

Visions of Feminist Peace

Women's Global Peace Congress
23rd September 2020

2020 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the Security Council's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. It will also be 25 years since the adoption of the Declaration and Platform for Action by states at the conclusion of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Women's activism inspired and shaped both the WPS agenda and the Beijing Platform for Action. Notwithstanding differences, women at these events have shared two ambitions: to achieve gender equality and sustainable peace, in the knowledge that neither could be achieved without the other. Likewise, research unearthed by feminist historians shows how these two ambitions have long been at the core of women activists' aspirations, including those who gathered in 1915 in The Hague.

Women's tireless activism through political institutions and local communities, through protest, advocacy, litigation and scholarship, has been instrumental in securing the progressive development of policy and law, at national and international levels. Across the world, women's and feminist groups are using legal and policy tools creatively to advance equal rights. Yet transformative change remains slow. A century on from the Women's Peace Congress in The Hague, women are still fighting for their equality in all spheres of life and in conjunction with other interlocking oppressions. Peace remains an elusive goal. Women, and even more so minority women, continue to be excluded and marginalised from mainstream conflict prevention efforts to peace building measures.

At a time of growing militarism and anti-feminism around the globe, activists from different quarters have vocalised a common desire to mark 2020 with expressions of solidarity and to explore how a feminist peace and gender equality might be more effectively secured. The idea for a Women's Global Peace Congress is intended to respond to that call. In particular, the initiative has been the subject of discussions between researchers with the Feminist International Law of Peace and Security (FILPS) project, based at the LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Through the Women's Peace Congress we aim to take stock of where we are and of progress made; surface, register and celebrate the work that is being done by women and other feminist activists to further the twin ambitions; identify obstacles, risks, challenges; to develop an enriched understanding of feminist peace; and strategies to advance that vision.

The Women's Global Peace Congress

The Women's Peace Congress will be convened during the week starting 21 September 2020, International Peace Day. As part of Congress events, interested parties – including researchers and academics in other institutions and non-governmental organisations working in the field of gender and peace located anywhere in the world – will be invited to design, arrange and organise their own events around women and peace.

The London Event

The LSE WPS FILPS project are organising an intergenerational, interdisciplinary, and inclusive event in London on the afternoon/evening of 23 September 2020. The event will be open and free to all. We plan to play video messages from events that have already taken place earlier in the week. The London event will include academic, activist and cultural components. The FILPS project plans to launch a draft Resolution on “A Feminist Peace” at the London event as a centrepiece of the Congress. The draft Resolution will be the outcome of a consultation process involving different stakeholders from across the world and be subject to further consultation before its finalisation. The hope is that it will be used as a tool for further advocacy and lobbying.

Legacy

Through the Women's Global Peace Congress, we will bring together a cross-section of societal actors, including academics, advocates, practitioners, activists, artists, and students to promote knowledge and experience creation and exchange. By encouraging people to decide on their own way of celebrating peace and the tensions and imperfections of peace processes, we aim to highlight the plurality of peace visions, experiences, and discontents. These aspects are important in contributing to the development of an interdisciplinary, inclusive, intergenerational feminist vision(s) of peace. To that end, the longer-term impact will be threefold: (1) more inclusive discourses and initiatives on a feminist peace, (2) stronger ties among societal actors working in the field, and (3) a mapping of feminist peace academics and civil society actors and their activities around the world.



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