

JUAREZ: WE ARE BEING KILLED

By Maria del Rosario Lara

We are being killed. I am from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and the situation of



violence the city is facing today still continues to affect me emotionally. The gender violence, which has reached the point of murder, can be considered as one of the multiple forms of national insecurity in which Mexicans live. The murder of the

female student of the Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez that occurred on April 5th of this year has shocked Ciudad Juarez. This fact is not an isolated one, it is an event that constitutes one more link in the long chain of femicides in Ciudad Juarez. The femicides in Ciudad Juarez began to occur since 1993 according to Humberto Flores' research: *Ciudad Juarez: where women live in danger of death*.

In response to the assassination of their classmate, the college students took the streets to demand justice for her. In the absence of government commitment to solve the cases of murder and lack of measures to prevent this situation, the college students of the Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez organized meetings from April 9th to April 12th to elaborate clear proposals to present them to the corresponding authorities with the intention to solve the situation of violence under which women in Ciudad Juarez are living right now. The students have also claimed that the basic social structures are violent, excluding, and misogynist.



These femicides, which have traumatized the city, take place in a global context where different feminisms have raised their voices against both the State violence and highly authoritarian political and social organizations, such as political parties, churches, the family, the school, and alike. Nevertheless, not all the reactions to this cruel reality have shown solidarity for the victims and different discourses have presented femicides as a personal decision, that is to say, a question of individuality, and have ominously disregarded the social dimension of femicides. This form of violence is structural and has doomed entire communities of human beings to an extreme vulnerability to the point of living permanently under the danger of losing one's life. In view of the incapacity of the State and non-governmental organizations that promote exclusionary and heterosexual structures, power is exercised in a stark and unmediated manner upon citizens who have been reluctant to standardization processes of life. So every effort to question scientific, religious and political discourses which tend to naturalize the dominant conceptions of "sex" and "gender" is viewed as irrational and ridiculous. Other forms of obliterating the social dimension of femicides is that of presenting them as both isolated events and as result of the assassin's personal decision. When using these arguments, the State and its supporters can avoid their responsibilities and duties to citizens, and at the same time the character of political mobilization that any denunciation of violence entails in itself is erased. Femicide is a social problem, and as such should be solved, politically and socially. Its resolution depends upon a change of mentality, upon politics of inclusion and of equity among the citizens. It is very disappointing to witness social practices that oppose different feminisms by criminalizing them without any critical reflection. These practices characterize feminism both as immoral and irrational and based on hatred towards males. The paradox is that there are women who support this type of discourses. As an example, we can cite the movement *Not in my name*.

The effort of feminism to establish inclusion relationships within communities has been punished by the State and its subsidiaries. From a personal point of view, I think that femicide is the result of punishment exercised over all those who do not submit to the norm of normalization. Opposition to the discourse that constructs woman both as an incomplete and dependent subject, results in a corporal and emotional punishment. The lack of action of the State to struggle

against femicides makes evidente that it has allowed and tolerated them, since femicides work as a means of control and domination over the population.