



FREEDOM
FIGHTERS
PORTRAITS



EMMELINE PANKHURST

The suffragette who **opened the ballot box
to women**



A POLITICAL CHILDHOOD



Emmeline was born in Manchester in a **household where democracy and social justice are constantly discussed.** Her mother is taking her at a very young age to meetings on women's suffrage, where she realises that **citizenship could not remain a men-only affair.**

In 1878, she marries Richard Pankhurst, a progressive lawyer who supports votes for women. Together, they become involved in the **Women's Franchise League**, which campaigns for women's right to vote as well as equality in marriage, divorce and inheritance.

“DEEDS, NOT WORDS”

In 1903, she founds the **Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU)**. Its slogan, “*Deeds, not words*”, is radical: the WSPU demands effective female suffrage and **makes direct action a legitimate means of forcing democracy to live up to its promises.**

In 1906, *Daily Mail* journalist Charles Hands refers to the feminist activists with the nickname “**suffragettes**” to mock them. Emmeline and her allies adopt the term, using it to distinguish themselves from more moderate groups.



CONFRONTATION WITH THE STATE

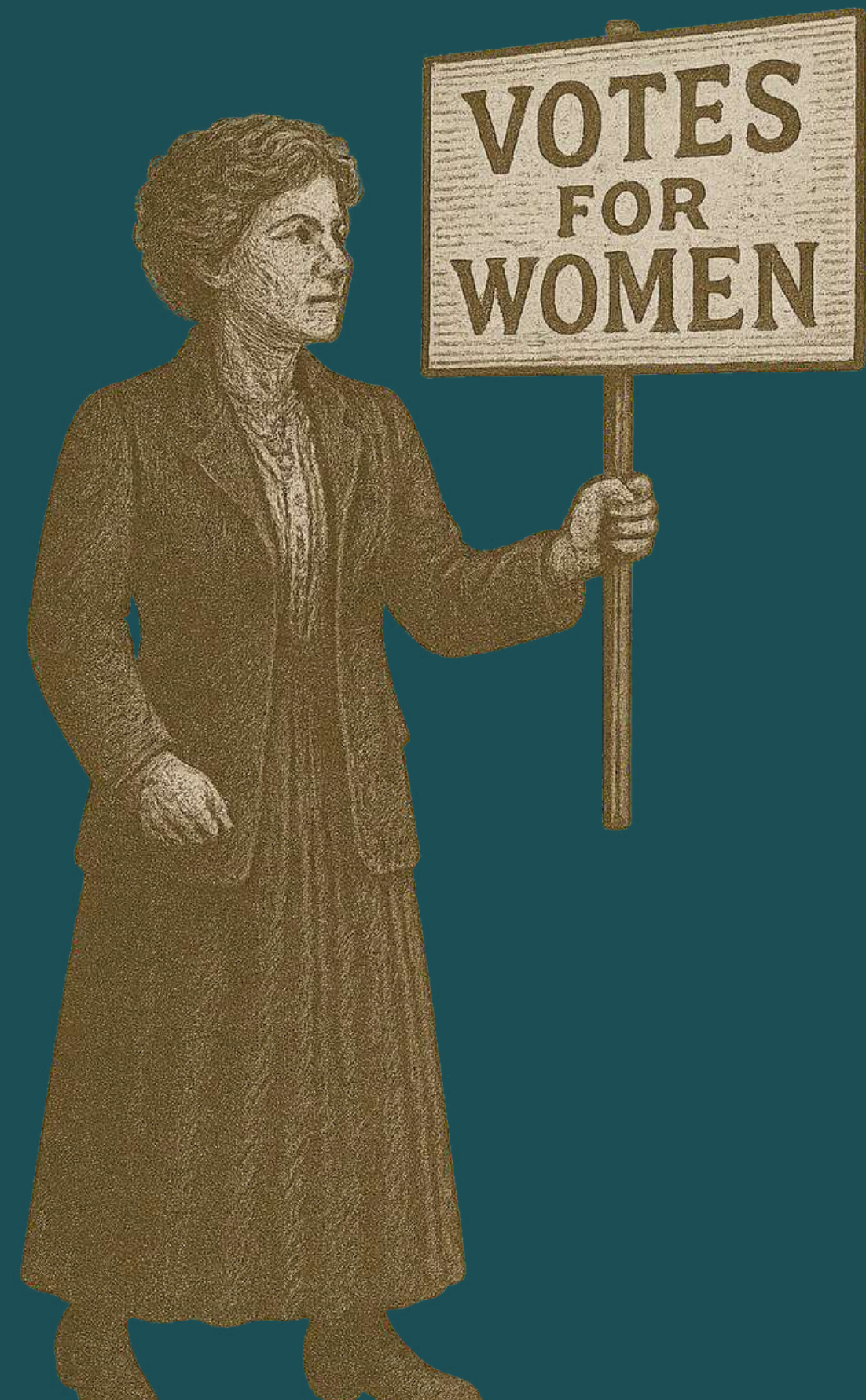
Under her leadership, the suffragettes organise **demonstrations, disrupt meetings and carry out acts of civil disobedience.**

When arrested, they are imprisoned, resort to hunger strikes and suffer forced feeding: their bodies become a battleground for political protest.

On 18 November 1910, during “*Black Friday*”, the demonstration led by Emmeline to Parliament is **violently repressed by the police.**



WAR AND THE RIGHT TO VOTE



In 1914, Emmeline suspends the activities of the *WSPU* and **calls on women to take part in the war effort.**

In 1918, an initial act grants the right to vote to certain British women. In 1928, the ***Equal Franchise Act* extends it to all women** over the age of 21, in the very year of Emmeline Pankhurst's death.

A central figure, often on the front line, she is **a decisive activist in winning the right to vote for British women.**

*“Women had always fought for men, and for their children. **Now they were ready to fight for their own human rights.**”*

Emmeline Pankhurst

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