

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY March 8, 2010

The United Nations has chosen *Equal rights, equal opportunities: Progress for all* as the theme for International Women's Day (IWD) 2010.

As these words suggest, achieving equality for women and girls not only involves establishing a strong foundation of legal rights but also creating the social, economic, political and educational openings that make those rights meaningful.

The recent article in January's *Update* notes that this year marks the 100th anniversary of Clara Zetkin's call to establish an international women's day to draw attention to the struggle for women's equality. Provincial OSSTF/FEESO has encouraged local leaders to use this as an opportunity both to celebrate the gains that women have won and highlight the continuing issues of gender inequality. In addition to organizing school events for students, members may be interested in participating in community based events organized by local women's organizations or labour bodies such as the Labour Council or union Women's Committees. As well, community college and university groups often hold special events.

The following are some of the websites offering information on International Women's Day, its history and the struggle for gender equality in Canada and around the world:



- 📍 United Nations cyberschoolbus - www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/womensday/index.asp
- 📍 Ontario Women's Directorate: International Women's Day – Resources and Links - www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/owd/english/resources/information/dates/iwd.shtml
- 📍 Canadian Labour Congress - www.canadianlabour.ca/action-center/womens-economic-equality/fact-sheets
- 📍 WomenWatch - www.un.org/womenwatch/
- 📍 UNIFEM - www.unifem.org/
- 📍 UNiTE - www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/
- 📍 Plan Canada - www.becauseiamagirl.ca/learn/learn
(see also www.plan-uk.org/becauseiamagirl/theissues/)

A listing of some IWD events taking place across Canada can be found at www.internationalwomensday.com/search.asp?country=37

The Canadian Labour Congress (English and French) and Ontario Federation of Labour statements on IWD are attached.



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OSSTF/FEESO Status of Women Committee Update



Bread and Roses is one of the traditional songs of the women's movement and International Women's Day celebrations. The slogan originated in a poem of that name by James Oppenheim and published in 1911. It is commonly associated with a textile strike in 1912, now often known as the "Bread and Roses strike". The slogan appeals for both fair wages and dignified conditions.

*As we go marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray,
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing: Bread and Roses! Bread and Roses!*

*As we go marching, marching, we battle too for men,
For they are women's children and we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us roses.*

*As we go marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient call for bread.
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for, but we fight for roses too.*

*As we go marching, marching, we bring the greater days,
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler, ten that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and roses, bread and roses.*

*Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies; bread and roses, bread and roses.*

The version of this song by Judy Collins can be downloaded from the Internet at
www.blight.com/~scarlett/traditions/songbook/breadandroses.html