"Women's Wars Are Not Men's Wars"
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November 15, 2023
Ballroom A, UMass Boston

NOTE: This print version is edited for reading clarity, CE

Elora Chowdhury:
My name is Elora Chowdhury and on behalf of myself and of the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights, it is my pleasure to welcome you. Today's talk by Dr. Cynthia Enloe is being run as a hybrid event with a live audience here at University of Massachusetts (UMass), as well as participants from around the world joining us on Zoom.

UMass Boston and its surrounding communities are based on the unceded homelands of the Massachusetts, Pawtucket and Nipmuc people. And we want to honor the diverse indigenous peoples enduring relationships with their traditional territories and to acknowledge that the ways land passed from indigenous to non-indigenous control is through a violent history of genocide and forced removal. We'd also like to emphasize that land acknowledgments by themselves are not enough. They are only one small step in supporting indigenous communities and need to be followed by action, building solidarity by combating the ongoing structural and physical violence directed towards indigenous peoples, and by supporting the Land Back movement.

I'd like to begin by thanking Dr. Carol Cohn for this opportunity to introduce Dr. Cynthia Enloe, who is a research professor at Clark University, where she was a founding member of one of the first women's studies PhD programs in North America and where she served as the chair of the political science department. She is the recipient of many prestigious fellowships, guest professorships, as well as honorary doctorates in more institutions and countries than I can count. Her work has been translated to more than 10 languages and has been recognized for her extraordinary contributions to disciplines like Women and Gender, International Relations, and Political Science through prominent lifetime achievement awards. I'm not going to attempt to enumerate her many, many books, I'm sure I would miss some, but I just want to mention that her work is both fields-defining and visionary, as well as prolific. One thing I will say about her books is they require very careful reading between the lines, thought-provoking titles like *'Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*', *'The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in the New Age of Empire'*, *'Gender is not Enough: The Need for Feminist Consciousness'*, *'The Big Push: Exposing and Challenging Persistent Patriarchy*', and many more. Each title conjures an entire feminist archive. She poses a seemingly simple question, which lead to complex theorizing about what happens to our international understandings of politics if we make the experience of women's lives and gender central to our analysis. And her groundbreaking book, a staple, I think in International Relations, a field she helped shape, *'Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Sense of International Politics'* offers vital, insightful and critical departure from conventional top-down treatments of international politics.

Today, I also want to specially emphasize Cynthia's role as a feminist teacher, and mentor, who has instilled lifelong lessons and commitments among generations of feminist researchers and scholars. And I speak from personal experience here, as a cohort from Clark University we all agreed that when you enrolled in a graduate program, you don't usually think you're going to finish it with more questions than when you started. But that's what happens when you study with Cynthia. I have learned a lot from Cynthia about International Relations, militarism, the intricate workings of patriarchy, gender, justice, feminism, the list goes on. But what I most value in addition to the knowledge I gleaned in classrooms (and that was quite an extraordinary experience) is an ability to inquire and to think in new and different ways. Cynthia may have written *'The Curious Feminist'*, and she is indeed a curious feminist, and she's also taught me to be a curious feminist, and to apply that curiosity daily to my pedagogy, and engagement with the world. And above all, out of the many qualities that make her so remarkable, her extraordinary humility, her strategic clarity, her incalculable daily gestures of generosity, large and small, the seriousness and respect she brings to every encounter, I think it is Cynthia's curiosity that best defines her. And I cannot help but quote one of my cohort members from Clark who once said that Cynthia may be tiny, but she's fiercely energetic, indeed, virtually atomic in her drive, to pose questions that will help us all think bigger and connect the dots. Like so many others, my life has been immeasurably enriched, and my own curiosity enlivened by knowing Cynthia and benefiting from her engagement, her wisdom, and her example. I couldn't be more honored to be welcoming Dr. Enloe here to bring us some of her latest thinking from her most recent book *'12 Feminist Lessons of War'*. Cynthia, thank you so much for coming to speak with us today.

Cynthia Enloe:

We're all in the midst of an intense conversation, an international conversation, about war, about violent conflict. But before any war starts, before the shots are fired, there is the militarization of our heads, the militarization of our daily lives, the militarization of our most intimate relationships. And that's what I wanted to join in a conversation with you about, in this newest effort, *Twelve Feminist Lessons of War* (University of California Press, 2023*).* This book is drawing on everything I've learned from Elora, from Carol, from people on Zoom today, such as Nadine, and Sandy, and so many others. From all of you I've learned why we have to take women's lives seriously in order to fully understand the causes and the consequences of wars.

Taking women "seriously" means not trivially, not as mere human-interest stories. Taking women *seriously* means not "by the way," not "if you happen to have some time," not "when things quiet down." We each, I've learned, have to take women's complex, diverse lives seriously in order to make useful sense of any conflict, to make sense even of a conflict you're horrified by or a conflict you're now in the roiling midst of.

Look around everybody. Many of us who are here today – or joining us via Zoom – have family members or dear friends who have experienced war firsthand. We can ask those relatives or friends what they actually did during wartime. We can ask what kind of resources had they wished they had then, but didn't possess. We can ask them to describe the little things they did every day just to cope with wartime violence. But we have to have our gender-curious glasses firmly in place when we have these sensitive conversations. That is, we have to use our gender curiosities to learn from our own family members and friends about how girls and women have experienced and coped with war, and how boys and men have experienced and coped with war.

Women's wars are not men's wars.

This declaration might become a feminist a bumper sticker for your car, bike or backpack. Be careful, though. To declare, "Women's wars are not men's wars" is *not* to call for a hierarchy of suffering. It's not to say that men have suffered more - or less - than women. Furthermore, to assert that women's wars are not men's wars is *not* to argue that men are less interesting than women. Rather, keeping this feminist assertion in mind is to remind ourselves that women's lives in all their complexity are just as *interesting* as men's lives.

That's a radical assertion. It's radical because it goes to the root of our assumptions about who is interesting, who deserves our attention, whose ideas matter, who deserves to be taken seriously.

In most parts of the world, certainly in the United States, it is assumed that if you want to understand the world, you have to pay attention to the people with power. Most of those people have been and remain men. I've come to realize that holding on to that assumption makes one stupid. In fact, the people with power only have that power because they've extracted it from everybody else in their community or their country. And that includes from women. I've learned over many years of my failing to pay serious attention to women – during high school, college, graduate school and my early years of teaching (Elora, in her generous introduction today, was kind in skimming over those early pre-feminist years!) – that I was embarrassingly shallow in my analyses of political power. In those early, pre-feminist years, I explored presidents, prime ministers, cabinet members, political party strategists, social movement leaders, generals, admirals and corporate executives. I imagined that if I studied all of them, I would become smart about how the world works. Well, I was wrong. In fact, I wasn't just wrong, I was naïve.

Now, "naïve" is an adjective that we should use with great caution. "Naïve" is commonly wielded by men to dismiss the ideas of most women (and sometimes ideas of rival men) by implying that they are feminine, that is, allegedly innocent of hard worldly realities. Here, however, when I describe my earlier approach to investigating political power as "naïve," I'm using the adjective to chastise my own earlier self for being *inattentive* and *uncurious*. In those pre-feminist years, I was naïve in so far as I failed to dig deeply into the complex, multi-layered, racialized and gendered realities of political power – who gets it, how do they acquire it and keep it, whose passivity they depend on, what do they do with it, and what are the consequences for all sorts of women and all sorts of men effected by those power-wielders' decisions.

To understand any war – in Myanmar, Sudan, Kashmir, Colombia, Syria, Ethiopia, Congo, as well as in Gaza and Israel, and in Ukraine - we need to actively grapple with the power dynamics driving this reality: Women's wars are not men's wars.

In practice, this means we cannot look at people in wartime as if they are ungendered. For instance, we cannot talk realistically simply about "refugees." Instead, we have to talk about refugees as men, refugees as women. Even if we're horrified by the violence destroying the lives of young people, we cannot simply talk about "children," whether it be in eastern Ukraine or in Gaza. Instead, we have to ask: Are the experiences of war identical for boys and girls? We have learned from scores of studies and reports that, in fact, girls' experiences and boys' experiences are not the same – and that those gendered differences among children

will have short- and long-term consequences that matter for both the boys and girls and for their entire societies.

Women's wars are not men's wars. Think about the ungendered category of people thought of as "parents." Both mothers and fathers try desperately to protect their vulnerable sons and daughters while fleeing from war, oftentimes ending up in refugee camps. Yet women as mothers and men as fathers do not always have equal power under custom or law to make decisions about their sons and daughters, about buying or selling property, about moving from one place to another with their children. In other words, ungendered people called "parents" don't experience war: mothers experience war and fathers experience war.

Let's keeping pushing deeper. Think about the wartime politics of "child marriage." In many war-torn countries caring, conscientious, desperate mothers and fathers both may consider whether marrying off their young daughters to an older men might be the safest way to protect their girl children – from famine, wounds or sexual exploitation. But if they disagree, those mothers and fathers usually don't exercise equal authority when making such the hard decision. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is one of the best sources of the information on wartime child marriages because it hires staff who have been trained in gender analysis and thus can conduct gender-disaggregated research. UNICEF researchers have found that 90% of all "child marriages" are not simply marriages of under-age "children"; they are marriages of under-age *girls.*

Moreover, UNICEF's gender-smart researchers show that a great majority of the people who become the spouses of these girl children are *older men.* So, when we talk about wartime violence increasing the numbers of "child marriages," we should make clear what the wartime reality is this: girl children are being married by their fathers to older men. Now, with your feminist gender-aware consciousness, consider the unequal gendered sexual, economic, health and literacy dynamics that will shape those child marriages - not only during the war, but for decades after the war.

Women's wars are not men's wars. If you're practicing your "elevator talk" to explain this newly understood reality, you can't imagine your mythical elevator is going up to the twentieth floor, giving you lots of time to meander in your explanation. You have to imagine making your point by the third floor. Perhaps in your short upward ride, you could point to the stark genderings of paid and unpaid pre-war, wartime and post-war work.

Among the most famous of the Second Wave feminist bumper stickers was the one that declared: "All women work." All women work, meaning that women doing both unpaid and paid work are performing labor. Then the political question to ask is: what percentage of all the women who work get *paid* for their work? Men, diverse by age, class, and ethnicity are, within virtually every country, more likely than the women in that country to get paid for their work; even if many men work in unsafe, exploitative jobs, they get paid. That is a pre-war gender reality that is rarely discussed by supposed war experts. Those uncurious experts don't wonder about how these gender politics of paid and unpaid work will play out during wartime. Thus their allegedly expert analysis will be unrealistic about the actual dynamics of wartime.

One should investigate these politics of work country by county. For instance, today we should be asking: What percentage of all Gazan women (a high proportion of whom today are literate and have completed secondary school) had access to paid employment before the

Israeli government's devastating aerial bombardments? How has that gendered economic reality effected Gazan women's capacities to draw on their own incomes to cope with this devastation? It takes money to flee a war, to keep yourself safe, to support your sons, daughters, and elderly relatives. If - even though she's been working work dawn to dusk without pay for years – a woman does not have her own cash, she is economically dependent on the person in her household who does get paid for his work. To understand the gendered realities of today's wartime coping in Gaza – or in Ukraine, Syria, Kashmir, Congo, Myanmar, Ethiopia or Sudan – we need to explore the gendered (usually unequal) economic realities of work.

Let's turn to Ukraine. Vladimir Putin, the authoritarian leader of the current Russian government, is smiling this week. Why? Because most of us have stopped paying attention to the destructive war imposed by the Putin regime on Ukrainians. We, the world's spectators, have shifted our gaze on to the newest shiny (if horrific) thing. We all get easily distracted - because there is a "military stalemate," because it's "old news", because we want wars to be like football, with yards gained and lost, with scores tallied up on the Jumbotrons to hold our attention. Vladimir Putin is counting on us to have woefully short attention spans. Putin depends on us to be distracted from his on-going aggressive bombing of civilians in Ukraine.

Feminists work hard not to be distracted, not to think about just one-horror-at-a-time. We try to think simultaneously about the wartime gender dynamics that are shaping conflicts in Sudan, Ethiopia, Congo, Kashmir, Syria, and Myanmar, Ukraine and Gaza and Israel. We try to do this – and it's not easy – because to practice international feminist solidarity is to pay attention. "Feeling sorry" is not solidarity. There's a second incentive, though, for honing our skills in attentiveness. We are more likely to keep fine-tuning our gender understandings of war if we keep comparing wartime women's and men's experiences of – and actions during – several wars; What do Ukrainian and Gazan women share today? What is similar about the politics of masculinities in Sudan and Myanmar? And, to craft more reliable, realistic understandings of war, feminists always compare women activists' wartime efforts: What experiences are similar between Ethiopian, Israeli and Syrian local women's advocates' wartime experiences?

I went to University of California at Berkeley in the 1960s. Nobody in allegedly hip, radical, activist Berkeley of the 1960s urged us to pay close attention to women as survivors, as fighters, as farmers, as activists, or as people with useful ideas. So, don't be nostalgic for the "60s." You today have the chance to be smarter in your investigations of current wars than we were back in the 1960s. For instance, we can try to gain information about current Gazan women's activist advocates. Palestinian women have organized around women's concerns for generations. What issues were they focusing their energies on before October 7th? How did they try to maintain their organizational autonomy, despite intense political pressures from inside and outside Gaza to prioritize nationalist issues over gender inequities? Which male-led Palestinian groups did Gazan women advocates choose to ally with, before October 7th and after October 7th? How do any of these realities matter today? Seeking the complex answers to these important questions will provide a keener understanding of the currently gendered militarized violence, as well as the likely gendered shape of future peacetime.

Look inside Israel too. There has been a long history of Israeli intersectional feminist organizing. What are the demands that these feminist activists prioritized before October 7th? How did Israeli feminists think about the relationships between militarism and patriarchy? What concerns have these same activists been pressured to keep silent about now, after

October 7th and after the Netanyahu government's military invasion of Gaza? How are these intersectionally-conscious feminists within Israel reacting to those wartime silencing pressures? With what consequences?

Yes, there are a dizzying array of questions to pursue. But unless we try, together, to craft thoughtful, specific questions, including questions about local women's organizing hurdles and difficult choices, we will not be able to pursue the tough investigations that will generate useful gender analyses of war and its prevention.

One intersectionally-conscious Palestinian /Jewish Israeli feminist group I've tried to keep track of is called "Gun-Free Kitchen Table." You can follow them on social media. "Gun-Free Kitchen Table" was started about six years ago by a handful of Jewish and Palestinian women inside Israel who were worried that security guards, overwhelmingly male private security company employees, were being allowed to bring their weapons home. The GFKT women began investigating. They found that Israeli officials in the Interior Ministry were failing to enforce the law which is supposed to hold security company executives responsible for making sure their security guard employees leave their guns at work. GFKT researchers also found that, simultaneously, there was an increase in gun use by security guard men against their women partners. GFKT feminist activists did careful gender research on guns in domestic violence and then used their data to persuade local journalists to report on the government's failure to enforce the national law prohibiting companies from allowing their male guards to take guns home with them. While Gun Free Kitchen Table's activists focused on a seemingly narrow question of law, they were fully aware that they were publicizing masculinized violence against women at the very time that the Netanyahu-led right-wing government was relaxing gun ownership rules and encouraging more Israeli Jews – especially men, including settlers taking over territory on the Palestinian West Bank - to privately acquire more guns.

Thus, GFKT feminist activists have explicitly made the political connections between anti-militarism, support of Palestinian rights, defense of Israeli democracy and the campaigns against violence against women – concerned about the security of *all* women. Despite current intimidating pressures exerted on them, the activists of Gun Free Kitchen Table have continued their organizing efforts during the Netanyahu government's military assault on Gaza.

It takes a special courage to sustain feminist activism during wartime.

In Ukraine too, local feminists are continuing to organize during wartime. According to Ukrainian feminists, they too are experiencing pressures to stay silent about women's rights in the name of cementing patriotic unity while facing Putin's aggressions. One Ukrainian feminist group is called "Women's Perspectives." It is based in Lviv, in western Ukraine, but organizes against men's domestic violence against women throughout Ukraine. It was launched before the February 2022 Russian military invasion, but has continue its feminist activism during the wartime tensions and displacements of the last two years. The Ukrainian feminists of Women's Perspectives also are shedding light on the causal dynamics between patriarchal privilege, violence against women and the necessity to sustain an inclusive democratic civic culture even as the Russian missiles are bombarding apartment houses, schools, energy plants and hospitals.

So often, when a war starts, feminists everywhere are told by non-feminists and anti-feminists to keep quiet: “Don’t you know there's a war on?” The implication is that these feminist demands will weaken the war effort. Feminists, by contrast, argue that making a society more fair, more inclusive will strengthen the social fabric and thereby make society more resilient in the face of war. The second implication rumbling underneath the warning that “There’s a war on,” is that society will address gender injustice - violence against women, unequal pay, lack of reproductive rights, women’s marginalization inside political parties, as well as women’s inequality in marriage, inheritance and divorce laws – *later*. Women who've been active in war zones in Nicaragua, China, Zimbabwe and Algeria have warned us all to be wary of “later.”

“Later” is a patriarchal time zone.

The feminist response is not to be silenced by militarized violence. Instead, feminists around the world have urged us all to expand and deepen our feminist curiosities when the guns begin firing and the missiles start to fly. Talk back when somebody claims you're being “naïve” when you raise the issue of domestic violence in a warzone. Tell them that, it’s quite the opposite: your feminist-informed understandings actually have made you more *realistic* about war.

Thanks.

Elora:
Thank you, Dr. Enloe. For that incredibly expansive and timely, urgent talk. We do have about a good amount of time, 25 minutes for question and answer.

Q1:
So, a lot of the talk about gender is very binary, so my kind of question is how does transgender and non-binary identities fit into kind of the worldview and perspective that you're talking about?

Cynthia:
Thank you very much. Well, here's what happens in war and, more broadly, in militarized societies, even if they claim to be at peace: all definitions of acceptable gender identity and gender behavior shrink. That's what militarization does. It’s not a coincidence, for instance, that the Putin regime has used wartime to tighten its punishments of LGBTQ Russians.

Think of the proverbial “eye of the needle.” The eye of the needle is what is conventionally deemed acceptable in your society. When war threatens to break out or has broken out, the eye of the needle narrows. What it means to be a “respectable woman” shrinks, what it means to be “manly” shrinks, what it means to be a “devoted wife” shrinks, what it means to socially “fit in” shrinks. Under those shrinkage pressures, it is “loyalty” that counts. And, of course, the definition of “loyalty” is controlled by the observers: Neighbors, editors, clergy, government officials. It's very, very tough to live outside the conventional gender boxes in times of war. That's true of non-binary people in Gaza, non-binary people in Ukraine, non-binary people in Kashmir. To cope with the shrinkage of what it takes to be seen as “loyal,” many non-binary people try to “fit in.” Some try to flee, but fleeing requires money, documents and connections. Wartime can be a very dangerous time for anybody in any society who doesn't squeeze into the locally conventional, narrow gender boxes.

It's a great question. Thank you.

Q2:
First of all, thank you for the really insightful talk. What you implied in your presentation is something like this, which I gather, if we remedy the unpaid work, and equalize the pay between women and men, so gender inequality will be obliterated. Is that okay, for one? And secondly, like your talk is very modernist in its streak, like, one-size-fits-all. Like if we pay women in Pakistan, where I come from across the globe, so then this gender equality will be enshrined suppose something like this. But didn't you ignore the power from your talk, irrespective of what gender one comes from? If they are a professor, men, we will respect them for their knowledge, no matter which gender they come from. If you are journalist, and you were a woman or a man, we will respect the order, because that's the power imbalance. What about that? Thank you.

Cynthia:
I think that trying to equalize women's economic and men's economic conditions is trying to reweave a many-stranded woven social fabric. By itself, equal pay does not guarantee full justice or full equality, right? And your point about introducing class status into our understandings is a valuable one. For instance, I have a good friend, Ghazal Zulfiqar, who's a UMass Boston PhD. She is a Pakistani feminist political economist now on the faculty of LUMS, the famous Lahore University of Management Science. As a feminist scholar, Ghazal researches the lives of Pakistani women working as low paid, often exploited domestic workers. Some of these women clean the homes of professors. They are being paid for their hard work, but is it fair and equitable pay? Can they live safe and healthy lives on that level of pay?

Your point, I think, is really useful. Any single thread of a patriarchal social fabric needs to be teased out and examined closely with a feminist intersectional lens. Guaranteeing security for women performing both paid and unpaid work, while simultaneously equalizing men's and women's paid work – both should be investigated to see when and if either of these progressive changes have the effect of rolling back the forces of militarization - and why.

Q3:
So, my thought is just how the fragility of the patriarchy really stems from, I feel, the roles which we allow ourselves to play, and I'm interested in how in your new book, you talked about how a lot of times, women in war are depicted as shy, tearful, broken down, almost like dolls, like very fragile. I feel like this victimization is kind of deception, and it's a way to keep that patriarchy in place, you know, that story kind of. I was just wondering what you thought and how, like, if we keep ourselves in those boxes, and if we, through agency, upliftment and activism, how we can work through those battlefields of women's wars? Because I feel like a woman's war isn't, you know, it's not like I don't, I see it differently. And I feel like the battlefields are all over the place. And they're like, on our bodies, they're in our mind. It's just everywhere. It's what we see. It's what we eat.

Cynthia:
Thank you. You know, it's about journalists, and editors, and about us. We all gravitate to the big photographs of women crying. As if that's the main thing women do in war: they cry. We don't ask the follow-up questions about the woman who is pictured: What does she do after she's had her good cry? What did she do before she started crying? What does she *think* when she's crying over her son's body or her husband's body? You're absolutely right. As feminists,

we want to know what did she do before the photographer snapped his photo and what will she did she do when the photographer moved on?

Your question has made me think about how hard it was to find a realistic image to serve as the jacket cover of a book I wrote about Iraqi women and American women during the US-led war in Iraq: *Nimo's War, Emma's War*. I wanted a cover image that showed Iraqi women, but I did not want the image to be of women crying. I knew from my research that Iraqi women did a lot more than cry: they went to university, they held families together, they kept small businesses running, the were engineers, museum curators, civil servants and physicians. The photo I finally found is by an Iranian Canadian feminist photographer. It shows Baghdad women debating each other, sitting on their apartment house stairway steps engaging in an animated conversation - in the middle of war.

So yes, you're absolutely right. We shouldn't be seduced as viewers into the conventional notion that women in wartime merely cry. Photographs matter, but they do not reveal the full story of women's lives and women's thinking. Thanks.

Q 4:
Kind of jumping off on her question: But I had a different opinion. I feel that a lot of the times women in war aren't victimized enough. And like I completely understand the points that you and she made. But there are many women in my family who were comfort women in the Japanese Imperialism time. And it wasn't until like, you know, many years later that they even talk about it. You know, and because of this, not wanting to victimize yourself, and nobody really caring, you know, I understand you, you don't want to be perceived as weak in comparison to men. But at the same time, it's like, if you don't victimize at all, no one's going to take the time out of their day to ask, you know?

Cynthia:
You are so smart. This is really good. It's only certain women who are portrayed as victimized by war. And they are women who are rarely interviewed. Furthermore, as you rightly point out, many women victimized by war a shamed into silence about what they endured during the war. The most famous of the women experiencing this wartime and long post-war silencing are those women in Asia whom the Japanese Imperial Army forced into prostitution in the 1930s and early 1940s to sexually service rank and file Japanese male soldiers. They were called "comfort women," a terrible euphemism. Those women – from China, Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia – felt the pressures of feminized shame and so remained silent about their ordeals for decades. It was only in the 1990s, with the support of local younger feminists, that these women began to publicly tell their stories. Feminists now reject the term "comfort women." Instead, thanks to the brave speaking out of the elderly women describing the entire exploitative wartime system, feminists call it "sexual slavery."

So, you're right. During and after any war, we should all wonder about which women victimized by the gendered dynamics of war choose to stay silent for fear of their being marginalized by social stigmatization. What careful forms of support does any victimized woman need in order to be secure enough to describe what happened to her during war?

Patriarchy acknowledges certain women as victims only when it serves to strengthen patriarchal ideas about masculinized protection and militarized nationalism. Feminists, by contrast, care for women as victims in order to strengthen those women's own security, their

own health, their own full human rights. This stark difference between patriarchy's incentives and feminists' incentives matters today more than ever.

Q 4:
I agree with also the, like, [it was] embarrassing that you were even a comfort woman, even though it was even not your own choice, as if being one is made to devalue and not just people in your family, or like Korean peoples, if you bring this issue out loud, then you're devaluing all the women who were like this. So even saying it, even victimizing yourself is in turn, devalue yourself, and at the same time.

Cynthia:
You're right, that's how patriarchy works. It's as if a woman who has been exploited sexually loses her honor. No woman ever loses her honor because she's been sexually abused. The man who does the abusing and his superior, who organized and enabled the abusive system, are the people who've *actually* lost their honor. But a patriarchal society blames the victim. And most of us can't afford cannot afford to be stigmatized. We need to be thought of by employers, public officials, and our own family members as "honorable," as "respectable." A woman who is tainted with the label "fallen" or "dishonorable" is a woman placed in danger. That is why it took fifty years following the end of World War II for these Asian women to speak out. Even then, it required bravery to describe the sexual abuse they endured.

Women who had been forced into militarized prostitution spoke out in the 1990s with the support of feminists two generations younger than them. This was a model of feminist alliances over generations, first among South Korean women, then among Filipina, Taiwanese, Singaporean and Indonesian women.

Today you can visit a small but daring Tokyo feminist museum – the Women's Activism Museum - devoted to exposing the Imperial Japanese military's "comfort women" system. The Japanese feminists who have built this tiny museum have deliberately done so with the active cooperation of the women across Asia who survived wartime sexual slavery. Because of intimidating threats from today's Japanese nationalists who want to deny World War II history, the Japanese feminists who run this little museum don't put its name on the door and have located it up on a second floor, above a bridal attire company.

So, you're right. When women find the support that enables them to break a patriarchally imposed silence, we, their fortunate listeners, gain in our own understanding not only of the sexual politics of war, but also of the sexual politics shaping post-war lives. Thank you for such a valuable observation.

Q 5:
I did not actually raise my hand but thank you so much for the opportunity. You know, maybe I could read, you know, the end of chapter seven of your book as a response, because it speaks to the question that you asked. Sohaila Abdulali, the Indian US feminist writer, activist and rape survivor offers a feminist caution: "It's quite a balancing act. You don't want to have a secret you can share. But you equally don't want this one thing that happened to you to be the biggest thing on everyone's mind when they think of you. I hope being a rape survivor isn't the most interesting thing about me or anyone else."

Cynthia:

Thank you for reading Sohaila's words. I urge everyone to read Sohaila Abdulali's sensitive book: *What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Rape.*

Q 6:
Thank you very much for your wonderful presentation. My question basically is about an issue that is, I don't know whether it's contemporary, but it's gradually creeping into kind of a war against women. And that is some people now turning themselves into women and venturing into sports and competing with women. And evidence has shown that such people when they get into the women's sports, they easily win and take the kind of prize that is supposed to be for women. What is feminism responding to this new development?

Cynthia:
Thank you. That's, that's a very good question. It was raised here, also, when we earlier were discussing non-binary people's experiences of war. Across the world, most feminists want inclusive societies, societies that are broadly accepting of a variety of people. That's where feminists start. They also want not just mere tolerance, but fairness for all sorts of people. Inclusiveness and fairness might seem almost the same, but not in real life. You have to work on achieving and sharing both. Maybe these sorts of efforts are going on here, in the UMB athletic department. Around the country now, people responsible for all kinds of sports are trying to figure out exactly what is fair when a male-to-female trans person wants to take part in women's sports. It's a healthy debate when it is about achieving genuine fairness. It's not based on stereotypes, right? Not on rigid notions of exclusion?

These conversations, these efforts take honest, attentive collaborative work. It calls on us to think about when, in their process of transition, they joined the sporting activity? And one has to explore the nature of the particular sport, the kinds of agility or skill or strength gives advantage in that particular sport. So, what I would suggest is that we all take real care not to slip into stereotypes and not to allow others to wield stereotypes. Stereotypes are never the reliable building blocks of inclusiveness or fairness. To do the nitty gritty work of achieving of fairness, we have to pay attention to the specifics, the details. My sense is that today in soccer and in many other sports, there are genuine efforts being made to shed stereotypes, while holding fast to the twin goals of fairness and inclusiveness.

Q 7:
Do you have any advice for young folks looking to enter the world of Global Affairs? And how they can continue to amplify feminist perspectives and approaches to international communication and conflict resolution?

Cynthia:
That's a wonderful question. Thank you to the Zoomer online. My advice is: Be curious, always ask the gender questions about masculinities, about femininities, about women, about men, about people who don't want to be categorized as either. Always be ready to be surprised by what you discover in your feminist explorations. Make those findings your guide to activism.

But start by being curious, being attentive. Don't just read the headlines, read five paragraphs down. Don't just take the punchy messages and provocative images on TikTok or Instagram as your guide. What can fit on a single screen on your phone will not provide the sort of nuanced insights and evidence you need to be a valuable feminist activist in this dynamic, complicated world. If you take as your guide to activism impressions that are simplistic,

superficial or cartoonish, your actions are bound to be unrealistic and ultimately ineffective. In fact, your actions – including your words – may have harmful consequences that you do not intend. It takes time and thought, listening, exploring and re-thinking to be a feminist.

Q 8:
So basically, in your reading, when reading it, you kind of talk about how it's important to not look at just like one certain group of women, but like every different religion and like, country and everything. And it reminded me, because also, we see a lot of misunderstandings about different women from different parts of the world. Do you agree? Because this might be a little stretch, it reminded me of like the US feminist movement in like the US. Would you agree that basically, because of the misunderstanding of other women around the world, we see like less progress, just like how it was in the US feminist movement of basically like, the feminist movement, like lost their potential to reach where we could be, because of the division that we have, between the misunderstanding of what it is to be like a white woman and the misunderstanding to be like what it is to be a woman of color?

Cynthia:
Good for you. Yes, I mean, you know, it's taken a lot of Latina women, African American women, Native American women, women from many backgrounds to try to get white women up to speed in their understandings of this world. Those white women who have been most receptive, who have really listened, are the ones who have remained effective. Take, for instance, Gloria Steinem, who's probably one of the most well-known white women feminists today in the US. Gloria Steinem always says that it was African American feminists who taught her, in the 1970s, to be a feminist. She tells of her earliest feminist activism, when she went on the road, invited by an African American feminist, to speak jointly with her to small mixed-race community groups. She says that that was her feminist education.

For all of us, no matter how broad we think our curiosity is, our curiosity isn't broad enough. Without being embarrassed, without being defensive, we have to be ready to keep learning from somebody else's realities, realities we've never really paid close attention to. And then we have to be ready to change our minds – about what causes what, about what should be prioritized, about how to build sustainable progressive organizations, about how, step by painful step, to gain trust.

This is true in every society. For instance, Sri Lankan feminists have had to work very hard during today's difficult post-war era to overcome the deep divisions between Sinhalese and Tamil women and men within Sri Lankan society. In Sri Lanka, it's been Sinhalese who have been politically predominant. But now Tamil/Sinhalese alliances are crucial for reweaving the country's social fabric shredded by twenty-five years of violent conflict. American feminists can learn from feminists in other countries who today are building cross-ethnicity, cross-race, cross-religious, cross-class, cross-sexuality, cross-party, cross rural-urban alliances – in Sri Lanka, in India, in Turkey, in Myanmar, in Iran, in Northern Ireland, in the former Yugoslavia, in Poland, in South Africa, in Colombia. It's hard to build alliances. It's especially hard to build lasting alliances, not coming together just for a short-term objective, but for the long haul. That's hard. But, you know, feminists have stamina. That's the good news.

Thank you very much.