

# THE FEMINISTS

---

Women's Emancipation Movements in  
Europe, America and Australasia 1840-1920

Richard J. Evans

ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:  
WOMEN'S HISTORY



# **THE FEMINISTS**

**Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe,  
America and Australasia 1840-1920**

**RICHARD J. EVANS**

**Volume 16**

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1977

This edition first published in 2013

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

First issued in paperback 2014

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 1977 Richard J. Evans

The right of Richard J. Evans to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him/her in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-415-62985-0 (Volume 16)

ISBN: 978-1-138-00805-2 (pbk)

#### **Publisher's Note**

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original copies may be apparent.

#### **Disclaimer**

The publisher has made every effort to trace copyright holders and would welcome correspondence from those they have been unable to trace.

ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:  
WOMEN'S HISTORY

---

THE FEMINISTS

---

# CONTENTS

## Preface

## Abbreviations

1. Philosophers and Organisers	13
Reason, Religion and Revolution	13
Economy and Society	23
Politics and Morality	33
2. Moderates and Radicals	44
The United States	44
Australia and New Zealand	58
Great Britain	63
Scandinavia and the Nordic Lands	69
The Habsburg Monarchy	91
The German Empire	103
Tsarist Russia	112
France, Belgium, Holland and Italy	124
3. Socialists and Revolutionaries	144
Feminists and the Working Class	144
From Fourier to Bebel	153
Women and Socialism in Germany	159
The Socialist Women's International	165
America, France and Britain	170
From Radical Feminism to Revolution	177
4. Militants and Conservatives	189
Retreat from Liberalism	189
The Decline of Feminism	198
Winning the Vote	211
Conclusion	232
Appendix: International Feminist Movements	246
A Note on Further Reading	254
Index	257

# **THE FEMINISTS**

**Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe,  
America and Australasia 1840-1920**

**RICHARD J. EVANS**

**Volume 16**

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1977

This edition first published in 2013

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

First issued in paperback 2014

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 1977 Richard J. Evans

The right of Richard J. Evans to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him/her in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-415-62985-0 (Volume 16)

ISBN: 978-1-138-00805-2 (pbk)

#### **Publisher's Note**

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original copies may be apparent.

#### **Disclaimer**

The publisher has made every effort to trace copyright holders and would welcome correspondence from those they have been unable to trace.

# THE FEMINISTS

WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE,  
AMERICA AND AUSTRALASIA 1840-1920

RICHARD J. EVANS



CROOM HELM  
London & Sydney

BARNES & NOBLE  
Totowa, New Jersey



©1977 Richard J. Evans

Croom Helm Ltd, Provident House, Burrell Row,  
Beckenham, Kent BR3 1AT

Croom Helm Australia Pty Ltd, Suite 4, 6th Floor,  
64-76 Kippax Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010, Australia

Revised edition 1979, reprinted 1984 and 1985.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Evans, Richard John

The feminists.

1. Feminism -- History

I. Title

301.41'2'091812 HQ1121

ISBN 0-85664-977-5

First published in the USA 1977 by

Barnes and Noble Books,

81 Adams Drive,

Totowa, New Jersey 07512

ISBN 0-06-492044-5

Printed and bound in Great Britain  
by Billing & Sons Limited, Worcester.

# CONTENTS

## Preface

## Abbreviations

1. Philosophers and Organisers	13
Reason, Religion and Revolution	13
Economy and Society	23
Politics and Morality	33
2. Moderates and Radicals	44
The United States	44
Australia and New Zealand	58
Great Britain	63
Scandinavia and the Nordic Lands	69
The Habsburg Monarchy	91
The German Empire	103
Tsarist Russia	112
France, Belgium, Holland and Italy	124
3. Socialists and Revolutionaries	144
Feminists and the Working Class	144
From Fourier to Bebel	153
Women and Socialism in Germany	159
The Socialist Women's International	165
America, France and Britain	170
From Radical Feminism to Revolution	177
4. Militants and Conservatives	189
Retreat from Liberalism	189
The Decline of Feminism	198
Winning the Vote	211
Conclusion	232
Appendix: International Feminist Movements	246
A Note on Further Reading	254
Index	257

For Elín

## PREFACE

A comparative history of feminist movements would scarcely have been possible five or six years ago. It is only since the end of the 1960s that scholarly interest in the history of feminism has awakened, and only since 1972-3 that academic studies of women's emancipation movements in the past have become available in any number. We still do not know enough about the history of feminism in most countries; some female emancipation movements have yet to attract the interest of a single historian. Nevertheless, I believe that sufficient work has now been done to warrant a first attempt at a comparative synthesis. Many people have tried to explain why feminist movements emerged, what they wanted and how – or whether – they achieved their aims. Almost invariably they have based their explanations on the example of one country alone, usually England or America. It is only by looking at the development of feminism in a variety of countries, however, that we can overcome the distortion of perspective which this involves, and reach towards a more comprehensive grasp of the history of women's efforts to emancipate themselves through political action.

I first became aware of the need for a comparative study of feminism at the beginning of the 1970s, when working on a history of the feminist movement in Germany. In part, therefore, this book is the outcome of my own need to place German feminism more firmly in an international and comparative context than I was able to do then, limited as I was by the necessity of concentrating on the presentation and interpretation of detailed archival research within the confines of a book devoted primarily to German history. I also felt it would be a useful exercise for a general study of feminism to be written from the point of view of a practising historian, sympathetic to, but not a member of the present-day feminist movement. At the same time, this book also comes out of the personal experiences in which I became involved through my work on Germany. Initially, my work on German feminism was conceived as a case study in German liberalism, and had no connection at all with the Women's Liberation movement, which at that time (1970) was only in its earliest stages. Although the historians and archivists with whom I came into contact in the course of my research could not have been kinder or more helpful, many of them, both in East and West Germany, were unable to conceal their surprise that I had chosen to

study feminism, and some of them clearly thought I would have done better to have picked a subject that was more central to the concerns of the historical profession in general and to have left feminism to women. At the same time, my research aroused a good deal of interest in supporters of the Women's Liberation movement, and it naturally brought me into contact with many of them. These two influences forced me to embark on a more general consideration of women's history, the reasons for its neglect, and the problems involved in researching and writing it.

These considerations on the hybrid parentage of this book may help to indicate to some extent where its focus lies. My basic concern is not to analyse the history of women's position in society, nor to discuss the structures and realities of women's everyday life in the past and the variety of techniques used by women to adapt to them, change them or escape from them. These are important subjects, of course, and they are inspiring a great deal of significant and trail-blazing research. But I also believe that there is room for a discussion of the political dimension of women's history, or, in other words, for a history of feminism. It is a curious feature of the present historiographical climate that it should be necessary to justify such an enterprise, but necessary it is, not least because of the tendency for women's history to be subsumed under the category of social history, where the habit is to dismiss active feminists as 'untypical' and to concentrate on rediscovering the lives of the 'average' housewife or working woman. Yet millions of women were involved in feminist movements over the period covered by this book, and this fact alone, quite apart from any relevance their experience may have for the Women's Liberation activist of the present day, surely justifies the attempt to understand them. If this study must be categorised into a sub-branch of the historical discipline (though such categorisations are in my view artificial and constricting), it is to the category of political history that it should be assigned, not to that of social history.

The intention of this book is not to be definitive or comprehensive, but rather to establish a general framework of interpretation tracing the origins, development and eventual collapse of women's emancipation movements in relation to the changing social formations and political structures of Europe, America and Australasia in the era of bourgeois liberalism. It is not primarily an account of personalities, ideas, or literary expressions of feminism. Its focus is mainly on organisations and their development, rather than on the effects which feminism had on the mass of women, though of course objective changes in the social position

of women are taken into account in the analysis. The first part of the book discusses the origins of organised feminism and advances a model or 'ideal type' description of the main general features of its development. The second and longest part of the book takes a number of case studies of individual feminist movements to illustrate the main varieties of organised feminism and the differences in its structure and evolution from country to country. Brief accounts are given of the development of feminism in America, Australasia, Britain, Scandinavia and the Nordic countries, the Habsburg Monarchy, Germany, Russia, France, Belgium, Holland and Italy, and in each case there is an attempt to determine the extent to which the feminist movement conformed to or deviated from the model outlined in the first chapter. The third part of the book, which strictly speaking is not in conformity with the book's general title, deals in a similar way to parts one and two with socialist women's movements. Some consideration of these is necessary since their emergence played a crucial role in the further development of middle-class feminism, but I have thought it important to go beyond this and discuss socialist women's movements in some detail since they formed the major, indeed almost the only alternative form of women's emancipation movement to that developed by the feminists of the middle classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The fourth part of the book discusses the reasons for the collapse of bourgeois feminist movements after the First World War. A general conclusion pulls together some of the arguments advanced in all four chapters and tries to explore some of their implications. There is a brief appendix on international feminist organisations. A short note on further reading concludes the book.

The first draft of this book was written during a semester's sabbatical leave granted to me by the University of Stirling in 1976, and I am most grateful to the staff of the University of Stirling library for their unfailing courtesy and helpfulness in dealing with my requests for material. I also wish to express my thanks to the British Library, Reference Division, and the Fawcett Library, for their assistance in obtaining the original sources on which parts of this book are based. I have also made use of some of the documentation collected during my researches on German feminism, and once more I am happy to express my gratitude to the various archives and libraries in whose care the material rests. In a synthesis of this kind, the author is more than usually indebted to the labours of others; I particularly wish to acknowledge the debt I owe to the historians whose work I cite, and to offer my apologies to them for using their hard-won information to support

arguments which they might not always accept. My debt to particular works on individual countries is indicated in more detail in the notes; it is to be hoped that some at least of the many important PhD dissertations which have appeared on the history of various feminist movements in recent years, and which I have derived much from consulting, will reach a wider public by appearing in print in the not-too-distant future. I am also grateful to all those individuals who have helped me obtain material, especially Agneta Pallinder, Gunnar Qvist and Anna Sigurdardóttir. Parts of the typescript were read and commented on by David Barrass, Jane Caplan, Elín Hjaltadóttir, Karen Leonard, Stewart Oakley and Neil Tranter, and I am very grateful to them for their critical suggestions and remarks. I would also like to thank Marjan Bhavsar, Pat Jackson and Margaret McCallum for their assistance in preparing the final draft, which was completed in February 1977. Cathleen Catt kindly undertook the task of reading the proofs. Finally, I owe a more general debt of gratitude to Elín Hjaltadóttir, who helped me in many ways, but above all with her constant criticism and encouragement; it is to her that this book is dedicated.

Norwich

February 1977

Richard J. Evans

### **Preface to the Paperback Edition**

For this edition I have mostly confined myself to the correction of misprints and minor errors, and the insertion of a few stylistic improvements. There are two substantial alterations to which I must draw the reader's attention. On pages 168-9 I have recast my account of the Finnish Social Democratic Women's Movement in the light of information kindly provided to me by Dr David Kirby, of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in the University of London. Secondly, I am grateful to Jill Craigie for pointing out in her generous review of this book in *The Spectator* that the account which I gave on page 191 of the English suffragettes' 'truce' in 1910-11 was misleading, and I have amended the passage accordingly. Neither this nor any of the other points made by Ms Craigie alters my more general views on the political significance of the suffragettes. Finally, a number of important studies on the history of feminism have appeared since the completion of the original manuscript of this book in February 1977, and I have mentioned a few of them in the 'Note on Further Reading' on pages 254-5.

Norwich, 1978

Richard J. Evans

## ABBREVIATIONS

AFL	American Federation of Labor
AWSA	American Woman Suffrage Alliance
ICWT	<i>International Council of Women: Transactions of Quinquennial Meetings</i>
IWSAC	<i>International Woman Suffrage Alliance: Reports of Conferences</i>
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
NAWSA	National American Woman Suffrage Alliance
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
NWSA	National Woman Suffrage Alliance
NZWCTU	New Zealand Woman's Christian Temperance Union
SPD	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
WCTU	Woman's Christian Temperance Union
WSML	<i>Women's Suffrage in Many Lands</i> , ed. Alice Zimmern, London, 1909
WSP	<i>Women's Suffrage in Practice</i> , ed. C. Macmillan <i>et al.</i> , London, 1912
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union
WTUL	Women's Trade Union League



