International Women's Day: Why we celebrate on March 8th

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There are a few ways in which International Women's Day can be approached. It can be ignored. This is what mostly happens in the mainstream media. Unlike Valentines Day and Mothers Day, cards aren't given and presents aren't bought. With no profit to be made out of it, the day is not exactly one that jumps out and grabs the attention.

International Women's Day is an expressly political day. In 1907 women sweatshop workers marched in New York and thus the first International Women's day was born. Often when women are celebrated it is because they are either cute (Valentine's Day) or caring (Mothers' Day).

There is nothing wrong with being cute or caring, but on Internationals Women's day we get to highlight those of us who are politically active, those who are fighting for a better world, those who know that there can be a better world. I don't know their names but I know I have linked arms with women at Shannon Airport protesting against the war. I've stood in front of bin lorries with women from the estate I live on. I have met women as we marched, leafleted, picketed and posters for the right to have an abortion on Irish soil.

There are many many ways in which life is difficult for women in Ireland, from our pay packets, to the fact that we get little support if we decide to have children and no support if we decide not to have children. We have to wait weeks (and sometimes months) for something as simple as the result of our smear tests. Like men we live in a country which can't provide housing, medical services, and security, basic human needs for all citizens. Yes there is a lot to be angry about and a lot to change.

Thankfully, many of us, like those women who marched in the cold 102 years ago, are not willing to make do with what we have been offered. International Women's day is a celebration of those women who make things better.

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