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International Women's Day

New rise of women's movement puts women at forefront of fightback

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– The cycle of women's mass mobilizations opened in recent years has kept its dynamic and organized once again an international women's strike this 8 March in more than fifty countries from Argentina, to Italy, from France to the United States, from Brazil to Britain from Iceland to Iran, as well as mobilizations in countless countries on all continents.

– The strike has become a tool for the feminist movement. The women's strike shows not only whose waged work makes the market function, but also shows whose labour and activity - waged or not - makes the society as a whole function and sustains living conditions for all. At a time when informal work, the process of returning paid work to the home through home-working, or the conditions of semi-slavery are generalized, the women's strike makes it possible to organize these invisible and feminized spheres.

The strike in 2018 has deepened its impact since 2017. In 2018, in the Spanish state for example, 5.3 million women, with the backing of 10 unions took part, while in Argentina more than one million took to the streets across the country. In Poland, women organized again in 2018 remembering that their mobilizations in support of women's abortion rights brought the first victory so far achieved against the reactionary Pis government. In Britain, women already taking action in defence of their pension rights or jobs, linked up with the women's strike movement. In Italy the Non Una di Meno movement against violence against women along with trade unions called for a strike that severely hit transport and schools.

The diversity of the demands raised on March 8 continues to grow. In Tunisia, for example, over 1000 women marched to demand equal inheritance rights, whereas in the Philippines women denounced President Duterte as among the worst violators of women's rights while in the Central African Republic women's access to education was the main focus. In Iran, we are sure that protests against compulsory veiling are continuing.

In Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, women carried placards saying 'we march, we do not celebrate'. In Turkey women rallied behind slogans such as "We are not silent, we are not scared, we are not obeying". In Pakistan alongside broad protests against violence instigated by the fundamentalist Talibans, women took the opportunity of March 8 to launch a new socialist-feminist organisation Women Democratic Front (WDF), for democracy and secularism, while in Ireland there was further step towards a new referendum to abolish the anti-abortion provision in the constitution, planned for the end of May.

– The response to the call for the International Women's Strike launched by the Argentine movement in 2017, as well as the Women's Marches around the world, has been the starting point for a new cycle of mobilizations.

A central vector of radicalization in this cycle is the fight against male chauvinist violence that remains unpunished throughout the planet. This had been prepared in previous years. Already in December 2012 we saw gigantic demonstrations in India. On 7 November 2015, 500,000 women mobilized in Madrid; in 2015 in Argentina, hundreds of thousands of women mobilized in response to several murders that made a big impact in that country. The extension of murders and disappearances of women in Mexico marked by drug trafficking to a hitherto unknown level also resulted in strong mobilizations. More recently, the #MeToo phenomenon has highlighted the extent of sexual violence and harassment around the world and of an increasingly collective resistance too it.

– In addition, this new wave has allowed those who were previously relegated and made invisible in the women's movement to take a greater role. Racialized and migrant women, as well as LGBTI + subjects and sex workers, have been an important part of the mobilizations of recent years.

New rise of women's movement puts women at forefront of fightback

- Since last year, the building of women's strikes has made it possible to link sexist violence to the precarity in work and living conditions that most women suffer, but also to denounce the reactionary offensive of capitalism in crisis. The first strikes and mass mobilizations that both Macri (Argentina) and Trump (USA) faced were feminist in nature, notably the massive mobilizations on 21 January 2017 on the occasion of Trump's inauguration, which laid the ground for relaying the call for the women's strike to the USA and beyond.

- This cycle of women's struggles is facing a reactionary offensive in many countries with the rise of neoconservative and fundamentalist currents, as well as increasingly authoritarian forms of neoliberalism and attacks on democratic rights that undermine freedom of expression and protest in more and more places in the world. The political agenda of reaction means challenging fundamental rights: the right to live, financial and social independence from men (fathers, brothers or husbands), reproductive rights such as abortion and reinforcing the role of the family. The capitalist crisis is worsening the living conditions of the majority of women in the world, this is the context of today's fightbacks.

- The role of women at the forefront of social resistance in the last decade shows that it is not a sporadic outbreak, but a potential that covers the entire world and very diverse struggles. The main tasks of revolutionaries are to explore that potential, to be part of the self-organizing experiences of women learning from them; to generate stable links between different struggles and resistances; as well as deepening and maturing the systemic criticism manifested by broad layers of women, giving body to this implicit anti-capitalist dynamic.

- The women's movement and feminist movements this 8 March have shown that there are alternatives to capitalist xenophobic and authoritarian policies – where they build walls of hate, women build bridges of solidarity.

Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

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