

Celebrating International Women's Day 2010

Women Still in the Streets for Socialism... Rights, Equity, Justice... Stop the Assault on the Public Sector!

International Women's Day: A Century of Empowerment, Resistance, Celebration

From the Women's Commission of the Socialist Party USA, February 2010



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 the Julian calendar lags several days behind the Western 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.

1979: In Tehran, women's rights activists celebrate International Women's Day by taking to the streets to demand equality for women and to protest the reactionary order of the Ayatollah Khomeini calling for all Iranian women to wear the veil.

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 new calendar), tens of 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.

Celebrating International Women's Day 2010



This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of International Women's Day. It was in 1910 that German revolutionary, Clara Zetkin, brought a proposal for an International Women's Day to the Women's Congress of the Socialist International being held in Copenhagen in 1910. This proposal was inspired by women's demands for workers' rights and voting rights, and by the 1909 Woman's Day rallies organized by the Socialist Party of America. After passage by the Women's Congress, Zetkin's IWD proposal was adopted by the Socialist International as a whole, and has been celebrated around the world ever since.

The Women's Commission of the Socialist Party USA urges socialist feminists within the US and throughout the world to honor both IWD's socialist founders and today's socialist feminist

activists by planning actions that include a focus on the world-wide assault on the public sector. Aspects of this proposal include...

- 1) putting forward a socialist feminist analysis and program as regards the issues involved in this assault
- 2) rallying under the banner "International Women's Day 1910-2010... Women Still in the Streets for Socialism... Rights, Equity, Justice... Stop the Assault on the Public Sector!" as a way to honor IWD's socialist founders, and to link their issues and activism with ours today
- 3) seeking the participation of other socialist and radical labor organizations as part of an effort to communicate, and to coordinate actions and events, on a regular basis

The dire state of the public sector is an international crisis that has become especially intense since last year's global economic meltdown precipitated by the heartless and calculated policies and practices of global capitalism. Issues we could address in the context of capitalism and patriarchy include cut-backs and layoffs; sub-minimum wages, lack of benefits, and bad working conditions; gross governmental neglect of education, healthcare, housing, mass transit, social services, and the environment; domestic violence; harassment and scape-goating of immigrants and people of color; governmental policies that restrict abortion access, and underfund child care and other family support services; and the union-busting tactics of privatization and deregulation.

Together, we can build a large and lively International Women's Day 2010—one that brings radical energy and a much-needed socialist feminist analysis and program to all our events.

Today, like yesterday, women are speaking out and fighting back against injustice and exploitation—as workers and as community activists. Many are increasingly convinced of the need and possibility for the transformation of global society from capitalism to democratic socialism. We hope you agree that this is what men and women throughout the world should celebrate this coming March 8.



Socialist Party USA Women's Commission 339 Lafayette St. #303 New York, NY 10012

Local Contact: