

The status of women

25 November 2013

Women's rights were a topic of heated discussion throughout the [United Kingdom](#) around 1913. Women did not have the right to vote in elections. With their slogan, 'Votes for Women', militant women were challenging their traditional status in society and demanding that they should be given the same democratic rights as men.

'Suffrage' is the term given to the right to vote, and those women who were demanding that right were called 'suffragettes'. The suffragettes were fiercely opposed, however, frequently by other women as well as by men.

In 1908, the Irish Women's Franchise League was founded. Its aim was to force politicians to grant the vote to Irish women. Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington was one of the leaders. Her husband, Francis, a journalist, publicised their demands.

They launched a campaign of petitions and demonstrations. Francis was editor of a newspaper, *The Irish Citizen*, which reported on the activities of the Women's League.

The activities of the women became more militant as time went by. In June 1912, eight women were arrested for throwing stones at the windows in government buildings, and were sent to [Mountjoy](#) Jail. Actions such as attacking public buildings and interrupting meetings to attract attention were the policy of the movement.

A lot of people were turned against the women's movement by their militant activities. In [Britain](#), they failed to get what they wanted, and in Ireland, they were treated as a curiosity making news headlines, but not to be taken seriously.

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