**Representations for use in Part C**

**Representation 1**

**From *The Militant Suffragette Campaign* written by Lucy Wray, published on the *New***

***Histories* website in 2012.**

The Pankhursts led a militant campaign that is still remembered today for its undeniable impact on the fight for women’s suffrage but also for the controversial techniques employed by the suffragettes.

In the years leading up to the First World War, the Pankhursts and the WSPU undertook a militant approach to gaining equality for women, including arson, bombings and public destruction. The intention of the violence incited by the WSPU was to intimidate the Government. They hoped it would force the Government into conceding and extending the franchise to include working women. Whilst they did not want to cause personal harm to members of the public, they wanted to draw attention to their cause by creating disturbances and subsequently gaining considerable publicity.

The suffragettes burnt public buildings, restaurants, churches, shops. The homes of politicians, such as David Lloyd George, were also targeted. They sent letter bombs, cut pro-suffragette slogans into turf, chained themselves to railings, smashed the windows of government buildings and also bombed Westminster Abbey. As Emmeline Pankhurst said, ‘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, if you are really going to get reform’. Whilst the violent tactics of the suffragettes were, and still are, often subject to heavy criticism for being detrimental to the plight of women seeking equality, it cannot be denied that they gained widespread attention, both public and political.

Whilst some can appreciate the desperation of these women as they struggled for their right to be heard and to become politically relevant, others condemn the WSPU for its militant campaign. It is argued that the violence delayed the extension of the franchise to include women for ten, even twenty years. The First World War is often seen as the real reason for the Qualification of Women Act in 1918, as millions of women proved their worth by aiding Britain’s struggle on the home front. During this period of conflict the suffragettes abandoned their campaign in favour of nationalism and supporting Britain in the war.

However, whilst some argue that violence was not the way to gain equality, it cannot be denied that the militant suffragette campaign of the early twentieth century raised public awareness and attracted political attention to the issue of gender equality.