



Josephine Butler, Women's Rights, and Social Reform in Britain, c. 1820–1930

Collection Summary

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Josephine Butler (1828–1906) was a leading British feminist, writer, and advocate for women's rights. She devoted her life to improving the intellectual, spiritual, legal, and economic prospects of women. This collection explores Butler's life and work through her personal correspondence and literature that she and her contemporaries produced. **Much of this content is sourced from collections housed at the Women's Library, based at the London School of Economics and Political Science.**

Butler campaigned for the rights of sex workers, known as “fallen women”, and against state regulation of prostitution in Britain and abroad. **She led one of Britain's first national women's political campaigns, demanding the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. This movement called out the hypocrisy of Victorian society around issues of sexual morality.** The sources also illuminate the broader history of social reform, spotlighting ideas of gender and class in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. International in scope and interdisciplinary in ethos, this fascinating collection sheds light on the period when Victorian feminism emerged as a potent political force.

It will appeal to students, educators, and researchers interested in women's studies, gender studies, politics, and legal history. **The collection will likewise appeal to those studying Victorian and Edwardian social and cultural history more widely.**

Sources Include:



