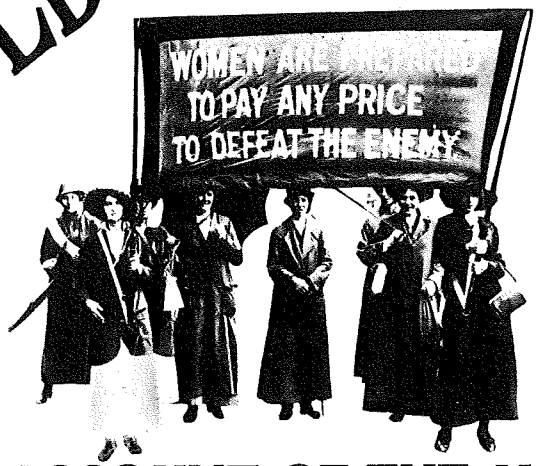
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER



AN ACCOUNT OF THE MILITANT DAYS OF THE BRITISH SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

BY MIDGE MACKENZIE / THE CURRENT PBS TV "MASTERPIECE THEATRE" SERIES IS BASED ON THE BOOK FROM WHICH THIS EXCERPT IS TAKEN

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PANKHURST, EMMELINE (1858-1928): Widow of Richard Marsden Pankhurst, the noted reformer and legislative champion of women's rights (drafted the Married Women's Property Act of 1882). A lifelong social activist, she became dedicated to the cause of votes for women as a result of the exploitation she saw all around her in Industrial Britain. Founder with her daughters of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Her health was broken by the militant campaign. She died just as the vote was finally being extended to all women over 21.

PANKHURST, CHRISTABEL (1880-1958): Elder daughter of Emmeline, she qualified as a lawyer but was barred from practice because of her sex. Political strategist of the WSPU from its very beginnings, she led every stage of the militant campaign. When women were granted the vote, she ran for Parliament in the first election in 1918, and lost—but polled more votes than any other woman candidate that year. Created a Dame of the British Empire in 1936. Died in Los Angeles.

PANKHURST, SYLVIA (1882-1960): Younger daughter of Emmeline. Trained as an artist, she dedicated her talents to the WSPU campaign. She became increasingly involved with political and social work among the poorest people of London's East End. Her socialist sympathies and support of Labour Party candidates went against WSPU policy, and she split with the main branch of the union. She visited Russia after World War I and strongly supported the Revolution. In the thirties, she supported the cause of Abyssinian Independence and eventually settled in Ethiopia doing social work and campaigning for African Independence in general. When she died in Addis Ababa, she was given the equivalent of a State Funeral.

THE PETHICK-LAWRENCES, EMMELINE (1867-1954) FREDERICK (1871-1961): Among earliest supporters of the WSPU. She campaigned actively and was imprisoned many times. He was a lawyer who defended the Suffragettes,* frequently used his fortune to pay bail for them, and was himself imprisoned in 1911. The Pethick-Lawrences eventually split with the Pankhursts over the policy of guerrilla militancy in 1912 and became active pacifists during World War I.

Editor's note: "Suffragette" is a term originally coined by the London *Daily Mail* in 1906. Derived from the idea that women were out to "get suffrage," the word was adopted by the WSPU.

I used to feel before Watergate that I was all alone on a hill with my paranoia about Nixon. That's how I felt for years about my own convictions of freedom in my personal and professional life, and in the lives of other women: surrounded by that same sense of isolation. Now I see all around me—in the writing of Susan Harris [creator of "Fay"] and Penelope Mortimer, through my friends—that we are all going through the same things, sharing common experiences and communicating about them more to each other. There is much more of an affirmative feeling in my life now with women: what we all have in common is change.

The whole nature of my relationships with friends has changed. Years ago, in my first marriage, if women got together, it would be to gossip about our husbands—that's what we thought we had in common. Now, when I have dinner with friends—Lily Tomlin, Goldie Hawn, Julia Phillips—we show each other scripts, discuss new projects, share our professional experiences. As more of us are moving into producing and directing, the level of creativity among women has become very high, and therefore our relationships have changed—have themselves become more creative. We have yet to see those new kinds of relationships among women reflected on television or in film. Maybe because art always seems to be catching up to life. More probably because in a half-hour television show you have barely enough time—about 24 minutes—to get on with the action, and get the story told.

The whole basis of the story of "Fay" is that change is not necessarily going to demolish you. My first marriage was based on "Thou shalt stay home and not work," and when it broke up, I had a terrible need to reproduce another dependent relationship with a man. But stronger than that was a sense that I had to *try* life on my own; whatever that meant in terms of pain, and regardless of the mistakes I might make. Seeing yourself reflected in the eyes and responses of others when you go out into the world alone (maybe for the first time) is a fantastic revelation.

Taking that risk turned out to be the right thing for me—the right thing being, of course, only what really makes you happy. A while ago, I accepted that I had to live within my own world, not in any man's, no matter how secure and statusy his world was. So when Mr. Wrong—who bears absolutely no resemblance to Mr. Right—came into my life, we got off on the Wrong foot, thank God. What interested us in each other initially was what the other was doing, and everything fell into place around that.

We always had a sense of temporariness about our situation. It's allowed us to be totally ourselves —maybe that's why our 10 years together have flashed by.

A few years ago I had an enormous desire to have another child. (I raised two stepsons from my first marriage, and my daughter Dinah, 17, is beginning her own career in film at the California Institute of the Arts.) Two years ago, we learned that there were many children in Thailand who had been fathered by GIs stationed at the air base there and who were considered outcasts from Thai society. We decided to adopt, got married in order to do that, flew to Thailand and brought Belinda (now four) home. She's wonderful — and we're all in love. How strange and ironic that someone on one side of the world finds someone on the other side of the world on the basis of mutual human need. Mr. Wrong and I have since written our own personal "annulment contract," to preserve that initial sense of individual freedom that has always been the cornerstone of our life together.

Professionally, too, freedom has been the right thing for me. I am used to fighting for my own kind of reality as an actress: determining what my particular character's style is, and then being true to those small realities that create her life.

I'm not saying everybody has to like that character, but at least let me make her live. When NBC took "Fay" out of the original 9:30 Friday slot, it was the beginning of the end. "Fay" gave me a chance to explore a part of myself: the closest part, in a funny way, which I don't get a chance to do very often. I wanted to make an impact, make my contribution to saying "this is what a woman is." And now I feel robbed of that.

But as an actress, as a woman, I couldn't have done otherwise with my life. I'm stuck. This is where I had to go. The Greek poet Cavafy talks about life as a voyage to Ithaca:

When you start on your journey to Ithaca,
then pray that the road is long.

Always keep Ithaca fixed in your mind.
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.

But do not hurry the voyage at all.

Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.
Without her you would never have taken the road.
But she has nothing more to give you.

I am on my particular voyage. And I don't want the journey to stop. I want the boat to *go.*

Lee Grant's comments were made in an interview with Susan K. Berman, a "Ms." editor.

LEIGH, MARY (dates unknown): An active member of the WSPU, she was frequently arrested and imprisoned. When she went on a hunger strike in jail in Birmingham in 1909, she was one of the first women to be subjected to the horrors of forcible feeding. She continued to support Sylvia Pankhurst's work in the East End of London after the split with Mrs. Pankhurst.

WILDING DAVISON, EMILY (?-1913): B.A. of London University and first-class honors in English Language and Literature from Oxford University. A dedicated Suffragette, she was imprisoned, went on hunger strikes, and was forcibly fed many times. She eventually sacrificed her life by throwing herself under the King's horse during the Derby as a protest against the treatment of women everywhere.

EVANS, GLADYS (dates unknown): One of the more militant of the Suffragettes. Was the daughter of one of the proprietors of *Vanity Fair*. A member of the WSPU (and drummer in their band), she emigrated to Canada in 1911 but returned to England in March, 1912, when she learned that Emmeline Pankhurst and the Pethick-Lawrences were being tried for conspiracy, and gave active support to the militant campaign of the WSPU again.

PITFIELD, ELLEN (?-1912): A nurse and militant. She had worked as a midwife and was suffering from incurable cancer. She committed acts of arson and window-smashing in March, 1912; on March 19, a dying woman, she was sentenced to six months in prison, having had to be carried into court to hear sentence from her bed in the prison hospital. She was released in May and died on August 6 of that year.

MARKIEVICZ, COUNTESS (1868-1927): Daughter of Sir Henry Gore-Booth, an Irish baronet. Famous Suffragette and Irish Revolutionary. She was sentenced to death for her part in the Irish Easter Rebellion of 1916, but was reprieved. The only woman to win a seat in Parliament in the 1918 election, she refused to take the oath of loyalty to the British Crown and so was barred from office. She became a member of the Dáil (the Parliament of Eire) in 1923.

REDMOND, JOHN (1856-1918): Leader of the Irish Party in Parliament, he had in fact been a supporter of the case for women's suffrage for many years, and argued for the Suffragettes in the House of Commons.

It was on 10th October, 1903, that I invited a number of women to my house in Nelson Street, Manchester, for purposes of organization. We voted to call our new society the Women's Social and Political Union, partly to emphasize its democracy and partly to define its object as political rather than propagandistic. 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 our question. 'Deeds not Words' was to be our permanent motto.

The voice is that of Emmeline Pankhurst; her "question" was the explosive issue of votes for women, and the group who met with her and her daughters Christabel and Sylvia were soon to become known as the Militant Suffragettes.

The WSPU united women of every age and social class in a highly sophisticated national campaign calculated to exert maximum pressure on the government. Their tactics of confrontation were perfectly legal—relentless questioning of Ministers about the vote whenever they appeared at public meetings, peaceful demonstrations, and deputations to the Prime Minister and Parliament, and active campaigning during elections to defeat government candidates—but the Liberal Party met this constant pressure with broken promises and legislative defeats. They finally resorted to ordering physical violence against the women: police brutality, mass arrests, and imprisonment under the worst conditions moved the Suffragettes to resort to hunger strikes to protest their sentences. The government retaliated by ordering that they be forcibly fed—a form of physical torture that could cause permanent injury. The WSPU's continuing confrontation and the treatment meted out to them created enormous publicity. Meantime, Woman Suffrage bills were repeatedly introduced by their allies in Parliament, only to be defeated by Cabinet chicanery and manipulation of procedure. By the General Election of 1910, public opinion was such that the Suffragettes were instrumental in destroying the Liberal Party's overall majority in the House of Commons. Members of all parties joined in drafting a new bill that would enfranchise approximately one million women. While this bill was going through its various stages, the Pankhursts called a truce to militancy, but after months of hopeful progress, they saw Prime Minister Herbert Asquith use his power of veto to insist that the measure be postponed until the next session. In November, 1911, the bill was *not* reintroduced; the only mention of votes for women came as an appendage to a proposal for widening the male franchise that had no chance of becoming law. Their patience exhausted, the Suffragettes turned from legal forms of pressure to more extreme measures . . . it was now Women's War.

The following excerpts from diaries, memoirs, and letters of the women themselves, as well as newspaper accounts of their demonstrations, document the militant days of the British Suffrage Movement.

1912

CHRISTABEL PANKHURST:

"I cannot start the New Year without putting my name down for the next protest against the policy of the Government. . . . I fully realize that the only way to get the vote is to fight for it. . . . Please enter my name for the next protest. I should like to help to hasten the day when we shall have votes for women."

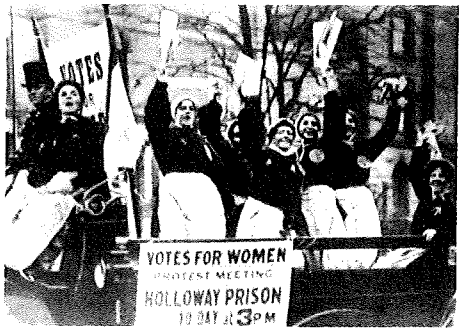
Messages such as these came thick and fast to the WSPU headquarters as 1912 began. Rumors appeared in the Press that it would be "impossible" for pro-suffragist and anti-suffragist Ministers of the Government to oppose one another on the public platform by speaking, some for and others against votes for women, although the pro-suffrage Ministers had undertaken to campaign in favor of the women's amendment.

Women noticed in the New Year a strange silence as to votes for women on the part of their "friends in the Cabinet." Mr. Lloyd George at Cardiff, Mr. Runciman at Newcastle said not one word of the cause they had promised to advocate in order to assure its inclusion in the reform bill. If the Suffragettes had not been present to heckle them, they would not even have mentioned votes for women.

1912

EMMELINE PANKHURST:

We had planned a demonstration for March 4, and this one we announced. We planned another demonstration for March 1, but this one we did not announce. Late that afternoon, I drove in a taxicab, accompanied by the Honorable Secretary of the Union, Mrs. Tuke, and another of our members, to No. 10 Downing Street, the official residence of the Prime Minister. It was exactly half-past five when we alighted from the cab and threw our stones, four of them, through the window panes. As we expected, we were promptly arrested and taken to Cannon Row police station. The hour that followed will long be remembered in London. At intervals of fifteen minutes relays of women who had volunteered for the demonstration did their work. The first smashing of glass occurred in the Haymarket and Piccadilly, and greatly startled and alarmed both pedestrians and police. A large number of the women were arrested, and everybody thought that this ended the affair. But before the excited populace and the frustrated shop owners' first exclamation had died down, before the police had reached the station with their prisoners, the ominous crashing and splintering of plate glass began again, this time along both sides of Regent Street and



the Strand. A furious rush of police and people toward the second scene of action ensued. While their attention was being taken up with occurrences in this quarter, the third relay of women began breaking the windows in Oxford Circus and Bond Street. The demonstration ended for the day at half-past six with the breaking of many windows in the Strand.

DAILY GRAPHIC, Saturday, March 2, 1912
WAR ON WINDOWS
SUFFRAGETTE RAID ON WEST END SHOPS
WIDE-SPREAD DAMAGE
MORE THAN A HUNDRED WOMEN ARRESTED

The West End of London last night was the scene of an unexampled outrage on the part of the militant suffragists. The women "furthered their cause" by doing thousands of pounds' worth of damage to the windows of West London shopkeepers.

Bands of women paraded Regent Street, Piccadilly, the Strand, Oxford Street, and Bond Street, smashing windows with stones and hammers.

In all quarters the outrage, carefully planned and organised, occurred with startling suddenness, and shopkeepers found their property damaged and destroyed before any steps could be taken to prevent the onslaught.

By seven o'clock practically the whole of the West End of London was a city of broken glass. Shutters were put up and in some cases temporary barricades erected. In nearly all cases the work of destruction was executed with hammers, which the women carried concealed under their clothes. Many of the rioters were young girls, and were terribly nervous when the crucial moment arrived.

One of the most noteworthy factors in the scene was the general attitude of the crowds which collected with astonishing rapidity. Bitter hostility to the women was expressed on all sides, and there is no doubt that had any recurrence of the outrages been attempted later in the evening the women would have been severely handled in spite of the presence of the police.

In all about 120 women, including Mrs. Pankhurst, were arrested.

DOWNING STREET

The most daring raid took place on the Prime Minister's house at No. 10 Downing Street. Just after five-thirty p.m. a private motor-car drove up Downing Street, and as it reached the Prime Minister's house three women jumped out and immediately began throwing stones at the house opposite them. Two windows were broken on each side of the door downstairs, four panes in all. The police patrols were taken by surprise, but before the women could do any further damage the constables had run through them and seized their arms. All three were taken to Cannon Row police station, but as Mrs. Pankhurst was being led past the Home Office she suddenly wrenched her arm free and threw a stone through one of the windows. About the same time another woman broke two windows at the Local Government Board Office.

At the Home Office a clerk who was sitting writing had a narrow escape, a heavy stone flying over his head.

THE STRAND

Between St. Clement Danes and Charing Cross the array of broken windows presented a remarkable spectacle. The southern side of the Strand was singled out for attack; the other side, with a few exceptions, escaped.

Directly the women started operations the police telephoned the jewellers in the West End warning them, and advising them to remove all valuables from their windows. The police stated that within an hour 4,000 extra men would be drafted in from the suburbs, and asked the jewellers whether they would require any special guard. It was feared that looting hooligans might follow the smashing of the windows.

REGENT STREET AND PICCADILLY

About 100 women made their way to Piccadilly, Regent Street, and neighbourhood. In many cases the windows were of large size and a complete hole was made in them. In other instances the thick glass was simply splintered, but none the less rendered useless.

Throughout the whole length of Coventry Street, Regent Street, as far as Oxford Street, along Bond Street and the greater part of Piccadilly, the women continued the wreckage, apparently indiscriminately. The well-known firm of Swan and Edgar had some seven or eight windows smashed. The Regent Street post-office and Hope Brothers' establishment also suffered. By seven o'clock nearly sixty of the delinquents had been conveyed to Vine Street police station.

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BY DEBORAH LEAVY

MAMIE LEE WARD ON DEATH ROW

One decision before the Supreme Court this term is a life-and-death matter for Mamie Lee Ward. She's on death row in North Carolina, one of five women of more than 300 condemned prisoners in the country, all waiting for the verdict on what may be the final challenge to capital punishment.

A plain-looking woman in a blue prison uniform, Mamie Ward is black, 54 years old, the mother of three and the grandmother of five. Her body is heavy and slow to move. She sits with her hands clasped tightly between her knees, bouncing her thick legs up and down, monotonously chewing gum. People say she used to be thinner before her starchy prison diet. She once wore a wardrobe of wigs but now her hair has "gone bush," not really Afro, just kind of combed back. She was always quiet, her family says, never talking to anyone about her problems, and two years on death row hasn't changed that. She stares straight ahead, blinking under the unshielded glare of the lights in the office of the prison social worker.

Mamie's calm manner is one thing people on her jury remember. ("If she had been a person who cried and said she was sorry, I might have felt different," one juror remarked after the trial.) They convicted her of first-degree, cold-blooded, premeditated murder for killing her lover, a man named Frank Parker, a good man, most folks agree, but a bit vain—probably on account of that job he had selling menswear over at Sears. His picture, still in its frame on top of the TV in his mother's house, shows him in a coat and tie; his black hair gleams, slicked with grease, not yet turning gray though he was past 50 when he died. Talk was that Frank was running around. Mamie denies it, but friends and family figure if they knew it, she did too. A "Frankie and Johnnie" murder they called it. He was doin' her wrong.

When the Supreme Court last heard a capital punishment case (*Furman* v. *Georgia*) in 1972, it declared, in a five-to-four decision, that the death penalty was so harsh, "freakish," and arbitrary as to be "cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments." While the ruling gave the impression that the death sentence had been outlawed, this apparent victory for anti-capital-punishment forces proved to be illusory. Only Justices Thurgood Marshall and William Brennan held that the death penalty was *inherently* unconstitutional. The other three majority justices concentrated on the "rare and arbitrary" manner of inflicting the punishment. By basing its ruling on such narrow grounds, the Court at that time avoided dealing with the basic question of capital punishment itself.

Proponents of the death penalty have argued that it is the *jury's power to recommend mercy* that makes the application of the death penalty "cruel and unusual," reasoning that if death were the *mandatory* penalty for certain crimes, it would no longer be "cruel and unusual" but rather, cruel and usual—thereby satisfying the Constitution and the Court.

The Supreme Court, with its roots in the Warren Court liberalism of the sixties, will hand down next month's decision (*Fowler* v. *North Carolina*) in the backlash atmosphere of the seventies. As the memory of putting prisoners to death grows dim, the public's rising fear of crime is making the gas chamber, the electric chair, the gallows, and the firing squad increasingly acceptable once again. If the Court rules that the death sentence is a fair punishment and that it can be justly administered, it will have cleared the way for an unprecedented number of executions. In the meantime, since the *Furman* v. *Georgia* decision, 33 states and the federal government have reenacted capital punishment legislation.

The condemned wait in a soul-stretching limbo, uncertain of their fate. Death is a fact they go to sleep with and wake up with. They still have hope for their individual cases, as well as for the repeal of capital punishment, and that makes things bearable, but it doesn't erase the fact that they are living with death right down the corridor.

For Mamie Lee Ward, the experience has dulled her to numbness. Alone in a cell in C block, maximum security at the North Carolina Correctional Center for Women in Raleigh, she doesn't know what comes next.

"I think about Frank 'most every day," Mamie told me nearly a year after she killed him. Even when she talked about the man she loved, her voice

EMMELINE PANKHURST: *A hundred or more women walked quietly into Knightsbridge and walking singly along the streets demolished nearly every pane of glass they passed. Taken by surprise the police arrested as many as they could reach, but most of the women escaped.*

For that two days' work something like two hundred Suffragettes were taken to the various police stations, and for days the long procession of women streamed through the courts.

It was a stormy imprisonment for most of us. A great many of the women had received, in addition to their sentences; "hard labour," and this meant that the privileges at that time accorded to Suffragettes, as political offenders, were withheld.

March 5

1912

The panic-stricken Government did not rest content with the imprisonment of the window-breakers. They sought, in a blind and blundering fashion, to perform the impossible feat of wrecking at a blow the entire militant movement. Governments have always tried to crush reform movements, to destroy ideas, to kill the thing that cannot die. Without regard to history, which shows that no Government has ever succeeded in doing this, they go on trying in the old, senseless way.

Our headquarters in Clement's Inn had been under constant observation by the police, and on this evening an inspector of police and a large force of detectives suddenly descended on the place, with warrants for the arrest of Christabel Pankhurst and Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, who with Mrs. Tuke and myself were charged with "conspiring to incite certain persons to commit malicious damage to property." When the officers entered they found Mr. Pethick-Lawrence at work in his office, and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence in her flat upstairs. My daughter was not in the building. The Lawrences, after making brief preparations, drove in a taxi-cab to Bow Street station, where they spent the night. The police remained in possession of the offices, and detectives were despatched to find and arrest Christabel. But that arrest never took place. She eluded the entire force of detectives and uniformed police, trained hunters of human prey.

SYLVIA PANKHURST: *Militancy was now assuming a new and serious aspect. In December 1911 and March 1912, Emily Wilding Davison and Nurse Pitfield had committed spectacular arson on their own initiative, both doing their deeds openly and suffering arrest and punishment. In July 1912, secret arson began to be organized under the direction of Christabel Pankhurst. When the policy was fully under way, certain officials of the Union were given, as their main work, the task of advising incendiaries, and arranging for the supply of such inflammable material, house-breaking tools, and other matters as they might require. A certain exceedingly feminine-looking young lady was strolling about London, meeting militants in all sorts of public and unexpected places, to arrange for perilous expeditions. Women, most of them very young, toiled through the night across unfamiliar country, carrying heavy cases of petrol and paraffin. Sometimes they failed, sometimes succeeded in setting fire to an untenanted building—all the better if it were the residence of a notability—or a church, or other place of historic interest. Occasionally they were caught and convicted; usually they escaped.*

When Asquith visited Dublin, on July 18, Irish suffragists met him by boat at Kingstown, and shouted to him through megaphones. They rained Votes for Women confetti upon him from an upper window as he and Redmond were conducted in torchlight procession through the streets, but when they attempted poster parades and an open-air meeting close to the hall where he was speaking, a mob attacked them with extraordinary violence. Countess Markievicz and others were hurt; every woman who happened to be in the streets was assailed. Many unconnected with the movement had to take refuge in shops and houses. The Ancient Order of Hibernians was abroad, determined to punish womanhood for the acts of militant women from England. Mary Leigh had rushed to the carriage in which John Redmond and the Prime Minister were riding and had dropped into it a small hatchet. She was mobbed, but escaped, and afterward she and Gladys Evans had made a spectacular show of setting fire to the Theatre Royal, where Asquith was to speak. They had attended a performance at the theatre, and as the audience was dispersing, Mary Leigh, in full view of numbers of persons, had poured petrol on to the curtains of a box and set fire to them, then flung a flaming chair over the edge of the box into the orchestra. Gladys Evans set a carpet alight, then rushed to the cinema box, threw in a little handbag filled with gunpowder, struck matches, and dropped them in after it. Finding they all went out as they fell, she attempted to get under the wire fencing into the box. Several small explosions occurred, produced by amateur bombs made of tin canisters, which, with bottles of petrol and benzine, were afterward found lying about.

Declaring it his duty to pass a sentence calculated to have a deterrent effect, Justice Madden sentenced Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans to five years' penal servitude. He expressed the hope that when militancy were discontinued the term would be reduced. "It will have no deterrent effect upon us," responded Mary Leigh in defiant tones. (continued)

Christabel had escaped to Paris, knowing that she could not be extradited for political offenses. As the supreme strategist of the movement, it was considered essential that she remain free to continue directing the WSPU from exile. The other leaders were all imprisoned; Mrs. Pankhurst received three years penal servitude for inciting the violence (she had taken public responsibility for all their acts in advance). However, she went on a hunger strike and had to be released after a few days because of her extreme frailty.

The government now attempted to crush the WSPU completely. Its final weapon was the notorious Cat and Mouse Act: under this new law, hunger-striking prisoners who endured forcible feeding until the gravity of their illness forced the authorities to release them were to be released *without* remission of sentence; this meant that after they recovered their health and resumed their activities, they could now be rearrested and jailed to continue their original sentences. The Cat and Mouse act was calculated to deter Emmeline Pankhurst, now over 50 and dangerously ill.

But the Suffragettes did not falter. Arson and the bombings and destruction of property continued unabated; as the ringleaders were arrested, others stepped forward to take their places. The agitation and pressure continued to mount through 1913 and into 1914. A huge deputation carrying a direct petition to the King at Buckingham Palace was smashed by mounted police with the utmost brutality, and hundreds of women were arrested. All went on hunger strikes. The prisons could not cope. The Government was in despair as summer wore on, debated letting the hunger-strikers die, deporting them, committing them to lunatic asylums. The streets and parks were filled with demonstrations and marches; when Sylvia Pankhurst led a vast gathering of poor women from the East End of London to Westminster in triumphant contradiction of the Government's claim that the agitation was a middle-class movement with no popular democratic support, Asquith finally relented sufficiently to receive five of them and listen to their statements. It was a crucial shift in policy. But by then it was August, 1914.

August 1914

CHRISTABEL PANKHURST: *For the present at least our arms are grounded, for directly the threat of foreign war descended on our nation we declared a complete truce from military which was answered half-heartedly by the announcement that the Government would release all suffrage prisoners who would give an undertaking "not to commit further crimes or outrages." Since the truce had already been proclaimed, no suffrage prisoner deigned to reply to the Home Secretary's provision. A few days later, no doubt influenced by representations made to the Government by men and women of every political faith—many of them never having been supporters of revolutionary tactics—Mr. McKenna announced in the House of Commons that it was the intention of the Government, within a few days, to release unconditionally, all suffrage prisoners. So ends, for the present, the war of women against men. As of old, the women become the nurturing mothers of men, their sisters and uncomplaining helpmates.*

The struggle for the full enfranchisement of women has not been abandoned; it has simply, for the moment, been placed in abeyance. When the clash of arms ceases, when normal peaceful, rational society resumes its functions the demand will again be made. If it is not quickly granted, then once more the women will take up the arms they today generously lay down. There can be no real peace in the world until woman, the mother half of the human family, is given liberty in the councils of the world.

The Militant Campaign was over.

The militant campaign was over, but the war served to polarize the many attitudes within the movement previously hidden by the all-embracing demand for the vote. Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst had always opposed the government because it denied women social and political justice. Now they saw their opportunity to take their place as *de facto* political leaders—as a crucial part of that same government in wartime—by committing themselves and the WSPU to lead the women of Britain in National Service. They dedicated themselves to work in the national interest because they saw that women's playing an equal role in time of war would make their demand for the vote impossible to deny. On the one hand they lent their active support to Lloyd George; on the other, they undertook to encourage women to work in the munitions factories and essential services while men enlisted in the armed forces. Sylvia incurred the wrath of her mother and Christabel by pleading the pacifist cause and concentrating on social rather than war work among the poorest men and women in London. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, a former leader of the WSPU, supported Sylvia and traveled to America to initiate an International Women's Peace Movement.

Though WSPU policy from 1914-18 reflected unwavering cooperation with the government, there was always the threat that should their vital services not be recognized by the granting of the vote, militancy would certainly be resorted to once again. How-

ever, the final granting of the vote in 1918 was restricted to women over 30 who could fulfill certain property requirements: women were now a majority of the population and the government feared again for the balance of power if all females over the age of 21 could vote.

DAILY MIRROR, January 11, 1918

VOTES FOR WOMEN PASSED BY LORDS
MANY PEERESSES LISTEN TO GRAVE WARNINGS
MAJORITY OF 63
EARL CURZON FEARS SOCIALISTIC INFLUENCES
BISHOPS SUPPORT BILL

"Hurrah! It's a fine ending to a long fight."

This exclamation was made over the telephone by an official of The Women's Party when told of the House of Lords' decision last night on Lord Loreburn's amendment to the Reform Bill to omit the clauses giving the vote to 6,000,000 women.

The division resulted as follows:

For the amendment	**71**
Against	**134**
Majority against	**63**

The division was taken in a fairly large House and amidst much interest. A large number of peeresses were present and many ladies also keenly interested in the question occupied seats on the floor of the House below the bar.

On the steps of the Throne and in other parts of the House were a number of M.P.s.

Lord Curzon and Lord Crawford were among the peers who abstained from voting.

Midge Mackenzie is a film director and feminist. She made the film "Women Talking" in 1968—and is coproducer of "Shoulder to Shoulder," shown on television's "Masterpiece Theatre." Her home is in London.

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about drink and the bed. Most times he has fallen somewhere dead drunk. He was angry at one time because I refused to show myself to him, that is why he said that bad word about me. My special parts are quite normal but a woman can be too much hurt by these men. That is why I refuse to show them."

Not to be outdone by Mma-Mabele's reasoning powers, Lekena said: "I can throw the bones again, Mma-Mabele. I don't mean you to pay me. Your sickness has worked up my mind. In Tswana custom—"

Mma-Mabele jerked her head to one side, impatiently: "I know we have Tswana custom as well as Christian custom. There is no one who would laugh when a person mentions the name of the Lord. This thing which I see now laughs when I pray to the Lord."

This so knocked Lekena off his medical feet that he drew in his breath with a gasp of surprise: "You mean you have seen a new thing, Mma-Mabele? I must say I don't know it. We can never tell what happens these days now that we have independence."

After he had left, she sat in the shadow of the hut and slowly ate some of the oranges, but they never helped. She lived with the affliction. Once she realized she must do this, she never asked for sick leave again. The pain took precedence over everything else she experienced; sometimes it was like a blow to the head; sometimes it was like a blow to the heart—it moved from place to place. Soon her whole village ward noticed the struggle she was waging with death. She became thinner and thinner. She took to leaving very early for work, would walk a little way and then sit down in the pathway to rest. And she did the same on returning home in the evening.

Toward the end of that year her employer and family went away on a month's holiday. The strain of keeping her job had reduced Mma-Mabele to a thin skeleton. She seemed about to die. She lay down in her hut like one stunned or dead for many days. But just when everyone expected news of her death, she suddenly recovered and began to eat voraciously and recover her health. She was soon seen about the village at the daily task of drawing water and her friends would stop her and query: "How is it you aren't sick any more, Mma-Mabele? Did you find a special Tswana doctor to help you, like the rich people?"

And she would reply angrily: "You all make me sick! There is no one to help the people, not even God. I could not sit down because I am too poor, and there is no one to feed my children." □

STALKING THE WILD JILL JOHNSTON
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 82

anywhere. In fact, the afternoon after the dance, every time I saw two women walking together or even passing each other in the street, I would stare and then picture them necking. When I first walked into the dance, I was numb for several minutes except for a sudden sore throat. I kept trying to figure out what my reaction was. I had allowed myself no expectations about what a lesbian dance would be like, and I was pleased that the scene didn't make me feel weird. One woman with a kind smile, long curly hair, and a lot of rings on, noticed me writing in my notebook, and asked if I was gay or straight. When I said I was straight, she said wistfully, "You're lucky. Too bad for me, though."

When two slightly overweight women in new-looking dungarees finally stood up to dance, they moved slowly despite the fast music, their cheeks touching, their arms around each other's necks 1950s style. Every once in a while they kissed passionately. One skinny woman in a man's sailor suit and hat was gyrating by herself. Two other women were bear-hugging, their bodies swaying, their feet stationary. One of them was wearing denim farm overalls, and her large breasts were hanging out bare on either side of the bib; the other woman's red cardigan was unbuttoned, exposing her breasts. I shivered. Were these women doing something I would love to do if I weren't so uptight? Was this a scene from my nightmares or my fantasies?

Sometimes the 30 women fox-trotting under the strobe lights looked to me like the teenage girls dancing together at lunch period at my junior high school. The older women looked like people you'd see at a political meeting, except for the dancing and the self-conscious necking. But then again their openmouthed kissing didn't seem very real to me, it seemed kind of stagy—in the service of ideology. But after a while the scene began to look like a pornographic cliché. I suddenly thought that some of my male friends might envy my witnessing the scene. And I felt protective toward the women, knowing I might be writing about them for a male audience.

When the music stopped, Jill wandered over to me. The girl with the large bare breasts followed her. I strolled out of earshot, and noticed that they were beginning an animated conversation. Suddenly, Jill started to laugh and began to dance with the girl—whose breasts were now bobbing again. Then they were hugging very tight, and Jill kissed her lips gently, holding her face between her hands. They hugged again and Jill rolled her hips and her crotch against the girl.

As I stood there in the darkness, hoping that at least I was invisible with all the queasiness that I was feeling, a young blond girl with an angel face and narrow hips came over to ask me to dance. "No, *ahh*, I have a sore throat," I said, touching her arm apologetically. I was sipping my third glass of warm white wine. Her lips tightened like mine might if I got up my nerve to ask some guy to dance and he said no. So she nodded, looked down, and walked away to stand on the other side of the room.

I noticed Jill dancing boisterously by herself, first a solemn ballerina twirl, then a hammy clown pirouette, and then finally an athletic twist. She danced over to me standing in the dark, and held open her arms while swaying slowly, a hypnotically seductive gesture. She grabbed me and hugged me. I felt her soft, maternal breasts. For two weeks, I had been watching her—hugging, touching, and flirting with women. To accommodate the strangeness, I guess, I had started to believe she was a man. But breasts. How could a woman act like that? How could a woman touch another woman's breasts? But worse than that, I had that funny, sexy feeling tingling along my skin on my stomach. Then shame overwhelmed me. How my ex-husband would nod, sigh, and laugh harshly. My legs felt weak. I nodded to Jill apologetically. "Jill, it would ruin the objectivity of my article if I danced with you," I said quickly, holding her arm to reassure her as she pulled away. "Aw, shit," she laughed, relieved, I think, for an excuse to avoid our encounter. She danced away and was soon throwing her arms and legs around in a wild dance with the girl in the unbuttoned red cardigan.

Four women linked arms and began a cakewalk across the floor, singing lackadaisically along to the record. "It's too late, baby, naow. There's something inside, I feel I can't make it, ohoo, *no-aa-oo.*"

While they sang, my mood improved. I began to feel silly for having treated these people as denizens of an emotional snakepit. They were simply people dancing and enjoying each other, and I was the one in an emotional turmoil. I watched my blond-haired friend looking at her beer can and leaning against a far wall by herself. I walked over to her, and touched her on the shoulder. We began to dance and twist; I felt strained, but determined to keep going. When Jill saw me dancing, she laughed, throwing her head back, and kicking her left leg up in the air. Then she doubled over with glee. She twisted over to us and we all danced to the end of the record of Janis Joplin singing "Bobby McGee," each of us doing a private, dutiful twist. My mind was split as usual when I'm on assignment. I was dancing with the girl and with Jill because it would be a great thing to describe in the piece, right? Or was I dancing with them because I wanted to? But this is why I am a reporter. I can assume a fearless, or a slightly less fearful persona to explore the world. Jill hit me affectionately on the shoulder when the dance was over, and I felt as though I'd come through a major psychic journey. I'd felt physical attraction for a woman. I'd watched women hugging and kissing each other. And I haven't gone mad, grown fangs, or felt less myself.

JANUARY 24. Jill Johnston is the first person I've spent a long time observing for an article who has insisted I am an equal. She is also the first woman I've spent this much time reporting on. I wind up telling her