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"THE VOTE, THE VOTE, NOTHING BUT THE VOTE!"
A SURVEY OF PUBLIC AND PRESS REACTION
TO THE
WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN GREAT BRITAIN:
1906 - 1914

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
and the
Faculty of the College of Graduate Studies
University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Mary Jane Fout
June 1964

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PREFACE

The topic of the woman suffrage movement in Great Britain was suggested to me, no doubt, because I might resemble a suffragist, or perhaps even worse, I am "militant-minded". This study has been of great interest because the United States is presently experiencing a similar movement -- civil rights!

I would like to thank Dr. A. Stanley Trickett for his helpful suggestions, constructive criticisms, and endless patience. Also a special thanks is due Miss Ella Jane Dougherty of the Eugene Eppley Library staff who obtained through interlibrary loan so much of the material needed to complete my research. My husband's advice was always welcomed and for his help I am extremely grateful. My small daughter, Justine, will now be very happy to have a "mommy -- without a typewriter."

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CHAPTER I

THE INITIAL YEARS

The Right to Vote

The Times, the mighty organ of the London press, took no notice of a disturbance created by two young women during Sir Edward Grey's speech at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester on October 13, 1905. It should have! With their small banners inscribed with the same words they shouted, "Votes for Women!" Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney with this action set a precedent to be followed fervently by vote-seeking women for the next nine years. The actions of these young women and their followers would be ridiculed by press and public from the time of initiation until the outbreak of the World War, but a strident note of rebellion against the existing order was sounded by this "outrageous" act in Manchester.

"Votes for Women!" was the cry heralded in 1905, but in reality it had been a whisper in the wind since the late nineteenth century. In fact, the right for women to vote may be traced legally to medieval times when abbesses received summonses to attend the earliest parliaments.¹ Not only was

¹Roger Fulford, Votes for Women: the Story of a Struggle (London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1957), p. 20.

the privilege given to abbesses, but to women who were large landowners. Anne, Countess of Dorset, controlled elections in northern England from Skipton to Appleby during the reign of Charles II.² New ideas fostered by the French Revolution and the industrial revolution gave definite form to demands for feminine rights when Mary Wollstonecraft published A Vindication of the Rights of Women in 1792. "In this book the whole extent of the feminist idea is set out, and the whole claim for equal human rights is made. . . ."³ Mary Wollstonecraft emphasized boldly that women lacked education. Subjection in this respect by man created in women a lack of understanding for intellectual pursuits. Women were left only with a set of senseless social accomplishments. She asserted that equal rights would solve this dilemma. The rather irregular behavior of the authoress hindered the movement, and little suffrage literature was produced in the years following the Vindication supporting the claim of equal rights for women.

The women's suffrage movement was slightly revived with the publication of William Thompson's 234-page Appeal of One Half of the Human Race in 1825.

The Appeal was the first voice of a nineteenth-century man against the degradation of women and the first piece of literature written with a direct bearing on

²Ibid.

³Ray Strachey, The Cause: A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1928), p. 12. Hereafter cited as Strachey, The Cause.

suffrage legislation.⁴

It was written as a protest to James Mill's Article on Government which appeared in the 1824 Supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, wherein Mill denied political equality to women. Unfortunately for the suffrage cause and despite a brilliant rebuttal, Thompson, in his approach to equality for women, was convinced that the only way women could secure the vote was through acceptance of a "co-operative form of social order, in which, apparently, marriage should not exist."⁵

An enthusiastic reception did not meet the ideas ushered forth by William Thompson and Mary Wollstonecraft. The rank and file were not aware of their literary efforts. Even if woman suffrage had been supported, the masses had little voice in government in 1825. The following years, however, saw popular agitation for extension of the vote and the women's claims were, to a degree, included. The resulting reforms of 1832 broadened the franchise somewhat, but even after the passage of the Reform Bill less than a tenth of the total population, and not women, were allowed to vote in Parliamentary elections.⁶ In the Reform Bill of 1832 intro-

⁴Richard K. P. Pankhurst, William Thompson: Britain's Pioneer Socialist, Feminist, and Co-operator (London: Watts & Co., 1954), p. 94.

⁵Doris Mary Stenton, The English Women in History (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1957), p. 323.

⁶Elie Halevy, The Rule of Democracy, 1905-1914, Vol. VI: A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, trans. E. I. Watkin, (New York: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1961), p. 443.

duction of the word "male" instead of "man" was incorporated into the new franchise law.⁷ The ruling concluded the immediate possibility of women obtaining the vote. For the moment the wording stymied the movement and any mention of women suffrage in Parliament remained a matter which invoked laughter. A petition was presented to the reformed House of Commons by Henry "Orator" Hunt of Manchester, a long-time and well-known political agitator, setting forth the claims of women. It advocated that women should vote for members of Parliament if they possessed "the necessary pecuniary qualifications."⁸ Premonition of the ungallant reception, raucous laughter, should have been expected.

During the next thirty years little attention was given the suffrage question. The Chartist Movement, radical in its suggestions, breached universal suffrage. Chartism died leaving only ideas to be adopted, almost completely, at a much later date. The publication of a propaganda pamphlet in 1843 by Mrs. Henry Reid entitled A Plea for Women, establishment of the Sheffield Political Association (1851), a petition introduced by the Earl of Carlisle in the House of Lords in favor of female suffrage (1851), and an

⁷ Millicent Garrett Fawcett, "Woman Suffrage Movement", Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., Vol. XXVII, p. 787.

⁸ Caroline Ashurst Biggs, "Great Britain", Ch. LVI of Vol. III: History of Women Suffrage ed. by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joselyn Gage. (New York: Susan B. Anthony, 1886), p. 323.

act in 1857 which opened regular divorce procedures to men and women were the important events during these years. In 1858 the Englishwomen's Journal was started, dedicated "to focus the growing interests and aspirations of educated women. . . ."⁹

While Europe watched Prussia become the dominant partner in Germany through the defeat of Austria in 1866, the English were deeply embroiled in domestic affairs -- the question of giving the vote to working men! Agitation for this extension brought renewed interest in obtaining the vote for women. Strangely, one of the great supporters of feminine rights was John Stuart Mill who in this manner repudiated his father's stand on the subject of political representation. The son had come to the attention of the public with the publication of his pamphlet, Essay on Liberty, in 1859. In the general election of 1865, Mill was elected to Parliament as the member from Westminster. Women centered their hopes on him, and, on June 7, 1866, he presented a women's petition to Parliament. It was again received with with laughter. Mill then gave notice that he intended to introduce an amendment to the Reform Act whereby women would also be granted the vote. "On May 20, 1867, on clause 4 of the Representation of the People Act Mr. Mill moved to leave

⁹A. E. Metcalfe, Women's Effort: A Chronicle of British Women's Fifty Years' Struggle for Citizenship. (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1929), p. 2.

out the word 'man' and insert the word 'person.'¹⁰ The measure was defeated 73 votes (including pairs, 81) for and 194 against.¹¹

The ladies displayed remarkable tenacity and were not totally dismayed by this defeat. Moreover one could say that their efforts were doubled. They turned next to the courts to test "Lord Romilly's Act" (13 and 14. Vict.). This act provided for shortening the language used in Parliamentary acts. The words that interested the women were those that stated that any words in the masculine gender should include females unless specifically expressed otherwise.¹² With this reasoning to bolster their arguments, and nothing to the contrary in the Act of 1867, women throughout England attempted to have their names placed on voter registration lists. Four cases for appeal were placed before the Court of Common Pleas in November, 1868. The most famous of these was Chorlton v. Lings. It was pleaded by Mr. J. D. Coleridge and Dr. Richard Marsden Pankhurst, prominent lawyers, for over 5,000 Manchester women householders on November 7, 1868. The Times, in a definitely enlightened lead article of November 2, 1868, admitted that "the nation would be 'formally and in the light of day committing itself, through its judicial tribunal, to the dangerous doctrine that representation need not go along with taxation.'¹³ The

¹⁰Biggs, p. 842.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Metcalf, p. 5.

courts "interpreted the law against the women, -- 'they are disqualified neither intellectually nor morally, but legally.'¹⁴

Other cases were summarily dismissed as the Court contended that the issue had been decided in Chorlton v. Linga.¹⁵

Not to be thwarted, Miss Lydia Becker, with the encouragement of Dr. Pankhurst and others, formed a committee in Manchester to promote the enfranchisement of women.¹⁶ This group eventually became the National Society for Women's Suffrage. Committees sprang up simultaneously in various communities of Great Britain and Ireland. Along with groups in London, Edinburgh, Bristol, Birmingham, Belfast and Dublin, forty smaller towns also founded similar societies.¹⁷

Following their defeat in the courts, an early victory was scored by the suffragists and their enthusiasm was immensely heightened. In 1869 women taxpayers were granted the right to vote in municipal elections.¹⁸ On the municipal level and in questions of control of their personal rights, the situation of women continually improved. Forster's

¹⁴Dr. Kaethe Schirmacher, The Modern Woman's Rights Movement: A Historical Survey, trans. Carl Conrad Eckhardt (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), p. 62.

¹⁵Biggs, p. 844.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 841-2.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 841.

¹⁸The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 had inserted wording similar to that of the Reform Bill of 1832 denying women the right to vote on the municipal level. This was changed as mentioned in the text by the Municipal Franchise Bill of 1869.

Education Bill of 1870 allowed women householders to vote in schoolboard elections. An even more favorable development, authorized in the same bill, was the provision that women could sit as members of schoolboards. For the unfortunate propertied, married woman, who was "under the protection of her husband, . . . without redress against assault, libel, fraud, or other harm," the situation also improved. Heretofore "she had no right in her children, her earnings or property by gift or inheritance,"¹⁹ but with passage of the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, she was guaranteed the right to keep the earnings of her financial holdings.²⁰

Strongholds crumpled slowly, and the continual delays discouraged many. The women were often disgruntled, especially as a series of Bills between 1870 and 1897 which provided for woman suffrage failed to receive serious consideration. Typical was the fate of the Women's Disabilities Removal Act drafted by Dr. Pankhurst and introduced into the House of Commons in 1870 by Mr. Jacob Bright. Given a second reading by a majority vote, the bill "was killed in committee by Mr. Gladstone's preemptory orders."²¹

Perhaps the reasons for these constant failures was

¹⁹E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement: an Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1932), p. 48. Hereafter cited as The Suffragette Movement.

²⁰Biggs, p. 893.

²¹Emmeline Pankhurst, My Own Story (New York: Hearst's International Library Co., 1914), p. 11.

the limited social circle from which the promoters and supporters of the bill were drawn. Their contact with the masses was still quite limited. The women moved in radical, intellectual circles and gained their support from members of a like society unaware of the hostility of the general public toward their movement. Whatever small press coverage the suffrage societies received, the reports were filled with mockery and ridicule. Such denouncements were difficult to combat. Encouragement to continue with their struggle came when the right to vote was granted women in far-off Wyoming in the United States.²² A greater impetus came, from somewhat closer to their own shores, when the Isle of Man was empowered to enfranchise women landowners whose annual property value was £4 of higher.²³ News of such victories led to public demonstrations in Manchester and London in February of 1880.²⁴ The public, however, took only a casual interest in the proceedings. Middle class males, and their womenfolk, were still enjoying the fruits of their own emancipation and were not overly excited by the struggles of others.

²²Helen Blackburn, "Great Britain: Efforts for the Parliamentary Franchise", Ch. LXXIII of Vol. IV: The History of Women Suffrage 1833-1900 ed. Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper. (New York: Susan B. Anthony, 1902), p. 998.

²³Ibid., p. 1025.

²⁴Millicent Garrett Fawcett, "The Women's Suffrage Movement", The Women Question in Europe: A Series of Original Essays ed. Theodor Stanton (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1884), p. 24.

Men maintained that a woman could not stand the harassment and "rough-housing" that occurred at the polling booths during the mid-nineteenth century. "The voter publicly stated his wishes and was jeered or cheered according to the fancy of the motley crowd assembled in the booth."²⁵ Shortly thereafter such actions were disallowed in the passage of the Ballot Act of 1872 which guaranteed privacy while voting. Even with these improvements, women were considered far too frail to participate in the roughness of an election. However, with the passage of the Corrupt Practices Act of 1883, both major political parties suddenly discovered that women could be political assets. Paid canvassers of elections were ruled illegal. The need to find volunteer canvassers became apparent.²⁶ Surprisingly men no longer objected to women becoming involved in the rough and tumble of politics and women were soon included in the discussions and decisions regarding policies whereby the public might be appealed to by the respective parties. Still unable to penetrate the barriers surrounding the ballot box, many women after 1883 were enrolled in the women auxiliary groups formed by the Liberal and Conservative parties. Established in

²⁵Fulford, p. 64.

²⁶Millicent Garrett Fawcett, "Progress of Women's Movement in the United Kingdom (1900-1920)", Ch. LI of Vol. VI: The History of Woman Suffrage (1900-1920) ed. Ida Husted Harper (New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922), pp. 725-26.

1885, the Primrose League,²⁷ the Conservative affiliation for women, was under tight male supervision. Its organization "seemed to derive inspiration from Freemasonry and that strange underworld of Buffaloes, Rechabites and Oddfellows."²⁸ The Women's Liberal Federation was founded in the same year. It was devoted to promotion of liberal principles. Of the two, the Liberal organization was more inclined to support the woman suffrage movement. Mrs. Pankhurst in her propagandistic book, My Own Story, claimed:

The promise of the Federation was that by allying themselves with men in party politics, women would soon earn the right to vote. The avidity with which the women swallowed this promise, left off working for themselves, and threw themselves in the men's work was amazing.²⁹

This explanation seems plausible as inclusion of provisions for votes for women could be included in the reform bills that were to be introduced in 1884.³⁰

Every year after 1870, except in 1876, a bill to extend the franchise to women had been discussed.³¹ Likewise,

²⁷Women were assigned the unprecedented recognition as co-operating with men on equal footing for political purposes. It does not promote special measures but lays down for its principle the Maintenance of Religion, of the Estates of the Realm and of the Imperial Ascendancy of the British Empire, thus indicating the conservative tendency." As quoted from Blackburn, p. 1012.

²⁸Fulford, p. 94.

²⁹Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 14.

³⁰Biggs, p. 877.

³¹Metcalf, p. 11.

further extension of married women's rights gave women the privilege of separate ownership.³² This, plus growing extension of rights at the municipal level, caused supporters to be confident that in this latest effort the franchise would be broadened to include women. William Woodall, the women's representative in Commons, introduced the measure on November 19, 1884. He called for enfranchisement to be extended to unmarried women and widows. Despite the limited demands put forth by Woodall, only men who paid rent and taxes, on a more liberal basis than in 1867, were given the right to vote. Discussion of the women's amendment was stalled five times and, finally, because of the strong opposition of Gladstone, Woodall's measure was defeated.³³ The turn of the century would come and go before such an opportune moment came again.

After the defeat of 1884 women could vote in none but municipal elections, where few had any real interest. They wanted to participate in "the great consultations of the people which were milestones in the history of the nation."³⁴ They were restricted, and many felt doomed to exercise the vote only at the municipal level. It was at this level, however, that they made their greatest gains and where their morale was bolstered. These achievements spurred them to greater efforts at the national level. In 1888 women were given the vote in

³²Blackburn, p. 1022.

³³Biggs, p. 888. For an accurate, detailed account see pp. 877-91.

³⁴Halevy, p. 514.

elections for Councillors to the county councils.³⁵ By 1895 women were given the vote in district and parish council elections.³⁶ They even gained the right to sit on the local boards of education.³⁷

The gains of the eighteen-nineties led to uniting of many of the independent suffrage societies throughout the British Isles under the title -- the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

The declared policy of this Union was to place the question "in such a position that no Government, of whatever party, (should) be able to touch questions relating to representation without at the same time removing the electoral disabilities of women."³⁸

The noble resolution and the determined efforts of the society members were to no avail. An 1897 suffrage bill was circumvented by the government's preparation for the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee,³⁹ and female enfranchisement aspirations were postponed for another seven years.

³⁵Blackburn, p. 1022.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., p. 1023.

³⁸Metcalf, p. 17.

³⁹The debates surrounding the proposition of extension of the vote to women were often completely ridiculous, and insulting by their pure banality. The intellectual degree of some debates were questionable. A good example was found in the discussions of 1893 when "Lord Percy was to be matched by an imperial trumpeter of grandiloquent proportions, who pointed to the vast weight of the great British empire resting on man. . . . In the course of his speech he asked who founded the glorious British Empire. In ringing tones he answered 'Man'. He quoted Daniel Webster, the American statesman, about the morning drum beat which 'encircles the earth with the unbroken strain of the martial airs of

The wearisome constitutional processes of drawing up memorials and getting petitions signed did not attract great popular support during the period from 1897 to 1904. England's involvement in the Boer War was partially responsible. During the period, however, new tones developed in the suffrage movement. Noting the successful strike of working women in the Bryant and May match factories in 1886, leaders of the women's movement decided to appeal to the working class women to join in their struggle.⁴⁰ Recognizing that the feminine intelligentsia were not universally loved, nor admired; it was felt that working women, clamoring for the right to vote in order to improve their standards of living, might make a deeper impression on the general public. A new motivation and inspiration was sought to fire the dull, constitutional struggle. Emmeline Pankhurst describes the actions of this period as follows:

It was in October, 1903, that I invited a number of women to my house in Nelson street, Manchester, for purposes of organisation. We voted to call our new society the Women's Social and Political Union, partly to emphasise its democracy, and partly to define its object as political rather than propagandist. We resolved to limit our membership exclusively to women, to keep ourselves absolutely free from any party affiliation, and to be satisfied with nothing but action on

of England,' and again he answered that the drum was beaten by man. 'Who safeguarded us in our sea-girl isle?' 'Man.' And then he rose to his mighty climax -- 'What is the outcome of all these unceasing and ever-increasing labours of man?' And before he could make his answer the perpetrating voice of Mr. William Allen -- the Radical Member for Gateshead -- shouted, 'Children'.' As quoted in Fulford, p. 89.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 100.

our question. Deeds, not words, was to be our permanent motto.⁴¹

The members of the Women's Social and Political Union spent their formative years following the "wakes" that travelled from village to village making suffrage speeches to the crowds that gathered.⁴² With home base in the Manchester house of the widow Pankhurst, the society waited for its opportunity to make itself heard.

It was with the Liberal party's campaign in the general elections in 1906 that the fuse was lighted. The original Women's Enfranchisement Bill drafted by Dr. Pankhurst was adopted by the Independent Labour Party and introduced by its representative in the House of Commons, Mr. Bamford Slack.⁴³ In late 1905 Slack's bill came up for its second reading. Two women, Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Elizabeth C. Wolstenholm-Elmy waited in the Stranger's Lobby with high hopes, yet expecting the worst. It came!

The promoters of the Roadway Lighting Bill were allowed to "talk out" our bill. They did this by spinning out the debate with silly stories and foolish jokes. The members listened to the insulting performance with laughter and applause.⁴⁴

The women in the lobby heard the news with dismay. Mrs. Pankhurst called the other women in the lobby together. They

⁴¹ Emmeline Pankhurst, p1 38.

⁴² A wake, peculiar to Lancashire, was a type of travelling fair.

⁴³ Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 42. ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

followed her to the Broad Sanctuary near Westminster Abbey. After a few mild speeches, but considered quite inflammatory when delivered by women, the ladies adopted a resolution condemning the Government's action in allowing a minority to "talk out" their precious bill.⁴⁵ Without fanfare and with due provocation, the first militant action had taken place.

Education

Before a discussion of the crusade for women's political rights can be continued, some review of a parallel movement to advance women's educational opportunities is necessary. It was in this area that the first successful campaign was conducted to equalize the opportunity of women to men. The deplorable condition of women's education was recognized only by a few. To avoid being charity cases or spending the rest of their lives as useless spinsters, women stepped into the business world to earn money for their own keep. The professions open to her in the mid-nineteenth century were extremely limited. One had either the choice of becoming a governess or a dressmaker.⁴⁶ The salaries were a mere pittance, but when this step was taken, it was a monumental step forward. With more governesses teaching on the elementary level in the homes, educated parents of young girls

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Vera M. Brittain, Lady into woman: a history of women from Victoria to Elizabeth II (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953), p. 20. Hereafter cited as Lady into woman.

sought qualified secondary institutions for their daughters. With a sounder elementary background, the teachers could not afford to have their pupils surpass them academically. In order to prepare themselves, teachers needed local training schools to attend so that they could keep pace with the latest developments in education. Teachers were then needed to staff the training schools as well. When the "round-robin" reached this level, the question was also asked:

Could the latter be refused the advantage of a university education? If not, girls of good family whose brothers were undergraduates of Oxford or Cambridge?⁴⁷

Building to the apex of the pyramid took nearly the last half of the nineteenth century to accomplish.

Under the guidance of F. D. Maurice, Professor at King's College, and Charles Kingsley, both prominent Christian Socialists, Queen's College was established in 1848 as part of the University of London. Financial support was given by the Church of England.⁴⁸ In the next year and at the same institution Bedford College came into existence. It lacked the same patronage, but nevertheless, it was established for advancing women's educational opportunity. A royal charter was obtained in 1853 which signified "the first formal public sanction given in modern times to the principle that the education of Englishwomen was not less important or less

⁴⁷Halovy, p. 500.

⁴⁸J. A. R. Marriott, Modern England 1885-1945 (4th ed. reprint; London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1952), p. 319.

worthy of honor than of men. . . .⁴⁹

In the plan of attack the next educational fortresses to be invaded were Oxford and Cambridge universities. Cambridge capitulated first. The local examinations, which had been set up by Cambridge originally to raise the level of middle-class instruction, were the primary goal. In order to set a standard for the mushrooming girls' schools throughout the country, it became obvious that female students had to be admitted to the local examination so that their educational status might be judged in comparison with that of those coming from boys' schools. Miss Emily Davies, a long-time advocate of the need for education for women, agitated successfully for such a program and the examinations were opened to girls in 1865. Four years later a women's college was organized at Cambridge, established permanently in 1873 at Girton, several miles outside the city. In 1875 Newnham College was established at Cambridge.⁵⁰ Such a development did not go unnoticed at Oxford. Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville Hall were founded at Oxford in 1879.⁵¹ These newly formed colleges attracted a plentiful crop of students from the recently organized secondary girls' schools.⁵²

⁴⁹As quoted from the article "Personal Recollections of Women's Education," in Nineteenth Century by Lady Stanley of Alderley in Maria G. Grey, "The Woman's Educational Movement," Ch. II: Woman Question in Europe, p. 32.

⁵⁰Blackburn, p. 1024.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 1024

⁵²One of the greatest of these was the Cheltenham Ladies' College founded in 1854 and headed by Miss Dorothea Beale.

Later women education was furthered at the universities by the establishment of Alexandria College, Dublin (1881), Queen's Institute, Dublin (1880), and in 1881 by establishment of a Women's Department at the King's College, London. All was not smooth sailing! The medical schools provided the drawback. With the woman's experience as a midwife and nurse there seemed nothing more natural than that they should enter the medical profession. The opposition to this move was fierce. Perhaps Halevy, the prominent French historian, put his finger on the root of the opposition. It was "a question of professional interest. The doctors who were powerfully organized and regarded medicine as a commercial profession were defending a lucrative monopoly."⁵³ During the eighties, five young ladies, under the leadership of Sophia Jex Blake, fought to remain at the College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. Riots of serious consequences conducted by male students were followed by a petition from these same students seeking to exclude the ladies from the lectures.⁵⁴ The women were not totally defeated, however, even though they were forced to withdraw from the College of Surgeons. After several other disheartening rejections from other medical schools, victory of sorts came in 1874 when a school of medicine for women was established in London. It became affiliated with the Royal Free Hospital in 1877. For many years, it was the

⁵³Halevy, p. 502.

⁵⁴There is a very vivid account of the riots in The Woman Question in Europe, pp. 76-77.

policy of many of the larger London hospitals to refuse women medical students admittance to their schools.

Progress in educational opportunities for women was recorded in many other places and the level of women's education was raised considerably. The urgent need for teachers of quality led to the founding of training colleges for women teachers.⁵⁵

Woman's Changing Place in the World

The advances in the area of educational opportunities made little "front-page publicity" for they were the slow culmination of the efforts of many years. Slow as the advances were, each victory was a forward move. It remained for a few brave and adventurous women to crash the traditional barriers and force the public-at-large to take notice of the intellectual capabilities of women. Harriet Martineau, a famous journalist; Dr. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, one of the first women doctors and later one of the first popularly elected mayoresses; plus women who were established in the literary world, and countless others, helped in this advancement.⁵⁶ The greatest public acclaim was given to Florence Nightingale who broke the restraining confinements of nineteenth-century spinsterhood and made of her life an example

⁵⁵One of the first established in 1878 was a Training College for Teachers in Middle and Higher Schools for Girls adjacent to the Bishopsgate Middle Class School for Girls which also served as a practicing school.

⁵⁶See short section "Eminent Women" in Biggs, pp. 865-69.

for other women to follow. Fulford in Votes for Women points this out dramatically:

Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War, who, in a single spectacular flash, was able to lighten a dark corner of the human mind. Taking advantage of her achievement other women were able to illumine the road which led away from kitchen and scullery, from needle and wash tub towards a professional life.⁵⁷

Admittedly Florence Nightingale was not interested in the question of votes for women. She felt that women were not interested enough to participate in the electoral process. They did not have the stamina to break the confinements of their homes and follow her through the entangling barriers to do something useful.⁵⁸ She was guilty of underestimating her own sex's determination and will.

Occupations for women were increasing -- store clerks, secretaries, telegraphists, and nurses. With these innovations in job opportunities, and with additional fields constantly opening to the women, the attitude toward them underwent a gradual, if hesitating, change.

The Women's Movement was still a long way from being popular or triumphant; its advocates were still considered cranks and oddities, but the ordinary average women, for whose benefit the whole thing primarily existed, were rapidly moving in the right direction.⁵⁹

As women played an ever larger part in the life of the nation the hope for women's suffrage grew -- "the thin edge of the wedge was in place."⁶⁰

⁵⁷Fulford, p. 41.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 50.

⁵⁹Strachey, The Cause, p. 248.

⁶⁰Ibid.

Public and Press Reaction

During the initial phase of the struggle, the press generally omitted any mention of suffrage news, and few letters to the editors on the subject were printed. This undermined the endeavor for:

between John Stuart Mill's Woman Suffrage Amendment in Parliament in 1866 and the foundation of the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903, enormous petitions had been organized and supported by nearly 1,400 public meetings which included nine great demonstrations in the largest halls of the chief towns.⁶¹

When the changes were being made in the Married Women's Property laws, the Saturday Review did not understand why "un-injured wives" needed their property. Furthermore, the journal continued, "There is besides a smack of selfish independence about it which rather jars with poetical notions of wedlock."⁶²

British newspapers and periodicals, generally noted for propagating discussion of controversial issues in letters to the editor columns and through editorials, were not inclined to discuss this until about 1867. In 1851 the Sheffield society drew up a petition for the Earl of Carlise to present to the House of Lords, one journal commented that the opposition's attitude of "it has always been so" was invalid, for it was an English tradition "that taxation and repre-

⁶¹Vere N. Brittain, Pethick-Lawrence. A Portrait (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963), p. 42.

⁶²Strechey, The Cause, p. 75.

sentation should be co-extensive.⁶³ Although logical, the soundness of this argument, and many like it, collided headlong with the thought patterns of the era. Letters of this kind appeared after John Stuart Mill's amendment received wide attention. A typical observation was:

This then, is the way I would have women attain the vote--I would have them PAY FOR IT.⁶⁴

The writer further suggested that this could be done by paying five hundred dollars over a twenty-five period and in this way buying the vote!⁶⁵ Another gentleman asserted that military responsibilities were the real voter qualification and observed that women were physically ill-equipped to wage war. "The bullet and the ballot should go together."⁶⁶ "An earnest and thoughtful Christian woman" admonished suffragists for clamoring to share the privileges of man, saying one must be prepared to be content with "manly daughters" and even worse, "manly" women.⁶⁷

There were occasional objections by male correspondents to such ideas. J. E. Cairnes felt that by giving women the vote the relation of a woman to her family would not be

⁶³ Mrs. Taylor, "Enfranchisement of Women," Westminster Review, 55 (July, 1851), 151.

⁶⁴ T. G. Shearman, "A Woman's Thoughts about Voting," The Nation, IV (February 14, 1867), 136.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ A. Hooper, "Reasons Why Women Should Vote," The Nation, V (November 21, 1867), 417.

⁶⁷ S. F. Cooper, "A Letter to the Christian Women of America," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XLI (August, 1870), 446.

harmed. This would matter least of all to her husband, for "to argue that . . . a new source of profound common interest for husband and wife must of necessity weaken the bond, is, in my opinion, to evince a singular inability to appreciate the real dangers now besetting the institution."⁶⁸

In support of the many suffragists who maintained that newspapers suppressed news of the suffrage agitation, the following observation might well be cited. "The popular interest in it, if we may judge from the newspapers and from private conversation, has all but died out."⁶⁹ To dispute the lack of interest in women's suffrage and demonstrate that the issue was still of major interest to the public, Nineteenth Century published in 1889 a "protest against the enfranchisement for women", signed by 104 well-known society women.⁷⁰ Within a two week period two thousand names were collected and six hundred of these published in the Fortnightly Review, containing the names of women in intellectual circles.⁷¹ Also included on this list were the names of women and men who were successful in the professions.⁷² The issue still had a breath of life!

The widely-read London newspaper, The Times, opposed

⁶⁸J. E. Cairnes, "Woman Suffrage as Affecting the Family," Popular Science Monthly, VI (November, 1874), 87.

⁶⁹E. L. Gookin, "The Last Report of the Women Suffragists," The Nation, 29 (October 30, 1879), 287.

⁷⁰Blackburn, p. 1014.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 1015.

⁷²Metcalf, p. 12.

women suffrage from its inauguration. "It missed no opportunity of damaging the women's cause. . . ."⁷³ The Manchester Guardian, a widely-circulated and widely-read provincial paper of liberal orientation, adopted the opposite viewpoint. Under the influence of its famous editor, C. P. Scott, that newspaper surmised that the admission of women to the ranks of voters would only be a matter of time.⁷⁴ It was, however, one of the very few important dailies supporting the cause of woman suffrage.

With the majority of journalistic publications opposing women suffrage, and the bulk of the population standing against them, the suffragists had a long, arduous struggle before them. Despite the unfavorable odds, many women were still willing to struggle for what they believed were their rights. The scandalous nature of the disturbance created by Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney in 1905, when it was still a novelty for women to adorn a platform and never the practice for them to address a mixed audience, opened a new, and more colorful phase, in the crusade -- and one that was destined to be covered by the press. For better, or for worse, the struggle came to be more in the public eye. The country could not help but notice militant women. In the minds of these women was the hope that the public and the press would,

⁷³Ray Strachey, Millicent Garrett Fawcett (London: John Murray, 1931), p. 310.

⁷⁴Fulford, p. 62.

after noticing them, be converted to their viewpoint. The right of women to participate in their nation's affairs, domestic and foreign, through the vote in parliamentary elections was, they felt, worth crusading for.

CHAPTER II

ENTER MILITANCY (1906-1907)

Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst and the Women's Social and Political Union

Mrs. Pankhurst realized, to the horror of many women, that approaching men "in a ladylike and supplicatory manner . . . would never give you what you wanted, they would put you off for ever."¹ Born Emmeline Goulden, she was reared in an enlightened fashion, the favorite of her father even though she was only a girl. Uncle Tom's Cabin was her favorite bedtime story and she observed from an early age the gross inequalities of the world. Revolted at the idea of being educated merely in "making home attractive"--presumably to migratory male relatives" and dejected by her father's wishful thinking that success would have been hers had she only been born a lad, Emmeline was doomed in her own mind to a life of boredom and frustration.² At fifteen she was allowed to travel to Paris and attend a pioneer institution in

¹George Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England (1910-1914) (New York: Capricorn Books, 1961), p. 152.

²Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 6.

secondary education for girls. Exhausting the course of studies, she returned to Manchester and shortly thereafter married Dr. Richard Marsden Pankhurst, a lawyer, many years her senior.

As Dr. Pankhurst did not want his wife to become a "household machine", she devoted some of her time to community affairs.³ Although four children were born in quick succession,⁴ she managed to campaign for the extension of the right for women to vote in municipal affairs. Venturing on several occasions into the world of finance, she brought the family to the brink of bankruptcy. During the period of her business ventures, she rented a big house at 8 Russell Square, Manchester, where "Radicals, Socialists, Fabians and Agnostics gathered . . . , free-thinkers and libertarians of every school and country."⁵ Her children waxed in a stimulating, although somewhat different atmosphere to that of an average Victorian home. These early contacts made thinkers of them all. When Dr. Pankhurst became ill, and the debts incurred by unwise business transactions mounted, the family was forced to move to humbler residence at 62 Nelson Street. In

³Ibid., p. 13.

⁴"Four children were born to her within five years; the first Christabel Harriette in September 1880; myself, Estelle Sylvia, in May 1881; Henry Francis Robert, in February 1884, and Adela Constantia Mary, in June 1885." As quoted from E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst: The Suffragette Struggle for Women's Citizenship (London: T. Werner Laurie, Ltd., 1935), p. 18. Hereafter cited Life of Emmeline⁵Ibid., p. 24.

1898 Dr. Pankhurst died, which forced Mrs. Pankhurst to seek work, and she obtained a position in the offices of the Registrar of Births and Deaths in Manchester.⁶

Five years later she founded a women's organization so that she could enter more actively into the struggle for votes for women. She drew upon a new element for her organization. "Almost all the women who were present on that original occasion were working-women, Members of the Labour Movement, but it was decided from the first that the Union should be entirely independent of Class and Party."⁷ The group at first adopted the title of Women's Labour Representation Committee, but Mrs. Pankhurst's eldest daughter vetoed the idea.⁸ Instead the title "The Women's Social and Political Union" was originated. As indicated in the title, the original purpose was to include work in the social field, as well as the political. Organizationally the Women's Social and Political Union had no rules, constitution or by-laws. It was "simply a suffrage army in the field."⁹

The first headquarters in Manchester proved inadequate

⁶ Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 31.

⁷ E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette: The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement 1905-1910 (New York: Sturgis & Walton Company, 1911), p. 7. Hereafter cited as The Suffragette.

⁸ "Christabel did not at that time attach any importance to her mother's project. . . ." As quoted from E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 168.

⁹ Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 59.

being far out of the reach of government circles, and the family organization moved to London. They became firmly entrenched at Clements Inn. Members were not strictly supervised, and it was recognized "that there must be no concerts, no theatres, no smoking; work, and sleep to prepare us for more work, was the unwritten order of the day."¹⁰

Other than the Pankhurst triumverate; Emmeline, Christabel ("the Anointed One"),¹¹ and Sylvia; members of the organization who achieved prominence of sorts were Annie Kenney, a former Lancashire millhand, Mrs. Flora Drummond (the General), Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, former social workers, Mrs. Billington-Grieg and Mrs. Charlotte Despard.¹² Of those listed perhaps the most important to the Women's Social and Political Union were the Pethick-Lawrences.

While the Pankhursts were brilliant in many ways they had no idea how to handle money. "Theirs was the guerilla method of political warfare. It became my Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence's business to give their genius a solid foundation."¹³ Under the business and financial knowledge and direction of Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, the society prospered. The Lawrences

¹⁰Annie Kenney, Memories of a Militant (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1924), p. 110.

¹¹Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, My Part in a Changing World (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1938), p. 151.

¹²For a good, but brief, biographical listing of suffrage and anti-suffrage leaders see Fulford, "Biographical Index", pp. 308-27.

¹³Pethick-Lawrence, p. 52.

served many other functions than those already mentioned. In fact, it was in the Pethick-Lawrences' apartments at Clements Inn that the Women's Social and Political Union took its London home. Christabel Pankhurst boarded there for five years (1907-1912). The official organ of the militants, Votes for Women, saw the Pethick-Lawrences assume another important position, that of editors-in-chief.

The Split

By the time the society reached London it had a very meager form of organization. The Pankhursts resented any attempts to saddle the Union with too firm a set of rules and regulations. There were three committees of importance -- organization, ruling and emergency. Members of the organization and ruling committees agitated for stronger control by the many, rather than a few top people, and it was this agitation which created the first ripples of dissension. Mrs. Despard and her associate, Theresa Billington-Grieg, disliked the autocratic leanings of the society. Most of the trouble became apparent when Christabel arrived in London and assumed the position of Organizing Secretary. Her methods were high-handed and she demanded that her co-workers agree completely with her ideas. Coupled with this, Theresa Billington Grieg, a Manchester elementary school teacher, lost her job as the organizer in London upon Christabel's arrival. Perhaps the provinces did not suit Mrs. Billington-Grieg, and

this underlying resentment combined with questions of who would make policy decisions led to friction. "Should it be decided by a full vote of delegates who would elect an executive committee at our annual conference, or by virtually dictated by the movement's founders?"¹⁴

Rumor that a coup was in the making caused Mrs. Pankhurst to take a very important step. She announced dramatically at an Emergency Committee meeting on September 10, 1907 that:

- 1) The committee would at once proceed to the election of a new committee.
- 2) The conference would be abandoned.
- 3) The Constitution would be annulled.¹⁵

In disbelief certain members listened to Mrs. Pankhurst's announcement of her virtual dictatorship. Refusing to pledge loyalty to Mrs. Pankhurst and the Women's Social and Political Union, Mrs. Despard and others supporting secession withdrew from the society.¹⁶ For a while the secessionists claimed themselves to be the original society, but this was soon changed as any connection with an organization tainted by autocracy while pleading for equal rights for women, seemed incongruent. Thus, titling themselves the Women's Freedom League, the new society was "organized on a 'democratic' ba-

¹⁴Brittain, Pethick-Lawrence, p. 50.

¹⁵Fulford, p. 164.

¹⁶"In Unshackled Christabel records. . . . 'The idea of diverting attention from the cause to constitution-making, struck me as incongruous.'" As quoted in Brittain, Pethick-Lawrence, p. 50.

sis," while the Women's Social and Political Union "was willing to leave the initiative and responsibility in the hands of its leader."¹⁷ In a reorganization shuffle the Women's Social and Political Union appointed new officers. Mrs. Pankhurst remained the Founder and Honorary Secretary; Mrs. Take, Joint Honorary Secretary; Miss Christabel Pankhurst, Organizing Secretary, and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, Honorary Treasurer.¹⁸

The Union lost very capable leaders in Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Billington-Grieg and Mrs. How-Martyn, a teacher and later member of the Middlesex County Council. As leaders of the Women's Freedom League, they developed many remarkable innovations in the suffrage struggle and received wide publicity in the press. The W. S. P. U. suffered further because the "refusal of votes in their own organization to women struggling for the rights of citizenship" appeared incompatible with their ultimate aims.¹⁹

As the militant activities increased daily, the non-militant suffrage supporters needed a means of distinguishing themselves while totally disassociating themselves from the

¹⁷Metcalfe, p. 19.

¹⁸The auditors for the W.S.P.U. were Messrs. Sayers and Wesson of 29 Hanover Square; bankers were Barclays on 19 Fleet Street. The telephone number was Holborn 2724 (three lines) and the telegraphic address--Wospola London. Fulford, p. 167.

¹⁹E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Life of Emmeline, p. 70.

"disgraceful" behavior of militants. Rather than tediously differentiate daily between the militant suffragists and the constitutional suffragists, the Press referred to the more violent as the "suffragettes". This ending "brand[ed] them with the implications of pettiness which seems inseparable from words ending in that fashion."²⁰

Mrs. Fawcett and the Suffragists

The constitutional suffragists could see the value of the Pankhursts and the Women's Social and Political Union. Although the suffragists represented the historic tradition in the women's suffrage question, they realized that the approach used by the militants brought life to the issue. They also deplored the new organization's barrage of government and public, fearing that the foundations which had been so carefully laid over a fifty year period would be demolished by unwise actions. These suffragists generally belonged to the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies led by Mrs. Henry Fawcett.

Having more prestige in Liberal government circles than Mrs. Pankhurst, Mrs. Fawcett was accepted socially by everyone.²¹ Widowed at an early age, she was left with a daughter,

²⁰Fulford, p. 139.

²¹Her eldest sister, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, had been one of the first women qualified to practice medicine in England, and under the County and Boroughs Council Act of 1907 (which provided that women, either because of sex or marriage could not be barred from being elected to county or

Phillipa. Henry Fawcett, her husband, a professor following a brilliant student career at Cambridge, was, at one time, a Member of Parliament and held the post of Postmaster-General in one of the Gladstone ministries (1880-4). After assuming office, he had modernized the department and introduced the practice of hiring female clerks to postoffice positions. Perhaps the most remarkable feature about Henry Fawcett was the fact that he was totally blind.

Fawcett encouraged his wife in her intellectual pursuits. His encouragement was all encompassing and allowed her to devote a great deal of time in advancing the cause of women's enfranchisement. She published many books, and throughout the period covered in this thesis, she penned many a razor-sharp retort to antagonists. Under the nom de plume, Janet Doncaster, she was an authoress of "popular" novels. Despite all these sterling qualities:

Compared with the meteoric brilliance of Emmeline Pankhurst . . . Dame Millicent's eighty-two years of patience consolidation seem a somewhat pedestrian affair. Though capable of hard-hitting and shrewd diagnosis, she was invariably sensible, courteous and judicial; and indispensable as these worthy qualities are to revolutions which without would run amok, popular enthusiasm is seldom inspired by those who possess them.²²

Borough² councillors or aldermen), was the first woman elected to serve as Mayor of Aldeburgh in 1908. Mrs. Anderson had deserted the N.U.W.S.S. for the W.S.P.U. during the initial years of militancy, but by the time the Pankhursts and the Pethick-Lawrences had parted company, Mrs. Anderson also returned to the fold.

²²Vera Mary Brittain, Lady into Woman, p. 34.

Although lacking the popular appeal of the Women's Social and Political Union, the National Union's membership thrived. With each new violent act, women and men disliking these tactics, but feeling the necessity of supporting votes for women, would join the constitutionally-oriented group.²³ This minor victory was not acknowledged by the militant societies.

Will the Government Give Women the Vote?

The disturbance created by Mrs. Pankhurst and her followers outside Westminster Abbey was only minor. The fracas at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, could be classed in the same category. Major attention in the newspapers and daily conversation concentrated on the collapse of A. J. Balfour's Conservative government, which had long defended two losing causes, the privileges of the Establishment and the supremacy of the landed interest. . . .²⁴ The Pankhursts wasted no time on the dying Conservative government.

Private members' sponsorship had gotten women suffrage bills nowhere and the newest of the societies, the Women's Social and Political Union, decided that only a Government measure could assure passage of a suffrage bill. Anticipating a Liberal victory, the women carefully calculated ways to

²³"There was the suffragette agitation, and I assisted the constitutional side of the movement of votes for women." Quoted from C. R. Attlee, As It Happened (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), p. 48.

²⁴R. B. McDowell, British Conservatism 1832-1914 (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 179.

secure an indication of the Liberal party's attitude toward the question of enfranchisement of women. The asking of a question at the Liberal meeting in the Free Trade Hall was therefore deliberately planned to gauge the prospective government's stand on the matter. Annie Kenney made several moves to place the question and as no answer was forthcoming, she finally stood on her seat and shrieked, "Will the Liberal Government give working women the vote?"²⁵ The question created a sensation! Two interesting reactions followed. The "Liberal stewards dragged us [Annie Kenney and Christabel Pankhurst] from the meeting and literally flung us out of doors."²⁶ In doing so, a great number of the sympathizers in the audience followed and listened to explanations for the extraordinary behavior. Before any rebellious action could be initiated the police arrested Annie and Christabel.

Winston Churchill, a Liberal member standing for North-west Manchester seat in the House of Commons, rushed to the gaol to post bond. The officials rejected this rash offer of generosity as the two women had already refused payment of bond, electing to go to prison instead. Christabel was sentenced to seven days and Annie Kenney three. A precedent had been established. For the first time in the history of the woman suffrage movement, women suffered imprisonment for the

²⁵E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 27.

²⁶Kenney, p. 35.

cause.²⁷

Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, mother of Christabel, present at the Manchester meeting, had not participated actively in the demonstration. Afterward she enthusiastically stated that the Women's Social and Political Union received many new members who joined because of the outrage.

When they [Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney] were released, they were given an immense demonstration in Free-Trade Hall, the very hall from which they had been ejected the week before. . . . Above all, the question of women's suffrage became at once a live topic of comment from one end of Great Britain to the other.²⁸

Keep the Government Out!

The Free Trade Hall incident illustrated that the Liberal party would not make woman suffrage a party issue. Consequently the Women's Social and Political Union adopted three tactics to combat the party -- heckling Liberal candidates, deputations, and harrassing future Cabinet ministers.

Heckling was a time-honored custom at British political meetings, and the militants sent their members to heckle Liberal candidates in the by-elections. The presence of heckling ladies at party rallies caused much confusion. The women were frequently given rough treatment.

Their first attempt to defeat a Liberal candidate by this method was centered on a prospective Cabinet minister,

²⁷Peter de Mendelssohn, The Age of Churchill: Heritage and Adventure 1874-1911 Vol. I (London: Thames & Hudson, 1961), p. 279.

²⁸Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 50.

Winston Churchill. He was chosen principally because "he was the only important candidate standing for constituencies within reach of our headquarters."²⁹ When the returns were evaluated, Churchill won only by a small majority, but not necessarily due to the ladies' opposition. Battling in a predominantly Conservative area and for a seat which had returned Conservatives for twenty years, his victory was in most aspects quite significant.³⁰ Churchill coined a memorable phrase which would be recorded as an historical evaluation of the suffragettes' efforts. In return to the ladies' heckling at his meetings, he cautioned them:

"I am not going to be henpecked on a subject of such grave importance."³¹

While Churchill refused to be "henpecked", Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, a future prime minister, advised the women to "go on pestering."³²

Heckling was not an adequate weapon by itself and the Pankhursts broadened their attack by sending deputations to discuss with responsible members of the government the women's point of view on the suffrage issue. When they did not gain entrance to official offices or residences, they "rushed" the premises. This action led in many cases to arrest, which was the intention of the offenders. In this way they could create

²⁹Ibid., p. 51.

³⁰Fulford, p. 131.

³¹Ibid.

³²E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 275.

a large enough disturbance which would bring about publicity for the suffrage movement. As this, too, did not suffice, prospective Cabinet ministers were subjected to heckling at private and public social functions.

The business of tracking them [the prospective Cabinet ministers] was a serious business at Clements Inn; a secretary kept a list of their forthcoming engagements, called from obscure newspaper paragraphs by eager scrutineers, and also obtained on many occasions from confidential sources.³³

With the Women's Social and Political Union's extension of its operations to London, they could try to influence the government at closer range. Sylvia Pankhurst, Annie Kenney and later Mrs. Flora Drummond, were in charge of the move and set up plans for the initial invasion of London.³⁴

The first organized "attack" on ministers in London involved Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's meeting at Albert Hall during the last phase of the general election in December, 1905. H. H. Asquith, the future Chancellor of the Exchequer, recalled that the suffragettes' interruptions of the meeting were "persistent and irrelevant."³⁵ Annie Kenney was again roughly ejected from the meeting, but this time her accomplice was the second Pankhurst sister, Estelle Sylvia,

³³Ibid.

³⁴Shortly thereafter Mrs. Pankhurst joined her associates in London, but Christabel was detained in Manchester completing her law degree. She had been threatened by the university officials with expulsion if she participated in any more rowdy woman suffrage demonstrations.

³⁵H. H. Asquith, Fifty Years of British Parliament, Vol. 2 (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1926), p. 39.

who happened to be in London on an art scholarship. The newspaper, the following day, commented that some parts of the speech had not been heard.³⁶ The Union's impact was not yet great enough to be felt.

All the tactics created enemies for woman suffrage. At the same time, many old friends left the cause. However, "the suffragettes could command larger open-air crowds than either of the political parties."³⁷

Marks of Glory

With the triumphant procession of the Liberals to the government bench in Commons, a procession of a different nature was in the making. Striving to produce and invent methods that would catch the public's eye, a women's procession was planned to direct greater attention to the woman suffrage movement. The Women's Social and Political Union was secure in London now. The family society awaited the opening of the 1906 session of Parliament and its opportunity to "rouse London."³⁸ A meeting at Caxton Hall, preceded by a procession, was organized to coincide with the opening of Parliament. Caxton Hall's capacity was approximately eight hundred and hopes were placed high that that many people would attend.³⁹

³⁶J. A. Spender, The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, G.C.H. Vol. 2 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), p. 210.

³⁷Pethick-Lawrence, p. 160.

³⁸E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Life of Emmeline, p. 54.

³⁹E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 198.

Mrs. Pankhurst was at first outraged, fearing a possible failure and "declared the whole thing would be a ridiculous fiasco."⁴⁰ Luckily, when February 19, 1907, arrived, the hall was well filled. During the proceedings, notification that there had been no mention of woman suffrage in the king's speech reached the waiting women. The assembly took immediate action and with three to four hundred working women in tow, Mrs. Pankhurst led the way to Parliament Square and the Stranger's Entrance. There they were met by police who barred the way. With rain pouring down, and no doubt melting their resolve, eventually only twenty women at a time were allowed to enter the House of Commons and speak of their disappointment to generally disinterested members of Parliament.

There's a lady whose name's in Debrett
 She became a great Suffragette
 She walked and she talked
 She wrote and she spoke
 But Adam is adamant yet.⁴¹

Women had been permitted to attend sessions of Parliament, although they had to observe certain restrictions. Segregated in the Ladies' Gallery, they had to sit screened off from view by a grille. In the early spring the new Parliament awaited a private member's resolution supporting the right for women to vote. The measure was introduced by Keir Hardie, an influential Labour leader and woman suffrage advocate, on April 15, 1906. Members of the militant and constitutional

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Fulford, p. 137.

societies attended and watched the debates eagerly from the Gallery, hoping for a favorable decision. The debate dragged along slowly.

Ten minutes before the debate must close Samuel Evans rose with the obvious intention of talking the Resolution out. He kept the House in a roar of laughter, and every now and then he turned round, with a smile, to look at the clock.⁴²

In defiance to the police stationed in the Gallery, a demonstration occurred. "Divide! Divide! We refuse to have our Resolution talked out!"⁴³ shouted the militants. The shouting turned the Commons into an uproar and the police scrambled over the seats to rid the Commons of the shouting women.⁴⁴

The agitation did not cease here, other forms followed. By summer eight women had been imprisoned for harrying ministers and creating disturbances in public. The courts did not match the clever strategy of the women and dealt only severely with them. The ladies were tried and generally received stiff sentences. Unknowingly the courts added a new feature to the suffragette struggle -- suffering! Respectable women no longer considered prison dress as "marks of shame: they became the marks of glory."⁴⁵

⁴²E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 109.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴The demonstrators were unaware that Keir Hardie was waiting to move for closure of the debate. The Speaker had the option to accept or reject the motion. In years previous the Speaker had refused to accept the closure resolution thereby allowing favorable suffrage bills to be talked out.
Ibid.

⁴⁵Pulford, p. 144.

Tensions mounted. As the months in 1906 rolled by, the Commons met, adjourned, and resolved to reassemble on February 12, 1907. For the second time the king's speech did not include mention of women's emancipation. The women meeting at Caxton Hall again anticipated news of the king's speech. They received the unfavorable message and immediately passed a resolution calling for the House of Commons to give precedence to a measure insuring passage of a woman's suffrage bill. A deputation was formed with Mrs. Despard at its head. They planned to present the resolution personally to the Prime Minister. Near Westminster Abbey the group met a strong force of mounted police and a battle ensued, lasting for several hours. Fifty-six arrests followed with punishments of seven days to a month's imprisonment, or payment of a fine. Everyone refused to pay her fine and all went to Holloway Prison.

Of course the raid, as it was called, gave the Women's Social and Political Union an enormous amount of publicity. . . . The newspapers were almost unanimous in condemning the Government for sending mounted troops out against unarmed women.⁴⁶

The Daily Chronicle published a cartoon the following morning showing a mounted policeman riding off the "battlefield" with his booty, an assortment of ladies' hats. It was cynically captioned -- the London Cossack.⁴⁷

The constitutional suffragists viewed the proceedings with disdain, although Mrs. Pankhurst in a letter to the Times supported the "raid". She wrote:

⁴⁶Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 84

⁴⁷Fulford, p. 157.

I take this opportunity of saying that in my opinion, far from having injured the movement, they [the militants] have done more during the last twelve months to bring it [votes for women] within the region of practical politics than we have been able to accomplish in the same number of years.⁴⁸

The behavior of the militants in April of 1906 and again in February of 1907 led the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (N.U.W.S.S.) to adopt actions which would both capitalize on the militants' actions and also counter any unfavorable reaction caused by the suffragettes. The N.U.W.S.S. began supporting candidates who had woman suffrage as a main issue in their political program. The first of these candidates was Bertrand Russell, a well-known Liberal, who chose to run in the heavily-dominated Conservative area of Wimbledon. With staggering opposition facing him, it was not surprising that he lost by a considerable number of votes. An important lesson learned in this election was the fact that the appeal for woman suffrage "to the electorate . . . was not very effective."⁴⁹

Press Reaction

Although a few newspapers had failed to report the Manchester incident, the majority of newspapers carried the story on the front page. The woman's cause received more publicity after this occurrence than it had received during

⁴⁸The Times (London), October 27, 1906, p. 8.

⁴⁹H. N. Gretton, A Modern History of the English People 1880-1922 (London: Martin Secker, 1930), p. 719.

the previous years. The W.S.P.U. developed to the fullest the policy of creating demonstrations which would attract the greatest amount of publicity.

The public itself reacted in many and varied ways. Sylvia Pankhurst analyzed the habits of readers in the following manner:

Unfortunately vast numbers of people instead of examining into and thinking out a thing for themselves, begin . . . by allowing their opinions to be formed for them by the particular newspapers which they happen to read. Therefore some people at once made up their minds that women were entirely in the wrong, because the paper said so.⁵⁰

Continuing this rather astute observation, readers who did not have their opinions formed by the newspapers based their disapproval on the women's violence, while many of the Liberal-affiliated made excuses for their party's inactivity toward the woman suffrage problem.⁵¹ Reading through letters to the editor substantiated this analysis somewhat.

Women's decisions to go to prison rather than pay fines for political agitation, caused the Evening Standard to compare the behavior of the women to that of "children in the nursery."⁵² The Daily Mail simply stated that if any proof was needed in refusing ladies the right to vote, the reckless actions at Manchester were enough to show women's

⁵⁰E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 33.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 190.

political disabilities.⁵³

Mr. Churchill's accusation that women were attempting to "henpeck" him into submission with their wishes collided head on with Helena N. Swanwick's ideas. An occasional contributor to the Manchester Guardian, she observed that "there is no analogy between the politics of the farmyard and the reasoned pleas of women for a direct share in the democracy."⁵⁴ She concluded that women constituted half of the population and after all were "women not of the people!"⁵⁵ Women dismayed by the change in the customary weakness and meekness of their sex in discussing the suffrage issue, wrote in appealing tones "to try to gain an object however good in itself at the expense of the dignity and self-respect of womanhood is as far from self-sacrifice as the east is from the west."⁵⁶

A few days prior to the disturbance in the Gallery at the House of Commons, one correspondent suggested that obtaining the vote and demonstrating fitness to use the acquired votes would only come by "steady and persistent, if quiet, helpful words and works."⁵⁷ Adroitly avoiding suggestions of patience, the W.S.P.U. invaded Commons and brought down the

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Manchester Guardian, January 16, 1907, p. 10.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 10.

⁵⁶Ibid., January 20, 1907, p. 6.

⁵⁷Ibid., April 23, 1906, p. 5.

wrath of many on their heads.⁵⁸ For those who were unaware of the W.S.P.U.'s intentions, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence let the world know in an article published in the Evening News on June 25, 1906 that:

"That struggle has begun. It is a life and death struggle.

What we are going to get is a great revolt of the women of this country against their subjection of body and mind to men, and a realization of the equal dignity, authority, and power of their own womanhood."⁵⁹

Perhaps on the strength of this warning, another author called for the Liberal party to make the question of extension of the franchise to women a general election issue.⁶⁰

A newspaper which remained a stalwart opponent of the woman suffrage, the Pall Mall Gazette, ridiculed the movement at every opportunity. Their first mention of the suffrage was brief and sarcastic. They compared the trial of Mary Brown, a demented woman with the agitation of the suffragettes. It appeared that Mary Brown from Blackpool had caused a two day delay of her trial because she had merely howled during the proceedings and the trial could not be held.

On the whole her Mary Brown case is not very encouraging to the suffragettes. Moral victories such as her two days' respite are poor things in the long run and the yells of a Mary Brown end in the same

⁵⁸See the letters to the editors under the caption 'Woman's Suffrage' in the Manchester Guardian, April 27, 1906, p. 8.

⁵⁹Hetealfe, p. 37.

⁶⁰Manchester Guardian, July 12, 1906, p. 5.

prosaic way⁶¹

--being led off to a cell where one could cool off. A staunch Conservative journal,⁶² the Pall Mall Gazette had no pity for the Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, Asquith, and his persecution by the militants. Asquith was notified that during a trip to Ladykirk, near Fife, that a suffrage deputation would attempt to obtain an interview with him. Failure to meet the deputation would make his visit there extremely unpleasant. The Gazette then injected its note of sarcasm. "But then, why did he [Asquith] go to a place with such a portentuous name as Ladykirk."⁶³

Some publications maintained that the tactics and appeal of the W.S.P.U. retained the trace of the Lancashire "wake". The Times carefully pointed this out in issues of October, 1906, when reporting audience reaction at suffrage meetings, noted: "Many persons were attracted by the novelty and others came in belief that the dull routine of a public meeting would on this occasion be enlivened by pleasant interlude."⁶⁴ A little over a week passed when again the popularity and high attendance at W.S.P.U. rallies were questioned. "People went to their meetings for the same reasons as they

⁶¹Pall Mall Gazette, September 15, 1906, p. 2.

⁶²David Butler and Jennie Freeman, British Political Facts 1900-1960 (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1963), p. 210.

⁶³Pall Mall Gazette, September 22, 1906, p. 3.

⁶⁴The Times (London), October 16, 1906, p. 10.

went to see a circus."⁶⁵ The Pall Mall Gazette caught up this theme the next day, October 24, 1906, when they stressed that crowds, viewing the Westminster "raid" by the suffragettes the previous evening, had merely cheered and laughed at the dilemma of the struggling, battling suffragettes, and made no moves to help them.⁶⁶

The ridicule did not stop the movement which steadily gained momentum. Members joined daily. With women being imprisoned at every turn, the harsh terms meted out by the courts gained the suffragettes admiration and sympathy. The fact that educated, intelligent women were being jailed and kept under the worse possible conditions dismayed some of the readers. The harshness of the magistrates was unfortunate, but there were those who supported the sentences. One man objected the cost of feeding the prisoners to the taxpayer. "As a taxpayer, I object to having to pay for her Mrs. Cobden-Sanderson⁷ bread and cocoa. . . ." On closer inspection one can detect heavy traces of sarcasm in the letter and when the letter finally points out that the entire basic issue has been overlooked, the signature of George Bernard Shaw is no surprise. He concluded by appealing to the Home Secretary to "rescue us from a ridiculous, an intolerable, and incidentally a revoltingly spiteful and unmanly situation."⁶⁷

⁶⁵Ibid., October 23, 1906, p. 6.

⁶⁶Pall Mall Gazette, October 24, 1906, p. 7.

⁶⁷The Times (London), October 31, 1906, p. 8.

Another well known author, George Meredith, submitted that the punishment dealt the suffragettes merely intensified an already deplorable situation and made martyrs of the suffragettes to boot.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Philip Burne-Jones in a letter to The Times suggested that because the agitators could not stomach the idea of being classified along with ordinary lawbreakers that they found devious means in being promoted to "'first-class' delinquents."⁶⁹

One solution offered in the letters to the editor concerned a ban on the entire issue for a ten year period. If the ladies had by then learned "to behave with propriety" the issue could be discussed.⁷⁰ A brave male felt that the real issue had been overlooked. The sensible solution to the women's problem could be solved by the adoption of an universal adult suffrage platform.⁷¹

Toward the end of the year the following letter appeared in the Manchester Guardian:⁷²

I have advocated their [women] right to vote at Parliamentary elections for over forty years, but I confess I do not like the very disorderly way in which some of their leaders go about their work, and especially the very unwomanly manner in which they

⁶⁸Ibid., November 1, 1906, p. 2.

⁶⁹Ibid., November 3, 1906, p. 8.

⁷⁰Manchester Guardian, November 8, 1906, p. 4.

⁷¹The Times (London), November 6, 1906, p. 4.

⁷²Manchester Guardian, December 8, 1906, p. 81.

went to Mr. Asquith's house.

I claim the friendship of the late Dr. Pankhurst, and had many chats with him upon this subject, and I am bound to say that I do not think he would have approved of the very strong measure adopted by the present leaders--and I say this with a knowledge that his widow and three daughters are some of them.--Yours, &c.,

CHARLES J. ROBERTS.

Rochdale, November 8.

The rebuke of a former family acquaintance had no effect.

Two encouraging articles appeared later in the year. A lead article in the Manchester Guardian on December 8, 1906, claimed that equal rights of citizenship was growing in strength and must be dealt with by the politicians as a major issue.⁷³

The Review of Reviews, in a similar end-of-the-year burst of optimism, reported that victory for woman suffrage was not far off.⁷⁴

The agitation in 1907 grew considerably. Frank Parsons, in an American journal, called on the Liberal government to acknowledge election pledges in support of women's enfranchisement. He could not understand why women in England need be incarcerated in a manner only to be expected in the Russian penal system.⁷⁵ Indignation was expressed in many letters regarding the indelicate treatment in ejecting women

⁷³Manchester Guardian, December 8, 1906, p. 8.

⁷⁴"The Woman Suffrage Campaign in England and France" The American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXXIV (December, 1906), 744.

⁷⁵Frank Parsons, "Women Suffragists in Prison" The Arena, 37, No. 206 (January, 1907), p. 86.

suffrage workers from meetings, but at the same time hints of a strong anti-suffrage movement were afoot by January of 1907.⁷⁶

In a light vein, the Pall Mall Gazette asked why, if women could receive the vote, could not monkeys apply for chauffeurs' licences, or storm the "Palace Yard with banners inscribed 'Votes for Monkeys' and claiming the rights to go to Holloway."⁷⁷ The first strains of "ballots for bullets" were examined and offered to the public by a brave soul who signed his letter "Equality".⁷⁸ Several heated replies printed in The Times informed "Equality" that "women make the nation and men protect it. Ours is not, I think, the easier part."⁷⁹

The melée surrounding the opening of Parliament on February 12, 1907, found the Pall Mall Gazette toying with nicknames. They dubbed the women, "scrummagettes", explaining that "those who elect to play under 'Rugger' rules must expect to be tackled."⁸⁰ Women readers were not easily amused. Their resentment was aroused when they read of the "jeers and

⁷⁶See letters by Sophia Lonsdale in the Manchester Guardian on January 15, 1907, and January 19, 1907, in The Times.

⁷⁷Manchester Guardian, January 26, 1907, p. 2.

⁷⁸The Times (London), February 4, 1907, p. 4.

⁷⁹Ibid., February 7, 1907, p. 6.

⁸⁰Pall Mall Gazette, February 15, 1907, p. 2.

laughs⁸¹ of the police who battled with the women. Another correspondent compared the incident before Parliament to Vladimir's Day (1905) in St. Petersburg when troops massacred a deputation of working men on their way to present a petition to the Tsar.⁸²

Approximately one month later, over seventy women were arrested again in Parliament Square. In an openly sympathetic article, the Manchester Guardian's observer noted that the crowds expressed shame at the sight before their eyes and cheered the women openly without the former tinges of derision that had been shown on February 12.⁸³ The crowds were by this time aware of the serious consequences in store for the women, and in their sympathetic cheering for the women, they cheered the underdog.

The split in the ranks of the Women's Social and Political Union created no great stir in the press. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the secessionists remained militant. In classic style the cynical Pall Mall Gazette hooted:

Probably the most typical of all the daughters of Eve is that one who described the whole sex (excluding herself, but including her mother) as "those cats." We shall watch the evolution of the quarrel with some interest.⁸⁴

⁸¹The Times (London), February 15, 1907, p. 4.

⁸²Ibid., February 19, 1907, p. 4.

⁸³Manchester Guardian, March 21, 1907, p. 7.

⁸⁴Pall Mall Gazette, September 13, 1907, p. 7.

On December 31, 1907, The Times devoted a lead article to the discussion of home affairs for the passing years. Woman suffrage received only a limited space, but the slant chosen was pointedly anti-woman suffrage.

It may be added that a new element of discord has been introduced into politics during the year by the acts of the extreme of the Women's Suffrage party, derisively known as Suffragettes. Many of these women, by violently breaking the law and the peace, got themselves sent to prison; and the policy of the party at present consists in deliberately wrecking . . . the meetings addressed by Ministers and other prominent Liberals. It is pretty evident that thus far they have alienated more votes than they have gained.⁸⁵

It is interesting to note that the Daily Mail chose Mrs. Fawcett as the authority on woman suffrage to interview on the progress made by women during the year 1907 for its Yearbook report. While major concentration had centered on the struggle for national enfranchisement, the year 1907 ended successfully municipally with "1,141 women on Boards of Guardians; 2 on Urban District Councils; 146 on Rural District Councils; and 615 on Education Committees."⁸⁶

The progress on the municipal level grew steadily, and in final analysis great strides had been made on the national scene. Although The Times in concluding statements on the suffrage activities in 1907 maintained that the cause had suffered irreparable damages the militants still managed to create the news.

⁸⁵The Times (London), December 31, 1907, p. 7.

⁸⁶Daily Mail Yearbook for 1907, p. 46.

Day after day, as the militants provided fresh headlines for the newspapers . . . the comments flowed out from domestic hearth to railway trains, smoking rooms, clubs, and public-houses, and wherever men gathered.

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To hundreds and thousands . . . the thing came as a new gospel; even those who had believed in the cause before now began to see it in a new light, and an almost religious fervour entered into their support. 87

CHAPTER III

"PIN-PRICKS"¹

The Year of Demonstrations - 1908

Woman suffrage, for many years an important question, was not a top-rank subject before 1908, when it became a vital issue. The entire populace was caught up in a movement that attracted attention from one end of the country to the other. The very fact that there was widespread opposition and criticism to the militant methods demonstrated that the cause was one of grave concern. The constitutional societies, although disliking the violent methods of their "shrieking" sisters, had vitalized themselves and, undoubtedly, felt some sort of gratitude toward the militants for making woman suffrage a live issue. 1908 itself saw a great deal of originality in propaganda by the suffrage societies and their activities received wide publicity.

On January 17, 1908, the suffragettes captured the headlines: "SUFFRAGETTES IN DOWNING STREET, CABINET BAITING"

¹Suffrage attempts to secure audiences with the government leaders in the face of great odds was referred to by Richard Haldane at a meeting in Glasgow on January 8, 1908, as "pin-pricks", which the suffragettes accepted as a taunt and "were not slow to resent nor quick to forget." As cited in Metcalfe, p. 54.

AS THE LATEST RUSE, SUPFRAGETTES IN CHAINS."² Two militant suffragettes, Miss Edith New and Nurse Olivia Smith had chained themselves to the railings outside 10 Downing Street. To show symbolically "the political bondage of womanhood,"³ they had used a double set of chains. While police struggled to break the chains, Mrs. Drummond arrived in a cab, slipped by the police guard and invaded the residence of the prime minister. Before she could enter the Council Chamber, she was seized, removed and arrested along with her companions.⁴ The year was off to a roaring start.

Parliament met on February 21, 1908. Despite an attempt by the Women's Freedom League to present a petition to the king,⁵ the real fun was about to begin. Again matching opening days with Parliament, the women of the Women's Social and Political Union met in convention at Caxton Hall. From there they marched in procession to Parliament Square. Meanwhile, near St. Stephen's entrance to the Houses of Parliament, an extraordinary scene had taken place. Twenty or more women hired a furniture van and, after concealing themselves within, had it driven to Parliament Square. Once there they rushed from the van and attempted to gain entrance to the Houses of Parliament. They were unsuccessful in penetrating the House of Commons, and most were arrested. This set the

²E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 190.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Pulford, p. 173.

stage as the deputation from Caxton Hall soon arrived. By evening fifty or so women had been arrested. From now on the suffragettes were called upon to invent cleverer and cleverer tricks to attract widespread attention.⁶

A bill sponsored by Henry Stanger, the woman suffrage representative in the House of Commons, came up for a reading in late February (the 28th). The debates offered no new arguments, and outside the House the Freedom League held a peaceful rally. The only high point was reached when Sir John Rees, Liberal member from Montgomeryshire, commented:

"Woman is a good thing, and Suffrage is a good thing, Petticoat is a good thing, and government is a good thing, but it does not follow that Petticoat Government is a good thing."⁷

Received with a great deal of laughter, his comment did not prevent a favorable majority for the Bill, 271 for and 92 against.⁸ Referred to a Committee of the whole House, "nothing more was heard of it."⁹

In early April Campbell-Bannerman resigned because of ill health and died on April 22. A general election was called. The suffragettes opposed the Liberals, which helped assure the defeat of Churchill in Northwest Manchester¹⁰ and Peckham.¹¹ Most party leaders denied that the suffragette

⁶Metcalf, p. 55.

⁷Ibid., p. 61.

⁸Fulford, p. 178.

⁹Metcalf, p. 61.

¹⁰de Mendelssohn, p. 341.

¹¹Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 104.

campaign had affected the election results, but the number of the denials suggested that definite inroads on the Liberal strength had been made by the suffragettes.¹²

The prime minister-elect, H. H. Asquith, was regarded as the arch enemy of the suffrage movement by Mrs. Pankhurst. During the election he had made inferences that an electoral reform would be introduced and within such a scheme there might be room to include an amendment for woman suffrage.¹³ He did add that any proposal must have the support of the majority of women as well as men.¹⁴ Accepted by many supporters of the "cause", Asquith's welcome announcement was attacked by Christabel Pankhurst. She accused Asquith of being the "one-third" of the Cabinet opposing woman suffrage and that the terms of his statement contained too many conditions.¹⁵

In reply to Asquith's charge that woman suffrage needed a show of mass support, the various suffrage societies organized great demonstrations in London for the summer of 1908. The National Union staged their march on Saturday, June 13, while the W.S.P.U.'s demonstration took place on Sunday, June 21. The meetings conveyed to the crowds and other observers that there had been a tremendous membership in-

¹²E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 233.

¹³Metcalf, p. 62.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 63.

crease in both groups.¹⁶ Half a million people jammed into Hyde Park to attend the W.S.P.U. rally, whereas a mere 13,000 followed the National Union's march.¹⁷ Roger Fulford, author of Votes for Women, questioned the popularity of the W.S.P.U. attributed by the masses in Hyde Park. "Was it . . . possible that the orderly but picturesque 13,000 were a greater force majeure than the half million sparring alongside the rostrums in Hyde Park?"¹⁸ H. W. Nevinson, a journalist, wrote: "If the Liberal Government had burnt one of the leaders alive the audience 'would have shrieked with indignant delight and gone home to read.'¹⁹

The banners²⁰ and pageantry were pleasingly attractive. The societies each had their individual colors. The W.S.P.U. (principally Mrs. Lawrence) selected purple, white and green; "purple for loyalty, white for purity, and green for hope."²¹ Yellow, white and green were adopted by the Women's Freedom

¹⁶Brittain, Pethick-Lawrence, p. 43.

¹⁷Fulford, p. 182.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 183.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰There were several amusing incidents concerning the banners in the procession as recorded in Kenney, p. 159. One banner was carried by two rather "aesthetic and anaemic-looking" men. Along the route great howls of laughter met the banner which was later discovered to read: "Men Vote, Why Can't We?" A motto on a Lancashire banner met with a slight accident which was also not noticed until late in the parade. "Lancashire Lassies Want the Vote," had been amended to read something different for the "L" had been cut away from the word "Lassies."

²¹Ibid., p. 158.

League, and the National Union was left with red, white and green.²²

The demonstrations were not confined to London. Similar meetings were held during July in Manchester (Heaton Park), Woodhouse Moor, Leeds, Nottingham Forest and Bristol Downs.²³ Although there was some evidence that the woman suffrage question had some favorable support, the mass meetings did not force the government to promote a suffrage bill.

The W.S.P.U. intensified their campaign and following their impressive demonstration on June 21, began deliberately damaging government property, attacking important men in public life and committing genuine breaches of the law.²⁴ On June 30, 1908, Christabel and Emmeline Pankhurst appealed for crowds to help them with their agitation. Publicity gathered a crowd of at least 100,000 in Parliament Square.

From the steps of public buildings, from stone copings, from the iron railings of the Palace Yard, . . . our women made speeches until the police pulled them down and flung them into the moving, swaying, excited crowds.²⁵

This was the preliminary bout, for a far more serious confrontation was shaping. Another "rush" on the House of Commons was advertised for October 13, 1908. A warrant for the arrest of Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and Flora Drum-

²²E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 241.

²³Metcalf, p. 71.

²⁴Strachey, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, p. 217.

²⁵Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 118.

mond was issued at Bow Street Police Station, but not in time to forestall the clash.²⁶ The battle followed the same pattern as the one fought earlier in the year. One highlight of the entire procedure occurred inside rather than outside the House. Mrs. Travers Simons, Keir Hardie's private secretary, crashed Commons and demanded that the members do something about the question of woman suffrage.²⁷ Meanwhile the leaders responsible for the "rush" were arrested and brought to trial on October 21.

Christabel Pankhurst handled the defence. The training she had received in the law at the Victoria University of Manchester helped a great deal. In fact she scored a great victory when in a brilliant attack she questioned the two subpoenaed Cabinet members, David Lloyd George and Herbert Gladstone.²⁸ Max Beerbohm, of the Saturday Review, said of the clash between Lloyd George and Christabel Pankhurst:

His Celtic fire burned very low, and the contrast between the buoyancy of the girl and the depression of the statesman was almost painful. Youth and an ideal, on the one hand, and on the other, middle age and no illusions left over.²⁹

"Youth and ideal" held no sway with Curtis Bennett, the presiding magistrate, and he sentenced the defendants to prison.

²⁶Fulford, p. 180.

²⁷Ibid., p. 187.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 187-190.

²⁹As quoted in E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 285.

Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Drummond were committed for three weeks each, and Christabel for ten weeks.³⁰

The judgment raised howls of protest from the suffrage societies and members of Parliament heard some of their protests from unexpected quarters. Although the Women's Freedom League was no longer affiliated with the W.S.P.U., the treatment roused the League to action. They staged perhaps the most effective protest on behalf of the W.S.P.U. leaders. Helen Fox, Muriel Matters and Miss Tillard, members of the League, interrupted the House from the Ladies' Gallery by shouting "Votes for Women!" When officials rushed to eject them, it was discovered that the women had chained themselves to the grille. Twenty square feet of the grille had to be removed to an adjoining committee room to be completely dismantled.³¹ At least, the suffragettes cheered, parts of "this insulting grille" had finally been removed.³² The galleries were closed and then reopened to the public only on specific conditions. Anyone wishing to visit the Ladies' Gallery had to sign a pledge agreeing to create no disturbances, with the general practice being to admit only wives or daughters of a Member of Parliament.³³

1908 came to a close. Skillfully planned schemes by the militants drew both admiration and disgust from the public.

³⁰Fulford, p. 190.

³¹Metcalf, p. 79.

³²E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 328.

³³Ibid., p. 373.

Realizing that a certain forbearance in public opinion would occur if acts of militancy were accompanied by pageantry of demonstrations, the Pankhursts and the Pethick-Lawrences planned for the coming year.³⁴

Press Reaction (1908)

The public pulse appeared favorable at the year's start. Even the salty Pall Mall Gazette chastized the members of groups who mistreated women campaigning at by-elections.

It may be true enough that these ladies had taken a prominent part in the electioneering, and that they who play out bowls must expect to receive rubbers; but that is really no excuse whatever for the blackguards who knocked down, kicked, and pelted with mud a pair of defenceless women.³⁵

The Times advised the ladies to exercise patience even though "we cannot affect to hope that their patience will be rewarded in the end."³⁶

With the concoctions of imagination displayed by the militant groups, each incident was publicized widely. The Furniture Van Incident, or the Trojan Horse Affair, received its due amount of attention. The Daily Chronicle suggested "a high standard of artifice has been set and it should be maintained."³⁷ The article continued. A "deserted pante-

³⁴Fulford, p. 196.

³⁵Pall Mall Gazette, January 20, 1908, p. 11.

³⁶The Times (London), January 31, 1908, p. 11.

chnicon" would not be dragged into the House, but "there must be occasions when a large-sized packing case is taken into St. Stephen's."³⁸ The story of the Trojan horse was rather unbelievable, but after the ruse of the furniture van, anything was possible stated the Evening News.³⁹

The rather novel incidents coincided with the suffragette procession to Parliament, and as a result women were arrested and received heavy sentences. Conflicting reactions, as with every movement, arose over the imprisonment. One correspondent to the newspaper, "Y.Z." felt "content to leave government and law-making in the hands of our Englishmen, whose nature and training produces more evenly-balanced minds and judgment."⁴⁰ This "land-holder's protest" concluded, thusly:

I enclose my card, but must request you not to print my name, or perhaps my house would be attacked by hysterical females.⁴¹

In another letter, A. P. Sinnet scornfully wrote:

I pity the gentlemen of England who can rest happily in their own beds knowing that ladies of delicacy and refinement are lying on planks locked up in miserable cells, condemned to filthy, nameless conditions day and night, all because Magistrates and Ministers behind them have been too senseless and savage to deal with a difficult situation discreetly.⁴²

Charles Higby, another contributor to the newspaper, scold-

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰The Times (London), February 18, 1908, p. 11.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., February 20, 1908, p. 4.

ed the powerful government "with unlimited force at its back is pitted against a few struggling women, and its only remedy is the gaol."⁴³

The Stanger Bill received cursory attention, although it aroused some reaction in the Pall Mall Gazette⁴⁴ and The Times.⁴⁵ Both intimated that the uneducated women receiving the vote would force men into an uncompromising world situation that could only be settled by a war, and who would have to defend the country, not the instigators, but men! The Times then added that it is "men's function to order and to guard the State in their joint interest and in the interest of the family dependent on them"⁴⁶ not the women, so why did they need the vote? The Manchester Guardian supported woman suffrage, but felt that "deliberate and systematic interruption of public meetings," was "the denial--in a petty way . . . , but still the denial--of the very principle of democracy. . . ."⁴⁷

Anti-Liberal shoutings of the suffragettes abounded in the general election of 1908. At the Peckham election, some voters wrote to the press complimenting the suffragettes

⁴³Manchester Guardian, February 26, 1908, p. 5.

⁴⁴Pall Mall Gazette, February 29, 1908, p. 1

⁴⁵The Times (London), February 29, 1908, p. 9.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Manchester Guardian, March 3, 1908, p. 5.

on their agitation.⁴⁸ "Their dignified demeanour and cultured oratory made a profound impression, and I think this should not be overlooked when considering the result," wrote Dr. Robert Esler, the Divisional Surgeon for Peckham to the Daily Telegraph.⁴⁹ On the other hand, W. J. Fisher suggested in his letter that the whole movement could be killed if the press discontinued reporting their proceedings or publishing their letters.⁵⁰ The Manchester Guardian rebuked Christabel Pankhurst for her cynicism and hoped that her attacks would cease upon the Liberal party, which after all had always been friendly to the cause of woman suffrage.⁵¹ J. Gray Weddell implored the wiser of the societies to "rescue the movement from the mismanagement and misfortune which have befallen it at the hands of their unwise and indiscreet though over-zealous, sisters."⁵²

The defeat of Winston Churchill in Northwest Manchester had startled the Liberals. Rather than lose a Cabinet Minister, the party selected a safe Liberal seat for him at Dundee. Even there he could not escape the suffragettes who attempted to drown out his electioneering by continuous bell-

⁴⁸See a letter by Mr. St. John G. Ervine originally printed in The Nation on March 28, 1908, and quoted in E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 221.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 220.

⁵⁰The Times (London), April 9, 1908, p. 6.

⁵¹Manchester Guardian, April 23, 1908, p. 11.

⁵²Ibid., May 1, 1908, p. 4.

ringing.⁵³ The Pall Mall Gazette, up to snuff, suggested that Churchill make amends to the suffragettes or his "career as a candidate may not end at Dundee."⁵⁴

Constitutional suffragists protested continuously, and to no avail, that publicity during this campaign was directed almost entirely toward the suffragettes:

During the by-election in the North-west Manchester the North of England Society had about thirty open-air meetings, attended by many hundred, and listened to with perfect respect and frequent enthusiasm. Not one of these was reported, or, as far as I H. M. Swanwick saw, even mentioned.⁵⁵

The peaceful processions of mid-June created an aura of good-feeling in the press. The Manchester Guardian acknowledging the constitutional marchers, asserted that the Liberal Government could no longer ignore the claim for suffrage, because the processionists had a right to vote and the demonstration proved that they had a large body of support.⁵⁶ The Pall Mall Gazette stated simply that all the demonstration proved was that "there is a very considerable demand for the vote among the women of this country;" however, the editors were not convinced that the majority of the country's women wanted the vote, and questioned any great advantage to the country in giving votes to women.⁵⁷ The Times, although

⁵³Ibid., May 13, 1908, p. 4.

⁵⁴Pall Mall Gazette, May 9, 1908, p. 2.

⁵⁵Manchester Guardian, May 15, 1908, p. 4.

⁵⁶Ibid., June 15, 1908, p. 6.

⁵⁷Pall Mall Gazette, June 15, 1908, p. 1.

printing a complimentary article of the actual procession, maintained their usual attitude to the problem of woman suffrage.

The exercise of the franchise by women would be unfair and unequal in giving them an excessive voice in determining measures for which they would not have to bear the ultimate responsibility.⁵⁸

The Pall Mall Gazette called the W.S.P.U.-organized demonstration the "March of the Women of Plank-bed", in reference to their "sleepless nights in Holloway prison."⁵⁹ The Times was again complimentary, but cautioned that the political pressure of a crowd of that size might not be totally sympathetic.⁶⁰ The Standard, Daily News and Daily Chronicle gasped at the immensity of the crowds in Hyde Park, while the Daily Express in summing up observed that "Gladstone's meeting years ago . . . compared with yesterday's multitude . . . was as nothing."⁶¹ Not only did the suffragettes become recognized as an active political group, they achieved an unique form of immortality. The day before the march, John T. Tussard had placed a suffragette group on exhibition in Mme. Tussard's Wax Museum.⁶²

⁵⁸The Times (London), June 15, 1908, p. 11.

⁵⁹Pall Mall Gazette, June 20, 1908, p. 2.

⁶⁰The Times (London), June 22, 1908, p. 11.

⁶¹As quoted in E. Sylvia Fankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 248.

⁶²As reported in The Times on June 22, 1908, p. 9. "An effective suffragist group has just been completed by

The praise was quickly withdrawn upon receipt of the news of the June thirtieth demonstration by the W.S.P.U. before Westminster. The cause could stand the "obtrusive exhibitions of political incapacity on the part of a group-- . . . an extreme group--of women."⁶³ Why did the W.S.P.U. not realize that crowds did not come to support them, indeed:

They had come merely for a cheap evening's entertainment, and they had about as much sympathy with the women they came to see run in as the people who flocked to the Roman amphitheatre had with the wretches who, for their diversion, were thrown to the lions.⁶⁴

The later "rush" on Parliament in October was generally denounced, however, the sentences on Mrs. Pankhurst and her companions aroused sympathy. The Daily Chronicle wished that the courts had treated them with more leniency, while the Daily Telegraph declared that the hands of the clock could no longer be stopped.⁶⁵ Writers such as Arnold Lupton in his letter to the newspapers defended the court's action.

John T. Tussard, and was in place in Mme. Tussard's Exhibition on Saturday. The group occupies a prominent position on a specially-constructed platform in No. 3. hall. There are four life-sized figures. Mrs. Pankhurst is represented seated at a massive oak table and standing looking over her shoulder is Miss Christabel Pankhurst. At the left end of the table is seated Mrs. Pathick-Lawrence and at the other end is Annie Kenney. On the table is a green cover and on this are a number of pamphlets supplied by the Women's Social and Political Union. Each of the four ladies whose models are in the group has given several sittings to Mr. Tussard.

⁶³Manchester Guardian, July 1, 1908, p. 6.

⁶⁴The Times (London), July 1, 1908, p. 14.

⁶⁵As cited in Metsel, p. 77.

One should treat the suffragettes as "one would treat a troublesome child--with endless patience, perpetual good humour, and unlimited kindness."⁶⁶ The Freedom League's staged incident in protest of this sentence provoked J. Arthur Bland of Manchester to question the suffragettes' intelligence:

Assuming that by the power of their votes women obtain admission to Parliament, will they submit to the rules of Parliamentary procedure, or shall we have a body of Victor Graysons in petticoats, chaining themselves to the benches and defying the Speaker? Apart from the effectiveness of these tactics there arises the more serious question of how far they are destroying the law-abiding instincts of the British people; once broken down, the habit of respect for government will not be restored, even by votes of women.⁶⁷

Although the agitation had increased gradually, the general public was still indifferent to a degree, and at times, irritated. They realized that the women had a good case, but at the same time resented the manner in which the women pressed it. The year ended with new Christmas toys offered on the market -- "the arrested Suffragette toy" and "then there is the 'dying Suffragette,' whose size and importance is simple a matter of lung power--until the 'blow-out' toy bursts."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Manchester Guardian, November 2, 1908, p. 4.

⁶⁷ Ibid., November 5, 1908, p. 3.

⁶⁸ Pall Mall Gazette, September 16, 1908, p. 7.

Martyrdom

Two developments dominated the news of the suffrage movement in 1909 -- the hunger strike and forcible feeding. Both processes could not be overlooked and they set the stage for the drastic events that arose in the few months preceding World War I. All the suffragette and suffragists agitation mentioned previously continued. The Women's Freedom League introduced continual peaceful picketing of Government offices in Westminster and the prime minister's residence at 10 Down-in Street, hoping to remind Asquith and the Government that the question of votes for women stood unresolved.⁶⁹

In late June, Miss Marion Wallace-Dunlop, a member of the Women's Social and Political Union, obtained a rubber stamp which had upon it a quotation from the Bill of Rights regarding the right to petition the king (Clause V).⁷⁰ Taking her stamp, she stormed St. Stephen's Hall in the Houses of Parliament, not once, but twice, and succeeded in stamping the wall. She was arrested and chose to serve one month's imprisonment in Holloway Prison rather than pay a fine. Upon arrival at the prison, she demanded "first division" treatment as her offence was of a political nature. The Governor refused her request. For ninety-two hours thereafter she ate no food, despite enticement, and finally, in a state of collapse, was released.⁷¹ News of the hunger strike spread

⁶⁹Metcalf, p. 130.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 132.

⁷¹Ibid.

quickly and an idea, conceived without instructions from the leaders of W.S.P.U., heightened the struggle. Upon Miss Dunlop's release, Mr. Pethick-Lawrence wrote to her "that the power of the human spirit is to me the most sublime thing in life--that compared with which all ordinary things sink into insignificance."⁷² Members of the W.S.P.U. universally adopted the hunger strike idea and by so doing managed to frustrate their captors. For example, Miss Wallace-Dunlop served only one-fourth of her sentence and ignored all the terms attached to her imprisonment.⁷³ The strikers played on the sympathy of the public as the government stood to lose a great deal of prestige if any of the women died. The government sought to find a way out of the trouble so that its political life would not be jeopardized unduly. The solution was not very imaginative.

On September 17, 1909, Asquith journeyed to Birmingham where "he was to throw down his challenge to the Lords, and to announce that their veto was to be abolished, leaving the people's will paramount in England."⁷⁴ Mrs. Pankhurst determined this to be an opportune time to stage an effective demonstration. Every other course of obtaining an interview with Asquith had been denied them. "The women were forced to take whatever means that remained to urge their cause upon

⁷²As cited in Fulford, p. 205.

⁷³Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 149.

⁷⁴Ibid... p. 154.

the Government."⁷⁵ Asquith, during his visit to Birmingham, was heavily guarded and few suffragettes were able to penetrate the police shield. On his departure, Mrs. Mary Leigh, who had previously broken the windows in the prime minister's official residence,⁷⁶ Miss Edith New, who was famous for chaining herself to the railings in front of 10 Downing Street, and other suffragettes threw stones at the prime minister's departing train. Most received sentences of fourteen days to two months, but the two prominent members of the delegation received four and three months respectively.⁷⁷ On Friday, September 24, 1909, reports in the newspapers indicated that the Government had fed the hunger-striking prisoners forcibly by passing a tube into the stomach. Immediately the W.S.P.U. realized the propaganda and publicity value of the move, took a swift survey and announced shortly thereafter the results of forcible feeding on unwilling patients.

It [Forcible feeding] was liable to cause laceration of the throat and grave and permanent injury to the digestive functions, and that, especially if the patient should resist, as the tube was being inserted or withdrawn there was serious danger of its going astray and penetrating the lungs or some other vital part.⁷⁸

Unfortunately for the women, the increasing disorders of 1909 had alienated a considerable portion of public opinion. There

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 118.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 156.

⁷⁸E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 431.

were those who were horrified,⁷⁹ but Churchill pinpointed the generally apathetic reaction of the public on the violence of the suffragettes. He said: "I am bound to say I think your cause has marched backwards."⁸⁰ Feeding the women forcibly, became commonplace and the government did not stop the practice, nor did the women stop resisting it. The actual liquid fed through the tubes was as a rule Valentine's meat juice and lime juice cordial alternated with Benger's Food or beef-tea.⁸¹

The upperclass English society was only incited by forcible feeding when one of their own number suffered the indignity. Lady Constance Lytton, sister of the Earl of Lytton and a victim since childhood of a weak heart, under the name of Jane Wharton, committed an act of militancy for which she was imprisoned in January of 1910. Undertaking the hunger strike, she was subjected to forcible feeding without medical examination. Her dramatic description of this experience was related for all to read in her book Prisons and Prisoners.

He [the doctor] did not examine my heart nor feel my pulse; he did not ask to do so, nor did I say anything which could possibly induce him to think I would refuse to be examined. I offered no resistance to being placed in position, but lay down voluntarily on the plank-bed. . . . Then he put down my throat a tube which seemed to me much too wide and was something

⁷⁹Fulford, p. 210.

⁸⁰de Mendelssohn, p. 437.

⁸¹Fulford, p. 206.

like four feet in length. The irritation of the tube was excessive. I choked the moment it touched my throat until it had got down. Then the food was poured in quickly; it made me sick a few seconds after it was down and the action of the sickness made my body and legs double up, then the wardresses instantly pressed back my head and the doctor leant on my knees. The horror of it was more than I can describe. I was sick over the doctor and wardresses, and it seemed a long time before they took the tube out.⁸²

Although the public had received the news of forcible feeding apathetically, the Government was placed morally in the wrong. The suffragettes based their entire appeal to the public on the creation of martyrs, and the government continually did this for them.

The Truce

A bill had been introduced in 1909 to establish adult suffrage, but because of the feud between the Liberal majority in the House of Commons and the Conservative majority in the House of Lords failed to get beyond a second reading. The continual rejection of the Liberal program by the House of Lords led to the general election of January 1910. The issue of woman suffrage was completely overwhelmed on a political battlefield concerned with the People's Budget, the veto power and Irish home rule. The Liberals won the election, but not without losing a considerable number of seats.⁸³

⁸²Constance Lytton, Prisons and Prisoners: Some Personal Experiences (London: William Heinemann, 1914), p. 268.

⁸³R. C. K. Ensor, England 1870-1914 (Reprint; Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 418.

Shortly thereafter the suffragettes received a welcome message from the Liberal government.

It was hinted to us that the Government were weary of our opposition and were ready to end the struggle in the only possible way, providing that they could do so without appearing to yield to coercion. We, therefore, early in February ¹⁴, declared a truce to all militancy.⁸⁴

This hint by the government to find a means to grant votes to women in the most graceful way possible was more than a rumor. H. N. Brailsford working closely with Christabel Pankhurst, the Pethick-Lawrences and Constance Lytton was gathering together a Conciliation committee to promote a woman suffrage bill.⁸⁵ The Committee drew its members from both parties in Parliament. Lord Lytton was the chairman.

On May 6, 1910, King Edward VII died and his death produced a more compromising attitude in dealing with controversial issues. Just a little more than a month after the king's death, Mr. David J. Shackleton, Labour Member for Clitheroe, introduced the Conciliation Bill, which was quickly given first reading.⁸⁶ The seriousness with which Parliament treated the issue was a tribute to the activities of the militants.

Adhering closely to the truce, the Women's Social and Political Union channelled its energy into by-elections and

⁸⁴ Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 166.

⁸⁵ E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 334.

⁸⁶ Ensor, p. 459.

other constitutional forms of agitation. Toward the end of October, despite all Asquith's earlier promises in the summer,⁸⁷ his "wait and see" attitude aroused suspicions in the suffragette camp and the truce was temporarily broken. On November 10, 1910, the W.S.P.U. massed its forces and planned a petition procession to the House of Commons.⁸⁸ The debacle that followed has been named "Black Friday".

For a long time, nearly five hours, the police continued to hustle and beat the women, the crowds becoming more and more turbulent in their defence. Then, at last the police were obliged to make arrests. One hundred and fifteen women and four men, most of them bruised and choked and otherwise injured, were arrested.⁸⁹

The violent tactics of the military mounted and continued through the second general election of 1910. It was only after the reintroduction of a slightly modified Conciliation Bill and its passage of a second reading on May 5, 1911, that the suffragettes considered another truce. They were mildly ruffled when Lloyd George flatly stated that there was no further time for the discussion in 1911, but an entire week would be devoted to the woman suffrage question in 1912.⁹⁰ The W.S.P.U. then adopted the "wait and see" attitude themselves.

Refusal by women to pay income taxes and absenting themselves from their homes to avoid the census officials

⁸⁷ Metcalfe, p. 176.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 181.

⁹⁰ Brittain, Pethick-Lawrence, p. 58.

on April 2, 1910,⁹¹ marked the rather mild suffrage activity in the interim. Women suffrage would never reach again the peak of popularity until the end of World War I that it had achieved by the fall of 1911.

Press Reaction (1909-1911)

In a short play entitled Press Cuttings, A British general in the War Office confronts an Anti-suffragist and within minutes he informs Balsquith, the Prime Minister, of his change of opinion regarding the suffragettes.⁹²

MITCHENER. Balsquith: we must not yield to clamor. I have just told that woman that I am at last convinced--

BALSQUITH [Joyfully]--that the Suffragets must be supported?

MITCHENER. No: that the Anti-Suffragets must be put down at all hazards.

Others felt the same way. "Surely these women cannot realise the injury that they are doing to their own sex?"⁹³ Although the suffragettes "forfeited all public respect,"⁹⁴ they were better than the anti-suffragists. At any rate an eighty-four year old woman, signing her letter "Octogenarian" insisted,

⁹¹For a concise account of this development see Metcalfe, p. 170.

⁹²Bernard Shaw, "Press Cuttings", Complete Plays with Prefaces, VOL. VI (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1962), pp. 322-23.

⁹³Fall Mall Gazette, February 12, 1909, p. 3.

⁹⁴Ibid., February 18, 1909, p. 7.

regardless of inclination, women's inclusion on the roll of voters would have been not only an honour, but a strength, to their country."⁹⁵ A Democratic Suffragist observed in her epistle that a young boy would be unexperienced in comparison to a middle-aged woman, but he was allowed to vote. Adult suffrage did not mean this, "it is not experience but understanding that we want in voters."⁹⁶

The Manchester Guardian challenged the House in its discussion of Howard's Suffrage Bill to "respond to the last and greatest demand addressed to it for political enfranchisement, this time not for a class merely but for a whole sex."⁹⁷ A practical politician did not take kindly to this suggestion and scratched the following comments into his diary about women seeking the vote.

(March 26, 1909)

Lord! how I do dislike the suffragists en masse, though there are very charming women among them, if not among the screeching sisterhood of suffragettes; and how I hate their whole movement and all it means in politics and social life. The more I think of it, the more my whole soul revolts against it--and I did not need the slight touch of lumbago to which I woke this morning to stiffen my back again it! However, I think it is passing off--the lumbago I mean, not the dislike. It has not touched the sciatic nerve so far.⁹⁸

⁹⁵The Times (London), February 16, 1909, p. 12.

⁹⁶Manchester Guardian, March 10, 1909, p. 14.

⁹⁷Ibid., March 10, 1909, p. 8.

⁹⁸Austen Chamberlain, Politics from inside: an epistolary chronicle (1906-1914) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), pp. 169-70.

As woman versus police came to a head in the summer of 1909, The Times observed that the crowds were highly disappointed at the tame proceedings and they had formed only to see a little entertainment.⁹⁹ E. Kenyon in her letter accused the powerful London newspapers of misrepresenting the facts of June 29, and maintained that the crowds greeted Mrs. Pankhurst with "frantic cheering and eager shouts of approval."¹⁰⁰ C. Fred. Kenyon meanwhile blamed Asquith's indifference and the anti-suffragists for the mass arrests and imprisonments suffered by the women on that day.¹⁰¹

The Times shouted the news of the hunger strike from a small article on page nine of its July ninth issue. "It is understood that Miss Dunlop refused to take food," the article concluded.¹⁰² The Pall Mall Gazette chided the Home Secretary for his failure to stop the "starvation" strike and allowing the women to be released prematurely on mere medical grounds without completing their just sentences.¹⁰³ The Gazette also published the recipe of a new drink, "The Suffragette", offered in the American bar at the Savoy Hotel.

Composed of a little lemon juice, a little bit of orange peel, a leaf of the peppermint plant, a small

⁹⁹The Times (London), June 30, 1909, p. 12.

¹⁰⁰Manchester Guardian, July 3, 1909, p. 5.

¹⁰¹Ibid., July 1, 1909, p. 3.

¹⁰²The Times (London), July 9, 1909, p. 9.

¹⁰³Manchester Guardian, July 22, 1909, p. 7.

piece of cucumber, a little sugar, and a good deal of ginger ale, and is as stimulating and insinuating as the energetic and persuasive ladies out of compliment to whom the beverage has been named.¹⁰⁴

On September 25, 1909, The Times reported that forcible feeding had been used at Birmingham. The leader in the Manchester Guardian advised the prison officials to "let the wild ones be treated mercifully and kept as far as may be out of harm's way."¹⁰⁵ There followed in most of the newspapers a raging controversy among doctors as to the advisability of employing forcible feeding. Several medical journals denounced this new weapon of submission; the Lancet published a long list of doctors who condemned the practice;¹⁰⁶ the British Medical Journal protested the "'contemptible pusillanimity'" of the Home Secretary in hiding behind the coats of medical officers,¹⁰⁷ and the British Journal of Nursing praised the suffragettes in their attempt to gain human rights for women and deplored the use of forcible feeding.¹⁰⁸

The Daily News offered the explanation that forcible feeding was the only alternative to the hunger strike and allowing women to die. Two of its ablest journalists resigned as a result, Henry Nevinson and H. N. Brailsford.¹⁰⁹ Many

¹⁰⁴Pall Mall Gazette, August 13, 1909, p. 8.

¹⁰⁵Manchester Guardian, September 17, 1909, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 157.

¹⁰⁷Metcalf, p. 138.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette, p. 437.

women heretofore indifferent to the suffrage cause protested the action of the Government. A letter by Emily F. Knyvett summed up these views.

The Government having brought about this revolution, and trying to put an end to the movement, endeavours to break the women's spirit by this barbaric treatment of forcible feeding against which many eminent doctors have protested. I have always held Liberal views, but owing to the behaviour of the present Cabinet on this question I join my protest to that of those four leading Liberal women who seceded from their party at Birmingham a few days ago. I look forward to seeing many more follow their example.¹¹⁰

Charles Rigby asked the government, in a dramatic letter, to reconsider their stand on forcible feeding, for it was:

Injustice following injustice, and each side goes on stronger. How is it going to end? . . . Honesty of purpose will not be deterred by suffering, but is rather tensified.¹¹¹

To circumvent this feeling of pity toward the suffragettes, a writer, "A. C. P." suggested that Parliament pass a bill on the lines of an Alien Act which would give the Home Secretary power to expel from the country any suffragette convicted "by a Court of summary jurisdiction."¹¹² The controversy over forcible feeding remained at a high pitch throughout November and December.

The Fall Mall Gazette ended the year with its usual light touch and paid tribute to the growing violence of the militants. As the holiday season approached, a column offer-

¹¹⁰ Manchester Guardian, October 7, 1909, p. 8.

¹¹¹ Ibid., October 30, 1909, p. 7.

¹¹² Ibid., November 20, 1909, p. 10.

ing gift suggestions contained the following remarks:

In sending presents to a militant Suffragette a man should exercise some caution. A jewelled dog whip might be welcomed, or perhaps a pincushion in the form of a prominent politician. The lady would have the wild joy of sticking pins into the presentment of her enemy, morning and evening.¹¹³

1910 was a year of grace, due to the death of King Edward. The suffrage issue was given over to the Conciliation Committee, and the Manchester Guardian pleaded with the Government to accept what was offered by this committee:

In the momentary pause in the war of parties which the wholly exceptional circumstances of this session have brought about there is an opportunity such as can hardly again occur again for a non-party measure such as this. It is a double chance; never was there so much agreement, never so apt an opportunity. It was not easy to believe that the Government will compel both to be wasted.¹¹⁴

Writing to the Manchester Guardian, Arthur E. Figgott expressed the hope that "fair play be done to this bill."¹¹⁵ The Morning Leader actually had indirect words of praise for the suffragette tactics. Because of their maneuvering, the issue was now taken seriously and "is no small achievement in a country where the steady development of political reform is not seldom as slow as it is sure."¹¹⁶

The Conciliation Bill's future grew dimmer and dimmer as debate progressed. Lloyd George, Winston Churchill,

¹¹³Pall Mall Gazette, November 15, 1909, p. 10.

¹¹⁴Manchester Guardian, June 10, 1910, p. 6.

¹¹⁵Ibid., June 30, 1910, p. 5.

¹¹⁶Pall Mall Gazette, July 13, 1910, p. 2.

and F. E. Smith, a brash "new-look" Conservative, stood firmly against it. Such blocking led one contributor, W. H. Wiseman, to query: "But is it not strange that the same people who tell us that votes are of no value should make so much ado about giving them to women?"¹¹⁷ The suffragette sensitivity to the change of political climate broke the truce emphatically on November 17, 1910. The rough treatment by the police incensed some people who inquired as to why the police, supposedly stationed to protect the deputation, arrested them only "after each woman had had a most terrible time at the hands of the police and mob."¹¹⁸ One journal dubbed the suffragettes after this encounter "Gorgons and Furies", for the women had realized that "sugar and spice and everything nice" would not secure passage of a favorable suffrage bill.¹¹⁹ The breach continued as letters supporting both sides poured into the newspapers. One clever writer cited Dr. Samuel Johnson as having a good case against woman suffrage.

Nature has given women so much
power, that the law very wisely
gives them little.¹²⁰

In the same month, the Conciliation committee published statements concerning "Black Friday" and accused the police of un-

¹¹⁷ Manchester Guardian, October 10, 1910, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., November 23, 1910, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ "Gorgons and Furies", The Independent, 69 (December 1, 1910), 1227.

¹²⁰ The Times (London), March 22, 1911, p. 6.

due brutality. The correspondence columns were filled with eye-witness accounts during the month of March, 1910, generally substantiating claims made by the Committee and the participating suffragettes.

Renewal of government interest in the Conciliation Bill quieted outspoken animosities and a truce was pledged once more by the suffragettes. The Manchester Guardian verbally sighed relief at this announcement. "It is an immense gain, and if it is reflected as it ought to be in action it should do more than anything else to secure the near success of the common cause."¹²¹ The Woman's Coronation Procession on Saturday, June 17, 1911, stretching down Trafalgar Square, Pall Mall, Piccadilly, and Knightsbridge to Kensington was received appreciatively by the crowds. The Times, however, disclaimed any true support, although the procession impressed the public with its "beauty and uncommonness."¹²² The Pall Mall Gazette in an end-of-the-year spoof, published "extracts from the diary of a jester," and for June the following inscription can be found:

14. Great procession of Suffragettes. "H'M," remarked a simply horrid old gentleman as he watched it go by, "High thinking and plain looking!"¹²³

The outbreak of window smashing in late 1911 coinciding with a delay in the discussion of the Conciliation Bill

¹²¹Manchester Guardian, June 19, 1911, p. 6.

¹²²The Times (London), June 19, 1911, p. 33.

¹²³Pall Mall Gazette, December 19, 1911, p. 3.

dismayed a host of people. Lloyd George's appeasement statement had not adequately satisfied the W.S.P.U., and the Daily Express remarked:

These exhibitions prove in the Suffragists ^{mean-}ing here suffragettes/ a complete inability to control themselves or to discharge the most elementary duties of citizenship. They are ruining a good cause, converting lukewarm supporters into bitter enemies, and making keen champions lukewarm. So long as they continue there can be no votes for women.¹²⁴

124As cited in The Pall Mall Gazette, November 30, 1911, p. 2.

CHAPTER IV

"VOTES (whang!) FOR (biff!!) WOMEN (smash!!!)"¹

The years 1912, 1913, and 1914 were difficult ones in Great Britain. 1912 was marred by a railway strike, a coal strike, a transport workers' strike, and to top it off, the greatest suffragette havoc to date. The situation, truly critical on the home front and marked by the growth of threatening war clouds that darkened the international front, continued into 1913 and 1914. "It was a time of extraordinary bitterness."²

The Government and the Women's Enfranchisement

A deputation from the People's Suffrage Federation heard rightly! Prime Minister Asquith intended to introduce a Parliamentary Reform Bill during the parliamentary session of 1912 whereby "votes were to be given to 'citizens of full age and competent understanding,' but no mention was made of women."³ Under questioning Asquith stated that an oppor-

¹g. H. Adams, "Votes (whang!) for (biff!!) Women (smash!!!)", Colliers, 49 (April 20, 1912), 11-12.

²J. A. Spender, Life, journalism and politics, Vol. 2 (New York: F. A. Stokes Co., 1927), p. 2.

³Millicent Garrett Fawcett "Women Suffrage Movement," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Ed., New Volume XXXI, p. 1035.

tunity would still exist for the Conciliation Bill. Such promises were not very assuring for the women. Not only did it anger the militants, but disturbed the more moderate suffragists as well. Some broke away from the Women's Liberal Federation "devoting themselves entirely to the suffrage cause."⁴ The suffragettes decided to resort to destruction and violence.

The Conciliation Bill came up for its second reading on March 28, 1912. By clever parliamentary manipulation, the Irish Nationalist faction in the House was led to believe that support thrown to the women's bill would mean the downfall of the Liberal Government. If the Liberal Government fell the Irish would suffer most, because the House was on the brink of a third ratification of the Home Rule Bill.⁵ Thirteen Labour members were absent due to the coal strike. When the vote was taken, the Bill was defeated 222 to 208.⁶ Mrs. Fawcett did not excuse the members of Parliament for defeating the Bill:

The continued violence of the militants . . . caused intense irritation and resentment among the general public, and afforded an excuse to those M.P.'s who had promised their support to our movement to break

⁴Ibid.

⁵E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Life of Emmeline, p. 107.

⁶Fawcett, Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXXI, p. 1036.

their word.⁷

Asquith's program crystallized in June, 1912, with the introduction of the Franchise and Registration Bill. The Bill did not include mention of the women, but the government was still pledged to see that some provision was made for the women to receive the vote. It was understood that an amendment could be proposed, leaving such a proposal up to a free vote of the House.⁸ Any idea of an amendment was as short-lived as the Bill which was ruled out of order by the Speaker.⁹ None of these actions appeased any of the suffrage groups and more and more the Liberal Government was considered traitorous to the "cause".

The Government did not discontinue its efforts to introduce a Reform Bill, and renewed its word by introducing one again on January 23. Asquith revealed that amendments specifically pertaining to the extension of the enfranchisement to women would be acceptable to the Government.¹⁰ Four amendments were proposed. Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, proposed deletion of the word "male".

⁷ Millicent Garrett Fawcett, The Women's Victory--and After: Personal Reminiscences, 1911-1918. (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd., 1920), p. 22. Hereafter cited as Women's Victory.

⁸ Harriott, p. 326.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Harold Nicolson, King George the Fifth (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1953), p. 211.

A Labour-sponsored amendment introduced by Arthur Henderson envisaged extension of the vote to women on the same terms as men. Thirdly, the "Norwegian amendment," in Mr. Dickinson's name, called for the enfranchisement of all women householders and wives of householders over 25." Alfred Lytton in a fourth amendment restated the terms of the Conciliation Bill.¹¹ Bonar Law, Leader of the Opposition, queried the Speaker as to "whether such a radical alteration of the Bill as amendments of this kind would involve was not unconstitutional."¹² The Speaker requested several days to mull over the question and on January 27 he made his ruling.

The passage of any one of the women suffrage amendments would so alter the scope of the Franchise Bill as practically to create a new bill, because the measure . . . did not have for its main object the bestowal of the franchise on a hitherto excluded class.¹³

Asquith was forced to drop the bill, and he could only allow a private member's bill, such as Sir George Kemp's of May, 1912, to be reintroduced and occupy government time. This was a return to a proposal which had received an adverse vote, and the "same vicious circle."¹⁴ Sylvia Pankhurst raged for the suffragettes and the suffragists:

The Bill was a poor mouse of a Reform Bill, a miserable substitute for Adult Suffrage, to offer to the country after a lapse of thirty years since the last Act. A new Bill could be introduced and carried through all its preliminary stages at a sitting, if

¹¹Fulford, p. 275.

¹²Halevy, p. 523.

¹³Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 276.

¹⁴Halevy, p. 523.

the House willed it. Parliament, after all, was supposed to exist to legislate. All that happened was a mere pretence.¹⁵

Despite heated and serious discussion, the Bill was defeated by forty-eight votes.¹⁶

The growing number of votes against woman suffrage spelled the death of any favorable woman suffrage bill for some time. Lord Selbourne introduced a one-clause bill drafted to confer the vote on women already participating in the municipal franchise into the House of Lords. It too failed.¹⁷ Many asserted that the militants' tactics had alienated public and parliamentary opinion to the extent that their cause would never succeed.¹⁸ With such a judgment pronounced a closer study of the suffragette tactics during the pre-war period is necessary.

Extreme Militancy (1911-1914)

Asquith's announcement of a suffrage bill on November 7, 1911, "came like a bolt from the blue" to Mrs. Pankhurst and her followers.¹⁹ Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence immediately led a "raid" in which 233 persons were arrested.²⁰

¹⁵E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 431.

¹⁶Fulford, p. 270.

¹⁷Metcalf, p. 335.

¹⁸Harriott, p. 326.

¹⁹Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 206.

²⁰Metcalf, p. 185.

Our women went out with stones and hammers and broke hundreds of windows in the Home Office, the War and Foreign offices, the Board of Education, the Privy Council Office, the Board of Trade, the Treasury, Somerset House, the National Liberal Club, several post offices, the Old Banqueting House, the London and South Western Bank, and a dozen other buildings, including the residence of Lord Haldane and Mr. John Burns.²¹

The only people standing to benefit from this new move were the glass manufacturers.²² At the same time an incident of a far graver nature occurred. Miss Emily Davison on December 15, 1911, was arrested for setting fire to the contents of a mail box. She had announced her intention in the press, and was easily apprehended. Sentenced to six months' imprisonment, her deed was not sanctioned by the W.S.P.U. and in fact received the "cold-shoulder" at Clements Inn.²³ Little did the public realize that this incident was "the precursor of a new and terrible struggle."²⁴

At 5:45 P.M. on March 1, 1913, the suffragettes

²¹ Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 209.

²² This comment was made in George A. Riddell, More Pages from my Diary 1908-1914 (London: Country Life, Ltd., 1934), on December 7, 1911, and humorously demonstrates the point made in the text.

Two unreported incidents during Lady Frances Balfour's suffragist campaign in Lancashire: At her meeting at St. Helens--centre of the window-glass industry--her chairman remarked that he was all in favour of the militant suffragette movement, and had no objection to window-breaking. The speaker being the most important window-glass manufacturer in the district, this observation was received with laughter and loud applause.

²³ E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p.

²⁴ Ibid.

staged a surprise "attack". Women and girls carrying hammers in their muffs broke nearly all the shop windows in The Strand.

Scared shop assistants came running out to the pavement; traffic stopped; policemen sprang this way and that, five minutes later the streets were a procession of excited groups, each surrounding a woman wrecker being led in custody to the nearest police station.²⁵

Mrs. Pankhurst's original announcement of war in February stated that the women would assemble in Parliament Square on March 4, but they had obviously arrived three days early. The police taking every precaution mounted a heavy guard on the evening of March 4, but the ladies did not arrive. Instead, they had invaded Knightsbridge in the morning, felling the police, and "demolished nearly every pane of glass they passed."²⁶

Such damage could not continue unabated and on March 5, the police arrived at Clements Inn with warrants for the arrest of Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence and Christabel Pankhurst. The Lawrences took a taxicab to Bow Street prison where they spent the night, but Christabel had disappeared. Disguised only with a different style hat, she fled to Paris where she was to live under the name of Miss Amy Johnson. "The militant movement" now had "its idol."²⁷ The Lawrences

²⁵Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 217.

²⁶Ibid., p. 218.

²⁷Dangerfield, p. 173.

were brought to trial and, after eloquent appeals in their defense, the jury recommended leniency. Judge Coleridge, however, sentenced them to nine months' imprisonment, as well as requiring that they pay the whole cost of the trial. As the Pankhursts had no tangible assets the trial costs fell on the Pethick-Lawrences. Mr. Pethick-Lawrence refused to pay and authorities auctioned his personal belongings away to met the costs.²⁸ The decisions were not well received. Phyllis and Audrey Coleridge, daughters of the presiding judge, joined the W.S.P.U., while several members of the jury wrote letters of protest to the Home Secretary.²⁹

Although the Pethick-Lawrences had loyally supported Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel, they opposed the radical trend in tactics as they fear the ramifications. Arranging a secret conclave in Paris, Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel greeted the Lawrences with their decision that the W.S.P.U. would wage guerilla warfare, destroying public and private property and avoiding arrest at all costs. They Lawrences were shocked. "We considered it sheer madness to throw away the immense publicity and propaganda value . . . [of] the State trial."³⁰ Mrs. Lawrence explained in turn to mother and daughter that

²⁸From then on the costs of the Union in these damage suits were thrown to Pethick-Lawrence by the courts and he was soon made nominally bankrupt. Pelford, p. 254.

²⁹Brittain, Pethick-Lawrence, p. 63.

³⁰Pethick-Lawrence, p. 277.

a great campaign of popular demonstrations would draw people who were eager to see the suffragettes and support them. She even suggested that Christabel return to England and "challenge the Government to arrest her."³¹ One Emmeline plead with the other Emmeline to realize what a great sensation Christabel's trial would be and "if not, she would be acclaimed by crowded audiences wherever she chose to speak."³² The opportunity to receive world wide propoganda was at hand, Mrs. Lawrence advised, and the Union could only stand to win tremendous support.³³

Despite the fact that the Lawrences and Christabel Pankhurst had lived closely together for five years, they had not examined their guest closely enough. Questioning the wisdom of Christabel's projected plans meant questioning Christabel's policy. "Once people questioned policy her [Christabel] whole feeling changed towards them."³⁴ Christabel disregarded the Lawrences' advice,³⁵ and the W.S.P.U. issued a manifesto in July, 1912:

The leaders of the Women's Social and Political Union have so often warned the Government that unless the vote were granted to women in response to the mild militancy of the past, a fiercer spirit of revolt would be awakened which it would be impossible to control. The Government had blindly disregarded the warning, and now they are reaping the harvest of their unstatesman-

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., p. 284.

³⁴Kenney, p. 191.

³⁵E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p.

like folly.³⁶

Secret arson was the order of the day: "the signature of Pankhurst was to be inscribed in letters of fire."³⁷

The police were still searching high and low for Christabel Pankhurst when she announced in September, 1912, her place of exile. Assured by the French government that her offence was political and she could not be extradited, she could remain safely in Paris far from the auspices of British law. At the same time, the W.S.F.U. moved its headquarters from Clements Inn to Lincoln's Inn in Kingsway. The new building would be ready for the Pethick-Lawrences who were returning from their Canadian vacation in October.

Upon their return, the friction was still evident, and an emergency meeting was called. The Pethick-Lawrences and the Pankhursts clashed again. "They [the Lawrences] had insisted in 1907 that she [Mrs. Pankhurst] must be the autocrat; and in 1912 she was taking them at their word."³⁸ On October 17, 1913, two suffragette publications were being sold on the streets. The old -- Votes for Women and the new -- The Suffragette, edited by Christabel Pankhurst and was now the official organ of the W.S.P.U. Both published the following announcement:

³⁶E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 401.

³⁷Dangerfield, p. 181.

³⁸E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Life of Emmeline, p. 113.

GRAVE STATEMENT BY THE LEADERS

At the first reunion of the leaders after the enforced holiday, Mrs. Pankhurst and Miss Christabel Pankhurst outlined a new militant policy which Mr. and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence found themselves altogether unable to approve.

Mrs. Pankhurst and Miss Christabel Pankhurst indicated that they were not prepared to modify their intentions, and recommended that Mr. and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence should resume control of the paper, Votes for Women, and should leave the Women's Social and Political Union.

Rather than make schism in the ranks of the Union Mr. and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence consented to take this course.³⁹

The constructive genuises of the militant movement were gone. The Lawrences had been extremely successful in raising money, and without them, the financial appeal and status of the W.S.P.U. suffered. £15,000 had been collected from two meetings prior to the split, but at a single meeting in October only £3,600 was collected.⁴⁰ "Christabel won, the fight continued, but the movement, lost."⁴¹

The W.S.P.U. now began a headlong course towards disaster. They were dedicated to out-and-out, destructive militancy. "We had to spoil English sports, hurt business, destroy valuable property, demoralise the world of society, shame the churches, upset the whole orderly conduct of life."⁴² They did! Unoccupied country houses and grandstands at race courses were burned down, railroad stations were bombed, and

³⁹Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 261.

⁴⁰Pulford, p. 256.

⁴¹Kenney, p. 195.

⁴²Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 279.

famous paintings were slashed.⁴³ After the famous Rokeby "Venus" and the Sargent portrait of Henry James were viciously slashed by suffragettes, the Government was forced to close the British Museum, the National Gallery, Windsor Castle, and other tourist attractions.

On April 30, the police raided W.S.P.U. headquarters at Lincoln's Inn and the suffragette movement went underground. Five days before this, Reginald McKenna, the Home Secretary, received the royal signature on the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge) Bill. The act provided the Home Secretary with a weapon he could use against the hunger-striking women. Prisoners whose health was very poor were freed under certain conditions and subject to immediate rearrest on violation of these conditions. It was scornfully referred to by Robert Cecil as "the Cat and Mouse Bill."⁴⁴ The underlying reason for the passage of the act was as an alternative to forcible feeding. As on previous occasions, the leaders of the militants turned the "Cat and Mouse" act to their advantage, depicting their increased suffering, and, as a result, spurred their followers to increased militant acts. Hunger-striking continued and forcible feeding was reinstated on October 13, 1913. The licences⁴⁵ given to the "mice" on

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Fulford, p. 283.

⁴⁵For the complete text of the Temporary Discharge Act and a sample of the license see Metcalfe, p. 364.

their release were often auctioned off to raise funds.⁴⁶
 The wife of General Brackenbury lent her home at 2 Campden Hill Square to the suffragettes. Called the "Mouse Castle", the "mice" could be nursed back to health here and once recovered prepare for further militant work.⁴⁷

The outrages of the militants kept the police busy. Acid was poured on the greens of golf courses, letter boxes were either fired or a black sticky substance was poured into them, and innumerable false fire alarms were given.⁴⁸ A steel spike was hurled through the window of a taxicab in which Lloyd George was riding, piercing slightly his cheek. His son, Richard, could have informed the suffragettes that sending "accomplished siren-toned Mata Haris to undermine his resistance" would have been far more effective.⁴⁹ Any sound of breaking glass along Downing Street immediately brought the police.

I Richard Lloyd George remember going up to my room one evening at No. 11 and finding that the light bulb had "gone." In a fit of exasperation and youthful thoughtfulness I tossed it out of the window into the street. The subsequent explosion on our front doorstep brought the police in squads to our defense, causing terror amongst certain innocent female passers-by. I hurried to procure their release. I blush at the memory.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 313.

⁴⁷ Kenney, p. 232.

⁴⁸ Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 270.

⁴⁹ Richard Lloyd George, Lloyd George (London: Frederick Muller Limited, 1960), p. 122.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Mrs. Pankhurst defended militancy in its extreme form by citing historical precedence. "Every advance of men's political freedom has been marked with violence and the destruction of property."⁵¹ The outrages continued: an empty house about to be rented to Lloyd George at Walton Heath was razed; the Tea House in Kew Gardens was burned down; a bomb was discovered under the coronation throne in Westminster Abbey, as well as one found in St. Pauls; while in Dublin a hatchet meant for Asquith hit John Redmond, leader of the Irish members in Parliament, wounding him slightly.⁵² The disgust of the general public at these acts was raised for a moment by the sacrifice of a suffragette's life at the Derby.

Emily Wilding Davison, one of the most inventive and conspicuous suffragettes, went to the Derby with the idea of bringing the question of woman suffrage vividly to the fore by causing some startling event.⁵³ She found her opportunity. Unexpectedly as the king's horse rounded Tottenham Corner, someone seized the bridle causing the horse to fall to the ground and throwing the jockey, Herbert Jones, to the ground. The attacker had meanwhile been grotesquely crushed underneath the horse. Carried to Epsom and Ewell Cottage Hospital, while the injured jockey was sent to the Great Eastern Hospital, Emily Wilding Davison never regained consciousness and

⁵¹ Emmeline Pankhurst, pp. 213-14.

⁵² Harriott, p. 325.

⁵³ Metcalfe, p. 290.

died four days later.⁵⁴ On June 14, 1913, the W.S.P.U. staged a gigantic funeral procession, watched silently by the crowds in London. The suffragettes had a martyr and the public was moved and distressed wishing that the struggle would end now.⁵⁵ It did not!

Every other area of life having been touched by the suffragettes, they now turned to their last, remaining victim--the King. During the year of 1914 the W.S.P.U. tried to "rush" the royal family, creating many unpleasant situations, which was both embarrassing and distressing to them. The stage was set in December, 1913, when during a performance of Raymond Roze's Jeanne d'Arc at Covent Garden, three young women locked in their box addressed the King and Queen, plus the assembled Court, through a megaphone urging the King to pressure the government into giving women the vote.⁵⁶

Attempts to present the king with a petition were fruitless,⁵⁷ and finally Mrs. Pankhurst, thwarted by the Home Office, determined to lead a deputation to Buckingham Palace and demand an audience with the King. May 21, 1913, was the date set, and that afternoon, the procession struggled up Constitution Hill, which for safety's sake had been heavily barricaded by the police.

A free fight ensued. That the police received considerable provocation there can be no doubt; but,

⁵⁴Emmeline Pankhurst, p. 314.

⁵⁵Strachey, The Cause, p. 332.

⁵⁶Dangerfield, p. 376.

⁵⁷Metcalf, p. 301.

instead of immediately effecting the arrest of offenders, they attacked them savagely, using their truncheons freely, backing up their horses against the women, knocking them about and otherwise ill-treating them.⁵⁸

Mrs. Pankhurst was not in the procession, but remained hidden in the crowd until she saw her way clear to obtain entrance to the palace yard unobtrusively. She was spotted and immediately arrested.⁵⁹ The next evening the King and Queen were disturbed at His Majesty's Theatre when two women called out to them. One spoke from the stage proper, while the other had chained herself in the stalls.⁶⁰ Harrassment of the King did not end there, for on June 4, 1914, an even more dramatic incident occurred during the presentation of debutantes at Court.

Miss Mary Blomfield, daughter of an eminent architect, and her sister, disregarded their mother's wishes and attended the presentation. Lady Blomfield had suspected that the girls were intent on some militant action and had decided to leave them at home. Through clever deception, the debutantes obtained entrance to the palace affair.⁶¹ Mary, in an "exquisite courtesy before the King, started to call out, "Your Majesty, stop forcible feeding!" The newspapers ran vivid accounts of this incident and one clipping found its way into Queen Mary's Diary. With the clipping attached nearby, the

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 342.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 349.

⁶¹Fulford, p. 296.

⁶²Netcalf, p. 345.

Queen described the incident:

We held our 3rd Court in the evening and a tiresome suffragette came & fell on her knees before G. & held out her arms in a supplicating way, saying "Oh! Your Majesty stop" when she was gently escorted out by Douglas Dawson & John Hamilton. Very unpleasant. ⁶³

Suffragettes continued their warfare, but were once again faced with dissension.

In February, 1914, in a surprising gesture, Sylvia Pankhurst announced the formation of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes. ⁶⁴ Sylvia had supported her sister's decision to wage secret warfare against the state by fire and other militant acts, but did not withdraw from the East End when she was requested to do so. Sylvia's determination "to keep our working women's movement in touch with the main body of the working-class movement . . . was essentially the difference between the Paris policy and mine [Sylvia]; it was a difference Christabel would not tolerate." ⁶⁵ Mrs. Pankhurst's and Christabel's Conservative tendencies had attracted a certain amount of support from the leisured classes. ⁶⁶ This "Toryism" incensed Sylvia who did not forget her father's socialist teachings. ⁶⁷ Disliking secret arson, she advocated

⁶³James Pope-Hennessy, Queen Mary 1867-1951, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 465.

⁶⁴E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Life of Emmeline, p. 140.

⁶⁵E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 503.

⁶⁶Fulford, p. 224.

⁶⁷E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 221.

huge demonstrations of working women, somewhat similar to the Pethick-Lawrences' ideas. Her eventual secession from the Union tossed one portion of the militant movement "among the dark waves of proletarian anger."⁶⁸

Tinged with a touch of sibling rivalry, Christabel overrode Mrs. Pankhurst's compromise over Sylvia's East End organization. Sylvia, after many summonses to Paris, disguised herself and journeyed to Paris. Once there Christabel accused her of making the East End organization "too democratic, too independent; it might secure funds which would otherwise go to Lincoln's Inn House."⁶⁹ No longer able to express her own views on policy, Sylvia met Christabel's demands of "a clean cut," and the "nine days' wonder" severance was completed.⁷⁰ Christabel's isolation in Paris, the complacent compliance of a "blanched and emaciated" Mrs. Pankhurst with all that Christabel said, the glorification of autocracy and the unscrupulous casting aside of friends who disagreed with Christabel, no matter how slight, intensified Sylvia's dislike of the Paris organization. The split did harm a close family relationship, but Sylvia became reconciled with the division, and felt free to go on her own way. The factors listed also led to the decline of support for the

⁶⁸ Dangerfield, p. 212.

⁶⁹E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Life of Emmeline, p. 140. For a much more detailed account of these Paris conversations see E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, pp. 517-18.

⁷⁰Ibid.

suffragettes, while Sylvia became the acclaimed heroine of East End London.⁷¹

Early in 1914, Sylvia was sent to prison for refusing to find "sureties at the order of a magistrate for some alleged incitement in a speech."⁷² Upon imprisonment Sylvia adopted the hunger strike, was released under the provisions of the "Cat and Mouse" Act and rearrested many times. Often too ill to walk in the huge demonstrations throughout 1914, she was carried on a litter by her followers. Her campaign was so successful in East London that men and women joined the Federation in droves. Many dock laborers and other East End residents became her devoted supporters and their encounters with the police in defense of Sylvia were extremely violent.

With many groups vying to pressure the government to give women the vote, suddenly an uglier possibility of hostilities dominated the scene. What had the suffragists been doing this period? Had they suffered the same loss of popular support? These questions are explored to give some suggestion as to their activities.

Mrs. Fawcett Triumphs

For the newspapers the period of sensationalism,⁷³ was one in which the suffragettes provided them with prime

⁷¹E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 384

⁷²Pethick-Lawrence, p. 305.

⁷³See Ensor, England 1870-1914, pp. 532-36, for a clear description of the evolution in the newspaper industry which was a parallel movement at this time.

news. The oftentimes "malvolent" reports were not extended to the suffragists. "I shan't stay any longer. These women are only talking sense; there's no news in it," was a reporter's remark overheard at one of Mrs. Fawcett's meetings.⁷⁴ Militancy did no harm to the suffragist organizations, membership climbed, although militancy did as a whole harm the cause. Traces of popular support for the constitutional societies can be found throughout the period. Suffragist meetings conducted in an orderly fashion and filled to capacity were occasionally reported in the newspapers.⁷⁵

By 1910 there were twenty-one suffrage organizations opposed to only three in 1905.⁷⁶ In the spring of 1913 The Times reported on the growth of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies:

The growth in the number of societies and in membership has increased at a greater rate than in any other year. When the last report was published the number of affiliated societies was 311; it is now 411. The membership of the Union has grown from 30,408 to 42,438, an average increase of 1,000 a month. Propaganda work up and down the country has doubled in volume. Thirty-two organizers were employed during the year, and over 1,000 meetings have been organized by the National Union alone. Local and central funds added together (including the election fighting fund and the receipts of the literature department) make a rough total of 35,000 spent by the National Union during the year. In addition to this 5,700 was given at the Albert Hall five days after the close of the financial year.⁷⁷

⁷⁴Strachey, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, p. 268.

⁷⁵Manchester Guardian, November 9, 1909, p. 8.

⁷⁶The Times (London), June 25, 1910, p. 7.

⁷⁷Ibid., April 19, 1913, p. 10.

Despite Asquith's "betrayal", the suffragists did not carry out a personal vendetta as did the suffragettes.⁷⁸ Mrs. Fawcett during the days of extreme militancy doubted if extreme tactics would ever cease. "I think they would rather lose Women's Suffrage than give up their own way of demonstrating."⁷⁹ Rather than adopt the rash acts of the suffragettes the National Union discontinued supporting friendly Government candidates and threw their support to the Labour party.

Public opinion moved rapidly and strongly in the suffrage direction, the general view being that the suffragists had received less than fair play at the hands of Mr. Asquith and his Government.⁸⁰

Increasing the volume of propaganda, Mrs. Fawcett spoke night after night to large audiences, and support of the crowds was overwhelming. In October, 1912, four hundred women, the Sui Vive Corps, set out to march from Edinburgh to London. Only six women lasted through the entire trip, but as members dropped out, others were recruited in their place. Upon reaching London they were graciously received at 10 Downing Street.

In the summer of 1914 perhaps the most impressive of all suffragists demonstrations was held.

The Pilgrimage was a march of bands of our societies, all non-militant suffragists, from every part of Great Britain, converging on London, and so arranged as to

⁷⁸Asquith, Fifty Years in Parliament, p. 141.

⁷⁹Strachey, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, p. 268.

⁸⁰Fawcett, Encyclopaedia Britannica, XXXI, p. 1036.

reach their goal on the same day. Eight routes were selected. . . . In each case the Pilgrimage procession started at the point most distant from London, carrying banners, and accompanied, where possible by music. The pilgrims were prepared to stop and hold meetings, distribute literature, and collect funds in towns and villages en route.⁸¹

Meeting in London the pilgrims marched in a beautiful procession, marshalled by Sir Francis Fletcher-Vane of the Boy Scout movement, to Hyde Park. In London the respect paid to the processionists was impressive.

The evenly-balanced organization--often up-staged by their more violently-inclined sisters--had always drawn support in the provinces and the well-managed procession finally won over the city. Although greatly boosted by the militant tactics, patient constitutional work had paved the way for the eventual granting of the right to vote to women.

The outbreak of World War I saw an end to woman suffrage agitation. All the suffrage groups, with the possible exception of Sylvia Pankhurst's East End Federation, turned their energies to aiding their country during a difficult international struggle. The women's loyalty was rewarded in November, 1918, when a bill was hurried through both Houses allowing women over 30 years of age to vote. Several women stood as candidates for the House of Commons in 1918. Only one was successful on the first attempt. Countess Markievicz, a Sinn Feiner, was elected from Dublin, but never took her seat. Lady Nancy Astor, in 1919, was the first woman to sit

⁸¹Pawcett, Women's Victory, p. 55.

in the House of Commons as the member for the Sutton constituency of Plymouth in 1919.⁸² 1928 saw the extension of the franchise to the "flapper" group when women between 21 and 30 years of age were granted the vote -- and women, of all ages, had the right to participate in the political process on the same basis as men.

Public and Press Reaction

The rumblings of extreme militancy all but eliminated any coverage in the press regarding the constitutional societies and their work. However, there were traces of this activity, and even the slight mention of favorable trends toward the suffragists cannot be ignored, no matter how minute the news article. In Edinburgh on Saturday, July 8, 1911, it was announced at a suffrage meeting, presided over by Mrs. Fawcett, that Carnavornshire County Council had set a precedent. "For the first time a county council had passed a resolution in favour of women's suffrage, such as had been passed in over eighty town and district councils;⁸³ and again:

Mrs. Fawcett addressed to-night a fairly large meeting in support of women's suffrage, held in the smaller room at the Guildhall. The Rev. A. S. Duncan Jones, Dean of Caius College, was the chairman. It was thought that some of the undergraduates might create some disturbance. . . . There was perfect silence throughout her speech, except for frequent applause.⁸⁴

⁸²Evening World Herald (Omaha), May 2, 1964, p. 18.

⁸³Manchester Guardian, July 10, 1911, p. 10.

⁸⁴Ibid., January 20, 1912, p. 6.

Many public debates were arranged pitting suffragists and anti-suffragists against one another. The suffragists recorded frequent favorable decisions.⁸⁵

In a Manchester Guardian article, "Women's Suffrage; A Survey 1908-1912," one finds another important concession of the public opinion.

During the past eighteen months over 140 town and other local councils have passed resolutions in favour of the Conciliation Bill, and these include Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Bradford, Derby, Hull, Leeds, Leicester, Nottingham, Sheffield, Glasgow, Bangor, Cardiff, Dublin, Cork, and Limerick. This may be taken as a valuable indication not only of public opinion among business men, but among those women who possess the municipal vote.⁸⁶

These reports were written at a period best described as being on the brink of extreme militancy. After the failure of the Conciliation Bill to be passed, militants sharpened their rusty weapons and smashed windows rampantly. Public reaction turned viciously against the suffragettes, audiences became hostile -- making propaganda very difficult.⁸⁷ Meetings were forcibly broken up and the militants were labelled dangerous, and their activities were no longer regarded as entertaining.⁸⁸ "Was ever such criminal folly? With the greatest strike we have ever known in progress, great distress and unemployment, not in the coal trade only . . . the

⁸⁵ Ibid., February 17, 1912, p. 7.

⁸⁶ Ibid., February 12, 1912, p. 8.

⁸⁷ E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 384.

⁸⁸ Gretten, p. 326.

women set the example of disorder and wanton destruction.⁸⁹
The disturbances were even noted by the royal family.⁹⁰

Some students staged a demonstration themselves and in a vigilante move broke windows and damaged the premises of the Women's Press in Charing Cross Road and the International Suffrage shop in Adam-street Strand.⁹¹ In the House the atmosphere became even more unfriendly and "a much more serious and hostile opinion is now beginning to prevail."⁹² T. A. Lacy, writing to The Times, begged that the actions of the suffragettes not destroy the opportunity of giving "Mrs. Pawcett a vote because another lady interested in the same cause happens to have lost her wits."⁹³

Christabel Pankhurst's disappearance shifted the focus from unfavorable woman suffrage news. Most newspapers published pictures of her, and "the Bystander had a full page inset of 'Saint Christabel,' in which she was represented as the centre of a stained glass window."⁹⁴ The escape and consequent police hunt held a certain allure for the reading public and Christabel's mysterious disappearance made her popular with the masses.⁹⁵

⁸⁹Chamberlain, p. 438.

⁹⁰Pope-Hennessey, p. 464.

⁹¹Manchester Guardian, March 5, 1912, p. 6.

⁹²Chamberlain, p. 438.

⁹³The Times (London), March 6, 1912, p. 6.

⁹⁴Pethick-Lawrence, p. 267. ⁹⁵Ibid.

With the release of the Pethick-Lawrences and Mrs. Pankhurst in late June, 1912, two notices of interest are found. In Manchester a constitutional society held a rally which drew a large crowd. Listeners attending, purely out of curiosity, stayed, and by adjournment time were quite favorable to the case presented by the speakers.⁹⁶ Whereas, the suffragettes celebrated the release of their leaders by breaking windows and mutilating straps and cushions of the London and Brighton Line railway carriages.⁹⁷ This resulted in a Pall Mall Gazette admonishment, addressed to the Home Secretary: "The chief secret of successful government is to do justice to the suffragettes⁷ and stick to it."⁹⁸

As guerilla warfare edicts were executed, the public became both fearful and angry. The Manchester Guardian attacked "Militancy as a Policy."

Here is "militancy"; now what is "more militancy," and what is "still more" and "more again"? Perhaps a repetition of these things. In that case the axe next time may do more than cut; it may kill. And the fire in the theatre may not merely frighten; it may destroy. But the path of deliberate and reckless violence is a slippery one, and fools and fanatics may go from one extreme to another.⁹⁹

H. Vernon Carey, writing to the Pall Mall Gazette, suggested that the women "who possess no restraint" should be placed

⁹⁶Manchester Guardian, June 24, 1912, p. 14.

⁹⁷Pall Mall Gazette, June 26, 1912, p. 6.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Manchester Guardian, August 12, 1912, p. 6.

"in a lunatic asylum."¹⁰⁰ Mrs. Fawcett regarded the militants "as misguided enthusiasts, and . . . are the most dangerous obstacles in the way of the immediate success of our cause in England."¹⁰¹

Emily Wilding Davison fired mail boxes, while the suffragists completed their march to London on November 16, 1912. The suffragists were received with hearty cheering,¹⁰² and women firing letter boxes were regarded as lacking mental stability.¹⁰³ An old man called out to Mrs. Pankhurst during a meeting, "You are a disgrace to your sex. You are not fit to have a vote,"¹⁰⁴ and at Norwich she was shouted down to such an extent that the entire meeting had to be disbanded.¹⁰⁵

Parliamentary activity concerning a suffrage bill in January, 1913, received both public support and public calls to delay giving votes to women. "Either the 'Dickinson' or the 'Conciliation' amendment will, I believe, satisfy for a long time the conscience of the nation, but a flat negative would insult that conscience."¹⁰⁶ Frederick Pollock, in his

¹⁰⁰Full Mall Gazette, September 24, 1912, p. 4.

¹⁰¹Millicent Garrett Fawcett, "Violence in the Women's Suffrage Movement; A Disavowal of the Militant Policy", The Century Magazine, 85, No. 1 (November, 1912), 149.

¹⁰²Manchester Guardian, November 18, 1912, p. 5.

¹⁰³Ibid., November 23, 1912, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., December 4, 1912, p. 10.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., December 12, 1910, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., January 14, 1913, p. 4.

letter, stated that "no evidence that ordinary female intelligence is so much inferior to male as to place all or most women below the level of average political capacity."¹⁰⁷

These pleas were countered in another correspondence column by a short question. "Can we afford a vast additional infusion of unreason into our politics?"¹⁰⁸

The suffragettes were called "the Bombazines" after they destroyed Lloyd George's home. This action had been caused by the Speaker's ruling on the government suffrage bill in late January, 1912. The House of Commons was merely a "box of tools" in Asquith's hands following the unscheduled ruling by the Speaker.¹⁰⁹ The women, however, reacting to the decision by committing outrages were referred to as "those horrid suffragettes."¹¹⁰ The burning down of the tea house in the Kew Gardens led to a new chant sung to the tune of "Guy Fawkes, Guy, stick him in the eye."

'Gette, 'Gette, Suffragette,
Throw her in the river and
let her get wet.¹¹¹

One writer to The Times found that the fine word "allitant" was dreadfully degraded when used to describe suffragette

¹⁰⁷Ibid., January 20, 1913, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸Pall Mall Gazette, January 22, 1913, p. 8.

¹⁰⁹"A Defeat for the Suffragettes", The Literary Digest 46, No. 8 (February 22, 1913), 391.

¹¹⁰Pope-Hennessey, p. 465.

¹¹¹Pall Mall Gazette, March 6, 1913, p. 1.

activities, and suggested: "Why not employ the word malignant instead of militant?"¹¹²

With the Ulster discontent erupting in Ireland, the press and public compared the suffragettes with the "Ulsterettes." Some did not understand why the Ulster rebellionists were allowed to simply go their own way, and the suffragettes had to suffer forcible feeding and imprisonment for their cause.

The Women's turn never comes. They are fighting not for their own way in politics, as you suggest, but for a voice, which puts the matter on an entirely different footing. They may be wrong in their methods --I think they are,--but at least do not couple them with "Ulsterettes," who appear to be unable to play a losing game cheerfully. The women are not allowed to play at all.¹¹³

Joseph Clayton in his letter of May 24, 1913, questioned the Liberal government.

If . . . [the] contention is sound that "Ulsterettes" and militant women are both in the same boat and are equally criminal, how is it that women are prosecuted and imprisoned while Sir Edward Carson and his friends proceed with impunity.¹¹⁴

The Liberal government, Reginald McKenna in particular, was taken to task for the death of Emily Wilding Davison.¹¹⁵

The funeral procession through London was "as fine a piece of organization as any for which the W.S.P.U. had been respon-

¹¹²The Times (London), March 22, 1913, p. 4.

¹¹³Manchester Guardian, May 22, 1913, p. 5.

¹¹⁴Ibid., May 26, 1913, p. 5.

¹¹⁵"The Blame for the Epsom Tragedy" Literary Digest, 46, No. 26 (June 28, 1913) 1419.

sible," said the Daily News.¹¹⁶ The Birmingham Daily Post noted that the crowds were quiet "for every onlooker felt in the presence of death self-incurred for the sake of a cause."¹¹⁷ The W.S.P.U. had indeed a martyr, yet the sympathy did not endure. Several weeks later the Pall Mall Gazette suggested that Mrs. Pankhurst be allowed to escape permanently under the "Cat and Mouse" act, and flee to France where she could live in quiet rest and "suit us all very well."¹¹⁸

The non-militant women received favorable press coverage for their "Pilgrimage" which started on June 3, 1913, and ended on July 26, 1913, in Hyde Park. The Time complimented the suffragists and commented on the respectful attention given by the attending crowds. "The entire absence of disorder and the unquestioned success of the demonstration are the reward of the great body of women suffragists. . . ."¹¹⁹

"Suffragettes broken up," was a premature announcement made by the Daily Mail on January 12, 1914.¹²⁰ The paper had published an official memorandum from the Home Office listing the facts and figures proving that militancy had been defeated by the terms of the "Cat and Mouse" act. The boast found its

¹¹⁶As cited in Metcalfe, p. 291.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Pall Mall Gazette, July 15, 1913, p. 6.

¹¹⁹The Times (London), July 28, 1913, p. 8.

¹²⁰As cited in Metcalfe, p. 305.

way into Christabel's headquarters and outrages soared. The Hokeby "Venus" and Sargent's portrait of Henry James were slashed.¹²¹ The announcement had only aroused the "wild women" and made them "wilder."¹²²

The effect of these wild outbreaks on the suffrage movement must be disastrous. They are filling many thoughtful people with forebodings as to what would happen if this type of hysterical woman were given the larger opportunity which suffrage would afford for political and social disorder.¹²³

However, those condoning the suffragette actions were requested by the Manchester Guardian to attend a meeting of the non-militants. "A great and just reform shall not be denied because of the wrong done by a very small fraction of its advocates."¹²⁴

American newspapers also had their comments to make concerning the suffrage movement in Great Britain:

1. "Great Britain's militants seems to be the champion cut-ups when it comes to art."--Louisville Post."
2. "In England the feminist movement is largely towards the police station."--Charleston News and Courier."
3. "English suffragists [suffragettes] believe that the brick is mightier than the pen."--Washington Herald."
4. "Ladies visiting British art galleries are requested to have their knives and axes checked at the door."--Cleveland Plaindealer."¹²⁵

¹²¹"Suffragette Butcher of Art", Literary Digest, 48, No. 24 (June 13, 1914), 1434.

¹²²"Wild Women Still Wilder", Outlook, 107, (June 6, 1914), 272.

¹²³Ibid. ¹²⁴Manchester Guardian, June 19, 1914, p. 8

¹²⁵"The Suffraget Reign of Terror in London", Current Opinion, 57, No. 1 (July, 1914), 16.

The country generally detested militancy by 1914, but many reasonable voices had been calling for support of the suffrage cause. This can be attested to by the introduction of a woman suffrage bill into Lords by Lord Selbourne. "A number of clergy were ardent supporters of the W.S.P.U., speaking from its platforms, contributing to its organ, hailing the militants as heroines and martyrs."¹²⁶ Nonetheless the last note to ring in the ears of the woman suffrage supporters was discouraging.

Whether we are suffragists or anti-suffragists, whether we admire militant methods or despise them, we have to admit that militancy has irrefutably proved that women cannot be made responsible for their public acts in the same way men are: public opinion will not stand it. The law cannot be put in force against women who commit crimes for political purposes, and then, to avoid the punishment the law prescribes, mutilate themselves and parade before the public their consequent sufferings. . . . This immunity of women from the law's control bars them quite finally from any right to control the laws of the nation in any degree.¹²⁷

It comes with a shock to read almost a month later the following excerpt from an advertisement in the Manchester Guardian:

WILL 1,000,000 WOMEN RESPOND?

THIS IS A WAR FOR THE PEOPLE.¹²⁸

¹²⁶E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement, p. 523.

¹²⁷The Times (London), July 21, 1914, p. 13.

¹²⁸Manchester Guardian, September 4, 1914, p. 8.

CONCLUSION

The rebellion of women against the Victorian pattern of life, with its tendency to dull routine, led indirectly to the woman suffrage movement. The first fifty years of suffrage agitation in Great Britain were marked by great restraint on the women's part. During this period carefully proscribed constitutional methods were generally followed. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, after experiencing continual failure in the attempt to secure the vote, certain women became impatient with usual constitutional methods and new practices were introduced. At first, mildly, but, as 1914 approached, steadily increasing in violence; these tactics were "militant". Militancy, for all its faults, served to call attention to the woman suffrage movement. As a result, by the years just prior to the outbreak of World War I, no one could move in any social circle in Great Britain without overhearing, at some time or other, either vehement or scholarly discussions of the "vote for women" issue.

No matter how sternly the average Englishman might criticize the suffragettes' behavior, the movement benefited. The general public, while often disgusted by the actions of the militants, did not turn against those who were non-mili-

tants. In fact, during the period from 1906 to 1914, strong public support and sympathy for the movement developed.

The British press was generally anti-woman suffrage and devoted considerable space to the militant outrages. At the same time relatively little attention was accorded to the quiet, orderly meetings of the non-militant suffragists. The problem with the press and its policy can best be understood when it is remembered that most British newspapers were affiliated with one or other of the great parties. Realizing that support of any suffrage legislation would split either political party, the press tended to play upon the comic aspects of the movement. Only after the advent of truly extreme militancy did the chief press organs realize that strong new forces had been unleashed. Even then they attempted to describe the suffragettes as dangerous and unbalanced. Only after many years of extreme action were they willing to admit that the women of Britain were determined to secure the vote.

It may be argued that the women of Great Britain would have received the parliamentary vote before World War I had it not been for the Pankhursts and extreme militancy. Certainly it is true that Mrs. Pankhurst, and Christabel in Paris, did not gauge the political climate in Great Britain. Had war not come in 1914, however, there is reason to believe that the suffrage agitation would not have met with early success. "Votes for women", achieved in part at the end of the war and, in full, in 1928, were, thus, hastened

by World War I and marked the unforgettable, historical events of 1906-1914.

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