

Anarchist library
Anti-Copyright



Anarcha-feminism against institutionalized misogyny, homophobia and transphobia in right-wing populism

Sonia Muñoz Llort

11/12/2017

Sonia Muñoz Llort
Anarcha-feminism against institutionalized misogyny,
homophobia and transphobia in right-wing populism
11/12/2017

Text written for the panel debate "Right-wing mysogyny" at "Brøl, the many voices of feminism" organized by the Women League in Norway (Oslo, October 28th. 2017)

en.anarchistlibraries.net

Right-wing populism is a political ideology, which combines right-wing politics and populist rhetoric and themes. In Europe, right-wing populism is an expression used to describe groups, politicians, and political parties generally known for their opposition to immigration, mostly from the Islamic world and, in most cases, euroscepticism. Right-wing populism in the Western world is generally, but not exclusively, associated with ideologies such as New Nationalism, anti-globalization, nativism, white supremacy protectionism as well as fear for diversity and opposition to immigration. Many authors and scholars see right-wing populism and extreme right-movements part of the same phenomenon.

Their rhetoric often consists of anti-elitist sentiments, opposition to the socialistic system and speaking for the "common people". Their rhetoric and ideology though, have a narrow under-

standing of who common people are. When they refer to “common people”, it is white able heterosexual middle-class men as the norm. It is obvious that we can find women, known as femonationists, being part of these movements regardless of their conservative and misogynist view against women, non-binary, gender fluid, intersex and trans persons since all of us are seen as subservient to men. This has surprisingly provoked very little criticism from the so called mainstream feminists in Europe and the Western in general. From an anarcho-feminist perspective, I am not going to use the concepts either of mainstream or majority feminism because both create an inherent hierarchy that is extremely negative for feminist movements and because it usually refers to straight middle-class Western able white women. We are a diversity of feminist groups with particular issues grounded in our different identities, while at the same time we share part of the struggles against oppression from common systems such as capitalism, the state or religion.

The last years has been clear that right-wing movements are increasing in presence and strength and with them, the danger of violence against several groups of people that do not match their exclusive description of “common people”. Particularly, women and other groups of people that do not identify as men are seen as inferior to men in their oppressive idea of social hierarchy, and gathering other factors to our identities are these movements a direct threat to the majority of society. They try to control us while they dehumanize us with their rhetoric canalized by authoritarian state-organized abuse, objectivizing our health and our bodies, demining our ideas and denying us our human rights.

Focusing in this natural exclusion of people in the core ideology of right-wing populist movements, anarcho-feminism is a natural antagonist of right-wing populism. Anarcho-feminism is described to be an anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist, anti-oppressive philosophy, with the goal of creating an “equal ground” between all genders. The term “anarcho-feminism” suggests the social freedom and

dividing us as groups making hierarchies based on identities, pretending we have no common goals because our diversity. But this is absolutely false.

Our struggle must be fought based on solidarity upon our differences. Differences between feministic groups are the intersectional strength that right-wing homogenous ideology fears. They know that if we work together in our common goals we can actually defeat the system that they hide behind. This is something many Native groups around the world have understood and some Western feminists have to work with. Their struggle is our struggle.

sion, we must join the struggle we endure across borders and beyond identities.

No borders, embrace diversity, share the struggle

In many cultures, we have developed concepts and labels to define ourselves. These linguistic tools are practical in order of getting to know ourselves, define our identity and be able to show and express ourselves to the rest of the world. Unfortunately, these same linguistic tools are abused to split us as human beings. They have been used to categorize, discriminate and create false differences between us besides; this is something right-wing movements misuse at a high degree in their misogynistic tactics.

Linguistic tools empower us as individuals but can be a burden for us as collectives. I think that the better we know ourselves, the clearer we can decide what goals we want to achieve and what tools and methods needed in order to do so.

Since right-wing movements are strongly ideologically based on nationalist homogeneity and protectionism, feminist movements must think thoroughly about the need of fighting against borders and the capitalistic system that are used to separate us. Volcano and Rogue explained intersectional anarcho-feminism in their article *Insurrections at the intersections: feminism, intersectionality and anarchism* as the concept where “we call for an end to all exploitation and oppression and this includes an end to class society. Liberal interpretations of intersectionality miss the uniqueness of class by viewing it as an identity and treating it as though it is the same as racism or sexism by tacking an “ism” onto the end. Eradicating capitalism means an end to class society; it means class war. Likewise, race, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, age—the gamut of hierarchically-arranged social relations— are in their own ways unique. As anarchists, we might point those unique qualities out rather than leveling all of these social relations into a single framework.”

Right-wing movements want to create a false notion of difference and separation between us where we fight against each other,

liberty of women and other groups who does not define themselves as men, without needed dependence upon other groups or parties. Right-wing populism is nourished upon violent male authority represented by capital that grows at the expense of the oppressed who are not seen as common people.

The ideological clash is undeniable; the struggle for our freedom is inevitable. Furthermore, an awakening of anarcho-feminism might be the key needed in these uncertain times to regain our independence creating a new system and in order to achieve this; we must join other movements who share our struggle to end capitalism and authority in society in addition to share our aim to build a new system.

As I pointed before, from an anarcho-feministic point of view the criticism to the misogyny and phobia against other people with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations from the right-wing populism has been taken too lightly from Western white middle-class feminists. This is actually a very dangerous role to choose, letting silence take over under this threat and making me especially critical to this lack of commitment. The reason behind this silence might have several factors, being one of them the lack of consciousness of our white middle-class privileges and the consequently threat some feel of losing them when right-wing rhetoric has increased in the last years.

Acknowledging our privileges

White middle-class privileges are a reality we white feminists must acknowledge in order to change all the oppressive systems that surrounds us. Historically speaking, we like to see ourselves as pioneers in fighting for women’s rights giving this an intrinsically ethnocentric role in women’s struggle, being that the reason behind concepts such a mainstream or majority feminism. However, we are either majority nor pioneers. This rhetoric is part of our privileges, which has been sold by the tendency of empowerment among Western feminists. Empowerment does not challenge

the structures at all, and even less destroys them in order of building new structures based on equality.

By instance, becoming a part of the system through taking leader roles in private enterprises or high political placements in the government does not bring automatic changes of the oppressive system. It actually seems to have the opposite effect, that women develop a Stockholm's syndrome to capitalism and become unquestionable defenders of the system excluding most of the other groups that remain oppressed and invisibilized.

We just have to understand and admit that as white Western straight women some of us are, we have certain privileges that most of our human siblings in other parts of the world do not have. Moreover, it is through these privileges we also must have the responsibility to criticize and fight right-wing movements much louder than we have been doing until now. In addition to that, we must learn to respect, encourage and support other groups' struggles opening our alliances in solidarity with any other group of people that it is excluded from the current vicious system. I must make perfectly clear that our role as feminists should be of allies to each other. Unfortunately, I often read comments, articles and such written by middle-class feminists that are completely biased by their good Samaritan attitudes towards women's movements in lower classes and even other countries. This is a condescending imperialistic attitude we must be aware of, in order of getting rid of it completely because it creates a hierarchical difference between us and other feminist groups we do not neither want nor need because it is created and we need to deconstruct it.

This is one of our most dangerous bias, our unawareness about our own privileges. We must look carefully, recognize them and replace them. We cannot and must not try to lead other women's and groups struggles. As middle-class Western feminists, we tend to be more heard and seen, while our brothers and sisters are invisible even though they deal with more complicated and deeper struggles

that are results of centuries of abusive Western capitalistic system, which expanded through colonialism and capitalistic imperialism.

Acknowledging our middle-class white privileges might be the first step towards fighting the hierarchy within feministic groups that weaken our common fight. We are allies in the struggle, but every group knows how to organize and the tools needed to take responsibility for liberating themselves from the system. When right-wing populism try to divide us, we are going to organize in intersectional solidarity. Solidarity then, must be built upon respect for each other's struggle, rhetoric and tools chosen to set us free. There is not one single universal solution to reach our common goal of building a new system based on equality and diversity, we have to support each other's movements towards the creation of a new system.

White middle-class feminists must learn to step aside when it comes to setting goals and choosing methods in other social movements. We have to make a statement against misogyny and other gender-related phobias being conscious of encouraging and supporting diverse representation in society. Representation not as we wish to, but as other groups choose to. We can be allies, as others show us how and until what degree.

On everyday basis, I experience many of my fellow Western white middle-class feminists to be content with what our predecessors achieved, but not being aware that most of these achievements just enriched and uplifted us, a narrow minority. We must think as anarchists do, nobody is free until everybody is free. Though I might feel free, the threat of right-wing ideology is real because they violently increase our oppression. This increase in right-wing violence, both political and practical by fascistic and white supremacist movements, is deadly for many people. So the question remains, what does it take to organize feminists movements in solidarity against this common threat?

After being conscious acknowledging our privileges and other movement's abilities to choose their own methods to fight oppres-