

of freedom and the place where men put women on a pedestal and worshipped them.¹⁷²

Yet, she went on, she had landed in New York during the laundry workers' strike, and through investigating their conditions, '[a]nother fallacy that was soon exploded was the matter of enormous wages paid women here' and she quoted figures from the fifteen factories she had investigated.¹⁷³ She went on to describe the conditions in prison, highlighting Tennessee where inmates were terrorised into false confessions. The structure of this speech, starting with the laundry strike, examining wages and conditions of women workers, and ending in the darkness of the Tennessee prison follows the structure of this book.

Sylvia had arrived with a book that was loyal to the WSPU leadership. It was, however, in the process of promoting this book that she became involved in a process of research and political discussion which challenged and developed her as a thinker, political activist and writer. She speedily recorded her impressions and their impact on her ideas in her speeches and in her letters. The result would be a typescript that distilled those experiences, pitting modern capitalism against 'the great other side': humanity.

THE IMPACT OF THE TOURS ON SUFFRAGE HISTORY

On the night of 2 April 1912, fifteen women wearing yellow suffrage sashes and carrying banners came down to the New York harbour outside to say goodbye to Sylvia Pankhurst. Sylvia held a midnight reception in the stateroom of the SS *Mauretania*, and the women distributed their suffrage literature to the other passengers. At 1 a.m., the ship set sail.¹⁷⁴ Sylvia never returned to North America.

The effects of her lecture tours, however, remained profound and enduring. After her return to Britain, she appealed to her American contacts to exert pressure on the government. A Bill proposing Home Rule for Ireland was before Parliament which made no inclusion for women's suffrage, despite widespread Irish Nationalist support, and which would prevent any chance to amend this for three years. Christabel, who was closer to the Unionists than the Nationalists, called for Parliament to avenge the women by voting down the Bill. Sylvia later expressed her view that any hope of influencing the Irish Nationalists to make women's suffrage a decisive issue in the Bill's progress 'could only

be by the efforts of Irish women' and that the WSPU should 'leave the Irish question to them'.¹⁷⁵

At the time, however, Sylvia took a more active stance on this question than her memoirs indicated. Instead of calling for the Bill to be voted down, she tried to garner American support for a women's suffrage amendment to it. She wrote to Lillian Wald and Jane Addams, her friends in the Settlements, asking them to seek American messages of support for a women's suffrage amendment to the Bill.¹⁷⁶ Wald received a favourable response from Oswald Garrison Villard, the editor of the *New York Evening Post*. Villard's mother, Helen Frances Garrison Villard, had spoken alongside Sylvia at a suffrage meeting in Winchester, Massachusetts, in April 1911, and his maternal grandfather was the William Lloyd Garrison who had spoken of the uncompromising reformers in Britain and America at the founding meeting of the Women's Franchise League in 1889. Wald also received a favourable response from Henry Moskowitz, involved in investigating factory conditions in the wake of the Triangle fire, who wrote to Sylvia stating his view that Irish Home Rule and women's suffrage were 'expressions of the same movement' and therefore 'there is no logic in answering the democratic demands of the Irish People by an undemocratic home rule bill'.¹⁷⁷ However, not all of those Wald contacted were so favourably disposed; George Foster Peabody, president of the Men's League for Woman Suffrage in America, objected on the grounds that he opposed militancy and believed that Emmeline Pankhurst was 'at heart a Tory' whose reactionary politics would ensure 'that the effect of such letters as Miss Silvia [sic] Pankhurst wishes written respecting the Government of Ireland would only tend to defeat the giving of Home Rule to Ireland'.¹⁷⁸

Beyond seeking political support, Sylvia's communications with her American contacts reveal the warm friendships she constructed in America and their importance to her. Sylvia ended her letter to Addams 'With very kind regards and remembrances to all friends at Hull House'.¹⁷⁹ She wrote to Lillian Wald: 'I think of you very often and all the dear people at the Settlement, and hope that I shall see you again before very long, closing her letter 'Yours with affectionate remembrances'.¹⁸⁰ Wald's letter to Sylvia asked her to send 'my deep love' to Emmeline and indicates that Sylvia was writing regularly, only a month after leaving America, to Alice and Irene Lewisohn: 'I know that Alice and Irene have kept you informed from time to time of our movements here and our concern about the affairs in England, particularly those affecting your