The Suffragettes Movement

The history of the " feminist movement" can be dated back to Ancient Rome: when in 200 b.c. , it was proposed to repeal the law that prohibited women from owning more than half an ounce of gold, from wearing multicolored clothes and from riding in a carriage, the " feminist" of the time protested in the street for their rights.
In the Middle Ages, some " intellectuals" discussed whether women had a soul (like men) or not (like beasts).

The movement of the **Suffragettes** belongs to the big battle for **civil rights and equality.**

The Suffragettes were activist women who, at the end of the XIX century in the United Kingdom, protested to obtain the right to vote.
In those years, only **men** with a certain income **could vote**. Those who couldn't vote were *murderers, thieves, unemployed, servants, lunatics and women.*
The women who took part in the Suffragettes movement came from a variety of social classes, though the majority were from the **middle class**. However, the movement included women from the working class and a **few** women from the **aristocracy**.

The most important suffragettes were **Millicent Fawcett**, who created the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, and **Emmeline Pankhurst.**

The movement was responsible for violent **riots**, breaking windows or buildings, and they went on hunger strikes if they got arrested.

But up to 1914, their efforts were not recognized by the Government.

With **World War 1,** men joined the Army. As a consequence, the factories needed workers to keep the production going. So, women, Suffragettes included, covered the role of men in the British **factories**, to help the country.

Their help was very important because this changed the social and public opinion about the role of women in the society.

In **1918**, the **UK Governmen**t approved the right of vote to women who were over **30** years old and with a certain income.

Only in **1928**, Britain's women got the right to vote as men. The age was lowered, both for men and women, at **21.**

18 from **1969**, with the Representation of the People Act.

EDUCATION

In some areas, the suffragettes established educational networks where women could gather, learn, and organize. Many suffragettes also ran citizenship classes to teach women about the political system, so they would be prepared to engage in voting and other democratic processes.

The **National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies**, led by Millicent Fawcett, promoted the **idea** that educated women were better equipped to participate in civic life and that **education should be a right for all women, just as voting was.**

WEALTH

The wealth of suffragettes varied considerably depending on the individuals involved, but it's important to note that both wealthier and working-class women played significant roles in the movement. Many of the leading suffragettes came from

wealthy or middle-class backgrounds, which gave them the resources and social capital to drive the movement forward.

They spent their money in different ways: Publication, organizing rallies,marches, supporting imprisoned suffragettes and legal fees.

ITALY

In Italy, the Suffragette movement was born at the **beginning of the 20th century**, inspired by the struggles for women's right to vote in other countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States.

The Italian movement for women's suffrage was, however, less violent than the English one. It developed more gradually and was conducted mainly through the political and social activity of women's groups and intellectuals.

But women, still, weren't allowed to vote.

When and Where:

In Italy, women's suffrage was **granted in 1946.** Women voted for the first time in the administrative elections and in the institutional referendum to choose between monarchy and republic.

Main Reasons:

Italian women demanded the right to vote to gain equal political and social dignity. After **centuries of political marginalization**, they wanted to be active participants in the country's democratic life, especially after demonstrating their capabilities during the Resistance and the war.

Women who had fought against fascism and Nazi occupation wanted to participate in the political and democratic reconstruction of Italy. Many women were also involved in **trade**

unions and **social movements**, seeing suffrage as a tool to improve working and living conditions.

Historical Context:
In Italy, debates over women's rights had been active in the post-unification period, but the **fascist regime** (1922-1943) **repressed all forms of feminism** and women's political rights. However, women were very active during the Resistance against the fascist regime and Nazi occupation during World War II. After the war, the founding of the Italian Republic in 1946 was seen as a moment of democratic rebirth, and **universal suffrage, including women**, was introduced as part of post-war democratic reforms.

Political Movement:
The Italian suffrage movement began in the late 19th century, but it was stifled by the fascist regime, which reduced female participation. Only after the fall of fascism in 1945 did the movement regain strength.

Education and Social Status:
Women who participated were often **middle- and upper-class**, like intellectual Anna Maria Mozzoni. However, the movement also involved **working-class women, especially during the Resistance.**

Protests:
Before World War II, protests for suffrage were mostly peaceful and based on conferences, petitions, and newspaper articles.

Prison:
During fascism, many feminist activists were **persecuted or censored.**

USA

When and Where:
Women gained the **right to vote** in the USA in **1920** with the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. However, some women in western states, such as **Wyoming**, had the right to vote as early as **1869.**
But many women remain unable to vote long into the XX Century, because of **discriminatory state voting laws.**

Main Reasons:
American women fought for suffrage based on several principles, including **equality of rights** (as stated in the Declaration of Independence) and the **right to political representation.** Women, who actively participated in social reform movements (abolitionism, temperance, workers' rights), **believed that without the vote, they could not effectively influence social policies and protect the rights of women, children, and workers.**

Historical Context:
The United States was undergoing significant transformation, with the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the beginning of industrialization. Women, especially those involved in social and progressive movements, played important roles in the abolitionist movement and civil rights campaigns. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the rise of the progressive movement and civil rights demands, including women's rights. During World War I (1917-1918), women took on jobs

traditionally held by men, further proving their role in society. **The granting of voting rights in 1920 was seen as the culmination of decades of activism.**

Political Movement:
The American suffrage movement was led by figures like Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Alice Paul. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and the National Woman's Party were two of the most important organizations.

Protests:
The movement in the US saw marches, petitions, and picketing. Alice Paul's Silent Sentinels organized silent picketing in front of the White House.

Prison:
Many suffragists were arrested, including Alice Paul, who was tortured and force-fed during a hunger strike in prison.

Riots and Violence:

American suffragettes, led by figures like Susan B. Anthony and Alice Paul, used peaceful but effective protest tactics. They organized marches, rallies, and pickets, like the famous "Silent Sentinels," where women stood silently outside the White House for months. Alice Paul was imprisoned and tortured, being force-fed during a hunger strike.
Women like Ida B. Wells and other African American activists played a key role in linking the women's rights movement with the fight against racial segregation.
Women in America first collectively organized in 1848 at the First Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls

In the 1890 there were a few feminist movements: the "National Woman Suffrage Association" and the "American Woman Suffrage Association" (then they merged into the "National American Woman Suffrage Association").
In 1919 was approved the Nineteenth Amendment (then ratified in 1920):

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.
Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation"

Some women began running for and winning political office. Others fought to further women's equality.

1924, Mary T. Norton of New Jersey became the first Democratic woman elected to Congress

AUSTRALIA

In Australia, the suffrage movement occurred at roughly the same time as the move towards Federation, which sought to unite Australian states into one nation.
Community groups formed, such as the Women's Suffrage League (established by Mary Lee, Mary Colton and later joined by Catherine Helen Spence), the Working Women's Trade Union, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Social Purity Society. These groups marched, protested, lobbied and organized petitions to try to change public and political opinion about women's right to vote. They also wrote and publicly performed songs, plays and poems to raise awareness and support.

In 1894, South Australian women gained the right to vote. At the same time, they became the first women in the world to be able to stand as candidates in state elections.

With Australia a newly federated country, the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 allowed non-Indigenous women in all states to vote and stand as candidates in federal elections.

In the following federal election, four women stood as candidates. They were Vida Goldstein, Selina Anderson and Nellie Martel in the House of Representatives, and Mary Ann Moore Bentley in the Senate. None of them were elected.

Nearly 20 years passed before a female candidate was elected; in 1921, Edith Cowan became the first woman member of an Australian parliament when she was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia.

In 1943, in the middle of the Second World War, two women were finally elected to the Australian federal parliament—over 40 years since they had been given the right to run as candidates. Enid Lyons was elected to the House of Representatives and Dorothy Tangney to the Senate.

It wasn't until 1962 that Indigenous Australian women were granted the right to vote

FRANCE

During the Revolution movement (1830-1848) women started to get independent creating exclusive clubs, but in 1848 the Government banned them. The first France Suffragettes society was found in 1876, In 1919 half of the government approved the Right to vote for women (the Senate didn't pass the law) , only after World War II in 1944 when the country was rebuilding democratic institutions after the fall of the Vichy regime. Women's contribution to the Resistance against the Nazis was a key factor in the recognition of their political rights

FINLAND

Finland was the first European country to grant women the right to vote in 1906.

Historical Context:

In Finland, at the beginning of the 20th century, the country was part of the Russian Empire, and the national independence movement was intertwined with struggles for civil rights, including universal suffrage. The granting of women's suffrage in 1906 was part of a broader democratization movement.

Main Reasons:

In countries like Finland and Sweden, women demanded the right to vote as part of a broader struggle for democracy and equality. Finnish women, for example, wanted to be included in the new political life emerging with the push for **autonomy from Russian control.**

SWITZERLAND

In Switzerland, surprisingly, women were granted the right to vote **only in 1971**. This reflected the country's highly conservative and canton-based structure, where the process of change was slower compared to the rest of Europe.

Main Reasons:

In Switzerland, the demand for voting rights was based on a growing awareness of individual rights and political emancipation, although this was hindered by the **conservative and rural mindset.**

Mind Map