Greek women now have an equal voice

Premier Andreas Papandreou inaugurated the premises of the Council for the Equality of the Sexes on April 2, 1984. During the ceremony, he spoke on the government's program, its work and its aims regarding the issue of equality between the sexes.

"Our government," the premier said, inter alia, "has been delegated the historic role of paving the way for the social liberation of our people, to abolish all forms of social discrimination and to lead the country toward stable and permanent social and economic development, through wide, active and popular participation."

"During these two and a half years of government, we have brought about extensive social changes based on the abolition of anachronistic institutions and the establishment of new ones, and through substantial measures contributing decisively to the liberation of not only Greek women, but the Greek family as a whole. We have consolidated the recognition. We have already taken measures to protect children born out of wedlock.

"We have adopted International Agreement 103 on the protection of motherhood, and also the U.N. international accord on abolishing discrimination against women.

"We have awarded full and separate pensions to woman farmers, as well as motherhood subsidies and secured through new regulations their right to freely and actively participate in agricultural cooperatives and the other organizations.

"Our target is to secure all working rights for the woman farmer. Behind this was the recent decision on the continuation of agricultural day care centers during the summer months.

"A recent law has consolidated equality at work, in remuneration, access to jobs, career advancement and family subsidies, aiming at increasing women's participation in the country's agricultural strength."

Papandreou also re-emphasized the struggle of women, which has been accomplished, in others less. In Greece, there are many women's organizations which have fought for their rights for many years. Through these struggles and with the new government's support and cooperation, progress has been made in the promotion of equality between the sexes in Greece.

Before the advent of the Socialist government in October 1981, there was no state mechanism charged with promoting women's issues. Since then, we have established a state mechanism in order to promote the interests of women in all areas of life.
Before the advent of the Socialist government in October 1981, there was no state mechanism created for promoting the equality of the sexes, and the issue of women was left off the agenda of the women's progressive movement. For the first time, on March 8, 1983, the Council for the Equality of the Sexes was formed. The council is responsible directly to the Prime Minister, and functions as an autonomous body within the Ministry to the Prime Minister.

In his speech, Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou said: "In the course of Allaghi toward the construction of a socialist society, true equality of the sexes is essential not only as an element of social justice, but also as a factor for full exploitation of the country's manpower, irrespective of sex, if we are to achieve economic and social development in our country. The Greek woman today has to face tremendous problems in all social sectors... These problems are not simply women's problems, but problems that concern Greek society as a whole. The Council for the Equality of the Sexes is charged with promoting the issue of equality in our country. But the final responsibility for promoting this issue is the collective responsibility of the whole government.

A fundamental aim of government policy is to increase women's participation in the country's productive, political, economic and social life, improve the status of the Greek woman with statutory changes legally abolishing sex discrimination and with positive steps promoting women in both the public and the private sector.

According to the new policy, the Council's responsibilities are divided into four main areas:

1. Promoting equality in education and employment opportunities for women.
2. Ensuring equal rights in marriage and family law.
3. Protecting women's health and welfare.
4. Increasing women's political participation.

The government's goal is to provide the opportunities for women to participate on equal terms and with equal opportunities at all hierarchical and organizational levels of production.

Training has been offered to women in traditional male-dominated professions, as well as in new fields. The Urban Transportation System, for example, has announced that it will employ 100-150 female bus drivers in 1984. The Employment Organization (O.A.E.D) is planning to subsidize a higher proportion of women (30% for women as opposed to 20% for men). At the statutory level, the following changes have been made: the abolition of polygamy and a new law on civil marriage has been established in Greece for the first time; a full pension has been given to the female Greek farmer; the

U.S. Historian on Women's Issues

Ms. Suzan Hartman, a prominent professor of history who lectures at the University of Missouri, was in Athens recently for an exchange of views with various Greek women's organizations.

While in Athens, Ms. Hartman discussed the various changes in priorities in the feminist movement in the 20th century and the women's movement from 1965 until today.

During her meetings with leading members of the Greek women's movement, Ms. Hartman also had the opportunity to be brief on the directions and prospects of the women's movement in Greece in recent years.

Ms. Hartman is the author of a series of articles and books - some of which have been award-winners - such as "The Woman's Position in U.S. History," "The Peculiarities of Women's Progress, 1820-1920," and "Women's Organizations During World War II: Interaction of Class, Race and Feminism."

The feminist press in an effort to put an end to the female stereotypes, deals with main issues such as child support, the role of women in the labor market, marriage, and divorce. The feminist agenda aims to redefine women's status and to end sex discrimination.

The feminist press is, in a way, a form of resistance against the traditional and patriarchal roles assigned to women. It seeks to challenge the norms that have historically marginalized women and to promote a more equal and just society for all genders.

The feminist agenda in Greece is reflected in various campaigns and initiatives that aim to empower women and to ensure their rights and freedoms.

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