LEONORA COHEN

LEONORA'S LIFE

In an interview Leonora once quoted her Mother as saying "Leonora, if only we women had a say in things". What influence do you think this had on her life?

Timeline of WOMEN'S RIGHTS →

1867
The London Society for Women's Suffrage was formed. Even before Leonora was born people were working to improve women's rights.

1902
In Northern England, 37,000 people signed a petition demanding votes for women. It was taken to Parliament and presented by a delegation of female textile workers.

1903
The Women's Social and Political Union was founded in Manchester by Emmeline Pankhurst.

1907
A change in the law allows women to be elected onto councils and even become town mayors for the first time.

1908
In Hyde Park, London 250,000 people gather at a rally in support of women's suffrage.

1912
The 'Cat and Mouse' act came into British law allowing female prisoners who were hunger striking in protest of women's right to vote, to be freed from prison until they were well enough to be returned.

1913
Another huge rally is held in Hyde Park, London to protest for the women's right to vote.

'Deeds not Words', was a suffragette slogan. What do you think it means? How does it relate to Leonora's actions?

1918
Women over the age of 30 are granted the right to vote in Britain..

1928
ALL women are given the same voting rights as men. The general election the same year became known as the 'Flapper Election'.

1968
Women at Ford car plants go on strike demanding that they get paid the same as men doing the same work.

1970
The Equal Pay Act came into force in Britain making it illegal to pay women less than men for the same jobs.

1978
The first national organisation supporting black women's rights in Britain is set up; The Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent.

1873
Leonora was born on 15th June in Hunslet, Leeds. Her mother was a seamstress and her father a sculptor.

1879
Leonora's father died leaving her mother, Jane, to raise Leonora and her two younger brothers alone.

1887
Leonora became an apprentice at a milliner's shop. It was here that she met Henry Cohen, a Jewish immigrant from Warsaw.

1900
Leonora and Henry Cohen, watchmaker and jeweller, were married. Neither of their families approved.

1909
Leonora joined the Leeds Women's Social and Political Union, known as WSPU.

1911
Leonora was arrested for throwing rocks at government building windows. She was sent to Holloway Prison for 7 days.

1913
February. Leonora threw an iron bar into a glass cabinet at the tower of London. She was arrested but released after defending herself in court and outwitting the prosecution.

November. Leonora smashed a window at Leeds Labour Exchange as part of a larger organised protest. She was arrested and sent to Armley Gaol, Leeds where she went on hunger and thirst strike.

December. Leonora was released under the 'Cat and Mouse Act' which meant that anyone who became seriously ill due to hunger and thirst strike was released in order to recover.

1914
Leonora wore her famous dress covered in WSPU badges and made of their colours to the Leeds Arts Club ball. When WWI broke out she worked at a munitions factory in Leeds.

1924
Leonora was appointed as one of the first female magistrates on the bench in a court of law in England.

1928
Leonora was awarded an OBE by King George V for her good work within the British Empire.

1974
Leonora appeared on the cover of the Radio Times advertising 'Shoulder to Shoulder', a TV series about the suffragette movement.

1978
Leonora died, aged 105 in Colwyn Bay, Wales where she had spent her retirement.

There were a lot of positive changes for Women in Britain during Leonora's lifetime and more since. Do you think this is the same in all countries? Can you think of an example of somewhere where women haven't got equal rights with men?

Leonora's husband, Henry and son, Reginald supported her actions despite Reginald being bullied at school and them both losing a lot of their friends. What does that tell you about their family values? Do you think that many men supported the Women's Rights movement?

In 1913 Leonora was released from prison under the 'Cat and Mouse' Act. Why do you think this Act was introduced? Why do you think it was only for female prisoners who were protesting for womens' right to vote?