

The Truth About The British Suffragettes

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The writing of history is a tremendously pretentious task, for it is generally assumed that the history of an era or a country is equivalent to "the truth" about it, "the facts." Historians themselves often reinforce this assumption by pretending to be "impartial" and "objective," handing down their narrative as if that were the only way the story could be told.

And yet a simple comparison between two or three or numerous versions of the same phenomenon—the British Suffragette Movement, for instance—makes it immediately obvious that a man's distance from an event, his ideology, his subconscious biases, his personal investment, his experience and field of competence all affect the way he sees that event.

PART OF THE LARGER REVOLUTION

From a considerably distant perspective, over 50 years and an ocean away, it is easy to see what the phenomenon of the Suffragettes has in common with other, apparently dissimilar phenomena. What evidence can we present to indicate that the enfranchisement of women was only a part of the larger social revolution that swept through the Western world between 1907 and 1917? That it is only one manifestation of a change of which Irish Home Rule, socialism, trade unionism, syndicalism, working class franchise, American populism, and Russian Bolshevism are others?

Its chronology, first of all, coincided neatly with the chronological progress of nearly every one of these other movements. The years 1885-1890 saw first flare-ups on every front: the Parnell scandals and the Irish demand for Home Rule, numerous strikes and lockouts culminating in the great Trafalgar Square riot, socialist and Salvation Army disturbances. In 1889 Ibsen's influential play *Doll's House* was performed for the first time in England, slamming the door on unquestioned masculine supremacy.

Then for fifteen years the unrest quieted down for some reason. Not until 1907 did things begin happening again. Bloody Sunday had stirred up the emigré Russian revolutionaries, in 1907 the Women's Social and Political Union staged its first mass demonstration, and in 1908 George Sorel bolstered French syndicalism with his

Reflections on Violence.

From here unrest built up geometrically, reaching a climax between 1910 and 1914. Syndicalists in England organized huge strikes of the coal miners, railroad and transport workers, and were planning the biggest one yet for autumn of 1914; the Home Rule Bill was introduced, turning Ireland into two armed camps; the last vestige of power of the House of Lords was extinguished; and Suffragettes hit the peak of their militancy in both England and America. Most impressive of all, they each met the same paradoxical end. Interrupted and postponed by the outbreak of war in 1914, nearly every reform group was victorious within the next few years.

An economic determinist would say that these interesting chronological parallels indicate that the different movements were fundamentally all one social-economic revolution. Whether they knew it or not, says the commentator from a distance, they were fighting for the same thing, in much the same way.

All were the spokesmen for a huge new class. Women, Irish, working classes, labor unions, commoners all wanted the vote, sovereignty, independent powers. Each had been governed all through the 19th century by groups smaller in size than themselves: women by men, Irish by British landlords, working class by bourgeoisie, unionists by capitalists, commoners by peers. If the end of the 18th century had broken the hold of the old, fixed aristocracy and granted freedom to the middle class, as one could say, then the logical extension of this liberation was being demanded at the end of the 19th century by the great masses left unenfranchised.

All the reforming groups made their appeal to group solidarity, rather than to individual self-interest like the utilitarians and liberals of the previous century. The hymn of the trade unionists was "Solidarity Forever;" Labor Party members of Parliament were instructed to vote as a bloc; Suffragettes worked for the defeat of all Liberal candidates regardless of their individual stand.

Their methods were similar. Every radical group directed its main attack not so much against the die-hard reactionaries as against the Liberals who purported to support them but took no decisive action. Suffragettes, Independent Labor Party, and Irish nationalists combined to cut down the Liberal majority in the elections of 1909, putting them in greater need of the support of these radical groups. "Don't Be Misled by Socialists, Suffragettes or Tories" said a Liberal handbill that year, "Vote for Sherwell."

Reform movements all began with passive resistance, demonstrations, and marches, and as these were not successful in accomplishing their ends, worked their way up to stone throwing and setting of fires, and in the case of Ireland and Russia, to civil war. "Window breaking, when it is done by Englishmen, is regarded as a time-honored method of showing displeasure in a political situation," said Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, leader of the militant suffragettes. Although her women did not want to break the law, she said, she quoted the Italian revolutionary nationalist Joseph Mazzini, "the way to reform has always led through prison."

The similarities between these movements can further be seen in the tangible facts of their formation and functioning. They were effectively linked together. The Women's Social and Political Union, the most militant suffrage group, led by the Pankhurst, was organized in Manchester among working class women, rather than in London among educated middle-class women like the feminist societies of the previous century. They had the enthusiastic support of I.L.P. leader Keir Hardie, who included Votes For Women in his own party's platform, and of the trade unionists, who took women into their ranks in about 1889. The first woman elected to Parliament when it became possible in 1918 was an Irish Home Rule agitator, Countess Markievicz.

If Mrs. Pankhurst and Keir Hardie perhaps did not think of themselves and all the other reform movements as part of one great proletarian revolution of the 20th century, they did feel emotional ties with reformers of every generation. In Mrs. Pankhurst's autobiography are countless comparisons of the Suffragettes to other groups: to American abolitionists, to English trade unionists, to franchise agitators of 1832, 1867, and 1884, to Italian nationalists, and even to Bolsheviks.

So far we have considered the Suffragettes only as a part of something else. Now let us identify the Suffragettes from the perspective of immersion in the struggle, in terms of the line-up of forces.

LINE-UP WITHIN THE RANKS

Within the ranks were two major divisions. One was called the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, and in activity as well as in name it resembled the N.A.A.C.P. of the 1960's, working for reform exclusively through peaceful and parliamentary methods. They were "sane, sensible, and never discouraged," says historian Ray Strachey, who sympathizes with them enthusiastically. They were the non-militants, or "suffragists," and repeatedly disavowed the more spectacular pastimes of the extremists.

The extremists, led by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters Sylvia and Christabel, were perhaps the SNCC of the Suffragette movement. Their motto was "Deeds, Not Words." They were singlehandedly responsible for the great number of wild tales about the movement for women's rights which have come down to us. Officially the Women's Social and Political Union, or W.S.P.U., they alone can be called "Suffragettes." They operated by "defiance, antagonism, suspicion . . . laughed at all talk of persuasion

. . . were always cloaked in secrecy . . . were aggressive, sarcastic, angry, excited" according to Strachey. This is the mildest treatment they get from any historian.

These two groups were not the only ones. In 1909 a Men's League for Woman Suffrage was formed, and in the following year were organized Woman Suffrage Associations of actresses, artists, Catholic women, church league, Conservatives, Unionists, free church, Friends, Jews, London University graduates, and Scottish University graduates.

There also came into existence Men's and Women's Leagues for the Opposition of Woman Suffrage, under the leadership respectively of Lord Curzon and Mrs. Humphrey Ward who followed the Suffragette orators around the country presenting opposing speeches. But their cause was so patently ridiculous, says historian Strachey, that every public meeting they held won converts to the Suffragette cause.

THE PERSONALITIES

But while British society was slowly polarizing into the pro and con, a great deal of attention was focussed on the leading individuals of the two camps, some extremely colorful and antithetical personalities. Emmeline Pankhurst had been happily married for twenty years to an active reformer, and had five children. Textbook photos show her to be a small, attractive woman. She served in numerous public positions before she became a Suffragette: Poor Law Guardian, Registrar of Births and Deaths, member of Manchester School Board; and during World War I she ran some governmental projects. Her daughter Christabel earned a law degree (although women were not allowed to practise in England), and defended her mother and herself when they were on trial for conspiracy. Mrs. Pankhurst's followers were fiercely devoted to her. It is reported that wealthy women were sometimes moved to throw money and jewelry at her feet when she made speeches.

Another of the leading women of the Suffragette cause was Lady Constance Lytton, a peeress. In order to avoid the special treatment police always afforded her because of her social position, she assumed a false name and was arrested as a commoner. The harsh treatment she received subsequently made her an invalid for life, and is the subject of a book she wrote *Prisons and Prisoners*.

Leading the forces on the other side was Herbert Asquith, Prime Minister who postponed the suffrage bill repeatedly between 1908 and 1916. A British historian says he had "little philosophy of government . . . His chief object is to get into office and stay there, his chief slogan 'Let's wait and see.'" Winston Churchill called him "a simple-minded man." Although he was officially a "Liberal-Imperialist," his opponents called him a Whig, a "murderer" in the Featherstone incident of 1893, and a "torturer of innocent women" in 1913.

Another of the reactionaries in the opposition was Lord Curzon, not only president of the League for the Opposition of Woman Suffrage but also Speaker of the House of Lords. Previously he had been forced to resign his post as Viceroy of India for "autocratic ways."

To many individuals, the struggle must have looked like

a personal one. When Christabel Pankhurst says to Asquith "Sir, we are not satisfied," he returns acidly, "Well, I didn't expect to satisfy *you*." Both she and her mother tell the story of their struggle as a series of repeated insults to them by the government officials. And Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence breaks from Emmeline Pankhurst in 1913 to set up her own Woman's Freedom League, different in only a minor aspect of internal organization.

It is understandable that in this way of considering the movement, as the specific confrontation of groups and individuals, the charisma of the leaders must have been important to the people choosing up sides at the moment. For the purpose of making sense out of the contradictory explanations in different history books, we will consider the historians as belonging to different schools of thought with reference to the Suffragettes. We will see how their attitude, ranging from strongly disapproving to strongly approving, affects their discussion of what happened between 1907 and 1914.

A SPECTRUM OF HISTORIANS

First of all there is *the Blind Ignorance School*, inspired by Queen Victoria (who called women's rights "mad, wicked folly") and led in the 20th century by Asquith (who called the movement "contrary to the laws of nature") and Curzon (who called it "disastrous and wrong.") In Asquith's *Memoirs* he condescends to devote a chapter to the "curious episode" of the woman Suffragette movement. Without the slightest hint of his own role in the whole affair, he presents as narrative a series of totally unrelated and chaotic incidents, apparently staged by a bunch of crazy women. All initiative came from them, and if he was aware of any reasons or causes he doesn't mention them. He does not make a distinction between the suffragists and the Suffragettes, calling them all simply "the women." He does not mention activity going on in the country as a whole, but only what he experienced personally: the time he was riding with his wife in a carriage in Dublin and a woman threw a hatchet through the window; the time his carriage was stopped by a group of women who threw pepper and tried to dogwhip him. He knows women set fire to a football stadium when he visited Manchester; they threw stones onto the roof of the hall when he spoke at Birmingham. "Even our children had to be vigilantly protected against the menace of abduction," he writes.

He thus gives the impression that he was blind and deaf to what was going on. At no point in his presentation of the "curious episode" does he describe the fate of the Suffrage Bill in Parliament, let alone relate its fate even slightly to the militancy. He does not bother to give his own reasons for obstructing the bill, though in Mrs. Pankhurst's opinion he prevented passage almost singlehandedly. And he never mentions that the bill finally did get passed; for him the women's story ends in 1914 when their attacks on him ceased.

There is another way of narrating the Suffragette affair: *The Sober Disapproval School* of historians. Such British historians as Lunt, Ensor, Havighurst and Stenton devote scarcely a paragraph to Suffrage in all their endless tomes.

The outbreak of militancy they treat as a freak accident, an irrelevant sidelight in the main story of the unceasing progress of the British constitution. They disapprove. In 980 pages, all Lunt has to say about the whole Suffragette movement is "During the twentieth century, British women had been agitating for the right to vote and during the years immediately preceding the war a radical group had indulged in violent demonstrations of one sort or another. With the outbreak of the war the agitation ceased." He seems to feel that he would contaminate himself if he got too specific.

Similarly Ensor, exclusively writing about the years 1870 to 1917, gives only one page to the cause. The militants, he scolds, "set the clock back" and prevented the earlier passage of a suffrage bill. "They wanted to win the game by . . . breaking the rules. The W.S.P.U. was sawing at the very bough on which its members were demanding the right to sit." Although his tone is not as personally persecuted as Asquith's, he doubtless would have been friends with the man, for he too thinks the women were "psychopathic. . . . It was not easy to save society from them or them from themselves." The complete absence of details on the subject of their adventures is explained by his feeling that their whole career was "a profound mistake, which did less than nothing to help woman suffrage."

Slightly to the left of this interpretation is *the Hearty Laughter School* of historians like Smith, Getton, and David E. Owen. They neither approve nor disapprove; they think the whole thing is funny. For reader interest, they string together incidents like cutting phone wires, breaking porcelain in the British museum, throwing stones, setting fires, putting jam and tea in mailboxes, wielding knives and hatchets. They tell good stories: of women anchoring a raft on the Thames opposite the House of Commons and haranguing the members taking tea on the terrace, of women carving the words "Votes for Women" in acid on the greens of exclusive golf courses. But they juxtapose these merry stories with the one about Emily Davison throwing herself in front of a horse on Derby Day 1913, giving the whole a nonsensical, irrational, even maniacal quality. They are not concerned with the logic of the arguments on either side, nor the chronological progress of the reform; by their omissions they imply that the movement had only tenuous relation to Parliament, to the public, or to any social and economic realities. This patronizing attitude toward the antics of the ladies was probably responsible for many men's dismissal of the cause then, and their refusal to take it seriously even now.

Some historians are more liberal and sympathize quite firmly with the non-militant suffragists; they compose *the Proud Pointing School*. Ray Strachey is the best example: she delineates the different suffragist factions as none of the conservative historians bother to; she presents their activities in an orderly sequence rather than spouting vast generalizations or fragmented anecdotes. Strachey treats the actions of the government as causal, declaring that militance erupted only at such tense moments as the announcement of the defeat of the Conciliation Bill in 1913. But as a *Proud Pointer* she can only be completely approving of the non-militant National Union. The W.S.P.U.

and all their color baffle her, for she doesn't want to think that violence may have had effective influence. Hence, without ever flatly condemning violence, she dwells instead on the successful lobbying of the National Union, their steady increases in income and membership, their level-headed public statements. Suffragists, we learn from her (in the most prosaic account of them to be found anywhere), chalked pavements, carried sandwich boards, went house to house for money, and made speaking tours on their vacations.

SUFFRAGETTE WRITINGS

And at the final extreme of approval we find *the Evangelical School* of historians, the actors in the drama of history: the Suffragette writers themselves. Mrs. Pankhurst, her daughters, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence (the other Emmeline), Lady Lytton and many other activists wrote memoirs and histories to justify themselves, and to spur women on to the as-yet unfinished cause. Their tone is consistently dignified and lofty. Susan B. Anthony wrote "Cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing" (is she talking about our historians, perhaps?) "can never bring about a reform. Those who are really in earnest must be willing to be anything or nothing in the world's estimation, avow their sympathy with despised ideas and bear the consequences." Although Mrs. Pankhurst alone justifies the use of violence for self-defense when demonstrators are manhandled, she adds to this a statement of the ideal: "We cast about to find a way that would not involve the loss of human life. Had this been a man's demonstration there would have been blood shed long ago." She points out that fires were only set in empty buildings, that stones were thrown at windows and not people.

In making this statement Mrs. Pankhurst also brings up an issue which enters into the arguments of the extremists: the *Blind Ignorants* and the *Evangelicals*, namely the relative virtues of men and women. Her claim is not, as many people believe, that women will necessarily improve the level of politics. She merely mentions the relative humanity of the women's agitation because public officials arrest and condemn women more readily than they would male demonstrators. Her plea is for equality: that like the Englishmen of 1832, 1867 and 1884 her followers would simply like to be granted the vote they feel is their right as human beings. Her opponents of course do not concede this equality.

Understandably, the *Evangelical* accounts of the movement describe every detail of their progress, making every step toward the near anarchy of 1913-14 seem inevitably necessary. Only in these writings, which give equal space to the machinations in Parliament and the concoctions of the Suffragettes, does one get a sense of the mounting excitement of the time. Mrs. Pankhurst's study concretely justifies all that the conservative historians vaguely condemn.

Violence was begun, she says, by the government, when they forcibly interfered with the peaceful demonstrations of the Suffragettes. She tells of policemen slapping,

knocking down, choking, and riding their horses into female picketers. She describes the excruciating pain and danger in the prison doctor's practise of "forcible feeding" of women on hunger strikes. (Only *Hearty Laughter* historians dared mention this practise, usually saying something like "So the women went on hunger strikes and the prisons had to resort to forcible feeding.") She points out, as no other historian does, that attacks were made on the Suffragettes not only by the police but also by the public: hecklers at Suffragette orations bombarded them with dried peas, pepper, mice, rotten eggs, and oranges. Only in her account are found such marvelous but forgotten events as the mass refusal to participate in the Census of 1910, the 4-mile-long silky and velvety masquerade parade of the same year, the converting of a small restaurant (the Gardenia, on Catherine St. in the Strand,) into an arsenal for window-breaking stones—brought one by one in women's pocketbooks.

Mrs. Pankhurst states that the harassment of the Royal Scotch Golf Links (women sneaked in one night and replaced the hole flags with "Votes for Women" banners) aroused much more indignation and protest than the destruction of nearly all the shop windows in downtown London. The upper class, and *their* property, were finally being threatened, she says, something more sacred than human life. She writes finally that Woman Suffrage would have been achieved much sooner if the suffragists had been more single-minded, more intensive, more militant.

All of these different schools of thought naturally result in quite different conclusions as to what the events in the Suffragette movement really were. But even when they are dealing with ostensibly the same event, or the same specific question, there are large discrepancies.

VERSIONS OF THE SAME EVENT

For instance, what went on in the *mêlées* between Suffragettes and police? Newspapers reported that the women scratched, bit and used hatpins. The government convicted them for "obstructing" or even "assaulting" the police. Mrs. Pankhurst calls these accusations completely false. Women did nothing violent, she says, while she saw one policeman "slap the leader and choke her until she was blue in the face." Accusation and counteraccusation are equally unverifiable now, but in the light of the behavior of policemen and protestors in the 1960's Mrs. Pankhurst's version rings slightly truer.

What happened when Asquith spoke at Birmingham in 1909? He reports that "Suffragettes hurled slates and other missiles into the street below and onto the roof of the hall. They were eventually dislodged with the assistance of a fire hose." But when Mrs. Pankhurst tells the story, she adds that there were only two women, their stones hit no one, the firemen refused to turn on the hoses because it seemed unnecessary, and so the policemen turned the water on the women, "clinging to the dangerous slope of the roof." She makes Asquith's fear of the Suffragettes in this case sound like paranoia, by adding a description of his terrible elaborate precautions for self-protection: underground tunnels, paths sprinkled over with sand to muffle

the sound, hidden back entrances. By a different selection of details, she conveys an altogether different impression of the affair.

All of the schools discussed above had in common the desire to place the Suffragettes in a concrete historical context. But there were people and groups with altogether different spheres of interest.

The artists of the time sought the truth of the Suffragette movement by evoking its spirit, by drawing out its emotional or ethical connotations. Henry James' *Bostonians* are the English feminists of the late 19th century. They are a strange, macabre group, like the characters in a *Mad* comic morality play. His archtypical Suffragette is pictured as an icy, ferocious lesbian named (ominously) Olive Chancellor, who dominates the action but is eventually overcome by a real man, Basil Ransom.

Also running frightened at the spectre of women's rights was George Bernard Shaw, whose *Man and Superman* was immensely popular between 1905 and 1907. "Give women the vote and in five years there will be a crushing tax on bachelors . . . The women are all become dangerous, the sex is aggressive, powerful; when women are wronged they do

not group themselves pathetically to sing 'May Righteous Heaven Defend,' they grasp formidable legal and social weapons and retaliate . . . Man is no longer victor in the duel of sex," he says in the Epistle Dedicatory to the play.

AN ABOUT FACE BY THE PRESS

Another group with a unique special interest, whose interpretation of the Suffragettes is extremely interesting, are the journalists of the day. Alone of all the commentators, their viewpoint was constantly evolving, and in the years between 1907 and 1916 made a complete transformation from disapproval to approval. Their interpretations are thus more interesting as an index of popular opinion than for their inherent validity, for the evolution of newspaper coverage seems to indicate that there was a crucial switch in about 1913.

Before 1909, the press gave so little coverage to suffrage demonstrations that Mrs. Pankhurst was convinced there was a deliberate boycott. When police began arresting women, the papers began to print color stories, always disapproving of the Suffragettes' "violent" behavior. What Mrs. Pankhurst speaks of as a march to Parliament they call a raid. When she slaps a policeman lightly in order to get him to arrest her, they declare that the women have "proven themselves unfit to vote." But when the government made the incomprehensible decision to kill the Conciliation Bill in 1913, the *Evening Standard and Globe* stressed that it was "no friend of woman suffrage" and then went on to condemn the government action. When numerous horror stories began coming from the prisons, newspapers printed them in grisly detail, now sympathetic to the women's heroic behavior. But at some point, Strachey declares, the papers became "glutted with horror stories," grew tired of printing them even though they were still raging in full force, and began to be more interested in what the government was going to do about it. This looks to me like the point where the horror of violence had saturated the public mind and done its job. By 1916 even a previously extreme opponent like the *Observer* favored woman suffrage, and stated clearly "We were wrong."

Why did woman suffrage finally pass in Britain, after seven years of militancy and two years of respite? Such a simple historical "fact," and yet such a hard question to answer that almost no one even attempts it. However, by the very terms of their previous interpretation, description, narration or evocation of what the Suffragette movement was, one can deduce what each of our different sources would give as an answer to this great question. Their answers would be:

PHILOSOPHIES

Social-economic Synthesis: Because it was bound to succeed. The motion of events in the world have a collective impact.

Personal Analysis: Because Mrs. Pankhurst (or the suffragists or Asquith) was so clever.

HISTORIES

Blind Ignorance School: Because we decided to reward the fine behavior of the ladies during the war.

DO YOU REALIZE

That in Every Country Woman Suffrage and Socialism Go Hand-in-Hand?

NEW ZEALAND has Woman Suffrage. Its government is wholly in the hands of Socialists, and at the beginning of the war it was the worst debt-ridden country in the world.

AUSTRALIA too, has Woman Suffrage and a Socialist government. Conscription was twice defeated during the war, owing to Socialism, Pacifism and the Woman's Vote. Shortly before the close of the war, a national convention of Australian Socialists declared that unless the Allies made peace immediately, on the Russian program, they would stop even the recruiting from Australia!

FINLAND adopted Woman Suffrage, and Socialism, which developed into the wildest anarchy, soon followed. At the recent election (March, 1919) the Socialists elected more representatives than any two of the other parties.

In **REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA** 26,000,000 women can vote. Russian Socialism is the most fearful menace to the civilization of the world today.

GERMANY adopted Woman Suffrage immediately when the Socialists gained control of her government.

EVERY SOCIALIST COUNTRY AND STATE IN THE WORLD HAS ADOPTED WOMAN SUFFRAGE

In the **UNITED STATES** Socialism has already gained control of North Dakota, and the first act of the Socialist legislature was to pass a Woman Suffrage bill.

The "Recall of Judges," a measure to which Socialists look as a means of gaining control of government, has been adopted in Kansas, California, Oregon, Colorado, Arizona, and Nevada—all Woman Suffrage States!

Our only woman Congressman was claimed by the I. W. W. as "Our Representative."

Every Socialist is a Suffragist, and Dr. Anna Shaw, when President of the National Woman Suffrage Association, said "we welcome every Socialist vote."

WOMAN SUFFRAGE WOULD HAVE BEEN DEFEATED IN NEW YORK IN 1917 BUT FOR THE SOCIALIST VOTE.

. . .

If you want to save your country from following in Russia's footsteps

FIGHT WOMAN SUFFRAGE

and

FIGHT IT NOW!

Issued by the MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC INTERESTS' LEAGUE of ANTI-SUFFRAGISTS, 687 Boylston Street, Boston, March, 1919

Sober Disapproval School: Because the militancy finally stopped, and the devoted service of so many women during the war allowed us to forget that awful business previously.

Hearty Laughter School: Who knows?

Proud Pointing School: Because suffrage reform, which had won an emotional victory by 1914, was clearly a moral necessity.

Evangelical School: Because our cause is right! (And if

more militant women had cooperated, we could have finished it off earlier.)

COMMENTARIES

Art: Because the world is decaying.

Journalism: Because everything works out in the end in a democratic society with a free press.

A Chronological Chart of Some of the "Facts"

1905	October	Annie Kenney and Christabel Pankhurst take "Votes for Women" banner into Parliament; thrown out bodily.
1906	March April	300 women march to House of Commons; barred from entering. BEGINNING OF HECKLING OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES. Leaders meet with Campbell-Bannerman; given evasive answer.
1907	February	W.S.P.U. organizes Mud March of 3000 women, wearing long skirts, carrying banners, in the rain; 65 arrested. Crowds watch policemen, women fight. Bertrand Russell, running on suffragist platform defeated. 130 women try to carry a resolution into the House of Commons; arrested for "obstructing the police."
	September	Less militant Woman's Freedom League breaks from W.S.P.U.
1908	June	Huge procession of 13,000 women to Hyde Park, ending in demonstration estimated at 500,000 (previous high in Hyde Park had been 75,000). "Golden sunshine, mighty throngs, awe-inspiring"—Mrs. P. Asquith issues statement that "government might, at some indefinite time, introduce a reform bill which might be amended so as to include woman suffrage."
1909	February June October November	Procession of 15,000; 60 arrested. Fight with police in Parliament Square; 29 arrested. FIRST HUNGER STRIKE IN PRISON. 14 women immediately follow suit, released within a week. Riot in Parliament Square; 21 arrested. Ejected from hall by force for interrupting Lloyd George.
1910	June July October November	Conciliation Bill introduced in Parliament; prospects look hopeful. SIX-MONTH TRUCE DECLARED. Enormous demonstration in Hyde Park, all organizations cooperating. "Beautiful, medieval pageantry, took an hour and a half to pass one point."—Strachey Lloyd George, Winston Churchill speak against Conciliation Bill, the press calling their stand "absolutely indefensible." W.S.P.U. DECLARES WAR National Union gathers a petition of 300,000 names, mostly men; ignored by government. Black Friday: 450 marching women attacked by policemen, fought for five hours. BEGINNING OF WINDOW-BREAKING
1911	January March	Asquith makes contradictory promises to suffragist and anti-suffragist delegations. Huge window-breaking conspiracy all over town; 200 arrested. Police raid W.S.P.U. headquarters. Mrs. Pankhurst tried for subversion; Christabel escapes to Paris. Mrs. Pankhurst says in a speech "We have made more progress by breaking glass than

- we did when we allowed them to break our bodies.”
Coal miners holding huge strike.
- 1912 January Parliament defeats Conciliation Bill.
GREATLY INTENSIFIED MILITANCY.
National Union holds 50 propaganda meetings at night.
Two women arrested on suspicion of arson at Minister's home.
Horror and atrocity stories about prisons filling newspapers; 80 hunger strikers, being forcibly fed.
Anti-suffragist candidate for Parliament beats an incumbent.
Mrs. Pankhurst, recently out of jail, says “I will incite this meeting to rebellion!”
- 1913 January Speaker of House of Commons rules new suffrage bill out of order.
HEIGHT OF VIOLENCE:
Art exhibits slashed; 15 galleries close to protect them.
5000 letters destroyed in mailboxes.
Telegraph wires cut, isolating London temporarily.
Jewel room in Tower of London invaded.
Refreshment House at Regent Park burned.
Exclusive clubs' windows broken.
Golf courses tampered with.
Orchid Houses at Kew wrecked.
Emily Davison commits suicide by leaping in front of race-horse; 6000 women march in her funeral procession.
- March Parliament passes Cat-and-Mouse Act, enabling starving prisoners to be released for recuperation and arrested without further trial.
Mrs. Pankhurst in and out of jail 12 times during one year.
182 women go on hunger strikes.
Mrs. Pankhurst escapes from police and flees to America, where she is warmly received and given money.
- June TIDE OF PUBLIC OPINION HAS TURNED.
40,000 Friends of Woman Suffrage march to London from all over country, hold mass meeting in Hyde Park.
Prospects in Parliament seem good.
- 1914 All Suffragette activity dramatically ends. Government releases and pardons prisoners.
W.S.P.U. never heard from again.
Suffragettes and suffragists turn to war work.
- 1917 March Demonstration of Women War Workers (only one).
June Woman Suffrage Bill victorious in Parliament 385-55.
- 1918 Christabel Pankhurst and other women run for Parliament; Countess Markievicz successful but not seated.
- 1928 Complete Woman Suffrage granted from age 21.
Herbert Asquith and Emmeline Pankhurst die.

FEMINIST:

“Mother, what is a Feminist?”
“A Feminist, my daughter,
Is any woman now who cares
To think about her own affairs
As men don't think she oughter”

—Alice Duer Miller, 1915

FEMINISM:

... when I speak of feminism, I mean the fact of struggling for specifically feminine claims at the same time as carrying on the class war . . .

—Simone de Beauvoir, 1972
ALL SAID AND DONE