

# Women's Rights and the Suffrage Movement

# In Germany...

- Clara Zetkin (1857-1933) was one of the most famous women's rights activists in the German Reich
  - a leading representative of the Social Democratic Party (SPD)
    - Among German political parties, the Social Democrats were most vocal in their support of women's rights, including voting and equal employment rights
  - founding editor of the Social Democratic women's magazine *Equality*, which first appeared in 1892
  - Zetkin published "Women's Suffrage!" in March 1913



# Frauenwahlrecht!

Herausgegeben zum Dritten Sozialdemokratischen Frauentag von Klara Zetkin

Stuttgart, 2. März 1913

## Jener Tag.

An jenem Tag wird unter Himmelstüften  
Ein fröhlich sprossen auf der Erde sein,  
Und Weigdorablüthen stehn in süßen Däften.

Und jede Schwelle wird von Olbaumzweigen  
Umhängt sein, wie zum Schutz fürs holde Haus,  
Wo Liebe segnen wird des Lebers Reigen.

Und jede Mutter darf ihr Kindchen küssen  
In Fried' und Seeligkeit, und gibt die Krone  
Des roten Mutterblutes ihm zu eigen;

Sie wird dem starken Jüngling, der das Leben  
Ihr dankt, mit reinem, unbedenktem Sinn  
Ein undurchdringlich Panzerhemd weben

Mit Worten, die die Lippen sinkt mit Besen  
Im Tagen wiederholen, wo man fröhlich,  
Wo Mutteraug' und sanftlich vor uns treten.

Und keine Frau muß sich mehr zwingen lassen  
Durch das Gesetz mühsel'ger Fronarbeit,  
Das Haus, der Kinder Wiege zu verlassen.

Zur Göttin reinen Tempels ausetheren,  
Süßst frei zum Tisch den Helden sie empor,  
Aus ihrem Fleisch und ihrem Geist geboren.

Und Brüder sind sie alle dann im Herzen  
Durch die Religion vom Mutterkloß,  
Der sie für Sonn' und Sturm erschuf mit Schmerzen;

Im Traum, beim Schaffen und beim Ernten, Brüder,  
Im Namen jener, die in aller Welt,  
In jeder Sprache, jetzt und immer wieder

Mit gleichem gütlich, liebevollem Ton  
Und frommem Blick, das Herz von Tränen übers,  
Verzeihend, liebend küßten: O, mein Sohn!

## Im Zeichen des Sozialismus.

Wohl als Landestag ist zu bezeichnen, ist in dem Lande  
Wohl als Landestag ist zu bezeichnen, ist in dem Lande  
Wohl als Landestag ist zu bezeichnen, ist in dem Lande  
Wohl als Landestag ist zu bezeichnen, ist in dem Lande

Die Welt war noch unruhig, so stürzten die Frauen  
Aber sie trank vollkommene Freiheit, so im mächtigen  
Aber sie trank vollkommene Freiheit, so im mächtigen  
Aber sie trank vollkommene Freiheit, so im mächtigen

Die große französische Revolution war ein Werk, das  
Denk der Freiheit und Gleichheit aufzuweisen. Sie hatte  
Denk der Freiheit und Gleichheit aufzuweisen. Sie hatte  
Denk der Freiheit und Gleichheit aufzuweisen. Sie hatte

Unter den Vätern steht sollte es im Bewusstsein der  
Unter den Vätern steht sollte es im Bewusstsein der  
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Es war eine unerschütterlich und unerschütterlich  
Es war eine unerschütterlich und unerschütterlich  
Es war eine unerschütterlich und unerschütterlich  
Es war eine unerschütterlich und unerschütterlich

Women's Suffrage!  
(March 1913)



- Zektin believed that the “women’s question” could only be resolved in conjunction with the “workers’ question”
  - In her mind, capitalism was the common enemy of both men and women



## Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg (1910)

- In 1916, together with Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, Zetkin founded the Spartacus League

- Rosa Luxemburg was a Jewish woman born in Russian-controlled Poland
  - a combative intellectual and Marxist
  - favored revolution over parliamentary democracy
  - published *The Mass Strike, the Political Party, and the Trade Unions* in 1906
    - she argued for the necessity of the violent overthrow of capitalism and emphasized the role of workers in achieving revolution
  - called for a revolution based on the Soviet model



## *Rosa Luxemburg in Stuttgart in 1907*

-flanked by portraits of Karl Marx (right) and Ferdinand Lassalle (left), the founders of the German Socialist movement-



The first International Women's Congress, held in Paris in 1878, was a step towards creating a transnational women's movement



**German activists during the International Women's Congress  
in Berlin in 1914**



**Heraus mit dem Frauenwahlrecht**

**FRAUEN-TAG**

**8. MÄRZ 1914**

*Den Frauen, die als Arbeiterinnen, Mütter und Gemeindegliederinnen ihre volle Pflicht erfüllen, die im Staat wie in der Gemeinde ihre Steuern entrichten müssen, hat Vereinigungsmacht und realistische Befähigung das volle Staatsbürgerrecht bis jetzt verweigert.*

*Dieses natürliche Menschenrecht zu erkämpfen, muß der unerwiderliche, feste Wille jeder Frau, jeder Arbeiterin sein. Hier darf es kein Nachen kein Nachen geben. Kommt daher alle, ihr Frauen und Mädchen in die Arm.*

**Zonntag den 8. März 1914 nachmittags 3 Uhr stattfindenden**

**9 öffentl. Frauen-Versammlungen**

March 8th was officially designated as International Women's Day

- This poster calls for a public gathering of women on March 8, 1914 – “Give Us Women's Suffrage.”

- The poster reads:
  - “Until now, prejudice and reactionary attitudes have denied full civic rights to women, who as workers, mothers, and citizens wholly fulfill their duty, who must pay their taxes to the state as well as the municipality. Fighting for this natural human right must be the firm, unwavering intention of every woman, every female worker. In this, no pause for rest, no respite is allowed. Come all, you women and girls...”

In England...

# Barbara Bodichon (1827-1891)

- English feminist
- In the 1850s, she started meeting with women and discussing women's rights
  - became known as "The Ladies of Langham Place," one of the first organized women's movements in Britain
  - They pursued many causes vigorously, including their Married Women's Property Committee
- In 1854 she published her *Brief Summary of the Laws of England concerning Women*
- In 1858 she set up the *English Women's Journal*
  - an organ for discussing employment and equality issues directly concerning women



# Barbara Bodichon

- In 1857 she wrote *Women and Work*
  - she argued that a married women's dependence on her husband was degrading
- gave evidence to a House of Commons committee looking into the legal position of married women
  - resulted in the Matrimonial Causes Act
    - allowed divorce through the law courts and protected the property rights of divorced women
- In 1866, she formed the first ever Women's Suffrage Committee
  - They organized the women's suffrage petition, which John Stuart Mill presented to the House of Commons on their behalf
  - Her speeches converted many women to the cause, including Lydia Becker, the future leader of the movement
- raised funds for the first women's college, Girton College, which became part of the University of Cambridge, in 1873

# Lydia Becker (1827-1890)

- English feminist
- Pioneer organizer of the British woman's movement
- Helped to start the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) in 1887 and became its first president
  - organized petitions, wrote letters to politicians, published newspapers and distributed free literature
- Published the *Women's Suffrage Journal* from 1870-1890





1152972 www.fotosearch.com

Lydia Becker leading onslaught on John Bull's door



Lydia Becker being  
thrown out of  
Parliament

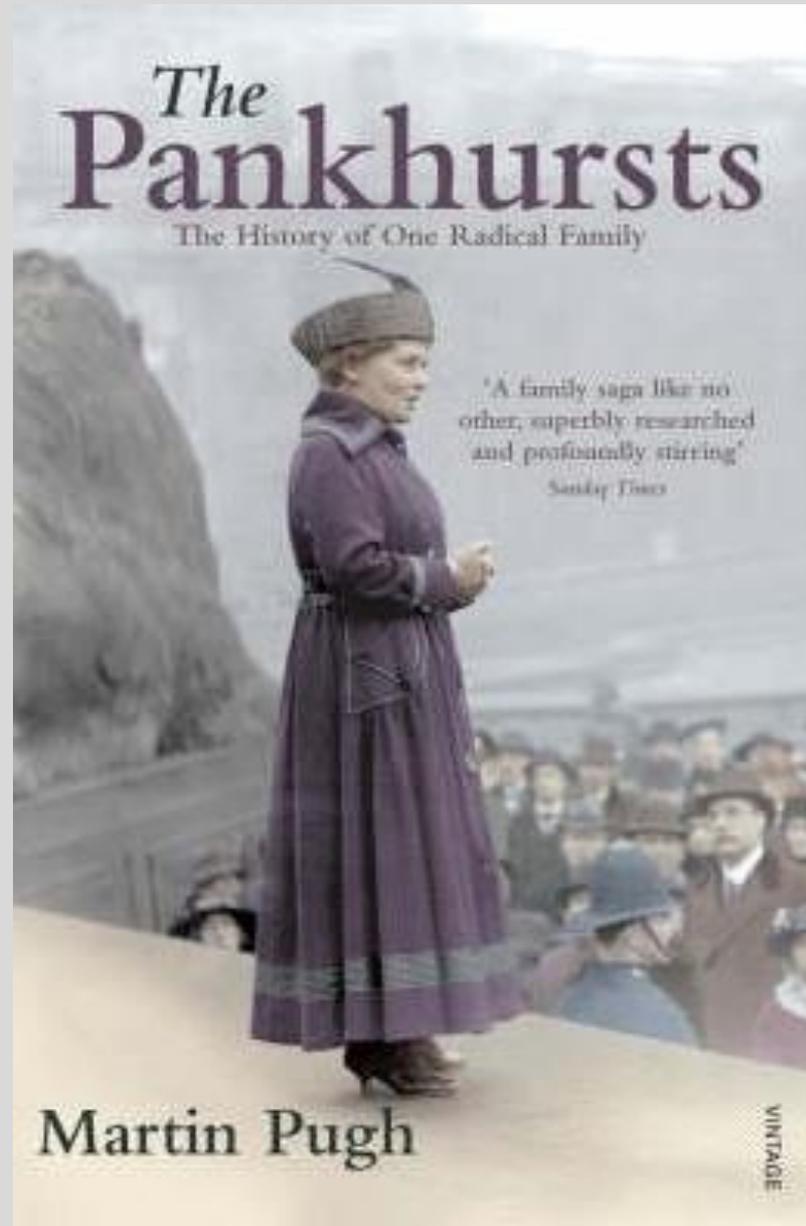
# Suffrage

- the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS)
  - the largest suffrage organization with over 100,000 members
  - Refused to resort to violence
  - led by Millicent Fawcett from 1907 on, after the death of Lydia Becker
    - known for her "constitutional" approach: a more peaceful, patient, and rational strategy
      - Known as **“The Suffragists”**
      - Based on persistent lobbying and public education
      - She felt that any violence or trouble would persuade men that women could not be trusted to have the right to vote
  - But some left the NUWSS as they thought it was too soft and started a more militant group



# The Pankhursts

- The Pankhursts were a family completely committed to women's suffrage
  - “suffrage’s holy family”
  - Richard Pankhurst, a lawyer, had written the 1<sup>st</sup> female enfranchisement bill in England
    - Introduced in Parliament in 1870
  - After Richard’s death in 1898, his wife Emmeline deepened her role in the suffrage movement
    - Aided by her daughters, Christabel (the chief strategist), Sylvia, and Adela, and her son Harry
    - The press called them “suffragettes” to distinguish them from the traditional suffragists



# Emmeline, Christabel, Sylvia, and Adela



# Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928)

- British suffragist
- Influenced by Lydia Becker
- Influential in getting the Married Women's Property Act passed in 1882
  - passed after years of intense political lobbying by dedicated women
  - ensured that married women had the same rights to buy, sell, and own property as unmarried women did
  - meant that women were legally recognized as individuals in their own right for the first time in history
- Founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903
  - Slogan was "Deeds not Words"
- became a national and international figurehead for the suffrage movement
  - Influential in getting women the right to vote in Britain by 1928





Emmeline Pankhurst addressing a crowd



# PICTURE PAST

JUNE 19, 1911

FREEDOM  
FOR  
WOMEN



## SUFFRAGETTE PARADE

On this day, 97 years ago, Emmeline Pankhurst leads a suffragette parade through London





VOTES  
FOR  
WOMEN

# The WSPU

- The WSPU was behind a long and increasingly violent campaign against stubborn British governments
- When the gov't showed no readiness to back female suffrage, Pankhurst led a more militant movement
  - Followers of this new strategy became known as **“the suffragettes”** or “the Pankhursts”
  - Under the leadership of Pankhurst, the suffrage movement adopted a radical, militant strategy of civil disobedience and violence
    - “I am here as a soldier who has temporarily left the field of battle in order to explain what civil war is like when civil war is waged by women.”
    - Greatly impacted American suffragists, especially Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, who worked with the WSPU in the early 1900s

## Suffragists

- the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS)
- Founded in 1887
- Led by Lydia Becker and Millicent Fawcett
- Advocated a more passive, constitutional approach
  - Petitions
  - Lobbying
  - Letter writing

## Suffragettes

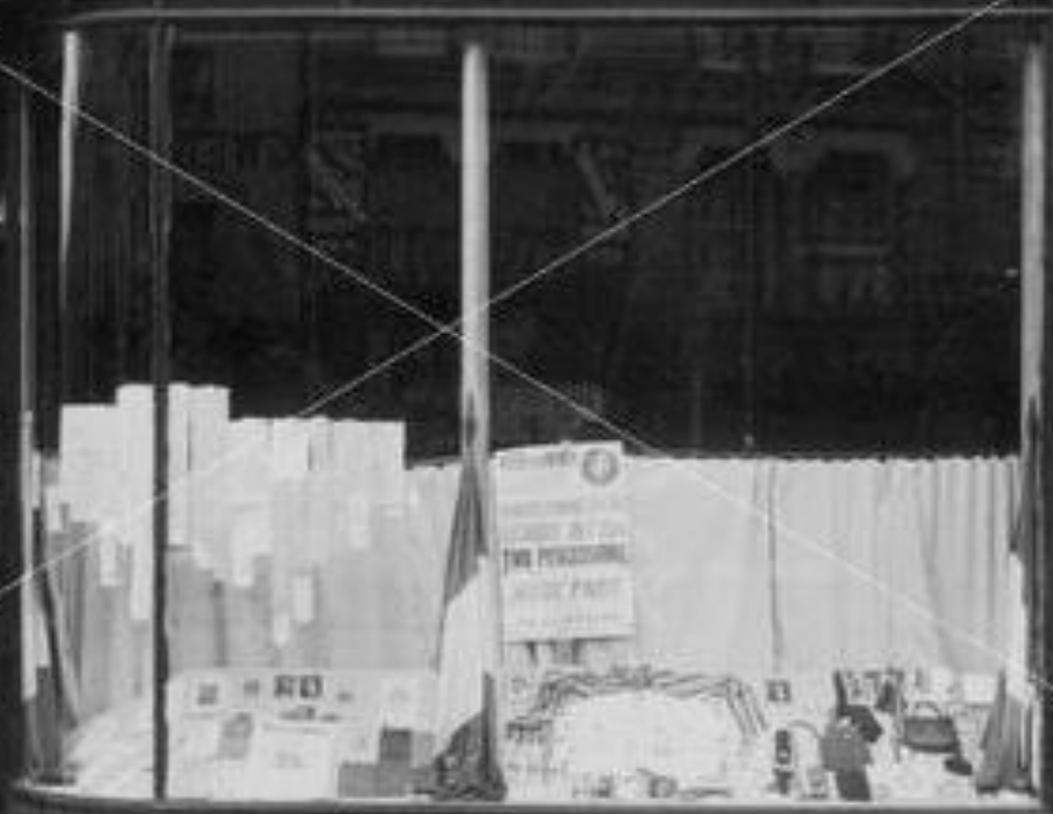
- the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU)
- Founded in 1903
- Led by Emmeline Pankhurst
- Advocated a more confrontational, militant approach:
  - Civil disobedience
  - Fasting
  - Threw bricks through windows
  - Bombings

# WOMEN'S SOCIAL & POLITICAL UNION.

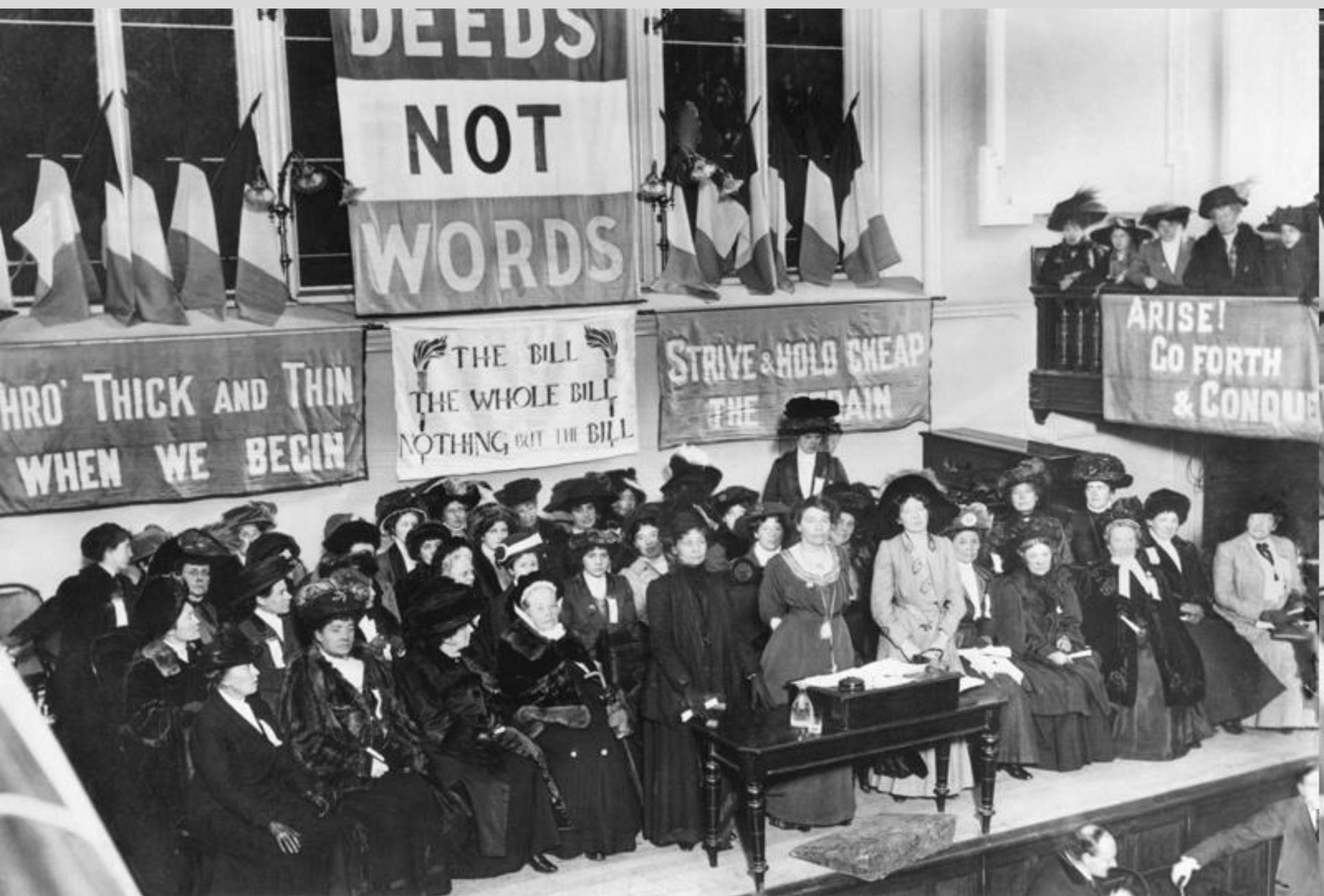
· Votes for Womenz ·

DAINTY  
SERVE

39



39. West St  
Reading.



DEEDS  
NOT  
WORDS

THRO' THICK AND THIN  
WHEN WE BEGIN

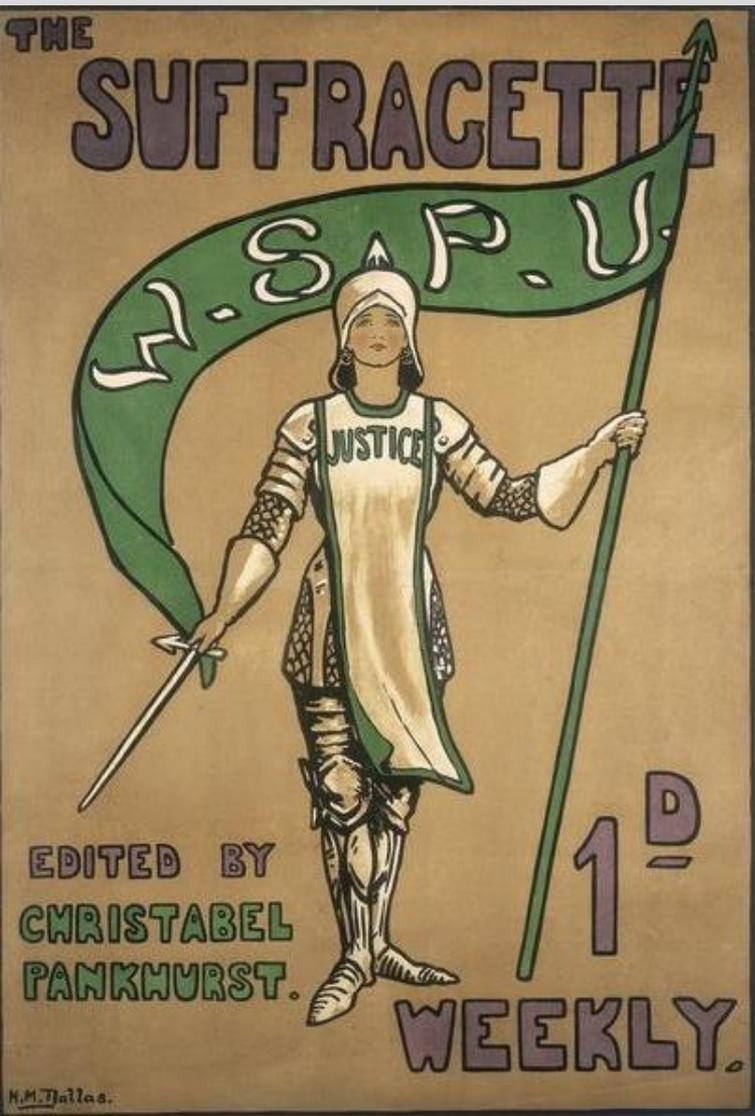
THE BILL  
THE WHOLE BILL  
NOTHING BUT THE BILL

STRIVE & HOLD CHEAP  
THE TRAIN

ARISE!  
GO FORTH  
& CONQUER



*The Suffragette* was founded in 1912 by Emmeline Pankhurst and served as the organ of the woman's movement in Britain



# Emmeline Pankhurst

- “We felt we had to rouse the public to such a point that they would say to the government, you must give women the vote.”
- “You have to make more noise than anybody else, you have to make yourself more obtrusive than anybody else, you have to fill the papers more than anybody else...if you are going to get your reform realized.”
- “‘Put them in prison’ they said, ‘That will stop it.’ But it didn’t stop it. ...Instead of the women giving up, more women did it.”
- “Either women are to be killed or women are to have the vote... Now that is the outcome of our civil war.”

# Suffrage

- After repeatedly getting beaten up and assaulted by protesters and police, some suffragettes learned to defend themselves
  - Edith Garrud taught the became a jiu-jitsu instructor to the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU)
  - Suffragettes went into marches and protests with the skills for self-defense
  - The Pankhursts agreed and encouraged all suffragettes to learn it



Black Friday protest, 1910: Suffragettes were assaulted by police and men in the crowd



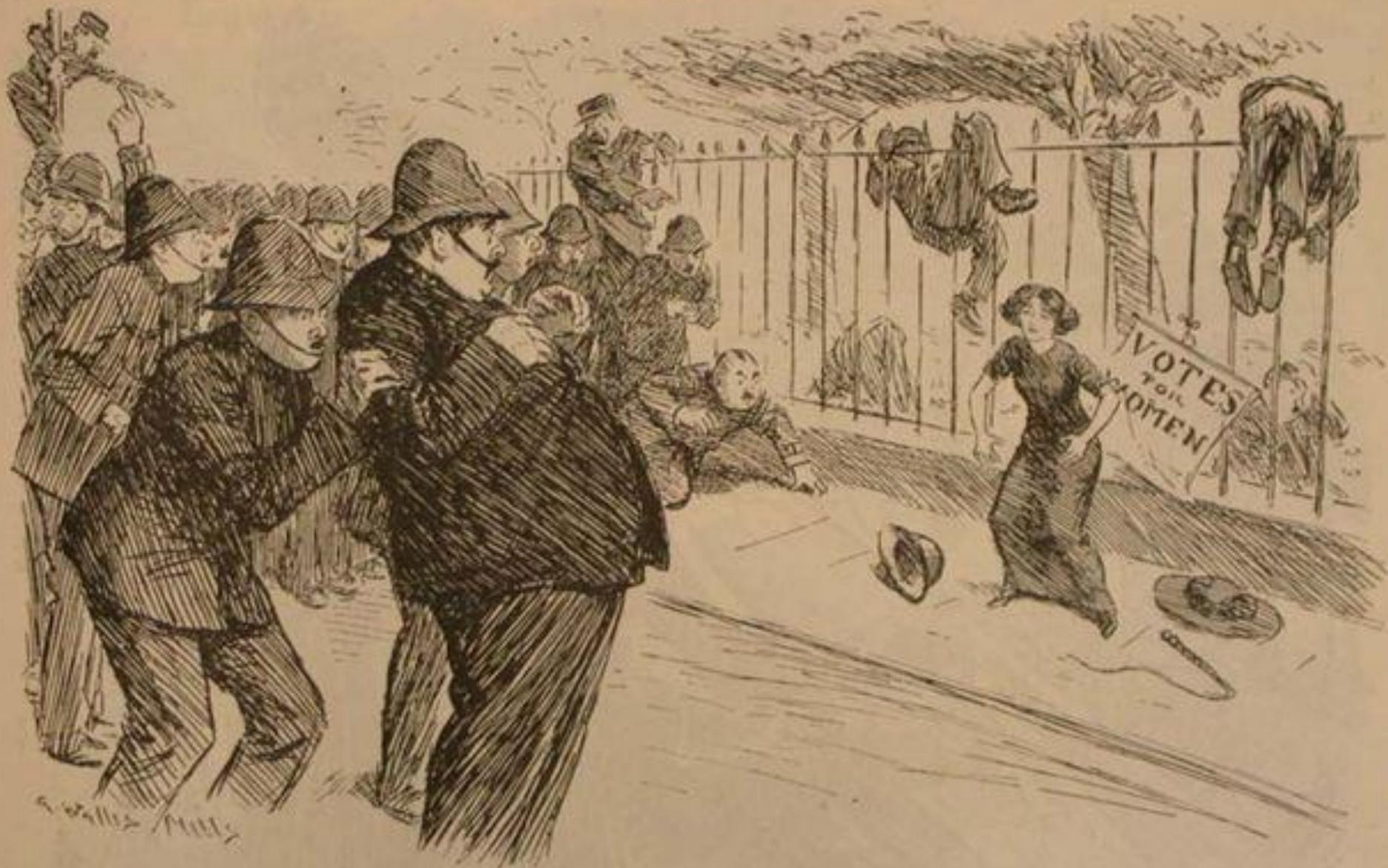
Mary Evans Picture Library

A suffragette's guide to self-defence

# SUFFRAJITSU

MRS. PANKHURST'S AMAZONS





THE SUFFRAGETTE THAT KNEW JIU-JITSU.

THE ARREST.

# WSPU tactics

- Held marches, demonstrations, made speeches, wrote petitions, disrupted political meetings, and picketed the House of Commons
- But they also used more militant tactics
  - Up until 1913, they...
    - Spit in the face of and physically assaulted politicians and police officers
    - Defended themselves with jiu-jitsu
    - chained themselves to the grille of the Ladies Gallery (the overlooking chamber of Parliament), the prime minister's office, and Buckingham Palace
    - Threw rocks through the windows of police headquarters and politicians' homes, including 10 Downing Street (the prime minister's office and home) in June 1908, and the prime minister's retreat in Kent in 1909
    - targeted only gov't-owned property -- buildings and mailboxes

# WSPU tactics

- But in 1913, when Parliament again refused to consider suffrage, Emmeline Pankhurst called for “guerrilla warfare”
  - Targeted more than just gov’t-owned buildings now
    - Hurling stones through shop windows, slashed the cushions of train seats, etc.
    - cut telegraph and telephone wires
    - Blew up fuse boxes
    - Smashed a jewel case at the Tower of London
    - Proclaiming “no votes, no golf,” they singed greens with acid
    - the arson and bombing campaign started in 1913
      - » threw bombs into the homes of members of parliament, including the home of David Lloyd George, the chancellor of the exchequer and future prime minister
      - » Burned down the pavilion at a bowling and tennis club in London
      - » Burned down the orchid house at Kew Gardens
      - » Blew up the cactus greenhouse in a Manchester park

- “We shall never get this question settled until we make it intolerable for most people in this country... We have tried everything else.”

– Emmeline Pankhurst

- “There is something that Governments care for far more than human life, and that is the security of property, and so it is through property that we shall strike the enemy.”
  - By the summer of 1914 over 1,000 suffragettes had been imprisoned for destroying public property









Pankhurst  
arrested  
outside  
Buckingham  
Palace in 1914

The Militants' March to Buckingham Palace Fully Illustrated.

# The Daily Mirror

LATEST CONTINENTAL CORRELATION MORE THAN 100,000 COPIES PER DAY

MRS. PANKHURST ARRESTED AT THE GATES OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE IN TRYING TO PRESENT A PETITION TO THE KING.



- “Mrs. Pankhurst arrested at the gates of Buckingham Palace in trying to present a petition to the king”



Mary Richardson in 1914 after slashing a Diego Velazquez nude painting in London's National Gallery in protest at the government's failure to give women the vote





Diego Velazquez's *Venus at Her Mirror*

- Emily Davison threw herself into the path of a horserace at the Epsom Derby and died as a result in 1913
  - Britain's most prestigious horse race, which housed 200,000 people
  - Had been arrested 9 times before and had undertaken hunger strikes in prison
  - Davison ran from the crowd and attempted to grab the reins of the King's horse when she was run over
  - she had sewn the WSPU colors inside her coat to ensure that no mistake could be made as to her motive





Crowds line Emily Davison's funeral procession

- "Emily Davison's actions were of huge significance. She cared enough about a principle - that women should have equal political rights - to sacrifice her health, her reputation with the establishment, her comfort, her safety and ultimately her life."

– Melissa Benn, British journalist in 2013

- "The suffragettes held her up as a heroine. In death, she became a martyr."

– Michael Tanner

# The Suffragette

Edited by Christabel Pankhurst.

The Official Organ of the Women's Social and Political Union

No. 32—Vol. I.

FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1913.

Price 1d. Weekly (7d. 6m.)



IN HONOUR AND IN LOVING, REVERENT MEMORY  
 OF  
**EMILY WILDING DAVISON.**

SHE DIED FOR WOMEN.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Miss Davison, who made a speech at the Derby against the trial of Votes for Women, was crushed down by the King's horse and sustained terrible injuries at Stone and died on Sunday, June 13th, 1913.

The front page of *The Suffragette* newspaper depicts Emily Davison as an angel on June 13, 1913

# Prison Protests

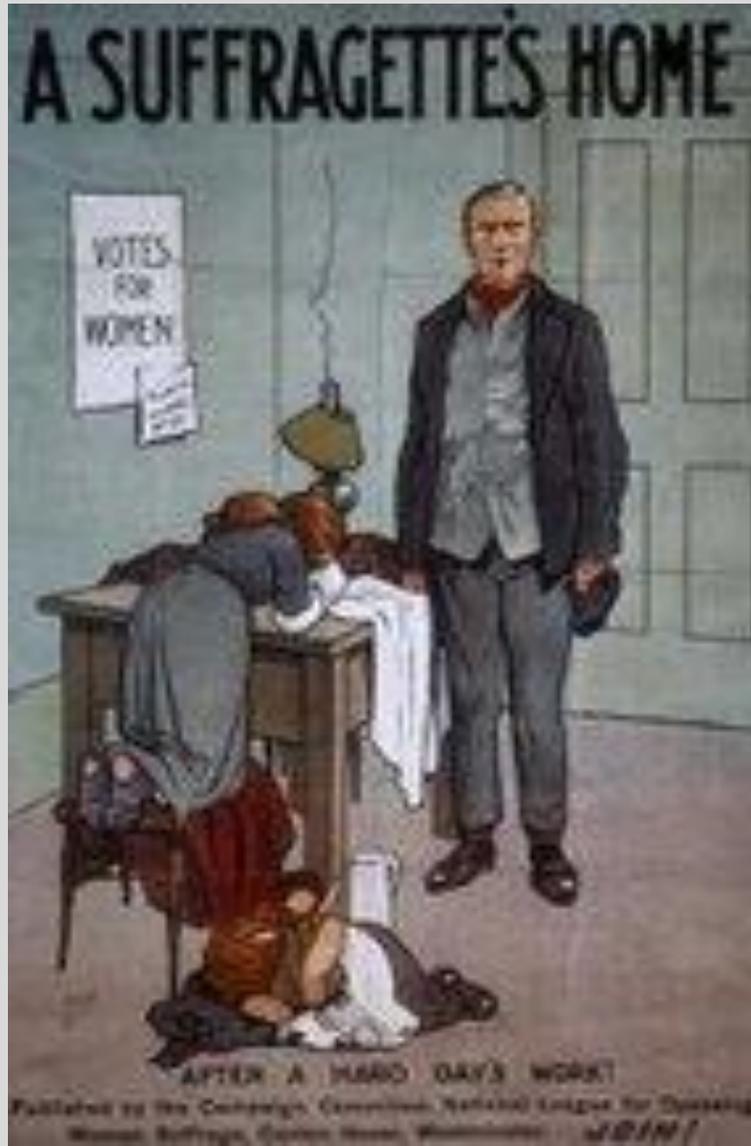
- In June 1909, suffragette Marion Wallace Dunlop was convicted of defacing the House of Commons
  - Had pressed an ink block to a stone wall that quoted the 1689 English Bill of Rights: “It is the right of the subject to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal.”
  - Dunlop demanded to be recognized as a political prisoner, and when she was refused, she went on a hunger strike
  - The gov’t knew that allowing her to die would make her a martyr, so they released her after 3 days
- All suffragettes imprisoned afterwards were then expected to follow her example and go on hunger strike
  - In 1913 alone, 183 British suffragettes went on hunger strikes while imprisoned, including Emmeline Pankhurst who went on 12 hunger strikes in 1913 alone
  - Gandhi, on a visit to London, met with Emmeline Pankhurst and praised the WSPU and the suffragettes
  - Prisoners also demanded status as political prisoners, and would thus refuse to wear the clothing of prisoners
    - Many went on “naked protests” or “blanket protests”
- To keep the women in prison and to keep them alive, force-feeding was started

- “They tore off all our clothes and left us with only prison clothes. We would not put them on and I sat there for about two hours with nothing on. Then they brought me a blanket so I wrapped up in a blanket until I was released. We began to destroy as much property as possible. I broke every pane in my window.”
  - Alice Paul, an American member of the WSPU who would eventually lead the suffrage fight in the US

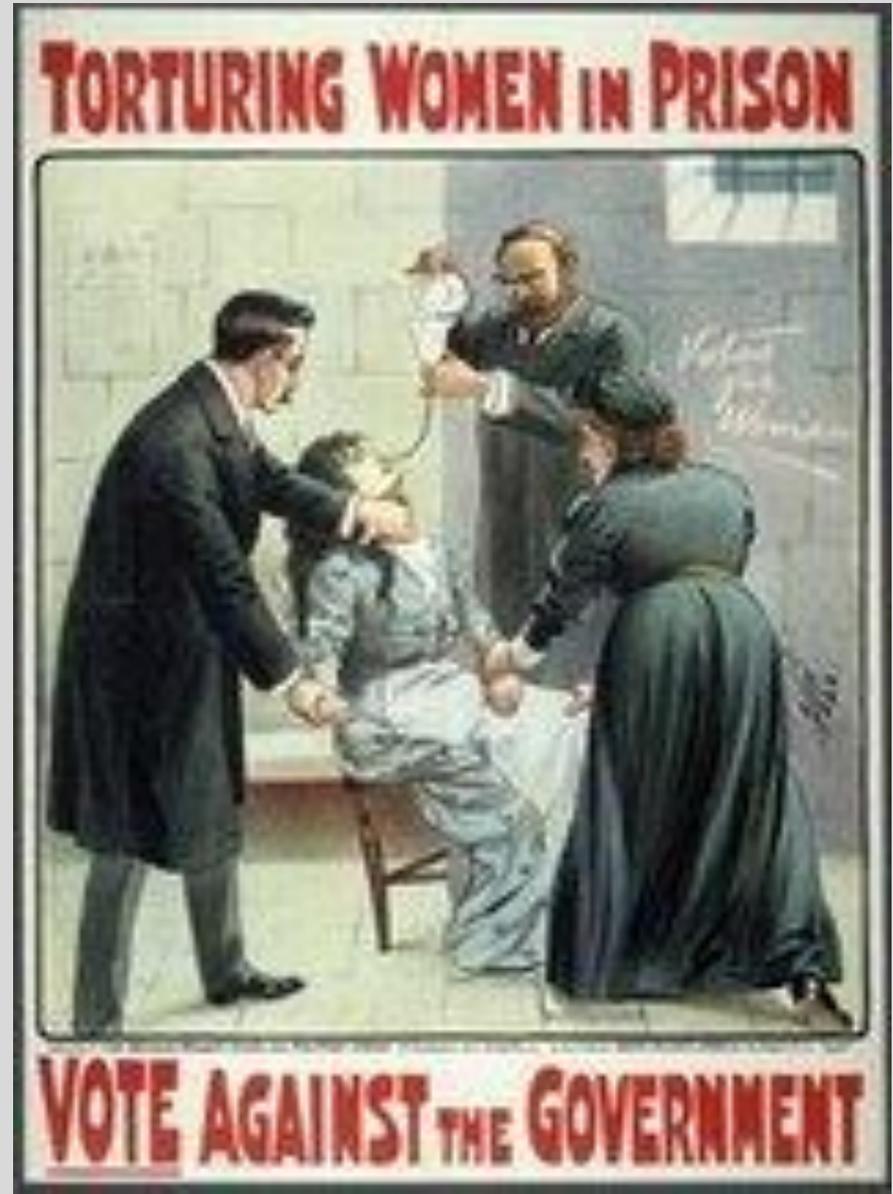
A drawing from *The Suffragette* in 1909



(L) the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage in Britain, demonstrating what opponents feared



(R) the WSPU depicts the "forcible feeding" of British suffragists



# Suffrage

- the British government regarded the suffragettes as the biggest threat to the British Empire at the time
  - Called them “terrorists”
  - They put the “terrorist” organization under secret surveillance
  - “They would even send people along to meetings to take pictures and notes of what was being said.” -*Carole Tulloch*
    - “On the one hand, the state considered them dangerous terrorists, but on the other it simply did not know what to do with them.”

In 1912, Scotland Yard detectives started photographing the suffragettes in jail



- Mary Poppins' "Sister Suffragette" song
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3JP3TW07bo>

# Suffrage

- In Aug. 1914, the government announced it was releasing all suffragettes from prison
  - In return, both the NUWSS and the WSPU agreed to end their militant activities and help the war effort
    - Did so by demanding that women be able to work in industries traditionally dominated by men
- The suffragettes suspended their campaign to support the home front in World War I
- After the war, in 1918, came the first stage of female suffrage - the 1918 Representation of the People Act
  - gave property owning women over the age of 30 the right to vote, while men could vote at 21
  - Only 40% of women in UK eligible (8.5 million)

# Voting Rights - What Then?

## Immediate Reaction (Post-Suffrage)

- First *elected* female member of Parliament - 1918, Constance Markievicz
  - supporter of Irish Nationalism
  - refused to take seat
- First female to take seat - 1919, Nancy Astor
- 1929 - first female cabinet minister - Margaret Bondfield
- Oxford and Cambridge give degrees to women (1920-21)



**MARGARET BONDFIELD MP**  
Britain's first woman  
Cabinet Minister.

# Voting Rights - What Then?

Immediate Reaction (Post-Suffrage)

- 1922 Law of Property Act
  - husband and wife inherit property equally
- 1923 Matrimonial Causes Act
  - grounds for divorce same for men and women

# Voting Rights – What then?

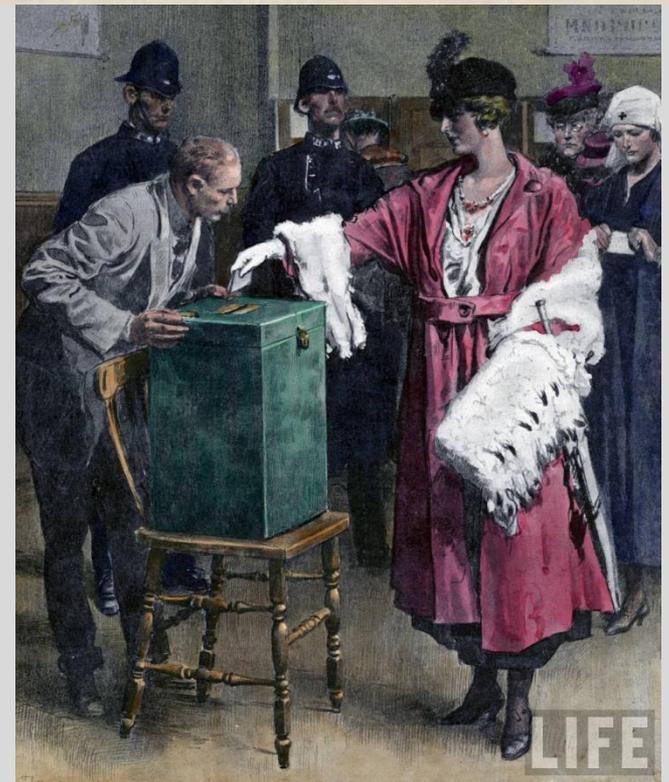
- legally women were equal...but socially? economically? politically?
  - science (specifically biology/concept of evolution) reinforced gender stereotypes and emphasized the role of women as mothers
  - Freud viewed women as destined to live unhappy mental lives/greatest role = mother
  - psychology had great impact on child rearing/domestic relations laws of time



# Suffrage

- in 1928, all women were given the vote at the age of 21 in the Equal Franchise Act
  - lowered the voting age of women to 21 (same as men)
  - meant that 15 million women were able to vote
  - Passed shortly before Emmeline Pankhurst died

TO-DAY.  
—  
5,240,000 MORE  
VOTERS.



# Suffrage

## The Legacy

**1918** Germany  
Austria

**1919** Belgium

**1920** Czechoslovakia  
United States

**1928** United Kingdom



*Emmeline Pankhurst, a radical suffragette, is arrested in 1914*