



grassroots feminism & regional integration

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Introduction

This digital publication brings together feminist formulations about building internationalism and the fundamental participation of women fighters in the processes of integration of the peoples.

In never-before-published interviews, Alejandra Laprea and Norma Cacho address the organization of the World March of Women in the Americas and the movement's international challenges. The texts by Alejandra Angriman, Elpidia Moreno, and Karin Nansen are edited versions of speeches they delivered on the webinar "Feminism and Regional Integration," held in November 2023. The texts by Ana Priscila Alves and Irene León feature the contributions they provided at the 3rd Dilemmas of Humanity Conference in their regional and international stages, in September and October 2023. The writing by our dear sister Nalu Faria, originally published in 2021, was chosen to open our publication, keeping her memory alive, as well as her legacy and her accurate views on the strategies toward building grassroots feminism.

Especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, we have been facing a history of imperialist offensives that, for more than five centuries, have been imposing different forms of violence on our territories and ways of living. In current times, these offensives are taken through conservative, neoliberal, and fascist campaigns and forces aligned with projects of subordination, exploitation, extractivism—projects ordered by states from the global North and transnational companies that accumulate more power than states.

Meanwhile, we see an abundance of struggles across the continent, with one thing in common: women are on the front lines, coordinating efforts, making denunciations, sustaining life, the community, and the movement. In everyday forms of resistance, they see the connections between patriarchy, racism, and neoliberal capitalism. Challenging this authoritarian model, they propose a grassroots, anti-racist, diverse feminism that is deeply rooted in their territories while also being aware of the experiences of neighboring places, exercising, through internationalism, the principle of unity in diversity, rejecting the competition between historically violent and colonial national borders.

Latin American and Caribbean grassroots movements build collective possibilities, even as they face contexts of repression, authoritarianism, and austerity. They do it with creativity, investing in building broad political processes, promoting anti-systemic changes, deepening democracy and a popular sovereignty that encompasses different dimensions. In this sense, we defend regional integration as a project that involves all areas of life, including communications, culture, and the economy, guided by food, energy, and technological sovereignty. While regional integration advances with progressive governments — which are the product of the grassroots struggle and mobilization in each country —, it becomes stronger especially through the action of the peoples.

For the World March of Women Americas, regional integration brings back memories of key moments of the continental struggle that still find an echo today, including the grassroots victory against the FTAA. It also points toward the future paths toward strengthening alliances, deepening our strategic view of feminist economy and the sustainability of life, and the building of a broad sector of international feminist movements that is militant, diverse, and continuously moving.

We hope this publication can provide contributions for the reflections of sisters in our national coordinating boards and ally organizations. Meanwhile, we also aim to contribute to fundamental actions in the calendar of struggles ahead: the Latin American and Caribbean Week of Peoples' Integration, to be held in Foz do Iguaçu February 22-24, 2024; and the 6th International Action of the WMW, which will take place throughout 2025 with the slogan "We will continue to march against war and capital, for popular sovereignties and good living," which guides us today as a movement toward the future.

We hope you enjoy it!



Challenges Facing Feminism: Liberal Co-optation and Conservative Attacks

BY NALU FARIA

Challenges Facing Feminism: Liberal Co-optation and Conservative Attacks

BY NALU FARIA

It is undeniable that today there is an expansion of feminism to several sectors. It has become a general agenda for society, and not just organized feminist movements. There are multiple points on the agenda and sectors, but there are also shared and converging directions. They include: the acknowledgment of the patriarchal and racist dimension of capitalism; the need to face the androcentric traces of the current model; the importance of defending diversity and sexual nonconformity; the need to assert other values and more democratic and horizontal forms of exercising power; the struggle against violence; the struggle for the right to abortion; the acknowledgment of the care agenda; and the need for women's self-organizing. We assess that these directions combined are part of the accomplishments of the feminist movement and its ability to influence society at large and spaces of formulation such as the academy. On the other hand, this also comes with challenges and contradictions.

Part of these challenges and contradictions is regarding the different expressions of the feminist movement—that is, the plurality of positions that express different forms of addressing its political agenda and giving meaning to feminism. Overall, we can talk about a first level, which is the sectors that look at the need for an overall change in society; on the other, we can talk about liberal feminism, which is not concerned about these structural changes and is ultimately centered around an individual rights perspective. Beyond these challenges, we face the offensive of right-wing sectors, which is twofold: it co-opts and pretentiously incorporates feminism—something we call [purplewashing](#) — ; and it promotes neoconservative far-right attacks.

The conversation between ourselves and the definition of a political project must necessarily come from anti-systemic feminism. Referencing an anti-systemic approach means understanding that this current model is capitalist, heteropatriarchal, racist, and colonialist. It means observing, therefore, the imbrication of the different forms of oppression. We understand that dismantling this model will only be possible if we simultaneously overcome this set of relationships. Moreover, it is important to underscore that the logic of accumulation that organizes this model is supported by this set of oppressions. Looking into the material bases of the dynamics imposed by this model is vital.

In our process, we have been defining ourselves as [builders of grassroots feminism](#). But it should be noted that we are living a moment when several sectors that share this broad

definition also feel the need to affirm their unique characteristics. And so we have popular peasant feminism, community feminism, Black feminism, and others, which organize with each other in unity while also formulating their own agendas and perspectives.

Building political actors that can play a leading role in social change is what makes change happens. This leads us to understand and exercise self-organizing as the guiding principle of the struggles, which is decisive for the self-emancipation of all of the oppressed.

Women's place in the social, sexual, and racist division of labor is what explains their need to take a leading role as political actors. Women, more than men, need access to common goods and therefore are more committed to defending them, both in rural and urban areas, as Silvia Federici shows in her article [“Feminism and the Politics of the Commons in an Era of Primitive Accumulation.”](#)

A feminist perspective into the analysis of this leading role acknowledges women as the primary actors of reproductive labor, which sustains common life.

The propositions built from grassroots feminism sum up several contributions, both from the discussion about and the consolidation of political agendas, as well as the process of organization and joint efforts among struggles. These syntheses and propositions are based on concrete actions that change society and women's lives, showing that it is impossible to separate the discussions around the agenda and the constitution of the political actor. The fact that grassroots feminism is part of the working class in its diversity helps to define the political project with a stance that aims at a comprehensive change through a political project based on liberation, emancipation, autonomy, and equality. In this sense, it is important to look back at the analysis by Beth Lobo in [The Working Class Has Two Genders \(A classe operária tem dois sexos\)](#), on the reformulations of Black and grassroots women's practices as a survival strategy as well as a strategy to resist domination and subjugation.

Regarding feminism becoming an agenda in society at large, the first point to take into consideration is that, in this scope, liberal views of feminism have been growing. This is materialized in several initiatives, such as the creation of sectoral organizations of professionals from middle-class and business sectors, several consultancy initiatives, training and marketing programs, as well as blogs and online channels by liberal influencers. In the academy, we see less critical aspects. There are different kinds of initiatives in this sense. Women's participation in management spaces of capital today is often treated as part of the “feminist agenda.” What these sectors claim to be a feminist agenda is very far from what has been historically defined by most of the feminist movement as what we call the anti-systemic approach to feminism. This approach is beyond the liberal views of individual rights, empowerment or “equity” with men from middle-class sectors or the elite.

Liberal and reformist views are battling for feminism and are more present than we first thought. One example is how central the topic of “women and power” is today, without challenging the model of power, but rather seeing representation in spaces of power as

the solution to the malaise. Media initiatives from these sectors often even appeal to social movements. But the most serious aspect of it is that it is part of the efforts that have been watering down the role of women's movements. What is ultimately reinforced is individual and media leading roles. The most problematic thing is that the work of grassroots sectors of the women's movements is rendered invisible, as is the role of their everyday resistance for the growth of feminism.

As we have pointed out, part of this process of fighting for positions is the fact that some ruling sectors organize their offensive to co-opt feminism, in which the entertainment industry incorporates parts of the feminist discourse with the support of women who represent the elites. The ambiguities of this process cannot stop us from recognizing the strategy that aims to trivialize the critical content of feminism.

On the other hand, the reactionary offensive of the far right makes feminism and all other sectors fighting for emancipation come under attack. These are the two sides of the same neoliberal coin. Looking at the big picture requires more complex answers, which must be offered by anti-capitalist and anti-racist grassroots feminism. In addition to organizing and expanding a critical view, formulating and exercising feminist answers implies organization—that is, the ability to position an agenda that materializes the struggles and points to pathways toward a different economy.

A new becoming

A huge challenge facing grassroots feminism is to globally and more strongly confront the current model and propose a vision for a new society, with new relationships and other forms of organizing labor, securing the sustainability of life and creating new subjectivities based on autonomy, reciprocity, and equality. The everyday practices women have built and accumulated over time point to several elements of this new becoming: acknowledgment and appreciation of affective relationships, well-being, care, transcendence.

To achieve that, acknowledging and strengthening grassroots experiences organized through the everyday struggle to sustain life is key. These are experiences that focus on the collective, from a perspective of the commons. They play a key role in building bonds, occupying territories, and redefining borders between private and public spaces, as the satisfaction of needs and promotion of well-being are collective concerns. [Black women, Indigenous women, women from the outskirts, and peasant women](#) play a huge role in these struggles and processes, building collective answers. The fact that women working in paid labor are mostly concentrated in care-related activities impacts their role in the struggles in defense of the commons and the sustainability of life in face of society at large.

We must enlighten the processes of resistance with actions that put a strain on the logic of the market.



They are usually connected to demands to the state, but also include reclaiming other forms of sociability and culture. [This challenges the current model](#) that pushes people to compete against each other, fosters individualism, and encourages them to stare at TV and phone screens and engage in isolated forms of leisure defined by the entertainment industry.

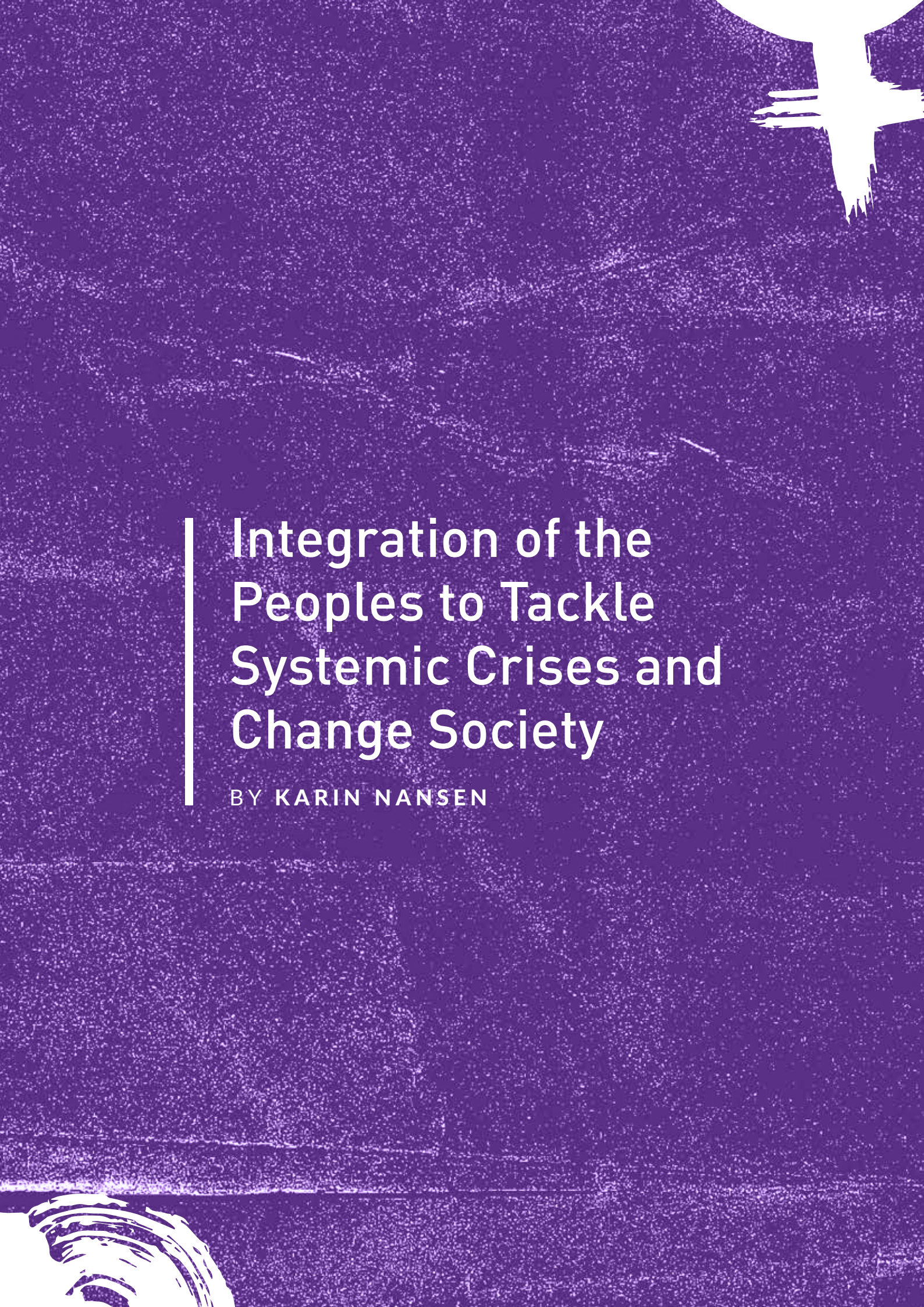
Building these processes and spaces means occupying and engaging the community, promoting collective, self-managed, and solidarity- and reciprocity-based work experiences. These are experiences that change the present while also pointing to the possibility of social reorganization with no exploitation or hierarchies.

Through women's different expressions of resistance, resilience, and propositions, this view of feminism as part of an anti-systemic project materializes an action that places life on center stage, by understanding our interdependence as human beings and our dependence on nature.

Nalu Faria was an activist with the World March of Women, joining the International Committee between 2016 and 2023. Nalu passed away in October 2023, leaving behind memories, many lessons and hope. This article was first published on the portal of the [Latin American Information Agency](#) (ALAI) in April 2022.

Nalu Faria lives!





Integration of the Peoples to Tackle Systemic Crises and Change Society

BY KARIN NANSEN

Integration of the Peoples to Tackle Systemic Crises and Change Society

BY KARIN NANSEN

The seriousness of systemic socio-environmental crises—climate, biodiversity, water, hunger, inequality, care crises—requires us to promote a much deeper coordination of struggles, processes of resistance, and political projects that are created through grassroots movements from the continent and the world.

It is impossible to fight crises from within national borders, or just at a territorial and local level. At the origin of crises, we identify a system of capitalist, patriarchal, racist, colonialist, and imperialist accumulation, which has been historically built based on slavery, genocide, the destruction of continents, and the subjugation of our peoples. It is a system of accumulation that continuously expands at a local level, incorporating new territories, but also new spheres of life in society. Fighting this system requires looking beyond the local or national level and adopting a regional and internationalist perspective.

Transnational companies are key actors in this process of accumulation that makes life and work increasingly precarious. They are the main characters of the process of destruction and dispossession of lands, forests, and waters. Their actions reach way beyond national borders. They have much more power than nation states and constantly impose their projects, norms, and logics, especially on a continent like ours, which has historically been incorporated into the capitalist system and the globalized neoliberal economy in a highly dependent way.

In Latin America, the process of accumulation led by powerful transnational companies and national economic groups is based on the extraction of raw materials and the exploitation of labor. This exploitation also affects our territories, our peoples, our bodies, and women's work—especially racialized women. The power and impunity of transnational companies are strengthened with new norms in free trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties, as well as other neoliberal instruments. Transnational corporations actually have the power to file lawsuits against states when they consider that a public policy does not favor them. If they consider that a public policy that favors the common good can harm their profits, they file suits in international courts of arbitration, including the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), which operates under the auspices of the World Bank. Courts of arbitration usually rule in favor of transnational corporations, attacking the sovereign capacity of states to decide on their most appropriate public policies.

This continuous violation of rights, this continuous attack on life that remains unpunished cannot be tackled from the local level only.

In grassroots feminism, we learn from the struggles of resistance on our continent and we understand the urgent need for the integration of the peoples, building unity in diversity to dismantle corporate impunity, the destruction of territories, and the continuous attacks on our rights, and to consolidate our emancipatory political projects. Indigenous, peasant, Quilombola, working, and grassroots women are those most affected by these processes of continuous destruction and attacks. They are also the ones who actually spearhead struggles and resist this offensive. Grassroots women play a central role as political subjects in the defense of territories and collective political projects. They are the ones who repeatedly organize and mobilize to fight corporate projects of accumulation.

We have learned from the sisters of the World March of Women how necessary it is to build regional grassroots political projects and collectively empower ourselves as grassroots political subjects. Amid a context of deep systemic crises that endanger the ecological systems that make life possible and the brutal offensive that the right and capital are launching in many countries across our continent, we have the responsibility and the duty to move forward in building unity around emancipatory political projects that allow us to dismantle the systems of domination, oppression, and exploitation of our peoples and nature.

Over the course of history, our organized peoples have built these emancipatory political projects and processes, including food sovereignty. These projects allow us to fight for imaginaries and meanings, as well as to establish the bases and principles that should organize our societies and allow us to provide a comprehensive, structural response to systemic crises.

We build integration around the resistance and struggle against the concentration of power and wealth, against inequalities, spoliation, land grabbing, pollution, and the destruction of territories resulting from the advances of agribusiness, mining, dams, fossil fuels. In face of that, unity and the building of integration imply the further deepening and consolidation of the proposals for the transformation of the food system, the energy system, the economic system, disrupting the dichotomies imposed on us by opposing society and nature, productive and reproductive work, and regarding the sexual division of labor.

It is also fundamental today on our continent to organize ourselves to fight for politics and public policies, because we need to regain control of the decisions made about the way our societies and our relationship with nature are organized. Battling for politics, as Nalu Faria has taught us, also means fighting for and decolonizing the state, redefining its role around the sustainability of life, the defense of nature, and the rights of the peoples. It is a profound battle, which redefines what is the state and how we build political institutionalities at a regional level, in a time when politics is being delegitimized and nefarious beings like Javier Milei in Argentina are imposed.

We have to fight for the economic sphere. Thanks to the World March of Women, we have provided fundamental contributions to all our movements around feminist

economy. Feminist economy offers us the necessary principles and guidelines to organize the production and reproduction of life and make sure that our people's needs are met. Principles that are shared with food sovereignty, which aim at a radical transformation of production, distribution, and consumption of everything that is necessary for life. From a regional perspective, feminist economy points to the organization on all levels, highlighting the relevance of the bond between grassroots classes from rural and urban areas. And organized women play an essential role in building food sovereignty on our continent. In this sense, we firmly oppose the green economy that is turning nature into a commodity and the attempts to impose it on our region. And we continue to struggle, as we have done throughout history, against neoliberalism, which is privatizing more and more spheres of life in society and nature. As it became clear during the pandemic, neoliberalism does not ensure the sustainability of life, but rather endangers life.

Regional integration must start by acknowledging care work as an organizing principle of economic processes and the need to put an end to the sexual division of labor, as well as the exploitation of women's bodies and work. To do so, we must ensure the collective autonomy of women in processes of reviewing and reformulating our economies regionally.

There is an increasing battle for territories across the continent. On the one hand, there are peoples who feel and experience their territories as spaces of production and reproduction of life, as spaces of struggle, of political and cultural building, of memory. On the other, there are companies that see territories as a platform for accumulating capital, as a never-ending source of resources. Strengthening the power and control of our peoples over their territories—both rural and urban—beyond borders is fundamental in this battle, resisting the reductive views that turn nature into units that can be traded in the market, and the transformation of nature's features into services.

We must regain control of knowledge and technology, stressing their public character. As technology is privatized and becomes concentrated in the hands of a few companies, it becomes a tool for more exploitation of grassroots classes and nature.

Our perspective on integration must be based on internationalism, as the bases of unity and solidarity between the peoples and a new multilateralism. An integration that prevents criminal actions, like the ones that are being perpetrated today by the government of Israel against the Palestinian people. These processes of regional integration have been built over the course of history and continue to be built today. To empower political subjects through a regional emancipatory perspective, it is fundamental to learn our own history, to keep our memory alive, and especially to resist the imposition of new wicked imaginaries by the hands of the right.

Karin Nansen is a member of REDES—Friends of the Earth Uruguay and the Continental Day for Democracy and Against Neoliberalism. This is an edited version of her speech delivered during the webinar “Feminism and Regional Integration” held by the WMW Americas on November 30th, 2023.



Feminism Builds Bridges for the Integration of the Peoples

BY ALEJANDRA ANGRIMAN

Feminism Builds Bridges for the Integration of the Peoples

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Latin America and the Caribbean are territories where a material and symbolic battle is waged. The empire's advances in recent decades in terms of power and greed are impressive, and they have been happening fast and relentlessly. It's an expansion of unprecedented violence and spoliation. This is reflected on the institutional, economic, and productive levels, through neoliberal policies implemented by corporate representatives of concentrated power, that put strategies into practice to destroy our peoples' living conditions.

This reality implies, to us, building the conditions for grassroots organizing to battle for all the spaces where the struggle is waged to overcome inequalities and asymmetries in our societies. We must wage an emancipatory battle that allows us to define a different way for the reproduction of our shared lives. In this sense, the contributions of feminism—and particularly of the World March of Women—and all the discussions around the Continental Day for Democracy and against Neoliberalism have been very important for our organization.

The experience of formation of our countries has shown that the administration of states is not enough, because their colonial and neoliberal origins have deeply crept into their structures and have limited the development and transformation that our societies need. In this sense, it is fundamental for the working class to reclaim the struggle for power and the political representation of the peoples. This has to unite us, not necessarily as a political party, but as an emancipatory political project.

Latin American feminisms have a virtue: they have created a political identity that is capable of radically challenging, in the regional scenario, the systems of knowledge and organization of society. Especially since the 1990s, the discussions about building citizenship and the need to further develop democracy in the countries of our region became part of the agenda, and the relationship between movements and states, as well as the development of strategies to influence these democratic processes, became central to this conversation. The grassroots feminism developed on our continent has provided fundamental contributions to expose these tensions.

Today, a central question emerged regarding the agenda: where should the efforts to institutionalize the rights policy be placed in contexts where exclusion and social inequalities become deeper and deeper? The achievements we have had in recent years are important, but they seem small in face of the challenges to incorporate equality and rights into the democratic debate. The focus of building democracy must be on creating a life that is worth living. The struggle for women's rights requires the development of an strategic vision for

the future, where feminist agendas are not only supported by defending a discourse and reclaiming a space of our own, but by bringing together the democratic demands of society. Spaces of contestation and alternatives must be ensured in terms of thought, but also—like Nalu Faria used to say—in terms of action.

May we be capable of formulating not only what is possible, but also what is desirable.

In the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA-CSA) and in my own organization, the Argentine Workers' Central Union – Autonomous (CTA-Autonomous), we have an agenda that is strongly connected to the struggle of the grassroots feminist movement. We reflect on the debates that are being built on our continent. We don't just talk about grassroots feminism—we also talk about the contribution of decolonial feminisms to our continent, which allow us to approach different aspects of integration from a different perspective.

Decolonial thought deepens our feminism, our perspectives on the North-South conflict, the global dimension and local bonds, to denounce the coloniality that persists in our territories and bodies. It allows us to analyze issues from perspectives ranging from geopolitics to economic and cultural dependency to social injustice across the region. It also allows us to look for answers through resistance, which is connected to the attempt to decolonize knowledge and power. This decolonial feminism that has emerged in the 1980s as a critical review of hegemonic feminisms must be restored.

Hegemonic feminism remains in our region and establishes a unique and universal view based on the concerns of white, Western, European, or US women. It's important to go back to talk about Black feminisms, which were the first to take a stand regarding these Western feminisms. We must go back to the tradition of Latin American critical thought, including the critique of the international co-opting of feminism. Part of the feminism that emerged in the 1990s was co-opted by international non-governmental organizations and financial organizations that try to include us in an agenda connected to the defense of individual rights, denying collective rights or putting them on the back burner.

We need to once again value situated and horizontal knowledge, with no claims about universal or unquestionable truths, to get more correct answers, more aligned with our region's problems. Our grassroots feminism, with its different currents, has had the ability to reconsider the concept of power and the struggles for power, underscoring the different forms of oppression. By promoting horizontality in relationships, we must continue to contribute to the critique of the international order, to tear apart the relationships that are structured around masculinity.

This way, we can continue to reflect and ask new questions: what are the social roles built and assigned to men and women in regional integration processes? What other

inequalities are interconnected to gender inequalities? How do these relationships become crystalized when building institutionality? How do integration processes impact our affections, emotions, and bodies? Where and how are women's and diversity spaces included in these processes? All of these questions also have to do with contributions we have already made, and with those we must continue to make to build an agenda that considers women's issues.

The challenges are not just about exposing these multiple inequalities, subalternities, and hierarchies that permeate all these subjects that are in these political spaces. Analyzing regional integration from a decolonial and grassroots feminist perspective does not mean fixating on a perspective about lived experiences, but rather devote a necessary effort to formulate new questions that challenge these integration processes. We have done a lot, but we still have a lot to do. What has been on the back burner? We must bring together all the knowledge we have built, as well as the social struggles that remain segmented by the patriarchal logic. From feminism, we can create communicating vessels to analyze and think about regional strategies that can be challenging and combined with the current social mobilization. Feminism builds bridges and bridges gaps.

Alejandra Angriman is a World March of Women militant in Argentina and a member of the Argentine Workers' Central Union—Autonomous (CTA-Autonomous). She is currently the chair of the Women's Committee of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA-CSA). This is an edited version of her speech at the webinar "Feminism and regional integration" held by the WMW Americas on November 30th, 2023.



Revolutionary Grassroots Feminism in Cuba

BY ELPIDIA MORENO

Revolutionary Grassroots Feminism in Cuba

BY ELPIDIA MORENO

Since before 1959 in Cuba, there was evidence of a revolutionary grassroots feminism, apparent in the incorporation of women in liberation struggles and the fostering of values for their children to defend their homeland. Mariana Grajales, the mother of the homeland, after first learning that her son Antonio Maceo was injured in the war, told her youngest son, Marcos, “Get ready, now it’s time for you to fight for our homeland, like your brothers.” Many were the women who fought for the independence of Cuba.

The presence of Vilma Espín in the struggles for the liberation of Cuba and later as the president of the Federation of Cuban Women has shown that there are women who gave their all during this time they had to live through for the development of society. Vilma waged battles in favor of women and brought together forces so that women could become today the main characters and the beneficiaries of the revolutionary process.

Similarly, before 1959, women came together to push for a law about divorce and the right to vote. Nevertheless, it was only after the triumph of the Revolution that women shared the first program of equality. The Revolution came for the entire population.

With the revolutionary victory, deep economic, political, social, and cultural changes were made in favor of the Cuban population, and several laws and legal provisions were passed to ensure human rights for all citizens. Women benefited particularly from the protection of their reproductive and sexual rights, family planning, and health care. Some of the laws that stand out include the maternity law for women workers, the right to education, social security and services, the right to employment, technical and cultural advances, the right to development, to vote and to run for office.

In Cuba, women represent 62 percent of the population with a college degree, 67.2 percent of the people with technical and professional education, and 45.4 percent of the work force in the state civil sector. In the public, free, and universal health care sector, they represent 70.9 percent of the work force and 62 percent of the doctors. And they stand out for their performance in science — a sector surpassing gender parity in Cuba, where 53.3 percent are women.

The Federation of Cuban Women has been working systematically for women to hold more decision-making positions, especially in the People’s Power system. The results

achieved in the latest legislature demonstrate that the Cuban Parliament has the world's second highest share of women in parliament – 55.74 percent. In the Council of State, they represent 52.4 percent.

We have a National Program for Women's Advancement, with 7 areas of implementation to benefit Cuban women. We have a new [Family Code](#), approved through a referendum, through a broad process of citizen participation. The Code acknowledges that all people are equal and that gender violence has legal consequences, also offering guarantees to caretakers.

This is some of the evidence of what we have achieved to promote women's rights and empowerment. Nevertheless, regardless of all these advances, we still face challenges: working to eliminate the traces of inequality and discrimination that persist in Cuban society; sharing the care work with the family, as it is still—along with domestic chores—shouldered by women; continuing to work to eliminate all kinds of violence against women; continuing to condemn the economic, commercial, and financial [blockade](#), which is the primary act of violence Cuban women have been enduring for more than 60 years.

Amid so many hardships, we have been the standard-bearers of international solidarity and regional integration. We have been to Angola and we have left Cuban blood in combat. We also raised flags of solidarity in Ethiopia and Namibia, and whenever we hear news about an earthquake in Peru or Indonesia, or about a hurricane in Central America—we will be there, with the spirit of revolutionary stoicism and a true conviction that we share what we have, not what is left, challenging time and hardships. As a weapon, we carry our white coats and the necessary tools to heal the world.

“Operation Miracle” allowed millions of people to have their vision restored, people who thought that, because they are poor, their health condition could not be resolved. We were not afraid to fight Ebola, and a brigade called “Henry Reeve” is now touring the world, making friends. Dengue in El Salvador did not intimidate us, and we are pleased to have been in Nicaragua. We have built the Granada airport and we turned setbacks into victories, like Fidelhastaughtus. HealthcareprofessionalswenttoBraziltojointhe“MoreDoctors”program, where they wrote beautiful pages of care, ethics, and relationship with patients. We are proud of the fact that 64 percent of the Cuban medical team providing medical care abroad are women.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Cuban scientists—mostly women—were able to produce five potential vaccines, and three of them were approved and allowed the entire Cuban population to be vaccinated; they were also shared with several countries. We provided care to other states, sending 58 medical brigades to 42 countries and territories, including developed countries.

These examples empower our convictions. Our medical team will continue to climb mountains, cross rivers, sleep outside, while you, our friends, will continue to defend the truth. You have always known who the true enemies are, who causes war, and what causes poverty, misery, hunger, and the lack of basic rights violated every day around the world.

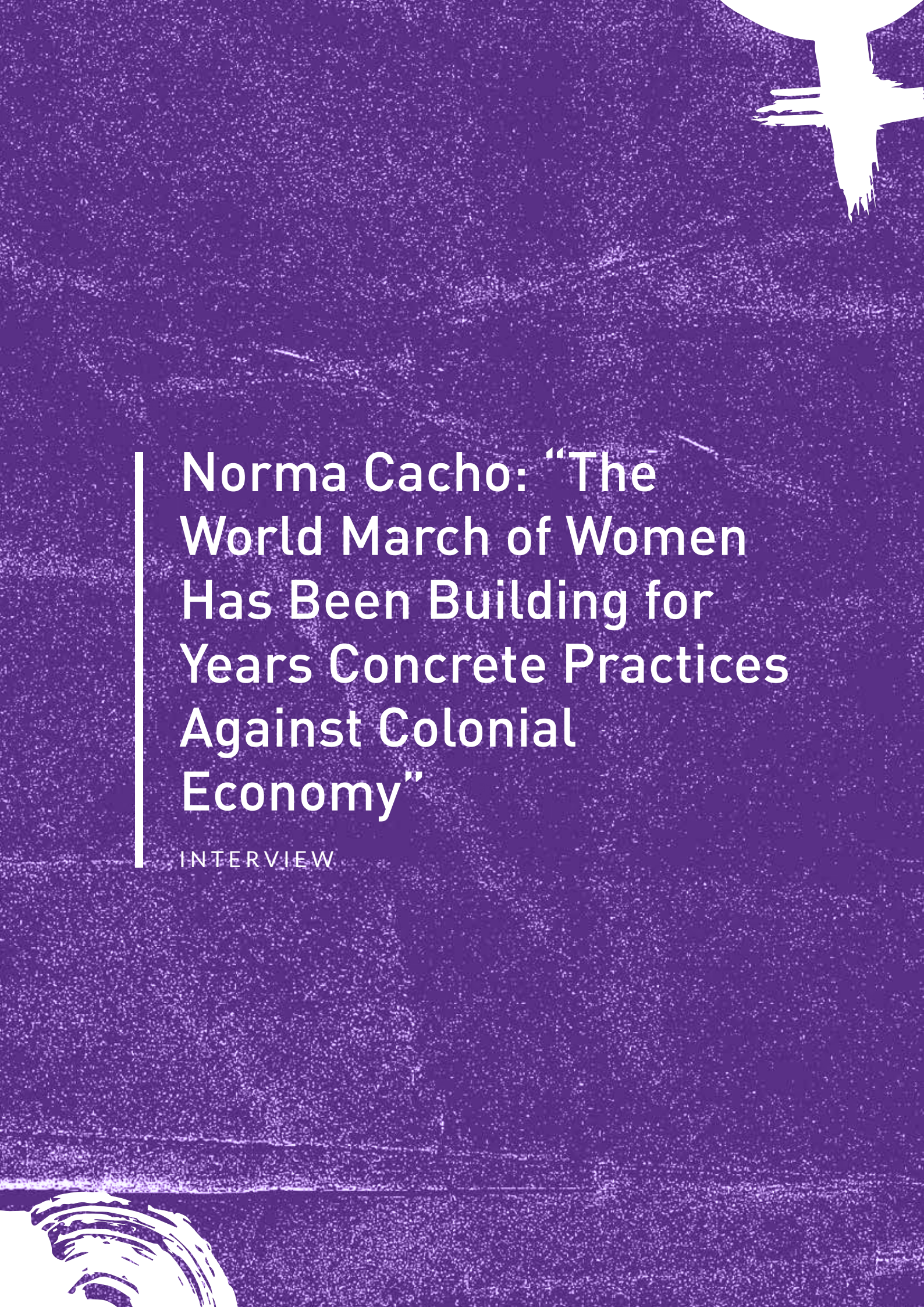
We, Cuban women, are part of social movements across Latin America. We must continue to promote a diverse and plural conversation and contribute to incorporate the gender perspective into other movements; continue to battle against transnational corporations and big rural properties; work in communities in the region to incorporate women from different sectors into solidarity movements, with those who resist in their territories, for the right to land, food sovereignty, and culture.

Revolutionary grassroots feminism is on political agendas, but false ideas and opinions still persist. There are women who know the value of emancipation and the struggle for equality, but when you ask them, “Are you a feminist?” They answer, “No.” We must contribute to recompose the feminist movement, considering mobilization, taking to the streets, promoting solidarity between the peoples, fighting economic and political blockades, and waging the struggle against patriarchy, neoliberalism, and capitalism. The practices of popular education and feminist reflection groups are fundamental to continuously build the movement and to be able to respond to the challenges of each context.

We must appreciate the advantages of socialism, as well as work in the present for regional integration, to leave the legacy of unity for new generations. We must bring peace and the banners of internationalism and international solidarity to the highest levels, and support a common front for just and noble causes against poverty and violence. To struggle together for Palestine, Venezuela, Cuba, and all territories that are blocked by the US government and its allies. To have a common front for countries that are being bombed and where innocent people die day after day.

This is the great challenge: to continue to contribute to revolutionary grassroots feminism as a movement that struggles to change the world and women’s lives. All of us, together, are able to do it, through unity and integration in our Americas.

Elpidia Moreno is a member of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) and a member of the Cuban chapter of the World March of Women. This is an edited version of her speech during the webinar “Feminism and regional integration” held by the WMW Americas on November 30th, 2023.



Norma Cacho: “The World March of Women Has Been Building for Years Concrete Practices Against Colonial Economy”

INTERVIEW

Norma Cacho: “The World March of Women Has Been Building for Years Concrete Practices Against Colonial Economy”

Norma Cacho is a World March of Women (WMW) militant in Mexico. She has been a member of the movement’s International Committee since October 2023, as one of the representatives of the Americas, side by side with Alejandra Laprea, from Venezuela, and Cony Oviedo, from Paraguay (deputy). Norma has first become an activist in lesbian feminism, in collectives that reclaimed lesbian feminism as an anti-systemic political perspective. “From there, I started to see how complex the oppressions against women are, not only compulsory heterosexuality or the heterosexual regime, but also colonialism, patriarchy, racism, and capitalism, this web of oppressions and domination that ravishes women’s bodies and territories in the global South.”

Norma took part in regional and international education processes and was part of the methodology working group of the Berta Cáceres Feminist Organizing School of the WMW Americas in 2022. “I’m convinced that political education from a grassroots feminist education perspective is a vital strategy to strengthen feminist and mixed-gender movements, with focus on the perspectives built by women,” she argues.

In this interview you can read in English or listen to in Spanish, Norma shares her views about the challenges the feminist movement faces globally and regionally, and the contributions of grassroots feminism, feminist economy, and the alternatives proposed by women from their territories, bringing the local and global together.



How was it to join the World March of Women from a place of resistance that is lesbian feminist activism?

By reclaiming a lesbian feminist practice not as a sexual orientation or just an identity, but as an anti-systemic practice and demand against the heterosexual regime imbricated with colonialism, patriarchy, and racism—this has been one of the contributions we have pursued in our reflections and conceptualizations at the WMW. At the regional level, I remember the International Meeting we had in Brazil in 2013, when we organized a large group of

lesbians with T-shirts about these multiple oppressions. We reclaim ourselves as feminist lesbians, but we are also involved in processes to defend territories and build grassroots economic alternatives. We don't see ourselves separated from the struggle for the defense of the territory or against extractivist and transnational companies, because we are also providing our reflections through lesbian feminism to observe all this systemic implication of different forms of violence against women.

You have just joined the International Committee of the World March of Women. What do you believe to be the tasks of the Americas to strengthen the WMW internationally?

We surely have challenges, pending goals, but, in political and epistemic terms, we are a region with great jointly articulated and accumulated political knowledge – not only between ourselves as a region, but also in connection with other global movements. This is a vision we will be able to imprint as our brand on the International Committee. We also have an important contribution to make by deepening theories, concepts, and education processes as we have in recent years. The history of the education processes of the World March of Women is an important achievement. We conduct political education processes all the time, not only with the Berta Cáceres International Feminist Organizing School, but also at the local level. Our national coordinating boards have grassroots feminist education as one of their main banners and as a pathway toward empowerment.

The International Committee is not only a consultative body—it is a deliberation body. Our sisters from different regions offer us a trust mandate to guide the political pathways of the WMW for at least the next two years. It is a substantial task, especially because we are living in a context of very strong attacks from the ultra-right, neoliberal fascism, transnational corporations taking over territories, the wars of occupation against the Palestinian people and the Sahrawi people, and many others. These struggles have always been present at the WMW, because we have sisters in these occupied territories.

In this context, we must strengthen the movement internationally in terms of alliances and ability to mobilize; and we must position not only our demands in face of these scenarios of occupation, war, and dispute, but also our perspectives toward transformation, as they are in their territories. Feminist economy has been one of our most powerful political perspectives in recent years, as well as our views about regional integration, grassroots feminism, and people power. This is a task for everyone, but the International Committee has a very important task in terms of providing political guidance.

At the 13th International Meeting of the WMW, you talked about the movement's next International Action, to be held in 2025. In what way is it possible to combine memory and action to build a strong mobilization?

The 6th International Action must express the power of accumulated political knowledge from 25 years of the movement. The slogan we have defined for the 6th Action, “We

march against wars and capitalism, for grassroots sovereignties and good living,” correctly summarizes our political perspectives in this crucial moment. The action must bring back the memory and the historical movement-building we have accumulated, but it also must be deeply mobilizing, showing our strength on the streets. The WMW’s international actions have been an example of the movement’s mobilization power.

After such a crucial moment as the pandemic we have experienced—which, even though it has not limited us as a movement, has redefined our conditions for mobilization—the 6th Action must be able to coalesce, organize, and be very powerful. While contexts may be different, with demands that make more sense in some territories than in others, we have many synergies, political convergence, and also a vision for the future and the movement. We also have to strengthen the character of the process. The Action always closes in a territory that is usually under dispute, but it is also a deeply political process that involves mobilization, education, and action.

You have addressed the international challenges of feminism. Now back to the Americas, what are the specific challenges of the region? What are the common battles in the territories on the continent? And how can the WMW contribute in this sense?

As Abya Yala moves toward far-right governments, this is a trend that requires a great critique—the last election in Argentina, others where progressive governments have won, but by very narrow margins, like in Brazil, and in Mexico, where now we are facing a hotly contested federal election. The right is not just that partisan ultra-right—the discourse has changed significantly; it’s a populist right with massive impact. Fundamentalisms, going hand in hand with the ultra-right, are creating a scenario that can escalate in the following years.

On the other hand, I consider that the extractivist and colonial economy will also become deeper and deeper. Extractivist policies and megaprojects are fighting over ancestral territories, especially Indigenous and Black territories, where women are offering their bodies and lives to the struggle and building anti-systemic practices and alternatives. The World March of Women has been building concrete practices for many years to tackle these scenarios. It is worth addressing the next agendas in the region, like the Latin American and Caribbean Day of Peoples’ Integration. I believe that a regional platform that draws from the local, territory-based struggle and from the perspectives of grassroots feminisms, progressive unionism, and movements for environmental and climate justice creates vital and essential synergies to face these fascist ultra-right scenarios.

The contribution that the World March of Women can make amid these scenarios in the Americas is to stress the importance of the lives of women and the peoples, placing life on center stage. This is part of the disruptive feminist economy that we are building as a movement. And this has a lot to do with the denunciation of international financial

institutions that threaten people's lives, of transnational corporations and corporate powers that are joining forces with the ultra-right to destroy the peoples' lives. Our accumulated knowledge is not only about concepts or epistemologies: it is our practice.





Alejandra Laprea: “Revolutions Don’t Come With a Manual”

INTERVIEW

Alejandra Laprea: “Revolutions Don’t Come With a Manual”

Alejandra Laprea has been, since October 2023, one of the new representatives of the Americas at the World March of Women (WMW) International Committee, side by side with Norma Cacho, from Mexico, and Cony Oviedo (deputy), from Paraguay. Alejandra is a filmmaker and militant with La Araña Feminista, a network of collectives that joined the WMW in 2013.

Alejandra attended the 8th International Conference of La Via Campesina in Bogota, Colombia, between December 1st and 8th. She also attended the [6th Women’s Assembly of La Via Campesina](#), on December 2nd, maintaining a commitment with the joint efforts between feminism, food sovereignty, and the global transformation of the economic system. She granted the interview below to Capire on that occasion, addressing the history of the World March of Women in Venezuela, the anti-imperialist struggles in the country and the region, and the importance of building an internationalist grassroots feminism with a solid practice of forming alliances with other global grassroots movements.



Can you tell us about your political background and the formation of the World March of Women in Venezuela?

Venezuela first joined the World March of Women through the network of collectives La Araña Feminista, a network that emerged in 2010. I remember that, in 2012, in one of our meetings, when analyzing the country’s situation and the media blockade we were facing, we decided to start to coordinate with other similar organizations to break the blockade that was imposed on us. The first blockade Venezuela suffered was this: not being able to tell the world what was happening or presenting a version of what was happening that was not very close to what we were experiencing.

[Nalu Faria](#), who was a close friend of one of La Araña’s co-founders, [Alba Carosio](#), always said, “Alba, look, the March is doing this and that...” So when La Araña made the decision to start to join international efforts, we were invited, through this contact between Nalu and Alba, to the [9th International Meeting of the WMW](#) in São Paulo. Aimée Benitez and I attended as delegates and took part in the methodologies by language and region. I had never been to such a huge space and with such a high level of organization. Back in Venezuela, we introduced a report and in 2014 we filed our formal request to join the National Coordinating Board of the March. Back then, our collective was active in six or eight states in Venezuela. Joining the March was a very rich experience, especially due to the exchange of information, knowledge, and wisdom, and it reached exactly the goal we had.

I remember that, at first, no one knew about Venezuela, no one knew what to think about Venezuela or the Revolution. The most “reasonable” people would stay neutral. There was also the risk that the country’s right-wing organizations could take over these spaces and continue to replicate the dominant narrative that delegitimizes the [decision of the Venezuelan people](#). You cannot say whether the decision is good or bad—the decision is ours.

In the Americas, what can the struggles in Venezuela against imperialism teach the continent?

I think that all national coordinating boards have a lot to share in terms of knowledge about resistance, struggles, and proposals. As the people, we are obstinate and we like to smile. If there is something I would highlight in my country and in us, women—it’s our tenacity. We make a decision and we want to take it all the way. This is the commitment we have. Do we make mistakes? Yes, because revolutions don’t come with a manual, and history books and experiences cannot be adapted from one country to the other. What happens sometimes, for example, is that I look at Guatemala and I know what is going to happen to them, because it’s something I’ve been experiencing for two decades. I know what it is like to invest in one political option, play by the rules of the game, and then having to stand up for your decision every day until the end of your life.

And what can I share? I think the obstinacy, the tenacity, and the commitment we have regarding our election decisions and our decisions as a people, of wanting to change our system and our way of organizing.

How do you see the current dispute for the Esequibo territory?

Esequibo is part of the territory I originally come from. This is a very close issue to me, because I have experienced it over the course of my life. I know it’s difficult to understand, but this is a territorial dispute that goes back to the time when capitalism tried to reorganize the world. The Spanish Empire came to an end and other emerging empires said, “Well, here is a territory we can’t share.” This territory is very rich in biodiversity, in fresh water. The dispute now is only focusing on the continental maritime gas platform, but the fresh water wealth there is impressive.

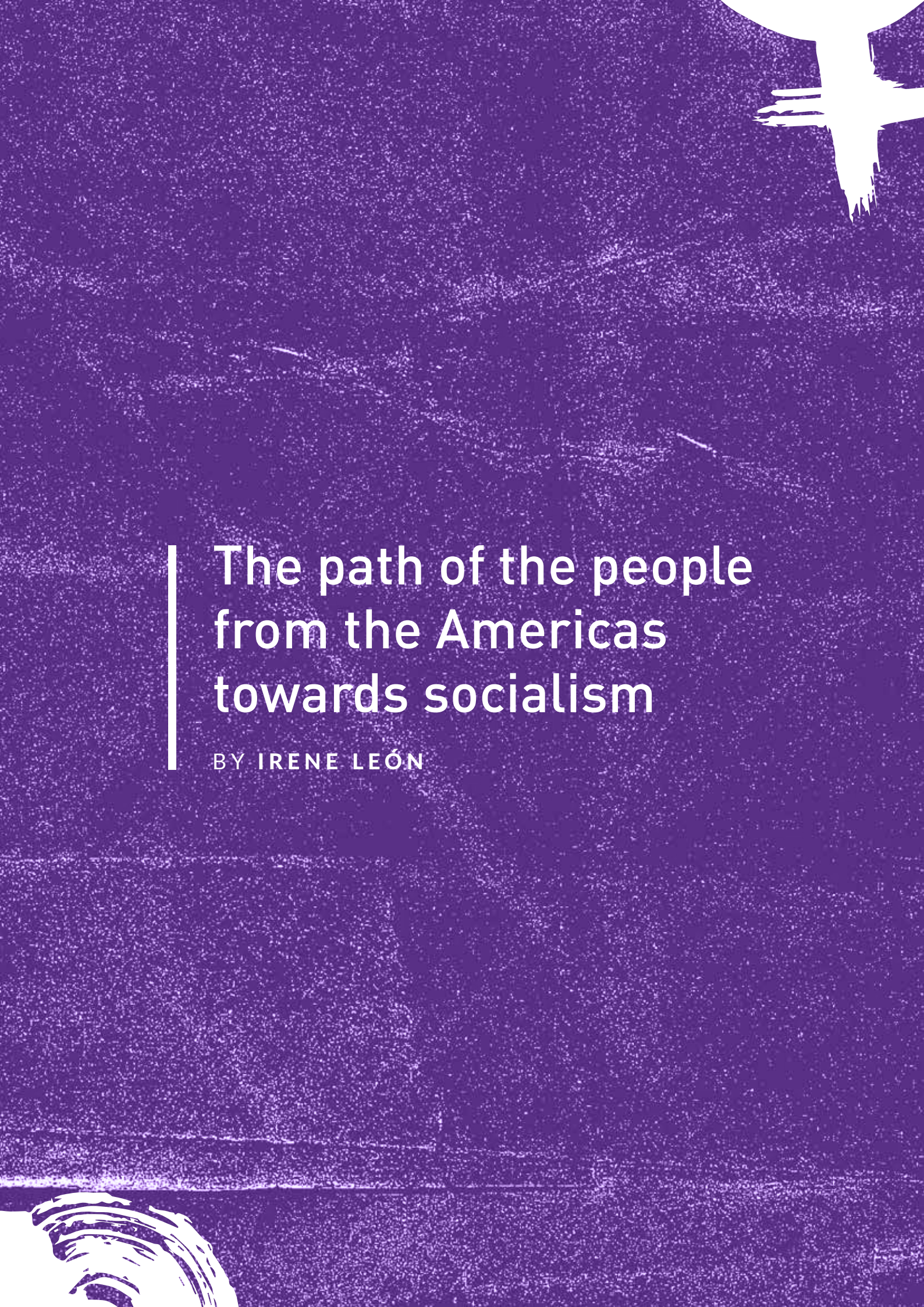
When you are born into a struggle, there is a need to defend yourself in face of what is unfair, against something that has more influence in an international court, because they speak English and are able to say, “Well, this piece of land is mine now.” For a few years now, the map of Venezuela has been systematically disfigured with this narrative, but Esequibo is a territory that has historically belonged to Venezuela—we share the same geography. It is part of the Pemon nation, which is an Indigenous people, and this is their true territory. It is part of our landscape.

I believe that the referendum is a reminder for the other areas of the country, which are very far away geographically. The referendum was good to remind all Venezuelans that Esequibo exists, that it is also part of Venezuela, and that we must defend it, for its biodiversity, for the people who live there, for its landscape. At some point the British hunger for territories was so big it changed the borders four hours away from the town where I was born. This offers a glimpse of how these empires see us. We were creating a nation that had its own internal conflicts, but we were reorganizing ourselves, recovering from more than 30 years of war of independence. And that was the moment they decided to take away an important share of our territory. As a Venezuelan and as a Guyanese, I must say Esequibo is ours, it is mine, it is Venezuelan land.

How do you see the role of the World March of Women in the global context? What is the strategic importance of alliances for building grassroots feminism?

The World March of Women has been a very important space to coordinate common regional efforts and actions. To think that the March is active in the five great regions of the planet—some as diverse as Asia—and that the feminist movement has a space where we can come together, look at each other and have a common discourse, to me that is extremely important. It is power accumulated for the movement and to amplify our voices and actions. This is also the importance of feminist internationalism: to amplify voices and different struggles, and to recognize the mechanisms of patriarchy and capitalism, which may have different names but are the same mechanisms of oppression. And if they are the same mechanisms of oppression, we have to think, together, about how to face them.

Alliances are extremely important for the feminist struggle. We can't be talking about liberating half of the population only among women. We have to talk about this with everyone, of every gender. Attending a space like the Conference of La Via Campesina can create common causes, find aspects where our struggles meet together and permeate each other, identify ourselves, and start to formulate strategies and actions together—all of that is extremely powerful. Building unity among grassroots and social movements is fundamental to end the system of multiple oppressions. Oppressions don't work separately. So why should we work separately?



The path of the people from the Americas towards socialism

BY IRENE LEÓN

The path of the people from the Americas towards socialism

BY IRENE LEÓN

Creating conditions for a transition towards socialism is and has been ongoing and challenging. Still, I will draw a very brief timeline here, to account for some of the most relevant milestones at the beginning of this century, in this region that is in full swing. But, before this, I will go back to some unavoidable events from the last century, because nothing can be explained regarding this region without mentioning that, at the end of the 1950s, Cuba turned on a light that still shines on the prospects for change on the continent and in the world. Its proposal remains in force and its experience is a testimony to the historical possibility of leaving capitalism and its crises behind, as well as the feasibility of building a large-scale socialist project.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the Unidad Popular [Popular Unity] government in Chile made it possible to visualize the probability of coming to power peacefully and to postulate structural changes. At the same time, it showed that this is a broad dispute, since the setback faced by Salvador Allende's socialist building process not only affected Chile, but the entire world. The 1973 coup inaugurated a laboratory of neoliberalism, an exclusionary model that defined the rules of the game for the whole market as an essential aspiration for the repositioning of capitalism, which persists on the world stage until today.

At the end of the same decade, in Nicaragua, after the dictator Anastasio Somoza resigned, the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) [Sandinista National Liberation Front] came to power in 1979 with an agenda of structural changes and redistribution. These were years in which paths of struggle for socialism were opened in Central America. In the 1970s, 1980s and until the end of the 1990s, heroic battles took place in Guatemala and El Salvador; they were heroic not only because they occurred under imbalanced conditions, but because they raised aspirations for victory and triggered a process that led, in the 21st century, to the coming to power of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front] in El Salvador, which is also a contribution to the procedural transformations that continue to be at the center of dispute in the region.

In the 1980s, in Haiti, the Lavalas Revolution ("avalanche" in Créole) removed Jean-Claude Duvalier from power and thus defeated a dictatorship that had passed on from father to son for over 25 years. Jean Bertrand Aristide's government proposed a significant set of changes in a very complex context, including sovereignty and pacification of the country. Likewise, in those Caribbean lands of great projects for independence, Grenada raised thoughts of socialism, with the victory in 1979 of the New Jewel Movement led by Maurice Bishop.

There emerged socioeconomic changes that included women's equality and a reorganization of the State that was prevented by a coup d'état and the assassination of Bishop in 1983.

In the 1990s, with increased globalization, the peasant movement presented a critical stance against huge commercialization. The Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo (CLOC) [Latin American Coordinator of Rural Organizations] and Vía Campesina proposed an agenda of resistance to attempts to place commercial rights above the rights of people, which was being forged within the scope of the World Trade Organization (WTO). With the motto of "keeping agriculture out of the WTO", they were in Hong Kong, Cancún and everywhere the WTO came together. They expressed their disagreement with the interference of transnational corporations and financial capital in the processes of food production and distribution, which not only resulted in the disappearance of rural areas as a social and cultural entity, but also deepened inequalities and hunger. In return, they proposed the concept of food sovereignty, which is an endogenous and sustainable solution.

Grassroots and social movements played a leading role in proposing alternatives to neoliberalism in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The new century dawned with feminist and internationalist mobilization against poverty and violence raised by the World March of Women, which also provided ideas for dismantling patriarchal structures as part of achieving social change.

In 2001, Brazil hosted the World Social Forum, initially as an alternative to the World Economic Forum in Davos. With the motto "Another world is possible", it attracted people from multiple sectors and had open debates. It quickly became a global laboratory for seeking alternatives. In turn, the Social Forum of the Americas, based in Ecuador, following the context of changes that the region was experiencing, had great relevance as a space for debates, conversations and even strategic initiatives.

In those same years, there was significant popular and social cohesion around resistance to neoliberalism, especially against free trade and against the hemispheric project that the United States proposed for the region: the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), whose objective was economic restructuring under its leadership and control. This resistance resulted in a historic victory, which marked the visibility of alternatives and guidelines for the construction of transition processes to socialism that became evident in the first three decades of the 21st century.

But before addressing the content of these proposals for transition, it is inevitable to mention the Caracazo of 1989, which constituted a pioneering mobilization against neoliberalism. The Venezuelan people expressed in the streets that the socioeconomic exclusion caused by neoliberalism was unacceptable for the people and lit a fire that, in the late 1990s, illuminated ideas to outline socialism for the 21st century.

The Bolivarian Revolution that began in 1998 proposed peaceful changes and produced significant concepts: constitutional revolutions, participatory and "protagonistic"

democracy, rebuilding the State, feminist socialism, and the dialogue between the local and the construction of a multicentric and pluri-polar world, among others.

The methodology of constitutional drafting with the participation of the people to rebuild the State was something that inspired the processes of change in other countries. In the second five-year period of the 21st century, Bolivia, hand in hand with the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) [Movement for Socialism] and the leadership of Evo Morales, undertook its democratic and cultural revolution from 2006 onwards, and reformulated itself constitutionally as a pluri-national State. In 2007, the Citizen Revolution process emerged in Ecuador, which produced the Constitución del Buen Vivir (2008) [Constitution of Good Living], proposing far-reaching changes.

In Brazil, the Partido dos Trabalhadores [Workers' Party] led Lula to power in 2003: a progressive view emerged, a redistributive alternative, for changes for Brazil and a geopolitical proposal for mobilizing the South, with great historical perspective. Also in 2003, in Argentina, Nestor Kirchner, from the Frente para la Victoria [Front for Victory], came to power, introducing significant socioeconomic and political changes in his country and making historical contributions to the regional integration process. Similar processes were registered in the rise to power of Frente Amplio [Broad Front] with Tabaré Vazquez (2005) and later Pepe Mujica (2010) in Uruguay, while in 2008 Paraguay joined the line of countries for change with Fernando Lugo, of Frente Guasú [Guasú Front]. In Honduras, Manuel Zelaya (2006), coming from a progressive wing of the liberal party, joined the dynamics of change.

In this brief and incomplete overview of a heterogeneous process, it is essential to highlight the centrality of regional integration proposals, which emerged after the FTAA became unfeasible in 2005. Chronologically, the Alternativa Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (Alba) [Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our America] emerged, the result of the people's resistance and the encounter between two giants: Fidel and Chávez, who brought together the experience of internationalism and the perspective of humanitarianism postulated by the Cuban Revolution with the Bolivarian geopolitical view of the Great Homeland, to raise the idea of an integration between Latin American and the Caribbean as the great regional historical project of the 21st century.

The Alternativa, now Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América - Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos (Alba-TCP) [Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Treaty], It is the most relevant anti-systemic proposal that has been put forward in this moment of history. In addition to the great projection of sharing economic, political, cultural and other perspectives, it refers to the joint transformation of the region, which could create conditions for a transition to socialism. Its strategic agenda includes productive approaches and exchange initiatives that can generate processes of disconnection from capitalism, interrelated in turn with a geopolitical perspective of the South and a multicentric and pluri-polar world.

Similarly, the Unión de Naciones del Sur (Unasul, 2004) [Union of South American Nations] is a South American sovereignty project, whose perspective of endogenous articulation, in addition to regional sustainability, could result in the creation of a pole of geopolitical articulation in the South, with the ability to participate in the construction of a multipolar world. In turn, the Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (Celac) [Community of Latin American and Caribbean States] was created as a mechanism for political dialogue between the thirty-three countries in the region, to represent the region in its relationship with other blocs and promote exchanges and development projects. Among Celac's first achievements is the declaration of the region as a zone of peace. It holds summits and interregional plans with China, the European Union and others.

These are some components of an integrative architecture that is a possibility for the future, amid political diversity and different economic projects. It is a proposal that dialogues with the creation of coordination offices or joint projects in the global South, as is the case with BRICS+ and others.

The sovereign regional integration proposed in this scenario has the singularity of standing as a historical project, which is why it is different from the blocs that are articulated only around free trade.

The perspective of sovereignty and diversity includes dynamics that result from processes of socialist change and a move away from neoliberalism and capitalism. Along these lines, in the second decade of the 21st century, several countries withdrew from Ciadi (a World Bank organization), challenged the international arbitration offices of corporate power, presented initiatives for a regional financial architecture, and conceived sovereign security and defense bodies, science and technology and cultural initiatives of great projection.

In Latin America and the Caribbean in the 21st century, ideas were sown to establish the region as an anti-capitalist power, with other ways of producing and reproducing life, placing life at the center, displacing the historical bias of organizing everything based on the reproduction of capital, which has distorted human coexistence for centuries.

Putting life at the center is the most anti-capitalist and transitional to socialism response proposed in our times. It is a perspective of substantive changes, arising from a conjunction between feminist approaches and economics for life, and other sustainability perspectives that are currently unavoidable.

In this third decade of the 21st century, in a context that is also affected by the conservative backlash, marked by the emergence of far-right networks, interrelated with the factual powers of global capitalism that fight for systemic recomposition, the Latin American and

Caribbean region goes through an important dispute over society’s guidelines, thanks to an accumulation of transformative perspectives and a set of experiences with great possibilities of projection for a future of changes.

Even in a high-intensity context like the current one, the region has enough elements to create conditions to dispute the meanings of the future. The strategy to achieve this was stated by Chávez: unity, struggle, battle and victory.

Irene León is an Ecuadorian sociologist, part of the Red de Intelectuales y Artistas en Defensa de la Humanidad. This text is an edited version of her panel at the regional stage of the Dilemmas of Humanity conference, which took place in Santiago, Chile, in September 2023.





Feminist Alternatives to the Dilemmas of Humanity: Challenging Capitalism in the Present

BY ANA PRISCILA ALVES

Feminist Alternatives to the Dilemmas of Humanity: Challenging Capitalism in the Present

BY ANA PRISCILA ALVES

The World March of Women carries an internationalist tradition. It is also a fruit of the lifelong struggle of our sister Nalu Faria. We continue to carry on the tasks Nalu has given us—they are many, for all of us, fighters of the world who have met her, her dedication, her devotion, and her accumulated knowledge.

So I start by addressing two reflections Nalu always provided to us. The first one is the importance of building internationalism, understanding that socialist and feminist struggles are anti-systemic and need to be international, with sisters and comrades from all over the world. The second reflection is about the importance of the process—not just the importance of this space we are building today, but the process that has brought us here and also the one that starts from this space.

Organizing Against Globalization

In what condition are we, working men and women, today? Our organization is a response and an alternative building to change the conditions we live in. In what scenarios do social movements emerge? How is the struggle organized? In Brazil, for example, between 1964 and 1985, we lived under a military dictatorship, in a process that, paradoxically, has led to the emergence of many of today's social movements, including the Landless Workers' Movement (MST), the Unified Workers' Central (CUT), the National Association of Graduate Students (ANPG), and many others.

Then in the 1990s, we lived in a time when imperialism was imposing a globalization project onto us, further internationalizing the neoliberal economy that makes our lives increasingly precarious. Especially in Latin America, they tried to impose the FTAA, a free trade treaty, onto us. That moment, at the turn from the 1990s to the 2000s, the organization of movements created two different paths: some believed that fighting for the agenda of institutionality could provide opportunities; we, on the other hand, believed it could not. We understood that that was very similar to the conditions we were already living under, and that project was trying to intensify and trap us in a condition of subordination.

The United Nations (UN) did not represent us, and we understood that the necessary struggle and responses could only come from workers. Amid this context of neoliberalization, the World March of Women, La Via Campesina, and many other movements emerged, understanding that, if oppression is international, our response—our socialism, our feminism—must also be international.

The Working Class and Its Current Dilemmas

Today we are living a new turning point in the capitalist system. We see that the capitalist system is not only attacking labor, but also our lives. Capitalism is incompatible with life. We see this today in the struggle waged by our sisters and comrades from Palestine. We've also seen that in recent years, during the pandemic, because while people in countries in the global South were dying, the vaccine was already out and they could not access it. At that moment, many of us understood how the struggles to break vaccine patents and fight transnational pharmaceutical companies were part of a struggle of international solidarity of the working class.

The pandemic changed labor, and that change was even tougher on women. On the one hand, we have seen increasing uberization—not only on strictly work through platforms, but also as any rights are loosened. On the other hand, even under these precarious conditions, women have been forced out of this labor market. In Brazil, in 2020, 96 percent of the people who lost their formal jobs were women, according to a survey by the Annual List of Social Information (RAIS). This trend happened not only in Brazil, but around the world. Today there are many more men in the economically active labor force than women.

The crises of capital are necessary to restore profits, but also to restore their exploitation chains, of which the sexual division of labor is part. Crises go hand in hand with austerity policies, reducing the size of the state and of its health care, public education, and care systems. When the market forces us out of the labor market and the state fails to undertake these tasks, the message they send us is that this is women's responsibility. That they want to put us back in our homes to carry out the work of caring for the sick, the children, the elderly, and also the men, who are in this economically active labor market that is increasingly making people ill.

For the capitalist system, all this care work is women's work.

This condition brings two elements to light: the first one is that wage labor is not the standard, not for the global South, not for women. There are many different types of informal, unpaid work. The second is the capitalist construct of false dichotomies, like production and reproduction, public and private, reason and emotion. All of them are meant to render free work carried out by women invisible. The work of reproduction of life sustains the economy. Assuming that women will bear the responsibility for care imposes onto us structural precariousness, marked by the capitalist, patriarchal, and racist system, as well as the international division of labor.

Feminist Alternatives To Change the World

We have no use for a feminism that is actually capitalism painted purple. Feminism must be from the grassroots, dismantling the bases of this capitalist system that oppresses us around the world. We provide an alternative, feminist economy, capable of putting life on center stage. The economy is the set of tasks that ensure life and continue to make society work.

By understanding that the conflict of capital against life structures our society, we build these alternatives in our territories. In the pandemic, we understood the need to name those who oppress us and tackle the offensive of transnational companies—pharmaceutical, mining, the privatization of water, and others. Women provide answers because they are in the front line of this resistance in their territories, with memory, *mística*, family agriculture, and solidarity economy.

When we look at the alternatives proposed in our countries and territories, we realize this is the challenge of our historical time. In the 1980s, a number of social movements were able to emerge to struggle for democracy. In the 1990s, we struggled against capitalist globalization. Now is the moment to understand the reorganization of capital and fight to build socialism today, in our historical time.

This system that kills us cannot go on.

Nalu Faria repeatedly said that the answer to the problems and dilemmas of humanity are in the working class, in everyday life, in the movements, in the alternatives we have built every day, in the places where we work and live. The answer to dismantle the material bases of capitalism is in the movements of resistance that we do around the world. This is our task: change the world to change women's lives, and change women's lives to change the world. And this is why we will continue to march until all of us are free.

Ana Priscila Alves is a World March of Women militant in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This is an edited version of her speech delivered at the panel "Organization of the working class," held on October 15th, during the 3rd International Dilemmas of Humanity Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa.

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