

Women in Black of Madrid Against War:

The wars in the Balkans began in the former Yugoslavia in 1991 and lasted for a decade. In 1992 the MOC (Movement for Conscientious Objection) sought in the former Yugoslavia groups or individuals to support and to work with against the wars. In that way, they came to know the Women in Black Against Wars of Belgrade, feminist women, antimilitarists and pacifists who with their “not in my name” denounced the militarism of their own and that of the international community in the Balkans.

In Madrid a coordinator of mixed groups was formed (Platform for Peace in the Balkans) through which we supported the WinB of Belgrade for several years. At the same time, we were shaping a group of women who participated in the various proposals that were made in Spain in support of the Women in Black of Belgrade. Following years of antimilitarist, feminist and pacifist work against the wars in the Balkans, in 1999 we formed *Women in Black of Madrid Against War*. We were women coming from antimilitarism, Christian groups, feminists or without any activist background.

Since 1999 Women in Black of Madrid has been formed by women who have remained active during these years, others who come and go, and a third group that is the widest circle and who support or participate in the various activities.

As a group, we strive to work inward, deepening the characteristics that we consider special to WinB, interwoven with the challenges that emerge each day, and outwardly by publicly demonstrating our position with regard to topics or problems of our country or anywhere on the planet. In the first years we would go out into the streets occasionally and since 30 January of 2005, we have been going to the Plaza Mayor the last Sunday of the month at 12:00 noon, or on any other occasion that we feel it is necessary. That first convocation was about the *International Day of Nonviolence and Peace*.

We are feminists. Our feminism is pacifist and antimilitarist. This feminism is an alternative to others, renovating and more global. We say NO to the patriarchy because it is a system of power and oppression against women, which also turns against many men as it builds a masculinity based on values such a physical force, warlike heroism, heterosexuality, hierarchy and victory. One cannot analyze the topic of war and militarization without taking into account the perspective of gender; and, likewise, without considering the involvement and collusion between the patriarchal and political power systems, and nationalisms and fundamentalisms, as they all presuppose an exclusion of the ‘other’.

We are pacifists. Our work for peace, against war, is a political option. We consider that just as wars are constructed daily, so is peace.

We are antimilitarists:

- We say NO to armies, to militarization of daily life, to weapons production and research, to the commerce in arms.

- We reject the idea of the enemy, the other, a hostile alien, dangerous, inferior or fanatic, from whom one must defend oneself, and who can be dealt with only with force.
- We do not believe in just wars. No war happens for the good or the defense of the civil populace, rather for hidden economic or political reasons.
- We do not believe that any army can be a force for pacification.

We say **NO to fundamentalisms**.

Our **proposals, actions and tools** are:

- **Civil disobedience, not collaboration**, to say NO to acts of our government and to call on other citizens to do the same. It is also necessary that society (instead of always blaming those in power) assume its own responsibility for the bellicose policies of the country.
- **Direct non-violent action**.
- **Education for peace and nonviolence**.
- **Group discussions** and international meetings.
- **Street actions**: rallies, performances.

We go out into the street:

- Dressed **in black** as a sign of mourning for all the victims of war.
- In **silence**, as there are no words to satisfactorily express the grief and indignation in the face of war. Also because too frequently political slogans and mottoes become empty and trite; and because we do not want to use language aggressively, with insults and shouts – which doesn't mean that we fail to call things as they are.
- We speak **in our name** in the public plazas and squares with our bodies and through our communiqués, banners, placards, posters and mottoes.

*Let us expel war and violence
from history
and from our lives.*

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-Webpage: <http://www.mujerpalabra.net/activismo/mdnmadrid/>

-Blog with information about the vigils and the supporting documents:
<http://mujeresdenegromadrid.blogspot.com.es/>