

Women In Canada

First wave of feminism:

First wave of feminism started at the turn of the 1900's and ended with the onset of the depression in 1930.

- Led by white wealthy Christian women
- Two goals of the first wave of feminism
 - Right to vote for women
 - Persons under the law

Legal reality:

- Women surrendered all property rights to husband when she married
- Many women not provided for in husbands will with money & property being passed to the male children
- Women barred by law from homesteading. If husband died women must leave the farm and land was returned to the government
- Men could seek divorce based on adultery women could not until 1925.
- Divorced women had no rights to children or property
- Canadian women lost citizenship if they married a non-Canadian.

Right to Vote "Suffragist"

Women and men who believed in the value of the woman's voice pressured both provincial and federal governments for the right to vote. Most outspoken pressure group was the WCTU

- 1916 – Women won the right to vote provincially in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.
(why?)
- 1917 Wartime elections act had select women voting in federal elections. BC and Ontario give women the vote provincially.
- 1918 – Federal women's franchise act gave the vote to women over the age of 21 and who were British subjects in federal elections. Nova Scotia gives vote to women
- 1919 – New Brunswick women gain right to vote
- 1920 dominion elections act allows women to run for parliament.
- 1922 – PEI gives women the right to vote
- 1925 – Newfoundland gives women the right to vote
- 1940 – Quebec gives women the right to vote.

Person Case:

1916 – Emily Murphy became the first female judge in Alberta. Defence lawyer argued that she could not judge his client, as she was not a person under the BNA act.

1919 – Emily petitioned Prime Minister Borden to appoint a female to the senate he responded that he could not as they were not persons under the law of Canada.

1927 – Using rule that 5 people could petition the supreme court for an interpretation on any point in the BNA act Emily Murphy with Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby & Henrietta Muir Edwards asked for clarification. The Supreme Court upheld the interpretation.

1929 – The Alberta 5 petitioned the Privy Council in Britain, who are responsible for the BNA act. The Privy Council declared that both men and women were persons in Canada.

First wave of Feminism ended because

1. They accomplished their two main goals
2. The onset of the depression caused most women to worry about survival of their families.

The second wave of Feminism: the women's liberation movement.

The second wave of feminism did not start until the 1960's, this was a result of the war where women were focused on the war effort and working in the work force.

After the war, the Baby boom kept many women at home and exhausted a traditional housewife in the 1950's worked a 99.6-hour work week.

The second wave of feminism was led by educated middle class women and was enabled due to two factors:

1. Prosperity led to greater education and awareness for all.
2. The "Pill" enabled women to be in control of them selves. Allowing many to focus on a career.

Goals of the second wave of feminism:

1. Equal pay legislation
2. Paid maternity leave
3. Removal of glass ceilings
4. End of sexual exploitation of pornography and beauty pageants
5. Establishment of rape crisis centres
6. Changes to the abortion law.

Two types of feminist developed during this period

1. Mainstream feminist: who felt that they could change values by passing legislation and publicizing their cause through the media.
2. Radical Feminist; who focused on concept of power and felt that society was set up for men who would not give up their power so it must be sized from them.
 1. Eliminate stereo types
 2. Change child rearing practices
 3. Change education practices
 4. Change clothing styles

Royal commission on the status of women 1967-1970

- Women should chose whether to work outside the home
- Child care is the responsibility of both parents
- Society has a responsibility to pregnant women
- In certain area women will require special treatment to correct past discrimination

(affirmative action)

Due to affirmative action the wage gap between men and women has gone from 60 cents / dollar to 80cents/ dollar.

Poverty and Women:

1. Education: women tend not to take senior math and science courses in high school limited choices at university and the work force. Women tend to cluster in pink-collar jobs like clerical, retail and service. When they do become doctors and lawyers they do not specialize.
2. Systemic discrimination: women are passed over for promotion.
3. Poverty through divorce:
 1. Awarded care of dependent children
 2. Women may not have worked for many years decreasing earning power
 3. Often husbands fail to provide regular child support.

d. Good affordable daycare is not available.

4. Old age: many past generations may not have savings
5. Minority women: unable to get jobs due to lack of English or French.

Violence against women:

Montreal Massacre Dec 6 1989, male student who was denied enrolment entered the engineering school and killed 14 women and injured 12 other students.

- 27% women raped or sexually assaulted
- 50% women victims of unwanted sexual act
- 69% women assaulted by men they know.
- 60% of the assaults happen at home or in a car.
- Younger women at greater risk of date rape.
- 1 in 6 males reports being sexually assaulted (number low as males do not report the crime)
- 99% of all reported assaults committed by men
- Pornography played a role in 56% of the offences.

Bill c-49 No means NO, Yes means Yes: clear explicit consent must be given. No answer is a no Sexual assault and form of sexual activity forced upon another (kissing, fondling, or intercourse)

Child sexual assault: children under the age of 12 or children between the ages of 14-18 by a person in trust or authority.

Methods used to affect change:

- writing campaigns (letters, editorials)
- Consciousness-raising sessions
- Guerrilla theatre
- Artwork
- Music
- Phone networks
- Utilizing the media
- Networking with lawyers
- Civil court action
- Promotion new legislation
- lobbying
- Public speak-outs on taboo subjects
- Marches
- Rallies
- Protests
- Filing complaints

Radical Feminism

Calls for a reordering of society where male supremacy (patriarchy) is eliminated and liberate every one from an unjust society.

Abolish patriarchy by challenging existing norms and institutions rather than through a political process.

1. Believe that the class of men and gender relations were the largest oppressors of women.
2. Believe that men as a class **benefit** from the continued oppression of women.
3. Believe men cannot be feminists and contribute to the feminist movement no matter how well-intentioned

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Radical feminists credited with:

- Raising sexual politics as a public issues.
- Expanding reproductive rights – make choices on abortion, birth control on her own.
- Driving to legalize abortion
- Demanding total equality in the private sphere (housework, childcare, emotional and sexual needs etc)
- The sexual revolution where heteronormativity and gender roles would be challenged.

Radical feminists tended to be more militant and wanted to get to the root of the problem.

- 1968 protested the Miss America pageant by throwing high heels and other feminine accessories in a garbage bin
- Sit-in on the ladies home journal
- Speak outs – large protests/rallies on topics of violence against women , rape, etc.

Lesbian separatism:

Belief that gender and sexual roles were male driven and enforced by those in power to maintain domination. To this end, some women used political lesbianism to further the feminist agenda, and it became popular in the 1970s. Some feminists doubted the LGBT movement offered any help to the radical feminist movement.

These were quite a deviation between the previously political (right to vote) and economical (equal pay, equal opportunity) movements that came before.

Many women of colour did not associate themselves with this group because they didn't feel as if their issues were being supported.

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