

The Social Justice Time Machine: Social Justice Through History

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“THERE IS ALWAYS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS. THE MORE INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANIZATIONS THAT YOU CAN RALLY TO YOUR CAUSE, THE BETTER”
MARK SHIELDS



Image by Dani Foster

What is Social Justice?

Social justice has varying definitions, but there are commonalities in their wordings: Equal rights, equal opportunity, and equal treatment (San Diego Foundation). Social justice is commonly discussed in the world of philanthropy, among different organizations and institutions, within grassroots advocacy, and more. That leaves many wondering, what exactly is social justice, what does it mean? Most basically, as the San Diego Foundation explains, social justice is “equal rights and equitable opportunities for all.” Going more in depth, they explain that social justice encompasses a wide range of issues and advocates to fight for the fair treatment of all people. These issues can include racism, sexism, homophobia, reproductive rights, economic inequality, and more!

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An explanation and overview of what social justice is

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Image by Dani Foster

Social Justice History

It's believed that the term "social justice" was used as early as 1840 by Luigi Taparelli to make a case for why poor people should be treated the same in society (Taylor and Francis). As injustices and economic issues arose in society during times of war and the Great Depression, the first half of the 20th century focused on efforts to codify a moral code. This code had social justice at its core. In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted with a focus on political/civil rights and social/economic rights. While the term "social justice" wasn't used until the late 1960s, the terms "equality" and "equity" were often used interchangeably (Taylor and Francis). Modern day, social justice continues to focus on equality, equity, political, civil, social, and economic rights.

However, its expanded dramatically to include numerous new social, political, civil and economic issues. There are some key social justice movements in history according to Human Rights Careers, LinkedIn, and Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities:

- US Women's Suffrage (1848-1920s)
- US Civil Rights Movement (1950s-1960s)
- South African Anti-Apartheid Movement (1948-1990s)
- US Gay Rights Movement (1952-present)
- Reproductive Justice Movement (1980s-present)
- US Black Lives Matter (2013-present)
- MeToo Movement (2017-present)
- For more movements, visit gcdd.org linked in the sources list!

A Call to Action

Social justice movements are the foundations for making change in our society, there's a few ways you can get involved:

- Join a social justice organization
- Attend events and meetings for social justice organizations and movements
- Donate to organizations that focus on social justice issues
- Educate yourself and others on the importance of social justice and what the current issues are

Sources

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