

# FIVE WOMEN MARCHES THAT HAVE CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY

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A LESSON MADE BY: [Outside the Box](#)

# Taboo – define the first word without using any of those below

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PROTEST

FEMINISM

INEQUALITY

LEGISLATION

STRIKE

WOMEN

DIFFERENCE

CONSTITUTION

RIOT

FIGHT

GAP

BILL

OPPOSITION

RIGHTS

STRIKE

LAWMAKING

# DEFINE

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- FREEDOM OF CHOICE
- RIGHT TO PROTEST
- A HERO
- GOVERNMENT

# READING PART – YOU ARE GOING TO READ 5 STORIES ABOUT PROTESTS

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Find out:

- why each of events happened,
- how long was it,
- what the demand was,
- What the events have in common,
- what has changed after each of them,
- what can we can learn from the events.

# Women's march on Versailles: 5 October 1789

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Tensions were running high in France in 1789 as the political upheaval of the French revolution picked up steam. That summer, protesters had stormed the Bastille. At the same time, supplies of grain were running low thanks to a poor harvest, and the price of bread surged. In protest, a number of Parisian women gathered in the square, then marched on Versailles, where King Louis XVI held court, on 5 October. Some men joined the women as they made their way to the city, in a crowd which was said to have numbered in the thousands. Eventually, some members of the crowd violently stormed the royal apartments in Versailles to make their demands. Afterward the king agreed to move the royal family to Paris to be closer to the people and did not return to live in Versailles.

# Women's suffrage parade in Washington DC: 3 March 1913

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By 1913, the women's suffrage movement in the US had long been brewing. The women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York, where the Declaration of Sentiments was read, occurred decades before in 1848. In those intervening years, there had been some movement at the state level to grant women the right to vote. A number of suffrage parades occurred in the early 1900s as the first mass demonstrations of the suffrage movement. This one, held in Washington DC, was planned for the day before the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson for maximum press attention, according to the Library of Congress. Thousands took part in the parade which sought an amendment to the constitution, according to the Atlantic. After the march, at least 100 were hospitalized for injuries inflicted by spectators. The march was part of the years-long movement for women's suffrage – and more marches followed, including a massive demonstration in New York in 1915. Women finally were granted the right to vote with the ratification of the 19th amendment in 1920.

# Women's march on Pretoria: 9 August 1956

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To protest against pass laws, which aimed to limit the movement of black people, 20,000 women marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria, South Africa, on 9 August 1956. The significant gathering of women and their leaders delivered petitions against the pass laws being extended to women to the government, though the prime minister was not there to receive them, according to the Mail & Guardian. They then stood in silence for 30 minutes, and later sang a song which included a variation of the phrase “you strike a woman, you strike a rock”. Protests against the pass laws took place before the women's march and continued after, including one which became a massacre after police opened fire on protesters in Sharpeville in 1960. The pass laws were finally repealed in 1986.

The anniversary of the women's march is now celebrated as National Women's Day in the country and the month of August is known as Women's Month. The march was re-enacted in 2006 for the 50th anniversary, according to the BBC.

# Icelandic women's strike: 24 October 1975

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- Iceland topped the World Economic Forum's gender gap index again in 2016. But in 1975, women were underpaid and underrepresented in government. So they decided to strike – or as it was then called, the “Woman's Day Off”, according to the BBC – to demonstrate their importance to society. On 24 October of that year, 25,000 women gathered on the streets of Reykjavik (in a nation of 220,000) and 90% of the female population did not go to work, cook, clean or take care of children. Annadis Rudolfsdottir was aged 11 at the time. She recalled the strike for the Guardian in 2004, calling it “a wake-up call” and a “spur to action”. Vigdis Finnbogadottir became the nation's first female president five years later, and credits that day with helping her get elected; other landmarks followed.

# The first Polish protest of abortion ban in Poland: October 2016

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Thousands of women, many dressed in black, boycotted their jobs and classes and took part in protest demonstrations on 3 October. About 30,000 had gathered in Warsaw's Castle Square, chanting. Their efforts resulted in the parliament backtracking and overwhelmingly rejecting the total ban. Protests resumed later in the month, after the introduction of a new proposal which sought to ban abortion when there is no chance the fetus will survive or in cases of severe abnormalities, and Polish women resolved to keep up pressure over the restrictions. Meanwhile, other protests against the Polish government have ensued. It explodes repeatedly every time when the government try to change the legislation. It rose in 2019, 2020 and it is most likely to have its wave every time in similar situations. Protesters have disrupted church services across Poland in the latest in a series of demonstrations Sunday marked the fourth day of protests after Poland's top court ruled on Thursday that abortion due to fetal defects is unconstitutional, meaning that the only circumstances in which termination is legal are in cases of rape, incest or when the mother's life in danger. The ruling sparked furious demonstrations that spilled into the weekend in cities including Warsaw, Łódz, Poznan, Gdansk, Wroclaw and Krakow in defiance of a ban on gatherings of more than five people due to the coronavirus pandemic.

# THE STORY OF BLACK PROTEST



- YOU ARE GOING TO WATCH A VIDEO CONCERNING BLACK PROTEST IN POLAND. CLICK AN IMAGE TO DO SO.

# AFTER WATCHING - QUESTIONS

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- 1.. What has happened before the protest?
- 2. What were three factors legalizing abortion?
- 3. One of the speaker said that she and her friend were talking only about one topic. Why did it catch so much attention?
- 4. Was the social mood the same then in 2016 as it is now? What did people do and say then?
- 5. The restriction was compared to some period of the past. What period exactly?

# VOCABULARY – make a sentence with each of the new words

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In the video „bill” was used as a synonym for „legal act”.

Other words that might be difficult are:

- backtracking – going back to the previous point (of view or a place),
- suffrage – the right to vote, especially in a political election,
- to repeal - to revoke or withdraw formally or officially (e.g.: to repeal a protest or an object),
- an amendment – a written improvement, change.

# Discuss

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- What is your approach to the topic? Do you support the protestants?
- Were those previous attempts to stop restrictions even successful if Polish women are forced to repeat their strike?
- What are the changes in form of protesting? What could be the further steps?
- Do you believe that the issue will come again in future? Is it never-ending story?
- How public opinion abroad will react? Will the movement bring any further activities?
- What about a factor of the pandemic in case of the strike?
- Do you think that the influence of the Catholic Church on the government is too huge in Poland? Is it going to change in future?  
Why/Why not?

# credits:

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- Video: [FRANCE 24 English](#)

- Text: adapted from: [The Guardian](#)

Questions, vocabulary and the idea: [Outside the Box](#)