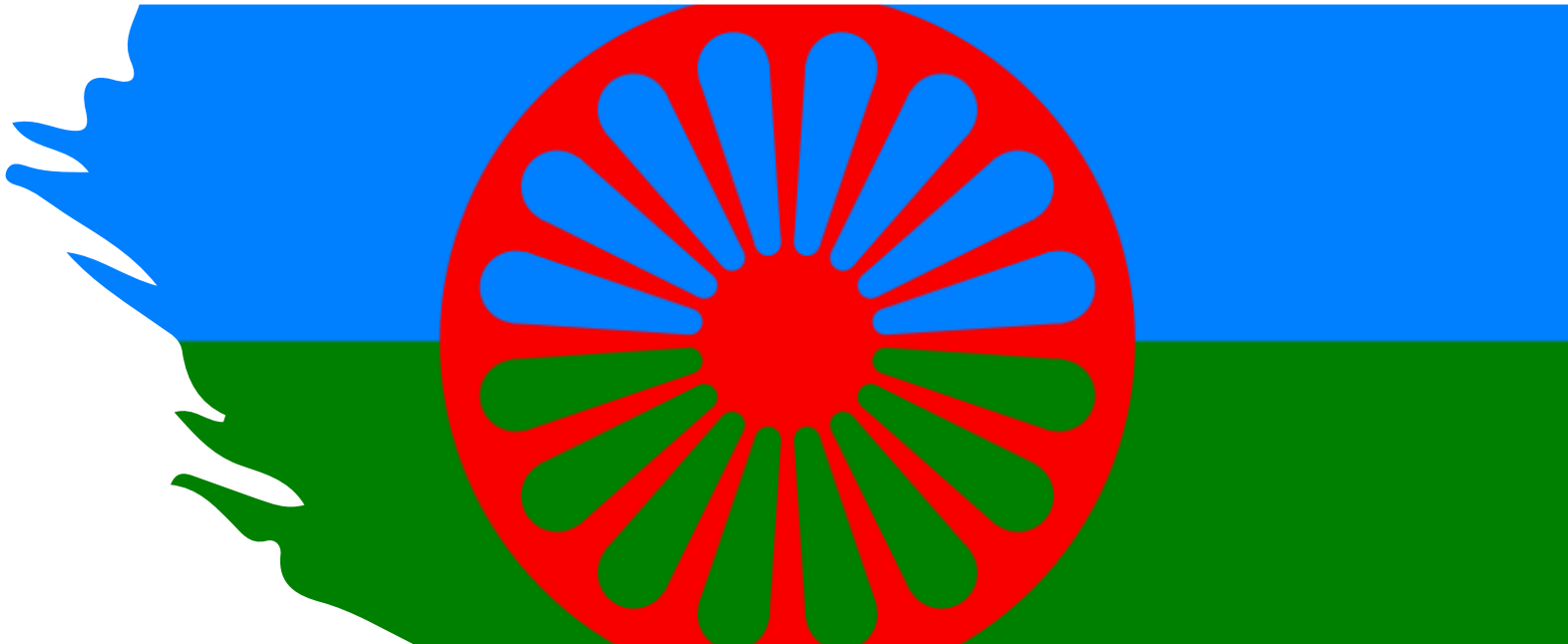
Sofya Kovalevskaya (1850-1891)



Sofya Kovalevskaya was a pioneering mathematician born in 1850 in Russia, at a time when girls were not allowed to attend university. From a young age, she showed a strong interest in mathematics, even covering the walls of her room with lecture notes to study. Because higher education was closed to women in Russia, Sofya had to find creative ways to continue learning. She entered a marriage of convenience so she could travel abroad, eventually studying in Germany under a famous mathematician. Even then, she was not allowed to attend lectures officially and had to study privately, showing remarkable determination to pursue her passion.

Despite these challenges, Sofya made ground breaking contributions to mathematics. She became one of the first women in the world to earn a doctorate in mathematics and produced important work on differential equations and mechanics. One of her most famous achievements was solving a complex problem about how objects rotate, known today as the "Kovalevskaya top." Her work was so respected that she became the first woman in modern Europe to be appointed as a professor of mathematics, teaching at Stockholm University in Sweden.

Sofya Kovalevskaya's life is a powerful example of perseverance in the face of discrimination. She not only advanced mathematical knowledge but also opened doors for women in education and science. Beyond mathematics, she was also a writer and supported social reform, showing her wide interests and commitment to improving society. Today, she is remembered as both a brilliant mathematician and a trailblazer who challenged the barriers facing women in the 19th century.