3.11 How women shook-up the world and made history?

Source: *Washington Post*, March 8, 2019.

In conjunction with International Women's Day, March 8, the *Washington Post* highlighted seven instances when women shool up the world. Six are included below.

Questions

1. Check your global history text. Are these actions by women mention? How prominently? Do you think the coverage is adequate? Explain.

2. In your opinion, did these protests by women shakeup the world and make history?

1. The Women's March on Versailles (France, 1789): At the start of the French Revolution — post-Bastille storming but long before all those heads started to roll — French women had a moment. Angry about the high price and lack of bread in the markets, they began to riot, storming the armory for weapons and, with revolutionary men joining them, marching on the palace at Versailles. They arrived at dawn on Oct. 6, 1789, invaded King Louis XVI's bedroom and "accompanied" him, against his will, back to Paris. And that was it for an independent French monarchy.

2. Women's Petition (New Zealand, 1891): In 1891, when a bill came up in New Zealand's Parliament that would give women the right to vote, local suffrage activists dispersed petitions throughout the country in support. Nine thousand women signed; the bill passed the lower House of Representatives but was defeated in the upper body, the Legislative Council. The next year, the bill came up again. This time 20,000 women signed petitions, but the bill was again defeated in the Legislative Council. Then, in 1893, the bill came up for a third time; 32,000 women — a full quarter of all the European women in New Zealand — signed petitions delivered to the Parliament. When it passed the House, suffragists held huge rallies and sent flurries of telegrams to persuade members of the Legislative Council. It worked; the bill passed 20-18, and the colonial governor signed it, making New Zealand the first self-governing country to allow women to vote.

3. March for 'Bread and Peace' (Russia, 1917): Though socialist women in the United States and Europe had been holding "International Women's Day": demonstrations for several years, Russian women took it to a new level in 1917. On March 8, female textile workers in the capital went on strike, demanding an end to World War I, an end to food shortages and an end to czarist rule. They asked male factory workers to join them, and according to revolutionary Leon Trotsky, 90,000 people struck that day. The next day, it doubled. The czar abdicated less than a week later. Since 1975, the United Nations has celebrated March 8 as International Women's Day.

4. Abeokuta Women's Revolt (colonial Nigeria, 1946): Abeokuta is now a city in Nigeria, but in the 1940s, it was a city-state under the control of British colonial authorities via a local puppet alake (king). There, a woman named Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti started a "ladies' club" for educated women like her. But soon Kuti and her club united with market women who were being unfairly taxed. Over the protracted struggle, tens of thousands of women marched, sang abusive (read: hilarious) songs outside the alake's compound and, according to The Washington Post's Hannah Jewell in her book "She Caused a Riot," stripped and beat male authorities who opposed them. Some of the older women may have also engaged in revolutionary flashing. It took a while, but it worked; the taxes were overturned, and the alake abdicated and went into exile.

5. Women's March (South Africa, 1952): There were a lot of terrible things about the apartheid regime. One of the worst was the "pass laws," which prohibited black men from moving freely through the country without a permit. In 1952, the government moved to implement pass laws on women, too, sparking protests. On August 9, 1956, nearly 20,000 women joined in protest in the capital, Pretoria. It was a remarkably multiracial gathering for a country where mixing between races was banned. The leaders delivered petitions against the pass laws to the government, then stood with the crowd in silent protest for nearly half an hour before breaking out in song. The expression "You strike a woman, you strike a rock" originates from this moment. August 9 is now recognized as Women's Day in South Africa.

6. Women's Day Off (Iceland, 1975): On October 24, 1975, an estimated 90 percent of Icelandic women didn't show up to work, to protest sexism and inequality. Schools, stores and factories closed, according to the Icelandic Women's History Archives. Housewives walked out, too, meaning that many men had to either call in sick or take their children to work. Things have improved since then; the World Economic Forum has declared Iceland the least gender-unequal country for nine years in a row.