

Politics and Poetics of Strike in the Postsocialist and Postcolonial Encounter

Dates: 7 – 8 April 2022

Location: University of Groningen

Organized by:

Judith Naeff

Senka Neuman Stanivuković

Ksenia Robbe

Theme and aims

On International Women's Day in 2018, women from over 50 countries around the world participated in a 24-hour strike to draw attention to ongoing gender inequality, discrimination and violence. By (re)turning to March 8 as a day of striking, the International Women's Strike has made visible the potential of feminist movements to think and act otherwise (Gago et al. 2020). The International Women's Strike assembles feminist experiences, struggles and mobilizations across different geographies and temporalities.

A feminist strike troubles distinctions between formality and informality, employment and unemployment, paid and unpaid labour, productive and reproductive work, or migrant work and work done by nationals (Gago 2018). It recognizes and includes rights claims, lived experiences and spaces inhabited by those who are made invisible by these binary distinctions. As such, a feminist strike provides a critical lens through which we can explore material and immaterial connections between radically different bodies, conflicts and territories and assemble diverse politics and poetics of struggle, protest and liberation across space and time. This workshop continues the conversation about politics and poetics of a feminist strike and the emerging feminist internationalism from below from the perspective of a postsocialist/postcolonial encounter. The workshop hopes to explore existing and possible postcolonial/postsocialist encounters through practices, experiences and struggles of a feminist strike. By postcolonial/postsocialist encounters, we refer to the intersections of postcolonial and postsocialist experiences, imaginaries, and legacies, including elements outside of these intersections and the challenges that arise from them (Koobak et al. 2021).

Programme ¹

March 21, 4-5 PM

Discussion of “Strike a Rock”, dir. Aliko Saragas-Georgiou (fully online) – with Nomusa Makhubu, Helene Strauss and Patience Mususa, moderated by Ksenia Robbe and Kylie Thomas

The discussion will focus on the documentary and explore feminist resistances against violent extractivism in South Africa in the aftermath of the 2012 Marikana Massacre and in the Zambian Copperbelt.

This event is part of the series *Footnotes – Intersectional Strategies in (South) Africa* organized by Zuid-Afrikahuis, Amsterdam, with the support of The Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture, University of Groningen, and The Netherlands Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

The film is available via this [link](#).

Join the discussion via [YouTube](#) on March 21, 4-5 pm.

April 7

To join on-site: Room A 7, Academy Building, Broerstraat 5 9712 CP Groningen

To join the video meeting, click this link: <https://meet.google.com/jkn-cgci-ndt>

Otherwise, to join by phone, dial +1 470-616-0488 and enter this PIN: 106 234 623#

9:30 – 9:45 Opening of the Workshop and Coffee

9:45 – 11:00 Keynote Francisca de Haan, Central European University
“From Madrid 1936 to 1990s Buenos Aires: Continuity and Change in Left Women’s Activism.”

The contributions of women from the “Old Left” to enhancing women’s rights across the globe are still insufficiently known or understood. There is a widely-held assumption that “communist women” shared the overarching anti-feminist views of the male communists of their time. But, as I will show with numerous examples, this view is far too simplistic and has overshadowed the fact that these women were involved in a consistent and collective struggle for social justice and rights for all women. Just one example is that on March 8, in 1936, four months before the Spanish Civil War, Dolores Ibárruri organized a march of eighty thousand

¹ All times are CET

women in Madrid, with banners “For the emancipation of the working women in Spain from the yoke of capitalists and landed gentry and the menace of fascism and war.” Already in 1934, Ibárruri had been involved in establishing the Women’s World Committee Against War and Fascism, and in 1945 she participated in establishing the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF). The WIDF’s key goals were peace and women’s rights, understood as deeply interconnected, for which it worked at national and transnational levels, such as the United Nations.

Women like Ibárruri and her comrades and companions were engaged in this decades-long struggle because they formed a collectivity and because they were driven by a profound “desire to change everything” (Verónica Gago), no less than today’s feminist activists. And those who lived long enough, such as the Argentinian communist leader Fanny Edelman (1911–2011), who in her later years forged a friendship with Lohana Berkins (1965–2016), the founder of Asociación de Lucha por la Identidad Travesti y Transexual (Association for the Fight for Transvestite and Transsexual Identity, ALITT), were also directly connected with today’s struggles. Against this background, my paper will discuss continuities and changes in Leftist women’s activism from the 1930s until today.

11:00 – 12:30

Panel 1 - Poetics of a Feminist Strike

Aleksei Borisionok, “General Strike and Comradely Aesthetics in contemporary art of Belarus 2020-22”

Liberty Chee, “Play and Counter-conduct: Migrant Domestic Workers on Tiktok.”

Sarah Wells, “What Was the Women’s Strike?: Voice-Off in Militant Cinema of the Long 1970s.”

12:30 – 13:45

Lunch

13:45 – 15:15

Panel 2 – Discourses of a Feminist Strike

Donya Ahmadi, “Overlooked No More: The Iranian #Metoo Movement and the Case for an Intersectional Iranian Women’s Rights Agenda.”

Fabio Belafatti, “Caught in the clash of two colonial systems”: Postcolonial Rhetoric in anti-Feminist and anti-Human Rights mobilization in contemporary Lithuania.”

Aleksandra Reczuch, “The Emergence of the New Left. Feminist Discourses as a Counterpower to the Hegemonic Discourses in Poland.”

15:15 – 15:30 Coffee

15:30-17:00 **Roundtable Discussion on Decolonial Feminist Activism**

Tirza Balk (University of Colour, Extinction Rebellion)

Helin Sahin (Groningen Feminist Network)

3rd speaker TBA

Moderated by Donya Ahmadi

8 April

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To join the video meeting, click this link: <https://meet.google.com/whn-sasx-pqm>

Otherwise, to join by phone, dial +1 347-318-8419 and enter this PIN: 428 716 354#

10:00 – 11:30 **“Who is afraid of ideology? Part I, II and III”(2018-2020), dir. Marwa Arsanios Streaming, Screening and Q&A with Marwa Arsanios – moderated by Judith Naeff**
(Screening 10:00, Q&A 10:30)

Marwa Arsanios’s new film examines the structures of self-governance and knowledge production fostered by the autonomous women’s movements in Iraqi Kurdistan (part I), Northern Syria (part II) and Colombia (part III). Observing ecofeminist praxis in these conflict zones, she asks: what kinds of democracies are enabled without a state, and what kind of ecology is produced under the conditions of war? Together, the three experimental documentary videos of Who is afraid of ideology? offer a propositional portrait of guerrilla ethics.

The videos will be made available for streaming between 3 and 10 april. The Q&A with Marwa Arsanios will take place on April 8 at 10:30 and can be followed online.

Video for the Q&A and streaming link TBA, please contact Judith Naeff at j.a.naeff@hum.leidenuniv.nl

11:30 – 12:45 Lunch

12:45 – 14:15 **Panel 3 - Prefigurative Politics of a Feminist Strike**

Barbara Dynda, “Anarcha-feminist Traditions within the Polish Protests for Reproductive Justice. Political Strategies of Postsocialist Grassroots Feminism in Poland.”

Souad Eddouada, “Women’s Land Rights and the Commons: Rural Activism and Liberal Feminism in Morocco.”

Arya Thomas, “Striking to Sit- Against a Coercive Regime of Time.”

14:15 – 14:30 Coffee

14:30 – 16:00 **Panel 4 - Temporalities of a Feminist Strike**

Judith Naeff, “The Literary Afterlives of Arwa Saleh.”

Senka Neuman Stanivuković, Women of Uljanik - Contesting European Labour Regime in a Postsocialist Factory

Olia Sosnovskaya, “The Poetics and Politics of Interruption.”

16:00 -16:15 Coffee

16:15 – 17:00 **Keynote Liz Mason Deese, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

“Cartographies of a Situated Strike: Resonance and Translation of the Transnational Feminist Strike.”

Liz Mason-Deese is a translator, researcher, and feminist activist. She holds a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has taught at the

University of Mary Washington and George Mason University. She has published extensively on social movements in Latin America, struggles around social reproduction, and the politics of knowledge production. She has translated numerous books, including Verónica Gago's *Feminist International* and *A Feminist Reading of Debt* by Verónica Gago and Luci Cavallero, and recently co-edited and translated the collection *Femicide and Global Accumulation*. She is currently conducting engaged in a research project entitled "A Feminist Counter-Mapping of Debt" with the Grupo de Investigación e Intervención Feminista with funding from the Antipode Foundation. She is also a member of the translation collective Territorio de Ideas and the Counter-Cartographies Collective.