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AUSTRALIAN PEACE COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF REPORTS TO A MEETING AT NICHOLAS HALL,  
MELBOURNE, MONDAY, 12th SEPTEMBER, 1949, ATTENDED  
BY 112 REPRESENTATIVES OF 49 ORGANISATIONS.

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1. CHARACTER AND COMPOSITION OF AUSTRALIAN PEACE COUNCIL:

The Council was formed in Melbourne in July 1949. It is non-party and undenominational, and consists of about 70 representative citizens drawn from all States of the Commonwealth and from all walks of life; for example, Ministers of Religion, Trade Unionists, some of Australia's leading Writers, Scientists, Ex-servicemen, Housewives, Educationists, Members of Parliament, Sportsmen and Youth. It is not a delegate body based on other organisations nor is any mass membership proposed. Council is responsible only to its own 70 or so members, and regards its task as preparing the way for a Peace Congress at which a permanent organisation can be democratically set up (see below).

2. POLICY AND OBJECTS :

The policy and objects of the Australian Peace Council are clear and unambiguous. It is on this basis that we invite all to unite for Peace without distinction of politics or religion. The Council rests on this Manifesto and Statement of Objects :-

MANIFESTO

Four years after the tragedy of World War II, the peoples of the world are faced with the terrible danger of a new war.

Four years after the signing of the United Nations Charter, the world is divided into two rival blocs of nations; a disastrous armaments race is developing; science is made to serve the ends of war instead of advancing human happiness.

Through the organisation of political unions and military alliances, fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter are being violated, its basic assumption - THE WILL TO PEACE - is being replaced by the fatal "balance of power" concept.

War is still raging in various parts of the world, with acts of aggression, armed intervention in the internal affairs of nations, and the forcible suppression of national independence movements.

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Vic  
Peace  
Council  
Collected

The planned rupture of economic relations between groups of countries has already assumed the character of a war blockade. In Japan and Western Germany, our former enemies are reclaiming their weapons and being assessed for their possible military usefulness in World War III.

As we pass from the stage of cold war to open preparation for war, truth and reason are continually under assault from organised war propaganda, fostering hatred and fear. Our democratic liberties and institutions are being attacked and undermined in the drive to war.

We believe that the peoples of the world, without distinction of political opinion or religious belief, can and must unite in defence of peace; that this unity of the peoples is capable of imposing peace on the forces making for war.

We declare unequivocal support for the United Nations Charter and for the peaceful co-existence of different social systems. We accept the fact that capitalism and socialism exist as the two major social systems of our world, and we condemn all attempts to oppose social change with force.

We demand the limitation of armaments and the outlawing of atomic energy for war purposes under a system of international control.

We denounce all military alliances which violate the United Nations Charter and we reject the policy of opposing one bloc of States to another bloc of States.

We demand self-determination and national independence for all peoples as being essential conditions for freedom and peace.

We stand in defence of reason and the right of free enquiry against the propaganda for war which is poisoning public opinion and condemn those newspapers, books, magazines, films, persons and organisations which disseminate such propaganda.

We express our confidence that those who are working for a new world war can be confronted at every stage with a great popular force capable of defending peace.

#### OBJECTS

1. By all appropriate means to work for world peace and in particular -
  - (a) To mobilise public opinion in support of the United Nations Charter and against the idea that war is inevitable.
  - (b) To support the principle of the peaceful co-existence of different social systems and to oppose all military alliances and acts of aggression which violate the United Nations Charter and render ineffective the United Nations Organisation.
  - (c) To demand immediate limitation of armaments and the outlawing of atomic energy for war purposes.
2. By organising meetings, lectures and conferences and by the publication of books and pamphlets and by other appropriate means :-

- (a) To make known the facts concerning international relations, the causes of war and the problems and aims of peoples of other countries.
  - (b) To expose and counter all forms of war propaganda and all appeals to race hatred and prejudice.
  - (c) To advocate self-determination and national independence for all peoples.
3. To assist and help co-ordinate the activities of other persons and organisations in Australia with like aims, and to co-operate fully with peace movements in other countries.
  4. Recognising that the present concerted attacks on civil liberties are directly associated with the danger of a new world war, to collaborate with other bodies in defence of our democratic liberties and institutions.

### 3. PROGRAMME OF ACTION:

Believing that the question of peace or war is the central issue for all peoples today, the Australian Peace Council aims to promote a great popular Peace Movement throughout Australia, based on the above Manifesto and Statement of Objects. We do not propose merely to talk about Peace or to hope for it; we propose to work for Peace and fight for Peace. We offer a policy and a programme of action.

Our programme includes :-

- A. A PEACE JOURNAL -- for circulation among all kinds of organisations and among the people at large. Features of the Journal will be reports on all Peace Movements throughout the world; the presentation of essential facts concerning world events; the systematic exposure and condemnation of all kinds of war propaganda.
- B. PEACE PROPAGANDA -- Council will immediately organise throughout Australia public meetings, lectures, film screenings, radio programmes, newspaper articles and advertisements, and will distribute large quantities of pamphlets, posters and leaflets.

#### C. PEACE WEEK

We propose that PEACE WEEK should be observed throughout Australia, or at least in capital cities, from 23rd to 29th October. Into this week we aim to pack the maximum of peace propaganda and activity; for example :-

#### (1) Printed Material (for distribution in all States) -

- (a) Peace Pamphlet -- 16-page, 20,000 copies for sale at 3d.
- (b) General Propaganda Leaflet -- 250,000 copies.
- (c) Peace Ballot Papers -- 100,000 (or more)
- (d) "How to vote" leaflets -- 100,000 (or more)
- (e) Peace Posters -- 20,000
- (f) Peace Stickers -- 50,000
- (g) Comic Paper (2-sided broadsheet) -- 50,000