

The Eight of March When Women Said "Enough Is Enough"

Part of [Feminisms](#)

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Photo: Cecilia Barriga.

On 8 March 2018, millions of women, called upon by the feminist movement, took to the streets of cities and towns all over Spain. Many of us had additionally supported the strike called for by labour unions. It was one of those days of catharsis that we will never forget, one of those moments in which politics, bodies, and the Earth united, acquiring an unstoppable, positive, indescribable force.

The strike and the demonstration had been in planning mode since last year. March 8 committees were created in cities, neighbourhoods, and towns. In these committees many women shared their discontent at the injustices and violence that capitalist hetero-patriarchy imposes upon them in the daily lives of not only women, but upon everyone, including the rest of the world.

The success of the feminist strike and demonstration had a lot to do with the care put into the extremely long planning process. The openness, flexibility, and freshness of the process helped bring together domestic workers, retirees, students, the underpaid employees, lesbians, transsexuals, migrants, ecologists, and anyone fighting for adequate housing and against energy poverty, etc. The information blackout by women journalists brought to the public eye what they wanted to show concerning communication media: the enormous vacuum that is created when women are not present. Numerous artistic demonstrations – songs, performances,

installations, posters, theatre, etc. – multiplied the repertoire of language and messages in order to reach the most sophisticated stages of cities and invisible corners of marginalised towns and neighbourhoods.

The mobilisation challenged a social and economic model that has declared war on life, that does not recognise the relational and material foundation upon which it is built, and which violently suppresses those it forcefully designates as supporters of life.

Dominant culture does not recognise that the human race is held up by bodies that are vulnerable and finite, bodies that must be cared for throughout their entire existence, and more intensely in certain times of their life cycle. Every human being, individually, can't survive if it does not receive attention that guarantees that they meet all of their basic needs. In patriarchal societies, the ones who for the most part carry out these tasks are women, not because they are the only ones capable of doing it, but because the sexual division of work imposes them to be performed through different mechanisms: socialisation, notions of duty or sacrifice linked to love or simply out of fear.

But additionally, human life is inserted in a natural environment, one to which it belongs and with which it interacts to obtain what is necessary to maintain conditions of existence. This natural environment has physical limits and imposes constrictions that collide head-on with the expansive dynamic of capitalism.

No human being can live without interacting with nature or without being cared for. Nevertheless, Western society has been constructed on a dangerous fantasy: that human beings, thanks to their ability to reason and learn, can live without organisation, limits of nature, and needs stemming from having a body.

Only certain individuals – mostly men – can live as if they floated above their bodies and above nature – and they do it thanks to the fact that spaces hidden from economics and politics, other people, lands, and species, take responsibility for supporting life. They are a minority, but politics and economics have organised themselves as if this were universal.

The arguments that justified the mobilisation on March 8 fully took on the cultural and material roots of the crisis of civilisation we live in, the invisibility of eco- and inter-dependence. The feminist strike presented itself as a new form of social protest that called upon every dimension that forms part of social reproduction.

The feminist movement extended the labour and student strike to rural areas, habitually invisible and neglected, situating their centrality and the injustice in their distribution, as well as to the sphere of consumption, that along with production and the obsession for growth, underpins an unsustainable and unfair model. For women, a strike is not general if it does not include all areas that support social reproduction.

The women's strike also made it necessary to reflect and redefine the role of men within it and went beyond the proposals of some labour unions that only allowed for a shut-down of two hours, despite the protests of their women workers.

It will not be easy to manage the success of a mobilisation that attempts to change ideas, behaviours, and attitudes that strongly condition the life of women, and at the same time, achieve normative and legislative changes, resources, and structures to make those changes.

The strength of the mobilisation has to be reflected in the fortitude of the feminist agenda. The proposal of this agenda speaks of a different life for women – for people – a fair, socially, and economically sustainable one. It is a proposal for significant change that clashes, plain and simply, with the patriarchal, anti-ecologist, colonial, and unfair politics that comes from a neoliberal capitalist model. Conflict is unavoidable.

That is why, since the day after March 8, the feminist movement has returned to meetings, conscious of its strength and also of the difficulty of the challenge it faces, and the obstacles and resistance it will encounter.

Undoubtedly, debate, the continuance of mainstreaming and diversity – with all the difficulty that it brings with it are the pillars to lean on. The political and emotional bonds that have been created amongst hundreds of women of all ages who for months and months have constructed the mobilisation is a warranty for its continuity.

We must thank the intelligence, sensibility, and tireless work of all the women who have been building day by day what, without a doubt for me, is the strongest, most vigorous, and international social movement of the times in which we live. Without a doubt, the way it formulates policy and builds the movement is a beacon that illuminates other collectives that have experienced so much difficulty in trying to do the same.

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