

# WHAT MILITANCY HAS ACCOMPLISHED

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Now that time has supplied the proper perspective, it is possible to view from the correct angle of vision with quite sedate judgment the militant suffrage campaign of the National Woman's Party during those spectacular years immediately preceding the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

A more dramatic period than that which Woodrow Wilson, directed the affairs of the nation and Paul directed the militant suffrage campaign of the National Woman's Party can not be found in the world's history. The nations of the world were at war: an explosion unparallelled had disrupted the affairs of the world and shocked humanity to a great spiritual awakening. Human thought was so accelerated that it became action without the medium of transition. To think was to do, and everybody was thinking as never before since civilization began because civilization was at stake.

Never before in its history, the world needed men: as never before it needed women, and nobly and wonderfully they proved themselves, men and women alike.

There are any wonder, when the civilized people of the earth were struggling for the preservation of civilization and that principle of democracy and safety was America's concern,

is there any wonder, I say, that the women of America, disfranchised by the very articles of our constitution, denied the right to citizenship, discriminated against by the law, should, in the midst of this crystallization of



MISS ALICE PAUL,

Vice President of the National Woman's Party, who led the campaign for the passage of the Federal Suffrage Amendment. The National Woman's Party is now working for the establishment of political, legal and civil equality of women with men.

human thought, have found a new voice, a new method of articulation?

Had they not been struggling for their rightful place in group life since 1848? Had they not exhausted every means in the indirect mode of operation that was the only method at their command previous to 1920, and the enactment of the suffrage amendment?

Appeals and petitions had availed nothing. Even the vociferous clamoring of some early woman suffrage advocates had, apparently, not been heard. If ever in this history of the world, action was to speak louder than words, that time had come. It was action on the part of the militant suffragists—swift, sure, dramatic action, compelling attention, crystallizing thought that brought results. Behind the action was a very real militancy of spirit, for if ever a cause was fought for and won by the sword of the spirit, it was the enfranchisement of the women of the United States.

Alice Paul is a Hicksite Quaker. She does nothing, whether great or small, except with the guidance of the spirit. She has a thoroughly trained mind; she holds degrees from three universities and from colleges in two hemispheres. Those who know her best call her the girl with the seventy-two caliber mind and the Jeanne D'Arc vision. Such combination is well-nigh invincible. Whatever such a soul undertakes becomes a crusade, a crusade that ends in victory.

I shall summarize presently what her militant suffrage campaign accomplished. Meanwhile, we should review the situation with regard to suffrage in 1912, in the last months of which year Alice Paul came to Washington as chairman of the Congressional Committee of the National American Suffrage Association.

In 1912, while suffrage agitation in the various states was being pushed with a varying degree of persistence, agitation for an amendment to the Constitution, which had been Susan B. Anthony's dream, had, practically, ceased. Before the passing of Miss Anthony in 1906, suffragists generally had followed the line of least resistance by listening to the siren song of the doctrine of State's rights. In Washington, suffrage agitation had ceased entirely and there was almost no vibration. The American Suffrage Association maintained a Congressional Committee in Washington but no headquarters. The chairman of the committee was allowed ten dollars a year for expenses, and returned the change at the end of the year. The committee was expected to arrange for one formal hearing before the Senate and House Committees of each Congress. The formal speeches delivered on these occasions were used as suffrage propaganda and distributed on a Congressman's frank. The suffrage amendment had never been brought to a vote in the House and put once, in 1887, in the Senate. It had not received a favorable report

from the Committee in either house since 1892 and had not received a report of any kind since 1896.

In addition the incoming President, if not openly opposing it, was indifferent to it; the great political parties were against it. Political leaders were unwilling to be connected with it. Last of all the majority of suffragists did not think the Federal Amendment practical. They were entirely engrossed with state campaigns.

On the other hand, the suffrage movement was never more alive and virile. A new force had come with the fourth generation of women to espouse the cause. These were of a different type from those of the second and third generation. They were more like the pioneers. They possessed the spirit and vision of the pioneers plus the power and ability of the emancipated generation, of which they were a part.

Six states, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Washington, California had enfranchised women. With the winning of Oregon, Kansas and Arizona, in 1912 the movement had assumed a new national importance. These victories meant that there were approximately two million wo-

men-voters in the United States; that one fifth of the Senate, one seventh of the House, and one sixth of the electoral vote came from suffrage states.

It was in December, 1912, and as chairman of the Congressional Committee of the National American Suffrage Association, that Alice Paul came to Washington. In the next eight years, this Quaker girl, frail, wraith-like, timid, still in her twenties but with five years of settlement work and social service back of her, was to bring into existence, by the power of her spiritual domination, a new non-partisan political organization, composed of women working for women and numbering fifty thousand members. "She was," says Inez Haynes Gimore Irwin, "to gather into her organization hundreds of devoted workers; some without pay and others with less pay than they could command at other work and in other organizations. She was to raise for work over three-quarters of a million dollars. She was to establish headquarters at Washington that became the center of liberal thought of the country. She was to introduce into the suffrage agitation a policy which, though not new to politics, was new

to suffrage, the policy that led to much misunderstanding but which led also to victory, that of holding the party in power responsible for the legislation enacted during the period of party power." She was to institute a suffrage campaign so swift, so intensive, so compelling, and at the same time so interesting, so picturesque, that again and again it pushed the war-news out of the preferred position on the front pages of the newspapers of the country. She was to see her organization blaze a purple, white and gold trail from the east to the west and from the north to the south of the United States. She was to resurrect the amendment written by Miss Anthony, to name it after its author, the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. She was to see this amendment pass from the House and from the Senate. She was to see 37 states ratify the amendment in less than a year and a half thereafter. She was to see the President of the United States move from a position of indifference to suffrage to an open espousal of it; move slowly at first, but with a progress which gradually accelerated until he himself obtained the last senatorial vote necessary to pass the amendment.

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