



Speak Out Now

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International Women's Day: Give Us Bread, but Give Us Roses, Too!

March 8th is International Women's Day. This is a day to commemorate the working women who have struggled and fought to better their conditions.

Today in the United States, the attacks on abortion and reproductive rights continue. The Alabama Supreme Court recently ruled that all "unborn children are 'children'" and that an embryo in a petri dish is equivalent to a child. This is ridiculous! Fertility clinics in Alabama are pausing all operations as they navigate this new attack.

Meanwhile, costs of childcare continue to go up and waitlists can be years-long. The cost of childcare and eldercare all falls disproportionately on women, both the unpaid work that falls on us, as well as the low-pay, understaffed conditions in these fields.

This is in line with the trajectory the right has been carrying out for decades. They have every intention of continuing attacks on birth control, on stem cell research, even on the right to divorce! The anti-LGBTQ+ legislation and hate speech is generated by the same wealthy elites with billions of dollars at their disposal. These attacks are part of the long strategy to impose reactionary gender norms and force women to continue to bear the brunt of unpaid and underpaid domestic work.

This election season the Democrats have lots to say about reproductive rights. They would like us to forget that they are the party that fired the first shot by passing the Hyde Amendment, blocking the use of federal insurance for abortion access. Neither party is a force we can rely on to better the conditions of women.

Around the world one woman is killed every 11 minutes by someone in their own family. One in every three women will experience sexual violence in her lifetime. Domestic violence increases with economic instability and unemployment. As climate disruption impacts more people, the stress caused will turn into more intimate partner violence. Global conflicts and wars are also on the rise. This directly impacts women as they bear the burden of caring for family and feeding children. This is all the more difficult in conflict zones which have increased sexual violence. Today, the genocide in Gaza is overwhelmingly killing women and children. In Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the systemic violence against women is rising.

Since the start of social classes and private property, the oppression of women has been essential to these exploitative societies. But women have often found ways to organize themselves and fight back.

One example is the history of International Women's Day (IWD). The first International Women's Day was called for during the International Socialist Women's Conference in 1910. On the first IWD in 1911, over one million people joined demonstrations demanding a woman's right to vote and to hold public office, as well as for protection against gender discrimination in employment. In 1914, IWD demonstrations included slogans against World War I.

On International Women's Day in 1917, women textile workers in Petrograd, Russia called for a demonstration for "Bread and Peace," which led to the Russian Revolution, when working people took power. The slogan "Give us Bread and Roses" has been associated with women workers' struggles, and especially with International Women's Day. The slogan was first used in the successful textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912, when women textile workers demanded "Bread" – an improvement in their pay and working conditions, but "Roses, too" – signifying also having time to enjoy rest, art, culture, and relaxing time with family and friends.

When we unite our forces as working women, we have the ability to change even the most dire circumstances, end the rule of kings, and stop wars. When we organize to overthrow capitalism and put an end to the rule of the billionaires, we will be able to create a society addressing the needs of working people around the world, based on equality and collaboration. Then we can all have bread — and roses, too!



Flight Attendants Protest Poor Wages and Working Conditions

Recently, tens of thousands of flight attendants rallied and picketed at 30 major airports across the globe to demand higher wages and better working conditions. The demonstrations showed that many rank-and-file flight attendants were united and militant.

During the pandemic, the airlines received \$25 billion in federal subsidies. Now airplanes are full and making billions in profits, so flight attendants say it's time for the airlines to grant big wage increases and properly value majority-women flight attendants.

Flights are short-staffed, causing unnecessary stress. The airline industry has found ways to gut pensions. All of these issues combined explain why strike votes are have been approved by 90% or more.

Rank-and-file flight attendants appear to be in no mood to back down, so the next few months could see a sharp confrontation between them and their bosses.

Profits for the Rich, Inflation for the Poor

As oil and gas companies make record profits, gas prices continue to rise. From 2021 to 2023, the country's top-10 wealthiest of these companies made a combined net income of \$313 billion. Average gas prices have now reached \$3.34 per gallon, costing people \$40 to \$50 to fill up their car tank. But, in some places, like California, it is much more expensive. Companies excuse their ridiculous prices on increased demand during spring and summer months and refinery shutdowns. This is meaningless when the gas industry is cashing in hundreds of billions of dollars. Why should ordinary people—already struggling to pay for food and housing—have to bear the brunt of this profiteering?



U.S. Airman Sacrifices His Life to Free Palestine

Aaron Bushnell's self-immolation outside the Israeli embassy in Washington, DC captured the attention of the world. The active-duty member of the U.S. Air Force, disillusioned by the military and U.S. government, morally rejected the U.S. government's support for Israel's genocide of Palestinians.

The U.S. has provided Israel with the weapons and intelligence to carry out this genocide. Bushnell said, "I will no longer be complicit in genocide. I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest, but compared to what people have been experiencing in Palestine at the hands of their colonizers, it's not extreme at all. This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal." His last words were "Free Palestine." Bushnell's death is a reminder that we cannot sit idly by while a genocide is being conducted in our name.

Mergers: Another Attack on our Wallets

The largest grocery store merger in history is taking place between Albertsons and Kroger. These chains boast over 5,000 grocery stores in 48 states, and employ almost 700,000 people. These chains include Safeway, Ralphs, Kroger, and Vons. If this merger goes through it would be worth \$24.6 billion and would cause 22% of the grocery stores in the nation to be owned by one company.

This is happening at a time where our grocery bills have already increased by 20% since 2018 and while our wages are stagnant. Historically, mergers cause stores to shut down, mass lay-offs, and price increases. These two companies have openly acknowledged planning such actions. These stores should not be able to profit off of our basic necessities while we struggle to pay.

We live in the wealthiest country in the world, and it is our labor that has created all of this wealth. We aren't the ones who benefit from this. The super rich – the bosses of the big corporations and banks – keep the wealth and make all the decisions. Working people do the work that makes society run, and we can organize to unite our forces. When we do, we have enormous power to change things and make a better world.

We Need to Organize!
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