

Australia's Day of Degradation: Proclamation Day, Oct. 2, 1916.

## Special Appeal by Women to Women

## MANIFESTO

Australian Women's Peace Army.

## CONSCRIPTION.

## VOTE NO.

WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA! On October 28 we shall have laid upon us the greatest responsibility and the greatest privilege that could be placed upon the women of any country.

For the first time in history, the people of a white nation are being asked whether they shall declare their allegiance to the force of Might or the force of Right.

## THE A. B. C. OF THE CASE.

Down all the ages, the rulers of the world have held that Might is a nation's only defence, and in the twentieth century this doctrine has been carried to such a point that no nation can claim to be a "Great Power" unless it is so great in naval or military strength as to excite the fear and suspicion of other "Great Powers."

The "Great Powers" of Europe, which have hostile neighbors on one or more frontiers, have, in deadly fear of each other, accepted the principle of conscript armies as being necessary for defensive purposes; but England, with her seagirt shores, considered a voluntary navy and army sufficient to defend her from possible enemies. Her people, deploring the supposed necessity for conscription in Europe, gloried in the fact that no Britisher need be a fighting man against his will.

It has been universally recognised that conscription and freedom are mutually destructive, and in conscript countries the aim of the masses, in contradistinction to the classes, has always been to throw off the crushing yoke of conscription and militarism.

While European countries were engaged in protecting themselves, or fighting against each other, our island England was free to develop her manufactures and find markets and possessions overseas, to protect which an ever-increasing navy was needed.

We have become, accordingly, such a far-flung, mighty Empire, that we have excited the fear and jealousy of other "Great Powers," some of which, with the aid of electricity and chemistry, have been endeavoring to catch up with us in production, and, in turn, seek outlets for their surplus products, and profitable investments. International commercial rivalry has developed to such an extent that the peace of the world has trembled in the balance many times during the past decade.

Desire for commercial supremacy, or fear of losing it, has kept all the nations armed to the teeth. This weight of armaments, upon which our capitalistic system depends, and on whose maintenance the bulk of the national income must be expended, has kept the working classes (without whose labor no wealth could be created) in such an oppressive condition of wage slavery, that in every country they were building up their industrial and political organizations with the object of bringing about a complete change of the commercial system—so that production should be for use and not for profit. Sometimes, when conditions became more than usually oppressive, the double-edged weapon of the strike had to be resorted to.

Their teaching so aroused the fear of the Great Powers of Industry, whose enormous profits depend on a docile wage-earning working class, that in every country certain of these financial magnates, backed up by their newspaper and naval and military tools, have openly declared that the only way to bring the working men to their senses was to have a great war,

which would destroy the growing power of Trade Unionism, which was directly opposed to the established power of Capitalism.

We do not say that this war was promoted with the deliberate object of crushing the workers, but we do say that the belief in Might, the fear of enemies without and within national boundaries, the use of the press, of armament firms, of secret diplomacy, of naval and military strength, to bolster up a social system, under which the great mass of the people live in avoidable anxiety, wretchedness and ugliness, has made such a Clash of Interests that a Clash of Arms between Nations Prepared for War, some more, some less, became inevitable when Circumstance and Opportunity sounded the tocsin of alarm.

Now that war has come, Britishers who believe that Might is the guardian angel of Right, are driven to jettison all their cherished ideas of freedom and conscience in the frantic effort to get enough men to do enough killing to wipe out the enemy.

When British men believed that they were going out to protect a "Little Nation" from a ruthless "Big Nation," and to do their part in the "War to end War and Prussian Militarism," they came forth in their thousands as Free Men. But as time went on, they found that "Little Belgium" was forgotten, that the rights of "Little Ireland," "Little Finland," and "Little Greece," seemed to be set aside by other "Big Nations."

They found that, while they were destroying a European menace, they were setting up what they believed was another and nearer menace. They found that, instead of Prussian militarism being destroyed, it was being hailed as the saviour of the British Empire. They found that, instead of England being the

Land where, girt by friends or foes,  
A man may speak the thing he will,"

she had become the land of military and industrial slaves, of shackled speech and shackled conscience.

They found that, instead of this being the "war to end war," all nations, neutral as well as belligerent, are preparing for future wars, and aiming more and more feverishly.

Under these circumstances, do you wonder that free Australian men have come to see that the war is not being fought for the great ideals of freedom that were held before them at the beginning, and that, therefore, the few who might still volunteer in the cause of freedom refuse to volunteer in a cause that aims at rivetting the chains of European militarism on Australia?

They begin to see that the belief in Might throws the nations into a bottomless pit of hate, and oppression, and debt. They begin to see that conscription entrenches militarism still more deeply and breeds endless war, to which every conception of Right and Freedom must be ruthlessly sacrificed.

## THEY SAY.

Therefore, they say, "To 'vote NO' means the beginning of the end of militarism in Australia, and of every other nation; the beginning of the reign of Right as the only Might there is or can be."

## AND YOU?

And you, Women of Australia, are asked to say the same thing, and more; for as women you are faced with a greater responsibility in this matter than men.

As the Mothers of the Race, it is your privilege to conserve life, and love, and beauty, all of which are destroyed by war. Without them, the world is a desert.

You, who give life, cannot, if you think deeply and without bias, vote to send any mother's son to kill, against his will, some other mother's son.

You may, if you choose, send your own son, but you are guilty in the first degree if you take upon yourself the responsibility of forcing someone else's son to break the Sixth Commandment, and, deifying God, say to him,

## THOU SHALT KILL.

We ask you to tell us what MORAL RIGHT you have to do this thing?

A sorrowing mother, who lost a brave son at Gallipoli, said to us:—

"It was not the thought of his being killed that was a nightmare to me. That was terrible; but more terrible still was the thought of his killing another dear boy like himself, a boy whose mother loved him as passionately as I loved mine."

Which is the nobler spirit? That woman's, or that of the woman who would say on October 28 to all the men in Australia:—

"You SHALL GO and KILL. KILL. KILL, till you have helped to bring about 'THE DAY' when Germany is utterly crushed, and every German mother has lost every son of military age?"

Which Australian woman, do you think will stand the more fearlessly before her Maker?

Man-made laws that defy the eternal laws of God, of Right, of Reason, of Love, can never produce good. We cannot gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.

And so we ask you to be true to your womanhood, and with your vote, bring to the State the same gifts that you bring to your homes, the gifts of order, of beauty, of forbearance, of harmony, of love. The nations are dying for lack of these gifts from women. Give them freely, give them gladly, but GIVE THEM YOU CANNOT IF YOU VOTE FOR CONSCRIPTION.

## THEREFORE VOTE NO.

[Vide Colclough, 215 Latrobe Street, Melbourne.]

## OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENT.

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of the Australian Women's Peace Army and the democratic forces of the Commonwealth, I desire to place before you the method by which we, whose work brings us into close touch with all classes of the community, have seen the chains of militarism being fastened more and more firmly on the Women and the Workers, who are the chief sufferers from War and Militarism.

I feel impelled to make an appeal to you because I know the depth of feeling that is being aroused by the attempt to conscript the lives of Australian men, and by the gradual but steady loss of the great Bulwarks of Liberty, a Free Conscience, Free Press, Free Speech. Unless the rank and file of Parliament assert their control over the Government, and insist on the military authorities being deprived of their present powers over civilians, in Australia cannot be avoided.

First, let me assure you, who have only the daily papers to go by, that we, who have always opposed and will always oppose war as being contrary to the Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, as inevitably sowing the seeds for future wars, and as an utterly futile method of settling international differences, let me assure you that we are not Pro-Germans, nor do we attempt to prevent men from voluntarily enlisting as soldiers.

We believe that the existing commercial and industrial system, the antiquated ideas governing secret diplomacy and foreign affairs, the predatory instincts of financiers, armament firms, newspapers, the Militarism of Germany, the Navalism of Great Britain, and the consequent fears of other nations, produced a situation which Foreign Offices were incapable of meeting, and war became inevitable.

We believe that every man, over the age of 21 has a right to decide for himself whether he shall become a soldier or not. Never at any time have we done anything to "prejudice recruiting," except in so far as the teaching of Christianity and explaining how wars are made and ended, may be said to be "prejudicial to recruiting."

## "It is the First Step that Counts."

The first attempt of the military authorities to deprive civilians of their rights was made in Melbourne in August-September, 1914, and it was made on women. I, as editor of the "Australian Woman Voter," a weekly newspaper run by the Women's Political Association, in the interests of woman and anti-militarist prop-

ganda, and our Business Manager, Miss Cecilia John, were visited by a military officer, and told that we must not publish certain matters dealing with war.

I denied the right of the military authorities to censor such matter, and informed them that I would appeal to the Government for a decision.

As the Liberal Government was just going out, and the Labour Government had not yet taken office, I was compelled to wait until September 25 before an interview with Senator Pearce could be arranged.

At that interview the "Socialist," the "Labour Call" and other Labour papers were also represented. We placed the facts about the office of "The Woman Voter" before the Minister, and he ridiculed the action of the military authorities, describing it as hysterical, and he assured us, unequivocally, that it was not the intention of the Labour Government to interfere with peace propaganda.

From September, 1914, to March, 1916, "The Woman Voter" and other pacifist papers were protected from military interference by Senator Pearce's pledge, which was given before he was captured—unconsciously I believe—by the military machine.

That members may fully understand the present position, I must now recall to their minds the pledges given by the Prime Minister (Mr. Fisher) and the Attorney-General (Mr. Hughes) when the War Precautions Acts 1 and 2 were introduced in October, 1914, and April, 1915, when a definite pledge was made that "no general powers" would be given the military authorities under the Bills, that they were to protect the Commonwealth against treachery, etc.

I ask you, gentlemen, to hold the Prime Minister to his pledges, the pledges that were the means—surely the honest means—by which he secured the assent of Parliament to the drastic powers contained in the War Precautions Acts.

While Parliament was in recess, the military authorities took to themselves, by regulations, more and more of the "general powers," which Mr. Hughes said it was not intended to give them. And the position now is we are not governed by laws made by Parliament, but by regulations made by military men, who are not responsible to the people, who have no sympathy with, and no understanding of, the aims and ideals of Democracy.

In October, 1915, military control of the public platform commenced. In March, 1916, complete military control of the Press, tried first with "The Woman Voter," in September, 1914, was applied to all papers, but

Gradually it has been applied to all Labour papers. The great daily papers, the organs of vested interests, are censored only in regard to naval and military news.

They are given unlimited powers in the expression of opinion, in preaching militarism, but "The Woman Voter," the "Federal Independent Socialist," and Labour papers, all of which are irreconcilably opposed to militarism, are censored at every vital point touching on anti-militarism in its broad educational and ethical aspects. The daily papers are permitted to lie freely about anti-militarists;

The daily papers are permitted to comment on matters connected with the war, and then a regulation is rushed through which prevents any other opinion being expressed by the weekly papers,

In May, 1916, an Interstate deputation representing the Australian Peace Alliance waited on Senator Pearce to protest against the censorship of Platform and Press. The Minister has, undoubtedly, much to try his patience in these strenuous times, but a most regrettable change in his demeanour was noticeable from that which he greeted the deputation in 1914. Then he was the democrat, the representative of the people, ever ready to hear what the people had to say, ever ready to defend them against official injustice. On this occasion he was the Minister of Defence, militarist, zealous of preserving the militarists' prerogatives to oppress without a thought of preserving the rights of the people which had helped to wrest from the authorities in days gone by.

When asked by Mr. R. S. Ross to appoint to the censorship staff one of two persons acquainted with Labour terminology and ideals, Senator Pearce said: "I have no politics in the censorship." But the people are gentlemen, that the censorship is all politics, and of one brand, Conservatism.

I hope it will be that there is not a particle of military control of the Minister, of the Censors. The

colossal, soulless machine called Militarism, and it has, instead, assumed control over them. Militarists come to believe, quite honestly, that Might is the only Right, that Conscience and Freedom undermine Right, and must therefore be crushed ruthlessly.

You will be surprised to hear that we have not even the same measure of freedom that is allowed in Great Britain. Labour and Pacifist papers there are allowed the utmost latitude; only one or two fruitless attempts have been made to suppress anti-militarist propaganda,

#### Prosecutions.

The Prime Minister or the Minister of Defence will probably tell you that no action against anti-conscriptionists and anti-militarists is instituted, except with their consent.

You will then probably say that neither Minister would consent to a prosecution unless he truly believed it was justified. I say so, too, but you must remember that the reports on which the prosecutions are based are made by newspaper reporters, or by members of the Secret Service, or by the police, which, torn altogether from their context, convey the very opposite of what the accused person said. You must remember also, gentlemen, that a prosecution with a Minister's signature attached means that the case is pre-judged.

The accused is already condemned before the evidence is heard. Every magistrate feels bound to uphold the Commonwealth Government in its conduct of everything connected with the war, and, although all the weight of evidence in each case that has been tried has been in favour of the accused person, the result has been, except on one or two occasions, a conviction.

I say, without fear of successful contradiction, that the prosecutions under the War Precautions Act have not been for the purposes for which the Act was placed on the Statute Book, but for a wholly foreign purpose—that of crushing non-party, Labour and Socialist reformers in their anti-Militarist propaganda.

#### Conscription.

If the fullest freedom of speech and press is not given to the anti-conscriptionists, I am in a position to know better than some of you who have been present at the meetings of Labour Councils to hear Mr. Hughes, that, if this freedom is withheld and Conscription is forced upon the manhood of the country, there will be serious trouble

the news will then be sent out to the rest of the world that the great Australian Democracy has willingly accepted Conscription.

The public have not been allowed to know that Mr. Hughes has stood almost alone in Labour gatherings (except for a few of the Tory-Labourites, beaten up from every direction) against Labour officials with the powerful unions behind them.

A regulation has been issued ordering every leaflet intended for publication, which in any way deals with the war or matters arising out of the war, to be submitted to the censor. By the time the censor has finished deleting everything that might be useful as an argument against Conscription in the hundreds of leaflets which it is desired to issue, the Referendum will have been taken.

What is the use of taking a Referendum on a question on which full latitude is allowed to those in favour, and the most rigid restrictions are placed on those who oppose it?

I ask you, sirs, whose duty it is to protect the people against tyranny and oppression, to fight, before Parliament goes into recess, as you have never fought before, for the people, and for those whose conscience directs them to oppose Conscription, from which it has always been the proud boast of Britishers that they were free.

The nation that stifles Conscience, even in time of war, thereby proves that it believes, with the Bernhardt it despises, that Might is the only Right.

Yours faithfully,

Wida Goldstein.

215 Latrobe St., Melbourne.  
September 21, 1918.

#### OPEN AIR AND FACTORY MEETINGS.

The Women's Peace Army open air and factory meetings have been most successful. Addresses have been given by Misses Pankhurst and Grant, and on every occasion the audience has declared its hostility to conscription. At the workyard of one influential firm, where previously the "Argus" had announced the passing of a conscription resolution by the men, we were informed that it had been passed by a few "old fogeys upstairs." That reminds us of the frantic attempts of the "Argus" to beat up support for conscription. We are told that resolutions in favour were passed at Ravensthorpe and Five Dock. "Where on earth are Ravenssthorpe and Five Dock?" the average person will ask. The whole population of either place would hardly get inside the "Argus" office.

#### VENEREAL DISEASES. Bill in State Parliament.

The Venereal Diseases Bill, which is much on the same lines as the West Australian Bill providing for compulsory methods of treating venereal diseases, was introduced in the Assembly on 14th ult. by the Chief Secretary, Mr. McLeod.

The Minister argued that the public welfare demanded the passing of such a measure. He spoke of the terrible ravages of the disease; of the 70 per cent. of cases in the lunatic asylums, in which post-mortem examinations clearly reveal that they have been victims of venereal disease; of the prevalence of the disease in the army and navy; of the syphilitic and gonorrhoeal cases at the Eye and Ear and Children's Hospitals.

Mr. McLeod's lurid pictures, we shall admit, for the sake of argument, are not exaggerated. He thinks they justify the use of compulsory methods. We think compulsory methods will defeat the end in view—the securing of the treatment the Government desires. We think, also, that a disease that has so many contributing causes as venereal disease, whether acquired or inherited, is not going to be effectively dealt with as long as the causes are allowed to flourish unchecked.

Mr. Elmslie advocated the use of the so-called preventive measures that were used in the American army and navy. He thought the Bill would create a close monopoly in the medical profession. There would be difficulty in getting people to seek treatment because of the shame attaching to venereal disease. Sufferers are always ashamed, say the doctors and chemists, and hang about for an hour or two, perhaps for several days, before they can muster enough courage to go inside for advice.

Mr. Farthing said that doctors have stated that the White Australia policy has done more than anything else to mitigate the disease, that there have been fewer importations of the disease since that policy was adopted.

As chemists are prohibited under the Bill from selling medicines for the treatment of venereal disease, Mr. Farthing asked what would be done in the case of a sailor coming from another port, staying here only a few days, and wanting a certain patent medicine.

Mr. McLeod then made the following remarkable statement:—

"The chemist could supply him if the sailor did not state what he wanted the medicine for."

State regulation of vice, as existing in Japan, was advocated by Mr. Prendergast, who seemed to think it was quite a new system, and he believed what he was told, when in Japan, that it had "very nearly obliterated" the disease there!

Speaking of the soldiers, Mr. Prendergast said:

"We have had severe lessons in connection with the matter. Only those who privately know the inner history of the war realise the effect which the disease has had on thousands of our soldiers. The Chief Secretary is in possession of information with regard to cases which were brought back here. I find it almost hard to forgive those who had those cases brought back here to be cured. The patients should have been cured where they contracted the disease. The nature of the disease which they brought back provided medical men here with something new and more difficult to consider. The segregation of the men suffering from the disease has not been effective, because some of them have escaped from the camp; the result being that the seeds of the disease have been distributed through the com-

#### MISS ANNIE KENNEY.

Miss Annie Kenney returned to England last week by the "Osterley."

TELL US WHAT YOU WANT. We Supply any Furnishing Requirement Well.

CONSIDERATE, CONSCIOUS, ORIGINAL AND TASTEFUL. CONSULT OUR WILLING SERVICES.

Decorative Furnishings & Carpets, 589-595 COLLINS STREET W.

Established 38 years.

RENDERSON & SONS, Melbourne.

PLEASE DEAL WITH OUR ADVERTISERS, AND SO HELP OUR PAPER.