



# LOUISE WEISS

## A WOMAN OF WORDS AND POLITICAL ACTION

Louise Weiss was born in 1893 in Arras, France. A journalist, writer, and political activist, she believed deeply in the power of ideas and media to shape society. At a time when women were excluded from political decision-making, she used journalism as a tool to advocate for democracy, peace, and women's rights. Through her influential journal *L'Europe Nouvelle*, she promoted international cooperation after World War I and warned against the dangers of rising nationalism.

### A Fighter for Women's Suffrage

In the 1930s, Weiss became one of France's most visible suffrage activists. She organised public demonstrations, symbolic campaigns, and media actions to demand women's right to vote. Although women in France would only gain suffrage in 1944, Weiss played a crucial role in building the movement and keeping the issue in public debate. She showed that visibility, communication, and civic engagement are powerful tools for social change.

### A Pioneer of European Integration

After World War II, Weiss dedicated herself to the European project. She believed that only cooperation and unity could prevent future wars. In 1979, at the age of 86, she was elected as a Member of the first directly elected European Parliament. As its oldest member, she opened the inaugural session, symbolically linking the struggle for suffrage and peace with the new democratic European institution.

Today, the main European Parliament building in Strasbourg bears her name — a recognition of her lifelong commitment to democracy and European integration.

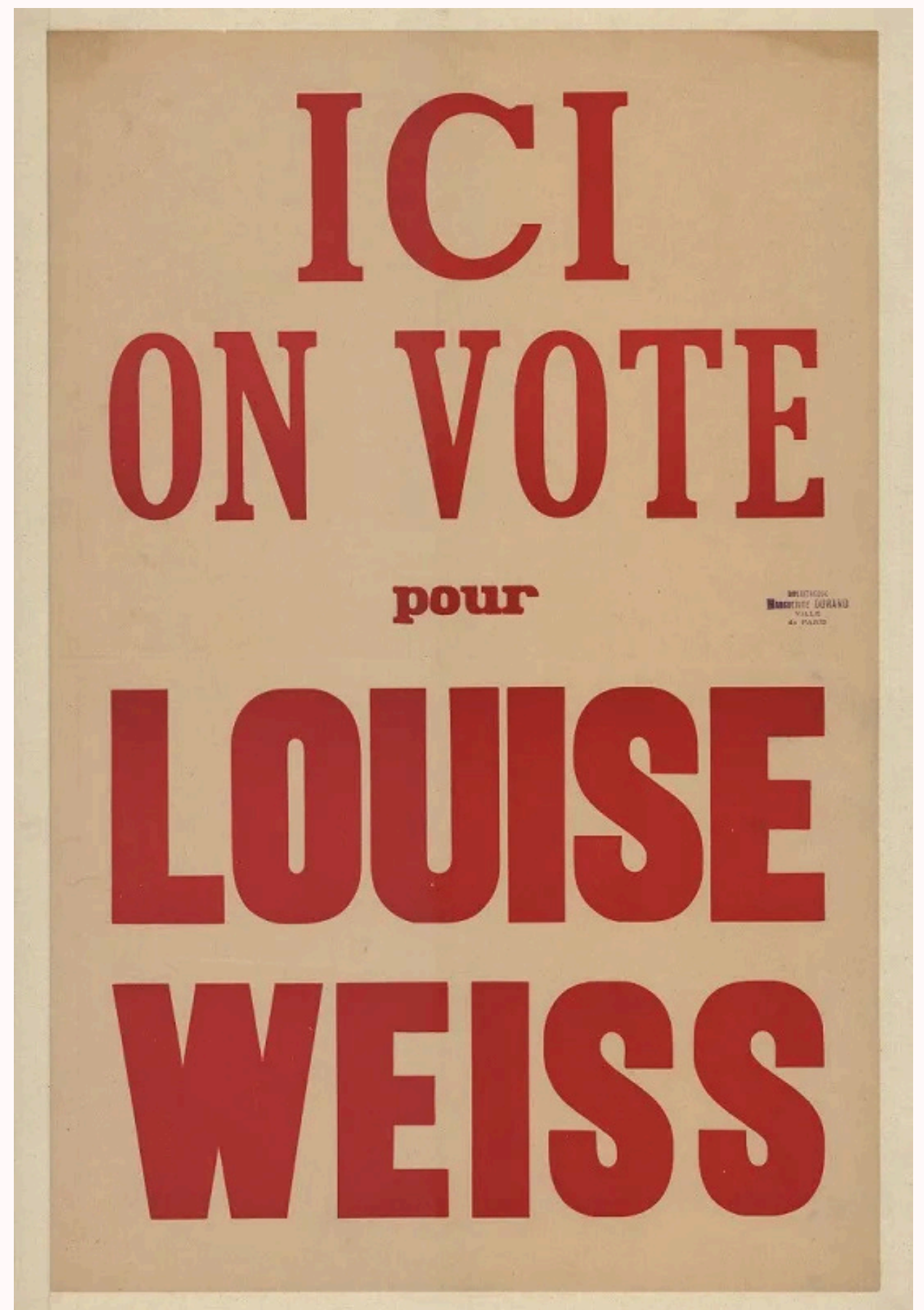
## Important Dates

- 1893 – Born in Arras, France
- 1918–1930s – Publishes L'Europe Nouvelle
- 1930s – Leads campaigns for women's suffrage in France
- 1944 – Women gain the right to vote in France
- 1979 – Elected Member of the European Parliament
- 1983 – Dies in Paris

## ★ Why Louise Weiss Matters Today

Louise Weiss remains relevant because she understood that democracy depends on participation, representation, and informed public debate. As a journalist, she demonstrated how media can shape political consciousness and promote international cooperation. As a suffragist, she fought to ensure women were recognised as full political citizens. And as a Member of the European Parliament, she embodied the link between national struggles for equality and the broader European project.

Her life shows that communication, civic courage, and political engagement are essential to sustaining democracy – values that resonate strongly with contemporary discussions on equality, European integration, and responsible media.



→ "Here we vote for Louise Weiss."

It is a suffrage-era political poster, most likely from the 1930s, when Louise Weiss was campaigning for women's right to vote in France.