

The similarities and differences between rosa parks and emmeline pankhurst

[Life](#)



“ All men are created equal.” This sentence has been one of the best known words in the Declaration of Independence, especially when it comes to equality or human rights. The equality, which we human beings have been keen to call for, seems always too difficult to realize. In the long history of human being, there has always been unfair treatment between different classes, races and countries. Deserve to be mentioned, there were two great women who had taken actions when they faced the unfair situation.

First, the causes of their actions had something in common in spite of the different places they were. In 1900s, Emmeline Pankhurst had fought for female voting rights in Britain. When Emmeline was young, she was brought up in a quite free family. She was taught learning knowledge, such as French and geography, but taught the ‘ womanly’ virtues more. And her parents thought Emmeline should do what a woman did at the Victorian Age. It was an era when the girls were expected to prepare for lives as wives after they grew up (Junk Purvis, 2005, p10-11). Her parents’ and the society’s attitudes to women disappointed her. However, after she attended her first suffrage meeting, she met her husband Richard Pankhurst who had took part in the early women’s suffrage movement (Junk Purvis, 2005, p 16). The support of her husband was quite important to Emmeline that she played a crucial role in organizing suffragette movements.

Later, in 1955, Rosa Parks defended her rights as a black in America. One day on a bus in Montgomery, Rosa was asked to give up her seats for a white man, but she refused. When asked the reason of her refusal in an interview, she emphasized that she had been an activist and taken part in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for a long time <https://assignbuster.com/the-similarities-and-differences-between-rosa-parks-and-emmeline-pankhurst/>

(Aldon Morris, 2012). According to Anne Schraff, Rosa's grandfather, also black, taught her that it was necessary to stand up for principles when the Ku Klux Klan tried to harm their family. Also, her mother supported her for a good learning and sent her to Montgomery where she found people criticized segregation. After she got married, she helped her husband with the case related to the civil rights for the black (Anne Schraff, 2008, p 6-16).

Emmeline and Rosa both took actions for their rights because of different reasons. Personally, they went to school and were able to know what was equality. They both gained the support from their husband who had the same value towards rights as them. Historically, Emmeline was affected by the unfair treatments on voting to women in the Victorian Age, while Rosa was influenced by the long-time struggle the black people had experienced.

Second, the measures they took were different. After Emmeline established the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903, they adopted the militant methods to attract the attention of the press and society. For instance, they took advantage of the verbal aggression, stone throwing and hunger striking and arson. And later they even produced their newspapers for propaganda (Katherine E. Kelly, 2004, p331-350). However, Rosa chose another way. After she refused to give in, she was arrested. In jail, she just telephoned her husband. But actually that she did not act provided the African American community a legal chance to fight against the segregation without breaking the law (Lydia Bjornlund, 2012, p36).

They two used different strategies to achieve their targets. Although, Emmeline organized the activities using some violent methods, their

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newspaper did gather many females to join them and generated enormous publicity in Britain. On the contrary, Rosa seemed to do nothing in response to the arrest. Rosa made it more reasonable for African Americans to support her in the court and to ask for social justice.

Third, the effects of their efforts in two movements also differed. The WPSU Emmeline had founded organized the women successfully in the activities of the early suffragette movement. Besides, John C. Zacharis pointed out that the campaign WPSU led in England was reported in America, affecting the women laborers in major urban areas (John C. Zacharis, 1971, p199). For Rosa, she decided to defend her rights on the bus, serving as a good start for the fights of African Americans. In that way, Martin Luther King could rally the African Americans in Montgomery for the later bus boycotts.

They are both great women. Emmeline inspired not only the women in Britain, but also the women in other regions of the world, such as America. She broke the situation that men always dominated the voting rights. For another thing, how Rosa behaved altered the different treatment between races. She made a better society environment possible for the later generations.

To conclude, Emmeline Pankhurst and Rosa Parks had grown up in different social environment and had taken different methods to strive for what they believed. But they both received education and endeavored to change the unsatisfactory world.

However, I think Emmeline Pankhurst was more effective because she was extremely brave to do what others did not dare to do. Under the pressure from the men and other women, she tried her best to change the status quo of voting rights in Britain. While in Montgomery, there had a rather good foundation for starting a campaign and the African Americans were very united. Therefore, there could be someone else to first stand up for the black.

Although Emmeline and Rosa influenced the world in their own ways, they both contributed much to the development of history. Undeniably, they are both worth being memorized. I think what Emmeline did meant a small step for a woman, one giant leap for all women in the world. So Emmeline was more effective.

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