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Campaigns to Remember: Writing in the Afterlives of Sylvia Pankhurst

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<1> Rachel Holmes's 2020 biography of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century campaigner Sylvia Pankhurst, subtitled *Natural Born Rebel*, ends with the strong claim that the time has come for the publication of Pankhurst's complete writings. "Sylvia was such an accessible and clear-eyed writer," states Holmes, "I hope that those who have read this far will support my wish that her collective works will be published in full at last. They offer so much encouragement and wisdom in this new difficult age" (*Sylvia Pankhurst* 837). Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960) was a lifelong activist and an indefatigable writer. Over the course of her long life, she was involved in an impressive array of causes, from anti-fascism to Ethiopian independence to the plight of unmarried mothers and – most famously – the fight for women's right to the vote. Holmes argues that Pankhurst's written works offer a gateway into understanding her activism. Comparing Pankhurst to contemporary activists, including Greta Thunberg and Malala Yousafzai, Holmes describes her subject as one whose struggles "sprang from a single, simple and principled vision" (*Sylvia Pankhurst* xii, 838). However, this understanding of Pankhurst's life, in which her activism is seen to arise from a cohesive ideology, is one that is undeveloped in early accounts of her activism and has strengthened significantly in the sixty years since Pankhurst's death. Over time, those involved in memorializing her activism have moved from versions of Pankhurst that give very little weight to her writing, centering her within her famous family or emphasizing her unconventional qualities, to versions that see her writing as fundamental, affirming her importance as a socialist feminist whose politics are seen as having deep contemporary relevance.

<2> Drawing on theories from cultural memory studies, I consider the role of Pankhurst's writing as well as writing about her "afterlives," used to refer to the long-term movement of stories "across cultural spheres, media, and constituencies and its effect on social relations" (Rigney 12). The afterlife has something in common with the idea of a legacy but, rather than implying that a past event is over, the concept of afterlives envisions such events as actively alive. In this vein, the study of cultural memory recognizes that memory is based on the mediation and remediation of a set of recognizable symbols over time. Memory is formed and sustained through "a multimodal process, which involves complex interactions between medial, social (and ultimately cognitive) phenomena" (Erl and Rigney 10). From this perspective, remembering is a creative act wherein relations between the past, future and present play out through interactions between

mediated and lived experience. While the events of Pankhurst's life have been well-recorded (see Holmes; Connelly; Harrison; Davis), an account of her active memorialization, and the importance of her writing to that memorialization, has yet to be carried out. Moreover, this research contributes to a growing field of study of the cultural memory of activism and in particular the memory of women activists (Chidgey; Crozier-De Rosa and Mackie; Altinay et al.).

<3>This article considers Pankhurst's cultural memory and the importance of her writing in relation to three, roughly chronological, types of representation. The first of these centers around Pankhurst as a suffragette – focusing on her early life – and, to a large degree, considers her in relation to her mother and sisters. The second takes Pankhurst's whole life and depicts her as a historically unusual and important figure but not necessarily as someone whose political activism followed any very coherent pattern. The third category approaches Pankhurst as an exemplary political figure and considers her in the context of the political movements she supported. This article uses trends and changes in biographical writing on Pankhurst – and the elements of Pankhurst's writing that they draw from or focus on – to reveal wider patterns in her representation over time, taking its lead from Liz Stanley's account of biography and autobiography as “ideological accounts of ‘lives’ which in turn feed back into everyday understandings of how ‘common lives’ and ‘extraordinary lives’ can be recognised” (Stanley 3).

<4>These biographies paint changing portraits of Pankhurst: as the imaginative and whimsical daughter and sister to an authoritarian mother and older sister; as a tempestuous political maverick with contrary motivations; or as an ideologically grounded and consistent socialist feminist with a clear and innovative set of values and tactics. As, over time, the focus shifts from Pankhurst's life to her activism, so the place of Pankhurst's writing in these representations also changes, moving from functioning primarily as a source of biographical detail towards providing an ideological inspiration and point of identification for the biographical author. It is when Pankhurst is represented as an activist leader that her campaign writing truly resonates. Correspondingly, the centrality given to Pankhurst's gender alters across different clusters of representations. While, in earlier accounts of Pankhurst as a curious historical figure, her gender further marks her out as an anomaly, a maverick and an exception to the strictures of the time, in later accounts, with Pankhurst's writing brought to the fore, her gender is considered as a vital element of an integrated ideology as a socialist feminist.

Pankhurst's Life, Writing and Archive

<5>The second daughter of Dr Richard Marsden Pankhurst (1834-1898) and Emmeline Pankhurst (née Goulden) (1858-1928), Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst was born into a politically active family. As is well documented, in 1903 Emmeline Pankhurst set up the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), the militant arm of the women's suffrage movement that came to be known as the suffragettes. Sylvia Pankhurst was a key part of this movement from the outset, particularly – as a trained artist – in designing the WSPU logo, banners, pamphlets and brooches for those suffragettes who had survived periods of imprisonment. In 1911 she wrote *The Suffragette. The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement 1905-1910* (1911), which was the first official history of the movement, providing an effective catalogue of early WSPU campaigns. *The Suffragette* extolls the importance of the WSPU and their fight for the vote,

arguing that it will “rank amongst the great reform movements of the world” (Pankhurst and Dodd 42). Pankhurst places the suffragettes within a wider genealogy of nineteenth-century activism, describing her sister Christabel and Annie Kenney speaking in Parliament and demonstrating for the vote “as their forefathers had done, upon the site of Peterloo” (Pankhurst and Dodd 46).

<6>Despite these accolades, Pankhurst was increasingly at odds with her mother and Christabel over the movement’s use of violence (which she opposed), its top-down leadership and its attitude towards class: she was a determined socialist whereas Christabel and Emmeline Pankhurst felt that all women’s interests were best represented by bourgeois women. By 1914 Sylvia Pankhurst had left the WSPU and set up her own organization, the ELFS (East London Federation of Suffragettes) in the East End of London. Her dismissal from the WSPU forms a touchstone in both the first and third categories, those that see her in relation to her family and those that celebrate her as a socialist feminist.

<7>During the years of the First World War (which she, in contrast to the WSPU official line, did not support) she was involved in setting up welfare schemes in the East End, alongside consistent campaigning for women’s and workers’ rights. Much of this campaigning was effected through her newspaper, first named *The Woman’s Dreadnought* and later *The Workers’ Dreadnought*. Sylvia Pankhurst was a great supporter of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and later travelled around Continental Europe meeting left-wing leaders, including a visit to Moscow in 1920 – at some personal risk – to meet with Lenin. Although she was a founding member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) she was later expelled from that same party.⁽¹⁾ She moved to Woodford Green in Essex with her partner Silvio Corio, an Italian anarchist, in 1924. Here she continued writing on a range of campaigns, including in opposition to Mussolini and fascism in Italy. In these years she returned to some of the concerns of her early activism, writing again about the plight of working women and unmarried mothers.

<8>In 1931 she produced another history of the WSPU, *The Suffragette Movement*, which differed notably from her 1911 account. This text is in many ways the closest she came to writing an autobiography. Starting with a description of her childhood it moves through her time in art school and early involvement with the WSPU to her split with her mother and sister. Highly critical of Christabel and Emmeline – which her 1911 work is not – *The Suffragette Movement* has been viewed as a “specifically socialist challenge” (Pankhurst and Dodd 21) to early histories of the campaign for women’s right to vote, which are seen as having downplayed the role of the militants in winning the vote or displayed them as aggressive or autocratic. Subsequently, this text has been considered by many a definitive history of the movement.

<9>While in Woodford, and despite the fact that she was not married to Corio, Pankhurst gave birth to a son. This was reportedly the nail in the coffin for her relationship with her increasingly conservative mother. In later life Pankhurst’s involvement in anti-fascism and anti-imperialism led her to become involved in campaigns for Ethiopian independence, first from Italian forces and later from British intervention. She set up another paper, the *New Times and Ethiopian News*, which not only covered Ethiopia but was a platform for much Pan-Africanist thinking. She spent the last years of her life in Addis Ababa. On her death, she was given a state funeral and pronounced an “honorary Ethiopian” by Emperor Haile Selassie.

<10>Despite this long life and her vast oeuvre, Pankhurst's writing is best known for her histories of the suffragette movement. But as both founder and editor of *The Woman's Dreadnought* (18 March 1914 – 21 July 1917), *The Workers' Dreadnought* (28 July 1917 – 14 June 1924), *New Times and Ethiopia News* (9 May 1936 – 5 May 1956) and the *Ethiopia Observer* (1956-1960) Pankhurst contributed to and oversaw political journalism for the better part of fifty years. She wrote prolifically outside of her own newspapers and was published on an impressive range of subjects: from the necessity of forming soviets in the United Kingdom to Romanian poetry to the importance of creating an international language. Throughout her long life her writing remained detail-orientated and vivid – for instance her publication *India and the Earthly Paradise* (1926) led several commentators to believe she had actually visited India, when in fact the book was the product of research conducted from the United Kingdom.

<11>Running through many of these works is a continuous thread that emphasizes the need for action to overcome the fate of the downtrodden, vulnerable and oppressed – a thread which has become increasingly central to Pankhurst's representation since her death. Pankhurst notes her responses to the world around her, while remaining focused on the particularities of the movement and the challenges faced. More emotional passages often serve a provocative function: grounds for the reader to sympathize with a particular cause or campaign. By way of example, her 1930 piece "Save the Mothers" supplements statistics on the number of women who were dying in childbirth with a vivid personal story about a seeing, in her childhood, a starving homeless woman (Pankhurst and Dodd 146). The ability, shown in her campaign writing, to draw connections between oppression at a political and societal level as well as at an intimate, experiential, practical, level has become a prevalent strand in the remembrance of her activism.

<12>Pankhurst's published writing is supplemented by her vast archive, comprising a collection of her letters, official documents, manuscripts, newspapers she wrote for and edited, and much of her art and poetry. The "Estelle Sylvia Pankhurst Papers" are kept in the International Institute of Social History (IISG), Amsterdam. Sylvia Pankhurst's son Richard K. P. Pankhurst donated the collection to the IISG in 1961, with a smaller addition in 1976. As Rita Pankhurst (Pankhurst's daughter-in-law) notes in her 1988 article, the collection was moved twice, first from London to Addis Ababa when Pankhurst moved there in the 1950s and later from Addis Ababa to Amsterdam because the "Dutch had been more helpful than the British in this enterprise" (Rita Pankhurst 246). The family's decision to house the collection in the IISG – where it sits alongside the collections of the Red Army, Leon Trotsky, Emma Goldman, and active international movements like Amnesty International – thereby separating it from the rest of the suffragette archives or those of the British Labour movement, emphasizes Pankhurst's status as an independent activist of international significance. The detachment of her records from the official archives of these other movements moves the focus beyond her famous family and her involvement with the WSPU, constituting a clear and deliberate placing of her legacy in a context that is removed from other suffragettes, whereby she sits alongside prominent left-wing figures from around the world who campaigned for multiple causes; an extension of the internationalism that she supported throughout her life.

Category One: Daughter, Sister, Suffragette

<13>The earliest, and one of the most persistent, characterizations of Sylvia Pankhurst sees her almost entirely through the prism of the suffragette movement and in relation to her famous family. In developing this characterization, this section explores the earliest biographies, written by David Mitchell (1967), Richard Pankhurst (1979) and Barbara Castle (1978), which deal with Sylvia Pankhurst as an individual or in conjuncture with family members. While these texts draw heavily from *The Suffragette Movement* as a chronicle of events, they tend not to dwell on Pankhurst's account, in that history, of the intricacies of WSPU and ELFS activism.

<14>Seen in relation to her relatives, Sylvia Pankhurst is routinely characterized as the "artistic and imaginative" (Mitchell dust jacket) or "sensually alive" (Castle 128) Pankhurst. Her early commitment to art is central to this characterization and her socialism is often rendered as the logical conclusion of her sensitivity. Key events of her life are seen as those that expose tensions in the Pankhursts' familial relationships: her expulsion from the WSPU and the birth of Richard Pankhurst. The former is figured in terms of family drama rather than ideological split, with a *dramatis personae* that includes the doting mother, the bossy elder sister and the second sister struggling to find her own role. In this version having a child out of wedlock is seen as an act of rebellion by Sylvia against her mother. The fact that Richard Pankhurst's birth was soon followed by the publication of *The Suffragette Movement*, critical of Emmeline and Christabel, cements its presentation as an act of defiance.

<15>By way of example: the first published account of Sylvia Pankhurst's life takes the form of a group biography that was in print a mere seven years after her death. David Mitchell's *The Fighting Pankhursts: A Study in Tenacity* (1967) follows the lives of Emmeline, Christabel, Sylvia and Adela Pankhurst and provides an early indication of the centrality the Pankhurst surname would go on to have in Sylvia's afterlives. Mitchell (1924-) originally worked as a journalist before writing *Women on the Warpath: The Story of the Women of the First World War* (1966), a study which influenced him to write about the Pankhursts. Mitchell's self-assigned role becomes to unpack and examine a sensational narrative for the sake of posterity. The biography has a concern with the Pankhursts' internal lives, and especially their feelings about each other, so that its focus is far more personal or familial than political; the mechanisms and intricacies of their activism and ideologies are often glossed over. Meticulously researched, *The Fighting Pankhursts* contains a long list of acknowledgements thanking those family members, friends and acquaintances of the Pankhursts with whom Mitchell corresponded. While it does not list the IISG among its sources (although it does use images from Pankhurst's collection), *The Fighting Pankhursts* provides a long list of Sylvia Pankhurst's published works in its select bibliography. Mitchell's flowing prose is not punctuated by citations so it is not always evident how he is drawing from his sources, how proximate his work is to those sources or to what degree Pankhurst's writing influenced his interpretation of events.

<16>While Mitchell's omission of any place for Pankhurst's writing is characteristic of other early accounts of her life (Castle does likewise) there are other publications in which Pankhurst's own accounts of her life come through directly. For instance, in *Sylvia Pankhurst: Artist and Crusader, An Intimate Portrait* (1979) her son Richard Pankhurst often uses language which closely mirrors Pankhurst's own. For example, in describing her childhood meeting with the French anarchist Louise Michel, Richard Pankhurst writes: "The 'Petrouleuse' as her enemies called her was by then a tiny old woman in a brown cloak, intensely lean, with gleaming eyes

and a swarthy skin ...” (15), while Sylvia Pankhurst writes in *The Suffragette Movement* of “Louise Michel, of the Commune, the ‘petroleuse,’ as her enemies called her, a tiny old woman in a brown cloak, intensely lean, with gleaming eyes and swarthy skin...” (E. Sylvia Pankhurst). Apart from the different spelling of *pétroleuse*, Richard Pankhurst’s text is distinguished from the original only by the temporal distance implied in the phrase “was by then”. But this close attention to Pankhurst’s writing does not appear to have led to an increase in its circulation. Instead, such close attention to questions of influence and personal relationships seems to have obscured more political readings of her life.

Category Two: Crusader and Maverick

<17>By the late twentieth century another representation of Pankhurst emerged which remembered her as a lifelong misfit, constantly at odds with the world around her. By way of example, Patricia Romero’s *E. Sylvia Pankhurst: Portrait of a Radical* (1987) is the first large-scale and comprehensive biography of Sylvia Pankhurst. In many ways *Portrait of a Radical* marks a new phase, in which Pankhurst’s whole life, rather than just the early years and involvement in the campaign for the vote, comes under scrutiny. Spanning over three hundred pages, Romero’s book stands as a definitive monument to Pankhurst’s life and has provided a source for much subsequent disagreement between biographers.

<18>Romero (1934-2015) comes at Pankhurst’s life from a very different perspective to other biographers of the time, who are primarily interested in suffragette history. Romero was an American scholar of African history who published widely around the intersection of race and gender, from works on African American women’s Civil War memoirs to profiles of women in 1990s South Africa. She first encountered Pankhurst in the context of her connection to Ethiopia.

<19>As the book’s blurb notes, Romero seeks to undercut a tendency to idealize her subject: she “reveals Sylvia as much more complex and less admirable than hitherto imagined. ... Although not the feminist socialist heroine that recent historians have considered her, she was nonetheless, a powerful and significant personality.” Throughout Romero takes a critical stance towards Pankhurst, viewing her as impulsive, contrary and emotional. Romero’s account consistently challenges Sylvia Pankhurst’s own descriptions of the events of her life, often explicitly judging statements that reflect her own feelings as false. This is especially pertinent where Pankhurst claimed political motivation for actions which Romero tends to attribute to family competition or self-importance rather than genuine empathy or ideology. It is highlighted by the repeated suggestion that other politically important figures do not take Pankhurst seriously. Romero notes this with particular frequency during the years of Pankhurst’s most fervent communism. For instance, she alleges that in the 1920s “Sylvia had a penchant for speaking in the most revolutionary terms ... , yet her behaviour after 1930 suggests she may have been less a genuine revolutionary than her speeches and writings at this time indicate” (Romero 125). This statement implies that Pankhurst’s articles on the strengths of soviet communism were “all” “based on pure utopian fantasy” (Romero 131) and that her correspondence with Lenin can be read as him, an adroit politician, humoring her, who lived “in a world devoid of political reality” (Romero 134). Overall, Romero judges Pankhurst’s writing as erratic and prone to self-aggrandizement. Although Pankhurst’s cultural memory may have moved on from a focus on her familial

relations, Romero's reading of Pankhurst's writing is highly gendered in its refusal to take Pankhurst seriously as a political force.

<20>The next comparably sized work on Pankhurst's whole life is Shirley Harrison's *Sylvia Pankhurst: A Crusading Life* (2003, also published under the title *Sylvia Pankhurst: A Maverick Life*), another work that pays close attention to Pankhurst's personal relationships. Here Pankhurst is depicted as energetic and passionate, but driven more by sheer doggedness than by any cohesive political ideology; Harrison follows the lead of Mitchell and others in using Pankhurst's writing for its biographical detail rather than a source of ideological drive.

Category Three: Socialist Feminist

<21>The biographical representations covered in this section, which span the period from the early 1990s to the present day, attempt to make sense of Pankhurst's *activism*, rather than her life. Over time they give an increasing sense of the cohesiveness of Pankhurst's causes, showing how what might at first sight appear to be a series of random campaigns can be seen as a whole, motivated by a particular ideology and a set of driving ideas. As with those biographies that consider Sylvia Pankhurst primarily as a Pankhurst/suffragette, her split with the WSPU is treated as a central moment, however in these versions it becomes the culmination of her political awakening rather than of familial infighting. In this vein these texts reformulate Pankhurst's "unconventionality" as her "innovation," noting, for instance, her pioneering early anti-fascism.⁽²⁾ They engage readily with her writing as a means to understand her activism.

<22>By way of example, Mary Davis's *Sylvia Pankhurst: A Life in Radical Politics* (1999) argues that a sympathetic non-hagiographic account of Pankhurst's whole life has yet to be written (1). She contends that Pankhurst may not have been the first activist to see the relationship between gender and class but her exploration of that relationship was nonetheless of the utmost importance. Beyond that intersection, Davis identifies Pankhurst's revolutionary communism and her anti-racism as pioneering. Her text opens by setting out a detailed history of the late nineteenth-century labor movement and its relationship to women's suffrage that provides the context and matrix of problems to which Pankhurst is offered as the solution. The chapter on these separate spheres is followed by chapters on sections of Pankhurst's life. Davis shows how Pankhurst's perspective offers insights on feminism, socialism, communism, anti-fascism and anti-racism at the time of writing.

<23>Davis consistently highlights Pankhurst's unusual status as an activist leader as well as in being a woman activist at this time. She pays particular attention to the most left-wing phase in Pankhurst's politics and her role in the Communist Party of Great Britain. Davis is also innovative in her direct discussion of Pankhurst's anti-racism, which "has received scant attention" (*Sylvia Pankhurst*, 95). Again, she contextualizes this with a detailed description of the dominant discourse around race during Pankhurst's lifetime, observing that a new pseudo-science and the rise of the popular press meant that "[e]ugenics became an established and virtually unquestioned orthodoxy" (*Sylvia Pankhurst*, 96). Pankhurst's anti-racism is more apparent in her practice throughout her life than in her writing and Davis cites various examples: Pankhurst's hiring of Claude McKay, who became Britain's first Black journalist, to write for the *Dreadnought*; her work against colonialism in India; her decision to fight anti-fascism in

Ethiopia rather than in Spain, unlike many of her contemporaries; her subsequent Pan-Africanism.

<24>Davis underlines Pankhurst's feminism throughout her account of her activism, arguing that "Sylvia adopted, albeit unsystematically, a Marxist analysis which postulated that the roots of women's oppression lay within the capitalist mode of production" (*Sylvia Pankhurst*, 58 – 59). Davis ends by asserting several points of importance to be taken from Pankhurst's life. Not only is she an "icon for socialist feminists" (*Sylvia Pankhurst*, 117), whose politics have struck a chord with second wave feminists, she tackled issues from a leadership perspective, was virtually alone among white people in making a link between fascism and racism and she herself lived her politics, especially her feminism. On this final point Davis refers to Pankhurst's decision to have a child out of wedlock as an example of her commitment to women's liberation, not only as a theoretical position, but as a "testimony to its lived meaning" (*Sylvia Pankhurst*, 120). Positing Pankhurst's unconventional personal life as its own form of activism corresponds with second wave feminism's interest in recognizing that the personal is political.

<25>In a semi-structured interview that I conducted with Davis as part of a wider enquiry into Sylvia Pankhurst's cultural memory she was clear she did not want to write about Pankhurst's personal life: her interest was in Pankhurst's political life, her ideology, strategies and tactics. In this vein, Pankhurst's writing provides a substantial basis for Davis's investigation of her life. *A Life in Radical Politics* contains extensive citations of both Pankhurst's published and her unpublished works. Indeed, Davis noted that she had read most of Pankhurst's extensive oeuvre, including every issue of the newspaper Pankhurst edited and contributed to for many years, *The New Times and Ethiopian News*. As a member of the Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Committee, who are in a lengthy process of campaigning for and raising money towards the erection of a statue of Pankhurst, Davis urged the importance of remembering Pankhurst not simply as an individual but as someone who "gave voice to a movement" through writing and living her politics (interview).

<26>Celebrations of the centenary of the 1918 Representation of the People Act – which for the first time gave some women in the United Kingdom the right to vote – inspired a wider reappraisal of Pankhurst's memory. Pankhurst's role as the spokeswoman for a movement, or even several movements, became a central characterization once again. This reappraisal is apparent in Holmes's 2020 biography, which exhorts Pankhurst's contemporary appropriation. It is long, evocatively written, light on in-text citations or quotations, and driven by an engaging narrative which does not discriminate between personal and political details. As Holmes herself describes it, *Natural Born Rebel* is a "trade biography," aiming to open Pankhurst's story out to a wider audience, one which is perhaps less politically invested in Pankhurst's remembrance as a socialist feminist (Holmes, interview). She makes copious use of Pankhurst's writing, in particular *The Suffragette Movement*, but does not always take her account at face value, often lightly challenging her veracity.⁽³⁾ Like Davis, she considers Pankhurst as emblematic of a wider political trajectory, stating in our interview that "I am interested in the history of big ideas and the continuity of big liberation struggles and how do we ultimately make things free and better. But those aren't very interesting books to read. So, I think as humans we like stories and we like to know how the individual life rubs up against it" (Holmes, interview). Describing Pankhurst as "the most politically significant woman of the British twentieth century," Holmes

makes a case for the importance of Pankhurst's memory – as mediated through her writing and remediated through Holmes's biography – as offering both ideological and practical inspiration for a new generation of activists (interview).

Conclusion

<27>The progression of Pankhurst's representation in the sixty years since her death is exemplified by the historic figures she is set alongside. Barbara Castle's 1987 biography of Sylvia and Christabel Pankhurst is from a Penguin Books series of "Lives of Modern Women." The series presents short biographical portraits of "women whose ideas, struggles and creative talents have made a significant contribution to the way we think and live now" (blurb). This includes titles on Annie Besant, Elizabeth Bowen, Vera Brittain, Coco Chanel, Colette, Jean Rhys, Bessie Smith, Freya Stark, Mme Sun Yat-sen and Rebecca West. By contrast, Connelly's 2013 *Sylvia Pankhurst: Suffragette, Socialist and Scourge of Empire* is part of a Pluto Press series on "Revolutionary Lives" that contains works on Salvador Allende, Leila Khaled, Jean Paul Marat and Gerrard Winstanley. She goes from being represented as a "prominent" or "talented" woman – in which her surname necessarily plays an important role – to being seen as part of an international cohort to be deployed as revolutionary examples of extraordinary lives. In this latter version, Pankhurst's writing occupies a central position.

<28>This article has sought to unpack the place of campaign writing within the cultural memory of Sylvia Pankhurst. It has examined the chronological shift across biographical accounts of Pankhurst's activism through a progression of representations leading to one in which her writing and activism can truly be harnessed for contemporary political purpose. While early narratives of Pankhurst's life draw on accounts other than her writing (such as those from people close to the Pankhurst family) or, as in the case of Romero, judge her writing to be misleading or false, more recently Pankhurst's writing has become fundamental to the way in which she is commemorated and celebrated, creating a memory of her that promotes affective engagement with the ideas and causes she promoted and consolidating the importance of her gender to her activism. Ending *The Suffragette Movement* with the line "Great is the work which remains to be accomplished!" (E. Sylvia Pankhurst 640), Pankhurst actively sets the tone of her own afterlives, urging future generations of activists to pick up where she, and others, left off.

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Notes

(1) Her separation from the CPGB was eventually catalysed by her refusal to cede the running of the *Dreadnought* to party hands. However, she had long been at odds with the majority of British communists – and indeed with Lenin – over her anti-parliamentarianism and refusal to work with the British Labour Party. (^)

(2) This section covers a 1992 collection of essays on Pankhurst, alongside works by Katherine Dodd (Pankhurst and Dodd, *A Sylvia Pankhurst Reader*), Rosemary Taylor, Barbara Winslow, Mary Davis, Katherine Connelly and Marie-Hélène Dumas. (△)

(3) For instance, early on she wryly challenges Pankhurst's own account of her father as a "graceful and vivacious" figure (Holmes, *Sylvia Pankhurst*, 23). (△)

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