

# The Making of a Militant: How Ireland Made Emmeline Pankhurst a Militant

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by *Louise Marie Coyne*.

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## **Abstract**

Emmeline Pankhurst is well-known as a militant figure through her actions as leader of the Women's Social and Political Union. The militant acts of the Union ranged from interrupting meetings to arson attacks. However, Emmeline's connection to Ireland has received limited historiographical analysis. In *My Own Story*, Emmeline features three important Irish events that shaped her actions as part of her fight for women's suffrage: the execution of the Manchester Martyrs, Charles Stewart Parnell's campaign for Home Rule and the Home Rule crisis of 1912-1914. This thesis argues that each of these events played a significant role in Emmeline's development as a militant. Emmeline emphasised that militancy was not necessarily violent. Instead, she saw militancy as an awakening of women to campaign for themselves and put their cause first as well as using tactics to force the Government to act. Emmeline was awakened to injustice because of the Manchester Martyrs which shaped her suffrage work as she associated the battle for the vote as a battle against injustice. Fenianism also equipped Emmeline with a successful example of militancy through the concessions gained and the attention it brought to the Irish Question. Emmeline had a personal connection to Parnell's campaign as she blamed his election policy for her husband's election loss. She adopted Parnell's lesson, emphasising the militancy of women fighting for their own cause by putting suffrage above political party divisions. Interruptions were designed to be as obstructive as possible taking inspiration from Parnell's success of obstructing despite the limited power of his party. Interrupting political meetings was radical for the suffragettes as it questioned gender norms. The response of violence by those present further intensified Emmeline's militancy as women began to arm themselves in defence. However, it was the Home Rule crisis that led to the most significant escalation of action. Throughout the campaign for women's suffrage, the WSPU had been competing for attention with the Irish Parliamentary Party. In cases like the Conciliation Bill of 1912 and Snowden's amendment to the Home Rule

Bill 1912, the Irish Parliamentary Party put their cause first and sacrificed women's suffrage. This led to an outpouring of militancy as the WSPU argued it was a double standard and that Irishmen should be fighting for the rights of Irishwomen too. The differing treatment of the WSPU and the Ulster Unionists offered Emmeline another example of double standards. This was especially the case in terms of imprisonment as she and other suffragettes were arrested for their actions whilst Edward Carson and other Ulster militants were free. Like Fenianism, Ulster Unionism provided another example of successful men's militancy which the WSPU tried to put into practice but due to their gender were treated differently. Ireland made Emmeline a militant through inspiring her at each stage of militancy. However, she also used it in *My Own Story*: to justify and minimise her militancy and to raise her political prestige. Emmeline was a political figure in her own right and recognised Ireland as an inspiration and an opportunity for her militancy.



## 1. *Introduction: Emmeline & Ireland*

For International Women's Day 2023, a new waxwork was unveiled at Madame Tussauds in London of Emmeline Pankhurst, 120 years after the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was founded. Tim Waters, the General Manager of Madame Tussauds, explained that the new figure was a way of 'remembering a revolutionary female voice of the past that helped to shape modern culture'.<sup>1</sup> This thesis is about Emmeline and her 'revolutionary female voice' in relation to Ireland: how did it make her a militant and why did she use it to explain her militancy?

Emmeline Pankhurst is most famous for her role as a militant suffragette. In 1903, Emmeline and a group of women founded the WSPU with the aim of using 'Deeds, not Words' to ensure the Government would commit to women's suffrage. Emmeline and her family, including daughters Christabel and Sylvia, took an active part in the campaign. From 1905 to 1914, the WSPU's tactics transformed from interrupting political meetings to breaking windows to arson attacks. At each stage of militancy, Emmeline connected the battle for women's suffrage with the situation in Ireland in her autobiography *My Own Story*, first published in 1914. The origins of the WSPU related to Emmeline's nine-year-old self's interpretation of the Manchester Martyrs execution in 1867. The incident awakened her to injustice, and she realised that the law may not always be fair. The early policies of the WSPU including complete independence and interrupting political meetings were shaped by Emmeline's twenty-seven-year-old self's experience of her husband, Richard Pankhurst, and his election loss due to Charles Stewart Parnell's tactics in 1885. The intensification of militancy when Emmeline was in her fifties was a result of the ongoing tensions in the battle for Home Rule in the 1910s. At each stage of her life, Emmeline had been influenced by

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<sup>1</sup> Max McClean, 'Emmeline Pankhurst immortalised by Madame Tussauds for International Women's Day', *Independent*, 6 March 2023, < <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/emmeline-pankhurst-suffragette-london-florence-sylvia-b2294997.html> > [accessed 10 March 2023].

Ireland. This thesis seeks to answer *how* Emmeline was influenced by Ireland, specifically her militancy, but also *why* Emmeline chose to include Ireland in her autobiography.

### 1.1. Militancy

There is no set definition to militancy in relation to women's suffrage. In terms of a political definition, David Robertson's *A Dictionary of Modern Politics* and Duncan Watt's *A Glossary of UK Government and Politics* connect the term to the Militant Tendency, a left-wing movement in the 1970s, overlooking the suffragettes and their use of the term.<sup>2</sup> For suffrage historians, there is confusion over what constitutes a militant act. David Powell argues that the WSPU 'was never a purely militant body' and that the 'WSPU never completely abandoned more peaceful methods of campaigning and propaganda'.<sup>3</sup> For Powell, militancy was not peaceful. Powell also suggests that there were connotations of militancy: 'in the sense that such a term implies unrestrained, terrorist or quasi-revolutionary violence'.<sup>4</sup> For Powell, the term 'militancy' was therefore one of violence and revolution. He instead offers the alternative of 'civil disobedience' to describe the actions of the WSPU.<sup>5</sup> The term 'civil disobedience' is also utilised by Sandra Stanley Holton who described militancy as 'neither a uniform or static phenomenon, nor indeed one determined solely by decisions of the Pankhurst leadership' as there were other militant suffrage groups like the Women's Freedom League.<sup>6</sup> For Holton, militancy ranged from disruptions to 'civil disobedience and threats to public order', thus it could entail a variety of actions.<sup>7</sup> June Purvis shares this sentiment and argues that the equation

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<sup>2</sup> David Robertson, *A Dictionary of Modern Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (London: Europa Publications, 2002), p. 309; Duncan Watts, *A Glossary of UK Government and Politics*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> David Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis: Britain, 1901-1914*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>6</sup> Sandra Stanley Holton, 'The Language of Suffrage History', *Women's History Review*, 28.7, (2019), pp. 1227-1234, at 1228 <<https://doi-org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/09612025.2019.1654638>>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.

of militancy to violence and illegal activities is ‘problematic’ as militancy ‘embraced a broad range of behaviours’.<sup>8</sup> Each historian has a different interpretation of what militancy constituted and how that influenced the battle for women’s suffrage.

However, Lyndsey Jenkins has recommended a different approach to militancy altogether by looking at militant identities instead. Jenkins argues that militancy was ‘above all, created in the mind’ and about identification rather than action as ‘no particular acts were required for women to consider themselves militant’.<sup>9</sup> By working towards women’s suffrage, WSPU members were embracing a militant identity regardless of their actions. Jenkins further explains that analysing militant identities can change the perception of militancy as violent, emphasising that WSPU members ‘considered themselves militant all the time- even when not engaged in “militant” acts’.<sup>10</sup> This connects to Lisa Tickner’s definition of militancy as a ‘public embodiment of a new femininity’.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the definition of militancy is not just about actions or violence but rather how those involved identified themselves.

This thesis will explore how Emmeline viewed militancy and how she connected it to Ireland. Emmeline defined militancy in different ways throughout *My Own Story*. She emphasised that militancy had been part of the WSPU before its turn to violence, titling Book Two of *My Own Story* as ‘Four Years of Peaceful Militancy’.<sup>12</sup> In a speech from 1912, she claimed that even though the suffragettes were described as militant there had been no organised violence until 1911.<sup>13</sup> Emmeline recognised the connection between militancy and

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<sup>8</sup> June Purvis, ‘Did militancy help or hinder the granting of women's suffrage in Britain?’, *Women’s History Review*, 28.7, (2019), pp. 1200-1217, at 1200 <<https://doi-org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/09612025.2019.1654638>>.

<sup>9</sup> Lyndsey Jenkins, *Sisters and Sisterhood: The Kenney Family, Class, and Suffrage, 1890-1965*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 139.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 168-9.

<sup>11</sup> Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907-1914*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 205.

<sup>12</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, (London: Vintage, 2015), pp. 73 & 79.

<sup>13</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Mrs Pankhurst’s Defence, Tuesday May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1912’ in Emmeline Pankhurst, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, Frederick Pethick Lawrence & Timothy Healy, *Suffrage Speeches from the Dock: Conspiracy Trial, Old Bailey, May 15<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 1912*, (London, 1912), pp. 20-44, at 23.

violence but emphasised that they were different. Therefore, Emmeline did not define militancy as simply violent or destructive acts as suggested by Powell. It was connected to action though in the sense that ‘Deeds, not words’ was the motto of the WSPU.<sup>14</sup> In *My Own Story*, Emmeline focused on the motivation behind these ‘deeds’ and how the ideas behind the actions were militant too. This supports Jenkins’s argument that militancy was about identification rather than action. When describing the Opening Day of Parliament in 1906, Emmeline recounts attempts made by a suffrage procession to gain entry to the House of Commons and how marching to Parliament was militant. This was not due to danger or even action but because she felt it was an awakening of women:

Out of the disappointment and dejection of that experience I yet reaped a richer harvest of happiness than I had ever known before. Those women had followed me to the House of Commons. They had defied the police. They were awake at last. They were prepared to do something that women had never done before – fight for themselves. Women had always fought for men, and for their children. Now they were ready to fight for their own human rights. Our militant movement was established.<sup>15</sup>

For Emmeline then, militancy was about women being willing to fight for themselves. Just as Emmeline had been awakened to injustice by the Manchester Martyrs, she too wished to awaken others to the injustice of women having no vote. Floyd Dell, an American writer, argued that militancy was not created ‘out of the void’ as it was instead an ‘awakening where it lay sleeping in these women’s hearts’ and Emmeline had ‘the courage to draw upon it’.<sup>16</sup> Militancy was therefore recognised as an awakening by others outside of the WSPU. June Purvis had a similar definition of militancy as she argues that it ‘was a form of feminist consciousness raising that roused thousands of women of all political persuasion and social classes to demand, rather than ask politely for their democratic right of citizenship’.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 51.

<sup>16</sup> Floyd Dell, *Women as War Builders: Studies in Modern Feminism*, (Chicago: Forbes, 1913), pp. 37-8.

<sup>17</sup> Purvis, ‘Did militancy help or hinder the granting of women's suffrage in Britain?’, p. 1200.

Emmeline referred to the first militant act of the WSPU as holding a meeting after a suffrage bill was talked out in 1905.<sup>18</sup> The women were making a stand against the Government. Emmeline wanted women to stand up for themselves but also that they would be heard. She claimed that ‘we were determined, at the beginning of our movement, that we would force the Government to take up our question’.<sup>19</sup> In a speech titled ‘Why We Are Militant’, Emmeline argued that it was necessary to ‘force’ legislation using ‘something dynamic’, thus militancy was about forcing the Government to act.<sup>20</sup> There are varying definitions of militancy but for Emmeline it was all about the commitment to women’s suffrage, women raising their voices and forcing the government to listen. This thesis will analyse militancy in this way and explore how each reference to Ireland in *My Own Story* contributed to women raising their voices and forcing the Government to listen. In the first chapter, Emmeline’s memory of the Manchester Martyrs establishes how her own awakening to injustice played a role in converting her to the necessity of militancy. The second chapter explores the relationship between Parnell and Emmeline’s Anti-Government tactics. The main purpose of these tactics was emphasising the independence of the WSPU, enabling women to put the cause of women’s suffrage first. The last chapter focuses on the WSPU’s interactions with the fight for Home Rule. The Irish Parliamentary Party’s attempts to ensure a Home Rule Bill left Emmeline, the suffragettes and Irishwomen pushed aside. This incited militancy as women fought to put their cause first. On the opposing side, the Ulster Unionists provided an example for Emmeline and the WSPU to highlight differing responses to militancy, thus militancy was used as an expression of injustice.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 41.

<sup>20</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Why We Are Militant’ in *Suffrage and the Pankhursts*, ed. by Jane Marcus (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 153-162, at 153.

This thesis also seeks to recover Emmeline's own militancy. Fern Riddell argues that the more violent acts of the suffragettes have been forgotten. The WSPU is now remembered as women who were 'window-smashing' and 'chaining themselves to railings' rather than the more accurate picture of women using 'guns, bombs and arson attacks'.<sup>21</sup> The image of the suffragettes has been commodified. Considering the movement attacked politicians and blew up houses as well as churches, it is ironic that the Houses of Parliament shop now sells suffragette merchandise including a suffragette rubber duck, silk scarf and an apron.<sup>22</sup> The journey of Emmeline from enemy of the Government to a hero is one of sanitisation as the violence of the suffragettes has been downplayed in many cases due to their gender. World War One altered the relationship between Emmeline and the British Government. After the outbreak, Emmeline announced a change in policy and the WSPU switched causes to support the war effort. In the space of five years, Emmeline had transformed from being arrested for inciting the arson attack on Lloyd George's summer home to sharing breakfast with him to discuss the success of the Representation of the People Act in 1918.<sup>23</sup> The War transformed the image of the WSPU into allies of the Government. After Emmeline's death, a statue was unveiled in London in 1930. The *Daily Mail* article on 3 March 1929, discussing the proposed statue, expressed the change of opinion that had occurred surrounding Emmeline: 'Monument to Once "Best Hated" Woman'.<sup>24</sup> The article refers to the 'extraordinary reversal that has taken place in public opinion' as Emmeline transformed into an admirable figure to the British public.<sup>25</sup> An article that described the unveiling event reported on the 'strange spectacle' of

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<sup>21</sup> Fern Riddell, *Death in Ten Minutes: Kitty Marion: Activist. Arsonist.*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2018), pp.149-150.

<sup>22</sup> 'Votes for Women', *Houses of Parliament Shop*, (2023),

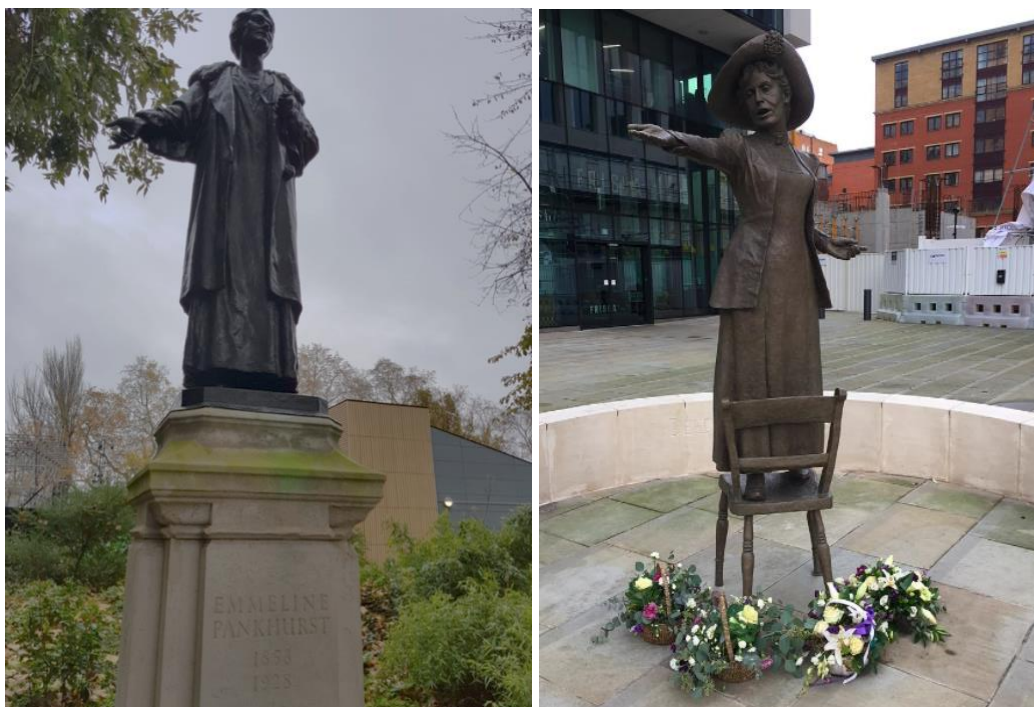
<<https://www.shop.parliament.uk/collections/votes-for-women>> [accessed 1 March 2023].

<sup>23</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst: The Suffragette Struggle for Women's Citizenship*, (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1935), p. 162.

<sup>24</sup> 'Monument to Once "Best Hated" Woman', *Daily Mail*, 3 March 1929, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

the Metropolitan Police Central Band playing the ‘March of the Women’, a suffragette song.<sup>26</sup> The police had previously been enemies of the suffragettes especially those who employed violence when arresting the women. There is no evidence of Emmeline’s militancy on the statue as her figure stands peacefully atop a plinth (Figure 1). It has a very different tone to the statue of Emmeline, despite having a similar pose, which was unveiled in Manchester 2018 as part of the centenary of women’s suffrage. *Rise Up, Women* (Figure 2), the official name of the statue, presents Emmeline as more active and rebellious.



1 & 2. Emmeline Pankhurst’s Statue, Victoria Tower Gardens, London & ‘Rise Up, Women’ Statue, St Peter’s Square, Manchester.

This more recent recovery of Emmeline’s militancy relates to the image of suffragettes in films. Laura Nym Mayhall asserts that the image of Mrs. Banks in *Mary Poppins* had served to domesticate the image of Emmeline and the suffragettes.<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Bank’s song ‘Sister

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<sup>26</sup> ‘Police Band Plays Suffragettes’ War March’, *Daily Mail*, 7 March 1930, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Laura E. Nym Mayhall, ‘Domesticating Emmeline: Representing the Suffragette, 1930-1993’, *National Women’s Studies Association Journal*, 11.2, (Summer 1999), pp. 1-24, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4316653>> [1 March 2023], at 10.

Suffragette’ does reference how women were ‘fighting for their rights militantly’ but there is little mention of any militant actions in particular.<sup>28</sup> *Mary Poppins* was influential in shaping the image of the suffragette and even inspired others, like Shaherazad Umbreen who became a ‘cheerleader’ for the suffragettes because of Mrs. Banks.<sup>29</sup> However, more modern iterations of the suffragettes have focused on the bombing campaigns as *Suffragette* (2015) and *Enola Holmes* (2020) depict women using explosives.<sup>30</sup> Although *Enola Holmes* is set in 1884 and not necessarily about the WSPU, it does take inspiration from the movement and the women are using bombs in their quest for the vote, thus are presented as violent. Like these films, this thesis will uncover Emmeline’s more extreme militancy and analyse how the press, politicians, and Emmeline herself contributed to the diminishing of her more violent actions.

## **1.2. My Own Story as a source**

Emmeline’s *My Own Story* is an important record for any suffrage historian. Written during the ongoing battle for women’s suffrage, it provides a record of Emmeline’s journey into a militant. The autobiography was originally published as a series of articles in *Good Housekeeping* in America. As *Good Housekeeping* was printed in America, the audience for *My Own Story* was predominantly American. This is apparent in some of the references such as Emmeline’s comparison of the suffragettes to American abolitionists, Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison. Emmeline directs the comparison to the audience, hoping ‘perhaps you will see some parallel to our case’, thus trying to connect her movement with her audience.<sup>31</sup> *Good Housekeeping* had been purchased by the Hearst Corporation in 1911, a year

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<sup>28</sup> *Mary Poppins*, dir. by Robert Stevenson, (Buena Vista Distribution Company, Inc., 1964).

<sup>29</sup> Shaherazad Umbreen, *Secrets of the Suffragettes: An Exploration of Exclusionism in the British Suffragette Movement*, (Surrey: Nielsen, 2019), p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Suffragette*, dir. by Sarah Gavron, (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 2015); *Enola Holmes*, dir. Harry Bradbeer, (Netflix, 2020).

<sup>31</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 65.



in which the magazine had a circulation of over 300,000 Americans.<sup>32</sup> William Randolph Hearst was in charge of Hearst Interests at this time. His mother Phoebe Apperson Hearst was a supporter of women's suffrage which may explain why he chose to include Emmeline's articles in *Good Housekeeping*.<sup>33</sup> There were other pro-suffrage articles in the magazine including one instructing how to hold a suffrage luncheon, suggesting that *Good Housekeeping* was sympathetic to women's suffrage.<sup>34</sup> From January to July 1914, articles were published documenting Emmeline's story. In the introduction of Emmeline's series of articles in *Good Housekeeping*, the editor explains that the articles will 'tell how she [Emmeline] became a militant'.<sup>35</sup> This was therefore the overall purpose, not only of the articles but also of *My Own Story* as a publication. It appears to have been successful as the final instalment in *Good Housekeeping* labels the story 'a satisfactory explanation, if not a justification, of the militant movement'.<sup>36</sup> Militancy was therefore the key theme of *My Own Story*, thus the perfect source to analyse how Emmeline's militancy was influenced by Ireland.

*My Own Story* is an important source in analysing Emmeline's public self as it is autobiographical. An autobiography is, in a way, a proclamation of a public 'self' as the author presents a certain version of themselves to the public. This point has been argued by Sidonie Smith who wrote that 'autobiographical writing is always a gesture toward publicity, displaying before an impersonal public an individual's interpretation of experience'.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines: Volume V: Sketches of 21 Magazines 1905-1930*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 133.

<sup>33</sup> Alexandra M. Nickliss, 'Phoebe Apperson Hearst's "Gospel of Wealth," 1883-1901', *Historical Review*, 71.4, (November 2002), pp. 575-605, at 589 <<https://doi.org/10.1525/phr.2002.71.4.575>>.

<sup>34</sup> Bertha E. Shapleigh, 'A Suffrage Luncheon', *Good Housekeeping*, January 1914, pp. 136- 138.

<sup>35</sup> Editor, 'Introduction' in Emmeline Pankhurst, 'The Making of a Militant', *Good Housekeeping*, January 1914, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Editor, 'Introduction' in Emmeline Pankhurst, 'Why I Am a Militant?', *Good Housekeeping*, July 1914, p. 90.

<sup>37</sup> Sidonie Smith, 'Autobiographical Manifestos' in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pp. 433- 440, at 436.

Emmeline's autobiography therefore offers her interpretation of the suffragette movement, and her inclusion of Ireland enforces that it was an important part of her experience.

Emmeline, Christabel, and Sylvia all wrote autobiographical accounts of the movement as did others involved in the WSPU. Sylvia was the first Pankhurst to publish an autobiographical history of the suffragettes. *The Suffragette: The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement 1905-1910* was published in 1911 during the fight for women's suffrage. This book was published before the split that occurred between Emmeline, Christabel, and Sylvia over Sylvia's failure to comply with the WSPU's policy of independence due to her association with the Labour movement. Teresa Billington-Greig, a former member of the WSPU, claimed that Sylvia had been sent into 'a form of retirement' to write the book, using 'five great cases of her father's and mother's accumulated papers as her material'.<sup>38</sup> The use of Emmeline's materials as well as her authorship of the preface emphasises Emmeline's approval of *The Suffragette*. Emmeline's *My Own Story* was the next Pankhurst history to be published in 1914. Both *The Suffragette* and *My Own Story* were the only Pankhurst histories written during the battle for women's suffrage. Sylvia's later history titled *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (1931) and Christabel's *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote* (1959) were both written retrospectively. *Unshackled* was published in 1959 after Christabel's death. The reason for this was supposedly due to Christabel's reluctance to feud publicly with Sylvia.<sup>39</sup> However, there are disagreements as to when this book was written as June Purvis and Maureen Wright argued that it was 'in the early 1930s', in response to Sylvia's work, but Rita Pankhurst claimed 'according to Adela most of it was produced in the early 1920s' which Rita labels as 'likely' because 'by the 1930s Christabel's religious

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<sup>38</sup> Teresa Billington-Greig, 'The Birth of the Women's Freedom League' in *The Non-Violent Militant: Selected Writings of Teresa Billington-Greig*, ed. by Carol McPhee & Ann Fitzgerald (London: Routledge, 1987), pp. 102-108, at 105.

<sup>39</sup> June Purvis & Maureen Wright, 'Writing Suffragette History: The Contending Autobiographical Narratives of the Pankhursts', *Women's History Review*, 14. 3-4, (2005), pp. 405-433, at 420 <DOI: [10.1080/09612020500200444](https://doi.org/10.1080/09612020500200444) >.

mission appears to have absorbed all her energy'.<sup>40</sup> Christabel had become an evangelist for the Second Adventist movement after emigrating to America in 1921. Regardless of when it was written, all the Pankhurst autobiographies focus on their experiences in the suffragette movement. The suffrage autobiographical histories including Christabel and Sylvia's are important in distinguishing Emmeline's own views of militancy. Inconsistencies such as Emmeline claiming militancy began in February 1905 whilst Christabel describes herself asking a question in 1904 as the beginning, demonstrate that Emmeline had her own militant identity and her own thoughts.<sup>41</sup>

The genre of autobiography enabled Emmeline to express her own views on militancy. For Linda Anderson and Regina Gagnier, autobiography is all about empowering the writer, giving them a voice. Anderson argued that it is 'both a way of testifying oppression and empowering the subject through their cultural inscription and recognition' and Gagnier agreed, claiming 'autobiography is the arena of empowerment to represent oneself in a discursive cultural field'.<sup>42</sup> Autobiographies enable the writer to tell their version of events and represent themselves, something which was extremely important to the suffragettes who were often misrepresented by the press, the suffragists and other suffragettes. Emmeline featured this misrepresentation in *My Own Story*. In its preface, she noted the challenges facing the movement: 'coercion, repression, misrepresentation, and insult'.<sup>43</sup> She referred to this again later in the book, proclaiming 'how we were ridiculed!', in reference to the press, and used a speech in court to discuss the history of the movement 'because the press has never adequately

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p. 421; Rita Pankhurst, 'Introduction to the Cresset Women's Voices Edition' in Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, ed. Frederick Pethick-Lawrence, (London: Cresset Library, 1987), pp. xi-xvii, at xvi.

<sup>41</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, ed. Frederick Pethick-Lawrence (London: Hutchinson, 1959), p. 46.

<sup>42</sup> Linda Anderson, *Autobiography*, (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 104; Regina Gagnier, 'The Literary Standard, Working-Class Autobiography, and Gender' in *Revealing Lives: Autobiography, Biography and Gender*, ed. by Susan Groag Bell & Marilyn Yalom, (New York, 1990), pp. 93-114, at 102.

<sup>43</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p.vi.

or truthfully chronicled the movement'.<sup>44</sup> Emmeline's focus in *My Own Story* was therefore presenting her version of events as opposed to those misrepresented by the press. Sylvia and Christabel also used their autobiographies to challenge misrepresentation. In Sylvia's own words, the purpose of *The Suffragette* was 'to give a just and accurate account of' the movement's 'progress and happenings' by granting a 'look behind the scenes in order that they may understand both the steps by which the Movement has grown, and the motives and ideas that have animated its promoters'.<sup>45</sup> *The Suffragette* aimed to provide a new presentation of the suffrage movement away from the unjust portrayals which often appeared in the press. Sylvia's *The Suffragette Movement* challenged the WSPU's independence policy, arguing that socialism had been the main influence on the Pankhursts through Richard Pankhurst and that Christabel's socialist ideals had been 'shed as readily as a garment'.<sup>46</sup> Christabel's *Unshackled* was a challenge to the misrepresentation of her and Emmeline as power hungry as Christabel emphasised they 'had no love of power for the sake of power'.<sup>47</sup> This highlights Christabel's awareness of how she and Emmeline had been portrayed. The image of Emmeline and Christabel as megalomaniacs had been presented by Teresa Billington-Greig who had published a critical history of the militant suffrage movement in 1911. *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Emancipation in a Hurry* labelled the leadership of Emmeline and Christabel as 'unhealthy hero-worship and exaggerated devotion' and that the domination of the Pankhursts was 'deliberate'.<sup>48</sup> *The Militant Suffrage Movement* was published before *The Suffragette*, thus it was the first history of the movement by one of the well-known members of the WSPU. The *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* contained Billington-Greig's book in

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 210 & 66.

<sup>45</sup> Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette: The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement 1905-1910*, (New York, 1970), p. viii.

<sup>46</sup> Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (London: Virago, 1977), pp. 247-248.

<sup>47</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p.82.

<sup>48</sup> Teresa Billington-Greig, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Emancipation in a Hurry* (London: Frank Palmer, 1911), pp. 1, 72 & 119.

‘This Week’s Books’ on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1911 whereas Sylvia’s book was advertised as ‘ready next week’ in *The Athenaeum* on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1911.<sup>49</sup> *Unshackled* was therefore about correcting Billington-Greig’s interpretation. Each autobiography had the purpose of challenging preconceptions, and these motivations were important in relation to women’s suffrage.

Glenda Norquay emphasised the importance of representation in the battle for women’s suffrage as she argued ‘how women were depicted was of central importance in assessing why they should or should not be given the vote’.<sup>50</sup> How the women were represented was therefore essential for the Pankhursts and the WSPU. The importance of representation is emphasised in the creation of *Votes for Women* in 1907 and the *Suffragette* in 1912. Both newspapers were created for the WSPU to present their version of events. In the opening of *Votes for Women*, an article describes the paper as the ‘mouthpiece’ of the party therefore offering the WSPU’s interpretation.<sup>51</sup> *Votes for Women* was edited by the Pethick Lawrences. Frederick and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence were both leaders of the WSPU with Emmeline and Christabel until a split in opinion led to their expulsion from the WSPU in 1912. This led to the creation of the *Suffragette* which was edited by Christabel. The necessity of the WSPU having their own paper is emphasised in the first issue of the *Suffragette*: ‘it is essential that there shall be an organ to expound the Union’s views and intentions, this paper, THE SUFFRAGETTE, has been founded’.<sup>52</sup> *Votes for Women* and the *Suffragette* have been used throughout this thesis to connect Emmeline’s references to Ireland with the policy of the WSPU. They have also been compared to other newspaper articles to express Emmeline’s emphasis on correcting misrepresentations. Lady Constance Lytton, a member of the WSPU, claimed that *Votes for Women* was the ‘only publication which gave events as they happened, not as they were

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<sup>49</sup> ‘This Week’s Books’, *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 1 April 1911, p. 404; ‘Advertisement’, *The Athenaeum*, 3 June 1911, p. 620

<sup>50</sup> Glenda Norquay, ‘Introduction’ in *Voices & Votes: A Literary Anthology of the Women’s Suffrage Campaign*, ed. Glenda Norquay (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 1-38, at 12.

<sup>51</sup> ‘The Outlook’, *Votes for Women*, October 1907, pp. 1-2, at 1.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Review of the Week’, *Suffragette*, 18 October 1912, p. 2.

supposed to happen' emphasising the unreliability of the press in relation to the suffragettes.<sup>53</sup> Like *Votes for Women* and the *Suffragette*, Emmeline attempted in *My Own Story*, to present her own story from her own perspective. Emmeline's references to Ireland were therefore included for a reason: to challenge the public perception of Emmeline and the suffragettes.

Suffrage autobiographies were also important in justifying their actions. Norquay argued that suffrage writers wrote with the aim of 'conversion of the reader' and 'to persuade the reader of the validity- or of the dangers' of the cause and even in later autobiographies there is 'a strong desire to convince the reader of the validity of their actions'.<sup>54</sup> Norquay's emphasis on the intentions of the writer to 'persuade' the reader highlights how the suffragettes were using their stories to influence their audience. In reference to *My Own Story* specifically, Emmeline was therefore using her autobiography to validate militancy as claimed by the editor of *Good Housekeeping*. This was acknowledged by Purvis and Wright who labelled the book 'a poignant apologia for militancy', thus Emmeline's intention was to justify militancy.<sup>55</sup> The title of this thesis, 'The Making of a Militant', is taken from the first section of Emmeline's autobiography demonstrating her focus on militancy. *My Own Story* is therefore focused on Emmeline's militancy, and it is the best source to analyse how Ireland made her a militant.

However, the quest for validity has also resulted in criticisms of the suffrage autobiographies. Sylvia's *The Suffragette* received criticism from the *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* of being 'a very one-sided account' and 'of the suffragettes themselves the pictures are always nicely drawn'.<sup>56</sup> *My Own Story* received a similar review: 'she makes no effort to see anything but the feminist side'.<sup>57</sup> Both the *Suffragette* and *My Own*

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<sup>53</sup> Constance Lytton, 'Prisons and Prisoners' in *Voices & Votes*, ed. Norquay, pp.67-71, at 70.

<sup>54</sup> Norquay, 'Introduction', p. 35 & 28; Glenda Norquay, 'Conversion' in, *Voices & Votes*, ed. Norquay, pp. 39-40, at 39.

<sup>55</sup> Purvis & Wright, 'Writing Suffragette History', p. 412.

<sup>56</sup> 'The Suffragette', *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 21 October 1911, p. 528.

<sup>57</sup> 'Emmeline: My Own Story', *English Review*, December 1914, p. 121.

*Story* present violence as one-sided. In their descriptions of the 1905 Free Trade Hall interruption, both describe how men ‘scratched’, ‘tore’, ‘howled’, ‘shouted’, ‘roared’, were ‘shaking their fists’ and even left a woman bleeding.<sup>58</sup> This description presents the men as wild animals, attacking innocent women. The one-sided nature of autobiography is expected as it is a narrative based on one person’s perspective. Nevertheless, it is important in analysing Emmeline’s interpretation of events in Ireland to remember, not only that she was motivated to correct representation and validate her militancy but that her discussion of Irish events were her own viewpoints, thus reality may have differed.

Autobiographies are not infallible. They are subjective and based on memories which can result in bias and errors. *My Own Story* does contain errors such as the misspellings of names like ‘Theresa Billington’ instead of Teresa or the year of events such as Susan B. Anthony’s visit to Manchester as 1902 instead of 1904.<sup>59</sup> These mistakes, however, do not negate the importance of *My Own Story* as a source as they are Emmeline’s interpretation of events. James Olney argued that autobiographies were complex, and this is certainly the case in terms of truth.<sup>60</sup> Marcus asserted that autobiography ‘asks of its readers that they be open to the complexities of truth’ including ‘the work of memory and the gaps produced by forgetting’ which could create errors.<sup>61</sup> Truth in autobiography is therefore multifaceted. Each of the Pankhursts have offered different ‘true’ accounts of the movement. The different yet allegedly ‘true’ accounts provided by the Pankhurst family reflects the complexity of truth as recalled over four decades by three individuals albeit linked by blood ties. Throughout this thesis, I

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<sup>58</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 35, 44 & 47; Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Our Domestic Circle’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 30 July 1904, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> James Olney, ‘Autobiography and the Cultural Moment: A Thematic, Historical, and Bibliographic Introduction’ in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 7.

<sup>61</sup> Laura Marcus, *Autobiography: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.4.

have compared *My Own Story* with the other Pankhurst autobiographies to demonstrate differences in accounts and interpretation, thus making Emmeline's story clearer.

Considering *My Own Story* is an autobiography, there is little reference to personal affairs other than those related to the suffrage movement. Emmeline's focus was on correcting misrepresentation therefore the focus was on the WSPU's actions rather than personal divisions. *My Own Story's* focus on politics was picked up on by contemporary critics such as the reviewer for the *English Review* who claimed that 'people who expect to find a compilation of sensations in this volume will be disappointed'.<sup>62</sup> Estelle Jelinek claimed that 'even in the autobiographies by women whose professional work is their claim to fame, we find them omitting their work life, referring obliquely to their careers, or camouflaging them behind the personal aspects of their lives' such as their 'family, close friends, domestic activities'.<sup>63</sup> Yet it was the opposite for Emmeline. Purvis and Wright asserted that Emmeline only referred to her daughters 'in regard to their political work as suffragettes' which is explicitly clear in *My Own Story*: 'all their lives they had been interested in women's suffrage'.<sup>64</sup> However, Emmeline was not the only suffrage writer to do this. Hannah Mitchell wrote about all her different political interests such as being part of the suffragettes and being a socialist but referred to her son as 'the boy'.<sup>65</sup> This suggests that others were going against the trend of personal autobiographies, focusing instead on their political work as male autobiographies had done previously. Sylvia's *The Suffragette Movement* is more personal, evident in the title: *An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*. This intimacy was recognised by Sylvia herself in the preface of the book as she dedicated the work to R.G. Longman for 'his sympathetic

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<sup>62</sup> 'Emmeline: My Own Story', p. 121.

<sup>63</sup> Estelle C. Jelinek, 'Introduction: Women's Autobiography and the Male Tradition' in Estelle C Jelinek, *Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), pp. 1-20, at 7-8; Estelle C. Jelinek, *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography: From Antiquity to the Present*, (Boston: Twayne, 1986), p. xiii.

<sup>64</sup> Purvis & Wright, 'Writing Suffragette History', p. 407; Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p.33.

<sup>65</sup> Hannah Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up: The Autobiography of Hannah Mitchell, Suffragette and Rebel*, ed. by Geoffrey Mitchell, (London: Faber, 1968), p.116.



understanding of the author's aims and difficulties in a work at once so intimate'.<sup>66</sup> Sylvia's discussion of the split with Emmeline and Christabel is certainly presented more personally than that of Christabel who claims that the split was due to 'difference of view'.<sup>67</sup> *The Suffragette Movement* and *Unshackled* were published after militancy had ended, thus any signs of dissension were not damaging to the same extent as if Emmeline had referenced it fully in *My Own Story*. Emmeline's focus on the political story demonstrates her wish to create a political self through autobiography.

Autobiographies, according to Corbett and Brozki, were predominantly male discourses, thus women were 'supposed to be excluded' and 'to appropriate by means of the word has been a divisive privilege rarely accorded [to] women'.<sup>68</sup> The Pankhursts were therefore entering into a previously predominantly male discourse, mirroring their political work. Smith, Watson and Corbett all argue that women writing autobiographies were able to write themselves into history, indicating that men had dominated history previously as they had written autobiographies: 'autobiography has been employed by many women writers to write themselves into history' and 'they were determined to represent their own' through autobiography.<sup>69</sup> Marcus also notes about the importance of autobiography to history as autobiographies have 'provided historians, in particular social historians, with crucial "first-person accounts" of events and movements'.<sup>70</sup> Stanford Friedman claimed that 'writing the self shatters the cultural hall of mirrors and breaks the silence supposed by male speech'.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. iii.

<sup>67</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 69.

<sup>68</sup> Mary Jean Corbett, *Representing Femininity: Middle-Class Subjectivity in Victorian and Edwardian Women's Autobiographies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 11; Bella Brozki, 'Mothers, Displacement, and Language' in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, pp. 156-159, at 156.

<sup>69</sup> Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson, 'Introduction: Situating Subjectivity in Women's Autobiographical Practices' in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, pp. 3-56, at 5; Corbett, *Representing Femininity*, p. 179.

<sup>70</sup> Marcus, *Autobiography: A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>71</sup> Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Women's Autobiographical Selves: Theory and Practice' in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, pp. 72-82, at 76.

Autobiography was therefore the perfect medium for Emmeline, Christabel and Sylvia to write their experience of the suffrage movement as it gave them a voice, the ability to create a version of themselves whilst breaking into a male discourse and write themselves into history. The writing of autobiographies by women were revolutionary acts in themselves as it allowed women to enter a predominantly male discourse. Emmeline's *My Own Story* was a way of Emmeline writing her own place in history. She was aware that histories would be written about the movement; 'other histories of the militant movement will undoubtedly be written' and that she wished 'to live long enough to read such a history, calmly considered, carefully analysed, conscientiously set forth'.<sup>72</sup> In terms of the role of her autobiography as a history book, she minimised its influence, describing an imaginary history book as 'better' than *My Own Story* which had been written 'in camp between battles'.<sup>73</sup> However, the fact that *My Own Story* was written during the battle is advantageous as it presents the public version of Emmeline that she wished to portray *during* the fight rather than after. Autobiography is all about presenting a public self, thus Emmeline in *My Own Story* was presenting a version of herself. The aim of suffrage autobiographies was to validate their actions and challenge misrepresentations. Emmeline's writings were about justifying the WSPU's use of militancy. Emmeline's use of Ireland in her autobiography was therefore inextricably connected to militancy.

There have been criticisms about *My Own Story* in terms of its authorship. Sylvia Pankhurst, in *The Suffragette Movement*, claimed that Emmeline 'never could bring herself to write', thus *My Own Story* was 'produced by Rheta Childe Dorr from talks with Mrs. Pankhurst and from Suffragette literature'.<sup>74</sup> The figure that Sylvia was referring to was actually Rheta Childe Dorr. Emmeline certainly acknowledged Dorr's help as she expressed her 'deep

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<sup>72</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 290-291.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 268.

obligation' to her for 'invaluable editorial services performed in the preparation of the volume'.<sup>75</sup> Dorr admitted that she had suggested to Emmeline that she would 'take on most of the drudgery of the work, writing at her dictation' and that she travelled for Emmeline's 'notes and documents'.<sup>76</sup> Dorr's recollection suggests Sylvia was correct that she had transcribed for Emmeline. Dorr referenced how they worked on the articles during their journey to America in October 1913: 'We worked during the voyage, for Mrs. Pankhurst dictated well, and was pleased with the way I put the story together'.<sup>77</sup> The work for *My Own Story* was completed in Paris as the *Good Housekeeping* articles had ended with a focus on 1913, thus *My Own Story* needed additions.<sup>78</sup> From Dorr's recollections, it appears that *My Own Story* was ghost-written but that they were Emmeline's words for the most part and that Emmeline had final approval, thus it was her *own* story. However, the status of *My Own Story* as ghost-written has resulted in criticisms over credibility and when referenced by historians like Brian Harrison and Patricia Ford, it is emphasised that they were the words of Dorr not Emmeline.<sup>79</sup> June Purvis and Maureen Wright acknowledge that other historians like Martin Pugh repeated the accusations but argued that there was little evidence in *My Own Story* to prove the claims.<sup>80</sup> There are certainly repeated references to Emmeline writing herself: 'as I write these words' and 'the scene is clear before me as I write'.<sup>81</sup> It is unclear whether this was Emmeline's dictation or whether it was Emmeline writing herself. Dorr's assertion that Emmeline dictated emphasises that *My Own Story* was truly Emmeline's account that had simply been edited to Emmeline's approval. The questions surrounding *My Own Story* have resulted in it being overlooked as a

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<sup>75</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. ix.

<sup>76</sup> Rheta Childe Dorr, *A Woman of Fifty*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1925), p. 249.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256; Emmeline Pankhurst, 'Why I Am a Militant?', *Good Housekeeping*, July 1914, pp. 90-99, at 99.

<sup>79</sup> Brian Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries: Portraits of British Feminists between the Wars*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 39.; Patricia Ford, *A Lab of One's Own: Science and Suffrage in the First World War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 53.

<sup>80</sup> Purvis & Wright, 'Writing Suffragette History', p. 408.

<sup>81</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 206 & 252.

source despite its significance. *My Own Story* was Emmeline's attempt at justifying her militancy, correcting misrepresentations, presenting her political self and, in an act of militancy herself, adding her voice to the male-dominated genre of autobiography. These motivations all influence Emmeline's writings, thus raising the question: why did Emmeline include Ireland in *My Own Story* and how did that relate to her aims?

### 1.3. Historiography

Despite Emmeline's references to Ireland in *My Own Story*, there has been relatively little detailed analysis on the connection. Paula Bartley, in her biography of Emmeline, describes how Emmeline's 'political views' and 'suffragette activities' were 'affected and shaped by her awareness of Irish politics'.<sup>82</sup> Martin Pugh also emphasised the importance of Ireland on Emmeline claiming that it was 'to exercise a major influence on her own tactics' and it had 'influenced the Pankhursts'.<sup>83</sup> Despite the importance of Ireland as an influence, there has been little detailed analysis on *how* Ireland influenced Emmeline. This thesis aims to uncover these connections, analyse them and explore the impact on Emmeline's militancy.

Pugh's reference to the Pankhursts is notable as there has been some analysis of their connection to Ireland as a family. Erin Scheopner, in a 2020 article, analysed Christabel and Sylvia's diverging newspapers and their coverage of the situation in Ireland from 1912 to 1918. Scheopner's article examines how the Pankhursts interacted with Ireland and 'how the issue of Ireland entangled feminists on all sides of the political aisle'.<sup>84</sup> Scheopner mostly references Christabel and Sylvia, thus Emmeline's own connections are overlooked. Barbara Winslow,

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<sup>82</sup> Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 22.

<sup>83</sup> Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts: The History of One Radical Family*, (London: Vintage Books, 2002), p. 9; Martin Pugh, *The March of the Women: A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage 1866-1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 173.

<sup>84</sup> Erin Scheopner, 'A Double Claim to be Consulted': the Pankhurst Sisters' Newspaper Coverage of Ireland, 1912-18', *Women's History Review*, 29.7, (2020), pp. 1182-1200, at 1196 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2020.1723209>>.

Geoffrey Bell and John Newsinger have both focused solely on Sylvia Pankhurst and her connection to the Easter Rising.<sup>85</sup> Newsinger, like Scheopner, analyses Sylvia's newspaper the *Woman's Dreadnought*. The newspaper was one of the first to publish articles about the Rising.<sup>86</sup> Bell and Newsinger's focus on Sylvia is expected as Sylvia was the most sympathetic with Ireland. Her split from the WSPU was even connected to Ireland as her speech supporting James Larkin, an Irish socialist, went against the policy of political independence.<sup>87</sup> Emmeline never labelled herself an Irish nationalist nor a unionist during the battle for women's suffrage as the cause came first. However, the Women's Party formed in 1917 by Christabel and Emmeline was unionist suggesting her later sympathies lay there. Emmeline's observations in Ireland were not from a place of interest for their cause but rather an interest as to how tactics in Ireland could be employed for women's suffrage. By focusing on Emmeline, this thesis challenges the idea that Sylvia was the only Pankhurst entangled in the Irish Question.

The domination of Sylvia Pankhurst in the historiography of the Irish connection to the Pankhursts mirrors the historiography of the suffragettes. Sylvia Pankhurst's *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (1931) was the most influential book in the early historiography of the movement. Sylvia had also written the first biography of her mother Emmeline which was first published in 1935, but it was *The Suffragette Movement* that captured historians' imaginations.<sup>88</sup> The importance and influence of this history is emphasised by historians such as Jill Liddington, Patricia Romero, Jill Norris, Sandra Stanley Holton, June

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<sup>85</sup> Barbara Winslow, *Sylvia Pankhurst: Sexual Politics and Political Activism*, (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 102-104; Geoffrey Bell, 'Sylvia Pankhurst and the Irish Revolution', *History Ireland*, 24.1, (January- February 2016), pp. 38-41 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43683556>> [accessed 1 March 2023]; John Newsinger, *Sylvia Pankhurst, the Easter Rising and the Woman's Dreadnought*, (London: Socialist History Society, 2016).

<sup>86</sup> Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, 'The Irish Rebellion: Our View', *Woman's Dreadnought*, 6 May 1916, p. 469.

<sup>87</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 517.

<sup>88</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst*.

Purvis and Harold Smith.<sup>89</sup> They all agree that *The Suffragette Movement* had a major impact on the historiography of the movement even if they disagree with its conclusions. Sylvia presented her mother as worshipping Christabel, claiming she ‘upheld her as an oracle’ but Sylvia resented Christabel’s ‘incipient Toryism’ and ‘her frequent ruthless casting out of trusty friends for a mere hair’s breadth difference of view’.<sup>90</sup> She claimed that Emmeline was ‘swept’ into Christabel’s policies suggesting that Emmeline simply followed Christabel.<sup>91</sup> In a review of the book when it was first published, Renee Haynes claimed the book presented the history of the suffragettes as ‘that of a continual division into two streams: that of sober, thinking women genuinely anxious for political responsibility, and that of snobbish, idle females explosive with pent-up energy and consumed with the lust of self-advertisement’.<sup>92</sup> This view was adopted by the early historians too. George Dangerfield’s *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (first published in 1935) was one of the first histories of the movement. Dangerfield analysed the role of the suffragettes in the downfall of the Liberal Party. He labelled Emmeline and Christabel ‘intolerable lunatics’, ‘not very loveable’ as they had ‘certain motives of self-interest, certain moments of exhibitionism, which do not especially commend themselves’.<sup>93</sup> Dangerfield therefore presents Emmeline as a leader who used militancy to raise her position in life and publicise herself. This was not Dangerfield’s view of male leaders such as Asquith: he described Asquith as ‘ruthless if need be, and he was fond of power’ but this was a positive

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<sup>89</sup> Jill Liddington & Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women’s Suffrage Movement*, (London: Virago, 1978), p.12; Patricia W. Romero, *E. Sylvia Pankhurst: Portrait of a Radical*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. xi; Sandra Stanley Holton, ‘Reflecting on Suffrage History’ in *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History*, ed. by Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan & Laura Ugolini, (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 20-36, at 20; June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 2; Harold L. Smith, *The British Women’s Suffrage Companion 1866-1928*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Harlow: Longman, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>90</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 221.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>92</sup> Renee Haynes, ‘The Suffragette Movement’, *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 7 March 1931, p. 352.

<sup>93</sup> George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, (London: Constable, 1936), pp. 148 & 359.

as he was a ‘most gifted man’ who ‘could extract loyalty’ and was ‘made for Parliament’.<sup>94</sup> Dangerfield’s impression of Asquith as ruthless but a great leader differs to his summary of the Pankhursts as ‘intolerable lunatics’. There is no suggestion that Asquith’s quest for power was selfish indicating that Emmeline’s militancy was mocked and downplayed because of her gender. Dangerfield’s presentation of Emmeline is significant as it was one of the first histories. Jane Marcus argues that as the ‘first historian’ Dangerfield had ‘invented the narrative and historical plot from which subsequent historians have seldom been able to free themselves’.<sup>95</sup> Such language used by Dangerfield was repeated by David Mitchell, a journalist in his book *The Fighting Pankhursts: A Study in Tenacity* (1967) in which he described the Pankhursts as ‘wonderful, crazy, intolerant and sometimes intolerable busybodies’.<sup>96</sup> The narrative therefore presented Emmeline as an unlovable lunatic using militancy for her own publicity. As explored in the next paragraphs, this narrative has been challenged and this thesis will add to this challenge by arguing that militancy, although it could be used for publicity, was more about the awakening of women and that the influence of Ireland played a role in women embracing their cause first above all.

As it was one of the first histories, this image was maintained throughout the early historiography. Roger Fulford, a Liberal MP, claimed that militancy was a ‘personal weapon’ for the Pankhursts suggesting that they were using militancy for their own gain.<sup>97</sup> Fulford’s book *Votes for Women* was first published in 1956 and he expressed his ‘deep sense of obligation’ to Sylvia ‘for her two books’ (*The Suffragette* and *The Suffragette Movement*) on which he had ‘unashamedly drawn for an understanding of the exciting (though at times

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<sup>94</sup> George Dangerfield, *The Damnable Question: A Study in Anglo-Irish Relations*, (London: Constable, 1976), p. 59.

<sup>95</sup> Jane Marcus, ‘Introduction: Re-Reading the Pankhursts and Women’s Suffrage’ in *Suffrage and the Pankhursts*, ed. by Jane Marcus, (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-16, at 2-3.

<sup>96</sup> David Mitchell, *The Fighting Pankhursts: A Study in Tenacity*, (London: Jonathon Cape, 1967), p. 340.

<sup>97</sup> Roger Fulford, *Votes for Women*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1958), p. 301.

confusing) story of militancy'.<sup>98</sup> Sylvia, in her letters to Christabel in the 1950s, relayed her horror upon reading Fulford's book as she felt he had been 'distorting everything I have written'.<sup>99</sup> Sylvia's own attempt at correcting misrepresentations had therefore been misrepresented itself. Christabel labelled Fulford's book, in her reply, as 'anti-W.S.P.U. and anti-Pankhurst' pointing out Fulford's political leanings as the WSPU had campaigned against the Liberal Party as well as Fulford's lack of reaching out to her or quoting any of her work.<sup>100</sup> Both of the sisters blamed Billington-Greig as the cause of the negative portrayal.<sup>101</sup> The letters between Christabel and Sylvia demonstrate that despite using Sylvia's book as a resource, she did not agree with the conclusions made by Fulford. The early historiography presented Emmeline as a fanatic who was using militancy for her own gain. It overlooked Emmeline as a serious political figure through labels such as 'lunatic' whilst downplaying her motives for militancy as simply self-publicity. This explains why her use of Ireland had not been thoroughly examined as early historians did not view her as a serious political figure.

There were some attempts to challenge the image of Emmeline using militancy for her own gain. Josephine Kamm, in *The Story of Mrs. Pankhurst* (originally published in 1961), challenges Dangerfield's view by arguing that 'she had no personal ambition' but rather a 'cause to which she could devote herself heart and soul'.<sup>102</sup> However, Martin Pugh disregards Kamm's work claiming that in 2000 there had been 'no good, scholarly biography of either

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<sup>98</sup> Although Fulford does mistake the date of publication for *The Suffragette* as 1912 when it was published in 1911. See Roger Fulford, *Votes for Women*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1958), p. 11.

<sup>99</sup> Pankhurst, Estelle Sylvia, 'Sylvia to Christabel, 10 July 1957' in Richard Pankhurst, 'Suffragette sisters in old age: unpublished correspondence between Christabel and Sylvia Pankhurst, 1953–57', *Women's History Review*, 10.3, (2001), pp. 483-537, at 494-497, at 494 <<https://doi-org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/09612020100200295>>.

<sup>100</sup> Pankhurst, Christabel, 'Christabel to Sylvia, 3 August 1957[?]' in Richard Pankhurst, 'Suffragette sisters in old age: unpublished correspondence between Christabel and Sylvia Pankhurst, 1953–57', *Women's History Review*, 10.3, (2001), pp. 483-537, at 497-504, at 498 <<https://doi-org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/09612020100200295>>.

<sup>101</sup> Sylvia to Christabel, 10 July 1957' in Pankhurst, 'Suffragette Sisters in Old Age', p. 495; 'Christabel to Sylvia, 3 August 1957' in Pankhurst, 'Suffragette Sisters in Old Age', p. 499.

<sup>102</sup> Josephine Kamm, *The Story of Mrs Pankhurst*, (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 65.



Emmeline or Christabel Pankhurst'.<sup>103</sup> Pugh had his own critics though as June Purvis claimed Pugh's work *The Pankhursts* was dominated by Sylvia (58 references to *The Suffragette Movement*) in comparison to Emmeline (2 references to *My Own Story*) and Christabel (13 references to *Unshackled*).<sup>104</sup> Sylvia's narrative was therefore the most dominant for Pugh. Kamm's biography was not the only one to be disregarded by Pugh as David Mitchell's *The Fighting Pankhursts* and *Queen Christabel* had been published before Pugh's book. Marcus discounts Mitchell's writing as 'salaciously aimed at a male readership afraid of the new feminisms of the 1970s with more modern and rudely expressed sexual and psychological explanations of the political movement'.<sup>105</sup> The resurgence of feminism resulted in a revival of interest in the suffragettes. Midge Mackenzie's *Shoulder to Shoulder* was a television series in 1974 which publicised the actions of the suffragettes. In the accompanying book, published a year later, Mackenzie argued that they had been 'vanished from our history' and their feat 'has been almost successfully erased from the history books'.<sup>106</sup> Mackenzie claimed that this was due to lack of sources as the 'writings were long since out of print' and newspapers 'buried in archives'.<sup>107</sup> The Pankhurst autobiographies were therefore becoming overlooked as were Emmeline and Christabel. These writings did not remain out of print for long though as the feminist Virago Press reprinted *The Suffragette Movement* in 1977 and *My Own Story* in 1979. As discussions about feminism and class became more prevalent, so too did the Pankhursts in reference to Sylvia and Christabel's opposing feminism. Harold Smith and Barbara Castle agree that socialist-feminism and radical feminism 'originated with Sylvia and Christabel Pankhurst's conflicting interpretations' and their 'wholly divergent philosophies'.<sup>108</sup> The role

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<sup>103</sup> Pugh, *The March of the Women*, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, p. 5.

<sup>105</sup> Marcus, 'Introduction: Re-Reading the Pankhursts and Women's Suffrage', p. 12.

<sup>106</sup> Midge Mackenzie, *Shoulder to Shoulder: A Documentary*, (Middlesex: Penguin, 1975), p. ix.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Companion 1866-1928*, p. 34; Barbara Castle, *Sylvia and Christabel Pankhurst*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 18.

of socialism and class, according to Castle and Sandra Stanley Holton, was ‘the classic dilemma of the feminist movement’ as ‘class inequality had become the major threat to the sense of sexual solidarity’.<sup>109</sup> Certainly, class played a key role in the suffrage movement as even today the image of the movement is that it was simply middle class. Even today, there are battles over whether women MPs should be loyal to their gender or their political party. Jane Marcus has more recently questioned the image of Christabel betraying socialism, raising the question as to why socialism betrayed her instead.<sup>110</sup> However, the focus on Sylvia vs Christabel has diminished the focus on Emmeline’s own beliefs and arguments.

Emmeline Pankhurst has received historical attention more recently in biographies published by June Purvis (originally published in 2002, reprinted in 2016), Paula Bartley (2002) and Jad Adams (2003).<sup>111</sup> *My Own Story* was also reprinted in 2014 in connection with the film *Suffragette* and its release. Purvis, in her 2002 book *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, claimed Sylvia’s *The Suffragette Movement* ‘became the authoritative reading of Emmeline Pankhurst’.<sup>112</sup> Thus she wished to uncover the other side in her biography, writing ‘as a white, heterosexual, middle-class feminist who admires the leader of the WSPU’ (Women’s Social and Political Union).<sup>113</sup> However, there are some common strands in all the suffrage histories. Emmeline’s position as leader of the WSPU is often referred to as autocratic which left her susceptible to Dangerfield and Fulford’s attacks on her leadership as being self-motivated. The idea of an autocratic organisation in the fight for democracy was certainly ironic and had been used to emphasise Emmeline’s quest for publicity and illogical policies.

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<sup>109</sup> Castle, *Sylvia and Christabel Pankhurst*, p.55; Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women’s Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain 1900-1918*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 65.

<sup>110</sup> Marcus, ‘Introduction: Re-Reading the Pankhursts and Women’s Suffrage’, p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, (London: Routledge, 2002); Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, (London: Routledge, 2002); Jad Adams, *Pankhurst*, (London: Haus Publishing, 2003).

<sup>112</sup> June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

However, Emmeline admitted to her autocratic leadership happily in *My Own Story*. She replied ‘quite so’ to the charge, arguing that it was so the WSPU would not be ‘hampered by a complexity of rules’.<sup>114</sup> Emmeline’s distrust of committees continued into the 1920s as a letter to Martha Carey Thomas describes her respect for Carey Thomas’s ability to ‘be so patient with committees + their indecisions + delays’ implying Emmeline did not have this patience with dissenting opinions.<sup>115</sup> Christabel and Sylvia admitted to the autocrat image, proclaiming that it was created ‘at the request of the Pethick-Lawrences’ as the WSPU needed a ‘captain’.<sup>116</sup> Instead of shying away from the word ‘autocratic’, Emmeline explained that she felt the only way for women to win the vote quickly was through an autocratic organisation as it would not be delayed over disagreements or committee meetings. In *Difficult Women: A History of Feminism in 11 Fights* (2020), Helen Lewis does not shy away from the term ‘autocratic’ and ‘ruthless’ in reference to Emmeline and Christabel.<sup>117</sup> However, Lewis argues that this is what made them ‘difficult women’ and that it should be acknowledged that ‘most revolutionaries are not... nice’ yet ‘women have always been told to be nice’.<sup>118</sup> By acknowledging that there were historical assumptions that women were supposed to be ‘nice’, Lewis’s argument reinforces the idea that Emmeline has been judged differently to her male counterparts. Dangerfield is certainly evidence of this as he labelled James Stephens, the head of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and autocrat, an ‘inspired organizer’ in comparison to ‘intolerable’.<sup>119</sup> By using Ireland as a lens, it becomes clear how Emmeline was treated differently to male

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<sup>114</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 54.

<sup>115</sup> Letter from Emmeline Pankhurst to Miss Martha Carey Thomas, 13 September 1921, Washington D.C., Library of Congress, M. Carey Thomas Papers, Microfilm 18,536-217P, Reel 162.

<sup>116</sup> Sylvia to Christabel, 10 July 1957’ in Pankhurst, ‘Suffragette Sisters in Old Age’, p. 495; ‘Christabel to Sylvia, 3 August 1957’ in Pankhurst, ‘Suffragette Sisters in Old Age’, p. 502.

<sup>117</sup> Helen Lewis, *Difficult Women: A History of Feminism in 11 Fights*, (London: Jonathon Cape, 2020), p. 43.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>119</sup> Dangerfield, *The Damnable Question*, p. 94.

politicians. Emmeline was a difficult woman who refused to put other causes first, including Home Rule.

Another dominant presentation of Emmeline in historiography is as Christabel's follower. Sylvia's quote about being swept away removes Emmeline's own agency. In *The Suffragette*, Sylvia labelled Christabel the 'daring political genius and originator of the tactics' whilst Emmeline was the 'founder, with her magnetic personality'.<sup>120</sup> This description suggests Emmeline was simply the founder and figurehead of the WSPU whilst Christabel pulled the strings. This label has been used by others such as Frederick Pethick-Lawrence who described Christabel as having 'a genius for leadership' as well as historians like Helen Lewis who claimed Christabel 'was the one who came up with the organisation's militant policies'.<sup>121</sup> Jane Marcus recounted how it took many hours for Jill Craigie, another historian, to 'convince me to pay attention to Christabel Pankhurst's mind, her political genius'.<sup>122</sup> Christabel was the main tactician but the focus on her as a political genius has pushed Emmeline's own political nature from the forefront. This thesis seeks to challenge the historiographical image of Emmeline as a follower of Christabel's tactics by analysing Emmeline's own political origins and experiences in relation to Ireland and the impact of these on the WSPU.

#### **1.4. Conclusion**

Emmeline Pankhurst defined militancy as awakening women, forcing the Government to act and getting women to put themselves first. This thesis will analyse how these definitions interacted with Emmeline's references to Ireland in *My Own Story*. As an autobiographical source, Emmeline was presenting a public version of herself and trying to validate militancy.

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<sup>120</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette*, p. ix.

<sup>121</sup> Frederick Pethick-Lawrence, 'Preface' in Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, pp. 11-14, at 12; Lewis, *Difficult Women*, p. 42.

<sup>122</sup> Marcus, 'Introduction: Re-Reading the Pankhursts and Women's Suffrage', p. 6.

The inclusion of Ireland was therefore deliberate, and Emmeline must have had a reason to include it. By comparing her autobiography with other suffrage autobiographies and WSPU literature, Emmeline's own views and arguments about militancy become clearer. This challenges the historiography that Emmeline was simply swept along by Christabel's policies. Despite the criticisms over the ghost-written status, *My Own Story* was Emmeline's *own* story as she approved of Dorr's edits and provided her own words, thus it is a vital resource in analysing Emmeline's militancy.

This thesis is divided into three chapters, focusing on each of the Irish events mentioned in *My Own Story*. The first chapter concentrates on the awakening of Emmeline to injustice via her witnessing a hole in the wall of New Bailey Prison where the Manchester Martyrs were hung. This chapter explores Emmeline's account and how an awakening to injustice prepared Emmeline for her suffrage work. It also provided an example for Emmeline to follow. The second chapter investigates the influence of Charles Stewart Parnell on Emmeline. The WSPU had adopted Parnell's election policies and, inspired by his obstruction, took to interrupting meetings in the hope of forcing women's suffrage to the forefront. This coincided with the early militant tactics of the WSPU. The third chapter analyses the relationship between Emmeline and the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) as well as the Ulster Unionists. The campaign for Home Rule brought the IPP and the WSPU into battle over which issue would succeed first. Militancy intensified and the battleground shifted to prisons. Hunger strikes and the battle for political status had an Irish connection but with the threat of civil war in Ulster and the double standards facing the WSPU, hunger strikes transformed into escape routes through the Cat and Mouse Act. Suffragettes were released due to ill-health and then re-arrested once their health had improved. Emmeline Pankhurst is an important political figure of the twentieth century and by using Ireland as a lens, this thesis reclaims her political awareness and analyses her ability to use events in Ireland to further her cause.

## 2. *Emmeline & Fenianism: A Militant Awakening*

A certain Saturday afternoon stands out in my memory, as on my way home from school I passed the prison where I knew the men had been confined. I saw that a part of the prison wall had been torn away, and in the great gap that remained were evidences of a gallows recently removed. I was transfixed with horror, and over me there swept the sudden conviction that that hanging was a mistake – worse, a crime. It was my awakening to one of the most terrible facts of life – that justice and judgment lie often a world apart. I relate this incident of my formative years to illustrate the fact that the impressions of childhood often have more to do with character and future conduct than heredity or education. I tell it also to show that my development into an advocate of militancy was largely a sympathetic process. I have not personally suffered from the deprivations, the bitterness and sorrow which bring so many men and women to a realisation of social injustice.

Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*.<sup>1</sup>

In this extract of *My Own Story*, Emmeline Pankhurst discusses the influence that a site of executions had on her political awakening as a young girl in Manchester. The men who had been executed were the Manchester Martyrs: William Phillip Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien. These men were accused and charged with the murder of a policeman, Sergeant Charles Brett, as part of a rescue of two Fenian leaders, Thomas J. Kelly and Timothy Deasy. The Fenian movement was primarily a militant movement, which claimed that the only way to achieve an Irish Republic was through force and action. These methods mirror the methods of the WSPU and their 'Deeds Not Words' motto. The Fenian movement was predominantly comprised of two organisations: the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), an Irish faction, and the Fenian Brotherhood, an Irish American faction. Throughout the 1870s, Clan na Gael replaced the Fenian Brotherhood in America. The aim of the Fenian movement, according to the original oath of the IRB in 1858, was for members to do their 'utmost, at every risk, while life lasts, to make Ireland an independent democratic republic'.<sup>2</sup> That they were

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<sup>1</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, (London: Vintage, 2015), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> John O'Leary, *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, 2 vols (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), I, p. 120.

willing to risk and do anything for an independent Ireland overlaps with the later tactics of the WSPU who were willing to do anything for the right to vote. John Newsinger argues that the Fenian movement was ‘one of the most important of the revolutionary movements that challenged the British Empire in the nineteenth century’.<sup>3</sup> For nine-year-old Emmeline Pankhurst, the movement certainly left an imprint on her and her future suffrage activities.

This chapter will explore the connection between the Fenian movement and Emmeline Pankhurst, especially its influence on her militancy. The first section of this chapter is an analysis of Emmeline’s account of the Manchester Martyrs. The second section focuses on the influence of the event on Emmeline: how it awakened her and inform Emmeline’s militancy throughout her political career? The last section argues that Fenianism provided a successful example for militancy which Emmeline could use as inspiration for her own movement. It also compares the two movements and analyses how the militancy of the suffragettes has been downplayed in comparison to Fenianism.

## **2.1. Emmeline and the Manchester Martyrs**

### **2.1.1. The Manchester Martyrs**

Before analysing Emmeline’s account of the event, it is necessary to summarise who the Manchester Martyrs were and why they were executed. The arrests of Thomas J. Kelly and Timothy Deasy on 11 September 1867 sparked a series of memorable events. Kelly and Deasy were arrested on suspicion of plotting to break into a shop. However, both were notable Fenians and had been involved in the Fenian Rising of 1867 and upon news of their arrest, an attempted escape was made on 18 September. The escape occurred on Hyde Road as the prisoners were being transferred to Belle Vue Gaol from the courthouse. In *The Manchester Guardian* and the *Observer*, it was claimed that there were ‘about 40 persons’ or ‘a body of 40 or 50 men’ that

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<sup>3</sup> John Newsinger, *Fenianism in Mid-Victorian Britain*, (London: Pluto, 1994), p. 1.

attacked the van and that ‘several shots’ were fired from ‘about 15 revolvers’, ‘a gun’ and ‘single-barrelled [sic] pistols’.<sup>4</sup> This figure is also featured in Neill’s *The Fenian Outrage in Manchester (1867): The Attack on the Van and the Murder of Sergeant Brett* (1909) which is one of the first histories written of the event.<sup>5</sup> It is unclear whether this figure is correct as phrases like ‘about’ and ‘or’ suggest an estimation rather than an accurate figure and the figures depended on witnesses who may have exaggerated or underestimated. There was some confusion over how many shots were fired too. Glynn argues that the number of shots ‘will never be known’ adding to the uncertainty surrounding the case.<sup>6</sup>

During the escape, one of the Fenians shot at the cab that was transferring the prisoners and killed Sergeant Charles Brett. It is debated who the Fenian was and where he shot into the cab. The *Manchester Guardian* published that Allen was the shooter as well as accounts of witnesses such as Policeman George Shaw, Police Constable Trueman, Charles Thomas (a plumber), Emma Halliday (a prisoner in the van with Brett) and Ellen Cooper (a prisoner in the van with Brett) who claimed Allen was the shooter.<sup>7</sup> Neill, in his history of the event, also referred to Allen as the shooter due to the accounts of witnesses.<sup>8</sup> Allen was the surname of William Philip Allen, who was also known as William O’Meara Allen or O’Mara Allen in the press.<sup>9</sup> It is unclear where ‘O’Meara’ or ‘O’Mara’ originated from, although it was likely used

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Rescue of Two Fenian Head Centres: Three Persons Shot’, *Manchester Guardian*, 19 September 1867, p. 3; ‘Events of the Week’, *Observer*, 22 September 1867, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> J. Neill, *The Fenian outrage in Manchester (1867): the attack on the van and the murder of Sergeant Brett*, 1909, Salford, Working Class Movement Library, Ireland - Box 10, 36013935.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Glynn, *High Upon the Gallows Tree*, (Tralee: Anvil Books, 1967), p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Rescue of Two Fenian Head Centres: Three Persons Shot’, p. 3; ‘The Fenian Trials at Manchester’, *Observer*, 3 November 1867, p. 2; ‘The Fenian Rescue in Manchester’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 20 September 1867, p. 3; ‘The Outrage in Manchester: Examination of the Prisoners This Day’, *Observer*, 29 September 1867, p. 6; ‘The Fenian Outrage’, *Observer*, 29 September 1867, p. 3; ‘The Fenian Outrage: Examination of The Prisoners’, *Manchester Guardian*, 28 September 1867, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> J. Neill, *The Fenian outrage in Manchester (1867): the attack on the van and the murder of Sergeant Brett*, 1909.

<sup>9</sup> ‘The Fenian Outrage’, p. 3; ‘The Fenian Outrage in Manchester’, *Manchester Guardian*, 20 September 1867, p. 3.



by Allen as an alias. Michael O'Brien also used an alias and was known as William Gould by the press.<sup>10</sup> Despite the witnesses' accounts pointing the finger at Allen, John Devoy, a notable Fenian, claimed it was actually Peter Rice who killed Brett.<sup>11</sup> Historians such as Robert Kee and Anthony Glynn have used Devoy's account to argue that Allen was innocent, as were Michael O'Brien and Michael Larkin who had all been executed for the crime.<sup>12</sup> Glynn even claims that it 'was widely known among members of the attacking party' that Rice was the shooter.<sup>13</sup> However, Richard O'Sullivan Burke, who according to Joseph McGarrity had been in charge of the rescue, made a speech in 1931 commemorating the Manchester Martyrs, in which he claimed that 'one of the three volunteers, afterwards hanged' had 'fired the pistol' that killed Brett'.<sup>14</sup> This suggests that the killer was either Allen, O'Brien or Larkin, not Rice as claimed by John Devoy. It is therefore ambiguous as to who the real shooter was as there are different accounts that shift the blame. This ambiguity added to the sense of injustice which Emmeline felt.

The aftermath of the rescue resulted in the eventual arrest of 62 people including Allen, Larkin and O'Brien. Allen and Larkin were charged with murder whilst others, including O'Brien, were charged with 'riot and murder and rescuing prisoners'.<sup>15</sup> In the court proceedings, there were 57 witnesses for the prosecution and 105 for defence.<sup>16</sup> Many of those

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<sup>10</sup> 'The Fenian Outrage in Manchester', p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (New York: Chase D. Young Company, 1929), p. 245. Peter Rice also admitted to his involvement in the shooting on 24 November 1867 in New York: 'The Manchester Martyrs: A Leader in the Affray Tells the Story of the Rescue', *San Francisco Call*, 7 September 1890, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), p. 341; Glynn, *High Upon the Gallows Tree*, p. 129.

<sup>13</sup> Glynn, *High Upon the Gallows Tree*, p. 129.

<sup>14</sup> Draft by Joseph McGarrity of remarks made at a Manchester Martyrs Meeting of Clan-na-Gael, 6 December 1931, Dublin, National Library of Ireland, Joseph McGarrity Papers, MS 17, 536/11; 'For "Manchester Martyrs": The Killing, In the Irish Rescue, Was an Accident, Says Col. Burke', *New York Times*, 28 November 1910, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> 'The Fenian Outrage in Manchester', p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Our Special Reporter, 'The Fenian Outrage in Manchester: Approaching Trial of The Prisoners', *Observer*, 27 October 1867, p. 6.

arrested were discharged but Allen, Larkin and O'Brien remained and were found guilty of murder along with Edward O'Meagher Condon (alias Shore) and Thomas Maguire. All five of them pleaded their innocence of the crime but Allen, Larkin, O'Brien and Condon all admitted to being Fenians. Maguire was eventually reprieved due to public pressure and Condon's sentence was commuted to penal servitude. The execution of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1867 at New Bailey Prison, Salford. Their bodies were buried in quick lime then moved to Strangeways Prison after the closure of New Bailey Prison in 1868. The remains of the Manchester Martyrs were moved in 1991 when the bodies of executed prisoners were exhumed during building work and were then cremated and relocated to Blackley Crematorium. Although it is not referenced in the suffrage autobiographies and they may have been unaware, the bodies of the martyrs would therefore have been at Strangeways when Christabel Pankhurst, Emmeline's daughter, and Annie Kenney, a member of the WSPU, were imprisoned for a week in 1905 after interrupting a Liberal Party meeting. Emmeline recounted how there were rumours Winston Churchill had visited the two suffragettes at Strangeways and 'vainly begged the governor to allow him to pay their fines' as he was worried about his candidacy in Manchester.<sup>17</sup> This was the first arrest for the WSPU, thus Strangeways was symbolic for the Pankhursts and for the Manchester Martyrs.

### **2.1.2 Emmeline's connection**

Emmeline's account of the Manchester Martyrs was featured in the first chapter in the first section of *My Own Story*. The name given to the first section was 'The Making of a Militant' as she establishes her political background and what led her to become the political figure that she did.<sup>18</sup> She connects the Fenian event with her impression of Manchester, her home city:

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<sup>17</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 46.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Manchester is a city which has witnessed a great many stirring episodes, especially of a political character. Generally speaking, its citizens have been liberal in their sentiments, defenders of free speech and liberty of opinion. In the late sixties there occurred in Manchester one of those dreadful events that prove an exception to the rule.<sup>19</sup>

By emphasising the ‘political character’ of Manchester, Emmeline was presenting her upbringing as inherently political and retrospectively creating the idea that she was born to be a political figure. Emmeline’s birthday provided more evidence of this as she used her birth date to connect to politics. Emmeline was born on 14 July which is celebrated in France as Bastille Day: the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille in 1789. Her birthday became part of the WSPU’s propaganda as it was used to present Emmeline as destined for politics. It was publicised in pamphlets such as the WSPU’s *Women’s Exhibition 1909* which included a biography of Emmeline, connecting her birthday to the destruction of the Bastille.<sup>20</sup> *Votes for Women* also featured articles about Emmeline’s birthday, labelling it ‘remarkable’ and that as well as her birthday ‘she has in other ways revolutionary traditions’ suggesting her birthday resulted in her revolutionary pathway.<sup>21</sup> In a 1912 article in *Votes for Women*, a demonstration in Hyde Park was planned on 14 July: ‘the birthday of a famous Revolution and of a famous woman’.<sup>22</sup> The WSPU therefore connected the birth of a revolution with the birth of Emmeline Pankhurst. There is some dispute as to whether this was Emmeline’s actual birthday as her birth certificate was dated 15 July. June Purvis argues that this could have been a mistake or ‘perhaps Emmeline herself created the myth many years later’.<sup>23</sup> Paula Bartley claims that it was deliberate and a way of Emmeline forging ‘an image of herself as a natural revolutionary’.<sup>24</sup> The WSPU literature certainly attests to that idea, but Emmeline did not

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> The National Women’s Social and Political Union, *The Women’s Exhibition 1909*, (London: The Woman’s Press, 1909), p. 26.

<sup>21</sup> ‘To Hyde Park!’, *Votes for Women*, 7 May 1908, p. 142; ‘Mrs Pankhurst’s Life’, *Votes for Women*, October 1907, p. 2

<sup>22</sup> ‘Mrs. Pankhurst’s Birthday’, *Votes for Women*, 12 July 1912, p. 662.

<sup>23</sup> June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 15.

reference her birthday in *My Own Story*. Emmeline, instead, used political events from her childhood to shape her story demonstrating an awareness from a young age, thus she was ‘made’ a militant rather than born a militant. Emmeline focused on her other French connections in *My Own Story* including a friendship with Noemie Rochefort, the daughter of French political writer Henri Rochefort, with whom she attended school.<sup>25</sup> Rochefort had been sympathetic to the Paris Commune and, according to Emmeline, she heard stories from Noemie of ‘blood-curdling accounts of daring and of patriotism’.<sup>26</sup> Emmeline emphasised her awareness of the French Revolution in *My Own Story* as she described Thomas Carlyle’s *The French Revolution: A History* as remaining ‘all my life a source of inspiration’.<sup>27</sup> This is notable as Carlyle’s views on Ireland were definitely not sympathetic as he described the Irish national character in *Chartism* (1840) as ‘degraded, disordered’ and claimed that the Irish population must ‘either be improved a little, or else exterminated’.<sup>28</sup> He did, however, acknowledge that there had been unjust treatment of Ireland as he claimed ‘England is guilty towards Ireland’ and that ‘Injustice, doubt it not, abounds; or Ireland would not be miserable’.<sup>29</sup> However, Carlyle criticised Irish attempts at revolutions to overcome British injustice. In *Reminiscence of My Irish Journey in 1849*, Carlyle recounted seeing Wexford Harbour and how his thoughts went to the Battle of Vinegar Hill during the 1798 Rebellion. He claimed that he thought of it ‘with sorrow rather and contempt’ and one of the ‘futile fruitless “battles” this brawling unreasonable people has fought’.<sup>30</sup> He summarised his argument, writing ‘in Heaven’s name learn that “revolting” is not the trade which will profit you’.<sup>31</sup> Carlyle therefore viewed the Irish people negatively and despite arguing that they were treated unfairly, abhorred

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<sup>25</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism*, (London: James Fraser, 1840), pp. 26 & 29.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Reminiscences of My Irish Journey in 1849*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1882), p. 34.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

any Irish revolutions or rebellions. From Emmeline's account of the Manchester Martyrs and her later references to Ireland, it is clear that she did not share this view. Sylvia, Christabel and Richard Pankhurst, Sylvia's son, all documented the influence of the French revolution on Emmeline and how she became, as Richard argues, 'a passionate Francophile'.<sup>32</sup> It is no surprise that Emmeline emphasised her birthday after reading Carlyle as he described the Siege of the Bastille as 'one of the most important in history' and that to describe it 'transcends the talent of the mortals'.<sup>33</sup> Georges Gusdorf and Barrett J. Mandel claimed that autobiography enables 'a creator to give the meaning of his own mythic tale' and is 'one of the strategies human beings have developed to make life matter'.<sup>34</sup> Emmeline's *My Own Story* was therefore a way of Emmeline creating her own tale: one that emphasises her experience and knowledge of politics. Valerie Sanders, in an introduction to excerpts from Emmeline's *My Own Story in Records of Girlhood: Volume Two: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Women's Childhoods* (first published 2012), describes the childhood section of *My Own Story* as focusing 'almost entirely on her growing political awareness' and 'completely suffused by political awareness and activism'.<sup>35</sup> The Manchester Martyrs as well as Emmeline's admiration for Carlyle and friendships with Noemie Rochefort were therefore part of Emmeline's construction of how she became a political figure and a militant.

Throughout Emmeline's account of the Manchester Martyrs, it becomes clear that she had no personal connection with Fenianism. In her account of the rescue, she claims that Deasy

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<sup>32</sup> Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*, (London: Virago, 1977), p. 54; Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, ed. Frederick Pethick-Lawrence (London: Hutchinson, 1959), pp. 16-17; Richard Pankhurst, *Sylvia Pankhurst: Artist and Crusader*, (London: Paddington Press, 1979), p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, ed. by Ruth Scurr, (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 57.

<sup>34</sup> Georges Gusdorf, 'Conditions and Limits of Autobiography' in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 28-48, at 48; Barrett J. Mandel, 'Full of Life Now' in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 49-72, at 64.

<sup>35</sup> Valerie Sanders, *Records of Girlhood: Volume 2- An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Women's Childhoods*, (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 181.

and Kelly were arrested as they were leaders of ‘a Fenian riot’, and that ‘a man fired a pistol, endeavouring to break the lock of the van door’.<sup>36</sup> Deasy and Kelly were Fenian leaders, and had taken part in the 1867 Rising. Emmeline’s use of ‘riot’ in this quotation is in relation to the Rising. However, they were arrested at first on suspicion of planning to steal from a shop. It was after their arrest that their identity was revealed. Emmeline does not refer to Fenianism again in *My Own Story* and her account of the Manchester Martyrs provides few details about the movement. Her understanding of the movement was restricted to the impact that it had on her development as a militant. Emmeline was not alone in her limited comprehension of Fenianism as Richard Vincent Comerford argues that there was a sense of ‘ambiguity’ to the term ‘Fenianism’.<sup>37</sup> Comerford claims that ‘from about mid-1867’, the term was ‘applied to examples of nationalist activity and sentiment that were neither directed by the I.R.B. nor inspired by its principles’ by ‘government officials, English politicians and English newspapers’.<sup>38</sup> The English press and Government, therefore, also struggled with understanding what constituted Fenianism and how it differed from other forms of agitation for Ireland.

Emmeline’s account is especially interesting as she comments that she ‘distinctly remembers the riot’ but she ‘did not witness’ it and it was ‘vividly described by my older brother’.<sup>39</sup> In this quotation, Emmeline refers to the rescue of Deasy and Kelly as a ‘riot’ too which connects to the language used at the time in newspapers such as the *Manchester Guardian*.<sup>40</sup> Later in *My Own Story*, Emmeline refers to ‘reading newspapers aloud’ to her father which ‘developed a genuine interest in politics’ during the time of the ‘Reform Bill’.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Richard Vincent Comerford, *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics & Society 1848-82*, (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1998), p. 152.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> ‘The Fenian Outrage in Manchester’, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 9.

It is unclear whether Emmeline was referencing the Reform Bill of 1866 which failed to pass or the 1867 Reform Bill which became the 1867 Reform Act. Emmeline referred to the Act as the 'Reform Act of 1866 was passed' implying that she was referencing the 1867 Reform Act as it was successful.<sup>42</sup> Emmeline would have been reading the newspaper aloud to her father during the Fenian Rising of 1867 which occurred in February and March during the discussion of the 1867 Reform Bill, introduced in February. Emmeline would therefore have been influenced by the newspapers as well as her brother's retelling of the events. The idea that she 'distinctly remembers the riot' contrasted to the fact she 'did not witness it' is ironic. Emmeline was not present at the riot so could not remember it herself but instead remembers its impact. This demonstrates the importance of such an event on the citizens of Manchester regardless of whether they were witnesses or not. Emmeline describes her brother talking 'excitedly' and that the citizens of Manchester were 'greatly excited' by the execution.<sup>43</sup> It was not just Emmeline who took great interest in the event.

The impact of the executions themselves is clear in Emmeline's statement that her brother told her of the rescue on a walk in 'the deepening November twilight'.<sup>44</sup> The rescue took place in September; it was the executions that took place in November. This could be explained by her brother repeating the story as the executions were drawing nearer. However, it also suggests that Emmeline was more affected by the executions than the actual events leading up to them. She never refers to the names of the men (Allen, Larkin and O'Brien) but instead refers to them as 'several men'.<sup>45</sup> She also does not refer to Kelly and Deasy or Brett by name, only as 'leaders' and 'slain policeman'.<sup>46</sup> The executions were therefore more symbolic to Emmeline as she used the event as a framing device for her political 'awakening'.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

The lack of details and mistakes could be misconstrued as a lack of interest by Emmeline who was simply using the event as an example of her political awareness. However, the lack of detail makes the connection more believable. As stated in the introduction, there have been accusations over the authorship of *My Own Story* and how it was ghost-written, but the lack of detail suggests that these were Emmeline's memories and that no background research was done before the publication of the articles or the book. The impact of the event was therefore more powerful than the event itself as Emmeline's focus was not on the crime but rather the executions.

### **2.1.3 Emmeline & New Bailey Prison**

Emmeline was on her way home from a boarding-school near Manchester on a 'certain Saturday afternoon' when she passed New Bailey Prison.<sup>47</sup> It was there that she 'saw that a part of the prison wall had been torn away, and in the great gap that remained were evidence of a gallows recently removed'.<sup>48</sup> According to June Purvis, this boarding school would have been 'run by a gentlewoman' and there are no records of where exactly the school was.<sup>49</sup> However, Emmeline states that the school was near Manchester and Purvis claims Emmeline would have, at that time, been living at Seedley Cottage (Figure 3) which was 'on the outskirts of Salford'.<sup>50</sup> From Figure 4, it is clear that on a journey from Manchester to Seedley, it would be possible to pass through Salford. The train station circled in Figure 5, Salford Central Rail Station, is the same train station as featured in Figure 4, a map from 1850, under the name Salford Railway Station.<sup>51</sup> These maps highlight where the Prison was located in the context of modern Manchester and Salford.

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

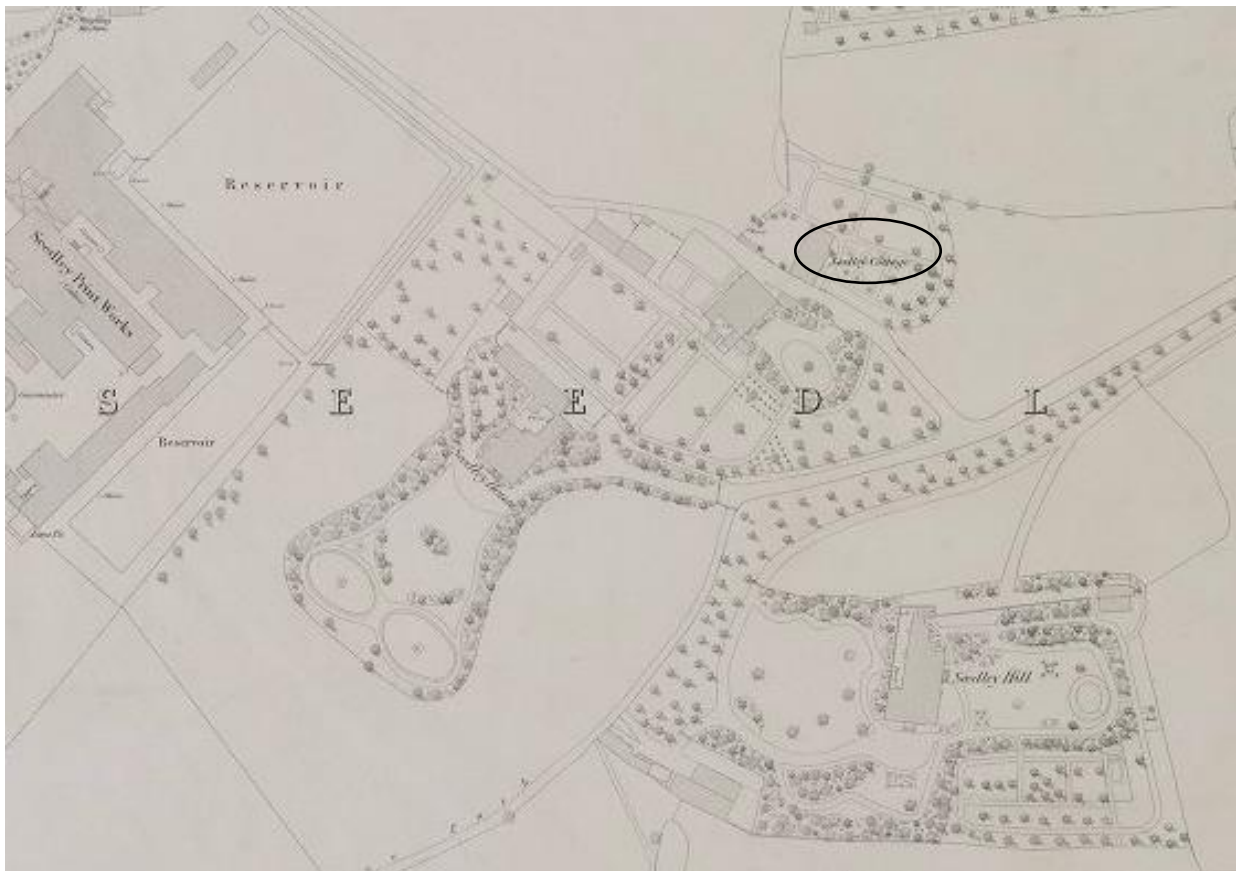
<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>51</sup> Raymond V. J. Butt, *The Directory of Railway Stations*, (Yeovil: Patrick Stephens, 1995), p. 204.



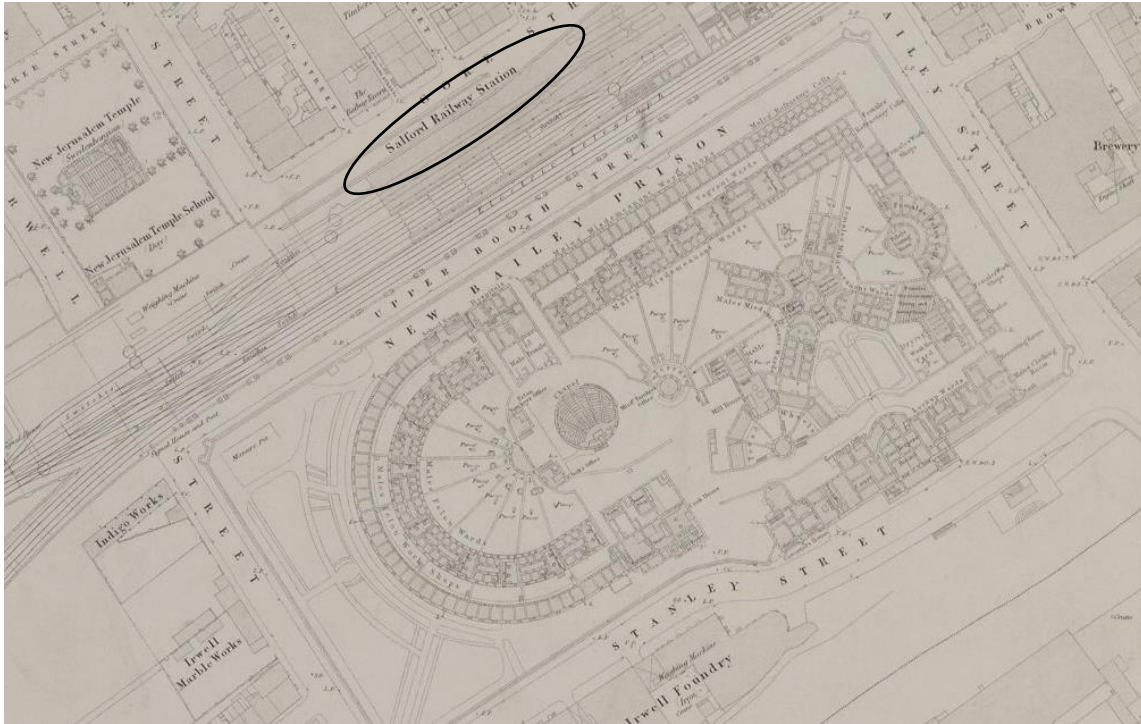


3. 1850 Ordnance Survey map of Seedley and Seedley Cottage (circled): University of Manchester Online Catalogue, 'Ordnance Survey Five Feet to One Statute Mile: Manchester and Salford'

[https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/maps002~1~1~338715~123070:%3Ca-rel=-license--href=-http---creat?sort=reference\\_number%2Ctitle&qvq=q:seedley;sort:reference\\_number%2Ctitle;lc:maps002~1~1&mi=0&trs=2](https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/maps002~1~1~338715~123070:%3Ca-rel=-license--href=-http---creat?sort=reference_number%2Ctitle&qvq=q:seedley;sort:reference_number%2Ctitle;lc:maps002~1~1&mi=0&trs=2) >[accessed 11 January 2020]



4. Google Maps from 2020 showing the Manchester area. The red pin is the location of Seedley whilst Salford Central Rail Station is circled. Google Maps, 'Seedley', <<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Seedley,+Salford+M6+8GL/@53.4854858,2.2547412,13z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x487bae4e3c79f3b7:0x1601c1d0e3c2f135!8m2!3d53.491054!4d-2.303965>> [accessed 11 January 2020].



5. 1850 Ordnance Survey map of Manchester and Salford. The map shows the outline of New Bailey Prison and Salford Railway Station is circled. University of Manchester Online Catalogue, ‘Ordnance Survey Five Feet to One Statute Mile: Manchester and Salford’,  
[https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/maps002~1~1~338827~123077:%3Ca-rel=-license--href=-http---creat?sort=reference\\_number%2Ctitle&qvq=w4s:/what%2FSalford%2B%252528Greater%2BManchester%25252C%2BEngland%252529--Maps;q:ordnance%20survey%20five%20feet;sort:reference\\_number%2Ctitle;lc:maps002~1~1&mi=9&trs=17](https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/maps002~1~1~338827~123077:%3Ca-rel=-license--href=-http---creat?sort=reference_number%2Ctitle&qvq=w4s:/what%2FSalford%2B%252528Greater%2BManchester%25252C%2BEngland%252529--Maps;q:ordnance%20survey%20five%20feet;sort:reference_number%2Ctitle;lc:maps002~1~1&mi=9&trs=17) [accessed 11 January 2020]

Emmeline’s reaction to the hole in the prison wall suggests why she ‘distinctly’ remembered the event: ‘I was transfixed with horror, and over me there swept the sudden conviction that that hanging was a mistake – worse, a crime’.<sup>52</sup> The tale of the Manchester Martyrs was, to Emmeline, an ‘awakening to one of the most terrible facts of life – that justice and judgement lie often a world apart’.<sup>53</sup> Emmeline’s account of the Manchester Martyrs was not full of detail nor wholly accurate, but it does provide insight into Emmeline’s connection to the event as a bystander. In George Dangerfield’s controversial *The Strange Death of Liberal*

<sup>52</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

*England* (first printed in 1935), he paints Emmeline as an attention-seeker, describing how Emmeline's widowhood would not be spent 'behind any scene, if there was the slightest chance of getting in front of it' and that her and Christabel had 'certain motives of self-interest'.<sup>54</sup> Dangerfield's reference to Emmeline's widowhood and how she was not going to be 'behind any scene' was due to the expectations of widows in the Victorian and Edwardian era. Patricia Jalland argues that widowhood in the Victorian era 'signified the probable end of the social recognition and responsibilities which flowed from the husband's work, wealth, and status'.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, the expectations would have been for Emmeline to remove herself from public life when she instead did the opposite. Dangerfield also describes how Emmeline's militancy was a result of her lack of status as in comparison with Millicent Fawcett, she lacked 'social prestige', thus 'allied with those women, she would always be in the background' and decided to form her own path through militant actions.<sup>56</sup> Through Dangerfield's interpretation, *My Own Story* and its inclusion of the Manchester Martyrs could be seen as self-serving and a way of Emmeline raising her prestige. It is not social prestige that is the focus of Emmeline, however, but rather political prestige through her encounters with Fenianism and French politics at such a young age. Emmeline even emphasises that she was not born political as she explains that she had included the Manchester Martyrs 'to illustrate the fact that the impression of childhood often have more to do with character and future conduct than heredity or education'.<sup>57</sup> This statement supports Dangerfield's idea that Emmeline lacked social prestige as she argues that her career had more to do with her childhood than heredity.

However, this interpretation is reductive as *My Own Story* was always going to present Emmeline as a political figure due to its publication during the battle for women's suffrage. If

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<sup>54</sup> George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, (London: Constable, 1936), pp. 144 & 148.

<sup>55</sup> Patricia Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 231.

<sup>56</sup> Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, p. 146.

<sup>57</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 6.

*My Own Story* had presented Emmeline as a child with no political awareness or no awakening to militancy, it would not have been very successful as propaganda. Emmeline's inclusion of the Manchester Martyrs in *My Own Story* was not to further the image of herself or gain more attention but rather to demonstrate her ability as a political leader. Emmeline was not the only figure to discuss the Manchester Martyrs or feel that their deaths were unjust. In an article from the *Manchester Guardian* on 12th November 1867, a meeting of '15 gentlemen and 4 ladies, presided by Mr. D. Brewster', at the Trevelyan Hotel is noted.<sup>58</sup> This meeting had the purpose 'to obtain a commutation of the sentence of death recently passed upon the condemned Fenian prisoners'.<sup>59</sup> It is unclear who exactly D. Brewster was but there was a D. Brewster who authored the work *The Radical Party: its Principles, Objects and Leaders: Cobden, Bright, Mill* which was published in Manchester in the same year, 1867.<sup>60</sup> This was found in the reference list of Demetrious and Loizides's work *John Stuart Mill: A British Socrates* (2013) and suggests a Radical Party connection with the Fenians.<sup>61</sup> Although this may not be the same man, it is undeniable that the Manchester Martyrs attracted the attention of British radicals. There were also Chartist connections with the case. Both W.P. Roberts and Ernest Jones, notable Chartists, were part of the defence for those accused of rioting and murdering Brett. Roberts also raised the issue of murder or manslaughter, claiming it was 'for another tribunal to decide whether this was a case of murder'.<sup>62</sup> Chartism was a political reform movement which campaigned for the extension of manhood suffrage throughout the 1840s connecting to Emmeline's battle for women's suffrage. Thomas Carlyle wrote about the movement, relating it to the condition of England and how Chartism was 'the bitter discontent grown fierce and

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<sup>58</sup> 'Sympathisers with the Fenian Convicts', *Manchester Guardian*, 12 November 1867, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> D. Brewster, *The Radical Party: its Principles, Objects and Leaders: Cobden, Bright, Mill*, (Manchester: Abel Heywood, 1867)

<sup>61</sup> *John Stuart Mill: A British Socrates*, ed. by Kyriakos N. Demetrious & Antis Loizides, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 150.

<sup>62</sup> 'The Fenian Outrage: The Defence Seventh Day', *Manchester Guardian*, 4 October 1867, p. 3.

mad'.<sup>63</sup> Carlyle also included a chapter titled 'Finest Peasantry in the World' focusing on Ireland in *Chartism*, connecting the movement with Ireland.<sup>64</sup> The Manchester Martyrs therefore attracted political sympathy from reform movements with similar sympathies to Emmeline.

Charles Stewart Parnell was also sympathetic to the Manchester Martyrs. The connection between Emmeline and Parnell will be explored in the next chapter yet it is notable that they shared an inspiration. Michael Hurst argues that the executions 'reinforced his [Parnell's] already active hatred of England and its government in Ireland'.<sup>65</sup> Thomas Power O'Connor, an Irish Nationalist Party MP, wrote in 1886 that the Manchester Martyrs resulted in a 'new birth of political convictions' and that the executions gave 'Mr. Parnell to the service of Ireland'.<sup>66</sup> This language is especially interesting as it mirrors Emmeline's own in her *Good Housekeeping* articles as the story of the Manchester Martyrs is placed under the title 'The Birth of a Conviction' (Figure 6) and she refers to the 'sudden conviction' she had of the unjust nature of the executions.<sup>67</sup> The Manchester Martyrs were therefore figures that roused political convictions throughout the 1860s. Like Emmeline, Parnell claimed that the executions were unjust. In 1876, in a House of Commons debate, Parnell defended Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, stating that he wished 'to say as publicly and as directly as I can that I do not believe, and never shall believe, that any murder was committed at Manchester'.<sup>68</sup> This statement gained support from not only constitutional Irish nationalists but also more militant organisations such as the Fenians. Parnell therefore publicised his support for the Manchester Martyrs just as Emmeline professed her sympathy in *My Own Story*.

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<sup>63</sup> Carlyle, *Chartism*, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-35.

<sup>65</sup> Michael Hurst, *Parnell and Irish Nationalism*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 44.

<sup>66</sup> Thomas Power O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement with Sketches of Irish Parties from 1843*, (London: Kegan Paul, 1886), pp. 214-215.

<sup>67</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, 'The Making of a Militant', *Good Housekeeping*, January 1914, pp. 4-13, at 6.

<sup>68</sup> HC Deb 30 June 1876, vol 230, col 808.



### The Birth of a Conviction

The rest of the story reveals one of those ghastly blunders which justice not infrequently makes. Although the shooting was done without any intent to kill, the men were tried for murder and three of them were found guilty and hanged. Their execution, which greatly excited the citizens of Manchester, was almost the last, if not the last, public execution permitted to take place in the city. At the time I was a boarding-pupil in a school near Manchester, and I spent my week-ends at home. A certain Saturday afternoon stands out in my memory, as on my way home from school I passed the prison where I knew the men had been confined. I saw that a part of the prison wall had been torn away, and in the great gap that remained were evidences of a gallows recently removed. I was transfixed with horror, and over me there swept the sudden conviction that that hanging was a mistake—worse, a crime. It was my awakening to one of the most terrible facts of life—that justice and judgment lie often a world apart.

I relate this incident of my formative years to illustrate the fact that the instincts of a child often have more to do with character and future conduct than heredity or education. I tell it also to show that my development into an advocate of militancy was largely a sympathetic process. I have not personally suffered from the deprivations, the bitterness and sorrow which bring so many men and women to a realization of social injustice. My childhood was protected by love and a comfort-

6. Emmeline Pankhurst, 'The Making of a Militant', *Good Housekeeping*, January 1914, pp. 4-13, at 6.

Throughout *My Own Story*, Emmeline does not express support for the Manchester Martyrs or even refer to any other Fenian events. Instead, she expresses her sympathy for the executed men, apparent in her conclusion of the tale that her advocacy of militancy ‘was largely a sympathetic process’.<sup>69</sup> The image of the hole in the prison wall was one that stayed with Emmeline as did the feeling of injustice. However, this raises the question as to why did Emmeline link the Manchester Martyrs tale with militancy?

## **2.2. Awakening to militancy**

Hilda Kean and Glenda Norquay assert that suffrage autobiographies include stories of ‘conversion’ in reference to how women became suffragists or suffragettes.<sup>70</sup> In Emmeline’s *My Own Story*, there are two conversions: one to militancy and one to women’s suffrage. In Emmeline’s account of the Manchester Martyrs, she refers to the tale as an ‘awakening to one of the most terrible facts of life – that justice and judgement lie often a world apart’ but also claims that she told the story to show her ‘development into an advocate of militancy was largely a sympathetic process’.<sup>71</sup> By awakening Emmeline to injustice, the Manchester Martyrs had converted her into a militant.

### **2.2.1. Injustice**

Emmeline claimed that the rescue of the Manchester Martyrs had been carried out ‘without any intent to kill’ including the shooting which was aimed at opening the door rather than killing

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<sup>69</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> Hilda Kean, ‘Suffrage Autobiography: A Study of Mary Richardson- Suffragette, Socialist and Fascist’ in *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History*, ed. Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan & Laura Ugolini, (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 177-189, at 177; Glenda Norquay, ‘Conversion’ in *Voices & Votes: A Literary Anthology of the Women’s Suffrage Campaign*, ed. Glenda Norquay (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 39-40, at 39.

<sup>71</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 6.



Brett.<sup>72</sup> Sylvia, in her biography of Emmeline, described the impact of the executions on Emmeline. She quotes directly from *My Own Story* about justice and judgment and therefore used it as a source when writing the biography implying that despite the ghost-written nature, Sylvia still believed they were her mother's feelings and memories. Sylvia described the 'lasting impression' the executions had on Emmeline as well as the injustice as 'humanitarian feeling revolted at the execution of three men when no murder had been intended'.<sup>73</sup> This argument suggests that the killing of Sergeant Brett was manslaughter rather than murder.

There was a broader debate whether the death of Brett was intended. An article in *The Times* focuses on a 'large public meeting of working men' which was 'held on Clerkenwell-green'.<sup>74</sup> The article references attendants such as 'Mr. Bradlaugh' and 'Mr. Lucraft'.<sup>75</sup> Charles Bradlaugh was involved in the Reform League and a supporter of Home Rule suggesting that he may be the Mr. Bradlaugh alluded to in the article. This is a similar situation to Mr. Lucraft which might refer to Benjamin Lucraft, a Chartist who was involved with the International Workingmen's Association. The Chairman of this meeting claimed that he 'did not believe when these men and their companions went out to rescue Kelly and Deasy that they had any intention to taking away life'.<sup>76</sup> The location of this meeting is ironic as Clerkenwell was later the location of a Fenian escape attempt in December 1867 in which an explosion resulted in 12 deaths and 120 people were injured. The *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser* also contained an article about the Clerkenwell meeting, claiming that the chairman also said 'though not approving of the manner in which the Fenians sought the regeneration of their country', he 'felt that they had been goaded into rebellion by the misgovernment of Ireland,

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst: The Suffragette Struggle for Women's Citizenship*, (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1935), pp. 9-10.

<sup>74</sup> 'The Fenian Convicts at Manchester', *The Times*, 18 November 1867, p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

and were in every way deserving of the sympathy of Englishmen who loved justice'.<sup>77</sup> Emmeline was therefore not alone in her feeling of sympathy and injustice towards the Manchester Martyrs. The principal organiser of the rescue of Kelly and Deasy, Richard O'Sullivan Burke, claimed that 'it had been no part of the plan to sacrifice any life', thus the killing of Brett had been accidental according to the Fenian leaders.<sup>78</sup> There were other aspects of the case that were questionable. There were instances when the press would have swayed jurors as well as the public: William Hughes, a witness, 'could not recognise that person among the prisoners' whom he believed fired into the van yet the article follows up with 'his description, however, very closely answered to that of Allen' instead of including the actual description.<sup>79</sup> The press also played a role in creating panic with articles printed of rumours of violence including stories like Fenians attaching bombs to pigeons.<sup>80</sup> The location of the court proceedings also raised questions as it occurred in Manchester, the same city as the attack which had, to quote Emmeline, an 'excited' population.<sup>81</sup> The evidence was contradictory, especially Yarwood's testimony, in which he claimed Maguire was present at the rescue.<sup>82</sup> Maguire was later released due to pressure from the press, yet Yarwood's testimony which placed Maguire at the scene had also been used to place Allen, Larkin and O'Brien at the scene and Allen as the shooter. The execution of three men when Brett had only been killed by one shooter raised questions too.<sup>83</sup> The political nature of the crime was ignored by the court. The *Cork Examiner* has an interesting take on the question of whether the shooting of Brett was a

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<sup>77</sup> 'The Condemned Fenians in Manchester', *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 19 November 1867, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> 'For "Manchester Martyrs": The Killing, In the Irish Rescue, Was an Accident, Says Col. Burke', p. 18.

<sup>79</sup> 'The Fenian Outrage: Examination of The Prisoners', p. 7.

<sup>80</sup> 'Dublin, Wednesday, Oct. 16, 1867', *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 16 October 1867, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> 'The Fenian Executions- The Blunder of the British Government', *New York Times*, 26 November 1867, p. 4; 'The law has taken its course, and its last dread penalty ...', *Daily Telegraph*, 25 November 1867, p. 4.

<sup>82</sup> 'The Fenian Outrage', p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> 'It is with a sense of relief that the public will learn ...', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 November 1867, p. 4.

political crime. An article from 21 September 1867 argues that despite Lord Derby's plea that it is not political, 'the sympathy of a class of extreme politicians proves their offence to be so very political that, according to the papers, there is no help for it but to hang them'.<sup>84</sup> *The Times*, however, vehemently denied any political motivation.<sup>85</sup> All of these issues clouded the legitimacy of the court proceedings, thus attracting the sympathy of British radicals who opposed injustice.

For Emmeline, however, it was the lack of intention to kill which made the executions unjust. This conviction related to her later violent militancy which included arson and bombings but was limited to attacks on property, as Emmeline claimed their militancy had 'harmed no human life save the lives of those who fought the battle of righteousness'.<sup>86</sup> Emmeline was referencing that those who were injured by militancy were suffragettes themselves. Despite Emmeline's intentions, there were some injuries to others because of the suffragettes and their militancy. Arthur Stockwell, a postman in Chelsea, had his hands 'severely burnt' by acid that had been emptied into the pillar box with the purpose of destroying letters.<sup>87</sup> However, it had not been the WSPU's intent to injure, just as Emmeline had emphasised it was not the intent of the Manchester Martyrs to kill.

Injustice was also a key theme for Emmeline in terms of her own militancy. In the foreword to *My Own Story*, she described the campaign of women's suffrage as 'women's militant struggle against political and social injustice'.<sup>88</sup> From a young age, Emmeline had been interested in women's suffrage, attending meetings at the age of fourteen and admiring Lydia Becker and her work as editor of the *Women's Suffrage Journal*.<sup>89</sup> Her interest in suffrage

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<sup>84</sup> 'Thursday Morning, Nov. 21, 1867', *Cork Examiner*, 21 November 1867, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> 'Fenian outrages in this country are in no sense political crimes: The Course Adopted by the Attorney-General', *The Times*, 30 October 1867, p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. xi.

<sup>87</sup> Statement from Arthur Stockwell, May 1913, London, The National Archives, Treasury Solicitor and HM Procurator General: Treasury and Miscellaneous, TS 27/19.

<sup>88</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. xi.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

remained and, whilst her children were young, she worked on the campaign for the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 and served on the executive committee for the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage Society from 1880 onwards.<sup>90</sup> She then became involved in the founding of the Women's Franchise League whilst living in London. Although Emmeline claims that the League was founded in 1891, an inaugural meeting was held in 1889 and included a speech by Richard Pankhurst, Emmeline's husband, suggesting an error over the date.<sup>91</sup> Emmeline associated the meeting as being a year after the birth of Henry Francis, which she claimed was 1890.<sup>92</sup> However, this differs to the record in the Civil Registration Birth index which has Henry Francis Pankhurst as being born between July and September of 1889.<sup>93</sup> The meeting was held 25 July, suggesting Emmeline had either recently given birth to Henry Francis or was in the last stages of her pregnancy. This differs to her assertion that in 1890 she was 'less active in public work' as she 'had a family of five young children'.<sup>94</sup> Although Emmeline did not speak at the inaugural meeting or may not have even attended, she was nominated for a position on the Executive Committee with Richard and, thus was involved in public work.<sup>95</sup> Emmeline's confusion over the year suggests she was distancing her political work from her motherhood. Angelique Richardson argues that responsible motherhood 'was a

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<sup>90</sup> The first appearance of Emmeline Pankhurst as a member of the executive committee is in 1880 in the thirteenth annual report for the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage Society: Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage Society, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage Society*, (Manchester: Alexander Ireland & Co., 1880), p. 2.

<sup>91</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 19; Women's Franchise League, *Report of Proceedings at the Inaugural Meeting: London, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1889*, (London: The Hansard Publishing Union, 1889), pp. 9-22.

<sup>92</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 19.

<sup>93</sup> Ancestry, 'England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915', 1889: Jul-Aug-Sep, St Giles, London, Volume 1B, p. 588, (2006), <<https://search.ancestrylibraryedition.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=8912&h=26253493&tid=&pid=&queryId=e1a8eb395ab2e13465af8457c3ce731f&usePUB=true&phsrc=tdp1&phstart=successSource>> [accessed 24 November 2022]. This was also the year given by Sylvia: Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 103.

<sup>94</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 19.

<sup>95</sup> Women's Franchise League, *Report of Proceedings at the Inaugural Meeting*, p. 31.

moral obligation and a woman's first act of citizenship in late Victorian Britain'.<sup>96</sup> Motherhood was therefore extremely important in Victorian Britain and connected to Emmeline's fight for women's suffrage through her quest for citizenship. Suffragettes were often accused of being inferior mothers due to their focus on politics. An article originally printed in the *New York Journal* then reprinted in *Suffragette* stated, 'idiots say that Woman Suffrage is opposed to the home, and the proper bringing up of children' but 'Mrs. Pankhurst is the mother of daughters heroic and devoted like herself'.<sup>97</sup> Emmeline's motherhood was used to expunge these rumours, thus it was important for Emmeline to present herself as a mother first and public figure second when her children were young in *My Own Story*. The language used by Richard Pankhurst at the inaugural meeting of the Women's Franchise League associated the fight for women's suffrage with a fight for justice: 'the victory, when it comes, will be most thorough; and it will be more permanent and more valuable because grounded on this supreme sense of right and justice'.<sup>98</sup> Richard, like Emmeline, labelled the enfranchisement of women a just cause.

Emmeline's interest in suffrage resulted in her position as a member of the Board of Poor Law Guardians. She explained that the Liberal Party 'had advised the women to prove their fitness for the Parliamentary franchise by serving in municipal offices, especially the unsalaried offices'.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, a member of the Board of Poor Law Guardians in Chorlton was the perfect example to prove women's capability for having the vote. This position resulted in Emmeline being responsible for the provisions of the Poor Law which included visiting workhouses. It was these visits that also inspired Emmeline as she felt the laws were not working and felt they would not be changed 'until women have the vote'.<sup>100</sup> This was her

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<sup>96</sup> Angelique Richardson, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 75.

<sup>97</sup> 'Mrs. Pankhurst's Tour in America', *Suffragette*, 12 September 1913, p. 834.

<sup>98</sup> Women's Franchise League, *Report of Proceedings at the Inaugural Meeting*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>99</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 21.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

conversion to the necessity of women's suffrage. From her experience in the workhouse, Emmeline's belief in women's suffrage was reaffirmed:

I thought I had been a suffragist before I became a Poor Law Guardian, but now I began to think about the vote in women's hands not only as a right but as a desperate necessity. These poor, unprotected mothers and their babies I am sure were potent factors in my education as a militant.<sup>101</sup>

Emmeline's experience of the injustices facing the women in the workhouse had spurred her on her path to militancy. This tale of injustice also reiterates Emmeline's claim that she became a militant through sympathy. Her wish to have the vote in order to enact change is apparent in her 1905 letter to Philip Snowden, a Labour MP, during her time as part of the Independent Labour Party:

If you knew how to get this *vote* question settled so that women may get to real social work. I am so weary of it and the long long years of struggle first against ridicule and concept and now of indifference and apathy.<sup>102</sup>

Emmeline believed that having the vote would enable women to enact social change. However, this did not necessarily indicate Emmeline wanted working class women to have the vote. The WSPU were fighting to remove the gender barrier of suffrage. In a pamphlet from 1911, the WSPU claimed that their demand was 'sex equality':

If there is to be manhood suffrage, then the Union demands womanhood suffrage also... But if the basis of men's suffrage is limited, then the Union asks that the same limited basis shall apply to women.<sup>103</sup>

Emmeline was therefore campaigning so that women could use their vote to help others rather than campaigning for all women to have the vote. This differed to her husband's speech at the inaugural meeting of the Women's Franchise League in which he emphasised that 'every class

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>102</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, 'Letter from Emmeline Pankhurst to Mr. Snowden, 2 February 1905' in Philip Snowden, *An Autobiography*, 2 vols, (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1934), I, p. 283.

<sup>103</sup> The National Women's Social and Political Union, *The Christmas Fair & Festival*, (London: The Woman's Press, 1911), p. 10.

must come into the political system'.<sup>104</sup> For Emmeline, women's suffrage symbolised overcoming the hurdle of gender inequality.

The WSPU's literature was also heavily dominated by the theme of justice. In a cartoon titled 'Armed!' published in *Votes for Women* in April 1911 (Figure 7), a suffragette is depicted holding a gun with the words 'The Vote' emblazoned on the side. Dogs are coming towards her with terms like 'Injustice' and 'Prejudice'.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, the view of the WSPU was that the vote would be used as a weapon against injustice. Justice also features as a figure in later cartoons in the *Suffragette*, the organ of the WSPU after the Pethick-Lawrence split. In March 1913, a cartoon was reproduced in the *Suffragette* from *Punch* depicting justice as a woman, holding scales and blindfolded (Figure 8).<sup>106</sup> Justice, adorned with a 'Votes for Women' banner, holds a sword titled 'Hunger Strike'. In the paragraph beneath the cartoon titled 'The Majesty of the Law', the WSPU explain that the 'law is powerless to repress the militant women' and that 'Justice herself is become a Suffragette'.<sup>107</sup> The WSPU therefore felt they had justice on their side and that their battle was against injustice, reiterated in the statement: 'for the sake of Justice the militant women have surrendered all thought of self'.<sup>108</sup> Justice was also depicted on the side of the suffragettes in July 1913 (Figure 9). The cartoon titled 'Justice- Another Wronged Woman' depicts justice chained to 'the Leader', with physical similarities to Asquith, arguing that women should be given the vote to release her 'from tasks that are an outrage on my name'.<sup>109</sup> These were not the tasks of the suffragettes but rather the tasks the Government had undertaken in response to suffragette action. A similar argument is raised in a *Suffragette* article titled "You Must Suffer to Be Free": The Government's Word to Women' printed in March 1913. The writer described the Government as refusing 'to obey the dictates

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<sup>104</sup> Women's Franchise League, *Report of Proceedings at the Inaugural Meeting*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>105</sup> Poyntz Wright, 'Armed!', *Votes for Women*, 21 April 1911, p. 469.

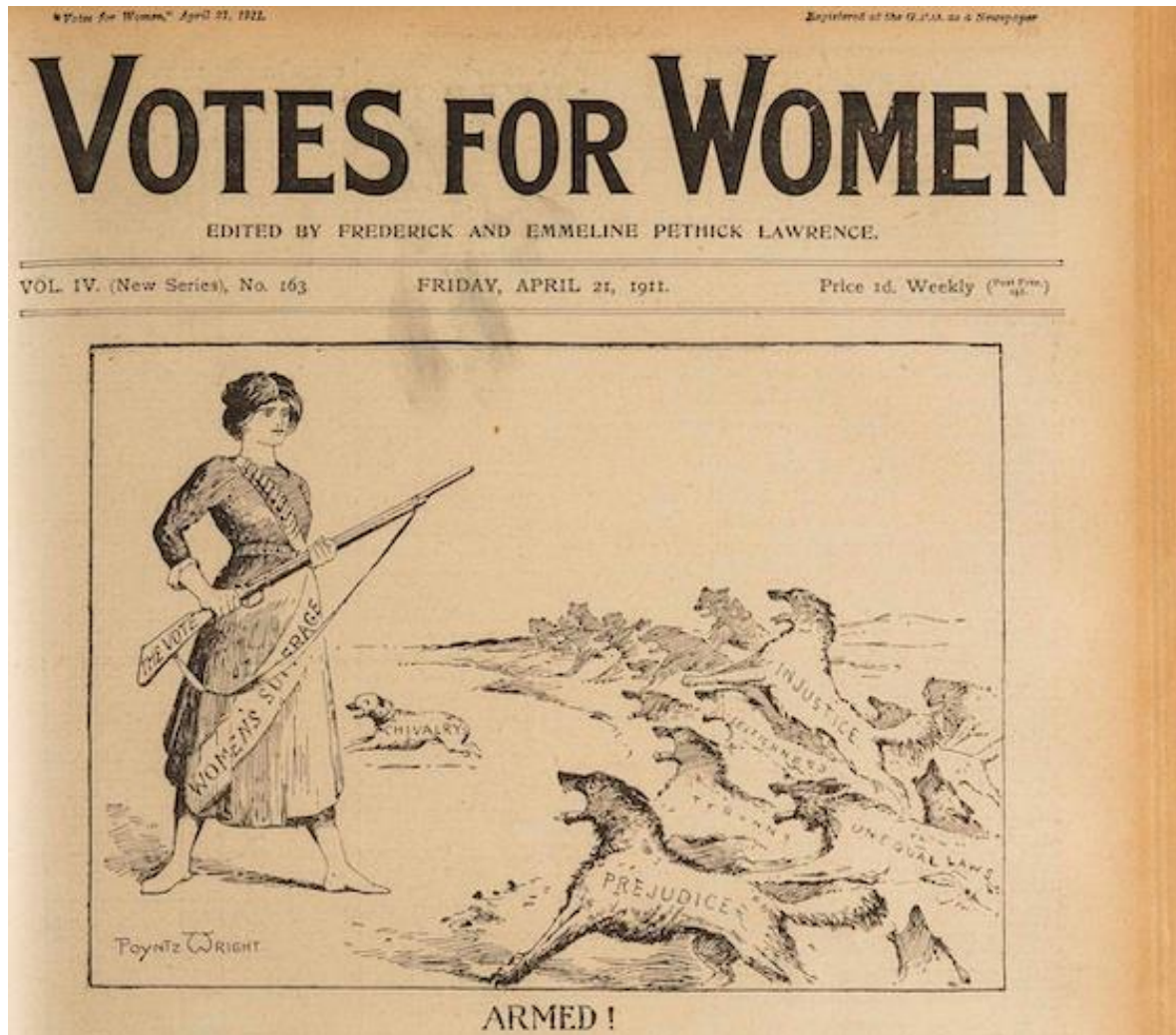
<sup>106</sup> 'The Majesty of the Law', *Suffragette*, 14 March 1913, p. 341.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> 'Justice- Another Wronged Woman', *Suffragette*, 11 July 1913, p. 649.

of reason and justice' and that the Government's 'treacherous conduct have literally driven Militants to violence'.<sup>110</sup> For the WSPU, injustice was a driving force for militancy and it remained a key motivation for Emmeline.



7. Poyntz Wright, 'Armed!', *Votes for Women*, 21 April 1911, p. 469.

<sup>110</sup> "You Must Suffer to Be Free": The Government's Word to Women', *The Suffragette*, 7 March 1913, p. 321.



# The Suffragette

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## THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW.

The law is powerless to repress the militant women. It can no longer protect property nor preserve order. Justice herself is become a Suffragette, and leaving judges and legislators, her accustomed ministers, in the lurch, she befriends the Militants.

For the sake of justice the militant women have surrendered all thought of self, and that is why the material force of the law fails to subdue them. The law may imprison, may torture, may kill, but it cannot make women afraid, and it cannot make them surrender.

8. 'The Majesty of the Law', *Suffragette*, 14 March 1913, p. 341.



"The Suffragette," July 11, 1913.

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# The Suffragette

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The Official Organ of the Women's Social and Political Union

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## JUSTICE—ANOTHER WRONGED WOMAN.



Justice: "Why not give them the Vote, and release me from tasks that are an outrage on my name!"

"The Leader": "Now, enough of that, my woman! I've suspected all along you were on their side!"

9. 'Justice- Another Wronged Woman', *Suffragette*, 11 July 1913, p. 649.

The Manchester Martyrs had roused Emmeline to the idea that the law was not always fair, and she adopted this lesson in relation to women's suffrage. In terms of the militant acts of the WSPU which broke the law, Emmeline emphasised that they were morally right actions. In a speech titled 'Why We Are Militant', Emmeline described the 'only justification for damage to property' was if 'you have tried all other available means and have failed to secure justice'.<sup>111</sup> Therefore, in her battle for the right to vote she favoured justice over the law. Christabel, Emmeline's daughter, presented a similar argument in an article titled 'Why the Union is Strong' in the *Suffragette* in 1912:

Law is not morality and law is not justice. If and when it conflicts with morality, with justice and with human welfare, law must be broken, and the saviours of society are those who break it.<sup>112</sup>

Through emphasising how their fight was morally right, the WSPU were able to frame their illegal actions as resistance to injustice. Emmeline's Manchester Martyrs awakening therefore played an important role in her militancy by enabling her to justify actions that would require breaking the law. Injustice was both a motive for the WSPU and justification for their actions.

### **2.2.2. A militant example**

Fenianism, as well as alerting Emmeline to the injustice of the law, provided an example of a militant movement. In the *Irish People*, a newspaper edited by notable Fenian John O'Leary, an article was published in 1865 affirming the view that the Fenians were militants. The writer of the article emphasises the importance of deeds as 'words have never won national independence' but 'Deeds have done so'.<sup>113</sup> This article was published thirty-eight years before the WSPU was to form with, as written in *My Own Story*, its 'permanent motto' of 'Deeds, not

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<sup>111</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, 'Why We Are Militant' in *Suffrage and the Pankhursts*, ed. by Jane Marcus (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 153-162, at 156.

<sup>112</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, 'Why the Union is Strong', *Suffragette*, 27 December 1912, p. 160.

<sup>113</sup> 'Duty and Interest', *Irish People*, 20 May 1865, p. 408.

words'.<sup>114</sup> The emphasis on deeds rather than words therefore connected the two movements. June Purvis argues that militancy for the WSPU 'embodied the rebellion against the submissive and inferior status of women' and 'shook the complacency of the British Government'.<sup>115</sup> This was also the case for Fenianism as their deeds were designed to force the Government to act and represented the refusal of the Fenians to submit to British rule. Fenianism and the women's suffrage movement were very different in their aims: Fenianism aimed at ensuring Irish independence from Britain whilst the women's suffrage movement focused on women gaining the right to vote. There were some similarities between the movements such as their militancy, focusing on actions designed to compel the Government as well as symbolise the rejection of their subservient status. Both the Fenians and WSPU distrusted parliamentary methods which they connected with words, rather than deeds. In an article in the *Cork Examiner* from 1867, the birth of Fenianism is described as an expression of the inaction by the British Government:

On their heads be it, if while they deny to the country any measure which may raise it from misery, or appease its anger, they, by a course of what they call polite severity, lay deep in the hearts of the Irish masses a resentment which one day or other will burst forth in most disastrous consequences.<sup>116</sup>

This article was written in the aftermath of the rescue but before the execution of the Manchester Martyrs. The blame for events such as the rescue and Fenian Rising was placed on the British Government's lack of concessions towards Ireland and describes the militancy and violence of the Fenians as an outward expression of anger and resentment. A similar argument was made in the nationalist newspaper, the *Nation*, which in the aftermath of the Clerkenwell Prison explosion of 1867 put the blame on the British Government:

we charge it not only on the ministers and the legislators of England, but also upon the corrupt and time serving politicians of Ireland, upon those who, having induced the

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<sup>114</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 36.

<sup>115</sup> June Purvis, 'Did militancy help or hinder the granting of women's suffrage in Britain?', *Women's History Review*, 28.7, (2019), 1200-1217, at 1212 <[https://doi-org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/09612025.2019.1654638](https://doi.org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/09612025.2019.1654638)>.

<sup>116</sup> 'Saturday Morning, Nov. 16, 1867', *Cork Examiner*, 16 November 1867, p. 2.

people to trust them and to make sacrifices for them as champions and servitors of the national cause, basely betrayed them for the pay of the Government.<sup>117</sup>

This article also implicates the work of Irish MPs and the distrust towards them. These attitudes towards Irish MPs were prevalent throughout the *Irish People*, a newspaper which was supportive of the Fenians. In 1864, under the title ‘Conciliation and Toleration’, Irish politicians were accused of ‘pretend[ing]’ conciliation was possible and a warning was given that they ‘should be avoided by every true patriot in the island’.<sup>118</sup> In the same year, another article explained that the parliamentary movement ‘can achieve nothing important’ and that the ‘government are aware’ of this fact and were taking advantage of Irish MPs.<sup>119</sup> Other articles in the same year presented constitutional action pejoratively, labelling it as ‘the old constitutional disease’ and emphasising that it ‘will not go down with the Irish people’ as ‘no amount of soft sawder can ever induce them to swallow another dose’.<sup>120</sup> Fenianism was therefore the rejection of constitutional action for more radical methods.

It was not just the *Irish People* that presented a distrust of parliamentary methods, it was also felt by Kathleen Clarke. Clarke was a founding member of Cumann na mBan and had family connections to the Fenian movement as well as through her marriage to Thomas Clarke, a member of the IRB who was executed after the 1916 Easter Rising. In her autobiography, Clarke describes a divide in the family as her Uncle James was ‘a great supporter of the anti-Parnellite Party’ which she and her family disapproved of, stating ‘We did not like that; we were Fenians, and had no living for Irishmen who became members of the British House of Commons’.<sup>121</sup> The Fenians perceived that constitutional action had been unsuccessful, thus

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<sup>117</sup> ‘The Explosion’, *Nation*, 21 December 1867, p. 9.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Conciliation and Toleration’, *Irish People*, 6 February 1864, p. 168.

<sup>119</sup> ‘The Right of Public Meetings in Ireland’, *Irish People*, 26 March 1864, p. 281.

<sup>120</sup> ‘Perseverance’, *Irish People*, 16 July 1864, p. 536; ‘Constitutional Agitation on its Last Legs’, *Irish People*, 17 September 1864, p. 680.

<sup>121</sup> Kathleen Clarke, *Revolutionary Woman: Kathleen Clarke 1878-1972 An Autobiography*, ed. by Helen Litton, (Dublin: O’Brien Press, 1991), p. 19.

physical action was necessary to ensure Ireland's independence and that it was justified by the inaction of the British Government.

However, as argued previously, Fenianism became an umbrella term for Irish nationalist agitation. It was comprised of various forms of agitation under different branches: violence including the bombing campaign of the Dynamiters and the Phoenix Park murders carried out by the Irish National Invincibles, campaigns for amnesty for Irish Fenian prisoners, and a constitutional campaign especially during the rise of Parnell. During the 1880s, some notable Fenians like Michael Davitt and John O'Connor Power became MPs. James McConnel, in his article 'Fenians at Westminster: The Edwardian Irish Parliamentary Party and the Legacy of the New Departure' explored the connections between Fenianism and the IPP including that the Royal Irish Constabulary estimated that in 1887, 23 of the 83 Parnellite MPs had been involved in Fenian activities.<sup>122</sup> Although this number is likely exaggerated, it demonstrates there were some Fenians who believed in constitutional action too. Matthew Kelly, Richard Kirkland, Christy Campbell, Simon Heffer and Russell Rees all agree that Parnell, the leader of the IPP from 1882 to 1891, received the support of the IRB as well with Rees claiming that 'Parnellism was effective because it embraced constitutional Fenianism'.<sup>123</sup> The phrase 'constitutional Fenianism' demonstrates that Fenianism went beyond armed rebellion and included some constitutional agitation despite the distrust of parliamentary methods of other Fenian groups. In 1873, the Supreme Council of the IRB revised their oath and Comerford

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<sup>122</sup> James McConnel, 'Fenians at Westminster': The Edwardian Irish Parliamentary Party and the Legacy of the New Departure', *Irish Historical Studies*, 34.133 (2004), pp. 42-64, at 42 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30008651>> [accessed 29 November 2022].

<sup>123</sup> Matthew Kelly, 'Parnell's Old Brigade': The Redmondite-Fenian Nexus in 1890s', *Irish Historical Studies*, 33.130, (November 2002), pp. 209-232, at 209 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/30006941>> [accessed 29 November 2022]; Richard Kirkland, 'A Secret, Melodramatic Sort of Conspiracy': The Disreputable Legacies of Fenian Violence in Nineteenth-Century London', *London Journal*, 45.1, (March 2020), pp. 39-52, <<https://doiorg.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/03058034.2019.1649523>> at 45; Christy Campbell, *Fenian Fire: The British Government Plot to Assassinate Queen Victoria*, (London: Harper Collins, 2002), p. 6; Simon Heffer, *The Age of Decadence: Britain 1880 to 1914*, (London: Windmill, 2017), p. 274; Russell Rees, *Nationalism and Unionism in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ireland*, (Newtownards: Colour Point Press, 2001), p. 152.

argues that this 'new element' might 'have been designed to turn the I.R.B. into a subordinate branch of the home rule movement'.<sup>124</sup> Fenianism during the 1860s was therefore an expression of distrust of parliamentary methods which was transformed during the 1870s and 1880s through the work of Parnell. Although as Kathleen Clarke's account suggests, not all were supportive of Irish members entering the British Houses of Parliament.

Scepticism towards parliamentary methods was apparent in the women's suffrage movement too, especially in the WSPU. In Emmeline's description of the founding of the WSPU in 1903 in *My Own Story*, she explains the previous action suffragists had used such as deputations and she described them as 'most conventional, not to say farcical'.<sup>125</sup> This use of 'farcical' emphasises how redundant Emmeline felt these methods were by 1914. It relates to the feelings of the Fenians that constitutional action 'can achieve nothing important'. The suffragettes therefore had the same frustrations in the 1900s and early 1910s as the Fenians had forty years before in the 1860s. Emmeline's frustration, however, was not necessarily with the method but the behaviour of those on the deputation. In *My Own Story*, she recounts attending a deputation to Sir Charles McLaren (misspelt as M'Laren by Emmeline) just after the founding of the WSPU. Others listened as McLaren assured the women of the deputation that he regretted women such as them did not have the vote. However, Emmeline did not remain quiet and instead asked:

Will Sir Charles M'Laren tell us if any member is preparing to introduce a bill for women's suffrage? Will he tell us what he and the other members will pledge themselves to *do* for the reform they so warmly endorse?<sup>126</sup>

These questions were designed to ensure action from MPs, but Emmeline was dismissed by the other deputation members who labelled her 'an interloper, an impertinent intruder'.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Comerford, *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics & Society 1848-82*, p. 203.

<sup>125</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 37.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Emmeline's misgivings about Parliamentary methods stemmed from incidents such as this. By 1908, Emmeline described how the WSPU 'had to choose between two alternatives' as 'they had exhausted argument': either 'give up' or they 'must act, and go on acting' as 'until forced to do so, the Government, we perceived, would never give women the vote'.<sup>128</sup> Emmeline's quote raises two important reasons as to why militant methods were used: the women were 'exhausted' arguing for their right to vote for Parliament which refused to grant them any concessions, and that women felt the only option left was militancy. With the intention of forcing the Government to act because of their actions, the suffragettes were being militant. This language of exhaustion was reiterated in *Votes for Women* as the term 'exhausted' is used in a 1908 article to describe waiting for the vote using parliamentary methods. Emmeline had therefore experienced losses before, and it was these losses that led to her distrust of Parliament and its members. In *My Own Story*, Emmeline references the 1884 Country Franchise Bill as an example of a loss. Despite there being what Emmeline describes as 'an actual majority in favour of suffrage' in the House of Commons, the Bill did not pass as Emmeline recounts William E. Gladstone's manoeuvres to avoid its success.<sup>129</sup> This included Gladstone stating that the Liberals would disclaim responsibility for the Bill if an amendment for women's suffrage was added and when the amendment was added, Gladstone did not allow discussion and ordered the Liberals to vote against it. This was how Emmeline perceived the event, resulting in her distrust of Parliament and political manoeuvres used by politicians to ensure women's suffrage was not granted. Emmeline does not refer to much of the earlier suffrage movement and explains that this is because 'that history is full of repetitions of just such stories as the one I have related'.<sup>130</sup> Emmeline argued that this history sparked the suffragettes to use militancy to avoid losses in the future. History, however, continued to repeat itself as there

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.



were more suffrage losses which intensified the militant acts of the suffragettes. The exhaustion of Emmeline and women battling for suffrage connects to the *Cork Examiner* article as the birth of Fenianism was described as a result of inaction by the Government just as the WSPU was created due to the failure of the Government to pass a women's suffrage bill.

Both the Fenian movement and suffragettes therefore initiated militancy for similar reasons: to force the ineffective Government to act.

The WSPU directly compared its militancy to the Fenians. In a cartoon in *Votes for Women* in 1912 (Figure 10), the figures of the WSPU and Justice, both depicted as female, are surrounded by leading MPs on their knees including John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1900 to 1918. The two female figures are the only figures standing, juxtaposing the idea that women were to be subservient to men. In the caption, Redmond said (in a stereotypical Irish accent) 'Shure, if it was Fenians instead of women I'd be out wid thim meself!' in relation to the actions of the WSPU.<sup>131</sup> Therefore the WSPU were aware of their overlap with Fenian tactics, emphasising that it was only the motive that differed. Even then, the motive was fighting injustice but for different causes.

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<sup>131</sup> 'Whose Fault?', *Votes for Women*, 26 July 1912, p. 693.

# VOTES FOR WOMEN

VOL. V. (New Series), No. 229.

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Price 1d. Weekly (Post Free)

## WHOSE FAULT?



MR. BURNS and MR. H. B. SE: WE won't help her till she does something MUCH worse to show she is in earnest. LORD H. LD. NE and SIR E. GR. Y: WE won't help her because she has ruined the cause we hold so dear by her criminal folly.—Boo—hoo! MR. R. DM. ND: Shure, if it was Fenians instead of women I'd be out wid thim meself! MR. ASQ. TH: I never did mean to help her, but George said she wouldn't see through me!  
JUSTICE: Ye gods! And then you dare to blame the woman for what she has done!

10. 'Whose Fault?', *Votes for Women*, 26 July 1912, p. 693.

This cartoon summarises this section perfectly as it demonstrates the feelings of injustice that the WSPU had as well as the connection between them and Fenians. Justice responds to the men: 'Ye Gods! And then you dare to blame the woman for what she has done' in relation to the woman figure representing the WSPU.<sup>132</sup> The WSPU were emphasising how

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

morally right their actions were despite their punishment, reconnecting to the importance of injustice as an awakening for Emmeline.

Fenianism acted as a militant pathway to Emmeline by presenting an example of a militant movement. The Manchester Martyrs had roused Emmeline to the fact that there was inequality in the laws of Britain. Through her position on the Board of Poor Law Guardians, Emmeline realised that these injustices were also applied to women. By having the vote, Emmeline argued that the laws could be changed and the suffering alleviated. Emmeline, like the Fenians, had experienced setbacks by the British Government which inspired her to use militant methods instead to compel them to action.

### **2.3. A Successful Militant Example**

The militant pathway that Fenianism provided Emmeline was significant too as it had successes along the way. Most notably, the Fenians had an influence on William E. Gladstone. This was the same Gladstone who had outmanoeuvred the 1884 women's suffrage amendment to the County Franchise Bill and who Emmeline described as 'an implacable foe of woman suffrage'.<sup>133</sup> Gladstone was a Liberal politician who was intermittently Prime Minister between 1868 and 1894. In a speech on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1879, titled the 'Second Midlothian Speech', Gladstone claimed that the Irish Church question was revived as a:

great jail in the heart of the metropolis was broken open under circumstances which drew the attention of the English people to the state of Ireland, and when in Manchester policemen were murdered in the execution of their duty, at once the whole country became alive to Irish questions.<sup>134</sup>

This speech was notable as it suggests that militancy could be successful in publicising a cause as well as in passing legislation. Just as Carlyle had argued that Chartism as a symbol of the

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<sup>133</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 15.

<sup>134</sup> William Ewart Gladstone, 'Second Midlothian Speech' in William Ewart Gladstone, *Political Speeches in Scotland, November and December 1879*, (London: W. Ridgway, 1879), pp. 60-95, at 79.

restlessness of the working class, Gladstone reasoned that Fenianism was the symbol of Irish discontent. By claiming that England was awoken to Irish issues by the Clerkenwell Prison explosion and the Manchester Fenian rescue, Gladstone was giving their actions political weight. He further claimed that it was these events which enabled him to act as he ‘took it up’ and tried to improve conditions in Ireland.<sup>135</sup> The sense that improving conditions in Ireland would decrease Fenian activity is present in *Punch* too. In 1869, in a cartoon titled ‘Disendowment and Disarmament’ (Figure 11), a Fenian is presented as looking at the Irish Church Bill and claims that it is ‘spilin’ our thrade’.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, the Bill was viewed as a concession which would reduce the complaints made by Fenians about the situation in Ireland.

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> ‘Disendowment and Disarmament’, *Punch*, 3 April 1869, p. 135.



DISENDOWMENT AND DISARMAMENT.

FENIAN. "BE JABERS, Y'RE RIV'RENCE, IT'S SPILIN' OUR THRADÉ THEY ARE, INTOIRELY."  
His Riv'rence. "THRUE FOR YOU, ME BOY."

11. 'Disendowment and Disarmament', *Punch*, 3 April 1869, p. 135.

The Manchester Martyrs acted as a turning point for Gladstone in terms of his Irish policies. Even if he had agreed on principle beforehand, the violence of the Fenians enabled him to focus his attention on the Irish question with the support of other politicians and the public. This speech and others were perceived as justification for militancy. Karl Marx, in reference to a previous speech of Gladstone, argued that Gladstone had ‘justified the Fenian insurrection and said that every other nation would have revolted under similar circumstances’.<sup>137</sup> Marx was living in London at the time of Clerkenwell so would have witnessed the feeling around Fenian action as well as the aftermath. Marx was not the only person who felt that Gladstone’s speeches had justified Fenian action as Gladstone was challenged by Lord Salisbury in 1884. Salisbury claimed that this speech had no other meaning than ‘Mr. Gladstone was induced by the Clerkenwell outrage and the Manchester murder to propose the disestablishment of the Irish Church’.<sup>138</sup> Gladstone’s response was that ‘the deplorable events at Manchester and Clerkenwell, by awakening interest and attention, had to do with the choice of time for bringing forward the question of disestablishment of the Irish Church, and with nothing else’.<sup>139</sup> Although Gladstone tried to backtrack, his speech suggests that militancy and violence was a successful way of influencing the government, connecting to Emmeline and *My Own Story*. If the Fenians were able to use violence and see results, then why not let women try and act to see if they could win the vote?

Emmeline identified Gladstone as an opponent of women’s suffrage through her experience campaigning in 1884. She also blamed him for ‘his disruption of the suffrage organisation in England’ through the Women’s Liberal Associations which he promised would

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<sup>137</sup> Karl Marx, ‘On the Policy of the British Government with Respect to the Irish Prisoners (Record of the Speech and Draft Resolution from the Minutes of the General Council Meeting of November 16, 1869)’ in Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Ireland and the Irish Question*, ed. Richard Dixon, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Progress, 1971), pp. 152-156, at 152.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury’, *Monmouthshire Merlin and South Wales Advertiser*, 27 June 1884, p. 3.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

enable women to ‘earn the right to vote’.<sup>140</sup> Emmeline disliked this option as women ‘threw themselves into the men’s work’ rather than working for themselves.<sup>141</sup> In *My Own Story*, Emmeline argued that women’s militancy was about women fighting their own fight: ‘Now they were ready to fight for their own human rights. Our militant movement was established’.<sup>142</sup> It was essential to Emmeline that the WSPU was focused solely on women’s suffrage and not divided by party politics. Emmeline’s experience of Gladstone and his political manoeuvres implies she also had knowledge of his response to Fenianism. Emmeline does not refer to the explosion of Clerkenwell Prison or the later bombing campaign by the Dynamiters branch of the Fenians in *My Own Story* at all. Emmeline’s lack of inclusion could be that she was not in London at the time of Clerkenwell, thus did not witness the ‘excitement’ in the same way. Yet Emmeline would have been affected by the later bombing campaign which began in Salford in 1881 with the explosion of a military barracks. Emmeline was still living in Manchester, although in Stretford so not as close to the scene as she had been as a child.<sup>143</sup> Emmeline would have been aware of the incident, yet it is omitted from *My Own Story*. Another significant incident which was not referenced in *My Own Story* was the Phoenix Park murders in 1882. The Permanent Under Secretary Thomas Henry Burke and Chief Secretary for Ireland Lord Frederick Cavendish were killed by another branch of the IRB, the Invincibles. Margot Asquith, in her autobiography, labelled the event as ‘the greatest sensation when I was a girl’ and that it converted Gladstone to the idea that the Irish would be better

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<sup>140</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 15.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>143</sup> Ancestry, ‘Census Returns of England and Wales, 1881, Lancashire, Stretford, District 12, p. 2’, (2004),

<[https://www.ancestrylibraryedition.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/7572/images/LANRG11\\_3883\\_3887-1130?treeid=&personid=&hintid=&queryId=9e1547a7f522ced1dcdfa02a96451df7&usePUB=true&phsrc=TRi1&phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=10204038](https://www.ancestrylibraryedition.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/7572/images/LANRG11_3883_3887-1130?treeid=&personid=&hintid=&queryId=9e1547a7f522ced1dcdfa02a96451df7&usePUB=true&phsrc=TRi1&phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=10204038)> [accessed 1 March 2023].



governing themselves as they ‘were people whom we did not understand’.<sup>144</sup> Margot Asquith therefore saw this event as significant as the Manchester Martyrs in converting Gladstone to Home Rule. Emmeline’s omissions are therefore significant. *My Own Story* is focused on the battle for women’s suffrage so could not include all the events in Ireland but to exclude such events imply that these stories did not serve Emmeline’s desired purpose. Emmeline’s reference to Fenianism was about an awakening to injustice and the Manchester Martyrs had been tried and executed for a murder that was not intended. However, events like Clerkenwell, the bombing campaign of the 1880s and the Phoenix Park murders were intended to cause harm to human life, thus Emmeline’s argument would not have applied in these cases. Although Emmeline did not refer to the events herself in *My Own Story*, it is featured throughout the WSPU literature.

In *Votes for Women*, an article titled ‘Violent and Lawless Action’ asserted that ‘no concession has ever been made to Ireland except in response to force – either Parliamentary force or physical force’ using the Fenian rescue, Clerkenwell Prison explosion and Phoenix Park murders as evidence.<sup>145</sup> The statement was supported by ‘Gladstone himself’ and the article included excerpts of Gladstone’s speeches to demonstrate a connection between militancy and concessions.<sup>146</sup> The article even labels the Fenian movement as ‘a most potent means of securing reform’, referencing the Manchester Martyrs and the Clerkenwell Prison explosion, and claiming that it ‘secured the Disestablishment of the Irish Church’.<sup>147</sup> The article was printed on 26 July 1912, a week after the militant action in Dublin which included a hatchet thrown at John Redmond and an attempted fire at the Theatre Royal. By relating their militant acts to Ireland’s own, the WSPU was justifying their actions through maintaining they were

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<sup>144</sup> Margot Asquith, *The Autobiography of Margot Asquith*, (London, Thornton Butterworth, 1920), p. 137.

<sup>145</sup> ‘Violent and Lawless Action’, *Votes for Women*, 26 July 1912, p. 700.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*



following in the Fenians' footsteps with the hope to achieve the same result: concessions. The article also includes a quote from Lord Eversley's *Gladstone and Ireland* which was first published in 1912.<sup>148</sup> Lord Eversley had been a Liberal politician and part of Gladstone's Government when Fenianism was at its height. By including the quotation, the writer of the article was consolidating the argument that force was the way of achieving concessions as well as emphasising that this was not only the WSPU's view. Others outside of the WSPU also claimed that Fenianism had forced Gladstone to act including Millicent Garrett Fawcett, the leader of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). The NUWSS was primarily a constitutional movement, but Fawcett did express some sympathy towards the suffragettes during their early militancy. In an article about the treatment of the suffragettes in prison in 1906, Fawcett acknowledged that 'great reforms have usually been effected by some amount of law-breaking'.<sup>149</sup> Like the *Votes for Women* article, Fawcett justified this statement as 'historical fact' due to Gladstone's actions after the Clerkenwell Prison explosion and the subsequent Irish Church Act.<sup>150</sup> The WSPU were therefore not the only suffrage organisation to label Fenianism as a successful militant example due to Gladstone's actions.

Christabel, Emmeline's daughter, utilised Gladstone's speeches during her own defence speech at a 1908 trial. She claimed that Gladstone had changed his mind about Ireland after 'the Fenian outrages, the killing of a policeman in Manchester, and the blowing up of Clerkenwell Gaol' and he had said 'that agitation of this kind is like the ringing of the church bell; it reminds those who are forgetting to go to church, that it is time they were up and doing,

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*; Lord Eversley, *Gladstone and Ireland: The Irish Policy of Parliament From 1850-1894*, (London: Methuen, 1912).

<sup>149</sup> Millicent Garrett Fawcett, 'The Prisoners of Hope in Holloway Gaol, 1906, *Contemporary Review*, December 1906, 820-6' in *Millicent Garrett Fawcett: Selected Writings*, ed. Melissa Terras & Elizabeth Crawford, (London: UCL Press, 2022), pp. 238-245, at 242.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

to perform their religious duty'.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, she too argued that Gladstone had acted due to militancy, thus justifying the actions of the WSPU. The quote that Christabel used during the trial had previously been employed by Parnell in 1891 to validate his previous militancy with the Land League.<sup>152</sup> Gladstone's concessions and acknowledgement that Fenianism shifted his attention to Ireland was utilised by the WSPU as well as Parnell to publicise the success of forcing the issue. Christabel was not the only person to use Gladstone as a defence during a trial. Timothy Healy, a member of the IPP, represented the suffragettes who had been accused of arson in Dublin in 1912. When asking a witness about the fire, Healy questioned: 'Was the explosion as loud as the Clerkenwell explosion? The explosion that blew up the Irish Church?'<sup>153</sup> Healy had not only connected the suffragettes to Fenianism but was actively minimising their actions by comparing theirs to the Clerkenwell explosion which had killed 12 people. The militancy of the Fenians had been recognised as successful by members of the WSPU as well as others such as Fawcett, Parnell and Healy. Fenianism offered a pathway for Emmeline and the WSPU to follow, with the hope they would achieve similar results. The WSPU also featured another quotation from Gladstone on the front cover of *Votes for Women* in August 1912. The front cover features the images of Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans, who Healy had represented, announcing their sentence of five years penal servitude for their attempt to cause an explosion in the Theatre Royal in Dublin. Underneath the images is a quotation from Gladstone: 'If no instructions had ever been issued in political crises to the people of this country, except to remember to hate violence and love order and exercise patience, the liberties of this country would never have been attained'.<sup>154</sup> This quotation was taken from a debate in the House of Commons in 1884 when Gladstone defended Joseph Chamberlain's claim he and

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<sup>151</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, 'Speech' in Frederick W. Pethick Lawrence, Christabel Pankhurst, Emmeline Pankhurst & Flora Drummond, *The Trial of The Suffragette Leaders*, (London: The Woman's Press, 1909), pp. 5-19, at 16-17.

<sup>152</sup> 'London and Mr. Parnell', *Freeman's Journal*, 14 May 1891, p. 5.

<sup>153</sup> 'Trial of Suffragettes in Dublin', *Manchester Guardian*, 7 August 1912, p. 6.

<sup>154</sup> 'Five Years' Penal Servitude', *Votes for Women*, 16 August 1912, p. 741.

thousands of his constituents would march to London in protest against the opposition to the Third Reform Bill. Fawcett had also used this quote in her article about the suffragettes in prison in 1906, suggesting it was a well-known incident and example of Gladstone's acknowledgement of militancy.<sup>155</sup> Before this quote, Gladstone claimed he 'eschew[ed] violence' but would:

not adopt that effeminate method of speech which is to hide from the people of this country the cheering fact that they may derive some encouragement from the recollection of the great qualities of their forefathers, and from the consciousness that they possess them still.<sup>156</sup>

Gladstone argued that previous movements had used militancy including violence, thus echoing his Second Midlothian speech, militancy was a viable political weapon. Emmeline Pankhurst's political work in 1884 for franchise reform would have ensured she was aware of Gladstone's position. She follows a similar argument to Gladstone too in *My Own Story*. Emmeline argues that 'only a complete lack of historical knowledge' would justify people failing to understand the connection between the vote and the destruction of property: 'for every advance of men's political freedom has been marked with violence and destruction of property'.<sup>157</sup> This sentiment was reiterated in her speech, 'Why We Are Militant', as she compared the lack of violent acts committed by the suffragettes in comparison to how 'the extensions of the franchise to the men of my country have been preceded by very great violence, by something like a revolution, by something like civil war'.<sup>158</sup> Emmeline was therefore arguing that as other political movements such as Fenianism had used militancy and even violence and received concessions then why would the WSPU not try? However, the WSPU had an obstacle in its way: double standards facing political women. This will be

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<sup>155</sup> Fawcett, 'The Prisoners of Hope in Holloway Gaol, 1906, *Contemporary Review*, December 1906, 820-6', pp. 238-245, at 242.

<sup>156</sup> HC Deb 30 October 1884, vol 293, cols 643-644.

<sup>157</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 193.

<sup>158</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, 'Why We Are Militant', p. 154.

explored in more detail in the third chapter. Militancy was nevertheless justified by Emmeline as part of the historical political tradition and Fenianism was a successful example. Although it had not achieved its aim of Irish independence, it had influenced the Government and raised awareness to the Irish Question.

### 2.3.1. Publicity

Gladstone's Second Midlothian speech also acknowledged the importance of publicising a cause as Gladstone referred to how it 'drew the attention of the English people to the state of Ireland' and that the country 'became alive to Irish questions'.<sup>159</sup> Therefore, one of the successes of Fenianism was its ability to raise the awareness of Irish issues. Norman McCord and Sean Cronin argue that Fenianism was an awakening for politicians: McCord describes Fenianism as 'shatter[ing] this complacency' surrounding Irish affairs and Cronin uses the term 'educational process'.<sup>160</sup> The rescues of Kelly and Deasy and the execution of the Manchester Martyrs also had a direct impact on publicity. The event was significant in rousing the attention of the British public.<sup>161</sup> Local newspapers like the *Manchester Guardian* featured articles from national newspapers like *The Times* and the *Daily News* emphasising how the events had national ramifications.<sup>162</sup> The story of the Manchester Martyrs reached America and became

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<sup>159</sup> William Ewart Gladstone, 'Second Midlothian Speech', p. 79.

<sup>160</sup> Norman McCord, 'The Fenians and Public Opinion in Great Britain', *University Review*, 4.3, (Special Fenian Issue, Winter 1967), pp. 227-240, at 229 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25504790>> [accessed 29 November]; Sean Cronin, *Irish Nationalism: A History of its Roots and Ideology*, (New York: Continuum, 1981), p. 91.

<sup>161</sup> These historians all emphasise the importance of the Manchester Martyrs and the significant impact it had on the public and press: Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain 1815-1914*, (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1991), p. 197; Justin MacCarthy, *A History of Our Own Times: From the Accession of Queen Victoria to the General Election of 1880*, 5 vols, (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1880), IV, p. 208; Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882*, (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004) p. 146; Kee, *The Green Flag*, p. 343; Owen McGee, "'God Save Ireland": Manchester-Martyr Demonstrations in Dublin 1867-1916' in N.C. Fleming & Alan O'Day, *Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations Since 1800: Critical Essays*, 3 vols. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), I, pp. 197-225, at 197-8; James McGill & Tom Redmond, *The Story of The Manchester Martyrs*, (Manchester: Connolly Association and Irish Self-Determination League, 1963), p. 8.

<sup>162</sup> 'The Fenians in Manchester', *Manchester Guardian*, 21 September 1867, p. 5.

international news as articles were printed in the *New York Times*.<sup>163</sup> Emmeline was aware of the promotion that the rescue had given to the Irish cause through her reference to the ‘excitement’ surrounding the event. Publicity was also a priority for Emmeline and the suffragettes. In *My Own Story*, upon discussing tactics such as street meetings and drawing-room meetings, Emmeline described how the WSPU received a ‘great deal of press publicity, which was something never accorded the older suffrage methods’.<sup>164</sup> Emmeline also described a press boycott in her speech, documented in *My Own Story*, at her Conspiracy Trial in 1912:

We realised that there was a Press boycott against Women’s Suffrage. Our speeches at public meetings were not reported, our letters to the editors, were not published, even if we implored the editors; even the things relating to Women’s Suffrage in Parliament were not recorded. They said the subject was not of sufficient public interest to be reported in the Press, and they were not prepared to report it.<sup>165</sup>

The militant tactics of the WSPU were aimed at attracting attention to its cause, thus breaking the boycott. Before this section of her speech, Emmeline claimed that the WSPU was founded with the intention of influencing the political party in power ‘to make this question of the enfranchisement of women their own question and to push it’.<sup>166</sup> By awakening others to their cause, they hoped to emulate the Fenians by alerting the Government to women’s suffrage as an important political issue and hoped to receive concessions in the form of Government Acts or Bills. The aim of this speech was to educate the public present at the court as Emmeline claimed that ‘the average man is profoundly ignorant of the history of the women’s movement because the press has never adequately or truthfully chronicled the movement’.<sup>167</sup> The WSPU believed they had been successful in publicising women’s suffrage as Emmeline claimed the cause was at ‘the very forefront of British politics’ by 1911 and *Votes for Women* declared that

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<sup>163</sup> ‘The Fenian Executions- The Blunder of the British Government’, p. 4.

<sup>164</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 57.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

‘the militant agitation has made votes for women the subject of thought and conversation in every home’.<sup>168</sup> Other suffragists agreed with this assessment. George Lansbury, who was supportive of the WSPU, agreed that the suffragettes brought women’s suffrage ‘into public notice’.<sup>169</sup> Ray Strachey, a member of the NUWSS who favoured constitutional methods, acknowledged that the WSPU were responsible for increasing attention to the cause due to their ‘sensational public protest’ though she also credits the ‘ever-widening propaganda’ of the NUWSS.<sup>170</sup> Teresa Billington-Greig, an opponent to the WSPU’s autocratic structure, connects the WSPU’s militant methods with advertisement: ‘it is a bold method of advertising’ and acted ‘just as a business firm advertises to bring the class of customers with whom it is most profitable to deal’.<sup>171</sup> The WSPU were advertising their cause to the British public as well as the Government. Just as the Fenians had done, the British Government were now aware of women’s suffrage but, unlike with Gladstone, no concession had been made in the form of an Act or Bill.

Publicising the cause left the suffragettes and Fenians susceptible to misrepresentation and hostility from the press. The Fenians were aware of this and noted, in an article in the *Irish People* in 1865, how ‘*The Daily Express* has been favouring the IRISH PEOPLE and the “Fenians” with a large share of attention of late’.<sup>172</sup> The *Daily Express* was in reference to the *Dublin Daily Express*: a unionist newspaper which the *Irish People* referred to as ‘The Enemy’s Press’.<sup>173</sup> The stories that the *Daily Express* were reporting about Fenianism were likely hostile and unsympathetic. Yet the emphasis that they were featuring the *Irish People* and Fenianism

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<sup>168</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Preface’ in Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette: The History of The Women’s Militant Suffrage Movement 1905-1910*, (London: Gay & Hancock, 1970), p. i; ‘Political Notes’, *Votes for Women*, 4 June 1908, p. 217.

<sup>169</sup> George Lansbury, *Looking Backwards and Forwards*, (London: Blackie, 1935), p. 101.

<sup>170</sup> Ray Strachey, *The Cause: A Short History of the Women’s Movement in Great Britain*, (London: Virago, 1988), pp. 302 & 310.

<sup>171</sup> Teresa Billington-Greig, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Emancipation in a Hurry*, (London: Frank Palmer, 1911), pp. 127-8.

<sup>172</sup> ‘The Enemy’s Press’, *Irish People*, 7 January 1865, p. 105.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

‘with a large share of attention’ is significant as the *Irish People* were acknowledging this was constructive to their cause by spreading news of their actions to a different audience. Despite the unsympathetic view, the *Dublin Daily Express* was playing into the Fenian’s hands by highlighting the issues in Ireland. The attention did not need to be positive to enact change. Emmeline was aware of this too in reference to the WSPU. In 1905, Christabel and Annie Kenney interrupted a Liberal meeting in Manchester, resisted arrest and were imprisoned after refusing to pay a fine. Emmeline, in *My Own Story*, described the negative outlook of the press as ‘unanimously bitter’ and that the newspapers claimed the WSPU ‘had set the cause back, perhaps irrevocably’ but in actuality, the WSPU ‘received a large number of new members’.<sup>174</sup> Despite the negative press, the WSPU became national news too as Emmeline described the 1905 incident as creating ‘a tremendous sensation, not only in Manchester’ but ‘all over England’.<sup>175</sup> National newspapers like the *Daily Mail* printed the story and the issue of women’s suffrage spread and became a national story.<sup>176</sup>

Emmeline Pankhurst was aware of the risk of misrepresentation in the press. *My Own Story* had been written to combat the ridicule by presenting Emmeline’s own version of events. She acknowledged how the suffragettes were ‘ridiculed’ and labelled ‘misrepresentation’ as a challenge facing the suffrage movement in her preface to Sylvia’s *The Suffragette: The History of the Women’s Militant Suffrage Movement 1905-1910* (1911).<sup>177</sup> The suffragettes were mocked and *Punch*, the satirical newspaper, suggested they should be renamed the ‘Insuffrabelles’.<sup>178</sup> Such ridicule and hostility was not necessarily a loss for militancy. Even if the articles were insulting towards the suffragettes, the newspapers were still printing stories about women’s suffrage. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, another leader of the WSPU, wrote in

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<sup>174</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 46.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>176</sup> ‘Two Ladies Arrested’, *Daily Mail*, 14 October 1905, p. 5.

<sup>177</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 66; Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Preface’, p. i.

<sup>178</sup> ‘Insuffrabelles’, *Punch*, 18 July 1906, p. 54.

*Votes for Women* that ridicule was ‘welcome’ and that actions like suffragettes chaining themselves to the railings were about informing the world about the cause for women’s suffrage.<sup>179</sup> This press attention justified militancy to Emmeline. In a speech titled ‘Freedom or Death’ delivered in Connecticut in 1913, Emmeline compared the situation to ‘two babies very hungry and waiting to be fed’: ‘One baby is a patient baby, and waits indefinitely until its mother is ready to feed it’ in comparison to ‘an impatient baby and cries lustily, screams and kicks and makes everybody unpleasant’ and that ‘we know perfectly well which baby is attended’.<sup>180</sup> She summarises that this is the ‘whole history of politics’: ‘you have to make more noise than anybody else, you have to make yourself more obtrusive than anybody else, you have to fill all the papers more than anybody else, in fact you have to be there all the time and see that they do not snow you under’.<sup>181</sup> The Fenians were aware of the importance of filling newspapers, thus emphasising how the inclusion of their articles and tactics in enemy newspapers were a success. Publicity for both the Fenians and suffragettes was not about gaining supporters but rather about making the most noise and ensuring their causes were national news.

However, some historians have assessed the success of the WSPU’s militancy based on public opinion. David Morgan argued that the escalation of militancy after 1910 was ‘counter-productive’ due to the changing attitude of the public whilst Elizabeth Crawford claimed that ‘the general public was not sympathetic’ and had ‘put no pressure on the government’.<sup>182</sup> Crawford quotes David Lloyd George, a Liberal MP, as an example of this loss of support.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, ‘The Tactics of the Suffragettes’, *Votes for Women*, March 1908, p. 81.

<sup>180</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Freedom or Death Speech, Delivered at Hartford Connecticut, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1913’ in *Suffragette Manifestos*, (London: Penguin, 2020), pp.102-110, at 102.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> David Morgan, *Suffragists and Liberals: The Politics of Woman Suffrage*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p. 160; Elizabeth Crawford, ‘Did militancy help or hinder the granting of women’s suffrage in Britain?’, *Women’s History Review*, 28.7, (2019), pp. 1217-1227, at 1221 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2019.1654638>>.

<sup>183</sup> Crawford, ‘Did militancy help or hinder the granting of women’s suffrage in Britain?’, p. 1221.



Millicent Garrett Fawcett had also recorded a similar experience with Lloyd George who claimed that militancy was ‘alienating support’ in 1910.<sup>184</sup> Politicians had understood militancy as relying on public support. Ranging from anti-suffragists like Austen Chamberlain to supporters of women’s suffrage like Philip Snowden, they claimed that with an escalation of tactics came a transformation in public opinion to actively against the suffragettes.<sup>185</sup> The change in opinion also occurred within the House of Commons as James William Lowther, the speaker of the House of Commons between 1905 and 1921, observed how the actions of the militants had ‘hardened the opposition to their demands’ resulting in the loss of the Representation of the People (Women) Bill in 1913.<sup>186</sup> The militancy of the suffragettes was viewed as unsuccessful as opposition to women’s suffrage increased. Following this historiographical argument, it was not possible for the WSPU to emulate Fenianism’s success in converting Gladstone to the necessity of concessions.

Morgan and Crawford’s argument is based on the idea that women’s militancy depended upon public support. Yet, this was not the case. In a speech delivered by Emmeline on 14 February 1913, she set out her view that militancy was about making the public uncomfortable:

For nearly 50 years we had your sympathy and your support, and nothing happened, so then we took other things that you don’t like and you were alienated. We would rather have your disgust and have you thoroughly annoyed. Nothing can stop militancy now, and it is going on until we get the vote. We tried by constitutional ways to get you to give us the vote, but you did not do it. What can we do now but carry on this fight ourselves? And I want you, not to see these as isolated acts of hysterical women, but to see that it is being carried out on a plan and that it is being

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<sup>184</sup> Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *What I Remember* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1925), p. 194.

<sup>185</sup> Sir Austen Chamberlain, ‘5 March 1912’ in Sir Austen Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside: An Epistolary Chronicle 1906-1914*, (London: Cassell, 1936), pp. 438-440, at 438-9; Snowden, *An Autobiography*, I, p. 288.

<sup>186</sup> James William Lowther, *A Speakers Commentaries*, 2 vols (London: Edward Arnold, 1925), ii, p. 144.

carried out with a definite intention and a purpose. It can only be stopped in one way: that is by giving us the vote.<sup>187</sup>

Emmeline's speech emphasised how despite having support, the cause had achieved little. Therefore, militancy was employed to make people uncomfortable and with the intention to alienate them. This was in reference to the WSPU's later militancy which included acts like blowing up Lloyd George's villa, fires at Kew Gardens, destruction of letters as well as the cutting of telegraph wires. From the politician's views, Emmeline had been successful in angering the public. The reference to 'hysterical women' was a challenge to the public's view and the press's misrepresentation of the suffragettes. This gendered language will be explored in more detail in the following chapter. Emmeline was therefore using militancy to hold the Government and the public to ransom: no votes for women, no peace. Emmeline's sentiments were reiterated in *Votes for Women*. 1907, an article emphasised how the actions of the suffragettes were 'deeds which do not please smooth people'.<sup>188</sup> An article directed to the British public in the *Suffragette* in 1912 proclaimed that the loss of support or sympathy due to militancy was not detrimental to the cause but rather 'anger' and 'irritation are very often more to be desired than your approval'.<sup>189</sup> This was the same argument presented by Emmeline. By making the public uncomfortable, they were suffering a 'continuing inconvenience' forcing them to act and apply pressure to the Government.<sup>190</sup> This idea of a 'continuing inconvenience' is repeated in a 1914 *Suffragette* article which argues that the militant acts committed by the WSPU 'are now of a kind too serious to be permanently endured by any civilised community'.<sup>191</sup> The militancy of the suffragettes was more comparable to Kenneth Short's

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<sup>187</sup> Police report of a suffragette meeting at Hampstead Town Hall, 14 February 1913, London, The National Archives, Home Office: Registered Papers, 1910-1919, HO 45/10695/231366.

<sup>188</sup> 'No Smooth Course', *Votes for Women*, December 1907, p. 30

<sup>189</sup> 'To the British Public: An Open Letter from the Suffragettes', *Suffragette*, 20 December 1912, p. 141.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> 'Women Still at War', *Suffragette*, 2 January 1914, p. 267.

assessment of the Dynamiters campaign: ‘London was to be held to ransom’.<sup>192</sup> A positive image was therefore not necessary to both the Fenians and the suffragettes as their campaigns were about exerting pressure. All that mattered was that their cause was in the newspapers.

The Press reported on Fenianism and the suffragettes differently. Although the *Observer* used the term ‘Outrages’ to describe both movements’ actions, the overall message differed.<sup>193</sup> For the Fenians, the British press created a sense of panic which in turn increased the pressure for the British Government to act either through executing the Manchester Martyrs or making concessions to Ireland like Gladstone. There were some newspapers like the *Cork Examiner* which sympathised with the Manchester Martyrs and emphasised that there was support for the Fenians in Ireland.<sup>194</sup> However, these articles added to the Fenian panic by implying that there were more Fenians out there. Despite the *Irish Times*’s assertion that the Manchester Martyrs case ‘was left, almost untouched’ by the press, ‘to be decided on its merits without a single attempt to excite the passions of the English people’, there is evidence of this excitement and panic in the press.<sup>195</sup> The *New York Times* recognised that the case was unjust due to the location of the court proceedings despite being the site of the incident and questions the validity of the jury due to anti-Irish feeling in the population.<sup>196</sup> An example of this hostility was experienced by a correspondent for the *Irish Times* as they wrote of how an Englishman claimed he would “hang every Irishman in England”.<sup>197</sup> The correspondent responded by questioning the man, who then claimed “You see we didn’t mean exactly every Irishman, but these roughs, these Fenians”.<sup>198</sup> In response to this, the correspondent then describes the

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<sup>192</sup> Kenneth R. M. Short, *The Dynamite War: Irish-American Bombers in Victorian Britain*, (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1979), p. 1.

<sup>193</sup> ‘The Fenian Outrage’, p. 3; ‘Suffragette Bomb Outrage’, *Observer*, 25 January 1914, p. 8.

<sup>194</sup> ‘Saturday Morning, Nov. 16, 1867’, p. 2.

<sup>195</sup> ‘Dublin, Friday, Nov. 22, 1867’, *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 22 November 1867, p. 2.

<sup>196</sup> ‘The Fenian Executions- The Blunder of the British Government’, p. 4.

<sup>197</sup> ‘The Fenian Craze in England’, *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 23 October 1867, p. 3.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

English public as ‘crazed’ over Fenianism.<sup>199</sup> There were also some examples of this hostility during the trials. There were ‘hisses from the gallery’ during a dispute over Roberts being Allen and Gould’s solicitor or advocate.<sup>200</sup> Neill, in his history of the event, describes ‘derisive laughter and shouts of ribaldry’ when the prisoners entered the court.<sup>201</sup> This behaviour supports the view of James Cottingham, one of the lawyers representing the Manchester Martyrs, that ‘the mind of the public had been excited to a cruel and vindictive feeling towards the unfortunate prisoners’.<sup>202</sup> Therefore, as the *New York Times* had predicted, the location of the court played a role in the unjust nature of the executions. The *Irish Times* also printed a circular from the War Office which they claimed had ‘its formation probably in the Manchester Fenian outbreak’ which included the use of ‘all reasonable endeavours’ by ‘Her Majesty’s subjects’ in the case of riots.<sup>203</sup> This implies that anyone could act against a Fenian riot, perhaps encouraging attacks on suspected Fenians who may have been ordinary Irishmen and women. There was, therefore, some hostility towards the men accused of the rescue and murder which influenced the court proceedings.

In the *Manchester Guardian* a day after the rescue, an article claimed the event had proven ‘more serious than we stated in yesterday’s impression’ and the attack was ‘evidently a well-concocted scheme’ suggesting that the Fenians had surprised the people of Manchester.<sup>204</sup> This differed to the treatment of the suffragettes as the *Manchester Guardian* described how a bomb at Lime Street Station in Liverpool was ‘crudely formed’ and that if the bomb had exploded, ‘it would have done little if any damage to the structure of the station, though persons in the immediate vicinity might have suffered injury’.<sup>205</sup> In another article

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<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> ‘Examination of the Prisoners: Fourth Day’, *Manchester Guardian*, 1 October 1867, p. 5.

<sup>201</sup> J. Neill, *The Fenian outrage in Manchester (1867): the attack on the van and the murder of Sergeant Brett*, 1909.

<sup>202</sup> ‘The Fenian Outrage: The Defence Seventh Day’, p. 3.

<sup>203</sup> ‘Volunteers and Riots’, *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 1 October 1867, p. 3.

<sup>204</sup> ‘The Fenian Outrage in Manchester’, p. 3.

<sup>205</sup> ‘“Bomb” in Railway Station’, *Manchester Guardian*, 12 May 1913, p. 7.

describing a bomb at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, the damage done ‘was trifling’.<sup>206</sup> The violence of the suffragettes was minimised in the press in comparison to the Fenians who were more of a threat and were better organised. This explains why Emmeline emphasised how the actions of the WSPU were planned and with purpose, challenging the misrepresentation. The danger of the suffragettes was not overlooked by all newspapers as the London correspondent of the *Weekly Irish Times* reported how London was ‘greatly worried’ by the events. There were attempts made to downplay the violence as ‘only a small affair’ but the correspondent argues that ‘the danger is a great one’.<sup>207</sup> The correspondent even connects the actions of the suffragettes with the Fenian dynamite campaign. The closure of the Palace of Westminster was officially announced as part of preparations for the opening of Parliament in April 1913, but the correspondent alleged the ‘real reason’ was the suffrage outbreaks and that Westminster Hall had been previously closed to the public ‘after the Fenian bomb explosion thirty year ago’.<sup>208</sup> The *Weekly Irish Times* therefore recognised the danger of the WSPU’s bombing campaign and compared the threat to Fenianism.

The seriousness of Fenian action was emphasised in excerpts from *The Times* and *Daily News* which were printed in the *Manchester Guardian*. *The Times* warned that ‘it would be unwise to treat it lightly, as a mere isolated outburst of Irish mob violence’ whilst the *Daily News* emphasised the surprise of the attack: ‘the intelligence published yesterday from Manchester has startled the country’.<sup>209</sup> This fear and surprise was also evident in later articles in the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Observer*: ‘the plot is really in conflict not with Government, or the English nation, but with society at large’ suggesting that society was at risk and the rescue was described as ‘the most startling of the events of the past week’.<sup>210</sup> Fenianism

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<sup>206</sup> ‘Suffragette Outrage’, *Manchester Guardian*, 11 May 1914, p. 9.

<sup>207</sup> ‘Our London Letter’, *Weekly Irish Times*, 1 March 1913, p. 10.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> ‘The Fenians in Manchester’, p. 5.

<sup>210</sup> ‘Summary of News’, *Manchester Guardian*, 5 October 1867, p. 4; ‘Events of the Week’, p. 5.

was presented as a real risk to society. This contrasted with the suffragette violence which was diminished in newspapers. The *Observer* labelled some of the suffrage bombs as hoaxes and featured stories of the suspected bombs being revealed as a box of ‘bananas’ or ‘a tin of nuts and gunpowder’.<sup>211</sup> These stories trivialised the WSPU’s actions and removed the danger aspect. The *Daily Mail* featured articles about suffragette fires but weakened their effect by focusing on how there were ‘five fires’ attributed to the suffragettes out of ‘sixty important fires’ and how the damage was ‘£10,500’ out of the total ‘£258,200’ as a result of the fires.<sup>212</sup> In an article from April 1914, the *Daily Mail* listed ‘fourteen serious outbreaks’ but the suffragettes were only accused of one of them.<sup>213</sup> By including these figures, the WSPU’s arson campaign was overshadowed. The *Daily Mail* does not refer to the culprits of the other fires. It is possible that the other fires were part of their campaign but were overlooked. Other newspapers also shifted the blame for events away from the suffragettes. The *Observer* included an article in May 1913 about lifebuoys being removed and broken at a boathouse near Caversham Bridge in London. The pieces of broken lifebuoys were marked with ‘Votes for Women’ but the article asserts that ‘the police are inclined to view the action as wanton mischief on the part of some person rather than as the work of Suffragettes’.<sup>214</sup> This coincided with the idea that the bombs were a hoax as an article titled ‘More Bombs’ asserted that several suspected attacks had been due to ‘a number of foolish persons’ with ‘the idea of hoaxing the community’.<sup>215</sup> This included supposed bombs at College Green Post Office in Dublin and the public library at Cardiff. By reallocating the blame to ‘foolish persons’ and ‘wanton mischief’ makers, the newspapers were downplaying any of the serious actions by the suffragettes through suggestions that it was not them at all. In instances when evidence was left behind by

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<sup>211</sup> ‘New Houses Set on Fire at Cambridge’, *Observer*, 18 May 1913, p. 13; ‘More Bombs’, *Observer*, 11 May 1913, p. 9.

<sup>212</sup> ‘£10,500 Fires by Women’, *Daily Mail*, 6 November 1913, p. 5.

<sup>213</sup> ‘14 Fires in a Day’, *Daily Mail*, 8 April 1914, p. 7.

<sup>214</sup> ‘New Houses Set on Fire at Cambridge’, p. 13.

<sup>215</sup> ‘More Bombs’, p. 9.

the suffragettes, it was items like a 'black silk veil', 'fragments of cake and an empty champagne bottle' and 'the impression of the high heels of ladies' shoes' that were included in the newspapers.<sup>216</sup> These items distract from the WSPU's serious motives by emphasising that the women were enjoying themselves but also accentuates the class of women as these were luxurious items. The newspapers undermined the actions of the suffragettes by advocating that it was a folly of wealthy women and that the bombs were not as dangerous due to hoaxes which included a box of bananas.

The minimisation of suffragette action differed to the Fenian panic especially in the aftermath of the Clerkenwell Prison explosion and the bombing campaigns of the 1880s. Newspapers such as *The Times* (which had not been sympathetic to the Manchester Martyrs) and the *New York Times* (which had been more sympathetic to the Manchester Martyrs) discussed the 'incalculable' level of death and 'tremendous' destruction resulting from the explosion.<sup>217</sup> The *Irish Times* described the injuries as 'including women and children' to emphasise the destruction affected everyday members of the public.<sup>218</sup> In *Punch*, cartoons were published such as 'The Fenian Guy Fawkes' (Figure 12) which depicted a Fenian as a thug-like figure atop a barrel of gunpowder which has been lit by a fuse, whilst carrying a lit torch. This caricature image is full of stereotypes about the Irish that were prevalent in the Victorian era. However, it is the surrounding figures of children and women that are significant in emphasising the danger of Fenianism. Connecting with the *Irish Times* article, the inclusion of women and children demonstrated the innocence of those victims who died or were injured after the Clerkenwell explosion. The motivation behind the attack was also removed from the cartoon as there is no reference to Clerkenwell Prison or the escape. The cartoon therefore

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<sup>216</sup> 'Suffragette Bomb Outrage', p. 8.

<sup>217</sup> 'The Fenian Outrage in Clerkenwell', *The Times*, 20 December 1867, p. 3; 'Telegrams: The Fenians', *New York Times*, 14 December 1867, p. 1.

<sup>218</sup> 'Diabolical Fenian Outrage: Twenty Lives Sacrificed- Several Injured', *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 14 December 1867, p. 3.

depicts Fenianism as an attack on society similar to how the newspapers reported on the event. The idea that Fenians were targeting human life is repeated in *Punch* in a poem titled 'Guy Fenian': the Fenian 'cares not how many people he blows up or houses down'.<sup>219</sup> The depiction of Fenians as Guy Fawkes who was famous for his attempt to blow up the House of Lords using gunpowder emphasises the Fenian connection to gunpowder and explosives. They were viewed as dangerous, thus increasing the panic surrounding them.

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<sup>219</sup> 'Guy Fenian', *Punch*, 10 November 1883, p. 220.





THE FENIAN GUY FAWKES.

12. 'The Fenian Guy Fawkes', *Punch*, 28 December 1867, p. 263.

There were instances when the suffragettes were recognised as dangerous, but this was only based on suppositions. In an article in the *Manchester Guardian*, an account is given of the bomb which exploded at David Lloyd George's summer home at Walton-on-the-Hill. The house was being built, thus the newspaper supposed 'had the explosion occurred half-an-hour

later there would have been several workmen about the premises'.<sup>220</sup> This was similar speculation to the *Manchester Guardian* article about a failed bomb at Liverpool Lime Street Station as the article claims that if it had been successful some people in the vicinity 'might have suffered injury'.<sup>221</sup> Despite the newspapers shifting the blame away from the suffragettes and trivialising their actions, articles did reference the potential danger of the bombing campaign. Emmeline, throughout *My Own Story*, emphasised how militancy of women had 'harmed no human life' and instead was aimed at property as 'it is through property that we shall strike the enemy'.<sup>222</sup> The newspapers did report on the property damage: the Botanic Gardens in Glasgow was damaged substantially as well as some of the plants and that damage of five suffrage fires in October 1913 was calculated as '£10,500'.<sup>223</sup> In the *Observer*, an article about a failed bomb at the Palm House at Sefton Park estimated the value of damage would have been £20,000.<sup>224</sup> The WSPU was aware that articles were being published about the cost of damage as a *Suffragette* article references the *Standard* which estimated a total cost of £500,000 due to militant action.<sup>225</sup> In the same article, the WSPU referenced actions like the bomb at Lloyd George's home, a fire at Kew Gardens, attempted fires at golf shelters in Manchester and Leeds as well as telegraph wires being cut near Newcastle.<sup>226</sup> The WSPU did not explicitly take credit for these actions but as they were included in the *Suffragette*, their involvement was heavily implied. These actions were significantly less dangerous to human life than the Clerkenwell Prison explosion. The WSPU corrected a newspaper story that they were 'not responsible' for 'tampering with a signal in South Wales': 'such a form of militancy being at variance with the Union's policy of not endangering human life'.<sup>227</sup> They were

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<sup>220</sup> 'Bomb Outrage by Suffragettes', *Manchester Guardian*, 20 February 1913, p. 7.

<sup>221</sup> 'Bomb' in Railway Station', p. 7.

<sup>222</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. xi & 238.

<sup>223</sup> 'Suffragette Bomb Outrage', p. 8; '£10,500 Fires by Women', p. 5.

<sup>224</sup> 'Suffragette Bomb at Liverpool', *Observer*, 16 November 1913, p. 14.

<sup>225</sup> 'Militancy', *Suffragette*, 28 February 1913, p. 302.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

therefore distancing themselves from some of the more violent events in a similar way to how the newspapers minimised their danger.

There were attempts made by Irishmen to distance themselves from Fenianism in a similar way. In correspondence with the *Manchester Guardian*, 'A Loyal Irishman' expressed his sympathy for Brett and his 'abhorrence of such a dastardly and blood-stained society as the Fenian brotherhood'.<sup>228</sup> There were also attempts by the Irish press to distance the Irish population. In an editorial in the *Irish Times* on 1 December 1866, before the events of the rescue, the paper described how the Irish in Wolverhampton greeted Queen Victoria and that because of her welcome 'she, at least, does not believe that "wherever there is an Irishman there is a Fenian"'.<sup>229</sup> This article suggests that even before the events of 1867, there were suspicions towards Irish men and women in England. In an article after the rescue, the blame for Fenianism is shifted towards 'debauched English artizans' and the newspaper claims Fenianism had 'completely died out in Ireland'.<sup>230</sup> The article was placing the blame on the English workers. This was in reference to the support of the working-class such as the meeting at Clerkenwell Green which had been reported on in the same newspaper three days before.<sup>231</sup> The British radicals who had allied themselves with the Fenians were used by the *Irish Times* to dismiss the Irish connection with Fenianism.

### **2.3.2. American connection**

There were also attempts to shift the blame on to Irish Americans for Fenian acts. Michael De Nie argues that the 'British press consistently sought to distinguish the activities and political goals of the Irish American "plotters" from those of the Irish majority'.<sup>232</sup> The newspapers

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<sup>228</sup> A Loyal Irishman, 'Sergeant Brett's Family', *Manchester Guardian*, 20 September 1867, p. 4.

<sup>229</sup> 'Dublin, Saturday, Dec. 1, 1866', *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 1 December 1866, p. 2.

<sup>230</sup> 'Dublin, Saturday, Sept. 21, 1867', *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 21 September 1867, p. 2.

<sup>231</sup> 'The Condemned Fenians in Manchester', p. 3.

<sup>232</sup> de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882*, p. 199.

were exaggerating the Irish American connection to reduce the anti-Irish feeling throughout Britain. An excerpt of the *Dublin Express* in *The Manchester Guardian* blamed Fenianism on ‘Yankee adventurers who are still among us and who pass themselves off as oppressed patriots’.<sup>233</sup> Other Irish newspapers like the *Dundalk Democrat* and the *Irish Times* featured many articles in which Fenianism was of American origin, with American connections, and were to blame for events such as the invasion of Chester Castle and the rescue in Manchester.<sup>234</sup> The Earl of Brownlow agreed with this view point, arguing in the House of Lords, that Fenianism was ‘born in a far-off country’.<sup>235</sup> The *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General* included excerpts from the *New York Times* labelling them as ‘ridiculous and barefaced falsehoods’ suggesting that Americans were too sympathetic with the Fenians and were creating their own narrative.<sup>236</sup> *The Times*, which was especially against the Fenians, claim that ‘there is probably no ground for serious alarm’ but that the rescue of Kelly and Deasy ‘proves that these Irish Americans who prowl the streets of Irish cities or English cities which are partially Irish, are in treasonable communication with some of the Irish population, and can count upon them to do a desperate deed’.<sup>237</sup> By shifting the blame onto Irish Americans, it decreased the likelihood of retaliation of ordinary Irishmen. *The Times* even argued that ‘if there be one class of Fenian conspirators rather than another which deserves no mercy at the

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<sup>233</sup> ‘The Execution of Brett’s Murderers’, *Manchester Guardian*, 26 November 1867, p. 5.

<sup>234</sup> ‘Fenianism in England—Arrest and Rescue of Colonel Kelly’, *Dundalk Democrat*, 21 September 1867, p. 4; ‘Editorial’, *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 23 October 1865, p. 2; ‘Dublin, Wednesday, Dec. 27, 1865’, *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 27 December 1865, p. 2; ‘Dublin, Thursday, Feb 14, 1867’, *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 4 February 1867, p. 2; ‘Dublin, Saturday, Oct. 12, 1867’, *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 12 October 1867, p. 2; ‘Dublin, Wednesday, Oct. 16, 1867’, p. 2; ‘Dublin, Monday, Nov. 4, 1867’, *Irish Times and Daily Advertiser*, 4 November 1867, p. 2.

<sup>235</sup> HL Deb 19 November 1867, vol 190, col 9.

<sup>236</sup> ‘Fenianism and the New York Press’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 16 November 1867, p. 7.

<sup>237</sup> ‘London, Friday, September 20, 1867’, *The Times*, 20 September 1867, p.6.

hands of the Government, it is the class of American filibusters who have long infested Dublin, and are beginning to infest our own great cities'.<sup>238</sup>

In an article from the *Manchester Guardian*, O'Brien, an Irish American, is held responsible for Larkin becoming a Fenian: O'Brien was 'by birth and sympathy an Irish American' and 'as to Larkin there can be little doubt that he was the victim of such men as O'Brien'.<sup>239</sup> For Allen and Larkin, the paper describes them as having respectable futures if not for Fenianism: Allen had 'secured the affections of a young woman of a respectable family', whilst for O'Brien 'there is reason to believe that he behaved like a respectable working man' who was married with four children.<sup>240</sup> This presents Allen and Larkin as desperate- a fact which O'Brien manipulated for his own gain. This view is contradicted by the *Daily Telegraph* which presents Gould (O'Brien's alias) as 'a tool in the hands of stronger men'.<sup>241</sup> The contradictions between newspapers highlights how subjective the case was and that each newspaper had their own interpretation. An American influence is also established in the *Daily Telegraph* as Kelly and Deasy were emphasised to have 'marked American accent' and 'claimed to be American citizens'.<sup>242</sup> The *New York Times* was certainly more sympathetic to the Fenians than *The Times*. In an article after the executions, a writer claimed that 'we must regard the executions in Manchester as American citizens and not as Irishmen' as 'only as American citizens that the Fenians in Great Britain claim the attention and care of our Government'.<sup>243</sup> There were clearly American connections with the Fenian movement.

This American connection explains Emmeline's inclusion of the Manchester Martyrs in *My Own Story*. *My Own Story* was written for an American audience as it was first published

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<sup>238</sup> 'There is one incident of the Fenian trials at Manchester and Dublin which deserves special consideration', *The Times*, 5 November 1867, p. 8.

<sup>239</sup> 'Execution of the Murderers of Brett', *Manchester Guardian*, 25 November 1867, p. 3.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> It is with a sense of relief that the public will learn ...', p. 4.

<sup>242</sup> 'Fenian Arrests in Manchester', *Daily Telegraph*, 19 September 1867, p. 3.

<sup>243</sup> 'The Manchester Execution-Rights of American Citizens Abroad', *New York Times*, 25 November 1867, p. 4.

as a series of articles in *Good Housekeeping*. Emmeline would have been aware of the American connection as she regularly read the newspaper to her father. By identifying herself with a movement that had some support in America, Emmeline was attempting to raise her profile as well as raising money. Philip Henry Bagenal, a historian writing in 1882, presented Irish Americans as funding Fenians through ‘forces and arms’ as well as fundraising money for Parnell in 1880.<sup>244</sup> In a letter to the editor of *The Times* in 1865, two years before the execution of the Manchester Martyrs, H. Fitz Herbert of Springfield, Massachusetts, wrote that the Fenian Brotherhood, the American branch of the Fenians, had ‘over half-a-million of men’ and had ‘at its disposal over \$1,000,000, and already forms a powerful element in American politics’.<sup>245</sup> This was likely an exaggeration which contributed to the Fenian panic but it nevertheless connects America with funds for Fenianism.

America was therefore seen as a fundraising and publicity opportunity for radical causes. Emmeline was aware of this fact. In her 1913 speech ‘Why We Are Militant’ which was delivered in America, Emmeline connected her own journey with previous Irish lawbreakers: ‘I can’t help remembering that right through the struggle of the Irish people they sent law-breakers to plead with you for help for law-breakers in Ireland’.<sup>246</sup> There were attempts made by Emmeline to directly engage with the Irish American community as she spoke at an Irish Fellowship Club in Chicago on the same visit.<sup>247</sup> A member of the WSPU in New York observed that the Irish Americans were ‘especially interested’ in the cause implying an already sympathetic audience.<sup>248</sup> Before entering America in 1913, Emmeline had been arrested and was to be deported before entering America due to her previous convictions. In a

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<sup>244</sup> Phillip Henry Bagenal, *The American Irish and Their Influence on Irish Politics*, (Boston: Robert Brothers, 1882), pp. 147 & 191-192.

<sup>245</sup> H. Fitz Herbert, ‘The Fenian Brotherhood in America: To the Editor’, *The Times*, 17 January 1865, p. 4.

<sup>246</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Why We Are Militant’, p. 161.

<sup>247</sup> ‘Irish Americans deeply Interested’, *Suffragette*, 24 October 1913, p. 28.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

*New York Times* article, it was reported that she was ‘still smiling’ when she heard the news of her potential deportation and gave a speech:

I have come here to tell the American people the whole story of our activities in England in the fight for our suffrage,’ she said. ‘My Mission to this country is similar to that of men who have come to represent Ireland in this great republic of the West. I come to appeal for help. Redmond and O’Connor came here to appeal for help for Ireland.<sup>249</sup>

It was three months later that her first chapter was published in *Good Housekeeping* which included her connection to the Manchester Martyrs. That her articles appeared after her visit to America suggests that Emmeline had ensured she would have a readership that was aware of her and the WSPU. Emmeline was establishing her own narrative and using the Manchester Martyrs as a framing device to ensure she was presented as politically aware and well-connected to other movements that had successfully fundraised in America. Her aim was clearly to fundraise as Joan Wickham, the press representative and advance agent for Emmeline, made a statement in the *New York Times* that Emmeline “will not receive a cent” for her lectures and that “the money will go to the Women’s Social and Political Union of England”.<sup>250</sup> Through her statements, Emmeline was connecting to both the militant side of Irish nationalism (the law-breakers) and constitutional side (Redmond and O’Connor). Fundraising would have ensured the WSPU had the funds to commit more militant acts, thus Emmeline’s use of Ireland was directly connected to her militancy. *My Own Story* was itself a publicity act, ensuring that the American population were educated on the issue and that international pressure could be applied to the British Government either through awareness or with funds.

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<sup>249</sup> ‘Mrs. Pankhurst Is Barred Out’, *New York Times*, 19 October 1913, p.1.

<sup>250</sup> ‘President Decides Case’, *New York Times*, 21 October 1913, p. 3.

### 2.3.3. Terrorism?

Fenianism provided Emmeline and the suffragettes with a successful example of militancy through the concessions gained and the attention raised to issues in Ireland. Rebecca Walker argues that the suffragettes adopted some of their tactics in terms of their bombing campaign. She asserted that ‘echoes of the Fenian campaign can be traced in their devices’.<sup>251</sup> However, in terms of bomb-making, Walker acknowledges that, though information about the creation of Fenian bombs was ‘publicly available’, there is no direct proof of inspiration.<sup>252</sup> There was a reference to Irish nationalist bomb-making in the *Suffragette* as an article from 7 August 1914 stated that the *Irish Volunteer* ‘contains week by week directions for the preparation of explosives’.<sup>253</sup> The *Irish Volunteer* was the newspaper of the Irish Volunteers, an organisation formed in 1913 which included members of the IRB. A week before the article in the *Suffragette*, the *Irish Volunteer* had included an article titled ‘Means of Detonation and Ignition’ which featured sections on possible fuses and detonators.<sup>254</sup> There were two motives behind printing such a story in the *Suffragette*: to highlight double standards in the treatment of women militants and men militants (as explored in the last chapter) and to inform women that the information was available. The date of these articles is significant as they were printed at the start of World War One and after most of the suffragette bomb attacks had occurred. The WSPU put an end to militancy to focus on the war effort so any influence that particular article had on suffragette bomb-making was limited.

Although the bombs themselves may not have been inspired by the Fenians, the bombing campaigns shared similarities. The use of symbolic locations united both movements. On ‘Dynamite Saturday’ in January 1885, bombs were set off at the House of Commons, the

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<sup>251</sup> Rebecca Walker, ‘Deeds, Not Words: The Suffragettes and Early Terrorism in the City of London’, *London Journal*, 45.1, (2020), pp. 53-64, at 56 < [https://doi-org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/03058034.2019.1687222](https://doi.org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/03058034.2019.1687222)>.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>253</sup> ‘Unequal Administration of the Law’, *Suffragette*, 7 August 1914, p. 295.

<sup>254</sup> ‘Means of Detonation and Ignition’, *Irish Volunteer*, 1 August 1914, p. 6.



crypt of Westminster Hall and the Tower of London. These locations were symbols of British power. By attacking them, the Fenians were demonstrating their own power and creating panic. The suffragettes targeted significant landmarks as well like the Bank of England and St Paul's Cathedral in 1913. Churches and golf courses were also attacked as symbols of patriarchal power. Both movements also directed their action to disturb the public. Fenian and suffragette bombs were set off at London Underground stations. One distinction was that, as Emmeline emphasised, the WSPU aimed to not harm human life. The Fenian bombing of a barracks in Salford in 1881 had killed a boy whilst the 1883 attack on the London Underground had injured 70 people. The suffragettes had significantly less injuries. Christopher Bearman, in an article exploring suffrage violence, references four deaths in relation to suffrage bombs but questioned whether it was the WSPU behind these attacks as some were claimed in the *Suffragette* despite arrests made with no connection to women's suffrage.<sup>255</sup> The WSPU were therefore not as harmless as Emmeline presented.

Both the Fenians and suffragettes had similar motivations as they aimed to pressure the Government to act through public attacks. The WSPU wanted to create an intolerable situation for the public through actions that were 'too serious to be permanently endured by any civilised community'.<sup>256</sup> The *United Irishman*, a newspaper edited by Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa who was involved in the Dynamiters campaign, featured an article describing dynamite as a way of bringing the 'common enemy to her knees'.<sup>257</sup> The aim of these movements was to create fear and force the Government to act through pressure. Short labelled the Fenians as terrorists, defining 'Terrorism' as 'a method by which an organised group sought to achieve its objectives

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<sup>255</sup> Christopher J. Bearman, 'An Examination of Suffragette Violence', *English Historical Review*, 120.486, (2005), pp. 365-397, at 374 & 393 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3490924>> [accessed 1 March 2023].

<sup>256</sup> 'Women Still at War', p. 267.

<sup>257</sup> 'The Coming Land League Convention', *United Irishman*, 26 November 1881, p. 4.

through the systematic use of violence'.<sup>258</sup> Using this definition, the suffragettes were also employing terrorist actions. However, terrorism is a complicated term. A simple definition of terrorism is 'using acts of public violence to achieve political change'.<sup>259</sup> However, this definition ignores the implications and context of such a term. Niall Whelehan issues a warning when using the phrase as its definition has changed over time after modern attacks like 7 July 2005 bombings in London and the September 11 attacks in 2001.<sup>260</sup> He also argues that there have been difficulties over defining terrorism as the international community failed to agree to a shared legal definition in 1998 at the International Criminal Court in Rome.<sup>261</sup> This is certainly the case presented by Timothy Shanahan in a chapter titled 'The Definition of Terrorism'. Shanahan explores how different the definitions of terrorism are: some see terrorism as definitely violent; others argue that it consists of random acts or that the acts are morally wrong, thus any action that was morally right could not be considered terrorists.<sup>262</sup> In terms of terrorism as acts creating terror, Shanahan raises the issue that some acts produce other feelings such as 'revulsion, disgust, moral outrage'.<sup>263</sup> There is no set definition of what a terrorist is which makes it difficult to use as a label for movements like Fenianism and the suffragettes.

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<sup>258</sup> Short, *The Dynamite War: Irish-American Bombers in Victorian Britain*, p. 2. Short was not the only historian to label the Fenians as terrorists: Don Hale, *Manchester Thieftakers: Policing in Victorian and Edwardian Manchester, 1825-1914*, (Wrexham: Bridge Books, 2007), pp. 50-51; James McConnel & Fearghal McGarry, 'Difficulties and Opportunities: Making Sense of the Fenians', *History Ireland*, 16.6, (Nov/Dec 2008), pp. 10-11, at 10 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27725893>> [accessed 1 March 2023]; Brian Jenkins, *Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State, 1858-1874*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), p. xii.

<sup>259</sup> Peter H. Collins, *Dictionary of Government and Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Middlesex: Peter Collins Publishing, 1997), p. 281.

<sup>260</sup> Niall Whelehan, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 24.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>262</sup> Timothy Shanahan, 'The Definition of Terrorism' in *Routledge Handbook of Critical Terrorism Studies*, ed. Richard Jackson, (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 103-113 106-110.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

Fern Riddell argues that it is important to use the label of terrorism in reference to the intensified militant campaign of the WSPU. Riddell asserts that there is a ‘gendered politics of revolution’: ‘a belief that women cannot commit the same acts of violence or destruction as men’ which has ‘created a paradox in how we view terrorism: we allow for men to be terrorists, while thinking women cannot be’.<sup>264</sup> Caron Gentry and Laura Sjoberg acknowledge that the perception of terrorism is gendered as it is assumed ‘anyone who is a terrorist is also a man’.<sup>265</sup> Riddell therefore uses the label as a challenge to double standards, emphasising that women were capable of being terrorists. There were instances when Fenians and suffragettes used the phrase in reference to their actions. In the *United Irishman*, the Dynamiters were referred to as ‘dynamite terrorists’ whilst militant acts in the *Suffragette* were labelled ‘The Reign of Terror’.<sup>266</sup> The *Suffragette* also included a reference to an article by a Liberal journalist which labelled militancy as ‘The New Terrorism’.<sup>267</sup> However, the Fenians and WSPU also used other language to describe their campaigns. The earlier Fenian movement was described in the *Irish People* as ‘rebellion and revolution’ and as part of ‘a civil war’.<sup>268</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst did not refer to herself as a terrorist but rather part of an army that were participating in guerrilla warfare.<sup>269</sup> The bombing campaign was not an act of terrorism but rather an act of war against the British Government through the destruction of property. The policy of guerrilla warfare was official as it featured in the WSPU’s *Seventh Annual Report* in 1913.<sup>270</sup> This label still

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<sup>264</sup> Fern Riddell, *Death in Ten Minutes: Kitty Marion: Activist. Arsonist.*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2018), p. 167.

<sup>265</sup> Caron Gentry & Laura Sjoberg, ‘Female Terrorism and Militancy’ in *Routledge Handbook of Critical Terrorism Studies*, pp. 145-155, at 147.

<sup>266</sup> ‘London Bridge’, *United Irishman*, 10 January 1885, p. 1.

<sup>267</sup> ‘A Serious and Dangerous Situation’, *Votes for Women*, 26 July 1912, p. 694.

<sup>268</sup> ‘The Only Remedy for Ireland’, *Irish People*, 25 June 1864, p. 488; ‘War and Famine’, *Irish People*, 11 June 1864, p. 457.

<sup>269</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 252.

<sup>270</sup> The Women’s Social and Political Union, *Seventh Annual Report 1913*, (London: The Woman’s Press, 1913), p. 12.

emphasises Emmeline and the WSPU's violence, challenging the idea that women could not be as destructive as men.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

The tale of the Manchester Martyrs inspired a nine-year-old Emmeline Pankhurst to recognise injustice and to doubt that the law would always ensure that justice would be done. This was one of the first steps on her way to militancy. Justice was the main motive for Emmeline in the fight for the vote: from her experience in the workhouse to the treatment of the suffragettes by the Government. By framing the Manchester Martyrs as an awakening, Emmeline connected her suffrage journey with the Manchester Martyrs in *My Own Story*. It also enabled her to highlight her political awareness as a child and to connect to American audiences in the hope of raising the WSPU's profile and funds.

Emmeline was not a supporter of Fenianism nor was she fully aware of all the details surrounding the event. However, the image of the hole in the wall where the executions had taken place remained with Emmeline throughout her life. It was a reminder of injustice as the shot that killed Sergeant Brett had not been fired with the intent to kill. Emmeline's errors and lack of details reinforce that *My Own Story* is very much hers and that this was an account of her memories. Fenianism is not referred to again in *My Own Story*, but its influence is present throughout the WSPU's campaign. Christabel's awareness of Gladstone's concession and the credit he gave to Fenianism provided the campaign with a successful militant campaign that could be used as inspiration. Emmeline's experience of the 'excitement' surrounding the event and her awakening to injustice highlighted how a movement could inspire others through publicity whether it was positive or negative. By comparing the two movements, the violence of Emmeline and the WSPU becomes clearer, and the guerrilla tactics were increasingly dangerous. The image of Emmeline has undergone many changes and her militancy has been

diminished. Fenianism not only provided a successful pathway for Emmeline on her militant journey, but it can also be utilised to recover Emmeline's lost militancy.

### 3. *Emmeline & Parnell: A Militant Lesson*

Dr Pankhurst was a popular candidate, and unquestionably would have been returned but for the opposition of the Home-Rulers. Parnell was in command, and his settled policy was opposition to all Government candidates. So, in spite of the fact that Dr Pankhurst was a staunch upholder of home rule, the Parnell forces were solidly opposed to him, and he was defeated. I remember expressing considerable indignation, but my husband pointed out to me that Parnell's policy was absolutely right. With his small party he could never hope to win home rule from a hostile majority, but by constant obstruction he could in time wear out the Government, and force it to surrender. That was a valuable political lesson, one that years later I was destined to put into practice

– Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*.<sup>1</sup>

In this extract, Emmeline Pankhurst recounts her husband's election loss in Rotherhithe, Surrey, in 1885. Richard Pankhurst had been a Lib-Lab candidate, a representative of labour interests that supported the Liberal Party's policies. This was before the formation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1893. Richard's political affiliation with the Liberal Party conflicted with Charles Stewart Parnell's anti-government party policy. Parnell, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), campaigned for Irish voters to vote against the political party that was in power. In 1885, this was the Liberal Party, thus Richard Pankhurst was an opponent. This was not always the case. Before Parnell introduced this policy, he had approved of Richard's candidacy in Manchester in 1883. The *Manchester Guardian* reported on Parnell's reasoning that Richard's 'declaration of views in regard to Irish coercion are satisfactory'.<sup>2</sup> The new policy had therefore resulted in Irish opposition to Richard, and Emmeline blamed Parnell for her husband's loss. For Parnell, the policy was a success: the IPP had won 86 seats which, combined with the Conservatives who had won 249 seats, ensured victory for the

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<sup>1</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story* (London: Vintage Books, 2015), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Representation of Manchester: Dr. Pankhurst's Candidature', *Manchester Guardian*, 2 October 1883, p. 8.

Conservatives over the Liberals who had won 355 seats. The 1885 election left a lasting impression on Emmeline and her daughters, Christabel, and Sylvia.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the connection between Emmeline, the WSPU and Parnell: how did Emmeline present Parnell in *My Own Story* and how was he featured in *Votes for Women* and the *Suffragette*? The second and third sections investigate the policies employed by Emmeline and the WSPU that were inspired by Parnell. In the extract from *My Own Story*, Emmeline refers to the anti-government party policy which will be the key focus of the second section. The WSPU adopted it as its own with similar motivations: to force the government to act and to awaken their followers by embracing independence. The response to the WSPU's policy differed to Parnell's as the suffragettes faced a different challenge. They did not have a political party in Parliament, and thus could not hold the balance of power as Parnell had done successfully in 1885. If they were successful in defeating a candidate, the suffragettes often faced violence. The policy of independence was also criticised by Labour affiliated men and women including Eva Gore-Booth, an Irish suffragist and sister of Constance Markievicz, who had previously worked with Christabel in the Manchester Women's Trade Council. The response of the press to this policy will also be analysed. The final section considers Emmeline's closing sentences in the extract: Parnell's ability to use 'constant obstruction' to 'wear out the Government, and force it to surrender'.<sup>3</sup> Parnell's obstructionist policy was developed under Joseph Biggar in the House of Commons. The policy involved disrupting Parliament through speeches, preventing bills passing through lengthy discussion. Emmeline could not replicate Parnell's obstruction policy exactly as the suffragettes were unable to enter Parliament in the same way. There were attempts to demand entry through deputations, but the response was often violent. Like Parnell, Emmeline and the suffragettes used speech to interrupt, preventing the work of politicians through targeting

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<sup>3</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 18.

meetings. This was radical and militant, awakening women to the importance of asking questions themselves. The response by attendees was often intimidating but the suffragettes responded with increased militancy. Emmeline was attempting to emulate Parnell by constantly obstructing and embarrassing the British Government, but she was in a very different position. Parnell's example provided Emmeline and the WSPU with a 'valuable political lesson', this chapter analyses whether Emmeline truly adopted this lesson and how it influenced her militancy.<sup>4</sup>

### **3.1. Parnell, the WSPU & Emmeline**

Parnell became a Member of Parliament in 1875 representing the Home Rule Party, becoming leader of the political party in 1877. The Home Rule Party then became known as the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP). He was also a founder and President of the Irish National Land League in 1879, agitating for land reform in Ireland, which led to his imprisonment in 1882. In 1890, an affair between Katherine O'Shea and Parnell was revealed publicly which led to divisions in the IPP. Parnell died a year later but his influence over the IPP remained, and the divisions continued. Throughout his political career, Parnell campaigned for Home Rule using militant methods inside and outside of Parliament. A letter sent from Parnell to E.M. Lynch in 1878 about the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill suggests that Parnell was sympathetic to the cause of women's suffrage or at least supported the removal of obstacles facing women. In the letter, he described how it would give him 'great pleasure to present the petition and support its prayer'.<sup>5</sup> The Women's Disabilities Removal Bill was about granting women's suffrage but it failed to pass as did other political bills throughout the nineteenth century. It was these failures that inspired Emmeline Pankhurst to act and form the WSPU. In an 1879 debate about

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Charles Stewart Parnell to Mrs. E.M. Lynch, 17 April 1878, Dublin, National Library of Ireland, MS 50,325.



a resolution to the Bill, Parnell stated that he did not see ‘what harm could be done’ by expanding the franchise to unmarried women and widows and that ‘women are justly entitled to say—“Since you have neglected to protect us, at least let us try to protect ourselves” by having the right to vote.’<sup>6</sup> Parnell voted ‘aye’ on the resolution, thus reinforcing his position as sympathetic with women’s suffrage.

Christabel Pankhurst was aware of Parnell’s position on women’s suffrage: she claimed ‘I am quite sure Parnell would have been in favour of votes for women, as, indeed he was’ in a *Daily Mirror* article in 1908.<sup>7</sup> In this article, Christabel stated that she would speak ‘from the life of Parnell’ in Manchester to oppose an appeal for the IPP to vote for Churchill.<sup>8</sup> The ‘life of Parnell’ is a reference to Richard Barry O’Brien’s *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell 1846-1891* which was first published in 1898.<sup>9</sup> O’Brien was an Irish historian and journalist who supported Home Rule. Christabel’s use of O’Brien’s biography of Parnell emphasises her awareness of Parnell and his life as well as political policies. She was even using it against his own party, using his story to persuade others to not vote Liberal despite the IPP’s campaign for Winston Churchill, then a Liberal MP. *Votes for Women* also included extracts from O’Brien’s book. One notable extract was used in an article titled ‘A Militant Argument’ in 1912:

“There is no use,” an Irish Unionist once said in the House of Commons, “in any Irishman approaching an English Minister on Irish questions unless he comes with a head of a landlord in one hand, or the tail of a cow in the other.” It was in this way the Land League came, and we all now know the Land League triumphed. “I must make one admission,” said Mr. Gladstone in 1893, “and that is, that without the Land League the Act of 1881 would not now be on the Statute Book.” – From “*The Life of Parnell*,” by R. Barry O’Brien.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> HC Deb 07 March 1879 vol 244 cc 480-481.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Incidents of Manchester Fight’, *Daily Mirror*, 23 April 1908, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Richard Barry O’Brien, *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, 1846-1891*, 2 vols, (London: Smith, Elder, 1898), I.

<sup>10</sup> ‘A Militant Argument’, *Votes for Women*, 30 August 1912, p. 775; Quoted from O’Brien, *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, 1846-1891*, I, p. 293.

This quotation was used to demonstrate the effectiveness of militancy. The use of ‘head of a landlord’ emphasises how violent the Land League could potentially be. The threat of the Land League was utilised by Parnell to ensure his party’s objectives. In an interview with a *New York Herald* reporter in 1880, Parnell claimed that England would not ‘pay any attention to Irish affairs until the position has become unbearable to herself’.<sup>11</sup> By applying pressure through the Land League, Parnell was creating an atmosphere in England for concessions. The WSPU were aware of Parnell’s successes and presented the Land League similarly to Fenianism in *Votes for Women*: as a triumph of militancy. The beginning of this quote was also repeated in Millicent Garrett Fawcett’s *What I Remember* as she claimed it was ‘possibly’ what the WSPU ‘may have had in mind’ when using militancy.<sup>12</sup> She acknowledges that the WSPU including Emmeline ‘may have’ been inspired by Parnell and the Land League in their use of militancy. The quotation from Fawcett is slightly different to O’Brien’s and Fawcett misattributes the excerpt to an ‘old saying invented by one of the Irish Nationalists’ rather than O’Brien’s ‘Irish Unionist’.<sup>13</sup> Fawcett may have been referencing O’Brien himself as the Irish nationalist as he was committed to Home Rule. *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell 1846-1891* influenced suffragettes in the WSPU as well as constitutional suffragists like Fawcett who recognised the similarities with their own cause. Parnell’s story was therefore a leading example for the WSPU. Teresa Billington-Greig, a former WSPU member, acknowledged the influence of O’Brien’s book on the militant movement:

‘The book of inspiration from which the spirit and policy of the militant movement have found direction is the “Life of Parnell.” In the record of his rapid re-construction of the Irish party there has been found the methods of re-construction of the Women Suffrage Party.’<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, ‘During an Interview with a *New York Herald* Reporter 1880’ in *Words of the Dead Chief*, ed. by Jennie Wyse-Power, Donal McCartney & Pauric Travers (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2009), p. 38.

<sup>12</sup> Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *What I Remember* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1925), p. 176.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Teresa Billington-Greig, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Emancipation in a Hurry* (London: Frank Palmer, 1911), pp. 209-210.

From her description, *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell 1846-1891* provided a blueprint for the WSPU. They were able to use Parnell's story and adapt it to their own cause.

O'Brien's book was not the only Parnell-focused book to be quoted in *Votes for Women*. In 1908, an extract from Thomas Power O'Connor's *The Parnell Movement with Sketches of Irish Parties From 1843* was printed, focusing on the Ladies' Land League and how their treatment in prison was worse than male members of the League.<sup>15</sup> The WSPU was again utilising Ireland as an example, only in this case it was about the double standards facing political women in comparison to political men. The inclusion of extracts from O'Brien and O'Connor accentuates the importance of Parnell to members of the WSPU as they were well-read on the movement. It is unclear who wrote these articles but as Emmeline and Frederick Pethick Lawrence were editors of the newspaper, they would have chosen to include the quotations. Christabel and the Pethick Lawrences were leaders of the WSPU as well as Emmeline, who was aware of Parnell's policies through Richard's election loss. The *Suffragette* also featured Parnell in articles for a similar purpose as *Votes for Women*, to highlight any double standards of treatment. In an article titled 'Mr Parnell – Mrs Pankhurst', the Annual Register of 1882 is employed to contrast how Parnell was granted parole from prison for the funeral of his nephew in Paris, yet Emmeline was arrested before attending Emily Davison's funeral after the incident at Epsom Derby.<sup>16</sup> Parnell was an important figure for the WSPU: an inspiration but also a way of highlighting double standards. The WSPU were not the only ones to adapt Parnell for their own cause. Roy Foster argues that Parnell could be 'altered to suit the needs of the age and of the people commemorating' him and that the interpretations 'rely as much on the climate of the times and the needs of the interpreter as on

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<sup>15</sup> 'T.P. O'Connor on the Liberal Government and Irish Women', *Votes for Women*, 10 September 1908, p. 43; Originally quoted from Thomas Power O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement with Sketches of Irish Parties From 1843* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1886), pp. 473-476.

<sup>16</sup> 'Mr Parnell—Mrs Pankhurst', *Suffragette*, 20 June 1913, p. 593.

the charismatic central figure himself'.<sup>17</sup> Foster's argument was related to the context of Ireland but Emmeline and the WSPU also adapted Parnell for their own needs: a militant hero pushing Ireland to the forefront of British politics and a symbol of the double standards of treatment of male political figures to female political figures by the British Government.

The influence of Parnell on Emmeline and the policies of the WSPU has received limited historiographical analysis. Paula Bartley, Rosemary Cullen Owens, June Purvis, David Mitchell, and Elizabeth Crawford include the story of Richard's election loss in their works and reiterate that Emmeline was deeply affected by it and that it was an important lesson.<sup>18</sup> Roger Fulford compared Parnell to Emmeline in the sense that both played a role in questioning authority: 'Parnell possibly- but Mrs Pankhurst certainly- mark the flight of reason and of respect for authority from the battle of politics'.<sup>19</sup> This statement suggests that Emmeline was more unreasonable than Parnell but it also reinforces the benefits of analysing Emmeline's militancy through the lens of Ireland as Emmeline's 'illogical' tactics can be compared to Parnell's directly. Despite the inclusion of the connection between Parnell and Emmeline in these histories, there is little investigation into how exactly it influenced Emmeline other than the adoption of the anti-government election policy. This overlooks the significance of Emmeline's connection to Parnell, its impact on her militancy and how gender impacted suffrage militancy as the suffragettes faced different consequences to Parnell. Melanie Phillips analysed the connection between Emmeline and Parnell, using both figures to emphasise

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<sup>17</sup> Roy F. Foster, *Paddy & Mr. Punch: Connections in Irish and English History*, (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 40 & 47.

<sup>18</sup> Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 85-86; Rosemary Cullen Owens, *Smashing Times: A History of the Irish Women's Suffrage Movement*, (Dublin: Attic Press, 1995), p. 40; June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 23; David Mitchell, *Queen Christabel*, (London: Macdonald & Jane's Publishers Ltd, 1977), p. 20; Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland: A Regional Survey*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p.261.

<sup>19</sup> Roger Fulford, *Votes for Women*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1958), p. 301.

Emmeline's autocracy in comparison to Parnell.<sup>20</sup> Phillips used Teresa Billington-Greig's *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Emancipation in a Hurry* as evidence, paraphrasing her argument that Parnell had 'good judgement' and 'knew how to trust his men' in comparison to the Pankhursts who 'did not trust their women'.<sup>21</sup> However, Billington-Greig had her own agenda in comparing Parnell and Emmeline. She wrote *The Militant Suffrage Movement* in 'criticism' of the WSPU and its autocratic structure and this shapes her comparison of Emmeline and Parnell.<sup>22</sup> In a chapter titled 'Parnell the Prototype', Billington-Greig argues that Emmeline and Christabel are following in Parnell's footsteps but taking it a step too far as, unlike Parnell, they have become autocrats claiming only they can lead the movement.<sup>23</sup> Billington-Greig does not analyse the similar policies but rather leadership style. She asserts that there is 'a common resemblance in the personal egotism of the Irish leader and the militant dictators' but again reconnects this back to the autocratic nature of Emmeline and Christabel as Emmeline ensured she 'can never be so displaced' in terms of Parnell being ousted by the vote of his colleagues.<sup>24</sup> This fear of being displaced may have been the result of the fall of Parnell. Although Parnell was able to maintain his position as leader initially, a split in the party led to his eventual loss of leadership. Emmeline was aware of the significant loss, claiming that there was 'no leader strong enough' to adopt Parnell's policies until John Redmond's leadership.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the autocratic nature of the WSPU was an attempt to avoid such instances.

Billington-Greig maintains the influence of Parnell on Christabel was so strong that she replicated his speech: 'sometimes the very words re-appear' and 'with a very few substitutions whole portions of Parnell's speeches could be accepted by her followers as Miss Pankhurst's

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<sup>20</sup> Melanie Phillips, *The Ascent of Woman: A History of the Suffragette Movement and the Ideas Behind It* (London: Abacus, 2004), p. 168.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169; Paraphrased from Billington-Greig, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, p. 209.

<sup>22</sup> Billington-Greig, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196-210.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>25</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 55.

utterances'.<sup>26</sup> Billington-Greig's accusation that Christabel was copying Parnell presents Christabel as manipulative towards her followers, accepting praise for her genius when it was truly Parnell's words. There are instances when Parnell's phrases are reiterated by the WSPU, but it was not just Christabel. The motto 'Deeds, not words' mirrors Parnell's speech in 1877 at Kilmallock that the Irish people, in reference to the British Government, 'shall meet their threats with deeds'.<sup>27</sup> In an article from *Votes for Women*, the phrase 'no concession has ever been made to Ireland except in response to force' echoes Parnell's interview with a *New York Herald* reporter in 1880: 'Ireland never won any great reform except by agitation' and a speech delivered in London in 1891: 'No English Minister makes concessions to Ireland unless under the pressure of necessity'.<sup>28</sup> It was not solely Christabel who was influenced by Parnell's words and they feature throughout the WSPU literature. Billington-Greig's comparison of Emmeline and Christabel to Parnell was designed to discredit their leadership. In her conclusion, she praises Parnell as 'the leader, the natural chief, the chosen, the master of circumstance' whilst labelling Emmeline and Christabel 'the artificially created dictators'.<sup>29</sup> She presents Parnell as a political hero and Emmeline and Christabel as mere imitators who fail to achieve his success. She even questions whether they deserve to succeed: 'He deserved to win. I dare not ask, "Do they?"'.<sup>30</sup> Billington-Greig's analysis of the WSPU's connection with Parnell was written with the purpose to undermine the Pankhursts as political leaders. She compares the two movements equally, claiming:

The likeness in many ways of the struggle that the Irish wage for self-government to the struggle which women wage for political liberty made the problem of adaptation easy after it had suggested the course of action.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>27</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 36; Charles Stewart Parnell, 'At Kilmallock, September 17<sup>th</sup> 1877' in *Words of the Dead Chief*, pp. 15-16, at 16.

<sup>28</sup> 'Violent and Lawless Action', *Votes for Women*, 26 July 1912, p. 700; Charles Stewart Parnell, 'During an Interview with a *New York Herald* Reporter 1880' in *Words of the Dead Chief*, p. 38; 'Mr. Parnell in East London', *Freeman's Journal*, 14 May 1891, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Billington-Greig, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

The use of ‘adaptation’ does acknowledge that there were different circumstances for the suffragettes in comparison to Home Rule. However, the reference that it was ‘easy’ to adapt dismisses the major differences between the two movements. Parnell had the power of the IPP which could be used as a voting bloc on particular issues or to hold the balance of power. The WSPU had to campaign for politicians to take up their cause for them in Parliament. In terms of the anti-government party policy, the IPP were campaigning for Irishmen to vote for their own interests whilst the WSPU had the challenge of encouraging men to vote for the cause of women’s suffrage. There were some similarities such as the prejudices faced by both the WSPU and the IPP which will be explored throughout this chapter.

Billington-Greig argues that the Pankhursts were unsuccessful in their imitation of Parnell as they ‘have failed to attain his mastery of circumstance, his trust in his colleagues, his capacity for judgement’.<sup>32</sup> Parnell is again used to emphasise the Pankhursts’ autocratic nature, and this has been adopted by historians like Melanie Phillips. However, there were more factors at play than poor leadership as the WSPU faced different situations and preconceptions. This chapter explores these different circumstances and how Emmeline and the WSPU adapted Parnell’s policies for their own cause. The purpose of Billington-Greig’s *The Militant Suffrage Movement* was to criticise the WSPU’s leadership and she utilised Parnell’s successes to emphasise the failures of the Pankhursts. Although critical, her book does highlight the influential role of Parnell on both Emmeline and Christabel.

Despite the prevalence of Parnell throughout *Votes for Women* and the importance of his life story as a source, Emmeline Pankhurst only references Parnell in two instances in *My Own Story*. The first instance was Richard’s election loss in 1885 and the second was about the introduction of the WSPU’s anti-government policy.<sup>33</sup> Both of these extracts were placed in

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>33</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 18 & 55.

the first chapter of Emmeline's *My Own Story*: 'The Making of a Militant'.<sup>34</sup> Emmeline therefore saw Parnell as part of her militant education, connecting to her lexical choice of 'lesson' to describe the encounter. There are obvious omissions surrounding Parnell in *My Own Story*. There is no reference to the Land League, the Ladies' Land League, or Parnell's time in prison. Anna Parnell and the Ladies' Land League would have offered Emmeline a closer example especially in reference to women's militancy. The WSPU were aware of the League from its article in *Votes for Women* and it was included in O'Brien's book too.<sup>35</sup> The Ladies' Land League had also received similar treatment by historians to the WSPU as the term 'fanatic' has been applied to both sets of women.<sup>36</sup> Despite these similarities, Emmeline makes no mention of the League. The end of the Ladies' Land League is described by O'Brien as deliberate by Charles Stewart Parnell. He quotes from a conversation between Parnell and Michael Davitt about the Ladies' Land League and how Parnell connected it to the 'dreadful' state of the country and 'anarchy', arguing the League had 'taken the country out of his hands and should be suppressed'.<sup>37</sup> The association of the Ladies' Land League with anarchy relates to Patricia Grove's argument that Anna Parnell had been portrayed 'as a militant activist who roamed the countryside creating havoc during the Land War of the 1880s, and who had to be silenced for the good of Ireland'.<sup>38</sup> There are various reasons why Emmeline may not have included the Ladies' Land League in *My Own Story*: perhaps her knowledge was not as extensive about the League, or she had no personal connection like Richard's election loss to associate herself with the League, or Anna Parnell's radical image was off-putting and Emmeline was trying to avoid the label of fanatic. However, the lack of inclusion of the Land

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 3-76.

<sup>35</sup> O'Brien, *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, 1846-1891*, I, p. 329.

<sup>36</sup> St. John Ervine, *Parnell* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1944), p. 154; George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, (London: Constable, 1936), pp. 176 & 187.

<sup>37</sup> O'Brien, *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, 1846-1891*, I, p. 364.

<sup>38</sup> Patricia Groves, *Petticoat Rebellion: The Anna Parnell Story*, (Cork: Mercier Press, 2009), pp. 14-15.



League completely implies Emmeline was omitting the more forceful aspects of Parnell's militancy. Emmeline's treatment of Parnell in *My Own Story* echoes her presentation of Fenianism: she focuses solely on events which were either less violent or less combative than others like the Land War or the Clerkenwell Prison explosion. Emmeline presents the more constitutional activities of Parnell as her inspiration to militancy, sanitising the more radical actions that would have overlapped more with the methods of the Land Leagues than Parnell's activities in Parliament.

In *My Own Story*, the focus is solely on Parnell's tactics: the anti-government election policy and obstructing the British Government. Despite only referencing him in two sections, Emmeline's admiration for Parnell is evident in her phrase 'the stirring days of Parnell'.<sup>39</sup> The term 'stirring' emphasises how Parnell's political manoeuvres impacted Emmeline. It also implies that it was a positive experience, but this differs to Emmeline's recollection of her husband's loss. Emmeline admitted to feeling 'considerable indignation' on behalf of her husband until Richard 'pointed out' how effective Parnell's strategy was. This indignation even led her to Thomas Power O'Connor, a member of the IPP, who claimed that Emmeline had tried to 'beg' him to exclude Richard from the ban on Liberal MPs which O'Connor had refused 'unwillingly for her husband had always been a friend of Home Rule'.<sup>40</sup> Emmeline does not include her encounter with O'Connor in *My Own Story* as it would have undermined her appreciation for Parnell's tactic as she had tried to challenge it herself. Emmeline's statement that Richard 'pointed out' the policy to her suggests that just as Parnell was part of her political education, so too was her husband. It also presents Emmeline as less politically aware than Richard as he had to explain the policy to her. However, Emmeline did have less political experience than Richard who had stood as a candidate twice and was also twenty-four years

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<sup>39</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 55.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Power O'Connor, *Memoirs of an Old Parliamentarian*, 2 vols (London: Ernest Benn, 1929), I, pp. 9-10.

older than her. Jill Liddington and Jill Norris in *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* argue that Emmeline was only 'drawn into the suffrage campaign' through her marriage, thus her political education was in its early days.<sup>41</sup> Liddington and Norris overlook Emmeline's attendance at suffrage meetings with her mother when she was fourteen years old.<sup>42</sup> Christabel also connected her mother's political career with her marriage: claiming Emmeline's 'career began with her marriage' as it 'admitted her to a share in the political activities of her husband'.<sup>43</sup> Emmeline's marriage to Richard was part of her political education too and though she did not recognise the efficacy of Parnell's policy on her own, she soon applied the lesson she had learned to her own cause.

The inclusion of Parnell in *My Own Story* demonstrates how influential he was on Emmeline. It also connected with the motivation behind the book itself as *My Own Story* was written for an American audience. Parnell had campaigned in America himself, raising \$200,000 after touring 62 cities.<sup>44</sup> By including him in her story, Emmeline was connecting herself to an eminent figure. She made this explicitly clear in a speech reported in *The Times* as she claimed her mission was 'precisely the same as the visits of Mr. Parnell' and other Irish leaders.<sup>45</sup> Parnell was an important figure for the suffragettes. He was featured throughout *Votes for Women* and O'Brien's work on his life was used as a source of inspiration and an example of double standards in relation to gender. For Emmeline though, Parnell's most important policies for the WSPU were the anti-government policy and obstruction.

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<sup>41</sup> Jill Liddington & Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement*, (London: Virago, 1978), pp. 74 & 167.

<sup>42</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, ed. Frederick Pethick-Lawrence (London: Hutchinson, 1959), p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, 'At a Banquet Given by the Cork Farmers' Club, March 21<sup>st</sup> 1880' in *Words of the Dead Chief*, pp. 41-43, at 42; Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 292-3.

<sup>45</sup> 'Mrs. Pankhurst's Tour', *The Times*, 20 October 1913, p. 8.

### **3.2. Opposition to all government candidates and party independence**

Emmeline Pankhurst does not credit Parnell with the creation of the anti-government policy but rather that it was ‘most successfully pursued by Mr Parnell’.<sup>46</sup> The origins of the tactics are discussed by Billington-Greig and Sylvia Pankhurst: Billington-Greig credits Charles Gavan Duffy (a Young Irelander) and Irish nationalists of 1852 but Sylvia Pankhurst claims that the policy was Josephine Butler’s and that it was ‘much advertised’ by the WSPU that it was hers and Parnell’s.<sup>47</sup> Josephine Butler was an important social reformer who campaigned against the Contagious Diseases Act which forced the examination of women suspected of having a venereal disease. Butler was also an advocate for women’s suffrage. She references her policy in her autobiography, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade*, and how the Committee of the National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts were ‘organizing opposition to the Government candidate’ in Colchester in 1870.<sup>48</sup> The policy had therefore already been used for the causes of Ireland and women before Emmeline and the WSPU adopted it. This section will analyse what made the policy militant, how the WSPU put it into action and how the press and political parties responded.

#### **3.2.1. Militancy of the policy**

Although an election policy may not appear militant, militancy - as argued in the introduction - was not necessarily about violence or unconstitutional methods. Militancy, for Emmeline, was about forcing the Government to act, awakening women, and having them fight their own cause. These prerequisites of militancy applied to the anti-government policy and Parnell also recognised the importance of the strategy in applying pressure to the Government and rousing

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<sup>46</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 55.

<sup>47</sup> Billington-Greig, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, p. 200; Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (London: Virago, 1977), p. 243.

<sup>48</sup> Josephine Butler, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade*, (London: Horace Marshall & Son, 1911), p. 25.

the Irish nation. The forceful nature of Parnell's policy was documented by Emmeline in *My Own Story*. She claimed it was designed to 'force it to surrender' in reference to the government.<sup>49</sup> Emmeline, Christabel and Sylvia Pankhurst were all impacted by Richard's election loss in 1885. All three of them reiterate the militancy of the election strategy through their language choices of 'force', 'forced' and 'pressure' in relation to Parnell's relationship with the Liberals.<sup>50</sup> 'Force' was also used in reference to William Gladstone's response to the 1885 election as an article in *Votes for Women* in 1912 credited Parnell's election manoeuvres as achieving 'the forcible conversion of Mr. Gladstone to Home Rule in 1885'.<sup>51</sup> Not only was this a militant tactic then, it was also a successful one as it transformed the opinion of Gladstone and forced him to take notice of Ireland and Home Rule. Christabel, quoted in a 1907 *Daily Mail* article, wanted to emulate this success for the WSPU: 'if they could make their power felt at by-elections they could bring the Government to a sense of the strength of their movement'.<sup>52</sup> Christabel's phrase 'bring the Government to a sense' emphasises how the WSPU were employing the anti-government party policy to force the government to acknowledge women's suffrage as an important issue.

Parnell also used similar language to 'force' in reference to his policy. In a speech delivered in Ennis in 1879, Parnell explained that 'by opposing every English party that refused to do justice to Ireland, they could compel justice to be done to this country'.<sup>53</sup> The use of the term 'compel' reinforces the idea that the IPP wanted to *force* the British Government to act on the issue of Home Rule by holding the political parties to ransom through using their support as a weapon. The anti-government policy relied on the IPP being independent from the other

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<sup>49</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 18.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*; Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 24; Christabel Pankhurst, 'The Policy of the Social and Political Union', *Manchester Guardian*, 23 April 1908, p. 11; Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 75.

<sup>51</sup> 'Violent and Lawless Action', p. 700.

<sup>52</sup> 'The Stepney Fight', *Daily Mail*, 6 May 1907, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, 'At Ennis, June 20<sup>th</sup> 1879' in *Words of the Dead Chief*, p. 28.

political parties, thus able to switch support when necessary. By remaining politically independent, Parnell ensured the IPP was more powerful as it was able to manoeuvre its support effectively to guarantee a government pledge. In two different speeches, delivered in London 1880 and Fintona 1881, Parnell warned the audience that the IPP needed to have an attitude of ‘reserve’ towards the present Government party and that they should act ‘aloof’ and ‘refuse to accept any situation until it is in the power of the Irish people’.<sup>54</sup> By withholding support from the Liberal Party, the IPP were intending to put pressure on the British Government to act. The effectiveness of this policy was observed by many including opponents of Home Rule such as Edward Carson and Henry Brougham Leech. They described the Liberal Party as being ‘at the bidding of the Irish Party’ and that Michael Davitt and Parnell had ‘brought Mr. Gladstone to his knees in 1886’ as the defeat of the Government of Ireland Bill in 1886 resulted in a general election and the Liberal’s loss of power.<sup>55</sup> The language used by Carson and Brougham Leech presents Gladstone as being held hostage by the IPP, expressing their worry over the increasing power of the IPP. The WSPU had acknowledged this success in Gladstone’s forced conversion. Both Parnell and Emmeline recognised the militancy of this policy and how, if successful, it could pressurise the government to act. Josephine Butler had also acknowledged the power of the anti-government policy when she employed it in 1870. For Butler, the policy highlighted that the question of the Contagious Diseases Acts ‘was not one which they could trifle with or ignore’.<sup>56</sup> By opposing the political party that was in power, political movements were able to raise awareness of their issue and pressurise the government.

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<sup>54</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, ‘Public Meeting at St James’s Hall, London, June 6<sup>th</sup> 1880’ in *Words of the Dead Chief*, p. 47; Charles Stewart Parnell, ‘Meeting at Fintona, September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1881’ in *Words of the Dead Chief*, pp. 62-63, at 62.

<sup>55</sup> Edward Carson, ‘Foreword’ in *1848 and 1912: The Continuity of the Irish Revolutionary Movement*, ed. by Henry Brougham Leech (London: Simpkin, 1912), pp. v-ix, at vii; Henry Brougham Leech, ‘Preface’ in *1848 and 1912*, pp. x-xv, at x.

<sup>56</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade*, p. 33.

The emphasis on independence as part of Parnell's policy also served to rouse the consciousness of both Irish nationalists and the suffragettes. Being independent ensured that both the IPP and the WSPU would always put their own cause first. Parnell emphasised the importance of independence in a speech delivered in 1881 as he warned that English political parties had used the 'means of patronage' to 'destroy the independence of every Irish party until now'.<sup>57</sup> The IPP's neutrality was therefore a defence against the attack of political parties, raising the spirits of the IPP members. The policy also shifted the power towards the IPP instead of the government. In an interview with a *New York World* reporter in 1890, Parnell claimed that there was 'no doubt that the Liberal party is bound to Home Rule, and cannot come into power without it'.<sup>58</sup> Despite this being claimed as a success, there was also a downside. Conor Cruise O'Brien argues 'if the liberals were pledged to , the Irish party was pledged to the liberals and its days of altogether independent action were over'.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, if a pledge was broken then the IPP was still able to oppose the government, regaining their independence. This was not the case in 1908 according to *Votes for Women* who observed the IPP's election strategy. The article described the IPP as having 'allowed the Liberal Party to go to the polls with a distinct pledge not to deal with Home Rule'.<sup>60</sup> By allying themselves with the Liberals, the IPP had lost its power, thus Parnell's policy was focused on empowering party members too. The article continues, describing how 'the rank and file of the Irish party began to grow restive' and that they announced their opposition to Winston Churchill (a Liberal MP at the time) in Manchester.<sup>61</sup> This led to Churchill offering a pledge that appeased the IPP. This article suggests that independence was a way of standing up for themselves and expressing

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<sup>57</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, 'Speech at Derry during Tyrone Election Contest, August 30<sup>th</sup> 1881' in *Words of the Dead Chief*, p. 61.

<sup>58</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, 'Interview with *New York World* Representative, December 1890' in *Words of the Dead Chief*, p. 144.

<sup>59</sup> Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party 1880-90* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 192.

<sup>60</sup> 'Political Tactics', *Votes for Women*, 7 May 1908, p. 146.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

their dissatisfaction with the Liberals. The WSPU therefore interpreted the policy as empowering and ensuring the cause would be taken seriously. Despite the success of the IPP in that instance, Christabel warned the IPP that Churchill's pledge was 'of a most unsubstantial character' and gave 'no guarantee that Mr. Asquith really regarded himself as bound'.<sup>62</sup> It was in reference to this election that Christabel threatened to speak 'from the life of Parnell', reminding the IPP of Parnell's policy and the importance of independence.<sup>63</sup> Parnell had offered a warning in 1891 that if the IPP lost its independence: 'you may bid good bye to hopes of benefits and reform for Ireland by political action and that powerful constitutional weapon which I forged for you'.<sup>64</sup> From the articles in *Votes for Women*, the WSPU argued that this was the case for the IPP prior to 1908.

For the WSPU, independence was vital. As argued in the first chapter, Emmeline recognised how the political parties had formed branches for women, allowing women to do political work on behalf of men. For her, the WSPU was an organisation of women working on their own behalf. Emmeline had previously been part of the ILP and the WSPU was founded by Emmeline and other ILP women. Before the WSPU was founded, Emmeline had attempted to ensure women's suffrage would be advocated by the ILP, moving a resolution at a conference in 1902 that 'in order to improve the economic and social condition of women it is necessary to take immediate steps to secure the granting of the suffrage to women on the same terms on which it is or may be granted to men'.<sup>65</sup> This was not Emmeline's only attempt as she also attended a Labour Conference in 1904, 'determined if possible to induce the members to prepare a suffrage bill to be laid before Parliament in the approaching session'.<sup>66</sup> Yet she was not optimistic, claiming she 'knew' her plan would be 'bitterly opposed by a strong minority'

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<sup>62</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, 'Political Notes', *Votes for Women*, 30 April 1908, p. 128.

<sup>63</sup> 'Incidents of Manchester Fight', p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, 'At Limerick, May 24<sup>th</sup> 1891' in *Words of the Dead Chief*, pp. 160-161, at 161.

<sup>65</sup> 'At Liverpool', *I.L.P. News*, April 1902, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 38.

who favoured universal adult suffrage, rather than fighting for women's suffrage first.<sup>67</sup> She recognised the futility of her actions, advocating for the WSPU to be independent so that women's suffrage would come first. The early WSPU members who were part of the ILP had at first praised the independent policy, arguing that they were replicating the ILP. Ethel Snowden claimed that 'an independent platform is the only one' that a mass of women would accept.<sup>68</sup> Independence was therefore about appealing to *all* not just Labour or Conservatives. By uniting women regardless of political class, Emmeline was spreading militancy as other women would discover their militant identity by awakening to the importance of women's suffrage. In *Votes for Women* in 1911, an article described how women had left their previous political parties to 'stand shoulder to shoulder in fighting the great battle of women's enfranchisement'.<sup>69</sup> The phrase 'shoulder to shoulder' had previously been used by Parnell in 1891 as he emphasised how Irishmen would 'refuse to surrender their independence to an English political party'.<sup>70</sup> Political independence was therefore about ensuring unity. Emmeline also acknowledged that strength was necessary in enforcing the policy as she claimed that the Irish nationalists had 'no leader strong enough to carry on Parnell's anti-government policy' until John Redmond took it up again.<sup>71</sup> This phrase demonstrates Emmeline's admiration for Parnell as she considered him a strong leader. It also implies that the policy was about strengthening the IPP, thus rousing its members. The anti-government party policy and its emphasis on independence were designed to force political parties to act, raise awareness to the cause and to unite members of an organisation to fight for their own cause. It was therefore, by Emmeline's parameters, a militant tactic.

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Ethel Snowden, 'Women and the Socialist Conference', *Labour Record*, April 1907, p. 33.

<sup>69</sup> 'The Outlook', *Votes for Women*, 14 July 1911, pp. 669-670, at 669.

<sup>70</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, 'At Kells, August 16<sup>th</sup> 1891' in *Words of the Dead Chief*, p. 166.

<sup>71</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 55.



### 3.2.2. Policy in action

The originator of the WSPU's policy was attributed by Annie Kenney to Christabel Pankhurst only. She claimed it was 'Christabel's second act of statesmanship'.<sup>72</sup> However, in *Unshackled*, the idea for the opposition to government party and political independence is credited to both her and Emmeline. Christabel recounted how after working with the Independent Labour Party, both had come to the 'conclusion that who would be politically free herself must strike the blow' and have an 'independent women's movement' which resulted in the WSPU being 'free of all political allegiance'.<sup>73</sup> Both Emmeline and Christabel use 'we' in reference to the adoption of this policy, although Emmeline does suggest that there was an element of destiny surrounding her in particular: 'I was destined to put into practice'.<sup>74</sup> Such a phrase connects to her birthday, which, as explained in the previous chapter, she connected to the French revolution, suggesting politics was her destined vocation. The policy was a collaboration between Emmeline and Christabel as Emmeline had her own political knowledge too as part of her upbringing and marriage. Billington-Greig, although critical of the Pankhursts, acknowledged this knowledge:

Mrs Pankhurst and Christabel had a knowledge of suffrage history and of the political dances that had defeated earlier efforts which was unique, for Dr Pankhurst had done drafting and pioneer work right back in the days of John Stuart Mill. Therefore they had felt and thought deeply on the methods necessary to win victory. They had formed a policy and were prepared to take the risks of carrying it out.<sup>75</sup>

Emmeline and Christabel had developed the by-election policy together in the hope of forcing MPs to take up the question of women's suffrage. It was through their experience, especially Richard's election loss, that the policy of independence and opposition to government

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<sup>72</sup> Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, (London: E. Arnold & Company, 1924), p. 49.

<sup>73</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 43 & 68.

<sup>74</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 18.

<sup>75</sup> Teresa Billington-Greig, 'The Birth of the Women's Freedom League' in *The Non-Violent Militant: Selected Writings of Teresa Billington-Greig*, ed. Carol McPhee & Ann Fitzgerald, (London: Routledge, 1987), pp. 102-108, at 107.

candidates was adopted. This policy was to be a stepping-stone for Emmeline and the WSPU's militancy.

The WSPU adopted the policy of opposition to the government party, and it became part of the WSPU's 1908 constitution.<sup>76</sup> The policy was described as 'Opposition to whatever Government is in power until such times as the franchise is granted' and 'Participation in Parliamentary Elections in opposition to the Government candidate, and independently of all other candidates'.<sup>77</sup> This tactic differed to Josephine Butler's use of the policy as another candidate, John Baxter Langley, was put forward in 1870 to split the vote as the Liberal Sir Henry Storks had been a supporter of the Contagious Diseases Acts which Butler was campaigning against. Storks was defeated and the Conservative candidate Alexander Learmouth was victorious as Langley had withdrawn the day of the election. The WSPU were instead only campaigning against the government rather than campaigning for opponents or other political parties. Independence was also at the forefront as section 1 in the 'Methods' section referred to 'Action entirely independent of all political parties'.<sup>78</sup> In a pamphlet for the Women's Exhibition in 1909, the policy was also advertised and the point was emphasised that the campaign was not against Liberalism but rather the support that an MP might give to the Liberal Government.<sup>79</sup> This was reiterated in *Votes for Women* in 1908: 'we fight against the Liberal Government, not because it is Liberal, but because it is the Government of the day', demonstrating Parnell's anti-government election policy in action.<sup>80</sup> In *My Own Story*, Emmeline described her policy as 'in opposition to a Government who refuse votes to women'

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<sup>76</sup> 'Constitution', *Votes for Women*, 2 July 1908, p. 280.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> The National Women's Social and Political Union, *The Women's Exhibition 1909*, (London: The Woman's Press, 1909), pp. 24-5.

<sup>80</sup> 'Special Correspondent', *Votes for Women*, 21 May 1908, p. 186.

in direct comparison to Parnell's opposition to a government who refused home rule which forced Gladstone who was 'obliged' to bring in a Home Rule Bill.<sup>81</sup>

For Emmeline, the first example of when this policy 'began to be noticed' was in 1906 at the Cocker mouth by-election as the Liberal candidate was defeated by a majority of 609 by the Unionist candidate.<sup>82</sup> Her account summarising the by-election campaigns provides a more accurate idea of how this policy could differ in results:

Throughout the summer and autumn we devoted ourselves to the by-election work, sometimes, actually defeating the Liberal candidate, sometimes reducing the Liberal majority, and always raising a tremendous sensation and gaining hundreds of new members to the Union.<sup>83</sup>

The use of 'actually' implies that the defeats were surprising suggesting that the WSPU did not necessarily expect success. However, the by-election policy was successful in other ways such as gaining experience of campaigning and in gaining publicity. Emmeline recounted her experience in 1907, claiming that the by-election work 'was such a new thing in English politics that we attracted enormous attention wherever we went'.<sup>84</sup> By-election work was not necessarily new, but the WSPU had made it their own by taking over towns temporarily and conducting meetings. Emmeline claimed that the WSPU 'sometimes 'cornered' all the good halls and left the candidate nothing but schoolhouses' for meetings and that by conducting meetings themselves, the crowds were instead 'listening to the women' rather than the candidates.<sup>85</sup> By-election campaigning was therefore a way for the WSPU to ensure women were heard even if this was not reflected in electoral success.

To be successful on the same scale as Parnell, this by-election campaign would need to ensure most of the Liberal candidates were defeated to force the Liberals to acknowledge votes

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<sup>81</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, p. 80.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*.

for women as a central issue. The Liberals stayed in power from 1905 to World War One although in some cases they were in a minority and relied upon a coalition with Labour and the IPP such as in 1910. As explored in the next chapter, the WSPU adapted their by-election policy in 1912 to be used against all parties of the coalition including the IPP, using Parnell's policies against his own party. Emmeline described the campaign in 1910 and how the WSPU was in the same position as Parnell had been in 1885. She claimed that, as Asquith had not completely promised a women's suffrage bill, the WSPU would still oppose the Liberals as 'the Irish opposed the Liberal Party, with the result that it was returned by such a narrow majority that the Liberal Government was dependent on the Irish vote in Parliament' and 'were obliged to bring in a Home Rule Bill'.<sup>86</sup> However, this raises the issue that the WSPU could not have a similar result to Parnell as they had no party that the Government could depend on to push women's suffrage through. Therefore, the Liberals became dependent on Labour and the IPP again, but this did not ensure a women's suffrage bill. It did strengthen the position of the IPP who could use their hold on the balance of power to force Home Rule to the forefront. It is a significant observation by Emmeline though as she again recognised the success of an Irish nationalist against Gladstone, just as she did with the Fenians. The opposition to the Liberals by the WSPU was a controversial decision amongst other suffrage workers as Emmeline recounted being 'begged' by other suffrage societies and to overlook the election due to the struggle over the People's Budget.<sup>87</sup> The budget, focusing on taxation to fund social welfare reforms, was blocked by the House of Lords and sparked a constitutional crisis. However, Emmeline argued that they had already been implored to drop their policy in 1906 for a fiscal issue and this was not a one-time thing. Instead, she emphasised that for the WSPU, there was 'only one political issue': women's suffrage.<sup>88</sup> According to her, the policy was a

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p. 147.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, p. 148.

success: of the forty constituencies the WSPU campaigned in, every one of them had a reduced Liberal majority and eighteen seats were taken from the Liberals.<sup>89</sup> It was certainly displayed as such in *Votes for Women* on 16 December 1910 as the front cover cartoon depicted Asquith as a general, surveying his lost soldiers/constituencies (Figure 13).<sup>90</sup> In the article underneath, it is described how the constituencies referenced in the cartoon (Birkenhead, Darlington, North Islington, Torquay and West St. Pancras) had been part of the WSPU's campaign and the Liberals had been defeated in each. Asquith's depiction as a general suggests that politics was a battleground which, though the Liberals may have survived, the WSPU were still able to inflict losses.<sup>91</sup> The election policy of the WSPU did not require the Liberals to be defeated in order to be successful, rather any loss of support was seen as a victory as the message of women's suffrage was pushed further. Therefore, by enacting the policy, the WSPU were being militant: putting themselves first and forcing others to listen to them. They could not recreate Parnell's success but they were able to embrace his motivations behind the policy: putting pressure on the Government and putting the cause first.

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> A. Patriot, 'General Asquith', *Votes for Women*, 16 December 1910, p. 177.

<sup>91</sup> 'The Outlook', *Votes for Women*, 16 December 1910, p. 177.

# VOTES FOR WOMEN

EDITED BY FREDERICK AND EMMELINE PETHICK LAWRENCE.

VOL. IV. (New Series), No. 145.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1910.

Price 1d. Weekly (Post Free).



GENERAL ASQUITH: "We have held our ground, but if it hadn't been for those women we should not have suffered these losses, and we should have held a position independent of the Irish."

13. A. Patriot, 'General Asquith', *Votes for Women*, 16 December 1910, p. 177.

### 3.2.3. Response to the policy

By putting women's suffrage first, the WSPU did face its fair share of critics especially in relation to its election policy. As referenced by Emmeline, the WSPU was criticised by other suffrage organisations for campaigning against the Liberals as there were fears that they would alienate any support. The feelings of the Liberal supporters were so great that the WSPU were sometimes met with violence during their campaigns. Emmeline Pankhurst experienced such

violence in 1908 at Newton Abbot where the WSPU had been campaigning for the Unionist candidate. In *My Own Story*, Emmeline described being approached by ‘young men, who wore the red rosettes of the Liberal Party’ who ‘had just heard of their candidate’s defeat, and they were mad with rage and humiliation’.<sup>92</sup> The men approached Emmeline and Nellie Martel (another member of the WSPU) and pointed to them ‘crying: “They did it! Those women did it!”’.<sup>93</sup> The Liberals therefore placed the blame on the WSPU even if they were not wholly responsible. The women were then ‘deluged with a shower of clay and rotten eggs’, they then ‘seized Mrs Martel first, and began beating her over the head with their fists’ and Emmeline was then given ‘a staggering blow’ to the back of her head and was ‘flung violently to the ground’.<sup>94</sup> In this case, the police protected the women but the experience left a long lasting impression on Emmeline and Nellie: ‘It was many months before either Mrs Martel or I recovered from our injuries’.<sup>95</sup> An account of the incident was featured in the *Daily Mail* on 20 January 1908 as the reporter described the image of the women after the attack:

Their clothing was covered with mud, their hats and veils were torn, Mrs. Pankhurst was suffering great pain from a bruised ankle, and Mrs. Martell from the wrenching her neck had received and the kicks and blows inflicted upon her.<sup>96</sup>

This violence towards the women because of the by-election policy incited women to use more violent methods to defend themselves. It also highlighted that even if the by-election policy was not to blame for the defeat, liberals assigned the blame anyway. This is clear in Emmeline’s interview in the *Daily Mail*: ‘You see what cause they think has defeated the Liberal – ‘Votes for Women.’<sup>97</sup> This was not the only example of violence as Emmeline recounted suffrage speakers being hit with ‘a blistering fire of dried peas’, ‘some pretty rough horse-play’ and

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<sup>92</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 84.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid* pp. 84-5.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid* p. 85.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Furious Mob- Mrs. Pankhurst’s Story’, *Daily Mail*, 20 January 1908, p. 5.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

‘even with some brutality’.<sup>98</sup> Through their policy opposing the Government, the WSPU received threats of violence and in some cases were attacked and injured. Josephine Butler recounted similar treatment during her campaign. In Pontefract in 1872, Butler faced ‘rage, profanity and obscenity of men, of their words and their threats’ as well as men shaking ‘their fists in our faces’.<sup>99</sup> Butler described this as a reaction to women’s action: ‘the new teaching and revolt of women had stirred up the very depths of hell’.<sup>100</sup> Both Butler’s and Emmeline’s descriptions imply that when political women were campaigning for women’s issues, there was always the risk of violence no matter how peaceful their methods were. For the WSPU, they decided that such violence would not go unanswered, thus their forceful actions increased.

In *My Own Story*, Emmeline connected by-elections with the intensification of militancy: ‘I shall deal no further with these by-elections than is necessary to show the effect of our work on the Government, and its subsequent effect on our movement – which was to force us into more and more militancy’.<sup>101</sup> For Emmeline, the violence combined with the lack of response by the Government was responsible for more forceful methods used by the WSPU such as the smashing of windows. Emmeline, after connecting the by-elections to increasing force, claimed that she would ‘leave it to the honest judgement of my readers to place where it ought rightly to be placed the responsibility for those first broken windows’, associating the by-election policy with window smashing.<sup>102</sup> However, the first windows broken, according to Emmeline in *My Own Story*, was after the arrests of some suffragettes at a failed deputation and not due to by-election campaigning.<sup>103</sup> Emmeline was shifting the blame for the damage onto the Government and though the by-elections were not the cause of the first broken windows, the Government’s lack of action to deputations and election policies served as

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<sup>98</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 81.

<sup>99</sup> Butler, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, p. 49.

<sup>101</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 97.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, p. 108.



motivation for the WSPU for future methods. The WSPU had failed to emulate Parnell's success despite using his policy. This was due to their lack of political party and the inability to represent themselves in Parliament. The failure led to more aggressive actions such as the breaking of windows. The policy was still a success in rousing the consciousness of the suffragettes who were able to use the by-election campaigns to speak about women's suffrage and silence male politicians.

Despite the inclusion of Emmeline's story in the *Daily Mail*, it was not supportive of the WSPU's election policy. In an article from November 1906, the policy was criticised as being 'a distinctly feminine example of logic' as they were opposing the Liberal politician 'because the Liberal Government will not give votes to women'.<sup>104</sup> The phrase 'distinctly feminine' is used to mock the WSPU's policy implying that it was illogical. This language has also been used by historians such as Fulford implying that this preconception remained into the 1950s. Roger Fulford, unlike the *Daily Mail*, acknowledged that this policy was Parnell's but again labelled it as a 'strange example of Irish logic', inferring that the policy was illogical whilst casting aspersions on the Irish as well as the WSPU.<sup>105</sup> This implies that 'Irish logic' was depicted as 'feminine logic' in the press, thus emasculating Irish politicians. Irishmen endeavoured to correct this image through founding organisations such as the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884, of which Parnell was a patron.<sup>106</sup> However, the *Daily Mail* never refers to the policy as Parnell's, unlike Emmeline who references it in *My Own Story*. Emmeline and the WSPU sought to counteract the claim that the policy was illogical by connecting it to Parnell: a politician labelled by Gladstone as a 'man of genius'.<sup>107</sup> Nellie Martel, in an interview

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<sup>104</sup> 'By-Election Tactics', *Daily Mail*, 22 November 1906, p. 10.

<sup>105</sup> Fulford, *Votes for Women*, p. 109.

<sup>106</sup> For more information see: Patrick F. McDevitt, 'Muscular Catholicism: Nationalism, Masculinity and Gaelic Team Sports, 1884-1916', *Gender & History*, 9.2., (August 1997), pp. 262-284, <<https://doi-org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/1468-0424.00058>>

<sup>107</sup> Margot Asquith, *The Autobiography of Margot Asquith*, (London, Thornton Butterworth, 1920), p. 152.

with the *Manchester Guardian*, credited Parnell with the policy.<sup>108</sup> The WSPU were employing Parnell as a defence against claims of feminine logic by emphasising it was *his* policy. They were connecting their movement with Parnell in the hope they would be taken more seriously. However, this was not the case. In the *Manchester Guardian*, Christabel wrote in that the WSPU was ‘adopting the policy which was pursued with such marked success by Parnell’.<sup>109</sup> In response to her letter, the editor commented that Christabel was ‘a little cynical’ and that the Pankhursts have done little ‘to encourage’ the Liberal Party.<sup>110</sup> This response dismisses the significance of the policy and emphasises that the WSPU should be more encouraging to the Liberal Party rather than opposing it. This relates to Helen Lewis’s argument that ‘women have always been told to be nice’ in relation to women revolutionaries.<sup>111</sup> The editor dismisses the WSPU’s policy of opposition and suggests that they be nicer to the Liberal Party instead.

As well as presenting the policy as illogical, the press itself was confused over the policy. In a 1906 cartoon published in *Punch*, a suffragette on a horse called ‘Labour’ is depicted as falling over the first jump labelled ‘Huddersfield’ (Figure 14). This was in relation to the by-election of 1906 and the caption describes how the suffragette had supported the ‘defeated Labour candidate’ but would now be taking ‘the field against the Liberal Candidate in all future contests’.<sup>112</sup> The cartoon was presenting the Huddersfield by-election as a major defeat for the suffragettes and suggesting that their future policy would also be defeated as it was a Liberal who had won at that election. However, this cartoon is wholly inaccurate. The Huddersfield by-election of 1906 took place in November whilst the Cocker mouth by-election that Emmeline labelled as the one that people began to take notice of occurred in August 1906, thus not the suffragette’s first jump. The caption also suggests that the WSPU began by

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<sup>108</sup> ‘Women’s Suffrage’, *Manchester Guardian*, 14 April 1908, p. 7.

<sup>109</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, ‘The Policy of the Social and Political Union’, p. 11.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Helen Lewis, *Difficult Women: A History of Feminism in 11 Fights*, (London: Jonathon Cape, 2020), p. 4.

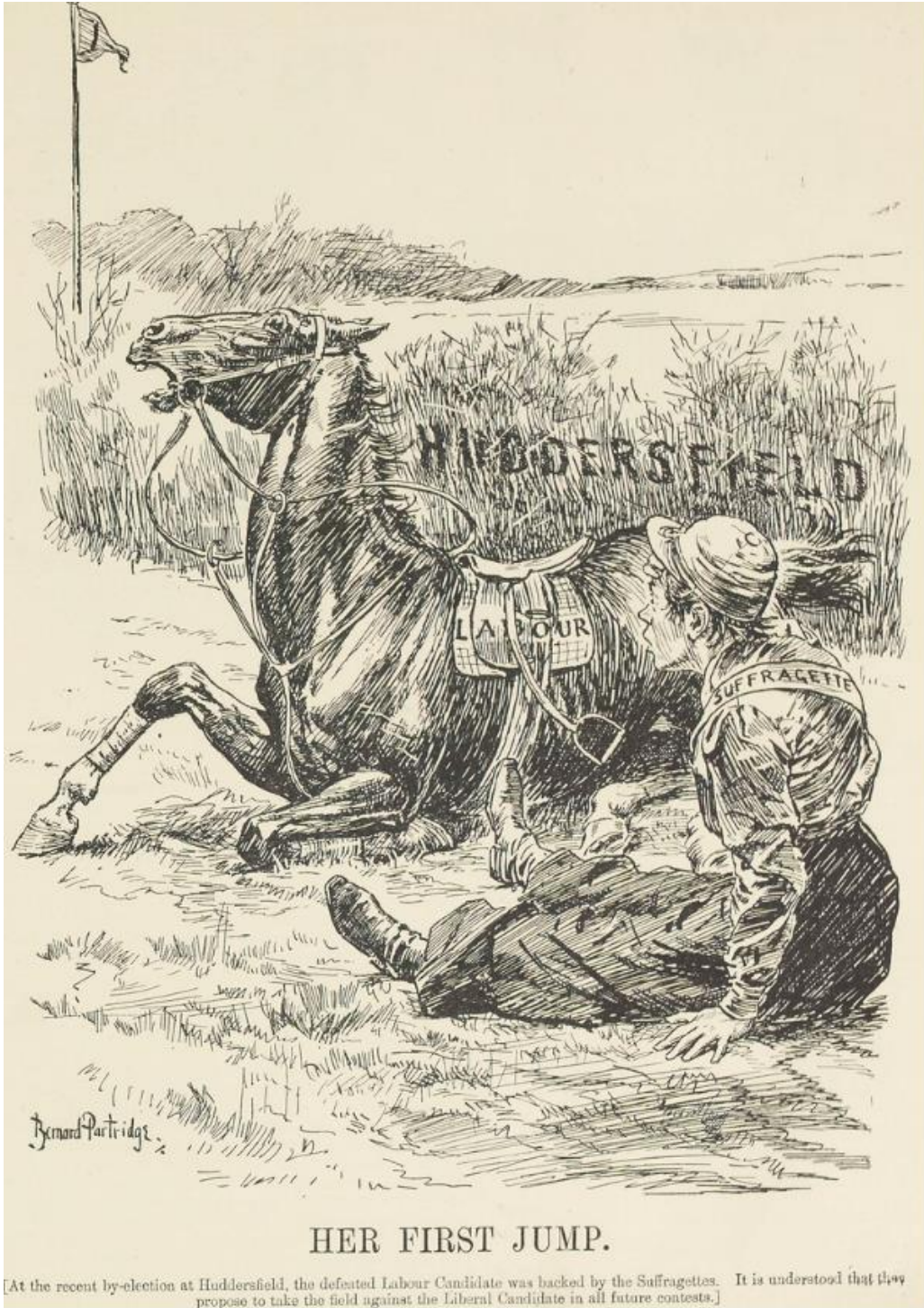
<sup>112</sup> Bernard Partridge, ‘Her First Jump’, *Punch*, 5 December 1906, p. 399.

supporting Labour candidates, then turned to opposing the Liberals but as the Cockermouth election occurred first, this was not the case. The WSPU opposed the Liberals in Huddersfield too. Emmeline recounted how the Liberals had handed out handbills with the phrase: 'MEN OF HUDDERSFIELD DON'T BE MISLED BY SOCIALISTS, SUFFRAGETTES OR TORIES. VOTE FOR SHERWELL'.<sup>113</sup> This handbill was also used by Sylvia Pankhurst to prove how the candidates who claimed to be supporters of the suffragettes were not sincere as Arthur Sherwell, the Liberal candidate, was 'constantly announcing that he was in favour of Women's Suffrage' yet released that handbill.<sup>114</sup> The WSPU had therefore encouraged the vote against the Liberals but they were not supporting Labour either- they remained independent.

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<sup>113</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 70.

<sup>114</sup> Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette: The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement 1905-1910* (New York, 1970), p. 128.



14. Bernard Partridge, 'Her First Jump', *Punch*, 5 December 1906, p. 399.

It was instead the work of Eva Gore-Booth and the Women's Representation Committee.<sup>115</sup> These were not suffragettes but rather suffragists. The cartoonist Bernard Partridge had published other cartoons that were supportive of women's suffrage but not for the suffragettes. In a cartoon titled 'The Shrieking Sister' (Figure 15), a suffragette holding a 'women's suffrage' sign is interacting with 'the sensible woman' who bemoans the suffragette: "YOU HELP OUR CAUSE? WHY, YOU'RE ITS WORST ENEMY!".<sup>116</sup> This cartoon implies that Partridge supported women's suffrage as he labels the woman 'sensible' who is criticising the suffragette but still calls it 'our cause' suggesting she is a suffragist. The confusion over the suffragette in 'Her First Jump' may have been that they were simply campaigning at the same time, thus the confusion, or that as they were campaigning against the Government, it was unclear who the WSPU were campaigning for. Gore-Booth was an Irish suffragist who had worked with Christabel in Manchester on various committees which Christabel referred to as her 'political apprenticeship'.<sup>117</sup> Gore-Booth's sister, Constance Markievicz, was an ardent Irish nationalist and was involved in the Easter Rising in Ireland in 1916. Eva Gore-Booth's campaign for the Labour candidate was due to a letter from the Labour Whip which claimed the party would present a Women's Suffrage Bill in the next session.<sup>118</sup> In a letter responding to Christabel Pankhurst in the *Manchester Guardian*, Gore-Booth argued that the anti-Government policy was 'a source of mingled amusement and exasperation to the electors' and that the difference between the WSPU and the Irish Party was that 'the Irish Party showed their independence by running their own candidates and building up an independent party'.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> For more information on Eva Gore-Booth and the Women's Representation Committee see Sonja Tiernan, *Eva Gore-Booth: An Image of Such Politics*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), Ch 6: Defending Barmaids: Legislative Proposals and Winston Churchill, pp. 111-134.

<sup>116</sup> Bernard Partridge, 'The Shrieking Sister', *Punch*, 17 January 1906, p. 39.

<sup>117</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 41.

<sup>118</sup> Eva Gore-Booth, 'Women's Suffrage', *Manchester Guardian*, 18 February 1907, p. 5.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*





Bernard Partridge .c

THE SHRIEKING SISTER.

THE SENSIBLE WOMAN. "YOU HELP OUR CAUSE? WHY, YOU'RE ITS WORST ENEMY!"

15. Bernard Partridge, 'The Shrieking Sister', *Punch*, 17 January 1906, p. 39.

Gore-Booth's criticism is valid, apparent by Partridge's confusion, as by encouraging people to vote against the Government, it was unclear who the WSPU were campaigning for as in the IPP's case it was the IPP itself or Conservative in 1885, and with Butler in 1870 it was the temporary candidate Langley. Gore-Booth's campaign is significant as it demonstrates that there were more election campaigns than that of the WSPU and that the WSPU faced criticism for their tactics by other suffrage societies. However, Gore-Booth's letter to the *Manchester Guardian* also provides an acknowledgement of the ILP's 'refusal' to 'carry out their written pledge' which Gore-Booth's organisation 'strongly condemn[ed]'.<sup>120</sup> It was actions such as these that spurred the Pankhursts on to remain independent and to campaign against the political party in power instead of supporting other parties.

The ILP were also critical of the WSPU's policy. Emmeline, despite the WSPU's emphasis on independence, had remained a member of the ILP in the early years of the WSPU. She still held a position on the National Administrative Council. There were still connections between the ILP and the WSPU despite its political independence policy.<sup>121</sup> The *Labour Record*, a Labour newspaper, also published the WSPU's programme of speakers.<sup>122</sup> The idea that someone on the Council could campaign against their own party led to disagreements including at a conference in 1907. In an account from the *Labour Record*, the resolution was raised that:

this Conference, having regard to the action of certain members of the party in the contests at Cockermonth and Huddersfield, who publicly dissociated themselves and their election policy from the Labour candidates who were members and adopted candidates of the I.L.P., declares such action is detrimental to the party and that loyalty to the constitution and policy of the party is an essential condition of membership.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> For more information on the connections between the ILP and the WSPU see Krista Cowman, 'Incipient Toryism'? The Women's Social and Political Union and the Independent Labour Party, 1903-14', *History Workshop Journal*, 53.1, (Spring 2002), pp. 128-148, < <https://doi-org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/hwj/53.1.128>>

<sup>122</sup> 'W.S.P.U. Programme', *Labour Record*, May 1907, p. 51.

<sup>123</sup> 'The Women's Success', *Labour Record*, April 1907, p. 29.

The term ‘detrimental’ stresses how damaging the WSPU’s policy was according to the ILP. Emmeline defended her policy when some of the women (Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Snowden, Miss Ford, Mrs. Cobden-Sanderson, and Miss McWilliam) pledged to never go down to a constituency unless helping Labour: ‘she would never be a party to giving up her future freedom of action’ and the suffragists ‘never had opposed the Labour candidates’.<sup>124</sup> She even offered to resign despite her previous loyalty to the ILP. The resolution was disposed without need for a vote, but Sylvia recounted the event and how a few months later Emmeline and some WSPU members had ‘quietly withdrawn from the I.L.P. without warning’ and that this was ‘calculated to stimulate the growth of a large non-party body, and to attract especially the support of wealthy Conservatives opposed to Labour views’.<sup>125</sup> For Sylvia and the ILP, the election policy had been a betrayal.

The depiction of the WSPU abandoning the ILP due to Parnell’s independence policy had been adopted by historians to present Emmeline as a Conservative. Roger Fulford claimed that the Liberals referred to the suffragettes including Emmeline as ‘Toryettes’.<sup>126</sup> His position as a Liberal politician, as referenced by Christabel in a letter to Sylvia complaining about Fulford’s book, likely had an influence on his view of the suffragettes as sympathetic to the Conservatives, as did the influential work of Sylvia Pankhurst which he had a ‘deep sense’ of ‘obligation’ to.<sup>127</sup> Sylvia’s description of Christabel implies the WSPU wanted to be associated with the Conservatives: ‘It was far from her [Christabel’s] wish that Keir Hardie, with his unpopularity in Tory circles, should be intimately associated with the W.S.P.U.’ and Christabel

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>125</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 250.

<sup>126</sup> Fulford, *Votes for Women*, p. 140.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11; Christabel Pankhurst, ‘Christabel to Sylvia, 3 August 1957[?]’ in Richard Pankhurst, ‘Suffragette sisters in old age: unpublished correspondence between Christabel and Sylvia Pankhurst, 1953–57’, *Women’s History Review*, 10.3, (2001), pp. 483–537, at 497–504, at 498–503 <<https://doi-org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/09612020100200295>>; Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, ‘Sylvia to Christabel, 10 July 1957’ in Richard Pankhurst, ‘Suffragette sisters in old age: unpublished correspondence between Christabel and Sylvia Pankhurst, 1953–57’, pp. 494–497, at 495–496.



was not ‘disposed to be enthusiastic about anything which might draw the Suffragettes and the Labour movement into closer union’.<sup>128</sup> Sylvia summarises that any interest Christabel had in socialism had been ‘shed as readily as a garment’.<sup>129</sup> This description of Christabel and the WSPU has been used by socialist feminists such as Mary Davis to argue that ‘the WSPU brand of feminism showed itself to be hostile to the labour movement’.<sup>130</sup> However, Jane Marcus turns this question around asking: ‘Why did Labour repudiate women and the struggle for the vote?’<sup>131</sup> The anti-government policy of the WSPU has been used to present Emmeline and Christabel as Conservatives rather than acknowledging that they were using Parnell’s tactic, and, as the Liberal Party were in power, they were in opposition to the Liberals.

Parnell was able to avoid such criticism as he had not been involved in a political party previously like Emmeline. However, Alan O’Day argues that Parnell’s interaction with the Conservative Party in 1885 has been relatively overlooked in favour of British radicals who were not as sincere in their support for Home Rule as they appeared.<sup>132</sup> Anna Parnell, in *The Tale of a Great Sham*, made the observation that it was ‘taken for granted’ that the ‘only English help to be had was that of the radicals and Socialists’ in relation to Ireland.<sup>133</sup> Instead, she argues that ‘it was just as likely to come from the opposite quarter’.<sup>134</sup> Parnell’s political independence enabled him to accept support from any political party without being presented as betraying the cause. Emmeline’s history with the ILP and her use of Parnell’s policy left her susceptible to accusations she had abandoned her political leanings.

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<sup>128</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 248.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* 247.

<sup>130</sup> Mary Davis, *Sylvia Pankhurst: A Life in Radical Politics*, (London: Pluto Press, 1999), pp. 21-22.

<sup>131</sup> Jane Marcus, ‘Introduction: Re-Reading the Pankhursts and Women’s Suffrage’ in *Suffrage and the Pankhursts*, ed. by Jane Marcus (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-16, at 11.

<sup>132</sup> Alan O’Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism: Parnellite Involvement in British Politics 1880-86*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977), pp. 92-94.

<sup>133</sup> Anna Parnell, *The Tale of a Great Sham*, ed. Dana Hearne, (Dublin: Arlen House, 1986), p. 72.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

For Emmeline Pankhurst, militancy was about pressuring the Government and women fighting for their own cause. Richard's election loss taught her many different lessons: that a small party like the IPP could still be influential, that forcing an issue may be necessary and that independence was important for a political party. The emphasis on independence in Parnell's policy enabled the WSPU to fight for themselves rather than other political groups. As referenced in the first chapter, political parties had begun to set up organisations that included women such as the Primrose League, set up by the Conservatives, and Women's Liberal Associations. These organisations were enabling women to enter politics but only for party issues. The WSPU's independence policy was about placing women's suffrage first, unifying women regardless of their party affiliations. Helen Lewis argues that women 'are expected to put their own needs last', thus the WSPU faced criticism by emphasising their needs first.<sup>135</sup> In the press, the policy was described as illogical and unreasonable. There were elements that did make the policy less effective such as not campaigning *for* a candidate and not having a political party to hold the balance of power like the IPP. These were downfalls of the policy. Nevertheless, the policy was an expression of the WSPU's distrust and dissatisfaction with the Government. It enabled women to gain campaigning experience during by-elections though this was not always a pleasant experience as women faced violence from Liberal supporters which in turn led to more forceful methods in protest, such as stone-throwing. Historians have misrepresented this policy, presenting the WSPU's rejection of Labour as a shrewd business move to appeal to Tory donors or a betrayal to their Labour comrades. However, this removes the significance and power of the policy. By remaining independent, the WSPU was able to keep its sole focus on women's suffrage, just as Parnell had maintained the IPP's focus on Home Rule. The election policy, though seen as a betrayal,

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<sup>135</sup> Lewis, *Difficult Women*, p. 44.

forced the Government to listen whilst allowing Emmeline to unite the WSPU to stand ‘shoulder to shoulder’, just as Parnell had hoped to do with the IPP before his death.

### 3.3. Obstruction

Obstruction was another of Parnell’s tactics that was designed to force the Government to listen. Parnell’s obstructionist policy was developed under Joseph Biggar in the House of Commons. The policy involved disrupting Parliament through speeches, preventing bills passing through lengthy discussion. In 1880, Parnell referred to obstruction as ‘agitation’ which was ‘necessary in order to gain the attention of the government’.<sup>136</sup> The aim of the policy was to publicise Home Rule and any Irish grievances. This was a key motivation for the WSPU’s militancy too as explored in the previous chapter. Emmeline recognised the significance of obstruction in *My Own Story* as she asserted that it was only through ‘constant obstruction’ that Parnell ‘could in time wear out the Government, and force it to surrender’.<sup>137</sup> Emmeline was therefore labelling obstruction as militant and acknowledged the power of the policy. The use of obstruction to pressure the government is also clear through Katherine O’Shea’s description of Parnell’s use of the policy: ‘Side by side with Biggar, he began his relentless obstruction of Parliamentary business until the demands of Ireland should be considered’.<sup>138</sup> This description presents obstruction as the IPP relentlessly interrupting proceedings to force Home Rule to become a central issue. O’Shea also contrasts Parnell’s policy with that of Isaac Butt and how the response differed as previously ‘the English parties smiled and patted the Irish indulgently on the head’.<sup>139</sup> This assertion that obstruction was a different pathway to Butt’s supports Martin Mansergh’s assertion that Butt ‘deplored obstruction, on the grounds that it was the

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<sup>136</sup> Parnell, ‘During an Interview with a *New York Herald* Reporter 1880’, p. 38.

<sup>137</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 18.

<sup>138</sup> Katherine O’Shea, *The Uncrowned King of Ireland: Charles Stewart Parnell- His Life Story and Political Life* (Stroud: Nonsuch, 2005), p. 80.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

abandonment of constitutional agitation'.<sup>140</sup> This idea that obstruction was a rejection of expected behaviour connects to the importance of independence to Parnell. Parnell wanted the members of his party to be strong and united against the English political parties, not to be coerced by them.

Obstruction being presented as an 'abandonment of constitutional agitation' is notable as the agitation continued to take place in a constitutional setting: the House of Commons. Mansergh's suggestion that obstruction was a completely new course reinforces the argument that obstruction was a militant policy, as it was viewed as a more aggressive policy. It would be more accurate to label obstruction as an 'abandonment of appeasement' or 'abandonment of conciliation' as it signified a new constitutional policy designed to pressure the government. Thomas Power O'Connor argued that obstruction was about wasting time as 'time is the very life-blood of a Ministry', thus by interrupting and wasting time, Parnell was damaging the government.<sup>141</sup> By causing damage to the government, the IPP could force its hand. St. John Ervine argued that it was the significance of the location (the House of Commons) which caused more damage: 'It must be seen to the reader that an extraordinary amount of fuss was made in England over the policy of obstruction' but 'the House of Commons was proud of its reputation as the mother of Parliaments'.<sup>142</sup> By disrupting Parliament, Parnell was damaging the image of the House of Commons. Parnell was aware of this damage as he faced claims that he was 'disgracing Ireland' by no longer behaving 'as the English members behave'.<sup>143</sup> Through obstruction, Parnell was able to pressure the government by interrupting the work of the House of Commons and by humiliating Parliament, making it clear it could be disrupted easily. The idea that he was also refusing to behave like English MPs suggests that obstruction

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<sup>140</sup> Martin Mansergh, 'Parnell and the Leadership of Nationalist Ireland' in *Parnell: The Politics of Power*, ed. by Donal McCartney (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1991), pp. 36-56, at 38.

<sup>141</sup> O'Connor, *Memoirs of an Old Parliamentarian*, I, p. 31.

<sup>142</sup> Ervine, *Parnell*, p. 85.

<sup>143</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, 'Public Meeting at Burslem, Staffordshire, September 8<sup>th</sup> 1877' in *Words of the Dead Chief*, p. 15.

was about raising the consciousness of the IPP as they were no longer acting subservient to the rules of Parliament.

The WSPU recognised the significance of obstruction and its contrast to Butt's policies. In an article titled 'Violent and Lawless Action' in *Votes for Women*, Butt's policy is described as 'constitutional and peaceful' which 'brought the Irish cause into contempt'.<sup>144</sup> The WSPU were asserting that Butt's lack of militancy was an embarrassment to the Irish cause. The article also includes a quote from Biggar that the IPP had been 'too gentlemanly' and from Parnell that the English had become 'too comfortable'.<sup>145</sup> The WSPU identified the necessity of militancy for the Irish cause and connected it with awakening the English people to the cause of Ireland. The sense that the IPP had been 'too gentlemanly' relates to Emmeline's claim that she had 'been womanly' as she had 'tried constitutional methods'.<sup>146</sup> Obstruction was militant as the IPP were standing up for themselves and their cause. The similar language used by Biggar and Emmeline imply that militancy was about rebelling against the *status quo* as good behaviour only brought contempt connecting to Parnell's acknowledgement he was no longer behaving like an Englishman. The *Votes for Women* article credits the policy of obstruction with legislation passed for Ireland, labelling the Session of 1879 'a Session of Irish legislation'.<sup>147</sup>

### 3.3.1. Emulating Parnell

The WSPU were therefore aware of the successes of obstruction and used it to justify their militancy. However, the suffragettes could not adopt this method easily. Andro Linklater

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<sup>144</sup> 'Violent and Lawless Action', p. 700.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, 'Speech' in *The Trial of the Suffragette Leaders*, ed. Frederick W. Pethick Lawrence, Christabel Pankhurst, Emmeline Pankhurst & Flora Drummond, (London: The Woman's Press, 1909), p. 20.

<sup>147</sup> 'Violent and Lawless Action', p. 700.

argues that the suffragettes ‘overlooked two consequences of Parnellism’: 1. ‘the rules of the Commons had been reformed so that all its business was strictly controlled by the government of the day’ and 2. ‘the Liberals, who had been split by the Irish question were left with a deep trauma about any matter which threatened to divide them again’.<sup>148</sup> Yet there were also other issues facing the suffragettes in adopting an obstructionist policy. One of the most important aspects of obstruction was its location. As O’Connor and Ervine noted, by holding up business in the House of Commons, they were attacking the prestige of the British Government. The WSPU were unable to enter the House of Commons in the same way as Parnell. Instead, they used Parnell as inspiration and obstructed in their own way through interruptions and attempted invasions of the Houses of Parliament. Women were able to watch the proceedings from the Ladies’ Gallery but could be ejected if they interrupted debates. This was the case on 26 April 1906 as the *Daily Mirror* reported: ‘Suffragettes Interrupt the Women’s Votes Debate’ which is followed by the line ‘Ejected by Police’(Figure 16).<sup>149</sup> The day after this article, the *Daily Mirror* reported that the speaker of the House of Commons had banned ‘the ringleaders of the demonstration’ from the Ladies’ Gallery.<sup>150</sup> By banning women involved in the WSPU, the Suffragettes were unable to disrupt the House of Commons unless they forced a way in or attended secretly. This differed to Parnell who, despite being expelled from the House of Commons in 1881 by force, was able to re-enter due to his position as a Member of Parliament.<sup>151</sup>

Nevertheless, the WSPU could obstruct successfully when they were able to access the House of Commons. The *Daily Mirror* article from 26 April 1906 described the WSPU incident: the Commons was ‘scandalised’ and that ‘the whole House had been thrown into a

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<sup>148</sup> Andro Linklater, *An Unhusbanded Life: Charlotte Despard- Suffragette, Socialist and Sinn Feiner* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), p. 108.

<sup>149</sup> ‘Amazing Scenes in the House’, *Daily Mirror*, 26 April 1906, p. 3.

<sup>150</sup> ‘The Speaker Bans Suffragettes’, *Daily Mirror*, 27 April 1906, p. 4.

<sup>151</sup> Henry William Lucy, *A Diary of Two Parliaments: The Gladstone Parliament* (London: Cassell, 1886), p. 132.

state of wild commotion, mingled with great indignation that the dignity of Parliament had been insulted by the misdirected zeal of the women suffragists'.<sup>152</sup> This language of 'scandalised', 'commotion' and 'insulted' in reference to the 'dignity of Parliament' confirms that the suffragettes were successful in disrupting the House of Commons as Parnell had done: not just through actual interruptions but by calling the dignity of Parliament into question. In an article the following day, the WSPU's success was clear as the *Daily Mirror* article described how the WSPU had used the weapons available to them including the ability to 'hold up men's institutions to ridicule (as the Suffragettes held up the House of Commons)'.<sup>153</sup>



16. 'Amazing Scenes in the House', *Daily Mirror*, 26 April 1906, p. 3.

Although the WSPU were unable to enter the House of Commons like Parnell, there were many attempts at forcing the House to listen. Deputations were sent to Parliament Square and meetings were held, such as in 1905 which Emmeline claimed as the first militant act.<sup>154</sup> These deputations were marches to the House of Commons where the women would demand to see

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<sup>152</sup> 'Amazing Scenes in the House', p. 3.

<sup>153</sup> H.H.F., 'Who Began It?', *Daily Mirror*, 27 April 1906, p. 7.

<sup>154</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 41.

the Prime Minister. There were also ‘rushes’ on Parliament where WSPU members would try to force their way in. These were just some of the WSPU’s attempts to demand answers from politicians. However, the suffragettes were often unable to delay Parliamentary proceedings in the same way Parnell had done and instead adopted alternative methods. In *My Own Story*, Emmeline described the policy of asking questions at political meetings and the reasoning behind it: ‘We determined to address ourselves to those men who were likely to be in the Liberal Cabinet, demanding to know whether their reforms were going to include justice to women’.<sup>155</sup> The use of ‘demanding’ connects to Emmeline’s interpretation of militancy as it implies women were using their voices to get what they want. By demanding the vote, they were trying to force an answer from politicians whilst highlighting the issue publicly. This is clear in Teresa Billington-Greig’s writings as she claimed that the 1905 interruption by Annie Kenney and Christabel Pankhurst was designed ‘to force the question of women’s enfranchisement to the front’.<sup>156</sup> Again, the use of ‘force’ connects to Emmeline’s observation of Parnell’s policy and the definition of militancy. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, in a description of tactics used by the WSPU in *Votes for Women*, also referred to ‘asking questions at the political meetings of Cabinet Ministers’ as one of the ‘two distinct methods of militant agitation’.<sup>157</sup> Christabel, in *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, claimed that militancy began ‘on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1904’ after she asked a question about women’s suffrage at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester.<sup>158</sup> The question was later forgotten and not reported on by the press. She declared that this was due to her lack of imprisonment, thus she promised that ‘next time such a meeting was held, a mark should be made that could not disappear’ resulting

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>156</sup> Billington-Greig, ‘The Militant Policy of Women Suffragists’ in *The Non-Violent Militant: Selected Writings of Teresa Billington-Greig*, pp. 111-119, at 111.

<sup>157</sup> Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, ‘The Tactics of the Suffragettes’, *Votes for Women*, March 1908, p. 81.

<sup>158</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 46.



in militancy having ‘its origin in purpose’.<sup>159</sup> The action of asking a question was militant but Christabel hoped to reach more people through being more forceful. As Lyndsey Jenkins argued, there were different militant identities.<sup>160</sup> For Emmeline, the beginning of militancy was the awakening of women. This was similar for Christabel but her focus was more on publicity: getting women’s suffrage in the press. Billington-Greig claimed that this attitude united the policies of Parnell and the WSPU: ‘Parnell believed in agreeing and shocking the enemy; so does Miss Pankhurst’.<sup>161</sup>

### 3.3.2. Response to policy

Christabel’s forcefulness links into the intensification of militancy of the WSPU. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, the leader of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and a suffragist, wrote about how the WSPU had started with ‘the strictly orthodox and time-honoured method of asking questions of Ministers at public meetings’.<sup>162</sup> The phrases ‘strictly orthodox’ and ‘time honoured’ reinforce the idea that the WSPU were simply honouring political tradition by asking questions, and following in previous politician’s footsteps such as Parnell. However, Garrett Fawcett claimed that the response to these actions and the ‘mishandling of the whole matter by the Liberal leaders and organizers’ resulted in ‘scenes of violence and disorder’.<sup>163</sup> She recounted a tale of violence that she had witnessed:

a sickening and terrible sight it was: suffragettes being carried by main force out of an Albert Hall meeting: a girl violently struggling, but powerless in the clutches of four men, two to her shoulders and two to her feet, and while in this defenceless position violently smitten on the face by enraged male members of the Liberal Party: both fists and umbrellas were used in this cowardly assault.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Lyndsey Jenkins, *Sisters and Sisterhood: The Kenney Family, Class, and Suffrage, 1890-1965*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 139.

<sup>161</sup> Billington-Greig, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>162</sup> Garrett Fawcett, *What I Remember*, p. 176.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, p. 186.

Garrett Fawcett's description of a 'girl violently struggling' in contrast to 'enraged male members of the Liberal Party' highlights the differing power dynamic between the suffragettes and male audience members.<sup>165</sup> She summarised that 'far more violence was suffered by the suffragettes than they inflicted on their opponents' and that 'for the first five years of their existence, while they suffered extraordinary acts of physical violence, they used none'.<sup>166</sup> This statement suggests that, due to the suffragettes suffering physical violence repeatedly, they turned to more violent methods in response years later. It was this intensification of violence towards the WSPU because of their questioning campaign that resulted in an intensification of militancy.

The first interruption in 1905 at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester resulted in attacks upon Christabel and Annie Kenney. In the *Manchester Guardian*, it was reported that 'there was no violence used by the police in any way whatever' and that Christabel had 'spat' in the face of a Superintendent and an Inspector, and she had 'struck' the Inspector in the face.<sup>167</sup> In response to this, Christabel referred to her arms being 'held' and that she pleaded in her defence: 'my conduct was justified owing to the treatment I received at the hands of Sir Edward Grey and other persons in the Free Trade Hall'.<sup>168</sup> Christabel and Annie Kenney described their version of events in each of their autobiographies with Christabel recalling being 'dragged' by men and Annie being 'flung' and 'dragged' too.<sup>169</sup> Sylvia and Emmeline also described the violence experienced by Christabel and Annie Kenney in 1905: the men 'scratched', 'tore', 'howled', 'shouted', 'roared', 'shaking their fists' and even caused a woman to bleed.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 181 & 185.

<sup>167</sup> 'Mrs Pankhurst and the Police: Assault and Obstruction', *Manchester Guardian*, 16 October 1905, p. 8.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 51; Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>170</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette*, pp. 28-29; Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 44.

Garrett Fawcett also used language such as ‘howl’ and ‘knock them about’ to describe the incident.<sup>171</sup> Frederick Pethick Lawrence, who, with his wife, had been involved with the WSPU until a split in 1912, recalled how the audience in 1905 ‘became a seething, infuriated mob’ suggesting this interpretation of events dominated suffrage autobiographies.<sup>172</sup> The suffrage autobiographies depicted the violence as one-sided which has led to accusations of one-sidedness and that ‘of the suffragettes themselves the pictures are always nicely drawn’.<sup>173</sup> This is certainly true in the case of Christabel spitting at a police officer as referred to in the *Manchester Guardian* as Christabel spitting is not mentioned in Sylvia’s *The Suffragette* and Emmeline’s *My Own Story*. Even Frederick Pethick-Lawrence wrote that the charges of assault were ‘fabricated’.<sup>174</sup> However, in *The Suffragette Movement*, Sylvia acknowledged the spitting and claimed that Christabel was ‘always slow to realize how a given action would present itself to the mind of others’ and she was ‘surprised by the horrified astonishment expressed that a young lady could so behave’.<sup>175</sup> The omission had therefore been deliberate in *The Suffragette* as Sylvia was aware of the criticism Christabel would face. When *Unshackled* was published Christabel claimed it was not ‘a real spit’ and that she ‘could not *really* have done it, even to get the vote, I think’.<sup>176</sup> This was published after the battle for women’s suffrage and demonstrates the way militancy could be rewritten and minimised by the Pankhursts. The WSPU had begun to obstruct political meetings through interruptions but as they were entering male-dominated spaces, the response was violent. This was not a direct imitation of Parnell’s policy. The suffragettes had attempted to emulate Parnell by disrupting Parliament but were unable to enter, thus had started disrupting meetings instead. However, this left them without

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<sup>171</sup> Garrett Fawcett, *What I Remember*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>172</sup> Frederick William Pethick Lawrence, *Women’s Fight for the Vote* (London: The Woman’s Press, 1910), p. 82.

<sup>173</sup> ‘The Suffragette’, *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 21 October 1911, p. 528.

<sup>174</sup> Pethick Lawrence, *Women’s Fight for the Vote*, p. 83.

<sup>175</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 190.

<sup>176</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p.52.

protection and as they were invading male-dominated areas, the response was violent rejection and ejection.

The violence described by members of the WSPU towards Annie Kenney and Christabel Pankhurst in 1905 paints a very different image than that in the *Manchester Guardian*. Despite the claims of a ‘one-sided’ image presented in the autobiographies of the WSPU, there was violence towards the WSPU because of their Parnell inspired questioning campaign. The press acted to minimise any violence done to the WSPU and to maximise the violence committed by the WSPU. This is clear in the *Daily Mirror*’s treatment of the 1906 disruption in Parliament (Figures 17 & 18). Figure 17 was the front page of the newspaper which displays three women covered in ‘VOTES FOR WOMEN’ banners and sashes. It was a photograph ‘specially taken by the *Daily Mirror*’.<sup>177</sup> It presents a very different image to Figure 18, which was a cartoon printed in the same newspaper on page seven. The cartoon features women throttling a policeman, hitting policemen on their heads and using saws, revolvers and axes to enter the House of Commons. Ironically, axes and hatchets would become weapons for the WSPU as Mary Leigh, a suffragette, threw a hatchet at Herbert Asquith and John Redmond in Dublin in 1912. However, at the time that this was printed the violence of the WSPU had not reached that level at all and the WSPU had yet to use weapons of that kind. This suggests that the cartoon was mocking the women’s actions by exaggerating them to what the artists would have believed was impossible levels of militancy for women. In figure 18, the women are not being ‘dragged’ or ‘howled’ at or being ejected by force but rather are inflicting damage to the policemen. This differs to the image presented in Figure 17 of women who were peacefully holding banners and signs.

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<sup>177</sup> ‘Suffragettes who Rioted in the Commons and were Expelled’, *Daily Mirror*, 27 April 1906, p.1.

# The Daily Mirror

THE MORNING JOURNAL WITH THE SECOND LARGEST NET SALE.

No. 776.

Published at No. 12, F. S. W. as a Penny

FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 1906.

One Halfpenny.

SUFFRAGETTES WHO RIOTED IN THE COMMONS AND WERE EXPELLED.



The Ladies' Gallery at the House of Commons was the scene of a spirited disturbance on Wednesday night. When Mr. Evans was speaking on the motion for women's suffrage, shouts of "Evans!" and "Justice for women!" resounded through the House. A white banner, bearing the words "Votes for Women," was thrust through

the grille. Finally the Ladies' Gallery was cleared by the police. Reading from left to right, the photograph shows Miss Kenner, Miss Billington, and Mrs. Bos. The two former took an active part in the demonstration in the House, and were forcibly ejected.—(Specials taken by the Daily Mirror.)

17. 'Suffragettes who Rioted in the Commons and were Expelled', *Daily Mirror*, 27 April

1906, p.1.

"I AM ASSUMED THAT WOMEN ARE SO SIMPLE AS TO OFFER WAR  
WHEN THEY SHOULD KNEEL FOR PEACE."—*Taming of the Shrew.*



The Suffragettes, tired of being submissive wives and mothers, rioted in the House of Commons on Wednesday night because they have no votes.

18. 'This Morning's Gossip', *Daily Mirror*, 27 April 1906, p. 7.

The *Daily Mirror* cartoon mocks the women's incident as well as the militancy of the women by exaggerating their actions. The use of women's violence against men during the suffragette

movement was described by Dangerfield as causing ‘an outrageous, an unprincipled laughter’ and that it was an element of ‘brutal comedy’.<sup>178</sup> The cartoon was not necessarily emphasising the danger of the suffragettes but parodying them and making them figures to laugh at, rather than fear. Some of the politicians also felt this way. Asquith recounted serious incidents like having a hatchet thrown into his carriage, being attacked on a golf course, an empty bottle thrown at him and having bags of red pepper thrown at him whilst almost being attacked with a dog-whip in his book *Memories and Reflections 1852-1917*.<sup>179</sup> However, in his letters to Venetia Stanley he jokes about the violence and how Mrs Birrell hit ‘a male suffragette (who was pouncing upon her Augustine) with an umbrella on the head’ and that Violet responded with envy as she wished ‘she had used her cleek upon my assailant’ at the golf course.<sup>180</sup> Asquith also jokes about Venetia missing a debate and wishes she would have disguised herself as a pressman, an action which would have been criticised had she been a suffragette.<sup>181</sup> The violence of the suffragettes was therefore mocked by the press and by politicians.

This was also the case in terms of violence towards the women. It was not just the *Daily Mirror* newspaper that used cartoons to minimise the violence committed by others to the suffragettes. *Punch* printed a cartoon of a suffragette being carried by a policeman in May 1906 (Figure 19). The title of the cartoon is ‘Safest and Cheapest Travelling in London’, mocking the Suffragettes being carried away by policemen.<sup>182</sup> This image differs from Figure 20: a famous image of Emmeline Pankhurst being carried away by policemen in 1914. This was after the intensification of militancy which included arson campaigns but nevertheless demonstrates how being carried by policemen was not as luxurious as Figure 19 presents. The press mocked

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<sup>178</sup> Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, p. 148.

<sup>179</sup> Herbert Henry Asquith, *Memories and Reflections 1852-1927: Volume 1*, (London: Cassell, 1928), p. 220.

<sup>180</sup> Herbert Henry Asquith, ‘3 September 1913’ in Herbert Henry Asquith, *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, ed. Michael Brock & Eleanor Brock, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 34.

<sup>181</sup> Herbert Henry Asquith, ‘9 March 1914’ in Asquith, *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, p. 53.

<sup>182</sup> ‘Essence of Parliament’, *Punch*, 2 May 1906, p. 320.



the suffragettes and their more forceful methods, connecting to Parnell and his awareness that his policy was criticised due to the IPP no longer behaving themselves according to the English politicians.



19. 'Safest and Cheapest Travelling in London' in 'Essence of Parliament', *Punch*, 2 May 1906, p. 320.





20. Emmeline Pankhurst being arrested outside Buckingham Palace 21<sup>st</sup> May 1914. She was attempting to present a petition to King George V.

Despite the press' minimisation of the violence towards the WSPU, members of the organisation were still attacked and manhandled, and it was this experience that led to an intensifying feeling that the WSPU had to protect themselves using force too. Teresa Billington-Greig and Annie Kenney attended a meeting in Northampton 1906 to question Asquith about votes for women. After being grabbed with the intention of ejecting the women from the meeting, Billington-Greig produced a whip. Billington-Greig argued that after witnessing women returning in 'a state of nervous humiliation, shocked, weeping and shuddering', she 'went armed' to the meeting.<sup>183</sup> She justified herself by asking 'How many self-respecting women would have done otherwise?'<sup>184</sup> In retaliation to the experience of being ejected out of meetings, Billington-Greig prepared to defend herself through use of force. In her account of the incident, Billington-Greig does not refer to Emmeline Pankhurst giving her the whip. However, Emmeline claimed she did in an article in the *Manchester Guardian* on 9 July 1906. She stated: '[I] bought a whip and gave it to Miss Billington, and said to her, "Use it if there is anything of that sort"' which was in reference to the 'Liverpool treatment'.<sup>185</sup> Emmeline referred to the Liverpool treatment as a 'new way of assault' which 'she could not explain publicly' suggesting that it could have been of a sexual nature and that the women had been groped or sexually assaulted.<sup>186</sup> The only reference to Liverpool before 1906 in *My Own Story* was that a meeting held by Henry Campbell-Bannerman had been interrupted at Sun Hall in Liverpool.<sup>187</sup> Krista Cowman, in *Mrs Brown Is a Man and a Brother: Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920*, focuses on Liverpool and features suffragette activity including this meeting and references how the hecklers were 'met with physical violence

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<sup>183</sup> Teresa Billington-Greig, 'The Woman with the Whip' in *The Non-Violent Militant: Selected Writings of Teresa Billington-Greig*, pp. 125-130, at 127.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> "Votes For Women": Mrs Pankhurst and the Whip', *Manchester Guardian*, 9 July 1906, p. 8.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 48

(which one woman returned, delivering a sound slap to a steward).<sup>188</sup> One of the worst examples of violence towards the suffragettes was Black Friday in 1910. A march on the Houses of Parliament was met with violence by the police. The WSPU printed a booklet titled *Treatment of the Women's Deputations of November 18<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1910, by the Police* which consisted of a copy of a memorandum and request for a public inquiry in 1911. In interviews about the violence, women recalled being 'beaten about the body', having their breasts 'clutched' in 'as public a manner as possible' and one woman was 'made to walk several yards while the police held her skirts over her head'.<sup>189</sup> This violence was specifically gendered and aimed at intimidating the women. Martha Vicinus argues that Black Friday 'brought into the open the sexual consequences of women's attempting to enter a male domain' emphasising that the WSPU faced different challenges to Parnell as they were excluded from the political arena and were endangered when forcing their way in.<sup>190</sup> Mary Richardson, a suffragette, recalled that sexual harassment also happened on the street when women were selling *Votes for Women* and recalled the 'sex filth' of 'elderly men'.<sup>191</sup> Incidents like this fuelled her militancy as upon breaking a window, she recalled that she was 'glad to hit back, to hit out at anything if I could in some way express my detestation of all the filthy remarks I had had to listen to'.<sup>192</sup>

Despite the WSPU suffering violence and sexual harassment for their obstruction policy, it was reported on very differently in the newspapers. Billington-Greig's use of the whip in 1906 was described in the *Daily Mail* as the 'wildest' scenes as 'no sooner had a steward laid hands on Miss Billington than she drew a whip from under cloak and lashed out

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<sup>188</sup> Krista Cowman, *Mrs Brown Is a Man and a Brother: Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations 1890-1920*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), p. 79.

<sup>189</sup> *Treatment of the Women's Deputations of November 18<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1910, by the Police*, (London: The Woman's Press, 1913), p. 6, 11, 12.

<sup>190</sup> Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920*, (London: Virago Press, 1985), p. 265.

<sup>191</sup> Mary Richardson, *Laugh a Defiance*, (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1953), p. 12.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

wildly on the heads and shoulders of the men'.<sup>193</sup> The article then describes Billington-Grieg's capture: 'She was seized by three men fighting like a tigress, and incontinently bundled down the steps, shouting at the top of her voice' and 'the women were carried out, struggling violently, on the shoulders of several men'.<sup>194</sup> The article presents Billington-Grieg's actions as aggressive rather than defensive as it states that precautions 'to protect Mr. Asquith' were 'fully justified'.<sup>195</sup> However, the language of the article does create an image of violence towards Billington-Grieg and Kenney as both women were 'seized', 'carried out' and 'struggling violently' whilst Billington-Grieg was 'bundled down the steps', 'seized' and 'fighting' with three men.<sup>196</sup>

Parnell was aware that political meetings could be dangerous places for men as well as women. In a speech delivered at Clones in 1883, he stated:

'Don't suppose that because the constitutional rights of public meetings and of public agitation are limited that therefore your cause can be thrown back. Hold the ground you have obtained, and press on for more... Select men who won't be afraid to stand by the side of the people and take their share of whatever peril and danger they ask the people to undergo'.<sup>197</sup>

Parnell was acknowledging the 'peril and danger' of politics. However, his speech also implies he advocated a similar policy to the WSPU as though the IPP were limited as a constitutional party, there were opportunities to be militant and 'press on for more' at public meetings. Parnell had even faced violence within the House of Commons. Henry William Lucy, a political journalist who had written extensively on the House of Commons and its workings, described an instance in 1881 in which Parnell was expelled and declined to leave 'except by superior force' and 'four assistants were called in, at the sight of whom his scruples vanished, and he at

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<sup>193</sup> 'Suffragettes and Mr. Asquith', *Daily Mail*, 16 June 1906, p. 7.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, 'At Clones- During Monaghan Election Contest, June 20<sup>th</sup> 1883' in *Words of the Dead Chief*, pp. 88-89.

once rose and left the House amid cheers from the Irish party'.<sup>198</sup> Lucy suggests that Parnell had no scruples and was unwilling to fight to stay. There is no further comment on whether Parnell was able to leave freely without violence or whether the four assistants followed him out. Lucy's comment about Parnell having no scruples because he did not fight back emasculates Parnell and emphasises his weakness. Yet, when the suffragettes defended themselves, they were presented as the aggressors and that their actions were unreasonable. This was a double standard in terms of gender as the suffragettes were expected to be peaceful instead whilst Parnell was criticised for remaining peaceful. Ironically, in a speech in Parliament about the Electoral Disabilities of Women Resolution in 1879, Parnell explained that women did not have to face 'the riot and turmoil' of elections anymore as there is 'none of that violence and contest which characterized elections under the old system'.<sup>199</sup> Parnell claimed that this lack of violent elections would 'guarantee that women would not be brought in contact with conditions which are in their nature unsuited to the sex'.<sup>200</sup> This statement is certainly ironic retrospectively as women of the WSPU faced such conditions in order to be able to take part in elections.

However, Parnell's statement also raises an issue which dominated the press as the language surrounding the WSPU's militancy was heavily gendered. The term 'hysterical' was applied to the WSPU's actions in different newspapers and magazines including the *Daily Mirror*, *Western Gazette* and *Punch*.<sup>201</sup> The *Western Gazette* in an article titled 'Riotous Women' described the suffragettes as 'shrieking', 'hysterical' and 'bereft of their womanhood'.<sup>202</sup> The WSPU objected to the use of 'hysterical'. In the *Suffragette*, an article titled 'Hysterical Students' challenged the press which had labelled students who had broken

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<sup>198</sup> Lucy, *A Diary of Two Parliaments*, p. 132.

<sup>199</sup> HC Deb 07 March 1879 vol 244 cc 481.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> 'Amazing Scenes in the House', p. 3; 'Riotous Women', *Western Gazette*, 26 October 1906, p. 12; 'The Billington Correspondence', *Punch*, 4 July 1906, p. 10.

<sup>202</sup> 'Riotous Women', p. 12.

the windows of a WSPU office as ‘indignant’ rather than ‘hysterical’: ‘But why not hysterical students, we should like to know!’.<sup>203</sup> Despite their objection, the label has been attached to the suffragettes throughout history. In 1999, Edward Heathcoat Amory described Emmeline Pankhurst as an ‘Edwardian hysteric’ in the *Daily Mail*, thus the label has been maintained to the end of the twentieth century.<sup>204</sup> The phrase ‘bereft of their womanhood’ presents the suffragettes as unwomanly and that their political agitation had resulted in the loss of their womanhood. This was a common theme in the press. *Punch* was especially critical, labelling them as ‘sexless’, ‘He-Brides’ (a play on the Hebrides) and describing any of the suffragette’s friends in Parliament as ‘The Member of Henpeckham’.<sup>205</sup> The idea that any supporters had been henpecked presents the suffragettes as overbearing and harassing, which in a way was what the WSPU wanted. They wanted to be so overbearing that the Government would *have* to pledge to women’s suffrage. Bernard Partridge’s cartoon ‘The Shrieking Sister’ depicted the suffragette as desperate and frenzied in comparison to the ‘sensible woman’.<sup>206</sup> The use of ‘shrieking’ signifies that the women were making too much noise, thus by Emmeline’s definition, had embraced militancy. In an article titled ‘Cross-Examining a Suffragist’ in *Punch* from 1908, suffragettes are described as ‘behaving in an unwomanly way’ due to ‘kicking policemen in Parliament Square’.<sup>207</sup> The assertion that it was ‘unwomanly’ to use violence is reiterated in an article from the *Daily Mirror* again focusing on the 1906 event in Parliament. The article claimed that the suffragettes were being accused of using ‘feminine methods of argument’ but argues that it was the House of Commons using feminine methods of ‘vapid talk’ which ‘set the Suffragettes the example of “femininity” and ‘they only followed suit’.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> ‘Hysterical Students’, *Suffragette*, 13 December 1912, pp. 126-127.

<sup>204</sup> Edward Heathcoat Amory, ‘Was this hysteric really the woman of the century?’, *Daily Mail*, 13 October 1999, p. 11.

<sup>205</sup> ‘Charivaria’, *Punch*, 30 September 1908, p. 235; ‘Charivaria’, *Punch*, 20 March 1907, p. 215; ‘The Suffragettes’ Friend: The Member of Henpeckham’, *Punch*, 18 March 1908, p. 203.

<sup>206</sup> Partridge, ‘The Shrieking Sister’, p. 39.

<sup>207</sup> ‘Cross-Examining A Suffragist’, *Punch*, 20 February 1908, p. 16.

<sup>208</sup> H.H.F., ‘Who Began It?’, p. 7.

The declaration that ‘vapid talk’ was a feminine trait is notable in relation to Parnell as obstruction involved talking out Bills suggesting that his obstruction policy had a feminine aspect. Many suffrage bills would be talked out including early attempts in May 1905 when the promoters of the Roadway Lighting Bill were able to ‘talk out’ the bill.<sup>209</sup> This was not the only reference to Parnell’s policy of obstruction as feminine as the gendered ‘hysterical’ was applied to Parnell by *The Weekly Irish Times* which referred to the ‘rowdyism and hysterical violence’ of obstruction.<sup>210</sup> Ervine, using Henry William Lucy as his evidence, claimed that Parnell *did* ‘scream like an hysterical woman’.<sup>211</sup> Michael de Nie argues that the Irish representatives were depicted as ‘children, selfish and immature individuals who prevented the adults from getting on with the manly business of the empire’.<sup>212</sup> The IPP members and Parnell himself were described in emasculating terms for their obstruction policy whilst the women were criticised in contradicting terms of being too manly but also too hysterical. The same *Daily Mirror* article also described ‘the weapons which women have to fall back upon as compensations for their inferior physical strength’ include ‘to make things uncomfortable, to create a disturbance, to hold up men’s institutions to ridicule’.<sup>213</sup> This again mirrors the policy of obstruction as one of its aims was to force Home Rule to the centre of politics by disrupting Parliament and by displaying this disruption to the public, embarrassing the House of Commons. Despite the gendered description of Parnell’s policies, he was taken seriously as an MP through his position as President of the Land League. He was able to obstruct Parliament directly whilst the WSPU members were only able to do so if they could enter the Ladies’ Gallery and were more likely to be forcibly ejected. Parnell was not the only leader to be compared to the WSPU as John Redmond, leader of the IPP from 1900, was said to have ‘spoke

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<sup>209</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 40.

<sup>210</sup> ‘A Home Rule Donnybrook’, *Weekly Irish Times*, 11 August 1877, p. 4.

<sup>211</sup> Ervine, *Parnell*, p. 115.

<sup>212</sup> Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882*, (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), p. 229.

<sup>213</sup> H.H.F., ‘Who Began It?’, p. 7.

up for them' highlighting how 'the leaders of the rowdy Suffragettes showed themselves such practised disturbers of the peace'.<sup>214</sup> The IPP and the WSPU were connected through their 'rowdyism', disturbing the peace of the House of Commons.

The press was contradictory in their approach to the suffragettes as they presented them as 'bereft of womanhood' but also claimed that they should 'behave like a gentleman' if visiting Parliament and that men should not expect women to be 'as wise and wonderful as we are'.<sup>215</sup> The reference to behaving like gentlemen connects to Biggar's argument that obstruction was the end of the IPP being 'too gentlemanly' to the English political parties. The press was therefore presenting the suffragettes pejoratively as unfeminine but also criticising them for using 'feminine' tactics. Articles in the *Manchester Guardian* in 1905 and the *Daily Mirror* in 1906 'exposed' the contradictions of the WSPU as both refer to suffragettes asking "Treat us like men" but when attacked, question how women could be treated in such a way.<sup>216</sup> The phrase "Treat us like men" was used by the WSPU in reference to being given the right to vote, not in reference to the violence that they faced. The press's reaction of the WSPU's policy of asking questions in political meetings highlights Emsley's argument that the suffragettes were 'appropriating male rights and customs'.<sup>217</sup> By using policies previously used by men, the women were attacked as being 'unwomanly' but also too feminine for the tactics to work. Both Parnell and Emmeline had been described as 'hysterical' in their obstructions but Parnell was still able to force Home Rule as a central issue in his disruption of Parliament whilst the response to the WSPU's disruptions reinforced the necessity of the vote for Emmeline through any means necessary. Dangerfield's assessment of the WSPU echo the treatment of the press as he describes their interruptions as 'eldritch screams' and how the suffragettes had discovered

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<sup>214</sup> 'Charivaria', *Punch*, 2 May 1906, p. 316.

<sup>215</sup> 'Charivaria', *Punch*, 4 November 1908, p. 325; H.H.F., 'Who Began It?', p. 7.

<sup>216</sup> 'Mrs Pankhurst and the Police: Assault and Obstruction', p. 8; 'This Morning's Gossip', *Daily Mirror*, 27 April 1906, p. 7.

<sup>217</sup> Clive Emsley, *Hard Men: The English and Violence Since 1750* (London: Hambledon, 2005), p. 126.



their ‘long-neglected masculinity’.<sup>218</sup> According to Dangerfield, members of the WSPU were therefore too shrill but also too masculine, resonating with the complex and contradictory message of the press.

The press’s reaction to the suffragettes reflects the anxiety in Edwardian Britain. Angelique Richardson, in her study *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman*, argued that there was ‘confusion’ over the role of women and that ‘fears of the masculinization of women were accompanied by a corresponding fear of effeminacy in men: both were expressions of degeneration’.<sup>219</sup> Richardson described how ‘the manly woman and the womanly man were an affront to evolutionary progress, and to civilization’.<sup>220</sup> Therefore, when the suffragettes began to use methods which had previously been used by men such as interruptions, fears emerged about the future of British society. Sally Ledger describes how this confusion about gender roles was related to ‘contemporary anxieties pertaining to the continuation of the ‘race’ in the best interests of the British Empire’, thus the New Woman ‘was dangerous, a threat to the *status quo*’.<sup>221</sup> The reference to the continuation of the British Empire connects to Ireland which was a colony. The questions about Home Rule therefore played on these anxieties too as it would not be beneficial for the British Empire. Alan O’Day acknowledged these concerns, describing the Home Rule question as ‘much more than a political issue because it attacked many of the basic assumptions and beliefs of the Victorians’.<sup>222</sup> Both Parnell and Emmeline were fighting for causes which shook the foundations of the British Government and the press reacted by undermining and attacking

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<sup>218</sup> Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, p. 138 & 147.

<sup>219</sup> Angelique Richardson, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 33 & 43.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>221</sup> Sally Ledger, ‘The New Woman and the Crisis of Victorianism’ in *Cultural Politics at the Fin De Siècle*, ed. Sally Ledger & Scott McCracken, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 22-44, at 31-2; Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin De Siècle*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 11.

<sup>222</sup> O’Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, p. 1.

them. The anxieties surrounding gender roles contextualise these articles as the visceral reaction of women acting ‘manly’ was due to worries about the future population. This is evident in some of the cartoons featured in *Punch*. In 1909, a cartoon created by Frederick Henry Townsend, depicted a suffragette mother with a screaming daughter (Figure 21). The caption explains that the mother ‘snatching a spare moment from really important things to visit the nursery’, asks her daughter what she wants and the daughter replies ‘Boo-hoo! I want a vote!’.<sup>223</sup> This could be interpreted as Townsend presenting the suffragettes as childish and spoilt but it also demonstrates the anxiety surrounding motherhood as it is suggested that the mother has abandoned her child for more important things. As well as presenting the suffragettes as absent mothers, the image was created of suffragettes being negligent or belligerent wives too. Mary Richardson recounted how her housekeeper’s son had bought Old Moore’s Prophecy crackers at Christmas which had a poem claiming ‘If you will not reform, I warn you, you may marry a suffragette!’.<sup>224</sup> The poem implies that marrying a suffragette was a punishment. The suffragettes were therefore depicted as unsuitable wives and mothers. By presenting the women in this way, the press were suggesting that as they were unfit for these roles, they were inept citizens, and therefore unsuitable for the vote. The idea that children of suffragettes would become like their mothers was repeated in a 1913 cartoon by G.L. Stampa, again printed in *Punch* (Figure 22). In the cartoon, the suffragette mother is depicted carrying a hammer, fire lighter and other weapons as the era of violent militancy had begun. The caption describes how the mother has returned ‘after a strenuous day’ to her daughter who has ripped up her letters.<sup>225</sup> The suffragettes had begun a campaign of letter-burning, thus the daughter had taken after her mother. The titles of these cartoons demonstrate how intrinsic the anxieties

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<sup>223</sup> Frederick Henry Townsend, ‘Hereditary Instinct’, *Punch*, 6 January 1909, p. 5.

<sup>224</sup> Richardson, *Laugh a Defiance*, p. 130.

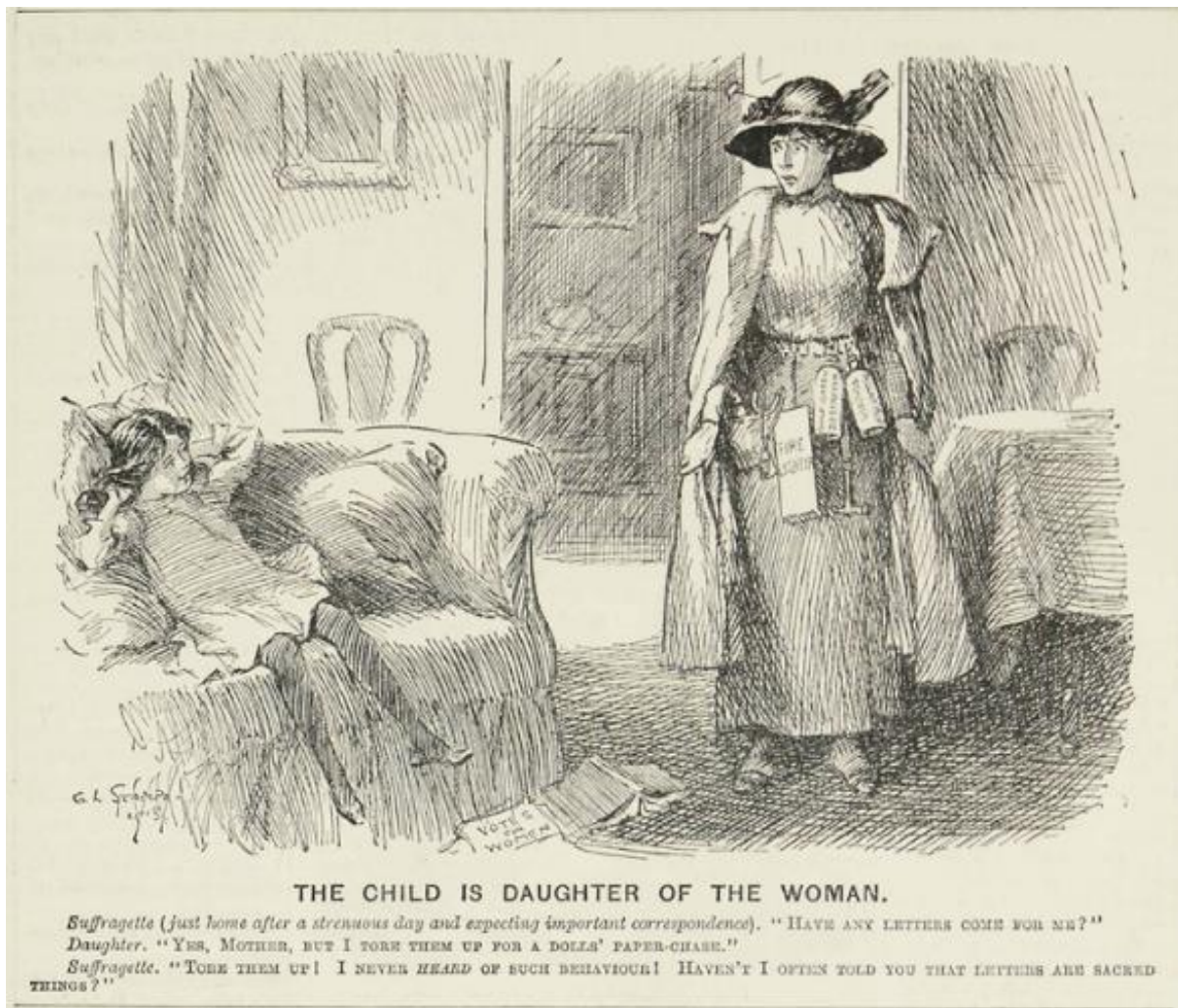
<sup>225</sup> G. L. Stampa, ‘The Child is Daughter of the Woman’, *Punch*, 5 March 1913, p. 191.

surrounding gender roles were to worries about the future race: 'Hereditary Instinct' and 'The Child is Daughter of the Woman'.<sup>226</sup>



21. Frederick Henry Townsend, 'Hereditary Instinct', *Punch*, 6 January 1909, p. 5.

<sup>226</sup> Townsend, 'Hereditary Instinct', p. 5; Stampa, 'The Child is Daughter of the Woman', p. 191.



22. G. L. Stampa, 'The Child is Daughter of the Woman', *Punch*, 5 March 1913, p. 191.

Richardson argues that those fighting for women's suffrage were 'likely to base their arguments on sexual differences'.<sup>227</sup> This is clear in Millicent Garrett Fawcett's admission that 'if men and women were exactly alike, the representation of men would represent us; but not being alike, that wherein we differ is unrepresented under the present system'.<sup>228</sup> Emmeline's argument for wanting women's suffrage was to overcome the injustice facing women as they were unrepresented by male politicians too. In Northampton in 1906, she interrupted a meeting

<sup>227</sup> Richardson, *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century*, p. 68.

<sup>228</sup> Millicent Garrett Fawcett, 'An address delivered at Toynbee Hall and elsewhere, 4th edition. London: Women's Printing Society, 1-8' in *Millicent Garrett Fawcett: Selected Writings*, ed. Melissa Terras & Elizabeth Crawford, (London: UCL Press, 2022), pp. 149-155, at 150.

to ask Asquith a question about education, raising the question as to why women as mothers did not have the vote. She was ‘seized’ by stewards and ‘dragged’ out but the question asked demonstrates how suffragists and suffragettes differentiated themselves from men.<sup>229</sup> Emmeline does suggest that militancy was unwomanly as she had tried to be ‘womanly’ through her use of ‘constitutional methods’.<sup>230</sup> However, that is not to imply that Emmeline was embracing masculinity as depicted in the press and by Dangerfield. As argued throughout this chapter, Emmeline’s definition of militancy was women uniting to fight for their own cause. The WSPU wanted to embrace a new type of womanhood based on this militancy. In an article in the *Suffragette* in 1912, a suffragette is described as ‘really womanly woman’ and the ‘advance-guard of the new womanhood’ as they have the attributes of ‘independence, courage, public spirit, and we may add, humour’.<sup>231</sup> The WSPU even adopted the image of a rebellious little girl, like the character featured in Figures 21 and 22. In a cartoon titled ‘Shut Your Eyes and Open Your Mouth and Take What Asquith Sends You’ (Figure 23), the WSPU is represented as a ‘rebellious little girl’ encouraging the ‘constitutional suffragist’ to resist the medicine of ‘manhood suffrage’, a concession offered by Asquith to the cause of women’s suffrage.<sup>232</sup> The suffragettes were proud of their new womanhood despite the press’s depiction of them as manly and sexless. Nevertheless, the image created of the suffragettes did have an impact on others. Margaret Cousins, a founder of the Irish Women’s Franchise League, and her husband James, described how the image of the suffragettes as ‘wild women’ and ‘unsexed’ resulted in fear in small Irish county towns, thus the press succeeded in presenting the women as unreasonable sexless hooligans.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 62.

<sup>230</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Speech’, p. 20.

<sup>231</sup> ‘Foreword’, *Suffragette*, 18 October 1912, p. 1.

<sup>232</sup> ‘Shut Your Eyes and Open Your Mouth and Take What Asquith Sends You’, *Votes for Women*, 30 August 1912, p. 769.

<sup>233</sup> James H. Cousins & Margaret Cousins, ‘Doc. 75a James H. Cousins and Margaret Cousins, *We Two Together*’ in Maria Luddy, *Women in Ireland, 1800-1918: A Documentary History*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2009), pp. 273-276, at 275.



# VOTES FOR WOMEN

VOL. V. (New Series), No. 234

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 1912.

Price 1d. Weekly (Post Free)

**SHUT YOUR EYES AND OPEN YOUR MOUTH  
AND TAKE WHAT ASQUITH SENDS YOU!**



DOCTOR A. Q. TH: There! If you'll take this medicine like good little girls, I won't stop Nurse Grey from giving you some Amendment jam afterwards - if there is any jam.  
REBELLIOUS LITTLE GIRL: No nasty medicine for me, thank you! I mean to have nice medicine that will make me well, and it's there in your pocket!

23. A. Patriot, 'Shut Your Eyes and Open Your Mouth and Take What Asquith Sends You',

*Votes for Women*, 30 August 1912, p. 769.

### 3.3.3. Obstruction vs interruption

One of the key differences between Parnell and Emmeline's policies of obstruction is the title given to it. Parnell's policy of 'Obstruction' was essentially wasting time in Parliament by talking about Bills and Acts and preventing the government from acting. It could include

interruptions or asking questions in a similar way to the WSPU. Historians of Parnell refer to his policy as obstruction yet in the histories of the suffragettes, this policy is referred to as interruptions, ‘heckling’ or in some cases a ‘nuisance’.<sup>234</sup> Jeanette Winterson even summarises the incident of the Free Trade Hall in Manchester in 1905: ‘Jail? For interrupting a meeting? Clearly, men don’t like being interrupted’.<sup>235</sup> Christabel and Annie Kenney were arrested for more than interrupting as they also tried to hold a meeting and Christabel spat at a policeman. They were charged with obstruction rather than interruption. However, the WSPU members themselves did not use the term obstruction: Billington-Grieg used ‘interruption’ whilst Emmeline Pankhurst used the term ‘heckle’ in relation to their policy.<sup>236</sup> This was the language used in the press too as on 16 October 1905, in reference to the Free Trade Hall incident, the *Daily Mirror* referred to the WSPU members as ‘Lady Hecklers’ whilst the *Daily Mirror*

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<sup>234</sup> Some examples referring to Parnell’s policy as Obstruction: Alan O’Day, ‘Parnell: Orator and Speaker’ in *Parnell in Perspective*, ed. by David George Boyce & Alan O’Day (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 201-220, at 206; John Lawrence Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation* (London: Longmans, 1938), p. 150; Mansergh, ‘Parnell and the Leadership of Nationalist Ireland’, p. 38; Irvine, *Parnell*, p. 85; Tim Hodge, *Parnell and the Irish Question* (Harlow: Longman, 1998), p. 14; Patrick James O’Farrell, *Ireland’s English Question: Anglo-Irish Relations 1534-1970* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), p. 180; James Camlin Beckett, *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 383.

Reference to WSPU’s policy as interruption: Marcus, ‘Introduction: Re-Reading the Pankhursts and Women’s Suffrage’, p. 9; Carol McPhee & Ann Fitzgerald, ‘Introduction’ in *The Non-Violent Militant: Selected Writings of Teresa Billington-Grieg*, pp. 1-24, at 5; Richard Pankhurst, *Sylvia Pankhurst: Artist and Crusader* (New York: Paddington, 1979), p. 55; Rachel Holmes, *Sylvia Pankhurst: Natural Born Rebel* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), p. 174; Phillips, *The Ascent of Woman*, p. 175; Chelsea Clinton, ‘Sophia Duleep Singh’ in Hilary Rodham Clinton & Chelsea Clinton, *The Book of Gutsy Women: Favourite Stories of Courage and Resilience* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2019), pp. 425-428, at 426; Jeanette Winterson, *Courage Calls to Courage Everywhere* (Edinburgh: Canon Gate, 2018), p. 9.

Reference to WSPU’s policy as ‘heckling’: Lyndsey Jenkins, *Lady Constance Lytton: Aristocrat, Suffragette, Martyr* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2015), p. 84; Shirley Harrison, *Sylvia Pankhurst: The Rebellious Suffragette* (Newhaven: Golden Guides Press, 2012), p. 95.

Reference to WSPU’s policy as ‘nuisance’: Constance Rover, *Women’s Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914* (London: Routledge, 1967), p. 92; Harold Champion, *The True Book About Emmeline Pankhurst* (London: Muller, 1963), p. 40.

<sup>235</sup> Winterson, *Courage Calls to Courage Everywhere*, p. 9.

<sup>236</sup> Billington-Grieg, ‘Mrs Pankhurst and the WSPU’ in *The Non-Violent Militant: Selected Writings of Teresa Billington-Grieg*, pp. 88-101, at 92; Billington-Grieg, ‘The Birth of the Women’s Freedom League’, p. 104; Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p.60.

labelled their actions as ‘interruptions’.<sup>237</sup> An explanation for the difference of language could be that obstruction was the term used in the House of Commons for Parnell’s actions. Henry William Lucy, a political journalist who had written extensively on the House of Commons and its workings, described Parnell as being warned by the speaker ‘that his conduct was willfully obstructive’.<sup>238</sup> This implies that ‘obstructive’ was part of parliamentary language. The term ‘obstruction’ does appear in *A Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament* of 1883, thus ‘obstruction’ was part of parliamentary language.<sup>239</sup> However, Lucy also referred to Parnell’s actions as ‘interrupting members’ in his *A Diary of Two Parliaments* suggesting that both terms could apply to Parnell’s actions.<sup>240</sup> Nevertheless, the language persists that Parnell obstructed whilst the suffragettes interrupted.

It could be argued that the term ‘interruption’ minimises the actions of the suffragettes but the term itself expresses how radical the policy was. Women were interrupting men’s speech and disrupting the political arena. Marcus argues that ‘*Interruption of male political discourse*’ was an invention of Christabel’s to question the subserviency of women through using women’s voices to ‘break down women’s learned silence’.<sup>241</sup> Women interrupting men and making demands was a militant act in the early twentieth century as it shifted power towards women. In Dale Spender’s *Man Made Language*, an analysis of language and how it is gendered, she defines interruption as ‘a mechanism by which (a) males can prevent females from talking, and (b) they can gain the floor for themselves; it is therefore a mechanism by which they engineer female silence’.<sup>242</sup> By adopting this method, the suffragettes were subverting gender norms. This is clear in the reaction to interruptions as a 1905 article in the

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<sup>237</sup> ‘Gaol for Lady Hecklers’, *Daily Mail*, 16 October 1905, p. 5; ‘Women’s Rights Martyrs’, *Daily Mirror*, 16 October 1905, p. 5.

<sup>238</sup> Lucy, *A Diary of Two Parliaments*, p. 131.

<sup>239</sup> Thomas Erskine May, *A Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Butterworth, 1883), p. 380.

<sup>240</sup> Lucy, *A Diary of Two Parliaments*, p. 119.

<sup>241</sup> Marcus, p. 9.

<sup>242</sup> Dale Spender, *Man Made Language*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 44.



*Daily Mirror* claimed that Christabel and Annie Kenney were ‘asked to be quiet’ which sparked the spitting incident.<sup>243</sup> One of the subtitles of the article was: ‘Two Ladies Who Wouldn’t “Be Quiet” Sent to Prison at Manchester’.<sup>244</sup> In *My Own Story*, Emmeline recounted the differing experience of interrupters by David Lloyd-George who praised a male interrupter but wished to silence suffragists: ‘Pay no attention to those cats mewling’.<sup>245</sup> In an article in *Punch* in February 1908, the writer advises the Pankhurst family to ‘stay quietly at home for a while’.<sup>246</sup> By interrupting meetings and encouraging WSPU members to do so too, Emmeline was encouraging women to stand up to demand the vote themselves, breaking the silence expected of them and forcing people to pay attention to them. Emmeline also emphasises the importance of interruption, labelling it an ‘almost sacred English privilege’ and that she could not ‘imagine a political meeting from which ‘the Voice’ was entirely absent’.<sup>247</sup> By using women’s voices, Emmeline was ensuring women also had the privilege of interruption and breaking the silence.

This learned silence was acknowledged by Parnell in the 1879 debate on the Electoral Disabilities of Women Resolution as he claimed that there ‘seems to be a sort of social law that women should not say anything to men that is not pleasing’.<sup>248</sup> The WSPU turned this social norm on its head and even began to use more demanding ‘unpleasing’ language as Kenney referred to a shift in questions from ‘are you in *favour* of women having the vote?’ to ‘Will you *give* us the vote?’.<sup>249</sup> This more forcible language connects to the definition of militancy as the WSPU were trying to pressure the government in to *giving* them the vote. Spender argues that ‘there are many penalties for women who interrupt men’ which is apparent in the violence experienced by the WSPU.<sup>250</sup> Another penalty for the WSPU was through the description of

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<sup>243</sup> ‘Women’s Rights Martyrs’, p. 5.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>245</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 61.

<sup>246</sup> ‘Cross-Examining A Suffragist’, p. 16.

<sup>247</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 60.

<sup>248</sup> HC Deb 07 March 1879 vol 244 cc 479.

<sup>249</sup> Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, p. 34.

<sup>250</sup> Spender, *Man Made Language*, p. 44.

their voices. Both the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail* in 1906 described the women's voices as 'shrill'.<sup>251</sup> Austen Chamberlain, an anti-suffragist Conservative MP, described the WSPU in 1909 as 'the screeching sisterhood', similar to the *Punch* cartoon 'The Shrieking Sister'.<sup>252</sup> Mary Beard, in her book based on her lecture *Women & Power: A Manifesto*, criticises the use of 'whine' in reference to women's voices as it removes 'the authority, the force, even the humour from what women have to say'.<sup>253</sup> Yvette Cooper, in her anthology of women's speeches, challenges the *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches* which claimed that 'women's voices are not made by nature for oratory' as they were 'not deep enough' by labelling it 'circular nonsense'.<sup>254</sup> The *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches* was printed in 1996 signifying the continued undermining of women's voices due to their pitch. By using terms like 'shrieking' and 'shrill', the press were using the pitch of women's voices to undermine what they were saying and this has continued into the 1990s, like the term 'hysterical'. However, from the same *Daily Mirror* article in 1906 describing the events in the House of Commons, it is evident that the WSPU's voices were able to be heard despite their shrillness as 'the whole House rang with the penetrating feminine screams'.<sup>255</sup> The use of 'penetrating', a masculine term, could be in reference to a higher pitch but it also emphasises that for the newspapers, the interruptions of the WSPU were out of place.

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<sup>251</sup> 'Amazing Scenes in the House', p. 3; 'Suffragettes and Mr. Asquith', *Daily Mail*, 16 June 1906, p. 7.

<sup>252</sup> Austen Chamberlain, '26 March 1909' in Austen Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside: An Epistolary Chronicle 1906-1914*, (London: Cassell, 1936), pp. 169-170, at 169; Partridge, 'The Shrieking Sister', p. 39.

<sup>253</sup> Mary Beard, *Women & Power: A Manifesto* (London: Profile Books, 2017), p. 30.

<sup>254</sup> Yvette Cooper, *She Speaks: Women's Speeches That Changed the World, From Pankhurst to Thunberg*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2019), p. 12; Originally quoted from Brian MacArthur, 'Introduction' in *The Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, ed. Brian MacArthur, (London: Penguin Books, 1996), pp. 20-31, at 28.

<sup>255</sup> 'Amazing Scenes in the House', p. 3.

### 3.4. Conclusion

Parnell's influence was prevalent throughout the WSPU's literature. It was featured in articles in *Votes for Women*, from his constitutional action to the Land League. They connected his actions with militancy whilst emphasising his success in forcing Gladstone's conversion. However, Emmeline only referenced Parnell twice in *My Own Story* and these were in reference to his anti-government election policy and his obstruction. Emmeline was connecting herself with Parnell's more constitutional actions, minimising the later militancy of the WSPU which overlapped more with the Land League. Emmeline recognised the militancy of these more peaceful policies. Both Parnell and her had the similar aims of forcing the British Government to take up their cause and to raise the consciousness of their followers through emphasising the necessity of independence. Emmeline's previous ILP work left her susceptible to accusations of Conservative bias, but for her it was about ensuring women's suffrage came first. Interruptions, though undermined in the press, were a way of women demanding the vote by breaking the learned silence and subverting gender norms. Anxiety surrounding gender roles and the future children of the British race resulted in the suffragettes being mocked as sexless creatures who shrieked. The WSPU reclaimed this criticism and established themselves as the advance of new womanhood. This was similar to Parnell's acknowledgement that the IPP members were no longer behaving like English members but rather Irish members, reclaiming their Irishness.

Billington-Greig used the connection between Parnell and the Pankhursts to depict Emmeline and Christabel as failing dictators in comparison to Parnell's success. However, she does not acknowledge the challenges the WSPU faced. Parnell's anti-government policy and obstruction relied upon his political party and his position as an MP in the House of Commons. The WSPU did not have its own political party and the suffragettes were unable to enter Parliament especially after an attempt to disrupt proceedings left them excluded. They

therefore had to adapt the policies, but Emmeline did credit Parnell with inspiration. Emmeline had been educated by Richard's election loss in the importance of militancy and how a small group could make a difference. The WSPU adapted these policies to ensure women's voices were raised and heard.

#### 4. Emmeline & Home Rule: Militant Double Standards

‘I called upon the women of the meeting to join me in this new militancy, and I reminded them anew that the women who were fighting in the Suffragette army had a great mission, the greatest mission the world has ever known- the freeing of one-half of the human race, and through that freedom the saving of the other half. I said to them: “Be militant each in your own way. Those of you who can express your militancy by going to the House of Commons and refusing to leave without satisfaction, as we did in the early days – do so. Those of you who can express militancy by facing party mobs at Cabinet Ministers’ meetings, when you remind them of their falseness to principle – do so. Those of you who can express your militancy by joining us in our anti-Government by-election policy – do so. Those of you who can break windows – break them. Those of you who can still further attack the secret idol of property, so as to make the Government realise that the property is as greatly endangered by women’s suffrage as it was by the Chartists of old – do so. And my last word is to the Government: I incite this meeting to rebellion. I say to the Government: You have not dared to take the leaders of Ulster for their incitement to rebellion. Take me if you dare, but if you dare I tell you this, that so long as those who incited to armed rebellion and the destruction of human life in Ulster are at liberty, you will not keep me in prison. So long as men rebels – and voters – are at liberty, we will not remain in prison, first division or no first division” – Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*<sup>1</sup>

In this extract, Emmeline Pankhurst recounts one of her most famous speeches delivered at the Royal Albert Hall on 17 October 1912, inciting her listeners to rebellion. The phrase ‘I incite this meeting to rebellion’ has been featured on t-shirts, pins, tote bags and mugs.<sup>2</sup> This merchandise further highlights how the suffragettes have been commodified and their militancy sanitised. These items only have the phrase ‘I incite this meeting to rebellion’, excluding Emmeline’s reference to Ulster. In 2018, as part of the commemoration of the

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<sup>1</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, (London: Vintage, 2015), pp. 238-239.

<sup>2</sup>‘FEMINIST T SHIRT ‘I INCITE THIS MEETING TO REBELLION’ IN RED AND WHITE’, *Bookishly*, (2023) < <https://www.bookishly.co.uk/products/feminist-t-shirt-i-incite-this-meeting-to-rebellion-in-red-white> > [accessed 1 March 2023]; ‘I Incite This Meeting To Rebellion Feminist T-Shirt’, *The Spark Company*, (2023), < <https://thespark.company/products/i-incite-this-meeting-to-rebellion-feminist-t-shirt> > [accessed 1 March 2023]; ‘REBELLION ENAMEL PIN - VOTES FOR WOMEN COLLECTION’, *Literary Emporium*, (2023) < <https://www.literaryemporium.co.uk/products/rebellion-enamel-pin-votes-for-women-collection-1> > [accessed 1 March 2023]; ‘EMPOWERING ‘REBELLION’ TOTE BAG’, *Bookishly*, (2023), < [https://www.bookishly.co.uk/products/empowering-rebellion-tote-bag?\\_pos=4&\\_sid=db8913356&\\_ss=r](https://www.bookishly.co.uk/products/empowering-rebellion-tote-bag?_pos=4&_sid=db8913356&_ss=r) > [accessed 1 March 2023]; ‘SUFFRAGETTE “REBELLION” FEMINIST QUOTE MUG’, *Bookishly*, (2023), < [https://www.bookishly.co.uk/products/suffragette-rebellion-feminist-quote-mug?\\_pos=6&\\_sid=db8913356&\\_ss=r](https://www.bookishly.co.uk/products/suffragette-rebellion-feminist-quote-mug?_pos=6&_sid=db8913356&_ss=r) > [accessed 1 March 2023].

centenary of women's suffrage, the Royal Holloway University of London uploaded a series of Emmeline's speeches performed by Bryonie Pritchard including Emmeline's incitement speech.<sup>3</sup> Pritchard's performance of the speech ends with the phrase, thereby excluding the original conclusion. In the closing lines, Emmeline was challenging the Government by emphasising the different treatment experienced by the suffragettes to those using militancy in Ulster. This double standard also applied to Irish nationalists whom Emmeline and the WSPU viewed as challenging the Government for the freedom of Irishmen only, neglecting the rights of Irishwomen. Emmeline saw these double standards as incitement to further militancy which by 1912, had taken on a new form: the destruction of property through stones, arson, and bombs.

This chapter explores how Emmeline and the WSPU interacted with Home Rule and how it inspired her and the suffragettes to militancy. It also considers how Emmeline employed Home Rule in *My Own Story* as she was able to sanitise the more dangerous actions of the WSPU by comparing them to gun-running in Ulster and threats of civil war. The first section will focus on Emmeline and the WSPU's interactions with the IPP. The two organisations had competed for Government attention before 1912. However, Emmeline and other members of the WSPU blamed the IPP for the failure of the Conciliation Bill of 1912 due to scaremongering by the Liberal Party. An amendment, proposed by Philip Snowden, to include a clause granting women's suffrage in the Home Rule Bill was also defeated in November 1912. These incidents enforced the idea to Emmeline and the WSPU that the Irish nationalists would not grant Irishwomen the vote unless forced, thus a policy was employed with the slogan 'No Votes for Women, No Home Rule'. This included militant acts committed in Dublin by WSPU members to disrupt Home Rule proceedings. The WSPU depicted Irish nationalists as selfish, only

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<sup>3</sup> History Hub, 'Emmeline Pankhurst | 'I incite this meeting to rebellion' speech, October 1912 | Women's Suffrage', online video recording, YouTube, 20 July 2018, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EMNDj\\_Ao3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EMNDj_Ao3s)> [accessed 1 March 2023].

wanting Home Rule for themselves and not for Irishwomen. They used Ulster to contrast this selfishness after Edward Carson pledged women's suffrage in 1913 if an Ulster Parliament were to be created. Carson later repudiated this pledge, and votes for women were again pushed aside. The second section of this chapter explores the different treatment of the suffragettes in comparison to Ulster unionists and Irish nationalists. In Emmeline's speech, she challenges the Government to arrest her but threatens that she would 'not remain in prison, first division or no first division'.<sup>4</sup> This symbolised a change in policy as previously the suffragettes had fought for the recognition of first division using hunger strikes. First division was the division assigned to political prisoners which included more concessions like being able to write letters, wear their own clothes and being able to talk with fellow prisoners. However, as the Ulster unionists remained free, hunger strikes became an escape route rather than a way of ensuring political status. The introduction of the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill Health Act) in 1913, nicknamed the 'Cat and Mouse Act', allowed for the release of hunger striking prisoners who would be re-arrested once their health improved. Home Rule inspired Emmeline to militancy due to the unfair treatment of women by Irish nationalists and by the Government in comparison to the Ulster Unionists. However, Emmeline was also able to utilise the contrasting treatment for her own benefit in *My Own Story* by presenting women's militancy as milder and justified.

#### **4.1. Home Rule vs votes for women**

After Parnell's downfall, the IPP had suffered from divisions and Home Rule had been shifted from the centre of British politics. Timothy Healy surmised in 1905 that the Liberal Government under Henry Campbell-Bannerman wanted to 'bury' Home Rule and would 'do

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<sup>4</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, (London: Vintage, 2015), pp. 238-239.

nothing that they are not forced into', like Emmeline's assessment on women's suffrage.<sup>5</sup> However, the situation was very different by 1910. In similar circumstances to Parnell in 1885, the IPP had the balance of power due to a Liberal minority in the 1910 January and December general elections. John Redmond, the leader of the IPP since 1900, therefore set out to achieve the goal of Home Rule. Emmeline was aware of this, documenting how Home Rule had been promised by the Liberal Party in 1910 upon election.<sup>6</sup> She compared this promise to Herbert Asquith's 'pledge' that he would 'introduce an electoral reform bill which could be amended to include woman suffrage'.<sup>7</sup> Home Rule was therefore in a more positive position as suffragettes and suffragists had not been promised a suffrage bill but rather an amendment. Emmeline summarised the position of women's suffrage as the same as the IPP in 1885 before the election: 'neither the Liberal nor the Conservative leaders would include Home Rule in their programme' until forced to do so through Parnell's policy.<sup>8</sup> The WSPU was unable to emulate the IPP's success and women's suffrage took a backseat to Home Rule.

Emmeline's reference to the negligence of the women's suffrage issue emphasises how important it was to the WSPU to push women's suffrage to the forefront of politics. As argued in the previous chapters, women putting themselves first was a radical act in Edwardian Britain and by Emmeline's definition, a militant one. The WSPU ensured that women's suffrage would come first, especially in *Votes for Women*. The cartoons (Figures 24, 25 & 26) on the front page of the periodicals depict votes for women as a priority issue with Home Rule taking a backseat instead. The cartoon titled 'Our Turn Next' (Figure 24) features a scroll waving a 'Votes for Women' flag, coming up to the desks of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, whilst other scrolls carrying 'Welsh Disestablishment' and 'Home Rule' are behind it.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Timothy Michael Healy, 'Letter to Maurice Healy, 12 December 1905' in Timothy Michael Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day Volume II*, (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1928), p. 475.

<sup>6</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 147.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> A. Patriot, 'Our Turn Next', *Votes for Women*, 29 April 1910, p. 489.



This cartoon was published over three months after the 1910 election in which the Liberals had promised Home Rule but merely pledged an amendment to women's suffrage. Nevertheless, the WSPU argued that with the passing of the budget there was now time for the Government to consider a women's suffrage bill.<sup>10</sup> For Emmeline and the WSPU, women's suffrage would always be pushed to the forefront even if that was not the situation in Parliament. The cartoon titled 'Playing at Soldiers' (Figure 25) was printed two years after 'Our Turn Next' but shares the same sentiment. Lloyd George and Lord Loreburn are depicted as children battling each other with 'women's suffrage' soldiers due to their opposing views on the issue. However, Asquith, in schoolteacher dress, is the most significant figure. He is carrying books on 'Home Rule', 'Manhood Suffrage' and 'Welsh Disestablishment'.<sup>11</sup> The cartoonist, A. Patriot (a pseudonym), was mocking the Government by presenting women's suffrage as a game to them, while issues like 'Home Rule' were schoolwork. Asquith was forcing the others to attend to these issues rather than enjoy the game. Women's suffrage was therefore placed in front of 'Home Rule' as Lloyd George and Lord Loreburn were actively engaging in it rather than the other issues. The third cartoon, titled 'The Living Engine' (Figure 26) was printed 10 May 1912. The use of a train as a metaphor for Liberalism was inspired by the caption, an excerpt from a letter from Lord Murray of Elibank describing Liberalism as a 'living engine of democracy'.<sup>12</sup> The train is not moving though as it is missing a 'votes for women' wheel. Despite the missing wheel, Asquith claims there is no 'change in the intentions of the Company' atop a barrel of Irish butter. Liberalism had therefore been using 'Irish butter' to grease the tracks, alluding to the Liberal Party's reliance on the IPP, when the solution was really women's suffrage. For Emmeline and the WSPU, women's suffrage was the key priority regardless of Home Rule. It was not just Home Rule that was threatened by the suffragettes. In

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<sup>10</sup> 'The Outlook', *Votes for Women*, 29 April 1910, pp.489-490, at 489.

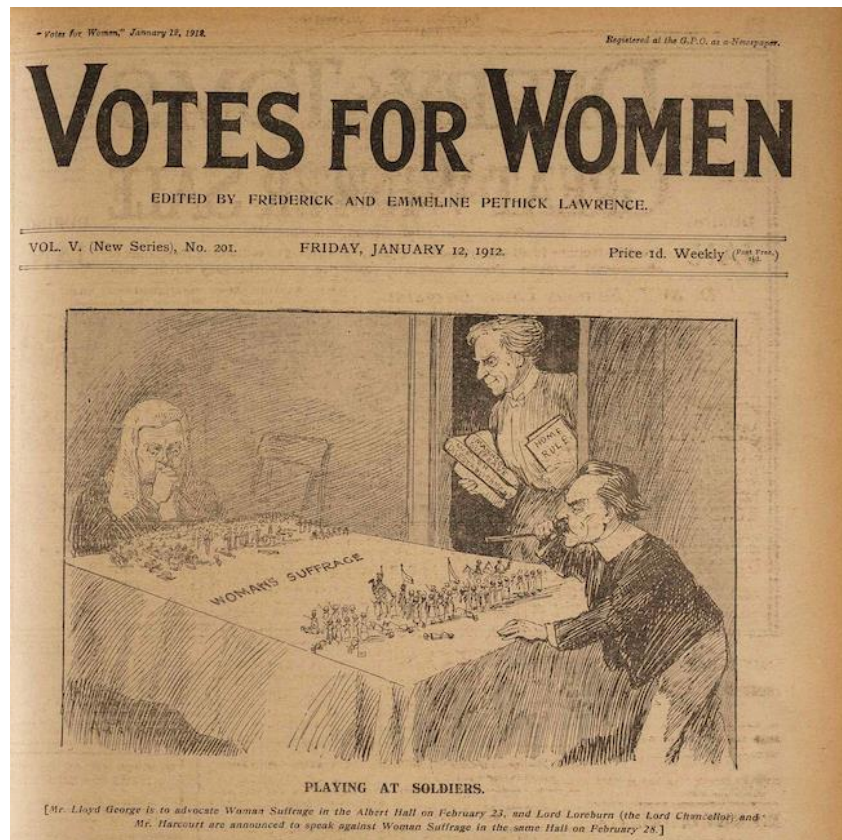
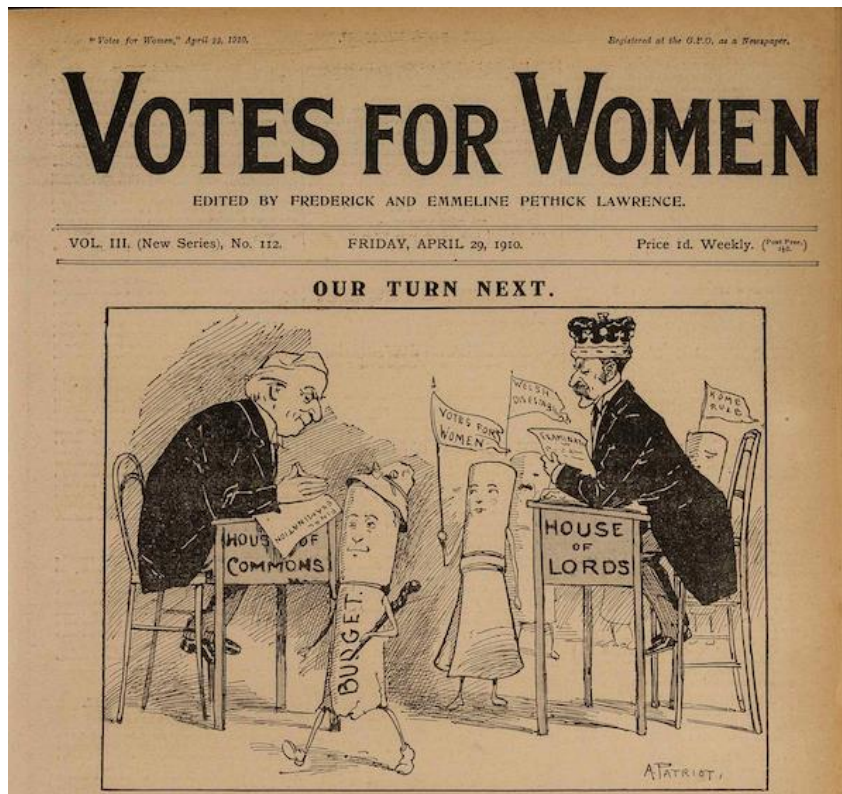
<sup>11</sup> 'Playing at Soldiers', *Votes for Women*, 12 January 1912, p. 233.

<sup>12</sup> A. Patriot, 'The Living Engine', *Votes for Women*, 10 May 1912, p. 497.

October 1908, Margaret Travers Symons (a suffragette) had entered the House of Commons and disrupted the reading of a children's bill. She shouted, 'Leave off discussing the children's question and attend to the women first'.<sup>13</sup> Such a statement would have fed into the anxieties surrounding the suffragettes and motherhood explored in the previous chapter. It nevertheless demonstrates that for the WSPU, it was women's suffrage above all other causes.

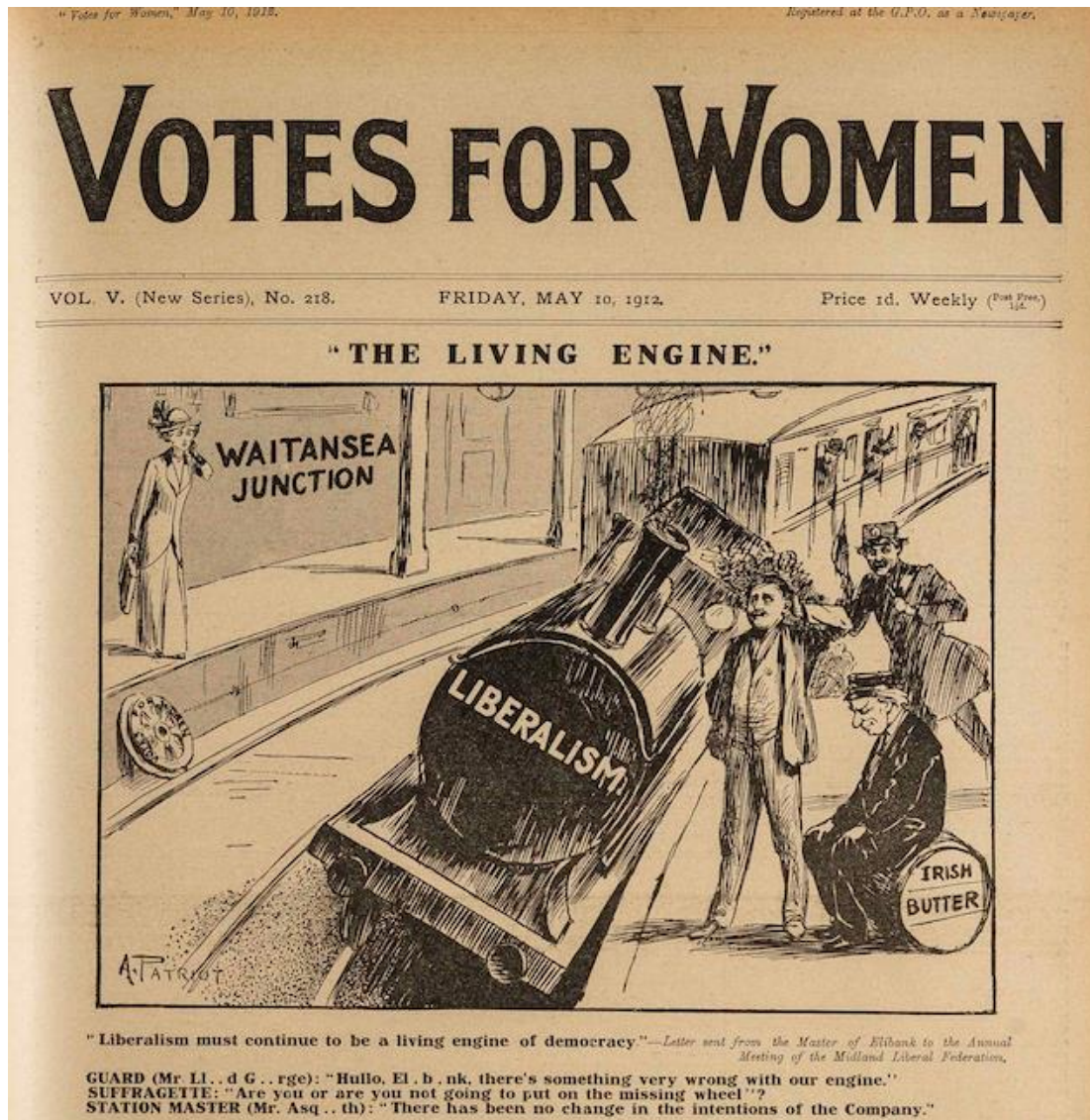
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<sup>13</sup> James William Lowther, *A Speakers Commentaries*, 2 vols (London: Edward Arnold, 1925), ii, p. 60.



24 & 25. A. Patriot, 'Our Turn Next', *Votes for Women*, 29 April 1910, p. 489 & 'Playing at Soldiers', *Votes for Women*, 12 January 1912, p. 233.





26. A. Patriot, 'The Living Engine', *Votes for Women*, 10 May 1912, p. 497.

In a preface to Sylvia's book *The Suffragette*, Emmeline claimed that the book was being written 'at a time when the question is in the very forefront of British politics'.<sup>14</sup> The book was published in 1911, thus Emmeline believed that the WSPU were successful in pushing women's suffrage to the fore. *The Suffragette* was intended to further the publicity surrounding women's suffrage. Sylvia, in her later book *The Suffragette Movement* (first published in 1931), used the same phrase as Emmeline: arguing that women's suffrage

<sup>14</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, 'Preface' in Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette: The History of The Women's Militant Suffrage Movement 1905-1910*, (London: Gay & Hancock, 1970), p. i.

remained at ‘the forefront of the stage: a triumph indeed for militants’ and that the WSPU was ‘determined at all costs’ to keep it that way.<sup>15</sup> Sylvia also referenced how this was a triumph as they were competing with Home Rule and industrial unrest. The WSPU therefore saw Home Rule as competition for attention, thus inspiring militancy which, as argued in the chapter on Fenianism, was inherently linked with publicity. Sylvia’s connection of ‘forefront’ to ‘militancy’ is a perfect example of this. However, there were critics of the policy of putting women’s suffrage first. Austen Chamberlain, a notable anti-suffragist, described how the women’s actions during the coal strike of 1912 were despicable: he compared the women’s actions of ‘disorder and wanton destruction’, ‘general folly’ and ‘wickedness’ to the ‘great distress and unemployment’ and ‘serious danger of rioting’.<sup>16</sup> As an anti-suffragist, it is expected that Chamberlain would not take the WSPU seriously. The language is especially gendered: ‘folly’ implies the women were acting on a whim and that their actions were not serious while ‘wanton’ is historically associated with women behaving in a sexual or immoral way.<sup>17</sup> The challenge for the WSPU was not only to keep women’s suffrage at the forefront but also to ensure politicians would take them seriously.

David Morgan argues that the WSPU were unsuccessful as women’s suffrage remained a ‘second-class question despite the public embarrassment and intense private indignation’ and that it was only considered seriously between 1912 and 1914 because it could threaten the ‘unity’ and ‘hence the continuance of the Asquith administration’.<sup>18</sup> This argument is contradictory because it depicts women’s suffrage having enough power to bring down the

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<sup>15</sup> Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*, (London: Virago Press, 1977), pp. 342 & 370.

<sup>16</sup> Austen Chamberlain, ‘3 March 1912’ in Austen Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside: An Epistolary Chronicle 1906-1914*, (London: Cassell, 1936), p. 438; Austen Chamberlain, ‘12 March 1912’ in Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside*, pp.443-6, at 444.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Wanton’, *Oxford Learners Dictionary*, (2023) <

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/wanton> > [accessed 3 March 2023]

<sup>18</sup> David Morgan, *Suffragists and Liberals: The Politics of Woman Suffrage*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p. 155.

Government if it was not dealt with, and so suffrage was not a second-class question. If the fate of the Government was being troubled, the issue was an important one. However, women's suffrage was not always at the forefront of politics, despite Emmeline and Sylvia's assertion. Emmeline's observation about 1910 that women's suffrage was only pledged an amendment in comparison to Home Rule being promised is evidence of this. Despite their best efforts, the matter was overshadowed. She was aware that it was not always the central issue but as *The Suffragette* was written for propaganda purposes, could not readily admit that at the time. James William Lowther, the first Viscount Ullswater, was the Speaker of the House of Commons from 1905 and 1921 and therefore had a clear view of issues within the political arena. In 1912, upon the opening of Parliament, Lowther described the 'three chief items' as 'Home Rule for Ireland, Disestablishment of the Church for Wales, and Manhood Suffrage for the United Kingdom'.<sup>19</sup> Lowther does refer to other matters and how 'a strike of coal-miners and of dockers, as well as innumerable suffrage disturbances, foreign affairs, and the routine business of the House filled up the time not devoted to the three chief Bills'.<sup>20</sup> The use of 'suffrage disturbances' suggests that Sylvia was accurate about the triumph of militancy as it is the 'disturbances' which ensured they remained an important topic. These disturbances were also noted by IPP MPs themselves: Timothy Healy, in a letter to his brother in March 1912, referenced how the Government were 'having a hot bath' due to 'the coal strike and the women' in reference to the suffragettes.<sup>21</sup> He claims, as discussed in the previous chapter, that there were suspicions the WSPU had Conservative connections: 'I think the extreme women must really have some Tory backing to behave as they are doing'.<sup>22</sup> This statement emphasises how disruptive the suffragettes were to the Liberals so that people suspected they were sponsored

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<sup>19</sup> Lowther, *A Speakers Commentaries*, p. 125.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Timothy Healy, 'Letter to Maurice Healy, 11 March 1912' in Frank Callanan, *T.M. Healy*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), p. 476.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

by the opposition. Emmeline and the WSPU recognised the importance of Home Rule as an issue but presented women's suffrage as the priority. Home Rule therefore served as a stimulus to militancy as the suffragettes fought to make their cause a central issue to the British Government.

#### **4.1.1. Conciliation Bill 1912**

The Conciliation Bill of 1912 was significant as it shifted the IPP into enemy territory for the WSPU but also provided an example of putting a cause first. The Conciliation Bills were a series of bills that would have granted women's suffrage but failed each time. In 1910, the Conciliation Bill had succeeded. However, a general election was called on 18 November 1910 which prevented the bill from going any further. The WSPU's response was militancy, protesting outside the Houses of Parliament which in turn led to the events of Black Friday and a proliferation of broken windows. A year later, the bill had been overshadowed by Asquith's announcement of a Manhood Suffrage Bill. In 1912, Emmeline placed the blame for the Conciliation Bill's failure on the Liberal Party and the IPP. In *My Own Story*, she recalled how Liberals had 'spread the rumour that its passage, at that time, would result in the splitting of the Cabinet' and that the IPP had 'become hostile to the bill because their leader Mr Redmond, was an anti-suffragist, and had refused to include a woman suffrage clause in the Home Rule Bill'.<sup>23</sup> The worries about the Liberal Party splitting threatened Home Rule. The IPP relied on the Liberals for a Home Rule Bill, thus any risk was to be avoided including women's suffrage. Emmeline's daughters had a similar view of the situation. Sylvia described stories being spread that Asquith 'would resign' if women's suffrage was granted, threatening the prospect of Home Rule.<sup>24</sup> Sylvia also described how Christabel had explained to her after the bill's failure that

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<sup>23</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 231.

<sup>24</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 370.

the WSPU had been aware that Redmond would encourage the Irish Party to vote against the bill to prevent Asquith's resignation.<sup>25</sup> For the Pankhursts, the reason for the failure of the 1912 Conciliation Bill blamed on the IPP and its belief in the Liberal Party's scaremongering.

Millicent Garrett Fawcett, leader of the NUWSS, described the situation similarly in her reminiscences *The Women's Victory- and After: Personal Reminiscences, 1911-1918*:

The Irish Nationalists were peculiarly susceptible to the line of argument that the success of women's suffrage would mean the break up of the Government. The Home Rule Bill had been passed in all its stages twice by the House of Commons in two successive sessions, but it required, under the Parliament Act, to be passed three times in three successive Sessions before it could be placed on the Statute Book, notwithstanding its rejection by the House of Lords.<sup>26</sup>

She also compared the 1912 Bill to the previous year's Conciliation Bill: in 1911, thirty-one followers of the IPP had supported the Bill but a year later, only three IPP members supported it (William O'Brien, Timothy Healy and James Gilhooly).<sup>27</sup> In *Votes for Women*, a cartoon appeared on 17 May 1912, during the conspiracy trial of the WSPU leaders, labelling Lloyd George, Asquith, Charles Hobhouse and Redmond as 'The Real Conspirators' (Figure 27).<sup>28</sup> Their cartoon counterparts are dressed as Guy Fawkes-like figures and each has their own role in conspiring against women's suffrage. Asquith's task is to shift focus onto manhood suffrage to ensure women's suffrage would be pushed aside. Hobhouse's function is to incite the women to use more dangerous methods. Redmond's role is having his 'boys' help David Lloyd George 'torpedo' any women's suffrage bills. Hobhouse was an anti-suffragist who would have his house burned down by suffragettes one month after this cartoon was published. In an article published in the *Suffragettes* a year after this cartoon, Hobhouse's views are described as 'unpleasant', and he is quoted as describing women as 'more feeble' in relation to the White

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

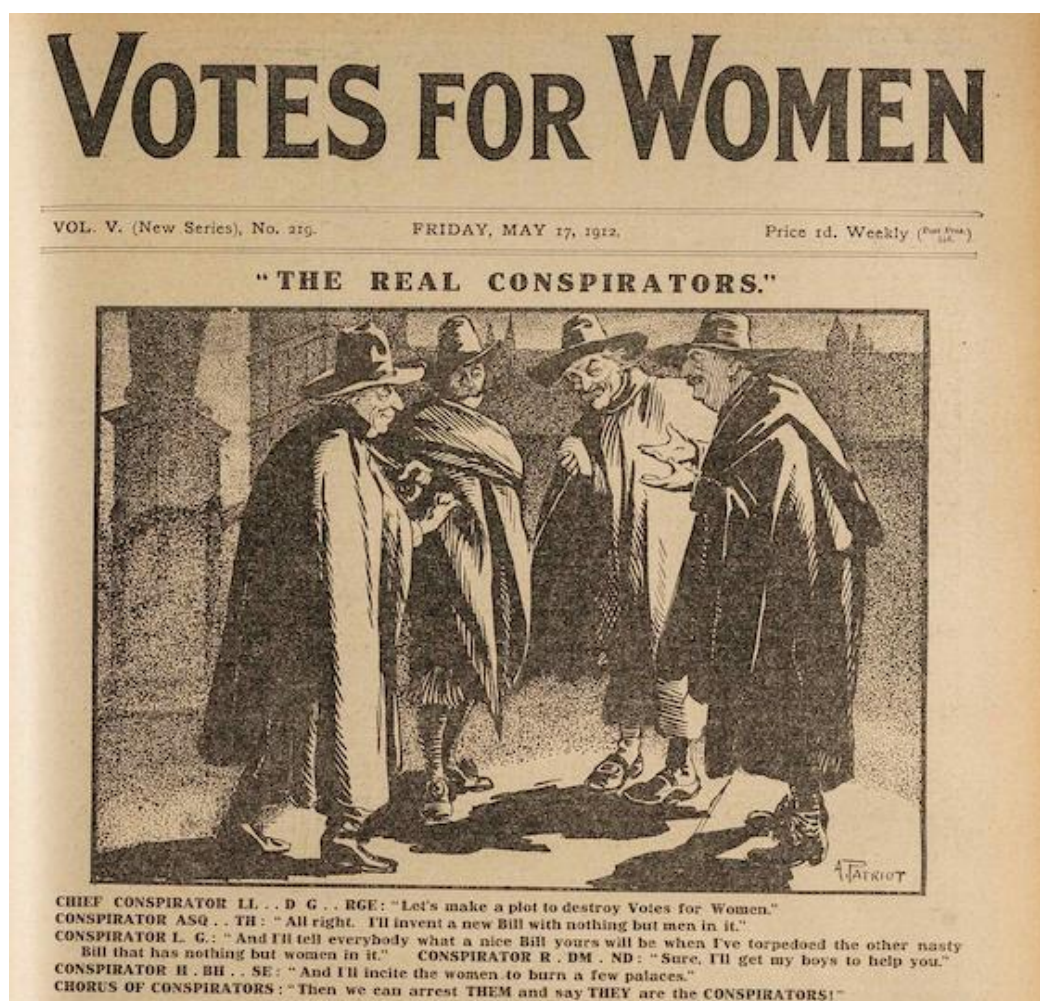
<sup>26</sup> Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *The Women's Victory – and After: Personal Reminiscences, 1911-1918*, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1920), p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>28</sup> A. Patriot, 'The Real Conspirators', *Votes for Women*, 12 May 1912, p. 513.



Slave Bill which was enacted to protect young women or girls from sex trafficking.<sup>29</sup> The final statement of the cartoon summarises the WSPU's point of view perfectly: 'Then we can arrest THEM and say THEY are the CONSPIRATORS!'.<sup>30</sup> For the WSPU, the Liberal Party and IPP were to blame for this defeat through the spreading of lies about the Bill.



27. A. Patriot, 'The Real Conspirators', *Votes for Women*, 12 May 1912, p. 513.

Suffrage organisations therefore shifted the blame for the failed bill onto those spreading rumours and the IPP for believing them. The loss of twenty-eight supporters (according to Fawcett's figures) was evidence enough that the IPP had been victim to

<sup>29</sup> 'Mr. Hobhouse's Unpleasant Views', *Suffragette*, 24 January 1913, p. 214.

<sup>30</sup> A. Patriot, 'The Real Conspirators', p. 513.

scaremongering. Austen Chamberlain, in his diary account for the 14 March 1912 (two weeks before the Conciliation Bill debate), recalled William Harcourt (a Liberal MP) stirring things up: 'He is pretty confident that he can get a large number of the Irish to vote against the Bill and he is hard at work intriguing with them'.<sup>31</sup> Not all IPP MPs believed Harcourt as Healy wrote to his brother in 1912 that he would vote to support it as he was 'always on their side' and felt the Conciliation Bill 'can't do us any harm' in reference to the IPP.<sup>32</sup> The letter is also evidence of scaremongering as it suggests that there was an impression the bill would be harmful which Healy was trying to correct. In a letter from 1914, Healy likened the treatment of the Home Rule Bill to a women's suffrage bill: 'which everyone is anxious to see killed off after having sworn to promote it'.<sup>33</sup> Healy's statement indicates that bills about women's suffrage were often 'killed off', thus the scaremongering was effective. The Liberal Party had therefore been responsible for spreading rumours and were successful. For the WSPU, this truly was a conspiracy.

Fawcett criticised the WSPU for their militancy. She blamed the WSPU for its 'continued violence' which 'caused intense irritation and resentment among the general public, and afforded an excuse to those M.P.'s who had promised their support to our movement to break their word'.<sup>34</sup> The WSPU had initiated a window-smashing campaign in early March which led to Emmeline's arrest and imprisonment during the Conciliation Bill discussion. It was this militancy that Fawcett blamed for the loss. Chamberlain acknowledged MPs who were supportive but because of the window-smashing had decided to vote against it. He even hoped for more windows to be smashed so that the 'Bill would be smashed at the same time'.<sup>35</sup> Fawcett was correct in her assertion that the prevailing attitude in the House of Commons was

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<sup>31</sup> Austen Chamberlain, '14 March 1912' in Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside*, pp. 446-7, at 446.

<sup>32</sup> Timothy Healy, 'Letter to Maurice Healy, 11 March 1912', p. 476.

<sup>33</sup> Timothy Healy, 'Letter to Maurice Healy, 18 February 1914' in Callanan, *T.M. Healy*, p. 501.

<sup>34</sup> Garrett Fawcett, *The Women's Victory – and After*, p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Sir Austen Chamberlain, '14 March 1912', pp. 446-7, at 447.

that militancy was off-putting. Militancy formed some of the debate as James Agg-Gardner, a Conservative MP who had been an early supporter of women's suffrage, argued that militancy had forced the question of women's suffrage to the forefront and that he felt this should go against the Bill because of the use of force.<sup>36</sup> Despite this criticism of militancy, Agg-Gardner also emphasises its success by acknowledging that it was responsible for pushing the women's question, thus, to quote Sylvia, a triumph for militancy.

Emmeline was aware of such criticism. In *My Own Story*, after her explanation of how she believed the Liberals and Redmond were to blame, she includes the phrase: 'So it was lost, and the Militants were blamed for its loss!'.<sup>37</sup> In 1910, when the first Conciliation Bill was being discussed, the WSPU had introduced a truce. *Votes for Women* displayed the truce as a suffragette, dressed as a teacher, putting away her cane (titled 'Militant Methods') (Figure 28).<sup>38</sup> Militancy for the WSPU was a way of ensuring that politicians behaved, and this is reiterated in the caption: 'Many of them are the same boys that gave me so much trouble last term; but there, I'll give them a chance, perhaps they'll be good and I shan't have to use it again'. By infantilising the MPs, the WSPU were mocking their behaviour and also challenging the idea that the suffragettes were like screaming children (as depicted in Figure 21 in the previous chapter). Militant methods were therefore a way of punishing the government when they 'misbehaved' such as the failure of the Conciliation Bills. The truce had failed and when the 1912 Conciliation Bill was being debated, militancy was still rampant.

The WSPU appeared to have learnt from the 1912 Conciliation Bill aftermath though as in 1913, they committed to another truce during the discussion of the Franchise Bill. In an article in the *Suffragette* on 17 January 1913, the case was put forward for the truce:

In order that every word and every gesture of the political traitors in the House of Commons may be seen, and in order that public attention may be concentrated upon

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<sup>36</sup> HC Deb 28 March 1912 Vol 36 c641-642.

<sup>37</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 231.

<sup>38</sup> A. Patriot, 'Giving Them a Chance', *Votes for Women*, 25 February 1910, p. 333.

their tactics, the W.S.P.U. will as announced by Mrs. Pankhurst last Monday, abstain from all militant action until the fate of the women's amendments is settled. Day after day the militants will sit in conference, watching the Parliamentary proceedings word by word and vote by vote. When all is over, then will come the time to take whatever action may be needed.<sup>39</sup>

This statement gives no indication that the WSPU were hopeful for success. The truce was instead an opportunity to shift the attention on to the politicians themselves to avoid the situation in 1912. A week later, another article was published in the *Suffragette* describing the Government's reaction as 'disappointed' by the truce as it disrupted their 'excuse for using violence' and 'their treacherous work of wrecking the amendments'.<sup>40</sup> Emmeline remembered the truce in *My Own Story* as wanting to ensure the 'Government might have full opportunity to fulfil their pledge'.<sup>41</sup> That is not to say that Emmeline believed the Government would fulfil their promise: 'We did not, for one moment, believe that Mr Asquith would willingly keep his word'.<sup>42</sup> Emmeline's distrust is understandable considering the previous Government pledges that had been broken. Her main reason for the truce was that the WSPU 'were determined that the blame should be placed, not on militancy, but on the shoulders of the real traitor'.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, she wanted to avoid the same situation as the Conciliation Bill of 1912 when the suffragettes were blamed instead of the IPP. The WSPU gave the Government the opportunity to act freely without the influence of militancy and the bill still failed. For Emmeline, militancy was not to blame but the Government itself.

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<sup>39</sup> 'Militants in Conference', *Suffragette*, 17 January 1913, p. 198.

<sup>40</sup> 'Masterly Inactivity', *Suffragette*, 24 January 1913, p. 214.

<sup>41</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 244.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid* pp. 195-230 & 231.



# VOTES FOR WOMEN

EDITED BY FREDERICK AND EMMELINE PETHICK LAWRENCE.

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## GIVING THEM A CHANCE.



### PUTTING AWAY THE CANE.

DAME SUFFRAGETTE: "Many of them are the same boys that gave me so much trouble last term; but there, I'll give them a chance, perhaps they'll be good and I shan't have to use it again."

28. A. Patriot, 'Giving Them a Chance', *Votes for Women*, 25 February 1910, p. 333.

Militancy was therefore a weapon to remind politicians of the seriousness of the suffragettes but also could be taken away to demonstrate their co-operation and willingness to unite for a government measure. Despite Fawcett, Chamberlain and Snowden putting the blame on the WSPU, the figures demonstrate the importance of the IPP and how the loss of support influenced the success of the bill. The Conciliation Bill of 1912 had been an example of the IPP putting their cause of Home Rule above women's suffrage by ensuring the stability of the

Liberal Government. This was not forgotten by the WSPU and the cane of ‘Militant Methods’ began to be used on the IPP this time.

#### 4.1.2. ‘No Votes for Women, No Home Rule’

In retaliation for the IPP’s actions, the WSPU announced a policy opposing the Home Rule Bill of 1912.<sup>44</sup> Sylvia acknowledged the power behind the policy when Christabel organised a poster parade to Parliament Square with the phrase ‘No Votes for Women, No Home Rule’ emblazoned on the posters: ‘as a serious policy it was fantastic; for not a single Member of Parliament who desired Home Rule would vote against it by way of reprisal’.<sup>45</sup> This was the aim also presented in *Votes for Women*: ‘unless we convince Mr. Redmond of our power to destroy his cause he will persist in his policy of destroying ours’.<sup>46</sup> The WSPU were therefore attempting to hold the Home Rule bill to ransom.

In July 1912, Dublin became the victim of WSPU violence. In *My Own Story*, Emmeline describes the significance of the date as Asquith was visiting Ireland:

the occasion had been intended to be one of great pomp and circumstance, a huge popular demonstration in honour of the sponsor of Home Rule, but the Suffragettes turned it into the most lamentable fiasco imaginable.<sup>47</sup>

The visit of Asquith had given the suffragettes the perfect opportunity to demonstrate their policy of ‘No Votes for Women, No Home Rule’. By disrupting Asquith’s visit, they were threatening Home Rule directly. *Votes for Women* reported that Irish nationalists had warned the suffragettes to keep their ‘Hands off Asquith!’.<sup>48</sup> The article continues, noting threats from a Dublin newspaper that if any action occurred then it would be ‘regarded as a declaration of

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<sup>44</sup> ‘The Home Rule Bill’, *Votes for Women*, 19 April 1912, pp. 449-450 449; ‘Votes for Irishwomen’, *Votes for Women*, 19 April 1912, p. 456.

<sup>45</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 403.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Votes for Irishwomen’, p. 456.

<sup>47</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 232.

<sup>48</sup> “Hands Off Asquith!”, *Votes for Women*, 19 July 1912, p. 678.

war on the Home Rule movement'.<sup>49</sup> However, the article claims that there was already a war since Redmond 'join[ed] forces with the Prime Minister in wrecking the cause of Votes for Women'.<sup>50</sup> The events in Dublin were therefore acts of war and in the concluding line, the article warns that the 'harmony' of Asquith's visit may be 'marred by the protests of indignant women'.<sup>51</sup> This was certainly the case. On 18 July 1912, Mary Leigh threw a hatchet at a car in which Asquith and Redmond were travelling. The same day, Leigh, Gladys Evans, Mabel Capper and Sarah Jennie Baines were involved in an attempted arson attack at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. These actions symbolised a new militancy as Emmeline described how a new manifesto was printed 'immediately after a visit paid by Asquith to Dublin'.<sup>52</sup> The manifesto warned the Government that 'a fiercer spirit of revolt would be awakened' as the British Government had 'disregarded' the WSPU's previous actions.<sup>53</sup> Home Rule had therefore intensified militancy as the suffragettes turned to more dangerous methods in response to the failed Conciliation Bill of 1912.

The danger of these actions was downplayed by Emmeline. She described the theatre as being 'practically empty at the time' and that 'the damage done was comparatively small' and that Mary Leigh 'threw' the hatchet at Asquith 'without, however, doing him any injury'.<sup>54</sup> Emmeline makes no reference to Redmond who was injured 'on the cheek' according to Asquith.<sup>55</sup> Emmeline was not the only one to sanitise Leigh's actions though as both Christabel and Sylvia use the term 'dropped' to describe Leigh's actions which corroborates Leigh's

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 232.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>55</sup> Herbert Henry Asquith, *Memories and Reflections 1852-1927: Volume 1*, (London: Cassell, 1928), p. 220.

statement in court that ‘she put an implement into the carriage, but said she did not throw it’.<sup>56</sup> It is unclear whether Redmond was injured or not as Christabel refers to a telegraph in which Redmond replied that there was ‘No serious hurt, except to the woman, who was nearly killed, and was arrested’.<sup>57</sup> The term ‘no serious hurt’ implies some injury but it was not life-threatening. In the court proceedings reported on by the newspapers, the wound was described as ‘an inch long’ and ‘over the ear’ and the *Daily Mail* specifies that it was ‘Redmond’s right ear’.<sup>58</sup> These were newspaper reports so the injury may have been exaggerated and it disputed Asquith’s claim that the injury was on Redmond’s cheek. Francis Sheehy Skeffington, one of the founders of the Irish Women’s Franchise League (IWFL), claimed that the ‘unfortunate incident of the hatchet hitting Redmond has inflamed popular opinion’.<sup>59</sup> This was written in a letter to Laura Geraldine Lennox, a member of the WSPU. Sheehy Skeffington’s letter insinuates that the incident with Redmond was well-known, thus Emmeline’s exclusion is significant. It also acknowledges that the militant action had been successful in disrupting the visit as it had impacted on the public. The newspapers reports, Asquith, Christabel and Sheehy Skeffington all agree that there was at least some injury, but Emmeline does not allude to it at all in *My Own Story*. This, combined with Emmeline’s minimisation of the Theatre Royal incident, highlights her ability to conceal some of the more dangerous actions of the suffragettes.

In a letter from Violet Bonham Carter (Asquith’s daughter) to the *Manchester Guardian* in 1957, she stated that ‘attacks on Ministers were constant occurrences’ and included accounts

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<sup>56</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote*, ed. Frederick Pethick-Lawrence, (London: Hutchinson, 1959), p. 223; Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 404; ‘A Symbolical Hatchet’, *Daily Mail*, 12 December 1912, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 223.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Charge of Wounding Mr. Redmond’, *The Times*, 12 December 1912, p. 8; ‘A Symbolical Hatchet’, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Francis Sheehy Skeffington to Laura Geraldine Lennox, 23 July 1912, Dublin, National Library of Ireland, Sheehy Skeffington Papers (Additional), MS 40,472/2.



of her father being attacked by pepper and whilst they were on a golf course.<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, Violet included the tale of the hatchet and claimed she was driving with her ‘father and John Redmond’ and describes how it ‘missed my father by a hair’s-breadth but cut John Redmond’s head behind the ear’.<sup>61</sup> This injury matches with the newspaper reports of the time but throughout articles about the incident, there is no mention of Violet being present. If she was not there, she must have heard about the events from her father second-hand.<sup>62</sup> In response to Violet, Mabel Chisholm (née Capper), who was remanded over the incident but had the charges withdrawn, claimed that Mary Leigh was only sentenced for arson as the charge of ‘grievous bodily harm’ was not substantiated.<sup>63</sup> Emmeline was therefore not the only one attempting to correct misrepresentations.

The WSPU also attempted to minimise the actions of their members. In the *Seventh Annual Report* published in 1913, the WSPU claimed that the Dublin protest had been ‘much misrepresented, and its violence greatly exaggerated’ and that there ‘was no real danger to human life’.<sup>64</sup> According to the WSPU, the press had played a role in embellishing the incident. Therefore, the minimisation of harm was a way of correcting misrepresentations for the WSPU as well as Emmeline. In the same report, the violence of Helen Craggs was also referenced as she had attempted to set fire to Lewis Harcourt’s house. The report alleges that ‘Mr. Harcourt has since maliciously and untruthfully described this act as “an attempt to burn the children’s wing of my home”’.<sup>65</sup> Asquith repeated this claim in his 1928 book *Memories and Reflections 1852-1927*: a suffragette attempted ‘to set fire to the children’s quarters of Nuneham House,

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<sup>60</sup> Violet Bonham Carter, ‘To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian’, *Manchester Guardian*, 2 February 1957, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> ‘Charge of Wounding Mr. Redmond’, p. 8; ‘A Symbolical Hatchet’, p. 5.

<sup>63</sup> Mabel Chisholm, ‘To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian’, *Manchester Guardian*, 2 February 1957, p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> The Women’s Social and Political Union, *Seventh Annual Report 1913*, (London: The Woman’s Press, 1913), p. 13.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

Mr. Harcourt's country residence'.<sup>66</sup> The WSPU's argument that this was not true could be accurate as there was no reference to Helen Craggs aiming for the children's quarters in articles in the *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mail* and *Votes for Women*.<sup>67</sup> In the *Daily Mail*, Craggs (although referred to as Craig in the article) was charged with 'being found in the garden of Mr. Lewis Harcourt's house at Nuneham for an unlawful purpose'.<sup>68</sup> This was certainly less harmful than setting fire to a children's wing of a house. The accusation added to the anxieties surrounding the motherhood of the suffragettes and presented them as more dangerous. However, *Votes for Women* included the summary of the proceedings after this event in which Craggs asked her lawyer, Mr Walsh, to say 'that whatever she had done was from political motive and not from any malice against Mr. Harcourt or with a view to destruction of property or the endangering of life'.<sup>69</sup> The Chairman did not share this view claiming that she had 'evidently made an attempt to burn down the house of a political opponent' and that it was a 'very serious case' as 'there were eight people sleeping in the house, and it was full of valuable articles'.<sup>70</sup> There is no mention of the house being occupied in either the WSPU report or *My Own Story*. Such exclusions support the idea that Emmeline was sanitising the violence of the suffragettes.

#### **4.1.3. Votes for Irishwomen**

The Dublin militancy was not just a result of the IPP's role in the failure of the Conciliation Bill but also its negligence of Irishwomen in the Home Rule question. Emmeline referenced Redmond's refusal to 'include a woman suffrage clause in the Home Rule Bill' in *My Own Story*.<sup>71</sup> *Votes for Women* shifted the blame for this exclusion to Asquith.<sup>72</sup> However, this was

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<sup>66</sup> Asquith, *Memories and Reflections 1852-1927*, p. 221.

<sup>67</sup> 'Attack on Nuneham House', *Daily Telegraph*, 19 July 1912, p. 6; 'Suffragette Scene', *Daily Mail*, 22 July 1912, p.5; 'Militancy', *Votes for Women*, 19 July 1912, p. 678.

<sup>68</sup> 'Suffragette Scene', p.5.

<sup>69</sup> 'Miss Helen Craggs', *Votes for Women*, 26 July 1912, p. 703.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 231.

<sup>72</sup> "Hands Off Asquith!", p. 678.

not the first time that *Votes for Women* had acknowledged the exclusion of Irishwomen from Home Rule. In an article from 27 October 1911, Christabel argued that Redmond was aware that he should be demanding women's suffrage for Irish women as part of Home Rule because the 'ancient traditions of Ireland are those of freedom for women'.<sup>73</sup> By connecting Irish women's suffrage with 'ancient traditions' and 'freedom', Christabel was asserting that due to the Irish nationalists fighting for freedom historically, they should also be fighting for the freedom of women. This sentiment of 'ancient traditions' was repeated by Christabel in a speech documented in *Votes for Women*: 'to give the vote to women would be in line with the tradition of Irish history'.<sup>74</sup> Sylvia claimed that it was these expectations of the Irish as 'freedom-loving' which resulted in the 'consternation' towards Irish MPs following the Conciliation Bill in 1912.<sup>75</sup> The emphasis on Ireland's tradition of fighting for freedom in *Votes for Women* was an attempt to discomfort Irish MPs and highlight the double standard that Home Rule would represent the freedom of Irishmen whilst excluding Irishwomen. In September 1912, an article titled 'Reminiscences of an Irish M.P.' included an account of a speech by William Redmond. The article challenged William Redmond by accusing the IPP of having 'turned coercionists' through their alliance with the Government: the IPP were 'helping to use against the women the very same weapons that were used against them in the past'.<sup>76</sup> The WSPU were presenting the IPP as betraying their cause of freedom by neglecting the freedom of women in their demands. By using their history against them, the WSPU were attempting to embarrass the IPP into action. This was not the first time, as explored in the previous chapter, Christabel had threatened to read from *The Life of Parnell* as a reminder of the IPP's betrayal of the anti-government policy.

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<sup>73</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, 'Votes for Irish Women', *Votes for Women*, 27 October 1911, p. 56.

<sup>74</sup> 'Irish Women and Home Rule', *Votes for Women*, 3 November 1911, p. 68.

<sup>75</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 381.

<sup>76</sup> 'Reminiscences of an Irish M.P.', *Votes for Women*, 13 September 1912, pp. 794-795, at 795.

The cartoons of *Votes for Women* also depicted the exclusion of Irishwomen from Home Rule. In the same issue as Christabel's claim about the ancient traditions of Ireland, the cartoon (Figure 29) depicted an Irishwoman challenging Irishmen: 'Shure yer honours will be given the women av Ould Oireland the same power av the vote you'll be given the men'.<sup>77</sup> The cartoon includes stereotypical language and appearance but is significant in demonstrating that the WSPU believed that Irishwomen should be given the vote. The focus on Ireland in that issue was due to the IWFL passing a resolution that Irishwomen should be included in the Home Rule Bill.<sup>78</sup> The IWFL were also featured in a cartoon in April 1912 titled 'The Greedy Bhoy' (Figure 30). Redmond, taking the role of the 'greedy bhoy', is presented as having 'Home Rule Chocolate' and receiving the gifts of 'Orange safeguards' from Asquith whilst a IWFL member looks on holding a 'No Votes, No Home Rule' flag.<sup>79</sup> This cartoon suggests that Redmond was betraying Irishwomen by accepting gifts from Asquith and ignoring their demand for women's suffrage.

The IWFL did feel betrayed by Redmond's offer of concessions to Ulster but refusal to concede to the inclusion of women's suffrage in the Home Rule Bill. Francis Sheehy Skeffington, one of the founders of the IWFL, questioned Redmond in a letter to the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* on 24 April 1912:

How does Mr Redmond reconcile his readiness to give Ulster any safeguard it asks with his definite refusal to give the simple safeguard of the Parliamentary vote to the women of the whole country?<sup>80</sup>

Cliona Murphy described the relationship between the IWFL and the IPP as 'tempestuous' and 'one-sided' as 'the women needed the help of Irish representatives at Westminster to bring

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<sup>77</sup> A Patriot, 'Shure and yer honours will be given the women av Ould Oireland the same power av the vote you'll be givin the men', *Votes for Women*, 27 October 1911, p. 49.

<sup>78</sup> 'The Outlook', *Votes for Women*, 27 October 1911, pp. 49-50, at 49.

<sup>79</sup> A. Patriot, 'The Greedy Bhoy!', *Votes for Women*, 19 April 1912, p. 449.

<sup>80</sup> Letter from Francis Sheehy Skeffington to the Editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, 24 April 1912, Dublin, National Library of Ireland, Sheehy Skeffington Papers (Additional), MS 40,472/2.

about their enfranchisement'.<sup>81</sup> The IWFL were, therefore, dependent on the IPP but faced continual disappointment. Murphy described Redmond as a 'villain' for suffragists in Ireland as he repeatedly denied the demand for women's suffrage.<sup>82</sup> The IWFL would have agreed with this depiction of Redmond as a 'greedy bhoy' enjoying gifts from Asquith, as an indignant member of the IWFL looks on. The cartoon was printed after the IWFL's deputation to Redmond on 1 April 1912. At the deputation, the IWFL had discussed the possibility of a clause to the Home Rule Bill which Redmond had declared he was 'entirely absolutely opposed to it': not because he was 'opposed to the principle' but because it should be decided 'by the Irish Parliament' and he would 'resent' the English Parliament interference.<sup>83</sup> These reasons were repeated and challenged in *Votes for Women* in 1913.<sup>84</sup> Emmeline's assertion that Redmond was an anti-suffragist was therefore incorrect in principle but his actions spoke volumes to the WSPU and the IWFL. In similar language to Christabel, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington described the Conciliation Bill as a 'betrayal', since the Irish Party had 'stood for liberties in Persia, China, Egypt' but not for Irishwomen.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Cliona Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement and Irish Society in the Early Twentieth Century*, (Hempel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), p. 164.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>83</sup> Report of the Irish Women's Franchise League's deputation to John Redmond, 1 April 1912, Dublin, National Library of Ireland, Sheehy Skeffington Papers, MS 21,639/1/22.

<sup>84</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, 'A "Free" House of Commons!', *Suffragette*, 3 January 1913, p. 172.

<sup>85</sup> Report of the Irish Women's Franchise League's deputation to John Redmond.

# VOTES FOR WOMEN

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1911.

Price 1d. Weekly (Post Free.)



"Shure and yer honours will be givin the women av Ould Oireland the same power av the vote you'll be afther givin the men."

29. A. Patriot, 'Shure and yer honours will be given the women av Ould Oireland the same power av the vote you'll be givin the men', *Votes for Women*, 27 October 1911, p. 49.



# VOTES FOR WOMEN

VOL. V. (New Series), No. 215.

FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 1912.

Price 1d. Weekly (Post Free) <sup>(Post Free)</sup> 1½d.

## THE GREEDY BHOY!



[With apologies to Peter's Swiss Milk Chocolate.]

MASTER REDMOND:—"THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN ONE WANTS TO BE ALONE."

30. A. Patriot, 'The Greedy Bhoj!', *Votes for Women*, 19 April 1912, p. 449.

For the IWFL, the campaign for women's suffrage was more difficult. For some of the members, it was a battle between two causes that greatly affected them. Margaret MacCurtain and Sheila Turner-Johnston argue that feminism and nationalism were not always complementary as MacCurtain describes a 'growing hostility' to feminists as they were 'accused of being anti-nationalist' due to their 'preoccupation with votes for women' whilst Turner-Johnston describes the 'tensions' as 'some Irish women put their nationalism before

their suffragist beliefs'.<sup>86</sup> Emmeline's policy of placing women's suffrage first was therefore a difficult policy to adopt for some Irishwomen. Deborah Webb, who had been present at the IWFL deputation in 1912 and left in 'indignation' at Redmond, had four years prior written to *Votes for Women* to express her attitude: 'I am not only a woman, but an Irishwoman, and while desiring justice for my sex, I desire also justice for my country'.<sup>87</sup> For Irishwomen like Deborah Webb, the WSPU and Redmond's policies of putting their causes first were impediments. Webb's letter also emphasises how Irishwomen had to inform members of the WSPU about the difficulties of campaigning for suffrage in Ireland. Members of the WSPU were only fighting for the right to vote not for the freedom of their country. This led to some resentment as the WSPU was a British organisation and symbol of imperial force, campaigning in Ireland. Correspondence between members of the IWFL with members of the WSPU offers insight into the relationship between the two organisations. Francis Sheehy Skeffington's letter to Laura Geraldine Lennox about the hatchet incident demonstrates that the WSPU did not consider the 'inflamed popular opinion' and its impact upon suffragists in Ireland.<sup>88</sup> Letters from Christabel Pankhurst to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington also reinforce that the situation in Ireland was not at the forefront of the WSPU's priorities. Christabel refused to visit Dublin in 1910 as she was busy with 'by-elections' and 'countless other things'.<sup>89</sup> She also offers gratitude for an article from the *Wexford Free Press* and how 'these important things might otherwise escape' the WSPU's notice.<sup>90</sup> The WSPU's actions in Ireland were, therefore, not carefully considered and put the IWFL in a difficult position. The WSPU were unaware of the

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<sup>86</sup> Margaret Mac Curtain, 'Women, the Vote and Revolution' in Margaret Mac Curtain, *Ariadne's Thread: Writing Women into Irish History*, (Galway: Arlen House, 2008), pp. 81-89, at 88; Sheila Turner Johnston, *Alice: A Life of Alice Milligan*, (Omagh: Colourpoint Press, 1994), p. 11.

<sup>87</sup> Report of the Irish Women's Franchise League's deputation to John Redmond; Deborah Webb, 'To The "Suffragettes"', *Votes for Women*, February 1908, p. 70.

<sup>88</sup> Letter from Francis Sheehy Skeffington to Laura Geraldine Lennox, 23 July 1912.

<sup>89</sup> Letter from Christabel Pankhurst to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, 20 January 1910, Dublin, National Library of Ireland, Sheehy Skeffington Papers (Additional), MS 41,177/38.

<sup>90</sup> Letter from Christabel Pankhurst to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, 6 November 1911, Dublin, National Library of Ireland, Sheehy Skeffington Papers (Additional), MS 41,177/38.



complexities facing the IWFL in their campaign for the vote. There was also resentment as the WSPU took credit for certain events. An apology was even printed in *Votes for Women* when a protest against Churchill was attributed to the WSPU rather than the IWFL.<sup>91</sup> The WSPU did not understand the difficulties for Irish nationalist women who fought for women's suffrage. Emmeline's militancy depended on women's suffrage being the key priority, over all other causes including Home Rule.

Philip Snowden, the Labour MP, attempted to bring both causes together through an amendment in November 1912 which would ensure votes for Irish women within the Home Rule Bill. However, this amendment was defeated and resulted in a more hostile relationship between the WSPU and the IPP. The cartoon printed on 12 November 1912 in the *Suffragette* demonstrated their feelings towards Redmond as he was depicted as trampling on Irishwomen (Figure 31).<sup>92</sup> A similar image had been created from an article in *Votes for Women* months before which described the IPP as 'trampling on the rights of women' whilst 'snatching at self-government for themselves'.<sup>93</sup> Connecting back to the 'Greedy Bhoys', the WSPU saw the IPP as selfish for putting Home Rule above votes for women. The cartoon, like 'The Real Conspirators', accused Redmond and the Government of a 'Coalition Conspiracy'. The IPP, due to their coalition with the Liberal Government, had been announced as enemies of the WSPU. As part of the announcement of the Pethick Lawrence split in October 1912, Emmeline had also announced a policy of opposition of 'all parties in the coalition' as the Liberal Party could 'not live another day without the coalition of the Nationalist and the Labour parties'.<sup>94</sup> The blame towards the Liberal Government was therefore extended to include the Labour Party and the IPP. Emmeline summarises her argument by claiming that the WSPU should say:

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<sup>91</sup> 'Irish Women and Mr. Churchill', *Votes for Women*, 23 February 1912, p. 318.

<sup>92</sup> George, 'The Coalition Conspiracy. – The Fate of Private Members' Amendments.', *Suffragette*, 15 November 1912, p. 61.

<sup>93</sup> 'Votes for Irishwomen', p. 456.

<sup>94</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 236-237.

not only to the Liberal Party but to the Nationalist Party and the Labour Party, "So long as you keep in office an anti-suffrage Government, you are parties to their guilt, and from henceforth we offer you the same opposition which we give to the people whom you are keeping in power with your support".<sup>95</sup>

The WSPU had now openly declared war on the IPP, not just by opposing the Home Rule Bill but by opposing the party itself. When the amendment failed, the WSPU were ready to attack again.



31. George, 'The Coalition Conspiracy. – The Fate of Private Members' Amendments.',  
*Suffragette*, 15 November 1912, p. 61.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* p. 237.

David Morgan's assessment of Snowden's amendment suggests that it was a mistake. He argued that it was an attempt to 'coerce the Nationalists' and that Redmond was 'understandably alarmed'.<sup>96</sup> Morgan was sympathetic with Redmond as he uses the term 'understandably', thus justifying Redmond's fear. This raises an important question about how women's suffrage is perceived as a cause. Morgan's argument is about how much of an error it was to force women's suffrage on Redmond. However, through the Conciliation Bill and the exclusion of Irishwomen from Home Rule, Redmond and other IPP members had indirectly forced women's suffrage to fail. Both the IPP and the WSPU were devoted to their own cause and wished to achieve it. This was part of militancy to Emmeline: that women were fighting for their own cause regardless of class or political divisions. Marian Ramelson claims that the 'whole attitude of the W.S.P.U. in demanding that only women's suffrage had urgency and validity was, indeed, politically impossible and indefensible'.<sup>97</sup> This argument not only undermines the seriousness of the cause for women's suffrage but also fails to recognise the militancy of the women demanding their issue be seen to first. The policy may have been unsuccessful as the bills continued to fail but the importance of such an attitude cannot be understated.

Redmond's refusal to include women's suffrage in a Home Rule Bill led the WSPU to seek Edward Carson's pledges instead. Carson was an Ulster unionist who was leading the campaign against Home Rule. In *My Own Story*, Emmeline described how the WSPU had approached Carson and 'asked him if the proposed Ulster Government would give equal voting rights to women' but if not, had threatened: 'in case the Ulster men alone were to have the vote, that we should deal with "King Carson" and his colleagues exactly in the same manner that we

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<sup>96</sup> Morgan, *Suffragists and Liberals*, p. 106.

<sup>97</sup> Marian Ramelson, *The Petticoat Rebellion: A Century of Struggle for Women's Rights*, (London: Lawrence, 1967), p. 156.

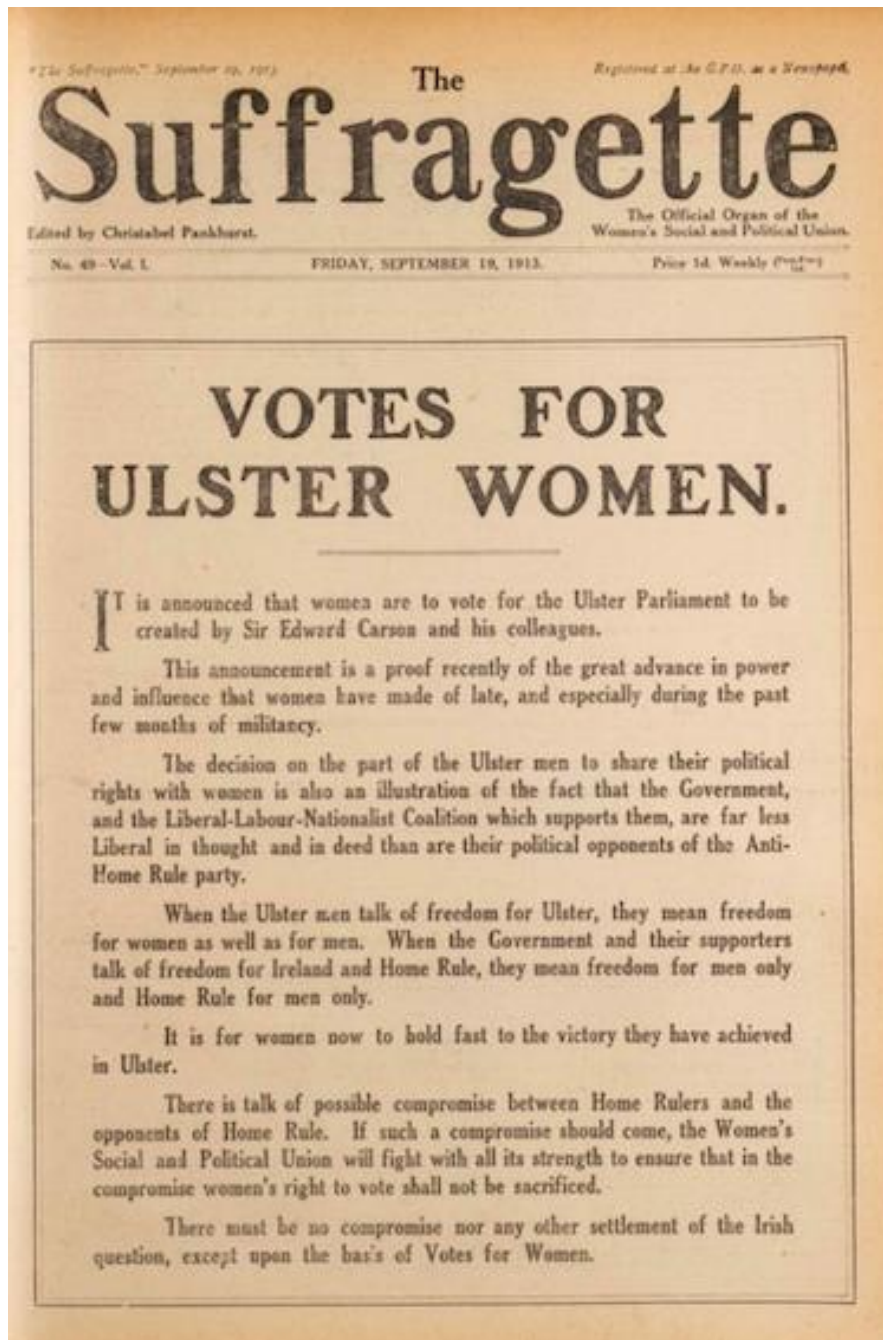
had adopted towards the British Government'.<sup>98</sup> Militancy had been employed as it had been during the truces, as a weapon to be used if women's suffrage was not taken seriously. Through this threat, Emmeline was warning Carson that if Ulster was to repeat the Irish nationalists' rejection of women suffrage, then the response would be an outbreak of new militancy like the events in Dublin. Carson appeared to have taken this threat seriously at first by ensuring votes for women in an Ulster Parliament. On the front cover of the *Suffragette* 19 September 1913, the title 'Votes for Ulster Women' celebrated the success (Figure 32). The reason for this victory, according to the WSPU, was militancy: 'This announcement is a proof recently of the great advance in power and influence that women have made of late, and especially during the past few months of militancy'.<sup>99</sup> For the WSPU, this pledge was a triumph of militancy, especially the new militancy policy which was more extreme. However, there were other suffrage organisations that played a part in this pledge.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, the WSPU took the credit and proclaimed militancy as the reason for success.

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<sup>98</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 305-306.

<sup>99</sup> 'Votes for Ulster Women', *Suffragette*, 19 September 1913, p. 841.

<sup>100</sup> For more information about the campaign in Ulster see: Diane Urquhart, 'An articulate and definite cry for political freedom': the Ulster Suffrage Movement', *Women's History Review*, 11.2, (2006), pp. 273-292, <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09612020200200321>>.



32. 'Votes for Ulster Women', *Suffragette*, 19 September 1913, p. 841.

The WSPU became even more hostile to the IPP. Sylvia, in *The Suffragette Movement*, documented Christabel's announcement that:

The W.S.P.U. will henceforth oppose the Government and the Nationalist Party with more vigour than ever, because if the Government and Mr. John Redmond should be successful in forcing the Home Rule Bill upon Ulster, women would be robbed of the voting rights which Sir Edward Carson and his colleagues are prepared to grant to them under the provisional government.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 500.

Home Rule had now become a definite obstacle to women's suffrage for the WSPU. Carson had therefore made powerful allies as Redmond, already labelled an anti-suffragist, would be the subject of intensified WSPU militancy for campaigning for Home Rule. The front page of the *Suffragette* contrasted the actions of the Unionists and the Coalition Government:

The decision on the part of the Ulster men to share their political rights with women is also an illustration of the fact that the Government, and the Liberal-Labour-Nationalist Coalition which supports them, are far less Liberal in thought and in deed than are their political opponents of the Anti-Home Rule party.

When the Ulster men talk of freedom for Ulster, they mean freedom for women as well as for men. When the Government and their supporters talk of freedom for Ireland and Home Rule, they mean freedom for men only and Home Rule only.<sup>102</sup>

This quotation expresses the WSPU's discontent with the Coalition Government by emphasising the constant double standards that the freedom of women was overlooked by the Liberal Government and by the IPP. Scars had been left by the Conciliation Bill of 1912 and the failure of Snowden's amendment which made the WSPU more susceptible to the line that those fighting for Home Rule did not support women's suffrage. All of those involved felt that their cause was the most urgent. thus would do whatever they could to ensure its success. The front page of the *Suffragette* develops this point as the WSPU claim that they 'will fight with all its strength to ensure that in the compromise women's right to vote shall not be sacrificed' and that 'there must be no compromise nor any other settlement of the Irish question, except upon the basis of Votes for Women'.<sup>103</sup> The WSPU were therefore employing the threat of militancy towards the IPP. Militancy was to be used to ensure Home Rule was dependent on women's suffrage.

The WSPU believed that through their threat of militancy to Carson, they had been taken seriously. However, this was not the case. A U-turn was made in 1914 and Ulster women

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<sup>102</sup> 'Votes for Ulster Women', p. 841.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*



would no longer gain the right to vote if an Ulster government was set up. The WSPU responded with outbreaks of militancy including bombs and fires. The response to this militancy was violence as Sylvia recounted how ‘women were roughly handled when poster parading, and Dorothy Evans had occasion to bring an action for assault and false imprisonment against a gallant captain’.<sup>104</sup> Regardless of location, militancy for women was dangerous. The events in Ulster highlight that even when the WSPU believed they were being taken seriously, pledges were still broken, and women’s suffrage would unfortunately come last as a priority.

#### **4.2. Difference of Treatment**

Prison played an important role in the battle for women’s suffrage. In *My Own Story*, Emmeline described prison as a ‘battleground’ for the suffragettes.<sup>105</sup> However, it was a changing battleground as the meaning of imprisonment was altered throughout the suffrage campaign. In 1905, imprisonment had been used for publicity: a way of ensuring Christabel and Annie Kenney’s protest at the Free Trade Hall made the news. By 1909, it was the site of protest for political recognition. Comparisons were made by the suffragettes with Irish nationalists who had been put in the first division, thus were political prisoners. To fix this, the suffragettes broke rules and embarked on hunger strikes. By 1912, prison was a battleground in the sense that the suffragettes were struggling to stay out as a challenge to the Government for not imprisoning Carson and other Ulster militants. The suffragettes used the same weapon of hunger strike but with different motives: to escape and to embarrass the Government. Ireland was intrinsically linked to the suffragettes’ battle in prison. Emmeline used Irish nationalists

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<sup>104</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 549.

<sup>105</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 272.

and Ulster Unionists to challenge the treatment of political women by highlighting the disparities in conduct.

#### **4.2.1. Imprisonment & political status**

One of the defining features of the WSPU's imprisonment policy was the request for first division treatment. The WSPU argued that the actions of the suffragettes should fall under the category of political prisoners. This would have entitled them to concessions: they would have been able to receive letters, have visitors, eat their own food, and wear their own clothes. One of Emmeline's first accounts of Holloway Prison demonstrates how different her experience was. Upon arrival she was asked to strip and was given a prison dress and while there, she was kept in solitary confinement for 23 hours a day.<sup>106</sup> This experience was shared by others and publicised in *Votes for Women*.<sup>107</sup> The articles emphasised that women were being treated like criminals, instead of the political figures they were. Emmeline ensured that her tale of prison was not a complaint in *My Own Story* as she claimed, 'one does not expect to be comfortable in prison'.<sup>108</sup> The battle for the title of political prisoner was not one to improve their conditions but rather a battle for recognition of their political motives.

This battle was intrinsically linked with Irish nationalists as they were often used as examples in WSPU literature to highlight the disparities in conduct. Between 1911 and 1912, the WSPU printed a leaflet contrasting the imprisonment of political men to the suffragettes. One of the examples included was the Irish prisoners of 1868 who were sentenced for 'seditious libel'.<sup>109</sup> These prisoners were Alexander M. Sullivan and Richard Pigott (later the author of

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<sup>106</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 91-93.

<sup>107</sup> 'Treatment of the Prisoners', *Votes for Women*, February 1908, p. 62; 'Women's Parliament and the House of Commons', *Votes for Women*, March 1908, p. 84.

<sup>108</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 91-93.

<sup>109</sup> 'Suffragist Prisoners are Political Offenders. Therefore they should be Treated as First-Class Misdemeanants' in *Suffrage and the Pankhursts*, ed. by Jane Marcus (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 177-179, at 177.



the famous Pigott forgeries which claimed Parnell had supported those involved in the Phoenix Park murders). There had been recognition of the political motives, but they had not been granted first division treatment, apparent in the House of Commons debate on 27 March 1868. The Earl of Mayo, Richard Southwell Bourke, claimed that the prisoners had not been given the label of first class misdemeanant but the rules had been relaxed as the men were able to wear their own clothes, had their cells cleaned for them, could extend their exercise hours and that none of their requests had been refused.<sup>110</sup> The WSPU leaflet did not claim that the Irish Prisoners had been treated as first-class misdemeanants but rather they ‘were given first-class treatment’, acknowledging the distinction.<sup>111</sup> There were some rules still enforced such as the prisoners having to eat the prison food but the Government claimed that the prisoners were receiving first-class treatment. Sylvia Pankhurst also referenced Laurence Ginnell and James Patrick Farrell as receiving first class treatment in *The Suffragette* which was published in 1911.<sup>112</sup> Both Ginnell and Farrell were arrested in connection with land agitation in Ireland including cattle-driving. Both Sylvia and Frederick Pethick Lawrence (in a book published in 1910) argued that Ginnell had received ‘the privileges of a first class misdemeanant’.<sup>113</sup> Whilst for Farrell, Sylvia argued that Farrell’s case for inciting to cattle-driving was ‘technically parallel’ to the trial of Emmeline, Christabel and Flora Drummond in 1908 yet the women were committed to prison in the second class division.<sup>114</sup> Sylvia documented how these prisoners could provide their ‘own clothing, furniture, food, malted liquor, could smoke, have books & newspapers, freely correspond’ which offered a very different image to Emmeline’s description of Holloway.<sup>115</sup> The WSPU also made the differences visually clear at the Women’s Exhibition

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<sup>110</sup> HC Deb, 27 March 1868, vol 191, c. 441-445.

<sup>111</sup> ‘Suffragist Prisoners are Political Offenders. Therefore they should be Treated as First-Class Misdemeanants’, p. 177.

<sup>112</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette*, pp. 203 & 332.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203; Frederick William Pethick Lawrence, *Women’s Fight for The Vote*, (London: The Woman’s Press, 1910), p. 116.

<sup>114</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette*, p. 332.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

in 1909 at Prince Skating Rink. There was an exhibition of two prison cells: one ordinary cell and the other, the cell of a political offender. The exhibition leaflet describes how the latter cell was occupied by a political offender ‘who might, for instance, have been an Irish member of Parliament, imprisoned as the result of some agrarian agitation’.<sup>116</sup> The visual representation of inequality was also emphasised in the leaflet which compared the schedules and provisions granted to a political prisoner.<sup>117</sup> The exhibition piece was therefore all about the inequality facing political women in comparison to Irish MPs. The repeated references to these MPs demonstrate how the double standard drove the women to militancy in order that they too could achieve political recognition.

Ginnell also features in a cartoon that was printed on the front page of *Votes for Women*. The cartoon (Figure 33) cleverly contrasted the treatment by presenting prison as a train. The leaders of the WSPU are depicted as passengers attempting to enter the first-class department but are instead being placed in the second-class department. The response of the guard, who is depicted as Reginald McKenna who was Home Secretary at the time, is that it is not first-class but rather a ‘greatly improved’ second-class under the ‘Company’s by-law 243a’.<sup>118</sup> This was in reference to Rule 243 A which was put into place in 1910 by Winston Churchill, McKenna’s predecessor as Home Secretary. Kevin Grant argues that that this conciliation was ‘not political prisoner status’ and that it had been referred to jokingly as “one-and-a-half-class” by the suffragettes.<sup>119</sup> For the WSPU, these concessions were insulting as they were still not recognised as first division prisoners. In the *Fifth Annual Report* of the WSPU, Rule 243a is referred to as ‘a result of the heroic hunger strike’ but that the ‘exemptions fell far short of the

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<sup>116</sup> The National Women’s Social and Political Union, *The Women’s Exhibition 1909*, (London: The Woman’s Press, 1909), p. 38.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>118</sup> A. Patriot, *Votes for Women*, 7 June 1912, p. 577.

<sup>119</sup> Kevin Grant, ‘British Suffragettes and the Russian Method of Hunger Strike’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 53.1 (2011), pp. 113-143, at 135 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41241735>> [accessed 29 November 2022].

treatment which is properly accorded to political prisoners'.<sup>120</sup> As women fighting for their political enfranchisement, such a rejection was significant. This is emphasised in the response of the passengers in the cartoon: 'We don't want an improved 2<sup>nd</sup> class carriage. We want what is ours by right. We have paid for it- at the risk of our lives'.<sup>121</sup> For the WSPU, the refusal of the Government to imprison them as first-class prisoners was not about comfort. As Emmeline argued, prison was not supposed to be comfortable. The demand for first-class was a demand for the Government to recognise the women's political intentions. It is notable that throughout the WSPU literature, it is mostly men who have received political status as the WSPU were emphasising that it was their gender as well as the Government failing to take their cause seriously that inhibited their quest for status.

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<sup>120</sup> The National Women's Social and Political Union, *Fifth Annual Report*, (London: The Woman's Press, 1911), p. 14.

<sup>121</sup> A. Patriot, *Votes for Women*, 7 June 1912, p. 577.

# VOTES FOR WOMEN

VOL. V. (New Series), No. 222.

FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 1912.

Price 1d. Weekly (Flat Rate.)



PASSENGERS (Leaders of the W.S.P.U.): "But ours are 1st class tickets! Is not this a 2nd class compartment?"  
GUARD (Mr. McKenna): "The answer is in the affirmative. But under the Company's by-law 243a it has been greatly improved, and—"  
PASSENGERS: "We don't want an improved 2nd class carriage. We want what is ours by right. We have paid for it—at the risk of our lives."  
GUARD (losing his temper): "It is impossible to enter into the minds of these passengers!"

33. A. Patriot, *Votes for Women*, 7 June 1912, p. 577.

Before analysing these militant tactics, it must be noted that not all Irish nationalist prisoners were committed to prison in the first-class division or given the label of political prisoners. Sean McConville, in his study of Irish political prisoners, suggested that the Irish political prisoners had also had to fight to gain political status. He claimed that in the later nineteenth century, Fenians 'demanded political status, but the politicians and officials did not want them to have it' over worries it would grant 'legitimacy' to the cause.<sup>122</sup> The connection between political status and legitimacy emphasises why the suffragettes were fighting for

<sup>122</sup> Sean McConville, *Irish Political Prisoners, 1848-1922: Theatres of War*, (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 181.

political status: they wanted to be recognised as legitimate agitators like Ginnell and Farrell. McConville's argument is also a reminder that the suffragettes were using the most fitting examples for their cause. They were intentionally choosing examples to highlight inequality. For example, despite Emmeline's connection to the Manchester Martyrs, there is no mention of them in the demands about political status. As referenced in the first chapter, there had been debate about the political nature of the Manchester Martyrs. *The Times* vehemently denied that the Fenian outrages were political.<sup>123</sup> By denying their political nature, they would also be denied the label 'political prisoners'. John Sarsfield Casey, in his prison autobiography *The Galtee Boy: A Fenian Prison Narrative*, described the conditions of prisons such as Pentonville and Portland: from a bed filled with vermin to being confined to his cell for twenty-four hours to having his food flavoured by bugs.<sup>124</sup> There were some concessions such as being able to walk around in the yard in Portland and to be able to converse with whomever was next to you.<sup>125</sup> However, these concessions did not equate to political status. There were some campaigns to improve conditions or for the release of prisoners and in 1871, an amnesty was granted for Fenian prisoners that they would be pardoned or, if their sentence had not yet expired, would be exiled until completed. It is notable that, despite the influence of Parnell on tactics, there is no comparison of Parnell's time in prison as a political prisoner other than the article 'Mr Parnell—Mrs Pankhurst' in *Votes for Women*.<sup>126</sup> This compared Emmeline's arrest before Emily Davison's funeral and Parnell's parole to attend his nephew's funeral. Parnell had been arrested in 1881 and had received elements of first-class treatment such as having his own food and the ability to send letters. He had been able to send letters to Katherine O'Shea in which he described that he was 'very comfortable', could 'associate all day long' with other

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<sup>123</sup> 'The Course Adopted by the Attorney-General', *The Times*, 30 October 1867, p. 8.

<sup>124</sup> John Sarsfield Casey, *The Galtee Boy: A Fenian Prison Narrative*, ed. by Mairead Maume, Patrick Maume, Mary Casey, (Dublin: University College Dublin, 2005), pp. 42-43, 53, 194.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p.178.

<sup>126</sup> 'Mr Parnell—Mrs Pankhurst', *Suffragette*, 20 June 1913, p. 593.

men in adjoining rooms and was even allowed ‘to play ball’.<sup>127</sup> These letters were being sent to a loved one, so the intention was likely to offer comfort but such activities were not granted to those in second division suggesting he had received first-class treatment. In a debate about the treatment of prisoners in 1883, Parnell argued that prior to 1877 ‘there had never been any attempt made in the Statute Books of England to give special treatment by laws’ which may explain why the 1868 Irish prisoners were not granted first-class treatment officially but rather had concessions made.<sup>128</sup> In 1891, Parnell had emphasised the importance of political prisoners for Ireland in a speech at an amnesty meeting.<sup>129</sup> However, there is no reference to Parnell’s imprisonment in *My Own Story* or in the WSPU leaflet about prisoners. Ginnell and Farrell’s imprisonments were more recent and had even occurred during the battle for women’s suffrage, thus they were more timely examples. Emmeline does not refer to any male Irish political prisoners but did acknowledge that Irish suffragettes at Mountjoy were in first division in 1912 and had undergone a hunger strike in sympathy with the women arrested for the militant acts in Dublin.<sup>130</sup> This is the only reference to Irish suffragettes in Emmeline’s *My Own Story*. The ‘sympathy’ expressed by the IWFL members creates the image that the two organisations were strong allies. Emmeline does not acknowledge any tension or resentment which implies she was either unaware of the issue (in a similar way to how the WSPU were unaware of the complexities in Ireland) or simply does not feature it to present a unified movement. Francis Sheehy Skeffington claimed that the reason Irishwomen were granted political status and not

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<sup>127</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, ‘Letter from Prison, October 14<sup>th</sup> 1881’ in Katherine O’Shea, *The Uncrowned King of Ireland: Charles Stewart Parnell- His Life Story and Political Life* (Stroud: Nonsuch, 2005), p. 126; Charles Stewart Parnell, ‘Letter from Kilmainham, October 17<sup>th</sup> 1881’ in O’Shea, *The Uncrowned King of Ireland*, p. 126.

<sup>128</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, ‘Debate on the Treatment of Prisoners in Ireland, March 11<sup>th</sup> 1883’ in Charles Stewart Parnell, *Words of the Dead Chief* ed. by Jennie Wyse-Power, Donal McCartney & Pauric Travers (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2009), pp. 86-87, at 87.

<sup>129</sup> Charles Stewart Parnell, ‘At Amnesty Meeting Held in Phoenix Park, August 30<sup>th</sup> 1891’ in Parnell, *Words of the Dead Chief*, pp. 167-168, at 168.

<sup>130</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 233.

the suffragettes was ‘the ordinary Irish instinct in favour of the political prisoner’.<sup>131</sup> Emmeline certainly makes a distinction between the treatment of the Irish suffragettes and the English suffragettes.

Emmeline and the WSPU took it upon themselves to ensure they would gain concessions and recognition. To begin with, militancy began by simply refusing the prison conditions. In *My Own Story*, Emmeline recounts her demand when she re-entered Holloway in 1908:

My first act on reaching Holloway was to demand that the Governor be sent for. When he came I told him that the Suffragettes had resolved that they would no longer submit to being treated as ordinary law-breakers. In the course of our trial two Cabinet Ministers [David Lloyd George and Herbert Gladstone] had admitted we were political offenders, and therefore we should henceforth refuse to be searched or to undress in the presence of the wardresses. For myself I claim the right, and I hoped the others would do likewise, to speak to my friends during exercise, or whenever I came in contact with them.<sup>132</sup>

Emmeline’s refusal to be searched and to undress publicly was therefore tied to the desire that the suffragettes would be recognised as political offenders like Farrell and Ginnell. Her first demands were granted but her third one, that she be able to speak to others, was denied. There were some concessions given in her case: Emmeline described being given adjoining rooms and being able to take exercise with friends including Christabel.<sup>133</sup> The silence still remained though and the suffragettes were expected to walk single-file without interaction. Emmeline, however, refused to keep silent. Like their interruption tactics, Emmeline used the weapon of her voice and disturbed the silence by calling Christabel’s name and walking with her. Emmeline’s punishment was solitary confinement, but she described how the ‘the other suffrage prisoners cheered’ her ‘at the top of their voices’ and were punished for their ‘mutiny’

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<sup>131</sup> Letter from Francis Sheehy Skeffington to Laura Geraldine Lennox, 23 July 1912.

<sup>132</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 119.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

with 3 days solitary confinement.<sup>134</sup> Emmeline's mutiny, though small, represented a resistance to the prison rules and by association, the Government itself. Emmeline described the impact of her mutiny: 'a subsequent one' was led by Flora Drummond who was then released on poor health and publicised the policy.<sup>135</sup> The silence of prison was then broken by suffragettes who sang the Women's Marseillaise (the song of the WSPU) and cheered the prisoners. Patricia Groves describes a similar situation upon the arrest of Hannah Reynolds, a member of the Ladies Land League, who had bands play by her window.<sup>136</sup> By breaking the silence, the WSPU were raising the spirits of the members in prison as well as challenging the prison's rules from outside. Emmeline discussed her motives with other members of the WSPU at a welcome breakfast after her release: 'We did not propose to break laws and then shirk punishment. We simply meant to assert our right to be recognised as political prisoners' and that the WSPU should 'in future demand the treatment given to men political offenders in all civilised countries'.<sup>137</sup> For Emmeline, resistance in prison was a way of challenging the Government to recognise the WSPU for who they were: political women with a legitimate cause.

#### **4.2.2. Hunger strike & changing motivation**

The first suffrage hunger striker was not Emmeline Pankhurst but Marion Wallace Dunlop in 1909. There is no indication that the WSPU had approved the policy beforehand, yet it was adopted readily afterward. The inspirations for Wallace Dunlop to refuse food is a source of debate for historians. For the WSPU, they connected the hunger strike with Russian hunger-strikers, and noted their contrasting treatment: 'If she had been a Russian defying the tyranny

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.* p. 120.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Patricia Groves, *Petticoat Rebellion: The Anna Parnell Story*, (Cork: Mercier Press, 2009), p. 195.

<sup>137</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 121.



of the Czar and fighting for political freedom thousands of miles away the Liberal Press of this country would have been full of admiration for her conduct'.<sup>138</sup> They were challenging the Government again on their double standards. Historians Simon Heffer and Kevin Grant also situated Wallace Dunlop's hunger strike in the context of Russia as Grant labelled it the 'Russian method' while Heffer claims it was a popular method of protest there.<sup>139</sup> Joseph Lennon's study of the hunger strike, however, explores the Indian and Irish origins of Wallace Dunlop's actions. Her father had been in India and would have been aware of nineteenth century fasting practices that occurred there. The Irish connection was due to Wallace Dunlop's interest in the 'Celtic Twilight', a renewed interest in Celtic culture which did include references to fasting.<sup>140</sup> Lennon referred to Wallace Dunlop's own literature too as she had published a book titled *The Magic Fruit Garden* in 1899.<sup>141</sup> The story, according to Lennon, depicted a young girl, who despite suffering hunger, reaches the magic fruit garden, 'pointing to the rewards of determination, even through hunger'.<sup>142</sup> Wallace Dunlop's interest in hunger existed before she adopted the hunger strike as a tactic.

In terms of hunger-striking for Irish nationalists, Lennon claims that there were attempts to link the contemporary hunger-strikes with early Irish traditions of "fasting upon" enemies as well as publications of medieval Irish texts in the nineteenth century which included public fasting, but that it was likely that they were influenced by the suffragettes hunger-strikes.<sup>143</sup> Scull argues that hunger-striking was not invented by the Irish but did have 'deep roots in Gaelic tradition' suggesting that there was a legacy for the nineteenth and twentieth

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<sup>138</sup> 'The Outlook', *Votes for Women*, 16 July 1909, p. 933.

<sup>139</sup> Grant, 'British Suffragettes and the Russian Method of Hunger Strike', p. 114; Simon Heffer, *The Age of Decadence: Britain 1880 to 1914*, (London: Windmill, 2017), p. 733.

<sup>140</sup> Joseph Lennon, 'Fasting for the public: Irish and Indian sources of Marion Wallace Dunlop's 1909 hunger strike' in *Enemies of Empire: New Perspectives on Imperialism, Literature and History*, ed. by Eóin Flannery & Angus Mitchell, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 19-39, at 26-28.

<sup>141</sup> Marion Wallace Dunlop, *The Magic Fruit Garden*, (London: Ernest Nister, 1899).

<sup>142</sup> Lennon, 'Fasting for the public: Irish and Indian sources of Marion Wallace Dunlop's 1909 hunger strike', p. 28.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

century hunger-strikers to build on.<sup>144</sup> There were therefore Irish implications to the hunger strike. It was adopted by the IWFL effectively and became part of their policy if political treatment was denied. They even used the hunger strike as an expression of sympathy to English suffragettes who had been denied political status.<sup>145</sup> Kathleen Clarke also referenced its use during the Anglo-Irish War. She claimed she could not join Sheehy Skeffington on hunger-strike as ‘the policy of Sinn Féin was against hunger-striking at that time, unless we were refused political treatment’.<sup>146</sup> Hunger striking had therefore become a weapon not only for the WSPU and the IWFL but also for nationalist organisations such as Sinn Féin. Murphy argued that ‘the suffragettes provided an influential model of political imprisonment’ for Irish nationalists incarcerated during the Anglo-Irish War and Civil War.<sup>147</sup> The suffrage influence certainly cannot be ignored but for Clarke, the hunger strike was connected to Ireland first. She recalled how her uncle John Daly, a Fenian who had been in prison since April 1884, had begun a hunger strike which enabled him to ‘defeat’ the Government as they had to release him. In her account, she referred to how Daly refused food gradually ‘fearing that if the prison authorities knew of his intentions they would find some way of circumventing him’ and that he was eventually force fed.<sup>148</sup> His hunger strike was not as highly publicised as the suffragettes but the reason for his release was the state of his health, as admitted by Matthew Ridley (the

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<sup>144</sup> Margaret M. Scull, ‘The Catholic Church and the Hunger Strikes of Terence MacSwiney and Bobby Sands’, *Irish Political Studies*, 31.2, (June 2016), pp. 282-299, at 282-3 < <https://doi-org.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/07907184.2015.1084292> >

<sup>145</sup> ‘Doc. 75b: Annual Report of the Irish Women’s Franchise League for 1913’ in Maria Luddy, *Women in Ireland, 1800-1918: A Documentary History*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2009), pp. 276-277, at 276; Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, (London, 1977), p. 407.

<sup>146</sup> Kathleen Clarke, *Revolutionary Woman: Kathleen Clarke 1878-1972: An Autobiography*, ed. Helen Litton, (Dublin: O’Brien Press, 1991), p. 161.

<sup>147</sup> William Murphy, *Political Imprisonment and the Irish, 1912-1921*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 33.

<sup>148</sup> Kathleen Clarke, *Revolutionary Woman*, pp. 20-1.

Home Secretary during his 1896 release) and in the press.<sup>149</sup> For Clarke, the adoption of a hunger strike was an adoption of her uncle's methods, not the suffragettes.

These international influences certainly played a part in Wallace Dunlop's hunger strike. However, it is important to also consider what her motivation was at the time. According to Emmeline Pankhurst in *My Own Story*, Christabel in *Unshackled* and *Votes for Women*, the reason for Wallace Dunlop's hunger-strike was to protest the rejection to have her recognised as a first-class division prisoner.<sup>150</sup> In *My Own Story*, Emmeline recounted Wallace Dunlop arriving at prison, where she 'demanded' to be 'treated as a political offender'.<sup>151</sup> The use of 'demand' in reference to Wallace Dunlop is significant as Emmeline had used similar language in her own account of arriving at a prison. By 'demanding', Emmeline and Wallace Dunlop were being militant: they were raising their voices, ensuring they would be heard, putting themselves first (just as they would in reference to Home Rule) and expressing their discontent with the Government. The use of the term is also a deliberate attempt by Emmeline to connect her own journey with Wallace Dunlop's. Just as Emmeline had demanded political status, so had Wallace Dunlop after her. Emmeline is therefore implying that she was an inspiration, not so much for the tactic, but for the attitude of Wallace Dunlop. In Emmeline's account, Wallace Dunlop refused to eat 'until the Government yielded her point'.<sup>152</sup> Wallace Dunlop's refusal to eat was therefore about gaining first-class treatment like that given to the Irish MPs who were imprisoned. Food was an important part of political status as first-class division enabled prisoners to have their own food. Parnell, during his imprisonment in Kilmainham Jail between 1881 and 1882, as well as other Land League prisoners had food provided by a catering

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<sup>149</sup> Matthew Ridley, 'From Sir Matthew Ridley, Home Secretary, Whitehall, 3 August 1896' in John Redmond, *John Redmond: Selected Letters and Memoranda, 1880-1918*, ed. Dermot Meleady, (Newbridge: Merrion Press), p. 57; 'Release of John Daly', *Irish Times*, 13 August 1896, p. 5.

<sup>150</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 135 & 139; Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 134; 'The Outlook', *Votes for Women*, 16 July 1909, p. 933.

<sup>151</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 135.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

service.<sup>153</sup> Food therefore had political status whereas prison food did not. By refusing to eat prison food, Wallace Dunlop was following in the footsteps of Emmeline's mutiny but on a more extreme level. She was refusing to accept second class treatment by refusing second class food. This is also evident by the actions of the other women who were imprisoned. After Wallace Dunlop's release, 14 other women were inspired and followed her example but also refused to keep silent, to wear prison dress and perform prison duties. Wallace Dunlop's hunger strike was therefore connected to rejecting prison food particularly. Although Emmeline does describe how the 'ordinary prison diet was replaced by the most tempting food', the food was still prison food as Wallace Dunlop had not chosen or organised it herself.<sup>154</sup> Therefore, the refusal to eat was also symbolically a refusal of second-class division treatment. Cleaning a prison cell was also part of the suffragette's mutiny. As referenced in the case of the 1868 Irish prisoners (Pigott and Sullivan), this was a concession given, thus the suffragettes refused so that the prison would not expect them to act like ordinary criminals. Mary Richardson recalled how she had refused to clean her cell and another woman had to do it instead.<sup>155</sup>

Machin argues that hunger-strikes enabled women to use their body as a weapon and to defy gender norms, claiming that the hunger-strikes: 'took the power of the prison and the state and inverted it', thus 'undermining the dominant order' and acted as 'a highly significant form of political protest and resistance for those who lack vote, voice and status' as the suffragettes who were 'deprived not only of vote but also of voice, use[d] their bodies to communicate'.<sup>156</sup> The importance of giving the suffragettes a voice has been noted in the

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<sup>153</sup> Groves, *Petticoat Rebellion*, p. 190.

<sup>154</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 136.

<sup>155</sup> Mary Richardson, *Laugh a Defiance*, (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1953), p. 16.

<sup>156</sup> Amanda Machin, 'Hunger Power: The Embodied Protest of the Political Hunger Strike', *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements*, 8.1, (May 2016), pp. 157-180, at 174, 161 & 169 <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306065578\\_Hunger\\_Power\\_The\\_embodied\\_protest\\_of\\_the\\_political\\_hunger\\_strike](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306065578_Hunger_Power_The_embodied_protest_of_the_political_hunger_strike)>[accessed 1 March 2023].

previous chapter as well as in *My Own Story* as Emmeline claimed that going to prison was a way for women to ‘make ourselves heard’.<sup>157</sup> Hunger strikes were the embodiment of the WSPU’s devotion to the cause and their challenge to the Government. Just as prison had become a battleground, so too had the bodies of the suffragettes themselves. Machin’s point about the inversion of power is significant in reference to Emmeline’s own belief in the power of hunger striking. In a speech titled ‘Why We Are Militant’ delivered in New York in 1913, Emmeline explained that the hunger strikes ‘proved’ that a government ‘cannot govern human beings who withhold their consent’.<sup>158</sup> By refusing food, Emmeline was also withholding her consent to be governed. Forcible feeding was therefore an attack on consent on two levels: an attack on the women’s consent in terms of forcing her to eat and an attack on her ability to refuse governance. Consent was also significant as some of the women had refused to pay a fine and, thus had consented to go to prison. This, according to Christabel, was part of the Government defence as they argued that women were free to leave at any time. However, as part of their release the women would have to give a ‘pledge to abandon the agitation which they know to be essential to the success of their cause’.<sup>159</sup> Effectively, the suffragettes would be released if they promised to be on their best behaviour. This was not an offer given freely to any prisoner suggesting that the suffragettes did receive better treatment in some senses. There were examples outside of prison of an apology granting freedom. The case of Margaret Travers Symons, mentioned previously, was one of these examples. Symons’s interruption of Parliament was recorded by James William Lowther, in his *A Speaker Commentaries*.<sup>160</sup> In his account, two attendants had escorted her out and she was therefore placed ‘upon the black list, and she was for a year or two denied admission to the precincts’.<sup>161</sup> For Lowther though, this

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<sup>157</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, (London: Vintage, 2015), p. 65

<sup>158</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Why We Are Militant’ in *Suffrage and the Pankhursts*, ed. by Jane Marcus, (London: Routledge, 2016), pp.153-162, at 162.

<sup>159</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, ‘The Militant Methods’ in *The Women’s Exhibition 1909*, pp. 15-19, at 18.

<sup>160</sup> Lowther, *A Speakers Commentaries*, p. 60.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

act was forgiven after she had written an apology ‘and an undertaking not to offend again’.<sup>162</sup> This was not the only instance when Lowther accepted an apology rather than an arrest as he also witnessed an incident in the House of Commons when Ronald McNeill, a Unionist, threw a book at Winston Churchill which ‘cut him on the forehead’.<sup>163</sup> This incident was also recorded by Snowden who claimed Churchill was ‘struck on the side of the face and bruised’.<sup>164</sup> Lowther claimed he could take no action as the house was technically not sitting but ‘Mr. McNeill made a full and handsome apology, which was frankly accepted by Mr. Churchill’.<sup>165</sup> The book, whilst not a hatchet like in Dublin in 1912, was still a weapon that had inflicted hurt on Churchill. Yet, there had been no punishment as an apology was given: a contrast to the suffragettes who mostly refused to do so.

Christabel observed at the 1908 trial that Symons was the only woman successful in entering the House of Commons during their ‘rush’ yet went unpunished whilst other women, like herself, had only attempted to enter.<sup>166</sup> However, Symons’s lack of arrest was likely due to the fact the police had no jurisdiction in the House of Commons.<sup>167</sup> Nevertheless, Symons’ apology and lack of consequences for this incident demonstrate how the imprisonment of some of the women was due to their refusal to pay a fine or sign a pledge. Imprisonment was sometimes a choice for the suffragettes. By signing a pledge or paying a fine, they could easily free themselves. However, the importance of staying in prison was noted by Millicent Garrett Fawcett who visited Anne Cobden-Sanderson in prison. Cobden-Sanderson would later become a member of the Women’s Freedom League but in 1906, was still a member of the WSPU. Fawcett observed that ‘One word would open her prison door and set her free: that

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<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>164</sup> Snowden, *An Autobiography*, p. 255.

<sup>165</sup> Lowther, *A Speakers Commentaries*, p. 132.

<sup>166</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, ‘Speech’ in *The Trial of the Suffragette Leaders*, pp. 5-19, at 11-12.

<sup>167</sup> Ian Christopher Fletcher, ‘“A Star Chamber of the Twentieth Century”: Suffragettes, Liberals, and the 1908 “Rush the Commons” Case’, *Journal of British Studies*, 35.4, (1996), pp. 504-530, at 519, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/176002>> [accessed 1 March 2023].

word she will not speak' as 'she believes it would injure the cause of women's freedom'.<sup>168</sup> Fawcett summarised the spirit of Cobden-Sanderson: 'Great is the power of self-sacrifice'.<sup>169</sup> The idea that an apology or pledge would injure freedom suggests that by refusing to pay a fine or apologise, the suffragettes were damaging their cause. An apology would infer that the suffragettes were repentant for their actions as did a pledge not to repeat the offence. Padraic Kenney argues that by refusing to pay a fine, the suffragettes were vindicating their actions.<sup>170</sup> However, this can also be applied to the refusal to apologise or pledge. By resisting, the women were also giving themselves the opportunity to fight for political status through hunger strike.

Forcible feeding and hunger strikes were taxing on the health of the women physically and mentally. Emmeline described her experience in *My Own Story*:

But no one who has gone through the awful experience of the hunger strike can have any idea of how great that misery is. In an ordinary cell it is great enough. In the unspeakable squalor of the punishment cells it is worse. The actual hunger pangs last only about twenty-four hours with most prisoners. I generally suffer most on the second day. After that there is no desperate craving for food. Weakness and mental depression take its place. Great disturbances of digestion divert the desire for food to a longing for relief from pain. Often there is intense headache, with fits of dizziness, or slight delirium. Complete exhaustion with a feeling of isolation from earth mark the final stages of the ordeal. Recovery is often protracted, and entire recovery of the normal health is sometimes discouragingly slow.<sup>171</sup>

The hunger strike was a dangerous weapon which left physical and emotional scars. Emmeline's recollection is personal as she references how her suffering was worse mostly on the second day. The hunger strike was therefore not an easy escape route for the suffragettes. Emmeline's first sentence about how no one who had not gone through it could understand also raises an important point about hunger striking: it created a bond between the suffragettes.

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<sup>168</sup> Millicent Garrett Fawcett, 'The Prisoners of Hope in Holloway Gaol, 1906, *Contemporary Review*, December 1906, 820-6' in *Millicent Garrett Fawcett: Selected Writings*, ed. Melissa Terras & Elizabeth Crawford, (London: UCL Press, 2022), pp. 238-245, at 241.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> Padraic Kenney, "I felt a kind of pleasure in seeing them treat us brutally": The Emergence of the Political Prisoner, 1865-1910', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 54.4 (2012), pp. 863-889, at 881-2 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23274554>> [1 March 2023].

<sup>171</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 139.

The women had suffered together and could understand what the others had been through. As argued in the previous chapters, to Emmeline militancy was about women asking questions and coming together to fight for their own cause. The hunger strike was another example of this. The women were using their own bodies as weapons and demonstrating their lack of consent to the Government. The WSPU, a week after its first article describing Wallace Dunlop's hunger-strike, described 'the spirit prompting these women' and how it is 'the spirit which will overcome all the obstacles the Government and the authorities may oppose to justice'.<sup>172</sup> The use of 'spirit' connects to the idea of a suffragette spirit, a shared feeling. It also connects to Fawcett's observation that Cobden-Sanderson was ready for self-sacrifice in terms of imprisonment. Though she may not have been a member of the WSPU, she was willing to stay in prison for her principles. The sense of unity and community is also clear in how the suffragettes were presented with medals for their imprisonment. The medal below (Figure 34) was presented to Emmeline Pankhurst and each bar on the medal referred to the date and length of imprisonment. These medals created a collective of women who had shared the same experience and were celebrated for that. Figure 35 demonstrates how this collective spirit lived on as the image displays suffragettes sixty years later who had kept their medals and wore them with pride on the front cover of *Radio Times* in an interview about Midge Mackenzie's *Shoulder to Shoulder* programme released in 1974. This suggests that the suffragette spirit which was a by-product of the hunger-strikes and cultivated by the WSPU was successful. The spirit was not recognised by all, however, as politicians like Philip Snowden criticised the policy after visiting two women who had been released. He questioned what the motives could have been: 'Was it through some strange hypnotic power exercised over them by their leaders? Had they been convinced that the Cause was worthy of martyrdom?'.<sup>173</sup> Snowden makes no

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<sup>172</sup> 'The Hunger Strike in Holloway', *Votes for Women*, 23 July 1909, p. 971.

<sup>173</sup> Snowden, *An Autobiography Volume 1: 1864-1919*, p. 288.



reference to political status indicating that the method of hunger strike had overshadowed its original cause.

Image of Emmeline Pankhurst's hunger strike medal. This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

34. Emmeline Pankhurst's hunger strike medal, accessed via: Beverley Cook, 'Six things you should know about the Suffragette hunger strikers', *Museum of London* (2018), <<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/discover/six-things-you-didnt-know-about-suffragette-hunger-strikes>> [accessed 4 April 2021].

Image depicting the front cover of the *Radio Times*, 30 March 1974. Three elderly suffragettes are shown with various suffrage paraphernalia. This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

35. 'Freedom Fighters', *Radio Times*, 30 March 1974. Accessed via <http://www.jliddington.org.uk/rebel-girls-photos2.html> [accessed 4 April 2021].

Force feeding was also a traumatic experience. Mary Richardson described how, upon watching a film with a force-feeding scene, she had to leave due to the sound of the 'wheels on the asphalt' as 'tears were steaming' down her face.<sup>174</sup> She also referenced her fear of the dentist as a connection to force feeding as lying back with someone putting instruments in her mouth brought her right back to Holloway.<sup>175</sup> Force feeding left emotional scars. The treatment of the women inspired the WSPU to use it for posters to embarrass the Government. During

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<sup>174</sup> Richardson, *Laugh a Defiance*, p. xiii.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

the January 1910 election, Emmeline claimed that the WSPU campaigned, opposing 40 Liberals, by focusing on the Liberals' 'torturing women' in Holloway and how it was 'splendid ammunition'.<sup>176</sup> The power of force feeding, for Emmeline, was its propaganda value. She claimed that this poster campaign had been effective as the Liberal Party's majority had been destroyed. The IPP's ability to use this to push Home Rule had been an indirect consequence. It is unlikely that the WSPU's poster campaign was the sole reason for its defeat, but force feeding was an unpopular policy. In *Votes for Women*, an article was reprinted from the *Nation* which criticised the Irish Government for its role in force-feeding the suffragettes who had been responsible for the militancy in Dublin. The article referred to reports by doctors and argued that if the hunger strike was simply for political status, then it would be better for the Government to grant it.<sup>177</sup> *Votes for Women* would obviously print an article in their favour, but the article also claims that if the hunger strike was for a 'policy of general social defiance' then 'such fanaticism, however brave, can have but one end'.<sup>178</sup> This reference of fanaticism mirrors Snowden's shock about the women's devotion to the cause. This implies that the bonds formed from hunger strikes as well as their devotion to the cause was thought to be fanaticism. The term 'social defiance' is significant though as the hunger strike has begun to shift. At the beginning, the hunger strike was used as a protest for political status. However, by the time of Emmeline's speech, the hunger strike had become an escape route out of prison for the suffragettes. They were therefore using it to defy the Government. Just as John Daly had employed it, the suffragettes were now using the hunger strike as a way of shortening their imprisonment through bad health. In the same speech about consent, Emmeline claimed that the WSPU had proved that the government could not govern without consent due to her release:

They sent me to prison, to penal servitude for three years. I came out of prison at the end of nine days. I broke my prison bars. Four times they took me back again; four

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<sup>176</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 148.

<sup>177</sup> 'The "Nation" on Forcible Feeding', *Votes for Women*, 13 September 1912, p. 804.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

times I burst the prison door open again. And I left England openly to come and visit America, with only three or four weeks of the three years' sentence of penal servitude served.<sup>179</sup>

The hunger strike had therefore shifted from a demand for political recognition to a way of embarrassing the Liberal Government.

It was not just Emmeline who had been able to escape her sentence. Helen Craggs had been arrested for an attempt to set fire to Lewis Harcourt's home, Nuneham House, and had been sentenced to nine months hard labour yet was released 11 days after sentencing due to hunger strike.<sup>180</sup> Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans who were involved in the attempted arson attack on the Theatre Royal in Dublin in 1912 were sentenced to five years' penal servitude. However, due to hunger striking, they were released six weeks later.<sup>181</sup> Healy acted as their lawyer for this case. He had previously represented the suffrage leaders at the 1912 conspiracy trial. There is little written about this connection other than letters sent by Healy which were published in *Letters and Leaders of My Day* and the pamphlet *Suffrage Speeches from the Dock: Made at the Conspiracy Trial, Old Bailey, May 15th-22nd, 1912* which included a speech from Healy. Frank Callanan, in his biography of Healy, referred to the reasons behind Healy's inclusion: Healy was 'unable to see any good reason why they should not have the vote' and that it 'offered him the opportunity of attacking the complacency of the Liberal establishment from an unexpected angle'.<sup>182</sup> Healy had supported the Conciliation Bill of 1912, demonstrating his support for women's suffrage. Yet it was not his devotion to the cause but rather an opportunity to, like the suffragettes, embarrass and challenge the Liberal Government. Healy recognised the extent of the WSPU's attack through his suggestion that there was Conservative backing, thus saw kindred spirits with the suffragettes. In a letter to his brother

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<sup>179</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, 'Why We Are Militant', p. 162.

<sup>180</sup> *Seventh Annual Report 1913*, p. 13.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Callanan, *T.M. Healy*, p. 476.

about Evans and Leigh's case, Healy explains that Gerald Byrne had told him the women 'don't care what sentence they get' which Healy claims 'it is fine spirit which Penal Servitude would probably change'.<sup>183</sup> This excerpt of the letter appears in Callanan's *T.M. Healy* and in a footnote, Callanan explains that the 'sense of the letter is radically altered' in *Letters and Leaders*.<sup>184</sup> The *Letters and Leaders* letter makes no reference to penal servitude nor to his dislike of the job – he was happy and willing to take the job as it was 'a hundred guineas'.<sup>185</sup> The alteration to simply 'fine spirit!' presents Healy as pleased that the suffragettes had no care about their sentence: a very different tone to the original letter.<sup>186</sup> This omission could be that in retrospect he wanted to appear supportive of the suffragettes or that Leigh and Evans did not serve their sentence due to hunger strike. The idea that the 'fine spirit' would be changed by penal servitude implies that Healy was aware that unlike Irish nationalists like Michael Davitt, the suffragettes had never experienced prison in that way. This contrasts with the WSPU's use of Irish prisoners to present a double standard of treatment in prison. The quick release of some of the women would also have raised questions as it is unclear how long Daly had undergone his hunger strike, possibly it would have been longer than 11 days before he was released.

The accounts of Craggs, Leigh and Evans's escape from hard labour and penal servitude via hunger strike were published in the *Seventh Annual Report*. By presenting this as an achievement, the WSPU was therefore demonstrating its change in policy. The hunger strike was no longer about political status but about shortening the sentence. Prison as a battleground had changed for the suffragettes. Staying in prison had been important in terms of refusing to pay a fine, apologise or pledge. Hunger striking enabled the women to leave the prison without compromising their principles though, as argued, it was at great expense to the suffragette's

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<sup>183</sup> Timothy Healy, 'Letter to Maurice Healy, 23 July 1912' in Frank Callanan, *T.M. Healy*, p. 477.

<sup>184</sup> Callanan, *T.M. Healy*, p. 709.

<sup>185</sup> Timothy Healy, 'Letter to Maurice Healy, 23 July 1912' in Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day Volume II*, p. 507.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

health. Imprisonment was no longer desirable by 1912. In Emmeline's incitement speech, as quoted at the beginning of this chapter, she claimed that due to Ulster Unionist militancy the Government would be unable to keep her in prison. Hunger striking was therefore a way of ensuring this. The last line of her speech demonstrates the significant change in policy: 'So long as men rebels – and voters – are at liberty, we will not remain in prison, first division or no first division'.<sup>187</sup> Hunger striking was therefore no longer about political division but a way of exiting prison without completing their sentence like Emmeline, Mary Leigh, Gladys Evans, and Helen Craggs. The embarrassment to the Liberal Government was an added bonus to the WSPU.

This change in policy that imprisonment was undesirable was evident in the *Seventh Annual Report* of the WSPU in 1913 which proudly claimed that 'in connection with the more serious of the attacks upon property, no arrests have been made'.<sup>188</sup> Imprisonment was clearly no longer the aim as these attacks were celebrated due to the lack of arrests. Christabel also acknowledged the changed policy in her description of the 1912 Conspiracy Trial in *Unshackled*. Emmeline was imprisoned due to her window-breaking, but the other leaders were also arrested on 5 March including Emmeline and Frederick Pethick Lawrence. Christabel was not present at the trial as she had escaped to Paris, proving the policy was to avoid arrest. The prisoners still attempted to gain first division but also protested 'against the fact of imprisonment at all' as Ulstermen who were 'drilling in breach of the Unlawful Drilling Act' were still free.<sup>189</sup> Emmeline and the WSPU's changing attitude to prison was therefore inspired by Ulster. The suffragettes would attempt to remain free and, if that was not possible, then they would hunger strike for freedom. Christabel claimed that this policy was not about 'moral justification of Ulster's militancy' but rather about the WSPU having 'the same immunity from

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<sup>187</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, pp. 238-239.

<sup>188</sup> *Seventh Annual Report 1913*, p. 16.

<sup>189</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 215.

prosecution and imprisonment for militant women'.<sup>190</sup> The WSPU were, therefore, not necessarily criticising the militancy of the Ulster Unionists but instead the response by the Government. The fight to remain outside of prison was therefore, like the fight for political status, about demanding the same rights as militant men. Christabel documented how Emmeline and Annie Kenney, who were both under the Cat and Mouse Act, attended a meeting despite the threat of re-arrest. The Cat and Mouse Act enabled the Government to release women who were ill due to hunger strike and re-arrest them when their health improved. The reason given was that they were there 'to assert their right to be free, as Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Bonar Law, militants in the cause of Ulster, are free'.<sup>191</sup> By showing up to such meetings, Emmeline was challenging the Government to arrest her just like she was in her speech.

#### **4.2.3. Ulster leniency**

As well as campaigning about the double standard facing the militant women and the Ulstermen through avoiding imprisonment, there were also frequent references to the injustice in *Votes for Women* and the *Suffragette*. Just as the WSPU were able to use these periodicals to publicise the idea that Irishmen were fighting for their own freedom and not Irishwomen's, they were also able to point out the lack of imprisonment for Edward Carson and other Ulster militants. Some of the cartoons on the front cover were explicit in calling out for their arrest. The front cover of the *Suffragette* on 1 May 1914 simply held the message 'ARREST Bonar Law and Carson!' (Figure 36).<sup>192</sup> Andrew Bonar Law was a Conservative who opposed Home Rule and supported Carson. Two years before this cartoon, there was another that depicted Bonar Law in prison dress for 'inciting to violence in Ulster' (Figure 37).<sup>193</sup> The cartoon also

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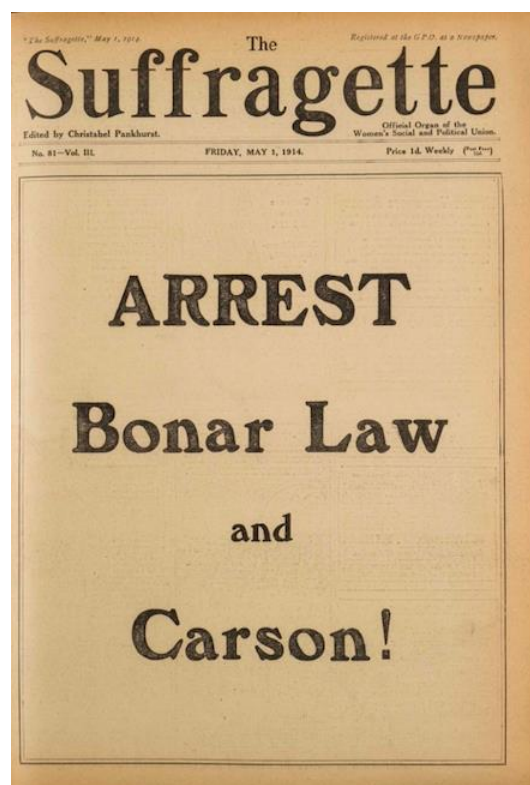
<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>192</sup> 'Arrest Bonar Law and Carson!', *Suffragette*, 1 May 1914, p. 53.

<sup>193</sup> A. Patriot, 'Will Mr. Bonar Law Be Sent to Prison?', *Votes for Women*, 9 August 1912, p. 725.

compared Bonar Law with Charles Gray who had attacked David Lloyd George and was given two months hard labour. Although this cartoon was attempting to highlight how Bonar Law remained free, this contrast does suggest that the reason why Bonar Law had not been arrested was that he had not acted himself but was instead inciting action. Emmeline herself though had been arrested for incitement as part of the 1912 Conspiracy Trial but she had also thrown a stone so had inflicted damage herself.<sup>194</sup> The date of this cartoon was significant as the cartoon was printed 9 August 1912, two months before Emmeline's famous incitement speech indicating the speech was a challenge. The charge for Emmeline's incitement was about damaging property but the *Suffragette* argued that this paled in comparison to Carson and Bonar Law who had 'inflamed the Ulster people to the point of shedding blood'.<sup>195</sup> Emmeline's damage to windows looked mild in comparison.

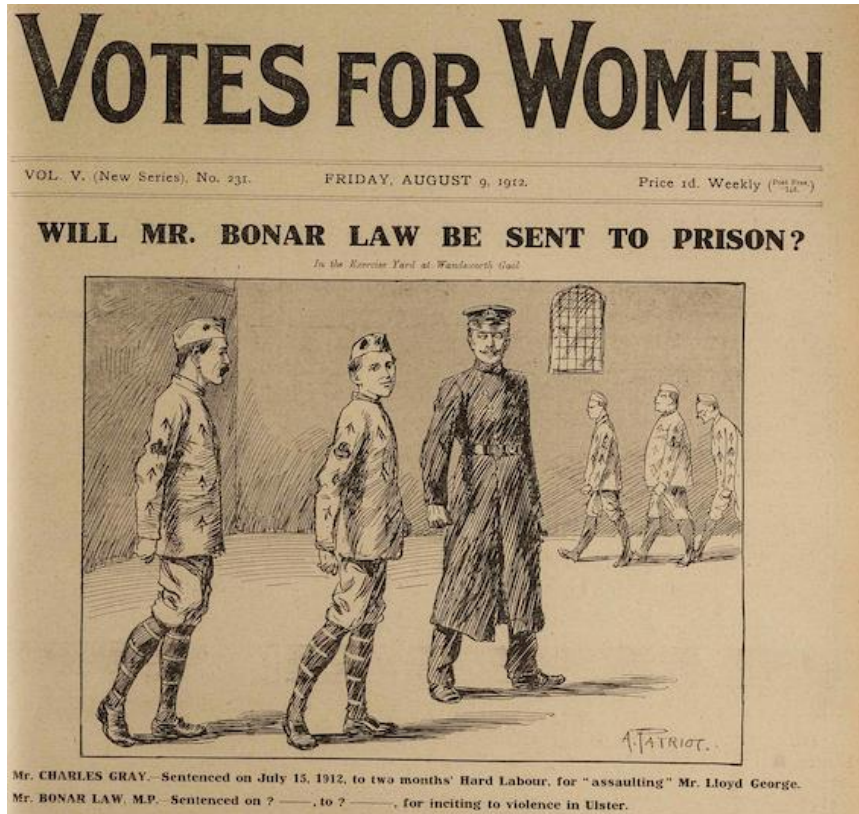


36. 'Arrest Bonar Law and Carson!', *Suffragette*, 1 May 1914, p. 53.

<sup>194</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 195.

<sup>195</sup> 'Why Are Not Mr. Bonar Law and Sir E. Carson Arrested?', *Suffragette*, 22 August 1913, p. 779.





37. A. Patriot, 'Will Mr. Bonar Law Be Sent to Prison?', *Votes for Women*, 9 August 1912, p. 725.

There was evidence that there would be bloodshed in Ulster. The gun-running campaigns such as in Larne in 1914 demonstrated how the Ulster Unionists were arming themselves in case the Home Rule Bill was passed. The formation of the Ulster Volunteers in 1912 also sparked the suggestion that Ulster were preparing for war and bloodshed. John Redmond in a 1913 Memorandum claimed that Asquith had referred to the Volunteers possessing 'at least 5,000 rifles- probably more'.<sup>196</sup> By 1914, after the gun-running campaigns, there would have been even more rifles available. This is evident in the film titled 'Machine Guns Ready' which was recorded on 24 April 1914 at Drumalis House.<sup>197</sup> The Ulster

<sup>196</sup> John Redmond, 'Memorandum of Interview with Prime Minister H. H. Asquith, Monday 17 November 1913' in *John Redmond: Selected Letters and Memoranda, 1880-1918*, pp. 156-158, at 158.

<sup>197</sup> British Film Institute, *Machine Guns Ready*, silent film, Digital Film Archive, 2017, <<https://digitalfilmarchive.net/media/machine-guns-ready-1821>> [1 March 2023].

Volunteers were armed and familiar with their weapons. The suffragettes had previously used dangerous weapons like hatchets and bombs but not on the same scale as the Ulster Volunteers were preparing for. These were weapons that would intentionally inflict harm upon human life which had been an important boundary for militancy for Emmeline despite the actions in Dublin in 1912. The WSPU were not the only ones to observe the increasing militancy with dismay at the lack of Carson's arrest. Healy commented upon how he suspected that gun-running campaign had some help from Government officials as 'it if had been smuggling brandy' it 'would long have been seized'.<sup>198</sup> Healy was therefore suggesting that Carson must have had support from powerful people for gun-running to continue. Other publications suspected Carson's tactics of being illegal such as *Punch* which joked that Carson's resignation as a lawyer was because 'in his future actions he intends to disregard the Law'.<sup>199</sup> This labelling of Carson's tactics as illegal demonstrates that *Votes for Women* and the *Suffragette* were not the only press to recognise the danger. *Punch* also published a cartoon titled 'Fore-Armed' (Figure 38) in reference to the intensification of militancy in Ulster. In the cartoon, Carson is depicted as being covered in guns and even a sword. Not only does this demonstrate the danger, but the cartoon also connected with Healy's assertion that the Government were aware as Carson is in full view of 'Customs Officer' Birrell yet shifts suspicion onto Redmond behind him (indicated by the J.R. on the suitcase).<sup>200</sup> Augustine Birrell was the Chief Secretary for Ireland between 1907 and 1916. The cartoon enforces that it was not just Emmeline and the WSPU who recognised the illegality and the danger of Carson's actions. The image of Carson in *Punch* compared to the image of the suffragette in *Punch* in Figure 24 from the previous chapter is significant. In Figure 24, the suffragette is depicted with a small hammer, fire lighter,

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<sup>198</sup> Healy, 'Letter from London, 26 April 1914' in Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day Volume II*, p. 543.

<sup>199</sup> 'Charivaria', *Punch*, 17 January 1912, p. 37.

<sup>200</sup> 'Fore-Armed', *Punch*, 17 December 1913, p. 509.

a catapult, pillar box remover and golf green destroyer. These cartoons were printed in the same year and after the escalation of the WSPU's militancy. These weapons in comparison to Carson's emphasise how the suffragette's militancy was viewed as mild, despite its dangers, in comparison.



FORE-ARMED.

SIR EDWARD CARSON (in course of promenade on the quay, to Customs Officer BIRRELL), "CAPITAL IDEA THIS OF STOPPING IMPORTATION OF ARMS. NOW THERE'S A DANGEROUS CHARACTER; YOU SHOULD SEARCH HIM. THAT'S JUST THE SORT OF BAG HE'D HAVE A COUPLE OF HOWITZERS CONCEALED IN."

The *Suffragette* used very gendered images in other cartoons presenting the double standard that the Ulster Unionists posed to the suffragettes. In a cartoon titled ‘The New Chivalry’ (Figure 39), Asquith is depicted as beating a woman with the law whilst Carson and Bonar Law throw abuse at him. The reason given for their lack of punishment is that they are men: ‘your sex protects you’.<sup>201</sup> The cartoons titled ‘The Liberals’ Idea of Justice’ and ‘The Two Policies’ (Figures 40 & 41) were printed within two months of each other yet share the same message: female militants were being coerced whilst male militants were being surrendered too as the Government were on their knees bowing down. One of the most emotive images is the cartoon that was printed on 31 July 1914 (Figure 42). The cartoon depicts a woman being force fed, which as Emmeline argued was ammunition for the Government. The woman’s face expresses the torture that she is enduring and the caption connects this to the Ulster Unionists: ‘Militant Women Tortured – Militant Men Received by the King’.<sup>202</sup> For the suffragettes, this was one of the key successes of the Ulster unionists as the suffragettes had attempted to gain the King’s attention yet failed. One of the most famous photographs of Emmeline Pankhurst (Figure 20 in the previous chapter) depicted Emmeline being arrested outside of Buckingham Palace on 21 May 1914. This protest was an attempt at leading a deputation to the King, but Emmeline was instead arrested. The announcement of the Buckingham Palace Conference was therefore significant to Emmeline who had attempted to gain the King’s attention previously. Christabel described how Emmeline had written to the King in protest as she had ‘been denied an audience’ yet Ulstermen and Irish nationalists had been received despite their incitements to violence.<sup>203</sup> Christabel, using similar language to her mother, declared that the King’s speech had been a ‘triumph’ for Ulster militancy as not

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<sup>201</sup> ‘The New Chivalry’, *Suffragette*, 5 September 1913, p. 809.

<sup>202</sup> ‘Militant Women Tortured – Militant Men Received by the King’, *Suffragette*, 31 July 1914, p. 273.

<sup>203</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 264.

only had it received a reference by the King but the Government were due to make concessions.<sup>204</sup> Christabel also referenced how Emmeline argued in her letter to the King, that WSPU's militancy also applied to his words.<sup>205</sup> Emmeline and Christabel had therefore recognised that the Ulster Unionist militancy had been successful where women's suffrage had not been: gaining the attention of the King. *Votes for Women* and the *Suffragette* utilised the gender difference of the suffragettes and Ulster unionists to emphasise that the difference in treatment was because of their gender. The suffragettes had used militant methods in an attempt to force the Government to listen but had been imprisoned. In a speech documented by Christabel, Emmeline claimed that despite both her and Carson being rebels, it was because she was a woman that she was a felon despite having more reason to use militancy due to the lack of vote.<sup>206</sup> *Votes for Women* and the *Suffragette* even printed articles comparing the language of Carson to the suffragettes. In one article, a speech from Carson was quoted which the writer of the article argued 'might have been taken bodily out of' *Votes for Women*.<sup>207</sup> By demonstrating the use of the same language, the WSPU were emphasising that the only difference between their movements was that the Ulster militant leaders were men. There were other instances in *Votes for Women* and the *Suffragette* in which both Redmond and Carson's words were used but edited to fit women's suffrage.<sup>208</sup> By quoting male militants, the WSPU were highlighting that the suffragettes were using similar language but facing very different treatment.

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<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, p.284.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>207</sup> 'If I am a Criminal', *Votes for Women*, 27 September 1912, p. 826.

<sup>208</sup> 'Statesmen's Views on Militancy: Past and Present', *Votes for Women*, 26 July 1912, p. 694; 'God Give Us Women!', *Suffragette*, 23 January 1914, p. 322.



## THE NEW CHIVALRY.



ASQUITH (Guardian of Law and Order) to Mr. Bonar Law and Sir Edward Carson:  
"As for you, sirs! Your sex protects you."

41. 'The New Chivalry', *Suffragette*, 5 September 1913, p. 809.

"The Suffragette," May 8, 1914

The

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.

# Suffragette

Edited by Christabel Pankhurst.

Official Organ of the  
Women's Social and Political Union.

No. 82—Vol. III.

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 1914.

Price 1d. Weekly (Post-free)

## The Liberals' Idea of Justice.



**Coercion for Militant Women.  
Surrender to Militant Men.**

42. 'The Liberals' Idea of Justice', *Suffragette*, 8 May 1914, p. 77.



"The Suffragette," July 17, 1914.

The

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.

# Suffragette

Edited by Christabel Pankhurst.

Official Organ of the  
Women's Social and Political Union.

No. 92 - Vol. III.

FRIDAY, JULY 17, 1914.

Price 1d. Weekly (7s. 6d. Ann.)



**THE TWO POLICIES.**

43. 'The Two Policies', *Suffragette*, 17 July 1914, p. 234.

\*The Suffragette\* July 31, 1914.

The

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.

# Suffragette

Edited by Christabel Pankhurst.

Official Organ of the  
Women's Social and Political Union.

No. 94—Vol. III.

FRIDAY, JULY 31, 1914.

Price 1d. Weekly ("T.D.C.")

## FORCIBLE FEEDING.



Militant Women Tortured—  
Militant Men Received by the King.

43. 'Militant Women Tortured – Militant Men Received by the King', *Suffragette*, 31 July 1914, p. 273.

The WSPU were also aware that the imprisonment of Irish nationalists was a double standard in comparison to the freedom of Ulster Unionists. However, they also refer to this in gendered terms. As argued in the previous chapter, there were preconceptions about Irishmen, specifically nationalists, as weaker or womanlier. Post-Famine Ireland and the Celtic Revival sought to counterclaim that Irish Catholic men had been emasculated by the famine and aimed to reassert physical strength and virility to further the cause. The article titled 'Prison for Carson and Redmond' blamed both Carson and Redmond for an outbreak of violence in Dublin.<sup>209</sup> However, the writer of the article acknowledged that the Irish nationalists were treated more 'harshly', and this was because the Government's object was 'to terrorize and persecute those whom they think to be weaker, and to surrender to those whom they think to be stronger'.<sup>210</sup> By this argument, both the WSPU and Irish nationalists were perceived as weak. The *Suffragette* also reported on the arrest of James Larkin which was described as a 'disgraceful proceeding' whilst Carson was still free but his release gave 'a new proof of the efficacy of militant methods'.<sup>211</sup> Larkin's release would be a significant factor in the split of Sylvia Pankhurst from her mother and sister as she described how her attendance at a public meeting was against the WSPU's independent policy.<sup>212</sup> The WSPU recognised that the Irish nationalists were also being coerced, arguing that it was due to the Government perceiving Irish nationalists as 'weaker' than Ulster unionists.

One of the most symbolic double standards for Emmeline Pankhurst was the Ulster Unionists use of Hyde Park. The park had been used by the suffragettes for events such as Women's Sunday as it held political symbolism through its connection to previous movements such as the reform movement and even the Fenian movement.<sup>213</sup> However, the Government

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<sup>209</sup> 'Prison for Carson and Redmond!', *Suffragette*, 31 July 1914, p. 275.

<sup>210</sup> 'Review of the Week', *Suffragette*, 31 July 1914, p. 275.

<sup>211</sup> 'More Government Cheating', *Suffragette*, 21 November 1913, p. 119.

<sup>212</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 517.

<sup>213</sup> 'To Hyde Park!', *Votes for Women*, 30 April 1908, p. 125; Anthony Glynn, *High Upon the Gallows Tree*, (Tralee: Anvil Books, 1967), p. 131.

had banned the WSPU from the park, denying them a political space to use their voice. Emmeline claims that the Government enabled the Ulster Unionists to use the park but banned the women because they ‘advocated and defended a militant policy’.<sup>214</sup> The WSPU organised a meeting in protest on April and a manifesto was released demanding that ‘if men militants can hold meetings in Hyde Park, women militants will hold meetings in Hyde Park’.<sup>215</sup> For Emmeline and the WSPU, the disparities in treatment between the suffragettes and Ulster Unionists was all gender based.

The most significant example of Ulster leniency for Emmeline was that Carson remained free and was not arrested. Christabel Pankhurst argued that Carson had not been arrested because Emmeline had made ‘militancy and law-breaking for political ends positively respectable and even fashionable’.<sup>216</sup> Christabel was therefore claiming that Emmeline was responsible for the acceptance of Carson’s militancy. However, this argument overlooks how differently they were treated. Emmeline was imprisoned for incitement for breaking windows, yet Carson was free despite inciting and arming the Ulster Volunteers. If Emmeline had made militancy politically acceptable, why was she still being punished? The *Suffragette* speculated that the reason that Carson had not been arrested was due to him, like the House of Commons, being out of jurisdiction.<sup>217</sup> This theory was disproved once Carson entered jurisdiction again.

For those involved in the Government the reason for Carson’s lack of arrest varied. Sir Edward Grey wrote in a private letter to Asquith that the Unionists ‘appear to be acting patriotically’ by defending Ulster from Home Rule and therefore an arrest would be a mistake.<sup>218</sup> Austen Chamberlain recounted how Winston Churchill, though admitting that he would be prepared to ‘put down disorder ruthlessly’, did not believe he had the right to coerce

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<sup>214</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 311.

<sup>215</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 268.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>217</sup> ‘Expected Arrest of Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Bonar Law’, *Suffragette*, 29 August 1913, p. 795.

<sup>218</sup> Sir Edward Grey, ‘Grey to Haldane, 5 December 1913, Enclosure, Very Private’ in Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside*, pp. 584-585, at 585.

Ulstermen into Home Rule.<sup>219</sup> Redmond even made a list of reasons why the leaders of the gun-running should not be prosecuted including: ‘they will greatly exacerbate feelings in Ulster’, ‘they would have no deterrent effect’, the accused would become ‘heroes’ and there was ‘not the slightest chance of getting convictions without a packed jury’.<sup>220</sup> These reasons are especially interesting in comparison to the imprisonment of the suffragettes. In the WSPU’s *Seventh Annual Report*, the July 1912 militancy in Dublin was explained as a response to the arrest of the WSPU leadership and subsequent trial.<sup>221</sup> However, this did not prevent the Government from re-arresting her. Emmeline’s 1913 imprisonment sparked off a militant response which she described as ‘the greatest revolutionary outbreak that had been witnessed in England since 1832’ which included arson attacks on country houses and even a bomb explosion in Oxted Station.<sup>222</sup> Mary Richardson’s protest on the Rokeby Venus using a meat cleaver had also been inspired by Emmeline’s imprisonment as she had wanted to ‘draw a parallel between the public’s indifference to Mrs. Pankhurst’s destruction and the destruction of some financially valuable object’.<sup>223</sup> Despite the repeated militancy outbreaks after Emmeline’s imprisonment, Emmeline was still re-arrested suggesting that, as Emmeline and the WSPU argued, the militancy of the Ulstermen was more extreme of a threat than the suffragettes.

Jean Victor Bates, in a biography of Edward Carson, claimed that there had been attempts made at an arrest as warrants had been issued for Carson and other leaders. He questioned why they had been issued: ‘Had Sir Edward or his people taken a single human life? Had he or they even threatened life or property? Had he or they armed against the forces

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<sup>219</sup>Austen Chamberlain, ‘Memo of Conversation with Mr. Winston Churchill, 27 November 1913, Secret’ in Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside*, pp. 572-577, at 573.

<sup>220</sup> John Redmond, ‘Letter to Prime Minister H.H. Asquith, House of Commons, 27 April 1914: Secret’ in *John Redmond: Selected Letters and Memoranda, 1880-1918*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>221</sup> *Seventh Annual Report 1913*, p. 9.

<sup>222</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 275.

<sup>223</sup> Richardson, *Laugh a Defiance*, p. 165.

of the crown? Never!’<sup>224</sup> Bates’s assessment of the situation suggests that he, like Grey, believed that Carson was simply protecting Ulster. The idea that Carson had not taken a single life was also acknowledged by the WSPU as articles in the *Suffragette* speculated that ‘there may be expected a great massacre of human beings’.<sup>225</sup> The use of ‘may’ and ‘expected’ emphasise how this great massacre had yet to occur. In *Votes for Women*, an article titled ‘Mere Bombast’ argued that despite the Ulster Volunteers acting within the law, Carson had acted illegally through his ‘incitements to violence and Civil War’ and that to dismiss it was a mistake.<sup>226</sup> The use of ‘incitements’ suggest that there had yet to be violence. In the 22 August 1913 issue of the *Suffragette*, it is suggested that the reason for Emmeline’s arrest and not Carson’s was that ‘Mrs. Pankhurst’s words have led to the commission of deeds while Sir Edward Carson’s words have not’.<sup>227</sup> They argued that the situation had changed though because of riots in Belfast and shots fired in Derry. Despite the acknowledgement that Carson had yet to harm human life until the shots were fired in Derry, the *Suffragette* and *Votes for Women* presented Carson as a dangerous figure who should have been arrested for his more extreme militancy.

#### **4.2.4. Feminine Militancy**

For Emmeline, it was important that Ulster Unionists be viewed as more militant than the suffragettes. Throughout *My Own Story*, Emmeline contrasts the actions of political women to political men. She emphasised how men had used violence to achieve citizenship.<sup>228</sup> In the preface to *My Own Story*, she sets this argument out very clearly:

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<sup>224</sup> Jean Victor Bates, *Sir Edward Carson: Ulster Leader*, (London: John Murray, 1921), pp. 18-9.

<sup>225</sup> ‘Prison and Torture for Women. Freedom for Militant Men’, *Suffragette*, 26 September 1913, p. 857.

<sup>226</sup> ‘Mere Bombast’, *Votes for Women*, 29 March 1912, p. 402.

<sup>227</sup> ‘Why Are Not Mr. Bonar Law and Sir E. Carson Arrested?’, p. 779.

<sup>228</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 169.



The militancy of men, through all the centuries, has drenched the world with blood, and for these deeds of horror and destruction men have been rewarded with monuments, with great songs and epics. The militancy of women has harmed no human life save the lives of those who fought the battle of righteousness. Time alone will reveal what reward will be allotted to the women.<sup>229</sup>

For Emmeline, the militancy used by the WSPU paled in comparison to the militancy of men. Emmeline repeatedly referred to how the suffragettes had ‘harmed no human life’ and focused instead on the destruction of property. The use of ‘battle of righteousness’ and ‘reward’ suggest that to Emmeline, the militancy of the WSPU was morally superior to men through their avoidance of harming human life. This is reiterated by Emmeline in her ‘Why We Are Militant’ speech as she argued that the WSPU were fighting for ‘the betterment of the human race’.<sup>230</sup> Similar language appeared in *Votes for Women* as Emmeline Pethick Lawrence asked women to give themselves ‘to this great-life work’ which was ‘the salvation of womanhood and of humanity’.<sup>231</sup> Theirs was a spiritual battle which was superior in its motives and in its actions. For Emmeline, the crux of the issue was risk to human life. Therefore, by contrasting with Carson’s incitement, she was able to emphasise how morally superior the battle for women’s suffrage was.

Emmeline presents that the militant shift to breaking windows was defensive. In an article titled ‘The Argument of the Broken Pane’, Emmeline argued that women had ‘their health injured’ and ‘lost their lives’ on marches to Parliament Square but with breaking windows, they had ‘made more progress with less hurt’ to themselves.<sup>232</sup> Again, the emphasis is on how it was only the suffragettes who were injured during the campaign. In the same issue, women were volunteering for the next window-breaking campaign. Two of the volunteers emphasised how they were ‘not strong’ and ‘almost an invalid’ yet could throw a stone in

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<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.

<sup>230</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Why We Are Militant’, p. 162.

<sup>231</sup> Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, ‘What Women Are Worth’, *Votes for Women*, 9 July 1908, p. 296.

<sup>232</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘The Argument of the Broken Pane’, *Votes for Women*, 23 February 1912, p. 319.

protest, making the militant action more accessible to those who worried about violence at the deputations.<sup>233</sup> The militant actions of the suffragettes were, to Emmeline, a response to men's violence. As explored in the previous chapter, women armed themselves in defence at political meetings and after the violence which occurred on Black Friday. In the case of Ulster, the cartoons printed in the *Suffragette* (Figures 39-42) all depict women as victims of attack whether it be physical violence (39 and 41) or force feeding (40 and 42). However, the Ulster figures are being surrendered to or being offered concessions. The WSPU were therefore justifying militancy as self-defence by emphasising how the actions of men had inspired their militant responses.

However, Emmeline's repeated contrasts to men's violence and how women's violence was less extreme has mitigated the WSPU's actions. Just as she had minimised the militancy in Dublin, Emmeline's repeated references to Ulster in *My Own Story* also minimised the WSPU's violence. She claimed that the WSPU's stronger militancy 'could not possibly be counted as violent' in comparison to men's militancy like in Ulster.<sup>234</sup> This negates the women's violence altogether, erasing it from the narrative of *My Own Story*. In one of Emmeline's few admissions of the use of explosives within the book, she referred to suffragettes Dorothy Evans (WSPU's organiser in Ulster) and Maud Muir's arrest and charge for possession of 'a quantity of explosives'.<sup>235</sup> She compared their arrest with the 'houses in Belfast that secreted tons of gunpowder and ammunition for the use of the rebels against Home Rule' which went unchecked by police.<sup>236</sup> Emmeline labelled the incident as 'proof' of Government's 'law of leniency for militant men'.<sup>237</sup> The contrast between 'a quantity of

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<sup>233</sup> 'The Next Protest', *Votes for Women*, 23 February 1912, p. 319.

<sup>234</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. 240.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*



explosives’ and ‘tons of gunpowder and ammunition’ demonstrates Emmeline’s use of contrasting treatments to minimise the actions of the suffragettes.

Emmeline was able to use the situation in Ulster to her advantage by repeatedly contrasting the treatment of the Ulster militants with the suffragettes. By gendering the argument, she ensured that women’s militancy was emphasised as moral and superior as the suffragettes had more justification to further militancy. *My Own Story* was written for propaganda purposes and as a way of explaining militancy to an American audience. The repeated minimisations of violence and contrasts of treatment therefore enabled Emmeline and the WSPU to look more reasonable as they were using militancy to fight against double standards.

#### **4.2.5. Successful example of militancy**

Emmeline recognised in the Ulster unionists the same as she did in Fenianism: a successful example of militancy. In a speech from February 1914 (documented in *My Own Story*), Emmeline proclaimed how there had been a ‘triumph of militancy – men’s militancy’ in relation to Ulster.<sup>238</sup> The use of ‘triumph’ emphasises how successful Emmeline believed their campaign to be. She also uses this triumph to contrast how ‘women have ample justification, nay, have greater justification, for revolution and rebellion’ than men.<sup>239</sup> Emmeline was again connecting Ulster with the justification of militancy but in this instance, it was in reference to its success. Christabel and Sylvia also acknowledge the success of Ulster militancy as Christabel described the WSPU policy as ‘a faint imitation- except that we respected human life’ of Ulster’s militancy whilst Sylvia claimed that concessions made to Ulster acted as a

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<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.

‘stimulus to feminine militancy’.<sup>240</sup> Concessions had also been a key theme in the cartoons on the *Suffragette* front page as both Figure 40 and 41 featured the Government bowing down and surrendering to the Ulster militants whilst using coercion on the suffragettes.

The Government’s recognition that concessions were necessary implied that they did not wish to coerce Ulster. Christabel described how this change in attitude was ‘a justification of Suffrage militancy’ as it symbolised the Government recognising the dangers involved in coercing militants.<sup>241</sup> Chamberlain observed this shift in attitude too, claiming that the Government had ‘made up their mind that they cannot coerce Ulster’.<sup>242</sup> The Government’s refusal to coerce Ulster served as inspiration for the WSPU, who hoped for a similar attitude shift in their treatment. Chamberlain recognised the power that Carson had in terms of having the Government grant concessions as though he emphasised that Carson wanted peace overall, he wanted it ‘on terms’ suggesting Carson would withhold peace until these terms were granted.<sup>243</sup> Carson’s militancy had therefore been successful as he was able to issue demands through his threats of unrest. The threat of reaction had also impacted upon the Prime Minister as Margot Asquith, in a letter to Chamberlain, admits that her husband had been ‘so anxious not to *appear* even to provoke Ulster’.<sup>244</sup> Asquith, therefore, had to act in a conciliatory way to avoid the threatened civil war. This was essentially a victory for militancy as the Ulster Unionists had been able to use the threat of action to influence the Prime Minister into making concessions.

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<sup>240</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 229; Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, pp. 547-548.

<sup>241</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 266.

<sup>242</sup> Austen Chamberlain, ‘13 February 1914’ in Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside*, p. 614.

<sup>243</sup> Austen Chamberlain, ‘A.C. to Lord Morley, 10 December 1913, Secret’ in Chamberlain, *Politics from Inside*, pp. 590-591, at 591.

<sup>244</sup> Margot Asquith, ‘Letter to Austen Chamberlain from Margot Asquith, 10 May 1914’ in Austen Chamberlain, *The Life and Letters of the Right Hon. Sir Austen Chamberlain, K.G., P.C., M.P. Volume 1*, ed. Sir Charles Petrie, (London: Cassell, 1939), pp. 361-364, at 363.

Redmond had also witnessed a change in attitude from 1913 to 1914 as in a memorandum of a meeting with David Lloyd George, the impression was given that the Government would 'suppress' Ulster militancy and 'use any force necessary' yet by 1914, Asquith had claimed that when challenged the Government would have 'to announce what concessions the Government were willing to offer'.<sup>245</sup> Ulster militancy had therefore been a success in shifting the Government from coercion to concession. The reason for the change in attitude towards Carson may be explained in an earlier letter sent by Redmond to Asquith in 1913. Redmond argued that the threat of Ulster was 'considerably exaggerated' and that 'outside a certain number of fanatics and leaders' there were not many who believed in rebellion or civil war.<sup>246</sup> The use of 'fanatics' is especially interesting as this was also a label often given to the suffragettes.

The WSPU were not the only movement to take notice of the triumph of militancy in Ulster. The Ulster unionists also provided a successful example of militancy to Irish nationalists. Geoffrey Lewis argued that the 'lessons being taught in Ulster' would not be lost on the Irish nationalists.<sup>247</sup> Kathleen Clarke explained that the formation of the Ulster Volunteers 'gave the IRB [Irish Republican Brotherhood] the chance they had been hoping for, and they immediately set to work to start the Irish Volunteers'.<sup>248</sup> Clarke was an Irish nationalist herself and was married to Thomas Clarke who was a member of the IRB, thus had first-hand experience of this event and its impact on the IRB. The Ulster Volunteers had therefore enabled Irish nationalists to form their own organisation. Sylvia was also aware of the Irish nationalist response as she included a quotation from James Larkin that they would

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<sup>245</sup> John Redmond, 'Memorandum by Redmond: Interview with Mr. Asquith and Mr. Birrell, 2 February 1914' in *John Redmond: Selected Letters and Memoranda, 1880-1918*, p. 164.

<sup>246</sup> John Redmond, 'To Prime Minister H.H. Asquith, 24 November 1913' in *John Redmond: Selected Letters and Memoranda, 1880-1918*, pp. 158-161, at 160.

<sup>247</sup> Geoffrey Lewis, *Carson: The Man Who Divided Ireland*, (London: Hambledon & London, 2005), p. 115.

<sup>248</sup> Clarke, *Revolutionary Woman*, p. 44.

‘follow Sir Edward Carson’s example’ and would ‘enrol, organize and arm a volunteer force’ armed with ‘Irish weapons: blackthorns, bottles and hurleys’.<sup>249</sup> Ulster militancy therefore enabled Irish nationalists and suffragettes to justify their militancy as Ulster Unionists were successfully achieving Government concessions. However, Joseph Plunkett emphasised that the founding of the Irish Volunteers was not to ‘imitate the boastings of Sir Edward Carson’ but as a way of protecting Home Rule from ‘the threats of a small and bigoted minority’.<sup>250</sup> Carson had therefore inspired the Irish Volunteers through his actions which had resulted in the Government offering concessions.

The language used by the Irish Volunteers in their newspaper the *Irish Volunteer* was heavily gendered.<sup>251</sup> Like Emmeline had presented the WSPU’s militancy as distinctly feminine, the contributors to the *Irish Volunteer* presented militancy as masculine. Irishmen were feminized in the press so the emphasis on masculinity as part of their militancy was likely a challenge to the British perception of Irishmen. Joseph Plunkett claimed that the new movement would ensure that the Irish people ‘reassume’ their ‘manhood’.<sup>252</sup> Judge, in a different article, claimed that ‘every able-bodied Irishman’ should be involved.<sup>253</sup> Maurice Moore even suggested that the motto for the Irish Volunteers should be to ‘defend the soil of Ireland’ and ‘maintain the rights and liberties common to all Irishmen’.<sup>254</sup> The gendered language and emphasis on masculinity by Irish nationalists connect with the WSPU’s campaign that Home Rule was freedom for Irishmen only, not Irishwomen. Moore argued that the rights and liberties of Irishmen should be protected yet there is no mention of Irishwomen.

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<sup>249</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 501.

<sup>250</sup> Joseph Plunkett, ‘Civilized Nationhood’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 February 1914, p. 4.

<sup>251</sup> For more on the connection of masculinity to Irish Nationalism, see Aidan Beatty, *Masculinity and Power in Irish Nationalism, 1884-1938*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

<sup>252</sup> Plunkett, ‘Civilized Nationhood’, p. 4.

<sup>253</sup> M. J. Judge, ‘A Nation’s Destiny’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 February 1914, p. 16.

<sup>254</sup> Maurice Moore, ‘Shoulder Arms!’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 February 1914, p. 6.

The articles in the *Irish Volunteer* connect with the language of the WSPU: an emphasis is put on an awakening- the spirit was ‘kindled’ again, they were ‘determined no longer to remain passive spectators’, ‘We Will Never Again Submit to be Governed by Force or Corruption’ and the movement was ‘a sign of an awakened nation’.<sup>255</sup> In another similarity, the Irish Volunteers emphasised that their motive was ‘noble’ and had restored ‘self-respect’ in a similar way to Emmeline’s claim of moral superiority for women’s militancy.<sup>256</sup> The provisional constitution of the Irish Volunteers also related to the WSPU as they put their own cause first above all: hoping to unite Irishmen ‘of every creed and of every party and class’.<sup>257</sup> This implies that the WSPU and the Irish Volunteers shared the same weapon of militancy but with different aims.

### 4.3. Conclusion

In the opening extract, Emmeline incited rebellion as a challenge towards the Government about the double standards facing the suffragettes in comparison to Ulster Unionists. Double standards were prevalent throughout the WSPU’s interactions with Home Rule: the criticism they faced by putting their own cause first despite the betrayal of the Conciliation Bill, the negligence of Irishwomen in the Home Rule Bill, the lack of political status when imprisoned and even the fact that they were imprisoned. The Ulster Unionists acted as an example for Emmeline of militant men. She was able to use the differing treatment to demonstrate the importance of feminine militancy, though this also sanitised and erased violent acts committed. Each violent act was contrasted with an act of the Ulster Unionists to emphasise the mildness

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<sup>255</sup> ‘From the Outpost’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 February 1914, p. 1; E. Bloxham, ‘Why Volunteer?’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 February 1914, p. 6; Eoin MacNeill, ‘The Alternative’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 February 1914, p. 3; Dr. W. H. Grattan Flood, ‘An Awakened Nation’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 February 1914, p. 3.

<sup>256</sup> L. McManus, ‘A Word with the Recruit’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 February 1914, p. 2; T.M. Kettle, ‘The Irish Volunteers’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 February 1914, p. 8.

<sup>257</sup> ‘Provisional Constitution’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 February 1914, p. 9.

of their actions, justifying the women's actions. The experience of imprisonment was a vital part of the suffragette campaign but the battle for Home Rule played a role in transforming the WSPU's policy. This is best symbolised in the changing motives of hunger strikes. To begin with, hunger strikes were to demand for political status and comparisons were made to Irish prisoners who had received first-class treatment. However, Carson's intensification of militancy transformed the hunger strike into a way of embarrassing the Government as it enabled the women to escape the sentence that they felt the Ulster Unionists deserved instead. The ability of the Ulster Unionists to achieve concessions from the Government was recognised as another example of the success of male militancy. Emmeline was able to recognise the different treatment and used examples throughout *My Own Story* to make her case: that women's militancy was milder but morally superior to men's militancy.

## *Conclusion*

The closing paragraphs of this book were written in the late summer of 1914, when the armies of every great power in Europe were being mobilised for savage, unsparring, barbarous warfare – against one another, against small and unaggressive nations, against helpless women and children, against civilisation itself. How mild, by comparison with the despatches in the daily newspapers, will seem this chronicle of women’s militant struggle against political and social injustice in one small corner of Europe.

Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*<sup>1</sup>

The extract above is taken from Emmeline’s preface in *My Own Story*. With the outbreak of World War One, Emmeline’s militancy for women’s suffrage was transformed into patriotic war service. The WSPU had announced ‘at the first alarm of war’ a ‘truce’.<sup>2</sup> The *Suffragette* became the *Britannia* and the WSPU’s focus became women’s war work. Emmeline’s definition of militancy was that women were putting their cause first, thus the truce symbolised the end of Emmeline’s and the WSPU’s militancy. In a letter, Emmeline Pankhurst claimed that women had ‘set aside’ their claims to perform the ‘most sacred duty’ of answering the country’s call.<sup>3</sup> In a report about a speech delivered by Emmeline, she was interrupted by cries for ‘Votes for Women’ (the same tactic she and other WSPU members had used) but she replied that if Britain lost the War: ‘not only is the possibility of votes for women going to disappear but also votes for men will be a thing of the past’.<sup>4</sup> A similar argument was given in *Britannia*: women’s suffrage would be taken up as a question after the war.<sup>5</sup> Votes for women had therefore been deferred until after the war, thus militancy had ended. Emmeline even demanded votes for soldiers before votes for women in 1916.<sup>6</sup> This was certainly a U-turn for Emmeline who had repudiated manhood suffrage during the militant days of the WSPU. This could easily

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<sup>1</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, (London: Vintage, 2015), p. xi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Mrs. Pankhurst’s Letter’, *Britannia*, 26 November 1915, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> ‘National Service for All’, *Daily Mail*, 25 June 1915, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> ‘The One Test’, *Britannia*, 26 November 1915, p. 80.

<sup>6</sup> ‘How Fighters Can Vote’, *Daily Mail*, 29 September 1916, p. 3.

be seen as a betrayal of all that Emmeline stood for. However, Nicoletta Gullace argues that this gesture was ‘part of the larger theatrics of patriotism’ and an example of how the war ‘could be harvested to the case for female citizenship’.<sup>7</sup> By sacrificing her cause, Emmeline was demonstrating her patriotism and women’s ability to be citizens. Sacrifices were emphasised in *Britannia* as men were ‘sacrificing life’ and ‘women are giving husband[s] and children in this war’.<sup>8</sup> Throughout World War One, Emmeline became more associated with women’s role in the war. The *Daily Mail* labelled her the ‘leader of the Women’s War Service movement’, highlighting her connection.<sup>9</sup> In *My Own Story*, she described how women were working to ‘keep civilisation alive’ whilst men were fighting, accentuating their suitability for citizenship.<sup>10</sup> Emmeline also campaigned for the war and delivered many speeches. Her patriotism took the form of anti-German sentiment, questioning the loyalty of officials in the Foreign Office who had German family members or associates.<sup>11</sup> Emmeline had therefore embraced the war effort, surrendering the fight for women’s suffrage until after victory was achieved.

Emmeline, however, did threaten that if women’s suffrage was not seriously considered after the war that women ‘will take up the arms they today generously lay down’.<sup>12</sup> Despite her campaigns for the war effort and votes for soldiers first, women’s suffrage was still an important cause for her. She still also connected the cause to Ireland. In a letter to David Lloyd George in 1917, Emmeline criticised the Government for not making a pledge to women’s suffrage as they had with Irish nationalists about self-government. She claimed that such an offer suggested the Government was ‘prepared during the war and without any further delay to

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<sup>7</sup> Nicoletta F. Gullace, “*The Blood of Our Sons*”: *Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 124 & 130.

<sup>8</sup> ‘To Save the Country’, *Britannia*, 29 October 1915, p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Women’s Shell Work’, *Daily Mail*, 20 July 1915, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. xi.

<sup>11</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, ‘Help Serbia for Honour’s Sake’, *Britannia*, 5 November 1915, pp. 41 & 44

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<sup>12</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story*, p. xiii.



give us self-government in the shape of the parliamentary vote'.<sup>13</sup> The Irish Question had therefore given Emmeline one last opportunity to exhibit the difference of treatment by the Government, enabling her to fight for her cause once more.

In 1918, the Representation of the People Act was passed granting women over the age of 30 and with certain property qualifications the parliamentary vote. To Emmeline, her goal had been reached as the gender barrier had been removed. The WSPU had been transformed into the Women's Party and Christabel had stood as a candidate in Smethwick in 1918, hoping to be one of the first women MPs. However, Christabel lost and the first and only woman MP to be elected that year was Constance Markievicz, representing Sinn Féin. She was in Holloway Prison at the time, the same prison where Emmeline had undergone her first hunger strike. The abstentionist policy of Sinn Féin resulted in Markievicz never entering the House of Commons. After 1918, Emmeline Pankhurst toured North America and Canada campaigning on social hygiene issues including venereal disease and eugenic policies for 'race betterment'.<sup>14</sup> By 1926, Emmeline had returned to Britain and had entered the Conservative Party and was nominated as a candidate for the constituency of Whitechapel and St George's. Before the election, Emmeline died on 14 June 1928. Like her birth date had been connected to the French Revolution, her death has also been used symbolically as the year of her death was also the year of the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act was passed. Rupert Butler even claimed that Emmeline's funeral was the same day the 'Royal Assent was given to the Bill for total adult suffrage'.<sup>15</sup> This was not the case as the Bill's Royal Assent was granted on 2 July 1928 but her funeral occurred on 18 June 1928.<sup>16</sup> Her death therefore became connected to the battle for women's suffrage, just as she had been in life.

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<sup>13</sup> 'Woman's Suffrage', *Daily Mail*, 27 May 1917, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst*, (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 214-216.

<sup>15</sup> Rupert Butler, *As they saw her... Emmeline Pankhurst: Portrait of a Wife, Mother and Suffragette*, (London: George G.Harrap, 1970), p. 133.

<sup>16</sup> 'Deaths', *The Times*, 19 June 1928, p. 19.

Emmeline Pankhurst's political journey was full of oxymorons: an autocrat fighting for democracy, a Liberal turned Socialist turned Conservative, an enemy of the Government to its propaganda weapon during the war. Her militancy was also multifaceted. It took the form of asking questions to breaking windows to inciting rebellious acts like arson. At each stage of her militancy, Emmeline connected it to Ireland. Fenianism, Parnell, the IPP and Ulster unionists all provided successful examples for Emmeline who focused on the concessions made by the Government. They had been able to force the Government to listen either through election policies, violence, or the threat of violence. For Emmeline, the motivation behind militancy was to 'make ourselves heard' and 'force the Government to take up our question'.<sup>17</sup> Ireland therefore left an important blueprint for Emmeline to follow.

In chapter one, the origins of her militancy were explored through Emmeline's encounter with the Manchester Martyrs. Young Emmeline's awakening to injustice was also an awakening that the law was not always right. She associated injustice with the fight for women's suffrage, thus her experience with the Manchester Martyrs was tied to her suffrage beliefs. Militancy became a weapon to fight injustice, using legal or illegal methods as Emmeline had also learned that the law itself was not always just. Injustice was emphasised too by Christabel who used Fenianism to argue militancy had brought them success through concessions made by the Government, yet the WSPU had not received any compromises. The 'excitement' of the crowd surrounding the executions also emphasised how militant acts raised the profile of causes and increase publicity, whether positive or negative. Emmeline was also able to use the story to demonstrate her political awareness from a young age, establishing her political journey as destiny. *My Own Story* had been written for an American audience and by associating herself with Fenianism, she was forming a connection with a cause that received American support.

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<sup>17</sup>Emmeline, *My Own Story*, p. 65.

In the second chapter, the focus was on the relationship between Parnell and Emmeline. Her husband's election loss had inspired the WSPU's independence policy though this came at a cost to Emmeline's involvement with the Independent Labour Party. By campaigning for themselves, the suffragettes were raising women's voices and women were fighting for their cause first: part of Emmeline's definition of militancy. The WSPU also took inspiration from Parnell's obstruction tactics and chose to be as obstructive as possible in meetings through interruptions. This was a radical act, challenging gender norms as women interrupted men and forced entry into political spaces. The response to these tactics also played a role in the WSPU's militancy as Emmeline and other members faced violence. Such an outburst of aggression was due to overarching anxieties surrounding the 'New Woman'. This concern resulted in the press representing the suffragettes as 'sexless' and 'hysterical', bemoaning the election policy as illogical. By correlating the WSPU's policy with Parnell, Emmeline was again establishing her political understanding.

In the final chapter, Emmeline's relationship with the IPP and Ulster Unionists was important for her militancy through the repeated double standards the WSPU faced in the differing treatment. The IPP had put their cause first which had jeopardised the Conciliation Bill of 1912. An outpouring of militancy was the result including a hatchet being thrown and injuring Redmond in Dublin. Emmeline does not include Redmond's injury in *My Own Story*, nor does she feature many of the more extreme actions of the WSPU like bombing and arson. As explored in the first chapter, the violence of the WSPU has been overlooked by historians and a more wholesome version of the suffragettes has been remembered. These deliberate omissions of injury in *My Own Story* as well as constant contrasts with the situation in Ulster display Emmeline's own attempts at sanitising the violence of the suffragettes. Through emphasising how mild their militancy was in comparison; Emmeline was presenting the suffragettes as reasonable and justified. The WSPU were using men's methods but their policy

of never intentionally harming human life emphasised the moral superiority of women's militancy. The events in Ulster also offered an opportunity for Emmeline and the WSPU to highlight the differing treatments between suffragettes and Ulster Unionist leaders. Imprisonment and hunger strikes had, at first, been a battle for political status and recognition that the suffragettes were fighting for their political right. Yet, as events in Ulster intensified, hunger strikes became an escape route as Emmeline and the suffragettes protested their imprisonment at all whilst Edward Carson was free.

Emmeline was not the originator of militant tactics. Most of the actions such as the breaking of windows and hunger striking were not devised by Emmeline but rather members of the WSPU. This was a success for Emmeline in terms of militancy as it was evidence of women awakening and taking up their own cause. However, Emmeline's own political education should be recognised. She was able to connect events from her youth with her current fight, presenting herself as having political prestige. Her husband's election loss also contributed to this education as Emmeline learned how a small group could force their issue. Her ability to use current events in Ulster to highlight inequalities whilst minimising the WSPU's own violence was a stroke of political genius as the long-lasting image of the suffragette in popular memory remained sanitised. *My Own Story* was written as validation for militancy and Emmeline used Ireland to achieve this purpose. She justified militancy by focusing on its previous successes as well as current success in Ulster, emphasising that the only difference in causes was gender. Emmeline was therefore able to exhibit the double standards and how unjustly women were being treated.

This thesis has enabled Emmeline's political genius to come to the fore. In *My Own Story*, Emmeline uses Ireland to her advantage: justifying and minimising her militancy to ensure that her audience would understand the necessity of action for the suffragettes but remain sympathetic. It has also analysed how Emmeline had constantly battled with

expectations of gender. From politicians to newspapers to historians, Emmeline's militancy has been misrepresented, overlooked, and criticised as a failure. By focusing on her connection to Ireland, her militancy has been rediscovered challenging the commercialised image of the suffragettes. Emmeline Pankhurst and the suffragettes were radical figures: raising their voices, obstructing meetings, using their bodies as weapons, breaking windows, setting off bombs, throwing hatchets. Although Emmeline did not partake in the more destructive militancy herself, it was her responsibility to inspire and justify the actions of the suffragettes as the leader and figurehead of the WSPU. Using her own definition, militancy was a success as women were awakened, fighting for their own cause, and using actions designed to force the government to act.

Ireland is not the only inspiration referenced in *My Own Story*. Emmeline also mentions the influence of the abolitionist movement as a child and the importance of French politics on her political journey.<sup>18</sup> An analysis of how these movements played a role in Emmeline's political development would contribute to pushing Emmeline's political knowledge to the forefront. With this study, it has also become clear that Emmeline Pankhurst was not the only advocate of women's suffrage to find inspiration in Ireland. Millicent Garrett Fawcett also alluded to Ireland throughout her writings. A comparison of how Fawcett employs Ireland to Emmeline would be significant: Fawcett was a constitutional suffragist, thus interpreting the militancy of Ireland very differently to Emmeline who saw it as an inspiration.

Emmeline was no Irish nationalist. There is no mention of any support for Home Rule throughout *My Own Story* though as she emphasised, the only cause for her at the time of battle was women's suffrage. Nevertheless, Emmeline had knowledge of the Irish Question and was able to use it. Each step of militancy was associated with Ireland: from its origins to its intensification to its end.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2 & 11-12.

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