

Anti-feminist Praxis

This is not a men's movement

Feminism was never Not Rotten

MARCH 31, 2017APRIL 3, 2017 / 4PUBLISHING

by **Karen Straughan (a.k.a. GirlWritesWhat)**

Years ago, when I embarked on my investigation into the feminist movement and what it has become, I subscribed to the understanding that there had once existed a magical age of feminism. Of course I did. It was common knowledge, even among anti-feminists, that early feminism was a noble and well-intentioned movement, and that somewhere along the way it was hijacked by lunatics and man-haters bent on female supremacy.

I was curious as to exactly when, and by what means, this virtuous movement had been corrupted, so I went on something of an archaeological expedition, digging through piles of documents and old news articles and treatises from as far back as the late 1800s and earlier, transcripts of speeches given by well-known suffragettes like Susan B. Anthony.

My unexpected findings were as follows: Feminism has never been a righteous movement seeking equality. The “noble” Suffragettes were soaked in sexism, classism, racism, eugenics enthusiasm and the mindless pursuit of female privilege. The Declaration of Sentiments, widely believed to be the official manifesto of the First Wave, was nothing more than a hate-filled screed, simultaneously indicting and convicting the male sex of the wholesale criminal enslavement and subjugation of all women, through all of history.

I found a First Wave populated by terrorists and elitists who did little to conceal their malice, dishonesty and thirst for power. They were skilled at isolating any given statute from its full context and declaring it as discrimination against women, even when the overall set of laws to which it belonged conferred immense privilege on women. And always, their “reforms” focused on the one, isolated statute, always leaving those privileging women untouched.

They sought, and received, the automatic right of mothers to custody of children after divorce, but did nothing to change the financial obligation of fathers to provide all material necessities to said children.

They sought, and received, the right within marriage to hold and keep their own property and income untouchable by their husbands, but did nothing to change the legal obligation of husbands to financially support their wives, to pay their wives taxes, or to repay their wives debts.

They sought, and received, the right to vote, but did nothing to change the civic obligations of men toward the state, including military conscription, which had informed the primary justifications for universal male suffrage, nor did they campaign to impose any such obligations on women.

And through every effort on the part of those early feminists ran a vein of resentment, blame and indifference toward men. Resentment of “privileges” that were bought and paid for by men through their formal obligations to others. Blame cast on men for single-handedly constructing the entire system with no care or concern for women’s

wellbeing, safety or happiness, seats in lifeboats notwithstanding. Indifference to the responsibilities imposed on men by this same system, or the male sacrifice, hardship and suffering which resulted.

While men were dying in their thousands to win the right to form a union and earn enough to support their wives and children, early feminists were campaigning for a woman's right to take a man's children away from him through separation or divorce, and still enjoy the same access to his wallet she'd become accustomed to in marriage.

While men were dying in their millions to protect societies in which most men didn't have the vote, early feminists were terrorizing and injuring innocent civilians, demanding votes for women.

I was, to be honest, appalled by the entitlement of those early feminists, and by the nonchalance with which they portrayed men, as a sex, as not just capable of, but guilty of, treating their own wives, sisters, mothers, and daughters with sociopathic disregard. Little wonder these selfish, elitist, divisive women were, contrary to the revisionist history we've all been fed, no more popular among ordinary women back then than their modern counterparts are today.

A friend of mine has said that modern feminism is simply feminism without the mask. But my investigations showed me that feminism has never worn a mask. It has never needed to conceal the bitter core of hatred, blame, prejudice and supremacy that form its nucleus

Suffragettes were notorious domestic terrorists, lobbing bombs, lacing letter boxes with acid, setting fire to train stations, and even attempting to assassinate the British Prime Minister. But far from attempting to conceal their crimes, they relied on traditional notions of chivalry to shield themselves from the consequences of their actions. And the very subjects of their ceaseless hate campaign — men — eventually gave them everything they wanted, and more.

Pretending that First Wave feminism was virtuous not only erases the systemic injustices of which they were the primary architects, it erases the anti-male resentment and blame that have always infected the roots of the movement. It's time we stop idealizing them, and begin seeing the entirety of feminism for what it really is.

History is written by the victors, and feminism has been on a winning streak since its inception. Within that official history we are told only good things about the "brave women who risked their lives for women's equality". Some may find it deeply upsetting to discover that feminism has never been the righteous movement we've been told it was, but we have a moral obligation to examine political movements and history with our rose-tinted glasses off before we form an opinion. To do otherwise is to indulge in the wishful thinking of children.

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Posted by Karen Straughan

9 thoughts on "Feminism was never Not Rotten"

1. Tyler says:

JUNE 11, 2018 AT 4:25 PM

I think your right in saying (bourgeois)feminism was always kind of rotten. Many of the suffragettes would hand out chicken feathers to men who hadn't signed up for WW1, trying to shake them into fulfilling their "masculine" role and get themselves killed. That's pretty cruel and hypocritical. Then there's the whole dark history of feminists and eugenics. That being said, patriarchy was real, women did not have equal rights and were in a subservient position. It was never as one sided as it was made out to be. As for Marxism, it's important to keep in mind it's an almost extinct ideology now, occasionally hijacked and abused by the rad-libs. Marxism in it's heyday was both deeply concerned with women's liberation and real equality but highly critical of bourgeois feminism. Marxist women such as Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin, Eleanor Marx, Alexandra Kollontai,

Lucy Parsons, Helen Keller etc did not identify with feminism and were loath to consign themselves to a pink ghetto. They were deeply interested in organizing women workers alongside men, not against men, though that occasionally meant challenging male prejudices it was from a completely different place than all this “male privilege” talk and all this misandry. It was in men’s objective interests to welcome women into the ranks of the labor movement, or immigrants or racial minorities, instead of letting the boss use them as scabs. People throw this moddish term “intersectionality” around but a genuine working class socialist(but not Stalinist) politics was the ultimate intersectionity.

Womens liberation or even black liberation Jewish liberation etc was seen as merely a part of human liberation not something separate. Much of today’s ostensibly left identity politics are really right wing, not left wing. Like Zionism, at first many Zionists were socialists but they’re tribalism turned them into fascists. Male chauvinism is real but frankly a lot of feminists just sound like mirror images of male chauvinist. Today’s feminism is deeply complicit in so many evils the left claims to be against, like the prison industrial complex. Old school Marxists were right to keep this stuff at arms length because it’s rotted the left from within. You practically aren’t allowed to be a leftist anymore if you won’t pay lip service to this misandrist feminism.

REPLY

2. **Spry** says:

NOVEMBER 15, 2017 AT 7:12 AM

Excellent post as always Karen. I wonder, would you be willing to compile a database of primary and secondary sources, newspaper articles, speeches etc, of First Wave feminists and their antics? Having done the hard spade work it would be an immeasurable service if you could leave a trail of breadcrumbs for us to follow so that we can help get this message out there.

REPLY

3. **Art Webb** says:

JUNE 12, 2017 AT 9:47 AM

Stellar post, Karen, as your work always is

REPLY

4. **Joyous Goddess** says:

MAY 17, 2017 AT 1:48 AM

I would absolutely love to wade through these documents as you did, Karen. Would you mind letting me know where you began the journey? It’s challenging wading through the feminist dialogue to find evidence of the truth you so eloquently shared 😊 Thanks so much.

REPLY

5. **Richard Elliott** says:

MAY 1, 2017 AT 4:18 PM

Thanks for this. I had a bit of a bad tempered debate with an MRA who claimed feminism was invented by Marxists once they realised Marxism had failed. I tried to argue that feminism began at least 80 before the Russian revolution. But she wasn’t having any, ‘cos she’s a better MRA then I am. She’ll probably believe you, though. Go figure...

REPLY

1. **fidelbogen** says:

MAY 1, 2017 AT 4:24 PM

The funniest thing about it was that she just assumed you were an MRA in the first place.

But seriously, I think it is counterproductive to go around trumpeting real or imagined connections between feminism and Marxism. It destroys focus and undermines SAF message discipline.

REPLY

6. **Eisso Post** says:

MAY 1, 2017 AT 9:30 AM

Absolutely hair-raising, frightening story. Makes you wonder if we're not in the middle of an irreparable dystopia, or at least on the brink of it.

I miss a bit the hard facts: figures, citations etc. Not that I doubt for a moment Karen can come up with them. But to let this read to people who doubt about all this won't convince them.

REPLY

1. **woodman1959** says:

AUGUST 4, 2017 AT 11:11 PM

I would imagine that Karen's story needs to become a fully fledged book with the detail you speak of. Hopefully she's building up to that...but it's something that would need to be done very thoroughly, and at the same time fully informed about the suffering that women did genuinely go through – and some way of understanding and reconciling the two phenomena...so quite a task altogether.

Possibly something best achieved in collaboration with another writer – Warren Farrell comes to mind!

REPLY

7. **John Davis** says:

APRIL 29, 2017 AT 3:50 PM

Second wave feminism succeeded, through the gynocentrism that plagued Western culture in the 1980's, in completely revising the history of the suffragettes.

This is an excellent article that exposes that cultural revisionism that led to feminism becoming a supremacy movement, and a hate movement, at the expense of men in our culture.

The result of that supremacy movement has been to destroy the possibility of men exercising their natural virtues, and, as a result of creating a culture without male virtues, our cultures and our civilization are deteriorating at a lightning pace.

REPLY

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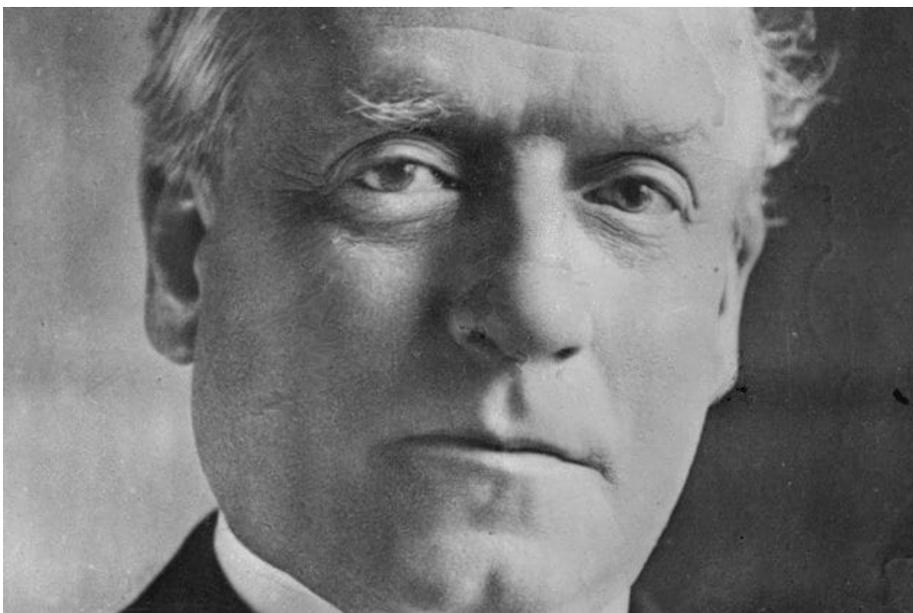
Top 10 Reasons The Suffragettes Were Actually Terrorists

by [Mark Oliver](#)✓ fact checked by [Jamie Frater](#)

In the early days of feminism, women known as suffragists demanded the right to vote through peaceful protests, but by 1903, it was clear that the peaceful path wasn't working. Emmeline Pankhurst led the Suffragettes into a new wave of violent, militant action, declaring, "No measure worth having has been won in any other way."

Today, we wrongly apply the Suffragette label to everyone in the suffrage movement, both peaceful and violent, but the Suffragettes were not peaceful women, politely waiting for men to give their rights. They were violent. They were vicious. They were domestic terrorists who lived up to their motto: "deeds, not words."

10 Trying To Assassinate The Prime Minister

Photo credit: [Wikimedia](#)

On July 19, 1912, a group of Suffragettes nearly killed the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, a key opponent of the Suffragettes, was visiting Dublin. He was traveling by carriage with the Irish politician John Redmond when suddenly a **hatchet flew toward him**. It landed directly between the two, grazing Redmond's ear, only a few inches away from killing him. On it were written the words: "This symbol of the extinction of the Liberal Party for evermore."

The woman who threw it was Mary Leigh, and she was only getting started. She managed to escape in the commotion and, with a few friends, made it to the Theatre Royal, where the prime minister was scheduled to speak.

Leigh and her friends poured a combustible oil on the theater's projector and set it on fire. Some men saw it burning and rushed in to put it out, but as they did, an explosive went off in the audience. When they turned to the sound, they saw Leigh's co-conspirator, Gladys Evans, blocking the door out of the protecting room. She had a lit match in her hand—and she threw it onto the oil around those who trying to calm the flames.

The girls were arrested, and the fire was stopped. As she was dragged off, though, Gladys Evans swore that there would be more explosions to come. "This," she promised, "is only the start of it."

9 Bombing A Chancellor's Cottage

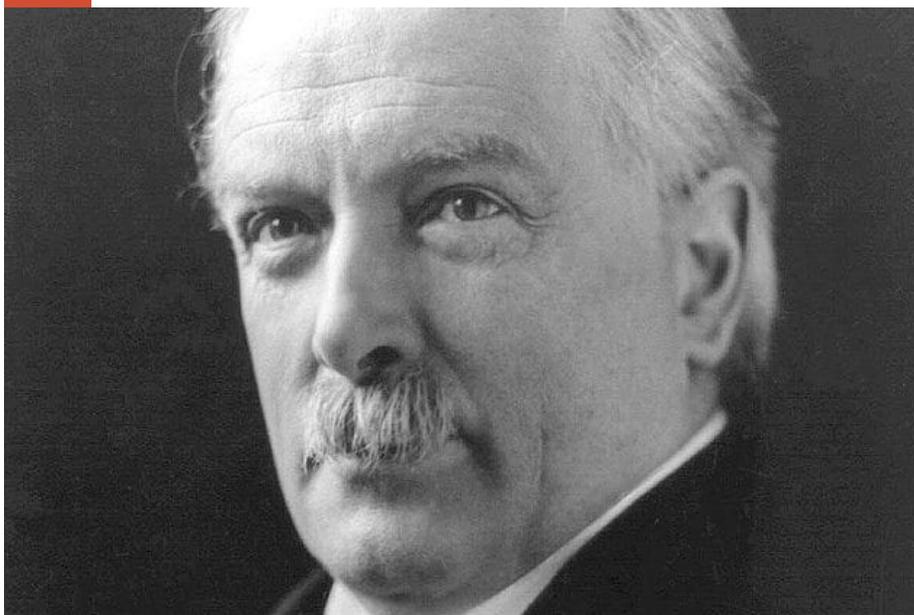


Photo credit: [Harris & Ewing](#)

The Suffragettes had an active campaign of actively destroying property. They set letter boxes on fire, smashed shop windows, cut telephone wires, and burned buildings to the ground. They targeted buildings dominated by men. Golf courses that forbade women, in particular, would be dug up, with slogans graffitied across the greens and buildings set aflame.

They **nearly killed 12 men** when they bombed a cottage that belonged to politician Lloyd George. George was an outspoken advocate of women's rights—but the Suffragettes didn't feel like he was doing enough. "He is always betraying us!" one Suffragette complained. She justified bombing his cottage, saying she believed it would "wake him up."

Two bombs were concealed in his cupboards, set to explode at a time when they thought the house would be empty. The Suffragettes, though, didn't realize workers were coming in that day. By a miracle, the second bomb didn't go off, but if it had, the men would have been killed.

The arsonists were never caught, but Emmeline Pankhurst took the credit for organizing the attack. "For all that has been done in the past I accept responsibility," she told the courts, before being sentenced to prison. "I have advised, I have incited, I have conspired."

Vandalizing Famous Pieces Of Art

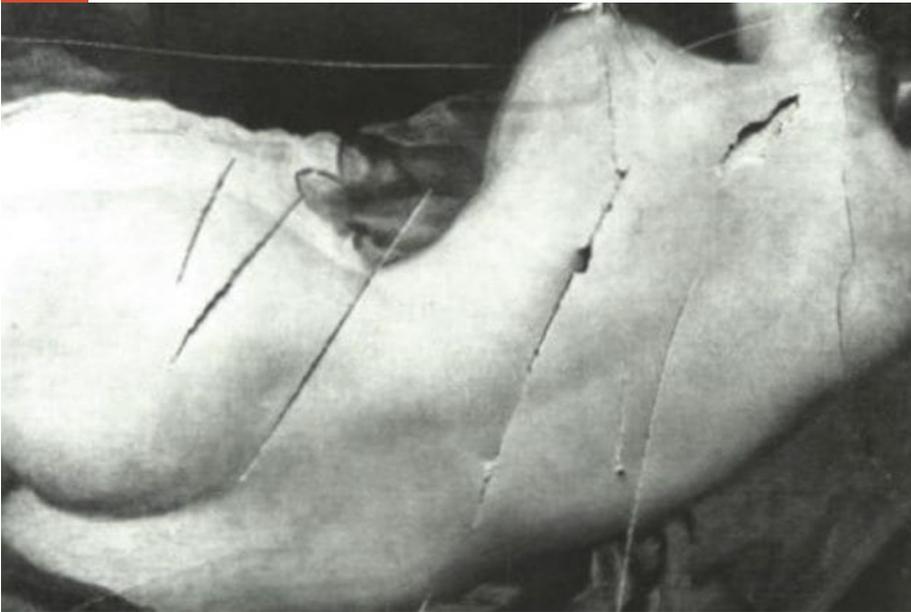


Photo credit: [National Gallery](#)

After Pankhurst was arrested, a woman named Mary Richardson went into the National Art Gallery, walked up Diego Velazquez's *Rokeby Venus*, and slashed it to pieces with a meat cleaver.

"I have tried to destroy the picture of the most beautiful woman in mythological history as a protest against the government for destroying Mrs. Pankhurst," she declared, "who is the most beautiful character in modern history."

Richardson's attack inspired other Suffragettes. Another woman, Mary Wood took a meat cleaver of her own to a painting of Henry James, crying out, "Votes for women!" while she hacked at it. Another woman put a blade in a portrait of the Duke of Wellington, and another cut up Lausen's *Primavera*.

Their biggest hit, though, was the [coronation chair at Westminster Abbey](#), where kings were crowned. A woman smuggled a bomb loaded with iron nuts in a small black bag and placed it nearby, hidden under a feather boa. It went off, blowing off a piece of the chair.

"I wish to show the public that they have no security for their property nor for their art treasures," one of the vandals explained when asked why she'd done it, "until women are given the political freedom!"

7 Hunger Strikes



When Emmeline Pankhurst was sent to prison, she immediately staged a hunger strike. This was a common Suffragette strategy. Marion Wallace Dunlop had staged one of the first in 1909, and it had worked. After three days of starving herself, the warden, unwilling to let her die, had released her.

When other women followed suit, though, jailors started force-feeding them. A hunger striking woman would be tied down to a chair. Her mouth would be pried open with a steel gap, and a rubber tube would be jammed down her throat, usually tearing up the throat tissue.

Some women went through this process more than 200 times. Nobody got it worse, though, than Frances Parker. Her captors forced her rectally, and, it seems, did much more than that. When the prison doctor examined her, he found injuries that he described as "consistent with an **instrument having been introduced into the vagina.**" Parker ultimately broke out of jail, desperate to get away from the abuse.

The government wasn't about to risk force-feeding someone as influential as Emmeline Pankhurst. When her strike started, they rushed a new law known as the "Cat And Mouse Act." Under this law, they could let Pankhurst go—and arrest her again as soon as she was healthy.

6 The Jujitsu-Trained Bodyguards



Photo credit: Arthur Wallis Mills

Pankhurst had no intention of going back to jail. And so she called on the help of Edith Garrud, official Jujitsu instructor of the Suffragettes.

Garrud was a tiny woman, less than 5 feet tall, but she could fight. She'd already starred in an early martial arts film and ran her own dojo. Now, she taught Jujitsu to Suffragettes, believing they could use their attackers' strength against them and knock them to the ground.

Garrud would go to events dressed in a red gown, and she would invite trained martial artists to attack her. She set up a dojo at the Golden Square to train any women who were interested. It was so popular that girls around the country started setting up "jujitsu parties" of their own, where they trained one another.

Once Pankhurst was released, Garrud trained an elite team of female, armored bodyguards to guard Emmeline Pankhurst. They followed her around with **clubs hidden up their dresses.** Whenever the police tried to take Pankhurst away, they would pull out their clubs and strike.

5 Emmeline Pankhurst's Decoys



Photo credit: [Matzene](#)

With a warrant out for her arrest, Emmeline Pankhurst decided to deliver a speech in Camden Square. A crowd of people—some Suffragettes, some protesters who opposed every part of her movement—came out to watch. And among them were a throng of police officers, waiting to arrest her.

Pankhurst, a veil over her face, walked out on the balcony. Before the crowd, she lifted it up, revealing that it was really her. "I had reached London tonight in spite of armies of police. I am here tonight, and not a man is going to protect me, because this a woman's fight, and we are going to protect ourselves!" she told the crowd. "I am coming out among you in a few minutes and I challenge the government to re-arrest me!"

Pankhurst came out a moment later, surrounded by her jujitsu-trained, club-wielding bodyguards, the veil over her face. The police rushed her, and pandemonium broke out. The mob turned violent, protesters clashed with officers. Pankhurst was knocked unconscious, dragged into a police car, and driven away.

But when the police took off her veil, **it wasn't Pankhurst** they saw. The woman they'd nabbed was someone they'd never seen before. Pankhurst, in the commotion, had snuck out the back and driven away.

4 Stabbing People With Hatpins

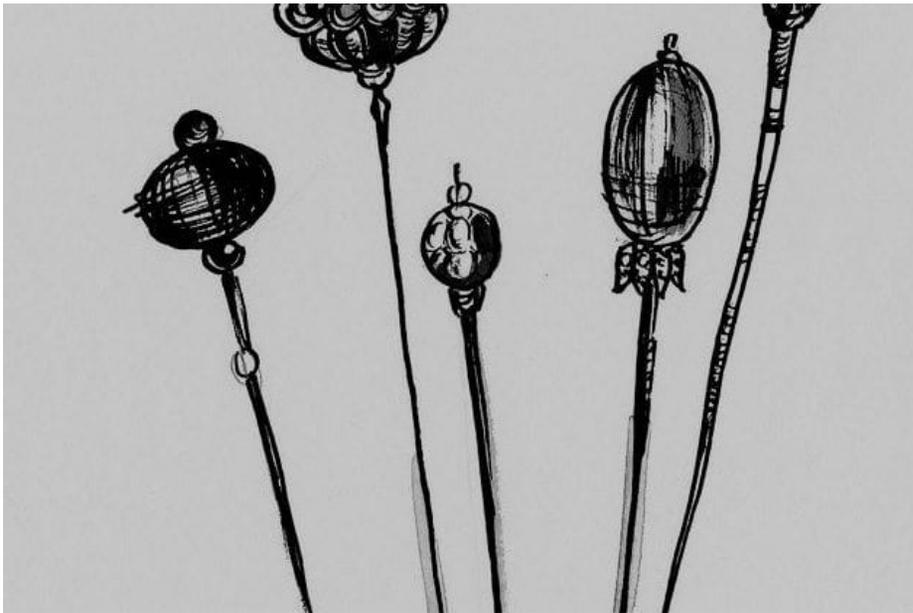


Photo credit: [David Ring](#)

Jujitsu wasn't the only form of self-defense the Suffragettes could use. They also had their hatpins—and they knew how to kill a man with them.

The hatpin went from accessory to weapon in 1903, when a Kansas girl named Leoti Blaker was accosted by a man in New York. He'd started creeping closer and closer to her and, when he put his arm around her lower back, she pulled a foot-long hatpin out of her hair and stabbed it in his arm.

"He was such a nice-looking old gentleman. I was sorry to hurt him," Blaker said afterward. But she explained, "if New York women will tolerate mashing, Kansas girls will not."

The Suffragettes rallied behind her, and she inspired a whole wave of hatpin attacks. Women around America, following Blaker's lead, started slashing men who tried to sexually harass them with their hatpins or beating them with umbrellas. Soon, hatpin attacks were so common that, in 1910, Chicago passed a law [making it illegal](#) to carry a hatpin longer than 9 inches.

To the Suffragettes, this was a perfect example of why women needed the right to vote. "No man has a right to tell me how I shall dress," a woman named Nan Davis declared. "If the men of Chicago want to take the hatpins away from us, let them make the streets safe."

3 Using Tax Laws To Send Their Husbands To Jail



Photo credit: [Carlos Delgado](#)

One woman, named Dr. Elizabeth Wilks, had her husband sent to jail to make a statement.

At the time, men were **legally responsible for their wives' taxes**. It was a sexist law meant to discriminate against women, and, usually, it did. Men were entitled to their wives' tax refunds, while wives were entitled to nothing—and Wilks wanted to highlight just how unfair this was.

Wilks made more money than her husband did—she was a doctor, and her husband was a teacher. So, to prove a point, she stopped paying her taxes. Her husband protested, but she openly and publicly refused to pay them, and he couldn't afford to pay them himself.

Since her husband was legally responsible, he got sent to jail for her tax evasion. The men of the world were furious. She had sent her own husband to jail, they protested, simply to make a point.

To the Suffragettes, though, their anger was proof their point had been made. Men, one said, were unable "to realize the extent of any injustice until it touches himself." Most of these laws were unfair to women, but Dr. Wilks had found one that was unfair to the men—and now the men were protesting.

2 Emily Davison Threw Herself In Front Of A Horse



Emily Davison was one of the more militant suffragists. She had set fire to mailboxes, smashed windows, and once famously hid in the cupboard of the House of Commons so that she could claim it as her residence on the census.

All of her actions got her sent to prison, where, like many Suffragists, she went on hunger strikes and went through force-feedings. For Davison, the experience was terrible, and she ended up making a failed suicide attempt in prison by throwing herself down a staircase.

After she got out, she went to the Epsom Derby, where **King George V's horse** was racing. Davison, as a strange form of protest, jumped onto the track and grabbed onto the king's horse, tried to pull it over, and got trampled to death.

It took Davison four agonizing days to die of her injuries. She went down in history as a martyr for the cause—and horribly traumatized the jockey riding the horse. He attended her funeral, overwhelmed by guilt, and ultimately committed suicide. For years, he told people he'd been "haunted by that poor woman's face."

1 The Battle Of Glasgow



Photo credit: [Wikimedia](#)

The police finally caught Emmeline Pankhurst when she gave a speech at St. Andrew's Hall in Glasgow. The Suffragettes, though, made sure it was as hard on them as physically possible.

Pankhurst publicly advertised that she would be speaking at St. Andrew's Hall, despite the warrant out for her arrest. To get in undetected, her bodyguards smuggled her in a laundry basket and hid her among the audience. 50 plainclothes police officers, though, were sneaking in too, crawling in through the lavatories and hiding in the crowd.

Pankhurst stepped out of the audience and onto a stage lined with a bouquet of flowers—and, as soon as she did, the police charged her. The Suffragettes, though, were ready. Hidden behind the flowers was a fence of **barbwire**.

With the police caught in the barbwire, the bodyguards rushed out and fought with the police officers. One woman pulled a gun and opened fire on the officers. It only had blanks, but it sent them into a panic. The police, though, managed to overpower the bodyguards and dragged Pankhurst away.

According to one witness's account, Pankhurst was dragged down the stairs headfirst. When a woman cried out, "For God's sake, don't use her so!" a cop knocked her down with his baton, kicked her down the stairs, and trampled over her.

The frustrated police exacted every level of brutality—and, in the end, just won more support for the Suffragettes. A few months later, they stopped their militant tactics, and, four years after that, women got the vote.

More Great Lists

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BLOG > BETTER CONVERSATION

The Suffragettes Were Not Allies to Black Women, They Were Racist

POSTED AUG. 24, 2019 IN [BETTER CONVERSATION](#)



ShaRhonda Knott-Dawson currently resides in the west suburbs of Chicago with her two school-aged girls and her husband, Brian. She blogs at [ShaRhondaTribune.com](#) and [ChicagoUnheard.org](#). [FULL PROFILE →](#)

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This week America celebrated the 99th anniversary of the 19th Amendment’s passage, which granted women the right to vote. However, like much of American history, the words in our Constitution don’t reflect the reality of what actually happened.

THE TRUTH IS THAT THE SUFFRAGETTES WERE RACIST, OPPORTUNISTIC AND THEY SOLD OUT THE BLACK CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

As a Black [womanist](#), I will not celebrate the passing of the 19th Amendment or the White women suffragists. The truth is that the suffragettes were racist, opportunistic and they sold out the Black Civil Rights movement to partner with Southern, racist White women who supported and participated in domestic terrorism with the lynching of Black Americans.

If the adage is true, “those who forget about history are doomed to repeat it,” it is my duty as a parent to teach my children the truth about American history. And it’s our collective duty to teach the truth about the fight for women’s suffrage to the children in our schools—warts and all.

As luck would have it, I’m a truth-telling tea spiller—so here it is.

BLOG MENU

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE WAS A POLITICAL COMPROMISE

We teach our students that the idea of political compromise is part of what makes American democracy “great.” But for those of us who are not White men, “compromise” isn’t great at all. In fact, it’s horrible. The political compromises made by our government are almost always made at the expense of the most marginalized groups in America. And the 19th Amendment is a prime example of how American democracy’s compromises work against Blacks folks.

The truth about the 19th Amendment is that it was a political win for White women at the expense of Black women.

POLITICAL COALITIONS: BLACK FOLKS AND WHITE WOMEN

Black people and Northern White women realized they were disenfranchised and formed coalitions to advance the civil rights of both groups. This is the part of history that is often highlighted in our history books—both Black folks and White women, working hand in hand to fight for the right to be included in American democracy.

Here’s the part we don’t teach:

SOUTHERN WHITE WOMEN WERE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE ENSLAVEMENT, DISENFRANCHISEMENT AND DEHUMANIZING OF BLACK FOLKS.

Black folks and Northern White women were political allies. However, in the conservative South, there were no coalitions between Black folks and White men, and especially White women. Southern White women were active participants in the enslavement, disenfranchisement and dehumanizing of Black folks. Some records show that up to 30% of slave owners were White women. Additionally, after the Civil War, White women were full participants in the KKK, lynching Black men.

THE SPLIT

After the Civil War, the Northern coalition between Black folks and White women was strong. With the win and a majority in the House and Senate, they quickly went to work on changing government policies to allow new participants. However, when the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments were passed, White women were left behind.

From the moment Black men gained suffrage rights and White women were denied, the coalition was fractured. The suffragettes were furious. It was clear to Black folks that White women were not their allies and many had no real belief in equality. In fact, it became clear to Black folks that although White suffragettes may not have believed in slavery, they were White Supremacists all the same.

You have put the ballot in the hands of your Black men, thus making them political superiors of White women. Never before in the history of the world have men made former slaves the political masters of their former mistresses!

—Anna Howard Shaw, president of the National Women Suffrage Association.

A NEW COALITION

The suffragettes realized they needed to change their alliances from Black folks to Southern White women. Southern White women are a lot of things, but inconsistent in their hatred for Black people is not one of those things (ShaRhonda tea...). And if the suffragettes wanted to partner with Southern White women, there could be no “racial equality” stuff.

During the Reconstruction, Southern White women were participating in one of the darkest periods of American history for Black folks that some have called, “worse than slavery.” Mass incarceration, brutal beatings, dire poverty and the barbaric act of lynching were running rampant in the South. For Black people, stopping lynching was the priority, and they hoped their “suffragette allies” would publicly join the cause.

That is not what happened.

What had happened was White suffragettes decided that the right for White women to vote was more important than lynching. From then on, Northern and Southern White Women decided to side with “Whiteness” and argue that the inclusion of White women in democracy was more important than any racial inclusiveness at all.

BLACK SUFFRAGE LEADERS

Our children rarely, if ever, hear about Black suffrage leaders in their history classes. Yet, Black women were out there doing the work—even when no one wanted them on their team. Black women refused to accept their exclusion from

**BLACK WOMEN
REFUSED TO**

White suffrage organizations or the racist tactics they employed. In fact, some Black women pushed back—hard.

[Ida B. Wells-Barnett](#), a Black woman journalist, newspaper editor, suffragist and Civil Rights leader, planned a boss move—a strategic, savage takedown of the phony White suffragettes.

She called out White suffragettes who were working with racist, Southern White women, while pretending in the North to be anti-racist to their major funders, the British Anti-Racist societies.

When she realized the game the White suffragettes were playing, she decided to fight. Wells got on a boat and went to London, met with the funders for the suffragettes and spilled all the tea about how the suffragettes were compliant and forming coalitions with White folks who were still doing barbaric shit, [like burning and lynching a pregnant woman and cutting her stomach and letting the baby hang by the umbilical cord over the fire pit.](#)

The British were outraged and immediately pulled funding from the American suffragettes. Because their funding was in jeopardy, the White suffragettes made more public attempts to seem anti-lynching, while simultaneously coalition-building with Southern White women.

FEMINISM WAS NEVER FOR BLACK WOMEN

Feminism, even and especially the feminism of the beloved suffragettes we remember when we mark the anniversary of the 19th Amendment, has never been for *all* women. Feminism has been for White women, usually upper-middle-class, White women.

Plenty of White women’s suffrage leaders held racist, White supremacist views and worked against the freedom of Black women. Black women understand this betrayal. In the same way we are clear that Black people were not part of the “independence of America,” we are also clear that Black women were not part of “women’s suffrage.”

The [suffragettes](#) were focused and even formidable at times. They organized effectively, they marched and they picketed. They were beaten and wrongfully imprisoned. They went on a hunger strike and were forcibly fed. They were strategic and used the public sentiment to win “Votes for Women.” They deserve some recognition for this. But we must also recognize that they [played a powerful role in maintaining White supremacy.](#)

But Black feminists have been fighting for equality—both racial and gender equity—since the founding of the United States and not only have their struggles been ignored by White feminists and suffragettes historically, but the issues that are priorities for Black women are *attacked* by White women acting from racial bias today, who, ironically, claim to be feminist.

DIFFERENT TIME, SAME STORY

This is the complex and complete history we need to teach our children about the women’s suffrage movement because the impacts of these political bargains are still alive and well today. Black people are still disenfranchised, especially in the Southern states. And, just like the suffragettes who worked so hard to pass the 19th Amendment, White feminists are quiet about racism, White supremacy and voter suppression. Luckily, Black folks realize that [White feminists are not allies.](#) They are about advancing the rights of White women—no matter the cost.

So, as a Black woman, I roll my eyes when I hear praise for the suffragettes. I understand that none of that was for or about me. In fact, Black folks were used as “political pawns” to get White women the right to vote.

As far as political organizing goes, I say to White feminists: “great job organizing to get the 19th Amendment.” But, please don’t pretend that you didn’t sell Black folks out in order to secure your own rights.

Let’s keep it real.

PHOTOS VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

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