

# De/Constructing Internationalism

Feminist practices in conversation

Tuesday 26 May 2020, by [ARRUZZA Cinzia](#), [FURTADO Victoria](#), [KANE Ndèye Fatou](#), [MENON Radhika](#), [WISCHNEWSKI Alex](#), [WOLTER Kerstin](#) (Date first published: 1 May 2020).

**The Coronavirus crisis and, in particular, the governmental measures responding to it are aggravating pre-existing inequalities and oppression. Exposure to danger and access to support is determined by class, race and gender, as well as one's position in the global economy. Feminists continue to organize worldwide to make these problems visible and to increase the attention currently paid to caring work and sustaining life and to use this for progressive initiatives.**

**The contributions collected in this volume have emerged from a debate on feminist expectations of internationalism at the Feminist Futures Festival in September 2019 in Essen, Germany. That debate took place in a context in which feminist movements in different countries of the world were becoming increasingly loud and numerous and were also internationally connected to one other. Is this debate still relevant in the current situation? The answer is clearly yes.**

**The contributions show that even in the past, of so-called normality, feminist struggles never took place without resistance and opposition, and yet movements and networks have developed that are no longer easily destroyed. That is why they continue to work even during this global pandemic. In these times, when the nation state is reappearing as it has not done for a long time and yet does not help many people, numerous feminist movements are exchanging experiences about local practices and are thus also giving impulses, inspiration and strength to more and more feminists. They act both locally and transnationally at the same time - as is repeatedly seen in the characterization of internationalism in the present texts, while, at the same time, deconstructing traditional ideas of what internationalism should look like.**

**In a moment as radically open as the present, the voices collected in this publication give hope and impetus for future debates and initiatives. We can use them!**

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## **Contributions for Thinking About a Feminist International and the International Dimension of Our Feminist Struggles**

*By Victoria Furtado | Uruguay*

In southern Latin America (Argentina, Uruguay and, more recently, Chile), the feminist struggle has shown an extraordinary force and an enormous capacity to expand. For the last three years, March 8, in addition to a day of struggle, has also meant a day of strike, a moment to stop and recover our

time for ourselves.

## **What Does a Feminist International Look Like?**

By *Ndèye Fatou Kane* | Senegal

To talk about transnational or international feminist solidarity, the most important prerequisite for me is to contextualize. Before I try to understand the feminist perspectives of other countries, I must try and comprehend that of my own. In some countries, women have achieved high levels of freedom and the word is free, but in my country everything just falls in line. In line with Victoria Furtado's argument about different temporal arrangements (p.9), we must allow ourselves time to reclaim these feminist issues, to reclaim freedom before we can fully consider feminism and think about international solidarity.

## **United in Diversity - The International Feminist Movement**

By *Kerstin Wolter* | Germany

Practices of feminist resistance - from #MeToo to the feminist strike to the performance *Un violador en tu camino* (A Rapist in Your Path) - are now increasingly spreading at the transnational level. These actions are directed against the consequences of neoliberal policies for the reproductive sector, against gender-based violence and feminicides, and against right-wing or fascist rulers, or demanding the right of self-determination over one's own body. They are part of a global increase in class struggle. The reasons for their transnationalization lie, as Cinzia Arruzza also indicates (p.25), in the rapid spread of videos, images, and stories via social media and in the growing awareness of shared experiences, needs, and desires. This common ground gives the feeling of belonging to a worldwide movement, even if the structures in one's own country are still weak. Feminist resistance movements worldwide send impulses and inspiration. But the current mobilizing power of the protests is the result of a self-reinforcing interplay of contextual factors and an increasingly dense global network of feminist movements.

## **Across Borders, Against Borders: Why We Need a Transnational Feminist Movement**

By *Cinzia Arruzza* | USA

Originating in Poland and Argentina in October 2016, the feminist strike movement has continued to mobilize millions of people around the globe for the past three and a half years, organizing three consecutive feminist strikes on International Women's Day, as well as transnational days of mobilization against gender-based violence and international festivals and gatherings. This transnational dimension has been a constitutive feature of the movement and is key to understanding the conditions that made its growth and mass appeal possible.

## **Shrinking Democratic Spaces in India and the Need for International Feminist Solidarity**

By *Radhika Menon* | India

It is difficult to situate the women's movement and the struggle for rights in India, without understanding its deep connection with the condition of democracy in the country. Democracy is in a state of ill health and facing an unprecedented challenge today, following the electoral foisting to power of a government, whose commitment to democracy is far less than its commitment to the establishment of a political-religious Hindutava state. Right wing populism and authoritarianism were the chosen horses for riding to power, but following achievement of power, political hegemony has been established through fascist mob justice as well as electoral maneuvering. The result has

been a steady erosion of democratic structures and processes within the country. It must, however, be emphasized that India has reached this stage after nearly three decades of neoliberalism. Since 2011, following the global crisis of capital the descent has been steady. Policies of globalization, liberalization, and privatization washed away the social safety net elements of the Indian state, leaving people and mostly women extremely vulnerable to shocks. Growing unemployment, agrarian crisis, and low growth rates have limited the opportunities for large masses of people and the malaise has taken the form of farmer suicides and the targeting of vulnerable communities in resource fights. Politically, the centrist and regional ruling class parties have been discredited as they have not been able to offer any credible alternatives to the distress. On the other hand, the uncertainties and anxieties have been mobilized by right wing organizations to widen the historical inequalities based on caste, prejudice, and religious communal divides. In 2014, the capture of national political space was complete with the formation of a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

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