



THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY: A WORK IN PROGRESS

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A 'Equality is the **soul** of liberty; there is, in fact, no liberty without it,' said activist and writer Frances 'Fanny' Wright. But today, all over the world, people live with inequality and a lack of rights that are considered legal. A 2015 World Bank report said that about 155 countries still had legislation limiting the freedom of women. Apartheid, a system of racial segregation and discrimination, was the law until the early 1990s in South Africa. These are just two recent examples.

B Popular protests against injustice have always been part of history, with varying success. During the 1381 Peasants' Revolt in England, rebels fought for economic and social reforms. It ended with the execution of their leader, Wat Tyler, but their ideas about fairer systems of labour didn't die. The first known written protest against **slavery** in America was made in 1688 by four Pennsylvania **Quakers**. Their anti-slavery views were also anti-racist: they wrote 'we shall do to all men like as we will be done ourselves; making no difference of what generation, descent or colour they are'.


C Perhaps the most famous anti-racist movement was the American civil rights movement, led by people like Martin Luther King, whose 'I have a dream' speech has become globally iconic. Although the US constitution guaranteed citizens' rights, racial segregation was legal, and racist violence and discrimination were **widespread**. On 1st December 1955 Rosa Parks, a black woman in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. Many consider this act and the resulting protests to be the official beginning of the movement. King and other leaders based their peaceful demonstrations on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi,

who had successfully led India to independence (1947) with non-violence. Although the American civil rights movement resulted in major legislation and progress towards equality, the successes **came with a price**. King won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, but was assassinated in 1968.

D One of the largest global protests ever was the Women's March on 21st January 2017. Organisers reported that there had been 673 marches on all seven continents, including Antarctica! The spark for the protest was a series of offensive comments about women by the US president, but it quickly became a wider, more comprehensive protest addressing sexism, racism, poverty, religious discrimination, workers' rights and environmental policy. The Women's March protests were allowed to take place peacefully, but protesting remains dangerous for many around the world – just think of the attempted murder of activist Malala Yousafzai in 2012, for demanding the education of girls in her country.


FACT BOX

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was made in 1948. It lists thirty basic rights every human being should have, including freedom of speech, the right to asylum, the right to freedom from torture, the right to education.
- The first known abolition of slavery was in Athens in the early 6th century BC.
- In 1906 Finland became the first country in the world to give women the right to vote AND to be elected to parliament. Other countries had previously granted some women voting rights but barred them from public office.

- 1 How many different types of discrimination and inequality between human beings are you aware of?
- 2  107 **INVALSI** **FIRST** Listen and read the text and match the questions (1-6) with the paragraphs (A-D). Some paragraphs may be chosen more than once.

Which paragraph talks about ...

- 1 ☐ a protest movement leader that was killed?
- 2 ☐ examples of discriminatory laws from recent decades?
- 3 ☐ attempts to lead protests before 1800?
- 4 ☐ a protest that took place all around the world?
- 5 ☐ a fight against discrimination based on the colour of one's skin?
- 6 ☐ examples of protests for gender equality?

- 3  107 **INVALSI** **PEIC** Listen and read the text again and answer the questions using no more than four words.

- 1 When did the policy of apartheid end?

- 2 What is limited by law in over one hundred and fifty countries?

- 3 In 1381 what did poor workers in England try to obtain?

- 4 Who influenced Martin Luther King and the non-violent protesters in the US civil rights moment?

- 5 Where were protests held for the 2017 Women's March?

- 6 What was Malala Yousafzai fighting for, which provoked an assassination attempt?

- 4  108 **INVALSI** **FIRST** Listen to the conversation between two friends and choose the correct option.

- 1 What does the blog talk about?
A The geography of Antarctica.
B The residents of Antarctica.
C The Women's March on Antarctica.

GLOSSARY

came with a price: also had a negative consequence
Quakers: a Christian group with that began in England in the 1650s
slavery: the state being another person's possession, working for that person for no money
widespread: found over a large area or number of people

- 2 Where did the people have their base?
A On a ship.
B In a bay.
C In a square.
- 3 Around how many people were in the group?
A Forty.
B Thirty.
C Thirteen.
- 4 How does Penny describe the protest?
A Inclusive.
B Exclusive.
C Expensive.
- 5 Of the many reasons that people protested, what was most important to this particular group?
A Sexism.
B Racism.
C Ecology.
- 6 Amir thinks it's possible to get lots of attention for a small protest if you
A Do it in your local area.
B Do something unusual.
C Contact local newspapers.



By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

- 5 **CRITICAL THINKING** In pairs or small groups, look back at your list of ways people discriminate against each other in exercise 1.

- 1 Can you add more forms of discrimination to your list?
- 2 Do you think laws against forms of discrimination are enough to eliminate them? Why or why not?
- 3 Do you think that non-violent protest is an effective way to create change? Why or why not?
- 4 Why do you think that peaceful protests sometimes become violent?

- 6 **DEBATE** 'It's OK to break the law if you are fighting for a just cause.' Debate this claim in two teams: Proposition team vs Opposition team.

- 7 **DIGITAL COMPETENCE** In small groups, choose a human right or social issue that you feel passionately about. Go online and find out:

- facts and statistics about this issue in your country
- facts and statistics about this issue around the world
- actions/events, protest groups, movements or organisations that are related to this issue.

Then present your findings to the class.