

about being asked to step back from the campaign, seemingly for the second time. Clearly distressed, Emerson asked, 'what was the cause of you not wanting me to speak for us any more?' She thanked Sylvia for giving her a lock of her hair, wrote her a poem recalling old times and stated 'you know that nothing that has happened or may happen between us can ever alter my feeling toward you.'<sup>193</sup> On the basis of this letter, some biographers have speculated that Sylvia and Emerson's relationship had been a romantic one.<sup>194</sup> The Settlements themselves provided a way for women to live together and this may have been what one or both of them envisaged at some point. Whether or not the relationship was romantic, it was inseparable from their shared political endeavour. It has been little appreciated since how much the ELFS owed both to Emerson's political experience and Sylvia's American tours.

#### POSTSCRIPTS

The outbreak of the First World War highlighted the divergence of the WSPU and the ELFS. While the ELFS adopted welfare schemes that emulated the work of the Settlements, the WSPU suspended its militant campaign for the vote and backed the war effort. In America, however, that country's entry into the war would see militancy, previously on the fringes of the suffrage movement, propelled to centre stage. Departing from the previous emphasis on winning the vote in individual states, Alice Paul, the American campaigner who had participated in the British suffragette movement, began to focus on attaining a women's suffrage amendment to the Constitution. In 1917 she initiated 'silent sentinels': women pickets who resolved to stand silently outside the White House with banners demanding their political emancipation until President Wilson capitulated. Like the early militant suffragettes, they directly confronted the government with street-based protests. Unlike the WSPU, they continued this action when their state was at war (the United States joined the war in April 1917). The activists involved were met with a brutal response by the authorities which the suffragettes would have recognised. They were arrested and imprisoned, many of them in the Occoquan Workhouse. Some of the women hunger struck in protest and were force fed. Alice Paul, who had previously endured force feeding in an English prison, was locked up in a psychiatric institution – a threat the British authorities had once held over hunger striking suffragettes. On 14 November 1917, her comrades in the workhouse were subject to

what became known as the 'night of terror', when the male guards rushed in armed with clubs and savagely beat the women.<sup>195</sup> Sylvia would have known many of the imprisoned pickets. Alice Paul had arranged the flamboyant greeting for Sylvia in Pennsylvania in April 1911; Lucy Burns had participated in the British suffragette movement; Eunice Dana Brannan had met Sylvia at the dock when she arrived in New York for the first time in January 1911; Doris Stevens had heard Sylvia lecture in Oberlin in January 1911, and Sylvia had been joint guest of honour at a luncheon in Washington in February 1911 alongside Anna Kelton, then celebrating her engagement to Dr Harvey Washington Wiley, a chemist whose work led to the passing of the Pure Food and Drugs Act. In November 1917, Mrs Kelton Wiley was smuggling workhouse food out to her husband to expose the unsanitary food to which the prisoners were subjected.<sup>196</sup>

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In 1918, women in Britain won the right to vote at 30 years of age – though men could vote from the age of 21. Women won votes on the same terms as men in 1928. In America, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified in 1920, giving the vote to women nationwide. In Canada, most women were granted the vote in 1918, but Asian people were disenfranchised until the 1940s, and indigenous Canadians until the 1960s.

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Sylvia Pankhurst dedicated the rest of her life to political activism. She supported the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and was inspired by the more direct democracy of the workers' and soldiers' soviets (councils). She participated in international communist debates into the 1920s and campaigned to stop British military intervention in Russia. As a consequence of her communist activism, she was imprisoned one last time in 1921. She remained resolutely opposed to imperialism and racism. She was the first newspaper editor in Britain to employ a black journalist. Sylvia was among the earliest British campaigners to identify the dangers of the rise of fascism from Mussolini's rise to power in Italy in 1922. The triumph of fascism represented the destruction of democracy, of workers' and women's rights, and the propagation of racial hatred resulting in the attempted annihilation of Jewish people. Fascism also aspired to imperialist expansion. When Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, Sylvia made