

March 8th, 2010: 100 Years of Struggles for Gender Equality

The celebration internationally of “Women’s Day” was established at the second International Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen in 1910. It was proposed by the campaigner Clara Zetkin.

The women agreed to conduct common struggles for the rights of working women, for the protection of motherhood and children, for the right to vote, for a common struggle against high prices caused by the monopolies’ greed for profit and against the arms race.

In those one hundred years the equality of genders has been recognized as a fundamental human right. The UN International Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, constitutes a strong international base.

A good European and international legislation has been created as a result of long and hard struggles of the women’s and feminist movements. Of course, there was always the gap between de jure equality and de facto equality.

Today, the neoliberal model that has caused an economic, social and cultural crisis, threatens to eliminate not only the achievements of women, but also the principles on which they are founded.

The work of women has become enslaved by paltry wages and lack of insurance, it is often made difficult by violence, threats, sexual harassment, women often get fired in case of pregnancy and at times we find working conditions that cost us our lives.

The welfare state has disintegrated through privatization even of those fields that are the basis for substantive equality. That is the whole complex: health, education, social security, care and concern for children and the elderly. The obligations of the welfare state were loaded on the shoulders of women.

The retirement age is equated upwards and all positive measures for women are eliminated.

Violence against women has intensified and often takes the form of murder. The right to abortion either is in dispute or is invalidated. The family law changes in a conservative direction.

Politics remain male-dominated.

The attack of the neoliberals on women’s social and political rights finds its own expression also in the ideological sphere. There is a systematic propaganda to enforce part-time work, above all on women, as the only kind of work.

Conservative political circles and the Church attack women's rights. Women’s sexuality, the self-determination of our reproductive function and sexual orientation are systematically attacked.

We, the women of the European Left, cannot accept that the people must pay for the consequences of the crisis of capitalism. Adamantly we defend our acquired rights, and we demand a solution to the crisis not at the expense of the people but at the expense of monopolies, companies and banks.

We want gender equality in the labor market, equal pay for equal work and the same opportunities for women and men at work.

We want the possibility of combining work and family life through the reduction of working hours and the establishment of public services for the care of children, sick and the elderly.

We want equal participation and representation of women in politics and in all decision-making institutions, including 50% of all seats.

We demand the sexual and reproductive rights of women to be guaranteed.

We are in favor of a European law that will legalize abortion.

We demand a European law against gender-based violence.

We demand the same rights and the same opportunities for migrant and refugee women.

We shall not become "working poor" women.

The feminist movement allied with the workers' movement and the equal rights movement is fighting against the monopolies, companies and banks.

DOLORES IBARRURI's slogan "NO PASSARAN!" is also our slogan!

Statement des feministischen Netzwerkes der Europäischen Linken.

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