

Peace and Gender Equality: Common threads in the fabric of Resistance

IWD 2020
solidarity message
from the
Canadian
Peace Congress

On International Women's Day 2020, the Canadian Peace Congress sends a warm shout-out to all activists and supporters of the women's movement across Canada and around the world, and to all people struggling for the full equality of women in your workplaces, in your communities and in government policy. This includes the struggle against systemic wage and economic discrimination, violence against women, reactionary attacks on reproductive rights, transphobia, and other forms of gender-based inequality and subordination in our society.

The quest for peace, and the opposition to militarism and imperialist aggression, has always been a hallmark of the women's movement. This is because throughout history, women and children worldwide have invariably suffered most from the ravages of war, and from the diversion of essential public resources from health, education and social programs into bloated military budgets and the arsenals of destruction.

That's why the struggle for peace is a women's issue. It is also a youth issue, a working class issue, a climate justice issue – indeed, an aspiration of all those committed to a brighter future for ourselves, our communities, and for all humanity.

Ending militarism, aggression, and war, averting climate catastrophe, and tackling poverty, social disparity, and related global problems should be humanity's top priorities. Instead, political elites – especially in the countries of the NATO alliance including Canada – are pushing the world in the opposite direction.

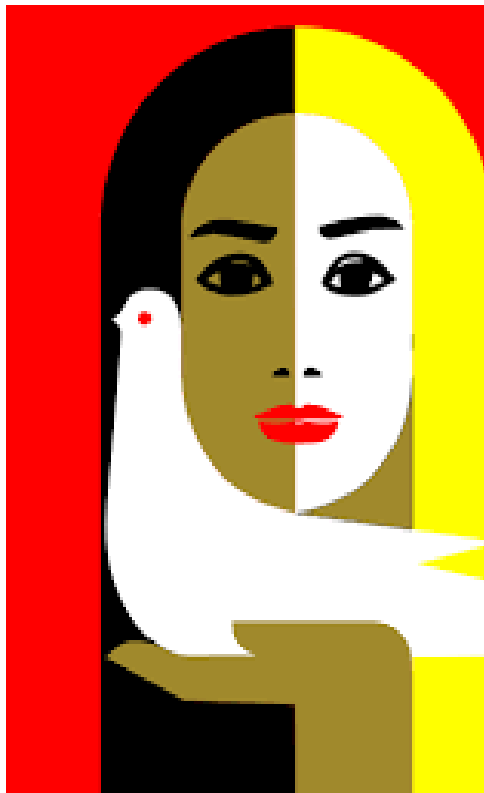
We are witnessing the emergence of a 'new cold war' and the deliberate cultivation of Russophobia and Sinophobia, along with other forms of fear-mongering, xenophobia, and demonization of people with whom we should be uniting in the common causes of peace, equality, and climate justice.

The principles of international law – respect for the full equality and sovereignty of all countries, non-interference, and the resolution of disputes through peaceful negotiation, not threats and aggression – are being increasingly violated. Important agreements such as the Iran Nuclear deal (JCPOA), the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, and the renewal of the START treaty limiting nuclear weapons are being unilaterally cancelled by the U.S. Administration.

The arms race is accelerating, and weapons systems relentlessly "modernized". Globally, military spending is now over a trillion dollars a year, with the expanding US military budget leading the way. Foreign military bases are spreading like a metastasizing cancer, outer space and the high Arctic are being militarized, and the world's armed forces are now the

largest single global source of carbon emissions from fossil fuel consumption.

Meanwhile, punitive economic sanctions are imposed on dozens of countries and peoples around the world, the main victims of which are civilian populations. Coups and "regime change" operations are targeting any country with the audacity to choose its own destiny, and refuse to bow to the dictates of Washington and international finance capital.



The widespread advance of racist, national chauvinistic, and neo-fascist movements is adding to global instability. The deepening economic crisis of capitalism is fuelling increased rivalries, trade wars, even predictions of another global economic meltdown. The crisis of climate change is already bringing destructive weather systems, droughts, rising ocean levels, and other dire consequences.

Canada's Role

In the face of this rapidly deteriorating situation,



Canada should and must be a voice of reason and restraint, and a principled advocate for peace and disarmament. Instead, however, Ottawa has become one of the most bellicose voices marching to the 'drums of war'. The current Liberal government of Justin Trudeau has tilted Canadian foreign and defence policies in a far-right, militarist and interventionist direction. The Canadian government is directly implicated in 'regime-change' operations against Bolivia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Syria and elsewhere. And its bloated war budget – caused in no small part by continued membership in the NATO alliance – squanders valuable resources which would be better spent on socially useful purposes.

That's why it is more urgent than ever to rebuild a dynamic and engaged peace movement across Canada, one which unites the forces for peace, solidarity and social justice dedicated to shifting Canadian and global politics away from confrontation and militarism, and towards peace, disarmament and international cooperation. Only such a change can give the human race a realistic chance to save the planet from war and environmental disaster, and to improve the lives of billions of people.

The Canadian Peace Congress stands committed to this urgent and decisive goal. Join with us in this interconnected struggle. As the expression goes: 'Without social justice, there can be no peace; without peace, there can be no social justice!'

"Happy International Women's Day!"



Laura Savinkoff – Peace Congress VP, community activist and coordinator of the BC Southern Interior Peace Coalition (BCSIPC)



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For more information about the Canadian Peace Congress, visit us at www.facebook.com/CanadianPeaceCongress/, or write info@canadianpeacecongress.ca