

# a charter for women

national assembly of women

Women have always fought for their long-denied rights; we must do so again. We hope to inspire a new and inclusive socialist feminist theory and practice that will motivate a new generation of women activists and revitalise the fight for women's liberation. One of the ways of doing this is to unite around a campaigning programme. This is the purpose of the Charter for Women. It does not offer new policy but instead seeks to bring together the key demands for which women are fighting in various arenas. The charter covers three broad areas, social policy, the labour market and the labour movement. It raises the main campaigning demands under each heading. We want it to be discussed, adopted and promoted by women in the labour movement, by all progressive women's groups and organisations. For us the price of equality is eternal vigilance – we must ensure that women's demands are heard and acted on.

## in society

- Highlight the feminisation of poverty and campaign to reverse cuts in social provision, the welfare state and public services.
- Campaign for decent local authority grant funding for voluntary organisations that campaign for women's equality to ensure a strong voice advocating for women's equality for all women.
- Expose the ideologies that are used to perpetuate women's inequality (for example, the notion of 'family values' and the 'family wage').
- Draw attention to the role

of the media and other cultural agencies in shaping gender identities that reinforce the unequal relationships between men and women.

- Campaign for greater support for lone mothers, carers and women subject to domestic violence, coercive behaviour, stalking and other abuse.
- End the discrimination against Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans women.
- Improve access and rights to abortion.
- Campaign for Period Dignity with free period products available in workplaces and public buildings and an end to VAT on period products.
- Ensure that women and



girls are entitled to the full range of free and high quality educational provision (from nursery to further and higher education) and subject choice.

- Campaign for gender sensitive occupational health and safety, personal protective equipment and work stations and environments designed by and for women.

- End women pensioner poverty by reducing the state pension age to 60 and increasing the State pension in line with average earnings.

- The principle of women only spaces to be upheld – and where necessary extended. Gender neutral spaces should be additional to women's spaces.

- Maintain the exemptions in the Equality Act that allow for single sex services or requirements that only a woman can apply for a job.

- Ensure that women have an absolute right to self-organisation as women.

- Extend sisterhood and solidarity to our sisters internationally in recognition that women across the world face similar sex-based discrimination.

# at work

- Campaign to end institutional and other forms of racism and ensure that the status and pay of Black women workers is a bargaining priority.
- Campaign to reduce the gender pay gap and highlight its causes.
- End job segregation by improving access to apprenticeships, training and opportunities for women in non-traditional areas.
- Campaign to ensure that unions fight more equal value claims through the mechanism of collective bargaining.
- Campaign for access to justice for women, with restoration of legal aid.
- Campaign to change equal pay law to permit 'class action' (group claims) and remove employer 'get out', strengthen the legislation to ensure employers are required to be open and transparent and with employees and close the loopholes that employers regularly use to avoid equal pay.
- Campaign to raise the level of national minimum wage to at least half, and rising to at least two-thirds of male median earnings.
- Demand that statutory pay audits be implemented in the private and public sector and remedial action taken.
- Demand full-time rights for part time workers.
- Root out bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace.
- End casualisation and especially abusive zero hours contracts.
- Campaign for a fully funded national child care service with affordable child care including pre-, after-school and holiday provision.

■ Campaign for a shorter working week for all and rights to flexible working.

■ Improve maternity leave and pay, including properly paid paternity leave.

■ Ensure that women do not suffer disproportionately from the impact of robotics and artificial intelligence in the workplace.

■ End modern day slavery, people trafficking, racist immigration laws and campaign for the free movement of people.

## in the labour movement

*Women's membership of trade unions is rising. However, women are not represented in proportion to their numbers within the leaderships of trade unions or other labour movement organisations. The under-representation of Black women is even worse.*

■ Tackle the under-representation of women and Black women in labour and trade union movement structures by proportionality and other measures.

■ Campaign to maintain and extend women's self-organisation in trade unions.

■ Campaign for the right to organise a trade union, statutory rights for union equality reps, and the right to take industrial action.

■ Campaign for sectoral collective bargaining, delivered through a Ministry for Labour, with an oversight of ensuring the gender pay gap is closed.

■ Ensure the accountability of women's structures to women.

■ Maintain and extend women's committees, women's

courses and other measures to ensure that women's issues/concerns are collectively articulated and actioned.

■ Maintain women-only short lists in the Labour Party.

■ Campaign to raise the profile of the TUC, STUC and Welsh TUC's women's conferences as the 'parliaments of women'.

■ Campaign for:

- a Ministry for Women's Equality;
- a fully funded independent Equality and Human Rights Commission with powers to take action when the Equality Act is breached;
- restoration of the Women's National Commission.

Ensure that by these means women's collective voices are not only heard but are acted upon.