

# Critical Times / The Earth Trembles

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Translated by Ramsey McGlazer

How long does a tremor last? It's not a moment but a movement, we could say, in the words of Black Lives Matter. On March 8, we felt the earth tremble beneath our feet. During the preceding days, we acted with the certainty that what we did, or what we left undone, was decisive: we organized assemblies, went to small meetings here and there, had conversations, wrote, listened, fought with one another, conspired, and fantasized. We even dreamed at night about what had yet to be done to prepare for the days to come. Comrades in various places throughout the world did similar things at the same time. We were connected by words, signs, and intuitions, and also by gestures that we didn't even know had been residing in us. We were magnetized by a strange, shared sense of fury and complicity, of power and urgency. But above all we were blown away by the surprise of the event's vast and effective organization.

We worked together, connected by images that accumulated like watchwords, passing from the streets into social networks and from the networks into our retinas, forming a transnational, multilingual imagination. During those days, we created a new internationalism. For many of us, life changed, was divided into a before and an after.

We decided collectively to appropriate the tool of the strike. This tool allowed us to link machista violence to the political, economic, and social violence that results from the complex but fundamental logic of current forms of exploitation, which are making women's bodies into new territories to conquer. Speaking of a strike enabled us to approach violence in a new way, to locate violence in imploded households and in lands devastated by agribusiness, in wage gaps and in forms of domestic work rendered invisible, in the prominence of women's popular economies in efforts to confront crisis. We also located violence in the financial exploitation of private and public indebtedness and in the attempts to discipline our disobedience through overt state repression or the persecution of migrants. We saw violence in the way in which the poorest women are imprisoned and subsistence economies are criminalized, as are abortions.

At the same time, though, we forced that classic tool of the labor movement to change, to be reconfigured, re-conceptualized, and reutilized to confront realities of life and work that exceeded the limits of trade-union activism (with its economy of visibility, legitimacy, and recognition). We took precarity to be a shared condition, but one differentially distributed along classist, sexist, and

racist lines. This way of understanding violence as a network of forms of exploitation deployed by contemporary capitalism allowed us to make feminism into a mode of organization, a practice of alliances, and a diffuse language that was truly transversal and expansive.

We shouted, ¡Ni Una Menos, Vivas Nos Queremos! (Not One Woman Less, We Want to Stay Alive!), and we heard this common shout resound in houses and neighborhoods, in assemblies and streets, in schools and workplaces, in markets and power stations, on social networks and in trade unions. We formed a collective body and connected ourselves with the body of the land, in the words of the feminists of Abya Yala.<sup>1</sup> From their position on the front lines of neo-extractivist projects and efforts to extend the frontiers of agribusiness, they remember other temporalities of struggle.

Today, with them, the earth continues to tremble, because right now they are defending the earth in the Bolivian Amazon, confronting the incursions, recently approved by that country's parliament, that will lead to the liquidation of the Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory. The tremor continues with the fighters in Rojava as well.

The movement has words, but it is not made up only of words, as if they floated here and there, gathering meanings. As if they were magic words. A sound of vibrations, not the sound of words, was what brought together the massive, vibrating collective body under the rain when we organized the first national women's strike on October 19, 2016. It was the kind of cry that's made by a blow to the mouth. A howl from a herd. With a warrior disposition. In a conspiracy of pain. In a quagmire that disorganizes the body and moves it. A cry at once very old and brand new, connected to a way of breathing.

The October 19 strike was the first women's strike in Argentina's history, although it quickly ceased to be solely national. We brought the country to a stop during one hour, when we all coordinated, but we did so throughout the day as well, in a thousand different and interconnected ways. We made time tremble. Throughout the day we avoided doing anything that wasn't organizing ourselves in order to be together. Through our practice of overflow (of excess), we realized that, in various places in the world, thousands of women were knit together by the need for mobilization, the need to escape from the confinement into which we were forced by private mourning. That day, we mourned the murder of the young Lucía Pérez, a murder that relied on colonial methods. Raped and impaled to death, during the same days when seventy thousands of us met for the National Meeting of Women in Rosario, forming a surge for the largest gathering in that convention's thirty-one year history in Argentina. In response to the rage that flooded the social networks when we heard the news, we said, "see you at the meeting." And there the idea and force of the strike emerged. We rebelled in an effort to overcome terror and paralysis, faced with a crime that sought to be exemplary and instructive. We refused to keep our lament merely virtual.

It was apparently unreasonable to expect that this kind of collective refusal could be organized in just one week—irrational, from the point of view of many who were not at the meeting. At the meeting, though, it became possible to perceive it as entirely possible and realistic. The meeting created another kind of rationality and organized a form of decision and several ways of setting it to work. To call for a strike, one year after the rise of Mauricio Macri's neoliberal government, was a gesture that had no "organized" political force until that moment. And yes, as we sang in the Plaza de Mayo, "Yes, we can, the first strike against Macri was made by us women." That day, we felt proud

that the images of union leaders negotiating the terms of obedience and adjustment made us laugh. While the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT), or General Confederation of Labor, took tea with the government, we were taking to the streets. We felt proud of that crowded tide of bodies that returned us to our places marked by the vivid tattoo of collective enthusiasm. We felt proud of how friends, strangers, mothers, daughters, trans women recounted among themselves scenes of everyday disregard, shared the gossip of the revolt, the anonymous murmurs of the day we stopped the world and found ourselves together, among ourselves. But that was just the first, the day that began, as we said then, our revolutionary October. It was the day that led us to decide to launch a call for an international women's strike on March 8, 2017.

So the strike began to be amassed, voiced, debated, and, above all, built in a series of several spaces, in different keys, in gatherings that allowed the strike to be accommodated and enlarged as it came into contact with heterogeneous realities, with geographies that were far from one another but came to overlap in zones of conflict that were not reducible to the limits of nation-states. We began to pose the questions that would let us make the strike a tool that would not shore up the boundaries and exclusions separating those who can consider themselves workers from the point of view of formal, salaried, and unionized employment: What does it mean to make the strike an apt means for informal workers and the members of cooperatives? How can domestic and care workers strike, and what of those who cannot take a break from work? How is it that unions feel at once challenged and revitalized by this interpellation from the women's movement? Why is the strike a means by which to repudiate the various forms of exploitation in our times? How can the strike become a means of politicizing precarities? How can we account for the multiple realities that are indispensable for mapping the world of work in a feminist key?

The meetings proliferated. They became occasions for the elaboration of a concrete critique of neoliberalism, a practice that began with the production of new, unfamiliar alliances. Meetings took place in union halls and internal committees, in neighborhoods, in factories and offices, in clinics and the headquarters of social movements, in schools and public squares. In that collective space, words cannot be detached from the body.

Where to speak is to gesticulate, breathe, transpire, and feel that words slide and stick to others' bodies. Far from being organized only virtually or through calls on social media, the strike came together through the framework of the meeting, through its obstinate repetitions and its different scales, which remind us of the hard work of the face to face and the body to body, of permanent conflict, of the lived effort to map divergent experiences, concrete and unyielding dissidences. Such a way of sharing space, of listening patiently to others' interventions, and, finally, of sustaining the tension that continuously produces innovative thought without necessarily being productive of consensus—all of this shows that heterogeneity is not only a matter of discourse.

Being assembled in a meeting, in a laborious form of being with others, removes us from a passive or cynical relation to the cruelty that machista violence crushingly imposes even while it constitutes an everyday landscape. Being assembled in this way also displaces us from our victimized mode of suffering the adjustments that make our lives precarious, that seek to make them austere and miserable and to enclose us in a gendered ghetto where sufferings and reparations are codified. Because this was what the strike sought: an exit from the victimization and state of permanent

mourning to which they want us to submit.

The meeting weaves a time between one event on the street and another. We said this on October 19 and we again put it into practice for March 8: amplifying and redefining the strike, we were insisting on the inextricable links between femicidal violence and its economical and political contexts. This makes the strike a tool of refusal rather than negotiation. It makes us alert as well to “light” or depoliticized uses of the strike, which seek to empty it of its political purpose and turn the women’s movement into a multi-use but inoffensive umbrella, or to turn the strike into a merely symbolic performance.

We have already seen this with the securitarian response to the femicides. That is, we have seen an attempt by the media and institutions to address machista violence as if it were an issue of the citizenry’s insecurity, one that could be resolved with a mere increase in repressive measures. We have also seen that some have sought to render the strike banal, to dilute it, to deprive it of its concrete force as a blockade, a means of contestation and challenge, and instead show that it is merely a “symbolic” action.

The strike’s force as a means of struggle derives precisely from its capacity to connect labor, the political, the vital, and the economic in ways that make it a new site of international solidarity. It leads to a massive, street feminism, capable of linking territorial struggles, local complaints, and desires for a new life, elaborated at the margins of mourning and in the joyful abyss where we discover a common force.

To what extent is the world of union organizing prepared to give space to this resignification of the strike? What is interesting is that the strike has led to a turning point within many unions. Many of our female comrades do not hesitate to note this: for those who entered into the labor struggle recently, there is no contradiction between labor militancy and the women’s movement. Rather, the joint struggle is lived as an experience of convergence. From the point of view of the high-ranking labor leadership, the situation is more complicated: some were overheard saying in forceful tones of voice that only unions can legitimately call for a strike. Legitimacy thus expressed is like a barbed wire fence. This is no minor issue: the union call would effectively guarantee the conditions for thousands of workers to strike without feeling that they would risk their employment in the process. As the women workers taking part in the popular economy said on the last Wednesday of February,<sup>2</sup> under the sun, in an assembly that occupied the center of the city: “This protest is for us the announcement of a conflagration, because in a moment that is so difficult for our people, we women are the first to lose our jobs, because we struggle to bring bread to every meal. We struggle to reproduce life.” In that meeting there were many women who had participated in various movements for the unemployed around 2001. Even more striking, though, was the presence of a new generation: the daughters of the *piqueteras*.<sup>3</sup> These young women had been five or seven years old when their mothers attended the meetings of the unemployed, and now they participate in the movements connected to the popular economy, movements that are in fact traceable to those earlier struggles. If women were central to that earlier moment of organizing, today they engage in a type of politicization that is explicitly recognized as feminist.

The March 8 strike was constructed in many languages, and it made space for many claims. In Paraguay, to strike meant, for many women, to protest against the poisoning of entire communities

by agricultural toxins. In Colombia, there is an intense debate on the role that the campaign against the “threat of gender” played in securing the victory of the “no” vote in the referendum on the peace accords. In Honduras and Guatemala, the strike proved to be a powerful means of protesting against the killing of the female leaders of communities. We received a note from the women of the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), who made our call theirs and signed #NosMueveElDeseo (Desire Moves Us) in order to say that they were striking in the jungle as well. In Brazil, supporters of the strike emphasized the advances of churches in their struggles against those fighting for women’s bodily autonomy. The strike thus at once exceeded and integrated the issue of labor. It did not set this issue aside, but at the same time it redefined and updated it. The strike multiplied the question of labor, made it multiple, without diluting its historical density.

The mobilizations of March 8 also integrated and exceeded individual demands. The strike integrated these demands, because we did not underestimate the importance of concrete claims, arising from the situated investigations of different collectives, relating to policies, laws, necessary modifications to institutions, or other specific grievances. And the strike exceeded these demands because the coming-together of bodies in the street allowed us to stop to give ourselves time to imagine how we want to live and to affirm that we want to change everything. But these two movements, integrating and exceeding, were not experienced as opposites: it was not a matter of choosing between reform and revolution. There was instead a simultaneity of temporalities that could not be disjoined.

This is what allows for a radical critique of neoliberalism. Because this critique involves a concrete and categorical rejection of the multiple dispossessions and the new forms of exploitation with which capital advances into our lives. It also enables a discussion of the ways in which we think about the provision of care, resources held in common, and infrastructures for everyday reproduction. The mass feminist movement is a response to philanthropic and paternalist efforts to redress precarity by imposing conservative and reactionary forms of subjectivation, fueled by fear.

For what is the expansive, popular, communitarian, street feminism that managed to cross the frontiers of a language accessible to only a few, to become a common code or shared language that could be used to express the malaise and aspirations of so many women? It is a form of feminism that was made newly massive, inclusive, and radicalized. And one that took as its point of departure an experience that connected us: the experience of the different kinds of violence that we began to confront in a way that would let us escape the logic of victimization.

What this experience of assemblies and strikes tells us, as feminists gathered along multiple axes, is that the category of “woman” has ceased to be an identity that can be related to others in the terms of identity. It has been opened to tactics of flight and to experiments with subjectivation that have a concrete materiality: the new and unfamiliar alliances that we forged together. It is precisely these alliances that reveal to us our previously unknown force, from which we take courage with others and by which we are moved to previously unknown undertakings. And it is in the name of that strange common utility that we appropriated time and space against capital. #NosotrasParamos (We Strike) produced this displacement, this force of movement beyond the borders of the “multicultural” differences whose entry onto the scene coincided with the processes of

neoliberalization that took place in the 1990s. All of this involves patient and difficult elaboration. But the meetings that reinvigorated the everyday activities of many organizations—labor, political, educational, neighborhood, community, cultural, and other organizations—have already produced new images of counter-power, of a popular sovereignty that challenges faith in the state, of insurgencies that have renewed the dynamics of decision and autonomy, and of self-defense and collective force.

These are intermittent and fragile moments, but inasmuch as they are persistent and capable of producing new forms of embodiment and power, we can say that they are not only moments, but a movement. They thus put into practice a question that today is posed not only in high theory and philosophy: what does it mean to act together when the conditions for doing so have been devastated?

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The selection of texts for this dossier from the Ni Una Menos collective seeks to recount the events that began with the strike on October 19. The first text is called “We Strike”: an urgent text that arose with the spirit of assembly. After we saw the impact and sensed the international resonances of that piece, we wrote “The Feminist International” as part of a reappropriation of November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, when we launched the first call for an international women’s strike on March 8. We then issued the “Call to the March 8 Strike,” which was translated into many languages and made into a video featuring the voices of countless comrades from many parts of the world. We include here as well a text that we wrote as a kind of genealogy of the making of the strike and a manifesto called “We Want To Be Debt Free,” written for an action that took place in front of the Banco Central de la República Argentina, or Central Bank of the Argentine Republic, on June 2. This action sought to address how finance capital affects the everyday lives of women especially, and to show why it is a fundamental feature of current forms of machista violence. We have added, as well, a chronicle on a recent meeting organized by Ni Una Menos and other feminist collectives in the South of Argentina, in response to the criminalization of the struggle to defend Mapuche lands.

We then present a text by Rita Segato, an Argentinean anthropologist and key interlocutor for our movement. Her theoretical orientation and her Latin American perspective are crucial for understanding the religious offensive that currently denounces “the ideology of gender”; this she sees as a reactionary response to the feminist movement. Segato also helps us to understand how a “pedagogy of cruelty” has developed and taken the form of a widespread counterinsurgency.

### **About the Author**

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## Notes

- 1 An indigenous name for America, used before the continent's colonial renaming. Today this phrase refers to a collective active in Buenos Aires, gathering comrades from throughout the region. But it is also an expression used more broadly in indigenous, popular, and communitarian feminist spaces.
- 2 These are women workers "without bosses," whose work includes various activities; this group is made up of *cartonerxs* and construction workers, vendors and nannies, cooks and public health officials, cleaners and small agricultural producers, and others.
- 3 The *piqueteras* were the women who led the movements of unemployed workers at the beginning of this century in Argentina; their tool of protest was the picket line on highways and roads, which had the capacity to blockade entire cities.

# We Strike

## Ni Una Menos

October 19, 2016

Translated by Ramsey McGlazer

**I. We strike.** While the 31st National Meeting of Women was taking place, they raped and murdered Lucía in Mar del Plata. A year before, we had been suppressed, just as we were this year in Rosario. We strike against those who want to stop us. So that they do not stop us with their criminal pedagogy. To create a pedagogy ourselves, because together we will build a society without machismo. Because freedom implies the definitive dismantling of the patriarchy. We strike. Because we are hurt and indignant that this October alone there have already been nineteen women killed. We strike because in order to stop femicidal violence, we need to act together on the basis of the autonomy of our decisions, and this is not possible as long as abortion is not legal, safe, and free for all women. As long as economic conditions continue to reproduce machista violence, because our work days are two hours longer than men's, because care and reproductive work fall to us, and they are not valued on the market. Because unemployment increases two points when women are taken into account, and because the pay gap is, on average, twenty-seven percent. That is, for the same work, we earn much less than our male comrades. In a context of austerity, enormous rate hikes for public utilities, growing poverty, and the shrinkage of the state, as proposed by the Alianza Cambiemos government, we bear the worst of these changes. Poverty has a feminine face, and being inside this circle of violence restricts our freedom to say no.

**II. We strike.** We strike against the bullets that seek to put a stop to our force. A force that grows through meetings, mobilizations, debates. A feminist force, a force of women. We strike against the disciplining of all women, which leads to Milagro Sala's being imprisoned for being a woman, for being indigenous, for having organized, for having demanded not only basic rights, but also every man's and woman's right to recreation and celebration. Against the detention and the irregular judicial process that keeps Reina Maraz, a Quechua-speaking migrant, hostage, condemned by a misogynist and colonial justice system to perpetual imprisonment. We strike against the conditions that, time and again, make women's prisons into spaces that amplify classist and racist hierarchies. Against the ways in which, in neighborhoods like Bajo Flores, teenagers are stalked and disappeared for days, after being threatened and blackmailed, but also against the way in which these neighborhoods become ever more asphyxiating as they are taken over by networks of illegal economies that enable new and more brutal forms of violence. Against the retrograde politics that opens a new detention center for migrants, in a clear step backward from current legislation. We strike in order to take initiative. To show our capacity to react to a war on women that is being



written day by day. We mobilize and defend ourselves. When they touch one of us, all of us respond.

**For this reason, today, October 19, 2016, we strike. #NosotrasParamos.**

We are housewives, workers in the formal and informal economies, teachers, workers in cooperatives, academics, laborers, the unemployed, journalists, militants, artists, mothers, daughters, domestic workers. We are the women you run into on the street, who leave their houses, who are in the neighborhood, who went to a party, who have a meeting to attend, who go out alone or accompanied, who decided to have an abortion, who decided not to, who decided how and with whom to live our sexuality. We are women, trans women, *travestis*, and lesbians. We are many, and from the fear that they want to impose on us and the fury that they incite with violence, we make sound, mobilizations, and the common cry: *¡Ni Una Menos! ¡Vivas nos queremos!* Not One Woman Less! We Want to Stay Alive!

**III. We strike.** We strike against the femicides that are the high point in a scheme of violence, that lay bare the exploitation, cruelties, and hatred of all forms of feminine autonomy and vitality, the view that our bodies are things to be used and discarded, to be broken and pillaged. The rape and femicide of Lucía Pérez show a stance against women's autonomy, against our capacity for decision, action, choice, and desire. Lucía was treated as a thing that should be given all the abuse it could bear. In an attempt to cover up the truth, she was left in an emergency room so that her death would seem like the result of an overdose. They raped and killed her in Mar del Plata hours before the suppression of the final march at the National Meeting of Women in Rosario. The meeting was transversal and creative, and it mobilized diverse identities and sensibilities under forms of organization that were also diverse: political, artistic, neighborhood, union, and other collectives all participated. All were supremely political, because politics is the insistent struggle for the invention of freedoms, for the construction of communities and the extension of rights. Like all femicides, Lucía's murder sought to discipline women and all people who rebel against the roles that this society defends at all costs: you will be what is supposedly normal or you will be nothing. And you will not be able to say NO because the cost of saying no will be, at worst, death. From one form of bondage to another. From one type of exploitation to others that are even more grueling. Among women under thirty years of age, unemployment is at twenty-two percent. This shows the precarity of our lives. Women become whores or are incarcerated. Trans women and *travestis* are suppressed daily in the streets while their right to join the labor force cannot be assured, and prostitution thus continues to be imposed as their only destiny. They are abused by their parents or beaten by police. We are living in a hunting season. And neoliberalism proves its power over our bodies. In each city and in every corner of the world. We are not safe.

**IV. We strike.** Because all the economic variables give an account of machista violence. Femicides are the result of a series of forms of economic and social violence, of pedagogies of cruelty, of a culture of victim blaming that permits, justifies, and underwrites the killing of women. They are not a matter of security or insecurity. The fight against these forms of violence requires multiple responses. It involves all of us, men and women, but we know that the powers of the state and its instantiations (national, provincial, and municipal) will only be made to act under social pressure, applied from below. For

this reason, we are here today, throughout the country and in various other countries, to say together: #NiUnaMenos, #VivasNosQueremos (Not One Woman Less, We Want to Stay Alive). How can we create another possible world if the means leading to this kind of transformation, like the Programa Nacional de Educación Sexual Integral (Program for Comprehensive Sex Education), are dismantled piecemeal, or simply not implemented in some provinces? How dare they compare graffiti written on a wall with the assassination and torture of a young girl? How can they demand patience when we earn twenty-seven percent less than men who do the same job? How can they ask us to care for ourselves if at the same time the media tell us that those who go out alone and wake up dead are to blame? How can they ask us to be patient if they take away retirement for housewives and do not take seriously the work it takes to care for a family? Yes, work. We perform seventy-six percent of all unremunerated work. How dare they say to us that none of this is all that serious when they take away from thousands of us our capacity for economic autonomy, when they throw us out of our jobs, when they cut our salaries, when they threaten us with less and less representation? How can they tell us to have hope when we die from abortions gone wrong or they imprison us if we go to the hospital seeking an abortion by choice? We could continue. No one wants to be the one to respond to these questions. Still less do they want to think of responses that include us not only as victims, dead women, or mere things, but as actors with our own voice. But we do want to insist, demand, ask, respond—because we no longer want to be victims at all. For this reason #NosotrasParamos. And this demand has become regional: Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador. **Throughout Latin America, women accompany one another, because all of Latin America will be feminist. Against femicides and against the precarization of our lives.**

**¡Ni Una Menos! ¡Vivas nos queremos! Not One Woman Less! We Want to Stay Alive!**

# The Feminist International

## Ni Una Menos

November 25, 2016

Translated by Verónica Carchedi

On November 25 we, as women, reclaim our time; we stop doing what we are required to do and do what we want. To meet, think together, speak out, occupy the streets and city squares, to appropriate public space for our ourselves and convert it into a space of hospitality and open circulation. We will work to realize our anti-patriarchal utopia. To invoke fear, to make our claims visible, and actualize our power in every territory. To create links of solidarity, webs of self-protection and care among ourselves. We find in the other woman not a rival, as the patriarchy postulates, but instead a partner: we become accomplices in an unprecedented revolutionary alliance.

We organize, and because of this November 25 will find us, here and around the world, united in a multiplicity of organizing forms: popular assemblies, radio broadcasts, public denunciations, open classes, strikes in workplaces, and urban interventions.

We organize, and our organization is global. On November 25, we will converge in a mobilization that reaches from Juárez to Moscow, from Guayaquil to Belfast, from Buenos Aires to Seoul. This articulation strengthened by the women's strike, which began our own revolutionary October, projects outward toward the international strike of all women next March. We cross languages and borders just as we do as women migrants, challenging the criminalization of our movements. The rebellion emerges: against violence, against the feminization of poverty, against racism, against the lack of political representation, against efforts to confine women and girls to domestic isolation, against religious dogmas that appropriate our bodies and our lives, against maternity as a mandate and the criminalization of abortion, against the new forms of capitalist exploitation and against the precarization of existence. Against the endless plundering: because neither the earth nor our bodies are territories to be conquered.

All over the world, we organize with a common shout: #NiUnaMenos #VivasNosQueremos #NosMueveElDeseo.

# Call to the International Women's Strike – March 8, 2017

## **Ni Una Menos**

January 23, 2017

Translated by Verónica Carchedi

This March 8, the earth will tremble. The women of the world unite and organize a demonstration of force and a common call: the International Women's Strike. We strike. We organize, and we find ourselves in one another. We enact the world we want to live in.

### **#NosotrasParamos**

We strike to denounce:

the fact that capital exploits our informal, precarious, and intermittent economies;

the fact that nation-states and the market exploit us when they indebt us;

the fact that states criminalize our migratory movements;

the fact that we earn less than men and that the salary gap reaches, on average, twenty-seven percent;

the fact that it goes unrecognized that domestic and caregiving labor is unpaid work and adds three extra hours to our workday;

the fact that this economic violence increases our vulnerability in the face of machista violence, whose most abhorrent extreme is femicide.

We strike to reclaim the right to free abortion so that no girl is ever forced into motherhood.

We strike to make it visible that until the responsibility for care work is shared by all of society, we will be forced to reproduce classist and colonial exploitation among women: to go out to work, we must rely on other women; to migrate, we must depend on other women.

We strike to value the invisible work that we do, work that creates networks, support, and vital strategies in difficult contexts and in the midst of crises.

### **#NoEstamosTodas**

We strike because we are missing the victims of femicide, whose voices are violently extinguished at the chilling rate of one per day in Argentina alone.

We are missing the lesbians and trans people murdered in hate crimes.

We are missing the political prisoners, the persecuted, those murdered in Latin America for defending the earth and her resources.

We are missing the women who are incarcerated for minor crimes that criminalize forms of

survival, while the major crimes committed by corporations and narco-traffickers remain unpunished because they benefit capital.

We are missing those who have died and are incarcerated for illegal abortions.

In the face of the homes that turn into hells, we organize to defend ourselves and care for ourselves. In the face of machista crime and its pedagogy of cruelty, in the face of the media's attempts to victimize and terrorize us, we turn individual mourning into collective solace and the rage of shared struggle. In the face of cruelty, we call for more feminism.

### **#NosotrasNosOrganizamos**

We appropriate the tool of the strike because our demands are urgent. We make the women's strike an amplified and updated means, capable of sheltering the employed and the unemployed, the salaried and those who collect benefits, freelancers and students, because we are all workers. We strike for ourselves.

We organize against domestic confinement, against obligatory motherhood, and against competition among women, all of which are forms imposed by the market and the patriarchal family model.

We organize everywhere: in our homes, in the streets, in the workplace, in schools, in markets, in neighborhoods. The strength of our movement lies in the links we make with each other.

We organize to change everything.

### **#LaInternacionalFeminista**

We create a new internationalism, one based on the concrete circumstances in which we exist, the ways in which we interpret our situation.

We see that, against the neo-conservative turn in the region and in the world, the women's movement emerges as an alternative force.

We also see that the new "witch hunt" that now pursues what is called the "ideology of gender" tries to combat and neutralize our force and break our will.

In the face of the many types of dispossession, expropriation, and the contemporary wars that regard the earth and women's bodies as territories to be conquered, we form a body together politically and spiritually.

### **#NosMueveElDeseo**

Because #VivasYLibresNosQueremos, because we want to stay alive and be free, we risk our lives in unprecedented alliances. Because we appropriate time and we create space for ourselves, we turn being together into a relief and conversation among allies. We make demonstrations out of assemblies, celebrations out of demonstrations, and our common future out of celebrations. Because #EstamosParaNosotras, because we are here for each other, this March 8 will be the first day of our new lives.

Because #NosMueveElDeseo, because desire moves us, 2017 is the time of our new revolution.

#NiUnaMenos #VivasNosQueremos

## How Was the International Women’s Strike Woven Together?

### Ni Una Menos

February 15, 2017

Translated by Liz Mason-Deese

Last October 19, the call for a women’s strike to protest the femicide of sixteen-year-old Lucía Pérez, who was stabbed to death, connected male violence with forms of labor, economic, social, and territorial violence and precarization, and denounced them as a new “pedagogy of cruelty” practiced on women’s bodies (in a scene with undeniable colonial echoes).

That femicide occurred the day after the 31<sup>st</sup> National Women’s Meeting in Rosario, Argentina, in which 70,000 women participated and, in a closing march, occupied forty street blocks. The meeting only appeared in the press because it was repressed at the end. At the beginning of that same month, women in Poland convoked a national strike rejecting the changes that were being imposed in local legislation to further restrict access to legal abortion.

Following the October 19 Women’s Strike and the formation of alliances of women from different parts of the world, the call emerged for an International Women’s Strike on March 8.

The precursors to the massive demonstrations against femicides under the rallying cry Ni Una Menos, or Not One Less (#NiUnaMenos), which took place on June 3, 2015 and 2016 in Argentina, had demonstrated a strong mobilizing power. And over the last year, a network of coordination between different Latin American countries was already being woven.

The October 19 Strike was the first women’s strike in the history of Argentina and Latin America. A strike was called for one hour, in all possible spaces: workplaces, educational spaces, domestic spaces, neighborhood ones, etc. The following mobilization was truly enormous: more than 250,000 people participated in Buenos Aires alone, and more marches took place all over the country.. Latin America was rapidly connected through the strike call.

Using the tool of the strike allowed for highlighting the economic fabric of patriarchal violence. And it was also an enormous demonstration of power because we removed ourselves from the place of the victim to position ourselves as political subjects and producers of value. We complicated the category of “women workers” and made it clear that work is also domestic and informal and includes forms of self-managed association. As the slogan Ni Una Menos had already been taken up in various Latin American countries, the October 19 mobilizations were quickly replicated in connection with the Argentinean call and the demands of each country against patriarchal violence.

Taking advantage of another appointment on the women’s calendar—the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women—the organization of assemblies, acts, and

mobilizations for November 25 accelerated the work of transversal connection between many countries, exceeding the usual initiatives on that date.

A new geography was drawn going from Ciudad Juárez to Moscow, from Guayaquil to Warsaw and Sao Paulo, from Rome to San Salvador de Jujuy. The local and global fabric produced a new type of internationalism that was seen in the networks and in the streets—a new practice of feminist internationalism.

An initiative is being coordinated through Facebook—the *Paro Internacional de Mujeres* (PIM) or International Women’s Strike—by a group of women in Poland, who have been joined by activists from various countries in Europe and other regions of the world. In addition to posting information on its webpage, the Facebook group is also circulating a petition to the United Nations and a manifesto.

On January 23, Ni Una Menos launched its own call, with contents different from the petition to the United Nations and the PIM manifesto. We understand that the manifesto has to be nourished by concrete situations and struggles, and linked to the construction of a dynamic that demands systemic changes and combats the dominant neoliberal, neoconservative, racist, and patriarchal model. We believe that we are in a process of accumulation of a new type, where struggles resonate and work by gaining strength from intersectionality.

The Women’s March in the United States on January 21 is part of this cycle that demonstrates a new form of feminism: the overlapping movements of women, trans people, and migrants refuse to remain subjected to the empire of new forms of capitalist exploitation. Following that march, there is now a call from the organizers to join the March 8 strike.

We are committed not only to virtual coordination, but also to patiently weaving a new fabric, body-to-body and in the streets. We open up dialogues and work every day to construct networks with all the countries of Latin America and with other parts of the world.

On February 3, in an open and heterogeneous assembly, all the currents of the women’s movement in Argentina agreed on a call to labor unions to support the women’s strike initiative. Appealing precisely to an interpellation of the question of work, and doing so in a feminist key, we are not only talking about waged and formal workers, but also inscribing our critique, our demands, and our strike in a framework that fully challenges the precarization of our lives and the criminalization of our autonomy.

We believe that the multiplicity of calls for the March 8 International Women’s Strike becomes powerful when it highlights a lineage of popular struggles and the women’s movement in a new way, proposing here and now the world in which we want to live, connecting the trajectories and struggles from each territory.

# We Want To Be Debt Free!

## Ni Una Menos

June 2, 2017

Translated by Liz Mason-Deese

On May 10, as we were constituting a collective body in the Plaza de Mayo to demonstrate our counter-power in opposition to impunity for crimes of state terrorism, the Alianza Cambiemos government compromised the lives of future generations by taking out billions of dollars in debt. This is the same permission that was taken by the last civil-military dictatorship by force of blood, torture, kidnapping, disappearances, extermination, and the appropriation of children. Those who carried out genocide and their accomplices silenced dissident voices and, usurping the government, took out debt, confiscated the power of labor and production, and making this power serve capital. And when we denounce impunity for the perpetrators of the genocide, which has been upheld by this government, they put us back in debt.

This simultaneity of events compels us to shout: debt is another form of violence that puts our lives at risk. Since the Alianza Cambiemos government took power, we have entered a new cycle of indebtedness, with the government borrowing nearly ninety-five billion dollars. This enormous debt is estimated to reach sixty percent of GDP by the end of 2017.

As women, we know, we have learned in our everyday lives, what it means to be in debt. We know that with debt we can't say no when we want to say no. And that the state's debt always spills over to subjugate us. And our children. And our grandchildren. It exposes us to higher levels of precarity and to new forms of violence. To take out this debt, the state promises programs to make labor flexible and reduce public spending that disproportionately affect women.

But additionally, we are users, whether voluntarily or not, of the financial system: in recent years, we were forced into the banking system, to the point that benefits from the state have become inputs for the financial system. As female heads of household, we occupy a central role in the organization and self-management of networks of cooperation. Financial corporations exploit these community economies by charging commissions on benefits and wages and applying exorbitant interest rates on loans, credit cards, and microcredit.

However, it is with a credit card that we celebrate a birthday, with a loan that we build an addition to our house, with a microcredit loan that we seek to start the business that would enable us to survive. And thus we spend our nights poring over accounts, separating out the lion's share. That day-to-day accounting is what becomes abstract in financial policies, but as women we put our bodies in the places where we are struggling to make ends meet. How will we be able to stop male violence when we are subjected to paying debts under the threat of losing everything, and when any



imbalance in the fragile economic structure in which we live leaves us out in the open and exposed? If we go to a shelter so that we can survive this violence, how will we pay the bills the following day?

Finance, through debt, constitutes a form of direct exploitation of women's labor power, vital potency, and capacity for organization in the household, the neighborhood, and the territory. The feminization of poverty and the lack of economic autonomy caused by debt make male violence even stronger.

The women's movement has consolidated itself as a dynamic and transversal social actor capable of bringing diverse forms of economic exploitation to the forefront. We stop being merely victims precisely because we are able to make the ways in which they exploit us, as well as our collective action against multiple forms of dispossession, comprehensible. In the two women's strikes that we organized in less than a year, together with women trade unionists and all types of organizations, we were able to put on the agenda and assemble the demands of formal workers and the unemployed, the demands of popular economies along with the historical demand for the recognition of the unremunerated tasks that women perform. We called for politicizing care work and recognizing self-managed work. In this context, we believe it is necessary to go further in taking stock of the renewed forms of exploitation that pauperize our living conditions and make our existence precarious, because in this context, the number of femicides has doubled. There is an intimate relation between these numbers.

As producers of value, we say: Not One Woman Less, We Want To Stay Alive and Debt Free!

## Our Bodies, Our Territories

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October 4, 2017

Translated by Ramsey McGlazer

Last week, the collective Ni Una Menos and other feminist organizations in Patagonia, Argentina held a massive meeting in the city of El Bolsón, on the border of the Andes, still snowy in early spring. The slogans were: **#NuestrosCuerpos #NuestrosTerritorios. ¿Dónde está Santiago Maldonado?** (Our Bodies, Our Territories. Where is Santiago Maldonado?). In this way, those assembled sought to address several issues simultaneously, issues that point to increasing conflicts in the region today and that center on the businessman Luciano Benetton.

The forced disappearance of the militant Santiago Maldonado followed the state's repression of a highway blockade organized by the Mapuche community on August 1 of last year. The young Maldonado had participated in this action. By now his case is internationally known, and its repercussions have exceeded the attempts of Mauricio Macri's government to silence them. The case should be understood in relation to a territorial conflict that has been unfolding in the region for some time and has led to its militarization. In fact, the highway blockade was organized to protest the detention of the Mapuche leader Facundo Jones Huala, of the Pu Lof en Resistencia Cushamen (in the Province of Chubut).

Since March 2015, this community has begun a process of territorial reoccupation, reclaiming the lands owned by Benetton. Those leading this effort have been young people who come from the urban peripheries (in particular those surrounding the tourist destination that is Bariloche), whose families have been dispossessed of their lands and for decades have been left with no option but to provide cheap manual labor. Many Mapuche youth have opted to engage in this "return," which has thus assumed a generational significance. In the meeting, women from the union of domestic workers noted this sequence of events: "the majority of us in this region are Mapuche women who were uprooted from our communities to go serve the city, and there we were obligated to feel ashamed of what we are."

The heightened repression has encompassed several communities during the past several months and has been related to the dynamics of valorization that are concentrated in this "paradise" region: projects in real estate development, tourism, and extraction. For years, the combination of these industries has led to the despoliation of lands in the region, a process that points to the complicity of political, judicial, and repressive institutions in this new phase of "the conquest of the desert," as the late nineteenth-century military campaign was called. This campaign consecrated

the consolidation of the nation-state through the massacre of indigenous peoples: Mapuche, Tehuelche, and Ranquel. The very notion of the desert decreed the nonexistence of these peoples and the legitimacy of the crusade against them. This notion is still operative today, as an impulse to appropriate these same lands drives the transnational corporations that have bought out local landowners or, through manipulation, the state. Images of that earlier military “conquest” hang today in the offices of the region’s police stations: two weeks ago, Elizabeth Loncopan was unjustly detained in one such station. A Mapuche woman, she was first to be indicted for the disappearance of Maldonado, in an aberrant attempt to criminalize those demanding justice. The judge who ordered this detention was finally removed from the case, as various community members had demanded by peacefully occupying the courthouse in Esquel. Although the judge’s removal was secured, one day earlier several houses in the community of Vuleta del Río were burned by hooded men, in a paramilitary action that is in keeping with the actions of a government increasingly characterized by repressions that take the form of “manhunts” and by the criminalization of social protest in all its forms.

“We are not asking for ownership of the land. We are proposing another way of inhabiting the land,” one of the Mapuche leaders said in the meeting. She was referring to the attempt to limit the dispute to the terms of property, a ruse that sought to parcel out the land in order to enable its future (forced) sale by individual owners. Today this kind of indigenous unrest resonates with various forms of urban protest. We could draw a complex map of responses to real estate speculation on the part of large corporations (whether they operate in the name of agribusiness, mining, or hotels) in Patagonia and in the north of Argentina. These regions have been witness to ever more acute territorial conflicts and confrontations. That is: the dynamics of dispossession require stronger and stronger forms of violence, and they encounter concrete resistances that are then ferociously criminalized.

In the feminist meeting, participants sang songs about the power of the people and the power of their ancestors, in a mix that is unprecedented and urgent, because indigenous communities today are present in the cities, where their youngest members tend to reside, and where they engage in a search for communal ties that has nothing to do with the clichés of purism or traditionalism.

The meeting was a site of difficult encounters. Or rather, it was a first instance of the elaboration of a historical disagreement between feminist organizations and the demands of indigenous peoples. Those assembled began to constitute a fabric of histories, trajectories, and experiences that could be used to perceive and respond to a moving present. These histories will also compel feminism to devise new practices and to be remade under new names: as popular, community, street, or indigenous feminism. These forms of feminism make space for the question of how feminism—street feminism or a feminism of assembly—can become an anti-colonial practice, how it can ally itself with concrete struggles and demonstrate in practice that these struggles are its own. The notion of the body-as-territory and the demand for autonomy over both body and land are key in this common struggle. In this sense, the meeting in Patagonia set to work a form of political action that could not be reduced to abstract solidarity. If it is to become a wandering apparatus that can be mobilized for concrete conflicts, feminism demands an unavoidable work of face-to-face, body-to-body elaboration. This work will allow for the unfolding of a collective intelligence that

speaks many languages: the languages of demand and insurgency; of everyday insubordination and the reformulation of public space; of sabotage and mourning; of the land and the street. The aim of this unrest that finds in feminism a new space of political elaboration is the preservation of the fabric of “new, unfamiliar alliances,” alliances that are also uncomfortable and irreverent. This feminism will not limit itself to addressing issues defined as strictly relevant to gender.