

# International Women's Day



## Why we celebrate International Women's Day.

International Women's Day has its roots in the early trade union struggles of this continent. On March 8, 1908, the New York garment industry suffered an unprecedented shock: 15,000 women textile workers went out on strike demanding the most basic of rights. They bore placards protesting fire-trap working conditions, demanding equal pay and the right to form unions. But these women also looked beyond their own situations and demanded votes for women; the slogan Bread and Roses rang through the streets -- bread a symbol for economic security, and roses a symbol of a better life. And the demand for Bread and Roses echoed the slogan of the women mill workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

The strike and demonstrations of the New York textile workers were felt all over the world, and in 1910, Clara Zetkin, the great European champion of women's rights proposed that March 8 be set aside each year by women around the world as International Women's Day. The first celebration in 1910 was an enormous success, drawing 30,000 in Austria and Germany alone.

## International Women's Day -- Canada.

Since the resurgence of the women's movement in the Sixties, women have responded to the call, decades old, to commemorate March 8 as a day of protest, solidarity and celebration. But only in the last two years have our numbers in Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, and Toronto begun to equal the numbers of women celebrating this event in Europe.

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\*\*\*INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY\*\*\*

MARCH 8, 1980

GATHER AT TORONTO CITY HALL AT 11AM

THERE ARE REGULAR MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR ALL WOMEN INTERESTED IN BUILDING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY:

Thursday Feb. 14 at 7:30 Community Centre, 519 Church Street

Wednesday Feb. 20 at 7:30 University Settlement, 23 Grange Road

Wednesday Feb. 27 at 7:30 University Settlement, 23 Grange Road

Wednesday Mar. 5 at 7:30 University Settlement, 23 Grange Road

There are committees to become involved in such as media, publicity, outreach, the event, issues etc.

Both years, over 2,000 women marched in the streets of Toronto to show the vitality of the women's movement and the urgency of our demands -- for full employment rights, for control of our bodies, an end to the cutbacks in our social services and an end to the harassment of lesbians.

Both years, we joined with over 10,000 women across Canada, women marching, meeting, celebrating -- women from their kitchens, offices, factories, unions, schools, social services and organizations -- all working in solidarity for women's rights.

We cannot stop there. What have we gained since the early struggles in the mills and the garment industry? Yes, we have the vote now, but our right to unionize is still not secure; equal pay is far from reality -- the gap between men's and women's wages in Canada is widening, not narrowing. And if the "bread" of economic security is not yet reality, what of the "roses"? What of the quality of our lives as women? We see the need to continue organizing around a broad spectrum of issues affecting our health, our sexual choices, the needs of our children for quality daycare and education, and our own access to social services and full employment.

Some of the 90 groups endorsing Toronto International Women's Day, 1979.

*International Women's Day Committee, Organized Working Women, Equal Pay Coalition, YWCA of Metro Toronto, National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Communication Workers of Canada, Birth Control and VD Centre, OPSEU, ONDP, Ontario NDP Women's Caucus, U of T SAC Women's Caucus, CUPE 1750, CUPE 1230, CUPE 2189, CUPE 1987, CUPE 1996, ACTE 1704, Body Politic, Lesbian Perspectives, Women for Political Action, Times Change, Group for Civil Rights in Argentina, In Struggle!, Ontario Federation of Labour, Canadian Association for Repeal of Abortion Law, Gay Youth, Parkdale Jobs, Revolutionary Workers League, Ross McClelland, M.P.P., WREC, Student Christian Movement, Lesbian Organization of Toronto, Law Union of Ontario, The Spadina Group, Women's Press, Centre for Spanish Speaking People, Labour Council of Metro Toronto, Wive's Supporting INCO, Non-Traditional Job Course -- Seneca College, Toronto Board of Education -- Labour Studies, Ontario Nurses Association, OSSTF -- NO. 15, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Gay Liberation Union, Association of the Children's Aid Society, New Welfare Action Centre, Women and Children, Osgoode Hall Women's Caucus, Osgoode Hall Gay Caucus, International Socialists, Unemployment Help Centre, York University Women's Centre, Opportunity for Advancement, Immigrant Women's Centre, Women in Transition, Nellies.*

What you can do for International Women's Day -- March 8, 1980.

Initiate or get involved with International Women's Day Committees in your local area.

- \*put your name on our mailing list
- \*get your local, your riding or your organization to endorse International Women's Day, 1980
- \*send members of your group to planning meetings for International Women's Day
- \*publicize the events by postering and holding discussions
- \*ask us for a speaker or film for your group
- \*plan your own event for International Women's Day
- \*organize a contingent from your group to participate in the March 8 events
- \*support your local International Women's Day committee with a donation to cover costs of mailings, posters etc.
- \*START NOW!

For Toronto Area Supporters:

I support International Women's Day, 1980   
 I would like to be on the mailing list   
 I'm sending a contribution of \$

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ (h) ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (w)

Send To: COALITION FOR MARCH 8  
 P.O. BOX 70, STATION "F", TORONTO, M4Y 2L4.  
 or call 789-4541