

What happened on Black Friday?



In the 1908 election campaign, Herbert Henry Asquith of the Liberal Party promised to include women's rights in a new law he intended to pass if elected Prime Minister. The suffragettes supported his campaign as a result, and he won the election. However, during his time as Prime Minister from 1908 to 1916, he went back on his promise and refused to reform voting law.

The WSPU organised a march in response to Asquith's refusal to consider giving women the vote. Policemen and male bystanders met the women with violence. Hundreds were badly hurt, and the police violence resulted in some deaths. This day became later known as Black Friday.

Writing in a newspaper two years later, Emmeline Pankhurst reflected on the events of Black Friday and the impact it had on future campaigns - **'Public conscience must be aroused, and it can only be done by attacks on public property. When women's bodies were battered on Black Friday that was alright but when a few windowpanes are broken, that is all wrong.'**

