

History of International Women's Day

International Women's Day occupies a special place in the history of women's and workers' struggles on this continent. It grew out of the actions of militant working women struggling for better working wages, working conditions, and the vote.

In 1857, women in the needle trade staged a demonstration in the Lower East Side of New York City to protest poor working conditions and to demand equality for working women. They were angry about indecent wages and a twelve hour working day. When their procession left the poor district in which they lived and worked, and moved into the wealthier areas of town, they were dispersed by the police; women were arrested, and some were trampled when confusion resulted. Three years later, in March 1860, these women formed their own union.

March 8, 1908 Thousands of women, this time in the garment-textile industry, marched once again from the Lower East side of New York City. Fifty-one years had passed since the earlier demonstration but their demands remained the same: shorter working hours and better working conditions. In addition, they wanted laws against child labour and they wanted the vote.

March 8, 1910 Clara Zetkin, the German socialist champion of women's and workers' rights, proposed that March 8th be set aside each year as International Women's Day, in memory of those first struggles.

Our slogan, "Bread and Roses", also comes out of the struggles of working women. On January 11, 1912, 14,000 textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts went out on strike for better wages and working conditions. With the cry of "Better to starve fighting than starve working", these women stayed out for nearly three months. Their courage inspired the song that has become the anthem of the women's movement, "Bread and Roses".

Since the rebirth of the women's movement in the 1960's we have reclaimed March 8th as a day of protest, solidarity and celebration. In memory of the plea of those earlier working women for economic security and a better quality of life, we celebrate our on-going struggle for bread and roses.

Endorsements received to date for International Women's Day 1984:

Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship/Phillipine Solidarity Network • Women's Perspective • Toronto Disarmament Network • Metro Toronto Labour Council • Birth Control and VD Information Centre • Centre for Spanish Speaking People • Ontario Division Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) • Association of Salvadorean Women (AMES) • Young Socialist Organizing Committee • Gay/Lesbian New Democratic Party • Glendon College Women's Issues Collective • Alliance for Non-Violent Action • Steelworkers' Toronto Area Council Women's Action Committee • Women Working with Immigrant Women • National Action Committee on the Status of Women • Lesbian Speakers Bureau • Committee for Racial Equality • Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics • Women's Action for Peace • CUPE 1582 • St. Paul's Centre • International Women's Day Committee • Lesbian Perspectives • Regroupement des Femmes Francophones de Toronto • Grindstone Co-operative • Congress of Canadian Women • International Socialists • Committee of Solidarity with the People of El Salvador • CUPE 1230 • Cruise Missile Conversion Project • ALPHA Alternative school • Dave Patterson, Director, District 6, United Steelworkers of America • Toronto Silvia Platoon • Hassle-free Clinic • Organized Working Women • Revolutionary Workers' League • Women's Press • Toronto Rape Crisis Centre • Voice of Women • Working Women's Centre • University of Toronto Coalition for Responsible Choice • Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Area Council of Metro Toronto • Participatory Research Group • Local 556 Canada Employment and Immigration Union (CEIU) • University of Toronto Peer Counselling and Sexual Education Centre • Ontario New Democratic Party Women's Committee • OISE Lesbian Caucus • Red Berets • Immigrant Women's Centre • Canadian Women's Movement Archives • OISE Centre for Women's Studies in Education • Azania Support Committee

I would like to endorse International Women's Day, 1984 _____

I am sending a contribution of _____

I would like to be on the mailing list _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Organization _____

MAIL TO: March 8th Coalition,
P.O. Box 70, Station F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2L4

**JOBS
CHOICE
PEACE**

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**MARCH 10,
1984**



RALLY-DEMONSTRATION FAIR
CONVOCATION HALL UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
11 A.M. SHARP
Interpreted for the hearing impaired

JARVIS COLLEGIATE
JARVIS & WELLESLEY
1:00 - 5:00 P.M.

PUBLIC FORUMS

Monday, March 5, 7:30 p.m.
Pornography
Trinity-St. Paul's United Church
427 Bloor Street W.

Tuesday, March 6, 7:30 p.m.
Women's Perspective on
War & Imperialism
Trinity-St. Paul's United Church
427 Bloor Street W.

DANCES

Saturday, March 3, 8 p.m.
Ukrainian Labor Temple
300 Bathurst Street
Proceeds to Pro-choice Defence Fund
Sponsored by Ontario Coalition
for Abortion Clinics
\$6.00 advance / \$7.00 door
\$4.00 unemployed
Women & men welcome

Saturday, March 10, 8:30 p.m.
The Party Centre
167 Church Street (below Shuter)
Produced by Branching Out
\$5.00 advance / \$6.00 door
All Women welcome

Childcare provided
John, Calvin, Brian 591-1434
or Taylor 964-1278

For information, call 789-4541

We apologize for the fact
that these locations are
not wheelchair accessible



**INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY**

RISE UP!

The last year has been a year of struggle for many woman. Our employment rights and wages have been eroded. Our right to choose if and when to have children and our right to define our sexuality are both areas where we continue to fight for control. We still face the daily possibility of nuclear annihilation, while women in Central America and the Caribbean face the threat of U.S. invasion. Women have stood together over the past year to fight for what is ours. We have supported campaigns for affirmative action quotas, for equal pay, for the legalization of abortion clinics and we've played an important role in the growing movement for peace.

RISE UP in 1984. Let us show our strength and our ability to take control of our lives. This year we are highlighting the experiences and the struggles of minority, native, immigrant and poor women. In addition to fighting the worst of sexist discrimination we also confront racial discrimination on a daily basis.

Women around the world have claimed March 8 as a day of protest and solidarity. We come together to celebrate our victories and show our determination to work for equality, liberation and peace. We need your help and support. Join us March 10, 1984.

CHOICE

1. Q: Have you or a friend ever been faced with an unwanted pregnancy?

A: Even to think of an abortion as a choice is difficult. If you do need an abortion you may not be able to get one because hospitals limit the number of abortions they provide. Without OHIP, with no community health clinics, poor women often cannot get abortions. All women, regardless of their immigration status or age, need access to free and safe abortion.

LEGALIZE FREE-STANDING ABORTION CLINICS

2. Q: Are you afraid to be open about being a lesbian at work because you might be rejected by co-workers or fired?

A: This is just one of the many forms of discrimination that lesbians face from employers, government and landlords. Being a lesbian should not bring reprisals or harassment. It is a sexual choice that all women should be able to make for ourselves. In order to make that choice real we need an end to the daily discrimination we face. We are proud to be lesbians.

WE WANT THE RIGHT TO LIVE OPENLY AS LESBIANS WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT

3. Q: Why are women reluctant to report rape and other sexual assault?

A: In Canada, a woman is sexually assaulted every 6 minutes. Fear and knowledge that courts often put victims on trial, prevent many women from reporting assault. With the recent jail-

ings of women who refuse to testify against their attackers, we may face jail ourselves. If we are poor, immigrant, native or minority women, we have even less recourse against violence than other women.

STOP JAILING WOMEN VICTIMS OF RAPE AND VIOLENCE

4. Q: Do you find it difficult to obtain affordable daycare?

A: Daycare subsidies are being cut back. Without subsidy, good daycare often costs more than most women can afford. Many of us will never be able to participate in skills-upgrading programs, or get a job without accessible daycare.

STOP DAYCARE CUTBACKS/INCREASE DAYCARE SPACES

5. Q: Why are we told to tighten our belts when there's little affordable housing and inadequate hospital facilities?

A: Governments tell us that groups of poor, unemployed and minorities do not deserve the same financial assistance that large corporations receive. Welfare services, subsidized housing, UIC, health care, education and retraining programs are not luxuries. They are essential services.

STOP SOCIAL SERVICE CUTBACKS/FUND HUMAN NEEDS

6. Q: Don't you think Francophones should control their own school boards?

A: The right to receive an education in both official languages is guaranteed under the constitution. As yet, francophones in Ontario don't have control over their own school boards which would ensure this right.

AUTONOMOUS SCHOOL BOARDS FOR FRANCOPHONES BY FRANCOPHONES.

JOBS

1. Q: Does your boss get away with paying women less than men?

A: Women make 59¢ for every \$1 men make. Pensions and other benefits also reflect this gap. Women are twice as likely to end up in poverty. Immigrant, minority and native women face the double burden of racism and sexism in hiring and on the job.

MANDATORY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION! EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE!

2. Q: Are you earning less this year because of inflation and feeling powerless to do anything about it?

A: High unemployment and wage controls create more insecurity in our workplaces. Many of us are unemployed because of plant shutdowns, re-locations or jobs being contracted out to non-union workers. This forces us to make a trade-off between low wages or no wages. Without a union, women have no protection against wage cuts, layoffs and/or harassment. As immigrants or minorities, we are last hired and first fired.

JOBS AT DECENT WAGES AND THE RIGHT TO UNIONIZE

3. Q: Do you ever wonder what a difference a union in your workplace might make?

A: Two-thirds of the Canadian workforce is not unionized. The majority of the unorganized are women. Of these, many are immigrant and minority women. We face language barriers, we are often in ghettoized jobs, and we have special needs — for instance as domestic or agricultural workers we are denied the legal right to unionize. We need the support of unions and the women's movement to make unions work for us.

ORGANIZE THE UNORGANIZED

4. Q: Did you know that many non-status immigrant women are constantly in fear of being deported?

A: Canada's hypocritical amnesty program has already excluded one-third of the applicants for landed status. As a result, would-be immigrants continue to face severe exploitation and intimidation.

FULL AMNESTY FOR ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

PEACE

1. Q: Are you afraid a "small war" in Central America or the Caribbean may lead to a world-wide conflict?

A: An action in Central America like the recent U.S. flagrant aggression in Grenada would only bring us closer to nuclear war. Yet the U.S. continues to increase military spending in Central America and the Caribbean because national self-determination struggles threaten U.S. domination in the area.

U.S. OUT OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

2. Q: Don't you wonder how Trudeau can talk peace around the world and test the Cruise at home?

A: 80% of Canadians support disarmament. Yet the government ignores our concerns. Manufacturing parts for the Cruise missile and testing it here in Canada is preparation for war and will only serve to advance the nuclear arms race.

REFUSE THE CRUISE

3. Q: Why is the unemployment rate blamed on immigrants and women? Why is the government defense budget for '83 over \$8 billion while there are massive cutbacks in skills upgrading and job creation programs?

A: It's a myth that money spent on military build-up provides jobs. In the last 3 years defense spending has increased by 60% while the government cuts back on essential social services. For every \$1 cut from health and education alone, \$1.10 has been added to military spending. As social service users and as workers in these areas, we lose our right to jobs and adequate services.

JOBS NOT BOMBS

