

## Women at War (+ Feminism):

*Key words: suffrage, suffragette, suffragist, feminism, E. Pankhurst, S. de Beauvoir, Bible and Bicycle*

**Great Britain:** Women in 1900 were treated differently from men. Most women had little schooling and did not go to university. Instead they spent their lives raising children and working to run a house. Women's business was looking after the home. Many people believed that women weren't very rational so they wouldn't be able to make big decisions. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several reform acts had given more and more people in Britain the vote but only men. Most of the population thought it was perfectly sensible that women didn't have the vote.

The campaign for women's votes wasn't brand new in 1900 – but the campaigns from 1900 to 1914 were more energetic than ever. Some campaigns were peaceful, some weren't ...

- **Suffrage** [safridž] = the right to vote

Suffrage		
Suffragists	X	Suffragettes

- **The Suffragists'** formal name was the *National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies*. They were founded in **1897**. Their main tactics were **persuasion, meeting and petitions to Parliament**.

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- **The Suffragettes** were more direct: The Suffragettes's formal name was the *Women's Social and Political Union*. The movement was founded by **Emmeline Pankhurst in 1903**. The suffragettes thought the Suffragists took things too slowly. The Suffragettes did not mind getting arrested. After 1912 the protests got **more extreme: Suffragettes chained themselves to railings outside Downing Street and Buckingham Palace. They physically assaulted politicians. Suffragettes made arson attacks on the post boxes, churches and railway stations.**

During the war women did "men's job": bus conductors, drivers, postal workers, farm labourers and coal deliverers,... they also worked in the munition factories, and engineering workshops,...



Picture: Women in an arsenal factory

One of the biggest changes brought about by the First World War was the great increase in the number of women who went out to work. The total number of working women went up by more than a million between 1914 and 1918, as women took over a wide variety of different jobs in order to release men for service in the forces.

One of the most important jobs which the women did was making shells in the munitions factories. By the time the

war ended, **60 percent** of all workers engaged in manufacturing munitions were women, happy to work for just over two pounds a week, which in those days was a very good wage.

Some women took up work which was more directly concerned with the war than simply going out to a job in this country. Many thousands of women, for example, volunteered to become nurses and ambulance drivers and joined the British Red Cross Society's **Voluntary Aid Detachment**. The nurses in this organization became known as **V.A.D.s**. To wounded soldiers coming in from the mud and horrors of the trenches, the sight of the calm, efficient V.A.D.s. was a great comfort, and without them the military services would never have been able to cope with the terrible problems created by the murderous battles on the Western Front.

Another group of women who played a more direct part in the war were those who volunteered to serve in the first women's services and actually "joined up" themselves. *The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps – W.A.A.C.* – was the first women's service of all, and it was established in 1917. Its aim was to employ women as cooks, and so forth, so as to release men for fighting. The idea quickly spread and by 1918 there was a *Women's Royal Service* and *Women's Royal Air Force*.

By doing work that helped Britain win the war, women proved that they were important to public life as well as home life. There was also a sense of gratitude towards women for their contribution. **1918: The Representation of the People Act**: right to vote for these women: 1. over 30 and a householder or 2. over 21 and married to a householder. The same act gave all men over 21 the right to vote. Women were also able to become *MPs (member of the House of the Commons)*. **The vote did not go to all women over 21 until 1928, when women finally got equal voting rights.**

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**Feminism:** refers to movements aimed at establishing and defending equal political, economic, and social rights and equal opportunities for women. Its concepts overlap with those of women's rights.



Feminist theory emerged from these feminist movements and includes general theories and theories about the origins of inequality, and, in some cases, about the social construction of sex and gender, in a variety of disciplines. Feminist activists have campaigned for women's rights—such as in contract, property, and voting - while also promoting women's rights to bodily integrity and autonomy and reproductive rights. They have opposed domestic violence, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. In economics, they have advocated for workplace rights, including equal pay and opportunities for careers and to start businesses.

*Picture on the left: Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928) was an English political activist and leader of the British suffragette movement, which helped women win the right to vote. In 1999, Time named Pankhurst as one of the 100 Most Important People of the 20th Century, stating: "she shaped an idea of women for our time; she shook society into a new pattern from which there could be no going back".*



*The Second Sex* (French: *Le Deuxième Sexe*, June 1949) is one of the best-known works of the French existentialist **Simone de Beauvoir**. It is a work on the treatment of women throughout history and often **regarded as a major work of feminist literature.**

On the Picture: Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir

- **Situation of women in Czechoslovakia:**<sup>1</sup>
- **Bible:** “czech” this out “*Skeptics Annotated Bible*“, <http://skepticsannotatedbible.com/>

### **Ephesians 5**

**22** Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. **23** For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.<sup>2</sup>

### **1 Timothy 2**

**11** A woman[a] should learn in quietness and full submission. **12** I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man;[b] she must be quiet.<sup>3</sup>

### **Deuteronomy 21, 11-13**

**11** if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife.

**12** Bring her into your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails **13** and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured. After she has lived in your house and mourned her father and mother for a full month, then you may go to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife.<sup>4</sup>

### **Deuteronomy 22, 5:**

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<sup>1</sup> **121/1920 Sb. Zákon ze dne 29. února 1920, kterým se uvozuje Ústavní listina Československé republiky:**

**Hlava druhá, Moc zákonodárná. Složení a působnost Národního shromáždění a jeho obou sněmoven:**

§ 9: Právo voliti do **sněmovny poslanecké** mají všichni státní občané Československé republiky **bez rozdílu pohlaví**, kteří překročili 21. rok věku svého a vyhovují ostatním podmínkám řádu volení do poslanecké sněmovny.

§ 14: Právo voliti do **senátu** mají všichni státní občané republiky Československé **bez rozdílu pohlaví**, kteří překročili 26. rok věku svého a vyhovují ostatním podmínkám zákona o složení a pravomoci senátu.

<sup>2</sup> **List Efezanom 5, 21-24:** **21** a podriaďujte sa jedni druhým v bázni pred Kristom. **22** Ženy svojim mužom ako Pánovi, **23** lebo muž je hlavou ženy, ako je aj Kristus hlavou Cirkvi, on, Spasiteľ tela. **24** Ale ako je Cirkev podriadená Kristovi, tak aj ženy mužom vo všetkom

<sup>3</sup> **1. list Timotejovi: 2, 11-12:** **11** Žena nech sa učí v tichosti a v úplnej podriadenosti. **12** Učiť žene nedovoľujem, ani vládnuť nad mužom, ale nech je tichá.

<sup>4</sup> **Deuteronomium 21, 11-13:** **11** ak uvidíš medzi zajatcami peknú ženu a budeš ju chcieť za manželku, **12** voveď ju do svojho domu, nech si ostrihá vlasy a poobrezáva nechty, **13** zoblečie odev, v ktorom bola zajatá, a nech sedí v tvojom dome a mesiac oplakáva svojho otca a svoju matku. Potom k nej môžeš vojsť, spať s ňou a bude tvojou ženou.

5 A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this.<sup>5</sup>

### Bicycle:



*Gertrude.* "MY DEAR JESSIE, WHAT ON EARTH IS THAT BICYCLE SUIT FOR?"  
*Jessie.* "WELL, TO WEAR, OF COURSE."  
*Gertrude.* "BUT YOU HAVEN'T GOT A BICYCLE!"  
*Jessie.* "NO; BUT I'VE GOT A SEWING MACHINE!"

**Bicycle:** The impact of the bicycle on female emancipation should not be underestimated. The safety bicycle gave women unprecedented mobility, contributing to their larger participation in the lives of Western nations. As bicycles became safer and cheaper, more women had **access to the personal freedom** they embodied, and so the bicycle came to **symbolise the New Woman of the late nineteenth century**, especially in Britain and the United States. Feminists and suffragists recognised its transformative power. Susan B. Anthony said, "*Let me tell you what I think of bicycling. I think it has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. It gives women a feeling of freedom and self-reliance. I stand and rejoice every time I see a woman ride by on a wheel...the picture of free, untrammelled womanhood.*"

- **Feminism today (!):** Ševítová, Lenka; *Ženy a zdraví: předmenstruační syndrom, menstruační a menopauza jako sociální konstrukty v moderní západní společnosti*<sup>6</sup>



Don't say we didn't warn ya!

<sup>5</sup> **Deuteronomium: 22,5:** Žena nech sa neoblieka do mužských šiat, ani muž do ženských, lebo kto robí také veci, oškliví sa Bohu.

<sup>6</sup> Zdroj: <http://www.ceeol.com/aspx/issuedetails.aspx?issueid=70ca9efe-234e-4488-990c-2879a9f0b93c&articleId=237ab4a9-d020-4f27-b6ad-d96f271fb5a1>

