

# Women's Strike Call March 8th

## A New Feminism for the 99%

Lean-in feminism and other variants of corporate feminism have failed the overwhelming majority of us, who do not have access to individual self-promotion and advancement and whose conditions of life can be improved only through policies that defend social reproduction, secure reproductive justice and guarantee labor rights. The new wave of women's mobilization must address all these concerns in a frontal way. It must **be an intersectional feminism for the 99%, for working women.**

The kind of feminism we seek is already emerging internationally, in **struggles across the globe**: from the women's strike in Poland against the abortion ban to the women's strikes and marches in Latin America against male violence; from the vast women's demonstration of last November in Italy to the protests and the women's strike in defense of reproductive rights in South Korea and Ireland. What is striking about these mobilizations is that several of them combined struggles against male violence with opposition to the casualization of labor and wage inequality, while also opposing homophobia, transphobia and xenophobic immigration policies. Together, they herald **a new international and intersectional feminist movement with an expanded agenda: at once anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-heterosexist and anti-neoliberal.**

The idea is to mobilize women, including trans women, and all who support them in an international day of struggle – a day of **striking, marching, blocking** roads, bridges, and squares, **abstaining** from domestic, care and sex work, **boycotting, calling out** misogynistic politicians and companies.

At UC Berkeley, the **effects of privatization and budget cuts have especially affected working women and students**: the increase of contingent labor at the expense of tenure lines, the cuts in staff resulting in overburdened working women, the lack of punishment in cases of sexual harassment, and women's and LGBTQI rights disregarded as considered through the lens of "liability" and "reputation" to please investors.

These actions are aimed at making visible the needs and aspirations of those whom lean-in feminism ignored: **women in the formal labor market, women working in the sphere of social reproduction and care, and unemployed and precarious working women.**

We take inspiration from the Argentinian coalition NiUnaMenos. **Violence against women**, as they define it, **has many facets**: it is domestic violence, but also the violence of the market, of debt, of capitalist property relations, and of the state; the violence of discriminatory policies against lesbian, non-binary gender and intersexual people, trans and queer women; the violence of state criminalization of migratory movements; the violence of mass incarceration; and the institutional violence against women's bodies through abortion bans and lack of access to free healthcare and free abortion. Their perspective informs our determination to oppose the institutional, political, cultural and economic attacks on Muslim and migrant women, on indigenous women, on women of color, on black women, and working and unemployed women, on lesbian, non-binary gender and intersexual people and trans women.

## Re-politicize Women's Day

It is time to re-politicize Women's Day. It has often been celebrated with brunches, flowers and Hallmark cards. We are united by the awareness that the current administration is a symptom of a larger problem: the outcome of decades of **neoliberal policies**, of transfer of wealth to the richest, of **erosion of labor rights** and of labor dignity, of **neocolonial wars of aggression**, of the abuse of Mother Earth/la Pachamama, of the constant violation of the **environmental justice** and the rights of the **indigenous people**, of the institutional racism and of the structural misogyny ingrained in US society.

By **striking together**, we will be returning to the historical roots of this holiday – a history that we should familiarize ourselves with once again. On this day in **1908, 15,000 women garment workers**, the majority of them immigrants, **marched through the heart of Manhattan** to demand better pay, shorter work hours and suffrage. A year later **women immigrant textile workers** were on strike against the terrible sweatshops where they were forced to work, facing down police violence and repression by the owners.

Inspired by the struggle of the women workers, German socialist, Clara Zetkin, called on attendees at the International Conference of Working Women in **1910** to organize an **International Working Women's Day**. Women delegates from over 17 countries voted unanimously to pass the motion. A few years later, in **1917**, thousands of Russian women, workers and wives of soldiers, took to the streets on 8 March to demand peace and bread and started the uprising that would overturn the Tsarist regime: **this year's International Women's Day will also be the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the February Revolution.**

There are two particular ways in which we want to re-politicize 8 March:

· First, we want to bring back the idea of **achieving the impossible** and **not accepting the unacceptable**. In the early 20th century women in general, and textile workers in particular, were considered impossible to organize. The main labor unions of the day left them well alone to work under vicious conditions, or – as in the case of Triangle Shirtwaist Factory – to be burnt alive in these sweatshops. The women going on strike, apprehended the impossible.

· Second, we want **the demand for bread to be reunited with the demand for roses**. Decades of neoliberalism has not just taken the bread from the tables of working women and families but also taken away all infrastructures that sustain life, the roses. **Hospitals and schools have closed** while prisons and police have multiplied. While **wages have declined and unions been smashed** by a battery of anti-labor laws, the same lawmakers have failed to indict **police officers** who have openly **murdered Black, Latino and Indigenous men and women**, and have tried to **close abortion clinics** and **ban trans women** from using female **bathrooms**. Thus the fight for wages cannot be separated from the means that regenerate life.

**ALL OUT on March 8<sup>th</sup> / 11am – 2pm Lower Sproul**