

Women's disorder against the patriarchal order of war

On the walls of Moscow there are posters with pictures of a foetus and a child dressed as a soldier. They say: 'protect me so I will protect you tomorrow'. Putin's attack on women's abortion freedom and his reintroduction of the state award for heroine mothers send a clear message: women must give birth to real men ready to die under bombs. Lesbians, gays, transgender people are not human: like women who do not want to be mothers and men who do not want to fight, they do not respond to the natural order of things affirmed by war. The war in Ukraine affects us even though we have the privilege of not being under the bombs. The patriarchal command of war with its deadly violence, tries to suppress any feminist struggle: it reclaims the sexual division of labour, while the workforce is either exploited to fight or must survive the misery the war produces. The patriarchal command of war reaffirms the authority and sexual hierarchies in the family, because it demands absolute obedience to the necessity of weapons or to emergency economic policies. It reinforces racism by militarising the borders, which select who can pass according to gender and skin colour. War divides, impoverishes us and reduces our spaces of struggle, but it has not suppressed the protagonism of women who reject patriarchal violence. In Iran, the women-led protest against the murder of Jina Mahsa Amini has ignited the spark of an uprising that is not just about the individual freedom not to wear the headscarf, but the collective possibility of rejecting decades of oppression, exploitation and poverty. This collective force challenges patriarchal violence so must be our own: in this violent time, the feminist struggle can be the disorder that upsets the Third World War's patriarchal order.

In every war, women's bodies are a battlefield, while rape is a weapon. Today, this battle does not only concern states at war. Europe demands that Ukraine fulfil the rights of women and LGBTQ+ people if it wants to join the western community. Ukraine sells as freedom the LGBTQ+ family and the emancipation of women soldiers fighting for 'European democracy'. At the same time, the EU is entrusting Erdogan with the task of managing relations with Russia and the Far East, while his government has withdrawn Turkey from the Istanbul Convention to prevent male violence and is persecuting women's movement, LGBTQ+ people, Kurds who are fighting for a feminist revolution. While the EU complains about Hungary's violations of women's rights and anti-gender policies, in order to manage its nuclear armaments NATO is betting on Poland, where abortion has been outlawed as in many North American states. In the transnational scenario, patriarchy presents itself in both reactionary and democratic forms. We must recognise the difference and fight both. This means that the feminist political initiative cannot be national, because nationalism supports this war by claiming the sacrifice of our present and the surrender of our future.

We consider Giorgia Meloni's election victory in Italy linked with the current war scenario. Without centuries of women's struggles she would never have got where she is. We do not spit on emancipation while there are millions of migrants

who not only do not have the right to vote, but still have to fight for every single right. We certainly spit on vain debates about the feminism of the Italian Prime Minister. Meloni is a representative of capitalist and racist patriarchy in a female body and we are not surprised that she is ready to do business with Brussels and NATO. Her celebration of the family is needed to justify the sacrifices women workers have to pay the price of war, or the increasing quotas of free labour. The attacks on abortion, the proposal to set up a ministry “for the birth-rate” and the advocacy of the 'right to be a mother', which according to Meloni is endangered by poverty, are the other side of economic policies that aim to push down the costs of the energy crisis. She protects the foetuses to enrich the bosses by promising super bonuses to employers who hire women. These will have to give up their minimum income guaranteed by the state in exchange for the first minimum wage proposed to them, while the government will be able to say it is moving towards the goal of gender equality in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. In the programme of Giorgia Meloni, who defined herself ‘mother and Christian’, male violence is only relevant if it is committed by an immigrant; women of all nationalities murdered by Italian males do not interest her. Thus, without much changing from previous governments, the Gender Equality Strategy applied in Italy meets the needs of social reproduction in war and post-pandemic times. Yet there is a difference. In the name of God, Fatherland and Family, Meloni will vent her fascism by attacking women, lgbtq+ people, and migrants. We must then oppose continuity through difference. Continue to fight for the freedom not to be mothers and to ensure that motherhood does not force women to be exploited even harder. Continue to challenge the family as an institution of order and claim sexual freedom. Continue to fight against racism that hides patriarchy. We must continue to do all this while saying openly no to war and its patriarchal order to produce the convergence of those who do not want to pay the price of war beginning with the rejection of male violence.

On the 28th of September, thousands of people took to the streets all over Italy filled for a day of action organized by Non Una di Meno on the occasion of the international day for safe and free abortion. We were in those squares with thousands of young women ready to rise up against the attacks that have already begun. But these numbers are not enough, we must organise ourselves to build up the strength we need. It is not enough to list the number of women murdered, the episodes of violence against lgbtq+ people, the cases of conscientious objection that prevent us from making motherhood a choice and not a destiny. It is not enough to claim many individual rights if this does not produce a collective struggle to change the conditions in which we live, work, love. It is not enough to fight against individual national policies, because they are not all the same and do not affect us all in the same way. The feminist and transfeminist movement must find a language and goals as clear and immediate as those that fed the global women’s strike movement. It must speak to the young women who were not in the streets when that movement began, and also to their mothers and workers who were thrown out of

work during the pandemic into the nightmare of double exploitation that scarcely allows survival. We won't be able to fight this exploitation if we don't make room in the feminist movement for the migrant women who in Europe sustain a reproduction without welfare and social protections, while at the same time they pay for the survival of their loved ones – in Ukraine as in Senegal, in Moldova as in Morocco – with the toil of an increasingly poorer job. For the 25th of November against male violence against women, we must make of the opposition to the patriarchal order of the Third World War the spark that reactivates the revolt against male violence and allows us to practice, here and now, a transnational politics of peace.