Revolutionary Nonviolence in Violent Times

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Edited by

Laura Finley and Michael Minch

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Michael Minch dedicates this book to his children and grandchildren: Bethany, Dane, Landon, and Ryan. May they know a world with less violence, but rather, a world of creative justice and peace.

Laura Finley dedicates this book to her daughter, Anya. At 16, she is already a powerhouse for positive change.

SERIES INTRODUCTION

LAURA FINLEY AND MICHAEL MINCH ON BEHALF OF THE PEACE AND JUSTICE STUDIES ASSOCIATION (PJSA)

Peace Studies: Edges and Innovations is a book series edited by PJSA Board Members Michael Minch and Laura Finley. The intent of the series is to fill in gaps in the conflict, peace, justice and reconciliation literature while presenting texts that are on the cutting edge of the discipline. The series includes both anthologies and monographs that combine academic rigor and accessible prose, making them appealing to scholars, classrooms, activists, practitioners and policymakers.

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The Peace and Justice Studies Association is a binational non-profit organization with the mission of creating a just and peaceful world through research, education and action. PJSA is dedicated to bringing

together academics, K-12 teachers, and grassroots activists to explore alternatives to violence and share visions and strategies for peacebuilding, social justice, and social change. The organization serves as a professional association for scholars in the field of peace and conflict studies and is the North American affiliate of the International Peace Research Association. Additional information about PJSA can be found at www.peacejusticestudies.org

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INTRODUCTION

LAURA FINLEY

Violence is endemic across the globe; it is institutionalized—structural, physical, psychological spiritual and emotional—through colonialism, neoliberalism, the prison industrial complex, the military and police forces, the proliferation of gun violence, poverty, racism, sexism, and, some argue, capitalism itself. With the growth of hate groups in the US and elsewhere, repressive policies regarding immigrants, asylees and refugees, increasing acts of violence against marginalized communities both by states and individuals, and a widening income gap, violence appears to be intensifying both locally and globally. Clashes abound with increasingly visible movements advocating for white supremacy, a growing frequency of violent interactions at political demonstrations, and recurrent debates between notions of 'free speech' and community self-defense. Yet, none of this is new, nor are efforts to counter it. Both today and for centuries, violence and nonviolence have been used as tactics as well as strategies.

Contrary to popular opinion, nonviolence has always been the most effective tool for making social and political change. Research by Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan for their 2011 book *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* found that, between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent resistance was at least twice as likely to be successful as were violent campaigns. This was true in even the most dangerous and trying locations, including efforts to topple brutal dictators. They found that nonviolent resistance movements were more inclusive and presented fewer obstacles in terms of moral or physical commitment. Higher levels of participation then increase resilience and commitment and enhanced tactical innovation. Not only were these movements more successful in the short-term but were also found to usher in more durable and peaceful democracies.

Yet it is perhaps time to reevaluate some of the tried and true nonviolent resistance tactics and strategies. Not to reject them outright,

necessarily, but instead to grapple with new methods or at least tweaking the old. And a continued call for the movement is to diversify its ranks. Some, including Todd Gitlin (2011) have called the peace movement dead, noting its antiquated methods. Gitlin here was discussing antiwar activism, although to perhaps a lesser degree the same argument can be made of other peace and social justice efforts. Similarly, student activists have critiqued the aging movement and its failure to diversify and innovate. One student wrote, "Many of us are disillusioned with the tactics, strategy, and partisanship within the antiwar movement. There doesn't seem to be much interest in talking strategy. Action has become ritualized. And frankly, without a major shake-up of the status quo in the movement, I can't imagine how the movement could ever become a force in shaping U.S. foreign policy. It's time we come off our high horses, get creative, and take back change" (Hart 2007). Fabio Rojas and Michael Heaney interviewed thousands of antiwar protestors between 2004 and 2010 for their book *Party in the Street: The Antiwar Movement and the Democratic Party After 9/11*. They found that the fairly large and active antiwar movement of the George W. Bush era waned as Democrats got elected to office. Partisan identities led many to feel conflicted regarding whether to continue to protest militarism or to support President Obama, thereby dividing the movement. Further, they note that the U.S. is, today, more politically divided than any time since the 1960s at least, and that people tend to associate almost exclusively with people who identify politically similar. They also maintain that changes in how the U.S. wages war have reduced the number and vibrancy of protests. Instead of mass conscription, which is very public, drones, mercenaries and missile strikes—far more hidden—constitute a great deal of the militaristic activity. Many Democrats don't wish to be labeled antipatriotic so are hesitant to fully embrace an antiwar position. The vast majority of Democratic candidates for the presidency and for other elected positions are more hawkish than not.

As Edmund Pries and Randall Amster wrote in the Introduction to *Peace Studies Between Tradition and Innovation*, the first book in this series, "Innovation is rarely the creation of something new ex nihilo, but of reinvigorating, reinterpreting or refashioning the ancients—sometimes in a way that leaves the old visible; at other time all but overshadowing the roots of the innovation…Frequently the innovation is not in a new creation, but the discovery or development of fresh collaborations" (pp. xvii-xviii). In sum, what the peace and social justice world needs is something different.

That different thing might just be what some have called revolutionary nonviolence. What exactly is revolutionary nonviolence? How is it different from other forms of nonviolence? Revolutionary is a loaded term that often elicits images of unformed men waging wars of sorts against oppressors, generally whilst armed. As a noun, it refers to "a person who works for or engages in political revolution," and is synonymous with "rebel, insurgent, revolutionist, rioting, mutinous, mutinying, renegade, insurrectionary, agitator, subversive, guerilla and anarchist." As an adjective, one definition is "engaged in or promoting political revolution" and is synonymous with similar words—rebel, insurgent, rioting, insubordinate, subversive, mutinous and the like. None of these really seem to fit in a book about nonviolence. Or do they?

If we aren't working for political revolution, what are us "peace people" working for? And if we aren't being a little rebellious, a little subversive or insubordinate, how on earth would we possibly effect the massive changes that are needed to make this world a healthier, more peaceful place? Yet another definition provides the perfect description of what we must do: "involving or causing a complete or dramatic change." Peace will be a "far-reaching, sweeping, comprehensive, and profound" way of being, of structuring societies, of building and maintaining transnational relationships. In other words, the idea is to expand nonviolent strategies, along the lines of Chenoweth and Stephan's (2011) findings, to transnational/multinational/international relationships.

This is not avoiding conflict. Rather, as Gene Sharp, who was called the "Macchiavelli of Nonviolence" noted, nonviolent action is about strategically wielding greater power against the opponent. Although the label of "political correctness" has been used by Donald Trump and his supporters to attempt to stifle those who seek to address social ills, it is also legitimate to consider the degree to which the peace movement has become overly sensitive and thus not capable of the important critique, even of its own, that is necessary for advancing the cause. Again, this is not to say that progressives are "snowflakes" or any of the other demeaning adjectives bandied about by Trump and his ilk, but instead a call for those in the movement to see if, and if so, how, they have silenced others or set aside challenging viewpoints (Esposito and Finley, 2019).

David Solnit, an activist and author of *Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World* (2004), puts forward five components of revolutionary nonviolence.

1. **Uproot the system**: Though individual issues are important, we need to move forward with a systemic analysis and an understanding that individual issues are connected to the larger economic, environmental, worker justice, and political systems.
2. **Organize with strategy**: In order to heal and rebuild, we need to be not only courageous, but smart. What worked the last time may not work this time, we need to consider our goals and come together around strategy.
3. **Build people power**: We need to go door-to-door and mobilize our neighbors by connecting with their concerns.
4. **Experiment in the laboratory of resistance**: What's worked in the past likely won't now, it's important to be creative and come up with new forms of resistance.
5. **Tell stories**: There is a lot invested in developing the mainstream, corporate dominated narrative. In order to fight back, it's important for us to tell our own stories, perform our own stories, both deconstruct the narrative of those we are resisting, and be brave enough to tell our own succinct and compelling narrative.

One might argue that progress towards peace has evaded us. It isn't particularly clear how to bring about sustainable change and progress. This book addresses that issue. In doing so, it responds to several key questions for peace activists: Are our notions and definitions of what constitutes violence and nonviolence oversimplified? What exactly has changed, if anything? What do revolutionary nonviolence, pacifism, and militancy look like? How do we understand these terms and definitions today? How is revolutionary nonviolence expressed, practiced or utilized in this current political environment? What lessons and ideas still resonate? From the passive to the coercive, and from the Gandhian to the guerrilla, what are effective means of struggle today, and how are they different from the past? This book, which emerged from the Peace and Justice Studies Association's annual conference in September 2018, is a call for educators and activists in peace and conflict studies to be engaged in the debates ongoing today in our classrooms, in the media, and in the streets, and to ask the challenging question: what is revolutionary nonviolence in 2019 and beyond?

The chapters in this book address these critical questions from a variety of disciplinary traditions. In Chapter One, Nancy Boyer, a geographer, uses letters and memoirs to analyze the nonviolent tactics used by suffragists in California, Oregon, New Jersey and New York. In doing so, she shows how activists today should both honor and learn from

these courageous suffragists. In Chapter Two, Laura M. Sabia focuses on reconciliation in Miljenko Jergovic's *Sarajevo Marlboro*. Sabia's chapter shows the rich perspectives and strategies that activists can draw from literature. Sometimes dismissed as frivolous, fiction offers an opportunity to experience, to contemplate, and to create. Authors like Jergovic had much to grapple with in the aftermath of the brutal conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s, and their work, as does other post-war fiction, affords readers an opportunity to examine our personal and collective identities as well as the will to violence. Shon Meckfessel, in Chapter Three, cautions against reminiscing about the peace movement of old, and notes the importance of poor people's movements, globally. In particular, these efforts disrupt the means of production, thereby offering people with little social power a great deal of economic power. Meckfessel also critiques the institutionalization of dissent via the "nonprofit industrial complex," seeing it as a manifestation of the trend toward neoliberalism. Further, as rhetorician, Meckfessel pulls apart the meaning of the terms violence and nonviolence in ways that are critical for the movement. He is problematizing what is meant by nonviolent activism, grappling with, for example, whether the destruction of property can ever be part of a nonviolent movement. In Chapter Four, Laura N. Mahan and Joshua M. Mahuna of Georgetown University present a modern view on mediation that is consistent with the idea of revolutionary nonviolence. They contend that the field must draw from the wealth of indigenous knowledge and histories in developing mediation philosophies and strategies. In Chapter Five, Jeremy Rinker exposes the role of neoliberalism in creating structural inequality and, with it, collective trauma. Collective trauma, left unaddressed, prohibits the growth of human capacity and stands in the way of a more peaceful world. Finally, in Chapter Six Michael Minch focuses on understanding violence as a system. In doing so, he begins to outline a path to see nonviolence as a system as well. In the book's Conclusion, we offer a summary of the most important and innovative concepts and themes of the book. Further, we provide recommendations for future work on revolutionary nonviolence. It is our hope that this book affords readers with new understandings, ideas, and strategies for crafting more effective peace and justice movements.

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CHAPTER ONE

BUILDING DEMOCRACY AND LEADING A REVOLUTION IN CULTURE: HELEN HOY GREELEY AND THE CAMPAIGNS FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN CALIFORNIA, OREGON, NEW JERSEY AND NEW YORK, 1904-1917, A CASE STUDY IN PRINCIPLED NONVIOLENCE

NANCY E. BOYER

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate effective nonviolent strategies and tactics evident in the successful state woman suffrage campaigns in California, Oregon, New Jersey, and New York as described in the personal letters and papers of Helen Hoy Greeley (1878-1965). Greeley and her colleagues avowed nonviolence as a touchstone of their campaigns, although leaders called their campaigns "militant." By this, they meant that the campaigns adopted a new strategy to move out of polite parlor settings and into the streets, to reach people where they were, to educate, and to win the hearts and minds of the majority of the people while confronting opponents in witty and clever ways. Further, as "militants," suffragists in the USA and suffragettes in Great Britain were willing to risk their lives to attain greater freedom and democracy like many heroes on the battlefield.

Although some suffragists called themselves "militant," they clearly practiced principled nonviolence, choosing not to cause personal injury, property damage, or even to buy votes as a matter of principle in pursuit of their goals. The women knew that to respond to violence with violence, or worse, to initiate violent tactics, would undercut what they were aiming for, namely to be accepted as worthy of having an equal right to vote in

their democratic government.[1] Further, to have been violent would have undercut their roles of being responsible members of their society and families.

The nonviolent strategies and tactics of the four state campaigns of CA, OR, NJ, and NY are a microcosm of the principled nonviolence that characterized the successful woman suffrage campaigns in Great Britain and the USA in the first two decades of the 1900s. As leaders crossed the Atlantic in both directions, substantial transference of principle and technique occurred between the campaigns.

To tie these campaigns into the human history and skill sets of other successful nonviolent campaigns which overthrew oppression and achieved political and social change, this paper finds strong theoretical foundations in Jonathan Schell's exposition of "cooperative power" in *The Unconquerable World.*[2] Cooperative power is that power which is built when a sufficient group of people in society work together effectively to achieve a goal. The history of the woman suffrage campaigns in the USA, 1904-1917, illustrates how cooperative power was built through inspiration, recruitment, motivation, training, coordination, mutual support, leadership, and responding respectfully to opposing voices. Specific details of these tactics are elaborated in this chapter, below.

Further, this chapter substantiates and builds on the theory of "integrative power" set forth by Michael Nagler, Kenneth Boulding, Johann Galtung and others. Integrative power is known through the work of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi. It is the power achieved by acting from a personal core sense of justice, fairness, and morality, which then appeals to similar sentiments in other people. When a critical mass of people and influential leaders acknowledge and act upon this common set of values, then the desired change in social or political or interpersonal structures may happen.

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[1] Greeley was quoted, "to meet strenuosity with strenuosity would defeat the very purpose the woman suffragists had in view when they became poll watchers." Virginia Tyler Hudson, "Lively Time at Primaries for Women: The Suffragettes and Other Fair Watchers Were Both Welcomed and Scowled At in the Polling Booths; they are Friends of Coughlin From Now on; And the General Opinion in East Side Districts Is That They 'Ain't So Bad' - Failed to Meet Guerrillas," *Globe Advertiser*, Sept. 14, 1910.

[2] Jonathan Schell, *The Unconquerable World. (*New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 216-231.

As this chapter illustrates, suffragists were convinced that justice, morality, fairness, and improved public policymaking required that women be given the right to vote under criteria equal to those that qualified men to vote. Suffragists then advanced their cause in ways that elicited a sense of fairness, justice, morality, and possibility of improved public policymaking in men who were needed to vote for woman suffrage.

The years of the woman suffrage campaigns covered in this chapter are crucial years in which suffragists changed their tactics and were able to convince the necessary majorities of male voters of the justice of their cause. These successful campaigns came after more than fifty years of struggle, with origins commonly dated to the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. Knowledge of these campaigns of 1904-1917 may serve to inspire future campaigns for social justice and political freedom, as they inspired Mahatma Gandhi's independence movement for India.[3] Gandhi likewise inspired and guided Martin Luther King, Jr., and other nonviolent leaders in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s in the USA.

The data for this chapter is primarily the letters and papers of Greeley. Additionally, I read memoirs and other histories of the woman suffrage movement in the USA and Great Britain. Greeley bequeathed her papers and indeed most of her estate to my parents upon her passing in 1965. Before they passed, my parents gave me the project of bringing her life and work to public attention.

I knew Greeley as an especially intriguing older woman who lived on a farm she owned and managed in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In researching Greeley's life and work in the summer of 1969, I talked with Alice Paul at the National Women's Party headquarters in Washington, D.C. She easily persuaded me to forgo my historical research to work on a current concern, namely passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Paul then coached me for several hours each day for a week in skills of lobbying and tutored me in the facts needed to convince US Senators and Congressional Representatives of the need to pass the ERA.

The gracious atmosphere of the National Women's Party headquarters, the elegance of the Senate and House offices where I lobbied, and the US history books I was reading in high school gave little indication of the

[3] Janice Law Trecker, "Introduction," in *Jailed for Freedom*, Doris Stephens (New York: Schoken Books, 1976 reprint of 1920 edition, accessed online), viii.

heroic work of the suffragists and suffragettes which are the subject of this chapter.

From about 1904 to 1917, Greeley devoted her life to gaining voting rights for women. She was invited to debate and was a featured speaker in thirty-six states, sometimes paid for her work. Although she campaigned throughout much of the USA, her primary focus was on the campaigns of NY, CA, OR, and NJ in which she served as an orator, organizer, and educator. She was an attorney, one of the first women admitted to practice before the US Supreme Court, and legal counsel to numerous humanitarian causes of her time. She was one of the many talented women who comprised the woman suffrage movement of the early 1900s.

When Greeley joined the woman suffrage movement in New York City in about 1904, she had recently graduated first in her class from law school, was admitted to the bar, and had her own law partnership.[4] For about eight years, she campaigned for woman suffrage in NY, organizing, managing, speaking, and debating in joint effort with such colleagues and friends as Carrie Chapman Catts, Rheta Childe Dorr, Lillie Devereaux Blake, and Harriot Stanton Blatch.

In 1911, she was sent by the Women's Suffrage Party of New York as a gift to the suffrage campaigns of California and Oregon. Upon returning to New York, she organized a "New Jersey Next" Campaign Committee to assist the campaign for suffrage in New Jersey. In 1916, she traveled over 10,000 miles in New York state to campaign for suffrage there. Throughout this time, she also was invited to debate, organize, and speak in thirty-two other states. Then she tapered off her work for suffrage in about 1917, after the successful state-level campaigns, to work as legal counsel for other women's rights issues.

Honoring and Learning from the Suffragists

Suffragists' dedication, perseverance, tactical and political brilliance, and willingness to suffer for the cause of human freedom and democracy need far greater recognition and understanding than is commonly held in order to appreciate the magnitude of their accomplishment and learn from their campaigns.

[4] She subsequently earned a J.D., with a full scholarship at the co-ed New York University Law School, from which she graduated first in her class in 1906.

In one respect, downplaying and undervaluing their work arguably serves a principle of nonviolent social change, which is to allow oppressors to save face. Once victory is achieved, people can act as if life and laws had always been just and fair (in this case with respect to equal voting rights for men and women) and should never have been any different. On another level, the courage and heroism of the suffragists in the USA and suffragettes in Great Britain to advance human freedom and democracy should be honored at least as much as valor on battlefields.

Leaders of the woman suffrage movement, such as Carrie Chapman Catts in the USA and Emmeline Pankhurst in Great Britain, were acutely aware of the need to call attention to the heroic qualities of their nonviolent campaigns to advance human freedom and democracy as compared to violent campaigns to achieve such goals. Catts wrote,

> The century from 1840 to 1940 may appropriately be called the Woman's Century…. In all the days of history no century brought to men so many rights and so much freedom as this hundred years has brought to women. It was not a peaceful period. One hundred and twenty-eight wars between nations were fought within the century, many extending of four years. Yet in the Woman's Campaign no blood was shed, no lives were lost, and no votes bought or sold. Reason, logic, patience, determination, union - these were the weapons which won the final victory. There is much to be learned from the Woman's Campaign by those who would use the same weapons for future battles for the right.[5]

Like Catts, Pankhurst of Great Britain consciously adhered to and educated her cadres in nonviolent tactics for victory. Further, Pankhurst recognized the heroic qualities of the women who were willing to sacrifice their lives by being jailed, brutalized, and tortured to achieve their right to vote and thereby influence the choice of legislators who would make the laws that governed their lives. As Pankhurst said, "We are here, not because we are law-breakers; we are here in our efforts to be law-makers."[6]

Although Pankhurst championed the nonviolent nature of the British suffrage campaign, she called it militant, because through her direction,

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[5] Carrie Chapman Catts, "Foreword," in *Victory, How Women Won It: a centennial celebration, 1840-1940*, National American Woman Suffrage Association (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1940), vii.

[6] Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story* (eBook, ProQuest Learning and Information Service: 2006), 129.

the campaign moved from discussion and education of a limited audience to acts of civil disobedience and confrontational street protests that brought the issue to the attention of virtually everyone. Further, in police response to acts of civil disobedience, some women literally sacrificed their lives.[7] Many women in Great Britain died or were made invalids for life as a result of police beatings at street protests, forced feedings, and squalid conditions in the prisons where suffragettes were incarcerated. In the USA, Alice Paul and many other suffragists also were imprisoned and force-fed.

Intellectual and Political Roots of the Woman Suffrage Movement

Before elaborating the nonviolent techniques and strategies of the successful woman suffrage campaigns of the 1900s, it is important briefly to review their historical roots and social conditions of the early 1900s.

Historical roots and new leadership. Suffragists in the USA date their suffrage campaign from 1848, when a conference was held at Seneca Falls calling for advancement in the social, political and moral conditions of women.[8] This meeting was convened by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to fulfill a pledge made to each other to improve women's rights in the USA when they met at an anti-slavery convention in Great Britain.

After the Seneca Falls Convention, the women's rights movement advanced through annual conventions of women's rights organizations and federations. However, work to achieve woman suffrage made little progress over the next fifty years in the USA and in Great Britain, because the movement limited itself to conventions and gatherings of like-minded people and to parlor meetings which might recruit more advocates. Challenging political parties or utilizing other confrontational techniques was anathema to most suffragists of that era.

Then, in 1903, Emmeline Pankhurst formed the Women's Political and Social Union in Great Britain. Its strategy was to be confrontational and directly challenge and oppose the ruling Liberal Party for its failure to support woman suffrage. Pankhurst became renowned for her

[7] Pankhurst, *My Own Story*.
[8] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage and Ida Husted Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*. 6 vols. (various publishers, 1881 to 1902).

revolutionary nonviolent strategy, tactics of mass civil disobedience, and willingness to be imprisoned for the cause of the right to vote.

She attracted women who were to become pivotal leaders of the woman suffrage movement in the USA. Chief among them was Harriet Stanton Blatch, daughter of pioneering suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Blatch married an Englishman and lived twenty years in Great Britain before returning to the USA in 1902. Alice Paul likewise campaigned for woman suffrage and was imprisoned with Pankhurst in Great Britain.

Adopting Pankhurst's methods, Blatch revolutionized the suffrage movement in the USA. Her nonviolent, so-called "militant" tactics are detailed below. However, to better understand the movement and rationale for granting women the right to vote, it is important to note that women wanted the right to vote to be better able to improve the social, human rights, and economic conditions around them, in addition to gaining equal access to representative government. Two campaigns in which Greeley and Blatch had leadership roles are illustrative, as follow.

Early social justice work of Blatch and Greeley

In 1906, Blatch and Greeley worked together on a campaign to abolish an above-ground rail line on the West Side of New York City which caused the deaths of many children. The rail line serviced stinking, polluting slaughterhouses and fat-rendering plants which the campaign wanted to demolish. Greeley served as Secretary of the Committee of Fifty which was formed to mobilize public opinion and prompt public officials to achieve these objectives and to create a public park in Chelsea on land where the offending industries were.

Greeley helped recruit and/or served with such community leaders as the Secretary of the Filipino Progress Association, pastors, members of settlement houses, other lawyers, Felix Adler (then President of Columbia College), and elected officials to accomplish these goals. She testified at a hearing at NY City Hall and presented legal cases to support the termination of the slaughterhouse and railroad licenses so that the park could be built, and the railroad line put below ground. Proponents of the park—men, women, and children—wore red badges at the hearing to be easily identified. Blatch was a featured speaker at some of the mass meetings. More than 8,000 people signed a "monster petition."

The so-called "Saxe bill" was passed unanimously by the NY State Assembly to compel the NY Central Railroad to remove its tracks on Eleventh Avenue.[9] New York Mayor McClellan pledged to sign the bill.[10]

During the New York Shirtwaist Factory Strike of 1909-1910, newspaper reports chronicled that Greeley, Blatch, and other "society women" joined the protest and, using their cars as platforms, spoke out against the exploitation of lower-class women. The strike was the largest of its time, comprising about 20,000 immigrant workers for whom working conditions were deplorable with long hours, low wages, and crowded unsanitary, unsafe working facilities.

Societal structure and social pressures. The social structure and mores of the suffrage era are also important to understand in order to appreciate what the suffragists accomplished. In the early 1900s, society was highly, and unapologetically, stratified by class, race, and gender. People saw women in relationship to other people, as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, etc. Women were strongly acculturated to believe bearing children and managing a household was their role and duty in life.

The census of 1900 counted nearly six million women in the USA who worked outside the home. However, in suffrage speeches, the plight and needs of wage-earning women were often seen through the lens of their relationship to the children they must raise alone. In her best-selling *What Eight Million Women Want* (1910), Rheta Childe Dorr concludes on the basis of her research that women want fresh air, playgrounds, and healthy living conditions for their children among other humanitarian goals.[11]

In reaching out to her fellow Vassar alumnae, Greeley frequently received the response that they would come to class reunions and social events only if she would not mention suffrage. Notably, both Blatch and Greeley were Vassar alumnae. The president of this prestigious women's college was opposed to woman suffrage at that time.

The philosophy and goals of communism and socialism, as known in the early 1900s in the USA, appealed to Greeley and many of her friends and colleagues. A significant number of letters in Greeley's

[9] *World*, 23 Feb. 1906.
[10] *World*, 7 March 1906.
[11] Rheta Childe Dorr, *What Eight Million Women Want* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1910), https://archive.org/details/whateightmillion00dorr/page/262.

correspondence are addressed, “Dear Comrade.” While Greeley used the “Dear Comrade” greeting, she was a spiritual, active, and enthusiastic Christian Scientist. The mayor of Berkeley was a socialist at the time of the referendum on suffrage in California, Oct. 10, 1911. Anita Whitney, who was active in suffrage campaigns from Connecticut to California and travel companion with Greeley in the Oregon campaign, was an organizer of the Communist Labor Party in California. She was arrested in 1920 and convicted for violation of the Criminal Syndicalism Act of California. Her case reached the US Supreme Court. Although her conviction was upheld, she was pardoned possibly due to her parents’ influence in California.

Political conditions

Politics were widely considered in the early 1900s to be corrupt, dirty, and no place for women. Polling places were often smoking halls and other places that were generally off-limits to women. Women of high society were considered pure, whose influence on politics should be indirect through the raising of their children and gentle cajoling of their husbands. However, women could hold, and rarely did hold, political office in some states that allowed women to run for political office before woman suffrage was passed nationwide. Progressive Era politics were notorious for the fight between the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and alcohol interests. The alcohol industry and other big business interests were among the most influential opponents of granting women the right to vote. The first two decades of the 1900s were an era of reform to fight the ills of rapid industrialization and urbanization, abuse of immigrants, and corruption.

Nonviolent Tactics of the Woman Suffrage Movement as Used by Greeley

New York Activities, 1904-1911.

Greeley chronicled her work for woman suffrage as beginning about 1904, in New York City, while she was earning her J. D. She had already earned her LL.B., was admitted to the bar in NY, and became a practicing attorney in 1903. However, she found meager fulfillment or intellectual challenge in the mundane cases that came to her as a female lawyer. Drawn to social justice causes by personal interest and family background, she became increasingly involved in the woman suffrage movement.

She joined the Collegiate Equal Suffrage League New York Branch in about 1904 and served on its Board of Directors. She chaired the Finance Committee which funded an investigation of the impact of woman suffrage in Colorado by Dr. Helen Sumner, an economist, and also financed the publication of her book.[12] The qualitative and quantitative analysis conducted by Dr. Sumner provided well-substantiated information about the impact of woman suffrage on Colorado to inform campaigns for woman suffrage. This study accomplished the vital task of documenting positive effects of granting women the right to vote.

Ellen Carol DuBois, biographer of Blatch, asserts that the Collegiate Equal Suffrage League became less influential under conservative leadership that took it over before 1906.[13] Further some suffragist leaders had already been meeting with women of the vibrant trade union movement. Initially they met with trade unionists to champion improved working conditions and more pay for wage and piece workers. However, Blatch and others soon realized that much synergy could be achieved by forming an organization that included wage-earning as well as professional women.[14] Greeley, Blatch, and others co-founded the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women in 1907.

In the new Equality League, Greeley chaired the committee which financed the first group of factory women ever to go to Albany, the state capitol, to ask for the right to vote. Historian Ellen Dubois reports the Equality League's activities just one month after its founding, as follows:

> In February 1907, the Self-Supporters made their public debut by sponsoring the first testimony ever delivered by women wage-earners on behalf of woman suffrage before the Senate Judiciary Committee of the New York legislature. The event made a stunning impression.[15]

Dubois observed, "the dignity and intelligence with which [the two female trade union spokespeople] conducted themselves constituted a repudiation of the anti-suffragists' dire prediction about democratizing the franchise."

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[12] Helen Sumner, *Equal Suffrage: The Results of an Investigation in Colorado Made for the Collegiate Equal Suffrage League of New York State* (New York: Harper & Brothers. 1909), https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbnawsa.n9195/?st=gallery.
[13] Ellen Carol DuBois, *Harriot Stanton Blatch*, 96.
[14] DuBois, *Harriot Stanton Blatch,* 94-98.
[15] Dubois, *Harriot Stanton Blatch*, 98-99.

The political genius of Blatch, Greeley, and their colleagues included a willingness to understand who makes decisions and what will influence them, being willing to learn new, more appropriate and effective ways to change public policy and laws and shedding confining limits and narrow thinking of the past. Advancing into unfamiliar territory, these suffragists learned politics through reaching out to politicians and requesting their advice about how to persuade politicians. Suffragists went to Albany, New York, sometimes by the hundreds to sit in on hearings. On one occasion, they formed an imposing mass which blocked the exit of legislators, thereby accomplishing a key goal to get committee members to stay and finish their business. Suffragists lobbied elected representatives in their offices. Further, Blatch hired a female lobbyist to work in Albany, ascertaining likely votes by each of the elected representatives.

About this time, the Equality League featured a speaker from Great Britain. She conveyed the news that renowned leader, Pankhurst, had split from more conservative suffrage organizations and formed a new organization willing to challenge politicians and oppose candidates of the ruling Liberal Party for refusing to support woman suffrage. Pankhurst and her new group staged headline-making acts of civil disobedience and were arrested. Demanding accountability from politicians and political parties, organizing massive street demonstrations, and being vulnerable to arrest, Pankhurst and her colleagues called themselves "militants."

Pankhurst and her British allies realized the vital importance of keeping the issue of woman suffrage in the public consciousness by capturing headlines. Further, taking to the streets for mass meetings and public speeches, Pankhurst and her allies set forth a new definition of what it meant to be ladylike. No longer would they be confined to parlor meetings or be reticent about speaking in open-air meetings to random groups of men.

Following the example of their British colleagues, the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women organized the first woman suffrage parade in New York City, when only about 100 women marched. By 1915, five years later, an article reported that vast numbers of people lined the streets and were in the latest suffrage parade.

> Where a few years ago the thin line of women was greeted with sneering remarks, their solid columns Saturday for miles passed through dense throngs of spectators that received them with respect and open admiration. …

> Saturday's parade did not produce this change in public sentiment. That has been accomplished through the well-organized campaign of education carried on by the Suffragists and their supporters.[16]

Greeley's correspondence with police indicates that her organization probably followed all applicable laws, requesting permission to parade, while thanking the police after the parade if the police protected them well. Other correspondence reveals she sometimes noted problems and requested better police protection at future events. At least once, she asked that equal protection be extended to colleagues in less affluent neighborhoods.

In 1908, Greeley founded the Co-operative Equal Suffrage League to "raise money to promote suffrage projects and education."[17] Its purpose was to counter-act the undue influence of wealthy women who could write a check to cover most of an organization's annual expenses. Greeley aimed to raise money penny by penny through the sale of suffrage stamps. She designed the stamps, had them printed, and sold them through suffrage organizations and clubs from Maine to CA, sometimes selling thousands of stamps in one order to a club which would then ask its members to market them.

These stamps were especially ingenious because they allowed people to show support for woman suffrage with minimal effort and expense. The stamps could be put virtually anywhere; therefore, delightful little signs of support for suffrage could appear anywhere.

The first stamp was sold to President Taft with US Supreme Court Justice Brewer and US Senator Bob LaFollette in attendance. Greeley arranged for this meeting to publicize the support of leaders from all three branches of government for woman suffrage in the USA. The meeting was carefully arranged through connections she had in Washington, D.C.[18]

The words on the stamp, "Taxation without representation is tyranny," recalled a rallying cry of the American Revolution. As such, it appealed to patriotic emotions and a fundamental sense of justice, and it called

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[16] Newspaper clipping, Helen Hoy Greeley papers.
[17] Dubois, *Harriot Stanton Blatch*, 98-99.
[18] Greeley later became a paid stump speaker for Senator Bob LaFollette's campaigns, traveling throughout Wisconsin giving as many as four speeches of several hours each, each day. Helen Hoy Greeley papers.

attention to the fact that many women were paying taxes as single parent heads of households without having the right to vote.

Egalitarian and inclusive, Greeley invited men to serve on the board of the Co-Operative Equal Suffrage League. While racism and classism marginalized people who were not of the white, educated, affluent class comprising the leadership group of most suffrage organizations, Greeley welcomed and related with African Americans on a personal, social level. For her, race and class differences were an opportunity for inclusion rather than exclusion, garnering strength in numbers and living an authentic, inclusive life that was true to the belief that all people are created equal. The first African American to earn a doctorate in the USA, W. E. B. Du Bois, was a popular speaker at suffrage rallies and is among the speakers Greeley invited to rallies she organized.

During her presidency of the Co-operative Equal Suffrage League, Greeley "made the first catalogue of New York believers in woman suffrage by political districts, which became the basis for the Woman Suffrage Party (WSP) of New York City."[19] Along with Greeley, the WSP had about ten co-founders including renowned leader Carrie Chapman Catts. Launched October 29, 1909, the WSP was "a political union of existing equal suffrage organizations in the City of New York."[20] It was organized by Assembly Districts (AD) with each AD having its own president and responsibilities for achieving goals set by the over-arching, representative, WSP leadership. For many NY women, it was their first exposure to political activity.

When Blatch and others observed that their parlor gatherings and mass meetings only attracted people who already were on the side of woman suffrage, they sought new ways to reach all males who would potentially vote for suffrage. "Street speaking" was launched as a primary tactic of the campaign.

Many women were reluctant to do what was so contrary to their upbringing. Volunteer sign-up cards for the campaign asked whether the volunteer would be willing to speak in the street, or in parlors only. A letter from Lydia K. Commander to Greeley on February 16, 1909,

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[19] Helen Hoy Greeley, answers to "Associate Alumnae of Vassar College, 1938 Biographical Register Questionnaire." Question 20, Helen Hoy Greeley papers.
[20] "Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897–1911". The Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbcmil.scrp6011805/?sp=1.

encouraged her to utilize her oratory skills in street speaking. Commander wrote,

> I assure you there is nothing alarming about this work, and it is most satisfactory from an educational point of view. It is surprising how large an idea can be given to a chance audience, gathered in this way at a street corner. For example, last evening, I spoke on social evolution…
>
> I consider it the best way of reaching the average man, the many upon whose ballot we must depend for our political freedom. We reach men who would never in the world attend a suffrage meeting. The trouble with most of our meetings is that we are talking to people who believe just as we do, and generally know as much as the speaker about the subject.
>
> May I call upon you for this work? If you could once take part, and see what splendid results are being accomplished, I am convinced you would be enthusiastic.[21]

Greeley attested in her 1938 Vassar Alumnae Questionnaire that, "as the only speaker, [she] spoke 56 consecutive nights, for as long as three hours, at the corner of Broadway and 96th street, which became famous in suffrage history." In her own organizing work, she signed up people to do street speaking in New Jersey and Philadelphia, as well as to distribute leaflets where the men were, meeting commuter ferries, being at "tube" [subway] stations, and being present at factory entrances for changes of shift.

She found speakers who were best suited to the audiences they would address, e.g. German-speaking, Italian, Jewish, Dutch-speaking, or "attractive," "feminine" women.

Seeking to inform and gather support from another key constituency while circumventing authorities who tried to dictate proper behavior for women, Greeley assisted Blatch in "planning the famous Vassar meeting in an adjoining graveyard when permission for a campus meeting was refused."[22] Blatch wrote to Greeley one Sunday in 1909,

> And now for an idea, - I have thought of how to get our "up to date" Alma Mater. We will, when the weather is suitable, have a meeting just outside

[21] Lydia K. Commander, personal letter to Helen Hoy Greeley, February 16, 1909, Helen Hoy Greeley papers.
[22] Greeley, answers to 1938 Vassar Biographical Register. Helen Hoy Greeley papers