

Environment

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The 24th Triennial Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 14-25 July 1989 in Sydney, Australia:

The so-called ecological catastrophes include acid rain, nuclear contamination, a leak in the ozone depletion, the increasing cancer rate and the growing number of environmental refugees (at present, some 25 million).

For some time, we have been in a situation where the catastrophic results of traditional technologies have had to be glossed over by ever new technologies. As long as the basic principle of the prevailing natural science and technology, i.e. exploitation of and domination over nature, is not cracked open and destroyed, this spiral will continue. In contrast, the principle of exploitation of nature, as that of women, will follow the same patriarchal patterns.

It follows that all achievement of "technical progress" rests on the exploitation of and domination over nature. The industrial use of biological and genetic technologies consolidates the existing relationship of dependence and exploitation.

Few states and concerns can deal with the immensely high cost of research and possessing the know-how, securing control over their prerequisites for life and production; food, natural resources and energy. Controlling these resources also means controlling the people who do not possess them.

Genetics and biotechnology are a logical extension of present-day power politics. Their use produces an intensified reproduction of existing power relations in society. Here are a few examples: the so-called "Green Revolution", the pharmaceutical industry, food exports from hungry countries, annihilation of self-supporting economies, global chemical concerns, wheat as a weapon, and monopolistic developments.

Suppose the human race itself is to survive. In that case, political steps need to be taken, the environment cannot be considered reproductive at will, and the areas of research and utilisation of biological and genetic technologies cannot be treated as open playgrounds.

The control over these fields' social and economic bases is strategically vital to international capital. Measures to check the destruction of the environment and pillaging of this planet effectively, and to stop it in the long run, are possible if they are tackled based on comprehensive political and economic principles and transformation of social consciousness. Women must play a decisive role in this - as those concerned and are critical observers and fighters for a radical utopia.

Congress is asked to resolve:

- (1) To include the subject in the international action program and to ensure that as far as possible, these problems are discussed and analysed in the sections and that in this process, the related issues are also considered;
- (2) To cooperate with women and women's groups and organisations that have already dealt with the subject and to plan and carry out common activities with them;
- (3) To show the interrelationship between the destruction of the environment, the exploitation of resources, and the exploitation and oppression of women, and to publish the results in suitable magazines;
- (4) Instead of appeals after individual catastrophes have occurred, develop WILPF's different political options.