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Spanish state

The attack on abortion rights

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This statement by Izquierda Anticapitalista was first published on 19 December 2013 at www.anticapitalistas.org. Since the draft law was announced by the Spanish government there have been widespread protests in the Spanish state and elsewhere, including pickets outside Spanish Embassies and consulates, such as that in Paris on Friday 27 December on the call of the national and Parisian groups including feminsit groups, campaigns for women's right abortion and contraception, and left political parties.

A draft law aims to suppress abortion rights in Spain!

1. Our body, our decision

We should again explain where the debate is really located. The Church and the most reactionary sectors are again mobilizing against those among us who exercise our liberty and to criminalise us. It is not about when life begins. For that, science has more to tell us than the Church.

They are not defending life. They are not concerned with women who die through backstreet abortions, or women who cannot let themselves become pregnant because they are unemployed. They are not concerned with the right to education, to health, to housing, to a worthwhile life for those already born. And they are silent in the face of the austerity policies and the dismantling of social conquests.

Because they are not interested in life, but in control over women's bodies, over their capacities of reproduction. For them it is about questioning the ability of women to decide over their own bodies and their sexuality; to restore the traditional roles to which women should be subject; to impose a model of sexuality linked to reproduction and to reduce sexuality to the single heterosexual model.

2. We want neither to go backwards nor continue as now

The Popular Party (PP) is threatening us with a new law "proposed by the Minister of Justice and not by that of Health" which would eliminate the 14 weeks of free abortion and establish a system of pre-requisites more restrictive than the current law dating from 1985. But in the current situation, abortion is already only partially decriminalized. The Socialist government of the PSOE had made some steps forward but had not dared to frontally oppose the Church or break with the logic of health privatization.

– 98% of abortions take place outside the public health sector in private clinics. Some Autonomous Communities do not practice them, in others you have to pay but have the abortion in another health centre, another town, in secret, as if it was a crime.

- After you have alerted your doctor, you have three days to reflect, with an information document whose content is far from impartial (tax breaks, adoption and so on). The choice of women is constantly questioned, as if we were hysterical and impulsive, incapable of taking a decision alone.
- There is no free access to contraception. But prevention is fundamental; it is an elementary right.
- There is no longer any sex education which involves a response to the situations of real life. The only information given concerns sexually transmissible diseases and the biological aspects of reproduction. But sexuality is part of our identity and that involves much more than reproduction.
- Many doctors who publicly declare themselves “conscientious objectors” in relation to abortion carry out abortions in private. Morals are secondary where good business is concerned. For women who do not have the means, an absurd morality is imposed which punishes all that does not fit into their reductionist definitions of sexuality, the family and so on.
- Budget cuts in education, social aid, to dependent persons, layoffs, evictions and so on limit our rights in all areas. Cuts and measures which hit women more because they are already in an unfavourable position and because they are the main users of public services.

3. New law from the PP, new turn of the screw

Le PP threatens to recriminalize the choice of women over their maternity, forcing us to become mothers, unless we can show that we have been raped or run a serious health risk. This law could condemn to death women who cannot travel to London to have an abortion. It places minors under tutelage by considering them capable of becoming mothers, but not of deciding on the question, whereas they can make this choice in relation to other surgical operations.

This new attack is not isolated from the other measures we suffer: budget cuts, layoffs and insecurity form part of the same logic. Capitalism needs to control our bodies to survive and emerge from this crisis, to draw profit from the situation of women on the labour market, to generalise more job insecurity by spreading it to the entire working class, by loading onto the backs of women domestic work, the education of children, care for sick or dependent persons. Meanwhile, public budgets are cut and the living conditions of women and other social categories are rendered still more precarious.

The new law is a new turn of the screw. The right to decide is part of the rights and social and political conquests which hinder the profits of capital and that is why they want to dismantle them. We who fight every day to defend our dignity are conscious of what is at stake. It is by going onto the streets that we must fight our feminist struggle for the right to decide. Free abortion on demand! Reproductive and sexual rights for all!

4. Our proposal: reproductive and sexual rights for all

- The right to self determination over our own bodies and our sexuality without interference from Church or State.

The attack on abortion rights

Recognition of our capacity to decide if we wish to be mothers or not and when we want it, without tutelage, or periods of reflection whether we are minors or have reached the age of majority.

– Decriminalisation of abortion: withdrawal of abortion from the criminal code and the right to decide on our body without any limitation. To decide is not a crime, it is a right.

– Free abortion on demand. An end to the waltz of the private clinics. Abortion for all in the public health system.

– Free access to contraception: in educational centres, in health centres, in social services centres.

– Sex education to enjoy our own sexuality, without risk, with autonomy and responsibility, breaking with hetero-normality. Pleasure is not a sin.

– Reproductive rights for all: withdrawal of the restriction on assisted reproduction for single women and lesbians. There is no single model of the family.

– Defence of life against austerity and insecurity. Our lives are worth more than their profits!