

Celebrating ~~International Women's Day~~ International Working Women's Day

Here is the motion from Clara Zetkin, Kate Duncker, and others at the Second International Conference of Socialist Women (August 1910 in Copenhagen) to establish IWWD:

To Point 3 of the Agenda - Practical Work in Favor of Universal Suffrage.

[...]

2. [...] In agreement with the class-conscious political and trade organizations of the proletariat in their country the socialist women of all nationalities have to organize a special Women's Day, which in first line has to promote Women Suffrage propaganda. This demand must be discussed in connection with the whole women's question according to the socialist conception of social things. The conference must have an international character and be prepared with care.

The integral human emancipation of all women depends on the social emancipation of labour; that can only be realized by the class war of the exploited majority.



Klara Zetkin

Source:

archive.org/details/InternationalSocialistCongress1910SecondInternationalConferenceOf

WORKING CLASS WOMEN OF THE WORLD ~

WE UNITE WITH ALL THE EXPLOITED AND OPPRESSED MASSES
TO SMASH FEUDALISM, CAPITALISM & IMPERIALISM ~GLOBALLY!



The comics here are by Stephanie McMillan stephaniemcmillan.org and were in a 2015 article at: koleksyon-inip.org

This pamphlet by

Equitable
Education
.ca

In these pages, samples of written *herstory* published between 1910 and 1920 provide some of the class-struggle origins of International Working Women's Day, 65 years before the UN's declaration of IWD.

This memory is important to keep alive, as members of the ruling class – both individuals and institutions – today avail themselves of current hegemony and position themselves centrally in what were (and still need to be) efforts by the proletariat to take back control of society.

♥ We cannot afford ahistorical activism ♥

MARCH 8 BEGAN AS
INTERNATIONAL
WORKING WOMEN'S
DAY.

BUT BORGEIS INSTITUTIONS
ATTEMPT TO **REMOVE** the
CONTENT OF **CLASS STRUGGLE**.

INTERNATIONAL
~~WORKING~~
WOMEN'S
DAY



All women have
basically the same
interests, right?

Forget that
"working class
unity" nonsense.

Illustration by Stephanie McMillan

Here, Alexandra Kollantai writes in the Pravda newspaper in Russia in 1913. This was one week before the first international celebration on the March 8(*) date, named "Day of International Solidarity among the Female Proletariat".

She explains differences between upper-class feminists and working-class women:

On 'Women's Day' the organised demonstrate against their lack of rights.

But, some will say, why this singling out of women workers? Why special 'Women's Days', special leaflets for working women, meetings and conferences of working-class women? Is this not, in the final analysis, a concession to the feminists and bourgeois suffragettes?

Only those who do not understand the radical difference between the movement of socialist women and bourgeois suffragettes can think this way.

What is the aim of the feminists? Their aim is to achieve the same advantages, the same power, the same rights within capitalist society as those possessed now by their husbands, fathers and brothers. What is the aim of the women workers? Their aim is to abolish all privileges deriving from birth or wealth. For the woman worker it is a matter of indifference who is the 'master' a man or a woman. Together with the whole of her class, she can ease her position as a worker.

[...]

For bourgeois women, political rights are simply a means allowing them to make their way more conveniently and more securely in a world founded on the exploitation of the working people. For women workers, political rights are a step along the rocky and difficult path that leads to the desired kingdom of labour.

The paths pursued by women workers and bourgeois suffragettes have long since separated. There is too great a difference between the objectives that life has put before them. There is too great a contradiction between the interests of the woman worker and the lady proprietress, between the servant and her mistress... There are not and cannot be any points of contact, conciliation or convergence between them. Therefore working men should not fear separate Women's Days, nor special conferences of women workers, nor their special press.

Source: www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1913/womens-day.htm

(*Note: There were internationally-coordinated celebrations in 1911 and 1912, but it was in 1913 that they were first on March 8. Also: March 8 in most of the world was February 23 in Russia, where the Julian calendar was in use at that point.)

To follow-up, an excerpt from Alexandra Kollontai's writing in 1920, after the Russian Revolution of 1917 that was started on IWWD:

Women's Day or Working Women's Day is a day of international solidarity, and a day for reviewing the strength and organization of proletarian women.

But this is not a special day for women alone. The 8th of March is a historic and memorable day for the workers and peasants, for all the Russian workers and for the workers of the whole world. In 1917, on this day, the great February revolution broke out. It was the working women of Petersburg who began this revolution; it was they who first decided to raise the banner of opposition to the Tsar and his associates. And so, working women's day is a double celebration for us.

[...]

Socialists in North America insisted upon their demands for the vote with particular persistence. On the 28th of February, 1909, the women socialists of the U.S.A. organized huge demonstrations and meetings all over the country demanding political rights for working women. This was the first "Woman's Day". The initiative on organizing a woman's day thus belongs to the working women of America.

In 1910, at the Second International Conference of Working Women, Clara Zetkin brought forward the question of organizing an International Working Women's Day. The conference decided that every year, in every country, they should celebrate on the same day a "Women's Day" under the slogan "The vote for women will unite our strength in the struggle for socialism".

[...]

... in the last years before the war the rise in prices forced even the most peaceful housewife to take an interest in questions of politics and to protest loudly against the bourgeoisie's economy of plunder. "Housewives uprisings" became increasingly frequent, flaring up at different times in Austria, England, France and Germany.

The working women understood that it wasn't enough to break up the stalls at the market or threaten the odd merchant: They understood that such action doesn't bring down the cost of living. You have to change the politics of the government. And to achieve this, the working class has to see that the franchise is widened.

Source: www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1920/womens-day.htm