

THE XXIX CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN (IAW)

**Under the aegis of H.E. the President of the Hellenic
Republic Mr. Constantinos Karamanlis**

The present issue of the "Struggle of Woman" is dedicated to the XXIX Congress of IAW, that took place in Athens from 4th to 10th October 1992. The main subject of the Congress was: "Parity Democracy: the challenge of the 90s".

Here are a few words on the background and importance of the Congress, explaining and justifying this dedication.

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The Greek League for Women's rights (LWR), a member of IAW since 1923, was assigned by the latter to organise this Congress, which marked IAW's 90th anniversary. This assignment was at the same time an honour and a challenge, which our League gladly accepted and worked hard to come up to.

Inauguration

The Inauguration Ceremony took place at the Aula Magna of the National University of Athens; all participants were present, amid a large audience of people of letters and science, politicians and many Greek women known for their contribution to arts, science or the cause of equality.

The Congress inauguration started with a Welcome Address by the IAW President Prof. Alice Marangopoulos-Yotopoulos, followed by welcome messages of the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. C. Mitsotakis and the Minister for Education Mr. G. Souflias. Addresses were also made by the Deputy Rector of the University of Athens Mr. K. Evangelides and the General Secretary for Equality Mrs. Rena Lampsa. The IAW President Mrs. A. Marangopoulos made the keynote speech on the subject: "1902-1992, 90 years of struggle for gender equality".

Seminar

Within the framework of the Congress, and in collaboration with the Council of Europe, a two-day Seminar (6-7 October) was organised on "Parity Democracy - the contemporary concept of Democracy and gender equality".

Specialists from Greece and abroad made extremely interesting presentations on themes related to gender equality in political life, economy, education and law. These presentations appear on this issue.

Plenaries - Workshops - Action Programme

Plenaries and Workshops were held at the Royal Olympic Hotel. The Congress in plenaries as well as in the workshops, dealt among others with the following subjects:

- "Women's Rights and Pleace" with special emphasis on the problems of education on peace, of peace in the world and in the home, of war refugees and of women and children in armed conflicts and under religious restraints;
- "The girl child" with reports on drop-outs, on early motherhood and health risks and on aspects of violence, where the universal phenomenon of violence against women was discussed.

These reports appear in pages that follow.

Based on conclusions of discussion groups for the specific subjects, a new Action Plan (1992-1995) was drawn and approved. This Action Plan also appears on this issue.

Reports were presented to the Plenary by Regional Coordinators, Heads of Commissions and ad hoc Committees, as well as by affiliated Societies; these reports pictured the problems with which women all over the world are faced, problems often similar from country to country inspite the differing cultural conditions.

The participation of IAW to the meeting of NGOs was also programmed; this meeting will take place during the U.N. World Conference for Women to be held in China in 1995.

An important aspect of the Congress was that the theory of "physical differences" between sexes was rejected, as was the concept of "complementarity" of roles. "Parity Democracy" is based on common human qualities of Men and Women and aims at the elimination of all forms of discrimination, which in the past has excluded women from many activities, and was the cause for a subordinate role to be modeled for them.

Nine new members¹, mainly women's organisations from countries of Eastern Europe, joined the IAW during the Congress.

Finally, the Congress re-elected unanimously Prof. Alice Marangopoulos-Yotopoulos as President of IAW for a second consecutive time for the term 1992-1995.

Mrs. Marangopoulos was the soul of this important Congress. Her contribution to the universal cause of gender equality was unanimously and expressly recognised.

Social Programme

The Social Programme was rich and successful. The first evening, members of LWR welcomed the participants at the premises of the "Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights" at Maroussi, in a warm and lively welcome gathering.

Receptions in the honour of Congress participants were given by the Minister of Culture Mrs. A. Psarouda-Benaki, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Mrs. V. Tsouderou, the General Secretary for Equality Mrs. Rena Lampsas and the Mayor of Athens Mr. L. Kouris.

At the Congress Dinner held at ASTIR Hotel of Vouliagmeni at the closing of the Congress the last evening, the Lyceum Club of Greek Women danced beautiful greek folk dances in colourful national costumes, giving a cheerful note that our guests seemed to enjoy. Another delight of the evening was a beautiful "cherry-blossom" dance performed by the Japanese delegation. The evening closed with President Marangopoulos presenting beautiful awards to veterans of the IAW: Olive Bloomer, Amy Bush, Hedi Flitz, Brigitte Pross, Irmgard Rimondini, Margaret Ingledew, Eva Kolstad and Margaret Borgmann.

There also were guided tours to the Acropolis, an evening at the "Sound and Light" and an evening with music at the Athens Concert Hall.

Finally, there was an optional excursion (one day cruise at the Saronic Gulf).

Participation

From the point of view of participation the Congress was a success. Approx. 150 women attended the Congress, representing 36 women's organisations² of the 5 continents. Among them there were important women with great influence in their countries and internationally, who have contributed significantly to the advancement of equality. They brought for discussion to the Congress a variety of problems with which women are faced all over the world —from Africa to the North Pole and from Europe to America and Asia— and recommended solutions. The Greek contribution to the discussions was also significant.

Organisation - Sponsors

The organisation of the Congress was undertaken exclusively by the LWR; to make the Congress a success from the organisation point of view was a difficult task, towards which our members worked with enthusiasm.

The Secretary General of LWR Terpsi Lambrinopoulos had the overall responsibility and coordination of the whole project. The contribution of D. Georgoulaki, Lili Kourakou and Sophia Stathatou, members of LWR Board and Irene Tzeveleca member LWR was invaluable. The other members of the Organising Committee³ also worked hard at the Secretariat, the Registration Desk, the Giftstall and various other functions. Mrs. K. Botopoulos guided our guests to the Acropolis. Other LWR members⁴ offered hospi-

tality at their homes to participants who could not afford Hotel expenses. Finally many of our members offered articles for the Giftstall.

It is only fair to close this brief reference to the Congress with acknowledgements to our sponsors⁵; without their contribution, big or small, the realisation of the XXIX Congress would not have been possible.

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During the XXIX Congress of IAW in Athens, once more women proved that they know how to get organised, work and fight for what is just and right.

United in the same spirit, women from many countries, of many races and creeds, concentrated on the still unsolved problems of equality, heard reports on excellent action cases and forwarded the cause of friendship and solidarity between women of the world.

Whoever saw this swarm in action knows that women will never lower the flag of their struggle for a society of effective equality and true Democracy.

L.K.

Notes

1. New members that joined IAW at the XXIX Congress:

Country Women's Association of India — "Gabriela" (Philippines) — Fiji Women's Rights Movement — Lithuania Women's Union — Ukrainian Women's Union — "Transfiguration" Women's Club, Moscow — Survival and Development Services, Sierra Leone — Foundation Emilienne Brunfaut, Belgium — CADEF (Comité d'action pour les droits d'Enfant et de la Femme), Mali.

2. Countries represented:

Australia — Austria — Bangladesh — Belgium — Burkina Faso — Cameroun — Congo — Cyprus — Denmark — Egypt — Finland — France — Germany — Greece — Iceland — India — Ireland — Israel — Japan — Lesotho — Lithuania — Madagascar — Mali — Malta — Netherlands — Norway — Philippines — Roumania — Russia — Sri Lanka — Sweden — Switzerland — Ukraine — U.K. — U.S.A. — Zambia.

3. Organising Committee

Terpsi Lambrinopoulou, Secretary General L.W.R.
Sofia Stathatou, Executive Secretary, L.W.R.
Lili Kourakou, Board Member L.W.R.
Klary Babakou Member L.W.R.
Markissia Hajipavlou Member L.W.R.
Kali Triantafillidou Member L.W.R.
Irene Tzeveleka Member L.W.R.
Natassa Vatali Member L.W.R.
Heike Veber-Kotsali Member L.W.R.
Chrisso Vourexaki Member L.W.R.

4. Members of LWR who offered hospitality:

O. Bati — D. Chiliadaki — E. Kolokytha — E. Mavrommati — K. Spanidou — G. Thanou.

5. Sponsors

Ministry of Foreign Affairs — Greece
Ministry of Culture — Greece
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Ministry to the Presidency — Greece
Council of Europe
Bank of Central Greece — Greece
Hellenic Industrial Development Bank ETBA
National Bank of Greece — Greece
National Welfare Organisation — Greece
Cambas S.A. — Greece
Delta S.A. — Greece
Dr. Kourtakis — Greece
League for Women's Rights — Greece
Alice Marangopoulos — Greece
Ms. Aglaia Tsitsoura — Greece
Ms. Tassia Yatra-Eliopoulou — Greece
Deutscher Frauenring — Germany
Ms. Hedi Flitz — Germany
Ms. Brigitte Pross — Germany
Ms. Edith Anrep — Sweden
The Chave Collisson Trust — United Kingdom
The Frauenzirkel of Austria — Austria
League of Women Voters of Japan — Japan