

PRESENTATION FOR PANEL IN BELGIUM.

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March 8, 2020. A historical mobilization in Mexico.

On March 8, 2020, a historical mobilization took place in Mexico, the first of this magnitude ever recorded in the history of women's struggles and the feminist movement. The streets of multiple cities across the country were massively taken over by a powerful movement that has been building for the past four years.

In 2020 Mexican women burst onto the public stage, diverse, heterogeneous, many of them for the first time attended a march.

The central demands of the movement, with different emphases in the states, were against patriarchal violence and feminicidio, for the decriminalization of abortion and for women's right to decide, against sexual harassment in universities and in the workplace; for the recognition of the work we women do for the reproduction of life; against structural inequality and job insecurity.

Also against dispossession and megaprojects, ecocidal violence; rights and respect for sexogenic diversity; solidarity with anti-patriarchal, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggles and rejection of the National Guard.

It should be noted that the body of demands, expanded in recent years the generalized feeling has a nodal point: access to justice expressed in denunciation against the justice

system and its operators for the historical impunity particularly in cases of femicide and disappearances. Against sexual harassment and harassment. With the impact of the Argentine Marea Verde there has been a revitalization of the struggle, with the new feminist generation for the decriminalization of abortion at the national level.

In the context of the new government: against the capitalist policies of budget cuts, the tone of the denunciation has risen due to the effects on programs, shelters for women victims of violence, Indigenous Women's Houses and many others.

Since 2018, there is a new government in Mexico headed by President Lopez Obrador (AMLO) and his party, which is called Morena. López Obrador's triumph is explained by many years of resistance and struggles against the right-wing and neoliberal governments, represented by the PRI (with 70 continuous years in power) and the PAN, and allies such as the so-called leftist PRD party. Like other so-called "progressive" governments in Latin America, López Obrador's government rhetorically claims to be against neoliberalism, but central aspects of its policies remain neoliberal.

For example, the ecocidal mega-projects such as the so-called Mayan Train in the south of the country and the application of a strong austerity policy that has hit social spending in education, health, culture, but significantly women in cuts to various programs. In the area of public security, the militarization process also continues with the creation of the National Guard.

However, the defeat and collapse of the old political regime represented by the PRI and the PAN has opened a very

strong political polarization between the government and the right-wing parties. The President himself insists on disqualifying any criticism or any independent movement, such as the women's and feminist movements, saying that they are manipulated by the right wing.

Together and organized

Called by different state coordinating bodies, assemblies, collectives that have been formed in recent years, actions were called for March 6, 8 and 9. The last fortnight of February became a flurry of calls for actions; walks, workshops, festivals, assemblies and preparatory meetings, some of them held in public spaces. In all the cities that were joining, in a process that reflected and publicly expressed an organizational process that has been built in recent years.

The year of 2019, the intensity of the movement's activity at the national level was growing and in some cases expanding alliances. A movement that is organized in each state, through networks, diverse agreements, in some cases thematic, which has no national or centralized coordination. The year of 2019, the feminist struggle increased.

A new polarized context

A group of women, Las Brujas del Mar, from the state of Veracruz, called via Twitter for a strike for the 9th. They did it as a particular initiative of that group. From the moment it was disseminated, it generated a confrontational, polemic and politically polarized context, and a strong media coverage.

This generated a lot of confusion for two or three days, especially because its proposal was immediately taken up by right-wing spokespersons and other personalities who joined in. And the media and the networks took off. In cascade, public institutions, first universities and companies joined in, and in these a guideline was generated to grant permits for women who wanted to go on strike. Also in a polarized context, those from the right and political opportunism jumped on board.

On the other hand, public and governmental institutions pronounced themselves positively also granting "permits", and expressing their support to the strike on the 9th. The "ship" was full.

The reactions from the feminist movement, in those weeks focused on the organization of the actions, reacted by pointing out the contradictions that were being expressed and the attacks that were being received; a wealth of disqualifications, misinformation, which created an unprecedented polarization.

We are not political spoils: hypocrisy, opportunism, authoritarianism.

Faced with the opportunism of sectors and voices from the right and party formations, feminist of the different articulations of the movement and through social networks, raised their voices to denounce the opportunism of those who have not defended women's rights, much less have been allies of the feminist struggle.

There is a feminist memory that does not forget the magnitude of the omissions and corruption and depreciation of the lives of women. The militarization in the government of Felipe Calderón under the pretext of the war against drug trafficking led to an increase in femicide. There is no doubt as to the responsibility of the past governments, also promoters of capitalist structural reforms.

We do not forget the thousands of murdered women, those criminalized for having abortions, the disappeared, in their wars against women's bodies.

Autonomy and political independence

The other key and unfortunate element, due to what it implies in that situation, was the response of the executive power, from authoritarianism and disqualification, also from the Morena party and its various allies. Those who reacted defensively by locating a public narrative, pointing out that the call for a women's strike for March 9 was a “black hand” strategy, the work of the right wing.

These polarized positions contributed to discredit the legitimate struggle of the feminist movement. Between the opportunism of the right and coripheans, hypocritically riding the wave of the rise of women, the president's responses, the "accordings" with that discourse, the feminist movement and thousands of women, we were at the epicenter of public controversy and between the political power struggle that has developed in the national context in the last two years.

The movement is very clear about its struggle, its demands

and its demands on the State and capitalist governments. That is why clearly expressed by evidencing the perverse intentions of the various actors in this contest; to mount themselves, and turn the feminist struggle, and the International Women's Strike, into political booty.

Among those who tried to take advantage of women and hit the government and the disqualifying, hostile, authoritarian, delegitimizing responses of those who, many with their mouths full of anti-neoliberalism, added an anti-feminism to it. Which paradoxically was placed on the same platform on the right.

Feminism does not need the permission of anyone, not the president, businessmen, government institutions. The feminist struggle is the horizon where today Mexican women face the patriarchal offensive, because we have become a powerful force that no one can control, that is autonomous, and that is uncomfortable, and that is good. And in the recognition that we are political subjects influencing the change of humanity.

Women mobilized during the pandemic

During the pandemic, reports of gender-based violence against women have increased. The economic measures in the pandemic affected the National Shelter Network, which indicated an increase in requests for assistance. On April 23, the president minimized this increase. Faced with this, a strong protest was raised on social networks and a movement We have Other Data emerged.

During the pandemic, sectors of feminism continued to express themselves through social networks and various symbolic actions as well as various occupations, as was the case of the

National Human Rights Commission and in the congresses of the states of Puebla and Quintana Roo. And various mobilizations for cases of femicide. As well as creating support networks during the pandemic.

Also surprisingly, in the months of August and September we have seen how the State has responded with repression to different feminist mobilizations in the cities of Guanajuato, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico City, Tijuana and others such as in the city of Cancun where police used firearms and in Mexico City a police operation encapsulated women protesters for more than four hours on September 28.

Conclusions

In conclusion, despite the confusing political situation that has been generated with the new government and despite the difficulties for street mobilization due to the pandemic, as well as the hundreds of thousands of people dying from Covid, despite all that the broad women's movement and anti-patriarchal feminism remain at the forefront of the struggles in Mexico.

Other social struggles are coming back, in spite of the pandemic, to the mobilization, but the actions of the women's and feminist movement remain at the forefront. After the gigantic mobilization of March 8 last year, at the beginning of the pandemic there seemed to be a recess due to the first quarantine measures, but this 2021 little by little it has been recovering, as everything points to this March 8, 2021, united again to the global rise.

Certainly, femicide continues as well as the repression of mobilizations.

We are facing a historical reconfiguration of the feminist and broad women's movement, with a new strong presence of an anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal feminism.