



05 - June

# THE MARCH IN ACTION

THE WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN'S THIRD INTERNATIONAL  
ACTION NEWSLETTER

## Editorial

We are in the middle of our Third International Action. After the demonstrations carried out from 8th to 18th March, Mali and France national actions took place in May and June, respectively, in addition to regional activities in Asia and Europe. Our sisters of WMW in Greece mobilized against the cutting of social spending by the government under the International Monetary Fund intervention, which at the same time maintains high military expenditures. We were also present at demonstrations of solidarity with Honduran women and people, who have been resisting the civilian-military coup for a year. We finally gather to protest against the false solutions to the economic crisis proposed by the G-20 meeting in late June in Toronto (Canada). With each answer we give to the challenges posed by the current situation, we build a stronger feminist movement in permanent action!

### ASIA-OCEANIA

## Regional Meeting defined common working plan and calendar of actions

From 10th-12th June, women from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, New Caledonia, Pakistán, Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan gathered in Quezon City, Philippines, for the Asia-Oceania WMW regional meeting. As part of the activities, on the 11th of June, a demonstration denounced US imperialism in the region and the military violence against women.

“Enough of military violence against women! Enough of US wars and militarism! Stop US support to Israeli Terrorism!” These were some slogans that expressed the struggle of women from Asia and Oceania against free trade, military bases, and sexual exploitation of women. The demonstration remembered that the day following, 12 June, is Philippine Independence Day but only from Spain, not from US intervention, control and military presence.

### Working plans

The participants of the meeting developed a working plan and a calendar of actions, having the debate on the four WMW area actions as starting point. In the framework of our Third International Action, within the Women's Work action area, simultaneous actions are being prepared for beginning October around the recognition of domestic work as labor, a call for social security and for governments to promote policies towards sustainable local and full employment.

The actions in the plan include as well the solidarity with women in Congo (in October), mobilizations from 11 to 20th November against the G-20 (in Korea) and exchange of information on trafficking and

prostitution on the 5th October and along the week of 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women (by the end of November).



The members of the WMW International Committee for the region, Jean Enriquez (Philippines) and Saleha Athar (Pakistan), highlighted how positive was the meeting. “We learned more about the region's women and political struggles in detail. Every participant was satisfied with the meeting and the demonstration”, Saleha told us. For Jean, it was very important that the women have decided to stay together acting as Asia-Oceania. There was a demand posed by New Caledonia for creating a new region that would gather the French-speaking countries of Oceania. This could increase marginalization and isolation of the continent. “Language may be a difficulty for all but should not be a barrier for our unity in the region,” highlights Jean.

## EUROPE

### Solidarity between women from countries in conflict marks WMW's European regional action

The WMW European Action started on June 29<sup>th</sup> with the reception of the Balkan feminist caravan at Gezi Square in downtown Istanbul, Turkey. The caravan was composed of women from Albania, Macedonia, Poland and many different Greek cities, who left together from Thessaloniki, Greece, and 14 hours later crossed the extremely militarized border with Turkey.

From Gezi Square, women walked up to the port where they took the boat to the Maiden Island, a meeting point between Asian and European continents. In that place, they denounced patriarchal practices and fallacies which imprison women and exclude them from public life under the excuse of protecting them: there is a popular story in Maiden Island of a king who built a tower to keep his daughter far from danger. However, the princess met death after being bitten by a snake hidden in a food basket.



More than 500 women from 23 countries took part in the forum of debates held on the following day, June 30<sup>th</sup>. Early in the morning, women's musical groups opened the long day, followed by a presentation of history of the Turkish and Kurdish women's movements and the situation of women in Europe, especially from Greece and Poland. Afterwards, participants were divided among two sessions for 13 workshops and panels which discussed WMW's four action areas and different issues, such as women's resistance during worker strikes in Turkey or peoples' right to decide about their future. In the end of the afternoon, plenary participants expressed their solidarity with Kurdish, Cypriot, Palestinian and Iraqi women. The Iraqi delegation received a standing ovation after sharing their struggles. Debates followed with the approval of a declaration and a calendar of action for the next months which highlighted the closing moment of our Third International Action in Sud Kivu, in the Congo Democratic Republic. This

intense day of debate and exchange was only possible thanks to the work of more than 30 volunteer interpreters, which allowed the communication in 8 different languages.

By the end of the day, women walked from the University Maçka campus to the Taksim Square, where many others were waiting for them. Around 5,000 people, mostly women, went through Istiklal street toward Galatasaray square, a historical place of women's resistance. Slogans such as "jîn, jîjan, azadî" (women, peace, freedom), applauses, tambourines, animated women who again were occupying the streets of Istanbul after one week in which different right wing nationalists held large demonstrations.

Yildiz Temurturkan, from the Turkish National Coordinating Body (NCB), explained that this demonstration occurred in a very important moment and changed the atmosphere of the city by having women struggling for peace occupy the streets. Diverse women, coming from many places of the country, besides East and Western Europe were present: the French delegation was composed of women coming from different parts of the country, women of different ages and religions; Belgium delegation had a large trade union presence, including grassroots women, workers in cleaning and food sectors that were participating in a international activity for the first time in their lives.

"This action shows our capacity of putting together women from different countries in conflict in a context of increasing militarization and action of conservative and fundamentalists national sectors", says Michele Spieler, member of the Switzerland NCB and of WMW International Committee. And the idea is to continue. Sonia Mitraillas, from the Greek NCB, says that "the WMW feminist network in the Balkans will continue in action. It is also possible that, soon, Greek and Turkish women carry out common actions demanding the



reduction of military expenses and the application of those resources to assure social services”.

During the European Social Forum, which was held from July 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, the European WMW held a workshop to share our experiences in the construction of a feminist movement in the continent and to talk about our Third International Action. Another activity was promoted specifically by WMW in the Balkans to share information about the situation of women in

their region. Also UMAR, from the Portuguese NCB, organized a debate on non-sexist education. In those moments, we were able to meet women from Germany and from Austria and involve them in our movement. The WMW was also present in many other workshops and seminars, in which women – strengthened by the participation in the debates and in our action on the 30th – were able to question the panelists from a feminist perspective.

## COUNTRY ACTIONS

### Steps towards the constitution of the WMW in the United States of America

Networking, information exchange, action planning and organization of the WMW have characterized our presence in the Social Forum of the United States, which took place in Detroit, from June 22 to 26.

The intense program began on the morning of the 22nd, with a rehearsal of the “batucada”, which inaugurated the Grassroots Global Justice (GGJ) block (*photo*). In the inauguration ceremony, we emphasized how important it is for all movements and organizations taking part in the process of the World Social Forum to join the struggle against the patriarchy by participating in the debates and actions for the construction of a different possible world. We issued a special call to support the campaign that focuses on domestic workers in the United States, who struggle for the approval of a law that will grant them basic rights. Invited by the GGJ and the Global Fund for Women, the WMW took part in discussions about the construction of a feminist anti-militarism movement in the United States and in a convergence panel about resistances to the crisis, which brought together several international movements.

#### Feminism in the struggle against militarization

The workshop “Transnational Feminist Organizing to Resist Militarism & Empire”, which was held on the 24th, was a convergence point among the struggles promoted by women’s and pacifist groups. For the American movements, it is more and more evident that it is not possible to assure work, welfare and basic rights without a large movement to challenge the military-industrial complex. This activity has enabled us to establish contact with the women from the following organizations: Esperanza and Peace Justice Center, of San Antonio, a city in the south of the country with the presence of five military bases; the Bus Riders Union – The Labor Community Strategy Center, of Los Angeles; the Guahan Coalition for Peace and Justice, as well as the International Network of Women against the American Military Bases and Women for Genuine Security.



The debate focused on complex issues, such as, the cycle of financial dependence created by the presence of the military bases and institutions in the communities, the strategy of promoting militarization through cuts in social services which result in the increase of military enlistment, as the Army is an economic sector which is not affected by the crisis and presents itself as a work alternative, especially for poor young men. Another point in focus was the increase in militarization on behalf of the war against drugs, gangs or the criminalization of the poverty, which generates in the US a figure of 2.2 million prisoners, 1 million of those being African-American men. Or also the routine to which young people are submitted in High Schools, forced to go through metal detectors and to have routine police surveillance in classrooms and corridors. In Guahan, the community is resisting plans to increase the US military presence and trying to expand contacts with groups from Japan and the Philippines to enlarge the movement in the region. The Women’s Social Movements Against War and for Peace (MSM), from Colombia, presented a history of the military cooperation between the US and the Colombian government, which resulted in the creation of a paramilitary army that acts against the country’s population, with significant harmful impact on the lives of women, like regular sexual violence and forced domestic work, among other consequences. This situation has stimulated the MSM to organize the Women and People’s Summit of the Americas against Militarization, from August 16 to August 23 this year, co-organized by WMW as regional activity within the framework of the Third International Action.

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We explained how the WMW responds to militarization through the development of a common positioning and the organization of international actions, with a local approach, such as the Third International Action. We call upon the US sisters to guarantee their presence and to be alert in solidarity during our actions in Colombia and the closing act in the Democratic Republic of Congo (October 13 – 17 this year).

## Towards a US chapter of the WMW

Performing solidarity actions in August and October, mapping grass-roots organizations in which women are protagonists, and calling a large meeting to discuss setting up a national coordination, as well as carrying on with information exchange and analysis on the

action areas, have been some of the proposal that have emerged from the various talks about the WMW that took place during the US Social Forum. Deepening the bonds that were established following up on this plan are challenges that motivate us!



## MOBILISATION AND ALLIANCES

### Meanwhile, our alliances processes continue...

Even though we're in Action year, our life of movement continues. From January to June, we continue to monitor the alliances processes accomplished in the social forums, the Social Movements Assembly gathered around a mobilization agenda common to many movements. Find, below, a list of such processes:

#### January

- From January 21st to 23rd, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Social Movements International Seminar took place, to reflect and elaborate proposals about our perspectives and challenges in face of the social, political and economical situation, our functioning and the elaboration of a common platform of struggle and alternatives. The complete report of the meeting can be found in the link: [http://www.marchemondiale.org/alliances\\_mondialis\\_ation/asamblea-movimientos-sociales/reports/saopaulo2010/en](http://www.marchemondiale.org/alliances_mondialis_ation/asamblea-movimientos-sociales/reports/saopaulo2010/en)

- Evaluation Seminar of the 10 years of the World Social Forum process, which took place in Porto Alegre (RS), from the January 25th to 30th

#### February

- Participation, as guest, in the Grassroot Global Justice Assembly, Miami, US, from February 26th to 28th

#### March

- Meeting of the Minga de los Movimientos Sociales coordination, on March 24th and 25th, in Guararema, Brazil

#### April

- People's Summit against the Climate Change and for Mother Earth Rights, Cochabamba, Bolivia, from April 19th to 22nd

- Meeting with the Via Campesina Women Committee, in Cochabamba, from April 19th to 22nd.

- Participation in the Via Campesina communication workshop, in Guararema, Brazil, from April 28th to 30th, with Friends of the Earth, ALAI and guests from other social movements

#### May

- Participation in the Social Forum "Another exit to the crisis is possible", in the City of Mexico, Mexico, from May 2nd to 4th, and in the meeting of the World Social Forum International Council (WSF), from May 5th to 7th, in the same city.

- Enlazando Alternativas, from May 14th to 18th, in Madrid, Spanish State

#### June

- Mesoamerican Forum against Agro business and the ADA, June on 4th and 5th, in El Salvador

- United States Social Forum, from June 22nd to 26th, with activities that focused in militarization

- Participation in simultaneous actions held in parallel to the G-8 and G-20 meetings in Toronto, Canada, from June 25th to 27<sup>th</sup>

**The March in Action** is a newsletter edited by the World March of Women International Secretariat (IS) and distributed by email.  
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