

Greek women now have an equal voice

«When women are not liberated, then neither are men.»

A. PAPANDREOU—

Premier Andreas Papandreou inaugurated the premises of the Council for the Equality of the Sexes on April 4, 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 popular participation."

"During these two and a half years of our government's mandate 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

crimination. We have also 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 continued operation of agricultural day-care centers during the summer months.

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

Papandreou also re-

Women, for more than a century, have been aware of their state of oppression and have begun to demand their rights decisively. The women's revolt in New York, on March 8, 1857, where much blood was shed, was followed by a series of struggles for equality at work, in society and in the family. At the Socialist Women's Conference in Copenhagen, Clara Zetkin proposed that March 8 be established as International Women's Day. Women throughout the world should realize that International Women's Day is every day of the year and that the International Year for Women is every year until the total and final justification and accomplishment of their targets are achieved: economic, political and social equality.

Since then, the struggle has continued. In many countries much 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 promot-



Women activists, demonstrating in Athens, led by Margaret Papandreou, the prime minister's wife. Mrs. Papandreou is president of the Union of Greek Women, a major women's organization

as well as in decision making. The Socialist Government is the first in the political history of modern Greece to include the feminist issues in its program. It has announced specific measures that will improve the status of the Greek woman with statutory changes legally abolishing sex discrimination and with positive steps promoting wo-

U.N. International Convention on the abolition of all forms of discrimination against women has been voted on by Parliament; the International Convention (Number 105) on the protection of motherhood has been ratified; adultery is no longer a penal offense. Greece's Family Law, which contained instances of blatant discrimination against

participate to end the offensive treatment of the female sex over the mass media.

Women's organizations and groups in Greece are very active. The feminist press informs and reminds society of the unsolved women's problems. Its goal is to promote equality through the implementation of urgent and appropriate



...ing decisively to the liberation of not only Greek women, but the Greek family as a whole. We have consolidated the new family law, abolishing the patriarchal family, and thus have laid the foundation for a family of equality, based on mutual respect and sincere relations among its members. We have abolished the institution of the dowry and replaced paternal authority with the concept of parental care, thus reorienting parents toward raising their children without sexual dis-

creasing women's participation in the country's agricultural strength. . .

Papandreou also referred to the five-year development program for the country, which, for the first time, provides for specific measures for solving the serious social problem of achieving equality of the sexes.

"Liberation is a double-sided issue," the premier continued, "because when women are not liberated, then neither are men."

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. Hart-

man also had the opportunity to be briefed 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."

Before the advent of the Socialist government in October 1981, there was no state mechanism charged with promoting the question of equality of the sexes, and the issue of women was left on the shoulders 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 announced recently regarding one of the two national radio and television channels, the women's movement, together with other mass organizations, will have 40% of the shares in the new corporation to which this channel will belong. A law has also been passed recently in the sector of "labor relations" eliminating all forms of direct sex discrimination.

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

Training has been offered to women in traditional male-dominated professions, as well as in new technologies. The Urban Transportation System, for example, has announced that it will employ 100-150 female bus drivers in 1984. The Employment Organization of the Working Force (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 institution of civil marriage has been established in Greece for the first time; a full pension has been given to the female Greek farmer; the

hood has been ratified; adultery is no longer a penal offense. Greece's Family Law, which contained instances of blatant discrimination against women, has been adapted to the principle of equality and brought up to date. The institution of the "dowry," which for years had put relations on a commercial basis and reduced women to a "burden" for whom indemnity had to be paid by her father, has been legally abolished. The patriarchal family in which the man was the "head" who decided on every matter connected with marital life, has been legally abolished. In its place we have a family founded on equality in which the husband and wife jointly decide on all matters concerning their marital and family life. Women are no longer obliged to change their surname when they marry. For the first time, each of the spouses may claim participation in the property acquired during the course of their marriage.

A bill of law has been presented in Parliament by the Ministry of Justice which provides for ipso jure prosecution for the crime of rape. A new law of the Ministry of Agriculture has lifted the prohibition on women participating in agro-industrial cooperatives. A bill of law of the Ministry of Commerce on the control of advertising (shortly to be passed) prohibits the disgraceful and unacceptable exploitation of the human body in the advertising media. In the special committee that is being set up, a representative of the Council for Equality will

the feminist press informs and reminds society of the unsolved women's problems. Its goal is to promote equality through the implementation of urgent and appropriate measures, to change the institutional framework of this patriarchal society and to end sex discrimination.

The feminist press, in an effort to put an end to the female's inferior status, deals with main issues - support through social care, the support of motherhood, sexual harassment in the market place, pension rights and economic equality: "Celui qui paye commande." According to a French saying, "He who pays commands." The economic factor is very relevant for the solution of the women's problem. The solution will be found in the course of social development and with the participation of women in the means of production. Taking women out of the kitchen and putting them into production paves the road for future development. Employment has become prevalent. The equalization of the sexes must be an aspect of official government policy, and not only the struggle of the feminist movements.

Spotlight

A Fortnightly Publication of the Institute for Political Studies

Publisher: Yiannis Stamiris 46, Sevastis Kallisperi, Halandri, Athens, Greece.