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| **Feminism and Suffragism** |
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| Originating from the French word *féminisme,* feminism’s first appearance in 1837 is attributed to the social theorist, Charles Fourier (1772-1837)*.* Denoting a principle that argues for the rights of women and the equality of the sexes, it grew increasingly popular as a term in the second half of the nineteenth century, and appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1895. As a reform movement with a network of activists comprising both sexes across the Americas and Europe, the championing of political, financial and social equality for women had its roots in abolitionist and temperance movements of the early nineteenth century. Roughly divided into three waves, the first began in the mid-1800s and peaked in the United States and Europe between 1890 and 1920. The second took place from the late 1960s to the 1980s and was followed by a third in the mid-1990s.  Prior to the first wave, early feminist foundational texts include Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Judith Sargent Murrary’s *On the Equality of the Sexes* (1790), Margaret Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1843) and Mathilde Franziska Anneke’s *Woman in Conflict with Society* (1847). The first women’s rights gathering in the United States, the Seneca Falls Convention, took place in 1848 after co-organizers Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott were refused entrance to the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London solely due to their gender. A Declaration of Rights and Sentiments was drafted at the convention with thirteen resolutions outlining how fundamental rights, like the right to vote, were denied to women. The National Women’s Rights Convention was born from the Seneca Falls Convention and convened annually from 1850 to 1860. Among the important American feminists who held office, attended, or spoke at the conventions were Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Paulina Kellogg Wright Davis, Martha Coffin Wright, Elizabeth Oakes Smith and Sojourner Truth.  A split within the larger woman suffrage movement in the United States occurred in 1869 primarily over ideological differences within the American Equal Rights Association regarding support of the 15th Amendment. Due to these irreconcilable differences, two competing organizations were founded in 1869, the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) established by Cady Stanton and Anthony and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) founded by Stone with Julia Ward Howe. In 1890 the two associations successfully merged and became the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). After the passage of the 19th Amendment, the NAWSA was renamed the League of Women Voters (LWV), which is still active today. Within the NAWSA, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organized the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage (CU) in 1913. The two women organized a large-scale suffrage procession in Washington D.C. a day prior to the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson. Led by lawyer Inez Milholland Boissevain, 8,000 marchers, nine bands and twenty floats travelled down Pennsylvania Avenue drawing tens of thousands of spectators. Three years later in order to focus solely on passage of a federal amendment, the CU became the National Women’s Party (NWP) and Paul adopted the confrontational and militant tactics used by English suffrage groups who obtained the right to vote in 1918. Through picketing, rallies, parades and marches directed at Congress and the White House, the NWP very publically demanded women’s suffrage. “Silent Sentinels” protested daily in front of the White House with large banners and were arrested on several occasions as a result of their public demonstrations. While serving their sentences, there were reports of extreme forms of punishment inflicted on the women ranging from sleep deprivation to physical violence to solitary confinement. Paul, Burns and others staged a weeks-long hunger strike while in prison in 1917 and were force-fed by doctors. Public uproar over the women’s treatment led to their eventual release and the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals deemed their arrest and imprisonment unconstitutional in 1918.  Due in part to mounting public outcry coupled with criticism over the United States’ support of democracy abroad but not at home, President Woodrow Wilson ultimately endorsed a suffrage amendment in January 1918. Although the 19th Amendment was not ratified until August 1920, numerous states granted women the right to vote decades earlier. Continuing on her campaign for equality, Paul wrote the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923, which declared the equal application of the Constitution to all persons, regardless of gender. It was introduced at every session of Congress from 1923 to 1972 when it finally passed but failed to be ratified by enough states. It was introduced into Congress again in 1982, as it has continued to be every year since.  Canada granted women the right to vote in 1918 with Emily Jennings Stowe founding the suffrage organization, the Toronto Women’s Literary Club (1877). In 1929, the Famous Five, comprising Emily Gowan Murphy, Louise Crummy McKinney, Nellie Mooney McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards, and Irene Marryat Parlby, successfully fought for women to be able to hold any appointed elected office.  African-American feminists were highly active within the women’s suffrage and abolitionist movement. Sojourner Truth, a former slave herself, was a vocal advocate for civil rights, emancipation, and suffrage. As a skilled orator, she is remembered for her 1851 speech *Ain’t I a Woman?* Sisters Harriet Forten Purvis, Sarah Forten Purvis and Margaretta Forten, along with their mother Charlotte, helped to establish the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1833 and later, Harriet and Margaretta organized the 5th National Women’s Rights Convention in 1854. Mary Ann Shadd Cary wrote columns published in Ontario’s *Provincial Freeman* and founded the Colored Women’s Progressive Franchise Association in 1880. The National Association of Colored Women (NACW) was established in 1896 with Mary Church Terrell as President and included important African-American leaders such as Harriet Tubman, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Margaret Murray Washington, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett. The NACM supported suffrage movements but also maternal and child welfare, poverty concerns, and social injustices. Wells-Barnett went on to found the Alpha Suffrage Club of Chicago in 1913, which was dedicated solely to woman’s suffrage. Access to education, especially higher education, was an important goal of African-American feminists such as Anna Julia Cooper, the fourth African-American woman in the United States to receive a doctorate degree in 1924, and Nannie Helen Burroughs, founder of the National Training School for Women and Girls (1909). In 1935 the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) was founded by Mary McLeod Bethune to lobby against discrimination, racism and sexism.  Suffrage for women in England had its beginnings in 1818 with Jeremy Bentham’s book, *A Plan for Parliamentary Reform,* advocating women’s right to vote, and with Ann Doyle Wheeler and William Thompson’s book, *Appeal of One Half of the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain them in Political and Hence in Civil and Domestic Slavery*. Early social reformers like Elizabeth Fry, Josephine Butler, Octavia Hill, and Florence Nightingale carried out additional early work. The movement gained momentum in 1869 when John Stuart Mill published the influential essay on women’s equality, *Subjection of Women*, and, as a member of Parliament, circulated a petition for Parliament to include woman suffrage in the Reform Act of 1867. Harriet Martineau was an early social theorist and published multiple political texts, novels and newspaper articles, in particular writing for the *Daily Mail* from 1852 to 1866. Activist, reformer and feminist, Annie Besant edited the *National Reformer* with Charles Bradlaugh from 1874 to 1887 which became a platform for discussions of women’s rights and equality. Leading English novelist and poet, Mary Ann Evans, under the pen name George Eliot, wrote seven novels, including *Middlemarch* (1871-1872) and contributed to the *Westminster Review*, ultimately becoming editor from 1851 to 1854.  The National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS, 1897) was formed out of multiple regional societies and Millicent Garrett Fawcett served as president from 1907-1919. Organized by the NUWSS in 1907, the “Mud March” was the largest march on Parliament at the time and featured over 3,000 women. Emmeline Pankhurst, together with her daughter, Christabel, founded the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903. Beginning in 1905 with the motto “Deeds, Not Words,” the WSPU employed more militant tactics than the NUWSS, such as hunger strikes, arson, picketing, destruction of property and demonstrations, to bring urgency to their cause. It was in 1906 that a *Daily Mail* journalist, Charles E. Hands, coined the pejorative term “suffragette” which was quickly appropriated by the WSPU. In 1910, a violent six-hour clash between police and demonstrators outside the House of Commons led to one death and was later termed “Black Friday.” In 1913, partially due to public agitation over the practice of force-feeding imprisoned activists who were on hunger strikes, the Cat and Mouse Act was passed which allowed women to return home to recuperate before returning to finish their sentences. Many supporters paused their efforts during World War I, including the WSPU, and it was in 1918 with the passage of the Eligibility of Women Act that women over the age of thirty were granted the right to vote and be elected to Parliament. Ten years later the age requirement was lowered to twenty-one, matching that of men.  In both the United States and England, men were involved in the suffragist movement through organizations such as the Men’s League for Women’s Suffrage (England, 1907), the Men’s Political Union for Women’s Enfranchisement (England, 1910), the Men’s Society for Women’s Rights (England, 1912) and the Men’s Equal Suffrage League (United States, 1910). Notable supporters included Max Eastman, Frederick Douglass, Henry Browne Blackwell, Philip Snowden, James Mott, Hugh Arthur Franklin, Fredrick C. Hicks, Henry Noel Brailsford, Laurence Housman, Henry Nevinson, and Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence who was an active member of the WSPU and started the journal, *Votes for Women*, in 1907 with wife Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence.  Feminism and suffragism in France had its beginnings during the French Revolution when in 1789, as a response to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, the *Women’s Petition to the National Assembly* was presented, proclaiming the same rights be extended to women. In 1791, Olympe de Gouges addressed Marie Antoinette in the pamphlet, *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman*, which asserted women’s equal rights and included a sample marriage contract. Two years later she was accused of tyranny and sent to the guillotine. Three influential feminist newspapers active in promoting women’s rights, *La Voix des Femmes*, *La* *Politique des Femmes*, and *L’Opinion des Femmes*, were founded between 1848 and 1849. During the Paris Commune of 1871, the Women's Union for the Defense of Paris and Care of the Injured was founded and demanded, among many things, gender and wage equality, women’s right to divorce and the closing of officially sanctioned brothels. Calls for woman suffrage became increasingly vocal at the close of the nineteenth century and into the earlytwentieth century with Hubertine Auclert launching the feminist newspaper, *La Citoyenne* (1881-1891) and establishing the Women’s Suffrage Society (1883), which called for a tax strike to bring awareness to their cause. In 1909, Jeanne-Elizabeth Schmahl formed the French Union for Women’s Suffrage. Rejecting the militant tactics of the WSPU in England, Schmahl instead used legal strategies. As in England, many feminist organizations supported World War I and felt the right to vote would be granted after the war ended. Despite continued efforts, French women would not be granted the right to vote until 1944.  In addition to England and France, other European countries had equally rich histories of feminism and woman suffrage in the early 20th century which included activists such as Camilla Collett and Gina Krog (Norway); Fredrika Bremer, Ellen Key and Alva Myrdal (Sweden); Marie Goegg-Pouchoulin (Switzerland); Ana de Castro Osório (Portugal); Clara Campoamor, Margarita Nelken and Concepción Arenal Ponte (Spain); Alice Salomon, Louise Otto, Anita Augspurg and Lida Gustava Heymann (Germany); Marie Popelin and Martha Bol Poel (Belgium); Mathilde Bajer (Denmark); Callirhoe Siganou Parren (Greece); Annie Furujhelm and Alexandra van Grippenberg (Finland); Aletta Jacobs and Rosa Manus (Netherlands); Ernestine Louise Rose (Poland); Františka Plamínková (Czech Republic); Adelheid Popp, Bertha Pappenheim, Rosa Mayreder and Bertha Felice Sophie von Suttner (Austria); and Mariya Trubnikova Nadezhda Stasova and Anna Filosova (Russia).  Support for women’s rights and suffrage in Latin America during the early twentieth century could be found in numerous women’s organizations, congresses and publications. This included international support networks such as the Pan American Association for the Advancement of Women (1922), the International Woman Suffrage Association (1902) and the Inter-American Commission of Women (1928). In 1929, Ecuador was the first Latin American country to grant women the right to vote with Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Cuba, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Guatemala and Costa Rica following between 1932 and 1947. Women’s suffrage was secured in Mexico and Paraguay in 1953 and 1961, respectively. Important figures in the movement included: Matilde Hidalgo de Prócel (Ecuador); Elena Torres and Elena Arizmendi (Mexico); Bertha Lutz (Brazil); Paulina Luisi and María Abella de Ramírez (Uruguay); María Collado and Ofelia Rodríguez Acosta (Cuba); Minerva Bernardino (Dominican Republic); Martina Barros Borgoño de Orrego and Amanda Labarca Hubertson (Chile); Cecilia Grierson, Julieta Lanteri-Renshaw and Fenia Chertkoff de Repetto (Argentina); and María Jesús Alvarado Rivera (Peru). |
| Further reading:  Claire M. Renzetti, “Feminist Theories” (2009); Ann Taylor Allen, “Feminism” (2013), and Alessandra Tanesini, “Feminist Philosophy” (2010) in Oxford Bibliographies Online, http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com |