

March 8th - International Women's Day

About IWD and Peace...

In August 1914, World War I erupted, leading to the slaughter of millions. International Women's Day became a focal point for those calling for an immediate end to the war. On February 23, 1917, (March 8 on the Gregorian calendar), thousands of Russian women celebrated International Women's Day by surging onto the streets of Petrograd demanding peace. These militant protests led to the downfall of the czar and, soon afterward, Russia's decision to leave the war.

Senseless war continues. Once again we are told that military action in Iraq and Afghanistan is intended to promote freedom and peace, and once again we know the real reasons are about power and wealth. As we demonstrate our opposition to war and occupation this and every International Women's Day, we commemorate the heroic actions of the women in Petrograd in 1917 and the women in Tehran in 1979. In doing so, we maintain an unbroken link in the struggle for peace, justice, and equality.

About IWD and Power...

International Women's Day is about power: theirs and ours. Their power puts courts and legislatures in charge of whether or not a woman can have an

abortion. Our power leaves this decision where it belongs: with the woman herself. Their power dictates a profit-driven "managed care" health care system, at the service of the health insurance industry and transnational pharmaceutical companies. Our power lies in grassroots organizing, for a national system of universal health care under community control.

Their power rests in greedy corporations owned by an ultra-wealthy few that deplete the world's resources and exploit its people. Our power depends on building a mass movement for a new society rooted in cooperation, equality, and workers' control.

Their power dumps toxic waste sites in our poorest communities-of-color, and builds dams that destroy the livelihoods of countless farmers in our poorest countries. Our power demands environmental justice. Their power busts unions. Our power is at our worksites, talking with our co-workers about the connections between workers' rights, human rights, and women's rights. Their power is "welfare reform" that pushes women into low-paid, dead-end jobs, and their children into inadequate child care. Our power is the fight for the creation of good jobs with pay equity and benefits, and the full funding of quality child care, education, and social services.

Their power dupes young men and women into signing away their rights and often their

lives for the sake of U.S. imperialism. Our power gets the word out on alternatives to "jobs" in the military and calls for huge cuts in the military budget. Their power blames hunger and poverty on over-population. Our power blames hunger and poverty on policies and practices consciously designed to protect and enrich the global capitalist class, in particular the agribusiness of the most developed countries.

Their power gets channeled through politicians whose primary allegiance is to the economic requirements of global capitalism. Our power gets exerted through political action completely independent of both mainstream, capitalist parties. Their power resides in exploitation, inequality, domination, violence, and deception. Our power resides in cooperation, compassion, respectful communication, justice, and collective action.

March 8th -- International Women's Day -- is our day.

It's our opportunity to come together to speak out for a world where democratic socialist feminist values and programs enable people to live lives in ways they never will be able to under capitalism and patriarchy. That's the truth. That's our power.

About IWD History...

1909: The Woman's National Committee of the Socialist Party calls for a national day of protest on the last Sunday of February to support women's suffrage in the context of the broader movement for women's rights, workers' rights, and social justice.

1910: The Women's Congress of the Socialist International meets in August in Copenhagen and approves the call for an international day of protest. The specific date is left open to the participants in each country.

1913: Russian socialists begin celebrating International Women's Day. Their intention is to organize rallies for the same day as that set in the United States, but since their Julian calendar lags several days behind the Gregorian calendar, the events take place in early March by our reckoning.

1917: The date of March 8 for International Women's Day gets established when tens of thousands of women, demonstrating on that day in Petrograd, the capital of Russia, spark a revolution that topples three centuries of czarist autocracy.

Since then, the revolutionary history of International Women's Day has been honored by countless women around the world: for example, by the women of Iran who, in the face of the reactionary dictums of the Ayatollah Khomeini, took to the streets in 1979 to demand equality; and by the thousands of women who, since 1999, have taken part each March 8 in the Global Women's Strike for a global society based on caring, not killing.



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International Women's Day: Our Day of Empowerment, Resistance, Celebration



"The Socialist Party is a socialist feminist organization that recognizes that a struggle against habitual male dominance and patriarchy must go hand in hand with any struggle against capitalism. Therefore, we pledge our opposition to all forms of sexism, and demand equality in all aspects of life."

Socialist Party USA Platform

Women's Commission of the Socialist Party

