

The suffragettes

Sociology, Human Rights



What was the aim of the suffragettes? The suffrage movement was mainly women from middle class backgrounds. These women were frustrated by their social and economic situation and wanted an outlet through which to initiate change. The word suffrage comes from French and means being allowed to vote. They were fighting for their legal right to vote and the injustice of the women situation of not having equal rights as men in the early 20th century. But men in power denied it, so they resorted to violence. They started to fire mailboxes, smashing windows and blowing bombs.

Tactics how did they get their point across? This group of women, the suffragettes, used a variety of tactics during their fight for equal rights as men. Tactics varied from passive such as using uniforms in order to attract publicity or staging marches, public meetings even printing their own newspaper. They also visited factories aiming to convince workingwomen to join their cause. They indeed got noticed; all kinds of women joined the movement. Nevertheless, the parliament didn't grant them the right to vote.

As a reaction to this denial, they responded with more destructive tactics like smashing shop windows, setting fire and bombs in buildings. They purposely tried to get arrested in order to shock people and make them realize that they were being treated like criminals. When they were in prison suffragettes went on hunger strike. Eventually the women were forced-fed. A tube was forced down their throat and liquid was poured down. It was very painful. After this violent strategy, some participants thought they had gone too far and resigned.

Leadership: Emily Davidson an English woman from a modest background who struggled her way through college, was a well-known participant of the <https://assignbuster.com/the-suffragettes/>

suffragettes movement. She is a great example of their determination and perseverance. During her years as a suffragette, she was arrested for various offences, including a violent attack on a man. During these arrests, she was tortured and force fed after a hunger strike, and suffered from severe spinal damage when throwing herself down an iron staircase as a protest.

Her tactics became more and more extreme as planting bombs. Her motto was " Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God. " The final act that earned her eternal fame as suffragette and demonstrated her strong will power and bravery was when she threw herself under the King's horse, Anmer, as it rounded Tattenham Corner becoming like this the first martyr of the suffragette cause. Success of the cause: With the outbreak of the war in 1914, the WSPU ended their political activities.

All suffragettes were released from prison and they focused on supporting the war. Many women worked very hard during the war, they took jobs normally reserved for men. The huge numbers of men needed to fight the war and the high numbers of wounded amongst the soldiers, forced men to employ women as gas workers, coal heavers, transport workers, and ambulance drivers. When the war ended, these female workers were rewarded with a law that allowed women over 30 years of age with property, to vote in parliamentary elections and even become Members of Parliament.

Finally in 1928 all women over the age of 21 were given the right to vote. Relevance of the suffragette movement: The suffragettes confronted, for the first time, the prejudice against women that has always existed throughout history. They attacked it both political and culturally, and they realized that they needed to win the right to vote because without political power they

didn't have a chance to change their position in society. The belief of the time was that women were not competent enough to compete with men and to participate in politics.

They had nothing to lose in the beginning and their ideas of how far they could take their actions in the name of their principles had no limits. They would do anything that was needed to change the future of the women who would follow them. Still this political movement remains very important for modern society today, there are still many challenges limiting the rights of women. Even though the suffragettes accomplished quite a lot, equality between men and women has yet to be achieved. Their example teaches us perseverance and commitment to a cause even when there seems to be no hope of winning.