



# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Case study 1 Suffragettes

#### WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In the 1800s it was widely believed that women were meant to look after the home and not become involved in public life. However, during this time groups of women began to protest against this and demanded to be treated as equal to men. These women wanted to take part in the running of the country and in particular called for the right to vote. They were known as 'suffragettes'.

In the early years of the 20th century, the suffragette movement gained in confidence and protesters started to use more militant tactics to fight for their cause, such as chaining themselves to railings, smashing windows and occasionally setting off bombs. Many suffragettes were imprisoned and some went on hunger strike to bring pressure on the government.

During the First World War, for the first time women in the UK found themselves doing traditional male jobs while the men were at war. This helped to change attitudes to women's rights. At the end of the war in 1918 women over 30 were given the vote, and all adults over the age of 21 were finally given the right to vote in 1928.



Suffragettes on a horse-drawn bus, 1910



Suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst being arrested, 1914

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## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Case study 1 Suffragettes (continued)

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#### ETHEL SMYTH AND MARCH OF THE WOMEN

Ethel Smyth was a famous composer who wrote the song *March of the Women* in 1911.

On one occasion Ethel Smyth was arrested for throwing stones at politicians' homes. While she was in prison, groups of women marched around the prison yard singing *March of the Women* while Ethel Smyth watched from her cell window, conducting with her toothbrush.

#### FROM MARCH OF THE WOMEN – ETHEL SMYTH, 1911, VERSE 4

*Life, strife – those two are one,  
Naught can ye win but by faith and daring.  
On, on – that ye have done  
But for the work of to-day preparing.  
Firm in reliance, laugh a defiance,  
(Laugh in hope, for sure is the end)  
March, march – many as one,  
Shoulder to shoulder and friend to friend.*

(Lyrics and music reproduced by permission of J. Curwen and Sons)



Ethel Smyth

© Library of Congress

#### WOMEN'S RIGHTS TODAY WOMEN IN SAUDI ARABIA

Did you know that even today women do not have equal rights in much of the world? For example in Saudi Arabia women:

- are not allowed to drive cars
- cannot travel without the permission of their 'male guardian'
- will be allowed to vote for the first time in 2015, but must travel to the polling place with a man.



A Saudi Arabian woman drives a car to defy the ban on women driving.

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# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Case study 2 Human rights in Zimbabwe

#### ZIMBABWE

For many years the country of Zimbabwe in Africa has been ruled by President Robert Mugabe. Under Mugabe life has been difficult. His government has been repressive and very corrupt and the people of the country have become poorer. Some people who have spoken out against Mugabe's government have been beaten or killed. Others have been chased from their homes or had their crops burnt. Their children have been prevented from going to school.

Because life in Zimbabwe has been so difficult, over 3 million people have left the country. Many people, including teachers and doctors, have crossed the borders into neighbouring nations in search of a better life.



#### ABOUT WOZA

In 2003 a group of women decided that they needed to do something to make life better in Zimbabwe. They started Women of Zimbabwe Arise to stand up for their rights and freedoms and fight for a better future for their children. Members of WOZA started holding peaceful demonstrations for freedom and justice, but they were often beaten by the police for protesting. They also have been imprisoned, and sometimes have not been allowed food, medical care or legal help.



WOZA

© WOZA

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## LESSON 1

### PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

#### Case study 2 Human rights in Zimbabwe (continued)

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#### WOZA (PROTEST SONG)

##### CHORUS (TRANSLATED FROM NDEBELE)

*Sisters and brothers*

*We have over populated other countries, what happened?*

*Home – who will nurture Zimbabwe?*

*Teachers we have over populated other countries, what happened?*

*Home – who will nurture Zimbabwe?*

*Nurses we have over populated other countries, what happened?*

*Home – who will nurture Zimbabwe?*

*Lawyers we have over populated other countries, what happened?*

*Home – who will nurture Zimbabwe?*

*Doctors we have over populated other countries, what happened?*

*Home – who will nurture Zimbabwe?*

#### WOZA'S USE OF PROTEST MUSIC

Music is very important to WOZA. As they march through the streets they sing so people who hear them know why they are protesting. They hope that people will gain the courage to join them.

When protesters sing they feel strength, because they know they are part of something bigger than themselves, they are part of WOZA.



© AP  
President Obama presenting Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu of WOZA with an award for standing up for human rights.



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# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Case study 3 Egyptian revolution

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#### HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN EGYPT

Hosni Mubarak ruled Egypt for 30 years until he was overthrown in February 2011. During his rule he violated many human rights. The police and security forces:

- arrested people for criticising the government
- put people in prison without ever giving them a trial
- used torture and sometimes killed people in their custody.

During elections the government hired ‘thugs’ to beat up people who they thought might not support the President’s party. In most elections for President, Mubarak was the only person allowed to run.

#### THE 25 JANUARY REVOLUTION 2011

In 2011 Egyptians began peaceful protests against Mubarak’s government. Millions of protesters took to the streets more or less closing the country down.

For many days the protesters occupied Tahrir Square in the capital city of Cairo and refused to leave until Mubarak resigned.

Finally on 11 February Mubarak resigned. The military leaders who rule today have made some changes but many of Egypt’s problems still remain.



© Getty Images

Egyptians celebrating the resignation of Hosni Mubarak

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# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Case study 3 Egyptian revolution (continued)

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#### IRHAL! (LEAVE!)

(translated from the Arabic)

*We are all united as one,  
And what we ask for,  
Is just one thing: LEAVE! LEAVE!*

*Down, Down Hosni Mubarak!*

*The people demand:  
Bring down the regime!*

*He is going away.  
We are not going anywhere!*

*We are all united as one,  
And what we ask for,  
Is just one thing:*

*LEAVE! LEAVE! LEAVE!*

© Ramy Essam (Words and music by permission of Ramy Essam)



Ramy Essam

© Mark LeVine

#### THE STORY OF RAMY ESSAM

Ramy Essam was a university student when the protests started in Egypt. He went to Cairo to support the protestors, taking his guitar with him. In Tahrir Square he heard the chants of the demonstrators, and turned them into a song. Soon he was invited to play in front of the thousands gathered. His song 'Irhal!' or 'Leave!' became very popular with the protesters as they sang with him demanding Mubarak's resignation.

One day the protesters were attacked by supporters of Mubarak riding camels and horses into the crowd, beating them with clubs and swords and throwing stones. Ramy was one of the many injured, but this did not stop him from playing.

Months later he was arrested and tortured for continuing his protests.



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## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Case study 4 Diggers

#### THE DIGGERS

Up until the 15th century most villages in England included common land that anyone could farm or herd their animals on. However, slowly wealthier people started fencing this in and claiming the land as their private property. As a result many poorer people lost access to the land and were made homeless and many struggled to feed themselves and their families.

In the 1600s a group called the Diggers protested against this. They said that everyone, rich or poor, should be able to use the land and that private property was a sin. The Diggers set up a camp in Surrey and hoped to start a revolt where the fences around the private land would be torn down.

Their protest was stopped by local landlords who beat them and destroyed their camp.

#### LEON ROSSELSON AND THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

In the 1970s British singer-songwriter Leon Rosselson wrote the song *The World Turned Upside Down* about the Diggers. Rosselson said that the message of the Diggers is relevant to our own times – the Earth and all its treasures should be for the benefit of all people, not just the rich.

Today the song is still sung at protests against inequality between the rich and the poor, such as the Occupy London protests in 2011 where people set up protest camps in the wake of the banking crisis (see photo right).



Leon Rosselson



Occupy London Protester, 2011

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# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Case study 4 Diggers (continued)

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#### **FROM THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN**

(by Leon Rosselson)

*In 1649, to St. George's Hill*

*A ragged band\* they called the Diggers came to show the people's will*

*They defied the landlords, they defied the laws*

*They were the dispossessed\*\* reclaiming what was theirs.*

*We come in peace, they said, to dig and sow.*

*We come to work the lands in common and to make the waste ground grow*

*This earth divided, we will make whole*

*So it will be a common treasury for all...*

*From the men of property the orders came*

*They sent the hired men and troopers to wipe out the Diggers' claim*

*Tear down their cottages, destroy their corn.*

*They were dispersed – but still the vision lingers on.*

\* **band:** group

\* **dispossessed:** people who have lost their land

(Lyrics and music reproduced by permission of Leon Rosselson)



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# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Case study 5 Race issues in the USA

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#### RACIST KILLING IN AMERICAN HISTORY

In the United States millions of African people were held as slaves until they were freed after the American Civil War (1861-1865). But in many states terrible racism remained alive. Sometimes black men were attacked and killed by racist mobs; these murders were called **lynching**.

On 7 August, 1930, two black men, Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith, were lynched in Marion, Indiana. They had been arrested the night before, charged with robbery, murder and rape. A large crowd broke into the jail, beat the two men, and hanged them from a tree.

In 1937 Abel Meeropol, a Jewish schoolteacher from New York, saw a photograph of the lynching of Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith and wrote the poem *Bitter Fruit* in protest against racist murders.

After seeing jazz singer Billie Holiday perform, Meeropol showed her the poem. She liked it and turned the poem into the song *Strange Fruit*.

#### STRANGE FRUIT

*Southern trees bear a strange fruit,  
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,  
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze,  
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees...*

*Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck,  
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,  
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop,  
Here is a strange and bitter crop.*

*(Lyrics reproduced by permission of Carlin Music Corporation). Recording licensed by Sony Records.*



Crowd viewing the body of a man lynched by a mob

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# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Case study 5 Race issues in the USA (continued)

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#### RACE ISSUES IN AMERICA TODAY

Thankfully lynching is a thing of the past and race equality has come a long way since the 1930s. However, despite having a black President in Barack Obama, race inequalities do still exist in America. For example, black people who are convicted of murder are four times more likely to be given the death penalty than white people who are convicted.

One example of this is the case of **Troy Davis**. Troy, a black man, was sentenced to death in 1980 after being accused of killing a white police officer. However, no physical evidence linked him to the scene of the crime and he always maintained he was innocent. As the date of Troy's execution approached in 2011, tens of thousands of people campaigned for Davis to be given a new trial.

Troy Davis was executed on 21 September 2011, despite serious doubts about his guilt. The American online news channel *Democracy Now* ended their reporting of the execution by playing Billie Holiday's *Strange Fruit* and their reporter Amy Goodman compared Troy Davis's situation to lynching.



Troy Davis



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### Worksheet Suffragettes

1. What human rights is the song about? (You can refer to your copy of the UDHR.)

2. Who were the suffragettes?

3. Identify key words from the song. Why did you choose these words?

4. Name some human rights issues women face in the world today.

5. Why do you think some women were willing to die for the right to vote? Why is this right important? Explain your answer.

**Use your responses to create your presentation.**  
Make your presentation engaging, inspiring and convincing.



# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Worksheet Human rights in Zimbabwe

1. Who is Robert Mugabe?

2. List some of the human rights that Mugabe's government has violated. (You can refer to your copy of the UDHR.)

3. Who are Women of Zimbabwe Arise and what do they hope to achieve?

4. Why is music important to WOZA? What role does it play in their protests?

5. Come up with two adjectives to describe WOZA. Explain why you chose these.

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# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Worksheet Egyptian revolution

1. Who is Hosni Mubarak?

2. Name three human rights that were violated by Mubarak's government. (You can refer to your copy of the UDHR.)

3. Who wrote the song *Irhal!* and why?

4. Why do you think this song was popular at the protests in Tahrir Square?

5. Ramy Essam has been called a 'hero of the revolution'. Explain why he may have been called this and whether you agree.

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# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Worksheet Diggers

1. Who were the Diggers? Briefly describe the story as told in the song.

2. What human rights were denied to them? (You can refer to your copy of the UDHR.)

3. Identify key words from the song. Why did you choose these words?

4. Who wrote the song and why?

5. The Diggers believed 'The earth was made a common treasury for everyone to share' and that 'all things should be held in common'. Do you agree with this? Is this debate still relevant today? Explain.

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# LESSON 1

## PROTEST MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

### Worksheet Race issues in the USA

1. What human rights is the song about? (You can refer to your copy of the UDHR.)

2. Explain the story that inspired the song.

3. Why were the victims of lynching compared to 'strange fruit' in the song?

4. What lines in the song do you think are the most striking? Why?

5. Why did Amy Goodman compare Troy Davis's execution to a lynching? What do you think of this comparison?

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