

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMAN'S DAY

8TH MARCH, 2024

The first unofficial Woman's Day was created by the Socialist Party of America in the United States on February 28, 1909. This commemorated the 1857 garment workers' strike in New York, where women stood up against unfavorable working conditions. Soon after, in 1911, Clara Zetkin led socialist women in Germany to establish an International Women's Day, emphasizing women's rights and advocating for universal suffrage.¹

This marked the alignment of American and European socialist perspectives. The first International Women's Day was held in Europe on March 18, 1911. This date was specifically chosen to honor the 1848 revolution and the Paris Commune. Beyond voting and holding public office, women demanded workplace rights, vocational training, and an end to discrimination. Russian women protested poor living conditions, high rents, food prices, and layoffs.²

International Women's Day also served as an anti-war platform against World War I. Zetkin organized socialist women for an anti-war demonstration, and in 1917, European women rallied against the war.³

Simultaneously, Russian women fought the Czarist regime, striking on March 8 for "Bread and Peace." Four days later, the Czar was overthrown, granting women the right to vote and ultimately kicking off the Russian Revolution.³

The name 'International Working Women's Day' was coined at the Conference of Communist Women in 1921, officially designating March 8th as its celebrated date. However, what once began as a communist celebration, saw a shift around 1967 when embraced by second-wave feminists. Today, it faces criticism for being heavily commercialized, where major corporations use the day to promote general concepts of equality rather than the social revolution it once symbolized.⁴



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