



6 Topaketak! Encuentros

DONOSTIA – SAN SEBASTIÁN / OTSAILAK 17–18 FEBRERO 2022

INDEX

INTRODUCCIÓN	3
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INAUGURAL PANEL "On sexual politics and feminist challenges in these times of pandemic and neoliberal offensive"	5
Nalu de Faria da Silva	5
Justa Montero	7
Questions	9
Keys	10

PANEL "Anti-gender, racism and neoliberalism campaigns in Europe and Latin America"	13
<i>Hungary: Resistance actions from the LGTBIQ+ movement against the anti-gender politics of the autocratic Orban government ...</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Nicaragua: What is happening in Nicaragua? Alliances between the government of Daniel Ortega and fundamentalist groups</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Brazil: Anti-gender, racism and neoliberalism campaigns in Bolsonaro's Brazil</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>State: The extreme right in Spain and its convergences with religious fundamentalisms</i>	<i>17</i>
Questions	18
Keys	18

PANEL "Bodies and Territories in Resistance: Building Lives Free of Violence"	22
<i>Afghanistan: Women the Taliban don't want: resistance from the margins</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Ethiopia: The war in Ethiopia. Facing once again sexual violence as a weapon of war.....</i>	<i>23</i>
Questions	24
Keys	25

PANEL "Rural and indigenous women facing the extractive industry and corporate power".....	29
<i>Honduras: Fighting against the impunity of corporate power. Justice for Berta Cáceres.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Ecuador: Indigenous women of Ecuador in defense of nature and its territories.....</i>	<i>30</i>
Questions	31
Keys.....	32

PANEL "Sexualities and non-normative bodies: of moralisms, hate crimes and other phobias".....	36
<i>India: Suspend judgment! Sex work, sexual and bodily diversity ...and other forms of stigma and marginalization.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>State: For a feminism of freedom. Against sexual normativities, purities and moralisms.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Honduras: On Trans activism in Honduras and its forms of resistance.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>State: For a feminism of freedom. Against sexual normativities, purities and moralisms.....</i>	<i>39</i>
Questions	41
Keys.....	42

CONCLUSIONS	48
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INTRODUCTION

These Meetings respond to the desire of Medicus Mundi Gipuzkoa to generate a biannual space to tackle the most challenging socio-political problems of today and their intersections with feminism and the struggle for Human Rights, analysing the different social, political and economic factors that are behind these fundamentalisms, and amplifying those voices that firmly oppose these practices and social discourses. Specifically, the 6th Meetings *on the Impact of political, economic, religious and cultural fundamentalisms on sexual and reproductive rights* have focused on the current political context and the role that fundamentalisms continue to play today in the violation of people's freedoms and rights, specifically sexual rights and reproductive rights (hereinafter SSRR&RR).

We understand fundamentalisms in their multiple cultural, religious, economic or political expressions that defend a single and immutable way of thinking as the norm for society, and that have harmful consequences for human beings in general and for the exercise of SSRR&RR in particular.

In the context of the health crisis, we have seen that the local has never been so global and the global has never been so local. Every day we are witnessing a growing and shameful global inequality and a world context of great polarisation, where the extreme right-wingers manifest clear common elements through their extreme defence of anti-gender, racist, anti-environmentalist policies and openly oppose the freedoms and rights won in recent decades by women and the LGBTBIQ+¹ community.

For all the aforementioned, in collaboration with the feminist organisations CREA from India and the Manuela Ramos Movement from Peru, these VI Meetings have had the ambition of being a space to address the most challenging socio-political problems of today and their intersections with feminism and the struggle for Human Rights, analysing the different social, political and economic factors that are behind these fundamentalisms, and amplifying those voices that firmly oppose these practices and social discourses.

To this end, we have invited people and movements representing different countries and struggles, who have shown us the different ways in which fundamentalisms manifest themselves, while sharing different strategies to confront them. All this has allowed us to identify common elements in fundamentalisms, as well as to rescue keys to rethink politics and resistance, to reimagine transformation and to renew strategies of struggle.

¹ Throughout the text we have unified the name using the term LGBTBIQ+.

PANELS²

INAUGURAL PANEL "On sexual politics and feminist challenges in these times of pandemic and neoliberal offensive"

Nalu de Faria da Silva, psychologist and feminist. Member of the International Committee of the World March of Women and of the feminist organisation Sempreviva.

Current context

We are in a context of an unprecedented, systemic crisis. In this context, Covid has exacerbated inequalities and reinforced racism, LGBTIQ+-phobia and the practices of colonialism and capital on the territories.

At the same time, there has been a deepening of the debates put on the agenda by feminism:

- the role of the state, privatisation, de-democratisation.
- the ecological dimension of the crisis
- the reproduction of life
- above all, what does this neoliberalism and capitalism mean, what is their rationality, how are their dynamics imposed with new meanings, but the same mechanisms (control and exploitation of bodies and territories, violence, devastation of common goods, persecution of movements and migrants).

In this sense, we observe a strongly neo-conservative tendency, as neoliberalism is based both on the idea of commodification and free trade, and on a conservative morality that organises everyday life and relationships. Awareness of this is essential when analysing the situation of SSRR&RRs today.

Historical

Neoliberalism has gone through different eras.

² The organising entities are not responsible for the opinions of the participants, they only seek to generate exchange and reflection from diverse opinions

In the early years, it focuses on destroying the organisation of working people, separating the subjects (on the one hand, working class with historical struggles, on the other hand women, black communities, LGBTIQ+...) and controlling labour; to do so, it encourages cross accusations of divisionism, of separating the class. Against this, feminists promote union, from a plural working class consciousness.

At the same time, a pattern of femininity is imposed and control of bodies is sought: eternal youth, slimness, hierarchisation of women by class and race. The image of femininity in many villages is hegemonic and has traditional traits, it is promoted as something natural and desirable.

However, until the end of the 1990s, neoliberalism is still not understood. The World March of Women could see the impacts, but would not understand the sexual and patriarchal dimension structuring neoliberal policies and the deepening inequalities between women.

Short after, in the 2000s, there is a growth of the movement for another globalisation, a strong struggle against neoliberalism and some gains, but there is also a counter-offensive and the control of states by corporations is strengthened. The progressive governments of this cycle have not managed to oppose the logic of the market, so they propose redistributive policies, but without attacking how the economy is organised. Likewise, they have limits when it comes to sexual and reproductive policies: every time governments address them, there is a huge backlash and they backtrack.

In the 2010s, the extreme right burst onto the scene and far-right platforms were organised with two main themes: gender ideology and the accusation of cultural Marxism.

On the one hand, they operate from the disqualification of politics (corruption) and social and public issues in order to impose right-wing populism. On the other hand, in the market, there is a tendency to accumulate, to grab natural goods and to show voracity for public funds.

Finally, the above-mentioned levels - neoliberal economic and neoconservative cultural - have the family as the key: organiser of care, complementary to the state and provider of exploited labour on an individualised level. To guarantee this, socialisation in Pentecostal churches is encouraged, which follow an ideology of prosperity from individual entrepreneurship and conservative family values discordant with the reality of most families today.

How does the feminist movement view this scenario?

There are three fundamental keys:

- Recognition and memory:
 - Despite everything that is happening the resistances and struggles continue.
 - Recovering the responses built by peoples and women over centuries.
- Political subjects and agendas
 - Feminism is considered emancipatory because of its critical vision of the model, of the public/private, political/personal dichotomies, of the construction of subjectivities. The debates are increasingly similar in different parts of the world, with agendas not separated from the subjects and incorporating their diversity in the movement, all their needs and subjectivities.
 - It has grown as a movement and in its links with other social movements in various parts of the world and from various sectors (peasantry, indigenous peoples, LGBTIQ+, black communities...). It has become a political subject together with other forces of transformation and seeks to put the feminist perspective in all processes, building mechanisms to move forward step by step together.
- Action and solidarity in the World March of Women:
 - 5th international action: with the actions led by women in the context of pandemics, it becomes visible that they are the ones who sustain life, that they do so in ways that are more appropriate to the needs of communities than government measures, and that are based on solidarity as the basis of social relations, the economy and feminist organisations.
 - In the current context, it is important to be able to:
 - Respond to the struggle against militarisation and war from an anti-imperialist perspective.
 - Generate learning, exchange and international links to strengthen local struggles and the global struggle.

Justa Montero, feminist and social activist and member of the Feminist Assembly of Madrid. Defender of an inclusive, anti-capitalist, anti-racist feminism in alliance with other social movements. Co-author of the book "A feminism of the 99%".

What has Covid meant?

It has been superimposed on the systemic crisis that we had already been analysing and suffering from. It has brought to light:

- The system is based on accumulation of layers of exploitation and precariousness. Once the emergency phase has passed, there is no longer any recognition of the conditions of the jobs that have been said to be essential, which have made it possible to provide a minimum, and which are, moreover, mainly occupied by women.

- What is environmental precariousness, what are the bio-attacks on the planet: this will lead to greater precariousness and difference in health coverage
- What domestic violence means: the home is not always and for all people the safest place, even less so in a situation of confinement.
- The system is fragile and our normality functions on its basis of violence: dispossession of the commons, of lives, of resources... "sacrifice zones", pollution, impoverishing industries and work without rights... Thus, the intersection of oppressions becomes concrete and operates in real life, especially in the lives of exploited women and all those lives that do not matter.
- There are counteracting practices: support networks, community food pantries, inclusive women's organisations, etc.

Connivance between neoliberalism and anti-feminist discourse

The health crisis exacerbates and makes us see something that feminism was already saying, that the system is unsustainable, urgently requires solutions, a global rethinking of relations with nature, what has to be at the centre of the economy (what has to be produced and for what), how we want to build life, relate to each other, etc. so that lives can be dignified. Feminism has put this on the agenda from a globalising vision: a challenge to the system and a proposal of alternatives. It has pushed the debate on what the system is and its impacts on people's lives, both at the level of macro analysis of capital, and at the level of the experiences of women's concrete lives.

This is the origin of the struggle against feminisms, their criminalisation and the attempt to implement social demobilisation. Feminisms are looking for ways out of this crisis and neoliberalism sees women as a way out.

What feminism and what challenges?

A feminism of the "global cry", internationalist, that questions the model, where defending rights for some does not cancel out the possibility of rights for others, through which to map out problems and challenges, without placing hierarchies between them (law on foreigners, CIEs, ecofeminism, trans...).

It is not a liberal, glass ceiling feminism, which does not touch hierarchies and advocates for improvements that benefit only some.

Challenges:

- Some on the left are moderately critical of the economic framework and brutally critical of the feminist and LGBTIQ+ movement, saying it fragments the contestation. Some movements fall into the dominant right-wing dynamic.
- Transmit an anti-capitalist and anti-racist feminism.

- Neoliberalism focuses its attacks on demonising the social: public services, relationships, community. Feminism must focus on the social sphere. This is where mobilisations and demands are generated, where the collective ferments.
- Punitivism: the extreme right mobilises negative emotions (fear and insecurity) through the discourse of violence that others (migrant men) carry out and threaten our normality. This makes it possible to reinforce punitivist outlets and securitarian policies. Transphobic positions also use the same mechanisms and lead to a denial of rights and criminalisation.
- Relationship between economics and cultural battles: neoliberalism has to do with market capitalism and also with the moralising machinery set in motion (security, family, nation...). Separating it and focusing only on one thing does not allow us to have the global vision of the scale of the way out of the crisis/Covid that is being proposed, which can even be fascist.
- Freedom as a disputed term to be redefined: in addition to being fundamental for social justice (freedom "from" denunciation and complaint, free from pain, from shortages, from precariousness, from helplessness...), to elaborate the concept of freedom "for", which mobilises positive emotions (construction, life and joy).

QUESTIONS

Moderator: Begoña Zabala, representative of the Euskal Herriko Emakumeen Munduko Martxa -World March of the Women of the Basque Country (EHMM)

1. Before Covid there was a moment of construction, union, street, movement. Then, they prevented people from coming together and criminalised it; moreover, the institutional channels, invisibilises and lengthens the processes, the demands are not collectivised. Between the online and the institutional, it is blocked, diverted... Now, where do we stand? What do we need?
 - a. Recover the street, mobilisation and public spaces: they are spaces of expression and allow society to have a reading of what feminism demands and proposes.
 - b. To set in motion processes of coming together/dialoguing/meeting and sharing agendas and priorities.
 - c. Clarify what certain issues mean for us: those that have become general issues (e.g. care) and those that neoliberalism co-opts (e.g. diversity).
2. Who is in charge of the changes in the family model and what they imply in terms of loneliness, logistics...?
 - a. Neoliberalism leads to atrocious individualism, it breaks down resources. It is not enough just to denounce, the challenge is: how to build and offer processes that lead to the strengthening of different community/relational ties?
 - b. Territorialise: demand public services/resources, think about what kind of city-neighbourhood we want, generate processes of accompaniment and instil values of mutual support.

- c. Learning from experience: there are small experiences that are not generalised, but which show that it is possible (villages, blocks of houses); there is also a history of single-parent families prior to the incorporation of white middle-class women into the labour market (e.g. black women).
 - d. Demystifying marriage as a place of non-solitude.
3. How to eliminate patriarchy if we reproduce it ourselves? How to teach our children?
 - a. Patriarchy is cultural but it also has a strong material basis. We are brought up as if motherhood is our main role, but in reality, it structures the social division of labour.
 - b. Debunking myths: we are fragile and dependent, we are neither whole, nor autonomous, they are. But in reality, we do a lot more than just breed/procreate.
4. How to include trans women in the agenda when radical feminists do not accept them and there is violence within the movement?
 - a. Sometimes there is an unbearable level of violence, anti-feminist. But a majority part of the movement feels that trans women are part of the movement, they do not talk about how they should be included, but that they are.
 - b. Political validity if this "we" is real and plural. That everyone feels represented in the agendas.
 - c. Trans organisations must also be strengthened and be more present.

KEYS

- The crisis of the model becomes visible and more acute with the Covid. The neoliberal and neoconservative tendencies are presented as two sides of the same coin, intrinsically linked.
- The family, in its hegemonic conceptualisation, proves to be a key element for the survival of the unequal and oppressive model. Therefore, the proposals and achievements of feminism constitute an obstacle to the objectives of these tendencies and, consequently, they respond by articulating a framework, discourse and political, legal, economic and strongly cultural actions against feminism.
- Today, feminism needs to be plural even more and to link the local and the global, both in the analysis of the mechanisms of neoliberalism and fundamentalisms, and in the implementation of its strategies.





PANEL "Anti-gender campaigns, racism and neoliberalism in Europe and Latin America"

Hungary: *Resistance actions from the LGTBIQ+ movement against the anti-gender politics of the autocratic Orban government.*

Dorottya Redai, researcher and LGTBIQ+ activist in Hungary. Coordinator of the censored book "A Fairy Tale for Everyone" *Resistance actions from the LGTBIQ+ movement against the anti-gender politics of the autocratic Orban government.*

Context of Hungary since 2010

The current government was democratically elected. However, it: changes laws, centralises, takes away rights, fuels hatred, controls the media, takes pro-family and pro-life measures justified by the demographic crisis and from Christianity, anti-gender policies. In addition, it uses the pandemic to regulate by decree and make changes to the constitution. Along the way, it makes alliances with autocratic world leaders.

Some of its anti-LGBTIQ+ policies are:

- Defining the family as heterosexual, with one father and one mother.
- Removing the right to change name and/or sex.
- Homosexuals and single parents cannot marry or adopt (considered paedophilia).
- Child Protection Act (from paedophilia and abuse): states that gender identification is assigned at birth and educated accordingly.

At the moment, a referendum is being prepared, which will take place at the same time as the elections (April 2022). The topic is sex education, with the following message: access to content on gender identity and sexual orientation diversity has a devastating effect on children.

Voices and strategies of resistance

Three types of formal and informal coalitions have been generated:

- LGTBIQ+ organisations together with other advocacy organisations campaign together.
- LGTBIQ+ organisations with the few existing feminist organisations. Women's organisations are not supportive due to the existing conflict over trans people.
- Expressions of solidarity, financial or rhetorical support: increasingly from citizens, independent media, some companies and NGOs that work in other areas and are critical of the government.

On the other hand, the book "A Fairy Tale for Everyone", due to its contents and the controversy it has generated, has been and continues to be a tool for resistance and struggle. It compiles fairy tales rewritten to educate children (6-12 years old) about diversity, minorities and exclusion. Its publication has received much critical reaction with the following arguments: children must be protected, they are going to become homosexuals, these ideas come from the EU, they are not local values.... It is forbidden to sell it and there are complaints if it is sold or exhibited. There is also a campaign in favour and they manage to put the issue of education and upbringing on the table.

Nicaragua: *What is happening in Nicaragua? Alliances between Daniel Ortega's government and fundamentalist groups.*
Silvia Zuñiga, Nicaraguan feminist and lesbian, persecuted and exiled in Bilbao. Member of EH Feministak Nika *What is happening in Nicaragua? Alliances between Daniel Ortega's government and fundamentalist groups.*

Context in the last 20 years

Nicaragua has an unconstitutional president, who has started his 4th consecutive mandate in January 2022 after reforming the electoral law, receiving international rejection and leading the country into a socio-economic crisis.

Who have been his accomplices?

- On the one hand, the neoliberal sector, since he came to power through a pact with corrupt leaders of the neoliberal sector. This is a disillusionment with a government that was expected to be left-wing.
- On the other hand, the Catholic Church helps him to wash his image as a revolutionary leftist, as well as the accusations of raping his stepdaughter. He starts to appear as a Christian person and to persecute feminism and women's groups. In this regard:
 - In 2008, therapeutic abortion is criminalised.
 - In 2010 the family code is approved, which excludes single-parent and diverse families. Homosexuality is decriminalised, but without rights to adopt, form a family, be recognised as a family, etc.
 - Women's police stations, which supported women in situations and complaints of violence, are removed.

Voices of resistance

Until 2018 the people are asleep, they do not fight for their rights, but trust in his slogan - "with Daniel until victory always" - and in the messianic figure that is being built by the daily indoctrination of his wife in the media.

In 2018 there was a strong mobilisation against the proposed pension reform. A mobilisation that the government tries to silence. The crisis is demonstrated on three levels:

- Political crisis. The government responds with police forces and Sandinista youth: many people exiled, country under siege, eliminates critical organisations and persecutes activists (women, youth, environmentalists, indigenous people...), prevents international subsidies, erases academic records, closes universities, takes away scholarships, imprisons presidential candidates, bans feminist demonstrations because it is the only movement that brings out the struggles.
- Economic crisis. There has been a huge increase in migration, especially of women, who come to take care of their families.
- Religious component. The Catholic church has opposed the killings and no longer supports the president, so it is not in a good position. It is the evangelical churches that do play into his hands with a fanaticism born of fundamentalism that presents him as a redeeming prophet.

The left of the Spanish state is complicit to the extent that it does not react.

Brazil: *Anti-gender campaigns, racism and neoliberalism in Bolsonaro's Brazil.*

Nalu de Faria da Silva, International Committee of the World March of Women and member of Sempreviva Organização Feminista. *Anti-gender campaigns, racism and neoliberalism in Bolsonaro's Brazil.*

Brazil before Bolsonaro

Brazil is an unequal and elitist country, patriarchal and racist in a very deep/naturalised/structural way. It also has the self-perception that it is not racist, that there is mixing. However, it is a polarised country with strong conservative thinking towards black communities, women, LGBTIQ+ groups and SSRR&RR.

With the PT (Workers' Party) in government, policies that address this substratum begin. Firstly, policies that confront racism. Thus, although the data on inequality between the white/black population (education, income, employment) continues to be very strong, the first results can be observed: access to university, although without achieving employment at the same level as the white population. Similarly, there are policies that focus on memory, that favour minorities and that are feminist.

Since 2018

Bolsonaro is elected president after the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, a process whose manipulation and agreement by the right has been recognised. His style is populist, aggressive, informal, rude, undiplomatic... and many people identify with him because of his strong masculinity. He mobilises the resentment of whiteness, of those who believed they were losing privileges through social policies.

Some features of his government would be:

- Good relationship with the worst sector of the army. The sale of arms is facilitated.
- Articulation of churches at the international level, especially on the American continent. His support is mainly from the Neo-Pentecostal church.
- Reduction of education policy, removal of tuition fees, scholarships, food...
- Promotion of hatred.
- Assaults on women.
- Use of fake news.
- Genocidal in the management of the pandemic.

His candidacy wins unexpectedly for the left, and he does so because the strong parties on the right have lost all their strength and there are no candidates. For the 2022 presidential elections the situation is totally polarised between Lula and Bolsonaro.

Voices and strategies of resistance

The militants could not have imagined that they would experience what they are experiencing with Bolsonaro. Even so, there are signs of struggle and hope:

- In recent years, the struggle of black people is strong and recovers the historical.
- In the municipal elections of 2020, the good result of the candidatures of young, black and LGBTIQ+ women (up from 8% to 32%) is striking, they are the ones who confront and put the critical debate.
- Two fronts of parties and movements (including progressive ecumenical ones) are built and after the coup decide that they have to join forces: Frente Brasil Popular and Pueblo sin Miedo.
- There is an intention to create an anti-Bolsonaro Front for the first round of the next presidential elections, since it is necessary to position oneself to confront the ultra-right.

There is a strong issue of debate in this process of generating common fronts and resistances: the whole left feels unprepared to debate with and approach the population absorbed by the neo-pentecostal church and willing to follow their myth/leader even if they know he is lying. Although the left was very close to the liberation theology church, they find it difficult to debate from religion. Given this reality, how to build connections?

State: *The ultra-right in Spain and its convergence with religious fundamentalism.*

Amelia Martínez Lobo, project manager and director of the publication "De los neocón a los neonazis. La derecha radical en el Estado español" published by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. *The ultra-right in Spain and its convergence with religious fundamentalism.*

Context, which extreme right?

In cultural terms, the extreme right condenses the vital consequences of the advance of neoliberalism. It aims to radicalise the right and impose its agenda and public policy, and to this end, they wage cultural warfare and torpedo consensus.

In the Spanish state, there are:

- 4 major anti-gender activists: episcopal conference, anti-abortion associations, neoconservative lobbies and extreme right-wing parties.
- 3 religious fundamentalisms: El Yunque (a secret ultra-Catholic and extreme right-wing organisation of Mexican origin with national and international scope, "ideological multinational of hate that recruits soldiers of God"), Hazte oír (a Spanish association of extreme right-wing, ultra-Catholic and ultra-conservative nature) and Abogados Cristianos (a national civil foundation that defends the values inspired by Christianity in the legal field).
- Those who follow the theory of the great replacement: the most uncomplicated version of the "normal" family, according to which the indigenous population will be replaced by the Muslim population that will occupy us.
- Those who align themselves with pinkwashing, which can lead to a racialisation of sexual politics, and promote a punitive approach.

They don't need to govern in order for their agenda to be taken on board, which is, after all, a material agenda: ending gender-based violence laws, imposing parental pinning, leaving 016 without a budget, increasing LGBTIQ+-phobic crimes, targeting migrants and women, and thus racialised women.

Voices and strategies of resistance

Feminism and women's rights are the workhorse of the far right, the backbone of a political project of hostility to spaces that question the traditional/nuclear/heteronormative family. Gender ideology is, in this sense, the activator of the moral panics of radical conservatism.

It is therefore essential to continue the resistance from a diverse and anti-racist feminism. If the anti-gender wars are what articulate the extreme right, resistance must also be approached from there.

QUESTIONS

Moderator: Rocío Gutiérrez, president of the feminist organisation, Movimiento Manuela Ramos from Peru.

1. In Latin America, as a laboratory of the far right, the focus is on education, on breaking in from childhood (e.g. family conferences). How to challenge this in order to defend the consensus on SSRR&RR?
 - a. In Brazil, the far right promotes the view that schools cannot be critical and teach people to think; they should only transmit content. It also advances to legislate "home schooling". On the other hand, in addition to education, they also attack health at the municipal level: they prevent access to contraceptives, to the emergency pill...
 - b. In Hungary, sex education is considered to be exclusively the duty of parents. Therefore, activists are trying to work directly at this level.

2. Religion as an escape route from precariousness, how can feminist, left-wing activism contest this?
 - a. If the community is in dispute, and if in times of precariousness the only community space left is religion, perhaps it is necessary to be there.
 - b. Generate links with community disputes (public education, grassroots health care...), do not let the extreme right occupy the spaces of pain/precarity, but build solidarity in concrete terms.

KEYS

- The trajectories and representatives of anti-rights and anti-gender movements jeopardise our possible life projects.
 - They occur in diverse socio-political contexts.
 - They are often based on a perversity of politico-religious pacts.
 - They undermine consensus and have consequences for life.
- Resistance can be manifold:
 - One must always continue to dismantle/denounce hate speeches; to continue in resistance, even if one has to leave the country.
 - From children's literature, bringing diverse realities to light, putting debates on the table, creating new imaginaries.
 - It is important to think creatively about how to construct narratives that reach unconvinced citizens.







PANEL "Bodies and territories in resistance: building lives free from violence."

Afghanistan: *Women the Taliban don't want: resistance from the margins.*

Massouda Kohistani, women's rights activist and Afghan refugee. *Women the Taliban don't want: Resistance from the margins.*

Context

Today there is a terrorist government that does not want to negotiate, it only kills, steals, imposes... Its leaders are from the same tribal group supported by Pakistan and created by the US: same roots and always in power.

This is not an Afghan issue, but an international terrorist struggle with many actors involved.

Women's rights

Prior to Taliban rule, the position on women's rights had less to do with government legislation and Sharia law and more to do with tribal customs. They are denied the right to decide, they are blamed if they do not accept the imposed husband, if they are mothers without being married, they are expelled from home... There are many "safe houses" but, especially in rural areas, families kill them easily and quickly.

Nowadays the situation has worsened:

- They have no rights, they are not even counted, the Ministry is eliminated.
- They are required not to work outside the home as they are responsible for the houses, if they are on the street they are prostitutes.
- They have arrested and killed women who go out to protest and leave them lying in the street. Threats to kill families if activists are active on social media internationally.
- The Taliban government announces to families that they must burn everything belonging to a woman activist who leaves the country.
- Because of poverty, women are selling their children, workers are starving.

On the other hand, in recent years being LGBT had become more visible and accepted by the young generation. Now these people are either killed or live in hiding, because for the Taliban it is a great sin, they are cursed by God.

However, radicalisation has nothing to do with Islam, nor does it respond to Afghan culture, which, in Pakistan's words, the world has to respect.

Resistance

It is women who are demonstrating against terrorism after the US has left the country. They feel it is better to protest and be active or else die.

As they are not allowed to go out, they do it on social networks and gather in their homes. They look for ways to raise their voices and protest against the decisions that are being taken and the messages that are being given. Some have left the country (for example, those who went to Oslo to negotiate) and cannot return, they would be killed.

They ask:

- Solidarity with them, because they are the ones who resist, both those who stayed and those who are outside. How to survive as a refugee?
- Not to recognise the Taliban government with the excuse that it will end poverty: "peace cannot be achieved at the expense of women's rights".
- Awareness that this is not just an Afghan issue, but an international issue with big hands behind it and that it will affect everyone, including here.

Ethiopia: *The war in Ethiopia. Facing once again sexual violence as a weapon of war.*

Hiwot Abebe, member of the Ethiopian feminist organisation "Setaweeet". *The war in Ethiopia. Facing once again sexual violence as a weapon of war.*

Context

War situation in Tigray. Many actors are involved in the conflict. It is difficult to know with certainty what is happening because, on the one hand, access to certain areas is blocked, even for social and civil organisations, and, on the other hand, there is no independent media and in social networks it is not clear what is true and what is self-serving. Therefore, there is no distinction between what is propaganda and the information is confusing.

Women's rights

We hear about rapes and atrocities, there are reports from the United Nations and Amnesty International, but usually these investigations do not fully reflect the reality because of shame and taboo many cases are not told.

Violence against women is instrumentalised by both state forces and rebel groups. It is normalised as a mechanism of war and is used as an argument in their agenda: they have raped, so we have to attack; they have raped our women, so we take revenge?

This also happens in the context of a traditional country, where violence against women was already normalised and is often not seen as violence. The numbers have gone up (murdered, acid, set on fire...).

The constitution is patriarchal and, in addition, the ethnic factor is fundamental. The gender issue is not dealt with at the state level. When this government started there was illusion and some changes towards parity (e.g. presence of women in parliament), but it was a superficial change, used as propaganda for progress.

Resistance

Feminism is not a united movement, but one that is increasingly fragmented along ethnic lines; there is a search for historical and identity bases, for what it means to be a woman in each culture. There is a need for a space to talk, to discover what they have in common and to act. As far as war is concerned, they maintain neutral positions.

In general, women work from the margins, organising themselves to try to reach the institutions, although it is very difficult because of the bureaucracy. They also do psychological support, as well as research and advocacy (on the constitution, violence against women, crime...).

Currently, there is a National Dialogue Commission with the objective of proposing a roadmap for peace. Women are being advocated to be part of it, but they are only 3 out of 20. Still, there is a need for hope because there are not many other options.

QUESTIONS

Moderator: Mariana Zaragoza, Researcher in Human Rights, Migration and Gender

1. What support can be given?

a. From the international community:

Underlying the question itself is an imperialist, colonial vision: who do we mean by the "international community"? Often the best help would be to "leave us alone". Although it is difficult to get out of this vision, it is important to be aware of our gaze and the kind of interventions we are proposing.

One support would be non-recognition of terrorist governments, as well as international protests. On the other hand, at the continental level, we should try to think in a pan-African way.

b. As women:

Solidarity networks:

- Financial support to Afghan women inside and outside the country.
- Exchange forums with women's and feminist movements around the world. Sharing what strategies work, letting the world know what is happening in the different realities and what resistances are taking place.
- Global influence on local realities, weaving struggles without reproducing imperialist logics, taking care of how, without imposing anything in the name of human rights.

2. How to use social networks?

It is an ambivalent issue: about 10 years ago there were still not many people active and they were a space of freedom; today they are widely used, they serve to share and get messages across, but they can also be in the hands of the Taliban or, as in Ethiopia, be a source of disinformation and manipulation. Moreover, they are owned by large corporations.

KEYS

- Contexts in conflict situations are unclear: the conjuncture is known, but not how patriarchy, capitalism and geopolitical interests come together structurally in that particular place. Lack of information.
- A clear objective is identified: subjugation of women's bodies in different ways, rape/punishment to send a message and dehumanise women in their contexts, that we see that they have consequences. It happens in contexts with a lot of violence and in contexts where it is not supposed to.
- This can happen because there is a general context of impunity in which, officially or unofficially, women are generally denied their rights and, in the face of any violence, justice, let alone reparation, cannot be expected.
- It is important to connect ideas of resistance with the violence women face in their countries. They are not only victims - both in their territories and when they flee their contexts - they also have the potential to articulate struggles.







PANEL "Rural and indigenous women facing the extractive industry and corporate power".

Honduras: *Fighting against the impunity of corporate power. Justice for Berta Cáceres.*

Laura Zúñiga Cáceres, human rights activist and daughter of defender Berta Cáceres - assassinated in 2016. Member of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras (COPINH). *Fighting against the impunity of corporate power. Justice for Berta Cáceres.*

Context

In Latin American countries, many companies act freely. In Honduras, there was a coup d'état in 2009 and, from then on, there was a total opening up to foreign extractive and tourism companies, etc., and legal frameworks were established that criminalised women land defenders and allowed the massive militarisation of society.

What happens there is important for Europe, because this is where the strings are pulled. European companies cover the tracks with local companies with foreign capital. They make concessions on all common goods, insensitive to their spiritual value as well, in order to produce green energy stained with blood and plunder.

Intersections from feminism

It is important to talk about feminism in these processes because, when capitalism arrives to plunder everything from its territories, it legitimises itself from the patriarchy, attacking women - who are the ones who, above all, confront these projects - and fragmenting the community. These processes also have a colonial imprint, because they destroy land, bodies and possibilities for a life project, in order to serve hegemonic development projects in certain areas of the world.

The control of bodies also takes the form of migration: extractivism of people who migrate because their land is taken from them, extracting lives/emotions/life projects to become cheap labour for countries that take advantage of the vulnerability of migrant women - disposable bodies of the system - and place them in domestic or sexual service.

Voices and strategies of resistance

In the words of Berta Cáceres: "We cannot just stand by and watch the destruction, the oppression. The encircled, raped mother earth demands action". How can we fight against the impunity of corporate power?

In the case of the Blanco river that crosses the Lenca territory, the strongly organised community resisted in order to send a message to the rest of the less organised communities that it was possible and to prevent them from being intimidated.

The state does not manage to stop the resistance and so they resort to physical violence, Berta is murdered (2/3/2016), but the community transcends the fear and pain generated by this death and continues to resist. They investigate who is behind the local company and discover European money and publicly owned banks. They come up against a framework of impunity: access to information is made difficult, responsibilities are outsourced and they are not considered valid interlocutors (because they are women, because they are indigenous, because they lead different lives...).

Communities need money, access to information, women leaders and alliances to carry out these lawsuits and investigations. Mobilisation through the accumulation of solidarity makes a difference in putting pressure on the state. They manage to break the silence and break the naturalisation of violence, in order to generate justice in the face of impunity.

Today, although the masterminds are still free and capital continues to support this type of business, indifferent to the violence they generate, this dam has not been built. It is a defended territory, a territoriality of resistance, creating new relations of life and preserving memory.

Ecuador: *Indigenous women of Ecuador in defence of nature and their territories.*

Patricia Túqueres Pichamba, member of the Colectivo Saramanta Warmikuna (women of maize) and Acción Ecológica. *Indigenous women of Ecuador in defence of nature and their territories.*

Context

Large extractive companies bring gifts, tempt and divide society. In reality, what they do is violate their territories, their economy and their women. They supposedly carry out impact assessments, but beforehand they start extracting illegally.

Communities in struggle are criminalised and when they ask for amnesty, the state asks for patience while investigations are carried out. According to the Constitution, these communities have the right to resist and to use their own law in their territories according to indigenous justice. However, the argument that the work of these companies is a good for the state and society is used to establish that not only indigenous communities can decide on the use of their territories.

At the same time, the hegemonic way of life that comes with these companies is having an impact on health and households: domestic abuse is increasing, new illnesses (skin diseases, cancer, AIDS, etc.), food with agrottoxins, and they feel their spirituality is under attack.

In this context, the women of the Amazon live in fear for themselves and their descendants, while suffering because their territories do not produce and their rivers are polluted.

Voices and strategies of resistance

However, it is largely women who are resisting and their goal is to say no to the extractive cement and mining companies, enough of mistreating us and taking away our land, which is our life, soul and heart. They are thinking of the next generations and of nature, which is asking for our help and for us to stop destroying it.

Their organisation brings together women from various cantons of Ecuador.

- They have promoted two popular consultations: one they win and the other they don't because it is manipulated.
- They are accused of sabotage for entering their own land, they are expropriated, threatened with death, sometimes they are imprisoned and die, their children are left alone.
- They have staged sit-ins, asked for hearings and amnesty.
- With Covid, they have learned to manage virtually. They have website and Facebook to show that women are resistance, work and knowledge.
- They want to show that these companies leave very little profit and that they are not the only ones generating employment. Working the land generates more benefit for the country, as it feeds the big cities, so instead of destruction, it generates life and, moreover, with a healthy diet.

QUESTIONS

Moderator: Júlia Martí Comas, representative of the Observatory of Multinationals in Latin America (OMAL)

1. What can we do from here?

- Carry out and disseminate research on the responsibility of companies and banks of the CAE and the State in the situation of peoples and nature in other regions. In this way, we can generate awareness and a movement to denounce and demand accountability.
- With regard to policies and interventions with a negative environmental impact in the Basque Country, it is clear that it is the women themselves and the other inhabitants of the territory who are best placed to know how to act. It is interesting to carry out exchanges, listen to experiences from different latitudes and generate solidarity; from there, we should not limit ourselves to admiring distant struggles without looking at the local ones, but everyone knows their own context, must assume their responsibility and, by collectivising and with creativity, can find the most effective strategies.

2. Are young people joining your struggles?

- Yes, in COPINH (Honduras) respect for all generations is encouraged: children and young people are incorporated into the spaces for debate and decision-making, and so there is a generational change, people aged 18-25 take on leadership and older people are delegating, and at the same time they are accepting that women are leaders. At the national level, a young sector is apathetic, but the student-university movement is strong and is a pole of denunciation.
- In Ecuador there is a school for young indigenous women leaders. They want young people not to hide from discrimination because of their hair, dress, language and wisdom; they want them to feel part of the collective and to learn to defend what is theirs.

KEYS

- The testimonies help to reaffirm that feminist struggles have to be anti-capitalist and for the care of the earth. The land touches us all, we learn from the testimonies and they give us a responsibility to act.
- To put an end to impunity through truth: to identify the actors, name them, judge them, and call the complicit states to account.
- Building the memory of the peoples. Covenants between peoples who see and treat each other as equals. Understanding that we are all in the same place and building harmony, solidarity and accord. Living each other in our diversity of bodies, art, spirituality, territory...
- Recovering listening, orality.







PANEL "Non-normative sexualities and bodies: of moralisms, hate crimes and other phobias."

India: *Suspend judgment! Sex work, sexual and bodily diversity ...and other forms of stigma and marginalization.*

Geetanjali Misra, CREA, an international feminist human rights organisation based in the Global South and led by women from the Global South. *Suspend judgment! Sex workers, sexual and bodily diversity? and other forms of stigma and marginalization.*

Context

Structural exclusion exists in India. Moralism and judgements based on patriarchy, religions and caste systems permeate social norms and practices, establishing what is acceptable and what is not. They lead to those who deviate from the norm in any way (disability, sexual orientation, work, Covid...) being, for example, left out of public services through strict rules of access. Rules that are often said to exist to protect women.

Sex work

It is important to address sex work and trafficking separately and, at the same time, to be aware that sex work is not the only exploitative work (informal waste collection, domestic work...). Why does feminism not seek to eliminate all exploitative work? Is it only prostitutes who need to be rescued and reclaimed?

There is a moralism about prostitution: not all are victims of exploitation, many are prostitutes escaping poverty or violent marriages where they are raped without payment. It is the stigma and criminalisation that are exploitative, not the work itself. With this work, they earn money to take their children to school, but some schools, as well as those who rent flats, do not want this money. When prostitutes have created a powerful organisation, with the capacity to borrow money, they have been criminalised and land and money have been taken away from them.

Moralism also affects the LGBTIQ+ community and youth. There is, for example, a law on child protection that indicates what to wear, lowers the age of consent and prohibits any display of affection/sexual relations between adolescents.

Resistance

Important:

- To make room from art for complicated conversations.
- Lead from the global south.
- Don't protect women, but their rights; keep them outside and with rights, not protect them in their homes.

65 thousand prostitutes are linked to a union of their own. They ask for SSRR&RR, to be able to have an abortion, to be able to have medical care directly when they are adults. There are networks all over India. It is essential that feminists do not abandon them in their demands.

We must challenge the idea that some bodies need more protection, some are more moral than others, that morality is about bodies. From resistance, generate questions and spaces. Need to unlearn. Need to question: How to measure how/how much people's mindsets change, what thoughts build stigma, what would an inclusive agenda look like? Need to learn: putting lesbians, trans people, people with disabilities, people working in prostitution in the same room, what is it like to be each of these things, what is sex/pleasure for each of them?

Estado: *For a feminism of freedom. Against sexual norms, purity and moralism.*

Saúl Castro Fernández, lawyer specialising in human rights, LGTBI rights and strategic litigation. Founder and President of "No Es terapia", the Spanish Association against Conversion Therapies. *Conversion therapies and religious fundamentalisms... not as far away as we think.*

Context

In more than 80 countries, practices/mechanisms/efforts aimed at modifying/nullifying sexual orientations and gender diversity and accommodating them to the prevailing cis-heteropatriarchal canons are carried out. These are measures of repression and control of identities and bodies. They do not have a standard definition and are not comprehensively addressed by states.

They arise from three approaches:

- Medical: sex-gender diversity comes from biological and genetic problems. This approach is becoming less and less strong, it is depathologised (no longer considered a mental illness) and the rejection of one's own sexual identity is considered to stem from internalised homophobia due to stigma or social pressure.
- Psychotherapeutic: sexual-gender diversity derives from emotional wounds, affective-sexual immaturity that prevents people from reaching heterosexual maturity. This current arrives in Spain from the USA through the World Family Congress.
- Faith: sexual-gender diversity is sinful. They do not criticise identity but practices, which is why they promote perpetual abstinence and chastity. They use technical terms - not always recognised - to avoid being openly transphobic and homophobic (ABMS_unwanted same-sex attraction, OCD_obsessive compulsive homosexual disorder), as well as supposedly innocuous therapies.

In the Spanish State, there are 2 types of perpetrators of these practices:

➤ Of religious affiliation:

- Non-profit: "Es posible la esperanza" (they propose an itinerary of personality maturation) and "Verdad y libertad" (a proposal close to Opus and the Neocatechumenal Way). They use the EMDR technique of reprocessing after traumatic events; they force different practices (leaving friendship circles, forced nudity between people of the same gender, hitting images of parents as guilty of their traumas...) and, if this does not work, they refer to psychiatrists who measure libido inhibitors.
- Professional activity as identity coach: they propose an inner exploration of the person in order to heal inner wounds so that their patients stop having unnatural orientations. The sessions are recorded, which then makes it difficult to denounce.

➤ Transgender feminist collectives: they propose treatments for transgender minors, so that they flee their identity and orientation and live with their assigned identity.

Voices and strategies of resistance

Firstly, change the name: do not talk about conversion therapies, because therapy is associated with medical practices and something to be cured, and the word conversion hides the real intention to override gender identity and diversity. They propose the term ECOSIEGE (sexual orientation and gender diversity change efforts), which gives prominence to the doer and not to perpetrators.

On the other hand, they call for the criminalisation of these practices. As a crime, perpetrators would face prosecution. A popular complaint could also be made. At the moment, only 6 Autonomous Communities in Spain sanction these practices, and they do so administratively.

Honduras: *On trans activism in Honduras and its forms of care and resistance.*

Sasha Rodríguez, OPROUCE, a leading organisation in the defence and promotion of the human rights of the LGBTIQ+ community in Honduras. *On trans activism in Honduras and its forms of care and resistance.*

Context

The LGBTIQ+ community in Honduras faces discrimination and violence, especially against lesbians and trans women. The State does not exercise its role as guarantor of rights and protection and neither do the collectives. This can be seen in 4 areas:

- Political: vernacular politics is traditional, macho and heteronormative. They say that the LGBTIQ+, women and territorial communities are enemies of the country's independence. The National Women's Institute does not recognise trans women. There is therefore an institutional death: they do not exist, they are excluded from all opportunities to exist, even to have a religious life,

there is no agenda in public policy, names and identity are not recognised. Death is also physical, with women human rights defenders and trans women persecuted and killed.

- Religious: in theory Honduras is a secular state, but religion is very present and LGBTIQ+ people are considered enemies of god, so churches recommend not to vote for parties with an agenda that includes them.
- Economic: transgender people have fewer job opportunities, which leads them to sex work (where they also face violence and revictimisation, both from clients, security forces and health services) or irregular migration. There is also trafficking of transgender women. Moreover, Covid has led to increased economic hardship, displacement and returns.
- Cultural: trans women in transit and those belonging to indigenous peoples suffer greater discrimination.

Voices and strategies of resistance

Activism faces a lot of persecution and police violence. And it is in this context that you see who really stands for and supports rights and life, who is considered community, who is excluded, what limits it has. "Community saves community."

- They do training for civil servants on LGBTIQ+.
- Organise a shelter for transgender women in transit and indigenous women.
- They share their reality in regional and international spaces to make these people and this violence visible, and to connect with what is happening in different contexts.

In Honduras, feminist groups do not support transgender people because they do not consider them women.

On the other hand, after 14 years of oppression, there is a new president, Xiomara Castro. Is some hope possible?

Estado: *For a feminism of freedom. Against sexual normativities, purities and moralisms.*

Laura Macaya, libertarian and feminist activist, coordinator and co-author of the book "Alianzas rebeldes. A feminism beyond identity".
For a feminism of freedom. Against sexual normativities, purities and moralisms.

Context

The state and institutions are not responding to the hopes of protection and good life placed in them; in some cases, they are even the generators of the greatest discrimination and stigmatisation.

On the other hand, there is concern about certain drifts of feminism that has reached spaces of power and favours political configurations that are at the origin of what is happening, strengthening what is at the basis of our oppression. There are also certain feminisms that reproduce the femininity/masculinity essentialism with respect to those who do not live their sexual identity and orientation from binarism.

At the same time, feminists outside the spaces of power have also failed to connect sufficiently with women and other people who are subjected to various forms of discrimination.

As a result, a feminism of sexual puritanism, sexual punitivism, identity-based and very closed to internal criticism and discussion is growing.

Sexual punitivism has effects on two levels:

- Material effects on populations: increased confinement, sanctions... An instrumentalisation of dissident people's demands is observed to favour the strengthening of a punitive culture and securitarian frameworks. This has a criminogenic effect (it increases criminality), favours censorship, individualises (violence is taken out of the framework of interpretation of structural causes and inequalities, it becomes an interpersonal conflict between bad man/good woman), and the blame is shifted to specific individuals identified in a racist and classist way (more racialised men and poor people locked up). Moreover, this punitive system is selective, as the protection it supposedly guarantees is not real: trans sex workers are assaulted by clients and by police forces (fined, not recognised when they go to file complaints), victims of trafficking who work on the streets are the most fined for using public space, good wives and mothers are more protected by the justice system and less punished...
- Control mechanism/creation of subjectivity: a weak, sexually inappetent, good wife and mother female subject is created. Those with these attributes can be recognised as victims, but if you are a gender victim and, because you are trans, a sex worker, a porn actress, etc., you do not meet this ideal-stereotype, you are not seen or treated the same.

Voices and strategies of resistance

We propose a reflection, diagnoses and collective studies from experience on what is named and experienced as violence, how we understand our bodies and desires. It is not something natural and intrinsic that comes with the body, or belongs to it, but comes from a construction of sexual subjectivity: that we have to do and feel in order to maintain a system.

There is also an analysis of what underlies moralism; its connections to labour exploitation and economic frameworks.

It criticises the pursuit of a securitarian framework marked by fears. And a feminism of sexual freedom is promoted, from a responsible assumption of certain risks within a system with guaranteed rights for all, more frameworks for decision making, negotiation and access to resources for all.

QUESTIONS

Moderator: Aitzole Araneta, sexologist, transfeminist activist and spokesperson for Elkarrekin Podemos-IU-Equo in the Donostia City Council.

1. Does defending sex work support exploitation and pimping?

- Not all prostitution is abusive: some women make choices, they prefer paid sex to cleaning houses or bad working conditions, and they work in the labour market, with intermediation. It is not only selling your body that is dishonourable, other things can be too. Let's avoid making moral assumptions about our bodies and desires: who you can have sex with, if you want to change your body, have sex without love, for money... Why not? Is only sex that reproduces heterosexual, monogamous relationships, with love... Who says it is right or wrong? Are we prepared to think about different kinds of consent?
- Pimping is not the same as trafficking. Sometimes it involves protection. Many women engage in prostitution because they have no other work opportunities and need income; it is not wanted, but it is one more job and does not demerit. Pro-rights positions defend the rights of those who engage in sex work, not those who profit from it. Achieving a better framework of rights and conditions does not favour the industry. In this area, the difference in positions is mainly women against women.

2. If violence is not dealt with punitively, how?

- Civil society already knows that punitive measures do not improve the situation, do not have positive effects on those who go to prison, nor do they put an end to the causes, but they increase this path so as not to question the sovereignty of the state (based on protecting its citizens), because of a tendency to be emotional (not to go to the cause but to show rejection of what has happened) and/or because it is being normalised to function with neoliberal methods of control.
- Feminists also do it because it is the right thing to do (our role: to do something) and/or because it generates an emotion in us (violence and its perpetrators make us hate it).
- Going against the punitive does not mean doing nothing, but thinking about civilisational change and generating measures for the now, the meantime and the future.
 - Street harassment: not using a punitive discourse, but protecting and defending oneself and making non-physical/subtle violence visible.
 - Victim status: making violence visible without being weakened by the term.
 - Denouncing: even if we do not seek to punish, denouncing to ensure that impunity is created and stopped.
 - Judicial system: improve access mechanisms, especially for non-model victims.

3. Is the use of certain terms not discriminatory?

- Movements, collectives and individuals re-appropriate certain words and claim them with pride. If so, we can use them, although in some cases they are terms that only those people want to call themselves by. Fag, whore, commercial workers... it is not the word that is (in)correct, but the context (who, how and at what moment it is used).

KEYS

- An architecture and logic is being created on the normativity of bodies and on the application of a morality and ideology in the institutional, legal and concrete, in a highly interconnected network to defend neoconservative postulates.
- Gender-based violence cannot be solved by criminal law alone. Think collectively about approaches and measures appropriate to different timeframes and contexts (education to transform the sex-gender construction, support for victims-survivors, mediation...).
- Feminism is strengthened when it allows spaces for dialogue and critical reflection on its own morality and solidarity led from the Global South.











CONCLUSIONS

In these VI Meetings we have had the opportunity to learn first-hand about situations and struggles from different continents and peoples; realities of armed conflict, extractivist plundering, coups d'état, democracies, governments with dictatorial tendencies, etc.

We have been able to observe the rise of fundamentalisms at the local and global level, as well as the common elements shared by their various manifestations in terms of: what they focus on, how they express themselves and how they are articulated. It has also reflected on the possibility of their most extreme expressions spreading.

The connivance between neoliberalism and neoconservatism, between the logic and mechanisms of the economic model and the axes and priorities of the cultural model, both of which aim to impose and normalise themselves hegemonically, has also become clear. Both with the need and defence of the heteropatriarchal nuclear family as the cornerstone, with all that this entails: violence, sexual division of labour, women's responsibility for care at the local level and in global care chains, unequal value of roles-functions-places, control of women's sexuality and desire, limitation of SSRR&RR, concealment/discrimination/persecution of diverse sex-gender identities, existence of disposable bodies, people and communities, naturalisation of a Western ideal model, disconnection with territory and nature, and criminalisation of dissidence. Both, therefore, anti-feminist.

Finally, in the Meetings we have exchanged experiences and strategies of resistance from feminism. We have seen the importance of continuing to build a plural feminism, articulated locally and globally, open to internal debate, where the LGBTIQ+ community is part of it. As well as building resistance by weaving horizontal solidarity between peoples and between movements; intergenerational resistance, with the leadership of women and of those bodies and identities that break away from the imposed normativity.

We hope that what we have shared in these meetings will contribute to the exercise of rethinking the politics of equality and resistance to fundamentalism, as well as to re-imagining and continuing to build the transformation we want. All of this from an anti-racist, anti-colonial and feminist perspective.

The text of this report has been prepared by Assumpta Ayerdi Olaizola from Sorginlore Gizarte Elkarte.

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