

# UCU

## CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 8 MARCH

University and College Union

**Mary Macarthur**  
Champion of women's rights (1880-1921)

Born in Glasgow, Mary Macarthur (pictured here) decided from a very early age that she wanted to be a full time writer. After observing a shop assistants union meeting she was convinced of the central ideas of Trade Unionism. She became the secretary of the Women's Trade Union League helping to win significant victories. A tireless fighter for equality a contemporary said of her, "She has left all working women...and the community as a whole...forever in her debt."

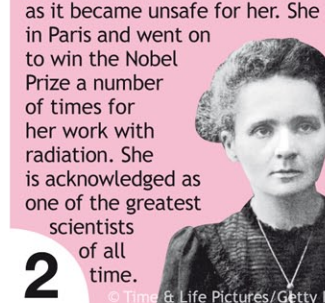
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**Margaret Bondfield**  
Pension Pioneer (1873-1953)

Margaret Bondfield was instrumental in making sure that working people received a pension in their old age in Britain. She was a member of the National Pensions Committee executive that organised a national campaign. Its success led to the world's first Old Age Pensions (the 1908 Old Age Pension Act).

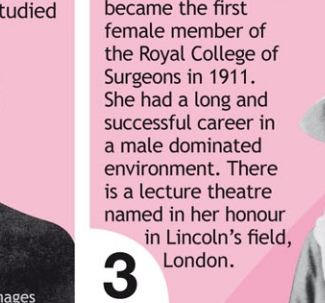
**2**



**Marie Curie**  
Scientific Pioneer (1867-1934)

The first woman to hold a Professorship in General Physics at the University of Sorbonne, Paris. Born in Warsaw she received scientific training from her father. After her involvement in radical politics in Warsaw she decided to leave as it became unsafe for her. She studied in Paris and went on to win the Nobel Prize a number of times for her work with radium. She is acknowledged as one of the greatest scientists of all time.

**3**



**Eleanor Davies-Colley**  
First female surgeon (1874-1934)

Eleanor Davies-Colley became the first female member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1911. She had a long and successful career in a male dominated environment. There she was named in her honour in Lincoln's field in London.

**4**



**Marie Stopes**  
Birth Control Pioneer (1880-1958)

Marie Stopes (pictured) set up the first birth control clinic in the UK and her seminal book *Married Love* (1918) was very influential.

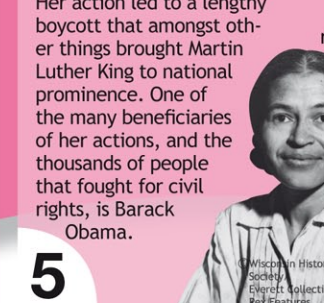
**5**



**Amelia Earhart**  
Flying pioneer (1897-1937)

Amelia Earhart (pictured here) was the first woman to fly solo over the Atlantic Ocean in 1932. She fought for more women in aviation. In 1937 she attempted to fly around the world but disappeared. Her body was never found but her strength and determination has lived on to inspire many.

**6**



**Rosa Parks**  
Civil Rights Activist (1913-2005)

Rosa Parks (pictured here) helped detonate the civil rights in America. She refused to give her seat to a white passenger in 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama. Her action led to a lengthy boycott that amongst other things brought Martin Luther King to national prominence. One of the many beneficiaries of her actions, and the thousands of people that fought for civil rights, is Barack Obama.

**7**



**Maya Angelou**  
Writer (1928-)

Poet and civil rights campaigner Maya Angelou began her career in the theatre. She has been a nominee for a Tony, an Emmy, and a Pulitzer Prize. She wrote her first plays to raise money for the leading civil rights organisation (led by Martin Luther King). Southern Christian Leadership conference. Her most well known work is *I know why the caged bird sings*.

**8**



**Phoolan Devi**  
Bandit Queen (1968-2001)

Married at age eleven to a man three times her age Phoolan Devi (pictured) found herself the victim of numerous sexual assaults. She eventually escaped and led a gang of robbers in North and Central India. She became a hero amongst the poor and dispossessed in India - especially when it was discovered she had gotten revenge on some of the men who raped her. She surrendered to the police in 1983 after a huge manhunt. She was later elected to Parliament but was later gunned down. An internationally successful film, *Bandit Queen*, was later made of her life.

**9**



**Billie Holliday**  
Jazz singer (1915-1959)

Billie Holliday (born Eleanor Fagan) grew up in Baltimore. She developed her distinctive singing style in Harlem nightclubs during the 1920s and 30's. In spite of a tragic life blighted by racism, sexism, and drug addiction she is best remembered for songs like *Strange Fruit* and *Billie Jean*. Always a controversial figure she survived an assassination attempt in 1951.

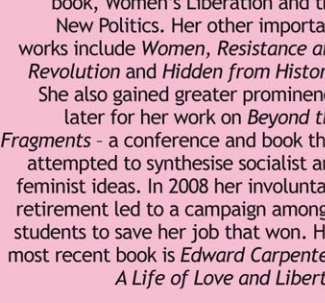
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**Bernadette Devlin**  
(McAliskey)  
Radical Irish activist (1947-)

Born in Northern Ireland of a Catholic family, Bernadette Devlin (pictured) took a central role in the Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland. In 1969 she became the youngest member of the House of Commons. She also gained great prominence later for her work on *Beyond the Fringes* - a conference and book that attempted to synthesise socialist and feminist ideas. In 2008 her involuntary retirement led to a campaign amongst students to save her job that won. Her most recent book is *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Love and Liberty*.

**11**



**Sheila Rowbotham**  
Progressive theorist/ thinker (1943-)

Sheila Rowbotham's works have been translated into many languages including Chinese, Arabic, and Hebrew. She was born in Leeds and studied at St Hilda's College, Oxford. In 1969 she published the very influential book, *Women's Liberation and the New Politics*. Her other important works include *Women, Resistance and Revolution* and *Hidden from History*. She also gained great prominence later for her work on *Beyond the Fringes* - a conference and book that attempted to synthesise socialist and feminist ideas. In 2008 her involuntary retirement led to a campaign amongst students to save her job that won. Her most recent book is *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Love and Liberty*.

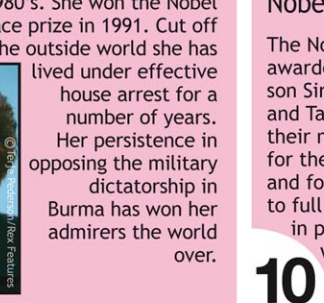
**12**



**Shirin Ebadi**  
Human rights activist (1947-)

Shirin Ebadi (pictured) was born in Iran and trained as a lawyer at Tehran University. She became a judge in 1969. After the 1979 Iranian revolution she (along with other women) was demoted. She protested and finally succeeded in setting up her own law practice. Controversial cases gave her national prominence. She was the first Muslim woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize in 2003.

**13**



**Aung San Suu Kyi**  
Democracy campaigner (1945-)

Aung San Suu Kyi has been one of the most prominent campaigners for democracy in Burma. She was born into a political family and signalled her opposition to the dictatorship in Burma in the late 1980's. She won the Nobel peace prize in 1991. Cut off from the outside world she has lived under effective house arrest for a number of years. Her persistence in opposing the military dictatorship in Burma has won her admirers the world over.

**14**



**Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**  
Africa's first female elected head of state (1938-)

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (pictured) was the first female elected head of state in Africa. She was born in Liberia and studied at Wellesley College in the US. She became a diplomat and worked for the United Nations. In 2006 she was elected President of Liberia, becoming Africa's first female elected head of state.

**15**



**Tawakkol Karman**  
Nobel peace prize winner (1979-)

Tawakkol Karman (pictured) was the first female Nobel peace prize winner. She was born in Yemen and studied at the University of London. She became a journalist and worked for the BBC. In 2011 she was awarded the Nobel peace prize for her non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work.

**16**



## Why we should celebrate International Women's Day

INTRODUCTION BY SALLY HUNT, UCU GENERAL SECRETARY

International Women's Day is a powerful symbol of the fight for equality. It is rooted in the struggle for rights in the workplace and the demand for women for a better deal.

In the twenty first century, while this magnificent wall chart shows how far women have come in one hundred years we have to reflect on how far there is to go. There remain many places where the lack of political and economic rights mean women continue to be second class citizens while even here in the UK to be female in the twenty first century means you are likely to be paid less and have a higher chance of facing discrimination.

International Women's Day reminds us both to celebrate our journey so far and redouble our efforts to achieve equality and justice for all in the next century of struggle.

If you have any comments or suggestions please go to [www.ucu.org.uk](http://www.ucu.org.uk)

## What is International Women's Day?

- Marked March 8 every year
- Celebrates women's achievements in all spheres
- First observed in 1910
- It is an official holiday in over 20 countries
- In Armenia and the United States they spend a month celebrating women's achievements, not just a day
- The UN designated 1975 the year of women. The same year it sponsored the celebration of the day in the United Kingdom.

## Influential writers & thinkers (1945-)

The number of influential women writers is as long as it is fascinating. Here are some, but not all, of the most important writers since 1945, their most important works, and the year they were published.

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1947); Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963); Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (1970); Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (1974); Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (1970); Ann Oakley, *Women's work* (1974); Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will* (1975); Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born* (1976); Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* (1976); Sussie Orbach, *Fat is a feminist issue* (1978); Mary Daly, *Gender, Eternity and the Power of Women* (1978); The reproduction of *Mothering* (1978); bell hooks, *Ain't I a woman* (1981); Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography - Men Possessing Women* (1981); Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: womanist prose* (1981); Angela Davis, *Women Race & Class* (1981); Catherine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified* (1987); Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (1988); Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth* (1990); Susan Faludi, *Backlash* (1991); Ariel Levy, *Female Chauvinist Pigs* (2005); Nina Power, *One Dimensional Woman* (2009); Natasha Walter, *Living Dolls* (2010); Kat Banyard, *The Equality Illusion* (2010).



From top to bottom, left to right: Kat Banyard, Germaine Greer, Angela Davis, Sussie Orbach, Adrienne Rich, Betty Friedan, Cristabel Pankhurst, Maya Angelou, Margaret Bondfield.

1909 | 1910 | 1913 | 1914 | 1917 | 1919 | 1920 | 1922 | 1923 | 1929 | 1939 | 1946 | 1947 | 1948 | 1951 | 1955 | 1957 | 1960 | 1959 | 1968 | 1970 | 1971 | 1975 | 1977 | 1991 | 1994 | 1995 | 2001 | 2002 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2012 & beyond

**The detonator**  
Start of the biggest strike amongst female garment workers in New York. This strike inspires the women's movement across the world.



**South African women come to forefront**  
Women's organisations like Manyano (a saving club for poor women) would play an important role in fighting racial inequality in South Africa. As the struggle against Apartheid becomes more intense in the latter part of the Twentieth century, women take on leading roles e.g. Winnie Mandela.

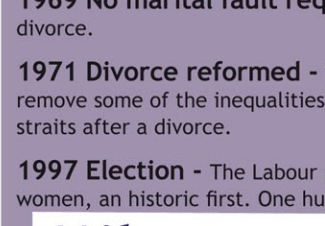
**First World War**  
During the First World War women became drivers, electricians, engineers and others in the radical, progressive movement are instrumental in making sure this date is marked.



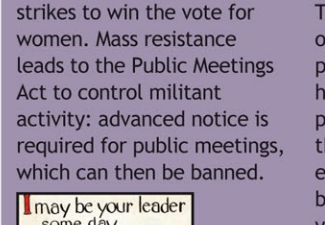
**...then Germany**  
Women in Germany vote for the first time. Over ninety percent of women vote and ten percent of those elected are women. Women in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Sweden also gain the right to vote.



**Chinese women fight**  
Chinese women play an important part in the May Fourth movement that opposes the Japanese occupation of Chinese territory. There are demands for the right to vote, to education, equal education and against foot binding (female children's feet were bound to conform to social ideals of beauty).



**Women start the revolution**  
Women in a bread queue in Russia start the Russian revolution. The revolution in its early stages granted the vote to women, removed the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children, made marriage a voluntary union, and attempted to introduce universal paid maternity leave.



**America**  
Women in America get the vote. African-American women are still excluded from the franchise until the civil rights movement (see Rosa Parks box above).



**Ireland - creation of the Irish State**  
Women gain the vote in the newly created Republic.



**Japan**  
Women gain the right to vote in Japan.



**1939-1945 World War Two**  
Liberated France grants women the vote in 1944. World War Two was to have a profound impact on women, especially in the principle countries that fought (see British timeline below). Women are drawn into the workforce - in some factories they make up 80% of the workforce.



**Equality and the Union**  
The newly formed European Economic Community accepts that Equal Pay should be a core principle.



**Contraception**  
First contraceptive pill approved for use by US scientists. The pill would revolutionise sex as the fear of pregnancy, and the social stigma that entailed, could now be avoided where the pill was available.



**Iraq**  
Educated, middle class women gain vote in Iraq.



**Nigerian women protest**  
2,000 women in Eastern Nigeria protest the fall in their status by occupying and burning down a market. However, in negotiations they agree to the removal of all foreign courts and schools as well as the expulsion of foreigners.



**Miss America, interrupted**  
Women demonstrate against the Miss America contest as giving "high-heeled, low status" to women and being sexist and racist. In spite of the intense media hostility to the demonstration the women's movement gains a heightened profile.



**Italian Divorce**  
Italian women are granted the right to divorce by law under certain conditions. The issue of divorce was (and is) a controversial issue in a country which contains the capital of Catholicism.



**Switzerland**  
Women vote in Federal elections. In 1990 Swiss women vote in all Swiss cantons.



**White ribbon campaign**  
The white ribbon campaign starts in Canada. A group of men encourage other men to wear a white ribbon to show their opposition to violence against women.



**Back pay ruling**  
A European court ruling says that if women are suffering from pay inequality they can backdate their claim to six years. This puts the pressure on employers to make sure they pay women equally or otherwise face huge payouts.



**More rights for Iranian women**  
Iranian Parliament grants women the right to seek divorce.



**Lithuania**  
Government repeals a requirement that meant before qualifying for a driving licence women have to have a gynaecological examination.



**Madame President**  
Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf takes office as President of Liberia, becoming Africa's first female elected head of state.



**UN Millenium goals**  
Two years earlier the United Nations holds a Millenium Development Goals conference to discuss progress towards reaching 8 aims for 2015 - the third of which is to promote gender equality and empower women.



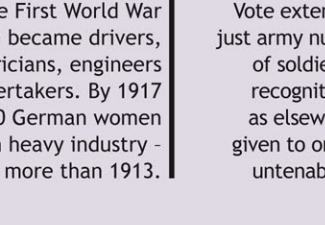
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As cuts reduce the welfare state and public services across Europe and elsewhere women are an integral part of every demonstration and strike (like Wanda Guimaraes and Catarina Albuquerque of the UGT union in Portugal and student leader Camila Vallejo in Chile).



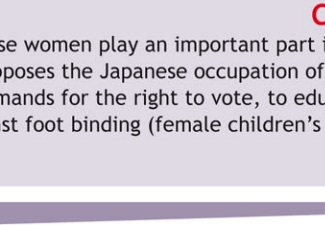
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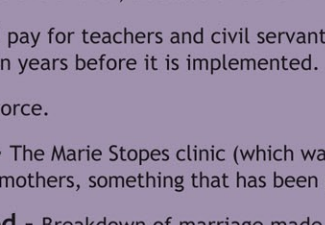
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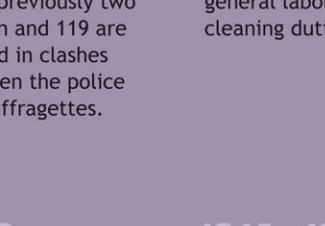
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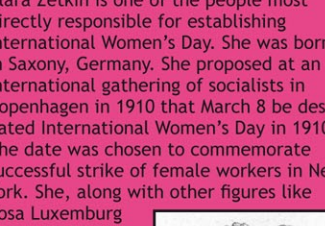
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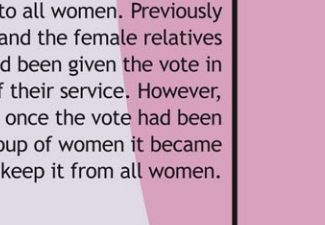
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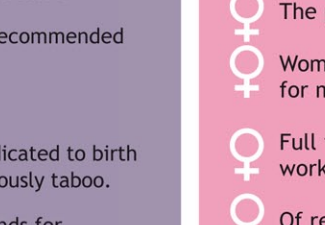
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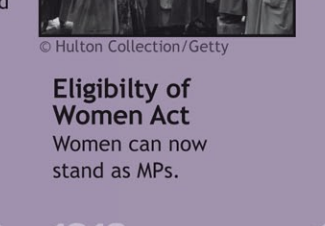
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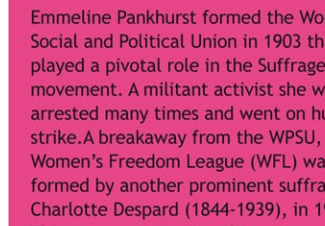
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