

Feminism and ecosocialism: a necessary alliance

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For as long as capitalism and patriarchy have existed as systems linked to each other, they have made an alliance to establish a relationship of domination over nature and of appropriation and exploitation of everything that, on this basis, they stereotyped as beings of an “inferior nature”, which includes women and their bodies. At the same time, the condition of blacks, mestizos and the indigenous, and their ethnic and cultural subordination, became something natural. Everything that comes from nature and does not match the standard of masculine and bourgeois social evolution and that does not fit the paradigm of white and Western, exists only as something of an “inferior nature”

The naturalization of motherhood as women’s function and destiny, as well as the naturalization of their bodies as territory to be conquered and controlled, should be rejected by all socialists who demand an ecosocialist, feminist world, free from the scars of capitalism. We cannot permit that a “biological” explanation of the inequality between men and women be used to keep the latter in an inferior social, political and economic position to that of men.

The effects of the environmental crisis ravaging whole regions of the planet, fall most harshly on the peripheral countries, on the poorest people, and especially on women and children. Desertification, the loss of water resources, environmental disasters caused by climate change (tsunamis, earthquakes, prolonged periods of drought, floods and landslides) have a huge impact on their everyday lives.

When people are forced to leave the places where they live, most refugees and homeless are again women and children. Climate change is exacerbating poverty and accentuating inequalities, making women often resort to prostitution just to get food. The increase in diseases, with the reappearance of some that were already extinct or controlled (such as cholera and tuberculosis, etc.), also puts a burden on women, because the care of the sick still falls to them. The neo-Malthusian response to the climate crisis points to overpopulation in the world as the central cause of the climate crisis, and seeks therefore to restrict women’s right to control their bodies. This is a racist approach, because population growth is higher in the South. But it also diverts attention from the huge gulf that separates the wasteful consumption of the super-rich from the absolute poverty of the poorest sectors, and the vastly different impacts each have on Nature.

Those of us who have fought for the expansion of women’s rights to control their bodies and their fertility, reject and denounce this pseudo-solution, because it puts in question women’s right to decide and makes the mistake of ignoring the structural causes of the crisis, where capitalism is the central factor.

In the South, women are also responsible for producing 80% of food, including the gathering and preservation of native fruits and seeds. This central role in ensuring food sovereignty and the preservation of biodiversity as the heritage of humanity gives women a key role in agriculture and the supply of food. The growing impact of large, capitalist development projects in Brazil, which are supported by the state through the CAP and the BNDES, has led to a loss of territory and autonomy for small producers, most of whom are women, indigenous communities or Afro-Brazilian maroon

communities.

The main expression of such projects are agribusiness, the re-routing of the São Francisco River and the irrigated areas that adjoin it, large dams to supply new hydroelectric plants (Belo Monte, Jirau, etc.), the IIRSA, mining, the intensive use of pesticides and the production of biofuels. Women play a central role in protecting ecosystems and biomass against governments (Federal, State and Municipal) who want to sell them off to multinationals. The actions of the women of Via Campesina, who destroyed the eucalyptus plantations of Aracruz Cellulose, like the role of indigenous and maroon communities in defending their ancestral lands, are examples of the victorious defense of the environment, based on their particular realities.

It is vital to strengthen the alliance between women in the countryside and women in the city. A feminism that incorporates the ecosocialist struggle will be closer to those struggles that are today at the forefront of the defense of common goods in our country and our continent. Ecosocialist and feminist struggles overlap and stand as the great reference for our work, because they fall, more than ever, within the framework of the struggle against capitalism and form part of our strategic vision.

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P.S.

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