EDITED BY PHILLIP DEERY AND JULIE KIMBER

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The extended commemorations to mark the 100th anniversary of the Great War have commenced in earnest. Over the next four years people around the world will struggle to avoid the politicised public narratives of these remembrances. Nationalistic sentiment is no less palpable today than imperial sentiment was a century ago. Its opponents are still there too. Among the countless commemorative activities that will occur, there are innumerable counter narratives. Although they are compelling in their telling of oppositional stories, they have yet to capture the imagination of the dominant storytellers of our generation. Mainstream media, governments, and politicians of all persuasions, remain a captive of “soft jingoism”,¹ and the myth making of Geoffrey Serle’s “fire-eating generals”.² In such a view, war remains a lamentable, but necessary evil. The true costs of war are absorbed only partially.

Given the destabilisation of much of the globe, and the increasing militarisation of domestic politics by Western governments, it is unsurprising that a widespread movement for peace is momentarily lost. But history provides hope. By looking back we can see the ebb and flow of peace movements, and the lessons here are instructive. The present commemorative phase provides historians with a license to tell the stories that underscore the feeble fabric of nationalistic hubris – ones that seek to analyse and understand the human condition rather than simply commemorate it. Tales of national re-birth are
but one facet of war, complicated by a much richer, dirtier, and more nuanced reality. This reality challenges the necessity of war, and allows us to empathise with war’s victims, elucidate oppositional tactics, and provide explanations for the difficulties in sustaining a pacifist approach in the midst of war.

The chapters here deal with aspects of peace and anti-war, of memory, of forgetting, and of legacy. The majority – unsurprisingly, given the present historical moment – concentrate on the experience of the First World War. The shadows of that war are long, and the historiography they build on extensive. We open with a chapter by Douglas Newton, a scholar whose work has done much to challenge familiar assumptions. His story takes us to “London on the eve of war” and the attempt by the international women’s movement to avert the coming catastrophe.

Newton’s chapter highlights the “chance” event that brought together the International Woman Suffrage Alliance with British suffragettes, a combined force of organisations representing 26 countries around the world. These women, many of whom were voiceless at the ballot box, combined to make a passionate plea for international arbitration, “a last rally of peace forces and common sense”. Their demonstration in Kingsway Hall took place just hours before Britain’s declaration. What seems at first glance a futile effort to stop the war is, Newton argues, a much more significant act of defiance. It foreshadowed both a split in the women’s movement and also paved the way for the peace organisations that followed. Significantly, it also highlights that the standard line that the people of Britain “enthusiastically embraced the prospect of war” requires an alternate reading.

Carolyn Rasmussen’s chapter picks up on the theme of women working for peace. Drawing on her research into the lives of Doris Hordern and Maurice Blackburn, her work reveals the complicated interactions between women’s and peace movements in Australia. Hordern, “a willing acolyte” to Vida Goldstein, played a significant role in the Women’s Political Association (WPA) until the tensions within the movement became too strained. Prefiguring Hordern’s own distancing was the fraught relationship between the Association and Blackburn. Rebuffed by the hardening line of the WPA against men, Blackburn ultimately fell out with the organisation over his support for a citizen army (but not for overseas conscription). Rasmussen’s work highlights the national and international complications affecting those working for peace. In an echo of the experiences of people in all the countries shaped by the war, once it had been declared, a position based purely on “absolute
“pacifism” became increasingly difficult to sustain. How best to work for peace became a preoccupation with pragmatic strategy and, as Rasmussen shows, the larger question of a “negotiated settlement” to the war was overshadowed in Australia by the brutal conscription debates.

The efficacy of pragmatic strategy lies at the heart of Verity Burgmann’s chapter on socialists and syndicalists in the war. Seen by some as an insignificant rump, the extremist anti-war position run by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is presented here as a necessary element in bringing the anti-conscriptionist cause into the mainstream. While the socialists split over the question of a citizen army, and found themselves flummoxed by the disintegration of the Second International as European socialists scrambled to defend national interests, the IWW assumed the leadership of the “radical flank.” Denigrated by much of the mainstream press and Prime Minister Hughes as disloyal, they nonetheless succeeded in broadening the political spectrum of debate, and in so doing, as Burgmann convincingly argues, they allowed the anti-conscription cause to seem a “reasonable compromise position that could attract majority support.” Burgmann’s thesis, which in many ways answers the question that had animated (and split) so many peace organisations during this time, proposes that “moderate gains” are brought about not by pragmatic, “respectable”, strategy but “by militant and disrespectful activity” acting in tandem with a moderate force. The IWW, as Childe had earlier suggested, “prepared the field” on which the Labor Party would slowly advance.

The internal development of Labor moderate and socialist opposition to conscription in Victoria is the focus of Liam Byrne’s chapter. Using the two contrasting studies of John Curtin and James Scullin, Byrne explores the narrow defeat of calls for a general strike, and shows how the perennial question of strategy undermines what is otherwise a largely unified position among moderates and socialists to the question of conscription. The “historical symmetry” of the early and later lives of Curtin and Scullin (both editors of labour papers, both later Prime Ministers) provides an interesting vantage point to evaluate the competing agendas of these two factions of the Labor Party. Scullin’s moderate approach, shaped by a labourist ideology and unique conception of Australian nationalism sits in stark contrast with Curtin’s socialism. Yet with the threat of forced conscription the two joined the anti-conscriptionist forces providing powerful voices of opposition. Scullin’s editorship of Ballarat’s Evening Echo proved a strident and widely read antidote to the mainstream press.
The role of the *Evening Echo* on the conscription debates is the focus of a chapter by Anne Beggs-Sunter. It tells of the extensive influence of the paper, which far outstretched its geographical origins. Beggs-Sunter points out that Scullin managed to tread a path that neither questioned the war, nor undermined labour values, but which nonetheless successfully articulated a powerful argument against conscription. It did so by utilising the memory of Eureka and played on the fear of “cheap Asian labour” being used to cover the jobs of conscripted workers. Perhaps because of this approach, the *Echo* was read widely; it has been estimated that around 60,000 copies of the newspaper were circulated in Melbourne on a daily basis. As Beggs-Sunter argues, its contribution to the conscription debates in Victoria was “vital”, and it lays claim to being the “only daily newspaper in Victoria”, which fought against conscription.

The focus on the role of newspapers is continued in Rhys Cooper’s chapter on the treatment of conscientious objectors (COs) in Australia. His study confirms the unjust treatment of COs to which they were subjected by the press. Held in contradictory regard as both “weak” and “feminised” on the one hand, and as a “threat” to Australia on the other, this largely unknown group of men who objected to serving in war became an on-going object of derision. During the one month long period of forcible enlistment Cooper was able to analyse the voices of these men whose appearance before exemption courts was exhaustively reported by the newspapers. His conclusions demonstrate that in this time both newspapermen and many magistrates shared a common anger for the man who would reap the “benefits” but not the “burdens” of citizenship. Notwithstanding the occasional calls for sympathy by readers and clergy, the overwhelming dismissal of claims by conscientious objectors who did not want to fight leaves a bitter legacy.

Another group of people under suspicion of being less than ideal citizens were the Irish in Australia. Robert Bollard takes up L.L. Robson’s study, which pointed out that despite assumptions that many Irish Australians opposed the war, Catholics in general enlisted in rates that were statistically on par with the rest of Australia. In the context of Val Noone’s validation of McKernan’s thesis that radical Catholics led Archbishop Mannix into his anti-conscription stance, Bollard examines Catholic enlistment figures in several areas in an attempt to resolve the conflict. What he finds is a tentative correlation with McKernan’s observations that Catholic responses to the war had a class origin.

As with the Irish, the Great War placed the loyalty of Italians in Australia under the harsh glare of xenophobia. In November 1917, just prior to the
second conscription referendum, the Australian government commenced the round-up and deportation of allied Italian males of military age, who would be required to serve in the Italian Army. Karen Agutter’s illuminating chapter examines the responses of the labour movement to this development against the backdrop of its earlier antipathy towards the Italian immigrant, who – allegedly – diluted racial norms and undermined working conditions. Agutter finds the level of support for the Italians uneven and the range of motives complex and sometimes contradictory. For stanch anti-conscriptionist Labor politicians, trade union leaders and socialist organisations, selective conscription of Italians was a prelude, by stealth, to universal conscription and they actively campaigned on the Italians’ behalf. On the other hand, rank and file sympathy remained minimal; residual racism overrode anti-militarism. But, for a brief period, in that last, difficult year of the Great War, a previously marginalised and distrusted group of Australians were incorporated into the struggle against pro-war policies.

Phil Roberts’ chapter tells the story of the indefatigable efforts of one community to commemorate its citizens who served in the First World War. He focuses on the regional Victorian city of Ballarat, judged by Weston Bate as “the most Empire-conscious of towns”. Pro-Empire sentiments were demonstrated by enlistment figures, public pronouncements, and casualty rates. In contrast, a solid core of Irish Catholic and socialist opinion expressed opposition to war and conscription. In Ballarat, a majority “no” vote was recorded in both conscription referenda. However, the movement to plant memorial trees and construct a commemorative arch evoked widespread and unifying support, even from Jim Scullin’s *Evening Echo*. Roberts traces the pivotal role of the “Lucas Girls” – employees of the local Lucas clothing factory – in initiating, planting, fundraising and sustaining Ballarat’s landmark Avenue of Honour (the longest in the world) and its imposing Arch of Victory.

The next contribution moves forward in time and onto the national stage. Lachlan Clohesy examines the position of Australia’s Minister for External Affairs, Dr H.V Evatt, in the immediate post-World War II period. He argues that Evatt’s quest for peaceful international cooperation, a multilateral forum for the resolution of conflict, and his desire for rapprochement with the Soviet Union, were all consistent with his embrace of a liberal internationalist framework, more than a realist one, in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives. Clohesy maintains that Evatt’s thinking was profoundly influenced not by ideology but by his experience with the “great powers” during the war.
Accordingly, he envisaged a less reliant, more independent role for Australia in the postwar order until, Clohesy argues, 1948, when he accepted the realities of bi-polar Cold War conflict.

The early Cold War provides the backdrop for the next chapter. It focuses on those who eschewed polarities and became activists in the peace movement: left-wing Protestant clergymen and religious groups in Australia in the 1950s. In explaining this clerical opposition to war, Kim Thoday compellingly traces the theological reflections and ideological convictions of the “peace parsons”, which he locates within a long-standing tradition of Christian-Socialist dialogue. Such dialogue, Thoday contends, was a “living heritage”, which directly influenced sermons, teaching and activism. A leading peace activist, examined in this chapter, was Rev. Alf Dickie, perhaps the most prominent spokesperson of the Australian Peace Council. Thoday convincingly demonstrates that his, and others’, involvement in the peace movement was not due to communist manipulation, as frequently alleged, since the historical legacy of progressive and pacifist theology was too ingrained. Thoday grapples with the issue of Communist Party control and concludes that, notwithstanding significant covert influence, there was little overt control. Despite the Cold War equation of peace with communism, there existed space for a range of clerical groups with divergent motivations, ideologies and purposes to campaign against the seemingly imminent threat of war.

Religious-based opposition to war also underpins Bobbie Oliver’s exploration of the role of the small, independent newspaper, The Peacemaker, which reflected the liberal Christian views of, but was not beholden to, the Federal Pacifist Council. When it folded, in December 1971, it had been published for 32 years. Almost entirely overlooked in the historiography of opposition to the Vietnam war, The Peacemaker sought to influence public attitudes to the National Service Act; provide a forum for the views of conscientious objectors (both pacifists opposed to all wars and resistors opposed to the Vietnam war); and offer practical advice and support for conscientious objectors – some of whom used the paper as a conduit, an “unofficial postal service”, for communicating with other conscientious objectors on the run from the authorities. Oliver argues that The Peacemaker was an effective voice for peace and, especially, for bringing into focus the issue of non-compliance with the National Service Act.

Nick Irving’s chapter locates the two moratoriums against the Vietnam war, in May and September 1970, within a global context. In particular, he
demonstrates how the campaigns employed a transnational vocabulary of protest. This rhetoric of rebellion was borrowed by both the Marxist-influenced New Left and by the conservative mainstream press and politicians. By mid 1970, he argues, the language of the international counterculture had been integrated into the Australian political discourse. Most interestingly, Irving juxtaposes the ideas of Dr Jim Cairns, the chairman of the Vietnam Moratorium Committee, with those of the civil rights movement (especially Martin Luther King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”) and the American New Left (especially the Students for a Democratic Society’s “Port Huron Statement”). These two intellectual foundations, when combined with his commitment to democratic socialism, produced Cairns’ distinctive ideology: participatory democracy with diminished reliance on parliamentary processes, and a conscientious obligation to defy, or break, immoral laws through civil disobedience, which could disrupt a repressive social structure. Irving concludes that the moratorium campaigns can be better understood by incorporating the language of the global protest movement into our analysis.

The last two chapters both take the long view in their assessments of Anzac, memory and war. Carolyn Holbrook explores the “psychological turn” in the Australian historiography of the Great War, and argues that reading the war through the lens of trauma contains an ideological ambivalence: it has the potential to both subvert and reinforce the sentimentalisation of war memory. The chapter examines the history of psychological representations of the Great War, stretching back to the 1930s, when the current emphasis on grief and emotion and suffering was then viewed with disdain or suspicion. However, Holbrook contends, such literature functioned as a form of protest, undermining the dominant narrative of imperial nationalism and the valorised martial virtues of the Anzacs. This chapter also expands on the work of Twomey, critically assesses the controversial What’s Wrong with Anzac?, and enters the debate between Scates, and McKenna and Ward over interpretations of the experience of battlefield pilgrimage. Holbrook concludes that trauma culture has been successfully incorporated into the Anzac mythology, an absorption nourished and politicised by military dignitaries and political leaders.

Chris McConville’s broad-ranging, provocative essay is a fitting final chapter. Drawing on different forms of memorialisation – from Maryborough, Victoria, in 1926 to Linz, Austria, in 2009 – McConville argues that Anzac and the First World War should be remembered in a different way. He suggests that, because the “iron grasp” of Anzac remembrance involves a process of collective
memorialisation, the term “memorial collective” rather than “collective memory” is more apt. Appeals to memory, most legitimate when a connection with the dead was direct, as existed between the wars, must be delineated from the constructed sense of memory embodied in contemporary evocations of “Lest We Forget” and “The Spirit Lives”. In contrast to the misappropriation of memory and memorialism inherent in Australia’s Anzac Centenary, McConville proposes that we look to Linz, and how its local council confronted suppressed memories of Nazi occupation. A heritage site that was dissonant with, rather than integrated into, the landscape was developed. Minimalist, white-stencilled texts were placed at sites associated with dark events; they are impermanent suggesting a state of tension with issues unresolved. Memorials, therefore, should engage people with a debate about the past, not serve as institutional sacred sites for state-sanctioned narratives.

Fighting against war implies a kind of symbolic violence at odds with pacifism. Individuals and organisations who are inspired to protest against war for ideological reasons, or for more immediate causes, such as anti-conscription, bring with them a variety of political strategies. Some are examined in this book. Histories of anti-war or pacifist movements simmer with tensions between moderate and radical wings. Opposition to conscription is not necessarily a pacifist position: approaches differ and distinctions between partial and absolute pacifism blur. Nonetheless, without the actions of those fighting against war, or conscription – invariably difficult and vulnerable to repression – our society would be vastly poorer. State-sponsored commemorative activities, and state-sanctioned forms of remembrance, rarely acknowledge the efforts of those who have struggled to defend ordinary people against the disfiguring effects of pro-war policies. It’s time that changed.

This edited collection contains some of the papers presented at the 14th biennial Labour History Conference, Fighting Against War: Peace Activism in the Twentieth Century, held at the University of Melbourne, 11–13 February 2015. The conference sought to restore the role of labour movement activists to our historical memory. Their peace activism stretched across a broad range of fronts throughout twentieth century Australia. With around seventy papers delivered with this aim in mind, the conference joins with the many other activities designed to counter the official narrative of Australia at war. Each of the chapters here has undergone double blind refereeing, and we are indebted to our supportive community of scholars in the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History and beyond, who assisted with this task. We wish to
thank Margaret Walters and Susanne Provis for proofreading, Kira Brown at Sauce Design for the graphics on the cover, and Victor Gordon for the original artwork on which this design is based.


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Endnotes

1 Tony Harris, “As the Gallipoli centenary approaches: is the Anzac Legend bubble in danger of bursting?”, Watermelon, 9 May 2013 http://watermelontharris.blogspot.com.au/2013/05/as-gallipoli-centenary-approaches-is.html

2 This phrase and Serle’s now oft quoted “Anzackery” can be found in Geoffrey Serle, “Godzone: 6) Austerica Unlimited?”, *Meanjin Quarterly* 26.3 (1967): 244. It should be read in conjunction with Geoffrey Serle, ”The Digger Tradition and Australian Nationalism”, *Meanjin Quarterly* 24 no. 2 (1965): 148–158.


The spirit of internationalism ran high in the British women’s movement in July 1914. In part this followed from a chance event: the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) happened to be meeting in London in mid-July, bringing inspirational international feminists into contact with the British suffrage organisations. At a series of IWSA events, a group of mainly younger British women (Mary Sheepshanks, Maude Royden, Kathleen Courtney, Emily Leaf, Catherine Marshall and Helena Swanwick) made common cause with their visitors, such as the charismatic Hungarian feminist Rosika Schwimmer. Together these international and British feminists persuaded the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) to mount a public campaign against the threat of war in late July. They prepared a passionate and prescient manifesto, predicting the catastrophic impact of a long war of mechanised killing and urging international arbitration. Prodded into further action by Labor women’s organisations, the IWSA/NUWSS leadership also decided upon a large demonstration in London’s Kingsway Hall, to be held on Tuesday evening 4 August (as it happened, just hours before Britain declared war). This packed meeting was one for the ages: the international women’s movement denounced
any resort to war, on behalf of the powerless and largely voteless women of 26 nations, on the very brink of the ruinous conflict. This chapter, based on the private papers of many of the leading participants, considers the significance of the women’s movement’s peace activism on the eve of the Great War.

In July–August 1914, the world’s forces of human solidarity were beaten by the speed of the European crisis. The organisations run by socialist internationalists, Christian internationalists, and liberal internationalists were mostly overwhelmed – and quickly. By comparison, the international organisation of women stood firm to the last. The women’s leaders, who happened to be concentrated in London as peace was snuffed out, staged a last bold defiance of war – a protest demonstration on the evening of Tuesday 4 August, just as the British government declared war upon Germany. It was, as one Liberal journalist wrote, “a last rally of peace forces and common sense.”

This chapter aims to examine the peace activism of the international women’s movement in London on the eve of the war, and to assess its significance. It will argue that the women’s protests had far-reaching consequences. First, their defiance of war was deeply inspirational. For many of the women caught up in these events, the experience turned them into inextinguishable firebrands, whose faith in the internationalist project never dimmed. Second, the women did not merely protest. They sketched out a practical alternative to war – a negotiated peace underpinned by a new international order – anticipating the work of the various progressive internationalist pressure groups that were to emerge during the war in many countries. Third, tensions that developed among leading women in London in July–August 1914 prefigured the future split across the international movement – between those who wished merely to alleviate suffering and those who wished to confront war. The radical women who first cooperated together in London in 1914 would place a crusading internationalism at the very heart of the women’s movement during the war. Fourth, the evidence of women’s peace activism in London in 1914 casts doubt on the resilient myth that intervention in the European war was wildly popular among the people of Britain. A movement that was building against British intervention was simply overwhelmed by the speed of the crisis and the fait accompli of the government’s sudden declaration of war deep in the evening of Tuesday 4 August.
Internationalism in the Women’s Movement on the Eve of War

Internationalism had become an increasingly important ingredient in the ideology of the women’s movement over the decade before 1914. The International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), an initiative of German and American women in 1902, had organised successful conferences in various European capitals since its foundation in Berlin in 1904. Agitation on matters of peace and war had begun to be a feature of these and other women’s conferences. For example, the fifth meeting of the older International Council of Women (ICW), which had been held in Rome in May 1914, had passed a resolution in favour of arbitration treaties between nations, committing them to the peaceful settlement of disputes at the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague. The conference had also recognised the special vulnerability of women in regions of conflict. The assembled women called on the next Hague Peace Conference to consider measures to achieve the “international protection of women” and the resolution pointed bluntly to “the horrible violation of womanhood that attends all wars.”

In part the energetic reaction of the women’s movement in Britain to the danger of war in July 1914 arose from a coincidence: the leaders of the IWSA happened to be meeting in London that month under the presidency of the famous American suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt. The IWSA, which boasted affiliations from 26 countries, was without peer in promoting women’s suffrage across the world. On its Board were charismatic agitators. These included Annie Furuhjelm, a member of the Finnish parliament, Marguerite de Witt-Schlumberger from France, Anna Lindemann and Marie Stritt from Germany, Dr Aletta Jacobs from the Netherlands, and Anna Wicksell and Signe Bergman from Sweden. The British were strongly represented. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, the famous leader of the moderate “law-abiding” National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) held the post of First Vice President of the IWSA, Chrystal Macmillan, a path-breaking woman graduate in Science from Edinburgh, was First Recording Secretary, and Mary Sheepshanks was editor of the IWSA’s influential monthly journal, Jus Suffragii. The Headquarters of the IWSA was also in London. Naturally NUWSS and IWSA officers socialised regularly.

A group of mainly younger British women from both organisations gave the internationalist spirit a big push forward in July 1914. Some of these activists made internationalism and anti-militarism integral to their feminist
convictions. The group included women who were to play leading roles in the women’s movement and the peace movement far into the future, such as Mary Sheepshanks, Maude Royden, Kathleen Courtney, Catherine Marshall, and Helena Swanwick. Notably, some of these women had been educated in Germany or had German family connections, which led them to question British nationalist simplicities.\(^4\) In 1914 they held pivotal positions in the women’s organisations. Kathleen Courtney was Honorary Secretary of the NUWSS.\(^5\) Maude Royden held the post of editor of the NUWSS journal *Common Cause*.\(^6\) Catherine Marshall was Parliamentary Secretary of the NUWSS.\(^7\) Helena Swanwick, an older mentor to this group, had been editor of *Common Cause* before Royden.\(^8\) All were firm friends.

The IWSA “Board of Officers” that met in London on 9 July 1914 was chiefly concerned with planning for its next conference scheduled for Berlin in 1915.\(^9\) But the presence in London of so many suffragist celebrities was soon exploited for its propaganda value thanks to the imaginative efforts of Catherine Marshall of the NUWSS. She organised a series of “meet-and-greet” events to put pressure upon the Asquith Government, which had so spectacularly failed since 1906 to advance the cause of a more democratic suffrage. The major event was a reception on 14 July at the House of Commons, arranged by the Labour MP Arthur Henderson. Chapman Catt and Annie Furuhjelm spoke. “This was the first time in history that a Woman Member of Parliament has ever addressed members of the House of Commons in the British Parliament,” noted *Jus Suffragii*.\(^10\) It was a non-party event. Francis Acland conveyed greetings from Sir Edward Grey as a leading Liberal supporter, Robert Cecil spoke for the Conservative Party, and Ramsay MacDonald for the Labour Party. Lord Courtney, a Radical peer, also secured seats in the gallery of the House of Lords for some of the international leaders.\(^11\)

Among the foreign activists, Rosika Schwimmer, a Hungarian suffragist and peace worker, was especially effective. She had just been appointed Press Secretary of the IWSA.\(^12\) With an eye for publicity, Schwimmer secured a breakfast with Lloyd George at 11 Downing Street on Thursday 9 July to discuss pensions, but took the opportunity to warn him of the danger of war.\(^13\) During her stay in London she also contacted various British peace leaders. She met Norman Angell, the famous publicist promoting the economic futility of war, and members of the Interparliamentary Union. In late July she gained headlines when she attacked London’s prudish bill-posting firms when they objected to displaying a poster pointing out that child mortality was lowest in
nations that had women's suffrage – because the poster featured a naked child beside its mother.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{The IWSA's Manifesto for Peace, 31 July 1914}

The idea of linking the women's movement with British peace activists in response to the Balkan crisis arose in discussions between Schwimmer and three of her local companions, Sheepshanks, Marshall and Emily Leaf, press secretary of the NUWSS. During her visit to London, Schwimmer had been staying with Sheepshanks and Marshall, in shared lodgings at 1 Barton Street just behind Westminster Abbey. The four women decided it was vital that the IWSA should sponsor some high-profile action against the danger of war, even though Catt, the IWSA President, had just departed for America on Tuesday 28 July.\textsuperscript{15}

Prodded into action by these younger activists, and stirred too by news of the Austro-Hungarian declaration of war against Serbia, the British branch of the IWSA agreed to meet in London on Wednesday 29 July. At this meeting, Fawcett and Macmillan, fulfilling their roles as key office-holders in both the IWSA and the NUWSS, deliberated with Emily Hobhouse, Kathleen Courtney, Swanwick, Marshall and Sheepshanks. The women agreed to plans initially proposed by Schwimmer that the IWSA should put pressure on all the governments caught up in the crisis, in the first instance, by means of a manifesto.\textsuperscript{16}

This was soon drafted. It implored the various European governments to use the existing machinery of arbitration – created by the Second Hague Peace Congress in 1907 – to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Balkan crisis. Fawcett and Macmillan signed. As these two women spoke for the international body, the appeal was directed to all the European governments. The tone was emphatic and moving. “We, the women of the world,” it began. It did not neglect the fundamental object of the IWSA: women's suffrage. It railed against the stark injustice facing all women: while almost everywhere voteless and excluded from political power, women faced the imminent perils of war. It called upon the governments “to avert the threatened unparalleled disaster.” War, it prophesied, “will leave mankind the poorer, will set back civilisation, and will be a powerful check to the gradual amelioration in the condition of the masses of the people.” It concluded:
We women of twenty-six countries, having banded ourselves together in the International Women’s Suffrage Alliance with the object of obtaining the political means of sharing with men the power which shapes the fate of nations, appeal to you to leave untried no method of conciliation or arbitration for arranging international differences which may help to avert deluging half the civilised world in blood.¹⁷

The manifesto was momentous. Those speaking for the women of the world, half of humanity, were shouting their protest against war on the eve of the hideous event.

But how was this manifesto to be distributed? The actual delivery of copies of the manifesto on that day gave an early indication of how divisive this kind of peace activism could prove to be. The manifesto was ready for delivery to all the key foreign embassies in London, and to the Foreign Office itself, on Friday 31 July. Fawcett and Macmillan signed the documents on behalf of their absent President, Carrie Chapman Catt. To the disappointment of Macmillan and Schwimmer, it was the more cautious Fawcett, as the most senior IWSA office-bearer, who took command of proceedings. Overriding the wishes of her companions, Fawcett insisted that they would not seek interviews with ambassadors and ministers. Fawcett decreed that she would simply hand over the documents. A cab was hailed. The deputation then delivered copies of the manifesto to the various footmen at the great buildings the cab visited.¹⁸ This self-effacement on the part of Fawcett contrasted altogether with her companions’ passion for publicity.

The Planning of a Women’s Peace Demonstration

But the manifesto was only the beginning. The activists continued to press the case for peace, and urged that the women’s movement should link up with the wider movement seeking British neutrality. Women were already active in the planning of labour protests, an idea endorsed on Friday 31 July by the British National Committee in harmony with the Second International’s plans for protests across Europe. A main demonstration was scheduled for Trafalgar Square for the afternoon of Sunday 2 August. Radicals were cooperating too. Norman Angell’s Civil Union was providing a procession.¹⁹ Intriguingly, some of the younger activists in the NUWSS felt relief that Grey, the Foreign Secretary, whom they respected as a supporter of women’s suffrage, was in
command of Britain’s response to the crisis. The NUWSS journal *Common Cause* of Friday 31 July lavished praise upon Grey for “doing all that in him lies to preserve an honourable peace as between the Great Powers.”

But clearly not all women activists were content to leave it to Grey. On Friday 31 July a movement began, pressing for the NUWSS and IWSA to plan a special additional women’s protest meeting in favour of peace and neutrality. The very first suggestions reached the NUWSS on that day from “working women,” explained *Common Cause*. Marshall was approached by a number of the labour women’s organisations, including the Women’s Cooperative Guild, the National Federation of Women Workers, and the Women’s Labour League. These organisations simply stressed “the vast importance at this juncture of giving women a platform.” In this “present ghastly crisis,” they argued, it was “in accordance with the fundamental principle of Suffragism – that women have an equal right with men to speak and to be heard.”

During the Bank Holiday weekend of 1–2 August, cables from the Continent arrived at the office of the IWSA, from several of the affiliated suffragist organisations in Germany, Denmark, France and Italy. These urged the IWSA to make some more spectacular demonstration for peace. From within the NUWSS, Marshall and Sheepshanks implored the suffragist leaders to respond to these calls.

The NUWSS executive met in Great Smith Street on Monday 3 August, the day of Grey’s famous speech to the House of Commons, to consider the requests for action. Fawcett, again piloting both the IWSA and the NUWSS, decided to support the proposal for a rally. Acting with great haste, the NUWSS officials booked the new Kingsway Hall in Holborn for the evening of the very next day, Tuesday 4 August. The purpose, explained Royden in *Common Cause*, was to provide “a public platform in London upon which women of various societies could voice the women’s claim to be heard on questions of peace and war.” The NUWSS leaders had reacted to “an overwhelming majority of Suffragist opinion.” It would be “cowardly and impossible,” she wrote, for the women’s movement to “stand out” at this moment of crisis.

In these discussions at the NUWSS offices, Schwimmer in particular pressed for the widest possible representation at the rally. She urged that the NUWSS should invite both the “militant wing” of the women’s movement, the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), and some prominent anti-suffragists. This was rejected after some debate. However, Schwimmer did succeed in pressing for invitations to be sent to two famous British female peace activists, Olive
Schreiner and Emily Hobhouse. Both were notorious in some circles, owing to their denunciation of the Boer War. Clearly the organisers accepted the thrust of Schwimmer’s argument. The rally was to be for all women interested in peace. In their advertisements the organisers promoted a “wonderfully representative” list of speakers. As the *Common Cause* reported afterwards, it was to be “a considerable feat of organisation to fill the Kingsway Hall.” There were “only two days in which to do this, and one of these was Bank Holiday. It was triumphantly done.”

But was the rally directly designed to pressure the Asquith Government to maintain Britain’s neutrality? This was not specifically mentioned in the resolutions prepared for the rally. But it was obviously the motivation of some leading spirits calling the NUWSS executive together. Some of these women were in touch with those who had participated in Labour’s Trafalgar Square rally of Sunday 2 August, such as Marion Phillips, Margaret Bondfield, Charlotte Despard, and Mary Macarthur. They clearly favoured British neutrality. There were hints of this in the NUWSS minutes. These explained that the rally was proposed “with the object of strengthening the hands of those who were working to limit the area of the European War, and to provide a platform for which the Women’s Organisations could express their point of view.” But it was appreciated that too “political” a rally could be divisive. Sensitive to the perception that criticism of Britain’s own government might be seen as disloyalty in the face of war, the NUWSS executive decided that “nothing in the resolution involved support of any particular policy in relation to the war.” The NUWSS decided it would provide only two speakers, Fawcett and Swanwick, and that other speakers should come from the ranks of the IWSA and the labour movement. But the executive specified that it must be made clear that each speaker at the rally “spoke only for herself or the organisation which she represented” – and not necessarily for the NUWSS. Similarly, the executive decided that the meeting should be “advertised under the non-committal heading, ‘What War Means.’”

**The “What War Means” Demonstration, Kingsway Hall, Tuesday 4 August**

On Tuesday evening 4 August, the British politicians choosing war rushed to their final decision. A rump of the British Cabinet, just five of the nineteen ministers, meeting in the Cabinet Room at Number 10 Downing Street, made the decision for a declaration of war soon after 10.00 pm. Prime Minister
Asquith summoned a Privy Council, of just three men, to meet at Buckingham Palace, with King George V, just before 11.00 pm, to endorse documents indicative of a state of war. As peace was abandoned, only a few blocks away, in Holborn, the British and international women’s movement staged the very last mass protest meeting in London urging peace.  

The meeting began at the Kingsway Hall at 8.00 pm. This large modern hall, built in 1912, was then a relatively new venue. It could accommodate over 2,000 people. On the night it was “crowded to overflowing.” This was a startling achievement. With scarcely two days to plan the rally, the various bodies involved “had no time to reach their supporters, and they had therefore to rely on newspaper advertisements and handbills to make the meeting known.” Nonetheless, news of the rally had evoked a solid response.

As supporters poured into the Kingsway Hall, the spirit of internationalism projected by the women’s movement and its labour allies was immediately on display. The women standing on the platform advertised it, through the fortuitous presence of several members of the Board of the IWSA who were still in London. Four international speakers stood ready to participate, representing Hungarian, German, Finnish, and Swiss women. With them stood women from the labour movement. Mary Macarthur, a famous campaigner for labouring women (and the wife of Will Anderson, a Labour MP), represented the National Federation of Women Workers, Marion Phillips represented the Women’s Labour League, and Eleanor Barton represented the Women’s Cooperative Guild. Charlotte Despard, the flamboyant veteran campaigner for so many radical causes, represented the Women’s Freedom League. Another controversial suffragist on the platform was Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence. She and her husband Frederick had been active with the WSPU before being prosecuted by the government for conspiracy and imprisoned in 1912. Showing that the organisers had cast their net wide, Louise Creighton was also on the platform. The widow of the late Bishop of London, Creighton was a prominent moderate who had originally opposed women’s suffrage but was more recently linked to the National Union of Women Workers. Elizabeth Cadbury, a prominent Quaker, and head of the Peace Committee of the same union, stood with her. Her husband Henry was the Managing Director of the Radical newspaper *Daily News*, showing the still strong connections between the women’s movement and the Radical wing of the Liberal Party. The celebrated anti-war writer Olive Schreiner, who had only just returned from seeing Aletta Jacobs in Holland, took her place on the platform.
When the meeting opened, Millicent Garrett Fawcett stepped forward to preside. She pointed immediately to an awful irony. “Voteless women were not responsible for the complicated series of political events which had led up to the war,” she complained. But as her address unfolded, she adopted a fatalistic tone. She appeared to accept that war had become irresistible. She had hoped “four days ago,” she explained, that this gathering “might take the form of a demonstration in favour of European peace.” This hope, she implied, had passed away:

Whilst the child was alive I fasted and wept! But now the time for fasting and weeping had gone by. Europe was already at war, which Britain was to be involved in now. We must therefore concentrate every effort in meeting the calamity, and try to alleviate the sufferings which must ensue.\(^{34}\)

In this situation, she advised, women must bind themselves together “for the purpose of rendering the greatest possible aid to our country at this momentous epoch.” She expressed her sadness that, in the face of war, women would have “to put aside the highest and most precious of national and international aspirations and hopes.” This meek tone did not entirely swamp her address. There was “one ray of light,” she told the audience: ten days before only a few people were questioning war, but “millions now were asking, ‘Why should this insensate devilry of war be allowed to go on?’” The phrase “insensate devilry” prompted a burst of applause.\(^{35}\)

Fawcett’s speech, by turns pessimistic and defiant, foreshadowed the fractures that would soon split her NUWSS. Indeed, on the eve of the rally Fawcett had privately confessed to Swanwick that she had “very grave doubts” as to the wisdom of the gathering. Fawcett, a long-standing Liberal, was uncomfortably aware that in protesting for peace on the eve of a war she was risking the goodwill of the Liberal government.\(^{36}\)

Creighton then stepped forward to present the first resolution.\(^{37}\) This resolution borrowed many phrases from the IWSA manifesto of Friday. But there were some significant additions. The resolution opened by stressing how broad-based was the rally at the Kingsway Hall. The resolution was also updated, with a reference to the women’s response to the outbreak of actual fighting: “They deplore the abandonment of peaceful negotiations, the failure to settle the present international differences by conciliation or arbitration, and
the outbreak of war in Europe as an unparalleled disaster.” Then the resolution repeated the essential complaint of the original manifesto: that women were facing war as a result of “decisions which women have no direct power to shape.” The denunciation of industrialised killing was repeated from the manifesto. If war erupted, women would see not only “the horrors of slaughter,” but also “their countries impoverished, their homes broken up, their children and their friends dying of starvation and disease.” The warning was hammered home that war would “set back civilization” by paralysing social progress. A new direct call to the governments was added at the end of the resolution:

The women here assembled call upon the Governments of their several countries to support every effort made to restore peace, and urge all Governments not yet involved to work unceasingly towards a settlement, not by force, but by reason, that by their united efforts the war may be speedily brought to an end.\textsuperscript{38}

Presenting this resolution, Creighton reminded the audience of the spirit that had animated the ICW gathering in Rome just a few weeks before – common hopes, interests and aspirations, eclipsing narrow national divisions. At this moment, women should resist the war fever. She “appealed for the banishment of all bitterness of national feeling” and urged “united prayer” for peace.

The next speaker, Eleanor Barton, struck a much more rebellious tone. “The working people must refuse to have war,” she insisted. “No enmity exists between the work-people of England and the work-people of Germany.” To illustrate this, she related a poignant incident she had witnessed as her train set out from Sheffield to London on the previous day. A tearful family waved off an old sailor. Then two young Germans got in to the same carriage. Barton described the scene:

As the train passed out of the station one of the Germans, a young married man, stood up and put out his hand to the old man, and said, “By God, we are enemies, give me your hand – it is not my fault.” They shook hands, and the old salt replied, “It is hell, my lad. Why could not it have been settled by arbitration? I have traveled all over the world, have given thirty years service to the Navy in China and Japan, and have never made an enemy of a foreigner, but plenty of friends.”\textsuperscript{39}
Barton warmed to her subject. “Wars are made by diplomats, and financiers, and the Jingo press; but the people must resist – if necessary they must down tools. War must not be.” According to various reports, Barton’s speech “was given the great reception of the evening.” Her themes “were those which the audience shared and had come to hear.”

Two speakers then brought the subject back to female suffrage. Swanwick acknowledged that the NUWSS “stood for the vote only.” But she immediately rattled that cage. The NUWSS believed that in all things “force was no remedy.” Thus, “the great mass of women were on the side of peace.” Women could bring to international life, she argued, “that human note so fatally lacking” when men pursued diplomacy as if it were merely “a game of chess.” Women must not simply accept war: they had “a duty to think out what the war was about, how it ought to end, and what constructive policy to prepare to prevent its repetition.” In reacting to this deadly crisis, women must “so establish their claim to enfranchisement that their husbands, lovers, brothers, sons would no longer seek to deny it.”

Similarly, Mabel St Clair Stobart, representing the Women Writers’ Suffrage League, told the packed hall that never before had she realised “so deeply” the need for the female suffrage. This crisis showed that the voice of women was indispensable. A shameful double standard of morality prevailed in international affairs, she argued. Under this perverse morality, individuals condemned murder, but nations extolled it when it was carried out in vast numbers. Only when women were given a share of political power could they dismantle this “double standard of morals, international and personal.”

The international speakers followed. With their foreign names and accents, they gave the rally emotional punch. First Madame Gellrich of Germany stepped forward and she “received a great welcome from that crowded audience.” She spoke of her admiration for Britain, and of her hopes that women’s enfranchisement in both Britain and Germany would build peace. She finished on a defiant note: “And now there came this fatal war. The idea of war was in the air. Men – always so easily influenced – said, ‘There must be war.’ Let women tell them there must be no war.” Schwimmer, speaking for Hungary, gave a vivid picture of the economic dislocation and fear that war was already bringing to her homeland, including the fact that many women had “the horror of dishonour in their minds.” Trade was disrupted and shortages were beginning. The Hungarian Parliament had already closed, because the Speaker and many members “had gone into the firing-line” – a remark that
prompted ironic cheers from those already suspicious that Britain's politicians were not so keen on the warrior's life. “Women must use every effort in their power to stop this war,” Schwimmer pleaded. Then, women could look forward to “a human world instead of a man-made world, in which there would be no War Ministers but Peace Ministers. (Applause).”

Next Aino Malmberg, representing Finland, gave proceedings a political twist. First, she offered a dire premonition of the impact of war: “The old civilization will be destroyed,” she predicted, and she invited “women and workers” to build “a cleaner world.” Then, reminding the audience of the struggle for freedom in her Finnish homeland, Malmberg offered pointed remarks directly critical of Britain's Liberal government and its cultivation of connections with her nation’s oppressor, Russia – remarks bound to resonate with Radical Liberals long suspicious of Grey’s subservience to St. Petersburg:

The Jingo Press, which was forcing war upon us, for honour's sake, was ashamed to mention Russia as Britain's friend and ally. Britain was really being asked to fight to keep the Czar upon his throne and enable him to beat down the free people of her [Malmberg's] native land.43

Finally, Lucy Thoumaian, speaking for the women of Switzerland, mounted a fierce attack upon militarism. She challenged the social-Darwinist and pseudo-religious maxims underpinning combat. War was not “a dispensation from the Almighty,” nor was it “something like measles, that we cannot avoid, and so must accept with patience,” she argued. “It is not from God this war. It is a man made war, and it is for woman to unmake it.” She called upon women to be inspired by the classic tale of the Sabine women, to “exhaust every effort to attempt to save their menfolk from the horrors of war,” and even to “go on strike for peace.”44 With this echoing through the hall, the first resolution was passed to great applause.

**Relief of Distress or Defiance of War?**

It remained for the meeting to consider a second practical resolution. This urged women to focus their efforts upon the relief of distress arising from any war.45 But the British women labour activists who stepped forward on the platform to present this resolution fed the defiant mood. First, Mary
Macarthur railed against the fact that “the people had not been consulted at all in the crisis.” Real courage was required, she argued, to advocate peace. She heaped scorn on those pleading that war was needed to redeem Britain’s honour. Men who argued this way seemed ready to tolerate much dishonour in social conditions. “Was it to the honour of England that millions of women should be toiling for starvation wages and little children should be suffering?” Women must focus upon the daily grinding war at home, as she put it, “the war against poverty.” Next, Elizabeth Cadbury kept to a more moderate script, simply commending voluntary work. But the speech of Marion Phillips, the Australian-born labour activist, resumed the rabble-rousing. Phillips “ended on a note of hope that from the common privation and suffering would arise a real sisterhood, working for common needs, which no government and no wars could ever break again.” The second resolution was then put to the assembly and carried by acclamation.

As the meeting ended, Fawcett quickly formed a deputation. It took a copy of the resolutions around to No. 10 Downing Street, soon after 10.00 pm. An envelope containing the resolutions was posted through the prime minister’s door. This must have landed in the hall just as the clique of ministers gathered around the cabinet-room table decided that Asquith should summon the Privy Council to declare war.

The leaders of the women’s movement then dispersed. They encountered some high spirits in the streets of London. As Schwimmer and Macmillan walked through dense crowds along Whitehall, they saw cars, filled with men and women shouting. Possibly these were stragglers from the main nationalist demonstration in front of Buckingham Palace. For safety’s sake, Macmillan insisted that she would escort her Hungarian colleague all the way to her friends’ home. The two reached Barton Street at 2 a.m. and found Marshall still up. Schwimmer recorded that Marshall, whose family politics were strongly Liberal, was utterly baffled. That Grey, a suffragist, should instigate war was inexplicable to her. “I don’t understand how Sir Edward Grey could be a party to England’s alliance with Russia! There must be a mistake somewhere. How could he, of all our statesmen, enter the war?”

Of course, not all the leading women suffragists saw Britain’s descent into war this way. Fawcett in particular had felt uneasy at the radicalism on display at the Kingsway Hall. Indeed, on Thursday 6 August, at the first meeting of the NUWSS executive after the meeting, Fawcett observed that “she herself did not agree with the views put forward by two of the speakers.” Moreover,
she was intensely aware that some powerful people were aghast at what had happened.

Robert Cecil, the prominent Conservative frontbencher and, as it happened, a woman suffrage supporter, had sent a letter of protest immediately to Fawcett. The women had been “so unreasonable” in staging such a “peace” meeting, he complained, that his faith in the fitness of women to exercise the suffrage had been badly shaken. He comforted himself, he told Fawcett, with the hope “that in this matter the National Union do not represent the opinions of their fellow country women.”

Similarly, the press was divided. Liberal and Labour newspapers gave the rally friendly coverage. But *The Times*, in common with other Conservative newspapers, simply looked away. While *The Times* reported on the nationalist demonstrations in front of Buckingham Palace on the last night of peace in some detail, it completely ignored the events at the Kingsway Hall. Not one word.

**The Significance of the Kingsway Hall Meeting**

What was the significance of this burst of internationalist enthusiasm in the international women’s movement on the eve of war, and in particular of the women’s last rally for peace? Many books on the war simply ignore it, or speak dismissively of a rally that failed. It is implied that it was a mere exercise in sentimentalism, quite pointless in the face of the reality of German aggression. Such a rapid dismissal of the women’s effort entirely underestimates its significance. One senses in the writings of those who so dismiss it a male eagerness to dispose of the women as irrelevant to the big events.

Of course, it is easy to point to the obvious and note that the demonstration was too late to deflect Britain from the war. Even the women involved felt overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness as they left the Kingsway Hall. Margaret Bondfield, for example, an ILP activist who had spoken at the Trafalgar Square rally, noted in her diary that straight after leaving the women’s meeting she saw the “Guards on [their] way to Dover.” But to stress the “failure” of the protest is misguided.

What was its true significance? First, this was simply fabulous defiance. The meeting was one for the ages. Leading women had done something quite unprecedented. Affiliated to the IWSA in 1914 were some 12 million women. For these, the leaders of the movement had spoken up – boldly claiming to
Chapter 2 – Douglas Newton

SPEAK FOR THE WHOLE SISTERHOOD. IN A WORLD WHERE WOMEN’S LIVES WERE BLIGHTED BY SYSTEMATIC DENIAL OF STATUS AND RIGHTS, LEADING WOMEN HAD PRESUMED TO ADDRESS POWERFUL MEN – AND NOT ON AN ISSUE THAT WAS BY COMMON CONSENT A “WOMEN’S ISSUE.” THEY HAD SPOKEN UP TO DENOUNCE WAR – A WAR THEY CORRECTLY APPEHENDED WOULD BE PROTRACTED AND GHASTLY. FOR THE KEY WOMEN INVOLVED – SCHWIMMER, MARSHALL, MACMILLAN, ROYDEN, AND SWANWICK – THE SPIRIT BORN OF THIS DEFYANCE WAS IMPLACABLE. EVELYN SHARP, THE NEW EDITOR OF THE PETHICK-LAWRENCES’ JOURNAL, VOTES FOR WOMEN, SAW THAT THE SPIRIT BEHIND THE RALLY WAS “EVEN MORE WONDERFUL THAN THE OCCASION THAT HAD CALLED IT FORTH; MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANT.” SHE WROTE:

Never before had such disaster threatened the world; never before had the conscious, organised articulate women of all classes and parties and of several nations met to make, on behalf of womanhood and childhood and the home, a protest against the time-honoured methods of brutal force by which men – regardless of half the race – have seen fit to settle their national disputes. It was a protest, passionate, sane, and practical, of the civilised against the barbaric; of the spiritual against the material and of the mother who takes thought for the future happiness of her children against the destructiveness of a brief, insensate rage.53


Was the women’s insistence upon arbitration realistic in 1914? During the crisis, the Serbs had offered to take the dispute to The Hague. The Russians had suggested it also, only to flag it away once bilateral negotiations between
Vienna and St. Petersburg got under way. No European power had pursued the option of international arbitration seriously. Yet, on the very evening of the Kingsway Hall rally, President Wilson of the United States had indeed offered to sponsor mediation in an official cable to the monarchs of Germany, Austria, Russia, Britain, and to the President of France, pointing to his “duty” under the Hague Convention and informing them all that he would “welcome an opportunity to act in the interests of European peace.” All the powers quickly turned the offer aside. All wanted a military resolution. But even on 4 August, it can be argued, the war was entirely avoidable, had there been the political will to explore the alternative.

In the aftermath of 4 August, the women sought to build the public opinion that would create such a political will. They pointed the way to stronger international machinery to contain war in the future – proposals to be taken up, of course, by President Wilson and various propagandists for a “League of Nations.” The women, in promoting international arbitration, were lighting the path for the great progressive internationalist movement that sprang up during the war, directed by such leagues as the Union of Democratic Control and the League of Nations Society in Britain, the Bund Neues Vaterland in Germany, the Central Organisation for a Durable Peace based in Holland, and the League to Enforce Peace in the United States.

Third, the tensions that developed inside the women’s movement over peace agitation in July–August 1914 had important consequences. They foreshadowed the split that was coming in the British movement. Between February and April 1915, the conservative position – that women should focus simply on alleviating distress – so infuriated the younger women that half the executive of the NUWSS resigned. The indignant dissenters included Royden, Marshall, Courtney and Swanwick. For them, active campaigning for a negotiated peace was by far the nobler endeavour for all women. The split catapulted the more dynamic agitators into leading roles in such organisations as the Union of Democratic Control (Swanwick) and the No-Conscription Fellowship (Marshall). So too, from the ranks of the London agitators of 1914 came the women keen to promote still bolder initiatives: the International Congress of Women held at The Hague in April 1915, which set up the International Women’s Committee for Permanent Peace (Schwimmer, Pethick-Lawrence, Macmillan); the Women’s International League from October 1915 (Swanwick, Kathleen Courtney, Royden, Bondfield); and the experimental Neutral Conference for Continuous Mediation that met at Stockholm in 1916.
(Schwimmer). It was Schwimmer and her British friends, assisted especially by Dutch and American women, who kick-started efforts to give women a central role in the wider campaign for a negotiated peace during the war.\footnote{57}

Fourth, the evidence of the Kingsway Hall meeting undermines the war-makers’ self-serving fable that the mood of the British in August 1914 was perfectly exemplified by the well-to-do Londoners who gathered at Buckingham Palace to cheer the King on the last three nights of peace.\footnote{58} The spirit on display at the women’s meeting brings into question the legend manufactured in 1914 that the people of Britain had enthusiastically embraced the prospect of war.\footnote{59} The truth is that the crisis came so quickly upon the people of Britain that they scarcely had time to take stock of the situation before the declaration of war was tossed into their laps as a \textit{fait accompli}. Was it only a contemptible rump of opinion that preached neutrality during the crisis? The large Trafalgar Square rally on Sunday 2 August, the 17 speeches delivered in the House of Commons against intervention on Monday 3 August, and the steadfast opposition of the bulk of the Liberal and Labour press, even on the morning of 4 August, indicate a potential deep well of opposition to war.\footnote{60}

On the morning of the women’s meeting, Elizabeth Cadbury wandered through the major streets of London and saw no enthusiasm, only crowds of people “quietly and anxiously” waiting for news.\footnote{61} Similarly, Liberal journalists who remembered the “mafficking” at the time of the Boer War were struck by the absence of any such nationalist hysteria in August 1914.\footnote{62} Writing in the \textit{Common Cause} after the women’s meeting, Royden argued that the audience at the rally had made its preferences clear. She recalled that there were loud interjections of “Down tools!” at several points, as speakers touched on what women could do to prevent wars. “To many,” she concluded, “the tone of this meeting, gathered together in so haphazard a way, was a revelation of the force of anti-war feeling amongst women of the working class.” She explained that, so swiftly was the rally organised that “no one could anticipate with certainty what the spirit and tone of the meeting would be.”

But all doubt was soon dispelled. The meeting did not rely on the speakers to tell it what to think. Those hundreds of women had clearly come, with few exceptions, with the object only to protest with all the strength that was in them against war, and, above all, against the participation of Britain in a European war. The speakers who spoke of resignation and acceptance of the burden were coldly received.
All the enthusiasm and response of the meeting was for those who denounced the war, and called on the women of Europe, even at the eleventh hour, to fling themselves between the combatants.63

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12 Carrie Chapman Catt to Rosika Schwimmer, 25 July 1914, Schwimmer Papers, Box A38 (New York Public Library).
13 Schwimmer, Diary fragment, 9 July 1914, Schwimmer Papers, Box A38.
14 M. Talmadge to Schwimmer, 16 July 1914; printed invitation to attend an “At Home” at the home of Sir John and Lady Barlow to meet Norman Angell, 16 July 1914; circular from the Organising Committee of the Interparliamentary Union, 13 July 1914; cutting from Daily Chronicle, 29 July 1914; all in Schwimmer Papers, Box A38.
18 Rosika Schwimmer, Diary notes, 31 July 1914, “Peace Manifesto,” “Appeal to Queen Wilhelmina,” and “Appeal to the Governments of Europe,” in Schwimmer Papers, Box A38.
22 Wiltsher notes enquiries from Frida Perlen in Germany, Elna Munch in Denmark, Marguerite de Witt-Schlumberger in France, and Anita Dobelli-Zampetti in Italy, urging the IWSA to act. See Wiltsher, *Most Dangerous Women*, 20–21.
33 Aletta Jacobs to English Suffragists [Macmillan, Sheepshanks, Schwimmer], 16 August 1914, Schwimmer Papers, Box A40.
36 Swanwick, *I Have Been Young*, 240.


40 Barton’s speech is summarised in “Protest Against War,” *Jus Suffragii*, Vol. 8, No. 13, 1 September 1914.

41 Swanwick, *I Have Been Young*, 240.

42 Swanwick’s and Stobart’s speeches are summarised in “What War Means,” *Common Cause*, 7 August 1914.


44 The speeches of Gellrich, Schwimmer, Malmberg and Thoumaian are summarised in “Protest Against War,” in *Jus Suffragii*, Vol. 8, No. 13, 1 September 1914, and in the *Daily News*, 5 August 1914.

45 The full resolution is reproduced in *Common Cause*, 7 August 1914.


47 Minutes of the Executive Committee of the NUWSS, 6 August 1914, Marshall Papers, D MAR 3/37.


50 “London and the Coming of War,” *The Times*, 5 August 1914.

51 Margaret Bondfield, Diary, 4 August 1914, Bondfield Papers, Folder 12.2 (Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York State).

52 Jill Liddington, *The Road to Greenham Common: Feminism and Anti-Militarism in Britain since 1820* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989), 78.

53 Reprinted from *Votes for Women* in “Protest Against War”. Evelyn Sharp, the former assistant editor, became editor of *Votes for Women* on 1 August 1914; see Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage*, 29.


56 NUWSS, Minutes of the Executive Committee, 18 February, 4 and 18 March, and 15 April 1915, NUWSS Archives 2, NWS/A1/7 (Women’s Library, LSE).

57 See Schwimmer’s correspondence in August 1914 with British peace activists regarding her mission to encourage US diplomatic mediation, in Schwimmer Papers, Box A40. On the wider campaign, see David S. Patterson, *The Search for Negotiated Peace: Women's Activism and Citizen Diplomacy in World War I* (New York: Routledge, 2008).


60 See Newton, *The Darkest Days*, chs 16 and 22.

61 Elizabeth Cadbury Family Journal, 6 August 1914, Elizabeth Cadbury Papers, MSS 466/205/21 (Birmingham Central Library).


At 21 Doris Hordern was introduced to the Women’s Political Association (WPA) and her enthusiastic embrace of its activities soon led to an important role as joint campaign secretary in Vida Goldstein’s bid for the Senate in 1913. In the course of that campaign she fell in love with Maurice Blackburn, at that stage something of a pin-up boy with the WPA. Blackburn was in transition from the Victorian Socialist Party to the Labor Party, and his election as the State member for Essendon allowed Maurice and Doris to marry, but not before war had broken out in August 1914. By then Blackburn was already at odds with the WPA on the matter of a citizen defence force, and the WPA was changing. Exchanges on various matters, including venereal disease and equal pay, became heated and by March 1914 Blackburn no longer felt welcome. Doris agreed sadly about the growth of “sex-antagonism” in the WPA, but it was the outbreak of war that brought her into conflict with an organisation she had thought to be her spiritual home. She felt unable to support the purely pacifist stand taken by the WPA, but it was the manner of decision-making on this, and other matters, which finally drove her away. She would continue to further the broad goals of the WPA but in new associations and with new friends and activists, most notably the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.
The 21-year-old Doris Hordern was so nervous at her first meeting of the Women’s Political Association (WPA) in the winter of 1911 that she “couldn’t get a word out,” so she “sat down again,” but it was not long before she “took up the cudgels” and moved to the centre of activities. In October 1913, Maurice Blackburn reported to her:

> Your fame is noised abroad in the land. A rather malicious old lady who was at school with my mother asked my sister, ‘Whether you were not the girl who was nearly taken up by the police for selling Suffragette papers?’

Certainly she was. Later Maurice heard from an acquaintance in the WPA, Miss Kilkelly, how much Doris was admired. “She said you were the first to pluck up courage to sell papers in the street.” Of course it was the WPA founder, Vida Goldstein, who had been the first on the street in May 1912. Indeed the self-effacing Catherine Kilkelly was among the early group herself. It was scary. Only boys sold newspapers on the street in those days and it was approaching the coldest time of the year.

The second of four daughters born to a handsome, charming member of the Victorian branch of the Sydney retailing family who had mismanaged his considerable fortune, Doris lived in genteel poverty in a household managed by her liberal, tolerant mother. The WPA gave her an outlet for under-utilised energy, new friends and the frisson of engaging in activities regarded as revolutionary, if not downright wicked – for women at least. It also gave more shape and form to her musings. Among the most revealing of her new thinking, and the connection in her mind between women’s emancipation and war, is a short essay she titled, “The Hand That Rocks the Cradle.” One of the current theories put about to explain the contemporary woman’s “discontent, unrest and intolerable daring,” she contended, held that it was

> due to the loosening of her maternal bonds; – that whereas in olden times a woman would be tied to her house with the cares of a family of sixteen, now she has too much spare time with a family of only three or four, and too often less!
“Dare I suggest,” she continued,

that when a country can afford to do so – when a world can afford to do so – it must concentrate, endeavour to produce quality instead of quantity. When we are no longer hurling vast forces against each other in constant warfare we need not breed such large numbers – we need not seek physical force, but intellect.\(^5\)

The political sensibility and the style of argument emerging in this little manifesto would characterise her voice in the public sphere for the rest of her life. Doris was young, but eager to embrace the possibilities and challenges of progressive politics.

Vida Goldstein had spent 1911 in England as guest of the Women’s Social and Political Union where she formed deep connections with a number of leading militant Suffragette campaigners. She returned to Melbourne in March 1912 fired up for the cause, and in May announced that she would contest the House of Representatives seat of Kooyong at the next election, rather than try again for the Senate. This was the area where she had garnered the most votes in her previous campaigns and the Labor Party was not standing a candidate against the Liberal Party incumbent, Sir Robert Best. The decision to bring *The Woman Voter* out weekly and sell it on the streets was integral to her election strategy, as much as her wider goal of educating women in the effective use of their vote.\(^6\)

Doris was a willing acolyte and by August 1912 she was teamed up with her former teacher at Hessle Girls’ School, Selina Hooper, as Goldstein’s joint campaign secretary. Ahead was nine months of vigorous campaigning before the scheduled polling date of 31 May 1913. It would be a thorough political apprenticeship, for Goldstein was a seasoned and respected campaigner, surrounded by inspirational, professional speakers and organisers.\(^7\) Doris would experience the thrill of large public meetings – and the occasional disappointments of low turn outs, while learning the logistics of organising and maximising resources. She would also feel the slow, cold burn of entrenched opposition to women’s participation in public life. The novelty value of Goldstein’s activities had faded as she began to look more like a genuine threat to existing political incumbents and the daily press, if it reported on her campaign at all, became more hostile.\(^8\)
Doris swept her mother and sisters into the swirl and hubbub of life as a political activist. Just how much the family conversation turned to votes for women, the plight of the Suffragettes in England, the “Woman Question” and the like, is made delightfully clear in the tale of how Doris’ cat came to be called Pankhurst. “We have amongst us,” she wrote in *The Woman Voter* in December 1912,

a small boy, not yet five years old, who is fully conversant with ‘suffragette lore,’ and seems to have easily grasped the leading points of this great subject. A few days ago he informed us that ‘he thought of naming the kitten (aged three weeks) Pankhurst’ ... ‘Then we’ll have to send it to [UK Prime Minister] Mr Asquith,’ suggested somebody. ‘No we won’t!’ was the reply. ‘He might put it in the place where he ‘prisons’ ladies.’

Some days later, the child resumed the conversation:

‘Well, how’s Mr Asquith? ... Has he gone for a holiday yet?’
‘I don't know what he is doing,’ was the reply.
‘Well, when he goes away,’ continued the small Solomon, ‘why doesn’t somebody run in and get the vote while he’s off it?’

Doris’ father, Lebbeus Hordern, was less approving. Family lore has it that a mocking taunt from him sent Doris off to talk to “that woman in trousers” (Cecilia John) who lived down the road, and sign her up as member of the WPA. John had started a poultry farm at Deepdene not long after Hordern moved his own family there. By 1911 she was both a poultry expert and a successful teacher of singing and voice production. Talented, resourceful and interested in social questions, John rapidly assumed a powerful role in both the WPA and the life of Vida Goldstein – one with which Doris soon became rather uncomfortable.

Association with the WPA also led to a most congenial employment opportunity for a young woman with literary as well as political aspirations. Vida Goldstein’s sister, Elsie, and her husband, Henry Hyde Champion, a radical journalist from Britain, together managed the Book Lovers’ Library in Collins St, Melbourne. Launched in 1896, by 1912 the Library was something
of an institution – “The meeting place of Melbourne literati,” specialising in “drama, high class literature and ... radical works.” Goldstein’s other sister, Aileen, wished to travel overseas and Mrs Champion was looking for a replacement who could be trained as a sort of reader’s advisor. This work at the Library brought Doris into daily contact with the cross-currents of ideas circulating among Melbourne’s radical activists.11 Here she could escape the semi-rural fringes of Melbourne, the indignities of private governessing and the boredom of domestic duties and extend her own education while enjoying some financial independence. At lunchtime, she could pop around to the WPA tea rooms and take lunch among the most progressive political activists of her day. Before taking the train home in the evening she could join them at public lectures at venues like the Bijou and Gaiety Theatres, or attend meetings of the Melbourne Parliamentary Debating Club. It was at the latter that she first caught sight of Maurice Blackburn, aspiring socialist barrister and friend of Henry Hyde Champion.12

Maurice Blackburn wrote to Doris in September 1913, a few weeks into their engagement, in the following terms:

You are the centre of my universe; & mankind whom I love & hope to serve becomes in my mind a concrete individual personality – your own. The poet whom I love – Francis Adams – in dedicating to his love the Songs of the “Army of the Night” had these lines which I repeat to you.

You held me close pressed to your bosom,
Your heart on my heart beating strong,
In mine eyes put your life like a blossom,
Put your love in your lips like a song!
(Heart, Soul and all, sweet, never to sever
Love me for ever!) ...

I love you, Doris. I think I worship you. You embody for me all that is good. You are the moon which is drawing up the currents of my being. It is high tide with me now.13

Even the rapturous language of new love could not diminish the powerful intertwining of love and politics that lay at the heart of their romance. Doris
replied that he had awakened in her a “wealth of feeling” that she “could never have imagined possible.” She was “not cold, ... she never (was) quite that, but in time she might have become so.” Now it was “pure joy to be alive. Life has meaning.” She understood Maurice as her “twin soul.” So, of course, she too was reading the “sad and beautiful” Songs of Francis Adams. “Dearest Boy!,” she declared,

never, never dream for a moment of putting aside the work that lies before you & me & all of us. You could not do it – we both know that – you could not shut your eyes to suffering & oppression any more than I could. Poverty, work, trouble, sorrow – if they are to be our lot, oh man, I can face them with my hand in yours. I can face them smiling.\(^\text{14}\)

A deeply lonely Maurice had found a “safe haven,” a place where he could admit his anxieties, his sense of past failures and disappointments, as well as bestow his love and warmth.\(^\text{15}\) And most unexpectedly of all, he had found a comrade on his political journey, which had just taken a new turn. Doris too had been lonely, not for want of companionship, but in her belief that her deep yearning for greater purpose in her life was misunderstood by those around her.\(^\text{16}\) Progressive politics had brought them together, and politics would be their life work.

Like Doris, Maurice McCrae Blackburn had grown up in genteel poverty, though scholarships had eased his path through Melbourne Grammar. Born into two of Melbourne’s self-consciously pioneering elite families, the death of his bank manager father, leaving his mother with four children under six, gave him first-hand experience of the disabilities under which women suffered. His membership of the WPA sprung from a firm commitment to removing these disabilities, but his association with Henry Hyde Champion had brought him into its innermost circles. Through the Champions Blackburn was introduced to Doris in February 1913. Hard at work as Goldstein’s campaign secretary,\(^\text{17}\) Doris could hardly have failed to notice Maurice, since he was at the time something of a pin-up boy with the WPA, which had taken to referring to him as “our Mr Blackburn” soon after he joined in 1911,\(^\text{18}\) and began to provide notes on legal and political matters for the Woman Voter.\(^\text{19}\) At the time of his joining he had been, as an active member of the Melbourne University Advancement League, agitating for the removal of the disabilities still affecting women there, including the right to exclude them from lectures (though not
focusing on examinations) and their ineligibility to be members of the governing bodies of the University.  

Blackburn treated women as political equals. His exposition on various relevant issues was clear. “Mr Blackburn has the knack of putting things plainly and concisely, so that even what might seem a dull subject is made understandable and interesting,” noted The Woman Voter in August 1911. He was readily available to speak, and a financial contributor to the cause. His only disability was that he was a member of a political party. Under Goldstein’s leadership, the WPA took the view that party politics was an evil that would soon wither away, and the interests of women were best served by voting as women, not as members of a party. Nevertheless, on most issues, the WPA was in sympathy with the Labor Party.  

Blackburn regularly took meals at the WPA Tearooms at 229 Collins St, mingling with the large, enthusiastic team that was supporting Goldstein’s candidature for Kooyong, while he worked for the passage of the Commonwealth powers referenda. There he found himself daily in the company of Doris. “How many times did we travel together that election?,” he wondered some months after their engagement. As often as the flimsiest circumstance could provide – for Maurice was immediately captivated, and Doris had “recognised” her “Prince from the first.”  

Goldstein’s campaign was founded on the premise Blackburn had expounded to the Victorian Socialist Party (VSP) in the wake of the referendum defeat of 1911 – “the voter must be reached personally,” and if necessary in their homes. This was especially true of women, who were loath to attend public meetings. The virtual boycott of Goldstein’s campaign by the Age and Argus was met by publishing The Woman Voter weekly and a concerted effort to extend its circulation. It was a hectic and exhilarating few months. Early in the campaign Goldstein spent two or three days each week in the electorate, often attending several functions a day – in public halls and in private homes and in the open air. She spoke to full houses, often repeating her address at overflow meetings. The final rally was held at the Hawthorn Town Hall, which seated 1,200. An adjoining hall accommodated a further 600, and still others waited on a nearby vacant allotment. While Goldstein was addressing the overflow meeting, the Town Hall filled with a second audience and Goldstein delivered her address for the third time in an evening.  

Doris was at the heart of the organisation and management of over 150 campaign workers, arrangement of publicity, venues and so forth – and then
scrutineering on election day, another first for women. In this role she could observe the prejudice against women as candidates, and the strong preference for party representation, which contributed to Goldstein’s defeat – 11,540 votes as against 18,777 for Sir Robert Best. Best was an established politician, with a pleasant manner, a forceful debating style and the formidable support of the Australian Women’s National League. Above all, though, he appealed to the majority in the conservative electorate that judged the WPA platform as too close to that of the Labor Party. As Doris lamented at one stage, in reference to some family visiting, “I hate sitting up and being ‘good and proper.’ Besides I had to sit and listen to all sorts of talk about Mr Fisher and ‘That crowd’ – about the wicked people who want to ruin the country and put an end to even the freedom of private people.”

Goldstein remained committed to her non-party philosophy and judged the educative function of her efforts to be a major consolation. She was being a little over-optimistic, and, at the same time, perhaps unwittingly, leading the WPA down a path that was narrowing its support base. There was a growing element of “sex-antagonism” – a tendency to cast all men in the same bad light – in the WPA from 1912, and more vocal support for causes and groups, such as the militant Suffragettes in England, which were not generally popular in Victoria. It certainly became far less hospitable to men like Blackburn, and liberal, moderate feminists like Doris. It was unfortunate for both of them that this should be so, for it closed off a significant arena of political activity for Doris.

The first weakening of Doris’ attachment to the WPA came with the decision of Mrs Champion to discontinue her employment in the Book Lovers’ Library as soon as she became engaged. The excuse was that since it was unclear when Aileen Goldstein would return from overseas, Mrs Champion needed someone she could rely on “for two or three years.” Since Doris was not planning on marrying for at least eighteen months, she was deeply upset. Once again she would be confined to the outer suburbs, the indignities and frustrations of private tutoring, and the tedium of social visiting. And no longer could she casually meet with Maurice whenever they liked. “From Sunday evening till Saturday afternoon does seem such an endless time, doesn’t it dear?,” she wrote in early October. He could only agree. “The fact is, Doris,” he wrote, “that I cannot patiently bear being separated from you. Our past relations have spoiled me.” The only real beneficiary of Mrs Champion’s decision was posterity. The daily, sometimes twice-daily, letter-writing it forced upon
the newly engaged couple, offers a revealing and intimate glimpse into the lives and characters of them both, and some behind-the-scenes insight into developments in the WPA.

Maurice, for his part, had plenty of work to keep him occupied, work which was “in the long run for both of them,” but the absence of Doris also exposed him more fully to the hardening line in the WPA, once he began eating in their Tea Rooms alone. “In the early days of the Association Vida had been astutely aware of keeping everyone working in harmony,” including most Australian men, whom she characterised in August 1912 as “kindly and courteous and broad in their sympathies,” but “now she was more inclined to follow her own path.” By the time the Kooyong campaign was over, concerns among some members were beginning to multiply. Discomfort over issues of style and of policy was exacerbated by Goldstein’s deepening relationship with Cecilia John. Employed first as Goldstein’s secretary, then as business manager of The Woman Voter, her rapid rise aroused jealousy and misgivings. Doris was not alone in her view that it was not “wise to give so large a responsibility into the hands of one so new to the game as Miss John.”

Blackburn soon found that it was unwise to express contrary opinions in the WPA. “I was at the Club to lunch to-day,” he wrote in early October 1913 and “incurred the mild wrath of the Misses Brown & John.” The subject under discussion was Miss Goldstein’s letter to the editor objecting to an Argus report of the views of an Australian anti-suffragist at the recent Anglican Congress in England. Blackburn’s slightly flippant tone in suggesting that the woman was entitled to her opinion, ran up against Cecilia John’s uncompromising style. As a result, he told Doris, “Miss John wants to hold a class at Deepdene for the education of me ... I expect to have Miss Goldstein brought on me like a shower.” The right to hold, defend and challenge an opinion, even if it was at odds with the “party line” would prove central to Blackburn’s relations with any group, and it soon took on a more serious tone with the WPA.

Much has been written recently of the undeniably masculinist culture of politics that women found inhospitable. It was clearly evident even within bodies like the VSP, which was “unique among socialist groups for its attempts to integrate women into its organisation,” but it could work in reverse. It was an issue that Doris and Maurice reflected on from time to time as they consciously worked towards a relationship of equality, that also acknowledged difference – not just of gender, but of temperament, education and occasionally of beliefs. Privately, the romantic, sometimes wilful, Doris gave voice to the
Blackburn could be a little alarmed by her bounding physical exuberance – after all this was a young woman, nine years his junior, who enjoyed rowing a small boat over a mile in strong current against a headwind – and occasionally sought to temper a little her eager political idealism as well. At one point in their correspondence Doris apologised for scaring Maurice with her tales of “bad husbands.” “I know without you telling me that there are very many good men, as there are good women, in the world.” It is just that, she explains, “I do not trust men as I do most women, and I can’t help that yet.”

Maurice responded with the observation that “you know I don’t despise women. I neither despise them, nor do I worship them. I don’t understand them as well as I understand men. But I must be the friend to the sex that gave me my mother first & then you, my dear.” “No,” he replied to a teasing question from Doris, he did not “feel worried at being in bondage.” Nor did he wish for his old “freedom and complete independence.” He certainly did not want to be “lord and master ... not for one moment.” He wanted their marriage to be “the free union of a free man & a free woman.”

Doris had “taken a vast objection” to the arguments of a writer on Shakespeare’s women. The author, “a woman!,” had written that, “The intellect of woman bears the same relation to that of a man as her physical organisation – it is inferior in power & different in kind.” “Inferior in power!,” exclaims Doris indignantly.

Maurice, who had already declared that he believed “treating one another as intellectual comrades” would “do very much to ensure the permanence of our happiness,” readily agreed. Here we have the essence of the type of feminism to which both subscribed, expressed eloquently at the time by the American feminist, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in an article reprinted in The Woman Voter in May 1914. She drew a distinction between the Human Feminist and the Female Feminist.

The one holds that sex is a minor department of life; that the main lines of human development have nothing to do with sex, and that what women need most is the development of human characteristics. The other considers sex as paramount as underlying or covering all phases of life, and that what women need is an even fuller exercise, development and recognition of her sex. There are, of course, all shades and degrees of opinion on the subject, but these two are quite clearly distinct.
It was not that women were inferior, but that centuries of discrimination had done women a “grave injury” in denying them the opportunity to realise their full human potential, and take part fully in every area of society.

A desire to remove the civil and political disabilities under which women suffered had originally drawn Maurice into the WPA. Doris, a self-confessed idealist, was rapidly discovering that she too was a Human Feminist, while the WPA was moving further towards the Female Feminist position. Articles under headings like “Woman’s War” were more typical of the tone of *The Woman Voter* from mid-1913. Doris gradually became more uncomfortable in this milieu. For Maurice, the discomfort escalated rapidly.

Blackburn’s address to the Bluebird Club on “The Legal Position of Women” on 5 November 1913, the first of many, was fully in line with the WPA platform. However, his support for a citizen army had put him somewhat at odds with the prevailing sympathies in the Association. Several people had cancelled their subscription to *The Woman Voter* on this issue, but Cecilia John assured readers that expression of opinion on both sides of any question would be published. Blackburn tested this assurance later in the month when, in the context of declarations that “reticence on sex questions” was inhibiting work to halt the spread of venereal disease, he protested that there was insufficient authoritative evidence for the assertion in *The Woman Voter* that 80 per cent of men had venereal disease. It was a subject on which Blackburn was quite knowledgeable, given his close association at this time with A.W.T. Bottomley, author of *An Old Plague and a New Remedy: a plain talk about certain contagious diseases* (1911). His letter was paired with a heated rejoinder from John, emphatically rejecting his suggestion that the author of the original article was motivated by “sex-antagonism.”

Though the exchange was between John and Blackburn, the Champions were at pains to let Blackburn know that Miss Goldstein was personally insulted. Relations deteriorated even further in March 1914 when Blackburn asked Goldstein “why the WPA doesn’t agitate for a legal minimum wage for women whose trades are not covered by wages boards, securing to girls at least the same wages as boys of that age are getting.” “She just played with the suggestion,” he reported to Doris, because she “thinks it can be postponed until ‘Equal Pay for Equal Work’ is got.” Blackburn disagreed on the grounds that equal pay would “only worsen the conditions of girls in the unregulated occupations by turning [them] out of trades into which they have got by undercutting men & sending them to undercut the miserable competitive
wages paid to girls." Blackburn agreed wholeheartedly that equal pay was just, indeed he would advocate it strongly in his election speeches a few months later, but at this point in time “its main advantage” would accrue “to the aristocrats of female labour.” The potential problems for lower paid women were discounted, in Blackburn’s view, because more “sex antagonist capital” could be “made out of the refusal” to grant equal pay.

Blackburn was thoroughly fed up by the “sex-antagonism”: “Nothing seems worthy of attention except the delinquencies of men,” he complained. “The interests of children, the interests of wage-earners seem to many of them to count as nothing if they can’t be turned to use in the duel between men & women.” Why, he asked, “doesn’t the Association work for an improvement in the position of illegitimate children for instance?” He also felt hurt and misunderstood – especially by women such as Miss Moody who had known him such a long time. “Anyhow I get sick of the talk,” he told Doris, “it won’t help men or women to understand one another; the effect will be the reverse,” and so he had decided to stay away from the Club for a time. He was equally frustrated with “some of the stuff men talk about marriage – it is just as wild and wrong-headed as the stuff some women talk. Really there must be something wrong – but that something is beyond the power of parliaments,” he mused gloomily.

Doris agreed “about the growth of sex-antagonism in the Association,” but felt that even “if they are not doing exactly the best things possible, or going the right way about the things they do, at any rate they are doing as it seems best to them & they are in deadly earnest.” Her essentially optimistic disposition was clearly evident. “Nothing is wasted,” she declared,

No matter how much any society or group is opposed, no matter how little good they seem to do, that spirit of progress & reform which is life & breath to them must count for good in the long run. I think more of the will to do good & the effort than the actual work done. It may not seem to leave any mark but I am quite sure it does.

The same was true for individuals. Motives counted for more than actions. “Don’t be angry with the WPA or with its members,” she implored. Blackburn fundamentally agreed, and “liked to see and hear” her defending her “suffragette heroines.”
Much as I disagree with the means they use, I do admire those women who have had the courage themselves to do openly the things which they have taught others to do. Courage, however ill-directed, one must always admire. I shall at any rate; and I shall never wish to interfere with your beliefs.\textsuperscript{57}

Nevertheless he considered that he had “just as great a will to help women” as Doris or “any one.” Indeed one of the earliest things he did when elected to the Victorian Parliament as the member for Essendon in July 1914 was to prepare a successful amendment enabiling women to stand for municipal elections.\textsuperscript{58}

But he had “no sympathy with a sex war, nor with wanton injury to innocent non-partisans or conscientious opponents.” And so, though his anger was “very slowly roused” – usually several days after “the event” – when the insults behind his back continued to circulate, he did become “very indignant.” “I don’t think you can or will blame my annoyance,” he wrote to Doris.\textsuperscript{59} All the same, he rather missed the Club.\textsuperscript{60}

Blackburn’s biggest concern was the possible effect of this breach with the WPA on Doris’ associations, and, “knowing the attitude toward men in which you have been bred,” on her estimation of him. He worried that he had come between you & the things & persons of which you are fond. Through me you had to leave the Library, which leaving you felt very much at the time. Through me (so the WPA think) you have been diverted from working for them. Through me Miss Goldstein has become cold to you.\textsuperscript{61}

It was not Blackburn’s behaviour that was troubling Doris. She had her own view of developments in the WPA – and her place in them. She only briefly considered resuming the campaign secretary role for Goldstein's second tilt at Kooyong following the double dissolution in June 1914,\textsuperscript{62} before she became absorbed in Blackburn’s election campaign for the Legislative Assembly seat of Essendon.

It was the outbreak of World War I that brought the final estrangement from the WPA. Significantly, it was virtually the same issue that had forced Blackburn out of the VSP a year or so earlier. The anti-militarism that ran very deep in the WPA emerged as a test of belonging that led to a major fracture. No-one disputed that the WPA stood for International Peace and
Arbitration, but the exact meaning of that stance, once Great Britain was at war with Germany, was open to interpretation. At a heated meeting called on 26 October 1914 to decide whether the WPA should change this plank to opposition to compulsory military training and anti-militarism (ie. a strict pacifist position), Hilda Moody (Secretary) and Doris Kerr (Treasurer), moved an amendment to leave the plank unchanged for the present because, “at this juncture,” it might “tend to weaken England’s opportunities for obtaining volunteer military service in the present war.” The meeting was adjourned until 5 November, but in the meantime, Moody and Kerr both resigned from the executive.

Doris was extremely fired up. She learned from Miss Moody that the vote on the executive had been three to two against the “peace campaign,” but the “opinion of the majority was put aside.” “I think that such goings on are just disgraceful,” she wrote to Maurice on 2 November. “I don’t intend to leave the Association,” she continued, “but I would like to have a good old row in it with a view to putting things on a sounder basis.” She spent the next few days sorting out tactics. At the meeting, as predicted by Maurice, Miss Moody’s amendment that the resolution be held over until a general meeting, while the current meeting resolved the relationship of the executive to the Association, was ruled out of order. Likewise, Doris’s follow-up amendment that the matter be put to a general meeting. The resolution to change the platform was then passed 22 to eight. Members who could not attend this meeting were offered a “postal vote.” This proved inconclusive – 41 to 33, with six “no” votes disallowed for being late. The more pragmatic members of the organisation had been outmanoeuvred and much goodwill squandered. It was not so much that Doris left the WPA, as the WPA left her. She was not so very out of sympathy with the new interpretation of the plank, as her later activities would demonstrate, or with the WPA in itself, just with the current methods and style of its leadership. In a matter of weeks she would be the wife of a Labor member of the Victorian parliament. The WPA had brought them together. Together they would continue to further the goals of the WPA, but in new associations and with new friends and activists.

One of those associations was the Free Religious Fellowship, led by the renegade Unitarian Minister Fred Sinclaire, of which Maurice was a foundation member. Doris especially enjoyed her introduction into the literary milieu that gathered around Sinclaire and she slipped easily into this group that included a high proportion of young married couples, all of
them disillusioned with the established churches – especially their failure to address poverty and unemployment – and aspirations to change the world for the better and rid it of war. In August 1914 there were 64 members of the Fellowship in Melbourne and 12 in other parts of the world. The War would scatter them further, both geographically and in sympathies. Attitudes to the war strained the Fellowship, but not to the point of schism. Some, like Dr Woollard, enlisted almost immediately, while the pacifist Sinclaire had been opposing “boy conscription” as a member of the Australian Freedom League since 1912.

By February 1915 four members of the Fellowship had enlisted. The “question as to what should be the attitude of professing Christians towards war” was inevitably “brought up,” and while “a majority of members seemed to support the doctrine of non-resistance,” unlike the intransigent mood in the WPA, a motion on the subject was “gradually modified” until it read simply, “the present war is not a complete expression of the relations between nations, and the Fellowship therefore pledges itself to strengthen the forces which are making for better relations between nations.” Passionate discussion continued for “days and weeks,” but the Fellowship remained an inclusive haven for idealistic dissenters of many shades – people who, like Sinclaire, “measured the success of an undertaking partly by the opposition it has to overcome.” Maurice and Doris were both comfortable in a body whose leader could declare, “We have not sailed with the stream,” for they had both stepped out of the stream into which they were born, and would hold to their own convictions, even if they were not in full accord with their friends and associates, let alone the general current of community opinion.

Nevertheless, the newly married Doris was a little stranded politically. When she applied to join the Essendon Branch of the Political Labor Council in February 1915, her application was briefly deferred because she was a member of the WPA. The WPA was proscribed simply as a body which also contested elections, and following her “row” with the dominant group in the WPA the previous November, Doris was fairly out of sympathy with them. Nevertheless she resented being required to resign and to some extent submerge her political identity under that of her husband. She would never be very comfortable in the essentially masculine, working class world of the Labor Party, but almost immediately she found a new focus for her personal political energies.
The Sisterhood of International Peace was formed in March 1915 under the auspices of Dr Charles Strong, breakaway Presbyterian Minister and founder of the Australian Church. An active opponent of the Boer War, Strong had founded the Melbourne Peace Society in 1905, agitated strongly against “boy conscription,” and recently attended a peace conference in England in 1914. Strong believed that women “should exercise great influence” in the matter of warfare and that they would do this best in a “society of their own, managed in their own way.” A few weeks later on 28 April 1915 an international congress of women from Europe, America, “enemy” and neutral countries was held in the Hague, Netherlands, and the Sisterhood immediately established international connections by affiliating with this body which in 1919 became the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The aims of the Sisterhood were to

promote mutual knowledge of each other by the women of different nations, goodwill and friendship, to study the causes – economic and moral – of war; and by every means in their power to bring the humanising influence of women to bear on the abolition of war, and the substitution of international justice and arbitration for irrational methods of violence.

The first president was Lucy Paling, who unlike Doris did not completely cut her ties with the WPA. Doris had little difficulty encouraging her mother and sisters to join her in the Sisterhood. Mrs Paling also joined the Free Religious Fellowship, as did Blackburn’s mother and sister.

The formation of the militant pacifist Women’s Peace Army by the WPA in July 1915 only served to consolidate Doris’s estrangement from her former political associates. The Women’s Peace Army courted confrontation. Doris was happier in an organisation the tone of which was explained by its long-time secretary, Eleanor Moore, in these terms:

In wartime ... when the public is excited and revengeful and Government censorship is severe, the way a thing is said matters as much as the context of the saying. Sometimes it matters more. When public opinion is inflamed there are ways of seeking to influence it. One is to be provocative, taking the risk of reprisal in hope of gaining
converts on the recoil. The other is called educational. It studies to avoid the particular phrase which will irritate listeners, and tries rather to draw then into discussion, based on propositions with which, at the outset, all will agree.\textsuperscript{77}

Apart from the Sisterhood, Doris was also in most congenial company in the Free Religious Fellowship, which contained so many peace activists, that when Moore came to write the history of the peace movement, she counted it as a peace group in its own right.\textsuperscript{78} Indeed Frederick Sinclaire would join with Charles Strong and a small number of other clergymen in one of the few distinctly religious anti-war statements of the period to declare in 1917 that there was, “No more amazing or incongruous spectacle than that of Ministers of the Prince of Peace advocating, often with intemperate zeal, the subordination of the rights of the individual conscience to alleged military necessity.”\textsuperscript{79}

Back in September 1914, Sinclaire had taken the Fellowship into the newly formed Australian Peace Alliance (APA) where he would play a significant executive role. Quickly drawing in the Quaker-inspired Australian Freedom League and the VSP, the APA then entered into fruitful alliance with religious pacifists, international socialists, members of non-conformist protestant sects, some women's groups (including the Sisterhood and the Women's Peace Army) and trade unions.\textsuperscript{80} Essentially a co-ordinating body focussed on persuading the public that the war was not entirely the result of German self-aggrandisement and therefore a negotiated settlement would be a better guarantee of both future peace and civil liberties at home,\textsuperscript{81} by the end of 1918, 54 bodies throughout Australia had affiliated.

Doris and Maurice welcomed their first child into the world on 27 October 1915. A second son was born in early January 1918. Absorbing as she found motherhood, the happiness of new life also generated a deep empathy with mothers whose sons faced the possibility of death every day in faraway places. For Doris, the experience of motherhood, as with many progressive women, heightened rather than eased their need to engage in anti-war work. Child-bearing and child-rearing gave them an arsenal of arguments against war. Peace work was at least as important as child-rearing, and Doris was right in the maelstrom from the moment Maurice declared that he would not support the recruiting campaign in July 1915, while the young men in her own and the Blackburn extended families enlisted enthusiastically.
Moments of intense emotion, especially when the personal and the political intersected, called up the poet in Doris – no more powerfully that in a poem drafted on learning of the death of her favourite cousin, Frederick Matthews, on 8 November 1916, only four months after the death of two of his brothers, Arthur and Henry, on the same day in the Battle of the Somme. On 16 July, Maurice’s cousin, Geoff McCrae, had died in the disastrous battle of Fromelles. “There is blood on the earth! Weep! Weep! ...” her pen gouged into the paper. Then the first initial scream of words was crossed out to make way for more controlled eloquence:

Oh, woman awake!
Rise up from your slumbers and turn you!
The world is ablaze
And the frenzied flames fanned up to burn you.
They are taking your sons!
Has the heat overpowered you?
Or is it the flames that enchant like the red eyes of serpents?

The world is ablaze
With hatred and slaughter and carnage!
There’s blood on the earth
There are rivers dyed red with the outrage!
There is blood on the sea
And the mountains are frowning:

Oh see! It’s your heart’s blood that ran in the veins of your children!
Oh, woman awake!
Rise up from you slumbers and hold them
The blood is your own
It’s the life that you gave to your children.82

Uncharacteristically, this apocalyptic vision remained in draft form. Called forth by a sudden flare of emotion, perhaps it was too painful to revisit. It was all entangled with her coincidental request to her uncle George Matthews (father of Arthur, Henry and Frederick) for a loan so that the Blackburns might purchase the house in Florence St, Essendon that they had rented since
their marriage, the escalation of opposition to the War Precautions Act and the imminent fight to resist the introduction of conscription for overseas service. Perhaps it was transmuted into the less visceral, more political poem, “Peace Talk,” published by Sinclaire in *Fellowship* in February 1917:

And dare we talk of peace when wars are raging?
When rivers run with blood in Honour’s cause?
(‘Honour’, they told me!)
When men forge chains upon themselves for freedom?
And children starve, and stricken women groan?
Dare we talk peace? They say these wars are righteous.
Righteous!
Then all the world of reason is o’erthrown!
Dare we talk peace?83

Unfortunately, the escalating conscription campaign, for the time being at least, undermined the campaign for a negotiated settlement – since most of the opponents of conscription went to great lengths to demonstrate that they were no less patriotic than its advocates.84

Doris played her part in the anti-conscription battles and stood by her husband in the vitriolic campaign that saw him lose the seat of Essendon to the “Labor Rat,” Tommy Ryan. Nevertheless, it was her activities in the Sisterhood of Peace that best suited her aspirations to accord women a greater role in public life, with the express purpose of bringing an end to all wars – wars which wasted human and material resources and undermined the freedoms they were supposed to defend.

The WPA did not long survive the war and while Doris remained a member of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, for some years she mainly occupied herself with her three children and her other great interest, education – especially of infants. By the later 1920s though – with a little more time on her hands and the acute awareness of international developments she shared with Maurice – she would once again “take up the cudgels” for peace. President of WILPF from 1928 to 1930, it was only the imminent birth of a fourth child that drew her out of the fray for a time, before she re-emerged as an important leader in the International Peace Campaign from 1937. This role led to her resignation from the Labor Party, a body with which she had never been “in love,” but it also involved stepping away from WILPF. Convinced
that fascism represented an even greater evil than war, once again she rejected absolute pacifism, which had become the dominant position of WILPF under Eleanor Moore, only returning to active engagement with that body after the death of Moore and the loss of her seat in federal parliament in 1949. She remained president until 1966, but apart from an extensive tour of Europe, the UK and attendance at the Peking Peace Conference in 1952, her energies were increasingly focussed on work to advance the cause of indigenous Australians. Her passion for that work, kindled in widowhood, is another story.

Running parallel with, and occasionally overrun by her work as a Professional historian, Carolyn Rasmussen has maintained her engagement with the history of labour and peace movements, beginning with a masters thesis on the Coburg branch of the ALP and a PhD on opposition to war and fascism in the interwar period. A common thread through all this work has been the story of Doris Hordern and Maurice Blackburn. With the aid of an Australia Council grant and Roger Coates Research Grant she has recently made significant progress on a joint biography of this important political couple.

Endnotes

1 The author gratefully acknowledges the wealth of family stories, archival preservation and previous research undertaken by Louisa Hamilton (nee Blackburn) and Dr Sue Blackburn generously shared with her over the past 37 years. She also wishes to acknowledge the support of the State Library of Victoria, the Australia Council Literature Board and a Roger Coates Labour History Research Grant for the joint biography of Maurice and Doris Blackburn which is the larger project from which this chapter is drawn.

2 As told to a reporter, Sun, 5 November 1946.

3 Maurice Blackburn (MB) to Doris Hordern (DH), 10 October 1913, Maurice and Doris Blackburn Papers, State Library of Victoria, MS 11749, Boxes 734.

4 MB to DH, 3 August 1914.


7 Ibid., 123–4.

8 Woman Voter, 11 December 1912.

9 Louisa Hamilton, interviews with the author.

12 DH to MB, 4 March 1914.
13 MB to DH, 12 September 1913.
14 DH to MB, 16 September 1913.
15 MB to DH, 30 September 1913. See also DH to MB, 8 October 1913.
16 DH to MB, 1 October 1913.
17 DH to MB, 6 October 1913.
18 See, for example, The Woman Voter, 6 October 1911, 3 & 1 May 1911.
20 See for example, The Woman Voter, 6 October 1911, 3.
21 The Woman Voter, 25 August 1911.
22 MB to DH, 17 November 1913.
23 DH to MB, 13 August 1913.
25 In March the WPA passed a resolution against this boycott, The Woman Voter, 10 March 1913.
26 The Woman Voter, 3 June 1913.
28 DH to MB, 18 March 1914.
30 MB to DH, 9 April 1914.
31 DH to MB, 6 October 1913,
32 MB to DH, 7 October 1913.
33 Interview with Goldstein, Herald (Melbourne), 6 August 1912.
34 Bomford, Vida Goldstein, 135.
35 Some insight into this can be found in Blackburn’s letters to Doris of 10 October & 6 November 1913, 18 & 25 June 1914.
36 DH to MB, undated, c 16 December 1913.
37 This was a letter to the Argus by Edward Miller referring to the opinion of his niece Mrs Wentworth Stanley. Miss Goldstein replied, suggesting this woman was “unknown in Australia.”
39 MB to DH, 6 October 1913.
41 DH to her mother (no date, early 1911). In possession of the author.
42 DH to MB, 1 December 1913.
43 MB to DH, 5 December 1913.
44 MB to DH, 10 November 1913.
45 DH to MB, 4 December 1913.
46 MB to DH, 21 October 1913.
47 MB to DH, 5 December 1913.
49 *The Woman Voter*, 2 December 1913.
50 *The Woman Voter*, 9 December 1913. Most of the material appearing in the *Woman Voter* on this subject was reprinted from overseas sources, Nicholls, “Women's Political Association,” 9–13; Bomford, *Vida Goldstein*, 131–3.
51 *The Woman Voter*, 16 December 1913.
52 Age, 10 July 1914.
53 MB to DH, 12 March 1914.
54 *Ibid*.
55 MB to DH, 25 March 1914.
56 DH to MB, 13 March 1914.
57 MB to DH, 5 May 1914.
58 MB to DH, 15 October 1914.
59 MB to DH, 2 April 1914.
60 MB to DH, 25 March 1914.
61 MB to DH, 9 April 1914.
62 Note MB to DH, 18 March 1914.
63 *The Woman Voter*, 10 November 1914.
64 DH to MB, 2 November 1914.
65 Note: DH to MB 4 November 1914.
66 MB to DH, 6 November 1914.
69 *Fellowship*, no. 4 November 1914.


71 *Fellowship*, 4 November 1914.

72 Minutes, Essendon Branch Political Labor Council, 15 February 1915. Consulted while in the possession of Mr Sam Merrifield.


77 Moore, *The Quest for Peace*, 28.


81 Manifesto of the APA published on 4 October 1914, reprinted in the *Socialist*, 30 October 1914.

82 Copy in possession of the author.

83 *Fellowship*, no. 7, February 1917.

Before and during the Great War, syndicalists and socialists dominated the anti-militarist movement that opposed Australian pre-war preparedness and involvement in the war. By campaigning against any involvement in war, syndicalists and socialists acted as a radical flank that helped create political space for the more moderate movement against conscription. Especially significant in anti-war campaigning was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The explicit and developed basis of IWW internationalism, inherent in the principles and tactics of revolutionary industrial unionism, enabled it to grow in size and influence at this time when capitalism was revealed at its worst. Socialists were also a significant force, especially in mobilising against “boy conscription” from 1911. However, at the outbreak of war the socialists were compromised and embarrassed by European socialist parties voting for war credits, which raised further the profile of the IWW, untainted by the Second International’s disgrace. With Australian socialists disoriented, it was the IWW that spearheaded anti-war agitation and it did so from the moment hostilities commenced. Its anti-war activity won it supporters amongst workers inclined to be critical of the senseless slaughter and angered by inequalities of sacrifice on the home front. This chapter
analyses the balance of left-wing forces within the anti-militarist movement of the Great War period and its prelude, and how this uncompromising anti-militarism encouraged the fragmentation of the labour movement into a left/anti-conscription majority and right/pro-conscription minority.

One of the first parents convicted for failing to register his son for military training, in March 1912, was Australian Socialist Party (ASP) leader Harry Holland. He was fined £10 for refusing to allow his son to be made a “trained murderer,” in the words of the “Open Letter to the Conscript Boys of Australia” he wrote with fellow-ASP leader W.R. Winspear.¹ The ASP also published Holland’s pamphlet, The Crime of Conscription, which advocated:

Let those who own Australia fight for Australia ... THE SOCIALISTS COUNSEL ALL WORKING CLASS BOYS TO REFUSE DRILL ... We, the Revolutionary Socialists, shall propagate the idea of the general strike to block you and the class whose tool you are from marching armed forces against the workers of this or any other country ... we Socialists are no patriots!²

When the guns of August sounded, Tom Barker of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the “Wobblies,” gave Australian workers similar advice:

LET THOSE WHO OWN AUSTRALIA DO THE FIGHTING. Put the wealthiest in the front ranks; the middle class next; follow these with politicians, lawyers, sky pilots and judges. Answer the declaration of war with the call for a GENERAL STRIKE ... Don’t be fooled by jingoism: The workers have no quarrel with Austria, Germany or Japan. The workers in those countries are as ruthlessly robbed and exploited as the workers of Australia.³

By 1914, it was these syndicalists of the Chicago-line IWW in the forefront of anti-militarist campaigning, but in the years immediately prior to the war, socialists led the charge against “boy conscription.” That said, the socialists’ position was informed by the ideas of the Detroit-line IWW Clubs founded in Australia from 1907 and the Chicago IWW from 1911. Socialists had previously outclassed the Labor Party’s racism and nationalism, but from the IWW of both varieties they imbibed instead the principles of
working-class internationalism that brought them enthusiastically to anti-militarist campaigning.⁴

John Barrett’s history of “boy conscription” describes Holland as “a difficult man” who “alienated more moderate men” by embracing IWW ideas.⁵ Barrett quotes Holland’s pamphlet against Labor’s 1910 Defence Act that used IWW phraseology:

The one and only justification that could exist for working-class military organisation in Australia would be to shoot the Capitalists of Australia if they should rebel against the workers on the day the workers decide to TAKE AND HOLD the land and machinery of production stolen from the workers.⁶

In a similar vein, contemporary activist May Brodney insists the IWW was “more of an embarrassment than a help to the Anti-Conscriptionists” because it campaigned against war in general rather than concentrating on conscription.⁷ Of course it embarrassed the moderates of the movement: to disconcert was its decisive role. By taking the extremist war-against-war position, annoying to many anti-conscriptionists, the anti-militarist socialists and syndicalists acted as a radical flank that helped the anti-conscription movement emerge as the moderate and reasonable compromise position that could attract majority support.

Political scientists have developed the concept of the “radical flank effect” to explain the phenomenon whereby extremism brings reforms more effectively than those less extreme are able to achieve alone.⁸ The American civil rights movement is presented as an example. Rosa Parks’ refusal to move from the whites-only section of an Alabama bus and similar rebellious actions by many other brave African Americans were crucial in achieving part of Martin Luther King’s dream. In response to the astounding challenge posed by its radical flank, the civil rights movement mainstream was buttressed financially and politically by institutions of government and civil society; and significant policy reforms were enacted.⁹ Before this radical flank concept was formulated, I likewise concluded from the empirical facts about Australian social movements from the 1960s to the early 1990s that:

Their limited, but not insignificant, attainments have been won largely through the extremist postures and activities and the making
of extravagant political claims. It appears that the assumption of ultra-radical political positions affects the spectrum of political debate, shifting it to a point where less radical interpretations of the same viewpoint seem reasonable. By carving out political space for themselves, the more defiant within any movement manoeuvre the less defiant into an advantageous political position. Moderate gains are accordingly achieved, not so much by moderate and respectable means, but by militant and disrespectful activity.\textsuperscript{10}

Moderates often claim as solely their own victories that are assisted hugely by those they deride for being excessive and embarrassing. So it was with the victory against conscription in the referenda on 28 October 1916 and 20 December 1917. This outcome was achieved not just by the “pure-and-simple anti-conscriptionists” as they were called but also by syndicalists and socialists who opposed militarism outright and engaged in confronting behaviour to wage war against war. This argument in no way denies or even downplays the integrity and vitality of the anti-conscription movement during a distinctive and unique historical moment; no other country in the world asked its citizens whether they should be compelled to fight in the Great War.\textsuperscript{11} Crucial to the radical flank hypothesis is the existence of a less extreme movement that has strength on its own terms. This is certainly true of the anti-conscription movement with its rich panoply of groups such as the Women’s Peace Army, the No Conscription Fellowship, the Australian Council of Trade Unions Anti-Conscription Alliance, Irish Australian organisations, and more besides. Their contribution in persuading Australians to oppose conscription was immense, but their cause was aided greatly by a more extreme movement that drew the wrath of reactionaries and whose very existence positioned the anti-conscriptionist argument as the middle ground. To this extent disputes between the extremists and the moderates were as helpful in defeating conscription as their very real collaboration. The healthy and productive tension between the anti-militarists and mere anti-conscriptionists is manifest in the grandstanding of both camps about their roles in defeating conscription.

Rather, the anti-conscription victory was secured by the radical flank effect of anti-militarism acting in creative conflict with and cooperation within the anti-conscription movement. The dynamics of this interaction may be denied discursively by historians when discussing those who formed the radical flank, as in Barrett’s dismissive description of Harry Holland. Robin Archer’s
comparative perspective on Australian labour’s response to the Great War states: “In Australia, opposition, such as it was, was almost entirely limited to small sectarian socialist parties, a handful of Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) activists, and pacifist organisations.” Why is anti-militarist internationalism sectarian? Why is “a handful” an appropriate way to describe an organisation of 55,000 followers in a population one-fifth of that today, and which the mainstream media reported upon regularly? Less pejorative phraseology is used to describe the moderate flank, whose success in stopping conscription was the result of “the precocious strength of the Australian labour movement’s political organisation.” This study of the anti-militarist contribution to the less far-reaching anti-conscription goal hopes to treat it respectfully. It relies on analysis of the arguments and actions of those who campaigned; and on testimony about effect and impact in contemporary published commentary and in unpublished material given to me by surviving participants and their recollections recorded in interviews conducted with them decades ago. This evidence points to the importance of being extreme in order to achieve more modest aims.

**Prelude**

In 1911 the IWW Club produced a long statement on “Militarism in Australia” in which it despaired that the Australian working class would never learn to think internationally, “that to-day there are only two nations in the world – the working class nation, one despite race, creed, or color; and the capitalist nation, one in greed of gain, lust of exploitation, and unity of purpose to keep the working nation in subjection.” The Club argued that the true safeguard against capitalist aggression lay in fraternal class relations with fellow wage slaves everywhere who would disregard the lies of those who sought to blind workers with prejudice:

> Don’t fight your fellow workers of other lands … We have no country, for we own no country … The world is our country, and the world’s workers, without distinction of creed, or race, or color, are our fellow workers, and fellow citizens … We must be Internationalists, for Capitalism is international too.¹⁴

For the same reason the IWW Club denounced craft unionism, it rejected all forms of divisiveness:
Lay aside national prejudices, crush race hatred beneath your heel, join in true comradeship with the workers of all lands into One Great Union, for, in the words of Karl Marx: ‘You have nothing to lose but your chains (economic poverty and servitude), and a World to Gain.’ Agitate! Educate! Organise!\(^{15}\)

For the Chicago IWW too an industrial International would necessarily evoke a new internationalist spirit in the working class.\(^{16}\) The overcoming of racial and national prejudice was to be both a method and an aim of the new order: “we shall stop war, and shall put by racial hatred and prejudice for the International Solidarity of Labor. We shall in the future society be all workers, working for the common good, and war shall be relegated to the dark ages of barbarism.”\(^{17}\)

The two major socialist constellations in Australia before and during the Great War, which adopted these internationalist precepts from the IWW, were the ASP and the Socialist Labour Party (SLP). The ASP had developed around the energetic Sydney-based International Socialists, but its largest section numerically was the Victorian Socialist Party (VSP), which produced *The Socialist*. However, the official ASP newspaper was the *International Socialist*, edited by Holland. The influence of the ASP and SLP was effected primarily through workplace organisation, stump oratory and weekly newspapers read by labour movement activists and others sympathetic to working-class politics. Even more popular was the Chicago IWW newspaper *Direct Action* founded in January 1914.

The *International Socialist* argued that the “moon-madness known as patriotism”\(^{18}\) had been practically unknown 30 years previously and colonists would have laughed at military conscription and an independent navy. Then local manufacturing began to develop; the subsequent growth of capital and wealth fostered the contemptible spirit of patriotism, with the possessing class demanding naval and military defence for the preservation of their property.\(^{19}\) The Labor Party was “bolstering up Capitalism with a compulsory military training scheme.”\(^{20}\) The ASP Brisbane branch’s manifesto declared of the Labor Party:

The solidarity of the working class is ruthlessly sacrificed to the cultivation of an ‘Australian national sentiment’ … The Labor Party is no longer a working class party; it is the party of the rising Australian
manufacturers ... we call upon the Australian working class to organise both on the political and industrial field.\textsuperscript{21}

The ASP recommended the IWW strategy of organising all workers industrially, whatever their race, colour, creed, sex or calling. “As the capitalist robs all of them, so they must fight as one in ending robbery at the source of production.”\textsuperscript{22} So the \textit{International Socialist} urged Australian boys to resist militarism and join the movement that united the working class of the world against the capitalist class: “the capitalists of every nation are our direct antagonists.”\textsuperscript{23}

The ASP supported the Second International’s resolution for a general strike in the event of imminent war, “and through the threat of industrial war force the capitalists to refrain from military war.” This editorial quoted from the Australian IWW manifesto against war:

the army of soldiers, though it were millions strong, is helpless unless the working class in farm, field, and factory, remains at work ... By organising the I.W.W. Union in Australia, and affiliating internationally with the working class in other countries, we shall knit together a mighty force which will enable us to achieve emancipation from capitalism.\textsuperscript{24}

The anti-nationalist trajectory of the ASP prompted the VSP formally to withdraw about June 1912.\textsuperscript{25} “It leaves political action to the Labor Party, and endeavours to strengthen the Socialist tendencies of that Party.”\textsuperscript{26} The ASP stated the VSP had seceded just before it would have been expelled for soliciting advertisements from the Department of Defence.\textsuperscript{27}

The left of the VSP formed the Melbourne branch of the ASP, a split clearly caused by VSP prevarication over militarism, racism and nationalism. The ASP derided the VSP’s neutral stance on compulsory military training and even support for the Defence Act from sections of the VSP.\textsuperscript{28} It rejected VSP overtures for reunion in 1913, stating its lack of opposition to Labor’s militarism discredited the socialist movement.\textsuperscript{29}

The Western Australian Socialist Party (WASP) likewise split about September 1912, the “militant section” forming a Perth branch of the ASP.\textsuperscript{30} The rift was over fundamental politics, the Perth ASP critical of the WASP because: “They appear to believe that a Citizen Army has nothing to do with militarism.
They support the Labour Party’s Conscription Act, which is more drastic and despotic than the German Act. Bluntly, we say they are a barrier to the progress of scientific socialism.”

The ASP grew significantly from 1912, establishing branches not just in Melbourne and Perth, but also in Brisbane, Adelaide, Broken Hill, Hobart, Lithgow, Ipswich, Rockhampton, Woonona, Port Pirie and Mt Larcom – and additional branches in suburban Sydney, in Leichhardt-Annandale, Balmain, Newtown and Auburn; and suburban Melbourne, in Hawthorn. Its report to the International Socialist Congress that would have been held in Vienna in 1914, had war not broken out, implored the Second International to refuse the ALP’s application for membership, because the ALP denied the international character of the labour movement and increased the likelihood of war by support for the White Australia Policy.

Equally hostile to militarism, nationalism and racism was the SLP, which was consolidating its footholds in Sydney, Waterloo, West Wallsend, Cobar and Cessnock. The SLP were followers of Daniel De Leon, leader of the Detroit IWW that placed equal emphasis on industrial unionism and socialist party organising. Although the non-political Chicago IWW became the dominant IWW brand in Australia after its establishment in Adelaide in 1911 and especially from 1914 onwards, IWW ideas were first brought to Australia by the SLP when it launched IWW Clubs from 1907 onwards. The SLP weekly newspaper The People emphasised that the enemy was at home, not abroad. National prejudices and racial hatreds were “fostered by the ruling class and its emissaries” to keep workers of each nation “ready at command to fly at and tear one another’s throats with the ferocity of wild beasts.” The hope of the workers of the world lay in the consolidated organisations of the workers of the world; the socialist movement must of necessity be international; to refuse to co-operate with all other workers was “to commit economic suicide, to encourage militarism and conscription, murder, and rapine.” The workers of every country had economic interests in common – to rid themselves of the chains of wage-slavery; and “when the light of class consciousness illuminates the mind darkened with racial and national prejudices the latter will be quickly dispelled.”

Like the ASP, the SLP elaborated upon the connection between the promotion of racism and the ruling class interest in defence – and the Labor Party’s regrettable role in the process. “In defence of its infamous act of introducing child-conscription into Australia,” the ALP painted a lurid picture of a Brown Australia “to get the working class of Australia shackled to Conscription and militarism.” Labor governments legislated to imprison strikers and boys who
objected to compulsory militarism. The anti-conscription resolution of the 1912 SLP Conference declared “The workers of the world, being a wage-slave class with economic interests in common, have no quarrel with each other” and urged workers to organise upon the basis of the IWW “for the complete overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a universal republic.” In arguing against his expulsion from the Sydney Labour Council, SLPer Ernie Judd insisted workers should create international sentiment among themselves and any party that aimed to build up a national sentiment was going against the best interests of workers.

**War, What For?**

Holland’s biographer argues that, after 1914, anti-militarism became an avenue for the attempt of militant socialists to solve their constant problem – the establishment of contact between vanguard and working class. “In anti-militarism, militant socialists could put forward their creed at its best, capitalism at its worst.” As manifestation of the most unacceptable face of capitalism, the war offered growth prospects to all radical movements, but it was the IWW that flourished. Although the ASP and SLP maintained their anti-militarist positions, they were on the defensive, damned by default by association with the Second International, which disintegrated when most of its affiliated parties supported their respective national war efforts.

*Direct Action* was scathing about its performance: the potential solidarity of the European working classes and their ability to prevent the war by organising a general strike had been thwarted by the major socialist parties. The politicians had betrayed the class they claimed to represent by acting as bell-wethers in amassing working-class fodder for the guns of the ruling class. The failure of the International to avert war gave the IWW valuable ammunition to argue that parliamentary socialism was a flawed strategy, that the attempt “to transform the capitalist State into an instrument of working-class deliverance” was “a hopeless task.” The socialist parties of Europe, placing their faith in a collection of ballot papers rather than industrial organisation, was a “howling farce” that had failed the workers and plunged the world into the present holocaust: “the State principle in Socialism had to lead the Socialist parties to the defence of the national state.”

The ASP and SLP subsequently endorsed much of this critique, but a sad example of the “tyranny of distance” was that they remained confident in the
“war against war” credentials of the Second International long after it had collapsed. Although workers and socialist party activists did indeed mobilise in their thousands to oppose the war, socialist deputies in Germany, Austria and France voted for war credits, effectively putting an end to the Second International. Weeks later the ASP was still convinced European socialists were organising a general strike to hamper warmongers and exposing financiers for their villainy in causing war, comrades Liebknecht and Luxemburg had been assassinated by German military authorities, European Socialists were enlisting only under compulsion. As late as mid-September it expressed its confidence that “against war and militarism the Socialist party throughout the world is as solid as a rock.” When the truth was acknowledged, the ASP was morose.

In Europe we have lately seen millions of so-called Socialists swept off their feet by emotionalism. From preaching the solidarity of international labor they have gone to the other extreme of Imperialism and nationalism, and have responded to the cry of ‘to arms’ with as much enthusiasm as the most rabid of racial and national bigots.

It commented that alleged socialists who voted war for credits were not socialists any more than were Fisher, Pearce, Hughes, and their followers, though nominally representative of the working class. “The working man has no country,’ said the authors of the Communist Manifesto, but the Socialists of Europe have been indulging in a lot of revisionism lately.

The SLP had likewise been confident that the Second International was mobilising to prevent war. After it discovered this was not the case it criticised socialist deputies who had voted for war credits for displaying attitudes that would ensure the world was beset with racial hatred, national prejudices, and bloody wars. In an editorial entitled “Why Didn’t the Socialists Stop the War?” The People concluded it was because the Second International was not organised along industrial unionist lines, so there was insufficiently effective organisation to be able to enforce the General Strike. The SLP and IWW Club advocated Political and Industrial Unity of action to win Peace, Progress, and Freedom for the working class of all races. “Militarism must be combatted by intelligent organisation and resistance without violence.”

With the ASP and SLP disoriented by the Second International’s collapse and the VSP excusing it by embracing national integrity as a vital principle,
the IWW easily assumed leadership of the anti-militarist movement. It was well equipped to do so. The explicit and developed basis of IWW anti-nationalism, inherent in the principles and tactics of revolutionary industrial unionism, enabled it to use this favourable moment to grow in size and influence, and it seized the opportunity from the outset.

On 7 August, the Saturday night following the outbreak of war, IWW anti-war speakers in Bathurst Street were heckled by “patriotic interrupters” and much argument ensued. The following day, the IWW organised an anti-war demonstration in the Domain at which its orators denounced the war under an IWW banner bearing the motto “WAR! WHAT FOR?” On 10 August 1914, underneath a gruesome depiction of war, the front page of *Direct Action* answered that question.

For the workers and their dependents: death, starvation, poverty and untold misery. For the capitalist class: gold, stained with the blood of millions, riotous luxury, banquets of jubilation over the graves of their dupes and slaves. War is hell! Send the capitalists to hell and war is impossible.

In an “Open Letter to the Workmen of Australia,” this issue warned workers they had nothing to gain through war; the only people who did were the leading financiers of the world, who had engineered the war to further their own interests and were busily persuading workers to die for this cause. “Hangers-on of the system, the whole host of rulers and statesmen, pillars of church and state, politicians of every hue, are all endeavouring to infest the workers with the microbe of patriotism, in the name of which half the crimes of history have been committed.”

The following Sunday, the IWW Domain meeting drew an exceptional crowd, “ringing cheers” were given against the war, and 800 copies of *Direct Action* sold. Detective Nicholas Moore visited IWW headquarters and asked J.B. King for an undertaking that the Wobblies would stop criticising the war; no such promise could be extracted. Instead, *Direct Action* implored: “Workers, you have nothing to gain by volunteering to fight the battles of your masters. Dismiss from your minds, all geographical boundaries; tear down once and for all those rags of flags that have long helped to keep the workers of the world divided.” Workers of all nations had interests in common, so they should organise together to fight the war promoters. “Workers of the World:
Unite: You have no country to defend. You have a common enemy to fight! ... you have nothing to lose and a world to gain.” Especially if workers joined the One Big Union.\(^{58}\)

Socialists and syndicalists criticised workers who boycotted “enemy aliens.”\(^{59}\) IWW commentary was blunt, insulting in fact, because the boss must smile when he witnessed workers snarling at each other like wild beasts and realised how successfully press, parson and politician had chloroformed the minds of his slaves. “Now then, you boneheads, rub the rust off your thinking apparatus and ask yourselves a few questions, and don’t always depend upon the boss and his hirelings to think for you.” It advised the “Mr Blocks” not to let honeyed words from the boss lead them away from their class, insisting that it was a thousand times better to be a traitor to your country than a traitor to your class.\(^{60}\) The ASP soon adopted Wobbly vernacular in its denunciation of the burning of the Broken Hill German Club, to avenge the deaths caused by two Turks firing on a train: “When the boneheads are in the majority they are apt to adopt prehistoric methods when displaying their patriotism.”\(^{61}\)

The IWW also used its distinctively pejorative terminology to describe workers who enlisted, the “mugs” and “patriotic boneheads” who allowed their opinions to be manufactured for them by priests, parsons, politicians, newspapers, schools, and so on: “droves of gulled workers … willing to don the uniform of slavery and wholesale murder, and … rush to the aid of a master class to slaughter their foreign class-brothers.”\(^{62}\) Mr Simple, the cartoon character lampooned in Direct Action, was the type to go to war, devoid of class-consciousness, lacking insight into the nature of capitalism and imperialism.

A recurring theme in Wobbly propaganda was the discrepancy between the lives offered up by the working class and the profits secured by many capitalists during the war. Those who bade the worker die for his country, “the whole horde of capitalist flunkeys,” would sacrifice the last man and the last shilling, “so long as he was not the last man and the shilling was not his own.” “Let these cowardly wind-bags stop bleating and howling for blood.”\(^{63}\) Jock Wilson’s deportation resulted from an anti-conscription speech in the Domain in which he declared: “I am not going to the war to have Broken Hill lead pumped into me by the Germans.”\(^{64}\) Direct Action emphasised the class-based inequality not just of sacrifices at the front but also privations imposed at home. Bosses, the IWW pointed out, used the increasing unemployment in the early years of the war to attack wage levels and working conditions, to make workers work harder for less money. Landlords evicted the wives and
children of men who had joined the army, even of those killed at the front. It was wage-workers who lost their jobs as government finance was directed towards the war effort. Employers profiteered in providing the Australian government with goods for the army that were grossly underweight or woefully inadequate. Tom Glynn perused the weekly trade reports of the Merchants and Traders Association of Australasia, and regaled Direct Action readers with details of the pleasure expressed by “these industrial and commercial Huns” at the business opportunities offered during and after the war, especially in the provision of a labour force willing to work long hours for low wages. The IWW argued that, apart from the obvious opportunities for making vast profits, the war was useful to the capitalist class as a means of checking workers’ rising aspirations.

The “recruiting poster” that started appearing on Sydney buildings in July 1915 was the ultimate Wobbly commentary on the hypocrisy of the war-mongers:
As the police removed each offensive poster, Wobblies were waiting around the corner with more to paste up the moment the police moved on. After arguing that the poster was a serious attempt at raising recruitment levels, Barker was fined £50 and given a £200 bond or six months imprisonment with hard labour if he failed to comply with the *War Precautions Act* in the future. Broken Hill miners responded by refusing to hear Labor Premier Holman on his propaganda tour; he was obliged to stay on his train and return to Adelaide. In March 1916 Barker was again convicted for publishing the previous December a cartoon by Syd Nicholls, the talented young *Direct Action* cartoonist, which depicted vividly the contrast in wartime experience between that of the worker who died at the front and the capitalist who prospered at home. Barker was fined £100, he refused to pay and was sent to jail on 4 May 1916. Mat Hade’s contemporary pamphlet claims “the prosecution of Barker made known to everyone that the organisation was in existence. And from then on, it received a tremendous advertisement, and went ahead enormously.”

Established in the patriotic public mind as the source of disloyalist infection, the IWW was likewise confirmed in the radical working-class mind as the centre of anti-militarist resistance.

During 1915 and 1916 the IWW meetings in the Sydney Domain attracted larger and larger crowds, bigger collections and many new members; the circulation of *Direct Action* grew and covered a wide area of the country. Workers in their thousands were interested in hearing the senseless slaughter denounced by those whose understanding of the phenomenon seemed so clear and systematic. Carnage on such a massive scale gave credence to Wobbly arguments about the nature of the capitalist system. As casualties mounted still higher, the most extreme allegations of the IWW seemed more plausible; here was imperialist capitalism at its ugliest, with a seemingly ruthless disregard for the lives of those it enrolled in its defence. Contemporary activist Fred Coombe recalls how the IWW gave public voice to private feelings: “the thoughts in people’s minds they couldn’t articulate, but the old Wobblies could.”

The IWW had speakers – Donald Grant, Tom Barker, Tom Glynn, J.B. King, Charlie Reeve, Peter Larkin and Jock Wilson – who, according to Norman Jeffery, were “unrivalled in their agitational vigour” as they alerted people to facts about the war obscured or repressed by the authorities. In the West, too, from the onset of war, Monty Miller, Mick Sawtell and other Wobblies “exhibited courage and steadfastness with their anti-militarist views and critical attitude to the War.” Ted Moyle, one of the central figures in the anti-conscription
movement in South Australia, claims that the IWW in Adelaide “faced up to the hostility of the soldiers and the ‘patriots’ practically on its own” as it “gave to its audiences what it considered to be the plain unvarnished Truth of having been wage-slaves they were now to become cannon-fodder in the interests of the same master class.” In Queensland, IWW agitators regaled the crowds with anti-war propaganda. When Labor Prime Minister Hughes addressed a lunch-time meeting from the post office steps in Brisbane, Wobblies decided to “count the bastard out” and, by the time they reached ten, the crowd had joined in so loudly Hughes could not continue to speak.\(^{72}\)

### The Anti-Conscription Campaign

In its vehement rejection of patriotism, the IWW was easily presented as the source of all attitudes anathema to a society at war and yet, as Peter Rushton observed: “From a ginger group on the periphery of the labour movement, it was transformed into the most provocative and vocal, if not the most important, organ of anti-conscription.”\(^{73}\) The attempt by pro-conscriptionists to damn the anti-conscriptionist cause by dint of its association with the IWW failed to limit the appeal of the IWW: it greatly increased its following as a result of its outspoken part in the campaign. Ted Moyle considers the conscription issue was “food to the I.W.W.,” giving it “life and movement” and “elbowroom to agitate,” because it was “in the front line of a great & popular mass struggle.”\(^{74}\)

The absurd allegations made about the “pro-German IWW” and the publicity given the “disloyalist” outlook of the IWW also bolstered rather than impeded the anti-conscription cause. As an anti-war radical flank, the IWW distracted public hostility away from the anti-conscription movement; but Bill Beattie believes the extremity of the propaganda war against the IWW and the physical attacks on it by pro-conscriptionists also helped turn public opinion against conscription. Norman Jeffery was convinced that the attack on the IWW, plus the crushing of the 1917 strike, were factors aiding the anti-conscription victory.\(^{75}\) The extremists of both camps – the vociferous anti-militarists and the virulent pro-conscription patriots – made the anti-conscription movement appear to many waverers as the voice of reason.

So it was important to the simple anti-conscription cause that IWW anti-conscription propaganda did not confine itself to the issue of conscription, but condemned the war itself. The IWW insisted wars between nations were never justifiable, and it favoured an abrupt halt to the present carnage by the
workers of the belligerent countries refusing to fight or to work, whereas most of the anti-conscription movement was either opposed simply to the use of compulsion to fight a war that might or might not be justifiable or in favour of securing a negotiated peace between the warring nations “by means of international arbitration.” Groups such as the Women’s Peace Army and the Australian Peace Alliance subordinated anti-war activity to the fight against conscription.76 The IWW was careful to distinguish its extreme anti-war position from the more muted philosophy of most with whom it cooperated in the anti-conscription movement, the “pure and simple antis,” who were “unscientific and illogical since they uphold the capitalistic system.” The IWW “not only opposes conscription, but it attacks militarism in all its forms.”77 Acting thus as a radical flank, the IWW greatly aided the cause of those who merely opposed conscription or simply concentrated their propaganda against it.

Yet the IWW also made an original contribution to the arguments specifically against conscription. It made two distinctive and important points: that conscription would be used to discipline the workforce; and that, in opposing conscription, it was an important matter of principle that there be no pandering to racial fears about the import of coloured labour to replace the white labour at the front. In both cases, the ASP and SLP followed the IWW lead. A People editorial announced: “Australia is in danger. At least the working class of Australia is in danger. The conscription conspiracy is raising its head and gathering all its force to shackle the workers with the chains of compulsory militarism.”78 The ASP denounced the anti-conscription elements of the Labor Party for using such a racial idea as the White Australia Policy in their campaign, and at a time when efforts should be made to rid the world of national animosities.79

Bertha Walker argues that the IWW was the only party uncompromisingly against the war itself.80 This is unfair to the SLP and ASP, who shared the IWW’s anti-war position. For example on the morning of the first referendum, the International Socialist stated:

Australia’s danger does not come from Europe, but it is right here within our midst, and comes FROM THE INDUSTRIAL BANDITS WHO LIVE AS PARASITES UPON ITS PEOPLE. Remember that the main war is the CLASS WAR BETWEEN THE WORKING PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA AND ITS PARASITES UPON THE
BATTLEFIELDS OF INDUSTRY. And the main issue is – VICTORY FOR THE WORKING CLASS IN THAT WAR. Indeed, the most famous poem of the anti-conscription movement, “The Blood Vote,” is attributed to W.R. Winspear, treasurer of the ASP and frequent editor of the *International Socialist*, 1912–1916. But the IWW made the most noise about its anti-militarism. Ernie Lane recalls the IWW’s uncompromising part in the anti-conscription campaign: “Unlike the official Labour movement, the I.W.W. with rare courage and reckless of all consequences denounced and exposed the true causes of the war as a deadly clash of interests of conflicting imperial capitalist groups.” On the twentieth anniversary of the first referendum, the Communist Party acknowledged that “The I.W.W. was in the forefront of the struggle, and not only against compulsory service, but against the war itself.”

It was not simply that IWW anti-militarist propaganda was more extreme than anti-conscription rhetoric; so also were the means by which it intended to contest any introduction of conscription. As early as 1 October 1915 it urged workers to answer the threat of conscription with a general strike: “A Conscription Act should be the signal for industrial revolt and insurrection.” Be prepared, it advised workers, “to stop every industry and every wheel in Australia, and tell these unscrupulous vampires that if they want blood a little may be shed at home.” V.G. Childe notes how effectively it produced the impression that it was a formidable and desperate body that would resist to the utmost any attempt to impose compulsory service. Denunciation and defiance were customary Wobbly devices. As the war progressed their appeal increased.

“Great crowds used to come to our anti-conscription meetings,” Tom Barker recalls, “up to a sixth of the population of Sydney gathering around and trying to hear the speakers.” By February 1917 the IWW in Sydney had held 120 Sunday afternoon Domain meetings, 240 hall lectures and over 300 outdoor street meetings, and sold over 1000 copies of War, What For?, in addition to its sales of *Direct Action* and other revolutionary literature. This unrelenting campaign “not alone against conscription, but also against the war,” helped to shift the spectrum of public opinion towards a more circumspect approach to the war effort. Very few could accept the IWW’s intransigent hostility to the war, but this war against war encouraged opposition to the means by which the Hughes government wanted to fight the war. The IWW provided
the extreme viewpoint that most people rejected; but in rejecting the anti-war position, many also adopted a more critical outlook that inclined them to oppose conscription.

Ted Moyle contends that “most of the credit” for the success of the anti-conscription movement must go to the IWW: its “early propaganda of direct struggle against the War, however little appeal it may have had in the beginning, undoubtedly prepared the ground for the easier setting up of the platform of the Anti-Conscriptions”; given the small No majority, “without this early start ... the Referendum would have gone the other way.”

Tom Barker, too, stresses the organisational effort the IWW put into the anti-conscription movement:

I am sure that the work we did made all the difference to the Australian workers and the Australian people generally when the question of conscription came up in 1916 and 1917. There is no doubt at all in my mind, if it hadn’t been for the presence of our organisation and what we did in those days, the history of Australia might have been vastly different as far as the war itself was concerned.

It was at a meeting at the IWW hall in Sydney on 20 July 1915 that the Anti-Conscription League was launched by the IWW, socialists and other “advanced thinkers.” The address of this League was the same as that of the IWW. In Melbourne, likewise, the Local formed an Anti-Conscription and Anti-Militarist League in July 1915; and when Bob Ross, a month later, formed the VSP-dominated No Conscription Fellowship, the IWW, along with the IWW-dominated Anti-Conscription and Anti-Militarist League, combined with Ross’s Fellowship and other organisations, such as the Australian Peace Alliance, in holding anti-conscription meetings.

A censor’s note on two Queensland Wobblies in 1918, Jim Quinton and Harry Barcan of Toowoomba, recalled they had been closely associated with the Queensland Anti-Conscription League, which, the censor insisted, was really an IWW organisation.

Despite its emphasis on opposing the war not just conscription, the IWW was cooperatively unsectarian. According to Dick Surplus, it “worked with anyone who was opposed to conscription.” Joint activity and combined propaganda meetings with parliamentary socialists, the left of the Labor Party, craft unions and even the Detroit IWW was considered justifiable and necessary. This open-minded approach extended even to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Of Archbishop Mannix, Tom Barker recalled of the
IWW mood at the time: “We might not have followed him to heaven, but we certainly weren’t going to deny him his right as a partner in the battle.”92 But quantifying the Wobbly contribution to the anti-conscription movement is not the most significant consideration; crucial to the success of the pure-and-simple anti-conscriptionists was the quality of the IWW’s contribution, its uncompromising rejection of all wars other than the class war and the energy with which it propounded its ideas.

By the time of the first referendum, Hughes was complaining that the IWW was “largely responsible for the present attitude of organised labour, industrially and politically, towards the war.”93 The Labor mind of 1916 was very different from that of 1914, which had been ready to give its last man and last shilling. Three-quarters of the Caucus indicated they would refuse to pass a Conscription Act. For this transformation he blamed the IWWs, who had “nothing in common with Labor or Unionism” but were “foul parasites,” who had “attached themselves to the vitals of labour.”94 Shortly before the first poll he declared the IWW was the enemy of society: “Its ideals are German, and its only weapon is force.” He appealed to “organised labour” to cast out from its midst those who dominated the anti-conscription wing of the movement: “Extremists – I.W.W. men, Revolutionary socialists, Syndicalists, ‘red-raggers’ ... who seek to use labour for their own purposes.” Around the same time, Holman blamed the drift into the anti-conscription camp on “the secret but steadily growing influence of the Industrial Workers of the World over union organisations.”95

Hughes and Holman’s exasperation is explained by Childe, who claims IWW members and sympathisers within the Leagues and unions prompted the emphatic decisions against conscription by the AWU Convention and the New South Wales and Victorian Labor Parties; it prepared the way for the ALP peace proposals of 1917, the Labour Council’s resolutions against recruiting and the Perth Conference decisions in 1918. The IWW not only “can claim the credit for the defeat of conscription” but also for the transformation of the labour movement: “Before ‘No Conscription’ became a popular watchword, while the Labour Party was still toying with militarism, the I.W.W. steadily and unflinchingly denounced the curse and prepared the field where the Labour Party afterwards reaped.”96

The IWW’s radical role helped to rehabilitate Labor to become the anti-conscription party that could later claim credit for its opposition to the Prussianism that Australia was allegedly fighting against. As Judah Waten’s
fictional Wobbly character, George Feathers, explained: “I reckon half of those anti-conscription Labour politicians would have ratted like Hughes but for the way we stirred the wage plugs up against conscription.” The syndicalists and socialists who opposed patriotism in principle and waged war against all wars acted as a radical flank to thwart the introduction of conscription and reconstruct Labor to better represent working-class interests. These were reforms that might not have been achieved solely by a less extreme movement that politely and simply opposed conscription.


Endnotes

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91 Jim Quinton, 14 February 1918, to Harry Barcan, Item 28/2/18, A6286, 1st Military Dt, 26/12/17–29/6/18, National Archives, Canberra.
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Chapter 5

The Young John Curtin and James Scullin: Conscription, the Split, and Labor’s Political Culture

Liam Byrne

John Curtin and James Scullin are best known as Labor Prime Ministers with vastly contrasting places in party lore. Less known is that between 1914 and 1917 these young men were two of Victorian Labor’s most important figures. Scullin represented the moderate Australian Workers Union-led wing of the movement, and Curtin the growing socialist forces within the unions. These two forces united to oppose conscription but for vastly different reasons. Where the moderates were seeking to defeat Hughes and enforce union control over the party the socialists sought to take opposition to the measure further to oppose the war itself. I shall argue both that the Victorian movement was the key player in initiating the national campaign, and that the socialist left played a cohered and organised part in this initiation not recognised in past literature.

But this story reveals more about Labor in this period than this narrative alone. In this time of great stress and recalibration of the organisation, the ideological division between the socialists and the moderates played a creative role in developing arguments against conscription, but also conceptions of Labor’s role and what the party should be. Scullin and Curtin were crucial agents in this contest, movement intellectuals who were both activists and agitators, each connected to an important movement power base. The story of these young
men concerns not just how Prime Ministers were made, or how conscription was defeated, but the very nature of the Labor Party itself in this vital period.

Studies of James Scullin and John Curtin’s role in the Labor movement have, unsurprisingly, focused overwhelmingly on their tenures as Prime Minister.¹ This chapter charts an earlier stage of their political careers, when as labour movement intellectuals they were important combatants in the fight over conscription in 1916, and the subsequent Labor party split that year. In tracing their arguments and actions during these defining moments, it is concerned not simply with revealing the extent of their involvement in these years, but also considering the underlying dynamics that shaped the political culture of the party. Focusing on Victoria, it will trace the political forces operating within Labor, their ideological positions, and how the contestation between these forces aided in re-crafting the party’s political culture.

Accounts of these events by labour historians have traditionally considered the conflict between the parliamentary Labor party and the broader movement as their defining factor. Vere Gordon Childe set the pattern of discussion of this period in his path-breaking analysis of political labour, *How Labour Governs*. Childe argued that the campaign against conscription and the Labor split was the result of the growing division between the union movement and those parliamentarians who wished to subvert the particularly Labor form of democracy the party had developed.² From Labor’s foundation (his particular focus is on New South Wales), he argued that there was a tension between Labor’s parliamentary representatives and the union-controlled extra-parliamentary party machinery. At the centre of this tension were questions of control and responsibility that had emerged from Labor’s intervention in the parliamentary realm: were Labor parliamentarians representatives of their electorate or of the labour movement?³ From foundation until 1916 control ebbed and flowed without clear resolution. Labor’s election to government in NSW served to heighten these tensions as the administration was perceived to be distancing itself from the decision-making capacities of the broader movement. Frustrations with Labor Premier William Holman finally boiled over in 1916 as the unions combined into the “industrialists” and managed to assert their control, first in the conscription referendum victory and then at the Federal Labor conference in December.⁴

This narrative was further bolstered by Ian Turner’s authoritative study of the relationship between industrial and political labour, a defining text of the
“Old Left” interpretation. Turner closely follows Childe’s line of argument, considering the campaign as part of a long-running “battle” between the industrial and political wings of the movement that had threatened to split Labor ranks on several occasions. The split of 1916 came after parliamentarians sought to instil a “new character” to the organisation following its transition “from cross benches or opposition to government.” As a result, “anti-conscription became one (finally the most important) of the watchwords with which trade unionists challenged politicians for control of the movement.” In this battle the interests of conservative and militant unions were united and “together these elements carried enough weight to defeat the politicians and their ‘national’ policy.” Until recently this was the predominant trajectory of the conscription/split narrative, with Turner’s account differing predominantly in its categorisation of the rural electorate as the most decisive final vote, but otherwise developing the general narrative first outlined by Childe.

These dominant narratives were highly structuralist, providing a vital analysis of the role of institutions and power blocs within the movement, but one that tended to obscure the role of individual “antis.” In these tellings, the locus of opposition to the parliamentary bloc was found predominantly in NSW, where an alliance of unions which came to be known as the “industrialists” put up a fight against the dissidents. The coherence of this grouping has been further analysed by Michael Hogan as a “template” for subsequent Labor factions, a section of the movement cohering through its exclusion of other elements, something he argues was unique to this alliance. The contribution of the Victorian state movement was mentioned in these accounts, but without detailing precisely what this contribution was. The general trend of these structural approaches has been to consider the main contest inside the movement as between these parliamentarians and the union movement. The unions are presented as speaking with a single voice, and determining their opposition to conscription for similar, if not the same, reasons. Though there is recognition that more left-wing forces existed, especially in Victoria, their ideological positions, their organisational activities, and how this related to that of the dominant leadership of the movement is not detailed.

Underlying these interpretations was an implicit sympathy with the aims of the union movement in opposing conscription, even if there was some ambivalence as to the ultimate benefit of union control. Nick Dyrenfurth has recently offered a more sceptical reading of the conscription campaign considering the arguments of the unions as disingenuous in the context of their
“scurrilous” campaign.\textsuperscript{12} He argued that anti-conscription was not rooted in working-class politics, it was “certainly not some preordained or unproblematic Labor attitude,” and that the union movement might have accepted a compromise on the issue, to support conscription of life, if wealth was similarly conscripted.\textsuperscript{13} Dyrenfurth has a greater focus on the actions of individuals within this period than Childe or Turner, particularly that of radical MPs such as Frank Anstey and labour newspaper commentators such as W. Wallis.\textsuperscript{14} This focus is shared by the chronicler of the Victorian party, Paul Strangio, in his work on these tumultuous years.\textsuperscript{15} Important as these figures surely were, the problem with this focus is that it does not provide a detailed account of the ideological approaches that influenced broad sections of organised labour outside of parliamentary ranks. Noticeably, Dyrenfurth and Strangio share a perspective concerning the problematic nature of the left’s predominance in Victoria, being particularly harsh in their judgement of the left’s involvement in the Labor split, which they consider a negative development for the party that prevented it from attaining office in the years that followed.\textsuperscript{16}

Childe and Turner were correct to argue that the conflict between the union movement and the parliamentary leaders of labour was a defining issue for the union response to the conscription proposal. The 1916 split was the conclusion to long-running tensions within the Labor parties over this question of union-party relationship and control since their respective foundations. It was the time in which the modern character of Labor was formed, and institutionally guaranteed. But another major divide existed in the movement at this time, that between Labor socialists and moderates who contested the purpose and the nature of the organisation.

This contest has not gone entirely unnoticed in the established literature of the Victorian party. Frank Bongiorno’s insightful study of the state party certainly considers such difference as of great import for Labor’s development in Victoria, but considers this period to have concluded by 1905, when “the moderate elements in the party stiffened their resistance and the socialist star began to wane.”\textsuperscript{17} Ending in 1914, this work does not explore the actions of the Victorian Socialist Party (VSP)-inspired socialist left throughout the war years, and its contestation with the moderate forces. Humphrey McQueen’s chapter in D.J. Murphy’s edited collection was the first attempt to outline the history of the Victorian party, and does recognise both the ideological influence of the VSP and the growing power of the Australian Workers Union (AWU) within the organisation.\textsuperscript{18} The specifics of this division are buried beneath the weight
of his general disdain for the labourist project, and the positive impact of this divide in driving the party forward both ideologically and in terms of practical action is not specified. He does, for instance, recognise a division within the party over its attitude towards the war, but does not explain the terms of these divisions, or their importance in the development of a party that he had already determined was damned from the outset.\textsuperscript{19}

In this chapter I use the example of Curtin and Scullin as labour intellectuals to analyse the important ideological division within the party, and the importance of the contestation between these forces in crafting Labor's political culture. I will do so with a focus on the Victorian state party, and consider the important role that it played in the dynamics of this tumultuous year.

**Movement Intellectuals and Labor’s Political Culture**

The young Curtin and Scullin were movement intellectuals representing different forces within this contest. Long before assuming leadership of the movement both had already carved important positions for themselves within labour’s ranks. Scullin was connected to the powerful AWU, and articulated a uniquely Labor theory of democracy. Curtin was a major theorist of the section of Labor socialists who received their political training in the ranks of the VSP, and who came to occupy a powerful position in the Victorian labour movement. Between 1909 and 1917 he developed and articulated a radical anti-militarism which gained purchase by this socialist section of the movement. These sections united in 1916 in deep conviction over the need to oppose conscription, but did so with very different ideas as to why the measure had to be overcome.

In order to conceptualise this relationship I propose to develop the work of Jürgen Habermas’ concept of the bourgeois public sphere, and the commentators upon it. Habermas famously sought to chart the origins and growth of a distinct site of information debate and exchange that existed between the established state and the developing market for commodity production, the bourgeois public sphere.\textsuperscript{20} Habermas made clear that his specific analysis was of the “\textit{liberal} model of the bourgeois public sphere,” leaving aside alternative spheres for study by others.\textsuperscript{21}

Alexander Negt and Oskar Kluge took up this challenge by seeking to identify those counter spheres that did not fit inside Habermas’ schema. Their work focused on the distinctive sphere of the proletariat, which acts as
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a centre for the articulation and dissemination of a working-class identity. This provides an important conceptual tool to comprehend the experience and social positioning of the labour movement. The movement is differentiated between the “delimited proletarian sphere” which is enmeshed with the bourgeois sphere, and the section that rejects it. The delimited sphere can be considered as the moderate-dominated leadership of the movement, the advocates of a distinctively proletarian form of democracy, but one that operated within the bounds of capitalist relations. It is these Labor democrats whom James Scullin represented.

But they did not do so without opposition from within the proletarian sphere. Within the Victorian movement there was a significant socialist section which sought to provide an alternative vision for Labor. This radical opposition can be considered as what Nancy Fraser termed a subaltern counterpublic. As Fraser explains, such counterpublics were sites of identity formation, where non-dominant groups “invent and circulate counter-discourses,” and from which they actively project their interests out towards broader publics. That is, it attempted to sway the labour movement as a whole in a socialist direction.

Movement intellectuals were agents of this contestation. The concept of a movement intellectual is influenced strongly by the Gramscian concept of “organic intellectuals,” those intellectuals who arise from, are embedded in, and articulate the experiences of a particular social class. Gramsci described these intellectuals as being “active particip[ants] in practical life, as constructor, organiser, ‘permanent persuader’ and not just simple orator.”

This concept has been developed by subsequent thinkers to encapsulate the broad layer of thinker-activists operating within the international labour movement, disseminating its ideas, and operating as the “NCO’s [non-commissioned officers] of the movement.” In the Australian context, such intellectuals have been identified and theorised by Terry Irving and Sean Scalmer, who discuss their role within the labour public as the producers of knowledge and the manipulators of symbols. These movement intellectuals performed the bulk of labour’s educational and propagandistic work and planned its strategies. They “edit[ed] the journals; speak at the stumps; form the arguments; frame the legislation; plan the strategies.”

This study is of two men who, as movement intellectuals, performed these roles within a contested labour public. Crucially, they did so in a state of innate connection to the institutions of the class. Their role as intellectuals derived from their relationship to the socialist and moderate sections within the
movement. Both were activists and organisers, as well as editors and orators. As such they represent the ideological and structural nature of the political culture of Labor.

**Scullin, the Moderates, and the Labor Theory of Democracy: 1906–14**

James Scullin’s induction into the ranks of Labor, in about 1903, came at a crucial moment for the fledgling party. Labor’s ideological reliance on liberalism was, in this period, being superseded by a new distinctively Labor theory of democracy, which by decade’s end would become a theory of government. This theory was the ideological counterpart to what Childe recognised as a new conception of democracy and representation. It was a consistent worldview as to the programme for change to be implemented by these movement representatives, influenced strongly by previous ideological currents such as radical liberalism, yet in what I consider to be a new distinctive Labor form. These influences were incorporated into a unified Labor worldview underpinned by a collectivist approach to politics and society that was derived from the movement’s industrial wing. This political approach, alongside Labor’s concept of organisation and movement control, helped divide Labor and the liberals in the early period following Federation. Advancing through the state party’s ranks in rapid succession, by the time he took his seat in the Federal Parliament in 1910, Scullin would be well positioned to proselytise this theory.

Scullin was born in 1876 in Trawalla, a small town in rural western Victoria. Schooled until he was fourteen at local state schools, he moved with his family to Ballarat, where he worked in a variety of roles until his mid-20s when he found employment as a grocer. Like many Labor activists of the time Scullin was largely an autodidact, expanding his own intellectual horizons through countless hours in local public libraries; his training in the art of public address came courtesy of the debating club of the Catholic Young Men’s Society.

In 1906 Scullin declared his political ambitions by challenging Prime Minister Alfred Deakin for his seat of Ballarat. This propaganda exercise enhanced his reputation despite his predictable defeat. The bid helped to propel him to the position of political organiser for the AWU. Scullin was a successful branch builder in rural Victoria, building up Labor’s presence in these areas, and helping to strengthen the AWU’s hand in the party machinery as a result.
The AWU had a particular understanding of the role of political labour that Scullin would articulate. This understanding was based on a belief that the movement required men who, when in power, would not sacrifice the principles of the movement. The “strictest care” would need to be taken, warned AWU officials, when it came to choosing candidates to “do battle for Labor.”

The sites of this battle had changed since the depression of the 1890s. The implementation of arbitration meant that the “carpets of the Law Courts” had taken “the place of our former battle ground,” the mass strike and the picket line. In this conception, arbitration was the extension of Labor democracy into the economic realm, a means to equitably balance class relations within the new nation. The primary problem was limitations placed on the system which prevented its functioning more effectively on a larger scale. To correct this would require a recalibration of Federation, the transformation of the Constitution to enable the theory of Labor democracy to be enshrined in national law.

After his election in 1910 Scullin used parliament as a platform to propound this vision of Labor democracy within the labour movement, and out towards broader constituencies. This included his own constituents, the small-scale farmers of Corangamite, who could benefit from Labor’s egalitarian vision of Australia. He played an important role in developing this vision into a consistent worldview and did so from a position of power within the movement. Unlike the socialist sections of the movement at this time with their more abstract hopes for social transformation, Scullin and the Labor democrats had an opportunity to enact their vision – the experience of government in the Fisher administrations of 1910, and later 1914.

Scullin articulated this vision at the symbolic genesis of the first Fisher government, as he delivered the address-in-reply to the Governor-General’s speech at the commencement of parliament in 1910. This was a truly epochal moment for political labour, not just in Australia, but internationally. As Scullin noted, it was the first time that a labour party had achieved majority government anywhere in the world.

Scullin interpreted this as the “beginning [of] a new era,” a period in which “this Parliament is going to justify Federation.” This was a crucial statement of the approach that underpinned Labor’s vision of change as one that would include both specific legislative initiatives, and a broader effort to redistribute economic and political power in the Commonwealth. In this speech Scullin sketched his vision for Australia and outlined the measures required to achieve
it. It was a “national” rather than parochial vision, with decisions to be made in the best interests of the country as a whole rather than in response to sectional interests. Its economic basis would not be widespread nationalisation, but equalisation through the use of a land tax – a measure for which Scullin was a tireless advocate.41

He argued that too much land was locked up in unproductive systems of ownership which saw rich landholders, the erstwhile squatters, controlling blocks that should be divided amongst smaller leaseholders who could “put into use rich lands which are capable of maintaining hundreds of thousands of people, but which are now only sheep walks.”42 Such a measure would denigrate the power and wealth of the established elite, but benefit the nation as a whole. The raising of tax on this section of the population would likewise benefit the defence of the nation, a central concern in Scullin’s speech to which he persistently returned.43 Not only would the subdivision of large landed estates provide an increase in production, but it would also increase the population, so that “in case of necessity, we might have the call on large bodies of men able to shoulder the rifle in defence of their country.”44 Provision for defence was a costly business, and it was right and proper for the government to “call upon those large values which we add to the land for a great part of the cost of that defence, just as we shall call upon the manhood of Australia to take up arms to defend our hearth and homes.”45 It goes without saying that Scullin was a strong supporter of the compulsory military training scheme for male youths adopted by Federal Labor in 1908, which they would implement in this term of government.

Underpinning these measures was the “proposal to amend the Constitution, which is, perhaps, one of the most important measures before the people of Australia at the present time.”46 This was in reference to the measures considered necessary to entrench the “new Protection” for which Labor had “declared unanimously,” but was “not possible under our Constitution.” To realise certain policies, particularly the expansion of Federal power in sending disputes to the Arbitration Court, it was necessary to return to the people. The government wanted mandated power to deal “with trusts and combines, to control them, to acquire them, if necessary, or to compete against them. We say that private enterprise will have to justify itself.”47

Here, Scullin was enunciating a unified and coherent vision of governance based on a particular theory of Labor democracy. It was egalitarian, national, and moderate. Though largely unspoken, it was underpinned by commitment
to the maintenance of a White Australia. It considered its primary enemies the entrenched sectional economic interests from the colonial system, who maintained power through the media and undemocratic upper houses. Federation, which had been cast in their image, was to be transformed to enable the realisation of this vision.

Labor’s loss at the 1913 election interrupted this project, and ended Scullin’s first experience of parliamentary contest. His vision for Australia had not been achieved in this limited time, though, as will be seen, this did not diminish his belief in the necessity for such changes to be enacted. After seven years working for the labour movement Scullin’s skills were too valuable for the movement to lose. Not long after the election Scullin was appointed by the AWU as editor of the union-controlled *Evening Echo* daily newspaper in Ballarat. Despite not being formally owned by the AWU, the union held a controlling stake in the *Echo*, which under Scullin’s guidance came to be an important mouthpiece for Labor in rural Victoria.48

Under Scullin’s editorship, the *Evening Echo* demonstrated the idiosyncrasies of the rural newspaper, as well as the influence of a Labor intellectual. At once provincial and worldly, it mixed reportage on local races and sporting events, job opportunities, and an immense patchwork of national and local advertisements, with international news reports, and a constant, if at times subliminal, barrage of Labor articles. For example, the front page of 2 July 1914, the day announcing the issuing of writs for the upcoming Federal Election included articles such as: “Mexico: Peace Conference Fails – Rebels Pursue Each Other”; “Labor Legislators Turn: Industrial Laws Defended”; “Sporting Cables: Bell Wants Return Match – Johnson’s Winnings”; and “Pigeon Patter: South Aust. Show – Forthcoming Display.”49

The most important headlines of all, however, appeared in August that year, with an editorial proudly proclaiming the paper’s status as the first “medium” in all of Ballarat to announce the outbreak of war.50 Scullin’s consideration of the war is an important indicator of the thinking of Labor democrats faced with troubling questions over the nation’s response. Scullin greeted the war without ebullience or undue fervour. He argued that it was Britain’s responsibility to intervene in defence of its allies against the aggression of the Axis powers.51 Scullin held strongly to the idea, widely spread within Labor, that international disputes could be best resolved through a form of arbitration,52 perhaps an indicator of the adaptation of key Labor democratic ideals to the international arena.53 But after the outbreak of war the time for arbitration had passed,
leading Scullin to argue that it was Australia’s duty to aid Britain as it fought a war not of its making. He wrote proudly of the activities of the 70th Regiment, drawn from the local area, and extolled further the benefits of the “compulsory defence system” which allowed them to be so quickly mobilised as “the best thing Australia has ever had.” This mobilisation was ostensibly in the cause of defence, rather than for international deployment, and it was in those terms that he championed its virtues. Scullin propounded the importance of such measures, responding to those who said that Germany could not invade Australia: “Well, Carthage said that Rome could never conquer Africa.”

Necessary as he considered the war to be for the long-term protection of Australia, Scullin wrote with sadness at the oncoming conflagration. As with other Laborites of the time, socialists such as Curtin included, he imagined that a better world could arise from the conflict, after the eyes, “the people who fight – and suffer,” the working class, had “been opened as they have never been opened before.” The war was “monstrous,” but had happened because “the making of war has been left to kings and rulers, and not to the people most interested – those who do the fighting, and who provide the means of fighting.” The answer to the challenge posed by this cataclysm was the construction of a new world order in which it was the working class that governed in the best interests of all, in other words, an order based on the ideas of Labor democracy.

A new world would arise from the ashes and it was up to Labor to determine what sort of world that would be. He hoped it would be a Labor democracy, but this would require successfully prosecuting the war effort first. But, as he had argued since 1910, Scullin and the Labor moderates would not be content with the working class bearing all the hardships, and wanted the sacrifice to be spread across the community. As Scullin had spoken in 1910 – the adequate defence of the country required that all did their share of the work, particularly those who held the wealth.

Scullin greeted the election of the second Fisher administration in the September election as an opportunity for a more equitable distribution of the burden of war. In that triumph Scullin’s primary lament was that once again referendum proposals for the expansion of Commonwealth powers had not been carried. He warned of the “predatory combines” who were sure to exploit the situation to drive up prices in the war economy, for which the people of Australia would be forced to pay. Scullin continued to advocate forcefully for a referendum to reshape the distribution of power, a demand that gathered pace throughout the war years.
He expressed the hope that this Labor democratic worldview could yet be achieved, if the “Labor Government will make haste to overtake the delay.” He concluded: “we can take it for granted that the Referendum questions will soon be submitted again.” Such optimism would prove to be misdirected, with the gravest of consequences for organised labour.

Curtin, Socialism, and the Theory of Imperialism: 1906–14

John Curtin was born in 1885 in the small town of Creswick, 18 kilometres north of Ballarat. Leaving school at a similar age to Scullin, he was a determined autodidact who had snatched many weary hours before sleep to fulfil his addiction to books and learning. He joined the VSP in the year of its founding, 1906, and was an enthusiastic participant in its educational and propaganda activities. The party took its political inspiration from its leader, the internationally infamous radical Tom Mann. The VSP provided the young Curtin with an important means through which to develop his passion for learning, and to satisfy his burning desire for social change. He joined his comrades in the task of swaying the ranks of labour leftwards, convincing them of the need for revolutionary transformation.

The party was quickly divided in this task, and from 1908 onwards a bitter factional civil war was conducted between those VSP members who wished to remain connected to the Labor Party and those who pursued a syndicalist anti-Labor form of politics. The VSP experienced a sustained loss of leadership until Curtin and his allies successfully forced out the syndicalists in 1913. But the VSP remained an important intellectual influence for the left-wing of the labour movement in this period, and Curtin was its primary theorist after Tom Mann left Australia in 1909. In this period he frequently articulated and disseminated his ideas in the party newspaper, the somewhat unimaginatively titled Socialist.

Curtin’s theoretical outlook considered imperialism to be an inherent outgrowth of the capitalist system of competition and accumulation. He argued that two aspects of the system pushed in this direction. The first was the capitalists’ fear of the growing international workers’ movement. Akin to many other laborites and socialists Curtin observed the seemingly inexorable growth of the social democratic forces in Europe with much hope for the eventual triumph of socialism. He considered that the capitalist enemy was aware of these advances, which were “pressing heavily” on them “in every
country.” He argued that war was a means through which the capitalist classes, whatever the hue of their national flags, could distract, divide, and destroy the working-class movement and prevent its advance.\textsuperscript{66}

To achieve this, the capitalists summoned “from the sepulchre of annihilated superstitions the bogeys of racial animosity and human suspicion,” to break the international unity of the working class.\textsuperscript{67} The contaminants of nationalist fervour were conducted by the “press and pulpit,” which “chloroforms” the “public mind” in the “interest of political operations.”\textsuperscript{68} Curtin considered it the duty of the class to oppose the efforts of the social necromancers who wished to divide it, utilising the principles of internationalism and solidarity to do so.\textsuperscript{69}

But war was not simply a means to stave off social democratic advance. In a manner that accorded with the approach of the socialist section of the European workers’ movement, Curtin argued that war was also the inevitable product of the merclessly profit-hungry nature of capitalism. He painted a vivid, if somewhat simplistic picture: “When shipbuilders do not receive orders to construct vessels for service in the mercantile marine, they have either to close down or build ships of war.”\textsuperscript{70}

In a series of articles in the \textit{Socialist}, Curtin outlined these ideas in a consistent critique of international capitalism. Unlike many other radical writers of the time Curtin did not focus his ire on a single section of capital, such as the financial trusts. His criticism imbricated a series of capitalist agencies and forces into a singular agenda which they all served, and from which they all gained. War was a conspiracy by all those who ruled in the inequitable system of capitalism; both the private capitalists and state managers were implicated. Those governments that protested their “total repugnance to the incidence of war preparations,” and “simultaneously place[d] orders with private enterprise for ships, guns, [and] ammunition,” were all complicit alongside the giant firms to whom they paid an “immense tribute.”\textsuperscript{71} Not to be denied their slice of the profits from the arms race were the “parasitical groups of petty traders” who clung to the “coat tails” of the armaments contractors, licking their lips at the potential benefits “that future developments will bring in their train.”\textsuperscript{72}

His position at this time could be summed up as “War creates no market, it is a market itself.”\textsuperscript{73}

As early as 1909 Curtin was forecasting the flood of nationalism and anti-German hostility that would accompany it five years later, telling his audience to “[a]nswer their cries of ‘Look out for the Germans’ by pointing to our 3,000,000 comrades resident in the land of the Kaiser,” and to answer discussion
of Imperial conferences with “your triennial congress representative of the toilers of every race!” This was in reference to both the mass membership of the German Social Democratic Party, and the congresses of the Second International, which had been meeting to discuss the response of labour to the possible outbreak of war.

Curtin drew on theoretical influences from European socialism to guide his opposition to specific militarist policies and measures that he considered inimical to working-class interests. It is important to note that this opposition was expressed towards a Labor government. This gives a particularly pointed character to Curtin's writing at this time, and aids in clarifying his purpose. His critiques of militarism in these years must be seen as a critique of the direction of the Labor Party, and the majority of the movement that lent it ardent support. This was the attempt of an intellectual from a subaltern counterpublic to sway working-class opinion as part of a broader ideological battle within the proletarian public sphere. This required a rebuttal of the Labor democratic vision, which accepted elements of capitalist logic.

Curtin lambasted Federal Labor’s claims that its military preparations, those so lauded by Scullin, were necessary to defend the continent. In no uncertain terms he denounced the “palpably fake character” of the “ridiculous abortion labelled Australian Defence.” These measures were, he argued, an unnecessary “veil” behind which hid “the material advantages to be derived by powerful manufacturing and trading groups in whose interest the war policy is formulated.”

Curtin was developing a serious critique of the policy that would be fully implemented by the Federal Labor government in 1911. In December 1910 he continued the process with a lampooning article in which he wrote a satirical speech for Labor Defence Minister, Senator George Pearce, whose greeting of “Capitalists, Sweaters and Parasites, Comrades and Friends” gives an indication of the tone with which it proceeded. This article attacked Labor’s prioritising of military spending, alongside the training scheme, repeating earlier tropes that such measures were aimed at curtailing the workers’ movement. Curtin had Pearce promised his capitalist “friends” that, when the time came that the workers broke the social peace and took action against their exploitation, there would be “at hand the material for an armed despotism,” that is a trained military force.

Curtin consistently returned to several key points: that war and militarism were inherently part of the capitalist system, that the Australian government
was intent not on defence but on joining the global arms race to benefit the profiteering capitalists, and that measures such as compulsory training were not truly about defending the country so much as eroding democracy and attacking the organisational and economic gains of the trade union movement.

In a period when the majority of organised labour was giving tacit support to such measures, Curtin was part of a circle involved in developing a rhetorical opposition to these measures that union opponents of conscription would draw upon in 1916 and 1917. At that time very similar arguments would be deployed against military compulsion: that it was not necessary for Australia’s defence, that it was anti-democratic, and that it would undermine the gains of trade unionism. Notably, whereas racist White Australia arguments would also be a major feature of later union tropes, Curtin’s emphasis on internationalism and the inherently capitalistic nature of war would not. Not all arguments would later be treated equally, but the legacy of dissent developed by Curtin and other radicals would provide much of the rhetorical justification for union opposition in its time of dire need.

In 1911 Curtin was appointed as secretary of the Timber Workers Union in Victoria, a significant turning point in his life. From this stage onwards he would be an increasingly prominent member of the broader proletarian sphere, operating within the major forums and institutions of the labour movement. These new arenas provided Curtin with an opportunity to disseminate his radical message to a broader labour audience, and with a greater authority deriving from his official position. In this, he represented an emerging counterpublic, imbued with the ideological inheritance of the VSP. This was the Victorian socialist left, a grouping of radical unionists who had at some point been members of the VSP and who were reconstituted as an influential bloc within the institutions of Victorian labour. Their number included E.J. Holloway, Trades Hall Council (THC) and state Labor President, and Frank Hyett, the legendary secretary of the Victorian Railway Union (VRU), amongst others rising through the ranks of the movement at this time. By 1916 at least 11 unions were represented on the THC by socialist delegates.

Curtin remained an important anti-militarist propagandist, maintaining his strict line against capitalist defence policies such as compulsory training. From 1912 articles in this vein started to appear in the *Labor Call*, the movement’s major organ in Victoria. From 1913 Curtin’s voice was further amplified as he founded a newspaper for his union, named perhaps with the influence of the VSP’s fondness for bluntness, the *Timber Worker*, which
recapitulated these arguments time and again in the period leading to the war, and after its outbreak. It is an interesting historical symmetry that both Curtin and Scullin took the editorship of labour newspapers in the same year. In May 1914 Curtin was responsible for the adoption by the state's Trades Hall Council of the Hardie-Vaillant resolution. This was the commitment by the Second International in 1910 to co-ordinate working-class industrial action to stymie the war plans of European governments. This declaration greatly affected Curtin, who wrote of it at length in the *Timber Worker* four years later on the cusp of war.

In August 1914, as has been well documented, the social-democratic parties in Europe failed to live up to this promise, disappointing many socialists and working-class anti-militarists across the globe. The THC too failed to lead a general strike to prevent Australian involvement in the war, unsurprisingly. Based on the promise if not the reality of working-class internationalism and anti-imperialism, this motion would provide the ideological anchoring for the socialist left’s thought and activity during the war. This would not be the last time the Council was called to affirm its support for the cause of class war over imperial war. The THC reaffirmed this principle in 1916, becoming perhaps the only union body of similar significance in the world to declare its opposition to the war and belief in working-class action against it while the war was still in progress. Long after much of the Second International had abandoned Hardie-Vaillant, the Victorian left would continue to proclaim its virtues, and perpetuate the message that workers had no war to fight, only the class war. This was an approach and an understanding that had been theorised and tirelessly advocated in the crucial pre-war years by John Curtin.

**War, Conscription, and the Split**

In the pre-war period Scullin and Curtin had contributed to the development of specific theories of Labor and its purpose, which they articulated within the movement. Up until 1916 these sections were clearly divided. But in 1916 they found common cause against the belligerent Labor Prime Minister, W.M. “Billy” Hughes, who announced a referendum on conscription for October that year. This came in the immediate wake of Hughes abandoning a proposed prices referendum that had long been advocated by the movement. This perceived treachery by Hughes – and his NSW counterpart William Holman – set the scene for a showdown between labour’s political and industrial
wings.\textsuperscript{85} Conscription became the trigger for the unions to move against the parliamentary apostates.\textsuperscript{86}

Contrary to recent claims, this was not a cynical manoeuvre on behalf of the movement. Both the Labor democrats and socialists were legitimately aggrieved by the conscription measure, and both groups clearly considered it a great threat to their project for change. For the moderate section the abandonment of the prices referendum was a great betrayal, a rejection of a primary means for social transformation at just the time when workers were paying the price for the war effort.\textsuperscript{87} For the socialists, it was further proof of the capitalist wartime conspiracy to profit from the erosion of the position of the working class. Hughes’ desire to compel men to fight, in this context, compounded the view that he was no longer acting in the interests of labour. Action was inevitable.

For the Labor democrats the first priority in 1916 was to purge the parliamentary parties of those elements who had betrayed the principles of Labor by not fighting against this exploitation, and who had abandoned the referendum. The influence of the Victorian section was important in the momentum for this change. At the 1915 Federal AWU conference one Victorian delegate boasted that his state was a “‘political Arcadia’ in the matter of straight-going Laborites” as opposed to the treacherous NSW party. Though the numbers of Labor MPs were admittedly small, he argued that this “was preferable to a majority in Parliament which cared little or nothing for Labor ideals.”\textsuperscript{88} By January 1916, the AWU National Secretary, Edward Grayndler, who had previously been the Victorian secretary, was openly contemplating that without change in the Federal party, “the time would come for the formation of a trades union party with their own platform.”\textsuperscript{89}

At this conference of January 1916 the AWU declared itself opposed to any form of conscription of human life, an important statement of opposition from the largest union in Australia. Other unions, union councils, and state Labor parties swiftly followed. But as important as these statements of opposition were, it was the initiative of the Victorian left which began to lay the vital political infrastructure for the campaign against conscription that would be unleashed later that year.

Curtin was not involved in much of this action. He had suddenly resigned his position with the Timber Workers in 1915 and undertook treatment for the drinking problem that had threatened to derail him completely. In his stead, his friends and comrades took the initial action that would culminate in
victory over Hughes in October, but they did so as part of a radical section that Curtin had helped to form and cohere through his years of sustained agitation. This section had gained enough influence on the THC governing Council in May 1916 to restate dedication to the Hardie-Vaillant resolution, an important and courageous step considering the punitive actions of the Government in restraining dissent against the war effort. It is notable that when other unions and union federations had stated their opposition to conscription, the Victorian left went a step further to declare continuing opposition to the war itself.

In March Frank Hyett, Curtin’s long-term friend and comrade, secured the support of the Melbourne THC for the convocation of a national union gathering on conscription. Two socialist delegates moved that if conscription were implemented before the meeting of unions a general strike should occur; the motion was defeated by the moderates. The motion also contained the threat of expulsion for any Labor MPs who determined to support conscription. In May, these same delegates moved a near-identical motion in favour of a general strike at the Victorian Labor state conference, only narrowly losing the vote. This debate demonstrates important continuities with the pre-war dedication to a general strike against the war, an adaptation of that principle for the new environment.

The national union movement met at the THC’s initiative in July, and pledged complete opposition to conscription. Behind this unity was a division over the practical form this opposition would take. Once again a motion was moved in favour of a general strike to defeat conscription. Once again it was defeated by a relatively narrow margin. This suggests the same contest on a national scale as within Victoria: a leftist element driving an industrial campaign to threaten the government, and a moderate element that was against incorporating industrial tactics into the movement.

From this convention a national executive was elected to lead the union campaign, heavily dominated by figures from the Victorian left. Not too long after, the secretary of the campaign, EJ Holloway, resigned due to the stresses placed on him by his multiple roles in the labour movement. Completing a swift return to grace, and showing the regard in which he was held, John Curtin was named in his place.

Scullin had hardly been cooling his heels during this time. His position as editor of a labour newspaper had greatly expanded his sphere of influence. He had been a delegate to the state Labor conference, speaking to condemn
the perceived referendum betrayal. His influence was even greater in August when Hughes announced that there would be a referendum on the conscription question. The *Echo* was the closest to a labour daily that existed in Victoria, and as the campaign gathered momentum its importance as a campaigning tool grew. This influence spread beyond Ballarat, with one participant later reflecting on it being brought to Melbourne daily, and “sold in the thousands in the streets.”

From early August until the referendum on 28 October, conscription was the paper’s dominant theme. Scullin expressed a number of arguments that were central to the “anti’s” argument. He contended that the unions were “equally resolved to prosecute the war and deliver civilisation from the ruthless militarism which is typified by Germany.” He argued that under the voluntary system Australia had contributed in proportion to its population greater than any other imperial country outside of Britain itself, and that the union movement had a legitimate fear of “Hunnish methods” and “the introduction of militarism into industry.” It was the capitalists who were not pulling their weight, and it was their wealth, not men, that should be conscripted. Scullin made this argument not as an indicator of some potential compromise with Hughes, but rather as a continuation of his pre-war argument that the social elites who opposed the Labor democratic vision were standing in the way of the proper defence of the country.

The moderates and the socialists clearly had a common enemy, and they campaigned together to ensure the defeat of conscription. But this should not suggest that there was no discord or contestation between them during this campaigning period. There is clear evidence that there was a concerted effort to transform the regular routine of mass meetings and protests along the banks of the Yarra into a general strike action against conscription. While the evidence is incomplete, it would appear that the national executive, over Curtin’s signature, called for several days of strike action commencing on 4 October. In the event there was a one-day stop work across the country on that day, but this was half-heartedly supported by the AWU, drawing the opprobrium of left-aligned unions. This suggests a tension of perspective between these sections. For the radicals, it was industrial power that would wipe conscription off the map. For the moderates, it was the referendum that would reshape the political scene.

In December 1916 a special conference of the Federal Party agreed to purify the parliamentary ranks of labour. One month after Hughes had walked
away from the Labor caucus room, the infamous split would be formalised as those who had betrayed the Labor platform were forever cast from the ranks of organised labour. The honour of moving the formal motion fell to the man whose role in the conscription movement had been so prominent, and whose political fortunes had risen so dramatically: James Scullin. Decrying Hughes’ attempt to violate Labor’s supposedly embedded opposition to compulsory overseas service, Scullin argued, “It is greater than a plank. It is a principle.” With that, the apostates were forever banished.\textsuperscript{103} Soon after this conference took place, Scullin wrote an article for the \textit{Echo} justifying the decision; its title, “Removing a Cancer,” aptly demonstrates its tenor.\textsuperscript{104}

There is a strong connection between the pre-war work of Curtin and Scullin as movement intellectuals, the conscription campaign, and the Labor split. Socialists and moderates formed a united front to defeat conscription and to purge the movement of its disloyal representatives. No doubt some level of contingency, self-interest, and opportunism were involved. But overwhelmingly both sides acted in this year to defend their worldview on democracy, the movement, and Labor power.

In recent times the utility of the split for Labor has been questioned, and the positive spin that the movement put on it has been denigrated largely in reference to the lack of electoral success that Labor experienced outside of Queensland until the mid-1920s.\textsuperscript{105} It is worth considering whether the union opposition against Hughes may have been correct, and whether a party purged of such a “cancer” was not the stronger for it. Has the entrenching of the union-party relationship that occurred at this time really been the disadvantage as has been described? If nothing else, this is one reason why there has been a consistent, left-wing presence in Australian politics, rather than the soft “liberalism” so dominant in countries such as the United States. Considered in the span of months or immediate electoral cycles, this was indeed a great tragedy for Labor. But of course, as has been seen in recent years, the limiting of vision to such a span has itself had tragic consequences.

In 1917 John Curtin departed for Western Australia, where he would begin a new life as a labour editor, parliamentarian, and eventually Prime Minister. But it would not be long until he and Scullin had an opportunity to cross swords. At the 1918 Labor conference in Perth Curtin and Scullin were on opposite sides as the party debated whether it should drop its commitment to compulsory military training.\textsuperscript{106} As a delegate for the Tasmanian branch, Curtin was forced
to vote in favour of retaining the scheme, though he made clear in his speech that he ardently opposed its retention. As a Victorian delegate, Scullin was bound to vote in favour of deleting the commitment, though he used his time at the podium to speak in favour of its retention. In 1921 they would meet again in Melbourne as delegates to the trade union convention that formulated the proposal for the socialisation objective, serving together on a specially appointed committee charged with this vital task.\footnote{107}

The later stages of these men’s careers reveal much of the story of Labor and is, rightly, the period against which they are both ultimately judged. But their contributions in this earlier period should not be ignored. Their role as movement intellectuals provides an important lens through which to consider the construction of the party’s political culture, and the manner in which it was re-crafted. In particular it allows us to consider the varying political forces that existed within Labor, and the contributions they made to developing and articulating its ideology. These sections came together in the fight against conscription from genuine conviction. But they did so with different strategies and end points in mind.

Labor was not weakened by this discord; in fact, this active contestation made it stronger. Through it, these competing sections were able to ensure that the party would remain connected to the broader labour movement. They constructed a series of arguments and positions in the context of debate and disagreement with each other, a rich legacy of ideas upon which the movement could draw. Crucially, this contestation was not about individuals, or personalities, or factional deals. It concerned genuine conviction over the nature and purpose of Labor, and the direction of the labour movement.

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\textbf{Endnotes}


3 Ibid., 15–8, 30–55.
6 Ibid., 113.
7 Ibid., 113.
8 Ibid., 93–113. For his arguments on the vote, see 115–6.
13 Ibid., 198–9.
14 Ibid., 163, 176–80.
19 Ibid., 293–5; 324–332.
21 Ibid., xviii.
22 Ibid., xlviii, 1.
23 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 39.
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29 Ibid.

30 After having witnessed one of Tom Mann’s rabble-rousing speeches. Robertson, J.H. Scullin, 8.

31 Such influences are chronicled most authoritatively by: Bongiorno, The People’s Party, 10–31; 19–209.

32 Although other factors were of course influential in this, such as economic responsibility for tariffs changing from the state to the federal level. Ibid., 97; 114.


34 McQueen, “Victoria,” 316.

35 This gendered description is used to reflect their conceptualisation, not the authors.


39 Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (CPD): 55, 1 July 1910, 41; 44.

40 Ibid., 45.

41 Ibid., 41–5.

42 Ibid., 42.

43 Ibid., 41–5.

44 Ibid., 42.

45 Ibid., 44.

46 Ibid., 43–4.

47 CPD 55, 43–4.


49 Evening Echo, 2 July 1914, 1.

50 “The News in Ballarat,” Evening Echo, 4 August 1914, 4.

51 “Our duty to Britain and to ourselves,” Evening Echo, 5 August 1914, 2.

52 This argument was in common currency in Labor circles even at this early stage, and would be a major part of the Moderate argument when calling for the wars end in 1918, see Fisher speaking on this: “Speech by Mr Fisher,” Evening Echo, 4 August 1914, 4.

53 “Our duty to Britain and to ourselves,” Evening Echo, 5 August 1914, 2.


55 Ibid.
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56 Ibid.
57 “War and the People,” Evening Echo, 10 August 1914, 2.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
71 Curtin, “Capitalist Politics”.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
74 Curtin, “Australian Defence”.
75 Curtin, “Capitalist Politics”.
76 Ibid.
82 See, for example, “War and the Workers,” Timber Worker, 8 April 1914, 1; “Back to the Abyss,” Timber Worker, 10 October 1914, 1; “European War,” Timber Worker, 12 December 1914, 4.
83 “War and the Workers,” Timber Worker, 8 April 1914, 1.
84 Council Meeting, 4 May 1916, Victorian Trades Hall Council 1874–1976, University of Melbourne Archives, Box 1, Folder: Minutes, Council Proper, 15 January 1914 to 15 September 1921, 201–2.
85 Charted at length by: Childe, How Labour Governs, 30–70; Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics, 81; 113.
86 Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics, 113.
87 See, for example, “If Conscription …Which?,” editorial, Evening Echo, 5 August 1914.
88 Australian Workers Union Federal Conference 1915, Sydney, NBAC, AWU records, E154/17.
89 Australian Workers Union Federal Conference 1916. Sydney, NBAC, AWU records, E154/17, 60–70.
90 Council Meeting, 4 May 1916, Victorian Trades Hall Council 1874–1976 records, University of Melbourne Archives, (UMA), 1986.0098, Box 1, Folder: Minutes, Council Proper, 15 January 1914 to 15 September 1921, 201–2.
91 Ibid., 191–2.
92 Council Meeting, 2 March 1916, Ibid., 188.
95 129,730 votes against, and 103,728 for. Ibid.
98 “Conscription Disloyalty,” Evening Echo, 3 August 1916, 2.
100 “If Conscription …Which?,” Editorial, Evening Echo, 5 August 1914, 2.
104 “Removing a Cancer,” Evening Echo, 13 December 1916, 2.
105 Dyrenfurth, Heroes and Villains, 223–30; Strangio, Neither Power Nor Glory, 122, 124–5.
Chapter 6

Ballarat’s Crusading Evening Echo: Fighting Militarism in World War I

Anne Beggs-Sunter

The Evening Echo commenced publication in Ballarat in 1895, becoming the organ of the Ballarat branch of the Australian Workers Union in 1910. In the early twentieth century it had the largest circulation of any newspaper outside Melbourne, with future Prime Minister James Scullin editing the newspaper between 1913 and 1922. During World War I, the paper under the socialist Scullin took a forceful anti-imperialist view, particularly when it came to the two conscription campaigns, when it was the strongest voice against conscription in Victoria. This chapter will examine the role of the newspaper, its editorial stance, reaction to it both locally and in Melbourne, where its twice daily editions were widely read. Its influence in representing labour causes in a strongly conservative media environment will be assessed.

This chapter will investigate the role of the Ballarat daily newspaper, the Evening Echo, during World War I in fighting against militarism and particularly against conscription. Ballarat, the great gold-mining settlement of nineteenth century Victoria, internationally recognised as the centre of the gold-mining industry, became in the early years of the twentieth century the seat of some powerful organisations, such as the Australian Natives Association (ANA) and the Australian Workers Union (AWU), which based
its Victorian-Riverina Branch in the city for a number of years from 1904. It also hosted a number of leading political figures, such as future Prime Minister James Scullin and AWU member David Charles McGrath, who were evangelised by the visiting international socialist Tom Mann when he visited Ballarat in 1903. It was the seat of both the Anglican and Catholic Dioceses, home to some prestigious secondary schools, and headquarters of the impressive Ballarat Ranger Barracks, which organised the activities of the militia, and assisted with the compulsory military training of boys, introduced by the Fisher government in 1911. The ingredients were at hand for a potent interplay of nationalism, class, ethnic and religious issues, brought to boiling point by the conscription campaigns and Australian Labor Party split of 1916–17. This chapter, drawing on Colin Cleary’s history of Ballarat labour, and the studies of Victorian labour by Frank Bongiorno and Paul Strangio, will argue that the *Evening Echo* exerted a powerful influence in galvanising opposition to conscription in Ballarat, and was also an influential voice in Melbourne in opposing the policies of the labour traitor Billy Hughes.

The *Evening Echo* began publication in 1895 as an evening daily newspaper for Ballarat, entering into competition in a crowded local market. From the birth of the *Ballarat Times* in 1854, the city had seen the rise and fall of many morning and evening papers.¹ In 1895 Ballarat had two major morning dailies – the liberal-leaning *Courier* and the conservative *Ballarat Star*. Amazingly, the historian of Ballarat Weston Bate does not acknowledge the existence of the *Echo*.² But he is not alone in that omission, because the *Australian Encyclopaedia*’s 1983 edition entry under “labour newspapers” makes no mention of the *Evening Echo*. From the first the *Echo* championed the working man, appropriately from its address just a few doors from the Ballarat Trades and Labour Council in Camp Street, the judicial heart of Ballarat. This was a strategic location, opposite the Court House and the Public Library, next to the Australian Natives Association and very close to the railway station. From the start it was a modest paper of just four sheets. No photos were published before 1920, and advertising was limited, although each year a lavishly illustrated Christmas supplement was published, and in 1904 an important Historical Souvenir celebrating the centenary of the Eureka Stockade. The paper’s founder was Alfred H. Powell, and its motto was “Fearless, Truthful and Just.”

In July 1903, the newspaper was incorporated into the public company Powell & Co. Ltd., a consortium of Ballarat business and professional men. Powell remained as managing director until the AWU began to increase
its investment in the company. The AWU had been formed in 1894 by the merger of the Shearers Union (formed in Ballarat in 1886) and the General Labourers Union, and the Creswick shearer David Temple became the first secretary. Bongiorno points out the closeness between the AWU and the Political Labor Council (PLC), and the fact that the AWU sponsored Tom Mann’s tour of country districts in 1903 in order to support the formation of country branches of the PLC. Bongiorno argues “that the AWU increasingly dominated the industrial and political wings of the labour movement” in Ballarat. The AWU appointed as their political organiser in 1908 the young Ballarat grocer James Scullin, of Irish Catholic extraction, who had excelled in debating competitions at the South Street Competitions and had come to notice when he unsuccessfully stood for the PLC against Alfred Deakin in the 1906 Federal election. In this year it also built a hall in Grenville Street capable of seating 1,000 people. Cleary shows that it also assisted in the birth of the *Labor Vanguard* on 23 December 1909, the official organ of the Ballarat Political Labor League, which continued until October 1910, giving a strong voice for labour issues, “locally, nationally and internationally.” Its voice undoubtedly contributed to the Labor victory at the 1910 Federal election, when James Scullin won the seat of Corangamite, Frank Anstey won Bourke, and Andrew Fisher became the Labor Prime Minister.

At this time strategists for the AWU and the Ballarat Political Labor League increased their interest in the *Echo*. As Cleary points out, the defeat of a good Labor candidate in the 1911 Victorian election led the Ballarat Trades and Labor Council in November 1911 to support the acquisition of its own newspaper to counter the predominate anti-labour daily press. In February 1912 Australian Labor Party (ALP) Senator John Barnes became a director, and the following month the Labor member for Grenville in the State parliament David Charles (D.C.) McGrath joined him on the board. From early 1912 the *Echo* became a strongly labour paper, the voice of the AWU. In 1913 it played a key role in supporting D.C. McGrath in his contest to win the Federal seat of Ballarat for Labor, defeating the high profile manufacturer H.V. McKay by the very narrow margin of 368 votes. Weston Bate makes some uncharacteristic errors in relation to McGrath. He called him the sitting member at the 1911 election, which he was not, and later identifies the son of an Ulster protestant as a Catholic.

McGrath had resigned his Victorian seat of Grenville to fight an intense election campaign, with libel suits pursued by both candidates – first McKay
sued the *Echo* for publishing comments that reflected poorly on McKay’s business dealings, and then McGrath sued the *Courier* in May over a letter published by a farmer Archibald Lawson.

At the election held on 31 May 1913, McGrath narrowly won the seat of Ballarat, with 16,417 votes to McKay’s 16,049. In the same election Scullin was defeated in Corangamite and was immediately offered the job of editing the *Echo*. Scullin was now embroiled in the legal proceedings over the McKay libel suit, but good news came in September when McKay dropped the proceedings and paid the *Echo’s* costs.

Labor was out of power, but opportunity beckoned in 1914 when the Cook Liberal Government took the country to a double-dissolution election in September 1914, an election played out against the outbreak of European war, and a rash of patriotic commitments by both sides of politics to support the Empire in a war against Germany. ALP leader Andrew Fisher made his famous pledge at Colac that “Australia will stand beside our own … to our last man and our last shilling.” Socialist voices against war and in favour of international workers’ solidarity against capitalism were overwhelmed by the dominating calls of nationalism. Robin Archer has analysed the reaction of labour parties of all the participating countries in the war, and is surprised that the Labor Party, so powerful in Australia in 1914, should have acquiesced so readily to the call to arms. He suggests that the desire for electoral success influenced the leadership’s decision making in 1914.

In fact the left tradition in Australia had been suspicious of military power being used against workers since the Eureka Stockade, when contingents of the British Army were pressed into action against protesting civilian gold miners at Ballarat in 1854. That working-class memory of military shooting at civilians was reinforced in 1890, when Colonel Tom Price of the Victorian Militia ordered his troops to “fire low and lay them out” when confronting striking maritime workers on the Melbourne waterside. Fortunately at the time the militia did not follow Price’s orders, but the memory remained a powerful one with working men.

The ALP found itself elected with a comprehensive federal victory in September 1914, with majorities in both houses. Billy Hughes, who had been preoccupied with the need for compulsory military training for many years, became Attorney-General and deputy leader, and Prime Minister in late 1915. Humphrey McQueen exposed his militaristic tendencies in *A New Britannia*, arguing that militaristic nationalism became part of the radical tradition
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in this period. Drawing on “White Australia” rhetoric and fear of Asia, McQueen powerfully argues that this militaristic nationalism composed of “racism, democracy, nationalism and imperial loyalty, formed ranks to storm the parapets at Gallipoli.”

McQueen traced the rise of support for compulsory military training, with its roots in the “White Australia” policy and the need to protect the new Commonwealth of Australia from threats from the north, particularly Japan after its unlikely defeat of Russia in 1905, when the *Worker* declared that “militarism is a curse of the greatest, but it is less a curse that the armed occupation of your country by invaders – possibly by invaders of an inferior race.” One of the strongest advocates for military training was Billy Hughes, who in an interview with the *Bulletin* in 1901 set forth his scheme for the military training of the whole male population, including every male between 18 and 21 years. He argued that the country did not need an offensive army, but a potential army that could be quickly assembled when an enemy threatened. He remarked, “encourage shooting till it becomes the national sport, as archery used to be in England.” In 1908 Hughes succeeded in having compulsory military training put on the platform of the Labor Party, overcoming the scruples of some members of the conference.

Hughes’ views were reinforced by Field Marshal Kitchener, when he visited Australia in 1909 at the invitation of Prime Minister Alfred Deakin to report on the new nation’s defence needs. Kitchener recommended the introduction of compulsory military training in his report. The scheme for training of all boys between the age of 12 and 18 years came into operation under a Fisher Labor government on 1 January 1911 under the *Defence Act*, which also stipulated that young men aged between 18 and 25 must train with the Citizen Military Force for 16 days a year. Conscientious objectors were not countenanced under the Act, and a number of prosecutions were pursued against scrupulous parents, particularly Quakers. Leckie gives an excellent overview of the operation of the cadet program, operated in both primary and secondary schools in communities of 2,000 plus. When war was declared in 1914, these young members of the Citizen Military Forces, and senior cadets at secondary schools, provided a ready pool of enlistments. The issue of compulsory military training would continue to be a complex one at ALP conferences.

This “militaristic nationalism” was demonstrated at the beginning of the war in 1914 by the rapid passing of the War Precautions Bill on 28 October 1914, spearheaded by Attorney-General Hughes, as one of the first acts of
the Fisher Government, a draconian curbing of civil liberties, which gave the federal government complete control over the press. In the wave of euphoria at the beginning of the war, it was not opposed by any members of the ALP or the Liberals. The regulations attached to this Act stipulated a wide range of penalties that could be given for acts such as “being in possession of official documents”, to “making statements prejudicial to recruiting”, to “showing, in printed matter, alterations made by the Censor.” Crowley argues that a review of the many cases prosecuted under the Act, which led to penalties of up to six months imprisonment, showed that people with Irish or foreign names predominated. The War Precautions Act was to have dramatic consequences for all newspapers, especially the Echo, as will become apparent.

In Ballarat there was a rush of enlistments in late 1914, and the morning newspapers became great advocates of recruiting campaigns. The Echo took a lower profile, concentrating on issues of unemployment, wages and the cost of living, which began to rise as prices rose, and the Echo published articles condemning profiteering and calling for price controls. This had been one of the promises of the Fisher Government, which had promised a referendum to ask the Australian people to take control of prices set for December 1915, but with the retirement of Fisher in October 1915 to become High Commissioner in London, Hughes manipulated the abandonment of price control, which had been a key plank in ALP policy. The rather weak excuse was that this was a state, rather than federal, issue. Souter argues that Hughes was also influenced by conservative opinion that the “blood-red mists of war” was not the right time to propose far-reaching constitutional change. Thus a wonderful opportunity was lost to the labour interests to institute important economic reform.

In the heady aftermath of news of the Gallipoli landing, D.C. McGrath's young son David, a 16-year-old student at the Ballarat Agricultural High School, enlisted for the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) with his father’s approval. But the father must have worried about his son, and in January 1916 the member for Ballarat, at the age of 43, enlisted as a sergeant with the 22 Army Service Corps. This action drew widespread favourable comment, as an inspiration to young men. For recruiting was beginning to fall off as the war dragged on, and particularly once news of the AIF's bloody introduction to the Western Front filtered through the heavily censored newspaper reports. Young driver David McGrath arrived in France from Egypt on 25 June 1916, in time to be part of the worst day in Australian history, the Battle of Fromelles on 19 July 1916, when Australian forces were led by the former Ballarat College school
boy Harold “Pompey” Elliott. When young McGrath’s parliamentarian father arrived in London, he seems to have exerted some influence to protect his son, who was transferred to his father’s unit, the 22 Australian Service Corps, in September 1916.27

Nevertheless, Sergeant McGrath, gaining a whiff of Hughes’s indoctrination by Lloyd George and the British Government whilst he was in London in 1916, wrote letters to his comrades in Victoria concerned about the possibility of Hughes introducing conscription. McGrath wrote letters to friends in Victoria, including Frank Anstey, expressing his antipathy to conscription, and he became a leading advocate for the “No” cause in London. On 19 October 1916 he indicated through the Echo that the soldiers on the front would vote “No”.28

As the war progressed, the War Precautions Act was gradually strengthened. In April 1915 Attorney-General Hughes introduced amendments that were beyond the pale for some Labor members. Strangio points out that Anstey and McGrath were among the small group who protested against the further incursions against civil liberties.29

**Fighting Against Conscription 1916**

As the dreadful casualty lists were published in the newspapers following the battles on the Somme in 1916, Hughes raised the issue of keeping up reinforcements to the AIF, and the need for conscription because voluntary enlistments were faltering. The Echo took a strong role in the conscription campaigns, as the mouthpiece of AWU and Trades Hall policy of protecting working-class interests. Scullin’s biographer John Robertson claims that the Echo was “the only daily in Victoria, and one of the few in the Commonwealth, to preach anti-conscription.”30 Of course there were some labour weeklies that were strongly opposed to conscription, including the Labor Call and the Australian Worker.

On 29 August 1916 the Echo’s major headline read: “Conscription has killed the Trade Union Movement in most European countries.” The editorial under the headline “Labour Prepare! Conscription conspiracy growing. Democracy in Danger” began:

The seeds of liberty which were sown in the blood-stained soil of Eureka, has created an Australian environment which is responsible for bold, courageous, and self-sacrificing characteristics, which have
made our sons admired by all in the world. If you would preserve these freedom-loving aspirations, which is the very soul force of true patriotism, then fight to the last gasp against the introduction of conscription into your country, because conscription is the very foundation and cornerstone of a servile state.\textsuperscript{31}

Scullin here uses the memory of Eureka, still so strong in Ballarat, when the military attacked civilians, and shot at innocent bystanders, including women and children. Again during the strikes of the early 1890s, the military had been used against the strikers.\textsuperscript{32} In an appeal to trade unionists, Scullin argued that if conscription is enforced, every soldier when he returns will be treated as a conscript, amenable to military laws. Workers would not be able to demand a living wage and would have to accept whatever wage was offered. This theme was strongly reiterated in future issues.\textsuperscript{33} Scullin raised the bogey of Germans – who could not enlist in the AIF – remaining in Australia and breeding and taking over the homeland; of the importation of cheap Asian labour to cover the shortage caused by conscription, and the evils of “the substitution of military law over civil law. The boys went out to fight the cursed system of militarism. Would it be fair to find it here when they come back?” At this time the AWU conference accepted a motion condemning conscription, showing the hardening of labour opposition to the concept.\textsuperscript{34}

Hughes announced a referendum at 4.00pm in Parliament on 30 August 1916. He knew that the Trades Halls and most of the Political Labor Leagues opposed conscription, but he also knew that he had the support of almost all the newspapers in the nation. The AWU quickly organised a meeting the following evening in its Ballarat hall, which was reported in the \textit{Echo} on 1 September 1916. It gave bold headlines to the “Great Meeting” and “stirring speeches” and the demonstration that “liberals and labourites have joined to prevent Prussianism being foisted on Australia.” Throughout September and October, the \textit{Echo} advertised meetings organised in halls all over the district, with speakers from the Ballarat Trades Hall, parliamentarians like Senator John Barnes, and Scullin and local school teacher Tom Carey. Often these meetings would be held outdoors, at the Galloway Monument in Sturt Street. Ballarat was a popular meeting place. Scullin’s great oratorical skills, honed at the South Street debating competitions, would have been much appreciated, as too were Carey’s. As Strangio points out, speakers “appealed variously to nation, class, conscience, gender, race and ethnicity.”\textsuperscript{35} For Scullin and his
associate Richard Jordan at the *Echo*, the attack on capitalists and profiteers came through strongly, as well as the theme that Australia had done more than its share in defending the Empire. Strongest of all was the attack on militarism. Australia had sent troops to help defeat the German state that had subsumed the nation to a military ideal. Now Hughes wanted Australia to itself submit to the same militarist conception of the state.

It is instructive to compare the coverage of the campaign by the three Ballarat dailies. The *Echo* devoted almost every column inch to the campaign, and gave coverage of meetings conducted in Melbourne, such as a great anti-conscription rally at the Yarra Bank in Melbourne attended by 10,000 people, and an Anti-Conscription League meeting at the Guild Hall, Swanston St, attended by over 2,000 people. It also reported in full the speeches made at an anti-conscription meeting at the Ballarat AWU Hall on 18 September. Not for the only time in the campaign, Scullin the newspaper man reported his own speech. This meeting was effectively the launch of the “No” campaign, held on the same evening that Hughes launched the “Yes” campaign in Sydney.

The *Courier*, and the even more conservative *Ballarat Star*, gave lengthy coverage to the Prime Minister, and to “Yes” campaigners, including many letters to the editor in support of conscription. Editorials, and later cartoons, were used to support the “Yes” case. They often ignored anti-conscription rallies, however they had to print notices of the many AWU evening meetings arranged at country halls and on street corners. These showed the extraordinary devotion of campaigners like Scullin, working full-time during the day at the presses, and at night driving many miles around the countryside to address meetings at country localities.

On 9 October 1916, there were extraordinary scenes in Ballarat when Prime Minister Hughes came to open the annual South Street Competitions at the Coliseum, a venue capable of seating 10,000 people. The evening was advertised as a musical program, to be proceeded by a speech from Mr Hughes. The Prime Minister blatantly used the opportunity to give a more than hour-long speech explaining the reasons why conscription was needed. Two of his supporters then proceeded to give lengthy speeches in favour of a “Yes” vote, such that the advertised musical program did not commence until 10.30pm. The *Echo* roundly condemned Hughes for bringing politics to South Street.

During the campaign the *Echo* produced a number of special “anti-conscription” issues, which condensed leading articles from the previous week. On 23 October it carried a long letter to the editor from J.H. Osborne, MA,
a local schoolteacher, under the headline “What History Teaches.” This same Osborne had tried to ask Hughes a question at the Coliseum meeting. He also had several letters published in the *Courier*, which drew reluctant praise from the editor on 23 October for the reasoned arguments of the writer. Osborne argued that for a country with such a small population, the demands on its population which conscription would bring, and the resulting loss of young manhood, could take decades, even centuries, to rectify.

On the eve of polling day the *Echo* published another special “Anti-Conscription” issue, and Scullin was a leading speaker at the final rally at the Galloway Monument in Sturt Street with a “great audience.” On polling day, the conservative papers called, in striking headlines, for a vote for “Honour and the King,” as against “dishonour and the Kaiser.” The results came through by Monday 30 October, when the *Echo* announced that the nation had narrowly rejected conscription, that although Victoria had voted “Yes,” Ballarat had voted “No,” with the labour areas of Ballarat East and Sebastopol strongly “No,” while more middle-class Ballarat West strongly “Yes.” Most notable was the Warrenheip division, which included the strongly Irish Catholic township of Dunnett, where the vote was 145 “Yes,” to 460 “No.” This district had been strongly influenced by reports of executions after the Dublin Easter rising, which the *Echo* had reported with front page headlines throughout May 1916. The Catholic press in Victoria also carried reports condemning the British government for abandoning Ireland’s promised home rule. In total the Ballarat electorate had voted 11,612 in favour, 13,158 against. Many farming communities voted “No,” indicating concern that conscription would threaten their ability to harvest crops and manage dairies, a factor alluded to by the historian Ian Turner and mentioned by Russel Ward.

The question of the soldiers’ vote was much debated in the *Echo*. There were suggestions emanating from Sergeant McGrath that frontline soldiers had voted “No.” Hughes had brought the soldiers’ vote forward, hoping that a strong “Yes” vote from the front could be used to support his case in Australia. But the figures were very close, with suggestions that the frontline soldiers had actually voted “No,” not wishing to inflict such hell on their relatives and friends. Pompey Elliott, although himself strongly in favour of conscription, could understand this point of view. He reserved his venom for the anti-conscription campaigners, like Sergeant McGrath.

The *Echo*’s contribution had been vital, as the only daily newspaper in Victoria taking a firmly anti-conscription stance. Jauncey estimates that
60,000 copies a day were sent to Melbourne for distribution. The *Mildura Cultivator* on May 1917 carried a piece attacking the *Echo*’s views on Hughes and conscription, referring to it as “a sheet so widely distributed among the people.” However, Scullin warned that conscription was not dead, and that Hughes, whom he denounced as “Australia’s Napoleon” had to be expelled from the Labor Party. This happened on 14 November, when the Labor caucus in Melbourne split over the issue, and Hughes and his followers left the Labor Party and formed a minority National Labor Government, which depended on Liberals for support. At a conference of the Labor Party on 4 December 1916 in Melbourne, Scullin moved the motion to expel all members who supported conscription. He reinforced the notion of conscription for overseas service was what the party objected to. The vote was carried 29 votes to 4. The great split in the Labor Party occurred, which would keep it out of office until 1929, when Scullin would become Prime Minister at a critical time in Australia’s history.

**Fighting Against Hughes and Conscription 1917**

In the dark days of 1917, civic leaders in Ballarat decided to raise local spirits by organising an Easter homecoming, inviting former citizens to visit the city and reminisce about old times. One of the main attractions was the Eureka Pageant, held at the Eureka Stockade, featuring an “historically correct” re-enactment of the “only battlefield in Australia … Hundreds of men are taking part, trained in the old fashioned method by Warrant Officer Humphries.” The pageant was a great success, attended by 15,000 people, and had to be repeated the following weekend. But not everyone had their spirits lifted. The day after the pageant, a letter to the editor appeared in the Ballarat *Courier* signed “One who has given all,” grieved to see “the exuberance of spirit and fine physique of the many young men in the tableaux,” and condemning this waste of energy “when so many of our sons have to face stern reality in France.” This provoked a quick response from Major Lazarus, who pointed out that the participants in the pageant were mostly boys from the cadet units of the School of Mines and High School, supported by a few grey-haired veterans.

This homecoming celebration had been held in the lead up to the May 1917 Federal election, an intense campaign between the Nationalist “Win the War” Party, and the ALP, which was working towards advocating for peace negotiations, and the *Echo* gave increasing space to promoting Pope Benedict’s proposals for negotiations, which were roughly equivalent to President
Woodrow Wilson's 19 Points. On the evening of 28 April 1917 Vida Goldstein spoke to a well-attended meeting at the Ballarat City Hall as a Peace candidate for the Senate. Election day, 4 May 1917, was very quiet in Ballarat because there was no contest against the sitting member, Sergeant McGrath, serving with the AIF in London. McGrath was lucky that there was no contest in Ballarat, because Labor was decimated in the election, with Hughes winning the seat of Bendigo from the sitting Labor candidate. Immediately conscription was in the air again, and the War Precautions Act was being used to even more devastating effect against peace advocates and anti-conscriptionists. A new Unlawful Associations Act was enacted from the end of July 1917, intent on crushing the most dogged anti-war organisation, the Industrial Workers of the World.\textsuperscript{45} The \textit{Echo} took up the struggle against the draconian methods of the Nationalist Government, rejoicing when AWU organiser P.H. Hickey won apologies and costs in a libel case after the Prime Minister had said Hickey was “a member of the I.W.W., and proud of it.”\textsuperscript{46}

Throughout September 1917 the \textit{Echo} was full of reports about the general strike in Melbourne of the waterside labourers, and the Russian Revolution. There were also reports on Pope Benedict’s attempts to negotiate an end to war, and the new Archbishop of Melbourne Daniel Mannix. The tall, handsome Irishman who was a strong supporter of home rule made a great impression on his Melbourne parishioners, and was also very popular with Ballarat Catholics, who had a special connection to Mannix as the cousin of their own Bishop Daniel Foley.\textsuperscript{47} On 1 September 1917 Scullin, revealing his Irish background, wrote in the \textit{Echo} that Australia needed “a guiding principle of patriotism in its truest sense, an Australian Sinn Fein.” The \textit{Echo}, like many papers throughout Australia, published reports of the amazing Melbourne meeting in favour of Irish Home Rule held on 5 November 1917 at the Richmond racecourse, after the guest speaker Archbishop Mannix was refused use of the Exhibition building. A huge crowd estimated at 100,000 people were there to cheer and hear the Archbishop.\textsuperscript{48} Many loyalists, including Prime Minister Hughes, claimed he should be interned for disloyalty. Val Noone highlights the rare alliance of radical working-class interests with an Archbishop, arguing that Mannix, as a charismatic leader, was able to articulate “the already developing demands of a mass movement which in this case was challenging the Australian state’s seemingly endless need for men to kill and be killed.”\textsuperscript{49}

Just two days later, on 7 November, Hughes announced another conscription referendum, with the poll just before Christmas. The collapse of the Russian
front meant that the Allies were sorely pressed in France and Belgium, and casualties continued at a high level. Hughes opened the “Yes” campaign in Bendigo, and Scullin helped to form a Ballarat District Anti-Conscription League, which held its first meeting at the AWU Hall on 22 November 1917. Scullin made a passionate plea to mothers, at the prospect of voters making 150,000 young men turning 20 years old, called up for military service, likened to a pack of dogs chasing a rabbit. Again there were special issues of the newspaper, and supplies of paper ran so low that on occasions the paper was down to one sheet. But it continued to be almost the lone daily voice against conscription, and its efforts were justified by the poll on 20 December 1917, when the nation voted even more strongly against conscription. The Echo wrote proudly on 21 December 1917 that “in spite of 90% of the capitalist press, large sections of the Pulpit, and Parliament supporting Conscription, it appeared that the “no” vote had won the day, in spite of prosecutions, of persecution, in spite of suppression of free speech, in spite of regulations framed by a Junta.” In the Ballarat electorate the vote was “Yes” 10,777, “No” 12,367. The second referendum was even clearer in rejecting conscription, and this time Victoria voted no by a small majority, indicating the effectiveness of the anti-conscription campaign led by the AWU, supported by the strong voice of Archbishop Mannix.

1918

The Echo moved in 1918 to a position of actively advocating for peace, in line with the ALP Federal resolution of 1917. The paper was in trouble with the Nationalist Government for an article published on 2 May 1918 headed “Peace – Is it for Ever Banned?” In the article, it was claimed that if the Allies had offered honourable peace terms in 1917, Germany would have accepted them, but because generous terms were not offered, Germany was now in a stronger position. In July, Richard Jordan, but not Scullin, was charged under the War Precautions Regulations with publishing an article likely to be prejudicial to recruiting. Labor Call expressed sympathy for Jordan:

Another political casualty happened at Ballarat last week, when Mr. Richard Jordan, the well-known journalist, collided with the War Precautions Act; and came through second best. Mr. Jordan is attached to the “Evening Echo;” and, with Mr. J.H. Scullin, made
it fairly bristle with force and facts when the Little One was on the rampage with the slavery racquet. It appears that Mr. Jordan set out to give a testimonial to peace, like Christ many, many decades ago, but although to some people peace is a very desirable subject, it is, nevertheless, most undesirable to the recruiting authorities, and, as a result, the Laborite with the Biblical tone about his name was mulcted in £25 damages.\textsuperscript{55}

The ALP Member for Ballarat, D.C. McGrath, returned from England late in 1918 and was welcomed as a hero at the end of the war. Yet he had to face a very tough and bitter re-election campaign in 1919 when the Nationalist candidate, former soldier E.T.C. Kerby, was strongly supported by the war hero, Pompey Elliott, who was standing as a Nationalist Senate candidate for Victoria. Elliott published a venomous attack against McGrath, saying that as a member of the AIF he had had a “safe and cushy job” in London, and that he had pulled strings to have his young son moved away from the Front. McGrath angrily refuted these claims and launched a libel writ against the General.\textsuperscript{56} McMullin cites this as “one of the most murky and sordid episodes in Australian political history.”\textsuperscript{57} In fact young McGrath had served at the Battle of Fromelles, and McGrath senior had seen service in France in 1917 before being invalided home.\textsuperscript{58} Elliott’s status held sway, and he was elected at the top of the Senate poll for Victoria, and probably accounted for the fact that McGrath lost his seat of Ballarat by a solitary vote. However, McGrath appealed against the result on account of voting irregularities, and had the satisfaction of having the result overturned in July 1920, much to the satisfaction of the \textit{Echo}.

On 18 February 1922 Scullin was elected to the safe Labor seat of Yarra, and at a Board meeting of the \textit{Echo} the following week Scullin was replaced as editor by his brother-in-law John Kean. It continued as an AWU paper, until its liquidation in February 1929, not living long enough to see its former managing editor, Jim Scullin, elected Prime Minister of Australia in October 1929. It had always been an underdog, under-resourced from advertising revenue, struggling financially, harassed by censorship laws and distribution problems, but as this chapter shows it made a highly principled stance against conscription for overseas military service during World War I, and was the lone daily newspaper in Victoria to take an anti-conscription stance. McMullin grants it a “telling contribution.”\textsuperscript{59} It must be counted a contributing factor to the defeat of the conscription referenda, and it is a great injustice to
“the little paper that could,” that it has not been digitised under the National Library’s World War I newspaper digitising project. The *Echo* has not been microfilmed and the only complete extant set, in very fragile condition, is in the State Library of Victoria. It deserves to be made widely available because of its powerful advocacy of labour interests and particularly the platform it gave for regional ALP politicians, as Cleary has signposted.\(^6\) The *Echo* is such a valuable historical resource because it was edited in the war years by the “silver-tongued” James Scullin, and because of its strong stance against military conscription, which it characterised as an attack on democracy and workers’ rights.

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Chapter 7

Heroes of the Fireplace: Conscientious Objectors in Australian Newspapers during World War I

Rhys Cooper

With censorship and sedition laws enacted during the First World War, the Australian print media of the time was predominantly an arm of propaganda for the federal government. As such, the depictions presented in mainstream, Australian print media of anti-war campaigners and conscientious objectors were typically negative. A common method used by newspapers to persuade public opinion against women and men who challenged the war was to compare their perceived cowardice with the bravery of returned or serving Australian soldiers. Letters and opinions of those who were serving, or had served on the front lines declared anti-war protestors in Australia to be “worse than cowards.” Furthermore, journalists frequently compared the gallantry of those serving in the Australian armed forces, with the unpatriotic and weak natures of those who opposed the conflict. Such representations attempted to create a stark contrast between heroes and cowards, Australian and un-Australian, and help to further part a nation already divided by the conscription campaigns. This chapter examines the dichotomy created by Australian print media of the cowardly pacifist and conscientious objector with the heroic soldier as well as how this contrast altered over the course of the Great War.
Writing a month before the beginning of World War I, a Melbourne journalist claimed that conscientious objectors to military service (COs), were possessors of “extravagant consciences” who would “allow murder if it suited them, or arson, or dynamite outrages, or bigamy.”1 Similar criticisms and fears of objectors continued throughout World War I in Australia. Yet for most of the war the only recourse available to individuals and institutions that wished to see eligible but reluctant Australian men enlist in the forces was to shame them into doing so. Hugh Smith has argued that pressure on COs to join the services during the war, “came from those public-spirited citizens who handed out white feathers and asked when they were going to do their duty.”2 Bobbie Oliver and Marilyn Lake have also presented examples in which organisations (such as the White Feather Leagues) and individual citizens ridiculed eligible men for not having enlisted to fight.3 Yet it was Australian newspapers that formed the most evident, broad and consistent attack against those they saw as avoiding their patriotic duty. Throughout the conflict Australian papers were generally united in fearing, fighting, belittling and ultimately dismissing the conscientious objector. The newspapers examined in this study represented the CO as a shirker, coward, scrounger and unmanly enemy of the nation and the war effort. They framed contrasts between the valour of soldiers and the selfishness of COs. Without a mandate for national service, the Australian government’s inability to force COs to war manifested into mainstream newspapers attempting to influence and pressure them into combat.

There is a dearth of information regarding Australian conscientious objectors, likely due to the absence of conscription in the country during World War I. With the exception of a month in 1916, Australia did not forcibly draft men into the military, and therefore objectors were not subject to state persecution on the same scale or severity as COs in other Allied nations.4 The legality of conscientious objection in Australia means few primary sources about the groups and individuals who took a conscientious stance against the war exist. Further, just as Lois Bibbings has asserted of the English CO, Australian objectors were “a diverse group with vastly different backgrounds, views and politics.”5 Such diversity makes it difficult to determine how many men in Australia did not join the war effort as a result of their consciences.6 Only some were attached to organisations or proactively spoke out against the war. Consequently, the Australian objector was largely anonymous during wartime and is a difficult figure to study nearly a century on. As a result
newspapers provide one of the only avenues of investigation in attempting to comprehend the standing of COs in Australian society during the war.

Perhaps as a result of such research difficulties, the Australian CO of World War I has been almost overlooked by histories of the home front. Margaret Levi and Stephen DeTray in a study of COs throughout Australian history have gone as far as claiming that “conscientious objection was hardly an issue in 1914–18.” One of the few exceptions to this omission in Australian history can be found in a chapter of Bobbie Oliver’s work Peacemongers. Oliver provides a brief overview of the different religious sects that opposed war, and argues that few men objected to war on grounds that were not based on religion. Yet, the focus of Oliver’s study is on a month in 1916 in which exemption trials took place, and overlooks other periods of the war. Such a focus is understandable, as the exemption trials represent the only time in which COs were prosecuted, and therefore documented as objectors by the Australian government. Thus, while a useful and almost unique contribution to this field, Oliver’s study illustrates some of the difficulty involved in understanding the Australian CO in World War I.

Investigations into the treatment of objectors in Britain during World War I provide some material relevant to the Australian case, yet the approaches of these different governments towards COs were markedly different. British objectors were prosecuted by the state throughout the war, and consequently trial records have been the focus of scholarly attention in that context. Little consideration has been given to cultural representations of the CO in British newspapers. A notable exception is the valuable work of Lois Bibbings, who has investigated the gendered nature of war and the depiction of COs as “unmen” by the British print media.

Although unlike prior studies in the field, this paper takes a novel approach to the subject by assessing selected Australian newspaper’s portrayals of conscientious objectors (COs) throughout World War I. Such representations have been gathered through comprehensive examinations of three popular broadsheets published throughout the war: Melbourne’s Argus, Sydney’s Sydney Morning Herald and Adelaide’s Advertiser. These daily broadsheets had high readerships, extensive letters to the editor sections, and were well-established sources of news at the beginning the war. As major newspapers, they also produced a large number of original articles that were syndicated to other publications throughout the nation. The editors of all three papers, Sir Edward Cunningham at the Argus, Thomas W. Heney at the Herald and Sir
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John Langdon Bonython at the *Advertiser*, were strong supporters of the war effort as well as the push for conscription. Such support was not unique, but indicative of most Australian newspapers and their editors.

In 1918, 26 Australian newspaper editors (including Cunningham, Heney and Bonython) met with the Commonwealth Minister for Defence to discuss press censorship laws. “Among the most noteworthy features of the Conference,” according to the official document that resulted, “was the evident devotion of the Press of Australia to the public interest, and an unswerving loyalty to the cause of the Allies unexcelled in any other part of the world.” Indeed, both primary sources of the papers themselves, as well as investigations of the Australian press during this period indicate that editors and owners of mainstream Australian newspapers were consistently supportive of the war effort as well as the Australian government’s war aims.

Had editors not been supportive of war or conscription, the censorship laws implemented through the *War Precautions Act* of 1914 would have ensured that such dissenting opinions were not published. World War I had introduced a new era of state directed propaganda, in which the “mass media were able, and therefore required” according to John F. Williams, “to play a decisive role across the broad social spectrum of the modern state.” The decisive role of the media was of particular importance in Australia, where military service was voluntary. Regulations 28I and 28AC of the *War Precautions Act* made it illegal for newspapers to print anything that might negatively influence recruitment, and allowed censors the power to search newspaper offices.

Kevin Fewster has offered strong evidence to show that censorship inhibited and sometimes destroyed the few newspapers in Australia that printed views against the government’s war aims. The result of government censorship and general editorial support for war and conscription was that Australian mainstream newspapers were almost homogenous in their reporting (and absence of reporting) on war issues. The three broadsheets examined in this study are therefore representative of the broader treatment of COs in Australian, mainstream newspapers.

This treatment was one of derision and antagonism. Through official reports and letters to the editor, the examined broadsheets presented COs as being greater enemies to the country than Germans and mockingly judged their masculinity as being lower than women’s. They frequently questioned the authenticity of CO’s motives, a cynicism that was adopted by the state during the brief period of exemption courts. Stranger still, the examined newspapers, no
doubt like most Australian papers throughout this censored and homogenous era, accused the CO of being the weakest element of Australian society, while simultaneously presenting the greatest threat to it.

The Threat Posed

Even before Australia became involved in World War I, conscientious objectors were the subject of newspaper interest. The 1903 Defence Act required that all Australian, male, youths undergo military training. While the Act also held a clause excusing young men who had conscientious objections to joining the military, few exceptions were made and cadets who identified as COs were subsequently and regularly punished with incarceration.

In early 1914, all three selected broadsheets published a letter written by R.J. Roberts, whose 16-year-old son had conscientiously objected to participating in military training. Roberts lamented that his “own son at this moment lies in a solitary confinement cell in the Queenscliff fortress for no other misdemeanour than loyalty to his parents’ views of Christian teaching.” While most newspapers, including the Advertiser and the Sydney Morning Herald, published the letter without comment, the Argus printed an article about the young Quaker’s beliefs and incarceration in response. “Mr Roberts and those who think with him,” argued the journalist, “show a lack of the communal spirit which makes society harmonious and its citizens safe.” The piece went on to state its support for Senator James Stewart, who had advocated for the “transhipment of refectory boys to another country.” Conscientious objection was seen as a position that undermined the security of Australia, not just because it was socially disharmonious, but because it was both a stance that attracted sympathy from the public, and one that was hard to disprove.

The handling of young conscientious objectors was an issue that regularly surfaced in the examined newspapers throughout pre-war 1914. Reverend Leyton Richards wrote to the Minister of Defence urging the need “for some differentiation in regard to the treatment,” of objectors, for as long as they were “treated identical[ly] with the ordinary shirker,” their abuse was “inevitable.” Letters to the editors of newspapers examined in this study show that at least some Australians shared Richards’ views, and were sympathetic to the plight of young, incarcerated COs. During the case of Cadet Roberts, a letter to the Argus argued that despite media and government trying to “disguise the fact, and wrap it in specious phrase … the plain truth remains, that this case is one in
which a lad is being persecuted for conscience sake.”\textsuperscript{25} The letter further urged that a system of identifying “real conscientious objectors” was required, and that those deemed genuine should be pardoned from service, “otherwise the inherent intolerance of the present system in a democratic country will speedily destroy it.”\textsuperscript{26} It is important to note that sympathy towards conscientious objectors in the newspapers examined were only ever printed in the form of letters to the editor, or as verbatim public addresses by third parties. Defence of COs in the papers examined were exclusively letters written by members of the public and not journalists. The authorial voice of the broadsheet was never present in such cases, and, as was standard for the time, the papers would distance themselves from the opinions of public correspondents.

Letters defending the position of COs were also rarely printed. In this study of three papers from 1914–18, fewer than ten such letters could be found. The lack of epistolary support printed in these newspapers does not indicate a lack of public support for COs (especially for the cadet COs of 1914), but nor does it indicate an intentional stifling of such views by the papers themselves. What can be understood from the few letters published defending the moral position of objectors, is the perceived importance of ensuring that those who opted out of national duties on conscientious grounds were not treated in the same manner as those who evaded such obligations as a result of idleness or cowardice. W.H. Pope’s letter to the \textit{Advertiser} was indicative of most correspondence defending COs, as he described the “conscientious objector, who certainly is not a shirker, but who, on account of his conscientious convictions, is treated worse than a criminal.”\textsuperscript{27} Throughout the war the three broadsheets examined depicted shirkers as presenting a threat to the nation that was almost on par with Germany, and COs in general, as shirkers in disguise.

Doubts concerning the validity of conscientious objections were also present in pre-war 1914 editions of the three papers being examined. Yet there was the substantial difference that epistolary as well as journalistic forms of argument against objectors was printed, while positions of support for COs were limited to letters from the public. An \textit{Argus} article entitled “Physiognomy of shirkers” detailed the Inspector-General, Sir Ian Hamilton’s examination of island defensive installations off the New South Wales coast. Early in the report Hamilton is described as having had “a kind of sympathy” for conscientious objectors. Yet the article goes on to report that after visiting a prison camp of what he anticipated to be “little Quaker boys” with the “open and disingenuous countenance of the conscientious objector,” he was surprised to find that “so
far as my knowledge of human nature, as judged by physiognomy goes … the boys there were just the reverse – shifty-eyed and not at all impressive.”

The concept of conscientious objection, at least as represented by Australian newspapers, was that it allowed cadets who wished to avoid their national duty an excuse. Therefore conscientious objection, as well as COs generally, were considered a potential threat to the defence of the nation. At this stage of 1914 though, COs and the apparent danger they represented, was specific to cadets. It was with the coming of the World War I and the eventual decline in volunteer enlistments, the newspapers examined began to portray the CO as a shirker and a hazard to the nation’s wellbeing.

While objectors received scant attention throughout 1915, by 1916, with fewer eligible men willing to enlist in the services, COs became a recurrent subject in newspapers surveyed. The common case levelled at objectors was the inherently unfair nature of their views. While they, according to an article in the *Herald*, “were willing to enjoy all the benefits of any State in which they resided,” COs remained “unwilling to share any of the burdens.”

Comparisons of men who had been wounded or killed while fighting for the survival of the Empire were made with COs who had remained home to enjoy the fruits of their supposedly unearned freedom (this will be discussed in further detail later). Such comparisons led one journalist to argue that when “the existence of a nation is threatened, those who refuse to take part in its defence should forgo their rights of citizenship.”

By mid-1916 the treatment of COs in the Australian press had not yet reached the level of vitriol apparent in English newspapers. British COs were actively resistant to a draft, and often being sentenced to prison. Conscription pushed objectors into the public eye, and placed them in a position where many were tried and punished for their beliefs. Comparatively, Australian COs did not face a draft and were therefore, with the exception of some vocal opponents to the war, anonymous. When reports in the broadsheets examined attacked conscientious objectors, they were represented as a distant and unknown group. This may have been because unlike more vocal anti-war campaigners in Australia, COs were collections of small and diverse religious sects (such as the Quaker Society of Friends), or individuals without affiliations to any CO organisation or movement. Furthermore, such groups and individuals did not generally campaign against the war, but rather objected to being involved in it. Yet, with the announcement of a conscription referendum set for October 1916, and the polarising and spiteful campaigns run on both sides of the
ballot, conscientious objectors were increasingly treated by newspapers as a great threat to the Australian war effort.

The threat presented by COs to the Australian government, and by extension Australian newspapers, was that conscientious objection could be seen as an easy way for men to avoid service, particularly if conscription were introduced. The three examined newspapers began printing reports, particularly letters to the editor, in an effort to rally the Australian people against the idea of conscientious objection and the individuals and groups who adhered to such a stance. Australian papers began mimicking their counterparts in England where the “official view,” according to historian Lois Bibbings, “seemed to centre upon fears that, if objectors attracted widespread sympathy or support, the legitimacy of military compulsion and, indeed, of the war effort might have been undermined.” Bibbings goes on to argue that as a result of attacks on the CO by English newspapers, such men were considered, “to be the most heinous cultural criminal.” The assertion that English people rallied against COs based only on the newspapers printed at the time is a problematic one, but there can be no doubt as to the vitriolic and sometimes violent way in which English newspapers described COs. In 1916 the *Sunday Herald* remarked that while the conscientious objector was “not worth the powder and shot … perhaps a few rounds might be spared.” Remarkably, similar sentiments can be found in some Australian newspapers in the lead-up to the first Australian conscription referendum. W.F. Ogilvie from Glen Innes, in his letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* viewed the CO as an “excrescence on society, which a virile community should not allow for one moment to exist, not even to draw one tainted breath.” In Ogilvie’s opinion, astoundingly printed in a major Australian newspaper, “the first shot from each and every soldier’s rifle should find its home in a conscientious objector.”

To what extent Ogilvie’s letter was representative of the Australian population’s view of conscientious objectors is difficult to know. Yet what is apparent in the printing of his letter is the extent to which the three examined newspapers, and likely many more, helped in representing the CO as a real danger to the nation that needed to be expunged. Much as in England, the CO posed a threat to the process of conscription, the enlistment campaign, and the war effort in general. As a result, Australian papers attempted to rally public sentiment against the objector by presenting him in an unfavourable, unpatriotic, and unmanly light. The threat of the CO was to be met, at least in part, by the Australian press.
“What Are You Doing Here”: Questions of Masculinity and Loyalty

In 1916 a journalist for the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on the conversations he had with returned soldiers at a George Street Services Club. While most of the report centred on the men’s support for conscription, there was talk of those men “who ought to be in khaki” but were not. The CO, one of the many unnamed soldiers was reported to have claimed, “lives on another man’s blood … he lets other men do his fighting for him.” The reporter recounted how “indignation almost choked” one returned soldier, as “he told of the smug excuses of the ‘religious and conscientious’ objectors.” The soldier, after some lambasting of COs, concluded that he would, “like to turn a few Huns loose among them and their cows and their fat cheques and their religious objections.” This report was one of a many that placed conscientious objectors in a direct binary with the heroic returned soldier. The soldier, while having sacrificed their health, time and security in the name of duty, is contrasted with the man who stayed home on questionable principles and was, as a result, earning plenty and living comfortably. Articles such as this help strengthen Bibbings’ argument that World War I restored and strengthened traditional ideals of maleness and masculinity, and created an important conflict within that frame: “that of the military man versus the conscientious objector to military service.” The *Herald* report offers several tropes that appear and reappear in articles about COs throughout 1916–17: the objectors’ devotion to Australia, their comforts and rewards for remaining home, and most prominently, their diminutive masculinity, particularly in comparison to the heroes of Gallipoli and the Western Front.

The author of an article that appeared in the *Advertiser* applauded the “strong, valorous, pure and clean,” men who had “laid down every worldly advantage because they believe that the cause for which England is fighting is the cause of God.” In contrast the reporter considered the views and excuses offered by COs to be “absolute nonsense.” The dichotomy between the strong, masculine warrior and the shirking CO was one that continued up until the end of the war. The idea that during the conflict, as Bibbings asserts of England, “efforts to influence popular thinking about manhood became more focused, more deliberate and … more desperate,” is also true of the Australian media. COs represented an aspect of society who had shirked their responsibilities as men. Or, as one report in the *Argus* stated, “manhood suffrage connotes manhood service and responsibility … the man who will not defend his
country over any line whatever is not worth giving a country to defend.”42 The difference between the hardships suffered in war, and the supposed comforts that came with a questionable moral stance, were commented upon in most articles criticising COs during referenda years, and presented one of the strongest challenges to the masculinity of objectors.

A moral stance against violence was viewed, by reporters and published members of the public alike, as the workings of an “unsound mind: or a man so dreadfully selfish that he wants to sit beside a snug fireside in safety at the expense of all our splendid boys.”43 In an article titled “Go and do your bit” that featured in the Sydney Morning Herald, the comfort of the open fire was again contrasted to the horrors of the fire of battle. For while Australia’s soldiers fought and died for their nation, argued the reporter, all that the moral stance of the CO amounted to was “words, words, words from these heroes of the fireplace.”44

The comparisons and subsequent derision of conscientious objectors did not end with soldiers. The courage, dutifulness and masculinity of objectors were also frequently placed in contrast with that of women. Just as in the English press, while soldiers were often “depicted as both the antithesis and the defenders of a largely defenceless female population,” conscientious objectors “tended to be portrayed as feminized.”45 In Australian newspapers, COs were not just represented as being equally feminine, but rather less masculine than women. W.H. Ogilvie of Glen Innes, in his vast and erratic letter to the Sydney Morning Herald, asks “are there any women conscientious objectors? I have never heard of any; all of them—the good ones, are fighters.”46 The comparison of COs to women is one that appears frequently within the examined newspapers during 1916–17. COs offered nothing to the war effort, and even less to Australia, especially when compared to one of the most undervalued groups in society at the time, women. Women were represented in newspapers as being more masculine, patriotic and necessary than the objector. An article in the Advertiser a week before the first conscription referendum claimed that had objectors “only done their duty as the women had there would be no need for compulsion.”47 Another writer for the Advertiser tells the story of a man who was sitting alone in a men’s train carriage, when women started boarding. The man, afraid of losing his seat, confronted an elderly woman and stated “somewhat testily, ‘this is a carriage for gentlemen.’ But he was quite taken aback when the old lady made this unexpected reply: ‘Well, and what are you doing here?’”48 The depiction of COs in newspapers as emasculated and
foolish was certainly a response to the threat they posed both to recruitment and conscription.

COs were presented as being weaker than women but also weaker than the feeblest of men. A theatre review of a William Shakespeare program of recitals, which was also printed in the Advertiser, considered that Shakespeare had “no need for ‘slackers’ or the so-called conscientious objectors.” The reviewer went on to consider how Feeble, “the woman’s tailor in ‘Henry IV’ proved his manhood,” through his participation in war, and questioned whether “men today would not allow themselves to be outmanned by Feeble.”

Similarly, a poem that appeared in the Argus asked the CO if “supposing that your wife were under fire, would you not lift a finger to protect her?” To which the objector’s constructed response is: “I should certainly not deem it expedient to protect my wife … [As to] your uncalled for remark that I do not know my duty as a husband, all I can say is that you do not know my wife.”

Where Feeble manages to discover and find his masculinity by leaving the charge of his female superior, the Australian CO is represented as a man who does not need to, and possibly could not, protect his partner. The message is clear, that COs are less masculine, that is less willing to enter into violence, than the women they are married too. That such attacks upon conscientious objectors appear in theatre reviews and poems as well as news publications, offers some insight to the scale of threat that Australian papers and journalists saw the CO as representing.

Articles such as these attempted to cast COs and their moral and religious values against war as being simple, cowardly and unmanly. Furthermore, by belittling and emasculating COs as people, there was less likelihood that readers would seriously consider the reasons behind objectors’ beliefs and opinions. Or, as Bibbings nicely puts it when regarding the English media, “publicly portraying the conchie as the feminized fool was, perhaps, sometimes safer than taking him too seriously.” Indeed, many Australian journalists and articles focused their criticism on objectors themselves rather than the reasons behind their objections to war.

This focus on COs’ positions in society, rather than their reasons for not partaking in the war, was also evident in reports that compared and sometimes linked the CO to the enemy. An article in the Advertiser accused objectors, along with shirkers, as being “small-souled individuals” who were akin to “the ghouls who rob the dead and helpless wounded on battlefields.” A letter to the editor of the Argus by a writer who described himself as being underage,
but keen for service, shared his distaste for how “conscientious objectors and cowards” were “skulking behind the ‘Sinn Feiners’ and anti-British’ party.”\(^{53}\) In another letter to the *Argus*, the author inquired as to whether COs genuinely held “objections to spilling even German blood?”\(^{54}\) What such publications demonstrate was the keenness of the Australian newspapers to portray objectors as an enemy: a foe who was on a par with the Germans. Such a sentiment was heightened even further when broadsheets around Australia, published a story in which a group of German prisoners in England “administered our conscientious objectors a worthy rebuke,” by refusing to work alongside them in penal servitude.\(^{55}\) Such news was continually reported in Australian papers and led at least one article to claim, and many more to insinuate, that objectors “were worse than the Germans.”\(^{56}\)

Objectors and shirkers were, according to most mainstream news sources in Australia, a greater threat than the country’s enemies. Such a sentiment is odd when considered against the simultaneous claims of many newspapers that objectors had neither the will nor manliness to pose much of a threat to anybody. What is obvious in the papers examined in this chapter is that the portrayal of objectors as weak, feminine and toxic to the war effort, purposely overlooked the reasons for such objections against the war. The average reader was therefore provided with two views of the conscientious objector. The first, discussed in this section, being the unmanly, yet dangerous shirker, whose motives were overlooked. The second was the conscientious objector who, for a brief period in 1916, was required prove that their conscientious scruples were genuine at exemption courts.

Beliefs on Trial: The Exemption Courts

One month before the 1916 conscription referendum, the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, delivered a proclamation that required most men eligible men to enlist in the armed forces.\(^{57}\) The proclamation remained in effect until shortly after the conscription referendum had returned a “no” vote. In this time nearly 191,000 men were enrolled into the AIF, a force that was thought, and is still considered by many, to have been made up entirely of volunteers.\(^{58}\) During the proclamation period, over 80,570 men had applied for exemption from compulsory service.\(^{59}\) The reasons for seeking exemption were varied, with conscientious objections making up a very small portion of the claims. The Australian historian Bobbie Oliver has made a strong case that
COs who applied for exemption Australia-wide numbered a mere 2,500 men, or just over three per cent of the total amount of exemption seekers. Yet, despite such small numbers, newspaper headlines reporting on the exemption courts often focused their attention on objectors. As a result, for the first time since the beginning of the war, COs had the opportunity to plead their case before court and country.

During the time of the exemption courts, conscientious objectors were reported on daily in the examined newspapers. Due to newspapers often printing direct transcripts rather than reports on the cases, for the first time Australians were able to read about the nature and reasons behind conscientious objections. Although despite being permitted to plead their cases, objectors were required to represent themselves without legal aid, and to prove the nature and sincerity of their conscientious decision not to partake in the war. As a result their success, or more likely failure, was dependant on the way in which they pled their case, as well as the leniency of the presiding magistrate.

Articles detailing the exemption trials allow an understanding of the belligerence COs encountered from state officials at this point of the war. A magistrate, responding to a CO exemption applicant, stated that given the evidence, he was not satisfied and that “this kind of objection can be raised and I see no end of it … unless I have something more than the mere statement … I am not prepared to excuse them from a duty to the State.” In another reported case, the objector stated that, “It would be contrary to the principles of my religion to bear arms.” The magistrate responded: “If everybody was like you, and sat down and did nothing, the Germans would soon be able to walk over us.” The magistrate concluded, before rejecting the exemption claim, that he was “afraid there are some people too good for this world.” During the same court proceedings, the objector was told by the magistrate that he was “only attempting to shield himself behind a miserable subterfuge.” A report in the Herald claimed that one CO withdrew his exemption claim, stating that “after reading reports of the exemption court proceedings in the papers he had come to the conclusion that his objection would not hold.” Strangely, exemption court articles that appeared in Australian newspapers carried a similar approach to the objector as reports and editorials that had been printed before the courts. While COs were given an opportunity to present their views, such ideals were difficult, if not impossible to provide evidence of, and were often speedily dismissed as disingenuous in any case. Rare incidences of applications being approved had few reported commonalities, and the reasons
for such positive outcomes can only be speculated upon. Generally, successful CO exemption applications were seldom granted and rarely reported on.

Most cases were based on religious beliefs, and many exemption applicants attempted to quote scripture to magistrates as a way of proving their conscientious objections. Magistrates would often respond to such attempts by quoting different passages of the bible that encouraged or justified war.

Magistrates would also employ arguments that had been used in newspapers to discredit COs since the beginning of 1914. In a case involving a Seventh Day Adventist, “whose teachings were against the use of arms under all circumstances,” the magistrate queried whether the man would “not use arms in defence of your life if attacked at night, or in defence of the honour of your mother and sisters?” The application was denied.

CO applicants who did not invoke religion were rare, and tended to meet with even less success than those who based their objection on spiritual grounds. One such applicant, when asked why he would not take up arms to defend his country, responded: “I don’t like the idea of going to kill anyone … There is something in me that makes me feel that I could not do it. I have always been very funny and tender like that … it is my conscience.” The applicant was given limited exemption and made to join the services in a non-combatant role. While partial treatment by newspapers was widely expected, some members of the public were shocked by the conduct towards conscientious objectors at the hands of state officials. In a letter to the editor of the Advertiser, the writer relates their belief in the idea that “the Bible interpreted by conscience is the only mentor of the soul,” and that some interpretations were being ignored and devalued by and in the name of the state. Another writer to the editor of the Herald, having read reports of the exemption courts believed that “genuine conscientious objectors are likely to be subjected to a good deal of injustice.” The author continues by asking if the tribunals would soon adopt justice or, “are they simply going to be opportunities for those in charge to pour out abuse and ridicule against every conscientious objector who comes before them?” Such opposition to the treatment of COs was rarely printed, and only ever applied to the tribunals’ treatment of objectors. Either these epistolary contributions echoed the sentiments of only a few, or they represented a position that newspapers were reluctant to publish. In either case, defence for conscientious objectors, legally or otherwise, was scarce throughout the war.

An interesting similarity between newspaper editorials and the direct reporting of exemption trials, was that minimal difference existed in their
representations of conscientious objectors. Just as newspapers had frequently criticised objectors for their unmanly and unpatriotic moral positions, state magistrates were widely reported in newspapers to have done much the same. Broadsheets and magistrates also questioned the motives and values of COs while allowing scant opportunity for objectors to defend their stance. Religious ideals, as well as the contrast between the soldier’s sacrifice and the CO’s comfort were also presented as arguments against objectors by both newspapers and state magistrates. Newspapers perpetuated negative ideals of the conscientious objector throughout the war, frequently labelling him both a threat to the country as well as an object worthy of ridicule. In late 1916, the exemption courts provided a state reinforcement of such representations, and, via means that were more than likely illegal at the time, briefly persecuted those with moral and religious objections to war.

In 1918, with the war all but won, the Advertiser reported on a parliamentary debate regarding the instigation of compulsory government loans to pay off war debt. The article described a Mr Considine asking, “amid laughter, if conscientious objectors … would be exempt” from contributing to the loans.71 By the end of the war and with no chance of conscription being implemented, objectors, once represented as a national threat, were being depicted in broadsheets as figures of comical absurdity. The danger they had once posed of providing an opportunity for shirkers to avoid service was no longer a relevant issue, and the nature of their derision in newspapers had morphed from a fierce opposition, to a dismissive joke. Over four years many major Australian publications had represented COs as being a dangerous and immediate threat to the nation and the war effort. Broadsheets operated as the vanguard in the battle against conscientious objectors, a battle also carried out by organisations such as White Ribbon Leagues and the Australian government during the exemption trials. Yet, unlike civilian organisations or the brief intervention of the government, newspapers were both far-reaching in their readership and consistent throughout the war in their attacks on objectors. Smith has argued that the question of conscientious objection “goes to the heart of the relationship between the individual and the state.”72 Yet what Smith overlooks is the influence of the media on that relationship. For if, during times of war, the state cannot legally control an individual’s actions, the press will attempt to influence them. Throughout World War I this influence was used in a concerted campaign against a quiet minority in Australian society, the conscientious objector.
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Endnotes


7 There are some important investigations into Australian conscientious objectors such as Smith, *Conscientious Objection to Particular Wars*; Margaret Levi and Stephen DeTray, *A Weapon Against War: Conscientious Objection in the U.S., Australia and France*, Administration, Compliance and Governability Program Working Paper: No. 4 (Canberra: Administration, Compliance & Governability Program, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, 1992) and to some extent, John Barrett, *Falling In: Australians and “Boy Conscription” 1911–1915* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1979). All such works offer only brief accounts of Australian COs during World War I.


10 Although other Australian texts about the home front do not specifically investigate conscientious objectors as Oliver’s has, Marilyn Lake’s *A Divided Society: Tasmania During World War I*, Raymond Evans’ *Loyalty and Disloyalty: Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914–1918*, Jan Bassett’s *The Home Front, 1914–1918*, and Michael McKernan’s *The Australian People and the Great War*, all offer an insight into the tensions that existed in Australian society regarding eligible men who, for whatever reason, did not join the services.

by Conscientious Objectors from the Great War to the Cold War (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

12 Bibbings, Telling Tales About Men, 20.


17 John Frank Williams, ANZACS, the Media and the Great War (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999), 6.


19 Kevin Fewster, Expression and Suppression: Aspects of Military Censorship in Australia During the Great War (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1980), 139.

20 Barrett, Falling In, 12.

21 Ibid., 62.


23 Ibid.


25 Ibid.


31 Though, there are some notable exceptions. John Curtin was perhaps the best known anti-war, conscientious objector.


33 Ibid., 343.

34 Ibid., 344.

35 “Conscientious Objectors. To the Editor of the Herald,” The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 July 1916, 11.
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37 Ibid.
38 Bibbings, “Images of Manliness,” 337.
40 Ibid.
43 “Conscientious Objectors. To the Editor of The Herald,” 11.
44 “Go and Do Your Bit!” The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 June 1916, 12.
45 Bibbings, “Images of Manliness,” 337.
46 “Conscientious Objectors,” 11.
48 “Arriving at it,” The Advertiser, 26 December 1916, 10.
51 Bibbings, “Images of Manliness,” 347.
52 “Civil Servants and ‘Preference,’” The Advertiser, 1 August 1916, 4.
53 “Men for the War,” The Argus, 30 May, 1918, 5.
54 “No Conscription Displays,” The Argus, 22 March 1916, 4.
55 “Our London Letter,” The Argus, 8 December 1917, 16.
56 “War Parades,” The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 May 1918, 7.
57 Oliver, Peacemongers, 33.
58 Ibid., 38.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., 34.
61 Ibid., 40.
63 “North Sydney,” The Sydney Morning Herald, 7.
64 Ibid.
68 “Views and Comments,” The Advertiser, 18 November 1916, 12.
70 Ibid.
71 “Compulsory Service,” The Advertiser, 10 October 1918, 5.
72 Smith, Conscientious Objection to Particular Wars, 2.
It has long been recognised that a source for discontent with the Great War was the disaffection of Irish Australians, fanned by the suppression of the Easter Uprising and the subsequent increase in sectarian hostility. In this context L.L. Robson’s revelation in 1973 that Catholic enlistment to the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) was in proportion to their demographic share of the population, and that there was no drop off in that enlistment after the Easter Uprising, has presented historians with a conundrum. This chapter will present a possible resolution of this conundrum based on a study of recruitment patterns in a number of locations, including the mining centre of Maitland in the Hunter Valley and the town of Koroit in western Victoria. It will argue that consideration of the economic position of Irish Australians in this period explains why they were more vulnerable to “economic conscription” and that this most likely compensated for the ideological and political disincentives to their enlistment.

Lloyd Robson’s study of the first Australian Imperial Force (AIF), published as a journal article in 1973, was ground-breaking in a number of ways. It pioneered a form of statistical analysis that could challenge assumptions about the composition of the AIF based on anecdotal evidence (at best) and (at worst) on ideological tropes and wishful thinking. A recent study of the AIF
by David Noonan, very much in the tradition established by L.L. Robson, has uncovered the astonishing fact that the casualty rate amongst the AIF, already officially the highest of any combatant country at 59 per cent, was in fact closer to 80 per cent. Robson’s efforts in 1973, along with John McQuilton’s study of recruitment in north-eastern Victoria, remain, astonishingly, the only other examples of such studies.

There is, of course, an extensive historiographic record regarding the Irish-Australian community during the Great War. The involvement of Irish-Australians in the conscription debate has long been the focus of attention – the work of A.D. Gilbert, D.J. Murphy and M. McKernan in the 1970s being obvious examples. It has also been touched on, inevitably, by general studies of the conscription debate. The career of Daniel Mannix has been the subject of biographies. T.J. Murphy’s biography of T.J. Ryan also inevitably touches on the issue. More recently, Jeff Kildea’s *Anzacs and Ireland* provides recently provided an insight into a previously ignored aspect of the war – the interaction between Australian and Irish troops during the war and the involvement of some Australians in the suppression of the Easter Uprising.

One of the most significant contributions to scholarship has been made only last year by Val Noone in an article for *Labour History*. Expanding on an observation made by McKernan in 1980 that the Catholic hierarchy, and Mannix in particular, opposed conscription in response to the radicalisation of working class Catholics – a reversal of the traditional view that Mannix was the leader rather than the led – Noone has examined the relationship between Mannix and his parishioners in West Melbourne. The result is a cautious, but nonetheless firm, confirmation of McKernan’s thesis. Noone’s evidence for this is provided by a study of Mannix’s speeches, the context in which he made them, the people whom he shared a platform with and the organisations which they represented, drawn largely from contemporary newspaper accounts and from secondary literature. It is to be hoped that the current study will provide more primary evidence regarding the extent of the radicalisation of working-class Catholics.

The historian today has an easier task than Robson back in 1973 as AIF service records are now digitised and online. There is even a facility, the *Mapping Our Anzacs* website, run by the National Archives, which aggregates links to records for recruits from each town and suburb based on where the members of the AIF enlisted and where they were born.

This study has taken advantage of the *Mapping Our Anzacs* site to record data regarding recruits to the First AIF from five locations, the towns of Koroit
in western Victoria and Maitland in the Hunter Valley in New South Wales and three suburbs in Melbourne: North Melbourne, Kensington and Camberwell. Its purpose has been to test a hypothesis that “economic conscription” may have been responsible for the fact, noted by Robson with surprise, that Catholic recruitment to the AIF remained throughout the war at around 20 per cent, equivalent to the demographic share of Catholics recorded in the 1914 Census. The methodology behind the choice of these locations is somewhat different to that undertaken by Robson. Robson’s study was based on a large sample of records from all states (2,291). It is unfortunate that Robson did not explain the methodology behind his selection of records, whether it was completely random or whether he followed the methods of opinion pollsters in ensuring he selected a representative number from a range of rural and urban locations in all states.

In any case, the purpose of the present study was not necessarily to attempt to validate or invalidate Robson’s findings – to test whether his finding regarding Catholic recruitment to the AIF is correct. It was, rather, to attempt to see if an investigation of a selection of records from an area, or areas, with a large Catholic demographic might in some way help explain the apparent contradiction revealed by Robson’s findings. It was not, therefore, necessary to select a sample that was representative of the nation. Instead, the choice, firstly, of the town of Koroit, was deliberately based on its unrepresentative character – specifically on the town’s reputation as an area with an above average Irish/Catholic demographic.

The choice of the other four locations was simply to provide a range of different demographics in order to test the extent to which patterns of recruitment evident in the findings from Koroit were either unique or repeated. It needs to be stated at this point that in all cases a choice was made to select the list of AIF members born in each location rather than those who enlisted there (the site allows one to choose either). This choice was unavoidable in the case of Koroit as the number who enlisted there, given it was a small town and not an administrative centre for recruitment, was negligible. The choice of Koroit was due to its Irish/Catholic demographic and, while choosing those born there inevitably involved including a number of AIF members who no longer lived in the town at the time of their enlistment, the reason for choosing the town was not to provide a picture of Koroit during the war but to include a large sample of rural Catholic recruits. As it happened, a close inspection of the records revealed that most recruits were still living in or around Koroit at the time of their enlistment.
In selecting Camberwell, Kensington and North Melbourne, this choice was made necessary due to the fact that most inhabitants of these suburbs would have enlisted in central Melbourne. It is only in the case of Maitland that the decision to choose those born there rather than the equally significant number who enlisted there was probably a mistake. The Maitland coal fields were late in developing and the recruits born in Maitland proved to include fewer coal miners than expected. Part of the reason for choosing Maitland was familiarity with the industrial history of the field during the war and an expectation that the employment levels in the Maitland mines at different stages of the war might be reflected in recruitment patterns. This proved not to be the case, possibly due to the fact that the largest coal mines in Maitland began their operation in the first decade of the century – after the recruits had been born; which is not to say that the data was not revealing in other ways, simply that further study would advisedly approach the choice of data differently.

The first set of data to be compiled was the details available regarding the 153 recruits from Koroit. Everything of conceivable significance was recorded on an Excel spreadsheet: their name, occupation, date of enlistment, age, religion and their fate (ie, whether they were wounded, killed or suffered significant hospitalisation). The graph in Figure 1 provides a monthly breakdown of their enlistment:

**Figure 1**

![Koroit recruits by Month graph](image)

Source: NAA war service records for Koroit accessed via Mapping Our Anzacs website
What stands out most clearly from this graph is the enormous spike in July 1915. This is consistent with Robson’s findings that the July 1915 recruitment drive in Victoria was extraordinarily successful. Apart from this spike, the rest of the war reveals a significant drop in recruitment at the end of 1916. 1917 was a disastrous year for recruitment and a small rally in 1918 (in reality the recruitment of six in May and two in November) is the only relief from a more or less flat line.

The next thing to assess was the religious affiliation of the recruits, in particular, of course, the percentage of Catholics. Sixty-three of the 153 recruits were Catholic – 41.17 per cent. Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to verify definitively whether this represents the demographic share of Catholics in Koroit in 1914. The 1914 Census provides a figure for the county of Villiers, in which Koroit is located, of 37 per cent Catholic. Tradition would suggest that Koroit is somewhat more Catholic than the county as a whole and this is supported by past Victorian censuses which recorded detail for local government areas. The 1861 Census, for instance, recorded that Koroit was 59 per cent Catholic and the 1901 Census recorded a figure of 47.33 per cent. As this is a selection of recruits born in Koroit, it is then significant that the percentage of Catholics in Koroit at the time of their birth would clearly have been greater than 41 per cent. Table one compares the data for religious affiliation of the Koroit recruits to the data for Koroit in the 1901 Census.

Table 1: Statistical Data for Koroit (Males)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>1901 Census</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
<th>Enlistments</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>47.33%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>40.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch of England</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>19.83%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5.92%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Christ</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.51%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from the strange non-appearance of Church of Christ recruits (did the local Koroit congregation change religions and become Baptists between
1901 and 1914 – which is possible given the closeness of these two sects?) the pattern matches McQuilton’s findings for north-eastern Victoria where he noted an over-representation of Presbyterians and Church of England recruits, a slight under-representation of Methodists and a more significant under-representation of Catholics.\textsuperscript{12}

Given Koroit’s fame as a potato-growing region (potatoes are a theme in its annual Irish Festival) it might be expected that this would be a factor in Catholic under-enlistment. Twenty-three of the Koroit recruits gave their occupation as “farmer” (other evidence suggests most were farmer’s sons rather than owners of property). Catholics are under-represented in this sample (30 per cent as compared to 41 per cent of all recruits) while, interestingly, Presbyterians are over-represented (34.7 per cent of farmers as opposed to 22.87 per cent of recruits). It would appear that potato growing in Koroit was more a Celtic than a specifically Irish activity! More importantly, these figures can be explained by fewer Catholics being farmers, in which case any under-representation of Catholics in overall recruitment cannot be explained by the reluctance of farmers to enlist. Alternatively, if there were indeed a large number of Catholic farmers, then it would appear that they enlisted in less numbers than Presbyterian farmers, in which case religion rather than occupation was the significant determining factor in their non-enlistment.

Returning to Robson’s original observation, along with noting that Catholics enlisted in proportion to their demographic share (around 20 per cent) he also noted that there was no significant change in this share over the course of the war. The uprising in Ireland, the increase in sectarian hostility towards Catholics, the demonstrable rise in Irish national sentiment during the second conscription referendum – none of these factors appear, in Robson’s findings, to have led to a drop in Catholic enlistment. The evidence of Catholic recruitment in Koroit bears out that none of these factors appear to have an effect on Catholic recruitment.

However, it is also evident that, at least in the case of Koroit, Robson’s pattern of an even and unchanging share of enlistment is not evident. There is a change – a significant decline in Catholic recruitment. It is, however, earlier than one would expect if Irish national feelings were to be advanced as an explanation. Looking at Catholic recruitment as a percentage of the overall enlistment in Koroit, the key date for a shift is the month of July 1915. In 1914, 53 per cent of recruits were Catholics. In the first six months of 1915 the figure remained steady at 50 per cent exactly. In July 1915, the month of the great
Victorian recruitment drive, only 10 of the 27 recruits in Koroit were Catholic – 37 per cent. Catholic recruitment for the second half of 1915 was 39 per cent. For 1916 it was 43 per cent, for 1917 it was 33 per cent, and for 1918 it was 31 per cent.

How could this change be explained? It might be argued that the recruitment drive of July 1915, with its inevitable emphasis on the ideological motives to enlist, might have had less of an impact on Catholics than Protestants. However, this does not explain why the percentage of Catholic enlistment remained suppressed in the succeeding months and years. The shift also predates a likely shift in attitude due to the experience of casualties. The first casualty amongst the Koroit recruits was a single death in Gallipoli on 21 August 1915. Of the 31 deaths amongst the Koroit-born recruits, 29 occurred on the Western Front, as did all the wounds inflicted (a further 31 men were wounded but not killed). So in July 1915, when Catholic recruitment began to decline, no-one from Koroit had been killed or wounded.

There is, however, a plausible explanation available. One of the things that distinguished the Catholic recruits in Koroit from their Protestant comrades was their occupational background. Overall the recruits divide into four broad categories, farmers, white collar workers, skilled blue-collar workers and unskilled workers (most of whom give their occupation as “labourer”). The proportion of unskilled amongst the Catholic recruits was 53 per cent. This compares to 38 per cent of the Church of England recruits, 31 per cent of the Presbyterians and none of the (admittedly small) sample of Baptists and Methodists.

Australia was already in recession when war was declared. Unemployment peaked in the March quarter of 1915 at 12 per cent. It declined to 9.5 per cent in the June quarter and to 8.8 per cent in the September quarter. Monthly figures are not available, but it is clear that by July 1915 the recession had receded significantly. The occupational categories given by the Catholic recruits at Koroit reveal that they would have, on average, been more vulnerable to unemployment than their Protestant neighbours. This would explain their greater willingness to enlist in the early period when unemployment was high. They were prime candidates for “economic conscription.” This revelation also points to a possible, partial, resolution of the conundrum raised by Robson. If Catholics were more vulnerable to economic conscription, then this could account for their willingness to enlist just as easily as an ideological acceptance of the war. There is an obvious analogy with the notorious over-representation
of African Americans in the US armed forces. It is widely accepted that economic motives, rather than a greater ideological adherence by African-Americans to the war aims of the US state, is responsible for their enlistment.

At this point it seemed useful to attempt to validate this result by seeing if it was reflected in other locations with larger and more statistically robust samples. The town of Maitland in the Hunter Valley was chosen. Of the 1,147 recruits recorded as having been born in Maitland, the date of their enlistment and their religion was recorded. Restricting the data to these two fields made it possible to quickly process such a large number. The result was significant. Just under 29 per cent of the Maitland recruits were Catholic, greater than the national average, but less than Koroit. The 1901 NSW Census gives a Catholic (male) population of Maitland East and Maitland West combined that is 29.34 per cent of the total, which indicates a very slight, and probably insignificant, under-representation of Catholics in enlistment.

The overall pattern of recruitment in Maitland was similar to Koroit's. There was slightly more enlistment in the last two years of the war – a phenomenon Robson noted comparing NSW to Victorian recruitment, and the biggest month was August rather than July 1915. Robson noted that there was an attempt to replicate the successful Victorian recruiting campaign with a campaign in NSW in August 1915 and argues that it was less successful. It would appear to have had some success, however, in Maitland.

With regards to Catholic recruitment, there are differences between Maitland and Koroit, but in general the Maitland figures confirm a decline in Catholic recruitment rather than Robson's finding of a constant rate throughout the war (see Figure 2). Overall the data presents four distinct periods; the Maitland-born Catholics, for reasons that remain difficult to explain, were slow off the mark in joining up. For the first four months of the war – in 1914 – they were only 22.82 per cent of the recruits. The second distinct period was January to June 1915, as with Koroit, this was a period in which Catholics enlisted in large numbers – 40.77 per cent of enlistments. As with Koroit, the end of the recession brings a drop in Catholic enlistment. In the second half of 1915 it falls to 33.76 per cent and this continues through the first four months of 1916 at 34.10 per cent.

Unlike Koroit, in Maitland there is evidence of a change after Easter 1916. Catholic enlistment from May to December 1916 falls again to 24.96 per cent and remains at a similar level throughout the rest of the war (24.63 per cent in 1917 and 23.44 per cent in 1918).
At this point another way of looking at the original results from Koroit suggested itself. It is an obvious counter-argument to any attempt to deduce war weariness from a decline in enlistment that such a decline could be simply a result of exhaustion of the potential supply of recruits. One way to get around this problem is to focus exclusively on the one group of recruits for whom exhaustion is impossible – 18-year-olds. There were fifteen 18-year-olds amongst the Koroit-born recruits. Of these six enlisted in 1915, seven in 1916, none in 1917, and only two in 1918.

While the sample is small, the dramatic drop, from 13 enlisting in the first half of the war to two in the second, appears significant. It is not significantly different to the overall pattern of recruitment (134 of the 153 recruits enlisted in the first two years of the war), but it is significant when one considers the fact that, unlike other age groups, the potential pool of 18-year-olds was constant. The breaking point for 18-year-old recruits is significant coming at the end of 1916 rather than, as for Catholic recruits, at the end of the recession in mid-1915. “Economic conscription” would be less of a factor with 18-year-olds, many of whom would have been still living with their parents and none of whom in this sample were married or had children. The introduction of the AIF to France in late 1916 and the subsequent flow of casualties is the most likely explanation for the sudden fall off in the enlistment of 18-year-olds. The war was no longer as exciting; it was certainly more terrifying, and even if...
a would-be 18-year-old recruit remained starry-eyed about the prospect of battle, they would have faced a harder time in getting their parents to consent once the flow of casualties became apparent.

It is significant then that only two of the 18-year-old recruits were Catholic. This pattern continues up to the age of 22 – eighteen out of 76 recruits between the ages of 18 and 22 were Catholic – 23.68 per cent. By contrast, the recruits in their thirties are 72 per cent Catholic and those in their forties, 44.44 per cent.

This revelation of the significance of age and occupation when combined with religion and the date of enlistment led to a third sample being investigated. Kensington in the inner west of Melbourne was chosen, mainly due to it having been the site of a disrupted pro-conscription rally in 1916 where the audience was clearly motivated by Irish nationalism (the speaker was a pro-conscription Labor Senator of Irish birth, Senator Patrick Lynch). The sample was larger than Koroit – 268 recruits – but manageable enough given that the only data recorded was age, religion, date of enlistment, and employment. See Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*Kensington Enlistments*

Source: NAA war service records for Kensington accessed via Mapping Our Anzacs website

It soon became apparent that Kensington was in fact not particularly Catholic. Of the recruits 58 (21.6 per cent of the total) were Catholic, which is close to the national average and slightly lower than the 23.88 per cent of the male
residents of Flemington and Kensington who were recorded as Catholic by the 1901 Victorian Census. The other thing which stood out was the occupational status. Only 50 (18.5 per cent) described themselves as “labourers” or other unskilled occupations. There were a larger proportion of white collar workers than Koroit and also a larger number of skilled workers, particularly from the metal industry (“engineer”, “engine driver”, “fitter” etc.).

Another thing that stood out was the comparative youth of the Kensington recruits. The average age of the Koroit recruits was 26 whereas 23 was the average age of the Kensington-born recruits. Also, as the chart above makes clear, the dominance of the recruiting campaign in July 1915 is far more marked than in Koroit.

With regards to Catholic recruitment, there was in the Kensington-born recruits no discernible pattern. Catholics made up 16 per cent of recruits in 1914, 14.7 per cent in the first half of 1915, and 19.8 per cent in the second half of that year. There is a difference between the first half of 1916 (27.3 per cent) and the second half (15.4 per cent), but any speculation that this decline might indicate a nationalist reaction to the Easter Rising is ruled out by the fact that, in 1917, 32.4 per cent of the Kensington recruits were Catholic.

With regards to the 18-year-old recruits, the drop in recruitment after 1916 in Koroit is even more pronounced in Kensington, though with an earlier drop off. There were 37 18-year-olds who enlisted between August 1914 and July 1915, and only two others (both in late 1917) for the rest of the war. However the pattern found in Koroit of Catholic recruits being older is not repeated in Kensington.

This last fact is significant, especially when combined with the evidence of the occupational categories of the recruits born in Kensington. As mentioned above, they indicate a higher economic status than for the Koroit recruits. It is significant that the class differences between Catholic and Protestant recruits evident in Koroit are not repeated in Kensington. A significantly larger proportion of the Protestant recruits are skilled workers (especially fitters and turners, engineers and engine drivers) but this is to a large extent compensated by a larger proportion of Catholics in white collar occupations. The proportion of “labourers” is around the same for both denominational groups. It can be said then that, whilst the data for Kensington does not repeat the pattern of a difference in recruitment between the two religious groups, this is explicable by the fact that the class differentiation between Catholics and Protestants, evident in Koroit, is also not repeated.
The next study was of the 642 recruits born in North Melbourne, a suburb which neighbours Kensington but which had a reputation both for being a slum and for having a high proportion of Irish-Catholics.¹⁶

**Figure 4**

![Nth Melbourne Recruits](chart.png)

Source: NAA war service records for Kensington accessed via Mapping Our Anzacs website

Once again, as shown in Figure 4, there is the inevitable spike in July 1915, though the proportion of recruits recruited in that month is 17 per cent (the same as Koroit rather than Kensington for which the proportion was 22 per cent). The age profile is also similar to that for Koroit rather than Kensington. The average age for North Melbourne was 26.23 compared to 26.1 in Koroit and 23.04 in Kensington. The proportion of Catholic recruits in North Melbourne was, as expected, significantly higher than in Kensington – 35.83 per cent and slightly higher than the 33.02 per cent of Catholic males recorded in North Melbourne by the 1901 Census.¹⁷ Unlike Koroit or Maitland, however, there was no drop off in the proportion of Catholics enlisting as the recession eased in 1915. There was, however a drop off after the Easter Rising in 1916. Between August 1914 and May 1916, 38.09 per cent of the recruits born in North Melbourne were Catholic, but the proportion falls to 29.65 per cent for the rest of the war.

The final sample studied was of 239 recruits born in Camberwell, a relatively wealthy suburb in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Unsurprisingly,
the proportion of Catholics in this sample was small – only 9.2 per cent (unfortunately the 1901 census does not provide figures for Camberwell). The average age of the recruits was 22.83, even lower than Kensington’s.

**Figure 5**

![Camberwell Recruits](chart.png)

Source: NAA War service records for Camberwell accessed via Mapping Our Anzacs website

As can be seen from the above graph of Camberwell recruitment, apart from the inevitable spike in July 1915, the most striking feature is that recruitment does not appear to have collapsed to the same extent as for the other Victorian locations. Just under 77 per cent of the Camberwell recruits were recruited in the first half of the war, compared to 80.23 per cent of the Kensington recruits, 84.43 per cent of the North Melbourne recruits and 86.54 per cent of the Koroit recruits. It is even slightly lower than the percentage for Maitland (77.14 per cent) despite the fact, noted by Robson, that recruitment in NSW as a whole tailed off less than in Victoria. The collapse in recruitment of 18-year-olds was also somewhat less pronounced in Camberwell than in other locations. Twenty-six 18-year-olds were recruited in Camberwell, 19 in 1915 and 1916 and seven in the last two years of the war.

Combining the data for the five locations provides a statistically robust sample of 2,449 recruits. Because of the deliberate decision to pick locations with a high percentage of Catholics, the combined sample has a larger than normal percentage (28.66 per cent Catholic). The drop off in Catholic
recruitment in mid-1915, evident in Koroit and Maitland, is not apparent in the combined data. However, the drop off in Catholic enlistment in May 1916, evident in the North Melbourne, Camberwell and Maitland data, remains significant. Between August 1914 and May 1916, 500 of the 1,631 recruits were Catholic (30.66 per cent). From June 1916 up to the war’s end the proportion was 202 out of 818 (24.69 per cent). This does not validate the hypothesis that Catholics were more subject to economic conscription though it does, intriguingly, contradict Robson’s finding that there was no change in Catholic recruitment during the course of the war.

An explanation is suggested by the fact that a mid-1915 drop off in the proportion of Catholics enlisting is evident in the two rural/semi-rural locations of Maitland and Koroit, but not in any of the three Melbourne suburbs. As noted above, there was an evident socio-economic distinction between the Catholic and Protestant recruits in Koroit whereas the class location/socio-economic status of the recruits in Kensington was similar for both Protestants and Catholics. The same lack of differentiation is evident in the North Melbourne recruits. As expected in a location considered to be a “slum” area, there are far more unskilled workers in North Melbourne than in Kensington, but these unskilled workers are as likely to be Protestant as Catholic. As noted above, the recruits are older and more Catholic than in Kensington. The fact that in North Melbourne there was no greater drop off in the proportion of Catholics enlisting in mid-1915 is made explicable by the fact that the North Melbourne Catholics were no more vulnerable to “economic conscription” than their Protestant neighbours. Similarly, the Catholics of the leafy suburb of Camberwell reveal the same preponderance of white-collar workers and professionals as their Protestant neighbours.

It makes sense that in a small or large country town, in which a wider range of socio-economic groups are located (from the local bigwigs down to the humblest labourer) socio-economic distinctions between religious groups would be more evident than in inner-city suburbs. The lower socio-economic status of Catholics in Melbourne would be registered in their greater concentration within the poorer working class suburbs rather than distinctions between religious groupings within suburbs. It is instructive then to look at the combined data for all five locations. The result is represented in Table 2, the column on the far right recording the percentage of Catholic recruits in six distinct periods of the war.
Another way of analysing the data, with regard to the question of economic conscription was provided by the four locations where occupation was recorded – a total sample of 1,301. Table 3 records the total number of recruits for the same six distinct periods of the war and the number of those recruits who were described as “labourers” or some other unskilled profession. The column on the far right then records the percentage of the total recruits that were unskilled. It reveals an even greater fall off in enlistment of “unskilled” recruits at around the same time that there was a decline in the recruitment of Catholics.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>All Recruits</th>
<th>Unskilled</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Jun 1915</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>21.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul–Dec 1915</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>22.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan–Apr 1916</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May–Dec 1916</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1301</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>20.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NAA War service records accessed via Mapping Our Anzacs website

Another way of looking at the data, of particular interest when considering the question of economic conscription, is to break it down into quarters; this enables
a comparison with the quarterly unemployment figures provided in the 1919 Commonwealth Yearbook. The graphs in Figures 6 and 7 reveal mixed results.

**Figure 6**

*Catholic recruitment as a percentage of total AIF recruitment compared to quarterly unemployment*

![Graph showing Catholic recruitment and unemployment over time.]

Source: NAA War service records accessed via Mapping Our Anzacs website

**Figure 7**

*Recruitment of “unskilled” to the AIF as a % of total recruits by quarter*

![Graph showing recruitment percentages of unskilled recruits and unemployment over time.]

Source: NAA War service records accessed via Mapping Our Anzacs website

An obvious problem in breaking the data down into smaller time periods is that apparently huge variations in percentages from quarter to quarter can
be generated by relatively tiny amounts of data. So, for instance, in North Melbourne in September 1917, 100 per cent of the recruits were Catholic, thus contributing to the apparent spike in that quarter in Catholic recruitment. That 100 per cent was however a total of only two recruits.

It remains to be admitted that the data, when represented in this manner, does not support the hypothesis that economic conscription was a significant factor in Catholic enlistment to the AIF. Nevertheless, the graph reveals the decline in Catholic enlistment (the spike in the September quarter of 1917 notwithstanding) from mid-1916 onwards. It is significant that this is based on a sample slightly larger than Robson’s. The obvious qualification to be made in this regard is that the data is not as representative as Robson’s in that it is only selected from five specific locations in two states. Nevertheless, given the numbers involved, it is significant enough to suggest that further research is warranted.

The second graph is more useful in that, despite some similar problems with exaggerated variations from quarter to quarter (again a product of dealing with small numbers), and despite the fact that, as occupation was not recorded for the Maitland recruits, it is based on a smaller sample (1,301 rather than 2,449), it reveals a suggestive correlation between the enlistment of unskilled recruits and the unemployment rate. Economic conscription may not have been confirmed as a factor in Catholic recruitment specifically; it appears, however, to have been, on this evidence, a factor in recruitment overall.

In the end, what is perhaps most revealing is that the drop in enlistment in mid-1916 was greater amongst the unskilled as a category than it was amongst Catholics. This suggests that, for all that Irish Catholics may have expressed their disaffection with the war in nationalist terms, especially in response to the agitation of Dr Mannix in 1917, their disaffection with the war had, as its primary cause, their class location rather than their religion or their nationality. The banner under which they chose to march does not necessarily reveal the true origins of their grievances. That Irish Catholic disaffection with the Great War in Australia was a “class response” is not a new observation. It is an observation, and a claim, however, that this data would appear to strongly support.

Robert Bollard currently teaches at Deakin University. He was runner up for the Serle Award in 2008 for his PhD thesis on the Great Strike of 1917 and is the author of In the Shadow of Gallipoli: the hidden history of Australia in World War One (Sydney: NewSouth Press, 2013).
Endnotes


10 Since writing this chapter the National Archives have altered the title and formatting of this facility, but it still works in much the same way. It can be accessed at the following URL: http://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/places


12 McQuilton, “Enlistment for the First World War.”


14 *Results of a Census of New South Wales Taken for the Night of 31st March 1901* (Sydney: Government Printer, 1904), 94.

15 *Census of Victoria, 1901*, 246.


17 *Census of Victoria, 1901*, 247.

For over two decades prior to World War I Italians living and working in Australia had been on the receiving end of union hostility. Regularly referred to as cheap, even coloured, labour, they were frequently accused of working for less than award wages, as strike breakers, and as a major threat to Australian workers’ rights. In 1918, having successfully fought against conscription in two referendums, the Australian labour movement found itself in an unusual position. The round-up and forcible deportation of allied Italian men by the Australian authorities, effectively selective conscription, was seen as a direct challenge to the “No” vote and as the first step towards wider conscription of other nationalities and ultimately Australian workers. Around the country groups within the labour movement helped organise protest meetings, posted flyers and wrote petitions in support of the Italians as they fought against their deportation. According to the Military Investigation Bureau, who closely monitored these activities, “the Labor Party and Socialists [did] … much to create and foster the soreness … among Italians.” Certainly the labour movement provided an avenue of protest for these Italians where no other means existed. This chapter will consider how the plight of allied Italian men fitted into the Australian labour movement’s anti-militaristic and anti-conscriptionist beliefs and how the events around this protest brought a group of previously distrusted workers, albeit briefly, into the fold.
On 5 November 1917, after months of correspondence and discussion between the Australian, British and Italian Governments, Emilio Eles, the Consul General for Italy in Australia, formally notified Australian Minister for Defence, George Pearce that the Italian Government wished to arrange for the repatriation of Italian conscripts and reservists residing in Australia. The Australian Government, under the powers of Section 2J of the Alien Restriction Order of 1915 and Section 5 of the War Precautions Act, agreed to facilitate this repatriation and offered the use of Australian Imperial Force (AIF) personnel for their round-up, and AIF camps as detention centres for Italians awaiting deportation.

The subsequent detention and deportation of over 500 Italian-born men resident in Australia began at the end of what Joan Beaumont has labelled as Australia’s worst year of the Great War. The round-up of Italians closely followed the Great Strike and occurred in a general atmosphere of war weariness, declining living standards and a corresponding increase in cost of living, and growing anger at the abuse of Government powers. Most significantly the announcement of what was in effect selective conscription of men from an allied nation coincided with the lead up to the December 1917 second Conscription referendum.

In the decades prior to World War I the Italian was one of the most unwelcome of migrants in Australia and within the labour movement in general. Commonly referred to as “knife welding mafia agents” or as the “Chinese of Europe”, Italians were frequently labelled as strike breakers and generally considered a threat to the hard won labour conditions of Australian workers. Despite this, the labour movement was almost alone in its support for Italians as they protested their deportation to Italy in 1917 and 1918.

In recent decades, traditional accounts of the Australian home front as a predominantly harmonious society working together for the greater good of the Empire have been challenged by scholars who depict a home front instead divided by race, “political turbulence and class conflict on a scale almost unique in the nation’s history.” Similarly, traditional accounts of the labour movement during World War I as generally racist, anti-militaristic, and anti-conscriptionist have also been challenged by scholars who suggest that their opposition was not ideologically uniform but rather reflective of a more nuanced response. On the same basis, customary interpretations of the labour movement response to the Italian deportation would see it either as an anomaly or, as Evans argues, an opportunist event associated with a degree of
“self preservation, allied with a deep seated antipathy to military compulsion ... rather than any well-developed sense of solidarity with Italian workers.”

This chapter will consider the labour movement support of these allied alien workers in light of recent scholarship which has challenged the traditional interpretations.

The Italian Position in Pre-War Australia

From the 1890s Italians settled in increasingly larger numbers across Australia. While many joined earlier established communities in the commercial districts of Melbourne and Sydney, the majority were to be found in both occupational and geographical concentrations in the Queensland cane fields, the mining and associated timber industries in Western Australia and in the fishing industries in coastal towns such as Fremantle and Port Pirie.

According to the 1911 census there were 6,719 Italians in Australia, of whom 5,543 were males. However, between 1911 and 1913 there was a marked escalation in the number of Italians coming to Australia, especially as a result of the Italo-Turkish War in Libya. Therefore, on the eve of World War I, and certainly at the time of the deportation, it is estimated that there were over 10,000 Italians in Australia, the vast majority of whom were men of military age.

In the years leading up to the War, the increasing numbers of young Italian males and their concentration within certain industries regularly brought them to the attention of the labour movement seeking to preserve hard earned workers’ rights. As protection was closely linked to questions of race, Italians were regularly accused of working for less than the award, as scab labour, and strongly linked to the fear of contract or imported labour which had come to a head with the enactment of the Contract Immigrants Act in 1905. Furthermore, Italians were culturally demonised in the press and their place in the racial hierarchy was repeatedly questioned by Australian authorities enforcing White Australia through the Immigration Restriction Act (1901).

In the Western Australian mining industry for example, local unions accused the Italians of working for less than award wages, and the apparent favouritism towards the employment of Italians by mine bosses, such as Herbert Hoover at Gwalia, only enflamed such debates and added credence to the notion that these men were in fact imported contract labour. The Commonwealth Government Report of the Commissioner on Foreign Contract
Labour in Western Australia (1902)\(^\text{14}\) while expressing concern in regard to safety issues from lack of English, found no evidence of organised imported labour operating in the mining industry. However, what was considered to be an abnormal rate of increase in the arrivals of Italians, Austrians and Greeks and ongoing union questioning regarding their employment resulted in a second enquiry, this time a State Government Royal Commission in 1904 to report on the employment of foreigners in the goldfields.\(^\text{15}\) The findings were the same, that is, there was no evidence of contract labour, nor of Italians in particular, working for less than award rates. As a reflection on the Italians’ place in Australia however, the report noted their “unclean habits” and that the Italian Consul had in fact written home advising men not to come to Australia as Italians in Australia are treated “like black fellows.”\(^\text{16}\)

These same issues of colour were also prevalent in the sugar industry in Queensland to which Italians also gravitated in large numbers. As Moraes-Gorecki argues, the term “black Italian” was prevalent and Australian women who married Mediterranean immigrants were scorned for marrying a “black.”\(^\text{17}\) Following the 1911 Sugar Strike, union questioning of rising numbers of Italians arguably contributed to legislation such as The Sugar Growers’ Employees Act (1913) and The Sugar Cultivation Act (1913) for the protection of the industry and its workers. Whilst specific rates of pay and conditions of employment benefitted all workers the prohibition of the cultivation of sugar without a certificate, which was only issued after successful completion of a dictation test, was directly aimed at keeping the industry in the hands of “desirable” settlers in line with White Australia.

Another industry in which Italians were seen to be a dominant force was fishing. In Fremantle (Western Australia) over 50 per cent of the licensed fisherman were Italian and the Joint Select Committee on the Fishing Industry in Western Australia (1906) was instructed to focus on the causes “debarring persons of British origin from engaging in the industry.”\(^\text{18}\) Similar actions had already been taken in South Australia where in 1903 a Bill (extended in 1909) was introduced into Parliament in an attempt to control the number of foreigners, particularly Italians, in the industry through the issue of licences to British subjects only.\(^\text{19}\)

In parallel with these reviews and legislative actions, contemporary newspapers continued to demonise the Italian immigrant. Alongside the highly nationalistic and protectionist The Bulletin,\(^\text{20}\) the radical labour paper The Boomerang was also regularly outspoken on the Italian labourer. The
Boomerang noted that the “kanaka”, although cannibalistic, was “harmless compared to the contingency of mafia or camorra”\textsuperscript{21} who settled quarrels with a knife and was set to invade Queensland towns.\textsuperscript{22}

On the eve of World War I it is evident that there was a history of antipathy towards the Italian immigrant in Australia both by the labour movement in general and the authorities, including members of the Labor Party, who collectively believed that these men threatened Australian racial and labour norms.

The Round-Up of Italians

Despite a number of Government and private initiatives,\textsuperscript{23} recruiting became and remained one of the primary concerns for the Australian Government after 1916 and for the remaining duration of the War. As well as stimulating two conscription referendums, it prompted sustained and often heated discussion of what was perceived to be the “Italian problem”. Prohibited from enlisting in the AIF,\textsuperscript{24} the Australian authorities believed that Italians, especially those living in concentrated numbers in certain regions, were inhibiting recruiting in those areas; after all why would an Australian enlist if they were leaving their job to an Italian?\textsuperscript{25}

The detrimental effect on recruiting was also highlighted by a number of Labor Members of Parliament. Prominent anti-conscriptionist Labor Senator Edward Needham, and protectionist Senator Richard Buzacott, forwarded a resolution to the Department of Defence that “Italians in this State [Western Australia] would be allowed to enlist with the Australian Forces or go to Italy to fight with their own army.”\textsuperscript{26} Soon after, the Australian Labor Federation in Perth called for urgent attention to the problem of Italians and enlistment,\textsuperscript{27} and the Secretary of the War Council of Western Australia pleaded for something to be done about the Italians on the goldfields who were “taking the places of our own men who are on active service ... causing acute dissatisfaction ... detrimental to recruiting.”\textsuperscript{28} On the other side of the country, Queensland Labor parliamentarian, F.W. Bamford, reported that Italians were having a “detrimental effect on local enlistments. Britishers recognising that these men [were] waiting to step into their billets” were not volunteering\textsuperscript{29} and acting Queensland Labor Premier E.G. Theodore forwarded to the Department of Defence a resolution passed at an open air meeting in Cairns that whatever action possible should be taken to enforce the serving of Italians.\textsuperscript{30}
In November 1917, over 18 months since the first calls had been made on the Italian government to allow Italians to enlist in the AIF, the Australian Government and the Italian Consul General in Australia agreed that Italians in Australia would instead be required to undertake service in the Italian Army.

As a result of this, the first call to arms went out, as both advertisements and editorials in newspapers, across the country. For example, the Italian Consular Agent in Perth, H.W.D. Shallard, who was also the president of the Association of Employers of Waterside Labour placed an advertisement notifying that “all Italian Conscripts born in 1874 to 1899, are called compulsorily to join the Colours in Italy”.

The response to this nation-wide call up was limited, and a Department of Defence paper claimed that some Italians were treating the matter of compulsory deportation “as a joke, believing no compulsion can be exercised,” especially given that conscription had already been rejected by the Australian people at the 1916 referendum. Subsequent increasing levels of intimidation including threats of desertion charges, amendments to the War Precautions Act making Italian reservists who refused to render service, and those who induced them not to comply, guilty of an offence, and heavy censorship prohibiting any reporting or reference to opposition brought further resistance. Finally, from March 1918, the Italian Consul, supported by officers of the Australian Military, and armed with information, including names and addresses supplied by the Alien Registration Act requirements, toured the country (beginning in Melbourne and travelling through South Australia and New South Wales) rounding up Italians, even at gunpoint. With few avenues of protest available to them, the Italians welcomed the help of the political and industrial arms of the labour movement.

Labour Movement Aid

Italians and Members of Parliament alike claimed that there was “great unrest amongst the working class in regard to this matter of the deportation of Italians.” At this time, as Australia moved towards a second “No” vote against conscription, and even into 1918 as the round-up continued and the conscription proposition was again defeated, the selective conscription of Italians was still seen by many within the labour movement as the first step towards potential universal conscription in Australia.
Consequently, a number of Labor politicians became involved in the so-called Italian problem, often raising issues and asking questions in Parliament to increase awareness of events. In fact, a Defence Department memo from the officer in charge of repatriation claims that “owing to the interference of Members of Parliament and others, the work of repatriation is being made very difficult.”

Amongst the most outspoken in the House of Representatives was Michael Considine (Labor Member for Barrier) who was insistent in his questioning of the round-up. Considine focused not only on the plight of the Italian women and children left behind but also on the role of the Consul who he believed was “utilizing the governmental machinery of the people of Australia for the very object against which [they] … emphatically declared themselves,” namely, conscription. He was also forthright on the role of censorship in silencing the protest going as far as to claim that, as well as the press, “members of Parliament too are well muzzled. Their Hansard speeches even are subject to censorship.”

Issues of censorship and lack of avenues for protest were also taken up by James Mathews (Labor Member for Melbourne Ports) who described the police raids on Italian clubs protesting the deportation as a “system of terrorism … [where] One particular section of people is being persecuted in a manner which is a disgrace to us.”

Many Members believed that this notion of selective conscription of Italians was as Considine stated “simply the thin edge of the wedge” of universal conscription. This same theme was evident in other discussions including remonstrations by Frank Brennan (Labor Member for Batman) who reminded the incumbent government that it was in fact a non-conscriptionist Government and by Francis Tudor (Leader of Federal Labor after the split) who expressed grave fear that the Government had started on a course “the end of which it is difficult to foresee.” Weeks later the matter was still subject for discussion as William Finlayson (Labor Member for Brisbane) pointed out that “if the policy of compulsory seizure and deportation can be applied to Italian citizens, then … the same violence may be perpetrated on other citizens.”

It was in fact Finlayson who provided one of the most emotive descriptions of the round-up stating that, while waiting for a train to Adelaide, he had seen “a sight which caused me considerable sorrow.” His report to Parliament went on to describe the Italians:
who had travelled all night from Broken Hill in unlighted carriages, and under military escort, being lined up on the platform, and marched off under armed escort to be deported later on for military service overseas … a sight that might be expected in Prussia.48

Finlayson’s protestations against the conscription of Italians were in direct contrast to the previously mentioned Queensland State Government calls to force Italians to serve. However, by 1918, even the Queensland Ryan government was refusing to allow its state police to cooperate with any Commonwealth action in the round-up of Italians – a direct shift from earlier policy.49

Taking their support for Italians to a wider audience outside of Parliament, politicians such as anti-conscriptionist Percy Brookfield (Labor Member for Sturt, NSW) personally addressed public protest meetings declaring that he was “with the Italians heart and soul against deportation and would render all the assistance possible.”50 Others pressed the same point, using almost the same words, and emphasising that the Italian deportation was merely the first step towards introducing universal conscription.51 It was, in fact, at these meetings that the wider labour movement support for the Italians’ plight was most evident.

Organisations such as the Social Democratic League supported the Italian protest while promoting their own anti-conscriptionist and anti-militarist manifestos by financing, organising and conducting public meetings and rallies at a number of venues around Melbourne and Sydney.52 A Miss Santamaria, reporting as part of an Italian female deputation to the Prime Minister, said that on “the previous night in Melbourne there were seven theatre meetings protesting against the deportation of Italians. These meetings were all packed and people had been turned away.”53

From the reports available it is evident that the demographics of attendance at these meetings varied considerably, with audiences described as numbering anywhere from 90 to three hundred or even thousands.54 At some events the audience was predominantly Italian, and even at one meeting two-thirds women, whilst other meetings incorporated other nationalities, including Australians.55 Frank Brennan claimed to have attended meetings of protest, “where the number of Italians was small and the number of Australians preponderated.”56 The venues themselves ranged from the banks of the Yarra in Melbourne and the Domain in Sydney to Trades and Socialist Halls and Italian Clubs’ rooms.
Some meetings resulted in concrete resolutions later presented in writing to the authorities. For example a resolution passed unanimously at a 20 May 1918 meeting in Sydney declared that those present were “prepared to do their uttermost to defeat the diabolical designs of deporting from these shores any member of the community as a conscript.” At other meetings petitions were circulated opposing the deportation of Italians as an action that was “distinctly inconsistent with the Government’s declaration against conscription.”

No matter where the meeting or how large the audience, detailed reports were taken by members of the state police, representatives of the Military Intelligence Bureau and interpreters, whose presence understandably often “caused some consternation.” Some speakers made light of the police and military presence and joked that they “did not mind if police took notes” as they were “only doing their jobs” but hoped that they at least “took accurate notes.” Others were at pains to point out that they were “not rebels or advocating a revolution” but simply meeting “to see that justice was meted to the Italians.”

The Workers Industrial Union of Australia, an offshoot branch of the Industrial Workers of the World, also became involved in the cause at the behest of the Italians. In a letter to the Italian Consul-General they indicated that they were against the methods employed in the deportation of Italians and raised the moral issues of anti-militarism.

[We are] against the undemocratic methods employed and adopted by your government in forcing men into a condition, namely, that of having to serve with the Italian colors [sic] abroad for active service. As a good many of these people affected have strong convictions against militarism. This organisation being ‘International’ in its scope, and therefore those Italians interested in the ‘International Socialist Movement’ a moral duty. [sic] We enter an emphatic protest against the methods employed by your Government in forcing those affected to become part of an institution, that they have conscientious objections against, viz, ‘That of Military Service.’

Given the restrictions and censorship on general publications, including newspapers, the use of circulars and leaflets was an important tool in the protest. Strongly worded flyers were sent out in large numbers addressed, according to the authorities, “in a distinctly foreign hand-writing.”
against the conscription of Italians. These leaflets commonly included anti-conscriptionist headlines such as “Italians Deported Australians Next” with the text following this theme stating that:

Those people in Australia who believed that the issue of Conscription, having been twice voted upon and turned down by the people, was dead, and that no Government, purporting to represent a democracy, would dare enforce it until the people had had an opportunity of reversing their decision, and had actually reversed it, must receive a rude shock when they learn that the Cabinet, behind Parliament’s back, and with the utmost secrecy, is ENFORCING CONSCRIPTION AGAINST A SECTION OF THIS COMMUNITY, and forcibly deporting those affected.  

Other leaflets stressed that the Italians were only the first victims, reflecting the arguments raised in Parliament that “conscription” of Italians represented the “thin edge of the wedge” and that if the people of Australia were to take it lying down then it would be an “easy step to conscript Australians as well.”

Another protest approach was the campaign of yellow stickers. These small pieces of yellow paper appeared in numerous locations around Sydney in May 1918 in contravention of War Regulation 28AA, and resulted in exhaustive inquiries by the Intelligence Department, who believed them to be the work of the Industrial Workers of the World and the labour press. In many of the stickers the wording was strongly anti-conscriptionist, for example, “Do You Know Australian soldiers are being used to forcibly Conscript Italians. Is this what you voted ‘No’ for?” and “The People of Australia have twice voted ‘NO CONSCRIPTION.’ A conscriptionist Government is now trying to flout the will of the people by Conscripting Italians.” Other examples were more suggestive of a united workers approach “Italian Conscripts are paid 2d. per day Workers! This is your fate unless you protest.”

The production and distribution of flyers and stickers was carefully monitored and investigated by censors and intelligence departments who believed that the Labor and other socialist parties were active in their production and that the labour press was responsible for their printing. Certainly the Labor Party did not try to hide its involvement stating on one flyer that “the Labor party of Australia has taken up the issue … in every State of the Commonwealth.”

The invaluable assistance of the labour movement was also noted by
B. Santamaria, Secretary of the Italian Club in Carlton, who commented in a letter to A. Stewart, Secretary of the Melbourne Branch of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), on the “magnificent assistance you have rendered us. We fully realise that without your aid we would have been helpless.”

Discussion

The questions to be addressed as a result of the resistance to Italian deportation are: who in the labour movement was really behind the support for Italians, and what were their motives? From the above discussion it is apparent that the Italian cause was assisted by members of the Labor Party at both a Commonwealth and State level. As the examples given indicate, Labor politicians offered support through parliamentary debate, but for what motive? Was the support a reflection of parliamentarians “in opposition” particularly in the aftermath of the conscription split? Certainly for many of those who spoke out, the round-up of Italians was in direct contrast to their strongly held principles as staunch anti-conscriptionists.

For Michael Considine perhaps the motivations were multifaceted. He was a vocal anti-conscriptionist and, as Labor Member for Barrier, his constituency included Broken Hill where the most violent incidents of the round-up occurred and where Italians were to be found in large numbers working within the mining industry. Considine had worked in the industry himself and had also served as president of the Amalgamated Miners’ Association where he was a champion of the successful campaign to obtain the 40-hour-week for underground mine workers. Furthermore, Considine’s previous memberships of the Socialist Federation of Australia and the Marxist Australian Socialist Party and his 1922 defeat as an Industrial Socialist Labor Party candidate aligned him with the most supportive groups of the Italian cause, namely the socialist organisations.

All indications are that the meetings, petitions and other forms of protest on behalf of Italian conscripts were organised by only certain sections of the labour movement, notably socialist groups and those linked with the Industrial Workers of the World. There is little evidence of grass roots trade union support.

As Douglass notes, when Italian canecutters in Queensland initiated a work stoppage and organised a general protest meeting against their conscription the local branch of the Australian Workers Union assisted them. However,
although the meeting attracted 350 people including Italians and Australians, a circulated petition threatening a general work stoppage if the order for deportation was not rescinded prompted few signatures.  

On the other side of the country, the Federated Miners Union in Western Australia questioned the appointment of a board to determine which Italians could be spared to fight and asked:

> why can Australians be spared from the Golden Mile without enquiry while in the case of Italians a Board is to be appointed to determine whether they can be spared or not? The Government has now gone too far.

Did the support for the Italian cause mean that the pre-war anti-Italian sentiment within the union movement had changed? Certainly at a meeting in June 1918, outspoken socialist W.G. Jeffrey specifically called upon unionists not to let any racial prejudice stand in the way as:

> Labour is International in its scope, now is the time to stand shoulder to shoulder with your Italian comrades as International Brothers with a common cause and one final object the Workers Emancipation, the World Over.

For some the dilemma was evident. New South Wales ALP parliamentarian, Percy Brookfield, a staunch anti-conscriptionist and vocal opponent to Prime Minister Hughes, was outspoken about foreign labour and its link to conscription. Responding to the arrival of Maltese migrants in 1916 Brookfield said: “If conscription was allowed to come in, Kaffirs, Maltese and Chinese would take their places in the mines.” Although he often spoke disparagingly of other racial groups his attitude towards Italians was different and as Adams notes:

> On one hand, he expressed his concerns with immigrants who might undermine union solidarity, reduce conditions or make work places less safe. On the other … [he] tirelessly helped Italian immigrants avoid deportation and conscription.

Brookfield’s response to the arrival of Maltese migrants was representative of other labour members and organisations who feared that they had been
brought to fill the positions of Australians who had left for the front.\textsuperscript{76} It would appear that union pre-war xenophobia was still a force at least in connection to conscription and volunteerism.

Evans argues that Australian workers in Queensland “found great difficulty in overcoming deeply ingrained ethnocentric responses” especially to Southern Europeans\textsuperscript{77} and argues that self-interest was paramount during the 1918 sugar strike when “strikers were anxious to have all field hands join, whatever their ethnic origins.” However, when the round-up of Italians actually began “the active assistance of Anglo-Australian workers in helping the Italians to resist was notable in its absence.”\textsuperscript{78}

It would seem that the Italian conscripts, as the Military Investigation Bureau noted:

received from the ALP, much assistance in their efforts to oppose the calling up of their countrymen for Active Service … [there was] Little doubt that the Labor Party and Socialists have done much to create and foster the soreness which undoubtedly exists among Italians.\textsuperscript{79}

Union assistance was, perhaps, less forthcoming.

The selective conscription of Italians in Australia occurred at a unique point in Australian history. The initial call to arms corresponded with the second conscription referendum, and despite a second “No” vote for Australians, the forcible deportation of these allied workers in the last months of the war contributed to the disquiet which was prevalent in many sections of society. War weariness, labour unrest, falling standards of living and a general fear of increasing government control over many aspects of daily life created an environment in which past prejudices could be temporarily put aside in favour of solidarity to a cause.

On the other hand, for the labour movement, in many ways the conscription of Italians actually highlighted the divisions and ideological differences that the war had both initiated and accentuated. Consequently support for the Italian cause was as varied as the drivers were conflicting.

For political Labor the round-up of Italians occurred at a time of division. Following the conscription split many of the Parliamentarians who spoke out against the conscription of Italians were already known to be staunch anti-conscriptionists. It is likely that the response of those Members of Parliament who spoke out against the deportation of Italians was part of their established
anti-conscriptionist ideology. In many ways this event reinforces Dyrenfurth’s argument that the war brought to the fore the differences between Labor as a political party versus labour as a movement.\textsuperscript{80}

With regards to the socialist movement, Burgmann has noted that the internationalist traditions of socialism were in direct conflict with the racist traditions of the Australian labour movement.\textsuperscript{81} The conscription of Italians, provided an event which underlined the importance of workers united as one, regardless of colour or race. Socialist and Industrial Workers of the World organisations saw past the xenophobia which had dominated Australian labour philosophy and appear to have looked toward the Italian, despite earlier mistrust and questions of whiteness, as an international worker in need. In this case vigilance over wages and conditions rather than colour was replaced by vigilance against conscription.\textsuperscript{82}

At the grass-roots level the response of union members is less easy to determine. There is little evidence to show their support for the Italian cause outside of the anti-conscription argument. In fact, earlier in the war, unionists were concerned about the risk of Italians taking the jobs of men who went away to serve and following the war, there was a clear return to the pre-war xenophobic position in many areas.

The post-war reversion to xenophobia and accusations that Italians were being employed as contract labour is more evidence that conditions at the time drove the response to the Italian repatriation issue. Although the Australian Workers Union (AWU) supported Italian members protesting against their exclusion from Kalgoorlie following the 1919 racist violence in the town there are questions as to the Union’s motivation. While Gregson contends that this support suggests that a “solidarity across perceived racial boundaries was developing”,\textsuperscript{83} other scholars argue that racism remained strong within the labour movement and that support for Italians was actually motivated by the need to build AWU membership against competing unions which were comprised predominantly of returned soldiers.\textsuperscript{84}

By the mid-1920s in Queensland, sugar produced by Italian farmers was referred to as “black sugar” and unions protested the Italian presence in the industry.\textsuperscript{85} In the years immediately after the war there was no evidence of any solidarity with the Italian worker as the AWU imposed a boycott in the transport and crushing of sugarcane grown by Italians and pushed for quotas of 75 per cent British labour and 25 per cent foreign on the cane fields.\textsuperscript{86}
Across the country there are many other examples of union antagonism to Italian labour especially as potential contract workers. These came from unions as diverse as the New South Wales Stonemasons Union who, in 1924, protested against 100 Italians who they claimed would be imported to build the North Shore Bridge,87 to the Actors Federation which protested against an Italian chorus being imported for the Melba Opera Company reportedly to work “under contract rates and conditions below those of the award.” As Mr Harrop, Secretary of the NSW Theatrical Employees Union argued, Italian singers had been in Australia before and had been known to work outside of the union and for less than award rates. Furthermore, as Minister for Trade and Customs, Austin Chapman, elaborated “all good Australians feel that we have plenty of Australian singers here” and as such you are “entitled to protection”.88

So it seems that the support of the labour movement for the Italian cause was mostly a matter of timing and circumstance. It is difficult to believe that, had the call-up occurred in 1915 when the labour movement was adamant in its belief that Italians were detrimental to volunteering and a threat to Australian workers jobs, there would have been the same level of support. It needed the war weariness and the antipathy towards conscription of the general public, the division in the Labor Party and the consequent hardening of position of the anti-conscriptionists, and the increasing influence of the socialist agenda, that made some elements of the labour movement look beyond race and take a more international perspective, to occur.

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Endnotes

1 Department of Defence Précis, Italians – Enlistment in the AIF, Department of Defence, no date, National Archives of Australia (NAA): Department of Defence; MP367/1, General correspondence files 1917–1929; 592/4/1116, Italians – Enlistment in AIF and Calling up of Italian Reservists, 1919–1920.
2 Ibid.


8 Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, 120.


11 One indication of this increase is to be found in the Alien Registration Data. See Karen Agutter, “Valued Allies or Unwanted Immigrants? Contextualising the experiences of Italian migrants in Australia and Canada during World War One” (PhD diss., Flinders University, 2008).


16 Ibid.


18 Western Australian Parliamentary Papers, “Joint Select Committee on the Fishing Industry in Western Australia,” Legislative Assembly (1906).


20 This weekly magazine’s masthead was “Australia for the White Man” and its cartoons and articles against Italians and other undesirable immigrants are oft quoted. See for example Gaetano Rando, “Aspects of the History of the Italian Language Press in Australia 1885–1985,” in Italians in Australia: Historical and Social Perspectives: Proceedings of the Conference on the Italians in Australia, the first 200 years, held at the University of Wollongong and Macquarie University, 27–29 August 1988, ed. Gaetano Rando and Michael Arrighi (Wollongong, NSW: Dept of Modern Languages, University of Wollongong, 1993).


22 Ibid.

23 From the Government side these included the appointment of a Director-General of Recruiting in November 1916, the formation of recruiting committees in each state and the appointment of local recruiting officers who collectively employed a variety of methods to stimulate volunteering. See Scott, The Official History of Australia, 294, 400–3 and 871–2. Similarly, a variety of private recruitment campaigns, which had been occurring throughout Australia from as early as 1915, failed to provide sufficient numbers of recruits. These private recruitment drives began under the initiative of either a single individual, such as W.T. Hitchen’s Gilgandra Snowball or by collective groups like the Sportsmen of Victoria or the Tramway Employees of Sydney. See Scott, The Official History of Australia, 314–5.

24 From the time of Italy’s declaration of war on the side of the Allies in May 1915 Italians in Australia attempted to volunteer for service in the AIF. Unlike the citizens of other allied nations the Italian Government, despite continual calls from the Australian authorities, remained adamant that Italians would only be allowed to serve in the Italian army and were therefore prohibited from joining the AIF.

25 Each of the 36 recruitment areas into which Australia had been divided had a quota of recruits to fulfil and, in those areas in which Italians were prevalent, meeting this quota was considered to be even more difficult.

26 Department of Defence Précis, Italians: Enlistment in the AIF, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/1116.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Note Premier Ryan was at this time in Europe. Department of Defence Précis, Italians – Enlistment in the AIF, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/1116.

32 Department of Defence Précis, Italians – Enlistment in the AIF, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/1116.

33 Translation of Call to Arms and Repatriation of Military Men Born in the Years from 1874–1899, NAA: Department of Defence; MP367/1, General correspondence files 1917–1929; 592/4/295, Italian Reservists Mobilization, 1918–1919.

34 These additional regulations 17 E.A were made on 6 March 1918 under the War Precautions Act. Notice of gazetting of new regulation, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/295.

35 Department of Defence Précis, Italians – Enlistment in the AIF, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/1116.


37 For a more in depth discussion of the deportation itself, see Karen Agutter, “The Enforced Repatriation of Italian ‘Reservists’ from Australia during the First World War” (Hons diss., Flinders University, 2002). The event is also briefly discussed in G. Nicholls, Deported: A History of Forced Departures from Australia (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2007).

38 Calling up of Italians in Australia, no date in NAA: Department of Home and Territories; A1 Correspondence files, annual single number series 1903–1938; 1918/6398, Italians – Deportation of for military service – Searches re Naturalization 1918.

39 Lieutenant-Colonel Walker to the Adjutant General, no date, NAA: Department of Defence; MP367/1, General correspondence files, 1918; 592/4/658, Amendment of War Precautions Regulations Repatriation of Italians 1918.

40 Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates (CAPD), “Mr Considine,” House of Representatives (HR) (19 April 1918), 4090.

41 CAPD, “Mr Considine,” HR (23 May 1918), 5077.

42 CAPD, “Mr Mathews,” HR (17 May 1918), 4859.

43 CAPD, “Mr Considine,” HR (19 April 1918), 4090.

44 CAPD, “Mr Brennan,” HR, (2 May 1918), 4333.

45 CAPD, “Mr Tudor,” HR, (2 May 1918), 4339.

46 CAPD, “Mr Finlayson,” HR (30 May 1918), 5311.

47 Ibid., 5310.

48 Ibid., 5310–12.

49 Evans, Loyalty and Disloyalty, 120. For more on Ryan’s beliefs see D.J. Murphy, T.J. Ryan: A Political Biography (St Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1975).

50 Meeting held at Trades Hall, Sydney, 20 May 1918, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/295.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Calling up of Italians in Australia, 29 April 1918, NAA: A1, 1918/6398.

54 Considine, reporting on a meeting held at Socialists Hall, Melbourne, CAPD, 19 April 1918, “Mr Considine,” 4089.

55 Police Reports, various dates, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/295.
Calling up of Italians in Australia, no date, NAA: A1, 1918/6398.
Meeting held at Trades Hall, Sydney, 20 May 1918, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/295.
Petition to the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives, no date, NAA: BP4/1, 66/4/2159.
Meeting held at Trades Hall, Sydney, 2 July 1918, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/295.
Mr Treffle, at a meeting of Italians at Trades Hall, Goulburn St, Sydney, 2 July 1918, ibid.
Intelligence Report Sydney, 4 June 1918, ibid.
Extracts from Melbourne Censor’s Intelligence Report for week ended 29 April 1918, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/658.
Censor Sydney to Captain Hinton Intelligence Section 8 May 1918, ibid.
Censor Sydney to Captain Hinton Intelligence Section 8 May 1918, ibid.
Extracts from Melbourne Censor’s Intelligence Report for week ended 29 April 1918, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/658.
Ibid.
Kalgoorlie and Bolder Federated Miners Union to State Military Commandant, 21 October 1918, NAA: Headquarters, 5 Military District, Commonwealth Military Forces; PP14/1, Intelligence reports of internments, repatriations, affiliations and general investigations, multiple number series, 1915–1920, 4/7/507, Italian Reservists, 1915–1920.
Ibid., 147.
Evans, Loyalty and Disloyalty, 120. Evans takes this further to argue that the help for Italians in Queensland was also aided by the fact that these were “northern types” rather than their inferior southern Italian countrymen. While earlier arrivals to Queensland were predominantly northern Italian in origin the rapid increase in the years before the war resulted in a rise in southern born Italians to the extent that according to Alien Registration returns over 20 per cent of Italians in Queensland in 1916 were southern born. See Karen Agutter, “The Italians in Queensland during World War One,” Spunti e Ricerche 24 (2009): 22–41.
Evans, Loyalty and Disloyalty, 120.
Extracts from Melbourne Censor’s Intelligence Report for week ended 29 April 1918, NAA: MP367/1, 592/4/658.
Fighting against war – Peace activism in the twentieth century

80 Dyrenfurth, “‘Conscription is Not Abhorrent to Laborites and Socialists’,” 152.
82 Ibid., 53.
85 Moraes-Gorecki, “‘Black Italians’ in the Sugar Fields of North Queensland,” 315.
86 Rando, “Italians in Australia”, 55.
87 “Sydney Harbour Bridge,” West Australian, 9 April 1924, 8.
88 “Melba’s Opera Company,” Kalgoorlie Miner, 5 January 1924, 5.
On 3 June 1917 the first plantings for the avenue on the western edge of Ballarat took place and by the last planting on 16 August 1919 this avenue at 14 miles (22 kilometres) was the longest in the world. More than 3,800 Ballarat servicemen and women who served in the Great War were each commemorated by the planting of a tree. These memorials were a permanent visual reminder of the death of many who served and the impact of war. Following the Ballarat plantings many other avenues were planted in western Victoria. It is an intriguing story about how the avenue came about in a city where the union movement and the Labor Party had a very strong foothold and where the conscription campaigns of 1916 and 1917 had caused major rifts within the society. The story will be told as a result of close research of the contrasting emphases of Ballarat’s three major daily newspapers – The Star, The Courier and The Evening Echo – and other local primary documents. As part of the story an exploration will be made about the reasons for so much war commemoration in Ballarat and the contribution of the “Lucas Girls” who were involved in the plantings.

The Avenue of Honour planted during 1917–19 and the Arch of Victory opened in 1920 were major landmarks in western Ballarat that commemorated World War I. This occurred in a city where the union movement and the Labor Party had a strong foothold and where the conscription
campaigns of 1916–17 caused major rifts within the society. Despite this, the community united to undertake this significant war commemoration.

Analysis on factors bringing about this war commemoration will focus on research of the contrasting emphases of Ballarat’s three World War I daily newspapers – The Star, The Courier and The Evening Echo – and other local primary documents. The Star began as a liberal newspaper in 1855 but from 1856 under the ownership of T.D. Wanliss it took a conservative stance that continued throughout its history. In 1924 it was taken over by its rival The Courier that commenced in 1867 with liberal-minded editorials and, in the main, continued to advocate more liberal policies than The Star. The Evening Echo commenced in 1895 and showed strong support for the fledgling Labor Party. Its editor during 1913–22 was future Prime Minister Jim Scullin. It stopped production in 1929.

Labour Traditions in Ballarat

Since its beginnings in 1891 Ballarat Labor has played a very significant role within the Australian labour movement. Ballarat and district was also a central area for the formation of trade unions in Australia. The first miners’ union in Victoria was formed in Ballarat in January 1870 and in 1880 a monument to one of the eight-hour day founders James Galloway was erected in Sturt Street. From 1883 an annual march of unions near the monument assisted the formation of the Ballarat Trades and Labor Council.

Another major local force in union growth was the presence of William Guthrie Spence in Creswick in the 1870s and 1880s. A superb organiser, in 1874 he assisted in the formation of the Amalgamated Miners’ Association of Victoria and in 1882 became the union’s general secretary. Then in 1886 Spence and David Temple commenced organising shearsers and on 12 June the Australasian Shearers Union was established at Fern’s Hotel in Ballarat.

Once unionists moved into the political arena in the 1890s, the Labor Party gradually grew in strength. Through organisation in rural Victoria local branches were established and maintained but it took until 1913 before Labor had federal representation in Ballarat. In the new Federal Parliament Liberal Protectionist and Australia’s second Prime Minister Alfred Deakin represented Ballarat in 1901–13 before Labor’s Charles McGrath was successful in winning the seat. From March 1916 until April 1918 McGrath served in the Australian armed forces in Europe and was re-elected unopposed in 1917. McGrath
remained as a Labor representative until 1931 when he moved to the United Australia Party.

**Ballarat in World War I**

As with most of the rest of Australia, Ballarat and district embraced the “Great War” in 1914. In spite of its initial rebelliousness of the Eureka Stockade in 1854, as Bate has described in *Lucky City*, Ballarat had shown remarkable loyalty to the “mother country” and its Empire. It is significant that in the twentieth century up until the early 1930s, in terms of population Ballarat was Victoria’s second city after Melbourne. From about 1932 Geelong’s population was greater than that of Ballarat. Also it should be remembered that before the Federal Parliament moved to Canberra in 1927, Melbourne was the seat of the Federal Parliament. Ballarat’s close proximity to Melbourne ensured it was an influential centre both in terms of national and state politics.

Once World War I commenced on 4 August 1914 there was widespread euphoria about the war effort and in Ballarat headlines in *The Star* included “Men Eager For Service” and “Splendid Patriotic Response.” Ballarat men were very prominent and well represented in the armed forces. During the first fighting against the Turkish forces at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, the Victorian forces of the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth Battalions were in the second “wave” to land. Three of the four Battalions were led by Ballarat connected men – Lieutenant-Colonels William Bolton, Harold “Pompey” Elliott and David Wanliss.

One measure of the depth and extent of Ballarat’s involvement in the War is the contribution of war service of local schools. Many of the soldiers filling local Battalions were recent graduates and it is evident the percentage of enlistment in Ballarat was one of the highest in Victoria. Most secondary students were from private schools, as the State did not enter secondary education until the founding of the Melbourne Continuation School in 1905. Some Primary Schools had classes through to Form Two (Year Eight). Many who enlisted hadn’t attended secondary schools such as 1916 Victoria Cross recipient William Dunstan who attended Mount Pleasant Primary School. The Pleasant Street Primary School Honour Board lists 244 former students that served in the World War I and Dana Street Primary about 300. Each of Ballarat’s 18 primary schools had many enlistments among their former students.

The first Ballarat government school to offer secondary education was the Ballarat Agricultural High School that had existed as the Ballarat Continuation...
School during 1907–10. In 1914 the school boasted Victoria’s State Champion cadet team. During 1914–18, 275 former students enlisted, representing 72 per cent of those eligible (a further 10 per cent had been rejected on grounds of health). Of those who served 52 obtained commissions and 75 reached non-commissioned rank.¹⁰

Among the private schools the enlistments from Ballarat College, where 305 former students and teachers saw active service, were remarkable. This occurred despite a total school enrolment in 1904–13 of 294 students. Of those who served 103 attained commissioned rank and 44 had non-commissioned rank.¹¹ Both “Pompey” Elliott and David Wanliss were old Collegians. The school had a long military tradition especially under Headmaster Major John Garbutt from 1877 to 1909. In his *Light Blue Down Under*, Bate noted:

> Among Victorian schools, the highest casualty rates seem to have been at Ballarat College and Geelong Grammar School – from Ballarat, the most empire-conscious of towns, and Geelong Grammar, the most empire conscious of schools. At Geelong Grammar one in five who enlisted was killed. At Ballarat the death rate was even higher – 22 per cent.¹²

The neighbour of Ballarat College, St Patrick’s College recorded the names of 289 former students on its Roll of Honour 1914–18. It was estimated there were about 1,000 past students that potentially could have served¹³ at a time when about twenty per cent of Ballarat’s population were Roman Catholics¹⁴. The lower percentage of volunteers reflects the widespread Irish Catholic scepticism about the war, especially in the aftermath of the Dublin Easter 1916 uprising against the English. On the other side of Lake Wendouree, Ballarat Grammar had commenced in 1911. By 1917 it had 24 former students and three teachers serving.¹⁵ Overall, very many young men educated in Ballarat went to war during 1914–18.

In Ballarat both *The Star* and *The Courier* gave strong support to the war effort. Their editors, along with most of Australia’s population, found out only gradually about the war’s full horror. After the 25 April 1915 Gallipoli landing *Courier* reports included: “The “Times” says that the attention of the Germans and Turks was diverted by feints at various points, giving the Allies at Gallipoli time to entrench, which they have done so successfully.”¹⁶ Two days later headlines in *The Courier* were: “Magnificent Achievement” and
“Splendid Gallantry Displayed by Australians”\textsuperscript{17}. Next day a message from King George V to Australian Prime Minister Andrew Fisher was highlighted: “I heartily congratulate you upon the splendid conduct and bravery displayed by the Australian troops in the operations at the Dardanelles, who have indeed proved themselves worthy sons of the Empire.”\textsuperscript{18} Myths and legends about the heroic Anzac campaign were already in the making.

Both \textit{The Courier} and \textit{The Star} maintained support for the war effort throughout the war. The day before the Federal election of 5 May 1917 \textit{The Courier} carried a large advertisement authorised by the National Campaign Council, Melbourne that proclaimed: “If you neglect to vote for the Nationalists tomorrow you betray the Anzacs, Australia and the Empire.”\textsuperscript{19} Later the same month \textit{The Courier} lauded Britain’s war effort:

> By a wonderful feat of organisation Britain has built up, trained and equipped the most formidable fighting force in Europe. In the financial sphere Britain has been the sheet-anchor of the allies. While making provision for the empire’s needs, the Motherland has at the same time advanced loans to the allied countries to enable them to whether the financial storm.\textsuperscript{20}

As Bate illustrated in \textit{Life After Gold}, patriotic efforts were particularly strong in Ballarat. Recruiting Committees, the “Forward Ballarat” movement, manufacturers such as the Woollen Mill, the Mayors’ Patriotic Fund, a Queen Carnival in 1916 (raising £8,279) and the Red Cross (raising £29,263 during the war, with the 1918 total of almost £12,000 easily topping the State list) were all attuned to fundraising for the war effort. Bate also points out that the forerunner of the Returned Soldiers League and the initial promotion of a Soldier Settler scheme originated in Ballarat.\textsuperscript{21} Local governments and religious leaders in Ballarat were also very supportive of the war effort. For example, on 4 August 1916, the second anniversary of the declaration of war, at the direction of the Victorian Premier, Sir Alexander Peacock, to hold public meetings throughout the State, a public meeting attended by a large audience was held at the Alfred Hall. Sponsored by the City of Ballarat and the Ballarat East Town Council, a patriotic motion was moved by Archbishop Tucker (Anglican), seconded by Father Kennelly (St Patrick’s Cathedral) and supported by Rev. Joyce (Council of Churches), Rev. Smith (Presbyterian), Rev. Snell (Methodist), Brigadier Bickerton (Salvation Army) and Rabbi
Lenzer (Jewish Synagogue). Following musical items, collections were taken up for the Red Cross and the Lady Mayoress Patriotic League.

The main outlet for opposition in Ballarat to the manner in which the Australian government was conducting the war was The Evening Echo. Due to the War Precautions Act, it was difficult for anti-war material to be published so The Evening Echo used the tactics of asking questions about the government’s war efforts, arguing strenuously against the policy of conscription of Australian men of military age and being supportive of the Australian troops. As the war lists of the dead lengthened, as evidence of people making financial gains out of the war came to light, and when Roman Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix spoke out against “imperialists” after the British suppressed the 1916 Irish Easter uprising, opposition to Australia’s involvement in the war hardened. By mid-1916 recruiting numbers had dropped markedly and the attempt of Prime Minister Billy Hughes to introduce conscription led to a clear division between those advocating an increased war effort and those opposing it.

In both 1916 and 1917 The Evening Echo, under its banner of “Fearless, Truthful, Just,” featured sustained campaigns against the introduction of conscription. In numerous editorials, Jim Scullin and his co-editor R. Jordan, argued that conscription was based on the philosophy that “might is right” and that conscription “places military law above civil law.” They noted:

> The seeds of liberty which were sown in the blood-stained soil of Eureka, has created an Australian environment which is responsible for bold, courageous, and self-sacrificing characteristics, which have made our sons admired by all in the world. If you would preserve these freedom-loving aspirations, which is the very soul force of true patriotism, then fight to the last gasp against the introduction of conscription into your country, because conscription is the very foundation and corner stone of a servile state.

The paper railed against comments of The Courier. During September 1916, the Evening Echo stated that The Courier had supported the “stinking fish party” that was trying to drive Australia’s young manhood out of the country. In its “lather” and “sorry verbiage,” it had a fatal gift of speaking out of turn: The Courier, which refused to allow its editor (Colonel Williams) to go to the Boer War, and the present editor who was over the military age, was fiercely determined that others shall be compelled to risk their lives. Before the May
1917 federal election, the *Evening Echo* wrote about a speech Prime Minister Hughes delivered in Bendigo at the end of March. It stated: “The ‘Age’ and the ‘Argus’ and the ‘Courier’ and the ‘Star’, and all the anti-Labor papers received advanced copies of his speech – but the ‘Echo’ did not. The fact is not without its significance.”

The issue of conscription was hotly debated in Ballarat and surrounding townships. While local councillors, church leaders, large manufacturing businesses and military organisations did their best to promote the “Yes” campaign for conscription, the “No” campaign also received heavy promotion. For example, on 17–19 October 1916 Jim Scullin was the guest speaker at anti-conscription rallies in Ascot and Miners’ Rest (Tuesday), Brown Hill (Wednesday) and Waubra and Learmonth (Thursday). At a “Yes” rally at Bungaree on 17 October, Colonel Bolton had organised for Private Tolliday and another returned serviceman to speak to this strongly Irish Catholic community. About 200 people stood outside and refused to enter until the two speakers left. Then, those attending entered the hall and held a “No” rally to organise as many “anti” votes as possible.

The campaign of the *Evening Echo* and the anti-conscription rallies does appear to have had an impact. In the first conscription referendum of 28 October 1916, Victoria voted “Yes” overall, but Ballarat recorded a vote of “No” – 15,375 to 13,831. During the second referendum of 20 December 1917, Ballarat had a slightly increased percentage of negative votes – “No” 12,367 to “Yes” 10,777.

**War Commemoration in Ballarat**

Ballarat has a long history of commemoration and especially war commemoration. Since the arrival of the first British settlers in 1838 and the immense wealth created by the major gold rush period of 1851–70 the city has had a strong link to Britain. In *Lucky City* Bate provides a detailed analysis of the characteristics of the city and states: “City of statues, city of trees, city of pictures, city of song, golden city. These were not enough. Ballarat was also to be loyal city, and was vying with all comers to be the most loyal city of the empire.” Part of this loyalty was the city’s strength in providing many members of the local militia. Bate notes that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Ballarat sustained a militia of over 400 men in a population of 40,000. Melbourne could not fill two battalions 500 strong and numbers in units in Sandhurst (Bendigo) and Castlemaine were far smaller.
A symbol of this loyalty was the Boer War statue outside the Ballarat Town Hall. The foundation stone was laid by HRH the Duke of York (later King George V) in May 1901 and then in November 1906 the Governor-General Lord Northcote before a crowd of “many thousands” opened it officially. The towering statue features a soldier on horseback with another soldier standing by the horse. Ken Inglis in *Sacred Places* during a discussion about Boer War commemoration notes:

The longest list of names appeared in Victoria’s second city, Ballarat, where the monument unveiled in 1904 [sic] recorded the names, arranged by contingent and rank, of some 250 Victorians serving in Victorian and other units who had died at the war. The memorial identified itself as at once imperial, national, provincial and municipal: Ballarat’s tribute “In Honour of Australian Soldiers who fought in South Africa 1899–1902,” commemorating individually “Victorians who died for the Empire.” In the rich prose of the *Ballarat Courier*, they had poured out their warm blood on kopje and velte and cemented the foundation of empire.

The creation of the Avenue and the Arch continued the tradition of war commemoration in Ballarat. In recent years key theorists such as Pierre Nora in *Les Lieux de Memoire*, Ken Inglis in *Sacred Places*, Jay Winter in *Remembering War*, Bruce Scates in *Returning to Gallipoli* and Bart Ziino in *A Distant Grief* have analysed the interaction between memory, commemoration and heritage. As time goes by there is a drive for memory and the gap between history, heritage and commemoration is blurring. Traditions become “invented” and myths are developed. The origin and history of the Avenue and Arch lends themselves to such an analysis, but a detailed examination of this is beyond the scope of this chapter. It can be observed, though, that a significant feature of the planting of the Avenue was its egalitarian and inclusive nature. Also it appears that a “myth” has been invented that avenues of honour are an exclusive Australian phenomenon. As well it is an intriguing question as to why E. Lucas & Co. became so involved in commemoration and the war effort. The next two sections outline how the Avenue and Arch came into existence.
The Avenue of Honour

The conscription debates provided the backdrop to the commencement of the “Avenue of Honour.” The first plantings for the avenue on the western edge of Ballarat took place on the King’s Holiday on Monday 4 June 1917. Once the last official planting occurred on 16 August 1919 this avenue at 14 miles (22 kilometres) was the longest in the world with 3,762 Ballarat servicemen and women who served in World War I each commemorated in order of enlistment by the planting of a tree. These memorials were a permanent visual reminder of the death of many who served and the impact of war. Following the Ballarat plantings many other avenues were planted in western Victoria and other parts of Australia, although most only commemorated the war dead.

Avenues of Honour had their genesis in the mid-nineteenth century worldwide movement to recognise the importance to the environment of parks, gardens, tree-lined streets and the greening of urban areas. Arbor Day tree planting originated in Nebraska, USA in 1872 and from then in many countries annual tree planting was organised. In Ballarat from the late 1880s annually on Arbor Day tree plantings took place, often centred on Victoria Park, where the City Council established its tree-planting nursery.

In America after its Civil War there were commemorative tree plantings and in Australia five small Avenues were planted to commemorate the Boer War of 1899–1902. In Germany from late 1914, on the initiative of landscape architect Willi Lange, oak trees were planted for fallen soldiers in circular festival grounds. The first Australian World War I Avenue appears to have been established at Stirling in South Australia in September 1915. In Victoria, the first was at Eurack in May 1916 when 26 trees were planted as an Arbor Day project. During or after World War I besides Australia and Germany, a small number of avenues were established in England, France, Italy, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. Sometimes they were clusters of trees, commemorative gardens or had different names such as memorial avenues and remembrance drives. The majority of plantings, though, took place in Australia towards the end or just after the Great War.

During the time of the conscription debates in 1916 and 1917, the federal government explored ways to enhance recruiting and local councils were urged to acknowledge the war effort of local servicemen. In Ballarat Arbor Day became allied to patriotic efforts by schools, Progress Associations, branches of the Australian Natives Association and other community organisations.
During meetings about Arbor Day projects, locations for tree planting were discussed, so it is not surprising the idea of Avenues of Honour moved to the forefront. In Victoria after the Ballarat Avenue’s first plantings in June 1917, Avenues were established at Seymour in July, Digby (west of Hamilton) in August and at Cambrian Hill near Buninyong in November. During 1918–20 more avenues were established – usually at the entrance to, or the main road through, the town. Recently 378 Australian Avenues commemorating World War I have been identified. Of these 218 were in Victoria with most in the Western District near Ballarat which had eight, some were in the suburbs of Melbourne, a number in Gippsland and in northern Victoria and 57 were in Tasmania.

How Ballarat came to possess such an impressive and extensive avenue is an intriguing story. All three local newspapers covered detailed accounts of the various plantings and exhibited strong local pride about the efforts of the employees of E. Lucas & Co known as the “Lucas Girls” in fund-raising for (and planting) the avenue’s trees. Despite its constant criticism of Prime Minister Hughes and those who were pro-conscription, The Evening Echo carried similar reports about the Avenue to those outlined in The Courier and The Star. The short time span from the proposal of an avenue to the first plantings is quite remarkable. On 2 June 1917 The Star, The Courier and The Evening Echo all noted: “It is less than three weeks since the suggestion was made to the young ladies of Lucas’ establishment, who have been in the forefront in all patriotic and charitable works.”

On 10 May 1917, The Courier revealed that the idea for the Avenue had originated with Lucas’ saleslady Mrs Tilly Thompson. At a meeting on Wednesday 16 May 1917 convened by the Ballarat Progress Association to discuss arrangements for Arbor Day, which was to be held on 21 and 22 June, once discussions about a program for local schools and Progress Associations concluded, further suggestions for tree-planting were made. Police Sub-Inspector Alexander Nicholson representing the Newington Branch of the Australian Natives Association floated the idea that an avenue should be planted on the continuation of Sturt Street along the Burrembet Road to commemorate the “great” achievements of “our gallant boys” at Bullecourt on the Somme. After this, Managing Director of the Lucas factory, Edward Price, the son of Mrs Lucas, revealed recent discussions had occurred at the factory. The report noted:
Mr Price said the young ladies of Lucas’ whitework factory were going to plant 400 to 500 trees, as a start to commemorating the enlisting of every soldier from Ballarat. It was a suggestion from Mrs Thompson, who had heard about it being done at Mount Lofty at Adelaide. A start was being made to commemorate the first 500 who had enlisted. He believed there was over 3,000 altogether, which would make an avenue ten miles long.

They would like the assistance from Progress Associations and each soldier’s next of kin who could perhaps contribute to a plate that would list the name and rank of the soldier. It was decided the site for the avenue would be selected next Saturday in conjunction with the City Council. A motion was passed that representatives of the organisations present meet with the Mayors of the City and Town to discuss the schemes proposed by Inspector Nicholson and Mr Price.

*The Evening Echo* in a report of the same meeting noted that the Lucas Girls had already arranged to plant the trees. Mr Caldwell mentioned that a scheme for Black Hill was similar to that proposed by Inspector Nicholson – avenues would be planted and named after different battles in which Australians had taken a prominent part. Inspector Nicholson had questioned in the scheme proposed by Mr Price the expense of providing the plates. The Star report noted that it was a “largely attended meeting” at the Ballarat Progress Association rooms. Among those present were representatives of three local ANA branches – Ballarat, Canadian and North, the Sebastopol Council and various school committees and headmasters.

Soon the idea of an Avenue along Burrumbeet Road was consolidated. On Friday 18 May at 11 am City Mayor Hill and Town Mayor Levy met with representatives of ANA branches, Progress Associations and other bodies. The next day *The Star* reported that Mayor Hill said there would be no difficulty in obtaining the trees required and Mrs Thompson, on behalf of the employees of Lucas and Co, had said it was the intention of the girls of the factory to pay for the cost of the planting and the tree guards. On Monday 21 May, *The Courier* reported:

> It is generally agreed now that the avenue, which it is proposed to plant in commemoration of soldiers who have gone from Ballarat, shall be planted on the Burrumbeet road. On Saturday afternoon
cars took (at the invitation of Mr Price and Mrs Thompson of Lucas & Co) a party consisting of the City Australian Natives Association, Newington ANA, Ballarat Progress Association, Council and Town representatives to the proposed site and a call was made to the City Council nursery in Victoria Park, from which the trees to be set in the avenue will be largely drawn. The President and Councillors of the Ballarat Shire are to be interviewed today.

On Saturday night representatives of the Progress Associations and various bodies were at a meeting at the office of the Progress Association, Inspector Nicholson presiding. The meeting decided that two representatives from each association would form an executive committee to carry out the scheme and seek patronage from the Mayors of the City, Town and Sebastopol. It was pointed out that other avenues in the district would probably be planted. Prices for items and support are to be obtained.52

The report in The Star provided further detail about the Saturday evening meeting. From the chair Inspector Nicholson outlined the purpose of the meeting was to organise the 23 June Arbor Day program. He stated about the “avenue of honour:”

This plan originated with Lucas & Co and is to be initiated by the girl employees of that firm … Mr Price and Mrs Thompson were desirous of the help of the ANA and Progress Associations … it is expected the avenue will eventually reach Burrumbeet Park … if other places take up the idea, in time, it may stretch throughout the length of the State.53

Preparations for the Avenue took place quickly. On Saturday 26 May many Lucas “young ladies” accompanied by 100 Boy Scouts began preliminary work of digging holes for the tree planting and this was followed up in a similar way on Saturday 2 June. On this day The Star described preparations:

A personal letter has been sent by the young ladies of Lucas’ establishment who is to plant the tree to the next of kin of each soldier, requesting their presence and assistance. The function is to commence at 3 pm on Monday 4 June by Sir Alexander Peacock and Brigadier-General Williams planting the first and second trees,
then 450 will be planted by the young ladies and 50 by Parliamentary representatives for the district and councillors of Ballarat, Ballarat East, Sebastopol and the Ballarat Shire ... In the first mile 320 elm trees are to be planted and the next half mile mountain ash. The even numbers will be on the right side and the odd on the left starting from the golf links.\textsuperscript{54}

*The Evening Echo* was fulsome in its praise for the preparations and the project. On 2 June it stated:

**Soldiers’ Avenue**  
**A Fine Effort**

One of the most striking memorial tributes to the valor and heroism of our Ballarat boys will be the avenue of honor that is to be planted on Monday afternoon at three o’clock at the west end of Sturt Street commencing at the High School, when 500 trees will be planted, tree guards erected, and the name plates attached to each guard.\textsuperscript{55}

A similar report to that of the *Evening Echo* was carried in *The Courier* and it appears likely the reports for the newspapers came from the one source. Both papers stated that as well as selling souvenir catalogues for 1/-, the Lucas Girls will have one of their large flags used in the Eureka pageant at Easter 1917, on which the public will be able to shower their loose coins.

At last the planting day of the 4 June holiday for the King’s Birthday arrived. Trams left the city centre at Grenville Street at 2 pm to go to Hamilton Street. Then those planting at the far end spent 20 to 30 minutes walking 1\(\frac{3}{4}\) miles to their tree. At 3 pm a trumpet played by Sgt. Slade Hedlam signalled the commencement of planting and then six buglers at intervals relayed the signal. A team of 25 professional gardeners supervised the tree planting and 25 carpenters fixed “name plates” to the trees. The actual number of trees planted was 505 as five further names had come to light after the initial plans were made. Those commemorated had enlisted from 17 August 1914 to 19 April 1915.

Unfortunately about 3 pm it commenced raining just as the planting was about to start. Despite the rain, the *Evening Echo* thought the planting was “a fine effort.” The Premier Peacock was to make a speech near the High School and it was planned for the Boy Scouts to march from the far end of the tree.
planting to the platform for the speeches, but all this was abandoned. The Star report read:

The weather was exceedingly boisterous, and the sky threatened rain, but despite this thousands of people, some in trams, some in motor-cars and other vehicles and many on foot, wended their way to Sturt Street west to do honor to Ballarat’s heroic soldier boys … it was a magnificent tribute to the first 505 soldiers to enlist … Unfortunately before ceremonies were over the rain came down very heavily … a large body of Boy Scouts were present and rendered much assistance in various directions … thanks needs to go to Mr J. Williams of Victoria Park who supervised the laying out of the avenue, Mr L. Charles who erected the tree guards in the record time of 2½ days, Messrs Sim & Co who manufactured the guards and delivered on time, T. Kift & Son and Mr Sol Flohm who got the name plates written and High School students who sank 100 holes.56

Despite the rainfall, the first planting for the Avenue was a success and it was soon decided to undertake a second planting event. On 9 June The Evening Echo under the heading “A Fine Effort” noted:

The whole cost in connection with the planting of the 500 trees in the Avenue of Honor, amounting to £250, has been met by the patriotic efforts of Lucas’ young ladies. The success that has attended their efforts and the pleasure and gratification that the soldiers and soldiers’ relatives have shown, both by letter and personal interviews, has made them feel another effort should be made to plant another 500 trees this season. A conference has been held with Mayor W.D. Hill, Cr Brawn and Col Morton, with the result that the Mayor has had pleasure in opening a public fund to defray the cost of the next 500 trees (estimated £250).57

The first two donations to the public fund came from local identities, Councillors Frederick Brawn and Mr Walter Coltman. As donations were made they were acknowledged in the local press and the target was soon passed.

The first planting had set the scene for the creation of the rest of the Avenue. It is significant that the idea of listing the rank of each person commemorated
was dropped and that those memorialised were in order of enlistment, thus bringing an egalitarian approach. Also all those enlisted were included, not just the war dead, although this was indicated on the plaque. Again the idea of commemorating various war battles was not taken up. The Avenue was to be a long lasting reminder of the contribution of many in the community. Families identified with the particular tree commemorating their relative and many relatives made the effort to visit. Bate observes, “Some soldiers could visit their own trees” as by December 1916 there were 450 returned men in the Ballarat district.\(^{58}\)

The second “Avenue of Honour” planting took place on Saturday 18 August. As the Ballarat-Ararat railway line was near Burrumbeet Road, a special excursion train from Ballarat Station travelled via the Ballarat North and Wendouree stations to the Cardigan station. Return fares cost 1/6 (first class) and 1/- (second class). *The Courier* noted that again the planting took place during wet weather:

> Although there are some who said that if Saturday had been fine the attendance at the extension of the Avenue of Honor at Cardigan would have been much larger, it may be doubted whether much difference would have been made. Those who were interested in the movement showed so much enthusiasm for it, and much indifference to rain and mud, that a cyclone would not have stopped them.\(^{59}\)

On the day 703 trees were planted for soldiers and 47 for nurses. The Lucas Girls and dignitaries planted 450, residents of the Ballarat Shire’s South Riding planted 50 and local clubs, associations and employee groups planted 203. This included the City Fire Brigade, the Post and Telegraph Office, a Racing Club, a Women’s Association, the Sunnyside Woollen Mill, a Business College, a Gun Club, unions and associations of drapers, carters, bakers, painters and ironworkers, the Horticultural Society, the North Ballarat Railway Workshops and an ANA branch. Trees for the serving nurses were grouped in an area distinguished by two large red crosses. Similar preparations to the first planting involving the Lucas Girls, souvenir booklets, gardeners, carpenters and others were made, although this time one side of each tree guard was taken off to facilitate the process. At 3pm work began after the bugle sounded and at 4pm those present gathered for speeches by the Minister for Defence, Senator Pearce and the Victorian Premier, Sir Alexander Peacock. Then all
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enjoyed afternoon tea provided by the Windermere Red Cross Branch as a fundraising effort. The involvement of a wide cross-section of groups during this second planting is significant as an indication of the strong community support for the concept of this memorial avenue.

Further Ballarat district plantings took place. During the 21–23 June Arbor Day program local schools planted many trees, the Eureka Committee added 60 trees to the Eureka Stockade Reserve and the Canadian Progress Association planted an avenue of 60 pine trees from the Buninyong Road to the Sovereign Hill lookout. In July the Sebastopol Borough planted about 100 trees to Honour local soldiers and on 29 July Governor-General Sir Roland Munro Ferguson visited Mount Xavier Park to formally open a new Ballarat Orphanage avenue. In August 36 trees were planted by the New Cemetery as a Ballarat North Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Avenue of Honour.

Residents and organisations in the eastern part of Ballarat and the Ballarat East Town Council were keen to have their own avenue. At a meeting of the Ballarat East ANA branch on 19 June, it was suggested by Inspector Nicholson that the eastern avenue could be a continuation of the western avenue to become a grand avenue of honour extending from Melbourne right through Victoria. After discussions between East representatives and the main Avenue of Honour Committee, tree numbers in sequence with the western avenue were allocated to the East (numbers 1,242 to 1,342) and it was decided to establish an avenue extending from the Caledonian bridge eastwards along the Melbourne Road. On Saturday 25 August 1917 many dignitaries attended the official ceremony at Ballarat East Avenue of Honour to view the planting of 103 trees. A difference to the western avenue was that a dozen trees honoured generals, admirals and nurses.

Following the East ceremony on 25 August, 30 trees were planted on the Burrumbeet Road. As a continuation of the western avenue's third planting, on the following Saturday 1 September a further 104 trees were added, including 31 trees to honour “Our Navy Boys.” On the same Saturday in the east another 65 trees were planted bringing the total for 1917 to 1,558 trees comprising 1,390 on the western avenue and 168 on the eastern avenue.

During 1918–19 further extensive planting took place and many townships close to Ballarat established their own Avenues of Honour. Subsequent plantings of the main Avenue took place in 1918 on 1 June when 501 trees were added, on 20 July with 605 and 17 August with 533, most planted by the Lucas Girls. In 1919 on 9 June and 14 June 549 trees were added and the final
planting was on 16 August when 184 trees were added to the far northern end of the Avenue, ending at the junction of the Weatherboard-Learmonth Road. Some time after a further nine trees were planted bringing the final total for the western avenue to 3,771.

In all 23 species of exotic deciduous trees were planted at regular intervals of 10 to 12 metres. Usually in blocks of 25 trees on either side of the road, the elms and poplars were the most dominant trees. Those commemorated were in order of enlistment date and plaques providing details of each individual's name and Battalion were attached to the tree guards (in 1934 permanent gunmetal plaques were placed at the base of each tree). It was estimated the cost of the 3,771 trees planted, the tree guards and the plates was £2,700.

Management Plan author John Wadsley has observed: “Thus in a little over two years from June 1917 to August 1919, the Lucas Girls and the Ballarat community had achieved something, which in terms of commitment and scale would not be repeated around Australia.” This statement could be extended to “around the world.” To my knowledge, the only other avenue longer in distance than Ballarat Avenue was from Abbottstown to Wrightsville in York County, Pennsylvania where a Road of Remembrance was planted in 1919–22 to honour about 1,500 local men and women who served in the War during 1917–18. Oak, maple, elm and popular trees were spaced 30 metres apart on each side of the road for about 25 miles (40 kilometres). Unlike Ballarat, the upkeep was poor and by 1925 tree replacement funds were depleted. By the 1950s disease and road widening reduced the memorial to few trees.

In Australia in 1953 an ambitious plan for a Remembrance Driveway as a memorial avenue from Canberra to Sydney was conceived and plantations were established in 1955–57, 1967, 1973 and 1979. Since the early 1990s the Federal Government has funded its revival and now the Driveway along the Hume and Federal Highways has memorial parks and rest areas commemorating Victoria Cross winners. It is very different to Ballarat's Avenue.

The Arch of Victory

Similarly to the Avenue, the Lucas Company was central to the creation of Ballarat’s impressive Arch of Victory. In 1918 the company advertised a competition for monument designs as an appropriate Avenue entrance.

Nine designs were submitted to two judges who were members of the Victorian Institute of Architects. Just after the armistice on 11 November 1918,
Herbert Smith, Principal of the School of Mines Technical Art School, received notification from Edward Price of Lucas and Co. that the Art School’s design was awarded first place. The winning design was placed on view to the public in the window of Tunbridge’s warehouse. The Star wrote about this “beautiful design:” “The whole of one window space is taken up with a model of the design as it would be carried out in actuality. It has gained the attention of a large number of people and many appreciative comments have been made.”

The next issue for Lucas and Co. was ensuring sufficient funds were available to build the Arch. The fundraising efforts of the Lucas Girls coordinated by Tilly Thompson were quite remarkable. At the time of the laying of the foundation stone of the new Arch by the British General Sir William Birdwood on 7 February 1920, The Courier outlined details of the Lucas’ efforts. The nucleus of the Arch fund was £330, the proceeds made on 28 September 1918 when the Khaki Girls of the Commonwealth Clothing Factory in South Melbourne came to Ballarat and gave a display and then played a Ladies’ Football Match against a team of Lucas Girls. The newspaper report about the fundraising included:

The Lucas Girls have raised money in many ways. Three exhibitions of the firm’s season’s samples raised £200 and many thousands of dolls were sold which realised £1,000. They have also sold hundreds of bead necklaces, contributed weekly amounts and kept a YMCA secretary at the front for three years at a cost of £200 per annum. They have paid the rent costing £156 on the Returned Soldiers Institute for 12 months and presented the Institute with a 70-guinea piano. They raised £450 for the Red Cross at their big fair, £220 for the Comforts Fund and £50 for the YMCA.

Also the report mentions that after the 1918 football match effort of £330, a further £220 had been raised towards the Arch and the sale of the miniature bricks at Saturday’s foundation stone ceremony was expected to realise between £200 and £300. Already £300 had been spent on maintenance of the Avenue. It was expected it would take about 4 months to complete the Arch. The weekly payments of the Lucas Girls were 2d in every £1 on wages received. The dolls and necklaces were sold overseas as well as throughout Australia and other souvenirs included buttons and catalogues. By the time it was completed in early June (The Courier prediction was accurate), the Lucas Girls had raised
£2600 for the Arch. The public donated another £400 that was credited to the Maintenance Fund for the upkeep of the Avenue.

The Prince of Wales visited New Zealand in May 1920 and then Australia, so it was a “coup” to have him officially open the Arch. Both The Star and The Courier were “besotted” about Ballarat taking part in the Royal visit, but The Evening Echo used the opportunity to criticize the visit. On 14 May it pointed out the Prince had delivered a speech in New Zealand prepared for Australia and that most of the press, in realising the Prince’s faux pas, suppressed the speech. It stated that his publicity agents had recorded what he wore, how he “backed” tote winners, how he smiled, how he golfed and how he danced with pretty girls but somehow his wonderful speeches have not yet reached us. On 26 May it noted that the Prince’s trip was appallingly expensive at the people’s expense. It was a pageant with a lot of “flag-flapping,” presentation of addresses and singing of the National Anthem. On 1 June, under the heading “Princeitis” and after noting The Age was “full of tripe” about the 10-day visit of the Prince to Victoria, the Evening Echo recorded:

Whilst the average man and woman can afford to laugh at the absurd manifestations of so-called loyalty for which the visit of the Prince of Wales is responsible, it must not be forgotten that behind the visit is a purpose at which we cannot afford to laugh. That purpose is to entangle free Democratic Australia in the web of Imperialism. With considerable cunning, the organisers of the trip are directing much of their attention to the children.

In contrast The Courier noted: “In welcoming the Prince of Wales, Australians have shown that it is possible to extend a sincere, wholehearted and affectionate greeting to the heir of the Throne without lowering their dignity or offering an affront to the Royal visitor by indulging in fulsome praise.” All the same The Courier’s editor was very annoyed that the organisers of the trip of the Prince had found it impossible to allot more than two hours to the visit of his Royal Highness to “Ballarat, the most important inland city in the Commonwealth.”

When the Prince arrived in Ballarat on 2 June, despite the threatening weather, the streets were packed with thousands of people from throughout the district. After arriving at 2 pm by train, the Prince toured Ballarat’s main streets in sunny conditions before arriving at the Arch at 3.15 pm in the first
car with 24 cars following with “dignitaries” seated in strict order of “rank.” Steady rainfall led to a brief ceremony before a large crowd. The High School army cadets were devastated as they were to provide a guard of honour but in the rain the Prince’s car drove past. Nevertheless, Mrs Eleanor Lucas presented the Prince with a pair of golden scissors to cut ribbons across the Arch. As these didn't work, Edward Price produced small scissors that did work and then the Prince declared the Arch open. Following this, Mrs Tilly Thompson presented the Prince with a suit of silk pyjamas and all the dignitaries left for a brief Town Hall reception. The Evening Echo along with The Courier and The Star wrote with pride about Ballarat’s appearance for the Prince’s visit and about the new Arch. “The railway station was adorned with gum branches and flags” and “Lydiard Street was a blaze of color.” The impressive Arch stood tall at 57 feet (17.5 metres) and 64 feet (19.7 metres) wide and soon became a major landmark for Ballarat.

Bate saw the building of the Arch as symbolic. In Life After Gold he wrote: “This last response to the war by Lucas (the building of the Arch), although only brick and stucco and a little wider than the highway, was in spirit a linking of the valour of warrior Australians with mighty deeds and great traditions, both ancient and modern.” Ballarat boasts the longest remaining Avenue of Honour in the world and the only location with a pairing of an Arch and Avenue. They are a constant reminder of the sacrifice and involvement in war of the local community.

Bate’s Life After Gold includes a general study of Ballarat’s history for most of the twentieth century. He draws a picture of a conservative community that after the demise of gold mining was able to capitalise on its secondary industry and rich agricultural surrounds. In many ways it retained its British origins and continued to host Royal visits.

Part of the story of Ballarat’s commemoration through the Avenue and Arch comes back to individuals and their actions. The “Lucas” connection to Ballarat remains strong. Since 1931 Ballarat has had a civic Arch of Victory/Avenue of Honour Committee. Up until 1993 it was connected to the Ballarat Shire and since then is an Advisory Committee of the City of Ballarat Council. Since 1980 the President is Bruce Price, grandson of Edward Price and great-grandson of Eleanor Lucas. Also the Lucas Girls continue to meet. Although the Lucas business was taken over in 1968, former Lucas Girls have met regularly since 1950 and continue to fundraise to assist the upkeep of the Avenue and Arch.
Ballarat is a conservative City, full of tradition and commemoration. It has the unique Prime Ministers Avenue, the Australian Prisoners of War Memorial, an impressive array of statues especially along its main avenue Sturt Street and in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens and many other memorial symbols throughout the district. It also retains traditions emanating from its early experiences with Eureka Stockade, unionism and the Labor Party and, since 2001, the Federal Labor member is Hon. Catherine King. Alongside this mix of traditions, the story of the Avenue and Arch continues and appears to engender strong community support. Its Advisory Committee is working hard to ensure all 3,771 trees and plaques are in place for Anzac Day 2015 and a comprehensive centenary book is published on 4 June 2017.

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Endnotes
2 Ibid., 21–3.
3 Ibid., 181–7.
5 Weston Bate, Lucky City (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1978), 204.
6 Cleary, Ballarat Labor, 88.
8 Bate, Lucky City, 251–66.
9 The Star (Ballarat: 1855–1924), 6 August 1914, 7.
10 Phil Roberts, High School: A Hundred Years, Thousands of Footsteps (Ballarat: Ballarat High School, 2007), 51.
11 James Affleck, In the Footsteps of Pompey (Ballarat: Ballarat Clarendon College, 2012), x.
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17 *The Courier*, 30 April 1915, 3.


22 City of Ballarat, Correspondence, Public Record Office Victoria, File 2500/Box 111, 18 July 1916; *The Courier*, 5 August 1916, 4.


25 *The Evening Echo*, 28 March 1917, 2.

26 *The Star*, 17 October 1916, 2.

27 *The Star*, 18 October 1916, 1.

28 Bate, *Lucky City*, 253.


30 *The Star*, 2 November 1906, 5.

31 Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 44.


33 Inglis, *Sacred Places*.


Ibid., 61.

The Star, 2 June 1917, 6, The Courier, 2 June 1917, 2, The Evening Echo, 2 June 1917, 2.

The Star, 2 June 1917, 6.

Presumably this is the Stirling planting.

The Star, 2 June 1917, 6.

The Evening Echo, 3 June 1917, 2.

The Star, 5 June 1917, 6.

The Evening Echo, 9 June 1917, 2.

Bate, Life After Gold, 66.

The Courier, 21 May 1917, 4.

The Star, 2 June 1917, 6.

The Evening Echo, 3 June 1917, 2.

The Star, 5 June 1917, 6.

The Evening Echo, 9 June 1917, 2.

The Star, 17 May 1917, 3.

The Star, 17 May 1917, 3.

Ibid., 17 May 1917, 2.

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The Star, 2 June 1917, 6.

The Evening Echo, 3 June 1917, 2.

The Evening Echo, 30 July 1917, 2.

Ibid., 13 August 1917, 2.

Ibid., 20 June 1917, 2.

The Courier, 27 August 1917, 2

(Anon), Lucas’s Staffs Appreciation of Brave Men (Ballarat: Litho &Printing Co., 1919), 5–36


Wadsley, Conservation Management Plan, 23.


The Star, 27 November 1918, 4.

The Courier, 9 February 1920, 2.

Ibid.

The Evening Echo, 14 May 1920, 2.

Ibid., 26 May 1920, 2.
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77 *The Evening Echo*, 1 June 1920, 4.
78 *The Courier*, 2 June 1920, 2.
80 *The Courier*, 3 June 1920, 4.
81 *The Evening Echo*, 2 June 1920, 4.
82 Bate, *Life After Gold*, 74.
In the context of emerging Cold War tension in the immediate post-war period, the United States and United Kingdom regarded the Soviet Union with deep suspicion. However, Australia’s External Affairs Minister from 1941–59, Dr H.V. Evatt, decided on a different course. Evatt was widely regarded as a liberal internationalist who fostered international cooperation, culminating with his election as the President of the United Nations General Assembly. In doing so, he sought a greater role for Australia on the international stage in pursuit of a policy that was increasingly independent of both Britain and the United States. This chapter seeks to trace the origins of Evatt’s foreign policy, revealing the extent to which it was influenced not only by incipient Cold War tensions, but by the relationships Australia had experienced with its allies during World War II. This chapter will, in turn, assess the effectiveness of Evatt’s policies in External Affairs as responses to Cold War conflict.

As World War II drew to a close, the three major wartime allies – the United States, the Soviet Union and the Britain – drifted into an uneasy peace. The United States and Britain came to view the Soviet Union with deep suspicion, an attitude which was reciprocated. Yet, as global politics began to revert to the power politics of the pre-war years, foreign policy optimists
such as Dr H.V. Evatt, Australia’s Minister for External Affairs from 1941–49, sought to implement their vision of liberal internationalism. Such a vision, which sought to remove the root causes of war, abhorred and sought to prevent the drift to a potential war, which seemed conceivable in the climate of tension characterising the early Cold War years. Evatt’s liberal internationalism led him to favour multilateral forums such as the incipient United Nations (UN), which he was to have a significant role in establishing. It also led him to shape an Australian foreign policy increasingly independent in intent and approach from the two major Western powers, as he sought a role as a mediator and conciliator between the blocs which coalesced around the United States and the Soviet Union. However, the liberal internationalism of Evatt and his most important advisor during this period, Dr John Burton, was not the sole factor in determining Evatt’s approach. Whilst it provided the dominant theoretical paradigm for Evatt’s foreign policy, it operated in tandem with a foreign policy realism aimed at securing Australia’s security. In the pursuit of both his liberal internationalist vision, which included a desire to carve out a new role for Australia in a period where the character and composition of a new post-war order was being shaped, and the satisfaction of realist considerations, Evatt was influenced by the events of World War II. This chapter will examine Evatt’s wartime policies, in addition to his policies in the immediate post-war period until 1947 – the time when Evatt began to accept the realities of Cold War division. It will examine the influence of war on Evatt, and the often conflicting demands of Australian security and a liberal internationalist vision – or as one former officer of the External Affairs Department put it – between “security and justice.”

Dr H.V. Evatt is a polarising figure in Australian political history. Biographical works concerned with Evatt include, at one end of a spectrum, Kylie Tennant’s hagiographic Evatt: Politics and Justice, which characterises Evatt as a genius, and recognises in his career “the lonely power and extreme courage that scoured a path through the soil of mediocrity.” At the other end of the spectrum lies Peter Crockett’s Evatt: A Life, which draws far more critical conclusions concerning both Evatt’s character and legacy. Ken Buckley, Barbara Dale and Wayne Reynolds’ Doc Evatt: Patriot, Internationalist, Fighter and Scholar is an undoubtedly sympathetic, yet vitally important contribution to this field. Allan Dalziel, Evatt’s secretary for 20 years, also provides a candid and valuable view of Evatt during this period.
Of the books dealing with Australian foreign policy during this period, those who worked within the Department of External Affairs at this time feature prominently and again provide valuable accounts of the department and its personnel. Of these, Alan Renouf’s examination is perhaps most useful, concerning itself primarily with the motivations behind, and implementation of, Evatt’s foreign policy. Alan Watt, like Renouf, worked in the Department and his work combines his lived experience of Evatt with expertise in foreign policy. Of the academic contributions to this field, Christopher Waters has written most extensively and convincingly. Waters clearly defines Evatt’s liberal internationalism, which contrasts with the more pessimistic Cold War liberalism of many of his political opponents. Waters, however, differs somewhat from Renouf. Whereas Renouf sees Evatt’s foreign policy as a pursuit of security and justice (with security prevalent in any conflict between the two), Waters asserts the primacy of Evatt’s liberal internationalist ideological framework. Whilst Waters is convincing in this regard, this chapter seeks to examine the ways in which circumstances and events, particularly in World War II, influenced Evatt’s policy and how this influence manifested itself. Whilst liberal internationalism was the dominant paradigm, a subordinate stream of realist thought was also clearly present. Other useful works on this period include those dealing with Burton and his relationship with Evatt; those dealing more broadly with the Department of External Affairs; or those which examine Australia’s response to the Cold War.

Evatt’s Early Career

Very few politicians have had their formative years examined in such forensic detail as Evatt. Evatt was, by all accounts, a peculiar personality. Those who worked for him found him to be both brilliant but erratic, intellectually gifted though possessing a number of detrimental personality traits. Paul Hasluck, who worked in External Affairs until 1947 before entering Parliament in 1949, described him upon his death:

It is easy to use words like ambitious, envious, jealous, possessive and suspicious about him but they are words that describe the outward and visible appearance of a man who was still emotionally a child. Some persons were puzzled to find him too naive in his calculations,
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too obvious in his aims and methods, too self-destructive for a person with great mental gifts and wide experience of office. These things might have been better understood by them if they had known that there was always this strange and deeply disturbed child under the table. His emotional life was shackled to a complicated mind “uptwining and inveterately convolved.”

Hasluck, himself a realist and oft-times opponent of Evatt’s policy, combines in his recollection both the praise of Evatt’s talents and criticisms of his personality evident in many accounts. At their most uncharitable, appraisals of Evatt have suggested that mental illness played a part. Despite a clear decline in his later years, however, Crockett concludes that “Evatt’s demonstrable illness of the 1960s” began as late as 1958. Whilst these comments are demonstrative of the common, yet often excessive historical focus on Evatt’s personality traits, Evatt’s ideological predispositions are more easily explained by an examination of his formative years.

Evatt was born in East Maitland, on 30 April 1894. He was the fifth of eight sons, and suffered the death of his father in 1901. His mother, left with six sons (two had died in infancy before Evatt was born), moved the family to Sydney three years later. In 1915 Evatt eschewed socialism in favour of liberalism, however he became increasingly socialist during the Great War. Buckley, Dale and Reynolds partly attribute this to the influence of Evatt’s close friend and colleague, Vere Gordon Childe. Childe, a socialist and pacifist, was regarded by Evatt as a “political father.” Though his mail was monitored by the Department of Defence during the war, however, Childe was not a revolutionary in the mould of the Industrial Workers of the World or similar organisations, joining the Australian Labor Party (ALP) in 1918. Evatt himself volunteered to fight in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), though he was rejected on the grounds of poor eyesight on two separate occasions. Perhaps the greatest impact of the war on Evatt, however, was the death of two younger brothers. Renouf contends that Evatt’s mother did not recover from the shock of this loss and died soon after in 1922. This combination of factors instilled in Evatt an abhorrence of war. Evatt joined the ALP in 1920, with labour sympathies continuing to develop throughout the 1920s. Crockett contends that Evatt joined, not because of an ideological attraction to the ALP, but because of his opposition to conservatism. He was able to successfully combine his political activity with his career as a lawyer. He gained preselection in 1925 as an
ALP candidate for the safe Labor seat of Balmain in the New South Wales lower house. The preselection itself was, however, difficult to obtain. Renouf suggests that the ALP was “suspicious of ‘Bloody BAs’ and of lawyers,” though ultimately Evatt was successful in winning preselection and subsequently the seat itself. Evatt became a King’s Counsel in November 1929, and decided in October 1930 not to recontest his seat in the New South Wales parliament. Soon after – on 19 December 1930 – Evatt was appointed by the Scullin federal Labor government as a Justice of the High Court, the youngest to achieve this office at the time and since.

On issues of foreign policy, Evatt showed some sympathy to the left. He was an anti-fascist with regard to the Spanish Civil War. Buckley, Dale and Reynolds contend that Evatt also realised the validity of the realpolitik reasoning behind Stalin’s acquiescence to the Nazi-Soviet Non-aggression Pact. He favoured the “Hands Off Russia” resolution of the New South Wales Labor Party, which opposed Australian intervention in the war and sought to preclude a peace with Germany in favour of an attack on the Soviet Union. McKnight contends that isolationism had significant support within the ALP, including from federal parliamentary leader John Curtin, prior to September 1939. Ultimately it was Curtin who was responsible for directing the New South Wales State Executive to expunge the “Hands Off Russia” resolution. Other accounts of Labor in this period suggest that the primary reason for not supporting intervention in Europe was anxiety over the threat of Japan – the forces might be needed at home.

Throughout 1940, as the “phoney war” ended in Europe with Hitler’s invasion of the Low Countries, the position of those opposed to intervention became untenable. In June 1940 the ALP moved toward a pro-war stance, in line with the position of Prime Minister Robert Menzies’ United Australia Party (UAP) government. Evatt stepped down from the High Court to contest the federal election of the same year in September. Menzies was returned to government, though only with the support of two independents. Evatt easily won the Sydney seat of Barton. August 1941 saw the resignation of Menzies in the face of criticism of his leadership, to be replaced by his deputy and Country Party leader A.W. Fadden. Six weeks later, the two independents on which the Coalition relied for power withdrew their support, allowing Labor to form government in September 1941. On the ascension of Labor to power, Evatt received the portfolios of Attorney-General and External Affairs.
Evatt’s Liberal Internationalism

Gareth Evans, the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Hawke and Keating governments, suggests that though Evatt was not Australia’s first foreign minister, “he was certainly the first to deserve the title.” Beaumont contends that Australian foreign policy was “virtually non-existent” for the first 40 years of Australian nationhood. Australia was reluctant to adopt policy positions independent of Britain, and the integration of Australia into British Empire foreign policy appeared to be in Australia’s interests. Indeed, it was not until 1940 that Australia first boasted overseas missions (other than the High Commission in London). Renouf suggests that Evatt bore the hallmarks of earlier interventions in foreign affairs by Alfred Deakin and Billy Hughes. Deakin, whom Evatt quoted on the topic as a Justice of the High Court, espoused the view that conducting relations with other countries on behalf of Australia as a whole was one of the purposes of federation, whilst Hughes’ prominence was the result of his advocacy of Australian interests at the Paris Peace Conference in Versailles following World War I. In her examination of the diplomatic cadet scheme later introduced under Evatt, Beaumont contends that from 1941 the Department of External Affairs went from being “a small amateur organisation to a significant bureaucratic player.” She also suggests that bureaucracies acquire a collective character, dependent on the personnel which make up a particular organisation, which socialises those who join it. Evatt became associated with the growth of the department, and in so doing was able to shape what Beaumont terms “its distinctive character and esprit de corps.” These observations are important, as they indicate the climate in which Evatt would be able to promote his liberal internationalist vision of foreign policy. It was the intersection of this pivotal moment in the Department’s development with the momentous events happening overseas which allowed such an approach to thrive. As Evans later put it: “Evatt had the fortune to be foreign minister at a time when a new order was being born, and before the Cold War subordinated just about all international initiative to the demands of the East-West balance.”

Waters’ examination of the “great debates” within External Affairs at this time illustrates the difference between a liberal internationalist approach to foreign policy, and that which later became dominant, Cold War liberalism. Liberal internationalism is a more optimistic approach than the rigidly realist positions of the Cold War liberals. It is based on the assumption that peace
is a natural state, and that war – the aberration – has specific causes. If these root causes of conflict can be addressed, conflict can therefore be avoided. The conditions that lead to conflict include power politics, balance of power diplomacy, economic autarchy, arms races, colonialism, a lack of human rights and a failure to meet basic human needs such as nutrition and education. These causes can be addressed through economic and social development, full employment, multilateral diplomatic forums (such as the United Nations) and open forms, rather than secretive traditional methods, of diplomacy. Evatt’s liberal internationalism was influenced by his experience of the Great War and the Great Depression. His liberal internationalist view explains many of his policy decisions during his time as Minister for External Affairs. In particular, it influenced Evatt with regard to the escalating tension between the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union which would eventually develop into the Cold War. Most strikingly, it would lead to Evatt’s advocacy of the United Nations and a policy which sought to carve out a role for Australia in this new post-war order as a mediator between the two power blocs.

When seeking to form a full picture of Evatt’s foreign policy in the post-war period, however, his experience of World War II must be taken into account. The application of liberal internationalism was tenable in the immediate post-war period, but during wartime Australia’s priorities had been very different. The war necessitated great power diplomatic alliances of the type shunned by liberal internationalists and involved the application of “power” in its crudest form. Peacetime questions concerning issues such as self-determination and decolonisation in Australia’s region were subordinated to the global conflagration. Postwar, Evatt’s realism manifested itself, as he sought for Australia a great power alliance to ensure security. Evatt’s priorities – security and justice – were often conflicted, which in turn meant that difficult choices were necessary.

**World at War**

Prior to the outbreak of war, the UAP government employed a policy of appeasement. Support for this policy was not unanimous – the former Prime Minister Billy Hughes was a staunch opponent – though it enjoyed the support of the majority of influential government figures such as Prime Minister (until his death in April 1939) Joseph Lyons, Menzies, the High Commissioner to Britain (and former Prime Minister) S.M. Bruce and Richard Casey. As late
as 27 March 1939, following the annexation of Czechoslovakia by Germany just weeks earlier, Menzies refused to accept the realities of further German territorial ambitions.\textsuperscript{40} As Prime Minister in May, he stated that Germany had “a real case” in relation to the issues of Danzig, the Polish Corridor and Upper Silesia and that these issues should be resolved “not at the point of the sword, but at the conference table.”\textsuperscript{41} The government’s policies with regard to Poland were consistent with policies relating to the Japanese in Manchuria, the Italians in Abyssinia, and Germany’s actions in the Rhineland, Austria and Czechoslovakia.\textsuperscript{42}

Arguably, the impetus for appeasement in Australia had less to do with Germany than with Japan. Menzies reminded Australians upon taking office that: “What Great Britain calls the Far East is to us the near north.”\textsuperscript{43} The government feared being left to face the Japanese alone while Britain was engaged in the European theatre. Any move which postponed war in Europe contributed to Britain’s ability to defend her Empire.\textsuperscript{44} Bridge contends that trade was also a significant factor, as the Japanese were Australia’s most important trading partners after Britain. This was significant in an economy not yet recovered from the Great Depression. Australia’s perilous economic position also contributed to the decision to sell scrap metal to the Japanese in 1938, for which Menzies would earn the epithet “Pig Iron Bob.”\textsuperscript{45} Bridge contends that the UAP government, with regard to Japan, embraced appeasement even before the British by recognising Manchukuo (the Japanese name for their annexed territory in Manchuria).\textsuperscript{46}

Labor, meanwhile, pursued a policy of isolationism. This was not entirely motivated by what Bridge terms “sentimental pacifism,” but maintained order within the party.\textsuperscript{47} Labor’s left supported Abyssinia in the face of Italian invasion, and were sympathetic to Spanish Republicans during the Spanish Civil War. Labor’s sizable Catholic minority, however, leaned toward Mussolini and Franco.\textsuperscript{48} Renouf contends that Labor’s foreign policy at the time “was wildly unrealistic, almost infantile, amounting to the conclusion that as foreign affairs had become so complicated, the only course was to keep out of them.” He argues that Labor took longer than the Coalition to abandon appeasement, though his characterisation of ALP policy might be more accurately termed isolationism – being the only policy on which the disparate elements of the Labor Party could reach consensus.\textsuperscript{49}

Evatt became External Affairs Minister on 7 October 1941, two months before the Japanese attack on the United States’ naval base at Pearl Harbour.
Evatt allowed a glimpse of his later liberal internationalist policies, remaining optimistic as late as 27 November that Japan could be dissuaded from aggression. He told Parliament:

> It is to be remembered that the occasion of the imposition of the economic restrictions upon Japan was that nation’s military advance into French Indo-China at a time when the Government of France was under the direct domination of the Axis. I do not see why it should be impossible for Japan to retrace its steps and make possible the easing of the present economic restrictions, while Japan restores the *status quo* by withdrawing its fighting forces and equipment from Indo-China.\(^{50}\)

Renouf contends that this – and Evatt’s subsequent offer to act as a mediator between Japan and the United States – did not amount to appeasement, necessitating as it did Japan’s withdrawal from Indo-China. In the event, Evatt’s offer to mediate was countermanded by Curtin, who appreciated the realities of Japanese policy.\(^{51}\) The episode is edifying, however, as it demonstrates the liberal internationalist sentiments of Evatt, including an optimism that peace could be preserved if causes of grievance were addressed. His offer of Australia as mediator foreshadowed both his later policies in the early Cold War period, and the role Australia could play in international affairs. Ultimately, at this late stage the approach was too naïve and failed to fully grasp the realities of the international context.

**War with Japan**

Australia’s declaration of war on Japan was noteworthy in that it was declared independently – previous declarations had been unnecessary as it had been assumed that when Britain was at war, Australia was automatically at war.\(^{52}\) Grey contends that Australia was unprepared for war.\(^{53}\) Britain’s focus was clearly on the European theatre, though they did send two battleships to reinforce Singapore – that impregnable fortress which stood as a symbol of Britain’s imperial commitment – in November 1941.\(^{54}\) Curtin’s Christmas message of 27 December 1941, in which he famously appealed “to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the Britain,” was received overseas as panicked and disloyal.\(^{55}\) In this piece Curtin had stated
that: “We know the problems that the Britain faces. We know the constant threat of invasion. We know the dangers of dispersal of strength, but we know too, that Australia can go and Britain can still hold on.”\textsuperscript{56} This sentiment was only reinforced on 15 February 1942, with the fall of Singapore and the imperial defence it represented.

Curtin’s Christmas message was only the beginning of the souring of imperial relations. Australian troops had been recalled from the Middle East to defend Australia, but British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (who had enlisted the support of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt) argued that they instead be diverted to Burma. Curtin refused, but was to find that Churchill had ordered the divisions to Burma anyway. By this stage the Japanese had bombed Darwin, which likely contributed to the refusal of Curtin (and Evatt) to accept Churchill’s actions. Though they stopped in Ceylon, the soldiers were never sent to Burma and returned to Australia.\textsuperscript{57}

In the aftermath of Singapore’s surrender, which Curtin and Evatt regarded as an “inexcusable betrayal,” Evatt was dispatched to Washington and London. Bridge contends that he had a dual mission: to discover the plans of the Britain and United States and advocate Australian interests on the one hand, and to bring back more men and materiel.\textsuperscript{58} The Americans were warned by their legation in Australia that Evatt would be coming to “tell, not ask.” Bridge’s account of his visit to Washington depicts Evatt as formidable, using every weapon in his arsenal to attempt to secure both an appreciation of Australian interests and military resources. On the whole, however, he achieved little beyond what was already promised.\textsuperscript{59} It was in London that Evatt was to fulfil his mission to discover the Allied plans for prosecution of the war. Meeting with the Chiefs of Staff, Evatt saw a briefing paper ranking theatres in order of their priority to the war effort, with Australia ranking behind the Middle East and several other theatres. The paper, for the allocation of munitions, was not meant to be seen by Evatt – yet once he had seen it the Chiefs of Staff felt they had no option but to share the concealed strategy agreed upon by the Britain and United States – “beat Hitler first.”\textsuperscript{60} Evatt wrote to Curtin:

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The existence of this written arrangement came as a great surprise to myself and, I have no doubt, to you. We were not consulted about the matter and neither Page nor Casey ever reported to us about it. Owing apparently to the U.S. Government’s desire for secrecy it took some little insistence to get the document here.\textsuperscript{61}
Indeed, the question of consultation is raised several times in Evatt’s missive. Bridge argues that Curtin – and certainly the UAP government before him – was aware of the strategy (designated “WWI”). He blames the sense of shock and betrayal following the sinking of the two British battleships committed to Singapore – the HMS Repulse and the HMS Prince of Wales, the bombing of Pearl Harbour and the eventual fall of Singapore for Evatt’s subsequent actions in claiming to have “discovered” a heretofore unknown Allied strategy. Bridge argues that Curtin – and certainly the UAP government before him – was aware of the strategy (designated “WWI”). He blames the sense of shock and betrayal following the sinking of the two British battleships committed to Singapore – the HMS Repulse and the HMS Prince of Wales, the bombing of Pearl Harbour and the eventual fall of Singapore for Evatt’s subsequent actions in claiming to have “discovered” a heretofore unknown Allied strategy. Bridge argues that Curtin – and certainly the UAP government before him – was aware of the strategy (designated “WWI”). He blames the sense of shock and betrayal following the sinking of the two British battleships committed to Singapore – the HMS Repulse and the HMS Prince of Wales, the bombing of Pearl Harbour and the eventual fall of Singapore for Evatt’s subsequent actions in claiming to have “discovered” a heretofore unknown Allied strategy. Certainly, Evatt’s public speeches betray a suspicion that such a strategy was in place before the discovery of the plan in London, though in any case the strategy served to reinforce ideas that Australia’s needs were not being taken seriously. Evatt secured three squadrons of Spitfires for Australia’s defence, though historians differ on their interpretations of the success of Evatt’s trip. Bridge cites General Douglas MacArthur who believed “very little has been achieved” (though he also stated that nobody could have done any better), though Buckley, Dale and Reynolds point to the success of the Spitfires in engagements with Japanese Zero aircraft. Renouf, who worked in the Department of External Affairs at the time, concurs with Bridge on the benefits of the Spitfires. He does, however, accept Evatt’s interpretation of WWI. Renouf excuses the United States, who preferred to deal with Australia through Britain, but of Britain he contends that:

The decision [to ‘beat Hitler first’] was of fundamental importance to Australia as a major belligerent and one assessed by its government to be under threat of invasion. Britain may have thought that to inform the Curtin government could have prejudiced the common war effort; however, this is not an adequate explanation, as Australia was bound to find out before long, and when it did, it would have double grounds for complaint.

Australia would have other grievances with their allies during the war. Whilst Evatt negotiated with New Zealand on the shape of a post-war South Pacific, British, American and Chinese representatives met in Cairo in December 1943 to determine the terms of peace with Japan. Australia was neither invited, nor consulted about these talks. In response, Evatt proceeded to conclude a pact with New Zealand in January 1944, known as the ANZAC pact, which gave expression to their negotiations. Waters lauds the activist approach of the pact, describing it as a “blueprint” for Australia’s future policy for Asia.
He claims that the United States and Britain broadly approved of it, even if they disapproved of a suggested veto on changes to sovereignty in the South Pacific. Renouf’s view of the ANZAC pact, on the other hand, is almost wholly negative. He asserts that the planned regional security zone implied in the pact never came to fruition, and that Evatt mainly succeeded in putting American noses out of joint. They viewed the agreement as presumptuous, felt it overstated Australia’s importance and military power, denied them the leading voice, and proposed conferences in the Pacific where they instead wanted to be the sole power. Curtin had to account for the pact whilst in the United States in the face of descriptions of Evatt as “rude,” “outrageous” and having “bad manners.” Renouf contends that Evatt engaged in an unprofitable “tit-for-tat approach,” and that “well founded or not, frustration and exasperation are seldom a satisfactory rationale for the way a smaller country conducts its diplomacy towards the much stronger.” Similarly, Watt characterises the pact as an “explosive protest” against great power exclusivity and dominance.

The later breakdown of negotiations between Australia and the United States over the joint use of Manus Island as a naval base from October 1945 and into 1946 further created division between the wartime allies. With the United States interested in retaining the use of Manus Island after the war, Australia insisted on reciprocal rights for Australian ships to use American bases. Evatt wrote to Chifley:

> My strong impression is that the United States desire the use of facilities at Manus although it is intended that Guam will become their main Western Pacific Naval Base ... The essential feature of our approach to the problem has been to associate the use of Manus with other bases and territories in the South West Pacific Region and to see that if the United States gets the use of facilities they will be required in return to give us definite and tangible benefits of a Defence character.

This cablegram further highlighted the importance Evatt placed upon Australian interests, though he again overestimated Australia’s importance to the United States. The resulting disagreement led the United States to abandon Manus Island for Manila, though shifting strategic priorities likely also played a role. Nevertheless, the incident further eroded the good will between Australia and the United States.
Relations with the Soviet Union

Evatt was not a man whose political career rested on ideological predispositions. For Evatt, World War II was not a contest of the competing systems of capitalism, fascism or communism. In their own ways, all had failed which had led to the war in the first place. Ample evidence exists to demonstrate that Evatt did not agree with communism as an ideology. He expanded at length, for example, on the differences between Labor and communism in his election campaign for Balmain in 1925. Nevertheless, despite a lack of firm ideological conviction, Evatt developed sympathies. Crockett characterises these sympathies as vicarious fights against oppression on behalf of the oppressed. Hasluck characterised this as “a mixture of sympathy for the underdog and resentment against the top dog.” He contends that this mode of thinking – emotional rather than ideological – led him to favour the Soviet Union over Britain. Renouf contends that Evatt’s early contacts with socialists such as Vere Gordon Childe, his early liberalism, the effect of the Russian revolution on the left and admiration (from 1941) of Soviet efforts in the war also contributed to his view of the USSR. Similarly, the effect of the Great Depression on Evatt’s generation cannot be understated. Hasluck also comments that Soviet propaganda had influence in certain cultural circles before the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact, and that the “ugly face of Stalinism was still obscured.”

In addition to any leftist sympathy toward the Soviet Union, Curtin and Evatt faced a situation in which a vulnerable Australia might be left to fend for itself against a rampaging Imperial Japanese Army. The Soviet Union made it clear that any assistance would be linked to the question of its post-war frontiers, and Evatt was willing to make vast concessions. The Repulse and the Prince of Wales had been sunk on 10 December 1941, and on 22 December, Evatt (on behalf of Cabinet) urged support for Soviet territorial claims against Germany and Japan, given the state of British unpreparedness and the urgent need for Soviet military assistance. Such proposals would have recognised the frontiers prior to Operation Barbarossa, and Evatt noted that Britain had not guaranteed complete territorial integrity for Poland or Czechoslovakia. His proposals, however, went far further. Evatt stated:

We consider further that such an intimation would be more likely to be acceptable to Stalin if it were accompanied by a similar reference
to Russian strategical and territorial requirements in the Far East (i.e. Northern Korea, Southern Sakhalien and possibly the neutralisation of Manchuria) and also to the long-standing Russian objective of an outlet to the Indian Ocean by way of Iran. The present exchanges with Stalin should be conducted on the broadest possible lines.\textsuperscript{80}

Such a proposal is astonishing, not only because of what Evatt was prepared to offer, but because of the faith placed in Soviet forces which had suffered major reverses in Europe. Evatt’s willingness to disavow Poland and Czechoslovakia (he also suggested hostile nations such as “Finland, Rumania and others” did not deserve any sympathy) in Europe, and Korea, Manchuria and an Iranian Corridor to the Indian Ocean, completely disregard Evatt’s liberal internationalist inclinations towards self-determination and against great power acquisition of territory. Reynolds contends that the combination of Australia’s declaration of war on Finland, Romania and Hungary and the territorial concessions offered demonstrate Evatt’s “great concern” with Australia’s security.\textsuperscript{81} With Australia’s security threatened, Evatt’s realism came to the fore. By early 1943 the government had both lifted the ban on communists at home, and established a legation in the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{82}

**Post-War Considerations**

By 1943 the two decisive battles of the Pacific theatre – the naval battles of Coral Sea and Midway – had already taken place. The iconic battle of the war for Australia, the Kokoda trail campaign, was largely won by 1943 with Australian troops now involved in clearing out the remaining Japanese soldiers from other positions in New Guinea.\textsuperscript{83} It was during this period – seemingly redeemed from the possibility of a Japanese invasion – that thought was given to Australia’s foreign policy in the post-war world. It is also in this period that the two strands of Evatt’s foreign policy are most distinct. Evatt conceived of a society of states, which would address the economic and social factors necessary to provide justice. In this vein, he contemplated the idea of trusteeships to replace the League of Nations mandate system. This new system would entail obligations such as full employment and a raising of living standards – a liberal internationalist approach to foreign policy.\textsuperscript{84} Evatt also envisioned a regional defence agreement in order to preserve Australia’s security, something he would pursue in 1946.\textsuperscript{85}
Evatt’s foreign policy following World War II was shaped by his liberal internationalism as the dominant theoretical paradigm, yet the influence of the war itself also had a profound impact. The war had demonstrated to Evatt that the great powers were not necessarily more knowledgeable when it came to foreign affairs – especially in the Pacific, as British assurances regarding Japanese intentions clearly demonstrated. Unlike power, wisdom could not be monopolised by great powers alone. This, of course, led Australia to develop a more independent foreign policy, though it was envisaged as early as 1939 by Menzies who commented: “I have become convinced that, in the Pacific, Australia must regard herself as a principal providing herself with her own information and maintaining her own diplomatic contacts with foreign Powers.” Evatt also became convinced that small nations, including Australia, had a part to play in international affairs and deserved both to have a voice, and to have that voice heard. Though thoroughly consistent with his liberal internationalism, this was also consistent with Evatt’s conception of a greater role for Australia in a post-war order. Influenced by wartime experiences, Evatt sought to avoid situations such as the lack of consultation with Australia at the Cairo conference, or for that matter the brushing aside of Australian concerns at the earlier conference leading to the Moscow Declaration. Furthermore, the meetings of the “big three” at Yalta and Potsdam had excluded smaller nations including Australia, and had been set up to give great powers effective control of post-war considerations. In addition, Australia did not learn the terms of the Japanese armistice until they were made public, as the United States sought to monopolise post-war Japan. Initially, Australia was not even to be afforded separate representation at the ceremony for Japanese surrender. Only in a global system which gave voice to smaller nations could Australia hope to avoid being sidelined in such a manner in the future. A regional version – the South Pacific Commission – was set up in 1947 and involved Australia, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Britain and the United States. Crucially, the commission was only advisory, and did not deal with questions of security or defence.

The realist strand of Evatt’s thinking led to foreign policy approaches which were deployed in tandem with his liberal internationalism. Here too, the impact of the war is apparent. Despite Evatt’s most optimistic hopes for a multilateral forum to preserve peace such as the United Nations, World War II had exposed Australia’s vulnerability. The fall of Singapore ended faith in Britain’s ability to defend her empire. Evatt had already shown, by virtue of the concessions he
was prepared to offer the Soviet Union in exchange for participation in the war, a realist streak which manifested itself when Australia was threatened. In this new post-war era, he pursued a more reliable protector. He attempted to use the ongoing negotiations over Manus Island to draw the United States into a regional security pact which would also involve New Zealand. In so doing, he apparently acted without the authority of then Prime Minister, Ben Chifley (who had replaced the deceased Curtin).\textsuperscript{91} In Evatt’s estimation, the main threat to Australia was a remilitarised Japan. As such, Australia called for a “far-reaching occupation and Allied military government,” including the trial and punishment of the Emperor as a war criminal. Furthermore, the imperial system of Japan must be removed. Whilst Britain and the United States broadly agreed with Australia, they wanted the Emperor to remain. However, as the Cold War set in, British and American priorities shifted. They intended to reinforce Japan as an Eastern bulwark against communism. Australia, seeing the main threat still from Japan rather than the Soviet Union, believed this was a retrograde step. Nevertheless, Evatt prioritised Australian security. Still bent on achieving a security agreement involving the United States, and faced with the breakdown of negotiations over Manus Island, he attempted to tie Australian acquiescence to American wishes in Japan to a regional security treaty.\textsuperscript{92} In a clear act of foreign policy realism, Evatt effectively conceded his acceptance of the United States’ world view – the need for a balance of power between two competing Cold War great power camps – in return for a defence arrangement which, as it happened, would not be achieved within the lifetime of the Labor government.

Australia’s view of the Soviet Union in the immediate post-war period demonstrates a commitment to liberal internationalism. Evatt pursued a role as a mediator between the Soviet Union and the United States, particularly in the context of the Allied Council for Japan (ACJ). Australian representation on this body was a coup for Evatt – William McMahon Ball represented not just Australia but the British Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{93} Waters highlights Ball’s intention, in April 1946, to:

\textit{do whatever possible to reconcile American and Russian points of view, in particular, that I should openly support those declarations of democratic principles which the Russian member seems anxious to make while showing caution in committing myself to support his specific requests to S.C.A.P. [Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers].}\textsuperscript{94}
This policy is consistent with Evatt’s view of foreign affairs at the time. Weighing up questions of Soviet motives with regard to territory, Evatt accepted that the impetus behind Soviet foreign policy was defensive, “directed towards self-protection and security against future attack.” Furthermore, he believed that the anticommunism apparent in European foreign policy, including appeasement, in the 1930s contributed to Soviet suspicion of the West. He spelled out the foreign policy to be pursued by Australia, in proposing that through the United Nations: “a collective world opinion can gradually be built up, and it may also be possible to avoid the establishment of rival blocs of powers viewing one another through an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion.” Waters contends that the appointment of Alan Watt to the Soviet Union was an attempt to improve Australia’s standing, with the eventual aim of carving out a role as a mediator between the Cold War blocs. Evatt’s protégé, Burton, strongly advocated such a stance, suggesting that attempting to mediate between the United States and Soviet Union would be a “strongly bold independent move to break present tension.”

However, the influence of World War II on Evatt is also apparent, and helps to explain why Evatt persisted with a policy of mediation for so long when Britain and the United States regarded the Soviet Union as obstructionist in arenas such as the ACJ and UN and lacking in good faith. Renouf contends that political bias was a factor, though Soviet resistance to Germany also made a lasting impression. More importantly, the lesson that Evatt had learnt with regard to Japan – that great powers did not necessarily know better – came to be applied to the Soviet Union. As Watt put it, “he found great difficulty in accepting the harsh facts of Stalinist post-war policy.” In this it was Evatt’s experience of the wartime alliances which shaped his views. If Britain and the United States had been so wrong about Japan, there was nothing to suggest that their instincts about the Soviet Union were any more accurate. Furthermore, both Britain and the United States had demonstrated that Australian concerns would always be subordinate to their own, which further encouraged Evatt to pursue his liberal internationalist objectives which sought to provide platforms for smaller nations to influence world affairs. The irony, of course, is that with regard to the true intentions of the Soviet Union the United States and Britain did know better. Not only were they far more experienced at dealing with the Soviets (and Stalin personally), but their superior intelligence capabilities allowed insights into the Soviet Union Evatt did not possess. Instead, Evatt’s foreign policy approach to the Soviet Union can be seen in the same light as
his views on Japan in November 1941 – naïve and failing to appreciate the new foreign policy realities which drew the protagonists into the Cold War. Ashcroft argues that Evatt’s contention at the UN in September 1947, that the world was now “in the half-light between peace and war,” was a lament at what was now an evident end to great power cooperation. The Truman Doctrine and the speech by Andrei Zhdanov before the Cominform, where he spoke of the world being divided into two camps, confirmed that the world had indeed drifted in a Cold War.\textsuperscript{101} Despite attempts to tread a middle path and take a conciliatory role in forums such as then UN, where Evatt was to serve as President of the General Assembly, he had by 1948 largely accepted the realities of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{102}

Evatt’s liberal internationalism has often been understood in opposition to Cold War liberalism. Certainly, liberal internationalism was the dominant foreign affairs paradigm within which Evatt operated. However, to understand the complexity of Evatt’s foreign policy it is necessary to look beyond an interpretation of binary labels such as “optimist” or “realist” as mutually exclusive. Evatt’s foreign policy must be understood as comprising multiple strands – a dominant strand of liberal internationalism through which he pursued international justice and a voice for smaller powers such as Australia, but also a subordinate strand of realism which manifested itself in response to Evatt’s perceived threats to Australian security, both during the war and afterwards. An examination of the influences on Evatt’s policy also reveals a need to go beyond liberal internationalism as a sole motivating factor. Experience, rather than ideology, also played a large part. Evatt’s lived experience of World War II had convinced him of the need to find protection for Australia outside the British Empire, and also that great powers did not hold a monopoly on wisdom. Such was the complexity of his foreign policy that the former point would contribute to Evatt’s realist pursuit of a great power security alliance with the United States, whilst the second lesson led him to pursue liberal internationalist methods of engagement and conciliation with the Soviet Union, well after it should have become apparent that the Stalinist foreign policy of the immediate post-war era sought to obstruct these forms of diplomacy in favour of crude \textit{realpolitik}. Evatt’s foreign policy during World War II and the immediate post-war period can thus be understood as complex and adaptable, deploying both optimist and realist strategies in tandem with one another in order to achieve his two foreign policy objectives – security and justice.
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Endnotes
1 Alan Renouf, Let Justice Be Done: The Foreign Policy of Dr H.V. Evatt (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983), 195.
3 Peter Crockett, Evatt: A Life (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993), 296–305.
10 Miles Ashcroft, “In the Half-Light Between Peace and War: Dr Evatt, the Soviet Union and War Propaganda at the United Nations, 1947–8,” in Working Papers in Australian Studies,

For Hasluck’s views on foreign policy, see Waters, “The Great Debates,” 49–50. Waters contends that Hasluck was an optimist early in his career, but shifted firmly to a realist position by the time he was a Minister under Prime Minister Robert Menzies in the early 1950s.

An example of this is Andrew Campbell, “Dr H.V. Evatt – Part One: A Question of Sanity,” *National Observer*, no. 73 (Winter 2007). Though Campbell is not a psychologist, his article attempts to retrospectively diagnose Evatt with psychological disorder(s). Such an approach is unconvincing and methodologically problematic.

Crockett, *Evatt*, 302. Crockett cites several accounts from this time, including from a physician, in determining that in 1958 Evatt was still firmly in possession of his faculties.


Ibid., 11–4.

Ibid., 23–4.


Ibid.

Crockett, *Evatt*, 89.


Ibid., 141–3.

Ibid.


Buckley, Dale and Reynolds, *Doc Evatt*, 143.


McKnight, *Espionage and the Roots of the Cold War*, 166.

Buckley, Dale and Reynolds, *Doc Evatt*, 146.

Ibid., 149.


For a summary of these post-1940 appointments, see Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, 121–30.


“The Road to Peace: Britain's Part,” Sydney Morning Herald, 28 March 1939, 11.


Ibid., 375.

Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 57. Bridge contends that the Catholics feared antagonising Mussolini, who might then threaten the Vatican. See Bridge, “Appeasement and After,” 375.

Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 58–9.

CPD, H of R, 26 & 27 November 1941, 976.

Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 73–4.

Buckley, Dale and Reynolds, Doc Evatt, 106.

Grey, A Military History of Australia, 165.


Millar, Australia in Peace and War, 147. For the message itself, see John Curtin, “The Task Ahead,” Herald, 27 December 1941.

Curtin, “The Task Ahead.”


Ibid., 33–7.


Evatt to Curtin, 28 May 1942, National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA), A4764, 2.


For example, on arrival in London Evatt stated there was “great danger to the common cause in talking along the line, ‘Let us beat Hitler first.’” For their part, however, Buckley, Dale and Reynolds contend that Evatt queried whether the Australian government had information earlier on WWI, and Shedden replied that Evatt’s cablegram was the first record the Australian government had of the strategy. Buckley, Dale and Reynolds, Doc Evatt, 160, 163.
65 Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 75.
66 Millar, Australia in Peace and War, 153.
67 Waters, “War, Decolonisation and Postwar Security,” 111.
68 Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 142.
69 Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 103.
70 Evatt to Chifley, 1 July 1946, NAA A6494, SPTS 1/5.
71 Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 100.
72 Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness, 41. Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 111.
74 Buckley, Dale and Reynolds, Doc Evatt, 41–2.
75 Crockett, Evatt, 88–90.
76 Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness, 41.
77 Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 111.
78 Hasluck, Diplomatic Witness, 42.
79 Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 71.
80 Millar, Australia in Peace and War, 143–4.
82 Millar, Australia in Peace and War, 144–5.
84 Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 93.
85 Ibid., 151–2.
86 Ibid., 96.
88 Millar, Australia in Peace and War, 153. Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 127.
90 Millar, Australia in Peace and War, 325.
91 Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 151.
94 Waters, The Empire Fractures, 75.
95 CPD, H of R, 13 March 1946, 205.
96 Ibid., 206.
97 Waters, The Empire Fractures, 99.
98 Burton to Evatt, 28 October 1947, NAA A9420, 2.
99 Renouf, Let Justice Be Done, 111–2.
100 Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy*, 105.


102 Waters contends that Evatt called for a reappraisal of the foreign affairs situation in early 1948 as a result of the onset of the Cold War. Waters, “The Great Debates,” 50–1. Burke contends that Labor had become increasingly concerned with the replacement of their collective security idealism with a reversion to power politics, now made more dangerous by atomic weapons. On matters such as the formation of NATO, Evatt was guided by the “overriding claims of expediency.” Anthony Burke, *In Fear of Security: Australia’s Invasion Anxiety* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 2011), 91–5.
“A harder thing than dying”: Peace Activism and the Protestant Left in Australia During the Early Cold War

Kim Thoday

Research findings concerning “Protestant left” involvement in the Australian peace movement during the early Cold War. This chapter will highlight how their religious convictions caused the “peace clergy” to be, paradoxically, both vulnerable and resistant to communist influence. The Rev. Alf Dickie’s evolution as a peace activist and his role as president of the Australian Peace Council will be examined as a test case for this resistance and vulnerability. His association with organisations such as the Christian Common Wealth Movement, the Federation for the Resistance to War, the Democratic Rights Council and the Peace Quest Forum will shed light upon the motivations of the peace clergy, for whom Dickie was broadly representative. It will be argued that the Australian Peace Council and the Peace Quest Forum (whose membership was limited to clergy, including a disproportionately high number of Churches of Christ ministers) were closely affiliated and that this affiliation was symptomatic of the diversity of motivation, ideas and strategy within the peace movement; a diversity that eschewed communist interests and Cold War divisions.
In the years between the World Wars there emerged a multitude of interconnected, worldwide peace organisations. They responded to the collective trauma in the aftermath of nightmarish warfare between nation states. Following World War II these peace movements intensified their collaboration to oppose the use of warfare as a means of resolving international disputes. This determination amongst peace activists reached new levels of intensity in the early 1950s when national communities braced themselves for what seemed imminent: a third world war involving the use of atomic weapons.

The widely-held perception of the inevitability of a third total war was in many ways well founded. Hopes of a new world order of peace and co-operation administered by the recently formed United Nations quickly evaporated as East and West divided into two opposing ideological camps and a different kind of war ensued – a Cold War between the capitalist West and the socialist East for territorial, political, moral and ideological ascendency. The Cold War constantly threatened to turn hot and it was broadly recognised that another global conflict would threaten the very survival of the human race. The world had been given a foretaste of nuclear warfare and what that would mean if such weapons were deployed in the theatre of global conflict: the consequences of America’s use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima (a uranium gun-type fission bomb) and Nagasaki (a plutonium implosion-type fission bomb) in 1945 were now well documented and reports continued to be released in books, journals and newspaper articles.

It is within this tense Cold War climate that Christian peace activists sensed profound resonance. Australian Christian peace activists were no exception. By the early 1950s, certain clergy drawn from the ranks of what may be termed the “Protestant left,” defined below, chose to be in the vanguard of the peace movement, working alongside many other peace groups, including the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). In retrospect this is hardly surprising. This Protestant left had long been in dialogue with liberal and socialist ideas. In the Cold War context, this dialogue took on a new moral urgency, often at considerable personal cost. In the Cold War climate of competing ideologies, the motivations of leading Christian peace activists were frequently called into question. They were often portrayed by the government, the media and right-wing groups as naive pawns or dupes of the Soviet propaganda machine. Despite such anti-communist depictions, throughout the Cold War period many in the Protestant left were unrepentant and remained at the forefront of peace activism and in co-operation and dialogue with communists and socialists.
Before the rise of liberation theology in the 1960s and 1970s, Christian-Socialist dialogue occurred primarily within the more liberal sections of the Protestant Church. After the Reformation, there had emerged within Protestantism a theological division between those who espoused a more devotional or interior view of the Christian Gospel and those who advanced a more social and exterior application of Christian principles. The two views were not necessarily antithetical but, in practice, intentional dialogue and synthesis was rare. Generally speaking, the exterior view remained the minority view. It is this emerging socio-political reading and restoration of biblical ethics (especially those enshrined within the New Testament) that characterised the thinking of many left-leaning Christian activists, theologians and laity, who engaged in the 1950s peace movement. I have chosen the term “Protestant left” to demarcate this group of religious activists.¹

From a broader historical perspective, the Protestant left included a spectrum of thinkers and activists ranging from the more moderate reformers of existing social and economic structures to those at the more radical end who advocated change to, or replacement of, the capitalist system. The Protestant left is a useful generic category for a wide range of socialistic Christian groups that included the Christian Socialism adopted and articulated as such in mid-Victorian England by the Anglo-Catholic tradition (Samuel Coleridge and Frederick Maurice) and by the Christian Socialist movement in the Church of Scotland (c. 1850s–1930s; J. Keir Hardie, James Barr and George MacLeod). It also represents the more ancient socialistic trajectory within Christendom that can be traced back to the canonical documents, especially the synoptic Gospels, of the first century of the Common Era. Thus, it will be argued that for the Protestant left during the Cold War, dialogue with socialism not only had antecedents, it was a living heritage that informed liberal sermons and influenced the more progressive theological colleges. Furthermore, dialogue was the *raison d’être* of Protestant liberalism. This dialogue had begun with rationalism; now the dialogue was with socialism – rationalism’s political and philosophical offspring.

The emergence and influence of Christian Socialism has been underestimated in the historical literature.² It is not the dominant story of Christendom.³ Consequently, it has received limited attention from both ecclesiastical and secular historians. This has occurred for two main reasons. First, the subversive origin and nature of early Christian movements were largely obscured by the monolithic rise of the Constantinean Church and its formidable conservative
ecclesiological legacies that lasted well into modernity. Second, secular histories tended to focus more upon the institutional function of the church and often missed the critical connection between personal faith and political conviction (despite the landmark modernist studies by the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim and his German counterpart, Max Weber).  

Notwithstanding the dominant forces of doctrinaire religion and god-like secularism, a strand of subversive Christianity continued to reassert itself. In historical moments of crisis, and in particular, at times when political and economic structures have become unjust and oppressive, this implicit subversion came to the fore in Christian praxis. Although the Christian Socialist vision fluctuated as a Western intellectual and ecclesiological force during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, periodically it gained momentum as an historical agent for change. One such period of agency occurred during the early Cold War. This chapter will examine a form of Christian Socialism that merged with peace activism in Australia.

Melbourne in the 1950s became the epicentre for politicised peace activity in Australia. Indeed, Melbourne was the heart of Australian peace movements from the late nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century. It was also an important location for the liberal Protestant tradition in Australia and hence, the Protestant left. It is arguable that this heritage of protest and liberal theology gave significant impetus to the emergence, in Melbourne, of a broad-based Australian peace movement. A formative figure of this heritage was the Rev. Dr Charles Strong, who had emigrated from Scotland to Melbourne. In the late 1800s, after being dismissed by his Presbyterian denomination over his liberal views, he formed a new progressive faith community called the Australian Church. He became renowned for his pacifism, social activism and, in 1900, he formed the Peace and Humanity Society – the first Australian pacifist society.

Melbourne University played a significant post-war role in the convergence of radical politics, theology and peace. The university’s Labor Club, the strongest of the political clubs on campus, provided an environment for a wide exchange of left-wing ideas and included members of the CPA, the Labor Party and the Christian Common Wealth Movement. The university’s Freethought Society was also influential at this time. McLaren argues that these organisations, in conjunction with academics, such as Manning Clark in the Departments of History and Political Science, produced an environment of intense political activity and debate about post-war social and political reconstruction.
Melbourne University Student Christian Movement (MUSCM) was another prominent, left-leaning organisation.

The university was also in close association and proximity to Ormond College (Presbyterian), Queen's College (Methodist) and Trinity College (Anglican), whose theological departments, along with those of the Baptist and Congregational denominations, had formed the Melbourne College of Divinity (MCD), the training ground for many Protestant clergy. The MCD was given statutory recognition by the Victorian Parliament in 1910. Breward asserts that the vitality of theological education in Melbourne played an important role in shaping Christianity throughout Australia from the 1850s onwards and that clergy who trained in this progressive theological environment influenced the city’s cultural and intellectual development. The close proximity and shared facilities and resources of both the university, with its many student organisations, and the MCD, created a unique environment for the exchange of political, social and theological ideas. Many Protestant clergy completed an Arts degree before undertaking their theological degrees and for some this precipitated active engagement in this progressive culture. This culture would play an important role in the development of the 1950s peace movement.

The Peace Clergy

The Presbyterian minister Alf Dickie and the Methodist minister Frank Hartley were both graduates of the MCD. These Melbourne-based clergymen became pre-eminent figures in Australia’s peace movement during the Cold War years. Along with their colleague, the Unitarian minister Victor James, they formed the executive of the Australian Peace Council (APC), the co-ordinating body of the peace movement throughout Australia in the 1950s. The APC formed in 1949 with Dickie as national chairman and Hartley and James as joint secretaries. All three remained in these roles until the formation of the Campaign for International Co-operation and Disarmament (CICD) in 1959. However, this chapter will concentrate upon Alf Dickie’s political activism. In my research it became evident that Dickie was, broadly, more representative of the Protestant left than his two closest associates on the council, Hartley and James. This is not to diminish their substantial and unique contributions to the peace movement. Another consideration was that, in contrast to James and Hartley, there is no memoir or biography examining Dickie’s life and work. It
is hoped that this brief investigation of Dickie’s life and career will illuminate the significant influences and circumstances that propelled him to become the leading organiser and spokesperson of the Australian peace movement. Furthermore, my concentration on the Protestant left meant that an analysis of James’ non-Protestant (Unitarian) beliefs was outside the scope of this chapter.

The Rev. Alf Dickie was anything but a Communist “dupe.” His stance as a Christian socialist throughout his ministerial career was a product of his own inner convictions. While more of an ideological Christian socialist than most of his colleagues, he publicly represented the thoughts, feelings and ideas of many liberal Protestant clergy and laity during the Cold War years. Like other religious peace activists of this period, he regarded the cause of peace and social justice as central to the Christian faith. Political activism was part of his faith. However, this faith was based upon a particular understanding of the Christian gospels and the role of the church in the modern world. Like many liberal theologians, Dickie believed that religious orthodoxy had neglected, even negated, the social and political implications of Christ’s teachings. Dickie read widely and came to the conclusion, early in his career, that the essence of Christianity had been repressed by institutionalised piety and an outdated ontological doctrine, and that the revolutionary teachings of Jesus of Nazareth had been suffocated and sterilised by conservative theological and moralistic filters. For Dickie, as for many of the Protestant left, the rise of socialism and communism throughout the world was a judgement upon the failure of Christianity to follow Christ’s teachings. They asserted that Christianity had not fulfilled its purpose of becoming a transformational agent. Consequently, they argued, the world now looked to socialism for the Christian values of equality, liberty and fraternity. Dickie believed that although socialism and, especially, communism were consciously anti-religious systems, they were, in reality, unconsciously religious enterprises and, as such, could be transformed in dialogue with Christian socialism.10

During the 1950s more than 100 Protestant clergy participated in the peace movement. Most were left-leaning and many were sympathetic to Christian socialist principles or values. In the 1980s, O’Byrne interviewed 40 of these, by then, elderly clergy.11 Her important research reveals that whilst there were many differences in personality and approach, most had reached similar political and theological conclusions to Dickie and, had been influenced by similar circumstances. They were predominantly from working-class backgrounds; many had trades before training for ministry. They were deeply
affected by the Great Depression and were convinced that capitalism was the cause and needed to be replaced or reconstituted. Most had been influenced by earlier left-leaning peace activists such the Rev. Frank W. Coaldrake and the Rev. Robert Green, renowned for their unpopular pacifism during World War II. All but one were dedicated Labor voters. Several were Labor Party members but most were reluctant to become politically partisan; for them the corollary of a primary Christian allegiance meant political engagement but at critical distance. For some, this was the rationale for not becoming overtly involved with communists. For a few like Dickie, their Christian allegiance had the opposite effect: they would work alongside communists while maintaining their distinctive core values and goals. At least 12 clergy became members of the APC, organising and convening peace activities, such as marches, conferences, seminars, fundraising, petitions and representations to union meetings. Membership of the APC meant working alongside socialists, pacifists and CPA members such as Ian Turner, Stephen Murray-Smith, Dorothy Gibson and the Sydney-based Alec Robertson, editor of *Tribune* – the official newspaper of the CPA. In the early 1950s, at least two clergy resigned their membership of the APC as a result of attempts by communist members to the use the council for CPA aims and objectives. APC office bearers Dickie, Hartley and the Sydney-based ministers Norman Anderson (Congregational) and Allan Brand (Methodist) attended numerous international peace conferences and later received individual service medals from the World Peace Council (WPC).

Many of the Protestant left had formed strong pacifist views during the war years or earlier. Some held to the “just war theory.” Others were purists and believed that war could never be justified on Christian grounds. All were committed to the peace movement because they believed that the survival of the human race was now at stake in “the nuclear age.” All those interviewed commended Bertrand Russell for his attempts to outlaw atomic weapons. Most marched on Hiroshima Day each year. It was the emergence of the Cold War and the spectre of nuclear holocaust that transformed Dickie from ideologue to activist. A strategy for global peace became a matter of ultimate concern; an existential moral imperative. A world now cleft into two opposing spheres was, for Dickie, antithetical to all that Christ had commanded.

Dickie, like many of his clerical colleagues, was certain about the rightness of the stance and the cause. No amount of opposition or adversity would dissuade him. Dickie was fond of quoting from the poem, “The Boy in Armor”, by Hermann Hagedorn:
And now you others who must live
Shall do a harder thing than dying is –
For you shall think! And ghosts will drive you on!^{16}

Dickie had no illusions about the hardship of building a new social order based upon justice and peace. The road to peace, he believed, was the harder road. His ethical toughness was evident in an incident that occurred within his congregation in North Essendon, just after the war in Europe had ended in May 1945. Some church members came to Dickie and sought permission to install the Australian national flag in the church as a sign of patriotism and to honour the sacrifices made. No doubt there were those within the congregation who had been personally affected by the sacrifices and deaths of loved ones in that war. Nevertheless, Dickie refused to give permission and pleaded the case that true patriotism would involve sacrifices in the cause of peace.^{17} After 1949, Dickie’s workload with the peace movement became all-consuming, but his pastoral commitment to local church ministry never wavered. In Dickie’s mind there was an interconnection between his peace activism and his pastoral duties. He launched a program of re-education in his congregation. He hoped it would become an example of how Christian socialism and peace activism could make social, political and religious inroads within a local community. Instead, his congregation became a microcosm of the broader political and ideological divisions of the early Cold War period. In the early 1950s, Dickie’s plans to radicalise his congregation towards Christian socialist ideas and peace met with solid resistance. Those who supported Dickie’s ideas were few. The majority, being conventional Christians, found Dickie’s views too confronting and ultimately too politicised, especially as anti-communist pressures mounted in the broader community. Dickie’s determination, however, persisted even as his congregation dwindled and attempts at reconciliation by the presbytery failed. His tenacity was such that, even when his capitulation appeared to be inevitable as the presbytery sought his resignation, Dickie successfully appealed and was reinstated.^{18}

Like Dickie, many of the peace clergy shared an admiration for perceived social, economic and technological achievements in communist countries such as the Soviet Union and China. Most tended to hope that the “socialist turn” in the world would be the necessary antidote to the failure of capitalism, as they saw it, demonstrated most vividly in the suffering and misery caused by the Great Depression and the rise of fascism. Many visited these rigid and
dictatorial regimes, but their myopic hopes and presuppositions dictated that they only saw great social and economic progress. In 1951, following Hartley’s first visit to the Soviet Union, he stated: “Without hesitation I can say that I was impressed for good.”\(^\text{19}\) Allan Brand described the People’s Republic of China as “such an improvement on previous regimes.” Victor James stated many years later that he saw “unbelievable progress” and a “different attitude and atmosphere” in 1952 compared to his first visit to China in 1946.\(^\text{20}\) James would speak of “the thrilling experiment of a new social order taking place among a quarter of the world’s peoples.”\(^\text{21}\) Such declarations were not uncommon and they betray the vulnerability of faith. Yet, paradoxically, there is evidence that these peace clergy were not totally naïve. Even Hartley, the most philo-Soviet of the peace clergy, admitted that the Soviet Union was no utopia and held that for the new socialist order to be one of justice and peace, it would require the underpinnings of the Christian faith.\(^\text{22}\) For Dickie, Christian socialism would provide the necessary spiritual infrastructure for that new world order.

**Christian Socialism: A Basis for Peace Activism**

Protestant left involvement in the Australian peace movement of the 1950s was the result of a long and complex history. Clergy involvement in peace activism was not a result of having been duped by the CPA. The impetus for their participation drew upon an ancient legacy of pacifist theology and nascent socialist ideals. It was a product of post-Enlightenment, Reformationist emancipation from the historical legacies of Constantinian dogma and ecclesiology.\(^\text{23}\) It sought to rediscover authentic Christian identity through dialogue and participation in an increasingly secular world. The rise of Marxist theory in the nineteenth century was considered by many leading thinkers of the Protestant left to be a dialectical challenge, whereby, through critique and engagement, Christianity could finally be purified from its imperialist past and become the movement of religious reform its founder had intended. Such a movement would provide the basis of a truly human society built upon ultimate values of freedom, justice, dignity and compassion; values that would transform the old order of social, racial, gender, economic, class and national divisions. Maurice’s Christian Socialism, the Christian Socialist Movement in Scotland and the Christian Common Wealth Movement (discussed below) were religious and political outcomes of this theological praxis. The Protestant
left's involvement and leadership of the peace movement of the late 1940s and 1950s Cold War period was based upon this same theological impulse.

The Protestant left was also profoundly influenced by books and articles written by international theologians and clerics engaged in dialogue with socialist and communist ideas. During the 1930s this literature became influential in liberal theological colleges such as the MCD. The Fabian Society and the Student Christian Movement (SCM) published much of this material and provided significant opportunities for public debate and the exchange of progressive religious, social and political ideas. In the Australian context, Melbourne became the centre for the dissemination of these views. Following the cataclysmic effects of two world wars and the Great Depression, many on the left, religious and secular alike, concluded that capitalism was a failure. Consequently, there was a growing belief that dialogue with socialism and communism needed to shift from intellectual systems of thought to social and political experimentation with socialist or Marxist ideas in Western democracies. John Macmurray's *Christian Common Wealth,*\(^{24}\) described below, was one such political expression of this belief: a result of his religious, philosophical and ethical critique of Marx's writings in the inter-war period.

Early in Dickie's move to political activism, he formed a local branch of the Christian Common Wealth Movement (CCWM). The CCWM in Australia appears to have developed in two stages. Its first manifestation was sponsored by the Victorian Council of Churches and was inaugurated in April 1939.\(^{25}\) The CCWM launch was inspired by the famous Methodist missionary to India, Dr E. Stanley Jones, who had visited Australia in 1938.\(^{26}\) Jones, an evangelical with socialist leanings, had a broad appeal. Jones' speaking engagements found receptive audiences around the nation and were reported in major Australian newspapers. He spoke on many social issues and stressed that the church must overcome its denominational divisions in order to live up to its mandate as an agent of peace.\(^{27}\) The Rev. J.D. Northey, principal of the Congregational College of Victoria, was profoundly affected by Jones. At a meeting in April 1939 to constitute the CCWM, with the rhetoric of Jones still potent in his thinking, Northey hoped that the CCWM might unite the divided body of the church to deal with the problems of the capitalist system.\(^{28}\)

The second, more radical development of the CCWM, occurred in the post-war period. One of its leading proponents was the Presbyterian minister Stephen Yarnold, who had been one of Dickie's early mentors. Yarnold, by 1943
had become a regular broadcaster on radio station 3AW. He would frequently air his Christian socialist views, provoking strong criticism within the church. One of Yarnold’s ministerial colleagues complained “that on Easter Sunday all the broadcasting time was taken up by an attack on the present economic order. There was nothing about Easter, the Cross, or the resurrection.” Yarnold’s broadcasts also drew serious criticism from some members of the school council at Scotch College, where he was chaplain. In 1944, a broadcast that he had prepared on behalf of the CCWM was banned by a commercial radio station. Not surprisingly, Dickie and Yarnold would have a long association.

By the time of Dickie’s participation in the CCWM in the mid-1940s, the movement had become articulate about its views and the way its tenets would be misinterpreted by many as communist. It was highly critical of the political ambivalence of many in the church and, in overtly socialist terms, it mandated an intention to strive for “the common ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange.” It regarded the capitalist system as antithetical to the Gospel but emphasised its Christian socialist distinctiveness from atheistic socialism.

The conception of a socialistic Christian Common Wealth has a long history, particularly in the more radical churches in Scotland. As Brown maintains, it has its antecedents in the “godly commonwealth ideal of John Knox and the sixteenth-century Reformers.” Its legacies have been far reaching and the untimely death of John Smith, the Scottish Labour Party leader in 1994, was a reminder of the political potency of Christian socialism, even in recent times. Smith, like Dickie, was Presbyterian and unashamedly socialist. And like Dickie, his faith informed his socialist creed. Hugh Gilmore’s nineteenth-century Common Wealth movement in South Australia was also a manifestation of this tradition. Gilmore, a Primitive Methodist minister, arrived in Adelaide from Glasgow in June 1889. He described himself as a Christian Socialist. He was critical of religious individualism and capitalism, and he campaigned for social reforms and relief for the poor. He soon attracted a large and diverse following and was eventually lionised by trade unionists.

The post-war CCWM was undoubtedly also influenced by the ideas and political activities of the Common Wealth movement in Britain, formed in 1942. The mandate of the British movement was to ameliorate economic, political and social conditions in Britain. Macmurray was one of its leading advocates along with three other intellectuals: the writer and novelist Kenneth Ingram, the philosopher and science fiction writer Olaf Stapledon,
and the Liberal MP and baronet Sir Richard Acland. While differing in their approaches to religion, all four believed in the fundamental importance of religion and held that a truly humanising and progressive society depended upon the transformation of secular modernity through the dialogical integration of religion and socialism. The movement’s political platform was based on socialist themes of common ownership of economic institutions and democratic and constitutional reforms. The movement appealed to a spectrum of political opinion and included Christians and Marxists. Under the strategic political leadership of Acland, the movement met with remarkable electoral success, until the onset of the Cold War. At its peak, it had over 300 branches throughout Britain, with an estimated 10–15,000 members.

The political and religious views of their British counterparts would have augured well in the minds of the CCWM clergy in Australia. It was felt by many left-leaning Christian groups that post-war reconstruction was an opportune time for the church to engage with the community on social and political issues. The notion of the church being liberated from religious piety and rediscovering its prophetic call to engage humanity at all levels, undergirded Dickie’s developing vision. Dickie had reason to be confident in his Christian socialist vision. Senior denominational leaders shared similar interests. Dickie’s views had not only been tolerated by his denomination in the past but had been encouraged in his theological training. Furthermore, Dickie was not out of step with the Assembly motions and resolutions of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria in the early to the mid-1940s. In May 1943, for instance, the Assembly called capitalism into question on the grounds that it had not used “the entire economic resources of mankind’s common wealth equitably and justly, for the glory of God and for the good of all mankind.”

While Christian socialism was not a majority view in the church at large, it re-emerged as a theological, philosophical and ethical ethos for a number of clergy and laity during the first half of the twentieth century. This ethos was shared by numerous clergy and laity across the denominations and by some with significant influence in their roles as denominational leaders. Christian socialism was not monolithic; it was not developed in a systematic way and individuals such as Dickie, Northey and Yarnold were at liberty to place upon it their own nuances and interpretations. The fluidity of the Christian socialist vision meant that it was adopted by some liberal and evangelical Christians. It also became, for some, the necessary precondition for peace. For Dickie, simply being a pacifist was not enough. The struggle for peace was also the
struggle for justice and necessitated a new social and political order. Only then could there be an enduring peace in the world. After World War II, activists such as Dickie believed, with a religious conviction, that Christian socialism was now the predestined catalyst of a new world order. The time appeared to be ripe. There was a climate of co-operation between denominations. For the Protestant left and Christian socialists in particular, there also seemed to be a compelling confluence between an ancient Christian socialist strand and a world that appeared to be embracing the socialist experiment.

The Australian Peace Council

In the formation of the APC, Dickie was appointed its national chairman. This role propelled him into the forefront of Australia’s peace movement and he became its leading representative and spokesperson. In the early years the peace movement engaged in a broad range of activities intended to make as much social and political impact as possible. The movement was creative, dedicated and energetic. It offered a steady stream of peace activities at local, state, national and international levels. Triennial peace congresses were planned for the decade. The movement generated funding and support to send its delegates to international peace congresses and conferences throughout the 1950s. The APC soon organised itself as a national body with its headquarters in Melbourne. State peace councils were spawned. Important themes that had developed in Dickie’s thinking were articulated in a manifesto formulated shortly after the APC’s official launch, including support for: dialogue between different ideological and religious systems, the United Nations charter, the peaceful co-existence of political and social systems, an international ban of nuclear weapons and the defence of democratic liberties.

Despite the non-partisan tone of this carefully crafted manifesto and, later editorials in the council’s journal that defended a position of political neutrality (a position held genuinely by Dickie and other non-communist members), the reality was that the APC was heavily influenced by communist policy and strategy. This influence was a reality from the APC’s inception. There are two versions of how the APC began. Its own version implied that its genesis was largely the inspiration of the peace clergy. For instance, Victor James claimed that the APC was formed in June 1949 in his home, the Unitarian manse at Cathedral Place, Melbourne. James recalled that this meeting comprised himself, Alf Dickie, Frank Hartley and John Rogers, president of Australia–
The four men had earlier forged an alliance when Rogers was banned from using the Melbourne Town Hall to present a public lecture on his 1948 seven-month visit to the Soviet Union. Marion Hartley recalled that her husband Frank contacted numerous ministers and friends to form an alliance to assist in overturning the ban. Some 60 clergy responded and as a result the left-wing Democratic Rights Council (DRC) was formed.

The other version of the APC’s genesis does not contradict that these events took place, but it explodes the myth of a purely religious and non-partisan origin for the APC. Communist influence in the APC is now largely accepted as historical fact. Phillip Deery and Doug Jordan argue that the CPA “was the early driving force behind the APC.” They quote the communist Ian Turner, the first organising secretary of the APC (a position paid for by the CPA), who later confirmed the communist origins of the Australian peace movement and stated that the initiation of a peace council was agreed upon by a clandestine meeting of CPA members early in 1949. Turner’s testimony some 20 years later is compelling: “communist organisations and communist-led unions provided most of the [peace] movement’s muscle” and that in hindsight “we were over-manipulative.” Turner also confirmed that the CPA was, at this time, attempting to structure its activities in accordance with Soviet foreign policy. Accusations of communist influence in the APC also influenced the Australian Labor Party’s (ALP) executive’s decision, in May 1950, to place a ban on the council, declaring “that no member of the Australian Labor Party could be associated with the Peace Council and remain a member of the Party.”

The Menzies’ government accused the APC of being a platform for communism. In September 1950, at the Wesley Church in Sydney, the prime minister declared that the “bogus” peace movement was one of communism’s “subtle weapons to gain its ends.” Furthermore, with the peace clergy clearly in mind, he stated: “I have never been able to understand the man who acclaims himself a Christian and at the same time a Communist.” By 1954, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) certainly considered the APC to be a creation of the CPA and was, through the directives of the WPC, “inextricably linked to the global Communist peace initiative.” The CPA’s role mirrored the communist parties in Western Europe and the United States, which followed the Cominform policy to exploit the peace movement and to foster or create communist front organisations.

Alec Robertson, a member of the national executive of the CPA, confirmed in 1970 that for over 20 years the Australian peace movement had “been in
theory and practice one of the over-riding pre-occupations of the CPA. Robertson claimed that communist influence was pre-eminent in the peace movement from 1949 to 1950, but gradually declined in intensity thereafter. Jim Cairns, a founding member of the APC, resigned his membership, along with the writer Leonard Mann, apparently because he objected to the pro-Soviet communist faction that continued to vie for domination. His resignation in early 1950 was, however, probably also influenced by New South Wales ALP and Victorian ALP executive decisions to ban their respective members from belonging to the peace council. The SCM, initially represented on the council by two of its members, totally withdrew its support in August 1950, because of its deep concerns about the degree of communist influence over the APC. Its decision may also have been a result of pressure from the rising tide of anti-communist feeling in church and society at this time.

Dickie remained resistant to the virulent anti-communism of the 1950s. Such was his resolve that he continued to work closely with communists as a non-communist peace activist. However, Dickie represented a minority of clergy willing to collaborate with communists in such a manner. At the height of the Cold War, when for anti-communists peace was synonymous with communism, although few clergy were prepared to take up membership of the APC, it is nonetheless remarkable that a significant number of Protestant left clergy and religious groups continued to participate in the peace movement. Central to Dickie’s vision and strategy was a peace movement marked by a broad and diverse constituency. Dickie was a patient negotiator and skilled organiser. Under his leadership of the APC, the council continued to lead a peace movement supported by a plethora of peace organisations, unions and religious groups. On the more radical end were groups such as the Federation for the Resistance to War (FRW). The APC’s association with the more moderate Peace Action Council (PAC) meant that the peace movement continued to have strong support from the PAC’s constituents: the Arts Council, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, the Christian Common Wealth Movement, the Christian Pacifist Movement, the Christian Social Order Movement, the Education Fellowship, the Peace Pledge Union, the Scientific and Technical Workers and the Women’s Peace Campaign.

The APC was closely allied to the Peace Quest Forum (PQF). According to Ralph Gibson, the PQF was initiated by Dickie, Hartley, James and the Reverends Rex Mathias and J.F. Long. The PQF came into being in late 1950 as a co-ordinated attempt to raise public opposition to the Korean War and to
provide a platform for debate and discussion on peace.\textsuperscript{59} It claimed to be an association of ministers of religion with diverse “political opinions and views on the causes of war,” but who were united in Christian unity.\textsuperscript{60} Its membership was limited to clergy. While membership included Dickie, Hartley and James, the majority were committed to the peace movement but avoided membership of the APC. Nevertheless, along with the APC, the PQF became the subject of ASIO monitoring.\textsuperscript{61} The PQF consisted of clergy from denominations such as Anglican, Baptist, Churches of Christ, Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian and Quakers. Interestingly, it was the Churches of Christ clergy – representing a more independent, dissenting tradition with a pacifist heritage – who represented almost half of the membership base of the PQF.\textsuperscript{62}

The PQF was not afraid to make unpopular stands in the cause of peace and civil liberties. In 1954 the forum invited theologian Professor Josef L. Hromádka of the Protestant Theological Faculty of the Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia (1927–1966)\textsuperscript{63} to undertake a lecture tour in Australia. His controversial and divisive tour took place in September.\textsuperscript{64} Hromádka was a member of the central committee of the World Council of Churches and he wielded influence in the communist-supported WPC. In his critical acceptance of communism, Hromádka became a mentor figure for many of the Protestant left activists like Dickie and Hartley.\textsuperscript{65} At the time, he was the leading European theologian of Christian-Marxist dialogue and as a prominent Protestant church leader from behind the Iron Curtain, he provided Dickie and Hartley with compelling evidence that their Christian socialist vision was realisable and indeed, inevitable and, that the escalation in anti-communism was based upon the misinformation of conservative propaganda.

The development of a broad-based peace movement had the effect, at times, of mitigating communist influence or control. Indicative of this was the Australian Convention on Peace and War (April 1953), supported by the APC, but organised by the PQF.\textsuperscript{66} Despite being condemned by Menzies as a communist-front event, it was not controlled or manipulated by the CPA. Deery states, on the basis of reasonably objective reports from a cross-section of attendees, that the convention was conducted with genuine democratic participation, respect for varied political viewpoints and patient negotiation to find common ground to work for peace. Deery’s investigation reveals that a serious mistake had been made in ASIO intelligence that resulted in the convention being viewed as communist controlled. Subsequently, in the lead up to the convention, it “was boycotted, subverted, censored and condemned.”\textsuperscript{67}
Despite the overwhelming evidence of CPA influence within the APC, there is no conclusive evidence of overt communist control. Covert involvement in the peace movement was the precise intention of the CPA. Just as the Victorian Royal Commission on Communism 1949–50 found that the CPA hoped for, and actively encouraged, a revolutionary situation to arise through its influence in the unions and other political and civic institutions, so too its approach within the peace movement was largely an opportunistic one, but with strategic intent. It remains a monumental irony that the ideals held by the peace clergy and other non-communist peace activists: of lasting peace based upon broad participation, open dialogue and democratic representation, played into the hands of the CPA. In October 1949, Lance Sharkey, general secretary of the CPA, evoked Cominform policy stating: “We Communists do not want to ‘boss’ such a [peace] movement or order it about, nor define its policy or dictate its tactics; we want to see a broad mobilisation of peace-lovers fighting on a broad programme.”

Covert influence in the peace movement was advantageous for the CPA in an intensely anti-communist environment. Such a *modus operandi* was more difficult to detect and more importantly, hard to prove. Communists could broaden their base among organisations and individuals who might share some similar values, such as peace, whilst remaining oblivious to the party’s Soviet loyalties and revolutionary ideals. This helps explain why so many non-communists continued to co-operate with communists in the peace movement throughout the 1950s and beyond. The strategy of support for, rather than control of, the peace movement, gave the CPA covert advantage, but it also allowed some space for a range of peace groups, left-wing organisations and individuals to coexist with divergent motivations, ideologies and purposes.

**A Question of Faith**

Idealism can be the Achilles heel of faith. It was this element of faith that made the peace clergy vulnerable to the Cominform’s aspirations for the worldwide peace movement, in that it provided the movement with religious and cultural respectability and legitimacy. To some extent this countered anti-communist sentiment by offering a level of reassurance for numerous non-communist citizens to become involved with the movement. Conversely, the clergy’s theological articulation of a new world order gave voice to the quiet desperation of many for an alternative to the Cold War polarities between East
and West. Their faith would survive the shock of Khrushchev’s “secret” speech on Stalin’s crimes, which dented the belief of many in the communist system. The peace clergy often lacked sophistication in their social and political analyses and tended to be captive to simplistic anti-capitalist assumptions, but their genuine commitment to international peace and co-operation was based upon rigorous theological reflection and the long-standing traditions of Christian socialism and pacifism. Their goals consisted of peaceful resolutions to international conflict, of a world liberated from the threat of nuclear annihilation, of international dialogue and co-operation, of a peaceful co-existence of ideologies, and of a new world social order of justice and liberty. Whilst these objectives continued to be undermined by the politics of the Cold War, the determination of the Protestant left offered society a dissenting voice and an alternative vision.

In the longer term, this voice outlived the hegemonic rhetoric of the 1950s; it came in from the cold. As communist influence over the peace movement declined, the Protestant left, along with non-religious peace activists, cleared the path for a new generation to adopt the mantle of peace in the anti-war movement of the 1960s. In Australia, as in many other Western countries, the post-war peace activists developed enduring networks, alliances, literature, policies and strategies that provided an organisational base and activist culture that was able, by the late 1960s, to provide early leadership to the mass peace protests against the Vietnam War. The frozen political landscape of the earlier period slowly began to thaw, and by the early 1970s the cause of peace had become mainstream. Faith in peace was restored. Peace was no longer a dirty word.

**Kim Thoday**, a chaplain in South Australia, recently completed an MA research thesis at Victoria University on Christian Socialism and peace activism in the early Cold War in Australia.

**Endnotes**


2 A number of more recent religion scholars have highlighted the scholarly lacunae in the historical agency of religion in Australian political history. They argue that Australian political historiography has tended to treat ecclesiastical history as a separate entity with little effect on political life or national affairs. See Hilary Carey, Ian Breward, Nicholas Doumanis, Ruth Frappell, David Hilliard, Katherine Massam, Anne O’Brien and Roger...


12 Green succeeded Coaldrake as president of the Federal Pacifist Council. Coaldrake held the position during World War II.

13 O’Byrne, “The Peace Parsons,” 33. My research suggests that at least 14 clergy became members of the APC. O’Byrne correctly noted that there were also a number of other clergy who were significant supporters of the APC, but not official members; O’Byrne, “The Peace Parsons,” 28, 230.
14 O’Byrne, “The Peace Parsons,” 34.
16 Phone conversation with Peter Neilson, Dickie’s youngest son, 2 November 2013.
17 Ibid.
18 For a detailed examination of these circumstances at the North Essendon Presbyterian Church see Thoday, “Christian–Socialist Dialogue,” 72–81.
20 O’Byrne, “The Peace Parsons,” 34.
21 Victor James, Windows on the Years (Bayswater, Vic.: circa 1979), 312.
22 Hartley, In Quest of Peace, 5.
24 Macmurray was an influential Scottish moral philosopher and theologian who had a distinguished career in several university posts including Manchester University and the University of Edinburgh. His book The Clue to History, published in 1938, was widely read. As Dickie often did with literature he wished to examine closely and keep for future reference, he painstakingly typed the book out verbatim, University of Melbourne Archives, 1983.0081 Rev. Alf Dickie Papers, 83–81 [hereafter Dickie Papers], Box 7, Item 1/4, 5. More recently, Macmurray has again received attention partly due to the 1996 publication of an anthology of his writings for which the former Labour Prime Minister of Britain, Tony Blair wrote the foreword. Blair was first introduced to Macmurray’s writings as an undergraduate at Oxford University in the 1970s by a more senior student who would become a life-long friend, the Australian Anglican priest and social entrepreneur, Peter Thomson. Like Dickie, Thomson was also influenced by Macmurray’s The Clue to History. See Philip Hunt, “Discovering John Macmurray,” accessed 19 September, 2014, http://johnmacmurray.org/further-reading/discovering-john-macmurray.
25 Argus, 22 April 1939, 4.
26 Ibid.
27 Sydney Morning Herald, 1 September 1938, 16.
28 Age, 28 April 1939, 5.
29 Argus, 7 May 1943, 3.
31 Bulletin, October 1945 (newsletter of the CCWM), Dickie Papers, Box 2, File 2.

Ibid., 2.

Ibid., 1.

Ibid., 26, 46.

Proceedings of the State General Assembly (May, 1943) of the Presbyterian Church of Australia (Melbourne: Brown Prior Anderson Pty Ltd, 1943), Minutes 203–205.


Constitution of the Australian Peace Council, University of Melbourne Archives, Victorian Peace Council (VPC) papers, 1980.0068 Box 1, File 1.


Ibid., 2.


The Canberra Times, 4 September 1950, 1.


This was discussed in numerous newspaper editorials in the early 1950s; for example see: “The Perversion of Peace,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 September 1953, 2.


Ibid.


“Forum” *The Australian Intercollegian* 51, no. 6, (1 August 1950): 96.


University of Melbourne Archives, 2005.004 Meanjin–Christesen papers, Box 275/2, File 3.

University of Melbourne Archives, Peace Quest Forum papers, 76–92, hand written notes, Box 1.
59 Age, 16 March 1951; Dickie Papers, Box 6, File 8.
60 Sun (Melbourne), 9 March 1951; Dickie Papers, Box 6, File 8.
61 Memorandum to ASIO Headquarters: Peace Quest Forum, 27 June 1952, National Archives of Australia [hereafter NAA], A6119, XR1, 78.
64 ASIO monitored the visit; see Note for file from Mr. Dempsey, Chief Migration Officer, Melbourne, 20 August 1954, NAA, A6119/90, 2622.
65 Nishitani argues that Hromádka’s theological approach to state communism in his country was one of critical acceptance, rather than uncritical accommodation; Nishitani, Niebuhr, Hromadka, Troeltsch, and Barth, 153–156.
66 Deery, “War on Peace,” 266.
67 Ibid., 254.
69 Alec Robertson, “CPA in the Anti-War Movement,” 40.
70 Ibid., 99–110.
When the Menzies government reintroduced National Service in 1964 and then sent conscripted soldiers along with volunteer service personnel to fight in the Vietnam War, the pacifist movement in Australia was faced with the dilemma of whether to actively encourage young men to be conscientious objectors to National Service, or merely support those who already held such beliefs? One of their most effective tools was the newspaper The Peacemaker, founded in 1939. The Peacemaker provided an alternative voice during the war, and supported conscientious objectors to military service in both war and peacetime. Always short of funds, The Peacemaker survived on subscriptions and donations until the end of 1971, when it ceased publication. The Federal Pacifist Council [FPC], which produced the newspaper, regarded it as a worthwhile investment in time and resources. In order to assess the extent of its impact, this chapter surveys issues of The Peacemaker from the last seven years of production (1964 to 1971), and examines FPC Minutes and correspondence between objectors and the newspaper’s editor, Vivienne Abraham. It is intended that examining The Peacemaker as a case study may shed some light on the broader issue of the efficacy of the alternative press as a means of communication.
For 32 years, from September 1939 until December 1971, a small, alternative newspaper, published in Melbourne, was circulated to subscribers around the nation. Titled *The Peacemaker*, the paper, which began as a four-page broadsheet and ended as a 16-page journal, depended entirely upon subscriptions and donations. It took no advertising – the staple of most newspapers. In its early years, during World War II, *The Peacemaker* survived threats of censorship and paper shortage as well as scarcity of funds. Its longevity was exceptional when compared with the majority of alternative or radical papers, and must be attributed to the dedication of its entirely voluntary staff, including a handful of editors, as well as the desire of a section of the Australian public for an alternative opinion to that expressed in the mainstream media. Originally the initiative of one man, Frank Coaldrake, *The Peacemaker* was handed over to the Federal Pacifist Council [FPC] in 1946. The fact that the FPC maintained *The Peacemaker* for a further 26 years indicates that they regarded it as a worthwhile investment in time and resources.

My chapter aims to assess the extent to which *The Peacemaker* was effective in educating young men about the options available to conscientious objectors and supporting them in their attempts to gain exemption. In seeking to answer this question in the context of the Vietnam War period, this chapter surveys issues of the newspaper from the last seven years of production (1964 to 1971), and examines correspondence between objectors and *The Peacemaker*’s editor, Vivienne Abraham.¹

Radical propagandists had used newspapers as a means of disseminating their messages in the Australian colonies ever since they had access to printing presses – or even earlier.² From the 1880s, many alternative publications promoted a socialist political ideology.³ The most enduring of these came from the mainstream labour movement, with papers such as the Brisbane *Worker* (1890–1974), the Sydney [later *Australian*] *Worker* (1893–1993) and the *Westralian Worker* (1900–1951). These newspapers, with a wide readership, would continue in print throughout much of the twentieth century. But *The Peacemaker* was like none of these. It espoused a liberal Christian rather than partisan political ideology, yet, unlike “church” newspapers such as the *Catholic Worker* or the *Anglican Messenger*, it lacked the financial support of a mainstream Christian denomination; it was dependent entirely upon volunteers for its production; its subscribing readership probably never exceeded 1,500 people nation-wide; and because it eschewed advertising, the
most significant source of revenue for most newspapers, it was always on the
verge of extinction. Yet, incredibly, the paper survived for 32 years.

**The Peacemaker: A Brief History**

*The Peacemaker* made its debut as a four-page broadsheet format newspaper in
September 1939, the month that Prime Minister Robert Menzies committed
Australia to the conflict in Europe “because Britain was at war.” Its founder,
Frank Coald rake, combined working as warden at the Brotherhood of St.
Laurence’s hostel for destitute boys with study for a theological degree. A
committed pacifist, he belonged to the Christian Pacifist Movement and the
Australian Peace Pledge Union, but he sought further ways of expressing his
views. He financed the first issue from his meagre salary and did most of the
editing work late at night when he could spare time from work and study.
Initially, the paper was subtitled, “An Australian Venture in Reconstruction,”
which embodied Coald rake’s vision of a post-war world where the kind of
poverty he encountered in inner-city Melbourne would no longer exist.⁴

During the war years, the paper had several brushes with the government
censor. From July 1940 until December 1942, the front cover of each issue bore
a creed that commenced with the words:

> We will not knowingly assist our friends to kill Germans (or any other
people). Nor will we knowingly assist Germans [and Japanese] (or
any other people) to kill our friends.⁵

In June 1940, the Victorian State Publicity Censor complained to his chief in
Canberra that the paper was launching “a peace offensive” – a rather strange
complaint when “peace” was the aim for which Australians were said to be
fighting – and that much of the paper’s copy was “deliberately designed to
dissuade earnest young men of Christian principles from enlisting.” He
proposed to ban the entire issue.⁶ Nevertheless, the July issue appeared in its
usual size and format, and when the August issue was limited to two pages,
Coald rake stated that this was because of lack of time and finance, rather than
the censor’s pen. There were no issues for September, October, November or
December 1940, although the paper resumed publication in January 1941
and continued throughout the war.⁷ Coald rake offered *The Peacemaker* to the
FPC in February 1946 when he left Melbourne to train for missionary service in Japan. From then until the end of 1963, five volunteers served as editor. Others wrote regular columns for the paper.

The Vietnam War Era (1964–71)

While the aim of printing a monthly issue was not often realised, The Peacemaker published ten issues in 1964. The first seven (February to August) were filled with news of peace activities around the world. War Resisters International’s [WRI] eleventh Triennial Conference that had been held at Stavanger, Norway, the previous July. The February issue front page printed the “Stavanger Statement,” which affirmed the “fundamental importance and relevance of the individual conscience in the struggle against war in the nuclear age and for the purpose of bringing about social change.” Several Australian delegates attended the conference, including Shirley Abraham, who, with her sister, Vivienne, had been appointed co-editors of The Peacemaker for 1964. They served jointly until Shirley resigned at the end of 1968. Vivienne remained as the sole editor until the last issue. Thus the editorial style of the paper remained consistent throughout the period being studied, but both the format and the content changed. At the beginning of 1969, the paper’s size was reduced from a broadsheet to a journal format, slightly larger than A4, and the contents focused almost exclusively on resisters to the Vietnam War, whereas at the beginning of the period (1964), most of the content was from overseas.

In the months prior to Menzies’ government re-introducing compulsory national service – the first national service scheme having operated from 1951 to 1959 – The Peacemaker reported upon many international peace events, including: the Delhi–Peking Friendship March’s unsuccessful attempt to enter China; the US–Cuba Peace Walk; the imprisonment of American peace activist John Papworth; Nelson Mandela’s trial in Pretoria; and Hiroshima Day, observed on the nineteenth anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb. The only indication that the paper was aware that the government was planning to reintroduce military conscription is in two paragraphs at the end of the editorial in July 1964 issue, which stated:

[S]ources in Canberra suggest that selective compulsory national service is likely to be re-introduced in Australia unless the present
recruiting drive shows increased results. The scheme may well follow American lines where every youth is required to register on turning 18 and is eligible for service until he reaches 26.

In the first instance, we oppose compulsory military training because we feel it is wrong for young men to be compelled to learn to kill whoever the Government decides is the current enemy. Secondly, we fail to see how increased armies can do anything but increase world tension. What we need, rather, is a relaxation of tension, a lessening of arms and troops and an increase in efforts of goodwill.\(^\text{12}\)

In making this statement, the paper may have been consciously rebutting the government’s official rationale for reintroducing conscription, which was as security against Indonesian aggression, at a time when Indonesia and Malaysia were involved in territorial disputes.\(^\text{13}\) This rationale was, however, unconvincing, as the Australian government had already committed military advisers to assist the South Vietnamese government in August 1962.\(^\text{14}\) Perhaps it is not surprising that *The Peacemaker* was caught by surprise in July. When the September issue went to press, the Minister for the Army, Dr A.J. Forbes, was still denying that national service training was planned in the foreseeable future, stating that, “The time could come when national service training [would] become necessary. The introduction of the scheme would be one of timing, related to the resources available, military priorities and the strategic situation.”\(^\text{15}\) Nevertheless, the paper did give the issue a banner headline: “Say ‘No’ to Conscription” in bold black type across the front page, thus unequivocally stating its position on the matter. It also mentioned that schemes under consideration were likely to be “selective rather than universal,” would “probably be based on two years’ continuous service and three years in the reserve with liability for overseas service and call-up after training,” and that the enlistment age would be “at least 20 to get the advantage of skilled men.” This statement was reinforced by a creed printed in bold type, stating that the Federal Pacifist Council opposed “military training … all killing … teaching our citizens how to kill” and not just “nuclear weapons” but all forms of weaponry. This was followed by a set of beliefs:

We believe in the right of every man, woman and child … to be free from the threat of annihilation … that ideas cannot be changed by the use of force … that no man should be asked to kill another man … in
the dignity of the human race. No man can become ‘the enemy’ – he is always a fellow man.

The creed concluded emphatically, “We oppose compulsory military training. We ask you to oppose it, too.”

Evidently, the paper sought to influence opinions and attitudes to National Service, rather than merely assist those who objected to being conscripted, but initially it was an uphill battle. Ann-Mari Jordens observed that the Australian public’s lack of dissent, when, in November 1964, the government announced its “intention to deploy conscripts in combat overseas, in times when neither war nor a defence emergency had been declared,” encouraged the Menzies administration to amend the Defence Act, before announcing its commitment of the first battalion of Australian troops to Vietnam. The Amendment was passed in May 1965, of which more later.

Reflecting WRI’s Stavanger Statement, which stressed the importance of working to achieve social change as well as opposing war, The Peacemaker also devoted much space to non-war-related issues, such as the “feudal conditions” suffered by African Americans in southern states of the USA, and campaigns to end similar discrimination against Aboriginal Australians by equalising wages and employment conditions and granting them full rights to social service benefits.

Issues also supplemented useful information about the National Service Act 1951–1964 (as it was now known) with publication of the WRI’s and the American Fellowship of Reconciliation’s call for US forces to withdraw from South Vietnam; articles on US conscientious objectors, and – as the first year of the new scheme (1965) dawned – debates on “war and ‘sacrifice’,” “conscription and conscience” and “Christian views on peace.”

No detailed arguments in support of war were published, and many of the arguments against war and conscription were reprinted from World War II, as when Maurice Blackburn’s statement of “the case against conscription” (1942) appeared in the first issue for 1965. But Blackburn’s points were just as relevant in 1965 as in 1942: “compulsion to serve overseas is compulsion to fight in cold blood” and “How long would capital punishment be endured if each of us could be compelled to be the hangman?”

During 1966, there were substantial, contemporary contributions to the anti-war argument, such as an address by the Reverend Terry Lane, a Church of Christ minister from the Melbourne suburb of East Preston, titled, “Conscription is Immoral … Unjust.” Lane pointed out that the government’s
decision to send National Servicemen into active service in Vietnam had been opposed by Christians of all denominations – but not always for rational reasons. For example, he argued that it was inconsistent to support compulsory military training (“training to kill”) and then oppose sending these trained conscripts to fight. “It’s hypocritical to object to their deployment when we have acquiesced in their preparation.” According to Lane, training to kill was as morally indefensible as killing. A later article, “Conscription and Conscientious Objection: A Non-Pacifist Viewpoint” by Peter Bryant, also pointed out inconsistencies in some of the arguments for and against conscription. For example, comparing conscription to paying one’s taxes was a false comparison. “Taxation may threaten your pocket but never your life … Clearly, if we are to regard a government’s power to tax and its power to conscript, both as legitimate powers involving certain social obligations of a citizen, then they are obligations of a totally different dimension.” Bryant argued that:

only when conscription is introduced in circumstances [in which] the society itself is visibly threatened” could there be any comparison between “conscription of persons and conscription of wealth [taxation] … Those, like myself, who object to the present conscription, are objecting to it because it was introduced in response to a situation in which Australia was not threatened [that is] … the Vietnam War.  

These rational arguments influenced young men who were faced with the decision of whether or not to apply for exemption.

In May 1965, The Peacemaker published the first testimony by a conscientious objector. Colin Matheson, a Quaker from Canberra, was prepared to undertake non-combatant service “as a medical orderly, stretcher bearer, ambulance driver etc. in order to help save life rather than destroy it. The following month, the paper reported the “first C.O. court hearings” when eight young men appeared before two magistrates in Melbourne. It seemed so civilised. The hearings “took place in a small court room, with very little formality” with a representative from the Department of Labour and National Service present – rather than a military officer as in later cases. Two were granted complete exemption on the grounds of “having a belief that does not allow them to undertake military duties”; three were found to “hold a conscientious belief which did not allow them to undertake duties of a combatant nature” but
were required to serve as non-combatants, and two requested to change their application to complete exemption and were advised to re-apply. Although this account was given the front page, an announcement that was to have a much greater impact on conscripted youth was relegated to a paragraph (albeit in bold type) in the editorial. This concerned the “infamous 5 am Session of Federal Parliament,” which amended the Defence Act and the National Service Act so that conscripts could serve “beyond the territorial limits of Australia.” National Service conscripts were “deemed” to be members of the Regular Army, and in a time of “defence emergency” could be required to serve an extra three years following their training.

The Peacemaker’s focus became narrower as the pages were filled with details of the statements, trials and imprisonments of individual Australian objectors. The case of Robin Kitching, the first objector to win an appeal against being sentenced to undertake non-combatant duties when he had requested complete exemption, received almost two pages of reportage, and a register of Conscientious Objectors, showing the outcomes of 63 cases across the nation took up a further half page. While this emphasis was likely to have been partly Vivienne Abraham’s influence, the paper did rely on their subscribers and the media for material. There were no reporters to go out and collect news, other than volunteers in each state and the already over-committed editors. Vivienne Abraham spent much of her time assisting objectors to negotiate the complexities of the legal system, attending their court cases and taking copious notes.

While the level of detail provided for each case before the courts is a valuable resource for today’s researchers of the period, with records of names, charges and outcomes of trials, the number of objectors in the legal system at any given time, and a forum for their views, there is little evidence of debate about the theory of non-violence after mid-1970. The paper contained mostly Australian news, although some information about pacifist movements or objectors in other countries still appeared. In summary, the “unusually wide” coverage of world affairs “of interest to pacifists and all peacemakers,” for which Donald Swann, an Anglican pacifist and half of the famous song-writing duo Flanders and Swann, commended the paper during a visit to Melbourne in September 1964, had largely disappeared.

By early 1969, the paper was in financial trouble again, despite having raised the price of each copy from five to ten cents and the annual subscription from one dollar to one dollar and fifty cents in January 1968. Although the
editorial committee aimed to produce 11 issues annually, lack of funds had often resulted in as few as four or six issues per year. January–February 1969, a slim, six-page issue, bore the following statement in bold type, with some sentences entirely in capital letters:

WE MUST HAVE MONEY IN HAND BEFORE WE CAN PRINT.
Subscriptions and Donations have always, since “The Peacemaker” was first published in 1939, managed to keep ahead of rising costs. Send money now for the next issue (March 31) …

Apologies are due to subscribers for the non-appearance of “THE PEACEMAKER” in January and February. Amongst other reasons, it was due to lack of funds.

IF DONATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS COME IN PROMPTLY “The Peacemaker” will appear at least monthly in 1969 …. It’s over to you, readers.30

From 1969 to 1971, although the paper increased from six to eight pages, the number of issues declined to four annually. The last issue famously depicted Michael Matteson, photographed while on the run from police. Three pages contained statements by Matteson and Geoff Mullen on why they were resisting the draft.31

How Effective Was The Peacemaker?

There is virtually no acknowledgement of The Peacemaker’s existence in historical accounts of the period. Jordens mentions the paper as being a vehicle of “religious objectors to conscription,” who were “the first to offer advice to those seeking exemption from the new scheme.”32 Hamel-Green quotes it as a source and acknowledges its role in the anti-Vietnam war movement.33 There is no reference to the paper, and only one (again by Jordens) to the FPC in Pemberton’s substantial edited work, Vietnam Remembered.34 Similarly, the FPC is mentioned only once and The Peacemaker not at all in Peter Edwards’ A Nation at War.35 Perhaps even more surprising is the complete absence from the draft resisters’ and objectors’ reminiscences that Greg Langley recorded in A Decade of Dissent that mention either the paper or the FPC.36 Yet contemporary sources and verbal collections tell a different story.
The evidence indicates that *The Peacemaker* was an effective voice for peace during the Vietnam War era. From the commencement of the National Service Scheme in 1964, it made its opposition clear, and throughout the period, the paper performed a number of practical functions that made it useful to conscientious objectors, draft resisters and non-compliers alike. A distinction is made here because the term “conscientious objector” is normally applied to a pacifist, who objects to the use of warfare as a method of settling disputes between nations, or to any violence. Thus a conscientious objector refuses to train for or to serve in a role that will result in the deaths of fellow human beings. A “draft resister” specifically objected to being conscripted (or drafted) to fight in the Vietnam War, either because of an objection to “conscription” *per se* or to Australia’s involvement in that particular war. Others, such as Michael Matteson, Tony Dalton and Michael Hamel-Green, refused to engage with the process of applying for exemption, because this meant recognising the scheme’s validity. Some “non-compliers,” as these objectors were known, asked the Minister for Labour and National Service, to observe their “right of non-compliance” as Jonathan Hicks, of Heidelberg, Victoria, phrased it in January 1968. In March, Hicks was fined $100 and made liable for call-up regardless of the ballot. Other non-compliers received the same treatment.

Whichever form of resistance the draftees took, among their ranks were Christians, followers of other religions, non-believers, rationalists and anarchists. One “non-complier,” Graham Jensen, wrote in his statement: “I go to prison rejoicing! – rejoicing that I can be free to serve my God; rejoicing that you cannot make me a part of your self-destroying system; rejoicing that I have the privilege of suffering, however insignificantly, for my brothers”. David Mowbray and others called for the Act to be altered to include the option of “alternative, constructive forms of National Service, aimed at removing injustices, poverty and suspicion, by comprehensive programmes for aid in undeveloped countries and the removal of injustices at home.”

Arguably, *The Peacemaker*’s most useful function was to provide a forum for objectors’ views, which mainstream media did not publish. Statements appeared in increasing numbers throughout the war. There was no distinction made between pacifist objectors and non-compliers. The first issue of 1969 published complete statements by Karl Armstrong and Tony Dalton, and their letters to the Minister for Labour and National Service, giving the reasons for their stand. Statements by Matteson and Jensen also appeared in this issue,
along with details of the penalties exacted against all 23 “conscientious non-compliers” who had recently faced court or were awaiting prosecution.40

Under the title “Why Register for National Service?, “ The Peacemaker’s May–June 1969 issue reproduced part of a leaflet that had been distributed in some capitals and regional centres during the recent National Service Registration period, and for which several distributors had been charged with “publishing an incitement to commit an offence against the Commonwealth Act.” Although the charges were dismissed in Melbourne, the Commonwealth Government was appealing at the time of The Peacemaker’s publication.41 The remainder of the issue contained support for the “Don’t Register” Campaign. In publishing this controversial material, The Peacemaker may have been deliberately inciting the government to charge them or the FPC with the same offence. The statements in the leaflet certainly were unambiguous, listing the “alternatives” that young men faced as either compromise (“you can forget your principles, take your chances and accept military conscription”); applying for exemption from combatant duties (but they must be aware that in fulfilling non-combatant roles they would be helping “the troops kill more effectively and free others for combatant duty”); or applying for complete exemption from all forms of military service. But, the leaflet stated, anyone who believed that the whole National Service Act was unjust and felt that he “could not in conscience recognize its validity in any way” could not register, because to register was to give the Act validity.42 This view, “non-compliance,” became prevalent as the war progressed. The Peacemaker supported it, which is particularly interesting as the FPC had not agreed to the paper advocating this stance.43 Both Tony Dalton and Michael Hamel-Green, in phone conversations with the author, emphasised how important it was to them as “non-compliers” to have their views accepted, published and given the same validity as the pacifist objectors, who were prepared to work with the system by registering as conscientious objectors and appearing in court.44 Each stressed that Vivienne Abraham and The Peacemaker were “really, really important” especially in the period from 1967 until the first moratorium in 1970, with the Australian Labor Party deflated by the 1966 election defeat, and objectors realizing they must change their strategy from reliance on the ballot box to civil disobedience. During this period, The Peacemaker “must take credit for bringing the position [of non-compliance] into focus.”45 From then until the final issue, considerable space was devoted to objectors’ and non-compliers’ statements, together with photographs and details of trials and sentences.
Secondly, *The Peacemaker* published accurate information about what the draftee’s legal obligations were, how to apply for exemption and where to find help and support. The issue for November–December 1964 gave front-page coverage to the sections of the *National Service Act 1951–1964* that permitted exemption.\(^46\) It was the first paper to do so. The paper published details of what to do when an objector received a call up notice. Each issue listed the names and addresses of Conscientious Objector [CO] Advisory Committees in each state and the ACT, details of forthcoming events, and reports of activities including rallies and protest marches.

From mid-1965, the paper maintained a Register of Conscientious Objectors (later Non-Compliers), listing every known dissident and the results of his application. Records collected by the time the September–October 1965 issue went to press revealed that 26 out of 54 young men who requested complete exemption had their applications accepted, 19 were directed to non-combatant duties and only nine applications were dismissed.\(^47\) Although the editors stated that the register was incomplete, the evidence indicated that almost half of the cases appearing before the court got complete exemption, which would have heartened intending applicants. For some young men, *The Peacemaker* opened up a whole new world of activism, and, most importantly, showed them that they were not alone and not unique in holding views that, at that stage, were manifestly unpopular around Australia.\(^48\) Many of the letters Vivienne Abraham received from objectors included requests to have their name placed on the National Register of Objectors.\(^49\) The paper, or at least its editor, also served as an unofficial postal service for objectors who were on the run from the police. As an example, in September 1971, Tony Dalton, who signed himself “Yours unconscriptably,” asked Vivienne Abraham to pass a letter on to Mike Matteson.\(^50\)

**What Happened to *The Peacemaker***?

Whether or not it was recalled as being significant decades later, *The Peacemaker* evidently was fulfilling a need for information among and about objectors and resisters during the Vietnam War. Why, then, did it cease publication at a time when young men were still being imprisoned for their beliefs? Perhaps the lack of finance became insurmountable. To test this possibility, I surveyed FPC minutes from the beginning of 1969. The Minutes of the FPC’s Annual General Meeting on 18 October 1969 reported that *The Peacemaker* had been posted to 1,326 subscribers (this figure appears to have included sales outlets),
and that distribution figures were similar to the previous year. The Business Manager’s report for 1970 stated that 603 subscriptions were paid up or paid in advance, 43 were due that issue and 236 were overdue – totaling 882. The January–February 1970 issue was posted to 886 subscribers and 385 outlets, and the November–December issue went to 908 subscribers and 482 outlets, indicating that numbers of subscribers and other purchasers were actually increasing in 1970, although the figures also show that one-third of the subscriptions were unpaid. The Business Manager reported that,

> With each issue there are a number of new subscribers – these include, COs and Non compliers, and a variety of other people, some of whom give us their contact (eg Ex-Servicemen’s Human Rights) and some don’t. Some express delight at finding this paper, which they haven’t seen [before]. One recently saw an old copy and wrote to ask if it was still being printed.

Apart from issues sent to subscribers and sale outlets, extra copies were printed for sale at special occasions such as during the Moratorium campaigns. The FPC Minutes for 18 August 1970 stated that 2,250 copies of the March/April issue had been printed and 2,500 of the May/June/July issue. This latter figure was about twice the number posted to subscribers and outlets and represented a significant financial outlay. Further, under new postal regulations introduced towards the end of 1970, The Peacemaker was reclassified as a “Category A” periodical, which resulted in the postage increasing from five to six cents a copy. Taking into account the number of copies then being posted, postal rates must have risen by $12 or $13 per issue, at a time when the annual subscription was $1.50.

But there were other difficulties besides shortage of cash. By October 1970, when the honorary Business Manager Don Fraser asked to be relieved of his duties, no one was prepared to step into his role, although several volunteers were willing to take on other duties. There was also a lack of distributors. The Minutes of August and October 1970 mentioned the “urgent need” for people to promote the paper in all states. Possibly, a generational shift was occurring. The Abrahams, Don Fraser, Lex Turnbull, Don Fallding, James Somerville and others had been involved in working for peace since World War II. Some had been conscientious objectors. Now, it seemed, there was no one to replace them when they wished to stand down after years of unpaid
service. So, while the relatively steady subscription base suggests that there was not a marked decline in support during 1971, it was difficult to find volunteers willing to undertake the month-to-month commitment of running the paper, distributing and selling it.

The Business Manager’s 1970 report, indicating some change in the subscriber base with “CO’s” and “Non Compliers” signing up, may have been another factor. Changes to the paper’s content, discussed above, may have caused some supporters to cease subscribing. In the final issue, Abraham heralded further change by the following announcement: “[I]f the money is forthcoming in SUBSCRIPTIONS, SALES OR DONATIONS, [The Peacemaker] will appear regularly and with a more radical, a more constructive content in the future.”

There is no sound evidence, other than the fairly static numbers, to suggest that “old subscribers” ceased to take the paper – but this must have happened to some extent, otherwise new subscribers would have caused a rise in numbers beyond what was evident in the annual reports cited above.

There is, however, nothing in the final issue to suggest that the paper did not intend to continue publication. In fact, it had just adopted a new format as a 16-page journal and, for the first time, had introduced a full cover photograph, and coloured print in its masthead and on the back page. The editorial stated that the paper supported the resisters’ demand to repeal the National Service Act, and “their claim that the individual must determine his own actions without coercion.” As editor, Vivienne Abraham carried a heavy burden of responsibility. She was devoted to the cause of objectors and non-compliers to the extent that she sometimes neglected her editorial work, as noted in the FPC Minutes on one occasion. The retirement of her sister, Shirley, from the role of co-editor at the end of 1968 had an impact on both the content of the paper, which increasingly focused on non-compliers, and the number of issues that Vivienne could find the time to publish. Unfortunately, the series of FPC Minutes in Vivienne Abraham’s papers ceased in mid-1971, so any decisions regarding The Peacemaker remain unknown. About this time, the FPC itself was having difficulty finding a Secretary, which may have resulted in the absence of minutes, or possibly even of meetings.

There are some external factors that may have contributed to the paper’s demise although, without solid evidence, it is impossible to come to a definitive conclusion. From 1968, a series of increasingly radical, anti-war groups such as the Draft Resistance Movement [DRM], Students for a Democratic Society and the Draft Resisters Union operated on university campuses around the
country. Tony Dalton sees the foundation of DRM as evidence of a significant shift in politics. Objectors and non-compliers were no longer “just a group of individuals taking a position. They became an organized movement” and this “moved away from the Quaker [pacifist] position to more militant action.” The DRM held a conference on 24 August 1969, which published a “Declaration of Intent” that:

Should the government at any stage in the future attempt to gaol any one of us for our conscientious defiance of the National Service Act, we will initiate nation-wide resistance on a massive and unprecedented scale – in universities, work places, and on the streets.

Many of the 60 “non-compliers” were imprisoned later, and the moratorium movements of 1970 and 1971 saw tens of thousands of protesters take to the streets of the capital cities around Australia, so the threat was not without substance.

Members of these movements either infiltrated or founded radical student newspapers, such as National U, the magazine of the National Union of Students, and individual university publications. Even at conservative campuses, such as The University of Western Australia, student radicals and draft resisters dominated the pages of the Pelican. According to Alexis Vassiley, “The 1971 Pelican editor, Derek Schapper, who was responsible for provocative covers of Pelican (such as one entitled ‘Smash the Draft’), was a resister and student radical who was arrested for non-compliance with the draft.” At Queensland University, radical students produced Impact, an “offset press printed, stapled news magazine,” which they sold on the streets of Brisbane for five cents a copy, in protest against the lack of freedom of speech in Queensland in 1967, and the Brisbane Courier Mail’s refusal to publish anti-war and anti-conscription letters. A second publication Student Guerrilla followed in 1968. According to Alan Knight, Student Guerrilla was aimed specifically at university students. A survey of 22 issues published between March and October 1968 showed that the paper’s content ranged over a number of issues, with 18 per cent of articles on Vietnam and a further 9 per cent addressing issues of war and/or conscription and 40 per cent on the broader issue of civil liberties. The Student Guerrilla and another left wing paper, Brisbane Line, were savagely lampooned by conservative student publications such as Stupid Gorilla and subjected to more serious criticism by the Democratic Club publication.
New Light. Other student newspapers that published anti-war material were Monash University’s Lot’s Wife (begun in 1964 as a feminist response to the student paper Chaos) and Melbourne University’s Farrago (founded 1925, which also went through a period of radicalism in the 1960s).67

Probably, these primitive newspapers, with their offensive, in-your-face style of journalism, including jokes and cartoons that were designed to shock and offend, created by the young men who bore the brunt of the National Service ballot, had far greater appeal among students than the moderate language of The Peacemaker, which reflected the liberal Christian views of the FPC.68 Further, Gilbert and Jordens have suggested that Christians whose commitment to “ecumenism and theological liberalism” enabled them to form alliances with “secular anti-war traditions” may well have alienated a more conservative, albeit anti-war Christian constituency.69 Additionally, The Peacemaker’s dependence upon subscriptions and outlets to reach the public disadvantaged it in an era of free newspapers, which could simply be left around campuses for students to pick up and handed out on street corners.

Political events may also have impacted on The Peacemaker. In the latter months of 1971, the Australian government staged a withdrawal of combat troops from Vietnam, and these were not replaced.70 Although two further “birthday ballots” were conducted, on 24 March and 22 September 1972, respectively,71 it was clear to the Australian public that the commitment to sending troops overseas was at an end.

What Can We Learn From the History of The Peacemaker?

The Peacemaker is probably unique among Australian newspapers. Although, like many of the student newspapers, it ran on volunteer labour and depended upon donations, its policy of not accepting advertising meant that the FPC – or the editors – had complete control over the contents, but made it financially vulnerable. The FPC minutes show that The Peacemaker was regarded as a separate entity. It does not appear to have received FPC funds, even when it was struggling. This resulted in issues appearing sporadically, as shown above. It is uncertain how subscriptions were managed, as they appear to have been a set annual amount; whether there was any accounting for a subscriber receiving four or twelve issues a year is unknown.

Unlike student newspapers, The Peacemaker did not provide a training ground for keen young editors, journalists and artists, who departed the
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campus scene after a few years to be replaced by others. In its 32-year history, the paper was served by a small band of editors and business managers, mostly in mid-life and mostly occupied with many other commitments, including paid work. It depended upon its readership and other press outlets, both national and international, for much of its content. There appears to have been no succession plan, so that when the voluntary officers wished to move on, there were no automatic successors.

Had The Peacemaker survived into the present era, it may have become an online newspaper, like Britain’s Peace News (founded in 1936), the journal of the Peace Pledge Union. But in an era when all newspapers were in print, it always struggled and finally succumbed – just when it should have been celebrating its greatest triumph, the end of conscription and Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War.

At the time when many Australians unquestioningly believed government propaganda about the need to embark on a compulsory national service scheme, and that sending troops to an undeclared war in Vietnam was vital to Australia’s defence, The Peacemaker offered a reasoned, alternative voice. It was one of the first sources of information about the options available to conscientious objectors to military service, advising young men of their legal rights and providing contact details of support groups. As opposition to the war grew and became more radical, the paper reflected this shift, focusing on local issues as the anti-war protests became more aggressive and public opinion turned against the government. To draw an analogy, it evolved from being a “Save Our Sons” type of paper to a reflection of the non-compliers of the Draft Resistance Movement, but it never adopted the tabloid-style reporting of some student newspapers of the era. Its continued adherence to liberal Christian values, when a majority in the mainstream denominations supported the war, may have appealed to some but repelled many others.

For 32 years, through World War II and the ferociously anti-Communist, pro-nuclear Cold war era of the 1950s and ‘60s, with its conflicts in Korea and South East Asia, The Peacemaker consistently provided a forum for alternative opinions. At a time during the late 1960s when it was unpopular to oppose Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War, the paper proclaimed that war was unacceptable as a means of solving conflicts, and offered support to the young men who were standing trial and suffering imprisonment for those beliefs. Today, perhaps more than ever, governments need to be reminded of The Peacemaker’s self-evident truth that “ideas cannot be changed by the
use of force”. As the Australian government involves our defence forces in yet another pointless war that has no strategic value for the nation’s security, where is that voice now?

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**Endnotes**

1 Vivienne Grace Abraham (1920–2003) graduated with an LLB from Melbourne University, but did not complete Articles, so was not admitted to the bar and could not practice as a lawyer. From the 1940s until the 1980s, she worked as a volunteer for many peace organisations, including the Australian Peace Pledge Union (Victoria), the Federal Pacifist Council (Victoria), and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and as editor of *The Peacemaker*. The author knew Abraham and holds a collection of her papers related to conscientious objection. Other papers are lodged at the State Library and NSW and the Melbourne University Archives.


5 *The Peacemaker* [hereafter PM] 2, no. 7, 1940 to PM 4, no. 12, 1942. “*And Japanese*” was added at the beginning of 1942.

6 State Publicity Censor (Melbourne) to Chief Censor, 28 June 1940, National Archives of Australia (ACT) Series CP439/1/1, bundle 1/1/20.

7 *PM* 2, no. 7 (July 1940) and no. 8 (August 1940). For the editor’s statement on the size of the August issue, see no. 8 (August 1940): 2, “*This small number*.”

8 These editors were: G.A. (Tony) Bishop (1946–53); Vivienne Abraham (1953–55); W.J. Latona (1955–57); Dr E.E.V. Collocott (1957–60), and an Editorial Committee convened by A. Hodge (1960–63).


11 PM, 26, nos. 1–7 (February, March, April, May, June, July and August issues, 1964).

12 Editorial, PM 26, no. 6 (July 1964): 4.


16 PM 26, no. 8 (September 1964) 1.


19 PM 26, no. 10 (November–December 1964); PM 27, no. 1 (January–February 1965); PM 27, no. 2 (March 1965); and PM 27, no. 3 (April 1965).


24 PM 27, no. 5 (June 1965): 1.


26 PM 27, nos 8 and 9 (September–October 1965): 1, 3, 4.

27 The extent of Vivienne Abraham’s commitment is evident in the voluminous correspondence and notes of trials found in her papers. Tony Dalton recalled she was “always travelling” on the train between Melbourne and Sydney, phone conversation with the author, 2 December 2014.

28 For example, PM 32, no. 7 (July 1970, contains articles of the US Anti-war movement by Eileen Egan (2) and statements from a New Zealand delegation to a joint Australian/US/
Netherlands team which visited Saigon and interviewed a wide range of Vietnamese people (3–4); PM 32, no. 8 (August–September 1970): 5, full page obituary for Frank Coaldrake, who died suddenly, just days after being appointed Archbishop of Brisbane.

29 PM 26, no. 9 (October 1964): 2.
31 PM 33, nos. 9–12 (September–December 1971). For a summary of Matteson's position, see Bobbie Oliver, “‘What Kind of Democracy is This?’ Conscientious Objectors to the National Service Schemes, 1950–1972” in Lest We Forget? Marginalised Aspects of Australia at War and Peace, ed. Bobbie Oliver and Sue Summers (Bentley: Black Swan Press, 2014), 94.
33 Hamel-Green, “‘The Resisters,” especially endnotes, 205–12.
37 For a further discussion of the variations of this belief, as expressed by resisters during the Vietnam War, see Oliver, “‘What Kind of Democracy is This?’” 92–94.
38 Michael Hamel-Green, telephone conversation with the author, 3 December 2014.
39 Correspondence in files “Jonathan Hicks,” “Graham Jensen” and “David Mowbray” (Mowbray to Minister for Labour and National Service, 15 August 1967), in Vivienne Abraham's correspondence, held by the author.
40 PM 31, nos. 1 & 2 (January–February 1969): 5–6; nos. 2 & 3, 6–7; nos. 5 & 6, 1, 5–6.
41 PM 31, nos. 5 & 6 (May–June 1969): 8.
42 Ibid.
43 Minutes of the Federal Pacifist Council Annual General Meeting, 14 January 1968, 2, Vivienne Abraham Papers, held by the author.
44 Author's telephone conversation with Tony Dalton, 2 December 2014, and Michael Hamel-Green, 3 December 2014.
45 Hamel-Green, telephone conversation, 3 December 2014.
46 PM 26, no. 10 (November–December 1964): 1.
47 PM 27, nos 8 & 9 (September–October 1965): 3.
48 A Morgan Gallup poll held in September 1965 found that 56 per cent of those polled said they were in favour of continuing the war in Vietnam. Cited by Vietnam Veterans of Australia website, http://www.vvaa.org.au/calendar.htm, accessed 26 September 2014. In May 1967, another Gallup poll recorded 62 per cent of respondents in favour of “continuing the fight in Vietnam.” See Edwards, A Nation at War, 158. It was only in December 1968 that fewer than 50 per cent of Australians supported continuing to fight in Vietnam. Morgan Gallup Poll, cited in Murray Goot and Rodney Tiffen, “Public Opinion and the Politics of the Polls,” Table 7.1. “Do You Think We Should Continue to Fight in Vietnam or Bring Our Forces Back to Australia?,” in Australia's Vietnam. Australia

49 Letters to Abraham: Robert (Bob) Hall, 10 May 1969; David Bissett, 4 January 1970; Kevin Anderson, 1 March 1970; Keven Booker, 5 April 1970, all in Vivienne Abraham's Correspondence files, held by the author.


53 FPC Minutes of meeting, 18 August 1970, in Vivienne Abraham Papers, held by the author.

54 FPC Minutes of meeting, 3 October 1970, in Vivienne Abraham Papers, held by the author.

55 Ibid.; also FPC Minutes 18 August 1970, in Vivienne Abraham Papers, held by the author.

56 Oliver, Peacemongers, chapters 5–7.

57 PM 33, nos. 9–12 (September–December 1971): 2.

58 FPC Minutes of meeting, 3 October 1970, in Vivienne Abraham Papers, held by the author.

59 PM 31, nos. 1 & 2 (January–February 1969): 2. “We Lose an Editor.”


61 Dalton, telephone conversation with author, 2 December 2014.

62 Draft Resistance Committee, “Declaration of Intent,” signed by 60 “non-compliers” in Vivienne Abraham Correspondence, held by the author.


66 Ibid., 160.


68 For an example of Michael Leunig’s work, see National U 5, no. 3 (24 March 1969): full page, 7). Leunig also published cartoons in Monash University’s Lot’s Wife.

70 Edwards, *A Nation at War*, 302 ff.


The Australian historiography on the war in Vietnam understands the three Moratorium Campaigns in one of three ways: within a continuous history of peace movement activism in Australia, which privileges trade union and Christian pacifist involvement; within the context of the war itself, which reads it as a response to that war; or as a movement that borrowed uncritically from American activists rather than responding to local political conditions. This chapter aims to assess the Moratorium within a global counterculture, examining the ways Australian activists critically adopted American protest practices but adapted them to suit the specific historical circumstances of Australian anti-war activism. It will also look at the ways American government responses to American protesters – the rhetoric of “Law and Order” – were adopted in public discussions of the Moratorium in an attempt to silence or stifle protest during the second and third Moratorium campaigns. The chapter will show that Australians were attuned to a transnational counterculture, and expressed their opposition to the war and their ideas about protest in terms adopted from that counterculture.
On 17 November 1969, the *Australian* reported the “biggest US Anti-war protest ever”. Around 250,000 Americans had marched on Washington as part of nationwide demonstrations against the war. It was in response to the news of these American protests that Australian activists began to consider a local protest on the same model. John Lloyd, secretary of the Victorian peace organisation the Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament (CICD), recalls asking two other CICD regulars: “couldn’t we actually try and do this in Australia?” After a short discussion, the general consensus was “Yeah, let’s … have a crack.” After a National Consultation in Canberra on 25 November, initial planning meetings were held in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. These meetings inaugurated state Vietnam Moratorium Committees, which collectively planned co-ordinated marches across state capitals and regional centres on 8 May 1970.

Situating the Moratorium Campaigns in Australian political history obscures the prevalent adoption by its contemporaries of practises and vocabularies encountered through engagement with an international counterculture. Organisers and participants drew on examples and phrases from outside Australian political life to explain the nation-wide street demonstrations in May and September 1970. So too did newspaper reporters, police officers and parliamentarians who offered public commentary on the Campaign. The Moratorium could not be understood by its contemporaries without drawing on a transnational vocabulary of protest. In this way, the Moratorium Campaign operated as part of a transnational discursive network, bringing activists, commentators, and public officials together in a discussion of appropriate forms of democratic political engagement, nourished by the globalised political world of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The literature dealing with the Moratorium Campaign in isolation is very slim. Most frequently it is discussed in the context of a broader history of protest against the Vietnam War. Participants dominate the published historiography of anti-war protest. As a result, that literature rehearsed debates contemporary with the campaign itself: either that the Moratorium was overshadowed by a split between the radical student members of the New Left and the “moderate” members of the established peace movement; or that Australian activists uncritically borrowed or copied ideas from their overseas counterparts, which raised questions about their authenticity. The former argument interprets the Moratorium as polarised between the violent New Left and those older activists who were invested in a tradition of peaceful, respectable protest.
inherited from a peace movement that had been in continuous operation since the late 1940s. Curthoys, who has published more widely on the anti-war movement than any other participant-historian, acknowledged the need to move beyond the latter debate when she noted that similarities between Australian and American political worlds produced similar activist responses, and that “…when American ideas and arguments and organisational forms were borrowed, they were in the process often transformed into something different.” In this, she anticipated the work of Scalmer, who has argued that across the mid to late twentieth century, Australian activists “translated” American activist practises, critically identifying useful protest practises through transnational networks of activist correspondence and a globalising media, and incorporating them into their own protest “repertoire”.

Suri has interpreted the globalising activist and cultural networks of the late 1960s and early 1970s as an “international counterculture”, arguing that it was constituted by a global sense of “cultural rebellion [which] became common in urbanised industrial societies.” Suri includes acts of rebellion behind the Iron Curtain and in China in this counterculture, though he does not include the various Third World liberation movements, nor the Civil Rights movement in the United States. Suri’s international counterculture is a discursive network that crosses national boundaries, and he characterises the young as the principal — though not sole — vectors of the styles, ideas and actions that circulated through it. The “fall” of this counterculture was produced in part by a hardening of state responses to protest, and a worldwide adoption of “law and order” campaigns. Other academics looking at the global 1960s have attempted to explain the apparent American cultural dominance in Europe in particular. Kuisel and Nehring, for example, argue that what has been interpreted as a process of Americanisation ought instead to be understood as “globalisation”, “Westernisation”, or the coming of consumer society. Bell and Bell have mounted a similar argument regarding Australia. In this they echo Curthoys’ argument about social or cultural similitude above. While transnational histories of the 1960s are prevalent, and there is a burgeoning effort to situate Australian social movements in a transnational context, there has yet been no transnational reading of the Moratorium Campaign.

This chapter will examine three different examples of Australians speaking about street protest between 1968 and 1970, using vocabularies that were circulating in the international counterculture. First it will engage with the small literature on the New Left, which already explains the New Left
as a transnational phenomenon, in relation to student involvement in the Moratorium Campaign. Then it will situate the public pronouncements of Jim Cairns, federal Labor MP, Leader of the Opposition and chairman of the Vietnam Moratorium Campaign (VMC), alongside similar ideas circulating through the American New Left and civil rights movement. Finally it will examine the public discussion of “law and order” through newspaper reports on the first and second Moratorium Campaigns. Newspapers from August and September 1970 provide evidence of the usage of this transnational vocabulary to explain the Moratorium, but also offer evidence of its limits. By the time of the second Moratorium in September 1970, Australians no longer needed the vocabulary of the international counterculture to explain the Moratorium; they had successfully incorporated it into Australian political discourse.

**The Violent New Left**

After the consultation meeting in Canberra in November 1969, planning meetings were held in each state. In Melbourne the initial meeting took place at a restaurant in Carlton near the University of Melbourne. Lloyd reported being overwhelmed by the response:

> …there were all sorts of organisations coming in saying, ‘We want to belong to it,’ and one was the Monash Strawberry Club, and we thought this was bogus. Apparently there was such a thing as the Monash Strawberry Club, I don’t know, to this day I’m not sure how genuine it was. But people wanted to get in and get votes, so that they could shape the direction of the Moratorium.14

Lloyd’s suspicion was that the “Monash Strawberry Club” was a front for the New Left and an attempt by radical students to stack the votes at Moratorium planning meetings. Lloyd was not the only member of the Campaign to voice these concerns in hindsight. Val Noone, a Catholic priest with a long-standing relationship with the peace movement was left “unbelievably saddened” by the students’ behaviour at the raucous public planning meetings at Richmond Town Hall. He felt the Victorian student New Left, especially the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Monash Labor Club, created a “debating atmosphere” designed to prevent “Old Left” figureheads from the old peace movement like Jim Cairns from “hav[ing] power, behind the scenes
This sort of polemic division characterises recollections of the planning meetings in most states, and accounts for the prevalence of the narrative of a radical/moderate split in the VMC.

Tensions between the older members of the existing peace movement and the younger members of the New Left were not as deep-seated or irreconcilable as Saunders suggested. Noone did not fit any such simple dichotomy. While he was appalled at the students’ behavior in meetings, like them, he spoke of accepting the “way-out” ideas “typical of the students.” Marks has suggested that, in his efforts to produce a taxonomy of the Australian New Left, its members are so diverse as to defy categorisation, and that they were marked apart from other New Lefts by a widespread Marxist revival. Thus not all members of the New Left in the Moratorium were young. Brian Medlin was a philosophy lecturer at Flinders University, one of the most outspoken revolutionaries in the South Australian VMC, and part of the “Marxist revival”. Medlin made the front page of the *Australian* when he was put under citizens’ arrest by a shopkeeper while leading a protest. Later, he had an altercation with an Air Force officer after placing a Moratorium pamphlet under his car’s windscreen wiper. In 1971 he complained of the “notorious weakness of the unaided liberal conscience” – that is, that “moderates” were a significant obstacle for revolutionary participants in the anti-war movement. Neither were the young all part of the New Left. Ken McLeod was secretary of the NSW Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament (AICD). He was a student, and only joined AICD in the late stages of the Vietnam War. In 1971, he criticised the New Left Marxists for clinging to “magical totems whose function is to act as mystical resolutions of real contradictions” and engaging in “destructive invective”, “sloganising” and “radical cheer leading’ that amounts only to self-verification and posturing”. Though the debate tended towards the polemic, the Moratorium Campaign was a discursive network through which activist practises and vocabularies circulated, and aligned in more possible combinations than just Saunders’ “radicals” and “moderates”.

Radical activists who could only describe in ephemeral terms the impact of global events in 1968 were quite specific about the local political events that impelled their radicalisation. Marks argues that a “triumvirate” of local factors – the war in Vietnam, Conscription, and the defeat of the ALP in the 1966 election – radicalised the Australian New Left. The defeat of Labor at the Federal Election of 1966 in particular features prominently in reminiscences of the period as a radicalising moment. York, another participant-historian,
argues that Labor’s defeat “fuelled the development of a militant, extra-parliamentary trend within the student movement in Melbourne.” Another Melbourne participant, Mick Armstrong, argues that “Labor’s shattering defeat in 1966 … shocked activists and proved a turning point for the Anti-war campaign.” Writing in 1968, Humphrey McQueen felt that “[i]n 1966 the young left looked forward to a Labor victory. It worked incredibly hard … The defeat that followed either shocked them into apathy or slowly gave rise to undirected militancy.” Dissonance between their deep engagement with local politics and their ephemeral sense of the “spirit” of the international counterculture produced an intellectual and activist “cultural cringe” in some New Left activists. Gordon and Osmond decried in 1970 “…the failure to develop any coherent and specifically Australian understanding of society and social change”. They noted the Australian New Left’s incapacity to break away from the American model. In their “lack of any intellectual tradition that has not been imported from Europe or the USA … the radicals of the sixties are yet another reproduction of the historical nature of the Australian intelligentsia, rather than a real point of departure.” Contemporary activists found Australian events “dull” by comparison to those events overseas.

Thus, Australian New Left activists recognised their own implication in a transnational discursive network. According to Horne, the Australian New Left adopted a “language of revolution” learnt from observing events in Paris in May 1968. 1968 as a year of global cultural rebellion looms large in Australian activists’ recollections. That year has been described by activists as “a vintage year”, an “annus mirabilis” and “[t]he year that epitomises ‘60s radicalisation” because “so much happened, all around the world.” Australian activists were nourished by news on the Tet offensive, the Prague Spring, the May student movement in Paris, and the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Rabelais, the newspaper of the Latrobe University Student Representative Council, published an image in 1970 of a French participant in the Paris riots hurling a live police tear gas canister back at the gendarmerie. Some New Left radicals even adorned their bedroom walls with symbolic images of violence. According to Karl Armstrong, in a revealing mixture of sexual objectification and the fetishisation of revolutionary violence, “[t]he [poster] with a Viet Cong woman in black pyjamas and a cone hat holding an AK-47 was considered to be the ultimate to have on your bedroom wall.” Examples from elsewhere in the international counterculture invested political violence with revolutionary significance.
Some radical Australian students represented violent protest as the first steps towards a revolution in Australia. Karl Armstrong recalled that the radical Monash Labor Club, of which he was a member, “believed it was right to use revolutionary violence; later, for a brief period, people were joining rifle clubs to learn to shoot targets. There was … a Marxist/Leninist Rifle Club.”34 Michael Hyde was another member of the Monash Labor Club who recalled that “[w]e stood four square against parliamentary politics. We stood for revolutionary violence, and we worked for a revolution in Australia.”35 Violent protests opposed the institutionalised violence of the state, and simultaneously supported revolutionary goals.36 Between mid-1968 and the first Moratorium, violence became a noted feature of Australian protest. At the fourth of July protest outside the US Consulate in Melbourne, one commonwealth policeman recalled “sharpened sticks” that the protesters jabbed the police horses with, and “three-inch nails welded together and twisted” and thrown under horses’ hooves. Petrol bombs were lined up outside the consulate, and rocks thrown through the windows.37 By September 1970, the Courier-Mail could identify a “world pattern of university disruption”.38 The importance of the mostly Marxist New Left in the Moratorium hinges on this attachment to violence as a legitimate political act. The Statement of Aims produced by the National Consultation asked that “all Moratorium activities in pursuance of these objectives be of a non-violent nature”.39 In Victoria that clause was removed, cementing the association between protest and violence. The press took note; the day after it passed, the Melbourne Sun ran the headline: “Violence ‘in’ for protest on Viet”.40

As the Moratorium approached, the press looked to the international counterculture to interpret the possibilities for violence. The news of the Kent State shootings in the United States broke on the day before the first Moratorium. On that day, the Sydney Morning Herald’s front page juxtaposed the headline “Dead Students Honoured” with one that read “Student Arson, Riots and Shooting Revenge”, implying that the students were the source, not the subjects, of violence.41 The next day in Parliament, a Labor backbencher asked the government for an assurance that the police would not use firearms against protesters. McMahon, then Minister for External Affairs, replied that the lesson of Kent State “ought to be taken to heart” by Moratorium protesters, and “ought to be heeded” by members of the Opposition who planned to march.42 By early 1970, observers understood transnational solidarity between students as more potent than the bond between state and citizen that secured
domestic peace. Violence in the United States had the capacity to predict violence in Australia.

Before the first Moratorium, opponents of the march expressed that transnational solidarity in terms of the Cold War. In a discussion in federal parliament two days prior to the march, one Liberal backbencher identified the march as part of a communist “world-wide propaganda campaign to weaken the will of the Allied countries on the home front”. One Liberal minister called the march a “fifth column” while a Liberal senator called it an “assault on democracy” likely to “give moral support to the North Vietnamese.” The Attorney-General acknowledged his concern over the “numerous members of the Communist Party” in the Moratorium Campaign. Just as Lloyd had been suspicious of the “Monash Strawberry Club” at the initial planning meeting in Carlton, parliamentarians and the press worried that the Moratorium was controlled by an international conspiracy of radicals.

Jim Cairns and Participatory Democracy

To resist this representation of the Campaign as a “fifth column”, Moratorium organisers argued that street protest was a fundamental democratic right. Jim Cairns, as chairman of the Victorian Vietnam Moratorium Campaign, was instrumental in this process. As a sitting MP in Federal Parliament and deputy leader of the Opposition, and the person from the campaign most often quoted in the press, Cairns became a “mouthpiece” for the Moratorium. Even prior to the news of the American Moratorium, Jim Cairns worked to re-shape public perceptions of street demonstrations. In a series of public pronouncements made between April 1969 and May 1970 he developed a model of street protest as participatory democracy, and in doing so he drew on ideas from the international counterculture.

Strangio, Cairns’ most recent biographer, is unequivocal about Cairns’ commitment to parliamentary socialism, yet he noted that in late 1969 Cairns began to advocate conscientious law-breaking. In April 1969 he was arrested for handing out pamphlets that incited potential conscripts not to register for National Service. In August, he published another paper in which he argued in favour of the conscientious breaking of amoral laws. In that same article, he outlined a model of participatory democracy in which activists should seek to “turn back” the powers of parliament and open certain areas, among them schools and workplaces, to “government by the people”.

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According to Strangio, by the time of the Moratorium march in May 1970, “[a] clear connection existed in Cairns’ mind between the right to protest and the wider ideal of a vibrant, participatory democracy”. In Cairns’ view, protest was a form of democratic engagement, and to restrict it was to undo democracy itself.46

Two weeks before the Moratorium, Cairns made a speech at Melbourne University on similar themes. In it, he claimed that although the marches would be “reasonable, peaceful, inoffensive and dignified”, there were to be no guarantees that they would be lawful, and he reaffirmed his previous statements on the citizen’s right to break an objectionable law. He outlined what this meant for the relationship of street protest to parliament: “The argument that things should be left to Parliament … is the argument of those who want to stultify and quieten the essentials of democratic action.”47 This speech precipitated a parliamentary debate on the role of protest in a democratic state, during which Attorney-General Hughes argued that “[i]n a parliamentary democracy any attempt to change the law should be made within the framework of the law. Any other path to change is potentially anarchical”, while Billy Snedden, Minister for Labour and National Service, concurred that “[t]he place to make political points is in the forums established under the Constitution for that purpose.”48 When Cairns took the floor in response, he argued that a “whole generation” was beginning to believe that:

Parliament is not democracy. It is one manifestation of democracy and it can become a most important manifestation of democracy if people are prepared to come out of their apathy and do something about it … Democracy is government by the people, and government by the people demands action by the people. It demands effective ways of showing what the interests and needs of the people really are. It demands action in public places around the land.49

In this speech, Cairns constructed democratic citizenship as action performed in public view and the proposed occupation of public space as a performative democratic act by citizens. Strangio argues that he was speaking to the radical students rather than the public in his consistent avowal of non-violence.50 In formulating his model of the Moratorium as participatory democracy, Cairns drew on established ideas circulating through the activist networks of the international counterculture, building on an intellectual foundation provided
by Martin Luther King Jr and the American organisation Students for a Democratic Society. Though developed through a long engagement with the traditions of the Labor Party and the Australian Parliament, Cairns’ ideas need to be contextualised within the international counterculture.

Cairns’ use of a phrase from the American Declaration of Independence – “government by the people” – hints at the ways in which American conceptions of democracy and citizenship inflect his thinking. Martin Luther King Jr’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” and the Berkeley SDS’s “Port Huron Statement” are two examples among other foundational texts of non-violence and the New Left that nourished Cairns’ ideas about law-breaking and democratic citizenship. Cairns was not alone in drawing on ideas from a transnational discursive network that encompassed the United States. Historians have identified several Australian protest practises drawn from American examples in the 1960s. Neither were King or SDS the origin of these ideas; different traditions of non-violent law breaking were circulating through the international counterculture by the 1960s. Contemporaries could also make sense of Cairns’ ideas without looking outside the Western intellectual tradition; one discussion of the “right” to protest in the Sydney Morning Herald explained it with reference to Thomas Aquinas. However, the similarities between Cairns’ articulation of conscientious law breaking and those of King and SDS demonstrate that engagement with the international counterculture was necessary to make sense of the Moratorium.

When Cairns first framed law breaking as a moral right he argued that “the factor of supreme conscience is the individual, his soul or conscience, and not the State or some other authority” and as such, “the individual has to be free to show what is his soul or conscience.” By subordinating the legitimacy of the law to individual conscience, Cairns echoed King’s argument in “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”:

I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

King asserted that the citizen had a conscientious obligation to break an immoral law. Although Cairns characterises it as a right, individual conscience is still the key determinant of the morality of the law.
Both King and Cairns suggested that breaking morally objectionable laws was the only way to disrupt a restrictive social structure. Cairns insisted that only “those who want to stultify and quieten the essentials of democratic action” wished to limit democracy to Parliament, and Strangio argues that he “emphasised that the malaise that afflicted contemporary Australian life originated in ‘the structure of society’ which prevented individuals from ‘making National decisions’”.\(^56\) King asserted in his “Letter” that “law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress”\(^57\). The stratifications of segregation in the Jim Crow South were not comparable to the “thousands of autocratic units” that Cairns argued governed Australian political life. Cairns understood the structural restrictions on Australian democracy as productive of apathy and malaise rather than oppression. While it is clear that Cairns’ ideas about the morality of conscientious law-breaking were energised by a similar ethics to King’s articulation of the practise six years earlier, Cairns’ speeches were also informed by the articulation of citizenship and democracy found in the foundational text of the American New Left, the “Port Huron Statement” of 1962.

Conceptual similarities between Cairns’ ideas and the “Port Huron Statement” are striking. Cairns’ call for democratic control of schools, shops and factories was a democratic socialist spin on SDS’s similar call in 1962 “… that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life” and “that decision-making of basic social consequence be carried on by public groupings”. Cairns referred to apathy or malaise inflecting Australian political life and that between elections “the citizen withdraws even further from participation in his own government.”\(^58\) The “Port Huron Statement” highlighted

… the felt powerlessness of ordinary people, the resignation before the enormity of events. But subjective apathy is encouraged by the objective American situation – the actual structural separation of people from power, from relevant knowledge, from pinnacles of decision-making.\(^59\)

Cairns’ “thousands of autocratic units … in which there is very often little or no internal self-government at all” echo SDS’s “structural separation of people from power”.\(^60\) Cairns’ statement that protest was being vilified by
“those who want to stultify and quieten the essentials of democratic action” echoes SDS’s contention that “Institutions and practices which stifle dissent should be abolished, and the promotion of peaceful dissent should be actively promoted.” Cairns’ ideas about participatory democracy can be read as a synthesis of his own democratic socialism, the ideology of non-violent civil rights and the early American New Left.

To insist that Cairns’ ideas about protest were a product only of the civil rights movement and the American New Left would be a mistake. Though clearly nourished by influential ideas circulating in the international counterculture, Cairns’ model of participatory democracy was expressed in terms concomitant with those of Labor Party democratic socialism. Where SDS nominated the establishment of a “truly ‘public sector’” as necessary to a rehabilitation of American democracy, Cairns did not need to. In the United States, apart from short caesurae during the Progressive era and the New Deal, federal government intervention into the economy and the social lives of its citizens has been historically regarded with suspicion. In Australia, under the “Australian Settlement”, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, acceptance of state paternalism was central to Australian political life. Though Cairns’ democratic socialism fits perfectly within the traditions of the Labor Party and Australian democracy, the terms he used to explain the Moratorium between April 1969 and May 1970 were prevalent in transnational discussions of citizenship rights, ethical democratic reform, and the relationship of conscience to law.

Cairns’ rhetoric was adopted in parliament and by the press. Even while arguing that the march was a “deliberate promotion of social dislocation for political ends” in the context of a discussion about the Moratorium’s communist character, Senator Greenwood addressed the “right to protest”: “The exercise of what is popularly called the right to protest or dissent is one of the valued rights which our society should be concerned to preserve.” On the morning of the Moratorium March, the Australian came out in support of the march, arguing that it was “not an undemocratic reaction” to the government and that the street was an appropriate place for democratic dissent. Cairns had been successful in translating the vocabulary of street protest as participatory democracy into terms recognisable to Australians.

Though participants in the first Moratorium did not necessarily reach for the vocabulary of democratic engagement as the organisers did, many of them understood the May march as a moment in which they joined the international counterculture. They expressed themselves in terms of the “cultural cringe”,

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reading the Moratorium as a reconfiguration of Australians' relationship to the world. One marcher explained that after the Moratorium, “Melbourne was no longer a city which waved its most talented and adventurous minds goodbye as they flew off overseas to where the action was. Melbourne had come alive because the action was happening here, too”. Another did some maths, and figured that: “…[w]e mobilised more people per head of population than any other city in the world including London, Paris, or any in America. … It came as a shock. We thought we were living on the arsehole of the world where nothing ever happened”. Another demonstrated the transnational consciousness of the Moratorium when he described it as “…an international event, and it felt like Australia had finally connected with the world in a way it rarely ever does. We had an international voice walking up that street towards the Sydney Town Hall”. The absence of violence secured the national democratic character of Australians for some observers. The morning after the protests the front page of the Age argued that:

If that huge crowd had marched in America there would have been tear gas and National Guardsmen with masks and bayonets. If that crowd had marched in a banana republic there would have been tanks and anti-aircraft guns and yet another President. But Melbourne made you proud to be an Australian yesterday. Because it showed that in this country we can still make democracy work by turning out in the streets to exercise the right of dissent.

The first Moratorium was first interpreted by Australians in a vocabulary of dissent developed and nourished by engagement with an international counterculture, but by May Australians had come to understand the protests as part of Australian political life. As organisers began to prepare for the second march, it was the turn of the parliamentarians who opposed the Campaign to reach for a vocabulary derived from observing the international counterculture.

“Law and Order”

Buoyed by the success of the first march and the wave of positive press commentary that accompanied it, the Moratorium organisers decided to press their claim to democratic legitimacy. In late May, another national meeting advocated further civil disobedience, recommending

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… to all supporters that they realise that the achievement of the VMC depend upon the decisions by the government, and that they should therefore work to remove the present government of Australia and replace it by one that consistent with the aims of the VMC.  

This motion was a natural synthesis of protest as participatory democracy with the New Left’s revolutionary desires. However, the press had reported widely on the possibility of violence at the first march, catalysed by Cairns’ remarks on law breaking. Parliamentarians consistently spoke in terms of “the naked physical power of the mob” or of “noise, nuisance and violence,” while the major metropolitan dailies editorialised about the sit-down protest as a “flashpoint for violence.” For reporters, the similarities between American and Australian protesters gave events from the United States predictive power. The Sydney Morning Herald’s editorial on the morning of the first Moratorium stated that the risk of violence:

... exists in the first place because the campaign is so assiduous an imitation of its US model. Demonstrations in America have increasingly flouted ‘law and order’ and have increasingly resulted in violence. Sometimes, following provocation, they have been disrupted by violence from panicky authorities, as in Chicago in 1968.

In this context, the VMC’s stated aim of removing the government looked like an attempted insurrection. The Sydney Morning Herald’s use of the phrase “Law and Order” presaged another engagement with the international counterculture, but one that was not mediated by the New Left or other activists. Between May and September 1970, members of state and federal governments began to speak in terms similar to those being used by leaders facing popular dissent elsewhere in the world. As Suri argues, “figures pledged to ‘law and order’ shaped the early 1970s.” Thus in NSW and Victoria, state governments announced a series of new laws governing protest in early July. In NSW, the bill was to be called the “Summary Offences Act”, and would merge the Vagrancy Act and the Police Offences Act. It would increase penalties for assaulting a police officer and other disruptive offenses likely at protests, allowing for a maximum penalty of two years in gaol or a $100 fine. Premier Askin explained the legislation as targeting “professional agitators and rabid communists, who attach themselves
to what start off as lawful demonstrations, and do their best to turn them into riotous incidents”, claiming that the new law would not impact lawful protest. Following a string of well-publicised and violent protests in Victoria throughout July, the Victorian state government planned to institute penalties for using violence or threats of violence to obstruct police and other state officials, and would also carry a penalty of up to two years’ imprisonment.

The students who were ostensibly the target of the bills reacted with confrontational protests, which were duly reported by the press. Five days after the announcement of the NSW Bill, sixteen students occupied the Premier’s Department, in protest against the new legislation. On 30 July, students at Sydney University “jostled and abused” the Federal Attorney-General, Tom Hughes, letting down the tires of his car, writing slogans on it and sitting in front of it to prevent it moving off, and forcing Hughes to shelter in St Paul’s college while “every available police car in the city” was called to the campus. In mid-August, Hughes again became the focus of student protest when 30 students went to his Sydney home to present him with a list of names of draft resisters. The story became a public spectacle when Hughes emerged from the house with a cricket bat to chase the students off. Continuing the cycle of student confrontation and government crackdown, in late August the Federal Government followed NSW and Victoria’s lead with a proposed “Public Order” Bill that would stiffen penalties for trespassing on Commonwealth property and attacking federal MPs and officers. This bill was discussed in relation to a “sit-in” that took place at the Melbourne Office of the Department of Labour and National Service in which files were destroyed and an official injured by the occupiers.

Contemporaries interpreted the adoption of this rhetoric as uncritical mimicry of American political discourse. A book review in the Age on 15 August began by calling prevalent “Law and Order” rhetoric “Agnewitis” after one of its most vocal American proponents, Vice-President Spiro Agnew. At an address to a Presbyterian women’s group in early September, the Governor-General, Sir Paul Hasluck, used more of Agnew’s rhetoric when he asked “Who gave the permissive society permission?” The Australian observed the transnational adoption of this vocabulary:

[T]he government could make political capital out of a ‘law and order’ campaign, and an appeal to the ‘silent majority’ just as the Republican Party under Mr. Nixon had before the last US Presidential election.
The next day the paper’s editorial argued that the “law and order” campaign “seems to have been borrowed straight from the American context without regard to the diverse and often tragic consequences it has had there”, referring to the shootings at Kent State University that had made the news just before the first Moratorium march.\textsuperscript{83}

Resistance to the bills was widespread, and concentrated on the bills’ potential to impede civil liberties. The NSW Council of Civil Liberties and a number of Unions argued that the \textit{Summary Offenses Act} was “repressive”, “undemocratic” and an “assault on civil freedom”.\textsuperscript{84} The \textit{Age} warned that too-strict laws were at least as capable of destabilising democracy as violent protests, and that current police powers were sufficient to deal with protesters: “The maintaining of ‘law and order’ without undue interference to individual liberty is a democracy’s great juggling act: there have been signs of fumbling in Victoria over the past few days.”\textsuperscript{85} The \textit{Herald} concluded, that the “law and order” debate was prone to “exaggeration … or incipient hysteria” and that “governments must deal very firmly with violence and intimidation, but must be scrupulously careful how they do it.”\textsuperscript{86} The leader of the Opposition, Gough Whitlam, said that “law and order” was “an inflammatory issue to take the minds of the Australian people from the real issues facing the nation.”\textsuperscript{87} Despite its prevalence in the pages of newspapers by July 1970, opponents of these bills did not draw on Cairns’ language of the “right” to protest, opting instead to speak in terms of other rights. Opponents of the bills represented the new laws as distractions or threats to “individual liberty” and “civil freedom”.

As the second Moratorium approached, the democratic “right to protest” no longer justified the organisers’ actions. In NSW, Moratorium organisers argued “that citizens should only have to consult the authorities, rather than gain their permission to use the streets for political demonstrations”, and passed a motion in mid-August “[t]hat the Moratorium Committee communicate in no way with the commissioner of police in connection with the culminating activities in the city on Friday, 18th September.”\textsuperscript{88} By August 1970, the Moratorium organisers had reason to think that the public was on their side; that month for the first time Gallup polls had suggested that a majority of Australians were against the war.\textsuperscript{89} During the second Moratorium campaign, organisers conflated the Moratorium with public opinion. In his pictorial account of the Moratorium, \textit{Silence Kills}, published in May, Cairns argued that protest was just one among many legitimate uses of public space, citing ANZAC Day and the Queen’s visit as other examples of such use.\textsuperscript{90}
Identifying the protest campaign as synonymous with the public made sense to organisers after the huge turnouts in the first march.

Police commissioners and state and council officials did not accept this premise. In NSW, the Moratorium Campaign and Police Commissioner Allan refused to engage with one another and a tense conversation ensued in the pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald* between public officials and Moratorium organisers. After a week of intractable negotiations with the Minister for Agriculture, Mayor of Sydney and Police Commissioner Allan, the organisers argued in the Herald that “the committee was not prepared to ask permission to exercise a democratic right”. Allan replied through the paper that the organisers were attempting to place themselves “above the law”. The organisers delayed applying for a permit until two days before the march, and Allan approved it only two hours before the march was scheduled to begin. In this atmosphere of tension, Moratorium organisers interpreted police intransigence based on the American example, noting “an unfortunate parallel, if on a smaller scale, with the time of the Chicago Democratic Convention in 1968.” In Victoria, the Town Clerk of the Melbourne City Council wrote to the Vietnam Moratorium Committee, advising them that without a permit, any procession at the Princes Gate Plaza would be in breach of a council by-law. In a more conciliatory tone than the NSW Committee had adopted, Cairns wrote back to the town clerk, apologising for the lack of a permit and requesting the one-month notification period be waived. In Queensland the Police Minister refused permission for a sit-down and for the use of Queen Street by marchers. In South Australia, Premier Don Dunstan, sympathetic to the Moratorium, asked the police chief to divert traffic away from the sit-down in Adelaide. The police commissioner rejected the suggestion.

On the eve of the second Moratorium, the newspapers were uniformly critical of the march. The *Sydney Morning Herald* argued that the Moratorium “should fail” because “[i]t has fallen under the indirect control of extremists whose political motives are to say the least, questionable.” The *Age* argued that the May Moratorium had:

hardened community opinion against the political basis of the dissenters. It is certainly true that political issues are being forgotten in the growing controversy over ‘law and order’. Governments now feel sufficiently alarmed, and sufficiently confident of public support, to instigate new laws with undertones of repression.
The *Australian* argued that the Moratorium was headed for violence, and lamented that “[i]t seems unlikely that we will get any real contribution from next Friday’s confrontations” despite the “desperate need for intelligent, honest debate over Vietnam”. The “right to protest” was absent from these discussions, but so too was the accusation of communist conspiracy. The “extremists” identified by the papers’ editorials were not identified as part of an international network hoping to bring down western governments.

By the time of the second Moratorium in September 1970, the “law and order” debate had resolved in favour of the state, and the Moratorium Campaign’s claim to exercise the “right to protest” no longer secured protest’s legitimacy as a democratic process.

By the day of the second Moratorium, Australians had experimented with the vocabulary of the international counterculture in order to understand the nation-wide protests against involvement in the Vietnam War. In attempting to explain the role of increasingly violent protests in a democracy, Moratorium organisers and participants emphasised different kinds of cultural rebellion. The New Left staged violent protests, explaining their violence as the first steps towards an Australian revolution on the model of Paris or Prague. Jim Cairns, as a figurehead for the Campaign, attempted to articulate the Moratorium as a model for participatory democracy. Observing and reporting on the burgeoning Campaign, the press and parliamentarians drew comparisons between Australian activists and their overseas counterparts, arguing that the Moratorium was the local expression of a global rebellion. After the first Moratorium, various state and federal governments attempted to curtail further protests of that size. Rejecting the idea of the “right to protest” outright, state and federal parliaments initiated “law and order” campaigns in August and September 1970, also expressing themselves in the vocabulary of the international counterculture.

The press equivocated between accepting the “right to protest”, as the *Australian* did, and predicting violence based on the American example, as the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age* did. Both supporters and opponents of the Moratorium situated it in a transnational context; either through adopting Cairns’ ideas, which were nourished by the international counterculture through which they circulated, or by assuming transnational solidarity, or some form of conspiracy, between activists across the globe. Attuned to the international counterculture, journalists quickly levelled the same criticism of “assiduous imitation” at the “Law and Order” campaigns of August and
September 1970 as they had at the Moratorium in May. In the process of repudiating the “Law and Order” rhetoric as a distraction from important local political events, the press also rejected the “right to protest”. The press continued to mount the argument that “extremists” had taken control of the Moratorium, but they did not place those extremists in a global conspiracy. For six months, Australians had used the vocabulary circulating through the international counterculture to explain their actions, and could not make sense of the Moratorium without it. By September 1970, they no longer needed that vocabulary, and thus rejected it.

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Endnotes
1 The author would like to thank Lloyd Cox and Christina Twomey for exceptionally helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter, and the two anonymous referees for their valuable comments.
3 John Lloyd (Secretary of CICD), interview with author, Melbourne, 24 August 2007. The other two members of CICD that Lloyd mentioned were Norman Rothfield and Bevan Ramsden.


For a more theoretical account of such circulation see Nancy Fraser’s discussion of subaltern counterpublics in “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” Social Text 25 (1990): 67–8.

Lloyd, interview with author.

Val Noone (member of Peace Quest Forum, speaker at Moratorium rallies), interview with author, Melbourne, 5 September 2007.


“Shopkeeper Arrests Professor at War Protest,” Australian, 4 April 1970, 1.


Marks, “Towards an Intellectual History,” 95.

York, “Police, Students & Dissent,” 59.
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25 Armstrong, interview with Langley, Decade of Dissent, 59.
26 York, “Police, Students & Dissent,” 59.
28 Ibid.
29 Marks, “Towards an Intellectual History,” 95.
32 Barry York, Student Revolt: Latrobe University 1967 to 1973 (Campbell, ACT: Nicholas Press, 1989), 84.
33 Karl Armstrong, interview with Langley, Decade of Dissent, 116.
34 Armstrong, interview with Langley, Decade of Dissent, 116.
35 Michael Hyde, interview with Langley, Decade of Dissent, 89.
36 York, “Police, Students & Dissent,” 60; Horne, Time of Hope, 43.
40 Ibid id, 33–34.
41 “Student Arson, Riots as Shooting Revenge,” and “Dead Students Honoured,” Sydney Morning Herald, 7 May 1970, 1; O’Hara, “Press Coverage of the First Vietnam Moratorium”.
47 Strangio, Keeper of the Faith, 202.
50 Strangio, Keeper of the Faith, 191–2.


57 King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”.


60 Strangio, *Keeper of the Faith*, 190; SDS, “Port Huron Statement”.

61 SDS, “The Port Huron Statement”.


67 Bruce Petty (cartoonist and demonstration participant), interview with Langley, *Decade of Dissent*, 145.


70 O’Hara, “Press Coverage of the First Vietnam Moratorium”.


73 Suri, “Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture,” 62.

74 “New Law for ‘Professional Agitators,”’ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 July 1970, 1


Minutes of Sponsors’ Meeting (17 August 1970), in folder “Sponsors’ Committee,” Box 38 (74), AICD papers, State Library of New South Wales, ML MSS5522.

John Murphy, *Harvest of Fear*, 279.


Chapter 15

Protest or Propaganda? Psychology and Australian Memory of the Great War

Carolyn Holbrook

The psychological turn in Great War remembrance over the past three decades has been noted both internationally and in Australia. However, there has been less recognition of psychological readings of the war dating from the 1930s in the Australian context. This chapter examines early psychological interpretations of the Great War and the meaning that was attributed to them. It shows how this meaning has been transformed over time, as a consequence of the rise of trauma culture. The chapter discusses the debate among historians about whether the tendency to conceptualise war in the language of trauma and suffering facilitates its sentimentalisation. It concludes that while the Anzac legend successfully absorbs the language of trauma in contemporary Australia, the meaning attributed to psychological readings of war is always subject to the geo-political context in which it is made.

In recent years historians and others have noted the decisive turn that war memory in Australia has taken towards psychological themes and interpretations. Commentators have used various descriptors and reached vastly different conclusions about this phenomenon. For some it offers a more sophisticated understanding of war, acting as an antidote to celebratory and jingoistic interpretations; who could sentimentalise let alone glorify war once
they have understood its traumatic effects? For others, the turn towards the psychological is a worrying development, which has breathed new life into the Anzac legend by enabling it to speak in the modern idiom. To these critics, the “psychologised” Anzac legend functions as a Trojan horse for conservative values.

This chapter traces the transformation of psychological understandings of the Great War in Australian society. It argues that the contemporary discourse of trauma should be understood within a history of psychological readings of the Great War that dates back to the psychological realism of the “war books boom” of the 1930s. The chapter considers the different meanings that have been attached by Australians over the decades to psychological readings, and probes the distinction that is commonly made between political and psychological responses to war; with the former purportedly functioning as a vehicle for protest and the latter as an apologist for militarism. The chapter engages with the contentious historiographical question of whether the current fashion for psychological representation of the Great War serves to sentimentalise war memory by making it more readily subsumed within the nationalist Anzac legend. It shows how psychologisation of the war experience has been transformed from a form of subversion and protest to an orthodox means of remembering the Great War, and concludes that the distinction between psychological and political interpretations of war does not withstand close analysis. Like the nation-making war, the “psychological war” is pressed into the service of broader ideological objectives.

Tracking the Psychological Turn

The psychological turn has been variously described and conceptualised by commentators from a range of academic disciplines.1 The American sociologist Philip Rieff wrote a seminal book in 1966 called *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, which lamented the increasing influence of psychology, the growth of therapy and the tendency for people to be concerned with the workings of their inner lives. Writing amid the social revolution of the 1960s, Rieff’s chief concern was that the decline of religion and the growing cult of selfhood were leading to a deterioration of moral behaviour.2 The American historian and social critic Christopher Lasch echoed Rieff’s concerns about deteriorating moral behaviour in *The Culture of Narcissism*, adding that contemporary society encouraged self-obsession and victimhood at the expense of personal
responsibility and the greater concerns of political and economic inequality. Lasch’s thesis about the connection between the popularisation of psychology and the diminution of political activism has been highly influential. Over the decades since Rieff’s original analysis, others have criticised therapy culture from Marxist, Foucauldian and feminist perspectives. The British sociologist Frank Furedi echoed elements of Rieff and Lasch’s moral critique in *Therapy Culture*, which condemned the nature of personhood in Anglo-American societies. Furedi claimed that vulnerability and powerlessness were encouraged, not least by the therapy industry and the pathologisation of behaviours that are more truthfully viewed through a political or economic lens. He argued that there had been a dangerous dissolution of the boundary between private and public spheres, with the simultaneous leaching of private matters into the public sphere and preoccupation with the self. A consequence of this phenomenon, according to Furedi, was the degradation of public life.

Working discretely from the critics of therapy culture, the increasing prominence of the category of trauma in Western culture was described by the anthropologist Allan Young in 1995. *The Harmony of Illusions* examines what the author calls “the invention of post-traumatic stress disorder,” tracing its aetiology as far back as the condition of “railway spine” that appeared in the United States in the 1860s. Young ascribes the contemporary prominence of trauma to the experience of veterans of the Vietnam War, both as soldiers and as subjects of a treatment system. Once post-traumatic stress disorder was added to the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* in 1980, it was given legitimacy by the bureaucratic, pharmaceutical and medical systems that developed around it.

A more recent book, *The Empire of Trauma*, provides an exposition of the rise of the concepts of trauma and victimhood. French scholars Didier Fassin (a physician, anthropologist and sociologist) and Richard Rechtman (a psychiatrist and anthropologist) find the origins of the traumatised victim among those who experienced railway accidents in nineteenth century America, the First and Second World Wars, the Holocaust and the Vietnam War. They show how the “victim” has been morally transformed over the past one hundred years, from someone whose interior frailty was the cause of their misfortune, to a virtuous person who has suffered at the hands of an external event. The authors resist both the naturalisation of the concepts of trauma and victimhood, as well as the relativism favoured by Reiff and Lasch. Declining to draw political conclusions about the rise of trauma, Fassin and Rechtman seek
instead to describe the moral, social, political and economic circumstances in which these categories have become so pervasive; what they describe as “the moral economy of contemporary societies.”

Australian scholars have given less attention to the psychological turn than their colleagues in Europe and North America. The major work in Australia has been done by the historical sociologist, Katie Wright. Her book, *The Rise of the Therapeutic Society*, traces the emergence of what she calls “therapeutic culture” in Australia from the 1890s to the present. Wright finds the origins of the contemporary sensibility in the discourse of nerves and neurasthenia in the late nineteenth century. She notes the effect of the Great War on psychological practices, and traces their institutionalisation in education and workplaces over the course of the twentieth century. Wright also examines the wider cultural infiltration of psychological ideas.

*The Rise of the Therapeutic Society* is critical of the conclusions of Philip Rieff, Christopher Lasch and others about the psychologisation of Western culture. She argues that a culture that elevates the status of the self and its emotional life is not inevitably a recipe for victimhood, “self-centredness” and “self-pity,” as alleged by its critics. Such a culture potentially unearths the emotional suffering of members of society who were previously “marginalized, abused and oppressed,” such as women and children who have suffered emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Wright concludes that the “established reading of the therapeutic as antithetical to politics is … problematic”; “to view therapeutic solutions as disconnected from social action and politics is to misread the complexity of the therapeutic society.”

A recent publication by the Melbourne writer Anne Manne contradicts the conclusions of Wright about the positive implications of therapeutic culture, though it is framed in the language of narcissism. In *The Life of I*, Manne runs an argument that takes inspiration from that made by Christopher Lasch in *The Culture of Narcissism* nearly four decades earlier. She claims that there is an epidemic of narcissism in Western societies, which can be traced to their cultural, political and economic values. Manne identifies the child-rearing practices of modern parenting and the decline of traditional patterns of authority, as dictated by the demands of consumer capitalism, as being conducive to narcissism, and finds the traces of narcissistic behaviour in contemporary Australian political culture. Where Wright sees the benefits of growing empathy towards the oppressed, Manne sees a decline of empathy and increased selfishness.
Research on the psychological turn in Western societies has been done principally by social scientists in the disciplines of sociology and anthropology. Scholars have conceptualised the phenomenon in different ways and reached different conclusions about its implications. According to Reiff, Lasch and Manne, who see the psychological turn through the lens of self-obsession and narcissism, it is a harmful development because it diminishes personal responsibility and concern for the greater good. For Katie Wright the psychologisation of Western culture is a complex and potentially positive phenomenon, given its capacity to provide a means of expression for the marginalised. The anthropologists who have traced the rise of trauma have been less inclined to draw conclusions about its implications. Though historians have been reluctant to document the phenomenon, their discipline has not been immune from the psychological turn.

The Psychological Turn in Australian War Historiography

The pioneering historian of war commemoration, Ken Inglis, was among the first to comment on the growing taste for psychological perspectives in the Australian setting, both in the veterans community and among historians. Inglis observed in the third edition of Sacred Places the prominence given to such concepts as loss, trauma counselling, grief and “closure,” all of which demonstrated “how far perceptions of war were changing.”10 Alistair Thomson has also noted the transformation. In the second edition of Anzac Memories, published in 2013, Thomson wrote that while “young Australians may well take pride in their military forebears, they are more likely to pity the terrible experiences of war than celebrate a warrior hero.”11 Thomson traced the diminishing emphasis given to the Anzacs’ martial capacities back to the 1970s, with the publication of Bill Gammage’s The Broken Years and Patsy Adam-Smith’s The Anzacs. Both of these books used the letters and diaries of frontline soldiers to create sympathetic and poignant accounts of the emotional experience of war.12

The historian Christina Twomey has linked the revival of Anzac commemoration to the psychological turn. In a recent article, “Trauma and the Reinvigoration of Anzac,” she claimed that the role of state propagandising, as claimed by the authors of What’s Wrong With Anzac?, was an inadequate explanation of the legend’s resurgence.13 Twomey found a more convincing explanation in Anzac’s union with trauma culture, claiming that by the 1980s:
“the suffering of soldiers in war and the potential for them to be traumatised by it became a central trope in the public discussion of Anzac.”¹⁴ She acknowledged the role of the Holocaust in the rise of trauma and identified the debut of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 as a seminal moment. The radical feminist protest that targeted Anzac commemoration was also a factor in the revival of a declining ritual, according to Twomey. Despite the hostility that feminists generated by accusing disabled and elderly war veterans of being rapists, the focus on “war’s harrowing impact on women … articulated an understanding of the effects of war more generally, and ideas about its trauma-tising impact in particular, that had been gaining ground since the early 1970s.”¹⁵

Pondering the consequences of the new arrangement between war memory and trauma, Twomey claimed that ‘there is a world of difference between ‘it could have been me’ – an empathic sentiment often expressed in the 2000s – and ‘it should not be me,’ an oppositional stance to war that was more often found in the 1960s and 1970s.”¹⁶ She wondered whether the psychological turn constituted a rejection of jingoistic attitudes to the Great War, as the playwright David Williamson has claimed, or whether it was in fact providing “ballast for a nationalist interpolation of Anzac,” which made it difficult to criticise war commemoration without being labelled as insensitive and unpatriotic. She suspected the latter.¹⁷

The psychological turn is also detected in my recent book, Anzac: The Unauthorised Biography, which traces the history of how Australians have remembered the Great War since 1915. Specifically, I show how the Anzac legend has changed over the course of a century, from a myth grounded in imperial rhetoric and the martial ability of Australian soldiers, to one that emphasises the sacrifice, tragedy and trauma of the experience of war. I show that the psychologisation of war memory has coincided with a change in its custodianship, from the soldiers themselves to their descendants and to politicians, who have become the most enthusiastic of Anzac commemorators. I identify Bill Gammage’s The Broken Years and Peter Weir’s film Gallipoli as important moments in the transformation of Great War memory and trace the rise of family histories, linking the growing preference for readings that emphasise trauma to the influence of the post-Holocaust memory boom.¹⁸

Reflections on the psychologisation of war memory in Australia have been focussed on the period since the revival of the Anzac legend in the 1980s. While it is certainly true that the language of trauma and suffering has infused war
memory in an unprecedented way in recent decades, psychological readings of the Great War have a history that can be traced back to the soldier writing of the 1930s.

“Stench Warfare Writing”: War Books of the 1930s

In 1930 Professor G.H. Cowling of the University of Melbourne sought to classify the “modern novels” that were being written in Europe about the Great War. These books had two characteristics that distinguished them from Victorian novels: “Their realism, or close relation to real life and truth” and “Their psychological interest, which was exemplified by the warm interest of the modern novelist in the inner life, character, motives, feelings and passion and thoughts of their characters.” Cowling noted the gloominess of the modern novels, which he attributed to the fact that peoples’ hopes had been shattered by the war.¹⁹

The experience of the Great War had settled differently in the Australian imagination from those of Germany and Great Britain, the two major sources of disillusioned “modern novels.” To Australian minds, the war was dreadful but it was not entirely without meaning. After all, the heroic performance of its soldiers had made Australia a nation in the eyes of the world; that was the message at the heart of the growing legend of the Anzacs. Australians read enthusiastically the modernist war books that appeared from Germany and Britain. However, they were not eager to see the Australian experience expressed in the modern style. Books such as Joseph Maxwell’s Hell’s Bells and Mademoiselles and H.R. Williams’ The Gallant Company and Comrades of the Great Adventure were commercially successful because they portrayed a war in which the horror and suffering were redeemed by the camaraderie and pride of the Australian soldiers.²⁰ Indeed, those Australian authors who wrote frankly about the psychological damage wrought by the war risked accusations of besmirching the reputation of the Anzacs. While Charles Bean’s Official History and redemptive books such as Hell’s Bells and Mademoiselles buttressed the Anzac legend, psychological perspectives on the war functioned as forms of protest and subversion.

Critics had been quick to detect the odour of “stench warfare” writing in Erich Maria Remarque’s All Quiet on the Western Front, which appeared in Australia in late 1929.²¹ The book, with its frank descriptions of lust, violence and desolation, was banned by the conservative government in New South
Wales, an act that did little to prevent it becoming a best-seller. The trade journal *All About Books* reported in September 1930 that *All Quiet* was finding as many buyers in Australia and New Zealand per capita as it had in Germany: total sales in the two countries within the first six months of its release were reported to be an extraordinary 50,000 copies.\(^22\) The New South Wales ban was abandoned when Labor returned to office in November 1929; the same month that *All Quiet* made the *Sydney Morning Herald*’s “MOST IN DEMAND” list.\(^23\)

Those with military backgrounds and conservative affiliations were particularly prone to finding the modern war books offensive, seasoned as they were with “intimate psychological details showing the private soldier very much *au naturel*.”\(^24\) At a Legacy Club luncheon in Melbourne in February 1930, a former officer and recipient of the Victoria Cross, W.D. Joynt, put forward a motion arguing for the banning of war books that sought to commercialise “the horrible and the dreadful.” Joynt objected particularly to Remarque’s book: “Not only was it loathsome and filthy, it was also counterfeit, because it did not give a true picture of the behaviour of a soldier in any army.” The Germans were gallant fighters, he told his audience; if their army had been “as Remarque depicted it the war would have ended in six months.”\(^25\) Joynt’s unfulfilled wish to have Remarque’s book outlawed was echoed in other military fora. In March 1930 the Federal Executive of the Returned Sailors’ and Soldiers’ Imperial League of Australia passed a resolution that the Minister for Customs should “prohibit war books which defamed soldiers of the Empire.”\(^26\)

The Labor Prime Minister Joseph Scullin was unswayed by proposals for censorship. Consistent with the opinion of many on the left, he had read *All Quiet on the Western Front* and “believed that every word in it was true.”\(^27\) Filthy language and immoral behaviour, he believed, were a small price to pay for the power of the book’s political message.\(^28\) A correspondent to the *Sydney Morning Herald* defended modern war books on similar grounds:

> The truth is that the present crop of war books is not in any way an attempt to condemn the soldier … but to condemn war itself, and to show it up as well as we know how, in all its naked horror and stupidity, so that if possible our children may benefit by the lessons we have so terribly learned.\(^29\)

Not all of those soldiers who revealed the workings of the inner life with a striking new frankness combined psychological detail with descriptions of sex
and violence. Sergeant Eric Evans, who served with the Thirteenth Battalion in Gallipoli and France, recurrently reports in his diaries of being appalled by the swearing, drunkenness and rowdy behaviour of his fellow soldiers. Yet, Evans was prepared to describe his psychological state in a style and detail that seems decidedly modern. He writes in March 1918 of feeling: “Fed up, stagnant, depressed, call it what you will. Sick in the stomach too, no energy, tired, etc. I can’t think what is the matter.” More than once he describes having horrible dreams from which he wakes in a cold sweat. One incident in Evans’ diaries stands out to the modern reader: seeking respite from a crowded concert on a troop ship back to Australia in 1917, he made his way onto the upper deck:

There I stood, rigid, just staring into the headland. My thoughts turned to Gallipoli and I felt myself sweating as I remembered those terrible minutes we spent being rowed toward the mainland. It all came back to me – the flames, the rattle of gunfire, the random screams of shells and the splashes of water as they crashed around us. I could almost taste the spray of the salt water. All those details that I’d hoped I had lost forever came back. Even the faces of those men with me – some whimpering, others feigning smiles, some just with their eyes closed. All gripping their rifles tighter and tighter.

Evans’ flashback was interrupted by an officer: “What the hell are you doing, Evans? Didn’t you hear me calling you? … What the hell’s wrong with you? You look in a right state.” Evans assured his officer that he was alright – the rare instances in which soldiers confessed to deeply troubled feelings left them open to accusations of cowardice and over-sensitivity. Privately, Evans chose to understand the incident as a sign from a God who was familiar with the benefits of catharsis:

I had tried to blank out any thoughts of Gallipoli for thirteen months. Just never even talked about it … but this brief lapse has had quite an impact … It was as if the Lord was just helping to prepare me for feelings that I had blocked off for over a year. I think it has done me good, really.

Evans’ diaries were not published until 2002, by which time the incident on the troop ship had acquired a new cultural significance. Rather than attributing it
to personal weakness, modern readers would be more inclined to credit the experience to trauma, and assign to Eric Evans the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Edgar Morrow described a similar experience to Evans in a memoir that was published as *Iron in the Fire* in 1934. Morrow, who served in the Twenty Eighth Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), was deeply disturbed by his war experience when he returned to civilian life; unable to talk about it because “it had become bad form to discuss the war,” yet unable to put it out of his mind: “There seemed no way out to forgetfulness, or consolation.”32 He finished the book with a poignantly honest description of this state of mind:

> Only at night now – when I am alone and quiet – do I allow myself to remember. I sometimes think it helps me to readjust my balance. But … I don't know. For it is then that I quiver again with the shock of explosions, and fear. I duck at the sound of a shell, and stand like a statue while a flare dies down. I smell the gas again; I feel the tiring strain of the facial muscles in the effort to keep them steady. I itch with lice, and shiver again with the wet and cold. I feel the weight of wet mud on my boots. In the silent safety of my cosy room I see again the pale faces of the freshly dead, and the pathetically still, silent forms hanging on barbed wire. I feel the unutterable weariness of work and sleeplessness and prolonged fear … And late at night, before I go to bed, I turn on the radio and let its noise blare into the room – as a safety measure.33

General J. Talbot Hobbs, war-time commander of the AIF’s Fifth Division, provided the foreword to *Iron in the Fire.* He described the author as “an analyst; he analyses himself, his mates, his officers and his surroundings.” Seeking a diplomatic euphemism for the weakness he most likely perceived in Morrow, Hobbs wrote that he was also “apparently an extremely sensitive youngster … [thus] some things seared his soul which had little effect on older and more sophisticated men.” Morrow’s particular sensibility meant that “He sees very little of the glories of war; and he is intensely critical. He may be wrong in some of his conclusions, but he gives his reasons for them and shows what they are based on.” Seeking something positive to say about a book that was clearly not to his taste, Hobbs noted that it was important to present the view of the “the sensitive type [who] was fairly numerous and formed an important, if not very articulate cross section of an army that was made up of all types.”34
Other Australian writers, such as Leonard Mann, Vance Palmer and Katharine Susannah Prichard took the Great War as their subject matter during the inter-war years and produced novels of psychological complexity and sophistication.\(^\text{35}\) Mann’s novel, \textit{Flesh in Armour}, was criticised for its “lurid detail,” while Prichard’s and Palmer’s made little impact.\(^\text{36}\) Given the magnitude of the event, it is surprising that the Great War did not feature more prominently in Australian writing between the wars. The critic Harry Heseltine observed in 1964 that: “It is as if a whole generation of writers by tacit agreement declined to incorporate the Great War into their imaginative fiction.”\(^\text{37}\) Leonard Mann hinted at the reasons for the silent acquiescence of the intelligentsia when he recalled towards the end of his life that it was the Great War, more than Federation or any other event, which had made the Australian nation. Though he was a member of Melbourne’s left-leaning literary intelligentsia, Mann believed that the soldiers of the First AIF: “had measured themselves against others of the world and found they were second to none.”\(^\text{38}\) So magnetic was the nationalist pull of Anzac that it attracted those who might have been expected to stand back and analyse, in the manner of Edgar Morrow.

In the 1930s, psychological representations of the Great War functioned as a form of protest. They breached the traditional boundary between public and private spheres and subverted the dominant nationalist trope; that the war was dreadful but ultimately not without redemption. Local audiences devoured European representations of the tragic war, but they preferred to ignore the experience of men such as Edgar Morrow and Eric Evans, for whom the event was deeply distressing. As the Anzac legend tightened its grip on the Australian psyche, the psychological war was pushed to the edges of memory.

**Vietnam and the Seeds of Trauma Culture**

The failure of the literary intelligentsia to subject the moral implications of the Great War to serious scrutiny in the inter-war years was echoed to some extent by the radical nationalist historians who dominated Australian historiography after the Second World War. Men such as Russel Ward, Ian Turner, Robin Gollan, Eric Fry and Geoffrey Serle experienced directly the aftermath of the Great War and the devastating effects of the Great Depression. Seeking a remedy for the palpable inequality of capitalist society, they laid their radical template over Australia’s past.
I have written elsewhere of the ambivalence that the radical nationalists felt about the Great War and the Anzac legend. While they perceived the war to be the wrecking ball of progressive reform in Australia, there was something irresistibly attractive about the soldiers themselves to the radical nationalists, so blatantly did they appear to embody the male, working-class traits of larrikinism, egalitarianism and mateship. Russel Ward could not disguise his admiration for the men who bore such a striking resemblance to the “noble bushman” he had celebrated in his classic book, *The Australian Legend* (1958). In his history of Australia, *A Nation for a Continent* (1977), Ward declared that the Anzacs’ landing at Gallipoli “had shown the whole world – and themselves – that they could fight as well, or better, than the men of any other nation, including England itself … they had passed the test of battle with first-class honours.”

Ian Turner wrote about the Great War in Frank Crowley’s edited *New History of Australia*, published in 1974. Like Ward, Turner drew a sharp distinction between battlefront and homefront. Trade union revolt, government repression, strikes and conscription contributed to mounting strife and chaos in Australia. By the end of the war, Turner concluded, the nation was divided: “capital against labour, government against the unions, ex-servicemen against civilians, the war generation against their children, the traditional modes of behaviour against the new.” Yet, when Turner wrote about the diggers he could have been mistaken for the official historian Charles Bean. The soldiers’ efforts at Gallipoli were:

> a personal and national triumph … They had reinforced the established values of the Australian bush. A man was judged by his performance, not by his birth, and by how he stood with his mates … They had come to know their own manhood and that of their fellows.

The sheer force of the Anzac legend in its first few decades of existence had neutered the sustained critique of the Great War that might have been expected to come from the intellectual left. However, as early as the late 1950s, this situation was changing. Newspapers in the 1950s reported declining numbers of participants at Anzac Day marches, as the veterans of the Great War, born in the 1880s and 1890s, were growing frail and dying. The soldiers who fought in the Second World War seemed less interested in perpetuating the Anzac tradition, especially in the form favoured by those who fought in 1914–18.
A public dispute between the two veterans’ groups erupted in 1953 because the younger men wished for “a brighter Anzac afternoon,” during which they might attend organised sporting events. The older men interpreted any such changes as a sign of the commercialism of their sacred day. In 1954, an old digger from Victoria warned that the day would die in ten years, unless “the younger men took more interest.” A few days later, the Adelaide Advertiser reported that crowds were “well below” those for the previous year.

While the men and women who experienced the Second World War were inclined to apathy in the face of traditional Anzac commemoration, their children felt at liberty to declare their outright hostility. On Anzac eve in 1958 an article appeared in the Sydney University newspaper Honi Soit, which described the events of 25 April 1915 as: “a rather speculative and routine beach landing,” which has spawned “a festival of hero-adulation unequalled anywhere in the world.” The writer noted that returned soldiers who attended the dawn service “did not feel obliged to continue their weeping in the afternoon and headed with as much reverence towards the racecourses as they did towards the memorials.” The article was condemned by ex-servicemen’s associations and the Chancellor of Sydney University, but it had struck a generational nerve.

Alan Seymour was inspired to write his famous play, The One Day of the Year, by the article in Honi Soit. To the play’s protagonist, the university student Hughie Cook, old diggers like his father Alf were not deserving of respect, let alone adulation. Hughie was ashamed of Alf’s xenophobic philistinism, and questioned his adherence to the legend of Anzac: “Do you know what that Gallipoli campaign meant? Bugger all … A face-saving device. An expensive shambles. The biggest fiasco of the war.” The occasion on which Australia became a nation according to Alf, was in Hughie’s eyes a day of “bloody wastefulness” perpetuated year after year by a “screaming tribe of great, stupid, drunken, vicious, bigoted no-hopers.” Alf felt equally bewildered by his son, describing him as a “jumped up little twerp,” who was filling his head with fancy ideas at university.

Although Alan Seymour was born in 1927 and wrote the play in his mid-thirties, The One Day of the Year came to epitomise the willingness of the baby boomers to challenge the sacred symbols of their parents’ and grandparents’ generation. Its unbridled criticism of a day that had sacred connotations for many older Australians was highly contentious. The play was banned from the Adelaide Festival in 1960, following the objection of board members among
whom were prominent members of the state Returned and Services League.\textsuperscript{51} When it was performed instead by an amateur theatre group in Adelaide, police were present due to threats of violence. \textit{The One Day of the Year} debuted in Sydney in 1961, where dress rehearsals were disrupted by a bomb scare.\textsuperscript{52}

Despite its striking critique of Anzac Day, the principal theme of Seymour’s play was not war, but the generation gap. Like the author of the article in \textit{Honi Soit}, Alan Seymour did not seek to criticise the basis upon which Australia fought in 1914–18, but rather the behaviour of elderly men who seemed to be drunken philistines to the generation that was reaping the benefits of the massive expansion of higher education under the Menzies government. The play describes a \textit{social} rather than a \textit{political} rebellion, against what the baby boomers believed were the Great War generation’s anachronistic attitudes to such things as race, gender and Australia’s relationship with Great Britain. Anzac was a symptom of Hughie’s disaffection rather than the cause of it.

The protest movement against the Vietnam War began in earnest only after the Menzies Government introduced conscription in November 1964. What initially started as a protest against conscription became a more broadly based movement against the war itself, as a largely uncensored media relayed images back to Australians of the suffering of Vietnamese civilians and brutal acts perpetrated by American soldiers. Anzac Day provided a ready platform for the protests of conscientious objectors and groups such as Save Our Sons.

Even after the Vietnam War ended, women’s liberationists and gay rights activists continued to seek a platform on Anzac Day. On 25 April 1979 a Melbourne-based organisation called Women Against Rape issued a statement explaining that: “Australian women are angry because … celebrations have concentrated on glorification of the role men play in wartime and have totally ignored the fact that in war, as in peace, women have always borne [sic] the brunt of male violence.”\textsuperscript{53} Christina Twomey writes of the radical feminist protesters of the late seventies and eighties that: “they gave new space and voice to understandings of war as a cause of suffering and trauma.”\textsuperscript{54} Similarly, the suffering of gay men and women as a result of homophobic prejudice was highlighted by the attitudes of Anzac traditionalists. On Anzac Day in 1982 a group of men from the Gay Service Association were prevented from laying a wreath at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance by the president of the Victorian Returned and Services League, Bruce Ruxton. “Waving his umbrella like a sword,” Ruxton “bellowed ‘stop those men’” and formed a human barrier across the entrance to the Shrine.\textsuperscript{55} He later told a journalist that he did not
“mind poofers in the march, but they must march with their units.” A separate “poofter” delegation was just a “denigration of Anzac Day.”

The experience of radical feminists and gay rights protesters shows that the line between political activism and psychological experience cannot be sharply drawn. The civil rights movements of the 1960s–1980s increasingly reached for the language of psychology to articulate their political grievances, deploying what Katie Wright described as the “emancipatory potential of the therapeutic in buttressing claims of injustice.” When the tide of political activism receded the psychological wrack lines remained – political protest produced the psychological culture in which we are currently awash.

It was widely expected in the 1970s that the Anzac legend would die along with the last of the old soldiers. As it turned out, the passing of the Great War generation gave new life to Anzac, unburdened by the anachronistic values of the old diggers, and invigorated by the new language of trauma and suffering. As Anzac marched confidently into the twenty-first century, few could have predicted that the psychological sensibility that emerged in tandem with the emancipatory movements of the sixties and seventies, would be targeted as an apologist for political conservatism. Was it a case of shooting the messenger?

**Contemporary War Memory: Trauma and Nation**

The psychological turn in war memory has been reflected in the subjects chosen for examination by Australian historians since the 1990s. In the wake of the American historian Jay Winter's ground-breaking work on the personal experiences of grief and mourning in the aftermath of the Great War, there has been an outpouring of work about grief, mourning, trauma and memory. Joy Damousi’s *The Labour of Loss* studied private grief through letters and diaries, while Ken Inglis’ *Sacred Places* described the public process of raising war monuments. A younger generation of scholars has added nuance to the study of the war’s aftermath, often with an emphasis on women’s grief and a desire to challenge assumptions about femininity and masculinity that are embedded in the traditional Anzac legend. Tanja Luckins, Marina Larsson and Jen Roberts have all written about the “disenfranchised grief” of families whose soldier relatives died after the war. Larsson’s *Shattered Anzacs* told the story of soldiers who returned to Australia with psychological and physical wounds, and the families who bore the burden of their care. Michael Tyquin's study of psychological break-down among Australian soldiers added to the
vast amount of international scholarship about shell shock and other forms of psychological trauma suffered by soldiers of the Great War.\textsuperscript{64}

In 2010 the authors of a controversial book called \textit{What’s Wrong With Anzac?}, Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds, Joy Damousi, Mark McKenna and Carina Donaldson, expressed concern about the psychological emphasis in war historiography, (as well as more generally). Joy Damousi described what she called “the sentimental turn” in academic history, which corresponded with a shift away from the more critical, politically-focussed works of the 1970–90s, such as Stephen Garton’s \textit{The Cost of War}, to books like Bruce Scates’ \textit{Return to Gallipoli} (2006) and Marina Larsson’s \textit{Shattered Anzacs} (2009).\textsuperscript{65} She expressed concern that the experience of strong emotions, such as empathy with the soldiers or sadness about their plight, worked to the detriment of rigorous discussion and debate about Australian involvement in war. Damousi associated the beginning of the de-politicisation of war memory with Bill Gammage’s book \textit{The Broken Years} (1974) and Peter Weir’s film, \textit{Gallipoli} (1981), both of which “set the new trend in their focus on soldiers as the innocent victims of war.”\textsuperscript{66}

Damousi identified the current fashion for family history of the Great War as another source of sentimentalisation, arguing that under the patronage of Commonwealth-funded museums and internet resources, Australians were encouraged to blend personal histories with the broader national story. The Commonwealth had so cleverly intertwined contemporary military culture with the original Anzac story, Damousi claimed, that those who expressed criticism of current-day military incursions risked being portrayed not only as traitors to the Anzac spirit, but as “disloyal and unAustralian.” Furthermore, the sentimentalisation of war memory had retrospectively leached earlier wars of their political content. Thus, Damousi observed that the lesson for contemporary Australians from the Vietnam War was not that soldiers were traumatised because they were sent (and sometimes compelled) to fight an unjust war. Rather, they were traumatised because of the shameful treatment they received when they arrived home; it is the act of protest rather than the Vietnam War itself that has become the focus of hostility.\textsuperscript{67}

Mark McKenna, a co-author of \textit{What’s Wrong With Anzac?} has also written about the sentimentalisation of the Anzac legend. In 2007, during the final year of the nine-year-long Howard government, he co-authored with Stuart Ward an article that criticised the conclusions reached about the phenomenon of battlefield pilgrimage by another historian, Bruce Scates. Scates’ work in
Return to Gallipoli was concerned with the historical practice of pilgrimage: what compelled Australians to travel to battlefields in Turkey and France and how did people understand their experience? Scates was not immune to the commercialisation of battlefield tourism, nor the calculated oratory of political leaders. However, he argued that contemporary pilgrims, many of them young, university-educated Australians, were able to sift through the solicitations of politicians and commercial interests to reach their own conclusions about the meaning of the Great War.\textsuperscript{68}

McKenna and Ward claimed that Scates’ assignation of motivation among young Australians at Gallipoli failed to consider adequately the extent to which they were inculcated with the Anzac legend through government propagandising.\textsuperscript{69} They argued that Scates was in the thrall of his subjects and his subject matter; that he was “caught up in the lure of Gallipoli as a sacred parable.”\textsuperscript{70} The context for McKenna and Ward’s argument was the extraordinary phenomenon of state patronage of war commemoration that had begun under the prime ministership of Bob Hawke and been boosted by both Paul Keating and John Howard. The latter had proved particularly adept at hitching the Anzac legend and values traditionally associated with the left of politics, such as mateship and egalitarianism, to his political program; a skill that earned him the ire of the intelligentsia.\textsuperscript{71}

The debate between Scates and McKenna and Ward is revealing of the ideological ambivalence of the psychological turn. As Christina Twomey has noted, McKenna and Ward made no mention of the “cultural obsession with trauma” in their discussion of Return to Gallipoli. They accused Scates instead of peddling a kind of “sentimental nationalism,” which (though they did not state this explicitly), was vulnerable to the conservative connotations so artfully attached by John Howard.\textsuperscript{72} Bruce Scates attached an entirely different meaning from McKenna and Ward to the experience of battlefield pilgrimage. He believed that present-day pilgrims were able to transcend “the shallow rhetoric of the media and the politicians” in order to confront the “agony of history” and deplore its “tragic, brutal waste.” Few of Scates’ subjects “spoke of pride or glory.”\textsuperscript{73} The experience that works in the minds of McKenna and Ward to inculcate conservative values in the minds of the young, has the effect for Scates of leaving them better informed about the horror and suffering of war. These vastly different interpretations of the same phenomenon recall the opposing meanings attributed to the rise of therapeutic culture: what appears to Christopher Lasch, Frank Furedi and Anne Manne to be an unwelcome
sign of the increased narcissism of Western societies is seen by Katie Wright as an avenue for recognising the suffering of less empowered members of society.

In the decades immediately following the Great War, psychological perspectives on the event and its aftermath comprised a form of protest. To dwell on the suffering and trauma of the experience was to undermine the story of martial baptism and tarnish the sacred name of the Anzacs. Since the psychologisation of Western societies that began in the 1960s, concepts such as trauma and post-traumatic stress have been normalised to the extent that they no longer have the effect of subverting traditional narratives of war. Contemporary military and civic leaders routinely enlist the language of psychology when they speak about war. The admission that war is capable of wreaking “profound and dreadful damage,” in the words of the former chief of the Australian Defence Force and current Governor General, Sir Peter Cosgrove, is not inconsistent with the sacralisation of its memory.

The boundaries between political and psychological interpretations of the Great War, and of human experience more generally, dissolve upon close scrutiny. By giving voice to the psychological experiences of the oppressed, the political and social protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s laid the foundations for the rise of trauma culture and its integration into the cultural mainstream. To be traumatised is no longer to be weak but rather to be the victim of traumatic circumstances. The political implications of the psychological turn for war memory (and more generally) are less certain. Psychological rhetoric reflects the culture it is practised within. In the hands of political and military leaders, the all-conquering Anzac legend has shown a capacity to absorb traumatic narratives of war within its nationalist boundaries. However, if the circumstances of the 1960s were repeated – the introduction of conscription for an unpopular war – it seems likely that trauma would burst from its nationalist confines and become once more a subversive force.

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Endnotes

1 The phenomenon was noted in philosophy as early as 1982, Hilary Kornblith, “The Psychological Turn,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 60, no. 3 (1982): 238–53.


14 Twomey, “Trauma and the Reinvigoration of Anzac,” 106.


19 *All About Books*, 17 October 1930, 251.


21 The phrase “stench warfare” is from Melbourne *Argus*, 8 May 1930, 11.

23 Sydney Morning Herald, 8 November 1929, 10.
24 All About Books, 19 April 1930, 100.
25 Argus, 19 February 1930, 12.
26 Argus, 28 March 1930, 23.
27 Argus, 21 April 1930, 4.
28 Hobart Mercury, 21 April 1930, 10.
29 Sydney Morning Herald, 14 February 1930, 12.
31 Ibid., 26–27.
33 Ibid., 268.
34 Ibid., vii–viii.
36 All About Books, 13 April 1933, 50.
42 Ibid., 323.
43 Argus, 28 March 1953, 3.
44 Argus, 23 April 1954, 7.
45 Adelaide Advertiser, 27 April 1954, 3.
46 Canberra Times, 30 April 1958, 15.
47 Alan Seymour, The One Day of the Year (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1993 [1961]), 77.
48 Alan Seymour, The One Day of the Year, in Three Australian Plays (Melbourne: Penguin, 1994), 79.
49 Ibid., 80, 86.
50 Ibid., 80.
51 Carina Donaldson and Marilyn Lake, “Whatever Happened to the Anti-War Movement?,” in What’s Wrong With Anzac?, ed. Lake et. al., 85.

Twomey, “Trauma and the Reinvigoration of Anzac,” 92, see also 91, 100–105.

Bruce Scates, A Place to Remember: A History of the Shrine of Remembrance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 244.

Ibid.


The international memory boom has also influenced the historiographical fashion for memory and emotion. I have traced the origins of the memory boom in Holbrook, Anzac: The Unauthorised Biography, 145–47, and more thoroughly in my PhD Thesis, Carolyn Holbrook, “The Great War in the Australian Imagination Since 1915,” University of Melbourne, 2013.


Joy Damousi, The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); on World War Two, Korea and Vietnam see Joy Damousi, Living with the Aftermath: Trauma, Nostalgia and Grief in Post-War Australia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Inglis, Sacred Places. See also Pat Jalland, Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War, Medicine and the Funeral Business (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2006).


Marina Larsson, Shattered Anzacs: Living with the Scars of War (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009).


Ibid.

Ibid., 94–109.


Fighting against war – Peace activism in the twentieth century

70 Ward and McKenna, “It Was Really Moving Mate,” 144.
72 Twomey, “Trauma and the Reinvigoration of Anzac,” 91.
73 Scates, Return to Gallipoli, 215.
74 In 2013, the Governor General Quentin Bryce acknowledged “the loved ones who farewelled [soldiers], ached for them, welcomed them home, cradled their damaged souls, grieved for them”; Anzac Day Address, Isurava Ceremony, Papua New Guinea, 25 April 2013. Prime Minister Julia Gillard said on 25 April 2013 that the “wounded never forget the horror of war, imprinted as it is on their bodies and their minds. They returned to lives that could never be what they once were. Their loved ones often facing a different and longer battle behind the walls of the family home,” Anzac Day Address, Townsville, 25 April 2013. In launching a play about war trauma by former soldiers, the Chief of the Defence Force, General David Hurley, called the play “deeply emotive and a powerful reminder of the trauma of war,” “The Long Way Home Officially Opens,” Defence News and Media, Media Release, 9 February 2014. On Anzac Day in 2014, the Queensland Governor, Penelope Wensley, urged the crowd of 20,000 people at Brisbane’s dawn service to “consider the war still waged by our returned soldiers who live with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder,” Rockhampton Morning Bulletin, 25 April 2014.
75 George Bevan, Jum’s War: Finding my Father William “Jum” Bevan, 5th FAB AIF (Sydney: Pier 9, 2007), 5.
If global violence shaped cultural identity in the first half of the twentieth century, then surely, over the last 60 years, the civic culture of the neoliberal west has come to rely, viscerally, on memory. This reworking of memory into a public memorialism typically mirrors the politics of the nation-state, in which the purposeful commonality demanded by war has been all but erased. Public memory of world wars thus becomes an opening for political assertion by the marginalised, the last vestige of wartime mass solidarity for a group now dwindled to a minority, and beyond these sectional interests, a mask behind which an individualising transnational neoliberalism can continue its erosion of national civic identity. The simple admonition, “Lest We Forget”, always engenders a tangled politics.

Historians are now well practiced in identifying elisions and absences in the memorialism of both world wars, since even the most elaborate commemorative event – that for D-Day is a classic example – must be selective. Perhaps, though, there is something more that we can say about public memorialism; a commentary beyond our now routine unearthing of evasions and silences in such sites of memory?

A cultural theorist such as Andreas Huyssen (especially in his reflections on Berlin) can write critically but in the end perhaps, positively, about this culture of memory. In the interest of a renewed civic life, some historians of the twentieth
In very small compensation for the toll it had exacted, the Dardanelles
debacle inspired a burst of popular creativity across rural and small-town
Australia. Not long after the firing of final shots on the peninsula, amateur
balladeers such as the Donald scribe quoted above, municipal orators and
unctuous bush clergymen were responding to the Gallipoli tragedy, recalling
the departures, or faraway deaths, of local boys. The return of memories
or alternatively the forgetting of troubling memories as musèd upon in the
Donald Times, shaped local communal life across Australia for much of the
inter-war decades. Memory and forgetting have likewise continued to trouble
left and anti-militarist movements in Australia, right through to the 2015

The iron grasp of Anzac remembrance is such that a locality like the
central goldfields of Victoria retains few traces of vigorous anti-war and anti-
conscription campaigns. Nor do signs of the enduring war-weariness during
the last years of conflict survive. In part this stems from difficulties in creating

Does the lonely Turkish sentry
Bring back memories of wars
To the stockmen and rough
Riders of the wide Australian plains?
Or do they rest in quiet with the wisdom of the dead
Forgetting bomb and bullet and the screaming of the shells
(Anon., Donald Times, 21 December 1917, 3)
material reminders of anti-war campaigns on a scale and in locations that could in any way challenge the symbolism of the local war memorial. Not surprisingly, given this imbalance, successive critical historians and broadly leftist movements as well, have sometimes sought to construct a counter-memory.¹ There may well be locations and political systems in which a counter-memory achieves some of the longed-for resistance to militarism.² More commonly in Australia, where the mythology of Anzac over-rides any other foundational legend, campaigns of counter-memory eventually founder. They are rarely rescued by the historians’ conventional tactic of opposing another awkward sets of facts to the Anzac myth.³ The history profession of course has only itself to blame for this. Having conflated memory with historical evidence, historians baulk at defending their profession’s claims on truth, and instead defer to a once fashionable relativism. As a consequence, the more that historians challenge the legitimacy of myth, the more legend, ever malleable, reconstitutes itself, incorporating any new evidence. Indigenous Australians, women and ethnic minorities are now comfortably brought together under the Anzac banner.⁴

In part, this weakness in counter-memory reflects the unwarranted faith that anti-war and leftist movements have placed in collective memory, whereas the strength of an Anzac tradition rested initially at least on a fusing of memory and memorial locations, extending to ceremonial moments. Even now, it is the particular location, Anzac Cove, rather than any textual witness testimony, around which the hundredth anniversary of the landings is centred. By way of contrast, in reflections on World War II in Europe, a successful counter-memorialism, rather than counter-memory, has, albeit in a limited manner, been able to challenge some dominant mythologies. The revision of war reflection in Austria is one well-documented example. A comforting myth of Austria as Nazism’s first victim has been publicly disproven. For some time now historians have been exposing popular complicity and national compromise with the terrors flowing from the 1938 Anschluss.⁵

This chapter raises questions then about the left’s ongoing challenge to the dominant mythology of Anzac by way of local studies of memorial landscape, around Ballarat in Victoria’s central goldfields, in Caloundra in Queensland, and then through comparisons with one particular memorial project, in Linz in Austria, on the occasion of that city’s role as European Capital of Culture 2009.⁶ Initially the chapter raises concerns about the fusing of memory and memorials. It is proposed here that an habitual and uncritical acceptance of
Nora’s *Les Lieux de Mémoire* does not help us in reflecting on Anzac. The chapter secondly considers the circumstances of memorial construction, querying the often elaborate set of meanings attached to what are fundamentally normalised landscape elements, whose creators could not possibly have considered their works as memorials. The chapter thirdly considers counter-memorial campaigns, suggesting how these might work as challenges to some but not all of the more regressive articulations of Anzac. The notion of dissonant heritage is employed in this process. The chapter finally poses two questions about counter-memory or critical history strategies in relation to Anzac. It asks is it preferable to engage with the Anzac myth in a less deconstructive fashion, especially now that we inhabit a neoliberal, globalised and corporatised world? In that light, it finally asks if a process of constructive forgetting rather than resistance through memory is a more useful response to the mythologising of the 100-year-old, disastrous, Dardanelles campaign.

**Memory as Collective**

Historians of the twentieth century have conventionally privileged memory through an inexact reliance on Pierre Nora, before elevating collective memory to the pinnacle of any memorial process. Rarely questioned is Nora’s pessimistic assessment of a collapsed collective memory and the dire need for material and literary props to revive any sense of a national past. What Nora had to say about centuries of French sites and activities, even accepting the nationalist parallels with Australia and Anzac, does not translate well to reflections on the specific and circumscribed moment of the Gallipoli campaign. As one reviewer of his multi-volume collection noted, Nora had only one object – “this is a France that is indivisible even when understood differently over time and by different segments of the population.” The project thus marginalised regional identities and the dynamic strategies by which nationalist sentiment was moulded, rearranged and activated, the very action in which Nora himself had engaged.

Nora’s enormous catalogue is further distanced from a relevance to Australian identity by a “certain fuzziness in the way Nora defines and deploys the concepts of ‘history’ and ‘memory’ which allows him to make claims that at times seem to contradict one another.” In the process of defining a living national past in all its complexity, Nora deploys memory in a manner out of step with recent usage, where “scholarship on memory … coincided with increased
disenchantment with nationalism and the nationalist projects.” In this light Jay Winter’s critical assessment of Nora’s massive compendium rings true: “the Frenchness of the position is it’s [sic] particular kind of cultural pessimism.” Winter asserted that in contrast to Nora’s claims, an oral tradition did survive into the later-twentieth century, indeed thrived, as inter-generational storytelling within families and between children, parents and grandparents.

In relation to Anzac, Nora’s account takes us to a more or less conservative account of the manner in which memory works. As such this avoids problems inherent in eliding recollection, literary image and material form into that one realm of memory. In the first instance Nora is writing about places that are not sites of memory but for the most part sites of re-education – about the one indivisible France. The vast array of such sites (an eclectic collection ranging far beyond built monuments) stands beyond personal recollection and draws on French history from before the twentieth century, a different historical sequences to that of an Australian settler cognition of national emergence in 1915. Nora’s claim about the loss of memory and absence of ritual (which we might better understand as oral tradition) and the recuperative task of the cultural historian is itself problematic. Nora’s schema relies on collective remembering at a national level, whereas the nation-state is itself a product of modernity’s rationalising of the past, typically through written records and historical text. In other words, Nora’s conviction about an enduring French national identity assumes that the various subnational oral traditions of pre-revolutionary France simply constituted components of a nation in waiting, even though the nation-state, with its written history and bureaucratic uniformity, eventually erased these localised patterns of memory.

Nora was trying to explore material sites, commemorative events, narratives and recollection as these relate to a French national memory. To conflate all of these modes of seeking out a meaningful past, a characteristic of Memory Studies, eventually corrupts the idea of memory. After all it is now more than a decade since any living human has had a memory of the Anzac campaign. The last survivor, Alec Campbell, died in 2002. Despite the emphasis in the current centenary on a living memory, no such activity is occurring. We are trying, by any means other than remembering, to reconstruct a moment from the past in personal imagination and public spectacle. A resort to the term post-memory does not help us much here either since very few of us exist in a state of post-memory. Rather we simply lose a memory of one event and replace it with memories of another more recent event.
The collective memory supposedly discovered by Maurice Hallbwachs has its own difficulties, turning in some cases on the familiar distinction between aggregated memories, and some socially-distributed consistent cognition of a past event. The literal critique that memory is always individual relegates what we like to call collective memory to the margins, so that in reflecting on Anzac we are really engaging in a process of collective memorialisation rather than remembering. It is perhaps more productive to consider the centenary as a special form of social organisation around memorialism – or a collective process organised around an absence of memory. So memorial collective might be a more helpful definition than collective memory itself. There are no doubt many intimate social groups organised around the remembrances in towns and suburbs across Australia. They might best be understood as memorial collectives, a particular form of social organisation rather than as custodians of some overarching collective memory, their social structures pinpointed by Worthy in his study of one New Zealand memorial. So if the events of Anzac are memorialist rather than of memory then we need to turn to the construction and presence of the memorial itself.

Markers, Monuments or Memorials?

Perhaps the most remarkable material artefacts of popular culture created between 1915 and 1935 can be found in a war-derived monumentalism; statues, plaques, tree plantings and buildings. On the Victorian goldfields, and with a locus in Ballarat, these can now be seen as constituting a memorial landscape for which the goldfields are, if not unique, then at least highly distinctive. The drawn-out construction of these marks on the landscape was certainly infused with memory, of individual local volunteers rather than of any symbolic “Anzac.” When Maryborough women unveiled their town’s colossal Anzac statue they intended that it would “preserve for all time the memory of fallen soldiers.” The Creswick monument announces in text that it was specifically designed to perform the impossible task of “perpetuating the memory” of those who had volunteered.

Whereas we are now happy to call these markers “memorials,” the townsfolk who shaped them were not, initially at least, engaged in memorialisation. The earliest markers of the war were constructed before 1918 – when it was impossible to know just which people and what events deserved to be memorialised. Decisions to erect these structures, claims for their permanence
in memory, the form they eventually took and the ceremonials surrounding their opening or unveiling, were collective enterprises, shaped through public meetings and local organisation. Instead of reflecting on the past, townsfolk looked forward in hope, to victory on the Western Front (still uncertain) and a safe homecoming for local boys. Personal knowledge of individuals occupied the core of this process, so that even in reflecting on the world-altering role of the Anzacs, these events were profoundly localised. Monuments bore names from small-farming districts, volunteers intimately known, and from social networks solidified through shared agricultural or mining concerns. This sense of local identity helped shape the eventual monuments and remained entirely distinct from the formalised public appeals to memory such as the “glorious memory” of Anzac toasted at a London luncheon honouring the Australian High Commissioner (and former Prime Minister) Andrew Fisher in 1916.17

The construction of what we now call war memorials then, took place at a time of direct and ongoing personal connection to war, to individual combatants and to the families they left behind, often forever. Names on plaques represented familiar and real neighbours, friends or relatives. This memory stands as quite distinct from the constructed sense of memory which is implied in today’s assumptions of “Lest We Forget” or “The Spirit Lives.” In the same way the monuments themselves comprise distinctive material forms. They do not fit easily into now widely accepted categories of sacralised memorials.18 Goldfields people seemed at first unsure of what sort of response they ought to make to Anzac Day. Initially the events of 25 April were called celebrations. They had little solemnity about them during the war years and could incorporate boisterous demands for the struggle to continue or for local “slackers” to sharpen up and volunteer.

How to deal with the day posed an unprecedented challenge for Ballarat and the wider goldfields region. In transposing lived social networks into personal memory and then public structures, soon to be called memorials, each small locality followed its own lights. Church services offered one solution, tempered in townships like Dean or Bungaree by long-standing sectarian mistrust, intensified during the conscription referenda. The townsfolk of Addington decided to hold a contest for a Queen of Anzac and raffled bags of flour. Creating a material centrepiece for annual events posed further conundrums so that towns, mining and farming districts typically turned to the simplest, most practical, and ultimately most visible structure. In the war years and immediately afterwards residents of one district decided to purchase
a memorial car, others inserted memorial tablets in schools and churches, or quickly made up memorial stained glass and memorial plaques. Unveilings were carried out by mothers and friends rather than by civic worthies. In Creswick Mrs Howie, the woman who was both mother of a soldier in France and who had taught many local volunteers in the Creswick State School, unveiled the town’s reflective tablet. 

The signature monumental structure in the region however, remains the avenue of planted trees, although even this was not a uniform response, with an Anzac hill planting, tree groves in St Arnaud and in Staffordshire Lead, a shrubbery. The avenue, running from Ballarat’s western fringe, is now seen as a solemn memorial gesture, driven by one group of factory workers, the women employed at the Lucas clothing factory. In fact these avenues allowed a simple and cheap act of connection, with none of the complexity, craft skills or cost of a stone, stained glass or metal memorial. The Ballarat avenue was a gesture from one industrial firm and not a communally-directed project. Planting was straightforward and several avenues were planted before the major Ballarat Avenue of Honour. When a very early if not the first such avenue was planted in the small railway settlement of Lal Lal it was the work of school children. In 1915 the youngest student at Lal Lal State School planted the first tree in memory of Charles Way a former pupil who died of wounds in France. The plantings continued through to Arbor Day in 1917 with the local postmaster planting the last tree outside the Lal Lal Post Office. Such avenues were in the first instance referred to as “Anzac Avenues” or “Avenues of Honour” rather than memorials. The avenues took shape slowly, as young trees grew. For townsfolk these trees connected familiar streets and homes to men serving overseas, to neighbours in the town, and to hopes not yet extinguished, rather than to death and reflection on the past.

As the terrible events of war receded, larger towns turned to a more formalised, professional memorialism. In Maryborough, the local Patriotic Women’s Guild commissioned a respected female sculptor to create one of the most striking of war memorials. In August 1926 a steady stream of Maryborough people made their way to the Walter G. Scott Foundry in Melbourne where “in the dim light and shade of the interior, with its dust-grimed walls and dark pieces of machinery, the dull green bronze of the giant figure caught the sunbeams from the doorway and became transformed into a symbolic vision of heroism.” This was the work of Margaret Baskerville. She
had grown up in Ballarat and built a unique career for both a woman and an artist in 1890s Victoria, since she managed to earn a full-time living from her sculpting. She came to war memorials after spending years in European art circles with her first war memorial the now stereotypical image of the Anzac leaning on his rifle and completed for the town of Alexandra in 1922. “So slender and frail in appearance that she looks as though a strong wind would blow her away, Margaret Baskerville conceives and executes sculpture that is surprisingly virile in aspect and massive in bulk” recorded one admirer. For the Maryborough monument, she cast a figure superhuman in scale, stepping forward with vigour, rifle to hand. Atop an elongated plinth, this giant Anzac towered over Maryborough’s Civic (now McLandress) Square. So much so that the older Boer War memorial nearby came to seem insignificant in the town’s history. Inter-war memorials in Britain are sometimes read as reinscribing a classical aesthetic, and reconstituting the male body, torn apart in conflict. In other words they function as essentially backward-looking interventions in townscapes, resisting modernity and idealising soldiers before they left home. Maryborough’s Anzac, flanked by neo-classical public buildings, standing in a locality where inter-war modernism had barely penetrated, is fundamentally different. This is a soldier modernised rather than classical in form, captured in athletic, twisting movement, unencumbered, as were so many British monumental soldiers, by the weight of an enfolding greatcoat. The scale and liveness of the monument suggest a sense of both pasts and futures diverging optimistically from those at the heart of Empire.

By 1926, when the Maryborough memorial was declared complete, a new phase in memorialism had commenced. Monuments were still typically unveiled by mothers of men in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Now the poignancy of that moment was increasingly overshadowed by whatever pomp a provincial dignitary could muster, whilst reciting platitudes about global struggles for freedom. The Maryborough unveiling coincided with a “Back to Maryborough” celebration, drawing in and hopefully reinvigorating the ties of community unravelled by war and the drift of youth to Melbourne. A professionalised aesthetic code and response to statewide indeed national tastes in memorialism, in which a certain classicism did prevail, now counted for more than the exigencies of time, cost and farm-based skill, evident in avenues of honour and other pioneering markers of local identity.
Familial Memorials

Since they were designed by professional craftspersons and constructed to meet state and national stylistic conventions, these monuments have come to satisfy our current mode of reflection. Still, across the decade of the 1920s, their formalism was matched to continued personal and familial memories of soldiers returned or killed; memories, which few Australians can now claim. Perhaps the closest to this personalised memorial experience comes in contemporary memorials that emphasise text rather than structure or symbol. For example a combination of site linked to war and a sequence of individualised plaques defines the Memorial Walkway at Caloundra, Queensland. During the crisis following the Fall of Singapore, Queensland’s quiet holiday town of Caloundra, with its vistas over shipping lanes and the Coral Sea, was suddenly transformed into a vital point in the defence of Australia. Military officialdom classed Caloundra as a restricted area with command posts for artillery, a United States military communication centre and training bases for troops bound for New Guinea.\textsuperscript{29} Around the coastline, once considered such a critical military resource, there now runs a memorial trail. The Caloundra RSL organises plaques to individual returned service persons in this “Caloundra Memorial Walkway.”\textsuperscript{30} Families from around Australia have bronze plaques in more or less uniform design placed along the headland; simple, personal memorials but ones routinely investigated by locals and visiting tourists. The plaques are not organised by military unit, by war service, nor by locality. Rather, families and the local RSL select sitings and, within a generalised design, friends and family construct their own text. Here there is a familial remembrance of relatives, much in the manner of Winter’s critique of Nora, located in a setting inescapably connected to the critical events of World War II.

This unceremonial connection with memories of relatives and friends keeps memory alive in a manner no doubt difficult to reproduce in heavily mediated and formalised Centenary Celebrations of Anzac. It suggests also that in the long run historians read too much into memorial landscapes. For almost all days in the year, war memorials are fixed as background, contributing elements to a streetscape or natural environment, rather than existing as icons of war memory. The Europeanised landscape of goldfields towns, farmland and mining remnant is composed of layers and networks, pathways and nodal points for which there are documented viewing sheds and classifications of
heritage value. Ballarat itself is promoted and recognised as a town of statuary, an identity to which war memorials make a relatively minor contribution. Outside the town, the larger farms are approached along avenues of exotic trees, often as elaborate and dense as avenues of honour. Fields and hillsides are geometrically patterned by trees as wind breaks, with double rows of plantings to mark fence lines and to demarcate properties. War memorials form a part of this broad network of historic places whilst not necessarily remaining the most recognisable contributors to it. From a distance, the treed fenceline and the avenue of honour are often indistinguishable.

Similarly, stone and iron monuments may have been built to register names for all time. But even on Anzac Day these local monuments often attract only scattered onlookers, people for whom names on honour boards are no longer familiar. Their isolation stands in stark contrast to the motley band of joggers, dog walkers and surfers who casually but continuously inspect names and life histories on the Caloundra Headland. The goldfields monuments in contrast have long ceased to function as seminal reminders of the settler nationhood routinely challenged by historians.

As some scholars have noted, the materiality and spatial organisation of memorials can direct popular responses independently of their social origins. Such responses are never entirely certain. For landscape designers and botanists, the avenues of the goldfields may have one significance, for friends and relatives of a Ballarat soldier another. Heritage groups value the avenues’ distinctive historicity rather than any connection to war. For the convinced environmentalist, regardless of the avenue’s war associations, its plantings remain alien intrusions into the ecology of western Victoria. In the long run there is little that is disruptive in the memorials or their settings. The Ballarat Avenue of Honour seems more recognised for the fund-raising energies of the Lucas Girls than for the men whose memory it was supposed to make permanent.

Creeping neglect rather than reverence stemmed from their insertion into a broad landscape with a declining mining and farming population. The memorials became recognised, familiar aspects of the working landscape of rural Victoria, their deterioration unnoticed because of their familiarity, and their restoration only made possible by the approach of the Gallipoli campaign’s centenary. Attachment to them has on occasions aroused controversy, in for example, the plan by Victorian transport authorities to place a roundabout at the centre point of the Avenue of Honour in Bacchus Marsh. The more
common reaction remained a familiar indifference – people simply had gotten used to these avenues – which in itself suggests an integration into local identity and sense of place if not of nationhood.

Memorialising Hitler’s City

The supposed permanence of these structures can be set against a very different type of public memorial. There is an intentional temporality, in place of a desired “perpetuity” in several memorials constructed in order to expose suppressed memories of Nazi rule. These are memorials reiterating anti-war resistance rather than subservience to brutal imperialism. World War II has produced so many monuments in Europe that even Pierre Nora wondered if the event had been over-memorialised. He would have been less concerned had he surveyed memory in Austria and other parts of Central Europe rather than France. The Danube River town of Linz provides a case in point. Linz, the Austrian city in which Adolf Hitler spent his childhood, was also metonymic of Nazi triumphalism and collapse. As Michael John pointed out, Hitler’s Linz “was to symbolize a ‘healthy’ province in contrast to the unmanageable ‘Jewish’ metropolis of Vienna.” Here Hitler planned to gather together the priceless works of art that his troops had looted from across Europe. Stone quarried at Mauthausen Concentration Camp and its Alpine sub-camps was incorporated into the faux-historic and sub-modernist Linz monuments to Nazism. In 1945, as inmates in these camps were freed by horrified American G.I.’s, a drugged and defeated Hitler sat in his Berlin bunker, hunching over the model of his gloriously rebuilt Linz. Half a century later, the town’s municipal council resolved to embark on a detailed and open analysis of the city’s Nazi history and in 2009 Linz became the European Capital of Culture.

This title itself generated momentary confusion about how to display Hitler’s garbled master plan for Linz, his very own capital of culture. For transform Linz into a modern city the Nazis certainly did and by 1945 Hitler’s small childhood river town was a major industrial centre for the Reich. Thus in many ways for Linz to become a city of culture was an important marker on the journey from the industrialism of the Nazi years to cultural production in the twenty-first century urban world. The townspeople promoted this new city of culture by claiming they had no fears about facing up to the Hitler connection by way of exhibitions. Their displays however met with mixed reviews. The most interesting response to the Nazi past confronted rather than
became integrated into the Capital of Culture. The IN SITU Project set out its agenda as follows:

Seemingly everyday buildings and places that have, up till now, been almost completely ignored in this context will have their historical significance exposed as sites related to the implementation of persecutory measures under the Nazi tyranny. Given the frequency of the marked sites, just a short walk through the centre of the city opens ones eyes to the dense entanglements of the exercise of political power, state and individual terror but also manifests room to manoeuvre. This is also emphasised in a city plan specially developed for the project. It re-frames the perception of the city with reference to the selected sites and the stories connected with them.41

The IN SITU project was then a reflection on localised, mundane and by and large ineffectual resistance to militarism. At several points along pavements and in the Linz Hauptplatz itself (near to the Rathaus where adulatory thousands had welcomed the local boy become dictator’s 1938 homecoming), simple white-stenciled text appeared in front of buildings. A small guide book to these sites was sold in the city’s tourist office. The IN SITU Project’s website both explained the strategies behind the display and set out maps of sites, together with concise statements of the events which took place within and around them during the Nazi years. They could be followed in a walking trail, from one text stencil to another, not unlike the walkway around Caloundra Headland. The stenciled texts however form a classic display of dissonant or even “counter” heritage. Linz’s white stencils broke into the comfortable experiences of a classically-cultured cityscape. And where some cultural theorists critical of heritage see a non-linear past imploding into contemporary cityscapes, the Linz stencils were unromantic, quietly resisting the culture of heritage and memory.42

The locations identified by IN SITU register no overwhelmingly brutal terrorism, as is visible in the tourist cynosures of concentration camps. The site, for example, on the Danube’s south bank, at which Czech slave labourers were landed; the shops and apartments on the river edge where Nazis expropriated Jewish owners and erected their party headquarters; the offices where Simon Wiesenthal, Mauthausen survivor, first devised his decades-long chase after Nazis. Many are less noteworthy, the corner store in which someone had abused
the Nazi leadership and merited a short sentence in a camp, the medical centre where forced sterilisation took place, shops destroyed in anti-Jewish rampages. One such mundane almost casual marker is at 8 Marienstrasse where “Anton A” a departmental head of city administration criticised the execution of two female “Eastern workers” for stealing milk. Anton A was sentenced to death and shot. At 12 Museumstrasse, “Anna H” insulted Hitler and blamed him for the war. Anna was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment extended to five by the Reich Court in Berlin. And at 16 Hauptstrasse, Alexander, Eduard and Friederike Spitz, Jewish wine merchants, committed suicide rather than live on under Nazism.43

The simple, almost innocent white stencils were minimalist (and intentionally temporary) tokens of resistance to the everyday rule of Nazism in one city. The monumentalism of the city’s Nazi remnants and claims to a cultured future eliding the Nazi past into yet another art gallery exhibition are critiqued. They would have a lesser impact were not Linz already the Capital of Culture 2009. The stencils would make less sense if the city had not simultaneously staged an exhibition of Hitler and Speer’s vainglorious architecture. Isolated atrocities visited on individuals and families offer pointed contrast to this exhibition and equally to the mass tourist spectacle of the concentration camp, where memory is commercialised and in the process assumes for tourists an undemanding connection with victims of Nazi atrocity. IN SITU then makes for a distinctive recounting of war, placing it in the broader context of urban history and querying standardised and superficial mechanisms for “keeping memory alive.”

Memory of World War II is fast becoming aligned with that of Gallipoli – the point at which there are none alive who have any personal recollection of combat. The redemptive quality of memory, elided into memorialism, comes into question as we approach closer to that moment. Keeping memory of Nazism alive was supposed to prevent any return of their barbarity. Critics of the politics of memory can now legitimately point to “a return of memory without the effects that once were presumed to follow in its wake.”44 In the twenty-first century there is no longer any automatic redemption at work in memory. In place of memory then, the idea of a heritage site, which is dissonant, clashing with any seamless integrated landscape rather than being incorporated into it, in the manner of an avenue of honour, presents one possible response to Anzac and its memorialism. IN SITU in Linz created a momentary dissonance in the heritage of the city but in a focal point of happy memorialism – a European
Capital of Culture. This dissonance is not simply a matter of discordance, but reflects a state of tension – an issue yet to be resolved. It is not unlike the cultural if not political circumstances of planting goldfields avenues between 1915 and 1918. Of course dissonant heritage can gradually be reintegrated into familiar landscapes. So the temporary installation rather than the fixed and interpreted site may well function as the most dynamic source of dissonance in heritage.  

Forgetting

“We are” noted Andreas Huyssen, “nostalgic for the ruins of modernity because they seem to hold a promise that has vanished from our own age: the promise of an alternative future.” Huyssen was reflecting on popular fascination for another monument of war – the devastated remnants of German cities bombed by British and US air crews. This “promise of an alternative future” has defined left politics from 1917 onwards. Undeniably, a resistance to the national mythology of Anzac once helped keep this alternative vision alive. And yet, if such an alternative has indeed vanished from our era, as Huyssen suggests, what are we now to make of Anzac?

In that stoutly conservative journal Quadrant, Mervyn Bendle recently condemned emerging attacks on Anzac mythology, from left-leaning historians naturally, although more forcefully, from other military historians. Bendle took this conservative and newly critical military history to task for a negative portrayal of the Digger Legend as a “sort of cultural cancer within the military, promoting mythical ideas about the capabilities of Australian soldiers, and giving them ideas above their station.” Where Paul Keating once launched an heroic mission to recentre national identity on Kokoda rather than Gallipoli, influential journalists have continued with their campaign for minimising Anzac Cove and instead, asserting a triumphalist myth, authenticated in the successful Western Front campaigns of 1918. This critique might be seen as reflecting two current processes: on the one hand it appears as a consequence of the military arm of a globalising, transnational capitalism. In this globalising, Australian military excursions have been incorporated into uniform structures commanded by the United States in which technical expertise, dispassionate professionalism and unchallengeable hierarchical directives rather than individual valour, are the qualities that count. Secondly any attack must derive, at least in part, from a shift in Anzac mythology itself. What once depended
on a reverence for the Anzacs’ prowess as accomplished fighters has been modulated into recognition of their stoicism and is increasingly coloured by an anti-war elegy: the Anzac as defeated and cheated by imperialist ambition. In fact this is very much like the end point of C.E.W. Bean’s all-encompassing official history, in which he writes as a cautious enthusiast for his subject rather than as a myth-maker. Bean’s coda on the 1918 campaigns in which “the Old Force passed down the road to history. The dust of its march settled. The sound of its arms died,” reflects on the distinguishing characteristics of his subjects.\textsuperscript{18} First and foremost he saw them as children of social egalitarianism and whatever contribution they might make to a nation’s future depended on that absence of inequality:

If social divisions increase with the artificiality of more highly organised society, the snobbery of fashion and publicity, or the servility that almost necessarily follows the co-existence of poverty and great wealth, then the qualities that the A.I.F. gained from its social equality will vanish with the causes that gave them birth.\textsuperscript{49}

Ought we be surprised that in all the noble, integrating and official recommendations for keeping the Anzac spirit alive in 2015 and beyond, Bean’s faith in social equality has taken a back seat?

Remembering rather than forgetting is the preferred response to past major events such as wars and the Anzac myth in particular. Such is this imperative that F.R. Ankersmit noted that “historical theorists … have paid amazingly little attention to the issue of how we disengage ourselves from the past, of how we may forget it and disassociate it from our cultural and historical identity.”\textsuperscript{50} In academic circles at least it does seem that the admonition to remember for all time, pronounced at the unveiling of Margaret Baskerville’s towering Anzac in Maryborough in 1926, still holds true. At least one historian of Europe after 1945 has queried this urge to remember. Tony Judt concluded that “the Western response to the problem of Europe’s troublesome memories has been to fix them – quite literally, in stone. By the opening years of the twenty-first century, plaques, memorials and museums to the victims of Nazism had surfaced all across western Europe.”\textsuperscript{51} If this circumstance is reminiscent of what we have witnessed in Australia after 1918, Judt, distinctively, resists the moral imperative to remember. Memory he insists is “a poor guide to the past.”\textsuperscript{52}
Such intentional forgetting is conventionally considered avoidance, less worthy than remembering. Not surprisingly, a survey of databases for war, memory and forgetting reveals the accuracy of this claim. Academic Search Premier had at the end of September 2014, 38 entries for “war and forgetting” and 2,119 for “war and memory”; JSTOR had 3,679 entries for “war and memory” and only 438 for “war and forgetting.” Ankersmit explained such an imbalance by insisting that historical facts were never going to dislodge national mythologies once these had become established. Instead he saw the demand that we must remember as debilitating, especially in light of the fundamental new social identities we have adopted in response to the wars of the last century.53

These dramatic twentieth century transformations and their new identities often paradoxically engender a culture of memory. It was this culture that Andreas Huyssen queried and Tony Judt challenged in his demand that forgetting was essential for any new civic life. But then, forgetting thought Ankersmit, is “always accompanied by feelings of a profound and irreparable loss, of cultural despair and of hopeless disorientation.”54 Ankersmit’s proposed way forward involved seeking out a sense of the sublime in response to a culturally-prescribed memory as trauma. He proposed that “the past must first be historicized, transformed by association into narrative understanding, before, with a subsequent gesture, it can be repudiated.”55 Like Ankersmit, Judt insisted that he had no desire to endorse some national amnesia about war and genocide. Rather he thought that a nation “had first to have remembered something before it can begin to forget it.”56 His chosen example, of France coming to terms with Verdun, can suggest for us aspects of Australian relationship to Gallipoli. Since the events have been thoroughly interrogated over the last one hundred years, perhaps it is time to move on from both memory and memorialism. Such a step may permit our reflection on the past in a mood of the sublime rather than through ongoing trauma.

This chapter has reflected on the misappropriation of memory and memorialism in history and public remembrance. It calls into question the glib and inaccurate assumptions we make about memory, memorialism and “remembering” Anzac. The chapter has put forward three alternative responses to the Anzac Centenary. Abandoning any claim on memory it has proposed that a temporary dissonant memorialism at a localised even mundane scale is one way of coming to terms with past. It secondly proposes a more positive engagement with those aspects of Anzac mythology arising from its sense of
egalitarianism. It thirdly suggests a certain forgetfulness or at least sublime rather than traumatic recuperation. In this way the memorials may once again after their burnishing for 2015 recede into a familiar layered landscape. The dead from whom we are disconnected, may be left untroubled, as our Donald poet hoped. And lastly, Anzac may even be incorporated into a different history, one written for an era in which hopes of an alternative future have not vanished.

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**Endnotes**

3. The current Anzac events may however have given space to a more influential set of alternative historical “facts” as seen in the current project Honest History, accessed 10 December 2014, http://honesthistory.net.au/.
10. *Ibid*.

14 For one of the strictest individuations of memory see Susan A. Crane, “Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory,” *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (December 1997): 1372–85.


16 Bendigo *Advertiser*, 25 October 1926, 22.

17 Ballarat *Star*, 24 February 1916, 1.


19 Ballarat *Courier*, 30 September 1915, 5; 4 July 1918, 5; 22 July 1918, 6; Creswick *Advertiser*, 15 August 1916; 4; Clunes *Guardian and Gazette*, 16 August 1919, 3.


21 Ballarat *Courier*, 9 July 1918; 5, 22 July 1918, 6; 29 July 1918, 1.


23 Ballarat *Courier*, 30 June 1917, 10.

24 *Argus*, 25 August 1926, 27.


32 See McDougall and Vines, Sturt Street Gardens, Ballarat, Victoria, Conservation and Landscape Management Plan (Ballarat: City of Ballarat, 2007).
34 See for example the distinct and perhaps conflicting accounts of the Avenues from those concerned with their environmental quality and others interested in their memorial capacity at the Avenues of Honour Project, Treene, accessed 11 May 2014, https://www.treenet.org/avenues-of-honour/.
43 IN SITU, 2010.


49 *Ibid*.


52 *Ibid*., 829.


