

The Right to Rule and the Rights of Women

Queen Victoria is often cast as a foe of the women's movement – the sovereign who famously declared women's rights to be a “mad, wicked folly.” Yet, these words weren't circulated publicly until after the queen's death in 1901. Beginning with this insight, this book reveals Victoria as a ruler who captured the imaginations of nineteenth-century feminists. Women's rights activists routinely used Victoria to assert their own claims to citizenship. So popular was their strategy that it even motivated anti-suffragists to launch their own campaign to distance Queen Victoria from feminist initiatives. In highlighting these exchanges, this book draws attention to the intricate and often overlooked connections between the histories of women, the monarchy, and the state. In the process, it sheds light on the development of constitutional monarchy, concepts of female leadership, and the powerful role that the crown – and queens specifically – have played in modern British culture and politics.

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Queen Victoria and the Women's Movement

Arianne Chernock

Boston University



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