Feminism and Women´s Rights

The history of feminism comprises the narratives (chronological or thematic) of the movements and ideologies which have aimed at equal rights for women. While feminists around the world have differed in causes, goals, and intentions depending on time, culture, and country, most Western feminist historians assert that all movements that work to obtain women's rights should be considered feminist.

The fight for women's suffrage in the United States began with the women's rights movement in the mid-nineteenth century. This reform effort encompassed a broad spectrum of goals before its leaders decided to focus first on securing the vote for women. Women's suffrage leaders, however, disagreed over strategy and tactics: whether to seek the vote at the federal or state level, whether to offer petitions or pursue litigation, and whether to persuade lawmakers individually or to take to the streets. Both the women's rights and suffrage movements provided a political experience for many of the early women pioneers in Congress, but their internal divisions foreshadowed the persistent disagreements among women in Congress that emerged after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. The first attempt to organize a national movement for women's rights occurred in Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848. Led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a young mother from upstate New York, and the Quaker abolitionist Lucretia Mott, about 300 people most of whom were women attended the Seneca Falls Convention to outline a direction for the women's rights movement. They primarily focused on women's suffrage (the right to vote), striking down coverture laws, and gaining access to education and employment. These goals are famously enshrined in the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments, which is the resulting document of the first women's rights convention in the United States.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercise

First Series

- **Answer the following questions with the correct answer.**

1) What has been the goal of feminism?

2) Western feminist historians claim that all movements working for women's rights should be considered?

3) After which approval, persistent disagreements arose between the women of the congress?

4) Where and when did the first attempt to organize a national movement for women's rights arise?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The Most Remarkable Feminist Thinkers or Activists

Eleanor Roosevelt

Roosevelt became the First Lady to take on responsibilities beyond merely hosting and entertaining in the White House. Before her tenure as First Lady, she was already outspoken and involved with women's issues, working with the Women's Trade Union League and the International Congress of Working Women. From 1935 to 1962, Roosevelt wrote "My Day," a newspaper column that addressed women's work, equality, and rights before there was even a word for "feminism" the social issues at the time were considered "controversial," especially for that of a First Lady to speak about. After her time as First Lady, she became the first US delegate to the United Nations, served as first chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights and also chaired JFK's President's Commission on the Status of Women to promote equality and advise on women's issues.

Marlene Dietrich

While her efforts didn't directly fight for women's rights, Dietrich made a contribution to feminism through fashion. The Hollywood actress wore trousers and men's suits during a time where it was considered extremely scandalous and taboo; both on screen and privately, once almost being arrested for wearing pants in public during the 1930s. She was famously quoted saying, "I dress for the image. Not for myself, not for the public, not for fashion, not for men." Dietrich's way of dressing went on to influence generations of women after her, lending many the confidence and power of wearing a suit.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercise

Second Series

- **Complete the following sentences with the words from the bank, dragging and dropping the correct answer in the corresponding space.**

1)

activities	Eleanor	Congress	Marlene	responsibilities	White House

_____was a woman who assumed _____ that went beyond

mere reception and entertainment at the _____.

2)

1930s	awarded activist	fashion	arrested	actress	1935 to 1962
		books and writings			

She was an _____ who contributed a lot through

_____, she dressed in men's suits and that's why she was once

about to be _____ during the _____.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3)

book	feminism	right to vote	equality	newspaper	women's rights

She wrote a _____ column that was about equality and

_____ before there was a word for _____.

4)

confidence	suit	dressing	responsibility	speaking	wearing	buy	dress

Her way of _____ influenced many generations of women after

her, giving the _____ and power of _____ a _____.

LIVEWORKSHEETS