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Pre-Congress, 17th World Congress

# Amendments from the women's seminar

- Documents of the FI - World Congresses - 17th World Congress - 2018 - 17th World Congress discussion -

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**The following amendments to the three IC texts were produced by working groups formed at the July 2017 Women's Seminar of the Fourth International.**

**They cover four aspects: the impact on women of the rise of new far right and fundamentalist forces, women and migration, the state of the worldwide women's movement and feminisation of our parties.**

Amendments to the text [Capitalist globalization, imperialisms, geopolitical chaos and their implications](#)

### **V. New far right forces, new fascisms**

1) Replace transsexuals by transgender in the last paragraph

2) After the last paragraph, add: "These movements target in particular the women who are concerned by the double oppression of both racism and sexism. In a lot of western countries, the success of these movements has developed through Islamophobic propaganda (even if it is not only the brand of the reactionary parties and movements), especially about Muslim women, particularly with those who wear the veil, while aggressions against women wearing the veil are increasing.

If some movements attack clearly women and LGBTQI people, we can observe a new phenomenon of homonationalism and femonationalism in the European countries, in United States and in Israel, with the pretext of doing it for women and LGBTQI people, they attack some parts of the population like migrants or Muslim people, accusing them of raping women, or that Islam is against homosexuality. These movements have been growing up for a few years, in fact, they are often linked to the far right.

In light of the constant and recent religious fundamentalist ideology in our respective states we reaffirm the importance of state secularism alongside the freedom to practice one's religion.

The state must be secular, without secularising communities and using secularism as a tool to target minorities (France). A secular state does not mean secularisation of communities and people, in a way that impinges on their human rights.

And freedom to practice religion does not equate to the freedom of religious leaders to exercise power and control through state apparatuses. Freedom of religion only means the freedom to practise one's faith, that is freedom of religion in Lebanon should not equate to the ability of religious leaders to exercise their version of the "religious rule of law"

We take special note that both the above practices impose their oppressive power relations onto women, their bodies, and their lives and that religious rules of law heavily depend on the family unit and the segregation of roles of men and women. For example in Lebanon there are no personal status laws covered by the state, only religious laws covered by the sects.

Also in countries where State-Church separation has been a historic achievement, like Italy and México, we would

like to point out the constant blurring of this division, as we have witnessed the increase of public ties between high-ranking government and church leaders, especially on topics about women and LGBT rights.

These actions, although it is not said, are in order to make joint decisions on the bodies of women and their rights, like in the case of México about abortion. These are actions that of course endanger our lives.

Neoliberal conservatism that aims to strengthen the patriarchal family instead of women and obstruct divorce has dramatically increased domestic violence against women. Besides impunity for the perpetrators, cuts in the material support to the victims of domestic violence has created a social environment that encourages male violence.

Theofascist movements use systematic sexual violence against women and minors in the territories they hold mostly in the form of rape and sex slavery to recruit members and fight against other groups. In Iraq and Syria thousands of Yazidi and Kurdish women were captured and raped by the members of Islamic state.

### **Part VI**

This weakening of the democratic bourgeois state as an expression of the will of the people exposes women and other historically weaker sectors of society directly to the "savage" laws of the market where only the strongest can survive.

The giving up of the social contract as we knew it in the second half of the 20th century has opened the door for multinational capital to grab all common goods, which is extended to the personal and intimate sphere of women's bodies and vital organs (and of human beings in general).

### **Amendments to [Social upheavals, fightbacks and alternatives](#)**

#### **2 / Evolution also of worldwide rate of exploitation**

*After the first paragraph, add the following:*

In this context, we note what has been called the "feminization" of the labor market and poverty. This can be understood in two senses: on the one hand, conditions that historically have been typical in the formal employment of women: instability and job insecurity, flexible contracts, salaries less than those necessary to pay for the family's needs, have been generalized to the whole workforce. In a second sense, it also explains the increase in job opportunities for women notably in sectors that continue to be feminized, such as care work. The workday is doubled for those women who also perform tasks of unpaid domestic work.

At the end of the third paragraph, add the following:

... and social control to block these policies. The notion of the feminization of poverty refers to the fact that it is on this point that women also become the priority "target" of this type of policies. As mothers, they are called on to take responsibility for implementing these policies. They are also involved in the bancarization and financialization of their economies, which can add an extra burden to their labor.

After the fifth paragraph, to finish the section, add the following paragraph:

The processes of feminization referred to - as well as the weakening of some identities that were once collectivizing,

such as union identity -also explain the emergence of "new" social actors with an unprecedented role, such as women and, in many countries, the LGBT + community.

**Add a new paragraph in chapter 4 -"4 / What are the consequences of the significant increase in migration?"**

**Between the first and the second paragraph of this chapter, add the following:**

Women's migration in the current context of crisis, along with the capitalist globalization of the economy, deepens and increases their oppression and has multiple impacts in very diverse ways on the exploitation of women. The context in which migration takes place expresses the extreme impoverishment and loss of rights of large sectors of world's population.

Women migrate because they need better living conditions for themselves and their families, and because in their countries of origin they cannot find decent employment . Also they emigrate because of political persecution, or as a consequence of wars, that threaten their lives.

We also find women and their families being part of the flow of refugees heading to various countries in Europe, fleeing their original countries plagued by violence and war, notably in the case of Syria and other Middle East regions. In this case, we are faced with the brutal drama of the migrants who try to reach Germany and other countries. This tragedy is taking place on the borders of Europe, on the coasts, on the Mediterranean Sea, in Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries. In this context women face gender discrimination, racism and exploitation.

Another facet of migration is related to the trafficking of women in the countries they manage to reach: England, Denmark, the Netherlands and others.

In countries where organized crime and drug cartels are very strong, women face different risks, like getting kidnapped and 'disappeared' by the cartels who use them in the prostitution business, within the national and international networks of trafficking of women. In other cases the trafficking is organised through more sophisticated mechanisms, like matchmaking women for supposedly love relationships in which whole families of traffickers are involved. Then another method is to deceive women with promises of jobs which are a cover for forcing them into prostitution.. In some places there is a correlation between migration and the sex tourism business.

Xenophobic campaigns are used politically, to present migrants as enemies, even of the working class, as it was done during Brexit in Great Britain and then in the United States by Donald Trump. In some European countries such as Denmark, xenophobic campaigns have taken the form of a "femonationalist" rhetoric which claims that migration is undermining the rights of native women in the destination country. The discourse of "femonationalism" is closely related to "homonationalism" where the xenophobic right is claiming that migration is a threat to the rights of the LGBT community.

At the same time, another expression of the problem has to do with economically-driven migration, in which poverty, inequality, lack of jobs and opportunities due to the devastating consequences of neoliberalism pushes millions of people to leave their countries to look for a job in other places.

In the case of the Philippines, more than ten million people are working outside the country, in places as far afield as Saudi Arabia and the rest of Middle East. The monetary incomes sent by Filipino workers to their families through remittances constitute a central part of the foreign currency income of the country. In this case, the predominant presence of women among Filipino migrants is supposedly because it is easier for them to get a job, even though

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they are often forced into prostitution, which implies deep and serious consequences for them and their families.

In the many regions of world where migrants face oppression and exploitation, women are also suffering 'new' forms of work practically akin to slavery - confinement, prostitution and being trafficked.

If we refer to the displacements and migration in Latin America, Mexico is one of the most dramatic examples and, at the same time, also the place of many experiences of resistance. This country is the obligatory route for hundreds of thousands of migrants, not only Mexicans but also Central Americans and from places as far as Africa, trying to cross over into the United States at any of the points along the more than one thousand kilometer border between Mexico and the US, seeking a job or refuge (running away from violence in Central America, for example). That is why Donald Trump runs his demagogic campaign against Mexican workers, accusing them of stealing jobs from US workers in US factories and insists all the time about building (actually to finish building) a wall along this long border.

On top of this longstanding critical situation with migration to the US, can now be added the threat of Trump's xenophobic and racist policy that intends to expel in the short term around three million Mexican workers. During Obama's presidency, in fact, three million workers were expelled; the problem now is that Trump wants to deport the same number only in 2017, which would trigger a social crisis with unpredictable consequences in Mexico, in the middle of an existing human rights and political crisis. These deportations would go alongside restrictions on Mexican workers sending money from the US to their families in Mexico.

Remittances represent the second largest foreign exchange income in the country, only surpassed by the exports of automotive companies (companies that Trump wants to take back to the US). This remittance income is greater than foreign direct investment, tourism and oil exports. Mexico is the fourth largest economy for remittance income, after China, India and the Philippines.

The consequences of these policies are especially significant for women. The new laws that Trump seeks to impose, like ending the "sanctuary cities" (where the police are not allowed to request migrant documents from somebody committing a minor offence, such as traffic violations) will lead to deportations which break up families. If an undocumented migrant woman has children in the United States, they acquire nationality and, after a long, costly and risky process, the mother can also become an American citizen. With the new legal provisions, families are split up, their children are taken and the mothers deported to Mexico. Another legal provision that Trump wants to implement is to give a 10-year jail to those undocumented immigrants who, having been deported to Mexico, are arrested in a new attempt to return to the United States.

In addition to being a bridge to the US, Mexico is also the arrival point of migrants from other countries. With restrictions in the US, thousands of migrants are stranded in Mexico, especially in border cities like Tijuana and Nuevo Laredo. Hours before leaving the government, Obama cancelled the legal order known as "dry feet" that granted immediate asylum to Cubans who arrived in the United States by land and not by sea. In February of 2017 thousands of Cubans in Nuevo Laredo were demanding to go to the US but now they had no rights, neither do they have any in Mexico.

The same situation arose in Tijuana where the crossing of the border is blocked for thousands of Haitians and Africans who paid a lot of money to traffickers from their countries to supposedly take them to the US. Among Haitians there are complete families and many qualified people.

In addition to the social and economic crisis of these thousands of stranded migrants, without jobs and without rights there is now racism among the Mexican population against Haitians and Africans who are stigmatized as delinquents. While Mexico may complain about the bad treatment that migrants receive in the US, that bad treatment

also applies to the migrants that arrive in Mexico or are going towards the United States.

As well as the racism that robs and exploits them, the drug cartels (that frequently have the support of the Mexican authorities), assault buses of Central American migrants in places like San Fernando and Tamaulipas. In addition to stealing from and murdering a number of these migrants, others are recruited for quasi slave labor or as hit men, and women are taken to be used as prostitutes in their business or for the use of traffickers themselves.

The tendency of reducing the labour force, as a result of capitalist globalization, also translates into an increase in the migration of women and children in risky conditions (including an increase of children traveling alone to the United States). According to official data, migrant women made up 44.7% of the total number of migrants in the 2004-2006 period whereas this has risen to 47.5% in the 2013-2015 period. Migrant women have also a higher rate of unemployment than men.

The migration of Mexican women shows an increase from the 1970s to the present. In 2012, women residing in the United States were about 5.5 million, representing 46% of the Mexican population residing in that country. Their conditions of labor and employment are linked to traditional gender roles.

Several organizations point out that abuse against migrant women has become normalised and that rape has become a spectacle. The roles and stereotypes that accompany these women make them more vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual violence, disappearances, prostitution, human trafficking, extortion, separation from their families (many travel with children), arbitrary detention, illness, accidents and femicide. As they are often responsible for the care of children traveling with them, they become double targets and the difficulties increase because their status as undocumented workers makes it more difficult to obtain employment, housing and resources, as well as any social services for them and their children.

**Replace Chapter 7 with the following wording:**

### **Women's rights and mass mobilization against violence, rape and femicide, and for the right to abortion**

In general terms, as regards the key issues of feminist struggles, the situation in recent years has been contradictory, given the growing presence of women in the labour force. The women's movement has developed multiple structures and mobilizations in all regions of the world, but faces a reactionary offensive in many countries, linked to the rise of neoconservative and fundamentalist currents. This offensive once again attacks fundamental rights: the right to live; the right to financial and social independence from men (parents, brothers or husbands); the ability to dress as they want; and the right to control reproductive capacity, especially through legal, free and safe access to abortion.

In recent years, an important factor of social mobilization has been the response to violence against women, in the first place femicide, in India, Turkey, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay or Mexico. Since the gigantic demonstrations in India in December 2012, many other mobilizations have taken place in as many cities: on 7 November 2015, 500,000 women mobilized in Madrid against the increase in violence and murders of women; in Argentina, hundreds of thousands of women mobilized in 2015 in response to several murders that impacted the country; in Mexico, the spread of murders and disappearances of women marked by drug trafficking to a hitherto unknown level also resulted in strong mobilizations in the country.

These mobilizations remind us of the high level of violence in many countries, violence that affects women in the first place and also weighs on the social reality: most of the countries of Central America, Mexico and Brazil and almost all of sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa have reached their highest level of homicides not linked to war.

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Among the noticeable new factors, we find a tendency to interpellation and fruitful dialogues with social subjects that until now had not felt themselves to be a full part of the women's and feminist movements: trans collectives, black women, indigenous women, lesbians, among others. New forms of mobilization are also present, which in some countries have included using methods such as the strike, in dialogue and debate with the trade union movement, like the 8 March 2017 mobilization that was called as the Women's International Strike, with a significant increase of mobilization, which allows us to foresee the rise of the feminist movement and the diversification of its alliances.

The election of Donald Trump provoked an international wave of protests on 21 January 2017 at the initiative of the women's movement, not only in several cities of the United States, but also in many cities of the world, placing the women's movement at the forefront of political struggles against reaction. The various reactionary governments that have come to power in the wave of liberal offensives, try to challenge the right to abortion won by the struggles of previous decades. In this situation mass mobilizations have had to defend and extend this right, notably in the Spanish State in 2014 and in Poland in 2016.

We should point out the international character of this new movement, which gives it a potential for growth. Countries like Argentina and Italy inspire in different latitudes the possibility of shaping emerging structures that connect struggles, tactics and strategies. The role that new technologies have played in this regard, particularly social networks as a platform for dissemination and communication, is undeniable.

### Amendments to [Towards a text on Role and Tasks of the Fourth International](#)

#### Point 6 "The balance sheets of our experiences since the beginning of the 1990s"

##### Add at end:

As noted above, agreement on tasks in the national situation is an indispensable factor in creating new parties that have a lasting character, all the more so when there seems to be formal "programmatic" agreement, for example in the case of fusion between self-defined revolutionary currents. The ability to grasp the key task in the national situation, such as for example the question of the referendum for the legalisation of abortion in Portugal in 1999 - agreement on which was a key factor in the creation of the Left Bloc - is, as we have underlined several times, essential in determining our orientation to other forces.

#### Point 7 "Lessons from the balance sheets"

##### Rewrite the second sentence "They have turned around the need to wage political battles within the political forces we are building on: To read:

"They have turned around the need to wage political battles within the political forces we are building on a series of key programmatic principles. These principles in their developed form are not necessarily a precondition for building a new political force, but without the basis to have such discussions and to move forward then the prospects of building a truly useful party for the class struggle are unlikely. The level of initial agreement required on each of these points must be judged on the basis of the nature of the existing political currents and audience of the new party.

The points we have highlighted are:"

##### Add a new bullet point:

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âEurosç The party is committed to a policy of activity on demands and campaigns combating women's oppression, in the context of participation in the class-struggle oriented groups, campaigns and movements, with an understanding of the strategic goal of building an autonomous women's movement. The party's preoccupation with both education and activity on these questions is a permanent one, not to be put aside in moments where there is a lower level of mass activity.

The party seeks to build a feminist profile both externally and internally to not only encourage women to join but to build internally a positive vision of women in the leadership.

In addition to ensuring that the democratic functioning of the party enables all members to fully participate as outlined above, the party understands that social dynamics tend to exclude women from political participation, therefore it accepts the need for specific mechanisms (women only meetings, priority for women in speakers lists etc) that encourage women's participation, and the recognition of further problems to be overcome.

The party does not tolerate any form of sexist (or transphobic or homo/lesbophobic) behaviour. The implementation of this political position is the responsibility of the party which ensures not only political education on these questions but also that the structures, functioning and procedures put in place work to ensure that the parties we are building, although they cannot be "islands of socialism" in a capitalist world, strive to prefigure the society we want.

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