dictatorship and the start of the so-called democratic transition, we are witnessing the breakdown of feminist action as it was: *"The diagnosis that Chilean feminists share today shows us that the democratic reconstitution - designed as a moderate transition toward the post-authoritarianism through the logic of covenants and negotiations of its "democracy of the agreements"- has meant the fragmentation and dispersal of the women's movement that had previously exercised so much rebellious political force in the times of the anti-dictatorial struggle "* (Olea R. , in Richard, 2000, p. 229 ).

In effect, the possibility of influencing the political agenda, in the legislative field and in public policies, ended up dividing the movement. The institutionalization of feminist practices, through non-governmental organizations (NGOS) and departments of Gender Studies meant a withdrawal of the feminist voice from the scenario of public speeches (Richard, 2001). In the same way, the strategies chosen to cope with the transition are translated into excision: on the one hand, there were those who adhered to a critical position on the negotiation with the State, legitimizing the independent political player of feminism; on the other, there were those who joined the bureaucratic order through their participation in the State apparatus or other institutions, and they tried to intervene in the public agenda from there.

In 1991, the first Feminist 'Encuentro Nacional' took place in Valparaiso, a space that was intended to unify feminist projects and draw common objectives that would enable them to coordinate a common political platform. However, these initiatives have not matured to the point of promoting a new field of collective action.

### **Abortion on the political agenda**

While fragmentation became deeply engrained in the course of these past decades, it is undeniable that the demand for reproductive rights is a common reference point in the current feminist struggle. Even more when Chile is one of the seven countries in the world that penalizes abortion under any circumstance.

The panorama wasn't always so restrictive, in 1931, 'therapeutic' abortion was instituted as a legal practice in article 226, later 119, of the Sanitary Code, which stated that: "Only for therapeutic purposes may a pregnancy be terminated" however, to our regret, months prior to the end of 17 years of military dictatorship, the article that was established more than fifty years ago, that of the lawful practice of 'therapeutic' abortion was repealed.

One of the precursors of this measure was the extreme right-wing conservative Jaime Guzman, who assumed that this law violated the will of God: "The mother must have the child even though he might be born abnormal, even though

it has not been desired, even though it is the product of a rape or, even though giving birth, results in the death of the mother [ ...] whatever the pain that it involves since, it is precisely what God has imposed on the human being" (Guzmán, 1974 in Houses, 2000).

The legitimacy that was granted - and continues to be granted - in this type of argument reveals that the church-state separation is no more than a sophism. Ecclesiastical intervention permeates the daily life of men and women, by regulating their privacy and the uses to which their body can be put. The above is confirmed by listening to the words of President Sebastián Piñera, who, in defence of the moral conservatism rooted in the political sector that he represents, didn't shrink from his duty of declaring that he would veto any legal provision that sought to de-penalize abortion, defining himself as "a supporter of protecting human life and dignity from conception until death". This public reaction was due to the fact that in the year 2012 three legislative proposals were presented which allowed abortion in certain circumstances - non-viability of the foetus, risk of life to the woman and rape-. In April of the same year, consistent with the moral stance of the Chilean State, all the legislative initiatives and projects were rejected.

It is evident that after the dictatorship the actions of democratic governments normalized the church-state

relationship. The right to terminate pregnancy didn't feature in any of the political-governmental agendas of the five governments. Quite the contrary, we uphold the absolute omission of spaces and discourses which appeal for reproductive freedom and we hold one another accountable to the guidance of the church. In consequence, until now, the legacy of the dictatorship prevents women from exercising their citizenship.

### **Local Organization and attempts at coordination**

This context has generated constrictive rebellious actions from civil society, through prosthetic devices. For example, since 2009 the Chile Abortion Line has operated in our country, it is a telephone service that provides information to adult women on the correct use of misoprostol, according to the standards established by the World Health Organization and provides guidance on the legal framework of abortion in Chile.

In our local arena, the city of Valparaiso, there are various organizations and forms of feminist dialogue. Some of them are: ***Catholics for the Right to Decide Chile***, an organization which belongs to the Latin American Network of CDD and is composed of women and feminist Catholics, who, since 1993 have been fighting for a church that is more inclusive, where respect for sexual and reproductive rights are vital to advancing gender equality. Its work has been developed mainly through informative workshops targeted

at women of all ages and conversations with young people. Also through parliamentary lobbying, by promoting the creation of new references which move national legislation forward and that would allow women access to legal abortion; and also through the dissemination of views on the radio, television and in the press. ***The c-Port***, a self-styled feminist guerrilla force which is characterized by a provocative aesthetic and anonymity that allows us to glimpse the dynamic nature of identity, their main lines of action are interventionist, performances, both virtual and in the street. ***Feminist Colectivx masturbates your mind***, is closely linked to critical-theoretical disciplines and appeals to the deconstruction of gender and (de)colonization of bodies, through speeches and actions that disturb the prevailing sexual and gender order. ***Movement Broke the Condom*** is a movement composed mainly of young university students that seek to generate spaces for discussion and reflection on sexual and reproductive rights within the student environment.



*Concentration "For the Right to Decide: Legal Abortion, Safe and Free" July 18, 2013.*

***Feminist Collective Valpo*** is an integral organization of the Chilean network *against violence towards women*, its central goal is the eradication of all types of violence that is committed against women, one of its most important actions is the annual campaign *"Beware! Machismo Kills"*.

In an attempt to arrange and coordinate the various forms of feminist action around a common struggle, the right to demand abortion, both secure and free, a group of feminists and representatives of various local organizations created

the Coordinating Office for the safe and voluntary interruption of pregnancy (CISVE). With less than a year up and running this organization has worked to put the debate about abortion within the public arena, increasing its visibility as a political practice of free decision, which is autonomous and voluntary. In the words of its participants, the coordinating organisation is *"born with the purpose of bringing together various civil society organizations and independent citizens that work in favour of reproductive rights, with special emphasis on the decriminalization and legalization of abortion"*. Amongst the organizations that take an active part in CISVE we find: The Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC), Movement Broke the Condom, University of Valparaiso Students' Federation (FEUV), the Department of Public Health of the FEUV and Women for their Rights.

However, despite the tireless efforts of CISVE to promote the articulation of feminism, we have not been able to generate lasting partnerships between organizations, and much less to eliminate prejudice and related dichotomies of the institutionalization/ mobilization or negotiation/ subversion type, which ultimately, have crippling effects on collective action.

Under this light the exclusive meeting points, which generate fleeting instances of convergence, are: the emblematic dates - March 8, September 28, November 25,

among others, and the denunciation of controversial situations which violate women's rights. For example, this year 2013, the pregnancy of a girl of 11 years due to being raped by her father reopened the debate on abortion. Due to this, massive mobilizations of citizens were organized throughout the country. One of them in Santiago on July 25 marked a milestone because of the number of attendees, but also because a group of demonstrators forced their entry into the Cathedral of Santiago. This gesture described by some groups as an action of extreme violence and by others, as a legitimate means of protest, is a symptom of a feminism that is dynamic, and whose diversity makes it even more necessary to be a part of.

The citizens' movements, which have emerged in recent years, show the crisis of the current system. This situation is fertile ground for us feminists to rethink our strategies and build genuine channels of coordination, which will enable us to articulate the desired political and social action.

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# The Indigenous Women's Movement Marching for Life

Translated by Karen Chalmer



The Indigenous Women's Movement Marching for Life (*Movimiento de Mujeres Indígenas en Marcha por la Vida*), was founded in October 2012 for the purpose of holding a Conference of Indigenous, Native, and Tribal Women living in the territories now known as Argentina in September 2013. Throughout that period, we carried out many activities in order to acquire resources in an autonomous manner: clubs, festivals and an anti-colonial cinema program. In each of these activities we try to show the problems afflicting the communities in the territories, territorial dispossession, and water shortage, the spread of genetically modified soya, fumigation, health problems, government harassment, discrimination, racism, and lack of justice. We were beginning to walk the path of Decolonization as we prepared for the Conference.

1st Conference for the Decolonization of Indigenous, Native and Tribal Women, in Argentina on the Defence of Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Indigenous Human Rights. "Culture, Politics and Spirituality"

On 3rd, 4th and 5th September 2013 we held the 1st Conference for the Decolonization of Indigenous, Native and TRIBAL Women in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina: a conference for decolonization that arose from community bases and that would be autonomously sustainable. Representatives from eleven communities that live in the west, center and south east of the province of Formosa arrived in Buenos Aires.

This was a First Conference for Decolonization, the start of a journey to fight for the rights we are seeking, land, territory, self-determination, water, health, multicultural education, justice, dignity, and identity. This was/is a start, also brought about by a 521-year-old fight against colonialism<sup>2</sup> which was first brought by the invaders and

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<sup>2</sup> Colonization is associated with a process of steam rolling another land, occupying, conquering, seizing, dominating, and attacking lands. From the beginning, colonial states have designed state policies to eliminate the indigenous population and, if they could not be removed, then they were made to change their ways, their spirituality and their way of seeing the world through evangelizing, colonial education and laws. The decolonization process aims to begin to understand: who I am, who you are, who we are, what are our identities, empowerment from our indigenous native identities to begin to make an education from our identity, an organization, a policy, a law, and spirituality from our identity.

then continued by the Colonial Nation States, who still continue to this day.

Atsinhay n omhem /the awakening of women (wichí language)

Da lqauaxa nam alpi qomlashepi maye ilotaique ca lcalaxa/  
women marching for life (quom language)

During these three days at the drawing board, we talked about the realities that we are experiencing in the various indigenous, native, tribal Qom, Wichi, Pilagá, Nivaclé communities. There are serious problems that coincide as themes common to all participating communities: Land Ownership, Housing, Education, Health, Drinking Water, Lack of Light, Violence (institutional and outside of the Communities) Lack of training, Work, valuing our own work, indigenous, native art, valuing the work/art that has been passed down from our grandparents.

### **We have a Multicultural Indigenous and Ancient Identity.**

As Indigenous, Native, Tribal Women, we began to organize ourselves according to our identities, starting a process of decolonization from our history recovering our spirituality, culture, language, medicine, law, forms of organization and communication.

**Land and territory.** The state should consider the existence of the native population and be convinced that we are the first to secure land, followed by the Americans and companies that harm the environment. They should recognize and respect the ancestral settlements for which we have no property deeds, lands that were confiscated.

For them only the land is visible. When territory is being discussed, we feel persecuted by the interest of those that want to own the land. For us, the land and its components: forests, water, animals, land, the indigenous relate to these ecosystems. For the Americans or whites the components of the lands are associated with the word progress: used without taking into account the harm that may occur or consequences, nor much less caring about the prevention of environmental pollution.

The land, the forests are privately owned, when people are looking for material for their arts (fabrics, etc.) they often do not return home because they have been persecuted and killed by landowners, which also happens to women who gather chaguar<sup>3</sup>. They are unable to take anything from their ancestral lands because they are now private fields, all this also happens with the state's complicity. In some of the communities they do not have communal property title deeds and civil associations are often outside of the territory

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<sup>3</sup> Tn: chaguar yields a strong plant fibre, excellent for making fabrics, basketry ropes, etc.

and when this happens they take advantage because they want to transfer ownership of the land and prevent the indigenous people from working.

The state violates all international conventions (ILO convention 169) in relation to territory and indigenous nations and they continue to steal our lands. That is why we suffer harassment, repression, persecution from the provincial state and denial from the national state. The territorial survey that should be done in conjunction with the indigenous communities has not been carried out.

**Water** is vital so that we can move forward. Water is a universal and fundamental human right that we are being denied, the rivers are fenced off, the waters are contaminated by pollution, they sell the little water that there is to bureaucrats in power. Land clearing in our territories means that groundwater is becoming ever deeper and so drilling becomes more and more difficult. Water gives us life. Without the mountain there is no life either; it is a fundamental right - the government has to give us drinking water. Clearing land planting genetically modified soya has consequences: it pollutes the water and the air; it brings drought and lot of illness.

**Health.** Without water there is no health. Why are children and young mothers dying? Why is there malnutrition? We need native nurses and health workers.

There needs to be birth control, strict treatment for patients who have T.B.C and death records must not be tampered with to cover up reality. In some of the communities in Formosa there are first aid rooms with health workers but their attention is limited and constrained in hospital care, indigenous people are asked a lot of questions, the relatives of the leaders who think differently to the system of the present government are victims. Health centres do not have the materials and equipment for primary analysis, they send them to hospital, but this is a problem because if they don't have health insurance they don't receive attention.

Ancient healthcare customs, as well as natural remedies and traditional midwives are stripped of their speciality and of the mountains, water and lands; they are increasingly reducing that choice.

We continue to suffer from curable diseases, as well as malnutrition and lack of medical care; there is no medication, there are no first aid rooms, and there are no health workers or the essentials for keeping our children in good health.

**Multicultural education.** Without the incorporation of our languages, knowledge and history into school curricula, there can be no inter-cultural education; we will just be in the presence of a colonial education, only partially translated into our languages.

In some communities they have luxury buildings but no bilingual inter-cultural education. The quality of education is very poor, the subjects may not be taught in sufficient depth because the teachers teach in different schools at the same time and sometimes they are not competent at what they teach because the qualifications they have are to teach other subjects.

**Identity-art-work-economy.** We want our Indigenous Art to be valued, it is not a craft, an artisan technique as the colonizers or those with a colonial mentality sometimes like to define it. We need to get ourselves organized to create a chain of production and sale at fair and decent prices. We create fabrics from what Mother Earth gives us: chaguar fibre, palo santo wood, from the mountain, the seeds of the rivers, the different plants and fibres that have been transformed into *objets d'art* for life since ancient times.

### **Autonomy**

It is our language, because it still exists, for our future. Autonomy is very important to us because we need the land and our territory. As a member of the Wichi race I would like them to listen to us, the people. We do not want to be discriminated against nor trampled underfoot, we want the people look at the needs of women because we have children and grandchildren who are suffering because of the lack of food, which is why we want them to listen to us. Also the need for land, which should be returned to the

native population and also because of the water issue: we are suffering because we don't have water. We suffer greatly because of politics; they don't care about us, only in the elections. Sometimes when we make roadblocks to protest, they tell us they are going to address our needs, but they don't solve anything. When people demand their rights, they don't take any notice of us.

## Women looking for life

Hilda Gomez, of the Quom Nation



*Quom women arrive at Congress*

As women our slogan is "Women Marching for Life". In Qom we translate this as "women looking for life". Perhaps a lot of information reaches us here in Buenos Aires, but it is very different because the reality that we are experiencing is so very hard: water pollution, air pollution, and land clearing. We are suffering, and it is because of the lack of a good education from the governments in power who are closing the door in our faces.

And this gives me strength and encouragement and we come here to talk about topics and it is very good to talk

about this situation, we are fighting for the same cause, they are the same situations, we are listening to our sisters from different communities, but the situations are the same as we are suffering, our culture is being erased, our identity is being lost as well as education because they are closing the doors and all legally: their legal way is to close the doors, there is no education that is bilingual or inter-cultural.

## The tireless struggle

Normanda Agüero, Wichí nation

Many of us are persecuted by state politicians, if you fight for your rights and you have a salary, the government takes away your salary...Many do not want to fight because of the threats that come with fighting which is why they do not dare but we, with my friend Agustín, are always at the front... We have to be there because we want them to respect us, we want them to stop discriminating against us, we always talk to our children, even if they kill us, we tell our children that they must have the strength to follow the path that we are creating. We are badly persecuted, there were always companions with us, and now they don't come, I don't know what is happening or why they are afraid of the threats, but we still come and participate because the struggle continues. The struggle is tireless, we will fight as far as we can, that is what we, that is why we still come and participate, we have come so far. There are other brothers who are also extremely worried, they are striking and their demand is for water and it is a matter of grave concern in our area because some people have their little animals and they are dying, the indigenous population, the Americans, and the farmers also suffer but they do not dare make a stand to say that they too have to fight for this path that we are treading, this is why we are delayed, but we have

arrived, we are arriving and we still exist and we will carry on fighting as far as we can.

Participating communities in: 1st Conference for the Decolonization Indigenous, Native and Tribal Women, in Argentina on the Defense of Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Indigenous Human Rights. "Culture, Politics and Spirituality"

San Carlos, Malá Lapel, QOM Nation

Riacho de Oro, Daañalec Lacheuge, QOM Nation

Santo Domingo, Alhua Poxoyaxaic, QOM Nation

La Primavera, Potae Napocna Navogoh, QOM Nation

Belgrano neighbourhood, PILAGA WICHÍ Nation

Obrero neighbourhood, PILAGA WICHÍ Nation

Curtiembre neighbourhood, PILAGA WICHÍ Nation

Old Quarter, PILAGA WICHÍ Nation

The Bermejo River neighbourhood, PILAGA WICHÍ Nation

Piri Del Sol South, PILAGA WICHÍ Nation

El Colorado, Ramón Lista, PILAGA WICHÍ Nation

Indigenous Women Marching for Life

Latin America- Woman is mobilized for her rights

Blog: [mimporlvida.blogspot.com.ar](http://mimporlvida.blogspot.com.ar)

FB: women marching for life

Email: [mimporlvida@gmail](mailto:mimporlvida@gmail.com)



“Latin America- Woman is mobilized for her rights” is the second of a series of women publications realized by LatiCe, with the intention of providing a space of expression for those who do not have it in the commercial media.

This time, LatiCe is sharing with you a Latin America of strong and decisive women who are organizing themselves to fight against the patriarchal structure of society and in defence of their rights.



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