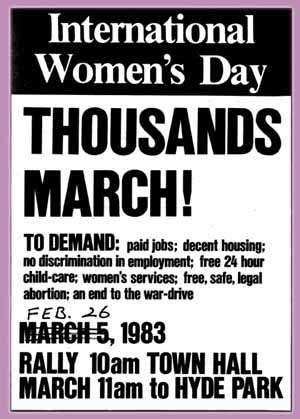
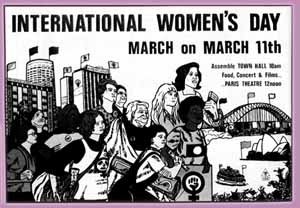
**A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY**

During the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, causes for gender equality were being raised by men and women throughout the world. In 1909, under the helm of the Socialist Party of America, the first National Women’s Day was celebrated in the United States on February 28th. In 1910, at the International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, influential German socialist politician [Clara Zetkin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clara_Zetkin) proposed that a day be set aside in every country where women can organize and advocate for their demands for social equality. The following year, Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland celebrated International Women’s Day on March 19th, 1911. About 1 million men and women attended rallies in those countries and others to advocate for equal rights and pay.

Tragedy struck women workers that same year with the [Triangle Fire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangle_fire) in New York City, where over 140 immigrant workers died in a factory fire, most of them trapped inside the building because the managers had locked all the exits and stairwells during working hours. The incident become a rallying point to highlight deplorable factory conditions and advocate for better labor laws at future IWD celebrations. In Lawrence, MA, the women textile workers also went on a strike that would later be named  [“Bread and Roses”](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bread_and_Roses) after the signs some women held that read, “We want bread but we want roses too!”  Inspired by those female workers, James Oppenheim wrote the famous poem of the same name, which was later adapted into a song that suffragists and feminists everywhere took up as their theme.

Russian women observed their first International Women’s Day in February 1913 on the eve of World War I and spoke out against the fighting at their rallies. Moreover, they decided to move future celebrations to March 8th. During the holiday’s early years, activists also held anti-war protests as the fighting raged across Europe.

Today, [International Women’s Day](http://www.internationalwomensday.com) is celebrated throughout the world as an official holiday in Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China (for women only), Cuba, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Madagascar (for women only), Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nepal (for women only), Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Zambia.

<http://beyondvictoriana.com/2011/03/08/international-womens-day-a-history/>

<http://www.isis.aust.com/iwd/stevens/gallery_3.htm> (pictures)

 On March 8th 1857 women from New York City stopped work in protest of bad working conditions, long working day (12 hours) and low pay. The march which started in poor neighborhood was brutally broken up by a police when the women reached wealthy district of town.

 Another march took place on the same day almost fifty years later, in 1908. It was triggered by a death of 128 women trapped on the high floor in Triangle ShirtwaistFactory in New York City. Their slogan was "bread and roses" - "bread" for economical security and "roses" - for a better life.

 In 1910 the Second International Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen created a Women's Day - to aid in the attainment of women's suffrage. It was honored with marches and demonstrations of women for their rights, especially in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Denmark. The creation of this day is attributed to Clara Zetkin. She was the editor of Die Gleichheit (Equality) and the leading theoretician of women's activism. Women who were fighting for women voting rights and for social, economic and political reforms were called suffragists.   
  
International Women's Day was practically forgotten in the USA until the sixties when it was revived with the rise of women's movement.   
  
**In 1975 the International Women's Year was announced by United Nations. As a consequence, two years later (1977) the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring March 8th - the Day for Women's Rights and International Peace Day.**   
Neither American nor French Constitutions at the end of eighteen century gave women rights to vote - but they influenced positively women role in the society in other aspects of life, for instance inheritance rights. Territory of Wyoming (1869) was the first to give **voting rights for women** in 1869, New Zealand was the first and the only country to allow women to vote before the end of XIX century, in 1893. Women received voting rights in Poland and several other European countries just after World War I in 1918, in the USA in 1920 but they have to wait for their right to vote until 1945 in France and until 1971 in Switzerland. There are still some countries where women do not have a right to vote, for instance [Kuwait.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women's_suffrage)

<http://culture.polishsite.us/articles/art166.html>