

SOURCE 4

A letter from Emmeline Pankhurst to WSPU members, January 1913

(PRO ref: CRIM 1/139/2)



SOURCE 4A

SOURCE 4B

HOW TO USE THIS SOURCE TO HELP YOU ANSWER THE BIG QUESTION :

Look carefully at this source and consider what it tells you about the relationship between the Suffragists and the Suffragettes and how this affected the campaign for the vote. You should consider:

ASK YOURSELF:

- What is the attitude of Mrs Pankhurst towards the Liberal government?
- What are her views on militancy?
- What are her views on opponents of militancy?
- What effect would this letter have had on attitudes towards women's suffrage?

VOTES FOR WOMEN.
The Women's Social and Political Union.

OFFICE: LINCOLN'S INN HOUSE, KINGSWAY, W.C.

Mrs. Pankhurst, Hon. Treasurer.

Mrs. Mabel Tuke, Hon. Sec.

Auditors: Messrs. Sayers & Wesson,

Chartered Accountants, 19, Hanover Square, W.

*All Communications,
unless marked "private" will be opened
by the Hon. Secretary.*

Telegraphic Address—WOSPOLU, LONDON.

Telephone 2724 Holborn (three lines).

January 10th, 1913.

Private and Confidential.

Dear Friend,

The Prime Minister has announced that in the week beginning January 20th the Women's Amendments to the Manhood Suffrage Bill will be discussed and voted upon. This means that within a few short days the fate of these Amendments will be finally decided.

The W.S.P.U. has from the first declined to call any truce on the strength of the Prime Minister's so-called pledge, and has refused to depend upon the Amendments in question, because the Government have not accepted the responsibility of getting them carried.

SOURCE 4B

There are degrees of militancy. Some women are able to go further than others in militant action and each woman is the judge of her own duty so far as that is concerned. To be militant in some way or other is, however, a moral obligation. It is a duty which every woman will owe to her own conscience and self-respect, to other women who are less fortunate than she is herself, and to all those who are to come after her.

If any woman refrains from militant protest against the injury done by the Government and the House of Commons to women and to the race, she will share the responsibility for the crime. Submission under such circumstances will be itself a crime.

I know that the defeat of the Amendments will prove to thousands of women that to rely only on peaceful, patient methods, is to court failure, and that militancy is inevitable.

We must, as I have said, prepare to meet the crisis before it arises. Will you therefore tell me (by letter, if it is not possible to do so by word of mouth), that you are ready to take your share in manifesting in a practical manner your indignation at the betrayal of our cause.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

E. Pankhurst