



Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920-1950 (Canadian Social History Series)

Joan Sangster

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Canadian women on the political left in the first half of the twentieth century fought with varying degrees of commitment for women's rights. Women's dreams of equality were in part a vision of economic and class equality, though they also represented profound desires for equality with men - both within their own parties and in the larger society. In both the Communist Party of Canada and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, a male-dominated leadership seldom embraced women's causes wholeheartedly or as a doctrinal priority. So-called women's issues, whether birth control, consumer issues, or equal pay, usually took second place to an emphasis on the general needs of workers or farmers. Nonetheless, many women continued to promote their feminist causes through the socialist movement, in the hope that, eventually, the socialist New Jerusalem would see their dreams of equality fulfilled.

In *Dreams of Equality*, Joan Sangster chronicles in fascinating detail the first tentative stages of a politically aware women's movement in Canada, from the time of women's suffrage to the 1950's when the CPC went into decline and the CCF began to experience the changes that would evolve into the New Democratic Party a decade later.

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