

March 8, 2017

March 8 -- International Women's Day

**Victory to the Struggle of Women for
Their Emancipation!**



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 8 -- International Women's Day

- **Victory to the Struggle of Women for Their Emancipation!**
- **Women's Struggle to Affirm Their Rights Confronts Obsolescent Institutions - *Christine Dandenault***
- **Women's Rights Are Not Defended in the Boardrooms of the Rich - *Peggy Morton***
- **On the Condition of Women and Girls**
- **Photo Review: 27th Annual Women's Memorial March**

March 8 -- International Women's Day

Victory to the Struggle of Women for Their Emancipation!



International Women's Day celebrated in Edmonton, March 5, 2017.

CPC(M-L) hails the fighting women of Canada and the world on the occasion of International Women's Day 2017, one of the most important occasions for humankind to remind itself of all that needs to be achieved in the immediate future.

One hundred and six years ago in 1911, the first International Women's Day was celebrated to express the demands of women for their emancipation. At the time, working women were already conscious of the need to coordinate their struggle and express unity for their cause worldwide. On February 28, 1909, women textile workers had already issued a call for an international day of action of women workers. A meeting of the Socialist International held in December 1910 reiterated this demand. In a short time, March 8 became the day when women of all countries would express their unity with one another in their struggle for emancipation. Soon after, on the eve of World War I, International Women's Day highlighted the call for peace issued by women in Europe, alerting to the dangers which lay ahead.



Today on a world scale women are in the front ranks of the people's efforts to open a path for the progress of society and oppose the growing war crimes and crimes against humanity of the imperialists and dangers of another worldwide conflagration. Women are involved in finding solutions to the most important problems facing society and their consequences, including poverty and unemployment, privatization of education and health care and, most importantly, the need for people's empowerment. The demand for justice for the families of Indigenous women and girls who have been murdered or are missing is one of the most significant in Canada today to advance the cause of the people against the continuation of colonial relations and the misery this causes. The involvement of women in the vanguard of the struggle for empowerment which must give rise to new forms to hold the rulers to account is one of the most important positive developments in the effort to open the door for the progress of society.



The more that the rich and powerful step up their anti-social offensive the more conscious the people become of the need for new arrangements so as to fulfill the promise that women and children must be provided with all that they require to flourish. The old arrangements continue to target women and children and divide the polity on every conceivable basis which the government then has the effrontery to call "strength in diversity" and "Canadian values."

The government has even given itself the reputation of having a "feminist Prime Minister." While the material conditions of women and children in this country worsen, this translates into the government promoting the role of women business leaders. The shamelessness of the Liberals is seen in the Prime Minister's attempts to rescue U.S. President Donald Trump's reputation by giving him the opportunity to jump on the same bandwagon and also present himself as a champion of women.

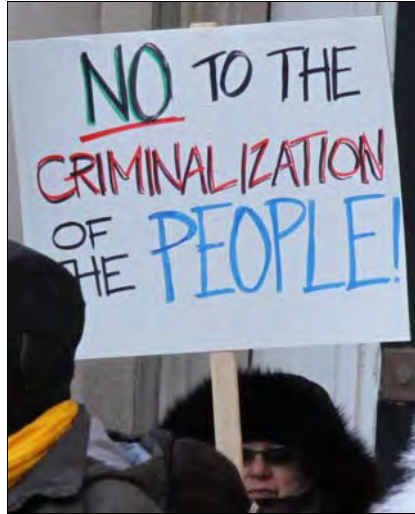
As the conditions in Canada worsen and working women bear the brunt of social responsibilities, they are the most militant fighters who can be relied on to demand concrete results. More than ever, the slogan given rise to by the women's movement, *No Means No!*, is taken up by the workers' movement, the anti-war movement and the movement against the criminalization of conscience and state-organized racism and war.



On this March 8 let us strengthen support for the affirmation of the rights of women which belong to them by virtue of the important roles they play in society. Women's rights must be recognized by providing them with constitutional guarantees so that women have the conditions they require to flourish. Unless this is done, the emancipation of women will not become a fact of life. Only once women's rights are guaranteed will the world be able to celebrate the emancipation of the whole of humanity.

***Let Us Stand as One in Defence of Women and the Rights of All!
Victory to the Struggle of Women for Their Emancipation!***







Women's Struggle to Affirm Their Rights Confronts Obsolescent Institutions

- Christine Dandenault -

The theme given for International Women's Day 2017 by Status of Women Canada is *Equality Matters*. The logic advanced to explain the theme is that "Gender stereotypes hold us all back." Changing this "starts with changing attitudes and behaviours" and among the proposed activities to change behaviours are to tweet as much as possible with the hashtag #EqualityMatters, or to "plan a fundraising event at your workplace or school for a charity that works with women or works to advance women's rights."

International Women's Day has been celebrated for 106 years. It represents the struggle of the women of all countries to free themselves from the old world of exploitation of persons by persons and to create a new world.

The distortion of International Women's Day by the Trudeau government and Status of Women Canada is another illustration of how the so-called democratic institutions they represent are an obstacle to the affirmation of women's demands. Women and their collectives are putting forward concrete proposals to make equality for women a fact of life -- investing in health care, education and other social programs and guaranteeing wages and working conditions that allow women and families to live and work in dignity. They call for a profound change in the direction of the economy so that it serves, first and foremost, the needs of human beings and is no longer under the control of the rich and the oligopolies.



The federal government and Status of Women Canada call for women to embrace the current orientation of the economy towards paying the rich because "[companies] with 30 per cent female leaders could add up to 6 percentage points to its net profit margin." Status of Women adds that "having a more diverse corporate board of directors may lead to stronger financial performance for companies." This echoes Prime Minister Trudeau's emphasis, along with U.S. President Trump, on

encouraging women to become members of corporate Boards of Governors and take up other elite leadership positions.

In Quebec, the Council for the Status of Women announced via its website that it held a dinner-exchange on March 7 with the U.S. Consul General. It informs that girls aged 14 to 17 were chosen to meet influential women from various backgrounds (artistic, political, scientific, etc.) and ask these women questions about their lives and passions and be inspired by their success. This is a provocative message from the Quebec government to the millions of women who participated in the actions of women in the United States against the swearing-in of President Trump and the thousands who did so in Quebec and Canada.



The demands of women today are to humanize society. Institutions of the society are responsible for creating the arrangements to facilitate this. The so-called democratic institutions in Canada and Quebec fail to do so and serve an agenda at odds with the needs of women who struggle for a society organized to provide for the needs of all its members.

For example, the government of Quebec could have decided to meet with the Consul General of Cuba in order to learn about the role of Cuban women in bringing about the victories of the Cuban people and their political and economic

system against the U.S. blockade, as well as the experience of Cuban women and their achievements in the fight to eliminate illiteracy and guarantee health care and education for all. Instead, giving credence to the Trump presidency's attitude towards women demonstrates that the Quebec government, like the federal government, has a different agenda for women and girls. They are following the U.S. lead to promote Trump "Power Women" to mobilize them for the financial oligarchy and U.S. imperialist war.

The struggle for the affirmation of women's rights remains one of the most important problems confronting society. It is intimately linked to the emancipation of the working class. The so-called democratic institutions and the anachronistic political process marginalize women from decision-making on all the issues that concern them, and an issue second to none is for women to stand in the front ranks of the leadership of society. Renewing these institutions and the political process to achieve this is the problem put forward for solution.



Women's Rights Are Not Defended in the Boardrooms of the Rich

- Peggy Morton -

Women's rights are not defended in the boardrooms of the rich but in their fight to defend their rights and for a society that provides for its members. Despite this fact, Donald Trump in his speech to a joint session of the U.S. Congress on February 28 used a joint Canada-U.S. initiative to suggest once again that he is a great supporter of women. "With the help of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, we have formed a Council with our neighbors in Canada to help ensure that women entrepreneurs

have access to the networks, markets and capital they need to start a business and live out their financial dreams," Trump said.



Women's march on Washington, January 21, 2017, one of many across the U.S., Canada and worldwide, as women take action to defend their rights.

The "Canada-United States Council for Advancement of Women Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders" was announced and had its first meeting on February 13 during Trudeau's official trip to Washington. According to reports, the council was the brainchild of Katie Telford, Justin Trudeau's Chief of Staff. The word "entrepreneur" is used to conjure the image of an enterprising risk-taker, who through self-sacrifice provides for the well-being of themselves and others. In fact, the members of the Council are all CEOs of big, mostly U.S., monopoly and oligopoly interests controlling large parts of the economy and exploiting thousands of workers including women.[1]



The Council members and their preoccupations are alien to the lives and struggles of women workers in the U.S., Canada and around the world who bear, often alone, the burden of caring for themselves and their families under brutal conditions. The problems Council members face are not those of women workers who have suffered the most as a result of the anti-social offensive of the rich and who are fighting to exercise control over their lives, the economy and society to guarantee everything they require to affirm their humanity. It is the struggle of women workers in defence of the rights of women and all working people that is decisive. To capitalize on the plight of women in this way, particularly that of women workers, is despicable indeed.

Using the dire situation of women to advance the interests of the rich has long been part of the playbook of Canada's ruling elite. Under the Harper government, the Status of Women Ministry was virtually turned into a business. On the occasion of International Women's Day 2015, then-Minister of Status of Women Kellie Leitch called on women to join her "along with key business experts and innovators" in a forum on "providing Canadian women entrepreneurs with the practical tools, networks and connections they need to reach their full growth potential." In turn, the Conservatives picked up the theme "10,000 Women" from Goldman Sachs investment bankers.



Telford and Trudeau earned accolades from Canadian ruling circles for devising, in the Council, an idea that allegedly pleased President Trump and now allows him to present himself as defending the interests of women. Trump expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "We need policies that help to keep women in the workforce and to address the unique barriers faced by female entrepreneurs -- and they are unique. We need to make it easier for women to manage the demands of having both a job and a family, and we also need to make it easier for women entrepreneurs to get access to capital. And I guess pretty much all entrepreneurs, we have to help them out, because the system is not working so well for entrepreneurs getting capital..."

Justin Trudeau added, "One of the things that I've been lucky enough to do over the past year in New York and Beijing and across Canada is sit

down with women CEOs, women executives to talk about both their successes and the challenges they're facing that are particular, but also how, of course, we create more paths to success for women across our community and across our society."

What have these CEOs and members of corporate boards contributed to the fight of women to affirm their rights? The message from Trump and Trudeau is that women contribute to "growing the economy." Women in the ranks of the working class may assist the oligopolies to seize an ever-increasing amount of the added-value created by workers or a small minority of women joining the ranks of the financial oligarchy may be good for business. But neither of these developments resolve the problems facing women or the society.

The approval with which the Trump-Trudeau women's council was greeted by the rich is proof positive that the boardrooms of the oligopolies are not where women's rights are defended or affirmed. It is not the composition of these boardrooms, old boy's clubs or think-tanks which need to be changed, but the disempowerment of women as decision-makers and an economy dominated by private ownership that denies women the material, cultural and social requirements to provide their rights with a guarantee.

The CEOs on the Council in fact embody the recent experience of attacks against working people, including women. General Motors, which has actively forced down the standard of living of auto workers, recently announced it is moving auto production out of Ingersoll, Ontario, eliminating over 600 jobs. T&T Supermarkets, now owned by Loblaw Companies, is both infamous for its part in the elimination of full-time work in favour of part-time jobs without benefits or secure hours and

for blocking T&T workers from forming unions in Ontario. Transalta, an energy monopoly, is notable for imposing concessions on its mostly women clerical staff. The President and CEO of Schnitzer Steel Industries, a U.S. company, is also on the board of directors of the Parsons Corporation, an engineering and construction firm active in promoting public-private partnerships in Canada to privatize infrastructure and public services. The Trump family themselves are infamous for denying women at Trump hotels maternity leave and obstructing their attempts to form defence organizations.

Furthermore, Trudeau's claims of concern for women's rights and even that he is a "feminist" ring hollow in the face of the Liberals' program for Canada. The Liberal government has callously dismissed demands for a national child care program or any program for modern and humane seniors' care which allows seniors to live with dignity and social love. Even its electoral promise to spend \$500 million per year (the same amount being spent on Canada 150 events) on disparate and privatized child care funding did not pan out. It put forward funding for seniors' home care which amounted to one hour of care per day for 25,000 people, while Statistics Canada reports that nearly 461,000 Canadians 15 years of age and older are not receiving the help they require for chronic health conditions.



The cynical attempt to paint one more forum for the rich to meet, contend and collude and to politicize their private interests as benefitting women will not divert Canadian women from the fight they are waging day in and day out for a society that provides their rights with a guarantee.

Women have the right by virtue of their being to everything they need to affirm themselves as human beings and to ensure a bright future for the next generation. Women have the right to live free of violence and to see an end to all discrimination they face, including racist and paternalist abuse. Women are fighting for a society organized to care for its members. They are fighting to increase funding for social programs, and against the anti-social offensive which has the greatest impact on women. Women know that it is not in the boardrooms of the rich, but by putting themselves in the front ranks of the struggle for democratic renewal and a new direction for the economy, against state-organized racism and attacks against the people, against environmental destruction, imperialist war and occupation that their rights and the rights of all will be defended.

Note

1. Participants in the Council include:

Canada

- Annette Verschuren, Chair and CEO, NRStor, an energy storage firm
- Dawn Farrell, President and CEO, TransAlta, an energy monopoly
- Tina Lee, CEO, T&T Supermarkets
- Monique Leroux, Chair, Invest Quebec
- Elyse Allan, President and CEO, GE Canada
- Linda Hasenfratz, CEO, Linamar, an auto parts manufacturer
- Chrystia Freeland, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs

U.S.

- Tamara Lundgren, President and CEO, Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc
- Julie Sweet, CEO, Accenture North America, a consulting monopoly
- Carol Stephenson, Board of Directors, General Motors
- Mary Barra, Chair and CEO, General Motors
- Beth Comstock, Vice Chair, GE
- Deborah Gillis, President and CEO, Catalyst, an NGO
- Dina Powell, assistant to President Trump
- Ivanka Trump, Executive Vice President of Development and Acquisitions at the Trump Organization



On the Condition of Women and Girls

Women have always been at the forefront of the struggle for rights and to open society's path to progress. This struggle is inextricably linked to the people's fight to exercise control over their lives and take up society's problems for solution. Below are some recent data on the conditions of women and girls.

Education and Work

Even in 2017, women's wages are on average 30 per cent lower than men's. This disparity is reflected on several levels. According to the Statistical Report of the Council for the Status of Women published in May 2016, women without a high school diploma working full time earn 69.8 per cent of the median salary of men in the same situation.

For all levels of education, while women are now slightly more likely than men to have a high school diploma -- 78.1 per cent of women versus 77.5 per cent of men -- their salary is lower. When they have a diploma, they earn up to 80 per cent of that of male graduates.

With a university degree, women's employment rate is 81.5 per cent, compared to 83.4 per cent for men. With a college diploma, this rate is 78.3 per cent for women versus 81.0 per cent for men. The employment rate for women without a college diploma is only 38.3 per cent, compared to 52.3 per cent for men in the same situation.



For immigrant women, higher education does not improve their participation in the labour market as much. The employment rate for immigrant women with a university degree is 69.1 per cent, compared to 78.5 per cent for men in the same situation.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is a serious problem across the country. Too many people suffer from food insecurity and no one is immune. Take the example of Quebec.

According to 2016-2017 data, Quebec food banks receive more than 1,800,000 requests for food. Quebec has a population of 8.215 million people.

More than 400,000 people in Quebec, including 150,000 children do not eat enough. Quebec's food aid agencies have recorded a 34.5 per cent increase since the last recession in 2008.

- A total of 372,064 food baskets and 1,426,546 meals and snacks are served per month to hungry Quebecers. Twelve per cent of monthly applicants first-time users.

- Nearly half of the households receiving assistance in the past year were families with children.

- Due to a lack of food, 5.6 per cent of food assistance organizations had to close early or not open some days between 2015 and 2016.

- Of those receiving food bank assistance, 10.8 per cent have incomes below their cost of living.

According to HungerCount 2016, 137,000 people, including 47,000 children between the ages of 0 and 17 (23 per cent of beneficiaries), receive food aid every month through aid agencies.

Quebec Sexual Assault Help Centres Data and Aid Requests

Similarly, sexual assault against women and girls is also a serious problem that society must solve. Again, looking at the situation in Quebec as an example, according to statistics compiled by Quebec's Sexual Assault Help Centres (CALACS) for the year 2014-2015:



- 76.3 per cent of requests for help at the centres are related to incest or sexual assault in childhood or adolescence;

- almost 42 per cent of women wait 13 years and more before seeking help -- shame, guilt and fear associated with sexual violence can keep victims silent for a very long time;

- more than 47.5 per cent of women who come to the centres are 30 years of age and older;

- 96.8 per cent of aggressors are known to victims;

- 87 per cent of sexual assaults are committed in a private home;

- 39 per cent of sexual assaults are committed in a home that the victim shares with the perpetrator;

16 per cent in the victim's home; 22 per cent in the abuser's home; 6.3 per cent in a public place or school; 4 per cent at work; and 1.4 per cent on the transit system;

- more than 27 per cent of women and adolescent girls seek help from a CALACS within one year of being assaulted.

In 2014-2015, the centres received 1,850 requests for assistance. Eighty per cent of these requests came from women and adolescent girls who were calling for the first time. Individual meetings represent 80 per cent of the hours of service and group meetings 20 per cent. Interventions include

individual follow-ups, group follow-ups, legal or medical support, support for relatives and referrals.

(Chantier politique. Sources: Table des responsables de l'éducation des adultes et de la formation professionnelle des commissions scolaires du Québec (TRÉAQFP); Huffington post, September 2016; Council for the Status of Women; Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes; Des clés pour comprendre la littératie en 2014: comment parvenir à une meilleure interprétation des résultats du PEICA en matière de littératie, Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes, Hervé Dignard, juin 2014; Campaign 2000 Report; Food Banks in Quebec)



Photo Review

27th Annual Women's Memorial March



Vancouver

While on February 13 Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Ivanka Trump played at being the greatest champions of women's rights, and Trudeau and Canadian media did everything possible in Washington to divert the attention of Canadians from what real life requires, on February 14 Canadians from coast to coast reaffirmed the demand for justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and denounced the paternalism of the Trudeau government's treatment of Indigenous peoples' hereditary, treaty and constitutional rights.

The Annual Women's Memorial Marches began in 1991 in Vancouver, in response to the murder of a Coast Salish woman whose death was viewed with disinterest by the authorities and media. Since that time, as more and more such deaths have come to light, the outrage has grown along with the demand that the Canadian state be held to account for the violence it continues to commit against Indigenous peoples. This year, thousands participated again in the march through Vancouver's downtown eastside. In Prince George, hundreds gathered to remember and demand justice for those who disappeared from Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert, known as the Highway of Tears. Toronto held its 12th Annual Strawberry Ceremony for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls outside of Toronto Police Headquarters. Other cities held marches, vigils and other gatherings to express the demand for justice.

This year's actions come just over one year after the Trudeau government announced that the "design phase" of its National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women came to an end on February 15, 2016. It comes one week after the commissioners tasked by the government

with overseeing the Inquiry held their first news conference on February 7, 2017, during which they announced that no date has been set to begin hearings. The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) released its first quarterly report card on the National Inquiry on January 5. NWAC noted that it has "been very vocal in our concerns regarding the lack of specific guidelines in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Inquiry. The report card gives us a an opportunity to outline the ways in which the Inquiry is successfully implementing their broader ToRs in the areas we've found to be potentially problematic. These include the identification of and actions to remove systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls at a national and provincial level as well as the ability of participants to pursue or reopen individual cases through the justice system." [1]

In the weeks before the march, information came to light about the continued surveillance of Indigenous peoples fighting for their rights by state agencies. On January 30, in response to questions tabled by Timmins-James Bay MP Charlie Angus, the federal government admitted that it continues to monitor protests demanding justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (among other protests) through its Government Operations Centre (GOC). According to the Government of Canada, the GOC "continuously monitors events of national significance (24/7) and shares information with senior officials and provincial/territorial (P/T) governments, as well as NGOs and the private sector" and "is connected to multiple information and intelligence sources -- media, law enforcement, intelligence organizations, emergency management organizations, private sector bodies—at international, federal government, P/T and NGO levels." [2]



TML Daily is publishing below a photo review of the February 14 actions and calls on everyone to continue to support the demand for justice for missing and murdered women and girls.

Canada-Wide February 14 Marches and Vigils

Vancouver





Prince George





Edmonton



University of Alberta, Edmonton

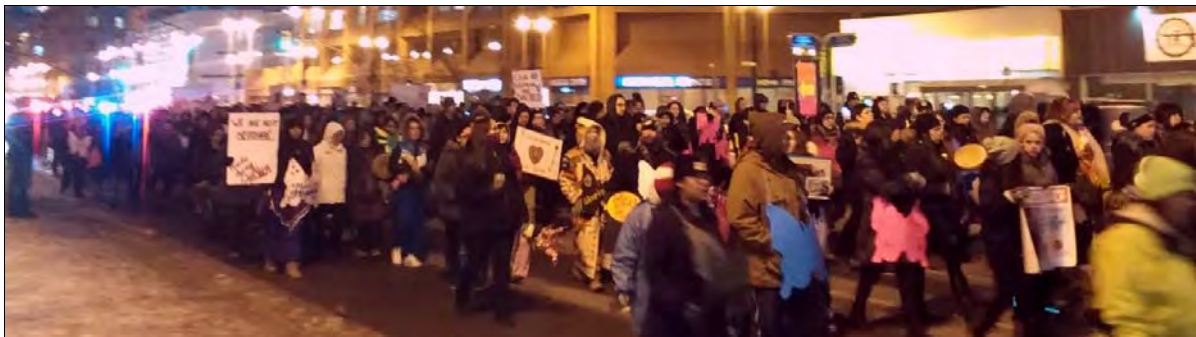


Calgary





Winnipeg



Thunder Bay



#RedDress Campaign, Laurentian University, Sudbury





Toronto



Montreal





Notes

1. To read the full NWAC Report Card, [click here](#).
2. To read the government's response to the request of MP Charlie Angus, [click here](#).

(Photos: TML, D. Gillan, M. Bush, S. Brasnett, P. Ashrafi, S. Amato, Radical Citizen Media, D. Khan, S. Okichitaw, Winnipeg Safe City, A. Achneepineskum, ISA Laurentian, M. Compton, M. Cornellier.)



PREVIOUS ISSUES | HOME

Read *The Marxist-Leninist Daily*
Website: www.cpcml.ca Email: editor@cpcml.ca